

The Mallard mini #4 ~ March 2021

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Bring it

WELCOME TO MINI #4, GUYS. I suppose I should have been numbering these things from the get-go. That said, I've started to piece together the next magazine—our first since February last year—and could really use more input. I get it, we're a relatively small joint and the pandemic hasn't exactly boosted everyone's sense of connection and creativity. But the thicker we can make that bookend of original content going forward, the better.

From what I hear, two rounds of vaccinations have gone through for the most at risk in our population, with more coming. All we gotta do is stay safe, hang in there and help each other across the finish line to something closer to a better normal.

Is it just me or are any of you still putting the wrong dates on request forms and letters? Talk about the past year being an *annus lumpus*—that's part-Latin, right? Or to paraphrase an ad for an industrial cleaning service, and quote the late Tom Petty: "2020—like it never even happened", and, "Don't come around here no more".

(Except for content, of course—bring it in, no vaccination required.)

~Jason
2021-03-06

Still busting moves



HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE SAYING, "Man makes plans and God laughs"? Well, that was last year's Inmate Welfare Committee Christmas give-away situation. Only one of the three things I'd ordered actually came in. Fortunately at the eleventh hour, SPO Erica

and Donna from ISS drove around and picked up all the Haagen Dazs bars they could find. Much gratitude. It wasn't what we'd planned for, but at least it wasn't nothing.

Furthering the fun, we had a treat planned for February but the supplier couldn't deliver and we needed a substitution. This was on day three of the Section 53 search. The only item I could remember for that supplier in the same price bracket was the butter tarts, so we had those. All in all I think it went over okay.

For March, we're planning on a bag of Chicago Mix for each guy, and then some Fancy Nut Mix in May. That'll get us to the middle of the year and we'll see where our world sits. But I'm guessing it's still gonna be a lot of the same.

It has been one strange and bizarre year. As of last week, I'll have been our acting Chair for one year. Even though my "three or four month fix" went a bit longer than expected, I still feel like I was in the right place at the right time. I had all these big and wonderful plans: work at moving on, with maybe some passes and a step closer to Minimum... Queue the *man, plans, and laughing*, and I'm here for at least another year. So is COVID. When we sat down with the Unit Reps at our meeting last week, I said I'd be happy to stick it out and keep the status quo flowing for now.

All things considered, we've accomplished a lot together. The 2021 calendar of events was approved, with most of the focus on Socials for the last third of the year. Fingers crossed we'll have vaccines by then and a new community strategy that supports these get-togethers.

I'm afraid Info Fairs are a whole 'nother ballgame that I have no answer for right now. Important as they are for us to develop and maintain supports and release plans, big gatherings like those are bound to be a ways off, probably behind Groups and Socials.

I'm talking to a few of our community agencies about connecting with content for this here Mallard, to see if we can get some updates and helpful direction for the guys.

After all, it's not like we have the luxury of interviews and fairs these days, let alone in-person visits with our friends and family. I keep having these bizarre day-dreams where it's a *Groundhog Day*-type episode of *Hogan's Heroes*, with Colonel Klink shouting at my family to "Show zee (vaccination) papers" to come in for a visit.

My original plan coming in as Interim IWC was to help the Living Unit appliances get up to snuff. Well, we did that

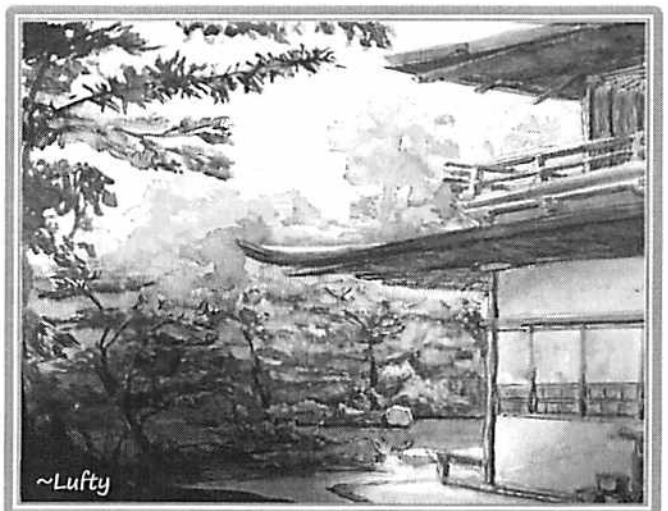
and then some... We spent over \$6000 on microwaves, \$3000 on fridges, and another \$5000 for toasters, hot water urns, kettles and computer printer cartridges. The plastic fridge boxes cost us \$1600 (it was a nightmare finding three hundred of the same thing, but the SPOs located a model at Canadian Tire). \$2600 got us last summer's cookies. The Christmas give-a-way went sideways with COVID chaos and Christmas-time supplier stock shortages, so we saved a bit there. Probably the biggest help was investing in Canteen stock: \$8000 in product got the base levels up so at least the last few Units each pay weren't stuck with a list of five items. (Remember the early days of the lock-down when 70% of inventory was out-of-stock?) I hear the new operation at ISS will have two service windows and more storage space, so that'll be progress.

