Cell corridor at Pelican Bay State Prison

California’s Prisoner Segregation Scrutinized
By John Eagan
San Quentin News Adviser

Big changes are on the horizon for California’s solitary confinement policies.

In the wake of hunger strikes, public protests and a complaint to the United Nations, California prison officials are gearing up for policy changes expected to dramatically reduce the number of prisoners in solitary lockdowns.

State prison chief Matthew Cate announced April 24 that “the department is already pro-jecting a decreased need for segregated housing for gang members and has cancelled the See Security Housing on Page 4

Recent State Study Criticizes Offender Classification Practice
By Richard Lindsey
Staff Writer

The current practice by California prison officials of categorizing and housing some prisoners in higher level institutions than necessary has been blasted by a new report funded by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

The report found that current administrative practice—called classification—creates a criminogenic effect that makes offenders more dangerous than they were before entering one of the state’s 33 prisons. In addition, the report points out that CDCR’s classification methodology allows favorable factors that would dissuade placement in higher-level institutions to be ignored—resulting in many well-behaved prisoners being misclassified. Nearly 68 percent of California’s prisoners are housed in higher security facilities. Once these misclassified offenders are released from prison, their likelihood for return is greatly increased, according to the report.

CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

During the classification process, prisoners are given a preliminary score based on their social history and criminal record. Annual re-classification adjusts that score relative to their in-prison behavior, with points added for misconduct or subtracted for good behavior. However, instead of relying on demonstrated behavior, prisoners are often over-classified by the application of Close Custody designations and Mandatory Minimums, two components that override preliminary scores to determine prisoner placement.

CLOSE CUSTODY

Close Custody is a designation reserved for prisoners considered an escape risk and make up nearly 40 percent of the state’s 144,000 prisoners.

To read what prisoners have to say to their mothers, see Pages 6 and 7 for their Mother’s Day quotes.

Book Views Plight Of Former Lifers
By Juan Haines
Managing Editor

She sifts through the emotional journey that these men and their families endure, writing: “No one really goes to prison alone. An invisible rope stretches from the heart and mind of a prisoner out through the bars of his cell, up into the sky, over the hills and water, dropping down to earth far away, inside the lives of the people left behind. As the years pass – five, 10, 20, 30 – the fibers of that rope become frayed, and sometimes they snap.”

Mullane goes into extensive detail unlooki...
Medical Care

What Is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis is a disease of the lungs that is commonly called TB. TB is caused by a germ that floats in the air. You can be exposed to TB if a person with infectious TB disease talks, coughs, shouts or sneezes. This sprays TB germs into the air around you. Anyone nearby can breathe the TB germs into their lungs. Some of these people could become infected with TB.

Why Is It Important To Have A TB Skin Test?

You can be infected with TB and not know it. TB germs can live in your body without making you sick right away. The TB Skin Test can tell you early that you need treatment.

Residents of prisons are at risk for developing TB. Since TB is spread through the air, all people who share the same air space can get it. Inmates should be tested regularly to make sure TB does not spread.

The TB Skin Test can catch TB early. The earlier you find TB infection, the easier it can be to treat.

¿ Que es la tuberculosis? La tuberculosis, o “TB” (ti b) como se le llama comúnmente en Inglés, es una enfermedad de los pulmones, que es causada por un germen que se encuentra en el aire. Los gérmenes de la tuberculosis pasan al aire cuando alguien que está infectado con la enfermedad estornuda, tosa o habla, por esta razón, usted puede estar expuesto a la tuberculosis con simplemente respirar el aire contaminado.

¿ Porque es importante tener un análisis de la piel para determinar si tiene o no tuberculosis?

Usted puede estar infectado y no saberlo. Al principio de la enfermedad es posible tener los gérmenes tuberculosos en el cuerpo sin sentirse enfermo. Este examen puede demostrarlo a tiempo si es que se necesita tratamiento médico.

Las personas en las prisiones están en riesgo de contraer la tuberculosis, Puesto que la tuberculosis se expande en el aire libre, por lo tanto al respirar el aire contaminado, cualquier persona puede contagiarse con esta enfermedad. Todos los reclusos tienen que ser examinados regularmente para asegurarse que la tuberculosis no se disemine por toda la dependencia penitenciaria.

El análisis de la piel ayuda a comprobar si existen gérmenes tuberculosos en el cuerpo. Con este examen la tuberculosis se puede detectar desde su comienzo y recurrir que entre más temprano se detecte la enfermedad, más fácil será su tratamiento.

SF Seeks to Build New County Jail

By N.T. “Noble” Butler Journalism Guild Writer

San Francisco officials have taken the first steps to modernize its jail system. The plan was prompted by the aging condition of the Bryant Street Jail. Officials believe that it is unstable and could not survive an earthquake.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) wants to purchase the entire block where the Hall of Justice is located at an estimated cost of between $7.7 and $9.4 million. The total cost of planning and building the new jail, including a new Superior Court building, is estimated at $425 million.

The County Jail system is designed to house 2,360 detainees. San Bruno houses about 1,100 prisoners and Seventh Street holds 464. The jail at the Hall of Justice on Bryant Street accommodates about 900 detainees.

If the land were purchased by 2015, officials would begin construction in 2018 and will open the jail for intake by 2019.

City officials have not contacted the owners of the land about offers. The San Francisco Examiner contacted one of the owners, who commented, “Why build a jail on such precious land?”

Environmentalists Visit ‘Green Life’

PRISONER GROUP RALLIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

By Juan Haines Managing Editor

Last month, two world-renowned environmentalists paid a visit to the Green Life program at San Quentin. One might think the environment would be the last thing that a person doing time would have on his mind, but the Green Life teaches prisoners about issues like sustainable growth, environmental justice, and waste management.

Manuel Maqueda and Julia Butterfly Hill are both interested in how prisoners are dedicating themselves to caring for the planet.

Maqueda originally studied law and economics in Spain. But when he moved to the United States, the worldwide misuse of plastics caught his attention and he redirected his career. Maqueda got involved in a documentary studying the environmental havoc wrought by plastics on islands in the Pacific.

“It is not a good idea to make a product that is only needed for a short period of time with a material that will last forever,” he said.

Maqueda said his visit to San Quentin was an opportunity to converse with like-minded environmentalists. He also talked about artist Chris Jordan, who captured 2.3 million prisoner jumpouts – one for every incarcerated American – as a visual representation of mass incarceration in the United States.

