



NEWS ARTICLES

**Prison News and News Articles
About / For Correction Officers:
{ Page 51 }**



[Back to Correctional Officers Informational Page](#)
[Back News Articles Index](#)



Use this search engine to find any subject you are looking for on my site, there is so much here that this is the way to find what you are looking for.

ARTICLE LIST:

[Vet Pension Buy-Backs Stymied](#)

[N.Y. examines changes to Rockefeller drug laws](#)

[Support Network Grows for Inmates' Buddhist Practice](#)

[Off Duty Officer facing DWI charges](#)

[Fatal crash leaves many questions](#)

[THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF ATTICA - Belt Buckle](#)

[Inmate's escape attempt is thwarted](#)

[Inmate guilty of mail fraud](#)

[State orders lockdown for prison](#)

[Auburn Correctional Facility locked down for facility-wide search](#)

[Women's role vital in prisons](#)

[Sing Sing inmate stabbed to death](#)

[Correction officers want safer vehicles](#)

[Guards accused of job scheme](#)

[Guard dogs thwart escape by two inmates](#)

[Governor Eyes Costs](#)

[Back to the Titles](#)

Vet Pension Buy-Backs Stymied

By BILL FARRELL

Daily News Staff Writer

Veterans who thought they would be able to use payroll deductions to "buy back" their military service time are getting some bad news from the city pension system - the computers can't handle it.

Instead, the New York City Employee Retirement System is requiring all veterans who apply for the credit to make a lump-sum payment within 60 days of application. The payment is equal to 3% of annual salary for the previous 12 months for each year of service credit.

Veterans can buy back up to three years of military service and make it applicable to their pensions. In some cases, a lot of cash is needed to make the lump-sum payment.

"For some city workers in the higher salary range, we're talking as much as \$9,000, \$10,000, cash," said Lee Covino, director of contracts and procurement for Staten Island Borough President Guy Molinari. "It's not right." Covino, a Vietnam veteran and director of the Veterans Action Coalition, found out about the problems with NYCERS computers firsthand when he applied for the credit.

"They told me I have to make the lump-sum payment by June 17, which is 60 days after I applied for my service time," said Covino. "We're talking several thousand dollars cash right now. Who can afford it? "The whole intent of the legislation was to make the buy-back affordable. This was certainly not the intent of the legislature."

While pension officials did not return our phone calls as of this writing, Covino and others did get letters informing them they may reapply for the buy-back anytime prior to their retirement.

The letter also noted that pension systems computers would be able to handle the payroll deductions within six months.

"If they are going to be able to have the computers programmed in six months, why don't they just take the figure they've calculated and freeze it now?" asked Covino. "Then, once the program is up and running, make the payroll deduction based on that figure?"

Last week, the city reached a tentative agreement with unions representing 10,000 city workers.

The 27-month deal was reached Wednesday with Communications Workers of America Locals 1180, 1181, 1182 and 1183. The contract mirrors the tentative agreement reached with District Council 37 earlier in the month. The agreement calls for a wage hike of 4% for each of the two years, plus elimination of the 3% pension contribution for employees with 10 years of service.

The contract is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2000, and runs through March 31, 2002. Ratification ballots are expected to be mailed to the membership of Local 1180 this week. Other locals will hold walk-in votes.

The unions represent numerous job titles including Administrators, Traffic Agents and Board of Elections Technicians.

"I told my members if we could get a deal like the one reached with the Transportation Unions, we would be happy," said Arthur Cheliotas, president of Local 1180. "This deal does that. Last time, we had to take double zeros.

"This is a contract that is right. This is a good contract."

The Internal Revenue Service is looking for some help. According to IRS spokesman Kevin McKeon, the agency is looking to fill dozens of openings in the metropolitan area. Most of the positions require a college degree or accounting experience.

The positions are available in a number of titles, including senior tax specialist, tax specialist, tax resolution representative, tax compliance officers and revenue officers.

Starting salaries range from just over \$23,000 to more than \$40,000, based on qualifications and assignment.

For details, call the toll-free number at 1 (877) 875-4875. Applications and details also are available on the Web site: www.irs.gov.

[Back to the Titles](#)

N.Y. examines changes to Rockefeller drug laws

By MARGARET COSTELLO
Star-Gazette

mcostello@stargazette.com

Twenty-eight years after former Gov. Nelson Rockefeller enacted tough, no-exception drug laws in New York, the sale and use of drugs is still pervasive, and reformers are calling for emphasis on treatment, not punishment. Today, current Gov. George Pataki and the state Assembly are coming up with proposals to soften the laws Rockefeller championed in 1973.

The legislation, still in effect, calls for strong penalties, even for first-time offenders, such as a mandatory sentence of 15 years to life for people dealing more than 2 ounces of drugs or possessing more than 4 ounces.

The Rockefeller drug laws and proposed reforms will be the topic of a round-table discussion from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday at the Lodge on the Green in Painted Post.

Catholic Charities Substance Abuse Services will host the event, which is free and open to the public.

Featured speakers will be Richard W. Rich Jr., the Chemung County public defender, and John Coppola, executive director of New York State Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers Inc. "I think it's a step in the right direction to provide people with information about the services that are available to them," said Stacy Share, a prevention educator with the Steuben Council on Addictions. Rich has served as the head of the public defender's office since 1998. His office handles about 85 percent of the criminal cases in Chemung County, or approximately 3,000 cases each year. He is also the legal adviser to the Chemung County Human Relations Commission. Coppola has headed up the state association since 1996.

The not-for-profit organization represents the interests of alcoholism and substance abuse treatment providers and advocates prevention and treatment for nonviolent drug offenders rather than incarceration. The Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers recently issued a statement in support of a drug reform proposal before the state Assembly. The proposal hopes to reduce crime by ordering drug offenders to mandatory treatment, allowing judges more freedom in sentencing and keeping violent drug dealers behind bars longer."

