

# Prisoner Express Newsletter

## Winter 2006

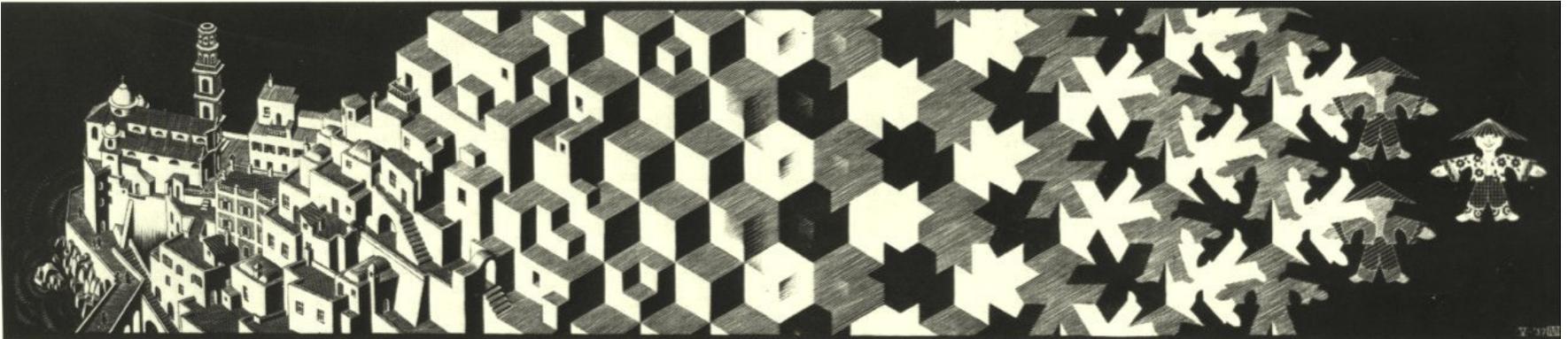


Illustration: MC Escher

Greetings from the frozen north and welcome to our newest edition of Prisoner Express News. I am grateful for the opportunity to write to you and share with you information about the various projects sponsored by Prisoner Express. For those of you reading this for the first time P.E's mission is focused on providing prisoners with information, education, and opportunities for creative self expression. The program evolves and changes as we discover the best practices in expressing our mission. We are still establishing the most cost effective and efficient practices for delivering our programs to you. It is easy to offer a program, but sometimes all of the follow-up work becomes too expensive or time consuming to do it well. As we go thru this process we are finding ways to offer more quality programming, and do it in a way that we can be timely in our response to you, while still trying to save money by using bulk postage rates. I'll explain more when I describe the programs that are going to be available in the upcoming months. For those of you who

have been part of the program, I encourage you to read the descriptions of the programs because they may be a bit different than in the past, and you might want to know the procedures before registering for the program. My name is Gary and I coordinate Prisoner Express from inside the Durland Alternatives Library. I get so many letters from all of you. I am unable to answer them individually. I do not have enough money to pay the postage or the time to do it and still be able to manage the Prisoner Express Program. I work in the library. About 5 years ago I sent one box of books to Danny in Texas, and from there the program has continued to expand. When I sent that box of books I just figured it was a one time thing, but Danny's letter was so appreciative, and the importance of good books to him was clear. His letter inspired me to do more, and in the years that have followed I have found that many of you inspire me with your words and your determination to survive and thrive in your present situation. Recently I have realized that this is a

dance we are in together. I try to provide an interesting project for you. Your responses inspire and educate me and in turn I want to create even more interesting opportunities for you. So, please keep participating in the programs and sharing with me what is happening in your lives.

I use the newsletter to answer questions that some of you ask. Many want to know what the Alternatives Library is. Well, we are a very small library on the Cornell University Campus. Our money to operate comes from a small endowment that was set aside in honor of Anne Carry Durland. She died a premature death, and her father wanted to remember her and her social activism. He set up a fund to maintain this library which collects books, magazines, DVDs, CDs mostly from small independent presses. Our material offers alternative perspectives on current social issues. As you may have guessed we mostly collect material from the left of the political spectrum. The library does not have any money to contribute to the

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE FREE TO PRISONERS. ALL OTHERS PLEASE CONTACT PRISONER EXPRESS NEWS FOR RATES. ALL PROCEEDS ARE USED TO FUND PROGRAMMING.

PRISONER EXPRESS PROMOTES REHABILITATION BY PROVIDING INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE SELF EXPRESSION TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

NEWSLETTER  
Prisoner Express  
Winter 2007

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. postage paid  
Permit 448  
Ithaca, NY 14850

CRSP/Alternatives Library  
Prisoner Express News  
127 Anabel Taylor Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853

Prisoner Express program but makes a substantial contribution by allowing me to devote work time furthering this program. I also recruit a number of student workers thru the library that help me with Prisoner Express projects. The library itself is a project of CRESP. There is a short article about CRESP on page 14 of the Positive News that you are receiving with this mailing. The Alternatives Library receives its' non profit status through our affiliation with CRESP, and I use that affiliation to get the lowest mailing rates at the post office. I have to have CRESP on my mailing label to get those rates. The CRESP office is just down the hall from the library.

CRESP sponsors a number of projects in addition to the library.

Other questions I'm asked regard matters such as donations, mainly can you send them? Yes! I know many of you are indigent, but if anyone can send stamps or other donations, every bit helps. Others have said they have relatives on the outside who would like to send a donation. Please refer them to us through our address on the newsletter or send them to the Prisoner Express website [www.prisonerexpress.org](http://www.prisonerexpress.org). Access to money as you can imagine is one of the greatest limitations to our program. As I get more involved in creating and dispensing programs I find it harder to create time for fund raising. I keep thinking I will find a large steady source of dollars to finance this program, and it

## Book Mailing

This activity is how we started in the game. The idea is, you write and tell us the types of books and subjects you are interested in, and we go thru our shelves of donated books and send you the best matches we can make. Due to the cost of postage we send out about 150 packages a month. At about \$4 a package we need to raise \$600 a month to keep this going. We have a dedicated volunteer in Steve who many of you know through his letters included in packages of books. We have others come thru and pack books, but currently Steve has been managing the book room. Because there are so many people asking for books it can take many months before we ship your package. Basically each new request goes to the back of the line. We encourage you all to share our books with each other when possible. I know many of you already do that. We also need to know how many books you are allowed to get at one time and whether they can be hard cover or previously used. I am going to include a survey in this newsletter that I hope you will answer. It can be very frustrating to have a package of books returned because we sent 1 more book than allowed.

is just a matter of time until it materializes. Until then I will just keep hustling up the money through small grants, gifts, and benefit events.

Some of you send stamped self addressed envelopes wanting a reply, and acknowledgment that your letter or art work has been received. I have not been very good at replying. I keep planning to write a personal reply. I usually put it to the side and then forget to write when another hundred letters arrive. I will create a form letter that I can put in your self addressed stamped envelope so at least you will know I have received your work. I know it must seem rude to some of you when you send me a brilliant poem, essay or drawing and then you never hear back. I know it sounds like it would be simple to write a short note letting you know it is here, but with all that I have going on managing PE, in addition to my regular library responsibilities, I can not seem to create the time for many personal responses to you. That isn't to say that this program is not personal. I read all your letters and program assignments. I usually pass them on to others to read as well, and I feel I know a good number of you thru your writing. I have chosen to support you all through this organization rather than choosing an individual pen pal. I just want to get that explained to those of you who get discouraged by my not sending back a personal letter.

Also I know that sometimes you write and do not hear from us for months. Depending on when we get

## History Program

This program has been evolving. Our last offering was a unit on Meso America. If you signed up for this you should have received a packet from us. It included a series of questions. If you sent in the assignment, you received a compilation packet containing some of the best responses. This packet will now be sent out with the original Meso American mailing, making it even richer for those taking the course next time. If you sent in the Meso America packet you will automatically be enrolled to receive the next history lesson. Everyone else will have to register for the packet. Because postage costs are high I hope to create a document with a couple of lessons. I believe the focus of the lessons will be on the ancient Greece and Rome. I hope one day to have a packet with all the material in one book, but for now we are utilizing the efforts of Dave, our number 1 history packet producer. Dave goes on the internet and searches for interesting material on these different historical topics. If you send in answers to the assignment in the packet, you will receive a compilation of the best answers received. It really brings out some great answers. It can be very informative to read the answers of others on the subject. Studying history

your letter, and the order we mail things out, it could be a long or short time before you get a response. Occasionally things get lost in the mail, or they may not get delivered because we've included something in our mailing by mistake that is too controversial to get thru the mailroom. As we do this longer we are learning how to express ourselves and still be allowed into your institution. If you think it has been a long time and we've missed your letter please write again and alert us of the problem. Let me move on to some of the program offerings. I hope there are some you would like to join.

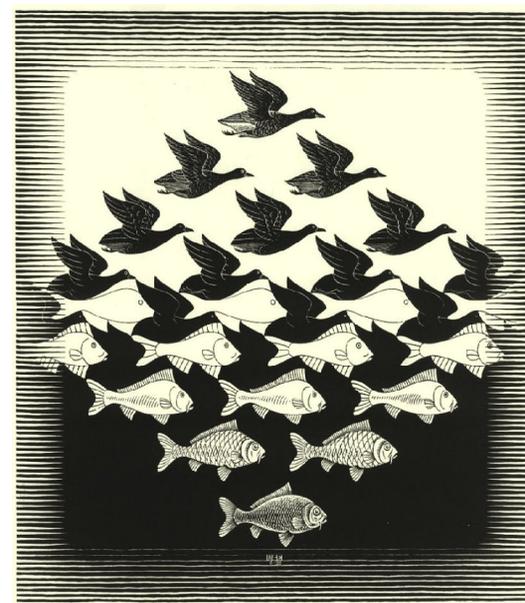


Illustration: MC Escher

is certainly eye opening. Because copying costs are so high I'm probably able to create and mail 250 to 300 packets. Look on the registration form for the expected mailing date for the packet and get your request in before then. I often do not send the individual packets as I depend on bulk mail rates or I'll run out of funds rapidly [as I learned quickly with the Math Program.] If you don't hear from us you probably missed the mailing deadline. Don't give up, as you can get involved with the next mailing, though there may be a wait depending on how the program cycle is running. If the funds were there, I'd send it right out, but they are not.

Here is a poem written by one participant using the course material.

## Ballad of Mesoamerica

Within the Western Hemisphere,  
the first to civilize were the  
Mesoamericans, but they met their  
demise when European ships sailed  
west in search of a new world.  
So here's a paraphrasing of how history  
unfolded.  
The Olmecs are believed to have been  
there before the rest.  
They ruled for 3000 years before  
European conquest, and even though

their culture has, for centuries, been dead, they are remembered still today for their massive stone statue heads. The Mayans raised the conception of culture to new heights as the first Mesoamericans to teach themselves to write.

The empire that they created covered huge amounts of land.

It spanned from Guatemala all the way to the Yucatan.

To all the so-called "civilized" their knowledge remained hid

But they came up with the number zero long before the white man did.

Most people view the Aztecs as being not very nice because they made a science out of human sacrifice.

And though the Aztec emperor's enjoyed widespread acclaim, it's pretty much a certainty you will mispronounce their names.

Hernan Cortes arrived, and soon the Aztecs were undone, as he conquered the empire in 1521.

The Incas built an empire the whole world could revere; the largest native state in the entire hemisphere.

And high up in the Andes mountains, what they did was hard to beat, as they conducted their rituals at 22,000 feet.

In primitive attire, they kept the elements at bay, feats that continue to perplex some scientists today.

In 1532 it seemed the empire would fold, as Spanish mercenaries were obsessed over Inca gold.

Between disease, conquistadors and native naiveté a great civilization would soon see its final days.

Some other cultures in the region were not as well known and if you have never heard of them, you probably aren't alone.

There were Toltec, Mixtec, Totonac, Tarascan and more.

The Wari and Chavin had their legends and lore.

