

DELL COUNT #64



WINTER 2011/12

WHO WE ARE ...

PASAN is a community-based organizations working to provide advocacy, education and support to prisoners and youth in custody on HIV/AIDS and related issues.

PASAN formed in 1991 as a grassroots response to the emerging AIDS crisis in the Canadian prison system.

Today, PASAN is the only community-based organization in Canada exclusively providing HIV/AIDS prevention, education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners, youth in custody and their families.

WHAT WE DO ...

I. SUPPORT SERVICES

PASAN offers support services to prisoners, youth in custody and their families, as well as to other organizations working on issues of HIV/AIDS and/or prison.

These services include:

a) Individual support counseling, advocacy, pre-release planning and referrals for prisoners and young offenders living with HIV/AIDS, primarily in the Ontario region institutions. We can assist our clients in accessing proper medical care and support while incarcerated, as well as help to arrange housing and medical/social support upon release. Much of this support is coordinated via telephone through **collect calls**, although we also do in-person support whenever possible. To date, PASAN has worked with more than 500 HIV positive prisoners and young offenders in over 30 different institutions (both federal and provincial) in six different provinces.

b) The only national AIDS Hotline specifically for prisoners. We accept collect calls from prisoners across Canada at: 1-866-224-9978 or 416-920-9567 and can help you with your questions about HIV/AIDS, and help you get the support you need.

c) We can help with replacement fees for birth certificates, S.I.N. cards and other necessary ID & release money (must be a client before release - twice a year maximum). The availability of funds vary, and we require proof of HIV status & incarceration to access the fund.

d) PASAN also provides ongoing support, networking, resources and training for AIDS services organizations (ASO's) and other community groups across Ontario. We assist ASO's to set up their own prison outreach and support projects, and act as a referral 'hub' for HIV positive prisoners and youth in custody who are transferred from one region to another, thereby helping to ensure a continuity of support.

II. OUTREACH & EDUCATION

a) PASAN conducts HIV/Hep C prevention education programs in many adult and youth institutions in the southern Ontario region. An integral part of this program is our **Peer Educator's Group**, which is made up of ex-prisoners living with HIV/AIDS. Peer speakers accompany PASAN staff for workshops in prisons, youth facilities, and other institutions. We have found that Peers are often able to get across HIV/AIDS information in these settings.

b) PASAN produces CELL COUNT quarterly. This publication, which is written and edited primarily by prisoners and ex-prisoners themselves, is the only newsletter in Canada providing an uncensored forum for prisoners

and youth in custody to explore and share their own experiences, and ideas about HIV/AIDS. PASAN distributes 6000 issues a year to prisoners, institutions, and agencies across the country. **CELL COUNT is free for prisoners and people living with HIV/AIDS in Canada.**

c) PASAN also conducts free organizational and staff training for agencies and institutions working with prison affected, and drug using populations. We have experience in conducting training not only for community workers and ASO staff, but also for probation/parole officers, youth custody staff, prison social workers and case management officers.

III. NETWORKING & ADVOCACY

Since our beginning in 1991, PASAN has always maintained a focus on systemic advocacy on issues of HIV/AIDS and prisons. Our advocacy is based in recognition and defense of the fundamental human rights of prisoners, and our perspective derives from PASAN's brief entitled *HIV/AIDS In Prison Systems: A Comprehensive Strategy* (June 1992). This document outlined 40 recommendations for implementing a comprehensive HIV/AIDS strategy in the Canadian prison system. In June 1996, PASAN released the follow-up document *HIV/AIDS in Youth Custody Setting: A Comprehensive Strategy* which specifically addressed the needs of youth in custody. In May 1999, PASAN released *HIV/AIDS in the Male-to-Female Transgendered Prison Population: A Comprehensive Strategy*. In August 1995, PASAN organized the first *National Workshop on HIV/AIDS in Prison* in Kingston, Ontario. PASAN has made presentations on HIV/AIDS in prison at the *XI International Conference on AIDS in Vancouver* (July 1996) and has appeared before the *Parliamentary Subcommittee on AIDS* in Ottawa (November 1996) and the *Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS* in Washington, DC (1998).

PASAN maintains an *Activist Committee* which monitors and advocates on issues affecting prisoner and/or people living with HIV/AIDS on a local, provincial and national basis. This committee maintains working links with other prisoners' rights groups, prison projects, and ASO's across Canada. We also maintain an ad-hoc *Advocacy Committee* of prisoners who assist us in identifying emerging issues.



- OUTREACH & SUPPORT SCHEDULE -

IMPORTANT: Programs run on one Unit only per month. If you want to see a worker or attend a program put in a request to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Social Work Dept.

PROVINCIAL (ON)

Men:

- CECC – Look for sign-up sheet or put in a request to the Social Work Dept.
- CNCC – Look for sign-up sheet or put in a request to the Social Work Dept.
- DON JAIL – The 2nd Wednesday of each month from 3:00-4:30.
- HWDC – One on One support - call PASAN
- MAPLEHURST – Put in a request to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- THE EAST – The 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1:30-3:30.
- THE WEST – The 3rd Thursday from 1:30-3:30 for group and one-to-one support.

Women:

- CNCC – Every 2-3 months. Look for sign-up sheet.
- VCW – 2nd Tues (Gen Pop) & last Wed (Max) of each month.

FEDERAL (ON)

Men:

We try to visit each prison at least 3 times a year. We visit: Kingston Pen, Warkworth, Collins Bay, Bath, Frontenac, Millhaven, Fenbrook, Beaver Creek and Pittsburgh.

We see people individually or in group settings and talk about HIV/AIDS, Hep C, Harm Reduction and Health Promotion. If you wish to know more or have HIV please contact us to find out when we will be at your institution.

Women:

GVI – The 2nd Monday of each month.

YOUTH (GTA)

We visit different youth facilities, group homes, etc throughout the City of Toronto on a regular basis. For more info call Trevor or Joan.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS
CALL PASAN COLLECT AT: 416-920-9567**

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- ABOUT CELL COUNT -

PASAN publishes ‘Cell Count’ 4 Issues per year. It is sent out for FREE to Clients & Prisoners. *If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a subscription @ \$15 per year or doing a Newsletter/Zine exchange to help out with our costs for the free subs & postage. Thanks!*

Circulation: 1,500
Recirculation: ?,???,???

Editor: Tom Jackson

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- HIV+ CLIENT SERVICES -

In order to be a client & access these services you need to have confirmed HIV+ status.

- ◆ **PHONE HOURS** - Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday mornings
- ◆ **DROP-IN** - Mondays 1:30-3:30 (except holidays) Good food & 2 TTC tokens
- ◆ **ID CLINIC** - 1st & 3rd Thursday every month onsite
- ◆ **RELEASE FUNDS** - \$50 (twice a year max.)
- ◆ **TTC TOKENS** - 3 per week when available (Toronto)
- ◆ **CLOTHING** - Mon 10-11 when available.
- ◆ **HARM REDUCTION MATERIALS** - Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday AM (Safer-Crack-Use-Kits, Safer-Needle-Use-Kits, Piercing Needles, Condoms, etc...)

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

- ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE -

Cover & 11: Michelle Commisso Pesce

Page 6: Phil Selby

Page 10: Stephanie Bird

Page 12: Peter Collins

Page 12 & 16: Brent Derian



- EDITOR'S NOTE -

The 'Fall Issue - #63' of Cell Count was banned from 10 buckets/joints in Canada.

'Public Health Info' & 'Freedom of Speech' are still: 'Not Allowed in Canada!'



PenPals: Write ONLY to ads in the most recent issue, almost all older ads are dead ends. All undeliverable mail is destroyed. Sorry folks, but this PenPal system is going through some changes. About 150 penpal ads come in for each issue & there's only space for 60. So it's the 'Grab-One-Outa-The-Big-Bag' method now. If your ad ain't in this one, send again for the next Issue. I'm trying very hard to do all this with only 3 hrs a day so, ... Respect, keep the calls short!

- MOVING ? -

We get about 75 Cell Counts sent back to us each mail-out due to 'No Longer Here'.

Please help us reduce our mailing expenses by letting us know of any address change, ASAP! So, before you call your mom - let us know!

- WORKLOAD -

PASAN has been around for 21 years now and over the years our client population has increased dramatically.

As a result of this increase in workload, clients may not be able to spend as much time on the telephone with staff as we would like. The staff and volunteers are dedicated and committed and will continue to provide the best care possible. Thanks for your patience and understanding!

- ARTISTS & WRITERS -

Let us know if you would like your work returned to you or sent on to someone else!

Artists: This publication is photocopied. That means B&W 'high-contrast printing'. Tonal pencil sketches get blown-away (don't expect good results). Black ballpoint or felt-tip penwork (tat-style) reproduces quite well. Try to work on paper with no lines & nothing on the backside (it shows through and degrades the image).

Consider the final print size: column width is 2.5, 5 or 7.5". Cover Art should be about 7"x 7". Artwork that is being reduced loses a lot of detail. Artwork cannot be enlarged (it gets really fuzzy & ugly).

Cover Art should **NOT** have the Issue # on it because if it is not used for that Issue, it would be really nice to use it on a future Issue!

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 & leave space for others - **quality & quantity!**

- DROP-IN -

PASAN CLIENTS

Mondays 1:30 - 3:30
See you then!

- ADVOCACY COALITION -

The Canadian Prison Advocacy and Outreach Coalition (CPAOC) is composed of Non-Governmental Organizations, incarcerated people and ex-incarcerated people across Canada that work with people in prison on HCV/HIV/AIDS and/ or human rights, health promotion and harm reduction issues. The mandate of **CPAOC** is to advocate for human rights, harm reduction (such as Prison-based Needle and Syringe Program, or PNSPs) in regards to HCV/HIV/AIDS and other systemic issues in all federal prisons and provincial institutions in Canada. The CPAOC is also a member of the Coordinator of NGO's of the Americas on AIDS, Jail and Confinement (COASCE).

If interested please contact us at:
CPAOC

314 Jarvis St, #100 Toronto, ON, M5B 2C5
416-920-9576 - www.cpaoc.ca

- FEDERAL SYSTEM -

If you are in any federal prison - please use our Toll Free # 1-866-224-9978

Using this number greatly reduces our phone costs. Thanks in advance!

- CELL COUNT SUBS -

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS:

Over the past 10 years our subscription list has grown from 700 to 1500 and all costs have more than doubled during this period.

We receive less than 30 subscriptions for 'Cell Count' from organizations Canada-wide so we have pared-down our mailing list so we can get more copies inside where they are much needed.

Cell Count is posted in PDF format @ pasan.org as a FREE download for viewing/printing. We urge you to help us out by using this method if you do not wish to support with a subscription.

If your org has paid for a sub - don't worry, you're for sure on our mailing list! Oh yeah ... Thanks!



- NURSE -

A Nurse at PASAN!
On the first & last Monday of every month

- Information and education regarding:
 - Medications
 - Nutrition
 - Community Health Resources
 - HIV/AIDS understanding
 - Complications to HIV/AIDS (i.e. Opportunistic Infections)
- Assessments of emerging health issues
- Management of existing medical conditions or follow up(s)
- Communication with community/ institutional health care providers for access,
- To clarify or communicate health information and to advocate for health service provisions
- Communicating findings and follow-up plans and accountabilities with PHAs and PASAN primary workers (or delegates)

~ Please Sign Up at the Front Desk ~

- ID CLINIC -

The Partners for Access and Identification (PAID) project opens doors and breaks down barriers for individuals who do not have a fixed or permanent address.

The ID Clinics are held at PASAN on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month
11:00 - 12:00

We begin by helping individuals obtain vital identification such as:

- Ontario photo health card
- Canadian birth certificate
- Record of landing
- Social Insurance number

The project operates at various sites across the city of Toronto. The PAID Project also connects individuals and families to other services, such as:

- Primary health care facilities
- Sources for housing
- Sources for food
- Legal Aid

We also provide guidance and awareness regarding other programs that are available, including community-based support services.

For more information, please call:
Neighbourhood Link Support Services at
416-691-7407

Grievance Procedure Challenge: Victory!

