

San Quentin News

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VOL. 2016 NO. 4 April 2016

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

www.sanquentinnews.com

POPULATION 3,985

Teachers' Forum Addresses School-to-Prison Pipeline

"Teaching is a political act," said Berkeley High School teacher Hasmig Minassian. "It's the job for the teacher to fight for the conditions that create safety for students."

Minassian said teachers need to be willing to act decisively for the benefit of the kids, and avoid focusing on policies and practices that don't work.

She was speaking at a roundtable at San Quentin State Prison,

where on March 4 about a dozen convicted criminals met with Bay Area teachers, a local TV news producer, and an international author to discuss solutions for keeping children in school.

"We come from unstable homes, and then we come into an unstable school system. So the kids don't change," said moderator Miguel Quezada, 34, who is serving a life

sentence for a 1998 murder he committed during school hours at age 16.

Barriers to the educational process became a central focus of the roundtable discussion.

"What is going on in these public schools that's adding to the problem instead of helping kids?" asked Bowen Paulle, the author of "Toxic Schools."

See *Teachers'* on Page 4



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

U.S. Undersecretary Of Education Visits San Quentin

By Juan Haines
Staff Writer

tion, which was hosted by the coding program Code.7370.

Another cadre of inmates learning computer program skills hosted a coding demonstration at San Quentin State Prison on March 15.

The undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Dr. Ted Mitchell, was among those attending the demonstra-

"I have 312 days left to make a difference," Dr. Mitchell said, referring to the amount of time President Barack Obama has remaining in office. "For too long, we've disregarded helping the incarcerated prosper."

See *Undersecretary* on Page 4



Photo by Amanda Berger

Educators and participants of the Teacher's Forum

Enhancements Leave Thousands with Longer Sentences

By David Eugene Archer Sr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Tens of thousands of convicted criminals are in state prison longer than the sentence for their crime due to California sentencing enhancements.

The Investigative Unit of "NBC Bay Area News" aired a video on television Feb. 26 about unfair and unjust state prison sentences.

"Enhancements leave thousands of California inmates

with extraordinarily long sentences," said NBC reporter Stephen Stock.

Critics and researchers say dozens of "extra" provisions exist in California's penal code, which can be added on as a sentencing enhancement. This has led to overcrowding of the state's prisons and inequity in sentences depending on the discretion of the prosecutor and judicial officer, reports Stock.

See *Sentencing* on Page 5

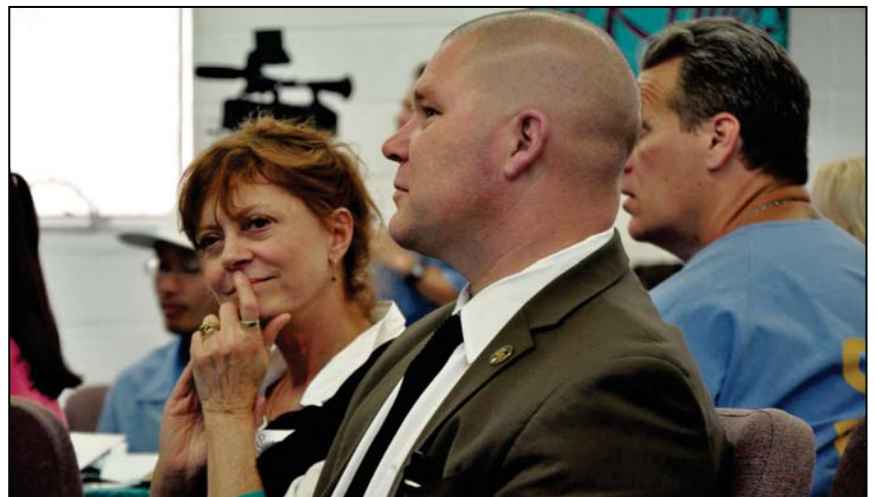


Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Actress Susan Sarandon and SQ Warden Ron Davis

Kid CAT Banquet Inspires National Juvenile Reform

By Rahsaan Thomas
Journalism Guild Chairman

Actress Susan Sarandon limped into San Quentin State Prison to learn from incarcerated Kid CAT members how she can help them stop the school-to-prison pipeline.

"You are such an asset," said Sarandon. "If I go into a school, they are not going to listen to me; but they'll listen to you, and you can make a difference."

Sarandon fell down a mountain, fracturing her ankle. However, the proud New Yorker didn't let that stop her

from attending the banquet for Kid CAT (Creating Awareness Together). Wearing a leg brace, she made her way around the tables in the Protestant Chapel, interacting with the incarcerated men she met.

See *Kid CAT* on Page 10

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



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.

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1 Main Street
San Quentin, CA 94964

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The San Quentin News is printed by Marin Sun Printing, San Rafael, with donations from supporters.

San Quentin News

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..... Sgt. Chris Sino
CDCR Public Information Officer Kristina Khokhobashvili
Senior Adviser John C. Eagan
Adviser Linda Xiques
Adviser William Drummond
Adviser Joan Lisetor
Adviser Jon Spurlock

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..... Rahsaan Thomas
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Staff Writer Chung Kao
Staff Writer Wesley Eisiminger
Photographer Eddie Herena
Researcher Richard Lindsey
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Layout Designer Jonathan Chiu

Collette Carroll
Dedicated to
Changing Lives

By Miguel Quezada
Staff Writer

Collette Carroll is the kind of San Quentin volunteer who sees a serious need and fills it. The need was to prepare prisoners for their release into the outside world.

After eight years volunteering in the prison, she founded the organization that became known as the California Reentry Institute (CRI). It led to her being recognized and honored as a leader in reentry services for the incarcerated in California.

However, pre-release was not enough for Carroll. "It's not good enough to just prepare someone for freedom; they need assistance and resources to put into practice what they have learned," she stated.

In 2013, Carroll opened the social enterprise 2nd Chance Boutique, with the intent to make CRI self-sufficient. In 2014 CRI opened its own re-entry home, Roland's House, named after her late husband. She describes the home as a safe place where the men in her program can receive the specialized services to ensure their successful future.



Roland Peck and Collette Carroll at SQ in 1994

San Quentin in 1994 with her late husband, Roland Peck, a volunteer of 25 years, to attend banquets in the chapel.

"It was through my husband and the chapel that I was able to meet and admire the men in blue," Carroll said in reflection.

One of her first acts as a volunteer was to sing Christmas carols in the cellblocks to the incarcerated men. It was a tradition she continued with her husband until his passing.

In 2015, she was honored as a CNW Hero for her pre- and post-release work in San Quentin. The recognition is granted to individuals who make extraor-

dinary contributions to humanitarian aid and improve their communities.

In that same year, the California Assembly awarded Carroll with an Assembly Resolution. In March 2016, she was honored as the Assembly's 2016 Women of the Year.

Carroll commented that "awards, or any honors, are difficult to accept. It's not who I am — it's not about me — it never has been about me but I realize the spotlight allows me to give a voice to those that are doing the hard work, to be a voice for the people changing their lives on the inside. That's my heart."

"She is extremely dedicated," said Community Partnership Manager Steve Emrick. "I've had the great pleasure of working with Collette over the years and building a relationship of trust. Importantly, Collette can be trusted by the men because she will always show up. It would take a natural disaster to stop her from meeting with the men."

"We try to help people understand the causative factors of why they did what they did. We try to help them understand the pain and harm they caused their victims and the ripple effect of their actions," Carroll commented.

The program helps inmates "to have empathy for the people they harmed and to believe that change can help -- that they aren't what they did -- and to give them the skills to have a new life," said Carroll.

She described her legacy like this: "If someone wants to change, they deserve the opportunity and assistance to try."



Assemblywomen Susan Bonilla and Collette Carroll

PPI Research Shows Population Fluctuation

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Many sources say America locks up some 2.3 million people in its jails and prisons on any given day, but that's not the whole story.

According to Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) research, "The Whole Pie 2015," there are more than 2.3 million people confined in various institutions throughout the country, including 2,259 juvenile facilities, 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 3,283 local jails, and 79 Indian Country jails, as well as military prisons.

"This report offers some much needed clarity by piecing together this country's disparate systems of confinement," PPI reported. "And we go deeper to provide further detail on why people in the various systems of confinement are locked up."

Two years ago PPI released a study detailing the number of people confined in various U.S. institutions. Then the numbers revealed an "enor-

mous churn in and out of our correctional facilities."

With some 636,000 people released from prisons each year and over 11 million people cycling in and out of local jails, according to PPI research, seemingly, not much has changed.

"We don't talk about local jails nearly as much as we do talk about prisons at the national level," said PPI Policy & Communications Associate Bernadette Rabuy in an interview with *therealnews.com*.

It was reported that jail populations are high due to the number of pretrial detainees who have not been convicted of a crime but are too poor to afford bail, or will make bail in a matter of hours or days.

"We found that actually 70 percent of the people in our local jails are unconvicted, meaning they're legally innocent," Rabuy told *therealnews.com*.

According to Rabuy, there is also an unseen number beyond the 2.3 million currently incarcerated. It is the figure counting those under state and fed-

eral correctional control.

"Once we have wrapped our minds around the 'whole pie' of mass incarceration, we should zoom out and note that being locked up is just one piece of the larger pie of correctional control," PPI reported.

According to PPI's research covering all forms of correctional control, 55 percent are on probation (3.9 million), 12 percent are on parole (850,000) and another 33 percent are locked up.

"We find that 19,000 people are in federal prison for criminal convictions of violating federal immigration laws," PPI reported. "A separate 33,000 are civilly detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement."

In its research, PPI also found convictions for nonviolent drug offenses exist as a cornerstone in federal prisons. In state prisons and local jails, these offenses "play only a supporting role."

"We know that almost half a million adults and children are locked up because their most significant offense was a drug

offense," PPI reported.

Most convictions result from defendants accepting plea bargains, PPI reported. It said some people plead guilty to offenses they may not have committed.

PPI reported almost 10,000 children incarcerated for "technical violations" stemming from parole or probation violations, not new offenses;

and more than 2,000 children confined for "status" offenses.

"Looking at the big picture requires us to ask if it really makes sense to lock up 2.3 million people on any given day, giving this nation the dubious distinction of having the highest incarceration rate in the world," PPI said.

PPI's report can be accessed at www.prisonpolicy.org.

Court of Appeals Upholds Prop. 89

By Noel Scott
Journalism Guild Writer

Two ballot propositions that make it harder for prisoners convicted of murder to get parole have been upheld on appeal.

The Feb. 22 ruling reverses findings by the late U.S. District Court Judge Lawrence Karlton. He ruled the propositions unfairly created stricter parole standards for inmates previously sentenced.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Proposition 9, a voter-approved proposition from 2008 also known as "Marsy's Law," and 1988's Proposition 89.

Proposition 89 granted the governor power to overrule convicted murderers' parole board decisions. Proposition 9 lengthened the maximum time between inmates' parole review hearings up to 15 years, among other new rules.

In 2005, a group of California prisoners sentenced to life with the possibility of parole sued the state in a class-action suit, *Gilman v. Brown*. They added claims concerning Marsy's Law later.

The appeals court ruled "the District Court committed legal error by basing its findings principally on speculation and

inference, rather than concrete evidence demonstrating that the PTA (Petition to Advance) process failed to afford relief from the class-wide risk of lengthened incarceration posed by Proposition 9."

Judge Karlton's ruling, which brought hope to many lifers in California, held that the PTA process wasn't being implemented fairly for inmates sentenced prior to Proposition 9's passage, but the 9th Circuit disagreed, the *Daily Journal* reported Feb. 23.

"There is no doubt that the two propositions have extended the time convicted murderers spend in prison," said Heidi Rummel, a professor at the University of Southern California's Gould School of Law, told the *Daily Journal*.

There's "a huge irony going on here," said Laurie L. Levenson, a criminal law specialist and professor at Loyola Law School. "You have the governor proposing changes in sentencing and parole...and then we have propositions that will certainly work in the other direction."

San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis wrote in a prepared statement, "Today is a solid win for victims' rights in California."

CDCR Releases New Blueprint With Budget Proposal

By Chung Kao
Staff Writer

CDCR officials unveiled an updated master plan to fix California's overcrowded prison system.

Significant improvements have been made, "but much work remains to be done," concludes the 55-page report titled "An Update to the Future of California Corrections."

"Access to meaningful programs and services (is) important to an offender's success and (leads) to improved recidivism rates and safer prisons and communities," according to the update.

The new plan was released in January with the governor's 2016-17 budget proposal.

This report by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) updates a 2012 CDCR report known as the Blueprint.

The Blueprint was premised on the model of maintaining the prison population at 145 percent of design capacity; however, federal courts capped it at 137.5 percent.

- CDCR has complied with the population cap.
- In-state contract beds increased to 5,821 and out-of-state beds will be cut to 4,900 by June 2016.
- Sixty percent of the total population is served by rehabilitative programs.
- CDCR has regained control of health care at Folsom State Prison and two areas of headquarter operations.
- Improved gang management converted thousands of segregation beds to general population use.
- Parole hearings are now

held for lifers, youth offenders, elderly or permanently incapacitated inmates, and non-violent second-strikers.

- The Division of Juvenile Justice, with only about 700 wards now, has reduced its jurisdictional age from 25 to 23 and has implemented court-ordered reforms.
- CDCR trained 2,542 correctional officers in 2015 and is improving training for wardens, superintendents, and executives.
- On Dec. 9, 2015, CDCR's adult population was 112,510 in state prisons (136 percent of design capacity) and 14,958 in fire camps or contract beds.
- The fall 2015 population report projected the adult population to decrease through June 2016 but increase gradually to 131,092 in June 2020.
- CDCR's estimated 2016-17 budget is \$10.3 billion, 8.4 percent of the total General Fund spending.
- CDCR is considering revisions to the custody designations of inmates and changes to address the growing Sensitive Needs Yard population.
- CDCR has moved from indeterminate to behavior-based determinate terms of segregation pursuant to a court settlement.
- Through June 2020, CDCR plans to maintain 4,900 out-of-state and 4,100 in-state contract beds, 3,500 in fire camps, 2,300 in the California City Correctional Facility, 1,000 in the community reentry beds, and 300 in state hospitals for the adult population.
- The California Rehabilitation Center will not be closed, although the budget includes \$6 million for repairs and maintenance of it.
- Inmate and parolee programs

are being evaluated to identify the cost-effective and successful ones for prioritization.

- Four community colleges were awarded \$2 million to offer pilot live instruction starting January 2016.
- Arts in Corrections programs were awarded \$2 million in 2015-16 and are available at 18 prisons.
- CDCR awarded \$5.5 million in Innovative Programming Grants to increase the volunteer programs at under served prisons.
- CDCR received \$2.2 million to expand the Cal-ID program to all prisons.
- The current budget includes \$32.1 million to continue the community reentry program.
- The current budget includes \$25 million for incentive payments to local government to approve hard-to-site re-entry facilities.
- The 2015-16 budget included \$3.3 million and the current budget \$6 million to expand the Alternative Custody Program to male inmates, available one year before release.
- The 2014 Budget Act granted \$865,000 for planning the California Leadership Academy to provide alternative housing and programming to inmates age 18 to 25.
- The current budget includes \$10 million for long-term offender programs.
- The current budget includes \$7.9 million to continue and enhance the drug- and contraband- interdicting pilot programs at 11 prisons.
- Video monitoring is projected at all new facilities.
- Cellphone jammers are considered outdated, and new technologies are being evaluated to detect cellphones.

CDCR Has Duty to Process Inmate Appeals

San Quentin News

A prisoner may petition the court for a writ of mandate to compel the prison system to process his or her administrative appeal, a state appellate court has ruled.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) "is obliged to process disciplinary appeals by the regulations in the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, section 3084 et seq.," said the court in an opinion filed Feb. 22.

Failure to perform a legal duty can be a basis for a writ of mandate. CDCR's regulations have the "dignity" of laws because they are "quasi-legislative rules the department promulgated as part of law-making power delegated by the Legislature," the appeals court reasoned.

Chung Kao filed a petition

for a writ of mandate in the Superior Court after the appeals coordinator at the R. J. Donovan Correctional Facility failed to process his disciplinary inmate appeal and the warden refused to rectify the failure. The Superior Court decided the petition was not filed timely and dismissed it.

Kao appealed the dismissal to the Court of Appeal in San Diego. The principal issue in the appeal was the time period in which Kao was required to file the mandate petition.

CDCR claimed the time period was 60 days. After passing on the threshold question of the legal obligation involved, the appeals court ruled that the time period was three years.

The Court of Appeal reversed the Superior Court's judgment dismissing the petition because Kao filed the petition within three years.

Critics Question the Purpose of Prisons

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

America needs to rethink the purpose of prisons and how they operate, some criminal justice reformers recommend.

The country needs to change its ideas of what offenses deserve incarceration and for how long. It also needs to make prisons contribute to the general economy, reform security issues and increase educational and vocational programs to give inmates job skills, according to an article on counterpunch.org.

The writer, Jacob Ertel, says more and more critics are rethinking the "prison-industrial

complex," or PIC. Ertel uses the term to denote "the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems."

