

FORUM

Minnesota Corrections Association



Your Association Newsletter

Volume 30, No. 3 June 2008

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President's Corner

Terryl Arola, MCA President



If you haven't noticed yet, MCA is celebrating a 75th birthday this year. Our world has changed considerably since 1933 or has it really?

•The cost of gas was .10 per gallon, the cost of an average house was \$ 5,750, and average wages were \$ 1,550 per year.

- 1933 was the worst year of the depression with unemployment peaking at 25.2% (1 in 4 people unemployed).*
- Tens of thousands travelled the road and rail in America looking for work*
- Pay cuts were implemented. Many state emergency work relief bureaus cut the hourly rate for laborers from 40 cents per hour to 35 cents per hour and implemented a five day week. Weekly pay went from \$19.00 to \$14.00 per week to stay in line with the changing economic trends throughout the country and was to help to provide more work for those seeking jobs.*

- The US banking system which was under great strain was propped up by the US government (US banking act of 1933) to try and stop the panic of people withdrawing their money from the banks.*
- Congress agrees to the Home Owners Refinancing Act as part of the larger NEW DEAL*
- Repeal of prohibition in United States allowed 3.2% beer and wine sales.*
- The continuing drought in the Midwest made even more of the land into dust bowls. Tornadoes strike Kentucky and Tennessee leaving 61 dead.*
- Adolf Hitler became the chancellor of Germany and opened the first concentration camp at Dachau.*
- Technology advances include the Electron Microscope and the drive in movie theatre.*
- Alcatraz became a federal penitentiary.*

This makes me think of the "what ifs" as it relates to corrections? What would our world have been like if Hitler and those like him had been successful in conquering the world? Would we even have a criminal justice system? What if prohibition had continued instead of ending in 1933? Would we still have

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MCA Website...www.mn-ca.org

Find additional information about the corrections industry, MCA programs and events, employment opportunities, and much more.

2008 MCA Board

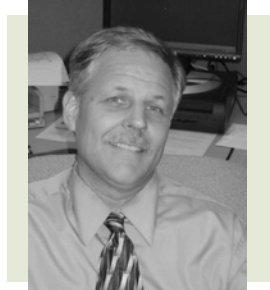
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Legislative Affairs

Cal Saari, Legislative Chair and Liaison

Late Sunday evening, May 18, 2008, the Minnesota House of Representatives adjourned Sine Die, thus putting an end to the 2008 Legislative Session. Although this was a short session, having begun on February 12th, it was an active and often continuous session with the DFL majority in both the Senate and the House and the Republican Governor and the minority leadership often taking widely diverse approaches in their efforts to solve the State's budget problems. The Session began with great expectations from Committee Chairs as legislators began to process of considering new fiscal and policy proposals in the various committees. A mood change was evident in the last week of February when the State economists revealed an almost \$ 1 billion deficit in the budget. This obviously meant that there would be a priority shift to solving the financial dilemma and the recognition that "new dollars" would be difficult to find in order to fund the many new legislative proposals that had already been offered. And that would be the way the rest of the legislative session went. Committees continued to work hard to advance new legislative proposals and several new "policy" initiatives were passed, and several others needing a funding basis were left in waiting until the leadership and the Governor could agree on a supplemental budget package that would address the financial issues and yet fund governmental operations for the next year.

By the first of May, still lacking an agreement to funding, that became the primary focus of the legislative session as the party leadership and the Governor's staff began a serious negotiation to reach agreement on the revenue sources and the supplemental budget plan for the next year. This process would last until the last hours of the legislative session when on May 18th, they announced that an agreement had been reached that would allow the legislature to finalize their legislative proposals, now almost all put into major omnibus bills, and begin an orderly conclusion to the 2008 Session.

We spent most of our time as the MCA legislative liaison, in tracking legislative proposals in the Senate and House Public Safety Finance and Civil Justice Committees where all Corrections and Public Safety proposals were considered. During the Session, we tracked about sixty five different bills impacting our membership. There were several new proposals brought forward as a result of the Paymar/Higgins Re-entry Work Group and others from recommendations of the state mandated Collateral Sanctions Committee. In the end however, most of these required new funding and fell by the wayside for consideration at another time. A few items did get included in the Public Safety Omnibus bill, HF 2996 which eventually was passed by both legislative chambers and was signed by the Governor on May 12th. The final bill contained language from 10 different bills and included, among others, the following provisions:

Provisions that modify the civil commitment of sexually dangerous persons.