So if the quest for knowledge leads you to this storied land it is virtually guaranteed your mind will expand

William Chaplar

### Journal Project

We have begun another round of Journal writing. Last fall we sent an introductory packet to those of you who signed up. To summarize, it explains the possibilities of personal growth that can be realized from self reflection. There is no right or wrong way to keep a journal and it doesn't have to be about anything particular. It is a chance for you to write about t what is in your heart or mind. It helps the writer clarify what is going on for them. It is a chance to be truthful with yourself. So many of the writers in the project comment about how they can never show the soft emotional

side of themselves to anyone in prison. That it would be interpreted as weakness and they would be taken advantage of because of it. The journal is a safe space for you to face how life really feels without the worry of having to posture to others. It seems to me a sign of strength and intelligence to be able to truly feel and express your feelings rather than to survive by numbing yourself to your reality. Prison living can take away your personal power by dictating the rules by which you must live by. A journal gives you a chance to reclaim your power, by giving you a chance to express what is true for you. You can reminisce about the past, plan for the future, explore today or muse about how it should be. Even to write about your boredom can eventually turn into something eye opening. I am very excited already about the quality of the journal entries you have submitted. Anyone who wants to join this project just needs to start sending in their submissions. You can send them in whatever way makes sense to you. We will send out letters on occasion updating you on the progress of this project. I often assign a student volunteer to type the journals. You will probably receive a letter from this volunteer as well. As I said, we cannot put all of your journals online but we will save them all, and if you request it and we have the funds we can send you back a complete copy of what you have submitted. This current round of journals will eventually be posted on the website on a page devoted to Journals kept in 2007. We currently have a page for journals from 2005-06.

### All Illustrations and Art:

#### M.C. Escher

ASCENDING AND DESCENDING  
Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898-1972) is one of the world's most famous graphic artists. His art is enjoyed by millions of people all over the world, as can be seen on the many web sites on the internet. He is most famous for his so-called impossible structures, such as Ascending and Descending, Relativity, his Transformation Prints, such as Metamorphosis I, Metamorphosis II and Metamorphosis III, Sky & Water I or Reptiles.

### Book Discussion Group

We are just finishing up 2 book discussion groups. They went very well. We sent out 250 copies each of 2 different books, "Life on the Outside" and "Things Fall Apart". They each went out with an assignment. Everyone who sent in an assignment will get a copy of this compilation.

"Life on the Outside" is a compelling tale about Elaine Bartlet and how she adjusted to getting out of prison after 16 years. The assignment for that project was to write a letter to Elaine or Jennifer Gonderman, the author of the book. I have students creating a compilation of your best letter and answers to the discussion questions. I also made a copy of your letters and sent them off to Jennifer and Elaine. I'm sure they will enjoy hearing your words. We are also in a similar process regarding "Things Fall Apart" and I look forward to mailing those compilations to the participants.

That said, I've been working on finding another book to send out, and have today found one. It's a classic from the roaring twenties called "The Great Gatsby". It may take a while before I can mail it out, as I have to wait until you have sent in your signup sheets. You must sign up for the Gatsby reading if you want the book and will participate in the assignment. Below is a short blurb about the book

The Great Gatsby is a novel by the American author Francis Scott Fitzgerald. First published on April 10, 1925, the story is set in New York City and Long Island during the summer of 1922. The novel chronicles an era that Fitzgerald himself dubbed the "Jazz Age." Following the shock and chaos of the First World War, American society enjoyed unprecedented levels of prosperity during the 1920s as the economy soared. At the same time, Prohibition, the ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol mandated by the Eighteenth Amendment, made millionaires out of bootleggers and encouraged organized crime. Although Fitzgerald, like Nick Carraway in his novel, idolized the riches and glamour of the age, he was uncomfortable with the unrestrained materialism and lack of morality that went with it.

The Great Gatsby was not popular upon initial printing and sold fewer than 25,000 copies during the remaining 15 years of Fitzgerald's life. Although it was adapted into both a Broadway play and a Hollywood film within a year of publication, it was largely forgotten during the Great Depression and World War II. After it was republished in 1945 and 1953, it quickly found a wide readership, and is now often regarded as the Great American Novel

## Positive News Project

As you can't help but notice, I've included the latest issue of Positive News in this mailing. By receiving this mailing you are all enrolled in the Positive News project. Positive News is a project of CRESP, just as the Alternatives Library is. I asked the publishers of Positive News to print extra copies so I could send it in to you. I am hoping we can have some fun both creating positive stories of our own and reflecting on the stories in this issue. Let me know if you think Positive News should be a regular addition to the newsletter, and how you would like to see its inclusion used to help foster your own creativity, positive outlook and critical thinking. Just for an explanation critical thinking does not mean criticizing what you see or read, but rather a thorough examination of the material you are presented with combined with your own perspectives on the material in order to evaluate and process what you are experiencing. Dave, PE volunteer extraordinaire has written an intro to this exercise.

When Gary told me that he was mailing out copies of Positive News with the next PE newsletter, I wasn't convinced that this was such a great idea. Positive News was, well, an Ithaca phenom as far as I was concerned – there were stacks of this free newspaper all over town, in coffee houses, bookstores, even in bright yellow dispensers on the Ithaca Commons. Most of the articles describe people in Ithaca, giving hugs, volunteering at soup kitchens, working to clean up and preserve the environment. What did all this local activism and positive energy have to do with prisons? How would Positive News' upbeat proclamation – Another World is Possible – play in places like Auburn, Huntsville, Corcoran, places where hope had died for many of the people incarcerated there? Giving economic power to the poor? How about all the people in prison who earned less than 50 cents an hour? Prisons are full of poor people. What does micro-credit have to do with guys who will be getting out of prison with \$40 and the clothes on their backs? Could they get loans, start businesses, escape “the hardship of poverty.”

So I wasn't totally on the Positive News band wagon when Gary asked me to develop ideas for projects around this particular issue. Until he reminded me that sending books and educational materials into prisons was actually an example of the kind of transformative action discussed on page 14. The whole mission of Prisoner Express is transformation. To transform the loneliness and isolation of prison life into a sense of community built around sharing experiences, communicating ideas and information. To transform the experience of prison from time wasted to time enriched through participation in book clubs, journal writing, poetry, Hey, I may not be a big believer in the power of local currencies, puppetry, making origami doves but I am a believer in the work Gary and his volunteers are doing.

It's probably a lot harder to think about changing the world from confinement behind miles of razor wire and concrete. But there are positive things happening in prisons around the country. Spoon Jackson is conducting prison poetry workshops out in California. Guys at Auburn are editing an online literary magazine. Volunteers at Elmira Correctional are conducting Alternative to Violence programs. Native

### Math project

As many of you know we began a math project last year but had to close it down as we did not realize how costly our method of delivery would be. We are redesigning the program to create more text per page as well as more lessons in each unit we send out. Our major cost for this and most every program we offer are photocopying and postage. It may not seem like a lot but it mounts up when the numbers of participants grow. I am doing everything I can to include every one of you who want to be in the program, and I am constantly re-evaluating. Dani, a math professor, is creating lessons that teach math, but

also reveal the beauty of the number system. Math is like another language and Dani is trying to illuminate the logic and truth behind math as well as educate you as to how to manipulate numbers thru common math exercises. The good news is we now have a student volunteer, Earl, who will be assisting us in creating lessons. The current plan has Earl developing a thorough unit on Pre Algebra. It will be focused on teaching the minimum requirements needed to graduate regarding high school math in NY. There is a lot of material so we will have a task of condensing it, at the same time giving enough information to make it accessible to you. I will be

sending out a copy of the competency exam you must pass in NY. The challenge is how to respond to individual needs versus my need to send everything by bulk mail, and bulk mail packets need to be identical to qualify for the low rate. I haven't yet figured it out, and except for finding a tub full of money as a solution to my mailing cost problem I'm still trying to get it figured. I have a list of you who already want math lessons and there must be 300 of you there. I will automatically send you the opening packet for the math program. If you're not certain that you are on the mailing list you can use the registration form to enroll.

American groups in New York are keeping their traditions alive behind bars by conducting ceremonies and forming chartered associations. A government teacher and a retired English professor from Cornell bring students from campus together with other students at Auburn. Lots of things are happening that we never hear about. We need you to let us know about these things, to tell us about individuals and groups that are making a difference.

Sometimes changing oneself is the first step towards changing the environments that surround us. Those of you who take part in distance learning courses, or develop discipline by keeping a journal, or embark on creative journeys through poetry and fiction, are doing that –changing yourselves, spreading the word, making it happen. That's positive news.

Dave

IF you care to participate in a project focused on the transformative power of positive news and how it can inspire individuals to serve the community and spread good cheer, then I invite you to write a response to one or more of the following exercises.

### Positive News Exercises

Positive News features individuals, groups or organizations that promote social change, economic or environmental justice, and/or community empowerment.

Write about an individual or group in or out of prison that is making a difference and might qualify for a story in Positive News.

Choose a story from this issue of Positive News and discuss whether you agree or disagree with the point of view of the people in the article. Explain why.

Explain what is meant and why you agree or disagree with the statement –“we're all in this together.”

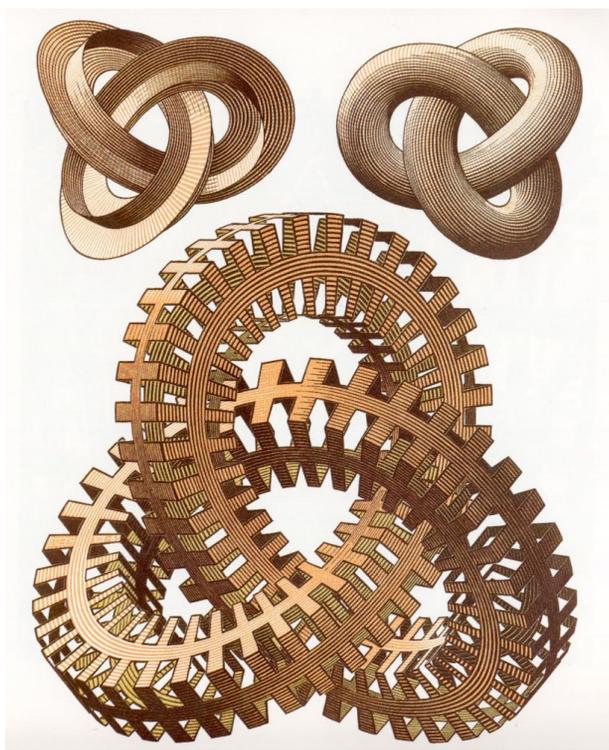
If you could wave a magic wand what type of project would you create or join in order promote change or relieve suffering. Please describe the project and why you think it would be important.

What effects do you feel after reading this newspaper? How relevant to you is the information in this publication?

