

Writers take guests on emotional journey

By Eddie Herena
San Quentin News Photographer

Stories by incarcerated writers swept members of the outside community into a world behind prison walls.

Sponsored by the William James Association's Prison Arts Project, the reading was an opportunity for the incarcerated writers of San Quentin to share their work. Many of their stories articulated personal struggles within the

criminal justice system and challenged the social stigma of incarceration, while others were imaginative expressions through spoken word or fiction.

Nearly 60 guests arrived to listen to the readings by members of Zoe Mullery's creative writing class Brothers in Pen. Mullery has been teaching the class for 17 years, and this was the 11th annual public reading.

See *Creative* on Page 12



Photo by Peter Mertz

Emcee Kenny Brydon and Zoe Mullery

A journey to freedom filled with pain and survival

By Arnulfo T. Garcia
Executive Editor

After serving nearly 30 years behind bars, Duane Holt was a changed man who convinced a parole board that he was no

longer a danger to public safety.

Holt's journey to freedom was not easy. He was diagnosed with cancer in January. The possibility of dying in prison was a reality check, he said. He thought about how his family would be affected by his death.

At the beginning of his incarceration, he felt he'd never make it out of such a violent place. Later he wanted to show his mother that he was not the same person who was arrested for murder nearly three decades ago. However, in 2014, his mother died. He said thinking about his feelings after losing his mother and facing death himself connected him to the pain of the victims of his crime.



Courtesy of Duane Holt

Duane Holt with his dog

See *Duane* on Page 4

SQ inmates surveyed about Trump's election

In a sample survey taken from San Quentin inmates, more than half think a Donald Trump presidency has the potential to make America worse, while about 20 percent think things would be better under a Trump presidency.

About a third of the respon-

dents said that a Trump presidency poses a direct threat to their future.

Almost 40 percent of respondents said their job opportunities outside of prisons were in jeopardy.

See *Post Election* on Page 4



Photo by Jonathan Chiu- San Quentin News

Julius De Guia (left) and Nikesh Patel (right) hear Vaughn Miles speak of collaboration between inmates and public safety officials

Prosecutors visit SQ News seeking answers to public safety

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

A team of San Francisco's leading prosecutors came into San Quentin on Dec. 16, seeking answers to very tough questions about public safety and got eye-opening answers from

the kind of people they have convicted and sent to prison.

A large part of the solution is curbing criminal behavior in children before they wind up in jail and prison, the inmates told the district attorneys.

"It's not about locking a kid up. It's about understanding

the root causes behind criminal thinking, like anger and rejection. It's about listening to what is happening in the kid's life," said Philip Melendez, convicted of two first-degree murders.

See *DA Forum* on Page 20



Courtesy of NBC Bay Area

Inmates sit with potential employers at the job readiness seminar

Inmates preview job opportunities thanks to an Employment Readiness Seminar

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

A group of San Quentin prisoners got a preview of job opportunities when they are released, thanks to an Employment Readiness Seminar.

Thirty-six inmates and 33 outside guests attended the December event, the latest of four job seminars held in the past two years.

"We prepare men for jobs," said Diana Williams to an audience of employers, inmates, trade union representatives, former inmates, law enforcement, top officials from the California

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), and other organizations. "We facilitate relationships."

The weeks-long seminars teach inmates how to present themselves on paper by communicating with letters of introduction and resumes. They also learn interview techniques.

"We just hired someone who got out of San Quentin," said Donna of Rubicon Bakery. She said she wants to make connections. "We love the (seminars) program. We really want to help."

Every Dog Has Its Daycare attended the event for a third time. The owner said a San Quentin

parolee was recently hired. "He started this week, and he's doing well." She said a woman who is in prison in Chowchilla will parole soon and wants an interview. She also has other inmates who are interested in employment, including another San Quentin inmate.

Williams co-founded the job program with inmate Nobel Butler as a way to connect inmates with potential employers, one-on-one. Their first step was to teach the men how to communicate administratively and in person through interviewing.

See *Employment* on Page 5

INSIDE EDITION #88

Prosecutors visit SQ News	1	Delivering a message	9
Writers take guests on	1	Volunteers' caroling brings	10
A journey to freedom	1	Christmas banquet shows	10
Inmates preview job	1	Discovering what it means	11
SQ inmates surveyed	1	Arts & Entertainment	12-13
Newsbriefs	2	Albergues de apoyo para	14
Mock crash but a real inmate	3	Trump crea pánico en los	14
Court OKs ex-warden's trial	3	San Joaquin offers free	14
US prison commissary	4	Dreamers fearful	14
New law requires inmate's	4	Inmate veterans deliver	15
\$473.5 million spent on	5	Christmas comes early	15
Archbishop of SF unveils	6	Book Review	16
Project Rebound helps	6	Study explores how lifers	16
Letters to the Editor	6	Asked On The Line	16
Are fewer inmates good	6	SHU inmates down	65
Kid CAT Speaks	7	Correctional officers	17
Protestors' vigil at CIW	8	Centinela helps	17
Straight talk from women	8	Chowchilla's cosmetology	17
The way she treats us	9	Sports	18-19



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



We Want To Hear From You!

The *San Quentin News* encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles. All submissions become property of the *San Quentin News*. Please use the following criteria when submitting:

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

Send Submissions to:

San Quentin News
1 Main Street
San Quentin, CA 94964

For inmates that want to receive a copy of the *San Quentin News* in the mail, send \$1.61 worth of stamps for postage to the above address.

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

Behind the Scenes

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News Briefs

1. National News – Last November, one of every 40 American adults was not able to vote because of state laws that bar people with past felony convictions from casting ballots, *The Sentencing Project* reports. The report estimated 6.1 million Americans did not vote because of these state laws. The laws vary widely. Florida, Iowa and Virginia have some of the harshest laws. They impose lifetime voting bans on felons. However, in these states, voting rights can be restored on a case-by-case basis by a governor or a court. Maine and Vermont are the only states that place no restrictions on people with felony convictions. Citizens can even vote while incarcerated in Maine and Vermont.

2. Sacramento – Opponents of the new law, Proposition 66, which would speed up executions in the state, are asking the state Supreme Court to block its implementation. The law would require the state Supreme Court to rule on death penalty appeals within five years, set a five-year deadline for second-stage appeals (habeas corpus) and require defense lawyers to file those appeals with the trial judge within a year. The law also would expand the pool of defense lawyers by including attorneys who take on non-capital appeals, and it eliminates administrative review of the single drug execution method, the new rules for which are currently under review at the Office of Administrative Law.

3. Folsom – The cost for the record-keeping system used by California prison officials to track nearly 130,000 inmates' medical and mental healthcare has doubled from the original estimated cost to almost \$400 million, *The Associated Press* reports. The extra cost comes from maintaining the system, replacing worn-out equipment, and additional hardware like mobile devices along with the software to run them. Most of the extra costs have been added into the prison system's health-care budget of \$1.9 billion.

4. Arizona – Maricopa County voters ousted the 24-year reign of Joe Arpaio, known as “Amer-

ica's Toughest Sheriff,” and replaced him with retired Phoenix police sergeant Paul Penzone. “No longer will we be known by the notoriety of one,” Penzone told *azcentral.com*. “The only division we should see in the community is between those who commit the crime and those (who) are willing to hold them accountable.”

5. Nebraska – More than 60 percent of state voters said they want to reverse lawmakers' elimination of the death penalty. Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts led the effort, saying voters want the death penalty.

6. Oklahoma – About two-thirds of state voters agreed to change the state constitution, stating that “any method of execution shall be allowed, unless prohibited by the United States Constitution” and that the method “shall not be deemed to be, or to constitute, the infliction of cruel or unusual punishment.”

7. Houston, Texas – The American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) filed a federal lawsuit against the southeast city of Santa Fe, accusing it of being a debtor's prison and “prioritizing raising revenue of the city over administering justice fairly,” reports ABC7 El Paso. According to a report filed by the ACLU, during a four-month period in 2015 and 2016, 48.9 percent of the people the Houston municipal court system jailed were Black. The city's Black population is about 24 percent. In nearby Texas City, the study found that during an unspecified six-month period, 60 percent of the people its municipal court system jailed were Black. In Texas City, Blacks make up about one-third of the population.

8. New York – Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has ordered a statewide inquiry into what has been called “pervasive racial bias by prison guards” in the state's 54 prisons, *The New York Times* reports. The action was taken after a report by the *Times* documenting racial disparities in the prison disciplinary system that found that Black and Latino inmates were punished at twice the rate of White inmates at some prisons, sent to solitary confinement more often and were held there longer.

9. Philadelphia – Last April, the city received a \$3.5 million

grant to reduce its jail population by a third. City officials are focusing on reducing recidivism by sealing records of low-level crimes from everyone except law enforcement. The effort, city officials say, would increase the offenders' chance of getting a job. Since late last year, nearly 2,000 people with criminal records signed up for free clinics around the city. Experts estimate about 1,200 people would benefit from the project.

10. Hookerton, NC – Vietnam veterans doing time in one of the state's prisons, along with other inmates who served in the military after Sept. 11, have their own dormitory. “They're still inmates,” Kenneth Lassiter, deputy director of operations for the state Department of Public Safety, told *newsobserver.com*. “They're still incarcerated. They're still heroes, though.” According to the report, the state has about 1,900 veterans – 5 percent of the state's prison population.

CALIFORNIA ELECTION

RESULTS:
100 percent (24,847 of 24,847) precincts reporting:

- **Hillary Clinton**= 8,753,788 (62.2 percent)
- **Donald J. Trump**= 4,483,810 (31.8 percent)
- **Jill Stein**= 278,657 (2.0 percent)
- **Gary Johnson**= 478,499 (3.4 percent)
- **Gloria Estela La Rive**= 66,101 (0.5 percent)
- **Prison Reform: Proposition 57**
Yes = 8,790,723 (64.5 percent)
No = 4,847,354 (35.5 percent)
- **End Death Penalty: Proposition 62**
Yes = 6,361,788 (46.8 percent)
No = 7,218,625 (53.2 percent)
- **Marijuana Legalization: Proposition 64:**
Yes = 7,979,041 (57.1 percent)
No = 5,987,020 (42.9 percent)
- **Speed Up Death Penalty: Proposition 66:**
Yes = 6,626,159 (51.1 percent)
No = 6,333,731 (48.9 percent)

Mock crash but a real inmate jolts high school students

By Krissi Khokhobashvili
CDCR Public Information
Officer

When Kaitlin Bennett got behind the wheel of her car after having drinks with a friend in 2012, she didn't know her decision would have devastating effects.

Speeding and running a red light, she crashed into a vehicle carrying five teenagers. A few were ejected and suffered major injuries. Bennett woke up in county jail, where she began her life as a prisoner.

Today, as an inmate at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), Bennett is sharing the lessons she learned with youth, using herself as an example to stop them from making the same bad decision.

"Saying 'I'm sorry' doesn't fix anything," Bennett shared. "Giving back is the only thing that helps lessen my shame and guilt. If I can help one person, that's the only thing that matters to me."

Bennett, who also gives back by serving as a firefighter at CCWF, was recruited by Fire Chief C. Diaz to speak to local high schoolers as part of the Every 15 Minutes program. Schools throughout the country take part in two-day events that include a graphic reenactment of a drunk-driving crash, including a memorial for the students "killed" in the accident.

"I'm asking all of you for the next hour to open your

eyes very wide," urged James Enochs' High School Principal Deborah Rowe, speaking to a gym full of seniors assembled for the somber presentation. "Consider how the choices that you make each and every day impact the lives of others so very greatly."

"The shame and guilt eat her alive and consume her when she closes her eyes"

The day of the mock crash, students were pulled out of class at 15-minute intervals, their empty desks an illustration of the shocking statistic that every 15 minutes, someone is killed or seriously injured in an alcohol-related incident. Then, the students were called out to the field to witness the gruesome crash reenactment, complete with first responders from throughout the community who volunteered their time to show the students just what happens during such an event. Agencies participating included the California Highway Patrol, Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department, Modesto Police Department, Modesto Fire, American Medical Response ambulance and Memorial Medical Center.

"If you're a first responder for any period of time, you've been to many crashes just like this," said CHP Officer Eric Parsons. "Most of the people you saw out there working that crash do this on a regular basis, unfortunately."

During the memorial at Enochs High School in Modesto, a guest speaker—Bennett—stood at the podium, dressed in street clothes and looking, for all intents and purposes, like a professional young woman. As she spoke, she shared a story about a woman she once knew who had a hard childhood but maintained a positive outlook as she moved into an adulthood that included marriage and raising two great kids. By building walls and stuffing her feelings down a bottle, she was able to power through the challenges of a father who abandoned her, a husband on deployment and relationships ending. She put on a happy face, provided for her family and drank to numb the pain.

"Deciding to go out with a friend one night to have a few drinks turned out to be one of her biggest regrets in life," Bennett told the students. "She remembers waking up on the concrete floor of a cell, disoriented, confused. She was being charged with a felony DUI with great bodily injury. She made a careless, foolish, thoughtless decision to drink and drive."

The students listened with rapt attention as Bennett recounted the injuries the teen in the other car suffered, and how scared they must have been, lying on the roadway, screaming for help.

"She did this," Bennett said. "She caused this damage. She hurt and forever changed these people's lives and their families. The irreparable damage she has caused to a multitude of innocent lives creates in her a personal prison from which she will not be pardoned."

The gym was silent as Bennett stepped to the side of the podium and removed her jeans and sweater to reveal a bright orange jumpsuit with "CDCR inmate" stamped on the leg. Before being handcuffed and led out of the gym by an officer, she revealed she was the driver, and is serving an eight-year prison sentence for DUI with great bodily injury.



Photos by Krissi Khokhobashvili

The students are silent as CCWF Capt. Y. Hill leads inmate Kaitlin Bennett out of the gym in handcuffs

Penny Johnson, whose son Kalief was one of the "living dead" at the ceremony, made a point to speak with Bennett after the memorial to thank her for sharing her story.

"Everyone else's story was pretend," Johnson said. "When she got up there, hers was for real. She's living it every day because of a bad decision. It really hit home, and I think some students will probably realize this could really happen."

CCWF Fire Chief C. Diaz, who supervises Bennett, said CCWF has a 250-square-mile mutual aid response area, and that almost daily his crew responds to some type of vehicle accident. While not all are alcohol-related, he said, even one is too many. That's why he supports Every 15 Minutes, even though there is a lot of effort and coordination involved.

"To be a part of it and see the impact the speaker makes—I'll do every single one the warden lets me do," he said. "All we need to do is stop one. Just one."

The effort is fully supported by CCWF and Warden Deborah K. Johnson.

"The involvement in this event serves two purposes,"

Warden Johnson said. "First, it allows the inmates an opportunity to make amends to the victims or their families and second, and most importantly, it saves a life. CCWF will continue to support the community by participating in this effort."

The intended message came through loud and clear to student Brooke Bettencourt, who was led into the gym handcuffed and in a county jail uniform. She had taken on the role of the driver for Every 15 Minutes, which included being field-tested for sobriety at the scene, arrested and actually transported to the county jail. Taking part in the crash, she said, was so realistic she forgot she was acting. Watching from the audience, Bennett nodded knowingly as Bettencourt recounted the intense shame and guilt she felt realizing the destruction she had caused.

"Those tears that came down my face, the screams I was screaming, were real," she said. "I just want everyone to understand how real it is—this could happen to anyone. It's so easy to take the life of someone. It's even easier to just not get behind the wheel."



Photos by Krissi Khokhobashvili

CCWF inmate firefighter Kaitlin Bennett, in street clothes, tells the students about a woman she knew who made the terrible decision to drink and drive

Court OKs ex-warden's trial for guard's sex with inmates

By David Eugene Archer Sr.
Journalism Guild Writer

A former California prison warden can face trial in a sex abuse case, a federal appeals court ruled in October, said the *Press Enterprise*.

Guillermo Garcia, former warden of the California Institution for Women (CIW), lost his appeal in a federal appeals court on Oct. 12, Oakland-based Justice First Attorneys at Law said.

Garcia had claimed "he should be immune from liability and dismissed from the case," said a news release from Justice First, plaintiffs' attorneys.

Jossie Ramos and Melissa Ortiz are the plaintiffs who were prisoners at CIW, where Correctional Officer Gary Swatzell allegedly subjected them to ongoing sexual abuse. Swatzell abused his authority by making threats and bribes in exchange for sexual contact with the inmates, according to the complaint.

The complaint continued, Ramos and Ortiz "were repeatedly coerced into engaging in sexual acts with Swatzell without their lawful consent. Ramos was impregnated by Swatzell and delivered a child who she is now unable to care for and raise."