I have recently won a case in the Federal Court of Canada against CSC and the Attorney General of Canada relating to the Offender Grievance Procedure. I did so on my own, without a lawyer and from my weekly pay from CSC. The precedent my case sets needs to be published for all inmates to know and aid in strengthening our ability as inmates to benefit from such victories and force CSC to be accountable and to deal with us fairly and become more ethical in the treatment of prisoners. Inmates who file Complaints and Grievances, predominately Grievances, are excluded from participation in the Grievance Process beyond their submission. The Analyst who investigates the nature of the Grievance prepares an 'Executive Summary' of his or her findings and forwards it to the Decision Maker who then decides to uphold, deny or reject the Grievance and then forwards the Decision to the inmate.

Inmates who are deprived opportunity to view the 'Executive Summary' completed by the Analyst of his/her Grievance prior to the Decision by the Decision Maker (Inst. Head, Head of Region or Commissioner) are deprived a fair hearing and a breach of 'Duty to Act Fairly'. Inmates are entitled to know the Executive Summary contents and opportunity to add new submission to the Decision Maker to make answer and defence to the Analyst's findings prior to the Decision being made.

In my Case, the Judge upheld that the CSC deprived me of opportunity to adequately State my Case to the Decision Maker:

1. Copy of Executive Summary completed by the Third Level Grievance Analyst prior to Decision being taken
2. Opportunity to participate 'audi alteram partem' and bring forth submissions to the Analyst's Executive Summary to the Decision Maker Assistant Commissioner of Policy prior to his Decision being made on my Grievance

I really wish to raise awareness for other inmates so that they know when CSC does not share the Executive Summary with them prior to the Decision being made on his/her Grievance that CSC has erred in law and breached the 'Duty to Act Fairly' and breached a legal principle known as 'audi alteram partem'. This also applies to other Decisions such as Security Classifications.

One accurate measurement is worth a thousand expert opinions.

- Grace Hopper

The world cannot get out of its current state of crisis with the same thinking that got it there in the first place.

- Albert Einstein

My silences have not protected me. Your silence will not protect you.

- Audre Lorde

Collective Punishment IS Abuse

It is true injustice to punish others for someone else's wrong and inappropriate actions. A case in point: a female guard was assaulted and immediately the prison is locked down, illegal and wrongful searches to every prisoner.

We prisoners who are doing our own time, not causing any problems are now subjected to having our place of living violated and pulled apart. Loss of many things we use and need on a daily basis to try and make our lives as positive as possible in a place where there is already too much anger and frustration from just trying to exist in a hostile environment.

Corrections is supposed to stand for 'corrective action' for those it incarcerates. I fail to see any 'corrective action' in causing others mental, physical and emotional misery for something they did not do. When a guard disrespects a prisoner, all the prisoners don't get together and punish all the other guards ignorantly. In all truth and reality it would be morally wrong.

Punishing everyone for one person's wrong only causes anger, frustration, depression, resentment, anxiety and many more problems that only traumatizes prisoners more each and every day. Traumatizing prisoners on a daily basis like this can only result in negative, destructive and deteriorating behaviour. This is the exact opposite of 'corrective action' and can only breed hostility and other bad actions that only makes matters worse for all.

It is now after the search and I have literally been violated. I've lost cooking bowls, tv stands and numerous other items. Some have been locked up for 4 days with no showers. Trying to right the daily injustices in prison is no different than problems with police brutality. People in society are starting to realize, there is no justice for those that are committing the real injustices. If the public was aware of the injustices that go on behind closed doors in the name of the law by correctional workers who abuse the power bestowed upon them, they would be appalled.

Staff Changes at PASAN!

◇ Mooky: Hey everyone, after 9 years of working within the provincial jail system carrying out harm reduction education and support, I have moved on, but not away from PASAN. I am still working here but have been hired as PASAN's first Program Manager. Although I will miss doing work in prison, my new position comes at the work from a different angle. I'm learning new skills and helping to strengthen the organization through supporting staff, working on policies and procedures and helping PASAN to achieve its short and long term goals. If you need to reach me, I'm still here!

◇ Hello my name is Kelly and I'm the new Provincial Prison Coordinator. I'm doing the job Mooky used to do. I will be going into CECC, Maplehurst, OCI and HWDC to run Harm Reduction groups and to meet with people I to I. Please feel free to write or call anytime if

you have questions/concerns or want to be seen around HIV or Harm Reduction issues. I'm very excited to be part of PASAN!

◇ Hi everyone, my name is Annika and I'm the new HCV Federal Prison Coordinator. My program focuses on educating prisoners in the federal system about hepatitis C and also providing support and advocacy to those who are hep C positive. You may have met me at one of the health fairs held this past December. Please feel free to write to me or give me a call if you are in a federal institution and have any questions/concerns/needs around hep C or HIV!

◇ Hey Folks, this is Steph and I work as the new HCV Provincial Prison Coordinator. This program works in the provincial system to offer harm reduction education and info about HepC. I plan to visit CNCC and Maplehurst regularly for programming and visits. I also work with people at organizations across the province who go inside to offer support around HepC. In a jail, detention centre or CC? Call collect or write if you have HepC questions.

◇ Greetings, my name is Cherisa. I am the new Community Health Coordinator, I will be working with individuals once released from prison. I would assist with your reintegration needs in supporting new beginnings within the community. Please connect with PASAN staff members that visit the institutions prior to your release. I look forward to working with many of you.

New Hepatitis C Advice Column!

Hi Everyone,

Stephanie and Annika here, a.k.a. I'm a Liver & a Fighter. We work as the new Hep C Program Coordinators at PASAN and we want to answer any and all of your Hep C questions.

Hepatitis C is a disease that causes damage to the liver over time. It is a huge problem in the prison system across Canada and prisoners don't always have access to the information needed to reduce risk, or know what to do if they find out they're infected.

Write to us at "Dear I'm a Liver and a Fighter" if you have any questions about Hep C prevention, transmission, testing or treatment. Want to share your experiences living with Hep C? Want to tell others how you manage Hep C risks inside? Having trouble with health care? Missed treatment? Forced to share needles/cookers/tattoo guns/link? Send us your rants and raves about healthcare, guards, programs - anything related to prisoners and Hep C. We will print stories, questions and answers in upcoming issues of Cell Count. The only things we will print are the questions and answers, NOT your name or where you're writing from.

You can also call one of us collect or toll-free if you have questions about Hep C that you'd rather ask over the phone.

We look forward to hearing from you!

I'm a Liver & a Fighter

There Is No Crime Epidemic

Here's the good news, the really good news: Canada's homicide rate has fallen to its lowest level since 1966.

Here's the bad news, the really bad news: The federal government acts as if crime were rising. Worse, it proposes measures that have demonstrably failed elsewhere, and will thus fail here.

Homicide rates by no means tell the whole story about crime. But because homicides are more likely to be reported to the police than other crimes, the homicide rate is taken to be what experts call a "social barometer."

A recent thorough study of homicides by Tina Hottel Mahony of Statistics Canada lays all the facts before Canadians. It's too bad – indeed, it's a tragedy – that these sorts of facts have no influence on the Harper government's expensive and counterproductive, politically motivated "tough on crime" agenda.

Peel back the general statistics and look more closely at homicides. For example, 13 per cent of those accused of homicide in the past decade were suspected of having a mental or developmental disorder. "Tough on crime" measures are hopeless in these cases.

The government stiffens penalties for gun-related offences, even as the number and rate of firearm-related homicides are falling. More people are killed from stabbings and beatings than guns. So why don't we crack down on knives and baseball bats?

Homicides committed by strangers and criminals – the ones the "tough on crime" measures are supposed to suppress – are already falling dramatically. In the country's largest cities – Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, where the Conservatives have pushed their agenda hardest – the homicide rate is below the national rate. Last year, British Columbia had the lowest homicide rate since the mid-1960s.

Homicide rates in Ontario and Quebec are also falling. Both rates are below the national average, and Quebec's is also at the lowest level since the mid-1960s. No wonder, then, that the governments of both provinces are annoyed by the Harper government's crime bills.

Ontario's beefs seem mostly to be about costs, a complaint understandably shared with other prov-



inces. More criminals in jail mean higher prison costs, which will fall on provinces. Ontario, like others, wants recompense from Ottawa, which has thus far steadfastly refused.

Quebec's objections are more profound. They were forcefully made this week by Justice Minister Jean-Marc Fournier. More prison terms lead to more recidivism, he said, accusing the government of ignoring the statistics. "Science is useful. At some point, someone discovered that the Earth is round." Alas, this is the government that abolished the long-form census, the method every statistician here and abroad said would produce the most accurate facts. In that file, as in criminal justice and others, it's a government that either looks simple facts in the face and denies them, or willfully disregards them.

Mr. Fournier's blast came the day after the country's ombudsman for prisons warned again of crowding in penitentiaries, a crowding that will intensify as the government's "tough on crime" bills

stuff more people into the same space. Many prisons now experience high rates of double-bunking and other forms of crowding, and the "tough on crime" government and those who support its approach would say that's great – more crowded prisons are what crooks deserve. It's also what will make more of them crooks for longer.

A bill now before Parliament will impose mandatory minimum sentences for some drug offences and toughen the youth justice system. These are the very measures against which Mr. Fournier properly inveighed.

Without any of these measures, almost all crime rates in Canada are falling, and not just homicide. The way to keep them falling is not only to insist on excellent police work but also to target policies at troubled areas and to work on the causes of crime, causes often rooted in social dislocation, mental illness and economic conditions.

Canada doesn't have an epidemic of crime, no matter how much the media play up criminal acts and how often the government talks up the peril. Canada has a challenge of crime, the response to which from this government is almost completely counterproductive.

Jeffrey Simpson
Globe and Mail - Nov 04, 2011

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.
- H.L. Mencken

Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.
- Anais Nin



Prison Double-Bunking Used in Segregation Cells

Federal prisons in British Columbia and Manitoba are forcing some inmates to be double-bunked in segregation cells, a practice that was supposed to have been abolished for everything but extreme emergency situations a decade ago, CBC News has learned.

Documents obtained by CBC News under the Access to Information Act show at least two prisons have forced segregated inmates to share cells — Stony Mountain in Manitoba and Mission Institution in B.C. In a number of Ontario prisons, the mandatory assessments that are required before any inmate can be double-bunked are not always completed, the documents also show.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator, an ombudsman for federal offenders, says double-bunking in segregation is a violation of government policy, the Charter of Rights and international human rights standards. A 2001 Correctional Service of Canada directive explicitly prohibits the use of segregation cells for double-bunking unless emergency exemptions are warranted.

"Segregation is the most austere form of incarceration we have in Canada. You're locked in a very small cell for 23 out of 24 hours," correctional investigator Howard Sapers said. "These are very confined spaces. These cells are not designed to house more than one inmate. So if you're now going to house two inmates in one of these very small segregation cells, you're really bordering on inhumane custody."

Sapers also draws a connection between prison overcrowding, double-bunking of the general inmate population and increased violence. Over the last four years, assaults in prisons have risen 27 per cent and occasions when guards have had to use force have increased 28 per cent.

A year ago Jeremy Phillips, 33, was found dead in his cell at the medium-security Mountain Institution in B.C. Phillips, who was serving time for aggravated assault, had been sharing a cell with Michael McGray, a serial killer serving six concurrent life sentences. Phillips had begged to be re-located.

McGray is now awaiting trial on a first-degree murder charge in Phillips' death.

Union concerned with overcrowding

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers is also worried about the effects of overcrowding in prisons.

"It's like an elastic band. Things are stretched and every once and awhile they break. For our prisons that have a high percentage of double-bunking we certainly see that elastic is being stretched pretty thin right now," said Kevin Grabowsky, the union's regional president for the area that includes Stony Mountain.

John Hutton, executive director of the John Howard Society of Manitoba, says double-bunking in segregation is unsafe but admits prison management may not have much choice as inmate populations continue to grow.

