



GRAPEVINE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NAAWS



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SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE CANCELLED

by: Mel Williams, Executive Director, NAAWS

It is with mixed emotions that we are announcing the cancellation of the NAAWS Conference in San Antonio this year. With all that is going on with COVID-19, we must put the safety of attendees and their families ahead of the conference.

Clearly there were some outstanding presentations planned and the networking would have been great as always. In addition, our business partners were prepared to discuss the latest in programs, supplies, and equipment for our field.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice was prepared to host our conference and we sincerely appreciate all that Executive Director Bryan Collier and his staff did in preparation. It is our expectation that we will be back in Texas, in the not too distant future.

It is our intent to still honor our 2020 Warden of the Year, Superintendent Dennis Breslin, the many wardens/superintendents who were nominated by their agencies for Warden of the Year, and Sgt. Philip Weston, our Medal of Valor Recipient, once we develop new plans. We will keep you advised.

For those who are registered for the conference, you will receive a refund as well as those business partners that reserved a booth. Please be patient as this will take some time. We have cancelled the conference at the hotel but if you have an individual room reservation you should contact the hotel to ensure that your reservation is cancelled. We hope that those business partners who sponsored events will apply that sponsorship to next year’s conference.

Our next conference will be at Daytona Beach, April 26-29, 2021. Please put it on your calendar.

If you have any questions, please contact us.

Clearly this is a time when we all need to work together and share information. In our correctional facilities, prisons, jails, community centers, and parole/probation offices, staff are facing a dangerous environment with the spread of this virus. Everyone will be concerned about the possibility of taking it home to their families. The population that we look after will be scared and tense. Lack of programs, family visiting, and limited recreation will adversely affect them. As leaders, wardens, superintendents, and correctional administrators face unheard of challenges. As first responders we are used to responding to emergencies. We have written policies to guide us. We are well trained. We know our staff and will do our best to protect them and the offenders.

Please stay in touch with each other, so that together we can face this storm and get through it.

Stay safe and vigilant.



NAAWS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by: Robert Welch, President, NAAWS

A great time was had by all in San Diego, California. We had a productive business meeting and the future of the North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS) looks bright with the many new ideas and members. The Warden of the Year and Medal of Valor process was efficient, and as usual, it was a very tight race amongst the numerous candidates. After much discussion, Superintendent Dennis Breslin of New York Department of Corrections and Community Service was chosen as the 2020 Warden of the Year. The Medal of Valor awardee is Sergeant Phillip Weston. Mel Williams and his committee did an excellent job and should be commended for their efforts in tackling this difficult process.

If you are interested in being recommended to the American Correctional Association (ACA) 2020 Election Nomination Committee for an ACA Officer's position, a member of the Board of Governors, a member of the Delegate Assembly, or seats on the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections and you need someone to nominate you, feel free to contact myself or Executive Director Mel Williams at rwelch@naaws.net or mwilliams@naaws.net for assistance. For any additional information regarding the election see the ACA website.

The business meeting in San Diego was fruitful, both ACA President Gary C. Mohr and Executive Director James A. Gondles

were in attendance. President Mohr shared about the upcoming ACA conference in Cincinnati.

As stated in the Executive Director address, Make-A-Smile is looking at a project in Dayton, Ohio. More information will be forth coming. If you are interested in helping, contact Mr. Williams.

In closing, I left the ACA 2020 Winter Conference in San Diego, excited about the future of NAAWS. The conversation in the business meeting about current issues and solutions to today's problems was refreshing. As always, I will end my article with, we must remain diligent about recruiting new members, however, we must also ensure that we have a strong foundation for us to continue to share our mission and vision with others. My vision for NAAWS has been and will always be for our organization to remain committed to be a strong voice on the national level in the field of corrections.

Sincerely,
Robert Welch, NAAWS President

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by: Mel Williams, Executive Director, NAAWS

The cold of winter for many was broken by attending the ACA's Winter Conference in San Diego. There were many excellent workshops including two by NAAWS Members; Dealing with Inmate Harassment by Susan Jones (retired Colorado Warden) and Crisis in Staffing by Kimberly Hughey (Delaware DOC) and Phyliss Morgan (Alabama DOC). Both were excellent and well attended. ACA's General Session had one of the best speakers ever in Tim Ballard. Tim spoke about slavery around the world and his personal struggle against it. There was not a dry eye in the house. ACA, under the guidance of Executive Director James Gondles, continues to offer an outstanding conference!

