

IN LOVING MEMORY

Joanna Yinn Lum

February 1, 1968 - January 27, 2005

Early this year, we at LostVault lost a very dear friend, Joanna Lum, also known to us as the screen name "Libbie". Joanna brought much joy to our lives with her quick wit, great sense of humor and genuine spirit. She was always there in any capacity for us, whether it be to help with something for the website, or just lending an ear when you needed someone to listen. She will be truly missed by all that knew her.

We all dance in heaven my friend
We all dance our way
The lights that shine over us
Glow and fade away-
But the lights we leave behind-
They grow stronger every day
Our loved ones feel our presence
And know we've found our way.

So dance my friend, dance
In your own special way.
You've finally been freed,
Of all the strife and
Of all the pain.
Your worrisome joints
And arthritic hands
Need not worry
For the heaven bandstand.

You've found your way sweet farie
You've found your way oh angel
You'll be ok bright flower
Just be my sun 'round the hour
Of need— take my hand
When I plead.

My dear friend,
I'll miss you so much
These words only brush
All the pain inside
The tears
The hurt
The wondering WHY.

I know it's ok
For I know you'd never dance
Until now...
You know we aren't watching
And no one will laugh
It's your time my friend
So go,
Go on and dance.

-Morrigan Johnson



Issue No. 10

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Joanna Yinn Lum, of White Plains, died suddenly at home on January 27, 2005.

Joanna was born in New York, NY on February 1, 1968 to John and Yolanda Lum. She is survived by her parents, John and Yolanda Lum, her grandmother Shun Ping Hong, her sister Lonnie Lum-Curran, her brother Eugene Lum, her nieces Emily and Tara Curran, and her nephew Brandon Lum. Joanna was a graduate of Elizabeth Seton College and received her

associates degree in design. She was an office manager for the Mid-Westchester Medical Group. Joanna was a loving and generous supporter of her family, and loved to spend time with her dog Libby. In her spare time, Joanna was a strong advocate of prisoner's rights, and wrote a monthly column for LostVault, a newsletter providing resources for inmates and inmates' families worldwide. She will be deeply missed by the friends and family whose lives she touched.



LostVault

Who We Are and What We Do

LostVault.com is the biggest and best FREE* prison pen pal site on the internet. Founded in September of 2003, we are dedicated to creating and maintaining a free/inexpensive place for inmates to find pen pals.

Want a Pen Pal Ad on our Site?

Send a SASE to us at the address below for an application. Please note that applications are required to place an ad through LostVault; your ad posted via a family member or friend may be posted without a LostVault application. Should your outside loved one wish to request an application, they may do so by snail mail by sending a SASE to the address below, by downloading it from our website, or by sending an email request to LVMotty@yahoo.com.

You may also have a loved one register at <http://www.lostvault.com/penpals/register.asp> and submit your free pen pal ad. **Please note that we cannot take free ads directly sent to us.** The address to send all requests for pen pal application (required):

LostVault
PO Box 261
Washburn, TN 37888

** Ads posted via the internet by free world people are completely free; we charge a \$5 fee for ads placed through LostVault Staff members.*

LostVault: Unlocked is a monthly publication of LostVault.com, a volunteer-based website offering free pen pal ads to inmates incarcerated worldwide.

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Please do not mail anything to this address other than items for the newsletter!

From The Editor's Desk

Letters to The Editor



LostVault has had a rough, yet wonderful year. We lost a terrific friend and have leaned on each other, and found out we have more friends than we could imagine all over the world. We've grown here at LostVault

– mentally, spiritually and in numbers. Most of us have stepped back and looked deep within ourselves and found a lot more than we had only a year ago.

What does all of our “looking inside of ourselves” have to do with you? We decided that the Newsletter was something not just noteworthy, but very important to continue to publish. We've altered it around a bit, added a bit of new staff and hope that you like our changes.

As some of you know, I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl in August. Aijanna (pronounced I-anna) has changed my life considerably and I cherish every second I spend with her. Between the baby and work, I have realized I cannot dedicate the time required to remain as editor for *Unlocked* and must step down. I will still write my column for the newsletter and take all the mail, as I believe in the LostVault and its' mission. We are unsure of who my replacement will be, but rest assured he or she will be as great as I am! haha :)

Enjoy this first “new edition”; we hope to have many more coming to you on a bimonthly basis and perhaps monthly again in the future. As they say around here, “Lord willing and the creek don't rise”...we have had our fresh start and even if the creek does rise again, we hope to keep our paddles this time.



**The Staff of
LostVault:
Unlocked
Would Like to
Wish Everyone
a Safe and Happy Holiday and
a Wonderful 2006!**



Prison News

News From Around the Globe

After 24 Years in Prison, Man Has a Reason to Smile

Marietta, GA.- It is rare to see a prison inmate with a life sentence who cannot stop grinning. But that was Robert Clark Jr. on Wednesday, the day before his conviction for rape, robbery and kidnapping was expected to be vacated on the strength of a DNA test that showed he was not the rapist.

After 24 years in prison - one of the longest incarcerations served by the 164 people who have been exonerated by DNA testing - Mr. Clark, 45, was buoyant at the prospect of seeing his siblings, children and the five grandchildren he did not have when he was sentenced in 1982.

Mr. Clark's story is not so different from that of others who were wrongfully convicted.