I hope a number of you see the potential to playing with this Positive News project. Perhaps we can get some of your stories into the paper. We could also start a page of positive stories on the Prisoner Express Website. If you participate by sending in a response to some of the above assignments you will receive a selected compilation packet from the assignments submitted. Let me know what you think of “Positive News”

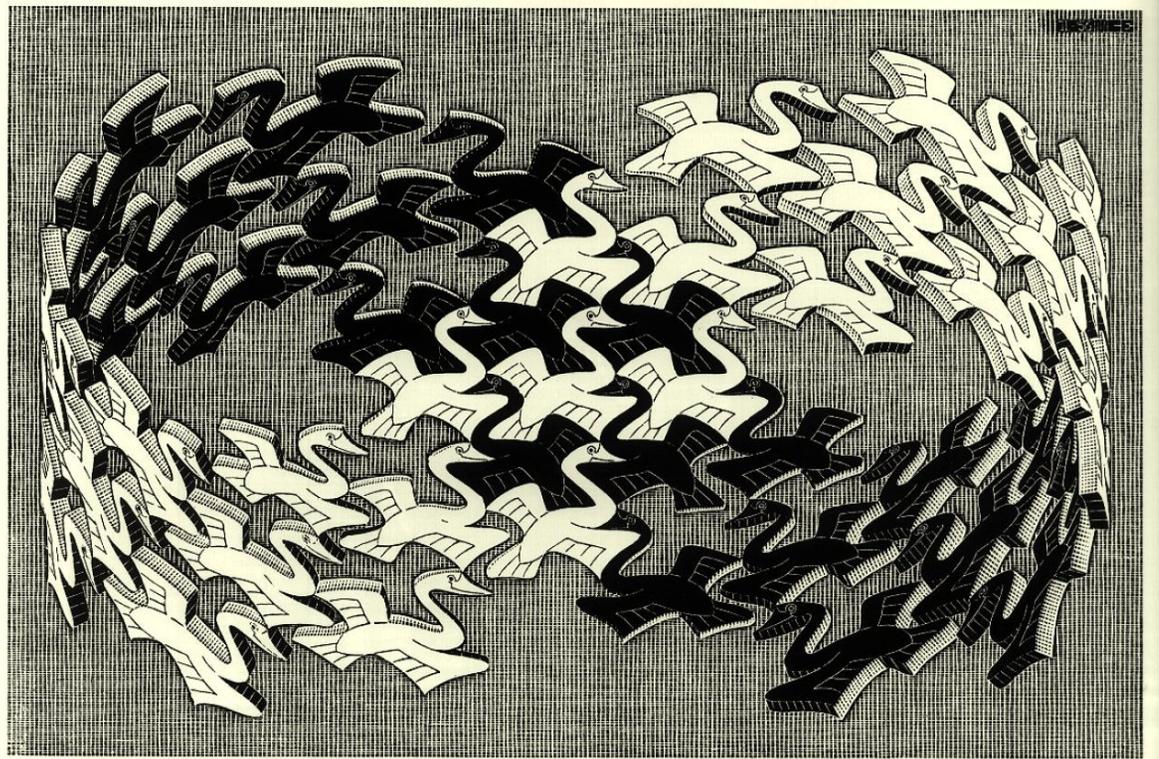
## Comic project

We have been playing around with a comic project for the past year. We have received some interesting scripts as well as artwork. I am pleased to say we have material for our first graphic book. It is based on a play by Danny Harris and has been illustrated by Richard Garza. As it contains nudity I'm not sure if I will be allowed to mail it in. It deals with the issues of violence and assault and its' deleterious effects on a young man in prison. I have been encouraged by a few to bring up the issue of prison violence and all manners of assault, and solicit your essays on it for the pages of this newsletter. I will include a compilation of your writings on the subject at the end of the comic when we publish it. I will try to produce a copy of the book that will be acceptable to your individual mailrooms as well as an uncensored version for the general public. Perhaps you all can let us know what your experience has been. We will print your stories and you can request your name be withheld if that helps in honestly sharing your opinions and experiences. Danny and Richard's collaboration is very powerful and I look forward to seeing it in print. We would like to continue this project so if you have other stories concerning prison life you'd like to see published as a graphic novel send me a copy and I'll try to hook you up with an artist.



## Origami project

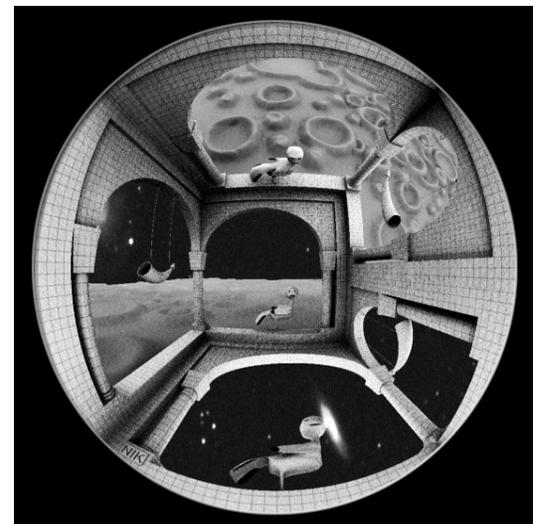
I am sorry to say I still have not found a volunteer to coordinate the project as well as the necessary



## Poetry

Since the program began we have been receiving poetry from many of you. We want to reproduce your work and create poetry anthologies that we can send to you so you can appreciate the different writing styles and emotions and thoughts contained in the variety of poems that have been submitted. I had hoped to get a grant to publish a small anthology of your poems, but that also was not funded. What I will do instead is print a smaller collection of the poetry that has been submitted. Instead of sending it to everyone, this will be one more project you can enroll in. Enrollees will be mailed the anthology. We request that you submit a poem as the price of receiving an anthology, but we can be flexible. Again I must wait for many of you to send in your request as I need to mail the anthology in bunches of 200. I'll probably wait until April to send it out. As with many of our mailings this will go out as a bulk mail item. Many of you have sent letters asking for the packet, and I must ask you to fill out the appropriate column in the registration sheet to receive the mailing as I have not kept track to date of who has requested the poetry packet. We are already collecting poems for the next anthology, and I encourage all of you with something to say to share it with us.

funding. Who would have thought it would be so hard? I was turned down for a grant to fund this effort last fall. I really expected to get the money, and while I acknowledge the setback I have not given up hope. A number of prisoners have written to share their quality paper folding talents, but I haven't been able to translate their designs in to easily understandable directions. I have a number of books that explain how to do it, but I want someone with experience leading this project, as I get confused pretty quickly when I try even the simple designs. I have begun visualizing the solutions to Prisoner Express problems. I am convinced that the necessary money and volunteers will arrive to help me keep this going and growing. Perhaps some of you can also hold that vision in your head and hearts and it will help deliver these unknown people to us just a little bit quicker. Hopefully in the next letter I will have good news to report.



Wasting Away Me, Claim, Proof,  
Connection  
By Joseph Byrd

I told myself  
I wouldn't fall victim  
To the dumbing and numbing  
Of this slave system  
But wisdom was missing  
And I was wasting  
Wasting time  
Wasting breath  
Wasting life and the ideas it moved on  
Wasting thoughts that could have  
turned my life around  
Like reality live and up close  
But what hurts the most  
Is that I was  
Wasting you  
Wasting me  
Wasting her  
Wasting, wasting, wasting  
Any dreams that could have been  
made  
A difference in how this cookie  
crumbled  
If this addendum  
Of this syndrome  
Had not been added to my life  
I wouldn't have to  
Waste sperm cells on  
BVI's, Buttmans and Blacktails  
In this modern day plantation  
Twenty five years of life  
Twenty five years of guards playing  
their part  
"on the go around."  
"Chow, shower, yard."  
"Chow, shower. yard."

"Lock in"

I don't wantna suffer  
From  
Post traumatic Slave Syndrome  
And  
Be enraged when freed  
From this cage  
I don't wantna ease  
My pain with  
Novocaine, methane or cocaine  
More stressing  
Unanswered questions  
People dying  
Unprotected sexing  
And  
Aids killing at a rapid pace.  
Pleading for deliverance and guidance  
Economic classes on Tuesdays  
Foreign language on Wednesdays  
Learning from my Hispanic and Latino  
brothers  
Amor paz y unidad  
On Thursdays it's Creative Writing  
Now I have "Lifers"  
Teaching me about  
Stocks, bonds, marketing  
Claim, proof, connection'  
I don't wantna suffer  
From Post-traumatic Silly Syndrome  
When I'm freed from this cage  
And be enraged.

Festival  
by Derrick Corley

How strange to look  
out a prison cell window  
to see children running--playing  
on a prison field: THE YARD,

and hear their voices, laughter  
sights and sounds so alien in this  
forbidding, bleak, hostile environment  
as is seeing affection--love  
given, taken, and shared freely:  
lovers holding hands, kissing  
a mother hugging her child  
kids hugging, touching, playing with  
an imprisoned father, brother, uncle  
unaware of their surroundings, for  
awhile  
the magic of love has transformed  
this place of dry grass and pain  
that holds the years, and bloody tears  
shed by caged flesh and souls  
into a field of hope and dreams.  
And as I watched it came to me  
the sum total of my life, and loss  
a deadness within, something missing  
from my life and what I was  
what I am and am supposed to be  
and, whether stolen by life or prison  
robbed of healthy human contact, I  
am  
yet able to find comfort in knowing  
that something still lived within me  
for I FELT the pain of my loss  
and while my flesh was not upon that  
field  
my soul was, and I  
found hope that I would love  
and be loved yet again, and so  
later, when the festival was over  
the field cleared and empty of all  
my eyes saw again the magic  
my ears heard the echo of laughter  
and my spirit danced upon that field  
that wasn't empty at all.

## Art

Last November we had art work from Prisoner Express participants hanging for the month on the Cornell Campus. The art show was very well received. It impressed the people who saw it as well as raised many questions among visitors about you all in prison. Prisoners are mostly out of sight and out of mind. All of your artwork hanging in the gallery brings an immediate awareness to people that it is humans and not numbers that are locked away. Some of the art work was shown to a group of folks at Cornell who digitally archive art. They want to create a collection of your art that will be available on their web site. This is all in the developmental stage, and the work is being done by Hannah, a graduate student who arranged, framed and hung your work for the first show. She is already planning another show next fall and is going to get some art experts at Cornell to be the judges. We are working out the details for a first, second and third place awards. I don't know where this will all lead, but your artwork makes you and this program more visible to the general public. I never know where the connection will come from to get money to keep this program running, but those connections do keep happening and I believe your artwork is one more way to publicize the mission and efforts of Prisoner Express. Hannah hopes you will start sending in art for the show so she can begin framing it and planning for the display. We still send out art paper on occasion, but the mailing costs are high and often prison mailrooms do let paper through which makes it a poor return on our investment. I have clearance for example in Texas to send paper, yet even with the clearance I know many times it is rejected.

Do you feel stifled in self expression?  
Want to learn better writing skills?  
If so, listen up!

My name is Tova and I'm starting a writing skills building program, which may be just for you! Since working with Prisoner's Express, I've spent most of my time working with the Themed Essay's portion, which means I've read much of your work. From them I've gathered that you all have wonderful ideas and want to share them, but are sometimes apprehensive about how. This new program I'm starting will give you the tools you need to display your creative ideas on paper and help you feel comfortable doing so. We will correspond every other week- me giving you the lesson plan and assignment for the week and you returning them to me for feedback. At the end of the program, you'll receive a certificate of completion and hopefully a new attitude about writing. If interested, please send a short essay (no more than a page) on why you want to be apart of the program [attn: Tova]. Please keep in mind, however, this program is only offered for a limited time (this is a short term- intensive program, running from March- May) and there are only 30 spots available, so please send in your essays ASAP so we can start working together! Can't wait to hear from you!

Stay Uplifted,  
Tova

### Theme Writing Project

The theme writing program began about a year after the book mailing program started. At first I was able to write personal letters to all of you, but as the numbers of program participants grew I became concerned that the program would lose the personal and intimate tone that sharing letters provided. The theme writing program was designed to provide a group you with writings that you've done on selected themes. If you submit an essay on a theme you receive a packet with every essay written on the topic. The volunteers here type your themes. Your theme writing is my number 1 priority as far as what I want posted on the internet. I have student workers who will focus on getting this material on to the web site. I find the theme writing you do very compelling and besides sending a complete copy of the themes to the participants I reprint a few from each month in the newsletter. If you want to receive a complete copy of the themes you must write something on the topic. Upcoming theme topics will be listed at the end of these selected essays. Here are a few theme writings from some of our selected topics.

In prison and society, we are faced with many different options of how easy or hard our time will go. No matter which path we choose, there will always be someone talking badly about us, or people we hang around. We choose to be jealous, greedy, deceitful, selfish, etc in an attempt to get more people to like us instead of someone else. Shouldn't we start helping each other instead of hurting them?

James Rowley

Neighbors. You can't get away from them in prison. The MAN has you all crammed together, elbow to snout, and every one of them has to have a radio blasting some DJs mindless yik-yak 30 minutes of every hour.

