

RESOURCE LIST

All resources are provided free of charge to prisoners. To request resources, please send a list to the project clearly writing the name and how many copies of each item you would like to receive. If you are requesting more than 5 or 6, they will be sent in batches over several weeks so please indicate which are the highest priority. As always, if there is something you would like to see in the resource library that is not there, don't hesitate

::Emotional self-care::

Support (sexual abuse & survivorship) In a time when sexual assault and abuse are an increasing problem; even in so-called radical and punk communities, and when most women have been sexually abused in one way or another, Cindy Crabb (Doris Zine) brings us a document showing ways to prevent sexual violence and support survivors of sexual abuse.

Taking care of Your Body and Mind

A pamphlet on safer slashing / safer cutting in prison put out by PASAN

Survival in solitary a manual written by and for people living in control units by California Prison Focus A collection of writing, poetry, and information about coping with solitary confinement and life sentences

Trying to understand self-injury A short zine written by Black Ice Press, about disassociation, and the reasons why folks might choose to use self-injury to cope

::Safer sex::

Beyond Appearances/Au Delà des apparences For prisoners, sex workers and other "high risk" communities, on HIV/AIDS issues, including prevention. Pour des prisonniers/eres, des travailleurs/euses du sexe et les autres communautés à risque élevée, sur le VIH, y compris la transmission.

C It's no joke - Hep C/C'pas un joke Hep C A guide explaining how to transmit Hep C, including tips on safer tattooing, sex, and drug use. Un guide en expliquant comment transmettre le Hep C, y compris la tatouage, le securisexe, et les drogues

Queersafe A zine (not specific to prisons) about safer sex for queer men and women, different sexually transmitted diseases, and taking care of specific body parts put out by Head and Hands in Montreal

Turnover A collection of HIV prevention comics through comics and illustration, Turnover explores issues of youth and HIV transmission,

barebacking, and physical and emotional wellness.

Risk in prison Two articles written by Matthew Jones (incarcerated) and Liam and Bridget from the Prisoner Correspondence Project (non-incarcerated) talking about the concept of "risk" and "risky sexual behavior" in prison

You improvise to survive

Addressing sexual 'safety' for Queers Inside and Outside of Prisons A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series.

What if I'm HIV positive? A general, non-prison specific resource about what you should know if you test HIV positive

Safer barebacking (not prison specific) An article about how to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV/AIDS and other STDs/STIs when fucking without condoms

VIH y el joint (Spanish only) A basic resource sheet put together by PASAN about reducing the chance of transmitting HIV in prison

The Bottom line (not prison specific) A gay man's guide to anal health: how the ass works, what it does, how it relates to other parts of the body, and how to get maximum pleasure from sex with minimal pain or damage

Hepatitis C Infosheet basic information on the virus

Hepatitis C Peer support group manual (non prison specific) tips and tricks for starting a support group

Hepatitis C Pamphlet Newly diagnosed, the basic facts, treatment options

Reading this can save your ass Safer rimming tips

Getting together-Use your head when giving it Safer blow job tips

AIDS and Hepatitis C Straight-up facts / HEP C Tipsheet A one-page overview of how you can transmit, and, avoid transmission of Hep C and HIV/AIDS in prison.

50 things you should know about hiv & safer sex (abstract)

::Writing about HIV/AIDS::

What causes/defeats AIDS AIDS project Los Angeles, Annual report 2006.

A guide to HIV drug side effects for people living with HIV/AIDS

Living with HIV information on HIV and AIDS, how to stay healthy, what does CD4 count and viral load tell you, next steps

Positively healthy (not prison specific) a gay man's guide to sex and health in Canada

A practical guide to complement therapies for people living with HIV

A practical guide to herbal therapies for people living with HIV

A practical guide to HIV drug side effects for people living with HIV/AIDS

A practical guide to HIV drug treatment for people living with HIV

A practical guide to Nutrition for people living with HIV

HIV and Hep C coinfection answers some basic questions about living with HIV and hepatitis C

HIV disclosure a legal guide for gay men in Canada

HIV viral load testing introduces the viral load test and answers basic questions about how it fits into a treatment plan

If We Have To Take Tomorrow a collection of writing about same-sex and same-gender desire, and HIV/AIDS by and for gay black men.

To be left with the body This collection, put out by AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) is dedicated to poetry, prose, and photography written by and for HIV positive folks about the marginalization and criminalization of queer and HIV positive communities.

Corpus: volumes 4, 5, 6 Corpus, put out by AIDS Project Los Angeles, and Gay Men's Health Crisis, is an HIV prevention publication that brings together health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities: incarceration, racism, policing.

Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

Issue 5 is about rural gay identity and AIDS;

Issue 6 is the International issues, and explores shifting global responses among gay and queer men to AIDS.

The De-gaying of AIDS & Reclaiming Culture / La deshomosexualizacion del SIDA Available in both Spanish and English, these short essays speak to how AIDS has been de-gayed, and the effects of this on, among others, prisoners and communities of colour.

Gay boy talk: stopping HIV infections among young gay men (Also available in Spanish, not prison specific) this article discusses the importance of influencing discourse about homosexuality at the social and cultural levels in HIV-prevention efforts targeting young gay men. The discussion is based on Sexual Stories, a study which sought to understand the interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts in which behavioral risk for HIV infection occurs among young gay men.

::Our events::

Imprisoned Pride: how queer and trans prisoners get written out of mainstream pride movements A zine put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project (us!) that is a transcript and photos from an event we organized in summer of 2008, during Montreal Pride festivities; an anthology of writing by queer and trans prisoners about pride.

You improvise to survive: Negotiating Sexual "Safety" for queer and trans folks, inside and out A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series. These submissions were the focus of several workshops and events we have put on with folks on the outside

Beyond prisons, towards

community strategies the transcription of a panel we held in the fall of 2009 on supporting work within and against prisons

Erased Histories: Community Responses to HIV/AIDS The transcription of a panel of different (mostly gay and lesbian) community activists about their work around HIV and AIDS in the earlier days of the epidemic, including how AIDS issues interact with courts, cops, and prison issues.

Building abolition future the transcription of a panel from spring 2010 about how sex offender panic is linked to homophobia and the recent push for sex offender registries

::Resource lists / Newsletters::

The Word is Out! Issues 1 to 7 Our very own Prisoner Correspondence Project newsletter. Includes featured resource, prisoner art and writing, callouts for our different projects, and a list of all our services.

Cellcount A general newsletter / list of services and resources offered by PASAN, the Prisoner HIV/AIDS Support Action Network. Also includes tips on safer drug use, etc. We will send you the most recent edition, though you can also request backissues (Canada)

Black and pink A monthly Newsletter put out by Balck and Pink, a USA based open family of LGBTQ prisoners and "free world" allies who support each other.

