
WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #17: WINTER 2019/20

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #17 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

This is a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, connections ...

We send copies into all Women & Youth prisons in Canada.

Send your art, poems, short stories, comments, articles, etc, to Women's Prison Network if you would like to be a part of the next Issue. - Thanks!

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

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Cover Artwork:

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Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation. Thank you so much for your work!
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Please note: this magazine is for women, trans and youth from all cultures, so please do not send religious imagery.
Thank you for your art!

Writers:

One column is only 300 words, so do choose your words carefully.
It must be short & to the point.
Poems that are tight & give space for others are the first in.
Thank you for your words!

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Very special thanks to:
Daumier Register '1293'
"Actually, I am quite content with our prison system. Maybe the prisoner has gone crazy, but all he needs now, is a little education!"

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The walls are the publishers of the poor.
- Eduardo Galeano

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If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

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NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

No need for new rules to ensure timely youth trials, Supreme Court rules

The Supreme Court of Canada says 18-month time limits for adult trials also apply to the youth justice system, but three dissenters said the ruling leaves accused young people worse off than before.

The dissenters - Justice Rosalie Abella, Justice Russell Brown and Justice Sheilah Martin - would have set the ceiling at 15 months, saying that young people are harmed more than adults by delay.

The majority said, however, that young people may seek a trial in less time than 18 months, for special reasons - "for example, if an accused can show that he or she is struggling in school due to anxiety over the outstanding charges" - and might still have their charges dismissed if the prosecution does not take reasonable steps to expedite the matter.

The ruling came in the case of KJM, a 15-year-old boy from Fort McMurray, Alta., accused of using a boxcutter to stab and seriously injure a 16-year-old boy at a house party. It was the first opportunity for the Supreme Court to consider whether the time limits it set in a 2016 case known as *Jordan* applies to young people. KJM's criminal proceedings lasted 19 months, from the time he was charged until he was convicted.

Graham Johnson, a lawyer for KJM, had urged the court to set a 12-month limit. He said the majority had shown a "fairly shocking lack of understanding" of Youth Court.

"They've essentially said the onus is on the youth, some of the most vulnerable participants in the criminal-justice system, to demonstrate their own vulnerabilities on a case-by-case basis," he said in an interview with *The Globe and Mail*. "It's odd, because it's enshrined in [the Youth Criminal Justice Act] that youth have a different perception of time and suffer heightened prejudice from delay."

He said that accused youth tend to be from disadvantaged backgrounds and often have little family support, making it difficult to abide by conditions of release, such as a curfew, which can lead to more trouble with the law.

The court voted 6-3 to extend the adult time limit to youth, and 5-4 to uphold KJM's conviction

(partly because the majority blamed KJM and his lawyer for some of the delay). The Alberta Court of Appeal upheld KJM's conviction, but of the three appeal judges, one said the adult limits apply, one said they don't, and one would have shortened them to 15 months.

The three dissenters on the Supreme Court wrote a stinging rebuke to the majority, saying that before the *Jordan* ruling, courts deemed young people to be entitled to trials in much less than 18 months.

"Applying the adult *Jordan* ceilings to young persons erodes this standard," Justice Abella and Justice Brown wrote, supported by Justice Martin.

"And it - bizarrely - leaves young persons worse off than they were, since the adult *Jordan* ceilings potentially allow for more pretrial delay for young persons than the system previously tolerated." (Emphasized words in the original.) This, said the dissenters, turns the *Jordan* principles into "a hollow promise" for young people.

The *Jordan* ruling in the summer of 2016 criticized the criminal-justice system for a "culture of complacency" among all parties, and set time limits of 18 months for proceedings in Provincial Court and 30 months in superior court. It sent shock waves through the system. Within months, two murder charges were thrown out for unreasonable delay. The provinces asked for an emergency meeting with the federal justice minister. In the end, the federal government passed a host of new measures to speed up the system.