I got lucky. My cage is on the end of the line, so there is only two guys slamming and banging on one side. The floor is too thick for the upper two guys to be heard much through it. Even better, I'm forced to live with an old, smelly wino that does nothing but sleep and be quiet. Stink I can handle better than noise. Stink all you want, just shut the hell up!

I just finished the cockroach wars. These neighbors are gone for a while, mustering their forces to attack

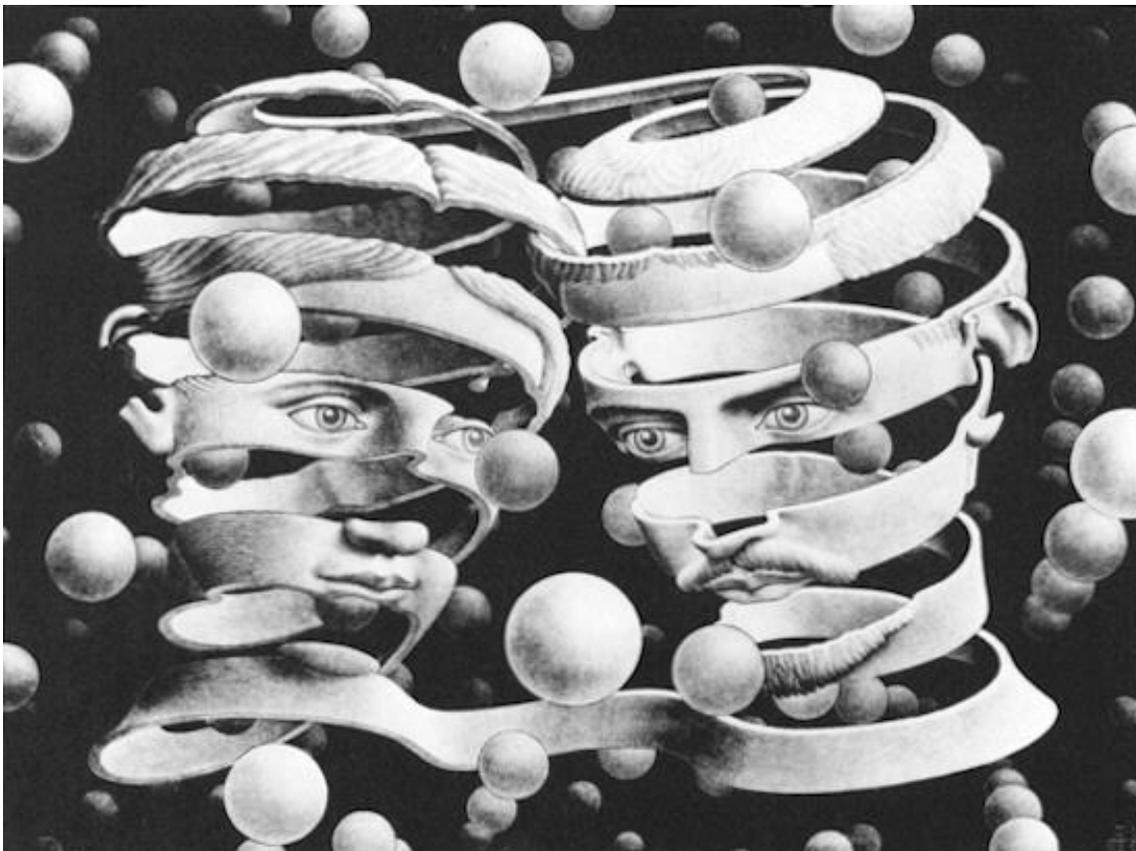
cat-rancher. Cats love gut meats and proliferate 20 times faster than ordinary live stock. They grow fat on this oily, carcinogen-laden diet. They grow big and strong quickly, and there is not much that tastes better than a Siamese-sirloin, corned calico or tabby bacon. At least not in prison, that is.

The guys further east have a bird preserve. They throw out bread and hide behind curtains in the dark, staring out of chinks in the cloth. They both have threads tightly clutched in their sweaty hands, and they salivate. They wait patiently for hours for a big, fat sparrow or a lumbering starling to step into their loop of string. They yank quickly, and often snag a toe. The bird squawks and flaps frantically, but gets hauled in rapidly. Then the wait begins anew. It takes a lot of birds to make breakfast.

Around the corner are neighbors who are always collecting paper and yard waste to shred and compost. They are the fungus farmers. Spring is their time. Edible and psychedelic mushrooms grow fast and plentiful all year round, but taste best in the spring. Just don't eat the brown ones. The white ones are for eating; the blue ones are for tripping.

All of us neighbors get together on special days and cluster around the microwave, 'cooking' our produce in plastic bowls. I share, but I don't eat any of the stuff they have made. I'm the only one who knows that nuking plastic for long periods leaches phthalates out into the food. These non-microwave-safe bowls are full of phthalates, which are a health hazard because they mimic estrogen. I used to tell prisoners of this danger, but they'd only laugh and keep frying their plastic bowls every day. I don't bother telling them anymore, and they have all forgotten or moved on. I just observe that their voices have raised a couple of notes, that their distribution of fat has changed slightly, that they talk less about sex (and violence), and that their paps have begun to deepen like breasts. Their changes benefit me because they've become less noisy, less argumentative and much less aggressive. I feel guilty for not continuing to tell them, because the changes are permanent. Phthalate pollution downstream from plastics manufacturing facilities are so strong that there are no frogs or fish: all the males have either died, mutated horribly or turned into females, depending on how young they were when they were first poisoned by phthalates.

So, you see, I have to ask: is it selfish of me to get good neighbors this way; by exploiting their ignorance? The ones before them didn't want to know and just laughed it off, so is it my duty to keep telling them that their ignorance is killing



Art: MC Escher

### NEIGHBORS

A Community Divided against Itself is Doomed

It seems to be our human nature to stereotype others and trash-talk them, because we don't want people to like others more than us. We don't care about whose feelings we hurt; we just want to make ourselves look better than them.

again later. We have window slits that we can even put out hands out to feel the freedom. My human neighbors use them to toss out every kind of processed meat garbage. They sneak these foods back from the mess hall. They are the soy-'burgers', turkey-dogs, vita-sausages, hot links salamis and bolognas that are inedible to persons who wish to retain healthy colons 20 years from now. These gut-meats are for the cat-ranch. Practically everyone in the ground floor level is a

them? I'd really like to know your opinion.

Tell me at ([www.jamesbauhaus.org](http://www.jamesbauhaus.org)) [Bauhaus@quik.com](mailto:Bauhaus@quik.com).

Also, anyone wishing to learn more about how ignorance hurts people should visit my website too for some free knowledge that most people never even thought of. This way I can atone somewhat for letting this happen, in case silence is a sin.

James Bauhaus

The people next door...are they my neighbors? Or are they, my neighbors, the people that I invite over to talk with, eat with, etc? Well, that in itself is a bit confusing as neighbors in here don't always mean the people around you. Fact is the word alone conveys a certain camaraderie, that's just not there in here. Here people live next to each other and for various reasons that don't amount to a hill of beans, never speak to each other. How are they neighbors? By my way of thinking, simply living in proximity don't make neighbors, it is the actual interactions on a community level that create that...Now at the same time, I must also state that myself, even before confinement, I was a poor neighbor, as I rarely had any dealings with the people living around me. I was so busy hustling and partying that I found myself with pretty much no friends at all and that's truly what a real neighbor is, a true friend of fair and foul weather.

Calvin J. Carter

It's 8 in the morning and I am drinking my first cup of coffee while listening to the Steve Harvey Morning Show on my headphones. This early in the morning I always need my daily dose of staying in touch with the free world. Actually, this is only one of several ways that I've chosen to help in dealing with my reality. But it is much harder for others in this similar situation to maintain their sanity.

There's a knock on my cell wall. I hear the knock but to make sure it's not next door or upstairs I wait several seconds for another knock. Then I hear it again.

"Vonderick, you up over there?" my neighbor asks. Ever since my neighbor moved in next door about four weeks ago we talk off and on through the day. It is usually conversations about where he has been in life and different things that he has experienced: from women to drugs to you-name-it. I can sense this is his way of dealing with isolation so we just kick it. However, here recently, the discussions are more and more on his problems and asking for advice.

"Yeah Rob, I am up man. What's up?" I respond.

"Ah, I was just hollering at you. Hay what cha' over there doing?" He asks.

"Just sitting over here listening to the Steve Harvey Morning Show. What are you up to over there?" I inquire.

I know something's on his mind but he doesn't want to just come right out and say it. I can empathize with him because in prison, especially in Ad Seg, that's something a man is hesitant on doing: talking about his problems. It's frowned upon. There's an established belief that only the strong survives... so in ad Seg that survival is mental.

Rob starts talking again, "Vonderic, man, this shit don't feel right. Just stuck in this cell all day, I swear man; it feels like these SSI's and CO's be messing with me. Do you ever feel like that man? Like these fools are picking on you and shit?"

I have to make sure I answer this question correctly. I've seen a few other prisoners going through the same thing. And I've never liked the out-come. I know Rob is really asking me how to handle the situation. Honestly, though, I doubt anyone is picking. This is one of the stages when someone's experiencing sensory deprivation.

Thinking before I spoke and selecting the correct tone of voice, I slowly advise Rob, "A few times a while back man, I could've sworn this one officer was picking on me. I felt like he was doing the shit because I was in Seg and he knew I couldn't get to him. So one day while I was being escorted to the shower you know what I did Rob?"

"What did you do?" he asks.

"While I was walking man, I asked him straight up. I say 'excuse me, officer; let me ask you a question'. So he tells me yeah, so I ask him Rob, 'have I ever done anything to you to irritate you?' He gives me this crazy look Rob, but he tells me naw, that I ain't never done anything to him. Then he asks me why I asked. So I tell him because a few times that he's worked the cell block I get the feeling that he was intentionally harassing me. You know what he says to me?"

"Naw, what he said man?" is what Rob asks.

"He says that he was glad I had come to him like a man instead of doing something stupid. He said that he only comes to work to do his 12 hours and go back home. After that Rob, I've never had the feeling that he was picking at me."

"Just like that" Rob states.

"Yeah man, just like that. Anytime you feel like you're having a problem with one of them, just talk to them straight up."

Rob isn't his real name, nor is he my neighbor anymore. He was released.

SSI stands for Support Service Inmate; these are prisoners that are assigned to doing the sweeping and mopping in As Seg. CO stands for Correctional Officer.

Vonderic Barlow

'Neighbors' is an interesting term. It brings to mind memories of the families that lived next door to me when I was growing up. For many years, after I was locked in maximum security prisons, that term was absent from my vocabulary.

'Neighbors' and 'neighborly' didn't seem like terms that captured the feeling of the environment. Why not? Because I had absorbed the ambient "keep a closed door, be rude to the world, assume everyone is hostile" philosophy. And there was a price I paid for acting un-neighborly. I felt like I was cut off from the Technicolor real world, trapped and surrounded in a surreal black and white world full of combatants.

Then a miracle happened. In this cruel bizarre world, I ran into another stranded soul who had been a friend in my youth. His family had actually lived next door to mine and I played with his older brother who was my age. When I saw him in jail, I assumed the posture of a surrogate big brother. I thought I had to teach him how to survive physically by teaching him what physical posture he must take around other prisoners, but the amazing thing is that he had more to teach me. I want to tell you about him, because he had the courage to demonstrate neighborliness for me and that is the type of courage we should all have.



Art: MC Escher

At first, I was afraid he would get himself hurt. He treated the men of other races like humans and said things like "good morning, neighbor." He even smiled at people. Sometimes I was embarrassed to be around him, but I bore with his eccentricities because he reminded me of family and I was extremely lonely. That

attachment allowed him to teach me some things. He proved to me that he could be moral in prison. He lived by faith on moral principles instead of jailhouse tradition. That is a radical concept in an atmosphere that is dominated by fear and peer pressure. His bravery allowed me to see a contrast to the rest of the prison and remember when I was in his position.