"I think we should be concerned because the inmates and the staff that work in those institutions are put at risk when their conditions are over-

crowded and they're being asked to do tasks that they don't have the capacity to do," Hutton said.

Sapers has described the practice of double-bunking in segregation as a measure of last resort, only to be used in emergency situations.

But in a letter dated Sept. 23, 2010, he called double-bunking "far from a 'temporary' situation." He wrote: "The decision to grant Stony Mountain Institution a 12-month exemption to allow for double-bunking in segregation does not reflect an 'extraordinary' or 'temporary' situation."

In an interview, Sapers added, "Granting a 12-month exemption doesn't really sound like a reaction to an emergency, it sounds like a reaction to perhaps bad planning."

CBC News obtained statistics from the Office of the Correctional Investigator dated Sept. 11, 2011, showing a snapshot of double-bunking among the general population at Canada's 58 prisons.

Nationally, 13.46 per cent of inmates were double-bunked. About half the prisons had no double-bunking on that date, but others showed a high proportion of offenders double-bunked:

- Regional Reception Centre, Saint-Anne-des-Plaines, Que.: 47.52 % doubled-bunked.
- Frontenac Institution, Kingston, Ont.: 72.20 %
- Millhaven Assessment Unit, Bath, Ont.: 65 %.
- Bowden Institution, Innisfail, Alta.: 50.89 %.
- Grande Cache Institution, Grand Cache, Alta.: 58.78 %.
- Mission Institution, Mission, B.C.: 24.90 %.

Ontario assessments info

Before two inmates are housed in the same cell they are supposed to be assessed to determine the compatibility or risk of double-bunking them. The OCI determined that placement assessments were not always done.

During a May 10, 2010, visit to Warkworth Institute in Campbellford, Ont., OCI senior investigator Christine Lessard identified a poor track record of assessment completion.

"I have reviewed 10 random double-bunking placement assessments from your facility. The results are very concerning," she wrote. "Out of the 10 reviewed, two assessments have been completed, four have been started but the finalized recommendation was not completed and four have not been completed at all."

On Feb. 8, 2011, staff at Warkworth Institute filed a complaint under the Canadian Labour Code that double-bunking had the potential to put them in danger.

In her incident report, Lessard writes this was "due to double-bunking and inability to verify live breathing body. The issue was could officers see live breathing bodies in double-bunked cells."

CBC News - Nov 22, 2011

Every society honors its live conformists and its dead troublemakers.

- Mignon McLaughlin

Watchdog Abandons Campaign for Needle Exchange in Prisons

Canada's corrections watchdog is giving up on his push for needle-exchange sites in prisons, saying the government isn't interested in the evidence supporting the program and is focused on its own zero-tolerance strategy.

Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers said several Canadian studies have suggested the program would help reduce the spread of infectious diseases in prisons.

But he said he's now looking for alternative ways to improve prisoners' health.

"The government has made it clear that they will not be introducing any prison-based needle exchanges in Canadian penitentiaries," Mr. Sapers said Tuesday, following a parliamentary committee meeting about drugs in prisons. "At some point, you move on."

The Correctional Service of Canada offers other harm-reduction tools to prisoners, including condoms, dental dams and bleach for contraband needles. It also provides methadone treatment to help wean heroin addicts off the drug.

Mr. Sapers said the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada's health care advisory committee have both suggested needle-exchange programs could further reduce the spread of disease in prisons.

"I think it's safe to say that there's consensus that a needle exchange has positive health outcomes. I think where there is difficulty is how to integrate a needle exchange into a correctional environment that is trying to achieve zero tolerance on contraband drug use," he said.

Russ Toller, deputy commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada's transformation and renewal team, told the committee his department can't keep its prisons drug-free.

"Zero tolerance, of course, is exactly where we're at. Unfortunately, there are still methods and ways people get [drugs] in," he said.

HIV/AIDS rates are 10 times higher in prisons than in the general population, while hepatitis C rates are 30 times higher, Mr. Toller added.

Candice Hoepfner, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, said she supports efforts to keep drugs out of prisons and believes it's not clear that a needle-exchange program would be beneficial.

She said the committee has heard from counsellors, inmates and corrections workers who have advised against the program. "There was certainly not a consensus at all."

Earlier this fall, the committee heard from a retired corrections officer who expressed concern the needles could be used as weapons and create new security problems in prisons.

Mr. Sapers first called for a needle-exchange program to be introduced in prisons in 2004.

Kim Mackrael

Globe and Mail - Dec 6, 2011

An unjust law is no law at all.

- Saint Augustine

'Mean-Spirited' Crime Bill Would Deny Visitors to Punish Inmates

Prisoners who are placed in segregation as a form of punishment could also be denied visits from family and friends under the federal anti-crime bill, a measure the Canadian Bar Association calls "mean-spirited" and counterproductive.

The omnibus legislation combines nine bills the Conservative government failed to pass when it had a minority in Parliament, including measures to toughen rules for violent youth and add mandatory minimum sentences for some crimes.

As a House of Commons committee began a clause-by-clause review of the contentious bill on Tuesday, opposition MPs reiterated their objections to the speed with which it is being pushed through. They argue the process has given them limited opportunities to consider many of the changes.

"They just want to ram the thing through without any discussion or consideration," Liberal MP Irwin Cotler said after the meeting.

The Conservatives have said they are committed to passing the legislation within 100 sitting days of the new government and that their majority status gives them a mandate to do so.

The bill proposes fundamental changes to the way inmates are treated behind prison walls, including the elimination of a rule requiring administrators to impose the least restrictive measures necessary on prisoners. Public Safety Minister Vic Toews told the committee this fall the changes are based on recommendations from guards and would "modernize the system of discipline in federal penitentiaries."

Under the legislation, administrators could limit visits to those being punished with solitary confinement for up to 30 days at a time.

Michael Jackson, a member of the Canadian Bar Association's committee on imprisonment and release, said the plan runs counter to research on prisoner behaviour. "Segregation tends to ratchet up prisoners' anger and makes them more difficult to control, [and] allowing visitors is one way of trying to alleviate it," he said.

Mr. Jackson pointed to a 2008 study from Florida State University researchers that found prisoners who were visited by family and friends were less likely to reoffend. "To say we're going to toughen up conditions by taking away visits is very mean-spirited and it doesn't make correctional sense," he said.

Pierre Mallette, president of the union that represents correctional officers, told the committee recently that the change is one of several that would allow inmates to be managed in a manner that is "more consistent with the objectives of the protection of society, staff members and inmates," but declined to expand on his remarks outside of the committee.

Mr. Jackson said the legislation should aim to limit the use of solitary confinement rather than making it more difficult for prisoners to endure. He wants to see an independent adjudicator involved in reviews of non-disciplinary segregation, as currently exists for isolation related to punishment. Non-disciplinary segregation is used for inmates considered a threat to themselves or others and those whose safety is at risk in the general prison popula-

tion.

Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers urged the government to introduce an independent adjudicator to the system three years ago, after his review of the death of Ashley Smith in a Kitchener prison. The 19-year-old died in 2007, having spent years in solitary confinement.

"There is reason to believe that Ms. Smith would be alive today if she had not remained on segregation status and if she had received appropriate care," Mr. Sapers wrote in a report on the case, adding an independent adjudicator would likely have pushed for alternatives to segregation for the distressed teen.

Responding to Mr. Sapers's report, the Correctional Service of Canada wrote that it does not support the recommendation and instead has introduced a new committee to monitor non-disciplinary segregation. A spokeswoman declined to explain the department's reasons.

Both the NDP and the Liberals have proposed amendments to the bill that would require external oversight for all inmates placed in solitary confinement.

During Tuesday's two-hour committee meeting, MPs covered just seven of the 208 clauses in the anti-crime bill, with the Conservative-dominated committee voting down every amendment put forward by opposition members.

Kim Mackrael
Globe and Mail - Nov 15, 2011

Scary are the Tory Measures to Combat Crime

"We're not governing on the basis of the latest statistics," federal Justice Minister Rob Nicholson said this week. "We're governing on the basis of what's right to better protect victims and law-abiding Canadians."

Think about that statement. Statistics are facts compiled by people who are expert in compiling them, such as those who work for Statistics Canada. And the facts are clear: Crime rates are going down.

Yet, in the face of this factual/statistical evidence, the Harper government acts as if crime is going up. Hence, the omnibus crime bill introduced this week that flies in the face of statistical facts, the objections of almost everyone who works in the criminal justice field, and international evidence, most notably from the United States.

Crime, to be sure, is scary. No responsible government can ignore it or its effects. But scary, too, are measures to combat crime that have failed elsewhere – such as mandatory minimum sentences, whose scope this government proposes to widen in Canadian law.

No one knows what these measures will cost as Canada enters into a period of fiscal restraint. While other budgets are going to be sliced, the ones that flow from this bill will rise. The government has offered some vague numbers to Parliament. These are far below the ones suggested by the Parliamentary Budget Office.

We know these bills will result in more demand for prison space. How much more remains to be seen.

More prison space costs more money. Or more prisoners will have to share existing space that is, in some instances, already overcrowded. Rates of recidivism under these conditions can only rise.

So Canada is about to adopt policies whose failures are well understood in the U.S. and whose costs will be large but remain unknown. No wonder the government admits its policies are not based on "the latest statistics," but on another order of analysis – namely, raw politics.

The Harper government has this weird contempt for solid evidence. It pops up from time to time when, in the face of expert evidence, the government just barrels ahead in another direction. Recall the government's abolition of the long-form census, a move opposed by statisticians and groups that rely on the most accurate statistics possible. Recall the government's insistence after the 2008 recession had begun that no recession was under way. Recall in the matter of criminal justice the parade of judicial spokesmen, lawyers, criminologists and prison experts urging, even imploring, the government to cease and desist.

No matter. The government made a political calculation that core supporters were desperately keen on new measures against crime and that the Conservative Party should embrace groups that represented victims of crime. The government also reckoned that, with the help of a crime-obsessed media, some voters beyond the Conservative core might believe that a crime epidemic was washing across Canada.

This led to a kind of morality play – good versus evil, "tough on crime" versus "soft on crime," the forces of order against those of disorder – in which the Conservatives would align themselves with virtue, whereas their opponents would be garbed in the cloth of chaos.

As with all morality plays, little room would remain for subtlety, debate or facts. Sloganeering prevailed, as in "tough on crime," despite the evidence that most of the proposed measures wouldn't work or had proved to be counterproductive elsewhere.

Politically, the Conservatives made a good call, because the other parties nipped and nibbled at their policies without drawing a line in the sand. They apparently didn't dare to make the fight against the Conservative measures a defining issue of politics but rather a parliamentary guerrilla war made possible in minority Parliaments but now rendered useless in a majority one.

Even scarier is Mr. Nicholson's assurance that "this is not the end; this is just the beginning of our efforts." He promises that "we'll introduce other legislation as well."

Some day, many years and many failures from now, it will fall to some other government to undo these measures.

Jeffery Simpson
Globe and Mail - Sep 24, 2011

I slip away to a corner of the dawn, and I light my pipe and uncertainty. Then I hear myself, clearly, saying to myself: "Perhaps not ... but perhaps yes ..."

- Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

Harper's Crime Bill is Government by Angry Old Uncle

In an important article, *Globe* journalist Kim Mackrael recently called attention to a little-discussed amendment in the Conservative government's omnibus crime legislation. The amendment would eliminate the principle that prison guards must use the "least restrictive measures" required to control inmates.

Ms. Mackrael quoted a number of experts in corrections speaking politely about what a bad idea this would be.

To be specific, the Tories want to amend article 4 (d) of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (1992). The relevant clause establishes the principle "that the service use the least restrictive measures consistent with the protection of the public, staff members and offenders."

Why do the Tories want to remove this principle? They have been talking to themselves about it for some time. For example, in 2007 a review panel presented a detailed report to then-minister Stockwell Day on corrections issues. Entitled: 'A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety', it takes direct aim at the clause in question:

"The panel believes that this principle has been emphasized too much by staff and management of CSC, and even by the courts in everyday decision-making about offenders. As a result an imbalance has been created that places the onus on SCS to justify why the least restrictive measures shouldn't be used, rather than on offenders to justify why they should have access to privileges based on their performance under their correctional plans."