Justice Michael Moldaver was a co-author of the *Jordan* ruling. A decade earlier, while a member of the Ontario Court of Appeal, he had given a speech in which he said he was "mad as hell" about a legal culture that tolerated needless complexity and delay. But in *KJM*, he said the *Jordan* ruling had succeeded in creating a faster-moving justice system, and the benefits would be felt in Youth Court. (Justice Brown, a *Jordan* co-author, split with him on *KJM*.)

"First and foremost," Justice Moldaver wrote for the majority, "it has not been shown that there is a problem regarding delay in the youth criminal justice system."

Sean Fine
Globe and Mail
Nov 15, 2019

Criminal (In)Justice: An interview with Gillian Balfour

BM: Indigenous women are vastly over-represented in the prison system in Canada, particularly in the prairie provinces. Could you discuss the reasons behind this?

GB: It is absolutely critical to connect the over-incarceration of Indigenous women back to the issue of missing and murdered women in Canada. Incarceration is a form of state violence against Indigenous women that needs to be placed on a continuum along with the high rates of interpersonal violence against women, and the horrific violence against Indigenous women who have gone missing or been murdered.

Numerous feminist historians and legal scholars have pointed to how criminalization has become the new manifestation of colonialism, and specifically, how the correctional system has become the new residential school system - particularly for Indigenous women.

If we're looking at the prairie provinces, anywhere between 70 and 80% of the female prison population is Indigenous. It's a gross overrepresentation, from about 10% of the general population.

We are asking questions as to why legal reforms, especially in the area of sentencing, have failed Indigenous women so desperately. For example, the Criminal Code of Canada allows for special consideration of Indigenous experiences of colonialism such as cultural dislocation, family breakdown, residential schools and substance abuse. But Indigenous women have not benefited from these sentencing provisions. Most Indigenous women are criminalized and punished for serious personal injury offenses resulting from conditions of endangerment in their own communities.

However, the courts have continued to evoke squaw narratives of Indigenous women as bloodthirsty and licentious rather than as women existing in communities ravaged by colonialism.

Some of the research I've been doing myself has shown that while all Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in the prison population, more Indigenous men have benefited from sentencing provisions for conditional sentences (prison terms to be served in the community), and special consideration for their experiences of residential schools or childhood abuse, than have Indigenous

women. In Canada, rates of imprisonment for Indigenous women have been increasing faster than those for Indigenous men.

Some of the work that I've tried to focus on is what I call conditions of endangerment in Indigenous communities, which have a particular gendered experience in terms of lack of affordable and safe housing, the configuration of power on reserves and within band councils, and the limited success of so-called mandatory charging in cases of domestic violence. In all of these areas of social policy and law reform, Indigenous women have fallen between the cracks.

BM: Some people argue that prisons have replaced slavery as a means of confining the African-American population in the United States. These are different historical legacies, but there are also parallels. Could you speak to the connection between Canada's legacy of residential schools, its continuing theft of Indigenous territory, and the incarceration of Indigenous women?

GB: I think the parallels with the African-American experience are significant, but they are deeply fragmented and complex ones to make. As you point out correctly, the different faces of colonialism need to be taken into account.

One of the struggles that Indigenous women face, especially in the area of ongoing treaty land claims, is their displacement and dislocation in negotiations with the state. This is itself a by-product of the Indian Act. The whole framing of land as Mother Earth, and the traditional placement of Indigenous women within the power structure of Indigenous culture, has been completely removed from any kind of negotiating process.

Andrea Smith, in the United States, takes this argument even further, and rightly so. She points to how sexual violence has been a much-needed weapon of colonization. Sexual violence and the victimization of Indigenous women is a piece of the colonialist project. If you have women who are battered and broken, you are taking away their capacity to be true political actors.

BM: Can you talk about the conditions that women are facing inside prisons?

GB: I've been looking at prison reforms in Canada since about 1998, when the Prison for Women in Kingston was closed as a result of feminist research that was done into the

conditions of confinement. This research revealed that victimization rates were upwards of 70 per cent, depending on whether you were an Indigenous or non-Indigenous woman. The closure of the federal Prison for Women put in place a process of building five new regional facilities, one of which was to be a healing lodge for Indigenous women, the first of its kind in Canada for federally sentenced women.

