Out of Bounds
prison magazine

Editor
Ryan Love

Managing Editor
Patrick Rafferty

Printing
James M. Dahnke

Contributors

Out of Bounds is a quarterly publication produced and distributed by Pithy Penal Press, the prisoners at William Head federal penitentiary. We believe that through dialogue we can change the mainstream media’s often distorted portrayal of crime and punishment. By enlightening people on both sides of the barbed wire we hope to effect change.

The views expressed in the articles appearing in Out of Bounds are those of the authors. Editorial decisions on matters of content are made by the magazine’s staff. In no way should this be deemed to mean the Correctional Service of Canada or any affiliated branch of the criminal justice system support these decisions. Further, publication of advertisements means Out of Bounds neither opposes nor endorses the advertised products or services.

All articles appearing in Out of Bounds may be reprinted or copied electronically without permission where credit to the author and magazine is given. We welcome all letters and submissions. A subscription to Out of Bounds is $12.50 per year. You can send your cheque or money order (include your name, address and postal code on a separate slip of paper) to Out of Bounds PO Box 4000 Stn A Victoria BC V8X 3Y8.

Copyright 2001 Out of Bounds ISSN 1195-9142
Canadian Publication Mail Product Sales Agreement Number 0683442
www.outofboundsmagazine.com

Volume 18
Number 4
Winter 2001
December Print

IN THIS ISSUE

Up Front 2

Readers’ Forum 3

Editorial 5
Is There Anybody Out There?
by James M. Dahnke

Legal News 7
Psychopathy ... Revisited
by John Pinkney

Prison Culture 10
Merry Christmas ... from jail?
by Michael King

Peace & Non-Violence 13
Being Frank’s Sister
by Val Napoleon

Around the PENinsula 19

Short Takes 24

Upon Reflection 32
by Patrick Rafferty

Complaint & Grievance 37

Horrorscope 38

Poetry 39

Correctional Cartoons 42
by Duke Simmons

* front cover artwork by Ron Perris

OUT OF BOUNDS 1
Much has changed with the world since our September issue. Then again, hasn’t it been said that the more things change the more they stay the same? I think American attitude can fit that bill. It seems to me, coming from a prisoner’s perspective, that the USA’s collective scream for revenge often drowns out the more rational and ethical whisper for justice. (Texas death penalty anyone?)

Things are getting more and more confusing on the other side of the razor wire. However, things are also getting confusing on this side too. In our last issue we touched upon the impending smoking ban within our residences at William Head Institution as of October first. Well, that restriction has been implemented, sort of.

At the time of our printing, prisoners are still allowed to smoke in their rooms, with doors closed, during the night lock-up only (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.). This alteration to the total restriction came about after one third of the population, two nights in a row, exited their houses after the 10 p.m. lock-up to smoke outside briefly, then return inside. The “in your rooms only” modification was announced the next day and is to remain in place until numerous grievances are dealt with regarding the in-residence ban. Still unsatisfied, a little more than a third of the prison once again stepped outside briefly on the third night. All of them were given a minor charge and summarily fined $25 for breaching security. Apparently, smoking within a house’s common area at any time will not result in a charge per se, as staff are only supposed to take note of the violation, confiscate ashtrays when found, and notify the “offender’s” Case Management Team.

*Out of Bounds* will continue to pursue the elusive facts, cutting through all of the (non) smoke to inform our readership, but this is a difficult task as right now the situation is an extremely fluid one. There are many differing sides to the story, and more opinions than you can shake a stogie at. Our staff will not rest though, until we have dug up all the nicotine encrusted, in-depth dirt surrounding the smoking gun.

Speaking of pistols – how about our very own Pat Rafferty. All indications are that he will be leaving his penological penmanship position with our Pithy Penal Press in favour of parole. We wish him the best at his hearing, and hopefully soon miss his experience and dedication to the magazine. But not before we squeeze a retrospective article from him, reflecting on his now eight years with *Out of Bounds*.

So is anyone looking for a pen pal? Sorry, but it was a rhetorical question, as I know very well that there is, based on the increasing number of requests we’ve received from some Canadian and many American prisoners. I must reiterate (to those persons or organisations that have mistakenly categorised us) that we are not a pen pal service, and we can not and will not facilitate personal correspondence. So please put your stamps to better use by sending us articles, short stories, poems, artwork, or letters describing your prison’s conditions.

You’re going to need something faster than regular mail to keep up with the fast pace of this, our Christmas 2001 issue of *Out of Bounds*. Our Legal News section special delivers the increasing troubles of the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R), as evident by the past and present Pinkney legal decisions. Mr. John Pinkney then gives us a personal accounting of his struggles against the nightmare Dr. Hare unknowingly created, through the misuse of his “diagnostic tool” by unqualified and incompetent so-called practitioners.

Michael King gift-wraps a Merry Christmas … from jail, while Jon Brown un-wraps and opens wide the very concept of home. We were fortunate to have received permission to reprint Val Napoleon’s story, “Being Frank’s Sister,” about her journey helping with her brother’s incarceration. You will then hear from that brother, Frank Kezer, on Victim Offender Mediation and a postscript from Val on her original story.

We’re serving up Christmas sized-proportions of an interview with the Inmate Committee, the Amazing WHO’s fall production, a thank you to WHI volunteers, and a short turkey story.

Man, am I stuffed already! Help me out here and give the ensuing pages a nibble while I run home and grab some Tupperware for leftovers. Go on take a big bite, ruminate but don’t regurgitate, we’re not responsible for any displeasing aftertaste you may get upon devouring this tasty issue of *Out of Bounds*. Happy Holidays from all of us to all of you, and a Merry Christmas, New Year’s too.

Ryan Love, editor
I am 35 years old as I write this letter. I just found last year's issue of your magazine and find it to be exactly what I've been looking for.

Right now, the reading materials that make up my cell consist of Stephen King and Danielle Steel, but I was looking for more. Then I found Out of Bounds Volume 17 No. 4. I loved it, read up until "Letter from Leavenworth," and felt I had to write. I hope you're still in publication, for enclosed is a poem I wrote last year. I have since lost the original, but remember it well enough to send this version. I hope you like it well enough to publish it.

I've been writing poetry since I was 14 years old, although I feel in some forms of writing I'm still pretty bad. But poetry seems to be my niche. Well, please feel free to publish my poem and if possible send me a copy of the issue it appears in.

I'm writing this letter now as the guard just locked my cell for the night. It's 10:00 p.m. and all's well. Yeah right! Well, thank you for the great literature you have in your mag, and I hope to read more in the coming months. From an Inmate at the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women.

April (Lisa) Neville
Burnaby, BC

May your day and life be blessed with positive thought and happiness within your soul, despite the restraint. Many thanks for the latest issue of Out of Bounds and for publishing my letter in Volume 18 No. 2. Very much appreciated.

I will be returning to the Federal District Court in Jacksonville, Florida, within the next few weeks and in all probability will not return to Lompoc before the end of October. The government wants to settle my 2255 motion by recommending a ten-year sentence to the Court. If all goes according to plan, this would give me a January 2002 release date. However, it's only 'official' when the Judge deems it so. I will definitely keep you posted. Hope springs eternal!

Share your views with other Out of Bounds readers.
Your name is requested but can be withheld if you wish. The length of your letter should be kept to approx. 250 words.

We are just coming off a one week lockdown—conflict among the factions that comprise the prison gang mentality that is truly inimical to our spiritual togetherness to unite in an effort to bring about direly needed reform within the U.S. prison system. It seems hopeless.

It was with much pleasure and nostalgic memories that I read Ryan Love's editorial comments on Prisoners' Justice Day (August 10), a one-day work stoppage and fast to meditate upon the past, present, and where we are headed. I have seen and experienced the positive changes that have evolved within the Correctional Service of Canada over the past quarter-century. But, he is absolutely correct in saying that without the sacrifices of those who came before him (many who I knew personally, others from hearing and reading of their courage and conviction) the system he finds himself in today would definitely not be what it is, by a long shot.

Congratulations on your Web Site. Keep up the excellent work. Upon my release I will send you a worthy monetary donation and subscribe to Out of Bounds.

William MacAllister
Lompoc, CA

(editor's note: For more of Mr. MacAllister's musings, see "Tidbits from Memory Lane" on page 24.)

Thank you for your notes of a couple of months ago, as your magazine just reached/caught up with me last week. I do not know when I'll have funds for renewal of the subscription; as soon as I do, I'll get them to you. Out of many prison news mediums that I have written for and received over the last twenty years, Out of Bounds is the best of them.

The U.S. is still in the dark ages, and Michigan—prehistoric. The Michigan Department of Corrections has stopped all but the most mundane of prison publications. "They" are crafting their own monthly newsletter format applauding the MDOC, and ignoring the real world of the convict. Many of us "old timers" a.k.a. "oc's" (original cons) have seen this coming for the past 10 years. The great irony is that Michigan has closed one 960 bed
prison at Muskegon (MTF), and cannot open the $82 million Briar Creek level 3-4 at Ionia for... "lack of bodies to sufficiently populate these two prisons."

When Michigan gets its new Governor next year (probably the same politician who started the massive prison-building program) the "new constructions" will likely resume.

Currently, I'm looking at discharging off my 50-year maximum next April if I am lucky, and some damned-fool, new-wave warden does not snatch my accumulated good time of 31½ years from me. Yes, there is much controversy about the regular and special good time applied to prisoners' out dates lately, in both state and federal courts. I've been involved in this struggle for nearly 20 years, attempting to get some manner of justice applied to all prisoners in Michigan.

There are approximately 4,000 of us remaining in the system who get regular and special good time against our maximum sentences, significantly reducing them by years, rather than merely days, weeks and months. Of late, it has become popular practice of new-wave wardens to simply refuse to apply the accumulated regular and special good time to our maximum sentences. More irony, the minimums of our "Proposal B, Type B" sentences are as much as 10 years beyond the maximum.

I am enclosing a couple of addresses that might be useful to "displaced Americans" in the Canadian prison system. Although I cannot imagine why a con would want to leave civilized Canada to go to a barbaric Amerika prison.

Prisoner Litigation Support Inc.  
117 Carnahan Drive, Suite 1  
Maumelle, AR 72113  
phone 501-803-0454  
fax 501-803-0476

I do not know how useful that will be, but perhaps they can help some cons. Hope so. I'm also enclosing a short, static-rhythm poem that might be worthy of publication. It's your call.

OK folks, it's in the mail. Take care and never give up the struggle for freedom - for what is left of our rights. If we do not carry the lance, who will?

Jason Schock  
Kinchelow, MI

My fellow comrades I greet you with love and solidarity. The struggle for release from the belly of the beast is nearly over and then I will embark on a new struggle with corporate ameriKKKa. Thus this letter which has a twofold meaning.

First the issue at hand. I've been imprisoned since 1963 at a young age. I've done, seen, heard many things, all in the name of freedom and justice for all. I'm now 52 years old and will be set free soon. I am looking for someone (male or female) who will be willing to reach out to me to help me make the transition by being my friend/comrade. I'm not looking for a penpal.

Finally I'd like to receive a subscription to your magazine. As previously stated my freedom date is soon, however I was thinking upon my release perhaps you'll let me be a contributor.

So in closing I thank you for your time and consideration.

Hermon L. Hawkins  
Huntington, PA

Please make the necessary changes to our mailing address for our subscription to Out of Bounds as we have returned to northern British Columbia. We have enjoyed each issue of your publication and are impressed with the quality of writing and production. Please persist with your fine efforts.

We also want to use this opportunity to say how much we appreciated the WHOSS productions we attended in our time in Victoria and were so impressed with the superb quality of every aspect.

We also participated in the Restorative Justice Coalition workshop and the Symposium before that. We gained much insight, learned a lot, and are grateful for the opportunities.

Please keep up your excellent work and communication.

Vigil Overstall  
Telkwa, BC

CAMS  
Community Adult Mentoring and Support

The Community Adult Mentoring and Support Project (CAMS) seeks to match trained community volunteers (mentors) with suitable, consenting, soon to be released prisoners. The goal of this project is to ensure that everyone's needs and expectations are addressed in a way that will make CAMS a useful tool in the work of reintegrating former offenders. For more information contact:

Honora Johannesen  
or  
Andrew McWhinnie  
at (250) 363-0105  
or  
mwhinnieaj@csc-scc.gc.ca
EDITORIAL

Is There Anybody Out There?
by James Dahnke

I vaguely remember the eighties, but one thing I do remember is how the music of Pink Floyd affected me at the time. The Wall, in particular, seemed an anthem of my life. One dark night, stoned on something around three in the morning, I remember listening to this song and feeling my heart tear inside me. Then it was the nineties and things were different, but the song remained the same.

Jan Arden once said, "You become who your friends are." I'd always been a loner, seeking social identity but never really finding it. Looking back I am able to see how my friends and I sought to find and identify ourselves, whether it was through music, cliques, drugs, cars or bars. I became a people watcher, trying to see where I fit, and why others seemed to fit so easily. I was the long-haired hippie freak, the brainiac, the round peg trying to fit into the square hole. I never really understood why people called me a freak. I thought that perhaps it was because of my high tolerance to drugs and alcohol, or my shifty vision, but I've come to realise that they couldn't make me fit either.

One by-product of this strange alienation was that since I never belonged with any one group of people, I was accepted or at least tolerated by everyone. I was just as comfortable, or uncomfortable, with the bikers, the metal heads, or the guys after work in the bar. However, I never quite shared their vision or opinions.

While being afforded this unique look into cross-culture phenomena, I observed behaviours of men and women extending from the psychotic and criminally narcissistic to self-deprecating and degrading extremes in their attempts to seek social acceptance and personal identity. I, at the time, never really understood any of this and instead chose to follow the white rabbit.

One day I thought, I'm tired of being lonely and outcast, so I tried to conform to what was expected of me. I found someone seeking emotional co-dependency and tried to be what she wanted me to be. Having never told anyone who I really was before, my feeble attempts to do so were disastrous, as any information I now shared was used as ammunition in a war of psychological and emotional abuse. Having won the battle but lost the war, I now sat in prison. It was the end of the world, as I knew it.

Whilst sitting in a cell, I immediately realised some simple truths. Whatever I had been doing for most of my adult life had brought me to a very bad place, and unless I wanted to be here forever, I had better take a long hard look at who I thought I was. Out of a handful of books I had acquired, one was of particular interest. It was called Why Am I afraid to Tell You Who I Am? Interesting title. However, I had yet to figure out who the hell I thought I was. Thus begins an intensive journey of self-discovery.

Part of this journey involved letting go of preconceived notions of spirituality and religion. I eventually embraced the teachings offered by the native spiritual advisor Lloyd Haarala at William Head Institution. The Prayer Lodge is not a religious experience but a spiritual journey. It is, and continues to be, a journey of introspection and self-awareness that encompasses all life. To discover who you are, you also have to be aware of who you are not.

One day, while speaking about two of the laws of the pipe – strength and honesty – a friend told me how he had recently taken a ferry from Vancouver. He had sat and watched all the unseeing people walk past him, no one smiling or acknowledging his presence. He said he was invisible. I told him he should write a story called "The Invisible Indian."

He said, "I am not the only one who is invisible, you are invisible also."

He was right. We began to speak about why this would be so.

How had I walked through my life unseeing? Seeing only the people I wanted to see. Now, I was indeed invisible also. My family didn't even acknowledge me any longer. I had become expendable to some, emotional baggage to others. Ninety-nine percent of the people out there don't even care what happens to the people in here. Hell, they don't even care what happens to their neighbours, as long as it doesn't affect them directly.

I know this to be true because I was once one of them. I cared only for the people that directly affected my life, sometimes not even then. The truth is I tolerated the inconvenience of having to see them, never truly appreciating the simple ability to reach out and
touch or be touched.

A significant measure of this narcissism is the way I have seen people justify the bombing of Afghanistan. People mindlessly flock to seek retribution and vengeance, regardless of the innocent invisible people this imaginary war on terrorism will kill. We need not go to other countries to see this, it is right in our own back yards.

Our country has the ability to abolish poverty and homelessness, but there is no desire to do so. It is not politically advantageous nor serves any benefit for the average citizen in the short term. I constantly hear talk of leaving a better world for our children, but seldom see the long-term vision required to necessitate it happening. They remain invisible.

We are all invisible. Visible only to those whose lives we inevitably affect. To what degree we affect them determines how long we are to remain visible. Our younger people seek visibility through fashion, hair colour, music, body piercing and tattoos. They are no different than we were when young.

I have been very fortunate to have a friend who sees my smallness in this vast world. I, in return, see her. I never before realised how important this simple statement is. I never before realised how much, or whom, I had taken for granted. Gaining an identity has given me an appreciation for those I once chose not to care for. Discovering my spirit has given me an appreciation for the inter-connectedness of all life. Unfortunately, I still lay in my cell some nights, wrapped in my insecurity and wonder ...

