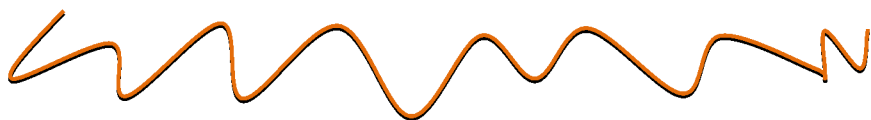
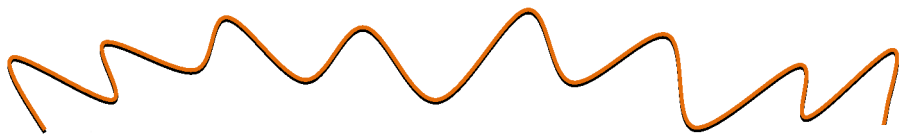


# WOMENS PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #8 - FALL 2017

*Editor's Note:*

Welcome to Issue #8 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.

*This magazine is not sent into men's prisons!*

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

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women's Prisons in Canada.

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

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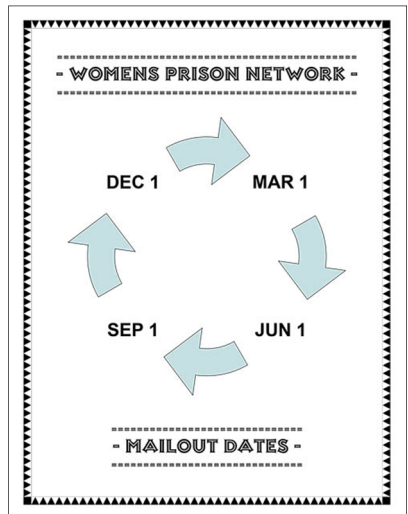
Michelle Williams-LaVey

*Artists:*

Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation. Thank you so much for your work!  
Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.  
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!*



## LETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERS

The problem with being Transgender not only in an incarcerated environment but, anywhere in the world, for that matter is that other people just do not understand what it is like to be born with the wrong body. They claim to understand but unless they walk in a Transgender's shoes they will never know.

Most people have the popular misconception about people who struggle with Gender Dysphoria that if someone is in fact Transgender then that makes them automatically gay. However, I am going to tell you here and now that this assumption could not be any more wrong.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are two separate entities entirely. I myself for example, am a Bi-sexual Transgender which means that I am attracted to both Men & Women. At the same time, I am a Woman who was born with the wrong body parts. It is as simple as this, Why make things more complicated then they need to be? I am a Bi-sexual Trans-Woman.

The other problem in today's society is that people have developed Homo-phobic/ Trans-phobic/ Bi-phobic beliefs/ ideology where they actually hate someone for the simple reason that they may be either gay, transgender, or both and really education would be a good place to begin in this area. However, it really is a historical fact, being kind and respectful to someone you do not understand has never been humanity's greatest attribute.

I would love to be granted a chance to help the LGBTQ2+ Community with perhaps, some sort of Mentoring Program for LGBTQ2+ youth (sort of like a Big brother/ Big Sister program.) I believe with all my heart that a change could be made through kindness, compassion, and understanding. Plus, I would love to show all the people who doubt me that when you believe in something strong enough, you possess the power to change your fate.

Further, I would be talking to these young people about my own life, and disclose the dangers of blindly following their negative peers as I know where it can lead ... incarceration. I could speak to them as a peer and I could show that I am just like them. That I understand them as I am Transgender and living within the LGBTQ2+ community. This would be yet another way for

me to further address my risk factors, as I would be speaking about my past to many different people, so it really is a win, win. So really either way you look at it, I would be making a positive change in other people's lives.

Perhaps visiting and speaking in schools on an ETA may be a good place to begin. It is after all another positive possibility. All that it would take for this to happen is support from my case management team.

What do you say - are you in? Are you ready to help make the future a little bit brighter? This is my goal that I would hope to achieve within the community, by reaching out to the coordinators/ organizers of Q-munity as well as members of the Trans-Alliance Society (TAS) among any other LGBTQ2+ organizations within the community & speak to them regarding my ideas of providing a positive interactive program that will help the young people who identify as LGBTQ2+.

It is my hope to speak with the other LGBTQ2+ organizations about this & learn how to get these ideas to be made into a reality. But first, I need to establish some kind of positive communication in order for this all to happen.