A resource list for the Incarcerated Native American Includes listings for newspapers for Native American prisoners, book program listings, legal resources, and education programs for prisoners (USA)

The Criminal's Handbook A list of halfway houses and re-entry resource across Canada, region by region (Canada)

Bisexual resource list national organizations that work on issues faced by bisexual communities (USA)

Queer and trans zine resource list a list of addresses and contact information for self-published zines

Prisoner resource guide includes primarily books-to-prisons chapters and legal resources (USA)

Prison Book Programs: National prisoner resource list expanded version of the prisoner resource list (USA)

Locked out resource for LGBTQ

prisoners (USA)

Stella's info pamphlet on their services (En anglais et en français) A resource list of the services offered by Stella, a Montreal-specific sex worker organization.

Resource list for Straight/non-queer inmates Bisexual resource list

Montreal resource for LGBT youth

Canadian publication for prisoners

List of Prisoner Correspondence Resources

::Legal resources::

TGI Justice Project A brief overview of the programs and services offered by the Transgender, Gendervariant, and Intersex justice project, and how to contact them (USA)

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project An overview of SRLP, it's mandate and programs, and ways to contact them for more information (USA)

Jailhouse Lawyer's manual A handbook of legal rights and procedures for use by people in prison. 36 chapters informing prisoners of their legal rights and how to secure these rights through the judicial process. (USA)

Pennsylvania Legal aid and pro bono organizations resource list (Pennsylvania)

The criminal Handbook: for being on the punitive end of justice This self-published book was written and sent to us by C Watts, who is currently serving his sentence in Southern Ontario. The book covers all of the ins and outs of the Canadian criminal justice system, from specific information about how arrest warrants work, to legal aid, to basic rights of prisoners like phonecalls, to the different levels of security levels in Canadian jails.

::Tattooing::

Tattooing and you: the safe-guards within prison walls A pamphlet / guide on safe tattooing inside prisons, things to consider, and materials to use

Think before you ink prisoners perpetual calendar

::Drug use::

My crack kit / Mon kit crack A short guide (pamphlet size) showing how to safely use crack, and reduce the risk to your body and your lungs. Un guide démontrant comment utiliser du crack, en minimisant les risques et le dommage au corps et aux poumons.

Trans health information project TIP

Guide to hormones and self-injection

Guide DOPE: Travail du sexe, drogues, alcool et autres substances (Français seulement) Un guide (non particulier au milieu carcéral) compréhensif au sujet de la réduction des méfaits en utilisant les drogues et des autres substances

Safer shooting A postcard with short descriptions about how to shoot up safely with injection drugs.

Be kind to your veins A guide to caring for your veins while fixing in prison, where to shoot up, etc, put out by PASAN

Keeping fit A prisoners guide to syringe care, cleaning your needles, and what to do to take better care of your body while shooting up in prison

L'injecteur Un outil de promotion de la santé et de défense de droits fait « Par et Pour » les personnes qui consomment des drogues. Au-delà des thèmes relatifs aux infections transmissibles sexuellement et par le sang (ITSS) et aux drogues, l'injecteur aborde d'autres sujets qui intéressent les personnes UDII, comme: la culture, le cinéma, l'art, l'histoire, la spiritualité, l'alimentation, le sexe, la santé etc.

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archiving different moments in queer / gay history and snapshots of queer struggle (not prison specific)

Tim Tum, a trans jew zine

Concentrates on the struggle with being a transgender young man, issues of identity, and visibility among both queer and heterosexual groups. Highlights being a boy in Jewish American culture, and the struggle for identity when interfacing with normalizing power that attempts to gender you inappropriately.

Making the lives of transsexual people visible: Addressing the politics of social erasure An examination of how social institutions and theoretical approaches have led to the erasure of transsexual (people who identify as members of the other gender) and transgendered (a broad term for a range of groups that do not fit into the current two-gender system) experiences and begins to counter this through developing research and a detailed analysis of the forms of marginalization and oppression facing transsexual and transgendered people.

Sex que(e)ry Que(e)ry is a collaborative zine on queerness, sexuality & gender. It was made at the University of Chicago

Bent bars From our sister org in the UK, a compilation of stories or coming out in prison

Getting Together The ins and outs of dating & relationships for gay and bisexual men.

Shoutout against homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism A booklet designed to educate young people on issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. Included in the publication is a series of autobiographical stories describing the first-hand experiences of those challenged by these issues, as well as educational information and resources.

::General Q+T Literature::

Building Bridges A short article written by Lin Elliot in the mid 1990s that provides a brief overview of the realities of being queer in prison.

Prisons and closets An article written by Jason Lydon about his experience being in prison as queer, and about negotiating outness

Ultraviolet: The case of the jersey 4 A small newspaper about the case of

the new jersey 4 - four black lesbians who were convicted for defending themselves against a homophobic assault

A view from Treblinka Dungeon, Pelican Bay An article written by Lofofora Contreras about her time spent incarcerated at the SHU (Security Housing Unit) at Pelican Bay as a transsexual woman, and about communities of trans prisoners coming together to support one another in the face of torture.

Wiener Society A gay punk zine put together by Neil, prisoner in the US, includes poetry, music reviews, etc.

Left Back: Issue 3 Gay punk prisoner zine distributed by Fanorama; includes poetry and writing about prison life

Thoughts of my liberation: Issue 5 A zine put together by two-spirit Native American prisoner Iron Tipi Warrior about his experience of prison

::Hormones::

Hormones without a doctor A comprehensive guide to street hormone use / hormone use without a doctor. Includes a pill and patch identification guide, what dosage to take pills, and other general tips about safe hormone use. Mostly MTF

Gender Anarchy: a translesbigay 2 spirit zine Issues March 2007 or December 2008 A short zine put together by US transsexual prisoner about trans issues and hormone access in US and California prisons

TranzLezbos A short zine, including poetry, for transsexual lesbians, put together by trans lesbian prisoner Lofofora, who is on the inside in California.

Hepatitis C and hormone therapy (Aussi disponible en français) A pamphlet about how you can transmit hepatitis C while injecting hormones (not specific to prisons)

MTF hormone therapy/traitement hormonal homme a femme Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning male-to-female

FTM hormone therapy/traitement hormonal



THE ROADS WE WALK ON ARE PAVED IN GOLD OUR SPIRITS TRUELY A BLESSING TO BEHOLD

End of Laura Whitehorn Interview

have access to the internet! Or, "can you call me?" - no I can't call you you're not on my approved phone list. You know, things like that, when you're inside you sort of want to know that people on the outside see what you're up against and recognize it.

And there is something I want to say also to prisoners who are reading this, that every time you do anything, organize anything, a walkathon, or a consciousness-raising group, a support group or something, please know that there are people on the outside who know how much sweat you have to put in to getting that into action, how hard it is to do that stuff in prison and it really inspires people on the outside when you do it because people do realize that.