"Is there anybody out there?"

by D.T. Olson

With renewed efforts in the war against terrorism, a baffling question poses itself. President Bush has vowed to end terrorism by centering the efforts on terrorists, and on all governments who harbour or support terrorist activities, with the unwavering belief that these governments will turn over those guilty of terrorist crimes. The question is: How do you go about waging a war against a government that only mirrors your own government’s wrong-doings.

The U.S.A. has harboured, funded, trained and armed terrorists for quite some time. This is not directly called terrorism but rather political intervention, which is a form of terrorism conducted with the support of a foreign government or organization. We have witnessed these terrors in the massive amount of civilian deaths in such places as Chile, where the overthrow of a democratic government that the U.S. replaced with a totalitarian regime run by Pinochet occurred. Indonesia and Vietnam, conflicts declared in the name of the Monroe Doctrine, are two more examples of CIA intervention.

Since 1959, the United States government has been waging a quiet war against the socialist government of Cuba. Before 1959 America had a wonderful relationship with Cuban President Fulgencio Batista, an extreme right-wing dictator who allowed corruption to run rampant and repeatedly abused human rights in order to subdue the population. A revolution resulted and Fidel Castro rode triumphant through the streets of Havana. One of the first items on the new government’s agenda was to oust all foreign investments, which were mostly American. The capitalist/imperialist pride of America was hurt and the war began. The only problem remaining was how to fight a war against Cuba when they were heavily backed by another super power, the U.S.S.R.

We have all heard the names of Timothy McVeigh, bin Laden, Qaddafi; or the groups The Red Brigade, IRA and the PLO; but have we heard of Orlando Bosch Avila and the CANF (Cuban American National Foundation)? Not likely, American mainstream media seldom mention these names.

Much like the infamous bin Laden, Orlando Bosch Avila and the CANF (who are Cuban exiles) were trained by the CIA in terrorist tactics, and armed in order to combat the threat of looming Communism. For the last forty years Orlando and company have conducted numerous assassinations, chemical and biologic attacks, and bombings of embassies and industries belonging to Cuba. Orlando openly admitted to the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed seventy-six people. He was arrested in the pro-American country of Venezuela, tried and found guilty of forged passport documentation. Nothing became of the bombing. It is interesting to note that the Venezuelan Secret Police were also trained by the CIA. Before the plane bombing, Orlando had spent time in an American prison for the car bombing of a pro-Cuban socialist in New York. He was paroled after doing four years of his ten-year sentence even though he stated that he would not give up his reign of terror against the Cuban government.

The Cuban government has been trying for years to have Orlando extradited to face numerous charges. So where is he? Well, he is living in Florida. The U.S. has repeatedly refused to extradite him, and others who are guilty of continual terrorism. America must end its hypocrisy. If President Bush’s vows are genuine then he must first clean up his own government and not only fight terrorism that is detrimental to America, but also fight terrorism which is beneficial to America’s consumer needs. If Bush maintains this lopsided war on terrorism, he is continuing America’s capitalist agenda that will kill more civilians, create more resentment and breed more terrorists. Sadam Hussein stated in 1991 that his conflict would be “The mother of all wars.” The U.S. won that battle and laughed in his face. We may win this battle as well, but the war will continue to go on if the bellies of millions of people are left hungry. ☝
Psychopathy Checklist-Revised & Revisited
from the WHI Legal Library

"Psychopath." No other label conjures up such an instant image of the madman, frothing at the mouth, speaking in monosyllabic grunts while ripping limbs from the corpses of the little girls and boys he has molested and mutilated. However, the label of psychopath has been much maligned and much overused, according to its originator Dr. Robert Hare. According to the good Dr. Hare, "... there are 300,000 psychopaths in Canada, but ... only a tiny fraction are violent offenders like Paul Bernardo and Clifford Olson."

Dr. Hare’s Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) was designed to provide "a standard definition (of) a cluster of distinctive personality traits, the most significant of which is an utter lack of conscience." The difficulty this provides for prisoners is that the original PCL, and its new and improved version, the PCL-R, have been accepted within correctional environments for some two decades now as being the definitive tool for identifying the abominable psychopath. Although strict guidelines for the use of the PCL-R exist, Corrections Canada, and its ever professional psychology and psychiatric staff, have often failed to meet even the most basic of the rules that Dr. Hare laid out for its use. Dr. Hare specifically stipulated in his PCL-R guidelines that any use by anyone holding less then a Ph.D. can only be for research purposes and not for assessments. And, that "informed" consent of the inmate must be obtained.

For years now, many inmates have been raising the issue of abuses of the PCL-R with Corrections Canada, only to be met with even further negative comments entered on their file, after being labelled a psychopath by some CSC psychologist with less then a Ph.D., and who has never requested consent, let alone "informed" consent. (How does one get "informed" consent on such a complicated psychological assessment tool from an inmate with less then a grade eight or nine education - the average within Canada’s prisons - or an inmate whose complete English vocabulary consists of "good morning" or "hello"?)

Two recent legal cases are important. In Metcalfe v. The Attorney General of Canada (April 26, 2001) the CSC’s position was that the label of psychopath provided by a psychologist using the PCL-R (without consent) was only "a memo, not to be construed as a psychological assessment" although the label of psychopath was clearly used by the CSC to the detriment of Mr. Metcalfe. The issue of abuse of the tool was grieved to the third level, only to be upheld (was there ever a doubt). Justice Mackay of the Federal Court of Canada who heard the matter was quite unconvinced by the Crown’s position in this case and has sent the matter back to the Commissioner of the CSC "for re-determination." Methinks that the issue of "consent" is being scrutinised.

In 1998, John Pinkney of William Head Institution raised the issue of consent regarding the PCL-R in a Federal Court writ. Although the judge failed to deal with the issue, he did state in orbiter that "assessing or diagnosing the applicant’s mental condition without his consent contravenes Commissioner’s Directive No. 803, s. 2 and 6; and that consideration should be given (by CSC) to avoiding (the) use of questionable psychological testing or assessments in future situations involving the applicant or other persons detained." However, even in light of this rather strong suggestion to the Commissioner, the CSC in its infinite wisdom continued to refer to Mr. Pinkney as "a psychopath," again much to his disgruntlement and detriment. In fact the CSC went so far as to use the label of psychopath to discredit Mr. Pinkney to the extent that he actually lost visitation privileges with his only daughter. In his second Federal Court application, Pinkney v. The Attorney General of Canada, Mr. Pinkney specifically requested that the court "order" that the CSC refrain from using the questionable psychopath label, due to the lack of consent. On September 26, 2001, Justice Dubé granted Mr. Pinkney’s request and made "an order restraining all present and future reference to the PCL-R testing and psychopath label condemned by Justice Mackay."

This most recent Pinkney decision is specific to Mr. Pinkney, but all inmates should see it as a victory. Any inmate who has been labelled as a psychopath without informed consent to having the PCL-R used can now use Pinkney as a precedent to have the label removed and all references deleted. Any inmate so labelled can immediately request to have his file reviewed and perhaps culled of all such references.

OUT OF BOUNDS 7
Misuse equals abuse

by John Pinkney

In a recent magazine article (Saturday Night, September 8, 2001) entitled “Psychopaths Among Us” Dr. Robert Hare, author of the Psychopathy Checklist - Revised, complains that the Correctional Service has misused his diagnostic tool. He also attempts to distance himself from the practices of the U.S. prosecutors who regularly use the PCL-R to successfully argue for the death penalty. Dr. Hare’s complaints are a little disingenuous.

In late October early November of 1995, I made a call to Dr. Hare and spoke to one of his lab assistants and laid out to her what had just happened to me at Mission Medium Security Institution, after being incorrectly labelled a psychopath as a result of his PCL-R. The details are now a part of public record as to the assessment process - FTR 145, at p. 311 issued on February 26, 2001 (T-1723-97), and (T-1835-00) issued September 26, 2001, Federal Court of Canada.

This lab assistant told me that Dr. Hare could not receive a collect call from me (the only convenient way we can make calls thanks to the Millennium telephone system still in place), however if I could call back directly, he would speak to me. When I made the appropriate direct call, as he had requested, he refused to speak with me. I was to learn some years later, through a John Howard Society worker who knew this lab assistant personally, that the lab assistant quit Dr. Hare’s team as a direct result of his refusal to even acknowledge the possibility of any harm his test was causing me.

I suffered for six years emotionally; my family was destroyed, ending in divorce as a direct consequence of this incorrect psychopath label. The Correctional Service even used it to ignore a Supreme Court of B.C. Child Access Order for a period of 2 years. Ultimately, it all comes down to the “inappropriate label!” and how it was fraudulently obtained.

Dr. Hare was informed by his staff of what was occurring in my case. He turned his back on both the clear evidence of abuse from the outset of his PCL-R use and abuse. He is just as responsible, if not more so, for allowing the abuses to occur at the outset of my initial diagnostic testing at Mission Medium Security Institution in the fall of 1995. Whether due to his past affiliations and influence with Correctional authorities, or just the prospect of opening the Canadian market to his diagnostic tool, his ethics were and are his own undoing.

I have not obtained the education level of Dr. Hare, nor do I question his qualifications, but there are many of his own peers who maintain his diagnostic tool is too flawed, and the consequences of its misapplication too severe. Some eminent psychiatrists say the label of psychopath is merely a moral construct, others are even more derisive and dismiss the PCL-R as ‘junk science.’ Whatever the position one takes, even Dr. Hare will admit there are some serious concerns.

In the 1970’s those who lived in Alberta attending high school may remember how the government and the school system dealt with unruly and troubled adolescents. Those children who suffered emotionally from problems at home, who demonstrated an inability to sit still and learn or retain the information being taught to them, were prescribed Ritalin. In the 1980’s the adverse effects of Ritalin were well documented. So what did they do with all those children who were determined to be unable to compete with scholastic challenges and given Ritalin?

For those who are uninformed, what they did was to channel these children through to grade eight, then passed them into special classes at a level they said was grade ten. The importance of this story is simply that grade nine is essential to prepare students for the following grades (ten through twelve). Without it there is little chance the child could successfully pursue additional education, and ample chance the child would soon be turfed out into the labour force. I know, I was one of those children. Thankfully, some years later I learned to appreciate the value and importance of a higher education and returned to school. One of the principal determinates used in the PCL-R to label me a psychopath was my early disruptive school history, which was like the PCL-R itself, a form of segregation by exclusion.

So what is the PCL-R diagnostic test, and why is this test only being used in prison populations and psychiatric institutions? Does the term psychopath mean there exists a chemical imbalance in the brain, much like in schizophrenia? Or does it mean the subject is so morally flawed and empathetically challenged that he is deemed untreatable, as Dr. Hare asserts? It is my view that no person is all psychopath all the time. It also is my belief, Dr. Hare’s test focuses on the subject’s cultural and behavioural background, and not neu-
roscience. PCL-R measurements span a lifetime and there are no ameliorating criteria. It measures morals, and other subjective information taken from our prison files – which is a narrative of our lives that highlights only our worst moments and focuses exclusively on the negative. We are now back to my story … segregation by exclusion. But to what ends does this diagnostic test hope to achieve, other than fear mongering?

It is a diagnostic test that allows Correctional authorities to aggravate the sentence a judge has given an accused. A judge sentences a person with the knowledge that an offender who is sentenced to three years has an opportunity to seek conditional release after one year. In addition, this same offender has the opportunity to seek statutory release after two years have been served. With a high PCL-R score the chances are an offender will not only serve every last day of his sentence, but case management can then refer the offender for a hearing under an 810 application for up to a 2-year probationary period after the completion of the sentence. The offender is thereby subjected to additional punishment by Correctional authorities.

As stated, this diagnostic test unleashes a multitude of consequences if the results exceed 30 on the cut off score. Now this person is viewed as an offender who is unable to learn from conventional programming, and therefore is excluded or deferred from non-intensive programming. It gets worse. The Correctional authorities withhold the program until the end of the offender’s sentence, then they seek a period to view the offender’s ability to demonstrate program gains – while still incarcerated.

One only has to look at the practice of ‘residency’ of those offenders being released on Statutory Release. Usually when that takes place it displaces offenders from their real home or families with whom they are supposed to be free, and forces them to live in a halfway house for a period of time.

As cited in “Psychopaths Among Us” Dr. Steven Stien, a psychologist and CEO of Multi-Health Systems in Toronto, stated that 30 years ago nobody believed or bought into the idea expounded by Dr. Hare. For myself, it’s no wonder we didn’t have the level of violence or degradation that’s feeding on our moral fabric of society. The by-product of mass media and our recently founded global society.

It is my opinion that calling someone a psychopath based upon cultural determinates and or differences will only lead to additional misuse of this diagnostic tool and will promote continued misuse by correctional staff.

Psychopath versus Psychopath

by Marion Wollersheim

The incidents that took place in Zimbabwe clearly reflect that every society bears the weight of people who take pleasure in waiting for reasons to torture or kill other people. This behaviour seems to be independent of culture or the colour of one’s skin.

I think it would be an excellent idea if all armies from here on relied on volunteers. I am optimistic that our “Modern Society” would have numerous people that would welcome the “thrill” of becoming a professional killer.

The truth is that most countries do not want to give up their military. Therefore, I suggest it might make a great deal of sense to use this attitude towards solving the dilemma of re-socialisation.

Countless convicts in many prisons suffer from mental and physical abuse caused by other inmates. What those offenders did to their victims on the outside, they will do to others behind bars.

Prisons are teeming with many of those who enjoy torturing or killing, leaving their new victims with no chance of escape. For this reason re-socialisation is not an alternative for their future. Psychologists can prove this.

The process of re-socialisation for those who want to undertake it is severely disturbed by those who do not want to undertake it. Nowhere is this more apparent than in a closed environment such as prison.

Due to the fact that all countries have the same prison troubles, I propose we draft psychopathic offenders into the army. Unquestionably these people will be more contented fulfilling the killing demands.

I am in favour of only letting psychopaths face psychopaths on the battlefield, where they are able to kill each other, and each other alone.

(editor’s note: Marion Wollersheim is a human rights and prisoners’ rights advocate. She lives in The Netherlands. She submitted articles to Out of Bounds in the past, then we lost contact. Now she’s back in touch and we’re glad. The information in our legal column should never be construed as legal advice. It is simply provided as legal news.)
Merry Christmas ... from jail?

by Michael King

Christmas.

The word evokes a lot of feelings for many people. For those of us who are incarcerated, Christmas is a time to check off another year closer to an eventual release, and unfortunately for some, that day may still be a long way off.

Compared to others, I'm what you'd call a "short timer." Seven years, compared to a life sentence, is a very short time in the grand scheme of things. However, I didn't always look at it that way.

When I arrived at William Head in the fall of 1997, I immediately experienced a "culture shock." Having just come from the dismal grey razor-wire worlds of Matsqui and Surrey Pretrial, William Head by comparison did not look like a prison at all. It wasn't until later on I came to recognize it for what I truly believe it is: a thinly veiled mental institution. To be more direct, a nuthouse.

The first few days I was in awe of the incredible view of the ocean and coastal mountains across the strait. Most of my time I spent wandering around exploring, until I was warned of impending charges if I continued to go out of bounds. Thus my hiking trips came to an abrupt halt.

Besides the warnings, the only other thing that marred my initial impression of William Head was the housing arrangement. I was unfortunately double-bunked with an inmate who had a severe gas problem. Rarely did I set an alarm to wake up in the morning, because every day around 7 a.m. my ears were assaulted by his trumpeting the arrival of the new day. I once told him that if he sealed himself up in a large plastic bag, he could easily escape from the institution as a hot air balloon.

About this time I began to seriously pray for a single room, or that God would kill my roommate in the most hideous manner possible ... death by his own gas emissions. My prayers were miraculously answered on December 23, when a disgruntled CSC employee flatly told me that a single room was available in a "heat bag" house. He stared at me with eyes that seemed to say, "You're crazy if you say yes." Amazingly, no one else seemed to want the room, and as far as I was concerned, the gruff "I hate my job" face of the officer looked like jolly old St. Nick at that particular moment. I accepted the room like I was a nine year old getting a new bike from Santa Claus.

I quickly learned what the term "heat bag" house meant shortly after I moved in. The house had the dubious honour of housing all the bad-asses, so I wondered if that made me an honorary bad-ass too, or if it simply meant that I was a stupid ass for taking the room. I discovered on arrival that the house had a long history of being turned upside down by guards looking for drugs, contraband and brews. Judging from the stack of yellow papers tacked on the bulletin board, a lot of charges were pending.

Christmas was only two days away when I moved in, and I found the residents were greatly distressed that the guards might find their "best brew yet." And with its loss, Christmas would be dismal. I suggested, as only a naive new-kid-on-the-block can, that if they left the brew in full view on the counter top, it might be safer. I reasoned that the more obvious the hiding place, the less likely it is to be found.

I'll never know if they tried my idea as a joke, or because they had simply run out of hiding places, but fortune smiled on me, and their precious extract was not discovered. I didn't have the heart to tell them that I had learned this strategy from years of hiding Easter eggs for my kids.

