

# Inside Education

September 2007

## Honouring Our Voices

**Sheri Lockwood**  
Bow Valley College instructor, Calgary Remand Centre

Six men in blue coveralls and one woman in street clothes sat around the table, listening to a poet read her work. It could have been considered unusual, in a place like the Calgary Remand Centre (CRC), yet the group listened, talked, wrote in silence, and shared their writing.

Margot Van Sluytman was the poet. She is a recognized poet, facilitator and publisher.

With the support of Bow Valley College and Security at the CRC, we had invited Margot to facilitate a workshop for this select group of inmates in the centre's Assessment and Treatment Unit.

Everyone in the room that day had been given the option to attend the workshop, called Honouring Our Voices. Margot's family had been impacted by violent crime when she was a teen and the inmates had been told that. Some of the inmates were facing charges for violent offences and Margot had been told that. Everyone, who was given the opportunity, chose to attend and to take part in the workshop.

The students had worked together previously. They had created the safety to express their thoughts and feelings together as a group in the classroom.



**The attendees were encouraged to acknowledge what was inside of them and write, to express their reactions to the poems read during the workshop.**

*(continued on page 2)*

**Inside Education is the newsletter of the Alberta Correctional Education Association.**

The newsletter is published two or three times a year, and submissions are always welcome.

The ACEA is a professional organization facilitating the educational needs of the incarcerated;

The ACEA strives to broaden professional horizons and interdisciplinary interaction of all personnel involved with correctional education;

Texts published in Inside Education express the views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the ACEA, its executive, or the editor.

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Margot encourages participants to think by feeling. She reads her poetry and invites each participant to respond, in writing, to her work. Margot's poems were invitations to acknowledge what was inside each person and to let it out. The students responded to the poetic invitation as they wrote the thoughts and feelings that are usually kept hidden. When given the opportunity, students chose to read their work aloud. We were touched by the vulnerability and humanity that each person showed. Everyone in the room responded with respect and compassion.

Later one of the students said, "I didn't know I had so much inside. It was a way of releasing the pain. There was so much going on at the time and this was a way of letting it out."

It takes courage to show up and participate, to honour our voices, and to hear and be heard.

### Seeing the Spoken Truth

B.J.P., "Honouring our Voices" participant

Tell me, tell me what do you see, when your eyes fall upon me.  
Do you see what makes me who I am?  
The qualities, facets, affectations, each individual building block,  
that when all come together, creates he who stands and speaks  
before you.  
OR do you see just parts of me, the parts that you  
choose to, or what others tell you to see, when you  
gaze upon me.  
The stigmas, perceptions, misconceptions  
that others outside hold towards me. Is that what  
you see?  
Do you see my wants, my dreams, my desires?  
Do you see my passions, my strengths, my weaknesses?  
When others tell you things about me, what do you  
finally choose to see?

### My Truth

V. V., "Honouring Our Voices" Participant

My story. My truth.  
This is my truth.  
I am in jail.  
What tools can prepare me for this?  
Humour? Compassion? Love? Honesty? My friendship?  
I would hope that all of these would help.  
I'm not sure.  
Different people. Different setting.  
They don't know you. You don't know them.  
How do you make jokes or kid around  
when all you feel is anger?  
Anger not towards others but at yourself.  
Why am I angry at me?  
I am away from my family. My friends.  
When will this anger stop? Will it?  
Everyday I try to smile.  
Make a few jokes.  
But the anger is still burning inside.  
I tell myself everyday that anger is not me.  
I know who I am.  
Jail is a temporary stop.  
Anger is a temporary feeling.  
I know how I feel.  
I miss me.



## Message from the ACEA President

First off I'd like to thank the ACEA and NorQuest College for co-sponsoring my participation in the European Prison Education Association's conference 'Learning for Liberation' in Dublin, Ireland this past June. The trip was well worth it as I got to meet prison educators from all over the world, from Estonia to Australia, and have a look at what is being done in a large variety of different jurisdictions. Particularly striking were a program to follow up former inmates post-release in Australia, video and TV training programs in Ireland and Norway, complete with a closed circuit in-house TV show and music videos, visual arts and creative writing programs for adult offenders, and an open learning program for recalcitrant young offenders in Latvia. I haven't got the space to go into specifics, but anyone interested can look up 'workshop papers' at [www.epea.org](http://www.epea.org) for the details.

