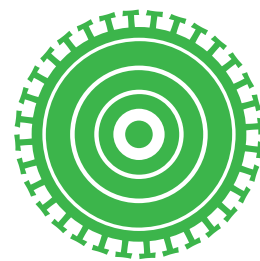


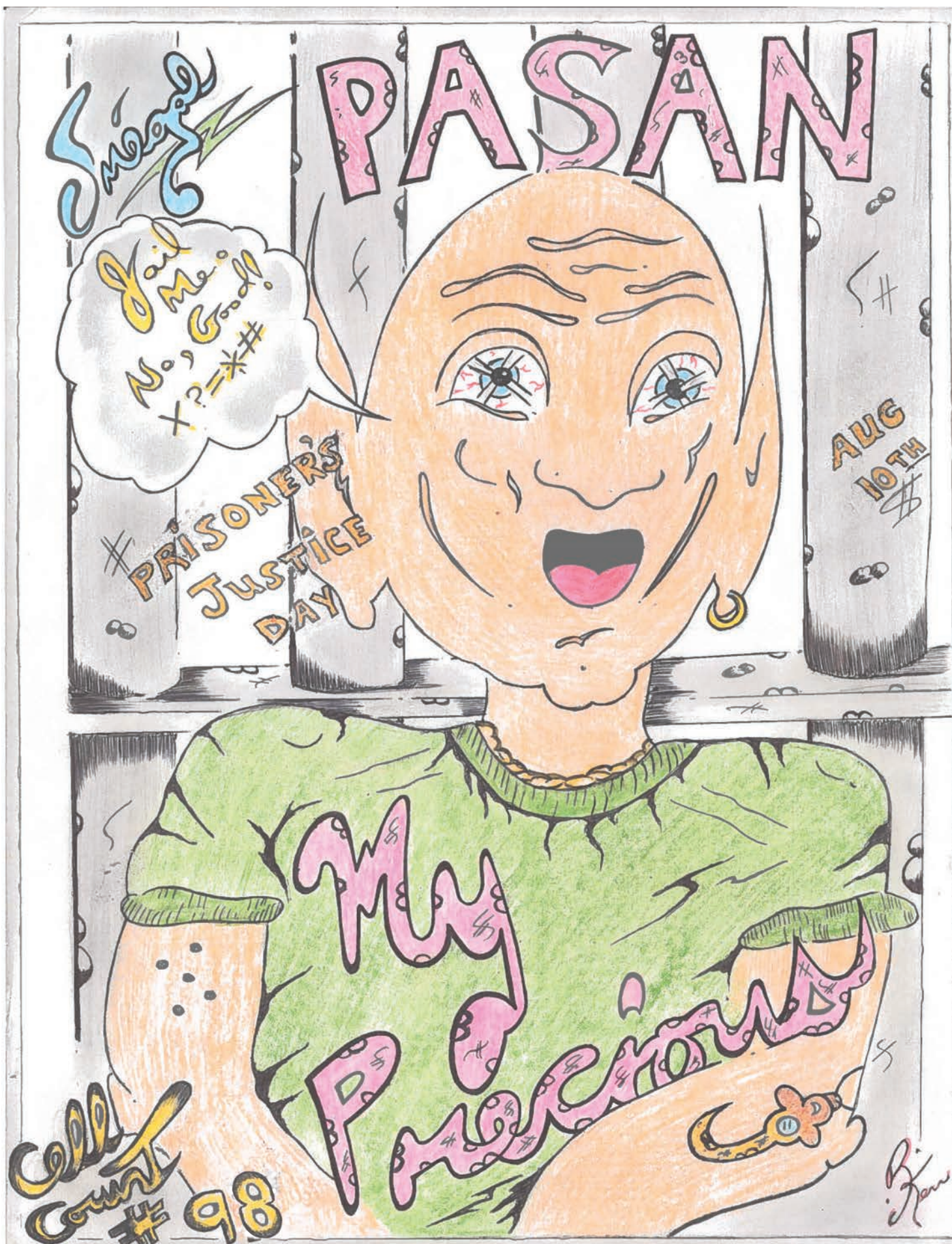
CELL COUNT



YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

THE PJD '22 ISSUE, AUGUST 2022 - #98



PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

By Mike Smith

In 1983 I escaped from an armed escort within the prison fencing. I got away, my partner was caught immediately, me an hour later by the Burnaby RCMP. This was Aug 31st 1983. I plead guilty the next day, first appearance and received 30 days consecutive.

I was sent back this time to the wings. West right, cell 516, I lived on high five. The wings consisted of left and right with 20 cells long, tiers 1 thru 5. I was 17.

Upon admittance to this dungeon you had to de-louse with Kwellada-P to combat lice. I had none, but it was with the Vancouver hard core types and others in this jail. I was approached by inmate Gary August, an Indigenous fellow from my island, he took me under his wing. I was very fortunate for that. Gary told me the basic ropes for jail: do not look in others' cells no matter what, and do not bump, do not gamble or play poker. I asked, "is there girls here?" Gary laughed and clued me in on that.

I was from Northern Vancouver Island, ADHD severe and the government said to slow me down for a petty theft, a short jail term should help. What a stupid move they did. The shower area where you de-loused had an office for IPO MacDougall and he eyed up all the new intake.

(MacDOUGALL) is on the net, and his very lenient sentence. MacDOUGALL sexually assaulted over 200 young boys and the service ignored it. He would get you sort of bullied and then call you down all agitated and say how he runs the place, you could be moved out to a better jail. This was west gate-b, a place separate from the wings and it's population. Had weights, pool table, and was a bit more open. There was no sink or toilet, it had a bucket to use and dump in A.M. The roof was galvanized steel, you could hear the rain. It actually sucked.

To get there he wanted to see your Johnson and perform his act. 'Just think of your girlfriend' was his pitch. His secret and yours, and those mean guys are no more. Gary got out, so I let MacDougall do this. He honoured the West Gate-B transfer, it was a 5-minute walk. Pack and baggage west gate Smith. Drained, confused at what occurred a few hours earlier and off I went. The same bullshit bullies eventually were in West Gate-B too, years later I found this all out.

The bucket for a toilet really sucked. I'm out of here when sleepy approached me again, he promised a forest camp in Chilliwack this time called (Thurston) in the mountains. There was a lumber mill. I actually enjoyed that. ADHD kid burning off energy is the cure for that disorder, not sitting in school first off, you run him-her laps. A medicine ball tossing game, you burn that high energy kid out a bit, not sit them.

In 1984 I was released from Okalla. I went back to the island, some 25 plus years later while in a medium jail in B.C.

cont'd on pg 8

INSIDE
THE
PJD '22
ISSUE

2
PASAN

3-4
HEALTH &
HARM
REDUX

5-7
NEWS
ON THE
BLOCK

8-11
WRITINGS
ON THE
WALL

12-14
FROM
INSIDE &
ART

15-16
BULLETIN
BOARD &
RESOURCES

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

To our Cell Count readers,

Thank you for picking up our Prisoners Justice Day (PJD) issue of Cell Count. In June 1976, prisoners at Millhaven sent out a letter to alert the public that they would be staging a protest regarding the preventable deaths of two prisoners at Millhaven Institution:

"To all Prisoners and Concerned Peoples from across Canada: June 14, 1976

On August 10th, 1976, the Prisoners of Millhaven Maximum Security Prison will stage a one day hunger strike in remembrance of our two fallen comrades, EDWARD NALON and ROBERT LANDERS, who died in Millhaven segregation (solitary confinement) on August 10th, 1974 and May 21st, 1976, respectively; and in remembrance of all our fellow comrades and brothers and sisters from prisons across the country who died in the hands of an apathetic prison system and its people.

Furthermore, it is a protest against the Millhaven Administration, the Canadian Penitentiary Service, and the Members of Parliament for their continued indifference to the recommendation of the Inquest Jury made at the inquest into Edward Nalon's death. The recommendations concerned Emergency First Aid Procedure; medical and psychiatric treatment for solitary confinement prisoners and that the emergency signal systems in the cells and the time clock which assures regularity in range patrols be made functional and that steps be taken to provide that they remain functional. None of these recommendations were enacted by the above mentioned authorities.

We protest against the continuous inhumane use of solitary confinement (segregation) and the repeated whitewashing by spineless individuals in the Government who are forever having inquiries into the use of solitary and its effects on a person's mental and physical state and

then hide the real facts of its use from the people.

We call upon our Brothers and Sisters from all prisons across the country, and upon all concerned peoples of Canada, to give their support to our one day hunger strike in remembrance of our comrades and to UNITE AS ONE VOICE IN OUR STRUGGLE for better understanding... compassion and EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.

Signed, Jack McNeil & Howard Brown For the Prisoners of Millhaven" - taken from prisonjustice.ca

This year, to observe Prisoners Justice Day, PASAN is organizing an event in the community to raise awareness to the general public about deaths in prison.

Prisoners' Justice Day August 10th 2022



No More Deaths in Custody!

Community Gathering in Allan Gardens Park
4:30-7:30pm Gerrard and Sherbourne, Toronto

Join us in solidarity with all Prisoners
observing Prisoners' Justice Day, as they fast
for justice and in honour of those
who died incarcerated.

LIBERALS TO LAUNCH CONSULTATIONS ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE TO HIV NON-DISCLOSURE

By The Canadian Press, Toronto Star, Jul. 27th, 2022

OTTAWA - The Liberal government plans to launch consultations this October on

the criminal justice system's response to HIV non-disclosure.

Justice Minister David Lametti made the commitment as he met interested parties this week in the lead-up to the International AIDS Conference in Montreal on the weekend.

The consultations will seek input on how to modernize the criminal justice system's response to the non-disclosure of HIV status, in light of growing scientific evidence related to the risk of sexual transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

As the law is currently written, people who do not disclose their HIV status before having sex can be prosecuted for aggravated sexual assault, the most serious type of sexual offence in the Criminal Code — even in cases where there is little to no possibility of transmission, no intent to transmit and no actual transmission.

The way the law is enforced is "extremely punitive and overbroad," said India Annamathadoo, a policy analyst with the HIV Legal Network, noting advocates are aware of more than 200 cases being prosecuted since 1989.

Annamathadoo said in an interview that the consultation is a good first step by the federal government, but it is not enough.

"We need to act swiftly and urgently," she said. "So what we're hoping is that this consultation is not going to be something that's protracted, but rather something that leads to swift legislative reform."

The Canadian Coalition to Reform HIV Criminalization, of which the HIV Legal Network is a part, said in a statement Wednesday that the government must recognize "we are not starting from scratch."

Over the last five years, the coalition has conducted two national consultations with the HIV community and has identified consensus recommendations for the government to follow.

After the first consultation resulted in a consensus statement in 2017, Justice

Canada referred publicly to the "overcriminalization of HIV" and, two years later, the House of Commons justice committee concluded that the application of criminal law in such cases should be narrowed.

But successive Liberal justice ministers have made no specific commitments.

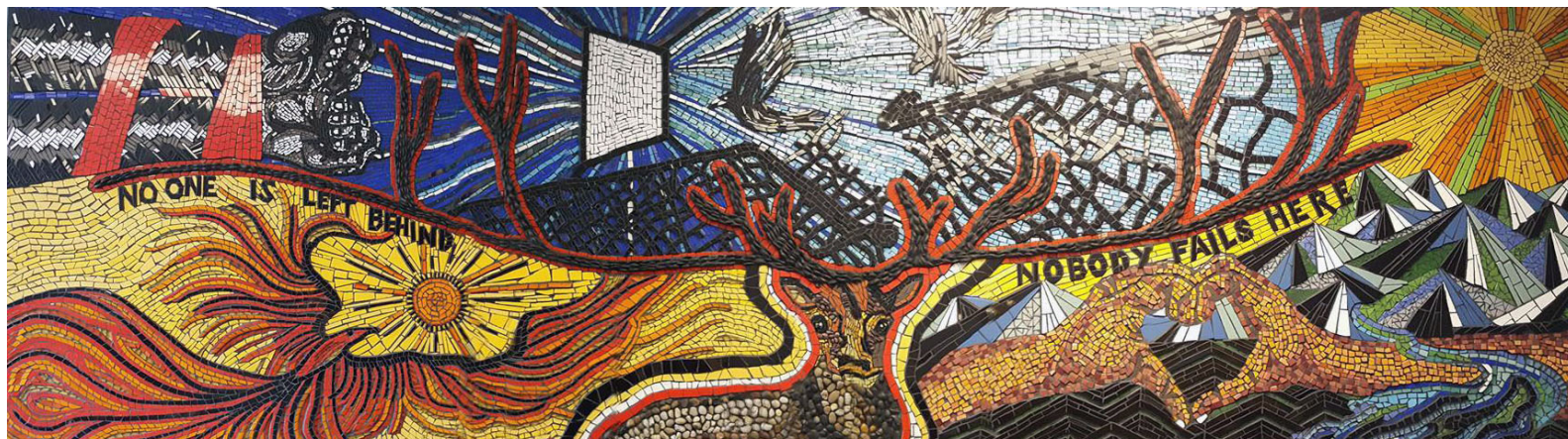
The coalition's specific legislative recommendations, based on its second consultation, will be outlined in a policy statement it intends to release on Friday as the international AIDS conference gets underway.

Canada has the dubious reputation of hosting that conference while it remains "a global leader in HIV criminalization," as Annamathadoo put it, with prosecutions disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous and LGBTQ Canadians.

The government did not set out a timeline for the consultations beyond stating they will begin in October, adding that more information would be available "in the coming weeks."

THE NEW DIRECTION FOUNDATION

The new direction foundation is a non profit that helps recently incarcerated persons and individuals that have a criminal record get stabilized in the community. We are currently partnered with PASAN to offer multiple services. We help with support letters and create release plans for inmates. We also offer support around getting housing, we have people that house our clients upon release and employers that can work with our clients upon their release from the institution. We also have a mental health support group for our clients who are suffering from PTSD and depression and experience mental health barriers. Finally, we have a 12 week program where incarcerated persons can learn how to be entrepreneurs and receive a placement opportunity to work for a logistics company. All of our programs are free of charge. If you are interested, call us at 437-771-2031 or 613-355-2041. We accept toll numbers.



PASAN is a community-based harm reduction/HIV/HCV organization that provides support, education and advocacy to prisoners and ex-prisoners. PASAN formed in 1991 as a grassroots response to the HIV crisis in the Canadian prison system. We strive to provide community development, education and support to prisoners and ex-prisoners in Ontario on HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV), overdose prevention and other harm reduction issues. Today, PASAN is the only community-based organization in Canada exclusively providing HIV and HCV prevention, education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Individual support, informal coun-

selling, case management, pre-release planning, and referrals for those in custody living with HIV and/or HCV

- We assist our clients in accessing adequate medical care and support while incarcerated
- You can reach us via our toll free number at 1-866-224-9978. If you can't get through to us from our toll-free number, we also accept collect calls from prisoners across Canada at 416-920-9567, but we prefer people use our toll-free number
- Provide ongoing support, community development, resources and training for community groups across Ontario.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Conducts HIV/HCV and harm reduction workshops inside many of the provincial and federal adult institutions in Ontario
- Produces a newsletter, Cell Count, which contains article, poetry and art produced by current and ex-prisoners
- Facilitates Prison Life 101, HIV/HCV

prevention and harm reduction/overdose prevention trainings for agencies working with prison populations

- Assist agencies to start prison in-reach and support and act as a referral "hub" for HIV/HCV positive prisoners who are transferred from one region to another, to ensure continuity of support
- Peer health/harm reduction workers where ex-prisoners assist those who are currently incarcerated, about to be released, or already released to get medical and health needs met.

