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Photo courtesy of CCWP

Participants gather after the event for a photo

Advocates in Oakland push to end LWOP

By Marcus Henderson
Editor-in-Chief

California has an estimated 5,000 people serving life without parole (LWOP), and their plight is almost never discussed—especially the way the sentence affects female prisoners.

A campaign to drop California's use of LWOP received a public airing late last year. Kelly Savage, Tammy Cooper-Garvin, Brandi Taliano and Susan Bustamante shared their pain and the trauma of serving a LWOP sentence with a

packed audience.

The Oakland event marked the first time the women were able to participate in a town hall meeting similar to one that first created public awareness of their situation. Then Gov. Jerry Brown commuted the women's sentences.

Their stories and those of others still imprisoned are described in an audio storytelling project titled "A Living Chance," released through the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP).

See *LWOP* on page 7

Peace movement grows in all 36 California prisons

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Staff Writer

California's top prison official, Ralph Diaz, says as a society our differences are a good thing, and no matter what a person's social background is, "They bring value to the world simply by being here."

Diaz is secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). His statement was delivered to San Quentin on the Day of Peace and Reconciliation observed in 35 prisons on Jan. 29.

The event aims to support non-violent living and spiritual unity through an all-faith dialogue.

Warden (A) R. Broomfield greeted participants before delivering Diaz's message inside the prison's Protestant Chapel.

"I feel blessed to be at San Quentin; it's a fresh breath of air. I came from a violent prison," Broomfield said. "This is an amazing prison, and I want you all to embrace that. We need to elevate the desire for peace."

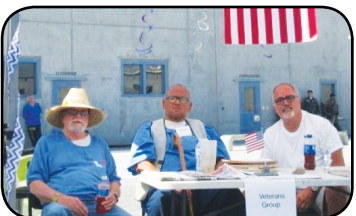
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Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Imam Fasi, Rabbi Paul Shleffar and Chaplain Hector Frank Heredia of Native Services

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CDCR leader and others seek prison reform answers in Norway



Photos by Michele Casadei, UC San Francisco

CDCR Secretary Ralph Diaz (back row, 5th from right) and formerly incarcerated Adnan Khan (in center)

Story by Ike Dodson
Office of Public and Employee Communications

As they covered 5,000 miles and an ocean on an international flight on Sept. 14, CDCR Secretary, Ralph Diaz and Connie Gipson had plenty of time to consider their doubts.

"It won't work here."

"California is too big, too violent and plagued by prison gangs."

Those thoughts soon gave way to excited optimism, as the pair,

CDCR's Secretary and Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) Director, bonded with senior staff from the governor's office, formerly incarcerated people, peace officer union representatives and criminal justice advocates in a life-changing environment across the globe.

Over six days, Diaz and Gipson toured Norwegian prisons, training facilities and reentry programs, witnessing famed humanistic practices that deliver wellness, safety and empowerment to

everyone involved.

The trip, funded by philanthropic programs and organized by an ambitious visionary at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), made significant impact on CDCR leadership. "The world shrunk," Diaz explained. "I saw staff and inmates engaging in a very positive way, as if the environment belonged to all of them, not just inmates or staff."

See *CDCR* on page 4

Storytellers polish their craft through the San Quentin News Journalism Guild

The second annual *San Quentin News* Journalism Guild Graduation took place in the Garden Chapel on Jan. 17. Twelve graduates from November's class combined with this current class of 11 to celebrate finishing the six-month course.

The event honored the graduates, recognized advisors and brought attention to the impact of programs like the guild on rehabilitation.

Richard Richardson, *SQ News'*

Executive Editor and winner of the Arnulfo T. Garcia Leadership Award, spoke about the importance of the guild.

Having worked every position from print to layout to Editor-in-Chief, Richardson reflected how words began to change his life.

"At my last prison, a guy called me pessimistic, and I wanted to beat him up—even though I really didn't know what the word meant," said Richardson.

Prisoners across the country can thank Richardson's curiosity and intellect when he looked the word up and realized his own talent with words.

"Words mean a lot; we communicate with each other; we all have the ability to grow. Our newspaper allows people to grow—and will continue to do so," said Richardson.

See *Guild* on page 11



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Monica Campbell with the Spanish graduating class of 2020

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Marin's Chief Probation Officer focuses on restorative justice

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Mike Daly, the chief probation officer in Marin County, believes in restorative justice, something he's put into practice instead of talking about it.

During an interview with *SQ News* in January, Daly discussed pro-social thinking and how to "rewire" people to be the best they can be after becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

"I want people to know that restorative justice does work, and there's data to prove it," said Daly. "It should be part of a forward thinking criminal justice system."

To successfully undertake restorative justice as a model, he said, there has to be input from district attorneys, victims, offenders and other stakeholders.

In Marin County, "Cases are referred to the probation department for restorative justice only after being cleared by the Marin County District Attorney's Office and the Marin County Public Defender's Office," the *Marin Independent Journal* reported.

For three years, Daly's office has been innovative in its approach to criminal justice.

"I think I'm the first in Marin to hire someone to do restorative justice," he said. "We offer that if the victim is okay with it. We want to be

careful not to re-victimize..."

Citing some of the failures mass incarceration has produced over the last 30 years, Daly said a change in the culture of corrections needs to take place as well. He acknowledged the increase in California's prison population didn't happen overnight but said the legislature was asleep at the wheel for two decades.

Between 1990 and 2005, a new prison opened in the United States every 10 days," wrote Bryan Stevenson, attorney and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, in his book *Just Mercy*. "Prison growth and the resulting 'prison-industrial complex' – the business interests that capitalize on prison construction – made imprisonment so profitable that millions of dollars were spent lobbying state legislators..."

"We didn't examine or make adjustments," Daly said of the years California's recidivism rate was at 70%.

He said it was there for a long time, and every year the state budget kept going up. Eventually a federal three-judge panel stepped in.

When that happened, the courts instructed California to reduce and maintain its state prison population at a cap of 137.5% of design capacity in order to deliver adequate medical care to all inmates.

Shortly thereafter, in 2011, California lawmakers passed

Assembly Bill 109, Public Safety Realignment, and implemented it to manage the state's unprecedented growth in its prison population.

Other significant reforms followed in California's criminal justice landscape. Changes in the law such as Proposition 57 are changing the situation, he said, while admitting it's not perfect, "but it's a start."

Daly said he's worked with Ralph Diaz, secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. They've established a Skype program that allows inmates headed for post-release community supervision (PRCS) to communicate with their probation officer before leaving state prison.

Daly was president of the Chief Probation Officers of California in 2014. According to the Marin County Probation Department website, "(former) Governor Brown had placed a tremendous amount of responsibility on the shoulders of probation departments across the state. You don't do that unless you have trust and confidence in your partners."

Daly said he felt that trust. "We will work with Governor Newsom and hopefully create the same trusting bond that we had with Governor Brown," the probation department website states.

"We're not a 'lock 'em up county,'" said Daly. "I'm



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Marin County Chief Probation Officer Mike Daly

happy that Marin has adjusted to Realignment very well."

He said all of its criminal justice leaders who voted to allocate funding feel that strong rehabilitative programs are the best for public safety.

Assembly Bill 109 provides funding for many of Marin County's support systems such as finding shelter for those on probation.

"We will pay for that free, for the first six months," said Daly.

Daly noted that Senate Bill 678 also provides funding for programs that offset prison.

"This bill was introduced around 2008, and it's still active today," he said.

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program also funds Daly's restorative justice service,

the *Independent Journal* reported. Daly stressed that defendants who participate in this program are less likely to reoffend.

Daly was appointed as Chief Probation Officer in 2009 by the Board of Supervisors, but confessed he wasn't ready to deal with the politics that came with the job. Since Realignment, the management of lower-level prisoners was shifted from the state prison and parole system to the county jail and probation system.

To promote justice, Daly said "We're proposing that the age of jurisdiction for juveniles be 18 to 19," citing the science behind brain development and the foundational reasoning that the brain is still in a stage of development

between the ages 18 and 25.

"We all have our points of change," said Daly. "What I'm trying to develop [in them] is intrinsic motivation. Sometimes guys don't care about themselves so it's hard to make those changes. When you make that move intrinsically you have a much higher likelihood of being successful."

"I've seen guys who've turned the corner," said Daly, adding "Extrinsic motivation doesn't work on guys from the hood. You have much more success when you develop intrinsic motivation."

Daly said statewide, 8% of those on PRCS violate their probation and return to prison, but in Marin County the number is 2%. "We're considered a high performing county," he said.

In 1990, Daly received his bachelor's degree from Cal Poly in Social Science with a concentration in criminal justice—the same year he started his career with Marin Probation. In 1999 he earned a master's degree in public administration from Golden Gate University.

"I'm super proud about (restorative justice) and I'm looking to expand," said Daly. "I'd like people to know that we are the first department in California solely to conduct restorative justice for offender and victim. I'm pretty proud of the footprint we have in Marin."

Newsom proposes reducing probation and boosting rehabilitation programs

By Dillon Kim
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom is proposing major changes in California's criminal justice system by reducing probation to two years and boosting rehabilitation programs for offenders.

Newsom said the change is aimed at cutting costs and reducing recidivism.

He said he proposes

spending "an unprecedented amount of money" -- \$210 million over four years -- in rehabilitation programs early in the probation period, where they are believed most effective, The *Associated Press* reported Jan. 11.

The plan sets probation at a maximum of two years, down from five for felonies and three for misdemeanors. Probation officers support the change but

police chiefs are opposed.

Longer probation terms allow officers to search offenders, their homes and vehicles to find drugs, weapons, stolen items or other evidence, said Ron Lawrence, president of the California Police Chiefs Association. According to him, this tends to reduce crimes.

Lawrence said his group opposes changes that would lessen accountability. "Lessening the

tail on probation would frankly lessen that accountability."

Support is voiced by the Chief Probation Officers of California. The group agrees that focusing on rehabilitative services is the best way to help change behavior and reduce re-offense.

"The data and the evidence and the science bears out," Newsom said. "You front load services -- those first 18 months

are determinative." He said the change was prompted by a major increase in car burglaries following passage of a proposition that reclassified some felonies as misdemeanors.

"This goes directly to the car break-ins; this goes to the petty crime issue, this should be celebrated by the law enforcement community because of the intensity of services we want to provide," Newsom said.

"Longer duration of supervision not only costs money," he said, "For small petty things you throw people back in the system and that cycle of violence perpetuates itself."

The reform group Californians for Safety and Justice points out that 10 times as many offenders are sentenced to probation than to prison, but probation receives only a fraction of the funding.

Pelican Bay’s new podcast ‘UNLOCKED’

By Vincent E. O’Bannon
Journalism Guild Writer

Creators of a new Pelican Bay podcast look to build community and prisoner relationships—one story at a time, reported the *Lost Coast Outpost*. “These guys just want to better themselves and create a stronger, more resilient community,” said Paul Critz, a journalist who teaches inmate students the tools they need to record their personal stories.

“We have to figure out what that means because at what point does bashing your reality become bashing the institution...”

Inspired by San Quentin’s Ear Hustle, Pelican Bay Prison’s UNLOCKED became the first of its kind at a security level IV institution. Created by Critz and about 30 incarcerated men, the

podcast aims to bring together the men on the inside and to communicate with the residents of Del Norte and Crescent City. “They’re Del Norte too, and they’re very interested in hearing from the community. They want interaction. They want to humanize themselves,” said Critz. Dubbed as the single most important project in his career, Critz uses a portable recorder, laptop and a handheld microphone to show his students how to put together a narrative. While given much room for choosing content, Pelican Bay’s Public Information Officer John Silveira advised Critz not to “bash the institution.” “There’s a lot of gray area all around that phrase,” Critz told the *Outpost*. “We have to figure out what that means because at what point does bashing your reality become bashing the institution that’s responsible for your reality?” Critz credits what he calls “The Awakening” as the pivotal moment in Pelican Bay’s history that led to launching the podcast. “The Awakening” refers to the 2015 Supreme Court decision that shut down Pelican Bay’s Security Housing Units in 2013, following a widespread series of hunger strikes that began at the



Photo courtesy of CDCR

Pelican Bay’s UNLOCKED staff meets

prison. Critz’ students chose “The Awakening” as the subject of their first podcast. “They wanted to talk about... the changes that have been happening at Pelican Bay and other prisons as a result. “The real awakening is

hope,” said Critz. “They’re able to think about a future, maybe getting out – certainly even with people who’ll never get out.” Critz, experienced in free-lance journalism and radio, is best known as the operator of Crescent City’s community radio station. He was tapped to head Pelican Bay’s UNLOCKED by Stephanie Wenning, former executive director of the Del Norte Association for Cultural Awareness. Of all the reviews Critz received, “The one that stands

out the most,” he told the *Outpost*, was from the daughter of one of his students. “I love listening to this podcast. It makes me happy to know my dad is doing something positive with his life. I can’t wait to hear more,” she said.

Nearly 15,000 meals per day served at San Quentin with a special touch



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Correctional Food Manager II. (CFM). Martha Garcia

By Timothy Hicks
Staff writer

San Quentin’s newest food manager says in a predominately-male prison, it takes a woman’s touch to balance out the population, especially when it comes to food. “I worked with men and around men my entire career,” said Martha Garcia, Correctional Food Manager II. (CFM). “So it’s no big deal to be a woman in charge of a situation like this. This is not my first rodeo,” she adds with a big smile. Known as the “Big Boss” by her nine staff members, Garcia and her crew are responsible for feeding nearly 5,000 men at San Quentin Prison three times a day, 365 days a year. Garcia says her love of cooking began at home but evolved into a passion to cook for the public. Her first gig was teaching young adults how to cook in a state funded program. She has worked in restaurants and participated in cooking clubs. She also has experience in catering.

Her first job in a prison was at Salinas Valley State Prison, Level IV. She rose through the ranks over the years as a cook in several other prisons, Tehachapi State Prison, Old Folsom Prison and California State Prison, (CSP) Sacramento to just to name a few. It was at CSP that she wanted to make a difference in the diet for the older incarcerated men. “I always loved food,” Garcia said compassionately, “I always want to put the best food forward. I saw a lot of older men getting sicker, and I wanted to change the medical condition.” Garcia came to San Quentin over a year ago because she liked its historic relevancy. When she arrived, she estimates the kitchen was understaffed by at least 50 %. Since she became Food Manager, the food and services have improved. “When she came here the breakfast eggs changed for the better,” said part time incarcerated kitchen worker Maurice Reed. “Yeah the eggs are cooked better now. In fact,

breakfast, lunch and dinner got better. Lunches got them granola bars in them and fresh veggies and the food is good at least three times a week now. I miss the real catfish for dinner; I cannot wait to have that again. The only thing I can say that I wish would happen is that it be more consistent.” Reed has been at San Quentin for almost eight years now and he said he definitely has seen the food change for the better. Garcia added new meals and a variety of foods, such as fresh yogurts, puddings, tangerines and chocolate milk. The lunches are bagged with treats such as granola bars and BBQ potato chips. Dinner meals on Fridays are not the usual processed breaded fish. The men in blue now dine on real fried catfish and potato wedges, (fish and chips). One recent Friday meal was chicken covered pizza. Although Garcia loves cooking for the men-in-blue, her other main concern is the staff. At the sound of an alarm, she is quick to make sure her staff is okay. She oversees day-to-day operations from her office. However, that is not where you’d find her most of the time. She is usually helping her, “overly strained and over worked,” staffers with their duties. “She is doing an exceptional job,” said five-year veteran Supervisor Correctional Cook, (SCC) I. Sapao. Sapao is usually the morning supervisor but is working the night shift due to a staff shortage. “I have never seen a manager who helps out, but she helps,” she said. From unloading the trucks on the dock, to the preparation of the food, Garcia is involved in it all. “I remember my humble beginnings,” Garcia said, “To deal with people you have to

be a people person. You have to have a sense of humor and be a little quirky. Just because you’re here (in prison) don’t mean that you have to be down.” She added, “I learned that it’s important to respect people and incarcerated men have always showed me respect.” Garcia gets along with people she works with—free staff and men in blue alike. “I never had a problem with her, and she is always easy to communicate with,” said two-year incarcerated worker Jose Ledesma. “She never gives us problems, and she is just a good food manager. She’s the same every day.” The men in blue receive fresh whole veggies and fruit daily. Garcia credits the previous food manager for that. However, she smiles while she takes the credit for adding all of the “crazy ones,” like red bell peppers and squash. Not everyone likes all of Garcia’s changes. “Only complaint I received so far is that I put too much spice in the food or too many onions or something of that nature,” Garcia smiles modestly. The gratitude from the San Quentin residents have not gone unnoticed. “I really appreciate the addition of the yogurt,” said San Quentin resident Stu Ross. San Quentin gets about \$5.4 million annually according to Garcia, which is spent quarterly to provide food for the prison. Prison officials in Sacramento create diet meals and issue the budget that Garcia has to follow. She stays within budget by searching the internet for the bargains. “I’m a foodie,” said Garcia, “I don’t believe that you need all that expensive stuff to have a good meal. I work toward the goal of having a palatable meal. Plus, I look for deals that will provide opportunity to save money plus provide a good meal.”

San Quentin News

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- 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.
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Behind the Scenes

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What role does society play in the development of felons?

EDITORIAL

By Marcus Henderson
Editor-in-Chief

Be it California or Mississippi, when news of suicides, murders or riots reaches any prison population the feeling is always the same: “damn”—if it’s spoken or not. Especially if you’ve been through it or witnessed these things.

Society might think “there goes those violent monsters acting up again.” What is rarely discussed is that we are a product of the society. Most of us incarcerated are Americans, and America is filled with double standards (we’ll get to that later) and most of the time breeds intolerance.

Black people and others are still suffering under racism, and we don’t have to go back to slavery to see this. Black people can’t BBQ, sell water or loose cigarettes without the police being called. A Black man was even arrested for eating a sandwich at a San Francisco BART transit station platform. We can’t even sit in our own homes without being shot and killed.

Have we ever talked about collective trauma? It’s not just individuals who suffer.

It’s whole communities. Our immigrant community is being detained, and kids are/have been separated from their parents—OK, more trauma. Our President even ordered the assassination of an Iranian general

using violence in the name of stopping violence.

Have we been raised to be intolerant against any and everyone who is not like us (on both sides)? Has violence been shown as a way to solve our problems? Is this learned behavior?

We witnessed our President say that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue in broad daylight and not get charged. Damn! That’s a criminal threat, or what we incarcerated call a “terrorist threat,” and people in here are doing three to five years, if not a life sentence, for a statement such as that.

During President Trump’s House impeachment trial started by the Democrats—more separation—Trump was alleged to have attempted to strong arm, bribe or leverage—or whatever a good word choice would be (quid pro quo)—to get the Ukrainian president to investigate his rival, excuse me, his possible political opponent, for his own advantage.

Once again, there are hundreds of thousands of people serving long sentences for attempting to do a crime. But what really was most interesting to those incarcerated was how the Republicans, Trump’s “homies” (supporters), kept touting that all the evidence against him was just hearsay. Wait, wait, wait—how many people are sitting in U.S. prisons and jails convicted on hearsay evidence? And I haven’t yet mentioned the venomous call to reveal the name of the



File Photo

Entrance to Paschman State Penitentiary in Mississippi

whistle blower. Trump’s supporters came just short of calling the confidential informant a “snitch.”

When the smoke cleared Trump was impeached in the House (by his rivals) on “Abuse of Power” and “Obstruction of Justice.”

But, he was acquitted by the majority Republican Senate. Imagine that! a jury of one’s peers. I think most people incarcerated would have loved to have their friends, supporters or homies on their juries. It wouldn’t be hard to guess the outcome.

Now let’s talk about prison violence and reform. When people are sentenced to 800

plus years, what is expected? They have officially written their lives off and wonder what they have to live for or if they will ever see the streets again. Add to that, they are incarcerated in harsh and questionable conditions.

True, unquestionable harm has been done and crimes have been committed against underserving people and communities destroyed. So there must be a cost. But, is redemption ever possible for the human being?

The prison system is the microcosm of the society; our country is divided, so are the people inside. There are struggles with racism, gang

mentality, drug addiction and low wages. The only thing they get right is housing. Even that has gotten tricky with California’s prisons system with non-designated yards—whatever that means. (Officially, it’s an experimental mixture of multiple classifications of incarcerated people in the same facility.)

But I have come to learn while doing time that some people really want to change their lives and not be part of—guess what—the “prison politics.” You see the terminology we use.

But some people, just like in society, would like to stick with the status quo—it’s more

comfortable. Change is challenging. So my heart goes out to the people incarcerated in Mississippi’s prisons and across our state.

Also, I commend CDCR headquarters. They have made efforts to change the prison landscape with rehabilitative programs, some of which have been successful and some not. Much more needs to be done: the prison population is getting younger and older at the same time. Just like in society, there is no more middle class.

We might not want to say it, but the violence, divisions and mental health issues in prison are just a reflection of our society.