I was impressed by the scope and depth of the conference as well as by the variety of social networking and cultural events offered. I then learned that the Irish Prison Services had kicked in €40,000 (\$57,720.00) over and above the conference fee revenue to help cover costs. If anyone reading this can devise a means to get Solicitor General to do the same for us, the conference in March could include a free ski weekend complete with spa.

With or without providential funding, the conference is going to be held March 5, 6, and 7, under the theme of violence and violence prevention. A preliminary pamphlet will be circulated in September with a draft schedule, as almost all of the presenters have been booked. Anyone who has suggestions for relevant presenters can email them to me at: [Kevin.bell@norquest.ca](mailto:Kevin.bell@norquest.ca).

I'd like to thank Judy Morcom, retiring ACEA secretary, for all her hard work, and remind everyone that having welcomed JJ Firstcharger as Lethbridge rep, we're still seeking a couple of board members, and that there will be elections to the board this year at conference.

Kevin Bell  
ACEA President



Photo 1 Pouring rain in Kilmainham jail, Randall Wright sheltering in background.



Photo 2 Main Entrance to Mountjoy Jail, built in 1850 in downtown Dublin.

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### Trivia Corner #1

Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.

*Answer on page 7*

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## Message from the Editor

Here we are entering into another Autumn, another new school year for many educators.

Early in October, I will be attending the International Conference on Crime Reduction, hosted in Banff by the Alberta Government. I am looking forward to seeing my compadres of the institutional world, and to learning new things at the various sessions offered.

As this goes to press the conference is now sold out, however, if you'd like to know more about the conference, the link is [www.crimereduction2007.com/index.html](http://www.crimereduction2007.com/index.html)

Planning is well underway for the ACEA annual Banff conference, this year held in March 2008. More information about registering will be forthcoming on the ACEA website over the next few months ([www.nald.ca/acea/](http://www.nald.ca/acea/)). We hope to see many returning faces, along with new ones. We would like to increase the attendance slightly, and you can help by forwarding this newsletter through your own network.

I hope as you read this Fall edition of the ACEA newsletter, you keep in mind that you may have something to contribute to the February edition. You may have an insightful article in mind, just waiting to be committed to text! Or, you may know of a new initiative that may be of interest to our members. Keep us in mind, as we are always in search of contributions. Thank you to those who contributed to the production of this edition.

Regards,  
Corey MacPherson

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## Surfing the WWW

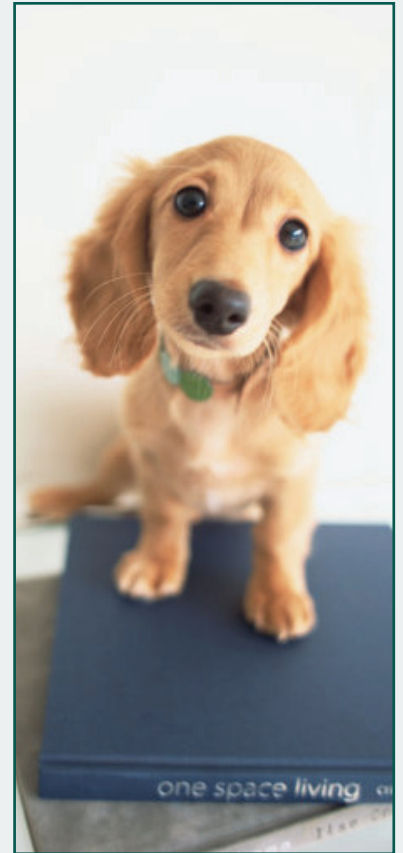
**Be sure to check out these interesting links...**

[www.cultivatingpeace.ca/main.html](http://www.cultivatingpeace.ca/main.html)

[www.ucalgary.ca/~dtoolkit/index.htm](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dtoolkit/index.htm)

[www.saskschools.ca/~aboriginal\\_res/](http://www.saskschools.ca/~aboriginal_res/)

[www.canada.justice.gc.ca/en/quiz/](http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca/en/quiz/)



**Outside of a dog,  
a book is man's  
best friend.  
Inside of a dog  
it's too dark  
to read.**

GROUCHO MARX

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### Trivia Corner #2

Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them.