National American Sues for Ceremonial Tobacco Right

A San Quentin prisoner is suing the California prison system for denying Native Americans the right to use tobacco during religious ceremonies.

Daniel Trevino, a member of the Cherokee Nation, filed the suit in the Northern District Federal Court in San Francisco. The defendant is the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

The prison rules manual provides an exemption for the use of ceremonial tobacco products for Native American religious ceremonies. However, many institutions, including San Quentin, routinely issue rules violations reports for possessing tobacco, even to be used for religious purposes. Trevino stated that recently arrived Native American prisoners report that tobacco is used in other institutions without men being equal to Native Americans would be equal to Native Americans.

Conservationist Julia Butterfly Hill’s visit was her second to San Quentin. “What touched me about the men I met inside of San Quentin is the courage I experience in this space,” she said. “It takes courage to care about this world, the way that you do, under the circumstances you are in. That really touched me.”

Butterfly Hill sat in a circle of convicted felons as she spoke about her transformation into an activist fighting against the deforestation of America’s rainforests that began with occupying a 1008-year-old redwood — an experience that ended up lasting 738 days. She attributes the success of her occupation to her stubbornness, which grew out of overcoming a rough childhood.

“The greatest obstacle to success is in the mind,” she said. Butterfly Hill compared her transformation into an activist fighting against the deforestation of America’s rainforests that began with occupying a 1008-year-old redwood — an experience that ended up lasting 738 days. She attributes the success of her occupation to her

By Adam Barboza Journalism Guild Writer

Last month marked the 17th anniversary of the tragic death of singer and songwriter Selena Quintanella, known as “La Reina de la musica Tejana” – The Queen of Tejano music.

Selena was born and raised in Texas. She started singing at age three and had her own band by the time she was nine, called Selena y Los Dinos. Selena signed her first recording contract, with EMI/Capitol, in 1989, and her popularity quickly grew. She was named “Top Latin Artist of the 90’s” and “Best selling Latin artist of the decade” by Billboard magazine. The Queen of Tejano music.

Selena was born and raised in Corpus Christi, Texas by Yolanda Saldívar, who commented, “Why build a jail on such precious land?”

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In South Dakota two inmates, Blaine Brown Plant and Clayton Creek, have also sued the warden of the corrections department because of the tobacco ban in that state.

Richard Moves Camp, a traditional Lakota healer said during a federal trial "denying the use of tobacco by Native Americans would be equal to taking bibles away from Chris-
States Rethink Prison Solitary Confinement

THERE ARE GROWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF ISOLATION

By San Quentin News Staff

In 1831, French historian Alexis de Tocqueville visited the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, where prison officials were pioneering a novel rehabilitation, based on Quaker principles of reflection and penitence. They called it solitary confinement, and it’s where we got the name penitentiary.

Now, 180 years later, “at least 25,000 prisoners” — and possibly many more, according to various sources — are held in solitary confinement in the United States, with little consistency in the amount of time they will spend there. The United Nations reported that more prisoners are held in solitary confinement in the United States than any other democratic nation, according to a recent article in the New York Times.

“By 2005, 44 states had supermax prisons or their equivalents. In most, prisoners get out of their cells for only a few hours a week. They are fed through slots in their cell doors and are denied access to work programs or other rehabilitation efforts. If visitors are allowed, the interactions are conducted with no physical contact,” the Times concluded.

Some prisoners seem to adjust to isolation, according to a report by Craig W. Haney, a psychology professor at the University of California. But Haney added that “the rigid control, absence of normal human interaction and lack of stimulation imposed by prolonged isolation can cause a wide range of psychological symptoms, including insomnia, withdrawal, rage and aggression, depression, and even thoughts of suicide. Worse still is the fact that for many of these men, the real damage is only apparent when they get out of this environment.”

A New York Times story on Pelican Bay, a supermax prison in California, reported that more prisoners claim they suffer from nervousness, anxiety, lethargy or other psychological complaints. Seventy percent said they felt themselves to be at risk of “impending nervous breakdown.”

Because of what has been learned about the adverse psychological affects of isolation, humanitarian groups have argued that, its use should have been ended long ago. However, because of their extensive staffing requirements, the economic factor has brought attention to the use of these facilities. California, Mississippi, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Ohio and Washington State are reevaluating the use of long-term isolation and reevaluating how many prisoners really require it, how long they should be kept there, and how best to move them out.

Exercise yard for segregated inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison

ACLU Releases Report on State’s Prison Realignment Plan

Last month, the ACLU of California released a report with specific suggestions geared toward state lawmakers telling them what they should do in order to comply with the terms of a Supreme Court prison population reduction order without overcrowding county jails with low-level offenders.

The state’s prison population reduction plan is called realignment. It is premised on the counties’ willingness to implement evidence-based practices that will reduce recidivism, limit incarceration costs and investing in criminal justice resources more efficiently. However, the report finds that since the new legislation does not establish systematic data collection or evaluation, the state has missed the opportunity to successfully measure the effectiveness of its realignment plan.

Of the 53 counties that the report examined, it found that too few explicitly allocated funds to make even the most well-intentioned plans to institute evidence-based alternatives to incarceration.

“Among the counties that allocated funds specifically for evidence-based programing, such as job counseling, family reunification, bavioral therapy, and mental health and substance abuse treatment, the allocations overall too often insufficient to carry out the stated plans or fail to provide access to the estimated number of individuals in need,” according to the report.

The following recommendations were made:

• Create and fund concrete plans for community-based alternatives to detention
• Implement and fund local pretrial release policies
• Review the impact of immigration status and immigration detention
• Ensure that community corrections practices are based on evidence
• Encourage local courts to utilize realignment’s new sentencing options

—Juan Haines

Model Prisoner Vang Paroles After 17 Years

By Julian Glenn Padgett

Journalism Guild Chairman

After half his life in prison, Touly Vang is scheduled to parole from San Quentin. He is determined to be a positive role model and a voice that speaks out against gang violence in the Hmong community.

“When I was found suitable for parole I was basically in disbelief,” Vang said. “I had to hold a couple of times to make sure it was what I heard.” When it registered, Vang said, he thought about his family and friends who helped him prepare for his parole board hearing.

“I thought of the family of the victim, Kha Huo. I thought about his mother and sister,” said Vang. “I thought I was worthy, if 18 years was enough after I took a human life.” When asked if that answer had been given, Vang said yes it had. Now his goal is to give a lot more back to the Hmong community.

