

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

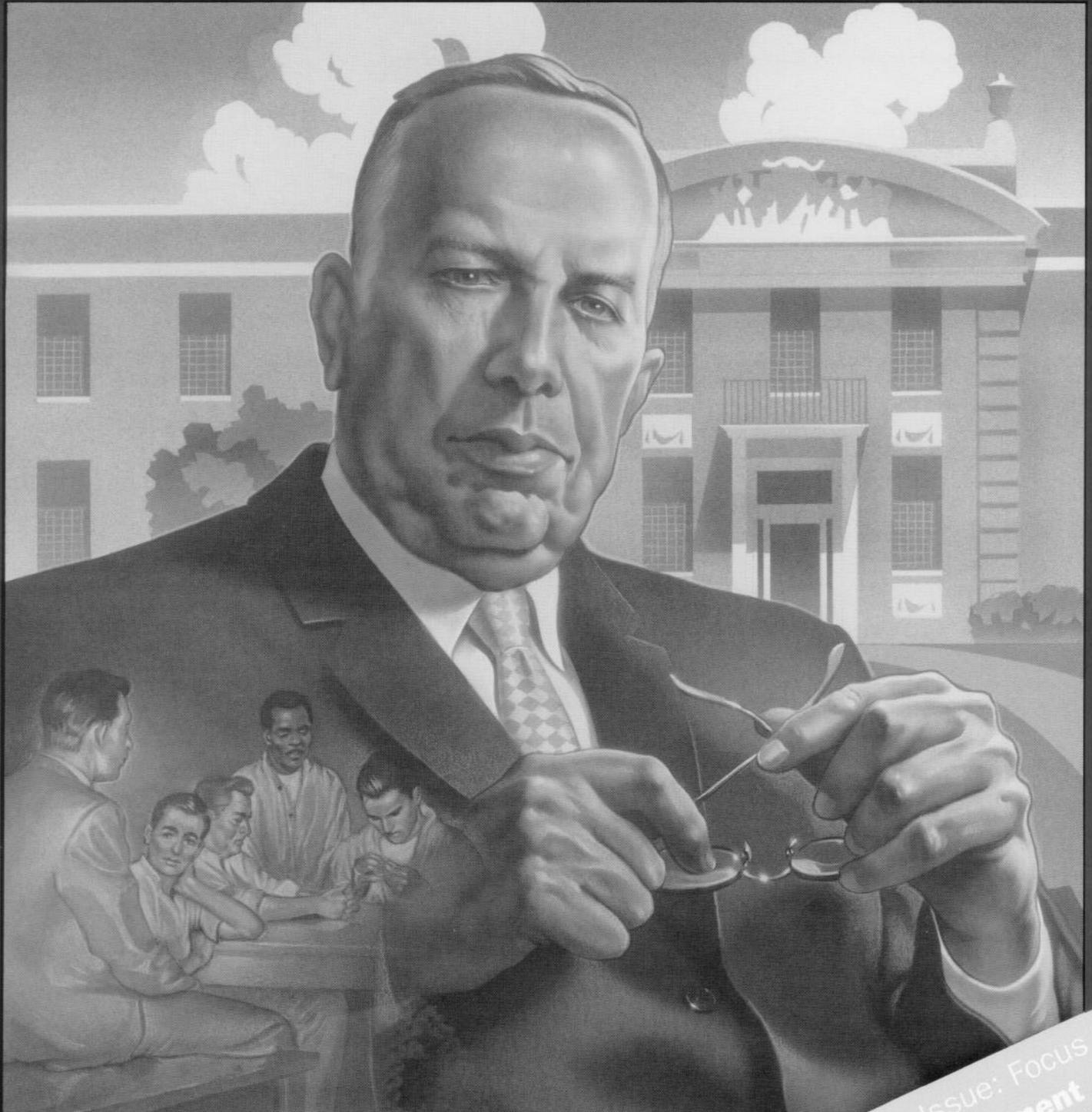


Federal Prisons

JOURNAL

VOL. 3, NO. 3

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Special Issue: Focus on
Management

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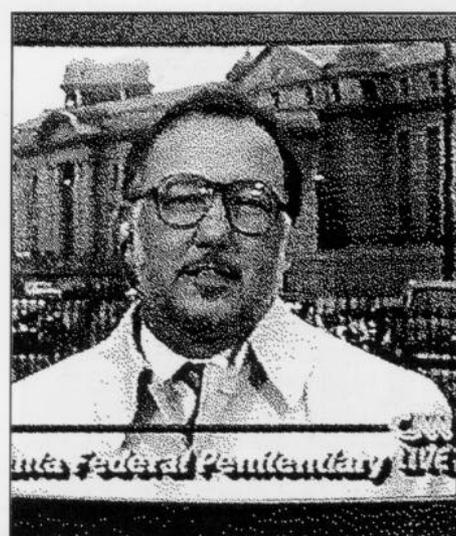
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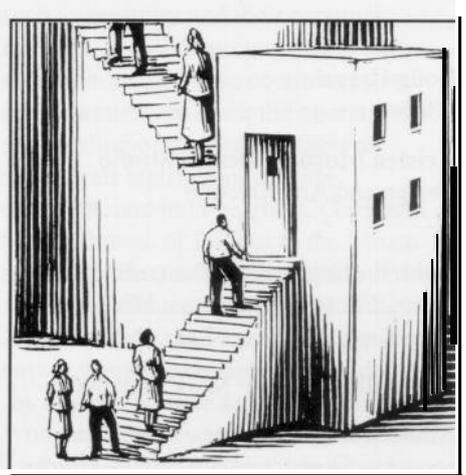
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Federal Prisons

JOURNAL

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About the cover: James V. Bennett served as Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons for 27 years, from 1937 to 1964. When he died in 1978, the *Washington Post* editorialized that during those years he had become “one of the world’s foremost leaders of prison reform.” The cover depicts Bennett near the end of his administration. The scene in the foreground typifies the education programs that he considered essential to a modern prison system. Over Bennett’s shoulder is the United States Penitentiary, Terre Haute, Indiana—an example of the more humane prison architecture that Bennett favored over the massive cellblocks that characterized prisons built in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

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Clarification: In the Fall 1992 issue of the ***Federal Prisons Journal***, an article on literacy programs makes several references to an article Illinois Department of Corrections Public Information Officer Brian K. Fairchild wrote for an Illinois Department of Corrections newsmagazine. These citations suggest that Mr. Fairchild personally conducted studies on literacy and recidivism. Mr. Fairchild stresses that his article merely cites the studies of others; he does not assume credit for the original thought, research, or publication of these studies.

From the editor

The ***Federal Prisons Journal*** resumes publication with this issue. The interruption since our last issue (which came out in spring 1993) was primarily due to reorganization within the Bureau’s Office of Public Affairs. We apologize for any inconvenience to subscribers.

The articles in this issue deal with a subject that has received a great deal of attention in these times of “reinventing government”—management and leadership. Since the 1930’s, the Bureau’s Directors and other top managers have been career corrections professionals who have come up through the ranks, usually serving posts in a number of different institutions and occupational specialties. That sort of career leadership has been very unusual in civilian government agencies.

We hope that readers will find much that is thought-provoking in these articles, not just in the sense of learning tips on the “nuts and bolts” of management, but in seeing what in an organization’s philosophy grows and changes and what remains constant over time.

Our thanks to Professor John J. DiIulio of Princeton University, who reviewed the articles in this issue and allowed us to excerpt his forthcoming book on the Federal Bureau of Prisons.



Working With Congress

Peter M. Wittenberg

Imagine the following. You are a representative of a large Federal agency sitting in front of a congressional subcommittee, which is responsible for your funding next year. In your blue pinstripe suit, you wait, hot under the lights of the nationally televised C-SPAN network. In your mind, you replay what you are going to say to justify your budget request.

The chairman of the subcommittee, speaking from his gavel and his elevated chair behind a huge ornate oak dais, bangs his gavel, and opens the hearing with the usual pleasantries. The chairman begins the budget hearing by asking you to tell the committee what the total staff complement of your agency is, what their primary responsibilities are, and where the staff are predominantly stationed. Your blood runs cold when you realize that you don't have the information available to answer those three simple questions. The hearings go downhill from there. Farfetched? Improbable? Silly?