The institution is cranking along at a somewhat better pace these days, with an improved willingness by Management to communicate with the IWC & Unit Reps—even though that's still the biggest road block to effective problem solving on behalf of the Population. This yelling-through-the-fence-at-my-window thing is not efficient...



Fingers crossed, what I'm hearing pans out and all the Unit Reps will be able to get together at least once a month. If nothing else, we could bundle up for the tennis court, or under the front roof of the Chapel. Not my preference, mind you, just saying.

I ordered new toner and a drum for the photocopier so, really, the office is set. Our 2021 calendar is submitted, and there's a



workable stock of Unit appliances and basic needs. Now let's go for it. Getting back to the One-Population idea has been my goal since day one, but for that to happen we have to get rid of this split-Unit confusion and get together again. Maybe even with a real baseball tourney this fall. (Hey, a guy can dream, can't he?)

I tried my best to get us back on Toaster-Oven Road, but Region is still holding the absolute-no position on this one. Same goes for coffee makers, rice cookers and blenders. With that in mind, I'm working on a CCRA-based complaint to National. The IWC is also very aware of continued stress over limited access to the phones. I fully get how, with so much time stuck in the Units, this kind of contact represents some of the only sane moments in the day for many of us. I can't promise that much will change on this front, but I'm willing to give it my best.

To help with that, I'm always looking for different perspectives on how to best approach our concerns. So send me your ideas. I've also started a mail campaign to IWC's at other institutions in the hopes of getting on the same page to achieve better outcomes for everyone. The best voice is a united one.

Thanks again for all the support. There were more than a few times, as I gave in to frustration and anger, when I considered just packing it in to stare at those four walls. But by leaning on each other—so to speak, physically distanced and all—we managed to make it through what I hope will be the last of anything close to this crazy year.

Stay safe. More vaccines are on the way.

All my relations,

Dean Roberts

A/Chair, IWC, 2021-03-01

Vaccinating prisoners a matter of public health, says researcher

Federal government's vaccination of 600 inmates faces criticism



An exterior view of Joyceville Institution in Kingston, Ont., on Dec. 17, 2020. As the federal government prepares to start vaccinating 600 of the most vulnerable federal inmates across the country, researchers say it's worthy pilot project. (Lars Hagberg/The Canadian Press)

GIACOMO PANICO · CBC NEWS · POSTED: JAN 07, 2021 4:00 AM ET

AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PREPARES to start vaccinating 600 of the most vulnerable federal inmates across the country, a researcher is calling criticisms of that plan short-sighted.

Following news of the federal government's plan to start vaccinating inmates, several politicians, including Ontario premier Doug Ford and federal opposition leader Erin O'Toole, said prisoners should be getting the vaccine only after front-line health-care workers have been vaccinated.

"It's impossible to stay safe when you're incarcerated," said Linda Mussell, a PhD candidate at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., has been studying the impact of COVID-19 on correctional facilities since the start of the outbreak in March 2020.

"You can't isolate like you can outside."

She noted that correctional facilities across Canada have experienced severe outbreaks, including the Joyceville Institution in Kingston which on Wednesday had 67 active cases of COVID-19 among inmates, according to Correctional Service Canada (CSC).

