

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

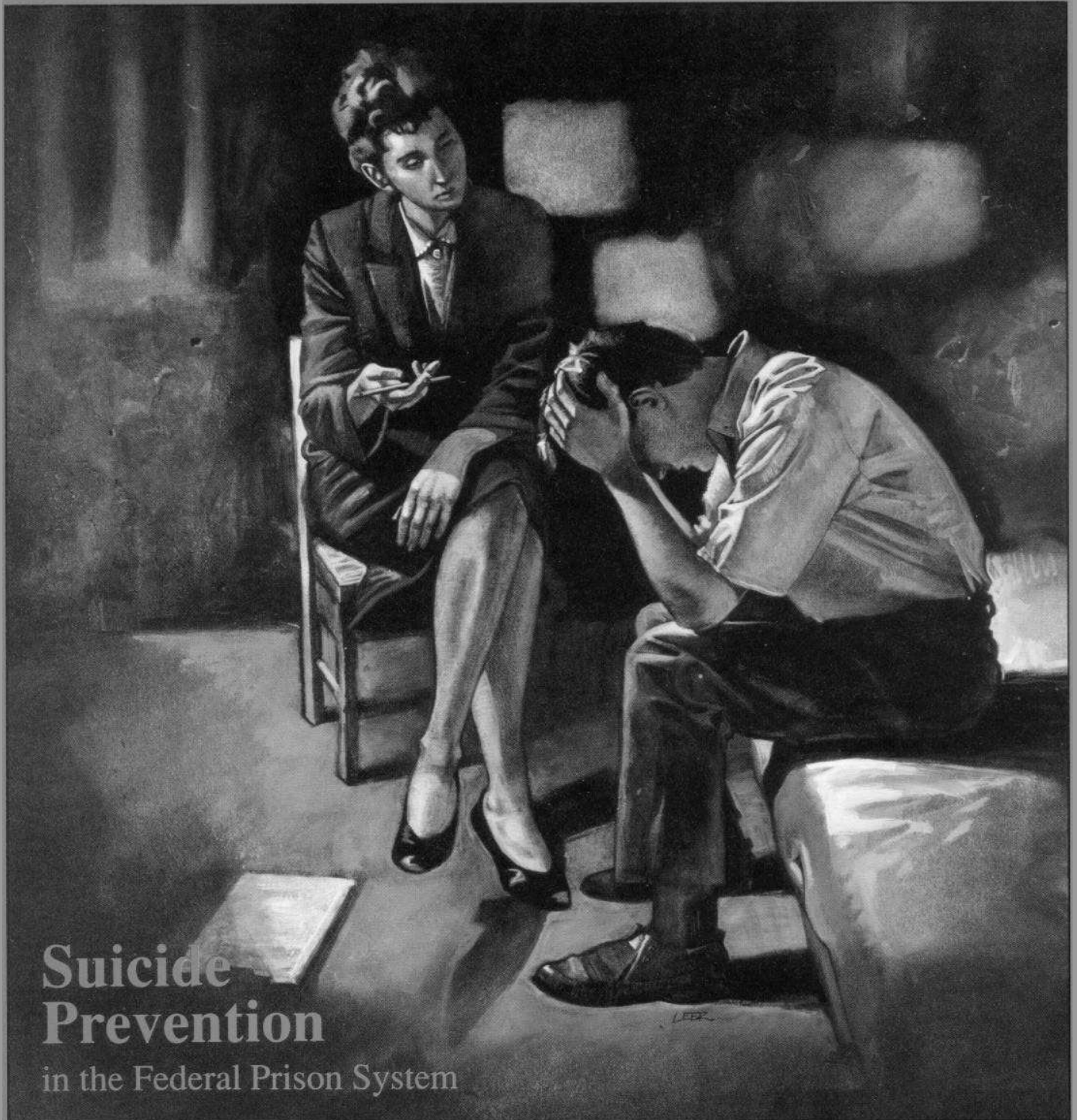


Federal Prisons

JOURNAL

VOL. 1, NO. 1

SUMMER 1989



**Suicide
Prevention**
in the Federal Prison System

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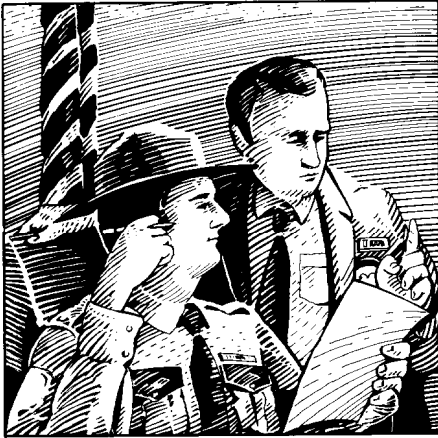
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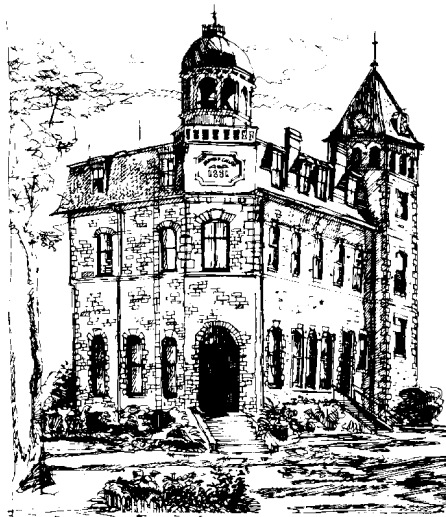
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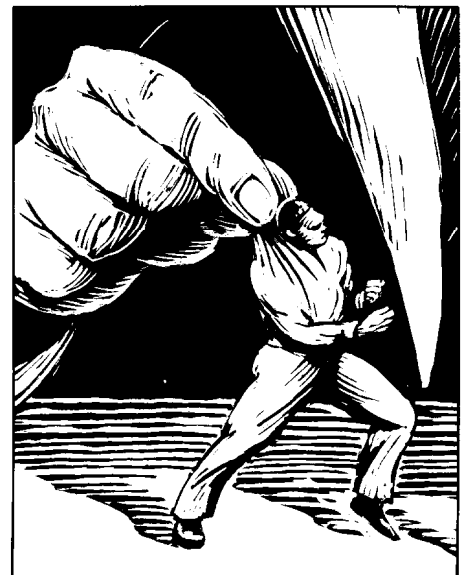
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Federal Prisons

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Published quarterly by the
Federal Bureau of Prisons

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Let us hear from you...

We hope you will find the *Federal Prisons Journal* useful in your professional work and interesting to read. We want to reach not only the 14,000 men and women who work within the Federal Prison System and Federal Prison Industries, but their colleagues in State and local correctional systems and in other parts of the justice system.

Because this is a new magazine, and a new outreach effort on the part of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, we're particularly interested in your reactions to our first issue. Feedback at this early stage will help us shape the magazine in the direction that will make it most useful to you. In addition, we're wide open for article ideas, and they don't have to be confined to the Federal system.

Please write to the Editor, *Federal Prisons Journal*, at the address on this page. If you want to talk to us, we're at 202-724-3198. We're particularly interested in your responses to the following questions:

What article did you find most interesting? Why?

What article did you find least interesting? Why?

Were any articles too long or too short?

Were any articles too difficult or too easy to read?

What topics would you like to see treated in future issues?



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

TO THE READERS OF THE FEDERAL PRISONS JOURNAL:

I am pleased to be able to speak to you through the first issue of the Federal Prisons Journal. The Department of Justice is particularly pleased to support this publication not only because it will be a valuable vehicle for personal and professional growth, but also because of the increasing importance of the role of corrections in our criminal justice system.

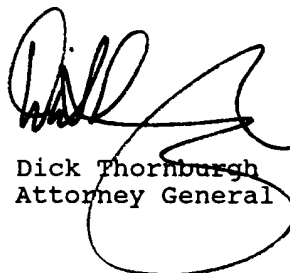
As you know, President Bush announced in his new Crime Bill that he is prepared to commit increased resources to expand the federal criminal justice system to meet his crime-fighting initiatives. The President and I are both committed to increasing the nation's ability to arrest, prosecute, and imprison those who would break the law. Under the President's plan the federal prison system's capacity would be enlarged by 24,000 beds. Obviously, correction professionals will have increased responsibility in our war against crime and drugs.

As the corrections system grows, those who make it work must communicate with each other, with opinionmakers, and with the public. The voices of professional correctional workers must also be heard in the national debate over issues of crime and justice.

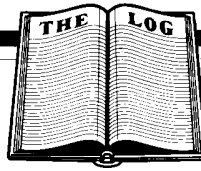
The Federal Prisons Journal provides a forum for these discussions: I urge your active participation through your submissions and feedback.

The Federal Prisons Journal will also be an opportunity to present to the nation a view of the problems facing the correctional system today. It is important to get the message out about the resourcefulness and professionalism of correctional workers in providing a vital public service -- safe, secure, and humane institutions -- often under difficult circumstances.

I salute you.



Dick Thornburgh
Attorney General



On the Modern Correctional Officer

Mike Grotefend

By many measures, we are an invisible profession because the people we serve rarely, if ever, see us at work. We live “on the edge”—crossing daily between “normal” society and the inmate world.

Sadly, correctional officers die in the line of duty. Too often, the fate of our fallen comrades has gone unnoticed. Hundreds of others have been injured on the job. On their behalf, we dedicate ourselves to the goal of raising the level of the public’s awareness of who we are and what we do.

We find ourselves in what has unfortunately become a growth industry. Given the choice, we would welcome a downturn in the industry if it meant that crime is on the decline. Clearly, that is not a likely situation in the short run. On the contrary—correctional facilities are bulging at the seams, representing a failure of our Nation to find ways to reduce crime. New facilities are filled as quickly as they are built. It is important to realize that these facilities will not be self-administering. Thoughtful administrators and political leaders recognize that they must identify and train sufficient personnel to staff these institutions and offer compensation, benefits, and recognition for a job well done.

We note, too, that some influential administrators are preparing to embrace the notion that corrections work can be turned over to “for profit” organizations, a trend that we view with alarm. On behalf of our members



Illustrations by Web Bryant

and the entire profession, we condemn that notion. Crime and its consequences are a problem of the entire society.

If there is one governmental function that cannot be relegated to contractors, it is incarceration. We urge the Nation’s lawmakers and public administrators to join with us in declaring a commitment to fulfilling this public obligation as a governmental function.

It is important, therefore, that the Nation recognizes the unique contribution correctional officers make to society. It is our role to provide humane incarceration and custodial protection for inmates and to serve the public by keeping those who have perpetrated crime segregated from the law-abiding.

The concept of corrections, rather than punishment, is often overlooked in the

discussion of crime. But, clearly, as long as we believe that criminal behavior can be changed and the individuals who engage in it are to be discouraged, we must remember that the role of correctional officers is more than simply to act as a “turnkey,” keeping criminals behind bars and invisible from the rest of society. Successful corrections programs rely on highly motivated, well trained, and dedicated corrections professionals.

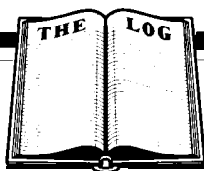
That is why we stress the complex nature of the modern correctional officer’s role. He or she must be trained and educated, prepared to respond appropriately in a crisis, and dedicated to public service—tough yet compassionate. Most of all, the correctional officer must believe that society and the employer value the contributions he or she makes.

Mike Grotefend is President of the Council of Prison Locals, American Federation of Government Employees. He works at the Federal Correctional Institution, Oxford, Wisconsin. A different version of this article appeared in Oxford Blues, the newsletter of AFGE Local 3495.

Don’t Just Do Something...Stand There (and Think About It)

Warren J. Welsh, Ph.D.

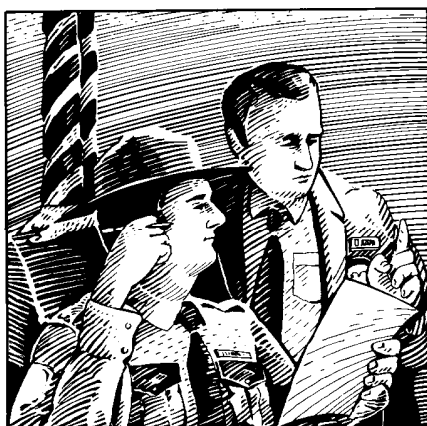
Years ago at an educational seminar, a speaker reminded the listeners that if the railroad companies had been as interested in transportation as they had been in railroads, they’d now own the airlines. The speaker’s point? Teach-



ers must not limit their involvement in the educational process to “classroom technology.” Instead, they must be concerned with the total process of education.

The same point is appropriate for correctional workers like us. If we limit our horizons to the cellblock, we’ll most certainly fall out of step with the times. Though many of us can remember when “sex was dirty and the air was clean,” such simplicity is long gone. In the atmosphere, we have holes in the ozone; in corrections, we can no longer just lock up inmates, work them, feed them, and release them when their time is up. Quite apart from social, moral, or political concerns, pure numbers force us to rethink our approach. We have simply run out of places to put them.

The time has come to replace double- and triple-bunking with completely new methods of carrying out our mission. The Curfew Parole Program (electronic monitoring of “inmates” sentenced to “house arrest”) is an example of what can happen when we are forced to think about what we’re



doing—looking at the forest instead of individual trees.

Our “forest” is more than the field of corrections. It covers the whole criminal justice system from the theories of the classroom to the realities of the cellblock. A pervasive sense of “territoriality” has left huge gaps between the legislature making the laws, the police enforcing the laws, the courts sanctioning lawbreakers, and the prisons managing the results. Our mission in the Bureau of Prisons is neither to make laws nor convict lawbreakers. However, novel as the idea may seem, it is time to enlarge our horizons and begin to voice our ideas and concerns about legislation, enforcement, and sanctioning as well as incarceration.

The first step is communication. Legislators, judges, police officers, parole officers, correctional workers, educators, everyone involved in any aspect of criminal justice must begin talking to each other about what each is doing, while thinking about the effect it has on the rest of the system. It is not unusual for the various components of the system to be working at odds. If we don’t talk, we can only assume everyone else is doing “just fine.”

One of the most important reasons for communication is the need to know the problems in other areas. Unfortunately, many have the attitude that to admit a problem is to admit weakness and incompetence. Thus, we display a “can do” attitude, even when, if we thought about it, we’d realize we were in a “can’t do” situation. Positive attitudes are admirable, as long as they don’t lead to self-deception. It’s always better to be right about not

being able to do the job, than wrong about being able to do it.

The Bureau can no longer remain unconcerned about such issues as zero tolerance, alternative sentencing, decriminalization of drugs, disparity in sentencing, prisons for profit, illegal aliens, gun control, police corruption, and so on. We all need to be talking to each other. This will help elevate our involvement with criminal justice from the “provincialism” of the prisons to the professionalism of the widest possible field of view.

Dr. Warren J. Welsh is Chief of Psychology Services at the Federal Correctional Institution in Milan, Michigan.

Seven Tips for Improving Your Newsletters

Doug Green

Every institution has a newsletter, but that by itself doesn’t tell you much. The newsletters are as diverse as the institutions themselves. They range from a single typewritten page to full-color printed booklets with artwork and photographs.

Even with all this diversity, there is—or should be—a common underlying principle. A good newsletter is one that *communicates*—that gets its message across to its audience. That means you have to be clear about both the message and the audience; everything else is secondary. The following tips are meant to improve your communicating.



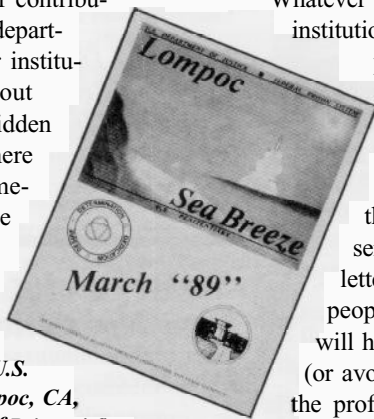
Stress people, not programs

Do people read your newsletter because they want to learn about new initiatives in the Regional Office or where the warden is off to next week? Partly. But they really want to know about their friends and colleagues, and to keep up with what's going on in their immediate work environment.

The more people involved, the better

One person should be in charge of the newsletter, but that person should involve as many others as possible. Try to get regular contributors from every department within your institution—and find out about people's hidden talents. Somewhere within your perimeter are at least one cartoonist and one poet.

The Sea Breeze, newsletter of the U.S. Penitentiary, Lompoc, CA, won the Bureau of Prisons' first institution newsletter contest in 1989.



Keep it simple

People often confuse "good" with "expensive" or "fancy." Not so. You can put a great publication together with a typewriter and some Elmer's glue—no color or typesetting or computer graphics necessary—if you're providing people with something they need to read. Concentrate on that first, then start tinkering to improve your design and readability.

Have it proofread

Proofreading is something you never notice when it's done right, but you

certainly notice when it's done badly. People don't like having their names misspelled or their titles garbled.

