

Lbg. Prison Project relayed racial grievance

Inmates seek information from outside the walls

BY MATT FARRAND

Staff writer

LEWISBURG — A paralegal for a prison advocacy group that forwarded a grievance from a USP Lewisburg inmate about racially tinged remarks heard on the Bucknell University student radio station admitted

the chain of events was unusual. The Lewisburg Prison Project alerted WVBU staffers about what the inmate heard, and the pace of official action picked up significantly after that.

"This was probably a unique situation," said David Sprout, paralegal with Lewisburg Prison Project. "Most of what we hear from the guys are about what happens inside. That's their world."

The inmate noted last month that an offensive term for African-Americans was used and violence toward the race was encouraged during a WVBU broadcast of a show called "Happy Times." After the observation was confirmed and three student DJs were identified by university administrators, all were expelled from the university.

Sprout added that he had occasionally been interviewed on the same Bucknell radio station to talk about the issues at the federal penitentiary being monitored by the Prison Project.

"It is a volatile pace," he added, noting that inmates have heard some of his appearances and acknowledged them via letters.

"They're hungry for information from the outside, just like anyone here likes to read their newspapers or listen to their radio," Sprout added.

Inmates in the Special Management Unit at USP Lewisburg have no access to television, Sprout said, and are locked in their cells for very long periods.

"Radio is their lifeblood, really," he added.

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