This past weekend I was out canvassing in Saskatoon. One of the good citizens I encountered on the doorstep was a former senior official at Corrections Canada. Ms. Mackrael's article was on his mind.

"I've spent more time in federal prisons than anyone I know," he told me. "I've had meetings with prison administrators, and then I've explored ever corner of our prisons right down into the hole. I know what's going to happen if they take that clause out of the Act. What's going to happen is that guards are going to feel free to use more force, a lot more force, to control inmates. There's going to be an enormous rise in violence in our prison system."

Is this what the Tories want? Is this what Canadians want happening in our prisons? Hard to say, because the Tories don't think they owe Parliament an explanation or a debate on this or any other issue. Instead they are using time allocation to ram a bloated omnibus bill through it without accountability.

Critics have highlighted some of the other issues with the Tory crime package. Some of the proposed minimum sentences are disproportionate and perverse compared to others in the legal system. All evidence from the United States shows that increasing prison populations – the basic goal the Tories are pursuing – leads to more crime. And the federal government is cheerfully creating more prisoners for provincial corrections systems, without providing any funds to house or rehabilitate them. All of this while willfully ignoring the evidence that crime in Canada is already steadily declining.

In all of this, the Conservatives are demonstrating the real character of their government. This is rule by angry old uncle. A character in many families, not without his charm and soft side, who shouts his angry views for the hundredth time, demanding firm measures and an end to many abuses, even if the facts all point the other way.

Unfortunately, the angry old uncles are now in charge of the government of Canada, and our justice system. Much work will be required when they have been defeated to rescind and unwind the damage they are doing. Including, alas, this effort to make some of the worst places you can be in Canada much worse.

Brian Topp
Globe and Mail - Nov 7, 2011

Inmates had Scheme to Attack Staff, Prison Alleges

VANCOUVER - A federal inmate who went public with details about a notorious incustody murder became involved in a retaliatory scheme against prison staff that included plans to attack a female guard with gasoline, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) alleges in documents obtained by the *National Post*.

In November, career criminal David Jolivet was serving out a lengthy sentence at Mountain Institution in Agassiz, B.C., when a fellow inmate named Jeremy Phillips was found dead in his cell, the victim of strangulation. Phillips had been forced to share the cell with prolific serial killer Michael Wayne McGray, who was eventually charged with the murder. McGray is now in a Quebec prison awaiting trial.

Jolivet and two other Mountain inmates contacted this newspaper after Phillips was killed. The three inmates all insisted that Phillips had begged prison staff, including a female guard, for a cell transfer away from McGray. Phillips had made it known that he feared for his life, the inmates claimed. McGray was moved last year from his single-occupancy cell inside maximum-security Kent Institution to Mountain, a medium-security prison where movements are less restricted and where most prisoners are "double-bunked." His arrival caused a stir: A decade ago, McGray told reporters that he had a strong taste for murder and could kill again, even inside prison.

Within days, Phillips was found dead. His parents are suing the federal government, alleging CSC staff of "reckless indifference" and negligence.

The CSC is conducting an internal review of the incident. To date, none of its findings have been released. But the agency has taken action against the three inmates, including Jolivet, who aired their concerns about the Phillips murder. The CSC accuses them of spreading false information about the incident, and of inciting other prisoners to "rally" against prison staff. The three inmates were all subject to emergency transfer from Mountain Institution. David McClain, a break-and-enter artist, was moved to a medium-security prison. In June, Jolivet and convicted murderer Jean-Paul Aubee were transferred to the maximum Kent.

Citing "reliable information" from a jailhouse infor-

mant, the CSC claims that Jolivet "was involved in attempts to incite other offenders to rally against a staff member" at Mountain and to "mount troops against the guards." According to another, heavily redacted CSC document prepared by a prison officer in late June, one prisoner was "trying to 'shop around' a 'contract' for an inmate to harm [a female guard]. The source has heard that some gas from a weed eater is already hidden in the compound and may be used to throw on [the guard] ... The source felt that [the guard] was in serious danger."

Jolivet is named repeatedly in the CSC documents. "The inmate source asked this writer why Jolivet still remains at Mountain and also warned this writer that Jolivet is dangerous and his plans to 'hurt' [the female guard] has not ceased," notes one prison officer, in his report.

Jolivet denies plotting against Mountain Institution staff. "It's nonsense," he said in a telephone conversation this week. "I'm vocal about things, but I don't go around shooting my mouth off. If someone was killed because of negligence, I'll say that. But I never made threats to anyone and I never incited any inmates to rise up against prison staff."

Jolivet has spent 38 of his 52 years incarcerated. In the early 1980s, he was caught manufacturing counterfeit U.S. currency while serving time in New Brunswick's Dorchester Penitentiary. At the time, he acted as editor of the prison's newspaper and had access to a printing press. In 1984, he escaped from Matsqui Institution in Abbotsford and fled to the United States. Jolivet committed a series of violent crimes in Utah, where he was arrested, convicted and sentenced to a maximum-security facility. In 1989, he was reportedly involved in a prison disturbance and was injured. He attempted another prison break in 1994 but failed. In 1995, Jolivet was found guilty of "influencing and retaliating against" a U.S. judge. He was transferred to Canadian custody in 2003, and has become what he describes as a "prisoners' advocate."

He claims he is being punished for speaking to media about the Phillips murder, and for attempting to organize a national prisoners' union. Jolivet wants the CSC to provide him with additional disclosure of details that led to his transfer to a maximum security prison, including reports that are not redacted. He has retained a Vancouver lawyer to assist him with his disclosure request. Ironically, he says he prefers the living conditions inside the maximum-security Kent to the medium-security Mountain Institution next door. He now has access to a large-screen television, a refrigerator filled with juice and milk and a recreational yard. "I'll finish my time here," he said. "I have three years left."

None of the fresh allegations made against him in CSC documents have resulted in criminal charges. CSC officials have refused to comment on the matter, citing security and privacy issues. CSC spokesman Alain Charette did confirm Friday that prisoners at Mountain who are on certain work assignments "might have access to gasoline ... but controls are tight."

Brian Hutchinson
National Post - Sep 12, 2011

Women See the Other Side

Once a week women from Waterloo's Wilfrid Laurier University go to prison. They pass through a razor-wired fence twice their height and enter an austere brick building, a federal prison for women in Kitchener called the Grand Valley Institution.

These are no Florence Nightingale-minded do-gooders. These women are locked up to learn. They are among the first in Canada to participate in a remarkable program that brings university students and prison inmates together to study in a post-secondary class.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program allows those in prison who never dreamed of going beyond high school to achieve that seeming impossibility. It is rehabilitative, character-changing and confidence-building. It has been shown to reduce crime and violence.

It also engages regular college students in a world they may only have encountered through TV or film and deepens their understanding of social problems. It pushes them to work for changes in their communities to reduce crime and recidivism. Inside-Out is a program that should be emulated in prisons across the country.

When the students arrive at Grand Valley, a prison

housing 189 women, they lock up their valuables. Books and papers are placed on an x-ray conveyor belt. Identity cards are shown and they make their way to what looks like an ordinary school room to meet their classmates, women imprisoned for theft, fraud or drug offences.

It is a novel idea, mixing students from essentially middle-class backgrounds with those behind bars. It was introduced to Canada by Simone Davis, an English professor who taught at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and is now at the University of Toronto.

Davis taught Inside-Out classes in the U.S. and found it deeply gratifying. Prisoners begin to have hope; they see the opportunities for a new life after they are freed. "The students from the outside who might have thought every inmate is a thug are also transformed," Davis says. Stereotypes are busted.

The program was founded in 1997 by Lori Pompa of Temple University in Philadelphia. She was inspired by an idea from Paul Perry, a man serving a life sentence in a Pennsylvania state prison. Inside-Out, headquartered at Temple, is now offered by universities and colleges in 35 states with about 10,000 students participating in classes ranging from anthropology to English literature. It is being emulated around the world.

Many argue that prisoners are behind bars for good reason and should pay for their misdeeds. Why allow them the privilege of a university education? The benefits, though, can be enormous. Studies conclude that inmates who receive education are less likely to return to prison. "School failure in childhood and adolescence is widely accepted by researchers as one of the most persistent precursors of later adult criminality," says a report by Correctional Service Canada.

One U.S. study found that completing post-secondary education could reduce the likelihood of reincarceration by 62 per cent. Davis argues it has a ripple effect. Prisoners who are educated become leaders inside and help mitigate violence and conflict within the institution, and re-enter the community with greater ease.

At the same time, students who visit prisons for shared classes are enriched by mixing with those who have grown up poor and fallen into criminal activity. "I've learned so much about women in prison and the issues they face," says Kim, an "Outside" student starting a master's degree in social work at Wilfrid Laurier.

Students use only first names and do not share backgrounds or histories unless they choose to. "Outside" students are not allowed to ask "Inside" students why they are behind bars.

The first session is often difficult. "I was afraid of being judged," allows Nyki, a woman from inside. "But with every subsequent class I started feeling better." Students all worry about being judged, whether they are from inside or out, says Wilfrid Laurier social work professor Shoshana Pollack, who led the first class at Grand Valley.

"The ability to share voices, being on equal ground, building trust and listening to each other is important," says Victoria, a student who returned to university after being away for a few years.

Lorraine, an inmate, evolved from feeling shy to being unafraid to speak her mind. "This course has been a journey rich in laughter and tears, heart-stopping leaps of faith," she said. "In a short period of time we got over assumptions we had about one another and we got on to learning."

Together the students struggled with texts, including the poetry of Maya Angelou; they wrote essays and are creating the first women's think-tank within the Inside-Out program. In the U.S., think-tanks are made up of prisoners and teachers and are responsible for training Inside-Out teachers.

The program is slowly taking root in Canada. Wilfrid Laurier and Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, B.C. launched it this year. A Ryerson University philosophy professor will teach at the Toronto East Detention Centre next year and instructors at U of T, York, the University of Ottawa and others have expressed interest.

The Harper government's omnibus crime bill is set to swell the prison population. That's following a flawed U.S. model, which scholar Ernest Drucker has labelled a "plague of prisons." In order to stop that plague, rehabilitation must be taken seriously. The Inside-Out program is a commendable solution, helping to push aside the bars of social inequity that lead so many to prison in the first place.

Toronto Star - Dec 27, 2011



Justine's Story Offers Hope for Female Inmates

Justine Winder was only eight years old when she first heard the odious voices in her head, over and over, telling her to light a fire in her brother's bedroom.

So she did.

On that day, the little girl with a lighter and a deeply troubled mind had no way of knowing she had just set her own life ablaze.

For the next 18 years, Justine would ricochet from one miserable human warehouse to another, from group homes to youth detention centres to provincial jails and finally to federal prison after beating up her ex-husband.

Each stop only made her mental illness worse, her behaviour more uncontrollable, her re-offending ever more certain.

Once in the federal prison system, she was locked in solitary confinement, sometimes strapped to a wooden restraint board, her life reduced to dreaming of death — and regular attempts to kill herself. Justine, now 27, recently shared her remarkable story in an exclusive interview with CBC News.

"I tried to kill myself a few times; there were a few times I saved up my medication and took them... I cut myself... and when I did have the opportunity to have clothes, I would rip them up and tie them around my neck and, um, choke myself a lot."

On at least two occasions, she had to be revived.

"I felt like I wasn't getting the help I needed. I felt there was nothing better, and I wasn't going to get out, and I was going to keep getting in trouble... And I was always going to be by myself and never with people, so I was pretty lonely and sad."

Justine's story of psychiatric crime and punishment is tragically all too common.

Lack of secure psychiatric facilities

There are currently 597 women doing time in Canadian prisons, and experts say at least a third of them are mentally ill.

Problem is, the Canadian penal system has almost no facilities to treat them, and the country's secure psychiatric hospitals are already overflowing.

That much is hardly news: The plight of Canada's mentally ill women inmates came to light in 2007 after 19-year-old Ashley Smith strangled herself to death in a prison cell while her guards watched.