Instead of incarcerating people with an illness, we will be giving them the treatment they need," Coppola said in a statement about the proposed legislation. "Addiction is a public health problem." Last year in the Southern Tier, almost 15 percent of all felony arrests were drug charges, according to the state Division of Criminal Justice Services.

According to a 1997 study by the Santa Monica, Calif.-based think tank RAND, treatment is 15 times more effective in reducing serious crime committed by drug offenders than mandatory minimum sentences. If you go

- What: Catholic Charities Substance Abuse Services is sponsoring a round-table discussion on the Rockefeller drug laws.- Where: Lodge on the Green, Routes 15 and 417, Painted Post.- When: 10 a.m. to noon, Tuesday.- Notable: The event is free and is open to anyone.

Support Network Grows for Inmates' Buddhist Practice

By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

Edward Keating/The New York Times

Prisoners at Green Haven practice zazen under the guidance of a monk from the Zen Mountain Monastery in the Catskills.

The maximum-security Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville.

STORMVILLE, N.Y. - In a room where the cinder block walls are painted white, 14 men sit in facing rows, each man on a small, round pillow, his legs folded, his gaze lowered. Nearby sits a robed Buddhist monk, a small altar at his back. The stillness is so profound it seems to muffle the blare of a television in the next room.

The Lotus Flower Sangha, as this group is called, is meeting deep inside the Green Haven Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison that houses 2,000 men convicted of serious crimes like armed robbery and murder.

Every Wednesday morning, this group gathers with the monk, Geoffrey Shugen Arnold, who arrives from Zen Mountain Monastery in the Catskill town of Mount Tremper, to lead them in zazen, the sitting meditation that underlies a practice emphasizing emptiness, the insubstantiality of the self and the interdependence of all things. The men who participate say it is transforming.

"Through this practice," said Bob Gashin Burgess, 45, a tall man with a goatee who keeps a small altar in his cell, "I've learned a lot of compassion and respect for others." And Milton Pratt, 43, said there were times when he could not get enough of meditative sitting. "It really helps," he said, "because when things are going really wrong, it seems I come out renewed."

The number of practicing Buddhists in America, estimated to be about two million, has grown exponentially since the 1960's as interest has risen among the native-born and as Asian immigrants have entered the country. Buddhist study centers and temples have sprung up in cities coast to coast, monasteries have been founded, magazines started and books written for a growing audience.

Buddhist meditative practices have also begun to take root inside the nation's prison system. Some organizations, beginning with Zen Mountain Monastery, have moved to help.

The Prison Dharma Network in Boulder, Colo., for example, has developed contacts with

250 prisoners across the country, sending correspondence and donated books. It will shortly publish a book about Buddhist practices for prisoners, said Kate Crisp, the associate director.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship in Berkeley, Calif., has worked with the San Francisco Zen Center to sponsor meditation groups in eight Northern California prisons and jails. "More and more people are being incarcerated, and conditions are brutal in many cases," said Diana Lion, director of the fellowship's prison project. "People are looking for some way to find peace and solace and meaning in the midst of tremendous suffering."

Buddhism's foundational principles, the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha 2,500 years ago, seem well suited to prison life. The teachings, in brief, declare that life is characterized by suffering and that suffering has a cause (which is desire), but an individual can be freed from suffering, and that way is to follow Buddhism's eightfold path, which includes precepts like right speech and right living.

"The Buddha was dealing with questions that are intrinsic to all human existence," said Geoffrey Shugen Arnold, who is known as Shugen Sensei, a title that combines the name given to him during his Buddhist training, Shugen, with the Japanese word for teacher.

Buddhist meditative practices, he said, hold particular value at a time when most prisons offer little but punishment. "It's abundantly clear to these guys that if anything's going to change, they're going to have to make it happen," he said.

James B. Flateau, a spokesman for the State Department of Correctional Services, said it felt an obligation to support inmates in their religious practices, "if we know it's a legitimate religious community." Gov. George E. Pataki, he said, has said the department should support religious practice because it can help improve inmates' behavior and provide them with a support system upon release.

Organized Zen practice at the Green Haven prison dates to the mid- 1980's, when John Daido Looi, a scientist who is Zen Mountain's founder and abbot, received a letter from an inmate seeking help with his meditative practice.

The abbot, known as Daido Roshi (roshi is a Zen title meaning venerable teacher), did not look forward to the visit. While he was in the Navy in the 1960's, he said, he disobeyed an order to peel potatoes and spent 10 days in solitary confinement, which he remembered as terrifying.

Passing through "all those gates" at Green Haven was distressing, he said. But he said he believed that his presence made a difference to the inmate he visited.

Eventually, the monastery began meditation sessions at Green Haven. Not long thereafter, word spread far beyond that prison.

"I don't know how the prison grapevine works," Daido Roshi said. "We started to hear from inmates from around the country."

As many as 5,000 prisoners, seeking information about Zen, have contacted the monastery, established in 1980 and now home to 12 men and women who are ordained in the Mountains and Rivers Order. In recent years, Zen Mountain has established a computer database with the names of 1,000 male and female inmates, linking each to a volunteer committed to at least three years of corresponding about Zen practices, answering questions, offering advice and lending encouragement.

Zen Mountain has also begun developing training manuals for inmates who want to develop meditative practice on their own. The first, dealing with sitting meditation, contains illustrations showing exercises designed to make it more comfortable for the novice.

Shugen Sensei, 43, an Atlanta native who retains a trace of a Southern accent, has been a monk at Zen Mountain since 1986. He began heading the Lotus Flower prison group six years ago. Typically, it attracts 15 to 30 prisoners, fluctuating as men are transferred or released and as newcomers arrive.

"One of the interesting characteristics of these sanghas is they go across all ethnic lines," Shugen Sensei said. By contrast, outside the prison, most native-born American practitioners form "an almost exclusively white Buddhist population," he said.

He said he did not forget that the men in the Lotus Flower group were convicted of serious crimes and that they left behind victims.

