



# Maine Adult Correctional Education Association Newsletter

Gary Upham, President ~ Rick Charest, Vice President,  
Stan Piknick, Treasurer ~ Sue Knight, Secretary  
Ray Therrien, Past President  
www.macea.maineadulted.org

The mission of the Maine Adult Correctional Education Association is: to prepare adult students for successful reentry into society by equipping them with academic, career/technical and personal/social skills; to provide adult correctional educators with opportunities for networking, professional development and personal growth; to increase community and legislative awareness and support for adult correctional education through public relations, collaborations, and legislative advocacy (7/08).

## March 2010

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Patricia Gillis, Editor

## Message from the President

Gary Upham, Principal of MSP & Bolduc Correctional Facility

### Stay the Course

At our officers meeting in early February a familiar theme came up. Although MACEA is moving forward as an association, as evidenced by our recent meeting at Maple Hill Farm, we still are struggling with a sense of direction. My thoughts are that this seems that the potential is even more pressing now with the change in leadership from the Governor to the new Commissioner of Corrections. We have some great teachers and members of MACEA who work hard and continue to believe that what we do can make a difference. Yet, I believe that now, more than ever, we have legitimate concerns about our sense of direction. I feel like the scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz having to throw my arms in both directions saying which way do we go – which way do we go. I do not believe that our membership is different from any other organization dealing with state government; we are all in the same boat. Our main mission needs to continue to be strengthened. A stronger collaboration with our partners in adult education is important not only to us but to the prisoners we serve. Now is not the time to flounder but to continue the course and work even harder. I suggest that as hard as it is to attend meetings or to join our membership in collaboration – we must do so to preserve MACEA. There is opportunity, if we choose to use it, even in all of the doom and gloom. It is up to us to decide –as the scarecrow said – which way do we go!

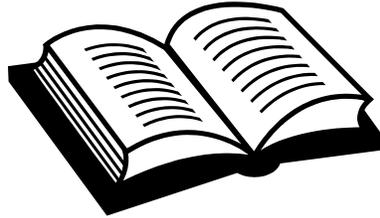
*See page 7 for membership information!*

# NEWS FROM THE FIELD

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## **York County Jail**

Submitted by Carolyn Blaisdell



A New Books New Readers Series was held at York County Jail during the month of December. The weather even cooperated! The "Biography Series" was facilitated by Mike Brady from USM. Mike's ability to engage all participants and share his vast knowledge of history made this a very successful series. The attendance was excellent and we are looking forward to having Mike return in the future!

~

## **Somerset County Jail**

Submitted by: David Richards



Last June, I was asked to teach a writing class at the Somerset County Jail (SCJ) as a replacement for an instructor who wanted to take the summer off. At the time, there was no plan for me to continue past the end of August. The original intent was to prepare prisoners for writing GED essays.

After only a few sessions, it became clear that the students wanted a less structured format. They had things to say and stories to share. Soon I was flooded with essays, narratives, reams of rap, piles of poetry, and even a few drawings. A folder overflowed into a 1" notebook that has since been replaced by a 1 ½" binder with a two-incher in reserve.

The quality of the creations has been so shockingly good – some dark, some brilliant, but all absolutely heartfelt and authentic – that SCJ Education Coordinator Sue Knight and I looked for ways to find the works a wider audience. The jail administration agreed to post a large bulletin board in the public lobby. It was quickly covered with submissions that are updated weekly. In addition, the inmates took it upon themselves to initiate a jail newsletter that has now had three issues.

Rapid turnover of prisoners has been a problem, but interest has been sufficient to maintain our class numbers at between five and eight students per session. In all, the program has touched twenty-one people. In fact, the class has become so popular that my original appointment has gradually expanded from

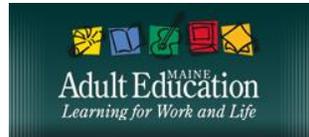
temporary to regular and from every other week to weekly to twice weekly in conjunction with the Maine Humanities Council's New Books, New Readers book discussion program.

As I try to do with the writing class, I will give the last word to an inmate who addressed a letter to the school board asking for the class to be extended beyond the summer term. Richard wrote: "[Mr. Richards] has taught me so much in the last ten weeks, with the limited time he's allotted. I just wish we had the opportunity to share with Mr. Richards on a weekly basis. My goal eventually is to publish a book."



## **Maranacook Adult Education**

**Submitted by: Deb Bowmaster**



RSU 38 Maranacook Adult Education is offering its second 60-hour WorkReady program Feb. 7 through March 2, 2011 for individuals on probation and in Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell.

