



Prisonersolidarity.org

Newsletter

Quarterly Print Edition

Register for the 2007 **Anti-Death Penalty Alternative Spring Break** in Austin, TX, March 12-16. <http://springbreakalternative.org> ++ In the tradition of "The Exonerated" comes "**Lucasville:**

The Untold Story of a Prison Uprising," April 11-29, 2007: Portsmouth, Cincinnati, Toledo, Columbus, Athens, Cleveland, Youngstown. <http://www.clarencedarrowgaryanderson.com>

Rally at Ohio's Death Row: Stop the Executions!

By Sharon Danann, *Peoples Fight Back Center, Cleveland (Ohio)*

On Sun., Jan. 14, in spite of drenched clothing and the state's videocameras, a crowd of about 80 people maintained their high spirits at the drive-way into the Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown. As a protest against the death penalty in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday, it seemed appropriate that the sounds of "We Shall Overcome" rose up from the group, led by the activist community group Black



on Black Crime from Cleveland which had brought a large contingent. They also led the crowd in their trademark chant of "No truth! No justice! No peace!" Soon after that, additional chanting started up around the huge "Stop the Executions!" banner, "What do we want? To end the death penalty! When do we want it? Now!"

In addition to the local groups strongly represented, Youngstown Prison Forum, LOOP (Loved Ones Of Prisoners), and Youngstown Peace Action, Cleveland organizations were there in force. The Cleveland Lucasville Five Defense Committee, one of the sponsoring organizations, arranged for a van and coordinated a

car caravan. The Cleveland Coalition Against the Death Penalty brought people and signs. And Black on Black Crime provided not just many carloads, but all of the energy to match. Look out, Ohio, here they come!

strategy for success. Some of the mothers have set up a website of their own, www.ourfight4justice.com. Check it out.

Sunday's rally was a kickoff to a new campaign and a new era. We have a

"We have a new governor in Columbus. We have a new level of coordination and energy."

Sharon Danann, Lucasville Five Defense Committee

new governor in Columbus. We have a new level of coordination and energy. We will be challenging the barbaric, racist death penalty which targets the poor and murders the innocent. And we will be mak-

Many people were there because of a prisoner letter campaign in which prisoners did outreach to other prisoners and to family and friends to bring people to the rally. As relatives held up signs with their loved ones' names, it became a way to network for future organizing to cement a coordinated

ing our case for the overturning of all Lucasville rebellion-related convictions which were false and unjust in the first place. Thirteen years in solitary confinement is way more than long enough for crimes these men did not commit in the first place. We're on the move!

Why I Oppose "Life Without Parole"

By Alice Lynd, *Prisonersolidarity.org*

Life without parole is dying one inch at a time. People need hope. People can change. These are two things that I have seen again and again when working with prisoners.

Some years ago, I talked with a man who was sentenced to life in prison. "Why should I maintain exemplary behavior if nobody cares?" he asked me, or words to that effect.

Another prisoner who had been sentenced to life in prison told me that after

New Quarterly Newsletter

Prisonersolidarity runs a **website** and an **email discussion group**, with the aim of creating an Ohio-wide and international network of people who are concerned with prisoners' rights and prison alternatives. In the past year we have co-sponsored conferences and vigils. Our subscribers are a dynamic mix of former prisoners, loved ones of prisoners, social activists, grassroots media, and concerned members of the public. Prisonersolidarity publishes **recent news and research**, and features **original essays**

and **poems** written by prisoners, family members, and activists. Prisoners who write for us receive copies of their publication, as well as feedback and letters of support from readers (who are encouraged to write to them). Their essays, in turn, help us to

"Subscribers are a dynamic mix of former prisoners, loved ones of prisoners, activists and members of the public."

Prisonersolidarity.org

educate the public about issues and concerns of interest to prisoners in Ohio and across the United States. To subscribe to Prisonersolidarity, send a blank email to:

prisonersolidarity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Submission Guidelines

Submissions should be no more than 2,000 words (roughly three typed or four handwritten pages in length). We accept essays, poems and artwork on philosophical, political and social topics that are of importance to you. Published pieces are permanently archived to our website and are circulated to an email discussion list. We do not accept material that has been previously published. We encourage our readers to write to inmate contributors. However, we are not a pen pal service. Have something

to say? Please send your contribution to: Prisonersolidarity.org, P.O. Box 422, The Plains, OH 45780 or email us: prisonersolidarity-owner@yahoogroups.com

Prisonersolidarity.org
Newsletter Quarterly Print Edition

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Internet: www.prisonersolidarity.org

LIFE, continued from page 1

years of his appeals going nowhere, he came to feel that his life had no value. Hopeless at that point, he says, he did not value the life of anyone else either. He is now on death row. How often have you heard it said that young prisoners, sentenced to life in prison, have nothing left to lose?