*Answer on page 7*

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## Doodle

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doodle>:

**A doodle is a type of sketch, an unfocused drawing made while a person's attention is otherwise occupied.**

Gathered from the cleared tables at the conclusion of the 2007 ACEA conference, were several sheets of hotel note paper bearing interesting doodles. Thank you to Jenny Oslie, one of our valuable conference organizers, who thought to collect these renderings. I have selected a few for exhibit in this newsletter. Thank you to the artists, our esteemed attendees, who randomly put pen to paper while attending the many presentations.

### More from Wikipedia...

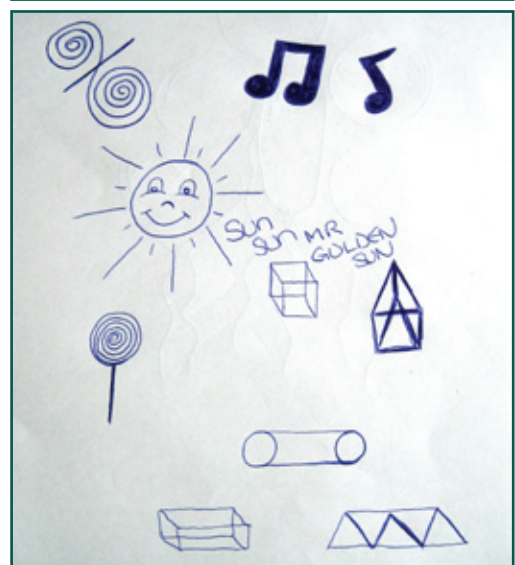
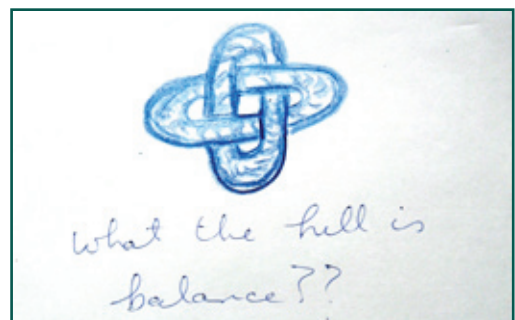
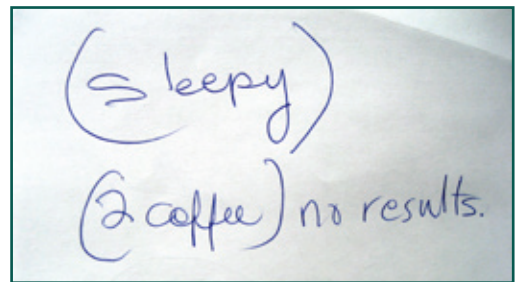
**Etymology:** The word *doodle* first appeared in the early seventeenth century to mean a fool or simpleton, and is thought to derive from the Low German *dudeltopf*, meaning "fool" or "simpleton". This is the origin of the early eighteenth century verb *to doodle*, meaning "to swindle or to make a fool of". The modern meaning emerged in the 1930s either from this meaning or from the verb "to dawdle", which since the seventeenth century has had the meaning of wasting time or being lazy.

In the movie "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" Mr. Deeds mentions that "doodle" was a word made up to describe scribblings to help a person think.

### Famous Doodlers

In published compilations of their materials, numerous historical figures have left behind doodles. Erasmus drew comical faces in the margins of his manuscripts and John Keats drew flowers in his medical note-books during lectures. Ralph Waldo Emerson, as a student at Harvard, decorated his composition books with somber, lectures. Ralph Waldo Emerson, as a student at Harvard, decorated his composition books with somber, classical doodles, such as ornamental scrolls. In one place, he sketched a man whose feet have been bitten off by a great fish swimming nearby and added the caption, "My feet are gone. I am a fish. Yes, I am a fish!"

One famous doodler is Sergio Aragonés, who has doodled cartoons in the margins of over 400 issues of MAD Magazine.



## Staff Safety Awareness Training

Kurt Zinkan CSW III, C.Y.O.C.