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LETTER RE: PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

Dear Ontario AIDS Service Organizations, The African Caribbean Council on HIV in Ontario (ACCHO), Prisoner's HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative of Ontario (WHA), Ontario AIDS Network (OAN), and Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance (GMSH) are calling on you to honour Prisoner Justice Day (PJD) locally with your community.

PJD is held annually on August 10th. This day initially started after a prisoner, Eddie Nalon, died in segregation at Millhaven Maximum Security Prison in Bath, Ontario. It is a day to honour, remember and bring visibility to those who have died inside Canadian prisons. On this day in 1974, prisoners came together to fast and refuse to work as an act of solidarity. Of note, refusing to eat and work are amongst the minimal tools of protest available to those in prison.

Beyond prison walls, PJD has been a day for allies to stand in solidarity. There is a history of community organizing outside of prisons - or at sites of significance - to raise awareness, remember those who have died, and to engage in noise making to show those confined inside that the community is standing in solidarity with them.

In particular, this is a day to draw attention and raise awareness about the over-incarceration of Black, Brown, Asian, and Indigenous communities. This is particularly true for incarcerated Trans, Non-Binary, Two-Spirited and femme people. We know that incarceration deeply intersects with risk and rates of HIV/HCV, and that people living with HIV/HCV in prison continue to face stigma, discrimination and barriers to medication and quality care. PJD is also a day for us to raise awareness about the deep level of violence and institutional racism against these communities from police, prison guards, and the systems in which they work. As we all collectively work to build community capacity to support each other and prevent the unnecessary and costly incarceration of our community members - this is an important day for us to amplify these important messages.

With these realities in mind, we call on all AIDS Service Organizations across Ontario to engage in PJD organizing and support local events. We encourage you to hold space to raise awareness and stand in solidarity with imprisoned community members. We need to collectively oppose prison and police violence and promote community models of care, support, and healing, while remembering those who have died in prison.

Together, ACCHO, PASAN, and WHAI will be hosting an Instagram Live event to raise awareness about PJD. This will happen in advance of PJD, on Monday, August 8th at 2:00 p.m., to raise awareness and encourage community members to learn about PJD and attend events happening in local communities. If you know of events happening, please share this information with us so we can announce it at the Instagram Live. You can do this by emailing Kristin Boyer, Program Assistant at WHAI, at kboyer@whai.ca. Sincerely, African Caribbean Council on HIV in Ontario (ACCHO) Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance (GMSH)

Ontario AIDS Network (OAN) Prisoner's HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN) Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative of Ontario (WHA)

HARM REDUCTION MEANS THAT...

Everyone is deserving of health, connection and well-being

SO...

1. We remove our judgement - work to minimize harmful effects of actions rather than simply ignore or condemn them. Remember our medicines are all different and what works for one does not work for all.

2. We are complex, multi-faceted people who will not share the same goals - or have the same needs - the best expert is the self. Our healing is unique to our experience and who we are, it cannot be done without our whole selves involved.

3. We focus on what's possible and not on what's out of our control. That means what's possible in my situation, environment, relationships, etc.

4. We acknowledge that there are systemic and institutional factors that take away choice and cause harm in peoples lives, relationships, communities. We work to bring choice and self direction back into focus.

5. All things are connected, we work from their intersections- a whole person approach to a whole person problem.

6. The who, what why, where, when is important- the best results come from when the people who are impacted are involved in the solution. With listening and consultation we find the right directions.

7. We believe that there is a better, more compassionate, kind and effective way to practice justice in our communities. Our current system punishes and isolates, harm reduction finds common ground and restores relationships.

Written by PASAN's Federal Team

ADVOCATING FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE IN PRISON

Harm Reduction and Healthcare BY PASAN

Our Approach to Harm Reduction in Healthcare is..

- Getting people all of the information they need around their health- not just the risks- so you can make informed decisions about your own health.
- To empower people around their interactions with health care. We promote this to advocate for yourself, as well as to contribute to systemic change to improve health care access for everybody.
- Build emotional and social resilience so you feel the motivation to make decisions that impact your health in a positive way.
- We do these things because people inside do not have equal access to a harm reduction approach that people on the outside do.

Empower people in their interactions with health care

- Before you see a nurse or doctor, write down the questions that you want to ask

them about your health. You can use this to keep track of what they tell you and make sure that you get answers for your most pressing concerns.

- If you are facing a healthcare concern, you should get all the facts available to you before you visit health care or before a follow up. This might mean talking to a Health Rep, PEC/APEC worker, or calling a community-based organization that serves Prisoners (see end). The more information about what is going on with you ensures that you are able to speak about what you believe might be the issue- or because things often work differently in prison, what would be the normal course of follow up in the community.

- When you are with a nurse or doctor, be clear with all of your symptoms, and how they have been occurring for you. It might look different in someone else but the symptoms of what you are experiencing might be individual to you.

- When you are with a nurse or a doctor, ask questions. Whether they seem receptive or not to what you have to ask, your health is important and your time with healthcare staff is yours. Try and frame your questions about your health, some examples are listed below:

- o What is my diagnosis?
- o Is this related to my mental health or my physical health?
- o What are my treatment options? What are the benefits of each option? What are the side effects?

- o Will I need a test? What is the test for? What will the results tell me?
- o What will the medicine you are prescribing do? How do I take it? Are there any side effects?
- o Why is it important for me to have a surgery? Are there other ways to treat my condition? How often is this surgery performed?
- o Do I need to change my daily routine? What could be helpful for me?

- Make a note of the Physician's name, the time of the interaction, key facts about the encounter. Where was it, how long was it, the issues that were covered, how the physician or nurse addressed your concerns, when there will be a follow up. This also puts you in the habit of asking these questions to a healthcare professional. Even though you are in prison, you maintain your basic rights around your care.

- Make sure that you keep any and all documentation from doctors, nurses or other health care staff. It is your right to maintain that documentation, as well as the privacy of that documentation (no one should see it without your permission). If you have not received documentation from important interactions related to your health, ask for it.

- After you see a nurse or a doctor it is a good to follow up with what they have told you. Some reasons to put in to see a nurse would be..

- o If you experience any side effects or

Equitable COVID-19 pandemic recovery in Canada

Problem:

Inequities that worsened during the pandemic will continue to threaten health

Solution:

Policy changes at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to promote health equity

Recommendations



Income

- Ensure a living income
- Universal unemployment insurance, parental leave and paid sick leave
- Affordable loans



Housing

- Expand permanent supportive housing programs
- Expand access to eviction prevention, legal services and financial advice

Intimate partner violence

- Legal advocacy and supportive interventions for victims



Childhood

- Expand publicly funded childcare
- Healthy food distribution to children



Access to health care

- Expand access to opioid substitution therapy and supervised injection sites
- Expand HIV and HCV screening for people at high risk
- Include prescription medicines in Canada's publicly funded health care system
- Improve health care for people who are incarcerated

Racism

- Action on previous recommendations to address anti-Indigenous discrimination and anti-Black racism



Recommendations for equitable COVID-19 pandemic recovery in Canada Nav Persaud, Hannah Woods, Aine Workentin, Itunu Adekoya, James R. Dunn, Stephen W. Hwang, Jonathon Maguire, Andrew D. Pinto, Patricia O'Campo, Sean B. Rourke and Daniel Werb; for the MAP Task Force to Promote Health Equity during Pandemic Recovery CMAJ December 13, 2021 193 (49) E1878-E1888; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.210904>

other problems with your medicines.

- o If your symptoms get worse after seeing the doctor.
- o If you receive any new prescriptions or start taking any over-the-counter medicines.
- o To get results of any tests you've had. Do not assume that no news is good news.
- o To ask about test results you do not understand

What to do if you have been denied healthcare or medication

- Make notes for yourself about what happened, when and where it happened and why you were told the decision was made. This is to establish key facts that you may later need to use in advocating for your health care.
- When making notes, detail is helpful, especially around negative encounters. For example, it is good to note that the guard at healthcare sent you back before you could get your medication. However, it is not helpful to note that you got in a yelling match with the nurse and the guard after you were denied medication.
- Try to avoid conflict over single incidents, although it may be painful to go without your medications, it is more powerful to demonstrate a pattern of mistreatment or denial of medication. Controlling your reaction puts you in a better position to get the things you need in the long run and makes it harder to deny you the things you need.
- Try not to implicate yourself in the further denial of your health care. Although it is extremely frustrating and painful to be denied the care you need, if you are seen to be threatening or difficult to health care staff or guards it is more likely the denial will be blamed on you.
- Use Health Reps and PEC/APEC Workers. Part of their role is to hear your concerns with healthcare. Over the course of their role they may discover that many people share the same problem as you, even if it is not discussed openly. Using their role to demonstrate a pattern of treatment amongst Prisoners can leverage change. Likewise, share your health care concerns with the Inmate Committee, Lifer's Group or your cultural group like BIFA, Native Brotherhood, Muslim Brotherhood, Prayer Group, etc.
- Make a paper trail, even if your grievance or correspondence is not heard in the way you hoped for, it is like a receipt for your complaint. If your house is not private or is searched often, you can give a copy of your filed grievance receipt to someone you trust or mail it to a friend, family member, or a community organization you have contact with.
- Know the Commissioner's Directives that are applicable to healthcare. They are the policy that explains how healthcare should be given to each Prisoner equally. They should be available to you at the library of your institution. If you need help to find ones that are helpful or help to understand them, speak to a member of the Inmate Committee.
- If your grievance is still not heard, or the denial of healthcare continues, you have the option of continuing to escalate your complaint. As healthcare is a universal human right in Canada, there are courses of action such as a letter to your Member of Parliament of your home region, filing a grievance lawsuit, forming a human rights complaint, or writing to community-based organizations like PASAN to advance your complaint.

Keep in mind that..

- o A delay is different denial, when you make your notes or file a grievance, its important to be clear which is happening

in your situation. A denial is a formal decision, a delay is the absence of a decision.

- o If you are prescribed something on the street, it might not be on the formulary or the prescribing guide in your Institution. You can ask the nurse or doctor what would be the closest replacement to what I have been prescribed.

What to do when things are difficult

- Focus on the moment you are in. If you are playing cards, focus only on playing cards. When thoughts or worries about your healthcare concerns come into your mind, remember that they are intrusive thoughts and you are doing what is in your power to address your situation.
- Don't worry about the things you can't control, focus on the tasks in front of you.
- Lifestyle change makes a big difference when it comes to your health. Simple changes go a long way. Think about the things you can shift in the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.
- Celebrate successes as they come, no matter how small!
- Venting is good- Journal, talk to someone you trust, call PASAN or other community organizations.
- Exercise is important, it makes happy chemicals in your brain. Even small activities like stretching or walking are enough to change the way your brain chemistry is working.
- Three deep breathes into your chest is enough to switch between your bodies fight, flight, fright state into its mode of rest and recreate.
- Get involved in restorative justice, Alternatives to Violence, toastmasters, chaplaincy or groups. Anywhere where you can tell your story and create a narrative for yourself.
- Make relationships with community organizations. Write to ones from your home community that you really like and ask them to make their organization accessible to Prisoners. This is justice work for everyone!

If you would like to talk about your healthcare in prison, or would like to help us update this guide Write or call us at:

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PLAN TO EXPAND PRISON NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS MOVES FORWARD DESPITE PANDEMIC DELAYS – NATIONAL

By Marie-Danielle Smith, The Canadian Press

Despite pandemic slowdowns, Correctional Service Canada is still planning to expand the needle exchange programs currently offered at nine federal prisons, government officials say.

At a presentation given to the International AIDS Conference in Montreal on Friday, Henry de Souza, the agency's director general of clinical services and public health, said "a number of institutions" have been identified for an expansion, and the program will continue to be implemented across the country. Inmates have been able to request sterile equipment for drug use at two Canadian prisons since 2018, and another seven were added in 2019. Some advocates have expressed fears the program, which is designed to reduce needle sharing and the spread of infectious disease, could be cancelled after numbers showed a low uptake.

Only 53 inmates were actively using the

programs in mid-June, officials told the AIDS conference Friday night, out of 277 who had been approved to participate over the last four years.

These programs are in addition to the country's only prison-based "overdose prevention service," which began operating in 2019 at the men's medium-security Drumheller Institution in Alberta. It is essentially a supervised injection site, offering sterile equipment and consumption under observation.

Since the site opened, there have been 55 participants, 1,591 visits and zero overdoses at the site, officials told the conference. The correctional service says it also offers mental health counselling, access to naloxone to counter opioid overdose effects and preventive treatments, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis — medicine taken to prevent getting HIV. All of these efforts have led to a decrease in infections, said Marie-Pierre Gendron, an epidemiologist at Correctional Service Canada. She said HIV infection among inmates nationally is down from 2.02 per cent of the prison population in 2007 to 0.93 per cent in 2020; and hepatitis C is down from 21 per cent in 2010 to 3.2 per cent in 2021.

Lynne Leonard, a University of Ottawa associate professor who was contracted by the agency to evaluate the programs, said during a Tuesday morning panel that both programs have had "significant beneficial outcomes" for inmates, and she saw "eventual successful institutional adoption" despite initial pushback from staff.

Preliminary results from her study found that the program seemed to lead to a significant decrease in HIV infections at the institutions that put it into place. Overdoses at Drumheller were down more than 50 per cent overall since its supervised consumption site opened.

"I'm encouraged by the way they're describing the program as something they're proud of," said Sandra Ka Hon Chu, co-executive director of the HIV Legal Network. But a major "red flag" that could be leading to lower participation is the fact that security personnel are involved in the process, she said. That's not the case in other countries' prison needle exchange programs, some of which are fully anonymous or even offer syringes in automated dispensing machines.

"It's really a critical flaw in the program," she said.

Asked about the low uptake, the correctional service said in a statement Tuesday that it has reviewed evaluation reports that indicate participation rates "may be the result of considerations such as stigma, fear, lack of understanding of harm reduction initiatives, and the nature of addiction."

Inmates are subject to a threat assessment by security and approval by a warden before being able to access programs, as officials described the process. Almost a quarter of requests to participate in the program have been rejected, according to statistics presented at the conference. Shawn Huish, the warden at Mission Institution in British Columbia, said it was a

challenge to shift the mindset of correctional workers accustomed to searching for drugs, confiscating them and trying to stop inmates from taking them — while at the same time reassuring inmates that participating in the program would not affect their release. There was a lot of "fake news" to battle, Huish said, including a billboard erected outside the prison that painted the program in a negative light.

