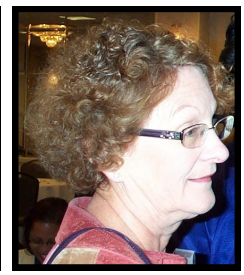




The Executive View

Honoring the Past and Present



The enclosed tribute to Laurel Rans from Bonnie Kern arrived via the network of women in corrections who meet at WWICJJ and AWEC where we continue to pass on "our stories" of meaning and success. Laurel Rans was a pioneer in corrections in a number of ways. Certainly she was vital to the success of NIC's leadership development program for women held at "The Castle."

AWEC's scholarship honors Laurel and her legacy of providing opportunities for women to develop skills, competencies, and the confidence to lead productive lives and pursue successful careers. Laurel was a true leader in corrections, blazing a trail to make it easier for the next generation of women leaders to succeed.



Letter from the President

Happy Spring!

I don't know about you, but I am very happy to see the snow move on and the buds on the trees as Spring blooms. It is one of my favorite seasons.

Since the conference in Des Moines, AWEC has been moving forward in achieving the objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan. We are excited to have completed our applications for incorporation and 501c3 non-profit status. This was a time-consuming undertaking, but we are confident that our investment will pay off in the future. Thank you to all who worked so hard on this project. We hope to announce shortly that the process is complete.

You will notice that this edition of our newsletter is honoring past and present women leaders in corrections.

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We hope you enjoy the tribute to Laurel Rans that found its way to us through AWEC members. We have also decided that the newsletter will be shorter and will be issued six times a year. Let us know what you think of it.

Several of our members are making the decision to retire. Joyce Conley, Jeanette Bucklew, and Sharon Johnson Rion, are all great friends, staunch supporters and active members of AWEC. They have contributed much to our association, all being founding members. AWEC has become more than just an organization, it has become for me, and I am sure for many of you, a place of special friendships. Sharon, Joyce and Jeanette I am honored to have you as my friends and on behalf of all of AWEC, we wish you well.

We hope you are planning to join your AWEC colleagues in New Orleans November 13-15 for the 14th Annual AWEC Conference. We are grateful to the Program Committee led by Co-chairs Mary Livers and Kathy Waters. They are working hard to provide you with an outstanding and exciting program. Presently we are in negotiations with hotels and Kit will send more detailed conference information when arrangements are confirmed. We are trying to make this conference as affordable as possible in these tough economic times.

We plan to continue our Emerging Executives Training this year in New Orleans. The Executive Committee has decided to make E2 a past presidents' initiative and will be providing more information on this initiative as plans are solidified.

As with any organization, there is still much to accomplish with AWEC. We can use the help of our members with several of our committees. This is a good opportunity for new members to become involved. Please contact me and I will be happy to share some opportunities with you.

Looking forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

Francine

Francine Perretta

AWEC President

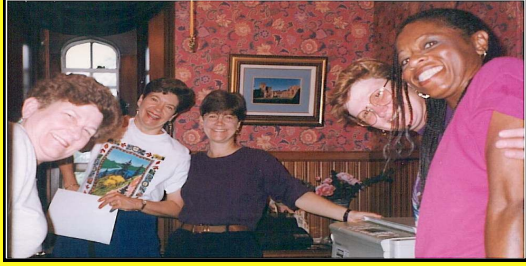


NEW EVENT FOCUSES ON WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

Orlando, Fla. - The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International will sponsor the first Women in Public Safety Communications Leadership Symposium in Orlando, Fla. May 7-8.

"Recognizing that women face unique challenges in the public safety communications industry, APCO International is launching the new event with the goal that it will be a place where women can find education geared specifically to their concerns annually," APCO International President Chris Fischer said.

The theme of this year's symposium is "Staying in Touch" and will cover a range of subjects from leadership to work-life balance. Speakers will include veterans in public safety communications, such as Dorothy Moses Schulz, PhD, professor at John Jay College, as well as career development and leadership experts from outside of the field. For more information, visit <http://www.apcointl.org/WIPSC/>.



