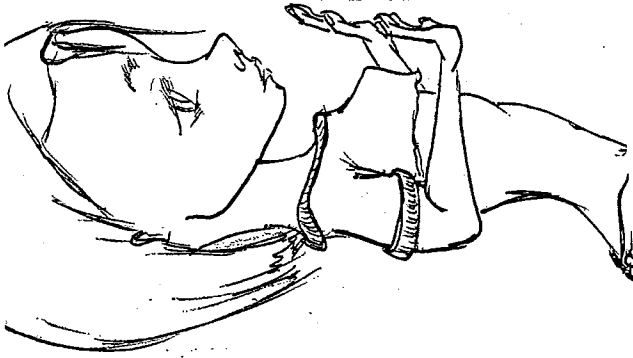


unpredictable and left me a little confused. Overall, its a cinematic triumph that should not be missed. While the soundtrack may not be up to Smug Jim's approval, we still give the film 4.5 out of 5 on the Smugness scale.



Support Us

This 'zine is published and distributed entirely by prisoners. We do not receive any funding from the prison nor the Department of Corrections. We are grateful for any assistance our readers can provide, even \$2 to cover the cost of printing and mailing.

We can accept donations in two ways:

Cashapp

9292552550 [MelindaM128]

Please memo that its for "IB64"

jPay

Go to www.japy.com

Look in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for "Charles Picarella Jr.". Submit your donation using your debit or credit card.

We appreciate any help that you may be able to provide. As much as we enjoy publishing the 'zine, we can't do it without a little bit of financial assistance.

IB64

ISSUE 3

Jan. 2025

Price:
FREE

KOPIMI

A 'zine by Prisoners!

Welcome back to another issue of IB64, America's foremost prison-based 'zine. Thanks to everybody that responded last month; your feedback means a lot to us. We especially enjoy receiving 'zines, although it seems like there isn't many left out there.

Thanks to everybody that forwards their issue to somebody else. We struggle to get in contact with people so its very valuable to us to have each issue get passed on a few times to increase our readership.

We're still working on getting the "personals" section going. Its been a little difficult to coordinate things but we're hoping to have something for February.

We're also still working on the online presence. We're fully committed to continuing to publish a physical issue each month for mailing but we realize that so much is internet based now that we can't afford to ignore that demographic if we want to have success getting our message out.

Note: Our apologies for the changing fonts. The Department of Corrections took my/our word processor. We're working on that....

The Department of Corrections' mail system is a bit complex. We regret that but its beyond our control.

Bound Material

Bound materials are publications with staples or fasteners, like books, magazines, or 'zines. They must be sent from the original publisher.

Security Processing Center
Charles Picarella #MZ7013
268 Bricker Rd.
Bellefonte, PA 16823-1667

Correspondence

Correspondence is basically anything other than bound materials, such as letters, artwork, and internet printouts.

Smart Communication / PADOC
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SCI Mahanoy
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St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Prisoner Artwork

We are always looking for prisoner artwork to publish. Of course, we'd include contact information so that readers might contact the artist. Try to keep the submission less than 3.25" by 5". Black ink copies best and we'll try to work with whatever is sent. We'd also welcome written submissions so long as they don't advocate violence or anything illegal. And seriously, no poetry...

We feel that this is an example of the sickness that has infected our criminal justice system. We are no longer a nation of equal justice and law for all. We are a nation where money, connections, and political affiliation gives license to commit crime with the expectation of leniency. We see politicians argue for "tough on crime" sentences for those that damage peoples' lives then turn around and grant pardons for people that has used their positions to damage people's lives. We see politicians advocating for a need for "law and order" then vow to pardon Jan. 6 rioters who attempted to subvert law and order. That is not how the system was designed to function.

Take a moment to ask yourself whether you would receive a pardon should you find yourself on the wrong side of the law. If your answer is "No, I'm poor and not politically connected", you are likely to understand the injustice. Maybe its time to consider some changes for how the system operates and for who is operating it.

TCM Movie Review

Three Women (1977) Color

Set in contemporary (at that time) California, overbearing and pathetic Milly (Susan Sarandon) befriends shy Pinky (Sissy Spasic) at a theraputic spa for geriatrics.

