



Hey, Boo

What an eventful third quarter it has been, both personally and professionally.

In the last issue we shared news that our website is undergoing an overhaul. Our design team at Ruby Porter here in Oregon is doing an outstanding job and we couldn't be happier with their work and dedication to our mission. We're also moved beyond words to report that this project is being funded in large part by inmates who have volunteered to donate their own earnings and coordinate multiple fundraisers behind the walls. Special thanks go out to Jacob Schmitt in Washington, and Martin Lockett in Oregon for enthusiastically stepping up to help. The current site remains live, and we'll be sharing more about these ongoing fundraisers on our blog as they occur. Sign up [here](#) to receive updates.

The beautiful green scarf I'm wearing in the picture above was hand-crocheted by an Oregon prisoner, who has donated some beautiful pieces, including the afghan shown on page 6. We expect additional items from Washington inmates and will be making everything available on the website over the coming weeks. We're also offering our first swag, a very nice engraved pen with stylus, for \$5.00. If you are an adopter and have not yet received your complimentary pen, send us an email with your mailing address and we'll get one right out to you. Please consider supporting us by making a donation or purchase for the holidays – and remember that all purchases and donations are tax deductible.

By the time this issue goes to print, Banned Books Week for 2016 will have just wrapped up. If you've sent a book to an inmate that was rejected, please contact us with the title and facility that banned it.

Please look over our Wish List (see page 8); in case you or someone you know might be able to help with any of those needs.

Leah writes in her column about visiting our home office earlier this month. She generously donated a week of her time to AI, providing invaluable support. It's not possible to over-estimate the volume of work required just to manage the mail – not to mention all the other projects. I am breathing easier now that we are gaining on the backlog. She even took boxes and boxes of work home with her. While I miss her physical presence here dearly, it is so gratifying to know the work continues to get done.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to *all* of our volunteers, new and old. Katie, Leah and her son Blake, and Debbie contin-

ue their steadfast support with tedious tasks that are so essential to the daily hum of work. Many thanks also to Nadia and her mother, who are helping to translate letters from our Spanish-speaking inmates, we are so glad to have that help. We welcome the new adopters that continue to stream in, thank you for finding us. Because of your compassion more prisoners have received human connection from the outside - some for the first time.

Thanks also go out to our donors this quarter: Melissa C., Bob and Nancee B., Nancy P., Ashley A., Vanessa V., Sharon C., Barb B., Donna A., Edna L., Judy H., Leah P., Nicole at [Connecticut Prison Book Connection](#), in addition to the countless inmates who send in extra stamps. We could not do this work without you.

On a personal note, July 13th marked three years my brother Rick has been wrongfully incarcerated (see pg 6 for his sketch of the view from his bunk, titled "Jackie Chans," which is what prisoners call the standard-issue shoes supplied by TDCJ – that fall apart after a few weeks). He continues to inspire and drive all our efforts by gently coaching me by phone at every turn. He reminds me constantly to thank all of the helpers for taking action and making this endeavor such a success. (This is also his birthday month, if you'd like to send him some love please [email](#) your message.) From our hearts to yours: Thank you for being awesome.

And finally, I am thrilled to share news of my new little grand-love, who arrived in the world on August 18th, and stole my heart.



As always, much love and peace,

Melissa

She-EO, Adopt an Inmate
melissabee@adoptaninmate.org



Ripples

by Leah Patterson

Visiting AI

In September, I was blessed to be able to spend five days in Oregon assisting Missy in the day-to-day happenings for Adopt An Inmate. What an amazing five days it was!

We spent the week matching adoptees to adopters, creating spreadsheets to keep track of various items and processes, writing copy for volunteer ads, taking care of some of the mundane office duties like filing, organizing and logging expense information, and the biggest tasks - logging surveys and

survey requests and stuffing and sealing envelopes...the list goes on and on. Priorities shift almost constantly, when one thing gets done, you turn around and there are

three more to do. Whew, what

a lot of work! And to think that, most of the time, it is Missy alone who is there in the trenches handling all of these tasks and more – as these are just the items I was able to help with while there – with little to no assistance.