Tribute to Laurel Rans

My name is Bonnie L. Kern. I am sixty three years old and completing my graduate rehabilitation counseling internship with the Iowa 5th Judicial District Department of Correctional Services.

I grew up trying to keep me and my little sister away from my pedophile grandfather. I told my mother what he had been doing when I was nine so he wouldn't hurt my little sister. Her denial culminated in cycles of deafening silence that warned of impending physical, emotional and mental outrage toward me. She told me that she would kill me if I ever told anyone what was happening to me so I ran away a lot, drank as much beer as I could find, and prayed that she would die. Nine months and one day after my daughter was born, they were killed in a car accident on December 15, 1962. I wrote checks on my account after the money was gone and received a seven year sentence "at hard labor" on March 18, 1963. I was eighteen.

In writing my novel, *Proclivity*, which shadows my life, I realized that Laurel Rans, warden of the Iowa Women's Reformatory in the late 1960s, was my second mentor.

My first mentor was a 'lifer' who taught me to do my own time, stay out of other people's business and not put my business on 'the street'. She showed me how to do the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and then she died. I did two years on a one year parole and realized that I was safer in prison. I wrote a check on my father's account, which revoked my parole and I was sent back to prison to complete my sentence.

I refused paroles after that because I watched women leaving and coming back, including myself. Parole was, to me, like taking a little kid to the candy store and saying, "Isn't it pretty? But you can't have any!" The only kindness I had ever experienced from another person was when 'tricks' were nice or the genuine compassion from the dead 'lifer'. To complete my parole I would have to stay away from everything that had helped when every cell in my body screamed for relief: beer, drugs & men. I couldn't do that.

I don't remember the names of the first two wardens at Rockwell City. We called the first one 'ol three hairs' and the man, who decided that I should be the first woman in Iowa to participate in the work release program, is a distant blip in my memory. I suppose because I didn't have that many encounters with them.

By the time that Laurel Rans arrived as the warden, I was already riding to and from the business college in Fort Dodge during the week with a young woman from Rockwell City. I also was drinking my lunches at a local bar. While I was on work release that time, I went to business college, worked as a hat check girl at a hotel during the holidays, and my father bought my convertible while I was working at the Carriage House in Fort Dodge.

Prisoners didn't pay for their room and board, do community service, or pay restitution and fines before they were released in the 1960s. We didn't know that much about Alcoholics Anonymous back then. There were no half-way houses or treatment centers. AA people coming in from the outside had been discontinued because the men had been caught 'servicing' the inmates while I was out on parole. None of us understood the psychic change that I went through when I ingested alcohol and I didn't know how not to.

2009 Annual Membership Training Institute
New Orleans, Louisiana

It wasn't so much what Laurel said, but how she said it. She told me that I mattered, was "bright" and I didn't need to live the way I had been living. At first I was just glad to ride in her Volkswagen bug. I had never been in a car where the motor was in the trunk. She took me to restaurants and shared about how she handled difficult situations in her life when we were riding in that car. She talked to me and used humor to help me deal with my frustrations. She planted the seeds of hope in a person who had never known much hope.

The time frame has long since been replaced with other information, but I was pulled from the work release program twice. Once because Laurel got tired of taking me to her house, feeding me coffee and sobering me up before she took me back. I realize today how frustrated she must have been when she kept telling me, "You're going to ruin my program!"

I learned to make custom drapes after I was pulled from work release and eventually I was allowed to participate again by attending community college. Looking back, I probably seemed so normal when I couldn't get beer. What actually happened is that I skipped a lot of classes and went to motels with male students. When I realized that I was going to get pulled again, I set up several rides away from Fort Dodge and took a week vacation. I turned myself in at the Dallas County Sheriff's office, it was called escape, and I was given five extra months.

I remember a lot of people yelling at me from time to time, "You just don't get it! You just don't get it!" And they were right, I didn't get it. But they wouldn't tell me what "it" was or where "it" was so I could get some and they were always mad at me for not having any. I was afraid to ask because I didn't want to look stupid.

