



UPAN Newsletter Volume 3 Number 11 | NOVEMBER 2016

“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

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Gratitude and Thanksgiving

There will be NO UPAN meeting in December

NEXT UPAN MEETING: MONDAY, January 9, 2017 6:30-8:30 PM

TOPIC: TBA

LOCATION: Holladay Library, 2150 E Murray Holladay Rd, SLC, UT 84117

FOCUS MEETING: FOCUS Meetings Cancelled Until Future Notice

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Disclaimer: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented. This information is presented for the reader's enlightenment and evaluation.

THE SEASON OF GIVING THANKS

November is the month in the U.S. with a tradition of acknowledging everything we are thankful for. With the Thanksgiving holiday upon us, UPAN Directors have been thinking about who and what we appreciate and are thankful for; many things during this year. Much of the November UPAN newsletter is devoted to coming from a place of gratitude.

Gratitude from Inmates for UPAN Volunteers

UPAN has received a significant number of letters from incarcerated individuals expressing their gratitude for what UPAN's volunteers do. Here are some samples we would like to share.

"All of us doing time owe all of you a huge debt of gratitude for all that you do on our behalf." J.O.

"Thank you for any and all assistance and thank you for aiding us in our fight to improve this massively broken system. We all cheer for all those that work within UPAN. Thank you with our full hearts. Thank you for bringing us hope." J.H.

"Thank you so much for all that UPAN is doing for us. I've been in the system for many years and it is great to finally have someone to speak out for us." B.F.

"Hi. I hope all is well with UPAN. I really enjoy and appreciate all UPAN does for us inmates and families. I've really enjoyed the UPAN newsletters." B.S. (Hope the initials are for a name and are not a subtle opposition statement. Ed.)

"I've been a fan since January 2016. I've been caught up in the system for 30 years and for once in all those years we have people [who] care and don't mind getting involved and helping us 'human beings.' Thank you so much for caring about us people behind bars." G.R.

"I and so many others here are incredibly grateful for all of you. I can never thank you enough. The work you are doing is invaluable. One of my biggest blessings in life is getting to know people like you. Please accept my donation as a token of my appreciation. Keep up the good work you are all doing. You matter a lot." J.K.

"Your newsletter has been wonderful and I love what you've been able to accomplish for inmates, myself included. I've been in prison for 7½ years, so I've seen a lot of the more recent changes and I'm very excited about some of the new developments, especially the new sentencing guidelines and the Board Audit. I want to thank you for all you do." D.A.

"To everyone at UPAN, I'd personally like to express my thanks and gratitude for all your help and achievements so far accomplished. Just when you think no one cares how our lives and our families' lives are impacted, a miracle of great caring people at UPAN are the ones who fight for fairness and justice in a rightful manner. I can't really find the right words to express my thanks to everyone at UPAN. I thank you all for caring and [your] show of support." R.R.

"You people are amazing. You are super heroes. Thank you for all you do." P.D.

"I think your newsletters are very insightful and very educational as well as helpful. Thank you for everything that you do for us." C.S.

"Thank you very much for everything that you wonderful people do. I am indigent and have nobody on the outside able to mail to me. I don't have words adequate to express how very grateful I am to all of you volunteers who send these newsletters and Christmas cards. Thank you all." B.M.

"Thank you for being the greatest prison and corrections reform movement. Your efforts and passion are greatly appreciated and will stand as testimony of your love for all mankind." M.C.

"I am so impressed with what you are doing with UPAN! Thank you for caring about us as we feel like second class citizens at times. Please let me know if there is anything I may do for you." C.A.

"You are wonderful people and I admire you. I am inspired by your care and selflessness. Wish I were able to do more to help." P.D.

"Dear UPAN. Thank you so very much for your big hearts, loving kindness, and generosity on our behalf. I appreciate all the hard work, time and effort that each and every one of you put in on behalf of us prisoners and our families. You are truly our guardian angels." K.G.

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think [and thank] with deep gratitude, those who have lighted the flame within us." – Albert Schweitzer

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it." ~ William Arthur Ward

INMATE ESSAYS ON GRATITUDE

In the September newsletter we requested submissions of essays from inmates on gratitude to be included in this month's newsletter. Here are two that we received. We thank everyone who submitted their essays for consideration. Everyone's heartfelt words are appreciated!