Missy; this organization is so blessed to have her! She is one of the most compassionate



people I know and she is so unflappable; I hope some of that rubbed off on me while I was there! She, as well as Rick when he called, thanked me for helping – but it is I who am thankful to be given this opportunity to make a difference.

Most people wouldn't consider 10-12 hour workdays to be all that exciting. Well, for me it was. I must say, I am honored and thrilled to be part of such an incredibly vital organization. I have given my time to many organizations over the years, but never have I felt that I was making a difference like I do right here with all of you; I am so proud to be part of this community of angels!

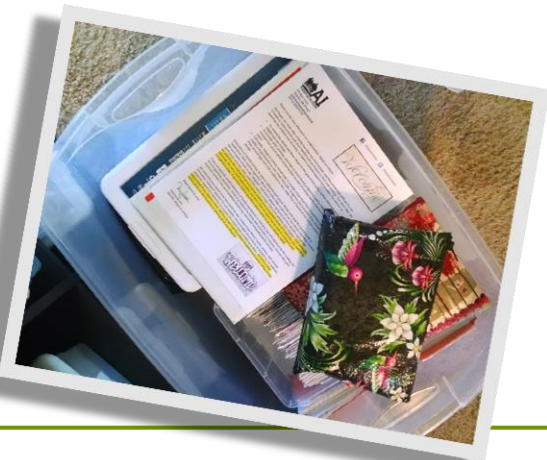
Namaste, may the realm of spirit, love, and peace wrap you in the arms of the cosmos!

Leah



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We are all potential criminals, and those whom we have put into prison are no worse, deep down, than any one of us. They have succumbed to ignorance, desire and anger, ailments that we all suffer from but to different degrees. Our duty is to help them.

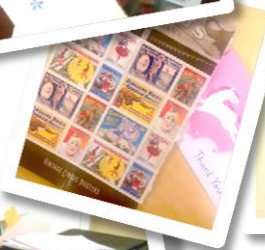
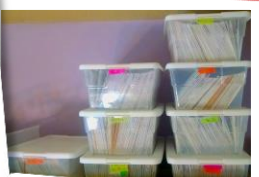
-- His Holiness, The Dalai Lama

Mail - One Year Later

The image at left was in the first issue (Fall 2016) of our newsletter, one short year ago. Impressed with the amount of incoming mail, we used the empty box from 500 envelopes to store it all. Below is Scout sleeping in the lid of that same box today. We now use many plastic storage boxes (thanks Katie) to store the letters, requests, and completed surveys.



Recent Stamp Donations



Since Leah's visit, I can see the top of my desk!

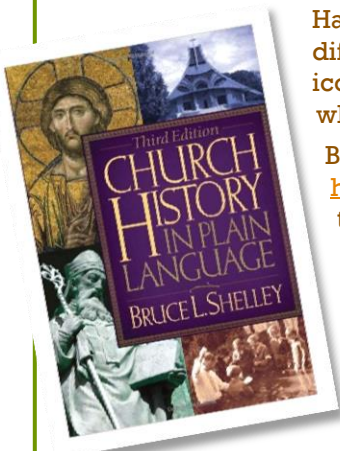


YTD:
Stamps used: 2,991
Incoming Mail: 8,252
Volunteer Hours: 3,941



Books

Most facilities require that books for inmates be sent directly from the bookseller (Amazon is always safe). If you're thinking of sending a book this month, consider one of the following:



Have you ever wondered why there are so many Christian denominations? Wondered what the difference between a Greek Orthodox and a Roman Catholic is? Did you know that the word iconoclast, used today as a label for those who clash against tradition, once represented those who split orthodoxy from Rome?

Bruce Shelley, professor of church history at the Denver Seminary, has written a fascinating [history of the Christian Church](#) which spans the life of Jesus and creation of His church until the present day. While the book is not exhaustive, it is thorough enough to reveal the answers to many questions both believers and non-believers have regarding historical Christianity.