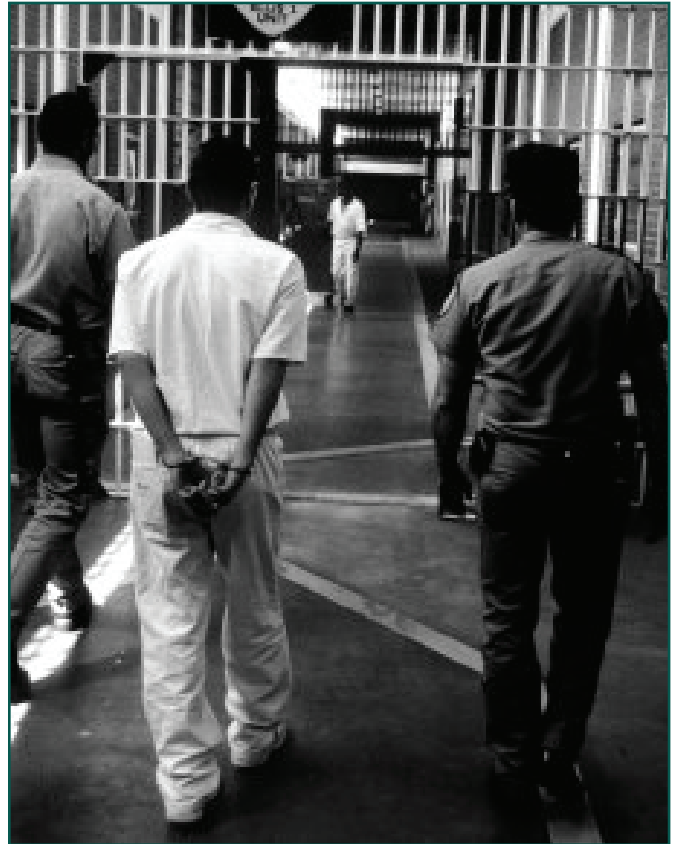
Working in the field of Corrections, where safety should be an ongoing evaluation process, how often do we evaluate our personal safety needs? Those of us, who work in an institutional setting or a community-based correctional office, will eventually deal with offenders who pose a potential threat to our personal physical safety.

Working within a correctional setting, we should deem safety a priority in our daily practices. As correctional workers grow more comfortable dealing with offenders, complacency may set in. With complacency may come a relaxation of personal safety practices. Through familiarity, we may lower our attention to detail and stop looking for signs of potential threat.

An evaluation of youth correctional workers was created, in effort to determine staff levels of training and planning, in relation to preparedness of a physical threat. After evaluating over two hundred staff working within a youth correctional environment, the conclusion was that most staff members have varying degrees of self defence training, and spend little time planning for the “what would I do if?” scenario. Directly as a result of the evaluation, staff safety awareness training was developed in September 2005.

This training addresses developing individual action plans. These plans are specific to individual skill levels, size, age and gender. Course participants learn provincial policy related to “Use of Force”, to recognize a threat before physical assault occurs, to safely interview a person; office space design to maximize safety, environmental awareness and what to do when confronted by an aggressive client.

The mandate of this training is to remind workers that their safety is important and awareness of potential threat is essential when working with clients. Staff Safety Awareness training will inform workers how to develop a pre-planned response for reacting to aggressive offenders. Staff Safety Awareness training will allow for diversity in application with minimal amount of skill development.



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*(continued on page 7)*

## Staff Safety Awareness Training

*(continued from page 6)*

When correctional workers are trained to process various scenarios in their mind (visual learning), they will be better prepared to deal with aggressive offenders should an occurrence arise.

This training program has been facilitated for staff members working within an institutional setting, along with community based correctional settings such as the Youth Attendance Centres in Calgary and Edmonton. Feedback has been encouraging. Correctional workers who have received this training, report the practical exercises coupled with information provided, have been valuable reminders and excellent tools for pro-active planning. Feedback also advises that this training has increased staff members' confidence.

Proper planning by all those involved with offender population, whether it is teachers, correctional staff members, counselors or Psychologists, will assist in maintaining everyone's safety. We are equally responsible to each other for ensuring that we provide a safe environment for the offender population and the staff members who work with them. Proper planning and practical training is one of the many steps that we can take to ensure a safe workplace for all those involved.

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## An Inmate Contribution

from Chris at Calgary Correctional Centre

**I want to grow**

**But I can't see the light**

**I keep reaching for the sky**

**But there's no future in sight**



**A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.**

WILSON MIZNER

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## Trivia Corner Answers

Answer #1: lettuce

Answer #2: Dwarf, dwell, dwindle

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