Gratitude by Chris J. R.

Experiencing and feeling "Thank You" constantly links and connects me in the practice of perceiving every part of every day as a gift from the Creator of the Universe, the Creator of all Life. As I thank my Creator for His Blessings (family, friendships, life, health, forgiveness, opportunities, 2nd and 3rd chances, successes and

failures), I also thank him for his blessings that I am either unaware of and/or have taken for granted. I thank my Creator for Loving me unconditionally, especially when I was unable to love Him, my neighbor, and myself at different times in my life. Thank the Creator even when you don't feel thankful. Thank you.

Gratitude for a Lifeline and Many Friends by Joel

Since the start of my incarceration in 2012 and to this very day, I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to one man in particular. I've known him longer behind bars than in front. His name is Randall, and he has been my employer, mentor, advocate, counselor, and above all else, my friend. From day one Randall has been a voice of reason in an unreasonable situation.

Through letters and visits Randall has been a lifeline to the outside world for me. He has been there for me during these travails; all the ups and downs, the moves from county to prison and back again. Always with words of support and positive guidance. Without

Randall, the dark days of incarceration would surely be much darker.

As my release date approaches I look forward to seeing my friend and, if I can, pay back and pay forward all of the support and kindness he has given me. I also owe much thanks to my dear Auntie L, my friends Dennis, Winnie, Aaron, Terry, Racheal and some new friends who have been there, done that with me including Miles, Shiffy, Alex, Jason, Tanner, Rich and others I cannot recall, but can't forget. Many thanks to all of you. Joel

The mellow sweetness of pumpkin pie off a prison spoon is something you will never forget. — Mitchell Burgess

MOLLY'S GRATITUDE TO OUR INCARCERATED LOVED ONES

I have had the privilege to lead UPAN over the past three years. I am deeply humbled and grateful for all the rich as well as challenging experiences this role has offered me.

I continue to appreciate that many of you incarcerated in Utah continue to write UPAN to share your stories of both struggle and success. We receive many letters that include expressions of gratitude to UPAN directors as well as all the families and volunteers involved that do their part to help our incarcerated loved ones as we work to improve the conditions that inmates and their families live in and with, day in and day out, throughout their prison journey.

While it can at times become overwhelming to try to address the myriad of issues that inmates face in Utah's prison system, I still appreciate all the comments, concerns, constructive criticism and thank-you's that we receive from prisoners. The comments and stories of what is going wrong inside help guide us in the direction we need to take in the future to work with Corrections and the State to remedy problems. The constructive criticism helps us review what we are doing what we need to be doing to move forward with UPAN's purpose and goals. The letters of appreciation are the things that keep us going when we are simply so exhausted

and burned out trying to juggle UPAN issues with our own work and families and incarcerated loved ones.

I am also continuously humbled on those occasions when UPAN receives donations from inmates in amounts anywhere from a couple of envelopes to \$2 to \$200. The prisoners who have been able to do this do so from a sense of gratitude and out of their hope for a better future. They give from their hearts. I send heartfelt appreciation to each and every one of you who have gone without noodles, candy, music, or a new pair of shoes in order to sacrifice to help UPAN continue operating.

We have received offers from inmates to do artwork and to write articles. We don't always have a lot of room in the newsletter for everything we want to include, but if you choose to write an article with the hope of it being included in the newsletter, please send it written in a clear and concise style and we will consider it. UPAN needs the author's understanding that their article could be edited for any number of reasons.

The outpouring of appreciation UPAN has received from our incarcerated UPAN family throughout 2016 continues to fill my heart.

I said it last year at this time and I want to say it again: To all the incarcerated men and women that UPAN touches, I want to share appreciation for what you have to offer and what you have already shared. I send my

gratitude. I send blessings with the hope for you to walk in balance no matter what challenge you may face. You matter.

Thanksgiving Thoughts about UPAN by Molly Prince

As I look back on the past year with UPAN, there is much to be thankful for. First, for the directors of UPAN who work hard to help UPAN function and who spend countless hours of their "spare" time devoted to improving things for the families and inmates in Utah. Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who mail almost 400 newsletters each month to inmates who don't have their own families to print out and mail to them each month. The UPAN newsletter is sometimes the only way inmates know what is happening in the criminal justice world out here.