When they work hard on articles for the newsletter, they like to see their work come out as they wrote it. A simple misspelling can quickly change the meaning (it's the difference between "great" and "grate"). Find someone in your institution who can spell and punctuate—then don't ever let him or her leave.

Don't reinvent the wheel

Whatever you're doing for your institution has been done before—probably at another institution. If you aren't already receiving them, write to all the institutions in your region—in the Nation, for that matter—and get them to send you copies of their newsletters. Looking at other people's successes (and failures) will help you know what to borrow (or avoid). And take note of how the professionals do it—go to the library and look at a few magazines. There are quite a few useful books on editing and design—E.B. White's *The Elements of Style* is a classic for the former; anything by Jan White will help you with the latter.

Get outside help if you need it

Most Bureau people have never had occasion to learn anything about publications design or how to edit. But there are people in your community who do know—your local paper, for instance, or your town's print shop—and usually they'll be happy to share their knowledge. You might talk to them about setting up a course in effective writing for staff while you're at it. Of course, if there's a UNICOR

printing plant at your institution, you'll have considerable expertise in-house.

Spend a little to save a lot

One of the best things about computers is that they allow an individual to do much of the work of a print shop—with no greater investment of time than you'd spend at a typewriter. If your institution is upgrading its microcomputers, for instance, why not piggyback the costs and invest in a desktop publishing system, such as PageMaker or ReadySetGo? You'll be amazed at how much time you'll save, and how dramatic the improvement in quality will be.

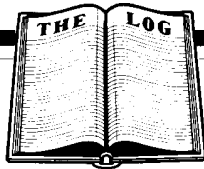
Doug Green is editor of the Federal Prisons Journal. He has edited far too many newsletters.

Heart Healthy Nutrition: Changing Diets, Changing Habits

Jerry Collins

In recent years more and more Americans have been concerned with health and fitness. This trend has carried over into the field of corrections. The old philosophy of nutrition in correctional settings could well be characterized as "keep them fat and happy." But this is no longer acceptable. Both inmates and staff are becoming much more conscious of the nutritional qualities of the foods being provided at institutions.

As health costs continue to spiral for prisons as for the rest of society, good nutrition becomes a form of preventive medicine. The effects of diet on



psychological states are not well understood, but it's reasonable to suppose that an unbalanced diet—one heavy in fats, sugar, and salt—can reinforce tendencies to “act out.”

Heart Healthy Meals

The birth of Heart Healthy Meals took place in the Bureau of Prisons in fall 1988. Heart Healthy Meals are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans developed to promote healthy nutritional behavior. Heart Healthy Meals are also compliant with the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA's), developed to meet the known nutritional needs of practically all healthy Americans. The guidelines address overeating, and recommend reaching a desirable weight that you can maintain, reducing consumption of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, eating a variety of foods, eating an adequate amount of starch and fiber by increasing the intake of grains, fruits, and vegetables, and decreasing intake of sugar and salt.

Providing healthier meals need not require major alterations to your institution's current menus. Initially,

the emphasis should be on providing additional choices for those interested in healthier eating. Some effective Heart Healthy alternatives are:

- Provide a hot or cold fiber-rich cereal at breakfast.
- Offer lowfat (2 percent) and skim milk in place of whole milk.
- Limit eggs to no more than three servings a week—and not always fried.
- Prepare vegetables without salt or butter, which can be added at the table.
- Offer a baked alternative when the main entree is fried—baked chicken along with the fried chicken, for instance.
- Offer fresh or canned fruit as the main dessert.
- Offer margarine as an alternative to butter.

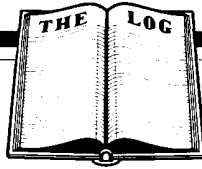
Many Bureau institutions have already implemented these simple changes and found them to be well received by their inmate population.

- Jerry Heftler, Food Service Administrator at FCI Fort Worth, started providing lowfat (2 percent) milk and was then asked if skim milk could be provided. Jerry started with three 5-gallon containers of skim milk and now orders 15 containers a week. Skim milk is now offered in many institutions to the general population, not just to inmates on therapeutic diets.

- Phil Bradshaw, Food Service Administrator at MCFP Springfield, initially started preparing 25 servings of a baked entree as an alternative to fried meats. In just a couple of weeks the demand increased to 150 portions. Springfield's alternative entrees are identified on the menu board and are available upon request.

- Salad bars have provided inmates an excellent and popular choice for Heart Healthy eating. In the past few years, at the majority of institutions, salads have changed from a simple bowl of lettuce to the opportunity to create your own salad with a wide variety of items. The salad bar provides inmates with a rare enough opportunity in institutions—the opportunity to select their personal preferences. Inmates wishing to eat light can do so; those seeking an alternative to meat, fish, and poultry can find protein substitutes on many salad bars in the form of cheese, cottage cheese, garbanzo beans, or a bean salad.

- Dual entrees have also added to inmate choices. Walt Breeden, former Food Service Administrator at USP Lompoc, offered a dual entree to the inmates consisting of a meat entree and a meatless entree in the form of a soy protein dish. John Scozzafava, former Food Service Administrator at FCI Danbury, made his second entree a



Heart Healthy choice. As stated earlier, other institutions are preparing an entree two different ways—fried and baked.

Changing habits through education

As many perpetual dieters know, changing your eating habits is not easy. Educating yourself about the content of what you eat is a start. Grace Rodgers, the Bureau of Prisons' Chief Dietitian, and the field dietitians are developing material to promote healthier eating behavior among inmates. For instance, to educate the general population, a Nutrition Corner Bulletin Board has been developed to provide information for inmates supporting Heart Healthy Food choices. The first Nutrition Corner display was the "Weight, Height, and Longer Life Chart," which showed the ideal weight for height and frame size, followed by proper portion sizes to maintain a desirable weight.

Nutrition education begins on the serving line, where, as in the outside world, the "customers" are likely to make some last-minute decisions. Some simple reinforcers can greatly increase the success of the program.

- Menu boards are an excellent tool for teaching healthy eating. This fall a new Bureau policy will be implemented requiring menu boards to list the calories, sodium, and cholesterol in each food item.

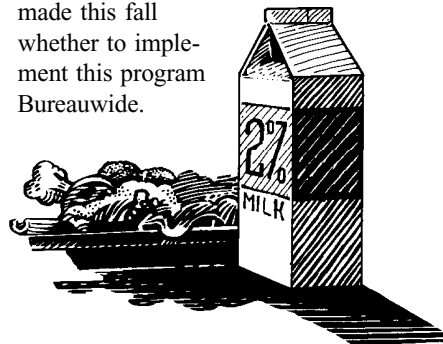
- Another "home remedy" to make inmates more aware of what and how they eat is a scale. Several institutions have a scale available in the dining room for inmates who want to monitor their weight.

- A full-length mirror placed at the entrance of the dining room has proved to be excellent for making people aware of how they look, thus hopefully affecting what they eat.

Supporting field initiatives

To date, the success of the Bureau's Heart Healthy Meals program has come from a close collaboration between Central Office and the institutions. Grace Rodgers has met with institutional food service administrators at two regional conferences, and the regional administrators and field dietitians have been very supportive. Individual food service administrators have also undertaken a number of initiatives:

- FCI Fort Worth is piloting a new concept—therapeutic diets. Food service staff, medical staff, and the contract dietitian are working together to provide inmates requiring special diets with counseling and educational materials to enable them to make healthier choices from mainline foods. The medical staff continues to monitor inmates' conditions during this pilot program. A final determination will be made this fall whether to implement this program Bureauwide.



- Tom Issermoyer, Food Service Administrator at FCI Memphis, feeds diabetic patients from the main line after they are taught the exchange

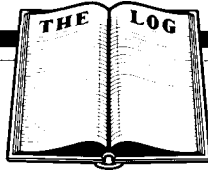
system for meal selection by the Nutrition Health Educator.

- Carl Vitanza, Food Service Administrator at FCI Otisville, and the education department have incorporated nutrition training into the institution's prerelease program.

The Bureau of Prisons' farms have also been very supportive of the Heart Healthy program. A year ago they were informed of the goal to provide healthier foods; the farms then upgraded their milk processing equipment to provide lowfat milk to their customers. In addition, USP Lompoc is currently breeding their beef herd with leaner cattle of limousin stock, in an attempt to provide a healthier cut of meat for inmates in the Western Region.

Intensified nutrition training for food service administrators is planned for 1990 at the National Food Service Administrators Conference and at the Food Management Training Center. The results of this training will be tracked through future nutritional analysis of Bureau menus and will benefit the inmate population through promoting preventive health care. The inmate nutrition education program, and the clinical nutrition education program for the population at nutritional risk for chronic disease, will be key components in the success of Heart Healthy eating.

Jerry Collins is Food and Farm Services Administrator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.



Mandatory Literacy for Prisons

Sylvia McCollum

When Warren E. Burger was Chief Justice of the United States, he had a strong interest in prison education programs. In a speech to George Washington University graduates in 1981, he urged education for all inmates so that, at a minimum, all would be literate and have a saleable skill. Just 5 days later, Norman A. Carlson, then Director of the Bureau of Prisons, appointed a task force to advise him regarding the policy implications of the Chief Justice's speech.

Within a year, the Bureau established its first mandatory adult basic education policy, incorporating the following points:

- Inmates functioning at less than 6th-grade level (as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, or SAT) were required to enroll in an adult basic literacy (ABE) program for 90 days.
- Inmates could not be promoted to jobs above the lowest level until they met the 6th-grade standard.
- Each institution had to develop a "needs list" to follow each inmate's progress (or lack of progress), including 30-day reviews and counseling sessions.
- Institutions also had to develop a system of incentives and awards to recognize satisfactory progress.

That both staff and inmates so readily accepted the mandatory literacy program came as a surprise to many. One question was whether inmates who had verified high school diplomas and college degrees should be required to take the SAT. Early on, the decision was made to test all new admissions, since there was evidence that many who had such diplomas and degrees functioned below the 6th-grade level on SAT subtests.

Some inmates thought they were too old to learn enough to meet the new standards. Others had enrolled in past literacy programs and failed only one or two of the SAT subtests. These cases were handled on an individual basis; work promotions were occasionally allowed if the inmates continued in the ABE program and made satisfactory progress.

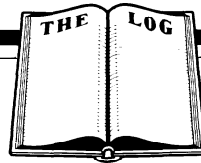
The impact of the new policy on the number of ABE enrollments and completions was substantial, as shown

in the table. Population increased 54 percent, while ABE completions increased 327 percent! We believe that the compulsory nature of the program and its tie to work promotion accounts for this accomplishment.

Constant monitoring has been an important characteristic of the Bureau's literacy effort. There was consensus that problems should be quickly addressed. Thus, in October 1983, the policy was amended to require each institution to have either a qualified reading specialist or a special education instructor on staff, as the average classroom teacher did not always have the necessary skills.

After 3 years, it became apparent that the 6th-grade level was not high enough to meet employers' rising expectations and comparable community standards. In July 1985, a pilot program was initiated in the Northeast Region to test the establishment of the 8th grade as the new standard; a year





Adult Basic Education Program, 1981-86

	81	82	83	84	85	86	Increase 81-86
BOP							
Avg. daily population	24,933	27,730	29,718	30,723	33,263	38,402	13,469
New enrollments	2,653	3,785	6,004	6,896	8,048	9,000 est	6,347
Completions	1,441	1,983	3,774	4,909	5,221	6,161	4,720
% Incr. over prev. yr.—Completions	—	37.6	90.3	30.1	6.4	18.0	327.6
% Incr. over prev. yr.—Pop.	—	11.2	7.25	3.4	8.3	14.2	54.0

Note: A new Education Data System was established in 1987; data for FY 1987 and 1988 are not yet available.

later, that standard became nationwide. Last year, the SAT—originally designed for use with children—was replaced by the Adult Basic Level Examination (ABLE) as the qualifying test.

The consensus we have reached in the Bureau echoes that of the private sector—a literate worker is a better worker. The literacy program is almost universally supported by line staff as well as managers. We attribute this success to two major factors:

- The connection between literacy achievement and wages and promotions. The difference between a UNICOR entry-level grade of 22 cents an hour and the top grade of \$1.10 an hour is a significant motivator. And both inmates and staff immediately understood and accepted the realities of the outside job market.

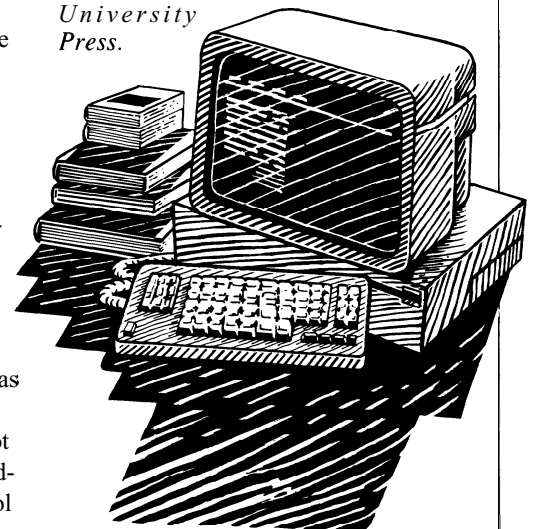
- The increased availability of computer-aided instruction. Computers are perfect for drill and practice, and allow staff to manage enlarged enrollments without losing one-on-one contact. More than 600 personal computers are now in use throughout the system.

Eight States have some form of mandatory literacy program, with standards ranging from the 4th to the 8th grade. A few others have mandatory requirements under certain conditions in particular institutions. These States' experience tends to support the Bureau's. Its positive experience with mandatory literacy has encouraged the Bureau to consider expanding the concept. A 1-year pilot program in the Southeast Region field-tested the requirement of a high school diploma or GED for promotions to top jobs; we anticipate establishing this requirement nationwide in 1989.

The mandatory GED program is taking place at the same time as the Federal prison population is exploding. Instead of competing for inmate time, education programs are increasingly viewed as necessary to meet increases in available inmate time. Job opportunities for educated ex-offenders may well increase as businesses have difficulty finding skilled entry-level workers. These factors make mandatory education more important than ever.

The bottom line, as always in education, is the classroom teacher and education manager. The literacy program in the Federal Prison System is one of their crowning achievements.

Sylvia McCollum is Director of Education of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. An expanded version of this article will appear in the Yearbook of Correctional Education, 1989, published by Oxford University Press.



The Future of Federal Corrections

An introduction by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons

J. Michael Quinlan

I want to use this inaugural issue of the *Federal Prisons Journal* to share some thoughts about how I think the Bureau of Prisons is likely to develop as our profession enters a period of astoundingly rapid change.

During the past year, scientists' dire predictions about the "greenhouse effect" and the depletion of the ozone layer, as well as such disasters as the recent Alaskan oil spill, have made all of us more conscious of ecology. As a Nation, we are beginning to realize that there are no quick fixes for environmental problems, and that decisions—good and bad—made decades ago have a lasting influence.

The ecology comparison helps us understand the criminal justice system. Only recently have we begun thinking of the entire process (and the many agencies) through which a criminal passes—from investigation through arrest, trial, sentencing, prison or diversion, probation and parole—as a system. We are not so far removed from the days when all these agencies operated in virtual isolation, with little thought for how decisions at one level would affect others further down the line.

And yet, we are now entering a period that is likely to see the greatest overall expansion of prison capacity in American history. It is not unreasonable to think that we will have almost twice as many prisoners in Federal custody by the middle of the next decade. As American citizens, we should not be proud of this—indeed, many see it as a symptom of national failure.



But the mechanisms are in place to drive prison growth through the end of the century, even if major judicial and law enforcement policies were to be reversed today—an unlikely event. As corrections professionals, however, we are now presented with a problem—and an opportunity—very much like that of the scientists working on the greenhouse effect: the greatest professional challenge we will ever know. We will need all the creativity we can muster to manage prisons in the Information Age. Let me mention a few areas:

■ *Moving away from "walls and fences" prisons.* Information Age technologies such as electronic monitoring and intensive use of satellites may make it possible for an increasingly large percentage of offenders to serve their sentences under conditions of home confinement—holding down jobs,

keeping their families intact, and keeping off the streets.

■ *Monitoring our own performance.* Public accountability in the Information Age means more than answering our mail. It means developing sophisticated feedback mechanisms to measure how well our programs work, allow for midcourse corrections, and provide a solid data base so that we can manage better and help States repeat our successes and avoid our failures.

■ *Keeping pace with the private sector.* We must take account of the private sector's technical and managerial innovations while retaining our distinctively public goals. UNICOR provides us with a unique laboratory to do just that.

■ *Reaching out to our colleagues and the public.* Institutions know the importance of Community Relations Boards and joint ventures with other public safety agencies in cementing support in their localities. But we must also use the full range of Information Age technologies—old (film, radio, public displays, newspapers) and new (video, computer networks)—for telling our story.

Inevitably, this challenging new "prison ecology" will require change within the organization to keep pace. Correctional officers joining the Bureau in 1989 will retire as senior administrators from a very different agency.