STAND WITH CECE

Last June, CeCe McDonald, a trans woman of color, and her friends suffered a violent, racist and transphobic assault in Minnesota. During the assault, one of her attackers ended up being fatally stabbed. CeCe will be sentenced on June 4th to 41 months in prison for a reduced charge of second degree manslaughter. We are all too familiar with the frustrating games that the criminal justice system plays with the lives of people of color and trans folks, especially trans women of color. If you want to extend your support, love, and friendship to CeCe, write to her at:

Public Safety Facility
Chrishaun Reed McDonald #2012000296
401 South 4th Ave
Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55415
USA

"Yourself"

By: Greg Berin

Take off your clothing,
Features, Pictures;
I don't want you like that,
Masked as another,
Always a lover of someone.
I want you pure, free,
Irreducible you.

I know when I call you
Among all people
In the world,
Only you will be you.
And when you ask me
Who is calling you?
Who wants you his,
I will bury nouns,
Labels history.

I will tear apart
All that they threw on me
From before I was born.
Finally, back in the eternal
Anonymity of the naked,
I will tell you.

But it's kind of hard for me to answer because I don't spend that much time in the mainstream queer movement – in fact my girlfriend [Susie Day] just wrote a satire about Don't Ask Don't Tell, called "Asking, Telling, Enlisting" – so it's a little hard for me to answer that. But in the broader left, they've adopted pro-gay language at least, because you can't not, since so many leading leftists are queer. But the whole question of prisons? Forget it. That is not a big issue in the majority of left organizations in this country.

PCP: Given the invisibilities of members of our communities who are locked up in prisons, what strategies are at our disposal to make queers invested in justice and prison issues? What stake do queer communities have in abolition?

LW: Queer communities have the same stake in prison abolition that anyone interested in social justice does. And when I talk about abolition I don't mean abolishing any system of control and punishment of, for example, people who assault other citizens, things like that. I just don't think that with the kind of system of government the United States has at this point that I trust them to be the ones to do that, I think those should be community based. I think that for all of us to live a decent life means moving away from hatred and permanent punishment and moving into rehabilitation and justice and communities taking control of what we consider crimes. And I certainly think that for queers that's true, I mean in the U.S., it still is illegal for queers to marry. In some states it's not but in the federal system, you just don't get the same protection as a gay couple that you do as a straight couple. And so what stake do we have in maintaining a system of "justice" that reflects that system? There's not much. Plus the U.S. criminal system upholds the broader goals of society, and those goals are not about human rights, equality, creativity – they're about amassing more wealth for the ruling class, and about maintaining an imbalance of power in favor of white people. So that system is not one that we really have a stake in, if we want a different and better kind of society.

The first part of the question about making queers invested in prison issues, I think is mostly about putting faces on who goes to prison. And that's the constant challenge. In the United States there's 7.3 million people involved in either prisons, jails, parole or probation. So putting faces on those people is very challenging – because people see a sea of criminals, that's all they see. But to try to familiarize each community with the people from their community who are inside, I think

can really help. And I also think that art and wall posters and things like that are so critically important. Because the internet is everyone's billboard instead of something on the street. So I think it's time to revive the street art and street posters as a way of educating. The last thing I would say is that you guys, and other people who do this kind of work, who don't let the people inside be left behind, are the main way that I think all of our communities are going to start to care about prisoners, about changing the prison system, telling the stories of queers who have been locked up is really important for getting those stories out and letting people see what life is like for their sisters and brothers.

PCP: As you know, we're planning on sharing this interview with folks on the inside that we're in touch with. Do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share with these folks?

LW: Just that they're not forgotten, that there are people who think about them every day, all the time. And that, you know, I think every day about my own experience in prison, it just never leaves you. But I also remember with great love the people who reached into the bars, to touch me, to visit me, to write to me, to send me something. You never forget those people and similarly I don't forget any of the women I was with in prison and I don't think any of us ever forget each other. So at the point when you feel you're the most alone, just know that someone, somewhere is thinking of you.

And just one other thing I want to say to people who do the work: it's what I said before about knowing the conditions that are unique to prison. I just know that for me one of the most frustrating things would be when I tried to tell people on the outside, if you want to write to me this is how you have to do it or if you want to send me a book this is how you have to do it. And they would just ignore it because it didn't make sense to them. And then I wouldn't get the book. There were so many examples like that. People on the outside have to understand that what they're dealing with is not a rational system, it's a system that's determined to destroy personalities. So when you think, "but that doesn't make sense why can't I send that in if I can send this in," please know that there is no reason except to be arbitrary. It's like that joke when you were little and you would say to your mother, why can't I do that, and she would say because I said so. Well that's the prison system except they really mean it. So I think it's really important for activists on the outside to know the conditions on the inside, and to ask before saying things – it would drive me crazy when people would say, "oh you know, search this on the internet" – well we didn't

>>>continued on next page

femme a homme Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning female-to-male
FAQ on transitioning/Questions frequemment posees sur la transition de genre A basic guide that answers frequently asked questions about transitioning, hormone use, and gender transition
Tracing this body & new flesh struggles An article about kink and radical politics written by a trans woman

::Smut::

Penetration A short story about fisting

Meatus: A pornzine for queers outside the box A collection of erotic writing about gay bio men

Reversed Seduction short erotic fiction by longtime correspondent and contributor Promethea. A younger female inmate develops a plan to seduce her beautiful friend with a titillating surprise ending

Read me a story A sexy story by Promethea

::Women & feminism::

Pocket guide for women living with HIV (not prison specific) A pocket guide for HIV-positive women that provides up-to-date information in plain language about a wide range of issues often faced by women with HIV. Topics include healthy living,

nutrition, getting care, treatment basics, relationships and pregnancy. It also addresses street drugs and touches on hepatitis C co-infection. (by Positive Women's Network)
Corpus See description in HIV/AIDS resource section

Never Innocent: Feminist trouble with sex offender registries and protection in a prison nation (by Erica R. Meiners) Using recent work by anti-prison theorists and community-based activists who are working against the prison industrial complex, this article links prison abolition to feminist frameworks to question escalating sex offender registries and community notification laws that are the state's response to sexual violence against children and women.