While it did not happen at a hearing, a similar situation recently occurred when Congress asked those questions of a Federal agency and the agency representative was unable to answer. Several Members of Congress are now scrutinizing that organization and considering whether staff reductions, budget cuts, or reorganization are needed.

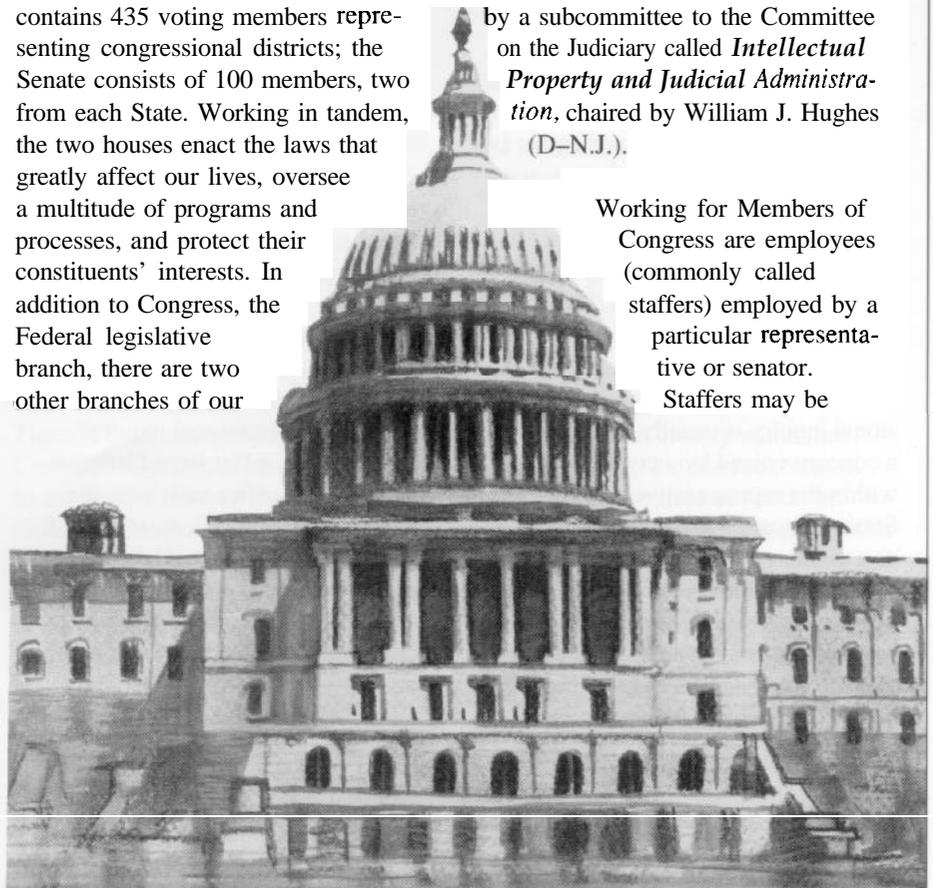
It is vitally important for Federal agencies to communicate and respond to congressional inquiries, requests, and questions within their professional scope and responsibilities. Staff have a further responsibility to educate congressional representatives and clarify for them any issues that may affect operations and programs. In the case of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, failure to do so can have devastating consequences on our ability to fulfill our mission.

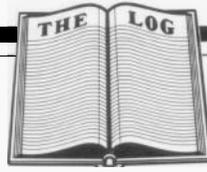
Before we discuss specific ways in which Bureau staff interact with Congress, we should travel back a few years to high school civics class for a quick review of congressional operations. The House of Representatives contains 435 voting members representing congressional districts; the Senate consists of 100 members, two from each State. Working in tandem, the two houses enact the laws that greatly affect our lives, oversee a multitude of programs and processes, and protect their constituents' interests. In addition to Congress, the Federal legislative branch, there are two other branches of our

Government—coequal in power: the judicial (courts) and the executive (President). Most Federal agencies, including the Department of Justice, are part of the executive branch.

Representatives and senators are assigned, based on several factors—such as seniority and their personal interests—to various committees and subcommittees. These committees and subcommittees oversee the operations and funding of the Federal Government, draft legislation, provide oversight, and hold hearings. Oversight for the Bureau of Prisons in the Senate rests with the *Committee on the Judiciary*, chaired by Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del). In the House of Representatives, Bureau oversight is provided by a subcommittee to the Committee on the Judiciary called *Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration*, chaired by William J. Hughes (D-N.J.).

Working for Members of Congress are employees (commonly called staffers) employed by a particular representative or senator. Staffers may be





assigned to the representative's Washington, D.C., office, State district office, or to a specific committee or subcommittee. Usually an agency representative will be contacted by a staffer, not the Member of Congress. However, the Bureau's director does receive calls from the Members themselves.

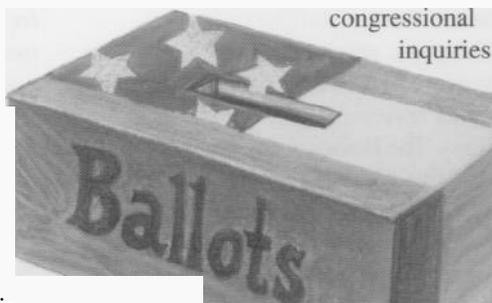
Representatives and senators are extraordinarily busy, and their time is limited. They rely heavily upon their staff to investigate concerns and problems and to recommend a course of action. While many staffers are relatively young, they are usually well versed in the importance of a particular issue and, more important, usually have a great deal of influence with the representative or senator for whom they work.

■ When working with congressional staffers, the first detail to remember is that they are acting for their representative, senator, or committee. Their impression of you and your response to their inquiry—whether good, bad, or indifferent—will often be relayed to their boss.

■ The second point is that a congressional inquiry is usually in response to a concern voiced by a constituent within the representative's district or State. The concern could be as simple as a mother of an inmate asking the representative for help in transferring her son to a facility closer to home, or as complex as a product manufacturer asking the senator to propose legislation restricting Federal Prison Industries. Remember, one of the major

responsibilities of a representative or senator is to respond to constituents' concerns—after all, constituents decide at election time whether a Member is sent back to Congress.

■ Third, staffers may have a basic understanding of criminal justice issues, but most do not have training or experience in correctional programs or management. As an executive branch agency, the Bureau must provide *specific* information in response to a congressional inquiry. It is imperative that we handle all



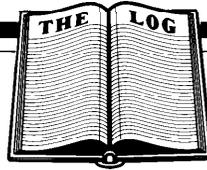
as a priority, and respond to them in a professional, straightforward manner.

What are some methods that Bureau staff can use, at the institution, regional office, and Central Office level, in handling a congressional inquiry? Assume that a staffer from Congresswoman Jones' office calls you, the public information officer, at the U.S. Penitentiary in Lompoc, California, and informs you that the mother of inmate John Good, housed at the facility, has contacted her office and would like her son transferred to a Federal Prison Camp in Florida. The staffer would like to know what can be done about such a request. As a trained correctional worker, you know that an inmate housed at a maximum-security

facility cannot be transferred to a minimum-security camp. In handling this situation, you should take the opportunity to educate the staffer on why the Bureau cannot authorize such a move. Explain the policy, explain the consequences of transferring this type of inmate to a low-security facility, and discuss specifics (without, of course, violating the Privacy Act or other concerns such as Witness Security status).

Another inquiry you may receive is a request asking why an inmate was transferred. If you reply, "He was put into the pipeline and moved from his last joint because he tried to kill a fish in PC with a shank," you will send the staffers scurrying to find a person who can translate correctional language into English (or this may cause them to distrust you because they think you may be trying to mislead them). Use professional language—not jailhouse jargon. (If you do happen to use a word such as "PC" or "shank," explain it.)

Of primary importance in responding to congressional inquiries is *accuracy*. Be sure that the information you are passing on is completely factual—do not guess. If the staffer (or representative) loses confidence in your integrity, you will have damaged the agency's reputation with that office. If you are questioned on matters that you don't know, don't understand, or are not sure about, such as the Bureau's position on pending legislation, it is important to refer those inquiries to the Office of Congressional Affairs in Central Office.