What is unusual about Justine's story is its potentially happy ending.

Prison psychiatrists, convinced that Justine was perilously close to being the next Ashley Smith, managed to convince the already overcrowded Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre to take her as a live-in patient at its secure facility in Brockville.

That was a year ago.

Today, Justine says she is working towards a life that, until recently, seemed impossible — staying straight, getting married, having a family, a career, "maybe even a car."

Perched comfortably on a couch in the Royal Ottawa, this articulate, shy woman with clear eyes and a gentle smile utterly belies the horrific details of a life terribly lived behind bars.

Clearly, proper psychiatric treatment in a hospital has changed her life.

Howard Sapers, Canada's independent watchdog of prisons and inmates, isn't surprised.

"The solution certainly isn't to respond to illness in the criminal system. I can't think of anything more expensive than that," Sapers said in a recent interview.

"The solution has to be to properly identify, assess and treat these individuals as being ill, and put them into a safe and therapeutic setting so that they can have their mental health issues addressed."

The problem is how to get the same treatment for the hundreds of women like her in prison.

There are only 12 psychiatric treatment beds for women in the entire Canadian penal

system; the Royal Ottawa's secure facility that took in Justine only has five beds for women, and is already at over-capacity.

Experts call for action

The Royal Ottawa is now at the forefront of a campaign to build a new secure facility specifically for mentally-ill women inmates like Justine.

But so far governments are dragging their feet, a fact that confounds experts in the fields of both health and corrections.

The head of the hospital, George Weber, says treating inmates rather than just warehousing them in prisons, makes sense both economically and practically in terms of making the streets safer.

Weber says what should worry Canadians about this issue are the mentally-ill inmates who are being released untreated after their sentences are up — 90 per cent of whom, statistically, will re-offend.

The treatment programs offered at the hospital's secure mental health facility for male inmates, he says, have cut that recidivism rate by 40 per cent.

The hospital recently released an independent study showing that for every dollar invested in treating mentally ill convicts, taxpayers actually save three times as much in prisons, policing and other community costs.

Even Vic Toews, the federal public safety minister known for his tough-on-crime approach to just about everything, seems on board.

"I do not believe that people are best served in a



penal institution. If mentally ill people need to be treated in a secure facility, it should be in a mental hospital or an asylum, and I use that in the best sense of the word."

So what is holding up construction of a new facility that everyone seems to agree is a no-brainer?

Weber says bluntly: "Money and political will."

Thoughts of Ashley

One person who needs no convincing is Justine Winder.

She breaks into a thin smile as she remembers the day she was transferred from her jail cell to a hospital bed at the Royal Ottawa.

"It was the first time in a very long time that someone actually tried to help me."

She wishes someone had helped her former prisonmate, Ashley Smith.

"She was in the next cell to me. There were always guards constantly at her door telling her to take the string off her neck and stuff like that.

"I think the guards didn't know how to handle her because she had mental health issues, and if she had been in a hospital, I don't think she would have died."

Justine is due for parole next year.

Greg Weston
CBC News - Dec 16, 2011

Prison Watchdog Probes Spike in Number of Black Inmates

52% increase in proportion of black offenders in federal system since 2000

Canada's independent prisons ombudsman has launched an inquiry into a 50 per cent spike in the proportion of black offenders filling federal jails over the last 10 years.

Howard Sapers, the federal correctional investigator, wants to study the possible causes behind the increase, which saw the proportion of black offenders in federal incarceration jump to 9.12 per cent in 2010-2011, from less than six per cent a decade earlier.

It amounts to a 52 per cent leap, with the most dramatic increase occurring over the last five years. Black people make up roughly 2.5 per cent of Canada's population.

More than 1,300 black offenders are currently serving time in federal penitentiaries.

Most of them are in Ontario, where 20 per cent of the entire federal prison population of 14,312 inmates is black, according to new statistics.

Saper will explore why the numbers have increased so rapidly. If there are gaps in the system that must be filled, such as a possible need to hire more visible minority staff, he hopes to identify them.

Locked away during 'formative years'

"We've decided to commence an investigation into both the increase and to help us determine whether the CSC [Correctional Service of Canada] is meeting the needs of this population of offenders," Sapers told CBC News.

"We'll be taking a look at how culturally appropriate programs are — whether or not the Correctional Service of Canada is living up to its legal responsibility to provide ethno-cultural services that are specific to meet the needs of this group."

Sapers said it will be several months before his report is filed, but he already has theories.

"We suspect that this is a population of offenders who are sentenced for the first time for longer periods of time, but are entering the institution at an age that is younger than the general population," he said.

That means most of those black inmates will still be in their peak employment years by the time they get out of prison, said Moya Teklu, a policy research lawyer at the African Canadian Legal Clinic.

"They're so young and they're locked away for so long," she said. "Those are formative years. Those are the years where you learn to become an adult, a contributing member of society. If they don't learn that in these institutions, then we're going to have a huge problem when they're released back into society."

The disproportionate number of black convicts serving in federal prisons has long troubled Roger Rowe.

The Toronto lawyer, who has been practising for more than 20 years, said little has changed since a 1995 report on systemic racism in Ontario's criminal justice system.

"On any given day, you can step into any criminal court in Toronto and see a gross over-representation of black young males," Rowe said,



adding that he feels the issue of an over-representation of black and aboriginal people has been studied to death.

Tackling root causes

Rowe said tackling root societal causes would be key to solving the over-representation problem.

"Very often, poverty is a factor. Disengagement from the school system is a factor. Racial profiling is a factor," Rowe said.

A key question in Sapers' investigation is to learn what distinguishes black offenders from other inmates.

Tazio Clarke, a Toronto social worker who mostly helps adolescent, high-risk and black offenders, said Sapers will likely find that the black prison population is young and in need of education.

"As soon as my youth come out, I'm setting up appointments for school meetings to advocate, to just get them into school," Clarke said.

Clarke estimates that 80 per cent of the teens he sees behind bars are black. Many are caught in a cycle of criminality.

"Lots of theft, assault, robbery, armed robbery to murder, attempted murder. So it's a vast range but the commonality is that it's repeated," he said.

Without proper opportunities to learn and acquire skills or job prospects, Clarke foresees many of the youths he works with continuing to get locked up, boosting the numbers even further.

"It takes a while as a worker to get used to that sight," Clarke said. "It's actually pretty traumatic, I would say."

As for the latest statistics showing the spike in black inmate representation, Clarke was hardly surprised, adding that he only needs to scan the faces in a detention centre to draw an obvious conclusion.

"Visually, I could see the reality to the stats," he said. "Like, what's going on here? Do they have

specific jails for other cultures that I'm not visiting? Because I'm not seeing them."

Aboriginal offenders up, white offenders down
While the proportion of black prisoners in federal penitentiaries has increased, so too have the numbers for aboriginal offenders.

The proportion of federally incarcerated aboriginal offenders jumped to 21.49 per cent in 2011 from 17.04 per cent a decade earlier — an increase of 26 per cent.

However, the proportion of white inmates decreased by 13.9 per cent this year, dropping to 61.14 per cent of the prison population from 71 per cent in 2000-2001.

Alison Crawford
CBC News



Are Pot Rules Going to Pot?

My pals — the ones who use medical marijuana — are worried that Health Canada is about to make their lives a lot more difficult. At least, that's what Erin said when she asked me to come over and meet her friends Jim and Stu.

You remember Erin: she broke her back in a car accident when she was in her teens; she healed, slowly and painfully, and then she got clipped by a car and broke her back again.

Her pain level is constant, verging on the unbearable. For her, marijuana is more efficient, and far less harmful, than any other pain reliever.

As for Stu, his knee is seriously mashed up, and Jim is HIV positive, and here's the background to their worry:

At the moment, Health Canada licenses some people to use marijuana; it also licenses people like Erin to grow for their own use, and to grow for designated others; some people order their marijuana from a federally-licensed farm in Manitoba; those who are not licensed may turn to a compassion club.

A compassion club?

It is a "don't ask-don't tell" dispensary, organized on a members-only basis; mostly, the cops turn a blind eye.

Recently, Health Canada has been having consultations around the country; the agency wants to get out of the business of mailing medical marijuana to licensed users; it wants users to deal directly with a handful of new, federally-licensed marijuana farms; and, my friends say, the feds will stop licensing individuals to grow their own.

Just so you know, Erin smokes what she grows; she also makes marijuana butter and oil for use in cooking and baking at home. Stu is licensed to use; he has applied for a license to grow; it doesn't look like he'll succeed. He said, "I make gingersnap cookies. I also make oils and tinctures."

And Jim, who is HIV positive, has a grower, at least for now. He said, "I make chocolate bars, cookies, squares, caramels; the trick is to hide the flavour."

Why do people prefer to grow their own?

Stu said, "I've had marijuana from compassion clubs. I tested it for pesticides and found traces of floramite, and of AVID — you have to have a commercial license to use AVID."

AVID kills spider mites. The larger concern is that AVID may interfere with some of the drugs in the AIDS cocktail.

Why else do licensed users prefer to grow their own, or to buy from someone licensed? Erin said, "There are more than 200 strains of marijuana; mine works for me. If it's taken away . . ."

She raised another concern. "A lot of women out there are put in the position of trading sex for meds — they can't grow for themselves, and along comes a guy . . ."

All three worry that Health Canada has been consulting with the compassion clubs, but not with them. Stu said, "Why are they talking with people they've branded as criminals, but not with the people they call patients?"

Okay, but if the system does need reform, then what should Health Canada do?

Erin said, "Research; they should inform the doctors

about the use of marijuana for anxiety, depression, anorexia, post-traumatic stress."

Stu said, "It should insist that those who have production licenses submit papers to show that the electrical inspections are done."

And Jim said, "I recommend that Health Canada work on customer service. I'm in a six-month loop of calling; it's hard, when there are times you're not well enough to call." And finally, Stu noted, "Some people are going to end up in jail if they change the law."

Hmm. Omnibus crime bill, mandatory minimums, and new jails in the works.

Just coincidence?

Joe Fiorito

Toronto Star - Oct 13 2011

Prisoners of the World, Unite!

Inmates in B.C. are working to establish Canada's first-ever prisoners' union

In January 2010, a 50-something inmate serving a life sentence at Mountain Institution, a medium-security prison in Agassiz, British Columbia, polled his fellow prisoners to see if they were in favour of starting a labour union. Over 76 per cent of the inmates said yes. By March, he and a core group of 14 inmates at Mountain had drafted a constitution for the union and have been working towards certification ever since. If the inmates are successful, the union will be the first of its kind in the country.

It's not surprising the movement is happening at Mountain, given its unique status as a work-focused prison where inmates must have steady jobs. As of 2007, there were 449 inmates at Mountain—the majority of whom work in one of four industries: textiles, manufacturing, construction, and prison services, such as printing and laundry. They've only recently met their first hurdle: getting 51 per cent of the prisoners to sign up. This is usually a routine affair, but represents a problem inside a prison, where inmates have been denied the right to assemble.

In a press release, the prisoners said their proposed union would raise issues that "plague the prison population as a workforce," including workplace safety, access to vocational training, and pay, which hasn't been adjusted to inflation since 1986. The union tactic comes in response to a dysfunctional inmate grievance system that is overloaded, understaffed, and inefficient. According to the Correctional Investigator's office the volume of complaints has grown from around 20,000 in 2005-06 to over 28,000 in 2009-2010

A 2010 review of the complaints and grievance process by David Mullan, a constitutional lawyer and professor emeritus at Queen's University, found "serious problems" with the current system. A routine grievance can take over 150 days from its initial filing to be resolved, in part because of improperly trained staff. (Mullan says staff do "little more than [process] paper.") And the system is tied up by "frequent users"—serial grievors, determined to bog down the process. In 2008-09, Mullan found that in some institutions, just a dozen offenders accounted for 11.3 per cent of all submissions.