The WorkReady instructor is Greg Durgin. Greg has 30 year's experience teaching high school and participated as a mock interviewer at our first WorkReady program in August 2010. Deb Bomaster, Adult Education Director, is coordinating the program by providing field trips to Goodwill, laptop computers on site for job searches, and volunteers for mock interviews. Ten men are currently participating.



## **Mountain View Youth Development Center Funding for Welding Program at UTC**

**Submitted by Pat Gillis**



Mountain View Youth Development Center was recently awarded a grant from the Carl Perkins Career & Technical Education Act of 2006 for a collaborative project that will make it possible for eligible residents to participate in the Adult Education Welding I Program at United Technologies Center in Bangor. Two students from MVYDC have already completed the safety training required for the course and will be heading to Bangor this week to begin welding.

The program is a collaborative effort between Mountain View Youth Ctr. High School Principal, Cheryl Quinn, UTC Director, Fred Woodman, UTC Adult Education Coordinator, Chris Dunbar, and JMG Program Manager, Pat Gillis. The welding training made possible by this collaboration is part of an ongoing effort to bring career and technical training into the forefront of educational opportunity for incarcerated youth.

The hope is to provide welding training for at least four students per academic year. Students will receive 45 hours of hands-on instruction in UTC's welding shop and receive a certificate of achievement upon completion. They will then have the option of continuing on to the Welding II program and/or possible state welding certification.

# The MACEA Page

## Meeting News:

The Maine Adult Correctional Education Association (MACEA) held its last meeting at the Maple Hill Farms in Hallowell, on December 3, 2010. MACEA is an organization that promotes correctional education throughout the State and is supported by both the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) and the Maine Department of Education (MDOE).

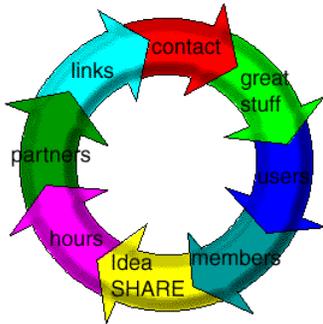
The agenda for the day-long meeting included presentations by Irv Faunce, member of the Maine State Board of Corrections and Dena Winslow, Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Maine and a number of other workshop presentations on issues pertaining to correctional education and re-entry. About 65 people attended this meeting and represented the County Jails, MDOC adult correctional facilities, MDOE, community adult education programs, and other collaborating agencies.

All correctional educators from State and County correctional facilities and anyone else that is interested in correctional education programs in Maine is welcome to attend the bi-monthly MACEA meetings. Please contact Gary Upham, President of the Maine Adult Correctional Education Association, for additional information at 273-5300 or at [Gary.Upham@maine.gov](mailto:Gary.Upham@maine.gov)

**Join us at the next MACEA meeting: Friday 3/25/11 @ 9:00am**  
**Maine State Prison in Warren**

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Submitted by: Gary Upham



**SHAREcenter**  
your hub for reusable resources  
schools, educators, nonprofits & the region

As some of you know, MACEA has a membership in Share Center located in Auburn and Topsham. This membership allows us to browse the tiny basement of this old school building. As you walk down the narrow steps and be careful not to bump your head on the low ceiling, you'll enter a small room to the right where you check in to begin your search for hidden treasures. Also here is the "green zone" where for a small fee you can buy personal items. This room holds pens, paper, duffle bags, or totes, miscellaneous items of cardboard spools, and anything and everything that a bulletin board might have need of. From here you can go to the left and step into the rest of the labyrinth holding a smorgasbord of books, paper, file cabinets, file folders, laminate, book shelving, overhead projector (I got the last one), ribbon, lined and unlined paper, stackable letter trays, parts of various office equipment, etc.. Except for the "green zone" everything is free (YES FREE). I picked up a four drawer lateral file cabinet and an older version of an overhead projector that can and does run off a computer. I also got a box of binders, numerous file folders, and pens. The Share Center will take requests to look for needed items.

If you are going to use this program, you have to go when it is open which is:

**Hours in Auburn:** Tues 1-6, Wed 1-6, 1st & 2nd Sat 9-Noon

**Hours in Topsham:** Thurs 3-6

Summer hours are different. Please call ahead and let us know what you need. Phone: (207) 333-6600

The website is: <http://www.auburnschl.edu/education/dept/dept.php?sectionid=1014>

# Member Editorial Opinion

## **Addressing Recidivism through Transition Programs: Positive Change through Collaboration and the Collapse of Organizational Silos**

**Submitted by: Richard C. Lumb, Ph.D.**

Reflecting on the state of our economy, the severity of funding cutbacks and the financial tightrope of municipalities; I find myself questioning the concept of separate but equal, agencies who work autonomously but who share the same client, resulting in less effectiveness than possible. Efforts to collaborate on sustainable solutions to resolve issues of recidivism and to do so in a cost effective manner, is laudatory. But this is not generally the case as most organizations do what they do with a minimum of collaboration.

