



San Quentin News



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Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

Warden Kevin R. Chappell with Victim Services groups

Criminal Victim Services Receive Prisoner Funds

By Arnulfo T. Garcia
Editor-in-Chief

San Quentin prisoners have supported five Bay Area crime victims services with a check for \$36,029.14, to be equally divided.

A presentation ceremony was held at San Quentin's Joint Venture facility, where the men are contracted to work for the local company Labcon, which employs about 200 people and provides services internationally to 57 countries.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation established the Joint Venture Program, a rehabilitative endeavor providing opportunities for prisoners to gain valuable work experience and job skills training,

according to a CDCR press release.

The funds are collected under a law requiring prisoners who work for Joint Venture companies to pay 20 percent of net wages to compensate crime victims. The law also requires prisoners to pay taxes, room and board, and family support.

"Anytime men give back to the community it's great," said San Quentin Warden Kevin R. Chappell. "There are only five joint venture programs throughout the state I wish they had these programs in all 33 prisons." He added, "That would be a tremendous impact for the community and the kids they are helping. It also gives the men focus and direction,

See *Joint Venture* on Page 4

S.Q. College Program Reduces Recidivism

By Tommy Winfrey
Journalism Guild Writer

The college program at San Quentin Prison dramatically reduces recidivism, according to a new report by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

In the first year of the study, the department found that the 37 prisoners who received their Associate of Arts degrees through the Prison University Project recidivated at a rate of 5.4 percent in the first year after their release. The control group — 33 former San Quentin prisoners of similar age, race, commitment offense, and sentence — had a recidivism rate of 21.2 percent.

The average recidivism rate of level II inmates is 63.2 percent

over a three-year period. Corresponding data is not yet available for PUP students.

The non-profit PUP recruits volunteer teachers from area colleges. The program is accredited by Patten University in Oakland, which awards A.A. degrees to graduates.

The program began in 1994, when prisoners became ineligible for PELL grants, then the primary source of funding for prison college programs.

The report also analyzed substance-abuse programs and post-release community-based aftercare. Neither program significantly reduced recidivism by itself, though the combination resulted in a three-year recidivism rate of 31.3 percent, the study reported.

S.F. District Attorneys Visit San Quentin for Solutions

By Boston Woodard
Staff Writer

A group of San Francisco prosecutors working in the recently formed community courts met with San Quentin prisoners, seeking insight into what leads young people into lives of crime and imprisonment.

"I believe that identifying individual kid issues is extremely important," said Charlie Spence, serving a life sentence for a crime committed when he was 15 years old. "You must find out what is their home life is like. Are they having a hard time learning in school?"

Spence added, "Personally, I never received the attention a young person should, nor was I paid attention to while in school; no excuses, that's just the way it was. These are facts we should not ignore."

The Nov 30 gathering included 13 employees from San Francisco's District Attorney's Office, and 30 prisoners convicted of various crimes ranging from minor drug possession to murder.

The forum came about after Assistant District Attorney Marisa Rodriguez visited the San Quentin Journalism Guild several months ago. After speaking with members of the San Quentin News staff, Rodriguez said she wanted to bring some of her colleagues into the prison to

discuss ways to help at-risk youth avoid a life of crime by listening to personal stories of men who have been through the system.

Many of the men who attended the forum are involved with various self-help/rehabilitation

See *San Francisco* on Page 4



Photo By Michael Nelson

San Francisco District Attorneys tour San Quentin

A Rare Press Visit to Death Row

By Jason McGinnis
Contributing Writer

Since 2007, members of the press have not been allowed access in any of the three Death Row buildings at San Quentin State Prison. However, recently Nancy Mullane was granted permission by then-prisons chief Matthew Cate to visit Death Row.

Mullane, an independent reporter/producer for National Public Radio and KQED-TV, interviewed three inmates in East Block, which houses 537 of the more than 700 men facing execution.

Lt. Sam Robinson, San Quentin's public information officer, said Death Row inmates begin their sentence in the Adjustment Center, where they are classified as either Grade A or Grade B. "Grade A are individuals who are programming and follow our rules, for the most part. Grade B are the individuals who are the

opposite of that, who are non-programmers or gang affiliates or whatever the case may be," says Robinson.

Robinson led Mullane on a tour of East Block, where she was allowed to interview the inmates in their cells, as long as they were willing to talk with her.



Official Photo

Nancy Mullane in S.Q. Library

One such inmate was Walter Cook, who has been on Death Row for 20 years. Cook explained how important family communication is to him:

"You got to have contact with your family. If you don't have contact with your family, you don't have nothing. You got to have something to keep your sanity. We're not like people portray us on the movies as crazy, deranged people. I get the impression from TV, you know, everybody is a child molester, rapist. Seems like that's the stereotype for everybody here — that's what they are. Even people that's innocent. If you're here, you got to be guilty; that's not true."

Cook claims that he is innocent. Although he is appealing his conviction, the appeal process is much slower for condemned inmates and some have been waiting in the courts for up to 30 years.

