

# MCA TODAY



## News from the Michigan Corrections Association Winter 2010

### Welcome to MCA Today's Excellence Issue

Every job in our field is stressful. Some specific jobs seem to be more on the line and obviously dangerous. Yet, we must acknowledge that all of us have a role to fulfill. Our individual efforts to keep a smooth running workplace are really parts of daily, if unsung excellence.

Little positive and productive deeds that we perform every day are signs of our excellence. These are like the single words that combine to make a great novel or screenplay. Without those quality words, the larger work falls apart.



Unfortunately, it is easy to disregard the little but necessary things that we do. As you go through your corrections day, think of how little things undone can undermine the larger success of all. Our smaller daily successes are parts of the larger puzzle. Once that puzzle is complete, we see a very clear picture of safety for staff, offenders, and the public.

With this, I am respectfully requesting assistance of the Michigan Corrections Association membership for the MCA team. MCA Today would benefit through submission of articles from different areas of our association. New perspectives are welcome. Please add to the strength of MCA by sending news and articles to Joe Bouchard at [bouchard@up.net](mailto:bouchard@up.net).

**Joe Bouchard,**  
MCA Today Editor



MCA TODAY

News from the Michigan Corrections Association



## ACA SUMMER CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

The Summer 2009 American Correctional Association conference was held in Nashville, Tennessee. Four MCA members were in attendance. Here is some of what they experienced.

**Joe Bouchard:** Despite the horrible state of the economy, there was quite a large crowd at the conference. I spoke on staff division to a full house. They were a lively bunch from all corners of the country. Participants brought a strange mixture of playfulness and seriousness to the session. From this, it was reinforced in my mind that staff division is still a widespread challenge in our vocation and that professionals are willing to look at the issue by attending workshops on the topic. For a video interview of this topic, please go to [www.correctionsone.com](http://www.correctionsone.com) and select "You Animal!" under videos.

**Michelle VanDusen:**  
*A Bonding Experience*

Everyone should take the time to show their support when a friend or colleague is in need. This was the bonding experience we provided a fellow colleague when we were in Nashville. Networking, training and shared work experiences are only a portion of the assets a national conference can provide. When part of your experiences is providing one of the key trainings for that conference, you know the questions that can befall you prior to that training: 'Is this going to be a training that colleagues will show an interest in?' 'How many will attend?' 'Will I have proper answers to their question?'

Given this, I felt the need to show our MCA Executive Board Member the support and recognition he deserved. In the process I solicited other staff and family support mechanisms to acknowledge the hard work our friend put into his presentation. You could see the genuine surprise and acknowledgement in his face when he observed us in the audience. A facial expression can say a thousand words. We just want to acknowledge his storehouse of experience that he is willing to share with others. Great Job Joe Bouchard!

**John C. Cordell:** *Recognizing Others*

For me, the ACA Summer Congress is a chance to learn, network, and grow professionally. But it's also a time to recognize others.

In some cases that means stopping in to listen and acknowledge the talents of one of our own, like Joe Bouchard, who delivered another awesome program to a standing-room-only crowd.

In other cases, it means spending an evening dressed in your best to attend the North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS) Warden of the Year Banquet. This year, Warden Millicent Warren of Michigan's Huron Valley Women's Correctional Facility received the honor.

Mostly it's about recognizing those who made the effort to improve their professional knowledge by taking part in a national conference. It's not cheap but it's an invaluable experience.



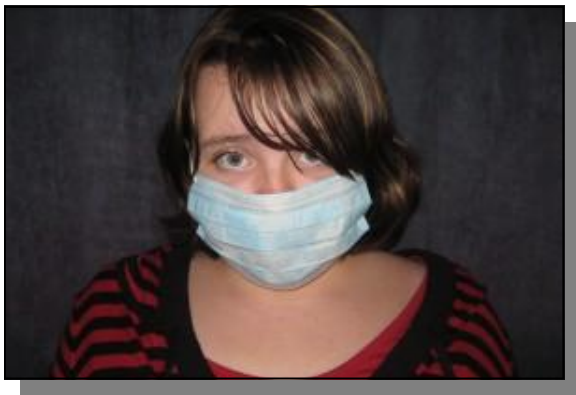


## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SWINE FLU

### BY JOE BOUCHARD

Welcome back, Swine Flu! It has been a while.

I have to honestly say that I am not happy to see you again. You caused quite a stir last time. When we last met, you were introduced as a formidable foe. Everyone was talking about you. Everyone was worried. The nightly news continually featured statistics and a map of your impact.



As you recall, many suffered because of you. Fortunately, your rampage was not as dire as predicted. But many that did not succumb to influenza fell victim to anxiety. Of course, because of that and many other factors, you must understand that no one is really very happy about your return.

I have not really thought much about you in the last few months. That is because I am a busy corrections worker, monitoring, observing, analyzing. I have been occupied keeping colleagues, offenders and the public safe.

