

September 16, 2012

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### Prison Woes: Various Updates

When I first typed the column title "Prison Woes" I kinda had the feeling that it would end up dominating the blog; which I guess is only logical considering my surroundings.

But at least I have a better cell-mate now, one I can get along with. The self-pronounced "crack-head" was moved to a different cell finally. So it's a lot quieter and I can actually get some work done. Just this past Tuesday I was able to complete my final exam for a Creative Writing course I was taking.

It was mailed out the same day.

I also got confirmation of my NWA (National Writers Association) membership, which entitles me to tons of services and benefits specifically for writers. I take pride in the membership card and its certification that:

**Johnny E. Mahaffey  
IS A MEMBER OF  
THE NATIONAL WRITERS ASSN.  
and is entitled to the privileges accorded to  
Free-Lance Writers.**

For any other writers reading this, the NWA has been around since 1937 and members can even get a "Press Card" that allows them access to many private places and past some police lines. You should check them out at their URL:

[www.nationalwriters.com](http://www.nationalwriters.com)

Since I'm enrolled in multiple college courses I have a student membership, but they also have a "Regular" and a "Professional" membership that you can get.

I plan to take full advantage of NWA's research services to improve my writing, and perhaps even have them critique a story or two; maybe even some editing services.

It's just good to have options and open doors.

Some editors and publishers don't really care to get a manuscript from a "prisoner" and the prison stamp on the outside of ALL my outgoing mail ensures that they--and anyone else I write--knows the mail is from a prison; probably pushing some of my work from the "slush pile" straight to the trash, without even being opened. Sad; but true. Thing is, an editor that does something like that is missing out because in all truth what better thing can a "prisoner" do with so much forced free time, than perfect his writing craft?

My words will get on the right desk one day.

Just like my case will one day have a real lawyer, a real judge, and an honest jury.

But who knows?

All I do know, is I'll never give up.

Not when I'm a father with five children that need me.