The concept of independent silos is appropriately illustrated using an inmate being released from prison and returning to his or her social environment. The expectation is that having served time the individual has changed and will emerge a viable and contributing member of society. With recidivism ranging from 65 to 85 percent, depending on the statistics observed, we have failed! When public and private provider agencies are not sharing information and working collaboratively to address commonalities of the "same client", inefficiency exists.

The journey from society to prison and back to society does not instill the social values and confidence that a more responsible life style is possible. In response, we must be willing to continue guiding and providing basic services to direct the person along a continuum to self-sufficiency, to become a contributing member of society and to refrain from future criminal behavior. Issues of confidentiality are fine, but with public funding supporting provider services, there is a greater expectation for those footing the bill. Working with the same client and sharing information to improve prevention, treatment and sustainable solutions, is a win-win for all. This process can be accomplished with care and sensitivity.

In the State of Maine, roughly 700 inmates leave state prison facilities annually. They are released at the completion of their sentence and return to the community where they will live. They face many challenges including: 1) difficulty in finding a job, 2) encountering stigmatization from community members who know them, 3) continuing deficit of job and vocational skills, 4) the pull of alcohol and drugs, 5) contact with individuals whose influence is caustic, and other influences that may contribute to a return to crime. Many former inmates continue to experience alcohol and substance abuse needs, mental health issues, medical treatment and other issues that carry a substantial cost to them, family and society.

I continue to focus on the transition from prison to society as a key step that is woefully deficient in our State. Serving time does not guarantee change in behavior or criminality. Getting serious about using prison time to educate, provide vocational training, engage in learning social skills and preparation for

release, should be mandatory for all of those incarcerated. Incarceration presents the opportunity for assessment, program planning and the provision of change opportunities to convert a person from criminality to a contributor to the social good. However, this process must not stop on release. Without a transition plan, a portfolio and access to programs upon release that reinforce a serious demand for change, we set the stage for a return to criminality. While some gasp at the thought of providing services to criminals, let me be clear, the cost of not doing so is much, much greater.

As a mental model, I use drawbridges to define the current situation. The bridge goes down and the inmate exits the prison. He or she looks around and discovers that drawbridges needed to access continued education and vocational training, substance abuse and mental health treatment, access to work ready and other programs, are often in the "up" position. Bewildered or perhaps relieved, the inmate strolls off to his or her former colleagues and environment, often resuming a life-style where they left off. That defines stupidity on the part of the system. How could we miss the obvious needs for these individuals to change their future to one of citizenship and productivity? Will we see 100 percent change? No, of course not! But to continue with the current philosophy is foolhardy and in keeping with an earlier statement, costly.

#### Short-Term Planning, Long-Term Outcomes

MACEA is in a unique position to take the lead to bring the right public/private organizations together to address recidivism and design a model of transition from prison to society that has a strong probability of success. A series of fact finding efforts and the identification of services that are available will lead to model planning that works for Maine. This is a good start. Many partners are available whose buy-in is critical. They include, the Department of Education, Adult Education Programs, colleges and universities, social services, Department of Labor, work ready programs, leaders in private business and others who will be identified as the partnership strengthens.

The Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative is a successful model that offers information that might be useful to future Maine deliberations. The Michigan website is found at: <http://www.michpri.com/index.php?page=home> . If MACEA were to take the lead on this important and future goal oriented quest, it appears that positive outcomes for the citizens of Maine are possible and former inmates as well. As to naysayers to this concept, simply say, "All else aside, this will save taxpayers money." For most, that is a good conclusion.