Because of that, I have not considered how you may be evolving and growing in the Southern Hemisphere. Here in the northern latitudes, we are just a few cold nights away from seeing leaves change. Is that some sort of announcement of your return? Will you be more potent than last time?

As a corrections veteran, I am not one to take chances. I have seen too many people get hurt

through complacency. Underestimation of an adversary is the nagging enemy here. You will not, in other words, catch me unprepared.

I will continue to attend to training that deals with you. This teaches me how to deal with you.

I will maintain cleanliness habits. There are no short cuts in hygiene or in safety. Because of you and other related maladies, hand washing is a serious business.

I will monitor how others fare during your imminent return. Working in a close, closed environment, it is imperative that I do so.

I further promise to watch the news to learn more about you. However, I will not become over-obsessed. I will not fall into a pit of paranoia and disrupt my normal work and personal life.

I will exercise caution and common sense.

I will take solace in the fact that medical professionals have continued to battle you, even when the news stories about you decreased. They continued to work and prepare. Your upcoming Northern Hemisphere tour will not be as easy as you might suppose.

I will inoculate against the rampant paranoia of others, calming where necessary. I will voice balanced concerns about you. But, I will never over state your potential powers of debilitation. In other words, I will not spread panic.

So, welcome back, Swine Flu. I am sorry that your reception is not some sort of sentimental reunion. You have earned the scorn of millions. I sincerely hope that you are simply just another hot news story that is really not as important as initially thought. But, if this is not the case, I await you. If you should visit me, you will find that I will employ my best defenses.





## “LIFE CORRECTIONS”

by Tammy Gajewski

During the last six months presenting Collaborative Case Management I have encountered a wonderful diverse group of people that work in, for or outside the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). The general reoccurring theme was their frustration with the lack of common sense in the department. Yet they diligently report to work and do their jobs 110% everyday. Through Collaborative Case management training many of the participants have shared their purpose in corrections and in life. Many have been enlightening to me and give me renewed hope in the direction of the department.

It was a bright sunny day as I walked in to the training room to encounter a woman crying. She was standing in the middle of the room looking at all the posters around the room generated by the CCM training. I asked her why she was crying and she said, “I wish these skills and methods were more supported and practiced when I was serving my time.” Turns out she used to be a CEO of a huge company and had served time for embezzlement. Her time in prison had been very hard on her and her family. She lost her job, her husband, and her house. Now her daughter was having problems with drugs and the law. We talked for a long time it seemed before trainees started filtering in the room. Later in the week I thanked her for sharing her story with me. I told her I believed in her because I could tell she had the tools to succeed.



Several months later, she notified me saying she had successfully completed her parole. She had her daughter in treatment and was practicing tough-love. She also told me no one ever told her they believed in her since she received her prison number. It was very powerful to know one comment helped give someone the courage to succeed.

How have you embraced change today?

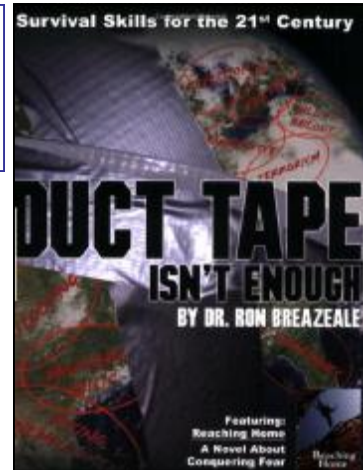
*Tammy Gajewski is an Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor at Baraga Maximum Correctional Facility in Baraga, MI. Her opinions do not necessarily represent the opinion or view of the Michigan Department of Corrections.*





## SOME COPING POINTS FROM “DUCT TAPE ISN’T ENOUGH”

H1N1, economic woes, and wars fill our minds. As a public, we have so much on our collective plates. Yet this stress has been the status quo for so long. Add those concerns to the daily duties of any corrections professional. As a matter of course, all corrections staff face the possibility of grievances, litigation and assaults. Daily interaction with those who, quite frankly, are not easy to deal with is also a major stressor.



Certainly, we seem resilient enough to deal with the many challenges on and off the job. However, there is ample evidence that suggests we endure a cumulative, crippling harm due to stress. It seems that few agencies provide enough training to address this dire vocational reality.

Recently, I came across “Duct Tape Isn’t Enough,” by Dr. Ron Breazeale. I learned many things from this source, including eleven skills and attitudes that can increase resilience.