Many NAAWS members took advantage of the NAAWS Suite. This year, at the bequest of our President, we opened the suite only two nights. This turned out to be a huge success with a packed house both nights. Instead of trying to compete with all the large business receptions we opened on Friday and Monday. We will follow this model in the future. The suite will be available on off nights for member meetings and committee discussions.

Our sponsors who made this possible are; AB Healthcare

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Solutions, Bufford Satellite Systems, Fastcase Smarter Legal research, Keefe Group, and SECURUS Technologies.

Thanks for the hard work and diligence of Tanisha Mathews, our Executive Treasurer, who wears many hats to keep NAAWS up and functioning!

NAAWS is in good shape going forward, with new members, new ideas, and a vision of positively affecting correctional fa-

cility operations throughout North America.

Lastly, but most importantly, my sincere thanks to our President, Robert Welch. His guidance and leadership have led us through some difficult times. He has served longer than any other previous president, and with distinction. His creative ideas and visions of the future have helped shaped NAAWS into the great association that it is. Thank you, Robert!

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HAVE NEWS FOR THE GRAPEVINE?

Any announcements that would be of interest to wardens or superintendents are gladly accepted for consideration! Contact **CHUCK ALBINO** for questions or for submission consideration.

A MATTER OF TIME...

by: Charles Albino, The Grapevine Editor, NAAWS

The Coronavirus is presenting our nation with an unprecedented challenge that has us fearful and growingly isolated. As we monitor the disease's progress, we watch our government at both the federal and state level attempt to meet the ever-increasing demand for personal protective devices, necessary medical equipment, and ICU beds. It is painfully obvious that we were not fully prepared for a pandemic, and the government's response has been slow and, thus far, appears to lack a comprehensive long-term national strategy.

While society struggles to meet these challenges, there is an often forgotten "society within a society" that we know quite well – corrections systems. I recently sat in on an ACA webinar regarding the Coronavirus from a corrections perspective and reviewed the CDC guidelines for correctional and detention facilities. While ACA's proactive response and the preparations underway at correctional systems across the US are certainly to be lauded, there is a crisis looming on the horizon that is not being adequately addressed – the proactive and accelerated release of offenders. In an honest moment as Wardens we would admit that our facilities are little more than "docked cruise ships" as we face this virus. Corrections administrators nationwide are taking proactive steps to obtain and inventory necessary medical and sanitation supplies, eliminate visitation, screen essential staff entering facilities, increase sanitation schedules, educate both staff and offenders with regard to personal protection practices, control offender movement, and update medical crisis and isolation plans and procedures. However, even with these vital steps underway, these same administrators must admit that, by design, facilities are not able to provide appropriate social distancing, and are not adequately staffed with medical personnel to address a crisis of any real magnitude.

So, with everything else going on, a valid question is why should the general public care? The answer may not be readily apparent to the average person, but though isolated, our facilities are not islands. In fact, our facilities are woven into the fabric of the communities who host them. Their residents are our staff and their hospitals are our resources when an offender's medical condition so dictates. Consequently, a serious outbreak of Coronavirus in a correctional facility will greatly impact the surrounding community. Some of our staff, their neighbors, will undoubtedly be infected and bring the virus

home with them. Additionally, critically ill offenders requiring ICU beds will also impact the availability of such resources for community residents who may also require them.

To help alleviate these unfavorable facility conditions and reduce the likelihood of a serious outbreak, the expedited release of offenders must be considered. Sounds crazy? Not so. As I write this editorial, detention facilities in many states are implementing early release programs to reduce their offender populations and provide for more manageable circumstances in their respective facilities, however, these efforts are generally smaller and less prevalent than these circumstances require. Additionally, I am not aware of any efforts on the state or federal level to establish any new structured programs/guidelines to expand or accelerate the release of offenders from prisons. An encouraging sign was a March 26th letter from Attorney General Barr to the Bureau of Prisons to ensure the Bureau utilizes home confinement to "grant certain eligible offenders home confinement in certain circumstances." However, while this memo acknowledges the benefits of reducing the offender population in federal prisons, it appears to rely on an existing program that will not significantly impact the offender population within the Bureau of Prisons.

I don't mean to suggest that this is a simple process, or one that can be implemented without considerable negotiation and guidelines. What I am suggesting is the complexity should not deter us from lobbying for what may be required to safeguard the health of our staff and the offenders in our charge. Accelerated parole considerations, moving up the releases of offenders with approved parole dates, the release of elderly, disabled offenders are "low hanging fruit" that could be a starting point. The next phase could be suspending the sentences or utilizing home confinement for offenders with non-violent offenses or whose criminal histories make them unlikely to reoffend.

