



COLLEGE GUILD

Fall 2013 Newsletter

RESPECT
REDUCES
RECIDIVISM

AD-SEG by Logan D.

Benjamin Disraeli (1766-1848) once said, "The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes." But how is a person supposed to prepare and be ready if he is forced to spend the better part of his life in an intellectual and emotional vacuum? As an Administrative Segregation prisoner in Texas, I spend 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, in a stark 9' by 5' cell, the walls of which must be kept free of any decoration. Ad-Seg goes by different names in different states, such as SHU (Special Housing Unit), but it's all the same.

Most of us in Ad-Seg have very little support from outside the walls. Older prisoners like myself are left alone as our family and friends pass away or become infirm through the years of our lengthy confinement. I have gradually been left in an ocean of isolation with the sharks of insanity circling about. If I am lucky, I will see 3 guards, 2 nurses and 4 inmate janitors during any given 24 hour period—see them, not converse. They pass by my cell counting, cleaning or handing out food, mail or medicine. They may be in my view for 5-6 seconds if they walk slowly. Usually I don't even know their names. The daily interaction and casual conversations which are the lifeblood of societal humanity, the glue that holds a human being's sanity together, that lets us know we are not alone or forgotten—such is non-existent in the normal Ad-Seg experience. Very often Ad-Seg prisoners experience stir-craziness or what we refer to as our "Away Time".

Some cling to the Away place, give up their sanity for the vari-

ety of voices, hallucinations and such which allow them some escape. Others seek ways to hurt themselves (cutting, placing fire ants on sensitive parts of the body) to give themselves any form of sensory input in this deprivation and isolation. Then there are those like me who struggle time after time to find our way back to sanity and humanness, who refuse to allow our desperate hunger for intellectual and emotional nourishment to be buried under the weight

of Ad-Seg's deprivations.

How do I remain human? Can I share intellectual conversation with the wall? (I have, but received no acceptable feedback!) How can some apathetic guard I see for 5 seconds understand when I say, "This is my heart! Look! Human!" But I am little more than cement in the wall to the people around me. I was slowly drowning in this ocean of isolation. Then some-

one threw me a lifeline, a raft upon which I could climb to experience a small measure of humanness once more. I found College Guild.

The intellectual fodder provided me when I took my first course, Greek Mythology, was a treasure to my starved mind. Much, much more were the readers' responses. They spoke to me like I am an actual human being whose ideas, opinions and feelings mean something to them. They cared! I know what CG readers do is difficult at times. I am all too aware how we Ad-Seg prisoners experience amplified emotional responses to even the slightest kindness.

(continued on page 2)

"How do I
remain
human?"

Update on CG's Waiting List

We have now received the final check from Doris Buffett's Sunshine Lady Foundation. For the past three years, her help has allowed us to serve a student body of 400-500. Without a grant College Guild can no longer afford to pay a part-time office manager. In preparation for this change, last July we closed the waiting list. In one year we had to notify 947 prisoners that we could no longer help. Here is an excerpt from one letter we received:

"Places like College Guild give prisoners hope and helps dissipate some of the anger many of us have by showing there are people in society who still care about us. That means a lot because many prisoners don't have any type of connection with society and that makes them bitter and angry, thus when they are released they tend to go back to the life which landed them in prison to begin with. Having someone to encourage them and showing that they genu-

inely care helps to change attitudes and set expectations, making one less likely to fail because they don't want to disappoint those who had faith in them, but most importantly themselves because they've built a new found self-confidence."

As of Sept. 1, 2013, 150 more have been turned away. However, in expectation of readers returning from summer vacation, for the first time in a year, applications were sent to 30 prisoners who have been waiting the longest. Hopefully that number can grow. If any College Guild supporters in the Brunswick area can donate 3-4 hours/week in the office, please let us know (colleg guild@gmail.com). We will be particularly short handed in December and January. We have the readers and the students, but without administrative help, the units can't get out, and all those who are hoping to participate will continue to wait.