I am humbled and grateful for our elected and appointed officials and legislators as they pay attention to what we say about prison issues and criminal justice reform. UPAN is recognized and included in meetings with the Utah DOC and other agencies about various prison and criminal justice reform issues along with the ACLU and Disability Law Center.

I truly appreciate the auditors who work for Utah's Legislative Auditor General who conducted and finalized the audit of the Board. Their work will help revolutionize the way the Board conducts its business. I'm amazed to see how the empowerment of families has manifested into the current audit of SOTP in the DOC, which I believe, will facilitate attention to the need

for funding for that program and drive improvements in its delivery.

I want to thank the UPAN families and volunteers who attend meetings at the State Capitol regularly to voice their concerns, ideas, and solutions on prison and criminal justice issues in Utah.

I want to acknowledge deep appreciation for attorney Melinda Morgan who generously offered her time and expertise to assist in getting UPAN's 501(c)3 application into the IRS. UPAN finally achieved non-profit status retroactive to October 2013 (when UPAN first incorporated).

As stated in another article this month, I am thankful to inmates who offer information, ideas, and have done research and writing to help us present alternative perspectives to the DOC and BOPP. We sometimes receive blank envelopes from inmates as appreciation for receiving newsletters at no cost and to help us further the cause. We have received financial contributions from inmates and believe me, every cent is appreciated and used to further UPAN's goals!

I express deep gratitude for everyone who has contributed to UPAN through their time, expertise, resources, and financially. Sending everyone a wish for a blessed Thanksgiving this year!

Giving Thanks This Thanksgiving Holiday

By Michael J. McAinsh UPAN Secretary

Autumn is the season of harvests, falling leaves, and reminiscing. As Thanksgiving approaches, we stop and reflect on what we have accomplished over the past year, and what we might have done differently if life gave us a make-over. It is also a time for giving thanks for the little things that make life special.

The greatest gift for which I am thankful is the opportunity to live out in the free world again, after 15 years in prison. This will be the second Thanksgiving that I will celebrate in freedom; however this holiday brings bittersweet memories as I recall friends left behind. I am thankful for the many friends I made while I was incarcerated, and for the changes that are happening now in corrections, that offer new hope of a time when they too can celebrate this holiday as free men.

I give thanks for the UPAN volunteers who wrote and mailed the newsletter to me when I was incarcerated. They gave me hope, and inspired me to join their efforts for prison reform when I expired my sentence.

I am thankful for my health. I still have the ability to bike, garden, hike, and camp in spite of the twinges of pain that remind me that age is taking its toll on my body. Oh, and I'm thankful for naproxen, a wonderful pain reliever!

I could come up with many more examples of things that make me thankful, but the one thing that sums up such a list is this: I am thankful for living on this beautiful planet!

Gratitude and Thanksgiving
By Warren Rosenbaum, UPAN Newsletter Editor

I'm grateful for this opportunity to help give hope and clarity to our loved ones caught up in the current criminal justice system. With changes and innovations under study and some improvements already being implemented, being able to bring that news of better things to come is an honored privilege. I don't personally know any of the inmates, with one exception, however through UPAN meetings with families and some written and word of mouth stories that have come my way, I feel I know many. Especially as I hear and grieve over the hardships and plights some inmates are experiencing.

Therefore, the UPAN Newsletter is written with the inmates in mind as our first priority. Naturally, other readers are also considered as we print the articles and information we believe are most suited to our readership.

The latest thing I'm privileged to bring to the attention of our readers is The American Prison Writing Archive, a featured article in this issue (pages 6 – 7). Please read it and take action as you deem appropriate.

Best Wishes to all, Warren (aka: Ed.)

ATTENTION INMATES WHO RECEIVE UPAN NEWSLETTERS

UPAN believes that creating and getting a printed paper newsletter to incarcerated individuals is a core and vital part of our function. We have become aware that some inmates are receiving more than one newsletter per month. This could be for a variety of reasons. One could be because some folks were put on the list to have UPAN volunteers send to them and then were able to have their family print and mail it to them, but UPAN was not ever notified to take that inmate off the volunteer list. If you are receiving more than one newsletter and at least one of them is coming from our UPAN volunteers, that limits us from being able to send that newsletter to someone else who doesn't have family or friends to do so.