The concept of taking radical steps to reduce offender populations is something that is beginning to garner attention and support. Recent Op-Eds in the New York Times and Washington Post have made the same call for significant reductions

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in the number of offenders being held in prisons to help manage the potential of a widespread virus outbreak. The Post article was written by Josiah Rich, professor of medicine and epidemiology at Brown University, Scott Allen, professor of medicine emeritus at the University of California at Riverside and Mavis Nimoh, the executive director of the Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights at the Miriam Hospital. The Times editorial was written by Dr. Amanda Klonsky, a scholar of education and mass incarceration and the chief program officer for a prison education organization. While these are highly credentialed professionals with considerable knowledge of medicine and incarceration, unfortunately theirs are not voices that typically help formulate correction policy with the United States.

Now to the heart of my plea, it is up to us, recognized experts in corrections, to lend our voice to this serious issue. Many of

us have formed excellent relationships with our local, state, and federal elected representatives. We fostered those relationships during the debates over PREA and restricted housing. Our opinions matter and our silence has consequences. So, my request is simple, give this matter your consideration, and if you agree with the call for population reductions, make this effort a priority. Please remember, we matter, and it is up to us, not academics, to lend credence to this effort. You can choose to act or stay silent, of course that choice is yours, however, ignoring this situation will not change one simple fact, it's only a matter of time...

Charles E. Albino

*Warden—Retired, New Jersey Department of Corrections
Editor, Grapevine*

From Many to One

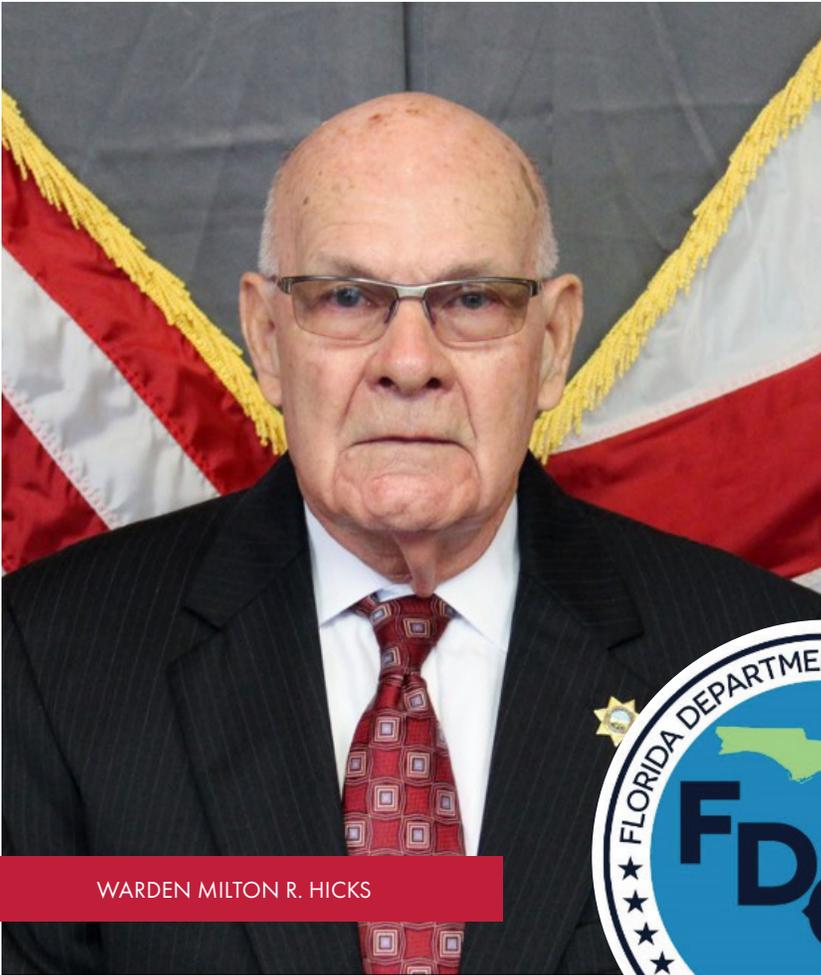
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WARDEN MILTON R. HICKS

by: Mel Williams, Executive Director, NAAWS



WARDEN MILTON R. HICKS

NAAWS has a long history of recognizing Correctional Leaders. This month NAAWS would like to recognize Warden Milton R. Hicks, recently retired after serving 53 years!

The Florida Department of Corrections offered the following summary outlining Warden Hick's distinguished career.