"One of the things I've always been aware of is, the victims are very much a part of this," because of the crimes, he said. But, he said, "the reality of our situation is, we care about everybody, but we're responding to who's knocking on our door."

At Green Haven, meditation sessions meet in the prison's Protestant chapel. On a recent Wednesday, the session closed with inmates chanting the Heart Sutra ("all dharmas are forms of emptiness," it declares, referring to the universal truths taught by the Buddha).

One of the inmates, Anthony Zitelli, 39, said he began meditating a decade ago, thinking it would offer him a path to self-understanding. But what it did, he said, was convince him that he needs to be concerned with the wider world and with others. "I can't just look at life in terms of me," he said. "I have to take myself out of the picture a lot."

Afterward, as Shugen Sensei sat in the prison's main reception area, he reflected on Zen's message for those in prison and those outside. "Nothing you do can be singularly about yourself," he said, "and once you see it that way, everything changes. Of all the things that Buddhism has to contribute, I think that's a profound thing for us."

[Back to the Titles](#)

Off Duty Officer facing DWI charges

5/27/01

A Hurleyville woman is facing DWI charges after a fatal collision in the Town of Thompson yesterday morning left a Times Herald-Record delivery woman dead.

Fifteen-year Record veteran Charlene Faitell was delivering papers on Route 42 just outside Monticello at the time of the accident, co-workers said. A 1997 Chevrolet driven by Angela Brodie, 26, struck Faitell's Taurus station wagon in the driver's-side door at the intersection with Sunset Drive at about 5:44 a.m. Investigators said Faitell, 49, was probably killed instantly.

Faitell, of Thompson, had an 18-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter. She became Sullivan County circulation manager with The Record in July, after 15 years delivering papers. Her supervisor, Walter Saunders, visibly shaken by the incident, said she never missed a day. Yesterday, she was covering a route currently without a carrier.

"We're going to miss her," said co-worker Jack Costello. "She was a good person, a real hard worker. She cared very much for her children." Deputies charged Brodie, who was taken to Community General Hospital in Harris for observation, with a misdemeanor DWI charge. She was released and is due Thursday in Thompson Town Court.

While the road was wet, Sheriff Daniel Hogue said the accident's cause is under investigation. Brodie's DWI charge stems from police observations. Investigators are awaiting results of Brodie's blood test. They are also trying to determine where she was before the accident, said Sullivan County District Attorney Stephen Lungen.

"We have to make some determinations surrounding the accident to determine the fault," he said. "Additional charges will depend on the results."

[Back to the Titles](#)

Fatal crash leaves many questions

5/30/01

MONTICELLO: As an investigation into a fatal car crash continues, friends try to raise money for the children left motherless.

By Heather Yakin
The Times Herald-Record
hyakin@th-record.com

Tire tracks cut up a 15-foot embankment at the corner of Sunset Avenue and Route 42. They end at a tree in Barbara Brochu's front yard. They were left about 5:15 a.m. Saturday by a Chevrolet Malibu. Police said the car, driven by an off-duty correction officer trainee, hit a station wagon. The wagon's driver, Charlene Faitell, died on impact. Faitell, a circulation district manager for The Times Herald-Record, was filling in for a carrier on a paper route. It had been Faitell's route for 15 years.

An aunt and uncle will care for Faitell's 13-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son. Linda Cellini, a family friend and head of the local United Way, said she'll try to work with Record Publisher Jim Moss to set up contributions for Faitell's kids.

Brochu and her aunt, Florence Sharkey, who lives across Sunset, spoke about the crash. Sharkey woke to her doorbell ringing. The Malibu's driver, Angela Brodie, 26, was standing outside.

"She was hollering 'Accident, I need the phone,'" Sharkey said. "She insisted on taking the phone. She told me about dropping off a friend." Sharkey told her to call the sheriff's department, but Brodie called Monticello police instead. "Then she called a girlfriend," Sharkey said. "I said to her, 'What about the person in the other car?' She just ran when I asked her that." Sharkey and Brochu said they smelled alcohol on Brodie.

Brodie was charged Saturday with misdemeanor driving while intoxicated. Detectives are reconstructing the crash.

Brodie is a correction officer trainee at Eastern Correctional Facility in Napanoch. Her job probation ends in September. She is a graduate of Sullivan County Community College's criminal justice program and won SCCC's 2000 New York State Sheriff's Association Award. She interned at the Monticello police department, doing filing and paperwork.

Sheriff Daniel Hogue and District Attorney Steve Lungen said other charges would depend upon the results from the reconstruction and blood alcohol results.

The blood results could be in by Friday, Lungen said. Yesterday, Faitell's Ford Taurus sat at the county Department of Public Works impound in Harris. The Malibu's impact left an almost semicircular crater in the driver's side. Cleanup personnel had tossed piles of Saturday's paper and yellow plastic rain sleeves into the front of the car. The keys hung in the ignition.

Contributions for Charlene Faitell's children may be sent to: Faitell Children Education Fund, c/o Paul Manz, 269 Cantrell Road, Monticello, N.Y. 12701.

[Back to the Titles](#)

THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF ATTICA - Belt Buckle

THIS IS THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY BELT BUCKLE OF THE 1971 ATTICA PRISON RIOT. THIS IS THE FIRST BELT BUCKLE EVER SOLD BY THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF ATTICA. THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF ATTICA ARE THE SURVIVING HOSTAGES, FAMILIES OF THE 11 CORRECTIONAL PEACE OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES THAT WERE MURDERED

DURING THE CARNAGE THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN SEPT. 9, 1971 AND SEPT. 13, 1971. WE ARE ALSO THE FAMILIES OF THE SURVIVING HOSTAGES THAT HAVE SINCE PASSED AWAY, BUT NEVER RECOVERED FROM THE HORROR THESE MEN WENT THROUGH.

