



## Long-time Covid

SO I DIDN'T PLAN ON BEING AWAY for this long when I put out the last mini in April. Fine, sue me—but could you use the same "elite strike force team" currently prosecuting a certain someone's attempt to hold onto tee-time at the golf course—or is it a presidency? It's easy to mix them up these days. Seriously, doesn't it just make you glad to be Canadian?

Wow. Where to begin... Nah, I couldn't possibly say anything that hasn't been said before about the state of the world, and I promised myself I wouldn't yammer on about our little fishbowl of it right now either. As you can see, we're not back to the magazine format yet, so time and the tools to get things done is limited. Besides, Dean was good enough to fill us in all fine-and-dandy-like with the update below.

As the duck bobs back up, please keep us in mind for your content via request to SPO Erica Chamberlain at the Medium. Scan-able artwork is always great, as well as digital pics of your shop stuff. At the Minimum, please check with your SPO's to forward any handwriting, e-mailed Word files, or scanned art and hobby pics.

This flyer around, we have an info dump (and I mean that in the nicest way) from our IWC, a poignant poem from "Thompson" and some line-work from Lufty and Tangent. The Luftmeister also sent a couple of great watercolors, but I'm using a floppy at the moment and couldn't do them justice.

Thanks to everyone for showing up, and to Programs and IT for their continued support, especially with so many other things on the go. Hang in there. Hope to see you again soon.

~Jason

## What's Going On? (An Inmate Welfare Committee Update)

TEN MONTHS AGO, THE WARDEN approached our 14 Range Reps at Mission Medium and asked us to form an interim committee. The aim was to address a backlog of issues created by half a year of being committee-less after the previous IWC was removed. The feeling was, if a couple of us were to fill in for a few months it might restore something closer to good faith between Management and the population, and afterwards we could have a general election with lots of candidates.

Well, cue COVID-19 and here we sit: a mini country of 6 segregated Living units and even more questions. So I'd like to take this opportunity to address the population. Our very own little State of the Union, so to speak.

Back in May, IWC approached the Warden to approve some kind of food give-a-

way, maybe some KFC or Subway. That devolved over a four-month slog to wind up as September's pack of cookies. During that time, we also tried to replace the broken appliances and fridges. However, Regional said no to toaster ovens, blenders, and coffee makers. At this point, even kettles are a pain; they say that we can only order the kind with an attached cord. (As if someone couldn't just unplug it from the wall and walk away.) One of the SPO's did go supplier shopping one weekend, located the last of the corded kettles that were being discontinued and put all 16 of them on hold for us. Computer printers and ink have been another recurring landmine. All but one, of the Unit printers have been replaced and we have cartridges on order.

Missionmash ~ by Tangent

### EVOLUTION OF THE CHECK-IN



BOSS! YA GOTTA GET ME OUTTA HERE -- I CAN'T PAY MY DEBTS!



C.O.! YA GOTTA GET ME OUTTA HERE! I CAN'T PAY MY -- ERR, I GOT THE SNIFFLES!

In September, the Warden met outside each Unit with their Reps individually. In October, the IWC finally met with all of those Reps in the tennis court without Management. We got to clear up a ton of confusion, take the pulse of the Units, and see where we needed to focus our attention going forward. Unfortunately, as I write this, our basic IWC-to-Unit communication remains stunted at best. We've asked over and over again to be able to visit the Units like the IWC does in Matsqui, or even meet with the Unit Reps every two to four weeks in the tennis court. But so far it's been nixed. As for the rest of our brothers and sisters, good for them but frustrating at the same time to read in Out of Bounds magazine how the other Pacific joints are making out. Apparently Management in those places did things like purchase a ton of board games for each Unit to help with mental fatigue. (We still have boxes of them locked up in the Gym under quarantine for fear of cross-contamination—even from guys in the same unit cohort.) More importantly, how is it that other mediums, let alone in the supposedly higher range, manage to hold weekly, even daily meetings with Management and their IWC?

Again, good for them, but still....

Mission Medium has gone half a year now without a single positive case of COVID. Matsqui just wrote us to say that their Warden divided the jail into two large groups of 150 men. Cohort A is out for half the day with a full run of all areas, followed by cohort B in the second half. Facemasks, social distancing, and each day the order switches. Smart and efficient, it makes gym, hobbies, canteen, visits, work, library, chapel, sweat grounds, industries, school, and programs run more smoothly. Of course, if one guy from a group gets COVID-tested, all the units in that group go back to "Unit-restrict" for 14 days. But at least the rest of the jail can keep calm and carry on. Mountain has gone in a similar direction, in their case with 3 groups.

Like us, Mountain and Matsqui don't have their PFV's up and running for family, just Quiet-time. Region has taken all three medium security Medical Intervention Units (the old Seg beds) for intake from Provincial or TD to do their 14-day quarantines. Yes, I've grieved it, but I don't see much changing on that front anytime soon. The CCRA allows this sort of latitude for only two circumstances in Canada: blackouts and pandemics. Shitty, I know, but it is what it is for now.

At the last meet-n-greet with the Warden, he said that he was going to be holding Warden's Boards again, and that ETA's and transfers to minimum were also being looked at. We were told that ETA's will be one-day only, again because Region has our MIU beds and a guy would have to do the 14-day quarantine if he is in the community for more than a one-day pass.

