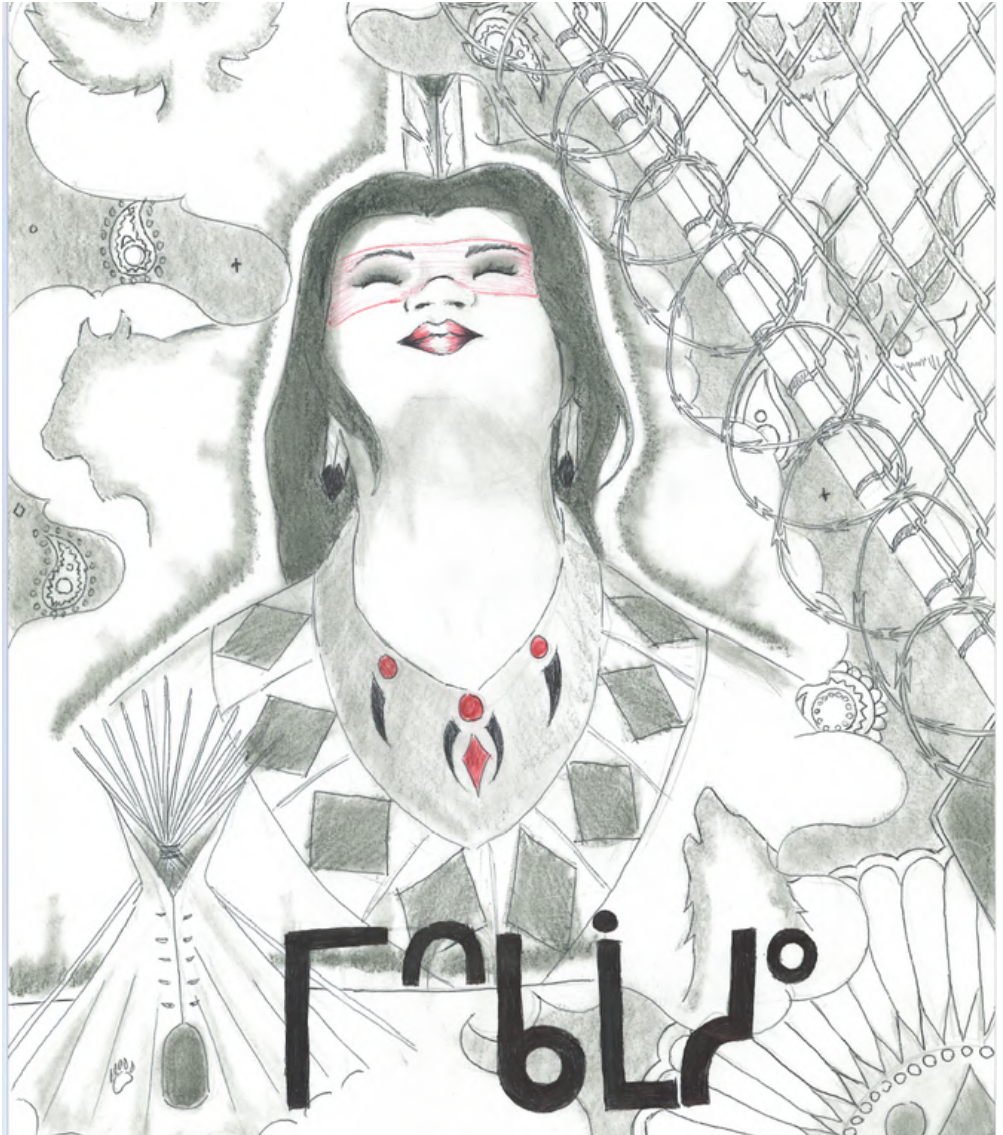


The Inside Scoop

Stories, poems, and art created by those who are or have been incarcerated

Summer/Fall 2024

Community Edition



Art by Nathan

Change from the inside

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Boozhoo, Aaniin, Tansi, Hello!

Thank you for picking up a copy of the Summer/Fall 2024 Inside Scoop. I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Anna Sigrithur and I am the new editor of The Inside Scoop.

I'm also glad to be writing to you with an exciting announcement:

The Scoop gets an Update!

Starting in January 2025, The Scoop will have a fresh new look, new sections, and valuable new opportunities for contributors. What will not change is our magazine's commitment to publishing the writing and artwork of people who are or have been incarcerated.

