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Computer Coders Show Their Skills

By Juan Haines
Managing Editor

The most recent group of San Quentin inmates to complete a computer programming class demonstrated their coding skills for more than 100 invited guests, including the head of prison industries, Charles Pattillo, during a Dec. 9 event held at the prison.

Thirteen inmates participated in the latest class of Code.7370, an innovative technology-training program. It is managed by the California Prison Industry Authority in collaboration with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and The Last Mile (TLM).



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Computer coding class Code. 7370 ready for their Demo Day Performances

TLM is the brainchild of venture capitalists Beverly Parenti and Chris Redlitz and provides prisoners with the opportunity to develop original business ideas.

Since its inception in 2014, Code.7370 has been praised by prison officials and inmates alike as an invaluable training program. It is the only in-prison coding training program in the U.S. and is supported largely by volunteers.

"This program teaches people skills that keep them out of prison and (allows them to) be able to support their families," said Warden Ron Davis. "What the volunteers do, you cannot put a

See *Computer* on Page 12

Ex-Prisoner Titan Returns With Vision for Inmates



Photo by Titan Gilroy

Titan Gilroy and one of the men he works with concentrating on a special project

"I never thought I'd be trying to get into prison," said Titan Gilroy, speaking to an audience of inmates at San Quentin State Prison on Nov. 19, 2015.

"I know what it's like to be in a lockdown cell for six months," Gilroy continued. "I know what it feels like to think that nobody can truly look into my world and

understand."

Once an inmate, Gilroy is now the owner of a precision machine shop called Titan America MFG.

Since opening 10 years ago, Gilroy's business has exploded and is giving new life to local

See *Ex-Prisoner* on Page 4

Life of The Law Stories Showcased

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin's Life of the Law event on Dec. 5 featured inmates and visitors for an evening of delightful storytelling in the Catholic chapel.

MCs Rahsaan Thomas and Professor Nigel Poor amused the audience of approximately 200 people as they introduced a combination of lighthearted and tear-jerking stories.

See *Life* on Page 23

Brothers' Keepers Graduates Fourteen Peer Counselors



Photo by Steve Errick

Marcia Blackstock congratulates Gregory Coates

Robert Dunbar's suicide in 2005 affected the entire San Quentin State Prison community. Patrick Mims, a close friend of Dunbar, said he had no idea or clues that the well-liked Dunbar would take his own life.

"When Robert hanged himself, I took a deep breath," said Mims. "I had just had breakfast with him."

The unusually high rate of suicides in U.S. prisons brought Mims along with other leaders of the San Quentin community together to create a suicide-prevention program, Brother's Keeper.

"When we walk this line, you never know what the man next to you is carrying," Mims said.

See *Brothers'* on Page 16



Photo by Elisabeth Fall

Lawrence Pela telling a story about life and how prison institutionalized him

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Prisoners United in the Craft of Journalism
In collaboration with students from the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
Graduate School of Journalism



Journalism Guild
of San Quentin

San Quentin News strives to report on forward thinking approaches in criminal justice policies that support positive changes in prisoner behavior, particularly through rehabilitative efforts.

We Want To Hear From You!

The San Quentin News encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles. All submissions become property of the San Quentin News.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Limit your articles to no more than 350 words.
- Know that articles will be edited for content and length.
- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances. (For that, use the prison appeals process.) We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.
- Poems and art work (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point. Send Submissions to:

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SQ Rec Chief DeNevi Reluctantly Retires At 78



Coach Don DeNevi with inmate Kevin Smith on the Lower Yard

Photo by Raphaela Casale

By Rahsaan Thomas
Staff Writer

Don DeNevi retired from his position as coach of the San Quentin recreation program, reluctantly leaving behind his most beloved job.

"I should have been doing prison work all my life," said DeNevi. "There is no place I'd rather be than right here. I'm not happy about retiring because I don't want to. They aren't forcing me, but I am 78.

"The great Freud and Carl Jung say the surest sign of psychological health is being realistic about yourself. I have to be realistic. I don't want to quit, but I have to give a younger guy a shot and the inmates deserve it too."

DeNevi is a published author of about 35 non-fiction books, including one about Alcatraz, called *Riddle of the Rock*, which was made into a *NBC TV* movie of the week, he said. DeNevi was also a teacher of all levels from grade school to college.

DeNevi started working for the California prison system after retiring from teaching criminal justice and sociology at San Francisco State University in 1998. He was first hired as a teacher in Salinas Valley State Prison 17 years ago.

"I came to corrections in my late 60s. When I retired from teaching college, I turned my grades in on a Friday and Monday morning I was at the door of the prison," said DeNevi.

Two years later, he transferred to San Quentin.

"I lucked out by coming to teach at CDCR," said DeNevi. "I wanted to come to San Quentin because it is so historic. I have never seen a fight in my 15 years here. These are good men."

He started at San Quentin teaching inmates in fifth-grade reading.

"There is no place I'd rather be than right here. I've been teaching (for 57 years) at all levels," said DeNevi.

In 2002, Jean Bracey asked him to take over the coach position.

"I took responsibility for tennis; I had brown cards (volunteers) take responsibility for the others. I played tennis with the inmates for years," said DeNevi.

He says his greatest accomplishment is building the best prison recreation program in the world.

"No prison has what we have to offer," said DeNevi. "I inherited much of it. My job was to expand it. I am responsible for over 20 brown cards in all sports -- sometimes as many as 29. It took me 15 years."

He says he helped get the tennis court turned from a dirt surface into a concrete blue and green fenced area.

"Out of my classroom window I used to see Mohamed playing tennis. It was the reception area for the buses. They were playing on parking lot surface with an inmate-made net and tennis racquets and no fence. Urinals were off to the side; seepage came down," DeNevi said.

He decided to build them an adequate tennis court, and asked a company called Ghilotti Construction to do the job. After six years of battling administrators, the court was built.

DeNevi recalls watching former inmate Burt Boatman play tennis.

"He was playing tennis and they lobbed him the ball at the base line," said DeNevi. "He literally ran after it and ran up the fence and did a complete somersault while hitting the ball and running back to the net."

DeNevi says he first became interested in prisons in 1949 after watching the movie *My Six Convicts*. "It's the story of a psychologist who goes into S.Q. and it was all shot here. It's about how he got to know six inmates that he really thought the world of," said DeNevi. "I wanted to be like the psychologist in *My Six Convicts*."

DeNevi says he volunteered to teach at Soledad, several years prior to being hired at Salinas Valley State Prison. There he taught two courses -- an autobiography class and a class about how unresolved unconscious conflicts lead to criminal behavior.

"What we do, we usually have no idea why. It comes from the subconscious," said DeNevi.

Inmate Paul Alleyne said, "During my two years at Quentin, the coach has shown nothing but concern for all sports programs, especially tennis. Although at times our relationship has been acrimonious, at the end of the day I always know that his main concern is keeping the sport program intact and making sure sports accompanies rehabilitation."

In retirement, DeNevi will be working on finding a publisher for his latest book, *Faithful Sheep*. It's historical-fiction based on a true story about how nine Texas Rangers on the Western frontier in 1880 volunteered to go hundreds of miles into Apache territory to save a dog.

"I see that same kind of bravery and courage on this yard. If somebody came at me with a knife, Harris would get in the way. This is my family; you think I want to go?" said DeNevi.

Obama Supports Growing ‘Black Lives Matter’

‘Those who retort “all lives matter” to the movement’s slogan are missing the point’

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

“Black Lives Matter” is not just another meaningless slogan that caught the attention of mainstream media across the nation. President Barack Obama recently had to defend it against critics who claim it’s divisive, according to the *New York*

Magazine. “African-Americans are stopped, frisked, harassed, brutalized and killed by police at rates far higher than other racial groups,” which is systemic racism that can’t be adequately explained, the magazine said. “I think everybody understands all lives matter” but “there is a specific problem that

is happening in the African-American community that’s not happening in other communities. And that is a legitimate issue that we’ve got to address,” the president said. Those who retort “all lives matter” to the movement’s slogan are missing the point, Obama stated. The president felt the need to point out that the Black community “isn’t making this up” is in itself a sad comment on how unwilling America is to cope with the problems of racism and police violence, the article said. It’s real and there’s a history behind it, Obama said, and it needs to be taken seriously.



President Barack Obama

enforcement is doing the right thing and wants to do the right thing,” he said. Those attacking the president for supporting this movement contend that it sets an ugly unsympathetic attitude toward local law enforcement and could potentially set up racial tensions with White groups, the

magazine reported. Republican presidential candidates Ben Carson, Ted Cruz and Donald Trump have seized the opportunity to express their feelings about the “Black Lives Matter” movement. Carson thinks the movement is “sickening.” Cruz said activists are embracing and celebrating the murder of police officers. Donald Trump said they are “looking for trouble.”

There are critics who took the president’s comments to serve as further evidence he’s a dangerous racist who hates White people and especially cops. The magazine concludes that Obama doesn’t have to soft-shoe around anymore; he can speak more frankly now because he has essentially nothing to lose. There are no more elections to win, the magazine points out.

‘Poor Healthcare’ At Private Prisons

By Tommy Bryant
Journalism Guild Writer

Problems in healthcare persist at the private prisons in California paid to house the state’s overflow population. According to medical receiver Clark Kelso, “Little progress has been made in resolving, much less improving,” medical care at seven private prisons housing 4,200 inmates.

Kelso’s statement appeared in a report sent to the three federal judges who oversee the state’s prison systems, according to a *Los Angeles Times* article by Paige St. John.

Four of the seven prisons are owned by the Florida based GEO Group, which owns or manages 106 prisons in the U.S. and in other countries. The GEO Group, which houses a total of 85,000 inmates, reported revenue of close to half a billion dollars in the first three months of this year.

The worst problems were at GEO’s women’s prison in McFarland, according to Joyce Hayhoe, a Kelso spokeswoman. The report cited “lack of accountability,” no physician for a month and failure to employ qualified physicians. Inmates with health issues were sent back to state-operated prisons,

Kelso reported. A spokesman for the GEO Group stated the company will work with California to “ensure consistent delivery of quality medical services.” The contract with GEO Group allows the state to seek damages if minimum healthcare staffing requirements are not met. The state corrections department will not seek damages, says spokeswoman Deborah Hoffman. The state expects contract operators to increase the availability of nurses and doctors. Earlier Gov. Jerry Brown had proposed moving 8,000 inmates currently in out-of-state prisons back into California contract prisons to save money. Kelso warns against this, saying it could cause even greater problems with medical care at these private facilities.

Meanwhile Kelso reports that healthcare continues to improve in California’s state-run prisons. The 34 California state prison healthcare programs are being evaluated on a one-by-one basis. Folsom State Prison was deemed “adequate” by the independent Office of Inspector General in April. This will lead to a final review by Kelso’s office before Folsom is turned back over to “state-control.”

Death Penalty Support Continues to Decrease

America’s support for the death penalty dropped significantly in the last 20 years, according to a recent Gallup Poll.

Capital punishment support dipped from 80 percent in 1994 to 61 percent this year, the poll reported on Oct. 15.

Part of the reason is juries are less likely to impose death because of publicity on wrongful convictions and racial disparity, the poll reported.

“There is no denying that the death penalty is controversial ...reflected, at least somewhat, by the deep racial divide it causes,” according to Andrew Dugan from Gallup.

Fifty-three percent of Americans polled feel that the death penalty is applied fairly and 41 percent believe it is not, says Gallup. Forty percent feel that the death penalty is not used often enough in America.

Gallup Poll also reflects that, “The death penalty appears to be losing popularity in statehouses and courthouses

across the country.” Pardons for once-condemned inmates, along with discrepancies in documentation and punishment applications, are beginning to influence juries and legislatures alike. This has led some juries and legislatures to ban more death penalty cases, the poll reported. More than 55 percent of Blacks polled were opposed to the death penalty, 68 percent of Whites were in favor, and 56 percent of Hispanics were also for it, according to the Gallup report.

The poll indicated that 82 percent of Republicans and 49 percent of Democrats favored the death penalty. The poll was based on 1,015 random sample of adult phone interviews living in all 50 states. This poll had a 95 percent confidence level. It used 60 percent cell phones and 40 percent landlines.

—Tommy Bryant

Critics Say Private Companies Exploit Prisoners and Families

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Writer

Exploitation of prisoners and their families leads to huge profits for private companies.

A six-month investigation by the Center for Integrity and *CNBC* revealed how private for-profit companies monopolize and overcharge inmates and their families for a variety of services.

“The costs imposed by JPay, phone companies, prison store operators and corrections agencies make it far more difficult for poor families to escape poverty so long as they have a loved one in the system,” the Center wrote, according to a report by the Equal Justice Initiative.

FAMILIES

JPay Inc., which provides money transfers to more than 1.7 million inmates in 32 states, has collected tens of millions of dollars from inmates’ families. Families used

to buy money orders for about \$1.25; JPay charges fees up to 45 percent, the report says.

The Center also reported: In 2013, JPay generated over \$50 million in revenue from almost 7 million transactions. JPay sends the prisons a cut of the profits, reportedly between 50 cent to \$2.50 for every transaction.

The prison also deducts its own fees and charges before the transferred money is placed in an inmate’s account.

INVESTIGATION

The investigation further found that prisons allow phone and commissary vendors to charge inflated prices in exchange for financial kickbacks as well.

Last year, in response to a petition filed by inmates’ families, the Federal Communication Commission capped rates for many telephone calls under its jurisdiction.

The Alabama Public Service Commission announced its own

plan to reduce rates and begin setting caps for inmate calls.

The FCC has put forth a proposal to eliminate prison kickbacks, which the Public Service Commission is resisting.

COST

Government agencies are not only receiving money from these companies, they have passed the cost of incarceration onto the inmate families as well.

In some states, these agencies charge for room and board, electricity, and even toilet paper.

Some inmates’ families also pay for other basic needs such as toothpaste, doctor visits, and winter clothes.

The FCC might have authority to set rates for pay-phone calls, but to force companies like JPay to reduce their fees would be much harder. Financial and consumer protection regulators have less power over pricing that might help families.

Report: Top Law Enforcement Officials Recommend Criminal Justice Reforms

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

More than 130 of the nation’s top law-enforcement officials are pushing for prison reform, reports *The New York Times*.

A collaboration of big-city police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and attorney generals have joined the call to end harsh and counterproductive practices and policies that contribute to America’s prison boom, the newspaper reported.

The current system destroys communities and has disenfranchised a generation of men of color, an Oct. 22 *Times* editorial stated.

“It’s really clear that we can reduce crime and at the same time reduce incarceration,” said Garry McCarthy, Chicago’s police chief. McCarthy was surrounded by police chiefs from

New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Philadelphia and Houston.

The editorial says the group is focusing on three broad areas of reform that have been successful in cities and states around the country.

First, alternatives in arrest and prosecution are being sought to reduce the number of people entering prison, particularly for those with substance abuse and mental illness problems.

Second, they call for the modification or elimination of harsh sentencing laws, which the group said destroy lives and burden state budgets. Police chiefs even called for some nonviolent felonies to be re-categorized as misdemeanors, as California did last year, and for minor crimes to be taken off the books. They also seek to reform mandatory-minimum sentences, and give

judges more discretion to make time proportionate to the crime.

Third, they want to rebuild relationships with the community because of the lack of trust between residents and police, especially people of color.

To achieve these goals, law enforcement officials will have to limit their own extremely broad powers, according to the editorial.

The Times says it remains to be seen how the group will square its push for fewer arrests with aggressive policing philosophies like the deeply problematic “broken windows” approach, which was pioneered by New York Police Commissioner William Bratton, a member of the group.

However, many district attorneys and law-enforcement officers strongly oppose any reform, the newspaper noted.

Microsoft Aims to Help Incarcerated

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Journalism Guild Chairman

A November visit from members of Microsoft’s information technology team prompted a dialogue about helping incarcerated Americans overcome one of their biggest obstacles upon returning to society: learning how to use a computer after decades of confinement.

San Quentin State Prison teaches a course in vocational computer literacy as one of its many rehabilitative programs to combat the digital divide, and the Microsoft employees said they would like to help enhance the program.

“You need to be able to navigate on a computer without being an expert,” said K.C., Microsoft’s director of infor-

mation technology in San Francisco, who recently visited San Quentin. She asked to be identified only by her initials.

K.C. and Rob Ford, general manager of information technology at Microsoft in Seattle, met with San Quentin’s computer literacy instructor K. Bhatt to discuss ways to improve the class and other skills for the men to market themselves.

“It was eye-opening,” Ford said. “I really want to help contribute.”

K.C. and Ford said they would like to visit the class on a monthly basis and eventually upgrade the vocation’s software. They were not aware how outdated is the software currently in use.

Men in the class said they felt anxiety that a lack of computer

literacy could decrease their chances of succeeding after leaving prison. Inmate Adrian Burgos said he was concerned with daily survival when he gets out of prison. He said he wanted to know what technology is being used on the outside.

“My biggest obstacle getting out will be technology,” said Bradley Ware.

“We’re in a cave,” said inmate Randy Atkins. “We’re trying to come out of the cave.”

The consensus among students is that they want to learn anything that will help them on the outside.

Ford explained to Atkins the concept and technology of storing and retrieving information on the cloud as opposed to a personal computer or smart phone. He said using the cloud

makes a user’s data accessible from any device at any time.

Ford also discussed Microsoft’s use of touch-screen computer technology, prompting responses from men in the class who said they want to understand it better.

“If you had two hours of our time, what would you like?” Ford asked the class.

“Everything that makes it easy to navigate through the world,” said Atkins. “You can tell me, but you’re going to have to show me, too.”

The issue is particularly relevant for men who have been incarcerated for decades, such as Harold Roberts. Roberts has been incarcerated 20 years and has been a student in the class for three months, learning to use Microsoft’s technology.

“I’ve learned a lot of things I didn’t know,” said Roberts. “I was completely illiterate to the computer.”

There are about 56 men enrolled in the class, which is split between a morning and afternoon shift. The classes teach basic personal computer knowledge that will aid them in other ways such as using the internet.

K.C. asked about Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg’s recent visit to San Quentin. She also learned about the Code.7370 computer coding class and The Last Mile program that teaches incarcerated men about emerging technology.

“I think what they’ve done in terms of education is amazing,” said K.C. “I didn’t realize San Quentin was so special.”

Ex-Prisoner Extends Opportunity to Inmates

Continued from Page 1

manufacturing. His success has landed him a reality show called *TITAN—American Built*, on MAVTV, which features programs about businesses helping to revive the American manufacturing industry.