When Mullane asked Cook about Proposition 34, the state-wide initiative rejected by voters that would have converted death sentences to life in prison with-

See *Media* on Page 4

Governor Brown Appoints New CDCR Chief

By John C. Eagan
Senior Adviser

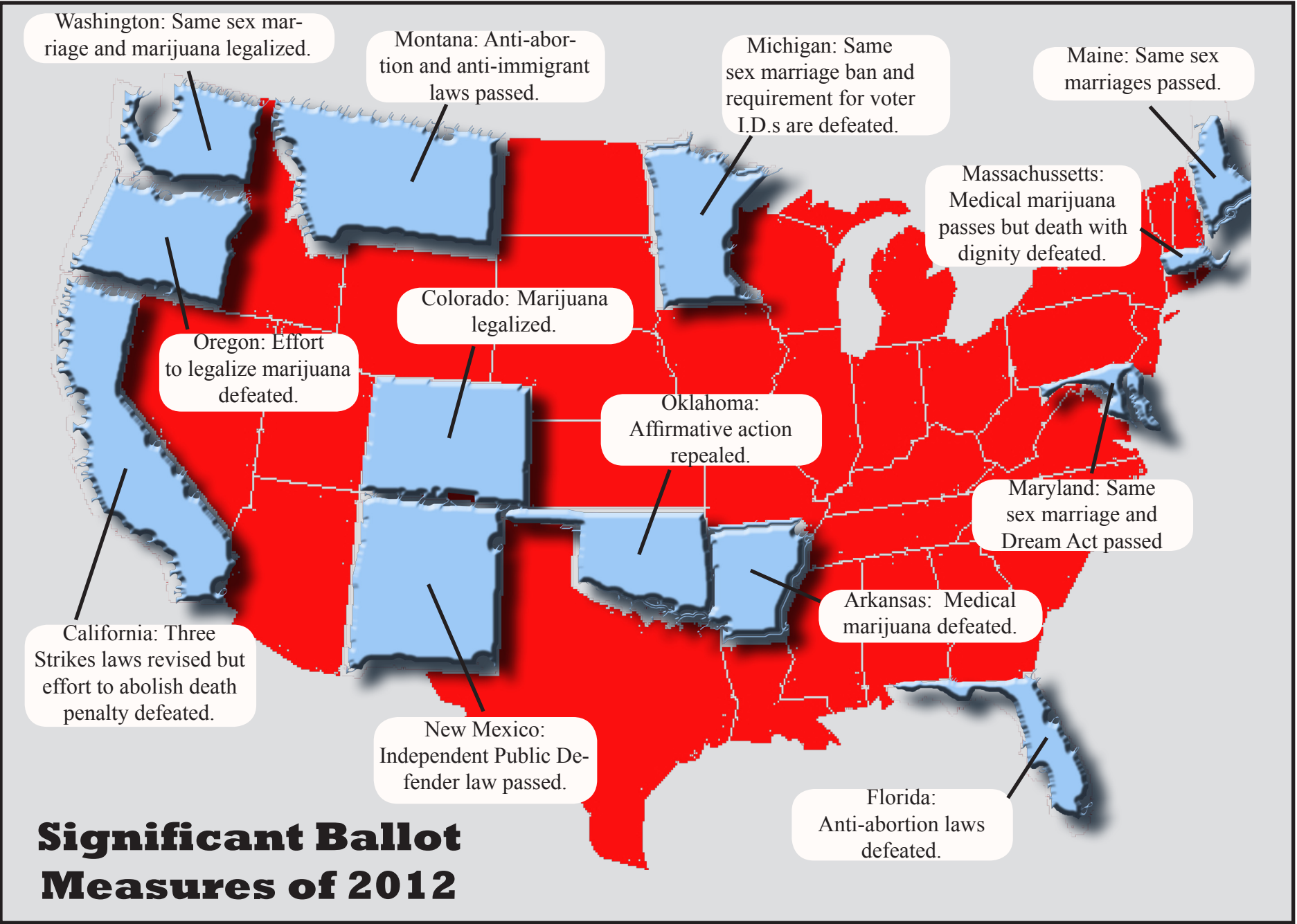
Gov. Jerry Brown has appointed the former head of Pennsylvania's prisons system

to take over as secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

He is Jeffrey Beard, 65, who replaces Matthew Cate, who resigned in November to be-

come executive director of the California State Association of Counties.

See *New Chief* on Page 4



San Quentin News

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In collaboration with students from The UC Berkeley School of Journalism

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 may be edited for content and length.
- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances. (For that, use the prison appeals process.) We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions. Poems and art work (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

Send Submissions to:

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Education Dept. / SQ News
San Quentin, CA 94964
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San Quentin News
1 Main Street
San Quentin, CA 94974

The process can be repeated every month, if you want to receive the latest newspaper.

Website Offers Help to Families of those Incarcerated

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

Editor’s Note

The articles and opinions published in the San Quentin News are the responsibility of the inmate staff of the newspaper and their advisers. These articles and opinions reflect the views of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the inmate population, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation or the administration of San Quentin State Prison.

BEHIND THE SCENES

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Prisoners United in the Craft of Journalism

Unique 12 Step Group Addresses Crime

By Ron Koehler
Staff Writer

A new 12-step organization aimed at helping prisoners shed their criminal gang activities and mentalities and become productive members of society held its first San Quentin graduation Dec. 7.

The program is sanctioned by the Arch Diocese of Los Angeles.

Meredith Sanchez, one of the founding mothers of CGA attended the ceremony.

About 25 graduates of Criminals and Gangmembers Anonymous celebrated transitioning from "homies," with no individual "me," to realizing their inner, personal identities — identities

based on personal experience, not cloned experience or outside intimidation.

"We learn from our experience that there is no right way to do wrong. Our aim in the CGA program is to turn men with little boy minds into grown men with grown men minds," said Tony, an inmate-facilitator for CGA.

"We learn from our experiences that there is no right way to do wrong."

Tony said, "The street sign is still there," referring to that past misidentification. He added,

"Only you can be real with you. This is real transformation without harmful identification."