This was a place that was to be tied to traditional Indigenous process, identity and culture. Instead, the state has again colonized the correctional process in its own vision, and has revised the entire approach to the imprisonment of Indigenous women such that those who have the greatest need for traditional healing do not have access to that facility because they are considered too high-need and too high-risk, and are classified as maximum security. So the irony is pretty clear: those who are most devastated by colonialism are those who are being denied access to their own culture. Conditions in each of the five facilities have become increasingly punitive, with higher uses of segregation and isolation practices than we see in men's prisons, and higher rates of institutional charges against women. Women with profound mental health and cognitive needs are also being managed through increasingly punitive practices, as opposed to truly therapeutic practices.

Kim Pate, the director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, and the Native Women's Association of Canada, have taken this to the UN, trying to draw attention to the human rights abuses that continue through correctional practices in the guise of institutional security.

BM: Public Safety Minister Vic Toews recently announced a massive increase in spending for Canadian prisons, as well as changes in sentencing that will see a huge surge in prison populations. What does this mean for the incarceration of Indigenous women?

GB: Any country with a colonial past will ultimately incarcerate its Indigenous populations at a higher rate. The more prisons you build, the more Indigenous bodies you'll incarcerate. This is a complex practice of power that has long denied access to economic sustainability, to legitimate governance structures, and to sovereignty. There has been a very careful disempowerment of Indigenous people such that the criminal justice

system ultimately becomes the legitimate authority by which to govern.

To me, it's inevitable that there will be more Indigenous women in prison, as we continue to deny them their rights and resources in their own communities.

I think that there is a real need for feminists and Indigenous women to work together. The alliance-building has to start in earnest, especially in the face of this prison industrial complex that is unfolding. We are too few to count alone, and it's time for us to start working together.

Robyn Maynard
Briarpatch Magazine
Mar 1, 2011

From Parks to Prisons, Decolonization is the Responsibility of People of Colour, too

Last month, I bought a blanket at Elk Island National Park made by the Sisters of Tradition Women's Collective.

Elk Island is the only fully enclosed national park in Canada. It was founded in 1906 to protect one of the last remaining elk herds in the province and is now a preserve for bison - animals intimately tied to colonization, whose population was decimated during the 19th century as a result of the fur trade.

The Women's Collective is comprised of incarcerated Indigenous women from the Edmonton Institution for Women, which holds more than 160 women, around 70 per cent of whom are Indigenous.

Elders come to the prison and teach the women traditional crafts, most of which are sold at Elk Island, though the women are able to keep some of their work to sell for future income. For many incarcerated Indigenous women, this is their first time learning these skills and connecting with Elders from their community.

The partnership between the park and the prison is a perfect distillation of the exclusion, exploitation, and erasure that form the basis of Canadian colonialism.

Canadian national parks are an important source of national mythmaking as well as tourist revenue. Images of mountains, lakes, and wildlife

such as beaver and caribou form the iconography of Canadiana.

National parks are also, in Indigenous writer Robert Jago's words, "colonial crime scenes."

Canadian colonialism legitimizes itself by making Indigeneity hypervisible - think decontextualized totem poles, treaty acknowledgments in colonial institutions, and dreamcatchers and moccasins sold at airport shops - and making actual Indigenous people invisible: missing, murdered, incarcerated, in precarious tent cities, and on reserves with undrinkable water.

Indigeneity is on full display at the Elk Island gift shop, and their website explains, "To give a Star Blanket is to show utmost respect, honour and admiration."

But this blanket wasn't given to me. I bought it at a store at a national park as a full participant in colonial erasure and capitalist exploitation. While my ancestors were colonized by the same British Empire, I live here as a settler on stolen land.

Even if we come from colonized places, the structural conditions of non-Indigenous and non-Black people of colour means that we benefit from and perpetuate settler colonialism in Canada.