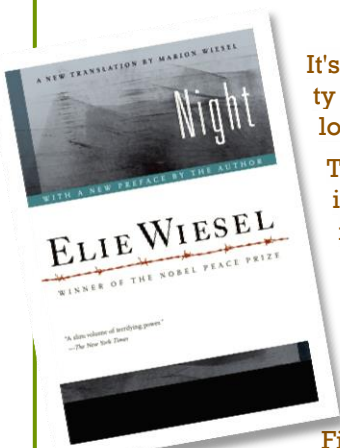
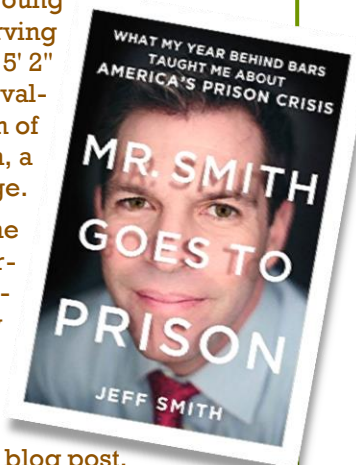
The best thing that can be said of this book is that it informs us while keeping us interested. Shelley's work belongs alongside the works of McCullough or McPhee in terms of its prose and quality. Five stars.

See the [full review](#) by Rick Fisk, TDCJ, Dalhart, TX, on our September 27th blog post.

What a book! This in-depth, candid memoir depicts a prominent man's epic fall from being a young hot shot politician with a sky's-the-limit career staring him in the face to a convicted felon serving hard time in a federal prison among some of society's most degenerate criminals. And yet, this 5' 2" suburbanite with a Ph.D. was able to not only successfully conform and navigate his new survival-driven surroundings, but also thrive in numerous ways while coming away with a wealth of knowledge that has spurred his efforts to reform the criminal justice system from, once again, a position of prominence and privilege.

This man's tumultuous, unlikely journey is a compilation of entertaining stories of how anyone who didn't grow up in a criminal environment would successfully adjust to the violent, predator-prey, perpetually volatile prison setting they are thrust into. It is also a very insightful, thoughtful manifesto of what is glaringly wrong with our current prison (and political) system and how it can begin to be rectified, benefiting ALL of America at the same time. Mr. Smith Goes to Prison is one of my favorite books this year, and I am confident it would be one of yours. Give it a read -- you won't be sorry you did.

See the [full review](#) by Martin Lockett, OSCI, Salem, OR, on our September 28th blog post.



It's not very often I can say that I'm sorry I missed the contemporaneous contributions to humanity by any particular human being. The recent passing of Elie Wiesel has left me feeling that loss.

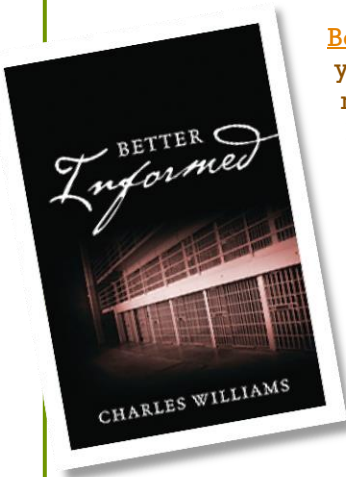
The vivid portrayal of Mr. Wiesel's Second World War atrocities were nothing less than shocking and left me with an urgent need to know more about the boy who survived some of the most inhumane conditions ever perpetrated by man, and the man who endured and grew from those conditions.

With intense, gripping narrative, I was unable to put the book down until I was overcome by the need to sleep. But sleep doesn't come easy with the realization of what humans are capable of doing to each other, and how hard Elie Wiesel worked, through his writings, to change the world — his *and* ours.

Five stars and I'm looking for more.

See the [full review](#) by Michael H., FL, on our September 29th blog post.

Paul Wright, executive director of the Human Rights Defense Center and editor of Prison Legal News, [told the Guardian](#) that about 15,000 books have been banned by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The book below was recently rejected – and that decision is on appeal. Once a book gets on the banned list, it never comes off.