The IWC submitted a proposal to purchase street-quality facemasks five months ago, but OMT said no (I've heard that ISS is working on something now); another to purchase clear food boxes assigned to each cell for the fridges (just heard its approved and the SPO's have an order for whatever we can find); another to buy "shaker" cups for us to mix the powdered milk in (OMT said no, and recently, we were told the Kitchen is going back to regular milk jugs with the meals soon—save it while you can, amateur yogurt makers) and; yet another to purchase a block of TV's for resale to the population under "crisis Management" criteria with COVID-19 as well as the financial hardship of having to deal with the longstanding, unscrupulous over-pricing in the National Catalogue (OMT also nixed that idea).

We wanted to buy big pan-cakes and ice cream for each Unit at Christmas, but OMT didn't want the Range Reps—even in our own cohorts and wearing masks and gloves—to serve. So we have to find some kind of "sealed" items. Believe me, it is crazy how many things out there are just not available, not to mention how individual items are way more expensive. If all

Issues archived at  
staff IMS/shared,  
the inmate-accessed  
computers, and  
[penalpress.com](http://penalpress.com)



reams of printer paper, and I've ordered yellow highlighters. You can send requests in the mail to "IWC-Unit 6" and I'll do what I can. In theory, we're supposed to be able to do a little photocopying in the office as well, but getting that material to me is a whole other kinda Jenga game. If it's privileged/confidential, best to try with your COII and IPO. I know the Lifers

goes well, I've found some 500 mL ice cream cups and a brownie/apple crisp combo. The search also continues for a new video game supplier, and one for magazines. We sent up a list of items for the Canteen and met with the Chief ISS and Canteen manager. They told us that everything's on hold till the new building is open—tentatively by mid-January.

We have finally received a new copy of the jigsaw puzzle catalogue and will order in a dozen to get started. I'll send around sheets to the Unit Reps in December with more info.

It has come to our attention that some joints in Alberta and Ontario have been paying their inmates overtime if they choose to go to work during COVID-19 protocols. I submitted copies of some of their account printouts and a proposal for some kind of overtime/incentive pay for guys in positions that expose them to potential cross-infection from outside employees. However, OMT said no, that it is beyond the authority of the institution and is now being reviewed at the Regional & National levels. I have also just confirmed that Matsqui is paying their Kitchen workers overtime.

The IWC office is expected to be open once or twice a week. We carry TV cables,

Group have started greeting card sales again through each unit, but unfortunately the supplier that we deal with had to close down. They're working on alternate sources.

Guys, I know this Holiday Season is gonna be hard. The recent tightening of the rules by Dr. Bonnie Henry is worrisome, and the insane rise in daily case counts ever more so. Fortunately, the Chapel has been able to expand its operating ability over the past few months, and groups there are being held again. Not yet so on the Indigenous front, I'm afraid.

I keep hoping for us to move out of Phase Three and into a better functioning new normal like what's being done at other same-level institutions in the Region. After all, the *Risk Management Framework* was established by the big-heads and experts in Ottawa for Management during the pandemic—and Mountain and Matsqui have shown us that it actually works, with absolutely no inmate infections in over half a year. One of the biggest frustrations I've encountered in this apparent transition is the underlying belief by some staff and contractors that we still have COVID. I've heard things like, I don't want to go to the Units

because I can't risk getting it from the inmates. (What, like we keep it in a box under our beds?) In May, we went through two 14-day cycles without any new infections. That means that the virus was completely eradicated from the inmate population. Completely. 100%. Then 6 months without any new inmate infections. It is scientifically impossible for the virus to still be alive within our population. Yet I continue to hear some staff express concern over getting it from contact with us, not the other way around. I'm left believing that one of the most important things we need to keep focus on in this crisis is trust, and an adherence to what scientific best practices dictate—not giving in to paranoia and irrational thinking.

The recent 6-day lockdown was troublesome. There was a lot of misinformation and less-than-transparent communication. I've heard from a lawyer in the community that there was an incident over at Matsqui which triggered a security union action. It seems we wound up as unfortunate pawns in a chess game with our mental and emotional wellbeing at stake. As it happened, I reached out to everyone possible and basically got a lot of rumors. The story is still evolving and I still can't get a clear line of sight on any of it. All I know is that we were originally told we were locked down for "contact tracing".

Your IWC at Mission Medium continues to do our best to patch the cracks wherever and as best we can. New nominations for the executive have been posted on channel 16. Hats off to everyone throwing theirs in the ring. In the meantime, please remember that we are here to hear from you. So send us your concerns, maybe even some solutions of your own, and let's get through this together. Stay safe.

~Dean



## Antibody

You don't catch it from kissing, mouthfuls or sharing food—make that lungfuls—but, sometimes, crowded rooms  
What makes for suspect symptoms?  
It doesn't come on all of a sudden  
except for when it does.

There's no fever, or rash, or hemorrhages  
It's always fully-formed, but there's stages:  
aches and pains, you're not breathing right  
and you may not sleep through the night.  
If you're near enough to be contagious  
you're probably not.

"Lots of people have it worse  
They're managing without the nurse  
What makes you so special?  
It's not that bad, don't act so mad  
"It isn't fatal"  
except for when it is.

You can imagine a cure  
but there's no inoculation, that's futility  
no vaccination, or hard-won immunity.  
But there's been human trials, I'm sure.

The economy is too busy to notice  
Quarantine won't stop the spread  
We hope the masks might defend us  
Yet there's no one left to count the dead  
The least of it is the border—  
It's our hearts we need to re-order,  
Not the shelves inside our head;  
The loveless crease upon our bed.  
Loneliness is no virus.

~"Thompson"



Missionmash ~ by Tangent



FINE LOOKIN' WINDOW YA GOT HERE.  
SHAME IF SOMETHING WERE TA MESS  
IT UP... HOW MUCH BREAD YA GOT?