- Michelle Williams-LaVey

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Even the most subjected person has moments of rage and resentment so intense that they respond, they act against. There is an inner uprising that leads to rebellion, however short-lived. It may be only momentary but it takes place. That space within oneself where resistance is possible remains.

- Bell Hooks

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Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get - only what you are expecting to give - which is everything. What you will receive in return varies. But it really has no connection with what you give. You give because you love and cannot help giving.

- Katherine Hepburn

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## NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

**In historic 1st, transgender inmate wins transfer to women's prison**

Canada's federal prison service has approved the first transfer of a transgender inmate to an institution based on gender identity rather than physical anatomy, CBC News has learned.

Fallon Aubee, who has been serving a life sentence at B.C.'s Mission Institution, told CBC her request to move to a women's prison has been approved, and that she will be transferred to Fraser Valley Institution for Women on Tuesday. Aubee called it a "profound decision," but said the journey to this day has been an emotional roller-coaster.

She says the move will allow her to focus more on her future and less on the problems of living as a woman in a men's institution. But she concedes the path ahead will bring its own challenges. "I think it's going to be a huge adjustment going to the prison for women, not just for me but for the women who are there as well because I am pre-op so there's a stigma that's attached to 'there's a guy living here,'" she said in a telephone interview with CBC News. "I want to be able to defuse that with my character, my attitude, my generosity, so they say, 'Wait a minute, she's just one of the girls.'"

Aubee said it feels "incredibly huge" to be a trailblazer, and wants to help other trans inmates who hope to go down the same path. "Despite all the stigma, the discrimination, the harassment, the abuse, the sexual abuse, I believe it was a worthwhile journey because I can stand tall and proud today and say, I'm a woman and I'm going to be recognized as a woman and I'm going to live in a woman's prison," she said. Trudeau prompts policy about-face

A new accommodation policy was prompted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau earlier this year. Canada's prison service abruptly reversed course and adopted an interim policy for transgender inmates in January, just one day after Trudeau promised to promote equality for all transgender Canadians, including those behind bars. He was asked about it at a town hall meeting in Kingston, Ont., and made the off-the-cuff pledge to address what advocates see as a human rights issue. Correctional Service Canada changed course and said it would

consider transfers and other accommodations on a case-by-case basis, replacing the strict, long-standing rule that based placement on genitalia rather than gender identity and considered transfers only after sex reassignment surgery. Human rights policy review CSC also launched a broader review of all its transgender policies to ensure they comply with new laws to protect the human rights of transgender Canadians. Spokesperson Lori Halfper said that consultations are ongoing to update policy to ensure offenders and staff members are treated according to their "self-identified gender or gender expression, regardless of their physical anatomy or the gender noted on their identification documents." Halfper said decisions around timing of the transfer, cell assignment and interactions with other inmates will be made to ensure they are appropriate and safe for the transferred inmate.

"Our staff will receive training, resources and updates to policies so they are properly informed and prepared to implement changes resulting from this legislation," she said. "With the updated policies we expect that, unless there are irresolvable health or safety concerns, an offender may be placed in a penitentiary that matches their gender identity."

Treated like 'junkyard dog'

Aubee was convicted of first-degree murder in 2003 in a street-gang contract killing case.

When first brought into custody at the federal prison in Prince Albert, Sask., Aubee said she was held in segregation for six months after advising officials she was transgender, in conditions that made her feel like a "junkyard dog."

Since then, it has been an uphill battle for single-cell privacy and other basics like women's clothing and toiletries. She said she faced discrimination by other inmates and staff who were not properly trained on the needs of transgender people. Aubee carved out a niche working as a prisoners' legal rights advocate, helping on parole bids and fighting for better quality prison food. The role afforded her some protection from peers, because she provided a valued service. Last year, Ontario became the first jurisdiction in Canada to allow inmates to serve their sentences in institutions based on self-identified gender, and to be referred to by their chosen names and preferred pronouns. At the time the provincial government called it "the

most progressive policy on the treatment of trans inmates in North America."

It's not known how many offenders are placed in Ontario jails based on gender identity.

British Columbia was the second province to permit placement according to gender identity.