"Our biggest focus was talking, educating, breaking down the fear. Having a needle acknowledged in jail can be scary for folks," he said. "You're afraid you're going to get needle sticks. So we looked at the records. In two-and-a-half years, we've had one staff member get pricked, and it was while searching, and it was a thumb tack."

Leah Cook, the regional manager of public health for the Prairies, oversaw the implementation of the supervised injection site at Drumheller and said it is "the only known service of its kind in a correctional setting on the world stage, for which I am incredibly proud."

Cook said a "safe zone" was created so that participants in the program could carry their own drug supply to the observation room without the fear of being searched — and it's been nicknamed the "yellow brick road."

Leonard's research found that staff members at Drumheller preferred it to the needle exchange program and thought it was safer and more successful. The statement from the correctional service says it is committed to "further implementation" of both types of programs as part of its mission to "better support patients with problematic substance use needs."

Warkworth Institution and Bowden Institution have been identified for an expansion of the needle exchange program, the statement says, while Collins Bay Institution and Springhill Institution are being considered for an expansion of the overdose prevention service.

Reduce the Spread of
MONKEYPOX
When Using Drugs:



Clean your hands often



Disinfect surfaces where you prepare & use drugs



Avoid sharing drug use supplies



If using drugs with others, wear a mask & gloves, & cover rashes or blisters if anyone has them



If you think you have Monkeypox, self-isolate as much as possible & talk to a health care provider



Get vaccinated, if eligible

toronto.ca/health 

PRISON SERVICE MUST DO MORE TO REMOVE BARRIERS FOR INDIGENOUS, BLACK OFFENDERS: AG

By The Canadian Press Staff, CTVNews, May. 31st, 2022
Ottawa -

The federal auditor general says Canada's prison service has not given offenders timely access to programs to help ease them back into society, including courses specific to women, Indigenous people and visible minorities.

Auditor general Karen Hogan found Black and Indigenous offenders experienced poorer outcomes than any other groups in the federal correctional system and faced greater barriers to a safe and gradual return to the outside world.

Hogan pointed out her office raised similar issues in audits in 2015, 2016 and 2017, yet the correctional service has done little to change the policies, practices, tools and approaches that produce these differing outcomes.

Hogan says disparities were present from the moment offenders entered federal institutions.

The process for selecting security classifications saw Indigenous and Black offenders assigned to maximum-security institutions at twice the rate of other groups of offenders.

They also remained in federal custody longer and at higher levels of security before their release.

The audit found that timely access to correctional programs continued to decline across all groups of offenders. Access to programming, which teaches crucial skills like problem solving and goal setting, worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of men serving sentences of two to four years who were released from April to December 2021, 94 per cent had not completed the correctional programs they needed before they were first eligible to apply for day parole.

"This is a barrier to serving the remainder of their sentences under supervision in the community," the report says.

The prison service needs to find a different way to organize programming, because "that timely access is so critical to an offender's successful path forward," Hogan said Tuesday at a news conference.

Correctional service efforts to support greater equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace also fell short, leaving persistent barriers unresolved, the report says.

Close to one-quarter of management and staff had not completed mandatory diversity training a year after the deadline.

In addition, the prison service had not established a plan to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of its offender populations, which has particular relevance for institutions with high numbers of Indigenous and Black offenders, the report says.

Hogan noted the correctional service has acknowledged systemic racism in the system, initiating an anti-racism framework to identify and remove systemic barriers.

The service has agreed to act on the auditor general's recommendations to remedy the various issues she identified.

Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino stressed efforts toward "rooting out racism in all of its forms" by diversifying the prison service's workforce, improving our training and collecting data to inform policies. "And we know we've got a long way to go."

Mendicino noted he recently directed the correctional service head to create

a new position of deputy commissioner for Indigenous corrections, saying it will ensure the overrepresentation of Indigenous offenders in the system, especially women, is addressed.

INDIGENOUS SISTERS HOPE FOR EXONERATION AFTER ALMOST 30 YEARS IN PRISON SYSTEM

By CBC Radio, June 17, 2022

Odelia Quewezance and her sister, Nerissa Quewezance, have maintained their innocence ever since they were convicted of second-degree murder in a 1993 killing in Saskatchewan.

Now, after almost 30 years of incarceration, Odelia says the federal Justice Department's recent decision to review their case felt like her "prayers were being answered" — but freedom is still out of reach.

"I'm grateful for the good news from my lawyer, from the Justice Minister [David] Lametti," said Odelia, a Keeseekoose woman who is on day parole, living in a halfway house and subject to certain restrictions.

"But I just, I still think, why am I not out today? And, you know ... I'm going to say this today. It's maybe because I'm Indigenous," she told The Current's Matt Galloway.

In 1993, 70-year-old farmer Anthony Joseph Dolff picked up Odelia and Nerissa — then aged 20 and 18, respectively — from their home on Keeseekoose First Nation and took them to his nearby home in the area of Kamsack, Sask., about 230 kilometres northeast of Regina. They were accompanied by the women's cousin, Jason Keshane, who was 14.

Dolff propositioned the women after a night of drinking, which led to a confrontation with Keshane. Dolff was stabbed, strangled with a phone cord and had a television thrown on his head. He died at the scene.

Keshane has admitted numerous times to killing the older man, including during the ensuing trial, and to an APTN investigation.

But all three were convicted of second-degree murder in 1994.

As a minor, Keshane served four years in custody. The sisters received life sentences. Odelia is now living in a halfway house in Winnipeg, while Nerissa is still incarcerated in B.C.'s Fraser Valley.

Late last year, the Office of the Correctional Investigator noted that Indigenous women make up 50 per cent of women in federal prisons, a percentage that has been rising, when Indigenous women make up about five per cent of Canadian women.

Canada Tonight's Ginella Massa spoke with Emilie Coyle, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, about the latest data from the Correctional Investigator of Canada that shows Indigenous women make up half the female population in Canada's federal prisons.

Odelia has spent much of her life institutionalized, from being forced to attend residential school as a child to being imprisoned at 21. She is also a survivor of sexual abuse, and described her decades in the prison system as "a battle."

"I was a lost person, lost lady, and it was tough, hard on the head," she said.

"I've also attempted, like, suicide because, you know, I did not belong here. It was faith that kept me going."

Neither sister has seen the other in person in almost 19 years, since their father's funeral. But Odelia said they've found

ways to be strong for each other.

"No one can understand how we feel, but me and her."

SISTERS WERE VICTIMS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM: LAWYER

Late last year, the sisters' Toronto-based lawyer, James Lockyer, wrote to Lametti seeking a review of their sentences.

In early June, he received a letter written on behalf of Lametti that stated that "there may be a reasonable basis to conclude that a miscarriage of justice likely occurred" in the sisters' case. The matter would be taken under review, the letter said.

"If [the minister] decides in fact there was [a miscarriage of justice], then he has the power of either quashing the conviction himself or referring it back to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal for reconsideration as an appeal," said Lockyer, a lawyer with Innocence Canada, a non-profit organization that advocates for exonerating people convicted of crimes they did not commit.

The letter came the same day that Odelia took part in a news conference on Parliament Hill to protest her and Nerissa's innocence.

Lockyer took on the case at the request of David Milgaard, who spent 23 years in prison for a 1969 rape and murder he didn't commit. Milgaard died last month, but had become a friend to the Quewezance sisters and an advocate for having their case reviewed.

Lockyer said that the original prosecution's case depended on a series of statements the sisters had given to RCMP officers in Kamsack, but those statements were never properly recorded, despite recording equipment being available.

He said the RCMP also ignored a judge's order to move the women to a nearby provincial jail, and instead kept them in Kamsack for five days of interviews.

"Perhaps not surprisingly, the statements became more and more incriminating, so that by the end of it, Nerissa and Odelia supposedly had acknowledged some kind of involvement in the stabbing by the cousin," Lockyer told Galloway.

Lockyer said what role they played was never fully defined in court.

"They're victims of systemic racism in the police investigation and the police conduct. In my view they're victims of systemic discrimination in terms of how their trial proceeded."

In a statement to The Current, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice said that after further examination, "Public Prosecutions did not find a basis to reconsider the verdicts outside the federal review process." The statement added that it is co-operating with that review, and is "in the course of providing disclosure to the reviewing authorities."

Lockyer said the ministry declined to share Crown or police files with him, so "for them to say they are co-operating with anyone is what I might call a misnomer, to be polite."

The RCMP declined to comment, citing the ongoing review process and the possibility it "may include consultation with police agencies involved in the case."

Lametti turned down an interview request from The Current, citing the ongoing review. In an emailed statement, he said his decision on the sisters' case will be made "on the basis of the facts and the law."

He acknowledged the review system needs improvement, and said there is work underway to create a new independent criminal case review commission.

More broadly, the minister said that "systemic discrimination and racism are

a reality for too many in Canada's criminal justice system," and pointed to the federal government's Bill C-5, which would remove 21 minimum mandatory sentence requirements "that unfairly affect Indigenous people, as well as Black and marginalized Canadians."

BILL C-5 ONLY 'TINKERS' WITH PROBLEM: SENATOR

Last month, Sen. Kim Pate said that Bill C-5 strikes down fewer than half of Canada's 67 mandatory minimum penalties, and is only "tinkering" with the problems that lead to Indigenous women being overrepresented in Canada's prison system.

She told The Current that where a mandatory minimum sentence applies, a judge might not have the opportunity to review the full context of the case, and its circumstances.

"If we really want to address this issue, we have to take much clearer steps to ensure that judges have the opportunity to do their job," she said.

Pate was one of three senators to co-author a report last month that called for the exoneration and group case review of 12 incarcerated Indigenous women. She said their cases "exemplify the systemic issues that ... need to be rectified."

The Quewezance sisters are among those 12 women, one of whom has died since the report was compiled.

"We all have different stories, different cases, but I honestly believe that we were all convicted because of racism," said Odelia.

"It saddens me. It saddens my heart because — 30 years of my life."

ACTIVISTS HOLD 'ABOLITIONIST PRIDE' MARCH TO CALL FOR DISMANTLING OF POLICE AND PRISONS

CBC News, By Muriel Draaisma, June 26th, 2022

About 500 people marched in downtown Toronto before the Pride parade on Sunday to call for the abolition of police and the prison system in Ontario.

The No Pride in Policing Coalition gathered at Nathan Phillips Square at 11 a.m. for an event it called "Abolitionist Pride," then marched to various sites that the coalition says represent queer and trans oppression.

An online poster for the event said demonstrators were "reclaiming our radical histories and creating liveable futures without police and prisons."

The march began outside Toronto city hall, then proceeded to the Ontario legislature and got close to Toronto police headquarters. But organizers said police would not let demonstrators go farther than Bay and College streets.

"We must defund, we must demilitarize, we must abolish," Beverly Bain, a coalition organizer, said during the march.

"We need to defund police, we need to reallocate those funds to communities to create sustainable communities, we need to abolish police and prisons and we need to start creating a community and a society without harm."

The marchers also stopped in front of the U.S. consulate to show support for women who will be affected by the U.S. Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, which provided the constitutional right to abortion in the U.S. for nearly 50 years.

Bain said the coalition is critical of Pride Toronto's decision to ask for more police protection during its parade. She said LGBTQ people are "under siege" by police.

"This is not the kind of protection that queer and trans people are looking for.

Police do not protect us. They are not in our corner," she said.

Bain noted the coalition rejected a recent apology by Toronto Police Chief James Ramer in response to the service's treatment of racialized people. She said the apology was an empty performance.

Ramer made the apology when the service released race-based data that shows Black and Indigenous people are disproportionately affected by use of force and strip searches by Toronto police officers.

Gary Kinsman, an organizer of the No Pride in Policing coalition, said the march was an abolitionist pride march, which means the coalition wants to see police services and prisons disarmed, defunded and dismantled.

"It's absolutely crucial that the trans and queer liberation movements adopt an abolitionist project and that's why we are organizing this event today to protest the escalation of police violence and racism in our city," Kinsman said.

Kinsman said Pride Toronto has become a highly commercialized organization, dominated by corporations, that produces a parade that is largely a spectacle for heterosexual people and it doesn't advance the goals of queer and trans liberation movements.

"This is not what queer and trans liberation is all about," he said.

The No Pride In Policing Coalition defines itself as a group of queer and trans people formed in 2018 to support the demands raised by Black Lives Matter TO at the 2016 Pride Toronto parade. It said it supports BLM TO in its demand for a 50 per cent cut to the Toronto police budget.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CANADIANS COULD SEE THEIR DRUG POSSESSION RECORDS DISAPPEAR

Toronto Star, July 4th, 2022

Canadians with criminal records for drug possession will see them effectively vanish within two years after the government's criminal justice reform bill becomes law — a move that could affect hundreds of thousands of people.

Criminal records can prevent people from getting jobs, volunteer opportunities, housing and hinder their ability to travel.

The automatic "sequestration" of drug possession records was made possible due to a New Democratic Party amendment to Bill C-5 and accepted by the government.

"I said we needed a better bill ... Highest on my list was trying to get rid of criminal records for simple possession," said NDP justice critic Randall Garrison, who proposed the amendment.

"They've assured me that in two years from the passage of the bill, criminal records for personal possession for all drugs will disappear."

Bill C-5 is the government's attempt at reducing the over-incar-

ceration of Black and Indigenous people in prisons. It cleared the House of Commons in June and was sent to the Senate, where it will be studied at committee in the fall.

The bill would also repeal mandatory minimum sentences for all drug offences and some firearm offences; expand the use of conditional sentences, such as house arrest; and require police and prosecutors to use their discretion to keep drug possession cases out of the courts.

It's estimated that as many as 250,000 Canadians may have drug possession convictions stemming from cannabis possession alone, when it was still illegal. The government launched a revamped pardon application process for those individuals in 2019, but Garrison said only a few hundred people have been successful.

"Your existing system isn't working, so let's do something simpler," he said.

A spokesperson for Justice Minister David Lametti, who tabled C-5, said Garrison's amendment and others were accepted "as our government believed they were essential in improving the bill and accomplishing its objectives."

The bill stops short of actually decriminalizing drug possession, something advocates, people who use drugs and the NDP have long called for.

"While the burden of possession convictions falls heavily on racialized Canadians and Indigenous Canadians, the same is true of course of having those criminal records and not having been able to avail themselves of any convoluted, expensive process to get rid of them," Garrison said.

Garrison had pushed for the expungement of drug possession records, and said the government came back with "sequestration," which he said means they won't show up on a criminal record check.

"The argument from the government is they can't physically destroy the records because they're kept in so many different formats in different places, but they can guarantee they'll never show up again in criminal record checks," he said.

He said the government insisted on the two-year timeline in order to implement a sequestering system.

The amendment also means that anyone who gets a drug possession record after the bill passes will see that record set aside two years after the completion of any sentence, Garrison said.

Individuals with criminal records who are eligible for pardons currently have to apply, a process that advocates say can be onerous and costly, which is preventing many from doing so. The government has long been urged to come up with an automatic system, but had shown resistance in the past.

"It is actually a very complicated process with a lot of steps," said Samantha McAleese, a Carleton

University researcher looking at the impact of the pardon system on people with criminal records.