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THESE BELT BUCKLE SALES GO DIRECTLY TO THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF ATTICA AND WILL BE USED TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE AND HELP CLOSE THIS CHAPTER IN HISTORY. THE SCARS WILL NEVER HEAL FOR US ENTANGLED IN THIS SOLEMN CHAPTER, HOWEVER.

FOR ORDERS SEND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR \$20 PLUS \$1.50 S&H EACH,

**TO THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF ATTICA
P.O. BOX 62
ATTICA N.Y. 14011**



[Back to the Titles](#)

Inmate's escape attempt is thwarted

Three Southport officers disarm man pointing toy gun in van, prison officials say.

By MARGARET COSTELLO
Star-Gazette

Correction officers disarmed a Southport

Correctional Facility inmate after he allegedly pointed what appeared to be a handgun at a prison van driver Monday in Elmira. Inmate Joel M. O'Keefe, 41, was charged with attempted escape and will likely face other criminal charges in connection with the incident, according to the state Department of Correctional Services.

Around 8:15 a.m., O'Keefe was taken by a state van to Arnot Ogden Medical Center for X-rays, the state said. Before leaving, officers searched O'Keefe and placed him in handcuffs, placed a chain around his waist and restrained his feet in leg irons, said John Winant, a spokesman for the correction officer's union at Southport. Inmates typically are accompanied by two officers when outside of prison grounds. However, O'Keefe had a history of escapes, so a sergeant accompanied the other officers, Winant said. O'Keefe escaped from police near Ballston Spa in 1994 and twice tried to escape from a prison last year, the state said. Officers watched O'Keefe throughout his 30-minute hospital visit and continued to monitor him as they loaded him into the van around 9:20 a.m., the state said.

The state gave the following account of what happened inside the van on the short trip back to the Southport Correctional Facility: Two officers sat in the front of the van behind a plastic security divider. The third was seated behind O'Keefe in the back of the van. After the van crossed the Walnut Street bridge, O'Keefe - still in restraints - pulled what appeared to be a semi-automatic handgun, held it to the driver's head and ordered him to drop his weapon out the window and to stop the van. The sergeant, who was driving, refused. In response, the officer who had been behind O'Keefe stood up and made a motion toward him. O'Keefe turned toward that officer and ordered him to sit down. The officer complied. The distraction gave the third officer, who sat in the front passenger seat, a chance to pull out his .38-caliber Smith & Wesson handgun. When O'Keefe faced front, the officer's gun was pointed at him. The inmate again held his gun to the driver's head. The officer ordered the inmate to drop his weapon or risk being shot. O'Keefe initially refused and then dropped the weapon.

The "weapon" turned out to be a plastic water pistol that had been dyed black and fashioned to resemble a Glock semi-automatic handgun. Officials do not yet know how O'Keefe got the toy or how he was able to hide it until he was headed back to the facility. The crude plastic toy consisted of a 4½-inch black barrel, an inch-thick slide mechanism and a fake collapsible trigger. Quick thinking by the officers prevented the escape, Winant

said. "The guys did an outstanding job," Winant said. "No one got hurt. They didn't create a scene in public. The inmate didn't get away.

"O'Keefe currently is serving a 13- to 26-year sentence for five separate convictions including attempted escape. He will be in solitary confinement until 2007 and could remain in state prison until 2020 if he doesn't receive parole, the state said.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Inmate guilty of mail fraud

Prisoner likely to receive two-year sentence on Sept. 4, prosecutor says.

By MARGARET COSTELLO
Star-Gazette

A Southport inmate was convicted Wednesday in U.S. Western District Court of filing false tax returns in 23 states and receiving about \$3,000 in refunds. Herbert Burgess, 38, who is serving an 11- to 22-year sentence for a 1993 manslaughter conviction, pleaded guilty to 23 counts of mail fraud. Each count carries a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard A. Resnick.

However, he is expected to receive two years in prison when he is sentenced before U.S. District Court Judge Charles J. Siragusa at 3 p.m. on Sept. 4 in Rochester, Resnick said. The two years will begin after he has completed his sentence for manslaughter. Burgess could also be fined or ordered to pay restitution, Resnick said.

While serving time at Southport Correctional Facility, Burgess obtained tax forms from 23 states and then filed the 1999 tax returns that stated he was entitled to refunds, Resnick said. He received checks from the 23 states, each for small amounts. Personnel from the state Department of Correctional Services noticed the refund checks coming into the prison and notified the FBI, Resnick said.

All mail is screened because it can be the source of contraband, said Michael Houston, spokesman for the state correctional services in Albany. When staff workers saw what appeared to be refund checks coming to Burgess, they began to closely monitor packages and letters addressed to him, Houston said. Prison staff members confiscated most of the money as it came into the facility, Resnick said. The money will be returned to the states, he said. As a result of the criminal charges, Burgess is also facing disciplinary sanctions within the prison, Houston said. He has been placed in a special housing unit, or solitary confinement, until June 11, 2003, for this and other infractions, Houston said. Burgess will not be allowed to receive packages until 2002, Houston said.

[Back to the Titles](#)

State orders lockdown for prison

Corrections officers at Auburn Correctional Facility say the action was overdue.

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

By Jon Hand

Fearing rising tension among inmates at Auburn Correctional Facility, corrections officers at the prison asked state officials to lock down the prison last week.

That request was granted at 6:30 a.m. Monday - after one inmate's arm was broken and another's face was slashed with a box cutter during at least five fights the night before.

A lockdown of the prison means all programs and operations are suspended. The 1,764 inmates are brought their meals in their cells, and the cells are searched for weapons, drugs and other contraband.

"We're pleased that they decided to lock down the prison today, but perhaps something like that could have been prevented if they had done it two weeks ago when we asked," said Grant Marin, regional vice president of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, a union representing the guards.

Officials from the union toured the prison last week and asked for the lockdown after corrections officers found "dozens" of homemade weapons in cells and common areas.

State officials, in a news release Monday, addressed the question of whether the lockdown came too late.