Kathleen Harris

CBC News - Jul 21, 2017

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## **The Trudeau government should not delay on sentencing reforms**

Ottawa's public consultation on criminal-sentencing reforms mustn't contribute to further delay - or worse still, be used as a justification for doing the minimum. As the Trudeau government launches its public survey on criminal-sentencing laws, it is worth considering what role such an exercise might usefully play in a prospective and overdue overhaul of Ottawa's approach to crime. Its ongoing consultations could, we say hopefully, help the government determine the best way to communicate to the public why it has chosen to act on the evidence and roll back a decade of punitive, costly and ineffective justice policies. It could inform the government about public fears and help it navigate and assuage them as it does the right thing. What public-opinion testing mustn't do, however, is contribute to further delay of this crucial project - or worse still, be used as a justification for doing the minimum. Despite the inevitable political temptation to duck this fraught issue, the government cannot afford to keep waiting or certainly not to act at all. The Harper government's crackdown on crime, even as crime continued its steady, decades-long decline, drove up the cost of the criminal justice system by billions of dollars and increased the federal prison population by 25 per cent. The Conservatives introduced an average of one tough-on-crime measure every month and a half in office. They brought in mandatory minimum sentences for dozens of offences, stripping away judicial discretion and shunning alternatives to prosecution. They ended house arrest and accelerated-parole for non-violent offenders and made criminal pardons harder to obtain. These policies continue to bring more than ever in conflict with the law and make it more difficult for those caught up in the system

to get out. They have clogged our prisons, drained the public coffers, unnecessarily criminalized minor offenders and contributed to a national crisis of court delays that profoundly undermines both justice and public safety.

No amount of public consultation will do anything to change the overwhelming evidence that more humane approaches to justice are not only fairer, but also more effective and less expensive.

To its credit, the Trudeau government, which came to power on the promise of an evidence-based approach to policymaking, has not fed fear of imagined crime as its predecessor did. Yet nearly two years into its mandate, it has done very little to undo Harper's evidence-blind policies. It has instead left this to the courts, which have again and again overturned mandatory minimum sentence laws and other features of Harper's tough-on-crime agenda.

When Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould announced in May that the government was set to begin working on sentencing reform, it seemed to be a welcome acknowledgement that this legislative problem requires a legislative solution.

Yet, for some advocates, the launch of a public survey this past week is cause for concern. Toppling laws born of fear is always politically difficult. And as the Star has argued before, too often with this government delays in the name of democratic engagement seem to serve as a smokescreen to avoid tough decisions.

Moreover, studies have shown that tough-on-crime policies, such as those introduced in Canada over the last decade, actually feed a climate of fear. People tend to think that if governments are ramping up efforts to fight crime, crime must be rampant. As Michael Spratt, a criminal defence lawyer, told The Canadian Press last week, "Governing your justice policy based on the popular opinion is a dangerous game." The evidence is clear. The judicial trend is clear. And the government's promise to pursue both public safety and justice is clear. The public survey should inform how the government sells its policy, not determine or unduly delay that policy. It is past time to undo the Harper government's punitive legacy and start working toward a smarter, fairer and safer approach to crime.

Editorial Board

Toronto Star - Aug 21, 2017

## Proposed '11th-hour' reforms won't help Canada's inmates: B.C. lawyer

Canada's correctional service continued to use indefinite solitary confinement for prisoners despite decades of policy-reform recommendations and a call for change from the prime minister, a lawyer said Tuesday. Joe Arvey told a B.C. Supreme Court judge that change did not come after the Liberals won the election in the fall of 2015, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau ordered the justice minister to implement recommendations from a coroner's inquest into the suicide death of a young inmate who'd been isolated. Arvey is representing the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society of Canada in a lawsuit launched against the federal government in January 2015. He told the court that even a bill Ottawa introduced two weeks ago to impose a time limit on what prison officials call administrative segregation falls short.

"Instead, through the course of this litigation there has been policy tinkering, and at the 11th hour the introduction of a bill that may one day but has not yet amended the laws that govern solitary confinement in Canada," he said in his opening submission. The federal legislation was introduced after several high-profile cases emerged involving extended isolation, including that of Moncton, N.B., resident Ashley Smith, an emotionally disturbed 19-year-old who died in custody in 2007 after tying a strip of cloth around her neck. In his mandate letter to Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, Trudeau tasked her to take a second look at the Smith inquest's recommendations "regarding the restriction of the use of solitary confinement and the treatment of those with mental illness."