1. Connected to others – Relationships in and out of the realm of family and friends can reassure and provide needed support and help.
2. Flexible – A primary factor in emotional adjustment and maturity. Flexible in thinking, actions, and beliefs. Take time to self check that you are open to change.
3. Realistic Planning - Be proactive rather than reactive; assertive not aggressive or passive; being able to see “what is” rather than “what you would like”.
4. Communicate and Problem Solve – Talk to others you have comfort with for it has magic properties. Resolve problems as quickly as possible both with yourself and others.
5. Manage Strong Feelings – Able to take action without being impulsive and responding out of emotion. Put emotions aside and use clear thinking.
6. Self-Confident – A positive self-image is critical to confront fear and anxiety. Able to help someone else.
7. Find Purpose and Meaning – Able to make sense out of what is happening and to find meaning. Critical to manage feelings during a crisis.
8. See Big Picture – Optimists better at this skill. Understand that good and bad events come and go in life and nothing is permanent. Less likely to cast blame.

*(Continued on page 6)*



*(Continued from page 5)*

9. Use of Humor – Laughter is healing. Helps to overcome some of the weights that assault people at times.
10. Care of Self – Diet, exercise, good health habits. Physical problems inhibit self activities.
11. Care of Others – Both physically and emotionally. Helps build resilience.

\* Citation: Breazeale, Ronald (2009). Duct Tape Isn't Enough. Portland, Maine: BBUSA, pages 4-5

#### **About the Author of Duct Tape Isn't Enough**

*Dr. Ron Breazeale is a clinical psychologist with over thirty years experience in the fields of mental health and drug and alcohol treatment. Reaching Home is about the world he grew up in as a child with a birth defect in the "Atomic City," Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where his parents lived and worked. He has worn a prosthetic hook most of his life. He is married, has one child, a daughter, and now lives and works in southern Maine.*

*He was one of the founders of Maine Resilience and has designed, administered and edited numerous programs and publications that focus on the psychological skills and attitudes that can prevent emotional problems and increase life satisfaction.*

*Maine Resilience teaches participants to manage adversity to bounce back more quickly. Benefits include improved morale, decreased medical and mental health problems, increased team spirit and cooperation, and better relationships among co-workers and community members. Contact information is [rlb@gwi.net](mailto:rlb@gwi.net) or 207-773-7993 x25.*

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETIREES**

Jerome Mason is the contact person for USIS, a new security company founded by Bill Bratton, former LA Chief of Police and NYC Chief. USIS is looking for capable corrections specialists who want a new challenge after retirement. USIS is working on several projects including the deployment of private security services in support of strategic U.S. interests. It is a valuable and challenging adventure for those who are interested. USIS is also looking for attorneys, judges, etc. for field work, training, and other sensitive positions.

Go to [www.corrections.com](http://www.corrections.com)>careers>all at the bottom of the page "criminal justice support." Please share the information with anyone who is retired or may be retiring and who wants a new challenge. The security of the United States may be in the balance—and you can help.





# Covert Inmate Communications and Personal Safety in a Jail/Prison Setting

Presented by the  
Michigan Corrections Association

## Conference Information and Agenda

MCA presents its 2010 winter training seminar, "Covert Inmate Communications and Personal Safety in a Jail/Prison Setting" on Friday, January 22, 2010 at the Michigan State Police Academy, 7426 N. Canal Road, Lansing, MI 48913 (517) 322-1200.

## Featured Speaker

John Williams is a Senior Training Deputy with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LACSD) with over 22 years of service. He has Bachelor Degrees in Criminal Justice and Geography and is also a Lieutenant in the United States Naval Reserve.

Williams is currently a full-time training instructor specializing in prison and street gangs, officer safety, and jail security. His primary duties include teaching training classes and creating audio-visual training presentations for the LACSD department's online training program.

Over the years, Williams has developed an expertise in covert communications. His expertise comes from working line staff, interviewing prison and street gang members, and maintaining contacts with state and federal prison authorities.

Deputy Williams has a national reputation in the field of covert communications having lectured on at numerous gang investigator conferences and to law enforcement agencies including the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Marshal's Service, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Military, and the FBI National Academy.

To Register, go to [www.micorrections.org](http://www.micorrections.org) or see the Registration Form on page 8 of this edition of MCA Today.

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## The Michigan Corrections Association Presents: “Covert Communication and Contraband”

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Worksite \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Conference Prices:** The Conference price includes attendance, continental breakfast, and lunch.

**Prices**

- \$ 35 member
- \$ 45 non-member
- \$ 55 includes membership
- \$15 Student Rate (\$35 with membership)

**Make Checks Payable to:** Michigan Corrections Association

**PayPal Payment:** Please visit [www.micorrections.org](http://www.micorrections.org)

1. Click on the Calendar icon under Additional Links. Review the MCA Training Seminar Information.
2. Download and complete the registration form and send it to the address below or e-mail to [john.cordell@micorrections.org](mailto:john.cordell@micorrections.org).
3. Choose the payment type (MCA member, non-member, or new member) and click the “Pay now” button. Follow the PayPal instructions. MCA will confirm PayPal payment upon receipt of your registration.

**Please send payment to:** Michigan Corrections Association  
P.O. Box 12021  
Lansing, MI 48901-2021

\*\*On-site registration is also available.







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