"We are actually seeing men's minds change in that they are no longer handicapped with the gang mentality," Tony said. "This helps them become better fathers, sons, uncles."

TRANSFORMATION

This transformation can then continue from one generation to another. "Life presents the individual with a constant tug of war over the elements of personal identity," he added.

The next session of CGA will begin in January 2013.

Contact T. Bolema
in Education.



Photo by Michael Nelson

Graduate members of CGA display their certificates

Relevant State Laws That Were Revised in 2011

By San Quentin News Staff

ALABAMA: Limited incarceration for probation violators.

ARKANSAS: Revised drug statutes; reformed sentencing practices to reduce recidivism; and enacted expungement provision.

CALIFORNIA: Authorized county jail detention for certain felony offenders.

COLORADO: Codified sentencing standards; established presumption of parole standard; and authorized early termination of community corrections sentences.

CONNECTICUT: Expanded risk reduction credits; reduced penalty for certain marijuana offenses; enacted medical response to overdose protection; and restricted incarceration of certain juveniles.

DELAWARE: Restructured drug code; authorized use of medical marijuana; opted out of federal food stamp ban for persons with felony drug convictions; and established expungement policy for specified juvenile offenses.

FLORIDA: Expanded eligibility for drug court participation and eliminated incarceration as a sentencing option for certain youth.

GEORGIA: Permitted sentencing modification for young offenders with certain felony offenses.

IDAHO: Amended alternative to incarceration options; and gave authorization for courts to expunge certain convictions.

ILLINOIS: Repealed death penalty; codified process of prioritizing alternatives to incarceration into statute.

INDIANA: Authorized expungement of certain arrests and low-level offenses.

KENTUCKY: Revised penalties for certain drug offenses; established alternative sentencing options for certain offenses.

LOUISIANA: Authorized early release for elderly prisoners; enabled sentence reductions through safety valve; and modified parole policies.

MARYLAND: Modified parole process for persons sentenced to life in prison; repealed certain parole revocation provisions; and established pilot program to reduce parole revocations.

MONTANA: Expanded medical parole eligibility for prisoners.

NEBRASKA: Authorized sentence reductions for certain prisoners.

NEVADA: Repealed juvenile life without parole for non-homicide offenses.

NORTH CAROLINA: Limited use of prison as a sentencing option for certain probationers; and established certificate for restoration of civil rights.

NORTH DAKOTA: Authorized sentence modification for certain prisoners.

OHIO: Established certificates of achievement and employability.

OKLAHOMA: Streamlined parole process.

OREGON: Expanded expungement policy for persons convicted of certain offenses; restricted mandatory minimums for certain juveniles.

RHODE ISLAND: Authorized discretion for certain sentencing options; extended medical parole policy to severely ill.

SOUTH DAKOTA: Established partial early discharge from parole.

TEXAS: Created new standard to reduce probation revocations; entitled probationers to exit community supervision early; clarified election code for persons; limited misdemeanor citations in school; and expanded determinate probation.

UTAH: Restored voting rights for persons with certain prior convictions.

VERMONT: Allowed alternative sentencing options for certain prisoners.

WASHINGTON: Established a process to eliminate interest for criminal justice debt.

WEST VIRGINIA: Increased sentencing reduction terms for program participation.

Source: The State of Sentencing 2011--Developments in Policy and Practice

Experts Favor Rehabilitation Programming Over Incarceration

By A. Kevin Valvardi
Journalism Guild Writer

California could reduce the number of people serving lengthy prison sentences by providing more drug-treatment programs before a person receives a third strike, say some independent experts.

The San Francisco Chronicle and California Watch obtained and analyzed state-compiled data on education, psychological and substance-abuse profiles of more than 49,000 California inmates, which revealed that two-thirds of third strike inmates have a high need for substance abuse treatment,

compared with less than half of all inmates.

The information revealed that second- and third-strikers are no more likely than average state prisoners to require cognitive therapy for dealing with criminal impulses.

Some prison reform advocates say the data suggest that greater

investments in drug treatment programs could reduce the likelihood of prisoners re-offending. San Quentin's Hope for Strikers group agrees with this idea, offering repeat offenders a program modeled after the 12-step addiction recovery program.

California prisons are having a difficult time addressing

offenders' rehabilitative needs, including substance abuse, due to severe overcrowding. Corrections officials are developing a plan to expand rehabilitation services and place inmates where such services are available, former CDCR Secretary Matthew Cate told California Watch.

Modest Organization Works Toward Advancing Rights of the Incarcerated

By Boston Woodard
Staff Writer

A small nationwide organization of volunteers and former prisoners is hard at work informing prisoners and the public of imprisoned men's and women's constitutional rights.

Founded in 1972, *The Coalition For Prisoners' Rights* advocacy organization has been sending its newsletter and re

The Coalition For Prisoners' Rights say they believe that the police, courts, and penal sys-

tem are dependent on poverty and racism for continuing institutionalization. They oppose punishment as a tool for positive social change and believe prisons as presently constituted are dangerous to community health, safety, and development.

FUNDING

The Coalition for Prisoners' Rights is supported with in-kind and cash donations plus contributions from church groups and a few grants from progressive foundations. Stamps, as

well as financial contributions, are welcome and necessary for the coalition to continue its service to prisoners throughout America. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Prison Project of Santa Fe, a 501 (c) (3) organization.

