
Youth Truth



Official 'Zine of Americans for a Society Free from Age Restrictions www.asfar.org

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Pendulum Swinging?

Sandra Buckley

At the dawn of the 1990s, the concept of “zero tolerance” was born. The concept was codified by Congress in the 1994 “Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act”. And in 1997, a school principal in Baltimore, Maryland, suspended 1200 students at once for refusing to obey an order.

And Americans began to wonder if perhaps “zero tolerance” had gone too far.

Last fall, ABC’s *PrimeTime* aired a segment about two supposedly violent and “incorrigible” brothers; their hidden cameras showed that it was actually their adopted mother who was out-of-control. The reporters noted that what they saw “may be indicative of what goes on in thousands of other cases, beyond the reach of professional intervention.” This May, an Idaho mother was arrested for isolating her children, all home-schoolers, in filthy living conditions. Shortly thereafter, we heard about a Dallas mother who killed her five children, blaming post-partum depression. Recently, Bill Maher of ABC’s *Politically Incorrect*, who has long maintained that children should have no rights because adults are “older and wiser”, expressed reservations about home-schooling because it can effectively restrict the child’s human contact to a potentially unstable parent.

Americans are beginning to question whether the adults are always right.

“Gulag schools”, the private institutions which have for decades offered parents a way to “fix” their troubled kids, have been considered, until recently, virtually untouchable by government authorities, free to practice any kinds of “treatment” they wished. Now a boot camp for kids in Arizona has been closed down, and a private treatment facility for “troubled youth” in West Virginia is fighting for its survival.

Americans are starting to consider the idea that adults should not be allowed to treat their children as property.

In 1999, the Minnesota legislature held a hearing on a bill to lower their state’s voting age to 16; this year a similar bill appeared in Massachusetts. Both bills failed, but not before they received some serious consideration and favorable media coverage. The national drinking age of 21 has recently met with some editorial ridicule after the President’s twin daughters were caught attempting to violate it. The *Dallas News* ran an excellent editorial on July 1 <http://www.dallasnews.com/metro/arlington/opinion/407829_oped1_01arl.AR.html> on the inconsistencies of our country’s age restrictions.

Americans are beginning to re-evaluate the notion of using age as an indicator of maturity or readiness.

In the next four years, the number of 15-24 year olds in the United States is expected to exceed 40 million, the highest number for that age group since the mid-1980s. Americans are already well aware that the adult electorate has placed into office a president with whom half the country is seriously dissatisfied. They have noticed that young people are reaching physical maturity at earlier ages, but are still expected to wait long years before being treated like full citizens. And they are starting to get the message that youth crime is not (and never was) as serious or prevalent as many politicians made it out to be.

If we are organized and ready for action, the coming years may provide some of the best opportunities for change since the 1960s. The media, the public, and our elected officials seem to be rethinking their formerly hard-and-fast views about youth, and becoming more receptive to new ideas. Eliminating age restrictions might be an idea whose time has come.

— AMERICANS ARE BEGINNING TO
RE-EVALUATE THE NOTION OF USING
AGE AS AN INDICATOR OF MATURITY —

News Links

West Virginia “Gulag School” Fights to Stay Open

Following the suicide of a resident, an investigation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) into Alldredge Academy resulted in an order in early June to shut down the institution and send all residents home, according to an article at <http://www.wvgazette.com/news/News/2001060656/>. DHHR found that the private institution violated minimum standards of operation, such as having staff administer mind-altering drugs without any license to do so. Last we heard, the institution was refusing to comply with the order and was preparing for a legal battle to stay in operation.

Disruptive Student “Subdued” to Death

The death of a student at a Maryland school for emotionally disturbed boys was ruled a homicide by police, according to a July 5 Washington Post article (available at <http://nospank.org/n-i04.htm>). The student, restrained by a counselor “until he looked like he was settling down,” was found to have died from asphyxiation, combined with an asthma attack. Other reports of physical abuse at the school were mentioned.

Depressed Mother Drowns Her Sorrows

Under the influence of post-partum depression (as well as an antidepressant drug used to treat it), 36-year-old Andrea Yates of Houston, Texas drowned her five children in the bathtub and then turned herself in to police. The children’s ages ranged from 6 months to 7 years. One report can be found at <http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/06/20/children.killed/>, another at <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/yates010713.html>.