If you are receiving duplicate UPAN newsletters each month and at least one is from UPAN, PLEASE write us and tell us who you are and if you are receiving from your family or UPAN or both. We will then update our inmate mailing list and assign another inmate to the volunteer that was sending you a duplicate.

Obviously, if you are receiving multiple copies of the newsletter from your own family or support system, that won't affect the UPAN newsletter mailing volunteers and they are welcome to continue to do that.

If you have family or friends that have access to the internet and email that you have not yet asked to do this service for you, please ask them to do so. The process is easy. They can email us at:

utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com and get on our email list through which we email the newsletter each month. Then they can print it out and mail you the newsletter. Our newsletter is 10 pages long. If printed out on front and back of all pages, the total sheets mailed are 5, which, when put in a standard #10 envelope costs one Forever stamp. The bare minimum cost of mailing each newsletter is \$1.18. That covers paper, ink, envelope and postage, not counting the time spent on each mailing. This is paid for and done by the volunteers.

This process has proven to work well over the past 2½ years that we have been creating a monthly newsletter. It gets information out to as many as possible in a timely manner and it also gives your loved ones an opportunity to read it and learn about the issues you face that are relevant to Utah DOC and other criminal justice concerns.

We appreciate all of you who have notified us of changes in your address / locations so we have been able to update our mailing list in a timely manner!

If you do not receive the newsletter and do not have friends or family that are able and willing to do that for you, please write us and request the newsletter. We will assign you to a volunteer who will mail the monthly newsletter to you.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

"The beaten are not always defeated." (from the novel, "The Camerons" by Robert Crichton)

GUIDELINES FOR MAILING HOLIDAY CARDS AND LETTERS By Molly Prince

This was published last year in UPAN News, but we think it is wise to inform families again. This information will apply to both Draper and Gunnison prisons. For county jails, this information may be a guideline, but if you are sending holiday cards to them, please make sure you know their rules – including if they receive anything other than post cards. During December,

Draper can expect to sort and screen approximately 8,000 and sometimes up to 10,000 pieces of mail per week.

In order to make this process go more smoothly so our inmates receive their letters and cards more quickly, it

will be helpful to be aware of and comply with the following restrictions and recommendations.

Restrictions:

- Only plain bi-fold cards are accepted. No layers, including clear plastic cover layer, and no cards that have two pieces glued together. Sometimes the best place to find this type of card is at dollar stores. Hallmark seems to be mostly layers and glitter these days.
- No musical cards or cards with anything sealed within them.
- No glitter, and no cards with things glued on them. This includes glitter pens/ink.
- No stickers can be affixed to either the card or the envelope.
- Do not use crayon, markers, Sharpies. Ball point pen is preferred and recommended.
- Seal the envelope the way it is intended to be sealed. Do not use scotch tape or decorative tape on the envelope or card.
- Do not include any blank envelopes or blank paper in the correspondence or it will be returned to you. The prison requires that any envelopes used by the inmates must be purchased through commissary.
- Do not use mailing envelopes with the plastic bubbles inside for padding.
- Sign the card. Cards without signatures will be returned.

Recommendations:

The prison mail room staff are now required to examine underneath anything that is adhered to the envelope. That is because contraband can be underneath it. This includes stamps and any address labels.

- Write or type the return name and address on the upper left corner of the envelope rather than using adhesive return address labels. If address labels

are used, they may be pulled back which can result in tearing.

- The mail room will tear the stamp off the corner of the envelope. This means they will tear the right hand upper corner of the envelope off. To reduce the damage to the envelope, please place your stamp in the far right top corner. Metered stamps (printed on the envelope) will not be torn off.
- White envelopes are preferred. While there is not an official restriction on colored envelopes, it is recommended we use white envelopes to cut down on processing time. The reason is that colored envelopes are supposed to be taken apart at the glued seams to make sure there is nothing hidden there. They can often see through white envelopes to make sure there is no discoloration or contraband. They cannot with colors. (We were advised two years ago that the prison now must examine for drugs that may be dissolved and hidden in the seams of colored envelopes).
- If sending large envelopes, the prison recommends that rather than using the gold manila envelopes, use large white envelopes without a clasp. Clasps are glued onto the envelope so the mail staff will have to tear it off. This delays processing.
- If you are sending holiday cards to inmates other than your own, you can sign your first name or you can sign UPAN or both, whichever you prefer.
- MAIL EARLY. In past years, holiday cards have sometimes been delayed for weeks after Christmas or New Years due to the challenges for the mail staff to sort and screen.