Modification of sex offender registration requiring offenders who do not have a primary address to notify local authorities where they will be going at least three days before they leave a correctional facility.

Requires registration as a predatory offender for anyone convicted of a comparable offense in another state.

Requires that at jail intake there must be a check completed against the BCA apprehension predatory offender registration database.

Provides the Court authority to charge a convenience fee when taking any payments by credit card.

Requires additional work by probation officers conducting pre-sentencing investigations which must include veteran status and requires consultation with veteran services about

the status of a veteran's mental health, with recommendations for treatment as appropriate.

Deleted language regarding previous appropriations to the courts for Drug Courts. (This puts funding for Drug Courts in serious jeopardy.)

Calls for a Study Group to consider the impact on presumption of joint physical custody of children after divorce; and establishes a working group to discuss the state's controlled substance laws, with a report due to the Legislature by January 15, 2009.

Requires that the DOC perform an internal review of the department's guidelines for revocation of parole and supervised release, with a report required to the Legislature by March 1, 2009.

Several other provisions were pulled from the bill before delivery to the Governor, many specific to Re-entry issues, including the establishment of a certificate of good conduct which was a highly recommended provision of both the Paymar Work Group and the Collateral Sanctions Committee.

The passage of the Public Safety Omnibus supplemental budget bill, HF 1812/SF 3813, put the finishing touches on the funding cuts for this next year. The gains we made in 2007 with increases in the Short-term Offender per diems was cut for next year, as well as significant cuts to funding for Crim-Net, and some cuts in other line items which are still being assessed for their impact.

As legislative leaders and the Governor are traveling around the state expounding on the "great success" of this Session, our assessment is one of relief that at least the financial problems of the budget were addressed (at least in the short term), a significant bonding bill was authorized which should help spur our economy, and the cuts that were made are still "livable". And with this, we can remain optimistic that we will be able to pursue our new legislative agenda with enthusiasm with the start of a new biennium in January 2009.

The MCA Legislative Committee is currently working on the development of a new Legislative agenda with Position Papers and we strongly solicit input and participation from the membership. Check the MCA website for committee members and contact us if you'd like to participate.

Time for the MCA Awards

The Minnesota Corrections Association recognizes individuals and programs for their contribution to the field of corrections in Minnesota. This is an opportunity for Corrections Professionals to acknowledge co-workers and programs that demonstrate excellence in the performance of their duties. 2008 is a special year for MCA, as we are also celebrating our 75th anniversary! We have several additional activities and events planned to honor this occasion.

Would you please share with your agency staff that MCA is seeking nominations for the following awards for the October 2008 Awards Ceremony in Duluth, Minnesota. The deadline for award nominations is August 1, 2008. Award nomination forms can be downloaded from the MCA Home page www.mn-ca.org Announcements – Award Nominations.

Professional Achievement Award Correctional Facility Employee

This award is given to a correctional facility employee in a federal, state, county or community-based correctional facility, whose skills, knowledge, judgment and communications have made a positive impact on offenders, fellow staff, the agency and the community. Achievement recognized exceeds that which is routinely part of a person's employment.

Professional Achievement Award Field Services Employee

This award is given to a correctional employee in a federal, state, county or community-based agency, whose skills, knowledge, judgment and communications have made a positive impact on offenders, fellow staff, the agency and the community. Achievement recognized exceeds that which is routinely part of a person's employment.

President's Award

This award goes to programs, resources or facilities working in the board field of corrections and criminal justice, which demonstrate creativity, resourcefulness, effectiveness and innovation.