Boy Arrested, Expelled for Using “C-Word”

A California 8th-grader spent ten days in jail for making an angry remark on the phone to two classmates. According to the article at http://www.lasvegasweekly.com/2001/departments/2001_06_28/upfront_1.html, after two girls called him late at night, placed him on hold, and forgot about him for 15 minutes, he told them “It’s people like you who get on the Columbine lists.” The juvenile court judge dismissed the case, but his expulsion from school was not reversed.

Buzz

Pro Youth Rights Voice To Be Heard At Conference

ASFAR and NYRA member Alex Koroknay-Palicz has been invited to participate in a panel discussion at the 81st Annual Conference of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in Washington D.C. The panel will consist of representatives of various youth-serving organizations.

The conference is scheduled for November 16-18, 2001. More information is available at <http://www.ncss.org>.

Opinions expressed may not reflect the views of ASFAR.

Letters

Wants to Work

I am 14 and can’t find a decent job! I need 108 more dollars plus the tax of the item I need for a summer project! I looked at all kinds of places and you can’t do ANYTHING until you’re that freaking 16!
“nightvid”

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What needs to change within our movement for ASFAR to be significant

The President's Pen

George Justin Mallone
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As President of the organization for which *Youth Truth* is the official publication, I have a duty to be honest with the members reading this, and with the broader public at large, regarding the situation of ASFAR and the whole youth rights movement altogether (mind you, this is just my perspective, and the other board members and ASFAR members will no doubt have varying opinions).

It is bogged down right now in a morass of apathy, lack of sufficient individual action-activities, and organizational procedure. This is the truth: members are apathetic, as a sense of hopelessness and resignation to despair seems to permeate many discussions. And this is not just within ASFAR; some of the other organizations in the movement seem to be having similar problems.

So what's the solution? A total and complete change in the way we approach our mission objective, the abolition of age restrictions.

Since the launch of this publication, it's received praise within the relatively small circle of people who know of its existence. Part of this, no doubt, comes from being the only publication of its kind (that'll win you a lot of praise from ideological partisans), but I'd like to think that some of it also comes from the informative and interesting quality of the content. People pass around editions of *YT* to their friends and get them interested in the youth rights movement, which naturally helps us. If this all sounds rather obvious, believe me, I have a point :)

My point is that, while *YT* has done relatively well, our efforts at organizing, say, protests and the like, have been hit or miss at best (and generally leaning towards "miss"). So, while still conducting the "ground level grassroots" political warfare of protests when and where feasible, perhaps ASFAR should shift its focus?

At this point I'd like to bring up NYRA for comparison. NYRA, the National Youth Rights Association, is a good, solid organization dedicated to the cause of youth rights. They are not as "hardcore" as we at ASFAR are, but they definitely want to move the debate in the right direction.

Now NYRA recently had a huge bunch of members (about 200 I hear) join from a concert, which is great news. It also illustrates ASFAR's dilemma: it's easier to get mass numbers of people to join an organization dedicated towards the cause of merely "improving youth rights" (and a worthy cause it is indeed!) than to get them to join an organization dedicated to the *abolition* of age restrictions. ASFAR's "membership lead" over NYRA was always set to be fleeting, and with neither dues nor a large enough base of members to be able to live off of contributions, our efforts at lobbying and protesting will be rather restricted, to put it mildly.

So where does this leave us? With a tremendous opportunity! While other organizations such as NYRA may (and hopefully will) build up a large base of support they can use to muster traditional political pressure, ASFAR has quite a few extraordinarily dedicated people whose passion and commitment to the cause ameliorate their relative lack of numbers (the mere existence of this publication is proof of that fact.)

How do we use this to our advantage? Going back to the example of *YT*, we see that the youth rights movement desperately needs and demands *content*, things that they can hold in their hand, pass around to friends, perhaps even one day listen to on the radio. These are the sorts of things that create a cultural environment favorable to the promotion of youth rights; these are the sorts of things that energize and invigorate and promote the adoption of our principles.

Our mistake is that we've been trying to develop local organizations without enough interesting material to entice people, to make them believe that there is actually a chance of making change through these organizations. Where are the ASFAR books? None. Flyers? Limited. But this is only the beginning. We need to really USE the power of the internet as well, and not just as a discussion-board either. We need new ideas.

How about an internet-based "Radio Free Youth" promoting youth rights through interviews, reports, and commentary?

Or a slashdot.org type of youth rights centered site, where people can post and rate stories of interest to the youth rights community?

