

Mark our words: He's on the job!

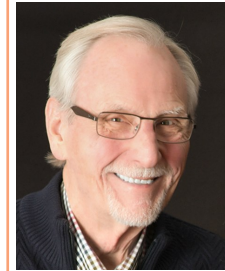


It took a while. Due to some health concerns, HFP's new CEO didn't officially get started until June 1. From that day on, with problems and important issues stacked up, it was a whirlwind! Said Mark: "My first month in the Executive Director/President's chair has been far from dull. Each day brings fresh challenges and new opportunities to grow and learn. The HFP Founder inspires confidence, our staff is great to work with, and our Board is incredibly supportive. Highlights include a plethora of administrative activities centered around a transition of responsibilities from Interim Director John Rottman and Board Chair Russ Bloem to me. Becoming acclimated with office staff, learning new applications and systems, meeting local business leaders in the community, forging new relationships, and planning future HFP events is all part of the job I love! Next, I look forward to personally greeting our supporters. I can hardly wait."

Think there might be a drug problem?

With nearly four decades in here I thought I'd seen it all, but this week takes the cake. I'm talking about the dope fiends who'll do anything for their next high. It used to be smuggled in weed, blotter acid, and heroin, as well as the ever-present rot gut brewed up in bags and buckets. Then this K2 stuff was all the rage, and by "rage" I mean it literally as guys flew into paranoid screaming violence. Smoking rat poison seems crazy, but when a rumor began that doing so with uncut disinfectant dried on a sheet of paper worked, the fiends were happily shutting off their brains. Then I saw a guy slumped death-like in a wheelchair, closely escorted by three guards, and followed by another pushing the medieval looking restraint chair, which tells me he must have gone gonzo. As it turns out, the fiends in level-IV are smoking some part of an AAA battery. Who can possibly think, "Gee, I wonder if smoking battery acid will get me high"? Thank God I've been spared from ever having such a gorilla on my back. I've known a lot of lifers who have given up and do whatever to mentally check out from the reality of waiting to die in prison, but so many of the guys here are short timers. Some of these guys are just weeks from going home, which tells me they'll be even worse once they're out and have access to real drugs. The number of reports of fiends who've gotten out only to overdose is alarming, but what to do? The DOC actually offers a couple decent substance abuse classes, but the old adage of leading a horse to water applies. Heck, two of the guys I work with are planning to get drunk after their college graduation next week, which again affirms to me a diploma is not proof of wisdom.

From the Desk of Doug: Marcia's solo Not just a song



Marcia was a fine singer, and was often asked to share her talents in special services. She gladly responded,

because she loved to sing. But she didn't do so to show off her voice. She went to participate, to contribute. She did her best to choose music that fit the situation. I often served as her accompanist.

Early in our marriage she took a liking to a relatively unknown gospel song called Others. It was written by Charles D. Meigs of Indianapolis in 1902. He was a prominent worker in the Presbyterian Church, but was not a prolific hymnwriter. The song was based on this line from Philippians 2 - *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

I rediscovered the song recently and was struck by how fitting this prayer is for those of us who work among the incarcerated:

**Lord, let me live from day to day,
In such a self-forgetful way,
That even when I kneel to pray,
My pray'r shall be for OTHERS.**

Refrain:

**Others, Lord, yes, others,
Let this my motto be;
Help me to live for others,
That I may live like Thee.**

Maurice Carter Day, July 24!



Photo Credit: Michael McArdle

On July 24, 2004, Maurice Carter walked out of prison, after spending 29 years behind bars for a crime he did not commit. He's shown here stepping from his ride out, and welcomed by HFP Founder Doug Tjapkes and the renowned Rubin Hurricane Carter!

No improvement in prison cuisine!

Today we were rushed through the chow hall like cattle, made fairly easy as it was a desiccated cheese sandwich; flaccid veggie mix; and mostly unwashed, mostly crushed potatoes mixed in water. Yum.

Powerful words from classical musical

"Fidelio / Prisoners' Chorus" by Beethoven:

Oh what joy, in the open air
Freely to breathe again!
Up here alone is life!
The dungeon is a grave.

FIRST PRISONER

We shall with all our faith
Trust in the help of God!
Hope whispers softly in my ears!
We shall be free, we shall find peace.

ALL THE OTHERS

Oh Heaven! Salvation! Happiness!
Oh Freedom! Will you be given us?

HFP helps, Prisoners respond!

HFP helped Mr. M get some important legal documents through the Freedom of Information Act. His response to our Susie:

I thank you so so so so much! You are a huge blessing! By you doing this I will now be able to clear my name of this WRONGFUL CONVICTION. That info has been withheld from me for the last 12 and a half years. Again I thank you from the bottom of my heart and I definitely will be asking everyone I know to donate something/anything to your Org!

When Ron, a longtime and dedicated HFP volunteer, made a successful search for a loved one, we received this note from Mr. S:

"Thank you for finding my daughter. She signed up for JPay soon as she got your letter. I emailed right away... she responded immediately. Plus I have her address now and phone. As you know how bad the state health care is, I pretty much know I'll be gone soon. Anyhow I am so grateful to you to know my daughter and granddaughter are happy and I got to tell them I love them before Jesus takes me. After 4 years of no contact and several not seeing her. May the lord Jesus bless you. thank you for your blessing finding my daughter so I could at least tell her I love her before I go home with Jesus. Thank you!

Donate to our work today!



How feeble is all language to describe the horrors we inflict upon these wretches, whom we mason up in the cells of our prisons, and condemn to perpetual solitude in the very heart of our population.

Herman Melville

Donate today at HumanityForPrisoners.org