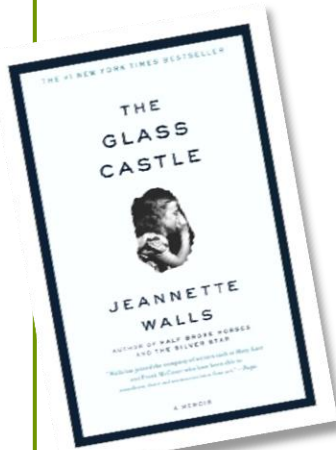
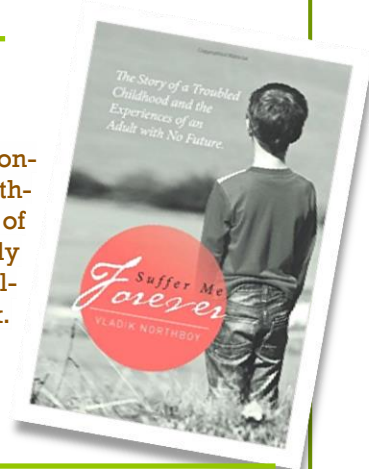


Better Informed by Charles Williams Until you're there, life behind bars is unimaginable. But if you're there...you need hope, strength, and community to survive. In this brilliant, searing novel created from his own experiences in prison, Charles Williams has illuminated stories of his life in a holding facility. Every anecdote, every scene was burned into his memory until he could scribble down words on scraps of paper with blunted pencils. With painstaking care, he introduces you to dozens of characters, immortalizing their truth, their tragedy, their brutality, and their transcendence.

While many of the inmates deserve to be there, a significant minority don't, or are simply working their way through the criminal justice system. But all of them are subjected to the lurid underworld of prison life, with its surprising alliances, unthinkable betrayals, and continual risks. But perhaps the most shocking aspect of this searing book is its inescapable reminder that people are the same no matter where they are: they need and seek friendship, and they are capable of embracing and expressing the best of who they are, even in degrading circumstances that seem intolerable.

Whether you're in the prison system or know nothing about it, this book is for you: an eye-opening revelation, a consolation in the worst of times, and a message of hope for those who are walking this path: you can survive and knit your life back together on the other side.

The author of this book is an inmate in Florida, and looking for readers and reviews. Please consider reading and sending us your review. From the author: [Suffer Me Forever](#) by Vladik Northboy is the life story of a man who was raised in the juvenile and adult court system as a result of ignorance relating to severe ADHD. This book will take you on a long journey leading to socially unacceptable sexual behaviors learned in so-called rehabilitation, and the life sentence that follows. This is the true-life story of my life. Available in Kindle, hardcover, and paperback.



The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls. A true story about poverty, deprivation, disassociation, resilience, and redemption by children who rose above it all to incredible success! I wanted to laugh and cry at the same time, so much of my life was not unsimilar. A gripping story.

Review by B. Ballard, CA



“

We can't just rail against crime. We must speak of the root problems – devastating family breakup, an insidious culture of violence that cheapens human life, skyrocketing prisoner recidivism rates that rob our communities of husbands and fathers – and recognize that there is a societal role in rehabilitation and restoration