How about a youth rights compilation CD, with a bunch of YR- related songs on it?

Just a few of the interesting things we can and SHOULD do. Yes, they would take resources. Yes, we would need volunteers, not just for developing the sites and creating the content, but possibly for hosting the sites themselves if there's significant traffic. And yes, we need to address fundamental problems while working on wacky new ideas (our main site needs to be improved, along with various structural changes to allow us to be a more nimble, responsive organization).

But it is KEY that we begin thinking outside the box, because if we don't, we're gonna be stuck inside it forever, and never crawl out of the cage of political insignificance. And what an ironic shame it would be, as we quote Robert Heinlein's phrase "Age is Not a Cage", to discover that Apathy serves as Age's ready understudy when it comes to our organization.

Fiction

[author's name deleted at author's request]

Damnation!

As soon as Matt sidled into the window seat and laid his hand on the fastening clip of his knapsack to pull it open, he realized he'd forgotten to pack a book. Opening the bag, he confirmed that everything else he'd brought for the three-hour plane trip—a packet of spearmint-flavored chewing gum, a packet of tissues, a chapstick—was there, as well as a neatly-folded sweater for later, a pair of sunglasses and his little digital camera. Nothing whatsoever was missing, except for the copy of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which he'd been planning to read on the way back, had even placed aside for this purpose. But a moment of thoughtlessness had caused him to put the brand-new paperback edition in his suitcase along with the rest of the books he'd gotten for his birthday, most of which he'd already devoured during his vacation. And so, rather than being in his lap as he waited for takeoff, the renaissance political treatise was for the present buried deep within the metal bowels of the mechanical bird that was to take him home.

An array of in-flight magazines cluttered the little compartment in front of him. Pulling one out, however, he saw at once that it wouldn't do. The glossy-paged publication contained page upon page of advertisements, and the little content it had to offer seemed to restrict itself to mindless gossip about the sex lives of famous actors. He put it away quickly. A stewardess with pigtailed began to demonstrate standard safety procedures to the passengers, and, half-listening, Matt pawed through the compartment in search for more inspiring reading material.

Just as he finally fished out what turned out to be a duty-free pamphlet—maybe he would get a nice gift for his parents when the cart with the merchandise came

around later—the elderly lady who occupied the seat next to him returned from the lavatory and sat down, smiling at Matt in what he took to be a grandmotherly, condescending way. She hadn't so thoughtlessly neglected to bring along a book, but, as he caught for a split second the name Michener on the paperback's cover before she opened it to the dog-eared page and began to read, Matt wasn't sure she was much better off than he was.

A stewardess wearing too much makeup reached across the old lady, offering him his pick of generic, infantile toys from a tray. He thanked her politely and waved them away; she responded with a puzzled, wavering smile. "Don't you want anything to play with?" she inquired, as though expecting him to change his mind. It took a second, firmer *No* before the



stewardess's outstretched arm finally receded and he could return his attention to the duty-free pamphlet.

As she stalked away, the "Fasten Seatbelts" sign above Matt's head illuminated audibly, again snatching his gaze away from the magazine. He groped around for the belt in the confinement of his seat.

Sluggishly, the Boeing headed across the lot. From his window, Matt could see the airport's buildings recede to make way for fields of green and gold.

On the runway, the 11-year-old felt himself pushed back into his seat as the plane accelerated for takeoff. Soon, the panorama fell away below him, rendered exceptionally gorgeous by the setting sun. But the latter shone into his eyes and, to the apparent dismay of his neighbor, he pulled the blind down on the scenery.

"Don't you like the view?" the woman asked and, when he remained silent, added that she had a grandson who was about his age. Matt thought it an inane comment, obviously uttered in the hope of provoking a response out of him. He muttered noncommittal acknowledgement and, having failed to find inspiration in the duty-free pamphlet, leaned back and shut his eyes to think.

He had spent the summer at his grandparents' in the country, fishing, hiking and doing everything else that city boys were supposed to do when they vacationed on the land. It had been a pleasant trip, full of new experiences, but already he was eager for home and his friends at the gifted children's school. There, nobody looked down on him just because he was, by common definition, a child. Matt hated being assumed innocent and naive. He hated it when people didn't take him seriously, dismissing his words as the ramblings of a youngster.

The stewardess with too much makeup returned to offer his neighbor a selection of newspapers, and Matt became alert again. "I'd like the Boston Herald, please," he requested earnestly, glancing up into her eyes.