"By themselves, the discovery of weapons in a maximum-security prison was not sufficient to order a lockdown," said Department of Correctional Services Commissioner Glenn S. Goord in the release. "However, combined with recent assaults, I believe the lockdown is an appropriate response to current inmate behavior."

Marin said he believes the request was turned down because administrators were reluctant to halt production of the state's new license plates, which are made at the prison. "They are more concerned about production of those plates than they are of the officers," he said.

James Flateau, speaking for the Department of Correctional Services, said the production of license plates had nothing to do with the delay in the lockdown, and that those allegations were part of some union members' "agenda."

Officers at Auburn said they were discouraged that the prison was locked down only after numerous fights in various yards Sunday night.

"We had about five fights, one right after the other," said Sgt. Michael Murray, a corrections officer and local union steward. "We find weapons every day, but there have been a lot lately, and a ton of drugs."

The man who was slashed received 24 sutures in his face.

Three men were placed in special housing units after the fights and are facing "disciplinary sanctions."

Goord said the lockdown would probably last through this weekend.

This is the first time the prison has been locked down this year.

There were three lockdowns at Auburn last year, prompted either by fighting or the discovery of large amounts of contraband, or both.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Auburn Correctional Facility locked down for facility-wide search

Department of Correctional Services

Glenn S. Goord, Commissioner

Contact: Spokesman James B. Flateau at 518-457-8182

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY JUNE 11, 2001

Commissioner Glenn S. Goord today ordered the lockdown of Auburn Correctional Facility so staff could conduct a facility-wide frisk for weapons and other contraband.

Commissioner Goord's decision comes on the heels of two separate inmate-on-inmate assaults last night in the recreation yard yesterday involving a total of four inmates. One inmate sustained a broken left arm during a two-man fistfight at 9:10 p.m.; he was treated at SUNY Health and Science Center and later returned to the facility. Moments later, an inmate was slashed on the side of his face with a box cutter by an unknown assailant. The injured inmate received 24 sutures.

A few other inmate fistfights also broke out in the yard following the second incident, none of which involved any injuries. There were approximately 350 inmates in the yard at the time.

Additionally, security staff have recovered some weapons - including metal and plexiglass shanks - from various common areas at the prison over the past 10 days.

"In order to ensure the safety of our employees and others, I have today ordered the lockdown of Auburn to free up the staff needed to conduct a comprehensive facility-wide search for weapons and other contraband," said Commissioner Goord. "I will not tolerate any inmate assaults at any time and will take whatever steps necessary to ensure the security of all our facilities."

Commissioner Goord said he made his decision based upon last week's discovery of several inmate weapons, combined with the recent altercations. He said, "By themselves, the discovery of weapons in a maximum-security prison was not sufficient to order a lockdown. However, combined with the recent assaults, I believe the lockdown is an appropriate response to current inmate behavior."

The three inmates identified as having participated in the two Sunday assaults currently are being housed in Auburn's Special Housing Unit (SHU) and face disciplinary sanctions.

The lockdown began at 6:30 a.m. and is expected to last until at least the weekend. It means that all of Auburn's 1,764 inmates will be confined to their cells while staff search individual cells and common areas for weapons and other contraband. Inmates still can be escorted from their cells by Correction Officers for visits and necessary medical appointments.

Auburn, a maximum-security prison located in Cayuga County, opened in 1817. The last lockdown at Auburn was from June 13-20, 2000.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Women's role vital in prisons

Making up nearly 10 percent of N.Y. correction officers, females face unique challenges on the job.

By MARGARET COSTELLO
Star-Gazette

When three convicted felons guarded a correction officer from an attack by another inmate at a medium-security prison, it wasn't because the inmates liked the officer. "It was because I was a woman," Joan Battison said. Battison, who now works at the Southport Correctional Facility, is one of 1,883 female correction officers who work in New York state prisons.

They represent less than 10 percent of all state correction officers. Female officers often face unique challenges inside prison walls. They are the subject of love letters, catcalls and, sometimes, assaults. However, they also have better results in dealing with male inmates, who officials say often come from matriarchal upbringings. Although males still dominate the state corrections field, state Corrections Commissioner Glenn S. Goord said women play a crucial role in the prison system and said he would like to see more female candidates enter the field. "We've always tried to get as much diversity as possible," Goord said. "Having women working in the facilities has a very positive effect on male offenders. Other kinds of diversity - like having more black and Hispanic officers - also has had a good effect." Denny Fitzpatrick, spokesman of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, said female candidates are an important source to fill vacancies as fewer people have turned out in recent years to take the state test for correction officers.

Many of the inmates come from families where women were the heads of the household, so male inmates are more inclined to take orders from a woman than a man, Battison said. Fitzpatrick said male inmates are less likely to respond to female officers' orders in a macho, confrontational manner. "(Female officers) have a soothing effect - just their mere presence," Fitzpatrick said. "I don't know if it's a mother image or a female image thing or what. Inmates aren't as combative toward them. That's not always true, but generally.

"Nearly 22 percent, or 411 female correction officers, work in the seven state female facilities, said correctional service spokesman James Flateau. The state would like to see more women work at facilities that house women because it would reduce the number of accusations by female inmates that male officers initiated improper relations, Flateau said. Such complaints by female inmates are "routine and quite often untrue" and are an easy way for an inmate to retaliate against an officer who has written her up on a misbehavior report, Flateau said. Although the state tries to encourage female officers to work at women-only facilities, the majority, 1,472 female officers, opt to work at all-men facilities instead.

Under contract, job location and duties are determined by officer seniority. "I would never work with females by choice," Battison said. "The women are more vicious. They come up

with more creative things to do to each other."The 18-year veteran officer said she found female inmates' ways of dodging administrative punishments disturbing when she started working in 1983 at the all-women Bedford Hills Correctional Facility."Men beg their way out of trouble. Women cry. It's sickening how they can turn it on and off. Just like a faucet.

