

Letter of Transmittal

Date: October 27, 2004

Date: November 16, 2004, Revision One – *This document has been revised and all changes are annotated by the dark bar in the left hand margin. It contains additional statements regarding conditions and more copies of letter published in the local Auburn paper, 'The Citizen'.*

Subject: Complaint regarding Prisoner mistreatment and abuse at the Cayuga County Jail, Auburn, NY

To:

1. Mr. Charles Schumer, US Senator
Hanley Federal Building, Suite 841, 100 S. Clinton Street, Syracuse, NY 13261
2. Ms. Hillary R. Clinton, US Senator
Hanley Federal Building, Rm 900, 100 S. Clinton St., Syracuse, NY 13261
3. Mr. James Walsh, Congressman
P.O. Box 7306, Syracuse, NY 13261
4. Mr. Sheldon Silver, New York State Assembly Speaker
LOB 932, Albany, NY 12248
5. Mr. Joseph Bruno, New York State Senate
909 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12247
6. Mr. Herbert D. Marshall, Jr., Chairman, Cayuga County Legislature
8016 Powers Road, Port Byron, NY 13140
7. Mr. John Ashcroft, US Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530
8. Mr. Harley G. Lappin, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW, Washington, DC 20534
9. Mr. Glenn S. Goord, Commissioner of Corrections
Building 2, 1220 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12226
10. Mr. Glenn T. Suddaby, US Attorney, Northern District of New York
P.O. Box 7198, 100 South Clinton Street, Syracuse, NY 13261
11. Mr. Eliot Spitzer, New York Attorney General
Civil Rights Bureau, 120 Broadway, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10271

12. Mr. James B. Vargason, Cayuga County District Attorney
Cayuga County Courthouse Annex, 154 Genesee Street, Auburn, NY 13021
13. Mr. Robert Outhouse, Cayuga County Sheriff
Cayuga County Public Safety Building, 7445 County House Road, Auburn, NY 13021
14. Mr. Matthew Clark, Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester
1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY 14624
15. Ms. Karen Murtagh-Monks, Editor, Prisoners Legal Service
114 Prospect Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

From:

Mr. John Murtari, Coordinator, www.AKidsRight.Org
55 E. Genesee Street, Baldwinsville, NY 13027 (315) 635-1968 x211

Attachments:

1. Cover Letter – Mr. John Murtari, Federal Inmate
2. Items of Concern – Mr. John Murtari, Federal Inmate (*addition*)
3. Statement – Mr. Danny Penird, County Inmate
4. Statement – Mr. Arthur Boberg, County Inmate
5. Statement – Mr. Mike Crouse, Federal Inmate
6. Statement – Mr. Tony Morse, Federal Inmate
7. Statement – Mr. Jeff Dixon, County Inmate
8. Statement – Mr. David Palma, Federal Inmate (*addition*)
9. Statement – Mr. Chris Balog, County Inmate (*new*)
10. Statement - Mr. Philip Bond, Federal Inmate (*new*)
11. Statement - Mr. Chion Burrage, Federal Inmate (*new*)
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16. Letter to the Editor (published 10/20/04 - Auburn ‘The Citizen’) – Mr. John Murtari, Federal Inmate
17. Letter to the Editor (published 11/2/04 - Auburn ‘The Citizen’) – Mr. Arthur Boberg, County Inmate (*new*)
18. Letter to the Editor (published 11/6/04 - Auburn ‘The Citizen’) – Mr. Chris Balog, County Inmate (*new*)
19. Letter to the Editor (published 11/14/04 - Auburn ‘The Citizen’) – Mr. Danny Penird, County Inmate (*new*)

John Murtari
Cayuga County Jail
P.O. Box 518
Auburn, NY 13021

26 October 2004

To whom it may concern:

I am a Federal prisoner at the Cayuga County Jail in Auburn, New York. My ICN number is 10509, my Federal number is 11772-052. This is a complaint about prisoner mistreatment and abuse at the Cayuga County Jail, located in Auburn, New York.

I am serving a 44 day sentence for trespass as a result of a peaceful Civil Rights action for Family Law reform. I have had jail sentences in the past related to the same activity and served time at several other facilities also located in the Central New York area.

Right now I am the President of a small Internet Business and live in Lyons where I am a lector at St. Michael's Church. I'm a 1978 graduate of the Air Force Academy and a former Air Force Captain and Instructor Pilot. I also have a Masters Degree from Syracuse University.

The Cayuga County Jail does not follow written policies and deliberately treats prisoners with less than the human dignity, respect, and compassion we all deserve. I have attached a list of Items of Concern that has some specific examples along with the statements of other Federal and Local prisoners. We would all be happy to publicly testify to these items.

I think I know how to train men, improving their lives by teaching them self discipline, confidence, and pride. Insufficient food, clothing, and poor treatment do not accomplish anything. The Jail achieves nothing by treating members of the community in a negligent and disrespectful manner. It does NOT serve its community by returning people to the area in worse conditions than when they left.

This package is going to agencies which have the authority to investigate, arrest, and prosecute wrong doing. The items below are not occasional errors, but a systematic policy being enforced by supervisory staff beginning at the Sergeant level. These policies intentionally mistreat and abuse prisoners.

Please, I hope you will take the time to confirm the attached items. It should not be difficult since they all represent common occurrences at the facility. This package is also going to legislative representatives at the Local and Federal level. The present written grievance process and scheduled 'inspection' does not seem to be enough. Additional quality control procedures may be necessary to get more direct and 'free' prisoner input.

I'm not sure what, if any, action will occur as a result of this. But I hope each of you will take time to write to the other prisoners who submitted statements and are willing to

testify to conditions and treatment here. Most will be here for at least another two weeks. Mr. Penird should be released on November 2nd.

Retribution comes all too easily to a prisoner who is a troublemaker. I tried to encourage them to write and to improve things for others.

Finally, I must also say you have some good deputies here who don't see just prisoners but members of our community still deserving respect, dignity, and compassion. I would like to mention their names, but that could bring retribution here upon them.

What is going on in this facility is an embarrassment and an intentional and systematic misuse of power. I do not use these words lightly when I say there is staff here that has violated the law, basic civil rights, and needs to be prosecuted.

To the many who will read this complaint that are Christians: Would you wish Christ (or the least of his brothers or sisters) to sit in a jail cell hungry, cold, and with not enough clothing?

I look forward to your response and action. This complaint about prisoner mistreatment and abuse was typed by my office staff. Originals of all letters and statements are available from there. I will not be released from Jail until November 5th.

Respectfully yours,

SIGNED

John Murtari

Items of Concern -- Cayuga County Jail

1. Sexual Harassment – There are female guards assigned to work the male dormitory area. This is an open area with no privacy. On rounds they will walk right by inmates using the toilet and a 3 foot surround wall does little to block the view.

There is also an open shower area to which guards on duty have an unobstructed view of showering inmates. One local inmate told me he felt uncomfortable when a girl he had known from High School was on duty.

I talked to a guard about getting a grievance form to complain about this policy and I was told, ‘No, it is not grievable. The females are certified to work the entire facility.’