As our agency continues to grow, and we build more facilities in congressional districts and States that have never had Federal prisons before, educating staffers and elected officials becomes even more significant. Site visits are highly encouraged. Information regarding staff and inmate complement, the economic impact the facility has upon the community, hiring practices as they affect the district or State, Federal Prison Industries operations, and vendor services that the facility uses are all topics in which Members of Congress have an interest.

There will be times when a congressional representative and the agency will not see eye to eye on a particular issue. Usually, problems of this nature are handled at the highest level of the agency through consultation with the Department of Justice. While it may not completely resolve the concerns, educating the representative or committee about the Bureau's programs normally results in better understanding.

Politics in general, and Congress in particular, are complex and ever-changing. Today's "hot issue" is tomorrow's old news, and the seemingly inconsequential program of today can be the focus of the entire legislative body tomorrow. Agendas change, sometimes hourly, in both the House and Senate. As members of the executive branch, we must continue our mission with as little concern about these changes as we can afford, yet be sensitive to the reality of the political process.

There is a section within the Bureau's Central Office that is prepared to assist in any matter relating to Congress. The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) was established to act as a liaison with Congress and to support management in all areas pertaining to congressional and legislative issues. OCA tracks legislation, attends hearings, provides information on Members of Congress to Bureau managers, and responds to requests from congressional staffers on a daily basis.

OCA also works closely with other divisions within the Bureau to determine possible courses of action in response to congressional inquiries. An online computer linkup with a congressional information service provides up-to-the-minute information on a number of issues related to Capitol Hill. Bureau staff are invited to contact OCA staff at any time to discuss a legislative issue.

Glossary of Congressional Terms

- **Bill:** Most legislative proposals before Congress are in the form of bills; they are designated "HR" if they originate in the House of Representatives and "S" if they originate in the Senate.
- **Act:** The term for legislation once it has passed both houses of Congress and has been signed by the President, or passed over the President's veto, thus becoming law.
- **Amendment:** A proposal of a member of Congress to alter the language, provisions, or stipulations in a bill.
- **Committee:** A division of the House or Senate that prepares legislation for action by the parent chamber or conducts investigations as directed by the parent chamber.
- **Subcommittee:** Studies legislation, holds hearings, and reports bills, with or without amendments, to the full committee.
- **Joint Committee:** Composed of a specific number of members of both the House and the Senate. Joint Committees may be investigative or research-oriented.
- **Conference:** A meeting between the representatives of the House and the Senate to reconcile differences between the two bodies on provisions of a bill passed by both chambers.
- **Hearings:** Committee or Subcommittee sessions for taking testimony from witnesses. The public and press may attend open hearings, but are barred from closed or "executive" hearings.
- **Hopper:** Box on House Clerk's desk where members deposit bills and resolutions to introduce them.
- **Mark-up:** Going through the contents of a piece of legislation to revise, remove, or add new sections or phrasing.



When Congress calls, staff should be prepared to respond professionally, competently, and ethically, and explain our positions with clarity and precision. In doing so, we strive to maintain the outstanding relationships the Bureau of Prisons has fostered with elected officials throughout the history of the agency.

Peter M. Wittenberg is Assistant Chief of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Office of Congressional Affairs, a branch of the Office of Public Affairs in the Information, Policy, and Public Affairs Division.

computer can discern. I spend time counseling an inmate about an issue, providing guidance to another. The day shift reports for duty. One staff member stops to clarify a work-related problem; another needs information on a personal issue.

Today is an opportune time to drop by the 7:45 a.m. roll call. About 20 staffers are assembled listening to a lieutenant discuss aspects of inmate personal property. These staff are looking younger—or am I just getting older? Data from the Bureau of Prisons' Key Indicators automated information system indicate that 68 percent of these folks have 2 years or less with the agency. I ask

for questions and rumors to address and clarify, and discuss upcoming events and Bureau initiatives. There is so much to communicate: policy, procedures, philosophy. We must enhance methods to “age” this green wood.

Time to briefly visit the office, return a call, and chat with the secretary about upcoming activities, priorities, and scheduling. Paperwork takes longer than expected. I need to make an appearance at a training session—indeed “the speed of the leader is the speed of the pack.”

More paperwork has accumulated as I return to the office for a meeting with staff. An employee is accompanied by a union representative. This is not a pleasant task: no pat on the back, promotion, or award. Dispensing

justice—a moment in the disciplinary process of a Bureau employee. The process is lengthy and fraught with emotion. I take notes as I listen to the employee and the union rep. The policy is explicit—as are the sanctions.

On to mainline. What a sight to see 1,000 inmates and staff eating lunch in a little over an hour and 15 minutes. Today the roar of the crowd is pleasant music. Only quiet warrants caution. If too many inmates present complaints I get concerned, and equally so if none of them stop to talk.

The institution is relatively compact—daily visits to specific areas ensure that each department will be visited at least once a week. A visit to a housing unit involves checking security procedures and sanitation, stopping to chat with officers, applauding innovations, and critiquing problem areas. Unit staff are busy with their duties but take time to offer coffee. A talk with the unit manager revolves around equipment needs, budget issues, career development, and performance of staff. I compliment the unit manager's positive Key Indicators data in the areas of financial responsibility (inmates paying their court-ordered debts) and informal resolution of inmate grievances.

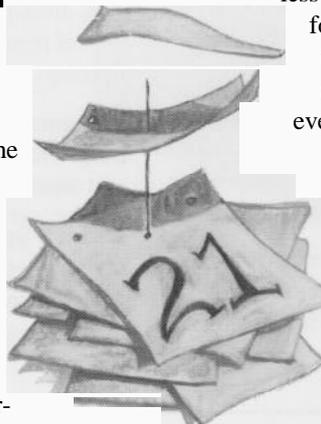


A Day in the Life

Philip M. Spears

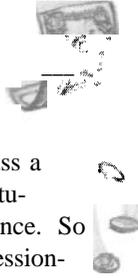
It's not quite daylight, and the high mast lighting reflects across the prison grounds. I'm reflecting on the day before me, the week's activities, monthly goals, and the routine to-do list. The early morning hours are free of calls, crises, and interruptions—a time to plan.

By 7:30 the day is fully scheduled, and I observe the hundreds of inmates reporting for work. A “gut feel” for the institution registers as inmates pass, nod, speak, frown, avert their eyes, complain, compliment—a feel no





A fellow warden calls to voucher an employee. I bounce a problem off this seasoned pro and pick her brain about a concern of mine. We discuss a shared tour of a sister institution—a humbling experience. So much innovation and professionalism. None of us has any monopoly on ideas.



In the parking lot as I leave, a disgruntled middle manager confronts me about the merit promotion system. He's a one-dimensional sort, but has potential—inside a good employee is trying to get out. That's how we earn our money; and what this business is all about.



Today—no major problems. No reporters covering the 10-hour-plus day. Not many compliments on the 642 functions that went well; only minor gripes on the four that weren't perfect. I leave feeling grateful that this little piece of the Bureau is safe, clean, humane.

Another day in the life of a warden.

Philip M. Spears is Warden at the Federal Correctional Institution, Three Rivers, Texas.

Working in the Central Office: Two Views

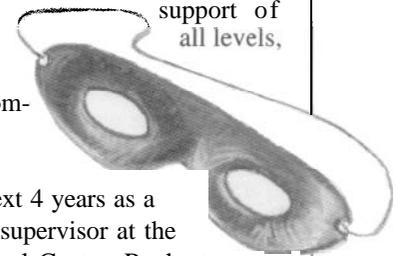
Putting it All in Perspective: How My Central Office Experience Helped Me Develop as a Manager

Teresa E. Hunt

One of the Bureau of Prisons' strongest cultural anchors is the "Bureau family." Just as my own family instilled in me many values during my formative years, the Bureau family has made me realize the qualities it takes to be a contributing member of this very extended family. Working in the Bureau's headquarters—Central Office—helped prepare me for most of the experiences I faced working in the field. It was not, however, until I began writing this article that I was able to articulate which principles were most helpful to me as I moved into management positions.

320 First Street NW., Central Office, was my duty station on two occasions. After gaining field experience as a correctional officer, I was hired as a data clerk in the Office of Information Systems. SENTRY, a nationwide computer network, was about to be introduced. My job was to learn everything I could about the system, then train other staff. I had been hired because of my field experience—I had never worked with computers. For the next 4 years, I learned more about Bureau policy development as I worked with the Central Office subject-matter experts. I also saw first-hand how policy is implemented, as we visited almost every institution, putting the computer system in place.