“I was self-destructive and angry. I tried to find my way and couldn’t,” said Vang. “Parson taught me to be independent but also to be humble and seek others’ advice.”

Vang credits San Quentin’s programs, Addiction Rehabilitation Center (ARC), Non-violent Communication (NVC), “fourth rage into power (GRIP), Impact, Kairos, and Prison University Project (PUP), for instilling the direction he now has. ‘Impact’s violence prevention module is what clicked for me today. When I’m angry I know violence isn’t going to straighten out the situation,’ Vang said. ‘I know not to meet the same energy with anger.’

“The rigid control, absence of normal human interaction and lack of stimulation imposed by prolonged isolation can cause a wide range of psychological symptoms, including insomnia, withdrawal, rage and aggression, depression, and even thoughts of suicide…”

Touly Vang at a self help group graduation ceremony

He thanked Jacques Verduin, a volunteer who teaches GRIP, and Katargeo for helping him.

Jacques is an inspiration. His help is genuine,” said Vang. “With PUP I stepped out of my comfort zone going to college. They challenged me and taught me self worth plus the value of education.”

Born in a refugee camp in Thailand, his family fled to the Philippines after a civil war broke out there. Later they would move again. “We came to America,” said Vang. Suddenly he found himself lured into a new battle zone, one of gangs and violence.

“What drew me to gangs was the camaraderie,” Vang said. “It was hard being first generation Hmong. I could hardly speak English. The gangs offered me a sense of belonging. It was like family.’

Yet when his parents and siblings found out they did not approve. “It was a culture clash between the old and the new,” said Vang. “They weren’t happy with me. They were very disappoint ed.”

Today his family is very proud of him, Vang said, especially his plans to speak out against gangs in the Hmong community. His message to Governor Brown regarding juvenile justice is clear. “San Quentin’s education and self-esteem programs should be the model.”

“Locking up kids and throwing away the key is not the answer,” Vang said. “There’s a disconnection. People are not connecting to their kid’s cry for help.”

“At 17, I came to prison. Now I’m 34, I have 11 sisters and three brothers,” said Vang. “I have a long way to go still, but for now I just want to be with my family and have some sticky rice and fish.”

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California's 33 prisons have continued use of the Close Management Program for inmates to work their way from a restricted population setting; their way from a restricted mechanical life that these men know how to pace himself, left in their wake. “...if anyone disobeys a storyteller as she tags along behind prison culture – simultane-ously naming and brushing aside the intricacies of state government input into the use of the IWF, and staffing and maintenance of mental illness who are under county supervision deserving.” The department’s prior concern was that the prisoner’s chances of being rearrested within three years.” The petitioners say California’s solitary confinement population setting; prison gang validation and impose consequences for gang-related behaviors; • Offer a step-down pro-gram for inmates to work their way from a restricted program back to a general population setting:

• Support and provide edu-cation for inmates seeking to disengage from gangs; • Employ a weighted point system to enhance the integ-rity of the gang validation process; • Use segregated housing only for those gang associ-ates and suspects who engage in additional serious disciplinary behavior; and • Offer programs designed to promote social valued behaviors in preparation for an inmate’s return to the community.

“The department manages arguably the most violent and sophisticated criminal gangs in the nation,” Cate said. “The department’s prior prison gang strategy was developed more than 25 years ago and relied primarily on suppression. Tested na-tional models available to day utilize a combination of prevention, inter- diction, and rehabilitation measures.” On March 20 the Cen-tor for Hu-man Rights and Con-stitutional Law

Mullane’s Book On Ex-Lifers

Mullane took five years to study and decode the mysteries of prison culture – simultane-ously naming and brushing aside the intricacies of state government. Notably, prisoners serving life without parole were found to be 21 percent less likely to commit major acts of violence when compared to prisoners serving shorter sentences. The report noted recent studies of the federal prison system found that moving a prisoner up just one level from minimum to medium increased the chances of being rearrested within three years.”

In California, another study found that Level III prisoners housed in Level I settings are 31 percent less likely to return to prison. The report concluded a pris-oner’s in-prison behavior is the best predictor of future con-duct and recommended prison administrators rely on that fac-tor instead of Close Custody designation and Mandate minimums to determine their prison placement—noting that prisoners with classification scores at or near the threshold of each security level could safely be moved down one level. The report also found that many older prisoners may be safely moved to lower security level prisons.

As tightly as possible, for as long as possible. But Epps said while he was using the lawsuit over prison conditions he changed his views and ordered changes. “If you treat people like ani-mals, that’s exactly the way they’ll behave,” he said. The report found Manda-tory Minimums over-classifies many well-behaved prisoners, placing them in higher se-curity levels than necessary. Notably, prisoners serving life without parole were found to be 21 percent less likely to commit major acts of violence when compared to prisoners serving shorter sentences. The report noted recent studies of the federal prison system found that moving a prisoner up just one level from minimum to medium increased the chances of being rearrested within three years.”

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The group agreed there is need to provide services for formerly prison inmates. But they told Price that the IWF should not be used to pay for services that are the responsibility of the state or county. One prisoner suggested increasing the $200 given to prisoners when they parole “Two-hundred dollars is not enough money to parole with; it isn’t even enough to rent a room nowadays,” he told the senator.

Mandatory Minimums

Mandatory Minimums further restrict the placement of identified prisoners based solely on their commitment offense. Although commonly perceived as more dangerous, prisoners “convicted of violent crimes tend to be better behaved in prison” than others. The report found Manda-tory Minimums over-classifies many well-behaved prisoners, placing them in higher se-curity levels than necessary. Notably, prisoners serving life without parole were found to be 21 percent less likely to commit major acts of violence when compared to prisoners serving shorter sentences. The report noted recent studies of the federal prison system found that moving a prisoner up just one level from minimum to medium increased the chances of being rearrested within three years.”

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Inmate Welfare Fund

The bill was referred to the labor committee. It would allow the prisoners produce. According to prisoners. “We want to make sure that the money is being used for what it was intended for,” Price assured prisoners. Prison University Project Executive Director Jody Le-wen, who invited the senator to San Quentin, said, “Just because there are funds and people have a need for them doesn’t mean that they have a right to them. That is the logic of theft.”

STAKE HOLDERS

After meeting with prison-ers, Price attended an April 17 stakeholders’ meeting in the state capital where he recounted his visit to San Quentin, according to those present.