Pinky emerges as a sort of bit of a sociopath in several confusing episodes including a botched suicide attempt. There is also another woman who plays a bit of a minor role and its not entirely clear if she's the third woman or if Pinky's transformation is the third woman.

Its slow to develop but the ending is completely

This month, we go a bit beyond the topic of prison reform. We'd like to address an issue that is relevant to some prisoners within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections: President Joe Biden's pardon of former judges Ciavarella and Conahan.

During the early 2000s, a juvenile detention center was built in Northeast Pennsylvania. The facility's operators developed a relationship with Luzerne County Judges Conahan and Ciavarella. A scheme was launched in which the judges would sentence youthful offenders to time in the detention center in exchange for kickbacks. Soon, the judges were sending youths who appeared before them to time in the detention center, many for very minor crimes and, in some cases, without even having been convicted. Eventually, the scheme came to light and both judges were charged with federal crimes relating to their malfeasance. The ensuing scandal became known as "Kids for Cash". After years of delay, the disgraced judges were sentenced to serve time in federal custody.

Now, before he leaves office, Biden has seen fit to pardon both men. The pardon was done quietly and without any suggestion that the acts of clemency were in the interest of justice. The victims of the scheme are no longer children. They have grown into adults and many of them got stuck in the cycle of incarceration. Nobody asked for their input before granting pardons to these former judges whom abused their position of authority to derail lives for financial gain.

Jay: I don't know that the 'zine has an exact "mission" but we hope to raise some awareness about the issues relating to corrections. We feel like people think of incarceration in the abstract but we want people to realize that the jails and prisons in their backyard are real and very costly to the community.

Luke D: I don't know why television programs show jails and prisons like they do. Most of prison life is just thousands of guys sitting around on housing units trying to pass time playing cards. Its become little more than warehousing humans and is a shameful waste of resources. The idea that guys are running around the prison involved in all sorts of schemes and escape attempts and riots is just inaccurate and misplaced.

PJ: Parole is done differently in each jurisdiction. In Pennsylvania, sentences have two numbers, a minimum and a maximum. The minimum is the term that must be served before a prisoner is eligible for release on parole. The maximum is the term that a prisoner could serve to complete their sentence. If they've not made parole by the maximum, they still must be released. Pennsylvania doesn't offer any sort of "good time" or "earned time" credit right now but there is legislation in the works to allow prisoners to reduce their minimum by completing educational or vocational programs. Many other jurisdictions have similar ways for prisoners to earn time credits.

Becky: Yes, in addition to prisoner artwork, we would consider publishing articles written by outside sources.

Steve-D: Unfortunately, you're correct. Prison have become something of dumping grounds for people struggling with mental health issues. At SCI - Mahanoy, there are entire housing units designed for prisoners with mental health issues totaling about 25% of the population. Its a sad commentary on the state of affairs in prisons and in society in general.

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Legal Update

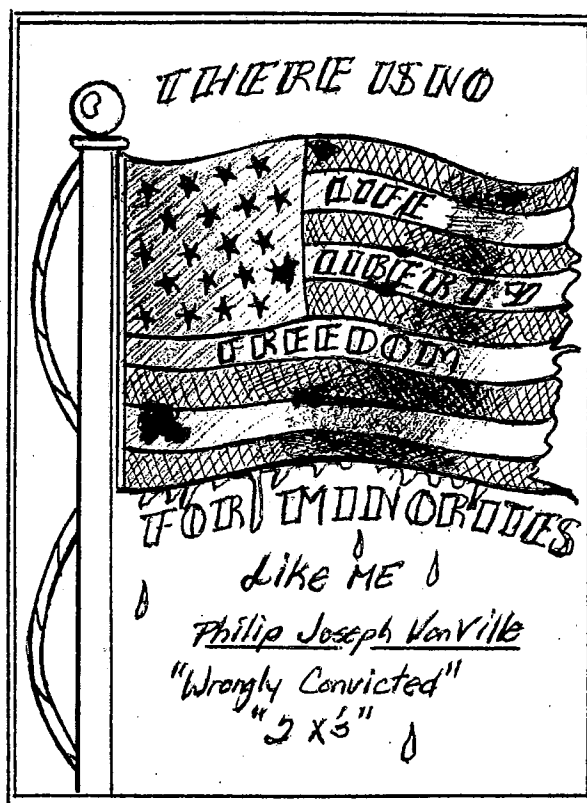
Commonwealth v. Picarella
No. CP-49-CR-472-2013
Northumberland County, Pennsylvania