The stewardess released a high-pitched giggle. "We have some comic books here if you like," she offered with that same confused yet serviceable smile she had worn when he'd turned down her toys.

"Don't you have the Herald?" he asked. "We are, after all, flying to Boston."

—WOULDN'T YOU
RATHER HAVE A TOY?—

Air Rage

“Yes, we do have the Boston Herald,” the stewardess warily conceded. “Are you sure you want it?”

“I’d hardly be asking if I didn’t, would I?” he remarked, annoyed.

Wordlessly, and with a noticeable annoyance of her own beneath the professional façade, she handed him the paper and hurried away.

Settling back into his seat, Matt began to update himself on the current events. Yet after a few minutes he felt the stare of the old lady sitting next to him and was unable to concentrate enough to continue. Folding the newspaper with a sigh, he met her glance with question and deliberately exaggerated impatience.

“Do you even understand what’s written in that paper?” she demanded. “I’d think you were still a bit young to read things like that.”

He was tempted to tell the nosy hag to mind her own business, but decided she wasn’t worth getting upset over. “I’ll do fine,” he offered, hoping she would leave him alone after that. He buried his nose in the paper, putting on his do-not-disturb air. It worked. Shaking her head, the woman went back to reading her Michener.

By the time the dinner arrived, Matt had finished the politics section of the *Herald* and was leafing through sports. The pig-tailed stewardess who had given the safety demonstration waited for him to open his folding table, and, beaming, placed a tray on it. It was spaghetti, a kiddie meal—this was obvious from the idiotic smiley face that had been painted onto the pasta with ketchup. Matt was not amused. He envied the woman sitting next to him for her tasty-looking roast beef and croquettes.

From the minute he had boarded the plane, nobody had let him forget for a minute

that he was 11. He knew he wasn’t supposed to get angry at that; knew that nobody was doing this to him with deliberate malice, but this knowledge couldn’t prevent him from raging silently at the utter lack of respect he was faced with every time he came into contact with adults. He ate slowly and pensively, chewing on his thoughts with the same deliberate thoroughness with which he chewed on his supper.

In the row in front of him, an argument began between a man and his daughter concerning the girl’s refusal to finish her food. The man seemed to be convinced that he had every right to order his daughter to eat. Finally, she caved in to his overpowering, almost threatening presence and grudgingly forked down the rest of her spaghetti.



As self-appointed figures of authority, Matt mused, grown-ups talked themselves into believing that commanding children to obey their every whim was for their own good, since they could make no decisions of their own. He recognized that it was the same, silly argument which the British had used when they exercised their rule on India; the Americans when uprooting residents of Africa and forcing them into slavery; men when they denied women the right to vote on who would stand at the helm of their nation. Like those groups had been, kids were still wholly at the mercy

of their elders. Their entire childhood, he concluded, was little more than a prison sentence, for only when they turned eighteen did they become free to do as they pleased within the boundaries of the law.

Why would no child stand up and oppose the domination they faced at the hands of adults? Why did they not cry out at the utter violation of their human rights? Matt gnashed his teeth in resentment, not so much towards the grown-ups for embracing power as towards kids everywhere for so willingly conceding it to them. Did nobody but him realize what a hopeless position they were in, or did they simply choose to accept it with defeat?

Matt blamed the girl sitting in the row in front of him for the misfortune of children in general. It was due to people like her that adults could get away with making kids do whatever they wanted them to—whether it was deciding that they should amuse themselves with toys that fitted their own notions of what kids should play with, read the books that adults figured they should read, or eat the food that they were expected to like. There seemed to be a certain predefined mold, conceived of the common clichés of childhood, that you could get in trouble for failing to fill. So long as children continued to reshape themselves to fit into that mold, it would never break.

The airplane suddenly turned into a jail cell, its gray interior claustrophobic. Frantic, Matt wanted out. He could not bear to spend another second in his tight seat, a mold by itself. Before the old lady had a chance to pick up her food tray and let him pass, he climbed right across her lap, knocking cutlery from her hands and tipping both of their folding tables so that the two trays crashed into the backs of the seats ahead of them. When he finally stood in the aisle, his entire row was a mess of spilled beverages and plastic wrappers.

When the stewardess tried to get past him to clean up, the boy threw a tantrum.