Those interested in receiving the newsletter can send self-addressed stamped envelopes to: Coalition for Prisoners' Rights, P.O. Box 1911, Santa Fe, NM. 87504. The organization will accept up to 12 envelopes at a time.



Official Photo

The CPR humble offices in Santa Fe New Mexico

Media Access With the Prisoners of Death Row

Continued from Page 1

out the possibility of parole, he said:

“Really it doesn’t matter to me one way or another because my whole purpose is to get all the way out of here, but some people that would give us life without – I don’t have nothing against that – but that’s not what I’m striving for. But for people – that’s their only shot – I feel that they should

get that. That’s what all they can get.”

Demetrius Howard was another inmate on Death Row who was interviewed by Mullane. A jury convicted Howard for the 1992 murder and attempted murder of a woman in San Bernardino and sentenced him to death. He has been on Death Row now for 17 years. He, like Cook, maintains that he is innocent. When asked about Proposition 34, he said:

“I’m constantly fighting for my freedom. You know, my innocence. I don’t feel it’s to a lot of individuals benefit, because then they’ll be without attorneys and being able to address their issues of being wrongly convicted. So it will be devastating in a lot of ways because many of us have been here over decades – and that in itself is already a life sentence. It’s already a life, just being here for many years. So to

go to another situation of a life sentence.”

The last inmate Mullane interviewed was Justin Helzer. Helzer was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of five people, including the daughter of guitarist Elvin Bishop. He told Mullane he did not want to talk about his case. While suffering from several medical issues, Helzer is now blind and partially paralyzed from an attempted sui-

cide in which he stuck two five-inch pens into his brain through his eye sockets.

Regarding Proposition 34, Helzer said: “I look forward to it. I think it’s the next step of a society that wakes up and realizes this is so unnecessary. It’s all politics. And right now the people are buying into the political story. Oh, Death Row – tough on crime. It’s not a deterrent. The death penalty is not a deterrent.”

San Francisco District Attorneys Search for Answers

Continued from Page 1

groups in search of answers to their own deterrence from a life of crime. Many of the questions from the DAs focused on how the potential for violence might develop into actual violence. Some of the answers included: motives for violent behavior, where the behavior occurs, whether alcohol or weapons were a factor, or whether anyone else was involved beside the offender and the victim.

Some of the San Quentin prisoners talked about circumstances in their personal lives that ultimately lead them to the penitentiary. These personal stories were “extremely helpful for us to hear,” said a visiting DA. “This is something we can take back to our community.”

Nick Garcia for example, who has been in prison for 35 years, spoke about being beat as a kid at home as well as in school.

“I ran away over and over again,” said Garcia. “When I was 12, I ran away to hitchhike to my grandmother’s house. When the police picked me up, I would not tell them where I lived or give them my real name. I wanted them to send me to juvenile hall.”

Although Garcia says he does not draw on this as an excuse for his crime, it no doubt contributed to behavior that landed him in prison for life.

There are “evidence-based” programs behind the walls of San Quentin that operate as interventions to juvenile crime.

One such group is the San Quentin’s Utilization of Inmate Resources Experiences and Studies (SQUIRES). Representatives from SQUIRES attended the forum. The group’s goal is to initiate counseling workshops, seminars, lectures, and other projects intended to assist young

people in overcoming antisocial behavior.

“Intervention needs to come before kids are sent to juvenile hall,” said David Basile, SQUIRES public information director. “It appears to me that the visitors seem to agree with that perspective.”

Because of the “great work” of SQUIRES, it makes for a “most effective form of opening dialogue between us and the kids we work with,” said Rani Singh, one of the visitors. “What everyone talked about here today totally validates why I do what I do.”

Another “evidence-based” group at San Quentin is The Alliance for Change, which assists incarcerated individuals to reintegrate back into society through community building and civic engagement.

The Alliance for Change achieves its mission through social justice education, practical living training, and real community support upon their release from prison. The group’s chairman, Ricky M. “Malik” Harris, began serving a life sentence when he was 26.

“One of the serious problems we have in the African-American and Hispanic communities is that we glorify the criminal lifestyle that got us here,” Harris said. “We really need to change that. We need to extend the individual rehabilitation programs to those men paroling. It may be hard, but it needs to be done.”

Among the visitors was Luis M. Aroche, an ex-felon. He was the first alternative sentencing planner to be hired by a district attorney in California, part of a new statewide plan to keep low-risk offenders from being sent to jail with much higher-risk prisoners.

“I grew up in the Mission District (San Francisco), one of eight



Photo by Michael Nelson

Men in blue discuss criminal issues with S.F. District Attorneys

children,” said Aroche. “My father worked as a security guard, and my mother was a maid. I spent time as a gang member, and I had several brushes with the law.”

San Francisco’s District Attorney George Gascón hired Aroche with state funds from Gov. Jerry Brown’s realignment plan, designed to slim the bloated prison system, where two-thirds of released prisoners return to custody within three years.

“Youth violence can develop in different ways. Some children exhibit problem behavior in early childhood that gradually escalates to more severe forms of aggression before and during adolescence,” a report on juvenile violence affirms.

“It was a great opportunity for me to talk to the guys on the other side of the isle. I was interested in what may have prevented them from committing their crimes in the first place,” said Marc Massarweh, an assistant DA.

After the forum, Rodriguez shared that, “The most powerful part was observing my friends and colleagues taking in all of this. We are tasked

with protecting and serving our communities and seeing the bigger picture of coming into San Quentin. It’s very powerful,” said Rodriguez. “It is important for us to know all aspects of the criminal justice system. This gives us an opportunity to find from offenders what would work or make things better.”