2. Prisoner Beatings – A very unfortunate problem here is the beating of prisoners by staff Mr. Morse (statement attached) witnessed two such events. The beatings were NOT in response to a prisoner assault, prisoner refusal to follow instructions, or other physical violence. The beatings were a response to a frustrated prisoner giving verbal abuse to guard.
3. No Uniforms – I spent over a week in the facility with only 1 set of trousers. This made it impossible to send them out to laundry. Some attempts were made to find another pair, but I was told, ‘there aren’t any in your size (medium).’

I later asked for a grievance form about the lack of uniforms and was given a large pair with no elastic waist. I have to hold them up with a free hand. I submitted a grievance and there was no response.

4. No Underwear – I was fortunate to be wearing white underwear and socks when admitted. Another man came in with blue underwear – that was taken from him and he wasn’t given any replacement (this is quite common). He was also issued pants that were two sizes too large – it was obscene. If he let go his pants would fall down!
5. No Recreation – I was closed up in a Dorm with 13 men. The area was about 24 x 40 feet in size. This was where we ate, slept, and went to the bathroom. There was no attached recreation yard for us. We were only out of there for 10 minutes a day for showers.

We are called for ‘rec’ at about 5 or 6 a.m. while still sleeping (well before breakfast). We can go to a dark yard with the temperature in the 30s and no external clothing. It certainly makes it easy for staff since very few inmates go to ‘rec.’

I am now in a Pod area with 35 inmates. The outside weather is cold. We only have two coats. We are expected to reuse a coat immediately after another inmate. I refused to do this and submitted a grievance. There has been no response.

6. Ineffective Grievance/Request Process -- I have submitted (4) Grievance forms regarding telephones, clothing, missing mail, and food and not seen ANY response. On the issue of female guards in the male shower area – I was told it was “not grievable.” I have heard that response to other inmate requests for grievances.

I have also seen requests ignored and people ‘locked in’ for repeated requests. Although I am not easily cowered, it made me afraid to submit too many. This is a common occurrence here.

7. Not Enough Food – This is one of the most chronic problems here. I am a 48 year old man, in good health and trim condition when I came here. I recently had myself weighed by the Nurse. In four weeks I went from 160 pounds to 150 pounds.

Just about every day I have felt hungry and gone to bed hungry. I only eat the food on my tray. It is not enough. There has been no response yet to a Request Form and a Grievance.

I cannot imagine how a growing juvenile or a large man would survive? On Wednesday, Oct. 20th, a local paper ‘The Citizen’ printed a letter to the Editor I had written regarding jail conditions (attached). It was embarrassing to see a young man actually lick his tray clean after a meal.

The menu seems different than other facilities. I have had no fruit juice since arriving here. The only fresh fruit I have had is half a banana on two occasions. In four weeks I have had canned pineapples about 3 times, but no other canned fruit.

Reports from inmates (attached) who have worked in the kitchen have said the supervisors do NOT follow the official menu with regard to type of items or quantity. The jail profits from extra food sales to inmates via commissary.

8. It is too Cold – Our cells are very cold, perhaps 55-60 degrees. I find myself shivering every day and night. I’m lucky to have two uniform shirts – I wear both. I’m lucky to have a T-shirt also.

We are normally ‘locked-in’ for about 4 one hour periods during the day. You cannot use your blankets to keep warm during the day. I have seen inmates with only one uniform and no underwear come out of their cells really shaking.

Sometimes guards complain of smell. Besides poor laundry service, some inmates sleep with all their clothes on. It is not good.

9. No Mail Delivery – My office has sent me a letter and a package which were never given to me here. The package was sent with delivery confirmation and it did arrive here. I submitted two request forms and received no reply. I later submitted a grievance and received no reply.

10. Belligerence/Lack of Compassion – Let me please describe four recent incidents which should be easy to confirm. Deputy Lang is one of the guards in our Pod. On at least two different occasions since I have been in K-Pod (only two weeks) he puts up a handwritten sign at his desk:

- a. I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT IS!!
- b. I DON'T HAVE ANY!!
- c. DON'T BOTHER TO ASK ME!!

I have seen sergeants and other staff visit the Pod – no one says anything about his sign. About a week ago we had a shakedown in K-Pod. In what appeared to be a new policy, several prisoners who are trying to recover from alcohol abuse had their “Alcoholics Anonymous” book taken from their cells. They were told they could no longer keep it there. It could only be read in the common area which has two TVs and is noisy. We are locked in for about 4 hours a day and it is a good time to relax, read, and reflect. Being denied the ability to read the “Alcoholic Anonymous” book seems to make no sense. One of the people talked to a counselor who later told him that Lt. Mack had been told of what happened and would look into it. After about a week, nothing has changed.

Another common occurrence: In the last four weeks I have seen uncooked bread slices served instead of toast for breakfast on about three occasions. A cook worker told me one of the kitchen supervisors gets in a hurry and tries to do as little as possible. Supervisory staff takes no action.

Let me finish with a most disturbing experience. The mother of Federal inmate James O. Johnson (Federal # 12571-052) was dying in Pennsylvania. He was upset, he was concerned, and requested a deathbed visit. Staff told him they could not transport him to Pennsylvania. He asked them to contact the U.S. Marshals to see if they could help. They refused. He asked if he could make a phone call to his family. They refused. He became very upset and angry and as a result was locked in restrictive housing for approximately 45 days. This is a real shame.

Sgt. McNabb caused him to serve a 45 day term in punitive housing. His mother died a few weeks later while he was in punitive housing. The New York State Minimum Standards For Prisons calls for at least a 30 minute deathbed or funeral visit. It does not distinguish between a convicted murderer serving 25 years, or a

person serving 30 days for possession of marijuana. Do inmates and their families deserve more compassion? Do any of us deserve to have only 30 minutes with a dying mother, father, child?

I am serving a 44 day sentence here. I was especially moved by this story after talking to him because I have an 88 year old mother and I am her only child.

11. Final Item – Some people may be surprised about how these conditions could have gone on for so long. A recent incident, which should be easy for you to verify, may explain a culture of “silence,” “acceptance,” and “its not my job.”

On Wednesday, October 6th, a Federal prisoner was transported by the US Marshals to Syracuse for sentencing. His uniform trousers were too large and he did not have any underwear (a common occurrence here). Did the Marshals ever report a problem? No.

During sentencing in front of US District Judge Scullin, the inmate’s pants slipped down to his knees exposing his ‘private parts.’ Everyone noticed. The Judge, the US Attorney, and the inmate’s attorney Mr. Greenwald, had to help him pull his pants up! Did anyone attempt to follow up or report the problem? No.

In the evening on Thursday, October 21st, a deputy in civilian clothes arrived (MsLonsberry) and began to distribute underwear to just the Federal inmates in the ‘K’ Pod – while county inmates with no underwear just watched. I was there. Has anything been changed in written procedures to preclude this happening again? No?

Was anyone disciplined for the failure to follow existing procedures? No? Was anyone at the Bureau of Prisons or Department of Corrections notified of a problem. No?

PS. On Wednesday, October 27th, Sgt. Gleason, the Grievance Officer, did come to me regarding my clothing grievance. He wanted me to withdraw because another inmate already had a similar grievance on appeal at Albany. I refused. He took the grievance back.