As we added more information and created procedures to automate existing functions through SENTRY, the importance of teamwork was evident. We became ambassadors and salespersons. We needed the support of Central Office administrators, computer programmers, and field staff to make the system work. After a few years, everyone was using SENTRY. My work with Central Office staff taught me a valuable lesson: I noticed that effective managers enlisted the support of their staff at all levels, while "lone rangers" accomplished little.



During my next 4 years as a manager and supervisor at the Federal Medical Center, Rochester, Minnesota, the need for teamwork and commitment became even more apparent. As manager of the general population housing unit, I was responsible for setting up unit operations for the institution's first inmates. A year later, we implemented an intensive unit program, the "Rochester Model," using principles from *The Future of Imprisonment*, by the former Dean of the University of Chicago Law School, Norval Morris.

As the manager responsible for the implementation of this program, I relied heavily on my Central Office experience. My staff and I spent many hours developing policy, writing position papers, providing seminars, training other staff, conducting retreats, preparing newsletter articles and videotape presentations, and conversing with Regional Office staff, whose support was critical. I had learned how impor-



tant these activities were for team building when I worked in the Central Office. The camaraderie shared by the unit staff reflected our commitment to the project.

I returned to Washington just as strategic planning had been adopted as the management approach that would lead the Bureau of Prisons into the 90's. I worked in the Office of Strategic Planning and was fortunate to have another opportunity to introduce a new program. The "Rochester Model" experience involved implementing a program at the institution level; my next challenge was to introduce a new concept at the national level.

We spent our startup time reviewing most of management consultant Peter Drucker's works, professional journals, and public-administration textbooks. I could not pass a bookstore without browsing through the business and management sections. It was difficult to find a common definition for strategic planning.

Several wardens requested assistance in planning retreats. Although we developed a standard training outline, we spent hours adapting it to match each warden's philosophy and institution. As we led the retreats, it was apparent that a standard format for strategic planning was not as important as the process itself, which encouraged commitment through teamwork.

One of the articles disseminated by the director was "Getting Everyone to Think Strategically," by Benjamin B. Tegoe and Peter M. Tobia. One of its points seems very pertinent in retrospect. The authors stressed that broad participation in the process was critical, but questioned how CEO's would encourage participation in strategic planning without inducing chaos. It has taken 3 years for the process to "take shape"; now most staff find strategic planning simple. The process enables staff at all levels to stay focused.

Before I left Washington, I also worked briefly in the Site Acquisition section. We met regularly with local citizens, public administrators, and other officials as sites were identified for new Federal prisons. For the first time in my career, my primary clients were not inmates or Bureau staff. Being flexible and tactful were absolute necessities. For the first time, I realized how many outside influences affect a Government agency.

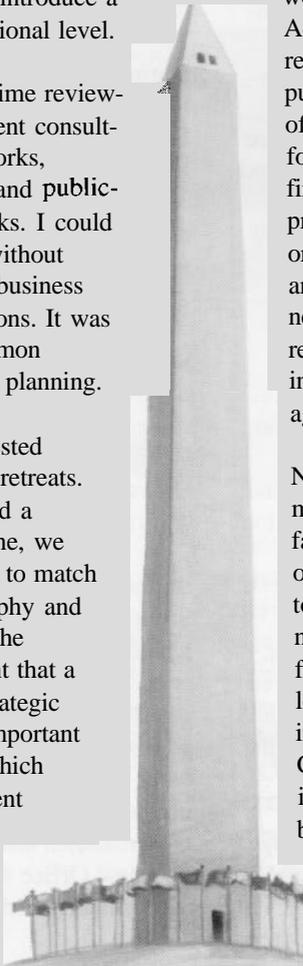
Now that I oversee 10 departments at a medium-security facility for 1,260 adult male offenders, I must closely attend to the principle of responsiveness—a principle we cannot forget as our agency grows. I learned that responsiveness was important when I worked in the Central Office and at other institutions. There have always been expectations that regional and Central Office staff will be responsive to institution staff, the

public, and other agencies, just as we expect institution staff to be responsive to inmates and the public. Staff, however, must work daily at remaining responsive to *all* their constituents to build credibility.

As associate warden, I have immediate access to most directives sent from the Central Office. I know the work involved in issuing or changing a policy. Policy is developed and coordinated between divisions, then, as part of the clearance process, a draft is forwarded to regional directors, who often involve institution staff in the review process. Issuing policy requires as much teamwork as introducing a computer system, setting up unit operations, developing a planning process, siting a new prison, or overseeing a prison.

It is difficult to have teamwork without commitment. Policy is effected because Central Office staff are committed to making the agency function more efficiently. We are fortunate that so many Central Office administrators have worked in institutions and have considerable experience at many different types of facilities—as policymakers, they know they will receive a "reality check" as they seek input on new initiatives from staff who must implement them.

Communication in the five separate Central Office buildings is facilitated just as in the field: meetings, more meetings, lunch, and "walking and talking." The friendships and working relationships maintained with people you "did time with" in the Central Office are as strong as those developed in the field.





While teamwork, commitment, focus, flexibility, tact, and responsiveness are the salient principles that came back to me as I reflected on my experiences working in both the Central Office and the field, one more thing cannot be left out. The "big picture" cannot be fully realized unless you are right there next to Capitol Hill. Every day you are forced to reckon with the issues facing our agency; issues that mean continual interaction with Congress and the Federal judiciary, as well as the Department of Justice and other Federal, State, and local agencies. Your world expands.

A few weeks ago, one of my staff and a visitor from another institution met with me to discuss a recent change in policy. After our meeting, I overheard my department head stating, "Ms. Hunt's got an interesting perspective on these issues. You

know, she has worked in the Central Office twice." I appreciated the compliment.

Teresa E. Hunt is Associate Warden for Programs at the Federal Correctional Institution, Terminal Island, California.

Working in Washington

Gary Winkler

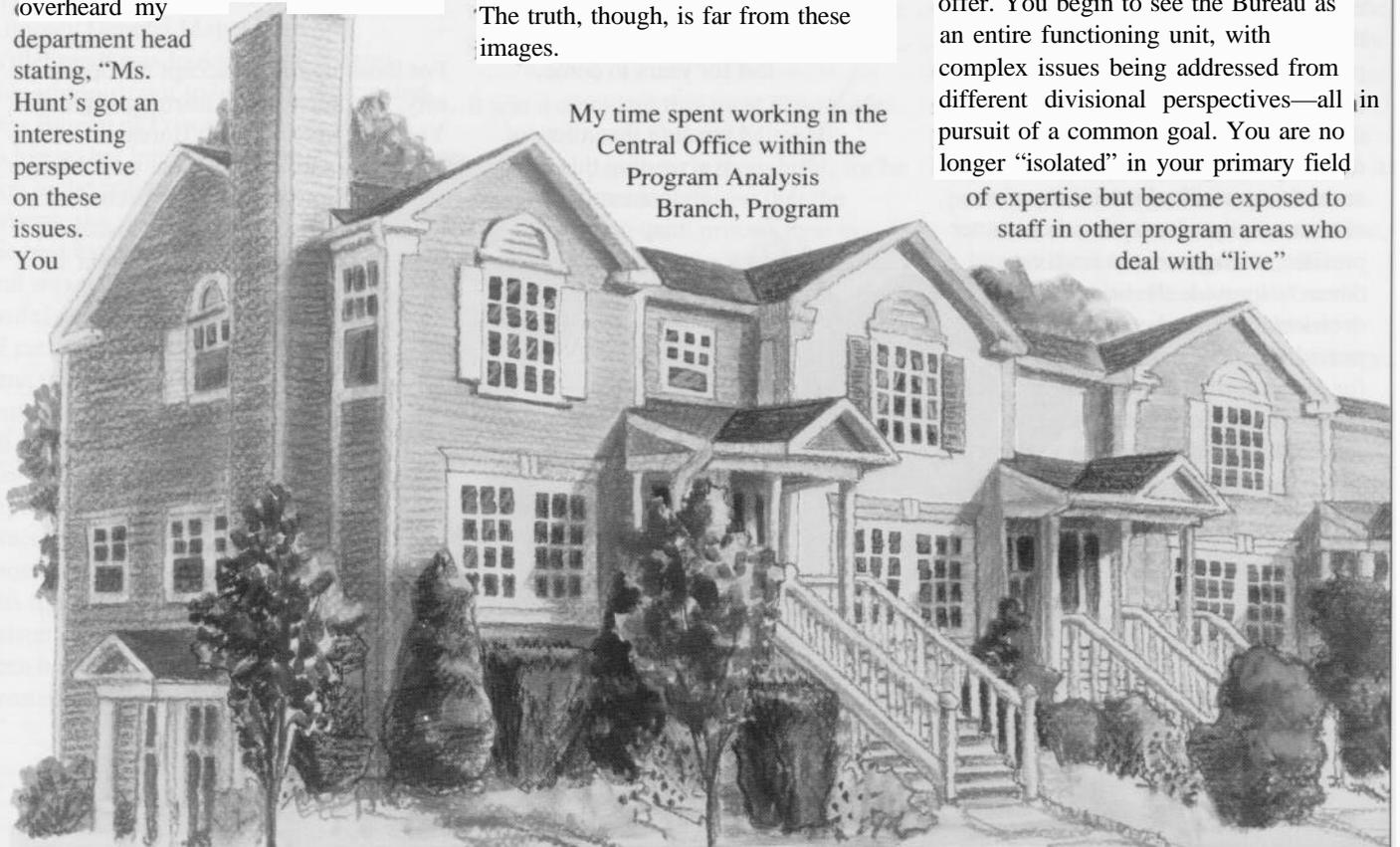
To some, working in the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Central Office in Washington, D.C., invokes visions of long, congested commutes, expensive housing, unsafe neighborhoods, and other unthinkable living conditions—to which no sane persons would voluntarily subject themselves or their families. The truth, though, is far from these images.

