

MOSES



Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity
for Criminal Justice Reform

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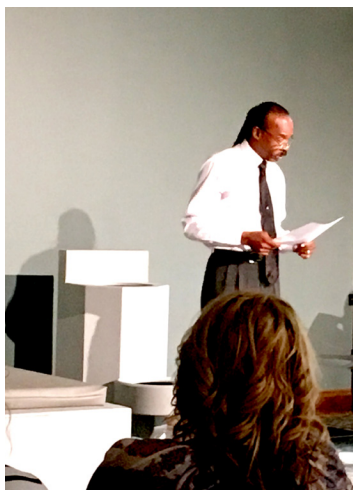
Book Review

"Like an Animal in a Cage:

Voices from Solitary Confinement"

by Tina Hogle, MOSES Communications Team

MOSES members were recently given a glimpse into the horrifying and frightening conditions that men and women experience when they are sentenced to solitary confinement. "Like an Animal in a Cage: Voices of Solitary Confinement" is a staged reading of written correspondence from people currently held in solitary confinement, or first-person testimonials from those who have survived it.



James Morgan tells of his experiences in solitary

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections routinely subjects incarcerated people to months and years of extreme isolation in solitary confinement. In the hour-long performance at First Congregational UCC Church on May 24, survivors shared their experiences in solitary confinement and explained how that experience had changed them. MOSES Vice President Talib Akbar, one of the play's authors and readers, and other survivors and actors voiced their own and others' thoughts on a simple stage that showed the actual dimensions and furnishings of a solitary confinement cell.

What is solitary confinement?

Solitary confinement in Wisconsin is the deliberate deprivation of human and sensory contact. An inmate is confined to a tiny, windowless cell designed specifically for this purpose. The cell measures 10 feet deep by 6 feet 2 inches wide. It contains a concrete platform covered by a very thin pad, which serves as a bed; an open toilet; a sink; and a steel door with two slits, so that cuffs and manacles can be applied to the inmate's hands and ankles before s/he can be brought out of the cell.

This cell is referred to, by both inmates and staff, as "The Hole." The inmate is locked down and alone for 23 hours every day; the one hour of daily "recreation" allowed takes place in an empty pen that resembles a dog cage. Many inmates in solitary confinement never get the opportunity to leave their cells or to have any meaningful human contact. People emerge from these experiences deeply traumatized and damaged.

According to the United Nations, more than 15 days in such a condition must be identified as

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Organizer's Corner

We have been busy!

On May 24, in conjunction with MOSES, Madison EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing) presented a play about what happens inside prison that can lead to a person being put into solitary confinement. The play also tried to portray how unfairly people are treated and how unbalanced this treatment can be. (See review by Tina Hogle in this newsletter.)

On May 31, recognizing the horrible treatment that our youth have endured and anticipating the imminent closing of the Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake prison, MOSES held a forum titled "Kids in Cages: Reducing Juvenile Incarceration." Panelists Judge Everett Mitchell, Sharlen Moore of UrbanUnderground, and Ali Muldrow of GSafe discussed pitfalls inherent in the youth justice system and suggested ways to ensure that our youth are treated humanely. The program was moderated by Lorrie Hurckes Dwyer of Dane County TimeBank. (Unfortunately, this newsletter went to press before the forum, so we weren't

able to report on it in this issue.) Many thanks to our panelists, moderator and attendees for making your voices heard about this important criminal justice reform issue.

At the monthly MOSES meeting June 3, EXPO President Melissa Ludin made an in-depth presentation about some of the horrendous conditions, including mental and physical abuse, that Wisconsin women experience while getting sentenced and doing time. If this issue speaks to you, please consider joining the MOSES task force on women's issues.

Mark your calendar for the WISDOM Gubernatorial Candidate Forum on June 11th. *Details on page five.* ■



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Upcoming Events

WISDOM conference calls (605) 468-8012

- Old Law: June 9 and July 14 at 8:30 am (code 423950)
- Solitary Confinement: June 12 and July 10 at 4:00 pm (code 423950)
- Prison Prevention: June 12 and July 10 at 5:00 pm (code 423950)
- Post-Release: June 28 and July 26 at 7:30 pm (code 423951)

MOSES Religious Leaders Caucus

- RLC Monthly Meeting: June 13 and July 11 from 8:30-10:00 am
St. Luke's Episcopal Church (Jericho Room)

MOSES Task Force: Justice System Reform (MJSR)

- MJSR Monthly Meeting: June 14 and July 12
6:30-8:30 at Madison Police Station South District, 825 Hughes Place

WISDOM Race to Justice: Gubernatorial Candidate Forum

Monday, June 11, 6-8:00 pm
Country Springs Hotel
2810 Golf Rd., Pewaukee

Next MOSES monthly meeting

Sunday, July 8, 3:30-5:30 pm
Location to be announced. Check the website.

