

BRUCE BAECHLER SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

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BRUCE IN MORGANTOWN FEDERAL PRISON; TAKES STAND AGAINST SLAVE LABOR

Bruce Baechler reported to Morgantown (W.Va.) Federal Prison (officially called the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Federal Youth Center!) on July 20 to begin serving his 26 month sentence for refusing to register for the draft. This is a minimum security institution for men 16-20; apparently a relatively easy place to do time. Bruce is in C Cottage, which is a huge room with 9' X 6' cubicles around the edge divided by shoulder-high partitions. Each inmate is assigned a cubicle. As a vegetarian, Bruce is given processed cheese in place of meat. He finds that the food is not terribly nutritious, but not grossly inadequate either. He is fasting one-third of the time. The library is closed because the staff librarian transferred to another prison and has not been replaced. Bruce's repeated offers to manage the library (he has experience in library work) have been refused. He gets along well with everyone there. Only one guard tries to order him around, the rest ask.

Bruce refuses to provide labor to the institution without adequate compensation. This issue came to a head on July 29 when he refused an order to perform work and handed an explanatory statement (see p. 2) to the guard. After both the unit manager and the unit psychologist failed to dissuade him, he was brought before the unit disciplinary committee of seven staff, which sent him to G Cottage - the disciplinary unit. He was confined to the building (the other cottages are kept unlocked), but locked in his room only at night. (G Cottage also contains a segregation unit where prisoners are kept in solitary confinement.) He did not find G Cottage to be a bad place to be compared to C Cottage - it's stocked with games and books, and is relatively quiet - but persons there are not allowed phone and visiting contact with people from the outside (except clergy). On August 1, Bruce and prison authorities agreed that he would be part of an on-the-job welding training program, instead of a regular work program. This agreement brought about his return to C Cottage.

WORSHIP. "I try to go out alone about 7 PM each nite for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, to worship, meditate, and think." Bruce welcomes everyone to join him in worship at that time wherever they are. Bruce expects to attend Morgantown Friends Meeting when it resumes meeting in the fall.

MAIL. "There are no restrictions on mail here. I can seal my outgoing mail. Incoming mail is checked for contraband or money and sent to me. It supposedly isn't read. Any money sent is credited to my account at the commissary and a receipt is placed in the envelope it came in. It would be good for anyone who might send money to mention the amount in the letter, just to be safe." Write him at: Bruce Baechler, 1046-103, Box 1000, Morgantown, WV 26505.

PHONE CALLS. He can make long distance collect phone calls, but no local calls. If you wish to receive collect calls from him, tell him in a letter.

VISITING. Visitors have to be on Bruce's visiting list (the Support Committee has the names of those on the list). If you want to visit, Bruce will add you to his list. He will need your address, age and marital status (!). Persons added should wait for notification from the Federal Bureau of Prisons before coming to visit. "Visiting hours are 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Saturday, Sunday, and National holidays. Just go to the administration building and they'll page me. Packages may be brought, except perishable food. By the way, visiting regulations state that visiting shall not be denied if I'm in deadlock (G Cottage) unless I'm there for violating visiting regulations. If they hassle, raise a stink." We hope to be able to arrange overnight hospitality for visitors in local homes.