



COLLEGE GUILD

Spring 2013 Newsletter

RESPECT
REDUCES
RECIDIVISM

Their Saving Grace

by Larry Lehna

The prison experience begins with an attempt at de-individualization; this is done by assigning a number and issuing a uniform. The law states that confining a person is punishment enough, there need not be any other measures. Many of the prison guards do not seem to agree with the law and take it upon themselves to deliver a lesson in humiliation, degradation, and outright bullying. (The Stanford Prison Experiment documents how this happens.) This is quite disconcerting and will eventually have an adverse effect on a prisoner's emotional stability. That was what happened in my case. What made it almost unbearable was knowing that I would be subject to this treatment for at least ten more years. I was close to the breaking point; I was ready to give them a damn good reason for treating me badly.

Before it got to that point I was lucky enough to find College Guild. I was one of their first students. When my first unit arrived I realized it was structured so that a person could make up his own mind about how in depth he wanted to go. I used it as an escape mechanism and gave it 100 percent. It was calming to work on a scholarly assignment. I became so engrossed that the cacophony that is a cell block would, at times, fade away for hours at a time. Bliss. I did not know it then, but the best was yet to come.

When my next unit arrived, there were also pages of commentary on my first submission. Someone had not only taken the time to read my thoughts; they had responded as if my work was relevant. They addressed me with respect. Words cannot describe the feelings and emotions at being treated as a human again. I still get choked up, just remembering that first evaluation. They were kind enough to concentrate their comments on the positive aspects.

The supportive words rekindled my joy in academe. I threw myself into the new unit. I knew the sooner I sent it, the sooner I would get their response. I continued with College Guild until I received my parole seven years later. The best days of my incarceration were the days I received a new unit with the response from the previous one. The responses were always helpful and encouraging. The fire that these wonderful people ignited still burns. I was released in November of 2009. I received my associate's degree from Oakland Community College in August 2011 with a 4.0 GPA. Now I am a senior at the University of Michigan. My GPA has slipped to 3.92 because of two A- grades. These professors do not seem nearly as concerned with my self-esteem as the people at College Guild. That is fine. College Guild offered their respect and support when I could not find it elsewhere. I would not be where I am without their help. I can handle it from here.

Kudos

College Guild congratulates student Ronnie M. on the presentation of his play, *Lineage*, at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. His play was a part of the "From Prison to the Stage" production presented by Safe Streets Arts Foundation this past September.

The Safe Streets Arts Foundation uses the arts as a rehabilitative and therapeutic tool for men and women in prison. Participating in the arts while in prison helps inmates develop a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem which are vital for reintegration back into society. It also helps them convey their message through the

art they create—an apology, a call for reconciliation or a cry of innocence.

College Guild also congratulates Jerold Z. for the presentation of a short story he wrote as an assignment from College Guild's Creative Language course. *Dragnet: The Goody Shop Sting* was adapted from the short story written by Jerold and was presented as a part of the Center Stage Players production, *Lives of Others*, this past November in Brunswick, Maine. Jerold's story was done as a radio program with sound effects by a jazz clarinet player. It was a hit! The Center Stage Players are a part of The Theater Project, a community based theater in Brunswick, Maine.

New Courses from Volunteers and Students!

After working with students on CG courses, some readers have become inspired to write courses of their own, (e.g. Gardening, Biography, Art of the Masters). This year we already have two new courses up and running—Philosophy and Sports. Another reader is working on Game Theory! Do you know the meaning of “game theory”? That’s the first question students are asked. Game theory is the study of strategic decision making. The creator of the Mythology course has partially completed a new course called “Wonders of the World”.

It’s not only CG’s readers who get inspired. We currently have two students writing courses. Advanced History will be based on a course previously offered, The History Scholar. It was a unique course because it was set up like a seminar on issues involving the first half of the 20th century. Danielle is reformatting it so any volunteer will be comfortable providing feedback.

The other course in the works is Temporal Physics, the study of time. Logan is tackling this new branch of physics, eager to introduce CG students to this fascinating field. Here is one assignment he has in store for future Temporal Physics students: *Do you think time has its own energy like heat or electricity?*

How would you respond to this assignment?