CDCR leader wants to ‘make these necessary reforms’

CDCR

Continued from Page 1

“At that moment I saw aspects of this that can be done.”

Diaz and Gipson were joined by California Men’s Colony Warden Josie Gastelo and Salinas Valley State Prison Warden Matthew Atchley and Captain Edward Brown. Governor Newsom [sent] representatives Daniel Seeman, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, and Kelli Evans, Deputy Legal Affairs Secretary for Criminal Justice in the Office of the Governor.

Other attendees included formerly incarcerated advocates Adnan Khan (Co-Founder of Re:Store Justice) and Sam Lewis (Executive Director of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition), or representatives from the California Correctional Peace Officers Association.

“I think it was the right people in the room, and what was so fascinating was that we all came to our discoveries throughout the week,” Gipson said. “It was really beneficial to have so many different perspectives going through the same experience.”

“We chose Norway because they have a very public health approach to corrections. They say that people go to court to get punished and go to prison to become better neighbors,” said Williams. “Every single policy/procedure and contact with a program is seen as an opportunity to bring health and well-being to people who are incarcerated, and simultaneously this gives staff and correctional officers the opportunity to change people’s lives for the better.”

To make the trip happen, Amend partnered with the community-based nonprofit organization Smart Justice to raise philanthropic funds. The biggest contributors included

The Jacob and Valeria Lange-loth Foundation and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

In Norway, the only human right an incarcerated person loses is liberty. The system, including architecture and habitat, is designed to mimic the community those citizens will return to. Interactions with staff are specifically structured to champion wellness and safety.

“I believe we have segments of what is happening in Norway going on in our institutions,” Diaz said. “We have to line it up, put it on paper and give employees the permission to care about the inmate population and remind them that rehabilitation has been a part of their job since the day they signed up.”

There are clear benefits to the normalcy of the environment for staff as well as inmates. Williams said initial reports from Norway show health and life expectancy metric for correctional staff mirror the outcomes of other citizens. She pointed to research in California that has highlighted a public health crisis among correctional employees, who are more prone to depression, suicide and poor life expectancy.

Khan, whose work at Re:Store Justice brings victims and offenders together for dialogue and forgiveness, said, “My advocacy has always been about crime survivors, bringing them in to prison, and currently/formerly incarcerated people, but when Brie talked about suicides and life expectancy of staff — that bothered me. I had to reevaluate my advocacy. Am I choosing to be the leader of a specific demographic of justice reform or an advocate for public health and humanity? Human rights and public health advocacy has to include correctional officers that are suffering and in pain.”

Norway’s prison model,



Photos by Michele Casadei, UC San Francisco

CDCR and CCPOA leaders at Norwegian prison

thriving at a reported recidivism rate of 20%, wasn’t built overnight. Advocates point to demands by the Norwegian Parliament that authorized a shift to rehabilitation and humanistic practices in the late 1990s.

Over time, accompanied by changes in sentencing laws, massive changes to all aspects of the correctional system began to take hold.

Those changes go far beyond the supportive housing units with private restrooms, couches, stocked kitchen units or even small forests in recreational yards that keep offenders connected to the world around them.

Officers interact warmly and respectfully on a first-name basis with incarcerated people and are trained much longer—two years versus CDCR’s 13-week Basic Correctional Officer Academy. They are schooled on psychology, criminology, human rights and ethics. The process includes a lot of perspective shifts, like placing an

officer in the role of an offender and experiencing different custodial tactics.

“I always look at experiences, trainings with an open mind, but I admit, I was pretty apprehensive about this,” Gipson said. “Early on I felt like this was too good to be true, but the more I started to listen to their concepts and principles of normality, humanity, the more I bought in. Everything clicked, and I was just blown away. I came back excited because I feel there are a lot of possibilities for us.”

A theme understood by trip-goers and emphasized by Norwegian officials is the practicality of change.

Norway didn’t evolve into a better form of correctional care immediately, and uprooting the same system and dropping it into a vastly different population is not the solution for California.

“We are not trying to make it the Norway way or the European way but the California

way,” Diaz said. “We are a unique, diverse populace with cultures within cultures, but that doesn’t mean we can’t make necessary changes.”

“We just have to make it the California way. That doesn’t mean saying no to security but yes to a different way of doing business that improves the workplace and makes a better life for people returning to our communities,” he added.

Diaz said he looks forward to collaborating with other states that strive for similar innovation and emphasized the importance of supporting an environment that both acknowledges the suffering of crime victims and delivers on a promise to create fewer victims in the future.

He joined Gipson in a presentation to CDCR wardens across the state on Nov. 6, highlighting the most impactful concepts and practices that simultaneously promote wellness, safety and rehabilitation.

“We have to look at our

historic policies and ask ourselves about each one: Why? Is it humane?” Diaz said. “As policy makers it is our job to change policies and explain why, because in the end we have to create a more humane prison system.”

The insight inspires action.

“My first step is getting a workgroup together to look at what policies and procedures we have in play that escalate vs. de-escalate,” Gipson said. “I also want to look at our training and talk about giving staff the comfort to manage situations within their authority without fear of making a mistake.”

“My big takeaway is a sense of urgency to make these necessary reforms because we have witnessed positive impact for all those involved in a correctional setting and for those returned to communities,” Diaz said. “I know what can be done. I know the department’s abilities and the ability of staff to get things done.”

That’s the California way.

Trump creates committee to address equality in law enforcement

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

Pres. Donald Trump used another one of his executive orders to create a committee dealing with how to enforce the law equally and without bias, according to Tom Jackman of the *Washington Post*.
With endorsements from organizations like the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and others, the order would deal with equal protection,

adding more people of color and females to the police force, and using 21st century techniques to fight crime.
“The thrust of the order,” said Nina J. Ginsberb, a Virginia-based lawyer who is president of the Defense Lawyers’ Association, “begs the question as to how interested this commission will be in solving the deep and structural problems in America’s criminal justice system, as opposed to simply delivering on certain

law enforcement requests.”
The U.S. attorney general will have the authority to determine the composition and the procedures for the functioning of the commission.
The measure was signed in October 2019, and those in charge have less than 10 months to complete their work. A similar bill is pending in Congress, the Dec. 23, 2019 story noted.
According to the article, the bill calls for review of policing in poor

communities, handling of the homeless issue, the needs of the mentally ill, and mass incarceration.
Finding a way to make this happen presents a challenge not just for law enforcement, but other government agencies, said Terry Cunningham, deputy executive director for the International Association of

Chiefs of Police.
Cunningham said that working groups have to find a bipartisan way in Congress to implement all of these things. “We’ll have their report, but how do you get it funded?”
The story reported finding funds requires a bipartisan panel and when the bill goes before the various

committees the concern is that certain elements of the bill will be phased-out. Across the aisle participation has been hard to achieve when working to iron-out delicate issues. This bill, however, affects the whole country. Law enforcement, along with the Justice Department, will try to get their way.

Rural prison locations make visiting more difficult

Families visiting incarcerated loved ones throughout the country have to go through numerous challenges just to see a prisoner, according to the *Marshall Project*.
Those without transportation, as well as those who drive, have difficulty getting to the prison sites because of where the prisons are located, usually in remote areas, the Dec. 18, 2019 report noted.
In the 1980s the need for more prisons across the country became apparent with more people being sent to jail and more remote areas’ economies needing new life.
“The rural prison boom in the United States really coincided with the farm crisis and the loss of manufacturing in rural America,” said Tracy Huling, founder of the Prison Public Memory Project, which studies the history of rural prison towns.
“Siting prisons was an apparent quick fix. The land was cheaper, and people either wanted them because they were so desperate for

anything to keep their communities from collapsing, or it was easier to overcome opposition in a small place, with fewer people and fewer connections to power.”
One parent, who goes to see her son as often as she can, stated that visiting him requires a 10-hour trip. The son is in prison in another state, so she has to change her work schedule, drive three hours to an airport, catch a plane for a three-hour trip, then rent a car to drive to a hotel. The next day she drives an additional hour to the prison site.
Once at the prison, if not attired properly, she can be turned away without seeing her son. This happened on her first trip when she wore a dress with black and khaki stripes. One of the prohibited colors at that prison is khaki.
“Most of these prisons are out in the middle of nowhere, so you can’t run out and get a new outfit,” she told *The Marshall Project* reporters. “You learn really quick to fill your trunk with clothing.”
Having to travel so far to

see loved ones and encounter rejection or humiliation before you see them is extremely frustrating for most families. This is why only a small percentage of those incarcerated receive regular visits.
It can be particularly discouraging for Blacks and Latinos visiting their incarcerated relatives, the report said. There is the ordeal of traveling to remote locations, where they may be looked upon with disdain by staff or White residents of the town. This can weaken family ties, the report noted.
Most prisons do not have public transportation nearby, so a lot of families try to ride-share. It is not uncommon for the incarcerated to be as far as 500 miles or more from where they were sentenced.
The *Marshall Project* reported some advocacy groups are working with public agencies to create low-cost transportation options so that more prisoners can receive visits from their families and friends.
—Amir Shabazz

Biden reverses his past position on criminal justice

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

Presidential candidate Joe Biden says his history of tough-on-crime legislation that led to mass incarcerations needs changes, *The Intercept* reports.
With upward of one in every two families suffering the harms of mass incarceration, “Too many people are incarcerated,” Biden is quoted as saying in the Sept. 17 article.
During his time as leading Democrat in the U.S. Senate, he led a number of legislative actions to increase anti-crime laws.
He supported increased funding to states to build prisons and criticized then-Pres. Jimmy Carter, a fellow Democrat, for not being tough enough on the war on drugs, the story says.

Under Carter the federal prison population actually fell by a quarter, though rising at the state level. The federal program, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) provided resources to states for policing and prisons and was being dismantled in the last days of the Carter administration, the article states.
“The American people believe we have waged war on crime and failed. Therefore, they concluded that nothing can be done about it,” Biden said at the time.
Biden worked to shed his party’s image of being soft on crime, reported *The Intercept*.
“As most old-line Democrats view it, the only ways we can deal with violence will have a negative impact on civil rights and liberties... I think that’s malarkey,”

Biden told the *New York Times*.
A Biden-Thurmond bill would have increased penalties for drugs, expanded civil asset forfeiture, eliminated parole at the federal level, and would have created a drug czar position. Reagan vetoed the bill.
Biden supported the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 that lengthened sentences for many offenses such as 100:1 crack cocaine sentencing disparities.
These new laws led to an explosion of federal prisoners from 24,000 in 1980 to 216,000 in 2013, the article said.
In 1994, Biden pushed through a massive crime bill that authorized more than \$30 billion in funding to expand state prisons and local police forces, the story noted.

Funding higher education in prison

By Timothy Hicks
Staff Writer

Incarcerated men and women seeking a college education face challenges due to funding restraints, a new report finds.
Funding for incarcerated college students stalled when the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act was enacted in 1994 and eliminated federally funded Pell grants. Student enrollments dropped 44% in one year, and 20 states reduced college courses.
The report, ITHAKA S+R (Unbarring Access) found that Pell grants cover a small

percentage of incarcerated college students. The numbers could be dropping even lower.
Some prisons prioritize access to higher education based on the amount of time that person has left on his or her sentence.
Several barriers also hinder efficient higher education:
• Write ups, (Prison infractions)
• No GED or High school diploma
• Age
• Crime and conviction
• Tabe test
• Length of incarceration
• No U.S. citizen and no social security number

• No one receives a Second Chance Pell grant if the applicant has any government loans in default or has not registered for Selective Service.
• Funds are suspended if the incarcerated student is convicted for the sale or use of illegal drugs.
The report said prison education programs use a “carrot for good behavior,” an incentive for those incarcerated who “behave the best.”
Despite push back from correctional officers, the report found programs have awarded thousands of Associate, Bachelor’s and even Master’s degrees across the nation since 1972.

Occupational licenses out of reach for most felons

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

People who have served time in prison are likely to find many occupational licenses unavailable to them – licenses that are necessary to earn a living.
More than 10,000 regulations can prevent people with criminal records from obtaining licenses, according to an article on *Independent.co.uk*.
These restrictions make it difficult to enter or get ahead in fast-growing industries such as health care, human services and some mechanical trades. The restrictions often include the very jobs they’ve trained for in prison or in re-entry programs.
“In many states, a criminal record is a stain that you can’t wash off,” said Steven Slivinski, an economist at the Center for the Study of Economic Liberty at Arizona State University. “There is no amount of studying that can take away this mark on your past if a licensing board wants to use it against you.”
The Sept. 14, 2019 story cites the case of Meko Lincoln, who served time for robbery, assault and various drug crimes. He is in a Rhode Island reentry program where he is training to be a drug and alcohol counselor. He believes his past is not a liability but an asset. “I lived it, I understand it...I can help another

person save a life.”
Previously Lincoln relapsed after completing the 90-day training program. As a result, he was convicted of assault, heroin possession, and stealing drugs and sent back to prison. He received a three-year sentence.
“Instead of facing life on its terms, I kind of folded like a lawn chair,” Lincoln said.

“In many states,
a criminal
record is a stain
that you can’t
wash off”

While back in prison, he learned to read and write from another inmate. He read the Quran and embraced Islam. In this religion he learned to forgive himself and others. He also participated in behavioral therapy, attending a chemical dependency program. In this program he was inspired to become a counselor as a career. Now, according to the article, he’s living clean, sober and healthy.
“He has the life experience that would allow somebody else to say, ‘Well if Meko can do it, I can possibly do it too,’” said Amos House Chief Executive Eileen Hayes.
In this program he works

as a “peer recovery coach,” earning \$25,000 a year and receives advanced training.
“Licensing legitimizes us as somebody,” says Lincoln. “It’s recognition.” It isn’t all about recognition, however. It’s about earning a living. In Rhode Island, Lincoln’s home state, a licensed chemical dependency technician earns \$50,000 a year but Lincoln’s drug convictions may make him ineligible.
There’s another side to the issue of public safety. States with the strictest licensing barriers tend to have higher rates of recidivism, according to research by Stephen Slivinski.
Rhode Island does not officially bar people with criminal histories from being licensed in HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) and other mechanical trades but they might as well.
Bill Okerholm, an HVAC instructor in Rhode Island, said that the union of plumbers, pipe fitters and refrigeration technicians accepts people with records as apprentices on a case-by-case basis. But of the 250 men he’s trained at the prison in the past five years, Okerholm can’t recall a single person who has been licensed after release.
California passed legislation in 2018 that required convictions to be “substantially related” to an occupation in-order to deny a license.

Hidden fees of incarceration cost families billions

There is a huge hidden cost of incarceration that is born by friends and families of prisoners, the *Marshall Project* reports.
“The Bureau of Justice Statistical reckons that the United States spends more than \$80 billion each year to keep roughly 2.3 million people behind bars,” the Dec. 17 story said.
“Many experts say that figure is a gross underestimate, though, because it leaves out myriad hidden costs that are often borne by prisoners and their loved ones,” the report stated.
The Prison Policy Initiative estimates families spend \$2.9 billion a year on commissary accounts and phone calls.
The story lists several family cost examples:
Telita Hayes sends \$200 each month to the prison trust account of her ex-husband William Reese, confined to the Louisiana State Penitentiary for the last 28 years.
The \$2,161 placed in his

account this year is but one of many “hidden” costs incurred by Hayes, according to the *Marshall Project* article. She’s also paid \$3,586 for collect calls and \$419 for e-mails.
“I think the biggest misconception that people have about prison is that the state pays for everything,” said Connie Martin, a Hazel Park, Mich., resident. “No one realizes that it’s the friends and families of loved ones who pay.”
Kae Boone, 52, spends \$100 a month on her boyfriend, Charles Lee Isaac, 52, serving time at Graceville Work Camp in Florida.
He failed a drug test, a violation of his parole. Boone said the money she sends goes toward toiletries and food.
Sending the money has forced her to make tradeoffs, struggling to pay her own bills. “I had one of my cars repossessed because I would prefer to send him money and

make sure he’s taken care of,” she said.
This trend took off during the recession in 2008, when state legislators looked for ways to cut down the cost of incarceration, according to Hadar Aviram, professor at the University of California Hastings College of Law. “Public prisons are public only by name,” she said. “These days, you pay for everything in prison.”
The state approves vendors that the incarcerated persons can purchase items from or have their families open up accounts.
The same items that use to be sent in from home now must be purchased from these vendors at inflated cost, the story said.
Hayes said, “The price is jacked up on everything.” She estimated that over the last two years she has spent \$10,000 supporting her ex-husband who is serving a life sentence.
—Alfred King

California approves \$6.4 million for tattoo removal

By Jails to Jobs

California is spending \$6.4 million to expand its pre-release tattoo removal program from two locations to 21 prisons and facilities across the state. The effort will take place over the next four years.

The program began in 2018 at the Folsom Women’s Facility and the Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program in Sacramento under a contract with the California Prison Industry Authority. The large demand for tattoo removal led to the dramatic increase in funding and programs, which will now be under the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

“Highly visible tattoos unfortunately present a significant obstacle to employment, and their removal can also signify a new chapter in someone’s life. We treated about 140 women at CCTRP and FWF, with more requesting services beyond what the current contract is able to provide. Hence, the expansion,” says Krissi Khokhobashvili, chief, Office of External Affairs, CDCR.

The program will take

place at 21 prisons and facilities.

The new sites were chosen based on location – to make sure services are spread throughout the state and be available to all genders and security levels.

“Highly visible tattoos unfortunately present a significant obstacle to employment”

CDCR has proposed that those eligible for the procedure have highly visible tattoos. They must also be nearing release to the community or have completed gang debriefing (a formal, multi-step gang disassociation process). Based on the number of members of these two groups, the CDCR estimates that as many as 3,032 people could receive treatment each fiscal year.

While tattoo removal at

the two existing programs is done by a mobile tattoo removal unit, the CDCR has not yet determined how the procedures will be carried out in the additional facilities. A decision will be made once the vendors are selected.

The competitive bidding process begins this month. The procedure is an invitation for bid rather than a request for proposal. In an RFP, which is usually for new services and programs, bidders propose how they will deliver their services and the price they will charge. An IFB, on the other hand, gives information on the tattoo removal services and how they will be delivered. It then asks bidders to submit what it would cost them to provide those services.

Those who are interested can find out more information and submit a bid through the [CaleProcure](#) website. They can also contact the CDCR’s External Affairs Chief Khokhobashvili. The actual tattoo removal services began January 2020.

CDCR will evaluate the program during year three of the four-year contract to determine its effectiveness.

At that point, the department may request additional funding to continue the program and expand tattoo removal services to California’s remaining adult institutions.

Individuals who start their tattoo removal process on the inside but still requires additional treatments for completion once released may be able to find a free or low-cost tattoo removal program by checking out Jails to Jobs’ national directory of these programs.

Jails to Jobs is happy to offer a complimentary copy

of our how-to guide for establishing such a program to any organization that plans to create a free or low-cost community-based tattoo removal program. Those interested can contact us to request a copy.

The locations where tattoo removal procedures will soon take place: Avenal State Prison, Central California Women’s Facility (Chowchilla), California Health Care Facility (Stockton), California Men’s Colony (San Luis Obispo), California State Prison-Corcoran,

Deuel Vocational Institution (Tracy), Folsom State Prison (men’s), Kern Valley State Prison (Delano), Mule Creek State Prison (Ione), North Kern State Prison (Delano), Pleasant Valley State Prison (Coalinga), California State Prison-Sacramento, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility (Corcoran), Sierra Conservation Center (Jamestown), California State Prison-Solano, San Quentin State Prison, Salinas Valley State Prison (Soledad), Valley State Prison (Chowchilla) and Wasco State Prison.

LA jails become costly mental health facilities

By Alfred King Journalism Guild Writer

Sixty percent of mentally ill inmates in county jails are eligible for diversion, but there are not enough facilities to provide supportive care, reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

Thousands of prisoners could be removed from the criminal justice system, ending the cycle of arrest, release, re-arrest, release and homelessness.

Sending such inmates to a diversion facility would save Los Angeles County thousands of dollars a day in incarceration costs. Individuals can be housed in a diversion facility for \$70 a day versus \$600 a day for incarceration, according to the article.

Thirty percent of the people in custody each day, about 6,000 prisoners, are either mentally ill or receiving psychotropic medication, according to a study by the

non-profit research agency Rand Corp.

The Rand report confirmed an earlier study by the Office of Diversion and Reentry, (OODAR) which attempted to determine how much the county should scale up its community based mental health services.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors created the Office of Diversion (OODAR) four years ago. Since then 4,400 prisoners convicted of felonies or ruled mentally incompetent to stand trial have been released, the *L.A. Times* reported.

According to retired Judge Peter Espinoza, who now directs OODAR, getting such inmates out of jail benefits both their clinical outcomes and the public’s safety.

“Often forgotten is that the vast majority of the people we’re talking about, they’re coming out of jail eventually –either to us or they’re going

to be on their own,” Espinoza said.

“And we are satisfied that when they come to us, their outcomes are greatly improved and their recidivist behavior is greatly reduced,” he concluded.