The DNA test that exonerated Mr. Clark started a chain reaction that revealed not just Mr. Clark's innocence, but a series of law-enforcement bungles. Those missteps allowed the real criminal to commit violent crimes repeatedly and, very nearly, to walk out of prison, where he is serving time for cruelty to children, at the end of January.

Thanks to finally checking the DNA evidence, Mr. Clark will be going home and hopefully the correct person will be staying behind bars this time.

Schwarzenegger Appoints Physician as Prison Health Care Czar

SACRAMENTO (AP) - U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson on Thursday gave Schwarzenegger one week to name a single person in charge of overseeing reforms to the health care system. He also criticized top Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation officials for failing to act quickly on reforms.

"They still fail to grasp the gravity of the crisis," Henderson said of managers in the state prison system, adding the emphasis in his 15-page ruling. He said he will no longer permit the department's top staff "to twiddle their collective thumbs" while conditions continue to deteriorate. Court-ordered reports have shown the system is responsible, on average, for the death of one inmate each week.

Peter Farber-Szekrenyi, whom Schwarzenegger named Monday as the prison system's new chief of health care services, also will work directly with the governor's office on reforms, said Schwarzenegger spokeswoman Julie Soderlund.

Henderson also ordered the state to immediately increase prison doctors' wages 10 percent a year and prison nurses' pay 18 percent a year. The department also must speed up hiring to fill 476 vacant nursing positions and 103 vacant physician positions. Prison officials also must accept or reject doctors' job applications within 10 days. Corrections department lawyer Bruce Slavin said it will be "a real challenge" to hire within 10 days because background checks take longer.

At a hearing Monday, Henderson said Schwarzenegger should find the money "the same way you find the money to build a tent to smoke cigars." Schwarzenegger had a smoking tent installed outside his office because state law forbids smoking in public buildings.

Don't Discard Youthful Offenders

Children can and sometimes do commit terrible crimes, and when they do they should be held accountable. But life in prison without any possibility or even consideration of parole does not hold children accountable, it holds them disposable. Child offenders should be sentenced in a manner that reflects both the severity of their crime and their special capacity to change and redeem themselves.

A recent report by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reveals that 2,225 child offenders in the United States been locked up for life without

any possibility of parole. Fifty-nine percent of child offenders serving life without parole are in prison for their first criminal offense, and an estimated 27 percent were sentenced for felony murder, meaning they were involved in a crime during which a murder took place, but they did not take part in the murder itself. Sixteen percent of child offenders serving life sentences without parole were between the ages of 13 and 15 when they committed their crimes.

Are you the same person you were when you were 14, or 16? Neither are the child offenders who have been discarded into our prison system without any hope of release, but our criminal sentencing laws ignore this obvious fact. While a neuroscientist could explain to you the specifics of brain development, it doesn't take a doctoral degree to know that kids act out, often don't consider the consequences and are extremely susceptible to peer pressure.

Judges cannot look into a crystal ball at the time of sentencing. Children are uniquely suited for change: They grow up and mature, often becoming unrecognizable to those who knew them in childhood. Yet in many states, sentencing of children who have committed very serious crimes has become an exercise in fortune telling.

Ironically, in 28 states, even a judge with a crystal ball could not save a child from being discarded into our prisons for life. Instead, in these states, judges' hands are tied by mandatory sentencing laws. Children locked away for life, is yet another reason the US needs to take a serious look at mandatory sentencing laws.

County Jail Is Being Sold on eBay

Along with concert tickets, sports memorabilia and designer handbags, add a Missouri jail to the list of things you can buy online at eBay. Randolph County, MO officials have decided to sell their old jail on the auction site as soon as Wednesday. Bidding starts at \$32,500, said Jim Myles, a county commissioner.

The two-story structure resembles a quaint home more than a secure lockdown. That's because until 1989, the jail doubled as home to the county sheriff and his family, with a separate living quarters including a full kitchen and fireplace. The sheriff's wife even cooked meals for prisoners.

Salvation Army Helps Prisoners Give Their Children Gifts

St. Louis - A vacant store in a suburban shopping center was transformed into a makeshift Santa's workshop on Tuesday as hundreds of volunteers wrapped and shipped gifts to brighten the holiday season for the children of prison inmates. For more than a quarter century, the Salvation Army here has quietly helped prisoners send holiday gifts to their children in an effort to strengthen the bond between the incarcerated adults and their kids.

The holiday gift effort in the St. Louis region will reach more than 13,000 children in Missouri and southern Illinois this year. And while the Salvation Army talks about the \$90,000 and 900 volunteer effort in the abstract, it never specifically reveals to the children that it played a role in getting them the gifts. "We want them to think it came right from their Mom or Dad," explained Major Marty Hudson, who coordinates the Army's Toy Lift Program, funded by the Salvation Army's Tree of Light campaign.

At prisons that opt to take part, a chaplain or activity coordinator provides inmates with a catalog prepared by the program. Parents can select a toy, from rattles for newborns to baby dolls or book lights for older children.

They fill out and sign a card, with messages simply saying "I love you" or even "I'll be home next Christmas," Hudson said.

After checking to make sure the gifts are headed to the appropriate children or stepchildren, volunteers take care of the rest. They match the selected gift to each child, wrap it, and ship it along with the card. The Salvation Army also works with a few juvenile detention centers, so that children being held can send their parents a gift.