I was rewarded for my idea on Christmas Eve by being offered a large glass of what I thought was orange juice. The home-made Yuletide cheer tasted like something from the dregs of a rotten box of fruit. It tasted that way because that was precisely what it was, except that the wine-maker had laboriously screened all the pulp and weevils out of it.

So this is what the "buzz" is all about, I thought. Booze au naturelle. By the second mouthful I believed that there might be some commercial potential to this ghastly tasting stuff. Old William Head, brewed in secret by a bunch of criminals. By the end of the glass, I was certain that Beaujolais 1948 could not have tasted sweeter.

Although I would never admit it to my IPO, I was mildly drunk that first Christmas Eve in jail. Hell, I thought, this is going to be easy doing time here. Unfor-
fortunately the euphoria did not last very long, so after taking a handful of Rolaids and several extra strength Tylenol, I swore I would never drink a brew again, unless of course it was in a can with a clearly marked “Coors Light” on it.

As Christmas morning dawned, I was thankful to have a single room, but I was still a long way from learning how to cope with this strange new reality that my life had become. I missed my friends and family, but most of all I missed being free. In a letter to a friend I revealed my thoughts on that first Christmas. “… the day has been grey, cold, wet and miserable. I know I have much to be thankful for, as there are a lot worse places I could be. And yet as I recall happier Christmas’s, watching my children opening their presents, I can’t help but feel a new level of emptiness I’ve never experienced before.”

I was feeling pretty lousy that first Christmas morning, but thankfully the day finally passed, and with it determined to make the best of the situation in the New Year ahead … if that was possible.

In my quest for a better understanding of my situation, I discovered an extraordinary book about incarceration titled Man’s Search for Meaning by Dr. Viktor Frankl.

Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist who was sent to Auschwitz concentration camp during WWII. There he lived under conditions so hideous and draconian it is hard to imagine how he ever survived. Though his life was in stark contrast to mine, there were some similarities that I could apply to my situation. Frankl stressed that the real battle in coping with incarceration occurs not from dealing with your oppressors, but rather with what’s inside, and how you view yourself. According to Frankl, attitude is everything.

A William Head lifer once told me almost exactly the same thing, shortly after I arrived. He was serving a Life-25 sentence, and had taken the grand tour of prisons from the East Coast to the Prairie Region, and then to Kent, Matsqui, and finally William Head. He told me that the most important secret to doing time is “to live as though you are a free man.”

As I read the book, and thought about what the lifer had shared with me, I felt encouraged to press on and look for the best in the situation I found myself in. By Christmas 1998, I decided to start sending Christmas cards with a personal newsletter to as many friends and family as possible. This, I concluded, might have the fringe benefit that if I got the cards in the mail early enough, I might receive some in return. My hunch proved correct and I received a deluge of mail, some from friends and other people that I had not heard from in years.

In 1998, I also started an annual tradition of buying myself a new CD, which I would open Christmas morning. I found that waking up knowing I had a new CD to listen to brightened my day immensely. The idea was not an original one. Viktor Frankl said that during his horrendous stay at Auschwitz he would deliberately give himself some kind of a gift on Christmas morning, “… even if it was just a piece of string I had found, it was a way of being kind to myself …”

Learning to be “kind to myself” had a strange way of backfiring on me.

During a CSC sponsored psychiatric assessment, I was asked how I coped with emotions during the Christmas season. I answered as clearly as I could, and felt comfortable with the psychiatrist’s response, mistaking his casual demeanour to imply a genuine interest in how I felt. Later, in his report, the psychiatrist described my coping strategy as a symptom of being very narcissistic, with latent histrionic traits. In layman’s terms that meant that I’m in love with myself, and I’m pretty emotional about it.

I was angry and confused, until I started talking to other inmates who had assessments at the same time I did. It soon became clear that the good Doctor had given virtually everyone a “flunked” grade, and that we were all narcissistic, histrionic freaks.

If being “kind to yourself” was such an abnormality, I wondered how the Doctor would feel about being separated from his friends and family at Christmas time. Would he sit in his own smug intellectual world and refuse to do anything good for himself because he viewed it as some kind of mental illness?

I doubt it.

As I approach this, my last Christmas inside, I have stopped trying to figure out “why?” Because in the end, it doesn’t really matter. What does matter is that I do not judge others as I have been judged, and that I try to do the best that I possibly can and seek to give something back to the world with the time I’ve been given. I have not been without several examples of other inmates doing just that.

It is sad that their success stories will rarely, if ever, turn up in official reports.

One man I know has been doing post-secondary school courses for years, and is close to writing his thesis for his Ph.D. Another is in the final stages of having his first novel published. Some have learned how to play musical instruments, or speak foreign languages. Still others have mastered the creation of elaborate woodwork, carvings, glasswork, paintings, silk-screen, etchings, furniture, and literally hundreds of other first-
class works of art. The magazine you are reading is made possible through the vision of prisoners who seek to provide a vehicle for budding writers and poets behind bars to express themselves. All these people have one common trait: they have a quiet confidence in who they are. And they don’t accept for a second the labels that have been put on them. Does that make them narcissistic?

No.
It makes them human.

A Winner
by Kaukaughie

Well, here I sit locked up in jail again. What a loser! I can’t believe that I got caught in another stupid get rich-quick-scheme. I’m such an idiot! Stupid, Stupid, Stupid!

Well anyway, it’s getting cold out again this winter, at least I’ll be warm instead of shivering my ass off in another welfare flat. The food here is pretty good, much better than that half-cooked gooey Kraft Dinner that seems to be my specialty. I have all my old friends that are still here from my last time around. I guess things aren’t that bad, at least I’m not a lifer like some of these burnouts that I see stumbling around here, it’s like they have given up and consider this home. Well, that’s not for me – I’m too smart for that kind of crap!

I remember when I was little, Mom was always trying to get me to do stuff like go to school, or work for the summer, or some other crap that was supposed to teach me something. Even Dad kept getting me interviews for jobs after I dropped out of school. I knew that all those interviews were just friends of my Dad, trying to push me into something that I didn’t want to do. I showed them.

Even my sister doesn’t want to talk to me now, because she thinks that I’m some kind of jailbird, and she is embarrassed to have me as a brother. Shit, I make more in one night of B&E’s than she does in a whole month! Oh well, to hell with her, she’s just pissed because I’m cool and she’s not. I’m kind of glad that she doesn’t want to talk to me anymore – I’m embarrassed to be seen with her because she is so straight.

That school was pretty screwed up too. Those teachers always on my ass for not completing my homework, and skipping class. I remember one telling me that I’d never make it as anything – he’d be amazed at the skills that I have now, that’s for sure.

Even the cops kept at me to straighten out – as if I’d want to be one of those walking dead citizens out there. What a joke! I’d sooner sit in jail. Oh yeah, I am in jail.

Well then, it all makes sense doesn’t it: I’m not a loser! I managed to push all those people who were close to me and cared for me away, and I made it on my own with no help from anyone. Even when the cops tried to scare me into conforming, I hung tough and carved my own path. Shit, when I think about it this way, I’m really a winner. I beat them all by myself and made it to jail, what a great way to look at things. I can’t wait for the guards to crack the doors so I can walk around with my buddies in the big yard and tell them how it really is. Yup, I’m a winner!

Home
by Jon Brown

Home to me is what’s worst in a sleepless night, and the greatest hits of abstract dreams. It is not a structure of wood, steel or clay, walls, studs or joists. It is nothing routine. It is a complex bay window, a kaleidoscope with just the view I paid for.

Home to me is seven dayglow colours haphazardly splashed on a cold dark wall of stone. It is eight seconds on the whipping tail of a comet roaring towards a fiery sun. It is in the depths of the Pacific and high among the racing clouds, as low-pressure fronts force it inland.

Home is the thousand-meter plunge, the smack of the slipstream like a boot to the face, plummeting earthward. It is on the fringes of the failure that we call society. It is the last breath of the suicide bomber, and the first seconds in his wake. It is a soundly sleeping baby, a crying mother, and a lonely widower.

My home is twice longer than it is wide, but is in no way rectangular. It stretches from the bullet-ridden ruins of Leechton to the glaring reflection of the fifty-calibre glass pipe in the eyes of freaks huddled in garbage-strewn alleyways.

At times, it is as simple as a woodpecker pecking wood, with no explanation needed or implied. Sometimes it is black, sometimes white, but more than likely the grey in between. It resists definition and is nothing expected, admired, or ignored. It is like a stray tomcat, with tabby markings, searching for scraps in a dog-lover’s town.

It’s all that’s good, bad and ugly in a poorly made designer gym bag, with one torn, but not quite broken, black nylon strap. It is not the best, nor the worst. It is the only home I have and the view is remarkable.
Being Frank’s Sister
by Val Napoleon

One of the problems I have is the nakedness of words.

When I say, “My family was politically, economically, and socially minimized,” it is only words. When I say, “My family was culturally dislocated,” again, while true, it is only more words, naked words that fail to describe the whole-lived experiences.

I will clothe these words with our story.

I am one of Frank’s sisters. Frank is in the Grande Cache Institution, a federal penitentiary in Alberta. Now from this starting point I look back and begin to rummage, and to snatch at memories to see what the pieces are that make up our story. How did we get here? It is like walking back over a path looking for things lost. Each time I pick up a memory, hold it, experience it, I wonder, “Is this one of the pieces that will make sense of things? Will this explain how we got to the point of Frank serving time in a federal penitentiary?” And of course, no one piece of life can explain the whole.

Frank is one year younger than I. He has four children from previous partnerships: one son twenty-five, fathered when Frank was fourteen, and three daughters under twelve.

He is tall, heavily built, and very strong. Good looking. His long dark hair is greying at the sides and drawn back in a single braid. He carries himself in a defensive slouch. When you speak to him, he will tilt his head to the side in a deferential gesture to show that he is listening. His face is usually serious, but his eyes can hold light, fun, mischief, and curiosity. When things are bad, his eyes go blank, hollow. His hands and arms bear the blue imprints of childhood tattoos.

The images I have include him kneeling beside our fragile grandmother and holding her so she wouldn’t be scared at the round dance at the Grande Cache Institution. More recently, at our father’s funeral, he spent hours cradling his daughters on his lap, his guards watchful at the next table. Frank hates to be alone.

In August 1996, Frank was charged with two violent robberies of people who were withdrawing money from bank machines in Edmonton. Blows from a ball-peen hammer seriously injured both victims. One victim’s name is Marika. A bone in her neck was fractured and she was unable to walk for a while. The other victim suffered a concussion, and at the time of the trial was still suffering with headaches. Both victims could have died.

When they picked up Frank, he was in a blackout caused by alcohol and cocaine. In his old truck they found odd bits of stolen property – pathetic tokens of desperate, indiscriminate, useless theft. The newspapers called Frank “The Hammer Bandit.” He was described as inhuman, crazed and mad, his crimes unspeakable. The coverage was sensational and it was national. That’s how we heard about it.

There are no excuses. I don’t seek to justify or minimize the harm caused by my brother. They were terrible and sordid crimes.

Frank has struggled with alcoholism since he was eleven and basically living on the streets by his wits and fists. He was in and out of jail until he was twenty-five. Most of his crimes involved petty theft and alcohol. When he wasn’t drinking or in jail, he worked in sawmills and timber falling. On his twenty-fifth birthday, he woke up in jail again, but somehow this became a turning point for him. He quit drinking for about ten years.

Then he started abusing prescription drugs. Then other drugs. Things began to fall apart. I think he knew he was on dangerous ground, but he was losing it. In 1995, angry, scared, and out of control, he was charged with assaulting his common-law wife and attacking a cab driver with a hatchet. His intention had been to physically restrain his wife from buying cocaine, and the cab driver from selling it to her. Fortunately, the cabby was not injured. For this, Frank served six months at the minimum-security centre at Prince George.

In jail, he read and thought, and learned a lot. He looked up and for the first time in years, he saw the stars again. I visited when I could. This was a precious time, and I thought we had been through the hardest part.

After he got out, he did really well for a little while. But he got back together with his partner, whose drug use was escalating, and the resolve he had built up in detention disintegrated along with the life he’d been trying to build.

He began to slide again. He didn’t keep his jobs. He
went into total denial about everything and wandered restlessly across the north. He sank again into a black depression, and anger and despair lurked around the edges. When he called me and told me he was going to have a drink, I knew he was in a state of crisis.

After the attacks and robberies in Edmonton, Frank was in the remand centre for nine months. That is where you are kept while awaiting trial when you have been denied bail. Remand is known as “doing hard time” because it is an awful limbo. It is a holding tank where no one knows what his future holds and everyone acts out his desperation. It is a terrible place.

The trial was in May 1997. Frank was sentenced to seven years with time off for his remand stint. This was a bargained sentence because there were gaps in the evidence against him. After some long, hard consideration and discussions, he decided to plead guilty to all charges – to come clean, start over, try again to heal himself, and help the victims heal.

Like a great many incarcerated First Nations men, he has no memory of the attacks because he was in a blackout, but Frank knows, and his family knows, that he could have done it. For him to get to this point took all of the nine months right up to the time of the trial.

So what are some of the pieces of all this?

My family was and is fractured. We were and are culturally dislocated. We had no system or way to deal with what happened to Frank. Our responses varied, we were angry at him, confused, terribly hurt, betrayed, and overwhelmed. We were all over the map. Some said, “Well, you do the crime, you do the time.” Not much of this was useful.

Frank is not the only member of my family to get into trouble with the legal system and not the only one to be incarcerated. I also have a young niece who is serving time, and Frank usually has the company of other relatives and friends when he’s inside. This provides small and perverse comfort.

Frank had a long criminal record, no credibility, an addiction to drugs and alcohol, a dysfunctional family situation, and an estranged partner who was also a serious drug addict.

Those of us siblings who were able and willing attended the hearings and trials, wrote letters, talked to legal counsel, visited his kids, and put together care packages.

One of the most painful tasks was to tell our father what had happened. My sister and I did this. He had a lifelong history of mental illness, and so great care had to be taken. Through subterfuge, we had hidden previous troubles from him. This time though, Frank’s absence was going to be too long for us to cover up.

After his sentencing, I worked with Frank to arrange a mediation process for him and the victims. At this point, the only result we could hope to accomplish was to facilitate a true and meaningful change in Frank and help all the parties to heal.

The specific objectives we drafted for our family restorative justice process were to:

· develop and facilitate a structured, safe, and compassionate mediation process between Frank and the two people hurt by the violent crimes for which he was convicted;

· create an opportunity for growth, healing, understanding, and closure for Frank and the victims;

· in a safe environment, provide for the victims the knowledge and skills that could reduce their fears and anxieties, and validate their questions and feelings about the crime; and

· provide Frank with an opportunity to understand the human consequences of these crimes and accept personal responsibility for his actions through constructive, face-to-face dialogue with the victims.

In February 1998, the Solicitor General and the Corrections Branch agreed to support our proposal, and the Grande Cache Institution agreed to allow the process to take place. Dave Gustafson and Sandi Bergen agreed to mediate. They work with the Victim-Offender Mediation Project in Langley, B.C. which deals with serious violent crimes. With their encouragement and support, Marika agreed to participate. We have never been able to locate the second victim.

The mediation was to be unique and significant for two reasons: Firstly, it was a family-driven and directed process. There was no program for us to follow. The system had no project staff or counsellors to help us. We dealt directly with everyone ourselves. Secondly, so far as we know, this was the first victim-offender mediation involving an incarcerated inmate to take place in Alberta.

While the work was going on behind the scenes to put the mediation together, Frank was doing his best to make the most of his life inside. While I would never wish incarceration on anyone, I could see that he was doing okay, and he was as safe as anyone can be in a Canadian penitentiary. He was not hurting himself or anyone else.

He was reaching new depths of spirituality. (He says now that if he had been released within the first six months, he would have gone back to the drugs. Although he knows he will never be able to relax about it, he believes he is as free of his drug addiction as he can ever be.)

For the first time, Frank was writing to his kids, aunts,
grandmother, father, cousins, and siblings. (They are coming to terms with each other now, and this has involved sorting out all kinds of tangled relationships. Our family is still fractured, but not because of Frank.)

Frank had begun working at the data entry job, which he still holds in the institution. He and twenty others enter land titles for an American real estate company. For a half-cent a title, they are expected to enter fifteen hundred titles a day. This is not quite a chain gang, but it is exploitative. I think Frank should be allowed to earn a living wage while incarcerated so that he can pay restitution to his victims and cover his incarceration costs. Nevertheless, he really likes working and this has been positive for him.

Frank had begun to work on his GED and to keep busy with all kinds of other activities. (In fact, he is busier inside than he ever was on the outside, and this is the first time that his life has been structured over an extended period. He still struggles with black depressions, but now knows he can live through them.)

What was it like for me to be Frank’s sister during all of this?

First of all, Frank is ours. He belongs to our family. It is as if all the pain and confusion in our family coalesced in his being. He is our responsibility. I believe that the strength of our family depends on our ability to deal with our problems as well as our successes. I won’t relinquish my responsibility towards Frank to the legal system.