Review Division, was one of the most positive experiences I have had in my career. Although the cost of living was higher and the commute was more difficult than at other Bureau locations where I have worked, we were able to maintain an acceptable standard of living with a little luck and a lot of hard work during the house-hunting trip.

Once you locate an affordable neighborhood within a reasonable commuting range, you will find that approaching the job with a positive attitude will go a long way toward making a very productive and enjoyable learning experience.

As you become involved in your new job responsibilities you will find, as I did, that the Central Office has a lot to offer. You begin to see the Bureau as an entire functioning unit, with complex issues being addressed from different divisional perspectives—all in pursuit of a common goal. You are no longer "isolated" in your primary field of expertise but become exposed to staff in other program areas who deal with "live"

My time spent working in the Central Office within the Program Analysis Branch, Program





issues—some with repercussions beyond the mechanics of daily institutional responsibilities. Not only does the Bureau come more into focus as a single unit but “managing” becomes a total, systematic process. Individual management techniques we are taught early in our careers have been fused into a “Strategic Management Cycle,” the heart of the Program Review Division.

As I began to understand the impact the Strategic Management Cycle was making on the way the Bureau operates, it became apparent that future managers would have to change their ways of thinking. Using information, the focal point of the cycle, to improve the decision-making process was key. All the information sources the Bureau has developed in recent years—program reviews, operational reviews, social climate surveys, institutional character profiles, management indicators, and others*—provide the basis for sound decisions. Although experience provides the necessary background for sound correctional decisions, using information sources to supplement that experience will only improve overall operations.

*See “Information as a Management Tool,” by Sharla P. Rausch, pp. 25-28, for further discussion.

As I look back at my time in the Central Office, many opportunities and challenges were offered to me, for which I am forever grateful. Working to improve the use of information sources revealed how important information was within the scope of sound decision-making. I began to question the validity of specific data and how they were being used to evaluate a program. I was given the opportunity to refine my analytical skills when focusing on specific issues being considered for field application. This allowed frequent contacts with many Regional and Central Office administrators, which in turn expedited requests for information and provided an open communications link for policy development and revision. Many of these contacts have developed into friendships that I hope will last for years to come.

I am sure that a few of you reading this article are contemplating or may consider a future decision to accept an offer to

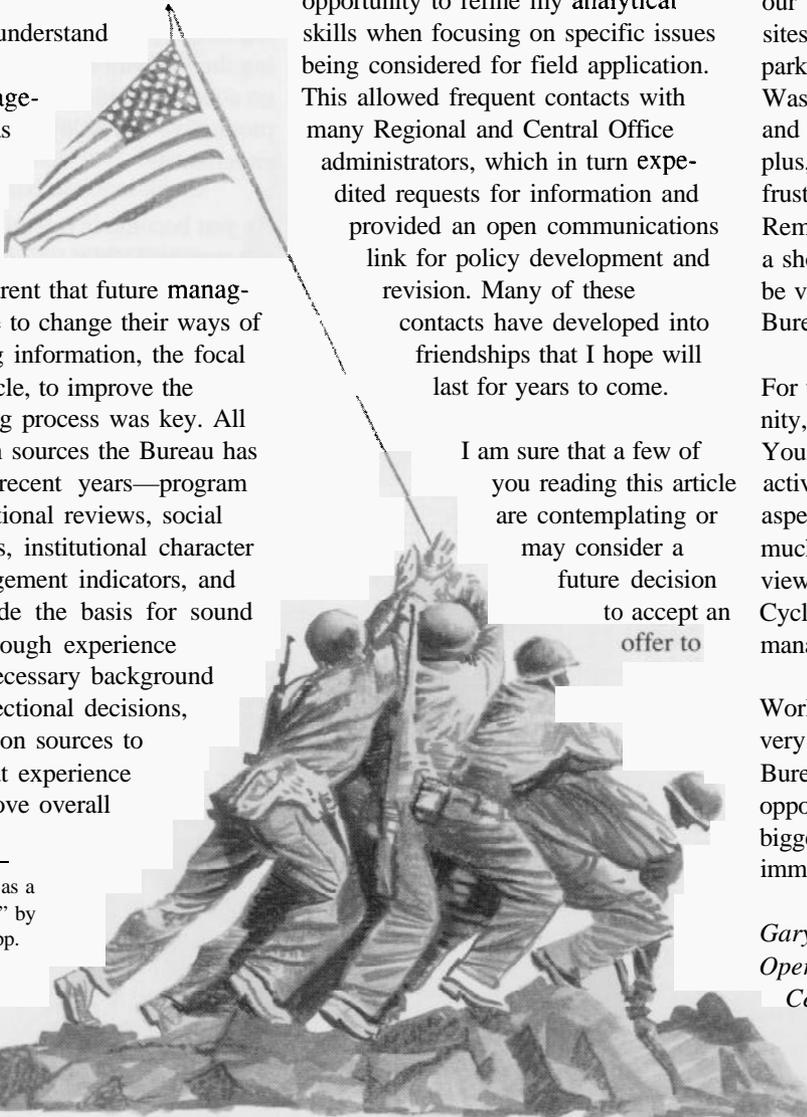
work in the Central Office. A decision of this magnitude must be evaluated on its total merits. Opportunities to expose and develop your talents exist; your potential for future responsibilities may lie in your willingness to accept this challenge.

Beyond your Bureau experience, you and your family could have an opportunity to enjoy the cultural activities of our Nation’s capital—the historical sites around every corner and the many parks and waterways that surround Washington. Although the recreational and cultural opportunities are a real plus, they must be tempered against the frustrations of the daily commute. Remember that a transfer to D.C. is not a short-term decision but one that must be viewed in the context of your entire Bureau career.

For those willing to accept the opportunity, the potential for learning is great. You will be exposed to Bureau activities in an entirely new way. Many aspects of our mission will become much clearer, and having a closeup view of the Strategic Management Cycle will broaden your view of management.

Working in the Central Office can be a very positive and exciting part of your Bureau career—missing out on such an opportunity could be one of your biggest mistakes. I enjoyed my time immensely and I know you will also.

Gary Winkler is Associate Warden for Operations at the Federal Medical Center, Rochester, Minnesota.



The Sources of Excellence

Paul W. Keve

Editor's note: We asked Paul Keve, one of the Nation's leading corrections scholars and an expert on the history of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, to examine that 63-year history and give us what, in his opinion, were the agency's most important innovations—in line with the theme of this issue, reflecting sound management and leadership in the correctional field. Professor Keve's observations follow.