Death Row

Capital Punishment Talk

by Lene Gabrielsen (Cassi)

I have been writing someone on death row for over three years, and it has become such a big part of my life that it almost surprises me when I realize that new people I meet find it a little strange. Some people bombard me with questions about them and their cases and others just look at me like I'm from Mars (I think we have established that no one actually comes from Mars, so I figure there's no one who takes offense). In the very beginning I felt like I had to defend my friends on the row, and also my friendship with them, but as time has gone, I don't anymore. It's none of their business anyway, right? I am grateful of all the things each of them have taught me. That may sound like a cliché being that everyone that writes someone on the row have the GREATEST pals of all times. *Smile* But in the end of the day it doesn't really matter how everyone else feels, because I can only speak for myself. So, are you curious what they have taught me? Well, patience for one. No joke either! It is not only because mail works in its own mysterious ways and own time (or perhaps in mailroom time, and postal services time), but I have thought so many times that it takes patience and strength to wait like my friends have to wait. All they ever do is wait, wait, wait and wait some more. It takes time to get the case through the courts as all of you are painfully aware, but also wait for everything we take for granted in the free world. My vocabulary has increased a LOT the last three years. As many of you know, my native language is Norwegian, and I had never thought that I'd ever understand legal terms in English, let alone know more about the law in the USA than Norway. I have learned to appreciate the little things, such as walking barefoot in the grass and the sound of the ocean.

I have been asked how I can relate to the worst of the worst and if I am attracted to violence, or perhaps the bad boy image. First of all, I am SO not attracted to violence. All thought the crime rate is going up in Norway too, I have grown up in a very peaceful country, and here it is against the law to spank children. I'm just saying to prove a point how little I am attracted to violence. I guess that is one of the reasons why I wanted to reach out to someone on death row. I believe it is as violent as it gets when a country kills their citizens. To me the guilt question isn't a factor in choosing whom to write. I assume my friends are guilty until proven otherwise. Honestly, I don't give it much thought, because I am not here to judge. A judge and a jury took care of that factor. But I have come to learn that innocent men and women are in fact found guilty of crimes they did not commit.

I write two men I believe are innocent as in had nothing what so ever to do with the crimes of which they were convicted. I don't believe that because they told me so, I believe that because of the case papers I have worked my way through, and because of all the people I have had the opportunity to talk to regarding my friends' cases. I think it is very important that we on the outside don't claim innocence for our friends without doing some research first. I understand that many are sentenced to death even though they didn't pull the trigger, but being a party isn't being innocent. They might not be guilty, and they certainly don't deserve the death penalty, but to me an innocent person is someone who did something else and had no clue about the crime that was committed while doing so. I just want to urge people to check things more thoroughly before making statements that in the long run may do more harm than good. All right, I'm getting off my soap box right about now and get back to what I have learned.

I hug my kids more than I did before. My 13-year-old son may not thank y'all (the inmates) for that right now, but he might pass it on later. Speaking of my son, I have two sons and three daughters and they have learned a lot also. None of my children will grow up and support the death penalty, that much is already established. My children treasure the drawings and words of encouragement my friends give them, and I am so grateful for the unexpected help in raising them. All parents want their children to stay out of prison right? Well, I don't think any of mine will end up there. I guess that I'm trying to say that your journey till now hasn't been all for nothing. You are touching lives, and you do it from man made hell. I also write some that are serving time in general population, and everything I have said also applies to you.

As for me being attracted to the bad boy image, I don't know any bad boys. *Smile* I know some boys that I have to correct every now and then, because their behavior is a little bad, but they are seven and thirteen years old and are my children. Other than that, I know men who messed up their lives one way or another and are paying a tremendous price. Mother Theresa said if you judge people, you have no time to love them. With that, I'm going to close for now.

Oh wait, I have one more thing to say! Feel free to send suggestions what I should write about. If you don't, I'm left to chit chat on my own, and if so, it is your fault if you fall asleep. I'm not sure if it says so in the disclaimer, but it is in Cassi's disclaimer. *Smile*