— ISN’T THAT
TOO OLD FOR YOU? —

Sue's Review

Susan Wishnetsky
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People don't usually like to be classified by others. Lately I've been noticing the reemergence of the old stereotypes about females. While I do believe that, for the female population as a whole, there's truth to the stereotypes, I still don't like it! Doggone it, they don't apply to *me!* This is what ASFAR is largely about: seeing people as individuals and judging them by their *own* behavior, not just what we think is typical of the group to which we assign them. Giving everyone the opportunity to prove themselves. No prejudging. No presuppositions. No labeling.

The authors of *Millennials Rising* aren't interested in individuals, even though they mention many of them in their book. The anecdotes and case histories (and the columns of quotations along the outer edge of each page) are all used to paint a broader picture of the generation they call the *Millennials*, those born in 1982 and later. They insist that "a generation . . . is not about its bits and pieces, but about its cultural center of gravity." And "as a generation arrives, advances, and recedes, this core persona invariably reveals itself. Not every member will share it, of course, but every member will have to deal with it, willingly or not, over a lifetime."

Georgia High Court: No Juries for Kids

When a Georgia statute was challenged by a youth on the grounds that it deprives juveniles of the right to a jury trial, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled unanimously on June 11 that defendants do not have that right in the juvenile justice system, which is designed for "rehabilitation and treatment," not punishment. One article is at <<http://www.law.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+FTContentServer?pagename=law/View&c=Article&cid=ZZZHE4U9WNC&live=true&cst=1&pc=0&pa=0>> (or visit <www.law.com> and do a search!). It contains some interesting discussion, including a comment by District Attorney Daniel J. Porter that the cost of providing jury trials to juveniles "would be astronomical."

Editor's note: Content of reviewed books may not represent the views of ASFAR.

This most recent generation is not the only one discussed in *Millennials Rising*; the authors also explore the generation of their parents, mostly Baby Boomers, in an attempt to provide explanations for their parental choices and behaviors. In one chapter, the authors look back as far as the late 1500s for generational comparisons and patterns (a chapter I found, frankly, rather tedious).

According to the authors, the typical Millennial child has been—since his or her conception—wanted, valued, and protected. These young people comprise a large segment of the population, born in a 1980s boom in childbirth which approached the levels of the late 1950s. They tend to be well-educated and well-behaved. They seem to be confident, optimistic, and happy. They seem to be team- and achievement-oriented, embracing group values and even conformity over individualism.



The ethnic diversity of this generation's members—many of whose parents are new immigrants—and the huge economic gap between the poorest and the wealthiest of their families are also mentioned, much too briefly, I think. To every generalization in the book about the families of Millennial kids—fewer siblings, more educated parents, fewer divorces, more material goods in the home—these two factors add a big, qualifying "BUT".

The authors call these kids fortunate to be the focus of so much parental and governmental attention and concern, but they are well aware of the intrusive, oppressive, and sheltered upbringing that has resulted from it. While they believe the outlook for their future is bright, they openly sympathize with these kids, subjected to longer school days in locked-down, policed environments, more homework, surveillance and snooping, unwarranted drug testing, zero tolerance, loss of free speech rights, and stricter standards of behavior than has been expected of any other generation of kids we can remember. They also point out how measures intended to improve kids' welfare may backfire:

News Links

Drinking Age Law Hits President's Daughters

Jenna and Barbara Bush, both 19, were cited for underage alcohol offenses after a visit to a Mexican restaurant in Texas. Details are on many news sites; one article describing the penalty imposed on Jenna Bush is at <<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/dailynews/jenna010706.html>>.

Abused Girl Killed While Waiting for Help

Three months after 12-year old Crystal Gordon told a school counselor about physical and sexual abuse by her half-brother, a social worker arrived at the Gordon's home in Belleville, Michigan, only to be told that Crystal had been fatally shot by her brother the previous day; see <http://www.freep.com/news/locway/nsister29_20010529.htm>.

Howe, Neil & Strauss, William. *Millennials rising: the next great generation.* New York: Vintage Books, 2000.

Kids have been prescribed so many antibiotics, to treat everything from earaches to pinkeye, that they are now threatened by new bacteria that acquire resistance to those drugs.

Mental retardation and some other chronic conditions are slowly rising, perhaps due to the rising share of older moms having babies and the rising share of very premature or very low-birthweight babies who now survive.

Passenger-side auto airbags have killed several dozen children.

Heavy school backpacks, stuffed with books, are causing some back injuries and drawing complaints from kids and pediatricians.

