

Abolition Alert



Put on your dancing shoes!

**Annual Dinner Dance
to be Held**



Thursday, April 10th — Featuring Andrea Lyon!

Andrea D. Lyon will be the keynote speaker for AADP's annual dinner dance, to be held on Thursday, April 10, 2008, at the Hotel Alyeska, in Girdwood. Tickets are \$65 each — which includes an all-you-can-eat buffet dinner, an opportunity to hear a leading abolitionist speak, a guaranteed chair at the ever-entertaining AADP auction, and a night of dancing to our favorite dinner-dance band, *Silver Train!* Buy your tickets now! The event occurs during the ATLA spring conference, so we expect a big turnout!

**Reserve your tickets
now — contact Sue
at 276-5753 or
scjohnson@gci.net**



Andrea Lyon is on the faculty of DePaul University College of Law, and is the Director of the Center for Justice in Capital Cases. Lyon's first legal work was at the Cook County Public Defenders' Office. Her last position there was as Chief of the Homicide Task Force, a 22-lawyer unit representing persons accused of homicides.

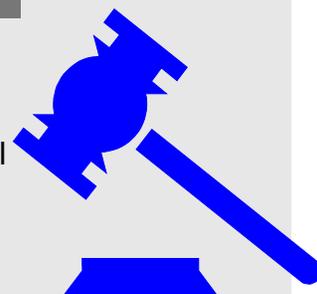
Lyon has tried over 130 homicide cases, both while in the Public Defender's office and since. She has defended over thirty potential capital cases at the trial level and has taken nineteen through penalty phase; she has won all nineteen. In 1990, Lyon founded the Illinois Capital Resource Center and served as its director until joining the University of Michigan Law School faculty as an Assistant Clinical Professor in 1995. She is a nationally recognized expert in the field of death penalty defense and a frequent continuing legal education teacher throughout the country.

Lyon won the prestigious National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Reginald Heber Smith Award for best advocate for the poor. In 1998, she was awarded the "Justice for All" award at the National Conference on Wrongful Convictions and the Death Penalty. In 2003, she received the lifetime achievement award from the Illinois Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. In 2005 she received the president's commendation from the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers for her death penalty work.

Auction Items are Needed for the April Dinner Dance

We are happy to auction off anything! Items in the past have included books (both old and new), photographs, jewelry, artwork, abolition memorabilia as well as offers to provide personal services, such as loan of a cabin, preparation of a dinner, or other offers. No contribution is unwelcome.

Contact Sue Johnson to make a contribution.



Abolition Around America

On December 17, 2007, the state of **New Jersey** abolished its death penalty! The number of states rejecting death as a governmental response is on the upswing.

In **Nebraska**, an abolitionist victory was celebrated when the state supreme court held that electrocution was cruel and unusual punishment under the state constitution. “Condemned prisoners must not be tortured to death, regardless of their crimes,” Judge William Connolly wrote in the 6 to 1 opinion, issued February 8, 2008.

In **Mississippi**, a man named Kennedy Brewer, who spent 12 years on death row for the rape and murder of his girlfriend’s three-year-old daughter, was exonerated by DNA evidence, following the efforts of the Innocence Project. The DNA matched that of another man, who was then charged with the crime. (This result was only possible because the evidence of the crime had been preserved by the state crime laboratory.)

Founding President of AADP Retires

Jim McComas, founding president of Alaskans Against the Death Penalty, and his wife, Anne, are retiring to a quiet life of fishing on a remote lake in Wisconsin. Jim’s leadership shaped the organization and made it what it is today. His passion and dedication to keeping Alaska death-penalty free left an indelible mark on this community. We wish him well in his retirement — he will be missed!



AADP members Bill Pelke, Kathy Harris and Barb Hood bid a fond farewell to Jim McComas (third from left) at his retirement party February 23.