At that time I also asked him about the other grievances. He said that this was the only one he had received and that he didn’t know where the other ones were and that prisoners submit too many. I asked him to please check on my missing mail which had some pictures of my son. He did so and was kind enough to bring them to me in the afternoon.

After this complaint was originally submitted it became common knowledge with the jail staff. I observed the following:

On November 2nd, Deputy Lange was again on duty in 'L' pod. He had a new sign at his desk which in large letters said "HAVE A NICE DAY!" – and then had some small print at the bottom saying "—now go lock in!" Again, supervisory staff came by the pod during his shift and the sign remained.

On that same day there was an incident involving one of the 'juveniles' who are also confined to that pod. From his desk Deputy Lange yelled toward the cell of a juvenile who was on the other side of the pod, "MILLER, YOUR DAD DOESN'T WANT YOU TO CALL HIM ANY MORE! STOP CALLING HIS HOUSE!" – similar words were used four different times and everyone could hear it clearly. Many of the older inmates have children and we were surprised by the callousness of publicly announcing a private matter. It appears Mr. Miller tried to ask the Deputy to 'keep it quiet' – but that only made him shout louder.

On the morning of November 4th, I was called out of my cell to pick up commissary items. I was given the items by Deputy Perkins when another Deputy, also at the desk, noticed who I was and said, "SO THAT'S MURTARI, I'M SURPRISED HE CAN READ, [F]UCKING RETARD!" I asked him what his name was on two occasions and he finally identified himself as 'Bill', he then told me to go back to my cell "we turned the heat up for you!" At that time female Deputy Hurd was at the desk in relief of Deputy Richards. Inmates also heard what happened.

Later that morning I spoke to Deputy Richards about what happened and told him I would like to talk to the Sergeant to get it resolved. After the Sergeant visited the pod I again talked to Richards and asked when I would be able to speak to the Sergeant. Richards said he had talked to the Sergeant and if the Sergeant wanted to discuss it further he would talk to me. I then asked him for a grievance form, he said 'in a few minutes'. I asked a few hours later and was told, 'not right now.'

I did see Deputy 'Bill' again and confirmed what other people had told me. His name was Deputy Mario Campenella.

I was surprised by this incident of verbal abuse. If an inmate were to use such language with a guard, there could be a beating.

Statement – Mr. Danny Penird, County Inmate

10/23/04

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter to inform you of the conditions and occurrences I've witnessed while incarcerated at the Cayuga County Jail in Auburn, NY. My name is Danny J. Penird Jr. and my inmate number is 4129.

In my first week of incarceration I was stationed my first 72 hours for classification purposes in an area known as the blocks. Then I was moved to an area known as the dorms. The dorms has an open shower area where up to, I believe four inmates can shower at once. The area is visible from the guard station. One evening as I was showering among other inmates, a female deputy officer was walking around the guard desk and saw me naked. I felt humiliated. Other inmates told me that the female deputies work there all the time, so it's happened to many. It's common practice for female c.o.'s to see you naked. She acted like it was no BIG DEAL.

Upon entry in to the facility, I had a pair of colored boxers that were confiscated from me because they were not white. I was not wearing any socks upon my entry either. When I asked for underwear, t-shirt, and socks, I was told if I have money I have to purchase my own. I've been here approximately 6 months now, and I currently have no underwear still and one pair of holey socks. I feel degraded. My bare minimum standards were never met.

For the whole month of July of 2004 I was a trustee in the jail, and I was given a job in the kitchen to help prepare food, wash dishes and serve trays. Many instances while we prepared trays I would scoop on to the trays a measured ladle service amount as it called for on the dietician menu posted in the cook's office. Many instances, especially when a cook I know as "Ernie" was on, who is hired by Canteen Services, he would yell at me in front of the others and say I was distributing too much food into the trays, even though it was the proper amount. He would tell me to "shake it out" so to speak, where I would take the required serving, shake the serving spoon till it was in a measure of half to three quarters of a scoop and to serve that instead of a full level scoop. I've also witnessed Ernie run low on the main entrée serving and take what would normally be one serving of entrée, and split it into three trays to be fed to the inmates among the jail. A lot of times I've noticed when the menu calls for a certain number of ounces of a particular meat, about only half is sometimes used and then is mixed with elbow macaroni or with potatoes, to hide the meat's true amount, and to make it look thicker.

While I was a trustee in the kitchen for the whole month of July, I was forced to work for 30 days straight. I've asked deputies about getting a day off and they have said in the kitchen you don't get one. I said I would like to quit my job. And I was told if I did that, it was considered refusal to work and I would get 45 days in the blocks, "The Hole", for "refusal to work". I and my fellow co-workers were enslaved. I saw a gentleman who worked for 8 months straight and was not allowed a day off.

On 10/18/04 our Pod area had what is called a “shakedown”, which is a cell search for contraband. Two deputies, Morrel and Bielowitz confiscated my “Big Book”. It’s a self help book for Alcoholics that teaches the steps and traditions of A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous). Many refer to it as the “Alcoholics Bible”. I was told the book was considered contraband and it’s not my book, but is considered to be the property of the jail. The book was personally given to my by the qualified alcoholic counselor in June of 2004. The book was personally inscribed to me by a group of people that purchased the book for me. I’m an alcoholic and now I’m lost without my literature, and I fear re-entry into society without the armament of it’s word.

SIGNED

Danny J. Penird Jr.
4394 Sam Adams Lane
Auburn, NY 13021

Statement – Mr. Arthur Boberg, County Inmate

10/27/04

To whom it may concern:

I am writing about my experiences in C.C.J. Briefly, I am not innocent and do not claim to be. I am here because what I did was wrong. I try not to use it as an excuse, but alcohol has been involved every time I have been arrested. I am not a bad person, I have very poor judgment while drinking. I have been sentenced to jail two times, both at C.C.J. This sentence, Aug 15 - Nov 19, 2004 and last year Sept 27 - Nov 25, 2003. During the time last year and presently there have been some things that have happened to me that I think are wrong. Here is a list:

1. Last Year during my first week in C.C.J. I was in a dorm with 9 other inmates. One of them lit a cigarette. The guards came in and smelled the smoke. They took 5 of the 10 of us out. The next day the remaining 5, including myself were moved to a pod. Approximately 5-6 weeks after that happened a \$5.00 charge was taken out of my account. It took many requests to learn that I had received a ticket for the smoking incident. I was never punished, given a written ticket or a chance to appeal (since I did not take part in smoking the cigarette). The deputies at C.C.J. did not follow their own policy, as stated in the rule book, regarding tickets, punishment or appeal.
2. When I was booked into C.C.J. on Aug 15th, 2004 I was wearing a t-shirt, short (No Underwear by chance) and Sandals with no socks. I didn't know at the time, but I found out within a week, that the minimum standards (I saw it in the C.C.J. law library) say that Inmates are to be given 2 t-shirts, 2 underwear and 2 pairs of socks. After at least 5 requests (which went unanswered) and a period of 7 weeks, I was given 2 t-shirts, 2 underwear and 2 pairs of socks. That was the longest time in my life I did not have underwear and socks on.
3. During my trip to the law library I witnessed an officer go through the minimum standards book (it consists of a 3 ring binder) and remove certain pages. I was only concerned with the clothing standard which was still there when he gave me the book. When I complained about him taking out pages, he told me to write a letter to the New York Dept of Corrections Commissioner. I don't know why I would have to write him to get a copy of the minimum standards.
4. When I was here last year I was lucky enough to have money to buy commissary. This time I am not so lucky. I do not know, because I am not a dietician, but I would bet that the amount of food we are given here is not enough according to standards.
5. On, Monday Oct 18, 2004 we had a cell search. The Deputy took my AA Big Book. I was given that book by a member of AA. It is my personal property. He told