Joining one or more of the WISDOM conference calls is easy and can be very informative.

At the appointed date and time:

- Call (605) 468-8012
- Enter the code after the beep
- State your name and that you are from MOSES after the greeting
- Listen, learn, and contribute as you wish

Old Law Parole: code 423950#

Solitary Confinement: code 423950#

Prison Prevention: code 423950#

Post-Release: code 423951#

Like an Animal in a Cage... continued from page 1

torture. The following are common solitary confinement sentences for the infractions listed. Notice that different Corrections Officers (COs) may give varying lengths of time for the same infraction:

CO 1: Disobeying Orders	30 days
CO 2: Fighting.....	90 days
CO 3: Threat, Lying.....	360 days
CO 3: Soliciting a Volunteer.....	360 days
CO 2: Disrespect/Disobeying Orders	30 days
CO 1: Threat	180 days

What you can do:

Because the governor has the most power to change the brutal practice of solitary confinement, contact the gubernatorial candidate you support and ask whether s/he plans to end its use for more than 15 days. ■



Talib Akbar (center right) and cast members

Imagine a windowless room that is not much larger than a small apartment bathroom with a stainless-steel toilet and sink connected as one piece, and just two feet away, a stainless-steel showerhead protrudes from a dingy white wall made of concrete blocks.

Imagine a slab of concrete stationed in the center of this room, two feet above ground level-- two feet wide and six feet long-- with a two-inch-thick mattress (years old, and it has seen better days) wrapped in black hard plastic lying on top of the slab of concrete where a person is supposed to sleep.

Imagine this room, which is not much larger than a small apartment bathroom, having a filthy, bug-infested concrete floor, where dried blood-stains remain from hundreds of suicide attempts with razor blades and other sharp objects that will allow a person to inflict deep cuts to their throats, wrists, and legs.

Imagine this small room having a very strong foul odor that reeks of human feces and urine that penetrates and assaults a person's sense of smell, which emerges from the concrete floor where the occupant of the room is forced to eat and to write, due to having no desk inside. And there's an extremely bright light that illuminates the room and is never turned off, depriving a person of sleep.

Imagine one end of this bathroom-sized room consisting of mostly bulletproof-type glass with brown colored bars which allow whoever is passing by to view within, denying the occupant of the room any privacy to shower and use the toilet. Imagine the door to this room having a slot made into the door just inches above the filthy, bug-infested, blood-stained, feces- and urine-smelling concrete floor, and through this same slot in the metal door is passed food to consume, along with filthy toilet brushes, dirty brooms and dust pans, garbage, dirty clothing and bedding.

Imagine being awakened from sleep choking on incapacitating agents-- i.e., chemical gas that is used by law enforcement in dispersing large crowds of people, yet here these chemical gases are being sprayed daily into other bathroom-sized rooms, and travel through the ventilation system which blows out freezing cold air through the winter and suffocating hot air during the summer months, which causes the walls, floor, toilet, and sink to sweat.

Imagine the inability to see your own face, a mere reflection of yourself, within this small apartment-bathroom-sized room, because there is no mirror.

~ the words of Antonio Marques Smith, held in isolation for more than two years

MOSES Attends Criminal Justice Reform Conference

Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership

by Janice Greening, MOSES Treasurer

Many MOSES members attended the Criminal Justice Reform conference hosted by the Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership on April 26-27, 2018. There were 22 speakers from various national universities and organizations, who spoke on such topics as Prisoner Re-Entry, Prosecutorial Discretion, Civil Forfeiture and Fines and Fees.