Tenacious: art and writings from women in prison

Women Prisoners' Resource Guide A list of addresses and contact information for incarcerated women
One woman's struggle By Kebby Warner, a short zine about one woman's struggle with the DOC, medical neglect, and about being a mother

Women in Prison: How It Is With Us Author Assata Shakur was a member of the Black Panther Party who went underground to evade police repression, joining the Black Liberation Army. She was captured in 1973 and held as a political prisoner until 1979 (one year after this article was written),

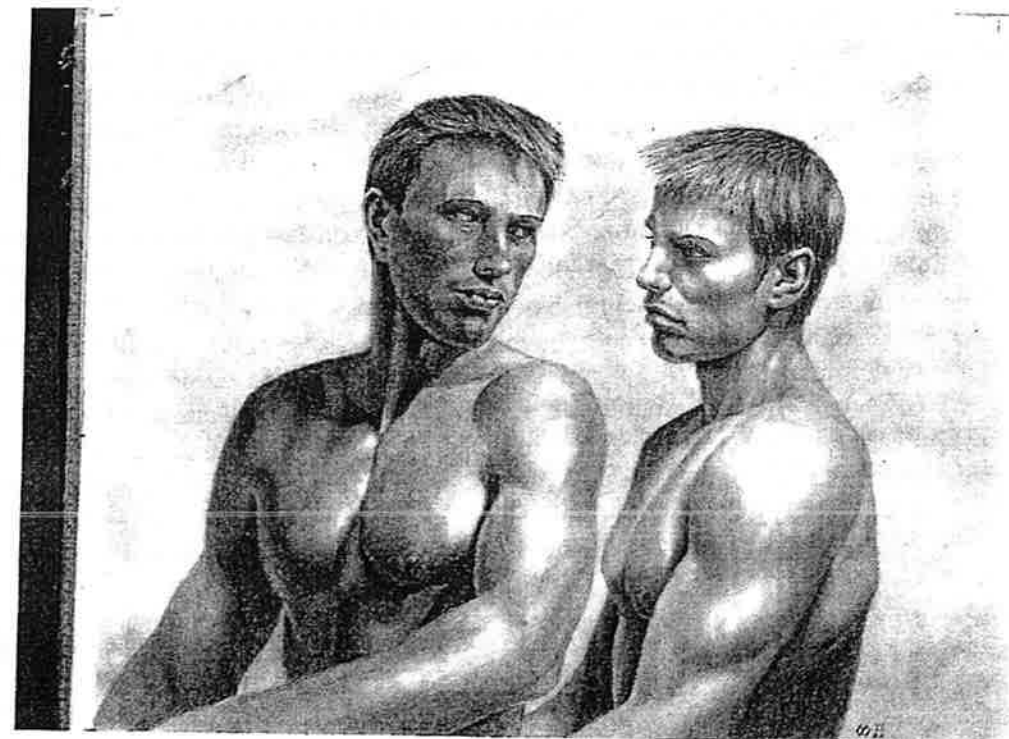
when she was broken out of prison by a unit of the Black Liberation Army. She made her way to Cuba where she lives to this day, despite increasing pressure from the United States for her extradition.

::Sex work::

Audacious: the reality of being a transsexual or transvestite sex worker/ Audace: etre transsexuelle ou travestie, c'est loin d'etre des droleries qui nous amusent a la tele dans la serie

Cover Girl An article written by a member of the Prisoner Correspondence Project about her experiences as a transsexual sex worker dealing with the Montreal policing, court and prison systems.
Hey Girls! Safer sex for sex workers/ He les filles! Le securisexe pour les travailleuses du sexe Tips and tricks for safer sex work

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QUEBEC: SQUARELY IN THE RED

Since mid-February, close to two hundred thousand university and college students have been on strike, walking out of classes all across the Prisoner Correspondence Project's home province of Quebec. Students are protesting the provincial government's plan to raise tuition fees by 75 per cent over the next five years, and taking to the streets daily to fight for accessible education. The tuition hike (or "la hausse" as it is called in French) seems to be yet another sign that our government's priorities are completely out of whack, and that our elected leaders would rather defend corporate interests than fund public services. In response, students have organized all manners of creative and disruptive actions, from costumed marches to bridge blockades. Many professors, union workers, parents and grandparents, artists, activists and other allies have joined in. Currently in the city of Montreal, there are demonstrations happening each day.

As the student strike has grown into what some are beginning to call an uprising, police violence and state

repression have bubbled to the surface of the conflict. Students on picket lines have been met with increased surveillance from security personnel within institutions and have been threatened with court injunctions. Riot police have become a constant presence at marches and demonstrations. Tear gas, sound grenades, batons and pepper spray are frequently used to disperse protests and to punish acts of civil disobedience. Several demos have ended in mass arrests after police declared them to be "illegal assemblies." It is clear that students and activists are being criminalized for their resistance to the Quebec government's neo-liberal agenda.

Concordia University is one of four universities in Montreal, and the Prisoner Correspondence Project's headquarters are located on its campus. Many of PCP's outside pen-pals and collective members work or study there. At Concordia, a lot of the students who are most actively involved in the strike are those who also identify as queer or trans. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that the tuition hikes will be most harmful to

students that are already having a tough time financially, perhaps due to discrimination based on their gender or sexuality. Another is that we queer and trans people share a long history of fighting for our rights, and many have had some previous experience with political activism. Not to mention a shared experience of surveillance, criminalization, and state-sanctioned police violence.

One of the most exciting things about the student movement in Quebec is the way that it has grown to include multiple issues. The struggle against tuition hikes and the privatization of education has also become a struggle against police brutality and political repression. It has become a struggle against colonialism and environmental destruction. It has become a struggle for social justice. In this way, the work of the Prisoner Correspondence Project and the work of the Quebec student movement are fundamentally connected. We are fighting for access, for justice, and for freedom against the imprisoning confines of the status quo.

HAVOQ, the Horizontal Alliance of Very Organized Queers, is a collective of queers based in San Francisco, CA, that fights for social and economic justice. They are rooted in the labor movement, organizing to project worker's rights and to defend queer justice in the workplace. HAVOQ also organizes and demonstrates around issues affecting queers in San Francisco, issues ranging from gentrification and tenant justice to immigrant and migrant rights and de-criminalization. They also work on prison abolition issues, and they held an Occupy San Quentin action last February to oppose practices of mass incarceration and prison expansion. The Prisoner Correspondence Project was fortunate enough to take part in HAVOQ's "Undoing Borders" tour this past fall, which focuses on the criminalization of migrants and the use of prisons and detention centers to punish bodies that the State deems illegal and locks away for profit. The tour focused on how issues of criminalization are queer issues, and how queers specifically are affected by racist laws that target immigrants and by policing and immigration practices that put people in jail. When we met with HAVOQ, we told them about how many people are writing to us from inside in the hopes of finding a penpal, and how difficult it is for us to match up all the people who are getting in touch, since we are such a small group. HAVOQ is now starting up a monthly letter writing night for queer and trans penpals incarcerated in California, and we plan to collaborate with them into the coming year. For more info about this fabulous, flamboyant, and fiercely queer organization, you can write them at:

San Francisco Pride At Work
1800 Market St. Mailbox #31
San Francisco, CA 94102

FEATURED RESOURCE: HAVOQ

FINAL INTERVIEW WITH LAURA WHITEHORN

PCP: What were the ways that you survived prison as a lesbian or queer person? Can you share any strategies for building support networks, maintaining personal well-being, and accessing information that queers living inside prison today might find useful?