me it didn't belong to me, and that the book was not allowed in our cells. The next day I asked [Deputy Lang] for a grievance (because I felt they stole my book) and I was told to "GO SIT DOWN". I asked twice more and was given a 23-hour lock-in. The day after the 23-hour lock-in I asked another deputy for a grievance, which he gave me, and filled it out and handed it in. That was only four days ago so I haven't gotten a response yet. I cannot understand why they would not let an AA Book in our cells. I also feel I was locked in just for asking for a grievance. Hopefully I will get an answer on the grievance I filed because I need to have a strong foundation of AA when I am released. I know I am in jail. Before I spent time in Jail I thought that people in jail didn't matter to society. I failed to realize that there are a lot of people in jail that are family men. They are real people like me. They deserve at least a minimum. I feel they do not supply that here at C.C.J.

Thank You,

SIGNED

Arthur O. Boberg
I.C.# 7775
Cayuga County Jail
7445 County House Rd.
Auburn, NY 13021

P.S. I am a homeowner in Auburn, NY, Cayuga County.

Statement – Mr. Mike Crouse – Federal Inmate

10/23/04

To whom it may concern:

I am a 37 year old Native New Yorker, who to this point have been fairly successful in my profession of construction mgt. I have lead a honest and upstanding life, but due to recent poor judgment and a few bad decisions I find myself a Federal detainee (Fed ID# 10113-052). I am being housed at Cayuga County Jail.

I am fully aware that my actions have gotten me here and I have no one else to blame. I agree with my punishment of being temporarily removed from the community. What I can not agree with is the constant and intentional mental and physical abuse, purposefully inflicted upon the inmates by the staff of this facility.

I have been here almost five months. I've seen other inmates go weeks with one uniform and no clean clothes to put on. I myself was here over four months before being issued socks, T shirts or underwear. My own were taken from me because they were not white when I arrived here.

I have been given fresh fruit on 4 occasions which was a half of a banana. When was the last time you ate half of a banana? As for the less fortunate that have no money in their commissary account, and must depend on the Hygiene pack that is issued once a week, they are given enough soap and tooth paste to last about 3 days which leaves 4 days of no hygiene items until next week.

As I mentioned before, I am a Federal Inmate. The Federal Government pays a great deal to house myself and many others here. Where is the money going? This facility has a long history of corruption and regularly disregards New York State Inmate Minimum standards.

Many of the people in here are your friends and family members. How long are you going to allow these things to continue to go on? I myself will not be here too much longer, and I am not writing this to benefit myself. But in hope that these actions do not continue. After witnessing the way the staff here belittles us, and how one man can treat another so badly, I've all but lost hope for humanity in this world.

Please, Upstate New York, don't turn your back on us or your community.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

M.A. Crouse
Syracuse, New York
(315) 593-1302
20 Airport Road, Bldg. 3 Apt. 2
Fulton, NY 13069
c/o Ann Armstrong

Statement – Mr. Tony Morse, Federal Inmate

10/24/04

To whom it may concern:

I am 44 years old being held at Cayuga County Jail on Federal drug charges. I'm from Watertown, NY. I am a certified welder and have been for over 20 years. I admit I've made a mistake in my life and have a debt to society. I have worked very hard during my life raising a family and to obtain the things I have.

During the 16 months I've been here I have witnessed some very unnecessary actions from staff members. I have seen physical and mental abuse more than I care to see. Such as the summer of 2003, I was witness to a young black man [Mr. Harris, presently an inmate at the Onondaga County Justice Center in Syracuse, NY.] getting beat up after being handcuffed [because of something he said to a guard. Many people in K Pod witnessed the beating. Inmates submitted 27 statements to the Cayuga County Sheriff. At least three guards were involved.].

During the spring of 2004 another inmate was beat up because of a comment made to another inmate. [Mr. Jim Schultz, a County Inmate, was in his cell sitting on the toilet. He had hung some toilet paper on the door window for privacy (a common practice at some facilities). Deputy Richards was on his rounds and told Mr. Schultz in passing to remove the paper. He also added, "When you're done, pack up" – an indication that we was to be sent to punitive housing.

A couple of minutes later a deputy had completed his rounds and was back at his desk. Mr. Schultz yelled a profanity regarding the officer's conduct. The deputy told the cleaning crew to lock in and called for other staff. Deputy Mazzoni responded and without further conversation with Mr. Schultz, they entered his cell and beat him.].

This letter's intent is not to cause disruption of this facility, but to know what rights we have as inmates.

Some of us inmates are not fortunate to have family members or some kind of help from the outside world to tend to our needs during times as this. Some of us don't get the privileges of commissary offered by the jail and some can't afford the prices. Therefore we must depend on the meals we're served. This facility operates on a 2000 calorie a day diet. I am over 250 pounds and that diet doesn't cut it! Because we have made a mistake in life we don't have the right to be full? The portions we're served may be enough for 4 or 5 year olds, but we are adults.

To obtain hygiene products (soap, toothpaste, and shampoo, and clothes that actually fit) that this facility should provide, is like pulling teeth you might say. A 72-year-old inmate went almost 2 weeks having 1 pair of whites and 1 uniform that he would wash himself

in his sink at night. A federal inmate had his pants fall down and had no boxers in a Federal courtroom.

As inmates do we have to be subjected to be belittled and degraded by staff? I feel being taken from society and family is paying our debts for our mistakes. I could go on and on, but your paper would be full. Maybe society and taxpayers should look into how their hard earned money is being used. Because us inmates have made a mistake in life, don't we have a right to smile, be full and try to become a positive part of society? Our intent is asking for help, not to be hurt or hindered. We need you!

Thanks society if you're concerned about humanity and the lives of Moms, Dads, Sons, Brothers, Sisters, and Grandparents.

SIGNED

Tony L. Morse, Federal Inmate
12177-052
16920 NYS # 3
Watertown, NY 13601
315-788-1873

Statement – Mr. Jeff Dixon, County Inmate

10/27/04

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter in hopes of bringing to light some serious situations that have occurred during my incarcerations at Cayuga County Jail. My name is Jeffery Dixon I'm in here due to some very poor decisions that I made due to alcohol and drugs. I accept that I'm trying to better myself in every way as to not let this happen again. I was always under the impression that our punishment was being taken away from our families and society, not to be degraded, embarrassed, humiliated, and belittled.