After 13 years, Editor Charlie is back in Court appealing his 2012 conviction. New evidence has emerged that the prosecution withheld exculpatory evidence. Charlie filed a petition in October and the Commonwealth failed to respond within 60 days as directed by the Court. Charlie has made a motion to the Court to direct the Commonwealth to provide him with documentary evidence in preparation for an evidentiary hearing.

Commonwealth v. Picarella
No. CP-49-CR-635-2024
Northumberland County, Pennsylvania

Editor Charlie's new case. Its a misdemeanor 2 count of fleeing and eluding. The Commonwealth offered Charlie time-served to plead guilty. He declined the offer.

There are reasons why Charlie declined a time-served offer and we hope to discuss them next month. Charlie has asked that the matter be scheduled for trial.



Prisoner Profile

Philip Vonville has an interesting story. He has twice been convicted only to have the convictions overturned on appeal. He was convicted for a third time and is now, once again, fighting his case on appeal.

We hear a lot of people in prison claim to be innocent but we believe that Philip is actually innocent of the crimes for which he was convicted. We support his efforts and he welcomes anybody who might wish to contact him to do so at the listed address.

Prisoner Personals

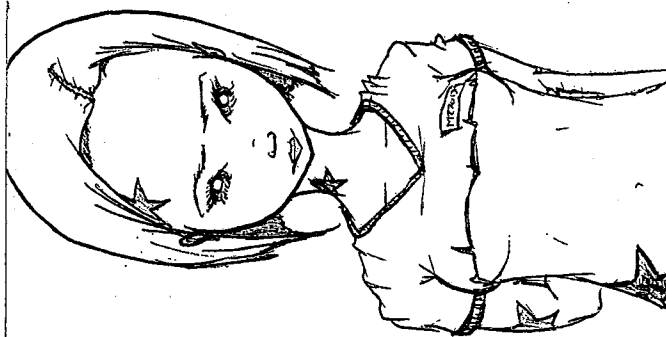
This is a new column. We'd like to attempt to match prisoners and people on the outside with a focus on networking prisoners that are going to be released with people outside that might be able to provide them with some support. We'd also like to use this as a way to help offset costs. Of course, nobody is going to pay to obtain contact information for men in prison but we hope that there might be some men out there that would donate a few dollars for contact information for women in prison.

Right now, we're trying to interest women seeking networking opportunities to place an ad with us (for free), so that we can offer a diverse cross section of women for men looking to make contact. To obtain contact information, we'd ask for a \$3 Cashapp donation. Simply send the personal ad's reference number in the Cashapp memo and we'll send the contact information in return.

For prisoners wanting to place an advertisement, please have your people send us your contact information and a short advertisement for publication. Below is an example:

single/caucasian/male
45yo 5'10" 240lbs
convicted of drug distribution
eligible for parole in May 2025
Seeking opportunities for business
Ref# 01-24

The ads are free for prisoners to place. Be creative and be direct in what you're seeking for best results.



Get Involved

We try to raise awareness of corrections related issues in this publication. Some readers have noted, fairly, that we don't offer many solutions. We appreciate that constructive criticism. We'd like to offer the following suggestion for our reader as a solution: get involved.

We realize that people have lives out there. We know that your time is valuable to you. However, there are small steps that can be taken that would be meaningful to effect change. Most of them are within the capacity of anybody with 15 minutes of free time and a phone.

1. Reach out to a prisoner. Everybody has a brother, uncle, niece, former coworker, classmate, or somebody else that was in their life that has struggled with incarceration. Many jails and prisons offer email services which make it convenient to contact prisoners. Consider reaching out to them and offering the help them move forward with their lives. Write them a letter of support for their parole hearing. Assist them in finding housing or employment when they are released. Any offer of assistance is beneficial to people that often feel as if they've been forgotten.