Then there is Karla Faye Tucker, who was executed in Texas for horrific crimes, but by the time she was killed she had

not only repented but was serving as a positive force in the prison where she was doing her time. Her story is not unique.

We talked with Glenn Benner in the honor block on Ohio's death row while awaiting his execution date. He

had not had a conduct report for 18 years. "We've matured," he said. Within hours of his execution, a child-



"Life without parole is dying one inch at a time. People need hope. People can change."

Alice Lynd, Activist Attorney
Youngstown (Ohio)

hood friend and brother of one of Glenn's victims talked with Glenn about what Glenn had done, came away believing that Glenn had changed, forgave Glenn, and now opposes the death penalty. A prisoner, who celled with murderers

who were not sentenced to death, told us that those men might seem happy-go-lucky during the day but at night

they were racked with remorse. They would say words to this effect: "I would give anything if I could breathe life back into the person I killed." Most murderers are not sentenced to death. Some are given the possibility of parole after serving a lengthy number of years. Why should not that possibility be kept open for

all prisoners who, in a tragic moment many years ago, committed an offense of a kind that they would never do again?

Alice Lynd, 1694 Timbers Court,
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salynd@aol.com

Prisonersolidarity's First Birthday

The Prisonersolidarity listserv was founded one year ago as a catalyst for communication between prisoners and people on "the outside."



To celebrate, we've updated the website, www.prisonersolidarity.org!

Prisonersolidarity sprang from the Youngstown Prison Forum, a social justice movement inspired by activist-lawyers, Staughton and Alice Lynd. Prisonersolidarity also gains inspiration from its Co-Founder, Siddique Abdullah Hasan, a respected African-American prison Imam who was wrongfully sentenced to death for an alleged leadership role in the 1993 Lucasville prison rebellion. Hasan is nearing the end of his appeals. To kick off the year, in this interview he discusses super-maxes, solitary confinement, and the desperate need for prison reforms, with his friend, Jason Goudlock. **Pages 3-6**

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Exclusive Interview

Everyday Struggles of a (Self-Defined) Political Prisoner

An Interview with **Jason Goudlock**

By Siddique Abdullah Hasan, *Prisonersolidarity.org*

Hasan: Greetings, Mr. Goudlock.

Goudlock: The same to you, Mr. Hasan. [Laugh]

Hasan: Why you say it like that?

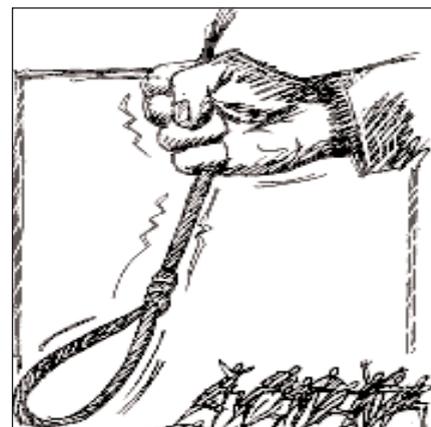
Goudlock: Because man, you said my name like that! You know you can call me "Jason" or "Jay," "Youngster," whatever...

Hasan: Would Tavis Smiley call you "Youngster" if he were interviewing you for the first time?

Goudlock: I don't know, he might though. But yeah, I see your point, Tavis! [We both laugh out loud.]

Hasan: That's a good one! Let's get serious now, though. With that being said, I want to begin by asking you, "What is it specifically that you want to share about your prison experience with our readers?"

Goudlock: A variety of things. For starters, I want to give society a raw, uncut, glimpse into the toll that solitary confinement, and the system in general, has taken on me. I don't believe people in society truly understand how parallel solitary confinement actually is to torture, or how parallel prisons are to slave plantations. I've read publications during my incarceration on the topic of crime and punishment. For the most part they were informative and well-written, but I always felt that they needed to be more in depth, or should I say more graphic. I mean, by me actually



being in prison, I know from first-hand experience what kind of effect this system of organized injustice can really have on a person. And when I read articles, interviews, books, etc., they are often toned down, and politically correct. I want people to know, as the saying goes, "the real deal Holyfield."