The article refers to Critical Resistance, a national self-described abolitionist organization comprised of a range of scholars and activists including Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Dylan Rodriguez.

Critical Resistance says the PIC "helps and maintains the authority of people who get their power through racial, economic and other privileges by way of mass media, electioneering

and the exercising of private corporate influence within the prison system itself."

The article stated that "the notion of the PIC has been central in galvanizing public interest in the country's astounding incarceration boom -- and the 2.2 million people enveloped by it, over 60 percent of whom are people of color -- since the 1980s."

French sociologist Loic Wacquant "is among the most brazen of the term's critics," particularly prison labor on the economy, the story says.

Wacquant explains that only a minuscule percentage of incarcerated people actually

work for private firms. In 2009, for example, only 0.3 percent of inmates nationwide were employed by such companies.

Even if this trend were to develop exponentially in the coming years, it would still fail to account for the fundamental features of the prison system, as no single sector relies principally or even significantly on prison labor, says Wacquant.

Prisons do not constitute a significant boom to the United States economy, Wacquant states. He adds that inmates are generally employed at a loss to the government.

The story says it is a negative factor that the private prison

industry is growing: Corrections Corporation of America's profits alone have increased by 500 percent in the past 20 years, and the three largest private prison corporations have spent over \$45 million combined in lobbying efforts.

Private prison companies are responsible for 62 percent of the beds used by the Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement branch, the story says.

Private firms such as the Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group operate nine out of 10 of the country's largest immigration detention centers, the story reports.

Undersecretary Tours Rehabilitative Programs

Continued from Page 1

Dr. Mitchell said California prisons set an example for the rest of the country in rehabilitative programs and vocational training.

A 2013 Rand Corporation study found that inmates who take part in educational programs while incarcerated have a 43 percent lower recidivism rate than inmates who do not. Employment rates after release were 13 percent higher for inmates who participated in academic or vocational education programs and 28 percent higher for those who participated in vocational training.

Code.7370 was developed at San Quentin in 2014 by venture capitalists Chris Redlitz and Beverly Parenti in collaboration with the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA), the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and Hack Reactor, a coding academy in San Francisco. The program teaches computer coding skills to inmates, many of whom have never been on the Internet.

Redlitz, who also attended the



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Dr. Ted Mitchell, Chris Redlitz, Brant Choate, Kelly Mitchell and Charles Pattillo

March 15 demonstration, told the students, "There's a strong interest in Washington with what we're doing in coding."

"Your commitment to this program will pay off for you and others in custody," Dr. Mitchell added. "I can't think of a more admirable program than this one."

Among the projects inmates developed and demonstrated were: an interactive program that rates and tracks students' educational progress and gives advice to parents of K-12 school

kids; a nationwide data visualization map designed to help parents understand the value of immunizing their children; a game-style program to teach coding skills to youth at sites outside of prison; and an interactive program that empowers recovering addicts through support networks.

Dr. Mitchell asked many questions about San Quentin's rehabilitative services. Deputy Warden Kelly Mitchell; Brant Choate, acting director of the department's Division of Reha-

bilitative Programs; CALPIA General Manager Charles Pattillo; and Rusty Bechtold, an administrator with CALPIA Workforce Development Branch, were on hand to answer Dr. Mitchell's questions.

Dr. Mitchell, in turn, answered inmates' questions about educational opportunities in prison. Inmates were curious about the availability of federal funding to prisoners who already have two-year degrees and are seeking additional educational opportunities.

Congress banned federal

student aid, otherwise known as Pell grants, to prisoners in 1994. Pell grants were created in 1972 and cover up to \$5,775 per year in education expenses, including books and classes.

Dr. Mitchell said more than 250 colleges applied for Pell grants, adding that reentry programs are also being funded.

"We have never proposed anything that's gotten more positive feedback," Dr. Mitchell said, referring to Pell grants. "Education is the American society's surest way for social mobility. So that people don't fall through gaps, we need to strengthen the public educational system."

Dr. Mitchell said his grandfather was a corrections officer at San Quentin and he had spent his own early years riding around on the San Quentin fire truck and playing baseball on the Little League team.

"Coming back is like a homecoming," Dr. Mitchell told the students at the coding demonstration. "When I go back to Washington, I can tell your stories."

"I look forward to following your careers," he added.

Teachers' Forum Tackles School-to-Prison Pipeline

Continued from Page 1

Paulle wrote the book after teaching high school in impoverished areas of Amsterdam and New York and witnessing the same emotional toxic environment that produced negative behaviors from students in both schools.

He discovered that many high school students engaged in negative behaviors wanted to change their lives, but they didn't or couldn't in toxic schools that made them worse.

Paulle's solution: desegregating schools, "no matter what it takes." He added, "We need to regulate the everyday experience of these kids, even if it becomes draconian."

By examining gun violence, "NBC Bay Area We Investigate" reporter Stephen Stock brought light to the toxic environment across the bay in Oakland.

Stock found citizens of all ages suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), like veterans returning from

combat. However, Stock said when looking at the people in Oakland, they cannot get away from the place where they developed PTSD. Many PTSD sufferers wind up in prison, where the problem is compounded.

The solution: social workers advocates for more resources to treat trauma at an early age, "NBC We Investigate" finds.

Inmates said the solution to keep students in the classroom will come from going beyond the traditional educational system.

The teachers' boots-on-the-ground solution calls for smaller classes and greater community input.

The Prisoners' Stories:

The prisoners told a wide range of stories: one had endured childhood abuse and the shame it carries. Another was born in a refugee camp. Another remembered violence between his parents from when he was a toddler. Others spoke of racism in school, of being

drawn into a gang as a result of a neglectful home life and peer pressure at school, of being an immigrant, of processing your parents' divorce and then having an adverse relationship with a stepfather.

These troubled pasts can be difficult to overcome. Guiding Rage Into Power (GRIP), a self-help program in the prison, teaches a transformation process.

"GRIP graduates have learned about emotional intelligence and that 'Hurt people hurt people,'" creator of the program Jacques Verduin said. "We should be sending people who have made the change inside to help on the outside. If you don't do it for ideological reasons, do it for money. It costs \$64,000 annually to incarcerate each of these men."

Every prisoner who spoke had undergone rehabilitative services, similar to GRIP. Each told of the lasting repercussions of their past trauma, and

struggled with a lack of emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence:

Bay Area teacher Kelli Riggs at Bret Harte Elementary asked prisoners to define emotional intelligence.

"It is breaking away from my institutionalization and how my dad influenced me on how I looked at masculinity," Philip Melendez explained.

Melendez commented that once he broke away from his pre-conceived ideas and realized his "authentic self," he focused on himself.

"A lot of emotional intelligence is slowing down your thought process," Melendez said.

According to Adnan Khan, another component of emotional intelligence is understanding that anger is a secondary emotion.

"I'm figuring out where that anger comes from," he said. "I'm able to identify the problem and deal with anger properly."

Tommy Winfrey added that the concept of empathy helped him understand emotional intelligence.

"Once you can understand what is happening to other people, you can deal with them," Winfrey said. "If you can understand yourself, you can understand other people."

What Works:

David Inocencio, publisher of *The Beat Within* magazine, sends writings of encouragement from San Quentin inmates to juvenile hall offenders across the nation.

"I am just the messenger," he said. "You guys are touching the lives of a lot of young people."

Prisoner Jarred Elkins, 21, said a little bit of encouragement goes a long way. He said even though he had many problems at home, encouragement by a third-grade teacher had him doing his homework. He called for teachers to "dig deep into why kids have these behavioral problems."

—Juan Haines

Distance Determines if Prisoners Receive Visits

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Research indicates prisoners who are visited by family and friends are less likely to return to incarceration.

Distance plays a major role in why many prisoners' visits are infrequent and in many cases

why others do not receive visits at all, according to Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) research. The study exposes how less than one-third of state prisoners are visited by loved ones during an average month.

"Distance from home is a strong predictor for whether an incarcerated person receives a

visit," said Bernadette Rabuy, the Oct. 2015 study author. "I hope this report gives policy makers more reasons to change the course of correctional history."

When someone is imprisoned far from home it impacts their visitors in many ways, one of which is by discouraging them

from visiting, it was reported.

"We found that among incarcerated people locked up less than 50 miles from home, half receive a visit in a month, but the portion receiving visits falls as the distance from home increases," the study says.

Prison Policy Initiative said it found "the breakdown of how far people in state prisons reported being locked up (is determined by their distance) from their home communities."

Distance	% visited last month
Less than 50 miles	49.6%
50-100 miles	40.0%
101-500 miles	25.9%
501-1,000 miles	14.5%

Based on a survey covering 14,500 state prisoners done by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the initiative calculated the proportion of inmates housed at various distances from family and friends:

Distance	Proportion
Less than 50 miles	15.7%
50-100 miles	20.9%
101-500 miles	53.2%
501-1,000 miles	7.9%
Over 1,000 miles	2.2%

According to a Yale Law School report, "Prison Visitation Policies: A Fifty State Study," "Thirty jurisdictions (including California) promote or encourage visitation at the outset of their policy directives or regulations."

However, the Yale study noted these states "are not necessarily the ones in which visitation is

most liberally permitted, and indeed some have policies that severely limit visitation."

The Yale study said 32 jurisdictions place limitations on the number of approved visitors a prisoner may have.

"In contrast, California affirmatively places no limit on the number of approved visitors," the Yale study says. Citing prison regulations, the study said, "Limitations shall not be placed on the number of visitors approved to visit an inmate."

The initiative's study also said distance is not the only factor that affects prisoners' families or friends' decision to pay them a visit. It said harassment by prison staff is a deciding issue too.

"States such as California and Massachusetts should stop their unnecessary and dehumanizing strip and dog searches of visitors," the initiative's study said.

The Yale study says all states provide prison visitation, and each state screens visitors and places limitations on visiting times and determines who is allowed to visit.

"All states provide a substantial level of discretion to each prison's warden or superintendent in implementing the policy directives," the Yale study said.

The Yale study commented, "Many inmates are incarcerated far away from friends and family; sheer distance serves as a major barrier to visitation."

Prop. 47 Results in Lower Recidivism for State

By Tommy Bryant
Journalism Guild Writer

The effects of Prop. 47, now at the one-year anniversary point, are still being analyzed. Statistics are slowly trickling in about the effects Prop. 47 is having on jail and prison systems.

Remarkably, Prop. 47 recidivism has been very low. "A prison return rate below 5 percent indicates that any increase in crime over the past year should not be attributed to inmates freed from prison under Proposition 47," stated the Stanford Justice Advocacy Project using data from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as of October, 2015.

Prop. 47 works hand in hand with the three-judge panel ruling that the prison populations be no more than 137.5 percent of capacity by Feb. 2016. It appears "the state will incarcerate an estimated 3,300 fewer prisoners

every year," reports CDCR.

"Approximately 8 percent of prisoners released under Prop. 47 have been women," according to the Stanford Justice Advocacy Project. There are 5,268 women housed in facilities made for 3,800, making them among the most overcrowded state prisons at 138 percent. Women prisoners make up 4 percent of the state's total.

A district attorney argued that Prop. 47 did not apply to plea bargains, and the Contra Costa County Superior Court agreed with the decision. "In April, the First District Court of Appeals reversed the Superior Court decision." All inmates eligible under Prop. 47 have three years to submit petitions.

With fewer long-term prison inmates, the estimate for potential state savings is around \$93.4 million a year. "The Department of Finance must complete its calculations by June 30,

2016, although the exact method for calculating savings has not yet been determined," reports the Department of Corrections.

Prop. 47 increased early releases in the beginning but has tapered off. "Early releases from county jails due to overcrowding are down approximately 35 percent statewide," according to the California Board of State Community Corrections.

The AB 109 Public Safety Realignment Act was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown to reduce prison overcrowding. Inmates began serving more time in county jails, which in turn overcrowded the jailing systems. "Over 20 county jail systems are under court orders limiting the number of inmates who may be housed at any given facility," states the California Board of State Community Corrections.

As of Sept. 30, 2015, "The prison population remains over 30 percent above capacity" reports CDCR.

Sentencing Enhancements Causes High Costs and Overcrowding

Continued from Page 1

In 2010, California's prison system had become so overcrowded the United States Supreme Court ruled that being incarcerated in one of the state's 33 prisons amounted to cruel and unusual punishment.

Mike Vitiello, a professor of law at the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law, said, "Everybody [loses] when we have these overcrowded prisons." It makes the entire system more dangerous and makes rehabilitation of inmates extremely difficult. "So we all suffer with this over-elaborate criminal justice system that just piles on these excessive, obscenely excessive sentences."

Reform advocates argue these enhancements are unjust because they punish inmates multiple times for the same crime. Sentence enhancements contribute to the high cost and overcrowding of California's prison system, Stock reported.

These enhancements, such as the "Three Strikes" law or the "10-20-life" gun enhancement law, carry severe mandatory minimum sentences. Prosecutors often hold them over the heads of defendants to entice guilty pleas, said Stock.

Advocates of sentencing reform like professor Vitiello and State Senator Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley) say the data shows that sentence enhancements are not effective in reducing violent crime.

"We really need to say

enough is enough on sentence enhancements," said Hancock, who chairs the Senate Public Safety Committee in Sacramento. "Our (state) population has about doubled (since 1980), but our prison population has grown by over 400 percent."

"NBC Bay Area's Investigative Unit" visited San Quentin for a conversation with inmates currently serving decades-long or life sentences because of sentence enhancements.

Antoine Watie told Stock, "In 1999 I committed the act of killing my stepfather after he abused my mother and my little brother."

Watie said he stood outside when he was refused entrance into his stepfather's house and argued with him. At some point Watie thought he saw his stepfather reach for a gun, so he shot him through the screen door in self-defense.

A jury convicted him of manslaughter. Seventeen years later, Watie still sits in San Quentin. He said, "I was sentenced to 32-years-to-life. Seven years for the actual act of killing my stepfather and 25-to-life for the gun enhancement."

Because the bullet passed through the screen door, the prosecutor at the trial added an enhancement for "shooting into an occupied dwelling," meaning his conviction carried a mandatory minimum 25-to-life sentence. The judge had no discretion to alter the sentence.

There are 40,000 inmates currently serving time under

the "Three Strikes" law alone. It is just one of dozens of possible enhancements prosecutors can add onto criminal charges, according to reporter Stock.

"We need to change the culture in prisons from ... punishment to a culture that acknowledges the ability of people to change and encourages that change"

murder when he shot another man in the leg. But a prosecutor added four separate enhancements onto Lewis' charges, all tied to the same gun and the same crime. While Lewis got 15 years in prison for an attempted murder conviction, he got another 94 years for the sentencing enhancements, reported Stock.

"The time is way more than you would even get for the crime itself," said Lewis, who is now serving 109-years-to-life. "In my case, I was given a couple of 25-to-life sentences for the same gun," Lewis said. "So I got 25-years-to-life for this, 25-to-life for that."

Lewis has been incarcerated since the age of 27, and without the enhancements, would have already served his 15-year prison sentence. But unless there's a change in the law, Lewis will likely die in prison.

Vitiello says sentence enhancements are largely a product of the tough on crime era of the 1980s and 1990s. Each time a high-profile crime occurred, lawmakers would propose a new enhancement for that crime. Vitiello says sentences for violent crimes increased dramatically.

According to a study by the Pew Charitable Trust, sentences for violent crimes between 1990 and 2009 grew by 63 percent.

California spends an enormous amount of money on incarcerating aging felons, said Vitiello. The professor wants

to see comprehensive reform of the entire system, starting with the creation of a sentencing commission that would use data to determine what works and what doesn't.

"There are very few people in the legislature who are ready and willing to take this on," Vitiello said. "Their answer, to some degree, is let the public do it through the initiative process."

Hancock agrees with Vitiello that California desperately needs prison reform. She's been trying to push for that reform for years in Sacramento, but she often runs into roadblocks.

She says she spends a lot of time pushing back against new sentence enhancements proposed by her colleagues. She said the state spends far too much money on punishment and incarceration and not enough on rehabilitation, drug and mental health counseling."

Hancock argues, "We really need to change the culture in prisons from ... punishment to a culture that acknowledges the ability of people to change and encourages that change," she says.

The senator recently helped pass prison reform legislation and said, "I think we're seeing a recognition (by many lawmakers) that things have got to change."

But, she says those legislative battles are often against heavy opposition from lobbyists representing sheriffs, DA's and police chiefs.

Reforming Our Way of Thinking

R. Malik Harris
Editor-in-Chief

Editorial

Governor Jerry Brown is backing an initiative titled "The Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016." The initiative changes the way juveniles are charged in adult court and will, potentially, have a drastic effect on adult sentencing.

There is a debate about the impact this initiative will actually have if it makes it into

the ballot and if it is voted into law in November. What seems certain is that people who were not talking about reforming sentencing policy a few years ago are now talking about it.

The Honorable Thelton Henderson told a room full of incarcerated men at San Quentin in November of 2015

that in his time on the bench this is the first time he has witnessed people from all sides of the aisle discussing prison reform. A lot of people are realizing that the criminal justice system is broken and are coming up with ways to fix it.