A third CG student, Paul, has begun to work on a much needed course on grammar!

Another note on courses: Thanks to a volunteer who has taken on the mammoth job of handling the website, readers can now access units online. This means College Guild can send out student work without the assignments, saving money by printing fewer units and spending less on postage.

Waiting List

As of Dec. 1, 2012, all those who had been on our waiting list were sent applications. Although it’s satisfying to no longer have a wait list, the reason is that we are no longer accepting new students. Between July 1, 2012 and April 1, 2013 College Guild has had to turn away about 750 prospective students. Our priority is now on continuing to provide services to our current students. Our grant from Doris Buffett will run out June 2013, and we will be relying on individual contributions. We continue to look for funding that will make it possible for us to accept new students.

Donations

\$100 in memory of June Snow
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 \$50 in memory of June Snow
 \$100 in memory of Fritz Kempner
 \$100 in memory of Fritz Kempner
 \$6000 in memory of Fritz Kempner
 \$500 in memory of Barbara Cady
 \$10 in memory of Leonard Cirino
 \$30 in memory of Clement Biddle
 \$1000 in memory of Clement Biddle

\$25 in honor of Catherine & Peter G.
 \$100 in honor of Peggy L.
 \$800 in honor of Julie Z.
 \$50 in honor of Barbara Y.

College Guild thanks students Jerold Z., Carlos B., Ray R., Jose A., and Richard R. for their monetary donations; Jerold Z., Nathan S., John K., Stefan C., James P., Jose A., William A. and Rick G. for their donations of stamps; and Bryan P., Al K., Dani D., and Nathan S. for their fundraising letters and ideas.

In Memory

It is with great sadness that College Guild bids farewell to three of its most dedicated volunteers.

Fritz Kempner was born in Germany and he studied and taught all over the world. He was College Guild’s first reader! His background in academia and love of discourse made him a favorite among students both in and out of prison. At the age of 91, he was still sharing his passion for classics with public school students.

June Snow was one of College Guild’s first readers and one of the few who asked for at least two units every week! She helped CG students with their writing and poetry. In recent years, she had begun to outline plans for a CG music course. It was always her mission to be of service to those in need.

Margaret Raymond worked “behind the scenes” at College Guild, helping with some of the tasks that allowed our organization to function smoothly. Her work with College Guild as well as Amnesty International and other organizations echoed her unending belief in peace and justice for all.

The Mountains Weep

The magnificent peaks are the hands of the earth
Futilely outstretched toward a withdrawing creator
"Don't leave me," they cry
As fingertips brush the clouds
For one last touch

Alan H.

Waiting on Inspiration

I sit staring at blank paper
waiting for inspiration to strike
doodling stickmen with the ferocity
of Picasso. The words will come.
Lady patience sits beside me
giggling from time to time.
She loves the Rhythm of my breaths.
The words will come. All I have
to do is sit. Above me,
seven blackbirds take flight
from the hint of a hawk.

Carlos B.

Tightrope

Each footstep carefully calculated,
I tread on the brink of calamity,
a paltry slip to a great fall.
Crowds don't gather below me,
only a few friends, some family,
soon all but a couple will flee,
so helpless, unable to watch any longer.
How did I possibly end up here?
I do recall some of the climb,
a crowded and noisy ascent,
now on the rope, so quietly alone.

James M.

My heart so empty
Loneliness wreaking havoc
In my world of one

Edward M.

Man in a Boat

He's ridden the storm out
As long as he can remember.
Yellow slicker, small boat
Tossed about on a boiling sea.
Layers of oil and pigment
Captured by a wooden frame.
Fight as he might with sting and sweat
Escape is impossible from Grandma's wall.

Rick G.

Navigational Hazards

We plotted
100 times our course
a Northwest Passage
in theory
without regard for fog
traffic, currents
or Juan de Fuca's ghost
face-down in the tide his
fisherman's cap and suspenders
unmarked
on our charts

Jerold Z.

The barn was empty, in disrepair
old hoofprints and tufts of hair
dust and musty air
ghosts of cowboys stand and stare

Wes H.

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 collegeguild@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.

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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.collegeguild.org