The Bureau wants to maintain a leadership role in corrections. We enjoy strong support in Congress. The Federal courts have time and again backed our policies when challenged. But this is not enough. We are moving into a wider arena.

The public's attitude toward prisons is paradoxical. On one hand, "lock 'em up" never fails to win support at election time. On the other, "not in my back yard" is the typical response when we get down to hard cases of siting and construction. Most of all, the public is unaware of the staggering costs involved—and that the costs of operating a prison don't decrease with time. It is cheaper to send a prisoner through college than to keep him locked up for a year.

Corrections agencies have generally preferred to live with this "out of sight, out of mind" attitude, and have stayed largely in a reactive mode as far as the public is concerned. We have not particularly tried to get our message across—we may not even have been aware that we had one. But we do.

Our message grows out of the Bureau's mission statement, which conveys the Bureau's goals to:

"Maintain secure, safe, and humane correctional institutions for individuals placed in the care and custody of the Attorney General.

"Develop and operate correctional programs that seek a balanced application of the concepts of punishment, deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation.

"Provide, primarily through the National Institute of Corrections, assistance to State and local correctional agencies."

Let us look at each of those elements.

**We do have
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The message is that
good correctional practice
works.**

The foundation of corrections is security—protecting the public. If we fail at this, our successes in other areas simply will not matter. No conceivable security system is 100 percent perfect, but our objective is to approach that level of perfection to the greatest possible degree.

It's frustrating to all of us that the occasional walkaway or escape—more often an escape attempt that fails—receives so much attention. But the public has the right to take security for granted; it's the first principle of the entire criminal justice system. We must be open in acknowledging the occasional security breaches, quick in fixing them, and constantly looking for ways to prevent them from occurring.

The "safe and humane" part of the statement is much less well understood. Sadly, many people still hold to the notion that a criminal belongs to some sort of separate species that deserves no consideration whatever. But prison, for the overwhelming majority of inmates, is not the end of the line. Almost all will be released back into the community.

We must help the public understand that the *prison experience itself is punishment*. It is neither Constitutional nor good correctional practice to increase that punishment by allowing inhumane

conditions to exist in prisons. The Bureau's record of leadership on this issue must continue to be strengthened in the next decades.

Overcrowding is a serious problem and will remain with us for years to come. At least some of its bad effects can be reduced through good management, however. If inmates feel safe from assault, and if sufficient opportunities for work, education, and recreation are available, then a reasonable level of overcrowding is manageable.

This brings us to the second element. The concept of "balance" is a particularly important part of the statement. Sometimes we feel that it is difficult to maintain our balance in the shifting winds of public opinion, but leaning too far toward punishment or toward rehabilitation is not professionally responsible.

It's not our job to change an inmate's ways of thinking—and we have to admit that we simply don't know how to rehabilitate people consistently. The recidivism rate is proof of that. Nevertheless, inmates do straighten themselves out in prison—and it's our job to help those who want to change.

Still, it is the rehabilitative aspect of the Bureau's work that most often meets with public incomprehension. It seems to many to be "coddling criminals." But we know that the mix of programs and opportunities we offer within our institutions actually enhances safety and security. Again, almost everyone now in Federal custody will return to the community. We can't "cure" criminal behavior, but we know that *some* programs work for *some* inmates *some* of

Growth of the Federal Prison System



the time—and that’s a better chance than many of them had on the street. Our goal must be to increase our percentages of success.

The third element of our mission statement reflects our position as a public agency and one of the recognized leaders in corrections. Government information—including the collected professional experience of thousands of Bureau employees—is not proprietary; it is meant to be shared. The National Institute of Corrections is our formal mechanism to provide specific types of assistance to States and localities. But there are many other situations, both

formal and informal, in which we can help (and learn from) our colleagues in other agencies. Indeed, we have recently begun talks with the Correctional Service of Canada on areas of mutual interest.

So we do have a message to get across. The message is that *good correctional practice works*. It keeps citizens safe, it keeps inmates secure, it allows some inmates to make the choice not to return to prison, and it allows the Bureau to manage an ever-expanding population.

This overall growth in the system means, of course, that the size of our staff will expand as well. We have always thought of the Bureau as a family, and just as

with many American families, our “family” is subject to outside pressures—demographic shifts, competition from the private sector, a tightened Federal wage structure, and so on. What will this mean for the Bureau as a place to work, a place in which to grow?

Organizing a Human Resources Division Bureauwide in the past year was one part of our strategy to cope with the reality that our “family” is changing. We are now an *extended* family, and the work we do requires an increasing level of sophistication and more specialization. In that respect we are like the private

sector. Computer literacy, for instance, will be an increasingly necessary skill for all BOP staff. Managers who are used to making decisions “by feel” will find that they must make use of research findings and powerful information-gathering systems in their daily work. Evaluation must become a part of every Bureau activity, not just because it improves our efficiency, but because it ensures a wiser use of public resources. (Our Program Review Division was also established this past year to implement this philosophy Bureauwide.)

Hand in hand with these changes in employees’ skill profiles, styles of management must change. Only one person is a real expert when it comes to a particular job—the person who does it. Managers will increasingly involve employees in decisions that affect them. This does not mean running institutions “by consensus,” but it does mean allowing everyone’s voice to be heard. American business is discovering that a participatory style of management is good for the bottom line—the public sector will see that it increases staff interest and involvement in their work.

The private sector is also discovering that helping its employees maintain their personal health and well-being—through exercise, better diet, assistance in dealing with alcohol, drug, and nicotine addictions, and similar programs—has greatly cut down on the number of sick days and increased overall job satisfaction. The Bureau is moving as fast as possible to expand this concept of “wellness” throughout our institutions, and to make it a permanent part of our thinking.

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Corrections is a people-intensive profession. Programs are only as good as the people who administer them. We can be proud of the increasing professionalization of our workforce, without thinking that we’ve come nearly as far as we have to go. In theory, if you find the best people and reward them well, you should have no staffing problems. Ours are obvious, and not just in specialized areas such as nursing, where a nationwide shortage of trained personnel has placed the Bureau in competition with leading hospitals and medical centers. The unfortunate situation is that we have good people, but can’t always pay them what they’re worth. We can hope that the long-standing pay inequities in our field will be redressed, but this is out of our control.

What we can do, in line with the concepts of participation and wellness outlined above, is to create an environment in which it is personally satisfying to work—to reinforce already existing skills and cross-train for new ones, to nurture future leaders and give them as much responsibility as possible, to keep communications open up and down the lines of authority. When the exercise of creativity becomes an accepted part of

the job, we will be well on our way to coping with the new world of corrections we are entering.

I said earlier that the huge expansion of the prison system we are about to enter reflects a national failure in the eyes of many observers. We have not come to grips with the causes of crime; indeed, we are not even close to agreement about what they are. But we know the symptoms all too well. A recent estimate (by criminologist Simon Dinitz) suggests that to lock up every felony offender for 5 years would mean increasing the American prison population by 300 to 500 percent, with construction costs of \$130 billion and operating costs rising accordingly. Clearly, this will not happen, but the shift toward more stringent sentencing and the public’s “get tough” attitude have produced changes that couldn’t have been foreseen as recently as a decade ago.

The “ecology” of criminal justice in this Nation is in a state of upheaval. The future presents both dangers and opportunities. We must manage this growth, or it will manage us. The *Federal Prisons Journal* is an important part of our integrated approach, and I urge you to read it, write for it, and support it.

As the debate on American crime and justice continues, we in the Bureau of Prisons have a special part. We must all be advocates for good correctional practice. We’re the experts on that. ■

J. Michael Quinlan became the fifth Director in the 59-year history of the Federal Bureau of Prisons in July 1987

Ensuring a Safe, Humane Institution

Through the basics of corrections

*James D. Henderson and
Richard Phillips*

This is a challenging time in the field of corrections—and an appropriate time to consider a few thoughts about contemporary, yet classic, correctional management. The need to focus on safe, humane management has never been greater. Federal and State systems constantly stress “the basics” in training, and continue to be managed in a highly professional manner. But correctional staff now face unprecedented numbers of commitments throughout the country. Thus, it’s worth stepping back for a moment to think about just why the basics are so important.

Today there are a multitude of ideas about how to manage prisons better. People “search for excellence,” try their hand at “managing by objectives,” or even become “1-minute managers.” “Theory X” and “Theory Y” may explain how some people act when they manage. “Quality circles” might set up a means for letting staff be more involved in important decisions. Any one of a half dozen other theories could very easily be a basis for successful institutional operations. As a common denominator, though, each seems to involve some type of comprehensive strategic management system, based on principles that are clearly understood and subscribed to by all staff. Within such a management structure, sound institutional operations rely on diligent application of the fundamentals of security technology and common sense, blended with a reasonable response to the human condition.

The fact is that good management in a correctional environment is made up of a relatively few fundamentals: the personal visibility of top staff, attention to high



Thomas Hoffman

levels of housekeeping and sanitation, inmate accountability, key control, tool control, good staff training, and having a sound policy basis for decisions.

You can be sure that there will be a session on “overcrowding” in every major correctional gathering held in the foreseeable future. Obviously, this is a major problem in corrections, yet it is essentially beyond our control—determined by the policies and practices of agencies and individuals outside our own organizations. There are things correctional staff *do* have control of, though—basic correctional practices, and visibility and accessibility of management and supervisory personnel. Having control of those factors will not only make prison jobs easier, but ensure that offenders in custody serve their sentences under safe, humane conditions.

Creating a safe institutional environment should be of paramount importance to every correctional worker. As everyone knows, though, just about anything that can go wrong, will. What is needed is a management style that gives an advantage—an “edge”—on the critical areas that create the most problems.

“Management by wandering around”

The first thing managers can do to gain a critical advantage, and improve the way an institution runs, is to increase the visibility—the physical presence in every area of the facility—of mid- and upper-level staff. While workloads are admittedly high for top administrators, it is imperative that the warden, his executive staff, and department heads regularly tour the institution and make themselves available to staff and inmates.

The first thing managers can do to gain a critical advantage is to increase the visibility— the physical presence in every area of the facility—of mid- and upper-level staff.

A concrete example helps illustrate this point. During a recent visit by one of the authors to a State institution, the warden approached the segregation unit, but stayed in the corridor. It was 9:30 p.m.; individual logs on the doors in the unit indicated that the inmates had been fed all three meals for the day, had been recreated and taken showers, and had been checked by medical personnel. Afterward, the warden was asked if he ever visited the unit. His response was that he never did, because “verbal abuse always leads to physical abuse.” Whether or not that was the real reason, one fact was clear—he didn’t know what was going on inside one of the most critical areas of the institution.

Administrators need to use their tours of the facility to personally communicate their standards of sanitation, conduct, performance, and professionalism. When they tour, they must actively seek out information, not just passively walk around. If they don’t ask questions—probing questions—and give clear instructions leading to concrete actions, then the acceptable performance level moves toward whatever level is in force at the time. Ignoring conditions you don’t like, or that violate policy, in effect

condones them. If the top staff don’t say anything, you can bet that no one else will. It is critical that the warden set a positive example in this respect, and insist that other management staff do likewise. This extends in particular to special housing areas such as death row, protective custody, and detention or segregation units, where serious problems can quickly develop from relatively small issues.

This personal visibility builds staff confidence in their leaders. Instead of visualizing front-office paper-pushers, line staff can relate to managers they see and talk to regularly, and who listen to their concerns and problems. There are institutions in which neither staff nor inmates know the warden. In other locations, unit logs in segregation indicate that the warden visits there for very brief periods, seldom, or not at all. That’s simply not enough attention to such a critical area of the institution. In one case involving a serious escape, supervisory personnel had failed to visit death row for weeks at a time.

Personal credibility is almost priceless in the people-intensive business of corrections. There is no better way to build it than through face-to-face contacts between line and administrative staff. Moreover, better decisions are made when administrators know their staff and institution on a personal basis. This is true in ordinary circumstances, and really pays extra dividends in times of crisis. Whether it’s an employee job action, a hostage situation, an uprising, or some other crisis, administrators who have this extra dimension of knowledge about their institution will inevitably fare better than those who rely on second- or third-hand information. Maybe it’s not the hard

facts as much as the feel of the institution, the more intimate knowledge of the staff and their capabilities, or even personal knowledge of the inmates involved. Those hard-to-quantify benefits of hands-on administration pay off when the tough decisions have to be made.

Many people promote the benefits of so-called “inmate councils” to get this kind of communication and credibility going in their institution. Inmate councils, however, tend to be composed of the privileged few—the inmates who try to style themselves as power brokers in the institution. This situation is ripe for disaster. If, on the other hand, administrators are out and about, and making themselves available to inmates for individual contacts, they will be getting everybody’s view, not just the predictable group of gang leaders and jailhouse lawyers who have intimidated and pressured their way into the inmate council. If staff at every level are accessible, the entire population is the inmate council.

Another reason for high-visibility management is to fulfill top administrators’ direct supervisory responsibilities. Without constant attention, it is only a matter of time until administrators lose contact with the realities of day-to-day operations, and are unable to see first-hand how their subordinate supervisors are performing. The larger and more complex the institution, the more important this element becomes.

A few years ago, this management style was immortalized in the Hewlett Packard company as “Management By Wandering Around.” That’s as good a name as any, but it didn’t start in the semiconductor industry. It’s been going on for years

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in well-managed correctional facilities, practiced by incorrigible old captains and other wise department heads who made warden, then couldn’t keep their noses out of the day-to-day running of the institution.

The accompanying principle is that if the warden isn’t out and around, other supervisors won’t be either. The warden should set the example, then insist that the proactive management strategy extends to the associate wardens, and on through to the shift supervisors and other department heads. Every manager should be acutely aware of the need to get out into the institution, particularly the locked units, to ensure that standards are being met. Only by personally conveying and communicating the expectations of the administration, and regularly following up with those who actually carry them out, will managers avoid slippage in critical areas.

In high-security settings particularly, the presence of top staff moving confidently throughout the facility conveys a message—that working conditions are safe. This is not a small matter in some prison systems, where the personal safety of line staff is a pervasive concern, and in some cases they literally work under the

gun all day. When the warden shows that he or she is not afraid to go into the housing units, onto the yard, or into other sections of the facility, the message is that it is safe for line staff as well. The morale implications of conveying any other message are serious, to say the least.

As a final pragmatic note on visibility, when superiors are confident that a manager knows the institution, the result is a gain in credibility that should make the manager’s job easier in many ways. Persuading agency heads and legislatures to support policy and procedure changes may be one positive result. Another might be less effort in gaining and maintaining the staff and fiscal resources needed to run the institution even better.

This element has been discussed at length not only because it is important in its own right, but because virtually every other correctional management tenet rises or falls on the personal visibility of top management in an institution. Visibility is the vehicle for ensuring that everything else takes place.

Sanitation

The second basic issue is sanitation. Too often, staff overlook the obvious—if inmates (and employees too) have to live and work in a place that is dirty, poorly maintained, and smells like a barn, sooner or later they will start acting accordingly. A strong emphasis on basic housekeeping and sanitation is a clear indicator of a well-managed institution. High standards of housekeeping should be communicated clearly to staff and inmates. Carefully crafted, conservative personal property limitations are essential. When deviations begin to occur,

personnel assigned to the problem area need to act immediately to prevent further deterioration.

This factor has direct implications for inmate behavior and morale. There is no record anywhere of an inmate complaining that the kitchen, dining room, or visiting rooms were too clean. When staff maintain high standards of cleanliness in these and other areas of the institution, they convey a message that they care in a positive way about how the inmates in their charge live.

The kitchen and food service sections obviously require the highest standards of cleanliness. Cluttered shop areas telegraph conditions ripe for accidents. Even in high-security units, inmates should be required to participate in sanitation efforts; where any other tradition exists, changing it should be a high priority. Structured inmate involvement in sanitation activities will relieve staff of this responsibility, provide more wholesome working conditions for employees, and result in better living conditions for the inmates—and higher morale all around.

When activating new institutions or housing units, establishing high standards of housekeeping should be an immediate requirement. Personnel assigned there need to set them immediately to prevent the deterioration that will soon set in if inmates are allowed to set their own standards—ones that will certainly be lower.

Along those lines, it's important to always have some active construction project in the institution, showing the population that there is some interest on the part of the administration in their

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welfare. This could be constructing a new ball court, refinishing the gym floor, refurbishing the dining hall, or any number of other things. Within the limits your budget allows, you need to have at least one *highly visible inmate-related project* going all the time.

Policies and procedures

A well-developed body of policy is critical for the efficient operation of any institution. The official agency policies on discipline, visiting, correspondence, use of firearms, use of force, hostage situations, and many others all need to be brought together, organized, and published. Field staff should certainly have significant input into the formulation of these policies. Once these policies are in place, there should be a comprehensive system of local and central audits. Above all, staff need to follow these policies. It may be better not to have a policy than to have it and ignore violations.