The child is now 5 years old,

the news release states.

Garcia "knew or should have known about the sexual misconduct and retaliation" perpetrated by one of his officers, the lawsuit charged. Garcia "failed to prevent further harm to plaintiffs," the suit added.

"Mr. Garcia ignored several reports from a prison lieutenant that former Corrections Officer Gary Swatzell was engaging in sexual misconduct with several inmates," Justice First lawyers said.

Garcia "didn't report Swatzell's alleged sexual misconduct to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and ignored the lieutenant's complaint that

Swatzell physically assaulted her in retaliation for reporting his sexual misconduct," reported the *Press Enterprise*.

In addition to Garcia and Swatzell, other defendants are correctional officers Jason Horgan, Ricardo Llamas, Sgt. Luis Flores, and Lt. Peggy Maldonado, as well as Matthew Cate, then secretary of CDCR, the complaint said.

The state Attorney General's Office is representing the defendants. A representative could not be reached for comment, the *Press Enterprise* said.

The case is expected to go to trial in 2017, the news release stated.



File photo

Former CIW Warden Guillermo Garcia

US prison commissary giants are set to merge

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Chairman

As prisoners across the nation wage protests over what they consider slave labor for low or no pay, two of the country’s biggest prison commissary companies are set to merge.

HIG Capital, owner of Trinity Services Group, a commissary and food-service operator, announced that it would be acquiring Keefe Group, one of the largest for-profit operators of prison and jail commissaries, according to a Prison Policy

Initiative article.

Throughout the nation, the prison commissary business brings in an estimated \$1.6 billion in sales a year. Keefe, Trinity and Aramark are the three companies that dominate this market.

With two companies merging, it would be difficult for smaller firms to outbid for contracts.

Trinity is a member of the American Correctional Association, American Jail Association, National Association of Deputy Wardens, National Sheriff’s Association and vari-

ous state and county sheriff associations across the nation.

San Quentin is one of the prisons in California that holds a commissary contract with Keefe Group, according to Dineen Parsons, the material and store supervisor.

“Sacramento makes the contracts for all 34 prisons, so I believe we will still get good prices,” said Parsons. “We deal with multiple vendors, so we will probably see increases and decreases throughout the year.”

The merger-created reduction in competition can lead to

the same economic distortions that afflicted the prison phone industry, the article noted. Jails and prisons often receive a commission or kickback from commissary operators as well.

The Trinity/Keefe merger could reap annual revenues of \$875 million, more than half of the total commissary market.

With jails and prison facilities cutting their food budgets and subsistence, incarcerated people are forced to pay for basic necessities to supplement the food in the cafeteria. This causes commissary orders to increase dramatically, the article noted.

various prison-related businesses.

Access Securepak delivers quarterly packages to inmates, and ICSolutions (short for Inmate Calling Solutions) a communications company, are two of them.

HIG and ICSolutions filed a notice of the sale with the Federal Communications Commission in June.

Keefe and HIG argued in their joint filing with the FCC that the acquisition “will serve the public interest by providing additional capital to ICSolutions, which in turn will enhance its ability to maintain and improve its network and services,” the article reported.

The statement fails to address whether there is actually a lack of adequate capital for ICSolutions or any other Keefe companies.

In 2014, Trinity already acquired Swanson Services Corporation, a leading national provider of commissary products and integrated software services to correctional facilities.

Trinity provides support services to 400 correctional facilities across 33 states, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, according to their website.

Given the market shares of Trinity and Keefe, it should be a matter of concern to incarcerated people, their family members and antitrust regulators, the article concluded.

New law requires inmate’s consent for federal interviews

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

A new California law requires law enforcement agencies to have inmates sign a written consent before being interviewed by the federal immigration agency.

Gov. Jerry Brown signed the measure, Assembly Bill 2792, on Sept. 28. It limits interviews by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

The governor wrote, “The author and proponents greatly modified these far reaching provisions, and the bill now reflects

a measured approach to due process and transparency principles,” reported *The Desert Sun*.

Jon Rodney, spokesman for the California Immigrant Policy Center, said, “California must do much more to ease the pain of harsh deportations that continue to demonize and devastate communities across the state. Harsh deportations stemming from the tangling of police and ICE – an unaccountable agency with a long track record of deceiving the public – are causing pain and suffering across California.”

AB 2792 requires inmates be

informed of their right to refuse interviews with ICE officials while incarcerated. The new law also makes communication between ICE and local law enforcement agencies subject to public record laws.

The author, Assemblyman Rob Bonta, D-Oakland, wrote, “The damage to our communities has been tremendous. Parents and children are being separated from their families. Trust in law enforcement is disappearing. Victims and witnesses are now afraid of the police who are supposed to protect them.”

Duane

Continued from Page 1

The experience also made him reach out to his daughters, Sibyl and Megan. He wants to be a good grandparent to their five children.

Having his own family concerned about his fate made him realize how devastated his victim’s family felt about losing their loved one because of his wrongdoing. He said it was during that time, that he was able to take full responsibility for the life he took.

“That gave me a revelation and

deeper understanding on how every life matters,” Holt said. “When I was told that I could go home to my family, I felt grateful and guilty at the same time. My victim’s family will never see their loved one again, because of what I did.”

Holt said he thinks about the victim’s family every day and that one day he hopes to get the opportunity to answer any questions they might want to ask him.

“They could have appeared before the board and ask that I don’t get released,” Holt said. “But they didn’t do that. They didn’t come. I hope that my release doesn’t bring them any painful memories.”

Post Election

Continued from Page 1

Close to 43 percent think policies toward immigrants and immigrant communities are under threat.

Slightly more than 41 percent said policies toward undocumented immigrants and undocumented immigrant communities are under threat.

Approximately 57 percent said the rights of minorities are under threat.

About a third think the rights of women are under threat.

Close to half said sentencing laws would get tougher.

Slightly more than 62 percent believe policing practices would get tougher.

The survey showed that 68 percent of the respondents were very supportive of the passage of Proposition 57 last

November.

Proposition 57 gives the secretary of corrections, Scott Kernan, the ability to modify the sentences of some inmates who qualify as non-violent and allows him to give good-time credits to any inmate he sees fit. The new law also took away the district attorney’s ability to decide when to send juvenile offenders to adult courts and gave that determination to judges.

In the November elections, California voters not only decided to keep the death penalty on the books, but also approved speeding up executions by shortening the appeals process. The survey also wanted to know how inmates feel about those changes.

Nearly 61 percent of the respondents to the survey did not support speeding up the death penalty, while about 15 percent were very supportive.

—Juan Haines

REHABILITATION AND GIVING BACK:

Holt spent most of his time in prison learning green construction technology and volunteering with a diversion program geared to mentor at-risk youth.

“These are two things I’d like to keep doing,” Holt said. “One day I’d like to own a construction company and also give back to the community by mentoring at-risk youth.”

Holt said what got him interested in giving back to the community was when about 10 years ago someone commented that people respect him for all of the positive things he was doing in the prison.

“When I was told that people listen to me, I thought about being an asset to the community, instead of a liability,” Holt said.

That idea got Holt involved with the SQUIRES program at San Quentin. He said working with the youngsters has taught him how the world has changed and how intelligent kids are today. He said he was able to understand how peer pressure puts the youth on misguided paths.

“With the proper guidance, coming from positive role models, they can achieve anything in life they want,” Holt said.

Holt’s battle against cancer also made him aware of the lack of funding for cancer research. He said he’s open to participating in the cancer walks, just like he did when he supported the Walk Against Breast Cancer while incarcerated at San Quentin.

MESSAGE TO PRISONERS:

“Of course, I don’t look at



Photo by Harold Meeks

Duane with his family at a SQ education graduation

prisoners like the rest of society,” Holt said. “It took me many years to change my criminal thinking. But when I realized that I didn’t want to be defined by the worst mistake I’ve ever made in my life — the horrible decision that cost the life of another human being -- did I begin to change and want to make amends.”

He added, “I was punished for my crime, and I had to prove that I was a changed man, so my message to all prisoners is: ‘Stay in the programs, because there is light at the other end of the tunnel.’”

Holt said the various self-help programs gave him insight as to why he held on to negative thinking. After learning about himself, he was able to talk openly to the commissioners on the parole board and answer all of their questions with confidence.

“I felt good when the commissioners quizzed me a lot about the GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power) program,” Holt said. “I did the work and was able to respond naturally.”

GRIP is a 52-week comprehensive self-awareness program geared toward teaching inmates

how to respond to various life-stressors, instead of reacting to them.

MESSAGE TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION:

“All prisoners should learn work ethics, because many people come to prison that never held a job,” Holt said. “Rehabilitative programs ought to be offered to everyone, especially these young men before they go back into society.”

He said he noticed that with all the technology in the world today, a lot of kids don’t know how to work with their hands. But he’s seen men in the prison workplace, where there is a lack of technology, but they are good with their hands, “but they lack the intellect or patience to comprehend reading material. So, it’s important for education opportunities to be available while someone is doing time.”

Holt walked out of San Quentin State Prison on Oct. 26, 2016.

\$473.5 million spent on 17 state ballot measures

By David Eugene Archer Sr.
Journalism Guild Writer

The 17 propositions on the California November ballot set a new state record for donations at \$473.5 million, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Prop. 61, 56 and 52 accounted for more than half of the total contributions, according to the California Secretary of State records.

That \$473.5 million was roughly twice what Republican candidate Donald Trump reported raising for his presidential campaign, a review

in the *Times* said.

"On average, more than \$1.5 million has been raised every day this year to influence the outcome of propositions on the November ballot," said Sophia Bollag, a reporter at the *LA Times*.

More than a third of the money came from tobacco and pharmaceutical companies to defeat propositions 56 and 61, she reported.

Merck, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson were the top three contributors toward the more than \$109 million against Prop. 61. Bollag said that these contributions would influence

prescription drug costs.

Tobacco Giant Philip Morris alone kicked in more than \$44 million to defeat Prop. 56, which imposed a \$2-per-pack tax on cigarettes, reported the *Times*.

The California Hospital Association and the California Teachers Association donated more than \$20 million to support Prop. 55, which would extend current income tax rates on wealthy Californians, to finance schools and healthcare, said Bollag.

The hospital association donated another \$10 million to support Prop. 56. They joined health care organizations to contribute

the majority of nearly \$60 million in favor of Prop. 52, which would make permanent funding for Medi-Cal for low-income residents, the *Times* reported.

Tom Steyer, former hedge fund manager, gave more than \$11 million, with most of it going to Prop. 56, Prop. 55, Prop. 62, the death penalty repeal measure, Prison parole initiative Prop. 57, and bilingual education Prop. 58, Bollag said.

Former Facebook president Sean Parker gave more than \$8 million to Prop. 64, which legalizes marijuana, said Bollag.

Gov. Jerry Brown supported

Prop. 57 and was opposed to Prop. 53. Prop. 57 would make more prisoners eligible for parole. Prop. 53 requires voter approval for the sale of revenue bonds of \$2 billion or more. Brown gave more than \$4 million from his 2014 gubernatorial campaign account and appeared in a television ad to defeat 53, said Bollag.

Campaign finance filings show \$16 million was raised in support of Prop. 62 to repeal the death penalty. The committee giving that money opposed Prop. 66, which expedites executions of death row inmates, according to the *Times*.

Employment

Continued from Page 1

"I thought I was a pretty sharp guy when it came to resumes," said inmate Norfleet Stewart, 67. "I found out I didn't know anything. I came to this class not expecting anything. To gain this wealth of knowledge is invaluable." He said he learned how to speak, how to humble himself and how to be interviewed.

The prison's Protestant Chapel was transformed into a makeshift job fair as inmates and employers discussed employment opportunities and the chance to make better lives for themselves and their communities.

"I feel like this is a pathway and opportunity overlooked," said Tannis C. Reinhertz, department chair at City College of San Francisco. "This is a way to enrich the community."

"I'm very impressed. I think it's a good opportunity for them to test their skills," said Connie Gibson, deputy director of facility operations for California prisons. "To see the programs prepare you for release is awesome."

Inmate Ronnie Williams, 51, said, "I think it's a perfect opportunity for guys like myself to get ahead. I think I've done enough work internally. One thing that completed it is this employment readiness seminar."

Derreck Johnson is the owner of Home of Chicken and Waffles with three locations in the Bay Area. He has attended all four job fairs and hires formerly incarcerated citizens.

"I'm from West Oakland. I don't judge people, as long as they have the capacity to work. Some of the most loyal and



Courtesy of NBC Bay Area

Warden Ron Davis (left) with potential employers

trusted employees come from this system," said Johnson. "Society in general doesn't give them a chance. So, when they find someone who does, they hold on to the opportunity."

Inmate Adriel Ramirez, 39, has been incarcerated for 20 years. Before prison he worked two part-time jobs. Hired on the spot as a teenager, he said he filled out his W-2 forms and started working.

"I've never done a resume before," said Ramirez. "This is my first experience having to interview. I'm enjoying it so far."

The Cala Restaurant opened a little more than a year ago. Its general manager, Emma Rosenbush, said they've had a second-chance employment practice since day one. She used to volunteer at Patten University in San Quentin and the Prison Law Office where she monitored prison issues. Rosenbush said

preparing inmates increases their sense of self-worth. "If we take that away from them, how do we expect them to succeed?"

"We work with a lot of folks with criminal backgrounds," said Bekka from JVS Healthcare Academy. This was her first time attending a job event. "It's really exciting," she said. "It's a good opportunity for people." She said she worked formerly in a prison for women in the state of Washington.

"I like doing this," said Kevin McCracken of Social Imprints. He said he was in and out of the criminal justice system for many years when he was younger, but has been clean and sober for 18 years. "I think you guys are really well-prepared. I would be very happy to offer any of you a job."

Inmate Ollie Miller, 39, incarcerated for 20 years, said, "I believe it's a real helpful program.

It gives us a lot of opportunity. With this help, it's a strong possibility people won't come back to prison."

Inmate Kevin Fuqua, 50, added, "I've never had an interview. It gives me an advantage because of my age."

David Basil, 64, works for Community Housing Partnership. He was locked up 32 years and paroled from San Quentin in 2014. He now works to find housing for the homeless, indigent and those afflicted with different forms of addiction. "I oversee 35 employees," said Basil.

Warden Ron Davis told the group most people don't know this side of San Quentin. "This is a (typical) Thursday in San Quentin," he said, referring to the many programs for inmates.

Diana Williams said California prison recidivism has gone from 65 percent to 45 percent,

thanks to increased rehab and job programs. "We're all unique. It's not about who we are but what we do."

When the interviews ended, the inmates applauded the employers.

The men attended a graduation ceremony two weeks later. They received job listings of "felon friendly" employers, certificates and a laudatory chronology document for their central file.

Formerly incarcerated Tito J. Guerrero attended the graduation with Basile.

Guerrero paroled from Solano in 2009 after serving 12 years. He talked about the routines of prisons.

"When you're in prison, someone else writes your script," Guerrero said. "But that is a lie. You write your own script. So, what are you going to write to get to the ending that you desire?"

"Give yourself achievable goals and small victories. I started off at \$8.75 as a Goodwill truck driver. Now, I make a hell of a lot more than that. If you come out, knowing that you want to work hard, it will show. Don't tell people what you want to do—show them."

Rodeo Van Bladel, 40, due for release soon, said, "This program helps keep me aware of the steps I need to take to find a job when I get out. It opens doors and opportunities. It allowed me to speak and lets me know that everybody doesn't have a biased opinion about people who are in prison."

—Juan Haines and
Rahsaan Thomas
contributed to this story



Courtesy of NBC Bay Area

Richard Lathan talking with former inmate and now potential employer David Basil



Courtesy of NBC Bay Area

Diana Williams talking with a CDCR representative Connie Gibson about job opportunities for parolees

Archbishop of SF unveils mural at Christmas Eve Mass

SAN QUENTIN NEWS PRESS RELEASE

Scott McKinstry and Bruce Fowler worked thousands of hours over several years on the concept and design of a mural depicting the victory of good



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Archbishop
Salvatore J. Cordileone
delivering a sermon

over evil. The Archbishop of San Francisco unveiled the mural after he delivered Christmas Eve Mass to a congregation of San Quentin prisoners and dozens of Bay Area community members.

"It's based on Chapter 12 of Revelation," said the prison's Catholic Chaplain, Father George Williams, who also participated in the mass. "It reminds us of the struggles we undergo every day between good and evil. It encourages us to not give up."

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone delivered a sermon about rejoicing in gift giving during the holidays.