*\* The comments provided in this article are the author's and not intended to represent MACEA. Lumb is a retired Associate Professor and former Chairman of the Department of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Brockport.*

# Article of Interest From Boston Globe

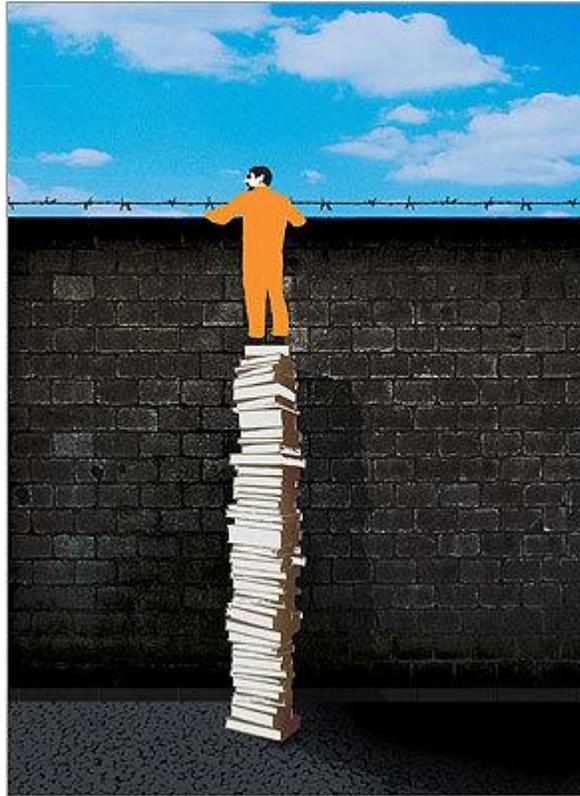
Submitted by Bob Aubrey & Ellis King

## Escape Route

### The surprising potential of a prison library

Boston Globe, December 26, 2011

By: Avi Steinberg, author of “*Running the Books: the Adventures of an Accidental Prison Librarian*”



{Excerpt} In the public debate about our penal system, prison libraries tend to be a point of controversy. Some critics worry that tax money is misspent on coddling convicted felons. Some go further, and stoke public fear that prison libraries are giving violent convicts access to materials that will incite them. The concept of books in prison has been contentious since at least the 19th century, when prison chronicler Enoch Cobb Wines wrote that some government officials considered prison libraries to be “of doubtful influence.” There is a direct lineage from the 19th-century debate to a Connecticut politician’s recent proposed purge of state prison libraries based on the supposedly nefarious influence of certain “disgusting” novels.

The problem with the public discussion about libraries in prison is that it’s the wrong discussion. For over a century now, the debate has centered on *reading* — on which books should, or more often should not, be included on the prison library’s shelves; which books are “harmful” or “helpful”; whether reading is a privilege or a right. In 1867, Wines argued that a book like “Robinson Crusoe” — at the time, the only secular novel permitted in prison — served the cause of criminal rehabilitation. Others fervently disagreed.

But the issue of reading is only one dimension of the question, and not necessarily the salient one. The crucial point of a prison library may not be its book catalog: The point is that it is a *library*.

**For more on this article: visit the Boston Globe website**



## Maine Adult Correctional Education Association Membership Enrollment

- Welcome! MACEA membership is open to anyone interested in correctional education. The \$25.00 enrollment fee will be valid through December 31, 2011. Beginning January 1, 2012 membership will be for a calendar year,
- Enrollment is open throughout the year.
- MACEA membership benefits include voting rights, annual conference discount, discounts at the Maine Department of Corrections retail showrooms, and professional development opportunities.

The completed enrollment form and payment (made out to Maine Adult Correctional Education Association) should be mailed to the MACEA Treasurer, Stan Piknick, Cumberland County Jail, 50 County Way, Portland, Maine 04102

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed Payment: \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Money Order \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase Order # \_\_\_\_\_

### **MACEA's Mission & Goals Statement**

“We believe that incarcerated individuals can benefit from education in terms of academic and vocational advancement and increased self-worth.” (November 1989)

- To prepare adult students for successful reentry into society by equipping them with academic, career/technical and personal/social skills;
- To provide adult correctional educators with opportunities for networking, professional development and personal growth;
- To increase community and legislative awareness and support for adult correctional education through public relations, collaborations, and legislative advocacy.

### **How to contact MACEA:**

Go to our new website: <http://www.macea.maineadulted.org>  
 Contact us by email at: [maceame@gmail.com](mailto:maceame@gmail.com) or phone at: 207-273-2036  
 By mail: MACEA, c/o Gary Upham, MSP, 516 Cushing Rd. Warren, ME 04864

### **Some useful informational Links:**

<http://mainehumanities.org/index.php>  
<http://www.macea.meadulted.com>  
<http://www.maine.gov/education/>  
<http://www.maineadulted.org/>  
<http://www.ceanational.org/index2.htm>

<http://www.maine.gov/labor/>  
<http://www.jmg.org>  
<http://www.ldame.org/>  
<http://www.corrections.com>  
<http://www.mccs.me.edu/>