Inmate accountability

Accountability for inmates is high on the list of basics, yet it is a complex subject that hinges on a great many other factors. The mission of corrections is to confine

properly committed offenders for the courts; if prisons don't keep inmates inside the perimeter, they very simply have failed. That is a basic level of external accountability—ensuring that the right number of inmates are counted every midnight.

There is a second level of accountability, though—internal accountability. It includes a sufficient number of counts at meaningful intervals. But it also entails census checks that monitor the whereabouts of inmates between counts, pass systems to track the movement of inmates on the compound, methods of confidentially posting pictures and identification information on particularly dangerous or escape-prone inmates, as well as other local systems for keeping track of inmates. These, coupled with an alert, well-trained staff, are the minimum components of any effective inmate accountability system.

Any number of facilities have exceptionally secure perimeters, but little in the way of internal inmate controls. If inmates have enough latitude inside the perimeter, eventually they will find some method to defeat even the best wall or fence. This is especially true if other internal control systems are also vulnerable to inmate exploitation.

Contrary to some opinions, inmates prefer to be controlled if procedures are consistent. Internal controls such as pass systems and callouts, bolstered with programs and jobs that structure major portions of the inmate day, all serve to strengthen internal accountability.

Key control

Absolute and comprehensive key control is another cornerstone of successful institutional management. Every key and key ring in the institution must be accountable to a person or location at all times. Every lock and key must be a part of a rigorous inventory, accountability, and testing program that ensures that keys are where they are supposed to be, in the proper hands, and that they work as intended without fail. Effective methods must be in place for controlling and issuing emergency keys and certain restricted keys. Special issue, logging, and color-coding procedures should be used, and training should be constantly emphasized.

Good key handling practices on the part of staff are essential; if inmates obtain keys or impressions of them, serious security problems are sure to arise.

Tool control

Tool control is yet another area where staff cannot afford to let down even for a minute. Every tool in the facility must be issued to a specific department, and thereafter controlled by strict inventories using shadowboards and other functional control and storage methods. Division of tools into categories for high- and low-risk items, and strict enforcement of inmate access restrictions, are necessities. In particular, this involves control of knives, files, saw blades, grinders, and torch cutting tips, but needles, syringes, caustics, and poisonous and hazardous materials also need high-priority attention.

The agency bears the responsibility for setting down the requirements of such a

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program. Once that is done, a concerted effort must be made by local staff to adapt the agency policy and specify how it will be carried out—through local policy supplements as well as a set of comprehensive post orders and emergency plans tailored to each locality. Supervisory efforts in the policy enforcement area are paramount, and, as already mentioned, personal visibility is the best way to achieve them.

Training

Lastly, staff training is the glue that holds everything in an institution together. It's great to have a well-developed body of policy in the agency's central office, or in the warden's office in the institution. But if staff are not familiar with that policy, and don't have local mechanisms for carrying it out, it is virtually worthless.

Introductory sessions for policies need to start in the training academy; needless to say, training academy staff should be

respected professionals who are well versed in the policy basis for what they teach. There should also be local training in the specific application of policies in the institution. Refresher training is needed at least annually to keep everyone up to date. All of these systems should complement each other—the central office policy development process, staff training academy activities, and local training and refresher courses. The trained staff member who is familiar with policy and how it is carried out in his or her institution is the real asset in corrections. Training systems have to prepare employees for the basics, or nothing else done, said, or thought about will matter.

Making a difference

It's hard to overstate the importance of personal involvement and visibility, the need to maintain high standards of maintenance and sanitation, and the other accountability and control systems mentioned here. Sometimes staff lose sight of the fact that one person can make a difference. As an individual, each administrator and correctional worker can create the climate necessary to set high standards and expectations that will make his or her institution or agency function at its best. ■

James D. Henderson retired in 1981 from the Federal Bureau of Prisons as Regional Director, North Central Region. He is now a private correctional consultant. Richard Phillips is Director of Communications of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Suicide Prevention

Is it working in the Federal Prison System?

Dennis Schimmel, Ph.D.; Jerry Sullivan, Ph.D.; and Dave Mrad, Ph.D.

Introduction

Those of you who worked for the Bureau of Prisons before 1982 may recall that suicide watches were handled very differently. Typically, the potentially suicidal inmate was counseled, put in a single cell in detention with limited property and clothes, and checked every 15 minutes. The Bureau had no formal policy or procedures for the management of suicidal inmates; institutions may have varied considerably in their treatment of inmates in crises and the training provided to staff.

In mid-1982, the Bureau of Prisons issued a new policy in the form of Program Statement 6341.1, which outlined a comprehensive suicide prevention effort involving increased staff training and attempts to better identify suicidal inmates. It also required continuous observation of suicidal inmates, allowed trained inmate "companions" to assist in suicide watches, and called for a formal review, or "psychological autopsy," of each suicide. There has been only one minor revision to the policy since its inception.

A psychology work group was established last year to review the Bureau's suicide prevention program. The work group reviewed all psychological autopsies from the past 5 years and conducted a phone survey of all Chief Psychologists. This article summarizes the work group's efforts.

Autopsy analysis

Suicide rates

The "bottom line" issue is what happened to the rate of suicides during the first 5 years. The various studies of Bureau suicides use slightly different criteria for

developing the suicide rate; this discussion should be considered suggestive rather than conclusive.

A summary submitted to the Bureau of Prisons' Executive Staff by Gaes, Beck, and Lebowitz (1981), suggested an annual rate of 24 per 100,000 in the 6 years prior to the implementation of the 1982 Program Statement. A study by Anne Schmidt (1978) reported a rate of 28 per 100,000 for sentenced Federal prisoners between 1970 and 1977.

There were 43 suicides in the Bureau during 1983-1987, which translates into an annual rate of about 24 per 100,000.

This is not very encouraging at first glance, but some significant factors need to be considered. First, Gaes used a different formula in computing his rate. In our review, we looked at the number of suicides relative to the average daily count. Gaes added an additional

40 percent to the average daily count to account for every person in the system during a given year. If he had not added this 40 percent, the annual rate of suicide from 1977 to 1981 would have been 34 per 100,000. Conversely, had we added 40 percent to our average daily count, our rate would have been approximately 17 per 100,000.

Second, Schmidt did not include eight suicides of unsentenced prisoners and a suicide by an inmate on furlough in her analysis. These additional suicides would have elevated the rate to over 35 per 100,000.

Finally, a major influence on our suicide rate since 1983 has been the influx of Cubans. Of the 43 suicides, 10 have been Marie Cubans—8 detainees at Atlanta, and 2 incarcerated at other institutions. Excluding the 8 detainees, the annual suicide rate since 1983 would be 21 per 100,000. The annual rate among Cuban detainees has been approximately 75 per 100,000.

Thus, comparing "apples with apples," there appears to have been a clear decrease in the suicide rate, especially among regular Federal inmates, since the implementation of the suicide prevention program in 1982.

Table 1. Comparative suicide rates

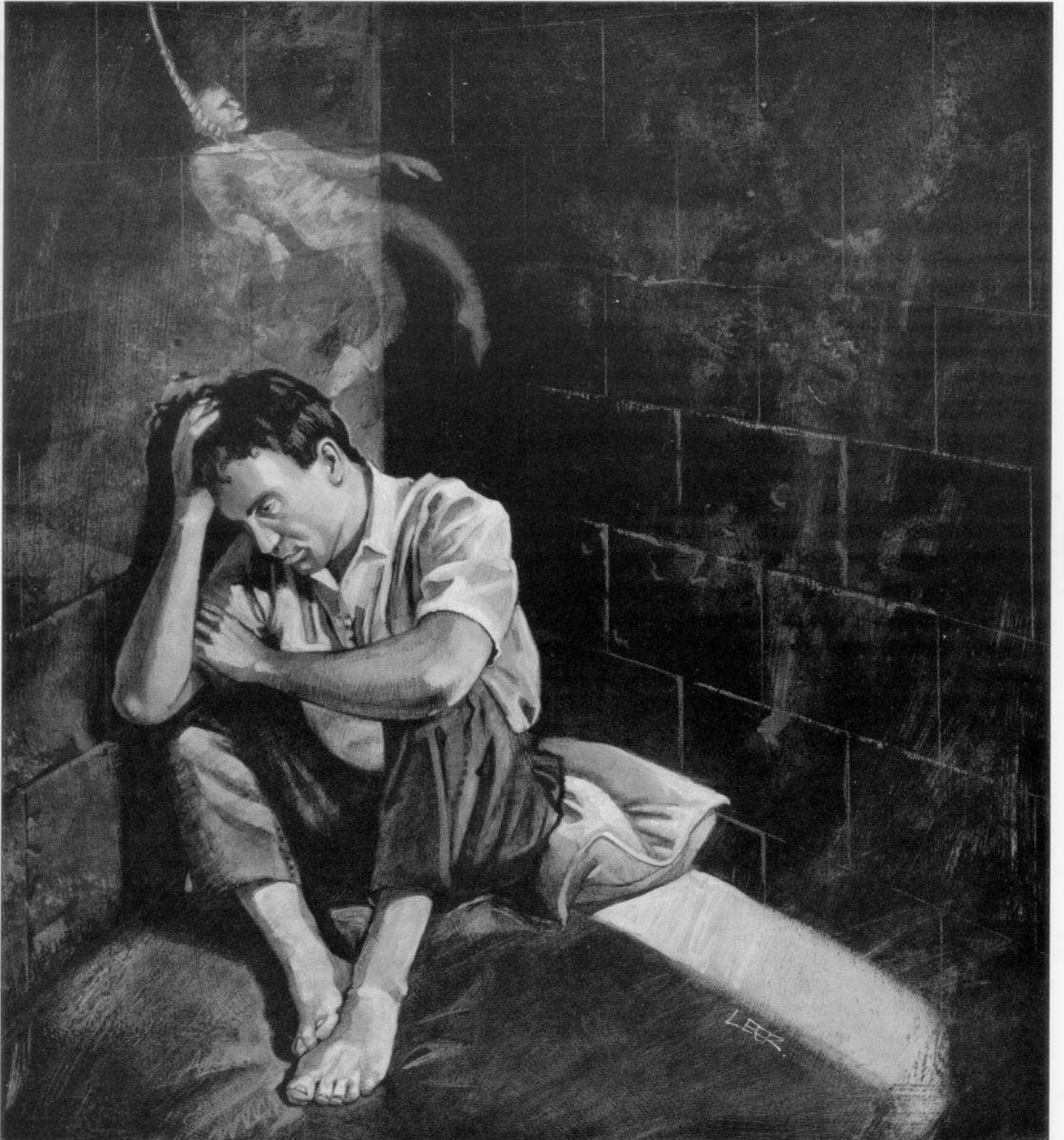
Annual suicide rate	Cited rate	"Apples with apples"
Schmidt, 1970-77	28/1,000,000	35/1,000,000
Gaes, 1977-81	24/1,000,000	34/1,000,000
Current Study, 1983-87	24/1,000,000	24/1,000,000*

*Without 8 Atlanta detainee suicides—21/100,000

Gender

All 43 suicides involved males. The suicide rate for male inmates was about 26 per 100,000. The annual suicide rate for males in the community, often considered an underestimate, is about 18 per 100,000.

There have apparently been only a few female suicides in the Bureau's history, and none that were recorded since the mid-1970's. The estimated rate for females in the community is about 7 per 100,000, though their rate of attempts or suicidal gestures is actually higher than that of males.



Illustrations by Rebecca Leer

Method

The most frequent method of suicide was hanging. Thirty-four of the 43 suicides (79 percent) have been by hanging, including all 8 Atlanta detainees. Five (12 percent) have been by self-inflicted cuts. Two have involved an overdose of medication, one individual jumped from a second-floor tier, and one shot himself while on an unescorted furlough.

Place

The most common setting for suicide continues to be a segregation or seclusion cell. Twenty-four suicides occurred in segregation (56 percent). Another three (7 percent) occurred in a mental health seclusion unit. Only 29 percent of the suicides occurred in regular housing. One suicide occurred on a medical unit, one in an admissions and orientation unit, and one while on a furlough. It should be noted that no suicides occurred while an individual was on an actual suicide watch.

Time of day

Twenty-one of 43 suicides (48 percent) occurred during a 5-hour period between midnight and 5 a.m. The other suicides were evenly distributed throughout the day, with one exception—a cluster of five suicides that occurred shortly after 4 p.m. It has been hypothesized that these suicides may have been manipulative, in that there was a higher possibility of discovery by staff at that time. In any case, the greater risk occurs in the early morning hours and shortly after the 4 p.m. count.

Psychiatric/suicidal history

In 13 (30 percent) of the 43 cases, a primary previous diagnosis of schizophrenia was mentioned. There was one case of bipolar disorder (commonly known as “manic-depressive illness”). In

two additional cases, there were prominent diagnoses of both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Thus, in 16 of the 43 cases (36 percent), there was a history of a psychotic condition. In an additional four cases (9 percent) there was a history of treatment for nonpsychotic depression. The rate of mental health problems is clearly disproportionately high among those who actually do commit suicide.

In 19 of 43 suicides there was a history of at least one previous attempt. In an additional two cases, the individual had been previously placed on a suicide watch but had no history of actual attempts. These 21 cases account for approximately 49 percent of the individuals who actually commit suicide.

Time of year

Thirty-three percent of suicides occurred in May or June (eight in May and six in June). The suicides were evenly distributed across the other months, with the exception of a slight increase in January and February (four suicides in January and five in February).

Race/ethnicity

Sixteen of the suicides were by whites, 15 by Hispanics, and 12 by blacks. The Hispanics accounted for 35 percent of the suicides, while their approximate average in our population over the past 5 years has been about 24 percent. Of course, the percentage of Hispanics in our population has grown steadily.

Sentence length

A review of the length of sentence of the suicidal inmates appears to reveal three high-risk groups. First, 8 of the 43 suicides (19 percent) occurred in the presentence population, though they represented only about 8 percent of the total population. Twelve (28 percent)

Table 2. Sentence length/status (in %)

	Length in years							CU
	PT	0-2	2-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20	
Total BOP	8	8	22	24	12	7	13	6
Suicides	19	5	16	7	2	5	28	19

(PT=Pretrial; CU=Cuban)

were in cases involving a greater than 20-year sentence, though they represent 13 percent of the population. Although the Cuban detainees represented only 6 percent of our population, they accounted for 8 suicides (19 percent). In none of the other sentence length categories did the rate appear to be disproportionately high.

It was interesting to review the factors listed as precipitating suicide in each of the cluster groups. In the presentence cluster, legal and family problems appeared preeminent. In the 20-to-Life cluster, the inmates usually were having problems within the institution. They had often been perceived to be “snitches” or in need of protection. In some cases, they appeared quite threatened, and may even have begun to develop paranoid tendencies toward the other inmates. These individuals would typically not commit suicide shortly after sentencing, but rather after 4 to 5 years of incarceration. An outside crisis (e.g., a death of a close family member) might also trigger

the suicide. In the detainee group, there was very seldom any evident precipitant. Most of the autopsies simply address the individual's history of impulsiveness and, in many cases, psychiatric disturbance.

Age

While most of the factors listed above confirm previous thinking relative to suicide risk, the age factor was surprising. In the current program statement, the 19- to 24-year-old inmate is cited to be at significant risk. However, the data from the last 5 years reveal only five suicides in this age group (12 percent of all suicides), which is consistent with their 11-percent representation in our population. The highest number of suicides (39 percent) occurred in the 30- to 39-year-old group, which represents 40 percent of our population. Overall, the distribution of suicides by age did not suggest that one group was at significantly higher risk than another.

Table 3. Age groups (in %)

	Age					
	<26	26-29	30-39	40-50	50-59	60+
Total BOP	11	14	40	22	9	3
Suicides	12	19	39	21	9	0

The data on age, in relation to the other variables already mentioned, were discussed at some length by the work group. One hypothesis for the lower than expected rate of suicides in our younger group was that the current program may have a differential effect. Perhaps our

efforts better identify and intervene with the younger, immature inmate.

Survey of chief psychologists—Overview

The work group sent a questionnaire to all chief psychologists and followed it with a direct phone contact. It should be emphasized that, in general, the survey revealed a very high degree of satisfaction with the current suicide prevention program. The consensus was that, while the program needs some "fine tuning," we should not significantly modify it. Among the survey's findings:

Program Coordinator

In all but eight institutions, the designated Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator is the chief psychologist. In five of those institutions, a psychiatrist is designated as coordinator. In the three remaining institutions there is currently no psychology staff; the Health Systems

Administrator is the designated coordinator. In all settings, except where there is no psychology staff, Psychology Services does almost all (if not all) of the staff and inmate companion training.

Training

All institutions contacted reported that suicide prevention training was conducted during both institution familiarization and annual training. The universal recognition of the importance of this training was clear. In a number of institutions, additional training was provided during the year either to correctional counselors, physician's assistants, or selected custodial staff (e.g., detention officers).