Among the recommendations from the 2013 inquest was a call to end indefinite solitary confinement and the use of segregation beyond 15 days for female inmates with mental health issues. Under the current law, Correctional Service Canada is required to release prisoners from administrative segregation at the earliest possible time. The new law would establish an initial time limit of 21 days, with a reduction to 15 days once the legislation has been law for 18 months. However, Caily DiPuma, acting litigation director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, said wardens will retain the final decision-making

power despite a proposed independent review process and there would be no caps on how long an inmate can be held in a solitary cell.

"But we have seen far too much abuse under a system that has more guidelines than guarantees," she said outside the court.

"We say that what's really critical to understand about this proposed law is that what happened to Ashley Smith can still happen under this proposed bill."

Correctional Service Canada has said administrative segregation is used when inmates are difficult to manage, their safety may be at risk in the general population, or if there is no reasonable alternative to maintain the safety and security of an institution. Arvey quoted the 2014-2015 correctional investigator's annual report that says 14 of 30 suicides during that time involved inmates who were segregated.

Mentally ill and aboriginal prisoners are segregated more often and women tend to inflict more self-harm when isolated, Arvey said.

Several current and former inmates are expected to provide evidence during the nine-week trial, including a woman who spent 3-1/2 years in solitary confinement. Mitch Taylor, a lawyer representing the government, said prison life is stressful and inmates who end up in administrative segregation fare no worse than those in the general population because staff ensure their mental health and other needs conform to professionally accepted standards.

"Under no circumstance is an inmate expected to be subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment," Taylor said. Current practices based on recent reforms comply with the charter and don't infringe on inmates' rights, he said, adding: "It's not a historical review. It is about the here and now." Taylor said the number of people in solitary confinement has fallen from 800 in 2014 to about 400 on an average day this year.

Reforms as of Aug. 1 mean certain categories of inmates will no longer be placed in solitary confinement, including pregnant women, people at risk of suicide or those with serious mental disorders, he said.

Camille Bains  
The Canadian Press  
Jul 03, 2017

## **Alberta prison warden says Indigenous programs help inmates**

The warden at a women's prison in Alberta says Canadian correctional officials are seeing better outcomes when inmates participate in Indigenous programs – though she acknowledged that Indigenous offenders are overrepresented in solitary confinement and do face racism from correctional officers. The BC Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society of Canada sued the federal government in 2015 over the use of solitary confinement in federal prisons. They have said the practice increases inmates' suffering and discriminates against Indigenous offenders. The trial began last month in B.C. Supreme Court in Vancouver, and the Attorney-General of Canada opened its case this week. Brigitte Bouchard, warden at the Edmonton Institution for Women, testified for the federal government Thursday. More than half of the inmates at the Edmonton prison are Indigenous. Ms. Bouchard said Correctional Service Canada has seen progress when inmates take part in its Indigenous programming, which can include meeting with elders, participating in cultural ceremonies or establishing a traditional healing plan.

"Correctional Service of Canada is trying to implement specific initiatives, interventions, that will actually address from a cultural perspective the needs ... of the aboriginal people within corrections," she said.

But in her cross-examination, Alison Latimer, one of the lawyers for the plaintiffs, highlighted the disadvantages Indigenous offenders face.

Ms. Latimer opened her cross-examination by asking Ms. Bouchard if Indigenous people face racism from correctional officers. Ms. Bouchard, after a pause, said yes. Ms. Latimer then took the court through a report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator, the ombudsman for federal offenders. The 2015-16 annual report noted there had been an increase in the number of Indigenous people behind bars, and Indigenous women made up 35 per cent of the population in women's federal prisons. Indigenous people account for about 4 per cent of the Canadian population. The report went on to say Indigenous inmates were held for longer and at higher security levels than non-Indigenous inmates.