I felt absolutely powerless and voiceless before the legal system and during the proceedings. I know our presence did make a difference, but that is about all it did. There was no place for family members to participate—no place for our voices, for us to say, “We know he did terrible wrong, but we love him and he deserves to be helped. He’s not all bad and he is hurting.”

Secondly, I was dismayed to learn that very few people throughout the judiciary in Alberta had any knowledge or understanding of restorative justice. This includes lawyers, the judge, court workers, caseworkers, the Crown, and the chaplain. The only restorative justice information distributed in Edmonton Maximum Security and the Grande Cache Institution has been by Frank. He shared materials with guards, caseworkers, and fellow inmates.

Meanwhile, I had a very difficult time with the people who wanted to judge Frank more than he had already been judged. People who were quick to denounce or offer suggestions about what else should be done about or to him. And I still get very angry when I see “justice” reduced to being a political commodity. This inhibits understanding, leadership, and alternatives that could heal, and promotes revenge. I am horrified beyond words by the executions in the United States.

My husband and I were able to meet with Marika. She is a truly remarkable and wonderful person. This was a gift of hope and love. And yet, I can’t approach a bank machine without remembering what Frank did. When I look at a bank machine, I imagine her, I imagine the people I love, being the victims of Frank. At the back of my own neck I feel a little buzz of alarm.

Frank gave me permission to tell you his part of our story. It is a story about pain—pain which can take on a liquidity that seeps through resolve, flows along the uneven surfaces of our being, infecting the empty places. It can leak through our lives, bleed around the images. It can seep through any level of consciousness. It stays as long as it wants to. And naked words can never express its pervasiveness.

It is also a story about hope.

As the mediation process between Frank, our family, the mediators and the victim unfolded, wonderful things happened.

Eight family members, including my ninety-five year old grandmother, and the mediators attended a Cree round dance in the Grande Cache institution. Attending these events has now become almost a custom for them and other siblings and their children.

Marika worked with the mediators and, despite rigid opposition from her family, when she was ready she met for an entire day with Frank. She got her life back in that meeting. She hadn’t been sleeping, could find joy in nothing, and suffered from many other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. She had been making costly mistakes at work and was in danger of losing her job. She knew that the only way out of the nightmare was to go through it with Frank. And she did.

They talked about the attack, but they also talked a great deal about their lives and all that had shaped them. She questioned Frank closely about his family, his kids, his plans for the future—stripping away the figure in the nightmare who had hurt her so badly.

Frank was terrified about meeting Marika. After their meeting he sank into a deep, deep pit of shame. It scared me, but he came through it. He is amazing and I’m really, really proud of him.

Now Marika is going to help another woman who is also alone, also going through a mediation without the support of husband or family. (These sad desertions only add to the loneliness.) This woman was disabled fifteen years ago, and her attacker has been in prison ever since. Apparently he is a lot like Frank.

I want to figure out how to make a difference for
my family’s kids, how to spare them the desperation that accompanies disconnectedness and dislocation, how to ensure for them a safe place to return to. For some, it may be too late. For others, maybe this action with Frank will make a difference.

I ask you to imagine what would happen if all families with incarcerated family members were helped to accompany them through the process. Look at what our fractured family has done. The face of Canada would change.

(editor’s note: What follows is a presentation on the Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Association’s Victim Offender Mediation Program that Val’s brother Frank made at “Interaction 2000” in Vancouver.)

Working Toward Change
by Frank Kezer

Being up here speaking used to be one of my worst nightmares and still is to some extent. But it is something I want to do because I want to be a positive force in society.

In working on this presentation about the victim/offender program that I was fortunate to be a part of, I felt very inadequate. Especially when I looked at what other people were writing. However I realised that the purpose of my presentation is not to try and be more profound or intelligent than I really am, rather I’m here to tell you about my experiences.

My willingness to speak about my victim/offender experience is mainly because of my sister, Val. She has been my support, although I haven’t always listened or agreed with her.

In my times of trouble, however, my sister’s support increased even more. Through my last two incarceration periods, she has been there for me spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. This has helped me begin healing and work to change my life.

When I was in the remand centre, Val sent me information about restorative justice and she talked about organising a sentencing circle. I was interested, but I just couldn’t face it, I dreaded meeting the people I hurt so much.

After my sentencing, I realised I might be able to play a part in my own healing and in the healing for the people I harmed. I knew that this process would be good for me, but I didn’t really know how I would benefit. I was pretty mixed up at the time.

I learned from the restorative justice material about how violence affects victims. I knew I couldn’t do anything about the past pain, but I may possibly be able to alleviate some future pain. I knew that I had to give Marika (not her real name) back her voice by her questions to me. I knew I had to answer Marika’s questions directly because I had caused her pain.

My crimes were random, senseless in every respect. There was nothing personal in my crimes of violence. I learned that victims sometimes blame themselves for the crimes. Maybe this wasn’t the case with Marika but I wanted to make sure that she didn’t blame herself. I also wanted her to know that she didn’t have to fear retaliation from me, because sometimes victims feared revenge.

The day finally came, and in trepidation I went to meet Marika. In the meeting’s setting, she and I were facing each other, my parole officer on my left, and a little further left a video camera. Sandi Bergen ran the camera and Dave Gustafson introduced me. (Dave and Sandi are from the Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Association.) Dave sat to my right and to the left of Marika.

Her questions began and she asked me about why? Why would I do such a crime to her. I answered her by explaining that the crime was a completely random act of violence simply to acquire more money for drugs, and that there was nothing at all personal towards her. I told her about my nervousness and the fact that the session required all the strength I had not to breakdown.

Marika asked me many questions, mostly stemming from the original question of why I committed the crime. I just kept talking, finally saying that “it was hard to try to make sense out of something so senseless.” This for me seemed virtually impossible, although I tried to explain as best I could how I got into the insane state of mind that I was in at the time of these violent acts.

In doing this I humbly bared myself and went back into a disturbing past, to a dysfunctional family upbringing, and for myself an alcohol and drug related life filled with alcohol related crimes. A world filled mostly with hopelessness and despair.

However, I did want to stress that I did not in any way want to lay blame on my past or on anyone. I explained that I was taking responsibility for my actions and doing all I could while in prison to make use of the time to better myself, to be a decent human being when released.

Towards the end of the meeting, I did want to speak of some type of restitution, however I knew that I could never take back the terrible physical pain that I had caused. I mentioned this and suggested that perhaps in
the future I could repay some of the financial burdens that she acquired because of my actions. She stunned me by her pure generosity and kindness. She told me about a certain bill that she would like to be repaid, but told me to put my children first and attend to their needs before concerning myself with repayment.

The unselfishness of this wonderful person I will never forget, and her acts of goodness will be engraved in my heart forever.

Dave and Sandi had explained that victims sometimes experience nightmares from violent acts of crime done to them. All Marika knew of me was that I must have been an extremely angry and evil person to have victimised her so. I wanted to show a remorseful side of myself, to show that I realised I’d made a terrible mistake and was willing to change. I wanted to portray a gentler, more caring side of myself – a human side. Thus lay to rest any demons in Marika’s dreams – to stop the nightmares.

Having had an occasional epiphany from thinking of what to say about the victim/offender program in this conference has helped me in my personal growth. Thinking about the meeting with the victim of my crimes was particularly difficult, being that at the time of the meeting I was in a highly emotional state and I’m unclear about what I had said and in what order. What I realised however, was the main question that Marika wanted answered – why I did the crime – I really didn’t know how to answer. So I attempted to try to explain the many circumstances and events in my life (some of which may or may not have any consequences) that led up to my mind being so twisted and distorted as to commit the totally selfish, heinous, uncaring acts of violence towards another human being. Thus I talked and talked, from my youth onwards to the present, hoping she could understand even though I didn’t. This led me to feel inadequate to say the least, and this in turn led me through a short depression because of my lack of understanding.

I believe the victim/offender process as a whole is set up in such a way as to weed out any possible ulterior motives. It would be difficult, to say the least, to try and put anything past Dave and Sandi, but I believe the process itself is a positive one and nothing but good can result from it.

There was no way to go into the meeting unless I was open, with nothing to hide. This was the only way I could be comfortable in the session.

I wept during the lunch break and after our session. I prayed continually for the strength to say what is right. I tried to make the meeting meaningful for both Marika and me.

I did feel a tremendous relief after the meeting, but I was depressed for days because digging so deeply into my past and answering Marika’s difficult questions was really hard. Maybe I was depressed because I had to think about my depressing life. Maybe I just felt inadequate because I felt I had too little to offer.

After a while I snapped out of it and started to feel better for having gone through the process. Lessening further pain from my actions was helpful for me, and taking responsibility for my actions was important. The positive feedback from Dave and Sandi made me very grateful.

I thank my higher power, which I choose to call God, for the meeting with Marika. I realised that hitting bottom so many times meant that I could only begin to go up, and that’s what I’m doing.

I had tremendous family support. I feel sorry for the many people inside who don’t have that, because it’s hard to stay out if you don’t have support. Also, I was able to work while inside so I had some savings when I got out. Lots of people don’t have that, and this makes it harder.

**Postscript on Being Frank’s Sister by Val Napoleon**

When asked if “Being Frank’s Sister” could be republished, my first thought was, “But it’s all different now; so much has changed.”

“Being Frank’s Sister” remains true to when it was written, but it’s as if I am watching an old movie when I read it. The words and story seem trapped in a different time and space. Only parts of the story connect to the present. Yet, the experience of being Frank’s sister continues, and I don’t know how the new story will unfold.

Frank was released from Grande Cache Institution in May 2000. My husband and I drove there to collect him. This was a surreal time for all of us – as though the world was suspended somehow.

Poverty led him through various unsuccessful living arrangements until he was finally able to rent a small house. He enrolled in a diploma program with courses in sociology, psychology, English, math, social work, and woman’s studies. From the outside looking in, it appeared that while Frank was struggling, he was basically doing okay and enjoying school.

Some months later, things start to unravel. Frank slips and begins using cocaine. He swears off the drugs, dusts himself off, goes to meetings, and picks up his new life again. But he continues to slip, and the time periods between slips shrink.
Our grandmother dies at age 96 in May 2001. Frank is a pallbearer. His appearance is terrible. Gaunt and ravaged. He is paranoid, irrational, and unreasonable. To talk to Frank is to talk to the cocaine. To talk to Frank is to talk to the addiction and the addiction is utterly relentless. I see his face and hear his voice, but he is not there. My words fall to the ground around his feet.

My heart is crushed. I want to weep in rage, frustration, and pain. I read the eulogy for our grandmother and think about how important Frank was to her – how she made the difficult trek to Grande Cache to visit him. I think of Marika and her fragile trust in the world.

I call the parole officer and tell her that Frank is using again.

Frank begins the unhappy roller-coaster ride in and out of treatment centres, remand centres, and halfway houses. During this time, he disappears several times and no one knows where he is for weeks. On the lam. On the run. Desperate. Lost. A face on the Crimestoppers screen.

Other family members are emotionally bankrupt where Frank is concerned. Too many other demands and too much personal chaos. There is no give at the margins, and intolerance is part of survival.

I arrange for him to fly from Prince George to Victoria. I pick him up from the airport and drive him to William Head Institution to serve the last bit of his sentence as a parolee. He will be released in about six weeks. As I drive away from the institution, I cry. Pain spills everywhere. Squirts from my eyes. I rage uselessly. Sob stupidly.

For the first few weeks as I visit Frank, it’s as though we are both underwater. As in a nightmare, nothing I do or say can reach him and he is only across the visiting room table. He is in a terrible place, trapped in his own sad, dark, and frightening dungeons. He confesses that he has been using since he got out of Grande Cache. I feel betrayed. Dumb and blind.

Questions seethe in my brain. What was missing? How could we have done things differently? What will happen next? I know that Frank’s future is ultimately in his own hands; I can’t create it for him. I must learn to accept my ignorance.

Then one day, a smile. Another day, laughter. Frank is starting to return.

From her place high above the sky, my grandmother watches. It will be a lifetime struggle for us. We can only hope. Meanwhile, there are things that I must learn from the universe. I must listen carefully.


Val Napoleon is a recent graduate of the University of Victoria’s Faculty of Law (April 2001). She will be articling with Arvay Finlay in Victoria until September 2002.

The Religious Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers, sponsor this regularly featured column. Contributors are invited to write on issues of peace, non-violence, forgiveness and reconciliation.)
Question Authority
An Inmate Welfare Committee Interview

Gilles Ouellette, our IWC Chairman, has been serving a federal prison sentence for the past 19 years. He is a French Acadian descendant born in New Brunswick, who grew up in the province of Quebec. Gilles has served time in prisons in Quebec and British Columbia. He has served on numerous inmate committees.

Phil Wilkin, our IWC Secretary Treasurer, has been serving a federal prison sentence for the past 18 years. A Maritimer born in New Brunswick, he grew up in the province of Ontario. Phil has served time in prisons in Ontario and British Columbia. He has also served on numerous inmate committees.

Gilles and Phil were duly elected and are still in their first term representing the population at William Head Institution. Already their dedication appears obvious to the prison's population. What follows is a brief interview with our committee.

OB: Together you two have almost 40 years serving time in various prisons across Canada. What did you think of William Head when you first arrived here?
IWC: We remember a time when we lived in a jail that was declared to be inhumane more than once by Amnesty International. Maybe that is why it was such a shock to see the beautiful environment where William Head is situated.

OB: What inspired you to become involved with the IWC at William Head?
IWC: Living in William Head for many years (Gilles: 8 years, Phil: 3½ years), enough time to see what it was about and to realize where it’s heading, the changes in administrative positions and regular staff, approximately a 60% turnover, is transforming the original purpose of this jail. This is why we have become involved in the IWC, because we both felt that somebody had to redress the situation on behalf of all William Head prisoners.

OB: Could you explain the difficulties the IWC is facing in William Head Institution?
IWC: The changing of the philosophy created by the administration represents, in our point of view, a regression in progress and it seems to be returning to some values which have proven to be detrimental for the prisoners as well as the staff.

OB: What special problems is WHI facing?
IWC: Double-bunking is one of the major concerns of the entire population, and even if Ottawa demands the elimination of double-bunking, it doesn’t seem to happen here.

Another obvious trend at WHI
has developed over the last few years. The number of inmates who are asked by someone on their case management team, by way of suggestion or recommendation, for any reason whatsoever, to postpone, waive or delay their application for day or full parole, ETA’s, UTA’s, etc., is increasing at an alarming fashion. The numerous cases presented to us compel us to establish an official survey in the coming months.

At the beginning of our mandate, we realised immediately that the IWC in this institution was treated as a non-existing entity, therefore no consultation existed. Without any consultation, the implementation of new policies, i.e., a non-smoking policy, are treated as a fait accompli under the banner of the local Union of Canadian Correctional Officers. A smoking ban in our residences was naturally badly viewed by the entire population.

As duly elected representatives of the prisoners, we had the obligation to follow due process and grieve this unfair, unwanted, and unwelcome policy. The results of our opposition seems to have created many additional problems with the staff in general within the institution.

OB: Do you think prisoners as a whole will ever be able to overcome their discrimination with respect to PC (Protective Custody) GP (General Population) designations, a dichotomy that often impedes the progress of inmate populations in most prisons?

IWC: Regardless who knocks at the door of the IWC office we have the obligation to act fairly in every occasion, and we do so. After all, all prisoners are forced to live here. When the rights of one prisoner is not respected, all prisoners are in danger. Therefore, this Inmate Welfare Committee will ensure, as much as possible, the prevention of any abuse.

OB: Can you comment on some of your accomplishments in the first five months of your mandate?

IWC: To comment on all our accomplishments would take up too much room so we’ll just list them: (1) The immediate decrease of all prices of items sold through the IWC, just to make it more affordable for every inmate. (2) The organisation of two ball tournaments. (3) The organisation of the regular Open House Social Event. (4) The promotion of the 25th Anniversary of Prisoners Justice Day with the sale of silk-screened tee-shirts designed and printed by inmates at William Head Institution. The profits of this sale were donated to a local charity. (5) The organisation of a Harvest Fest Open House Social Event with live bands comprising people from the inside and outside. (6) The astronomical clerical work involved in halting the implementation of a smoking ban in our residences. (7) The direct involvement of the IWC with the Segregation Review Board. (8) The improvement of equipment owned by the IWC. (9) The organisation of a Hockey Tournament, Tennis Tournament, Fishing Derby, Horseshoe Tournament, Pool Tournaments, Bridge Tournament. (10) The support and assistance in the creation of a Music Group with a room to practise in. (11) The preparation and organisation of the Christmas Open House Social Event. (12) Assistance, guidance, and direction provided to the entire population via the grievance process.

OB: Do you think the staff at William Head will be able to stop prisoners from smoking in their residences?