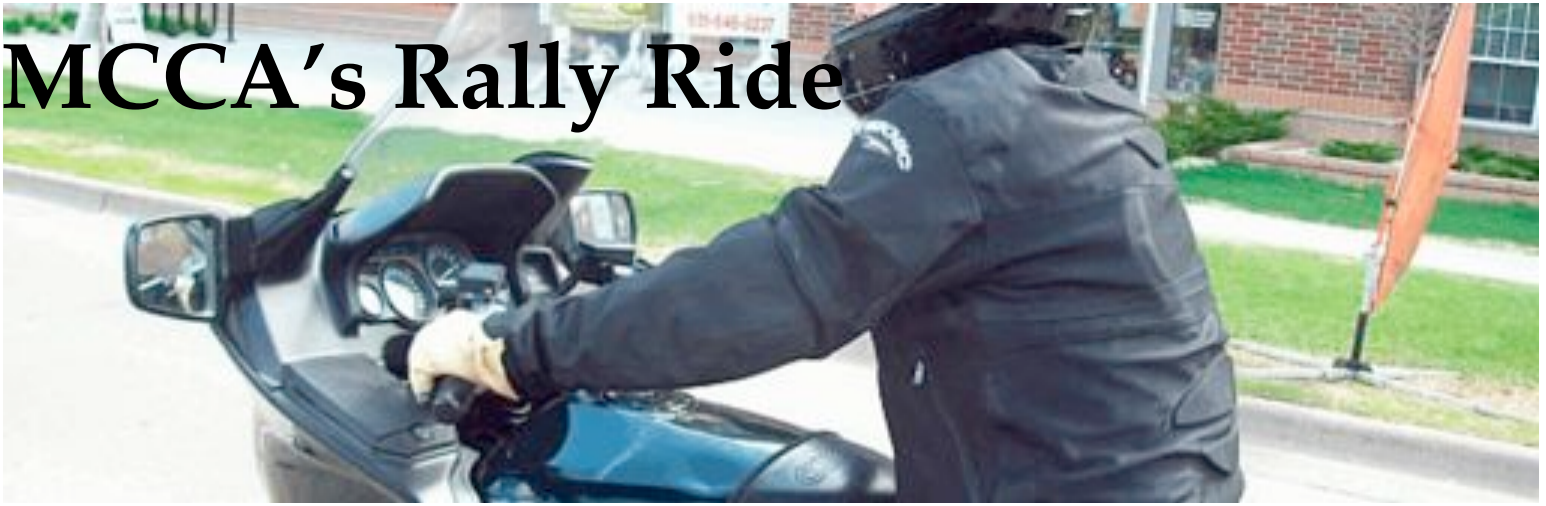
Corrections Person of the Year

This award is given for outstanding contribution to the field of corrections in Minnesota by an individual in any employment.

Board of Director's Award

This award recognizes exemplary service to MCA members through participation in association activities.

MCCA's Rally Ride



The DOC Central Office parking lot was alive with the sound of throaty engines as approximately 22 motorcycle enthusiasts converged to begin MCCA's first annual motorcycle rally on May 17, 2008. Our mission for this gathering was to have fun and enjoy the beginning of summer. We also wanted to help build camaraderie among community corrections bikers. Our MCCA Motorcycle Run volunteers, Sarah Walker, Jamie Tatarek and Catie Blake greeted us and served donuts and pastries to those of us who decided to skip breakfast. Dan Cain rounded us up, summarized the plan for the day, briefed us on our route, and got us going.

The morning started out beautiful. The sun was shining and the temperature was in the 50s. Our two lead riders were Jim Linehan, from the Rush City Correctional Facility and Bill Wagner from RS Eden. The rest of us brought up the rear. We started out for Lino Lakes Correctional Facility at 10:30 a.m. We drove through the city and into the country, side-by-side. What a sight to see as we drove up



Snelling Avenue past the State Fairgrounds. You can bet there was a head or two pointed in our direction as we paraded through St. Paul.

We arrived at Lino Lakes, safe and sound. Bridget Letnes, Shawn Ullrich and Rob Hope watched us arrive with big smiles, all around. Now that we were getting the hang of the day, the riders drew their second poker playing card, shot some bull and mounted back up for the ride to Rush City. To our surprise, when we actually got to the town of Rush City, the local sheriff noted our arrival and stopped traffic at the town's only stop sign, and allowed us to pass as a group. I don't know about the rest of the bikers, but I felt pretty darned special. It kind of reminded me of my days in the military when I was the Brigade Commander's driver driving him around Europe with our Military Police escort.