Hasan: In other words, what you're saying is that the media uses too much censorship when reporting its stories?

Goudlock: Exactly. Exactly. I mean, even I at times have been reluctant to express something to somebody the way I truly wanted to express it. But, when it comes to the media, the news should be reported with no punches pulled. Whether it's good, bad, or ugly, it should be conveyed to its audience raw and uncut. We're living in an age when people are glorifying the prison experience on television shows for the purpose of entertainment. In most cases these shows are doing nothing but delivering stereotypes and misconceptions to the masses, which ultimately harms the prisoner, as well as the society that the prisoner is a part of. Overall, society just needs to know that the prison experience isn't anything to be taken for granted, because unfortunately, some people incarcerated are being made into monsters instead of

INTERVIEW, continued from p. 3

being rehabilitated.[1]

Hasan: When you say “monsters,” what do you mean, specifically?

Goudlock: When I say people are made into “monsters,” I’m referring to people being transformed into heartless individuals: hardened, intelligent, sophisticated criminals. People who have not been rehabilitated. I, myself, have been on the verge of being transformed into a monster before.

Hasan: How is that?

Goudlock: Well, I went through a little semi-Jekyll and Hyde metamorphosis in early spring of 2005. I got assaulted by two cowardly guards while I was being escorted to the mini-infirmary on my block. I had just cut my hand on the basketball rim at recreation, and while I was en route to get medical attention one of the cowards escorting me, for no reason at all, started sinking his fingers into the tri-

ceps area of my arm. Out of impulse, as a natural reaction I pulled my arm away from the guard’s grasp. Then, out of nowhere, he caught me by surprise by using a front leg sweep and tripping me to the floor, face first.

Hasan: Weren’t you handcuffed at the time?

Goudlock: Yes, behind my back. And fortunately, I was able to avoid any serious injuries on the initial take-down to the floor.

Hasan: But how did this incident lead to you almost becoming a monster?

Goudlock: Well, right after I got slammed down on the ground, the guards picked me up and placed me in a steel holding cage. But they hit my head against the side of the cage first. When they did that, man, I went

berserk!

Hasan: Elaborate. What do you mean, you “went berserk”?

Goudlock: I mean that I spat at the officers, cursed them out and basically called them every derogatory word to ever be spoken by man [in the English language]. But hey, they deserved it! [Goudlock grins and winks his eye at me.]

Hasan: You’re a trip, man! But yes, I definitely can understand your reason for being upset in that position. I’ve heard, here and there, that you refer to yourself as a “political prisoner.” What specifically makes you one?

Goudlock: Before I answer your question, I want to begin by saying,



The Ohio State Penitentiary is the state’s only supermax prison. It’s home to Ohio’s death row.

“Free all political prisoners!” The Lucasville Five, Mumia Abu Jamal,[2] and all members of the original Black Panther Party! But to answer your question, “What makes me a political prisoner?” I’d have to say that it’s definitely the uniqueness of the injustice I’m currently submerged in, while inside of the state of Ohio’s matrix-like, never-making-sense, justice system. Ohio is the only state I know of in the United States that has two classes of prisoners incarcerated in the same prisons who are serving sentences under two separate sentencing laws. I’m serving a sentence of 6 to 25 years under the “old -law” (pre-July 1, 1996) and I have to go to the parole board to be considered for released. If I would

have been sentenced under the “new-law” (post-July 1, 1996), however, I would most likely have only served 3, 4, or 5 years at the most, for the exact same criminal offenses that I’m incarcerated for.(i.e. aggravated robbery, felonious assault). You follow me?

Hasan: I’m with you.

Goudlock: Now, a person on the outside looking in would think that old-law prisoners and new-law prisoners would, for the most part, probably serve around the same amounts of time, being that both are doing time for the same crimes. But this isn’t the case. Instead of the old-law prisoners getting released at their parole hearings, they are getting flopped for reasons

“I, myself, have been on the verge of being transformed into a monster before.”