Governor Brown is support-

ing one solution. The California District Attorneys Association opposes the initiative. They argue that there are people in prison who absolutely should not get out any earlier due to overcrowding.

The problem Californians are facing is that since Assembly Bill 109, also known as "Realignment," the "low hanging fruit" is gone. Left in prison are people with violent, serious or sex charges, "3-Strikers" and so-called "Lifers." These

are the people who are keeping the prisons overpopulated. These are the people who will get out of prison early if there is going to be sentence reform, or if the federal court acts.

While we talk about prison and sentence reform, it would be good for us to recognize that before we can reform anything, we first have to reform the way we think. Nothing good will happen if we talk about reform but continue to think "tough on crime."

San Quentin News Adviser Retires After Eight Years

By Aly Tamboura
Contributing Writer

The *San Quentin News*, created in 1940 by Warden Clinton T. Duffy, is at the end of an era, which began eight years ago under the guidance of one remarkable volunteer, who has decided to step down.

Veteran journalist John C. Eagan, who has been volunteering his time mentoring prisoners, including myself, in the craft of journalism, is leaving his position as senior adviser to the *San Quentin News*.

The legacy he leaves behind is a strong, professional, respected newspaper built from scratch. It is one of the most remarkable revivals in the annals of Bay Area journalism.

Eagan was asked in 2008 by then-Warden Robert Ayers Jr. to breathe the new life into the *San Quentin News*, which had been on hiatus for years.

Eagan told Ayers he agreed to take the position "as long as the newspaper was not going to be a mouthpiece for the administration."

As an unpaid volunteer adviser, Eagan oversaw publication of *San Quentin News*' first edition in almost 20 years in June 2008. He was also instrumental in creating the paper's Journalism Guild, a training project, where he has spent his Fridays for the last eight years instructing prisoners in how to be journalists.

On these Fridays, Eagan, despite his ailing knees, saunters in with the confidence of a seasoned newsman. He sports his black blazer and tie, topped off with his signature broad-brim canvas hat, creased at the crown. He takes his seat at the front of the class, sets his briefcase down and brushes his tie down to a neat, businessman's white shirt. The day's lesson begins.

"Write tight," Eagan tells the class of incarcerated men. "Tell me what I need to know, and don't tell me what I don't need to know."

His 80 years and fulsome experience in newsrooms command the listeners' respect.

Eagan, who has interviewed the likes of former President Ronald Reagan and former Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court Earl Warren, gives instruction, even when he himself is the interview subject.

"What are the three most

important questions you should ask me?" said Eagan, taking a break from editing articles with journalism students.

I asked how he became a journalist. Eagan set his coffee cup on the table, leaned back in his chair and smiled like a man who enjoys story-telling. And Eagan's life and long tenure as a journalist is nothing less than a narrative suited for a novel.

Eagan was born in 1935 in Crystal River, Florida, in a home his carpenter father built. At age one, along with six of his seven siblings, he was sent to the Florida Baptist Children's Home after his mother died due to complications with an ear infection.

The children's home imbued the child with a foundation of strong Christian values. After 17 years in the Children's Home, Eagan graduated from high school and joined the Army in 1954. After a stint overseas, he returned to the States and enrolled in University of Florida where he struggled to find what he really wanted to do.

First Eagan majored in engineering. All went well, according to Eagan, until he enrolled in a calculus class. The class was so difficult he changed his major to architecture, a profession that inspired him during his Army time in Europe. It also helped that his new major did not have such rigorous mathematical requirements. However, he changed yet again.

After a flu epidemic hit the college, leaving most of the school newspaper staff ill, Eagan was asked to assist. "I told the editor I didn't know how to write like a journalist," says Eagan.

According to Eagan, the editor's response was: "Whatever you can do is better than nothing." After the editor read the articles Eagan wrote, he called Eagan "a really good liar," because the articles were well written and suited for publication.

"I found something I could do well, so I changed my major and graduated in three semesters," said Eagan.



File photo

John C. Eagan

When it's editorial crunch time at the *San Quentin News*, Eagan offers the slogan, "Let's get out a paper and we'll make the next one better than the last," a mantra which is deeply rooted in his college journalism experience.

"It's been one of the most rewarding things I've done in my life"

Eagan's mentorship is the driving force behind elevating the *San Quentin News* from a four-page tabloid, distributed inside prison walls in 2008, to a 20 to 24 page, award-winning singular and respected journalism voice, which is distributed in all 34 California prisons.

"What else should you ask me?" quips Eagan, with his fingers laced together and brown eyes signaling an eagerness to tell another story. "How about the most important story in which I have been involved?"

When Eagan was the assistant bureau chief and news editor at the *Associated Press (AP)* in Chicago, he came across a story in a local newspaper about a doctor, Henry Jay Heimlich, who was promoting an emergency technique he claimed would eject an object, such as food, from the trachea of a choking person. Many rejected Heimlich as a quack,

but Eagan asked one of his reporters, "What if it's true?" and submitted the story for national coverage. The article was published worldwide.

The Heimlich Maneuver, as it is called now, has been adopted by emergency response officials all over the world and is credited with saving countless lives, including Ronald Reagan and Eagan's own granddaughter.

After graduating from the University of Florida with a degree in journalism, Eagan went to work at the Fort Lauderdale News. From there he got married and moved to California and was employed at the *Arcadia Tribune*, where he worked as a reporter and photographer.

After a year working at *Arcadia*, Eagan moved to Napa.

While working for the Napa Register, Eagan was tasked with going to the family ranch of Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren on Christmas Eve to take a family picture. A month earlier, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Texas and Chief Justice Warren was appointed by Lyndon Johnson, JFK's successor, to head a commission to investigate.

Chief Justice Warren, who had an aversion to interviews, invited Eagan to write a profile on him as long as there were no inquiries about the JFK assassination. For years afterward Eagan spent his Christmas Eves at the Warren family's St. Helena ranch where he would interview Chief Justice Warren and take a photograph of the Warren family.

The decades of Eagan's career took him to multiple news agencies. On top of holding positions in many news outlets, Eagan held executive positions for the *AP* in San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles and Chicago. The last position Eagan held in the news business was publisher of the *MarinScope Community Newspapers*, which encompassed five weekly newspapers.

Eagan also founded the San Rafael Computer Training Center, which he headed for 12 years in the 1980s and '90s.

What are his thoughts about his time here at San Quentin? His pending departure brought a cloud of melancholy drifting over his usually cheerful face.

"It is time for me to step down from the *San Quentin News*," said Eagan, with a hint of sorrow in his voice. "It's time to go to work on three books I have put on the back burner for eight years."

According to Eagan, "The *San Quentin News* has become an outstanding, high-quality, award-winning publication that does a remarkable job of reporting what is good and what is bad about the criminal justice system – and what needs to be improved or changed."

Under his tutelage, the newspaper to which he devoted so much time and energy has given a voice to a part of the American population which has dwelled in the shadows.

"It's been one of the most rewarding things I've done in my life," reflected Eagan.

One of the books Eagan is writing is titled "What If It's True?" a witty phrase drawn from the accumulated wisdom of a lifelong journalist.



File photo

Eagan speaking at a SQ Forum

New Reform Urges Voters to Help Juveniles

By John Lam
Journalism Guild Writer

In a letter addressed to all concerned parties, Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) founder Scott Budnick urged readers to become involved in the effort to get Governor Brown's criminal justice reforms approved in the November 2016 ballot. Budnick is asking for help from incarcerated people to promote awareness of these proposed reforms.

Governor Brown's proposed criminal justice reforms include:

Granting the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation the authority to award credits for inmate to reduce their sentences, by participating in educational, vocational and self-help programs.

Requiring persons convicted of a non-violent felony offense and sentenced to state prison to be eligible for parole consideration after completing the full term of his/her primary offense. In other

words, the time served would be limited to the longest term of imprisonment imposed by the court for any offense, excluding enhancements, consecutive sentence or alternative sentence.

"Imagine the impact if everyone inside got just one person to vote"

The determination of charging minors in juvenile or adult court would shift from prosecutors to juvenile court judges and require them to consider the youth's developmental status, cognitive ability, and social history.

"Californians will have

their say in November. There will be a lot of people in support of this effort, and many in opposition...There are others who will spend the [upcoming] months scaring the public into believing that violent offenders will be set free to rape and murder innocent people," Budnick wrote.

"The President of the District Attorneys Association and former Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley have already said this initiative will erode public safety, as have Republican Senators Andy Vidak (Hanford) and Senator Jim Nielson (Gerber)."

Budnick gives the following suggestions for contributing to the effort:

Make sure all family members and friends, who are legal US citizens and not on parole, register to vote on Nov. 4.

"Imagine the impact if everyone inside got just one person to vote, we would have

130,000 additional YES votes for this initiative. If everyone in CDCR got 10 people to vote, we would have an additional 1.3 million votes," Budnick wrote.

"This could ultimately encourage people to grow, change, rehabilitate and come home to their families. We all know this will enhance public safety, not jeopardize it," noted Budnick.

Other ways that incarcerated people can help includes raising awareness through artwork.

"We will hold an art auction in the fall to raise funds and awareness for this movement. The funds will help us fund re-entry programs, housing, mentoring, job training and support for people coming home."

The auction will be held in a major museum, with celebrity



File photo

Scott Budnick

art auctioneers, and a considerable amount of funding, all to benefit the nonprofit organization and also the artists inside (50/50). "We have many board members with powerful connections in the art world, and believe art inside could sell at five to 10 times normal rates," he added.

For more information about the proposed ballot, or how to get involved, write to:

Anti-Recidivism Coalition
448 South Hill St.
Suite 908
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Or contact Caitlin Ahearn, Associate Director of development and Communications at Anti-Recidivism Coalition, at cahearn@antirecidivism.org or (213) 955-5885.

Scott Budnick is the founder and president of ARC, a social advocate, and Hollywood producer known for "The Hangover" films. His work in criminal justice reform includes playing a significant role in help making into law SB9, SB260, SB261 and AB1276.

Wrongful Convictions Overturned

An overwhelming number of cases of wrongfully convicted minors involve youths of color.

"Thirty-four of the 329 DNA-based exonerees were arrested as minors. Thirty-two out of that 34 are people of color; specifically, 30 of them are black," the Innocence Project reported.

Wrongful conviction experts Sam Gross and Joshua Tepfer conducted a study to determine why youths of color are drastically overrepresented in these cases, and three key overlapping patterns emerged.

1. At least 75 percent of exonerees of color, who were minors at the time of their

arrests, were falsely implicated by other children.

"Seventeen-year-old Ethel Fumage, a 'confidential informant,' told police that she'd heard rumors that 15-year-old Leon Brown had committed a 1983 rape and murder of a local girl. She also told them that Henry McCollum, then 19, acted strange. McCollum and Brown, half-brothers, were arrested based on Fumage's information. The brothers falsely confessed and were tried and convicted, serving 30 years before they were finally exonerated in 2014 based on DNA testing," the project cited.

2. Wrongfully convicted

youth of color were often accused of committing crimes in large groups.

"According to Department of Justice data, juveniles of color are believed to offend heavily in groups, as approximately 40 percent of all juvenile criminal activity involves a group of juvenile offenders," the project reported.

3. False confessions and guilt admissions make up 84 percent of the cases of exonerees of color who were arrested as juveniles.

According to the project, "Many of the exonerees of color, who were convicted when they were minors,

confessed after particularly long interrogations – sometimes between 10 and 30 hours – lasting over several days without family and legal guidance."

"Until we address the breakdown in the criminal justice system that disproportionately targets and convicts people of color, and any continuing underlying bias, innocent people – especially black youth – will continue to pay the heavy burden in disproportionate numbers of wrongful convictions," stated Edwin Grimsely, Innocence Project case analyst.

– John Lam

SB260 Allows Youth Offender to Earn a Second Chance

Vinh Nguyen was found suitable for release during his first parole board appearance under a Senate Bill 260 youth offender hearing.

Thanks to self-help programs, Nguyen said he came to accept responsibility for his crime and seriously regret the harm he caused.

He credits VOEG (Victim Offender Education Group) as having the most important impact on him.

"VOEG gave me insight about who I was, where and how I went wrong, how I can do better, and become the person I am today, more loving and caring," he said in an interview. "It also helped me redefine myself, to surround myself with a support network that I can come to when



Courtesy of CDCR

Vinh Nguyen first entering into prison

I need help. Most importantly, it helped me understand remorse and the pain that I have caused the victim's family."

Nguyen has been incarcerated for 20 years since the age

of 16 when he was sentenced to 29 years to life for first-degree murder.

"Each one of us has the capacity to work ourselves out of our own dark place"

"I now have the opportunity to make amends on a broader scale. I harmed so many people because of my crime. That is not something I want people to know me by; I want them to know that I have grown and can become a productive member of society



Photo by Sam Hearnes

Vinh Nguyen 20 years later

by being of service to others," Nguyen said.

"Today, I understand the pain I caused Mr. Sosa's family to endure. Specifically, I understand that I took away their son, who cannot be re-

placed, that there will forever be emptiness in their lives, and I have to live with that."

Nguyen's turning point came when he found that he had a life sentence.

He sought out self-help groups early on, learned English, and obtained trade skills from vocational programs to better himself.

He said the message he wanted to give to other juvenile offenders is, "Each one of us has the capacity to work ourselves out of our own dark place, to free ourselves mentally through education and service, and to offer support to help each other by sharing our own experience."

Vinh Nguyen paroled in January 2016.

– 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, Attn: Kid CAT Speaks, 1 Main St., San Quentin, CA 94964

Sheriff Gives Ex-Felon Second Chance

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

The universal axiom of “what goes around comes around” is one of those parables that have modest importance to a person until he experiences life’s full circle. Michael “Tiny” Hill Jr. is one of those persons. In a story published by *The Hutchinson News*, his circle began with a

desire to box. His mother introduced him to the fight game at age 6, which eventually led him to the Golden Gloves and Silver Mitten championships, and a chance at the nationals. But before he reached his full potential, he ignored his God-given talents, and filled his life with drugs and ultimately faced a possible 35-year sentence in

prison, the story adds. “When you’re making choices to use and get high, and have an addiction, I just had to have it. ... It makes you ignore life-threatening situations, knowing you have a family that needs you,” he told *The Hutchinson News*. By the time he was 17, he was hooked on crack cocaine, and admitted he was addicted for 20 years. He was in and out

of jail for a total of 12 years. “God allowed me to get through some of that stuff to prepare me to help other people,” he told *The News*. That passion led him to Kansas, where he worked for Higher Ground’s substance-abuse program. There he got reacquainted with a former Drug Enforcement Unit officer named Randy Henderson, and

his life began that turn-around cycle. According to *The News*, Henderson had arrested, interrogated and investigated Hill multiple times. But despite these criminal encounters, Henderson and Hill developed an extraordinary bond. After their paths crossed again, Henderson, who is now the sheriff of Reno County, hired Hill as the program director for the county’s correctional facility. “I needed this because I needed someone who could reach inmates,” Henderson told *The News*. The success of this experiment was exactly what Henderson expected from Hill. The Reno County Correctional Facility has a total of seven groups which includes Peer Support and Substance Abuse Programs, GED, Anger Management, Seeking Safety and a mental health class. Since its inauguration, Hill has graduated six male and five female inmates at the jail from these life-skill programs, *The News* said. “When I think about God, I think about when my case was going on,” he said. “Why was I found not guilty of that crime that I openly admit I played a role in? When I say, ‘Why me?’ I think about how God saved my life, and I think about where I’ve come from and where I’m at now.”

By Marcus Henderson
Sports Editor

In the midst of mass incarceration, Black Lives Matter and an election year, San Quentin prisoners celebrated their Second Annual Black History Month program. “It was a success,” said Shai Alkebu-lan, the inmate program coordinator. “I wish more people would have come, but those who did, I think, would go out and spread the light.” With the blessing of Father George Williams, the Catholic Chapel hosted the 50-plus prisoners at the Feb. 26 event. The group consisted mostly of older men -- the younger generation was noticeably

absent. “Those who were here were meant to be here; truth is not for everybody,” said Bilal Hamilton, who spoke on the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Hamilton used a map to demonstrate the hardship of the journey and how the people were settled in Haiti, Dominican Republic and Jamaica. From the past issues to the present, Bryant “The Truth” Harrison gave a brilliant spoken word poem called “Hypocritical Oath.” His poetic words weaved in and out of the hypnotic sound of the band “Just Us.” He called the people to “Wake up, self-destruction is the case.” He

touched on issues of greed, disease and the state of politics. “Can you smell the insanity?” Harrison would repeatedly ask. Ira Perry gave a gripping spoken word on what it means growing up African-American, highlighting police brutality, the names of slain people over the past years and not knowing if you would live from day to day. Harun Taylor was master of ceremonies and performed “I am 3.0,” a third poem in a series. Using meta-physical word play about positive energy and the principle that everyone is one, and “we are those who came before us.” “We are Martin Luther King,

Malcolm X and the mathematicians, architects and scientist who built the pyramids,” stated Taylor. He said the men in the audience were black diamonds -- those who have been formed under different life pressures. He stressed that Blacks here are American and that loving Black people doesn’t mean hating someone else. “The Just Us” band provided soothing melodies throughout the event. It consists of Charlie Spencer on guitar, drummer Paul Oliver, and Terrence Slaughter, bass. They performed a jazz version of “Living for the Love,” by the Isley Brothers, and a classic Bill Withers tune, “Using Me.”