Ms. Bouchard did not dispute the findings of the report. The court last month heard from Bobby Lee Worm, a woman who spent more than 1,100 days in solitary confinement – including one near-continuous stretch lasting more than two years. Ms. Worm said Indigenous prisoners were treated worse than non-Indigenous inmates and given harsher punishments. Amanda Lepine also testified in the case last month and told the court she was placed in segregation at Edmonton Institution for Women in January, 2017, for allegedly assaulting another inmate. She denied she had done so but spent 26 days in solitary nonetheless and saw her classification raised from medium security to maximum security until she successfully filed a grievance. She was eventually transferred to a B.C. prison. Ms. Bouchard, when asked about Ms. Lepine's case specifically, said she has 171 inmates at her prison and had to consider the safety of all of them. Ms. Bouchard said the correctional service is working to "address systemic barriers within the criminal-justice system" and factors "aboriginal social history" into its decisions.

Ms. Latimer challenged that point. She noted the Office of the Correctional Investigator has said there is little evidence systemic factors have been properly considered in the correctional service's decisions. Ms. Bouchard said she has advised her staff all pertinent information must be written down. She agreed there was little reference to systemic factors in Ms. Lepine's case.

Ms. Bouchard also agreed more training is needed for correctional staff when it comes to the factors that should be considered for Indigenous offenders.

The trial is in its fifth week and is expected to run for about nine.

Sunny Dhillon  
Globe and Mail  
Aug 03, 2017

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The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, ... a heart of grace and a soul generated by love.

- Coretta Scott King

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**The Prison**

At edges of towns, & hidden well  
 Stand blocks of cages, razor-wire wrapped  
 Where humans put humans, at the peril of  
 morality  
 In the name of humanity, we inflict harsh sorrow.

Confined within concrete, strong locks & steel  
 Many a soul is here kept, withered & anguished  
 Not a warm meal to nourish, nor a soft hand to  
 feel  
 Not a name to be called by, not a moment to  
 heal.

And for years, where years are eternities long  
 Where each day's pain exceeds the last  
 Where cruelty is a currency,  
 Life sentences, solitary...  
 In the suffering of humans, there are few greater  
 pains  
 Than lengthy isolation games.

At the tip of the state's tongue, but never aired  
 Is why the prison truly stands  
 While affluence consumes, forgetting just down  
 lane,  
 Small cells cage and ruin and torture and shame.

At the edges of towns, and hidden well  
 Where prisons stand all hope has fell:  
 The most abhorrent institution that could  
 manifest  
 Thrives on hatred & violence, domination &  
 death.

- Nyki Kish

**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

**Like A Rock**

They spoke of women's strength  
 silently pleading eternal wisdom  
 illuminating centuries of herstory  
 they looked like men's hands  
 Granma has the same (and we spoke of her)  
 they were calloused, not rough  
 proud, vibrant  
 labored, and tough  
 they looked round, felt smooth  
 Like a Rock  
 run by water since youth  
 i saw her spirit  
 all-absorbing  
 beneath a life-time of drudgery,  
 trapped dreams, of wanting  
 more for her children  
 than a concrete penitentiary.  
 And it was hard to look  
 in those eyes -  
 monopoly capitals surplus value  
 she didn't understand the ties -  
 i tell you  
 she just understood the struggle.

- Kazi Toure

**Too Many Sisters Have Died**

Our Anishinaabeg queens  
 Are dropping like fiends  
 In their early teens  
 With needles in their arms  
 I drop to my knees  
 Asking Great Spirit, Please,  
 Have mercy for my people  
 You see the many tears I've cried  
 As they fell from me  
 They are a symbol of every  
 Anishinaabeg queen that has died  
 Too many tears have I cried  
 Too many sisters have died  
 Without their Anishinaabeg pride!

- Spirit Child



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POEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSP

**Untitled**

As I lay here listening to the screams of women  
hurting,  
I wish I could scream too.  
We are all screaming inside;  
Most of us are just too scared & conditioned to  
have the courage to let it out.  
So I internalize it; we internalize it, most of us.  
And that creates an even bigger hurt, one that  
we carry alone.  
But if we screamed out loud then we would be  
screaming together  
And our pain would not be isolated anymore,  
would it?  
It wouldn't be displaced, causing cancer inside of  
us, causing ulcers,  
Wearing down our teeth, wrinkling our skin;  
Escaping us in fits of anger when we lash out  
against loved ones  
Who suffer this too.  
And the screws would have to hear it.  
As they ought to.  
They don't deserve the comfort of thinking  
That keeping people in cages is okay  
Because we are letting them think it's okay  
By not screaming.  
But rarely do we scream out loud  
It's mostly a silence.  
A silence perpetuating pain.