Warden Milton R. Hicks has served the State of Florida in a career with the Florida Department of Corrections that has spanned more than 53 years. He began his career on April 2, 1962, as a Correctional Officer at Florida State Prison. He worked through the ranks to Assistant Warden in 1985, a position he held until June 30, 2001, when he retired after 39 years of dedicated service. After just four years, he returned to

the Department as Warden of Charlotte Correctional Institution on July 15, 2005. He has since served as Warden at Union Correctional Institution, Madison Correctional Institution, and Taylor Correctional Institution before transferring to his current assignment as Warden of Cross City Correctional Institution in April 2013.

At 82, and with nearly 15 years as a warden, Mr. Hicks' experience and leadership is second to none and he continues to mentor and inspire the many officers and correctional professionals who have had the opportunity to work with him.

Warden Hicks models the way with his quality work ethic and servant leadership approach to putting others before himself. Even with 53 years of service, he remains one of the most dependable and reliable leaders, often the first of his peers to complete tasks and assignments.

Warden Hicks is a man of courage and commitment, who for almost 54 years, has been a loyal and compassionate leader, treating all whom he comes in contact with civility and respect. He is a historian for the Florida Department of Corrections, having worked some of the most complex missions of Death Row, Maximum Security, Close Management, and Mental Health within our agency. There is no one more humble, more encouraging with his positive attitude, or more deserving of recognition.

Please join us in recognizing Warden Hicks for his long service to the people of Florida!

IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE PLEASE WRITE TO US AT [MILLIAMS@NAAWS.NET](mailto:mwilliams@naaws.net)

WHAT NOW? A GUIDE TO YOUR FIRST 90 DAYS

by: Joshua Rutherford, Superintendent, Northern State Correctional Facility

The following is an excerpt from an article written by Superintendent Joshua Rutherford for the NAAWS Warden Book "In The Trenches." You too could have your article published and at the same time give practical advice to other Wardens and Superintendents. Time is running out as the deadline is May 27, 2020. For more information please contact Sue Jones at sjjcanoncity@gmail.com.

Welcome to Your New Facility – Don't Break Anything

What's your first priority? Where do you start? DON'T. Don't make changes. Don't re-structure meetings. Don't make big decisions. As hard as it may be, for your first 30 days, you should do nothing but listen, watch, and learn. Understand how your new facility runs, what the informal power structures are, who really makes the decisions. Walk around a lot. Personally, introduce yourself to staff – at all levels. Ask lots of questions and listen to the answers. Take notes. Tell staff this is your plan; identify from Day One that you're thoughtful, not prone to micro-management, and don't prefer knee-jerk solutions. Equally important, establish that you understand the facility is operated by competent professionals who have generally made good faith decisions.

Not everything that appears dysfunctional is.

Testing the Waters

No Warden is successful by themselves. Each Executive Team has their own composition and norms. Each member brings talents and weaknesses. Assessing this team should be a priority.

Test-driving the team gives you valuable information about the skills, and motivation, of the members. Assign a new project to each member. Don't create busy work, maybe aim at some low-hanging fruit (see below) or have them gather data for you. Give a deadline.

Assess the results. Who completed their work ahead of the deadline; who waited until the last minute or was late? Whose work required you send it back for edits and whose was top-notch when it reached you.

A test-drive (and reading past evaluations) will give you valuable information about your team. You'll have a good understanding of their capabilities and that can help guide your supervision strategy. Be generous and look for strengths. A baseball team needs players at every position and if you judge the catcher by her ability to pitch, you do her and the team a disservice.

This is also a good opportunity to set your expectations. Do you accept late work? Do you fix errors yourself or send them back to the assigned?

Low Hanging Fruit

Okay, it's been 30 days. You have your notebook full of ideas. Where do you go now?

Whenever possible, start with some easy projects that are popular with staff. As you're getting to know your team and how the institution operates, this gives you a wider margin of error. If things go awry, it's often easy to correct course. If you start with an ambitious project, you may not have that margin of error.

Low-hanging fruit also produces some easy wins. It builds your competence (and confidence) while also building staff confidence in you. When you start more arduous challenges, you'll have a track record of success and staff will be willing to trust your judgment and buy-in.

Being a Warden

The most valuable advice I received was, "It's a marathon not a sprint." You won't win every day. Like any other job, you'll have good days and bad, you'll have successes and failures. Take them in stride and invest in the long-term. The opportunity to guide an entire institution, to foster a culture, to grow a staff is the most demanding role I've faced in Corrections, but also the most rewarding.

Submitted by:

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