Now Gilroy — who has never forgotten his time in prison — is extending an opportunity to inmates by bringing a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine shop to San Quentin.

“All I’ve been told is that the inmates at San Quentin are different. They want to learn,” said Gilroy. “I’ve not heard one negative thing about you guys since I’ve been here.”

Gilroy envisions establishing an accelerated six-month training program for inmates to learn CNC skills. The program is scheduled to accept its first 27 students in January 2016.

Brant Choate, the CDCR acting director of Rehabilitative Programs, said the proposed training supports CDCR’s expectation that inmates be prepared to reenter mainstream society. “You need to prepare for reentry the day you come to prison,” he said. He reported he has met with the Board of Parole Hearings personnel about the program.

“They want to see people who have a long history of programs, who are taking their

rehabilitation seriously and are changing their lives for the better,” Choate said.

Gilroy’s own path from inmate to manufacturing titan was circuitous. As a child, Gilroy moved to 20 different cities before the fourth grade. His mother — seeking refuge from an abusive relationship — eventually settled the family in Hawaii, where they became homeless, despite her steady employment.

At 18, Gilroy was a talented boxer who signed a contract with Top Rank Boxing. Hopes for a career in the ring were derailed when he became embroiled in a nightclub brawl that landed him a 16-year prison sentence, in which he served only three years because of good behavior.

The turning point in Gilroy’s life came during a prison lockdown when his cellie stopped talking to him and eventually committed suicide. Distraught and lonely, Gilroy began rethinking his lifestyle.

Upon release, Gilroy returned to boxing, landing contracts and fights. But escalating tensions with a neighbor led to a confrontation that involved police. Though Gilroy was able to avoid another stint in prison, he felt traumatized enough to leave Hawaii and soon moved his family to California. Once there, he took a job as a saw operator.



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Titan Gilroy, Tommy Winfrey and former Machine Shop Instructor Richard Saenz

Within months, he had gotten a pay raise and seized an opportunity to learn Computer Numerical Control.

“I just fell in love with it,” Gilroy said. Once he learned how to program the machines, he figured out how to streamline jobs, saving the company untold sums — landing him a pay increase from \$9 to \$28 an hour.

“When I went to prison, I had

this negative aggressiveness that was leading me to destruction,” said Gilroy, who has learned to channel his aggression into his work. “I take what used to be a negative and I drive it into manufacturing, and I take risks, and at the end of the day, I have billion-dollar companies that love me because I solve big people’s problems. I have such a belief in myself. I’m still the same

guy. I just found my path.”

Gilroy said teaching inmates CNC allows him “to take something that has an awesome foundation, to have the opportunity to take people who have lived in darkness, that made mistakes, and give them the same opportunity that was given to me. That’s an incredible honor.”

—Juan Haines and Bonnie Chan



File Photo

Titan Gilroy



File Photo

(A) Superintendent OCE Shannon Swain, (A) Associate Superintendent OCE Rod Braly and Titan Gilroy

Creative Writing Class Showcase Prisoners' Talents



Photo by Peter Mertz

Zoe Mullery and members of the creative writing class

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

The “Brothers in Pen” methodically disappear from the Main Line every Wednesday night. They leave to attend a workshop at San Quentin where they pursue creativity and enhance their imaginations. It’s like going to an artist retreat where the writers hone their craft.

After a year of creative effort, they emerge to showcase their work before a group of visitors who come to the prison every year to hear these short stories.

On Nov. 14, Zoe Mullery’s creative writing class members welcomed 75 visitors to their reading at San Quentin. It was the 11th year that audiences had been invited to hear a collection of both factual and fictional short stories. The guests were raptly entertained for nearly three hours.

“It’s important that authors write for their own satisfaction

and for the sake of their craft, but there is a sense of completion when what they’ve written is received by other humans,” Mullery said.

Master-of-Ceremony Rahsaan Thomas arranged the order of the story-tellers to capture the listeners’ interest and appreciation for the Brothers-in-Pen’s creative and resourceful minds.

This year’s stories included one writer’s frustration at dealing with an antagonist inmate. Another writer created a metaphorical assault on the letter M. Several writers wrote about childhood experiences and others included comical anecdotes. One narrative dealt with a young child’s disappointment with his father. Another writer spoke about the lessons absorbed while growing up Black in America.

For visitors who knew little about the lives of incarcerated inmates, it was an opportunity to hear tales, true or imaginary, of past and present experiences, and future expectations. In one

instance, attendees heard the aggravation and pain of an inmate accepting his reality of serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. This is the worst sentence a prisoner can receive, next to the death penalty.

During the afternoon session, guests heard a story by Adnan Khan, who described a long-established traditional of pre-arranged marriages for young Middle Eastern couples. Then came James Metters’ satirical short story about a bank robbery gone bad and Julian Glenn Padgett’s tale of a criminal courtroom strategy that backfires on the prosecution.

Kevin Sawyer offered a tale of an imaginary middle-class revolutionary writing about incarceration, rehabilitation and reentry, and Michael Holmes recounted a story of a young girl who confronts her realities.

Wayne “Wrong Way” Boatwright gave the audience a “compare and contrast” of life before and after incarceration.

Kenneth B. Brydon complained about a relationship with his antagonist.

Thedo “Noble” Butler spoke about a father who taught his sons the reality of the world: they are Black until proven innocent.

Michael “Yahya” Cooke shared with the audience a one-night sexual encounter.

Emile DeWeaver described the frustration of dealing with his siblings.

Ron Koehler told the tale of love and a Biblical journey.

Joseph Krauter wrote about a new pack of Marlboro Reds and menthol cigarettes.

Kdukobraye Pela explained the complications and new-found meaning of his name.

Ivan Skrblinski revealed his own stubborn childhood behavior.

Justin “Killa Clown” Medvin created a chronological attack on the 13th letter of the of the alphabet – M.

Paul Stauffer told about a per-

sonal relationship with Bubba, the stuffed talking bear.

David Taylor expressed an emotional relationship with a female.

Rahsaan Thomas chronicled the story of an absentee father.

Kevin Valvardi shared with the audience his indestructibility.

Michael Zell recited his metaphorical *Parole Release for Tomorrow* program.

On the printed program for the Brothers in Pen event writing instructor Mullery offered this thought:

“Historically, we un-incarcerated Americans have been fairly ignorant of what is on the hearts and minds of incarcerated Americans, what their experiences have been and what kind of creative gifts they might have to offer. I’m very honored to be hosting a gathering like this, an essential human act of sharing stories, which is to the benefit of all Americans, both Incarcerated and Un-incarcerated.”

Restorative Justice Facilitates a Journey to Healing

By Rahsaan Thomas
Staff Writer

“I pledge to accompany any victim of crime on their healing journey,” the men in blue recite at every Restorative Justice meeting in San Quentin’s Catholic Chapel.

True commitment to that pledge was demonstrated when two transgender people were welcomed as guest speakers at the Saturday, Nov. 21, Restorative Justice symposium.

“My purpose here is to educate and promote togetherness in the world,” said visitor Billie Cooper, founder of Translife.

Tanesh Nutall told the large group of insiders and community members about the rejection by an aunt for being gay, a history of abusive relationships and low self-esteem. Those problems contributed to devel-

oping a drug habit supported by boosting and prostitution, and victimization at the hands of pimps.

However, Nutall said everything changed on Dec. 31, 2010, at the City of Refuge United Church of Oakland. After that night, Nutall became a transgender minister and the program manager for Translife. Nutall has been married for 10 years and kicked the crack habit six years ago.

“What if we could see each other as a spirit?” asked Nutall. “What would life be if I only saw the truth of who you are? We would live in harmony.”

Cooper talked about being 57 years old, an HIV-positive long-term survivor, care educator, peer activist and founder of Translife, among other credits.

“Courage, tolerance, accep-

tance and vulnerability are all components of transition,” said Cooper. “I may not look like what your mother or your aunt looks like, but I am a woman.”

The inside men’s reaction indicated respect for Cooper and Nutall’s truths.

“I am a straight man, with certain belief systems, but after hearing your speech, I am empathic towards that,” said Fateem Jackson. “I commend you on your courage in telling your truth.”

Then Jackson performed a spoken word piece on victimization.

“Today,” said Cooper, “I am feeling so much love, compassion and understanding, and I see people want to learn and people want to understand.”

Nutall said, “Don’t allow your beliefs to kill another person’s belief. If you don’t agree

with their beliefs, learn to love them anyway. If you spend time with individuals you may not like, your thoughts will change. You will come to see the person’s spirit and not the flesh.”

Master of Ceremony Darnell “Moe” Washington, an African-American, talked about how sitting down and hearing each other’s stories led to his friendship with former skinhead Chris Gallo.

Sponsor Dr. Mary Elliott said, “In one day I saw the barriers come down. Sometimes all it takes is 10 minutes.”

Cooper defines transgender as someone who was born in the wrong body.

Nutall disagrees, “I was not born in the wrong body. My truth is that I am not 100 percent male or female, but I am 100 percent Tanesh.”

Transgender inmate Javis Clark said, “When referring to these ladies and ourselves—it is the power of the pronoun. Ask what we would like to be referred to as.”

Here are some reactions:

“This is the truth and I always love coming back,” said Dacher Keltner.

“I feel like it is another example of really transformative conversations that are happening inside S.Q. that are not always happening outside of S.Q.,” said Karena Montag, director of the Insight Prison Project.

“Because of the healing of the men inside, I find my own healing,” said outside guest “YoYo” Tchoukleva about why she participates in restorative justice.

“I am leaving San Quentin today with a light heart,” said Cooper. “I feel love and compassion towards everybody.”

New System Designed to Better Monitor Patient Care

In December, Dr. Timothy Belavich answered *San Quentin News* questions about the delivery of health care services to prisoners. Belavich was formerly acting director of the Division of Health Care Services and deputy director of Statewide Mental Health Program. He is now employed by Los Angeles County. Dr. Belavich's answers will be published as a series in the next several editions of the *San Quentin News* under the headings *The Coleman Lawsuit*, *Custody and Prison Culture*, *Suicide and Use of Force*, and *Transgender Special Needs*.

By Dr. Timothy Belavich
Contributing Writer

THE COLEMAN LAWSUIT:

Can you provide a brief history of the Coleman lawsuit?

In 1996, CDCR settled with *Coleman* plaintiffs regarding the delivery of care for inmates with mental illness. The original order required (1) proper screening; (2) timely access to adequate mental health care; (3) competent staff in sufficient numbers; (4) an adequate medi-

EDITORIAL

cal record system; (5) proper administration of psychotropic medication; and (6) a basic suicide prevention program.

CDCR has continued to work with the *Coleman* monitors in a number of areas, including ensuring patients who require inpatient treatment are appropriately identified and referred, ensuring adequate treatment space and housing for patients with mental illness, and developing a system to monitor and ensure the quality of mental health services.

How can we know that the changes that have occurred as a result of the Coleman lawsuit can be sustainable?

The Mental Health Program, in conjunction with the Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) and the *Coleman* monitors, has developed a comprehensive system to monitor and evaluate the care provided to mental health patients and to ensure adherence to policies. This program is administered by the Quality Management Unit within the Mental Health Program and is implemented by the regional mental

health teams. There are four regional mental health teams, each of which has a Regional Mental Health Administrator, several senior psychologists, support staff, and assigned lieutenants. The regional mental health teams ensure that both mental health and custodial components are compliant. In addition, the Quality Management Unit identifies areas that could be improved and ensures these areas are appropriately addressed.

Of the \$10 billion CDCR budget, how much of it goes to Mental Health?

Approximately \$400 million.

What other changes can we expect to see in the Mental Health Program in Corrections?

We are continuing to develop additional opportunities for patients at the EOP level of care to earn Milestone credits. Furthermore, we are planning to enhance and expand the substance-abuse treatment offered to patients at the Enhanced Outpatient Level of Care. The Mental Health Program is also



File Photo

Dr. Timothy Belavich

working to expand pre-release activities for patients at the EOP level of care. "Conflict Resolution" and "Coping with ASU" programs are currently in development.

What are the classifications of the various clinicians in the Mental Health Program and what are the requirements to obtain jobs in MHSDS?

The Statewide Mental Health Program employs psychiatrists, psychologists, and clinical social workers. All clinicians must meet credentialing guide-

lines established by California Correctional Health Care Services.

Do custody officers receive any training on how to intervene effectively with inmates who suffer from mental health conditions?

Yes, this is an ongoing process. First, all custody staff receive an eight-hour course at the cadet academy introducing the Mental Health Program. This class covers issues such as:

Communicating with someone in crisis

How to intervene with suicidal patients

Understanding psychological disorders and how they are exacerbated in prison

How to best communicate and work with individuals suffering from a mental illness.

Custody staff also receives annual training in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Additionally, we are in the process of developing a training specific to understanding and working with EOP patients. This training will be taught collaboratively by mental health and custody and will occur for custody and mental health staff at all EOP institutions.

San Quentin Ceremony Honors AIDS Victims

By Miguel Quezada
Staff Writer

About 50 visitors, staff and prisoners gathered in the San Quentin Garden Chapel to mark World AIDS Day.

The ceremony was held "in loving memory of the more than 685,000 people who have died of AIDS-related deaths in the United States and in support of the more than 1,200,000 people living with HIV in the United States and their families," according to the event program.

"Shame is one of the greatest impediments to getting tested inside of the prison system," said prisoner Allen Ross. "Many youngsters that come into prison view HIV through a stereotypical lens. That prevents young men from getting tested."

Centerforce peer health educator Tommy Ross said when he was growing up, HIV/AIDS was seen as something only affecting people like actor Rock Hudson -- White, rich and gay. Later, he said, "I saw the rapper Eazy-E being Black, rich and heterosexual. What I discovered is that it's not who you are; it's the behavior. After that I got tested."

There is no reason not to get tested, said T.J. Lee from Positive Force, a program run by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

"I was at a U.S. conference on AIDS, where there was a weird undertone when I mentioned being positive for 16 years to a group of African-American men. After my admission, one friend came out and said he had been positive since he was 12. He was 24. Then they all started admitting it," said Lee.

San Quentin's Dr. George Beatty, whose HIV/AIDS work has spanned over 25 years, stated that "there are 896 incarcerated people known to be HIV-

positive, maybe another 150 that may be infected that don't know it."

Beatty said HIV has been greatly reduced within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

"CDCR has concentrated people with HIV where the experts are. The vast majority of HIV cases here are doing great." Guys are "doing better here than people on the outside, probably because we have a group of people that are into rehabilitation and taking responsibility for their lives."

"Everyone with HIV should be on treatment. There is no excuse for going undetected, no excuse for getting sick," concluded Beatty.

Nurse Practitioner Ingrid Nelson, who works with Dr. Beatty at the HIV clinic at San Quentin, attributed better care to medication regimens that are far less complex than in the early era of HIV/AIDS.

"When I started practicing, medications were a lot more toxic. They're better, easier meds now, and we are a lot smarter about how to use them.

We have one pill once a day regimens. If they miss a dose, it could make the meds not work anymore. Stay on medications," she urged.

The ceremony included performances by musician and prisoner David Jassy and spoken word artist Bri Blue.

Blue said she was humbled by performing for the cause. "I have family members who have died of AIDS ... My dad was an inmate here. It just gives me a clear view and level of understanding of what people go through," said Blue.

The event was sponsored by Centerforce, LCA Monitoring Success, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Project Inform, AIDS Project East Bay, Eden I&R, Inc., and Christopher Noceti.

"We all have an HIV status," said Centerforce peer health educator and host Angel Falcone. "One in eight people live with HIV and don't know it, One in four 13-24 year olds pass it on. Find out your status. Get tested. The time to act is now."

—Rahsaan Thomas
contributed to this story



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Inmates from Center Force with Education Mgr. Project Inform Andrew Reynolds, Dr. Julie Lifshay, Artist Bri Blue, Shannon Gordhamer, SQ R.N. Tara Keseker, Program Mgr. S.F. AIDS foundation T.J. Lee and Jessica Osorio

Reos Demandan A Institución Por Ser Expuestos A La Fiebre Del Valle

Por James King
Escritor del Gremio
Periodístico

Cuatro presos han presentado una demanda ante el departamento de Derechos Civiles Federales. Ellos argumentan que oficiales en las prisiones de California los

expusieron a la infección de hongo mejor conocida como “la fiebre del valle”, aun sabiendo del riesgo de contraer esta enfermedad. La fiebre del valle es una infección que se desarrolla al inhalar las esporas del hongo coccidioidomicosis. Tales esporas se encuentran en niveles

muy altos en el Valle Central. En el 2011, 42.6 casos por cada 100,000 personas han sido reportadas en los estados donde la enfermedad se ha convertido en una epidemia. Según los inspectores de salud, California tiene aproximadamente el 31% de los casos. De acuerdo al periódico

Fresno Bee, una demanda expresa en parte que, “El sistema Americano de la justicia criminal requiere que las autoridades estatales de la correccional lleven a cabo la sentencia exacta determinada por el proceso criminal. –no mas ni menos de lo estipulado por la ley. Pero en vez de seguir el proceso, los acusados astutamente impusieron a los demandantes toda una vida expuesta a una enfermedad que podría llevarlos a una incapacidad y que en ocasiones llega a ser fatal”.

Las demandas nombran como responsables al Departamento de Correcciones y Rehabilitación de California, a varios oficiales, y a varios Directores de prisiones.

La demanda expuso que los estudios muestran que las razas afro americano, hispanos, americanos nativos, asiáticos, y particularmente los filipinos, están especialmente propensos en contraer la fiebre del valle.

El Fresno Bee reporta que los abogados que representan a los presos mencionaron que

inspectores de salud tenían conocimiento de los riesgos de la fiebre del valle en el Valle Central por más de 50 años.

A pesar del desinterés en comentar acerca de la demanda especifica, el portavoz de las prisiones, Luís Patino expreso, “El CDCR a trabajado por años para disminuir la fiebre del valle. Hemos tomado numerosas medidas en nuestras prisiones para reducir la cantidad y el movimiento de polvo, particularmente dentro de los edificios. También hemos trasladado a presos considerados de alto riesgo de contagio al igual que a los presos que desean ser trasladados fuera de las dos prisiones que se encuentran en la zona endémica de la fiebre del valle.

Desde el año 2005, 70 personas han muerto como resultado de la fiebre del valle, comento Jason Feldman, uno de los abogados demandantes.