At Rush City Correctional Facility, we were met by Kelley Heifort who treated us to refreshing bottled water and we drew our third poker card. We visited a bit and moved on to Stillwater



The ride from Rush City to Stillwater was an adventure to behold. The sky looked ominous and it began to rain. The temps dipped. Road spray on the highway was ugly but we made good time. The rain finally dissipated but the overcast skies and temps in the mid to upper 40's made the experienced bikers glad they were wearing their leathers. Me? I thought the day was going to be sunny and warm. I was wearing a University of Minnesota wind breaker, jeans and hiking boots. Lucky for me, another biker took pity on me when we stopped for gas and asked me if I'd like to borrow some gloves. Through chattering teeth and shivering shoulders, I mumbled: "Ssssuurrrre." You can bet your last nickel I'll be wearing leathers and have my saddlebags stuffed with whatever I need for any imaginable weather condition next year! I think I'll pack my electric socks, gloves and snowmobile suit, just in case. During our ride, we had to dodge a bale of hay dropped from some farmer's truck. More than once, we drove through cow manure spilled over the country roads (the stench made my eyes water and my nostrils sting). Way to go, Bessie! But . . . are you

ready for this? Here's the best part. During our ride, we were passed by a trooper with his lights flashing. Thinking he was going to some unconnected emergency we kept our pace. Lo, and behold. Surprise, surprise. He pulled over just ahead of our leaders and motioned us all to the side of the road. I thought to myself, "Are you kidding me?" As is often the case when riding, our speed had crept up over the posted limit. The officer was not a happy camper. He wanted to know what our hurry was, being a nice day and all. We told him that we actually were not in any particular hurry and that we were all corrections professionals just out for a nice ride. While collecting our driver's licenses, he reminded us that, as correctional workers, we should know better. There we were, 20 motorcycles on the side of the road and 22 people lamenting the fines we would need to pay for our transgressions. Instead of a ride for ex-offender reentry, we had become a ride of new offender orientation.

The shame! Luckily the officer had compassion and felt sorry for us. He gave us a stern warning and let us proceed, with our tails between our legs. Turns out, he was a pretty nice guy. He had a good sense of humor and posed for pictures with us and we shared a joke or two. Whew! I was certain I'd be sharing half of my federal government rebate "stimulus" check to Mayberry, Minnesota.

Because we were running late, we skipped Stillwater and rode right to Oak Park Heights. Jennifer Gast and the volunteers from the first four stops were there to greet us. What a sight to see! It looked like a small-town carnival. A warm, delicious meal was waiting for us served by Willie Pouncy of CWF Solutions. The chief cook was Dick Voss. The sun reappeared. The temperature rose. And, we gobbled down our hamburgers, brats, beans, chips and washed it all down with cold sodas. We traded stories, and delighted about our first annual MCCA