“The legislative trends evidenced during the past decade reflect a new understanding of adolescent development,” according to a recent report on juvenile justice. Investing in community-based alternatives and evidenced-based intervention programs are better serving youth and addressing and

preventing juvenile crime, the report concludes.

Discussions at the National Conference of State Legislatures last June revealed, “Evidence-based programs or policies are supported by a rigorous outcome evaluation that clearly demonstrates effectiveness.” Some of the examples given of various programs that have worked for example are, “multi-systematic therapy, family functional therapy, and aggression replacement training.” These are evidence-based interventions in place in juvenile justice systems today in at least eight states. California is not included in that list of states providing these programs.

New Chief Of CDCR

Continued from Page 1

Beard’s appointment requires state Senate confirmation.

California’s prison system is more than twice as large as Pennsylvania’s.

“The new secretary has just the experience California needs,” Brown said in a statement announcing the appointment Dec. 17. “He’s been a prison warden, led the correctional system in

Pennsylvania, and more recently participated in the federal oversight of California’s prisons, visiting the majority of our institutions.”

“In the face of a plethora of federal court decisions and the bold realignment enacted by the Legislature, Jeff Beard has arrived at the right time to take the next steps in returning California’s parole and correctional institutions to their former luster,” Brown added.

Joint Venture Program Provides Funding for Services



Photo By Sgt. W. Baxter

Joint Venture workers presenting their checks

Continued from Page 1

tion when they enter back into the community.”

Checks were accepted by Executive Director Tom Wilson of Community Alliance (Marin County), Executive Director Donna Garske of Center for Domestic Peace (Marin County), Chief Executive Officer Mary Dent of Sunny Hills Children’s Center (Marin County), Executive Director Marcia Blackstock

of Bay Area Women Against Rape (Alameda County), and Program Manager Regina Jackson of East Oakland Youth Development Center (Alameda County).

“The money will go towards survivors of domestic violence, especially those who are immigrants and have no place to go,” said Wilson. “Thank you to all the men that give back with their hard work. We know they care.”

“We’ve been receiving checks since the beginning of Labcon at S.Q., which has been 20 years,” said Denton. “We truly appreciate the funds. It goes to at-risk kids and foster children. This money is helping kids that desperately need it.”

Maura Prendiville of Center for Domestic Peace said, “The money will go to a general fund that provides shelter for domestic violence victims, transitional housing, and support groups.”

Inspiring Teacher Helps At-Risk Kids

By Charles David Henry
Staff Writer

More than 20 years ago, a promising student dropped out of school to sell drugs and was killed in a turf war. The event motivated his teacher, Dr. John Marshall, to start a program to support at-risk youngsters and steer them toward productive lives.

"It's hard to teach a kid math at 13, then go his funeral at 19," said Marshall.

More than 10,000 youth have attended the Omega Boys Club's group counseling and tutoring sessions, reports The Oakland Tribune. They are drilled in "straight-talk" sessions about survival in the streets.

Marshall says his teaching concepts focus on the "root issues behind the students' self-destructive behavior." His mentoring program prepares the young men to recognize risk factors that make them more likely to succumb to the disease of street violence.

Michael Gibson, 37, is one success story. At 12, Gibson was arrested for selling drugs and dropped out of school. Four years later, a judge sentenced him to eight years at California Youth Authority for attempted murder with the possession of firearms. Upon his release, the Omega Boys Club helped him turn his life around.

He earned his B.A. from Morehouse College in Atlanta. Today, he is married, has a 5-year-old son and is a program manager for the Alameda County Public Health Department's emergency medical staff.

Thanks to numerous donations, Marshall promises to send anyone in the program to college if they finish high school or get their GED. To date, the club has helped 176 boys and girls attend college.

The club was launched in 1987 by Marshall and Jack Jacqua, a former San Francisco public school teacher who volunteers with SQUIRES, San Quentin's youth mentor program.

S.Q. Education Dept. Gets Grant Support For College Supplies

By Ted Swain
Journalism Guild Writer

The Voluntary Education Program at San Quentin received an \$80,000 grant for college textbooks from the California State Library. Tom Bolema, literacy coordinator of college programs at San Quentin, said, "This is the greatest thing that ever happened!"

Typically a textbook costs from \$40 to \$200, which many inmate students can't afford. Principal Tony Beebe of the Burton Adult School at San Quentin said the cost of textbooks is the "single largest barrier to inmate college participation."

The grant was provided specifically for college course textbooks. Bolema said the books "will help give inmates the tools necessary for success in mainstream society." He said that education and literacy are keys to lowering the recidivism rate.

Currently, about two out of every three inmates who are released return to prison. Studies indicate that inmates who participate in prison education programs have a lower chance of doing so, according to Debra Lynch of the California State Library.

Bolema chose which books to buy for the San Quentin classes. He ordered 10 books for each of the Coastline College

and Lassen College classes he facilitates. The Voluntary Education Program coordinators at San Quentin act as conduits to a dozen or so colleges.

Beebe said San Quentin and Ironwood prisons received money through the grant. He noted the state has budgeted funds this year for the purchase of books for students at other prisons as well.

"It's a no-brainer," said San Quentin inmate Barry Jameson. "Buying books instead of more cells only makes sense," he added.

Society can generate investment returns on the money because rather than returning to prison, the students can now become tax-paying citizens, Jameson commented. "Do you want a person with a college degree getting out of prison, or a person who has spent the past 15 years working out and learning more criminal stuff?" he added.