En respuesta a la orden judicial de la corte, más de 2,100 presos han sido trasladados fuera de las prisiones del Valle Central.

–Traducción por Marco Villa

\$1.7 Billion In State Grants Slated for Jail Expansions

By Thomas Gardner
Journalism Guild Writer

A boom in new jail construction is taking place in counties across the state of California, according to a recent report.

The reason? “Realignment,” according to *The Marshall Project’s* report released in July.

“Twenty-eight counties are leveraging \$1.7 billion in state grants to build and expand 35 jails,” the report says.

Although Realignment was designed to reduce overcrowding in state prisons by keeping some non-violent offenders in county lockup facilities, doing so has caused a significant increase in local jail populations, the report says.

“The purpose was to lower the number of incarcerated people, but it seems somehow that got lost in the translation,” said Riverside attorney and re-entry advocate Vonya Quarles, accord-

ing to *The Marshall Project*.

The report states local jail populations have increased by one inmate for every three no longer in state prison.

In Riverside County, close to a quarter of the jail bed space is occupied by persons who before Realignment would have been housed in the state prison, according to the report.

Now, the effort to lower the prison population has turned into an effort to assist the counties to accommodate a rising number of inmates, as billions of dollars in state funding are being allocated to county officials for the renovation of old jails and the building of new ones, the report adds.

The Riverside County sheriff said he’s looking to triple the bed capacity over the next 13 years, according to the report.

“Our bed capacity is our greatest deterrent,” said Assistant Sheriff Jerry Gutierrez.

Court Decision Curbs Mandatory Life Without Parole Terms for Juveniles

By Dmitriy D. Orlov
Journalism Guild Writer

Fewer juveniles are being sentenced to mandatory life imprisonment without parole, in the wake of a U.S. Supreme Court decision, a recent study concludes.

Nine states abolished life without parole for juveniles after the court’s 2012 *Miller v. Alabama* decision, according to a study by the Phillips Black Project. Fifteen states now take that position.

“California and Florida have sharply limited its use and other

states have eliminated its use for certain categories of crimes,” reported Tony Mauro in an Oct. 12 story for *The National Law Journal*.

The Phillips Black Project is a public interest law firm that advocates ending sentencing juveniles to life without parole. Mauro concludes the study may prove to be influential when current cases are decided to “ban all juvenile sentences of life without parole.”

The Miller case ruled mandatory life without parole for juveniles violated “the Eight Amendment’s prohibition of

‘cruel and unusual punishment.’” However, the court did not rule it unconstitutional if the sentence is optional. That is left to the discretion of the judge in each case.

The U.S. Supreme Court must now address this optional question as it considers two recent cases, *Montgomery v. Louisiana* and *Jacobs v. Louisiana*.

Most of the sentences were handed down during the “moral panic” in the 1990s, Mauro wrote. These sentences peaked at more than 100 per year in the 1990s and dropped to fewer than 10 annually since 2013.

Cyberbullying Combatted

Sixteen of our country’s 50 states now have laws that specifically address “cyberbullying,” according to a state-by-state review published in 2013 by the Cyberbully Research Center.

By and large, these laws address threatening and/or aggressively coercive behavior that is transmitted via electronic communication devices to minors, the review shows.

California’s cyberbullying law, known as “Seth’s Law,” is named after 13-year old Seth Walsh, who committed suicide after being harassed about his sexual orientation and identity.

“Bullying causes a substantial disruption and detrimental effect on students,” states Seth’s Law (AB 9).

Enacted in 2011, “Seth’s Law” encourages training for school officials and creates provisions to remove the victim from the “unhealthy setting.”

Cyberbullying laws in other states reflect the same specific concerns, placing emphasis on students, children and schools.

According to legislation enacted in Louisiana, “cyberbullying is the transmission of any electronic textual, visual, written or oral communication with the malicious and willful intent to coerce, abuse, torment or intimidate a person under the age of eighteen...” (H.B.1259, 2010).

While cyberbullying laws have been on the books in some states for over a decade, only about half of those states have attached criminal sanctions to them, according to the review.

In today’s environment Internet access has become almost universal among children from all backgrounds. That being the case, we can expect to continue to see new legislation proposed regarding cyberbullying.

–Thomas Gardner

Fiscal Exige Información Mas Precisa Sobre El Uso De Fuerza Policial

Por Charles David Henry
Escritor del Gremio
Periodístico

La Fiscal General de los Estados Unidos Loretta Lynch quiere que el Departamento de Justicia reúna información mas concreta sobre las interacciones entre la Policía y las comunidades a las cuales protegen y ayudan.

“El departamento ya ha tomado los pasos necesarios para incrementar la veracidad y la consistencia de la información sobre el uso de fuerza de la agencia policial,” anuncio en una conferencia de prensa reciente la fiscal general.

“Esta información es de gran

relevancia porque nos permite a ver las tendencias del abuso de la policía, lo cual nos ayuda a promover la responsabilidad y transparencia. Al igual estamos avanzando en el desarrollo de modelos para informar acerca de las muertes de personas bajo custodia, ya que esta clase de información nacional ayuda a la transparencia y la responsabilidad.”

En años anteriores, no se requería que las agencias policiales publicaran informes anuales sobre el número de homicidios justificados cometidos en sus jurisdicciones. Sin embargo, la fiscal declaro que el Departamento de Justicia y la Administración de Obama se

encuentran tomando los pasos necesarios para obligar a estos departamentos a mejorar el proceso.

“Esta información es muy esencial por lo cual estamos trabajando estrechamente con la agencia policial para desarrollar modelos nacionales sólidos para reunir esta clase de información,” Lynch añadió.

Las principales agencias políticas a través del país están colaborando con el Departamento de Estadística de Justicia (BJS) y el Departamento de Investigación Federal (FBI) para presentar la información sobre el uso de la fuerza y homicidios cometidos por los oficiales de las agencias policiales, comento Lynch.

Para definir los requisitos para el proceso Uniforme de los Reportes Estadísticos de Crimen, la fiscal general quiere evidencia de las reglas establecidas del departamento de la policía y los acuerdos colectivos. Así mismo la fiscal desea información sobre los enfrentamientos sin fatalidades ocurridos entre las agencias policiales y civiles, los cuales fueron enviados al FBI, Lynch informo.

La información acerca de un incidente proviene de varios medios a través de fuentes abiertas de comunicación. La fiscal general quiere información más exacta, obtenida de múltiples fuentes informativas, sobre cada

incidente. Ella reconoció que el BJS ha desarrollado mejores métodos para identificar la muerte de una persona bajo custodia de la policía. Ahora la agencia se propone investigar estos asuntos al inspeccionar los departamentos de policía, analizar los reportes proporcionados por los médicos forenses y las oficinas de investigación.

El estudio de esta metodología será culminada en el año 2015 o a principios del 2016. Posteriormente, la BJS establecerá un programa nacional sobre muertes relacionadas con arrestos, concluyo el anuncio.

–Traducción por Taré Beltranchuc

Prosecutors’ Misconduct Charged In Appeal

‘Prosecutors asked all prospective Black jurors whether they sympathized with Jenkins and McDaniels’

By Bernard Moss
Journalism Guild Writer

Two convicted murderers are seeking a new trial based on prosecutors’ bias.

Convicted of the 1994 murder of 32-year-old Brinks truck driver Jeffrey Spencer, Keelon Jenkins and Robert McDaniels were granted a new hearing Feb. 26 to determine if they should

receive a new trial. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, their defense lawyers claim the prosecutors showed bias toward prospective Black jurors in their original trial.

The U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit in San Francisco ordered a hearing before an 11-judge panel after a three-judge panel of the same court had upheld the decision of state and federal judges to reject claims that the prosecutors’ removal of seven of 10 African-Americans on the original Alameda County jury panel was based on racial bias.

Defense lawyers argue that prosecutors asked all prospective Black jurors whether they sympathized with Jenkins and McDaniels, who are also Black, but asked the same question to only a few white jurors.

Jenkins and McDaniels, who admitted their roles in the murder of the Brinks truck driver during a plot to steal \$86,000, were both convicted of first-degree murder. Jenkins is currently serving a sentence of life without parole and McDaniels 25 years to life.

The men contend that a third man assured them the armored car driver was in on the plot and was supposed to hand over the money. They are seeking a new trial in the hope that their argument will result in a lesser conviction of second-degree murder, which carries a reduced sentence.

Only 17 Percent of Prisoners Serving Drug-Related Sentence

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

America definitely imprisons too many people, but the “war on drugs” and mandatory minimum sentencing are not the main causes, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks claims. He suggests overly aggressive prosecutors are responsible for the prison problem.

The drug war, according to Brooks, is “not even close to being the primary driver” behind the sharp rise. Only 17 percent of inmates are in for drug charges, and the share of people in prison for drug of-

fenses dropped 22 percent between 2006 and 2011.

Releasing every drug offender from state prison today, would reduce the population only to 1.2 million from 1.5 million, writes Brooks, quoting Leon Neyfakh in *Slate* magazine.

“The laws look punitive, but the time served hasn’t increased, and so harsh laws are not the main driver behind mass incarceration, either,” Brooks stated.

The article cites a theory by John Pfaff of Fordham Law School on the cause of the mass incarceration: prosecutors have

gotten a lot more aggressive in bringing felony charges.

Pfaff cites that 20 years ago they brought felony charges against about one in three arrestees. Now it’s something like two in three. The doubling rate of felony charges produces a lot more plea bargains and a lot more prison terms.

One reason prosecutors are more aggressive, according to Pfaff, is to impress voters if they run for office in the future. Prosecutors are paid by the county, and prison costs are paid by the state, so prosecutors tend not to worry about the financial costs of what they do.

Bill Would Increase Sentencing Discretion

By Noel Scott
Journalism Guild Writer

Legislation is being proposed to fix inequities in mandatory minimum sentences, a U.S. senator reports.

The bill drafted by the Senate Judiciary Committee is called the “Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act,” Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, told the *Deseret News*.

The measure would give judges more sentencing discretion. It would also increase access to vocational training, therapeutic counseling and re-entry services for federal prisoners. An aim would be to curb first-time offenders from becoming career criminals.

One flaw is that first-time offenders are serving more time than some murderers and rapists, said Lee, R-Utah.

Lee said he was exposed to the mandatory sentencing problems while assigned to the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Utah in 2004, the Oct. 18 newspaper story reported.

Lee saw that judges were powerless and that prisons had become overcrowded. Lee said he watched as the courts were forced to impose sentences that just didn’t fit the crime.

Pundits who support these extreme sentences rely on statistics, but when one out of 28 children has an incarcerated parent, the numbers tell a different side of this story, Lee told

the newspaper.

The motive behind mandatory minimum sentencing laws began in the 1960s, with a drug-fueled crime-wave of lawlessness and violence that persisted for three decades.

In the 1990s, the crime rates began to drop, a trend that continues to this day.

This crime reduction, however, isn’t due to any one policy or program but rather a host of “character forming” opportunities. Some might say it was an “It takes a village” mentality that brought all these elements together; Faith, Family, Work and Community.

These ideals became the premise behind the “Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act,” Lee said.

For the most part, the bill wouldn’t change the status for serious drug or violent offenders as they would remain ineligible for any sort of federal “safety valve” relief. Nor will it absolve offenders of their crimes or release crowds of violent predators into the community.

Opponents of the bill argue that some criminals are so monstrous that it’s almost a crime to give them a second chance. That is an unrealistic belief because almost all prisoners get released eventually, the newspaper noted.

The legislation might not be perfect, but it’s a great start that’s been long overdue, reported Lee.

2,931 Custody Deaths Reported

By Thomas Gardner
Journalism Guild Writer

Sixty percent of all reported arrest-related deaths from 2003 to 2009 were found to be homicides committed by law enforcement personnel, according to a recent federal analysis.

The U.S. Department of Justice report confirms that from 2003 through 2009 law enforcement agents killed 2,931 arrestees – deaths that have been classified “criminal.”

In the same period, there were 1,882 other arrest-related deaths that were determined not of criminal nature. These deaths include suicides (11 percent), intoxication (11 percent), accidental injury (6 percent) and natural causes (5 percent), the report says.

“In three-quarters (75 percent) of homicides by law enforcement personnel, the underlying offense of arrest was a violent offense. No criminal charges were intended in less than 2 percent of these inci-

dents,” the report notes.

Congress passed the Death in Custody Reporting Act (DICRA) in 2000. The law requires that any death that occurs within the process of arrest by a state, county or local law enforcement agency throughout the nation be documented.

“From 2003 through 2009 law enforcement agents killed 2,931 arrestees – deaths that have been classified ‘criminal’”

Through its Arrest-Related Deaths (ARD) program, the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics has sought to determine the number of these deaths that

actually get reported.

Using the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), two categories of deaths were considered: justifiable and unjustifiable, the report explains.

More than a quarter (28 percent) of law enforcement homicides in the United States – both justified and unjustified – were not captured by either system (ARD nor SHR), according to the information collected.

“In total, the BJS ARD program data and the SHR data each identified about half of the expected number of homicides by law enforcement officers during the period from 2003 through 2009 and 2011,” say the report’s authors.

This led the research team to questions about “voluntary” reporting from state and local agencies. Their response was to implement the use of “open sources” (web searches and Google alerts) to identify deaths that may have gone unreported.

U.S. Citizens Barred From Voting

By Lee Jasper
Journalism Guild Writer

The largest single group of American citizens who are barred by law from participating in elections are those with felony convictions, according to the American Journal of Sociology (AJS).

Punishment for felony level crimes in the United States generally carries collateral consequences, including temporary or permanent voting restrictions.

Voting rights in the United States before the Civil War had generally been limited to White males.

By the mid-1960s, most of the legal barriers to political participation for U.S. citizens had fallen.

One of the few remaining re-

strictions on the right to vote is the felon voting ban.

“Felon disenfranchisement laws are ‘race neutral’ on their face, but in the United States race is clearly tied to criminal punishment. African-American imprisonment rates have consistently exceeded White rates since at least the Civil War era and remain approximately seven times higher than rates among Whites today,” according to page 560 of Volume 109, Number 3 (November 2003) of the AJS.

In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld felon disenfranchisement measures in *Richardson v. Ramirez*, facilitating states to distinguish those “fit to possess the rights of citizenship” from other members of society.

“No other contemporary de-

mocracy disenfranchises felons to the same extent or in the same manner as the United States,” according to the AJS.

The most restrictive form of felon disenfranchisement a state can adopt is that which disenfranchises ex-felons.

These laws ban voting, often indefinitely, even after successful completion of probation, parole or prison sentences.

Also, in spite of the changes inaugurated by the “second reconstruction” of the 1960s, a number of scholars have argued that racial influence on policy making persists, according to the AJS.

The AJS points out that the historical process in the United States has been characterized as a shift from “Jim Crow racism” to “laissez-faire racism.”

Website Offers Help to Families of Those Incarcerated

A new and free search engine, www.PrisonPath.com, provides information for the public. The site helps users in clarifying confusion and fear of the unknown when a loved one is charged and arrested, or sentenced to imprisonment in the United States. PrisonPath provides information including the ability to find a person incarcerated, visitation rules, contact numbers, and more about every American prison or jail. It also allows families and friends of inmates to communicate with each other on a specific page.

Juvenile Justice Marks Progress, Solutions

‘With 2.3 million people in America incarcerated, we have a problem’

By Tommy Winfrey
Arts Editor

Considering the State of the Youth Address this year, I am very mindful of the accomplishments that have been made in juvenile justice, not just of the accomplishments that Kid CAT has made.

In February 2015, Sen. Lonnie Hancock, D-Berkeley, introduced Senate Bill 261. It allows offenders who committed their crimes before the age of 23 a Youth Offender Parole Hearing.

Penal Code Section 4801(c) requires that, when considering the suitability of a qualified youth offender for parole, the hearing panel must give “great weight” to the diminished culpability of juveniles as compared to that of adults, the hallmark features of youth, and any subsequent growth and increased maturity of the inmate.

Human Rights Watch estimates 10,000 California inmates could be affected by the passage of SB 261. The passage of this bill was due in large part to people like Human Rights Watch advocate Elizabeth Calvin and her team of supporters, who tirelessly work to change

Kid CAT Speaks!

archaic sentencing laws.

Kid CAT responded to the passage of SB 261 and the verbiage Youth Offender by changing the name of our Juvenile Lifer Support Group to the Youth Offender Support Group, which is inclusive of offenders who committed their crimes before the age of 23.

Another change in legislation that Kid CAT has been sensitive to is the effects of Assembly Bill 1276, a bill that made it possible for offenders that committed their offense before the age of 23 to be housed in lower security facilities. Many youth offenders, who never would have been housed here, are making their way to San Quentin’s mainline population.

Kid CAT is sensitive to these youth offenders’ needs, and many members have taken it upon themselves to mentor these young men while a more formal program is being developed to help them.

The Writing Department of Kid CAT has held many workshops this year where the new youth offenders have begun

to participate. A monthly collaboration workshop with the magazine *The Beat Within* has provided an opportunity for youth offenders to give back by sharing their stories and advice with youth housed in juvenile facilities.

The Beat Within is a publication that goes into these juvenile facilities, hosts writing workshops, and then publishes the writings of participants on a bi-monthly schedule.

The workshops are just one way that Kid CAT has opened up its doors to the San Quentin mainline population. We also graduated our third class from *The First Step* – Childhood Development Curriculum, which helps the participants connect with their child-self.

The curriculum explores childhood and allows a participant to see where they developed their values and identities. Emotional intelligence plays a huge role in the curriculum, and feelings often that are never articulated by an offender are confronted and expressed.

With the major legislation

that has passed in the last few years concerning youth offenders, Kid CAT has now decided our attention can shift a little. Instead of working to change legislation about how youth offenders are treated once incarcerated, in the coming year we have decided we want to focus on how to help stem the flow of youth offenders into prison.

almost every high school campus across the nation. Minor infractions are often criminalized for young minorities. Instead of a conversation about a child’s behavior with the child and the parent, children are arrested and sent to a juvenile facility.

Minorities are often sent the message at a young age that school is a dangerous place where you can be locked up. “Barack Obama was chided for saying that Black men were more likely to go to prison than to college,” writes Pettit. But it is the truth.