The event that I'm about to share is a very emotional one for me. I felt as though my mind, body, and soul were violated. The episode happened on the weekend of October 9th and 10th. I had a visit that weekend and as usual it was my family coming to give their much needed support. After the visit was over we are subject to a strip search. The search itself is very belittling by itself. But this day was much worse. I was walking from the visit room to the search area and was met by one of the officers in charge of the searches. He says to me "Hey Dixon I get to see a side of you that I have never seen before". He laughs and follows me into the searching area. At this time I began to take off my shirt and proceed with the search. Once I begin to take my pants down he says to me "O.K. lets see if what everyone else says is true". I take my pants off he looks at my crotch area and says "Yes I see that it is". At that point I was furious I really didn't know what to do. I felt violated at the very least. That kind of total unprofessionalism is what I pray no one ever has to go through. The searches are embarrassing enough by themselves let alone someone cracking jokes the whole time. I find none of this whole situation funny at all.

In conclusion, I would like to add that after bringing this situation to another officer I was informed that a grievance wasn't the way to handle it. I should approach the officer and ask for an apology. That to me is not good enough. I'm a hard working resident of Cayuga County, I pay my taxes here just like the rest of the community. I am asking for the rest of the mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters to join us in making sure that this jail is used properly to correct people, make them better fit for society. Not to belittle them to the point that they have no self-esteem at all.

SIGNED

Jeffery N. Dixon
112 Franklin St.
Auburn, NY 13021

Statement – Mr. David Palma, Federal Inmate

10/23/04

To whom it may concern:

I was released from Auburn State Prison on 8/13/04 after serving 6 years 8 months. My prison number in Auburn was 00R3675. I was sentenced 9/14/00 to 15 months to run consecutive with my State sentence. I was sentenced in the Southern District of New York Federal Court in front of Judge Thomas Duffy to be turned over to the Federal Marshals upon completion of my State sentence. My Federal number is 34687-054. I am presently in Cayuga County Jail where the U.S. Marshals brought me from Auburn State Prison. I feel I should have the same rights as a Federal prisoner concerning my mental health because I am not getting proper medical treatment here.

In Auburn State Prison I went to the outside Walsh Memorial Hospital on August 6, 2004. The doctor there told me that I was getting the wrong medication which was making me sick. The doctor also ordered different medication and new tests and an EKG. As of yet I have not received the proper medical attention. The doctors in Auburn State Prison and Walsh Hospital think I have MS or Lupis. I told the Cayuga County Jail doctor and he said he cannot do anything without my medical records. I signed a waiver on or about 8/16/04 for Auburn State Prison to release my medical records to Cayuga County Jail. Also, upon entering Cayuga County Jail the deputies took my colored underwear and told me I would receive new white underwear and socks. Two months later I received two pairs of boxer underwear only. Also, I feel, as a Federal prisoner, I should have access to an up to date law library. Cayuga County Jail's law library consists of books that are outdated. Basically, the law library is a joke. Also, there are 10 people allowed in the rec yard at a time with only 2 jackets provided. In cold weather what are the other 8 people going to do? Freeze!

Thank you,

Dave Palma
1965 Wallace Ave
Bronx, NY 10462
718-824-9320

STATEMENT (addendum) – David Palma, Federal Inmate

To Whom It May Concern:

I was transferred here to Cayuga County Jail from Auburn State Prison on 8/13/04 after completing my state sentence of 10 years of which I did 6 years and 8 months. I also had a consecutive sentence of 15 months from Federal Court, Southern District of New York. Having been sentenced on 9/14/00, upon the US Marshalls transferring me to

Cayuga County Jail, I was not issued any underwear, socks or T-shirts and I was not allowed to bring any of my property from Auburn.

Upon going to the law library here I found all the books to be outdated, missing pages and incomplete, also there are no US Constitution books and only seven outdated Federal Law Books and the NY State Law books are all several years old. I am therefore unable to do any research on my case whatsoever. I find the law library to be completely inadequate and there is also one typewriter that does not work, has no ribbon and no paper available. As a Federal Prisoner I feel I am being deprived of my minimum standards.

On 9/19/04 I received [was mailed] a card, letter, and pictures containing a \$200 money order. I received the money receipt only and have yet to receive the card, letter, or pictures. About two weeks later I filed a grievance and never heard anything. During the first week of November I saw Sgt. Gleason in the pod and asked him about it. He was supposedly looking into this, I have heard nothing. My Federal ID# is: 34687-054

I feel as a Federal Prisoner I should not be treated as badly as I am as regards to the clothing, food, or visiting issues. I am 61 years old and as I mentioned earlier I feel I am not getting proper medical care. I have a problem holding a pen and had to have someone else write this.

Sincerely

SIGNED

David Palma

Statement – Mr. Chris Balog, County Inmate

October 24, 2004

To whom it may concern:

I'm a 36 year old man and I am currently being held in Cayuga County Jail. I couldn't help but notice the Letter to the Editor in The Citizen about the conditions we have to deal with here on a daily basis.

I definitely agree with the article that was written, and have a few more things to add starting with their medical staff.

I injured my back, shoulder, and neck at work and was scheduled to have surgery on my shoulder. Well before this could take place I was incarcerated. I had been on strong pain medicines for this injury for 11 months when I came to Cayuga County Jail. I brought the instructions for my medicines with me to the jail to show the doctor here. In the instructions for my pain medicine, which is a heavy narcotic called Hydrocodone, it says in bold letters "Do not suddenly stop taking this medication without consulting my doctor." Well the nurse here called my doctor but cancelled my surgery instead without my permission and also stopped my medication.

When you are admitted to the Jail here you are "Locked Down" for 72 hours, excluding weekends. This was a Friday morning and the nurses are off until Monday. Well early Saturday morning I awoke sick, throwing up, severe diarrhea, every bone in my body aching, and shaking from my medication being stopped. I also had chest pains. I thought I was going to die. I informed the deputies and they told me the nurse would be here Monday, take it up with her. I spoke with my doctor and the nurse was informed I could have died from stopping my medication the way they did.

I know I am not alone, I witnessed one gentleman, with an ingrown infected toe nail, go to the nurse 3 times. Each time the doctor said "It will grow out." The man dug it out himself. I can't imagine the pain.

These are just a couple of instances and hope this will encourage others to come forward regardless of any repercussions I may receive from writing this letter. I feel I had to do this before someone else dies while in the custody of Cayuga County Jail. After all, I wasn't sentenced to death by the Court, but I could have died here.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Chris Balog
c/o Jolan Bulog
2 Milliken Road
Lansing, NY 14882
607-533-4935 message

STATEMENT – Mr. Phillip Bond, Federal Inmate

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Phillip Bond and I am 30 years old, born 3/6/74. I graduated from Mexico High School in 1993. I have a two-year degree in masonry. I have worked various jobs in my life.

I was arrested on 4/20/04 on Federal charges. Because of over crowding at the Onondaga County Justice Center I was brought to the Cayuga County Jail on 4/21/04. My IC# here at Cayuga is 10211.

I have been in other county jails in my past. Upon arrival at Cayuga County Jail I was never given a shower or any type of delicing spray or shampoo like other jails. I had on black boxer underwear, that were taken because they were colored. I was given one uniform and the socks I had on. When I asked for underclothes I was told I had to buy them out of commissary. I filled out requests for them and no answer. I filed a grievance within the first week and still no answer.

When I finally was able to buy them 8 days later, it cost \$17.18 for 2 pair of socks, one T-shirt, and 2 boxer briefs. That is outrageous. Also the boxer briefs were colored so I had to wait another week. That was 17 days with no underwear. I also waited about 10 days with one uniform until they gave me another one from stinking. I couldn't even have the minimum requirements.