Now "hundreds of inmates will be able to complete college classes they might not otherwise have been able to complete," Bolema said. Thanks to the funding, San Quentin inmates are now on a broader path to literacy, and have more resources to complete an associate's degree.

In addition to the college textbooks, the Voluntary Education Program received a large number of recreational reading books.

EDUCATION CORNER



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

VEP coordinators T. Bolema, D. Bray, K. Williams, G. Young, J. Kaufman and D. Searle

Education Program Expands

San Quentin's Voluntary Education Program has grown in the past several months adding five positions to the existing two.

Six VEP teachers now operate as Literacy Coordinators out of the Education C Building, and one position is yet to be filled. Each coordinator maintains a roster of 120 students, resulting in services to 720 students. Participants can earn GEDs, college degrees, milestone credits, and life skills competencies.

Participation in VEP is voluntary, unlike the ABE Program in which students are assigned based on educational accomplishment. A student can be enrolled in VEP and assigned to a job simultaneously.

"For so many students' educational success isn't a matter of mental horsepower, but a matter of engaging their motivational transmissions, said VEP coordinator G. Young.

"VEP gives students the option of accelerated growth."

Fellow coordinator K. Williams agrees, "VEP students are highly motivated."

VEP coordinators are equally motivated to provide a full service educational experience, D. Searle provides GED math instruction Tuesdays, 1-2pm in Education Building C2, and J. Kaufman provides GED essay writing workshops there Thursdays, 1-2pm. VEP college students work mostly in Room C1, where coordinators facilitate learning activities for students enrolled in a half dozen different colleges, universities and trade schools. Building C1 and 2 classroom doors are open for students Monday through Thursday, 8am to 2:30 pm.

"One-on-one direct instruction gives the student confidence to discuss a learning problem without embarrassment, while the study hall format, and the additional teachers, assures that someone is always there to help," said VEP Coordinator D. Bray.

"VEP evolved out of the Independent Study and Distance Learning programs that had been established some years ago at some of the institutions," said T. Bolema, who has facilitated such programs both at Lancaster and San Quentin.

"Program success depends on the amount of support that management is willing to extend to a non-traditional learning model. Meeting the needs of VEP students is a challenge, but with the increased staff, and the inmate clerks' and tutors' assistance, so far so good," said Bolema.

"About 20 percent of our students are ready to take their GED, 40 percent are taking college courses, and another 40 percent are preparing for the GED," said Kaufman.

Along with C1 and 2 classroom activities, VEP coordinators also work with students in the Condemned Unit, South Block, the Hospital, PIA, and the Firehouse.

— Charles David Henry

H-Unit Self Awareness Program Celebrates its 10th Anniversary

By Kenyota R. Gray
H-Unit Reporter

A decade ago, H-Unit began running a number of self-help programs designed to draw awareness to the need for emotional growth and personal empowerment. Now, as a result of the efforts of both staff facilitators and inmate-participants, the H-Unit Stand Up! program continues to help inmates develop their communication skills.

COMMEMORATION

In commemoration of 10 years of Stand Up!, participants recently organized an ice cream and cake social in the H-Unit dining hall. "Our hope is to use this celebration as a welcoming beacon to the general popula-

tion that these worthwhile programs are here to help improve their lives," said Stand Up! facilitator Jim Ward.

More than 150 inmate representatives from the various Stand Up! programs — such as Victims Offender Education Group, IMPACT, Non-Violent Communication and This Sacred Space — attended the commemoration.

The consensus among those in attendance was that, if a person has a desire to change and a willingness to make certain sacrifices, then Stand Up! can change their lives.

"Stand Up! means I get a chance to experience a real life that I never thought possible," said Steve McAllister, a participant in VOEG and several 12-step programs.

Other inmates who have taken advantage of Stand Up! share McAllister's feelings.

"The program has made me more aware of personal issues I need to address," said inmate Cleo Franks, who participated in Non-Violent Communication. "Stand Up! is preparing me to make better choices when I parole."

SUPPORT

The Stand Up! program has garnered a tremendous amount of collective group support from the general population. Ward and his staff of inmate workers advocate the program as a creative outlet for productive change. The group holds "Stand Up!" orientations every Wednesday for all H-Unit inmates from 10 a.m. to noon.

SPORTS

Athlete of the Year Named

Voted #1 by San Quentin's Coaches and Officials

By Gary Scott
Sports Editor

San Quentin's sports leaders have overwhelmingly elected Carlyle White Otter Blake as the 2012 San Quentin Athlete of the Year.

In 2012 Blake played right field for the San Quentin A's baseball team, running back for the San Quentin All-Madden flag football team, and led his intramural league basketball team in scoring.

"Special thanks for all the guys who voted for me as the athlete of the year and all the people I've played with," said Blake. "It's a blessing to get past the boundaries and for guys to recognize my talents."

Blake has been involved in sports since he was very young, growing up in poverty on a reservation in Hoopa, California. He wrestled and played football for Hoopa High School. "I was raised in sports. I look up to Jim Thorpe," a Native American pro-

fessional football player who played running back, said Blake. He also played in basketball and softball tournaments outside of high school, and wrestled in cage fights



Photo by Ernest Woods

Otter poses for team picture

at the Blue Lake casino in his hometown.

"When it comes to athletics, my skills come naturally. It's my God-given ability," said Blake.

He credits his grandfather, Carlson, for his motivation to

play hard. "He always told me if you're going to do something, do it 100 percent. So I took it to heart and give it my all when I'm playing," he said.