Being accountable to our communities means that we in Kid CAT want to help change the system that is sending so many young men to prison. We know from personal experience that we lacked the emotional intelligence to communicate our needs and feelings properly. We adopted belief systems that were prevalent in our neighborhoods without questioning where our ideas of masculinity came from. Ultimately, we were failed by the system -- the same system that is piping young men into prison.

Kid CAT’s solution to this problem is to help bring awareness to these issues and offer the solution of teaching emotional intelligence in schools across America. This will be the focus of Kid CAT for 2016, and we invite our supporters to help in this mission.

“The passage of this bill was due in large part to people like Human Rights Watch advocate Elizabeth Calvin and her team of supporters”

What has been popularly labeled “The School-to-Prison Pipeline” is something we see as a serious problem in our communities. With 2.3 million people in America incarcerated, we have a problem. “More than half of all male inmates -- White, Black, or Hispanic -- between the ages of 20 and 34 had not completed high school,” according to Becky Pettit in her book *Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress*.

Police officers are found on

Native American Girls are at Higher Risk for Imprisonment

‘Victims are left to fend for themselves’

By John Lam
Journalism Guild Writer

Native American girls have the highest risk of imprisonment in the nation, according to a report published by the Human Rights Project for Girls.

“The report also states that girls in the juvenile justice system are disproportionately victims of sexual violence... Native American women and girls are also 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than any other women in the U.S.,” *IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com* reported

are most likely incarcerated,” the *Network* reported.

“Prosecuting sexual assault in Indian country has been a low priority for federal prosecutors until very recently. In many tribal communities, reporting sexual abuse or rape did not result in anything resembling justice,” said Sarah Deer, sexual and domestic violence for Native American women advocate, and law professor at William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minn.

THE REPORT RECOMMENDS:

Enacting universal Safe Harbor laws in all states that would offer immunity to trafficked youth and ensure that they are treated as victims rather than perpetrators.

Strengthen the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act that sets standards for states operation of juvenile justice systems, enacted in 1974, but not reauthorized since 2002.

Use Medicaid funds to improve quality care and trauma services for girls in child welfare.

“Our societal response of getting tougher on crime and incarcerating children, rather than addressing their needs, has not worked,” said Susan Koepflinger, former executive director of the Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center.

“We now have enough knowledge to interrupt the impact of trauma on human beings. We can help people learn meaningful self-care using mind/body cultural healing. These maladaptive behaviors that land kids in jail are really just trauma acting out.”

VICTIMS

“Victims are left to fend for themselves. In trying to cope with trauma, victims may do things that seem counterproductive. Drugs and alcohol may be a young girl’s effort to self-medicate and dull the memories of abuse.”

The lack of prosecution and support for girls who suffer sexual abuse is two-fold, according to the report. Abusers are shielded from accountability and girls are sent deeper into the justice system, setting into motion a cycle of abuse and imprisonment.

Youth Offenders Given Alternative to Jail Time

Qualified youth offenders in San Diego are given an opportunity to participate in a restorative justice project as an alternative to jail time.

“In January 2014, a selection committee composed of City Heights residents and other organizations selected the National Conflict Resolution Center and San Diego Youth Services to provide the Restorative Community Conferencing services in an effort to demonstrate an effective alternative to incarceration,” the *Detroit News* reported.

“Holding youth offenders accountable doesn’t always mean prosecuting them in Juvenile Court and putting them in Juvenile Hall,” said San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis.

“We need more programs like this that provide second chances, opportunities for young offenders and alternative forms of justice.”

In the first six months of the program, there were nearly 50 referrals, most of which were incidents of battery, vandalism and theft. Of those referrals, 24 reached an agreement on an action plan for the youth to complete.

Plans may include community service for the offender, restitution, after-school programs or taking drug or alcohol classes.

Debbie Newkirk said she decided to participate in the pro-

gram after a 17-year-old boy stole her purse on a trolley.

“Holding youth offenders accountable doesn’t always mean prosecuting them”

“I decided, he’s a young kid. He needs help,” said Newkirk.

Newkirk said a face-to-face meeting with the offender gave him a chance to take ownership over his actions, express remorse and apologize in person for his conduct.

“We ended up hugging,” Newkirk said.

“Our communities all benefit from restorative processes because the victims are getting greater satisfaction than they get in court. The youth are getting an opportunity to make amends, and the community is getting more involved in helping youth turn their lives around,” said Steve Dinkin, president of NCRC. “Community relationships are strengthened; trust and respect grow, and everyone is safer in their homes and neighborhoods.”

–John Lam

Kid CAT (Creating Awareness Together) is a group of men that committed their crimes as teens and were sentenced as adults to life terms. The group’s mission is to inspire humanity through education, mentorship and restorative practices. Kid CAT Speaks wants to hear from the male and female juvenile lifers, educators, and policy makers concerning juvenile justice issues and rehabilitation. Contact us at San Quentin News, Att: Kid CAT Speaks, 1 Main St., San Quentin, CA 94974

450 Former Military Warriors Honored on Veteran's Day

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is an appropriate introduction to describe the San Quentin Veterans Day ceremony honoring the men and women who died serving their country.

The names of nearly 6,588 military personnel, whose names were first recited at the prison's First Annual Roll Call on Veterans Day in 2011, were finally completed on Veteran's Day this year.

Every time the bell tolled, it rang for a serviceman or servicewoman who either committed suicide while on active duty or after they served.



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Veterans stand in honor of falling soldiers



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Veterans marching in respect for the "Day of Honor"

For the fourth consecutive year, the morning air was filled with a brisk chill of clean air that settles around the bay.

As the 3,404 men living at the facility started their daily ritual of preparing to spend another Veterans Day at San Quentin, a handful of inmates who are former Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine and Navy men set the stage for the Fourth Annual Veterans Day celebration. For nearly 450 former military warriors, this was their "Day of Honor."

As the general population slowly moved to the Lower Yard, an unexplained mood resonated on many of their faces. Honor and respect were vibrating around the yard as they heard the mantra of all branches of the military played over the

PA system.

The rhythm of their movement was methodical and disciplined. Everyone seemed to be moving at a very careful pace. There was no noise or insignificant chatter on the yard.

Former military and non-military individuals celebrate a Veterans Day ceremony at San Quentin. It serves as a short-term break from the routine that inmates encounter every day in prison.

Veteran Healing Veteran From The Inside Out (VH-VFTIO) celebrates Veterans Day to bring honor and recognition to veterans who dedicated their lives to protect America's freedom against oppression and tyranny.

The group was started in 2011 by Marine veteran Ron

Self to help inmates cope with struggles of life inside prison. The large number of suicides committed by veterans inside and outside of these walls had grown at an epidemic rate without a strategy to combat or a plan to prevent it, Self said. He wanted to do something about it.

The number of suicides inside prisons is lower, Self noted. "Guys in our program are taught to look at themselves in the mirror and deal with issues in their past. I started the program to reduce the number of vets who commit suicide."

Another reason for establishing the program was to help incarcerated veterans manage their emotions. These veterans are often tormented with anger and frustration after serving their country, but their anguish is exacerbated when the system fails to recognize their needs.

There are memories of past experiences that haunt them, and being in prison just fixates their anxiety.

Treatment of PTSD was another motivating factor that prompted Self to formulate programs to help veterans look deeper into their past for answers to some of their problems.

According to VHVFTIO's curriculum, narrative therapy through writing and story telling are tools used by members in the group to help process painful events in their lives. After sharing these intimacies, "they soon discover that are not alone," Self explained.

Policy Initiative Researcher Visits SQ News to Discuss Prison Issues

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Journalism Guild Chairman

Bernadette Rabuy works to impact criminal justice policy. She recently visited the *San Quentin News* office to meet inmate journalists, who frequently report on her research.

Rabuy has been working for 16 months at Prison Policy Initiative (PPI), where she wrote a report revealing how some correctional facilities are replacing in-person visits with video visits. It was the topic of a recent *San Quentin News* article.

She "exposed one of the nastiest tricks ever developed: replacing free in-person family visitation with paid computer chats," said Peter Wagner, PPI executive director. "Her report has helped restore in-person visitation in Texas and Portland, Oregon, and I think will have permanently changed the future of this industry."

Rabuy also wrote the study *Separation by Bars & Mile* that details the immense effect distance has on incarcerated Americans visiting with their families.

"Policymakers are starting to understand that millions of families are victims of mass incarceration," said Rabuy.

The University of California at Berkeley graduate was poised as she discussed an array of prison issues.

"When I first started doing this work, I was really shocked," said Rabuy. "I was jarred."

Rabuy started doing crimi-



File Photo

Bernadette Rabuy

nal justice work with Voice of the Ex-Offender. She has also worked to halt jail expansion with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and Californians United for a Responsible Budget.

The work Rabuy does is centered on recasting the way Americans view mass incarceration. She said one of PPI's objectives is to create awareness on what is happening in the U.S. prison system.

"We're small, but we do important work," said Rabuy. "I've seen the way we've been able to change the discourse on the criminal justice system. The campaigns we work on are to show how mass incarceration is really destructive."

She said an example is how "prison gerrymandering affects everybody's vote."

Gerrymandering involves census counting millions of incarcerated Americans where they are imprisoned instead of in the communities where they

are from. This awards undue political influence to people living near prisons.

Rabuy's work is reminiscent of 1960s organizations committed to social changes. She is a civil rights emissary, similar to the idea President John F. Kennedy had when he encouraged men and women to join the Peace Corps as America's ambassadors.

Her venture inside San Quentin came on the heels of Barack Obama's recent historic trek as the first sitting president to visit a U.S. prison.

Unlike Rabuy, many veteran journalists have yet to enter a prison to gain insight on what is going on in them, and she did it without the aid of the Secret Service, just the watchful eye of her father, Octavio Rabuy.

"We walked in with Lt. (Sam) Robinson, so it was very easy," said Rabuy.

Rabuy said the work she is doing to call attention to mass incarceration is moving at a pace too slow to be effective any time soon.

"I can recognize how people are paying attention in the last four years. But I'm worried that it won't lead to substantial change, especially in the state system as opposed to the federal."

She plans to attend law school next year.

"I'll be sad to see her leave us this summer to go to law school," said Wagner. "But I'm excited to see what she can accomplish for justice reform when she can

add 'the law' to her long list of skills."

Rabuy's recent PPI work involved reducing the price of telephone calls made from correctional facilities.

As a result, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in October took steps to reduce excessive phone rates and fees charged to inmates' families.

"We're excited that they (FCC) are eliminating all the fees," said Rabuy. "We were excited to submit that 92 percent of prison calls were inside the state."

Rabuy said because of the recent FCC action, PPI is expecting companies to sue the FCC.

Rabuy said PPI is looking at email issues in the federal Bureau of Prisons and the possibility that communication between

attorneys and clients are being stored. She said telephone calls may also get recorded.

As Securus Technologies has recently purchased JPay, the leader in video visitation for jails and prisons, Rabuy said PPI is looking at possible anti-trust issues.

"We're updating our whole piece of the pie report," (*Mass Incarceration: the Whole Pie*) said Rabuy. The study, published March 2014, detailed what percentages of the 2.4 million incarcerated Americans are warehoused in various jails, state and federal prisons and detention centers.

While Rabuy contemplates the future of her education she remains committed to the work she is doing at PPI. "I love it. It's been great," she said.



Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

Bernadette and her father Octavio Rabuy standing in front of San Quentin's Tower 1

Actress Helen Hunt Looks Into Restorative Justice

By Tommy Winfrey
Arts Editor

A familiar sight greeted many prisoners who have participated in group processing as they entered the Protestant Chapel on Nov. 20 to watch the show *Faultline* at San Quentin State Prison. The group circles were made up of prisoners and free people, but most notably the actress Helen Hunt.

Each circle was made up of 11 individuals and resembled an everyday occurrence in San Quentin, a place where people talk about their problems and process the traumas of their lives. All one would have to do is take a walk around the Education Building on a weekday afternoon and they would see the real thing taking place.

Hunt was invited to the prison late last year by Insight Prison Project (IPP) Executive Director Billie Mizell to observe the restorative justice program and Victims Offender Education Group (VOEG).

"Helen is researching restorative justice for a project she's working on," Mizell said. "I had been working with her and found her to be incredibly sincere and humble. So, I suggested while she was here at San Quentin, to witness a VOEG group session, that she should also stay to see the annual artistic ensemble performance."

Hunt said seeing the IPP programs was humbling and the experience helped her better connect with her humanity.

After the audience began to settle down, the actors stood up and the free people took seats in the audience, leaving the men in blue to perform.

Faultline is the second production of the performance art group The Artistic Ensemble. This performance resembled the previous performance, *Waterline*, put on last year and incorporating spoken word, dance, movement and monologues.

Actual rocks from the prison yard were incorporated into this year's show and served as a visual representation of the granite walls that encase the actors and their lives. At one point, the actors spelled out the words



Helen Hunt, Karena Montag and Billie Mizell hanging out in SQ's Central Plaza



Rauch Draper intense performance captivates the audience

"WE ARE HERE," a poignant reminder that individuals live lives behind the walls of prison every day, but are rarely seen.

"Just like water wears a rock down, so does time wear a man down," said actor Richie Morris, when asked about the meaning of the rocks.

"The concept is that we are here and do not want to be

forgotten," actor Julian Glenn Padgett added.

One performer asked Hunt what she got out of the performance and how she'd describe it to the outside world.

"I'm trying to do something with restorative justice," she said.

Hunt acknowledged that the public sees a Hollywood ver-

sion of what is really happening in prison and that she wants to use social media to get the word out about what she saw during her time here. "What should I say? Hashtag Prison Renaissance. I want to show other people in the world and invite them here to see the real, not the fake, *Orange is the New Black*."

The dance of Anouthinh

"Choy" Pangthong and Antwan "Banks" Williams shined during the event. A blindfolded Williams articulated the concept of blindness as he danced around the stage with a sheet tied around his face. "Dance speaks to the soul. I do what I feel is right. In prison there are so many things we must abide by, so when given the chance to do something like dance, I love to do this. I am who I am. I'm a man in its entirety," said Williams after the show.

Pangthong soared high in the air as he climbed a pyramid of bodies and fell to the waiting arms of the other actors. "I really love this medium. Growing up I didn't know how to articulate myself, but with dance movement, I can express how I feel. It really is a privilege and honor to convey my feelings with these guys."

For most of the show, a white board stood behind the actors on stage with a list of numbers. The numbers equated to the amount of time each man in blue on the stage has spent in prison. The striking figure of the actors' time totaled to 334 years.

The performance closed to a standing ovation by the audience.

The Artistic Ensemble is sponsored by the Insight Prison Project, a nonprofit that is "Committed to transforming the lives of those impacted by incarceration through programs that inspire reflection, compassion and accountability," according to a statement in the program for *Faultline*.

The *Faultline* cast includes Adnan Khan, Anouthinh "Choy" Pangthong, Antwan "Banks" Williams, Belize Villafraanco, Chris Marshall Sr., Erick Lowery AKA Mike Lowery, Gary Harrell, Gino Sevacos, Ira Perry, Julian Glenn Padgett, Juancito, Lawrence Pela, Le'Mar "Maverick" Harrison, Maurice "Reese" Reed, Richie Morris, Rodney (RC) Capell, Rauch Draper, and Upumoni Ama. Stephen Pascascio operated soundboard, and outside directors are Amie Dowling, Freddy Gutierrez, Tatiana Chaterji and Sebastian Alvarez.



Ira Perry and Julian Glenn Padgett surround Richie Morris with Chris Marshall Sr. standing behind him



Antwan "Banks" Williams struggles to break his restraints

Computer Coders Celebrates Demo Day

Continued from Page 1

price tag on.” In attendance were local community members, including Scott McGrew, anchor of *Press Here*, an NBC tech-business television show, tech-business executives and curious citizens.

Inmates Jason Jones, Jerome Boone, Damon Cooke and Reginald Hola built Getting Parents' Attention (GPA), an app that helps parents stay involved with their children's education in order to help their children get into colleges with sports scholarships.

“GPA is not only my dream, but something I wish I'd had,” Jones said.

It took inmates Sam Hearnes,

Lucious Jackson and Aly Tamboura six weeks to build Project Tycho, a project that incorporates an analysis of data from the University of Pennsylvania to highlight the importance of childhood vaccinations. Hearnes said he found that effective teamwork was just as important to the success of his project as learning to code.

The inmates faced a challenge in Code.7370 unique among coding training programs: They did not have access to the internet in prison. All of their work was done without that one tool considered integral to coding and web development work.

Inmate Harry Hemphill and his teammates had to use uncommon techniques to over-



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

Last Mile founders Beverly Parenti and Chris Redlitz, Graduate Lucious Jackson, CALPIA General Manager Chuck Pattillo, Warden Ron Davis and Brant Choate, Acting Director of the Division of Rehabilitative Programs at CDCR

come the challenges of building without internet access. Hemphill said that since they could not Google answers, they had to struggle through problems and teach themselves specific skills. But by doing so, they got far more appreciation what hard work means.

Parenti said that each Demo Day brings her a great sense of accomplishment.

“We are a small but mighty team,” Parenti said. “We see challenges as opportunities. During the second cohort, we got a surprise visit from Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of one of the largest companies in the world who cares about what's happening behind these walls. We hope to continue the conversation.”

Parenti added that TLM's business partners are interested in giving internships to Code.7370 graduates. “We believe that having a job is the key to breaking the cycle of coming back to prison,” Parenti said. “One is judged by the quality of their code, not the stigma of their past.”

In fact, the success of programs like Code.7370 and *San Quentin News* has inspired motivation to add similar innovative programming to other prisons across the state, according to Brant Choate, acting director of the Division of Rehabilitative Programs at CDCR.

“Code.7370 is something new. We need to continue to look for new things,” Choate said. “Everybody is asking for a transfer to San Quentin and more programs like (the ones at) San Quentin. They shouldn't have to do that. Those programs should be at those prisons, too.”

Choate says there are current plans to expand a tech center at San Quentin with several hundred additional computers.

The event allowed inmate Chris Schuhmacher to demonstrate Fitness Monkey, an online platform he built with Jorge Heredia and Joseph Demerson that encourages using fitness to combat addiction. Schuhmacher felt optimistic after the demonstration.

“Is it just me,” he said, “or can you feel the buzz of possibilities in this place?”

