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December 2008**

Greetings,

I have decided to send out an annual update concerning my situation and activities in 2008. Many of my friends, supporters and well-wishers have not heard from me in a while. I am sorry for the lack of communication; much of the blame simply has to do with this 39 year ordeal. With each passing year, the task of writing to everyone gets harder and harder. Yet I enjoy receiving mail and your letters have been important to me and it is important to keep everyone updated on the ongoing struggle to gain my freedom. So, I have decided to try newer means of communication. Season's greetings to all in whatever way you choose to celebrate this time of year.

This year was one of change for me in several ways, I have been transferred back into the Jessup prison complex after two years of travelling around the state prison system. Previously, I had spent 24 years in Maryland House of Corrections at Jessup but the prison facility but that prison was closed down in 2006. Since then I have been held in a Hagerstown prison twice and in a Cumberland prison once. The Jessup prison complex is closer in proximity to my family and friends in Baltimore.

The second major change was the unfavorable legal resolution of the Adams case by the Maryland Court of Appeals. The court decided by 4 to 3 against supporting our legal position which had to do with jury instruction. Winning the case would have won my release. The case is being presented to the U.S. Supreme Court in hope of acceptance and a favorable resolution. We will not know the outcome until late spring or early summer. In the meantime, my lawyer and I have decided that we will move forward on some remaining issues in my case by early next year.

The on going campaign to correct this 39-year-old injustice and win my freedom is also changing because of the Adams case decision. We are now gearing up to mount a challenge to the parole board next year.

Many of Maryland's lifers, including myself, would have been paroled years ago if not for the state's draconian policies toward its citizens who are serving a life sentence. In my case, we hope to help change that situation. I will be forwarding information about request for parole and clemency.

There was also a change in my student status. I have finished all my academic and other requirements (writing a thesis) to change my status from student to candidate for a Master's Degree. My many transfers and some private issues among my advisors have created the need for an extension of the time in which I can submit my work.

In spite of the multiple transfers, I have continued working with programs that help mentor prisoners. I found the conditions among the youth population, in the Maryland Correctional Training Center in Hagerstown (MCTC), to be shocking even to me, someone who has spent nearly four decades in Maryland prisons. The need for positive role models and mentors led to the development of a mentoring program. The mentoring program, A Friend of a Friend, continues to operate at MCTC; new mentors are graduating every 6 months. The Hagerstown experience clearly shows that more work needs to be done in the prison system among the youth population. Young people are returning to the community by the hundreds and our programs (there are now three) are only reaching a few dozen at a time. Now that I am back in the Jessup region, I am working to help establish a training program for mentors with the help of a local college. Such a program would allow us to reach hundreds of young men and women a year, instead of dozens, and hopefully provide academic credit to the mentors.

On a more personal note, my family is well and almost everyone seems to be in good health and high spirits. I have a new grandson, Janall and during the last year my sister Cookie has worked at bringing the family closer together, and this has made me very happy. Besides that, my health is fairly good after 39 years of prison food and stress.

Thanks to you all I can still smile, my spirit is still strong and I know I will be free one day. Your support over the years has given me the energy to survive this ordeal. Please continue your support in whatever way you can. Write, educate, organize, rally, fundraise, protest and pray. If you want to help with the campaign contact Gary Gillespie at 410-323-9200 or ggillespie@afsc.org for additional information. . Clearly, the economical crisis will make 2009 a challenging year for all of us. We need to build networks and work together collectively to address our future needs.

Once again, thank you one and all for your support large and small. Considering the present conditions, I still hope you have a wonderful season and a brighter new year.

Sincerely,
Eddie Conway

*Comrade,
I hope you have already received this
By E-mail. However in case you have not
this is a late greeting, but sincere nevertheless.
Hope you are taking care and remaining
positive. Stay Strong - In Struggle
Eddie*

39 Years Is Too MANY!!!

A Fundraiser to support Marshall "Eddie" Conway

And all Political Prisoners

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For more information, contact Erica: erica_woodland@hotmail.com

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