IWC: No reasonable mind can believe that prisoners will stop smoking in their residences unless tobacco is banned from prison. To believe otherwise is to live in a fancy world. Staff are unable to stop people from smoking in the phone booths which are right across from their offices, so how can they possibly stop people from smoking in their residences. The number of grievances submitted since the attempt to restrict smoking have surpassed the 100 mark. The overwhelming number of prisoners who have signed a petition against this policy demonstrates clearly the discontent created.

OB: What is the most important advice you can give to other Inmate Committees in their fight for prisoners’ rights?

IWC: The most important thing everyone should remember is that the CSC has a code of laws that they are supposed to follow: the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA). Study that Act and the CD’s carefully, and when they stray from their mandate, and they will, call them on it. The CSC is supposed to help us become law abiding citizens. They will fail at that job miserably if they continue to break their own laws.

Who's Amazing?
William Head on Stage

Prison creates is own kind of twisted reality, or culture, in which various negative behaviours are held in high regard, sometimes rewarded, and usually expected. Keeping that in mind, the creation of a viable theatre company behind barbed wire with the absolute responsibility of its success or failure resting on the shoulders of the residing prisoners, is nothing short of a stroke of genius.

William Head on Stage was created to present the population of this prison with an opportunity to learn and grow as individuals by functioning within a peer group, and to en-
lighten the public through the vehicle of live theatre.

For those who have attempted to avoid responsibility in the past (which would include about 99% of us prisoners who plead not guilty at trial), being immersed in the environment of a working theatre company is a wondrous awakening. The concept of personal responsibility, of selflessly giving one’s time and effort for the benefit of others, can be a very positive thing. Having many others rely on your commitment to accomplish the tasks at hand, and similarly relying on the same from others, is not commonplace in jail. Who couldn’t (or wouldn’t) learn and grow from such an experience?

It is truly amazing that some men who arrive at William Head Institution have never had to do some of the simple things in life to look after themselves, such as cooking their own meals. For instance, I remember one new arrival who sat scratching his head wondering what to buy with his weekly allocated $32.90. After much deliberation and examination of the grocery order form he decided upon 40 boxes of Kraft Dinner and 50 pounds of potatoes. The next week (still having ample K.D. and spuds left over) his culinary repertoire expanded immensely with the purchase of a $31.00 case of chicken breasts. Needless to say, many individuals who lack varying degrees of cognitive, social and life skills visit upon prison, William Head included.

Using such a measuring stick as a base reference in this oft-dysfunctional environment called prison, we then find a registered non-profit theatre company called WHO’S, organised and run solely by prisoners. “What,” you may be asking, “a theatre company in prison? How can that be? Don’t convicts sit around all day getting tattoos, doing drugs and assaulting each other?” Well some ‘convicts’ do employ their time solely in those pursuits, but some do not. Some choose other, more altruistic pursuits.

The Playboy of the Western World was William Head on Stage’s fortieth production in its now twenty-one years of existence. Ten shows were performed for the ticket-purchasing public over four weekends in the month of October. This particular production can be summarised as one of new beginnings, as the company had many fresh faces on the stage, behind the scenes, and in the office. The level of responsibility, maturity and professionalism demonstrated by the majority of those involved was extremely high, making The Playboy... a very successful undertaking indeed. Hard work really does have its own rewards.

It is easy to get lost in the details, the specifics, trapped inside the box of our perceptions and considerations, confined to the singular events of that narrow moment in time. The William Head on Stage Theatre Company has suffered poor assessments in the past, when singular negative experiences by certain individuals are applied to the whole troupe. To appreciate and validate such a unique undertaking within a Canadian Federal Medium-Security Penitentiary, the opposite tact is warranted.

Out of Bounds was fortunate to receive short commentaries from a few of the participants in the Fall 2001 production. Commentaries on their positive experiences and personal perspectives of their time spent with the WHO’S family. Let’s put the shoe on the other foot and apply these particular positive accounts to the whole experience, as they represent most of those who took part but did not get the chance to be heard. The commentaries we received follow.

Brianna Bauman, actress:

Having spent twenty years of her life in Northern Manitoba, Brianna has developed a Precambrian toughness about her, enabling her to knock the head of any cowardly lad crazy enough to cross her path. Self-employed as a glass blower in Victoria, this hard working mom notes that this was her first acting experience in Victoria. She’d like to thank WHO’S for going out of their way to make the prison a comfortable second home. Her mother always said she’d end up in jail!

In her own words: Friday, October 19, I was stepping into the van for our routine ride from the gates to the gym, and I suddenly became aware of the little time I had left surrounded by this peculiar amalgamation of pain and beauty. Intimacy and loneliness.

The window was open, and I inhaled long and deep, then held my breath until I was certain the scent was locked in my mind forever. In the three minutes it took for us to reach our destination, I witnessed a heron scanning the water for dinner, an eagle perched upon a splendiferous branch, and of course, the deer. I asked myself, “How has it happened that I should find myself seeking peace of mind behind prison gates?”

When I proceeded to ready myself for the performance, stories flooded in about the swans that had gathered on the grounds for whatever their reason. I see an amazing connection between some of the inmates and their surroundings, and this is a good thing.

The Druids believe that the swan brings us “the qualities of the soul—love and depth, grace and beauty.” The swan’s skin and feathers were used to make the bard’s ceremonial cloak, and is precisely the animal one
would want to encounter before a
time of great creative release.

So you want to know what I’ve
gained the most from this experi-
ence? The realisation that I’m no
better a person than you, who com-
mitted a crime, regardless of the
severity of its nature. And yes, I
surprised myself by not wanting to
know, and by not caring what it is
you’ve done to wind up in this place.

In some shape or form, we’re
all rendered awe-struck or torn to
pieces by the same things — barbed
wire cannot separate this. However,
you are here and I’d be safe to as-
sume there’s somewhere else you’d
rather be. If nothing else, at least
hang on to your sense of self, or find
it. There’s peace in simply breath-
ing and listening — I know it. There’s
a god damn amazing symphony al-
most everywhere around you.

“The old tales of the swan show
that there is no separation from the
ones we love — only transformation
from one form to another. But to
continue our journey, in this world,
we need to be able to say ‘good-
bye’ to those we are separated from.” — The Druid Oracles

Dean Roberts, WHoS Board of
Directors, in his own words:

I woke up this morning with an
odd feeling of nostalgia. Last night
was the closing dinner after the
final performance of The Playboy of
the Western World. I am on the
Board of Directors for WHoS this
year and as it is a small board we
knew that our duties would overlap
one another.

A half-year ago I began this jour-
ney quite unaware of what to ex-
pect. I joined WHoS because I be-
lieve in the opportunities that it of-
fers to prisoners. I did not know
the amount of work that it would in-
volve. By July 22 my days started
at 7:30 in the morning in the office,
and would end at 9:30 p.m., still in

the office. That’s not to say it was
too much. I found that each day I
was more and more excited to go
to work. And now today, I feel like
a fish out of water. It’s over. There
is no need to be in the office at the
crack of dawn (until of course we
begin looking at the next production).

Someone asked me a few hours
ago how I felt about the whole ex-
perience, now that it is over. I
thought for a moment and replied
“richer.” I believe that I am nothing
more than the sum-total of all my
life’s experiences. Even the bad
experiences have gone into making
me who I am today. So, the last four
months I’ve had a wealth of quality
moments for me. Meeting and in-
teracting with the actresses, watch-
ing the director meld 12 people into
a unified family, preparing the the-
atre for and welcoming 1200 people
from society. Even the first tele-
phone calls I had to make to our
sponsors, now that was a scary
moment for me. I have been in
prison for only 8 years, but I was
completely out of touch with inter-
acting in a business-like manner.

Something else that was really
difficult for me, were the inter-
missions in the play. Each night I
would be in the “House Area” ensuring
everything was ready for the pa-
trons. The auditorium lights would
come up at the break and whoosh,
all these people rush back for re-
freshments: tea, coffee, juice and
cookies. At the start I felt a little
like a deer caught in the headlights.
But after ten shows I felt much more
comfortable in the rush of the crowd.

It is quite shocking to discover
how sheltered I have become. I have
always had family and friends visit-
ing, but put me in a room with hun-
dreds of strangers and I turn scared.
That is why I am so grateful to
WHoS for the opportunity to be in-
volved. I saw myself start to emerge
from the walls I have been behind
these past 8 years. Now, while I am
feeling the little regrets that this pro-
duction is over, I have already pulled
out a list of plays to read for the next
one. Because I know, although it
might look like things have slowed
down or even stopped, the excite-
ment is soon to start all over again.

If the chance to work with
WHoS ever passes your way, I say
take it — the rewards are many.

Richard Stille, Artistic Director:
Currently the artistic director
of Victoria’s Island Repertory
Company, he recently directed the
highly acclaimed production of
Terrence McNally’s Love! Valor!
Compassion! He has directed
many other productions for the
IRC including Clever as Paint,
Hard Hearts, The Writer’s Bloc,
Lonely Planet, and Sex, Drugs, Rock
and Roll and has assisted Roy
Surette at the Belfry Theatre on
several productions, and has di-
rected at Langham Court Theatre
many times, the most recent being
the upcoming production of Danc-
ing at Lughnashe. This will be fol-
lowed next spring with the IRC’s
production of Roddy Doyle’s
Brownbread. Richard has worked
in theatre, television and film for
nearly three decades, possessing
a M.F.A. in Theatre Direction, and
a Ph.D. in Psychology.

In his own words: Playboy of
the Western World was my third
production at William Head. Each
one has been very different, with
different challenges to each show.
The Three Penny Opera (Fall
1999) was my first show, a full-
blown musical, and my first time in-
side William Head Institution. There
are always some guys who have
never been on stage before, even a
high school production, so doing a
musical was a real challenge indeed.

My second WHoS experience
was No Room for Love (Spring

22 WINTER/DECEMBER 2001
2000), with a significantly smaller cast, yet all having previous experience. The challenge was that of "farce," which is a whole different style of acting; it's all about timing, technique, exaggeration, while all the fundamental rules of acting still apply. With farce however, all of these things and their importance quadruples.

The biggest challenge with The Playboy... was the accent. They did well, as the articulation was extremely difficult, as was creating a world of 1906 Ireland that the audience would believe convincingly. It was the most straightforward of the three plays from a directing perspective, as it was doing comedy but telling a meaningful story in the process. The notion of challenge is very important in theatre on the inside, because what you get out of anything in life is directly related to the effort you put forth. In this place, in William Head, there should never, never be any "easy" shows.

The experience of theatre is ephemeral. That is to say, theatre only exists in a point in time. When the show is over, when it's gone, it's gone, and in many ways so is a part of your family. I've found that people choose an actor's life because of the art, not the relationships, as theatre tends to be emotionally strong and short. The guys in here work so hard, so intensely, and the atmosphere of theatre is heightened reality anyway.

The lesson of letting go afterwards, of trusting someone without long-term expectation, lends itself to the process of maturity. It's an important lesson. In prison, as in life, no matter how much you need someone, you had better learn to take care of yourself first.

Editor's Epilogue:
And so the curtain is drawn, the stage lights turned low. Yet another remarkable production is completed. To all that took part, congratulations on your performances, your commitments, and your accomplishments.

Thanks Volunteers by Darren Getson

What does a volunteer mean to a prisoner? This is not an easy question to answer, as each prisoner has his own thoughts and feelings on what a volunteer represents and how we appreciate them. However, I believe that many prisoners may think the same as I, and can feel good about the volunteers for some of the following reasons.

A volunteer is a person who we can see on a regular basis. A person who comes to us and shares their time, thoughts, ideas, concerns, and empathy. They are people who go out of their way to give us a glimpse of a free world. A world that chooses to assist, care, and accept us for who we are. We are prisoners - people who stole a part of another person's freedom. Whether that was their freedom from fear, from injury, or from the loss of their innocence. The volunteer knows this, and also knows that we are people too, and thus they look beyond the labels we have attained. For this we are grateful. We appreciate the care they show in making time in their own lives to drive far distances on wet, cold nights to come and see us.

Volunteers show their caring in subtle ways. They listen, smile, and laugh with us, encouraging us to better ourselves. They support our character, thanking us for our knowledge. We learn from volunteers, and they learn from us.

A volunteer gives to us a person to reach out to. A person to care for, and to be cared by. We appreciate a gathering of diversity that is the melding of the volunteer and the prisoner. The time that is spent in our All Purpose Room, Chapel, or Gymnasium is precious, and we look forward to that time. We get to know the person that is the volunteer. There is a bond, and we appreciate that gift. We look forward to the occasion that is spent just drinking coffee, simply passing the time in meaningful conversation. We find knowledge, insight, and courage within the volunteer. We find strength in the change, and in their purpose. We glimpse and find the same within us.

We are grateful for the volunteer - for who he or she is. This is a person who we learn to trust. Trust with out thoughts, feelings, and emotions. In other words, ourselves. We know that the volunteer is just that, a person who goes out of their way because they choose to. No one has to care for us, or has to understand us. They do so because they believe that it is the right thing to do.

They know that there is good within this prison, that behind the barbed wire, the locked doors, the walls and labels, there is a person, one not so different than anyone else. We appreciate that acceptance, and strive to be people who volunteers can live side-by-side with when we are released.

We appreciate that the volunteers share their experiences with others in the community. This helps to bridge the gap that is ever present between the community and the prisoner. To belong to a world that is larger than our own, this is the true gift of the volunteer.

So we say "Thank you," to the Volunteers of William Head, and all the volunteers in other prisons, and a special thanks to the crew that assists in the preparation and setup of the Volunteer Appreciation Night that happens each year, sponsored by the WHI Lifer group.
Tidbits from Memory Lane
by William MacAllister

I was President of the Inmate Committee at Archambault maximum security penitentiary in Quebec during the January through May 1976 strike (complete work stoppage) that subsequently led to the 1976-77 Parliamentary Sub-Committee Report that was headed by Liberal MP Mark MacGuigan. Thirteen Members of Parliament toured all maximum security prisons across Canada and met with Inmate Committees, CSC personnel, criminologists and social workers in the field of penology.

Our decision to strike was sealed on October 15, 1975 when the Archambault Inmate Committee submitted a written ultimatum to the authorities – if they did not change their attitude with respect to genuine discussion and action in regard to IC requests that we would go on strike in ninety days. To put it bluntly, we were fed up with the Warden’s
tually instituted over the years. Some will come as a surprise to the younger generation that presently make up the CSC’s new millennium prison population. They’ve often taken them for granted.

(1) President, Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer positions on Inmate Committees became recognized CSC prisoner work assignments. Previously, all IC work was

(4) We prolonged the strike until we had obtained a firm commitment from the CSC to implement contact visiting with our friends and relatives from the “outside” in all maximum security institutions. We submitted renovation plans for the proposed V&C area that would accommodate contact visits. This eventually became a reality around 1979-80.

(5) We submitted an extensively researched proposal to the CSC for conjugal visits based primarily upon some Scandinavian countries’ successful conjugal visiting programs. Also, we were surprised to learn that Mississippi was the first state in the U.S.A. to have conjugal visiting on weekends way back in the 1930’s for those prisoners who toiled in the cotton fields and performed other slave-labor assignments. Millhaven maximum became the first Canadian penitentiary to experience Private Family Visits in 1982. These first PFV’s, which took place in a trailer brought inside the prison’s walls, led to the present-day policy.

(6) We submitted a proposal whereby a prisoner could establish guidelines with his classification team with respect to when he would be given serious consideration for a transfer to a lower security institution. This consideration was to be based on other factors besides simply one’s sentence. These factors

favorite four responses: (1) Denied for security reasons. (2) Lack of personnel. (3) Insufficient funds in the budget. And when hard pressed

(2) A permanent locale was accorded to all Inmate Committees, replacing the antiquated filing system that we kept stored in cardboard boxes under our cell beds.

(3) The IC executive was granted official access to visit fellow prisoners in solitary confinement (the “hole”) and segregation units on a weekly basis.

Shor
takes

done on a volunteer basis during our leisure time.

24 WINTER/DECEMBER 2001
included prior record, educational programs, vocational training, special programs such as AA and NA, psychological therapy and counseling, and naturally a person's overall conduct and family support. At that time, in French this was called a *Plan de Sejour*. Now the CSC calls it the Cascading Security Level principle.

(7) We fought for and won the right to have an attorney, representative, or family member(s) present at our parole hearings.

(8) We fought for and won the right to be notified in writing the reasons why the National Parole Board denied us parole, when they did. A denial had to be based on valid, substantiated reasons.

(9) We won the right to appeal a denial to an independent body of parole commissioners at the NPB Head Office in Ottawa.

(10) We requested that all CSC personnel be compelled to wear name tags so that prisoners could accurately identify employees in grievances and legal complaints. Prior to the 1976 strike no CSC personnel wore name tags.

(11) We requested that prisoners be accorded the responsibility of operating our own commissary, instead of CSC personnel dispensing pre-ordered canteen items once every two weeks. This was implemented in the mid to late 1980's.

(12) We requested that a prisoner's incoming and outgoing mail not be read or censored by CSC personnel, but merely perused in conformance with basic security measures for intercepting drugs, money orders, cheques and/or cash currency.