Even though the government slashed the application fee from \$657 to \$50 this year, McAleese said there are still other costs associated with having to get various police and court records in order to apply.

"So any time we can eliminate the bureaucracy required to secure those human rights protections is a good time," she said.

Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino, who is responsible for the pardon file, has expressed his support for the sequestration of drug possession records, according to a statement from his office.

Consultations had already begun on the automatic sequestration of a wider variety of criminal records, his office said.

"We expect that similar recommendations to MP Garrison's proposal come out of that examination," the statement said. "We remain committed to implementing measures that will bring our judicial system closer to eradicate systemic racism as well as ensuring a more effective and fair justice system for all Canadians."

HALF OF THE WOMEN IN CANADA'S FEDERAL PRISONS ARE INDIGENOUS

By Emma Jacobs, NPR, May 10th, 2022

Indigenous women are incarcerated at disproportionate rates in Canada. There are new efforts to address the systematic causes.

AILSA CHANG, HOST:

For decades, indigenous women in Canada have been incarcerated in federal prisons at much higher rates than the rest of the population. The country's highest court has even called it a crisis and tried to address discrimination in the legal system. But the problem has not been improving, and now there's a court case and proposed legislation aimed at trying to address it again. Emma Jacobs reports.

EMMA JACOBS, BYLINE: When she was incarcerated, Sheri Pranteau used to call a hotline for women who needed help with things inside - everything from dealing with abuse to finding resources to maintain their mental health. Now she's out of prison, in an apartment in Montreal, and she's answering the calls from other women on that hotline.

SHERI PRANTEAU: They're in a desperate situation or having a human rights violation, and they don't know what to do. It's - I find that it helps when they know that I'm also a lifer.

JACOBS: This is part of her work with the Elizabeth Fry Society, which advocates for women in the justice system. Pranteau is on parole after serving 19 years of a life sentence. She was 19 years old when she helped rob a Winnipeg grocery store alongside a man who shot and killed a young employee. While in prison, Pranteau, whose background is

Cree and Anishinaabe, noticed the number of other indigenous women held with her.

PRANTEAU: I was moving around, so everywhere I went it was like - it was just busloads of sisters.

JACOBS: Less than 5% of Canadians are indigenous, but as of the end of April, they were half of women serving sentences in federal prisons. Indigenous women also spend more time in solitary confinement and have a harder time getting parole, says Canada's correctional investigator Ivan Zinger.

IVAN ZINGER: Because of the pandemic, we've seen a significant decrease in the prison population, but it seems that Indigenous prisoners have a harder time to be released than non-Indigenous people.

JACOBS: Zinger says the numbers have gotten worse for Indigenous men and women, but especially for women. When Pranteau was in prison, she started talking to other indigenous women she met to try to understand why this was. She saw a lot of the same reasons as those cited by experts on the outside - systemic inequities, poverty and intergenerational trauma she had experienced in her own life. Pranteau's parents both died young. She ran away a lot from the homes of other relatives before her conviction.

PRANTEAU: Some of the street gangs, you know, were born from - was the poverty, was the trauma, was the alcoholism, the violence, the consequences of our family members coming out of the residential schools with, like, no help, no treatment, no counseling.

JACOBS: Canada's Supreme Court has also cited discrimination in the criminal justice system. Back in a case involving an Indigenous woman in 1999, the court ordered judges to consider discrimination and societal factors in sentencing.

JONATHAN RUDIN: But the criminal justice system is a very slow institution to turn around.

JACOBS: That's Jonathan Rudin, the program director of Aboriginal Legal Services. He says, first, not enough funding went to implementing changes. Then, in 2012, a tough-on-crime conservative government started expanding mandatory minimum sentences for a bunch of different charges.

RUDIN: So judges were faced with, on the one hand, this direction from the Supreme Court to do things differently when it comes to Indigenous people, and then, at the same time, having fewer tools to do that.

JACOBS: But now his group has joined a new legal challenge to those mandatory minimums before Canada's Supreme Court. At the center of the case is the conviction of Cheyenne Sharma, an indigenous teenager who received a mandatory two-year sentence for a drug offense. Rudin says that restoring judges' discretion would be an important step, even if incremental,

to address what he calls mass incarceration of Indigenous people. And there is legislation in Parliament to repeal a number of mandatory minimums, but many say that won't go far enough.

BEVERLY JACOBS: So if you keep sticking us and throwing us into the colonial systems, of course they're not going to work for us because that's not the way that we do things.

JACOBS: Beverly Jacobs, a long-time advocate and legal scholar now at the University of Windsor and member of the Mohawk Nation Bear Clan, says change must be transformational.

JACOBS: The systems that need to work are Indigenous systems - are the laws that we've always had as indigenous people that respect - whether it's mental health, emotional, spiritual, physical well-being. It's holistic.

JACOBS: There's so much work to do, she says, to finally see the numbers of Indigenous women in prisons go down. For NPR News, I'm Emma Jacobs in Montreal.

INSIDE CANADA'S PRISONS | MACLEAN'S | JUNE 6, 1983

By Val Ross

Dorchester maximum security penitentiary was designed in an era during which convicts shuffled along in shackles. For 104 years it has loomed over the rolling countryside of northeastern New Brunswick. One-metre-thick stone walls shut off its 470 inmates from the green hills of freedom. Inside, the prisoners hone their rage by fashioning "shivs" (knives) out of steel spoons to use on guards or each other and to ward off random attacks by inmate glue sniffers. In the past two years Dorchester has been relatively calm: only two suicides and 20 assaults, including five stabbings.

Dorchester's horrors fit the Canadian public's nightmare image of prisons. But on the face of it, Canada's most modern prisons are more "humane." The country's 12 minimum security prisons often have no walls, and guards dress in civilian clothes. Even Millhaven, 33 km west of Kingston, Ont., and one of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) 15 maximum security prisons, appears innocuous from the outside. Instead of Dorchester's smell of mould and urine, Millhaven carries the sharp scent of fresh paint; instead of vertical bars that clang shut, its grilled barricades, painted peach and turquoise, slide smoothly into place with an electronic hum. And instead of high walls, it restrains its 440 inmates with a double chain-link fence surveyed by guards in towers. Nearby, there is even a trailer—the family visiting centre—where a man plays catch with his two children and a woman barbecues hamburgers. It could be suburbia, except for the additional fence that shuts them in.

Modernity, however, has had little effect on the \$1.5-billion

federal prison system, which houses 11,300 inmates at a cost of \$700 million a year. Since they opened in 1970, Millhaven and its Quebec twin, Archambault, at Ste. Anne des Plaines outside Montreal, have had a far more violent history than even Dorchester. Three guards and two inmates died in last summer's riot at Archambault, the bloodiest in the Canadian penitentiary system's 114-year history. Millhaven's eighth murder victim was found stabbed in his cell on Christmas Day, 1982. And the tension among Canada's 11,300 federal and 9,500 provincial prisoners seems to be reaching a crescendo. Svend Robinson, NDP critic of the solicitor general's department, warns that there is "a crisis—something is going to explode."

Pastel colors and family visits cannot change the immutable fact: prison is prison. And the human soul recoils in a silent scream against all that prison-means: the schedule of relentless repetition; the lack of privacy; the tension; and, above all, containment in cells, or "drums," no larger than a bathroom in the average high-rise. "The anger is like being suffocated but never quite dying," writes inmate #1310 in the current issue of *Tightwire*, the inmate publication at the Kingston Prison for Women. "Even if my hell ceases, it doesn't—because I'm forced to witness another inmate's hell, or worse, a friend's. It's never-ending." Sometimes prisoners make home brew from fermented ketchup or orange juice to kill the grim consciousness of their lives; sometimes they drink Windex. Some, for shock value, in suicidal gestures or out of sheer boredom, carve chunks out of their arms with shivs or even serrated plastic knives; there were 51 such incidents of self-mutilation in Canadian federal prisons in the first three months of this year. Two weeks ago an emergency response team had to be called to the Prison for Women from nearby Kingston Penitentiary to quell a 2 1/2-hour fight that had broken out among several inmates drunk on home brew—a typical Saturday night.

Explosive: Life in the "maxes" is far grimmer than in Canada's minimum security institutions. Toronto Maple Leafs hockey club owner Harold Ballard once boasted that the seven-month sentence for tax evasion that he served in 1972 at Bath minimum, adjacent to Millhaven, was "better than a holiday at the Ritz." But the minimums and medium security also share the thwarted passion, booze, drugs, homosexuality and frustration of the more explosive maximums. Last year five inmates ran away from Saskatchewan Farm Institution, the largest of Canada's five minimum security prison farms, near Prince Albert, Sask., despite its reputation for relative inmate freedom and administrative liberalism. René Rousseau, director of Leclerc medium, north of Montreal, blames drugs for many

of the problems among his 540 inmates. "We break two or three networks of 'gaffe' [wrongdoing] a week," sighs Rousseau. "If it were not for the drugs, we would not have all these people to be carried out in ambulances, badly beaten."

Prison life was never pretty. It was not meant to be. It was designed to deter people from crime by exploiting their fear of being put inside. Many prisoners are violent and they fear each other. At Kingston Pen, Clifford Olson, the Coquitlam, B.C., construction worker who killed 11 young people in 1981, has to be protected, even from the other child murderers. And in the past two years the prison world's normal cycle of violence, despair, futility and rage has been accelerated by new external forces. The most controversial was Bill S-32, presented to the Senate committee on legal and constitutional affairs by Solicitor General Robert Kaplan on May 19. The proposed bill would amend the terms of "mandatory supervision"—the set of conditions under which a prisoner automatically serves the last third of his or her sentence under supervision outside the institution to "depressurize"—much like a diver gradually coming up for air. (Parole, on the other hand, can result in release before two-thirds of a sentence is served but it is not automatic and must be applied for.) Now, S-32 would make reimprisonment the punishment for any infringement of mandatory supervision. As well, it would legalize the practice of "gating"—or rearresting a prisoner legally due for automatic release under mandatory supervision because the authorities deem him to be potentially dangerous.

By tightening one possibility of early release, S-32 will bottleneck—and further antagonize—a prison population already growing more violent. As well, when Parliament substituted the minimum 25-year "life" sentence before parole for the death penalty in 1976, it guaranteed that the long-term violent population would swell like a vein below a tourniquet—from 26 in 1976 to a projected 2,000 in 1999. The "lifers" have little to lose by hostage-taking and murder; two men with 25-year sentences led last year's riot at Archambault.

Another potentially explosive development has been overcrowding. A national trend among Canadian judges toward handing down longer sentences caused the prison population to jump by an unanticipated 10 per cent between 1981 and 1982, and it is still rising. The result is double-bunking, the practice of confining two inmates in a cell designed for one, or, as one official cynically termed it, "two scorpions in a bottle." Because of overcrowding there are 100 more men than last year jostling each other in the narrow corridors, shoving, pushing and quarrelling over use of the tiny gym. Inmate Reg Striker, a convicted thief, fears that a

violent outbreak will take place before his scheduled release in two months. "If this place doesn't 'go' by then," he says, "I'll be surprised. I just hope I hit the streets Fingerprinting at B.C.'s Mission penitentiary (above left); guard's keys: never-ending before it happens."

The 1983 toll of violence is already grim: 10 suicides; an Archambault guard, Serge Delorme, stabbed to death; Serge Robidoux, an inmate at Quebec's maximum security prison, Laval, who was thought to be a stool pigeon, strangled with shoelaces by his fellow inmates; \$2.5 million worth of damage from the riot two months ago at the Prince George, B.C., provincial prison. But, tragically, there is no agreement on how the pressure can be relieved. The majority of Canadians seem determined that the violence must be contained by tightening the lid and loading up the contents of the prison pressure cooker—although it costs between \$32,000 and \$65,000 to house one prisoner for a year.

Kicked: The fact is, citizens are alarmed by murders committed by infamous alumni of the Canadian penal system—like Clifford Olson—despite the fact that it is impossible for penal authorities to predict who will be "dangerous" and despite the fact that only 6.3 per cent of those on mandatory supervision are reimprisoned. In March 175,000 Dorchester cell (above); gunrack (below left); Laval handcuffs: 'true meaning of hate' Canadians presented Parliament with a petition calling for even tougher sentences. The petition was organized by a Streetsville, Ont., businessman, Leslie Crisp, whose daughter's fiancé was kicked to death outside a local bar.

At the other end of the spectrum of public opinion are calls for radical change to reduce the pressure level, to reform a prison system that, charges Michael Jackson, a law professor at the University of British Columbia, is in danger of becoming a punitive "Gulag." And last week the Canadian Friends Service Committee (the Quakers)—the same group that 200 years ago proposed replacing lynch-mob justice with the present penitentiary system—hosted, at the University of Toronto, the first international conference on the theme of total abolition of the prison system.

In the face of the impending explosion behind bars and the rising clamor outside, Ottawa steers a careful course. Solicitor General Robert Kaplan told Maclean's that he faces two simple challenges: how to maintain programs while providing public security in a more cost-efficient way; and how to devise different ways of punishing people in order to reduce the number behind bars.

Currently, 116 out of every 100,000 Canadians are behind bars—the Western world's sixth-highest rate of imprisonment. Meanwhile, the justice department, the solicitor general's

office (which oversees federal prisons through the Corrections Service of Canada and the National Parole Board) and the Law Reform Commission are developing proposals for reforms in sentencing that should stem the jail-bound tide in the courts. The primary device being considered is restitution, a system under which offenders who are not dangerous would be forced to pay back, or work off, the damage inflicted on their victims as an alternative to imprisonment. The new guidelines are due to be presented to Parliament this fall. But for the rest, official policy appears "ad hoc," in the words of Progressive Conservative Caucus Chairman Benno Friesen. On April 27 Kaplan called for earlier parole of nonviolent offenders to ease prison overcrowding. But then, 23 days later, the intent of Bill S-32 was the opposite: any infringement of mandatory supervision, including drinking or consorting with proscribed people, would be punishable by automatic reimprisonment.

Alarmed: The uncertain policies are responses to the country's fear of crime and doubts about the positive effect of rehabilitation programs in prison. The uncertainty is based on statistics. In liberal Scandinavia, no less than in punitive Canada, recidivism—return-to-crime—rates rarely fall below 50 per cent. As a result, the Corrections Service of Canada is moving away from the very qualities that earned it a laudable reputation with the American Correctional Association.

Misinformation means that the Canadian public is increasingly alarmed by U.S. crime statistics, and television has set the punishing pace. According to a 1979 study by the director of the centre of criminology at the University of Toronto, Anthony Doob, a majority of Canadians believe that half of all crime is violent. In fact, despite individual horror stories, Statistics Canada reports in its 1981 publication of crime statistics that only seven per cent of crime was violent (including homicide, sexual offences and assaults) in the past few years. In fact, because the 18 to 30-year-old age group (the one most likely to commit crime) continues to shrink, the CSC's own strategic planning committee projects a slight decrease in total crime. A 1983 Gallup poll also found that more than 50 per cent of Canadians believe that the prison system is too lax. In fact, the number of paroles granted has decreased by 50 per cent in the past decade. And the suicide rate in Canadian prisons is seven times the national average. But politicians appear unwilling to contradict the public's voracious preoccupation with crime and punishment. On last month's election trail, the then NDP leader in British Columbia, David Barrett, declared, "Our prisons should not be first-class hotels."