As I looked at those who wanted my friend to frown and conform to the tough-guy postures, I remembered those who had approached me with their 'helpful' advice when I was new to jail. As a third party to this recurring interchange, I was able to discern more of what was happening. On some level, the older convicts hated my friend for reminding them of what they had lost. They had lost the ability to genuinely smile and be happy. They told him to stop being so open or he would get hurt by his own hope. They told him to bury his personality and joy from view. They told him to conceal and hoard his joy to himself.

But then I noticed how miserable and lonely these tough guys actually were. They had forgotten how to live and surrendered their motivation for swimming upstream against the prison's life robbing currents. It was easier for them to surrender their creativity and float along with the trends and life-robbing currents. I was lonely because I had listened to those so-called authorities. They had buried their joy so well that it now was permanently lost. They were disconnected from their job, familial self, their neighbors and most of the human experience. And I was in danger of becoming more like them, until my friend came back into my life to give me a behavior to contrast.

My friend was keenly aware of the reality of the interconnections between all men that are in the same environment. He didn't know a lot of big words to describe it, but he knew that whatever judgments he made about his neighbors (the men in his circumstance) would inevitably affect how he valued his own life too. My friend knew the differences between ideal and practicalities, but he also knew that social ideals are worth struggling for. Actually, we don't have a choice. Humans are social creatures. Neighborly behaviors connect to our emotional development. When we give up on having neighbors and acknowledging out neighbors, then we subtly become complicit with the system that dehumanizes them and us.

-Paul Pommels [Please note, this would have made an excellent submission to the Positive News Exercise regarding an individual in prison that is making a difference.]

The term neighbor means basically the same thing today as it did in the early sixties. However, the character of the term has lost its identity. There was once a time when a neighbor was someone who held to themselves a Art: MC Escher

degree of responsibility. This responsibility wasn't taken lightly, and normally was, in effect, an unwritten law of the land. But times have changed and so has the entire concept of the neighbor. All good things do end, and so this is true with the good neighbor. Neighbors today are nothing more than faces of a stranger or community watch dog helping big brother bring on a police state.

In the sixties, communities were small. Law enforcement actually did what they were paid to do. And the mortar that bound people together was the desire to be a good neighbor. To be a neighbor, one had to be accepted as a neighbor. The first neighborly act was to call out the welcome wagon. Once the new arrival to the hood was inducted, they were expected to maintain certain responsibilities. It wasn't uncommon for neighbors to become extensions to the family. And in some newly developed urban areas where government intrusion had not corrupted the natural laws of selection, neighbors became family through youthful romance. If neighbors were such close knit groups in metropolitan America, the bond was even stronger in the rural scene where survival was a major issue.

Rural neighbors had a quite unique bond. Many times their survival depended on those whom they shared the land with. This rural relationship was a privilege that took precedence over one's own family. The neighbor worked hand in hand to help get fields plowed, crops planted or harvested. Women joined forces in gardening, canning, and childcare on days the wife was helping her husband in the field. Roundups on the traditional farms were neighborly affairs.

In the early sixties in the haze of the great 'dust bowl' on a farm east Tahoka, Texas the rural families converged on one farm for a seasonal share-croppers event, the slaughter of a hog. Such events were not glamorous events in the public eye, yet it demonstrated the unity of the rural neighbor. The children built a fire, teenagers rolled the cast iron cauldron onto the fire in preparation to melt the lard or pig's fat. The women laid out the salting and pickling ingredients. At sun up, the hog was dragged up to the hangmen's bar; a rope was tossed over the bar, in the early hours a hog's squeal slowly faded. By ten, the hardest part of the job was complete. The ribs were put on a spit over the fire and everyone's attention turned to the other events.

It was at once of these events I experienced my first rodeo fall. Competing against the neighbor's kids, each of us was put on a ram. The ram was released and the ride began. My ride ended when I was thrown. I landed in a fresh cow paddy which to this day curls a nose. This was neighbors being what they were, neighbors.

Neighbors in those days didn't ask what you needed, they just provided it. In the shadows of the dust in the wind, those neighbors stepped forward to provide food and clothing when my so-called father decided to go look for greener pastures alone. With their help my brothers were able to keep plowing and planting while going to school. One neighbor provided me a place to stay while my mom worked at a diner for ninety five cents an hour plus tips. Neighbors in those days didn't look for ways to destroy each other; they worked together for the good of the community.

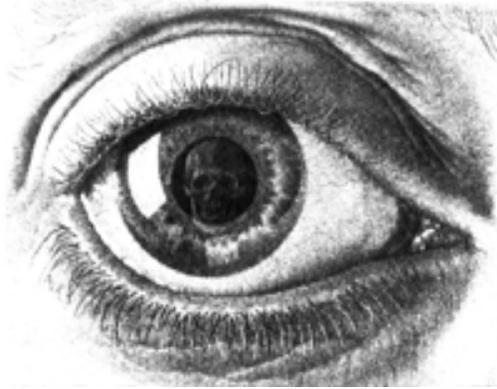
When it happened and why, no one can say, but somewhere in the very near past the neighbor lost their integrity. The relationship that once forged the nucleus of the community dissipated to two very different relationships, the first being that of total estrangement. In this, the people next door are just people you exchange pleasantries in passing. The second type of neighbor which is most common on the streets of America is the McGruff neighbor. Those neighbors who in self-righteousness try to destroy their neighbors by calling the police every chance they get.

In the wake of forced cultural integration and propagandized fear, America has lost its most valuable resource, its neighbor. They, like the American dream have faded into the political tapestry of control. Now a man's best neighbor is either an empty house or Mother Nature. Jackey Sollars

Neighbors can be helpful, bothersome, irritated, lonely, nervy, needed and talkaholic. But we all need our neighbors, some for support or good advice. When you have a neighbor like yourself you can't lose. But, when one is a psych-patient, you're out of there; especially the ones that like to bang, beat, kick, holler and flood all night. Also the ones that like to get gassed and have the team running on him/her, makes you wanna kill them. The best kind of neighbors I like, are the old school ones. They are quiet, stay to themselves and only bother you when it's necessary. Besides the psych-patient neighbors, the youngsters are out of control also. Most of them want to hog the run and cell warrior all day and night. But, I myself prefer neighbors that are what they are. Sometimes they are the best thing in

the world to have and sometimes, they are the worst. But one thing is for sure, we are going to need them at one time or another.

Tim Hampton



Art: MC Escher

“Good convicts, good neighbors”

The effect of neighbors on the quality of life is congruent between prison and the free world. It is doubtful there is anyone who has not experienced neighbors both good and bad. Many times, in the free world where choice is possible, we choose our homes to be near people we like or to avoid those that annoy us. In prison, our neighbors are selected at random and all we can do is try to make the best out of a bad situation and hope it won't last too long.

Since bad neighbors are the rule in prison, where the number of psychotic prisoners has grown exponentially since President Reagan cut funding to psychiatric hospitals in the mid 80s, the rare exceptions are all the more appreciated. My current neighbors are some of the best I've known in 14 years in Texas prison. They are also some of the most dangerous men in Texas prison. They house 'high risk' prisoners on this row and half of these houses men that made national news due to a criminal escape and subsequent actions. It's more than a little strange how intelligent and kind these men are. They are level ones and able to make store. I'm a level two and limited in what I can buy. Rusty bought me a pint of ice cream and root beer last night. Montana got me a bag of coffee last store. These were gifts but I can buy whatever I want or need for an equal value in stamps (I'm allowed to buy stamps). That is unusual in Texas where level ones charge two or three times the price when a fellow prisoner has a need such as mine.

Good neighbors are making my time of reduced privileges much more bearable and less costly. We have our share of nut cases. That's normal. But your average prisoner could learn a lot about doing time from the real convicts living around me. They know the meaning of unity and support fellow prisoners when the administration is trying to punish them. Free or imprisoned: good neighbors have much in common. They are there when you need them. Good convicts make good neighbors

and I expect a good neighbor would make a good convict.

Daniel Harris

Neighbors. What do most of us know about neighbors or care for them? For the most part, nothing. Most people nowadays don't know their neighbor nor do they care to know them. Why? I don't know why. I mostly believe it's due to being from a "me-me" society; a society and culture that cares for no one or nothing but themselves.

Neighbors at one point in time used to be like extended family. That has changed. Most people don't even care about their own family, let alone some people who live next to them. "Why should I care for them, I don't know them," they think. Truly, why should they?

Why? Simply because without care for others then there is no true care for one self. "How?" You ask. Well, look at it. Without true 'neighborly behavior' society falls apart. Even if stuff happens on such a small scale as neighbors not getting along, it turns to big scale problems. Society is based on the well being of its members, the interaction of its members. Anyone who is even slightly familiar with sociology will point this out to you, but do you ask? No, of course not. You're too busy buying clothes or throwing away your slightly used shoes just because 'they are a year old'. You're too worried about yourself to worry about others.

I guess I sound very socialistic (which I'm absolutely not), because some of their arguments ring true. What is the well being of the individual, when the whole is decaying? Why should people care if everything is going to shit? Well, because one person can make a difference. If one person tries to reach out to their neighbors for selfless reasons, then that one becomes however many they reach out to.

A good society is not based on the well being of the economy or government body, but the well being of the people. Not the individual, but the whole. If everyone would take a true interest in others, then we would be a healthier society.

Orvil Stilke

## COMING BACK

The laws of cause and effect bring to death everything around us; within us, and it also brings back to life everything around us; and within us. Death is a sign of things to come, a coming back of sorts.

The Earth turns in revolutions as the planet flies around the sun; what we call our solar system. This action brings a reaction; spring comes back, summer comes back, spring dies and summer dies too. Then the autumn comes back alive with its

bright colors contrasted by oranges, yellows, and browns with green backgrounds.

Autumn dies, and winter comes back, when winter dies, the cycle is repeated over and over. The seasons we know and are accustomed to come back, the earth continues to turn, the planet continues to travel around the sun.

Our bodies also change. Each seven years our body renews each cell in our body...amazingly, one cell at a time. One dies and one brand new replaces it, and does the exact same thing, same functions. Many of us do not even realize this process occurs within us day and night, sleep or awake. Each time our main muscle acts it causes a reaction, a tiny nuclear reaction kicks in, making the walls of the heart contract and continue to pump blood. Coming back each seven years, over and over, the cycle repeats itself.

The mind also comes back. When we experience things, they are stored away in files inside of our brain. Some of us have never developed full use of our brains. But memories are stored in there anyway. Many times they get shut out forever, and many times the same memories keep coming back, over and over. Back to the same old thing, for example; 'what if Dan wants to come back as a chango to be with la changa?' He would have to reprogram his mental blue print and then his spiritual blue print, and then his physical blue print as well, to come back as a chango. Never advancing further, never using that memory to make changes and adjusting. Instead, we become habitual. We keep coming back, back to that same old memory...



Art: MC Escher

We come back to our same old patterns, and without that pattern changing, we come back to the same old habits. We are unwilling to change that blue print, to build a new pattern for a better future. Coming back to prison is not a cycle; we want to follow that pattern. Is it a part of that pattern that needs to change? Karmic forces enable us to come back to this life and learn new lessons that will give us knowledge and open new files in our brains, to come back and compare and analyze, and make those

changes on the blue print of life to better ourselves as persons, as humans, not as rainbow colored people, but as humans.

Most white, and blacks and Mexican, rich or poor, fail to realize that the same chemicals and carbon components are in each race's blood. The outer color pitch is the only difference. But the life forces are all the same elements: earth, fire, water, and air. Without these, the whitest white, the blackest black, or the finest brown Mexican would not function, would not come back into existence as a part of the overall nature of cycles.