“This makes sense. The outcomes for people will be so much better,” said County Supervisor Janice Hahn, while expressing frustration at how difficult it would be to win community approval for new locations of such facilities.

Other supervisors praised the diversion program but expressed concerns about scaling up to provide additional mental health facilities.

Supervisor Kathryn Barger, the board chair, still remains committed to building community clinics.

“It is all about access to outpatient care, until we do that, diversion is going to fail,” she said.

No housing for returning citizens in California

California released a record numbers of prisoners without an appropriate place for them to go. Often, the formerly incarcerated are put in programs that offer no real help for the problems they face.

The parole board grants parole, but a prisoner must show that he or she has a place to stay upon release; 80% of those released are placed in state funded or philanthropically supported transitional housing, according to an article in *Mother Jones*.

People are placed in drug programs when they don’t have drug problems and wind up living in conditions that resemble those in prison, reported Marissa Endicott.

Terah Lawyer, after 15 years in prison needed to show the parole board she had a place to stay upon release. She had already secured a job working for the California Coalition of Women Prisoners.

Her reentry placement turned out to be a drug treatment facility with strict schedules and restrictions requiring her to attend treatment classes that she did not need. In fact, she had become a certified drug counselor while in prison.

She had to delay starting her new job for 90 days due to the program’s restrictions..

“The whole process of transitioning was hindered and stalled. It handicapped me in certain areas because I didn’t have that immediate exposure I needed to see what life was like out there,” Lawyer told Endicott.

Thousands of parolees are released each year, with stable housing being critical to their future success. Problems occur when home owners are reluctant to rent to them or allow placement of transitional housing in their neighborhood.

Few appropriate reentry options exist for those who have served long sentences, increasing the chance of former prisoners soon becoming homeless.

California is ground zero for this problem due to its lack of affordable housing. In the midst of criminal justice reform, California’s prison population has dropped by 25%. New reform laws implemented are putting more people back on the streets.

Between 2017 and 2018 there was a 7% increase in the number of lifers released, 25% increase in 3-strikes releases, a 48% increase in releases for people who were serving life without the possibility of parole, and 50% increase in releases for those who were once sentenced to death, according to *Mother Jones*.

It is a crisis within a crisis: the special housing needs of people released from prison while an affordable housing crisis spreads across the state.

Crystal Wheeler served 22 years, struggling with trauma issues from the years spent in prison and the mental and physical abuse by her husband.

With no family, her parole conditions mandated she stay in a re-entry housing program, a six-month program in Claremont, Calif., which specialized in drug and alcohol treatment.

Despite her never having a drug or alcohol problem, Wheeler was forced to attend daily AA meetings at 6 a.m. “That time could have been better used for teaching us things that our husbands never let us do,” she said.

The department of corrections acknowledges shortcomings in re-entry housing and has a policy to reduce the number of people without drug problems ending up in drug treatment centers.

In 2016 the state allocated \$10 million for re-entry services for people who had served long sentences, starting a six-month transitional housing program the following year.

By 2018, CDCR’s long term transitional housing had produced 257 facility beds. But, the demand continues to

grow. According to *Mother Jones*, 902 people were paroled in 2014 and an estimated 20,500 long term incarcerated people will be up for a parole hearing in the next 10 years.

Faced with such a shortage, CDCR has contracted with GEO Re-entry Inc., a for profit private prison company, to house parolees who have served long sentences. GEO’s reputation for poor conditions and lax oversight, resulted in a ban on any for profit prisons in California. However, the legislation does not apply to reentry services.

Now more private prison companies are moving into reentry housing. An *International Business Times* investigation in 2017 revealed the GEO Group had doubled its investment in re-entry housing.

“We need to have services that match the needs of people. And if we’re not doing that, we’re undermining people’s ability to succeed,” observed Shawn Roland of Our Road Prison Project, which is designed to meet the needs of lifers.

Most advocates agree that the best programs are small and staffed by peers, having the feel of home, yet big enough to have staff to help residents navigate obstacles.

In July, California awarded \$65 million in housing grants to community-based programs with a slice going to those for former lifers.

Doug Bond of Amity Foundation made it clear to *Mother Jones* how important it is that people released from long prison sentences are helped to succeed.

“We have to make sure that they’re getting the best service. The margin of error is zero for us. It has to be, because the one person that ends up on the news can undo years of good work and thousands of people returning back to the community. Once people stop being released those doors close a lot easier than they open.”

—Alfred King

Arrest rates fall for California

By Dillon Kim Journalism Guild Writer

Arrest rates in California are at a record low, declining by an average of 48% from 1995 levels, a recent study reports.

“Overall arrest rates have fallen 26% since before the start of the justice reform era in 2010,” according to the January fact sheet from the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. Decriminalization and legalization of marijuana accounted for more than one-fifth of the decline, approximately 66,000 out of 303,000 arrests.

The most prominent change occurred within the youth, falling by 87% for ages 10-14, 83% for ages 15-17, and 79% for ages 18-19 from 1995 to 2018.

In 2010, the youth arrest rates were 4,445 arrests per 100,000 population and 4,807 adult arrests per 100,000. By 2018, the youth arrest rate had declined to a quarter of the adult rate at 1,113 youth arrests per 100,000 to 3,894 adult arrests.

The figures were released by the California Department of Justice.

By county, 45 of California’s 58 counties report

decline in arrest rates, with one-fifth reporting increases. However, all counties except Alpine reported declines in youth arrest rates. Furthermore, “arrest declines are greatest in regions with lower incarceration rates.”

All age groups declined in arrest rates except for those aged 30-39. They increased by 11% from 5,160 arrests per 100,000 in 2010 to 5,714 in 2018.

The author, Mike Males, suggested that this increase correlates with drug overdose deaths and homicides, perhaps warranting “a need for services among Californians in middle adulthood.”

Facebook and CDCR join to stop criminal activity

By Harry C. Goodall Jr. Journalism Guild Writer

Facebook has policies in place to thwart prisoners who use their system to harass, threaten or make unwanted sexual advances.

“Access to social media allows inmates to circumvent our monitoring process and continue to engage in criminal activity,” said former Secretary of Corrections Matthew Cate. “This new cooperation between law enforcement and Facebook will help protect the community and potentially avoid future victims.”

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), said that previously it was made aware that a convicted child molester

had sent mail to his 17-year-old victim. This mail included current sketches of the girl although the offender had been in prison for seven years, according to an article by CNET News.

“Details of the victim, such as how she wore her hair and the brand of clothes she wore were accurate,” said CDCR.

CDCR’s investigation found that the inmate had a cell phone that he had used to view the girl on Myspace and Facebook web pages. The offender then used this access to draw his pictures

As a result of this crime, Facebook’s security team is working with CDCR to prevent inmates from using their “user accounts” to threaten or harass.

An inmate can have or

possess an account that was created prior to their incarceration. However, Facebook user policy prohibits users from sharing their password so that others can create posts on that account.

“If a state has decided that prisoners have forfeited their right to use the Internet, the most effective way to prevent access is to ensure prisons have the resources to keep smart phones and other devices out,” said Facebook spokesman Andrew Noyes. “We will disable accounts reported to us that are violating relevant U.S. laws or regulations or inmate accounts that are updated by someone on the outside. We will also take appropriate actions against anyone who misuses Facebook to threaten or harass.”

Investigation of LAPD falsifying documents uncovers a larger scandal

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

The elite Metro Division of the Los Angeles Police Department is under investigation for falsifying documents that identify people as gang members, newspaper stories report.

The probe was prompted by a mother who said police improperly identified her

son as a gang member. The resulting preliminary investigation uncovered discrepancies between video recording of police stops and written reports.

“An officer’s integrity must be absolute,” Police Chief Michael Moore explained to civic leaders from South Los Angeles who demanded changes. “There is no place in the department

for any individual who would purposely falsify information on a department report.”

Metro officers assigned to patrol South Los Angeles are suspected of falsifying data, after interviews with people stopped in the field, and inputting incorrect information about those questioned to bolster statistics, a Jan. 6 *Los Angeles*

Times article reported. The investigation began after a San Fernando Valley mother received a written notice in 2019 that her son had been identified as a gang member and added to the CalGang criminal intelligence system, the *LASentinel.net* reported Jan. 23.

Believing her son misidentified she reported the mistake to someone in a supervisory capacity at the Van Nuys Police station.

According to the LAPD, that supervisor reviewed the circumstances, including the footage from the body camera along with other information, and found that the officer’s report did not match up with the facts, the story said.

The mother who first brought this to the attention of the department was notified that her son was misidentified as a gang member and any documentation to that effect would be deleted.

These events led to an internal investigation focused on three officers, but has since grown in the coming months to include as many as 20, *LASentinel.net* reported.

The office of the LAPD Inspector General uncovered additional false documentation by the same officers, as well as others, the story said.

All the officers involved were assigned to the Metropolitan Division, “Given the serious nature of the alleged misconduct, all involved officers have been assigned to inactive duty or removed

from the field,” the story reported.

An investigation by the *Los Angeles Times* published last year revealed Metro officers stopped African American drivers at a rate five times their share of the city’s population.

LAPD has historically targeted and criminalized men of color; this has to stop, a group of community leaders said during a meeting with Chief Moore, the *LASentinel* noted.

Those assembled did not mince words when they outlined their concerns, blaming the LAPD and racist cops as the problem, asking that all the officers involved be fired and that the gang data base CalGang be eradicated.

Moore said he was not in agreement with eliminating the gang data base, which was created and is maintained by the State Attorney General’s Office.

He does however want changes to the CalGang protocols, such as changing the way officers document individuals as gang associates and eliminating officers and informants as reliable sources, the *LASentinel* article reported.

In 2015 the size of the Metro unit was doubled to about 200 officers, to combat a surge in violent crime throughout the city.

Moore said Metro’s vehicle stops had not proved effective, netting about one arrest for every 100 cars stopped, with innocent

drivers complaining they were being racially profiled, the *Times* reported.

The union which represents officers released a statement saying that it was “aware of reports of discrepancies contained on a limited number of field interview cards that the department is looking into.” The statement also said that the union expects Moore “will oversee a thorough and fair process to determine the facts and to also ensure that any impacted officer is accorded his or her due process rights,” the *Times* article reported.

As a result of the statistics, LAPD announced last fall that it will reduce the number of random vehicle stops, Metro officers will instead track down suspects wanted in violent offenses and use strategies other than vehicle stops to address flare-ups in crimes such as burglaries and shootings, the story notes.

Attending the meeting were Michael Lawson, president of L.A. Urban League; Yvonne Wheeler, labor leader; Khalid Shah, executive director of Stop the Violence, Increase the Peace; Horace E. Frank, assistant police chief, director LAPD Special Operations; Charisse Bremond-Weaver, Brotherhood Crusade president; Abdul Malik Sayyid Muhammad, representative for the Nation of Islam Western Region; Danny Bakewell, publisher of the *L.A. Sentinel* and *L.A. Watts Times*.

Oakland bans the box for housing

Oakland is the first city in the state to ban landlords from using criminal convictions to reject renters applying for private or public housing.

The City Council unanimously passed the Fair Chance Housing Ordinance that prohibits landlords asking about a previous criminal conviction or denying an applicant with such a record.

“This is incredibly timely, given our collective commitment and my personal commitment to addressing homelessness and housing in our city,” said Councilwoman Nikki Fortunato Bas, a cosponsor of the ordinance.

It is routine for anyone applying to rent an apartment to have a background check conducted and often people with criminal convictions are denied. This makes it difficult if not impossible for a formerly incarcerated person to find housing, the Bay Area News Group reported.

Wayne Rowland, president of the East Bay Rental

Housing Association expressed concern about the new ordinance.

“As rental housing providers, we have responsibility to provide a safe environment to residents, and a huge part of that is knowing the background of each applicant,” Rowland said in a written statement.

San Francisco and Richmond have similar ordinances, but those measures apply only to subsidized housing. Berkeley City Council is poised to vote on a similar ordinance banning tenant background checks, with similar measure being proposed for Emeryville and Alameda County, the story reported.

A supporter of these type ordinances, Margaretta Lin, executive director of Just Cities, said landlords still have access to credit reports, references and employment information – all things needed to determine if an applicant will make a good renter.

The Oakland ordinance does not apply to single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and in-law units if the owner is living on the property. Roommates seeking to replace a roommate can use background checks to exclude a potential tenant.

A landlord can still look up a prospective tenant on the states sex-offender registry, but only after providing a conditional offer to the potential renter.

The new ordinance also exempts owners of government subsidized affordable housing like Section 8 to continue to use criminal background checks to comply with federal law. At this time, federal law requires landlords to reject potential tenants who have been convicted of manufacturing methamphetamine or are on a lifetime sex-offender registry.

Oakland can fine landlords up to \$1,000 for each violation of the ordinance.

—Alfred King

LWOP event brings insight into the plight of incarcerated women

LWOP
Continued from Page 1

“The event was eye-opening; people really don’t know what LWOP is,” said Laverne Shoemaker, another panelist, whose sentence was commuted. “Once I was in a group of 23 San Francisco police officers, I had to explain and I mean really break it down to them what an LWOP sentence is and what a life sentence is.”

In criminal cases involving “special circumstances” a person may be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole instead of condemned to death in the penalty phase of a trial. The sentence is not restricted only to the person who pulls the trigger, but also to anyone else who was a participant in the crime as well, under California’s “felony murder rule.”

The advocates are fighting to have LWOP eliminated from the state’s penal code. They argue that it is worse than the death penalty, because it is really a living death sentence.

“I was praying that I wasn’t going to get the death penalty,” shared Taliano. “I was praying for LWOP, ironically—it seemed like the lesser of the two. Then I go to [prison]... and my counselor says, ‘do you understand that you’re going to die in prison?’ And it hit me. It literally hit me.”

Shoemaker said she was distressed to discover that many law enforcement officers have no idea what LWOP means, “I was frustrated and couldn’t understand it, because they really did not know. I had to ask them are you guys freaking kidding me? Am I being punked? They were really, like, shocked and flabbergasted.”

“I could see the confusion—they were perplexed and had mixed emotions that they could potentially be a part of giving someone ‘the other death penalty,’” added Shoemaker.

“We also needed to bring awareness to intimate partner battering,” Tammy Cooper-Garvin, told SQ News. “When I tell my story it makes me feel better and I pray that I am



Photo courtesy of CCWP

Drop LWOP group addressing the audience about the struggles and problems they are facing

helping someone.

“There are many layers to my story and I get emotional when I tell my story, because I can still feel that little girl who wanted to be loved.

“I don’t regret coming to prison,” added Cooper-Garvin. “I needed to be incarcerated for that period of

time to work on myself, and to show society that I was a changed woman who valued, and respected others, and also valued myself.”

Taliano and Cooper-Garvin both joined the Long Termers’ Organization while incarcerated, a group of like-minded people serving LWOP supporting each other. They credit the program for helping turn their lives around.

“Prison taught me how to be a better person, it showed me how to deal with life,” said Cooper-Garvin. “I went to many self-help groups. I wanted to know what was different from me and my siblings. I knew I wanted to change, so I surrounded myself around positive lifers.

“I also knew I was a LWOP and that I had to make a life for myself. I didn’t have a good life in the world but with change I could have a life in prison, so I took full advantage of what

CDCR had to offer,” added Cooper-Garvin.

With a second chance at life, the women are taking their stories and plight to Sacramento, lobbying for policy changes legislator by legislator. With support of other reform organizations such as CCWP, All of Us or None, Legal Services for Children and many others, the women are giving their time, energy and resources to change the narrative for all incarcerated and those finishing their sentences and returning home.

“We’re working on things like getting fair wages for all the incarcerated,” said Shoemaker. “We’re also trying to get the gate money raised to \$1,000 (currently the funds upon release are limited to \$200, unchanged for decades). We’re fighting for things that will make your conditions better in there and make your transition easier in the free world,” added Shoemaker.

CCWP hosted the “Drop the LWOP” event. Adrienne Skye Roberts moderated the affair and has work tirelessly to bring the “A Living Chance” campaign to Californians and legislators through the audio stories, portraits and postcards of the women who are still serving the LWOP sentence.

The newly released women thought they were supposed to die in prison. They felt they were held in bondage and captive to their shame and guilt, but have made that transition for success.

“If I could achieve my freedom anyone can,” said Cooper-Garvin. “It was hard work for me and it will be hard work for you also, but the pay-off is truly worth it.

“We may think people are closed minded about giving us a chance and it is just the opposite— they welcome us with our past because many see the good in us,” she concluded.

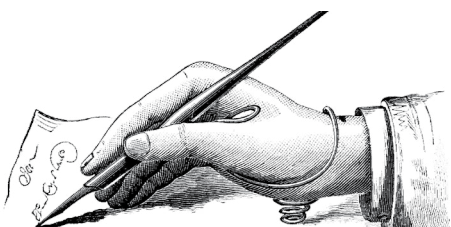
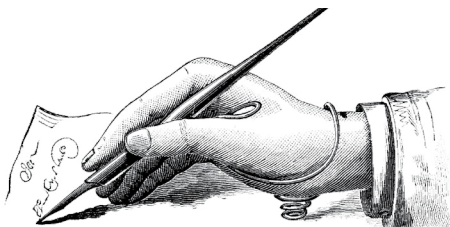


Photo courtesy of CCWP

Adrienne Roberts examines portraits of female LWOPS

LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK:

Letters to the Editor



To *San Quentin News*,
Happy New Year! I hope 2020 is filled with many blessings for the entire news team and that you guys continue to do an amazing job reporting the news we need. I respect each and every last one of you for fighting the good fight, making a difference, and constantly having patience with me when I was young & dumb at times, but I'm learning along the way and that's what counts, right?
I'm just writing to wish you all the very best and to stay in touch because I can't forget about y'all! I will always cherish & appreciate the times we had. I wish we could make some new memories, but unfortunately, I don't think I'll be making it back to SQ. I'm stuck up here at Pelican Bay and, no lie, it sucks LOL. Good news I have a few years till my release though! I still don't really know what I'm gonna do when I get out LOL. Well, I send mines to all of you. There's too many names to list and I'm sure there are many new additions to the SQ News team that I don't wanna leave out either.
Keep up the good work and don't be afraid to give me a shout-out in the next issue of the *SQ News*! LOL For real though I miss y'all and I'm sending positive vibes y'all's way so keep ya antennas up!
Sincerely,
D. Pariani
Pelican Bay State Prison

From Editorial Board and Staff,
Pariani is a former *SQ News* staff member. He was the youngest of us. We know what it means to be young and finding yourself while navigating prison life. Some of us have done decades of this life. So for you youngsters - we are called OGs for a reason - not all good, not all bad. But it is for you to learn. The choice is yours.
Pariani, we know your future is bright, but you must prepare for success or you will find yourself doing more of the same things.