Gift giving for a believer is a humbling experience that brings joyfulness, Cordileone said. Humility with charity brings us all closer to what God wants out of us, the Archbishop told the more than 200 men and women in the pews.

Cordileone's sermon centered on God's love for Man and the importance of Jesus Christ.

"There is a greater gift given to us, the gift of his son," Cordileone said. "God formed us as



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone blessing the mural

a people through Abraham, then gave us the land of milk and honey and gave us laws to share his wisdom."

Cordileone's sermon asserted the infidelity of man interfered with obeying God's laws, which squandered his gifts.

"So, he sent his messiah...his

very own son," Cordileone's said, fulfilling the Christmas story.

It was the first time Brittney S. had set foot inside a prison.

"Never take life for granted; everybody has worth," the University of Southern California sociology major said about how she viewed the incarcerated men

she sat with. Brittney S. said she is interested in learning how prisons in California operate, particularly Death Row.

Prisoner Michael Adams said the Archbishop's sermon gave him a better understanding of the Christmas story and what the artwork depicted in the mural.

Project Rebound helps formerly incarcerated gain an education

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

A popular program is helping formerly incarcerated inmates obtain a college education.

The program called Project Rebound (PR) is based at San Francisco State University. It has a dramatically impressive success rate, reports Emily DeRuy of *The Atlantic*.

It was started in 1967 by a formerly incarcerated inmate and professor of sociology named John Irwin, said DeRuy.

Irwin's idea was that when former inmates obtain a college degree, it reduces the chance

they will return to prison.

The study also showed a major contrast in graduation rates among PR students compared to university students: 90 percent for PR students and 50 percent for university students.

Jason Bell, who became director of PR in 2005, says the men and women who participate in the program have "a psychological hardness." Bell spent his twenties in prison for attempted murder in a brutal fight that turned bad.

Earning a diploma during his high school years was difficult for him. While incarcerated, he continued his education and

earned a high school diploma. After earning 25 credits from Ohio University, he paroled and transferred to San Francisco State, where he obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees, then became president of PR.

"I knew what it did for me, and I didn't want to see it fold," he said of succeeding John Irwin.

The work of Bell and his staff consists of answering correspondence from prisoners, processing applications, setting up an email account for students, teaching students how to submit their work online and providing food vouchers, transportation stipends, and money for books and housing assistance.

During Bell's tenure, more than 140 students graduated through PR, and those numbers tend to increase. Currently, Bell is expanding the program to seven other colleges in the California State University system.

The expansion is designed to

help reduce California's 44.6 percent recidivism rate, according to SF State officials. A 2010 study showed only 3 percent of PR participants re-offend, said DeRuy.

Although San Francisco State supports the program, some students believe it would have more success if run by a felony-free person. Joseph Miles, a formerly incarcerated student who is finishing up his senior year through the program, disagrees.

"There's just no replacing that experience (of incarceration)" Miles says. Students need to trust that the people running the program know what they've been through, and it's important for students to see people with similar backgrounds go on to earn degrees and be successful.

Miles went to prison for selling narcotics in his late 20s and early 30s. He said the program was helpful to him because, "There was a camaraderie here."

After DeRuy's visit, a spokesman for San Francisco State wrote her an email, saying that the school president has always believed that the mission and goals of PR are best served with a leader who was formerly incarcerated.

Curtis Penn, the new director of PR and a former San Quentin prisoner, added, "When we receive letters from men and women behind the wall who are interested in achieving higher levels of educational attainment, we cannot help but to act with a sense of urgency and empathy, as we are them and they are us."

Bell, nevertheless, believes the program will succeed regardless of any adversity.

Whenever prisoners are offered access to college, he said, "People are lining up around the yard." The opportunity to actually complete a degree after their release is the logical next step.

"It's like a new beginning."

Letters to the Editor

My name is Jose Bello, I am the vice-chairman of the MAC Executive Body on Facility "C" at Chuckawalla Valley State Prison. We want to thank you for your newspaper, which is read by the majority of the population of this facility. On behalf of the inmate population, we want you to know that we appreciate all the information you always provide for us.

Our chairman (Justin Flournoy) has been thinking about how to produce a local newsletter, and by local we mean just for our facility. We have some ideas but are finding it difficult to get them done. All of us in the MAC are lifers, and we are just trying to help out the community and make this place a little better.

We would like to know if you could give us suggestions as to how to produce this newsletter. I am enclosing a copy of the proposal we would like to submit. Any ideas you have will be welcome. Also, if you have ideas in regard to positive activities please feel free to suggest them.

We want to thank you in advance for your time. Feel free to contact us if you wish. This is a new yard, and not much is going on, and we would like to change that for the benefit of all of us living here.

Jose B.
Vice-Chairman Facility "C"
Chuckawalla Valley State Prison

Are fewer inmates good news? Not if you invest in private prisons

By David B. Le
Staff Writer

The decline in prison populations is good news unless you happen to be an investor who's put money into prison bonds.

The 3.8 trillion municipal-securities niche market has investors demanding higher payouts for their risk as prison bonds have been downgraded due to the prison population reduction and private prisons closure, *Bloomberg News* reported.

Responding to investors' demands, the Reeves County detention center in Pecos, Texas has raised its bond payout as high as 6.4 percent from 4.6 percent, according to *Bloomberg*.

Mississippi closed its privately run Walnut Grove prison due to budget constraints and an annual population drop of 10.5

percent from 2011 to 2016.

The facility run by the GEO Group had a history of staff misconduct and poor living conditions for its inmates, which a federal judge described as "a picture of such horror as should be unrealized anywhere in the civilized world," *Bloomberg* reported.

Despite the closure, Mississippi still owes \$121 million of debt obligation to bond holders.

In August, the Department of Justice announced that it will cancel or limit its contracts with private prisons. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security said it would consider doing the same, *Bloomberg* reported.

If Homeland Security chooses to close its privately run detention center in Florence, Ariz., 31,000 residents could take a serious employment hit,

the town spokesman said. Other small towns could be similarly affected by such closures.

However, some analysts are not sure the prison decline will continue. "The low-hanging fruit of criminal-justice reform is already done," said Daniel Hanson, an analyst for Height Securities, which tracks the municipal-bonds market.

Hanson thinks that prison populations may not continue to decrease once nonviolent offenders are weeded out because both the state and federal prisons' populations are still over capacity.

Based on the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, state and federal prison populations peaked at 1.62 million in 2009 and by 2014 that number had been reduced by 54,000, or three percent.

Stateless...a massacre...a murder...and now free

Kid CAT Speaks!

By John Lam
Journalism Guild Writer

Borey “PJ” Ai may be one of the most accomplished persons you will ever meet. He also happens to be one of the youngest persons to be given a life sentence for murder, at age 14. After spending 20 years in prison, he was found suitable for parole at his first hearing, and was released from San Quentin in November.

“In my observation, I have found that PJ not only talks the talk, he applies the things he learns in the group and puts it into his life. That is the ingredient to success, not only in getting out of prison but out in society as well,” said Raphaele “Raphy” Casale, chief sponsor of SQUIRES.

Self-described as being “stateless,” Ai was born in a refugee camp in Thailand to parents who escaped the genocide in Cambodia. “Almost 98 percent of my family were butchered in the genocide,” said Ai, during an interview.

When he was 5, Ai and his family immigrated to America, settling in Stockton in a neighborhood Ai described as “infested by gangs, prostitutes and violence. Some nights we could hear gunfire and people screaming; it was like reliving the war again,” said Ai.

Life in a dangerous neighborhood combined with the scars of war created turmoil within Ai’s household. “Both my parents suffered from PTSD; my dad was addicted to drugs and gambling, I saw him only once or twice a month. My mom struggled to raise six kids on her

own and did not speak English,” said Ai. “It was a dysfunctional household, though everyone loved one another.”

Despite the chaos at home, Ai sought stability in school, but it too proved elusive.

“I was in the first grade when I watched my 7-year-old cousin get murdered on the playground,” said Ai.

This horrendous crime happened in the 1980s and made headlines all over the country; a crazed gunman opened fire at the Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton.

“It was a massacre. I remember being on the playground with hundreds of kids around, when suddenly someone appeared on the rooftop and began shooting at us...That day, five kids and one teacher died, with 29 more students wounded,” said Ai. “I never felt safe in America, but now I was numb to everything.”

“In school, bullies were another problem, I got beat up all the time and this happened in the neighborhood as well,” said Ai.

Left to fend for himself, Ai turned to gangs. Ai dropped out of school in the seventh grade and began committing burglaries, assaults and carrying guns. He was 14 years old when he committed murder during a robbery.

“I didn’t know I had killed someone until my co-defendant told me,” said Ai. “When I found out the police were looking for me, I turned myself in.”

Ai was sentenced to 25 years to life for second-degree murder with a gun enhancement. Initially he continued his involvement with gangs while in prison.

“In 2004, I was invited to the sweat lodge community through



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Borey “PJ” Ai

a friend of mine, and it changed my life,” said Ai. “After a while, I began to step away from my gang, and stopped drinking, and joined the Red Road program. There, I learned about victim impact, and it solidified my commitment to change.

“Solano State Prison gave me the opportunity to build my

Prevention through Bay Area Women Against Rape.

As a testament to his dedication, work ethic and knowledge, the GRIP program director Jacques Verduin offered him employment with GRIP upon his release.

“Some of the most meaningful programs that I have been

part of are Kid CAT, CGA and SQUIRES...One of my proudest moment happened when we (Kid CAT) spoke to lawmakers about the importance of passing AB1276 into law, which allows young men to come to places like San Quentin instead of being sent to maximum security where there are no self-help programs.

“If it were not for these self-help programs,” Ai said, “I would have never got to know myself, and I would still be stuck in my old ways and never considered how much harm I caused my victims to endure because of my actions.”

Borey Ai was found suitable for parole on July 22. Upon being released from state custody in November, Ai was immediately detained for deportation, which is likely to occur within three to six months. Ai may try to seek political asylum in the U.S. due to his prior status as a refugee from the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia.

Homeless teens forced to choose jail just to get a square meal

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Chairman

Jail or starvation are the hard choices some American teens have to make when facing uncertainty of where their next meal is coming from, the Urban Institute reported in September.

Teens spoke about going to jail or failing school, so they could attend summer classes to receive lunches as another means for ensuring regular meals, the report stated.

“A lot of people are choosing to be in jail rather than be on the street,” said a girl in Portland. “It might not be the best food, might not be the best place to be, but it’s a roof over your head.

“Every single day, they eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner,” she continued.

Girls in Greensboro Metro agreed, “Jail is a luxury, especially for people who live in a trailer. Some people, including teens, will commit a crime to get a place to stay, a meal.”

Impossible Choices: Teens and Food Insecurity in America, by the Urban Institute, surveyed some youths who discussed sell-

ing their body or engaging in sex for money as a strategy to make ends meet.

“When you’re selling your body, it’s more in disguise,” explained a teen boy in rural North Carolina. “Like if I had sex with you, you have to buy me dinner tonight...that’s how girls deal with the struggle...That’s better than taking money because if they take money, they will be labeled a prostitute.”

With low-income wages stagnated, declining cash assistance and the recession, hardships increased for families already living in poverty, according to the report.

Impossible Choices finds an estimated 6.8 million young people ages 10 through 17 are living in food-insecure households.

Teens in such families routinely take on the role of parents, often going hungry so younger siblings can eat, and they are out searching for ways to bring in food and money.

“I will go without a meal if that’s the case,” said one girl in Chicago, “as long as my two young siblings is good, that’s all

that really matters to me.”

The youth had engaged in criminal behavior from shoplifting food to selling drugs and stealing items to resell for cash, the survey found. Young men in limited job option communities were the most likely to participate in such behaviors.

The surveyed showed that most teens felt that parents do everything they can to shield their children from hunger, but some also felt pressured to contribute to the family.

“Basically (those parents) are saying, ‘Get up and do something productive to help your family out,’ explained a young man in San Diego. “Don’t just watch (us) struggle.”

This can start as early as age 13; with parents telling the youth to look for a summer job. This intensifies by the time they turn 18 and they feel they have little choice but to start supporting themselves, the survey found.

Even when not pressured, some teens felt the need to take the initiative to help.

“Someone I knew dropped out of high school to make money for the family,” said a girl in San Diego. “She felt the need to step up; she started selling herself.”

Realistically teens have limited employment opportunities and earning power. This leaves many vulnerable to exploitation from gangs who want boys to sell drugs or girls to traffic sex for adults who want to date teens, the survey found.

There were 193 young people from 20 focus groups taking part in the research.

The participants were between ages 13–18, eight groups were majority African-American, five were majority Latino, four were majority White, and the remaining three were mixed.

Dear Kid CAT

My name is Angel Cabanillas, and I am an inmate at Pleasant Valley State Prison. I have been incarcerated since 2006 when I was 14 years old, and I am currently serving 128 years-to-life. Please, please, tell me what I can do to help. I want to help out anyway I can. Please contact me as soon as you can. Thank you for your time and consideration. Take care, and God bless you.

Sincerely,
Angel Cabanillas

Dear Angel,

My name is Borey Ai, a co-founder of Kid CAT, and I, too, was incarcerated at the age of 14 with a life sentence. I know in this environment there are few opportunities. However, one of the most needed and available opportunities to be of service as a positive role model is mentoring other young men who are serving time in prison. You can also help by starting a youth support group in your prison, submit articles for our page, and answer prompts for *The Beat Within*.

Lastly, you mentioned that you have 128 years-to-life, but please know that it doesn’t mean that you will spend the rest of your life in prison. On your path of self-discovery and rehabilitation, trust you will have an opportunity to demonstrate your change to the Parole Board. Perhaps you too will get an opportunity to come home. Stay positive and hungry to serve others. Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,

Borey Ai
Paroled Kid CAT Co-founder and member

Kid CAT and *The Beat Within* hold monthly writing workshops. The Beat Within conducts writing workshops in juvenile detention centers throughout the country. Kid CAT Speaks will publish one topic each month. Your writing should reflect a positive message that may help the youth make a better decision in life. Your stories will be read by the youth in detention centers. If published, you will receive a free copy of the publication. Your story can make a difference. Tell *The Beat Within* you read about them in Kid CAT Speaks!

My Dreams - What type of dreams did you have when you were a child? Did your dreams change as you’ve become older? Take us to that point when your childhood dreams changed up. Do you still have dreams? If not, do you plan to get your dreams back? Tell us about your dreams of yesterday and today, and your dreams for a better tomorrow. Dream big, ‘cause with plenty of good work, dreams do come true.

The Beat Within
P.O. Box 34310
San Francisco, CA 94134

Kid CAT (Creating Awareness Together) is a group of men who committed their crimes under the age of 25 and were sentenced as adults to life terms. The group’s mission is to inspire humanity through education, mentorship and restorative practices. Kid CAT Speaks wants to hear from all the juvenile lifers, educators, and policymakers concerning juvenile justice issues and rehabilitation. Contact us at **San Quentin News, Attn: Kid CAT Speaks, 1 Main St., San Quentin, CA 94964.**

Protesters’ vigil at CIW for women who took their own lives

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Chairman

Alarmed by high suicides rates and other alleged abuses at the California Institution for Women (CIW), about 80 people gathered in front of the prison to protest and remember loved ones who took their lives while incarcerated there.

Protesters came holding signs, some shaped like coffins, and wearing T-shirts proclaiming the memory of those who lost their lives while behind bars, according to an article in the *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*.

The group chanted for dignity, respect and no more isolation for inmates as they walked back and forth in front of the prison.

In attendance were family and friends of Erika Rocha and Shaylene Graves, who were both reportedly found hanging in their cells. Erika Rocha, 35, was found one day before her youth parole hearing was to be held on April 14, and Graves, 27, was found on June 1.

“I’m here to let them know I didn’t forget,” said Patrice Walker, an inmate at the prison from 2002 to 2015, and a friend of Graves. “We’ve seen the neglect; so we’re out here to support them,” the *Daily Bulletin* reported.

“I don’t want any other family to go through what my family has gone through,” said Freida Rocha, Erica Rocha’s sister. She added that her sister sought



Courtesy of CCWP

Families and supporters at a vigil in a town hall

treatment for depression but didn’t receive it. “I hope they change the way prison is run and that they will treat their inmates like they’re human.”

Freida Rocha also expressed hope that the protest would highlight the need for improved mental health care within the correctional system.

State Sen. Connie M. Leyva, D-Chino, has called upon the state auditor to look into suicides at the institution, accord-

ing to the *Daily Bulletin*.

