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Between the Bars

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The American Prison Writing Archive

Every time I read The Prison Legal News I see an ad for the American Prison Writing Archive. I always wondered what it was but never looked into it until recently. I wrote to them and they sent me an informational sheet describing themselves as "an internet a based, digital archive of nonfiction essays offering first-hand testimony to the conditions experienced by incarcerated people, prison employees, and prison volunteers. Anyone who lives, works, or volunteers inside American jails or prisons can contribute to the APWA. We seek authors who write with the authority of first-person experience."

They want to create a database of the Mass Incarceration Movement in the U.S., to bear witness to what our country has been experiencing. I believe their intention is to have a vast cache of narratives about all facets of the prison experience for current and future generations to research.

They can be found at: <http://www.dinitiative.org/projects/apwa/>

The American Prison Writing Archive

c/o Hamilton College

198 College Hill Road

Clinton, NY 13323-1218

Go there and check it out. Feel free to make your own contribution. One thing they didn't mention was the impact of imprisonment on friends and family of those who are in prison. I think their experience is crucial to an understanding of the effects of mass incarceration on American society. I urge everyone impacted by the Mass Incarceration Movement to go to this website and make your contribution. Read what others have to say. Perhaps you'll gain something from what you read which benefits you or gives you new insight. They didn't ask for input from friends and family of those who are in prison so I may be overstepping a bit. If they don't want your input, I'm sure they'll let you know.

I have given them permission to use my blogs in their archive so you may see some of my writings there as well.