Jason Goudlock, Ohio State Penitentiary Prisoner

as small as violating an institutional rule infraction. I mean, you and I both know that in this system you can be written a conduct report for merely waking up. And see, the thing with the parole board is,

they’re only giving people under the old-law, such as myself, more time for the purpose of “job security.” They know that, as long as they have people under the old-law, they will always have their jobs. They’ll preach the rehabilitation rhetoric but, in all actuality, their true language is alphanumeric. This system doesn’t care about rehabilitating anyone. All it cares about is making money. This is why I made the comparison to a slave plantation earlier. In fact, if a person was to get a copy of the Constitution of the state of Ohio and read “x6” under Article 1: Bill Of Rights,” they could see with their own eyes what the state of Ohio thinks about prison-

INTERVIEW, continued from p. 4

ers. x6 reads: "There shall be no slavery in this state nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime."

Hasan: I read that myself years ago and noticed at the time that the drafting of the constitution was at some time in the 1800s. And yet, the pro-slavery language still managed to survive an amended version as recently as 1998 or '99?

Goudlock: That's deep. Ain't it?

Hasan: Indeed, it is... Earlier you spoke about solitary confinement taking its toll on you. Enlighten me a little on just how much of a toll.

Goudlock: First of all, solitary confinement is an inhumane form of punishment. Locking someone up alone in a cell for twenty-two, twenty-three hours a day isn't in any way the therapeutic practice that the so-called "rehabilitation" is supposed to be about. Being in solitary confinement has greatly depressed me. Some days I'll be in considerably good mood, but, most of the time I am extremely depressed.

Hasan: What depresses you?

Goudlock: What depresses me is the fact that I am aware at all times that I'm being held in solitary confinement not because of my behavior, but really because of the evil and corrupt agendas of the economic opportunists who pass themselves off as persons of integrity, under the false pretense that they are actually protecting and contributing to the overall betterment of the citizens of Ohio. In a nutshell, though, my depression stems from my understanding that I am a victim of my own understanding.

Hasan: Explain this a little better for me.

Goudlock: Okay. Take for instance, the fact that I hear a lot of inmates talk, from time to time, about how good this prison is when compared to other supermax prisons throughout the United States. And, by comparison, yes they are correct. But see, what's being completely missed is the fact that there shouldn't even be a supermax prison in the state of Ohio! Every inmate OSP has should be, at the very worst, in a maximum penitentiary, receiving the privileges that maximum-security prisoners receive.

Hasan: And why do you feel that this

completion of the prison DRC quickly sought to occupy the vacant supermax.

Prisoners being sent to OSP were supposed to be the "worst of the worst." In truth, however, inmates were being sent to OSP for institution rule infractions such as "attempting to establish a relationship with an employee," or "attempting to convey drugs into the institution." These security classifications were nowhere near as bad as the "worst of the worst" descriptions being used in the initial campaigns to generate support to get this prison built. In any event, the overzealous, corrupt, powers-that-

be achieved their goal and managed to get a total of 479 prisoners classified to the supermax prison. However, due to the successful prison litigation by Prisoners' Rights attorneys-at-law, Staughton and Alice Lynd, the prison didn't stay full for long![4]



"Why do you feel that this supermax prison shouldn't have been built?"

**Siddique A. Hasan, Ohio
Death-Row Prisoner**

supermax shouldn't have been built?

Goudlock: Because there was never a true need for a supermax prison. OSP was built for no other reason than to provide economic stability to a semi-rural region in desperate need of meaningful employment opportunities. There was an article in Forbes magazine earlier this year on this same sham of a process.[3] Various politicians and Department of Rehabilitation Corrections (DRC) officials used the prison uprising of the SOCF riot in Lucasville as their platform and justification to show a need for a supermax prison to be built. And after inflating and embellishing their story to the naïve public, the 504-bed prison was ultimately built and opened in 1998. Upon the

The number of 479 inmates slowly but surely dwindled after the courts ordered hundreds of prisoners to be given new security classification hearings due to their denial of the right to be given due process.

Hasan: Well, tell me this. If the courts intervened on behalf of the 479 prisoners, why didn't they intervene on your behalf?

Goudlock: To my understanding, the amount of time for which the courts had jurisdiction over the oversight expired right before I was classified as a supermaximum prisoner.

Hasan: Why are you on supermax status, if you don't mind me asking?