AdSeg (cont'd from page 1)

Caring people like the CG readers must be tempted at times to respond personally to such need. Nonetheless, they manage to tread that line between professional instructor and caring friend to help us find stability.

Most SHU prisoners are released with no preparation. Even general population prisoners are lucky if they can get into limited pre-release programs. Every Texas prison facility has a "transitional planning officer" whose job is to help prisoners prepare for release. At my unit, she has about 3,000 men in general population, maybe another 500-800 in AdSeg. How much time can she devote to each inmate's preparation?

I can tell you how it feels to be released "cold" from AdSeg. There is a "post-release shock" even for people who do get to a pre-release program. We've spent years or decades with someone dictating everything we do every day. Then, all of a sudden, we are expected to run our own lives and daily schedules. Even our parole officers are demanding, "What are you going to do?!" In 1989, when I was released "cold" to my Mom's house from AdSeg, I basically self-isolated for the first few weeks because all the color, noise and physical sensations had me wired up, stressed out and jumpy. I was unable to sleep until I'd stripped my room of décor and shut myself in. (And I'd only spent 2½ years in SHU before my release; imagine how it is after 5, 10 or 20 years of isolation!) A common result of the treatment we get and the lack of preparation for release is predictable. We cannot function normally in society. This leads to 60-65% of releases committing new crimes or violating some condition of release. Others become victims of circumstance due to PTSD, hence we find ourselves back in prison. I was no exception and was reconfined as a violator of a single condition of release.

Now as I near re-release a few months away, I am once again without assistance, only worse than before. The mother I released to in 1989 passed away from Alzheimer's in 2011. In the past 24 months, I have mailed letters to 17 organizations which supposedly assist releases, also to 11 halfway houses. I have yet to receive a single reply. So again, I will be released "cold" with but \$100 Gate Money, only this time I have no home or room to get away from the tsunami of sensory bombardment I'll face after 3 years of SHU isolation. I am anxious to be free but terrified of freedom. In truth, I don't know what to expect, so I just prepare to deal with it minute by minute as it comes. I am still isolated, still in sensory deprivation, but College Guild has helped to keep me afloat. I will be calling on that stability as I face release.

[To read about the experiences of other SHU and general population prisoners, Logan recommends checking out www.prisonerexpress.org.]

Thanks to William A., Stefan C., Nathan S., and Jerold Z. for their donations of stamps. Thanks to Danielle D. for her contribution!

**FRACTURED FAIRY TALES**

Beginning in September, the College Guild Website is showing Mark Twain, Daniel DeFoe, the Brothers Grimm and every other creator of goblins, witches, wolves and brave children the truth behind the fiction...well, several versions of it anyway. Don't miss 12 delightful fairy tales which are being posted one at a time, once a week at collegeguild.org. Written originally as an assignment for the Creative Language course, these stories show College Guild students' imagination at their best. Which is your favorite? Email College Guild with your comments and we will send them to the authors.

E-MAIL OR HARD COPY??

College Guild's Spring Newsletter was emailed out to about 1/3 of our mailing list. The result was that we received a lot less feedback, more people saying that they never got it or never read it and many fewer donations! With big servers like Google and Yahoo now dividing email into 3 categories, it will be even more unlikely that everyone will see the newsletter and pass it along. This is our chance, twice a year, to keep you informed and share the words of our students. For these reasons, we are going back to mailing hard copies of the newsletter

Reminder—Use goodsearch.com, instead of other search engines, and by naming College Guild as your non-profit of choice, we will receive 1¢ for every search. Use goodsearch to purchase items on the web and many vendors will give a percentage to CG!

Congratulations to CG student Sean J. White for his exhibition of paintings, "Skalded in Oil", which was held Aug. 21—Sept. 13 at Illinois Central College!

check it out ⇨

Tony B. donated the beautiful painting you see to the right (on p.3) to help College Guild with fundraising. Check it out on our website in full color at www.collegeguild.org. The painting is done in colored pencil with an acrylic finish and is 8"x10". It will be auctioned off with a minimum bid of \$100. Mail or email your bid to College Guild. The highest bid will be listed on the website. Bidders have until December 1st when the winner will be announced. Our appreciation to Tony for his generosity.