Inmate companions

Probably the single most interesting survey response involved the use of inmate companions, in 32 of the 46 institutions surveyed. Inmate companions were hailed by most people who use them as providing a valuable service. The chief psychologist often commented on the quality of the job they did and often suggested that the rewards for the companions should somehow be increased. A few chiefs cited a number of advantages in the use of companions, but still discussed liability and ethical issues that raised doubts in their minds. Most people who use companions wanted to see this program component retained.

Those who did not use companions often cited philosophical or ethical problems with the program, liability concerns, or security and logistical problems at their particular institution. It was clear that there were strong opinions on both sides; no other issue so clearly appears to generate a strong opinion one way or the other.

Other survey issues

The survey suggests that the vast majority of suicide watches are done in the institution hospital. In only a few institutions did logistical problems prevent a hospital watch.

Most watches do not lead to psychiatric transfer. A majority of watches are short-term and handled in-house. When a psychiatric transfer was required, none of the chief psychologists reported significant difficulties in getting an inmate transferred to a medical facility.

Restraints appear to be used in only a small percentage of Bureau suicide watches. In most institutions, the use of physical restraints while an inmate was on watch was described as “a rare occurrence.”

Conclusion

The Bureau’s suicide prevention efforts over the past 5 years are widely viewed as successful. While the differing criteria used in studying the suicide rate mean that no cause-and-effect relationship can be shown, the overall rate of suicide appears to have declined, and staff are better trained and more sensitive to issues involved in prevention. The information contained in this article should provide some encouragement that our efforts have been worthwhile. ■

Dr. Dennis Schimmel is Chief Psychologist at the Federal Correctional Institution, Oxford, Wisconsin. Dr. Jerry Sullivan is Chief Psychologist at the Federal Correctional Institution, El Reno, Oklahoma. Dr. Dave Mrad is a staff psychologist at the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, Springfield, Missouri.

Inmate companions—Pro and con

The use of inmate companions was one of the more innovative aspects of the 1982 Program Statement on Suicide Prevention. Though the concept was not initially embraced by many institutions and staff, today the majority of institutions have companions and the feedback from Program Coordinators is generally quite positive. Here are a few of the thoughts expressed during the survey of chief psychologists:



Pro

“At first I had a number of reservations about companions, but now I’m sold on them.”

“They do a great job. In some ways they are more effective than staff.”

“No problem. They are motivated and do a good job.”

“One way to improve the suicide prevention program is to give inmate companions more reward and recognition. They deserve it.”

“There is now a track record of their success.”



Con

“Staff are to provide for the care and custody of inmates.”

“There is no way to logistically isolate an inmate and a companion at our institution.”

“We have them at our institution, but the liability issue still somewhat bothers me.”

“I would not sleep as well at night if we had companions.”

“All it will take is one bad incident with a companion.”

From "College Town" to "Prison Town"

A wrenching conversion for a small community

Doug Green

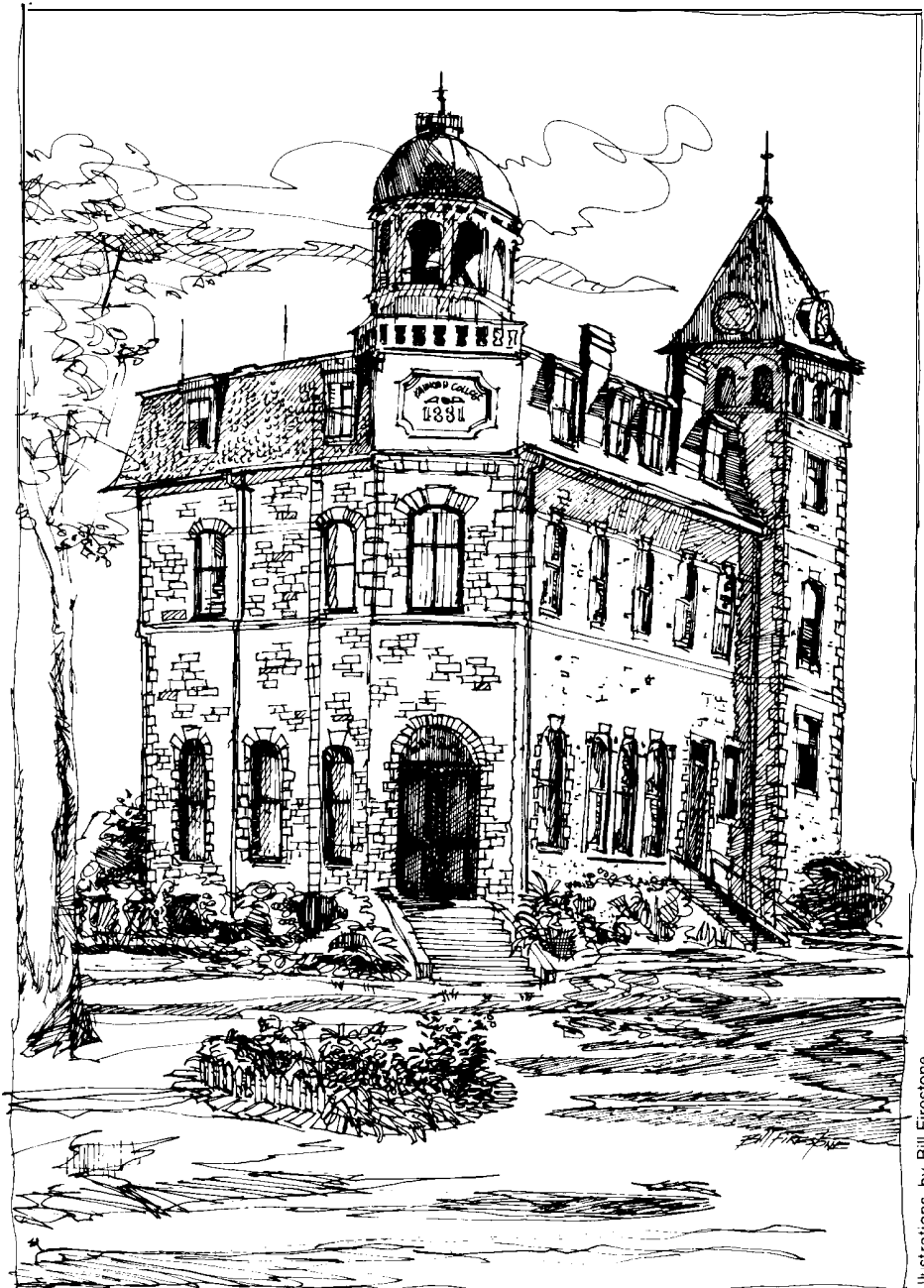
The Federal Prison Camp in Yankton, South Dakota, one of the Bureau of Prisons' newest institutions, is also paradoxically one of the oldest sites. Most Bureau conversions of facilities to prison space have taken place on military bases—Yankton is a former college campus, on a national historic site at that, and is located in the heart of the community, not at its fringe as are most institutions.

This was a unique conversion effort for the Bureau, and a wrenching one for the community. This article chronicles the debate that led to the establishment of FPC Yankton. As more new prisons are built and other facilities are converted this debate will occur again and again, not just in the Bureau of Prisons but in all correctional systems.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition stopped by Yankton (then a Sioux winter campground known as E-hank-to-wan) in 1804, on its way to points further west. The territory was opened for settlement just before the Civil War, and Yankton became capital of the Dakota Territory until 1883.

The first college in the territory, Yankton College, was chartered in 1881, and provided a liberal arts education for thousands of students for slightly more than a century. But in December 1984, long-standing debts and large projected deficits forced the college to close its doors.

The effect on the South Dakota community of about 12,000 was immediate and severe. More than 200 students and 100 faculty and staff would have their educations and their careers disrupted, and the town would lose a \$1.4-million



The "Old Middle" Music Conservatory at Yankton College.

Illustrations by Bill Firestone

annual payroll—a heavy blow to any community of Yankton’s size.

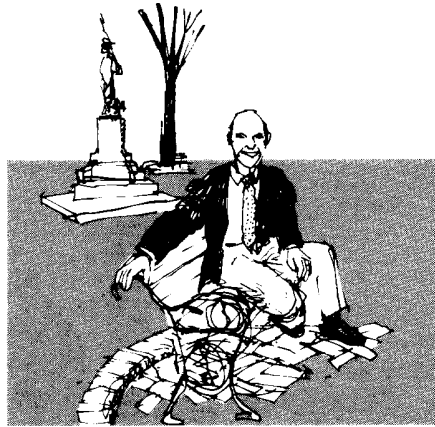
Beyond the economic losses, however, were the intangibles of pride and community image. To many citizens (and alumni), reactions “ranged from shock and sadness to bitterness,” according to the *Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan*. The great-grandson of founder Joseph Ward wrote, “Most of us experienced frustration and even anger at not being able to make one last heroic effort to save our college.”

Efforts were made, however. Two months after the last graduation ceremony in 1985, the college’s Board of Trustees entered into an agreement with a private corporation, Education Systems Development Corp., formed specifically to recapitalize the college. The trustees were optimistic that the college could reopen in 1986, but the hoped-for funds never materialized. The Chamber of Commerce also attempted to interest corporations in using the grounds as a retreat center, with no success.

As the college’s financial condition had deteriorated over the previous 10 years, so had its physical plant (16 buildings on 33 acres). The Conservatory of Music, known as “Old Middle,” built in 1881 and listed as a National Historic Landmark since 1975 (the entire Yankton College Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places), was in serious need of repairs. From one of the town’s greatest assets, the college was turning into a liability.

Enter the Bureau of Prisons

In mid-1987, the office of South Dakota Senator Larry Pressler contacted a number of Federal agencies to see if any



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of them had a use for the Yankton College facility. The Bureau of Prisons was immediately interested.

Chief of Facilities Development and Operations Bill Patrick first visited Yankton in September 1987. At a joint meeting of the Yankton County and Yankton City commissions, Patrick noted that a prison camp on the college campus would be classified as a Security Level 1 institution (the lowest of six levels). He suggested that community leaders talk to citizens—especially citizens who lived near the campus—to solicit their reactions about having a prison so close by.

This initial discussion raised several issues that would be hot topics in the following months. Patrick said that the camp would house 300 to 500 male inmates, serving average sentences of 18 months, and typically having committed such crimes as tax evasion, fraud, and money laundering—and drug trafficking

(about 50 percent). The prison workforce, Patrick said, would include 100 to 120 people, with 50 to 60 percent hired locally, and an average salary of \$22,000. The conversion would take 6 to 8 months.

City Commissioner Leon Abler asked how many walkaways could be expected. Patrick replied, “Generally, two to four per year with a facility in this range.” Commissioner Dave O’Brien then asked if the security level could ever be reclassified upward. It would be impossible to do that in Yankton, according to Patrick, because of the unique nature of the campus. Acting YC President Don Peterson added that he would only allow a Level 1 facility on the campus.

“As long as I’m acting president up there, that would be part of the contract,” he said. “It would not go to Level 2 as long as I’m alive.” Patrick said that the Bureau of Prisons could probably promise that the security level would not change.

Peterson noted that while at first he wasn’t interested in having a prison camp in Yankton, “I personally have changed my mind and have no fear of what Bill Patrick is optioning to us.” The prison would probably be the best chance of repaying the college’s debtors “100 cents on the dollar.”

The *Daily Press and Dakotan* wrote, “The news that the federal government is looking at the Yankton College campus as a possible location for a minimum security prison may leave some residents with a feeling of discomfort, perhaps even disbelief.” The citizens of Yankton would soon find themselves debating some highly technical aspects of corrections.

The debate begins

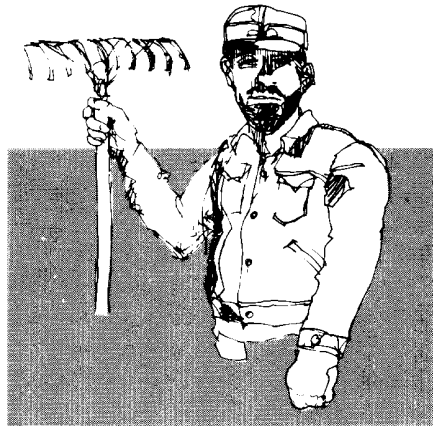
A hundred and fifty residents who lived near the college attended a town meeting shortly after the Commission meeting. They were shown a film on the Federal Prison Camp, Big Spring, Texas, that depicted the positive effects of that institution on the community. But, as some immediately noted, the camp is located on an abandoned air base, nowhere near the middle of a residential area.

Some of the residents' concerns expressed at this meeting would structure the debate in the coming weeks:

- What type of crimes were the inmates likely to have committed?
- Was there any danger from walk-aways?
- Would the college need to be fenced?
- Could the Government decide to upgrade to a Level 2 facility or higher?
- Would the value of their homes decrease with a prison so close?

The community would not have the chance to vote on the issue, which displeased many. The City and County Commissions would decide, once the Bureau presented a formal plan. One attendee said, "I think we're going to get something rammed down our throats that we probably don't like."

A newspaper poll a week after Bill Patrick's presentation found that, of 25 area residents polled, 9 were in favor, 9 against, and 7 undecided. Resident Jim Abbott said, "I view it as a choice between something and nothing. My first choice would be a college. That is unobtainable. My second choice is any



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kind of possible solution that avoids ruin and decay of the property." Another neighbor noted that in recent months the empty campus had been plagued by vandalism.

One of the "undecideds," John Willcockson, when asked if he was concerned about his property values, replied, "I guess I have a little bit of concern. But I also think property values won't be too super if there is nothing over there."

The proposed conversion picked up an early booster in the *Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan*. The newspaper, soon after the debate began, ran a number of editorials in support of "an option that has more benefits than drawbacks." The paper noted, for instance, that "though some of the inmates would be serving time for drug abuse, the strict testing system used at level 1 facilities virtually eliminates any use at these sites. If evidence shows up in regular urine tests, the inmate is automatically and quickly

transferred to another facility. But these incidents are rare because the inmates are short termers who don't wish to extend their prison time."

Over the next weeks, opponents of the prison organized into a group led by two former Yankton College faculty members, Pete DeFavero and John Notheis. The group felt local media had been biased in favor of the prison and began to fill the newspaper's letters columns.

One opponent wrote, "I know we have the Human Services Center [which housed some State prisoners as trustees] and halfway houses in Yankton and that doesn't bother me. I visit the HSC five days a week in the trusty unit. I was a probation officer for four years. I have worked with and been around people in trouble with the law in one way or another. They need help. Yankton has been helping them in many ways. But where does it stop?"

Debra Jorgensen, who lived 50 feet from the campus, wrote, "No child should have to be afraid of their own neighborhood....When we were buying [a house], I looked for a nice house, nice neighborhood, and a school nearby. If I were now looking to buy a house, a prison across the street would not be one of my priorities."

Another letter-writer suggested, "Do you really want Yankton's promotional literature to read, 'Yankton, a place to grow. Even if you mess up, you won't have to leave.'?"

While many citizens were nostalgic about the loss of the college, a local attorney wrote, "I have been directly involved in law enforcement in Yankton

almost continually since 1969 and during that period I have seen Yankton College students prosecuted for everything from shoplifting to drugs, sex offenses, burglaries, and robberies.”

Visits to Level 1 facilities

A number of Yankton residents, including some opposed to the conversion, visited FPC Big Spring at the end of September in the company of some Bureau officials. Those already in favor came away more strongly in favor (a county commissioner noted, “...you drive by and it looks just like a college campus”), while those opposed seemed only marginally less so.

While Big Spring residents generally seemed supportive of the prison camp, they were less enthusiastic when asked how they would feel about a prison in their own college. “It would be too close to residential sections,” one said, while a Big Spring homemaker, asked why the camp was “better” located on the outskirts of town, replied, “Sometimes they leave out there.” Big Spring averaged 20 walkaways or escapes per year in 1985 and 1986, from a population of more than 700.

The Federal Prison Camp at Duluth, Minnesota, the closest such facility to Yankton, also became an issue. The opponents’ group thought that the inmates’ profile—more than half served time for violating drug laws, and others for robbery and firearms offenses—didn’t match the Bureau’s promises for Yankton.

Four Yankton residents, including landowners directly adjacent to the college and a county commissioner, visited Duluth on September 24. Richard Wright, one of the immediate neighbors,



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wrote, “One of the major concerns, other than safety, has been the fear of a decrease in Yankton’s adjacent property values. I wish I had an answer. I do not. I do feel, after seeing the Duluth facility, and understanding a Level 1 institution better, that I would have no fear in living in or buying a home next to a Level 1 facility. I do feel the facility would probably create doubts and fears with new people coming into a community....”

One of the most unusual communications came from an inmate at Duluth—a former Yankton resident serving time for embezzlement. Ronald Wright wrote, “I was sentenced on March 10, 1987, and ordered to report [to Duluth] on April 14, 1987. During the month-long waiting period, I conjured up many ideas in my mind as to what would happen to me in prison. These include homosexual acts, beatings by other inmates, getting AIDS, and all sorts of bad things....but as I soon came to find, all my fears were unfounded and a figment of my imagination.