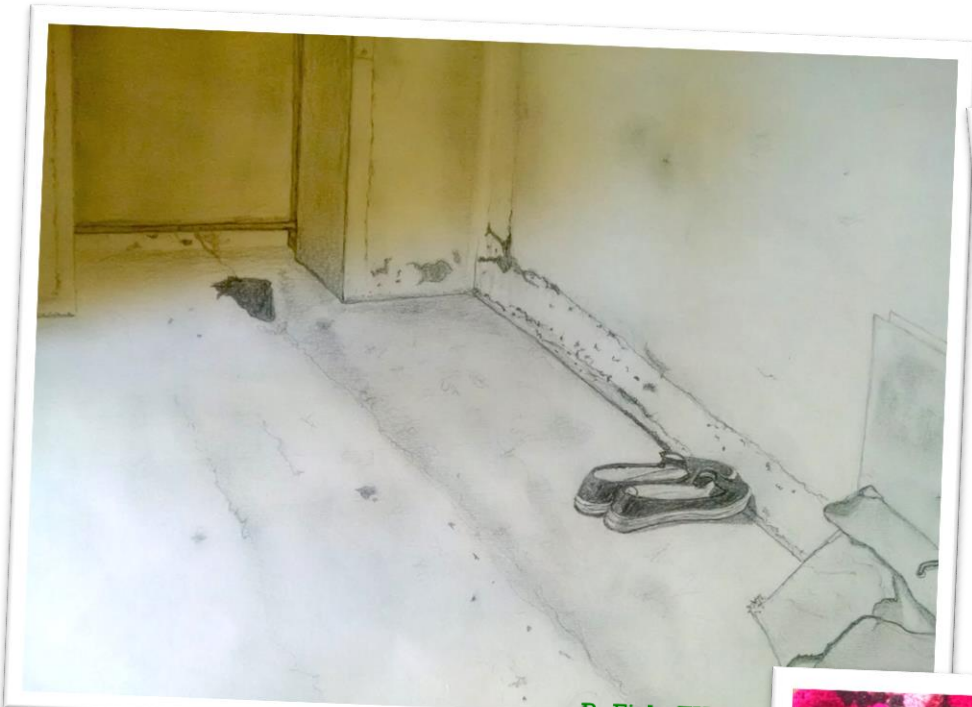
- Frank Wolf

Art in Prison

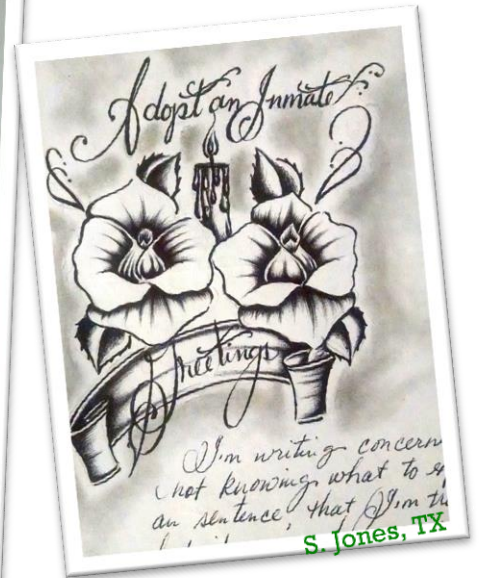
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An artist must never be a prisoner. Prisoner? An artist should never be a prisoner of himself, prisoner of style, prisoner of reputation, prisoner of success, etc.