"Battison moved from that facility to a medium-security prison that houses men. There, she learned that being a female officer can be a double-edge sword. A rapist had targeted her as his next victim. The inmates knew it, but she didn't. During a freak blackout, she was charged with clearing the walkways and returning the inmates to their cells. She was having a difficult time breaking up a group of inmates who seemed to be surrounding her. The inmates would flick their butane lighters periodically as she moved up and down the hall. When the lights were restored, she realized what was happening. The rapist had his hand outstretched inches from her throat, while three inmates with the lighters guarded her from his attack, using the brief flashes of light to determine his proximity to her, Battison said. "It wasn't because the inmates liked me that they did that," Battison said. "It was because I was a woman. The three inmates were Muslims, and Muslims profess that they will protect women.

"Despite such occurrences, Battison said, she wants to stay in all-men facilities until she is eligible to retire. Most officers, including Battison, say they choose to work at facilities that are closest to their homes, and the gender of the inmates is a secondary concern to them. The state has tried to recruit more minorities to prison jobs by targeting and spreading information about employment opportunities to community, church and civic groups. Most of the minority officers come from larger areas, such as New York City, which has a larger minority population and more female candidates, Flateau said. Therefore, the prisons in the New York City area tend to have more minority and female officers. Female officers make up a one-quarter to one-third of the work force in several Downstate facilities, Flateau said.

Only about 2 percent of the officers at the Southport and Elmira prisons are women. Because there are so few female officers, Battison said, she sometimes encounters sexist remarks from co-workers, although the frequency of such remarks has dropped dramatically during her 18 years on the job, she said. She is also working in the arsenal, guarding the weapons and watching monitors, so she has less interaction with inmates and co-workers. When she worked on the prison floor at another facility, she believed the male officers didn't trust her abilities. "The majority of men do not want a female working with them," she said. "They think we're gonna run or not help in a fight." Women can hold any position and perform any task within the correctional system, although officers are usually only allowed to pat-frisk an inmate of the same gender, Fitzpatrick said.

Female officers also receive the same training and testing as male candidates, including physical fitness requirements, Flateau said. "They wear a uniform, they are officers," Fitzpatrick said. "They have the same powers as a man does, with the ability of a pen to write an inmate up." They do an excellent job." Battison and Fitzpatrick agree that gender

has little to do with what makes a good correction officer. A good officer is firm, fair and consistent and must have good communication skills. "It depends on your personality," Battison said. "You're best off if you have a good sense of humor."

[Back to the Titles](#)

Sing Sing inmate stabbed to death

By YARON STEINBUCH

THE JOURNAL NEWS

(Original publication: June 18, 2001)

OSSINING A 31-year-old inmate at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility was stabbed to death over the weekend, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Correctional Services said yesterday. Jesus Rodriguez, who was serving a prison sentence of 8 1/2 to 22 years for second-degree robbery in Niagara County, was found with multiple stab wounds about 5 p.m. Saturday, said Linda Foglia, the spokeswoman. "He was in his cell cleaning his wounds when the staff found him," she said, adding that he had been stabbed outside the cell before going inside. It was not known when he was stabbed. "He wasn't passed out on the bed he was conscious and coherent." Rodriguez was taken to the prison infirmary and an ambulance was called, she said. At 5:10 p.m., he went into cardiac arrest in the infirmary. "CPR was administered before the ambulance arrived and took him to Phelps (Memorial Hospital Center in Sleepy Hollow)," she said. He was declared dead in the hospital emergency room at 6:11 p.m.

Rodriguez had been eligible for parole in July 1998. His next appearance before the Parole Board was scheduled for next May. He had been in the correctional system for the robbery since April 1990. Further information on his crime was unavailable yesterday.

Sing Sing was fully operational yesterday, except for B Block, where the stabbing took place. All inmates were confined to their cells in the block, except for those receiving visitors, Foglia said. Authorities were investigating the killing and interrogating inmates, but Foglia declined to comment on whether there were any suspects. Information about the kind of weapon used also was not disclosed.

The last homicide at Sing Sing occurred on Nov. 4, 1997, when inmate Barry Shawn was stabbed three times with a homemade knife fashioned from a soup ladle. Inmate Carlos Rodriguez said he killed Shawn who had been serving 10 years to life for robbery and drug sales to protect himself from being sexually abused. Rodriguez was serving a 17 1/2-to-40-year sentence after pleading guilty to manslaughter in the 1988 drowning of a man in the East River off Manhattan. He was sentenced to an additional 25 years to life in March 1999 for the prison killing.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Correction officers want safer vehicles

Union demands all New York prison vans be equipped with emergency lights, sirens.

By MARGARET COSTELLO
Star-Gazette

New York this year gave the option to install emergency lights and sirens in prison vans and vehicles in New York City. The union representing correction officers says that hasn't happened there yet and they want the provision extended to all areas of the state, such as Chemung County, home to two state prisons.

Approximately 70 percent of all county and state correction officers who have been killed on duty were attacked during the transport of an inmate, said Grant Marin, western region vice president of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association. "Having the lights and sirens will definitely provide a safer environment for officers," Marin said.

The union pointed to two incidents where lights and sirens may have helped. - On June 4, a Southport Correctional Facility inmate pulled out what appeared to be a handgun while being transported by prison van from a local hospital back to the prison. The officers had no way to signal passing cars of the impending crisis inside the van, the union said. - Two days later, on Staten Island, an armed officer in a state van was escorting an ambulance that was transporting an inmate to a nearby hospital. The ambulance, with its lights and sirens activated, ran through a red light and drove at speeds greater than those posted. In order to keep up, the escort van did the same thing, said Edwin Mercado, southern region vice president of the union.

The state prison van did not have lights or sirens and was technically in violation of the law, Mercado said. Luckily, neither case resulted in any injuries, Mercado said. The Southport inmate's weapon turned out to be a plastic toy gun, and he now faces charges of attempted escape. The legislation affecting the prison vehicles in the New York City took effect in February.