In Memorium - May They Rest in Peace

01/04/05 - James Porter (TX)
 01/19/05 - Donald Beardslee (CA)
 01/25/05 - Troy Kunkle (TX)
 01/25/05 - Timothy Carr (GA)
 02/17/05 - Dennis Bagwell (TX)
 03/01/05 - Stephen Mobley (GA)
 03/08/05 - William H. Smith (OH)
 03/08/05 - George Hopper (TX)
 03/10/05 - Donald Wallace (IN)
 03/11/05 - William Powell (NC)
 03/15/05 - Jimmy Ray Slaughter (OK)
 03/16/05 - Stanley Hall (MO)
 04/05/05 - Glen Ocha (FL)
 04/15/05 - Richard Longworth (SC)
 04/20/05 - Douglas Roberts (TX)
 04/21/05 - Bill J. Benefiel, Jr. (IN)
 04/27/05 - Donald Jones (MO)
 04/28/05 - Mario Centobie (AL)
 05/03/05 - Lonnie Wayne Pursley (TX)
 05/06/05 - Earl J. Richmond, Jr. (NC)
 05/12/05 - George James Miller, Jr. (OK)
 05/13/05 - Michael Ross (CT)
 05/17/05 - Vernon Brown (MO)
 05/18/05 - Bryan Wolfe (TX)
 05/19/05 - Richard Cartwright (TX)
 05/25/05 - Gregory Scott Johnson (IN)
 06/02/05 - Jerry Paul Henderson (AL)
 06/07/05 - Alexander Martinez (TX)
 07/12/05 - Robert Dale Conklin (GA)
 07/19/05 - Michael L. Pennington (OK)
 07/27/05 - Kevin Conner (IN)
 07/28/05 - David Martinez (TX)
 08/04/05 - George Sibley (AL)
 08/10/05 - Gary Sterling (TX)
 08/11/05 - Kenneth Eugene Turrentine (OK)
 08/23/05 - Robert Alan Shields (TX)
 08/31/05 - Timothy Johnston (MO)
 09/14/05 - Frances Newton (female) (TX)
 09/22/05 - John W. Peoples Jr. (AL)
 09/27/05 - Herman Dale Ashworth (OH)
 09/28/05 - Alan Matheney (IN)
 10/06/05 - Ronald Ray Howard (TX)
 10/20/05 - Luis Ramirez (TX)
 10/25/05 - William Williams, Jr. (OH)
 10/26/05 - Marlin Gray (MO)
 11/03/05 - Melvin White (TX)
 11/04/05 - Brian Steckel (DE)
 11/04/05 - Arthur Hastings Wise (SC)
 11/09/05 - Charles Thacker (TX)
 11/11/05 - Steven Van McHone (NC)
 11/15/05 - Robert Rowell (TX)
 11/16/05 - Shannon Thomas (TX)
 11/18/05 - Elias Hanna Syriani (NC)
 11/28/05 - Eric Randall Nance (AR)
 11/29/05 - John R. Hicks (OH)
 12/02/05 - Kenneth Lee Boyd (NC)
 12/02/05 - Shawn Humphries (SC)
 12/05/05 - Wesley E. Baker (MD)



A View From The Outside

A Free World Perspective

by Michelle Bean (Sewergrrl)

Have you ever come to your senses in the middle of something that seemed like a dream to realize you haven't been dreaming at all? That's my life these days. Since my column LAST December, I've been...well...for lack of a better term, slacking.

My pals have suffered the brunt of my 'laziness' and quite frankly, I'm shocked that all have stayed around and supported me while my life changed in so many ways. Even through my silence with them, it was never a lengthy time without a card or letter from one of them asking me how I am and wishing me well at whatever I was doing. It wasn't until I got an eye-opening letter from my one of my pals that I realized what I was doing not only to them, but also to myself. I was 'ignoring' a huge part of my life and one of the main reasons I was able to smile during the last (almost) 4 years.

Don't get the wrong idea – my life changed in mostly good ways, so I wasn't sitting on my sofa stuffing my face with bon-bons while watching reruns of The Golden Girls. I have been out living a life I never knew and getting to know who I was again. I missed that woman and am proud to say she's back in full force. Remember the Tropicana train cars I raved about in my last column? Well they are still there and I am still in awe at their embellishing beauty. Go ahead and laugh because I am!

Through my lack of words and writing hiatus, I have missed my pals terribly – their kind words; their shoulders if I need to vent or cry; their uncanny ability to make me laugh; their unconditional love, support and friendship; and their understanding when I wasn't feeling like myself. They have been my angels in disguise and have no idea how much I appreciate them. I care about them more than I can express in mere words.

People scoff at me for a lot of things - putting myself out here like this for anyone to read, speaking my mind about anything and everything, and mostly for what I do with LostVault. "Why would anyone want to write prisoners?" is a question I get more times than I can count. I'll tell you why – because these guys I have gotten to know and respect have stood beside me through everything, even after I didn't write them for months. They have showed me what true friendship is about: it's not about needing a cash cow or stamp maven, it's not about how much I can do for them or them me – it's about giving and receiving honest friendship through mutual respect and friendly conversation.

The first time I wrote a letter to an inmate was almost 4 years ago and I didn't know what to expect. Now as I look back, I didn't think I would find an honest-to-goodness smartass that I consider one of my best friends; a bear with a heart of pure gold; an Army veteran and artist whom I adore; a true Southern gentleman whom I've promised to cook a country breakfast for once released; an amazingly sweet man with tons of tips and tricks up his sleeve - especially for making homemade wine; and my fiery Latino that knows just how to push my buttons to make me think on a regular basis. I have a few others with whom I occasionally correspond, and they too are highlights to my days. As wonderful as these men are, why on earth would I risk the chance to not know them by being selfish by keeping my life to myself? Sometimes our lives get the best of us and we forget the people we need until it's too late. I am thankful that letter from my pal came to me before it was too late to salvage my friendships.

I suppose this isn't good PR for the owner of LostVault to admit she slacked in writing her pals when she was there in the forums telling people to pick up their pens and write an inmate. I am human and make mistakes, get caught up in myself once in a while, and forget sometimes about the very things that make me truly happy.

Don't be like me – don't let your life consume you even momentarily and ignore the friends you've made behind bars. They need you and admit it, you need them too.

Want my view on something specific? I'm always looking for suggestions for new articles and would love your input. Send me a letter at the address on the bottom of Page 2 - make sure you specify you are writing to Sewergrrl.

A View From The Inside

An Inmate Perspective

by Connie Goewey (Connie)

What a waste, not only a waste of the tax payer's money but a waste of patriotic, proud and willing men and women in prison, who would give anything to fight for their country also!!

Before I go any further, I would like to give my sincere and deepest heartfelt thanks to "ALL" out there fighting for our country! Also to LostVault for letting me attempt to grab folks attention to many possibilities.