The California Coalition for Women Prisoners organized the Oct.1 protest. The coalition stated that from 2014 to 2016 suicide rates at the facility were eight times that of all women’s prisons in the United States and five times that of all other California prisons.

Six women have killed themselves at the prison since the start of 2013, and there have been 73 suicide attempts, ac-

cording to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Yet between 2006 and 2012, there was just one suicide at CIW, according to an *L.A. Weekly* article.

“Each suicide has different factors,” CDCR Press Secretary Vicky Waters told *L.A. Weekly*. “We don’t see any links in the suicides at this point that indicate our system is failing. But we do recognize we have challenges, and we do need to look

at things closer.”

L.A. Weekly also quoted Cirese LaBerge, a former inmate at CIW. “I could walk down the yard — if you just look down at people’s wrists, you see old wounds and scars,” LaBerge said.

“My daughter’s death will not go unanswered,” vowed Sheri Graves, Shaylene Graves’ mother. “We are here to make sure the world hears their cries. Their lives matter,” she said.



Courtesy of CCWP

Courtesy of CCWP

Courtesy of CCWP

Courtesy of CCWP

Courtesy of CDCR

Courtesy of CDCR

Kyla Moore Erika Rocha Jessica (Nelson) Williams Shaylene Graves Shadae Schmidt Alicia Thompson

Straight talk from women at SQ’s ‘Sister, I’m Sorry’ event

Dozens of San Quentin prisoners listened intently as seven women described their own experiences surviving horrific crimes including rape, incest, abandonment and domestic violence.

During the panel discussion Nov. 12 in the Protestant Garden Chapel, the men received a dose of straight talk and a reality check on the hidden pains of women. Darell “Obadiah” Flowers, an inmate, said, “This was powerful, very enlightening and heartfelt. This makes you think about a father’s relationship with his daughter, about women who have been abandoned and what they need to heal.”

One panelist described surviving a home invasion robbery by three men. The intruders were looking for her boyfriend, who was living a dangerous lifestyle. She was six months pregnant, and the trauma of being roughed up caused her to have her baby prematurely, but it survived.

“Today was about pleading with the men,” said Sister Mar-

ion Barnes, executive director of the Wings of Love Ministries. “They are killing their seeds, because the kids are copying their behavior. It doesn’t make you a man to kick or beat a woman. We have to stop this generational curse.”

Some of the panelists shared stories of being molested as young as 4 years old by fathers, family members or family friends.

“Not being protected by family makes it hard for you to trust or open up,” one panelist said. “You start to suppress things or look for love in the wrong places. Just because a woman looks whole doesn’t mean so.”

“Communication is vital; it’s about listening and not trying to come up with solutions. I have to find out if my daughter has been damaged,” Flowers added.

The women talked about how some men use charm on women and then betray them. If she gets pregnant, the man starts saying the child is not his, thus leaving her abandoned or forcing her to

have an abortion.

“I know today is about the men saying they are sorry,” Lesley S., from New Faith Cathedral Church of God in Christ, said. “Are they sorry they got caught? That is fine, but the next sorry should be, ‘I sinned against God.’”

“We have to treat women as human beings and not as mere objects because without them there is no us”

Instead of bashing men, the women urged men to take care of their hearts because they are nurturers, and they love hard. Sometimes this role can cause conflict and pain.

“God holds men accountable

with a woman’s love,” Bridget Kyser from the Wings of Love Ministries said. “It’s about understanding each other with compassion and giving extra love to get through the traumas.”

The discussion of suicide, verbal and physical abuse drew tears from both the men and women.

“I was in a place where I was desensitized to women’s needs,” Harry Smith, another inmate, said. “These women brought me back to a place to step in as an authentic man of God. That’s what I want for my own daughter and for us to be leaders of our families.”

The conference started with the video *Sister I’m Sorry*, featuring the Rev. Donald Bell.

Inmate Fateen Jackson performed a moving spoken word piece called “Apologetic Salute,” expressing his regret to crime survivors and to the dead. “Apologetic Salute” also acknowledges that survivors are the courageous ones.

Jeffery Akins, an inmate, sang

a rendition of “Time is a Terrible Thing to Waste.”

“Real pain deserves a real apology” Manika D., of New Faith Cathedral Church, said. “God fills all voids. It’s for the men to take time to listen. That’s healing in itself and shows empathy.”

Diana Sackett from Corner Stone Fellowship added, “It’s daddy time. The most powerful things for a man to say are ‘I love you, I need you and I’m sorry.’”

“It’s about developing the skills to deal with relationships.”

The panelists and emcee and coordinator, inmate Tony “Pup” Waldrip, gave a special thanks to Chaplain Mardi Jackson and the Protestant Garden Chapel.

“This was about healing wounds and renewal,” Jackson said.

Waldrip added, “It’s about awakening the humanity up in us men. We have to treat women as human beings and not as mere objects because without them there is no us.”

—Marcus Henderson

'The way she treats us makes us want to do well'

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

There's a teacher who walks around a prison classroom engaging students and encouraging them in a way they say most teachers in the public school system don't.

Behind San Quentin educator D. Searle is a testament — copies of more than two dozen High School Equivalent diplomas earned since late 2015 by her students line the walls of her classroom.

"As convicts, we know how it feels to believe no one cares. It makes us not want to care about ourselves," said Cayo Carini, who is Searle's assistant. "I think the way she walks around and interacts with each student makes them want to do well, to make her proud, as well as achieve their personal goals. The achievement of the students speaks for itself."

Searle has master degrees in education and educational therapy. She has taught for 30 years, including 20 years in public schools and college. She incorporates using a Smart Board, computers, independent studies, small group studies and one-on-one sessions to accommodate every student's learning style.

"I see that the best use of my skill has been here," said Searle, who started teaching at San Quentin 10 years ago. "I want to see these guys succeed where people may have given up on this



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

D. Searle with fellow teacher Leonida

population." Searle admits that the success of the students is a collaborative effort between fellow teachers Phil Leonida and Anita Sufi. Leonida and Sufi prepare the students by teaching them ABE and Pre-GED grade-level reading, writing and arithmetic.

The students say they have equal access to all the teachers. If a student needs extra help on a particular subject, the student can easily work with a teacher who specializes in it. The teachers say that working together is rewarding.

"We all have the same goal. We want to see the students succeed," Searle said. "It's never been this way before. It feels like I'm not alone anymore."

George "Mesro" Coles-El, another one of Searle's assistants, added that her collaboration with other teachers "makes all the difference in the world."

Each student is required to meet the new Common Core and College & Career Ready standards for High School Equivalency that started in 2015.

"I was one of the first students that took the new style of GED," said Marquez Sherouse, who earned his GED at age 39. "That (standardized) system started last year, and the first couple of times I took it, I didn't pass. I was getting frustrated. My teachers had high expectations; they thought I would nail it. They saw the frustration, discouragement. 'They told me to calm down. I'm glad I did have them; I would have felt like I failed myself, my mom and my wife had I given up.'"

Each student is now required to be computer literate, type at least 20 words per minute and use critical thinking.

Former student Conrai Jackson, 48, achieved his GED in October.

"I had a learning disability called stupidity and didn't have teachers patient enough to work with me," Jackson said. "Out of all the teachers I had in my life, the three most caring teachers are Sufi, Leonida and Mrs. Searle."

Leonida brings his experience to bear.

"I was a special ed kid, so I had a lot of the same issues, both in understanding the material and fighting the teacher," Leonida said. "I remember and recognize the snags."

Student Anthony Prater said, "I dropped out of school in 12th grade. I couldn't focus. Now they call it dyslexia. I credit Sufi and Leonida and Mrs. Searle with how they teach. I was in special education. Leonida related to a lot of things I was lacking, and he was able to teach me a lot of things that I didn't understand."

Sufi, a 28-year teaching veteran, considers the work reversing the school-to-prison pipeline.

"Instead of everybody teaching all over the place, I focus on remedial math and getting reading up. I feed the pipeline for success," Sufi said. "I find it meaningful work. I think my students are the reason that I come to work every day. It gives me hope when I see them study, their self-determination. This is the best year in working in education."

Searle and Leonida also collaborate with the Office of Cor-

rectional Education in Sacramento.

"Sufi passed the baton to Leonida and I to be on the Academic Education Leadership Committee (AELC). Only eight CDCR teachers are on this committee. We have input regarding curriculum, professional development, instructional goals, and classroom strategies. We have a voice in what's going on in CDCR education."

"We know education is proven to reduce recidivism," Searle said. "I'm very excited, I see great things happening."

For her graduates, great things already are happening. "It a wonderful feeling to give that diploma to my mama and show her that I wasn't just a mess-up," Marquez Sherouse said.

GED Graduates: Gabriel Diaz, Marquez Sherouse, Conrai Jackson, Christopher Philson, Christopher Webb, William Blakeley, Satinder Singh, William L. Branscomb, Korey W. Gray, Nicholas Rodriguez, Eugene Williams, Fidel Salcedo, Tamon Halfin, Randy Silva, Phillip Morris, Ladelle Jackson, Erik Longfellow, David Silva, Adam Ibara, Kevin Huynh.

HiSET Graduates: Shawn Reyes, James Robbins, Lee Conley, Ricky Bates, Address Yancy, Kevin Huynh.

Delivering a message of hope for thousands with HIV

By **Emile DeWeaver**
Staff Writer

One of the country's major problems is that 161,000 people in the United States have HIV but don't know it, Andrew Reynolds told a gathering at San Quentin's World AIDS Day on Dec. 1

An expert in HIV prevention, Reynolds brought a message of hope: Although there are 50,000 new infections a year in the U.S., current medical technology can reduce the rate of infection to zero new cases a year.

Relatively few incarcerated men heard this message. The turnout for the last two World AIDS Day events in San Quentin has barely filled three of the 16 rows in the Protestant Chapel.

One reason might be that a lot of stigma surrounds HIV in prison.

"People in prison shy away from the conversation," Donald

"EL 'Bey" Cavness said. "But today you don't have to be afraid because we know (how to treat the disease)."

Those who weren't afraid gathered to show their solidarity with the millions of people gathering in various places around the world to promote HIV prevention.

"I had a sister-in-law that passed away from AIDS," Ronald Sallee said. Sallee, an incarcerated supporter, agreed that a lot of people don't want to talk about HIV, but he wanted to learn to teach his grandchildren. "People still think 'It won't happen to me,' but it happened to my sister-in-law."

The message on World AIDS Day was that with the current treatments available, death from AIDS doesn't have to happen to anyone.

Today, treatment for HIV is a lot simpler, more accessible, much more effective and entails fewer side effects than treatment did in the 1980s. Current treatment can reduce an HIV-positive person's viral count virtually to zero.

"Treatment used to mean a lot of pills and side effects," said Ingrid Nelson, a guest speaker and HIV specialist in San Quentin's clinic. She talked about how treatment has become as simple as one pill a day. "I've seen people (who

get treatment) reach undetectable levels in four weeks."

If you get treatment, "you can date and have sex, get married and have children without any problems," Nelson continued.

Reynolds explained why HIV-positive people are living regular lives with an average life expectancy of 73 years.

"Knowing your status and engaging in care and treatment early keeps you alive longer and lowers the risk of transmission," Reynolds said. "A person whose viral load is undetectable has a 96 percent lower chance of transmitting the virus. Introduce PrEP and other prevention methods like condoms and that percentage lowers to essentially zero."

PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis. It is available through the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. PrEP prevents HIV as birth control pills prevent pregnancy. Also available is a pill called PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis). It works like the morning-after pill in that it prevents infection after exposure to HIV.

Despite HIV being as manageable as diabetes, Nelson said there's a big gap between people who are HIV-positive and people who are getting treatment. She said the vast majority of the 95 HIV-positive people at San Quentin are on medication, and their viral counts are undetectable. One reason some do not get tested or seek treatment is the same reason turnout for World AIDS Day in San Quentin was so low: fear of stigma.

"We have to keep away from

the shame, stigma and people-judging," Nelson said. "Those who have support systems tend to stay healthier because they have people to help them stay on their regimen."

Nelson then explained that people who struggle to get and sustain treatment often do so because they feel like outcasts.

Keynote speaker Alfredo De Labra talked about his struggle with the stigma. "I wanted to keep it a secret. I received messages from my community that it was my fault. I felt very dirty."

De Labra is a Health Advocacy Coordinator for Positive Force, a program of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. He teaches people strategies for dealing with stigma disclosure and for keeping hope.

"Finally, I gathered strength to tell a friend," De Labra said. "Took three more years to tell my father and family. Telling people has been pivotal for me to keep up with medical (treatment), to make life-affirming decisions. It gave me the strength to quit drugs."

De Labra continued Reynolds' message of hope. The message continued with performances by George "Mesro" Coles and Michael Adams.

Award-winning spoken-word artist Bri Blu earned a standing ovation. She celebrated the greatness of a struggling people



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Keynote speaker Alfredo De Labra

and spoke about moving from a place where we discount ourselves to a place where we accept ourselves and others.

The event culminated with David Jassy and Joshua "J.B." Burton, featuring Bri Blu performing "Champion." Three rows of people seemed to fill the chapel with their waving side-to-side hands, Jassy sang and Burton delivered lyrics about regret for the past, hope for the future and determination in the present.

Another standing ovation followed "Champion."

People with questions about HIV or Hep C are encouraged to contact:

Project Inform
273 Ninth St.
San Francisco, CA 94103
Attn: Andrew Reynolds

—**Marcus Henderson**
contributed to this story



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Spoken-word artist Bri Blu

Volunteers’ caroling brings joy to SQ inmates

By John C. Eagan
San Quentin News Adviser

About 75 volunteers braved frigid weather to bring an evening of Christmas caroling to thousands of inmates in their cells and dorms at San Quentin State Prison.

“I saw a lot of joy,” said volunteer Steve Howell, music director at Tiburon Baptist Church. He led a group of about a dozen into H-Unit, a section of San Quentin with five dorms containing about 125 prisoners each. Many of the dorm residents joined the singing.

“We thought the carols gave a sense of home to the men,” Howell said.

Protestant Chaplain Mardi Jackson commented, “It was glorious. Music touches the heart in ways that words can’t.”

Volunteer Linda Rice was among the group visiting several multi-tier cellblocks where many prisoners joined in the singing.

“It was cold outside, but hearing the choir and seeing the men’s faces warmed up my heart,” said Rice. “It was a holy moment as we sang and looked into the faces of so many who

remember learning those Christmas carols as children.

“There was widespread humility and genuine love shown to the men of San Quentin. The men also showed us what it was to have joy in a dark place. It was a glorious night and not one I’ll ever forget.”

“It was glorious. Music touches the heart in ways that words can’t”

Rice is known in numerous prisons across America as “The Harp Lady,” who for many years performed harp concerts for thousands of inmates, including several years in San Quentin.

“The men were very welcoming,” said singer Katie Kvanvig. “It was like going to a friend’s house.”

About a dozen inmates accompanied the carolers on Dec. 17 as they wandered through the prison. The evening of Christmas season caroling in San Quentin has been an annual tradition for many years.



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

West Block inmates enjoying the carolers sing holiday classics



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Chaplain Mardi Jackson sings with the crowd



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Christmas caroling volunteers

Christmas banquet shows appreciation for the volunteers

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Chairman

More than 250 prisoners filled the San Quentin Garden Chapel to show appreciation for the tireless work of it volunteers at its 2016 Annual Christmas Banquet.

The theme of the event was “I was in prison and you visited me,” quoting Jesus Christ from the Bible, Matthew 25:36.

The chapel was decorated with Christmas lights, red and green tables and a small colorful tree. The soulful voice of Tami Crane, volunteer from The Well Christ Community Church, sang “How Great Is Our God” alongside the inmate Praise and Worship Choir. The song had prisoners and guests on their feet, swaying back and forth and singing along in a bond of

community praise. They also kept the Christmas spirit alive with a funky rendition of “Silent Night.”

“This was an awesome event from the beginning to end,” said inmate Chris Harris, who emceed the banquet. “It’s about the worship of Jesus. It shows we can be at peace and unity with men of all races, as the Bible states, ‘How sweet it is for men to dwell in unity.’”

Mardi Jackson, the Protestant chaplain, gave a passionate welcome speech and passed out Certificate of Appreciation awards to different churches in recognition of their service and ministries. The Wings of Love Ministries received an award; some of their members have been traveling from Southern California to be a part of programs and events in San

Quentin.

“I believe in the goodness of people,” said Pastor Bridget Kyser, of the Wings of Love. “God has a plan for us to bring the word to change these men’s lives. Just trust and obey God. He is the one who shows mercy, and if you hold on to that there’s nothing you can’t do.”