Ninety-one percent of the meeting attendees said in a survey they believed that the funds should not be sent to county probation departments to cover the cost of inmates with mental illness who are in county custody. One stakeholder wrote: “These funds should not be used for programs the state should be providing with general funds. These funds should be used for things like arts in prison, college text-books, theater groups and garden-ing programs.”

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After meeting with prison-ers, Price attended an April 17 stakeholders’ meeting in the state capital where he recounted his visit to San Quentin, according to those present.
San Quentin was on Nov. 21, 1893, a hellish experience. Physician Dr. Leo Stanly wrote until the doctor pronounced the condemned person would not be cut down by the hangmen know when the condemned person's heart to let step up on a foot stool and put 1893. A retraction was conducted on Oct. 3, 1852. The first triple execution was performed on sentence was two years; not many dangerous convicts. The general population wore clothing with vertical stripes; horizontal were assigned to the more dangerous convicts. Stripes were abolished in 1913 because they were considered demeaning to the prisoners.

PRISON GROWTH

The prison has transformed from 40 prisoners in a boat anchored on the shore San Quentin grew to be a prison holding from 40 prisoners in a boat anchored on the shore San Quentin grew to be a prison holding 6,000 inmates. The educational program has excelled to the point where those who wish to do so can get a college degree. Because of the many programs and opportunities San Quentin has to offer, the inmate is blue from all over California who want to become a law-abiding citizen were prison laborers worked for a dollar an hour. People complained because prison laborers worked for a dollar an hour. They were given back to work and strict discipline continued as it was before the governor took over. People complained because prison laborers worked for a dollar an hour. They were given back to work and strict discipline continued as it was before the governor took over. People complained because prison laborers worked for a dollar an hour. They were given back to work and strict discipline continued as it was before the governor took over.

STATE GETS CONTROL

In April 1860, the state gained back control of San Quentin and has kept it up to present time.

The state continued to upgrade the prison conditions. Wardens Josiah Ames abolished the whipping post that had been used to whip prisoners for over 25 years. In 1864 prisoners were given time off for good behavior. In 1868, the first school was started. It met once a week after ascending to the top of the prison block.

Factories were moved inside the walls and inmates were contracted out for labor.

The gas chamber, equipped with two chairs, was activated in 1938. A prisoner who helped build the gas chamber ended up years later being executed in it. All those who were on the list for execution went to the gas chamber. Four women have been executed in San Quentin. The last woman to die in the gas chamber was on Aug. 8, 1962. During Warden Clinton Duffy's term 1940-52, he witnessed executions by rope and by gas.

LETHAL INJECTION

In recent years, executions were conducted with lethal injections. Women have been executed in San Quentin. Four of the 409 people executed in San Quentin, over half were white. Not everyone executed was a California native. Jose Gabriel, a California native was executed in 1893.

Looking Back into S.Q.'s Legacy

The Rich History of California's Oldest Prison

By Keshaan Tate
Journalism Guild Writer

After California became a state, executions were carried out in individual counties, usually by hanging. On February 14, 1872, Capital Punishment entered into the California Penal Code. San Quentin was chosen to be the exclusive site for executions in 1883. The first execution within the walls of San Quentin was on March 3, 1893. Hanging from the end of the rope was 60-year-old California native Jose Gabriel.

SWIFT PUNISHMENT

There’s no doubt San Quentin has a rich history. Most prisoners who are locked within the walls of San Quentin have no idea what has gone on here before they were born. San Quentin is not as infamous as it was in the 1800s, yet it is still a prison that is designated for executions. Sitting on Death Row are some of the state’s most dangerous criminals. Punishment in the early years was swift. It only took three months and four days after Jose received the sentence for murder before it was carried out. The first triple execution was conducted on Oct. 3, 1893.

The chief physician would step up on a foot stool and put a stethoscope over the condemned person’s heart to let the hangmen know when the heart stopped beating. The person would not be cut down until the doctor pronounced the prisoner dead. Chief Physician Dr. Leo Stanly wrote that witnessing a hanging was a hellish experience.

If the body was not claimed within 24 hours, a medical school claimed it for student study.

The first woman to hang in San Quentin was on Nov. 21, 1941. There was no more hanging in San Quentin after 1942.
Words to My Mother

Steve Cuevas - Even though physically you're no longer here mom, I thank you for the way you raised me. You taught me that a good child is an obedient child. You raised me to be a good child. For that I am grateful. Words, gestures, or gifts can't fully contain the love and appreciation for all you gave me.

April 2012

The San Quentin News invited various prisoners to express their thoughts about their mothers as Mother’s Day approaches. Here are some of the responses:

From a Mother With a Son in Prison

Editor’s note: This article was written by a retired college professor who asked that her name not be used.

Around two million men and women are in prison in the United States, more than any other country in the world. That means a corresponding number of mothers have children in prison. Many others are affected by incarceration such as friends and family members: fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, nieces, nephews, and children.

Do you know any of those two million? Are you in any of their family? Most likely not. Is it the first time one mentions, nor maybe the last, when discussing family members. “Well, love are the kids doing? You would hear the one with the Bachelor of Science degree from Harvard who runs her own business, or the son who was his Master of Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin, or the son who is a scholar/athlete, but not about the one in prison. And how about the Christmas News Letter? Did you ever receive one that says that their daughter or son is in prison? Or an “inmate”? So, where are the all of the people who are incarcerated? They all have a family. Why, do you think parents are reluctant to share that their child is in prison? When your child makes a wrong turn, bad choices, breaks the law, parents usually get the blame, or they blame themselves. It is quite natural, for example, when there is a serial killer that the news media will search out the person’s background. What kind of mom did he/she have? Ask most parents who have children in prisons, and they probably would have advised against the behavior that resulted in their children being incarcerated. However, now they are dealing with the consequences.

Interestingly, whenever I mention to others that my son is in prison, people will confide in me or comment about their experience. The reprimand, “What did he/she do?” is common. That’s to be expected. By 2015, over 2 million people will be in prison. For those people, the mothers, the dad, siblings, aunts and uncles will be left to deal with and cope with the repercussions. The child will have a difficult time being a normal child. When I visit him at the prison, I see other family members of prisoners who obviously love and care for their children, too. Older grandparents visits as well as husbands, wives and children.