He honors Carlson and his grandmother for supporting him throughout his life. "My mother passed away when I was very young," he said. "My grandmother, Carmen Cane, has always been there for me. She never gave up on me. My grandparents raised me in a good structured home and I have always been really in tune with my native culture and ceremonies."

He expressed how if he had a chance to do things over he would have stayed away from bad influences and stayed in school.

"Playing sports in prison helps me stay focused on positive things. I get to be around positive people and have positive results," he said.

Now he considers himself a student athlete, taking classes with San Quentin's Prison University Project. He also participates in restorative justice programs.



Photo By Sam Hearn

Coach Thompson-Bonilla motivates All-Madden

A Coach's Summary

All-Madden's coach reviews the team's year

In a successful flag-football season, defense is an area of improvement, according to Head Coach Isaiah Thompson-Bonilla and wide receiver Dwight Kennedy.

Coach Thompson-Bonilla envisioned All-Madden becoming a professional and organized program. "I wanted to infuse a sense of professionalism with respect to how the coaches and the team went about their business," he said. "To do that, the coaches and I had to lay the foundation by implementing responsibility and accountability as a part of the criteria for playing on this team."

His vision became reality and the All-Madden team went on to finish the season with a winning record. "I believe the season was a huge success despite being truncated due to a late start," he explained. "The goal was to go undefeated, and that was our mindset all year. How-

ever, we suffered a one-point loss to the Gridiron Boys and we finished the season 4-1."

Kennedy discussed their area of improvement going into next season. He said, "I believe with the talent that the Madden team possesses, we can be much stronger on defense."

"We will practice more intently on applying the principles of our zone coverage next season," said Coach Thompson-Bonilla. "Despite our ability to win, we allowed our opponents to score when we should have stopped them. While opponents obviously will score, it should never come via a blown assignment."

Kennedy explained how he could work harder as an individual to improve the team. "I can improve by continuing to work hard, grow, and stay consistent," he commented.

— Gary Scott



Photo by Ernest Woods

The 2012 San Quentin Kings basketball team

S.Q. Kings Season Reviewed

The season was successful, but could have been better, Coach Orlando Harris and forward Paul Davidson of the San Quentin Kings' 40-and-over basketball team said.

"We finished the season 11-6 and we lost three of those games by one point," said Coach Harris. "We under-achieved."

He explained his regrets about letting his players play in the intramural league. "There was a lot of wear and tear on their

bodies, considering the practices, the regular season games, as well as the intramural league games," Harris said.

"If I had a chance to start all over again, my coaching style would remain the same," he said. "I communicated well. My coaching style worked, my players bought into my style, and they learned communication and life skills."

He named Davidson his team's Most Valuable Player.

"He is the heart and soul of the team," said Harris. "He started the season averaging 30 points a game."

"I like the acknowledgment, although I'm more of a team player and not about individual awards," said Davidson. "Coach Harris and I worked well together. He told me what he wanted me to do, and I did it."

— Gary Scott

Outsiders Ball Team Routs Kings 70 to 63

Team returns to San Quentin to finish season with a win against the Kings

The San Quentin Kings 40-and-over basketball team could not respond to the Outsiders' three-point shooting in the fourth quarter, losing the game 70-63.

Tied 46-46 with 12 minutes left in the fourth quarter, the Outsiders went on to drain five three-pointers.

Mark S. of the Outsiders started it off, burying a three-pointer from the left corner to break the tie.

Kings guard Orlando Harris countered with a three-pointer to retie the game at 49-49

The Outsiders struck back with back-to-back three-pointers by Mark S. and Tom T. to take a 55-49 lead.

"This was the best game I played since I've been coming here," said Mark S.

The Kings struck back as guard Billy Wilson pulled up from the top of the key and drained a three-pointer. Kings forward Paul Davidson followed with a strong post move to decrease the Outsider's lead to 55-54.

After T. Jones of the Kings knocked down a fade-away jumper to take a 56-55 lead, the Outsiders followed with three consecutive points to regain a 58-56 lead and never looked back.

"This is the best game I played since I've been coming here"

"We gave up a lot of second chance points the last time we were here," said Mark S. "So this time we tried to limit them and score second-chance points of our own."

Mark S. scored a game-high 21 points. He played junior varsity basketball at Grasberg High School in Wisconsin.

Davidson finished with a team high 17 points.

— Gary Scott

Veterans Battle it Out on the Softball Field

By Chris Schuhmacher
VVGSQ Chairman

On a crisp and clear November morning, the Vietnam Veterans Group of San Quentin held its inaugural Camaraderie Softball game. Armed with bat, gloves, and the indomitable spirit of competition, group members and one honorary draftee stormed San Quentin’s Field of Dreams ready for action. In keeping with a Civil War theme, Ernie Vick was selected as general of the blue team, the Damn Yankees. Kenneth Goodlow was appointed commander of the gray’s Johnny Rebels. Once

the teams were selected, the stage was set for a historic softball Civil War. As the game got under way, Gary Harrell was drafted to serve as the all-time pitcher. When asked about his participation, he replied “Usually, I’m a man of peace, but these feisty veterans really got me fired up. It’s an honor and a privilege to take part in this friendly battle alongside men who have served our country.” The Rebels took an early one-run lead with hits by Darryl Farris, Johnny Gomez, and the fleet-footed Harry Barton. The Yankees rallied back as Larry Faison, Greg Sanders, and Jim