Prisoner Re-Entry

Several studies were addressed regarding prisoner re-entry. One study found that “Ban the Box” does not work, and that it has led to increased discrimination against African-Americans because employers assume that if you are an African-American male, you have a criminal record. According to this study, this has led to less hiring of black men subsequent to the passing of the “Ban the Box” laws. Another study found that although many Americans agree that people should be given a second chance after being released, they also believe in additional restrictions upon release from prison resulting in further punishment, perhaps due to our puritanical background. In examining recidivism, one study emphasized the “convergence point”, defined as follows: “Over time, the probability of someone convicted of a crime committing a new crime will decline to a level that is indistinguishable from that for the general public”. Successful ways to help people re-enter society post-incarceration include:

- Pre-release assessment is critical and should ideally begin on Day 1 of imprisonment;
- The use of mentors pre- and post-release (HOPE for Prisoners in Las Vegas is very impressive in that it uses law enforcement officers as mentors and has seen the homicide rate there drop dramatically in the year following the implementation of the program);
- Ensure that those with a mental illness have medications upon release or are

able to get them as soon as they are released, which needs to be coordinated prior to release;

- Court-issued employability or rehabilitation certificates help people obtain jobs post-release;
- Family support is the most important factor in successful re-entry; and
- Re-entry fairs, held in some cities, offering access to clothes, food pantries, briefings with lawmakers and employers, and roundtables held by reporters.

Barriers to legislative reforms include:

- Professional associations, such as the American Bar Association;
- Lack of transparent information;
- “Concentrated assets and diffused costs”: law enforcement agencies show up for hearings to fight reform, whereas everyday citizens fail to make their views known. Legislators need to hear from the public; and
- In general, legislators need to hear from people over the age of 50.

In summary, the speakers stressed that we need to change our puritanical thinking and treat people like human beings with dignity. We need change among our neighbors, not offenders. Most importantly, people need to contact their legislators to change the criminal justice system and ask them to vote smart, not tough. Politicians fear being “crucified” for being “soft on crime”.





Civil Forfeiture

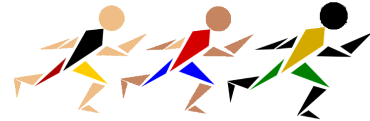
Since this issue has minimal relevance to MOSES, it will not be addressed in detail. Civil forfeiture allows law enforcement agencies to seize assets of ordinary citizens even if no crime has been committed. This has become very lucrative for law enforcement agencies with the proceeds being used to pay their salaries and other expenses. Wisconsin does not require the reporting of where the money obtained from civil forfeitures goes. There is no criminal forfeiture standard in Wisconsin, and public defenders have no power over civil forfeitures.

Fees

The criminal justice system heavily depends on fees to function, including supervision, court and program fees, fines and restitution. There is a conflict of interest within the DOC in determining whether probation time is decreased, since their jobs are endangered if such time is decreased. There was some discussion of whether we are encouraging the formerly incarcerated to resort to crime to pay such fees. In Wisconsin, supervision fees are based on income, with a maximum of \$60 per month. What happens if someone does not pay their court-ordered fees? They could have their sentence extended, parole revoked, wages garnished or be placed in detention. Although fees are destabilizing to the poor and utterly arbitrary, we have developed a serious addiction to fines and fees, so they will likely not be disappearing anytime soon.

(There were other speakers addressing the issue of prosecutorial discretion, but this writer was unable to attend these panels.) ■

WISDOM Race to Justice Gubernatorial Candidate Forum



WISDOM leaders from around the state will be asking candidates very specific questions about their intentions in the areas of:

Criminal justice reform including:

- Parole
- Crimeless Revocation
- Treatment Alternatives to Incarceration
- MSDF
- Solitary Confinement

Other issues include:

- Public Transportation
- Childhood Poverty
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Education
- Mining

Candidates who have confirmed their participation: Matt Flynn, Andy Gronik, Mike McCabe, Mahlon Mitchell, Kelda Roys, Kathleen Vinehout, Dana Wachs

Candidates unable to attend and sending written responses to WISDOM Positions:

Tony Evers, Paul Soglin

Also invited, awaiting response: Scott Walker

Transportation will be available from many parts of the state. To sign up for the event, and to learn about transportation options, contact any local WISDOM organization or EXPO chapter, or WISDOM at wisdomforjustice@gmail.com. ■

EXPO, WISDOM and MOSES to Address Women's Issues

Mothers In Chains will become part of a statewide effort focused on reforms for incarcerated women

The Religious Leaders Caucus (RLC), at the urging of Dane County Jail Chaplain Katharine Goray and MOSES member Patti LaCross, began researching the use of shackles on pregnant women during prenatal and postnatal physician visits and during labor and delivery. This practice is still in effect today as reported by formerly incarcerated women, though there is little data available from the Department of Corrections.