Stev’e Phillips - It’s been many years since we’ve been together on this date and it may seem like a lifetime. You’re always in my thoughts on this day and through this lifetime. Stay healthy, stay happy and smile for me. Love, your son, Stev’e.

Tristan Winfrey - In my world, every day is Mother’s Day. You are everything to me. You sacrificed so much for me. You have always been and will always be the love of my life. Happy Mother’s Day to you, too.

Steve Cuevas - To my mom, Rose, the only person that has loved me through all of the toughest of times, and has shown me that a heartfelt love and support is what life is all about. Happy Mother’s Day, straight from my heart.

Steve Carey - Mom, I miss you. Les mando un abrazo rompe costillas. And to my baby sis, Susie, wifey, Happy Mother’s Day. I love and miss you. And also to the mother of mymanas. Las amo y extrano mucho. Agradesco todo lo que han hecho por mi vida. Happy Mother’s Day.

Words to My Mother - Sean Malis - For my mom, Amy Juliet: Life, Existence, Being, Spirit; Family, Community, Faith, Compassion; Liberation, Joy, Peace, Love. This gift is my Mom: Love. Happy Mother’s Day.

The San Quentin News invites you to submit your thoughts and memories for your mothers as Mother’s Day approaches. Here are some of the responses.

From a Mother With an Incarcerated Son

Troy Williams - But for the unconditional love of my mother, I would not be the changed man that I am today. She stuck by me when nobody else did and for that I am grateful. Words, gestures, or gifts can’t fully contain the love and appreciation for all you gave me.

Chris Marshall - I cherish my mom for her wisdom, her nurturing care, but especially for her beautiful smile and the graceful way she dances on the beach.

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**NEW INTRAMURAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE Bounces Into SQ’s Lower Yard**

**Drew Piazza, founder and league official of the first intramural league at San Quentin, explains the significance of creating a competitive league where men can come together and be a part of a team.**

**Piazza, a former sports editor of the San Quentin News, expresses what was the idea behind starting the intramural league:**

“With the influx of new people here, I noticed there was a need for something for them to do. The San Quentin Kings and Warriors Basketball program could only accommodate 10 or so guys. But, there were a 1,000 or so new arrivals. This is what I’ve done at other facilities. I just thought it was the right thing to do.”

After the first games began he said, “The fact that San Quentin never has had an intramural basketball league because programs here were basically set up to play outside teams, I was a little optimistic. But, I knew that the energy was there; the need was there; and I had the mindset of making it work. So I was pleased.”

“We’re starting from scratch of course. There’s no set patterns or programs so we’re using a league format where each team plays each team twice. At mid season we will have an ‘All Star Game’ with the coaches and four teams in the west. The top three teams in each division will make the play-offs. Piazza emphasized that the league helps the incarcerated men at San Quentin. He said, “I think the league helps facilitates everything the population needs. I don’t think the facility is ready to take in so many people. It helps with the adaptation, the energy. The participation for the staff has been great. I would like to thank Mr. Di Nevi for allowing us to put this league together.”

As the league official, he also discussed the importance of calling a ‘game’ a game. “I always noticed that when sports were being played there was a lot of cheating and favoritism involved, so I kind of felt compelled to step in and do the best I could to make it good and clean,” he said.

—Gary Scott

Julian Glenn Padgett contributed to this story.
Snippets

Monopoly's mascot was originally called Rich Uncle Pennybags. He was renamed to Mr. Monopoly in 1998.

One phrase spoken by a human being requires about 100 muscles of the chest, neck, jaw, tongue and lips.

To get astronauts and a spacecraft to the moon, it cost the United States approximately $40 billion.

Halloween is the most important candy-eating occasions of the year for Americans. In 2001, seven billion pounds of candy was consumed, according to the National Confectioners Association.

For Laughs

An old man lived alone in the country. He wanted to dig up his tomato garden, but it was very difficult work, as the ground was hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son.

“Dear Vincent, I am feeling pretty sad because it looks like I won’t be able to plant my tomatoes this year. I’m just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me. Love, Dad.”

A few days later he received a letter from his son….

“Dear Dad, don’t dig up that garden. That is where I buried the bodies. Love, VINNIE.”

Rules

The prizes will be for completion of brain twister puzzles. Prizes will be given to the first two inmates who respond via U.S.-envelope to San Quentin News Education Department.

If there are multiple correct answers, the winners will be picked by drawing two of the winning answers from a hat.

First Place: San Quentin Fitness Gray Ball Cap
Second Place: 4 Granola Bars

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

The answer and winner’s names will be published in the next issue of the San Quentin News.

Sudoku

Wakan is a Lakota word that means “power.” It can also mean “mysterious,” “wonderful,” “incomprehensible,” and “holy.”

Because Wakan cannot be understood, it is impossible to completely control it. Anything Wakan is hard to understand. The Wakan of a warrior is its skill in battle and his absence from injury during warfare. But, the Wakan of a shaman is the source of his spiritual power.

Wakan can easily be acquired by anyone, and it can be used for either good or evil. Wakan is the expression of many things, all that can be felt, but not understood.
1. ARIZONA – In February, a magic drug was used for the first time in an American prison execution, replacing the three-drug protocol. The execution of Xavier Rodriguez was convicted of killing and dismembering his adoptive mother while he was only 16 when he pleaded guilty to taking part in an armed robbery. Under sentencing guidelines, Graham was sentenced to life in prison while the court considered the appeal and for a longer period if it agrees to review the case. The court reviewed the California appeals court ruling in the case, as it is entitled to release, and a stay in the case of parole has ruled against. Schoenfeld has been incarcerated nearly 36 years and has been denied parole at least seven other times. However, in 2007, the court said that he no longer is a danger to society, based on his good prison behavior, acceptance of responsibility, and educational and job training. This finding entitles him for release at the earliest parole unsuitability hearing scheduled in February. If the board appeals to the state Supreme Court, Schoenfeld would remain in prison while the court considers the appeal and for a longer period if it agrees to review the case. The court concluded that the board’s decision was based on an absence of insight and erred in its analysis of the evidence. The court believed that the agency had created a statutory scheme that could significantly reduce the population in the security housing units. Of the 2,300 prisoners convicted of killing another person while he was serving a life term, about 1,800 are considered gang associates. The units also house non-gang prisoners convicted of killing other prisoners, who attacked staff members or where involved in prison riots. Under the proposed policy, many gang associates could continue living in the general prison population. That shift alone could significantly reduce the population in the security housing units, a state official said.

