

# **A**bolition **A**lert

*Movie Event  
at  
Bear Tooth  
a Success!  
See details  
inside!*



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## **Annual Fish Fry To Be Held Friday, July 25th**



**5:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
at 2510 St. Elias Drive**

Mark your calendar for Friday, July 25th, for the Annual Fish Fry at Nancy Groszek's magnificent garden. This event gets bigger and better every year — you won't want to miss it.

We will have many celebrity chefs and judges for you to mingle with, along with wonderful auction items and door prizes. AADP Coordinator Sue Johnson has already been collecting auction items and door prizes for the event, so the auction promises to be more exciting than ever!

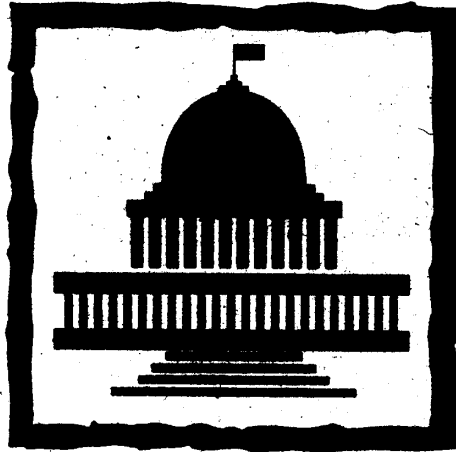
If you have something to donate, contact Sue at [scjohnson@gci.net](mailto:scjohnson@gci.net).

Any and all contributions are welcome.

## Abolitionist's Quotation of the Month

*"From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death. For more than 20 years I have endeavored...to develop...rules that would lend more than the mere appearance of fairness to the death penalty endeavor...Rather than continue to coddle the court's delusion that the desired level of fairness has been achieved...I feel...obligated simply to concede that the death penalty experiment has failed. It is virtually self-evident to me now that no combination of procedural rules or substantive regulations ever can save the death penalty from its inherent constitutional deficiencies..."*

Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun, from an opinion dissenting from the Supreme Court's decision denying review in a Texas death penalty case, *Callins v. Collins*, 510 U.S. 1141, 1145 (1994). Bruce Callins, the petitioner, was executed on May 21, 1997.



## Death Penalty in Alaska?

There have been a number of indications that at least one Alaska legislator is thinking of introducing death statute legislation in the Alaska Legislature in the coming term. We expect that Alaskans Against the Death Penalty will be an important voice in the discussion over any

such proposal. Please make sure we have your e-mail address, so that we can keep you up to date on any new information about this issue. (Send your e-mail to [scjohnson@gci.net](mailto:scjohnson@gci.net) with a request to receive the newsletter, and that will do it.) We will all need to work together should these statements of intent become more concrete. Remember that your contributions have made all of our work possible!



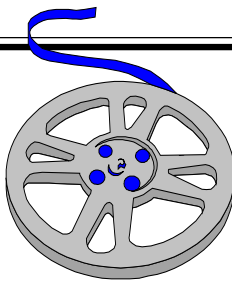
## Passing the Baton



Photo by Abraham J. Bonowitz, Director of Affiliate Support for NCADP

*Outgoing Chair of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty Bill Pelke passes on the baton to Rich Curtner, newly elected Chair. Both Rich and Bill are board members of AADP. Bill was NCADP Chair for 3 1/2 years. Rich was elected to a one-year term.*

## Movie Event at the Bear Tooth a Success!



Pastor Carroll Pickett walking in the graveyard of those put to death in Huntsville.

AADP hosted the first Alaska screening of the new documentary, *At the Death House Door*, at the Bear Tooth Theatre on June 15, 2008. The documentary is a personal inquiry into the Texas death penalty through the eyes of Pastor Carroll Pickett, who served 15 years as the chaplain at the death row in Huntsville, Texas, over the course of 95 executions, each of which Pastor Pickett documented.

The showing was well-attended, with approximately 165 tickets sold, and the documentary elicited great interest. Twenty-five people also attended a follow-up reception at Sue and Rob Johnson's house for further discussion after the movie.

AADP expects that Pastor Pickett may be coming to Alaska this summer, and encourages everyone who didn't have a chance to come to the Bear Tooth screening to rent the movie and see it!

## News from the Death Zone . . .

■ **The wrongly convicted who escaped death:** The Death Penalty Information Center reports that, since 1973, 129 innocent inmates have been exonerated and freed from death row since 1973.

■ **Texas death row inmate to be exonerated:** Based on statements from the District Attorney's office, it appears that Texas wrongly convicted Michael Blair and sentenced him to death in 1994 for the sexual assault and murder of 7-year-old Ashley Estell. The case led to the

■ *Continued on back page ...*

## AADP Unveils New Website

[www.AADP.info/](http://www.AADP.info/)



Please check out our new Website!

You can now get automatic updates of death penalty

information, and you can donate online using your credit card. You can also have your AADP newsletter delivered by e-mail: Just go to the Website and enter your e-mail address.

The Website will continue to evolve — check it out!

Many thanks to **Jamin Agosti**, who got the Website updated and running! Thanks also to **Connor McCoy**, our first Webmaster!

# **A**laskans Against the Death Penalty

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## **News from the Death Zone continued . . .**

passage of “Ashley’s Laws” to increase punishments for such offenses. Collin County District Attorney John Roach announced that new DNA tests show no physical evidence linking Blair to the crime. The only forensic evidence that pointed to Blair for the kidnap-murder was hair evidence; new DNA evidence has shown that the hair belonged to another person. D.A. Roach said, “There is no good faith argument to support the current conviction in light of the facts and the law as they now exist.” Blair has always maintained his innocence in this case and Roach announced that they have another “person of interest” in the case. That man, who showed suspicious behavior after the murder, has since died. Blair will remain incarcerated for life, however, for other crimes he confessed to in 2004. This case is now on review before the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

■ **The state of Maryland** has created a commission to study the death penalty. This is a further indication

that other death states are feeling increasing doubt about capital punishment, like New Jersey, which abolished capital punishment just last year.

■ **The Georgia Pardons and Parole Board** commuted Samuel Crowe’s death sentence to life without parole briefly before his scheduled execution in May. “After careful and exhaustive consideration of the request, the board voted to grant clemency.” The Board heard testimony from several people who knew Crowe, including pastors and a former corrections officer, who said, “I felt like if they released him that morning he would never get in any more trouble and he could make a contribution to society,” and called him a “peacemaker” amongst prison inmates. Crowe would have been the second inmate to be put to death in Georgia in 16 days after a de facto moratorium on executions was lifted in April, when the U.S. Supreme Court approved lethal injection.