- Henri Matisse



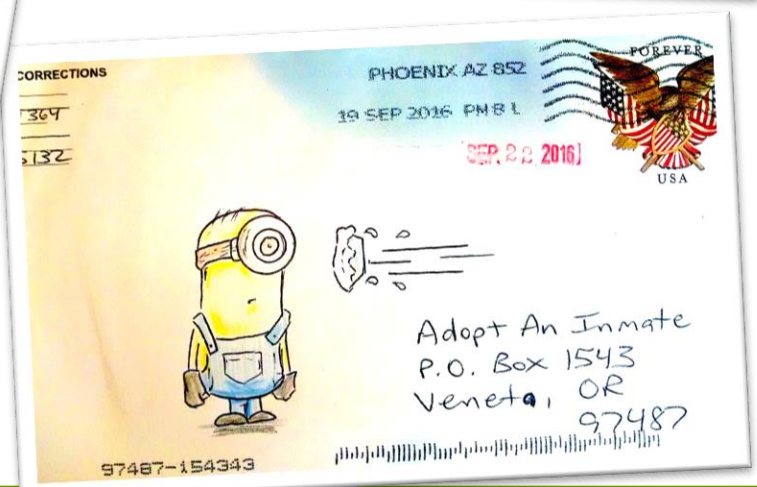
R. Fisk, TX



A.A., OR



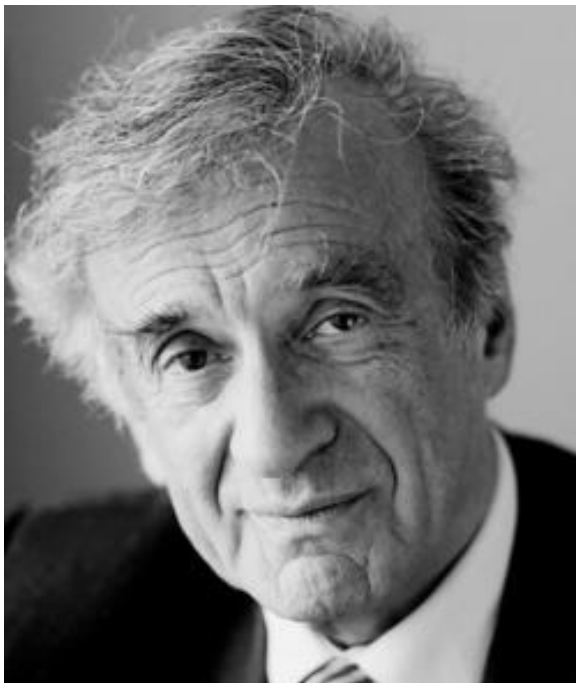
Eric A., CA Death Row



Gifts Ideas for Prisoners

It's not too soon to start thinking about gift-giving for the holidays. Jails and prison facilities have strict rules about what prisoners are allowed to receive. Consider these ideas and check with the facility before sending:

- **Personal Correspondence** – Letters and cards are vital to prisoners who are isolated from their family and friends. When sending cards, be sure they are plain with no glitter, glue or stickers, and no musical cards.
- **Stamps** – Some facilities allow a limited number of stamps per envelope – check the rules before sending any stamps or blank stationary.
- **Photos** – Most facilities allow a certain number of photos per envelope. You may also be able to send a photo book – which you can [design yourself online](#) or have made at many stores such as [Walgreens](#)
- **Commissary Money** - Many facilities and have special items and raise the spend limit for the holiday quarter when ordering from commissary or canteen. Check also the approved vendors for care packages.
- **Phone Calls & Video Visits** – Hearing a friendly voice of a loved one on the other end of the phone or in a video visit is a very special gift that most prisoners don't get. Let us know if you need any help getting an account set up.
- **Magazine Subscriptions** – Most inmates are allowed magazine subscriptions if they are sent from the publisher,
- **Newspaper Subscriptions** – Most prisoners have little exposure to news or newspapers. USA Today, Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times are all good choices for those who like to stay up on current events.
- **Angel Tree®** reaches out to children of prisoners and their families to help meet their needs during the holiday season. Go [here to register](#), and [here to volunteer](#).



"I swore never to be silent
whenever and wherever
human beings endure
suffering and humiliation.
We must always take sides.
Neutrality helps the oppressor,
never the victim.
Silence encourages
the tormentor,
never the tormented."

– Elie Wiesel

Photo Credit: Sergey Bermeniev/npr
HistoryByZim.com

Donate Your Books

From a *Baltimore Sun* article about Maryland's prison libraries: Many who are within a year or two of release use library services to prepare for re-entry, to get their GED, and to improve their vocabularies and language skills. There are two main reasons for high rates of recidivism: the employment challenge facing ex-offenders on the outside, and the lack of preparation for re-entry on the inside. So many of us have more books than we know what to do with. Please consider donating a few, we'll see that they get to some needy prisoners. What to donate (preferably in paperback): Books in Spanish, popular fiction, drawing and art books, how-to books, yoga & fitness, chess, African American studies, biographies, GED prep books, LGBTQ books, law books less than 5 years old. What not to donate: Books with spiral bindings, in bad condition or with notes and/or highlighting, books with nude photos, magazines, textbooks or law books more than 5 years old. Send all donations to us at:

Adopt an Inmate Book Campaign
PO Box 1543
Veneta, OR 97487



[Slate.com on banned books in prison](#)



[Bookstoprisoners.net list of banned books in prisons](#)



[Quiz on banned books in AZ prisons](#)



AI is looking for help with the following:

- Staples or Amazon gift cards for office supplies (see our [Amazon wishlist](#) for items we always need)
- Volunteers to send birthday cards to prisoners
- Book reviews from inmates
- Artwork from inmates
- Volunteers from each state to maintain facility and DOC information
- Translating our inmate survey into other languages (Word format)
- Adopters who speak and write Spanish
- Adopters of all faiths (Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, etc.)
- Service men and women to write to inmate veterans
- Handmade items by inmates for our online store
- Local (Eugene, OR area) volunteers to help process the mail
- *We always need stamps!*

Send submissions and donations to:

Adopt an Inmate
PO Box 1543
Veneta, OR 97487

Or email: donate@adoptainmate.org