"The legislation allows us the option of putting on lights and sirens," said Michael Houston, spokesman for the Department of Correctional Services in Albany. Prison Commissioner Glenn S. Goord is reviewing the legislation and determining whether any lights or sirens should be purchased, Houston said. However, in a March 23 letter to the union's attorney, Keith R. Jacques, commissioner Goord said "emergency operations" for transport or escort vehicles are an "extraordinarily rare occurrence," unlike other agencies such as police,

ambulance and fire departments.

Goord concludes the letter by saying there is no need to provide additional state vehicles with emergency equipment. Currently, four of the 27 prison transportation vans in New York City are equipped with lights and sirens. Because the state has not installed the emergency equipment on all transport vehicles in New York City, the union is preparing a lawsuit against the state, claiming the state is in violation of the recently enacted law, Mercado said. The union also hopes to change the legislation to include all state correction transport vehicles, not just those servicing prisons in the New York City area, Mercado said. Houston said the cost of purchasing and installing the equipment is under review.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Guards accused of job scheme

Charges allege 4 prison officers worked less than half their shifts but collected full pay and benefits

By MICHAEL GORMLEY,
Associated Press

First published: Saturday, June 30, 2001 ALBANY -- Two correction officers and two former guards have been charged with fraud and misconduct in a no-show job scheme, according to the state attorney general's office.

Two of the officers are on sick leave and two others who resigned are accused of working less than half their assigned shifts over four years while collecting full-time pay and benefits.

They paid other correctional officers to work as replacements at the Adirondack Correctional Facility in Ray Brook, said Commissioner of Corrections Glenn Goord and Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

The guards used a "shift-swapping" program allowed under civil service law as cover for the alleged scheme, officials said. One guard would pay a fraction of his day's salary to a colleague who worked the shift, supposedly as a swap of a shift that would be returned. Instead, the first guard collected a day's pay and accrued retirement benefits but never reciprocated on the swapped shift, an attorney general's office spokesman said.

The suspects charged with felony defrauding the government and official misconduct, a Class A misdemeanor, are: Raymond Perkins, 50, of Clintonville, who is collecting half-pay while on sick leave. A 21-year veteran, his annual full-time pay is \$48,609 a year. Roy

Holzer, 35, of Wilmington, who is collecting half-pay while on sick leave. A 13-year veteran, his annual full-time pay is \$43,576. He also is a former elected official in the community. Warren Churco, 36, of Saranac Lake, who resigned in 1998 while making \$38,521. John O'Neil, 35, of Bloomingdale, who resigned in May while making \$42,103 a year.

All were transferred to the Adirondack Correctional Facility in the 1980s. Corrections spokesman Mike Houston refused to say if the resignations were related to the investigation. The suspects "took advantage of a prison policy that provided correctional officers with some flexibility in meeting job assignments," Spitzer alleged. The "swapping" option allows workers to trade shifts. But Goord earlier this month established tighter controls on swapping, said corrections spokesman James Fleteau. Now, all swaps must be "repaid" to an employee within one year and there is closer monitoring of the practice. Goord has had staff studying shift-swapping for more than a year. "We have been aware for some time that a small minority of our 23,000 correction officers were abusing prison policy, and we have instituted tough new rules to address this situation," Goord said.

The men were arraigned in North Elba Town Court, Essex County, and released pending a court appearance. Holzer referred comment to his lawyer who was not immediately available. Neither Churco and O'Neil responded to requests for comment made to their homes.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Guard dogs thwart escape by two inmates

Prisoners nabbed in Elmira facility's family reunion area, officials say.

By MARGARET COSTELLO
Star-Gazette

Two inmates facing life imprisonment were one chain-link fence away from escaping from the Elmira Correctional Facility this weekend.

However, they were caught after their last obstacle, guard dogs, forced them to reconsider their escape route.

Shortly before 9 p.m. Saturday, a correction officer noticed two inmates were in the wrong place at the wrong time, said Linda Foglia, spokeswoman for the state Department of Correctional Services in Albany.

The inmates were in the family reunion area that is only used by prisoners during special

visits, said officer Edward Lattin, sector steward at the Elmira prison for the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, the union that represents correction officers.

When the on-duty officer asked them why they were there, the inmates gave a bogus story, Foglia said. Officers frisked the inmates and found \$20 in cash but nothing else, Foglia said.

The men were taken to the prison's special housing unit and questioned again, Foglia said.

It was there that one of the inmates, 24-year-old Jacob Russell, admitted that he and Salvatore Dagnone, 33, were planning to escape from the 125-year-old prison, located on Davis Street in the northwest corner of the city, she said.

The inmates had been executing their escape in segments that likely spanned several days, Lattin said.

Lattin described how the events likely unfolded:

The inmates worked together in the mess hall delivering kosher meals to Jewish inmates or others with special dietary needs. They had some freedom in moving about the prison unattended.

From the loading dock in the mess hall, they were able to pile wooden platforms and crates on top of each other to reach the roof. They used wire cutters to snip through cyclone fences along the roofline.

On the roof, the inmates could bypass the tight security inside the prison and reach a point where they could jump down, snip through one wire fence and be on the outside.

To aid in their attempt, the two had stored several sheets, which they had tied together, in an air-conditioning unit on the roof. They also fashioned tools using a mirror and a stick to help keep watch for correction officers who might have been around the corner or behind them.

The inmates probably had studied the officers' movements to know when they would be making their rounds and when the best times to escape would be.

Other inmates also assisted in the escape attempt by distracting officers or by signaling to the two men about the officers' movement throughout the facility, Lattin said.

The plan would have worked, officials said, except for the dogs. The dogs have their own kennel at the prison and take turns on eight-hour shifts in various runs on the prison

property.

"These inmates didn't anticipate seeing a dog, and I think that's what deterred them," Lattin said.

Correction officers found the wire cutters near a chain-link fence on the north side of the prison after questioning the two inmates, Foglia said.

This isn't the first time a pair of Elmira Correctional Facility inmates were close to escaping, Lattin said.