Fully aware that crime rates are relatively static, Kaplan nevertheless told Maclean's, "My first

job is to reassure the public." As a result, although Ottawa's corrections budget was slashed this winter by \$14.4 million, a construction program costing more than \$100 million—it will add as many as 600 maximum security beds to four penitentiaries—by 1986—continues. Declares UBC's Jackson: "We are emphasizing the worst and eliminating the best." Nowhere are the priorities clearer than in Kaplan's decision last December to cancel free postsecondary education for inmates—a \$1-million program under which 232 prisoners were working on university courses. Reflecting on criticism during the past five months, Kaplan told Maclean's last week that he will keep the current program in place—but only until he can replace it with one that will be paid for by inmates who will take out student loans. If anything supplies hope of rehabilitation, it is education. U.S. and Canadian studies both report that recidivism rates among inmates enrolled in postsecondary education is a miraculously low 15 per cent. And when the penitentiary service suffered its most costly riot ever (\$5 million in damages) at Matsqui, B.C., in 1981, inmates armed with baseball bats guarded the prison school and library.

Currently, rehabilitation programs are symbolized by well-equipped workshops whose underemployed inmates are forbidden to compete with the private sector. "We only have an hour of work a day," an inmate at Quebec's medium security Leclerc, told Maclean's. "The rest of the time we spend talking, smoking, goofing off. We're locked up in the shop instead of the cells, that's all." The shops cost far more to operate than the \$3,000 per inmate for a university education.

Dangerous: The demise of rehabilitation can be seen in other areas as well. There are only 26 full and part-time psychiatrists in the entire system and only one in the Atlantic region. Even the administration admits that this is inadequate; Mac Perry, the CSC's health care analyst, estimates that as many as 25 per cent of inmates could benefit from psychiatric counselling if they could get it. As well, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs are minimal. Wayne Eaton is an inmate imprisoned at Bath "because I became violent when I drank." He pleads: "All they have for me is Alcoholics Anonymous on Monday nights. I need help." But he will not get it. He is due to be released on day parole this week.

The clearest indication of the government's tougher direction is the \$35-million construction of 240 ultramaximum security special handling units (SHUs) for the system's most dangerous prisoners at Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Archambault and in Renous, N.B. Construction of the new four-metre-by-IM»m cells is well under way. They will be equipped with steel

**news on the block cont'd
from pg 7**

beds and toilets and waist-high windows through which inmates will receive their trays of food. Currently, 160 dangerous convicts live in the two special units already in operation at Laval and Millhaven. Critics charge that the cost of servicing and guarding them around the clock can be as high as \$90,000 per inmate. The units are not only the most costly form of imprisonment, they are the most punitive. As one inmate puts it, "If the SHU fits, it wears you." For the first two to six weeks after a "fish" (new inmate) arrives, he is kept in his SHU cell for 23 hours a day. Even at the end of his minimum two-year "bit," his movements and communication are rigidly circumscribed. "What bothers me about SHUs," says Gordon MacFarlane, Ontario's executive director of the Ottawa-based John Howard Society (a prisoner support group), "is that there is no rehabilitation whatsoever. And most of these guys will get out, eventually." Ominously, an open letter last January from the Laval SHU inmates to the CBC and CTV asserted, "This program is causing us to learn and to feel the true meaning of hate."

Violated: The mood is ugly in Canada's prisons and it is going to get worse: even small cut-backs have massive psychological effects in the circumscribed world inside. Two of the reforms brought in during the liberal 1970s— inmates' committees and the correctional investigator, or ombudsman— were intended to improve communications between prisoners and administration. But now they may simply add to inmates' cynicism and frustration. Last winter Leclerc's committee resigned en masse to protest the transfer of its leader, Robert Collin, to Laval maximum. Collin's offence: his committee challenged double-bunking in the Federal Court of Canada. Worse, Collin complained to the authorities that 680 kg of meat was disappearing from the prison kitchens each month—because, the inmates presumed, the staff was stealing. Instead of investigating the charges, the authorities removed their accuser. He took them to Federal Court again to challenge his involuntary transfer as an infringement of his rights. Earlier this spring Collin won an \$18,136 award after the court ruled that the inmate's constitutional rights had been violated under the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Authorities now believe that prisoners will, for the first time, have to be given reasons for transfers—and a chance to reply—before any move. Alarmed by the precedent, Kaplan is appealing.

The 1982 report of the correction investigator, already a month overdue, could help clarify controversies like the Collin case, but inmate hopes are not high. The 1981-82 Report of the Correctional Investigator noted that fewer than one in three complaints were resolved or assisted. Nor can the correction-

al investigator resolve the issue of involuntary transfers—one of the most frequent inmate complaints. Shaun Shannon was an inmate at the overcrowded Kent "max" in B.C.'s Fraser Valley. On the eve of his transfer he wrote to his wife to lament his move from an overcrowded prison to an empty cell 5,000 km away at Dorchester, N.B.: "I'm not a piece of baggage. I told them that they were destroying my family, the only thing that matters to me. This has got to be the bottom of the pit. I'm really hurting tonight." That evening Shannon killed himself with an overdose of barbiturates.

There will be more Shaun Shannons, there will be more Archambaults. According to the 1982 report of the correction service's strategic planning committee, sentencing reforms that send only the most violent to jail and the 25-year sentences will bottleneck more and more incorrigible offenders inside the corrections system. The committee concluded that "an increase in the inmate suicide-homicide rate may result." In the light of such a prediction, prison abolitionists argue that the system should end. Hans Mohr, a professor at Osgoode Hall law school in Toronto who served on the Law Reform Commission of Canada, is an abolitionist who submits: "People say prisons should exist to protect them from the Clifford Olsons. But Olson is not typical of prison inmates; surely he is sick and belongs in a psychiatric hospital. And if prisons are not for Olson, who are they for?" Even if the system now in place remains, the John Howard Society's MacFarlane insists that it should shift from a policy of warehousing criminals to one that emphasizes any program, such as postsecondary education, which at least offers hope of rehabilitation. The views of reformers, however, are clearly not in fashion.

Bloody: As it is, the public is twice victimized by crime—first by the offence and then by having to bear the ever-increasing cost necessary to support ever-increasing numbers of angry offenders inside the time bomb of Canada's prisons. But honest citizens want prisons, because they want to hope that terrible things will not happen to their children or to their property. "There can never be that reassurance," argues Osgoode's Mohr. But the Corrections Service of Canada, in an increasingly thankless role, must try to provide it. Clark Macdonald, moderator of the United Church of Canada, who visited Archambault and Laval during the aftermath of last year's bloody riots, has spoken to prisoners and guards on what can be done to prevent more bloodshed. He is not optimistic. "In a sense," he says, "the system imprisons them all."

Benoit Aubin, Jackie Carlos, Michael Clugston, Malcolm Gray, Gordon Legge, Christopher Mosey

cont'd from cover story

An image of Ashley Smith, who, in 2007, died while being watched by guards on video who failed to intervene to save her life.

(Mountain) I found out about the lawsuit I became apart of. I saw a lawyer and after a year I called the parliament buildings in B.C. to the attorney general's office about this long wait for the attorney to come. Well, within 4 months he was there with my lawyer plus a stenographer. I told my story.

I heard that MacDougall was caught at this, the RCMP put cameras in his office in Frazer Correctional, he had to quit. Then the public appeal if any other victims were out there. Well back to Mountain. This agent for the government shows up, my lawyer in tow. They showed me a map of Okalla. The maze and I picked his office immediately, but 1 door off, it was an 8x12 piece of paper. I was on the money. The next was west gate. I ached that.

We wrapped it up and in about a year I had to call the government at parliament again. I was saying Robert Gillen, Attorney General, talks the talk but does not walk the walk. Stalled sex crime victims who relived it to them in limbo (hurry up and wait). Well out come 25K offer. A "no," then 1 month later 35k and if not we go to court with another date. I took it, got paid and tried to forget it. The lawyer got 11k. Well Christmas was excellent on L-Bock in Kent and what's on Unit, stays on Unit, nobody says shit, everybody rides for free. We had a guy sewing stitches there as boys-will-be-boys with beefs. Big mouths would get it too, so on unit never goes off or it is ruined like most places nowadays.

I had the doings now, and a lot. I fixed a few up with transfers for year money. I supplied them with (ITF) for clothing, and all their wives or girls too, a little 15 hun each. My mom, spa, a package. My niece, her new baby boy, he got diapers for a year, plus her hubby a 15 hun pot and pan set. I talked to him at mothers in Maple Bay that Christmas.

My father and his wife received a matching set of eco-drive citizen watches, water-proof too as my village it rains a lot. My mom's husband a Texas mickey, sister, a T.V. card with a hundred too. It was all good.

In closing on MacDougall, I will never forget a guard in Kent

going out of his way to approach me and say, "I just want you to know Rod MacDougall is a piece of shit." It actually made me feel good, it is something that has stuck with me.

Prisoner's Justice Day and Mountain Institution

I was taken aback at the news footage of an in-unit camera, a living unit, had recorded and it was a staff member with the DC (digital counter) I call it the chrome dildo. And well before this. Well, a male and female were walking rounds and the male had the D.C. as the staff one female and one male staff exited a stairwell, the male staff ran the DC up with the lady staff's behind and sort of aggressively, plus laughed when her hips went forward in a motion or hurry as she looked back at him. She lodged a complaint with the RCMP plus union, and NHQ-RHQ and she was eventually let from the service!! Crown did not want to pursue legal charges and I would like to say if an inmate did this he would have been beat down, segregated and off to Kent. There it would have happened again, and he would have been off to the SHU 100% with consecutive time via video link, as not to get beat down again. The guard got nothing, not even reprimanded with time off with zero pay, nothing. The union disowned her and an Indigenous woman from Chilliwack, B.C. to boot.

Edmonton Max (A PJD Special)

Volumes of staff sexually assaulted new staff by tearing off shirts of females groping them plus assaults to inmates for years. An undercover sting had Don head Senior Commissioner fire a pile prior to retirement. HIP HIP HOORAY DON.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY AND ASHLEY SMITH & SENATE THE HON KIM PATE:

I have a friend who is very controversial person pertaining to the wrongful death of Ashley Smith. Her name is Kim Pate a Senator in Parliament. This wonderful lady is beyond the reach of an ordinary citizen advisory, or advocate. She was a member of Elizabeth Fry Society for a good 25 years, then was appointed to the Senate. Her work is impeccable, flawless and an inspiration for the new approach. This

includes abolishing segregation and providing help for those in need within the correctional service. You cannot be segged up for months or years without account or explanation no more. You have to report to the government watch dog. Then this federal class action for years past locked up! The action questionnaire asks if previous to the before dates provided (to action a claim). So before the date.

If you can make a good pitch to bring account do so. Well Pierre Elliott Trudeau was our P.M. his son is now our P.M. Justin Trudeau. But back to 1990. Then the reform party was harping about prisoners and the penitentiary act and stiffer penalties like an (LTO) and victims' access to rights. He put the charter thru the House as Law. It's the Supreme Law of Canada. Pierre Elliott started the CCRR and CCRA but Chretien took over and he finished it, plus put it thru the House of Commons as Law. It is still to this day, but been tweaked a bit with Justin as a Liberal. Pierre Elliott was a Liberal and Jean Chretien too, therefore the Liberals hold responsibility to my 2 years here, 1 year there in seg with no account to CSC due to CCRA (FYI boys).

Now Ashley Smith, a girl from New Brunswick with mental health issues, tossed in jail for tossing apples at a mail man. Then bounced around Canada from seg to seg, and died as staff videoed her death. They lied about it too and paid an officer over time to shut up, and time off with full pay. He broke down and told a psychologist, who reported it to police. The truth slowly came out, and when it did in full, holy shit like a pile of em standing about, and then the lies. Makes me sick and it is a fraction of previous past covered up. An officer can do no wrong and if they do NHQ plus a pile from strategic planning as they call it go to whitewash mode telling each other what is best served to be told to the public. Rest in peace Ashley, we all love you, you helped us all, plus gave people like the Hon: Senator Kim Pate the clout and ammo to proceed with action and accountability for prisoners. Ashley, you're my day, every day. You're my inspiration.

PRISONER JUSTICE, SLAVE LABOUR OR PURE DISCRIMINATION?**By Brian G. Kerr**

In Indonesia, an estimated 1.17 million children are child labourers. Many routinely sleep and work in these congested, sweltering confinements year-round. Their work hours can reach above 40 hours a week in some cases. The temperature inside some of these buildings that are not equipped with air conditioning are quite high, considering the average temperature ranges between 23 degrees - 32 degrees Celsius year-round, hence the term "sweat shops".

Daily salaries are but a portion of your own, equalling to \$2.57 - \$6.44 Canadian dollars per day. After deductions our salary is quite similar to theirs. About the only difference is the currency rate exchange between their money and our own dollars. We make between \$5.25 and \$6.90 per day, and most of us are at the lower end of this. Deductions can be as high as 30% for accommodation, food, phone fees and other deductions for outstanding fines. Point being, we aren't much different in our daily earnings than are the children who are in forced into labour, contrary to child protection laws in Indonesia.

In Canada, COVID-19 has raised the sanitation expectancy bar considerably. However, the rate in pay remains the same for prisoners tasked to perform these additional duties. Albeit some jails did in fact provide an incentive pay on a ½ time, ½ pay basis. This nonetheless was very short-lived and generally covered the period from approximately January 20th 2019 - Oct 12, 2020, which begs the question: what about the other past 8 months expired since this time?

Fortunately, the CSC commissioner has imbursed the odd \$5 coupon (the prisoner c/o the Federal correctional system) for phone cards for communication purposes and it is well appreciated, as was a slight adjustment to our weekly grocery spending allotment, due to the rise in costs c/o of the COVID pandemic.

However, employment potential here in the BCI medium appears to be rather prejudicial in their hiring requirement. For example, on April 9th, 2021 - practically an entire 7 months after my arrival at the institution, I, in compliance with job designation "positions of trust" requirements, put in an application for a position of trust as recommended by my CO II R. Sager dated 2021-03-14 (a six month review commencing from September 14th, 2021) states "I am fully participating in my correctional plan (in all aspects)". Which is fully "compliant" with the requirement for a "position of trust".

Regardless, on 2021-04-15 I was advised by PO A. Sheldon c/o the Inmate Application for Employment Response, that I am currently rated as low accountability and low motivation in Correctional Plan and am considered not engaged in my Correctional Plan.