—Bonnie Chan contributed to this story



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

Jon Gripsover, Chuck Pattillo, Rusty Bechtold and Michelle Kane at the Coding Demo Day



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

Joseph Demerson, Chris Schuhmacher and Jorge Heredia giving their pitch



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

Last Mile Adviser M.C. Hammer delivers a motivational speech to the class



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

Steven Lacerda shocks the audience with his knowledge



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

The audience gives a standing ovation for the graduates and presenters



Photo by Eddie Herana-San Quentin News

Damon Cooke gives a clear description of their app

Butterscotch Performs Live at SQ

By Rahsaan Thomas
Staff Writer

San Quentin inmates packed into the prison's Protestant Chapel on a recent December night for an intimate concert put on by musical artist Butterscotch.

Butterscotch took the stage, guitar in hand, to play a five-song set. She earned several standing ovations for her performance, which showcased her jazzy voice. But the music didn't stop there – she beat boxed and harmonized to create a full-blown one-woman show. Some 350 inmates attended the concert.

“I want to spread my music anywhere I can -- take people on a music journey,” said Butterscotch Clinton after the performance.

Butterscotch was inspired to

Musical artist Butterscotch



Photo by Sam Hearnes

David Jassy, Butterscotch and James "JC" Cavitt



Photo by Sam Hearnes

Butterscotch breaks in down with David Jassy



Photo by Sam Hearnes

Butterscotch gives Jason Jones her autograph as Reginald Hola poses in the background

perform inside the prison after seeing a documentary about The Last Mile, an entrepreneur training program for incarcerated men. She reached out to Chris Redlitz, the program's founder, and they decided to organize a concert.

“It's great so many people have come and volunteered to give back,” Redlitz said. “It's easy when the guys (in TLM) are so motivated.”

Redlitz said that Butterscotch is not the only musical artist to show interest in visiting San Quentin. MC Hammer visited the prison again not long after she performed.

Butterscotch gained national fame as a finalist on *America's Got Talent*. She won third place with her uncanny ability to simultaneously beat box, sing and play a musical instrument, blending jazz, R&B and hip-hop into ear candy.

She flew up from Los Angeles to perform the concert that was organized as a reward for the prison's coding class. The students recently put on Demo Day, where they showed off the projects they had built to demonstrate programming skills to the potential employers and the community members in the audience.

Incarcerated Grammy nominee and Swedish rapper/producer David Jassy and TLM member James “JC” Cavitt opened the show with a short set and also performed with Butterscotch.

“I felt like it was a travel back into time,” said Jassy. “I had fun.”

Cavitt started with the spoken word piece, *Why the Cage Bird Screams*, with Jassy strumming the guitar.

“I scream because it took only one bad...and tragic decision... To be considered at 17 unredeemable...” he said. “I scream because society's answer to the problem was a cage.”

Then Butterscotch took the stage.

“I just want to take it slow; we ain't got nowhere to go,” she sang. “I just want to give you a chance for you to see a melody with perfect harmony.”

Cavitt and Jassy then joined her onstage to sing *Freedom*, a track written by Jassy with only a few minutes to prepare before the show.

“I live in a world that kills people to teach people who kill people not to kill people,” spoke Cavitt.

“He opened up the mood and brought everybody in with his message of freedom, and it fit perfectly because it brought that blend of conscious spoken word, neo-soul and hip hop,” said Jassy.

The concert ended with a Jassy and Butterscotch beat boxing duet to his song, *All of a Sudden*.

“She was cool, and we synchronized even though we had no time to practice,” said Jassy.

The crowd expressed their appreciation.

“I'm 36, and this is my first time attending a real concert,” said Emile DeWeaver, who is incarcerated for a crime he committed at 18. “You just helped me cross it off my bucket list.”



Photo by Sam Hearnes

James "JC" Cavitt, Butterscotch and David Jassy rocks the crowd



Photo by Sam Hearnes

Eusebio Gonzalez gives Butterscotch two thumbs up for her performance as he waits on his autograph



Photo by Sam Hearnes

Butterscotch gets a round of applause

Women Prisoners Learn Computer Skills

By Krissi Khokhobashvili
CDCR Public Information
Officer

Office of Public and Employee Communications
Monica Oliva may have spent the last 13 years in prison, but now, as she prepares to go home, she said those years were time well spent.

“Although it is prison, I try to look at it as, ‘You know what? I’m going to use this time as an investment into my future,’” Oliva said. “I didn’t sit around and mope. I took advantage. It has meant a lot to me, and I appreciate it.”

Oliva was one of 18 offenders at Folsom Women’s Facility (FWF) to graduate from the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) Autodesk Authorized Training Center Program. Through a partnership of CALPIA, Autodesk and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the women receive training in AutoCAD (Computer-Aided Design), Autodesk Revit (structural design) and Autodesk Inventor (mechanical design). While the failure rate for people working toward these certifications outside of prison is 50 percent, the women incarcerated in FWF have a cumulative pass rate of more than 90 percent.

“They’ve done some amazing projects – some real-life projects that they’ve seen all the way through to completion,” said Lynn Allen of Autodesk. “I think they have a heads-up when they go to get a job, because they get it – they totally get it.”

Chuck Pattillo, General Manager of CALPIA, said the significant investment in the CAD program is easily offset by the fact that people who participate in rehabilitative and vocational programs while incarcerated are less likely to return to prison, thus saving taxpayers millions in the long run. CALPIA provides 6,000 productive work assignments at prisons throughout the state. Through the CDCR-supported Career Technical Education programs, inmates are earning real-world certifications in fields like carpentry, ironworking, deep-sea diving



Photo by Alan Barrett-CALPIA Photographer

The Autodesk Authorized Training Center graduates earned certifications in AutoCAD, Inventor and Revit – and many have completed all three!

and computer coding.

“Our primary function is to increase the safety of prisons by offering opportunities so that people are not going to come back,” Pattillo said. “Give them the training so they never come back. Give them the services so they never come back. We are a business, but our service is rehabilitation, and our number one product is an offender who does not come back to prison.”

The women’s education goes beyond computer training. In response to the California drought, they were called upon to design a landscaping plan to replace grass and other moisture-loving plants at the Green Valley Training Center, where classes are held. The women split into teams, work-



Photos by Alan Barrett-CALPIA Photographer

Courtney Nault demonstrates how the Autodesk software works in the Green Valley Training Center computer lab

ing together for four months in a friendly competition that was judged by staff, management and executives. The winning design was unveiled at the graduation, and the women who created it will oversee the construction of the project by their fellow inmates in the CALPIA carpentry program at FWF.

Pattillo shared a letter from Jessica Dence, a former offender who went through the Autodesk program at FWF. Today, she is a successful designer for a land-surveying firm in upstate New York, where she has done design work on existing and new structures, homes destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, pools, churches and even ski resorts. She wrote that her CAD experience at FWF was what got her foot in the door to a great job.

“I think about you all often, and I’m excited for the other girls to have the opportunity to work in a professional setting, and to feel proud of all they have accomplished while incarcerated,” she wrote. “It’s a long journey and a tough road ahead, but it is rewarding nonetheless.”

Brenda Dubon said that while the Autodesk training is rigorous and difficult, in the end she is learning more than just computer software – she now realizes that she is capable of accomplishing things she never knew she could.

“When I put my mind to something, I can actually do it,” she said. “Usually I’m kind of like, ‘No, I can’t do that so I’m not going to try.’ But I have expanded my knowledge.”

Oliva, who will parole soon, shared Dubon’s sentiments.

“It has been a wonderful program, and I feel inspired by everything,” she beamed. “All of the people – I have been inspired by them. It means a better future for me and it has given me the confidence to know that I still have the ability to learn. I still have the ability to

grow, and it is not over for me.”

The keynote speaker for the graduation was Robin Harrington, Chief Deputy Warden at CDCR’s Female Offender Programs and Services unit, and the former Associate Warden of FWF. The day was particularly moving for Harrington, as it was her last graduation as a CDCR employee. She is now retired after nearly 30 years of service. Harrington reflected on how she and the graduates are experiencing a milestone, and urged them to make the most of it.

“We all have little goals,” she said. “We have short-term goals, long-term goals, but a milestone is a type of goal that is significant. You can say, ‘I’ve done this, I’m not turning around, and this is forever in my pocket.’”

“A milestone is when you no longer look at yourself as the person who you used to be, because of the skills, the knowledge, the ability that you know have. You have created a milestone in your life. I want you to build on that.”



Photo by Alan Barrett-CALPIA Photographer

Caitlin Churchill has earned three Autodesk certifications, which she plans to use in the design industry after prison. Joining her in celebrating her accomplishments are Folsom State Prison Warden Ron Rackley, Associate Wardens Tracy Johnson and Steve Cox, CALPIA General Manager Chuck Pattillo, Chief Deputy Warden Robin Harrington and Jay Virbel, Associate Director, Female Offender Programs and Services



Photo by Alan Barrett-CALPIA Photographer

Monica Oliva proudly stands with her certifications in AutoCAD, Inventor and Revit. She is flanked by Folsom State Prison Warden Ron Rackley, Associate Wardens Tracy Johnson and Steve Cox, Chief Deputy Warden Robin Harrington and Jay Virbel, Associate Director, Female Offender Programs and Services

Watani Bids Farewell to SQ News

By Watani Stiner
Contributing Writer

For nearly three years, since March of 2013, I have enjoyed contributing to the San Quentin News with my OG's Perspective column, glad to let my son Larry Jr. pinch-hit occasionally. But with this column my time in the lineup comes to an end. When I paroled from San Quentin a year ago I promised editor in chief Arnulfo Garcia that I would continue for a year. That year has ended. Arnulfo likes to encourage the newspaper staff to "move forward." That's what I'm going to do, with a focus on my family that is so dear to me and to completion of my memoir. As you can see by the theme of my recent presentation to the men at San Quentin and my last regular column, printed below, I believe that family is an essential part of life. The restrictive terms of my release from prison will soon be eased and I will be able to connect more easily with those children and grandchildren that I cherish. I will also be able to get more involved in various social justice issues that interest me in my community. As I leave the pages of the SQ News I want to thank all those involved for the chance to have my say. If the readers and SQ News staff would allow, I would still like to be able to submit articles on an occasional basis as important issues arise and that I feel passionate to speak to.

LESS THAN A YEAR AGO, I was a California state prisoner serving a life sentence. And although I spent a total of 26 years behind these walls of San Quentin, the last time I actually walked the streets of this country as a "free" man (prior to January of this year) was 1969.... That was 47 years ago.

Now we certainly don't have enough time for me to bore you with details of my whole life-story, so let me just give you a thumbnail sketch of my journey and make one brief observation:

For those of you who don't know, I escaped from San Quentin in 1974 because my life was in serious danger in prison. I fled the country to South America where I remained an escaped-fugitive for 20 years. In 1994, I made a deal with the state department and vol-

An OG's Perspective



Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

Watani Stiner outside the East Gate in front of SQ

untarily surrendered to U.S. authorities in exchange for my family being given safe passage to the U.S. I was brought back to San Quentin to serve out the remainder of my life sentence. I realized tonight that I just might be the only person in this country to have successfully escaped from San Quentin and then volunteered to return—not only once but volunteered to come back to this prison twice! Once in 1994, and then again tonight! I just hope they don't decide to keep me as long as they did the first time. So Lt. Sam Robinson... I'm trusting that you will let me out of here TONIGHT!

For the thousands of fathers who are currently in prison in San Quentin and this country, it is certainly no secret that our children are collateral damage. Yes, sadly but truthfully, and rarely ever acknowledged or discussed by political pundits and policy-makers, millions of children are innocent casualties of our criminal injustice system. It is one of America's dirtiest little secrets, and a national tragedy.

After being in prison for so many years, separated from the lives of my children (who, by the way, did not get the prom-

ised safe passage from the U.S. government until 11 years and almost their entire childhoods had passed...), I had made up my mind that since they had all grown up during my incarceration, I had missed my chance to be fully present in their lives. I actually believed that my children no longer needed me as their father. After all, I had missed practically all their birthdays, their school graduations, family picnics, marriages; and so many holidays have passed without my presence. And most importantly, I had missed my God-given right as a father: the right to lower my voice and strike terror into the hearts of all my daughters' conniving little boyfriends. Yes, why would my children, after all these years of my absence, need a father now?

Although I was separated from my own children, during my incarceration I have found myself being a surrogate father to so many young prisoners who have also become my surrogate sons. As with any family, some of my sons I scolded because they were hard-headed and difficult to reach, while others would argue with me, repeatedly ask annoying questions, and listen to what I had

to say. Yes, there were those I had become disappointed with, and those that made me so very proud of them.

I recall one of my many prison sons who came to prison when he was just 16 years of age, unable to read or write and too embarrassed to admit it. He would not ask for help for fear of being exposed to the other prisoners. Instead, he chose to withdraw, losing all contact and communication with his family. Like a father, I tried to give the love, the time and the patience to this young man that I was denied the opportunity to give to my own children. If I couldn't be their father, I would try to be somebody's father. In addition to helping him learn to read and write, I tried to encourage him, build up his sense of self-respect, and help him sort out his own identity as a man. He would later go on to get his G.E.D. and AA degree. When I was paroled, he was taking a correspondence course to obtain his B.A. All he needed was a father and a chance!

If anyone here is holding onto the assumption that your children do not need you anymore because you have been separated from them for so long, or because they are grown, let me assure you that your assumption is far removed from reality: Once I had been released from prison, I first began to experience overwhelming feelings of anxiety. For I now had full access to all of my children: their scars, their hurts, and all their traumas. I was suddenly confronted with the difficult day-to-day experience of being a father. I did not realize it at the time, but prison serves as a kind of buffer to our relationship with our children. It hides from us their nightmares and their dreams.

I quickly found out that my children needed love and healing... they needed both a reassuring embrace from me as well as a silent and sacred space to scream: WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME DADDY? I HATE YOU AND I LOVE YOU TOO! The human heart must ask: Where is this love and who in the hell locked up compassion and justice?

It is my hope that one day you all will find out, just as I have... that no matter how long the state

decides to contain us under a broken criminal justice system, our children are the ones who suffer the most. And no matter how many years you are incarcerated, when you are released, you too will find that your sons and daughters still need their dads!

My message to every father in prison, and to all of the fathers here in this room who are not in prison, who feel they are no longer needed in their children's lives, is to find a way to stay connected (or get connected) to your children. For me (while in prison) I poured most of my time and energy into writing. Writing became my passion, my salvation, and it created a life-line from my heart to my children's heart. It literally kept me sane and connected to my children during my 21 years of re-incarceration. I continued to write to them each and every day, even when there was no response. Against any temptation to despair, I urge you to find a creative way to stay connected with your children.

In closing, I'd like to leave a message and a poem to all my brothers who are currently locked up behind bars. The message is crucial: Discover and explore your creative passion. If you have children, that passion, whatever it may be, can help provide that difficult and necessary bridge to them, a starting point in building a creative relationship that can sustain all the separation, hurt, anger and loss that is intrinsic to a having a parent in prison.

So, if you would just indulge me, I'd like to share this short poem with you. It is a poem I wrote 10 years ago while a prisoner here at San Quentin. I titled it: I Write For My Children.

I WRITE FOR MY CHILDREN

*I write for my children
in words only hearts can fathom*

*I write for my children
pen-drenched in love storms
and magical poems;
each alphabet a teardrop,
every page a river.*

*I write for my children;
no longer can I see their glow—
a soft and tender sadness
illuminates their souls.*

*I write for my children
to invoke their spirits;
faint breaths upon my face
as sprinkles of giggles
tickle my lobe.*

*I write for my children
to rescue my drowning faith
in a pool of regrets.*

*I write for my children
in a language that dances
on lyrical islands
and miracle streams.*

*I write for my children
because writing is a blanket
I weave around their hearts.*

*I write for my children...
THANK YOU!!!*

By Rahsaan Thomas
Staff Writer

Life of a King does an outstanding job of portraying the realities of using chess as a means of saving young men who come from dysfunctional homes with drug-addicted parents. First, studies show that juveniles lack the ability to understand long-term consequences; chess teaches them to think four moves ahead, to see the "end game." Second, it also teaches teens to see how major drug dealers get rich by using them as pawns.

Life of a King is an inspiring and moving movie about the use of chess to shape young minds. This movie, based on the

Movie Review

real life of Eugene Brown, is a gripping tale of Brown's (Cuba Gooding Jr.) struggle to teach others not to repeat his mistakes.

The movie begins with Eugene's release from prison after serving 17 years for armed robbery. He passed his time playing chess with Chessman, a man whose only relief from prison is playing chess and reading the Bible. By playing chess, Eugene learns to see the "end game."

As an ex-con, Eugene lies on a job application to acquire a janitor position at a high school, but winds up being a detention monitor when a tough drug-

dealing kid named Clifton (Carlton Byrd) runs the teacher off. Meanwhile, Eugene's former crime partner, Perry (Richard T. Jones), tempts him with offers of big money "with no strings attached."

Eugene resists Percy's seduction and introduces the kids to chess. The class mostly takes to his teaching, except for Clifton and Tahime Sanders (Malcolm Mays). Tahime shows promise as a chess player, but chooses to follow Clifton -- until their friend, Peanut (Kevin Hendricks), dies while running with Clifton.

Eugene strives to get accepted

back into the lives of his children, Katrina, a law student, and Marco, a juvenile drug dealer. They are both angry with Eugene for missing most of their entire lives during his 17-year bid.

Things get even harder when it's discovered that Eugene lied about his felony conviction on the job application and he is fired. Thereafter, he seeks to form a chess club on his own and manages to get past the anger and abandonment feelings of his kids.

Gooding Jr. does a great job as Eugene and Mays stands out as Tahime. This movie is a good one to see for anybody who loved *Coach Carter*, *Stomp the Yard* or *Lean on Me*.

Obama Focuses on Denouncing Mass Incarceration

By Isaiah Thompson-Bonilla
Journalism Guild Writer

President Barack Obama made an open declaration denouncing mass incarceration, and took action by commuting the sentence of 46 non-violent drug offenders, wrote Andrea Roth.

However, Roth's column, featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, made clear that the White House and reformers cannot reach a significant reduction in the prison population without reaching beyond non-violent drug offenses. The criminal justice system at some point must address massive sentence

disparities if any noticeable dent is to be made at reducing the population.

While the prosecution of drug offenses is often looked at as one of the reason for mass incarceration, they only account for 21 percent of the prison population growth. John Pfaff of Fordham Law School, an economist and criminal justice academic, used data from the National Prisoner Statistics database to come up with the percentage number. Pfaff's research also showed that there has been an increase in violent offenses between 1980 and 2009, accounting for more than half of prison population

growth.