To make this happen, we're taking a short break between this issue and our relaunch. So, if you're a writer, you have plenty of time to submit! And be sure to check out the updated submission guidelines on the back of this issue.

Here's a sneak preview of some of the new topics we're looking for submissions on:

- Opinions - your unique perspective on a current issue or event
- Life on the Inside - your firsthand account of an aspect of daily life in an institution. Examples could include food, living conditions, programs, activities, and more.
- Humour - laughter is medicine...why not share some with Inside Scoop readers?
- Nuggets of Wisdom - what advice would you share with readers on the Inside? Or, what would you like readers who might never be Inside to know?

And so, I invite you to get writing and drawing, and get ready for a new and improved Inside Scoop coming your way in the new year.

In solidarity and in literacy,

Anna

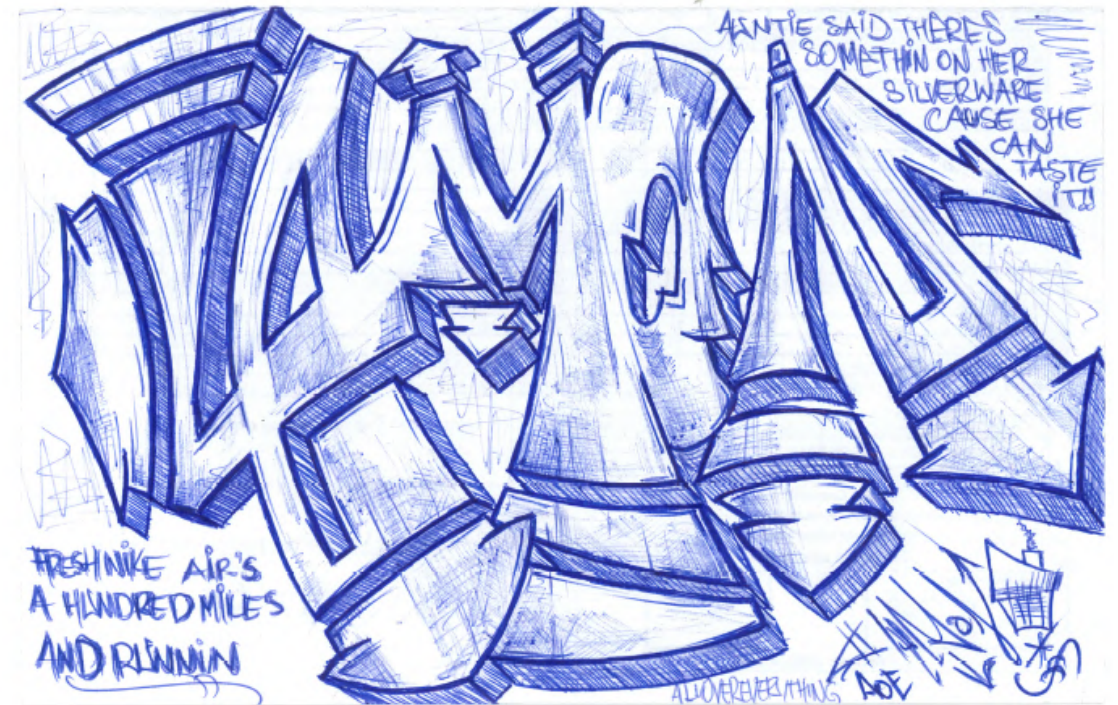
Inside Scoop Editor

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

the John Howard Society of Manitoba operates on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We acknowledge that the ongoing effects of colonization have resulted in the criminalization and over-incarceration of the Indigenous community. As an organization, we recognize that understanding this connection is essential to our work as we move towards reconciliation.

POETRY AND ART



Art by Bojan

Created by Him*by Louie**(written during lock in time, inspired by addictions)*

In the past, in our past, and by our guilt,
shame has taught us to be ashamed.

As I sit here confined by the thoughts
of my guilt, Mercy has shown me a band
of defiance through hard work and truth.
Truth to myself; for believing in myself,
can we pass through our struggles
of that which defined us, of that shame
with which we believed we deserved.

As we carry on through our struggles, remember
that I shared this with you, “you are not defined
as a person by your past, you are not defined
by the things you have done wrong in your life,”
but most importantly remember this: what we
believed once made it okay is not what carries us
forward, but what we realize through our journey,
head held high, is what will define us in
the walk, in that Journey we are here to walk.