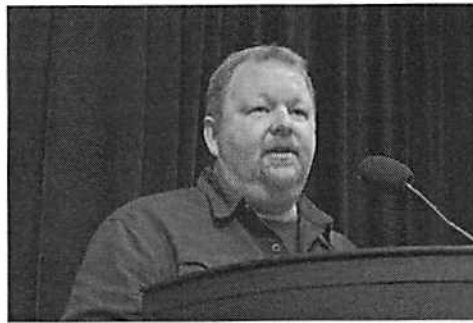
Mussell said the government's plan was based on advice from the country's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

"This is a public health issue," she said. "People behind bars, they're members of our society too. They're humans and they're extremely vulnerable."

Immunize staff first, says union

The union representing federal correctional officers says it was not only caught off guard by the government's announcement, it's also demanding front-line workers at prisons be vaccinated before inmates.

"We have many members across this country working in very precarious institutions that have been identified as pandemic sites," said Jeff Wilkins, national president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers. "We're going to run into some serious issues."



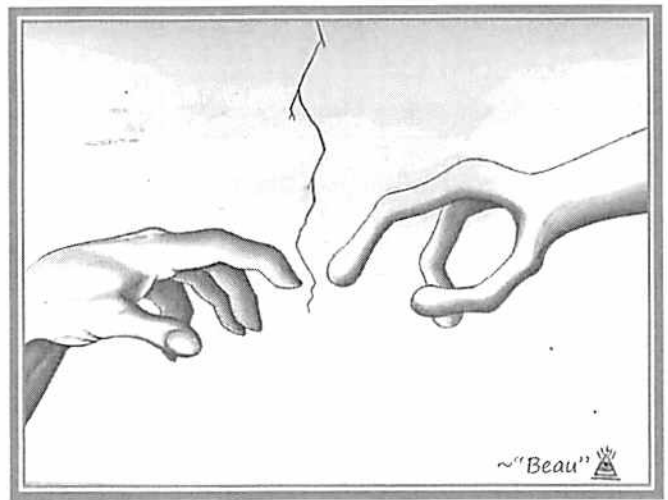
Jeff Wilkins, national president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers, says the federal government should be vaccinating front-line staff at correctional institutions before inmates. (Stewart Kelly)

Wilkins says that of his 7,500 members across the country, 225 have so far tested positive for COVID-19, and he's concerned more will contract the virus in the coming weeks and months unless they're offered the vaccine very soon.

"They're the priority," he said.

Staff immunizations done by provinces and territories

In a written statement, Correctional Service Canada said that under its Corrections



and Conditional Release Act, it "has an obligation to provide essential health care to federally incarcerated inmates."

The department said that CSC staff are vaccinated by their home province or territory, and that the department is working closely with health officials to vaccinate staff in accordance with the priority groups identified by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

Mussell said she still believes inmates should be immunized before correctional officers.

"I agree that staff need to be vaccinated too, but people who are confined are facing additional risks," she said.



CALLING ALL INMATES (MISSION MEDIUM, MINIMUM & ELSEWHERE), STAFF, COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS, ADVOCATES, EDUCATORS, ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS [INHALE]:

If you wouldn't mind please...

Feeding the Duck

ART ~ CAUTIONARY TALES ~ COMICS ~ CORRECTIONS ~ CREATIVE EXPRESSION ~ CULTURE ~ DIVERSITY ~ EDUCATION & TRAINING ~ ESSAYS ~ FAITH ~ FEEDBACK ~ GAMES ~ HALFWAY HOUSES ~ HOBBYCRAFT ~ HUMOUR ~ INSPIRATIONAL STORIES ~ JUSTICE ~ MANAGING PAROLE ~ POETRY ~ MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH ~ MOTIVATION ~ NEWS ~ OPINIONS ~ PANDEMIC EXPERIENCES ~ PEN-PALS ~ POLITICS ~ PUZZLES ~ RELATIONSHIPS ~ RELEASE PLANNING ~ RESPECT ~ RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ~ SHORT STORIES ~ SPIRITUALITY ~ TRIVIA ~ TIPS ON TIME ~ VIOLENCE PREVENTION | PLUS ANYTHING ELSE YOU THINK MAY BE OF INTEREST TO OUR READERS INSIDE & OUT -- YOU CAN FORWARD VIA SPOs, "THE MALLARD" NEWSLETTER C/O PROGRAMS DEPT. A-27, OR PIN THE MAIL ON THE DUCKY>>



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