When I was in the dorm area, I was also forced to shower where female C.O.s could see me easily. I also had to use a toilet with a three foot wall around it when they talked by. I felt this was very degrading.

I also had forgot my lawyer's card in my personal property. I filled out a request to get it and again no answer. I filed a grievance to get it and no answer. I had to wait till court to see my lawyer and get his number. I was also told by C.O.'s McNabb and Montroy that there was no sense in me filling out a grievance. They said this facility just throws them out.

Also during a cell search sometime in July, while I was in L Pod. A Male C.O. Bevlowitz came in my cell and told me to strip down. A female C.O. Maxwell was outside my cell with her back toward me. When he told me take my boxer's off the female Maxwell turned about to view me. I felt this was very embarrassing.

I have been here over six months and have never been given fresh juice like other jails. The only fresh fruit I have seen is half bananas. I've been told this place feeds us small portions to save money, so the kitchen staff can receive bonuses. I am hungry even after I finish my meals.

Sincerely,

SIGNED
Phillip Bond

C/o Patricia Meaney
46 Meaney Circle,
Oswego, NY 13126

Phone: 315-342-5528

STATEMENT – Mr. Chion Burrage, Federal Inmate

My name is Chion Borage. I have been in Cayuga County jail since 4/1/04. Here is a list of problems and concerns:

On 4/1/04 I told a deputy we didn't have pillows, she said there wasn't any so I asked for a grievance. I was told they didn't answer grievances, they beat you up, put you in R.H.U. then got drunk and talked about it later.

On 4/2/04 I was denied my 15 minute Constitutional visit. When I asked why I was told because I was a federal inmate. I wrote a grievance but it was never answered. I wrote a grievance about contact visits. It was never answered. A deputy cancelled my visit because my six year old daughter had to use the restroom. I informed the deputy she had sickle cell [anemia] and because of that she had to drink a lot of fluids. But I was told it didn't matter.

On 8/6/04 I received an envelope with \$50.00 written on it by the deputy. They write on the outside of the envelope how much money we receive to be added to our account. My account was only credited \$5.00. There was no return address on the envelope and I receive money from a lot of different people. I couldn't determine who I got the money from.

From 5/12/04 till now I have requested to be on the cleanup crew. I have been requesting since I have been in the pod. But there have been six different people put on before me, they came into the jail and pod after me. Some didn't even fill out a request and I was told you have to in order to get on the list.

On 10/26/04 I had a hearing for a write up. When I told my side of what happened I was cut off and told by Deputy Ostrander that "he would find my guilty anyway, he finds everyone guilty, and if I say I'm guilty he had a sweet deal for me."

The jail only carries one phone company. If our family has AT&T or MCI they would still have to add T6I. Because that company gives the jail a higher percent [of call fees] and because of that we and our families suffer with higher rates. When we make calls we can't here if anyone answers, we have to will until they accept the call. Sometime when our lawyers are not in there secretaries don't accept the call but give a callback time. Before we were able to hear that, now they made it so we can't and because of that they have made it harder to get in contact with our lawyers.

When any [visitors] come to the jail from the outside we are told not to talk to them. If we do we will be locked in. The reason for that is so we won't tell them how they treat us.

On 10/24/04 Deputy Cowan said that Deputy Duncan had six write ups in a few hours and he bet him that he could out do him. A few hours later I received a write up because of their bet.

I have been charged with Federal conspiracy for a phone conversation. They didn't find any drugs and I didn't have any sales. They say I bought drugs from two guys named Steven and Light who are now doing ten years in state prison for possession of 3 kilos and conspiracy to sell 20 kilos. It also was about 40 others who got State time. But me and about ten others were charged with federal charges.

I don't feel it's right. Sentence me for the crime I'm charged with, not because of what I did as a kid or teenager. Just because I have been arrested before I'm facing more time than Steven and Light, that's not justice.

I have a family. Two little girls 7 and 10. Their mother and I have been together for ten years. Her father lives with us and he has Parkinsons. My grandmother just had her 5th heart surgery. I work at a detailing shop owned by me and my family.

I have a lot on my mind and this jail only adds to the stress. It's like they enjoy seeing people suffer so they do everything they can to add to it. I am paying for what I did wrong. Why make me suffer more?

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Chion Burrage
300 S. Alvord Street
Syracuse, NY 13203

STATEMENT – Mr. Robert Deuel, County Inmate

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to letters I have read by other inmates here in the county jail. I have witnessed some if not all of the same as already made in complaints by others.

My name is Robert T. Deuel and am awaiting sentencing on Nov. 5, 2004. I am looking at a term not to exceed more than 4 years; however, this is my third time being in this jail in the last five years. Like others my charges stem from drugs and alcohol usage. The problems are not secluded to this jail but also involve our local court system.

Since I have been placed here back on Sept 5, 2004, I have only see the AA counselors show up once to hold a meeting. I have had my AA book confiscated like others, but was fortunate to have it given to me by one of the officers who do care about us as humans. I have been of the individuals who have been subject to mental abuse in which in the past few times I have been here I was placed in the mental health pod because of a depression disorder dating back to 1993, there for these officers don't understand how it affects me or just don't care. The mental abuse I go through this time is not as severe as in the past but is still going on.

I have been placed in the dorms since Sept 6, 2004 and have yet to be placed in the pods. I have had to shower in the shower room with 3 other inmates in full view of any and all officers including females of whom I have known since I was a young child. When I was first brought into this jail on 9/5/04 the officers confiscated a pair of underwear because it had a gray band on it even though they were white. The same officer, however, let me keep a pair of socks that were white with gray toes and heels. I was never given a pair of underwear to replace the ones they confiscated.

On my last bid here in the jail, 10/9/02 – 5/13/03, I was subject to much more abuse that did involve physical abuse along with mental abuse. It all started on 12/23/02 when I received a package from Congressman James T. Walsh. That night there was a shake down in the housing unit (mental health) in which I was back handed by one officer and searched three or four times in the matter of 10 minutes. Unopened commissary was flushed down the toilet or opened and scattered all over the floor and bunk.

I felt violated and asked for a grievance form and was then wrote up and put into solitary confinement for a month and then kept in punitive segregation for another two months. During these three months I had mail that never got to me or to those I was sending to. While in solitary confinement I asked to speak to mental health and was refused for over two weeks at which point I tried to kill myself by cutting my wrist with paint chips and hanging myself from the light. I was then finally able to speak to a therapist. Mind you I have a depressive disorder that has and is documented in my jail file.

Fortunately in the past I was able to get my complaints out to many of the same people you have already sent information to, but I was forced to dismiss my complaints due to the supervisors exploiting my mental illness then. Back then I was the only one who was making these same complaints, but now feel safer knowing that there are in fact others now. I am willing to testify to this publicly when needed.

Sorry this is so long, but everything here said is the truth and I have forms to prove my complaints. There are many other things that have happened to me or I have witnessed that would fill at least five more pages but I have already wrote long enough.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Robert T. Deuel
7445 County House Road
Auburn, NY 13021

- or -

c/o Erika Colasanti
20 Morris St.
Auburn, NY 13021

Letter to the Editor – Mr. John Murtari, Federal Inmate

John Murtari
Cayuga County Jail
P.O. Box 518
Auburn, NY 13021

13 October 2004

Letter to the Editor
c/o The Citizen
25 Dill Street
Auburn, NY 13021

Dear Mr. Lefurt,

I'm writing this letter from a cell in the Cayuga County Jail (someone at my office retyped my hand written message). I am from Lyons, but several inmates here get "The Citizen." I thought I would take the time to write with the hope of making members of the community aware of the conditions here.