There are those of us here in prison that will eventually go back to our communities. Some of us will go home sooner than others. There are those of us, who are in prison behind such unfair & miscellaneous convictions. And even those of us who are rightfully in prison. But most of us will have a chance to go home. At that is where my issue is at.

I'm not sure how much it cost the tax payers each year to house inmates in the state of Texas. I do know that there is over a 150,000 inmates in the Texas system right now. I believe at least 1/2 of them will be released at some point. Now, this war in Iraq is also costing the tax payers. Their money is steadily going towards inmates at the same time. Why is it that the Government don't take inmate, and train them to help fight this war?

The Army & Marines are perilously overextended by the war in Iraq. The Army already has lowered it's standards to let in more high school dropouts! Also, Marines are offering as much as \$30,000 to anyone who "reenlist"... Defense manpower officials concede there are critical shortages of military personnel with certain special skills, such as medical personnel, linguist, computer network engineers, etc.!

The Army needs more soldiers, not just more doctors & linguist. What they got now is a real shortage of "GRUNTS"- guys who can actually carry bayonets. We have to have a bigger Army.

I understand that there are those that are here in prison that should not be allowed out. But there are many more that could be beneficial. And at the same time kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. Look at it this way, if we (inmates) could meet certain criterions, then trained and sent to fight, that would mean less tax payers money towards prisons and more towards the war. Prison officials say that their prisons are under staff, less inmates would mean less staff, right! Instead of inmates sitting in prison, not working for pay, which means, no taxes coming from us, we would then be able to not only help fight in the war, but receive pay that could go towards out court cost, child support, fines and most of all, towards taxes!

This would also give those who are over there fighting a chance to come home. Spend time with their loved ones and a relief from the pressure of having to over extend their tour of duty! Also, look at this; If a second Korean war should break out, the US has reportedly committed to deploying a force of nearly 700,000 to defend South Korea- Almost 1/2 of America's entire military! And Texas has "over" 150,000 inmates and at least 50,000 will go home in a number of short years, either on parole or long way discharge! If those inmates want to fight right now, why not? True, there should be benefits for them if they do what they are supposed to, at the same time they can give back to the community they transgressed against! What a way to make up for the wrong you committed against your community by going to fight for your country!

K-Jun - TX

Have a prison story to share? I'm always looking for inmate writing to use for this column and would love your submission. Send me a letter at the address at the bottom of Page 2 - please say you are writing to Connie for the View From The Inside column. Thanks! :o)



Motty's Porch

Ramblings from the South

by *Morrigan Johnson (Motty)*

Sometimes you sit back and look at the whirlwind of chaos that is life. Your life. The lives of those you love, and the lives of those that live near you but that you only notice in passing. Then of course there are the lives that enter yours for moments in time, some shorter than others, some for long periods of time. Each life leaves it's trace on yours and sometimes leaving you in a state of wonderment on why you ever had to meet them, or why they didn't stick around.

There are questions in life you'll never get answered. One of which is why we lose some people before we feel it's time. Loss comes in many forms moving, 'growing apart,' breaking up....and yes, death. In any form of loss it is its own death, teaching us to grow stronger and keep ourselves focused on the things that really matter. Sometimes a break up can force us to look at ourselves, at what we may have caused to 'go wrong' or what we now know we are looking for in a mate.

Losses in the form of a parent or child tends to be much harder. We, as children, never think of our parents dying before us and of course we are invincible. As we mature, we learn that parents are supposed to pass before us, it's a part of life that's not easy, but that is surely much easier than losing a child at any age. Life teaches us slowly, by seeing others we barely knew pass on; or by going to Great Uncle Bill's funeral whom you only saw once a year. Life shows us that we are all only flesh and bone and that we will one day have to deal with people a lot closer to us dying. How prepared we get, is never prepared enough.

I believe, just about every religion has it's own saying close to "God/gods only give you what you can handle." For those who have no religion, put

into perspective as..."I am strong enough to face any challenge"....it's true. Though we may need a helping hand or shoulder in the form of a friend, a scripture or just time alone, 99% of us will never meet an obstacle we can't overcome. You have it inside yourself to claim your own stakes in life. Grab hold of your own reins and run into the wind, you may get blinded by a few dust clouds, but in the end you'll have found your way. Now and then, remember to stop and rest to reflect on the people who've left a mark on you, good and bad. That's the only way you'll see that you too, have left impacts on those around you. It may help you to decide what things about you need improving or that are working well in your life.

Maybe I've been thinking too much over the past few months. My life has done a 180...from being a care free chick to being solely responsible for another life...from having a security net in my friends and then suddenly losing one...from knowing exactly what I want and how to get there to really having to take life day by day....I've thought a lot. With all the things that have happened in my life, stressful as they are sometimes, I've grown and learned. I'm sharing these snippets of my reflections in hopes that you too, know that there is little in the world we can't manage.

The "Motty's Porch" column is about life. Please submit things to use as inspiration, or even things to make me ponder. My opinion is gladly shared as long as the subject is "PG-13." I want your input!! See the bottom of Page 2 for mailing address, please note on correspondence you are writing to Motty.