Goudlock: No, not at all. The rules infraction board found me guilty of

please see **INTERVIEW**, Page 6

Mold, Staph Infections and Broken Utilities at the Ohio State Penitentiary

By Robert Reed,
Prisonersolidarity.org

I, and the other inmates here at the Ohio State Penitentiary, have been trying to contact someone to come in and conduct a report on our living conditions. They are really poor. For a newer prison, it is bad. It's worse than Pickaway's old units. I have tried to address this within the grievance process, but it's just been spun around for more than a year. Please call the federal health department or send me an address. They need to take samples of this mold in our cells, and we need other areas addressed. A lot of sickness and staph is showing up here now! I wrote the Ohio Justice and Policy Center. They know, but we need some outside authorities to look at these inhumane conditions.

I have made a list of some of the issues, off the top of my head. I appreciate your time and promise that when I'm released I will

share my voice and give back for all the help I receive. I have 10 months left on a 6 year sentence, so it's almost over. But many more need help because things have taken a downhill slide since my incarceration. The thing that's crazy is that this place covers everything up, and won't do anything to help offenders. They know how to neglect basic human needs and abuse people, but that's about it. I hope you can help.

Thanks brother.

Bathroom

- * Sinks leak and backed up
- * Urinals backed up
- * Toilets leak profusely
- * Exhaust fan broken
- * Floor is constantly wet and slippery
- * Black mold spreading fast
- * Shower wall leaks into East living area

Dorm

- West side unreasonably cold
- Window won't stay up (west window)
- 200 & 300 rows cable doesn't work
- No drinking fountain in West dorm
- Fountain broken in East dorm

Laundry Room

- Not all washers work (3 out of 4 work)

- 2 dryers work of 4, the other 2 need electrical work

- Holes in wall leading to outside

West Day Room

- Not enough tables
- Not enough chairs
- Many chairs broken

East Day Room

- Many parts of weight machine broken, for example:

* sit-up bench broken

* cables snapped

* parts missing

- ice situation unsanitary

Inmates are braking out with staph infections and the medical staff is not helping them.

Please call the Health Department for us, somebody who can get somebody here ASAP and see how bad it is. I'm taking care of the other problems.

In God's Speed,

Robert Reed

Robert Reed #424-893
Ohio State Penitentiary
878 Coitsville-Hubbard Rd.
Youngstown OH 44505

INTERVIEW, continued from p. 5

spitting and throwing unknown substances on officers.

Hasan: Did they (RTB) say anyone was hurt or injured in any way?

Goudlock: Not one single OSP employee has ever been injured by me.

Hasan: So basically, you got railroaded huh?

Goudlock: Like a locomotive! [We both laugh.] But, see, this is why I say I'm a victim of my own understanding. I am conscious and I know what's going on. I clearly can see the corruption that's around me. It runs deep, and unless people in society demand change the corruption is going to continue to spread. Right now, in this so-called supermax prison, out of thirty-two pods only four pods of prisoners are on supermax status! That's only one-eighth of the entire supermax prison population! And, if only one-eighth of the supermax prison population is on supermax status, then there is no way that the prison should be called a "supermax," because it isn't one. It's

strange how you never hear any stories on the local news, or in the newspapers, about revelations such as the ones revealed in this interview. I'd like to ask whomever reads this interview to contact television stations, newspapers, radio stations, etc., and demand that they log onto this site and read this interview and give this act of injustice the media coverage that it truly deserves.

Hasan: We are going to have to wrap this segment up, but it truly was a pleasure to listen to you speak my brother. You are well spoken and articulate.

Goudlock: Thanks for the accolade. It was a pleasure being interviewed by you as well.

Jason Goudlock is an inmate at the Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown, Ohio. He has aspirations of becoming a full-fledged entrepreneur, in the interest of philanthropic advancement. He is also an aspiring athlete in the sport of basketball, as well as an aspiring author. You may

reach him by writing to: Jason Goudlock #284-561, 878 Coitsville-Hubbard Road, Youngstown, OH 44505-4635.

Siddique A. Hasan is the Co-Founder of Prisonersolidarity.org.

A death-row prisoner himself, Hasan was convicted for allegedly playing a leadership role in the 1993 Lucasville rebellion. The riots occurred shortly before his scheduled release. Hasan maintains his innocence. You may reach him by writing to: Siddique Abdullah Hasan, R130-559 878 Coitsville-Hubbard Road, Youngstown, OH 44505-4635.