In fact, many non-Indigenous, non-Black people of colour buy into colonial capitalism and allow themselves to be weaponized for anti-Indigeneity and anti-Blackness as "model minorities."

In "Are Prisons Obsolete?" Angela Davis writes, "The prison ... functions ideologically as an abstract site into which undesirables are deposited, relieving us of the responsibility of thinking about the real issues afflicting those communities from which prisoners are drawn in such disproportionate numbers."

Too often, settlers of colour in North America see the colonial relationship as between Indigenous people and white settlers, and in doing so, we absolve ourselves of complicity. But solidarity as colonized people means taking on the responsibility to decolonize here and now, along with acknowledging the different structural positions we inhabit in relation to different colonialisms.

My politics include a commitment to prison abolition and transformative justice, as well as a belief that reforms are almost always used to perpetuate unjust systems. At the same time, a critique of the prison as an institution should also attend to the real people inside and what can

make their lives more liveable, which may include learning crafts with Elders.

While we advocate for an end to incarceration, we must support those who are subject to it, whether they are inside or out. This means standing with Indigenous peoples against colonial capitalism.

On the horizon is the end of the mass incarceration and the restoration of stolen land. In the meantime, we must read, listen, and learn how history becomes present. We can write letters to incarcerated people. We can donate money to organizations that support people in conflict with the justice system, such as The Elizabeth Fry Society and Stan Daniels Healing Centre, and anti-colonial grassroots groups such as the Beaver Hills Warriors.

These are tasks for all non-Indigenous people on this land, not just European settlers.

I have the blanket as a reminder of the ongoing work of exposing the colonial and carceral logics beneath the postcard-perfect icons of the Canadian imaginary.

Shama Rangwala

Star Alberta

Nov 15, 2019

'Ah, what can I do?' say a powerless few,
With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye,
Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you?

- Buffy Sainte-Marie

The right and the left wings belong to the same colonial bird that shits on us.

- Terri Monture

If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time.

But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

- Lilla Watson w/ Aboriginal activists group

We must trust our own thinking.

Trust where we're going.

And get the job done.

- Wilma Mankiller

New women's healing lodge to give offenders option to stay in Manitoba

Indigenous women serving Federal prison sentences now have the option of going to a new healing lodge in Manitoba.

Correctional Service Canada announced the signing of an agreement on Tuesday that will see the Eagle Women's Lodge, in Winnipeg's West End, converted from a community residential facility into a healing lodge.

"We're pretty happy about this opportunity," said Annetta Armstrong, executive director of the Indigenous Women's Healing Centre (the former Native Women's Transition Centre). The organization has 40 years of experience working with Indigenous women and will be managing the facility.

"It's a good step for women who have been incarcerated to have this as a resource," said longtime advocate and grandmother Leslie Spillett.

The multi-level healing lodge at 667 Ellice Avenue will have enough room to accommodate up to 30 people, including offenders' children.

"Like all federal women's correctional institutions in Canada, it will have the capacity to safely house women with young children as deemed appropriate to foster relationships between babies and toddlers and their mothers," Correctional Service Canada said in a news release.

According to Statistics Canada, Indigenous women represented 42 per cent of admissions to territorial and provincial adult female prisons in 2017-2018.

Healing lodge first in Manitoba

Spillett has visited other healing lodges in Canada and said that Indigenous women need better alternatives to incarceration.

She said the Eagle Women's Lodge is the result of years of collaboration between Indigenous community organizations in Winnipeg, which have been working to transition Indigenous women out of the criminal justice system.

Up until now, Indigenous women in Manitoba sentenced to federal time have had to serve their sentences out of province. The Eagle Women's Lodge will be the first of its kind in Manitoba, allowing inmates to serve their sentences much closer to home.

Spillett is hoping that it will give Indigenous women a chance to connect with land based activities.

She also acknowledges the expertise of the Indigenous Women's Healing Centre Inc. the group running the lodge.

"If any organization has a chance of doing it right, it's the [Indigenous Women's Healing Centre]," said Spillett.