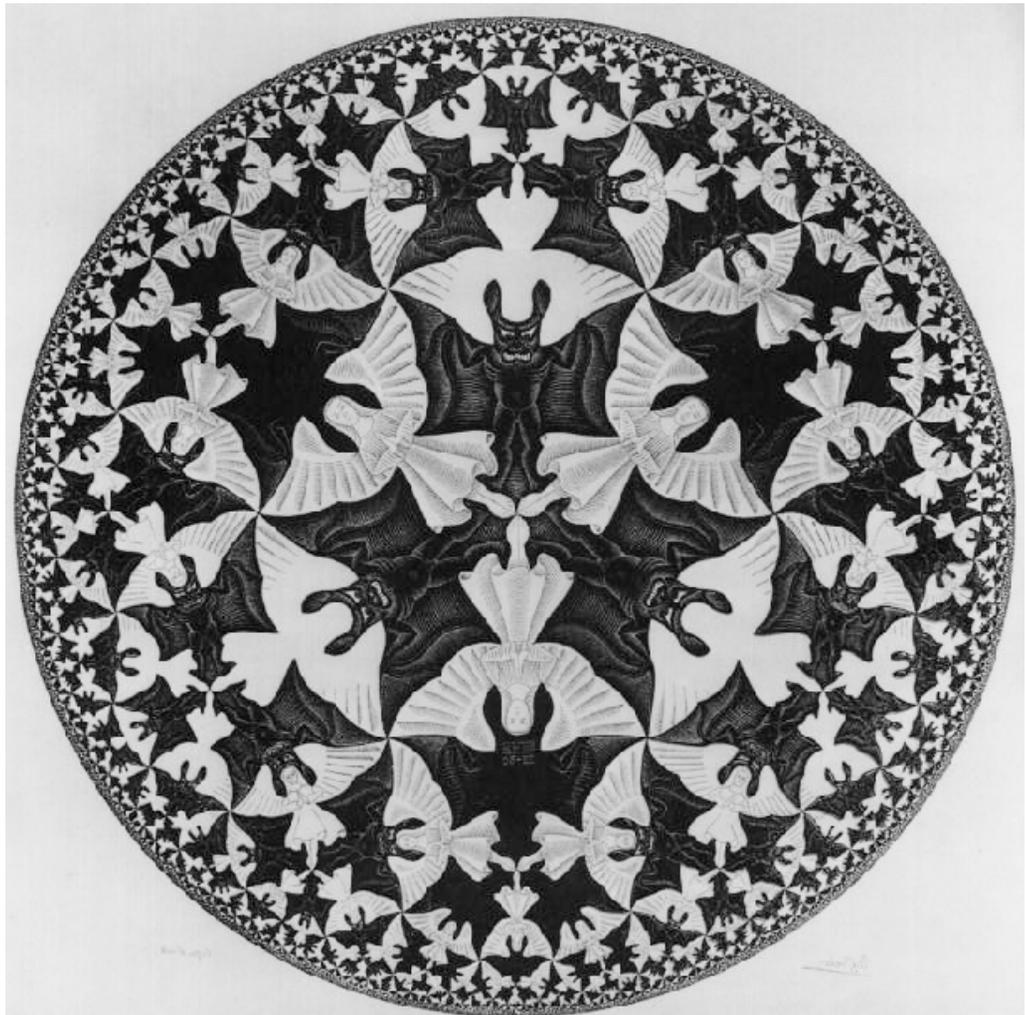
We may come back as parasites and live in human eyelashes as they do, they are so small we don't even know they exist, and we are so large they don't realize we have feet, hands, or other parts, they live their entire life cycle in our eyelashes! Generations after generations, they keep coming back to build homes and live in our eyelashes. I'll keep coming back myself but in what capacity, I don't know. Several have claimed to be returning, coming back, for example, Jesus Christ came back from the dead, and Joe Montana and John Elway were known as the comeback kids of football.

Coming back is a deep subject, it has a lot to look at to just dump it all by writing a short story for Gary, so I'll try to shorten up this conversation for now, but, like the Terminator said, "I'll be back!"

I'm back. I lost track of my line of thought. It is too noisy for us to hear ourselves, much less hear that inner voice. Many histories of great men were self educated. Formal education can actually be a hindrance to quality thought, for fostering mind sets, not allowing individual thought patterns to form. How we think is important for when we come back. Our thoughts create patterns that are stored within our brain. And we are stubbornly and destructively coming back to the same old things. The same old mind set. Information is not the same as understanding. As it is written, "he who follows worthless pursuits has no sense." To reprogram the mental computer, replace inferior thoughts with quality thoughts.

Hold fast that which is good. Let it soak in your brain. Shall we come back and repeat this cycle? Or, shall we come back and advance? Be honest with yourself, you may fool me or the world, but you cannot fool that blue print that each of us has built and lives by within our brains, that we keep coming back to. Be like the carpenter, he uses a new blue print on each house he builds. We can alter ours and build a thatched hut, or a mansion, or a castle, or a Trump building, what will it be? We will all find out when we come back!

Jesse Govea.



I wish I wasn't coming back, but here I am and I plan on making the best of it. This is the time to reflect on why I come back and to learn from my mistakes and to fill my head with more knowledge. And to work on my problems to be a better person, so, coming back is really a blessing and I will look at this time of helping myself understand life better.

Mark Vines

## GAMBLING

Everything in life is a gamble. Even taking a dump is a crap shoot. If you don't believe me go ask Elvis. Life is full of variables and there is only one guarantee: no one gets out alive. Realizing that may be why I seldom bet. When I do it with my money I feel no attraction to. With my bad luck it is too likely to be gone and money is too hard to come by.

Gamblers are eternally optimistic. They always think their next bet will be a winner no matter how long the losing streak has persisted. They forget that the nature of a bet is to create an equal number of losers and winners. Seems to me that even those who win the most, often lose more than they win.

Returning to my opening line: Everything in life is a gamble. We have to hedge our bets and not risk what is important. Once I bet I'd not get caught and lost my freedom. There is no way to win that back. For a time I gambled with my health. That too was lost and is now gone for good. You can't win back lost ground. That's why I am more cautious now. What I am willing to wager is my writing. Intellectual property, worthless unless

appreciated. Every piece I do for Prisoner Express is a sure win. It will be read by many people both free and incarcerated, and some are sure to appreciate my work. Instant gratification.

The most dangerous gamble I take is when I send my writing to publishers and contests. The stakes are higher. The competition fierce. Wins are rare. This year, 2006, I won a second price for nonfiction essay in PEN Writing Awards for Prisoners. Ecstasy! My book manuscript lingers at a major publishing house and I'm hoping for a big win. The odds are against me.

We all gamble. It is important to know the stakes and set the odds in your favor. Hedge your bets as best you can and roll the dice. Win, lose or just break even, we all have to play the game of life.

Daniel Harris

It is not uncommon to turn on our televisions and see primetime shows like 'Gambit', 'Wheel of Fortune', 'Who wants to be a millionaire?' and many other programs that encourage gambling. Nearly every state in America has passed laws to run lotto tickets, bingo halls, and slot machines in all of our communities and neighbors. It is not uncommon to see 'Pick 3' and 'Pick 6' numbers posted on the doors and walls of our local grocers, and to see bingo halls located right next to our churches. Our citizens are flooding countless stores everyday in hopes of purchasing the winning lotto ticket. With our competitive market, and society's insatiable desire for wealth, our nation is in the throes of giving birth to a new illegitimate and unwanted inception.

So take an objective view of gambling and analyze why our nation has lunged into such an onerous activity, one only need to evaluate the economic instability of our nation and society's need for financial stability. In our capitalist society, big businesses are trying to compete on an international scale which is causing our smaller businesses to fold. Thus, millions of American jobs have gone overseas and inflation has decreased the value of the dollar. So a lot of Americans are wondering if they will be able to provide for themselves within our fluctuating economy and gambling for them has been an alternative way of providing hope for financial stability.

Consequently, the money that is spent by our hard working citizens just goes into the pockets of the government and big businesses who act like leeches, sucking the life-savings out of the less fortunate and underprivileged. Most of our hardworking citizens do not really understand the game of chance and probability due to the over-commercialization of the advertised winners. But one thing we know for certain is that desperate people will do desperate things, right?

Moreover, analyzing gambling from a sociological perspective and seeing that people are generally creatures of habit, one cannot go without examining the psychologically addictive behavior associated with gambling. First and foremost, we know that our society is being plagued by other physically addictive substances, such as heroin, PCP, ecstasy, cocaine, and many other illicit drugs. Considering these factors, mixed in with America's insatiable addiction to sports, it has created additional programs, such as Gamblers Anonymous, where it has been noted that people have sold their cars, homes and personal goods to satisfy their uncontrollable urge to gamble. This habit alone, apart from addictive substances, has devastated and crippled Americans.

Just as America gave birth to the unwanted drugs and alcohol problems we face today, gambling has not yet become a focal point in America today because our citizens have not seen the ugly side of families going without food due to gambling, families that are homeless due to gambling, and jobs that have been lost due to gambling. America is not listening yet because it has not become a national epidemic that demands public intervention. My question to you today is...Where do we draw the line?

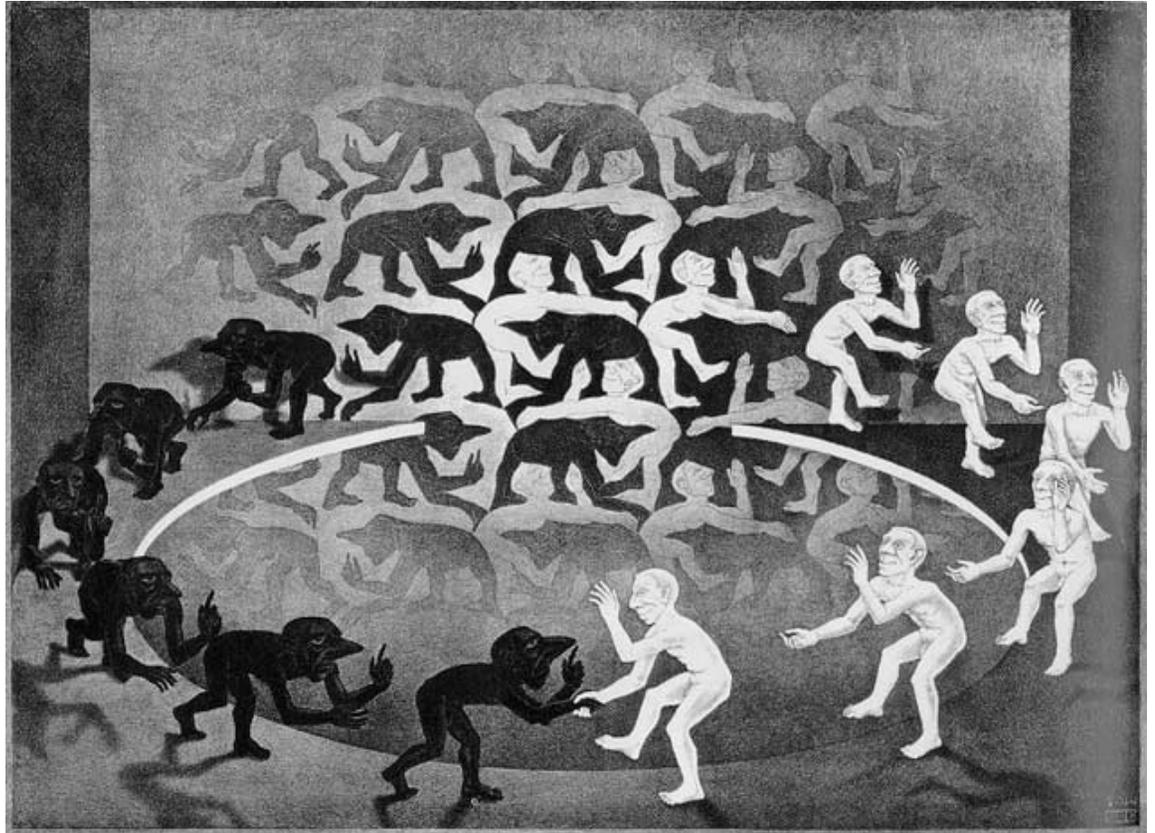
Johnny Brown

Gambling is a disease. It begins as a means of instant gratification or even as a result of peer pressure, but the victims of gambling know full well how consuming it can be. I've heard

stories of many people who were once on top of the world that were driven to despair as a result of debts they've incurred through gambling. It's tempting, and it easily pulls people in if they aren't very careful and aware of the potential power it has over them. Gambling, and the problems associated with it catch people of no specific demographic. The strange thing is that gambling in itself poses no problem, it takes human thought and desire, and then it exploits our already desperate greediness.

creating discomfort for the other person. Moreover, setting personal boundaries is decision-making, or drawing the line, knowing where to say no in situations that can cost you a lot, like losing friendships, jobs, promotions and even someone's life. In conclusion, setting personal boundaries is not neglecting yourself but improving oneself to avoid a fall. That's why I set them for myself.  
Jesus Sanchez

Art: MC Escher



Recreational gambling is just another outlet for the bad things we are made of. You must wonder after reading a story of someone driven to suicide as a result of their gambling problems. From a psychological standpoint I can understand it completely, as I've had to deal with similar addictions. Like the addict who gambles his own way each and every time he picks his veins with a needle, he is compelled. Such is the nature of addictions and human desire for instant gratification.