Footnotes:

1 Siddique Abdullah Hasan, "Induced Failure," *The Monthly Review* Zine, Sept. 30, 2005.

<http://tinyurl.com/yr4cv5>

2 Amy Goodman, "Legendary Historian Staughton Lynd on the 1993 Lucasville Prison Uprising," *Democracy Now!*, Oct. 20, 2006.

<http://tinyurl.com/295dtm>

3 Miriam Gottfried, "Stuck in the Slammer," *Forbes* Magazine, May 22, 2006.

<http://tinyurl.com/yoy8sz>

4 Staughton & Alice Lynd, "Prison Advocacy in a Time of Capital Disaccumulation," *The Monthly Review*, July/Aug. 2001, p. 128.

<http://tinyurl.com/26vfn3>

Poem
m909

Black Mirror

By Adam Spells

They as in them,
him is who we only tend to see when we point.

Then point out the fact
that my reproductivity has been ceased for a year,
another year, plus 4 years,
so that I can no longer produce a soldier
to stand up and fight.

I find myself in a constant state of analization,analyzing
the struggles of my ancestors who came before me.
Those who have created the road less traveled.

Hard work!

I am me, theoretical, ingenious,
curious of the who's and why's.
Past tenses, but presently wondering
how I speak with such a loud voice to
so many empty seats...

Cold hearts and restricted black men.

If you feel you've ever risen,
that time has come to rise again

Past and beyond the laid out adversities
of acceptance,

never regretting the extra step, or should I say
the last step that should have been taken to introduce You
and We, to another step forward.

Into the beautiful and luminous lights of Peace.

At least, momentarily.

But you've chosen. And I took the road often traveled
with over-cracked pavements,
selling crack to and amongst black babies
who lack, maybe,
the development of positivity
because of your feeble dreams of sounds,
fast cars and speakers,
instead of listening to the speaker speak
of the disasters of your actions.
All of the decisions made
before you even knew that you didn't know you.
Oh misguided one. Selfish one.
Though I've sometimes been misquoted in my creative
efforts to dismiss
the durance of our youth.
You sit quietly in denial, knowing the harsh truth!
You are a contributor to our demise!

Adam Spells # 472-679
PO Box 57
Marion OH 433011-0057

I have been incarcerated since Sept. 8, 2004 and have 2 to 4 years left. I have been a writer since my early teen years and have recently found a passion for more pro-found writing, like poetry.

Locked Up: Keys to Prison

International Conference on Prison Alternatives in Philadelphia, March 31

www.justicemonth.org

When: March 31, 2007

Sponsor: Moonstone, SageWriters
and The Broad Street Ministry

Location:

Broad Street Ministry, 320 South
Broad Street, Philadelphia PA

Conference Schedule

8:30 a.m. Registration Opens

9-10a.m. Welcome

**10-12 p.m. American Criminal
Justice From Within: What Works,
What Doesn't.** MC: William

DiMascio, Executive Director,
Pennsylvania Prison Society; Leon
King, Commissioner, Philadelphia
Prison System; Devon Brown,
Washington, DC Prison
Commissioner.

12-1 p.m. Lunch with entertainment
**1-3 p.m. Transforming American
Criminal Justice**

Introduction: Michael Coard,
Philadelphia lawyer and civil rights
activist. MC: Angus Love,
Pennsylvania Institutional Law
Project; Kimberly Haven, Executive
Director of Justice Maryland on alter-
native re-entry; Julia Hall, PhD. on
restorative justice as an alternative
system to punitive justice

3-3:30 p.m. Break

**3:30-5:30 p.m. The Future of
American Criminal Justice**

Introduction: Kay Harris, Dep. of
Criminology, Temple University.
Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead
Man Walking*; Angela Davis, author

of *Are Prisons Obsolete?*; Devon
Brown, Prison Commissioner,
Washington DC

**5:30-8:30 p.m. Dinner, Awards
Presentation and Entertainment**

Awards presentation to Queen
Mother Nana Ama Akofo, Mrs. Annie
Hyman and Mrs. Emily Rollins, for
thirty years of visiting men at
Graterford Prison, presented by Sonia
Sanchez with a special poem written
for the occasion follolwed by a pro-
gram of Poetry and Music.

Registration Information

FEE: \$25 for the entire program
includes meals (Discounted tickets are
available for those who need them;
contact www.lockedup.us or 610-328-
6101.)

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