4. seek change via elected officials. You don't need to know much about prisons and jails to know that you don't want to pay for them. Pennsylvania's general budget allocated \$3.1 billion for corrections and most states have comparable amounts of funding. Send an email or place a phone call to your legislators to help them understand that you aren't willing to pay that cost. If they aren't interested in listening to reason, seek candidates that understand the need for reform.

3. Contact the judges of your local court system. Consider submitting a character reference for defendants facing incarceration. Let the court know that you don't want to pay \$40,000 or more per year to house a prisoner. Often it is more cost effective to place offenders in rehabilitation or treatment settings than incarceration. Its worth nothing that judges in many jurisdictions are elected. Many have the good sense to take heed when their constitutions seek alternatives to incarceration.

Really, any effort that you might be able to makes helps to move the ball. Even having a conversation about not wanting to pay for the prison-industrial complex is a way to get involved. Understanding numbers relating to recidivism or the monetary costs of corrections is a way to get involved. While that may not be a quick and easy solution, its the solution that is needed to address the issues discussed in this 'zine.

We thank you for any effort that you may be able to make.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

House Bill 1678

A House Bill proposing legislation which would allow state prisoners to earn credits to reduce their time until parole eligibility by completing vocational and educational programs while incarcerated.

This legislation is premised on the facts that studies have shown prisoners who participate in correctional programs have a 43% lower odds of recidivating and a 13% higher chance of getting a job after incarceration than prisoners who did not. Further, for every \$1 invested in prison education and vocational training programs, \$4-\$5 is saved in the three years post-release. These figures, from the Pennsylvania Prison Society, should be meaningful to the taxpayers of Pennsylvania.

The legislation is sponsored by Rep. Napoleon Nelson (Glenside) and Rep. Natelia Mihalek (Pittsburgh). We ask our readers to show support by contacting their state Representatives and Senators to move the legislation forward. We appreciate any efforts you might make to support this legislation.

PLACE YOUR ADVERTISEMENT HERE

Its free. Contact Charlie for details.

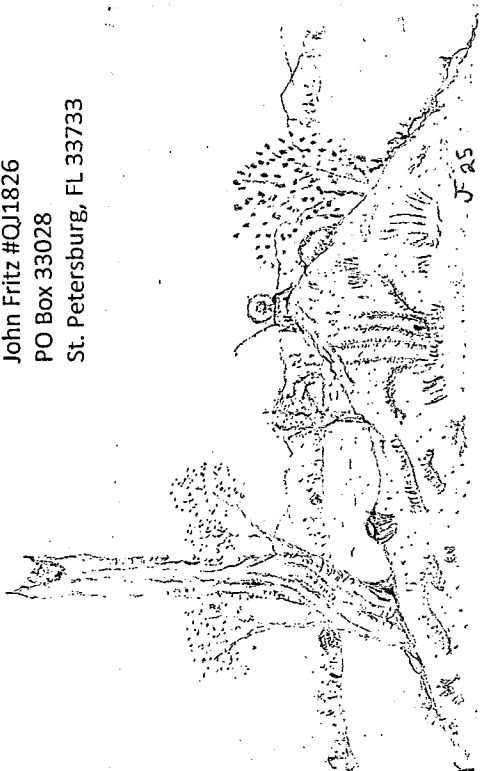
'zines and Mailart

Recently, I received a letter from fellow 'zine publisher Food Fortunata of Ear of Corn. We both lament the demise of 'zines being sent in the mail. It seems that a lot of the culture has moved online and miss the joy of receiving a physical copy of a publication through the post.