These are just some of the main issues that I recall from memory. However, there were many other significant suggestions in the fifty-six page brief that we submitted to the CSC and the Honourable

---

**Out of Bounds Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Howard Society</th>
<th>West Coast Prison Justice Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2675 Bridge Street</td>
<td>2459 Pauline Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria BC V8T 4Y4</td>
<td>Abbotsford BC V2S 3S1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Howard Society</th>
<th>Law Centre Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Head Visitors Program</td>
<td>1221 Broad Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Maxfield, Coordinator</td>
<td>Victoria BC V8W 2A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phone (250) 386-3428</td>
<td>phone &amp; fax (250) 480-0339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victoria Community Chaplaincy</th>
<th>Restorative Justice Coalition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1611 Quadra St, &quot;The Cottage&quot;</td>
<td>PO Box 4000 Stn A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria BC V8W 2L5</td>
<td>Victoria BC V8X 3Y8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phone (250) 480-7480</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Robert Gaucher</th>
<th>Alternatives to Violence Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Prisoners on Prisons</em></td>
<td>Victoria, British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Ontario</td>
<td>phone (250) 386-2887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 450 Stn A</td>
<td>Fraser Region Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135 - 25 University Road</td>
<td>Justice Initiatives Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa ON K1N 6N5</td>
<td>Victim Offender Mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 - 20678 Eastleigh Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Langley BC V3A 4C4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spirit of the People</th>
<th>Rittenhouse: A New Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suite 507 185 - 911 Yates St</td>
<td>202 - 157 Carlton Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria BC V8V 4Y9</td>
<td>Toronto ON M5A 2K3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phone (250) 708-0377</td>
<td>phone (416) 972-9992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fax (250) 708-0311</td>
<td>fax (416) 923-8742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prisoners Legal Services</th>
<th>e-mail <a href="mailto:ritten@interlog.com">ritten@interlog.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205 - 32450 Simon Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbotsford BC V2T 4J2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Pollak, Managing Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phone (604) 853-8712</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fax (604) 853-1038</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toll free number for prisoners</td>
<td>1-888-839-8889</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Society of Friends</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831 Fern Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria BC V8R 1S2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**share your resources with us**

*Out of Bounds* magazine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PO Box 4000 Stn A</th>
<th>Victoria BC V8X 3Y8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Francis Fox, then Solicitor General of Canada.

The 1976 strike was dedicated in memory of two previously very active Archambeault Inmate Committee members: Marcel Lawrence, who died in segregation at Archambeault; and Bob Landers, who was subsequently transferred to the Ontario Region, where he died in segregation at Millhaven.

Liberty and fairness are the panacea for our everyday life. We must never take them for granted. We must guard them with diligence, with vigilance, lest they slowly erode like the ocean’s fragile coastline.

Judicial Review by Evan C. Evans

Last June I had written an article about my upcoming Judicial Review; what it meant to me; how I interpreted the process; what I expected from it. Since that time a lot has changed. I withdrew my application for Judicial Review out of shear frustration. Ever since the new screening process has been implemented (Clifford Olson 1998) Judicial Review has become a bureaucratic nightmare that is indicative to a wearing down, screening out, and backlogging of cases. It’s a kind of attrition that is designed to discourage applicants through the tactics of delay, delay, and delay. Albeit, if you get through the two-pronged screening process – Legal Aid and the Court – you’ll then be subjected to a fraternity of ruthlessness.

Personally I’ve never liked lawyers. They have a parasitic propensity to make a living off the misfortunes of others, and to perpetuate a type of obduracy that is based solely upon your ability to pay – and pay you must. Once you’ve been sucked dry, and there is nothing left to give, then you’re sold down the river to ponder your misfortunes. God help those who are destitute (as most inmates are), because any chance of an early hearing lies directly in how well you present yourself, or how winnable your case looks to the lawyer. Unfortunately, the legal representation that an inmate requires for Judicial Review lies with someone who specialises in Prison Law. And as we all know, only a few lawyers who live close to the blood supply have a monopoly on this type of law.

My intention is not to discourage the imminent few that are waiting for Judicial Review. I know you’ll be experiencing plenty of discouragement soon enough. However, there’s a need to be aware of the process when thinking about Judicial Review. You need to think about the reasons why you want to go through the process. If your reasons are that you’re trying to get out of prison early – forget it! You’ve already started out from the wrong premise. This is not about getting out of prison early. This is about the moral self, and humbling yourself before victims and the Court to make an apology. This is about taking full responsibility for your actions through a public display of remorse. You have to try to convince a jury, and the Court, not only by your conduct over the past seventeen or eighteen years, but that you have internalised and understood the significance of your past actions through your remorse. If you don’t know yourself forwards and backwards – you’re wasting your time. You don’t deserve a chance to embarrass yourself, or have the right to insult other people’s intelligence. You need to know your crime cycle, thinking errors, and relapse prevention plan, and you had better be accountable in your humility. Otherwise some prosecutor is going to expose you for the bum you really are. I could handle the rejection of not having my eligibility reduced, but I could never handle being exposed as a fraud in a public court.

Let’s say everything goes right for you – that you get your hearing, and you’re able to display remorse. You convince a jury that you’ve changed. You even present a solid plan for the future. People are lined up in the courtroom to support you. The jury is so moved they reduce your eligibility to allow you to go before the parole board right away. Then what?

Even if you’re Jesus Christ incarnate, the parole board is never going to give you a day parole before completing a series of Escorted Temporary Absences. There’s going to be a slow assimilation back into the community before any day parole is considered. The average length of incarceration in Canada on a Life-25 sentence – is 25 years. So when you’re thinking and preparing for your upcoming Judicial Review, think of why you need to go through this process, and be prepared to do a little bit more than just showing up.

One of the primary reasons why I chose to withdraw my application for Judicial Review was because of an apathetic lawyer who wanted to represent me on her own terms. Furthermore, I had reason to believe that my victims didn’t want anything to do with the process, let alone face
me in a courtroom. The only people who were lining up to face me were policemen and Brink’s guards – which is fine. I need to apologise to them too. However, once I had learned that the immediate victims of my index crime would not be present, I started second-guessing my own reasons for wanting to go. Although the lawyer seemed happy that the victims wouldn’t be there, I needed to face my victims. I wanted to hear what they thought about me – how their lives were affected. I can handle the emotional truth: that I’m a son-of-a-bitch, or I should never get out of jail – so be it. The truth is always painful, but I have a responsibility to my victims, and I believe they have a responsibility as well.

Certainly victims are not obligated to offenders for anything, nor should they be, but isn’t there an obligation by all parties to try to make sure that this sort of crime never happens again. I’m not talking about locking offenders up for the rest of their natural lives, but making sure that a moral responsibility is inherent within the offender. If an offender is truly remorseful, and he’s demonstrated over a period of time (20 years) that his values and attitudes have changed, what are the possibilities that he’ll re-offend again violently? According to statistics, less than one percent of those convicted of murder commit another violent crime. I know victims would say that it’s one percent too many, but unless we’re prepared to bring back the death penalty or implement life without parole, there should be a moral responsibility to make sure that all safeguards are in place.

I don’t blame the victims for not wanting to attend my Judicial Review. Why should they have to pull a scab off an old wound? The pain and anguish is just too much to bear – to think a killer might go free early. If the circumstances were reversed, I wouldn’t go either. I could never forgive, and surely I could never forget. I would want to show up at parole hearings and make sure the killer never gets out. I’d lobby Ottawa for harsher and longer sentences, and I’d probably join a victims group. I’d want to do everything in my power to make sure that killers like myself could never get the chance to kill again. Hell, I’d even hire a lawyer to organise the movement.

In the meantime, I think I’ll just let time take care of itself. I’ll save the Canadian taxpayers the cost of an expensive hearing, and more importantly, I’ll deny the lawyers the chance of bullying up to the bar on my behalf.

Merry Ho, Ho!
by James M. Dahnke

Although I had plenty of offers to help, it was easier for me to work alone, so I was unable to influence my brother’s behaviour. After an hour my sister-in-law informed me that if my brother were to make one more offensive comment she was going to kick his ass. I had had enough of his pestering, annoying, and offensive behaviour myself, and asked him to leave before things got carried away. The next thing I knew the fight was on.

We managed to get him outside, but he wasn’t satisfied yet. He kicked out a three-hundred dollar window, and the cops showed up. Everything turned out horribly. My mother-in-law was incredibly impressed with my pugilistic skills … not! But in the end the turkey was great. Merry Ho, Ho!

A Santa’s Story &
The Grinch
by Jon Brown

It was 1992 and my wife and I had decided to have everyone over for Christmas dinner. Everyone not only included both of our families, but also our friends. It worked out to approximately thirty people and one extraordinarily large turkey.

Being a Chef by profession, I was not concerned about providing food for all of these people. I was more worried about thirty dysfunctional loved ones being in the same house together. My brother was one of the first to show up and was half-cut when he arrived. I was well aware of how belligerent he could be when smashed, so my first order of business was to issue him a severe warning on the consequences of his drinking. In other words, if he pissed me off I was going to knuckle him. I was, of course, also attempting to create a good impression with my new mother-in-law, something that didn’t last too long.
too flattering watching old Saint Nick cursing vulgarities to himself. He slid his legs over the edge of the roof and rested them on the drainpipe running the height of the building, only to find that his belly was hindering his progress. Jerking his body back and forth several times, trying to free his hung up girth, he lost the grip on his left hand, causing him to flail and fall the foot or so until his right hand caught the weight. Another series of private curses, and he was on his way down.

He struggled to shimmy his way down the drainpipe, but had exhausted himself and fell the last five feet or so and landed in a heap on the ground, amid the shrubs and bushes that bordered the building. After a few moments his head poked through the top of the bush, reminding me of a groundhog. His red hat was askew and sweat was beading from his brow. He nervously looked around until he was certain he had not been seen, then emerged from the shrubs and straightened himself up. Adjusting his red suit here and there, and picking a few branches from the bush out of his hat, he retrieved the oversized bag, which he had thrown down before his embarrassing attempt at a gracious descent. He threw the bag over his shoulder, visibly straining his back, and shielding his face from the pelting snow, shuffled off, limping into the darkness.

I removed myself from the window from which I witnessed such a scene, and lay back on my bed to ponder this scenario. What exactly had I just witnessed? I could not help but chuckle to myself. It could not be. Could I have been wrong all these years? Did a jolly fat man in a big red suit really deliver gifts to those who had been good? I shook my head again. Well, judging from the performance I had seen, he wasn’t all that jolly, but does Santa Clause really exist?

What I saw seemed to point to the conclusion that he does, though he certainly wasn’t as swift and agile as all those children’s stories make him out to be. Moreover, what was he doing here, at William Head Penitentiary? Was his list not updated?

I sat up and looked out the window again, only to see the snow whirling around and bouncing off the pane. As I started to lay back again I heard the shrieking of a Klaxon horn and the shuffle of footfalls in the slushy snow below. I guess Santa realised there are no chimneys here, and attempted a front door entrance. Silly fool, I thought, and leaped up to look just in time to see his fatness running back towards the building where I first saw him. A shot rang out, and he slipped and fell face first on the ground, but he was up again quickly. He threw his bag away in a hasty attempt to lighten his load.

I can see flashlight beams now, coming from all directions, shouts and the sound of people running.

"There he is," someone yelled, and another shot cracked in the darkness.

Santa hit the drainpipe and vaulted himself up like a cougar in a tree, trying to escape the slobbering pack of hounds on his trail. Again his belly was a hindrance at the lip of the roof, but this was no match for the sheer adrenaline caused by the chase. He heaved, and with a heavy clang his belt buckle broke open and fell to the ground as he pulled himself over the edge. As he stood up on the roof, a rapid fire burst from a rifle below sent him sprawling. He cautiously brought himself to stand again, to give the finger and mutter something to his pursuers below, before he disappeared from sight.

I don’t know exactly what it was that I just saw happen. It all transpired too quickly for rational interpretation. Suddenly the sound of thousands of bells jingled and faded into the distance until the only sound that remained was the deafening Klaxon horn. That damn Klaxon horn which persisted to wail, until it finally blended and became one with the alarm clock buzzing on my bedside table. It had all been a dream, but it was truly disturbing none the less. It was, after all, Christmas day.

The Grinch

After a bit of thought regarding this dreamscape I came to the conclusion that 2001 is going to be a sad year for Christmas, if only because of heightened security concerns. My only comfort in this thought is that there will not be a
Christmas at the White House this year. How could there be? Would Santa be able to cope when faced with a squad of trigger-happy F-16 pilots? How would they cope with engaging an unannounced and potentially hostile fat man over the skies of D.C., with no security clearance, even lacking a properly filed flight plan? It probably would not be very pretty, merry, or jolly at all.

I do not celebrate the Christmas season. I have not for many years now, but for some reason it still seems appropriate to hum “I’m dreaming of a white Christmas” when we get a little of the white stuff.

I used to go to midnight mass every year, like a good catholic, until one Christmas Eve when I was about eleven years old. I just told my Mom that I didn’t want to go that year, and she raised no objection whatsoever. It really makes me wonder if she was taking me all those years because she thought I actually wanted to be there. Yeah right, all I really remember of mass was being really creeped out by the various hymns and chants which, if delivered in a lower key could probably whip the parishioners into a frenzy not unlike the crusades of the middle ages. The only other memory I hold is always waking up as the people filed out at three in the morning. Therefore, I would have to say that it was in no way the high point of my year. So, I objected, and we were finally free.

We exchanged gifts and other formal requirements of the holiday for another few years. A dinner and drinks. Well, no drinks for me, but you get the idea. Then one year it was gone, never to return. Christmas became just another day, which rightfully it was, like June 3 or October 19.

Sure, we still wish each other a merry Christmas, and even send a card, but we don’t mean it. Not in the holiday sense of celebration, anyway. We may as well be wishing each other a merry February 9. Not that our love is anything less than in other families, but I think that Christmas has become extremely over commercialised and is really only meant to please children and capitalists.

This may sound like a harsh opinion, and maybe the meaning is lost in me, but far too many people give gifts at Christmas. Not because they feel generous and happy, not even necessarily because they can afford it, but because there has been a feeling of obligation attached to Christmas. Most families get together and have a great family experience, and still others get together and fight every year. Some individuals experience the utmost happiness, others, the depths of unimaginable despair. Strange phenomenon if you ask me. Makes me glad to be of the agnostic anarchistic variety, and thus not prone to any real celebration of anything other than perhaps life itself.

I have spent four of my “anti-Christmas’s” in prison. None have stood out as special to me. Why would they? Sure, we get treats like cookies and a Salvation Army gift pack. We also get turkey mystery surprise. Is it real or simulated (sometimes you just cannot tell), but when we start to anticipate or outright expect these things, I think we have lost more than we’ve gained. The same can be said for those on the outside, perhaps more so.

This may sound like a depressing interpretation of a traditional holiday, but I think what I’m trying to get at is that we shouldn’t need a close to family, give to people, or eat a hearty meal. Every day is a holiday as long as we want it to be, and make it to be. I could probably use some sugar in my diet to help sweeten some of the sourness of my personality. I may even come off as a grinch of some sort, but hey, at least I never stole Christmas.

Merry Christmas, and to all a ‘bah humbug.’

Diet & Exercise
how to lose Xmas weight

For moderately overweight adults, combinations of regular aerobic exercise (walking, jogging, biking) and diet offer considerably more flexibility in achieving a negative calorie balance and accompanying fat loss than either exercise alone or diet alone. In fact, the addition of exercise to the program of weight control may facilitate a more permanent fat loss than would total reliance on simply reducing food intake.

How can an overweight person, using exercise and diet while attempting to maintain a prudent weight loss of about a pound a week, reduce body mass by 20 pounds? Under ideal conditions, even under the best circumstances, 20 weeks would be required to achieve a 20-pound fat loss. With this goal, the average weekly reduction would have to be 3500 calories, whereas the daily calorie intake must be reduced by 500 calories. (A pound of fat equals about 3500 calories. Five hundred calories is equal to about one large piece of cheesecake or a peanut butter and jam sandwich.)

One-half hour of moderate exercise (which burns about 350 calories) performed 3 days a week adds 1050 calories to the weekly caloric reduction. Consequently, the weekly caloric intake (by food intake) would have to be reduced by only 2400 calories instead of 3500 calories to lose the desired one pound of fat each week. If the number of exercise days is increased from 3 to 5, food intake need only be reduced.
by 250 calories each day (a small piece of cake or pie). If the duration of the 5-day per week workouts were prolonged from 30 minutes to 1 hour, then no reduction in food intake would be necessary for weight loss to occur, because the required 3500 caloric deficit would have been created entirely through exercise.

Clearly, physical activity can be used effectively by itself, or in combination with mild dietary restriction, to create an effective loss of body fat. Either approach is likely to produce fewer feelings of intense hunger and other psychological stresses that occur with a program of weight loss that relies exclusively on caloric reduction. Perhaps of equal or greater significance is that the use of both aerobic and resistance exercise (weight training) in a weight-reducing program provides protection against a loss in lean tissue usually observed when weight loss is achieved by diet alone.