1. Setting a course: merit, not patronage

Leadership quality was there right at the start.

In the late 1920's, when Assistant Attorney General Mabel Walker Willebrandt was looking for a progressive administrator to head the anticipated new Bureau of Prisons, she was ready to forego her long accommodation to the political patronage system: she was eager to hire the best expert she could find and was willing to consider professional expertise ahead of party affiliation. At the time this was a substantial departure from the usual; of all the indicators of professional management, this repudiation of patronage practices was the most conspicuous for the prison system then being created.

The person Willebrandt chose to recruit for the director's job was Sanford Bates, then Commissioner of Corrections in Massachusetts, a man surprisingly averse to political selection of staff, given the fact that patronage was practically a fine art in his State.

Bates, who was not seeking the Federal post and was in fact a somewhat reluctant prospect for it, made his philosophy and concepts of corrections administration clearly known to Attorney General William D. Mitchell when being considered for the appointment. In a detailed letter he noted the importance of keeping a good relationship with Congress, but also: "I should confidently expect the backing of my superiors in withstanding that happily infrequent kind of pressure which comes sometimes from the unreasonable demands of persons whose chief aim in life is political."¹

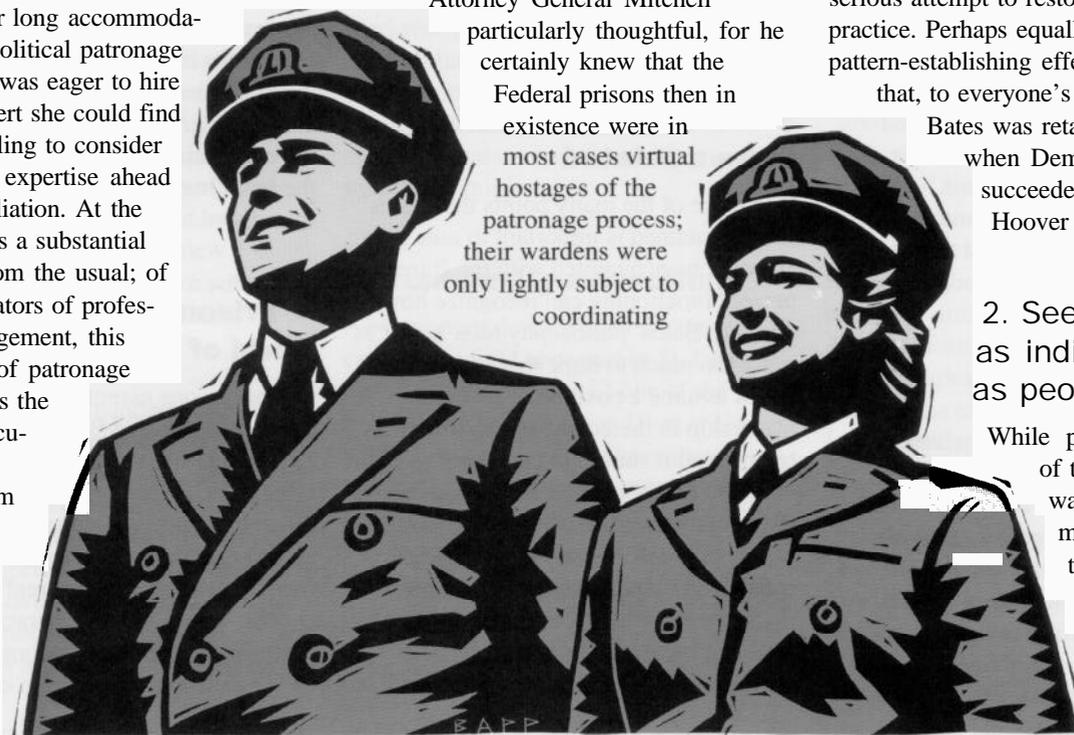
It was a comment that must have made Attorney General Mitchell particularly thoughtful, for he certainly knew that the Federal prisons then in existence were in most cases virtual hostages of the patronage process; their wardens were only lightly subject to coordinating

supervision by the Department of Justice, while heavily committed to loyalty toward their sponsors in Congress to whom they owed their jobs. It was a condition that defeated any hope for operating the institutions as a system. In effect it guaranteed that each facility would protect its own mediocrity—being managed without vision, without progress.

No substantial improvement could be hoped for until this pattern of patronage could be broken, and fortunately Bates had the skill and resolve to tackle it immediately and forcefully. It meant having to work against strong resistance from the entrenched, independently inclined staffs, a process that took time and was not yet fully completed when Bates resigned after nearly 6 years as director. Nevertheless, he established the new professional direction so effectively during his tenure that at no time in the half century since has there been any serious attempt to restore the patronage practice. Perhaps equally significant in its pattern-establishing effect was the fact that, to everyone's relief at the time, Bates was retained in office when Democrat Roosevelt succeeded Republican Hoover in the Presidency.

2. Seeing inmates as individuals, as people

While professionalization of the prison system was the first and most significant of the thrusts that Bates pursued, he also contributed



Kevin Bapp



Left: The Bureau's first three directors, James V. Bennett, Sanford Bates, and Myrl E. Alexander (left to right) meet in Alexander's office c. 1965.

Right: A Federal Prison Industries factory in the U.S. Penitentiary, Atlanta, Georgia, c. 1950.

a well-defined guiding philosophy for the management of prison inmates. Though his views would seem unremarkable today, they were in contrast to the philosophical poverty of most of the wardens he inherited. Bates could be unhesitatingly assertive when resolute decisions were called for, but he also approached his responsibilities with enlightened compassion. Again, in his letter to Mitchell: "Punishment must be promptly inflicted but it must not be so severe as to defeat its own ends or degrade a community."

One brief sentence in his letter pointed to a major concern. "A complete scientific study of the individual and the causes of his crime is not inconsistent with [protection of society] but a necessary prerequisite for intelligent community action." Although he did not elaborate at that point, this was the signal that under

his direction the Bureau would promptly begin development of its prisoner classification process, something until then unknown in Federal (and most other) institutions.

3. Building a system to be emulated

One more of the many points that Bates' letter contained is important to note here, and anyone acquainted with the Bureau's present functioning can recognize how strongly Bates' philosophy took hold. "Is it not too much to hope that [the Bureau] might assume a position of actual leadership in the country? I do not mean by this that it should in any sense interfere in the work of the various States any more than other bureaus do, but it can by example, if not by precept, set standards of fine, progressive prison management which the States would do well to emulate, and perhaps act as a clearing house for information and prison statistics."

In its size and complexity the Bureau today seems to bear little similarity to the relatively simple organization that Bates left after his 6 years in the director's post. Nevertheless, he succeeded in setting the pattern for reform so solidly that subsequent administrations, despite all the enormous growth and diversification, have essentially reinforced and extended the basic management principles Bates introduced.

4. Prison industries in a world of free enterprise

Of course, one essential element ensuring the continuation of Bates' progressive beginnings was the grooming of a competent successor; his assistant director, James V. Bennett, was ready to pick up where Bates left off, and in his own 27 years as director reaffirmed the Bureau's professional character. One particularly important accomplishment by Bennett was his creation of a separate

corporation to operate prison industries. Production work by prisoners has been a provocative, controversial subject as long as there have been prisons. Both labor unions and manufacturers' associations have looked with dismay at the sale of prison-made products in competition with free labor. In 1890, when the first proposal to establish Federal prisons was being debated in Congress, this was a sore point; Congressmen who fought the proposed legislation used this fear of competition with free enterprise as one argument against the creation of Federal institutions. The controversy had been a special concern of Bennett well before he became director, for his duty as assistant director under Bates had included responsibility for industrial operations in the prisons.

It was Bennett's idea to have Congress create an independent corporation to operate the industries at all the Federal prisons and to make allies of the usual opponents by having the corporation governed by a board whose five members were to include prominent leaders from labor, management, agriculture, and the general public. The bill establishing Federal Prison Industries was passed with a minimum of opposition after President Roosevelt negotiated support for it from labor leaders. The new corporation was made effective when the President signed an executive order creating it in December 1934.²

In 1977, the vastly expanded Federal Prison Industries adopted a new logo and name, UNICOR, but the basic design of Bennett's plan is followed today, even though there is still controversy and opposition to prison products. State governments over 2 centuries have tried an array of strategies to conciliate manufacturers and unions, with usually



partial and temporary success. The strategy followed by the Federal industries corporation has never been perfect either, but has been more dependably workable than others. Its principal element has been the limitation of production of any one product to a small enough percentage of the country's output so that competition with private industry is minimized.