Vaulter of the Month

One of LostVault's Finest

Lene (known to us as Cassi) is from Norway. At 32 she is the mom of 5 children and 2 pet kittens, who are named after two friends on Death Row. Lene started to write to inmates after reading a book about a death row prisoner in Texas. His story touched her so

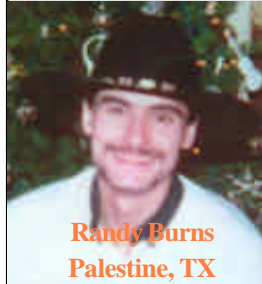


deeply that she felt she needed to send a letter to let him know. Before reading his story, she had been somewhat Pro-Death Penalty. Lene decided to educate herself on the topic and is now firmly Anti-Death Penalty.

Lene has been with LostVault since it's beginning days, always bringing sunshine, advice and an avid Anti-Death Penalty voice to us. She is an Administrator for the forums as well as one of the Anti-Death Penalty moderators. Her first letter to a prison was sent three and a half years ago. Today she is still going strong with many new pals, both on and off Death Row. She says that "writing to inmates has been rewarding, and I could never be without my American friends."

Featured Pen Pals

Inmates Desiring Mail



Randy Burns
Palestine, TX

Randy is a 38 year old country boy from Texas. He loves the simple things like bull and horse riding, music, playing pool, movies, long drives/walks and cooking. He is a very open and loyal person looking for good friends and perhaps that special lady, if the time is right. Randy will answer all letters.

Shannen is a 30 year old male who would like to write women only.

Since his incarceration, he's seriously matured and learned how to appreciate friendship. Shannen has finished school and is planning to further his education in order to be successful once he's released. He enjoys reading, writing, children, sports, traveling and hugs! It would bring great him great joy if you took the liberty of writing and sharing your thoughts, friendship and time.



Shannen Leatherbury
Fairton, NJ

If you would like to write [Randy](#) or [Shannen](#), please visit the pen pal section of our website at www.lostvault.com/penpals or send an email to penpals@lostvault.com for more information.



LV Ladylove

Love Advice for Those Locked Up in Body but Not in Heart

by Tammy Lynn LaFramboise (RaspberryGal)



As the new columnist for *LostVault: Unlocked's* "Romance Column", I feel honoured to have been asked to step into this role after the untimely passing of our very special and intuitive former columnist 'Dear Libbie'. I thought I'd dedicate this issue's column to introducing you, the reader, to a little about myself and as well share some creative ideas on celebrating the holiday season with your incarcerated loved one.

At 32, I can with absolute confidence say that I've lived quite an extraordinary life. In short, I'm a daughter, a sister, an ex-wife, a mother, a career woman and above all else I'm a friend to all and yes, even a special someone to an incarcerated individual. I, like the vast majority (if not all) of our readers, have experienced love in varying degrees. I have experienced love relationships both in the free world and with someone incarcerated. Understanding and bridging the differences and the similarities in the two relationships has become my passion and my quest that I look forward to continually exploring and sharing with you. I'm an eternal romantic, but an emotional realist. I'm a spiritual woman, but I am not religious. I believe there exists good and bad in all things and I embrace it all equally and open-mindedly. My ability to recognize the accomplishments as well as the challenges of any situation I believe keeps me level-headed and non-judgmental. These are the qualities I possess and hope to bring to the eye of our readers through my articles.

Very few can ever truly relate to the emotional pain of being torn apart from their beloved. Everyday relationships are frequently taken for granted. When tragedy strikes, we so easily and naturally give solace to those separated from lost loved ones be it to events such as death, war, or even divorce. Who is really there to comfort us when the loved ones are lost in/or to prison? An emotional constipation seems to all too often befall our closest support systems; our family and our friends. However, from the other end of the spectrum, how do you console someone when you don't understand how they can deeply love someone society has deemed a guilty person, a human unworthy of our freedom? I'm a firm believer that our emotional grassroots should include the philosophy that in life, everyone that lives and breathes needs love and understanding.

Love is *AFFECTION*. Love is *KINSHIP*. Love is *BENEVOLENCE*. Love is *LOYALTY*. Love is above all else *UNSELFISH*.

Understanding is *ACCEPTANCE*. Understanding is *SYMPATHY*. Understanding is *TOLERANCE*. Understanding is *THE POWER OF COMPREHENSION*.

We can clearly see, in simple black and white text, how magnificent two little words can be. Yet, in the world of a prisoner, these two are often merely a pronounceable series of letters or functional nouns, verbs and adjectives. This coinage is false and untrusting to them, only carrying emptiness, loneliness and rejection into their heart and soul.

So, as the holiday season approaches, show your incarcerated loved one(s) just how much LOVE and UNDERSTANDING you have for them. What ways can you think of doing this? Here are some alternative suggestions to the usual fare of money orders, phone calls, or gift packages (bear in mind your budgetary limits and the rules & policies of the facility in which your loved one is incarcerated).

1. Send a sheet of paper with a Christmas tree outline and another with varying ornament shapes for them to tear out. Decorate the ornaments or embedding photos of you, the family, pets, friends, etc. right on them. Help them to be able to decorate their own "tree" in their cell and share the day with you in spirit.

2. Utilizing the "Twelve Days of Christmas" theme, send a letter every day counting down the 12 days before the last mail delivery day before Christmas. On the twelfth day of Christmas (your first letter sent) list 12 of both of your favourite things you'd love to do together; for the Eleventh day (your 2nd letter) take 11 photographs of their favourite things and send them in, and so on with something new each day until the first day of Christmas (your 12th letter) in which you send a very detailed, special and heartfelt message about your favourite moment with them since you first met.

3. Send your letters written or typed on paper of your loved ones favourite colour, Christmas colours (alternating pages) or XMAS theme.