“I believe I know what the fears of the area residents are. I would have more concern with inmates from the mental institution than I would from a level 1 camp facility. The inmates are not violent and are not interested in getting into trouble which will only cause them to receive a longer sentence or be transferred to a higher security prison. The inmates at a camp want to get their time served and return to their families and jobs as soon as possible. Most of the inmates at this level of camp are or were married and have families on the outside to return to.

“As I recall, the residents in the area of Yankton College complained about the ‘rowdyism’ of the college students periodically. The students were very inconsiderate of people’s property at times. It was usually a very small percentage of the students that caused the problem. The area residents will have no problems with ‘rowdyism’ from a camp facility.”

The decision is made—and criticized

A public meeting was held on October 6 at the college’s Nash Gymnasium. More than 400 attended—a huge number in a city of 12,000—for 3 hours. Bill Patrick represented the Bureau and presided over the hearing.

On the following Monday, the City Commission would vote on whether to recommend to the college’s trustees to sell the campus to the Federal Government. Patrick said that the Bureau could not look to a popular vote as a measure of community support, but relies on elected officials instead. The Bureau, however, would not proceed with the

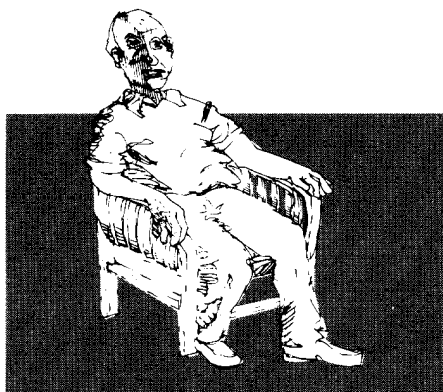
project if the college trustees approved the sale but the city and county commissions did not. Patrick also addressed one of the residents' major concerns by guaranteeing that the facility's environmental impact statement would include conditions making future upgrading of the facility effectively impossible.

Safety remained uppermost in people's minds. One resident who lived a block from the college said, "Why should my children have to walk out of the way close to a prison with guards without guns? I'd prefer they were carried."

Patrick could not guarantee that children wouldn't be negatively affected by the prison. Opponent John Notheis noted that the Government could not buy neighboring homes or pay for upgraded security, but "all of the major issues I can think of did come up, and I think Bill Patrick did an excellent job of answering the questions."

At the City Commission meeting on Monday, the head of the board of selectmen from Putney, Vermont, Peter Shumlin, was brought in by the opponents' group. Shumlin told the hearing that Putney, a small town of 1,400, faced a situation similar to Yankton's when its college closed. The Bureau of Prisons had attempted to acquire the campus, but when put to a public vote, 80 percent of the residents rejected it. After an auction, the town was able to recruit a new 2-year college for dyslexic students.

Nevertheless, the City Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Federal Government continue negotiations to purchase the campus. (The County Commission also voted unanimously in favor the next day.) After the



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vote, one opponent said, "I'm very disappointed to see...we can't even allow 30 days to evaluate putting a prison in town."

The *Daily Press and Dakotan* wrote, "Some of the arguments that continue to be raised will never be answered or addressed to everyone's satisfaction. Many are hypothetical scenarios, the kind of 'what if' situations that are fair questions but which ultimately cannot be answered with certainty. But the best judgment is one based on what other communities have experienced, and these reports confirm that a level 1 facility would be a plus for this community."

Taking it to a vote

The next strategy on the part of the opponents (now organized as Citizens for a Better Alternative) was to gather the several hundred signatures needed to put an initiative measure on the ballot requiring the city to buy the college, as well as focus on alternative solutions, such as a civic center/cultural complex,

post office, or selling buildings to individual buyers.

Although the petition drive succeeded (about 1,100 citizens signed), and the City Commission set the election date for December 15, it was not clear that the results would have any validity. Yankton College's acting president, Don Peterson, said, "I think the ordinance is meaningless. It will not change my thinking or my negotiations with the Federal Bureau of Prisons."

In addition, any alternative solution seemed certain to require a tax increase. The City Manager projected a property tax levy of between 30 and 39 percent to finance the city's purchase of the college and maintain it while another buyer was sought.

Both sides spent the month before the vote in intensive lobbying. An Associated Press story in early November was headed "Prison has Yankton in 'civil war'," and related the "believe it or not" story of Bill and Shirley Jennewein. The Jenneweins had both been instructors at the University of South Dakota in Springfield, which closed in 1984 when the State legislature voted to convert it to a State prison. They both found jobs in Yankton, three blocks from the college. Their 8-year-old son was quoted, "Where can we go where they won't try to make it a prison?" NBC News (whose anchor Tom Brokaw came from Yankton) also found the story of interest—"...a small town right in the middle of the country actually wanting a prison right in the middle of the town."

As it turned out, the residents did want the prison. Election day, December 15, saw the vote go decisively against asking the city to purchase the college (and thus

in favor of the Government purchasing it)—3,025 against to 986 for.

Preparing to open

The following January, the Bureau made its formal offer to the college's trustees. All creditors would be fully paid off, the campus would be restored and maintained, and the city could look forward to about 100 stable new jobs.

The prison's new management team both came from FCI Phoenix. Stephen Pontesso was Associate Warden (Industries and Education) and Rick Stiff was Executive Assistant at Phoenix. They first visited Yankton in February, about the time the buyout plan was submitted to U.S. Bankruptcy Court for approval.

On April 21, the court approved the bankruptcy. The Bureau paid \$3.1 million for the college; after all debts and closing costs were paid, about \$1 million would be left to ensure the continuity of the Yankton College corporation. The sale closed on May 5—ironically, the birthday of Joseph Ward, the college's founder.

Throughout the spring and summer, work proceeded on facility conversion. Almost 1,000 people attended job seminars in March, showing a great deal of interest in the 50-90 positions expected to be filled locally. The first Yankton-area employees were on the payroll by June.

Over the summer, the Bureau began some facilities work that was not strictly in preparation for the camp's opening. A Minnesota firm came to the Old Middle conservatory to remove and restore the 104-year-old clock in time for the camp's dedication in September.



**“The day
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By August, the Sioux Falls paper could headline a story, “Prison boosts Yankton's economy,” noting that “real estate agents are selling houses that have been on the market as long as 4 years.”

The transition was not totally without friction. The prison asked the city to close part of a street that ran through Federal property because inmates would cross it regularly to go from their quarters to work and school. The city planning commission denied the petition request and Pontesso withdrew it. In addition, some areas previously used for parking by local sports fans were marked off limits.

The first six inmates arrived from FPC Duluth in late August to help with the renovation, and on September 6, the facility was dedicated. Director Quinlan and Senator Pressler were joined by Mayor Ron Tappe, Donald J. Porter, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court in Pierre, and about 300 citizens. Local

columnist Wheeler Bowen wrote, “...for [Donald] Peterson and other Yankton College supporters who spent 3 years trying to find a use for the bankrupt college, the day brought some sadness that the campus really will be a prison but happiness that it will be so well taken care of.” As promised, the clock was back and working well for the first time in years.

A year later

Yankton College still exists. Early in 1989, its officers decided to place half the money left over from the sale in investments to perpetuate the college, with the other half going to an alumni office and a variety of scholarships. Its offices are still on campus. Renovation work continues on various campus buildings, and the facility, still under the leadership of Stephen Pontesso, is expected to reach its full complement of 500 inmates by 1990.

Overall, the citizens of Yankton seem pleased with their choice in favor of the prison camp. Still, there are some mixed feelings. Last fall, the Bureau of Prisons began erecting a 4-foot fence around the perimeter of the institution. It is designed for decorative purposes, not for security; it provides a barrier for children and pedestrians. Nevertheless, the fence is a daily reminder for Yanktonians that, while the economic benefits promised by the camp are real, some things about their town will never be the same. ■

Doug Green is editor of the Federal Prisons Journal. Douglas P. Sall, Supervisor of Education at the Federal Prison Camp, Yankton, South Dakota, provided substantial assistance in the preparation of this article.

Serious Prison Infractions

Differences between the 70's and 80's

Loren Karacki

While the Federal inmate population has nearly doubled since the early 1970's, incidents of serious infractions have increased only slightly. The Bureau of Prisons' Office of Research and Evaluation recently completed an analysis of inmate infractions in the BOP for fiscal years 1985, 1987, and 1988, and compared it with similar information for the years 1970 through 1973.¹ This article presents key findings from both analyses and offers some explanation as to why the type of infraction most likely to occur today differs from that which was more common during the early 1970's.*

For purposes of the recent study, a "serious infraction" was defined as "any concerted act of rule violation" involving five or more inmates, excluding the few instances when the violation was an assault by a group of five or more inmates on another inmate (as opposed to a fight among two inmate groups).⁺ These acts of inmate-on-inmate assault were excluded because they seemed to fall outside the scope of "infractions" defined as a group phenomenon directed against prison officials or other inmate factions (and because no such acts were reflected in the earlier survey). However, even if these assaults had been included in the present survey, there were not enough to significantly affect the survey results.

*For a copy of the full report, contact the Office of Research and Evaluation, 202-724-3118.

+The definition of "infraction" used for the earlier study was not available; consequently, we established a new definition that sufficiently overlapped with the earlier definition to allow reasonable comparisons.



Bob Dahm

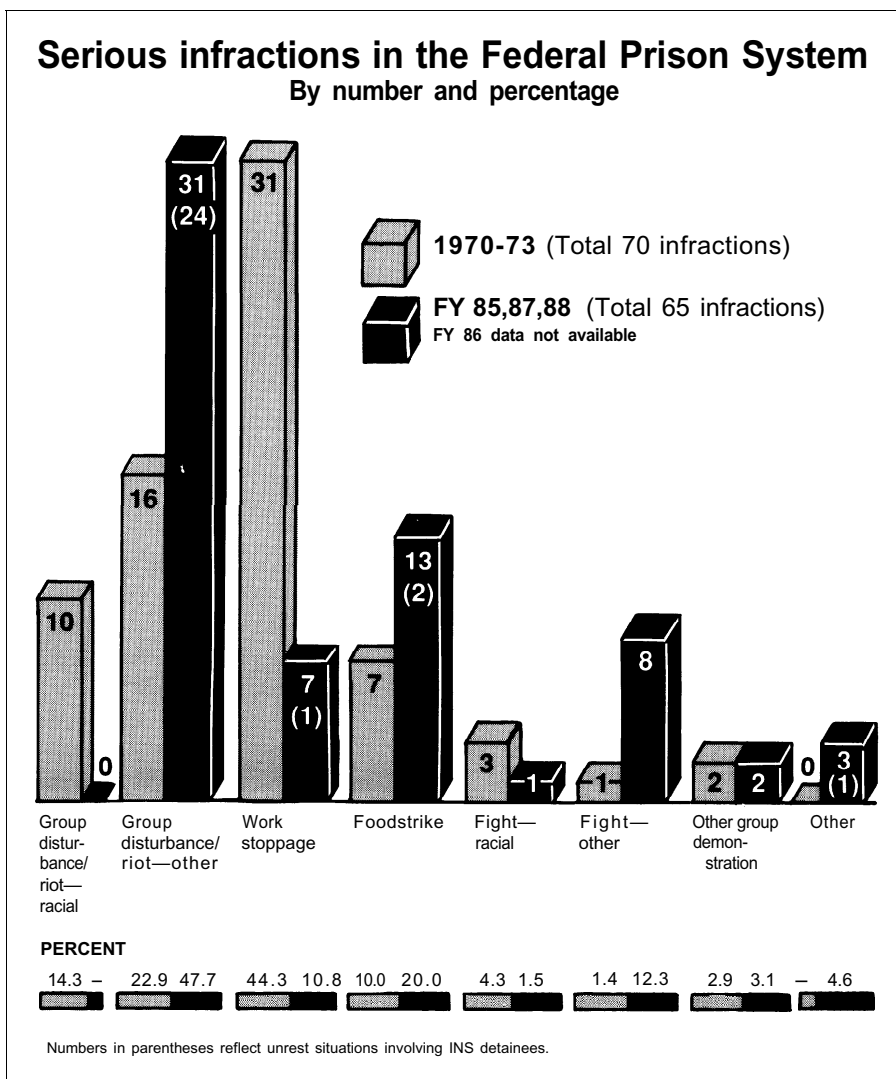
Information for the present survey was obtained primarily from reports of serious incidents sent to the Bureau's Central Office from various institutions. This information was augmented by other data to try and provide a complete picture of infractions for the current period. As undoubtedly was the case with the 1970-1973 survey, we can't be sure that this is a complete accounting of inmate infractions. However, the information is complete enough to provide a good synopsis of infractions in BOP facilities for fiscal years 1985, 1987, and 1988.

Number of infractions

As shown in the graph at right, 70 serious infractions were reported from 1970 through 1973, an average of 17.5 per year during the 4-year period.² Sixty-five serious incidents were identified for the 3-year period covering fiscal years 1985, 1987, and 1988, an average of 21.67 per year. While the current figure of 21.67 per year is somewhat higher than the 17.5 per year figure for 1970-1973, note that the prison population has increased considerably; during 1970-1973, it averaged more than 21,000, while during the more recent period, the average was close to 40,000.

Type of infractions

When type of major infractions is considered, as presented in the chart at right, there is a substantial decrease between the two reporting periods in inmate work stoppages and racial disturbances/fights. During 1970-1973, almost 44.3 percent of all serious infractions involved work stoppages, while the current figure fell to 10.8 percent. In the case of racial disturbances, 13 were recorded during 1970-1973 (18.6 percent of the total) while



only 1 was reported during the FY 1985, 1987, and 1988 period (1.5 percent). In contrast, the percentage of food strikes increased from 10 percent of the total inmate infractions in 1970-1973 to the current 20-percent figure.

Incidents involving INS detainees

Of the 65 incidents identified during FY 1985, 1987, and 1988, 28 (43.1 percent) involved Immigration and Naturalization

Service (INS) detainees, most of whom (27 of 28) were Cuban detainees held at Atlanta or elsewhere. Most of these incidents (24 of 28) fell into the group disturbance/riot category; the figure includes, of course, the November 1987 riots at Atlanta and Oakdale.

The number of incidents involving Cuban detainees is disproportionate to their numbers in BOP facilities—well under 10 percent. These instances reflect the enormous difficulties faced by staff in dealing with the Cuban population, given their uncertain status, their often long periods of confinement, and their history of disruptive behavior over time both in Federal confinement and elsewhere. Indeed, had this population not been in BOP confinement, the average number of infractions for the current period would have been only 12.67 per year, instead of 21.67.

Changes in type of infractions

The figures reported in this survey appear to reflect the tenor of the times. The early 1970's was a period of prisoner rights movements and confrontations as well as greater racial awareness and demands for equality on the part of various minority groups, especially blacks; not surprisingly, therefore, we find in the 1970-1973 figures many instances of prison work stoppages and racial conflicts.

Some observers attribute the occurrence of prisoner work strikes to the Attica riot on September 9-13, 1971, and the impact this had on prisoners throughout the country. Bagdikian, for example, in his book on the February 1972 work strike at USP Lewisburg, stated that "strikes were breaking out all over the country after Attica's exposure of prison conditions gave prisoners self-consciousness."³ He added that in a 6-month period, eight Federal institutions had strikes or prison protests.

While his figures on work strikes in the Federal system are correct, he failed to

If Attica had any impact at all on the Federal prison system, it may have been in the area of race relations.

mention that of the eight work strikes, five actually occurred in the 2 months preceding Attica rather than afterwards. Indeed, information for 1970-1973 for the Federal system, while indicating a fairly substantial number of work strikes, does not support any notion that Attica provided the catalyst for these strikes; they were as likely to occur before September 1971 as after.

If Attica had any impact at all on the Federal prison system, it may have been in the area of race relations. Of the 13 racial disturbances/fights during 1970-1973, only 1 occurred in the 20 months before Attica, while 12 occurred in the 28 months following.

More recently, with the exception of the Cuban detainees who have been a particularly troublesome population, the figures on serious infractions appear to reflect a more benign prison system. Food strikes have replaced work stoppages as the most common form of group demonstration, and only one incident of racial unrest was reported in the 3-year period of FY 1985, 1987, and 1988.

We suspect that much of the change between the two time periods is attributable to the efforts made over time to improve relations between staff and inmates and to enhance living condi-

tions—in particular, the adoption of the human relations approach in dealing with inmates, the emergence of unit management, emphasis on staff professionalism, initiation of the Administrative Remedy procedure as a means for inmates to voice complaints, and steps taken to reduce barriers to the free community. This is, of course, speculative, but one can argue that these actions and others have served to reduce tensions between staff and inmates, lessen or eliminate some of the deprivation of confinement, and improve the atmosphere of institutions. These positive changes, in turn, are reflected in the figures on inmate infractions in BOP prisons.

Unfortunately, efforts to work with the Cuban population have been less successful. The language and cultural barriers and the Cubans' prolonged and uncertain status in confinement have made dealing effectively with this population a serious challenge for staff.