As an activist for Family Law Reform I have been involved in peaceful Civil Rights Actions that sometimes result in small jail sentences. I sacrifice my freedom in support of my cause. Many of the people here have lost their freedom for drugs, alcohol, or other selfish crimes.

Having lost our freedom, do we also lose our dignity as human beings and members of the community?

As I write this letter to you I am hungry – even though I just finished lunch. I went to bed hungry after supper last night and I expect to do the same today. Someone who works in the kitchen told me they intentionally serve smaller portions than required to save money. I saw a very young man who was tall and thin – he would lick his tray after a meal. It should be an embarrassment to us all!

I know people who don't have any underwear. If you are admitted with colored underwear it is taken, but the facility does not issue a replacement and family is not allowed to mail you any. I spent some time with a man with no underwear who was also issued jail pants two sizes too large. It was obscene.

I don't consider myself a prude and I don't like the word 'sexual harassment' – but I was bothered taking showers in a dorm area where female guards were on duty and had an unobstructed view of showering male inmates. It is an indignity.

I was also surprised to see no scheduled religious services offered at ANY time. Are there no Priests, Ministers, or Deacons in the area that can sacrifice the time on a

regular basis? I have been in Jails in Onondaga County and seen how effective a chaplain program can help people change their lives. Does anybody care?

Many people in the local area are Christians. Christ condemned those who would not visit the least of his brothers in prison. Would you keep Jesus Christ in these conditions?

Right now I am the President of a small Internet Business and live in Lyons where I am a lector at St. Michael's Church. I'm a 1978 graduate of the Air Force Academy and a former Air Force Captain and Instructor Pilot.

I think I know how to train men, improving their lives by teaching them self discipline, confidence, and pride. Insufficient food, clothing, and poor treatment do not accomplish anything.

I hope this letter will cause the community to take a closer look at your jail and how your mothers, fathers, and children are treated.

I will be here until November 5th, I welcome your visit.

Best Regards,

John Murtari
Coordinator
www.AKidsRight.Org

P.S. To leave a phone message for me while I am in Jail, please call my office at 315-635-1968 and ask for Kelly.

Letter to the Editor – Mr. Arthur Boberg, County Inmate

Arthur O. Boberg
I.C. #7775
Cayuga County Jail
7445 County House Road
Auburn, NY 13021

October 23, 2004

To the Editor of The Citizen,

I am in Cayuga County Jail. I am writing to share one of my experiences here. I realize where I am, in Jail. I am not innocent or claiming to be. I have a problem with alcohol. I have never been arrested without being under the influence of alcohol. On Monday Oct. 18, 2004 we had a cell search. During the search the Deputies took my “Alcoholic Anonymous” book. They told me I could not keep the book in my cell. The next day I asked for a grievance and was told “Go sit down.” I asked twice for a grievance and was locked in my cell for 23 hours. The book was given to me by a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is my personal property. They have AA meetings here, but not as many as I need. I need a daily connection to AA right now. Before the cell search, I read the book every night in the privacy of my cell. I am trying not to drink. I am safe in jail in that respect, since there is no alcohol here. On the other hand, the moment I am released the temptation to drink is there. If I read the Alcoholics Anonymous book on a daily basis, at least I will have a stronger foundation to stand on upon my release.

My opinion is that, since a lot of inmates have either an alcohol or drug problem when entering a jail, the AA or NA (Narcotics Anonymous) book should be as readily available as clean undergarments and personal hygiene products. It should not be banned from Inmates’ cells. I am sure the sheriff would agree.

Thank you,

Arthur O. Boberg
Recovering Alcoholic

P.S. I am a home owner in Auburn, NY. My address is 20 Venice Street, Auburn NY 13021. Phone 252-1561. I am married and have 5 children ages 17, 6, 5, 4 and 1 year old. My wife’s name is Barbara and my childrens’ names are Dolores, Lillian, Julia, Susan and Holly (same order of ages). Also, a good heading for this letter would be AA in Jail: A No-Brainer!

Letter to the Editor – Mr. Danny Penird, County Inmate

Danny Penird
Cayuga County Jail
7445 County House Road
Auburn, NY 13021

October 23, 2004

Dear Editor,

I'm currently an inmate at the Cayuga County Jail. I'm writing in response to what I believe is a lack of corrective programs and about a particular incident that occurred on Monday 10/18/04. I'm sentenced here on alcohol related charges. I attend Alcoholic's Anonymous meetings or "A. A." once a week, and that's if the people from the community that host the one hour session a week, aren't turned away at the door by deputies telling them there's no inmate interest in a meeting. Last week we had no meeting and we were told that was the reason, but nobody ever asked me or the other guys if we wanted to go.

I have a disease and it's called Alcoholism. It's taken this incarceration period for me to recognize this. So with no set corrective programming in place, I sought the assistance of the local C.H.A.D. counsel to give me some informative literature and books that the jail doesn't personally provide. Well a group of people from the community, whom I'll choose to keep anonymous, purchased a book for me called the "Big Book". The C.H.A.D counselor gave it to me and it was a godsend. It explained ways for me to understand and arrest my disease of Alcoholism. Many Alcoholics call the "Big Book" an Alcoholics Bible so to speak. I've been studying my book for the last 5 months; I consider it a key to my proper re-entry in to society.

On 10/18/04 our cell area had what is called a "shakedown," where basically it's a rigorous, unannounced search through inmates' cells and personal property in search of contraband, usually leaving chaos and ruin in its wake to your personal letters, pictures, etc. Two deputies took the "Big Book" from my cell, explained to me that it's not mine, and is considered "contraband." I've had this book since June of this year, how all of a sudden did my book get taken away now after numerous "shakedowns in the past". Do these county employees not want certain people to rehabilitate for job security reasons, because without help we're likely to come back? I feel the county and the jail needs a real wake up call on these issues. As a Christian, I just thank God they didn't take my King James Bible too!!!!

One drink away from returning,
Danny J. Penird Jr.
4394 Sam Adams Lane
Auburn, NY 13021

**Letter to the Editor (published Auburn 'The Citizen') – Mr. John Murtari,
Federal Inmate**

The Citizen.

Rick EmanuelPublisher
Mikel LeFortEditor
Jeremy BoyerManaging Editor
Roger DuPuis II.....News Editor

OPINION

• WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2004 •

to reform this discriminatory form of taxation, but no current legislator is willing to sponsor such legislation.

This is sufficient reason to re-elect nobody.

LEE GAMLEN
Aurora

Jail takes away freedoms, but also an inmate's dignity

I'm writing this letter from a cell in the Cayuga County Jail. I am from Lyons, but several inmates here get *The Citizen*. I thought I would take the time to write with the hope of making members of the community aware of the conditions here.