5. Community corrections

An important development for the corrections field appeared in St. Louis in 1959 with the opening of one of the first halfway houses. This was Dismas House, a privately operated residence that attracted much favorable attention and served to promote the rapid spread of this new type of facility. Very early the Bureau of Prisons joined the trend with its own halfway houses.

A precipitating factor was the interest of newly appointed (in 1961) Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who advised

Director Bennett of his willingness to find funds for any innovative new approaches the Bureau might propose. Bennett and his staff quickly came up with several significant programs, including their version of the halfway house, calling these community facilities "prerelease guidance centers." Three of these were quickly started, in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Within another year or two there were three others, in Washington, D.C., Kansas City, and Detroit, all operating under the direction of future Bureau director Norman A. Carlson, who had started work with the Bureau in 1957.

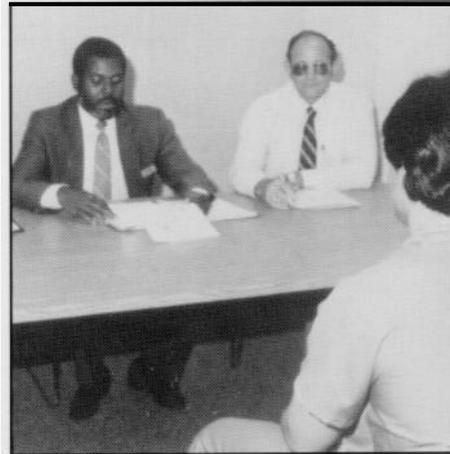
In a very adaptable manner, the Bureau found ways to house and organize these new facilities according to the available opportunities. In New York City a local college was given a contract to operate the facility; the Chicago center operated in a leased section of the downtown Y.M.C.A. residence; in Los Angeles the Bureau leased a former Baptist church

and seminary; in Detroit, the center, which used a former church parish hall, had a cooperative contract so that it could serve inmates from both the Federal system and the State of Michigan.³ After 1965, the centers were called “community treatment centers” and were on their way to being an indispensable element in the system, as well as models for other agencies. Research eventually showed that, like other programs from which much is hoped, these residences could not prove that they were reducing recidivism. However, neither were they having a worse record in this respect than the institutions; they still were essential to maintain for their value in reducing reliance on more expensive institution beds.

6. Unit management: a major breakthrough

To pick just one of the many other areas in which Bureau leadership has been distinguished, surely that should be unit management. Anyone who has been involved at all in prison management for a few decades knows of the historically discouraging dichotomy—custody vs. treatment. As it was, the two types of staff divided every prison, working against and in competition with each other, reducing the effectiveness of the treatment staff and the efficiency of custody. During the 1960's the Federal system began to develop a management approach that would substantially reduce this problem.

In the early 1960's some inventive minds among the Bureau clinical staff began developing dynamic treatment programs in several institutions, including the National Training School for Boys in Washington, D.C. (closed when



A unit team meets with an inmate.

Morgantown, West Virginia, opened); Ashland, Kentucky; Englewood, Colorado; and El Reno, Oklahoma. Without attempting to describe here the extensive details of this history, suffice it to say that innovative and intensive treatment programming could not achieve its potential in the context of a divided staff; it was evident that there needed to be a mutual involvement of all types of staff. Everyone must understand the treatment process and its goals, and all must be united in support of the effort. What gradually resulted was the delegation of both control and treatment functions to the combined staff members in defined inmate living areas, with each such staff group including members from both custody and treatment, and, as a group, being responsible for governing all aspects of their inmate living unit.⁴

The experience with this technique was that all staff did become effectively part of the treatment effort, control and order in the institutions were enhanced, and morale improved as the staff relationships became closer and more mutually dependent. The benefits soon became evident enough that the unit management technique spread rapidly in the early 1970's to most Bureau facilities.

Sanford Bates would have reason to be particularly pleased. His hope that the Bureau could become a model for other correctional systems to emulate has been more than fulfilled in the results of the unit management idea. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the old saying tells us, and the Bureau has much to be proud of in seeing its unit management concept imitated more and more in State correctional systems throughout the country.

These six innovations are not the only notable aspects of the Bureau's history by any means. Nevertheless, ranging from the very beginnings of the Bureau right up to the present, they demonstrate one important point: Bureau managers have always built upon the work of their predecessors. There is a clear, consistent line of development from Sanford Bates, who was born in the 19th century, through his successors—and that augurs well for the Bureau in the rapidly approaching 21st century. ■

Paul W. Keve teaches at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, and is a long-time student of correctional history. His most recent work is Prisons and the American Conscience (Southern Illinois University Press, 1991).

Notes

1. Letter of Sanford Bates to Attorney General William D. Mitchell, March 26, 1929.
2. Bates, Sanford. *Prisons and Beyond*, Freeport, N.Y., Books for Libraries Press, 1936, 21-2.
3. Keve, Paul W. *Imaginative Programming in Probation and Parole*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1967, 224-5.
4. Lansing, Douglas, Joseph P. Bogan, and Loren Karacki, Unit Management: Implementing a Different Correctional Approach, *Federal Probation*, Vol. 41, No. 1, March 1977.