“Coming here is about re-entry and reconciliation”

Al Hayes, of the Wings of Love, added, “Blessing is a two-way street. Everything we do is to build our fellowship here with our brothers in Christ.”

David and Sonja Hagy, a husband and wife ministry team,

were honored for their sacrifices and for driving four hours to be part of the SQ community.

“We need to hold our love up to God,” D. Hagy said. “Something real good is going to happen. I watch these guys grow and it’s humbling.”

Other churches and volunteers who received awards were Cornerstone Church, the New Faith Cathedral Church, Valley Christ Center, and Pastor Tom Pham of Red Hill Vietnamese Church. David Mack and Aldo Yannon were honored for conducting services when Chaplain Jackson wasn’t available. The Well Community Church; the Malachi Brothers, who taught a fatherhood class; Mervin Watkins; Chet Hall and longtime volunteers Kathleen Jackson and John Eagan were recognized.

There was a lot of love and

applause, but it was Chaplain Mardi Jackson who received a two-minute standing ovation.

“The Lord is moving Mother Jackson,” Marion Barnes, the Wings of Love executive director, said. “She could have moved to Chino to be closer to her family but chose to stay here. That says a lot about her and the men here.”

The congregation was treated to a holiday lunch of barbecued chicken, cheese pizza, macaroni and cheese, candied yams and cake.

“Coming here is about re-entry and reconciliation,” Leigh Purry, of Well Community Church, said. “We want the men to get back to their proper place as head of their households. Their children need them, their women need them and we are praying for all of them.”

Discovering what it means to be human

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

A diverse troupe of men, dressed as usual in prison blue, broke away from the everyday constraints of incarceration through the artistic expression of dance and dialogue.

San Quentin’s Artistic Ensemble put on its latest performance in the prison’s Protestant Chapel on Nov. 18 for an audience of about 150 that included the local community as well as fellow prisoners.

“In our explorations to discover how we can reach the public, we also discover more about what it means to be human by connecting with each other,” the program read. “Our creative process is dialogic. Together we explore social inequalities with language, sound and movement.”

With its song, dance and spoken word, *Ways to Disappear*, the Ensemble received a standing ovation.

After each performance, outside guests are invited to ask questions of the troupe.

Many of the questions focused on how, under the circumstances of incarceration, the prisoners created such a “quality performance.”

“We argue, we fight, but we come together,” prisoner Rodney “RC” Capell said. “It’s been a rollercoaster. It taught me how to have empathy for other people. We get together and write about our experiences, like feeling disappeared or invisible.”

Le’Mar “Maverick” Harrison told the outside guests, “This is not scripted. This is real life. The only thing Amie (Dowling) asked us to do was answer a writing prompt. We wrote about things we didn’t want anyone else to know. She helped us

write about things that made us disappear ourselves.”

One outside guest, Clive, said, “I see a lot of professional stuff and I see a lot of crap,” which brought laughter. “I am deeply moved by the quality of what you put on the stage. I’d like to hear about past performances on the stage.”

Emile DeWeaver brought a laugh from the audience when he related acting to how he pretended to be a gangster when around his peers on the streets.

Michael McBride works with No More Tears, a violence prevention program in San Quentin. “I’m super blown away. I do a lot of work with No More Tears and mass incarceration. These offerings are not in every facility. Please talk about the value of these types of programs. What can we do to allow some of your comrades to have this kind of opportunity?”

Richie Morris has been incarcerated 32 years and spent 25 years in a maximum-security facility. “There was no opportunity to work out differences,” Morris said, referring to working with other ethnic groups. “This program gives men the chance to work out their differences. In the end, we are a band of brothers. There is only one race, that’s the human race.”

DeWeaver added, “What we do here is we build bridges from the inside to the outside. But you have to put the same effort into building bridges out there to in here. Donald Trump just got elected as President and high school students are walking out of school. They’re not waiting for people to offer answers; they’re storming the streets to find them. That’s the solution: stop waiting on solutions. We have to inconvenience ourselves, go out there



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

The audience giving a standing ovation to the Artistic Ensemble performers

and build solutions, be entrepreneurs of change.”

Antwan “Banks” Williams advised McBride and other outside guests to “witness the children as they are. Look at the children in their eyes and stare at their truth. Witness their lives. Let them know that it’s OK to be how you are, where you are. Until we are able to witness each other, a change is a long way away. The next time you are in the presence of someone you disagree with, witness their greatness.”

Rauch Draper added, “We are marginalized people. If you separate the fight of marginalization then you’re not doing the right thing. We have to celebrate diversity. We cannot separate the fight against marginalization.”

Outside guest Bob said, “I can’t tell you guys how you just

blew me away. You talked about the outside relationship. How has this program helped your relationship with people who are not in this room?”

“It allows us to see each other in the other person,” Le’Mar “Maverick” Harrison said. “There’s no denial there’s a problem in the US. If we ever get to the point of seeing ourselves in each other, we can solve our problems.”

Outside guest Jason asked, “How much of the performance was therapeutic and how much is redemption from stereotypes?”

“It’s very therapeutic,” Rauch Draper said, “Up until this morning I wanted to karate chop everyone.” He added, “I’ve been incarcerated more than half my life, and I used to be a villain. For a long time I thought I could not change. I never thought.

I don’t know how this affects you...” (Draper’s tears invoked audience applause)

“We need to teach our youth to go out and do your thing and have fun,” Chris Marshall Jr. said. “Don’t be stereotyped. This is what we do for each other inside. Do it for each other on the outside.” Marshall added, “The movements spoke more directly to issues than language.”

Rodney “RC” Capell said, “I had to get over my phobias. There were a lot of hands on me, and for me that’s an issue. Being in this situation, I had to be conscious of getting lifted. I tried to get away from the hands.”

The Artistic Ensemble is sponsored by the Insight Prison Project (IPP). IPP is committed to transforming the lives of those impacted by incarceration through programs that inspire reflection, compassion and accountability.

To learn more about the Insight Prison Project: www.insightprisonproject.org.

Artistic Ensemble Members

- Anouthinh “Choy” Pangthong
- Antwan “Banks” Williams
- Chris Marshall Sr.
- Emile DeWeaver
- Eric Lowery aka Mike Lowery
- Gary Harrell
- Gino Sevacos
- Julian Glenn Padgett (Luke)
- Carlos “Juancito” Meza
- Le’Mar “Maverick” Harrison
- Maurice “Reese” Reed
- Neiland Franks
- Nythell “Nate” Collins
- Richie Morris
- Rodney “RC” Capell
- Rauch Draper
- Ira “SC Prince” Perry
- Sebastian Alvarez
- Amie Dowling
- Freddy Gutierrez
- Selby Wynn

Guest Members

- Sebastian Grubb
- Joanna Haigood
- Calina Lawrence

Prop and Costume Design

- Tiersa Nureyev

Sound Board Operator

- Stephen Pascascio



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Inmates interacting with the guests as they arrive at the Garden Chapel



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Artistic Ensemble members incorporate guests into their piece



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Maurice “Reese” Reed and Ira “SC Prince” Perry performing a piece called “Tattoo”

11th annual Creative Writing public reading inspires crowd

Creative

Continued from Page 1

“I came here three to four years ago, and it was a real transforming experience,” said Tammy Cabading, who sat in the front row in the small performance space just beyond the Lower Yard in San Quentin. “It helped me understand my ignorance concerning criminal justice,” she added after hearing all 21 stories on Nov. 12.

“I love how the stories are really, really deep,” said guest and comedy writer Mike Larsen, who has written for the mid-’90s sitcoms *Ellen*, *The Drew Carey Show* and *Real Time With Bill Maher*. “Some of the guys are great writers and could very well be professionals if they weren’t here (in prison).”



Photo by Peter Mertz

Creative Writing members

Larsen has been visiting the creative writing class for about a year and is writing the “forward” for the “Brothers in Pen”

next anthology.

For second-time guest Jennifer Zilliac, prison was always a traumatic place due to a painful, personal experience in childhood, but readings like the one on Nov. 12 have helped her overcome her fear.

“Listening to the writers was so moving; so much humanity was expressed. I feel really connected with the incarcerated here,” she said.

Bringing together collective experiences, these readings helped the audience challenge common beliefs about prison and extend an ear to forgotten Americans, bringing forth what Mullery calls “the best form of love.” The readings allow the public to learn and consider issues in the criminal justice system from the experts—the prisoner himself, the man

who lives it, and lives to tell it through writing.

“Wisdom comes from people who have hit rock bottom,” said Mullery’s sister and faithful supporter, Jennifer Martin.

The guests listened to stories of transformation, made possible through the art of writing. These stories often stay within prison walls, but many of the citizen participants left the event committed to relaying these stories to the outside world, to a society where most Americans don’t hear such stories and may not understand the realities of the prison system.

Darby Wells, an artist who attended the reading, said she was inspired by the writers of San Quentin. Wells’ exhibit *Viral*, now in San Francisco, explores

how modern technology may increase information about police brutality but has not yet contributed to changing the policies and culture surrounding police misconduct.

Wells attended the reading in search of “inside voices” to enrich her exhibit and was particularly drawn to the pieces *Stopping Animals*, by Rahsaan Thomas, and *What Do You Stand For*, by Thedo “Noble” Butler.

“I’m going to follow up on these guys,” Wells said.

All the stories will be published in the sixth and latest anthology, which Mullery hopes she will no longer have to sell out of the back seat of her car. The new anthology can be ordered online by early 2017. See www.brothersinpen.wordpress.com



Photo by Peter Mertz

Mike Larsen with Zoe Mullery



Painting by Tommy Winfrey

Emperor Penguin oil on canvas painting done in 2015

WORDCROSS PUZZLE

By Jonathan Chiu / Edited by Jan Perry

Across

1. "Excuse me"

5. Calipatria to San Quentin directions (Abbrev.)

8. Diner sandwich (Abbrev.)

11. Having wings

12. Actors James and son Scott

15. Wild animal

16. CA nickname

17. Buddhism term for attaining nirvana

18. Monte in the Pennine Alps

19. What you always leave behind (Two words)

20. Johnson of *How To Be Single*

21. The fall guy

22. Follows Earth, apple or reactor

24. Lots (Slang)

26. Precedes pencil, time or poisoning

28. Charged atoms

29. Ensemble event in Dec. at SQ

33. Quick rest

35. Women's prison in SoCal (Abbrev.)

36. Even...

38. Upright

41. Steve Carrell film _____ *Almighty*

43. 1900s US painter and etcher John

45. NASCAR's Earnheart Jr.

46. Of the kidneys

48. A doughnut-shaped coil

51. Singer ____-Lo Green

52. Bay Area baseball team

55. Runners event at SQ, New York or Boston

57. Soaps

58. Kotb of NBC's Today

59. Magazine *Reader's* _____

62. The notch for a bow's string

64. Helberg of 67 Across

67. *The Big Bang* _____

70. Amanda Seyfried movie *In* _____

73. Stomach of an animal

74. CBS news show of this many minutes

75. Article

76. Related

77. Web communication

78. Class after bio (Abbrev.)

79. Modern's succeder

80. 5 Across' opposite

81. Bristle

film or throw in one's

27. God (Sp.)

29. Computer monitor brand

30. Tear apart

31. George Strait album

32. Places you never want to drink the punch

33. Attract or please

34. Georgia's fruit

37. Slime

39. Psychic hotline's Miss _____

40. Injure or harm

42. To settle definitely (Two words)

44. *The Daily Show* and *Born a Crime* author Trevor

47. Chrono for ill or injured inmate

49. Life is full of it

50. Type of wood joint

53. Opposite of pos.

55. S. African fly

57. The T in SWAT

61. Carpenter's tool

62. George Strait song "All My Exes Live in _____"

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10
11					12		13	14		15	
16					17					18	
19					20					21	
		22		23			24		25		
			26			27			28		
29	30	31				32		33			34
35				36			37			38	39
41		42			43			44		45	
46				47		48			49	50	51
		52			53	54		55			56
			57						58		
			59			60	61		62		63
64	65	66			67		68	69		70	71
73					74					75	
76					77					78	
79						80				81	

64. To become known (Scot.)

65. A large amount

66. Annoys

67. 78 Across' predecessor

69. "Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" singer Redding

70. 1900s British astronomer Martin

72. Ben Stiller and DeNiro movie _____

The Parents

73. Actress Stone or Thompson

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

S	I	G	A		M	A	C	H		C	O	N	E
A	P	A	A		A	N	A	A	W		A	P	K
M	O	D	E	M		S	C	J	B	A		T	O
A	N	G	E		H	O	A	E	N		I	M	E
S	I	R	E		A	N	A	N	O	I			
		C	R	A	D		S	A	Y	S	O		
D	R	A	V	M	C	H	E		S	F	R	A	N
K	A	O			F	M	I	S		I	N	I	H
T	I	N	C	H		N	I	V	A	L		C	O
A	R	D	O	R		A	J	V	I	O		L	E
M	O	S	I	V		S	E	P	A	T	E	S	
		A	S	O	K	A	S		K	A	S	E	
			I	M	E	R	S			H	I	I	V
O	G	C	A	M		H	A	E	S		T	R	I
T	I	C	E	A		A	B	O	D	E		T	E
C	A	M	O	S		F	I	O	M	A		H	A
A	P	P	K			A	N	A	I		K	P	I

Snippets

A rare medical condition known as Foreign Accent Syndrome causes sufferers to speak their native language in a foreign dialect, usually after a severe brain injury or stroke. Only about 100 cases have been documented since it was first reported in the 1940s.

Ruby balls have always been oval. The boys at Ruby School use inflated pig bladders for the balls, which are by nature, oval in shape.

Gang of Four was also the name of a radical punk band from the late seventies, who used unconventional funk and reggae rhythms in their music.

Only after JFK was shot did it become a federal crime to assassinate the President.

Two-thirds of the American men who served in Vietnam were volunteers and 70 percent were killed during the war.

Sudoku Corner

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

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

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MONTH OF JANUARY

- January is the first of seven months in a year with 31 days. In 2017, January has five Sundays, five Mondays and five Tuesdays.
- New Year's Day is on Sunday, Jan. 1, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is on Monday, Jan. 16, the Lunar New Year is on Saturday, Jan. 28, and there will be a full moon on Thursday, Jan. 12.
- For Christians, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God is on Sunday, Jan. 1; the Epiphany of the Lord is on Sunday, Jan. 8; the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is on Monday, Jan. 9; the Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales is on Tuesday, Jan. 24, and the Memorial of Saint John Bosco is on Tuesday, Jan. 31.
- The Chinese New Year is on Saturday, Jan. 28.
- According to the World Almanac, January is Jump Out of Bed Month, National Mentoring Month, and National Poverty in America Awareness Month.
- There are two astrological signs in January: Capricorn, the sign of the Goat (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) and Aquarius, the sign of the Water Bearer (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18).
- According to the Jewelry Industry Council, the January birthstone is the Garnet.

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

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

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

Albergues de apoyo para ex-convictos repatriados

Por Marco Villa
y Taré Beltranchuc

Los presidiarios de nacionalidad mexicana, al cumplir sus condenas y ser deportados a México, serán recibidos por el Instituto Nacional de Migración de la frontera. Estas autoridades procesaran su ingreso a territorio nacional y les ofrecerán un albergue y una llamada telefónica. Así mismo, se les ofrecerá un

descuento para la compra de boletos de autobús para sus lugares de origen. Existen grupos que dan apoyo en la transportación a los albergues, tal como el Grupo Beta. De acuerdo al Consulado Mexicano en San Francisco “en algunas fronteras también los pueden contactar con el Servicio Nacional de Empleo, quienes podrán apoyarlos con parte de los costos de autobús y en algunas ocasiones of-

recerles empleo”. Estos albergues no solo ofrecen apoyo a ex-convictos, si no también a toda persona que es deportada a territorio mexicano. La Constancia de Migrante Repatriado (documento que acredite su deportación) es la que les da acceso a los albergues, por lo tanto es importante que usted la presente en el momento de solicitar refugio. Los albergues en el Estado de Baja California

son los siguientes:

- Instituto Madre Asunta, A.C. Arquidiócesis de Tijuana, Calle Galileo No. 2305, Col. Postal, C.P. 22350 Tijuana, B.C. Tel/Fax: 01 (664) 683-0575 Email : assunta_tj@yahoo.com.mx
- Albergue Maná Diócesis de Mexicali Av. Jesús García No. 1799, Col. Héroes de Nacozari, C.P. 21030, Enseguida de la Capilla San Lucas, Mexicali, B.C. Tel: 01 (686) 556-0271 Email: alberguemana@hotmail.com
- Casa Betania Diócesis de Mexicali Av. Lago Hudson No. 2408,

Col. Xochimilco, C.P. 21380, Mexicali, B.C. Tel: 01 (686) 580-0687 Email: casa_migrante_betani@hotmail.com

- Casa del Migrante en Tijuana A.C. Calle Galileo #239 C.P. 22350, Tijuana, B.C. Tel: (664) 382- 7685 y (664) 682-5180 sadelmig@yahoo.com
- Albergue San Vicente Diócesis de Ensenada Calle Nueve No. 691, Col. Bustamante, C.P. 22840, Ensenada, B.C. Tel: 01 (646) 176-0306 Email: alberguemigrante@prodigy.net.mx

Trump crea pánico en los dreamers

Por David Eugene Archer Sr.
Gremio Periodístico

El Presidente electo Trump, esta causando preocupacion en los “Dreamers” (estudiantes indocumentados) de ser deportados, comento un periódico de Texas.