There is a level of misconception as to what is considered a violent offense. In California for example, a violent offense can occur without anyone being physically harmed or even present at the crime scene. Currently, if a person enters an occupied dwelling— whether there is someone home or not—it is considered a violent offense. If a theft occurs and it takes place in someone's garage, it is considered a violent crime, etc.

In addition, crimes that are classified as violent under California's criminal codes are often directly or indirectly related to drug addiction, sales or pos-

session, concluded Roth. The use of the term "violent crime" has been socially constructed in legal terms which stretch across a wide span of understanding—and can be confusing.

Roth pointed out that drug offenders as a group are being given preferential treatment by enacting leniency over those who have committed more serious crimes. Often these more serious crimes result in sentences that are disproportionate to the actual harm done, causing longer prison terms and clogging the system.

Recent reforms in California's Three Strikes Law have done little to bring relief to the

state's bustling prison population. A person who commits a crime currently under California's violent crime statutes still faces a mandatory minimum of 25 years to life, even if one is injured in the offense.

However, the process of over-punishing an offender because they have committed a violent crime can no longer be an excuse to imprison people to terms beyond what the sentence for the crime carries, Roth concluded. "Addressing the over-punishment and racially disparate treatment of violent offenders is a necessary step toward reining in this country's bloated prison system."

Brothers' Keepers Certifies 14 Crisis Counselors

Continued from Page 1

"As a Brother's Keeper, you are trained to notice these things."

Mims, who paroled from San Quentin in 2009, has kept his connection with the men with whom he once did time by coming to the graduating class of 14 inmates in Brothers' Keepers.

"I believed in Brother's Keeper because it was not about me," Mims said. "It was about somebody else."

Brothers' Keepers began as an idea and was taken to a volunteer self-help facilitator, Jacques Verdin, who brought in professionals from Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR) —Marcia Blackstock and Diane

Beynon.

"We are asked all the time how can you go in there?" Blackstock said. "The answer is simple, 'This is where we find hope.'"

One of the many projects of Insight Prison Project is sponsoring the program.

"You have made a conscious effort to make the San Quentin community safer," said Associate Warden John Curzon in a written statement to the graduates.

"Integrity is about what you do when nobody is looking," Mims told the graduates. "Wear your Brother's Keeper hats and hone it with integrity and dignity."



Photo by Steve Emrick

Brothers' Keepers graduates inside the Protestant Chapel

Graduates of Brothers' Keepers 2015 are Edward Ballenger, Tare Beltranchuc, Lynn Beyett, Carl Burnside, Peter Chhem, Cleo Cloman, Gregory Coates, Arnulfo T. Garcia, Sam W. Johnson Sr., Vaughn Miles, Miguel Quezada, Dywayne Reynolds, John Robb and Kana Uch.

"It's a fantastic program," said Kathleen O'Meara, Regional Mental Health director for Northern California prisons. "It takes a community to prevent suicide. You guys are the boots on the ground. I am extremely fond of peer education groups. Whenever I go out to other prisons, I praise what you do."

O'Meara thinks that Brothers' Keepers are an instrument for peace. "Every one of you will be successful if you will go out of here. I am so grateful to have met you. And I am not done yet. I want to integrate what you do with the mental health program in a more formal way."

When Borey Ai, a Brother's Keeper graduate, told a simple story, called *The Mouse Trap*. It challenged his life, the suffering, death, empathy and compassion. The emotions depicted in the story resonated with the audience of about 75 people.

"I always think about what my role is among the people," Ai said. "I've never been to a community like the one here in San Quentin. We look at the world and try to help people. We all

have the ability to help shape our community."

"We did a lot of role playing," graduate Cleo Cloman said. "That was the most important thing, because it put me in the hot seat. There were challenges that taught me something different each time — each individual has helped me."

"What you do is relevant. The fact that you're willing to help

your community is remarkable," said facilitator Howard Bloom. "Being available for folks is a huge thing. That's what you guys do day in and day out. That energy changes things."

The ceremony closed with Gregory "Eagle" Coates providing a soft melody with a wood flute.

—Juan Haines

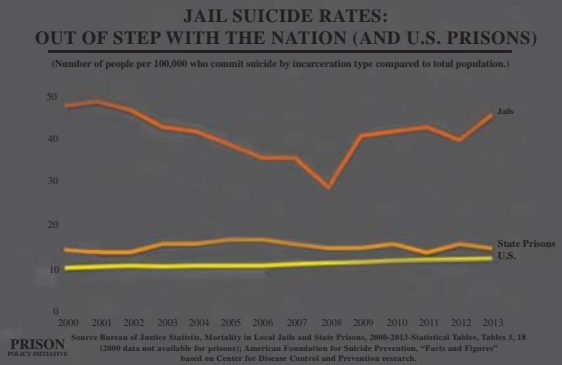


Photo by Steve Emrick

Dr. Kathleen O'Meara giving the crowd important information



Photo by Steve Emrick

Diane Beynon, Julie Posadas Guzman and Marcia Blackstock

Column Changes Perception of Inmates

By Angelo Falcone
Journalism Guild Writer

As "Asked on the Line" enters its fourth year at the *San Quentin News*, it renews its commitment to bringing readers the insights of the men at San Quentin. Asked on the Line shares with the world the memories and opinions of the residents of that infamous gated community by the Bay and hopes to quell the stereotypes of what it means to be an "inmate."

For those on the other side of the wall who have never felt cold steel on their skin, the slam of a cell door, or the condescending tone of authority's voice, there is no comfort in punishment.

Many men at San Quentin have done great harm to others and live with the shame of their crimes. The majority of the men actually work hard every day to find ways to make amends to their victims while healing themselves in the process.

Asked On The Line

Here are a few highlights of 2015:

In the January issue, men were asked if they could go back in time before their arrests and speak to their younger self what they would say. Answers included insightful advice such as "Never take the easy way out. Control your anger. Be patient. Listen to your parents. Stay focused. Don't waste time."

The February issue asked mainliners, "Who is the person or people you love the most? If you only had 30 seconds to give them a message, what would you say?"

The most common message was "I love you."

In March, the men were elated to have had a charity food drive in February that sold outside foods like KFC chicken and hot

pizza. The San Quentin TRUST program did \$37,000 in sales with the net profit of almost \$9,000 going to charities.

In the April issue, the men described their Easter memories. Many of the men remembered getting dressed up, going to church, having Easter dinner and having fun with family. They shared how they engaged in childhood activities.

In May, one of the biggest articles in the paper was the Mother's Day piece. The men described what they loved most about their moms. Among the sweet messages, mothers were described as being devoted, wise, resilient, intelligent, caring, beautiful, religious, hard-working, motivating, angelic, kind and compassionate.

In June, the men described

their dads, father figures or male role models. Fathers were described as intelligent, honorable, strong, inspirational, heroic, respectful, faithful, loyal, dependable and courageous.

In July, the men described their best Fourth of July holiday. Some of the men remembered spending time with their newborn children and going to parades.

In the hot month of August, men were asked, "Who is or was the most attractive person you ever met? In a heartbeat, many of the men claimed that their wives, fiancées and girlfriends were the prettiest of all.

In September, Asked on the Line asked, "If money or time were not an issue, what type of degree would you like to obtain?" The most sought out degrees: sound engineering, psychology, behavior science, theology, environmental engineering, medicine, mechanical engineering and marine biology.

In October, men on the mainline described what they liked most about the annual Health Fair, and among all the use of water, which was most important to you?"

The men enjoyed multiple aspects of the Health Fair, but they developed a greater appreciation for their access to safe water.

In November, men were asked, "Of all the things that we have in our lives, what are you most thankful for having?" Men were grateful for their sanity, television sets, family, sneakers, radios, clothes, eyeglasses, intelligence, guitar, education, Bible and access to medical services.

Finally, in December, inmates were asked, "If you could go back in time and repeat a winter holiday season, how old would you be? Where would you be? With whom would you be? More than half would be children again. Almost all of the men would be at home with family.

New Policy Allows Prisoner to Purchase Tablets

By R. Malik Harris
Deputy Editor

Some California prisoners are being allowed to purchase basic electronic tablets for the first time, it has been announced.

The new policy covers all Level I and Level II institutions such as San Quentin's mainline, camps and females. Condemned Row prisoners at San Quentin will not be allowed to order the device.

The announcement is contained in an Oct. 12 memorandum from Kelly Harrington, director of the Division of Adult Institutions for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The devices cannot include a camera, microphone or any recording or picture-taking ability.

Vendors Walkenhorst's and

Union Supply Direct will compete to supply the tablets to inmates.

Walkenhorst's representative Natalie Tovar visited San Quentin Oct. 22 to demonstrate the Hiteker Tablet. It is a 32-gigabyte, seven-inch, multi-touch screen tablet. "This device is very basic," explained Tovar.

The \$159 tablet comes with 40 video games and 100 books preinstalled. It will hold up to 5,000 games, songs and eBooks. Prisoners can purchase music and additional games.

Walkenhorst's requires that customers mail the tablet back to them in order to add additional programs. eBooks cannot be added to the Hiteker.

Tovar demonstrated the device to men representing the Men's Advisory Counsel, *San Quentin News* and various programs. The tablet comes with

ear buds and has a rechargeable battery. It does not have speakers or wi-fi capabilities but can be connected to certain television sets for playing video games.

Available games include Andor's Trail, Chess Walk, Dodge, Frozen Bubble, Sudoku and Solitaire, to name a few. "The catalogue will be out on Jan. 1, 2016," Tovar assured the group.

Union Supply Direct representative Bonni Mircovich visited San Quentin on Oct. 30 with the competing U-Tab 7.

Like the Hiteker, the U-Tab 7 has a seven-inch, color, multi-touch screen and holds up to 5,000 songs, eBooks or games. The U-Tab 7 also holds 32 gigabytes of data and has a media output port for connecting to any television that has an HDMI connection.

One major difference is that the U-Tab 7 comes with five

apps, five games, two educational apps and five books. Mircovich said the U-Tab 7 offers a larger selection of games and books "that you can update your device with."

The U-Tab 7 comes with an SD Card reader that can update the tablet with digital media without requiring the user to send the entire device back to the vendor.

Once digital media from the SD Card is downloaded onto the device, the card is wiped clean and cannot be used again.

Union Supply is producing a new catalogue for the device due in January.

"We just expanded our book selection," Mircovich said. Customers will have access to more than a million books through Union Supply's distributor. Union Supply is interested in hearing from its customers about any books or games in

which they are interested.

The U-Tab 7 has the capability to play movies; however, the department is not yet allowing vendors to send them to California prisons. Union Supply is negotiating with CDCR headquarters to add movies to its catalogue. Movies, if allowed by the administration, would be purchased and would automatically delete after 36 days and could be watched as many times as the user wants.

"If the department relaxes its regulations, we are ready to update devices and add more products," Mircovich said.

The U-Tab 7 runs on the Android operating system and has a high-quality graphics drive.

Union Supply is working with the state to enter into agreements with educational programs to add to the tablets.

Prisoners can begin ordering the U-Tab 7 in December.

Daylight Saving's: 'Spring Forward and Fall Back'

Most people know that there are two times during the year when we must adjust the time on our clocks and watches. The phrase "Spring forward and Fall back" is what reminds us of this task, but how many people actually know what Daylight Saving Time is? Is it just a practice here in the U.S.?

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Daylight Saving

Time is a system for uniformly advancing clocks so as to extend daylight hours during conventional waking time or "Standard Time." Clocks are advanced one hour to gain the added daylight of summer evenings.

Since 2007, Daylight Saving Time has begun at 2 a.m. (ante meridiem) on the second Sunday in March and has ended at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in

November. Standard Time runs from the first Sunday in November to the second Sunday in March.

Since most people are usually asleep at 2 a.m., clocks are usually set ahead one hour at bedtime the night before Daylight Saving Time begins (in March), and set back an hour at bedtime the night before Standards Time begins (in November). Efforts to conserve energy have also prompted the current changes of when Daylight Saving Time is observed. Prior to 2007, Daylight Saving Time traditionally ran from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October.

Daylight Saving Time was first observed during World War I (WWI), and again during World War II (WWII). It was observed from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in September. In the intervening years, some U.S. states participated but on different dates with that of the federal government. In 1966, Congress passed the Uniform Time Act, which

provided that any state or territory choosing to observe Daylight Saving Time must begin and end on the federal dates. However, states could request exemption. In 1986, Congress passed a law moving up the start of Daylight Saving Time to the first Sunday of April, while keeping its end date the same. These dates changed again in 2007.

Currently, Arizona, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa are exempt, always on Standard Time and do not observe Daylight Saving Time.

The practice was first suggested in a whimsical essay by Benjamin Franklin in 1784. Later in 1907, an Englishman named William Willett campaigned for setting the clock ahead by 80 minutes in four moves of 20 minutes each during the Spring and Summer months. In 1908, the House of Commons in England rejected a bill to advance the clock by one hour in the spring and return to Greenwich Mean (Standard

Time in the autumn.

The practice of Daylight Saving Time is common throughout the world. Canada and Mexico generally observe Daylight Saving Time, except in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan and in the Mexican state of Sonora. Several countries, including Australia, Great Britain, Germany and the U.S. adopted summer Daylight Saving Time during WWI and WWII to conserve fuel by reducing the need for artificial light.

In most of the countries of Western Europe, Daylight Saving Time starts on the last Sunday in March and ends on the last Sunday in September. Member nations of the European Union, however, observe their "summer-time period" or Summer Time—a version of Daylight Saving Time—from the last Sunday in March until the last Sunday in October.

Currently, Daylight Saving Time or an equivalent is not observed in Japan or by countries that border with the equator.

—Angelo Falcone

READ BETTER !

Sign Up for Free To Succeed
at the Education Office

Pick your
Nights -
Mon-Fri

Our students
who work hard
**ALWAYS
SUCCEED**

What I Wish I Knew When I was 20, Honored for Top Book in 2015

By Juan Haines
Managing Editor

It was the experience of reviewing *Makes Me Wanna Holla: A Young Black Man in America*, by Nathan McCall for a 2012 college class that made me want to write book reviews for *San Quentin News*.

After reading McCall, and re-living all his mistakes in life, I became hopeful and optimistic. "Never give up," I told myself.

In finding the most important book reviewed for 2015, I looked for its impact on incarcerated people from a literary perspective. In other words, if someone locked up read this book, will doing so make him or her better?

The reason I want to draw attention to these books — we need to read more, especially the incarcerated.

On its face, this may seem strange that I would pick a book that says nothing about being locked up or the criminal justice system. However, the two runners-up deal directly with crime and punishment, *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas*, Ursula Le Guin; and *A Trial for Grace*, Jessica Pishko. So, why would I give *What*

Book Review



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Tina Seelig with her parents during computer coding Demo Day event

I Wish I Knew When I was 20, Tina Seelig, top honors for 2015?

Seelig, a college professor, had no idea that I'd read this

book and found it very applicable to an audience she never intended to address.

As an incarcerated person, understanding where I failed

in life is paramount to getting better.

"Failures offer learning opportunities and increase the chance that you won't make the

same mistake again," Seelig writes.

For me the operant word in this sentence is "learning."

I believe anyone, incarcerated or not, who takes the time to read Seelig's book, would be steered into success.

What I did for this review is, after re-reading *What I Wish I Knew When I was 20*, I grabbed *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas*, then *A Trial for Grace*.

These three readings gave me an understanding of ethics, community, goodness and self.

At the end of reading these stories, I can say that I am hopeful and optimistic that in the 21st century, the public is beginning to understand the complexities behind the current criminal justice system and how to make it better.

Seelig, who has come inside San Quentin to take a look at one of its most promising programs, The Last Mile, has two new books out. *Insight Out: Get Ideas out of Your Head and Into the World*, refers to what she learned from her experience of visiting incarcerated Americans. The other book—*inGenius: A Crash Course on Creativity*.

Inmates Eye Relabeling Prisoners 'Incarcerated-Americans'

By Rahsaan Thomas
Staff Writer

Would being considered Incarcerated-Americans instead of prisoners, inmates or convicts, be a step toward ending mass incarceration, or a leap backwards?

A panel consisting of Tommy Winfrey, Emile DeWeaver and Juan Meza sat down in San Quentin's dimly lit gym to discuss the issue. Winfrey opposes the term. Emile is an advocate for it, while Meza sided with Winfrey but changed his mind.

DeWeaver describes being considered Incarcerated-Americans as a way to stop mass incarceration.

"It is an individual's recognition that he is a citizen and from that awaking, an acknowledgment of his civil responsibilities," said DeWeaver. "Second,

Yard Talk

for someone in free society to use the term Incarcerated-American is a sign that we are all part of the same society, and we are looking for solutions to problems that are hurting this country together."

Winfrey: "I am opposed to the label 'Incarcerated-American.' One, there are plenty of people locked up who are not Americans. As a prisoner, I'm not given full status as an American. Also, I don't feel like somebody else has a right to place an additional label on me. I don't want to soften the blow of where I live. It absolves accountability."

DeWeaver reacts: "I think Tommy and I are living in the same world when he says that

I'm not a part of society and I am disenfranchised; I don't have the same rights as people on the streets. I see that as the problem. The term, Incarcerated-American, is not a denial that problems exist; it's a first step because if we can't even see ourselves as part of society, then I find it hard to envision a future where we will ever be part of society."

Meza, who arrived late, described siding against the term Incarcerated-American at first.

Meza: "I didn't want to change from prisoner, but when I heard Emile's take on it, it made me think of Incarcerated-American in a different sense. Instead of being excluded from the com-

munity, I now have citizenship. Even though incarcerated, I am still part of the social structure."

Winfrey: "This artificial term, in my opinion, is a step backwards. I won't be happy 'til we are just called Americans."

DeWeaver: "I can see the problem with Incarcerated-American as a term if it allowed people to ignore the problem. But I think it makes people aware of the problem. We shouldn't be excluded from society more than incarceration dictates."

Winfrey: "I think there is already a huge awareness. Americans from the top down know over 2,200,000 people are locked up. My problem with the label is that it creates a class of American. When you create a label, there is always some stigma attached."

DeWeaver: "I don't think it

creates another class, there is another class, and it's us. There is a lot of awareness but it is rooted in economic concerns. I would like the conversation to be about the human beings who are incarcerated, not the costs to incarcerate them."

Winfrey: "We are trying to classify everybody as a group, when we are individuals. Until we write our own stories, we are going to be treated as second class."