LW: I think that your work and other queer activists and just progressive activists on the outside supporting queer prisoners and being willing to come to their defense or provide community visits, things like that are really important. I think that providing queer-friendly/pro-queer literature and books are really important. I had trouble getting some of that stuff when I was in prison because some of it just got censored, because of homophobia, and that would become a good issue to talk to people about. It's a little hard to say across the board, because I think it's different in women's prisons than in men's prisons. It's a lot less dangerous in women's prisons and I also know that, in the United States anyway, there are transgender women who are in the course of transgenering, transitioning from mtf (male to female), who end up in male prisons and it's really terrifying. And those are the people who really need support from outside communities.

But the other thing that was important for me was being able to talk to the young women who were in prison with me, some of whom were coming out or at least having sexual relationships with women for the first time in their lives - whether they would end up being lesbians when they went back on the street I don't know, but they were being bombarded by conservative religious people who came into the prison to lead Christian services about how they were going to hell. And luckily because I was able to be out as a lesbian, I was publicly a lesbian, my family knew about it, I came to be a person that they would come to and ask. And I could counsel them and they would bring me their bibles and I would say, "well this is what it says," and I would try to help them understand how that didn't mean that they were going to hell! I would help them challenge those assumptions and think about why the church services said what they did. So that was

really important.

Other than that, it's about getting inside, letting them know that they are seen on the outside and being really ready to provide legal support when people come up against something, either getting beaten up or being in some way targeted by the prisons for being gay.

PCP: We've read older interviews with you in which you mention the invisibility of prisoners and prison issues in most queer organizing. We're wondering whether this invisibility of prisoners has always been the case in your experience of queer or gay politics, and what shifts you have seen, if any.

LW: Well I think it's shifting a lot, and it's sort of back to what I was saying about the transgender movement and transgender queers playing a really great role, especially in the United States, it's especially transgender folk of colour playing a really leading role in raising the issue of prisons because that community is very much confronted with going to prison a lot of the time. So I think it's changing somewhat. You know in the United States there are two strands of queer organizing at the moment, and I think there always have been - one's fairly conservative and it's about gays in the military, and marriage equality, and stuff like that, we're just like you, and proving that gay people can be assimilated as easily as anyone else. And then there's the queer movement that says, "hell no we won't go!" We won't go into the army, and we also won't go into the mainstream society in the way that it exists now. So for me, it has actually changed since the days when I was in prison and I think that the AIDS movement kind of changed it and I think that the transgender movement is really changing it now. When I was in prison it wasn't even really realized in the broader community what a large percentage of people with HIV go through prisons. Now in the United States it's something like 25% of all people with HIV will at some point in the United States pass through the prison system. And that's huge. So it's become a little bit more of an issue.

GAY CELEBRITY GOSSIP

Turns out that our gay celeb gossip for the last newsletter was so slicked and oiled up that it accidentally slipped right out of the newsletter! So here's a double dose of thick, meaty queer gossip that's ready for you to bite right into.

In television news, ABC anchor, Dan Kloeffler, came out on air. While delivering a report on Zach Quinto, the "Star Trek" actor who recently came out in an interview, Kloeffler said he would consider dropping his rule against dating actors for Quinto.



Speaking of teams, David Testo just became the first professional soccer player to come out as a Mo. Times were tough for this talented ball-player, he had hard a time keeping his gay identity private.

Moving on to tighter uniforms, Josh Dixon, a gymnast who's been aiming to join the US Olympic team, also just came out! Hopefully these boys will inspire future jocks to embrace their true faggy selves.

Kelly Osbourne recently came under fire this winter for her use of the word "tranny" as an insult. However, she quickly corrected herself and was quoted as saying:

"As a lifelong LGBT ally and friend, I feel it is my duty to not only apologize for my wrong but to also correct it. I cannot imagine the courage it takes to live your life openly and honestly, reflecting who you truly are, or the hurt that comes from having to hide who you are because others may not support and accept you". Now, that's better Kelly!

Gettin straight (yeah right!) to the point, K.D. Lang on Justin Bieber: "Justin Bieber looks like a lesbian. Hot as sh*t!" We love you K.D.



RuPaul's Drag Race just completed its fourth season, which was dripping with drama and loaded with charisma, uniqueness, nerve and talent. The winner of the season was the spooky punk goth queen of the gay

underworld, Sharon Needles. What a dreamboat!!! Another highlight of the season was Latrice Royale, "chunky yet funky," and adored by all for her fierceness and soul, honesty and compassion. While she didn't win the season, she made it into the top 4. But what we luv so hard about Latrice is how open she was about her incarceration on national television. She was fearless and honest, and made the topic of incarceration one that could no longer be ignored on gay television. We're so excited that Latrice is now going to be a drag professor on RuPaul's Drag U this summer! "If you want a piece of Latrice, serve it ROYALE." SWOON!

Lastly, the lead singer of the punk band Against Me!, Tom Gabel, just came out as trans! Now going by Laura Jane Grace, she was just featured in a Rolling Stone article talking about her plans to transition soon, the band and her fame, and her wife being "super-amazing and understanding." We applaud Laura's bravery in coming out publicly like that. And yay for amazing partners!! A rumor also flew around recently saying that Queen Latifah had finally come out! As it turns out, she's just headlining a gay pride festival in Long Beach, New York. Regardless, homos everywhere (including ourselves) went wild in a lezzie-loving Latifah frenzy. Obviously we're just aching for her to dish, but until then...we still know.

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? BY THE KYLE

[an excerpt - get in touch if you want the whole story or look for it in a coming resource list]

It is funny, solitude is an essential part of purification and dedication in acts of self-discipline, both mental and physical, whether sacrificial or self-serving. Many throughout the ages have sought solitude in prayer, fasting, or to settle the mind in times of decision making. It is fundamental in yoga and meditation. It should be part of any serious exercise program and studies. We all need time alone. Solitude is good for the mind, soul and body. That type of solitude is rarely found in prison. Part of the process is a freedom of choice. Humans are the most stubborn of all animals. If you try to force change you will get change, but not the desired change.

Prison is a mixture of forced solitude and the direct opposite - no privacy at all. I live in an 8 by 12 foot cell. It has 3 walls, floor, and ceiling, with a bed (2 beds tho I live alone), a desk and stool, a toilet/sink combination without hot water. The fourth wall is open - or rather all bars. This is the side of my cell that opens to a twelve foot hall and two large windows straight across from me. This means even when the unit is in lock down there is very little solitude. There is not five minutes a day you can sit on the toilet. There is no privacy. If you must have privacy, go to solitary.