En el 2012 el Presidente Barack Obama concedió un permiso de no deportación a jóvenes inmigrantes indocumentados. Estos estudiantes “están asustados” con la elección de Donald Trump como presidente de Estados Unidos. Reporto el periódico The Texas Tribune.

Durante “su insultante campaña presidencial, Trump prometió que iba a desechar la orden ejecutiva con tan solo una firma,” comento The Tribune

Los “dreamers” son inmigrantes indocumentados, que llegaron desde niños. Se les otorgo “cierta forma de amparo legal” bajo la acción diferida mejor conocida como (DACA), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, reporto The Tribune.

José Manuel Santoya de 24 años de edad comento, “ni siquiera se como esta México en este momento. No tengo idea de como es la vida allá.” La última vez que José estuvo en México fue en el 2001, cuando era un niño.

José añadió, “cada sociedad es diferente y no sabría que hacer si estuviera en México.”

De acuerdo al The Tribunal, Santoyo fue contratado por la Panadería Collin Street, a pesar

de ser indocumentado y de no contar con el amparo de DACA. Esta situación creo un problema político en Texas, porque la familia de Thomas McNutt era dueña de la panadería. El político McNutt fue derrotado por un escaso margen por el Republicano Cook, debido a las historias en los medios de comunicación acerca de la contratación de trabajadores indocumentados como Santoyo.

“Estoy preocupada sobre lo que podría pasarle a mi familia”

Santoyo tiene programado graduarse de la Universidad Southern Methodist, en el mes de Diciembre, pero no tiene idea si podrá obtener un trabajo o si será deportado.

“La gente tiene miedo de lo que podría pasar. Santoyo añadió, lo peor es no saber que sucederá, lo cual esta afectando a demasiada gente”.

Jessica Azua se graduó de la Brackenridge High School en San Antonio y continuo con sus estudios en la Universidad de Texas A & M, obteniendo un titulo en administración de empresas.

Azua de 25 años de edad menciono, “Estoy triste. Estoy enojada. Estoy asustada”. Azua es una organizadora de la comunidad Texas Organization

Proget (TOP) que lucha por los inmigrantes y las minorías de bajos ingresos.

“Estoy preocupada sobre lo que podría pasarle a mi familia. También me preocupa lo que va a pasar con mi trabajo”, expreso Azua.

Omar Pérez de 26 años de edad y graduado recientemente de la Universidad de Houston, comento, “Mientras seas indocumentado en este país, serás tratado como un ciudadano de segunda clase. Al parecer eso será la realidad”

En el 2012, la orden ejecutiva de Obama impidió la deportación de aproximadamente unos 700,000 indocumentados que llegaron desde niños. Cerca de 200,000 se encuentran en el estado de Texas. La legislación para el alivio migratorio fue introducida, pero nunca fue aprobada por el congreso de los Estados Unidos, señalo The Tribune.

Trumap comento, “Se tienen que ir”, refiriéndose a los Dreamers.

Edgar Navarrette de 22 años de edad, estudiante en la Universidad de Texas en la ciudad de Austin, es uno más de los Dreamers que teme ser deportado.

Mary Moreno quien trabaja para TOP comento, “Nuestra esperanza es que podemos apelar contra Trump para que no sea tan cruel y despiadado con los Dreamers y pedirle que tenga un poco de humanidad”.

–Traducción por Marco Villa y Taré Beltranchuc

San Joaquin offers free tattoo removal for a better future

By Harry Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

“People say it’s like bacon, hot greasy bacon touching your skin” said nurse Chris Bendinelli. He was describing the pain of tattoo removal.

Dozens of people stood in line for a free tattoo removal program at El Concilio clinic a few months ago. The program is sponsored by the San Joaquin County Probation Department and funded by community programs that assist AB109 clients reported the *Stockton Record*.

“Free tattoo removals offer a chance to get your life back,” said David Saucedo, an AB109 mentor. The tattoo removal is a step toward a better future and employment. “Those gang-affiliated markings, prison markings, do put a wall, a barrier.”

Saucedo’s face was riddled with tattoos for years but could only be faintly seen now after removal. Those who chose to lose the tattoos are gaining their lives back, Saucedo said. “I am truly an example that change is possible.”

“I rather have a baby again, I rather go through labor and delivery” said 30-year-old Priscilla Grant about the painful process of tattoo removal. She held a bag filled with ice on her hand where a tattoo that spelled KILLA once was. It was the first of seven sessions that are needed for full removal of the tattoo. She endured the throbbing pain because she wanted to erase any signs of her past gang affiliation, especially her tattoo.

“I rather go through labor and delivery”

The tattoos are removed using a laser that breaks up skin particles. Over seven sessions, the ink is absorbed back into the skin. Prison tattoos are easier to remove because of the poor quality of ink, according to Bendinelli, a nurse with ink off me. Tattoo removals can cost up to \$5,000, depending on the number of sessions.

Dreamers fearful of deportation with President Trump

President-elect Trump causes immigrant “dreamers” to be fearful of deportation, according to a Texas newspaper.

The young, undocumented immigrants, granted relief from deportation under President Barack Obama’s 2012 executive order, are “freaking out” because of Donald Trump, the *Texas Tribune* reported.

During “his smash-talking presidential run,” Trump promised to wipe away the order with a stroke of a pen, according to the *Tribune*.

The “dreamers” are undocumented immigrants who came here as children. They were granted a “sort of legal status” under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA,

reported the *Tribune*.

“I wouldn’t even know how to get around Mexico right now. I have no sense of how things work there, how society works there,” said Jose Manuel Santoyo, 24. He hasn’t been there since 2001 when he left as a child.

“Every society runs differently, and I wouldn’t know what to do if I was there,” he said.

Santoyo was hired by Collin Street Bakery, though he was undocumented and at the time didn’t have DACA status. He became an issue in Texas politics because of Thomas McNutt, whose family owns the bakery. McNutt lost in a close primary race against Rep. Byron Cook. News stories about

undocumented workers like Santoyo working in the bakery contributed to the loss, the *Tribune* reported.

“I’m worried about what’s going to happen to my family”

Santoyo is scheduled to graduate from Southern Methodist University in December and has no idea if he will get a job or whether he will be deported, he said.

“People are just afraid of what’s going to happen. I feel like that’s the worst thing: not

knowing what’s going to happen. ...That’s impacting a lot of people,” he added.

Jessica Azua graduated early from Brackenridge High School in San Antonio and got a business management degree from Texas A&M University.

“I’m sad. I’m angry. I’m scared,” said Azua, 25, a community organizer at Texas Organization Project (TOP), which fights for immigrants and low-income minorities.

“I’m worried about what’s going to happen to my family. I’m worried about what’s going to happen to my job,” she said.

Omar Perez, 26, who recently graduated from the University of Houston, said, “Once you’re undocumented you’re treated like a second-class citizen in

this country. It looks like that’s going to be the reality.”

Obama’s 2012 order granted relief from deportation to roughly 700,000 undocumented who arrived as children. Close to 200,000 of them are in Texas. Legislation for relief was introduced but never passed by the U.S. Congress, according to the *Tribune*.

“They have to go,” Trump said regarding the Dreamers.

Edgar Navarrette, 22, a University of Texas at Austin student, is another one of the dreamers.

Mary Moreno works for TOP. She said, “Our hope is we can appeal to him (Trump) to not be so cruel and callous about this and have some humanity.”

–David Eugene Archer Sr.

Inmate veterans deliver a message to the young

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

In the early hours of Nov. 11, several dozen military veterans from all branches of service gathered on a prison yard. Free veterans and people from the surrounding San Francisco Bay Area joined them to pay tribute to this national holiday.

Before the guests arrived, incarcerated veterans worked with military precision to set up a makeshift stage on the prison's Lower Yard. Rows of cushioned seats were also set up for the visitors.

"This is not only about veterans," said the event coordinator, veteran and inmate Ron Self. "We need to be united and be mentors to the youngsters in the Youth Offender Program (YOP)."

The YOP aims to steer certain young inmates away from high-security prisons where they would face more serious and violent criminal influences.

Inmate Devin Marque Cole, 24, said he came out to watch the ceremony because when he was younger, he wanted to join the military.

"I couldn't join the military, because when I was 15 I got into trouble. That stopped me from being able to join," Cole said.

During his teenage years, Cole said he'd been in and out of juvenile hall, which eventually led to his current incarceration in state prison.

Cole is currently enrolled in a computer coding class at San Quentin State Prison. He said the program will help him to find a good job when he is released



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

The Color Guard presenting the colors on Veterans Day

from prison in 2018.

Cole sat next to D'Romeo Allen, 20, who has been incarcerated about a year. Allen is scheduled to be released from prison in 2023.

"Veterans Day is big," Allen said. "It's giving appreciation to people who fought for our country." He added, "San Quentin is good for younger guys like myself because it offers a peaceful environment and gives a purpose to do something positive, with

examples on how to live from older guys."

***"I do this to pay
my respect to the
fallen veterans who
came before me"***

San Quentin is home to more than 300 veterans, who make up

less than 10 percent of the prison population.

Eo Rojas has been working with incarcerated veterans at San Quentin for about three and a half years.

"I'm a veteran and my son's a veteran," said Rojas. "During this time, I've come to have a deep respect for the men and the healing work that we do with Veterans Healing Veterans (VHV)." He added, "I want to be here to support them."

VHV is a support group that helps incarcerated veterans connect Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and comparable past traumas to criminal behavior. Narrative therapy, which involves writing to remember one's past to aid healing, plays a significant role in the VHV curriculum.

"To work with you veterans to build this has been an amazing honor," said Mary Donovan, executive director of VHV. "There is awareness of the depth of care that veterans have for each other. That impulse to care about each other also exists inside the prison walls. The people outside don't understand this. It hasn't occurred to people on the outside that you guys are such powerful voices. I encourage you to use that voice."

Norfleet Stewart of the US Army has been a part of veterans' groups at San Quentin State Prison since 2011.

"I do this to pay my respect to the fallen veterans who came before me," he said.

Stewart, who served in Vietnam from 1968-74, added "I honor all veterans around the world."

"Every time I come in and meet with my group, I feel like you are ambassadors and I take your stories and share them with people on the outside," said VHV sponsor Diana Williams.

She continued, "When people ask me why I do the work I do inside a prison, I am reminded of this quote, 'If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.'"

Christmas comes early with VGSQ's Toys for Tots

By Charles David Henry
Journalism Guild Writer

The 2016 San Quentin's Toys for Tots program came earlier this year. On Dec. 16 chairman Gary Cooper and members of the Veterans Group of San Quentin (VGSQ) decorated the Christmas tree in the main visiting room and received nearly 400 gifts from the United States Marine Corps Recruitment Center in San Bruno. More than half of those gifts were also distributed to H-Unit.

This year's program ran for two consecutive weekends on Dec. 17-18 and 24-25. The men from VGSQ received various toys for children ages 10 months to 16 years and set up the room so that a child could easily pick a gift from a large selection and

leave with it when their visit was over.

VGSQ member Tederick Sims has participated in the Toys for Tots program for the second year. "This gives me so much joy to see the excitement it brings to kids when they walk into the room and pick out a gift."

These simple things help the men at San Quentin through the frustration of not being home during the holiday with their children, grandchildren and families. At least the kids can come to visit and leave with a gift. Twelve-year-old John came to visit his father, John, and was surprised when a member of the VGSQ insisted he pick a gift. "This is so cool," he said.

VGSQ member Stephen Wilson has been involved with the Toys for Tots for several years.



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

VGSQ members with the toys in the SQ visiting room

He is a grandfather and remembers the times when he was able to experience the pleasure he got when his children opened their toys. "The excitement of watching these kids pick a gift gives me so much joy and puts me in the spirit of the holidays and reminds me of the past Christmas."

Unique Aubrey, 16, came to visit her father, Derrico Aubrey, and found a gift to her liking. "I'm dedicated to keeping the family unit together, and I have been coming to visit my father for the past 10 years and will always support him," she said.

Kevin Brinckman, a VGSQ member who enjoys sharing the holiday spirit with the other vet-

erans, said, "I just get so much pleasure out of watching kids pick a toy and the excitement they have when picking it up before they leave. This is my way of giving something back. It helps me deal with the holiday spirit," he says.

Garin Robinson, who has been involved with the veterans group for five years, enjoys being around other veterans sharing in a worthy cause like Toys for Tots. "It's the joy and pleasure of seeing us put together these toys for the kids that keeps me coming back every year," he said.

Other members who participated in this 28th year Toys for Tots are Stan Baer, Tony Burch,

Wesley Eisiminger, Michael Upton and Bernard Werner.

"This is the 28th year that we have received gifts for these Toys for Tots programs, and this year is the most exciting because of the number of gifts we received from the Marines. We understand that the needs out there in the communities are just as great as the needs are here in prison, and we greatly appreciate the effort they put forth in making these gifts available to our prison population and their families. I want to extend a sincere thanks to our VGSQ sponsor Madeline Tenney for her dedication and commitment to making Toys for Tots a success again this year at San Quentin," said Cooper.



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Veterans members putting together toys for the kids

Government worker's job to destroy millions of lives

Book Review

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Adolf Eichmann was a regular guy who found his calling by being an efficient government worker. A deeper look into his life reveals a not-so-average guy who had failed in many things, including academically and at several jobs. Nevertheless, he was a dedicated public servant and a pretty good community organizer who worked on a program that destroyed the lives of millions.

One thing that grounded me while reading *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, (Hannah Arendt,



File Photo

Author Hannah Arendt

1963), is how objectively normal his life seemed before and while in government. He was born on March 19, 1906, in Solingen, in the Rhineland — a German city that is famous for its knives, scissors and surgical instru-

ments. The normalcy of Eichmann cannot be overemphasized.

Arendt notes that his relationship with his wife and children, his mother and father, his brothers and sisters and friends was “not only normal but most desirable,” and he was “a man

with very positive ideas.”

Eichmann was arrested and extradited from Argentina to Israel to stand trial for war crimes during World War II. In spite of his role in the holocaust — the death of more than 6 million

Jews — his defense was one of ignorance, and of following executive orders.

According to Eichmann, the indictment for murder was wrong:

“But I had nothing to do with the killing of Jews. I never killed a Jew, or, for that matter, I never killed a non-Jew — I never killed any human being. I never gave an order to kill a Jew nor an order to kill a non-Jew; I just did not do it.” Or, as he was later to qualify this statement, *“It so happened...that I had not once to do it.” — for he said explicitly that he would have killed his own father if he had received an order to that effect.*

Eichmann went to considerable lengths to prove that he had never harbored any ill feelings against Jews, Arendt wrote and added; Jews in his family were among his “private reasons” for not hating Jews.

That being said, I couldn't help but feel uneasy with the negatively tainted rhetoric coming from the U.S. President-elect against Mexicans and Muslims and its similarity to 1930s Germany's vicious criticisms against the Jews that resulted in the holocaust.

How many law-abiding government workers are in a position to cause grief and even death upon another human being merely by executing, to the best of his or her ability, the full force of the law in the United States?

Think about the millions of undocumented people in America who are in peril of deportation to who knows where because of place of birth or religious beliefs. Will they be sent to places where their livelihoods are in jeopardy?

Arendt writes that Eichmann:

recalled perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not done what he had been ordered to do — to ship millions of men, women and children to their death with great zeal and most meticulous care.