The bottom-line: If you want to lose 20 pounds guys you have to get off your butt for about a 30 - 45 minute walk each day, or spend about 30 minutes either on the stationary bike or jogging. Along with the exercise, cut out one desert a day, or cut out the late-night sandwich before heading to bed. In 20 weeks you will lose the 20 pounds. And with this method your chances of keeping the weight off are better then if you try to just diet. Good luck.

(editor’s note: The above article was adapted from Exercise Physiology by McArkle, Katch and Katch, 1991 edition.)

**Choices: a philosophical point of view by Raymond S. Kritz**

Many times in our lives we hear people tell us, “Oh, but that was your choice. You chose to do, or not to do, this or that.” But was there really any free-will choice to begin with? Do we, as human beings, always have the power of a free-will choice in an ultimate and realistic sense of the world?

Whenever I contemplate this concept of a free-will choice, I always find myself thinking of the movie “Sophie’s Choice.” In this movie, set during the Second World War, a young single mother of two very young children, one boy, one girl, finds herself faced with the most difficult situation any mother must face, that of the safety of her children.

The two young children are taken away from Sophie by the Nazi’s and held at gunpoint, while she is held back and restrained. Sophie struggles, pleading and begging the Nazi commander not to take her children. The Nazi commander replies to Sophie in the following manner: “You may keep one of your children, but the other will be taken away.” (And we all know what will happen if that is done.) “Which of your children do you wish to keep?”

In this analogy Sophie is faced with making a choice between losing both her children or keeping one of them, while the other is certain to die in the hands of the Nazi’s. What is Sophie to do? How does a mother, filled with love and grief for her two young children, choose one child over the other? Can it realistically be said that Sophie had a free-will choice? Or would it be more realistic to say that she really was faced with no choice at all?

In a spiritual comparison, it can be said that a person in search of Truth and Liberation from suffering and rebirth, such as the individual Buddhist, is like the mother. The path of Truth and Liberation can be said to be one child. The means and ability to pursue, study and learn the path of Truth and Liberation can be said to be the other child. Both are equally important. Both equally loved and cared deeply for. Both are needed for a desired end-result. Yet, faced with the dilemma of being made to choose one over the other, can a devout Buddhist, or any other person for that matter, realistically choose one over the other and hope to find their desired result, that being Truth and Liberation from suffering and rebirth? Can it also be asked if the devout Buddhist, or any other person, actually had a choice at all? The answer to both questions would have to be: No.

To be forced by another to choose one over the other is an unrealistic expectation, and no choice at all. For true fulfilment and joy can only be achieved when both children, or elements, exist simultaneously. Therefore, both must exist as an option in order to be considered a free-will choice, if any choice is to be made.

The concept of choice, at the ultimate level, can only exist, in a realistic sense, if one of the choices involved can produce a desired result for the chooser. If no free will on the part of the chooser, or desirable result, can be achieved, then can the concept of choice realistically be claimed, or would it be considered a “no-choice” concept instead?

For example, if a person were told that they were going to be killed, and that they were to choose between being shot or hung, how can that person be said to have a free-will choice when that person’s desired result is to live, not die. However, if the question of choice were put, “Do you wish to live or die?” and the desired result is to live, then it can be reasonably said that the person was given, and had made, a free-will choice.

The answer to the question of “Sophie’s Choice” is that there was
no free-will choice offered to her, but rather it was an ultimatum for which she was forced to make a decision based on extreme duress with a confused and distressed consciousness.

So it can be reasonably stated that not every decision made in a person’s life, be it materialistic or spiritual, is based on that person having a free-will choice, as some would have you believe. Because, as has been demonstrated in this article, sometimes there is no free-will choice leading to a desired result to begin with, only an ultimatum leading to further suffering.

So the next time someone tells you, “That was your choice. You chose to do, or not to do, this or that.” Ask yourself if you were actually faced with a free-will choice, or an ultimatum, that is, the no-choice concept. When you are able to answer this question for yourself, perhaps then you will be able to put your own mind at ease.

Success in Death?
by Dean Roberts

Jesus is viewed as somewhat of an enigma. Some people consider him to be very much of a success; others would see him as a failure. In his day he violated all the precepts of Jewish tradition. He wasn’t of the tribe of Levi, out of which the priests came. He was of the tribe of Judah, from which many of the kings descended. He was seen and anticipated to be the long awaited Messiah – the deliver of Israel.

John the Baptist had gone before Him preparing the people to receive Him. Yet, John himself fell into doubt as to whether He was the One or not. What confused John was that he expected one who would restore Israel to the glory it had known under David. Instead he got someone who preached mercy, grace, and forgiveness. One who also associated with the riff-raff of society.

Jesus had some odd teachings that did nothing to endear Him to the masses. In fact He often made costly and unreasonable demands of people who certainly could have helped Him financially and politically. If He was the King of the Jews, He certainly was noted for using unorthodox means to achieving His goals. When people wanted to crown Him King, He would slip away. He seemed to go out of His way to irritate the power brokers by healing on Sabbaths, insulting them, and stymieing them on questions of doctrine. Although He was hailed as King as He entered Jerusalem, He was crucified within the week by a group of angry, jealous, and self-seeking leaders. These leaders enjoyed the support of many of the same people who earlier had been laying palms and robes before Him.

When they came to the garden to arrest Him, He didn’t fight. The men were ready, after all, wasn’t this what the Kingdom was all about. At His hearing before Pilate He remained silent. It was His opportunity to pursue His innocence, but He didn’t take it. Upon the cross they mocked Him. “If you be the Son of God...” echoed in His ears as He hung there – the same challenge that Satan had thrown at him in the wilderness. We know that He could have vindicated Himself at that very moment, for He, Himself had said that He could have asked His father, and He would have sent forth a legion of angels. But He didn’t.

He died as a failure in the eyes of the citizens of Jerusalem, in the eyes of His disciples, and in the eyes of the world. That was Good Friday. He died a success in the eyes of His father, having completed all that was asked of him. Philippians 2:5-11 says: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very same nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.”

The ways of the Kingdom are not the ways of the world.

Claire Culhane Memorial Bench Project

Claire Culhane was the champion of those people whose plight was ignored by society. She was a person of integrity and lived by her word. She fought the unpopular fight to bring to public awareness the injustices faced by many people throughout the world, especially prisoners.

Friends of Claire Culhane are raising funds and support for a Memorial Bench to be installed in John Hendry Park at Trout Lake. For a tax deductible donation please make your cheque payable to:

The New Page Foundation
Claire Culhane Memorial Bench Project
Post Office Box 149
2496 East Hastings Street
Vancouver BC V5K 1Z1
phone (604) 318-8178
(evenings and weekends)
Upon Reflection: Outward Bound

by Patrick Rafferty

When people mistakenly refer to our publication as Outward Bound, something that happens all too often, I politely (but not without some consternation) explain that Outward Bound is a hands-on correctional program that helps troubled youth raise their self-esteem and learn coping mechanisms through cooperation and accomplishment. While Out of Bounds is a hands-on correctional program that helps troubled adults raise their self-esteem and learn coping mechanisms through cooperation and accomplishment. Hey wait a minute ... they’re pretty much the same, in both form and function.

Hopefully I’m going to be outward bound in the very near future. I have 15 years in on a Life-18 sentence, which means I’m finally eligible for day parole. Things look pretty good for me with respect to my parole hearing. I’ve done my time, followed my correctional plan, kept my nose clean, and I’ve been going out into the community on escorted passes for the past three years without incident. During the eight years that I’ve spent at William Head, I’ve been able to build some strong community support in Victoria and the surrounding area. Although I’m originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba (where I committed my crime), I hope to get a conditional release to a halfway house in Victoria.

During the whole time that I’ve been at William Head, I’ve had the distinct honour and delightful pleasure of working for Out of Bounds. I don’t know that I’ve ever had a more rewarding experience. One thing I know for sure, it’s the longest job I’ve ever stayed at one particular job. I guess that’s because it’s more than just a job, it’s an important learning opportunity. I’ve always enjoyed learning how to do different things – it’s a lifelong process that makes being alive much more meaningful.

Although I would like to, I can’t take credit for the idea and existence of Out of Bounds. Our magazine has a long and storied past. It came into being on September 4, 1980 when a coterie of cons who were involved in the University program at William Head decided (no doubt over several cups of coffee, amidst the scheming drone of rejuvenated minds at work) that they needed an outlet for their new-found intellectual fervour. Although the premiere issue had a long title, Out of Bounds: William Head Institution Newsletter, it had a short cargo. Four double-sided 8½ × 11-inch pages of text and cartoons, all held together by a staple in the upper left-hand corner. Using a typical newsletter format, the founding felons incorporated an atypical logo: a medieval woodcut depicting what I believe to be the town fool thumbing his nose at society – very apropos I might say. That inaugural issue quoted Oscar Wilde from his “Ballad of Reading Gaol” on its front page, an occurrence I’ll touch upon later.

The vilest deeds like poison weeds, Bloom well in prison-air;
It is only what is good in man
That wastes and withers there:

The Xeroxed newsletter started out as a weekly, but within two months it was cut back to publishing bi-weekly, due to a lack of submissions, as well as difficulties in procuring a typewriter, paper and printing capabilities. Two months later, in January of 1981, the newsletter became a monthly, a schedule it stuck with until September of 1982, when it became a bi-monthly for one issue and then back to being a monthly in November of that year. By this time the content had increased dramatically; up to 40 pages (double sided), the title had been trimmed to Out of Bounds Monthly, and the format was fitted with three staples down the left side, to give it more of a magazine feel. Gone was the old nose-thumbing logo, replaced by different drawings on each successive cover. The original nose-thumbing attitude, however, still ran rife throughout the magazine.

In October of 1983 the magazine went back to being a bi-monthly and dramatically changed its format. Using 8½ × 14-inch paper, folded in half and saddle-stapled, the magazine, now simply titled Out of Bounds, became a 7 × 8½-inch booklet with 30 to 40 pages. This design change was intended to make reading easier and mailing cheaper. From its very inception to the present, the magazine has been sent to interested readers and subscribers beyond the barbed wire.

This brief history of the magazine is somewhat sketchy in that I am garnering the information from an incomplete collection of old cop-
ies that were generously lent to me by the William Head librarian Kim Remple. Keeping this in mind, it appears that *Out of Bounds* became a quarterly publication at the beginning of 1990, then disappeared half-way through 1991. Throughout this long, arduous journey the periodical suffered severe bouts of censorship by the prison administration, and on several occasions lapsed into temporary obscurity due to this censorship and/or a lack of interest on the part of the inmate publishers.

In 1993 Steve Foote, who had just recently arrived at William Head from Mission Institution, decided to get the magazine up and running again, and I came along (also transferred from Mission) just in time to help him with the “resurrection issue” that came out in June of that year. At that time, we were told that the magazine hadn’t put out an issue for two years, so I assume the 1991 issue mentioned above was the last in that line. With its rebirth, we hoped to create a prison publication that was different from all the rest. When I say we, I have to give credit where credit is due. A lot of the glory for the longevity of our current uninterrupted publishing run (eight years and counting), and the popularity of *Out of Bounds*, is due to my friend and mentor Steve Foote. Although Steve only co-edited the magazine with me for one year before moving over to WHoS, as president of the theatre company, the pertinacious inspiration and positive influence he provided has stayed with me to this day.

By that time Steve had quite a bit of experience putting out prison publications, and he was more than eager to share some of the “tricks of the trade” with me. He showed me how to develop a vision of what the magazine should be, chart a course to realise that vision, then stick to that course no matter what hazards the journey may reveal. We wanted *Out of Bounds* to be more than just a newsletter, subsequently earning greater prestige than the usual “joint newspaper,” so we added magazine to our title and admonished anyone who called it otherwise. We went back to the 8½ × 11-inch format, but printed the front and back covers on heavy, canary coloured cover-stock that gave the magazine a unique, permanent look and feel. We filled it with 40 pages (on average) of interesting non-fiction articles, fictional short stories, poetry and humour, then bound it all with three staples down the left-hand side to keep with the magazine make-up.

On our masthead page we permanently placed a quote by Oscar Wilde, without knowing that the premiere issue from 1980 (as mentioned earlier) had quoted the illustrious author cum convict. The new quote read, “I need not remind you that mere expression is to an artist the supreme and only mode of life. It is by utterance we live. Of the many, many things for which I have to thank the Governor there is none for which I am more grateful than for his permission to write fully and at as great a length as I desire.”

With each new issue we tried to publish an eclectic collection of submissions, with the hope that each and every reader would find something that piqued their personal interest. We had a copy of Robert Gaucher’s article, “The Canadian Penal Press: A Documentation and Analysis” (*Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Autumn, 1989), and from page 4 we learned that “A distinction needs to be made between what I define as ‘outside directed magazines’ and ‘inside directed or joint magazines.’ Outside directed magazines are intended to
serve as a means of communication with the Canadian public, and therefore feature analysis of contemporary criminal-justice issues and serious prose on the experience of criminalization, incarceration and recidivism. Joint magazines are directed at the population of a particular prison and focus on reporting institutional activities such as sports, social events and club endeavours, and on providing information on new programs and legislation, coming events and internal news. Both provide insight into the perspectives and understanding of prisoners and the everyday experience of prison life in Canada.

But with Out of Bounds we amalgamated some of the outside directed aspects with some of the inside directed and then took it one step further, making it a truly unique prison publication. We intermixed the in-depth communication aspect of the outside directed with the inside directed reporting on institutional programs and activities (so both prisoners and the public could get an inkling of what’s going on in our peninsular penitentiary), then invited and encouraged the public to send us submissions, so the communication aspect of the outside directed designation would become a two-way dialogue. Also, we canvassed community-based prisoner advocacy groups, and organisations devoted to helping prisoners during their incarceration and upon their release, to send us information so we could regularly publish “outside resources,” and thus improve and extend the inside directed aspect. Subsequently, with our hybrid publication we were able to effectively breach the barbed wire that separates the ‘inside’ community from the ‘outside’ one.

Three years into our publishing run we acquired a binding machine, so ever since the Spring 1996 issue the black plastic ring-bindings have added another important cosmetic complement to the magazine’s presentation. Then with the Winter 1999 issue we changed editors and completely overhauled the layout and design. We went with white coverstock, front and back, and put a different photo taken somewhere inside William Head on each successive cover, rather than the prison art that we had previously featured. Although most publications try to maintain a consistent look over long periods of time, believing that consistency breeds familiarity and familiarity ensures a faithful following, they do need to make wholesale design changes every so often to keep up with society’s changing styles. Consequently, part of the complete overhaul involved changing our original logo and adding another word to the title, becoming Out of Bounds prison magazine, a more definitive distinction. Then with the Fall 2000 issue we changed editors again and went back to putting prison art on the covers, due to a substantial urging by our readership.

The educational experience that comes from publishing a prison magazine is truly unique and indescribably valuable. It is far beyond the scope of this particular article to discuss the means and ends of prison pedagogy. It’s difficult enough trying to come up with a working definition of education within the custodial milieu. If education involves learning, when you’re sentenced to do a semester in the ‘school of hard knocks’ you’ll learn a difficult lesson every day if you’re not careful. The pattern of education a prisoner-initiated enterprise can provide extends well beyond the ‘correctional’ purpose of educational programs the CSC provides. The tutelage encountered while participating in a prisoner-initiated enterprise such as Out of Bounds speaks more to the psychological and intellectual well-being of the participants during their incarceration, as opposed to the illusive spectre of rehabilitation that CSC programs are supposed to cater to.

One peculiarity of the ‘medical model’ of corrections, the model most in use today, presupposes that criminals are inflicted with some sort of social ill, and a stint in the penitentiary will somehow (with the aid of countless programs, constant badgering, and a pinch of punishment) miraculously cure this ill so the ‘rehabilitated’ offender can return to society as a law-abiding citizen. Unfortunately, part of this ‘cure’ involves being separated from and scapegoated by society; it involves being labelled, dehumanised and degraded; it involves the loss of rights, self-respect and self-determination; but more importantly, it involves the loss of community. I believe that most crime comes about when the perpetrator loses touch with the essence of community and the commonweal essential to its survival.

One of the more important qualities of community that I turned my back on when I entered a criminal lifestyle was the practise of joining together as a group to accomplish common goals for the good of the whole community. Unfortunately, my involvement in crime resulted in my becoming extremely self-centred and selfish, showing little concern for the well-being of others. In contrast, my involvement with Out of Bounds has helped alleviate quite a bit of that egoistic attitude and behaviour. Participating in inmate-initiated endeavours contrasts markedly with taking correctional programs. Inmate-initiated endeavours are voluntary as opposed to mandatory; they concentrate on personal development as opposed to character ‘correction’; they encour-
age excellence as opposed to punishing error; they promote creativity as opposed to enforcing discipline; and most importantly, because inmate-initiated endeavours impart a strong sense of ownership to their participants, positive feelings of self-esteem and self-determination often result, a benefit that not only allows for important immediate learning, but also encourages further exploration, creating an upward-spiralling process of mental and spiritual enlightenment.