Members of the RLC will join with EXPO's newly formed FREE Project, which will focus on all issues specific to in-



carcerated women. EXPO President Melissa Ludin is pleased to be leading this effort as women are the fastest growing incarcerated population. The majority of rules and regulations in prisons and jails were created for men without consideration for gender differences and specific needs of incarcerated women.

MOSES is forming a task force to support the statewide effort from the capitol city. If you are interested in becoming a part of this task force, please contact Joan Duerst at (608) 509-6933 or 11x15joan@gmail.com and you will be notified of the first task force meeting. ■

Women Behind Bars

From "The Gender Divide: Tracking Women's State Prison Growth" By Wendy Sawyer, Prison Policy Initiative, January 9, 2018

Across the country, we find a disturbing gender disparity in recent prison population trends. While recent reforms have reduced the total number of people in state prisons since 2009, almost all of the decrease has been among men.

Wisconsin women's prison population grew while men's prison population declined

The need for targeted attention to women's incarceration

Separately from the bigger picture of mass incarceration, women's incarceration demands more attention because of the distinct ways in which prisons and jails fail women and their families. Research consistently shows that incarcerated women face different problems than men — and prisons often make those problems worse. While not a comprehensive list, some of the major issues facing incarcerated women include:

- Women are more likely to enter prison with a history of abuse, trauma, and mental health problems. But even in the "secure" prison environment, women face sexual abuse by correctional staff or other incarcerated women, and are more likely than men to experience serious psychological distress. (This is to say nothing of girls who are victimized in juvenile facilities or the abuse of incarcerated transgender women.) Treatment for trauma and mental health problems is often inadequate or unavailable in prisons.
- Women have different physical health needs, including re-

productive healthcare, management of menopause, nutrition, and very often treatment for substance use disorders. Again, the health systems in prisons — designed for men — frequently fail to meet these basic needs.

- Most women in prison (62%) are mothers of minor children. These women are more likely than fathers in prison to be the primary caretakers of their children, so the increasing number of women in prisons means more and more family disruption and insecurity. Incarcerated women and their families suffer from lack of face-to-face contact: because there are fewer women's prisons, women are more likely to be held in prisons located far from home, making visits difficult and expensive. To make matters worse, if children are placed in foster care when their mother is incarcerated, her prison sentence can sever family ties permanently.
- Economically, women with a history of incarceration face particularly daunting obstacles when they return to their communities. Even before they are incarcerated, women in prison earn less than men in prison, and earn less than non-incarcerated women of the same age and race. Women's prisons do not meet the need or demand for vocational and educational program opportunities. And once released, the collateral consequences of incarceration make finding work, housing, and financial support even more difficult. ■

Race to Justice Spring Training

MOSES, WISDOM and EXPO prepare us for advocacy work

by Margaret Irwin, MOSES Communications Team

On a snowy Saturday in April, a large crowd of leaders from MOSES and elsewhere in southern Wisconsin gathered at the Damascus Road Church in Madison for the WISDOM-led Race to Justice Training, one of several held statewide. The day began with a presentation by Frank Davis, MOSES Organizer, on the problems inherent in the Wisconsin criminal justice system. Wisconsin ranks worst in the country for incarceration of African Americans and Native Americans. And the system is very wasteful. Unless things change, over the next seven years \$1.8 billion of taxpayer money will be needlessly spent on overlong prison sentences, and another \$672 million will go down the drain for crimeless revocations. The human cost is even more devastating.

Jerome Dillard of EXPO, The Rev. Jerry Hancock, Director of UCC's Prison Ministry Project, and Ann Lacy of MOSES then discussed three areas in which the system can be improved. They demanded an end to Crimeless Revocations, which would result in 4,500 fewer people in prison; reform of the broken Parole System, which would eliminate 2,000 people from prison; and expansion of Treatment and Diversion programs, which could lead to 8,000 fewer people in prison within two years. Eric Howland of MOSES described the situation in Dane County in light of the closing of one jail facility and the opening of a smaller one, emphasizing the need for diversion from incarceration. A Crisis Restoration Center and supportive housing are crucial for deal-

ing with those suffering from mental illness. In addition, restorative justice circles in schools and restorative justice courts can help divert people from incarceration.