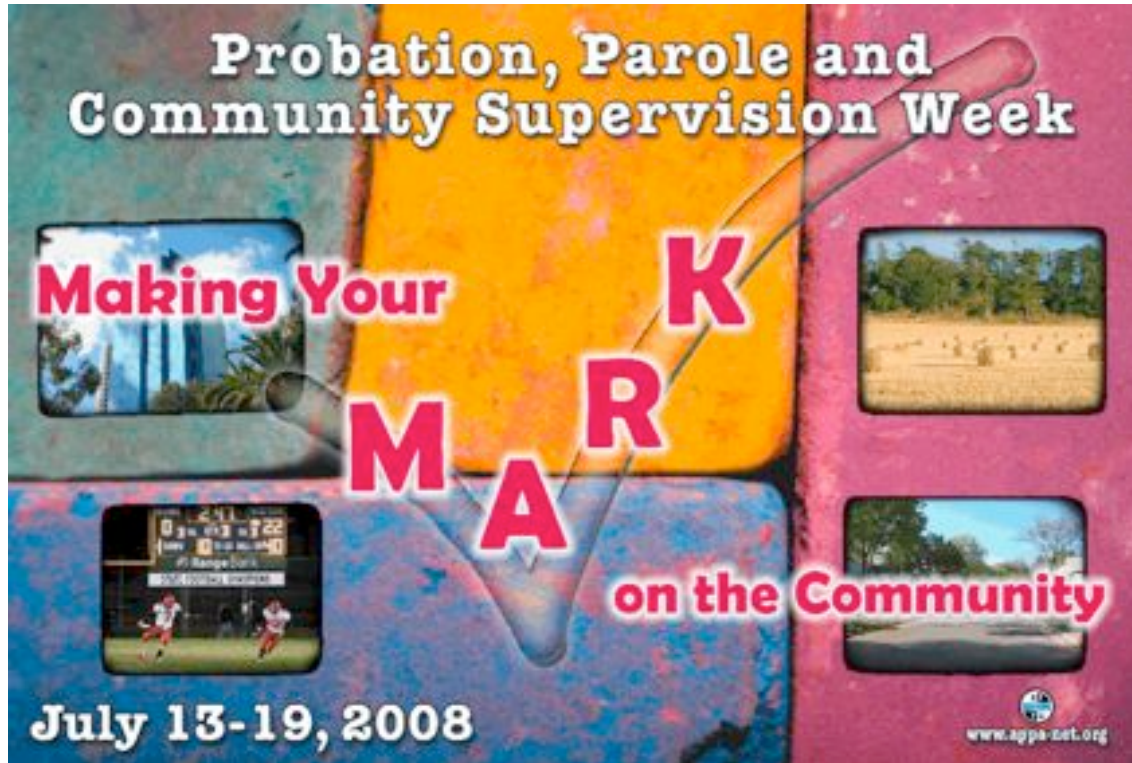
motorcycle ride now tucked, safely under our belts. We drew our fourth and fifth poker cards. The lucky duck who won the \$100 bucks for the best poker hand was Hector Matascastillo from DEED. Believe it or not, he had a heart flush draw from five cards. Some of the others had a pair, two pair or five totally unrelated cards. Congratulations, Hector!

I'll tell you what, though. The dicey situation of us being pulled over by the cops was animatedly told, re-told and told again at the BBQ. This event was definitely one for the books. You can't make stuff like this up. I don't know about you, but . . . I can't wait until next year's rally. I'm hopeful we'll stay out of the "hoosegow" next year! We'll see you at next year's Second Annual Motorcycle Rally and Poker Run. Vroooooommm!

The 18th Annual Minnesota Corrections Association Golf Tournament is set for Monday, September 15th, 2008, at Pebble Creek Golf Club in Becker, Minnesota. This event is a four person scramble, with a 9:00 a.m. shotgun start. Tournament fee is tentatively set at \$60.00 per person, which includes green fees, cart, lunch, awards, and prizes. Trophies will be awarded for the foursome with the lowest gross. Prizes will also be awarded to men and women in the following categories: longest putt, longest drive, and closest to the pin in regulation.

Registration forms can be accessed after July 7th, 2008, at www.mn-ca.org/ under the Events link. Registration deadline is September 10th, 2008, and teams must be reserved and paid in advance. The tournament is limited to 144 players, so get your registrations in early.

Please contact Chris Jahnke, Wright County Court Services, at 763-682-7862 or e-mail christopher.jahnke@co.wright.mn.us with any questions. If any vendors are interested in providing prizes for the tournament please contact Todd Gau (Wright County Court Services, at 763-682-7723 or e-mail todd.gau@co.wright.mn.us) by Sept. 10th, 2008 so that arrangements can be made prior to the tournament.



Continued from Page One

alcoholism and the DWI offender? What if our prisons still looked and operated like Alcatraz or perhaps a Dachau? What if we didn't have the technology today to manage our data, to track offenders, to communicate?

Then I think of how things have progressed in the years since then. The corrections folks who started this organization saw many changes since 1933. Today in 2008 we have the ability to track and influence events in our democratic legislative sessions. Today we actively educate our corrections community on current events that shape today's correctional employee, the student coming into the field, and the offender we deal with. Today we reach out through training, our newsletter, and our website. Today we address the issues that specifically impact the juvenile and adult justice system, as well as current technology advances. Today we recognize our peers through awards and nomination to office. We have many active members who are recognized professionals.

I am proud of this organization today, the people in it and how we have evolved since 1933. Make sure you are a part of the 75th anniversary at the MCA Fall Institute. Preliminary information is already out there on the website. I hope to see you in Duluth in October so we can celebrate together!