I relate what happened in Germany during World War II to what is happening in the United States today. In both, there is a patriotic movement to capture the hearts and minds of the public. I am reminded about days of past — when Hitler criticized the Treaty of Versailles, saying that it undermined the German economy and created massive unemployment. This sounds familiar to me: many of today's trade agreements are criticized by the president-elect and the blame for unemployment and crime are placed on a targeted group of people. Americans who feel left behind believe Trump can bring things back the way they were. I fear that history is repeating itself with a government that says it wants to empower the entitled citizen.

Study explores how lifers get better deal from parole boards

By Wayne Boatwright
Managing Editor

For decades, lifers were rarely found suitable for parole. Now more than 20 percent are being paroled.

Why? Thanks to changes at the legal, executive, as well as an initiative petition and administrative levels.

Many more prisoners will now have access to parole because of the passage of Proposition 57 in November 2016. It will likely allow thousands more inmates to go before the parole board.

That's great news for the men in San Quentin who yearn to go home. Now they just need to understand how to take advantage of the changes.

In this first of three articles, which are based on a groundbreaking Stanford University study published in the April 2016 Federal Sentencing Reporter (Stanford Report), we'll see how the system works.

Today about 35,000 individuals are serving life sentences with the possibility of parole in California's prison system. These “indeterminate” life sentences used to be called “life means life” by the incarcerated because few were ever found suitable. The reasons for their “unsuitability” were unclear to the denied. That is because the Board of Parole Hearings' (BPH) decision-making process

and suitability determinations “are largely invisible to the public eye,” according to the Stanford Report.

Fewer than 50 state employees handle the caseload equal to one-third of U.S. inmates serving indeterminate terms. There are 12 governor-appointed commissioners and 30-plus civil service deputy commissioners. One commissioner and one deputy commissioner preside over each lifer parole hearing.

Before each hearing, the prison prepares a board packet for the BPH hearing participants. This packet includes key documents from the inmate's central file (C-File), a summary of the applicant's crime, criminal record, psychological evaluations, post-conviction progress report, and any prior parole decisions.

A lifer inmate's initial suitability hearing takes place one year before the minimum eligible release date.

There were virtually no parole grants resulting in release prior to two 2008 California Supreme Court rulings. Between 1979 and 2007, less than three percent of all BPH hearings resulted in an inmate being found suitable for parole. The vast majority of these were then reversed by the sitting California governor, according to the Stanford Report.

There were few parole grants even though a BPH hearing begins with a legal presumption

that an inmate is suitable for release unless “consideration of the public safety requires a lengthier period of incarceration” (California Penal Code 401(b)).

The process has the board consider 15 factors listed in the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Tit. 15, 2402(a). Six factors relate to unsuitability for release. They are exceptionally callous life crime, violent history, psychological problems, institutional misbehavior, previous record of violence or sadistic sexual offenses, and the presence or absence of exit plans. The remaining nine demonstrate suitability. They include evidence of remorse, absence of a juvenile record, and stable social history.

The grant rate for lifer inmates has risen dramatically from eight percent in 2008 to 30 percent in 2015. The increase occurred because the BPH granted more “suitable for parole” rulings. While the governor revoked a fifth of these, there were still close to 25 percent of those who had a parole hearing in 2015 and earned their freedom.

In future articles, we will consider trends in parole and suitability decisions, and variables that have a statistically significant impact on odds of release.

A copy of the above-mentioned Stanford Report is available through Patten University.

‘My mother’ and ‘the Pope’ top list of best persons to visit

Asked On The Line

By Angelo Falcone
Journalism Guild Writer

A visit from family or friend is the most valued and anticipated occurrence in San Quentin. According to prison regulations, it is recognized as “a means of increasing safety in prisons, maintaining family and community connections, and preparing inmates for successful release and rehabilitation.”

“Asked on the Line” asked the men in blue, “If the warden would give you a pass to go anywhere to visit anyone for one day, where would you go? Who would you visit?”

M. Stewart: “I would visit my mother in Pomona. She has been living in that city for 40 years. She is my pride and joy.”

R. Malo: “I would like to go to the Vatican and visit Pope Francis.”

M. Morales: “I would visit my brother, Chino, who lives in San Bernardino.”

B. Muro: “I would go and visit my children, then my mom, and then my sisters.”

M. Jones: “I would go to the East Coast to visit friends, and I would go to New York to visit my long lost sister-in-law,

Glenda.”

R. Zeigler: “I would first visit my wife and my mother-in-law, then my brothers, nieces and nephews, and finally, close friends.”

V. Nguyen: “I would visit my family in San Jose.”

M. Benitez: “I would go to Mexico to visit my father's grave site.”

M. Saldana: “I would like to go to a family reunion to visit with all of my brothers and sisters.”

C. Moreno: “I would visit Mr. Sanchez, in person, and let him know that I am sorry for what I have done to him and his family.”

P. Feliciano: “I would visit my son, daughter and grandchildren in New Mexico.”

N. Burn: “I would visit my brother Vincent.”

N. Andino: “I would go back to my country, Colombia, and visit my mother's grave.”

A. Angulo: “I would visit all of my family who live in California.”

H. Bridges: “I would visit my wife in Pomona.”

J. Smith: “I would go visit my mother's grave in Mississippi.”

A. Torres: “I would visit my family in Sacramento, especially my children.”

J. Ybarra: “I would visit my brother in Bakersfield.”

SHU inmates down 65 percent since 2012

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

The use of Security Housing Unit (SHU) cells in California has reportedly dropped 65 percent. As of December 2012, the state had 9,870 prisoners in SHU, according to the Center for Constitutional Rights, which represented the prisoners. This August there were 3,471.

Of the 1,557 prisoners kept in SHU for 10 or more years, 1,512 have been transferred to general prison housing. At Pelican Bay, all but two of the 513 prisoners held for at least a decade have

been removed from the SHU, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

The transfers are a result of a lawsuit settlement approved by a federal judge in October 2015, which required changes in a system that had separated inmates from their fellow inmates for extended periods. Sometimes prisoners were isolated 20 years or more based on the prison system's findings of gang affiliation, the newspaper reported.

Criteria used in some cases were based on tattoos, letters or books they possessed. Under

new rules, isolation is for those guilty of assaults, weapons possessions, drug dealing and other serious crimes while in prison.

The settlement allows prisoners who commit violent felonies to be held in SHU for up to 10 years. It also states that inmates can be held longer if they continue to pose a danger to correctional officers or other prisoners.

Deputy press secretary spokeswoman of CDCR Terry Thorton told the *Chronicle*, “The department has moved from an affiliation-based system to a behavior-based system.”

Correctional Officers honored for rescuing citizens

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Chairman

Three California correctional officers have been honored for using their emergency training to rescue injured citizens.

One motorist layed unconscious in an overturned car on a 100-yard steep embankment. Avenal State Prison Lts. Mike Tuntakit and John Mendiboure broke out a window and used life-saving tactics to resuscitate her, reported the *Hanford Sentinel*.

“They exemplify a commitment to selfless service day in and day out”

In a separate incident, Correctional Sgt. Stan Tuck was on a trip to the grocery store when he noticed a woman unconscious on the sidewalk. He performed CPR after checking her vital signs. The woman began to breathe again, and Tuck monitored her until paramedics arrived, the article reported.

“I was kind of puzzled,” Tuck said. “There were people around doing nothing. Something just didn’t look right. I was glad I was there, but I hope I never have to do it again. I do hope I’m there, though, if someone needs me.”

Tuntakit and Mendiboure were carpooling home when they came across a person waving them down for help. A motorist was unresponsive from the wreck, and the car began

to smoke. They used a rock to break a window, then pulled the driver out, according to the article.

“For us, we do a lot of training,” Tuntakit said. “And to be able to be in the right place at the right time and put that training to use is a great feeling.”

At the 31st annual Medal of Valor ceremony in Sacramento, Lts. Tuntakit and Mendiboure both received Silver Stars and Sgt. Tuck was awarded a Bronze Star by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

The Medal of Valor is earned for bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of correctional duties.

“They exemplify a commitment to selfless service day in and day out,” CDCR Secretary Scott Kernan said. “Our jobs have never been easy. However, we continue meeting the challenges as they arise, sometimes at great personal sacrifice. I am proud to lead our staff as we strive to make the agency a national role model for corrections and rehabilitation.”

At the ceremony Gov. Jerry Brown praised the actions of the employees.

“It’s the people, their character, their virtue and how they treat themselves, their families and their neighbors and who are strengthening our state and country by what they’ve done,” Brown said. “They go above and beyond the call of duty and act in a way that is profoundly humane and gives edification and inspiration to everyone else who hears about it or sees it.”



Courtesy of CDCR

Lt. Mendiboure and Lt. Tuntakit at the scene of the accident



Courtesy of CDCR

Lt. Mendiboure, CDCR Secretary Scott Kernan and Lt. Tuntakit with their Medal of Valor award

Centinela helps incarcerated veterans with ‘The Fight Club’

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

The Fight Club, a Biblical-based program designed to help veterans suffering from

PTSD and other psychiatric disorders, came to Centinela State Prison in June. The goal of the program is to see how it can impact prisoner reform, Wayne Hughes wrote in an

op-ed for the *OC Register*.

The Fight Club’s framework is formatted like a boxing match with 12 rounds or lessons that help prisoners work through their personal prob-

lems under the club’s philosophy. Prisoners are encouraged to move past bad experiences in their lives and into their future, to defy the giants and fears in their lives, like King David did in the Bible against Goliath.

The prison’s warden, Raymond Madden, requested the program be conducted in the maximum security yard where most prisoners are housed with life sentences for committing serious crimes. There were 27 participants in attendance during the three-day event, reports Hughes.

Inmate Etienne Moore’s testimony demonstrated the impact the program could have on one person. Moore was convicted of two counts of first degree murder at the age of 24 and sentenced to two life sentences without the possibility of parole. He alleges that he was “...tried and convicted of a crime [he] didn’t commit.”

He experienced adverse consequences because of his tall stature and race, which contributed to his initiation into a prison gang, where he says violence and drugs became a way of life. After hearing about the Fight Club he decided to join, according to the report.

At the outset, he entered the

program full of anger and bitterness. After hearing stories from embattled veterans suffering from PTSD in war-torn countries, Moore’s heart was transformed. After the third day of the program, he said his life was changed.

Empowered by the change, Moore had a renewed interest and determination to put a two-point Fight Plan into place by creating a greater bond in his marriage and obtaining freedom from prison. He said the experience affected the attitude he had toward his incarceration.

“I’ve gained a new focus to help young men who come into prison, to help guide them away from the gangs and trouble makers,” Moore said. “I know I can make a difference by sharing what I’ve learned in the Fight Club.”

The Fight Club is operated and sponsored by an organization called The Mighty Oaks Foundation. The organization is sponsoring four more classes at Centinela State Prison and plans to start classes at Calipatria State Prison and others.

According to the report, 90 percent of all prisoners will be released from prison someday, leaving open the question of what type of person they will be when released.

Chowchilla’s cosmetology program for men enhances job prospects

By Noel Scott
Journalism Guild Writer

Valley State Prison in Chowchilla is the only prison in California that offers a cosmetology program for men.

It has a 100 percent graduation rate, which is one of the highest rates of any prison education programs in the nation, according to *Wash, Rinse, Redeem: A look inside a beauty school — in a men’s prison*, by Stacey Leasca on the good.com.

“It’s like a break from prison because of the way free staff interacts with us, and we interact with each other,” said Daniel Bezemer, the program’s first male graduate.

The Last Mile at San Quentin also provides training in a useful vocation. The class teaches how to write computer codes without having the use of the internet.

“Inmates are learning all the languages that actually get you

hired,” said Scott Budnick, a movie producer and reform advocate who founded the Anti-Recidivism Coalition.

“Inmates are learning all the languages that actually get you hired”

“I think we shouldn’t try to cram anyone into a certain box ... there is a huge need for vocational programming for those that don’t have a high school diploma or GED, don’t want to go to college, and prefer working with their hands,” said Budnick.

According to a 2013 report by the Rand Corporation, inmates who get a college education in prison reduce their chances of re-offending by 43 percent. The

study shows that money spent on prison education substantially reduces future incarceration costs for taxpayers.

Finding employment is often difficult when on parole but these two programs offer their graduates unique opportunities for potential entrepreneurs.

Hairstylists, for example, can rent chairs in beauty salons and work for themselves. Last Mile graduates, according to Budnick, are not only positioned for an \$80,000-a-year job once released, they can create “phone apps” of their own and market them.

These programs reflect a sea change in the CDCR’s overall mindset toward rehabilitation through education. This willingness to adopt new programs that prepare inmates for life outside of prison exemplifies the rehabilitation renaissance that is taking hold throughout our nation.

North Block wins basketball trophy named Becky, 28-21

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

The Asian/Pacific Islanders formed teams by housing units for a Thanksgiving Basketball Tournament where the prizes were promoting unity and a trophy called Becky with the Good Hair. North Block defeated H-Unit in the finals, 28-21.

“They played a good game; we played a good game. They came out on top,” said H-Unit’s Blu Vue. “This tournament means bragging rights and unity amongst ourselves.”

North Block’s leading scorer, Adnan Khan, jokingly disagreed. “It’s not about unity; it’s about winning and bragging, and most of all it’s about Becky. Tell me how West Block can go 0-4 and still be united. They are in the showers arguing right now.”

West Block’s Rafael Cuevas

responded, “We take our losses like we take our wins.”

In a previous Labor Day tournament, North Block beat West Block and was the first to receive Becky, which has two tiers wrapped in glossy-gold paper and is topped with a ping-pong sized ball painted to resemble a miniature basketball.

“It has gold teeth,” joked North Block’s Juan Meza.

“We’re gonna come back and win Becky from them”

The trophy went back up for grabs in the Nov. 24 tournament with the agreement that a new tier would be added for each new winner.

Tournament organizer and North Block point guard Chau Vi said he and another player, Damon Cooke, came up with the name Becky for the trophy.

“Me and Damon were talking about it and went with Becky because it’s funny,” Vi said.

Six games scheduled for North Block, West Block and H-Unit had them play each other twice to decide who goes to the finals. West Block lost four games, eliminating a need for game six and sending North Block and H-Unit to the finals.

“Hopefully we

learn something in this sweep right here,” said West Block’s Phirank Kim. “We needed Coach Nick Lopez back.”

In the final full-court game, the first team to score 28 won. North Block jumped out to an early 7-2 lead. H-Unit tied the score up at 7-7 on a three-pointer by Elijah Fejeran.

North Block’s center Upu Ama retook the lead with a power move in the paint. Ama started in the place of Cooke, who led North Block to victory in a previous tournament for Labor Day, scoring 10 points with six rebounds.

Khan heated up, scoring five straight points, making the score 15-7.

Wilson Nguyen gave H-Unit the lead with a three-pointer at 20-19. Nguyen led H-Unit with 10 points.

Khan answered with back-to-back buckets taking the lead right back, followed by teammate Vi with a highlight reel up and under layup, making the score 25-21.

H-Unit defended well for a few possessions, but failed to score again.

Khan nailed a three-pointer for the winning basket. He finished with 15 points.

The winning team members were: Khan, Jonathan Chiu, Eddie Dela Pena, Danny Thongsy, Moua Vue, Dahvee Sophal, Upu Ama, Juan Meza, Jerome Hermosura and Chau Vi.

“Every player gets to spend a night with Becky,” said Khan. “It rotates.”

“We’re gonna go back to the drawing board,” said H-Unit’s Patang. “Get more offensive. We’re gonna come back and win that (Becky) from them.”



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Bittermen Todd Sims guarding King D. “Zayd” Nickolson

SQ Kings end losing season with victory

The San Quentin Kings ended their last game of a losing season with an 87-83 overtime win over the visiting Bittermen basketball team.

“We salvaged the season,” joked Kings Coach Orlando Harris. “Even though they won the season series, they have to go home and sit with this loss for the entire off season. I’m gonna send him (Bittermen Coach Ted Saltveit) a copy of the paper.”

The Bittermen led 75-72 with 2:10 left in the fourth quarter when the Kings made a run. J. “Mailman” Ratchford made a pass to Thad Fleeton who scored inside, making it 75-74 with 1:47 on the clock.

On defense, Ratchford blocked Per Casey’s third consecutive layup attempt. Then Ratchford got back down court in time for teammate Demond Lewis to pass him the ball for an inside score, putting the Kings ahead 76-75.

“If they gave that effort every time we played, we wouldn’t be 13-16,” Harris said.

Trailblazer Ryan Steer, who also plays for the Bittermen,

stole the ball and laid it up to put his team back in front, 77-76.

The Bittermen fouled to stop the clock at 20 seconds.

Lewis went to the line to shoot free throws after being fouled. He missed the first but made the second to tie the score at 77.