College Guild Library

The Mystic Heart of Justice by Denise Breton and Stephen Lehman is a recent donation to the CG library. Those in the Brunswick area are welcome to borrow from our collection of criminal justice titles.

Homegoing

Ships glide ever toward the stars,
Leaving behind drought and wars.
I don't understand all the fuss;
As if we didn't bring ourselves with us.

Timothy O'Brien M.

BLUE EVENT HORIZON

THERE IS A GREAT BLACK HOLE
ASTRONOMERS SAY, AT THE CENTER
OF THE MILKY WAY. A PLACE
WHERE EVEN LIGHT MARKS TIME.

IT IS HERE, WHERE TIME ITSELF
SLIDES BACKWARDS – SLIPPING
EVER SO SLIGHTLY, UNTIL SECONDS
TAKE PLACE OVER CENTURIES

AND CENTURIES TAKE AEONS
TO PASS – THAT OUR HEARTS RESIDE,
GRASPING AT RAYS OF LIGHT THAT BEND
AND BRAKE IN GRAVITY'S DREADFUL WELL.

JEROLD Z.

A Humbling Find

My bare foot sucked wetly in the moist sand
Salty water peppered my thought lined face.
Side stepping a conch shell
I pick it up
and nestle it closely to my ear

Inside I hear a Breathing Ocean
that never was
an orchestra of crashing waves
pulling tides and lunar swells

The diversity of a hidden world
removes the veil of Daily Blindness
that measures importance by size
and monetary value

Completing my obligation
I return the conch for the
next traveler

Joseph H.

I Have

...a bit of butter
for my piece of bread
a roof to keep rain
off of my head;

...walls to keep out
freezing winds of winter
a locked door
no enemy may enter;

...books to peruse
to occupy my time
memories
to tenant my mind;

...no love here
but I've loved before



Current College Guild Courses

Art of the Masters

Biography

Captivities

Creative Language

Dogs

Drama Club 1 & 2

Exercise & Relaxation

Families

Gardening

Greek Mythology

Histories

Journalism Club

Logic & Puzzles

The Numbers Game

Philosophy

Poetry Club 1 & 2

Precision Drawing

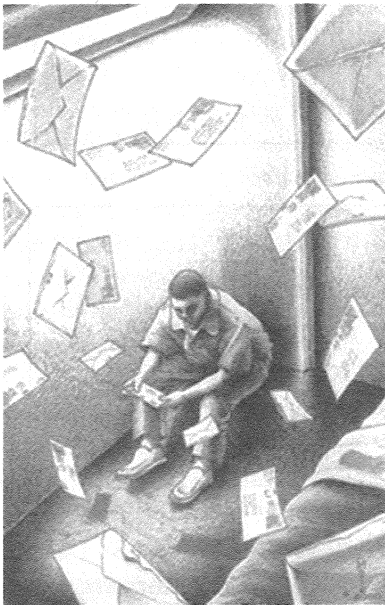
Sampler

Short Story Club 1 & 2

Sports

Travel

Artist: Matt Matteo



Frontiers of Justice, Vol. 3: The Crime Zone ©2000

OUR MISSION

*To stimulate in prisoners
an interest in life long learning
by providing a selection of free,
non-traditional correspondence
courses.*

HELP US SURVIVE!

___ My donation of \$12 provides free dictionaries to two prisoners.

___ My donation of \$46 buys 100 first class stamps.

___ My donation of \$75 supports one prisoner for one year.

___ My additional donation of \$ ___ helps us to continue offering the respect that can change prisoners' lives.

___ I would like to become a "Sustaining Friend" with an annual contribution of \$ ____.

contact us at colleguild@gmail.com



College Guild can now accept donations via PayPal. Just go to our web page and choose the donate button.



___ Please send me more information.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Many thanks on behalf of College Guild volunteers and student-prisoners for your generosity!

Your donation may be tax-deductible.

For more information go to www.colleguild.org