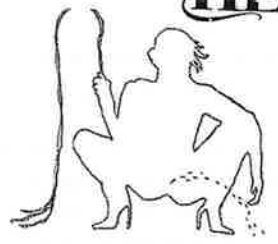
I have been in solitary confinement three times in 11 years - once for my own protection. Solitary confinement affects each person in a different way. I am Deaf. There are a lot of Deaf in prison. We are a separate class of humans - children of a Lesser God, remember. To experience this, put on a Deaf tag and go somewhere you are not known - a mall or college campus. Remember you are Deaf, so don't blush or let your anger show when others openly talk about you. I have an I.Q. of 125, yet officers and inmates treat me as tho I am mentally retarded. I am Deaf; because of a head injury I wear diapers; I shake almost constantly because of M.S.. No one is going to give me a chance to prove myself. To everyone I am a dummy. Funny, this dummy can say over 4,000 words, read lips at about 60%, and somehow (tho I am not sure how) I know more about what is going on around me than hearing people. Don't think I am angry. Many Deaf people are angry about how we are treated. I am not angry; however, I am going to use every tool God gave me, including my disabilities. That makes me a con and it makes for some very funny situations.

You might think I have gotten totally off the subject. I usually do that a lot. In this case I can only wish to show a comparison. For instance, solitary confinement has little affect on me. Deafness is solitary confinement. I was slightly more fortunate - or less. You must have something before it can be taken away. I had an identical twin brother. We were more than friends, more than brothers, more than twins. We were soulmates, and yes, we were gay. But he was killed when we were 16 years old and I had to learn about loneliness. I have found solitude very comforting in my grief.

RECIPE CALL OUT: A PRISONER COOK BOOK!

One of our inside members had an amazing idea to collect recipes from folks on the inside. We can publish the recipes in future newsletters or eventually make it into a zine. So if you have creative and tasty ideas to share of what people can make on the inside, please send them to us!

HOMOSCOPIES OR HEY, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)
With mercury in retrograde, I cannot predict whether you are coming or going this spring. Yet, I can say that Aquarians are known for their resolute ability to be fit, tied, blindfolded, spun all around, and still come out of it not only on course, but in high fashion. Worry not about staying on track, but watch as you skillfully get out of a bind, un-lost, re-lost, and then found, no-discovered (!), winning each and every runaway, pageant, and parade.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)
If you are a fish, Pisces, then you are swimming in the most golden pond to ever be showered with the lavish mists and mystical creatures, and sparkling tides of the radiant sun. The key, however, is to stay near the surface, because down below is like a gothic ruinous cave of bones and skulls. This is not to suggest that you be shallow, but just to tread with some level of caution and hesitancy, unless of course, goth is your thing, in which case, dive just as deep as you can.



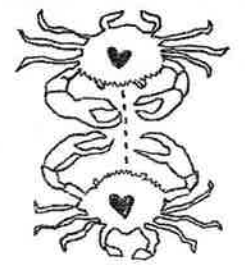
Aries (March 21-April 19)
Aries, it's your year!! That's right, after many long-term frustrations, long-term sloppy seconds, and LTR's (interpret as you wish), now is your time to whip out the stilettos, cake on the glitter, and take it to the moon. You are in top form, and you are only getting better. Make it fast and make it gay, because you really deserve this well-earned, well-hung break.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
Always a bull, but never a bully- you are sweet and tender like the finest flowers or the hunkiest meat. I think that as the spring springs, the astrological omens will continue to advise you to practice your cool and collected calm front, even if you are feeling like tornadoes inside. Put your tender heart on your sleeve and protect it with a vision of tiny faeries in gold lame hot pants. Then just sit back and enjoy the love.



Gemini (May 21-June 21)
Not a soul could ever contest that the last major chunk of your life was a festering pile of true poo. But, as you may have noticed over the shorter side of the short term, things are not just looking up, they are looking sequins and stardust and rainbows served over vanilla bean ice cream. It doesn't just get better, Gemini, it gets even. And you will soon receive your finest rewards.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)
Fire in the pan, Cancer, can either burn your butt, or it can set in motion what could be the longest winning streak of your gay ol' existence. So, be extra careful in the coming months to get rolling on your tasks at hand before they smolder your bottom. Distractions to watch out for: babes who are taken; procrastination; mind games; labyrinths; the t-rex. Good luck!



Leo (July 23-August 22)
Leo, you are taking full advantage of the novelty, possibility, and charisma of spring. And those around you, no doubt, are paying close attention to the novelty, possibility, and charisma of you. The key, the omens tell us, is to really tune your flaming bottom in to the adoration and admiration that your fine self collects. The shiny and glimmering longing of others should be stored like a sap that you will expel when you need it. With this sticky sustenance you will be fit for the kings.

NEWS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW

Solitary Confinement and Gang Validation - California's Gotta Give it Up

You may recall the hunger strikes in California prisons that took place twice in 2011. You may even have been directly involved in the actions. Thousands of prisoners all over the country engaged in hunger strikes to call for an end to long-term solitary confinement and an end to gang validation, among other things. This is a small update on this ongoing, incredibly important battle. Apparently in response to the hunger strikes and the media attention, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) released a new set of proposed regulations in March 2012 called the "Security Threat Group Prevention, Identification and Management Strategy."

According to the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition, CDCR's proposed regulations might actually increase the number of people in the SHU - the coalition writes that CDCR "is recommending an expansion of the seven currently recognized prison gang affiliations to include other security threat groups, as well as broadening its current validation categories." Members of the mediation team advocating on behalf of SHU and Ad-Seg prisoners managed to meet with representatives from CDCR on April 26. The Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition was hoping that this would be a time when the legislative aides and mediation team could push CDCR to actually make meaningful changes to its legislation that would work towards an END to long-term solitary confinement. The jury is still out on just how effective the mediation team will be.

The Supreme Court Sucks

On April 2, 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that "when new inmates are being admitted into the general population of a jail, officials don't need individualized suspicion before conducting a close inspection of private body parts," according to Bloomberg News. As in, prison guards are now legally allowed to strip search anyone coming into jail being admitted into the general population, no matter how minor the offence, and whether or not the offence involves contraband. Lawyers on both sides of this ruling are saying that this doesn't mean that everyone coming into jail will be strip searched, because people with minor offences shouldn't be going into general population anyway. But the fact that police and prison guards are now allowed to strip search anyone no matter what offence they committed is pretty fucked up, I think we can all agree.

Some people say that this ruling makes official the unofficial increase in strip searches in many states post-September 11. But there are still ten states (including Florida and Michigan) where this ruling won't take effect, because their own laws prohibit strip searches in the absence of reason to suspect the smuggling of contraband.