2. NORTH CAROLINA – Marcus Raymon Robinson is the first person to challenge his death sentence under the state’s Racial Justice Act. It permits a California Appeals Court Rulings Assist Lifers

3. SAN FRANCISCO – Richard Schoenfeld, the youngest of three Chowchilla kidnappers, is entitled to parole consideration. Schoenfeld has been incarcerated nearly 36 years and has been denied parole at least seven other times. However, in 2007, the court said that he no longer is a danger to society, based on his good prison behavior, acceptance of responsibility, and educational and job training. This finding entitles him for release at the earliest parole unsuitability hearing scheduled in February. If the board appeals to the state Supreme Court, Schoenfeld would remain in prison while the court considers the appeal and for a longer period if it agrees to review the case. The court concluded that the board’s decision was based on an absence of insight and erred in its analysis of the evidence. The court believed that the agency had created a statutory scheme that could significantly reduce the population in the security housing units. Of the 2,300 prisoners convicted of killing another person while he was serving a life term, about 1,800 are considered gang associates. The units also house non-gang prisoners convicted of killing other prisoners, who attacked staff members or where involved in prison riots. Under the proposed policy, many gang associates could continue living in the general prison population. That shift alone could significantly reduce the population in the security housing units, a state official said.

4. FLORIDA – The United States Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that Graham sentence of a teenager unconstitutional. In the resentencing, the appeals judge noted that the Florida Legislature did not provide a method to apply the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling or to give judges resen
ing into his substance abuse treatment. He was injected with lethal drugs. It took him 11 minutes to die. “All I want to say is I’m innocent,” Thurn said from the death chamber gurney. “I didn’t kill my wife.” He blamed the shooting deaths on another man. “I swear to God I didn’t kill her,” he said. With that, he told prison officials, “Go ahead and finish it off!” As the drugs began flow
g, he said, “You can taste it.” He wheezed and snored before losing consciousness.

5. SACRAMENTO – California prison officials made public a set of guidelines to rules that kept some gang members in segregated units for years. That led to prisoners conducting statewide hunger strikes last year. Previously, gang associates were autom
cally sent to the security housing units. Of the 2,300 offenders who are in the isola
tion units because of their gang involvement, nearly 1,800 are considered gang associates. The units also house non-gang prisoners convicted of killing other prisoners, who attacked staff members or where involved in prison riots. Under the proposed policy, many gang associates could continue living in the general prison population. That shift alone could significantly reduce the population in the security housing units, a state official said.

6. TEXAS – A man proclai
ing his innocence to the end be
came the third person executed in Texas this year. Keith Thur
mond was executed in March for killing his wife and her boy
friend. About an hour after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected ar
guments to halt his execution, he was injected with lethal drugs. It took him 11 minutes to die. “All I want to say is I’m innocent,” Thurn said from the death chamber gurney. “I didn’t kill my wife.” He blamed the shooting deaths on another man. “I swear to God I didn’t kill her,” he said. With that, he told prison officials, “Go ahead and finish it off!” As the drugs began flow
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8. MISSISSIPPI – The last three prisoners pardoned by former Mississippi Gov. Ha
ey Barbour were released in March, after the state’s highest court cleared the way for their freedom. Barbour pardoned March 7. With the final clearance now out of the left office. He said he showed mercy out of a spirit of forgive
ess – wanting to give them a second chance.

9. WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Corrections Corporation of America, which operates federal prisons, was criticized by the Council of Prison Locals of the American Federation of Gov
erment Employees for weak ening prison security, putting community safety at risk and pushing states to take on added debt.

10. MISSISSIPPI – William Mitchell was executed in March for the 1995 murder of Patty Millikin.

11. IOWA – A federal judge reversed Angela Johnson’s death sentence, saying her de
fense lawyers were “alarmingly dysfunctional” during her 2005 trial. Johnson was the first woman sentenced to death in the federal system since cap
tal punishment was reinstated in 1976. The defense attorneys who failed to pres
t evidence about her troubled mental state that could have spared her life, the judge found.

12. WASHINGTON, D.C. – Twenty-one Death Row pris
soners won an order stopping the use of sodium thiopental, an imported drug given as an
esthesia prior to administration of lethal injections. A federal judge ruled that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration violated its own rules by allowing entry of the drug into the coun
try without making sure that it worked effectively. “Prisoners are at serious risk and will continue to face unacceptably high

The court concluded that the board failed to consider all of the statutory factors in maki
g its decision to deny parole to Shaputis. The court found that the board had made incor rect factual contentions.

The court specifically re
cited the California Appeals Court’s det
rimental to what the court considered to be a particularly egregious crime.

The court concluded that the board’s decision was based on the sufficiency of Morganti’s insight into his substance abuse not on an absence of insight and questioned “whether anyone can ever adequately articulate the complexity and consequences of past misconduct.” The court stated that the key question is not whether there was “some evidence” Morganti lacked insight into his past criminal conduct but whether he consti
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Appliance Tech Tips

By Bob Martin
Journalism Guild Writer

Rechargeable batteries.
The new Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) formula does not need to be fully discharged before recharging like the older NiCads did. The number on the label is like MPG on a car. The higher the number, the farther you go. Let’s say your AA battery is 2400 MA/h. That also means 1200 milliwatts for 2 hours. If your radio takes 100 milliwatts per hour to make music, doing the math, your battery will supply 12 hours of music when fully charged. The charger pushes all the electrons to one side of a wall. This flow of pressure is what makes things happen in your appliance. This chemical process does wear out with time.

One application that will destroy the chemicals in a rechargeable battery is a hot wire. The rapid discharge boils the chemicals inside and they won’t charge anymore. The chargers are made to back off when the battery is full, so leaving it in for an extra day or two won’t hurt it. The smaller chargers have a circuit inside that creates noise by adjusting the FM radio that can travel through the extension cord.

LETTERS

To Women Prisoners:
We understand that you want your voices heard. Many of your stories are not told, so we want to give the women a voice too - especially with Mother’s Day coming up.

We would like you to write about your life in prison. Write about your work, your life in prison, your family. We want to be able to tell other people about your life in prison.

We want to publish your stories in the San Quentin News. If you have any questions, please write us at: San Quentin News, California Prison Service, San Quentin, CA 94964.