Youth Offender Program Aims to Curb Violence

By Juan Haines
Staff Writer

Youthful inmates beginning their sentences in high-security prisons run into all kinds of negative influences. To address the problem, California lawmakers passed the Youth Offender Program late last year. “The goal is to keep youth away from more serious and violent criminal influences found at high-security level prisons,” said Joe Orlando, a public information officer with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Sidney Ralph Wainiqolo is one youngster who benefits from the program. His first offense was an armed robbery committed at age 16. He received a four-year sentence to the Division of Juvenile Justice, formerly known as the California Youth Authority (YA). “The YA is a dog-eat-dog world,” Wainiqolo said. “We fought, participated in riots and other illegal activities. I learned to strike first in order to survive.” Wainiqolo said after enduring the trials and tribulations of YA, he considers himself lucky to have ended up at a fire camp as a juvenile offender. “Being a firefighter was something I never thought of growing up or even doing,” he said. “We traveled all through Northern California, and the food was great.” Wainiqolo said the harsh

conditions of fire camp training installed work ethics in him. He said he’s proud of the certificates he earned while passing fire fighting training. “I learned how to fight these crazy wildfires and making it out alive,” he said. Wainiqolo said the busy fire camp schedule provided a tremendous opportunity for positive change in his life. “We would work every day and go into the community and do whatever they or the city needed, like weed-whacking crop fields and cleaning up forestry work,” Wainiqolo said. “I never imagined myself obtaining skills in this trade, especially during incarceration. The experience helped me open up more and, in a sense, augmented my personal growth.” Wainiqolo said after getting an illegal cellphone, to contact his family, he got caught and kicked out of fire camp. “It was a mistake, but I missed my family,” he said. “Since I’ve been down at 16, I only got one visit from them.” Wainiqolo was informed that he was being sent to San Quentin State Prison. “I knew I was going where all the big boys were,” Wainiqolo said. “I was nervous, but I wasn’t scared,” he said. “I didn’t really know much about the Youth Offender Program until the counselor explained it to me.” Wainiqolo said San Quentin was completely different than what he expected. He met an

older Tongan man, a lifer named Damon Cooke. Wainiqolo said Cooke explained San Quentin was a prison with a lot of programs and that inmates were preparing to re-enter society. “I thought to myself, ‘This is really a place for people to take advantage of the opportunities, regardless if the person didn’t have a set date,’” Wainiqolo said. He reported Jason Jones helped him stay on the straight and narrow. Jones created Recognizing Every Active Leader (REAL) to match older inmates with younger inmates in order to mentor and guide them into self-help programs and positive activities. REAL is a 10-week course that teaches participants leadership skills, history, public

speaking and career-building skills. The program currently has 10 members who are mentors for 20 young men. Wainiqolo’s mentor is Reginald S. Hola, a co-founder of REAL, who also happens to be Wainiqolo’s close family member. “I was young when (Hola) got locked up,” Wainiqolo said. “His generation influenced my generation while I was coming up in the streets.” Through Hola’s mentorship, Wainiqolo said he saw how Hola had developed a “gratitude mind-set.” Hola led Wainiqolo to self-help groups including the Native Hawaiian Service; Restoring Our Original True Selves (ROOTS), an Asian Pacific Islander cultural

awareness group; and Insight Gardening. Wainiqolo also had the opportunity to participate in the TEDx San Quentin conference on Jan. 22. “I’ve gotten to see his tremendous wisdom,” Wainiqolo said about Hola. “He’s been a great positive mentor since I’ve been here. He showed me that relationships can either help grow your vision or choke your dreams.” Wainiqolo is scheduled to be released from prison in May. “Upon release, I plan to focus on being a pro-active member in my community and being committed to my goals and work hard to strive for a better future,” Wainiqolo said. “Being here with my loved ones had made that possible.”

Court Blocks FCC Ruling to Lower Prison Phone Rates

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

A federal court order temporarily blocked a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruling that placed a cap on the cost of calls that inmates make from prison, *The Hill* reported. In a suit filed against the FCC by Global Tel*Link, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit granted motions regarding the FCC’s Proposed Rulemaking

“setting caps on calling rates” and “setting caps on fees for single-call services.” “Everybody sues us about everything,” FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler told reporters. Inmate calling companies are suing to overturn the regulations. “The rules, which were slated to take effect (in March), are meant to lower the prices that inmates and their families pay to talk on the phone,” *The Hill* reported. Wheeler and Democratic

Commissioner Mignon Clyburn said in a written statement, “While we regret that relief from high inmate calling rates will be delayed for struggling families and their 2.7 million children trying to stay in touch with a loved one, we are gratified that costly and burdensome ancillary charges will come to an end.” According to *The Hill*, prison phone companies indicated early on that they would challenge the FCC’s rulings.

Blues Quartet Sings Classics to Prisoners

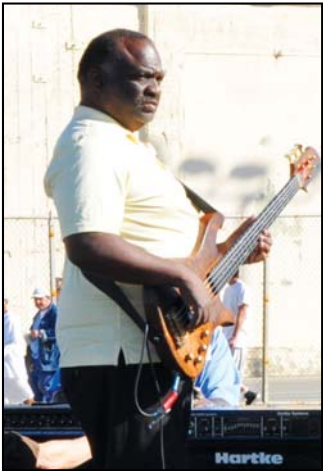
By Juan Haines
Staff Writer

On a Sunday night more than 100 men, most slightly older than your average prisoner, gathered in a chapel to hear a Blues Quartet brought into San Quentin State Prison by Lisa Starbird of Bread & Roses Presents.

“We’re on to a great start,” said guitarist and singer Kurt Huget after playing “Ain’t No Sunshine,” “House of the Rising Sun” and “Whiter Shade of Pale.”

“I was a kid when this music came out,” said Mark Tedeschi. “Our family would go water skiing on the weekends. We’d have lunch at this place and my mother would give me a handful of quarters for the jukebox.”

Heads were bopping with clapping in rhythm throughout the Feb. 28 performance by Huget, along with the bass



File photo

Tony Saunders before a live audience

playing of Tony Saunders, Peter Penhallo on piano, and the drumming of Julia Harrell.

“When I listen to this music

it reminds me of good days — of love and the prospect of a better world being articulated through the songs,” said James Metters, who normally goes to the Protestant Chapel on Sunday nights.

“Are you ready for some Rock and Roll?” Huget asked the audience, which brought whistles, claps, and a few “Yeah! Rock and Roll!”

“I came here to support Lisa (Starbird), who brings artists in here to perform for us,” said Joey Barnes, as the music of The Beatles, Janus Joplin, and Buffalo Springfield filled the air.

Saunders, whose extended bass solos brought several whoops and applause, has several CDs available on Amazon, including *Romancing the Bass*, *Uptown Jazz* and *Appaloosa*.



File photo

Kurt Huget in performance at San Quentin

The quartet played an original, “Ain’t Gonna Muddy The Water Anymore,” which was the first time Huget

and Penhallo played together.

“What a lovely time,” Penhallo said, referring to his experience. “You guys’ hearts are giving something to us.”

Harrell has been inside San Quentin several times. Her last performance, two years ago, was with Huget and Saunders on the prison’s Lower Yard at the annual Avon Walk Against Breast Cancer.

“It’s great to see all the smiles,” Harrell said.

After closing with “Hand Jive” by Johnny Oates, the audience went to the stage to shake hands with the band.

While autographs were signed, stories were exchanged about life in the 1960s and ‘70s, the era when most of the songs were hits.

Renown Photographer Shares Life Stories at SQ

By Eddie Herena
San Quentin News
Photographer

Pictures help people to understand and appreciate others, a noted Black photographer said in a recent visit to San Quentin State Prison.

David Johnson said his black and white photos of San Francisco kids playing hop-scotch or young people dancing the night away not only portray the beauty of his medium, but were “designed to enlighten the world about the beauty of our people.”

The beauty of his medium also entails a powerful message: a racially segregated Black and White America. He grew up in the “very

segregated South,” where “the life of the Black man was fields and chain gangs,” Johnson said in a Feb. 17 interview.

He spent most of his teenage years in Jacksonville, Fla.

At the age of 6, he witnessed a woman’s murder and his parents were imprisoned for the killing. Another trauma was learning they were not his biological parents.

One day while working for the local grocer, Johnson saw a magazine ad offering a free camera to anyone who sold a certain number of subscriptions. He won the camera and has been looking through a lens ever since.

Seeing little chance for his future in the South, he moved to California and attended



Courtesy of David Johnson

David Johnson 2015



Courtesy of David Johnson

David Johnson 1942

the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, class of ‘46, becoming the first Black student of the late Ansel Adams, a giant in the history of photography.

Johnson’s wife, journalist Jacqueline Annette Sue, wrote the book about his life, titled “A Dream Begun So Long Ago,” which contains many of the photographs from his long career. Summarizing his philosophy, he said, “Dreams are not made of proper words, but of images.”

It tells the story of Johnson growing up in the Great Depression, serving in the Navy during World War II and pursuing a career of photographing images of “how it was,” in the streets of San Francisco in the ‘40s, ‘50s, and ‘60s.

This was Johnson’s second visit to San Quentin. His first visit was 20 years ago, when he attempted to help a former prisoner after meeting him at a church service. That ended badly, with the man going back to prison.

At one point he pulled out a sheet of paper with some of his thoughts, including:

“You learn to build all your roads on today, because tomorrow’s ground is too uncertain for plans...”

“Instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers, you learn that you really can

endure, that you are really strong, and you really do have worth.”

David Johnson’s photography book is available locally at Barnes and Noble, The Depot, Mill Valley or from www.davidjohnsonphotography.com



Courtesy of David Johnson

Boys and Flags 1947 Hunters Point



Courtesy of David Johnson

Boy and Lincoln 1963



Courtesy of David Johnson

Man on Skateboard 1947

Kid CAT Banquet Shares Insight and Solutions for Youth

Continued from Page 1

About 150 inside men mingled with about 50 visitors and volunteers, including criminal justice advocate heavyweights Elizabeth Calvin, Senior Advocate, Children's Right's Division, Human Right's Watch and Alison Parker, Director of Human Right's Watch, U.S. Program and Jody Kent Lavy of the Campaign for Fair Sentencing for Youth, and The Marshall Project's new president, Carroll Bogert.

Sarandon and Bogert were scheduled as keynote speakers. However, Sarandon declined to speak.

"It's so soul-sucking to talk about yourself all the time," said Sarandon. "I'd rather hear from you. I really would like to know what you want from me. I can give your voice to the outside."

Sarandon sat in front of the audience with Kid CAT member Adnan Khan as other members asked for her help in various ways.

Emile DeWeaver asked, "Can you be our spokesperson to pitch emotional intelligence?"

Emotional intelligence teaches awareness of what your emotions are telling you, so you can identify what your needs are,



Miguel Quezada, Adnan Khan and Joe Hancock sharing their Stories

and find healthy ways to meet them, said DeWeaver. Kid CAT wants its emotional intelligent curriculum to be offered in schools in the community.

Sarandon responded, "I would have to know about it and live on this coast. I'm coming to LA in the fall to work on a TV series. Educate me, I'd be happy to work on it. Thanks for the invitation."

Lemar Harris asked, "Would you bring more people like yourself in?"



Woody Wu speaking to audience



Jarred Elkins shares his story with the audience

Sarandon answered, "I can talk to people. Do we have to wait for a banquet? Yeah Warden, do we have to wait for a banquet?"

Warden Ron Davis replied, "We have things going on all the time."

Kid CAT host Phil Melendez introduced guest speaker Bogert by listing her credentials. They include being the former deputy executive director of external relations at Human Right's Watch, graduating magna cum laude from Harvard University, reporting for *Newsweek* magazine and is fluent in Russian, French and Mandarin.

"We have to do something about the biggest problem in America – the criminal justice system," said Bogert. "It should rise to the level of a national emergency."

Bogert spoke of the power of journalism to change the system and alert Americans to what's going on. She invited incarcerated men to send their personal stories about prison life to The Marshall Project, the criminal justice online news service.

Kid CAT members Miguel Quezada, Joe Hancock and Khan told personal stories of how underlying unmet emotional needs affected their journey through the pipeline into prison.

Hancock spoke of moving to Sacramento and experiencing gang culture for the first time. Gang members tried to bully him.

"At 19 I developed a sense that I had to be tough and use violence for survival," said

Hancock. "Feeling threatened by a gang member, I fired a shot to kill him. Afterward, I ran and called 911 and told the dispatcher what I'd done."

Khan spoke of his father



Elizabeth Calvin of Human Right's Watch



Carroll Bogert Giving Keynote Speech



Audience watching a juvenile documentary

leaving him nothing but a set of hats. When a teenager teased him about one "ugly" hat, Khan responded in violence and ended up in continuation school. Then his mother moved away, leaving Khan with relatives who asked him to leave because he was acting out. The homeless teenager eventually landed in prison for taking part in a robbery where his co-defendant stabbed and killed the victim.

Sarandon said, "The lottery of birth, who your parents are, if your father is around, contributes so much to mistakes that you could end up paying a very high price for."

However, all three Kid CAT presenters expressed that their circumstances weren't an excuse for committing murder.

"I'm not in prison today because my dad wasn't around, school suspensions or homelessness. I'm in prison because I made a choice to participate in a robbery," said Khan.

Melendez introduced a video

showing incarcerated men telling how they have benefited from the advocacy work of Calvin, Parker, Human Rights Watch, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, and other organizations in getting laws changed that affect people who committed crimes as juveniles.

Kid CAT gave Calvin and ARC's Scott Budnick humanitarian awards for their very successful work.

Calvin used her acceptance speech time to advocate for more changes. She asked that everyone recruit their family members to help gather the signatures needed to get California Gov. Jerry Brown's initiative on the ballot.

She said the governor's initiative does two primary things:

It makes it possible for CDCR to make a merit system with a much-higher credit possibility.

It would also change how California decides when to send a child into the adult system. It would make it the assumed outcome kids stay in Juvenile



Audience listening intently to Kid CAT speakers

Court, flipping the current system on its head.

"Only way it will end up on the ballot is if we collect 800,000 signatures," said Calvin. "That's more than

80,000 a week. So I am asking you to ask your family and people you know if they can get training on how to get signatures by going to www.fairsentencingforyouth.org."

Afterward, grateful benefactors of Calvin's efforts lined up to get her autograph and thanked her for giving them a chance at freedom.

Budnick was not present at

Trade Program Assists Graduates for Re-entry

By Rabsaan Thomas
Journalism Guild Chairman

Ten San Quentin residents have graduated from a pre-apprentice construction labor program that will help them get jobs when they return home.

"We want you to be successful out on the streets," Prison Industry Authority (PIA) Administrator Rusty Bechtold told them, "You go out there with the knowledge and skill to join the labor union."

Bechtold called finishing the program a milestone that will help the men find success.

Graduates of the laborer-training program get several benefits when they return to society.

"Upon graduation and release, we guarantee union membership in three trades – Iron Workers, Carpenters and Laborers," said class instructor Gregorio Venegas.

The San Quentin program also pays their first-year union dues, provides a free set of tools, and recognition as a true pre-apprentice.



Graduate Yonathan Tesfay



Graduate Joseph Garcia

a success rate that 93 percent will not come back."

Bechtold hosted the small Feb. 18 gathering, which Laborer Union 261 representative Javier Flores attended.

"I came here to support these guys and look for the best apprentices," said Flores. "I expect every one of these graduates to be prepared and do their best and do the right thing."

Bechtold called each individual graduate up to a podium on a low stage to receive a certificate and take a photo.

In addition to Noel, the graduates were Joseph Garcia, Nagee Walker, Yonathan Tesfay, Aaron Dufour, Arthur Snowden, Michael Smith, Rene Pryor, Earl Nuru and Clifton Celestine. They all cheered for each other when their names were called.

"This is a big step in rehabilitation in my life," said Nuru.

Tesfay said, "I've been in prison from the age of 19 to 24 and I've had no job experience; therefore, I needed to take advantage of this opportunity.

That way when I'm released, I can get my life back on track.

Every man should know the fundamentals of how to operate and use tools. It's something the older generation had to learn and it also gives Black men the opportunity to be successful in the workforce."

Walker said he learned skills like pouring concrete



Graduate Arthur Snowden

the event, but Michael Stubbs, the ARC board chairman, accepted the award on his behalf.

Award certificates were also given to the volunteers that support the program including: David Inocencio, founder of the *Beat Within* magazine; Alison Parker, Phil Towle, Alexandra Williams, Karin Drucker, Adam Zigelbaum, Woody Wu, Marsha Williams and Sara Sindija.

Alexandra Williams organized the banquet.