DeWeaver: "All labels aren't bad. What this label allows us to do is be examples of what this can be and that gives others a model to go by. If people in prison started embracing the idea of civic responsibility, this world would be a better place. The key word is citizens. We are disenfranchised, but thinking of ourselves as citizens is the road to enfranchisement."

Inmates Raise \$3,389 to Help Fight Breast Cancer

Incarcerated men donated money and artwork to help conquer breast cancer. The accumulated funds were issued to Avon Breast Cancer Emergency Fund and the Women's Cancer Research Center at a ceremony inside the San Quentin's Protestant Chapel.

"It was a wonderful feeling that we are making a difference in people's lives," said San Quentin Cares co-founder Steve Pascascio. "A lot of us have moms and sisters and aunts that could catch breast cancer. I don't know anyone in my family that has it, but I'm still an advocate for it."

Approximately, \$2,034 was

raised from the Breast Cancer Walk held on San Quentin's Lower Yard in July.

Margaret Peggy was there to receive the check for Avon.

She spoke about how the more than \$50,000 raised between 2008 and 2015 by men incarcerated in San Quentin contributed to finding a cure.

About \$1,355 was raised from an auction held in San Francisco. Artwork donated by men inside San Quentin was sold, according to S.Q. Cares co-founder Sam Johnson.

Parolees Troy William, Clinton Martin and Coach Sweeny were at the auction,

and they bought pieces, according to Johnson, whose father died of cancer.

He saw his dad just before he died and cried at the sight of the 74-pound man who used to weigh 250 pounds. He also lost his brother-in-law and sister-in-law to cancer.

"Fighting cancer makes me feel like part of society. It makes me feel active. Even though we are behind these walls, we are still able to reach out, reach beyond these wall and let society know we want to be a part. It's a form of repentance," said Johnson.

S.Q. Cares' Nghiep Ke Lam spoke about the history of the

Breast Cancer Walk inside S.Q.

Former San Quentin resident Will Packer approached Pascascio with the idea of a having a breast cancer walk. Pascascio was the chairman of the 1000 Mile Club and took the concept to his sponsor, Laura Bowmen. She liked it and agreed to sponsor the event. Now it has its own sponsors under S.Q. Cares.

"This is something that I enjoy doing. I will continue fighting against breast cancer from parole," added Lam. "The best part of humanity is when we love each other enough to make each life matter."

Lam paroled Dec. 7.

"We are grateful that the administration allows us to keep the event going — I thank Warden Ron Davis, Associate Warden Kelly Mitchell, and Community Partnership Manager Steve Emrick," said Pascascio. "We are grateful to have outside sponsors: Shannon Gordhamer, Chris and Kim Bailey and Berkeley Donovan."

Lam commented, "The people that received the checks were so grateful. Because we are in prison and we make that sacrifice, we don't make much money; we made a sacrifice to give to this worthy cause."

—Rahsaan Thomas

Investing Urged in Minority Communities

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Writer

America needs to invest in Black communities to help minority people succeed and not wait to spend money on rehabilitation of prison inmates, a recent report by the Economic Policy Initiative concludes.

“Black children born in 2001 are roughly five and a half times more likely than their White counterparts to be incarcerated,” according to the report.

“It is time for society to make the difficult choice that it has been avoiding since the passage of the Voting Right Act of 1965, to wholeheartedly invest in the Black community in order to achieve the social and economic equality,” wrote Robynn J.A. Cox, the report author. Cox is an assistant professor at Spellman College.

“We are already employing and providing education and job skills training to individuals imprisoned because most state

departments of corrections also have a charge to rehabilitate. Why not offer these programs on the front end prior to committing a crime instead of after it is too late?”

The mass incarceration of Blacks is America’s way to maintain the social and economic status quo, according to Cox

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 is held responsible for the disproportionate rates of incarceration of Blacks in federal

prison, Cox wrote.

Many rural communities sought to benefit economically from mass incarceration by using prison construction for economic growth, according to Cox.

To stimulate their economics through job creation, political officials hoped prisons would be a recession-proof industry. Therefore, state and local officials lobby for prison construction, since crime has been tied to federal funding.

For minorities, the burden of proof for a conviction is low, while for Whites it is a higher standard, the report says. Prosecutors are twice as likely to charge a Black defendant with a crime that is under the mandatory minimums versus a White defendant, it says.

Where Blacks make up less than 13 percent of the nation, they made up more than half of the prison population during the height of the prison boom, the 20-page report states.

Life of the Law Highlights Prisoners’ Journies

Continued from Page 1

The first storyteller, Lawrence Pela, told about the complications of facing a 46-year sentence for robbery. From the county jail to the Level IV prison, this first-time offender had to find a way to fit in. He told about his compassion for the performing arts. In closing, he admitted, “I’m finally comfortable with myself.”

Kathleen Jackson, a volunteer at San Quentin since 2007, shared a heartfelt story about a personal journey that took 45 years to complete. The conquest to overcome the loss of her daughter began when she listened to six inmates tell their stories. Her confidence grew as she got involved in

programs. In closing, she said, “I’m really excited about the future.”

The energy surged in anticipation of the next speaker, Watani Stiner. He told about events at UCLA in 1969 that caused the death of two Black Panthers. He was arrested, charged with conspiracy to commit murder, sentenced and sent to San Quentin in 1974. After escaping from San Quentin, he fled to South America. However, 20 later, for the sake of his family, he turned himself into American authorities. During his tenure at the prison, Watani wrote the OG column for *San Quentin News*. He was paroled in January 2015.

Azraal Ford told the audi-

entry perpetrated his attitude throughout his adolescence and adulthood. After years of fighting and committing acts of violence, he came to San Quentin, where he morphed and found himself intrigued with Shakespeare. He spoke of his role as Julius Caesar.

Aaron “Haroon” Taylor took the audience on an imaginary play-by-play basketball game between the LA Lakers and the Golden State Warriors. Taylor told the audience about his relationship with the San Quentin basketball program and how much it means to have personnel from the Warriors encourage him to hone his announcing skills

David Jassy gave a rendition of “*Dream about Freedom*,” the circumstances behind his case. It is a song about the life of a bright and rising Grammy-nominated artist, who arrived in America to receive an award; however, all came to an abrupt tragic end in Hollywood.



Photo by Elisabeth Fall

Emile DeWeaver gives Troy Williams a warm welcome while Watani Stiner laughs during the whole event



Photo by Elisabeth Fall

Troy Williams speaks to the audience



Photo by Elisabeth Fall

Philip Melendez talking about how seeing Death Row prisoners prompt him to change his life

Philip Melendez came to prison at 21 filled with anxieties of prison politics. “At San Quentin I didn’t have to act tough. Nobody really cared about all that stuff.”

Raphael Casale, a secretary in the warden’s office, who grew up in Marin County, recalled seeing the prison while riding along Highway 101. Then she was hired as a medical scheduler and later promoted to the warden’s office. Casale discovered an interest in the youth diversion program SQUIRES. In this program, the men mentor youngsters having difficulties.

Eric Durr brought the audience to its feet with a rousing, comical, frolicking portrayal

of a character based on his life. The comedy hit home by Durr joking about how his behavior, over the years, had to change to deal with personalities he encountered in the everyday life of a prisoner.

Troy Williams, recently released from San Quentin after 18 years, shared tales of his transformation from a gang-banger to a mentor and founder of *San Quentin Prison Report*. He said, “I miss the programs at San Quentin and all the close relationships.” He encouraged inmates to continue programming and “prepare to return to the community; we really need you.”

Emile DeWeaver wakes up in prison every morning feeling as if he is living in a tomb. He spoke fondly of a correctional officer in West Block who brings a sense of humanity to reality by simply saying “Good night” to every inmate he locks up at the end of the day.

The evening of storytelling was co-produced by the Life of the Law, *San Quentin News*, *San Quentin Prison Report*, Society of Professional Journalists Northern California Chapter. It was funded in part by the Open Society Foundation, the Law and Society Association, and National Science Foundation.



Photo by Elisabeth Fall

Nancy Mullane and members of the SPJ, Northern California Chapter, San Quentin

1. Sacramento – At the start of next year, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Secretary Jeffrey Beard is stepping down to return to his family in Pennsylvania, reports *Los Angeles Times* reporter Paige St. John. “When he took the job in December 2012, he thought he might be here for a couple of years but that he had no fixed time line,” said agency spokesman Jeffrey Callison. “It’s now three years on, and he feels it’s time to focus more of his time and energy on his family who live a couple of thousand miles away.”

2. Los Angeles — Luis Vargas spent 16 years in prison for a rape that DNA evidence showed he did not commit, *The Associated Press* reports. DNA testing methods were not as sensitive at the time of his trial, and the convictions were based on positive identifications by three victims.

3. Helena, Mont. – State prison administrators from Montana examined technology classes at Folsom and San Quentin state prisons in California that teach inmates computer coding. Montana Correctional Enterprises administrator Gayle Lambert said the state is making plans to add computer coding classes to train inmates in job skills they can use once released from prison and is looking for resources, including partnerships with businesses, *The Associated Press* reports.

4. Kentucky – As a part of a move against felon disenfranchisement laws affecting nearly



6 million Americans, Gov. Steve Beshear signed an executive order to restore the right to vote and to hold public office for ex-felons who have finished their sentences, *MSNBC* reports. The order does not cover those convicted of violent or sex crimes, bribery or treason. “The right to vote is one of the most intrinsically American privileges, and thousands of Kentuckians are living, working and paying taxes in the state but are denied his basic right,” Beshear, a Democrat, said at a press conference.

“Once an individual has served his or her time and paid all restitution, society expects them to reintegrate into their communities and become law-abiding and productive citizens. A key part of that transition is the right to vote.”

5. Nashville – The understaffed Hamilton County Jail failed to meet minimum standards for the second year. Inspectors called the facility “antiquated,” and said, “Staffing levels are low and security for staff and inmates could be compromised,”

the *Times Free Press* reports.

6. Pennsylvania – Han Tak Lee spent 24 years in prison for his daughter’s death before a judge concluded that his 1990 conviction was based on since-discredited scientific theories, *The Associated Press* reports. Lee’s conviction was one of dozens to be called into question around the country in the midst of ground-breaking improvements in investigators’ understanding of how an intentionally set fire can be distinguished from an accidental one.

7. Maryland – The state has reached a settlement with several advocacy groups over conditions at the Baltimore jails complex, *Reuters* reports. A federal judge still needs to approve the plan that would overhaul the jail’s health care system and make major improvements, including accommodations for people with disabilities. Progress will be tracked by monitors.

8. Washington, D.C. — Donald Eugene Gates was paid \$617,000 for each year he spent in prison for a 1981 rape DNA evidence showed he did not commit, *The Associated Press* reports. The \$16.65 million payout was given amid a federal court’s finding that two city police officers fabricated and withheld evidence in the case. With advances in DNA technology, his lawyers were able to show that genetic evidence from the forcible rape was not linked to Gates.

9. Philadelphia – A chicken pox outbreak has caused some court cases to be delayed at the Federal Detention Center, *The Associated Press* reports. More than 1,000 people are housed at the prison. It is unknown how many have contracted the disease.

10. Amherst –Hampshire College updated its investment policy language and will not invest in private prison, private security or surveillance companies, weapons manufacturers and fossil fuels, according to the new policy adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Kennedy’s Solitary Confinement Ruling Sparks Changes

The Court of Appeals reversed the district court’s order on Incumma’s procedural

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy’s recent ruling on solitary confinement influenced the Richmond, Virginia, 4th Circuit Court of Appeals’ decision to allow Lumumba Incumma, a member of the Nation of Gods and Earths (NOGE), to sue because his due process rights were violated, according to an ABA Journal press release.

The NOGE is an offshoot of the Nation of Islam and other religious groups “in the Islamic sphere” that “preach a message of black empowerment,” the release said.

Due to his role in a 1995 violent riot, Incumma was validated as a Five Percenter and placed in a South Carolina Prison Maximum Security Unit (“Department”). It was not punishment for participating in the riot but to maintain and control the inmate and to provide safety and security for the staff and other inmates, the record said.

On the record, it was Incumma’s contention that the department’s singular goal was to make him renounce his belief in NOGE.

In December of 2012, Incumma filed a pro se civil complaint alleging that South Carolina Department of Corrections’ renunciation policy violated his rights under Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons

Act (RLUIPA). He claimed that throughout his detention in the Maximum Security Unit, the Department violated his procedural due process rights by failing to conduct meaningful review of whether he was fit for release to the general population, the record reflects.

In part, RLUIPA states: “No government shall impose a substantial burden on the religious exercise of a person residing in or confined to an institution . . . even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, unless the government demonstrates that the imposition of the burden on that person (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.”

“By enacting RLUIPA, Congress afforded prisoners free exercise rights similar to those enjoyed by the free population.”

After spending 20 years in solitary confinement for his participation in the riot, the court determined that his confinement amounted to a typical and significant hardship in relation to the general population and implicates a liberty interest.

“There is a triable issue as to whether the prison’s process for determining release from solitary meets minimum requirements of procedural due process,” the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled.

Incumma motioned the court for summary judgment on both of these claims. The district court granted the motion. Though the court assumed that the NOGE constituted a religion and apparently determined that his confinement imposed a substantial burden on his beliefs, it nonetheless concluded that the department’s policy was “the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interests” and therefore did not violate RLUIPA. He subsequently filed a timely appeal, court records reveal.

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed Incumma’s summary judgment on the RLUIPA claim but reversed his procedural due process claim.

The Court of Appeals affirmed the district court’s holding with respect to Incumma’s RLUIPA claim because he failed to show that his religious beliefs, rather than his choice to participate in a riot, are the proximate cause of his continued solitary confinement.”

The Court of Appeals reversed the district court’s order on Incumma’s procedural due process claim because he demonstrated a liberty interest in avoiding solitary confinement and the department did not prove as a matter of law that it provided him with a meaningful review. The court remanded this case for further proceedings consistent with this opinion, the record concludes.

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Basketball Tournament Targets SQ Youth

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

A basketball tournament gave the new influx of youth at San Quentin Prison something positive to do. It pitted H-Unit dorms against each other. Dorm 3 swept all teams and won the five-game championship series in three over Dorm 2.

"We started this tournament because guys just getting off the bus ain't have nothing to do," said Harry "ATL" Smith.

Smith credits Maurice Gipson for helping organize the event, an inmate known as Mr. Bennett for donating prizes of sodas and honey buns and corrections Capt. Baker for signing off on the tournament.

The flood of youngsters on the yard arrived as part of the Youth Offender Program, passed in 2014. It is designed to keep offenders under 22 years of age out of maximum-security prison, where there are more violence than programs.

However, although San Quentin is the prison of opportunity, getting into most groups starts



Photo by Raphaelle Casale

Tevin Fournatte with the monster jam

on a waiting list. These young men decided to do something else positive in the meantime.

"I'm on the waiting list for programs. They ain't got back

to me yet," said Joshua Moseley. "This is about all of us getting together to stay out of trouble."

"Take the negative and turn it positive in any circumstances,"

said Elijah Stinson, 25.

Dorm 3 was stacked with talent. There was Smith, a former junco player and current San Quentin Warrior starter; Tevin Fournette, a former John Marshall High School player; Keon Williams, Eli Hill, Stilson, Mosely, Terrence Grate and a few others.

In the second full-court game, that was scored by ones and twos (beyond the arc); it was the first team to 35 that won. Fournette led his team in dunks and scoring with 11 points, while Williams, Smith and Hill added 7 each. They won 35-28.

In the must win game for Dorm 2, it was the Fournette and Williams show. They dropped 13 points each.

Miguel Caraballo of Dorm 2 tried to keep his team's championship hopes alive.

"We should have had a few more wins. I'm trying to get us one today, even though our team is not all here," said Caraballo.

Dorm 2's Tommie Nellon was sidelined during game three with an injury.

Caraballo, who says he's a

former Freemont High School player, led all scorers with 16 points despite missing four free throws.

"We just trying to have fun and let my game be respected," said Caraballo.

Williams credits the 35-24 finals game sweep to work ethic.

"We had to keep fighting, miss a shot, keep going, keeping hustling," said Williams.

Fournette and Williams practice with the San Quentin Warriors and hope to make the team next year.

"If he (Fournette) makes the team, he could add toughness, defense and rebounds," said Warriors Head Coach Daniel Wright.

Fournette and Williams both say if they make the team, Bob Myers won't drop 43 on the Warriors again.

Smith envisions the tournament to be the start of something bigger. He would like to see a platform setup where players can display their talents so they could be recruited straight out of prison to play for Junco or Division 2 or 3 colleges.

Warriors Lose Final Game of Winning Season

By **Juan Haines**
Managing Editor

It was a welcomed distraction for referee Isaiah Caldwell to be hassled by coaches and players in the season-ending game between the Green Team and San Quentin Warriors the day after his biological father passed. Serving a life sentence, Caldwell also lost his mother since being incarcerated in 1998.

"I just can't mope around and let things build up," Caldwell said. "So, I came out here to be with you guys and ref the game." Prior to tip-off, both teams gathered center-court to pray, dedicating the game to Caldwell's deceased dad.

"I appreciate what everyone is saying to me," Caldwell said. "I'm doing everything I can to set a positive role model for my children, like my step-father tried to do for me. I just didn't take advantage of the opportunities he gave me."

San Quentin's basketball season started in April and ended Nov. 21, with the Green Team snapping a three-game losing streak to the Warriors, the Warriors retained a 7-6 season-series edge.

Don Smith and Bill Epling

manage a sports program, Christian Sports Ministries. Its basketball team is the Green Team. Seventeen years ago, Smith and Epling started bringing Green Team players inside San Quentin.

The game's scoring started slowly, until the Green Team — armed with extra motivation from the Warrior's winning streak — erupted with back to back 3-pointers and a couple of lay-ups, resulting in a double-digit lead mid-way into the second quarter.

They held onto a double-digit lead until Warriors' guard Josh Burton took an inbound pass, dribbled into the paint for a quick score, knocking the lead down to nine at 41-32.

Green Team missed the ensuing shot, and the Warriors got the rebound.

"This is the last game," coach told his players. "They are playing hard. We have to tighten up."

After a timeout, guard/forward Anthony "Ant" Ammons shelved a pass to Warrior Donte "Sandman" Smith, for a quick lay-up.

With 18 seconds left in the first half and the Warriors trailing 46-36, an alarm rang on the Lower Yard, stopping all action.

All was cleared in about a minute.