...But Sometimes the Supreme Court Gets it Right, I Guess

So in 2005, the Wisconsin Legislature passed a law called the "Inmate Sex-Change Prevention Act" that refused to allow prison doctors to prescribe hormone therapy or gender reassignment surgery to trans prisoners!! So Lambda Legal stepped in, on behalf of several trans women whose hormone treatment completely stopped after the law passed.

The lawsuit they filed was called *Fields v. Smith*. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin ruled that the 2005 law was unconstitutional, because denying transition-related care to people in prison violated the Eighth Amendment - as in, it was cruel and unusual punishment. And THEN the State of Wisconsin appealed the case!! They took it to the Supreme Court, they wanted those trans people to be denied their necessary meds and surgeries that badly. Well, the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, and upheld the lower court's ruling.

The Supreme Court said: "Surely, had the Wisconsin legislature passed a law that DOC inmates with cancer must be treated only with therapy and pain killers, this court would have no trouble concluding that the law was unconstitutional. Refusing to provide effective treatment for a serious medical condition serves no valid penological purpose and amounts to torture." At least the Supreme Court got one thing right.

We at the Prisoner Correspondence Project don't quite know what kinds of cases Lambda Legal takes on, but to contact the organization, write to one of these addresses:

- National Headquarters**
120 Wall Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10005-3904
- Western Regional Office**
3325 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1300
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1729
- Midwest Regional Office**
11 East Adams, Suite 1008
Chicago, IL 60603-6303
- Southern Regional Office**
730 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 1070
Atlanta, GA 30308-1210
- South Central Regional Office**
3500 Oak Lawn Avenue, Suite 500
Dallas, TX 75219-6722



SINCE WE'VE BEEN GONE

Many exciting things have happened in the Prisoner Correspondence Project since the winter issue of the Word is Out. We kicked off February with our 2012 visioning, hosted at the fabulous Chez Marty (aka Marty's living room). We spent the day talking about the general direction of the Prisoner Correspondence Project in the past year and a half, and setting short and long-term goals for the coming year and beyond. We are getting excited about making space for an inside advisory committee to be a part of our project. This would mean a group of members inside prison (you) who wish to help us make decisions regarding what projects we take on, what resources we develop, and new visions for the future. This is a really important aspect of our work. We've talked about this before, so this may sound familiar. But if you've already expressed interest in being a part of this process or if you are thinking about it now, please get in touch. Plans are on the go to start focusing the project more locally on the Quebecois and Canadian context. At the same time, we want to encourage other projects like ours to start across the United States and Canada, especially in areas like California, Texas, and the southwestern United States. These are places we get new letters from almost every day, so clearly there's a lot of folks out there who want penpals! The demand has been so high for the last few months, and we've gotten so over-capacity that we've unfortunately had to temporarily close the project

to U.S. prisoners who're looking to get involved for the first time. We're trying as hard as we can to get other groups in the U.S. to take on some of the folks who've contacted us recently, and we've started partnerships with both the Redbird Project in Columbus, Ohio and HAVOQ in San Francisco, California. These groups have helped take the pressure off by taking on matching up some penpal pairs in their areas. Still, this is a huge project, and we need help! If you have any contacts on the outside who might be interested in starting up a gay/bi/queer/trans prisoner penpal project in their area, please let us know!

In happier news, since February we've been holding monthly letter-writing nights for outside penpals in Montreal, and it's been going great! The May edition even featured queer astrological readings. In mid-February, members of the project traveled to Waterloo, Ontario to attend the Breaking Bars, Building Bridges conference, where we presented on a panel with other prisoner support groups in Ontario and Quebec. Other highlights of the weekend included learning the history of Men Against Sexism, a gay prisoner activist group of the 1970s inside Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, and attending a workshop by Toronto's PASAN (Prisoner HIV/AIDS Support Action Network). Back in Montreal, some of our inside participants' art was displayed as part of the Radical Queer Semaine art show, which hung in the Fresh Paint Gallery from February 23th to March 17th. In early April, some of our outside members went inside the Federal Training Centre in

Laval, Quebec to facilitate a discussion about prison histories of HIV/AIDS in Canada, and recent cases of the criminalization of HIV transmission, with the lifers' group there. We've also held two fundraiser dance parties in the last few months that were successful both as fundraisers and stress relievers for all of us in the project!

We have a lot on the go in the coming few months, too. Our workshop proposal was accepted to Montreal's annual anarchist bookfair, so on May 20th we'll be presenting "Homo\$ for Prison Abolition," a workshop about the necessity of queer/gay/trans prisoner support. We're also currently working with a volunteer group of radical librarians called Radical Reference, trying to update our resource library and our resource lists. If you know of any resources or organizations we should add to our library or referral lists, please write in and tell us!



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Saturn is such right now, Virgo, that any other astrological sign might throw caution to the wind and go for broke. But you, Virgo, will use the force of Saturn to recalculate, appraise, assess, and dip your toes. You might become more beautiful, more organized, more fabulous, and more aware. But what you will not do is jump face first into a sea of hot fluids. You will not emerge with a glitter beard, nor will you taste the pleasures at the back of your throat. But with a little compassion, you will have all of this and then some. Good timing is your virtue, Virgo, and you'll make them dance, and spin, and twirl, and then you'll do it all again like nobody else.

Libra (September 23- October 24)

Libra, you've heard it before, but darling you must get yourself out of the muck. Stop thinking, stop waiting, stop with the foreplay, the blueprints, the careful floral arrangements- it's now or never, honey, and I don't mean that you can just shelve this or avoid it or put it back off. This is not an appropriate star sequence for deliberation, but knowing your nature, I offer you a little game plan to face the shark in the teeth. Ready, here it is, five crisp words to repeat as you slip in and out of your dreams: "Homo, Action! Time is Up."



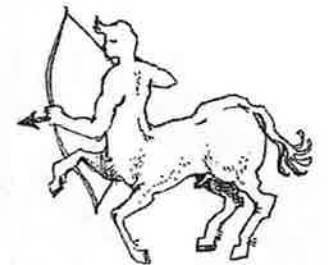
Scorpio (October 24-November 22)

Hellooooooo, Scorpio. This may seem fairly obvious and perhaps unnecessary advice, but I think it can't go without saying that you mustn't behave like such an Evil Queen. Channel your soft side in the coming months. Free your inner bear. Imagine yourself underneath the giant furry costume. Attempt to tame your fuzzy heart. Practice wrapping yourself in puppies and being worshipped for your kindness by the most sensitive of femmes. These mental acts, no doubt, will make your Queen even more awesome and your evil more resolute, leaving you still plenty of time for the first frost.



Sagittarius (November 23-December 21)

If your astrological map were a tea party, it would involve the following guests: Dolly Parton, Queen Latifah, and Mickey Mouse. In a not-quite-unlikely turn of events, Dolly and Queen Latifah would find themselves lovers, leaving Mickey to watch. Whether you agree or disagree with the inevitability of this mélange, the best thing to do for this fated metaphor is to figure out how to use your Dolly realness to allow your inner butch to love itself beyond the cold, corporate gaze of the material world. Because your Dollywood/Queen Butch cannot be coopted, it is something funny and true that could be delightful to face.