Dear Editor
I've been incarcerated for 30 years and have been housed at various Level 4 prisons for the entire 30 years of my incarceration. As I began to lose hope of ever being free, I (started to) delve deep into the violent and criminal activities of prison life. I've spent a significant number of years in and out of Ad-Seg and the security housing units (SHU). After I discovered how and why I became a thug and a criminal, I began the hard and challenging process of reconstructing a new and positive way of thinking. I sought to change myself to become a better version of ME!
I've experienced a lot of both good and bad things in prison. The good things that I've experienced: engaging in efforts to rehabilitate myself within the past 10 years and being a mentor to other prisoners, working to motivate, inspire and encourage them to engage in rehabilitative efforts to change. The other good things that I've witnessed is the hard work by members of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, Initiate Justice, Restore Justice, and other organizations play an instrumental role to help reform the California criminal justice system.
I've witnessed and heard about a lot of prisoners who were serving life sentences being granted parole, which was unheard of when I initially came to prison in 1989. They were granted parole because they did the hard work that it took to rehabilitate themselves. They became suitable to be granted parole, while I engaged in prison-related criminal activities that kept me in the SHU, with a classification score of 377 points. I'm now far removed from engaging in criminal activities. I've been on the road of rehabilitation for the past 10 years and I'm about to go home in a few months, thanks to SB 1437.
San Quentin News also continues to play a vital role for prisoners by providing us with important information and news relevant to our incarceration, rehabilitation and legislative news. The *San Quentin News* has given me, as well as other prisoners, hope for a better future. And I want to thank all the staff there that provides us prisoners with content that you publish.
For those of you serving a life sentence, DO NOT GIVE UP and DO NOT LOSE HOPE. Fight to get out and stop fighting to stay in.
Respectfully,
I. Tatum
Calipatria State Prison

San Quentin News,
I'm always looking for a reason to send a letter to the editor of *San Quentin News*. Thankfully I've now got a reason. Like many of us serving time I came to prison as a teen, and because of this there are many things in life I never got to do or experience. So I came in lost and lonely with lack of love.
As many of us do, I began to experiment and dabble in the life of drugs. I quickly became a heroin addict without even realizing I had. The first time I ever used, I found warmth, comfort, purpose and love. As my tolerance built up to it, I would lose the feeling and daily for five years straight I chased the drugs, making my body dependent.
As time passed, the unbelievable finally happened. Something I constantly told myself, "It won't happen to me." I overdosed in my cell. Thanks to the quick response of my peers, the CO's and nurses I was brought back (something rare in the free world, "quick responses").
Upon returning from the hospital I sought help from the medical staff and was offered it immediately. I was put into the MAT/SUD treatment program that set me on a recovery plan. Not only do they provide medical help, such as suboxone, they offer mental health services, including groups and counseling.
Thanks to God, my wife and this program, I have now been sober and living a day to day life upon recovery. If you find yourself how I once was -- lost, depressed, addicted and living a life in rock bottom -- don't be embarrassed to seek help. Addiction is a disease that we can't fight and win on our own. CDCR sees the problem and is providing us the help. We are already prisoners. Why be a prisoner and slave to this drug as well? Save yourself and seek the help if you need it.
My warmest regards,
J.K. Avila
Calipatria State Prison



By Rebecca Weiker, Re:Store Justice Program Director

In November 2019 I traveled with over one hundred members of my Jewish congregation to Montgomery, Alabama on a pilgrimage to two remarkable institutions created by the Equal Justice Initiative,

a justice organization created by Bryan Stevenson over thirty years ago. (You might be familiar with Mr. Stevenson as the attorney who argued history-making juvenile justice cases before the US Supreme Court, including *Miller vs. Alabama*, which held that mandatory life without parole sentences for juveniles are unconstitutional).
We went on this journey together because we understand that as Jews, as Americans, and as human beings, we must acknowledge and respond to a part of our history that has for too long been more hidden than visible in our public discourse.
The first stop on this journey was to the Legacy Museum, which is subtitled "From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration." This museum is built on the site of a former slave warehouse, and gives visitors the opportunity to learn about and experience the impact and legacy of our country's history of racial inequality and the relationship of this history to present day issues, and specifically, mass incarceration. The museum uses first person narratives, and original research to create exhibits that use video, audio, art and text to allow visitors to begin to understand with their minds and heart, the terrible legacy of enslavement, racial terror and racial segregation.
As I first walked down the ramp into the museum, my attention was caught by the projected image of two small children, a boy of about seven and his little sister. The boy's was calling out for his mother, and the story while only narrated by this one word - "mama" was heart-breakingly clear: two children separated forever from their mother, and sent alone into a life of ongoing trauma and violence. For this family, this was a pivotal moment in what followed: decades and generations of trauma, and I as a museum visitor, and a human being, needed to bear witness.
A fifteen minute walk from the Museum is a different, but equally powerful new institution: The National Peace and Justice Memorial, also known as the "Lynching Memorial." This memorial grew out of EJI's work to document the racial terror of the post-civil war period (up until the civil rights movement) that included thousands of public executions of black men and women. EJI wanted to document these murders, and also the terror and impact this violence had on entire communities. The memorial structure that forms the center of the site is constructed of over 800 steel rectangular monuments, each with the names of lynching victims from a specific county. In another part of the park, there are identical monuments - the memorial has invited every county to claim these as acknowledgement of the lives that were taken in their community, with the intention that "over time, the national memorial will serve as a report on which parts of the country have confronted the truth of this terror and which have not."
So why am I, the Program Director of Re:Store Justice writing about this visit? First, because transformative and restorative justice require that accountability for harm and for creating healing and safety in our communities is not only the responsibility of individuals. Our government and systems must also be accountable for past harms and current actions that create the conditions of inequality that can lead to violence, despair and trauma. Second, as someone who society has labeled a victim/survivor because I lost a loved one to homicide, I also need to think about my own accountability and living amends for living in a society that privileges me as a white woman.
One of the most powerful things I have learned through my work with survivors and responsible parties is that none of us should be defined by what the worst thing we have done or what has happened to us. As Walt Whitman once wrote "I am large, I contain multitudes." Each person is complex, and our lives contain many contradictions. AND, it is also true that we cannot heal if we don't acknowledge the harm we have caused to others, intentional or not. And that is a lesson I first learned from the men and women I have sat in circle with inside California's prison.
With hope, because hopelessness is the enemy of justice
With courage, because peace requires bravery
With persistence, because justice is a constant struggle
With faith, because we shall overcome.
National Peace and Justice Memorial, EJI, Montgomery, Alabama



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

FROM SAN QUENTIN'S

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

REMINDER: CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARDS IN THE HOUSING UNITS FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION.



What you need to know about

coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath



What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

USC Law Professor fights to give lifers a second chance



Photo courtesy of Heidi Rummel
Law Professor Heidi Rummel

KidCAT Speaks!

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

Law professor Heidi Rummel fights to give thousands of men and women a second chance—many of them sentenced decades ago to life-terms for crimes committed as youths.

As co-director of the University of Southern California’s Post-Conviction Justice Project (PCJP), Rummel teaches and leads a team of certified law student interns. They represent incarcerated clients in courtrooms and parole boards throughout California.

“I fell in love with the work,” said Rummel. “I first started working with women at CIW [California Institute for Women] back when no one was going home.

“We’d take these women to the parole board and hear their stories, and I could see for myself that they were just amazing human beings—truly amazing people.

That’s when Rummel started to realize the systemic hurdles she was up against statewide. The legal battles weren’t simply case by case—there was fierce legislative advocacy work that needed to get done.

“You can’t just keep denying people parole forever—based on their crime,” she said. “That’s essentially LWOP [life without the possibility of parole].”

Together with Elizabeth Calvin of Human Rights Watch, Rummel committed herself to “heavy policy work.”

They came and sat side by side with KidCAT members for the first time at a San

Quentin symposium in 2012.

Original KidCAT member Nou Phang Thao remembers the impact Rummel made.

“Heidi’s an exceptional person,” he said. “I’ll never forget hearing her say she believes every child who commits a crime—any crime—deserves a second chance.

“That meant so much to me—to know there was someone out there who believes in us, even before we learn to believe in ourselves.”

Calvin and Rummel spent hours listening to the stories of youth offenders, who, at the time, faced little hope of ever getting released.

Since then, PCJP has co-sponsored or authored almost every juvenile justice reform bill in California.

Thanks to Senate Bill 9, SB 260, SB 261 and SB 394, youth offenders sentenced to LWOP and life-term sentences are now allowed the chance to appear before the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) after serving 24 years.

“These laws recognize that young adults should be treated differently,” said Rummel.

When Rummel spoke to KidCAT about her experience as a parole attorney for PCJP, the guys half-joked with her that she should represent their fellow member, Gary Scott, who was approaching his first BPH.

“She took down his information and promised us she’d do it,” said Thao. With Rummel’s guidance and support, Scott was found suitable for parole later that year.

PCJP’s co-director Michael Brennan currently oversees students working to get Thao successfully through his own BPH difficulties.

“The best piece of advice Heidi gave us was ‘Do not buy a cell phone,’” said Thao. “Man, later I had to

write her a letter apologizing for getting caught with one.”

Rummel holds workshops at prisons all over California to help youth offenders who never believed they’d be offered any legitimate chance at freedom prepare for their BPH.

Because they thought they’d be locked up for the rest of their lives, many of these youth offenders spent much of their incarceration not caring at all about positive programming or rehabilitation.

“They never thought about parole,” said Rummel. “At the higher security prisons, they simply had no access or exposure to anything but violence, gang activity and substance abuse.”

Rummel mentioned one of her clients, Ruben Ruiz. Involved in gang activity from the age of 13, Ruiz entered the prison system with LWOP for a murder committed when he was 17.

Despite his record of violence and illegal behavior behind bars, Ruiz became eligible for parole and earned his release—with Rummel’s help—in 2017.

And after 25 years of incarceration, Ruiz became one of the men who returns to prison with the PCJP workshops.

“These guys need to share their experiences with each other,” Rummel explained. “We bring them together in our workshops so they can open up and see their own vulnerability.”

Bringing formerly incarcerated LWOP and life-term youth offenders face-to-face with their currently incarcerated peers might be the most powerful component of the workshops.

“It’s amazing when they see someone who survived the process and was able to go home,” she said. “They can’t believe this is true until they meet one in person.”

One incarcerated participant met Ruiz and called him a “unicorn”—something people talk about and hear stories about, but never see. Rummel brings these unicorns into prisons to show the real possibility of second chances.

“She’s one of those unsung heroes who does so many things that impact so many other people,” said Anthony Ammons, a KidCAT member and one of Rummel’s PCJP clients at San Quentin.

Sentenced to 102 years-to-life for crimes committed when he was 16, Ammons had his sentence commuted by then Gov. Jerry Brown in 2018 and appeared before a BPH panel in 2019.

Rummel visited Ammons several times to prepare him for the board’s scrutiny.

“She gave me the

confidence to start believing in myself,” said Ammons. “Just having her tell me that she believed in me—that helped a lot.”

But when Ammon did face the BPH, they issued him a three-year denial.

“Heidi was so angry when she heard the decision,” he said. “I think she was even angrier than I was at the time.

“That made it a whole lot easier for me to feel okay with what happened.”

“Heidi’s exceptional... She believes every child who commits a crime deserves a second chance”

Rummel wants all her clients—and, really, anyone going before the BPH—to have a firm grasp on what they’ll be required to speak on.

“There are three questions you need to answer—simple questions with really difficult answers,” she said. “What did you do? Why did you do it? And how have you changed?”

In the workshops and

one-on-one visiting sessions, Rummel and her team encourage the deep introspection necessary to achieve full accountability and honesty.

“Fully own your part and understand your crime,” she said. “What was the impact? What was the harm? The board already knows, more or less, what you did.

“They’re trying to figure out, ‘Are you going to do it again?’ There’s always the assumption—right or wrong—that if you don’t know why you did it, you’ll most likely do it again.”

Rummel says it’s ultimately about understanding the choices one made and being able to take responsibility for those choices.

“What happened while they were growing up?” she continued. “Why did they have a gun, join a gang? Was there some underlying shame that led them to commit their crime?”

When Rummel sits down with her clients to prepare them for the board, she never lets them skirt around these issues.

“She made me see my crime, and really myself, from a clearer perspective. Now I understand why I did what I did,” said Ammons. “I can connect all the pieces that contributed to my thought process at the time, my belief systems.

“Having the eyes of an ex-prosecutor, Heidi catches

everything—and calls you on it. Nothing slips past her.”

Rummel chuckled at what she called her “deep dark secret.”

“I was a federal prosecutor for the first half of my career,” she said. “And, I felt good about my work as a district attorney. We prosecuted a lot of hate crimes and police misconduct.” Rummel spoke fondly of her time working with Eric Holder in the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

“At the beginning under [President] Clinton, we were taking over a very Republican office,” she said. “Holder always told us, ‘If you don’t think it’s just, go to the next level. Go to me.’

“I’m not going to say I did it perfectly, of course. But, I like to say we were fighting for justice.”

Calvin and Russell recently went to Sacramento to voice their opinions at an Assembly Public Safety Committee hearing on Jan. 14.

Two proposed bills, AB 665 and AB 1641, aimed to bring back LWOP sentencing for juveniles and demolish the Youth Offender Parole process.

“The committee voted them down, so those bills are dead,” said Rummel. “Last year, it didn’t even reach a committee vote.

“But there’s a lot of interest in Sacramento right now to roll back the gains we have made.”



Photo courtesy of Heidi Rummel
Rummel with Elizabeth Calvin and artist Ruben Ruiz

Any inmates interested in receiving the KidCAT curriculum must ask the Community Partnership Manager (CPM) at their facility to contact the CPM at San Quentin. As of February, 2019, KidCAT’s curriculum can only be distributed to prisoners through their CPM.

The Beat Within

A Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

KidCAT 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 helps 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!

Parenting—What kind of parent will you be (are you)? What have your own parents done that you would like to carry on with your own children? What are the things you promise you will never do to your child(ren)? How will you make your experience with your child(ren) different from your experience with your parents/guardians? What makes a good parent? What memories, good or bad, do you have about your parenting or your parents and their parenting?

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

KidCAT (Creating Awareness Together) is a group founded by men who committed their crimes in their teens and were sentenced as adults to life terms. The group’s mission is to inspire humanity through education, mentorship and restorative practices. KidCAT Speaks wants to hear from all offenders, educators, and policymakers concerning juvenile justice issues and rehabilitation. Contact us at San Quentin News, Attn: KidCAT Speaks, 1 Main St., San Quentin, CA 94964.

SQ response to violent incident resonates system wide

DAY OF PEACE

Continued from Page 1

Darryl “Champ” Hill emceed the event. He set the tone for the day asking 150 staff, volunteers and incarcerated persons to allow “this beautiful day to open minds, relax and enjoy everything each denomination has to say.”

Protestant Chaplain Mardi Ralph Jackson gave the opening prayer. She reminded the praying audience that Jesus glorifies everything in this world.

Chris Scull of the Inmate Advisory Council said, “Peace is more than a feeling. It’s actions of reconciliation.” He continued, “Mediation is a great tool to begin the process. For some it is God. When it was me getting in trouble by my parents, it was my grandmother,” he joked.

Chairman Steve Piscascio and Sergeant at Arms Tommy Wickerd of the Committee for the Day of Peace then taught the crowd the history of the event.

San Quentin created the first Day of Peace 13 years ago.

In 2006, a riot between the Mexican and Black populations occurred just before a

scheduled yard event. Several volunteers were headed to the yard event when then-incarcerated Tong led them away from the riot to safety.

Frustrated, incarcerated leaders of all races came together and went to the administration. The request was to devote one day out of the year to peace and the rehabilitative programs at San Quentin.

“Now, all prisons in California participate because of our original committee,” Piscascio said.

The Rabbi Paul Shleffar said the Day of Peace will help us “grow together.” He then asked everyone to open their hearts to create a world more “awake and aware.” He said children of Israel should preserve the ‘righteousness of charity.’

“The way to live life is service. We must act with love. Our community calls the Hebrew word for love, ‘al aba’ — which means ‘I give to you,’” said Rabbi Shleffar.

San Quentin’s Muslim leader, Imam Fasih, reminded everyone, “God is our creator, (and) do not look up to others who have more.”

The Protestant Choir sang, followed by the Catholic choir’s Christmas rendition of “Hallelujah.”

During intermission, No More Tears volunteer Eric Van Kleen noted, “This is a great way to express spirituality to all races, all walks of life.”

Dr. Dianna Kronstadt added, “This is very special for all communities. I was honored to be invited.”

Chaplain Hector Frank of Indian Services followed. The nationally renowned spiritual leader, who walked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Julio Cesar Chavez, talked about a 1,000-year-old prophecy he learned at age 14. (He is now 76).

Chaplain Frank spoke about:

- Prophets he sat with who had known Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull
- Seven generations back to a prayer that included the heaven’s brightest star --- the North Star, “was red because... the red road is a spiritual path to peace.”
- The seven original tribes
- The four original colors of men—Red, Black, White and Yellow—depicting all races
- We are older than the Aztecs, Mayans, Olmecs
- We are Temax -- People of

Peace

- The road to peace did not happen. “We died for it.”
- 150 original medicine people; only two are left
- 1976 was the first sweat lodge in California prisons after the protest at Alcatraz
- He helped establish all sweat lodges in California’s prisons

“Honor each other’s differences, because we all pray — we just use different languages,” said Chaplain Frank.

Incarcerated keynote speaker Michael Adams gave thanks to Lt. Carlton for the opportunity to represent all incarcerated around the state. The Catholic choirs’ singer quoted St. Francis of Assisi, “Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Men and women in blue...make peace within so the enemy does not win. Let peace on earth begin with us today.”

The Strobe Ensemble performed a piece from Mozart called, “The Oboe Quartet,” in honor of his 276th birthday. They then performed a song called “Water Colors.” The song was designed to visualize

colors from Grass Valley’s ponds, and rivers.

Father George Williams spoke about responsibility, accountability, forgiveness and self-forgiveness.

“When Christians pray the Lord’s Prayer, we pray for justice and mercy. These are the ingredients for forgiveness,” said Father Williams, who has been serving San Quentin for 17 years.

“We need justice for our offenders and victims, and yes we need places for punishment and for reconciliation/forgiveness; yet, the hardest thing to do is forgive ourselves,” said Father Williams. Reminding the incarcerated and volunteers how blessed they are to be at San Quentin, he asked, “Do all of you know how lucky we are?”

The father asked everyone to pray with more introspection, including:

- “Acknowledging San Quentin is proof of rehabilitation because of education, spiritual and volunteer mentors who come as peacemakers”
- “When we harm others, we must be punished... we should not seek vengeance nor should our punishers...punishment should have clear purpose”
- Jesus showed disappointment but

rejected punishment, revenge and retaliation — by keeping love in spirit

- Like Jesus, we must return to society whole and heartfelt
- See Matthew 25 — Jesus, on death row, still asked for mercy and forgiveness for all at the time of his execution

Leaders from the Buddhist community followed. Incarcerated person Ronell “Rauch” Draper said, “If you love that person so much, even the person that harmed you, I think we can take away from the trend of pain and suffering that we experience every day. Be willing to love.”

Ceremonies ended with prayer from Father Williams. The ceremony continued in the Catholic Chapel with a harp recital by Christine Tullis.

Tullis, who performed six solos, told the remaining audience she has been playing for 30 years and the harp is “known to be a healing instrument since ancient times.”

This first CDCR sponsored Day of Peace promoted healing throughout the world. Lt. Carlton hopes the inspirational message will spread outside of San Quentin and that “the Day of Peace could resonate everywhere.”

—Kerry Rudd contributed to this story



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Chaplain Hector Frank talks about his history



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Harpist Christine Tullis pulling emotional strings



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

San Quentin's Protestant Chapel Choir sings church songs to everyone



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

The Strobe Ensemble were the featured performers of the day

“Our newspaper allows people to grow...”

GUILD

Continued from Page 1

“Our graduates—know you were journalists before you picked up a pen. Remember, if no one tells your story, who will?” Richardson said. “Please use your voice; it’s the most powerful asset (weapon) you have.”

Lisa Adams, the newspaper’s development manager for two years, called her career journey from state and federal prison “empty, until I found my niche helping others.”

Adams is collaborating with Wells Fargo Bank executive Amanda Weitman to generate philanthropic donations for the news agency. “Inside and out, we give the world access to the understanding and awareness of social reform and its impact. This news agency reduces recidivism by giving hope to the incarcerated throughout the nation,” said the philanthropic executive.

Today, *San Quentin News* is a leading voice for incarcerated people in the country.

San Quentin News’ editor-in-chief, Marcus “Wali” Henderson, remarked upon the journalism program’s capacity to build bridges. “(*SQ News* and *Wall City*) journalists tell stories that people are afraid to tell.”

Henderson, who used to chair the Guild, then introduced keynote speaker Tracy Brumfield.

Brumfield has transformed from “a heroin addict in and out of jail and then prison” to founder of a women’s news agency called *RISE*.

She inspired the crowd, speaking about her addictions and battle with cancer, “I’m beating its ass.” For the graduates she said, “The power of words—storytelling—includes talking about our journey. I found it extremely empowering to tell my journey... Write about what you know... your testimony!”

The Department of Juvenile Justice’s Ericka Mutchler celebrated the success of the incarcerated



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Journalism Guild Instructor Monica Campbell with the 2019, 2020 graduating class

female population in California. Mutchler gave praise to *Wall City*’s third edition, which featured incarcerated females.

“The women featured on the back page of *Wall City* were my [juvenile] clients who co-wrote articles for the edition. I am pleased to announce all of them have been released with jobs,” said the counselor.

Henderson introduced former San Francisco prosecutor Marisa Rodriguez after he spoke about the social reform symposiums at San Quentin. The latest forum with the San Francisco Police Department was a “Blue on Blue forum [which] improved communication between law enforcement and incarcerated persons. It [forums] will allow us to continue to build bridges that no one else can,” said Henderson.

In 2012, Rodriguez took a suggestion from her father to visit San Quentin.

“Now, I can’t shake this place,” said the former D.A. “It [the visit] was very, very moving, and I didn’t expect that. I shared the experience with my supervisor, San Francisco D.A. George Gascon.” She told Gascon there was something very special

happening at San Quentin, and he needed to go in and see what was happening himself, if we are going to change justice.

Gascon’s office then collaborated with the late Arnulfo Garcia to create the first symposium. It focused on San Francisco Community Court prosecutors’ desire to investigate what drives youth to commit crimes.

The symposium was such a success, today the forums are a core of the news outlet’s brand.

Rodriguez said after Police Chief (Del Scott) brought in his team, it led to the creation of the nation’s first Formerly Incarcerated Advisory Board. The board includes San Francisco prosecutors and formerly incarcerated men and women, many of whom had life sentences before being paroled.

CDCR administrators who ensure accuracy and analysis for *SQ News* includes, Terri Thornton, Krissi Khokhobashvili, and Ike Dodson. They received plaques of recognition and said, “No matter what happened in your past, who you are when you come out on the other side is what matters.”