"It was a lot of work, but it's rewarding," said Williams.

She knows Sarandon from her husband, Zack Williams, son of the late actor Robin Williams. Alexandra said she has always wanted to help younger people, probably because she was bullied as a kid.

The event ended to the sounds of David Jassy performing, "If These Walls Could Talk."

"They'd tell about the pain of watching life thrown away," rapped Jassy.

and using basic construction tools.

Laborer jobs start at \$18.67 an hour but climb to \$28 after working 3,600 hours, Venegas said.

Venegas said he noticed ex-felons were good workers while doing the hiring as a production manager for a huge demolition company.

"I found out ex-felons are some of the best workers because they are hungry to do well," said Venegas. "So when I ran across this opportunity (to teach), I didn't think twice about it at all."

Another benefit graduates of the program have is being recommended by PIA for the upcoming joint venture jobs with Big Dog, a refrigeration manufacturing company.

However, it will be up to Big Dog to decide who they hire.

Bechtold recommended the graduates keep their training sharp while waiting for release by working for Inmate Day Labor on construction projects around the prison.

—Richard Richardson
and Eddie Herena
contributed to this story



New Mexico Hot Air Balloon Festival

Photo by P. Jo

Snippets

Bananas can't be reproduced on their own.

Roller coaster Kingda Ka; located in Six Flags Great Adventures, is one of the fastest roller coasters in the world.

India's growing population could potentially surpass China by the year 2030.

Clinton is the first left-handed person to serve two consecutive term in the presidential office.

Ku Klux Klan was forced to dissolve after the IRS filed a \$685,000 lien against it in 1944.

Bastille was a fortress and state prison built in Paris after the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) between the French and the English.

April 20th or "420" was termed in reference to the time of day that a small clique of kids at San Rafael High School in California used to enjoy getting high in 1971. The name stuck.

The Prohibition in the 1930's gave rise to stock car racing.

Sudoku Corner

4	8				5		
	5	2		9			
6			7		5		2
			8				3
5	7			3		6	8
9					6		
2			5		4		7
				7		6	2
		5				4	9

9	2		7		4		5	3
							4	
5	4						7	6
	6		9	5				
			3	1	7			
				6	2		9	
4	3						2	5
	7							
1	5		8		3		6	9

Notice: Due to low submissions, there will no longer be a monthly trivia puzzle.

The Answer to Last Months Trivia is:

If the boys have as many brothers as sisters, then there must be 1 boy more than the number of girls in the family. But trying 2 and 1, 3 and 2, and then 4 and 3, it will be found that 4 boys and 3 girls will fulfill the requirement that each girl has twice as many brothers as sisters.

The winner to last Month's puzzle is:
Herbert Coddington

Congratulation to Tim Ashcraft and David B. Le for also getting last month's puzzle correct.

The winner to February's puzzle is:
Kevin Smith

Congratulation to Robert Bacon for also getting February's puzzle correct.

Last Issue's Sudoku Solution

5	2	9	8	1	4	7	6	3
8	1	7	3	5	6	2	4	9
6	4	3	2	9	7	5	8	1
1	5	4	9	7	3	6	2	8
9	7	2	6	8	1	3	5	4
3	6	8	4	2	5	1	9	7
7	8	1	5	4	2	9	3	6
4	3	5	7	6	9	8	1	2
2	9	6	1	3	8	4	7	5

7	3	4	5	8	1	6	9	2
5	1	2	9	6	4	7	3	8
8	6	9	3	2	7	1	5	4
2	9	3	6	1	5	8	4	7
1	8	6	4	7	9	5	2	3
4	7	5	2	3	8	9	6	1
3	2	1	8	9	6	4	7	5
9	4	7	1	5	3	2	8	6
6	5	8	7	4	2	3	1	9

1. Seattle, Wash. — The state’s highest court is taking a new look at the death penalty. Dozens of former state judges are claiming the state’s death penalty is unconstitutional, the *Associated Press* reports.

2. Sacramento, Calif. — State prison officials announced that inmate firefighter Shawna Lynn Jones, 22, died from her injuries on Feb. 25. Jones was struck by a boulder that had rolled down a hill. She was airlifted to UCLA Medical Center, where she was listed in critical condition with major head injuries. Jones’ organs were donated after she was removed from life support in keeping with her family’s wishes.

3. Sacramento, Calif. — Gov. Jerry Brown announced the appointment of two posts in the state prison system’s communications office. Jeffrey Callison was appointed assistant secretary of communications at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Vicky Waters was appointed CDCR press secretary. Neither position requires Senate confirmation.

4. Sacramento, Calif. — State prison officials will be introducing new television channels geared to help the prisoners’ rehabilitation efforts. Freedom TV offers aid to inmates’ efforts in substance-use disorders, anger management, criminal thinking, and family relationships in developing positive social and personal skills. Wellness TV focuses on aiding inmates in developing and maintaining positive health-centric habits. Inmates can learn the factors that affect wellness of mind and body. Cognitive behavioral therapy content is



coupled with nutrition and exercise to emphasize total and complete wellness. Education TV provides programming to help inmates with mathematics, social studies, English, history, geography, government, visual and performing arts, and much more. Employment TV offers programming designed to help inmates develop employable skills, including job-finding, interviewing, resume-building skills and financial literacy.

5. Mule Creek State Prison — The first inmates have been moved into the prison’s new “infill” facility. The \$330 million, 60-acre facility ultimately will house 1,584 inmates in a dorm-style setting and also in-

clude space for rehabilitation programs. The new facility also is expected to employ 377 staff.

6. Riverside, Calif. — The Berkeley, Calif. based Prison Law Office filed a federal lawsuit alleging inmate abuse and other violations in the county jails. The lawsuit alleges that staff use excessive force and medical and mental health care are deficient, the *Associated Press* reports.

7. Hartford, Conn. — A new re-integration facility opened in February for 56 women with a capacity to add 12 more prisoners, the *Associate Press* reports. The facility has programming designed help the women identify issues that led to their arrests

and develop skills to help them stay out of prison, once released.

8. Salt Lake City, Utah — State senators voted 15-12 to abolish the death penalty on March 2. The measure now goes before the Republican-dominated House. If it passes the House, Gov. Gary Herbert, a supporter of the death penalty, would likely veto the bill, the *Associated Press* reports.

9. New Mexico — Prisoner Barry Holloway has filed for an injunction against the use of double-celling in the Western New Mexico Correctional Facility, court documents show. The injunction cites a 1991 decree that brought federal oversight over the state’s prisons after 33

inmates died in a 1980 prison riot in Santa Fe, the *Associated Press* reports.

10. Phoenix, Ariz. — Relief from inadequate health care is lagging because “the state is dragging its feet in carrying out the improvements it promised when it agreed to resolve the case,” the *Associated Press* reports. The settlement was won on behalf of 33,000 inmates.

11. New York — Vanessa Gathers spent 10 years behind bars for a deadly robbery. She initially said she had nothing to do with it but later confessed. Prosecutors recently agreed to her release after examining her since-recanted confession, finding that it was peppered with facts that didn’t add up, which caused the detective’s tactics to come under question, the *Associated Press* reports.

12. Virginia — There is no waiting period for the restoration of voting rights for persons convicted of nonviolent offenses after the end of supervision. However, persons with more serious offenses must wait three years after the end of supervision and submit an application that includes a letter from their probation or parole supervisor, the *Associated Press* reports.

13. Washington D.C. — The nation’s highest court reversed the 2002 murder conviction of Louisiana Death Row inmate Michael Wearry, the *Associated Press* reports. The ruling cited the failure of prosecutors to turn over evidence casting doubt on the credibility of a prison informant and another witness and the state’s failure to disclose medical records raising questions about a witness’ description of the crime.

WORDCROSS PUZZLE

ACROSS

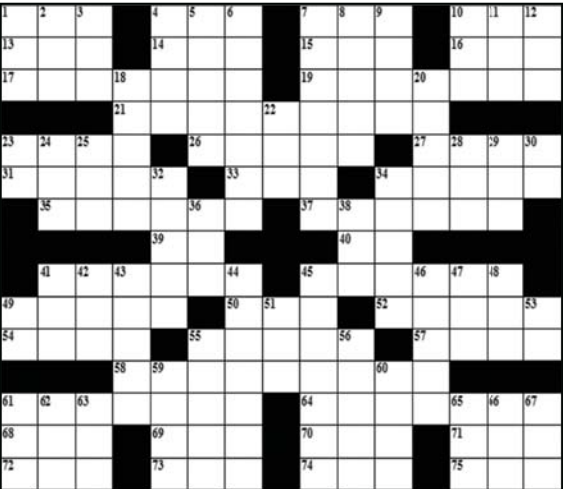
- 1. Super Bowl 50 Network
- 4. ____ King Cole
- 7. Set of equipment
- 10. A quick gentle tap
- 13. Mixture to thicken a stew
- 14. Oxygen
- 15. Adams of “Man of Steel”
- 16. Light flexible leather
- 17. 37 Across companion
- 19. Seaport in SE Italy
- 21. Retiring *San Quentin News* Advisor
- 23. TV show “____ Upon a Time”
- 26. To make amends
- 27. Movie “____ Raider”
- 31. Kelly Clarkson song “____ You’ve Been Gone”
- 33. Significant other in Korean
- 34. March’s book review about schools
- 35. Marvel superhero that paroled from SQ
- 37. City & port in Canada
- 39. Healthy once a day routine (Abbrev.)
- 40. Chemical symbol for table element 44
- 41. City in SoCal Valley
- 45. Capital & seaport in Guinea
- 49. Fog, mist, or steam
- 50. “Holy Diver” Band
- 52. City in central Chile

- 54. Bridges of Stargate-SG1
- 55. Saturn has more of this than Earth
- 57. To live in a debauched life (Slang)
- 58. 34 Down had 88 of these
- 61. Prison Slang: For sending & retrieving items from cell to cell
- 64. Yogi gesture of salutation
- 68. Canton of EC Switzerland
- 69. Unknown John or Jane
- 70. “The Simpsons” game console
- 71. Internet company that merged w/Time Warner
- 72. Acura’s sport car model
- 73. To wander or go astray
- 74. Pirates’ grunt
- 75. 1 Across comedy starring Anna Farris

DOWN

- 1. S.Q. Graduation group from February 2016
- 2. A drunken spree (Slang)
- 3. Govt. agency that investigates insider trading
- 4. Apple music player
- 5. Tyler of “The Talk”
- 6. Capital of N.J.
- 7. Japanese swords & Kawasaki motorcycles
- 8. Mental picture

- of conception
- 9. Banks of the “America’s Next Top Model”
- 10. It is mightier than the sword
- 11. Computer keyboard button
- 12. Boxing term
- 18. VCR button
- 20. Yelchin of “Star Trek”
- 22. CDCR’s Mental Health program
- 23. Windows, MAC, Android are forms of
- 24. Actress Long from Friday
- 25. 24-7 news channel
- 28. ____ Clean detergent
- 29. Soldier lost in combat (Abbrev.)
- 30. Canadian province bordering Idaho & Washington State (Abbrev.)
- 32. Forest fire starter
- 34. Acronym of March’s graduation story
- 36. Intel’s alternative
- 38. Character Gold of “Entourage”
- 41. Singer Corinne Bailey ____
- 42. Govt. agency regulating pollution
- 43. Sighing or rustling sound
- 44. Jackie Robinson



- was this (Singular)
- 45. Classic western TV Show
- 46. Latin dance
- 47. A type of beer
- 48. Annual classification for a prisoner (Abbrev.)
- 49. Class of words expressing action (Abbrev.)
- 51. Form of payment
- 53. ____-Ha moment
- 55. House of the Lord of a?
- 56. Flight of steps
- 59. “____ Along” starring Ice Cube & Kevin Hart
- 60. A ruler or prince in a Muslim country
- 61. Clothing that PETA opposes

- WORDCROSS ANSWERS
- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | P | S | T | A | M | F | B | S | K | I | N |
| A | S | O | E | D | U | O | R | A | O | N | E |
| B | A | D | O | D | O | R | A | I | S | I | N |
| S | U | X | O | R | I | C | I | D | E | | |
| S | U | S | T | R | A | P | I | D | T | A | L |
| A | R | S | O | N | T | O | N | S | T | A | L |
| L | I | F | E | R | S | | | | | | |
| P | I | C | | | | | | | | | |
| B | R | O | G | A | N | | | | | | |
| P | O | O | C | H | E | | | | | | |
| B | A | N | K | | | | | | | | |
| E | D | | | | | | | | | | |
| V | E | R | I | G | O | | | | | | |
| I | D | A | | | | | | | | | |
| A | M | | | | | | | | | | |
- 62. Govt. tax agency
 - 63. Tom Clancy’s Rainbow ____
 - 65. Uncle ____
 - 66. More than enough
 - 67. Dutch ____ disease

Gobierno Beneficia al Sector Privado

Por Thomas Gardner
Escritor del Gremio Periodístico

El gobierno de los Estados Unidos necesita dejar de trabajar a la par con el sector corporativo con el fin de aumentar el número de inmigrantes detenidos, de acuerdo a un reporte en el 2015.

La relación “asegura” altas ganancias para las compañías privadas de la prisión contratadas por el gobierno de U.S.A., según un reporte de el Centro para Derechos Constitucionales y la Red de Vigilancia de Detención (Center of Constitutional Rights and Detention Watch Network).

“Hay un consenso en expansión que expresa que la detención de inmigrantes es innecesaria e inhumana”, informo el reporte. “El gobierno de Los Estados Unidos debería

tomar medidas para finalizar el uso de la detención de inmigrantes en general”.

La Inmigración y la Agencia de Aduana (ICE) han hecho contratos con al menos seis diferentes compañías privadas de detención, “para garantizar un número mínimo de detenidos”, según el informe.

El ex-director de ICE, John Sandweg comento, “Hacer un convenio que estipule la detención de cierto numero de personas, sin importar cuantos de ellos sean una amenaza para la seguridad publica o una amenaza para la integridad de el sistema, no tiene ningún sentido. Lo correcto seria obtener un numero real de personas detenidas que son una amenaza a la seguridad publica, y en base a ello determinar las necesidades de la institución y no fijar un numero arbitrario primero que determine la

operación”.

El gobierno necesita terminar con la “cuota de detención”, estos contratos “que garantizan un número de detenidos” aseguran un pago a los contratistas de las prisiones privadas, a cambio de fijar un número mínimo de camas en las cárceles sin importar que estas camas se necesiten, el reporte explica.

El informe critica a la vez el uso del “precio de piso”, en el cual el ICE recibe un descuento por cada persona detenida por encima del numero garantizado, el reporte informa.

El informe estipula que los acuerdos “sirven para proteger lo básico de las compañías privadas”, estimulando de esta manera el encarcelamiento de inmigrantes.

Como parte de la Reforma de Inteligencia y el Acto de Prevención contra el Terrorismo

en el 2004, se solicito a el ICE aumentar su numero de camas disponibles para inmigrantes detenidos. Del 2006 al 2010 las instituciones fueron construidas con una capacidad de espacio para “mantener” 34,000 personas (cuenta mínima), el informe detallo.

De acuerdo al reporte, “la mayoría de los miembros del Congreso han sugerido al ICE interpretar con mas claridad el requerimiento de que todas las camas para detención estén ocupadas a todo momento – esto significa que un mínimo de 34,000 camas no solo sean financiadas, sino también ocupadas todos los días”.

The Center for Constitucional Rights and Detention Watch Network, menciona que hay una vínculo directo entre la capacidad de la cárcel y el interés corporativo en las detenciones realizadas por

inmigración, lo cual no es ético.

“El sector privado no debería ser recompensado por colocar una etiqueta de precio en la privación de la libertad, y se debería responsabilizar a el gobierno por su deliberada participación en este sistema corrupto”, informan los autores del reporte.

En la década pasada, el sistema de detención por parte de la inmigración a incrementado en un 75%, comentan los autores.

El reporte concluye que el ICE debe dejar de usar el precio de piso y terminar de garantizar un numero mínimo de detenidos, así mismo, el Congreso debe eliminar el numero de camas fijas de detención nacional, todo esto “como un primer paso hacia un cierre final de todas las instituciones de detención”.

—Traducción por Marco Villa

Estadísticas de Mortalidad en Prisiones

Por Larry Smith
Escritor del Gremio Periodístico

De acuerdo a un estudio federal, existieron 4,309 muertes entre las cárceles locales y prisiones estatales en el 2012, lo cual significa un aumento del 2% (67 muertes) en comparación al 2011.

El número de muertes en las cárceles del condado aumento de 889 en el 2011 a 958 en el 2012. Este fue el primer aumento a partir del 2009. El aumento de muertes en las cárceles del

condado fue debido principalmente a un incremento en el número de fallecimientos por enfermedades (hasta un 24%).

Estas muertes representaron el 97% del aumento total de fallecimientos en las cárceles del condado y las prisiones en el 2012. La tasa general de mortalidad en las cárceles del condado aumento en un 4%, de 123 muertes por cada 100,000 presos en el 2011 a 128 muertes por cada 100,000 presos en el 2012.