Lastly, the belief in changing comes
from within. Not by the defiance that
held us back. Push through the
shame, believe in yourself, change
can start today, instead of
tomorrow!

FLOW*by Damian*

MY COLOR, COMES TO LIFE

AND AT TIMES, SO FLOURESCENT

WITH NO BAD INTENTION, IT HITS
WITH THE FLOW

WITH NO WHEEL, OR SUDDEN URGE
IT JUST GOES WITH THE FLOW

SAND IS ASSET, WITH EACH WAVE, AS IT HITS
— BUT NOTHING PHYSICAL—A WIDE,
SPREAD BODY, AMONGST EACH SUN
THAT IS SETTING

YET, YOU'RE STILL—WITH NO SUDDEN
MOVEMENT

WAVES ALWAYS HIT—YET THEY GO
WITH THE FLOW

WITH NO BAD INTENTION, IT HITS
WITH THE FLOW

WITH NO WHEEL OR SUDDEN URGE
IT JUST GOES WITH THE FLOW

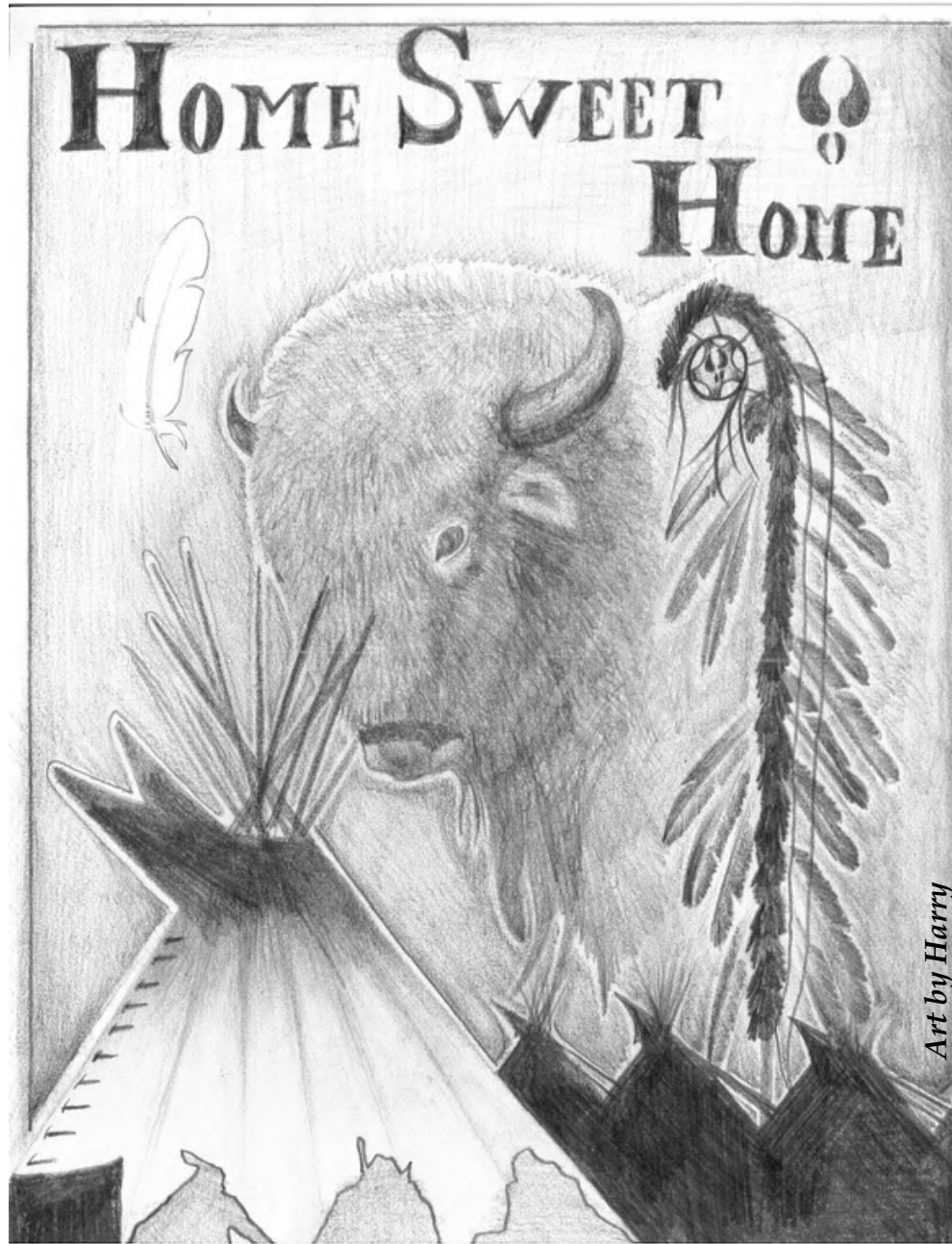
Metamorphosis*by Damian*

Programmed, to change
illuminating the mysteries, and wonders
all around us every day