Carl Fields of EXPO spoke of additional areas needing reform: decriminalize marijuana to eliminate sentencing disparities for people of color, stop treating 17-year-olds as adults, end excessive sentences for young people, end the criminalization of mental illness, and reduce solitary confinement to a minimum.

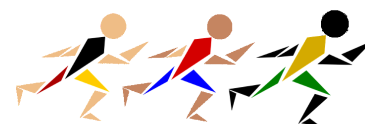
David Liners, Director of WISDOM, and Frank Davis concluded the session with ways we can bring about change. Door-to-door outreach through Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) is essential to involve members of the larger community. We can also show up at the June 11 Gubernatorial Candidate Forum in Pewaukee to hear candidates' responses to our issues. In June and July we can attend EXPO-led Mass Supervision Forums and regional forums for state Assembly and Senate candidates. There are opportunities for all of us to get involved in the Race to Justice. ■



Carl Fields



Citizens ask questions of candidates.



Book Review: At the Dark End of the Street

by Danielle L. McGuire

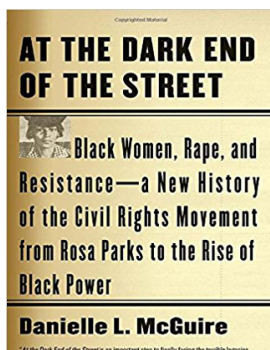
reviewed by Pamela Gates, MOSES Communications Team

This book, a 2010 Alfred Knopf publication, is subtitled “Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power.” That subtitle says it all. In this fascinating book, history professor McGuire takes us from the 1940s South to the 1960s South, from early resistance to rape – long used by whites as a tool of repression – to blacks’ successful efforts to seek justice.

McGuire begins her story in the 1940s, when Rosa Parks was sent by the local NAACP branch in Montgomery, Ala., to the nearby town of Abbeville to investigate a black woman’s report of being gang raped by seven white men. Such all-too-frequent attacks were used by white men to enforce rules of racial and economic hierarchy, McGuire asserts. When Parks took on the investigation, McGuire says, she helped launch what ultimately became the civil rights movement of the ‘50s and ‘60s.

Recently, much has been made of the fact that Rosa Parks was an activist from way back, not simply a tired seamstress who didn’t want to stand on the bus ride home. Perhaps that information comes from this book, which gives Parks’ background and history and makes her abilities clear: she was “a militant race woman, a sharp detective, and an anti-rape activist long before she became the patron saint of the bus boycott.” McGuire also points out that women were the mainstays behind the Montgomery bus boycott, organizing themselves and ferrying workers through the long months of the boycott. “It was more than a movement for civil rights,” McGuire writes. “It was also a women’s movement for dignity, respect, and bodily integrity.”

It took the courageous contributions of many to break



“the institutional silence surrounding the long history of white men’s violation of black women,” McGuire says. The woman violated in the Abbeville occurrence, for example, had to testify against her attackers in front of two grand juries. Twenty years later, the family of Rosa Lee Coates, a black teen raped in 1965 by a white man claiming he was looking for a babysitter, brought the first charges of this nature in Mississippi’s Forrest County. “In prior years,’ county prosecutor James Dukes said later, ‘when

whites committed acts like this they just swept them under the rug.” McGuire tells these stories and many others with careful historical analysis, but with empathetic attention as well to the human beings involved.

It is curious that while black women were being terrorized by white men, the craving of black men for white women was proclaimed throughout the South, underscoring, McGuire writes, “the importance of sex and sexual violence to maintaining white supremacy.”

The chapter titles are telling: “They’d Kill Me If I Told,” “Negroes Every Day Are Being Molested,” “A Black Woman’s Body Was Never Hers Alone,” head three of the eight chapters. And, yet, it’s not a book that will turn off the squeamish. It’s a compellingly well written history, giving important information that any of us trying to understand how we got where we are today will do well to read. As McGuire concludes: “Until we come to terms with our history – even its most shameful secrets and their legacies – we can neither really understand the past nor appreciate the present.”

Personally, I found it a very worthwhile, fascinating book. ■

Thanks to our sponsors!