The best deterrent is education. For those knowledgeable of the consequences that stem from such an addiction, the chances of becoming consumed by this are lowered exponentially. If you know someone who is falling into this trap, then educate them as best as you can, be content in knowing that you did what you could to help out your fellow man (or woman).

Rick Pearson

### Personal Boundaries

I believe in having personal boundaries. Personal boundaries help me in all kinds of ways. Without them, my life would be a complete mess. Personal boundaries, for example, have helped me build character. When I joke with someone I have a stopping time, and I don't go on and on,

"You have to maintain," are the wise words always passed from prisoner to prisoner. But we all know that it is easier said than done. It is also very easy resorting to the pen and pad for expression rather than openly verbalizing it. Some say if you do the crime then do the time. I want to believe that doing time should be about rehabilitation, should be about setting new personal boundaries and reinforcing those boundaries through dedication, determination and self-discipline. Unfortunately, once you are isolated to Ad. Seg. then struggling to better yourself becomes all the more impossible.

When you are being deprived of the required sensory input to think, to learn and to function as a human being then everything else becomes secondary to surviving mentally-even those newly established 'personal boundaries.' So other than living in the so-called real world and being productive (somehow) to the family and friends that are being supportive while you are in prison, your mind is somewhere else at war with very skilled and clever enemies. Enemies with names like 'anxiety', 'depression', crazy thoughts, hallucination and the ultimate foe being called antisocial behavior.

We all have mental battle wounds, and somewhere behind the darkness our minds are also mending those wounds; always fighting to reach the pinnacle of our personal growth and development, our personal boundaries. Again, it's easier said than done, but we have to keep to the old proverbial words: you have to maintain.

Vonderic Barlow

Personal Boundaries are a two way street. You have to respect others in order to have yours respected. Also, you have personal boundaries within yourself. When people come to prison, myself included, you have an attitude that you will never do this or that, then one day you find yourself in a position, due to the situation of being in prison, and those boundaries mean nothing any more. I have found myself crossing those lines quite a few times over the years. Having to deal with that mentally can have a really negative effect on your personal being. We all have personal boundaries that tie us to a time in our past or keep us grounded in the present, our parents or surroundings have instilled this in us.

Me, I do not like to be touched by others. I do not like people close to me, even people I like and know. My personal space becomes a boundary in a sense, and I don't like people putting things in or taking things out of my cage. To these rules like any other there are those exceptions. I have known Mark my whole bit, and when he walks up to a friend he always touches you. It is something I have grown used to through knowing him. I have to deal with others thinking that they can touch me at times, because I allow Mark to cross that boundary.

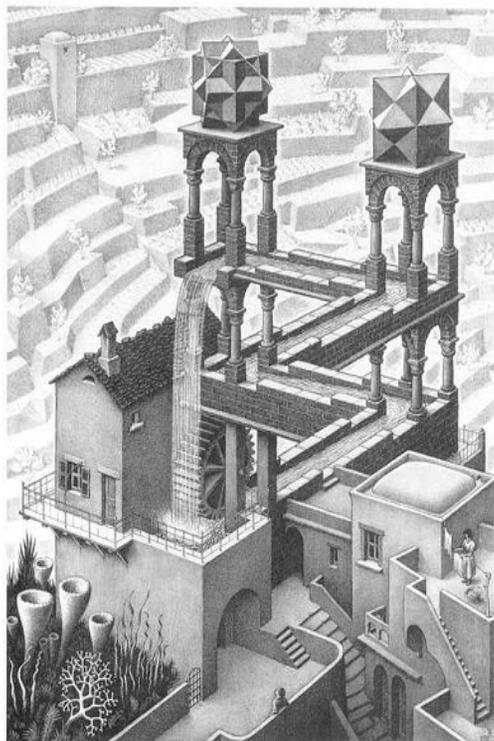
Other aspects of personal boundaries can be your belongings. I don't lend to anyone outside my personal circle, and even then there are limits. Over the years, I have had to cut quite a few people off due to wanting to borrow. The biggest joke I find in here is people who smoke, which I am not one, wanting to borrow matches. I don't smoke and I keep a box around. In the past if someone would ask for a book of matches I wouldn't think much of the fact and give it to them. A box of 50 books is only 35 cents or so. Well, I started noticing that these same people would be borrowing matches on the same day commissary came. With that a new boundary was put up. Plus once someone has borrowed something of you once, they tend to think the door is open to borrow other things. That is why personal boundaries are an important part of self preservation in prison. For if you don't set up a strong set of personal boundaries for yourself, the convicts around you will

treat you like dirt and try to use you every chance they get.

There is a big difference between jails as far as personal boundaries go. Here when people walk down the tier, it has become acceptable for them to be looking in your room as they go by, other prisons I been in you would be beat done for eye hustling. Personal boundaries concerning the cops up here seem to be non-existent, whereas in other prisons you always needed someone with you to talk to a cop, here it is commonplace for convicts to have one on one conversation with the cops and think nothing of talking about another convict during the conversation. There used to be boundaries between the cops and us. Those personal boundaries here in New Jersey have become gray area. From being from another state prison system I have a different view concerning personal boundaries. Whether I am right or wrong in my thoughts, I notice with the decline of people's personal boundaries, there is also a decline in the quality of a convict's life.

Because without strong personal boundaries you become nothing more than the number you are issued on your arrival. Take a look at the Jews during the holocaust, once they gave up all their personal boundaries to the Germans, they became nothing more than the number tattooed on their arm, lined up for the slaughter. Like I said earlier, whether I am right or wrong in my thinking, these are my thoughts concerning personal boundaries.

Matt Green



Art: MC Escher  
Out of Bounds

Prison is a strange world where personal boundaries are constantly being tested in search of weakness. Prisoners are always aware that every word they speak is being examined by all who hear us and there are often many "ear hustlers" listening. The

rewards that come from building friendships on an honest foundation must be weighed against the dangers. If you share personal experiences you may find yourself open to psychological attack later. It is easier than you think to have your armor breached and find someone out of bounds. Even as I write I am balancing what I am willing to reveal against the dangers: therein lies the problem.

There are few prisoners I feel close enough to that I would open to totally and Prisoner Express is widely distributed. If I reveal too much it might fall into the hands of some ignorant 'cell warrior' that will use it to attack me. So, I set my boundaries and they censor my actions, even my writing. It's not what I say but how another might misconstrue, whether by accident or purpose, my words or actions to forge weapons to use against me. Too often, I've seen men regret a moment's lapse in which they revealed too much.

If a prisoner speaks about some sexual perversion, he'll never hear the end of it. I have a friend here who once, while drunk, gang raped a Billy goat with two friends at a party. Why did he admit that here? I am sure he has regretted it. Oh, not raping the Billy goat; just that he ever told anyone. So, prisoners are limited to discussions of heterosexual relations unless they wish to be labeled, and you best not admit any trips to gay bars. Today, I am willing to admit to both gay friends and going to gay bars. It doesn't seem so bad in comparison to raping a Billy goat. I'll probably regret the admission.

Prisoners are bored and that makes them nosy. I get medicine twice each day and you can tell they wonder why. I've heard men accused of having HIV because they took medication on a regular basis. That's a stigma best avoided. But, is it anyone's business what medication a prisoner takes and why? I'd say not. Then again, I know that I'll hear a full account of my medical history at some point. What they don't know they'll make up. In the end, prison is too intense to not have some of your boundaries breached. All you can do is limit the damage and protect your psyche as best as you can. You must know yourself and be happy with the person you are. If not, all the boundaries in the world won't keep you safe. When prisoners cross the line and go out of bounds only being comfortable with whom you are can protect you, and how many people even know who they are. Not many, but luckily I'm safe. Are you?

Daniel Harris

Anyone living entrapped within prison comes to know the boundaries of their existence very well. There are those boundaries that are imposed upon us by the architects who designed the

space we dwell in, which bring to the forefront of our minds the loss of freedom we suffer, and cause a longing for better days to ever be present in our thoughts. There are also personal boundaries that we ascribe to ourselves, a form of self-control, discipline, discretion. What we deem honorable, and on the other side, is the line that is not to be crossed. A person's personal boundaries revolve around their personal morals. For some people, they excel and achieve due to the things that they will, or will not do, others falter and fail. Personal boundaries limit one's actions, but all limitations are not harmful if they are utilized to produce the best that we can deliver. In order to reach a goal, one must work consistently at it, and decide what things are in their best interests and prioritize their activities accordingly, which the self-discipline that comes from having personal boundaries allows us to do. The boundaries that we establish within ourselves come from mistakes. Personal boundaries also stem from an individual's character, one defines the other.

In totality, the type of life that people wish to lead will determine the boundaries that they place upon themselves. No one person can say what works best, they can only say what works best for them, since not all forms fit everyone. However, as a society, certain ideals have become the norm, and non-compliance or non-conformity to those norms may result in incarceration. As long as one's personal boundaries stay the same, physical boundaries in prison can be overcome. All that is needed is for a prisoner's boundaries to not include being held within prison, when that is

accomplished, their actions will focus on taking steps to get out. As people, we naturally resist being held in captivity, but only these with a strong desire for freedom will escape the confinements prisoners are subject to. As a prisoner, ask yourself if your personal boundaries include being a prisoner held in captivity, and if they do not, and you are being held, what will you do to change that?

Derrick Burbie

I do believe we all have our limits and boundaries, yet for each it's different. Some are set due to standards, morals and even up-bringing, and some just are. Personal boundaries can be broken, crossed and changed. Growing up, I developed and custom made the personal boundaries I now have. Not all boundaries were designed for me not to cross...and then came the drugs. The use of drugs, I guess, is the main reason I am able to see more clearly my own boundaries and those of others. On drugs, boundaries rarely exist, and even if they do, so what?! I can sit here today and look down on that type of thinking and more easily respect not just my own but also other's personal boundaries.

They exist for different reasons for each of us; mine exist so I can establish a foundation of standards. For what reasons I chose I can set lines I don't want to cross or have others cross. It's freedom, choice and personal expression...On drugs I did whatever, whenever to whomever because in that state-of-mind I over step all boundaries.

Boundaries can be gratifying, when used and respected you can gain confidence and even happiness knowing there's lines you won't cross or let others cross. Being aware of my

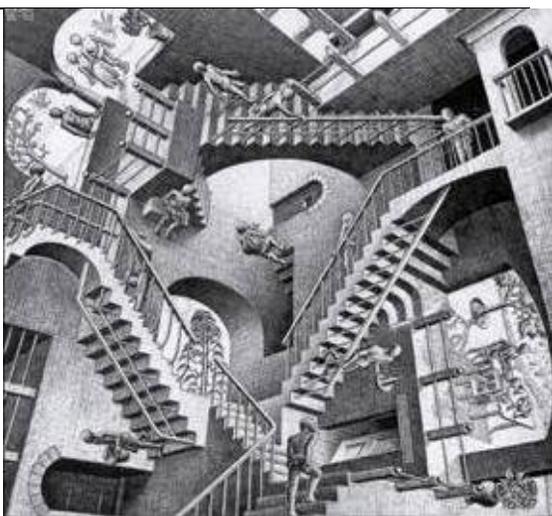
own allows and helps me see others, and in the end relationships and friendships persevere when boundaries are respected and or noticed. All this is in regards to the positive way I see personal boundaries. I am aware that emotional walls and barriers exist and they may be the same as personal boundaries, but in different terms mean something else.