***Stay tuned for more information on the
Annual Fish Fry Coming Up in July!***



"...Greg's visit was fantastic — the students and teachers were mesmerized with him. E-mails were received from several parents as a follow-up, saying their students had come home and could not stop talking about the impact he made on them."

From Bartlett

Chili Feed Featured Greg Wilhoit

Greg Wilhoit's visit to Alaska was extremely valuable. Wilhoit spoke about his experience of having been wrongly convicted and sentenced to death in Oklahoma on the basis of bite-mark evidence, and about his subsequent exoneration. Wilhoit's story was recounted in John Grisham's book, *The Innocent Man*.

Wilhoit spoke at Steller, Bartlett, and West high schools, UAA, McLaughlin Youth Center, and on the KUDO radio station. Sponsoring teachers reported that the students who heard Wilhoit were completely mesmerized. Wilhoit also spoke at the AADP Chili Feed, which drew a record crowd.

Website News

Our new Website will be available for viewing very soon at

www.aadp.info.com

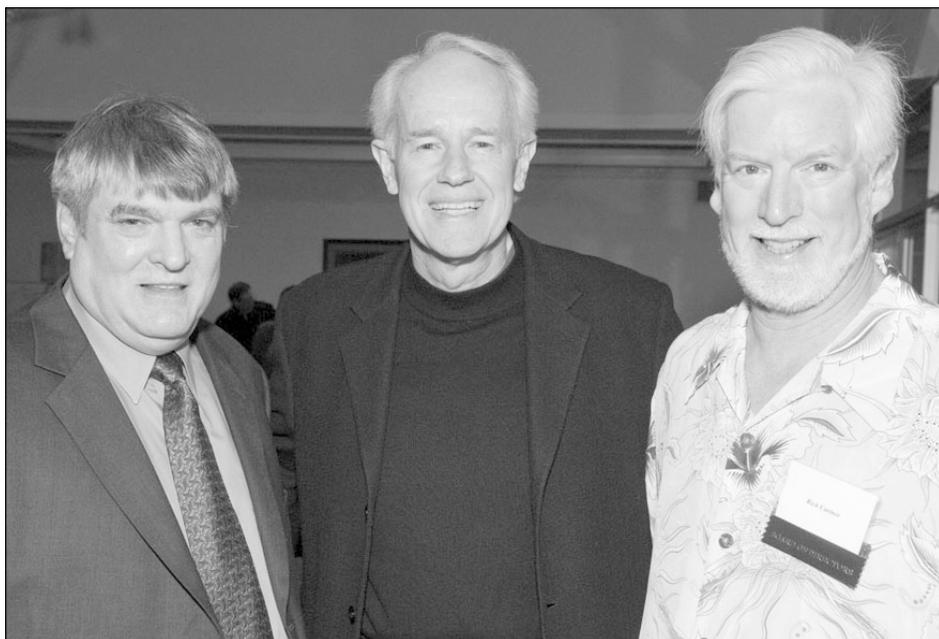
The site was redesigned by high school Webologist Jamin Agosti, who undertook the project in connection with an independent study through East High School.

The new Web site will have current information about AADP events as well as numerous links for people interested in finding out more about the death penalty and abolition efforts.



Pictured at right, Bill Pelke, Mike Ferrell and Rich Curtner.

AADP President Hugh Fleischer, Treasurer Kathy Harris and Board members Rich Curtner and Bill Pelke attended the NCADP conference in San Jose California in January. Pelke and Curtner serve on the NCADP Board. Bill Pelke and Rich Curtner serve on the NCADP board. Bill Pelke was honored as outgoing Board Chairman and Mike Ferrell received NCADP's Lifetime Achievement Award.



Alaskans Against the Death Penalty

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Hugh Fleischer, Kathrine Norgaard & guest at Metro book signing.

Would you like e-mail notices of our upcoming events?

Easy sign up will soon be available on our new Website. In the meantime, if you would like electronic notification of our events, please send an e-mail to scjohnson@gci.net with your name on it, no message necessary.