A radical change in form and in-function
crawling from
the beauty with-in
many shift, to the most reflecting-
transformable
-metamorphosis

Fate of natural beauty—beginning to Grasp
-the reality—at last
do not carve a force of wrath
-rather, me make-it, with a mix
of destruction and growth

Certain cells—they die, with-in a blink
of an eye—body parts atrophy
meanwhile, they are rapidly-expanding
now, they're ready to merge
borne, so internal—with genetics
like stubby—little degenerates.



Way I Feel

by Jordan

Music, the only way I'll do it so you'll never forget,
'n when I get you back in my arms you'll never regret it
but if you're happy I'm happy, now I can finally admit it,
even though I've been down and confused cuz
I don't know what's going on between us two,
if I can tell the future it would be the kids and just us two
but god wouldn't let this happen for no reason.



So baby please, just tryna see what's going thru your
mind cuz you see what's going thru mine.
I know you lying every time you say ya fine
so I ask god and he told me give it time.
I'm mad, stressed going thru this on my own, alone,
it kills me cuz I know that you been hurt,
we both know this is not what you deserve
now baby girl in your voice it has been heard.

Faint Hope to No Hope

Most of us have a date with freedom at some point in the future. Some sooner, some later. But some aren't guaranteed any freedom at all.

The Faint Hope clause (745.6 of the Criminal Code of Canada) offered the hope of parole to those serving a life sentence (first or second degree murder). Under this legislation, early parole could be sought after serving a minimum of 15 years. Faint Hope was created in 1976, when capital punishment (the death penalty) was abolished in Canada. It offered an incentive to rehabilitate and behave by giving inmates hope of getting out.

By no means was this a get-out-of-jail-free card, though. There was a rigid application process. The first step was to make an application to a judge who would determine if there was a likely chance of a jury agreeing to the release.

Secondly, the application had to convince a panel or jury of 12,

who must be unanimous in their decision. Only then could the petitioner approach the Parole Board of Canada, who held final say. Between 1987 and 2006, 97 people were granted early parole, of a possible 1500 eligible lifers. In March of 2011, the Conservative government passed Bill S-6, which repealed and abolished the Faint Hope Clause.

In my opinion, they made a big mistake by letting politics control the justice system. This was their attempt to look "tough on crime" without actually addressing the issues. This was the same government that got rid of 2-for-1 credit for pre-trial custody, which is now costing taxpayers billions.

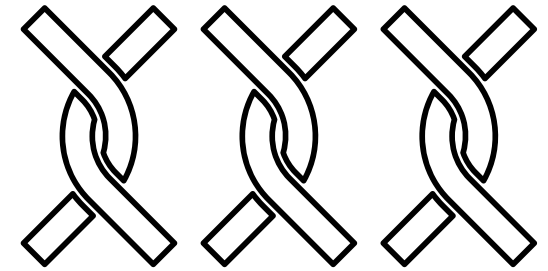
The public is fed the line "innocent until proven guilty," yet many spend months and years in custody without their day in court. What about bail? Sure, if you have money. Is it any wonder that most people awaiting trial in Canada are poor?

I understand the public's desire to keep criminals off the streets for as long as possible, but we all need to realize that in Canada almost everyone who is in jail will eventually get out. What kind of people do we want them to be? Those offered rehabilitation programs, preventative programs, counselling and incentive measures are more likely to change (or want to change), ultimately lowering recidivism.

The Faint Hope Clause encouraged convicted murderers to rehabilitate themselves. It prompted them to behave, to become less violent, and it gave them hope. It lowered the risk to prison guards and staff from murderers who would otherwise have nothing to lose by unleashing violence.

The federal Conservatives may have looked good by axing the Faint Hope and 2-for-1 credit, but in the long run, the average taxpayer is not any safer and has to shoulder the huge costs of incarceration.