Offensively or defensively boundaries also can be used in negative ways that hinder us in our daily lives. When they are set and solid, sometimes the people behind them will break before they give.

Robert Moser

My utmost thoughts of this topic are nothing more than questionable thoughts. As it stands, the universe is infinite to the understanding of man's intelligence. And with these understandings, we realize through time and space we are in fact limited. It makes me wonder if these limitations are based on personal boundaries. I question the theory, that if intelligent life forms can exist on earth, there must be many other intellectual beings existing in other realms governed by other laws. And maybe, we are separated from these beings due to being an undeveloped human race, due to a lack of spiritual growth, or by an intelligent creator not allowing us the privilege to unite. By placing boundaries on the universe, acknowledging that with an undeveloped state of thinking, coming in contact with these beings would cause conflict on a universal level, and maybe destroying our own existence (as if we are not doing it already). Maybe these boundaries are for our own good...and other's.

Jermaine Hicks



Upcoming theme topics and due dates- Please consider sending in an entry. You will generally get some interesting essays by your compatriots if you do.

"Celebrations" due April 1, 2007  
 "Breakdowns" due May 1, 2007  
 "Courage" due June 1, 2007  
 "Overcoming Depression" due July 1, 2007

"Sources of Strength" due Aug 1, 2007

"Fresh Air" due Sept 1, 2007

"Gratitude" due Oct 1, 2007

"Bullies" due Nov 1, 2007

"Temptation" due Dec 1, 2007"

### Upcoming Newsletter

We are already planning our next PE newsletter. It will deal with issues of mental health. I've read in a number of places that prisons have become dumping grounds for many suffering from mental illness. I've also read numerous letters from you all discussing quite vividly how the conditions you live under day to day contribute to the break down of your own mental health. The daily grind of life is hard enough on the outside, I can only imagine the struggles you all face to maintain a positive outlook amidst all the negativity trapped behind the walls you live within. We want to do something to help, but need your input to create a newsletter that can

really be helpful to you. We will begin collecting information for the newsletter as soon as this one gets mailed out to you. We are looking for suggestions on what kinds of materials would be most helpful for promoting healthy minds. Is it resource lists, or articles on how to cope with difficult situations, or stories of people overcoming difficult times, or would it be a help to include your personal testimonies on the subject in the newsletter? I know from reading your letters how easy it is for depression to sneak up on you, and I am interested in info on how you deal with it. Even sharing stories regarding depression and mental dis-ease in your life can be helpful to others in realizing they are not alone in their struggle for balance. We all have the potential to be content or depressed. I certainly can go between the 2 poles. Luckily for me I'm mostly content, but I have to acknowledge all sorts of

seething and resentment that is also part of my personality. It is all about degree. What percentage of the time am I suffering and down and when am I able to be comfortable and satisfied with who I am? Hopefully the upcoming newsletter, if not able to solve all the mental health issues you might have, can at least help reduce the degree of suffering and increase the amount of time at peace with yourself. Please let me know what you think of this idea and submit any writings that you think might be interesting to others to read.

Below is another contribution from Dave, who has strongly advocated that we help you deal with this pervasive issue.

The Prisoner Express newsletter has always been a forum where those on the inside can join a frank and honest discussion of topics that relate to the experience of incarceration. In different issues you've shared your reflections on subjects as wide-ranging as love, pride, boundaries, winners and losers, and religion. Our mission, in asking you to write on a variety of themes, has been to help break down the walls of silence and alienation that divide those on the inside, not only from those on the outside, but from each other as well. Now we're asking for your contributions to an issue of the newsletter that tackles some of the tough questions about what it means to survive and keep your sanity in prison. We're calling it our "mental health issue" and we hope to bring it out in a couple of months. But, we're not going to pretend to tell you how to stay sane or what you need to maintain a sense of balance and perspective. We're asking you to tell us, and indirectly, others who share that experience, how you do it, how you get through every day, day in and day out, year after year, what works, what doesn't work. It's been said from time immemorial, in one context or another that we're all in it together. What you tell us about what it takes to meet the challenges of prison could just as well be helpful for us on the outside as we confront tough experiences.

The writer, Gail Sheehy, author of *The Spirit of Survival*, once did a study of individuals who had survived horrific, unbelievable experiences like the Cambodian genocide. She came up with a series of traits that these individuals shared such as resilience, adaptability, and the ability to attract mentors. We hope that the next newsletter will inform, instruct and discuss, from your point of view, what is needed to maintain one's

mental health in prison. At the same time, we're asking you for ideas about what kinds of resources or materials you'd like to see in future newsletters albeit articles on anger management, meditation, etc. We are also looking to develop possible alliances with local mental health professionals or groups who might provide information or news that you would find helpful.

Gary and I have come up with a number of themes that might offer a starting point.

--What coping strategies have helped you personally to survive confinement?

--What advice would you give to a new 'fish' just starting out a long sentence?

--Has prayer or religious faith been a factor in facing the challenges of prison life?

--Do you currently practice meditation and what kind?

--What is the importance of finding a mentor or role model?

We thank you as always for your contributions to the newsletter and the Prisoner Express program.

Dave

### Miscellaneous Notes

There are a number of items that I'd like to discuss with you to get your opinion on the best way to proceed. I have dropped many hundreds of you from the mailing list for this issue of PE. I asked in my last 2 direct mailings for anyone still interested in receiving the newsletter to respond. As many did not I have dropped them from the current mailing list. A part of me wonders if some folks don't get their mail and that it is a shame to cut them off if they didn't know, but then again if they are not getting their mail why keep sending newsletters that are not arriving. More concern to me is that someone really enjoys the newsletter, but absolutely has no help for postage, and has no access to stamps. You on the inside will be able to set me straight on whether someone could be stopped by not being able to get a stamp. I figure they can always turn their neighbor on to the possibility of free books and include their request to stay on the mailing list in another's letter. What do you think?

I have 2 sets of encyclopedias that have been donated. Would I be better off sending individual books to you or should I keep the set intact and try to find a prison library to donate it to. I have also thought I should send a complete set to 1 prison by sending an individual book to 25 or more of you in the same prison. It might be fun for each of the recipients to eventually find out

who else had a section of the whole encyclopedia.

Please fill out the section on the registration form regarding how many books you can receive at 1 time. We have had trouble with packages being returned because we sent too many books. This is especially important in the following states. CA, FL, NJ, NC, PA.

Many of you write that showing any weakness in prison is taboo, and that showing real emotion especially sensitivity and sadness shows weakness. That to each other you have to present a face that says I'm tough no matter what happens. While I certainly am not encouraging whining, I do believe stifling your emotions will only lead to them being bottled inside you, and when those emotions eventually surface it often isn't even about what originally hurt. I understand that you have to control your behavior and how you express your emotions, but I'd like for all of you as members of PE to be ambassadors to your fellow prisoners, and make it okay for people to be real with you, and you to be real with them. Of all the folks who could be compassionate towards another prisoner's suffering it is you. I know the macho thing can keep you safer from outside antagonists, but what price does your internal being pay for the numbness or anger that comes from repressing your true feelings. Please send me suggestions on how we can cultivate a culture of compassion amongst prisoners. You are all in this together, and your support of one another could be a vital link in changing the atmosphere in your environment.

I enjoy coordinating this program, and am glad that my job at the library allows me to serve you in this capacity.

**Pen Pals-** I have been collecting your profiles and I show them to interested students. We are able to hook a few of you up with pen pals, and believe we can do better. We are making a concerted effort to post new profiles on our web site. I am trying to coordinate training for 2 work study students so they can update the website including your personals. I prioritize placing all the theme writing, journals, and poetry on the web site. As soon as that is caught up we will get your profiles up. Many of the current profiles are many years old. When I've caught up on the other assignments I will devote some time to getting the profiles updated and on line. For now anyone who wants can send a profile about themselves that we will offer to prospective pen pal writers.

## Registration Form

Please note- If you have received this newsletter you are on our mailing list for 2007, and if you do not wish to participate in any of our specific programs or update your program registration you do not need to return the registration form. If you want to participate in some of the programs including the new Book Discussion group, history project or poetry project this form should be returned in a timely manner. I hope to begin mailings by the end of April. Note on the form when there are deadlines for registration. You are always free to request books and they are sent on a first come first serve basis. Currently there are about 500 names on the list and we send out about 150 a month.

Please check one choice and then print your name and sign in the spaces provided.

I give the Alternatives Library permission to post my personal profile, writings and artwork on the web using the following guidelines:

A. \_\_\_\_\_ Use my name on my personal profile, artwork, and my other writings

B. \_\_\_\_\_ Use my name on my personal profile and artwork, but not on my other writings

C. \_\_\_\_\_ Use my name on my personal profile, but not on my artwork and other writings

D. \_\_\_\_\_ Do not use my name on my writings or artwork, but you may use any of my work and post it as anonymous

E. \_\_\_\_\_ Do not use my name or any of my writings in your program.

You must choose A or B or C, for your personal profile to be posted.

Even if you check A, B or C, you can still ask that a particular piece of writing be posted as anonymous or never posted at all. We will respect your wishes.

NAME: (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS:

SIGNATURE

DATE

1.    **I wish to receive books.** Enclose a separate sheet detailing the types of books wanted.

A. How many books can you receive in a mailing? \_\_\_\_\_

B. **Circle One** a. Softcover          b. Hardcover          c. Both are accepted

2. \_\_\_\_\_ **Math Project** –Please enroll me and send the pre algebra course placement exam.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Please send me more information on the **Journal Project**. [This involves a commitment to keep a journal about your life and experiences for 1 year, and sharing that journal with Prisoner Express for publication with other journals. Next bulk mailing for interested participants will be in the late spring.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ I'm interested in studying world history, please send me the next unit featuring **Greece and Rome**.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ A printer error left us with 299 extra copies with our original **Viking History Packet**. Please sign up if you want to receive it. It is the same one we sent out last year so if you've already got 1 leave it for someone else.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ **New book discussion group** please send me a copy of "**The "Great Gatsby"**" and the discussion questions. [Limited to first 300 responses.]

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Please send me the **poetry anthology. I understand that to receive the anthology I have to submit a poem.** Your poems will be considered for the next anthology. Though I have received requests for the poetry anthology until now I have not recorded them, so if you still want it now is the time to register. As of 3/1/07 every poem submitted will be considered a registration for this first anthology. Write legibly. It is especially hard to decipher poetry through poor penmanship.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Please consider my art for entry into the fall **Prisoner Express Art Show**. I understand the artwork will be used for a fundraiser to generate income for the Prisoner Express Distance Education Program. Everyone sending in artwork will be enrolled and receive updates on the show and a contest that will award art supply prizes.

DURLAND ALTERNATIVES LIBRARY  
127 Anabel Taylor Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853-100

## SUDOKU

	2	9	1		8		4	3
3			2			9		
		1			7		5	
5		8	4			1		9
			6		9			
7		4			3	6		8
	8		7			3		
		3			5			7
9	7		3		6	8	1	

EASY

1	9		8	6		5		
					3		7	
8					5	9	1	
		1			6			9
	3			8			6	
4			2			3		
	5	2	3					6
	1		6					
		8		2	1		9	3

MEDIUM

Fill in the empty cells, one number in each so that each column, row and region contains the numbers 1-9 exactly once. Each number in the solution therefore occurs only once in each of the three directions.