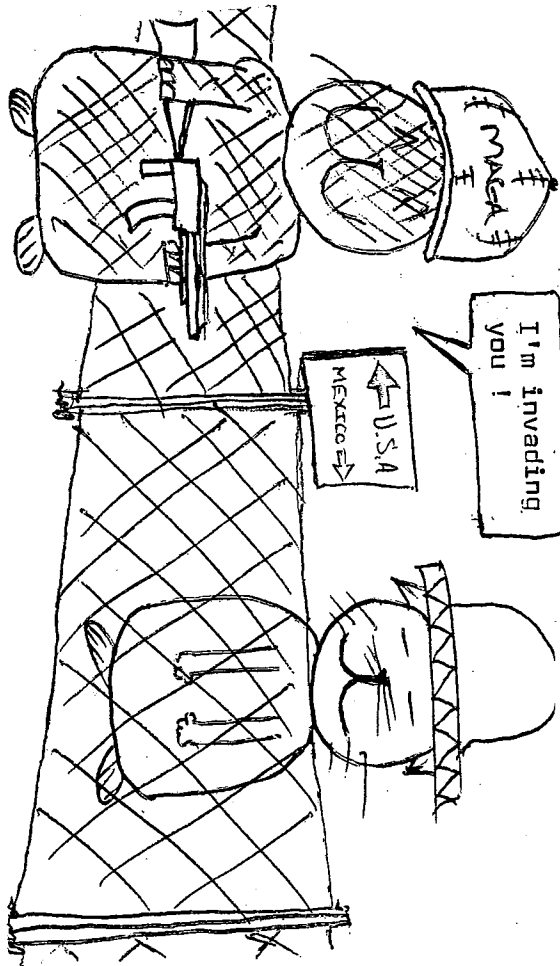
I recall a time when I used to receive no less than a dozen different 'zine each month and that was as recently as 2014. Now, I can only think of about 4 or 5 that regularly send anything through the mail. It's sad for me but I guess that I have to accept that is just the reality of the passing of the art of 'zining.

We're going to keep on publishing here at IB64. We don't expect that it will change much but we aren't ready to let go of something that has given us so much happiness over the years and helped us to pass the time. We hope that we might always have a few readers.

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Seeking Assistance

We are always looking for some assistance finding addresses and contact information. If you may be able to help us, please let us know.

Prison Reform

Many of the questions we receive are about what prison life entails and we find that most readers lack a comprehensive understanding of what incarceration has become. We would like to take an opportunity to help our readers understand what, exactly, they are paying for when funding corrections.

IB64 is published from the State Correctional Institution - Mahanoy, a 2200 prisoner facility located near Frackville, Pennsylvania. The prison houses Pennsylvania state prisoners, those sentenced to maximum sentences of 2 years or greater. Most prisoners live in a cell with one other prisoner, their "cellmate".

Daily life is a standard routine. The majority of prisoner's time is spent in their cell or directly outside their cells in a common area known as a "dayroom". For some prisoners, this is their entire lives for years on end. SCI-Mahanoy schedules prisoners for two, one-hour, outdoor recreation periods per day. During the summer months, a third one hour period is scheduled for the evening. These outdoor periods are often cancelled for every conceivable reason. Prisoners at SCI - Mahanoy receive their meals in their cells. They do not go to a dining hall. Prisoners often remain stranded on their housing units for days without change.

Prisoners do have opportunities to leave the housing units for various reasons. Prisoners that are medically cleared can attend up to 4 gym sessions per week. A gym session is scheduled for approximately 40 minutes. Prisoner can attend one, one-hour law library session per week. Prisoner may be assigned to rehabilitational programming, which may be 2-3, one-hour sessions per week. Some prisoners may be assigned to jobs or vocational training, which vary from 10 - 30 hours per week. Most prisoners spend all but a few hours a week in their cells or in the dayroom on their housing units. This is the tragedy of what occurs during incarceration. Prisoners lack a meaningful opportunity to engage in anything productive and/or which would serve to assist them in changing their lives. Instead, prisoners sit around, idle, smoking cigarettes and/or using drugs. Due to a lack of physical activity, coupled with a diet composed mainly of low nutrient, ultra-processed foods, prisoner health is a serious problem. Rates of obesity and diabetes are far beyond what is typical outside of prison settings. Despite what many readers may believe, prison is mostly men sitting in large, hugely expensive facilities, waiting for parole eligibility. It bears little resemblance to what may be seen on television or in films. We encourage readers to think about this and invite comments as to their understanding of how these circumstances came to be. We'll offer our own thoughts next month.