El suicidio continuo siendo la causa principal de las muertes

en las cárceles del condado (40 suicidios por cada 100,000 presos); sin embargo, la tasa de suicidio disminuyó a un 4% en el 2012 y ha disminuido el 17% a partir del 2000. Las enfermedades cardiacas fueron la causa principal de las muertes en las cárceles del condado, aumentando a un 14% en el 2012.

La tasa de mortalidad a causa del SIDA en las cárceles del condado aumento de 2 muertes por cada 100,000 presos en el 2011 a 3 por cada 100,000 presos en el 2012, el cual fue el primer aumento a partir del

2006.

A pesar del aumento en el 2012, las muertes por causa del SIDA han disminuido a un 63% en las cárceles desde el 2000. La mayoría de las jurisdicciones carcelarias, las cuales forman el 81%, no reportaron muertes en el 2012, lo cual fue consistente en años anteriores.

En el 2012, existieron 3,351 muertes en prisiones estatales, de las cuales el 78% ocurrieron en una correccional, lo cual se acerco al número de muertes en el 2011 con 3,353. A pesar que el número de fallecimientos en las

prisiones estatales permaneció constante, la tasa general de mortalidad en las prisiones incremento en un 2% en el 2012. El aumento del 2011 al 2012 fue ampliamente debido a la disminución de la población en las prisiones.

El Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos reporto que las personas de 55 años o mayores, constituían el 55% de las muertes en las prisiones.

Los presos masculinos representaron el 99% de los homicidios ocurridos en las prisiones estatales del 2001 al 2012, en tanto que el suicidio fue la causa mas inusual de muerte entre las mujeres encarceladas del 2001 al 2012.

Independientemente de las causas de muerte, los presos tenían una tasa de mortalidad más alta en comparación con las mujeres encarceladas. Con la excepción de las muertes causadas por el SIDA, los prisioneros anglosajones tenían el promedio anual más alto de mortalidad por enfermedades del 2001 al 2012. El porcentaje de muertes relacionadas con el SIDA fue alta entre los prisioneros afro-americanos (18 muertes por cada 100,000 prisioneros estatales), lo cual fue dos veces más alta en comparación con los presos hispanos o prisioneros de diferentes razas.

Del 2001 al 2012, la tasa de suicidio entre los presos de 17 años o menores fue casi el doble con relación a los presos de mayor edad.

Las enfermedades cardiacas fue la causa principal de muerte entre los presos del condado. En tanto que el cáncer fue la causa principal entre los presos estatales, con 10,122 muertes, seguido por las enfermedades cardiacas con 9,874 muertes.

Las muertes por enfermedad representaron más de la mitad de las fatalidades en las cárceles del condado en el 2012, mientras que las enfermedades cardiacas continuaron siendo la causa principal de mortalidad en las cárceles del condado en ese mismo año, con un 28%.

—Traducción por Tare Beltranchuc

Brown’s Proposal Hopes To Overhaul Parole Eligibility

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

The California State Supreme Court has re-affirmed its decision allowing Gov. Jerry Brown’s proposed initiative for changing California’s parole system to begin gathering signatures for the November ballot.

The March 9 decision was the second time the court kept Brown’s crime initiative alive by rejecting a request by state prosecutors to halt signature-gathering for the measure.

The proposed initiative would let some nonviolent criminals seek early parole and make it harder to charge juveniles as adults, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

Earlier, Mark Zahner, executive director of the District Attorneys Association, had said he understood Brown’s intention to reduce the state’s prison population, under federal court scrutiny, but that the proposed sentencing changes are “too much, too sweeping,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Brown’s proposed initiative would overhaul rules regarding parole eligibility for inmates serving time for nonviolent crimes and good behavior credits for early release.

The initiative is an effort to return to indeterminate sentencing, said Patrick McGrath, Yuba County district attorney.

“The emphasis has been on this not affecting violent offenders, but I think most members of the public would be surprised at what qualifies as a non-violent offense under the Penal Code,” McGrath told the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

In February, Sacramento Judge Shellyane Chang ruled that Attorney General Pamela Harris should not have allowed Brown to submit his substantial revisions to an existing initiative without additional review.

The governor appealed Chang’s ruling to the state Supreme Court on Feb. 25, warning the justices that California’s long-term ability to comply with a federal court order to reduce its prison population hinged on voters being given a chance to approve his plan, the *Times* reported.

“If the Superior Court’s order stands, the people will have been deprived of their right to use the initiative process to remedy problems that urgently require attention now,” Brown’s campaign attorneys wrote in their appeal.

The District Attorneys Association claimed the governor’s

initiative would effectively repeal nearly 40 years of deterrent sentencing laws, and authorize parole hearings for an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 felons.

Their suit said the initiative would repeal Proposition 8, the Victims Bill of Rights, enacted by voters in June 1982. Proposition 8 uses prior felony convictions to enhance any future criminal conviction. The proposed initiative would also exclude prior convictions in making prisoners eligible for parole.

Adult felons who commit multiple crimes against multiple victims would be eligible for early release similar to the procedure for as inmates who commit only one crime against one victim.

Under the newly amended language, “alternative sentences” involving increased punishment like the Three Strikes Law would be excluded from the term of the current offense for many offenders. Thus, repeat offenders would be eligible to apply for early release at the same time as inmates who have no criminal histories.

The current initiative would give the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) unilateral and unlimited authority to award cred-

its to all inmates, regardless of their charges or sentences, for good behavior and approved rehabilitative or educational achievements.

In their mandate petition, California District Attorney Association claims that the Penal Code currently provides that most prisoners could apply for parole after serving only 50 percent of their sentences.

However, people convicted of violent crimes must serve 85 percent of their time and those convicted of murder must serve 100 percent. That’s at least 68 percent of the California prison population, according to a 2012 report from CDCR’s Offender Information Services Branch Estimates and Statistical Analysis Section Data Analysis Unit.

Brown’s initiative, called The Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016, requires 586,000 registered voter signatures to qualify for the November 2016 ballot.

The governor is termed out of office in 2018 and has \$24 million in his campaign account to spend on his campaign, reported the *Times*.

For more information go to: jerrybrown.org/we_need_your_help

NBC Report Sparks Death Row Debates

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

The tiers of San Quentin's Death Row have not been open to the public for more than five years. All of that changed in February. Alecia Reid from NBC's San Francisco's affiliate was one of the first reporters to recently see the current living conditions inside one of the world's most notorious prisons.

As she prepared for this unique encounter with the men living in the original Condemned Row, Reid thought: "These inmates would be disrespectful and shout inappropriate things." It was just the opposite.

For a condemned inmate, life on Death Row is 23 hours a day locked in a four-by-10-foot cell. Keeping their sanity is the biggest challenge, Reid said. Some of men still claim their innocence.

Charles Edward Crawford II told her, "I don't know that there's an amount of time that you can give a person for the crime I'm convicted of that would satisfy everyone; (it's

like) tossing people away." Doug Clark insists he's innocent of being the Sunset Killer.

Since 1893, 422 convicts have been executed on San Quentin's Death Row, either by hanging, the gas chamber or lethal injection. Clarence Ray Allen was the last person executed in 10 years after spending 23 years on these tiers.

Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a founding member of the Crips, was also put to death in 2005 after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected clemency for him, she reported.

In the past decade, the public support for capital punishment has dropped. The majority of inmates facing this sentence want executions abolished. "If you kill someone for a crime ... that they may have committed, what makes you different from a person that's a murderer on the street?" Charles Smith asked.

Most inmates spend an average of 15 years on Death Row.

Since the death penalty was reinstated in 1977, 102 condemned men have died of natural causes. There are 746 inmates housed there today. Four



File photo

Death Row inmates enjoying their yard time on North Block's rooftop

men have been on Death Row for crimes committed in 1977. Today, the youngest inmate is 23. The oldest is 85-year old David Carpenter.

In 2014, U.S. District Judge Cormac J. Carney struck down the death penalty in California, not because he necessarily opposed capital punishment, but rather because he found the delays so long that it amounted to cruel and unusual punishment.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed his decision, the *Sacramento Bee* reported.

As the death penalty remains in limbo in California, signature-gatherers are circulating petitions for two November ballot initiatives, one to abolish the death penalty and one to speed up the execution process.

The abolition initiative will definitely qualify for the No-

vember election, consultant Bill Zimmerman said. Chuck Orrock, proponent for the death penalty, said, "I'm feeling confident."

If both measures should pass, the state Constitution says the one initiative with the most votes will take precedence. According to the *Bee*, this legal concept has never been applied to competing death penalty measures.

Initiatives Solicit Voters' View About Death Penalty

Signatures are being solicited for two November ballot initiatives that would ask California voters to speed up executions or repeal the death penalty.

One of the initiatives would require the state Supreme Court to rule on capital cases within five years. It would also limit death penalty appeals, set strict deadlines for filing appeals and seek to expand the pool of death penalty lawyers.

Any attorney who now accepts court appointments to represent impoverished defendants in criminal cases would also have to take on capital cases, regardless of experience, reported Bob Egelko of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Included in this proposal is a scheme that would disregard the commentary period required by the state to approve a new single-drug execution method that would eliminate the current three-drug executions.

Egelko also reported that a rival initiative would repeal and replace the death penalty with life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

Sponsors for the abolition initiative have raised more than \$1 million and both initiatives will need 365,880 valid signatures of registered voters in 180 days in order to be placed on the November ballot, said criminal trial lawyer Charles Bell.

Proponents supporting the

elimination of capital punishment in the state of California saw death penalty sentences decline sharply in 2015. According to the Death Penalty Information Center, "there were 28 executions in six states, the fewest since 1991. There were 49 death sentences in 2015," a 33 percent decline from what was already a 40-year low.

Three states, California, Florida and Alabama, accounted for more than half of all new death sentences in the country. The center reported "13 of the California death verdicts were concentrated in four Southern California counties."

Riverside County by itself imposed eight death sentences, 16 percent of all the new death sentences in the nation

and more than those that were imposed by any state except Florida. The center's report shows "two-thirds of the 28 people executed in 2015 exhibited symptoms of severe mental illness, intellectual disability, the debilitating effects of extreme trauma and abuse or some combination of the three."

More than 20 percent of death sentence imposed since 2010 were handed down by non-unanimous juries. This is a practice barred in all states except Florida, Alabama and Delaware. Those states collectively have imposed 16 percent of death penalty cases in the nation. However, more than a quarter of all death sentences in 2015 were cases

in which juries did not unanimously recommend death, the center reported.

"I believe it highly likely that the death penalty violates the Eight Amendment"

"At least 70 Death Row prisoners with execution dates in 2015 received stays, reprieves or commutations, 2.5 times the numbers who were executed." The number of executions dropped by 20 percent compared to 2014 from 35 to 28, "marking the first time in 24 years that fewer than 30 executions were carried out in the United States," the center reported.

"Most states in the union have abandoned the death penalty in law or in practice," according to a report by the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School. The report shows 33 jurisdictions, including 30 states and the District of Columbia, the federal government and the U.S. military, have either formally eliminated the death penalty or have not carried out an execution in the last nine years.

In 2015, a Religion Research Institute's survey revealed that when asked the policy question which sentence they preferred as punishment for people of murder, "a majority of Americans favored life without parole over the death penalty."

In the opinion of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, "I believe it highly likely that the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment."

—Charles David Henry

Prison Recidivism Statistics are 'Misleading'

By Marcus Henderson
Sports Editor

Some criminal justice experts say a federal report on prison recidivism is misleading.

Critics who circulated the report online argued that the conventional wisdom about recidivism in America is flatly wrong.

In reality, two out of three people who serve time in prison never come back, and only 11 percent come back multiple times, according to a Nov. 2015 article in *Slate*.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report in April 2014 covered data from 30 states, including California. It estimated recidivism patterns of 404,638 persons — about a fourth from California-released from 2005-2010, from state prisons.

Prisoners released within three years were re-arrested at 67.8 percent, and 76.6 percent were re-arrested within five-years, according to the report.

An estimated 28.6 percent of inmates were arrested for a violent offense within five-years; 1.7 percent were for rape or sexual assault and 23.0 percent for assault.

The majority of prisoners released were arrested for a public order offense, like failure to appear, obstruction of justice or a legal response to probation or parole violations.

An estimated 39.9 percent were arrested for some other public order offenses, which included drunkenness, disorderly conduct, liquor law violation or a family-related offense.

By the fifth year, the recidivism rates for violent or drug crimes were lower for Whites

and Hispanics than for Blacks.

The recidivism rates for males were higher than females, regardless of the incarceration offense or the recidivism period, according to the report.

"Following Incarceration, Most Released Offenders Never Return to Prison"

Slate staff writer Leon Neyfakh wrote the article on the federal study, citing a recent paper published in the journal "Crime & Delinquency," under the title "Following Incarceration,

Most Released Offenders Never Return to Prison."

The paper was produced by researchers at a public policy firm, Abt Associates in Cambridge, Mass.

Neyfakh highlighted a phone conversation with William Rhodes from Abt in his article.

The discrepancy between Abt's findings and the federal report, according to Rhodes, is that the BJS used a sample population in which repeat offenders were overrepresented.

"In truth what you have is two groups of offenders: those who repeatedly do crimes and accumulate in prisons because they get recaptured, re-convicted and re-sentenced; and those who are much lower risk, and most of them will go to prison once and not come back," Rhodes said.

Type of Flowers Sent to Loved Ones

By Angelo Falcone
Journalism Guild Writer

“April showers bring May flowers,” but what type of flowers would the men in blue send to their loved ones? And in what color? No one flower or color stood out.

Sam Johnson: “I would send my wife long-stem black roses. I know they are actually very dark blue or purple roses, but at first glance, they look black.”

Stephen Pascascio: “I would send lilies to someone I love. I would choose pink lilies.”

Wayne Villafranco: “I would send long-stem red roses to a woman.”

William Tolbert: “I would send anything but red roses. I would prefer to send tulips of

Asked On The Line

any color.”

Jesus Flores: “I think carnations are beautiful. I would send carnations to the women I love in my life: my mom, my grandmother, my wife, and my aunts.”

Chris Brown: “I would send a mixture of different flowers. They would be purple, yellow, and red flowers.”

Christopher Scull: “I love my mom and my girlfriend very much, with all my heart. So I would send them long-stem red roses.”

Jose Rivera: “I would send my girlfriend red roses because

it is the traditional sign of romantic love. I might also send her purple or bluish roses. I would send my mom a mixture of red, pink, and white roses but for family or loved ones, I would send a variety of flowers in a variety of colors. I’ve learned that any flowers are appreciated.”

Shakur Ross: “I would send red roses mixed with blue violets to my loved ones.”

Quenton Walker: “It depends who I send the flowers to. I would send a friend white roses, but I would send my girl long-stem red roses.”

- April is the first of four months in a year with 30 days. This year, April has five Fridays and five Saturdays.
- April Fool’s Day is on Friday, April 1, Tax Day (IRS filing deadline) is on Friday, April 15, Earth Day is on Friday, April 22, and Administrative Professionals Day is on Wednesday, April 27.
- For the Christian community, the Feast of the Divine Mercy is on Sunday, April 3, and the Annunciation of the Lord is on Monday, April 4.
- For members of the Jewish Community, Passover begins at sundown on Friday, April 22.
- The World Almanac notes April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, National Humor Month, and Stress Awareness Month
- There are two astrological signs in April: Aries, the sign of the Ram (March 21 to April 19) and Taurus, the sign of the Bull (April 20 to May 20).
- April’s birthstone is the diamond.

Topic of Discussion: Felons’ Voting Rights Part 1

By Rahsaan Thomas
Journalism Guild Chairman

Many people are disgusted with America’s problems, yet they neglect the one remedy they have to do something about them – voting, a group of San Quentin inmates concluded.

Felon voting rights vary widely from state to state. In California, convicted felons cannot vote while in jail, in prison or on parole. They regain voting rights after clearing parole.

Those sitting in the county jail awaiting an outcome of their case can still vote if they aren’t on parole, according to Joe Paul of the Jericho Vocational Center.

Despite not being able to vote themselves, inmates John “Yayah” Johnson, Jamie Sanchez and Eric Curtis met on San Quentin’s Lower Yard discussed the importance and power of the ballot box. (This is the first of a two-part series.)

Q. The last election had a low turnout. Why do you believe people aren’t voting?

Johnson: “I think it is definitely voters’ apathy, but part of the problem is people aren’t

being told about how powerful their vote is in local and federal elections. Felons can’t vote, but that could be changed by a ballot proposition. In some of these close elections, had felons been allowed to vote, they would have turned the tide.”

“When it’s a whole group banding together, voting can have an impact”

Allowing felons to vote would restore the right to well over 4 million Americans in the communities most neglected by politicians, according to a Sentencing Project Report. It was titled: “State-Level Estimate of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States, 2010” by Christopher Uggen and Sarah Shannon.

Curtis: “They just took the ex-con box off job applications. If you had that same push to get felons to vote, we would win.”

Sanchez: “People who are

Yard Talk

immigrants or have criminal records can’t vote (in many states). In Mexico, people stopped voting because they believe it is pointless. It’s set up, and the vote doesn’t really count.”