Henderson also praised the

group of *Wall City* advisers in attendance. Kate McQueen, Sarah Horowitz, Doug Levy and Dan Fost represented the magazine’s advisory board of 12.

Forecasting the mission of the world-class magazine, Levy said, “the more the community helps, the bigger this magazine gets.” Levy’s forecast of the magazine’s growth inspired the graduates.

Henderson thanked San Quentin’s Last Mile, which helps in the design and implementation of the news agency’s web site. The editor-in-chief then recognized the *SQ News* advisers. Collectively, these advisers have more than 200 years of service and devotion to make this newspaper happen monthly.

Henderson said, “They make us better in all that we do, and we can never repay them for that.”

Upon her acceptance of a prestigious plaque given to the group, advisor Jan Perry said, “They make us better.”

Monica Campbell spoke in place of absent Spanish Guild instructor Lourdes Cardenas to the 13 Spanish Guild graduates who received certificates of completion. The Spanish Journalism Guild, under the leadership

of Lourdes Cardenas and Juan Espinosa, is “breaking through barriers that eclipse newspapers throughout both countries,” said Campbell, who is a world leader in her own right concerning the reporting of immigration issues.

Special mention went to Juan Espinosa, who created the nation’s first magazine dedicated to the incarcerated Spanish population. This population’s estimate is 45% of the total population imprisoned in the United States.

“To see how far ahead the Spanish Edition of *Wall City* and the Spanish section of the San Quentin newspaper are compared to the rest of the country’s media is amazing,” added Campbell.

Espinosa assisted in designing, editing and laying out the nation’s first Hispanic magazine dedicated to the incarcerated.

He told *SQ News*, “With all the work necessary, I could not have brought this to reality without Lourdes Cardenas, or Wali (Henderson). Our whole community owes her a lifetime’s debt of gratitude.”

He added he was very excited to expand the magazine and Spanish section of the newspaper with the addition of more trained writers and with donations earmarked for the Spanish journalists.

Current guild chairperson Joe Garcia thanked his partners in the class, Monica Campbell, who has been teaching guild students since 2018, and Andrew Beale.

Garcia highlighted the event as he handed out certificates of participation to 25 graduates “Celebrate the completion of your education that will help us continue being the voice of the 3 million incarcerated persons throughout our country,” said Garcia.

The *SQ* newspaper falls under the supervision of PIO Lt. Sam Robinson. Robinson after the ceremonies talked of the importance of the *SQ News* team.

—Anthony M. Carvalho



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Keynote speaker Traci Brumfield sharing valuable experiences



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

CDCR administrators Krissi Khokhobashvili, Ike Dodson and Terri Thornton



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

SQ Alumnus David Le, Vietnamese Guild Graduates and Si Dang



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Wall City Advisors Kate McQueen, Dan Fost, Doug Levy and Sarah Horowitz



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

SQN Advisors Jan Perry, Tom Short, Linda Xiques, Steve McNamara and John Eagan

Donovan Correctional Facility holds



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Sunday Morning Fellowship gathering together for healing

By Shawn Khalifa
Contributing Writer

History was made and we were there. It was the first Restorative Justice Fair held inside an American prison.

The three-day August fair opened inside the Facility-E Gymnasium at R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility. One hundred chairs formed the foundation of a connecting circle. Brahmkaryie, a Restorative Justice super-supporter, gave her opening salvo on her BOSE speaker system.

“Welcome!,” she greeted the participants. The overstuffed gym, with tight security, had a long line of residents hoping to enter but they were turned away due to overcrowding. All those within the connection circle were invited to a grounding exercise that involved deep breathing and placing feet flat on the floor—each inhale bringing up positive energy and love from the planet that sustains us, while exhaling negative energy into the core of the earth. “Did you feel it?,” asked the leader

District Attorney Khemal Johnson-Williams came into the prison in the name

of Restorative Justice. D.A. Johnson-Williams walked around the entire circle shaking hands and saying his name.

He then joined the circle and passed around questions such as “What can another person do to make you feel valued?” Speaking beads and a microphone were passed around so that all could be heard. Fully participating, D.A. Johnson-Williams transformed from district attorney to a victim of crime. He shared that four of his close family members and a best friend had been tragically murdered. “How do you honor those that you have lost?,” was another question the DA passed around.

Dr. Andrea Travers, of VOEG (Victim Offenders Education Group), held a remorse-processing workshop in the prison visiting room.

“The event made such a strong impact on me because it dealt with remorse, something I have had a hard time dealing with,” said participant Aurelio Martin Sepulveda. “The manner in which the process was explained was very insightful. I was able to relate to everybody present in one way or another. I

am grateful to learn from that experience.”

From a stage in the middle of the yard, performers spoke about “giving living amends” during their performances.

“My definition of living amends is not being willing to compromise with any form of criminal behavior due to a changed belief system,” said Melvin Price, a participant performer.

Anon Jon Alexander added, “In sharing our talents with fellow [prisoners], alongside free staff and visitors, Echo Yard is opening a portal of positive reinforcement, which in turn expedites rehabilitative reintegration back to society.”

Alexander performed “Chrysalis” a song about metamorphosis.

“Because from prisoner to president, we all have the same 24 hours to be used constructively,” said Alexander. “When invested into such creative expression, it is also less likely to get sucked into negative politics or tribalism/violence.”

On Booth Day, thirteen canopies were arranged in a “U” formation facing the stage. Purple decorations were on display (purple being

the signifying color for domestic violence awareness). Under the canopies were 26 Arts-In-Corrections programs, peer-to-peer groups, Southwestern College, Mental Health, The Brahman Project, Eastlake Church, and several other service providers.

“My definition of living amends is not being willing to compromise with criminal behavior due to a changed belief system”

District attorney Marissa Bejarano also came to the prison to talk with its residents. She spoke about the effects of sex trafficking on the victims. It is rare, if not unheard of, for a district attorney to visit the prison to share but Facility-E received two. A moment of silence of shootings throughout the

United States.

Raquel Funches, of Southwestern College, was available to assist, motivate and interact with the facility’s large college student population at their booth. The booths were staffed with a combination of residents and service providers. Funches’ support and generous effort to instill “No Violence” into the culture at this facility will never be forgotten. She is a driving force of Restorative Justice.

“It was an empowering experience to witness,” said Funches. I’m fortunate to have had the opportunity to be included in the residents’ rehabilitative efforts.”

Raquel shared her booth with Tanya, another proud advocate for Restorative Justice, and Patrice, the Director of Southwestern College’s Restorative Justice Program. Another strong voice in the community was the head of the Alternative to Violence Program (AVP), Shandreka, who kindly postponed the AVP class to allow herself, facilitators and students to get the most out of the weekend.

The biggest impact was felt off-stage in the facility’s Multi-Faith Room. One by one, residents read their

remorse letters to women who had suffered from abuse. Then a purple friendship bracelet was placed on their wrist.

“We all came together in the spirit of Restorative Justice, and remorse,” said Ryan Grider. “This was the most powerful room I’ve been in during my 17 years of incarceration.”

“An overwhelming feeling of remorse, and surrender filled my heart. For offenders and victims of crime to come together to heal, it speaks volumes of the real work it takes to restore justice. I am so grateful that I had the privilege to be part of this powerful process,” Grider continued.

The fair weekend ended as it began with Brahmkaryie in a jam-packed gymnasium practicing a Satsang meditation of forgiveness. The canopies came down for the last time. The message of connection, love and healing rang throughout the event.

“These three days of the fair were the best days of my life,” said Ruben Radillo, E-yard resident.

This article was edited for length and according to the AP style



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Brahmkaryie enjoying the day inside prison



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Devaki sending prayers and blessings to everyone

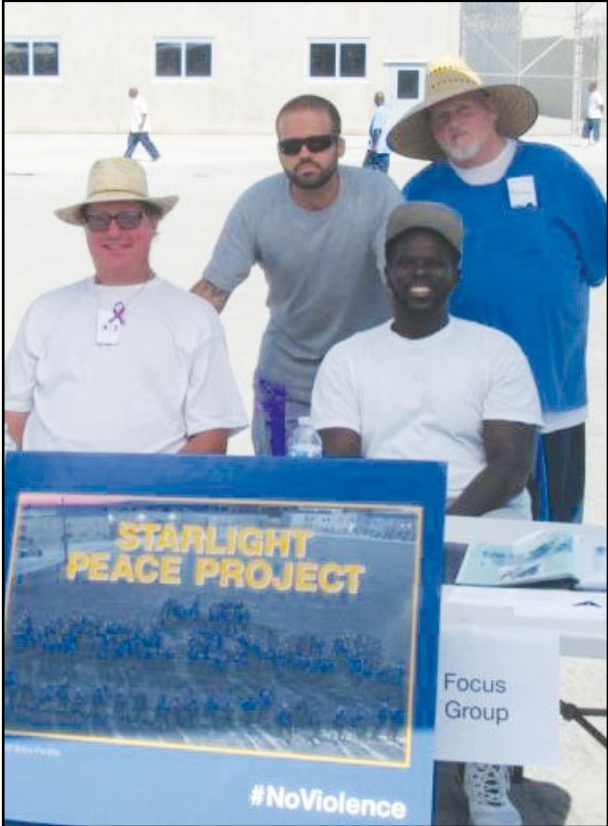


Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Starlight Peace Project-- #NoViolence

holds its first Restorative Justice Fair



Photo Courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Raquel Funches (center) with Southwestern students: Fernando Millsap, Shawn Khalifa, Cedric Parker and Jason Imbach



Photo Courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Facility-E Captain Benyard lookin' fresh



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Project Paint enjoying the day



Photo Courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Public Defenders rep. and Andrew Grandner



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Don of Prison Fellowship (center) with Struggling Youth Turnaround's Alex Mendoza and Here & Now's David Chehovich



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Eastlake Church Volunteer Flor



Photo courtesy of R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility

Deputy District Attorney Marissa Bejarano

AROUND THE WORLD



Jane Courant in Cascais, Portugal



Christine Remillard in Taiwan



Brian Howey in Thailand



Ear Hustle's Earlonne Woods and Nigel Poor at the Teatro Comunale, Italy

Recibe segunda oportunidad tras 29 años en la cárcel



Por Daniel López
Periodista

La vida fue difícil para él. Juan González, de 58 años, creció sin unos padres que lo guiaran, se metió en las pandillas y terminó en la cárcel cumpliendo una sentencia de cadena perpetua. Después de 29 años en prisión recibe una segunda oportunidad. González será hombre libre.

“A los seis meses fui puesto en adopción, pero mi abuelita me sacó del orfanatorio”, dijo González.

González cuenta que durante el tiempo que vivió con su abuela fue maltratado y que tal vez eso sucedió porque ella también pasó por la misma experiencia.

Durante su infancia, González no tuvo relación con sus padres biológicos. “A los 12 años conocí a mi

mamá y papá: tenía coraje con ellos por el abandono, me sentí extraño y solo pasé un año con mi madre”, dijo González.

González abandonó el hogar donde vivía con su madre y se unió a las pandillas que él consideraba como su propia familia.

En la calle comenzó a experimentar con drogas, que pronto se volvieron una adicción. “Fumaba marihuana, PCP, a los 16 años ya me inyectaba heroína”, dijo González.

El consumir drogas le trajo otro problema más grave. A los 19 años entró a la cárcel por primera vez y en ese tiempo contrajo hepatitis por compartir jeringas con otros presos adictos.

“A los 30, fui sentenciado a 32 años a cadena perpetua por un homicidio” dijo González. Su vínculo con las pandillas en la calle lo siguió hasta la prisión.

En la cárcel estuvo relacionado con las pandillas y terminó validado, (señalado como un miembro activo de pandillas) en el SHU, (Unidad de Alojamiento Especiales, o Special Housing Unit en inglés) en la prisión de Pelican Bay.

Su rutina diaria en el SHU se volvió muy monótona: despertaba a las 4 de la mañana, salía a la yarda una hora y media cada tres días mientras que el resto del tiempo se la pasaba en la celda. Hacía ejercicio, desayunaba, leía, cenaba, veía la televisión y repetía lo mismo todos los días por 11 años. “Me estaba volviendo loco” dijo González.

“Mi hermana me mandó una biblia. La empecé a leer, me puse de rodillas y dije ‘si hay un Dios ayúdame’. Solo en la celda me convertí en cristiano” dijo González.

González dice que desde entonces ha estado

encerrado, nunca recibió visitas, ni ayuda económica. “Murió mi abuelita, mi mamá, papá y mi hermana el año pasado. Cada año puedes agarrar un paquete pero si no tienes quien te mande pues no agarras nada”, dijo González.

Finalmente en 2008, González salió de SHU. “Me sentí otra persona” dijo. “Me sentí libre dentro de la población carcelaria. Poder trabajar, asistir a la escuela, socializar con otros prisioneros” añadió González.

Para solventar los gastos de sus artículos de higiene aprendió a arreglar aparatos electrónicos y afortunadamente su deseo por las drogas desapareció. “No sentía ningún deseo de entrar en el infierno de las drogas. Sé que Dios me cambió”, dijo González.

A finales del 2019, González se presentó ante el comité de libertades condicionales (Board of Prison Hearings como se le conoce en inglés).

González dice que muchas de las preguntas que le hicieron no tenían respuestas concretas como cuando el comisionado le preguntó “¿qué vas a hacer cuando

salgas? ‘No sé’ le dije”.

González dice que después de varias horas de preguntas y respuestas finalmente lo encontraron elegible para salir en libertad condicional. “Estoy yendo al programa

de Reentry. Me están preparando para la transición. Me van a dar ropa, hospedaje, y me van a ayudar a buscar trabajo. Al salir se me antoja comerme un siete mares”, dijo González.



Photo por Juan Espinosa, SQN
Jesus Gonzalez

¿Conduce mejor cuando toma? No es un mito, es un peligro



Por Tare Beltranchuc
Periodista

Algunos conductores están convencidos que manejan mejor bajo la influencia del alcohol, hasta que ocasionan una tragedia.

Tranquilino Figueroa de 57 años y José Rodríguez, de 44, son residentes de la prisión de San Quentin y pensaban que conducían mejor bajo la influencia del alcohol por distintas razones.

“Estaba convencido que conducía mejor después de tomarme unas cervezas. Sentía que era más precavido y prestaba más atención a las señales de tráfico”, dijo Figueroa, quien actualmente cumple una condena de 18 años.

Rodríguez, cuya condena equivale a 11 años, dijo “me tomaba unas 12 cervezas diarias y así manejaba. Pensaba que manejar despacio significaba que conducía mejor”.

De acuerdo a un estudio por National Drunk Driving Facts and Statistics en 2019, el alcohol disminuye la capacidad del cerebro para pensar, razonar y coordinar los movimientos. Estas son funciones vitales para conducir un vehículo de una manera segura.

Figueroa no entendía el peligro de tomar y manejar. “Siempre había llegado a casa sano y salvo, lo cual reforzó la idea que conducía

mejor cuando bebía”.

La National Drunk Driving Facts and Statistics menciona además que el alcohol reduce las habilidades sicomotoras. La coordinación en las manos, los pies y la vista es afectada después de consumir bebidas alcohólicas.

“Cuando intenté frenar, me equivoqué y pisé el acelerador y choqué con otro vehículo, quitándole la vida a tres personas”, dijo Figueroa con lágrimas en los ojos.

Hoy Figueroa entiende que la razón por la que llegaba sano y salvo a casa no era por conducir mejor bajo la influencia del alcohol, “era fácil pensar que estaba conduciendo normalmente cuando realmente no lo estaba”.

Figueroa tomaba y manejaba desde los 18 años. Creció en una pequeña comunidad de Colima, México, donde las personas conducían bajo la influencia del alcohol sin consecuencias legales. “Para mí era normal. No creía que tomar y manejar fuera un delito. Yo creía que delitos eran robar o vender drogas”

De otro lado, Rodríguez añadió, “después de beber en las fiestas, mis amigos y familiares siempre manejaban y yo hacía lo mismo. Pensaba que no le hacía daño a nadie”.

Al llegar a Estados Unidos ambos descubrieron que conducir en estado de ebriedad (DWI) o bajo la influencia del alcohol (DUI), es un delito en este país. El límite

legal de alcohol en la sangre (BAC) para conducir de una manera segura es 0.08%, según The Zebra Drunk Driving Statistics.

Figueroa dijo, “antes del accidente, me arrestaron dos veces por manejar ebrio pero solo me llevaban a la cárcel del condado y al otro día me soltaban”.

Rodríguez fue detenido dos veces por manejar bajo la influencia del alcohol. “La primera vez me deportaron y la segunda vez no me presenté a corte. La tercera vez fue cuando choqué y le quité la vida a una persona y dejé inválida a otra”.

“Reconozco que el tomar y manejar es un acto de irresponsabilidad que pone en riesgo la vida de los demás conductores, los peatones y mi propia vida”, dijo Rodríguez.

Figueroa dijo, “ahora entiendo que el alcohol altera mi capacidad de conducir y definitivamente no manejo mejor, sino todo lo contrario. Así que eviten tomar y manejar”.

De acuerdo a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), de los 37,133 personas que murieron en accidentes automovilísticos en el 2017, en 10, 874 casos, un conductor manejaba ebrio o bajo la influencia del alcohol.

De acuerdo a Figueroa, la solución de este problema no se limita a las autoridades, sino a la determinación de cada persona por no tomar y manejar.

El estado de California libera a varios prisioneros, pero se olvida de muchos otros

By Timothy Hicks
Staff Writer

El estado de California ha estado liberando a muchos prisioneros, pero está olvidando de algunos.

Las personas que son olvidadas cometieron crímenes a los 14 y 15 años y fueron juzgados como adultos y enviados a prisiones para adultos. En este momento, las prisiones de California sobrepasan su capacidad y los oficiales hacen todo lo posible para remediarlo, excepto liberar a estos jóvenes perjudicados.

En octubre, el periódico *San Francisco Chronicle* publicó un reporte especial sobre los jóvenes que fueron juzgados y sentenciados como adultos y que fueron después enviados a prisión y ‘tratados como adultos’.

Según *San Francisco Chronicle*, entre 2003 y 2018, casi 12,000 adolescentes fueron trasladados a cortes para adultos.

Michael Mendoza y Philippe Kelly son dos de esos jóvenes que formaron parte de ese proceso.

Mendoza fue internado en una prisión de adultos con una sentencia de cadena perpetua por un asesinato a otro pandillero cuando él tenía 17 años. Mendoza ingresó a una prisión en Wasco, California.

Por su parte, Kelly cuando tenía 15 años fue enviado a prisión por un asesinato de segundo grado por el cual recibió una sentencia de cadena perpetua.

Esa era una época cuando el pánico público provocó “ser más rígido contra el crimen” especialmente en contra de los adolescentes que cometían crímenes violentos. Los políticos y legisladores describían a los jóvenes como “extremadamente violentos” y “criminales sin remordimiento”. Se activaron nuevas leyes que los jueces aplicaron para sentenciar más severamente a los adolescentes.

“Era una experiencia escalofriante,” dijo Mendoza en el artículo publicado por *San Francisco Chronicle*. “Caminar por el patio de la prisión te hace sentir como si estas caminado sobre un campo de batalla. Mi mayor prioridad fue la supervivencia. No pensaba en la rehabilitación”.

Mendoza pasó dos décadas tras las rejas antes de ser liberado. Ahora se dedica a la legislación de justicia criminal con la organización ARC (Anti-Recidivism-Coalition).

La ley AB560 implementada en 1994, permitió que los adolescentes fueran sentenciados en las cortes de adultos. Después en 2001 la Prop. 21 dio el poder a los fiscales de juzgar a los adolescentes juveniles en las cortes de adultos.

Mendoza fue uno de los pocos que fue liberado después que estas leyes fueran implementadas.

Kelly cometió un crimen como adolescente y sigue hoy tras las rejas en el sistema de prisiones en California.

En la prisión de San Quentin, Kelly toma parte de múltiples programas de autoayuda para jóvenes como Squires y KidKat.

Kelly de niño fue considerado muy talentoso pero tuvo una vida muy difícil. Él se metió en pandillas cuando era adolescente. Kelly describe sus programas como una manera de servicio.

“Para que ellos no se encuentren en nuestra situación”, dijo Kelly.

Mientras que Kelly cumple su condena, el ex gobernador Jerry Brown le concedió una reducción de su sentencia de 40 años a cadena perpetua a 20 años con cadena perpetua.

Con el paso de la ley SB260, Kelly fue elegible para una “audiencia de infractores adolescentes” para aquellos que fueron condenados cuando eran jóvenes. En agosto el comité de

audiencias de libertad condicional le negó esa oportunidad pero puede volver a tener otra audiencia en tres años.

Con el paso de la Proposición 57 en 2016, los jueces, en lugar de los fiscales, deciden quienes serán transferidos a las cortes de adultos. Y además el año pasado se pasó la SB1391 que prohíbe que ningún menor de 16 años sea juzgado en las cortes para adultos.