Snider launched bombs of their own into the outfield, taking the lead 4 to 1. In the second inning, both teams got dirty in the trenches and really gave it their all. The Rebels scored another run, but once again the Yankees rallied with three of their own. **‘No guts, no glory’** With the bases loaded and two outs, General Vick headed to the plate with bat in hand. He recalled thinking, “No guts...no glory. I can end this now.” With his head held high, he walked back to the dugout

thinking, “Strikeouts, like war, are hell.” Going into the final inning, the Rebels were down 7 to 2. The comeback charge was mounted with a valiant resurgence of offense from Jesse Hernandez and David Tarvan. Yankee shortstop John Johnston dug in with two spectacular plays to first baseman Garvin “JoJo” Robinson. The Rebels managed to score two additional runs, but in the end it wasn’t enough. Our nation’s history has repeated itself and The Damn Yankees once again seized the day with a 7-4 victory. After the game, the two teams circled up and each ex-

pressed their appreciation for the sportsmanship and camaraderie that was displayed. General Goodlow summed up the day by saying, “We may have lost, but getting out here with my brothers was a really nice and genuine experience. Once I get over this soreness, I’ll be ready for a rematch. So, look out!” The VVGSQ is issuing a challenge to all outside veterans groups who would be interested in playing the San Quentin squad on the notorious Field of Dreams. To accept the challenge, contact Chief Sponsor Lt. K. Evans at San Quentin, (415) 454-1460 ext. 5205.

Warriors’ Season Ends in a Loss

By Gary Scott
Sports Editor

After a disappointing season, Coach Daniel Wright said he expects improvements next year for the San Quentin Warriors’ basketball team.

“We had our good and bad moments. We learn from each other...”

The Warriors finished the 2012 season below .500. For next season, Wright said, “I’m going to have an open try-

out. No one has a spot right now and with the new influx of talent, I believe we will have a better season.” As for the 2012 season, “I accept a lot of the responsibility for not preparing my players in practice and in games,” said Wright. “I was disappointed about the season, considering all the talent we had. I thought we had our highs and we had our lows.”

Regrets Wright said, “I probably should have stressed defense, rebounds and some of the X’s and O’s a little more in depth.” “I feel like the season was a seesaw,” said guard Joshua



The 2012 San Quentin Warriors and Sports Ministry basketball teams

Burton. “We had our good and bad moments. We learned from each other and grew as men with each other.” Wright named Allan McIntosh the Most Valuable Player of the Warriors’ season.

“I’m proud of the honorable recognition, knowing I came in half way through the season,” said McIntosh. “I’m honored for that and I do accept it.” Wright also recognized the play of a few more of his play-

ers. He said, “I liked the consistent intensity that Jhavonte Carr, Burton, Rafael Cuevas and Richard ‘Mujahid’ Munns brought to every game. I knew they were going to play hard for me.”

Inaugural Class Celebrates Completion

By San Quentin News Staff

A program aimed at helping prisoners overcome anger issues held its first graduating class for 30 men. Called *Guiding Rage Into Power*, or GRIP, is a self-help program for changing lives.

MOTHER’S VIEW “I think it’s a wonderful experience, being here to see him, I’m very proud of him,” said Janet Buckley, mother of Michael Tyler, one of the graduates at the November graduation. “I really enjoy seeing the

progress he’s making. All the programs he’s taking inside, he can take out into society,” added Doris Earsery, Tyler’s aunt. The violence-prevention, emotional-intelligence, and life-skills program was developed by Jacques Verduin. The 52-week program teaches offenders how to understand and transform violent behavior and replace it with an attitude that helps them comprehend the origins of anger. Participants develop skills to track and manage strong impulses before they are acted out in destructive ways.

A major component of the program is that it functions as a peer education model, where experienced students co-facilitate the classes and mentor newer students. Students sign a pledge to become a non-violence person and peacemaker.

COMMUNITY Verduin said GRIP gives the community more direct involvement in how justice is administered through its connection to offenders. “I’m here to learn more and it looks like an important program for inmates to do good work and work on themselves,” said author Lindsey Crittendon. His book, *The Water Will Hold You*, tells the story about how he came to terms with the murder of this brother. The GRIP approach as been developed over 17 years of working with thousands of prisoners, mostly at San Quentin State Prison. “We are not hiding or running. We’ve stopped that. We are no longer a problem we are a part of the solution,” said facilitator Robin Guillen. GRIP is recognized by the Marin Probation Department as



Graduates and guests celebrate after the ceremony

a program that meets the needs of parolees who must take a 52-week court-ordered domestic violence program before release to the community. It also is able to certify prisoners as facilitators of domestic violence prevention as a job skill. **PARTICIPANTS** GRIP facilitators are Robin Guillen, John Neblett, Richard Poma, and Randy Maluenda List Of Graduates: Edward C. Ballenger, Gordon L. Brown, Sr., Derrick Cooper, Michael Endres, Robert D. Frye, Eddie D. Herena, Bernard Moss, Arlyis

Peters, Alexi Ruiz, Michael Tyler, Dominique Whitaker, Borey Ai, David Baker, Travis Banks, Eric Boles, Gary Calhoun, Bruce Cooper, Andrew Gazzeny, Richard Honea, Stephen Yar Liebb, Alton McSween, A. Terrell Merritt, Vaughn Miles, Edgar Moore, Jr., Kevork Parsakrian, Dave Robinson, Ron G. Self, Darryll Sherman, Perry Simpson, Phang Nou Thao, and Binh Vo. More information is available at Insight-Out: P.O. Box 888, Woodacre, CA 94973, jverduin@comcast.net and www.insight-out.org.



GRIP graduates proudly display their diplomas