Following these rules and recommendations will contribute to our incarcerated loved ones receiving their mail in a timely manner during the very busy holiday season.

MARIA PETERSON IS NEW PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER FOR DOC by Molly Prince

Maria Peterson became the new Public Information Officer (PIO) for the Utah Department of Corrections in October. I had the privilege of meeting her during her first week with the DOC at the Kids Day for the Fathers in the ConQuest program. Maria has a wealth of experience in this field and is approaching this position with enthusiasm.

Maria comes to Utah from the Washington State Department of Corrections where she worked for nearly a decade. Washington's corrections system has 17,000 incarcerated individuals in 12 correctional facilities. In her nine years as a communications professional with corrections, Maria focused on ways to increase transparency and communication in order to engage and educate the public about the issues in this challenging and rewarding field.

She started her career in television news, where she spent five years as a producer, reporter and anchor in Bend, Oregon and Anchorage, Alaska. She left TV for public service in 2005 to work for Anchorage's animal shelter as the Public Relations Coordinator. She taught animal safety and humane education courses to students in the Anchorage School District and was featured weekly on local TV and radio news stations.

In 2007, Maria and her husband moved to Washington and she started working for the Washington DOC. As she describes it, she got hooked on the work of corrections and found her calling in telling the stories of the dedicated professionals, committed volunteers and innovative programs that are making a difference there.

In speaking with Ms. Peterson, I learned that she is very progressive in her thinking and approach to corrections. She comes from a state that is advanced in their

rehabilitative practices and is sensitive to the needs of incarcerated individuals and the inclusion of families and family oriented programming and events for inmates. Washington DOC even has family councils for each facility. For more information go to: <http://www.doc.wa.gov/family/> and scroll to Family Councils.

The DOC administration has done an excellent job finding Maria Peterson. We are very pleased that Utah has been able to bring someone on board with this experience and broad

minded, innovative approach to corrections. UPAN directors look forward to working with her in the future.

She states that she looks forward to working in support of Executive Director Cook's vision of a safe, humane and progressive corrections system that puts people first.

Her contact information is mariapeterson@utah.gov 801-545-5536. Please give her a bit of time to become familiar with the many layers and complexities of Utah's prison system as you contact her with your questions and concerns.

The American Prison Writing Archive

Note to Inmates, DOC Staff, and Prison Volunteers: A Request for Your Written Experiences and Thoughts

Researched, edited and submitted for widespread distribution by Warren Rosenbaum, UPAN Newsletter Editor

The American Prison Writing Archive (APWS) is an in-progress, internet-based, digital archive of first-hand testimony to the living and working conditions experienced by incarcerated people, DOC employees, and prison volunteers. You are the foremost resource for understanding the realities of imprisonment today. Anyone who lives, works, or volunteers inside American prisons can contribute first-hand experience via non-fiction essays (no fiction or poetry) that bear witness to the conditions in which they live (or work). This is where you can contribute to public debate about the American prison crisis. Include what is working and what is not inside American prisons.

Contributors can write under pen names (not nicknames) or anonymously, to protect their identity for prison safety or career considerations. If using a pen name, the author's legal name should NOT appear anywhere on the essay itself. APWA reads all writing submitted. They charge no fees. Contributors retain full and unconditional copyright to their work.

There is a notable ignorance of, or willed indifference to conditions inside our prisons and how inmates experience those conditions. The public needs to remember that inmates are human beings, as they are; human beings that made some mistakes and bad choices, often impulsively, unintentionally, or simply stupidly, where they ended up on the wrong side of the law. A single-site archive is needed where American prison writers can write about and document their experiences and where legislators, the general public — including scholars and students of criminal justice and mass incarceration — can access the depth of knowledge contained in those writings. Until now, no such archive exists.

APWA seeks anyone who writes with the authority that only first-person experience can bring. APWA values writing that takes thoughtful positions even on passionately felt ideas. We are open to any testimony about the issues that matter to incarcerated people,

prison staff, administrators, corrections officers, teachers, and volunteers. Each essay should feature one principle subject so it can be filed with similar subjects in that category. More subjects to write about? Put each in a separate essay. All such content should be formed into first-person essays addressed to a broad readership.