El fiscal del condado de Santa Clara Jeff Rosen se opuso a la constitucionalidad de SB1391. Según el artículo, Rosen está de acuerdo que algunos casos de adolescentes amerita la autoridad de las cortes juveniles. Sin embargo, él cree que las nuevas leyes no están siendo justas para los que cometieron crímenes cuando eran adolescentes.

Rosen argumenta que liberar infractores juveniles, que cometieron crímenes extremadamente violentos es una bofetada en la cara a las víctimas de parte del sistema.

Según el *San Francisco Chronicle*, otros fiscales en California han tratado de derribar la ley que protege a todos los adolescentes de ser juzgados en las cortes de adultos y el tema puede llegar hasta la Corte Suprema de California.

Pero exitosos adolescentes como Mendoza ven las cosas diferentes. “Yo pienso que nuestra generación de jóvenes que caímos en el modelo de castigo de adultos deja una marca negra en la historia de California, la cual siempre tendremos que sanar”, dijo Mendoza.

“Hay muchas personas que eran muy jóvenes (cuando fueron a prisión) que todavía están sufriendo, y que tal vez nunca podrán recuperarse”.

Traducción:
Heriberto Arredondo



Photo por Javier Jimenez, SQN
Tranquilino Figueroa

Photo por Javier Jimenez, SQN
José Rodríguez

ESPAÑOL

Por **Juan Espinosa**
Diseñador gráfico y Periodista

El virus COVID-19, conocido también como coronavirus, ha causado la muerte a más de dos mil personas y contagia a un número cada vez mayor en el mundo.

El Centro para el Control y Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC, por sus siglas en inglés) publicó una gaceta que responde a unas preguntas simples que son de interés para la comunidad.

¿Dónde se origina el Coronavirus?

El coronavirus viene de una larga familia de virus,

algunos de los cuales causan enfermedades en las personas y otros únicamente circulan en animales como camellos, gatos y murciélagos.

Los análisis genéticos de la raíz de este virus están dirigidos a una fuente en específico. SARS, otro coronavirus que surgió e infectó a muchas personas provino de la secreciones de gatos, mientras que MERS, otro tipo de coronavirus también infectó a muchas personas y provino de los camellos.

¿Cómo se propaga el coronavirus?

Es importante notar que el contagio de persona a

persona puede ser continuo. Algunos virus son altamente contagiosos, como la viruela por ejemplo, mientras que otros son menos contagiosos. Por ahora no está claro que tan fácil las personas puedan contagiarse entre sí. Los análisis genéticos sugieren que el virus provino de virus relacionados al SARS. Por el momento hay varias investigaciones en proceso para aprender más al respecto. Esta es una situación que se desarrolla rápidamente y la información debe de ser actualizada en cuanto esté accesible.

Hay mucho que no sabemos acerca del nuevo

coronavirus y cómo se contagia. Dos otros coronavirus que han surgido previamente han causado severas enfermedades en personas como MERS y SARS. El COVID-19 está más relacionado al SARS que al MERS, pero los dos son beta coronavirus con orígenes de murciélagos. Mientras que no se sabe por seguro que este virus se comporte de la misma manera que SARS o el MERS, podemos usar la información de estos dos virus como preparación. Hay una posibilidad muy baja de que el coronavirus se contagie de productos o paquetes que son enviados desde el

epicentro de contagio en un periodo de semanas a temperaturas ambientes.

Se piensa que el coronavirus se contagia a menudo de fluidos respiratorios. Por el momento no hay evidencia que apoye la transmisión de contagio en caso de COVID-19 asociado con enseres importados de lugares donde hay casos de coronavirus en Estados Unidos.

Por ahora no hay una vacuna para prevenir la infección del COVID-19. La mejor manera de prevenir el contagio es evitar exponerse al virus. En ese sentido, CDC recomienda las siguientes acciones:

- Lavarse las manos a menudo con agua y jabón por lo menos por 20 segundos.
- Usar un esterilizador que contenga por lo menos 60% alcohol si no tiene acceso al agua y jabón.
- Evitar tocarse los ojos, nariz, y boca sin lavarse las manos.
- Evitar contacto con personas que estén afectadas por el virus.
- Quedarse en casa si está enfermo.
- Cuando tosa o estornude, use un pañuelo y después tírelo a la basura.
- Limpiar frecuentemente con desinfectante los objetos y superficies que toque.

VIETNAMESE

Tác Giả: **ASHLEY CHAMBERS**
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Vào ngày 8 tháng 10, liên hiệp Repeal Ineffective Sentence Enhancements (RISE) ca tụng việc Thống Đốc Gavin Newsom thông qua đạo luật SB136: The RISE Act. Pháp chế, được tạo ra bởi Thượng Nghị Sĩ Scott Wiener (Đảng Dân Chủ từ San Francisco), phá hủy việc tăng án bằng cách cộng thêm một năm cho mỗi lần vào tù vì phạm trọng án.

"Liên hiệp của chúng tôi đang làm việc để giảm ngân

sách của tiểu bang dành cho việc cải tạo trong 15 năm qua. Các chính sách về án phạt, chẳng hạn như tăng án cho những lần kết án trước, là then chốt làm đầy 33 tù trong tiểu bang Cali, làm uống phí tài nguyên và xé nát nhiều gia đình," tường trình từ Amber-Rose Howard, Statewide Coordinator at Californians United for a Responsible Budget.

Đi chung với sự chênh lệch tại mỗi giai đoạn của hệ thống công lý, cá nhân, cộng đồng và gia đình của người da màu phải gánh chịu vì việc tăng án thêm một năm, theo lời công

bố của những người đề xướng luật SB136.

"Chuyện này là hướng về việc thêm công bằng cho những người đang bị giam và gia đình của họ và sửa sai những luật tuyên án phạt làm ảnh hưởng những cộng đồng da đen và da nâu," tường trình từ Emily Harris, Policy Manager of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights." Chúng tôi biết rằng tăng án thêm một năm không làm cho cộng đồng chúng ta an toàn hơn hoặc là ngăn cản việc phạm pháp, mà làm tan nát nhiều gia đình. Thu lại việc tăng án phạt này sẽ giúp giảm xức

cảm và tài chánh mà những người đang bị giam và người thân của họ phải gánh chịu.

Căn cứ theo California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), có hơn 15,000 vụ tăng án và cộng thêm một năm vào án căn bản của những người đang bị giam tính đến tháng 12 năm 2018. Đây là một ước lượng bảo thủ, vì sự danh giá của CDCR không cân nhắc về những người phạm trọng tội đang bị cầm tù tại trại giam địa phương. Hiện tại Cali tốn hơn \$80,000 mỗi năm để giam giữ một người.

"Mỗi năm người cha hay

mẹ bị giam tạo nên chấn thương nghiêm trọng cho con họ. Trẻ em có cha mẹ ngồi tù thì có thể bị bệnh sâu não, âu lo, kém học lực, nghỉ hoặc bỏ học, nghèo đói, vô gia cư và kém thể lực. Chúng tôi rất hãnh diện có được sự ủng hộ của Thống Đốc Newsom cho luật SB136, nó là việc tước bỏ sự trừng phạt," tường trình từ Romailyn Ralston, Policy Director with the California Coalition for Women Prisoners.

"Phần đông phụ nữ đang bị giam có con dưới 18 tuổi. Mỗi năm mà người mẹ phải xa cách đứa con thì có nhiều tầng lớp tai hại. Tôi rất hãnh

diện là một phần của nỗ lực lịch có sử này và biết rằng các bà mẹ bị giam sẽ trở về với con họ sớm hơn," Ralston tường trình.

Việc tăng án thêm một năm được sửa đổi bởi luật SB136 là một trong vô số luật tăng án dưới hiến pháp của Cali. Luật mới này sẽ không thay đổi án căn bản cho những ai hiện tại đang phạm trọng tội hoặc thay đổi những việc tăng án dài hơn tạo ra để trừng phạt tái can phạm.

Bộ luật SB136 được áp dụng vào ngày 1 tháng Giêng năm 2020.

—*Dịch giả-Hiếu Thái*

Buổi Lễ Trao Chi Phiếu San Quentin CARES 2019

Tác Giả: **Juan Haines**
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Hàng trăm cư dân tại San Quentin đóng góp mỗi người \$5.00, thêm vào những nghệ thuật do tù nhân làm ra đem lại hơn \$8,000 cho một trung tâm phụ nữ địa phương. Sự gây quỹ này là một phần của San Quentin CARES (SQ CARES) năm thứ 11: “Walk for a Cure” — Đi bộ cho sự chữa trị (ung thư vú) trong ngày 11 và 12 tháng 11.

"Tôi rất là vinh hạnh và tri ân các bạn đã chọn Oakland Woman's Resource Center," chủ tịch Penni Hudis phát biểu tại buổi lễ trao chi phiếu tại nhà thờ Tin Lành của San Quentin. "Trung tâm này là một chỗ đặc biệt và đã trải qua 33 năm phục vụ tất cả cư dân của quận hạt Alameda và Contra Costa."

Quản thủ B. Rousse của Cords Gallery điều hành buổi triển lãm nghệ thuật.

"Đề tôi vẽ một bức tranh," ông Rousse nói, "Rất nhiều người đến thăm Cords Gallery và khi họ biết rằng những nghệ thuật này do tù nhân tạo ra để ủng hộ ung thư vú thì người ta rất cảm động. Nó là một phương tiện cho phép các bạn đóng góp. Tôi đến đây đi

bộ và một khi gặp được các bạn tôi cảm nhận được sự quan tâm từ các bạn ngay lập tức."

Rousse nói rằng ông nhận tất cả các loại nghệ thuật, tranh vẽ hoặc bài viết, "những người bên ngoài rất là háo hức và muốn nghe từ các bạn."

Triển lãm nghệ thuật vừa rồi đem lại hơn \$1,000, và tất cả những số tiền đó chuyển đến Oakland Women's Resource Center. Tình nguyện viên của hội SQ CARES Samatha Feld nói, "Tôi bị tràn ngập bởi những câu chuyện và sự tận lực của các bạn để ủng hộ một cộng đồng rộng hơn. Sự cam kết của tôi được sâu hơn trong 2015 khi mẹ tôi mất do bệnh ung thư vú. Đây là một cách đặc biệt để vinh danh mẹ tôi và nối kết với những người khác để chia sẻ những sự mất mát và đau thương."

Cái ý tưởng đầu tiên cho sự đi bộ và gây quỹ trong San Quentin xảy ra vào năm 2009 sau khi một tù nhân xem Avon Walk chống lại ung thư vú trên TV.

"Tôi nêu lên ý kiến này đến Laura Bowman," ông Stephen Pascasio nói, người đã từng làm quản lý hợp tác cộng đồng ở thời điểm đó. "Chúng tôi viết lá thư đến trưởng trại tù

và được ông ta chấp thuận — cho đến nay chúng tôi đã gây quỹ hơn \$70,000.

Kim Bailey, người đã ở đó từ lúc đầu, nói Elena Tootell, một trưởng y viện thời gian đó, "rất hoan nghênh ý tưởng gây quỹ và hai ngày đi bộ trong San Quentin."

Feld và một cư dân tại San Quentin Edmond Richardson làm chủ buổi lễ trao chi phiếu.

Buổi lễ bắt đầu với một màn biểu diễn nhạc rap do James Metters, Michael Kirk Patrick, Derry Brown, và Raiveon "Ray-Ray" Wooden trình diễn.

"Chúng ta có thể thắng năm nay — chiến thắng đang ở đây — San Quentin đã có kế hoạch," đó là những lời nói đem lại tiếng

vỗ tay từ khán giả. "Chúng ta có sứ mệnh đánh bại bệnh này — xin gửi đến tất cả những người thân quá cố, chúng tôi xin làm lễ kỷ niệm trong ngày này."

Mẹ và chị của Kim Bailey đã qua đời vì căn bệnh này cách nhau vài tháng.

Bailey nói với khán giả về việc mang mẹ cô đến một trong những cuộc đi bộ của SQ CARES, nhưng mẹ cô chỉ có thể ngồi trên xe lăn. Vài tù nhân ngồi trò chuyện với mẹ cô.

"Tất cả những gì mẹ cô nói đến hết cuộc đời là sự

trải nghiệm đó," Bailey nói chuyện đó thúc đẩy cô tham gia với SQ CARES.

Buổi lễ kết thúc với lời mời đến những khán giả nào muốn lên sân khấu chia sẻ những kinh nghiệm cá nhân với bệnh ung thư.

—*Dịch giả-Dũng Trần*



File Photo

Những tù nhân đăng ký để tham gia cuộc đi bộ ủng hộ ung thư

Tuân Theo Sự Cải Cách Của Tòa Án

Tác Giả: **Alfred King**
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Tiểu bang Cali đang có một sửa đổi quan trọng là tuân theo lời của tòa trong việc giảm đi tệ nạn đông dân số trong nhà tù và cải thiện trong mặt y tế cho tù nhân trong 35 nhà tù của tiểu bang, một báo cáo mới đưa ra.

Sự thay đổi về nghị luật và luật lệ có được một kết quả đo lường trong vấn đề quần số của tù nhân có ước lượng là 138.8%, theo báo cáo của văn phòng quản giáo cải huấn tù nhân của tiểu bang Cali (CDCR).

Đây là lần báo cáo lần thứ 68 từ một quan tòa ra lệnh giảm bớt số lượng tù nhân xuống 137.5%.

CDCR đang tuân theo lệnh tòa và giảm bớt tù nhân trong vòng bốn năm nay, dựa theo lời báo cáo đưa ra vào ngày 16 tháng 12.

Thay đổi gồm có:

1. Theo nghị luật 57 (Prop. 57), được bình chọn vào tháng 11 năm 2016, mở rộng và tạo nhiều cơ hội cho việc nhận được điểm tốt từ tù nhân.
2. Cơ hội để nhận được hạnh kiểm tốt cũng được mở rộng ra cho những tù nhân

đạt được bằng cấp trung học, và tham gia đủ 52 tiếng đồng hồ vào những chương trình cải huấn. Luật này có hiệu lực bắt đầu từ ngày 9 tháng Giêng.

3. Văn phòng tư pháp chấp thuận khẩn cấp điều luật cho tù nhân không bạo lực một phương pháp để phân biệt giữa những tù nhân với án tù được xác định và những án chưa xác định của tù nhân không dính tội bạo lực. Nó đã trở thành khế ước vào ngày 1 tháng Giêng năm 2019.
4. Một tòa quyết định vào ngày 9 tháng 7 thay đổi chính sách của CDCR cho các ủy

nhiệm về an toàn cho xã hội trước phương pháp lựa chọn sẽ không được ứng dụng. Tất cả được thừa hưởng bất kể án tù đã xác định hay chưa xác định, hai nhóm này sẽ được đưa qua hội đồng xét xử án treo để họ quyết định, bắt chấp đến hạnh kiểm của tù nhân khi đang ở tù.

5. CDCR tiếp tục thi hành điều luật khác để duy trì và phục tùng, giao kèo trong tiểu bang với mức tội đa giam giữ tù nhân tại trại giam trong quận hạt, trại giam của cộng đồng, trại giam tư nhân và loại trừ đi trại giam ở ngoài tiểu bang.

6. Phương pháp ứng dụng cho án treo dành cho tù nhân bệnh tật, chương trình án treo cũng dành cho tù nhân 60 tuổi trở lên, và đã thụ án 25 năm trong tù.
7. Các hợp đồng hiện nay đang ở quận San Diego, Los Angeles,, Butte, và Kern để giữ những tù nhân có điều kiện vào chương trình trở về.
8. Tiểu bang Cali hiện đang mở rộng thêm chương trình khác cho nữ tù nhân để cung cấp cho họ với một tầm rộng hơn để cải huấn và giúp đỡ họ cai nghiện rượu và ma túy, tìm việc làm và nhờ sự trợ giúp của xã hội, giáo dục

và đoàn tụ gia đình.

Trại quản giáo trở về, Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Programs (CCTRP) hiện tại đang ở các quận như San Diego, Santa Fe Spring, Bakersfield, Stockton và Sacramento, được tường trình.

Kể từ ngày 13 tháng 11, có 340 nữ tù nhân hiện đang tham gia vào chương trình CCTRP. Ngân sách của năm 2019 và 2020 đã cung cấp \$7.5 triệu cho chương trình này và sẽ tài trợ thêm cho hai trại ở quận Los Angeles cho 60 nữ tù nhân.

—*Dịch giả-Tú Trần*

SQ Hosts 13th Annual Brothers in Pen Public Reading



Photo courtesy of Zoe Mullery

Micheal Cooke, Joe Krauter, Lawrence “Udukobraye” Pela, Emile DeWeaver, Jimmy Carlin, Zoe Mullery, J.B. Wells and Troy Williams

By Timothy Hicks
Staff writer

Zoe Mullery has listened to thousands of stories inside San Quentin since 1999. She facilitates a weekly creative writing class for about two dozen men.

Mullery’s small frame is a big presence on the prison compound as she’s watched several men from her writing class make parole and continue writing.

“I do it because I love the power of stories. I think storytelling is what people are made of, their creation,” said Mullery as members of Brothers in Pen held their 13th Annual Public Reading, on Feb.1.

Mullery has been volunteering at San Quentin for 21 years and says she’ll continue working with the program’s sponsor, The William James Association. She said that it satisfies her to see people leave and live better lives. “It’s like a happy ending but not so much an ending,” she said.

Beaming proudly while standing in the prison’s Catholic Chapel, Mullery opened the show with a warm poem titled, “*Let These Words*.” Then she introduced the writers who had paroled and returned: Emile DeWeaver, Troy Williams, Micheal (Yahya) Cooke, Jimmy Carlin, Lawrence “Udukobraye” Pela and Joe Krauter, who read what he’d written while still incarcerated: “Glasses.”

All of the returning writers were adorned in their street

clothes.

“I’m so happy that all this is happening,” said Mullery. “It takes details to pull this off and get everyone in the room together. I’ve seen some beautiful reunions.”

Pela told the men in blue, “People are jealous of what we have. They want our look and our life, our look of freedom. So guys, hurry up and do what you have to do to make it out.”

More than 70 outside guests, many their first time inside a prison, mingled with the men in blue.

“I met some interesting people,” said Lily Rachles. “I’m excited to be welcomed into this community, and I look forward to coming back.”

Rachles attended the event with her stepmother, science book writer Mary Roach. Rachles said “A Paradoxical Situation,” written by Charles Daron, was inspirational.

The editor of Prison Focus Magazine and News Paper, Kim Pollak, was also in the prison for the first time. She knows Mullery, and she asked, “Why aren’t these types of programs in every prison, and why are people with so much beautiful talent in prison in the first place? The raw truth what they share is phenomenal. It’s so unique and come from a different place.”

Emcee George “Mesro” Coles introduced each performer:

Charles Talib Brooks read “13 Bars.” The audience remained quiet as he read about

what 13 bars meant to prisoners, as told by the character, Omar. The crowd was enlightened and chuckled hearing things like, There are 13 bars on a cell door, and there are 13 steps between the tiers. Tim Bottomley gave a brief description of his crime and achievements before reading, “*Cross my Heart*.”

Elton Kelly read “Market Street,” which was about the perspective of a rich person to the homeless population.

Charles Daron read “A Paradoxical Situation.” The story was about his experience in the Los Angeles County Jail and an encounter with a deputy who abused prisoners with “Flash Therapy Sessions.” He said, “I was 8 years old when I started stealing, which I now regret because I can see clearly I was wrong. I now write urban novels as a form of therapy because I can relate to the characters.”

Clark Gerhartsreiter read a tale of a paranoid conspiracy theorist, “The Tyranny of Small Decisions.”

Richard Dean Morris recently paroled and Stu Ross read his story, “Dolly Caulder.” The story is about a woman who was brain dead and in a coma. Her spirit guide, Stanley, gave her the ins and outs of purgatory.

Gary Lee Roberson read “Just Win More Than You Lose.” It’s about going to court for serious charges and winning his freedom.

Joseph Krauter read “Glasses,” which is the last chapter of a novel he is writing since his release from

prison.

Stu Ross read “Going Bald Doesn’t Make You Less Attractive.” The title speaks for itself.

Anonymous read “Judgment Day.” The story centers on how prisoners present themselves before the parole board and the information that parole commissioners use to decide a prisoner’s fate.

George Coles read “Mesro-piece Theatre.” It depicted a mysterious fantasy filled with fictitious characters.

Michael Jace read “Unfortunate Statistic,” which describes a gruesome discovery of an African American who has been murdered and how he deals with being Black, a police officer and how that affects his family relations.

Kevin D. Sawyer read

“You Were Thinking.” The second person narrative is about a person on parole who returns to society trying to adjust to society. The parolee is indifferent to it all.

Juan Haines read “Treading Habits.” The story is about how a person deals with the fact that he’s dying.

Kevin Flanagan read “Now What?” His story started like an exotic, erotic love story, but it ended up becoming a story of a man and woman just simply in love.

Michael Zell read “Go Niners!” After a moment of silence for Kobe Bryant, Zell told the story of an experience at a Niner Super Bowl.