What none of us realized is that I was coping with my life and the people around me in the only way that had helped me survive a lot of trauma. My worldview was skewed. I was always on guard for the next person who wanted to hurt me. Alcohol and drugs had saved my sanity by allowing me to find short segments of relief in a dangerous world. I knew I was right. And I was right if all I wanted was to drink, drug, prostitute myself and go in and out of prison. That's what I knew how to do. I didn't know I wanted more until Laurel painted a picture of what my life could be.

I was released from prison on May 22, 1969. Laurel told me, "You'll be back in a year."

I looked deep into her eyes, "Over my dead body!"

After I got out and joined AA six years later, I finally realized that "it" was all of the stuff Laurel and others thought I knew. Like what to do with the rage and self-hatred that I ignored, how to get along with people, how not to drink/drug when every cell in my body screamed for relief. They thought I had learned social skills when I was growing up and all those things that help other people succeed in life. I didn't. I didn't have time to learn those nice things. I learned how to duck and weave, be on guard for the next person that was going to rape or beat me.

My childhood, as bad as it was, was a walk in the park compared to many girls and women I have met in mental hospitals, jails and prison. Laurel's legacy lives through me to the many people I have mentored for almost three decades in AA and the offenders I am trying to help in my internship now. I watch them find hope when there was none, learn to believe they can have a better life as long as they are accountable for their choices and do the next right thing, and pass that hope on to others.

I didn't necessarily believe Laurel when she told me that I was smart and the only limits I had were the ones I put on myself, but she seemed to believe it. Today I know that she told me that I would be back in a year to make sure that I would do everything in my power to prove her wrong. She was right, I didn't go back.

When two drapery shops paid me with bounced checks, Laurel was in my psyche telling me that I could do it myself. Somewhere in the 1970s I borrowed \$500 from my father, he built my tables, and I opened my drapery business. It started as Bonnie's Drapery and ended up as Dwinell's Quality Custom Drapery and Decorating Business in Adel, Iowa. The manager of the prison drapery department consigned one wing of the nursing home in Dallas Center to me.

I had knitted a skirt and poncho and wore it when I picked up the fabric at the prison. Looking back, I know the outfit was pretty ugly, but Laurel could see how hard I had worked on it and told me that she was proud of me, that my outfit was great, and I saw in her eyes how much she wanted me to succeed.

That is the last time I remember seeing Laurel. She never got to watch me discover 'it'. It has been a process. I was in my fifties, sitting in an undergraduate psychology class at Drake University, when I realized that everything wrong with my family was not my fault. That burden was physically ripped out of me that day and left me free to strive for a better life.

Laurel modeled how to share her feelings with me. It had never occurred to me that I should identify them, let alone talk about them with another person. My mother said she would kill me if I told anyone and the 'lifer' taught me to not put my business on the streets, but Laurel spent time listening to me even when I didn't know how to say anything meaningful.

When Phyllis Kocur, the woman who had been my parole officer a couple decades before, told me to not bother applying for an executive pardon from Governor Ray because he didn't give pardons, I heard Laurel saying, "All he can do is tell you no." I received my pardon August 27, 1982. When I was hurt driving semi over-the-road, I wasn't afraid to go to college again. When husband after husband became abusive, I heard Laurel saying, "Love doesn't hurt and you don't have to put up with that!" Laurel laid the foundation for other mentors to help me become a person who is comfortable in my own skin most of the time. Thank you, Laurel.

MENTOR

A mentor does not give a person a fish. They teach them how to fish. If the person is given a fish, they are stuck there waiting for the handout. When they learn to fish on their own, they can go anywhere.

A mentor plants the seeds of hope in a person and asks God to water their protégé. They stand back and watch miracles happen in people's lives. They understand that some miracles take more time, struggles and failures than others.

A mentor is not a banker, hotel, taxicab or childcare. They provide the names of agencies where the errant can find help meeting their needs. Mentors applaud successes and supply alternatives for disappointments and failures. They allow the student to learn in their own way and on their own time frame. Compassionate mentors recognize the emotional whiplash the errant must endure to change from the survival mode they learned as a child in a dysfunctional family to socially acceptable thinking and behavior.