"They've had so many years of experience of working with women who are trapped in those kinds of systems."

Closer to community and culture

Back in 2008, Candace Abdilla was sentenced to 30 months in prison. She grew up in Winnipeg and was separated from her children when she had to serve her time out of province.

She spent ten months at the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Aboriginal Women in Maple Creek, Sask, and learned how to bead while she was there.

"That was the first time I was regularly exposed to culture," said Abdilla, who now works at a women's centre in Winnipeg's West End.

She said a new facility in Winnipeg will allow more than just the women to heal in their community.

"[The healing lodge] will help their families as well, because then you're not so far away from your children," said Abdilla

The Eagle Women's Lodge will be the 10th healing lodge run by Correctional Service Canada, six of which are managed by Indigenous communities.

According to Armstrong, the West End facility will be the second healing lodge in Canada geared specifically for Indigenous women.

In a press release, Correctional Service Canada said that research from 2015 found that out of 40 women released on parole from a healing lodge in Edmonton, only one was convicted of a new charge.

The healing lodge is hoping to accept minimum security women beginning in the fall of 2019.

Lenard Monkman

CBC News

Sep 04, 2019

Nothing in life is to be feared.

It is only to be understood.

- Marie Curie

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

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'In the Best Interest of the Children'

When they came through the door, I thought it was right
 To give them my babies just for the night
 Trust and belief, that's all I wanted
 Now I'm left so empty and haunted
 How could they hurt me? I've been hurt before
 Sitting, staring, looking down on me some more
 I begged, I cried, give me a chance
 To be a Mommy, play & dance
 The textbook lines I heard and then
 I wondered will I ever see you babies again
 I feel your cries in the middle of the night
 You're probably wondering if Mommy's all right
 Don't worry my babies, Mommy won't go
 Just sleep in the night, I still hold you so
 Tomorrow I wake, with you on my mind
 To promise you so, we'll get out of this bind
 I'll tell them 'I Love You', I don't think they'll care
 About our belief in God or the feelings we share
 They love their jobs, the money they make
 They don't understand Mommy's mistake
 I thought it was love, that wasn't true
 Now that I know, there are things to do
 I'll wake up tomorrow, put up a fight
 Show them how to do thing just right
 For you my babies, my Love and Sunshine
 For you my babies, You'll always be mine!

- Ivona Lagimodiere

1% = Solidarity

Nowadays it seems quite rare
 I'm a dying breed, 'tis unfair
 To all who are 'Down 4 the Cause'
 Why? Can we not rewind? Too late to pause...
 Death before dishonour, that is my vow
 I% always & 4-ever staying strong, now
 Hold your head up, keep it strong
 A true soldier's road to heaven is long
 I see your soul behind those eyes
 Remain solid, and remember...
 Zero Compromise

- Helenann Young

Why Me?

I hate when no one answers their phone
 I hate dialling all those #s to get a busy tone
 I hate the voices, they're so loud in my head
 I feel like I'm being hit with a piece of lead
 Can life get any worse than this for me
 Someone come take me away please
 I hate not having someone writing me
 I hate lock up after I eat, then falling asleep
 I hate the stress other people fling
 I hate all these things, but can't stop the sting
 I hate myself for being caught
 I know I should have ran
 I know I should have fought
 I hate my Lawyer for not
 Trying harder so I thought
 And now in OZ I sit and rot
 I hate not being heard and ignored
 Wondering to myself, is there more
 I hate not knowing if I'll be released for sure
 I hate this place for it stinks
 I hate the clothes everyone in pink
 I hate the reason I'm sittin'
 I get so mad for most of these
 Bitches I should be hittin'
 I hate everything, I'm so sick,
 All I do is watch the clock, tick tick tick
 What can I do what can I say
 I won't let these fucks extend my stay
 A life of crime, they make you pay
 As I stare at these four walls
 Wishing & dreaming, I was at the mall
 All this time long & gone
 For me life's just another rap song
 I always thought I'd be someone's wife
 I can't help think where's the knife
 In this place I wasted my life