As an activist for Family Law Reform, I have been involved in peaceful civil rights actions that sometimes result in small jail sentences. I sacrifice my freedom in support of my cause. Many of the people here have lost their freedom for drugs, alcohol or other selfish crimes.

Having lost our freedom, do we also lose our dignity as human beings and members of the community?

I am hungry — even though I just finished lunch. I went to bed hungry after supper last night and I expect to do the same today. Someone who works in the kitchen told me they intentionally serve smaller portions, to save money. I saw a very young man who was tall and

thin — he would lick his tray after a meal. It should be an embarrassment to us all!

I was bothered taking showers in the dorm area where female guards were on duty and had an unobstructed view of showering male inmates. It is an indignity.

I was also surprised to see no scheduled religious services offered at any time. Are there no priests, ministers or deacons in the area who can sacrifice the time on a regular basis? I have been in jails in Onondaga County and seen how an effective chaplain program can help people change their lives. Does anybody care?

I hope this letter will cause the community to take a closer look at your jail and how your mothers, fathers and children are treated.

I will be here until Nov. 5; I welcome your visit.

JOHN MURTARI
Sennett

Murtari is coordinator of www.AKidsRight.org

Bush is a Catholic in Methodist's clothing

What has not been drawn to the public's attention about President George Bush:

- One of his first acts as president was to ban the heinous crime of infanti-

The Citizen.
Rick Emanuel Publisher
Mikel LeFort Editor
Jeremy Boyer Managing Editor
Roger DuPuis II .. News Editor

OPINION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2004 •

ance supported his genius for recognizing a worthwhile idea and carrying it to fruition.

Mr. Case would often tell Jane that when he got an idea, he knew thousands of people around the world received it too, but brushed it off. He also knew that somewhere in the world, a few people were taking the idea to heart and working on it.

Our Department of Public Works will soon be putting up signs proclaiming Auburn "The Birthplace of Talking Movies." Mrs. Tuttle said she would try and come for the unveiling of the signs. We will send invitations to other notables as well. Perhaps the signs will encourage more visitors to our historical area.

TONI K. COLELLA
Auburn

Alcoholics behind bars deserve access to treatment

I am in Cayuga County Jail. I am writing to share one of my experiences here.

I realize where I am, in jail. I am not innocent nor claiming to be. I have a problem with alcohol. I have never been arrested without being under the influence of alcohol.

On Monday, Oct. 18, 2004, we had a cell search. During the search, the

deputies took my "Alcoholics Anonymous" book. They told me I could not keep the book in my cell. The next day I asked for a grievance and was told, "go sit down." I asked twice for a grievance and was locked in my cell for 23 hours.

Before the cell search, I read the book every night in the privacy of my cell. I am trying not to drink. I am safe in jail in that respect, since there is no alcohol here.

On the other hand, the moment I am released, the temptation to drink is there. If I read the Alcoholics Anonymous book on a daily basis, at least I have a stronger foundation to stand on upon my release.

My opinion is that since a lot of inmates have either an alcohol or drug problem when entering a jail, the AA or NA (Narcotics Anonymous) book should be as readily available as clean undergarments and personal hygiene products.

It should not be banned from inmates' cells. I am sure the sheriff would agree.

ARTHUR O. BOBERG
Sennett

Joe Leogrande: A patron saint for young drivers

Few of us stick our necks out on public issues, so my hat is off to Joe Leogrande, the guy out front trying to

Letter to the Editor (published Auburn 'The Citizen') – Mr. Chris Balog, County Inmate

The Citizen.

Rick Emanuel Publisher
Mikel LeFort Editor
Jeremy Boyer Managing Editor
Roger DuPuis II .. News Editor

OPINION

• SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2004 •

• YOUR VIEW •

County jail careless with inmates' health issues

I'm a 36-year-old man and I am currently being held in Cayuga County Jail. I couldn't help but notice the letter to the editor in The Citizen about the conditions we have to deal with here on a daily basis.

I definitely agree with the letter that was written and have a few more things to add, starting with their medical staff.

I injured my back, shoulder and neck at work and was scheduled to have surgery on my shoulder. Well, before this could take place, I was incarcerated. I had been on strong pain medication for this injury for 11 months when I came to Cayuga County Jail.

I brought the instructions for my pain medicine with me to the jail to show the doctor here. In the instructions for my pain medicine, which is a heavy narcotic called Hydrocodone, it says in bold letters, "Do not suddenly stop taking this medication without consulting (a) doctor."

Well, the nurse here called the doctor, but canceled my surgery instead, without my permission, and also stopped my medication.

When you are admitted to the jail here, you are "locked down" for 72 hours, excluding weekends. This was a Friday morning and the nurses are off until Monday. Early Saturday morning I awoke sick, throwing up, severe diar-

rhea, every bone in my body aching, and shaking, from my medication being stopped. I also had chest pains. I thought I was going to die.

I informed the deputies and they told me the nurse would be here Monday; take it up with her. I spoke with my doctor and the nurse was informed I could have died from stopping my medication the way they did.

I know I am not alone.

I hope this will encourage others to come forward, regardless of any repercussions I may receive from writing this letter. I feel I had to do this before someone dies while in the custody of Cayuga County Jail. After all, I wasn't sentenced to death by the court, but I could have died here.

CHRIS BALOG
Sennett

Flynn should resign as head of nursing home

Robert Flynn should resign. On Friday, Oct. 22, the article in The Citizen reads, "Flynn settles with county."

Cayuga County Nursing Home administrator Robert Flynn was charged with second degree harassment after the facility's director of nursing accused Flynn of sexually harassing her at the nursing home, in July.

"Flynn settles with county," the headline reads. Does Flynn settle with

The Citizen.

Rick Emanuel Publisher
Mikel LeFort Editor
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OPINION

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destruction to the ecosystem around us.

I don't know that they would be that concerned that we continue to hunt as a bridge to the past. I think they would rather have us stop dumping toxins into our air, soil, and water.

FRANKIE LANCIA
Auburn

Jail guards thwart inmates' recovery

I'm an inmate at the Cayuga County Jail. I'm writing in response to what I believe is a lack of corrective programs and about a particular incident that occurred. I'm sentenced here on alcohol-related charges. I attend Alcoholic Anonymous meetings once a week.

I have a disease and it's called alcoholism. It's taken this incarceration period for me to recognize this. So with no set corrective programming in place, I sought the assistance of the local CHAD counsel, to give me some informative literature and books that the jail doesn't provide. Well, a group of people from the community, whom I choose to keep anonymous,

purchased a book for me called the "Big Book."

The CHAD counselor gave it to me and it was a godsend. It explained ways for me to understand and arrest my disease of alcoholism. Many alcoholics call the "Big Book" an alcoholic's Bible. I've been studying my book for the last five months; I consider it a key to my proper re-entry into society.

On Oct. 18, our cell area had what is called a "shakedown," which basically is a rigorous, unannounced search through inmates' cells and personal property in search of contraband, usually leaving chaos and ruin in its wake to our personal letters, pictures, etc. Two deputies took the "Big Book" from my cell, explained to me that it's not mine and is considered "contraband." I've had this book since June of this year. How, all of a sudden, did my book get taken away now after numerous shakedowns in the past? As a Christian, I just thank God they didn't take my King James Bible, too!

DANNY J. PENIRD JR.
Sennett