Conclusions

The comparison of instances of major inmate infractions in BOP facilities during 1970-1973 and during FY 1985, 1987, and 1988 generally reflects favorably on current operations. It shows only a small increase in the average number of such incidents between the two periods—from 17.5 to 21.67 per year—despite a doubling of the Federal prison population. Moreover, many of the more recent incidents (27 of 65) are concentrated among the Cuban detainee population, whose backgrounds and circumstances present a particularly difficult challenge for prison staff and

other Government officials. Absent this population, there would have been a substantial decline in the annual average number of infractions (17.5 vs. 12.67).

The figures in this survey appear to reflect changes that have occurred over time in society and in prison operations. Thus, the decrease in racial disturbances/fights from 13 in 1970-1973 to 1 in FY 1985, 1987, and 1988 probably mirrors the changing circumstances of blacks and other minority groups in society. Similarly, the substantial decrease in inmate work stoppages from 31 to 7 probably reflects both a decrease in inmate militancy and the improved prison conditions noted above. If one excludes the special problem of the Cuban detainees, these figures suggest a more benign prison environment marked by better relations between staff and inmates and improved conditions. ■

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Notes

¹Fiscal year 1986 is not included in the survey because of problems encountered in gathering information.

²The actual figure for 1970-1973 was 71; however, one incident appeared to involve only four inmates and, consequently, fell outside the definition of prison unrest.

³Bagdikian, Ben H., *Caged: Eight Prisoners and Their Keepers*, New York: Harper and Row, 1976, p. 35.

Some examples of prison infractions, 1985-1988

The examples that follow are drawn from the chronicle of 65 incidents of serious inmate infractions recorded in Fiscal Years 1985, 1987, and 1988 (as noted in the article, data for 1986 are not available). This sampling gives an overview of the types of incidents Bureau of Prisons staff must deal with. It should be noted that the takeovers by Cuban detainees in late 1987 of the U.S. Penitentiary at Atlanta and the Federal Detention Center in Oakdale, Louisiana—the two most serious examples of “infractions” in the history of Federal prisons—are included in the list of 65.

Fight

*Federal Correctional Institution
Englewood, Colorado
October 1984*

Following Saturday brunch, inmates began to gather in front of two of the institution's housing units. Inmates in front of Lower East rushed toward the group by Lower West, exchanging blows and entering the living unit where more inmates were attacked. Thirty inmates were placed in Administrative Detention (AD). Nineteen received injuries, including a possible broken arm and puncture wounds to the chest.

Group disturbance

*U.S. Penitentiary
Atlanta, Georgia
October 1984*

During the evening of October 15, Cuban detainees who were confined in their cells threw personal property on the tiers, broke many windows,

damaged plumbing, and set fires in front of their cells, causing \$100,000 worth of damage. Staff confiscated all combustible material and detainees were ordered to place personal belongings in individual lockers, which were removed and placed in storage. Disruptive activity continued throughout the next month.

Work stoppage

*Federal Correctional Institution
Petersburg, Virginia
November 1984*

Only 40 inmates reported for work, while the remainder went on a work stoppage, apparently in protest of the more restrictive use of telephones recently put in effect. Emergency procedures were ordered, staff began to interview all inmates, and four were placed in AD for investigation.

Work stoppage

*U.S. Penitentiary
Terre Haute, Indiana
May 1985*

At 7:30 a.m., some 300 inmates in two units conducted a work strike because they believed staff had killed an inmate who had committed suicide by hanging on May 15. At 10:45 a.m., they were persuaded by staff to return to work and the institution returned to normal.

Work/food strike

*Metropolitan Correctional Center
Chicago, Illinois
August 1985*

At 4 p.m., staff received a letter signed by 30 Cuban inmates housed on the 13th floor jail unit that indicated there would be a work/food strike because they

disagreed with BOP policy regarding their management at Chicago. The unit was placed in lockdown status, detainees were interviewed, and suspected leaders placed in AD.

Fight

*Federal Correctional Institution
Ray Brook, New York
October 1986*

At 1:30 p.m., an inmate was accidentally hit by another inmate while playing flag football. Both teams and spectators rushed onto the field and had to be separated by staff. Two inmates were placed in AD for fighting. After the inmates had returned to their living units, an inmate accompanied by a number of others went to another unit to fight an inmate there; it was necessary to place two more inmates in AD before the situation was resolved.

Group disturbance

*Federal Correctional Institution
Milan, Michigan
June 1987*

At 11:30 p.m., an inmate in AD started yelling obscenities at staff and beating on his bed. Others in the unit joined in the demonstration, which lasted until 1 a.m. At 11:30 a.m., the inmate threw a cup of urine on a segregation officer. He was moved to the hospital and placed in four-point restraints.

Fight

*Federal Correctional Institution
Alderson, West Virginia
December 1987*

At approximately 7:40 a.m., an argument developed between two roommates, which escalated into a fight involving

five inmates. Information indicated that three inmates had weapons fashioned from razor blades; one inmate accidentally cut her hand. Those involved were placed in AD.

Commissary break-in

*Federal Correctional Institution
Terminal Island, California
January 1988*

At 7:45 p.m., seven inmates were detected as having broken into the commissary and taken such items as shoes, coffee, and cigarettes. All were placed in AD pending FBI investigation and disciplinary hearings.

Group disturbance

*U.S. Penitentiary
Lompoc, California
January 1988*

At 12:01 a.m., a small disturbance occurred in the special housing unit when inmates began yelling, flooding their cells, and throwing items onto the range floor. These inmates were moved to disciplinary segregation. One refused to move and had to be wrestled under control, with two staff receiving minor injuries. The inmate then refused to allow the cuffs to be removed until 12:40 p.m.

Disruptive conduct

*Federal Correctional Institution
La Tuna, Texas
July 1988*

During the evening meal, a Cuban detainee in the AD unit threw his food tray on the range, complaining the meal was cold. He then placed his arms out through the food slot and grabbed an officer's wrists, resulting in a struggle

before the officer was able to free himself. The detainee then showed the officer a cut on his right arm and stated that the officer had cut him. He encouraged other detainees to flood the cell block and to throw liquids on the range and on staff. Six other detainees joined in, throwing urine and water and flooding the range. A squad of officers was assembled and entered the range to place the detainees involved in restraints. Some complied but others did not and had to be forceably removed to other cells and put in four-point restraints. Silent Partner tear gas was used. Two detainees were treated for minor injuries.

Hostage taking and escape plan

*Federal Correctional Institution
Talladega, Alabama
August 1988*

Staff uncovered a plan by Cuban detainees to take over one of the ranges of their living unit in order to seize hostages as a means to get out of the U.S. before they could be deported to Cuba. Two leaders of the plan were placed in segregation and a full investigation started.

Food boycott

*Federal Correctional Institution
Memphis, Tennessee
December 1988*

All but 100 of 981 inmates avoided the noon meal in protest against bans on Christmas packages and large portable radios. Staff met with the inmates and agreed to review both issues, as well as other complaints. ■

Two Innovations: Three Decades Later

Community Treatment Centers and regionalization

*William D. Messersmith
as told to John W. Roberts, Archivist,
Federal Bureau of Prisons*

Community treatment was one of the most important correctional concepts to emerge in the 1960's. In 1961, the Bureau established three model "Pre-Release Guidance Centers" to test the concept by providing halfway house services to help prepare youthful offenders for release. In 1965, the program was expanded to include adult offenders, and the halfway houses became known as Community Treatment Centers.

Later, the Bureau chose its new Community Services Division to test the regionalization concept. Regionalization was introduced as a pilot project in the Community Services Division in 1971, and shortly thereafter the concept was applied throughout the Bureau.

William D. Messersmith was involved in the piloting and implementation of both community treatment and regionalization. He recalls the challenges and experiences of helping to develop these innovations in this edited interview, which was conducted as part of the Bureau's oral history project.

William D. Messersmith joined the Bureau of Prisons in 1959 as a parole officer at the Federal Correctional Institution in Englewood, Colorado. From 1962 to 1970 he served at the Los Angeles Pre-Release Guidance Center as assistant director and later as director. He transferred to the Central Office in 1970 as coordinator of Federal community treatment centers and the following year became Director of Residential Programs. In 1972 he was named Community Services Regional Director for the North Central Region. He was Associate Warden for Operations at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago from 1974 to 1982, and retired in 1987 as Executive Assistant at FCI La Tuna, Texas.

Before the halfway houses, were there any special procedures to try to smooth an inmate's transition back into the community?

Only two things. There had to be an approved parole plan for release, which involved communication between the institution and the U.S. Probation Officer, at which time they tried to resolve some of the problems, family problems or whatever. But that was long-distance, so it wasn't a real good situation. The others varied by institution, but Englewood had an extremely active prerelease program where there were some outside speakers and help for release in general: seeking employment, what to expect from the U.S. Probation Officer, and things like that. But even that was just general for the whole group, not a specific or individual kind of thing. So it was hit or miss, really.

How did the halfway house or community treatment program get started in the Bureau, and what was the early program like?

Halfway houses were not a new idea, but very few were actually in operation. Then in 1961, Attorney General Robert Kennedy asked the Bureau of Prisons to proceed with establishing a pilot program for halfway houses.

Those of us who were in on this early effort knew there were three basic things we had to establish through this pilot. The first was to provide actual release services that would improve postrelease outcomes. Second was to set an example across the United States, to stimulate the private sector. And third was to provide feedback to our own institutions regarding vocational training, release preparation, and other programs.

At the time the first Bureau centers started in 1961, there were only three

private halfway houses to be found, from which early staff could draw information on how to operate a halfway house. They were St. Leonard's House in Chicago, Dismas House in St. Louis, and Crenshaw House in Los Angeles.

There were three basic models in the first three centers operated by the Bureau, in order to see if different sorts of staffing or types of facilities would make a difference in postrelease outcome. The first units opened in September 1961 in New York and Chicago. In Chicago, the program was housed in a YMCA and operated with Bureau of Prisons staff. In New York, the unit was likewise in a YMCA, but staffed by people from Springfield College in Massachusetts, known for training YMCA personnel. In October 1961, the Los Angeles center was opened. It was also staffed by Bureau personnel, but in a separate building, a former Baptist seminary, where staff had to provide all maintenance and meals. About 1 year later a fourth center was opened in Detroit, but the basic effort was in the original three, and that was where the staffing and location differences were intentionally made.

The program in the early days was [designed] for male Federal Juvenile Detention Act [F.J.D.A.] or Youth Corrections Act [Y.C.A.] offenders who would go to the center 90 to 120 days prior to release. They remained in custody of the Attorney General until release, unlike [offenders in] private facilities, where it was primarily postrelease placement.

Pre-Release Guidance Centers in those early days were more like work-release units. There were tight controls. The inmate just went out to work and came



Pre-Release Guidance Center staff, Los Angeles, 1963. Left to right: Kenneth A. McDannell, Director; Betty Suit, secretary; William D. Messersmith, caseworker, Assistant Director; Orville G. Bills, William Thomas, and Edward F. Arbogast, counselors; Stan Lay, employment placement officer.

right back, spending the rest of the hours in the center. If there were infractions—for example, if there was the smell of alcohol on a person's breath when he returned to the center—it was fairly automatic return to the institution as a program failure.

Institution staff at the first Pre-Release Guidance Centers weren't really prepared for the street side of corrections. We knew a lot about institutions, and we theorized a lot about what it took to get by on the street; we even planned some

of our institution programs that way. But we found that when people get out there and have to go face an employer and try to get a job, when they have to make it out there on the street, there were some things they weren't quite prepared for. Hopefully, we were able to feed this back to the institutions.

At the Pre-Release Guidance Centers, there was an emphasis on employment and on encouraging educational, religious, and recreational interests that could be followed after release. Staff provided counseling and guidance for the transition to community living. As part of the program, each resident would meet with

the U.S. Probation Officer to establish a supervisory relationship for their endeavors after release.

Specifically in the Los Angeles center, to give you some feel for what went on there, the staff provided individual and group counseling on seeking and holding employment. We checked for old traffic warrants; we weren't prepared to find so many of these kinds of problems that people have to resolve before they can even drive, which sometimes affected their employment. The staff also worked with the inmate on a savings plan, which was mandatory so that he'd have some

money to get started on. Other elements in the program that evolved in the first few years included driver education. And we introduced [inmates] to new recreational opportunities, such as learning how to play golf or attending musicals, plays, ice shows, movies, taping of TV programs in Hollywood, professional basketball, baseball, hockey games—things to try to stimulate an interest in what to do in a person's non-working hours.

At least one night a week, an outside speaker or participant came in. They provided information on job seeking, adult education, and vocational education. We had an Assistant U.S. Attorney come in to talk about the implications of their sentence in the future, relative to voting or holding public office or similar matters. Somebody from Internal Revenue spoke about tax preparation; a state educational representative talked about apprenticeships; a realtor came in to talk about renting and buying real estate; union representatives; a public health official to talk about venereal disease; a marriage counselor to talk about interpersonal problems in marriage. A lady who was very good came in to talk about manners and social customs, because many of our inmates felt ill at ease in social contacts. An insurance agent came in to talk about car insurance problems. Armed Forces recruiters came in to answer questions from those who might be interested in military service after completing their sentences. A banker came in to talk about different services of a bank—other than being robbed. Car buying. Interpersonal relations in general. Quite a wide variety of topics.

In addition to providing these direct services, we also found that another one

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of our goals—stimulating county, State, and private interests—developed. We had many visitors, including international visitors, and some of us probably feel like foster parents to some of these programs operating around the country now. We exchanged much operational, day-to-day information with each other. From some of this information, then, we were able to be helpful to those outsiders who now could go to a board of directors or county board or State legislature with figures on how much money it would take, how much bed linen would be needed, what kinds of problems could be expected, and so forth. And those specifics are what helped a lot of programs get under way.

Along that same line, in 1963 a small group started, with Bureau participation, called the International Halfway House Association. One of our Bureau people, Woody Toft, was president. I was secretary to the group for a while, and initiated newsletter mailings and the first directory. By 1968, only 5 years later, this group was large enough and stable enough that it became an affiliate body of the American Correctional Association.

By the mid-to-late 1960's, we could look back at some of the original purposes for the centers and make some observations. First, we were providing prerelease services to more and more people, especially with the advent of legislation in 1965 that allowed expansion of Pre-Release Guidance Centers to house adults, in addition to the F.J.D.A. and Y.C.A. cases. Secondly, we were certainly having a booming business in stimulating city, county, State, and private sector people; just look at the early figures—three of our own centers and three private places—and then look at the size of today's international halfway house directory! Third, in terms of getting information back to institutions, we began visiting Bureau institutions regularly, to develop some of their street-wise knowledge.

In terms of program emphasis in our centers, there were some significant evolutions. At first it was an in-house program, with just our own staff. We began to turn more and more to community resources. These people were more expert than we were in specific areas, and the inmates could go to them after release for expert help, instead of remaining dependent on us.

A second evolution point in our programs was moving away from the paternal "doing for" somebody to helping them to do for themselves. That way, they develop confidence, and they know how to do things themselves in the future. We felt that was an important change.

Third, we expanded from the original prerelease emphasis to handling study and observation cases for the court and a place of service for short sentences and split sentences. We also received some

direct parole and probation-violator commitments, instead of them being returned to the institution. So with this changed emphasis, the name “prerelease guidance center” was altered to “community treatment center.”

A fourth area—we found that the number of Federal offenders being released to particular geographical areas made feasible having only a certain number of Federal C.T.C.’s, eventually expanded to nine cities. But with our success in stimulating other agencies, public and private, we got to the point where we could contract with them for providing this service.

Tell me about the staff reactions to the C.T.C. program. Was there much resistance, or did they think it was a good idea?

Generally, people thought it was a good idea, even at the institutions. When I was going to get into it, about a year after the first ones opened, I went out for a few days before the guy I was replacing left Los Angeles. And when I returned to Englewood, Warden Joe Bogan, Sr. drew me off to the side and said, “I would appreciate it if, in the final few weeks that you are here, you would circulate among staff, because they’re going to be curious about this new thing. They know you’ve seen it, and I want you to talk it up as much as you can.” And so, there was good, positive support by the Warden. People were curious about it, thought it was a good idea.

Did you have any special training before going into this, or was it almost trial and error?

It was pretty much trial and error. There were only the three private places, and they drew a little on that, and then from



Los Angeles Pre-Release Guidance Center, opened in 1961.

there on it was trying to figure out what things to do or not to do. And trying some things and discarding them. It was just so totally new, that there really wasn’t anything to train on. Later, of course, on the basis of several years’ work, we helped come up with standards and training for the International Half-way House Association.

But in the beginning, it was just trial and error. It started out very tight. Gradually, we found that we could loosen up a little. It didn’t hurt, maybe, once in a while, if somebody had a little touch of alcohol on their breath. We learned how we could handle those kinds of things, dealing with them in the center setting, without sending somebody back to the institution. So we just sort of figured it out as we went along.

How did inmates view the program?