There are several complementary ‘rehabilitative’ features arising from inmate-initiated endeavours as well. I suppose that’s why prison administrators inevitably allow (sometimes even encourage) their existence. Specifically, with a project such as ours whose primary purpose is communication, the process of enhancing one’s ability to express his or her accomplishments, disappointments, complaints and concerns in an objective, pro-social manner is at once educational and rehabilitative. Through this process we gain experiential knowledge and a methodology of understanding that assists us in our everyday interaction with both institutional staff and our fellow inmates.

Experiential learning is an important aspect of any endeavour. We learn best by doing. Didactic programs offered by the CSC often fall short of success because they involve less than impartial instructors (former guards) lecturing less than enthusiastic participants (coerced cons) with an intent that is as controversial as it is demeaning (you’re defective, we can fix you). Rehabilitation is more effectively realised when the person who is being rehabilitated perceives that he or she has a stake in that process. With inmate-initiated projects, that perception is a self-evident outcome. The sense of ownership these endeavours impart upon their participants coalesces with the resultant feelings of self-determination, and together they fuel further learning, dignity and decorum.

The late Marshall McLuhan, a communications guru, brashly stated that “the medium is the message.” The message in Out of Bounds emanates from the writing and art published in the magazine. Although there can be a slightly different statement expressed in each individual submission, the overall representation is one of contrite hope and realisation. By being honest and open, and willing to share our thoughts and feelings with our readers in an authentic manner, we hope to dispel some of the misconceptions that surround prison and prisoners. And by enunciating our own shortcomings alongside the abject failings of the system that we are locked into, we eventually come to the important realisation that we can ‘fix’ ourselves – that we can ‘become’ rehabilitated a lot easier and more effectively than ‘be’ rehabilitated. We learn that we need to examine and criticise the underlying aberrant attitudes and beliefs that led to our criminal activity with as much rigour and enthusiasm as we expend criticising the criminal justice system that punishes our behaviour. But in doing so we needn’t let that system off completely either. Society has to bear some complicity in our social ‘illness’ and work to prevent future illness rather than try to punish it into remission.

The message in Out of Bounds is also one of emancipation. Free-
dom of speech in its purest form is a liberating sentiment. Unfortunately, in prison freedom of speech is seldom practised in its purest form, if it is practised at all. Even under the duress of censorship, the opportunity to voice one’s concerns and opinions in a prison publication, combined with the educational experience that comes from learning how to write effectively in an objective manner, speaks to the psychological and intellectual well-being touched upon earlier in this article. If prisoners believe that they can make positive changes to the system as well as to themselves, their incarceration becomes less tedious in both scope and duration. If we can learn to accomplish things for the common good of our little microcosm of society, a microcosm replete with an abundance of hate, anger, violence and selfishness, then in a sense we are liberating ourselves from those otherwise negative constraints. If Out of Bounds can nurture an honest (often sorely lacking) sense of altruism in its participants, then it becomes much more than just an inmate-initiated educational aid and a CSC cherished rehabilitative tool, it becomes a character-building message, the medium for social change.

I’m going to miss working for the magazine when I finally leave this place. The learning aspect of the experience isn’t the only valuable component. Upon reflection, I keep coming back to the concept of community, and it’s not mere coincidence. The Out of Bounds community has made the whole intricate journey worthwhile. For me our subscribers aren’t just customers, they’re friends. Friends willing to support our cause, willing to listen to our side of the story, willing to hear our voice, a voice that usually falls on deaf ears. And in some cases our subscribers are more than just friends, they’re family — literally and figuratively. My family has supported my involvement in the magazine through their encouragement, subscriptions and donations right from the very beginning. This has a hidden benefit in that I’m not very punctual with respect to writing letters, so at least every three months they hear from me through my articles in the magazine.

One thing that really surprised me, and pleases me to no end, is the warmth with which some of our readers invite us into their lives and living rooms. One particular family on the east coast of Canada, who have been subscribers as far back as I can remember, frequently send us letters and newspaper clippings updating us on some of the goings-on with respect to their family and community. They regularly sent us their used postage stamps for our SPICA stamp drive, until the Visiting and Correspondence department started sending them back, for reasons which are beyond me. They recently suffered a death in the family, and my heart and prayers go out to them, as I somehow feel like an adopted member of that family.

We canvass most of our subscriptions at the bi-annual WhoS productions, quality plays performed in the prison that attract about 150 people per night, each ten-night run. Working the Out of Bounds kiosk that we set up during each production is a highlight of my peripheral involvement with William Head on Stage. I don’t ‘socialise’ much around the prison, and when I do, situation dictates that it’s usually with one particularly distinct social subclass: prisoners. So twice a year I’m afforded the frightening pleasure of meeting and greeting a steady stream of diverse personalities from all social classes, collectively known as ‘the public.’ I’m always grateful when people who are already on our subscription list come to the kiosk and introduce themselves, thereby putting a face to one of the many names we have in our database.

Putting a face on otherwise invisible people (prisoners) is one mandate of our magazine. By publishing our thoughts and feelings, our hopes and dreams, our accomplishments and failings, as well as the accomplishments and failings of the system we are locked into, we hope to show that we aren’t just ‘offenders.’ We’re husbands and fathers; sons and brothers; uncles and nephews; friends, cousins, acquaintances; and in too many cases, long lost relatives. We are a thinking, feeling, breathing part of humanity, albeit somewhat confused and often totally angered by the complexities of the human social condition and its inevitable failings. Through writing we attempt to make sense of the situation we’ve landed ourselves in, and impart some of that sensibility to the public, as well as to our fellow prisoners.

It always encourages me when I observe, from issue to issue (sometimes from year to year), the positive growth in both ability and attitude of my fellow prison writers and artists. I take pride in assuming that in some small way Out of Bounds has helped facilitate that growth.

Courage to be Free
A support circle for Métis people making the transition from being incarcerated to being free.

John Sinclair
Post Office Box 862
Ladysmith BC V9G 1A6

phone (250) 245-7893
fax (250) 245-7890
e-mail sinclairjw@home.com

36 WINTER/DECEMBER 2001
The process of taking a small piece of crumpled paper, shyly submitted by a so-called hardened criminal, knowing that he has agonised relentlessly over the writing of that article or poem (in some cases taken a heart-felt risk due to its content), then filtering that submission through the regimen of editing, layout, printing and binding, resulting in what many people believe is one of North America’s best prison publications, has its own rewards. For me the reward lies in the look of apprehension, then pride, that emanates from the fellow who made the submission, when I hand him his copy of the finished product and he sees his work in print.

So, as I prepare to leave William Head, I look forward to taking the Out of Bounds experience with me. In doing so, I encourage everyone who’s reading this, if you’re interested in writing, art, or the process of publishing, get involved with the magazine. Become part of the Out of Bounds community. A community of concerned citizens.

The CSC Complaint and Grievance Process

We are often told by staff to use the grievance procedure. However, if an inmate feels that his grievance will, at some point, be used against him there is a reluctance to grieve at any level. This extreme reluctance to utilise the legislated grievance process is understandable. Most of us have either directly or indirectly experienced the repercussions of some previous complaint. Such experiences do not instil confidence in the use of the CSC grievance procedure.

Once we know the procedure and its full impact, we can take some confidence in it. This does not mean that we should have total confidence in the outcome or the fairness of the grievance process. The process is not fair, there is no level playing field. But the grievance process can be used to raise issues to a new level for review. It is also mandatory to exhaust the internal grievance system prior to filing at the Federal Court level.

The Commissioner’s Directives states, “If an offender wishes to seek formal recourse to a problem he has the right to file a written complaint. An offender is not to be penalised or intimidated with respect to his use of the complaint and grievance system. Complaint and grievance submissions are considered protected information. Progress Summary Reports and other reports and documents on offender files should not make reference to the offender’s use of the complaint and grievance system.”

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) states, in Section 90, “There shall be a procedure for fairly and expeditiously resolving offenders’ grievances on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of the CSC.” And further, Section 91 states, “Every offender shall have complete access to the offender grievance procedure without negative consequences.”

Thus we should all use the complaint and grievance process when appropriate. And at the first mention of it by any CSC staff we should file a separate complaint for having this legislated privilege used against us.

The grievance system is the only outlet that we have to attempt to rectify a wrongdoing or infraction (real or perceived) within the correctional process. If you need help with filing a grievance see your Inmate Committee.

L.I.N.C.

Long-term Inmates Now in the Community is a self-help group run by ex-offenders in partnership with the LifeLine concept. The only group of its kind in Canada, L.I.N.C. is comprised of long-term and/or chronic offenders, parolees, spouses, other family members, friends and community volunteers. Its aim is to help offenders reintegrate successfully back into the community. Currently L.I.N.C. is contracted by Community Corrections (Pacific Region) to hold weekly meetings at Sumas Centre, Genesis and Dunsmuir Houses (on the mainland) and Manchester House in Victoria. It is also funded by the CSC and supported by the B.C. Ministry of Attorney General to conduct a weekly inreach meeting at the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women. L.I.N.C. is helping. Some of the program goals for L.I.N.C. are: to assist long-term ex-offenders with parole and future plans; to provide counselling and support to the families of long-term ex-offenders; to conduct regularly scheduled meetings and one-on-one inreach; to work with members of the community and other agencies to find employment and/or educational programs for ex-offenders; to utilize ex-offenders in volunteer work; and to help bridge the gap between ex-offenders and the community.

For more information or a copy of the L.I.N.C. News contact

L.I.N.C. telephone (604) 820-1015
33270 14th Avenue fax (604) 820-2581
Mission BC V2V 4Z7 seflett@moody.bc.ca
toll free in BC or on Millennium 1-877-424-4244

OUT OF BOUNDS 37
Horrorscope

by Frater Perdurabo

Aries (March 21 - Apr. 19)
In the next little while you will be seized by the desire to improve your life. Forget about it, this false feeling will go away as fast as it appeared. Besides, you don't have a life, so how can you possibly improve it? Read someone's biography and try living vicariously.

Taurus (Apr. 20 - May 20)
Your values will soon be challenged, assuming you have any. You may have to rethink your stance on some important personal issues like: Should I start using deodorant? Can I finally make some friends by buying them things? How do I get rid of 50 lbs. of cellulite?

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)
You may have to focus on borrowing a lot of money, or else come up with some creative bookkeeping. Revenue Canada has your number. Better appease them or you'll wind up doing a stint in the Hacksaw Hotel reading nasty prison rags like Out of Bondage.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)
You are suddenly in a serious party mode. Don't get into a brew-ha (without letting us in on it). Christmas is near, don't do anything queer, get off on the right foot (long dube) in the coming New Year. Then thank your lucky stars you've lived through another year.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)
You need to feel more cozy in comfortable surroundings. Better get out of jail soon! Better yet, you might as well stay in, you've never had it so good. Stop your lion before it gets out of hand. The truth will set you free. If that doesn't work, try the National Parole Board.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
Your life is going to get busier now, so get off the couch, potato. Get into high gear instead of getting high, gear. Make some lists, check them twice, find out who's been naughty or nice. Get everyone a small Christmas gift with the hope you'll get something big in return.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)
Don't kid yourself that you won't over-eat during the Holiday Season. You'll probably put on twenty pounds, ya slug. Hopefully you'll get some Jenny Craig certificates in your stocking. Don't wait for Weight Watchers to watch your weight. Curb your own intake.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)
Have confidence that your ideas on how to make life more enjoyable for everyone will go unnoticed. Hey, they're not very good ideas in the first place. In the second place, they all involve giving you money, ya scam artist. Who do you think you're kidding?

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
Even though you don't know what you're talking about, keep talking, there's a sucker born every minute. (Include yourself in that category.) It's easy to go overboard spending at this time of year. Better get out your credit cards, you don't have any real money to spend.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
You are about to enter a powerful time in your life. Too bad the door's locked and you can't get in. Romance is likely right now and for the next few weeks. Too bad the door's locked and you can't get in. A locksmith course might be a good idea for your future plans.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
You adore secrets. Too bad you can't keep any. If you haven't heard a good rumour by noon, start one. You are determined to beg, borrow, and steal to get ahead. Me, I'd rather get behind. Work hard, then spend all your money. Remember, nothing succeeds like excess.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - Mar. 20)
Something smells fishy. For many of you this is a troubling time. For others, it's a time to get in trouble. Try a change of scenery. Better yet, do us all a favour and try a change of underwear. Your restless nature will get you in hot water. Hopefully, it'll be a hot bath.
John’s Daughter

i heard that you were
gutting fish in Iceland,
i guess we should not have
taken acid under the freeway
fondled and fornicated each other’s
broadening horizons.
i have a few unsigned letters
explaining why you died,
i will send them when I find some stamps.
did I ever tell you
it felt great the way your hands
caressed my loose skin
during intercourse, or when your
Scandinavian voice rang out song
in the alleyways.
i will marry the next lady
who sings for me,
the next lady
who can flit her fingers so gingerly.
i can still feel your eyes destroying
the women who left my bed
while you sat in silence,
maybe I should have spoke…
or is Iceland nice this time of year?

D. T. Olson

My Love

My love is like a cool spring
In the summer,
Flowing down the steep mountainside
Of her love for me
Smiling, down it plunges to the sea
Broadening out into the vast depths
Under the heaviness of the world’s sky,

My love is like a maple tree
Shedding leaves in the fall
While the birds of patience fly through her hair
And nestle there
Troubled by the blackening storm
That thunders over her green bosom.

Michel R. Depeyre

Regrouping

Spiritual exhaustion
Represents a limbo dance
Devoid of energy
The good fight fought
Wages war against itself
Demons march within
Against my better nature
The battle-weary soul
Quietly withdraws
Without retreating
Will feels drained beyond recall
For this day’s duty
Regions of inner landscape
Previously accessible
Beckon past my reach
The journey is rerouted
From a quest for truth
To tiredly parked
Life sits neutrally engaged
Examining its navel
While days race by
Waving their farewells
Tomorrow comes and goes
And leaves me
Lazily sipping defeatedness
Into emptied spaces
That nothing seems to fill
Until the smile breaks through
My self-imposed resistance
To the cause I serve.

Paul Davies
Ode to a Teacher on Her Last Day

With saddened hearts your students come
To school on this last day
To bid you such a fond farewell
With feelings of dismay.
The patience with your students shows
You have a giving heart
And we will miss that helping hand
When we are far apart.
But as we leave your class today
In just a little while
Along with much you've willed to us
We'll keep your winning smile.
It is so hard to say goodbye
This final day with you.
Mere words cannot express our thoughts
So we'll just say, "Adieu."

Richard Roy

 consumed

my heart was an apple
plucked from the pile
its blemishes casually courted
and brightness testing turned
while firmness squeeze-confirmed
then, polished by passion's hot breath
like fresh produce for love
an unrequited sustenance
eaten to the core

Patrick Rafferty

Spring Time

A trellis is lucky, as you well know,
To get hugged by Clematis lovingly so.
The Dutch receive kisses through site filled eyes,
With rainbows of colors as tulips arrive.

The smell of daffodils brings odorous pleasure,
Spreading golden sunshine in our warmest weather.
Gorgeous Roses of Victorian Era,
Remain today, in hope forever.

Cinnamon Carnations give my senses need,
Of continuous want of this lustful feed.
Mother Nature brings love, as this time rolls round,
Looking forward each year, when spring comes to town.

June Green
Twilight Zone

As I look out my window, I sit all alone
And stare out in the dark to my twilight zone
Not knowing the reasons that made me go back
And pick up my pipe and start smoking some crack

Midnight sky,
sorrow's sigh
of darkness,
gone bye.

Desolate dreams,
pretty lies,
reality screams,
dreams die.

Fantasy winds
softly cry
lover, friend.

Jason Schock

When do we learn it's only our demise
And let out the pain we truly despise
Like the girl on the corner, scarred from abuse
The man in the alley who OD'd from his use

But soon the sun will light up our eyes
And stop all the pain, and the hurt and the lies
Only then can we love and find our way home
And stare out our window to our own twilight zone

Lisa Neville

Time

Time I've spent, to the last dime.
Calculus of the incalculable. What price be freedom's peace?
When days, ill spent, round clock-spring wind, cause callous hands and hearts entwined
to ravage a man's very spirit, to chain his mind.

Time I've spent. Credit, I have none.
For tis exhausted by bigot minds and heartless lies, and when lock and key can no longer
hold the spirit within, so free, so bold, then prison, though concrete and steel be forged,
is not but gossamer wisps of decomposing greed, through which my essence strides.
Reborn, free.

Time I've spent, with no return.
Investment precluded by grievous hate. No reimburse on prison coinage.
No interest rates.
When exhausted, my essence be, cold and empty, I will be ... FREE?

John T. Hewitt

OUT OF BOUNDS 41
I really wish you'd stop saying, "It could always be worse!"