On defense, Thad Fleeton snatched the ball from Steer to end regulation play with a stop, sending the game into overtime.

In OT, the Kings took over starting with an assist from Oris “Pep” Williams for a turn-around post jumper made by Fleeton.

Steer missed a three-point attempt, and the Kings never looked back.

Ted Saltveit coached the Bittermen to their first winning season ever against the Kings.

Harris still feels everybody won.

“To have outside people come in here and share their life stories is big,” Harris said. “My takeaway is having this chance to build community and knowing how much we impact each other for the better.”

—Rahsaan Thomas



Photo by Jonathan Chiu - San Quentin News

“Becky with the Good Hair” trophy

A fútbol battle of the ages on the Lower Yard

By **Eddie Herena**
San Quentin News Photographer

Prison provides the opportunity for Latinos to seek friendship with their fellow inmates through a shared interest. At San Quentin State Prison, this usually means finding them on a soccer field.

On the Lower Yard, incarcerated soccer players recently held a match against the Hermanos Unidos (United Brothers) – a team of all college students attending the University of California at Berkeley. The match was their third in a year.

The outside players were Latino as well and came from similar, if not the same, neighborhoods as the San Quentin team. Because of midterms and final exams, however, they could only field a squad of six players.

Eager to play and to even the field, everyone agreed to split into teams based on age. The dividing line was 40 years. It was the youngsters against the OGs (older guys.)

With the back drop of cloud-covered Mt. Tamalpais and a soft, wet, newly green field, the

Hermanos completed their 10-man team by picking up four inside players.

Before the game began, youngster Alfredo Figueroa said he hoped his fellow Hermanos would “not die” from exhaustion.

OG Tare “Cancun” Beltranchuc, an inside player, said, “We’re going to have to play smart. We’re slow and have to compensate with wisdom.”

The average age for the youngsters was about 22 years old.

The OGs were all well past 40 years of age — with 65 being the oldest.

But age was not a factor as Jesús “Morelia” Lopez scored the game’s first goal off an assist from Beltranchuc in minute 30: 1-0 the older guys.

Near the first half’s end, only two Hermanos players remained in the game: Victor Gonzalez and Eduardo “Lalo” Ayala. It was starting to look like Figueroa’s plan to “not die,” was not working.

It was going to take more than energy to topple the veteran team.

And energy it was, as the youngsters kept coming and



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

San Quentin’s third soccer match against outside team

coming, until 22-year-old Brandon Higoalga, a young man from Mexico City, hurdled over a pile of bodies for a goal in the 43rd minute. The match was even: 1-1.

In the second half the OGs showed no signs of fatigue and played with the same vigor and determination, matching the youngsters stride for stride.

Arturo “Turi” Abalos and Jose “Niero” Viera in minutes 51 and 59 scored the first two second-

half goals, giving the OGs a 3-1 advantage.

At this point, an OG victory seemed inevitable. Even with the inside help, the Hermanos would not get their first victory.

As the OGs were determined to win, they sent a message of “earning your keep on the field” to the youngsters.

But in minute 62, youngster Manny Torres responded to the OG’s message by scoring a goal. With the game winding down

and in extra time, Cesar Delgado of San Quentin slipped in a goal, tying the match in the 93rd minute. The game ended seconds later.

It was time for penalty kicks.

Up for the first of five attempts was Lopez for the OGs who scored, putting his team up a goal: OGs 4-3.

- Ayala for the youngsters: goal, 4-4.
- Jose Melendez, OGs: miss, 4-4.
- Hidalgo, youngsters: miss, 4-4.
- Alexi Ruiz, OGs: goal, 5-4
- Lionel Hernandez, youngsters: miss, 5-4
- Beltranchuc, OGs: miss, 5-4
- Torres, youngsters: goal, 5-5
- Juan Espinoza, OGs: miss, 5-5

The game fell on the shoulders of Delgado, who scored the game-tying goal, and he did not miss his mark, giving the brothers from Berkeley their first win on San Quentin soil. The final score was 6-5 youngsters. The game was one to remember and one that could not be won “without them,” said Uriel Saldivar, referring to the young men on the inside.

Draymond Green converts a heckler

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

For years Ceasar “C-Money” McDowell has been heckling any team that comes in from the outside to play in San Quentin, especially the Golden State Warriors organization. However, after an epic day of playing dominos inside the prison with Draymond Green, he now calls the NBA All-Star his favorite basketball player.

“Draymond is my favorite player because he’s the realest brother in the league,” said McDowell.

Draymond came into San Quentin on Sept. 24 with Kevin Durant to attend a basketball game between the Golden State Warriors staff and the San Quentin Warriors. Green spent most of his time at the domino tables playing against McDowell and others.

McDowell, who has a Los Angeles Lakers emblem tattooed

on his leg, shares a cell with San Quentin Warrior Allan McIntosh. He calls rooting for outside teams “Stockholm Syndrome.”

He’s teased Golden State Assistant General Manager Kirk Lacob about everything from missing shots to his choice in basketball sneakers. However, after years of getting to know many people from the Golden State organization, especially Green, he has developed more respect.

“I like the Warriors because I met the owner, know the owner’s sons, and the general manager knows me by name,” said McDowell. “When you know them personally, you have to have love for their organization.”

Despite his admiration for Green and Golden State, he still plans to keep heckling Lacob whenever he comes to play with the Christian Sports Ministry team on Saturdays.

“I’m absolutely still going to heckle him, but it’s all love though,” said McDowell.



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

Ceasar McDowell (blue shirt) with Draymond Green



Photo by Eddie Herena - San Quentin News

University of San Francisco Tennis Team posing with San Quentin's Inside Tennis Team

USF tennis team loves its matches at San Quentin

The University of San Francisco Tennis Team, comprising players from around the world, returned to San Quentin to visit and play against the Inside Tennis Team. The S.Q. team is composed of older incarcerated men, most of whom learned how to play tennis inside prison.

“I love bringing my guys here,” said USF coach Pablo Pries de Almeida. “They really get a lot out of it.”

Pries de Almeida brought in seven tennis players from countries including France, Sweden, Turkey and the U.S. Regardless of where anyone came from, both the college kids and incarcerated men share a love for tennis, he said.

“I’m not in prison anymore when I’m on the court,” said Inside Tennis Team’s (ITT) Salvatore Solorio.

The ITT was no match for the younger guys who started playing tennis as kids. Marco Barretto, 21, of San Francisco, has played tennis since he was 9 and is proud to say his dad also played for USF. However, something bigger than tennis happens on the San Quentin court of dreams.

ITT member Paul Alleyne, who learned how to play tennis inside prison, appreciates the lessons he learns from the international visitors.

“I like the fact that they’re coming from the outside and

showing compassion for us,” Alleyne said. “They’re encouraging us to continue a positive program and by doing that, they’re helping us get ready for the streets.”

The visitors enjoyed themselves as well.

“I admire the people here — no one is giving up,” said USF’s Mert Zincili, 19, of Turkey.

USF’s Ryan Marker, 19, of Palm Springs, added, “I wanted to come. It’s an eye-opener, good experience.”

“I really look forward to Saturdays,” said ITT’s Paul Oliver. “They take their time to speak with us. It lets me know I’m still human.”

—Rahsaan Thomas

10 complete the ninth annual 1000 Mile Club marathon

Despite obstacles, like several alarms requiring all inmates to sit on the ground for momentum-zapping spats, 10 men completed 105 laps around San Quentin’s Lower Yard to finish the ninth annual 1000 Mile Club marathon.

The 10 finishers, on Nov. 19, represent a club record. Since 2008, no more than nine men have completed the 105 laps.

“This was harder than any other day,” said Markelle Taylor, 44, who came in first with a time of 3:21:19. “I was just glad to finish.”

Taylor cramped up after one of the alarms, which signaled there was a disturbance somewhere inside the prison. The alarm lasted 25 minutes. The others were of various lengths. After each alarm, he got up and continued to run with a look of determination and anguish on his face.

“The whole club, everybody motivated me to keep going — without you guys supporting me, I wouldn’t have finished,” Taylor said. “Believe me. I wanted to stop several times.”

Every race, he runs for a cause. For the 2016 marathon he ran “for people who struggle to forgive and for those who also need to be forgiven — remember to forgive yourself,” Taylor said.

Taylor holds the club’s top two best finishing times with the record he set in 2015 of 3:16:07.

Chris Skull, 38, came in second with a time of 3:37. That feat made his second completed mar-



Photo by Roldan Lozada

Troy Dunmore running with Jesus Vasquez

athon and his personal best time.

For Skull, it’s competing with fellow club member Eddie Herena and training with Taylor that motivated him to finish the 26.2 miles.

“I’m the hardest-working lazy guy that I know — they (Herena and Taylor) won’t let me be lazy,” Skull said. “Then my competitiveness with Eddie comes in. I wish Eddie were here. Tell Eddie to bring it next time.”

Herena did not run in the marathon, but he did stop by to support his teammate with competitive motivation.

“In the running world, there is a mutual understanding, and it revolves around time,” Herena said. “He (Skull) did not break my record.”

Skull missed Herena’s personal best marathon of 3:35:27 by about two minutes.

Jonathan Chiu, 34, came in

third. It was his best finish. It was also his personal best at 4:01:20.

“My knees started hurting with six miles left,” Chiu said. “No matter how hard it is, afterward you won’t be in as much pain.”

Chiu said he fought off cramps during the long alarms by stretching out his legs and massaging them. Focusing on breathing, pushing away the pain and listening to a country/rock play list on his music player helped him complete the course.

Tommy Wickerd, 49, conquered one of his two goals — getting a GED and completing a marathon, which he did with a time of 4:06. He took fourth place.

“It’s an accomplishment,” Wickerd said. “I ran a marathon, not just any marathon, a San Quentin marathon.”

Running has helped Wickerd lose 45 pounds.

“This was the hardest physical thing I have ever done,” said Wickerd, who said he played football and wrestled.

Troy Dunmore, 53, came in fifth at 4:11:20 despite health issues.

“I have a heart ailment,” Dunmore said. “It only beats at 40 percent. I asked my doctor if I could run, and he said, ‘Running slow is good; it’s not like you’re gonna run a marathon.’”

Dunmore has been training all year. He ran the race side-by-side with his Christian brother, Jesus Vasquez, who isn’t in the 1000 Mile Club.

“He told me he needed somebody to push, so I pushed him as far as I could,” Vasquez said. “Twenty-three miles is enough for me.”

Mike Keyes, 69, came in sixth with a time of 4:12:24.

“This was probably the hardest marathon for me,” Keyes said. “I had a cold and didn’t know if I would run until this morning.”

Diabetic Chris Schuhmacher, 49, finished seventh at 4:16:21.

“Today is my mom’s birthday,” Schuhmacher said. “I did this for her.”

Larry Ford, 60, came in eighth at 4:30. Bruce Wells came in ninth, completing his first marathon with a time of 4:32:53. Lee Goins, 59, took 10th at 4:46:14.

Lorino Hopson, 62, started out strong. He paced right be-

hind Taylor and just in front of Skull in the first lap of the race. But he injured his hip after running 20.25 miles firmly in second place and stopped running, missing a chance to take first place.

“After he (Taylor) lapped me four times, he slowed down, and I lapped him two times,” Hopson said.

Freelance writer Liz Gill covered the marathon for *Competitor Magazine*.

Gill said a story about why incarcerated men would run a marathon would be a good one.

“Their answers are pretty similar to what you’d hear from anyone who is hooked on running,” Gill said.

—Rahsaan Thomas



Photo by Roldan Lozada

1000 Mile Club coach Frank Ruona



Photo by Jonathan Chiu- San Quentin News

The District Attorney's forum at *San Quentin News* on Dec. 16

DA's came searching for answers; found something more

DA Forum

Continued from Page 1

"When the strategy is to lock the kid up, all they learn is how to become a better criminal," added Melendez, 37, who has been incarcerated for 18 years.

It was the 14th San Quentin News Forum, led by the newspaper's executive editor, Arnulfo T. Garcia. Previous forums have included judges, elected officials and teachers.

Garcia rounded up about a dozen inmates to discuss how they have transformed their lives and are now committed to giving back to the same community they harmed.

"I grew up in an abusive home," said Vaughn Miles, 43, incarcerated for 22 years for first-degree murder. "I left home at 13 and found acceptance in the streets. Living that way of life comes with a belief system — a street code. I internalized that code and started carrying a gun. That criminal lifestyle opened the door for my commitment offense."

To prevent juveniles from turning to a life of crime, Miles called for the collaboration between street-smart reformed inmates and public safety officials committed to smart-on-

crime policies.

"Our life experiences hooked up with your knowledge could be used to set up a program to help the kids," Miles said.

Miles told the prosecutors about San Quentin's at-risk youth program, SQUIRES.

"SQUIRES works with non-judgmental dialogue," Miles explained. "When we sit in front of kids and listen to them, we have credibility because they know that we were once in their shoes."

Phoeun You is serving a life sentence for a drive-by shooting in 1996 and has been involved with programs similar to SQUIRES. He said that because prisoners have had similar difficult childhoods, the visitors trust the inmates and often it's the first time they've been able to talk to anyone about their lives.

"A mentorship program with people who have paroled that also includes the parents could be used to work toward a solution," You suggested.

Ana Gonzalez said she was moved by the stories and noted that the San Francisco District Attorney's Office has an advisory board of formerly incarcerated individuals. Nevertheless, she said that victims of crime rely on prosecutors to punish lawbreakers.

"It's an eye-for-an-eye," Gonzalez said. "If there's no punishment, crime victims would feel like they need to exact it for themselves. They rely on law enforcement so that they don't resort to self-help."

SF Assistant DA Marisa Rodriguez added, "Bringing all the DAs in here is not to be softer on crime. It is to better understand how to do our jobs. It is really valuable to hear what a 19-year-old would take away from programs and not take bad habits back to the community."

Adnan Khan, 32, is serving a life sentence for a murder/robbery he committed at age 17. He pointed to the benefits of self-help programs.

Khan said there are a variety of San Quentin programs that lead to transformation. Among them are Shakespeare, yoga, anger management, and addiction recovery counseling. He pointed out that most inmates at other prisons don't get such help.

"We live in a punitive society, and we are seeing its results. The community and society should take responsibility as well as the individual for what went wrong," Kahn stated.

"I didn't expect to hear what I've heard," said Marshall Khine. He asked the inmates, "Do you think you had to

come to prison to find these changes?"

"It's sad to say that I had to come to prison (to find these changes), Khan said. "But, why aren't these programs taught in middle school and high school? If they were, it wouldn't have taken me to commit the kind of crime I did to learn these things."

Jerome Hermosura, who is serving a life sentence, said, "As a youngster, I felt like I wasn't being heard. There wasn't anything in place to help children with issues of domestic violence. The teachers weren't able to help. I didn't understand the resentment against my father — the hate and anger — until I came to prison. I wish I knew this when I was a child."

Emile DeWeaver, 37, also serving a life sentence for a murder he committed at 19-years-old added, "We grow up with thinking errors about value and being rejected/isolated. It's about connecting with strategies that support change in safe places. There needs to be places to nurture. I didn't need to come to prison to change my life — that's where I changed, but the same interventions that work so well at San Quentin should've been available to me when I was being thrown out of junior high school."

Upumoni Ama has been incarcerated 22 years. He is serv-

ing a sentence of 17 years to life for second-degree murder.

"My lifestyle in and out of the home was in conflict," Ama said. "My Polynesian culture taught me traditional values, but the street culture brought a lot of traumatic experiences to me."

Ama said while on the streets he witnessed a lot of violence against people he knew.

"I felt unsafe every time I left the house," Ama said. "Around 12-13, I turned to gangs for protection. Being in a gang gave me a chip on my shoulder."

Ama said ever since he joined a gang, he's been in and out of prisons and jails without his problems being addressed.

"I got out of prison at 25 and three months later I beat someone to death," Ama said. "I look at it now; I had a kind of rage inside me from my childhood experiences."

Rodriguez said, "Everyone came away with new ideas concerning rehabilitation and what that means and what it can really look like in practice, re-entry, and the juvenile justice system, just to name a few."

Julius De Guia, added, "I've been with the District Attorney's Office 19 years and never sat with the same people I've sent to prison. I have a lot of feelings I didn't think I'd have. My whole office needs to come and have this experience."



Photo by Jonathan Chiu- San Quentin News

SQN Adviser Steve McNamara, Marisa Rodriguez and Wade Chow



Photo by Jonathan Chiu- San Quentin News

Ana Gonzales and Alex Bastian listens to inmates sharing their personal stories