- Nadine

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change.
 I am changing the things I cannot accept.
 - Angela Davis

Anything less than the truth is a lie.
 - Tamara Starblanket

POEMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0

EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0E

Untitled

I seem to be lost for words behind these walls
 I don't understand, everyone just sits here &
 bawls
 I know we're in jail but can't we just get along?
 After all, we're all here because we did
 something wrong
 Everyone's talking behind someone's back
 Just makes you wanna give them a smack
 This isn't the first time I've been in this jail
 Nor the first time I've been denied bail
 I no longer want to see the sunshine
 I just want to sit alone and do my time
 Now things, they've gotten worse
 This place is nothing but a fucking curse
 Now they've just cut me off my meds
 Pretty soon I'll be banging heads
 I wish I hadn't have went with him
 The day they found me & brought me in
 I know that he is half to blame
 And he probably doesn't even feel any shame
 This is where he wants me to be
 Locked the fucked up with a thrown-away key

- Sara Tait

Addict

I am the one that you can trust
 Never fair, always just
 Just turn your life over to me
 I'll take good care, wait and see
 That's what you said when we first met
 It's like a game, I lost the bet
 You were the best friend I had
 But left me empty, scared, and sad
 I gave up everything for you
 My life, my pride, my family too
 You took everything I had away
 Left me alone, too scared to pray
 Now I'm alone and empty too
 And all because I trusted you
 I'll never be the same inside
 It's like a part of me has died
 So my life's over thanks to you
 I hope you're proud of what you do

- Lindsay Dubblestyne

Shackles 'n' Cuffs!

Holy Fuck! I just love this life!
 Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry!
 Wait! ... For what???
 Belly-chain her too ...
 Shackles 'n' Cuffs

- Chantel Patterson

Untitled

A beautiful disaster
 Wanting to be healed
 Deep below the surface
 An ugliness revealed
 Running from the pain
 And never looking back
 A long and lonely road
 That led to using crack
 In a world with no direction
 Lost & without hope
 Seemingly her only friend
 A glass pipe filled with dope
 But it too would betray her
 And leave her wanting more
 Alone on streets of darkness
 Looking for a score
 The lengths that she would go to
 To see that friend again
 Would be her final downfall
 But she didn't know it then
 Suddenly across the sky
 Lights flashing red & blue
 Nowhere left to run or hide
 And nothing she could do
 Cops with loaded weapons
 Forced her to the ground
 Inside her mind was screaming
 But she didn't make a sound
 They've locked her up in prison
 And thrown-away the key
 But this beautiful disaster
 Was never really free

- Tracie Cheesman

Indigenous healing lodge gets green light in Scarborough neighbourhood

A healing lodge for Indigenous women who are dealing with the criminal justice system has been approved for southwest Scarborough amid objections from some local residents

Scarborough's committee of adjustment voted unanimously in favour of the lodge at its hearing Thursday afternoon.

"We were all just elated," said Patti Pettigrew, president of the Thunder Women Healing Lodge Society.

These women "deserve to have a chance to heal," she said.

The 24-bed lodge would offer short-term housing and support for Indigenous women who are either before the justice system, or re-integrating into society after incarceration, said Pettigrew.

A dozen women will have a structured, mandatory daily program that includes trauma counselling, cultural teaching and healing circles, said Pettigrew.

They can then transition into 12 temporary apartments in the building.

Pettigrew said the lodge will address issues like intergenerational violence and teach life skills. There will also be a small store at the facility where women can gain work experience.

Community concerns

The project has been a source of controversy in the area. Some residents have raised concerns about limited parking space and traffic congestion; the building's proximity to schools; safety and crime; depreciating property values and a perceived lack of consultation.

A public meeting in June drew more than 400 residents, said Coun. Gary Crawford. The original hearing date was pushed back a month to allow for five smaller community discussions.

About 60 to 75 people - both for and against the project - showed up for the 90-minute hearing discussion on Thursday, said committee manager Andre Robichaud.