Alcoholics and drug addicts do not make linear progress. They advance in a stair step fashion with the treads representing adjustment and sometimes regression. This frustrates many well-intentioned tutors and some even give up saying, "They just don't get it!" However, patience, fortitude and a positive attitude have allowed many mentors to witness accomplishments beyond understanding. We have a saying in Alcoholics Anonymous, "If they live, we'll get them." Some die to teach us what not to do.

(2008- Bonnie L. Kern)



You are cordially invited to a Retirement Luncheon
for:

**Dr. Joyce K. Conley, Assistant Director
Correctional Programs Division**

After 20 years of dedicated service to the Bureau of Prisons,
we will honor her career and many accomplishments on July 24, 2009

U.S. House of Representative
Rayburn Building, Rooms 339 & 340
Washington, DC 20515
11:30 am - 2:30 pm

*A contribution of \$55.00 per person will include the meal, gratuity, services staff, and gift.

In lieu of gifts, we are creating a memory book and are interested in receiving your emails, cards, letters, photographs, good stories, etc. They should be mailed to Tasha Fleming, Executive Assistant, no later than June 1, 2009.

Please complete the attendee form with your payment no later than June 1, 2009, for the luncheon.
Please mail memory book items and attendee form and payment to:

Tasha Fleming, Executive Assistant
Correctional Programs Division
320 First Street, NW 554
Washington, DC 20534.

For more information, please contact Tasha Fleming at 202-353-3629 or bfleming@bop.gov or Shanel McEachin, Administrative Officer, 202-307-3226.

**If you are unable to attend and would like to make a contribution, you may also send your donation to Tasha Fleming.



Jeanette Bucklew, Deputy Director of Offender Services, retired from the Iowa Department of Corrections effective March 20, 2009.

Jeanette continues to serve as co-chair of the AWEC Membership Committee.

Congratulations, Jeanette!

Best wishes from your AWEC friends!



Sharon Johnson Rion to Retire from TransCor

Excerpts from TransCor Announcement:

CCA is losing an outstanding employee, a nationally respected correctional leader, and someone who has been a big part of our history and success as a company. And, we are all losing a charming and enjoyable friend.

I think you all should know the quality and experience we are losing when Sharon retires. With her long tenure and many contributions, other than Don Hutto, she has perhaps been the most well known and respected person in the correctional field to work for this company. February 2009 marks a 20-year relationship that Sharon has had with CCA, including a little more than 6 years at TransCor. She initially served as a warden, activating both the NMWCF and Metro in the US and then HMP Blakenhurst in the UK. She then became Director of International Operations for CCA and worked in Australia, Canada and England.

During her tenure with CCA, she was elected President of the North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS). She was the first private sector warden so elected. She also received NAAWS first Life Time Membership Award presented to a woman. She edited the first edition of *A View from the Trenches*, a NAAWS manual for wardens written by wardens. She has served as a leader of the American Correctional Association, being elected to the ACA Board of Governors and as a Commissioner for the Commission on Accreditation. She also has been a mentor and role model for so many women in corrections, was elected as President of the Association of Women Executives in Corrections (AWEC), and now serves as Chair of the AWEC Awards Committee. She also authored a book about another significant correctional pioneer important in the CCA history (*Beyond His Time: The Maurice Sigler Story*). She will be greatly missed by CCA and the entire correctional field.

Please join in extending all of our best wishes to Sharon as she plans to move into the next phase of her life.



American Correctional Association 139th Congress of Corrections

Nashville, Tennessee, August 7-12, 2009

AWEC Meeting , Monday August 10, 2009, 3-4 pm

Welcome New AWEC Members!

Some of our most recent
new members are:

Dr. Kay Haw

Gwendolyn Jones

Kim B. Mims

Ellyn Peterson

Sheryl Ranatza, CCE

Paula Merrick Roddy

Michelle Smith

Celebrate AWEC Achievements

Send announcements of special awards, promotions, changes in positions and other achievements or good news, along with any changed contact information to Kit at info@awec.us.

Know Someone Interested in AWEC Membership?

AWEC's membership brochure and a new member application can be down-loaded from our website's Download page at:

<http://www.awec.us>

AWEC Greatly Appreciates Our Wonderful Sponsors!

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