San Quentin CARES 2012
Avon Walk for Breast Cancer

On July 7th and 8th, the San Quentin CARES community will be walking 36 miles inside the prison walls in support of the S.F. Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. SFCARES is asking for donations from prisoners, community volunteers, and medical and institutional staff at San Quentin.

To donate to S.Q. Cares online, please go to http://info.avonfoundation.org/goto/SQCARES.

Artists Transform North Block Clinic

In April, prison artists transformed the dreary walls of imprisonment into a message of beauty and a commitment to change.

In April, prison artists transformed the dreary walls of imprisonment into a message of beauty and a commitment to change.

The Americanization of a Mexican Holiday.

Americans began to celebrate Cinco de Mayo in 1863. Today many Americans think that Cinco de Mayo is celebrated as Mexican Independence Day. That’s wrong. Mexico declared its independence from Spain on September 16, 1810.

The question remains: how did La Batalla de Puebla become a holiday in the United States?

During the 1950s and 1960s “The Good Neighbor Policy” was supposed to build a better relationship between Mexico and the United States. This policy translated into a bananza for U.S. corporations through a massive advertising campaign to commercialize the holiday as a celebration of cultural pride for the Mexican-Americans and all other U.S. citizens associated with Mexico.

In the early 1980s, Cinco de Mayo took a drastic change when commercialization shifted its meaning from community and self-determination to a drinking holiday. According to Jose Ala- millos, professor of ethnic studies at Washington State University in Pullman, American corporations, particularly those selling alcohol, grabbed the holiday. It is the biggest sales day for Corona beer, emulated on TV and radio by Mexican rivals such as Tecate. They were eager to tap into the expanding Hispanic population in the United States. Anheuser-Bush picked Cinco de Mayo to launch its new Bud Light line. At the Cinco de Mayo celebration in Atlanta sponsored by State Farm Insurance and Hyatt Hotels. Advertising has become the force behind most American celebrations, including Cinco de Mayo. In 1980, corporations spent close to $25 million on Cinco de Mayo promotions in Southern California alone; that jumped to $57 million in 1982.

In 1985, Coors gave $350 million to the National Council of La Raza, the American GI Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens in exchange for their support of a national boycott over its labor practices. In 2003 and 2004, 10 alcohol brands spent close to $600 million to advertise on Spanish-language television, exposing Hispanics in the United States between the ages of 12 and 20 to 20 percent more alcohol advertising per capita than any other group.

There’s a touch of genius in all this advertising for a minor historical celebration in Mexico. Realistically, the emphasis should be on the Mexican Batalla de Puebla and the coming together of a community in defense of their nation, not on corporate-sponsored drinking day, and making money off a relatively minor battle.

An estimated 45-50 million Hispanics live in the United States today and pump a trillion dollars into the economy every year, according to a recent KCBS radio program.

Today Cinco de Mayo festival can be found in at least 21 states in the United States. Clearly, they celebrate Cinco de Mayo for capitalist reasons, not for the Mexican victory against the French.

Letter:
As a former reporter and editor (now retired) on a West Coast metropolitan area daily newspaper, I commend the staff for producing an outstanding newspaper. It is clear that the staff is well trained in the proper structure of a news story.

The stories are well written and interesting, the layout is crisp and well thought out. The headlines are bold and well written, drawing the reader into the story. It’s everything a professional newspaper should be. I salute you all.

Tom Condon

Editor: We wanted to express our appreciation for San Quentin News! We live close by and have no idea of the workings of San Quentin. We especially liked the articles on the men of Death Row and their opinions. The opportunities of education on campus was good to hear. Parole’s ups and downs was informative. Your newspaper tells the facts that are hard to find in the media.

–Jean and Bill Hagler

San Quentin CARES 2012 - Avon Walk for Breast Cancer

Hot Pot Causes Fire Sprinkler To Flood Cell in West Block

By Bob Martin
Journalism Guild Writer

Last month water began gushing out of a third tier cell in West Block to the surprise of those living and walking below.

The cause of the flooding was a steaming hot pot that set off the fire sprinkler in the cell of Jimmy Prator and Kevin Valvarta.

When the sprinkler went off, Prator was sitting on the top bed. The sprinkler’s retainer ring popped off and hit him in the chest. However, he was not seriously injured. The only damage was drenched property.

The fire marshals determined this incident was accidental. Prator and Valvarta asked that some type of notice be given to new occupants about those heat sensitive devices.

The Truth About Cinco de Mayo

By Arnulfo T. Garcia
Editor-in-Chief

May 5, 1862

Cinco de Mayo is upon us once again.

As a Mexican-American, I am astounded by the way this holiday became so important in the United States. How and why it is so important is partly found in to whom it is so important.

I discovered that making money on this holiday is a big thing – good old fashion capitalism is found in this holiday, just as with the 4th of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. It’s all about the all-mighty dollar, not Mexico or Mexican-American cultural identity, or history.

Let’s put things in perspective.

In 1862, Abraham Lincoln had a lot to worry about. The country was on the verge of self-destruction by its own hand. During that same time, France, Spain and England rushed troops into Mexico, wanting to collect on mounting debts.

Eventually, the representatives of Spain and England came to an agreement with Mexican President Benito Juarez and went home. However, Napoleon Bonaparte III took the French to a different path and marched 4,500 of his soldiers toward Mexico City.

What really happened on Cinco de Mayo.

On May 5, 1862, the 4,500 French troops got about 100 miles east of Mexico City. The Mexican government hadtabs on the progress of the French troops, and knew that they would have to take a pause in a little known town, called Puebla.

President Juarez scraped up about 2,000 soldiers and townsmen to run interference against the French army. Like many resistance forces defending their homeland against invading armies, they fought off the French with a little help from the weather, and a lot of help from the local Indians.

After the La Batalla de Puebla victory against the French, Mexicans nationwide became weather, and a lot of help from resistance forces defending the French army. Like many about 2,000 soldiers and townspeople in a little known town, called Puebla. The French army had known that they would have to build a better relationship with Mexico and the United States. The policy translated into a bonanza for U.S. corporations through a massive advertising campaign to commercialize the holiday as a celebration of cultural pride for the Mexican-Americans and all other U.S. citizens associated with Mexico.