Essays can be as little as a couple of hundred words if you can cover your subject thoroughly within a few paragraphs. Essays should not exceed 5,000 words (15 double-spaced, typed pages). Handwritten essays (clearly written) are accepted and 5,000 words can be computed by counting the words on one typical page and applying that figure to the number of pages you write. Or, as if you were reading aloud to a group, limit your presentation to about 38 minutes. Time yourself as you quietly speak your essay and stay within 38 minutes.

To prime your thinking, topics of interest include descriptions of sources of stress, ways of coping, health care, causes of violence and ways to reduce violence, material (living) conditions, education, employment conditions, the environment for volunteers, the aging prison population, visions of a better way to operate (personally, politically, institutionally, etc.), reflections on the work of dealing with time inside (for workers as well as inmates), the challenges of physical and psychological survival, public perception and popular depictions of imprisoned people and prison workers, the politics and economics of mass incarceration, what works and why it works, and what doesn't work and why it doesn't work (i.e. practical views on reform), etc.

APWA is intended for researchers and for the general public, to help them understand American prison conditions and the prison's effects in rehabilitation and its good vs. harm to society. All work in the APWA will be accessible indefinitely to anyone with access to the Internet unless APWA receives your written request to

remove that work. The APWA will grow into a massive archive and every added piece of information you offer will help readers locate in depth knowledge relevant to their specific interests.

A signed permission sheet must be included in order to post your first work on the APWA. This is one time only. Further submissions do NOT require signed permission sheets. By signing, you are granting APWA permission to include your work in the archive. All information offered is voluntary. Leaving blank lines in the questionnaire will NOT exclude your work from the APWA; it will only limit the reference points by which readers can access your work. The only purpose APWA intends your questionnaire answers to serve is to connect your writing with readers interested in the topics you write about and the perspectives you bring to your writing. Your essays will be included in the archive even if you choose to reveal little or no personal information.

APWA is a work in progress; we are backlogged and constantly seeking funding to support our work. We acknowledge receipt of all essays but this can take a few months; it can be much longer before essays are posted. The APWA will post work that has been previously published as long as the writers have retained copyright.

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“Life isn’t always going to go our way but reviewing what is working in our lives can help us not only to survive, but to surmount our difficulties.” – Sarah Ban Breathnach

Summary of UPAN Meeting, Draper Library, Monday, November 14, 2016
By Warren Rosenbaum, UPAN Newsletter Editor

This meeting featured Anna Brower Thomas presenting information from her research trip to California regarding the gradual implementation of the objectionable practice of video-visitations-only. This subject is critically important in the Utah DOC Inmate Placement Program (IPP) and how it may creep into the current prisons and especially the planning for the new prison. We all recognize that contact visits are the very best way to help in rehabilitation, especially for families with children. Barrier visits are a distant second, and video visits are an even further distant third in acceptable visitation privileges for visitors who travel to jails for visits.

Not only are several Utah jails currently under contract in IPP agreements limiting visits to video only, but in some cases the visitors, who have traveled long distances enduring challenging expenses, are charged a fee such as \$8 for a half-hour “pay per view” visit.

This is a metastasizing cancer that will consume this aspect of rehabilitation for our loved ones if left unchecked. It is one more step in dehumanizing the inmate and further separating the inmate from the real world he or she has almost lost through incarceration. It

Photocopied, handwritten, or re-typed copies of the questionnaire are acceptable. We seek the widest possible gathering of American prison writing, and we will read, scan, and transcribe essays into the APWA on a continuing basis. If previously published, please let us know where and when your essay first appeared, in print or on-line. Authors can submit multiple essays. Only one permissions-questionnaire is required from each author.

For more information, write to: APWA, c/o Hamilton College, 198 College Hill Road, Clinton, NY 13323-1218. Parties outside can download the questionnaire at: <http://www.dhinitiative.org/projects/apwa/>

Summary: In creating a resource that can be accessed online, by a wide diversity of people, we hope that Hamilton can serve as host for a public conversation that will include all the members of a notably unheard population, increase awareness, and improve the ease with which all citizens — prisoners, students, scholars and the general public — can better educate themselves about one of America's most powerful, yet most questionable and debatable institutions.