Michael Calvin Holmes read “Waking Up Dead,” which was an odd story about death.

Paul Stauffer read “Jeffrey Wolsey,” a strange story that contains futuristic science related to mind and body.

Osibun Walton read “I Wasn’t Ready.” It’s a compassionate story about the loss of his brother Timothy.

Rahsaan “New York” Thomas read “Change in Places.” It is a memoir about accepting accountability for the crime that landed him in prison.

Troy Williams left the prison population with words of encouragement. “It’s always strange to walk back up in here and see the people that you know like family. Then I leave, and it hurts,” he paused then added, “We need y’all home so we can transform our community into what we want it to be.”



Photo courtesy of Zoe Mullery

Emily Harris, Emile DeWeaver, invited guest with Lawrence Pela

Prison bans on literature becoming more commonplace nationwide

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

Prison officials throughout the country are restricting reading materials in prison libraries. The state of Florida has banned 20,000 titles, and Texas has banned 10,000 titles, claiming that the prohibited reading material could stir up disorder.

Officials say there has been an uptick of drug smuggling via books, whose pages can be soaked with synthetic marijuana of other potentially dangerous liquids. Dozens of prison staffers have been sent to the emergency room with tingling skin, headaches and dizziness after handling inmates belongings.

In September 2018 Pennsylvania banned all book donations for prison libraries

-- New York, Maryland and the Federal Bureau of Prisons have implemented similar policies. Washington state banned most used books from its prisons but backtracked due to public outrage.

A report by PEN America protested restrictions around the country, declaring the situation so arbitrary and sweeping as to effectively be the nation’s largest book ban. Texas prisons have prohibited *Where’s Waldo* and a collection of Shakespeare’s sonnets because of racy illustrations. California officials have banned issues of the *New Yorker*, *Atlantic* and *Rolling Stone* magazines, citing nudity in cartoons and art work. Prison officials banned one issue of *Rolling Stone* because it had a photograph

of a blow-up doll.

Mother Jones magazine reported as early as the late 1700s prisoners received religious texts to encourage their rehabilitation. In the 1940s, California prison librarian Herman Spector pushed the theory of bibliotherapy, which held that prisoners could be reformed through reading. Dr. C.V. Morrison recommended book prescriptions for prisoners. Parole officials at San Quentin Prison took library records into account when deciding parole eligibility.

According to a 2014 study by psychologists, bibliotherapy in jails and prisons helped to reduce prisoner’s depression and psychological distress. A former prisoner of Maryland, Vince Greco, said time spent in the library

was “the only freedom” he had. The head librarian of Maryland prisons, Glennor Shirley, found that prisoners with access to good library services were less likely to file lawsuits about prison conditions.

Shirley resigned in 2011 because of funding cuts. During the recession the budget was reduced from \$200,000 a year to almost nothing. Today another prison librarian, who asked not to be named, said large facilities get about \$1,000 a year for recreational books. Illinois spent \$276 on non-legal books for its 28 facilities in 2017 compared to \$750,000 annually in the early 2000s.

The Prison Literature Project (PLP) received about five to 10 letters a month when it started in the 1980s. Today

it receives thousands from around the country. PLP volunteers in Berkeley receive requests for everything from *Harry Potter* series, *Marvel Comics*, Stephen King and dictionaries.

But, many books never reach their intended recipients. Security rules in most prisons prohibit hardcover books because they can conceal contraband. Books about sex, racism, violence and gambling are often off limits. Prison Legal News magazine has to go to the courts to overturn bans by California and Florida.

Some departments encourage prisoners to read on tablets to avoid the problems of paper. Pennsylvania prisoners can choose from more than 8,500 e-books through vendor GTL. Tablets cost

\$150 and titles that can be downloaded for free outside of prison costs as much as \$24.99. In West Virginia prisoners receive the tablets for free but are charged three cents a minute to read them, even though the books would be free online.

According to *Mother Jones* skimping on reading does not make sense if the goal is to help people stay out of trouble later. In 1991 Massachusetts launched a program that diverted offenders from prison if they completed a reading and discussion course. An early study of the program, which expanded to parts of Texas, New York and other states, found just 18% of participants were convicted of another crime, compared with 45% of a control group.

Snippets

Inventor Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone on March 10, 1876 with the first telephone message recorded in history, being, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you."

Romulus & Remus, the twins who founded Rome were said to have been fathered by the Roman god of war, Mars, who the month of March was named after.

Ides of March, the fifteenth of the month is the anniversary of the assassination of Julius Caesar who was stabbed in 44 B.C. by government officials.

South Bend, Indiana, is home to the University of Notre Dame. Their mascot is the Fighting Irish.

Hash, corned beef and cabbage is the most prominent holiday dish which is served on Saint Patrick's Day.

CROSSWORD

Edited by Jan Perry

Theme: 2N1

Across

Down

1. Split

6. Jessica of *Fantastic Four*

10. Savory paste

14. Passage

15. 1900s Fr. Physicist Louis (Eugene Felix)

16. Prayer leader

17. Come to think of it

18. Pet accessories

20. Precedes barb, cross, or finch

22. Military personnel (Abbr.)

23. Mother of Constantine the Great

26. Attraction

31. Large primates

32. Type of steak

34. Gen-X org.

35. Fall behind

36. Sci-fi warrior

37. A sharp edge formed by two curved surfaces

38. Actress who plays Maggie on *A Million Little Things*

42. Lucifer

44. Greasy

45. Tina's ex

48. Unit of a chemical element

49. Twinkle

51. 13, 14, 15 and 16 of 26

52. Member of the former Hindu kingdom in c. India

54. In slow tempo

56. Grief (Ind.)

57. Remnant

58. Jazz singer who is married to Elvis Costello

63. Essential oil

67. Pituitary gland hormone (Abbr.)

68. Actress Falco

69. Mecca shrine

70. Prevent someone from seeing

71. Type of African antelope

72. Assisted

1. Prison group

2. Invention

3. Keyboard button

4. Jet's accessories

5. Grass up

6. Murray or Warhol

7. Tolstoy, Fender, or Esaki

8. Go away!

9. *Little Women* author Louisa May

10. Precedes pusher, bug or box

11. Hospital personnel org. (Abbr.)

12. Precedes boy, pit or seal

13. Rescue personnel (Abbr.)

19. Classic poem

21. Strong containers

23. Producer Prince or actor Holbrook

24. Pollution monitoring org. (Abbr.)

25. Testator

26. US state that gain statehood on Dec. 3, 1818

27. Type of gem

28. Lobe adorning

29. ____ Lanka

30. Prison cell necessity (Abbr.)

33. Big day announcement

36. Chinese dynasty

37. ____ McBeal

39. Andes camel

40. Taiwanese dialect

41. Having to do with the small intestines

42. Smith, Browne or Hill

43. One step ____ time

46. Type of carp

47. Athletic substance (Abbr.)

49. Follows money or salt

50. Flattop, e.g.

51. Chinese sorghum liquor

53. Charlemagne ____ God

55. Capital of Bangladesh

57. Daytime host

58. Court workers (Abbr.)

59. Govt. agency

60. Swallowed

61. Knights' org.

62. Building designer's org. (Abbr.)

64. Smidgen

65. Honest ____

66. Cool

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72

By Jonathan Chiu

J O H N S p e n c e r R E M B O T T

C L E A T I D A V I D E O

V I P E R S E T I R O N Y

D O S A B E T A V E R N S

A C U R A R I M

S T A C Y S M A K E E N D S

W I S E M A L I N A R T

A A H J e n n i f e r J A S O N L e i g h M O E

M R E G O R S E M E N A

P A R M A L E E I J S S E L

A R I R O M A N

T R A I N E R T A M S S I

H A L L E E M T E T H E R

A M B E R S E E S H E M A

T S A R T A R D e a n C A I N

Last Issue's Answer

Sudoku Corner

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

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

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

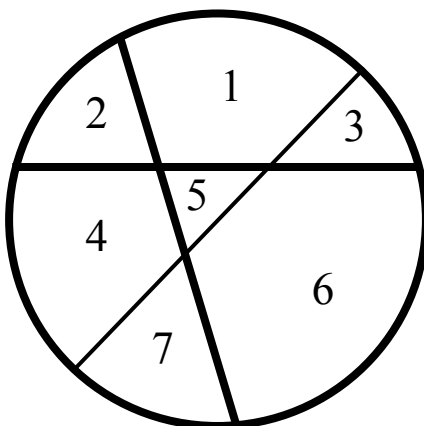
3	8	2	9	6	4	7	1	5
7	1	6	2	8	5	9	4	3
9	4	5	3	7	1	2	8	6
2	9	8	5	4	6	1	3	7
5	6	1	7	9	3	4	2	8
4	7	3	1	2	8	6	5	9
1	5	9	6	3	2	8	7	4
8	3	7	4	1	9	5	6	2
6	2	4	8	5	7	3	9	1

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

Brain Teasers

Cutting the Pie


With one straight cut you can slice a pie into two pieces. A second cut that crosses the first one will produce four pieces, and a third cut (see the illustration) can produce as many as seven pieces. What is the largest number of pieces that you can get with six straight cuts ?



Easy Equation Answer

$7^2=49$.
The 6 has been turned over to a 9 and the 2 becomes a square

Valentine Card Makers



Seven valentine card makers can make seven valentine cards in one hour and forty minutes, the theory of proportionality implies fourteen valentine card-makers will take the same amount of time, therefore the answer is one hour and forty minutes

If you would like to submit a photograph to be placed in SQ News just because, please send it with name(s) and a brief message to go with your photo. Please understand, we will not be able to return your photo so send a copy and address the letter to:

San Quentin News, 1 Main Street, San Quentin, CA 94964

The dice above have been rearranged. Can you work out the new sequence from the clues? An even number is immediately to the left of the number 1. Number 2 dice is to the right of an odd number. The two far left dice add up to ten.

America stagnated by “compounding moral debts”

BOOK REVIEW

By **Juan Haines**
Senior Editor

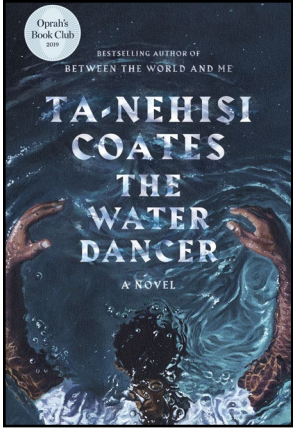
Two essays that appeared in *The Atlantic* magazine set up Ta-Nehisi Coates as a voice for African-Americans. He wrote *The Case for Reparations* in 2014 and in 2015, he produced *Letter to My Son*. In *The Case for Reparations* Coates cites, “Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy.” Coates argues, “Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole.” In the article, Coates uses the in-depth history of Clyde Ross, a real person, to support the case for reparations. In *Letter to My Son*, excerpted before publication of *Between the World and Me*, Coates tells his 15-year-old,

“Here is what I would like for you to know: In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body—it is heritage.” The father cites his own life and compelling evidence to say that African-Americans live under a deliberately inflicted state of violence. Since the publication of those works, there has been little movement to push for the US to consider its “moral debt” to the descendants of slaves. Since 2015, police have killed hundreds of African-Americans either wrongly or mistakenly, yet no laws were broken in doing so. Coates’ latest focus on African-Americans combines all of his historical knowledge in, *The Water Dancer* (2019), a novel full of magical realism. The historical fiction is set during the oppressive time of US slavery. The protagonist, Hiram, struggles against what it means to have a father and brother who are white, yet his darkened skin enslaves him. In the midst of subjugation, he has

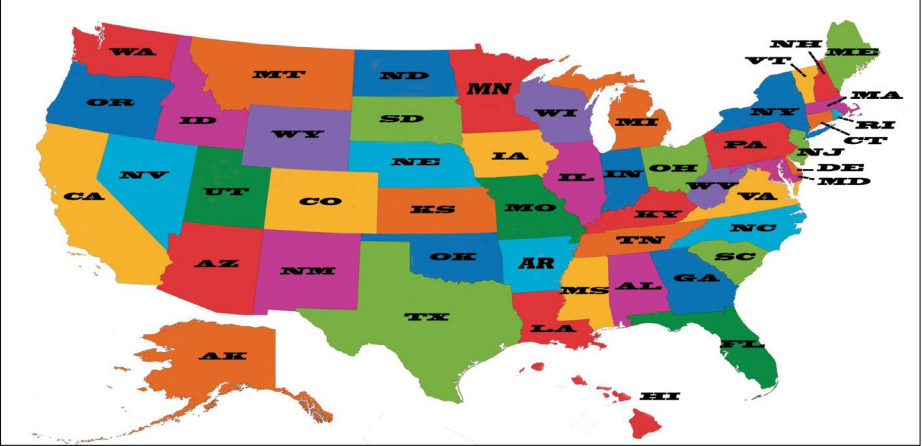
his eyes on a slave woman that his White uncle owns. Coates uses his scholarly knowledge about the Underground Railroad, fugitive slave laws and the abolitionists as fodder to set up various dramas that his characters must navigate. In doing so, Coates created a world different from reality, while at the same time a believable world based on American history. The following narration describes the feelings involved in Hiram’s enslavement. He focuses most acutely on the separation from his family, another parallel to incarceration. *To sell a child right from under his mother, you must know that mother only in the thinnest way possible. To strip a man down, condemn him to be beaten, flayed alive, then anointed with salt water, you cannot feel him the way you feel your own. You cannot see yourself in him, lest your hand be stayed, and your hand must never be stayed, because the moment it is, the Tasked will see that you*

see them, and thus see yourself. The following passage points to Hiram’s acceptance of the conditions that created his stark reality as well as his detachment from humanity: *Slavery is everyday longing, is being born into a world of forbidden victuals and tantalizing untouchables—the land around you, the clothes you hem, the biscuits you bake.* Coates is able to capture Hiram’s docility and hopelessness that comes with slavery, which also is a condition shared with the incarcerated and rehabilitated: *So many of us who went, went with dignity and respect. And it occurred to me how absurd it was to cling to morality when surrounded by people who had none.* Coates uses Hiram’s memory to recall events in great detail as a literary device to drive the novel’s plot, which translates to “freedom by any means

necessary.” *The Water Dancer* is the product of Coates’ thinking in all of his works—that African Americans are integrated to all of US history, not just segregated segments that seem irrelevant today. The story is a remarkably poignant exploration of oppression that has happened and can’t be changed. In *The Water Dancer*, Coates explores the possibility of what can be changed by using historical fiction and magical realism as a guide.



San Quentin’s community college, Prison University Project, put together a book club to read and discuss *The Water Dancer*. About 25 incarcerated men and selected folks from the outside met on a Thursday afternoon for the review. Most of the people from the outside, despite of being “woke,” were not familiar with what it means to live the incarcerated life. Still, the discussion focused on speculation as to who Coates is trying to reach and there was considerable interest in the dehumanizing elements in common between prisons and slavery.



NEWS BRIEFS

1. USA — Last year, the state of Texas carried out the most executions in the US with nine. Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee followed with three each. Florida had two, and South Dakota and Missouri had one. Pending death warrants for 2020 as of Jan. 17 show that Ohio is leading the nation with nine, followed by Texas with seven, Tennessee with three and Georgia with one, the Death Penalty Information Center reports.

2. USA — Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois, *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, *Dreams Of My Father* by Barack Obama, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *She’s Come Undone* by Wally Lamb, *Kindred* by Octavia Butler, and *Mosby’s Medical Dictionary* are among thousands of books banned by state and federal prisons in America, *The Birmingham Times* reports.

3. Washington, DC — Federal courts have cleared the way for more than 2,400 federal prisoners to have their sentences reduced while compassionate releases have been approved for another 124 seriously ill prisoners, the U.S. Justice Department reported last January.

4. Washington, DC—Incarcerated people doing time in a jail are publishing a six-page newsletter, called *Inside Scoop*, *The Washington Post* reports. The 8½ by 11 publication usually has from 10 to 16 articles. There are articles about criminal justice reform and jail programs as well as poems and advice columns, including one about finances.

5. New Jersey —In a move

he said was in honor of Martin Luther King’s legacy, Gov. Phil Murphy on Jan. 20 signed a trio of bills into law to further criminal justice reform, *NJ.com* reports. State officials say one new law could streamline the parole process and reduce the state’s prison population. The other measures change the rules on when authorities can seize valuables and money in the state and allocates taxpayer dollars to fund programs to reduce violence, *NJ.com* reports.

6. Florida —The state’s Supreme Court issued an advisory opinion Jan. 16 that felons must first pay certain fines and fees before gaining access to the polls, *Mother Jones* reports. The decision is not legally binding but could influence future rulings by federal judges and put the re-enfranchisement of potentially 1.4 million Floridians at risk.

7. Georgia — Jimmy Fletcher Meders was granted clemency hours before his scheduled execution Jan. 16, in part because jurors wanted him to be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole, *CNN* reports. Four years after his trial, the state added life without parole as a possible punishment.

8. Huntsville, Texas — John Gardner was the first person executed in the U.S. this year, *The Texas Tribune* reports. Gardner was executed with a lethal dose of pentobarbital at 6:20 p.m. on Jan. 15.

9. Nashville, Tenn.— State Attorney General Herbert Slatery is pursuing execution dates for nine death row inmates, all men, *The New York Times* report. Four of the nine are Black. Statistics show Blacks make up 17% of the state’s population but about half of its Death Row prisoners. There

also is a geographic disparity: since 2001, only eight of the state’s 95 counties have imposed sustained death sentences. Almost half of the men on Death Row are from Shelby County, which includes Memphis and is Tennessee’s largest county but it includes less than 14% of the state population, according to a court filing asking the executions to be put on hold.

10. Vacaville, CA — The *Jewish News Weekly* of Northern California reports that James A. “Sneaky” White Jr., a Jewish prisoner convicted of murder and imprisoned for nearly four decades, stepped out of prison on Jan. 21. While incarcerated, he began community outreach programs, including a Vietnam veterans’ group while in San Quentin, one of several prisons where he spent time. At Ironwood, he convinced a warden to help him start the college program. At the time there was only one other program like it in the state, at San Quentin; now nearly every prison in California has adopted the format. White also created a culture of charity in prison, convincing fellow inmates and guards to donate to local organizations. Over the years, he helped raise several hundred thousand dollars for everything from seeing-eye dogs for veterans to a local girls’ softball team, all through in-prison fundraisers like walkathons and pizza sales.

11. Kentucky—Less than a month after Governor Andy Beshear signed an executive order restoring the right to vote to roughly 140,000 people with felony convictions who have completed their sentence, state Republicans introduced a bill that would make it harder for those people to vote, *Truthout* reports.

New San Francisco District Attorney’s reform plans

By **Vincent E. O’Bannon**
Journalism Guild Writer

Recently sworn in as San Francisco’s new District Attorney, Chesa Boudin has bold plans to reform the city’s criminal justice system. “Our criminal justice system is failing all of us. It is not keeping us safe,” said Boudin in a recent *SF Examiner* article. “It is contributing to a vicious cycle of crime and punishment.” As the head of San Francisco’s investigative division, Boudin said he will form a Conviction Integrity Unit of special advisers to address wrongful conviction allegations and excessive sentencing. Boudin, a Rhodes Scholar and Yale graduate, ran for district attorney on a platform of reducing mass incarceration. “There have been debates about how sympathetic Boudin will be to victims of crime, with some questioning if his policies will be empathetic to them, and others

arguing that he will stand up for crime victims,” the *SF Examiner* reported. We have a shared understanding that “there is a balance between justice and fairness,” said San Francisco Mayor London Breed. “I appreciate that Chesa Boudin understands that balance. We can hold people accountable, and we can make sure there is fairness in our criminal justice system. I am looking forward over the next four years of working with him to do just that.” Opposed by the San Francisco police union, Boudin has been labeled a “radical” for his extremely progressive plans. “Radical simply means grasping things at the root,” Boudin said, quoting one of his supporters, activist Angela Davis. “For far too long, criminal justice policy has been shaking the trees, when the plant itself has rooted out. The solution lies beneath the surface.” Boudin views the criminal justice system as failing and points to current

tough-on-crime sentencing enhancements, immigration prosecutions, and “illegal searches” after minor traffic violations as problematic. During his inaugural speech, Boudin told a crowd of public defenders, former mayors, and police brass, “These failures (of our criminal justice system) have led us, as a community, as a nation, to accept the unacceptable. Join me. Join this movement. Join us in rejecting the notion that to be free, we must cage others.” Boudin is the son of radicals who were convicted for a robbery that led to the deaths of two police officers and a security guard. In his speech, he described visiting his parents in prison as a child. Although his mother was there to hear his speech, his father is still incarcerated. Speaking of his father, Boudin said, “He taught me that we are all more than our worst mistakes.” And in a spoken aside to his father, said, “Thank you for teaching me about forgiveness and redemption.”