4. Get a picture on Santa's knee at your local mall and send it to them. Don't forget to draw an arrow pointing at Santa's empty other knee and write "This spot reserved especially for you".

5. Buy a fine-tip permanent marker and a deck of poker cards. Each day take a card out and write a short sentimental note on the face of the card and mail it to them. Fifty-two days later, and they'll have a complete deck special notes from you. Whenever they are feeling lonely, all they have to do is take out the deck of cards and play solitaire to be constantly reminded of how much you love and care for them.

6. Arrange a dedication and playing of their favourite song on a local radio station that your loved one has access to.

7. Send your sweetheart a day-by-day tear-off calendar of 365 reasons why you love them. Make every reason personalized to some type of inside joke or something that relates to you both.

8. Buy 25 cards, (serious & funny), for each day of December leading up to Christmas Day. Send one card a day.

9. Have a T-shirt custom made with your loved ones name &/or picture printed on it. Wear the shirt out and have someone take a picture of you. Send it attached to a decorative hand made paper frame.

10. Visit a website full of quotes and phrases. Buy a little one-year blank diary (or just use regular 1/2 sheets of stationery paper). Write a quote at the top of each blank page and then I explain on the rest of the page why you chose it. Find 365 quotes and only choose special, meaningful ones. Plan on sending in the pages as a Christmas "present" so they can start reading them on January 1st.

11. Write a letter to your significant other telling them the things that you are looking forward to in the coming year and them one to you. Seal them each in an envelope and marked "Do Not Open until Next XMAS". Once they are exchanged, tuck them away for safekeeping. These are kept sealed for a year. Then next year, on the holiday, you both open and read the letters - it's sweet and romantic and fun to see what things were predicted for the two of you and to see how much did actually happen. It's a great way to reminisce about the year! For the first year you write one letter for the coming year, and one letter for you to read this year that can be about anything - write about what that first year was like together and what your favorite memories were.

Wishing everyone much LOVE through the 2005 Holiday Season and a bright New Year for 2006!

LV LadyLove

Got a love question you'd like answered? A romantic story to share? Always welcome your thoughts, feelings & stories to LV LadyLove by visiting www.lostvault.com/forums and private messaging me (username RaspberryGal) or by e-mail at: lvladylove@yahoo.ca or by snail mail at the LostVault address on the bottom of page 2 (please note that you are writing to the LV LadyLove Romance Column).



Inmate Art & Writing



Michael Franks - Bushnell, FL



Newton Henderson - Bay Port, MN



Dustin Johnson, Bunker Hill, IN



Vault Jokes & Junk

...The Fun Side of Life

HOLIDAY TRIVIA



CHRISTMAS

Who is the poinsettia named after?

The poinsettia was named for Joel Poinsett, a U.S. ambassador to Mexico, who introduced it to the United States from Mexico in 1829.

In what year did Hershey's start wrapping its Kisses in holiday colors?

Hershey's wrapped their Kisses in colored foil (other than silver) for the first time in 1962. Hershey's sold red, green, and silver Kisses during the Christmas season that year in addition to its year-round silver-wrapped ones.

Where is the North Pole?

The North Pole, home to Santa Claus and his elves, is in the Arctic Ocean, about 450 miles north of Greenland.

Who wrote "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas"?

Irving Berlin, in 1942. It is one of the most popular songs ever recorded.

Who popularized Santa Claus?

Between 1863 and 1886, the magazine Harper's Weekly ran a series of engravings by the famed political cartoonist Thomas Nast that included pictures of the jolly old Santa we know today.



What is the origin of the story of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?

An advertising employee at the department store Montgomery Ward wrote the story in 1939 for a store promotion. The store gave away 2.4 million copies of the story to its customers that year and it's been part of American popular culture ever since.



HANUKKAH

The holiday, celebrated Dec 26 this year, is the Jewish festival of lights. It originated when Judah the Maccabee and his followers reclaimed the temple in the village of Modi'in from Syrian King Antiochus IV. The temple was cleansed and prepared for rededication. The Hebrew word Hanukkah means "dedication." When the sacred temple Menorah (candelabra) was relit, there was only enough sacred oil to burn for one day. Yet, according to tradition, the oil miraculously lasted eight days until more purified oil could be found.

The Hannukah Menorah has 8 candles to signify the 8 days that the miracle oil burned. It is lit from the middle, 1 candle per day, and displayed, for the 8 days of Hannukah.



KWANZAA

What does Kwanzaa mean?

Kwanzaa, celebrated from Dec 26 to Jan 1, is Swahili for "fresh fruits." The holiday is based on African harvest festival traditions and was created in 1966 as a nonreligious celebration of family and social values for African American families.



MUSLIM

Eid ul-Adha will be celebrated Jan 10, 2006 by Muslims all over the world as a tribute to those who will be completing their pilgrimage in Mecca on that day. On this day Muslims sacrifice animals which have been deemed fit for sacrifice. They not only eat the meat themselves but distribute it amongst their neighbors, relatives and the poor and hungry.

PAGAN

Why do people hang mistletoe in doorways?

The ancient druids believed mistletoe had magic powers as well as medicinal properties. Later, the custom developed in England (and, still later, in the United States) of kissing under the mistletoe, an action once believed to lead inevitably to marriage.

What's a yule log?