-- Donald



Editor's Note:

We welcome submissions on the topic of the Canadian Criminal Code and its impacts on readers' lives.

To learn more about the Faint Hope clause or other aspects of the Criminal Code, contact your lawyer, your local Legal Aid office, or the Canadian Criminal Justice Association.

Fear

"I live on the edge, I'm only free because I'm not afraid. Everything I was afraid of already happened to me."

-- Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson

Fear is a normal part of life, even the toughest of us humans have it. If you say you don't, well, that's called denial. As a child, I had a fear of the dark, as most of us presumably did, just as I have a fear of getting killed walking down the street. I guess that scenario is a little far-fetched, but in reality it is just the sad truth of the world we live in.

The difference between many people in the world and myself is I don't let myself get comfortable in that state. I find comfort is a dream killer. It kills our ambition to do better things, and also blinds us to our vision and how we look at things. We often miss important details because we feel like what we did or have is good enough.

Anyways, back to fear: if we let ourselves get too comfortable with fear, we often miss out on great opportunities to explore things that are

new to us or are too afraid to try out. Perhaps some of us may even want to try, but we fear the outcome, not the situation, whatever that situation might be.

The Roman Emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius said, "It is not death a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live." Fear often changes good outcomes that could've happened if we had just took that leap of faith, as they say.

It often causes us to miss meeting a life partner due to a fear of intimacy, which also might be caused by a fear of losing someone we love. You might have had the opportunity to go skydiving but turned it down due to your fear of heights, not knowing it could've been one of your greatest moments.

In the end, we are all human and fear keeps us alive and alert for the most part, but being too cautious can sometimes mean missing out on life. Once again, fear is natural, but don't let it control your life.

-- Zaccheus

The Interrogation Room

At first I think it's neighbourhood gangsters rolling up on me, but before I finish that thought, my hands are in cuffs and I'm being escorted to the backseat of a cop car. In such situations I have come to develop a convenient form of amnesia where suddenly I don't know or remember a single thing. Seasoned cops have respect for this code of silence. It's mostly the rookies that lose their crap when you don't want to talk. It's not disrespect—some of us exercise our right to remain silent.

They bring my ass to central booking downtown. I'm placed in an interrogation room. I wake to a super bright hot light on me like a tanning bed. "Light, the visible reminder of invisible light." T.S. Eliot wrote that. My eyes are slow to adjust.

I'm trying to focus on the two silhouettes explaining what is going on and how it's their job to right a whole bunch of wrongs. I've grown accustomed to my own rights being wronged. I don't fall for this approach of self-righteous talk. When someone is

overheated, exhausted, famished and rudely awakened, you can imagine how one could talk during questioning. My usual answers are name, birthday, and lawyer. That's it. The first shall be last and the last shall be first but the silent shall not inherit charges. My mind starts wandering because I know once they exit this room they're going to radically change and reshape my world.

I was never really much of a talker. It might be a Yugoslavian thing, or my childhood. I grew up in the Balkans during a war. My surroundings were tragic but my upbringing wasn't that bad. Some of the best times of my life happened while I was hanging out in our neighbourhood, the centre of the universe to street kids where we all developed this hysterical need to become a superstar. When you lose this direction or sense of make-believe your life is no longer wild, romantic or exciting, but instead one that nobody wants, including yourself.

continued on next page

Later on, I realize that likely applied to both me and the guys asking the questions. They start grilling me about TVs and computer screens and the differences between them.

Incomplete and incorrect information, the game that's most often played in interrogation rooms. All I can think of is the scene in Goodfellas where the Joe Pesci character explains his approach to police questioning. It's graphic and full of swears delivered in a way only Pesci can, and I laugh out loud. The detectives put on a stern and surprised look and one asks, "What's so funny?"

I tell them I was thinking about the stupid look I must've had when they rolled in on me. And then I tell them I don't want to hear about TVs and computer screens anymore, because I have this thing that makes me really uninterested in TVs and computer screens. They look at one another and leave the room, interrogation over.