Sincerely—The APWA Editors.

also penalizes supportive family and friend by costing even more to stay in touch with incarcerated loved ones

The fees are a blatant attack on low income families by companies that see an unconscionable profit opportunity and are milking it for all its worth. Anna’s presentation pointed out that California has tried to limit the video-only visitation plans by the legislature passing, with strong majorities, their SB 1157 bill that would prohibit the elimination of contact visits. A sort of backdoor approach to hopefully stem the continuing growth of this harmful practice. The governor, Jerry Brown, vetoed the bill last September. This could indicate the degree of opposition we are facing in preventing similar growth in Utah.

Anna presented in detail - too detailed for complete coverage in limited space - three approaches to conquer this problem. The three approaches were: 1) using the legislature to stop it, 2) working with each contract county’s administrators, primarily the sheriff who has authority over the jail in that county, and 3) UDC contracts and their content. Anna presented both the pros and cons of each of the three approaches.

Several UPAN meeting attendees offered comments favoring, faulting, and amplifying on each approach. The discussion was lively, thoughtful, and informative and raised the level of awareness in all the attendees. The group also saw, in eradicating this problem, an opportunity and a pathway, to implement other desired

changes in the IPP system such as more recreation time, more outdoor time, possible jobs and educational classes for IPP inmates who are behind bars for months and even years with little if anything to occupy those thousands and thousands of hours of idleness. ##

“Concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation. You will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul.” – Rabbi Harold Kushner

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Update: Utah Board of Pardons and Parole – Progress on Recommendations of Legislative Audit

Adapted from information presented on October 19, 2016 – Legislative Audit Update Presentation to the Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice Interim Committee. Details can be found at:

<http://le.utah.gov/asp/interim/Commit.asp?Year=2016&Com=INTLAW>

The office of the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) has been working diligently on the various aspects required to come into compliance with the recommendations of the Legislative Audit of the BOPP. On October 19, 2016, Executive Director Greg Johnson and Deputy Director Beverly Uipi gave a presentation updating the committee on the progress made so far. The following is taken directly from their report to the above named Interim Committee.

Accomplishments and Progress

• **Audit Recommendation: Expand Expungement Eligibility** The Board has been collaborating with the Sentencing Commission and BCI to streamline and expand the expungement process. The focus has been on expanding eligibility for lower level offenses, such as “dog at large” or “oversize fish offenses.” (*Yes, believe it or not, the Board has to deal with these minor types of offenses in the expungement process.*) The drafting of the revisions has been completed by subcommittee and reviewed by Sentencing Commission, the process is moving forward.

• **Audit Recommendation: Implement Structured Decision Making Model (SDM)** The Board has researched existing SDM tools used by other jurisdictions* and contacted paroling authorities in other states that have successfully implemented SDM to utilize successful decision making strategies. They are now partnering with the National Institute of Corrections for no-cost technical assistance to develop SDM in Utah. The Board is also designing an electronic system that would include ability to fully integrate SDM in decision making process.

**UPAN has also provided a suggested draft model of a Structured Decision Making Tool to the Board for consideration and we have received feedback that the various categories we identified as important to consider are being found valid and useful as the Board is develops a model for Utah to use.*

• **Audit Recommendation: Increase Transparency of Rationale for Decisions** The BOPP has created new

rationale sheets that provide more detailed information on the applicable guidelines, board action, and reason for decision. It has expanded use of the rationale sheets including specific information on parole violations and general hearings. The revised rationale explanation responds to client needs. (**Special Note** – *UPAN is interested in feedback from inmates who have received one of these new rationale sheets in the past few weeks. Please let us know the date of your hearing and if you find the rationale sheet more informative than those used prior to the first of 2016.*)

• **Audit Recommendation: Streamline Process for Low Risk Offenders** The Board is collaborating with the Sentencing Commission to reduce the number of low risk offenders entering prison for less serious offenses. It is working in collaboration with UDC and they have begun to screen offenders early to better identify low risk offenders. The Board is utilizing risk assessments to better determine those amenable to treatment in the community or vary the intensity of treatment based on risk.