Canada's prisoners' rights movement dates back to the 70s, when a series of brutal uprisings and violent deaths spurred an overhaul of prison legislation, including extending the vote behind prison walls. Since then, a series of legal reforms that have guaranteed rights to prisoners, notably the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 and the adoption of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in 1992, which includes the inmate grievance policy. In many respects, Canada's commitment to prisoner's rights is admirable.

But just because something is written, doesn't mean it's enforced, cautions Allan Manson, a criminal law professor at Queen's University. "The problem," says Manson, "is enforcing compliance with the act and that continues to be a problem today." There are statutory standards, he says, "but prisoners have to be able to force compliance. And given the obstacles to judicial remedies and cost of litigation, there hasn't been a crucial mass of judicial scrutiny that will keep penitentiary officials in line."

The Correctional Service of Canada wouldn't speculate on the impact a union might have on the federal prison system and pointed out that inmates already have a say in their treatment. "Each institution has an inmate committee which is formed to allow inmates to identify issues, including work-related issues, affecting them and to raise them with wardens and institutional staff," CSC spokesperson Jean-Paul Lorieau wrote in an email to Maclean's. "So far no union has been formed, and we do not have any further comments on this issue."

In the meantime, Mountain inmates and Natalie Dunbar, a Vancouver-based criminal lawyer who's been serving as a liaison between the prison and the outside world, continue to organize. While the process is slow, Dunbar is optimistic. She says a prisoners' union could "change the dynamic" between guards and prisoners for the better. "Prison staff are unionized and they have issues they have to deal with and believe it or not some of the issues intersect with prisoners issues." Ideally, Dunbar says prison labour unions will propagate across the country: "Mountain would be local 001 and hopefully Kent would be unionized, then places throughout BC and then Canada." Though, until then, "it's baby steps," she says. "We just want to get the application in at Mountain."

Stephanie Findlay

Maclean's - Jul 4, 2011

It is easy to understand why the law is used by the legislator to destroy in varying degrees among the rest of the people their personal independence by slavery, their liberty by oppression, and their property by plunder. This is done for the benefit of the person who makes the law, and in proportion to the power that he holds.

- Frederic Bastiat

The only possible alternative to being the oppressed or the oppressor is voluntary cooperation for the greatest good of all.

- Enrico Maletesa

The Safe Streets and Communities Act: Neo-Conservative Crime and Cruelty

[People] fight for freedom, then they begin to accumulate laws to take it away from themselves.
~Author Unknown

Law and Order

2010 closed with the 33rd consecutive drop in both the rate and the severity of crime across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). Despite this, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government has reintroduced their much anticipated 'law and order' agenda in the form of one colossal crime Bill. Bill C10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act (Parliament of Canada, 2011) combines nine of the former Bills which had failed to pass into law due to opposition and repeated prorogues of parliament. Still other criminal law Bills which failed to pass previously have been introduced separately. They focus on tightening both our online freedoms and Canadian immigration law.

Safe Streets and Communities: Who Wouldn't Want That?

Despite how widespread the resistance to Bill C10 has been, it has thus far been futile. It seems that there is no bridging the gap between conservative ideology, and the truth behind the causes of community harm. The causes of course are poverty, unemployment, inequality, and trauma. Addressing these issues requires thoughtfulness and a commitment to evidence-based practices which reflect a human rights framework.

Precisely because Bill C10 ignores evidence and human rights, all manner of people have resisted it. Hundreds of organizations from across Canada, representing thousands of social workers, health-care providers, teachers, activists, regular citizens, and clergy who recognize the hyperbole for what it is, partisan ideology, greed, and fear.

Ideology and Greed

Harper's political base doesn't care much about sound statistics and proven best practices. Not if these are competing with the satisfaction obtained through retribution and high profit margins. The hang 'em high approach has been used successfully in the past. The Harris government in Ontario in the 90's made 'war on the poor' by demonizing us, while simultaneously cutting the services and welfare rates which could prevent many from becoming addicted and criminalised in the first place.

Neo-Conservative Agenda = Increased Crime and Less Safety

Stephen Harper has claimed that Canadians are unsafe and that only by restricting our freedoms further will we achieve safety. In fact what the Harper conservatives will likely achieve is not increased safety but an increase in 'crime'. As our freedoms are increasingly made illegal, and social programs which stave off desperation are defunded, our 'crime' rates will soar, thus justifying the prison building boom and tough on crime rhetoric. The people of the USA have learned this the hard way. Decades of 'tough on crime', 'war on drugs' ideology translated into programs of mass

incarceration. Studies found that those communities who were most impacted, suffered increasing, as opposed to decreasing rates of "crime". It was found that removing income contributing adults from already struggling households increased desperation and provided even fewer choices within those homes and throughout those communities. People were forced more often to make choices between doing without or engaging in that which we refer to as "crime".

More Canadians Criminalized

One in ten Canadians currently has a criminal record. (Canadian Criminal Justice Association, 2010). The majority of whom suffer the consequent and ongoing emotional, social and financial impacts related to criminalisation. As more Canadians are criminalised and experience encroachments on their freedoms, and cuts to social services are expanded, the more desperate and angry people will become and consequently, the more ready to resist. We should not have to go through this.

Capitalism at Work

Our government (like most governments) is highly adept in the art of 'spin'. The major media outlets are owned and operated by just a few large corporations in Canada, which greatly restricts the diversity of news we receive. These news conglomerates are mostly owned by huge multinationals and used by their owners to influence public opinion in their own favour. They have been allowed to gain far too much political clout through unrestrained growth and expansion, sometimes becoming so large and influential that our own governments become cowed.

Independent and Alternative News Media

It becomes apparent then that as individuals our own best interests compel us to explore independent sources of news and information. Democracies are wise to question and monitor our governments, whether they are selling off public assets, locking up those with addictions, or allowing warrant-less searches into our online activities. We are wise to ask ourselves who stands to benefit or to lose from a particular initiative or policy change. Equally we are wise to listen closely to opposing voices, in particular those voices which government and corporate interests invest precious resources attempting to discredit or silence.

Most of all we must fight our tendency towards complacency. We can never assume that new laws or greater restrictions (on privacy, for example) won't affect us personally. Insisting that intrusions into our personal sphere are OK because as law abiding citizens we have nothing to hide is rather short sighted. Where do these encroachments end? How far can we allow our government and police forces to expand into the private realms of others before we too are affected? The rights we now enjoy freely could suddenly be taken away and made illegal. New invasions on our freedoms when not challenged have a way of gradually intensifying until it becomes clear that we are no longer free.

sheryl jarvis

prisonstatecanada.blogspot.com - Oct. 25, 2011

The Contrite Bureaucrat

On this usually grey January morn, Stephen Harper's austere visage appears on my screen – log-in and he's automatic. I am a bureaucrat working in the Department of Public Safety writing phony press releases detailing 'Harper's victories' over psycho-legal criminals. This is what a degree in journalism got me. One person per riding, I cover gentrified Parkdale-High Park.

In my pocket, balled up in my trembling hand, is a hastily scrawled essay entitled: 'The Banality of Strategic Mendacity: Harper in Power'. The cathartics, the anxiety! Useless-degree-made-me-an-accomplice-to-mass-deception-truth-is-denial.

Legions of Canadian march through serpentine suburban streets to community centres to hear the trite message – impression management on high: give the perception of conformity and attain psychological peace. Life is all about strategic bull-shit.

In his stupefying monotone he speaks, 'Today we celebrate freedom. Freedom from government intrusion in our lives. Celebrate choice in the market. Celebrate the purification of Canadian society. The natural essence of Canada: law-abiding, hard-working men and nurturing women – nurturing the appropriate identities for boys and girls. This morning, pre-dawn arrests netted 836 deviants; communities are more safer thanks to my efforts. Celebrate peace, order and limited government. Canada is celebrated the world over; but few emulate us because of a lack of character...'

I whisper, 'No Canada lacks democracy – sold to corporate interests. You destroyed the liberal ideals of my forbears and minimized public input: Elections are a farce – an expensive poll.'

Paranoid, I glance furtively at the Night Watchmen doing their rounds. Helmeted, shielded faces and clad in matte ebony, they are Harper's quasi-private police force providing adjunct security – lethal at times – for government institutions. I wonder if they are able to detect my thoughts and feelings. I hear they are psychopaths – a prerequisite – thus unable to read physical and social cues. I relax emitting a loud sigh as they pass, then curse Harper as he smiles fiendishly holding a hissing cat.