The meeting was "emotional," said Pettigrew, who says she was grateful to see supporters of the lodge turn out. The committee also reviewed around 33 letters of support and 18 letters of objection.

In letters of opposition, residents were concerned that the lodge had only one proposed parking

space and about potential congestion issues.

"The proposed location ... is in close proximity to an elementary school," wrote resident K. Fedak. "It is not suitable for people who are in conflict with the law to be receiving treatment so close to ... children."

"Our neighbourhood is not developed yet to support a healing lodge," wrote Jessica Riofrio. "You will be ruining the reputation of our area and decreasing our property values."

Pettigrew said there are already people in the community who have been released from incarceration, she said, but they are living without proper support.

The women in the lodge "will have the support they need so that they can transition into their community in a healthy way," she said.

The program is voluntary, she said, and potential candidates be assessed for their commitment and motivation.

The lodge will let women - many of whom have had very difficult backgrounds - restore their cultural identity, gain strength and "experience their true power as Indigenous women," Pettigrew said.

'Thinly veiled racism'

One of the biggest challenges for the lodge will be "explicit and thinly veiled racism and classism," wrote resident Kristen Wallace in a letter of support.

"We need to welcome this project in and welcome these women back to their community. We have an absolute responsibility as settlers to be a part of reconciliation."

The lodge is planned for a vacant lot at the southwest corner of Cliffside Drive and Kingston Road. It's an ideal part of the city, Pettigrew said, with ample social services, good transportation connections.

There's also a high number of Indigenous people in the area, Pettigrew noted, and it's close to the lake, which she says is important for Indigenous women.

Members of the public have 20 days after the approval to appeal the decision.

Despite opposition, Pettigrew said she is delighted with the amount of community support she's seen in the Cliffside area - it confirms they made the right location choice, she said.

"We're going to be an asset to the community," she said. "At the end of the day, the community will be really proud of itself that they did accept

us."

The project has been in the planning process for about two years, Pettigrew said, with a cost of \$12 million. Pettigrew hopes to start construction by the spring.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women confirmed that Indigenous women need more supports within the wider community, she previously told CBC News.

Indigenous women are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, Pettigrew said, and current structures aren't working.

Pettigrew believes there will be a much higher success rate for women moving back into society by working with Indigenous women and "having our own system."

Laura Howells
CBC News
Jul 26, 2019

Issues persist over solitary confinement for Canadian inmates with mental illness

Ashley Smith's death in prison 12 years ago was supposed to lead to reforms for mentally ill inmates as well as changes to solitary confinement, but The Fifth Estate discovered another troubling case unfolding in a Canadian prison.

"Being in segregation is, it's tough," said Joey Toutsaint, an inmate in federal prison with serious mental illness who, by his own count, has spent nearly six years in isolation. "There's nothing to do and the only thing that comes to my mind when I'm in here is self-harming, self-harming, self-harming."

The 32-year-old from Black Lake, Sask., has spent most of his life incarcerated for violent offences and has been convicted of 41 offences while in custody. He was given "dangerous offender" status in 2015 and is currently serving an indefinite sentence.

In 2018, Toutsaint filed a human rights complaint against Corrections Canada for denial of mental health treatment. Corrections Canada said it cannot comment on Toutsaint's case and pointed to the new law for inmates who cannot be held in general population.

Prisoner isolation, declared unconstitutional nearly two years ago, remains legal after Canada's top court granted Ottawa's request in June to allow the current law to stay in force for the time being - a law that Smith's mother and sister say is highly flawed.

Smith died in 2007 by self-strangulation at Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener, Ont., while guards videotaped her death and did not intervene. She was 19 and had spent more than 1,000 days in segregation and was moved from institution to institution.

The inquest into Smith's death produced 104 recommendations, including a call to end "indefinite solitary confinement."

A number of human rights organizations say the law - which comes into force on Nov. 30, 2019 - offers only a cosmetic rebranding of solitary confinement with no hard time limits on isolation or separation of inmates. The government points out, though, that the new law does end disciplinary segregation.