In the early 1980s, Cinco de Mayo took a drastic change when commercialization shifted its meaning from community and self-determination to a drinking holiday. According to Jose Alamillos, professor of ethnic studies at Washington State University in Pullman, American corporations, particularly those selling alcohol, grabbed the holiday. It is the biggest sales day for Corona beer, emulated on TV and radio by Mexican rivals such as Tecate. They were eager to tap into the expanding Hispanic population in the United States. Anheuser-Bush picked Cinco de Mayo to launch its new Bud Light line. At the Cinco de Mayo celebration in Atlanta sponsored by State Farm Insurance and Hyatt Hotels. Advertising has become the force behind most American celebrations, including Cinco de Mayo. In 1980, corporations spent close to $25 million on Cinco de Mayo promotions in Southern California alone; that jumped to $57 million in 1982.

In 1985, Coors gave $350 million to the National Council of La Raza, the American GI Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens in exchange for their support of a national boycott over its labor practices. In 2003 and 2004, 10 alcohol brands spent close to $600 million to advertise on Spanish-language television, exposing Hispanics in the United States between the ages of 12 and 20 to 20 percent more alcohol advertising per capita than any other group.

There’s a touch of genius in all this advertising for a minor historical celebration in Mexico. Realistically, the emphasis should be on the Mexican Batalla de Puebla and the coming together of a community in defense of their nation, not on corporate-sponsored drinking day, and making money off a relatively minor battle.

An estimated 45-50 million Hispanics live in the United States today and pump a trillion dollars into the economy every year, according to a recent KCBS radio program.

Today Cinco de Mayo festival can be found in at least 21 states in the United States. Clearly, they celebrate Cinco de Mayo for capitalist reasons, not for the Mexican victory against the French.

Editor:
As a former reporter and editor (now retired) on a West Coast metropolitan area daily newspaper, I commend the staff for producing an outstanding newspaper. It is clear that the staff is well trained in the proper structure of a news story.

The stories are well written and interesting, the layout is crisp and well thought out. The headlines are bold and well written, drawing the reader into the story. It’s everything a professional newspaper should be. I salute you all.

Tom Condon

Dear Editor:
We wanted to express our appreciation for San Quentin News! We live close by and have no idea of the workings of San Quentin. We especially liked the articles on the men of Death Row and their opinions. The opportunities of education on campus was good to hear. Parole’s ups and downs was informative. Your newspaper tells the facts that are hard to find in the media.

–Jean and Bill Hagler

San Quentin CARES 2012 - Avon Walk for Breast Cancer

Hot Pot Causes Fire Sprinkler To Flood Cell in West Block

By Bob Martin
Journalism Guild Writer

Last month water began gushing out of a third tier cell in West Block to the surprise of those living and walking below.

The cause of the flooding was a steaming hot pot that set off the fire sprinkler in the cell of Jimmy Prator and Kevin Valvarta.

When the sprinkler went off, Prator was sitting on the top bed. The sprinkler’s retainer ring popped off and hit him in the chest. However, he was not seriously injured. The only damage was drenched property.

The fire marshals determined this incident was accidental. Prator and Valvarta asked that some type of notice be given to new occupants about those heat sensitive devices.
By Angelo Falcone  
Journalism Guild Writer

The men in blue at San Quen- tin are often told to hold on to their pay numbers. Pay numbers are the wages some prisoners earn for full-time job assignments. They are paid up to 95 cents an hour. The types of jobs vary from porters, clerks and painters to manufacturing jobs at the Prison Industry Authority (PIA) plant. In PIA alone, doz- ens of men have been “laid off” from their jobs this year, so pay numbers are becoming scarce.

“Asked On The Line”

decided random informal inter- views with 31 mainliners that have pay numbers and asked,

“Do you depend on your pay number? Did you ever reregis- teration? If you lost your pay number, where would you get money?”

Over 73 percent of those who were interviewed depend on their pay numbers. The money is used to buy food, hygiene products, vitamins, detergent, electronic appliances or accessories from canteen and pack- ages. I even saw a man to send money to his son. About 65 percent of mainliners interviewed have res- titution or child support pay- ments automatically deducted from their pay. The prison ad- ministration deducts 50 percent of inmate pay for these obliga- tions, along with a 5 percent “administrative fee.”

“I absolutely depend on my pay number,” said Joey. “I make 35 cents an hour at PIA. If I were to lose my pay number, I would have no other source of money, absolutely none.”

Dwight said he depends on his pay number, too. “I depend on the pay number to not ask any- one for money. But if I lost my pay number, I would be at the mercy of people on the outside.”

Stephen has a janitorial job and his fire money to train himself and send money to his son. “I depend on my pay number. I don’t have any other source of money, but sometimes people on the outside might help me, sometimes.”

J.N. is a clerk that depends on his pay number. “Without my pay number, I would have to beg my family for money. I would really have to beg them.”

Of the 27 percent of men that do not depend on their pay numbers, most would ask their friends, spouse, or other loved ones for financial support, but not Ke. “I appreciate it, but I don’t depend on my pay num- ber. If I lost it, I could still earn money through the hobby shop”, said Ke.

Sending Sermons to Prisoners

By Girard Rooks  
Contributing Writer

Why me? Why this? Who hasn’t asked this at times? Two men who teach a Bible class in San Quen- tin asked me to talk about how and why I send sermons to Cali- fornia prisoners.

I can answer in two ways. One, my experience of how it happened, and the other is through God’s will, as I read it in the Bible.

My experience comes from the fact that I have a brother who teaches a Bible class in a jail in California. He connected with some men who went on to prison. For them, he made cop- ies of sermons preached by the minister at his church. Over time, he was mailing these to 60 or 70 men, and family members of some.

For years, I’ve preached about ten times a year, at Mel Trotter Mission, in Grand Rapids, Mich. Once, after 1 year, I had time to type my sermons. My brother read one, and thought they’d make a good mailer, so I began sending them to him.

A few years ago, something changed and he stopped mailing sermons. When I learned of this, I asked for his mailing list, and started mailing my messages, myself. Then, I contacted some prison chaplains, and a few of them agreed to accept, copy, and make my messages available to men in their facilities. Over time, we have reached more and more men (and now women too) in prison, and members of their families. For several years, I have also mailed Spanish trans- lations of the messages.

Now, God’s view on this: Psalm 139, verse 16: All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Ephesians 2: 10: We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God planned it and then worked for us to do.

Why me? Why this? Because God planned it and then worked things in my life to make, it happen.

If you would like to receive these mailings, write me at: J.F. Girard Rooks, c/o Hanley Chris- tian Reformed Church, O - 372 Jackson St., Grandville, MI 49418.