• **Audit Recommendation: Develop Strategic Plan** BOPP is developing improved mission, vision, goals, and strategic plan for the agency. It is examining successful strategic plans from other jurisdictions. The Board is implementing recommendations of audit and incorporating best practices. The Board is working to create a shared vision and mission by seeking input and encouraging support from all members of the agency. (This includes support staff, administrative staff, hearing officers, as well as board members).

• **Audit Recommendation: Implement National Parole Resource Center Practice Guidelines:** BOPP is in the process of identifying and implementing best practices by collaborating with Department of Corrections, NPRC, and NGA. They are creating strategies to improve quality assurance for risk assessments, outreach to stakeholders, increase transparency, and expanding cross-agency collaboration and solutions. Finally, they are striving to determine solutions by focusing on use of evidence based practices.

• **Audit Recommendation: Complete Organizational Restructuring:** Work with Division of Human Resource Management to identify best organizational structure for the Board. Focused on increased capacity through cross-training staff and maximizing efficiency. Organizational restructuring is complete and improvements to efficiencies utilizing the new structure continue.

• **Audit Recommendation: Adopt an Electronic File Management System** Reached out to other paroling authorities to determine if their systems could be inexpensively exported and used in Utah. Examined various options including private vendor options, available Utah state-owned electronic systems, and building standalone system. Collaborated with Utah's Department of Technology Services (DTS), Governor's Office of Management & Budget, and the Courts to utilize existing state capacity. Focused on identifying a low-cost solution with basic functionality. Examined the Corrections O-Track database as an option. Determined that developing modules within the existing state database could lower costs of data sharing or maintaining two separate systems. Examined the appellate court voting system for possible reapplication and use; however DTS determined it would not be cost effective to export the code. Examined existing document management systems and determined the current UDOCA system could provide a low-cost solution to document management with less replication.

Progress Challenges Moving Forward

• **Current Development Progress:** The Board has been given a one-time \$75K appropriation for the development of electronic file management system. It is working with DTS to design an efficient and cost effective system. They have developed a detailed cost estimate, project description, timeline, and project charter. The design focused on basic functionality, excludes many aspects that would be useful but were not deemed absolutely essential. The Board understands that electronic systems are expensive and this is the estimate for the econo-line data system.

• **Challenges: Additional Funding Needed** BOPP has made extensive effort to find a lower cost solution that utilizes existing resources and reduces infrastructure needs. Worked with DTS to determine cost of a basic system. The estimate was submitted to

the Governor's Office as a requested building block. This estimate includes only the basic functionality; consequently, a partial transition to electronic records will likely result in greater inefficiencies.

• **Challenges of Not Converting to Electronic System** A paper-based system is highly susceptible to catastrophic loss; a leaky pipe or fire could eliminate all BOPP records. Information sharing with other criminal justice agencies is increasingly difficult; most agencies are electronic. BOPP is becoming further behind each year, with an increasing amount of time and funding likely required to catch up. Paper-based records allow for very limited transparency, few outcome measures, and reduced accuracy.

• **Benefits of Converting to Electronic System** Expanded access and increased transparency for the law enforcement agencies, policy makers, community partners, and the public. Enhanced capability to measure performance and target improvement. Improved ability to access and apply information essential to decision making.

• **Challenges - Psychological Evaluations** Making quality decisions for offenders with mental health concerns are often highly complicated and time intensive. These cases often require expensive psychological assessments from private vendors, with associated costs carried by the Board. UDC and the Board are collaborating to determine effective ways of addressing this issue. The challenge remains a most important one for the Board.

• **Challenges Moving Forward - Hearing Officer Pay Range:** Hearing officers make high level recommendations affecting public safety on whether or not inmates should be released. Extensive experience and expertise are essential. At the Board, 73 percent of hearing officers qualify to retire today. Current pay range is below market level and not sufficient to attract qualified applicants.

• **Moving Forward.** The transition to electronic records is essential for efficient and effective functioning. Hearing officer pay ranges remain a major barrier to replacing retiring hearing officers with qualified applicants. The cost of psychological evaluations is increasing and is borne by the Board, which is an ongoing challenge.

UPAN News: Staying a little hip for old timers (including Ed.) and hangin' with hints of cool for the youthful; we're living with gratitude this month. And as usual, staying cool. 'Way to go, Ed.

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