In 1997, an inmate tipped off correction officers to an elaborate escape plan by two fellow prisoners, who had chiseled through their cell walls into large pipes and had managed to crawl through the pipes into the basement.

After breaking through the cell walls, the two inmates left their cells every night for 28 days. At 12:30 a.m. each night, they placed dummies in their beds, removed a cardboard covering, crawled through the 18-inch holes, made their way to the cellar and up a 40-foot-tall turret.

Those inmates were convicted of attempted escape and transferred to Southport Correctional Facility, where they were locked in their cell 23 hours a day.

Russell and Dagnone will likely be transferred to a similar facility, Lattin said.

"Generally, lifers are pretty calm because they realize they'll be here for a long time so they might as well make the best of it," Lattin said. "But sometimes, you'll get some that say 'We're in for life. What else can they do to us?'"

"They had a little freedom and earned a little money," Lattin said of the inmates. "Now they'll be locked down 23 hours a day."

Both will likely face criminal charges of attempted escape as well, Foglia said.

Russell is already serving a sentence of life without parole on a December 1997 conviction of murder and conspiracy in Genesee County. Dagnone was convicted in August 1989 of robbery, murder and forgery in Nassau County and is serving a sentence of 34 years to life. He won't be eligible for parole until 2023 at the earliest, Foglia said.

[Back to the Titles](#)

Governor Eyes Costs

Task Force to Study Binding Arbitration

By William Van Auken The Chief Leader 07/06/01

Governor Pataki has announced that he will convene a task force to study proposals to extend compulsory binding arbitration to wider layers of the public work force.

The announcement came June 13 with the Governor's signing of legislation extending for two more years provisions in the State Civil Service that provide compulsory binding arbitration in cases in which an impasse has been declared in collective bargaining. The law covers employers and unions representing local police and fire personnel, members of the State Police and investigators employed in the offices of District Attorneys.

Locals Opposed

In a memorandum filed with the extension of the binding arbitration provisions, the Governor noted that local governments had opposed the measure, arguing that the process hinders the collective-bargaining process and carries with it a threat of settlements that they cannot afford.

I share the fiscal concerns of the local governments and, for that reason, have consistently included in my mandate relief package a reform that would require arbitration panels in binding arbitration cases to accord first priority to the financial ability of a governmental employer to pay an award, he stated. He went on to indicate that he may refuse to sign extensions of the law without such an amendment.

Mr. Pataki added that he was concerned over numerous legislative proposals to extend compulsory binding arbitration to other sections of public employees.

Bill for NYSCOPBA

In the current legislative session, both houses passed a measure that would grant the arbitration provisions to state Correction Officers represented by the New York State Correctional Officer and Police Benevolent Association. The Governor has not signed the measure.

It would be unwise to move forward with such extensions without further study and review, particularly in light of the strong opposition from local governments, Mr. Pataki wrote. For that reason, I intend to establish, by Executive Order, a Task Force on Binding Arbitration to undertake a comprehensive study of all issues relating to binding arbitration and to make recommendations on the future of compulsory binding arbitration in New York .

The Governor's action echoes his response to myriad pension reform measures proposed in 1999. He established a Task Force on Public Employee Pension Systems, including both government and public-employee union representatives. That panel issued a report last year calling for an automatic and permanent cost-of-living adjustment and other reforms that were subsequently enacted.

Seek Other Changes

Public-employee unions intend to push for not only an extension of compulsory binding arbitration, but broader reforms in the sphere of public-sector collective bargaining.

The New York State AFL-CIO has established its own task force on the Taylor Law, which is expected to issue a preliminary report this month based upon a polling of its public-sector affiliates.

We expect to be represented on the Governor's task force, and we expect to work out some sort of a discussion, said State AFL-CIO President Dennis Hughes. But we want to look at the Taylor Law in more expansive terms. Dispute resolution for public employees needs to be reformed.

Mr. Hughes took issue with the Governor's statements sympathizing with local municipalities concerns over binding arbitration. The municipalities seem to feel that fair arbitration is not in their interests, he said. Witness the fight in New York City over the police unions.

The Patrolmen's Benevolent Association is in the midst of a court battle with the city over a law enacted in 1998 that placed it and all other police and fire unions under compulsory binding arbitration by the state Public Employment Relations Board. The city unsuccessfully challenged the law in Albany State Supreme Court as a violation of home rule, and is now appealing. A decision by the State Appellate Division is expected in late July or early August.

When it launched its own Taylor Law task force at the beginning of the year, the state labor federation indicated that it would seek reforms in the 33-year-old law that governs public-sector bargaining in order to create a more level playing field for public employee unions.

Punish Employers

While binding arbitration is one of the areas the union task force is examining, it has also indicated it wants the imposition of unfair labor practice penalties against employers who refuse to bargain as well as a lessening of penalties against public employees who violate the law's no-strike provisions.

The unions also want changes in the provisions covering the recognition of bargaining units, both to allow sections of employees now classified as management/confidential to unionize, and to make it harder for already unionized sections of the public work force to decertify their bargaining agents.



Please sign My Guest Book - I like to know my Visitors

[Sign My Guest book](#) ← → [View My Guest book](#)

LINKS WITHIN MY SITE:

[ACOAP](#) * [All States DOCS](#) * [Facility Addresses](#) * [Forgotten Cop](#)
* [Gang Pages](#) * [History Pages](#) * [Index](#) * [In Memory](#)
* [My Links](#) * [NY Online Newspapers](#) * [News Articles](#) * [Site Map](#)
* [Spanish in the Correctional Settings](#) [Want a Web Page?](#)



The HIT Law Enforcement Connection WebRing

This [HIT Law Enforcement Connection Ring](#) site is owned by [Edward Kasper](#)
[Next Page](#) | [Skip It](#) | [Next 5](#) | [Previous](#) | [Random](#)
Want to join the ring? Get the [information](#).



ICQ #2811842