In June, a spokesperson for Ralph Goodale, the former public safety minister, disputed suggestions that the then-bill preserves solitary confinement under a different name.

"C-83 allows for the separation of inmates when that's necessary for safety reasons, while providing programs, interventions, mental health care and meaningful human contact on a daily basis - all subject to binding external review," Scott Bardsley said.

With files from Saman Malik
& The Canadian Press
CBC News
Oct 28, 2019

Nobody is going to pour truth into your brain.

It's something you have to find out for yourself.

- Noam Chomsky

Racial violence has been rationalized, legitimated, and channelled through our criminal justice system; it is expressed as police brutality, solitary confinement, and the discriminatory and arbitrary imposition of the death penalty.

- Michelle Alexander

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI)

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10-18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction of literary merit.

Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.

Book Clubs for Inmates
720 Bathurst St.
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4
www.BookClubsForInmates.com

✎ PEN PALS ✎

Send in your ad: 25 Words or Less.
We use Code #'s for Personal Safety.
When mail contact has been made, it is up to you to exchange your name & address, ... but only, if that is what you choose to do.

Please Print Your Name & Address on
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All Envelopes are Destroyed !!!

Participants agree that by using this service, it is at their own risk, and by accessing this service all users agree that WPN is not to be held liable in any way for harms suffered as a result of this service.

This magazine is only sent into women's prisons. Ads are not on the web version.

You can stand tall without standing on someone.
You can be a victor without having victims.
- Harriet Woods

**Incarcerated in Canada?
Need Information?**

Write On! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to support prisoners in Canada by researching the information you need, such as:

General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-1110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5



Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869 (It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).

Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP)

"Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning"

"Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school"

BCFI's commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a love of learning in children through the consistent presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children's educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child. This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent's voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents' choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

Book Clubs for Inmates
720 Bathurst St.
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4
www.BookClubsForInmates.com

I am not eccentric.

It's just that I am more alive than most people.

I am an unpopular electric eel set in a pond of goldfish.

- Edith Sitwell

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support.

We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.



Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance

Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.

And it's a Canadian problem too: 74 % of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37% have experienced physical violence.

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,
- anything in contact with blood! -

**BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C**



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

F.E.A.T.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, F.E.A.T provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid:

info@FeatForChildren.org
416-505-5333

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- *Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration*
- *Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA*
- *The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10*

The Need

- *Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal*
- *The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents*

The Impact

- *Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent*
- *These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law*
- *Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent*

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- *feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger*
- *lowered self-esteem*
- *economic instability*
- *social stigma and isolation*
- *disconnection from parent*
- *insecurity in familial and peer relationships*
- *school absenteeism, poor school performance*
- *difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma*
- *compromised trust in others including law enforcement*

FeatForChildren.org ~ 416-505-5333

Prison Radio

- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven – 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio – Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or
music request to be broadcast on-air.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

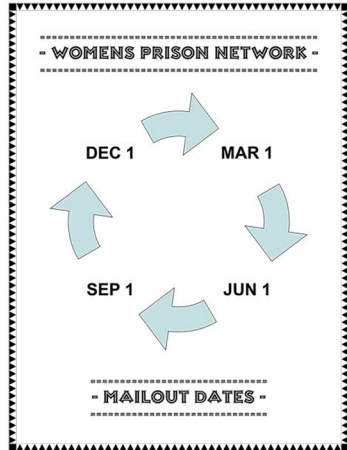
☞ In Remembrance ☞
- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.
- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page
on our website for Prisoners who have died
in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands,
Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered
there, send us a note or email and we will
honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org



Women's Prison Network Winter 2019/20 - Issue #17

PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download, print, donate!
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Spring Issue #18 mailed out:
Mar 1, 2020
Send in your work
before Feb 1, 2020

Women, Trans & Youth Prisoners:
Wish to receive 'Women's Prison Network'?
Contact us & we will add you to the mailing list!
Please let us know if you move.
This magazine is by and for you.
Thank you for sharing!