- Nyki Kish

**Dreams**

I love to dream  
For when I do  
I'm sure to dream  
Of only you  
In my dreams  
There is so much  
Your lips to kiss  
Your body to touch  
But when I awake  
It's sadness I feel  
For all I've touched  
Was not real

- Anne Boardmore

**Untitled**

They held hands  
And played in the sand  
All day long  
As they sang their song  
The beautiful sun was shining  
Families were dancing  
Down by the pond  
While they created a bond  
All of this love  
Flying like a dove  
Never quite falling  
Cause they heard the calling  
So now the day has come to an end  
As they overcome the rigid bend  
There's no more whining  
For the rest of their time it's shining  
Don't shed a tear  
I'll always be near

- Nicole Grove

**This Is Me**

I got into trouble on a drop of a dime  
I never seem to do what is right  
I end up doing nothing but time  
But all I do is fraud and fight  
Maybe someday I will straighten out  
And stop breaking the law  
A long time from now, no doubt  
Getting into trouble is just a flaw  
I seem to like being in jail  
Being in jail makes me happy  
All I seem to do is fail  
But I'm not sure this is the person I want to be  
But I got nothing to be out there for  
My life has been turned upside-down  
Whenever I look for help, all I get is closed doors  
I can't seem to smile anymore, all I do is frown

- Ruth Trecartin

You only learn to be a better writer by  
actually writing.

- Doris Lessing

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSP OEMSPOEMSP OEMSPO

**Show Me the Way**

Many years have passed me by...  
A daughter at home, who wonders why?  
Sitting in my cell, crying inside  
Going to sleep with those haunting feelings  
Of how I could've took his life  
I'm getting too old to just let life pass me by  
Oh how I wish I could turn back time  
My life hasn't been paved with gold  
No more life on the run  
Thinking drugs & alcohol are fun  
I pray each & every day  
Please Creator "Show me the way"

- Amanda Stewart

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

**Offering a lift keeps loved ones in touch**

As a high-school teacher, Lindsay Brown encourages her students to think globally and act locally, so they might make a difference in the world.

Brown exemplifies that attitude as a volunteer driver with the Prison Rideshare Project, which gives people free rides to visit their loved ones who are in prison.

"I was looking at ways of getting more active and being more involved in the local community," says Brown, 33. "I wanted to give back in a way that was more tangible than giving money. I have a vehicle and my weekends are flexible, so I signed up to do some rides. Now, I (offer) rides whenever I can."

Most of Manitoba's prisons and jails are located outside the cities where most of the prisoners are from.

"If you aren't able to drive yourself out there, then there's no way for someone to get to Stony Mountain or Milner Ridge (Correctional Institution)," Brown says.

Providing rides is "a really important way to help people stay connected when they have someone they love in (prison)."

Rebecca Ward began volunteering with the program six weeks ago and has already done seven trips.

For Ward, who has an undergraduate degree in conflict resolution and will begin studying law at the University of Ottawa this fall, the project speaks to her interest in social justice.

"I really feel that our current system does harm to people... and I think that it also damages relationships and communities," Ward, 23, says.

"I got involved because I thought what I could offer in time and driving is work I could do to fight the harm being done by our criminal justice system."

The project is totally volunteer-run by Bar None, a Winnipeg-based abolitionist prisoner solidarity group.

Providing rides is straightforward. Those looking for rides contact Bar None organizers, who find volunteers to accommodate the request.

Once the driver and rider have been paired, it's up to them to work out the logistics of the trip.

When it comes to the drive itself, Brown and Ward take their passengers' lead in terms of conversation.

Sometimes they will talk during the entire trip, other times the small talk peters out and they just listen to music.

"I just try to make it as comfortable for them as possible," Brown says.

Bar None is looking for more drivers. Volunteers are reimbursed for gas as well as food consumed during the trip. Anyone interested in getting involved can email [barnone.wpg@gmail.com](mailto:barnone.wpg@gmail.com).

"If people are wanting to get involved, they really should because it's been a pretty great experience," Brown says.

Ward agrees: "Supporting people who are marginalized, especially folks who are locked up, is an important part of striving for a healthy and thriving community. Bar None is a really big part of that."

Aaron Epp  
Winnipeg Free Press  
May 08, 2017

The truth is always something that is told, not something that is known. If there were no speaking or writing, there would be no truth about anything. There would only be what is.