Over 5.85 million Americans cannot take part in an election because of laws that bar convicted felons from voting, according to the Sentencing Project Report.

Curtis: “We passed Prop. 36, then the courts came with totally different rules about who it applies to. It’s a tricky issue...even if you voted for something, the courts can use their interpretation...that’s why people of color don’t trust voting.”

Sanchez: “I think there is a mentality that politicians are prioritizing what is politically correct over prioritizing the right thing to do. They built this tough-on-crime idea that criminals need to be in prison forever, so it’s hard to go back on their campaign pledges and

do what is actually better for society.”

Q. Do you believe voting makes a difference?

Johnson: “I absolutely think voting makes a difference, at least on a local level. Politicians don’t always do their jobs, but when they don’t, we can vote them out. Gray Davis was ousted (from the governor’s job) through recall. That shows the vote is relevant.”

Sanchez: “When it’s a whole group banding together, voting can have an impact. When you

are an individual, it makes you feel like nobody.”

Curtis: “People of color are more apprehensive of voting because they don’t think it works for them. They don’t see a change in their environment.”

Johnson: “We have this idea in America that voting doesn’t matter because politicians control everything, and that’s not true. The government is for the people, by the people. We have the power to protest, get signatures and vote. If we ain’t happy, we can change leadership.”

In the concluding part of this series, the Yard Talk panel will discuss ways to motivate people to return to the polls.

18 SQ Students Graduate from Scripture Study

By Wesley Eisiminger
Staff Writer

Eighteen students have graduated from the First Step Bible class, a 10-week program of Holy Scripture study at the San Quentin Protestant Chapel.

It was the first phase of a 12-month program aimed at preparing the students to become ministers.

The initial classes cover introductions to the Old Testament and New Testament of the Bible.

“This class has provided me with a solid foundation to continue to move forward on my journey,” said student Timothy Holmes. “I wanted to learn as much as I can about my Lord and Savior and develop a closer work with Him.”

The course was started by inmate/teacher Curtis Roberts about a year and half ago. He said he started this class because “God wanted to tell them He loves them.”

Inmate Robert Barnes said, “I joined this program within a few weeks of coming to San Quentin. Our class began with a group of men unknown to

one another. We became close brothers who are there for one another, which I’ve received, and what I love about this program.”

Assistant teacher Stephan Pascascio said, “We are preparing, going through these steps as going to war for God.”

In addition to Holmes and Barnes, the graduating students included Oscar Arana, Troy Dunmore, Perry Herron, Timothy Hicks, Eddie Hollingsworth, James Jenkins, Sam Johnson, Stephan Pascascio, Pete Rook, Nathaniel Sparks, Anthony Thomas, Phuoc Vong, Javier Wesson, Rodney Williams, Steven Harris and Vadin Zakharchenko.

The course points out the Old Testament has 39 books – the first five books are law, the next 12 books are history, the next five books are poetry, the next five books are major prophecy and the last 12 are minor prophecy.

The students learn the New Testament has 27 books about Jesus and his Apostles and writers of first-hand events with Jesus and life.

What You Need to Know About Your Laudatory 128-B Chronos

A Correctional Counselor (CCI) may not receive general or laudatory chronos (form 128-B) and certificates from inmates. Those documents must be submitted directly to the Records Department by the program sponsors.

“This has always been the rule,” said General Population Associate Warden J. Lawson. “The staff sponsors or volunteer sponsors must submit the chronos or certificates to Inmate Records to be scanned. This is to make sure that no fraudulent documents make it into their Central File (C-File).”

Inmates may be given a hard copy of the chronos or certificate for their own records, however.

Several dozen programs

MAC Corner

and classes are offered at San Quentin and after completing or graduating, certificates and/or chronos are issued to inmate participants. For many years, inmates got used to submitting copies of their program chronos and certificates to their counselors to have them placed in their permanent C-File.

Subsequently, inmate records, including C-File, have transitioned from traditional paper files to paperless computer files where all documents must be “scanned” in.

“This will cause some delay in getting our old laudatory doc-

uments into our C-File,” said M. Nguyen, Men’s Advisory Council (MAC) secretary.

“For those men who still have paper copies of chronos and certificates, they must go back to the staff or volunteer sponsor who signed them and ask that sponsor to turn them into Records for scanning,” said Nguyen.

“It will be a challenge, however, for chronos and certificates signed by staff or volunteers who no longer work at San Quentin. The MAC will seek to find a solution for that issue.”

—Angelo Falcone

Living in a Perpetual State of War

By Juan Haines
Staff Writer

Whether or not Americans know it, we have been living in a state of perpetual war since the 1950s. We have gotten used to it and it has a distinct affect on how we think about everything from what's good or bad, right or wrong, or how we treat each other.

Each of these matters is acknowledged and addressed through the hopes, persistence, and dark humor of protagonist Joe Bonham, a casualty of World War I, in the National Book Award winner, "Johnny Got His Gun," (1939) by Dalton Trumbo.

War survivor Joe Bonham is left without arms or legs, is deaf, blind, and without speech. Joe refused to accept the consequences of perpetual war and found a way to tell it. *His mind was the only thing he had left and he had to find something to use it for...He only lay and tapped his message over and over again to people on the outside who didn't understand.*

Book Review

Joe is a sympathetic character, who is easy to pull for during his long struggle to overcome his living conditions. It is a struggle illuminated by understanding the dark truth behind a witty writing style, heavily dependent upon the concept of telling time and giving readers *plenty of time to think*.

Trumbo slyly asks readers *What do you want?* through Joe's character, who responds by saying *Let me out of here and take me back into the world*.

Trumbo argues that the answer from anyone to *What do you want?* is centered on a state of happiness.

It doesn't matter if you're locked up, the wealthiest person on the planet, or materialistically and/or spiritually the poorest; happiness is centered on various forms of freedom from restraints, which are cher-

ished states of being for the living.

"Johnny Got His Gun" delivers a strong impact for anyone incarcerated; especially those doing time in isolation. It's a book that forces incarcerated readers to understand fully what it means to do time, to tell time, to understand the meaning of life through time—perhaps even better than how Viktor E. Frankl, author of "Man's Search for Meaning" defined all of these elements of finding purpose in life.

Frankl, who survived a World War II concentration camp, wrote of how he survived one day to the next through future possibilities and understanding the limitations of the present. "Johnny Got His Gun" takes readers on a political ride that bears a distinct anti-war message, which is quite a bit more than Frankl's WWII deep reflections about enduring the ev-

eryday traumas inflicted by authorities. Trumbo not only wants the powers-that-be to be accountable for all citizens; he wants those who march patriotically off to war to know exactly what they are getting into.

Understanding yourself and your position in life is important, no matter where you're living. And, knowing your impact on the world, along with your place, is just as important.

The blacklisted Trumbo wrote more than 60 screen-



plays, including "Spartacus", "Exodus", "Papillon" and the Academy Award-winning "The Brave One."

Police Dramas Skew Views of the Justice System

By Emile DeWeaver
Staff Writer

The new FOX series "Lucifer" depicts a lopsided view of America's criminal justice system, but that may be the least of its sins.

In "Lucifer," Laura German plays Chloe Decker, a homicide detective who struggles to be taken seriously by her male co-workers. Tom Ellis plays Lucifer Morningstar, the fallen angel and beguiler extraordinary. Morningstar is the dark half of his and Decker's buddy cop-consultant team — think ABC's hit show "Castle," but replace author Richard Castle with the Devil.

Lucifer loves quips and sex (in that order). What distinguishes him from Richard Castle is his obsessive compulsion to punish criminals and bad people who always turn out to be one and the same.

The SQ Reviews team meets in a lot between the Education Department and *San Quentin News*. The team discusses how the mainstream media romanticizes corruption in law enforcement. Members of SQ Reviews have also been watching FOX's "Second Chance" and NBC's "Shades of Blue," two shows featuring corrupt police officers as protagonists whom the viewer should support.

"Lucifer falls into the same category as these other corrupt cop shows," I said. "How is it in the age of Black Lives Matters that media still cast corrupt authority figures as heroes?"

"They're playing to the confusion in society," replied Juan Meza. "Everybody knows that there's something wrong with our justice system. They think it's the criminal, and so they cheer for the dirty cop — been that way since Dirty Harry," said Meza. He added that au-

diences don't want to see that some cops represent the problems with the justice system.

"Yeah, it's hard for people to see problems with law enforcement," said Jonathan Chiu. "They're blinded by the Bernie Madoffs of the world. I mean, look at O.J. Simpson. The majority of America thought he was guilty and his acquittal gives the average person the impression that this kind of thing happens all the time. They think guilty people in court aren't punished, so the public gets outraged and says, 'Lock everybody up. We don't care how you do it. We just want criminals in jail.'"

"Your O.J. example does happen all the time," DeWeaver said. "Millionaires get away with crimes, but the thing is the 2.3 million people in prison today aren't millionaires. Some are even innocent and wouldn't be in prison if they'd had \$5,000 to hire an average attorney."

Contrary to the view that law enforcement is powerless to bring law breakers to justice, the members of SQ Reviews know how effective the criminal justice system is at obtaining convictions. It is so effective that defendants don't even have to be guilty.

The National Registry of Exonerations (exonerationsregistry.org) registered 873 exonerations that took place between 1989 and 2012, including 10 exonerations that occurred after the person's execution. Between 2012 and 2014 the rate of registered exonerations increased by 46 percent to 1,304, and in 2015 registration set the record for a single year with 149 exonerations.

This is just registered exonerations. The National Registry of Exonerations investigated 1,170 exonerations (exonerations they don't include

Watch This

in their register) that occurred "after it was discovered that police officers had deliberately framed dozens or hundreds of innocent defendants."

Some people may think the 2,623 exonerations is a small

number when compared with the 2.3 million people in prison, but we invite such citizens to read Bryan Stevenson's "Just Mercy" to discover how crushingly difficult it is for an innocent citizen to secure

exoneration in the United States.

After you've read "Just Mercy," please answer this: For every 146 exonerated in a record year like 2015, how many thousands weep in their cells because their stories of innocence aren't clear-cut enough, procedurally valid enough, for exoneration by our murky system?

CDCR Implements Pilot Program for Screening Visitors

By Marcus Henderson
Sports Editor

California's prison system says it is testing ion scanners and drug sniffing dogs to screen people who visit prisoners in 11 correctional facilities.

The plan is to amend regulations to require visitors "to submit to contraband and/or metal detection devices...and/or electronic drug detectors including, but not limited to, ion scanners," the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation reports.

CDCR asserts these regulations will stop the flow of contraband, namely drugs and cell phones, into the prisons, according to a January 2015 opinion column by Gina L. Clayton.

She is executive director of the Essie Justice Group, an Oakland-based group of women with incarcerated loved ones. Its goals are to empower women and end mass incarceration.

These new procedures affect women disproportionately, Clayton said. Women and children make up the majority who visit prisons and these procedures place extra burdens on

them, she added.

Visitors already endure long drives and may have their cars searched in the prison parking lot. Once inside, they are subjected to pat downs, metal detectors and having their clothes examined for dress code compliance.

This can leave the visitor confused, humiliated and broken, some family members have told the Essie Justice Group.

These new policies further discourage visitation, Clayton contends. The Essie Group urges the state to find more effective and a less humiliating approach to keeping prisons safe from contraband other than dogs and strip searches.

The CDCR 2016-2017 budget proposal states, "In the event of a positive ion scan, visitors ... will be given the option of a millimeter wave full body scan to detect drugs or contraband concealed beneath clothing. If visitors refuse the ... millimeter wave body scan, they will be allowed a non-contact visit."

CDCR is requesting \$7.9 million for additional equipment and staffing for its Enhanced Drug and Contraband

Interdiction Program (EDCIP).

In 2014-15, the Legislature approved a two-year limited-term funding of \$5.2 million per year for the department to implement its EDCIP program.

CDCR chose to place its EDCIP pilot program in 11 institutions. The pilot placement is to gather understanding of the effectiveness of the program through the department's varying custody levels, including male, female, camps and reception center facilities.

The department's canine program statewide currently has 49 canine teams located in the Northern, Central and Southern California regions, according to the CDCR budget proposal.

The department has extended the written public comment period to April regarding the proposed amendments and the canine searches.

Clayton said that visitation protects society as a whole; it helps inmates stay out of trouble and engage in rehabilitative programs. Those inmates who maintain loving and positive relationships with family are less likely to re-offend, studies show.

Dungeons and Dragons on the Mainline

By Marcus Henderson
Sports Editor

The “gamer” phenomenon has invaded the San Quentin Mainline. A group of multiracial, multicultural prisoners has forged a deep bond over Dungeons and Dragons and an array of cardboard character games.

“A lot of people think we are a bunch of nerds, but we are gamers. This is how we choose to spend our time and use our creativity,” said George “Merso” Cole-El.

The non-electronic games are fantasy based, where players take on the roles of heroes. Usually a group of six to seven players sets out on different “dangerous” adventures.

The player who sets the scene or paints the mental picture is known as the Dungeon Master.

The Dungeon Master decides the threats the players will face and the rewards they will receive for accomplishing the quest.

“These games have real creativity,” said Cole-El. “All the creatures are mystical, and they do combat. I actually get my anger issues out through these games.”

Most of the games are about role-playing, where the players name their own characters. They decide their personalities, abilities and what weapons they carry.

They can choose standard weapons like long swords, battle axes and long bows that can be upgraded with magic spells by a wizard.

“It’s like playing a video game or reading a book,” said Gerry Grimes. “I choose my characters that reflect my personality. I like the hands-on battles. I’m not into the wizards.”



Photo by Ralphaele Casale

Jim Kitlas, Mike Oryall, George Cole-El, Gerry Grimes and Paul Stauffer

The games are math-based. They roll different shaped dice that decide the stage of combat, character powers and armor class.

“You have to image yourself in a field, with different creatures popping up. Elements of rain and thunder in the background and battles are taking place. The dice gives hits and damage points then you add or subtract those points,” said Vance “DT” Farland.

He said the games give him a chance to use his imagination and bring out different parts of his personality though his characters.

The creatures that might pop up are animals, devils, demons and angels.

Bat Swarm is a huge bat with

100 high-pitched sounds that fill the air and a mass of small meat-eating bats with a thirst for blood.

You have Lillenn, a seductive winged fairy with a snake body from the waist down. There’s also a demon named Urock, a mix of man and a gigantic vulture.

There are thousand of creatures that vary from game to game. The groups play “Pathfinder”, “World of Darkness” and “Rift.” There are also a movie and video-theme games like “Star Wars” and “Doom.” All the rules are similar to Dungeons and Dragons with dice and character sheets.

The guys decorated old Scrabble pieces as figurines to maneuver around the board to resemble

the combat.

The games are a cross between chess, Monopoly and Risk.

“After being a cancer in society, you get to play the hero,” said Justus Evans. “That gives you a different perspective of society. Now I have a deeper respect for people, property and humanity.”

The role-playing is therapeutic for some of the guys; they become their ideal person, relieving aggression by using their words and imagination. They also can escape to different dimensions.

“Star Wars” and “Rift” propel gamers into a futuristic outer space, to battle space creatures, spaceships and robots.

They can become were-

wolves, vampires and witches in the “World of Darkness.” They even fight zombie dogs and monsters in “Doom.”

“These games help you interact with a variety of people, and that builds your social skills,” said Evans. “No matter your age or what you’re into, everybody is equal when they come to the table.”

Another popular game is “Magic: The Gathering”. Instead of dice, it’s played with cards. There are more than 5,000 cards that have pictures of lands, creatures and spells. The player has to build a deck of 40 to 60 cards with which to play. Lacking the original cards, the men transformed mountains of pinochle cards to replicate the game. Land cards represent money and have color codes. You can buy artifacts, spells and enchantments that the gamers make up.

“It’s like ‘Lord of the Rings,’” said Farland. Just like with video games, with each game you can reach different levels, depending on the experience you gain.

“You gain experience points when you defeat creatures, complete the story objective and use your problem-solving skill,” said Michael “Sparky” Lain.

The game is over when the mission is accomplished and your character is still alive.

“A lot of people think we are wasting our time,” said Cole-El. “We are learning to multi-task, how to think on our feet and diplomacy.”

“We want to bring the bonds of unity back. We have an open-door policy. We’re not a clique; we are welcoming, because in the end, the heroes are supposed to win.”

Parolee Finds Redemption Through Basketball

By Rahsaan Thomas
Journalism Guild Chairman

For Jamaal Lee, education was unimportant in his hoop dreams, and he wound up in prison. Now, at age 33, he’s redeemed himself by securing a Vanguard University basketball scholarship with his focus on getting his degree.

Lee is in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree in order to become a teacher and a coach, according to an article in the Daily Pilot newspaper.

“When I realized I wanted to further my coaching experience and my resume wasn’t strong enough to do what I knew I wanted to do, school became an option,” Lee said. “And I thought basketball could be part of that too. I knew I could still play.”