Capricorn (December 22- January 19)

Capricorn, high five! You deserve only congratulations and respect for the many achievements and triumphs you've attained through the course of this year. As the stars reconfigure and realign, you have produced, influenced, dazzled and survived. You are full on inspiration for us all, and you queerly merit our unanimous applause. You are doing an excellent job.



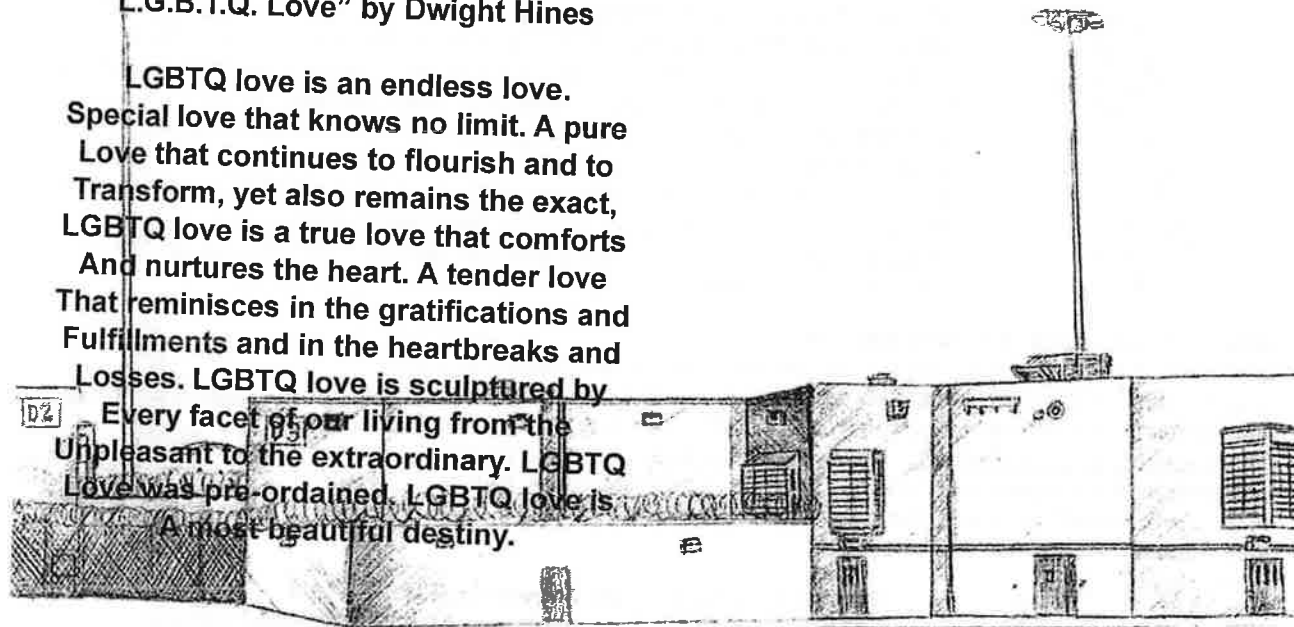
Catharsis: Trans Women's Stories of Sexual Violence is seeking written submissions from trans women who are willing to share their experiences of sexual violence and assault. The goal is to create a book-length collection of personal essays and stories from trans women about their individual experiences. Through compiling these stories, we hope to counteract the tendency of broader feminist dialog to deal with the subject of violence against trans women as hypothetical, ethereal, and comparatively minimal. We also hope that such a compilation would reinforce the place of trans women among all women and help to bring support and healing to our often overlooked communities.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS JULY 31st 2012

Submit by mail: Sawyer DeVuyst, Catharsis Project, 195 Morgan avenue, Brooklyn, NY, 11237

"L.G.B.T.Q. Love" by Dwight Hines

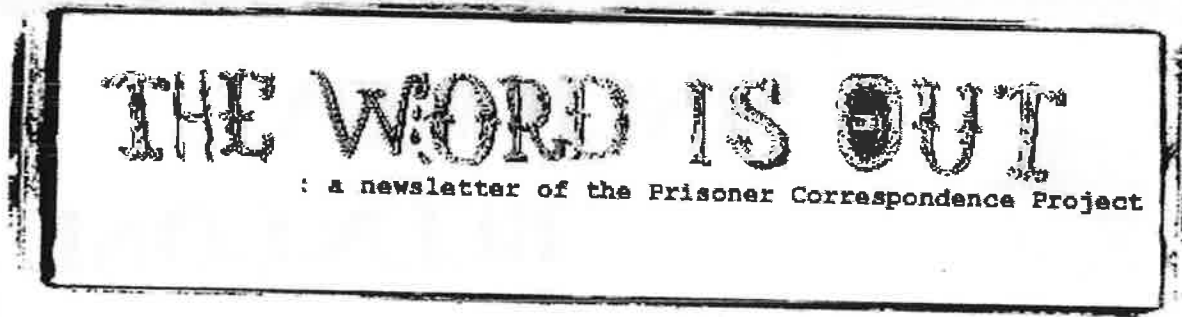
LGBTQ love is an endless love. Special love that knows no limit. A pure Love that continues to flourish and to Transform, yet also remains the exact, LGBTQ love is a true love that comforts And nurtures the heart. A tender love That reminisces in the gratifications and Fulfillments and in the heartbreaks and Losses. LGBTQ love is sculptured by Every facet of our living from the Unpleasant to the extraordinary. LGBTQ Love was pre-ordained. LGBTQ love is A most beautiful destiny.



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Issue 8: Spring 2012 "Students and Studs"



Dearest Pris Co Pro members (and anyone else who may read this),

In this issue we see a lot of struggle, a lot of hope, and an explosion of creativity. We hope you will join us as we support the Quebec student movement, celebrate another gay celebrity out of the closet, take the Kyle's words to heart, learn about important changes to prison legislation, appreciate the knowledge and advice that our prison activist and former prisoner Laura Whitehorn offers in the last installment of her interview, and much, much more.

A huge THANK YOU to the inside contributors to this issue - Aiden, James, the Kyle, Gregory, Dwight, and Jesse. Aiden - a million apologies for doctoring your image below and covering over this beautiful man's junk slipping out of his shorts. We just loved the image and knew it wouldn't get in that way! Our other major art regret is that we couldn't afford to print James' angels in colour - the beautifully bright rainbow colours would make your heart melt.

As always, write to us, and keep us on our toes.

In solidarity and struggle,

Your friends at the Prisoner Correspondence Project



"WILL TRADE" © 2010 M.A. WILSON

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