Is this any wonder, with the current setbacks allegedly pre-

sented by COVID? Nonetheless this is not the requirement for a position of trust, but rather to be "fully participating in all aspects of my correctional plan" as R. Sager c/o my latest Pay Review depicts I am! So much for being treated with equality and fairness, dignity and respect. So much for CSC's "commitment" and legal obligations, so much for being treated as a free citizen would be treated with the ensurance of a safe, healthy and living, working environment. In conjunction with the above, the Programs Manager - R. Rae, also referred to as the E-unit CM, concurs with the response from PO Sheldon and states "Needs further engagement in Corr-Plan prior to consideration for a position of trust," dated 2021-04-16, "inmate encouraged to apply for a position of trust," dated 2021-04-16, "inmate encouraged to apply for work elsewhere or re-apply at a later date," dated 2021-14-27.

Other than a rating of how motivation and low accountability, I am and have been complying with a level '3' requirement. Regardless to prevent me from a Position of Trust on the above grounds as indicated is completely discriminatory and contrary to job designation requirements. Furthermore, the requirement for an incentive pay (or pay raise) is to be fully participating in all aspects of their corr plan, as R. Sager suggests I am doing as confirmed on pg 155 of the Inmate Handbook for Beaver Creek medium, under heading Job Designations at a medium c/o Incentive Pay/Position of Influence/Position of Trust, revised Sept 21, 2018.

Seemingly, I recall not that long ago, when employed in CORCAN Industries c/o Federal Corrections in 2011-2012 I would bring to cell \$172.00 after deductions. Even after a \$90.00 canteen, I still had just as much remaining to go into my savings account. In other words, I couldn't spend my income quick enough. I for a better term, was satisfied! It will be much less than this once food and accommodation is deducted, once the COVID crisis is resolved. After canteen expenses, minus \$10.49 for stamps, plus \$1.76 for envelopes, \$2.15 for a writing pad of 50 pages of lined paper, and after food & accommodations, I'd be lucky to have between \$16.69 and \$20.69 for snacks with next to \$0.00 for savings.

So essentially, I leave the opinion up to you, the reader - as to rather or not this is in any way a good example of rehabilitation efforts or punishment at it's best. Is this in any way a representation of good standards as in respects to a modern-day social standard of living?

Despite the deplorable degree of daily pay amidst the prejudicial hiring requirements, lack of incentive pay or pay raise potential, discriminative decision-making processes and inhumane labour treatment within the Federal milieu. I have over these many past years managed to save approximately \$50.00 per month for a period of 240 months, enough money to send to my son and his legal

parent and guardian a significant amount for purposes of childcare/back pay. Albeit, it took a painstaking budget of very limited expenses for purposes of canteen purchases to obtain. I ask you, "how's that for low motivation?"

Since this time, I have recently requested from Warden Christopher Germain - upon resolution of the COVID crisis a waiver of food and accommodations, for I know that once deductions resume it will be much harder to continue making back payment for child support, to recover and/or replenish the extensive sum already paid out for such endeavours. Keeping in mind I still need to make payments towards obtaining my college studies in which I have been struggling to make since I began my Business Administration efforts in 2017. Luckily, to Mr. Germain's credit he did approve an exemplification of an electric typewriter (to be purchased by me) from the cell effects' list, so that it won't interfere with my allotment/dollar value of effects. As it is indeed for school purposes predominantly (this was approved 2021-06-17).

If only I can get him to do the same in honouring my waiver for food and accommodations upon resolution of the horrendous COVID crisis and the painstaking effects it has had upon us all. Wow, COVID-19 - what an awkward conundrum this has proven to be. The hold it has had upon interventions and programs facilitation within the Federal System. It is well beyond the realm of ridiculousness and I believe it has provided in a sense an unnecessary reliance and convenient excuse for corporate fall-backs within the Federal milieu. Particularly, where programs facilitation efforts are concerned. Otherwise, explain to me how there can be two ICPM High Intensity Programs currently up and running since March - May 2021, but yet an Indigenous individual awaiting an Indigenous ICPM-High Intensity can't get into such a program until promises of perhaps fair, winter or sometime in the new year, despite my personal relentless attempts to become enrolled in such a program since my arrival at BCI Sept 15th, 2020 - after being told relentlessly that "I am #1 on the list for the next Indigenous Program," c/o C. Jamieson - CPO. This is far beyond any COVID-related incidences. The entire situation reeks of discrimination or at least it sure appears this way!

Nonetheless, in the meantime, Corrections Canada still wants you to be an outstanding performer like that of a well-behaved circus animal continuing to jump through all the right corresponding flaming hoops without getting burned. But rest assure, 'we have programs for that too and remember, it only gets easier the more and more you do them!'

Personally, I believe we'd all, inmates and society alike, be far better off without so-called "Correctional Systems" hampering on the obsessive need for punishment - where no matter what good you do, it is never truly good enough!

Germany definitely had its faults' and less than humane perspectives in the past, but I believe it's now integrated system based upon rehabilitative reintegration is the way to Criminal Reformatory success.

"Power is in the fabric of a democracy. However, whence it is embraced by hands of corruption, it becomes a solution towards all forms of resistance (a revolt in and of it's own right). Fascist leaders know this best. As we all know, there is no Prisoner Justice. There is however, such a thing as slave labour. Albeit, it allegedly faded away long ago... and it is all covered by pure discrimination.

PRISONERS' JUSTICE DAY**By Philippe Poisson**

On August 10th, 1975, Prisoners' Justice Day (PJD) started. My Father was serving time then and, although 2006 was the last he was incarcerated, PJD is still very important to him these days.

Although I first came to prison in 2015, I did not learn about Prisoners' Justice Day until 2016 when on August 10th I went to eat my lunch, a Lifer told me off in my attempt to eat, then later explained the significance of the day and what PJD is all about. And this occurred in the SHU/USD, I had emergency transferred there from Millhaven for assaulting four correctional officers. Point being, I learned of PJD in the SHU/USD, but my first PJD (although I didn't know at the time) was spent in Millhaven.

August 10th, 2022, will be my 8th Prisoners' Justice Day spent inside with another two PJD's to go. In all the prisons I've been to (Millhaven, SHU/USD, Donnacoma, Port-Cartier, Edmonton Max, Pacific, Kent, and RPC) only three of them actually did their best to have everyone follow the rules for Prisoners' Justice Day:

Unless you're diabetic or have some other medical condition (for which you need to eat, eat the bare minimum) **DO NOT EAT, FAST ALL DAY!!!** Why? To show respect for those inmates who passed away inside prison! Do no work and/or programming! This is seen as disrespecting the deceased.

Don't play games (electronic, board or otherwise)! This is seen as again disrespectful towards the deceased! You are having fun on a day of mourning, a day in memory of their name and honour!

Be quiet all day. Meditate. TV is okay but at a low volume so only you can hear it. Do a lot of cell time. No sex. Reflect on yourself and those you lost inside or outside prison.

HONOUR, THE FALLEN

"PRISONER JUSTICE"

I hear the words "Prisoners Justice" on an annual basis, but very rarely do I see the results. The word justice implies fairness and just conduct, both of these commodities are extremely scarce and not so commonly forth coming - at least not in the respects of many interventions entertained within the Institution where I am currently residing. There are so many issues, which need the proper attention brought forth to address the

residing undermined and inappropriate conducted distributed amongst Federal inmates. If it is not the lack of faith group provisions or requirements, it is something else. Like say a failure to respond to a request within a certain stipulated timeframe, or completing a pay review in a timely fashion. All of which are suppose to be a policy-driven procedure and unfortunately, all of which so happens to occur on a relatively constant basis.

Howbeit, I have been in many different institutions across the nation and aside from perhaps the most predatorial, such as Stoney Mountain in Alberta; I would have to say that on an administrative level, Beaver Creek Medium Institution is probably the most severe in respects to non-compliances and meeting the needs of others.

Covid-19, as real as it is, severe as an administrative cop - out or excuse for those reluctantly pressed to perform their duties. Believe me; when the repercussions are felt in practically every aspect and/or moment of an already suppressed individual's life; nearly three full years after the first symptoms of the pandemic was discovered. And matters have not appeared to become any more expedient or efficient than they were before the pandemic. It becomes blatantly obvious that there is suggestively a more severe problem in relation to competency, suitability issues and modification efforts, especially, when the bubbling caldron spills out, on our loved ones.

P.F.V's (Personal Family Visits) are a prime example of such discrepancy. This is an ongoing issue, which has been troubling the inmates and their loved ones for some time now. Being told you can only have such visits on the weekends, as opposed to the weekdays and that all family or friends must be cleared not only by security; which seemingly takes forever. But that now, they must be cleared by national health standards for the purpose of covid detection related concerns, is a tremendous inconvenience, not only for the inmate; but also for their expediently long awaited friends and family members as well.

Let us not forget our friends and families too, were subjected to the confinements of their homes for a significant duration of time. The question is however, why is that the rapid test-kits can't be deployed for these purposes? It would significantly reduce the extensive wait period and simplify the entire process in an effective and medically satisfying manner.

Consensus being; "we should as people; a collective of human autonomy be availing ourselves of every effort available to do what is in the best interest of all others. And to do so with the least restrictive measures at our expense. This would reduce any undue hardship already suffered."

I mean is this not the particular type of prison justice in which we are truly seeking?

Sincerely:
The Concerned inmates of Beaver Creek Medium Institution



A CALL TO ACTION ...

PRISONER DISSENT MATTERS, AND ADVOCACY FOR CHANGE IN CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA IS IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY

By George Fraser

The government and CSC projects the image that prisoners in Canada are being treated with dignity, their human rights are respected, and they are receiving rehabilitation and work readiness training while they are serving their time away from society as a fair and reasonable punishment.

Unfortunately, this just isn't the case!

The truth is Canada has a brutal barbaric 20th century criminal justice system. When people go to prison they are treated less than human and more like an animal.

The office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) reported in 2018-19 there was 3194 use-of-force incidents against prisoners. They included inflammatory agents, batons and without consent injections. Many of these atrocities were inflicted on prisoners suffering mental illness. What's the point of a prison system that punishes prisoners for something they have done wrong with barbaric practices no better than the prisoner's crimes that brought them to prison? As prisoners, we all recognize that our keeper, CSC, is an 'abject failure' on every issue except safety and security. While prisoners recognize CSC's 'abject failure' we are remiss in our failure to get the message out beyond the razor wire.

If we don't ask questions and if we don't raise doubts about the 'abject failure' to recognize prisoners' human rights, rehabilitation and work readiness to 21st century standards, we are our own worst enemy. This is because no new horizons will be advanced to move CSC out of the 20th century.

LEGISLATED RIGHTS

As prisoners we need to do a better job of questioning, challenging, and asking for accountability and verification because we have this inalienable right

under the Canadian Constitution.

Our right, as prisoners, to dissent and advocate for change are guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We, like every Canadian citizen, have the fundamental freedoms of "conscience, thought, belief, opinion and expression including freedom of the press and other media of communications" including the internet. [Sc. 2(a) and 2(b)]. These are the vehicles through which dissent and advocacy can be expressed. The definition of dissent is to express disagreement and for advocacy is to recommend or support changes.

While dissent and advocacy are mutually exclusive terms, they are most effective when combined due to synergy. Synergistic advantages take dissent to higher levels of legitimacy with the recommendation of new policy and procedures to eliminate or mitigate the complaint issue that precipitated the dissent.

In other words, a dissenter may be marginalized as a complainer without advocating for recommended change(s). Prisoners may still be labeled as a complainer when dealing with CSC. This is **because CSC historically has a poor track record for respecting the legislative rights of prisoners including those related to human rights and dignity.**

Prisoners rights to dissent and advocate under the Charter's fundamental freedoms are recognized under the CCRA when it says "offenders retain the rights of all members of society" [Sc 4(d)]. Our rights are ensured and not suppressed by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Canadian courts have interpreted "freedom of expression" for "thoughts, belief, opinion" and "conscience" very broadly. If the activity in question conveys meaning it falls within the scope of "freedom of expression" regardless if that meaning is unpopular, offensive or even false.

Because the right of prisoners to dissent is one of the most important rights guaranteed under the Canadian Constitution, we need to start using it more broadly to advocate for change in CSC. As long as prisoners do not break the law,

advocate or incite violence/he has the inalienable and guaranteed right to vocalize, promote and publish their "thoughts, beliefs and opinions".

DISSENTERS ARE EVERYWHERE

Consider some famous dissenters down through history that made a difference: Jesus Christ, Copernicus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela. Being an environmentalist, the dissenter I always relate to is Rachel Carson, the naturalist and scientist. Rachel Carson is a person who connected the dots and sounded the alarm, warning the world of an unfolding environmental disaster that quite possibly threatened all life on the planet.

"Some dissenters are assigned the role as in the case of devil's advocates to increase the diversity of views and opinions. Others dissent because that is what is expected in their job, i.e. appellate court judges. Then there are those who dissent because they feel they have to because their conscience leaves them no choice but to speak up." (W. Kaplan, 'Why Dissent Matters' 2017)

"Dissenters are important because they force the status quo, sometimes uncomfortably, to look at the other side with an alternative way of doing or thinking about something. Without them we may still go down the wrong path but there is now a better chance that minds will be changed and get it right." (W. Kaplan)

Dissent is always inconvenient for the powers that be, the people in authority. *"Many dissenters will be marginalized as self-interested, misanthropic, crazy and even dangerous to the status quo while at the same time being considered principled and prescient."* (W. Kaplan)

WHAT MAKES SOME PEOPLE DISSENT WHILE OTHERS SLINK AWAY EVEN WHEN THEY KNOW THERE IS A PROBLEM?

The problem is that most people don't want to stand out from the crowd. They don't want to express contrarian views. There is strength in numbers and responsibility is easier when it is shared.

Dissenters are generally disliked especially by the powers that be when they are bucking against the status quo and the prevailing culture.

Think the 'Blue Wall' correctional culture!

Many people avoid situations where they would be the target of animus, rejection and potential reprisal. It's easier to be a passive bystander and not get involved. To let someone else take the heat for standing out from the crowd. As prisoners we all know that CSC has a long history of intimidation, threats and punitive reprisal for speaking out and asking them to be accountable for their actions.

- Authentic dissenters are "conscientious" driven, as is their fundamental right under the Charter.
- Dissenters are important because we, as a society, are so often prone to being wrong. Think about the Harper era 'tough on crime'.

- Dissenters start with an observation that something is wrong. They see a problem that others miss even though it may be in plain sight. Think Rick Sauvé and the Charter guaranteeing all citizens, including prisoners, the right to vote in Federal elections.
- Authentic dissenters have the courage to stand up all alone and say 'No' to injustice; 'this is wrong!'

WHISTLEBLOWERS ARE DISSENTERS ON THE INSIDE

Closer to home for prisoners was evidence of abuse being ingrained in the correctional culture with the publication of 'Down Inside-Thirty Years in Canada's Prison Service', 2017. The author, Robert Clark, is a retired Deputy Warden from the Bath Institution. In this tell-all publication, the author chronicled how he set out as a young recruit in the Canadian penitentiary service determined to bring some humanity to the prisons to which he was assigned. Instead, he was stifled by the 'Blue Wall' of prison injustice; **the correctional culture that "almost sanctions the mistreatment of prisoners."** (R. Clark)

The correctional 'Blue Wall' culture as Clark soon discovered was erected and perpetuated to hide prisoner mistreatment and to cover up and gloss over "acts that would be a crime outside the prison walls including racism, verbal and emotional abuse intimidation". (R. Clark)

As prisoners we experience first-hand on a daily basis what Robert Clark saw in the way of dignity and human rights abuse by our keepers albeit not always overt but subtle.