The word yule has Middle English roots meaning "to cry aloud." Scholars think it relates to early Anglo-Saxon winter solstice celebrations celebrated on Dec 22 or 23. Bringing in a large log to

serve as the base for holiday fires is an age-old tradition popularized in the 19th century.

NEW YEAR'S



In what year was the New Year's ball first dropped in New York City's Times Square?

This Times Square tradition started in 1906.

Where did the tradition of using a baby to signify the new year come from?

The ancient Greeks began this tradition around 600 B.C. They would carry a baby around in a basket to honor Dionysus, the god of fertility, and symbolize his annual rebirth.

HOLIDAY JOKES

Christmas is when people exchange hellos and good buys with each other. It's the time of year when every girl wants her past forgotten and her presents remembered. It's the time of year when mothers have to separate the men from the toys.

Kris Kringle especially loves all his reindeer because every buck is deer to him.

An English boy went to visit his two Scotch cousins during his summer vacation. His breakfast every morning consisted of plain oatmeal, and he got very tired of it. "Say, Jack," he said, "don't you ever have milk with your porridge?"

Jack turned to his brother. "Eh, Tom," he said, "the lad thinks it's Christmas!"

Q: What do you call a bunch of grandmasters of chess bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?

A: Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!

Q: Why is Christmas just like a day at the office?

A: You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit.

NAME THAT CHRISTMAS TUNE

Answer on page 10

The following Christmas carols might have been written by government officials. Can you guess the original titles?

1. Move Hither The Entire Assembly Of Those Who Are Loyal In Their Belief
2. Embellish Interior Passageways
3. Vertically Challenged Adolescent Percussionist
4. First Person Singular Experiencing An Hallucinatory Phenomenon Of A Natal Celebration Devoid Of Color
5. Soundless Nocturnal Period
6. Majestic Triplet Referred To In The First Person Plural
7. The Yuletide Occurance Preceding All Others
8. Precious Metal Musical Devices
9. Omnipotent Supreme Being Elicit Respite To Ecstatic Distinguished Males
10. Caribou With Vermillion Olfactory Appendage
11. Allow Crystalline Formations To Descend
12. Jovial Yuletide Desired For The Second Person Singular Or Plural By The First Person Plural
13. Commence Auditory Reception The Announcing Cherubs Vocalize
14. Kris Kringle Will Be Arriving In The City In The Not Too Distant Future
15. Bipedal Traveling Through An Amazing Acreage During The Period Between December 21st And March 21st In The Northern Hemisphere
16. Its Arrival Occurred At Twelve O'Clock During A Clement Nocturnal Period
17. Exclamatory Remark Concerning A Diminutive Municipality In Judea Southwest Of Jerusalem



CRYPTO-FAMILIES

How to Solve Crypto-Families

Each Crypto-Family is a list of related words in a simple substitution code in which a different letter of the alphabet is substituted for the correct one.

The words in a Crypto-Family list are related to a single theme or category indicated by its title. The example given is a clue to the kind of words to expect in the list and will help you guess what some of the words are. To break the code, look for words with distinctive letter patterns, such as repeated or double letters. For example, in a list of American Presidents, if an entry reads "Z B W D R B D," it is a 7-letter word with the same letter in the second and sixth positions and another letter in the fourth and seventh positions (the answer is JOHNSON). When a word in the list is correctly identified, use the decoded letters to help decode other words in the Crypto-Family. If D stands for N in one word, it will stand for N in all the words in that Crypto-Family.

1. TOOL TIME

Example: Pipe wrench

RDOGKDU
KOAMUBAQZMA
KJDWWMA
JTQMAK
RDLLMA
KRSZMT
ORQKMT
TMZMT
KJDBM
ADGM

2. WITH THE PROGRAM

Example: Agenda

NZFFWNZOZQ
ANIUVZOU
APADUQ
YFJNUVZFU
QUDIJV
QRADUF YORC
NROUCVRF
FJZDWCU
AORDU
FJADUF

3. FAMOUS BILLS

Example: Bixby

CXPVT
KJXLAVH
IQTKH
IARBPQB
PRALVB
LXBX
ZQHVT
KAXTT
ZSJXHX
ISAABV

4. FORE!

Example: Putter

QSMZXSE
NYJOGZ
DFMOGD
NHWGE
ASKKMG
ZHYJK
WZGGJ
NMZKMG
AHYZDG
QVSW

5. BANKING TERMS

Example: Manager

XGAKYKWA
FKIMWXA
XGJKWAUKGA
IYKUXLU
YKJKGLK
AKBBKY
FXJXFKGF
AYTGWTDAXMG
DTIXATB
BMTG

6. AFTER "HOUSE"

Example: Call

XYMOC
ERQV
XMQCN
RT PRBBROZ
EMQHZ
QDYH
RT PMQAZ
VHHXHQ
MQQHZZ
BDZLP



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www.rayhill.info/PrisonShow.html

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www.kpft.org -or- www.kpftx.org

NAME THAT CHRISTMAS TUNE Answers

1. O Come All Ye Faithful; 2. Deck The Halls; 3. The Little Drummer Boy; 4. I'm Dreaming Of A White Christmas; 5. Silent Night; 6. We Three Kings; 7. The First Noel; 8. Silver Bells; 9. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen; 10. Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer; 11. Let It Snow; 12. We Wish You A Merry Christmas; 13. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing; 14. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town; 15. Walking In A Winter Wonderland; 16. It Came Upon A Midnight Clear; 17. O Little Town Of Bethlehem