Federal Partnerships at Work

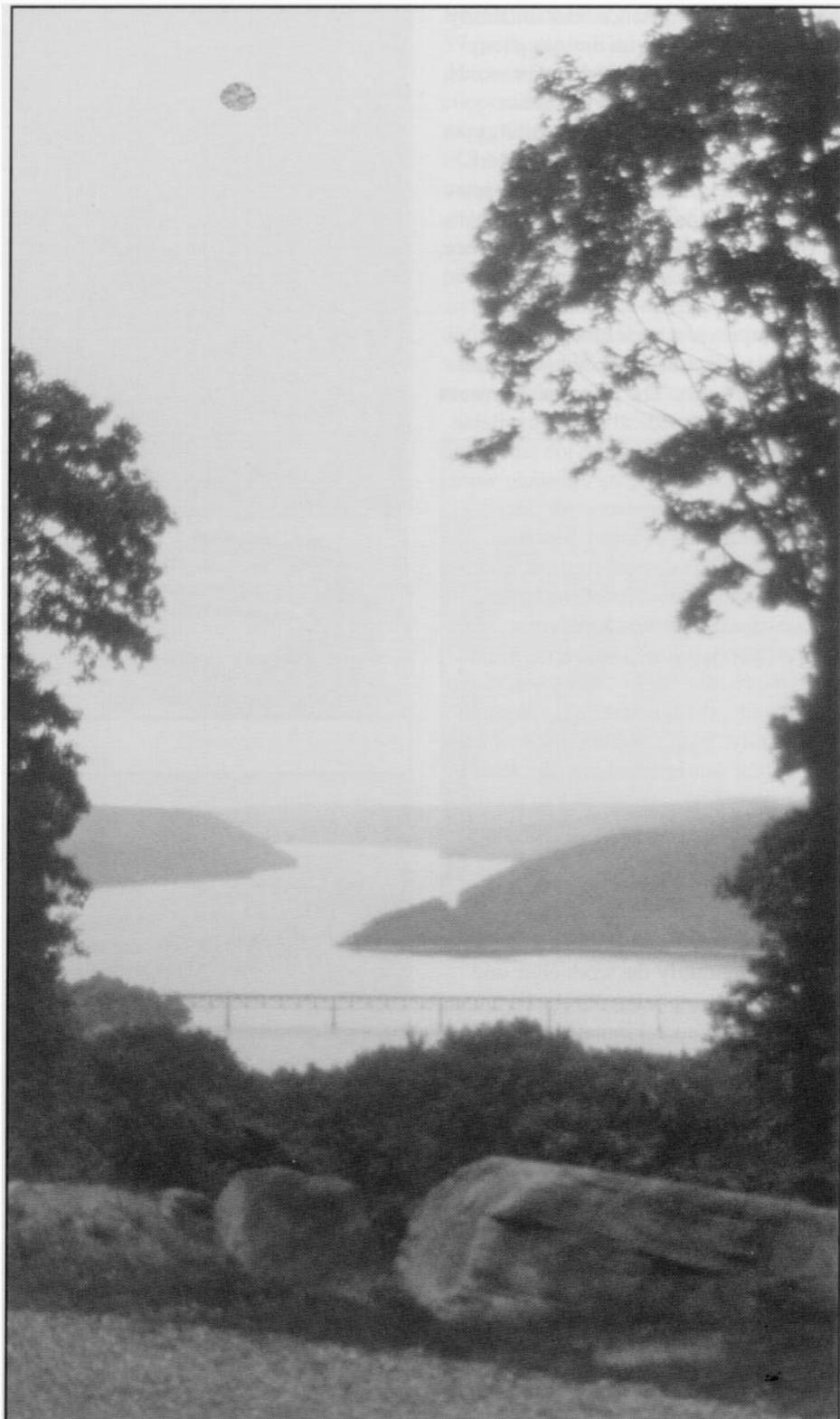
Chrystal Pitts

The Allegheny Plateau, located in northwestern Pennsylvania, is home to the Allegheny National Forest, Lewis Run, and many of Pennsylvania's other rich natural resources, as well as the Federal Correctional Institution, McKean County.

In our high-tech world, it is increasingly apparent that all of us—including Federal agencies—must take a proactive approach to maintaining the tenuous balance between humans and their environment. Thus, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Correctional Institution, McKean, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest (ANF), was signed in July 1989 by Warden Dennis M. Luther and David J. Wright, Forest Supervisor. While relationships between the U.S. Forest Service and prison systems were not a new idea, such a working partnership with a Bureau facility was unprecedented.

This unique program began with two eight-man crews that left McKean's minimum-security Federal Prison Camp daily to work in the forest. In 1991, two new five-man crews were added. Currently, the program has three work crews, with a total of 21 inmates. Shortly, we will be adding a fourth crew, bringing the total to 30 inmates. Crews are paid a modest wage: they participate in various forest maintenance projects, trail construction, and wildlife projects, including pruning and fence construction.

FCI McKean, with the concurrence of the Forest Service, selects inmates incarcerated at the Federal Prison Camp on the basis of their "custody level, their mental



and physical competence, and suitability for work programs with the Allegheny National Forest Service.” In other words, inmates assigned to the work crews exhibit a high degree of responsibility, as shown by their prior institutional work performance, and are suitable candidates for this rare opportunity. Their criminal histories must be free of serious violence, escape attempts, and sexual offenses.

McKean provides sack lunches and standard work uniforms, including steel-toed safety boots. The prison also ensures that immediate medical care is available if any injuries occur on the job site. The Forest Service supervisors provide work supervision to the inmates. Monday through Friday, the Forest Service provides tools, safety equipment, and transportation to and from work sites. According to one crew supervisor, “Forest Service work provides a respite from the routine of the Camp, but, more importantly, the inmates gain a sense of community. With the completion of each project, the inmates feel they are returning or giving something back to the local area.”

The accompanying pictures, showing projects completed through the teamwork of FCI McKean and the U.S. Forest Service, exemplify the work ethic and community spirit being developed among participating Federal inmates.



Providing snowmobile parking, fishing access to the south branch of the Kinzua Creek, and a gateway to the Kinzua Wetlands Area, the Long House parking lot is a versatile resource. The 1-acre lot



Photos by Crystal Pitts

is located off of Pennsylvania Route 321, south of the Scenic Byway. The McKean inmates cleared trees and brush for the lot; grading, seeding, mulching, and limestone surfacing were completed by outside contractors. ◀

The Kinzua Wetlands boardwalk was completed within 2 weeks during autumn 1990 by one inmate crew. Using a Forest Service design and \$3,000 in materials, the inmates constructed the 145-foot expanse, used as a winter crossing for snowmobilers. Plans are underway for making the picturesque setting part of an interpretive wetlands trail.

A 2.1 -mile stretch of trail intersects the Long House parking lot and the Kinzua Wetlands boardwalk. On one of their first projects, the inmates cleared roots and brush from the trail and placed signs. Recreationists and naturalists enjoy the scenic beauty as they stroll through the forest. ▼





In addition to building, expanding, and enhancing trails, the inmate crews constructed a tool and storage shed adjacent to the Bradford Ranger District office during summer 1991. The inmates designed and constructed the mobile shed within 1 month. The crews house supplies and equipment in the 10- by 20-foot shed, which was recently equipped with electricity.

FCI McKean staff members, in conjunction with the ANF, coordinated an Earth Day celebration on April 22, 1992. Fourth through sixth graders from the Bradford and Kane Schools gathered to plant shrubs and wildlife habitat in the Old State Road area, off Pennsylvania Route 59. The inmate crews assisted the children in planting the native viburnums. This timber stand, heavily defoliated by gypsy moths and further stressed by a drought, became an oak salvage area. Lunch was served by members of the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Inc., a wood-products industry trade association. ►



Bent Run, the only waterfall along Route 59 (adjacent to Kinzua Dam), has been the centerpiece of a recent project. A cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the ANF, and FCI McKean, the objective is to provide improved accessibility to the waterfall and to heighten the visibility of this natural wonder. The parking area has been enlarged to accommodate tourists, and wood railings are being placed to define the vehicular area. A path to the waterfall has been cleared, and brush removed for easier walking. ▼



The focal point of the convergence of the Allegheny and Conewango rivers is Point Park, Warren, Pennsylvania. Coordinated by the PennSoil Resource Conservation and Development District, Soil Conservation Service, this project was begun in December 1991. Since this project enhanced resource management efforts, funding for administrative costs for supervising and transporting the inmate crews was procured through the USDA Rural Initiative Program, State and

Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service. The park was designed by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry. Materials were supplied by the City of Warren. Finally, the inmate crew brought the project to life by clearing trees, brush, and rubbish from the area. In June 1992 the crew returned to the site to construct picnic tables, benches, and a pavilion. Residents and visitors enjoy fishing, watching waterfowl, and relaxing on the benches in the shade of the willows along the shoreline. ►

► Twenty-six picnic tables manufactured by FCI McKean's Vocational Technical-Carpentry Program adorn the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. Trees from each State will be the backdrop for this unique park. The Forest Service provided the materials in March 1992, and the inmates constructed the tables in April. The tables are shown here being assembled by Forest Service personnel.

While the ANF spends about \$160,000 for administration, supervision, and transportation of inmate crews, the value derived from these projects is three or four times the investment. Not only does the program provide invaluable work opportunities for minimum-security inmates, it also allows completion of labor-intensive environmental work that would not otherwise be accomplished due to the lack of funding and workforce availability.



Because of the many successes of the McKean work crews, a National Inter-agency Agreement between the USDA Forest Service and the Federal Bureau of Prisons was signed in June 1991, by F. Dale Robertson, Chief of the Forest



Service, and J. Michael, Quinlan, then-director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. This agreement officially recognized the value of the program and allowed for nationwide expansion.

FCI McKean's motto, "Setting the Standard," blends nicely with that of the USDA Forest Service: "Caring for the Land and Serving People." Through this cooperative effort, our Nation's forests will be enhanced for appreciation by tomorrow's generations. ■

Chrystal Pitts is an Employee Development Specialist at the Federal Correctional Institution, McKean, Pennsylvania.

Bureau of Prisons Public Work Projects

As of December 1993, more than 650 male and female Federal inmates, from both institutions and Community Corrections Centers, were employed in 45 public works projects with other Federal agencies.

Most worked either on National Forest Service or National Park Service projects similar to that performed by the inmates from FPC McKean, or on military bases performing facilities or grounds maintenance. A few of the larger project sites are listed below:

Federal Prison Camp inmates:

- Bryan, Texas
Sam Houston National Forest
- Lompoc, California
Vandenberg Air Force Base
- Morgantown, West Virginia
Camp Dawson
- Petersburg, Virginia
Fort Lee
- Sheridan, Oregon
Siuslaw National Forest

Community Corrections Center residents:

- Spokane, Washington
Fairchild Air Force Base
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Defense Personnel Support Center
- Dallas, Texas
Veterans Hospital
- San Antonio, Texas
Kelly Air Force Base
- San Diego, California
North Island Naval Air Station