- Susan Sontag

## Canada's Legally Innocent Prisoners are Dying in Jail

Nearly 270 people have died in Canadian provincial jails over the past five years. Two-thirds of them were legally innocent. The high number of deaths among prisoners awaiting trial, compiled by Reuters from data provided by provincial governments, is the result of some of the world's toughest bail practices that have led to overcrowding in jails, according to lawyers, prison officers and prisoner rights advocates. While the growing population of prisoners awaiting trial has been well documented, the disproportionate death toll in provincial jails has not. Provincial governments declined to identify the dead, citing privacy concerns. Interviews, inquest documents and news reports, however, show the deceased prisoners awaiting trial ranged from young parents who had breached bail conditions to people with chronic mental illness jailed for uttering threats; from accused murderers to addicts jailed for theft or drug-related charges. Reuters examined deaths in provincial jails from January 2012 through July 2017 for seven of 10 Canadian provinces. Of the remaining three, one had no deaths and the other two did not provide data broken down by custodial status. The review found that 174 people died in provincial jails while awaiting trial, compared to 80 who died while serving sentences. These figures are high even when one takes into account the disproportionate number of pre-trial detainees in jails: People awaiting trial comprised 56 per cent of all inmates in these provinces over that time period, but 65 per cent of the dead.

"Canadians are dying in prisons here in Canada on a regular basis and it gets very little attention," said lawyer Kevin Egan, who represents several inmates suing Ontario's provincial government over conditions in their jails. All the provinces Reuters spoke with said inmate and officer safety are their top priority and that they take all in-custody deaths seriously. The office of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's justice minister declined to comment, noting that the jails were the responsibility of the provincial governments. Prisoners awaiting trial accounted for 59 per cent of the total number of inmates in provincial jails in 2015, up from 27 per cent in 1995, according to Statistics Canada.

By comparison, people who have not been convicted make up about 20 per cent of inmates in state and local institutions in the United States, according to the U.S. advocacy group, the Prison Policy Initiative.

'We're not just covering our butts'

High-profile crimes committed by people on bail and politicians' "tough-on-crime" rhetoric have created a risk-averse climate among prosecutors, said Simon Fraser University criminologist Nicole Myers. But the president of the Canadian Association of Crown Counsel, which represents prosecutors, disputes that.

"We're not just covering our butts when we're considering bail," Rick Woodburn said. "Each time a Crown attorney releases somebody, it's on them. It's on them when (the accused goes) back out and they commit another crime. It's the No. 1 thing that weighs on a Crown attorney's mind," he said. The governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia told Reuters they were reviewing their penal systems in an effort to reduce the number of people locked up while awaiting trial. Several said they were also trying to improve jail procedures to ensure better care of prisoners. Manitoba, which launched a review after a spate of deaths at a pre-trial detention center last year, is the only province investigating deaths among prisoners awaiting trial.

In neighbouring Saskatchewan, each in-custody death is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, Justice Ministry spokesman Noel Busse wrote in an email. "At this time, the Ministry has not done an in-depth analysis of why there are more deaths in remand custody than there are in sentenced custody," he said. Seventy-five per cent of deaths in custody in Saskatchewan over the past five years have involved prisoners awaiting trial, the Reuters review shows.

'He was at risk'

When Adam Reed, 30, arrived at Ontario's North Bay jail in November 2012, charged with assault and violating his bail conditions, the intake officer noted that Reed said he had recently attempted suicide, an inquest into Reed's death later heard. A nurse evaluated Reed and did not deem him a suicide risk, according to inquest documents. She told the inquest she had not received the intake officer's notes. Only hours after being arrested, Reed was found hanging from his cell door.

Reed, who was an alcoholic, had said if he ever went back to jail he would take his life, his godmother Suzanne Lajambe told Reuters. "So we were aware he was at risk. You always believe that when they suffer from addiction they're better off and safer in custody than on their own. We believed that. Until that happened." In response to the inquest, the jail implemented a new suicide screening procedure, a spokesman for Ontario Corrections Minister Marie-France Lalonde said. Almost as many people died in Ontario jails in the first half of this year (13) as died in all of last year (14), provincial data shows. All but two were prisoners awaiting trial. Ontario Attorney-General Yasir Naqvi told Reuters he wanted to end the "churn" of people cycling in and out of the penal system. "People, especially those who are low-risk and vulnerable, can be released under supervision as opposed to being remanded," he said.