"Once immersed in the correctional culture many prison staff, no matter the job and no matter their background, begin to see the prisoners as something less than real people; feel it acceptable to mistreat them in myriad ways that they would not ever consider outside of prison; and they would be ashamed to have their family and friends see". (R. Clark)

Clark had harsh comments about the phoney 'tough on crime' policies of the Harper regime from February 6, 2006 to November 4, 2015. While Harper's 'war on crime' was designed to tackle crime and make communities safer and hold offenders accountable, it is now recognized to have done irreparable harm to Canada's criminal justice system. This is because the harsh treatment of prisoners who eventually have to be released is counter-productive to the public interest.

Even today in 2021, Canada's criminal justice system has not recovered. Warehousing has replaced rehabilitation. Overcrowding and double bunking has made prisons even more dangerous for prisoners and correctional officers alike. Mandatory minimum sentences, a Harper favourite criminal justice reform, has had no deterrent effect. Now more than ever marginalized people, especially Indige-

nous, Black and the mentally ill, including those with addiction issues, are overrepresented in Canadian prisons.

WHISTLEBLOWERS ARE PROTECTED

Whistleblower can refer to anyone who reports a wrong-doing. The office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada provides an independent and confidential process for receiving and investigating whistleblower disclosures of wrongdoing related to the federal public sector from public servants and members of the public.

For CSC staff members and prisoners seeking confidentiality in reporting wrongdoing in CSC, the office of the Integrity Commissioner would be where to go to seek resolution.

Certainly sounds good in theory, especially since the Integrity Commissioner is mandated to report founded cases of wrongdoing to Parliament under-the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act 2005.

The problem is the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner, like the Correctional Investigator, is relegated to 'suggestion box' status. This is because the Integrity Commissioner only makes recommendations on corrective measures.

- For conscience-driven prisoner dissenters and advocates, confidentiality is never an issue from my experience prisoners want justice; they want the abuse to end; they want to be up front and in your face personal with their CSC victimizers.

Hiding in the weeds is not an option!

EVERY PRISONER HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Every prisoner has something important to add in solving the problems with CSC. This is because we have all been abused by the system in one way or another. We know where the bodies are buried; we can identify our victimizers by name.

The following are just a few of the prisoners that I have met who have and still are challenging the 'abject failure' of CSC to be 21st century relevant.

1. **Rick Sauvé**, the prisoner who challenged the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because prisoners were denied the right to vote when the Charter says all Canadian citizens have the right to vote. Long story short, after a decade long legal battle, he won affirming the voting rights of all prisoners. Now paroled, Rick continues his advocacy work with the St. Leonard's Society of Canada.
2. **James Ruston**, since his release to parole in 2019, has launched the campaign for the Compassionate Treatment of Youth. This is a campaign to stop sentencing youth to prison by criminalizing their poor mental health.

James entered Canada's criminal justice system at 17 years of age with mental health issues that only became progressively exacerbated over 31 years of



incarceration due to a general lack of mental health counselling that led to reoccurring bouts of solitary confinement. The effects of the anti-social prison conditioning were suicide attempts as a primal call for HELP due to unaddressed depths of overwhelming despair and the PTSD that originally brought him to prison at 17 years of age.

3. **Todd Mallen** is another prisoner who has the courage not to be afraid to stand out from the crowd in his dissent and advocacy for change in CSC.

When Todd was housed in Cowansville, he was part of the group that launched the court challenge of Sc. 3(b)t and Sc. 4 of the CCRA regarding the "control" that CSC exercises over prisoner rights when working. The final court judgment sided with CSC who maintained that prisoners do not work at employment jobs in the conventional sense but rather participate in rehabilitation programs throughout prison institutions and at CORCAN. More recently Todd Mallen has been working with Evolve Our Prison Farms to expose the hypocrisy and ethical violations of CSC. Now, CSC is using the loophole that prisoners are not employees while working regular shifts on prison job assignments, but rather participating in rehabilitation programs that are incentivized with participation payments. **WHAT BS!**

CSC is using the farm labour participation in prison farm programs as justification to start producing goat milk for Chinese processing and export while at the same time Canada does not allow imports manufactured with prison labour.

If this goat milk fiasco ever gets up and running, it should be easy to make the case that it is criminal under the UN's International Labour Organization. - But then again it may just die the way 14 of the 19 bull calves bought in December 2019. (C. Neufield, Evolve Our Prison farms Aug. 4, 2020)

4. **Gus Ghassen**, with support from Queen's University Prison Law Clinic, is proceeding with a federal court challenge of CSC's total ban on internet access including for education purposes. This is an individual who wants to move beyond the rudimentary GED and enroll in a post-secondary degree program in mathematics, physics or computer science.

The fundamental basis for this court challenge goes back to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms [Sc. 2(b)] that guarantees "freedom of expression". Education is a "freedom of expression".

Also to be considered is that while CSC is not required to provide onsite post-secondary education, CD 720 clearly states 'institutional staff is expected to facilitate prisoners' access to post-secondary education'.

5. **Ross Evans** is the principal plaintiff in a group Human rights Complaint against the Bath Institution's healthcare and adminis-

tration.

Mr. Evans, 56, who suffers multiple health issues which include heart problems, diabetes and Parkinson's is confined to a wheelchair. Like all prisoners at the Bath Institution, where approximately 50% of the prison population is 50 years of age, he regularly waited up to 30 minutes in an outside medication line to receive his prescriptions. Some winter days the wind chill would be -30 degrees Celsius. Not a nice way to treat people! When Mr. Evans was quoted as saying **"they (CSC staff and management) treat us like we are not even human"** (G&M April 3, 2020), this quotation draws a parallel to what Robert Clark, the former Bath Institution Deputy Warden, said: **"prison staff ... see prisoners as something less than real people"**. All prison dissenters and advocates, like the five named, have that one most fundamental common denominator.

They are all conscience driven! They have all come to the conclusion 'enough is enough, I'm going to do something about this abuse!' They have all said "No" to the Man

It would be my recommendation to always use the legal option through the court system or the quasi-judicial process through administrative tribunals that administer legislated acts, i.e. human rights, privacy and information. This is because it is just too easy for the "Man" to marginalize and discount prisoners' legislated rights under the CSC complaint and grievance process when our deniers and victimizers are also our judge and jury.

It is also my recommendation that prisoners never sign non-disclosure/confidentiality agreements because without a precedent the "Man" is free to continue to victimize you or another any prisoner on the same issue that you took them to task for.

'PRISONER ADVOCATE' IS AN OFFICIAL EMPLOYMENT/PROGRAM ASSIGNMENT

It may come as a surprise to many that CSC has an employment position, 'Prisoner Advocate', listed in the job positions for every level of security at every prison institution.

- The main duties listed are:
- "Arrange and facilitate prisoner advocate group meetings"
 - "Observe and assist offenders at quasi-judicial and administrative tribunals"
 - "train other prison advocates"

This position is not filled at the Bath Institution where I am located, and probably not

filled at most prisons across the CSC spectrum. This is because 'old school' prison administrators would perceive this employment position to be an existential threat to the status quo.

I voluntarily fill the role of what might be expected of a 'prisoner advocate' without the encumbrance of censorship supervision.

- This essay is being published in that freelance capacity by exercising my "freedom of expression" right under the Charter. **It would be my recommendation that other prisoners voluntarily fill the 'prisoner advocate' position if it is not occupied wherever you may be incarcerated.**

PRISONERS HAVE ADVOCATES: WE JUST HAVE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM MORE EFFECTIVELY

1. The Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights is prisoners' most consequential advocate because they can legislate changes.

This Human Rights Committee is currently working on a final report for their 'Study on the Human Rights of Federally Sentenced Persons'. This study was initiated because CSC is widely recognized to be failing in its obligations to federally sentenced prisoners. Their focus is squarely on the constitutional and international human rights protection for prisoners.

In the Interim Report (Feb. 2019), this Senate Committee on Human Rights hit on many of the issues that we as prisoners know to be soooooo grossly inadequate:

- (a) Health care
- (b) Dental care
- (c) Gradual and structured release
- (d) Rehabilitation programs
- (e) Conditions of confinement
- (f) Remedial measures
- (g) Sub-standard food menu
- (h) Work readiness for the digital age
- (i) Discrimination and harassment

- Indigency, Race, Gender, Disability, Mental health, Ethnicity, Religion, Seniors, language, Sexual Orientation, Gender identity

This list of 'abject failures' to perform can be synthesized

down to a "crisis in penological modernism". (D. Garland, 1990). What is needed is a new philosophy or new rationale to address penal fundamental questions related purpose and justification. Included in any paradigm shift to be 21st century relevant would be a new culture/a new way of doing things. **The nuclear option must be exercised against the current correctional culture/the 'Blue Wall' that only serves to perpetuate injustice and almost sanctions the mistreatment of prisoners."** (R. Clark)

The following are reminders of the correctional culture's barbarism:

- Correctional officers have counselled suicide, which is a criminal offence, by saying to prisoners who told them they were feeling suicidal by telling them "Go ahead, commit suicide. It'll be one less person for us to look after." (Senate HR Interim Report, Feb. 2019)

No one was ever charged!

- Remember the Ashley Smith suicide when six COs watched her on CCTV without anyone intervening to stop her?

No one was ever charged!

2. **The Correctional Investigator, Dr. Ivan Zinger, is the legislated ombudsman for federally sentenced offenders.** He and his office are in *"the business of prison oversight, standing up for the rights of sentenced persons and advocating for the fair and humane treatment of prisoners."* (CI Annual Rpt. 2018-19)

While the OCI is mandated to ensure standards of human decency and dignity in Canadian prisons, they lack the legislative authority for enforcement. They are limited to identifying and seeking a resolution of prisoner complaints and systemic issues in consultation with CSC officials.

- **I have become increasingly disillusioned and cynical of the OCI because they have been relegated to suggestion box status.**

Any future comprehensive Canadian penal reform must give the OCI some teeth to forcefully and immediately act upon abuse by correctional staff. Otherwise, what is the point of the Correctional Investigator year after year reporting on the increase in use-of-force incidents, 3,194

in 2018-19, that by majority are being inflicted upon prisoners suffering mental illness.

The partial solution to mitigate the annual increase in use-of-force incidents seems simple to me: Require all CO's in Max and RTC units to wear 'body worn cameras' (BWC). It's all about transparency, verification and accountability. BWC's are an independent witness with no bias and no Blue Wall correctional culture allegiance to the Code of Silence.

3. While the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and the Office of the Information Commissioner do not advocate for prisoners; they do enforce legislated acts specific to their office that affect prisoners.

Typically accepted complaints are assigned a conciliator and go through a conciliation process to help the parties achieve a resolution. In the event that the parties do not agree on a remedy(ies) for resolution, the complaint may move to the tribunal/arbitration process where the parties have no control because the outcome is imposed.

'May move to the tribunal stage' is the operative term because there is no guarantee that a complaint would progress to the tribunal stage if a conciliation offer to settle by the defendant is deemed to be reasonable, equal or superior to that would be offered if the complaint were successful at tribunal.

I have made a complaint(s) to all three offices and I can attest the process is thorough and that I was treated with civility. My success rate would be in the 50% range.

4. **Academia** is the best advocate friend for criminal justice reform and that would include penal reform due to what David Garland described as "a crisis of penological modernism".

• In the Kingston area, where I am located, the Queen's University Law Clinic c/o Paul Quick, LL.B., does a stellar job of providing legal support and advocacy for prisoners.

They are legal counsel for the Bath Institution's seniors in doing that representative complaint to the CHRC discussed earlier in this document.



- The University of Ottawa Department of Criminology, c/o Justin Piche, Ph.D., maintains a Journal of Prisoners on Prisons. This Journal regularly brings the knowledge produced by prison writers together with academics to enlighten public discourse about the current state of carceral institutions.
- The Bishop's University Centre for Justice Exchange c/o Vicki Chartrand, Ph.D., maintains a Justice Resource Directory for academics, students, prisoners or for that matter anyone who seeks to advocate more inclusive understanding and practices of the criminal justice system.
- The Canadian Criminal Justice Association, Ottawa, is an umbrella organization that represents all sectors of the criminal justice system including the public. It exists to promote rational, informed and responsible debate in order to develop a more humane, equitable and effective justice system.
- Smart Justice Network of Canada (www.smartjustice.ca) presents ways of addressing criminal justice issues that solves the problems of crime rather than simply punishing the criminal(s). It addresses the profound connections of crime to mental health, addiction, unemployment, education, housing and social inclusion.
- Anthony Doob, Ph.D. and Jane Sprott, Ph.D. on October 2020 published a paper reviewing CSC's implementation of Structured Intervention Units (SIUs) that replaced solitary confinement, aka administrative and disciplinary segregation, on January 1, 2020 with the passing of Bill C-83.

Their finding: "Only 21% of the prisoners met the 4 hours out of cell requirement on half or more of their SIU days and only 46% had the 2 hours of meaningful contact on at least half of their days." The reality is CSC is addicted to extreme inhumane ways of treating prisoners and they continue to get away with the abuse and mistreatment of prisoners because there is no government oversight.

- Innocence Canada is dedicated to identifying, advocating for an exonerating individuals convicted of a crime they did not commit - In the months to come a prisoner from the Bath Institution will become part of this select group. He, like all prisoners who are appealing their conviction, suffer enhanced discrimination and harassment from their parole officer and the Parole board. This is because they are tagged as 'deniers' for failure to take responsibility for their crime.

IN SUMMARY

Everybody knows it. From the UN General Assembly members, the Senate Human Rights Standing Committee, anyone who studies or has an interest in the Canadian criminal justice system and even the Commissioner of CSC and her executive staff if they are honest with themselves --- that CSC is cheating prisoners of constitutional and interna-

tional human rights ...full stop... period.

If prisoners want to be part of the solution and be recognized with a seat at the table, we need to find our voice to be part of the chorus demanding change(s). As prisoners, we have to do a better job using our individual agency to dissent and advocate for changes to move Canada's criminal justice system into the 21st century.

No doubt you, like me, have become ambivalent and fatigued by watchdog reports to Parliament detailing CSC's failure to meet basic human rights, standards of decency and dignity. What's the point when the CSC commissioner and her cadre can blow them off without consequence!

Parliament and the Minister of Public Safety show little interest in taking oversight responsibility for CSC's 'abject failure' to rehabilitate and provide A1 work readiness training for this, the digital era. It's like they think we all aspire to be minimum wage janitors and farm labourers on release.

Criminal justice reform is not on the government agenda or, for that matter, on any opposition parties' agenda.

As prisoners, we have no forum for discourse that matters. But what we do have is hardworking advocacy allies working on our behalf who do have a forum. It's up to us to be more proactive and vocal to both help ourselves individually and for the greater good by getting the message out and keeping our advocates informed.

Silence is not an option.