-- Bojan



Stone Angel

by Andrew

I have pictures on my walk
A witch burning
The Mona Lisa
Cats, dogs, boats,
Girlfriend, war, kiss
Snowy streets of cities I know
But the most beautiful
Stone Angel effigy
Contemplating monument
Ripped, torn, scattered
Now gone
No longer a part of my walls
The walls that encase me
Withhold, contain
A picture
Trans-Canada
Where I was free
To spread my wings

A Gift from Above

by Allen

Life is full of events
people have choices
the greatest gift is that we all have time
what you do with that is up to you
Take the time to listen to a person
and then inspire them and give them hope.
You will be amazed when you see their
eyes light up, and that warm fuzzy
feeling moves through your body.
That's your reward for your effort.
A gift from above.

Bookmark

by Andrew

A Haiku maybe?	Where I read
An accidental poem	So far
A scrap recovered	It's been between
Obi-wan on Mustafar	A Stephen King novel
On the other side, Darth Maul	And Ernst Junger
My favourite	Storm of Steel
A picture torn from a book	This morning
I use it to mark	I spilled my coffee on it
Where I am	But only a little

WORD SEARCH



Jackson Growth
Eliot Hope
Pesci Fear
Aurelius Faith
Journey Music

Remember words can be
backwards or diagonal!

Double search
challenge: find
these words in
the pages of The
Scoop!

JHSM COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

END TO AGGRESSION

Helps participants understand how thoughts affect our feelings and actions.

NOBODY IS PERFECT PARENTING PROGRAM

Provides information about child development and behaviour (kids under 5).

INTRO TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Provides information about healthy/unhealthy relationship habits and tools for change.

COMING TO TERMS

Assists participants in evaluating alcohol and drug use, and potential consequences of use.

Contact Tania at 204-775-1514 ext. 110

READ TO YOUR KIDS!

Join our Get the Story Out program!

Pick a book, record yourself reading it, and have it gift-wrapped and delivered as a gift from you!*

Available at Remand, Stony, Headingley, and Milner. For more information, ask a staff member or contact: 204-775-1514 ext. 113 or literacy@johnhoward.mb.ca

*Packages can only be sent if the child/child's caregiver does not have a no-contact order against the program participant.

John Howard
THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA



The Inside Scoop Waiver

Please attach this to any artwork or writing you submit to The Inside Scoop

Name: _____

Title of piece: _____

I am open to discussing edits to my work (circle one): Yes No

I give my permission for my work to be printed in The Inside Scoop and confirm that I am submitting my own authentic original work. I understand that my work may also be used in other John Howard Society publications such as workbooks and facilitation manuals, as a handout in group classes, or for future promotional or fundraising projects. I understand that all rights to my work remain with me.

Signature

Date

Mailing Address (where would you like edits and/or copies of the Scoop mailed to?)

Call for Submissions

For our RELAUNCH issue coming January 2025

We always accept submissions of **POETRY, SHORT STORIES and ARTWORK.**

We are also NOW accepting submissions for NEW SECTIONS in The Scoop:

- Opinions - your unique perspective on a current issue or event and why that is.
- Life on the Inside - your firsthand account of an aspect of daily life in an institution.
- Humour - laughter is medicine...why not share some with Inside Scoop readers?
- Nuggets of Wisdom - what practical advice or wisdom would you give to readers on the Inside? Or, what would you like to share with readers on the Outside?
- Reviews - your critical perspective on a book, movie, tv show, or sports game. What about it was good or resonated with you? What could have been better?
- Food - Best and worst food at your institution

Artwork Suggestions:

- A portrait of yourself, a friend or cellmate and a few sentences about who they are
- A cartoon or comic strip
- An illustration that goes with your piece of writing

NEW: The Scoop now offers an editorial process for writers. Here's how it works:

- After you submit your piece and the waiver (check YES to edits), Inside Scoop editors will read and provide some suggested edits to your piece. We will send the edits back to you at the address or institution you put in the waiver.
- Once you have a chance to look at the edits, give us a call to go over them. (204) 775-1514 ext.112 (John) or 113 (Anna). We will then incorporate the edits that we agree on into the final published piece in the Scoop.

Please Note: The editors of the Inside Scoop reserve the right to select which submissions get published, and to edit pieces for length or clarity. We will not print anything containing racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, has gang symbols or that glorifies violence, drug use or gang involvement.

Send submissions and a signed waiver (see pg. 15) to:

Anna Sigrithur

583 Ellice Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3B1Z7

Or, email to asigrithur@johnhoward.mb.ca

The Inside Scoop is available free upon request from institution staff, the JHSM office, or on our website johnhoward.mb.ca/insidescoop