Tyrone Streete

~~~~~  
A single decision by the chairman of Royal Dutch/Shell has a greater impact on the health of the planet than all the coffee-ground-composting, organic-cotton-wearing eco-freaks gathering in Washington D.C., for Earth Day festivities this weekend.

- Sharon Begley

Freedom is not something that anybody can be given. Freedom is something people take, and people are as free as they want to be.

- James Baldwin

No matter how old a mother is she watches her middle-aged children for signs of improvement.

- Florida Scott Maxwell

### Time's Up

It's getting close  
The gates will unlock & open  
I will walk out, once again freedom  
The smell of the air & wind on my face feels good  
As I walk away, I leave behind shame, loneliness,  
fear  
As I walk, I'm excited & wonder what the future  
holds  
Once again I'm alone in a world of opportunity &  
choices  
Which one to take?  
What's the path I must follow?  
Once again I'm scared of myself  
My own worst enemy  
I ask god to show me the way  
All I hear is silence  
I have to do this on my own  
Please! Make the right choice  
Don't lose myself in the dark  
Thoughts race in my head, old ones & new  
I'm so confused, I get scared  
And want to run back in  
'Don't let me out!'  
But the bars are closed  
I must move forward  
To the next chapter of my so-called 'life'  
Once again, I'm free  
Time's up

Constance Taggart

### Untitled

Dying inside these prison walls  
Waiting for the day to be reborn back into society  
Where we once lived  
We made mistakes & things went wrong  
As I lay here I think farewell  
I lost my loved ones I once held  
As I look around I see people's faces  
I know very well I'm not alone inside these walls  
I know how you feel  
I too miss my loved ones as well

Ron Ward

### Alone

I can't wait until night time falls  
So I can hide my face in my pillow  
Tears of sadness fill my eyes  
Then rolling down my cheeks  
Soaking my pillow  
Thinking & fearing  
Of what tomorrow will bring  
Emptiness, loneliness  
Is a man's worst fear  
Behind these prison walls  
No matter how tough  
We think we are  
The shell or mask we wear  
Does break when we are alone ...  
I know mine do

Ryan Wheaton

### Pauper's Cup

City traffic crowds my head  
A dash of coins into my cup  
Hidden faces refuse to see me  
Pray they'll never be me  
Alms for the poor untouchable soul  
Whilst gutters fill with tears  
Along this road so foul  
I devour all that I see  
Gently comes evening upon the city  
This sleeping bag my burden  
Cold comfort from rain & snow  
Surrendered feelings I dare not show  
I glimpse the passing pedestrians fathomless stare  
I wish I were not here but there  
Masked bandits of the night  
Whose garbage shall be their fill  
Scurry across backyard fences  
They depart  
Till dawn comes  
We are comrades still  
Chaotic dreams inhabit  
They rearrange  
This life I live  
In cups of change

J.L. Marlowe

### Untitled

So many days have gone by  
I wish I had wings to fly  
I would've never done wrong  
If I knew I would be here for so long  
My life is within these four walls  
Oh how my life has taken such a fall  
It still shocks me to think I'm here  
I still have to wipe away my tears  
One by one I count the long days  
Higher it gets, the days I've been away  
I never seem to know  
The day I will get to go  
So I created a world of my own  
With so many people I've never known  
So many come & go  
It's sad to see them go  
Some say they'll keep in touch  
But it doesn't mean that much  
'Cause many who leave this place  
Run far from here, like it's a race  
When they're finally out, they start to forget  
The ones in green, so many of them they met  
It now makes sense of what he said  
The boy who put sense in my head  
No matter how many friends in here you meet  
Whether they are true to you or fake  
Always keep in mind  
This one little line  
You come alone, you leave alone

Juju

Those who do not move, do not notice their  
chains.  
- Rosa Luxemburg

### The Hate Box

The darkness surrounds me, there is no escape  
This cell is my hell, a box full of hate  
A hole full of hurt & a hole full of pain  
That surely but slowly drives me insane  
A place of nothing but twisted insanity  
With nothing left but broken humanity  
Just screaming & yelling & cutting & slashing  
Kicking & punching & hitting & smashing  
All this & yet still I get no peace  
From this cage full of rage I'll never get relief  
Just more silence & violence, hatred & rage  
Filling my soul till I explode  
Welcome all to my hellish abode

Christophor Trotchie

### An Ode to Wild Eyes

Wild eyes peered out from the darkness &  
Watched the clouds pass by up above  
Wild eyes watched the travels of a snowy white  
dove &  
Wild eyes wondered if he'll ever know love?  
Wild eyes stared at his hands & all he saw was  
pain  
Wild eyes wondered if he'd ever be free again?  
Wild eyes' heart burned as if it was on fire  
Wild eyes' body was filled with pent up desire  
Wild eyes' eyes burned from the tears that sprung  
there  
Wild eyes just wanted to breathe in free fresh air &  
Wild eyes knew for him, there was no one who  
cared  
Wild eyes howled in a deep woeful tone  
Wild eyes was so tired of just being alone  
Wild eyes was found hanging from the rope that he  
made &  
His body still swung in the cell that was his grave

Jeremy Hall

### The Strip Cell

In the strip I sat  
Humiliated, dejected, depressed  
It seems that no one cares. Do they?  
Well it seems not. Am I forgotten?  
I hear a jangle of keys  
I bang, I shout, I swear  
It seems as there's no one there. Is there?  
At last someone comes  
My saviour from this hell. Or not?  
What do I want?  
The screw shouts at me  
Just a chat, guv, I say meekly  
Not a chance lad, he grunts  
Is this real or an illusion?  
Who knows or cares?

Kevin Cabanaw

... nature's God commands the slave to rise, and  
on th' oppressor's head to break his chain.  
- John Quincy Adams

### Con

I wake in a cold sweat  
 Was it a dream?  
 No, the cold steel is real  
 My dream is real  
 I'm a convict  
 It's survival by any means  
 It's the life of a convict  
 Fuck it, it's my life  
 And I like it

D. Lewis

### Blood Not Glory

In front of me, calm  
 Just after breakfast cleanup  
 Just before my lecturing  
 The cloudy day hairs  
 And the younger chrome domes  
 On the unnecessary fighting:  
 'Don't be a big fish in a small pond  
 Or it's 23 hour lockup'  
 And I don't look forward to my next shift  
 Looking after young sharks, silver backs,  
 wolves, and thieves ...  
 Too late!  
 Alarm bell is on somewhere  
 We rush in, just before the ambulance  
 Another range. Blood, not glory

Wayne Ray

### It Is What It Is

I don't care for a second chance  
 I'll stake my claim & hold my stance  
 My pain is real, my ways are wrong  
 Only through failure do we grow strong  
 I'm not willing to give up my life  
 To trade it in for hardship & strife  
 When I faced my fears, I learned the facts  
 I soon then realized I was way off track  
 Myself alone can't win this fight  
 Watch my back & I'll do what's right  
 I'll find my way before I get lost  
 To conquer these demons, whatever the cost

Louis Delorme

### In and Out

Empty inside yet filled with pain  
 While screaming within & going insane  
 But there's no one to blame for this except myself  
 It's my own fault & no one else  
 Now all I do is count the days till I'll be free  
 That day will come just wait & see  
 When it does I'll spread my wings & fly  
 Up to the vast blue sky  
 And I'll leave this place, this hole of hate  
 Before it's too late & becomes my fate  
 I'll walk out these doors & never look back  
 And hopefully keep my life on the right track ...  
 Wish me luck!

Christophor Trotchie

### Alphabetical Killah

Poisonous poetry  
 Spittin' venom that burns  
 The brain 'n the eardrums  
 Your physician's concerned  
 Making your stomach churn  
 With my verbs 'n my nouns  
 Alphabetical killah  
 Dope as a quarter pound  
 Chemo therapy patient  
 I'm feeling your pain  
 My talent is like a tumour  
 Lodged deep in the brain  
 Radiation rap  
 Shit it's making me sick  
 Turk's murdering hip hop  
 His bic is the ice pick

Nolan 'Turk' Turcotte



### Chameleon

It numbs me, this pain inside  
 Secures a place where I can hide  
 Alone in comfort from these fears  
 In this room of endless tears  
 No eyes can see me in this place  
 No love nor truth for me to face  
 Only me - here I dwell  
 To find the words with which to tell  
 The numbness comes & goes at times  
 Lost in shaded lines of rhymes  
 It's the memories of all the things now past  
 Which brings the pain ever fast  
 And lets me see with these clear eyes  
 The life I tried to fantasize

J.L. Marlowe

### Concrete Walls

As I sit among these concrete walls  
 I wonder what lies ahead in the concrete halls  
 As I look out to the concrete halls  
 I see nothing but dim lights  
 This makes me feel like I have no rights  
 In these concrete walls  
 Is this my life in these concrete walls  
 Counting concrete blocks until my mind plays tricks  
 Even my room is made of concrete walls  
 Brick after brick of concrete  
 When will it end?

N. Andres

### Evolution

Emerging from swamps murky as soup  
 We improvised genetic suicide  
 Polluted air, earth, water, minds  
 Made mushroom clouds  
 Became masters of blasters  
 Love nearly saved us  
 We dwelt in cities  
 Good for robots

J.L. Marlowe

### Uncle Belly: A New Star is Born

I look up into the sky  
 Tearz fill my eyez, I cry  
 Thinking & wondering why  
 Why did you have to go?  
 I want you to know  
 That I miss you so  
 My uncle & my bro  
 All in one  
 I look up at the sun  
 knowing your journey has begun  
 I still wanna run  
 Run away so far  
 Because this pain be a scar  
 I look into the night  
 There is a new star  
 I wanna go back in time  
 Painful thoughts running through my mind  
 Deep down I'm still fucking crying  
 But I see that star shine  
 My heart is broken  
 My heart is torn  
 Can't breathe, still choking  
 But a new star is born  
 I know it's true  
 That that star is you  
 So this is what I'm gonna do  
 Be strong, keep my head up too  
 Now you're gone, now you're deceased  
 Your spirit is released  
 Now I gotta let you go  
 Love you Belly, rest in peace

Jamie 'Lokie' Sutherland

## TATTOOING & YOU: the safeguards within prisons

### SAFE TATTOOING

Tattooing is a popular art form that many men and women in prison participate in. If the work is done safely, by a skilled artist who values both their art and the health of their customers, tattooing is an activity that can give a lot of happiness and pride to the artist and customer alike. **However, if proper precautions are not followed, tattooing can be a high risk for the spread of diseases like Hepatitis C and HIV.**

### CHOOSING AN ARTIST

Everyone likes to get tattoos in prison, and that's good because a lot of the best artists are in prison - artists that take pride in their work, and do mega-detail!

When you're entering a prison, take your time before getting tattooed. Too many people want to hurry, hurry, hurry. Well, don't rush, because the people who do only end up later looking for a good artist to cover up the hurry, hurry crap.

The artist should make sure that the art work the person wants is what they will get. If you're getting a tattoo, make sure you check out as much of the artist's work as possible to make sure he or she knows what they're doing.

Take your time when looking for a tattoo, and in picking an artist to do it for you. If you can, try to see the artist in action first, and watch what he or she does. This can really help you make good decisions.

### SAFE TOOLS

In here it's very hard to ensure that the equipment (needles, shaft, ink) is clean. The only way to be sure is to have the tattoo artist make the new needle in front of you.

When doing a tattoo, everything the artist uses should be brand new. To make sure of this, **the artist that you choose should be able to make up everything in front of you - the needle, shaft for the ink, and tip for the needle.** For this, the tattoo artist needs to be adept at making the equipment fast. If the artist can't make the needle in front of you, tell him or her to drift. Even these precautions cannot guarantee a safe tattoo.

A simple pen or lighter can be used for a tip and shaft. A pack of guitar strings can make endless needles for the price of a few dollars. An easy way

to sharpen them is with a small piece of sandpaper stuck to your fan, or by hand using slow pull-away and turn motions. The needle should be razor sharp - the shorter the point, the longer the needle will stay sharp. The artist should also wear latex gloves.

If you have to boil your equipment, do so for 15 minutes, with bleach if you have it. The best system I have found is to make everything brand new each time and boil it, and afterwards clean it with alcohol and let the person who got the work done keep the works. By making the customer responsible for their own personal works, they can get more work done later (if the piece isn't finished yet) and be positive that no one else has used them.



### SAFE INKS

You trust your life on the ink you use. Just because someone tells you the ink they're using is brand new doesn't mean anything, because you can't see the HIV virus or Hep C virus. You can't tell by looking if the ink is clean or not.

Getting ink is a big problem within prison. CSC banned ink in their efforts to curb tattooing practices. This makes it hard to get. You can make your own ink by burning paper and mixing it with water to make a thick paste - then away you go! The artist should mix the ink in front of you, so you know it's disease free.

The standard practice for the serious tattoo artist is to obtain a sealed bottle of ink from somewhere (use your imagination!) and use that. **Reusing or sharing ink is very high risk for disease transmission (Hep C and HIV)!**