What we ignore we empower. Both individually and collectively we have to keep pushing the envelope for a 21st century paradigm shift. We do this by dissenting and advocating for changes to Canada's brutal, barbaric and archaic criminal justice system. We have this right under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

For those prisoners who do take up the good cause, history shows that you are in good company.

Thanks everybody for removing your blinders and recognizing that Canada's criminal justice system is in crisis and lags far behind more progressive countries. There needs to be a seismic penological reform because the status quo is an 'abject failure'. Special thanks to William Kaplan, author of 'Why Dissent Matters' (2017) that inspired me, formed my frame and provided numerous quotable quotes for this essay.

Nothing contained in the foregoing is considered to be private or confidential. Please feel free to disseminate and/or publish at will.

1 MLK, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

2 Nelson Mandela, "It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens

but its lowest ones."

BREAKING THE BEAKS OF EVIL

By Sic-Chick

This is a teaching I received from an elder where eagles in their later stages of life go to a safe, quiet place and break their beaks off.

this is the place I slayed and was slain by Angel.

The Hole in which I ate my heart insatiable

the result of dark years pushing the perimeters of depression beyond the walls of iso.

Apartheid is alive and well right here in our fabled free NATO. From genocide democracy I ran "savage" breathing locomotive smoke - hemorrhaging exhaust.

This is the season of respite (rare for distant runners) Of gathering old and new muses, and fusing the difference calculating

weights and measures, hearts to golden feathers.

This, a long time coming is a long time dying. And oh how I railed against god & kings. From the beginning to the end - enduring prison, second class citizens spiritual warfare.

Colonialized wild because I believed

in the doubt of Moses & Ishmael.

I run through deserts now, in search of a delicate rain. For self-preservation. For lactose & honey. To not fade. To unjade the living. To heal inter-generations. And all I know now is long-suffering. The never-ending perseverance for "someday" - Frozen with the notion that day may never come. But that's ok for caged eagles and champions who lose again and again knowing sacrifice is not defeat.

FORGOTTEN WARRIOR

a bad thing happened to me a long time ago, and my response changed me forever and made me what I am

I'm not the same person you knew people been trying 2 kill me in one way or another 4 years. I'M STILL HERE

Half insane, clinging 2 a fantasy of escaping this life, ready 2 kill 4 it - only therez no escape, cuz this IS LIFE!!

SHE'D

She hadn't just been my love - she'd been my life support, on

dark nitez like this, the really bad onez, she'd listen 2 my pain, and understand completely when I couldn't xxx

SHE'D been gone 4 almost a year now, and in all that time - I've been a fucken mess - how much longer can I live without your lite with me?

- STRAY ANGELz -

PHOENIX POISSON

CSC - Not Up To Par; Not In The Least

Hello! I'm here. I ain't going anywhere.

You can check up on me all day. That is quite okay. For here is where I stay.

Don't get me wrong, I'd love to leave this place behind.

But in the right way, so I don't have a warrant on my mind. Give me all the programming and help that I need.

So that I can be successfully released and freed! I don't know where I'm at if this is too much to ask.

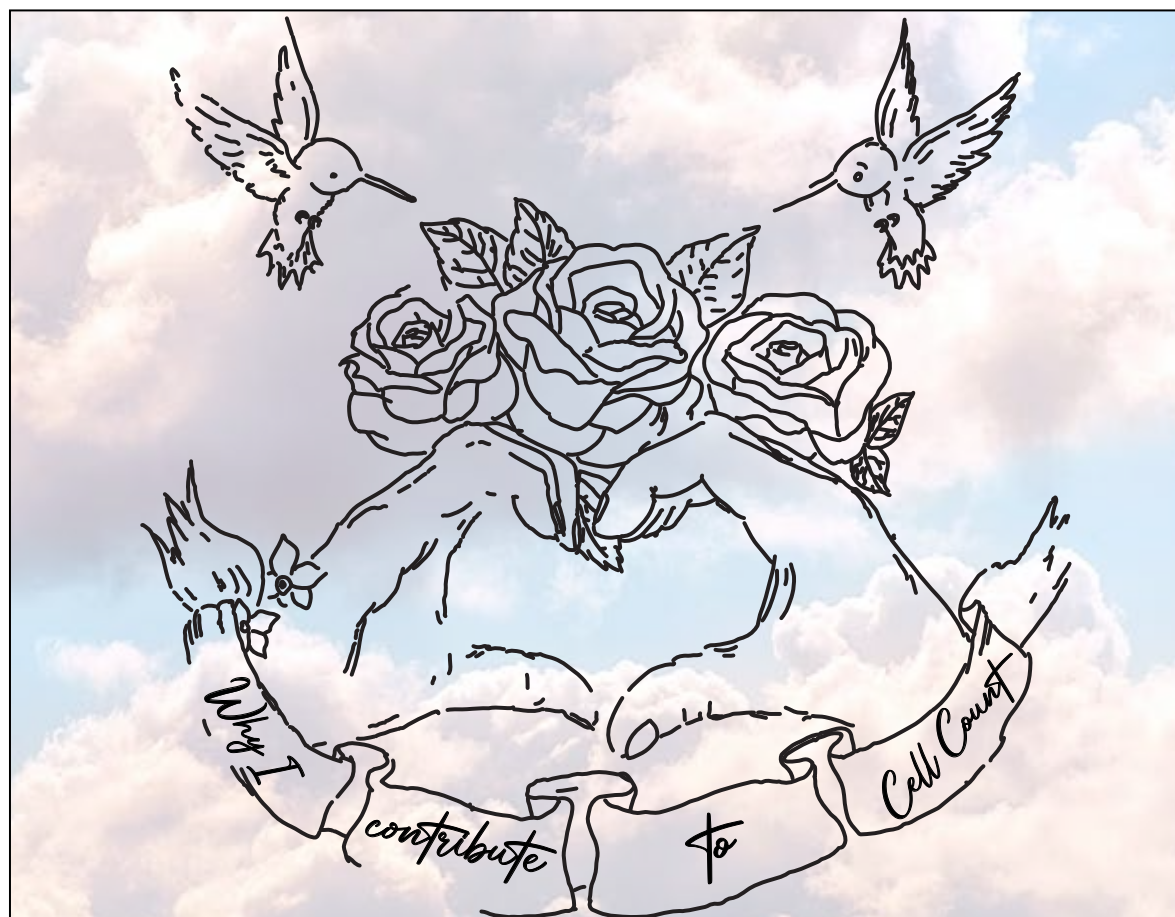
For Corrections Canada is built, or so it's said, for this one specific task.

Barnyard Inmates

Let us out why don't you. We want to socialize.

We want to run amok among the stalls, and let the social shit fly. Who gives a damn what we do, as long as we don't destroy the barn.

Due to the fence we can't get far, but we can still hide away in our rooms.



"To make sense of my experience and share that with others. I believe that when you make a work of art, it's meant to be shared. To find healing, worth, belonging, be vulnerable with intention, and to help others. Hopefully, others will read my work and relate to it, especially when it comes to the poetry."

- Zakaria Amara

Have you contributed to Cell Count? Let the people know why you do it to encourage others to contribute as well. Write to us at 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3 or call Sena at 1-866-224-9978 x234



BY JOEY TOUTSAINT

JOEY TOUTSAINT



Outreach & Support Schedule

Currently, as places are opening up slowly, we are also starting to do some one-on-one visits and limited capacity programs at a small number of provincial and federal institutions. Please keep an eye out for posters or call us at: **1-866-224-9978 for up-to-date information about when and where we are coming in.**

As things open back up in Ontario on the outside, we are increasing the number of days we are in the office. We are available Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm EST (to reach a specific staff member please dial **1-866-224-9978** followed by the extension):

Amina Mohamed x231
Women's Community Program Coordinator
Anton McCloskey x236
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Aniqa Mazumder x228
Office Manager

TBA x235
Harm Reduction Program Manager
Cherisa Shivcharran x233
Provincial Community Development Coordinator
TBA x230
Federal In-Reach Community Dev Coordinator
Claudia Medina x227
Program Manager
Eveline Allen x238
Regional Prison In-Reach Coordinator
Hajjarah Nagadya x239
POWER Project Coordinator

Janet Rowe x225
Executive Director
Jennifer Porter x223
Harm Reduction Program Coordinator
Olivia Gemma x230
Provincial HepC Program Coordinator
Sena Hussain x234
Communications & Resource Dev Coordinator
Trevor Gray x232
Community Programs Coordinator
You can reach us by mail at: PASAN, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PASAN's office, where we publish Cell Count, is on the historical territory of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the New Credit Indigenous peoples. This territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the lands and resources around the Great Lakes.

HIV+ CLIENT SERVICES

In order to be a client & access these services you need to have confirmed HIV+ status and be a prisoner or ex-prisoner (all times Eastern Standard time)

- Phone Hours: Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday mornings
- Workshops and Programming - Scheduled usually on Mondays or Thursdays, give us a call or check out our website for a complete list of events we have scheduled.
- ID Clinic - cancelled for now
- Release Funds - \$50 (twice a year max)
- TTC Tokens - 2 each for clients who attend workshops
- Harm Reduction Materials - Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday AM (Safer-Crack-Use-Kits, Safer-Needle-Use-Kits, Piercing Needles, Condoms, etc.) - for everyone.

Sometimes we and the phones are very busy so please keep trying!

ABOUT CELL COUNT

PASAN publishes 'Cell Count', a minimum of 4 issues per year. We are based in Toronto on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. It is sent out for FREE to Clients & Prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation @ \$20 per year. We are proud to release our 91st issue to you. We are also grateful for all the wonderful feedback we have been receiving from our readers, and encourage you to keep putting your two cents in. Our goal is to have most of our content written and produced by prisoners and ex-prisoners, so we highly encourage you to get in touch with us if you're interested in being part of the Cell Count team.

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526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3
Circulation: 700+ - Recirculation: ???

All original artwork, poems and writings are the sole/soul property of the artist and author.

Fair Dealing in the Canadian Copyright Act:

Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2: "Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

A NOTE ABOUT PEN PALS:

Here is a list of correspondence services for people inside (alternatives to pen pals, which is, sadly, no longer a part of Cell Count):

Canadian Inmates Connect: Currently, there is a \$35/year subscription. Your ad will be placed on a website, and people with internet access browse through to decide who to connect with. A point of caution: you are asked to say what you have been convicted for, and your full name will be published online. Melissa is the person to contact for more information. Write or call her at: Canadian Inmates Connect Inc. 3085 Kingston Rd, Suite 267, Toronto, Ontario, M1M 1P1 - (647) 344-3404

Black and Pink: Specifically for queer and trans prisoners. They are based in the United States, it does not cost anything to be part of the list, and you don't have to tell them your conviction. Here is how to reach them: Black and Pink National Office, 614 Columbia Rd, Dorchester, MA 02125 617.519.4387

Prison Fellowship Canada: This is a faith-based, Christian organization that connects prisoners with volunteers of either the same gender, or where there is a 15-20 year age difference. The point is for you to have an outlet to express yourself to someone who will listen. If you are of the Christian faith, this may be a great option for you. You can reach them for more info at: Prison Fellowship Canada - National Office, 5945 Airport Road, Suite 144, Mississauga, ON L4V 1R9 905.673.5867

Prisoner Correspondence Project: "...a solidarity project for gay, lesbian, transsexual, transgender, gendervariant, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual and queer prisoners in Canada and the United States, linking them with people who are

part of these same communities outside of prison." - From their website. Write to them here: QPIRG Concordia c/o Concordia University

1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest, Montreal, QC H3G 1M8

If you have had success using a pen pal service (other than ours) and would like to share it with other Cell Count subscribers, please write to us or call. We can list it in a future issue.

MOVING?

We were getting about 75 Cell Counts sent back to us each mail-out labelled, 'Not Here'. Please help us reduce our mailing expenses by letting us know of any address change, ASAP! Thank you for taking care with this.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS, WRITERS (FICTION, NON-FICTION), ILLUSTRATORS, CARTOONISTS, POETS, JOURNALISTS (ASPIRING OR OTHERWISE), AND OTHER CREATIVE TYPES:

We want your submissions! We get lots of letters from our readers telling us how much they love seeing all your work and they're hungry for more. Send us your stuff and get published in Cell Count. When you send us stuff, please make sure you write a line in that gives us permission to publish your work. Also, let us know if you would like your work returned to you or sent on to someone else! Please also type your work or write clearly if you can!

Writers: We get a lot of great work sent in that we are unable to use because of very limited space. Apologies. Please consider the column width & keep articles/poems tight & to the point. Honestly, the first items to go in are the ones that fit nicely and leave space for others - quality and quantity! Also, let us know in writing if it's ok to edit your work for grammar, spelling and so we can fit it in.

Please note: If you do send something to us, please give us a call if you can so we can look out for it in the mail. Also, call us again at least a week after you send it to make sure we got it. If not, if you're sending in a piece of writing, we can transcribe it over the phone for you, so keep a copy of everything you send us!

Women are the fastest-growing

prisoner population in Canada, but often their experiences are marginalized in conversations about the prison system. We want to hear your take on prison, life, family, or anything else you're interested in writing about. We can guarantee confidentiality, and can publish your pieces under a pseudonym if you want! Please submit your articles, poetry, art, or letters to the Cell Count editor at 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3.

WHEN SUBSCRIBING TO CELL COUNT

We have been notified by a few different institutions that if you'd like your subscription of Cell Count to make it into your hands, you have to register at the library to receive it first. Please do this before requesting a subscription from us just to make sure! Also, if you are inter-

ested in subscribing please contact: Cell Count, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON, M5A 1R3 or call Sena at: 1-866-224-9978 ext 228

CONTACT NUMBERS

If you are in any Federal/Provincial Institution or Detention Centre call us only with this #: Toll-free 1-866-224-9978

HOW PASAN AND CELL COUNT ARE OPERATING DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 outbreak, PASAN is still open, and are back in the office 5 days a week. Our staff are in the office Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm EST, which is when we can read and reply to mail we receive from inside, and answer calls. Currently, we are wearing masks, asking people to fill out COVID screening forms and social distancing to help limit the potential spread of the virus, and are offering services to our clients in office again.

Cell Count is still running and accepting submissions. We are currently low on submissions and need more sent from you inside to produce Cell Count. If you are interested in submitting but are experiencing issues trying to get your work to us, please give Sena a call at ext 228. Thank you for your patience during this difficult time!

NEW CELL COUNT EVALUATIONS

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form we've included with this issue and mail it back to us. We use these evaluations to make sure that Cell Count is useful to you and so our funders know we're on the right track. Call us if you would like to do your evaluation over the phone instead! **1-866-224-9978**

NEW CELL COUNT PEER LIAISONS

Cell Count is looking for peer liaisons who are currently incarcerated to be a representative for Cell Count inside. You would be responsible for gathering subscribers, letting us know when subscribers have moved, encouraging people to submit their work, helping with evaluations, and



Cell Count Deadline: September 15th

The theme of Issue #99 is Staying Healthy. Share your stories and art with this theme in mind or about any other topic! If you need someone to bounce ideas off of, call Sena at 1-866-224-9978 x234 from Mon - Thurs 10am - 5pm EST.