Joint injuries are plaguing girl athletes, whose participation in competitive contact sports has been encouraged by parents and schools. Arthritis looms as a problem for their young adulthood.

The authors also note that three health problems seen more often in Millennials—asthma, obesity, and attention-deficit disorder (the last of which, they declare, is diagnosed on “subjective factors”)—may in fact be largely attributable to the restricted, indoor, germ-free lifestyle imposed upon them, for their protection.

Some of the examples in the book paint a contradictory picture. Presented as

typical of Millennials’ work ethic is a 13-year-old boy who collected aluminum cans for two years to save up for a computer—quite unlike other kids quoted, who are not allowed the freedom to scour their towns for aluminum cans, and who already have their own computers! Other young go-getters are mentioned, who start their own businesses or community service projects—unlike others so overloaded with homework and group activities that they have no leisure time in which to formulate or plan such projects. (One example in the book is a story we’ve all heard, the tale of Columbine high-schooler Cassie Bernall proclaiming her faith in God at the cost of her life; the authors were apparently unaware that the story was later discredited by the one surviving witness to the scene.)

If the book’s depiction of Millennial kids—who in a survey estimated their annual incomes would reach \$70,000 by age 30



(over 259% of the median annual income for today’s 30-year-olds)—is on the mark, then I wouldn’t be too optimistic about their futures. Will the “confidence” reportedly instilled in these kids by their parents and teachers be enough when they’re faced with a world they’ve barely had a chance to see? Can they make it in a serious economic downturn, the likes of which has never occurred in their lifetimes? If the market is saturated with their smart, eager, computer-literate peers, will their “team focus” help them deal with true competition for jobs? And have enough of them been encouraged to develop the *individual* talents and qualities that will bring them success?

You may disbelieve or reject the authors’ conclusions or predictions, many of which are admittedly speculations on their part. Some of what they say may make you mad, especially if you happen to belong to the generation they describe. This isn’t a “pro-youth” book; it’s not intended to be. But, taken for what it is, *Millennials Rising* is neither offensive nor “anti-youth”. It contains some valuable information—many of the same facts youth rights advocates like to point out. It is fun to read and thought-provoking, and it may cause you to look at people around you in a different light. And it may be accurately describing some trends that we need to pay attention to.

News Links

Arizona “Boot Camp” Shut Down

An investigation into the death of a 14-year-old boy from apparent heat exhaustion led the local sheriff to shut down a “boot camp” program near Phoenix on July 2. Abusive practices by staff such as forcing residents to eat mud, kicking and stomping on residents, and severely restricting food and water were uncovered. Several articles covering this story from the Associated Press and the New York Times are available at the web site of *Project No-Spank*, one at <http://nospank.org/n-i05.htm>, and another on the questionable past of the man who ran the camp at <http://nospank.org/n-i01.htm>. A commentary on this story appears at <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/bootcamps010712.html>.

Students Sue Over Strip Searches

In May, a school-sponsored “Scared-Straight” style tour of the District of Columbia jail, for middle-schoolers in trouble for minor misbehavior, included strip searches of the students, possibly in view of prison inmates. A group of girls also complained that they were led into the men’s section and subjected to harassment by male inmates. The incidents, which occurred in May, led to four dismissals of prison employees, including the warden, and disciplinary measures for two school employees. Several lawsuits have been filed against the District of Columbia. The story can be found at <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/jail010530.html>.

Song

by Swish & You.

The author of what's below is not a songwriter or even a musically-knowledgeable person! Those of you who *are* should feel free to improve upon this song and add your own name to it. Or, start fresh and write your own!

1. You stamp a number on my face just to keep me in my place, for the law says at my
age I belong inside a cage. But that number's just a sham.
Doesn't tell you who I am. Won't you look at me? Don't you know we're not all the same. I've
got my own name. My life's not a game. Let me out to live beside you.

2. How can one live without a voice? Or the right to make a choice?
We'll remember for all time being jailed without a crime.
You say we're not ready yet, and that, one day, we'll forget.
(What d'ya want to bet?)
Open up and just let us try. Some of us will fly.
We'll show the reason why we should build this world together.

3. We are all waiting at the door. You won't even say what for.
And there's nothing we can do just to prove ourselves to you.
You say age makes you mature. Look around—are you so sure?
Open up the door!
Teach us what it's like to be free, permanently.
Soon we'll agree we can share this world together.