### SAFE WORK

When using a home-made prison tattoo gun, make sure that the area you're working on is flat and that you're holding the gun straight on. This will make the ink flow to the spot you're working on and stay there until you wipe it off. Never hold your gun on a tilt. This causes blotching and infection,

and it doesn't do a lot of good for the tattoo either. Make sure that a new toothpaste cap is used, or styrofoam cup or whatever, and that it's cleaned with alcohol.

The tattooist should not break through all the layers of skin. If they do it can result in infection and heavy scarring. There will always be a little scarring - remember, you're punching millions of holes to make a piece, but the ink will cover that. The heavy scarring I'm talking about - which seems to be abundant in prison - is the deep, rutted scarring. You can run your finger lightly over it and feel the indentations left from some butcher calling themselves a tattoo artist. Any butcher can follow a bunch of lines stencilled on someone's skin - the art comes from the shading, and every tattoo artist has a unique shade. That's the addiction. Because of this, once you've been around a while and seen a lot of work, you should be able to tell who did it - and that's without a signature!

Be aware of cross contamination. This means that anything that comes into contact with a used needle, dirty rag, blood, etc., is contaminated. For example, if the tattoo gun cord comes into contact with blood during a tattoo it is considered contaminated. This could be a risk to the next client receiving a tattoo if it comes into contact with their open tattoo sores. As much as possible the tattooist should protect against cross contamination by using non-microwaveable plastic wrap to cover equipment and working surfaces.

### SAFE DISPOSAL

After you've finished a tattoo, you have medical waste. After the job is done, everything you used is waste and should be treated as such. The needle, tube or shaft that the needle goes in, the ink, the ink cap, the gloves, and the new towel that you had at the start which is now black, should be disposed of. **Don't ever re-use any of the stuff.** You can't take it to health care, so you have to throw it in the garbage.

Make sure you cut the point off the needle and bend it up before you throw it or flush it. This will make sure the garbage person or whoever won't accidentally get stuck by it. This way you know for sure that you're not spreading any diseases. The gloves and rags should also be tossed or flushed and never reused.

Written by Wm. Danks

Art by Tim Felfoldi

Joyceville Inst, Kingston, ON (1998)

**BLEACH DOES NOT  
KILL HEP C**

## - BE KIND TO YOUR VEINS -

Be kind to your veins, they're the only ones you've got! Veins become leaky, infected and will eventually collapse if they don't have time to heal between injections. You can tell a vein has collapsed when it seems to have disappeared or you can't draw blood from it. To help prevent your veins from becoming damaged:

- ◆ try to use a different injection site for each time you shoot up
- ◆ learn how to inject in a number of places and with either hand so you'll be able to use the other side if one side needs a rest
- ◆ save the "easy" spots for when you know you don't have time
- ◆ shoot in the direction of your heart with the hole of the needle facing upwards
- ◆ taking oral vitamin C may help your veins repair themselves

To make sure your vein is full of blood and easier to hit, try:

- ◆ clenching and relaxing your fist
- ◆ gently rubbing or slapping the skin over the vein
- ◆ soak your arm in warm water
- ◆ squeeze your bicep with your hand
- ◆ Push-ups, pull-ups or wrist curls
- ◆ use a tourniquet (belt, string, rubber bands, shoelaces, etc.)

### REMEMBER THAT INFECTIONS ARE HARD TO HEAL, IT IS BETTER TO PREVENT INFECTIONS

#### WHERE TO SHOOT

Always shoot in a vein, never an artery. To be sure you're in the vein, pull back the plunger, if slow moving dark red blood comes into the syringe, **YOU'RE IN A VEIN**. If the blood is bright red and frothy or if the plunger is forced back by the pressure of blood, **YOU'RE IN AN ARTERY – GET OUT!** Untie, pull needle out, raise the limb above your head if possible and apply pressure for 10 minutes. Also:

- ◆ areas that are furthest away from the heart heal the slowest and have the worst circulation (eg: feet)
- ◆ areas that are closest to the heart have veins that are near major arteries and nerves which can cause serious damage if hit
- ◆ the veins in your arms are the safest places to shoot
- ◆ never inject where you feel a pulse (an artery)
- ◆ try to hit surface veins instead of deeper ones
- ◆ shoot in the direction of your heart

#### GOOD PLACES TO SHOOT

The veins in your upper arms and forearms are as safe as any!

#### BAD PLACES TO SHOOT

DO NOT fix into your eyes, face, armpits, penis or breasts, these veins are so fragile and hard to find that they're not worth the risk. The same goes for veins near your belly button and inner thigh, they are too deep!

#### PLACES TO SHOOT ONLY IF YOU HAVE TO

Veins in the hands and feet are fragile and will hurt, inject slowly into these areas. Inject slowly into the veins behind your knees also and be careful of the artery that runs next to the vein.

#### IF YOU HAVE TO USE YOUR JUGULAR (in the neck)

Hits into your jugular are very dangerous. Chunks and clots can go quickly to your brain or heart and cause a stroke or heart attack. Your best bet is not to shoot here at all. If you must, clean the area first with alcohol, then shoot towards the heart and come in at the smallest angle possible - 35 degrees or less. Flag it to make sure you're in. Go as slow as possible and don't stand up too fast. There is no 100% safe way to shoot in your jugular.

#### GERMS

Germs cause abscesses including spit germs, skin germs and other people's germs.

To avoid germs getting into your body while you're fixing:

- ◆ don't lick the bubble off the top of the point
- ◆ don't lick the site before or after fixing
- ◆ don't use a dirty mix like toilet water or spit (if you have to use toilet water, use the water in the tank, not the bowl)
- ◆ don't touch the filters too much
- ◆ avoid sharing spoons, water, filters and rigs with other people
- ◆ clean the site before fixing if you can with soap or alcohol



## - KEEPING FIT -

#### ABSCESSSES

Abscesses (infected boils) begin with redness, swelling and tenderness at the injection site and develop into an infection with a hard, pus-filled center. They are caused by tiny germs getting pushed under the skin by the rig. If you notice a hard warm lump developing and can't see a doctor, put a warm compress on it at least 3 times a day, this will bring blood to the area and will make it go away or it will soften and fill up with pus. Also keep the abscess clean with soap and water. It may drain by itself but if you choose to drain it yourself, **ONLY USE A CLEAN NEEDLE** to poke it with. The pus should come out easily, never squeeze it because it will spread the infection. If you are able to, put a dry bandage over it and keep it clean. If you get a fever, chills, extreme fatigue or pain (especially in the groin or armpits) that is related to the abscess, you may have a blood infection - you probably need medical attention for this. Some infections need antibiotics to be cleared up.

#### COTTON FEVER ("The Bends")

Cotton fever happens when a piece of the filter gets sucked into the syringe and injected into your blood. Within hours, you develop a fever and get really sick, your bones ache, you feel hot and cold at the same time and you shake. The best thing to do is to rest, eat something and cover up with a blanket. Cotton fever usually gets better after an hour.

#### CHALK LUNG

Chalk Lung is caused by injecting something that won't mix with water. These pieces can include talc, chalk and cornstarch (many pills have these pieces.) Your lungs may scar making it hard to breathe. Chalk Lung can be prevented by filtering carefully every time.

### **PENPAL LOTTERY**

Send in your ad: **30 Words or Less.**

PASAN - Cell Count Penpals  
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AVAILABLE  
ONLINE**



# AIDS RESOURCE CENTRE OF ONTARIO



## EAST COAST

**AIDS COALITION of CAPE BRETON**  
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P 1G6 902-567-1766

**AIDS COALITION of NOVA SCOTIA**  
1675 Bedford Row, Halifax, NS, B3J 1T1 902-425-4882  
Toll Free: 1-800-566-2437

**AIDS COMMITTEE of NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**  
47 Janeway Place, St. John's, NL, A1A 1R7 1-800-563-1575

**AIDS NEW BRUNSWICK**  
65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB, E3B 1G5 506-459-7518  
Toll Free: 1-800-561-4009

**AIDS PEI**  
2-375 University Ave, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 4N4 902-566-2437

**AIDS SAINT JOHN**  
115 Hazen St, NB, E2L 3L3 606-652-2437

**HEALING OUR NATIONS**  
3-15 Alderney Dr, Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 2N2  
902-492-4255 1-800-565-4255

**MAINLINE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**  
5511 Cornwallis St, Halifax, NS, B3K 1B3 902-423-9991

**SHARP ADVICE NEEDLE EXCHANGE**  
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P 6H1 902-539-5556 (Collect)

**SIDA/AIDS MONCTON**  
80 Weldon St, Moncton, NB, E1C 5V8 506-859-9616

## QUEBEC

**CACTUS**  
1300 rue Sanguinet, Montreal, H2X 3E7 514-847-0067

**CENTRE for AIDS SERVICES MONTREAL (Women)**  
1750 Rue Saint-Andre, 3rd Flr, Montreal, H2L 3T8  
514-495-0990, 1-877-847-3636

**COALITION des ORGANISMES COMMUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de LUTTE CONTRE le SIDA (COCQSIDA)**  
1 est, rue Sherbrooke, Montréal, H2X 3V8 514-844-2477

**COMITÉ des PERSONNES ATTEINTES du VIH du QUEBEC (CPAVIH)**  
2075 rue Plessis bureau 310, Montreal, H2L 2Y4 1-800-927-2844

## ONTARIO

**2-SPIRITED PEOPLE of the 1ST NATIONS**  
593 Yonge St, #202, Toronto, M4Y 1Z4 416-944-9300

**AFRICANS in PARTNERSHIP AGAINST AIDS**  
314 Jarvis St, Ste 101, Toronto, M5B 2C5 416-924-5256

**AIDS COMMITTEE of CAMBRIDGE, KITCHENER, WATERLOO & AREA**  
2B-625 King St E, Kitchener, N2G 4V4 519-570-3687 (Collect)

**AIDS COMMITTEE OF GUELPH**  
89 Dawson Rd, Unit 113, Guelph, N1H 3X2 519-763-2255 (Collect)

**AIDS COMMITTEE of NORTH BAY and AREA**  
201-269 Main St W, North Bay, P1B 2T8 705-497-3560 (Collect)

**AIDS COMMITTEE of OTTAWA**  
700-251 Bank St, Ottawa, K2P 1X3 613-238-5014 (Collect)

**AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY**  
574 Memorial Ave, Thunder Bay, P7B 3Z2  
807-345-1516 (Collect), 1-800-488-5840

**AIDS NIAGARA**  
111 Church St, St Catharines, L2R 3C9 905-984-8684

**ANISHNAWBE HEALTH AIDS PROGRAM**  
255 Queen St E, Toronto, M5A 1S4 416-360-0486

**ASIAN COMMUNITY AIDS SERVICE**  
107-33 Isabella St, Toronto, M4Y 2P7 416-963-4300 (Collect)

**BLACK COALITION for AIDS PREVENTION**  
207-110 Spadina Ave, Toronto, M5V 2K4 416-977-9955 (Collect)

**CANADIAN HIV/AIDS LEGAL NETWORK**  
1240 Bay St #600, Toronto, M5R 2A7 416-595-1666 (Collect)

**FIFE HOUSE**  
490 Sherbourne St, 2nd Flr, Toronto, M4X 1K9 416-205-9888

**HEP C SOCIETY OF CANADA**  
3050 Confederation Parkway, Mississauga  
905-270-1110 1-800-652-HepC (4372)

**HIV/AIDS LEGAL CLINIC OF ONTARIO**  
65 Wellesley St E, Toronto, M4Y 1G7 1-888-705-8889

**HIV/AIDS REGIONAL SERVICES (HARS)**  
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L 1G5 613-545-3698 (Collect)

**ONTARIO ABORIGINAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY**  
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L 1G5 613-549-7540 (Collect)

**PEEL HIV/AIDS NETWORK**  
160 Traders Blvd, Unit 1, Mississauga, L4Z 3K7  
1-866-896-8700 905-361-0523 (Collect)

**PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE NETWORK**  
302-159 King St, Peterborough, K9J 2R8  
1-800-361-2895 705-932-9110 (Collect)

**THE AIDS NETWORK**  
101-140 King St E, Hamilton, L8N 1B2 905-528-0854

**THE WORKS**  
277 Victoria St, Toronto, 416-392-0520 (Collect)

**TORONTO PWA FOUNDATION**  
200 Gerrard St E, 2nd Flr, Toronto, M5A 2E6 416-506-1400

## PRAIRIES

**AIDS CALGARY**  
110-1603 10th Ave SW, Calgary, AB, T3C 0J7 403-508-2500

**AIDS SASKATOON**  
1143 Ave F N, Saskatoon, SK, S7L 1X1  
306-242-5005 1-800-667-6876

**CENTRAL ALBERTA AIDS NETWORK**  
4611 50th Ave, Red Deer, AB, T4N 3Z9  
403-346-8858 1-877-346-8858 (Alberta only)

**HIV EDMONTON**  
11456 Jasper Ave, Edmonton, AB, T5K 0M1  
780-488-5742 (Collect)

**KIMAMOW ATOSKANOW FOUNDATION**  
RR 1, Site 1, Box 133, Onoway, AB, T0E 1V0  
780-913-9036 1-866-971-7233

**NINE CIRCLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE**  
705 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0X2  
204-940-6000 1-888-305-8647

**PLWA NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
Box 7123, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 4H1 306-373-7766

**RED RIBBON PLACE (ALL NATIONS HOPE AIDS NETWORK)**  
2735 5th Ave, Regina, SK, S4T 0L2 306-924-8429, 1-877-210-7622

**STREET CONNECTIONS**  
705 Broadway Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0X2 204-940-2504  
WOMEN: 50 Argyle, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0H6 204-943-6379

## WEST COAST

**AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND**  
1601 Blanshard St, Victoria, V8W 2J5 604-384-2366

**PLBC - PRISON OUTREACH PROJECT**  
1107 Seymour St, Vancouver, V6B 5S8 604-893-2283 (Collect)

**PACIFIC AIDS RESOURCE CENTRE**  
1107 Seymour St, Vancouver, V6B 5S8 604-681-2122

**POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK**  
614-1033 Davie St, Vancouver, V6E 1M7 Toll Free: 1-866-692-3001

For a more complete listing visit:  
[www.pasan.org](http://www.pasan.org)

email changes to:  
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# CELL COUNT ISSUE #64

# WINTER 2011/12

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Whatcha got in there you're tryin' to hide? Hmm ... ?  
Art, Opinion, Stories, Poems, News, PenPals, Whatever ...

Next Issue: #65 - Spring 2012  
Send your work in before March 15

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**PASAN**  
314 JARVIS ST, #100  
TORONTO, ON  
M5B 2C5  
phone: 416-920-9567  
toll free: 1-866-224-9978  
fax: 416-920-4314