#### Causes of death

Reuters traced the causes of death for 148 of the 174 cases through inquests, government data interviews and news reports. Of those:

- 50 were suicides
- 34 were by natural causes, which includes illnesses and health conditions
- Nine were drug- or alcohol-related
- Four were homicides
- Four were accidental
- One followed an altercation with prison officers
- 46 were designated "undetermined" by provincial governments, which means an investigation is ongoing or an inquest is pending

Several factors have created the conditions for the high body count, lawyers, former inmates and former corrections officers say.

Newly arrived prisoners who are awaiting trial are more likely to have high amounts of drugs or alcohol in their systems and so are more at risk of overdosing or suffering potentially life-threatening withdrawal symptoms. Three former inmates told Reuters they have had prescription medication confiscated or have failed to get medical attention as they shuttle to and from court. People with a history of self-harm may not be watched closely because their suicide risk is not communicated to jail staff who are already over-stretched in crowded facilities, lawyers and

former corrections officers told Reuters. Suspects picked up on minor charges are also sometimes housed alongside those with a history of violence. Canada's provincial jails often have little to no classification based on a person's criminal history, risk level or medical needs, said Howard Sapers, Canada's former federal prisons watchdog who is now advising Ontario on its planned reform.

As a result, he said, otherwise manageable risks like illness or vulnerability to victimization can become fatal. Erez Raz, a union official and former correctional officer in Alberta, said overcrowding and the "revolving door" of pre-trial detainees made it difficult for correctional officers to keep people safe and created a pressure cooker situation for inmates. Elizabeth Cromwell alleges that strained environment contributed to her son's death. Cromwell is suing the Nova Scotia government after her 23-year-old son died of a methadone overdose three years ago while awaiting trial for breaching court conditions on past drug charges. It isn't clear how he obtained the methadone, but Cromwell alleges in her lawsuit that the jail where her son died was "overcrowded, understaffed and unsafe."

The provincial government has denied the allegation, saying the jail "met the standard of care and did not expose Clayton Cromwell to any unusual or actionable risks or dangers."

Anna Mehler-Paperny

Reuters

Aug 04, 2017

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For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action.

Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.

- Audre Lorde

I am in a beautiful prison from which I can only escape by writing.

- Anais Nin

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## ✎ PEN PALS ✎

Send in your ad: 25 Words or Less.  
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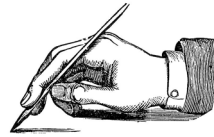
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This magazine is only sent into women's prisons. (ads are not on web version)

**NOT**

**AVAILABLE**

**ONLINE !**



## 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.*



## 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.*

*Harvoni: \$60,000 for 8 weeks (Genotype 1, low viral load, never-treated)*

*Harvoni: \$90,000 for 12 weeks (Genotype 1)*

*Sovaldi: \$55,000+ perhaps with other drugs for Genotypes other than Genotype 1*

*Federal Prison: you may be able to start your treatment while inside.*

*Provincial Prisons: Depending on the province, you may 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 work done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.*

*Important: most prisons, provincial drug plans, and private plans restrict the new drugs to people who have chronic hep C plus scarring of the liver (stage F2 or higher fibrosis). Both never-treated & people for whom Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin did not work are eligible for the newer treatments. For people with hep C and no liver scarring or light scarring (less than F2 fibrosis), it's still Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).*

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**

## 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.*



### **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 by email at [info@featforchildren.org](mailto:info@featforchildren.org) or by phone at 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

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## 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 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 5-6 pm & 4<sup>th</sup> 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net)*  
*Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.*

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## 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](mailto:PJD@PrisonFreePress.org)

## Women's Prison Network Fall 2017 - Issue #8

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Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

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visit, download & print:  
[WomensPrisonNetwork.org](http://WomensPrisonNetwork.org)

Send in your work  
before Nov 1, 2017  
Winter Issue #9 is sent  
out Dec 1, 2017

If you are a woman, trans or youth prisoner and would like to receive a copy of 'Women's Prison Network', write to us and we will put you on our mailing list. Please let us know if you move. This magazine is by and for you.  
*Thank you for sharing!*

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