Generally, people were anxious to get into it, because it compared favorably to the more restricted life in the institution. Those who weren’t eligible were a little jealous or envious, but, deep down, they could understand why. And there were some, surprisingly, who were not

interested. The latter were similar to those who will turn down parole to spend just a few more months in the institution, preferring to go out without having to be supervised by a U.S. Probation Officer. That’s because when they get out on the street, they just don’t want any strings attached. So there were a few, not many, that said they’d prefer not to go to a center because they weren’t sure they could handle that kind of pressure. And there was a certain amount of pressure, being part way out, but not all the way out. They had some of the same temptations as if they were totally on the street, but they always had us lurking in the background.

This relates to an interesting research finding. One time I tallied, over a few years at Los Angeles, those who were program failures. They either tended to fail right after they got there or just before they got out. They didn’t fail much during that time in the middle, perhaps because it just seemed easier

once they got into the routine. But they had trouble adjusting when they first got there, and apparently some got nervous just about release time as to whether they could really handle everything alone.

At one time, there was an experiment to send some people there for 6 months instead of just the 90 to 120 days. And that really didn't work. Apparently, the 90 to 120 days was fairly optimal, because you have those restrictions, but you know that it's only 90 to 120 days, and it compares favorably to the institution. But if you get there with 6 months to go, it's an awful long time out there, and it was just hard to hang on. It just wasn't close enough to get them through these constant temptations. People at work, not knowing of your status, would say, "Hey, let's go out for a couple of beers," or something. And if the kid turned them down, then they'd feel he was antisocial, even though he wanted to make new friends. With all of this pressure on the 6-month cases, almost every night we'd have to go man to man with them to get them out of their depression. So a shorter time seemed to be better.

Was there any difference in terms of the attitude or sincerity of the juveniles versus the adults?

I don't recall a difference in that direction. A difference somewhat related might have been that the ones that were in the program as pre-releasees, coming from institutions, tended to handle it better than those who came in off the street as study cases or to serve short sentences. They hadn't been inside yet, didn't really realize what they were risking, and tended to be a little more

We began to turn more and more to community resources. The inmates could go to them after release for expert help, instead of remaining dependent on us.

immature or less sincere. And sometimes the ones with the institutional background would try to pull them off to the side and say, "Hey, you don't know what a second chance you're getting here, without going to the main institution, and you'd better try to take advantage of it or you're going to be sorry." So sometimes the older heads would help give a hint to the younger ones.

To what extent did you involve family members in the reintroduction of these inmates to society?

Most of the family members visited the inmate at the center right away. The staff members would go out of their way to say hello and chit-chat a little, let them know they were available if there was anything they needed to call them about. And then we also tried, during most of those years, to make a home visit. In other words, pop the inmate in the car and go out and see where he lives, who's there, and what the situation looks like. And that worked very well. Very often, if something was going wrong, we'd get a call from one of these people, saying, "Hey, I'm concerned about my son or my husband or whatever; he's doing this or that, and I'm afraid he's going to wind up back in trouble. Is there any way that we can work with you on this to avoid that

kind of thing?" So, very often, it paid off. It helped us out with a situation before it got out of hand.

What were the neighborhoods like where the initial centers were located, and what kind of public response was there to the centers?

In Los Angeles, the center was located in a modest-to-poor Hispanic neighborhood, East Los Angeles. When the Center first opened, staff did go up and down the street to chit-chat a little with the neighbors, explained to them who we were and what we were doing. I don't recall hearing of any particularly negative reaction there. People were curious, maybe a little concerned, but not too much. There weren't any ongoing problems that I can think of. Except one night; we'd always been open with the local precinct of the Los Angeles Police Department—told them to stop by any time they wanted to get acquainted, see what was going on, see we had nothing to hide. Once they just had a slow night, so about six or seven police cars came up at one time and about eight to ten officers came inside. This was okay with us, but it scared the inmates half to death. We were in a building with 30 inmates, but as we walked around the building, we never saw more than two or three. We would go in one direction, and they would run down a stairway to where we had just come from. And then somebody looked outside, and saw quite a few people out on the sidewalk, expecting, I guess, to see the police carry a body out. So it upset the neighbors and it upset the inmates, but it was good public relations with the police!

What sorts of jobs did the inmates have?

The whole range of jobs. There would be drafting, auto mechanics, office work, sales. It might just be factory or assembly work. However, we generally would try to upgrade. Sometimes a person would go ahead and take a job, if the job market was rather tight. Then he and the employment placement officer would work toward trying to convert that to a better job, more like what they felt they needed or had training in.

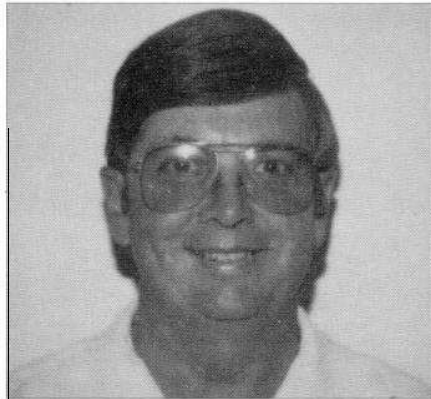
How did institutional work-release programs fit into all this?

Legislation passed in 1965 authorized work release. This led to an institution numbers game, in which institutions were getting people out for the sake of reporting large numbers.

While it was not intended for work-release inmates to remain in the community after release, the inevitable happened. Many of the employers liked the inmate working for them, many inmates liked their jobs, and so those who didn't have supervision requirements stating they had to be released to a certain district elsewhere began to stay in town. When they did that, there was negative community reaction.

With the rise of Pre-Release Guidance Centers, later C.T.C.'s, many institutions were even keeping people in the work-release program to play the numbers game, instead of sending them on to one of these pre-release programs.

Finally, reality set in, and work-release was phased out for the realism of sending people to their release areas, to get



Bill Messersmith in 1989.

established in a more permanent way, rather than this artificial employment in the local community.

What role did Community Services have in establishing regionalization?

Regionalization started in the Community Services Division, sometime before the agency fully regionalized.

First, I need to back up a little and explain that in 1972, the Community Services Division had five non-institutional responsibilities: the Community Treatment Centers; Employment Placement; Jail Services; Technical Assistance, through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration; and specific aftercare services mandated by the Narcotics Addict Rehabilitation Act of 1966.

Meanwhile, back at the regionalization ranch, the Director and Executive Staff apparently had been discussing the possibility of decentralizing the whole Bureau of Prisons. They were aware that the Community Services Division was planning to regionalize all its operations and by 1971 had two pilot regions already in progress—one under an institutional program manager in the Dallas area, and the other model under an

independently based person in the San Francisco area. The Executive Staff decided to use that experience to determine what advantages or disadvantages there would be in regionalizing the whole agency. Should they decide that it would not be feasible, they could more easily reverse regionalization in the Community Services pilot than they could back up if they regionalized the whole agency. So that decision led to full Community Services Division regionalization on March 1, 1972. At that time, Sport Kirkland, the person in the Dallas area, and Fred Dickson, who was in the San Francisco area, were joined by former Jail Services Administrator Harold Thomas, going to Atlanta, former Employment Placement Administrator Stan Lay, going to Baltimore, and myself, Bill Messersmith, the Residential Programs Director, going to Chicago. My Chicago placement was primarily because I was out of town on annual leave when the cities were divided up; when I returned, Chicago was the only city left.

I really want to emphasize that there were two issues in this pilot for the Bureau. One was decentralization, and the other was changing from the specialist to the generalist. Instead of specializing in a particular Community Services function, generalists would work in all functions but have responsibility for a smaller geographic area—with the exception that the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration-based technical assistance program would remain unchanged. Not only were the people in the field going to have to shift gears from being specialists to generalists, but those of us who were going to administer each of these five pilot

regions had to do the same. So while regionalization was effective March 1, 1972, the three of us still in the Central Office remained there for 3 months before moving so that we could cross-train each other. That way, for example, I could learn more about jail problems and services from Harold Thomas, Harold could learn more about centers from me, both Harold and I could learn about employment placement from Stan Lay, and so forth. And this worked very well. By the time June came, we were ready to move out and start, and we each had very intensive training with the field people that we had called in for this transition.

So, overall, it was an exciting new time, with the cross-training and good communication among people, and many good things happened. I called on most of the Chief U.S. District Judges in the North Central Region; many of them were surprised and pleased, saying I was the first Bureau of Prisons person to be in their office. They, along with the Chief U.S. Probation Officers and U.S. Marshals, whom I also called on in each of those districts, now had a higher-level Bureau person accessible to them locally, without the past inhibition of trying to contact somebody in Washington.

We were able to provide more technical assistance to jails and halfway houses and so forth, because we had people with wider backgrounds now, rather than just one specialty. Also, I was our agency representative at regional meetings of State department of corrections administrators for my part of the country at a time when they were dealing with a

number of problems, and sometimes we were able to provide some assistance.

Full Community Services Division regionalization was to be a 2-year pilot before evaluation. In the latter stage of the pilot, we were reporting to Warden Chuck Hughes of Seagoville. At the end of the 2 years, he and I were selected to give a report and recommendations on our 2 years' combined experience to Director Norm Carlson and the Executive Staff, meeting at Williamsburg, Virginia. We gave our report, stating the benefits and some disadvantages. For example, regionalization freed the Director for "larger picture" issues, because the smaller span of control meant that all Bureau managers nationwide would no longer be reporting to the Director, and there would be less pressure on the Director from judges, congressmen, and senators. Secondly, we noted improved Bureau of Prisons management communication with judges and representatives of Federal, county, and city agencies. Third, we noted improved personal supervision of Bureau of Prisons staff, as opposed to when they were just monitored from one central location. Fourth, we noted improved monitoring and managerial troubleshooting of contracts, such as jails, community treatment centers, and Narcotic Addicts Rehabilitation Act [N.A.R.A.] aftercare. Fifth, we saw reduced generalist travel and broader technical assistance available from these people in the smaller area in which they were working.

We did note one possible disadvantage and that was, perhaps, interregional inconsistency relative to a specific issue. But experience and good communication among regional directors could minimize these inconsistencies among the regions. This was a minor price to pay for the benefits that we saw.

Norm's reaction to our presentation was, I felt, a somewhat cool one. He said that decentralization and recentralization cycles are normal in many agencies, and that he didn't want to rush into something quickly and then have to change it later.

Personally, I left the Williamsburg Executive Staff meeting seriously doubting that full regionalization would occur. But 3 or 4 months later, Norm announced that the total agency was going to regionalize, and that all regional directors must have been wardens previously so the institutions would realize that they had someone there who would understand their problems.

I personally believe that was an excellent move on the part of the agency. Norm has been recognized by many private and public sector people over the years as an outstanding administrator. He was not a politician-type appointee, common to many agencies which change directors with every election. However, with all his interests and managerial skill, it just wasn't practical for him to have the warden of every institution reporting to him directly at the same time he was trying to deal with all those outside, press, judicial, politician-type demands. And that was at a time before we'd even opened a lot of the newer institutions. From what I've seen over the years since regionalization, it has served the agency well. ■

NIC and BOP

Working Together, Sharing Expertise

Nancy Sabanosh

Editor's note: If Bureau of Prisons staff are aware of the National Institute of Corrections at all, they are liable to think of its efforts as purely directed to States and localities. In fact, NIC and the BOP often work together on projects and share resources and expertise, as this article indicates.

Future articles in the Federal Prisons Journal will discuss particular areas of NIC operations; this first issue's article provides an overview of NIC resources and how Bureau staff can benefit from them.

The National Institute of Corrections was created in 1974 to help State and local correctional agencies by providing training, technical assistance, and an information clearinghouse. In its first 15 years, it has evolved into a national center of assistance for all correctional professionals. The Institute also awards grants for practical research, evaluation, and policy and program formulation in corrections.

Administered by a director appointed by the U.S. Attorney General, the Institute is overseen by a 16-member Advisory Board. Though the Institute is independent of the Bureau of Prisons, it shares certain administrative functions with the Bureau and each year receives a distinct appropriation as a line item in the Bureau's budget. The Institute's administrative offices, Prisons Division, and Community Corrections Division are housed in the Bureau's Central Office, while its National Academy of Corrections, Jails Division, and Information Center are located in Boulder, Colorado.



A training conference for new directors of State corrections systems, sponsored by NIC, was held in Santa Fe, NM, June 29-July 2. Each year the Institute provides funds to the Association of State Correctional Administrators to conduct two sessions for new directors and another for all directors of State corrections departments.

Project networking

Bureau and Institute staff have often worked together to coordinate resources to assist State and local personnel. While the Institute provides most services through a pool of independent consultants, on occasion Bureau personnel are requested to provide the assistance needed by a State agency. In such cases the Institute coordinates and finances the assistance. For example, in April of this year, the Bureau's Food and Farm Services Administrator Jerry Collins and MCC San Diego Food Service Administrator Robert Paradise travelled to Hawaii under NIC auspices. They were responding to a request from the Hawaii Department of Corrections for assistance in evaluating its food service operations and making recommendations for establishing a unified, systemwide food service program. In another instance, the

Institute underwrote expenses for two teams of correctional professionals from the Virgin Islands to visit MCC Miami to study classification processes. In both cases, the Institute received a written request from the State department of corrections and coordinated with the Bureau regional directors and institutional wardens to arrange the assistance. Likewise, Institute staff are available to assist Bureau personnel. During the Atlanta/Oakdale hostage crisis in November 1987, the Institute provided staff support to the Director's Office and helped develop the after-action report once the crisis was resolved.

Information services

More generally, however, Institute staff are able to assist Bureau staff by provid-

ing information and referrals on different subjects. Each year the Institute sponsors specific studies and projects and develops a broad expertise in those subject areas. Frequently, the Institute compiles information for use by the Bureau on programs available in State correctional institutions. NIC staff can respond authoritatively on such subjects as community corrections programming, detention issues, overcrowding, institutional security, classification, treatment of sex offenders, prison parenting programs, recreational programs, and others as the result of extensive involvement with projects of national scope.

Training

The Institute's training academy in Boulder, Colorado, conducts numerous training programs each year, primarily for State and local correctional administrators, managers, and trainers. Up to two Bureau of Prisons staff can attend each course. (A descriptive schedule of courses, which includes application procedures, is available from the Academy.) Conversely, the Bureau makes available a limited number of slots in its training programs for State and local practitioners with a special training need; these individuals attend a Bureau program under the sponsorship of the Institute, which pays their travel and per diem expenses. The Bureau also provides a special course in locksmithing at the Staff Training Academy in Glynco, Georgia, for State and local practitioners sponsored by the Institute.

Resources

The NIC Information Center is a national clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information on correctional subjects, and the Bureau of Prisons is both a welcome contributor and client.

The Information Center has a computerized data base and linkages with other clearinghouses; it specializes in collecting materials from State and local agencies on correctional operations and programs. The Information Center also maintains a collection of Bureau publications, program statements, research reviews, and other materials and shares them as appropriate with State and local agencies.

The Center conducts quarterly surveys of correctional agencies throughout the country and compiles and disseminates information gathered from State prison systems, large jail systems, and community corrections programs. (The Bureau participates in the quarterly surveys of State prison systems.) The results of the State department of corrections surveys are compiled in a *Corrections Quarterly*, which contains information on recent litigation, legislation, prison capacities, and new programs. Copies of this document are distributed to the Bureau regional directors and are available to Bureau personnel through the regional offices.

The Information Center also coordinates the Institute's Correctional Training Network (CTN), through which lesson plans, audiovisuals, and other training materials submitted by Federal, State, and local agencies are made available to other agencies throughout the country. All Bureau wardens are sent the CTN catalog and need only contact the Information Center to obtain loan copies of the training materials.

Bureau personnel are welcome to contact the Information Center for any type of information on corrections and are encouraged to submit their published and unpublished documents that would be of use to others. The Information Center is

currently beginning a Correctional Education Project, with emphasis on acquiring a collection of curriculum materials, program descriptions, and evaluations in all areas of adult correctional education, including vocational education.

Staff assignments

The Bureau and the Institute work together in another mutually beneficial way. At any given time, a few Bureau of Prisons staff augment the small, 41-person staff of the Institute. Currently, four Bureau employees are working at the Institute in both Boulder and Washington, D.C., as Correctional Program Specialists. As NIC professional staff, whose salaries are paid by the Institute on a reimbursable basis, these individuals manage grant projects; provide technical assistance; plan, design, and implement training programs; and otherwise assist State and local agencies. While Bureau people stay with the Institute for only a few years before assuming a new Bureau assignment, they are able to gain a broad understanding and exposure to correctional operations at all levels of Government and to work on a variety of projects. To date, 18 Bureau staff members have also been NIC staff members.

The NIC administrative offices can be contacted at 202-724-3106; the Prisons Division, at 202-724-8300; the Community Corrections Division, at 202-724-7995; the Jails Division, at 303-939-8866; the Academy, at 303-939-8855; and the Information Center, at 303-939-8877. ■

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