As a youth growing up in Long Beach and South Central Los Angeles, he chased the allure of a spot on a NBA team. However, academics and logistics kept Lee off his high school team, and failing to remain eligible ended his attempt to play for the College of the Canyons in 2002.

Lee’s subsequent attempt to play for New Mexico Highlands University ended with

his arrest and conviction.

“My mom will tell you that all I ever cared about was basketball,” said Lee. “She’d always tell me I needed a Plan B. But I never saw past Plan A, which was basketball. I wanted to play in the NBA. But, I was finally sane enough to appreciate what education could do for me. And once I saw that, I’ve been going hard after that degree.”

Potholes littered the path to getting his degree. The father of two daughters started out at Orange Coast College (OCC). At the time, he was separated from his wife when he made the decision to forsake working to play basketball. Lee said that “accelerated the divorce process.”

Additionally, Lee had to sit out the 2014-2015 season with Orange Coast College due to an eligibility stipulation that required he maintain a 4.0 grade-point average and take 19 units.

Lee’s basketball talent and hard work earned him the scholarship to start his junior year with Vanguard University. He averaged 17.1 points and led the state with 12.7 rebounds per game.

The 6-foot-3 utility player

recorded a triple-double for the OCC Pirates when Coach Steve Spencer started Lee at point guard. He had 17 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists. He has dropped 29 points twice and once grabbed 22 rebounds.

He’s a unique player, Spencer said. “He’s our best scorer, rebounder, passer and leader and not just because he is older, but because of how he is and how he plays. He handles himself in a classy, dignified mature way.”

His performance on the ball court and in the classroom earned him the Vanguard scholarship.

“You always have to ask questions any time you are interested in signing a guy who doesn’t take the traditional path to get here,” Vanguard Coach Rhett Soliday said. “But the more I got to know Jamaal and spend time with him, the more I believe not only is he the right fit for the special community that Vanguard is, he’s going to add a ton to it. He is going to be a refreshing and energizing presence in our community.”

Lee signed a letter of intent to play for Vanguard University in Costa Mesa on Jan. 22.

His mother Mavis McKnight and OCC Coach Spencer were by his side, smiling.

“I’m just so proud of him,” McKnight said. “I’m proud of the man he has turned out to be and the fact that he pushed through and didn’t give up.

He’s had this dream, and he is on this journey to make that dream come true. When we’re young, we don’t always get it. We have to grow into stuff. I’d say he is working Plan B now, and things are coming together for him.”



FREE WORK SHOP FOR FAMILIES OF LIFERS

REGISTER AT: ourroadprisonproject.org

Housing: Prison to Community:

Wed., April 13, 6-8 PM

Satellite Affordable Housing Associates

Madison at 14th Apartments

160 14th Street

Oakland, CA 94612

New Laws: New Opportunities:

Speaker: Keith Wattle

Wed., May 11, 6-8 PM

Oakland City Hall

City Council Chambers

1 Frank Ogawa Plaza

Oakland, CA 94612

Giants' Pitchers Winding Up

By Marcus Henderson
Sports Editor

The San Quentin Giants baseball team is entering spring training with two of its best pitchers ready to unleash their powerful arms. Jeff "Duey" Dumont and John Appley will be ready to keep batters off balance while playing the sport they say makes them better people.

Dumont believes that sports at San Quentin is one of the best self-help groups.

"You get to interact with people from different backgrounds and religions," said Dumont. "That helps you understand others. You learn how to compromise."

Dumont credits his pitching coaches over the years with teaching him the right way to play.

"This is a team, and I have a job to do just like everybody else," said Dumont.

Dumont said the keys to



Photo by L.L. Sam Robinson

Jeff "Duey" Dumont

winning are that you have to have a positive dugout and that you play with confidence, whether you are at the plate or on the mound.

"You can't let your emotions get away from you and stay patient," said Dumont.

Dumont thinks he has a legitimate chance to parole with the

passing of new youth offender rules.

"It's not a day that goes by where you wish you can take back the things you did as a kid," said Dumont. "You just have to make amends for those bad decisions."

Appley added, "Knowing I took someone's life, I owe it to my victim to live an honest and forthright life, the best I possibly can live."

"Being a baseball player you have to put your ego aside. You have to take constructive criticism. You have to know they are not attacking you personally but helping you become a better player."

He said the best teams win because they play together.

"I try to limit my walks. I don't like putting guys on base that didn't work for it. But, if I get in a jam, I know I have a defense behind me," said Appley.

"Growing up, I had anger issues after my family moved

to Iowa. I was 11 years old, and I didn't want to be there. Now looking back, it was super petty," said Appley.

Appley returned to California at age of 18. He was drinking and doing drugs, which ultimately led to the crime.

"I thought moving back would solve the problem. But things stayed the same because I stayed the same. I don't blame anyone but myself," said Appley.

He credits programs like Addiction Recovery Counseling and AA for helping him to understand the factors that led to his abuse of drugs and alcohol.

Appley said he recognizes these social skills reduce harmful behavior.

"I'm just grateful to be at a place like San Quentin where you have a lot of programs."

He said the baseball program helps in rehabilitation because it provides a healthy, competitive environment where outside visitors can interact with



Photo by L.L. Sam Robinson

John Appley

incarcerated people.

"It's about communication to let people know we changed and that we are remorseful for the things we did," said Appley.

Brian Asey Hangs Up His Crown

By Rahsaan Thomas
Journalism Guild Chairman

At the start of the San Quentin Kings 2016 basketball tryouts, one person was notably missing — last year's team captain, Brian Asey.

"A legend retires," said Kings Head Coach Orlando Harris.

"I am retiring because my body won't let me play at the level I want to play at," said Asey. "Also, I am so busy. Basketball is my outlet; I really don't want to retire, but I want to give some others guys a chance to experience what I experienced as a King. I could still play."

The Kings are a 40 and older basketball team. They play against outside community members, who come into the prison on Saturday afternoons. For incarcerated men over 40, being on the Kings is like playing for the pros of the prison. Outside competitors have included former semi-pro Will Wheatley, who played for the San Francisco Rumble, and former Claremont-McKenna College players like Chris Blees and Patrick Lacey.

At 49, Asey may still be seen playing pickup games, but he walked away from a long career of organized sports. He says he played guard for all three of the high schools he attended. Fighting caused Asey's transfers from Lennox High School to Davis Star Jordan in Watts. He says he also played football for those schools.

Additionally, Asey says he played for two midnight leagues, one in Long Beach and the other in San Pedro.

At 21, Asey started coming back and forth to prison over issues stemming from his drug use. He continued to play basketball in prison.

"I use basketball as an outlet, and it helps me confront a lot of my issues, like arguing and getting mad," said Asey. "You very seldom see me get mad. I



Photo by Ralpheale Casale

Brian Asey (White Kings Uniform) defended by Bittermen Player Rob Ebner

don't get mad no more. Basketball is my release, my getaway. It helps me to forget about my problems."

In California State Prison-Solano, Asey played in basketball leagues. There he met league rival Thad Fleeton.

"Me and Thad used to battle in Solano," said Asey. "I tried everything to beat their team."

Asey and Fleeton ended up becoming teammates on the Kings in 2012.

"I got here in December 2011, made the team and was elected captain," said Asey. "We were so good that first year the (San Quentin) Warriors didn't want to scrimmage us."

As a King, his scoring high was 32 points in a 2014 game.

Asey says his most memorable King moment came in a game where the Kings were down by one point with the ball and only seconds left on the clock. King's Assistant Coach Ishmael Freelon called a play for Fleeton to get the ball in the post. The other team had no answer for Fleeton's turnaround post-up move.

Shadeed Wallace-Stepter recalled the game and added,

"That was an all-time classic."

According to Wallace-Stepter, it was windy with three seconds winding down when Asey changed the plan.

"I was supposed to get the ball to Thad, but I was wide open, and I shot the ball from the corner by the bench. It hit

the side of the backboard and went into the razor wire," said Asey. "Thad stop talking to me for two weeks."

Although Asey won't be suiting up anymore, he isn't leaving the Kings.

"It's sad to see him leave as a player, but we are excited about him moving on to become the new general manager of the Kings," said Harris.

Asey added, "I look forward to the outside guests coming in. I'll still be out there to greet them."

Off the court, Asey has been productive.

"Today, I'm going to college, I am trying to build SQPR, and I'm a curator for TEDx," said Asey. "That was my biggest accomplishment thus far. Today I am trying to find myself."

The father of two is proud that his hard work on TEDx paid off. The event featured Curtis "Wall Street" Carroll and California Inspector General Robert Barton.

Asey says he'll miss practicing with the Kings.

"I will miss practicing with

(Antonio) Manning the most," said Asey. "Manning and I had this thing where I told him to go hard on me all the time; that way it only makes me better. That was our little thing."

Now Manning will be practicing with the new 2016 Kings including Tare "Cancun" Beltran, Marvin Cosby, Thad Fleeton, Demond Lewis, Aubra-Lamont "Coocoo" McNeely, Oris "Pep" Williams, Charles Sylvester, J. "Mailman" Ratchford, Derrick Holloway, D. "Zayd" Nickolson, Whitney Vardel Jackson, Joseph Kelly and other practice squad players: Kevin Carr, Timothy Long and Jamal Green.

"I think Holloway is gonna have a calming effect on the offense. Zyad brings a lot of energy, hustle, and he's an excellent post player, and Green is an excellent defender that can be a phenomenal player," said Harris.

Asey believes new King recruits like Holloway will make great replacements.

"I like Holloway," said Asey. "I step out; he steps in. I wish he had played when I was playing."



**Audrey Auld
1964-2015**

The Day of Peace committee would like to invite all San Quentin general population inmates to join us on April 23, 2016 in celebrating our 6th Annual "Peace Day". Come out and support what "Peace" is in your own life and how your practice of peace contributes in our San Quentin community.

Scheduled to Perform:
John Carter Cash Band, Mike Miller,
Coalition Hip Hop and Blame Sally
Thank You, Day of Peace Committee Members

Documentary Examines Immigrant’s Journey

By Juan Haines
Staff Writer

An hour-long documentary about an ex-offender who spent nearly two decades behind bars and then sought forgiveness through non-violence advocacy made its premiere for an audience of nearly 100 prisoners, mostly Asian and Pacific Islanders.

“Breathin’: The Eddy Zheng Story” debuted at San Quentin State Prison on Feb. 29.

The documentary, five years in the making, was scheduled to make its debut to the free world on March 11 to a sold-out audience in Oakland.

At the age of 16, Eddy Zheng received a life sentence after confessing to a home invasion robbery.

The family Zheng criminalized consisted of two children, a mother and father. The father, now in his ‘90s, lives in Chinatown.

“The kids have always opposed my release and stay in this country,” Zheng said. “I always wanted to make amends.”

The film opens with Zheng standing inside a San Quentin prison cell.

Zheng is filmed reading detailed accounts of a confession he says he does not remember.

“I had an urge to get on my knees and ask for forgiveness,” Zheng said. He said his shame kept him from doing so.

“The victims did nothing wrong, but they will have suffered for the rest of their lives for what I did,” Zheng told the audience after the film.

“What hurt most is that we couldn’t feel safe in our own home,” said one victim, who was a child at the time Zheng committed the home invasion robbery.

Zheng explained his family’s



Photo by Eddie Herrera- San Quentin News

World premiere of the Eddy Zheng documentary at San Quentin

shame because of his crime and incarceration.

“It was disgrace,” Zheng’s mothersaid. Shesaid she couldn’t tell Zheng’s grandfather about his grandson’s incarceration because of shame. “No way!” She exclaimed.

Zheng said that he wants to validate the words and feelings of the victims of his crime.

“I don’t know when the opportunity will come for me to help my victims heal,” Zheng said. “It may sound vain, but if I live a productive life, then maybe making a difference in preventing violence could help them heal.”

Zheng wrote an apology letter to seek forgiveness from his crime victims’ family.

“I had to wait for the right time,” he said. “I did not want to open old wounds.”

“For my family’s sake, please make him make a life anywhere but here,” one of the victims said in the documentary.

After being denied parole 10 times, Zheng said that he believed that all his hopes and dreams were shattered, “We believe that they were lies,” he

said. “Even if you think your dreams and hopes are lies, don’t give up. Hope is what keeps us going. Even when you only see rejection, don’t give up.”

Zheng was given a release date after his 12th time before the parole board after spending 19 years incarcerated; however, facing deportation, he spent two years in an immigration detention facility. After winning his case in federal court, his mother

told him that he’d better be a good son from now on and give her a “chubby grandson.”

Scenes were shown of Zheng’s wedding, and the chapel audience erupted in applause.

“If we have that breath, there is hope,” Zheng said. “I always tell youngsters on the streets, if you stay ready, you don’t have to get ready.”

Last June, Zheng received an 18-month grant to advocate

against the school-to-prison pipeline, organize grass roots efforts against mass incarceration, and inform policy makers on the impact incarceration has on inmates.

Zheng said the funding allows him to travel around the country to talk about these issues.

The funding also allows Zheng to work on reentry and jobs programs for returning citizens and to build support networks.

“The film humanizes us,” Zheng said. “I cannot go back in time, but I can heal and help other people deal with intergenerational trauma.”

Zheng was honored at San Francisco City Hall for “Single-handedly bringing the African-American and Asian communities together.”

“I am who I am today, because the community gave me a second chance,” Zheng said in the documentary. “The day I stop struggling, I stop breathing.”

On Easter Sunday, 2015, Zheng received a full pardon from Gov. Jerry Brown.



Photo by Eddie Herrera- San Quentin News

Audience watching the journey of Eddy Zheng

Criminal and Gangs Anonymous Welcomes New Members

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

Not long ago, they terrorized inner cities across California on a mission of criminal destruction, intimidation, mayhem and death, targeting other gang rivals with malicious intent.

On many occasions, there was more gun play and rapid exchange of gunfire from semi- and automatic weapons than on a shooting range.

“There was a time I felt it was my responsibility to eliminate Crips,” said former Blood gang member Cedrick Walker. But, today he has come full circle. His spirituality is about “getting rid of all of that madness.”

The result of this activity was “senseless and tragic,” said Sean Ruffin. Families were decimated. Fathers and mothers lost sons and daughters to a war on crime over which America’s law enforcement agencies have no control.

“America is quick to invade the homeland of foreign sovereign nations around the world, but somehow it can’t stop the violence in our communities,”



CGA Logo

said Walker.

“The California justice system is quick to charge and put enhancements on an individual’s criminal activity,” he said. “But it’s systemically slow indicting local police officers for their wrongful behavior. We’ve lost control of the streets in our neighborhoods, and something has to be done about it in a hurry.”

In 2011, a gang member from the Bloods and one from Crips met at San Quentin after having served time at other prisons. They decided it was time to do something about the violence perpetrated in California’s depressed, misunderstood and under-served communities. “In acting upon

our intentions, we must protect our communities,” said Cory Willis.

He is chairman of a group called Criminal and Gangs Anonymous. Since 2012 it has emerged into a 12-step program that helps men come to the realization that a criminal mind is a terrible thing to waste. The group’s chief sponsor, Vivian Florendo, radiated with joy when she told the audience “how proud I am to be involved with this program.”

The 12-step program focuses its curriculum on the Cycle of Addition. Here are samples:

Surrender Step:

1. We reviewed our past, admitting a lack of strength and control over our addictions to all forms of illegal activity and that our lifestyle was neither decent nor manageable.

2. We became willing to believe that change is possible by learning a different way of living through suggestions from those who have trudged the path of recovery before us out of insanity.

3. We made a decision to let go of destructive self-will in exchange for spiritual principles becoming willing to seek

God’s care and protection, as we understood God.

Self Examination Step:

4. We searched our past thoroughly, making inventory lists of the good we have done and our wrongs and resentments toward others.

5. We sought forgiveness from God, ourselves and admitted to someone we trusted, the wrongs we have done.

6. We made personal commitment to abandon “our” defects of characters, to practice decent reasonable conduct through daily actions and behavior.

7. We honestly recognized our shortcomings whenever bad habits surfaced, promptly correcting our thinking and actions.

Working Step:

8. We made a thorough list of all those we had harmed, realizing how our negative actions impacted their lives, become willing to make amends to them all.

9. We made direct amends and restitution whenever possible to the persons we injured except when doing so would cause further injury or harm.

Maintenance Step:

10. We continue daily to take a personal inventory of ourselves

and, whenever wrong, had the courage to admit it.

11. We sought to improve on spiritual awareness through prayer and meditation with God, asking for guidance to being decent and responsible to ourselves and more caring toward others.

12. We, each experiencing a spiritual awakening by applying these steps, freely share our truth and experiences with others like us and continue living in good orderly direction in all our affairs.

Fifteen “men of the streets” were welcomed into the fraternity of Criminal and Gangs Anonymous in February.

They are:

- Upumoni Ama,
- Vikram Billa,
- Raphael Calix
- Marvin Cosby
- Eduardo Delpapena
- Howard Jones
- Son Nguyen
- Charles Nicholson
- Jerome Oates
- Randall Kimani
- Edgar Lalazar
- Harry Sassounian
- Garth Smith
- Andrew Videau
- Eric Warner