In the last seconds of the half, Smith got the ball again to close, cutting the Green Team lead to six.

Former pro Tom Randall, who had never been inside San Quentin, tagged along with the Green Team. Randall, who performed half-time exhibitions at NBA games and played against the Harlem Globetrotters, juggled and spun basketballs for a San Quentin halftime show.

"I grew up in Detroit in a Black culture, went to a White college and lived in a Brown community," Randall said while juggling three basketballs. He said the experience gave him a multi-cultural understanding.

"I've been married 38 years," he told the audience, now spinning a basketball on his finger, "and I have 38 kids."

In the dead of silence following his statement, Randall added, "I run an orphanage in the Philippines!"

In the laughter, Randall said while simultaneously dribbling two basketballs, his youngest is 18 and oldest is a 28-year-old surgeon.

In his second visit to San Quentin, Green Teamer Brian

Kravoy said that speaking with inmates convinced him more community members should experience inside prisons.

"I've learned that these men are articulate and have educated themselves about where they went wrong in their lives," Kravoy said. "Talking to Rafael (Cuevas) about his life and the mistakes he's made has broken down stereotypes I had about prison."

Ben Draa, now an assistant with the Golden State Warriors played with the Green Team since 2011.

"It's been great the last four

years," he said. "I get more out of this than what I put in."

Green Team started the third quarter on fire with lay-ups and three-pointers, led by double-digit scoring by Chris Blees and Reilly Griffin while the Warriors shots could not find the basket.

The Green Team stretched their lead to 23 points midway through the quarter.

With about four minutes left in the game, the Warriors were down six points; however, two costly turnovers stopped the comeback, and the Green Team walked away with a 91-86 win.



Photo by Eddie Herena-San Quentin News

Tom Randall with Bill Epling

Trailblazers Clober Kings, 82-67, in Season Finale

By **Marcus Henderson**
Journalism Guild Writer

The visiting Trailblazers torched the San Quentin Kings 82-67 in the final basketball game of the season.

"We decided in the parking lot that we were going to bring it. We knew this was the last game, and we didn't want to wait until next March to get a win," said Blazer Damien Aden.

The one-two punch of Blazers Will Wheatly and Ryan Williams kept the Kings frustrated. Wheatly grabbed a rebound and pushed up court for

a fast break, then hit Williams with a no-look pass. Williams shook a defender and made a reverse lay-up. The Dynamic duo had three break-way steals for lay-ups, Williams had two and Wheatly one to extend their third quarter lead 54-41.

Williams finished with 23 points, Wheatly had 20, and point guard Antwan Capla added 12.

The Kings sharpshooters, Marvin Cosby and Oris "Pep" Williams, fought to keep the game close. Pep was fouled as he drained a three-pointer for the four-point play. Cosby hit a beautiful turn-around jump-

er over a defender and made a lay-up with seven seconds left to end the third. But the rest of the team look tired and had no offensive chemistry. They gave up steals and didn't move the ball around.

Pep scored the team high 22 points, and Cosby put up 11.

"I thought since it was the last game of the season, we would have played a lot better. But we ran out of energy. We still had a winning season, and the outside teams' level of competition was stronger this year," said Kings Coach Orlando Harris.

The Blazers ended the third up 64-48 and stayed on fire

to open the fourth. Wheatly pushed the ball up court and found Williams in the corner for the hands-down, man-down three-pointer. Williams repaid the favor and hit Wheatly with a bounce pass at the top of the key for the open three and a 70-50 lead.

"It didn't turn out the way we wanted it to, but it was a humbling experience to play with these older cats," said Cosby.

Blazer Coach Ted Saltveit added, "What can I say? We got five wins in the Big House. With every season, our friendship grows closer and the competition gets more intense."

The Blazers hot shooting continued when Aidan Coffino knocked down two three-pointers back-to-back. He fouled out before putting the game away at 79-63.

"This is a good and unique experience. Coming here has given me a lot to feel positive about and to let go of the negative. I will miss this," said Coffino.

King J. "Mailman" Ratchford concluded, "The season was good. We came together as a family. I enjoyed everything and I hope to be back next year."

—**Edward Moss**
contributed to this story

Markelle Taylor Breaks Club Marathon Record

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Writer

At the Sixth Annual 1000 Mile Club Marathon, Markelle Taylor shattered the old record by 10 minutes with a time of 3:16.07. He also broke the Two-Hour Run record last year. “I dedicated this run to Coach Kevin Rumon, who is battling throat cancer. I also want to show honor and respect to the people I hurt in my case. I owe it to everybody to find ways to show repentance,” said Taylor. Glen Mason took second with 3:45.03 and 68-year-old Michael Keeyes place third at 3:59.15 in the Nov. 14 contest. “Kevin has been nothing but inspiration. Part of the run, I was thinking of him,” Mason said. Mason broke his own personal record. Although he runs a marathon every Sunday, he said it was still work. GQ magazine was on the scene to cover the marathon.



Photo by Raphaelae Casale

Markelle Taylor break the 1000 mile marathon record

“The seed got planted when I met some guys who paroled from here at an Anti-Recidivism Conference. They said they ran a marathon here, and I wondered, “How can you run a marathon in prison?” I pitched the story to my editors, and I flew in from Los Angeles. I think this story is timely, be-

cause a lot of these guys will be getting out and it’s in everybody’s interest to support these rehabilitative programs,” said GQ writer Jesse Katz. While most of the 25 runners do not complete the 26 miles, first-time runner Steve Harris placed seventh with the refuse-to-give-up time of 5:26.29. “By the 22nd mile, I had my doubts. I thought, ‘This might be it.’ But my competitive nature kicked in. I understood that I was competing against myself. Now I can say I completed a marathon. Had I quit, I wouldn’t know that I can push myself to complete any goal I set for myself,” said Harris. Coach Frank Ruona added, “Talk about grit and determination; he finished this marathon on the first time coming out.” Katz said, their circumstances are not the best, “but you see guys reaching for their best, and that’s remarkable. They say you can’t control your environment; you can only control how you respond to it. That’s easier said than done, but here you see guys doing it in this environment, and they are not only surviving, but thriving.” “It’s a challenge for anybody to get out there to run 26 miles. This is a team effort; we push and support each other. I think a lot of the guys are behind on their training, but whatever they run is impressive,” said 1000-Mile member Tone Evans. “Completing the marathon is an act of love,” added Taylor. “You have to love yourself before you can love others. Not loving myself is how I ended up in prison. You have to love yourself to take care of yourself.” Other finishers included: Jonathan Chiu in 4:46:26; Al Yaseng in 4:44:46; and Darren Settlemeyer in 4:04:44. The 58-year-old Lee Goins completed 25 miles in 4:42:27.

University of S.F. Visits Inside Tennis Team

By Rahsaan Thomas
Staff Writer

The Inside Tennis Team mixed it up with University of San Francisco Tennis Team members and actually managed to win some games. “It was intimidating playing the USF guys because we know they are going easy on us, but they still tear us up,” said ITT’s Paul Alleyne.

Alleyne and N. Young took on USF players, Maker and Woravin Kumthonkittikul. IIT lost 4-1, but they won two games and broke a serve. USF Coach Pablo Pires de Almeida came in with four players. This is his fifth year since learning about the program from Inside Tennis Team sponsor Leslie Lava. “We do it every year, and we love coming out here. We have

the best time,” said USF player Alex Santiago. “Some guys are mad they couldn’t come out, but they had a tournament.” This year USF has won the North West Regional, and they qualified for the National Indoors, according to Pires de Almeida. “Last year we had our best season in 25 years,” said Santiago. “Pablo brings his best players

in. Standing ovation for Pablo,” said Lava. USF met with Inside Tennis Team members Clay Long, Chris Schuhmacher, Paul Alleyne, N. Young, team Captain Ronnie Mohamed and a few others. While double matches were taking place, Inside Tennis Team members shared stories with the young USF players. “It’s good meeting everyone and hearing their stories,” said USF Ryan Maker. Maker played mixed doubles with Schuhmacher against Kumthonkittikul and ITT’s Noel Scott and won 4-1. “We faced some international competition and won,” said Schuhmacher smiling proudly. “It’s a good place to get to know each other. It’s more about that than competing,” said Kumthonkittikul.

Chosen Out-Played All-Madden in Season Finale

The visiting Chosen Ministry flag football team brought its SWAG and beat the San Quentin All-Madden squad, 26-12, in the season finale. The ministry team came to show love and taught that SWAG means Saved (by) Way (of) Amazing Grace, said Chosen Pastor Wayne Jackson. “When storms come, either you be wise or foolish, but don’t cast away your confidence. Which can be a great reward for you,” said Pastor Jackson. And confidence is what they bought on fourth down, up 19-12 with a minute left in the game. The crowd roared for the Chosen to punt the ball and play defense. But Chosen had a better plan. The quarterback swept right and found a streaking Tyson Amir down field for a 60-yard bomb. Amir caught the pass off his fingertips and stumbled in the end zone, closing the game out with a bang. “The main thing is we want our brothers home,” said Amir. “We come here to show support and love. We agreed to be here, and we will honor our agreements as long as we can.” The first half of the game was a tight defensive battle. The Chosen put up a goal-line stand to save a touchdown by blitzing Andre Jackson. “This is the highlight of my year,” Andre said. “I can feel the love and brotherhood; it’s like family. You can see the changes in these guys.” All-Madden regained proces-

sion off an interception by Donald “Tex” Walker. That set up a 20-yard pass to Nicholas Darrett for an All-Madden 6-0 lead. “I’m glad for this season. We lost to our brothers. It’s not always about the win; it’s about the unity that we share,” said Walker. Chosen Amir intercepted All-Madden quarterback Royce Rose in the last two minutes of the first-half. That led to a Chosen 10-yard touchdown run to tie the score 6-6. At half-time, both teams honored sponsor Don Smith for his 18 years of commitment to the Ministry Sports Program at San Quentin. “Without a vision a man perishes, and without purpose, man goes down,” said Smith. The Chosen opened the second half with a screenplay to Amir, who shook an All-Madden defender for a 99-yard touchdown run to lead 12-6. All-Madden answered after a series of powerful runs by Rose and running back Matthew “Ed” Edwards. Edwards found a gap in the defense and ran 10 yards for the 12-12 tie. “This season was humbling and spiritual,” Edwards said. “I thank the visitors for helping to give us our humanity back. Plus I got my first touchdown.” The Chosen fired back on their next possession. Anthony Jackson snatched a 50-yard bomb out the air and ran it straight in for the touchdown and the 19-12 lead.



Photo by Raphaelae Casale

The Chosen (black) facing off against All-Madden (orange)

“It’s a blessing to come in here, Anthony said. “God wants us to minister through football. We want you guys to stay strong and remember God in everything you do.” With two minutes left on the clock, All-Madden moved the ball down the field quickly, off short passes to the sidelines to save the time. Rose then ran 40 yards for the first and goal. The next play Rose threw the ball to the end zone corner where the

Chosen’s Benra Williams intercepted it to seal the game. “I want to thank all the players and the people who helped to put these games on. You want to go where the competition is, and that’s why we come here,” said Williams. Isaiah Bonilla-Thompson, All-Madden head coach, added, “We like to honor the Chosen for their sacrifices to come here. They are like the home team with the many fans they

have here.” Dwight Kennedy, All-Madden assistant coach, concluded, “I’m just thankful to enjoy the outside guests. It shows the outside community our active rehabilitation, and that we can work together to accomplish a goal.” “It was fun while it lasted,” said Rose about the Nov. 21 game. It ended All-Madden’s season with a record of 2-1. —Marcus Henderson



S.F. City

Photo by P. Jo

Complete This Puzzle and
Win a Prize!

In order to become President of the United States you must 1. Be at least 35 years old. 2. Have been born in the United States. 3. Have been a resident of the United States for at least 14 years. What is Number 4?

The Answer to Last Months Trivia is:
Thursday, the Reindeer is lying.

The winner to last Month's puzzle is: Edward Wycoff.
Congratulation to Leroy Lucas and E. Vick for getting last month's puzzle correct and no Mr. Robert Bacon it is not Monday and the Elf told the truth.

Rules

The prize will be for completion of brain twister puzzles. All puzzle submissions should be sent via u-save-em envelope to *San Quentin News/Education Department*. Only one entry per person.

All correct submissions will be placed in a hat. The winner will be picked by a drawing of the first correct answer from that hat.

The prize is 2 Granola Bars. Prize will only be offered to inmates with privilege group status that allows for the prize items. Inmates transferred, sent to ad/seg, or otherwise not available to claim their prize will result in forfeiture.

The answer and winner's name will be published in the next issue of the *San Quentin News*.

Snippets

Quit smoking and the oxygen level in your body will rise eight hours afterward.

Under the weather? Did you know that it is possible to have two colds at one time?

Ironically, an Ohio State University study show that women gain weight after marriage and men gain weight after divorce.

Diamonds tend to shrink in the sun, according to an Australian physicists.

Death sentences were handed out in Naples, Italy to anyone caught kissing in 1562.

In 2008, during the presidential election, 37% of young Americans preferred capitalism to socialism.

Thirty million times per year is the average heart beat for an adult.

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word *yui*, which means to unite.

Sudoku Corner

1		9		8	2	6		
	2			6				
			1				9	4
6	3				8			
2		8		5		9		7
			6				3	2
3	4				6			
				2			4	
		2	9	4		3		8

		2		7				
5	1			2			7	
7			4			2		
3			6			4		2
			9	5	7			
6		1			3			8
		7			4			9
	5			3			1	7
				6		5		

Last Issue's Sudoku Solution

8	9	4	7	5	2	3	6	1
1	2	6	8	4	3	7	9	5
7	5	3	6	1	9	4	8	2
9	6	8	3	7	5	1	2	4
3	7	1	2	8	4	9	5	6
5	4	2	9	6	1	8	3	7
2	8	5	4	9	7	6	1	3
6	3	7	1	2	8	5	4	9
4	1	9	5	3	6	2	7	8

5	8	2	1	7	4	6	3	9
9	4	1	5	6	3	7	2	8
3	7	6	2	9	8	5	1	4
8	1	5	4	2	6	3	9	7
6	9	3	7	1	5	8	4	2
4	2	7	3	8	9	1	5	6
7	6	4	9	5	1	2	8	3
1	3	8	6	4	2	9	7	5
2	5	9	8	3	7	4	6	1

Artist Rhona Bitner Visits San Quentin to Capture Its Memory



Aragon Ballroom in Chicago, Illinois

By Miguel Quezada
Staff Writer

A respected artist visited San Quentin State Prison to take large-scale color photographs of the North Block Dining Hall where Johnny Cash performed in 1958 and recorded an album in 1969.

“It means a lot to stand where Johnny Cash played as I reach the end of this nine-year project,” Rhona Bitner said.

Bitner’s project, *Listen*, which images American popular music, led her to travel across the United States photographing iconic and historic locations from juke joints to studios to prisons.

“*Listen* is about our collective experience Rock n’ Roll,” Bitner said.

The series of photographs includes Electric Lady Studios in New York, Jimi Hendrix’s recording studio, Austin City

Limits studio stage in Texas, and Elvis Presley’s music room at Graceland.

Bitner’s career began at New York University’s art program, where a professor encouraged her photography. It was then that she discovered she belonged in a darkroom.

“Making photographs is like breathing,” she says. “I’ve had a camera in my hands since I was 6 years old.”

Bitner’s photographs have



Grant Gutierrez, 2015

Rhona Bitner hard at work

been displayed around the world. She’s had individual exhibitions at Yezerski Gallery in Boston in 2012 and Blondeau Fine Art, Geneva, Switzerland, in 2011.

Her work also has appeared in group exhibitions, including *une breve histoire de l’avenir* in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2015; *Mythomia*, curated by Stephane Malfettes, Rouen, France, 2014, and *Pictures are Words Not Known*, Photography Museum, Lishu, China, 2011.

“It isn’t about me. I want the work to speak to the viewer,” Bitner said, describing her work. “I shoot film, so at the moment when I am making a photo of you, the light bouncing off your face is the same light exposing the film in the camera. There is a physical connection. There is an inherent beauty in that.”

San Quentin News photographer Eddie Herena asked Bitner what makes a good picture.

“So many factors can contribute to a good image. There are the technical aspects like focus, light, exposure, and making sure there’s not a pole or a tree right behind your subject’s head,” Bitner said. “The photographer needs to adapt

to what is in front of him, always. Then there’s the question of what is situated where in the frame, primary and secondary... and not to forget what’s around the edges. But just as relevant, I think that the photographer must believe or trust what he sees, so that the audience will as well.”

Herena said, especially for a newspaper, he needed to avoid situations when the sun is on the person’s back. “It creates shadows, which darkens the person’s face and you don’t get a clear image,” he said. “I now know that sometimes I have to change my position in order to get a picture that can be used in the newspaper.”

Bitner said what she hopes to achieve with her photographs is for people to remember the places and people of her work.

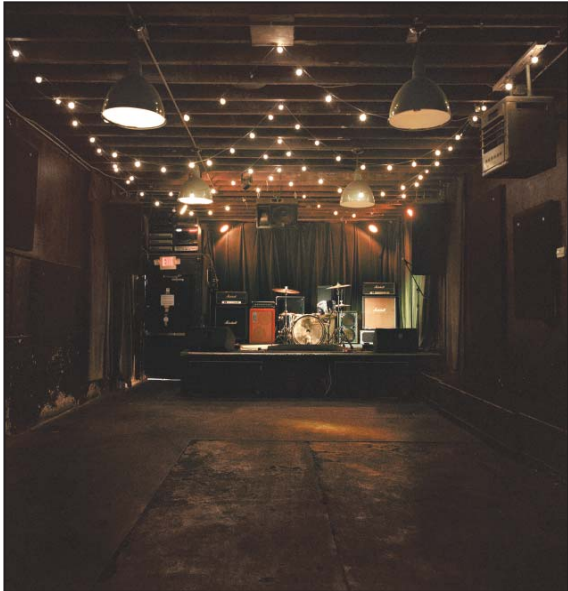
“It’s an attempt to contain that memory and hold onto it for ourselves.” She added, however, “Books are very important to me, they would be my legacy. I hope to publish my photographs so they can live beyond me.”

Bitner’s work can be viewed at: www.rhonabitner.com

—**Rahsaan Thomas**
contributed to this story



Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, Muscle Shoals, Alabama



Photos by Rhona Bitner

Caledonia Lounge in Athens, Georgia