Vermont detention center closing

By **Kerry Rudd**
Staff Writer

Vermont’s only juvenile detention facility no longer has children confined behind its walls, after being targeted by lawsuits in recent years for its restraint practices. “It’s the first time the Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center in Essex has been empty since it opened more than 30 years ago,” said the Nov. 21 *VT Digger* article. The center has a design capacity of 30 beds for youths ages 10 to 18. The institution is overseen by the Vermont Department for Children and Families. With the facility’s population at zero, some Vermont politicians are questioning whether the compound should be used to incarcerate youths. “The question is to use the building for juveniles or not,” said Rep. Alice Emmons, D-Springfield, chair of the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions. “And then if you don’t use it for juveniles, what are you going to use it for?” Lawmakers discussed in

session a proposal that would have replaced the facility at a cost of \$23.3 million, but no action has been taken yet. Emmons said that before the Legislature invests money into construction, the state needs to figure out its policy. Sen. Dick Sears, D-Bennington, and chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he would rely on the administration to offer recommendations on Woodside’s future. Sears said the general fund budget for Woodside totals about \$5.5 million. He expects the next legislative session to include discussion on the facility’s future. “I still think you have a certain number of kids who are going to need to be dealt with, whether that number is three, four or 10,” Sears stated. “There’s still a need for detention for difficult to place kids.” Lawsuits against the facility’s practices were brought by the Vermont Defender General’s Office in state court and another filed by Disability Rights Vermont in federal court. In the federal suit, Judge Geoffrey Crawford wrote

in his ruling about a video he reviewed that shows the restraint of a teenage girl at Woodside who is naked and streaked with feces. The judge used the words “horrific” and “entirely inappropriate” to describe what he saw. The judge further stated in his order that the video “demonstrates in the space of a few minutes Woodside’s limited ability to care for a child who is experiencing symptoms of serious mental illness.” The separate lawsuit in state court was dismissed by Judge Mary Miles Teachout as “moot” after the teen alleging the dangerous use of restraints at the facility was released. Although there’s uncertainty regarding the facility’s practices and future, there are some who find Woodside’s lack of residency to be a step in the right direction. “This is quite extraordinary,” said Vermont Defender General Matthew Valerio. “This really is evidence of a shift in both demographics as well as attitudes as to how we deal with kids to get the best results for them.”

Grammy-winning rapper Common performs in prison

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

On a misty night in December at Norco State Prison, Grammy award winning rapper and actor Common turned in a riveting performance before thousands of prisoners who stood in the mud to witness the performance.

Interacting with the incarcerated, backed by a full band, Common had the crowd swaying, shouting and fist pumping.

The atmosphere was typical of a concert on the streets, except there were no cellphones being held in the air.

Prisoners bounced balls made of plastic trash bags in

the air, symbolizing beach balls tossed around during baseball games, the *Riverside Press-Enterprise* reported on Dec. 6.

Common toured the California Rehabilitation Center in Norco, stopping to admire a painting of himself done by Yusef Pierce, who presented the portrait to him in appreciation for the work he is doing in the criminal justice arena.

Pierce saying, “For him to be reaching out and showing that we matter to him is really important.”

Concert organizer Sam Lewis in conjunction with Common’s Imagine Justice initiative, and Represent Justice worked tirelessly to put the show together.

Performing with Common,

was Bobby Gonzales, ambassador for Represent Justice, who was recently released from prison himself.

Gonzales said, “Deep down everyone yearns for the moment that we can let our guards down and receive that loving energy. It’s a dialogue with the audience that’s no different than a therapy session, with the ice-breaker of hip-hop. I would describe it as soul shaking.”

Lewis, executive director of Anti-Recidivism Coalition and event organizer, commented that this will not be the last time Common performs in a prison. He has already done shows at Folsom, Calipatria, Valley State Prison and the Central California Women’s Facility in

Chowchilla.

Lewis is also involved in a campaign to amend the California Constitution to allow people on parole to vote.

“We should believe in the resiliency of humanity and provide hope to the population; prison historically has been a hopeless place,” Lewis said.

Andre Williams, 34 from Fresno was thrilled that Common took the time to perform in Norco. “It means a whole lot that there are people out there who have hope for us,” Williams said.

The performance was timed to draw attention to the release of the movie “*Just Mercy*.” It was adapted from the book of the same name written by Bryan Stevenson,

the attorney who worked to free the wrongfully convicted man in the movie.

Jamie Foxx portrays Walter McMillian, wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to die for a murder he did not commit. Foxx has been presented the “Spotlight Award” for the role, *Sentinel News Service* reported Jan. 2.

The chairman of the film festival Harold Matzner said, “This is an inspirational drama that brings an important story about how our justice system can fail to the big screen.”

The movie was shown to California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who was “really shaken by the film,” notes the article.

Stevenson has visited San Quentin as a guest of the Prison University Project to discuss the book the movie is based on as well as his efforts in bringing about criminal justice reform.

He founded The Equal Justice Initiative, which works to end mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and protect human rights.

This movie joins other movies recently released that focus attention on in the criminal justice system, such as Clemency by writer director Chinonye Chukwu. That slow-paced movie describes the grim realities of capital punishment in America, notes *Entertainment Weekly*.



Photo courtesy of CDCR

Common concert at Norco State Prison

SQN staffer Johnson earns Masters Degree

By Timothy Hicks
Staff Writer

Striving for a good education has its challenges for anyone, but for incarcerated students those trials and tribulations are greater. However, one incarcerated man has persevered and has become the first student to earn a Master’s of Business Administration (MBA) degree at San Quentin State Prison in almost a decade.

Michael Johnson, 37, earned his MBA with an emphasis in “Leadership” from Adams State University of Colorado, where the motto is “Great stories start here!”

“He is the first guy to receive that level of a degree since I started overseeing the education department in 2013,” said Michael Wheelless, the principal of San Quentin’s education department. Wheelless is in charge of handling educational tasks and the overall education responsibilities, plus keeping track of who receives AA degrees and BA degrees.

There are other outside correspondence colleges active at San Quentin, as well as the Prison University Project that offers face-to-face classes and awards Associate Degrees upon graduation.

“For an incarcerated person to achieve any accomplishment in education is remarkable,” Wheelless said.

“Since Proposition 57 was implemented in November of

2016, there have been plenty of instances when inmates have earned time off their sentences for achieving AA and BA degrees, but this is the first time under the San Quentin rules of Prop.57 that I’ve seen a Master’s earned.”

Smiling while leaning back in his chair and beaming proudly, Wheelless continued,

“I’m impressed with Mr. Johnson’s educational achievement, at having earned an MBA degree while incarcerated. It means even more to have earned it while in prison rather than being on the streets.”

However, Johnson is modest about earning the MBA during his prison stay. Although he received his bachelor’s degree while at another prison, the challenges there were much greater to overcome.

“I treated my prison time as if I was away at college,” Johnson said, “I did my time and did not allow the time to do me.”

Johnson took such courses as Managerial Accounting and Business Management along with a laundry list of other business classes-- and emerged triumphant.

He maintained a 3.86 grade point average, earning “A’s” and “B’s,” grades that he could not imagine earning back in Woodland, California where he was born.

“When I was in the fourth grade I could not even read;

I was like in what they call, “slow learning classes,” said Johnson. He was a late starter and said that he actually started learning after he got to high school.

“I was determined to learn, though,” said Johnson.

Other SQ residents stopped by to congratulate Johnson even during this interview, but he modestly accepts compliments on his achievements from his peers. His wish is that he can encourage other guys in prison to pursue their dreams like he did.

Johnson understands the challenges an incarcerated person can face while in prison. During his humbling six-year prison experience, Johnson was not always on the right path to education. It was a life-altering experience with a family member that sparked his desire of higher learning.

“My first year in prison my grandmother passed away,” Johnson recalls, “Her name was Mary Rita Moncrief. She was my inspiration to do better. She raised me and when she passed, it pained me that I could not be there for the funeral.”

He somberly sank back in his seat at the memory. So, in honor of her memory, Johnson wanted to do something that would make his grandmother proud of him. For Johnson, education was the best way to show his appreciation to his grandmother for raising him.



Photo by Adamu Chan, First Watch
Michael Johnson

Throughout his life, Johnson has been familiar with loss in many other situations. Due to alcoholism he lost his wife and other assets. “Now I know how to appreciate the things that really matter in life, like family and loved ones, not the material things, the superficial things.”

He credits his Aunt Elizabeth for supporting him financially and helping him achieve his education goals.

“Feels good to be the first one to achieve this milestone at San Quentin,” Johnson said. “I encourage other guys to go ahead and do it, too.”

“If the government would focus more on education instead of just locking people up, I believe that would help communities out there a lot better.”

Kobe mourned in Chapel concert

By Kerry Rudd
Staff Writer

Hours after the death of Kobe Bryant, concert-goers flooded San Quentin’s Catholic Chapel for a rendition of hit songs. Four pro-level musicians took the stage behind the prison’s stone walls, including one with a current No. 1 hit.

“I’m feelin’ all right. I gotta be good to myself,” Anthony “Habib” Watkins said, quoting the lyrics from the final song. “So coming to these concerts that Bread & Roses throws feels good. This will carry on all week.”

The crew consisted of San Quentin’s guitar instructor, Kurt Huget, who was on vocals and rhythm guitar, Tony Saunders on bass, Julia H. on drums, and Craig Bartock of Heart, who played lead guitar.

Prisoners jammed to the vibes of “Spill the Wine,” “Come Together,” “Barefootin” and many others. Audience members danced, head bobbed, and sang along to the 13 songs performed.

high-level riffs that SQ audiences here have become accustomed to.

Between “After Midnight” and “Lowrider,” he began jamming the intro of “Barracuda,” then suddenly stopped and said, “That’s all I know of it” — drawing huge laughs from the crowd who know the obvious familiarity he has with his band’s own song.

Bartock spoke fondly of the five times he’s been to San Quentin. When asked about his experience of performing here, he stated: “I really enjoy it. Everyone here is really cool.”

Jimi Hendrix’s “Purple Haze” went down two songs later, enthralling everyone in striking distance. Bartock’s guitar solo was well celebrated, inciting the audience to shout and clap to its staccato beats. Saunders then chimed in for a solo as he vocally matched each note of the bass strings he rapidly hit. The smooth unity he operated with was like that of a well-oiled robot.

Next during “Spirit in the Sky,” Starbird made her way onstage and atop the musical platform she coordinated to perform backup vocals which began with the lyrics: “You got a friend in Jesus...” Joining ranks with her colleagues, Starbird smiled as she moved in succession to the song’s beat.

Huget dedicated the last song of the night, “Feelin’ Alright,” to Kobe Bryant. The legendary Lakers star died in a tragic helicopter accident earlier that day. The ripple effect of Bryant’s passing was evident by the audience’s earnest response to Huget’s words.

The healing power of music has been brought to SQ for 50 years through the nonprofit organization Bread & Roses, according to event coordinator Lisa Starbird.

“It’s about creating a good memory for people to come back to when times are hard,” said Starbird.

In the song “After Midnight,” Saunders rapidly hit the strings of his guitar as he gyrated his body and head to the beat — as if being electrocuted. The quick, sharp moves of Saunders sent the audience into a shocked uproar of smiles, “oohs” and “aahhhs.”

As the four played Santana’s “Black Magic Woman,” Huget suggestively sang “... got me a Black magic woman...” inserting the word “me” in the lyrics — as if he’s got one at home. He simultaneously smiled at Gary Harrell in the front row, getting huge laughs from all areas of the gallery.

Julia H. hit the drums with the high-energy and precision she always brings to SQ. During the bridge of “La Bamba,” Julie H. got busy with a drum solo that had the audience spellbound.

“She holds the bottom down!” Harrell said.

Bartock knows all too well what it’s like to perform at SQ. The lead guitarist of Heart just left the prison in December with the words “I’ll be back.”

Throughout the evening, Bartock contributed the

Each musician exhibited a solo during this final song as the show wound its way to a halt. And as the last chord was strummed, the audience members jumped to their feet for a standing ovation.

Saunders came to SQ after rocketing to No. 1 on the music charts with his wildly successful “Rocksteady.”

When asked what he would like his music to inspire, Saunders stated, “Hope.”

“I feel blessed and fortunate,” he said. “And, I’m not going to say I did the right thing all the time. I just never got caught.”

With warm sincerity, Saunders continued talking about the life he lived before he made it big in the music business.

“I was running the streets,” he said. “But that all ended May 23, 1983. Been straight since then.”

San Quentin Kings hold tryouts for the 2020 season

By Aaron Taylor
Sports Editor

The 40 and Over San Quentin Kings held their annual tryouts to pick their team for the 2020 season.

After running drills and scrimmages against pick up teams made up of younger players who were watching the tryouts, head coach Orlando “Duck” Harris called the men to center court and announced this season’s roster.

Bryant Underwood, at age 35, made the cut.

“I thought because I was younger than these guys, it would be easy to make this team but it wasn’t. These

OG’s got game and I see I still have something to learn from them. I’m ready for the challenge.”

Reginald Thorpe, another new player to make the team, had been reading about the Kings while housed in maximum security facilities. “I used to read the *SQ News* when I was at New Folsom on the level four yard, dreaming of getting to The Q and making either the Warriors or the Kings.” It was a long odyssey to reach The Q, but now Thorpe is fulfilling his aspirations. “I’m on the Kings and getting into the self-help programs. I’m healing my mind, body and spirit.”

Thorpe has earned the nickname “Saw” for his hard-nosed defense and physical presence.

When asked what the goals are for the SQ Kings in 2020, Coach Harris was blunt.

“We’re looking to improve on last season’s record of 20-11. We do that, we’ll be doing great.”

Harris said that since he was going to focus most of his time in training for Transformative Justice Initiative – a group that trains people in the criminal justice reform field – he’s going to be turning over most of the coaching duties to Kings assistant coach, Ismael Freelon.

After the teams were announced, Jaryd “Deep Ball” Newton – who played in the 2019 season but didn’t make this seasons roster – spoke about press coverage.

“I only made the paper one time last season. My name was mentioned because I was tied with somebody else with 15 points. I wasn’t even the lead scorer in that game, but there was no other stats on me. It’s just not fair. I don’t understand what I have to do to get my name in the paper.”

The following is the San Quentin Kings 2020 Roster:

Thaddeus “Beast” Fleton – 6’0 Power Forward/Center
DeSean “Silent Assassin”

Nicholson – 6’1 ½ Power Forward

Jamal “Do It All” Harrison – 6’0 Guard/Forward

Gregory “G-Styles” Jones – 6’0 Shooting Guard

Tare “Cancun” Beltranchuc – 5’8 Point Guard

Oris “The Human Theme Song” Williams – 6’4 Point Forward

Bryant “The Baker” Underwood – 5’8 Guard

Gary “The Knife” Brown – 5’11 Shooting Guard/Small Forward

Rafael “Coach” Ceuvas – 6’1 Point Guard

Derrick “Out Loud” Gray – 6’0 Guard/ Small Forward

Joshua “JB3” Burton – 5’7

Point Guard

Charles “Pookie” Sylvester – 5’10 Shooting Guard

Thomas “Mr.” Vaca – 6’2 Power Forward/Center

Reginald “Saw” Thorpe – 6’0 Forward

(Prison Sports Ministries, which is the sponsor for the SQ Kings, Warriors, All Madden Flag Football, the Earthquakes soccer team and Hardtimers Softball, is a Christian based organization seeking to fellowship and spread the word of Christ, using sports as the vehicle to reach a broader audience within The Q’s incarcerated community. Only player points are kept as a statistic.)

SQ sports: 2020 and beyond

It’s a new year, the start of a new decade, and where is San Quentin sports going?

During the month of February, there were tryouts for the San Quentin A’s, Kings and Warriors. These are some of the teams that represent the prison and, in doing so, help to build public interest in the CDCR from a recreational perspective.

The 1000 Mile Track Club is starting the marathon season as well, and in mentioning them, I’m thinking about the numerous documentaries and movies that have been filmed about sports programs at The Q.

All this indicates that in this new year, this new decade, we need to start taking involvement in sporting activities seriously as a part of the overall rehabilitation process. When a person goes before the Board of Parole Commissioners, voluntary participation in sports needs to be considered as part of a person’s inner journey to healing during their incarceration.

Not every person that suits

up for sporting events at The Q will go before the Board of Parole in order to go home. Many of the young people with a determinate sentence get involved just to stay away from other activities on the yard.

However, for the person who waits two to five years to get into some of the upper echelon self-help groups, then take what they learn in those groups and put it into practice during a sporting event (which often involves participation with outside visitors) this is putting conflict resolution skills immediately into action. It’s definitely part of the rehabilitation process.

From creating season schedules, to team tryouts, to dealing with the various personalities that make up team sports, let’s not overlook the audio and visual recording, the sports broadcasting, the pre- and post-game interviews, the coordinating events to even the seating, everything that encompasses putting on an event inside the walls of San Quentin is done by the incarcerated

members of *SQ News* Sports Department, SQ-TV and First Watch.

Why aren’t other institutions in CDCR doing this at their facilities?

What’s happening at The Q shouldn’t be an aberration; it should be the norm. Every institution should have a sports program that’s also partnered with a local college, semi-pro or even a professional team. These people should be invited inside of the facility to help aid in the rehabilitative process, to be involved in the inner healing of incarcerated individuals.

When released, we are coming back to neighborhoods and communities. We are coming back with a sense of purpose and a need to reconcile and help heal those communities. Sports is one healing path that reaches just about everyone, especially the youth.

In this new year, and at the start of this new decade, it’s time that we start looking at sports and rehabilitation in a whole new light.

—Aaron Taylor



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Willie Eldon O’Ree at Hall of Fame induction

Willie O’Ree: 1st Black NHL player

Willie Eldon O’Ree, (born Oct. 15, 1935) a former professional ice hockey player from Canada, is called the “Jackie Robinson of Ice Hockey” for having broken the color barrier in the National Hockey League, or NHL.

O’Ree, who played as a winger for the Boston Bruins, has said he met Robinson twice in his younger years. O’Ree was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in November 2018.

That same year, according to *Wikipedia*, the NHL instituted the annual Willie O’Ree Community Hero Award in his honor, to “recognize the individual who has worked to make a positive impact on his or her community, culture or society to make people better through hockey.”

During his career, O’Ree faced many of the same challenges that Robinson

faced as the first man of color in a predominately White sport. Before O’Ree, Art Dorrington was the first Black player to sign an NHL contract with the New York Rangers organization, though Dorrington never played beyond the minor league level.

“Racist remarks were much worse in the U.S. cities than in Toronto and Montreal,” O’Ree attested. “Fans would yell, ‘Go back to the South’ and ‘How come you’re not picking cotton?’ Things like that. It didn’t bother me. I just wanted to be a hockey player, and if they couldn’t accept that fact, that was their problem, not mine.”

O’Ree helped make it possible for more Black players to join the league. After O’Ree’s stint in the NHL, there were no other Black players in the NHL until 1974, when the Washington

Capitals drafted Mike Marson. Like O’Ree, Marson is Canadian by birth.

By the mid-2010s, there were 23 Black players in the NHL, including P. K. Subban, one of the league’s current most popular players. The NHL requires its players to enroll in a preseason diversity training seminar and punishes racially based verbal abuse with suspensions and fines.

Since 1998, O’Ree has been the NHL’s Diversity Ambassador. He travels across North America to schools and hockey programs to promote inclusion, dedication and confidence.

The NBA Championship and Stanley Cup Finals play during the same two-week period. Many sports enthusiasts inside prison watch both, exposing the incarcerated population to the NHL and helping grow its appeal.

—Aaron Taylor



Photo by Jonathan Chiu

All Madden Team celebrates closing prayer lead by volunteer Andre Jackson

NFL players see urgent need to transform youth justice system

“Youth of color are more likely to be targeted in the school-to-prison pipeline...”

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Writer

Criminal justice reform has become a key issue in the 2020 presidential race, but some National Football League players say the candidates are not addressing the urgent need to transform the youth justice system.

“Our work with young people has made it clear that youth justice reform is critical to tackling mass incarceration and advancing equity,” Carl Davis and Anquan Boldin are quoted in the *Des Moines Register* in December of 2019.

Davis is a defensive tackle for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Boldin is a former wide receiver. As members of the player’s coalition, both men dedicate their time to working with youth and promoting both social and racial justice.

Davis and Boldin say the future of America requires someone with the vision and courage to transform the youth justice system.

Today more than 2,000,000 people are incarcerated in prison -- a stark contrast to the less than 200,000 in the 1970s. According to a 2017 report by

Vera Institute of Justice, the rise in the population was largely due to Criminologist John J. Dilulio’s 1995 prediction that there would be an explosion of juvenile super predators.

This prediction caused wide spread panic and caught the attention of then First Lady Hillary Clinton, ushering in a wave of intensified policing and harsher sentencing.

Over the past 20 years Dilulio’s prediction has been largely debunked as a myth. He retracted much of what he said, but a lot of damage was done. States like California

locked up thousands of youth—mostly minorities.

“Youth of color are more likely to be targeted in the school-to-prison pipeline and to be punished more severely than their White peers, despite having the same rates of delinquent behavior,” Davis and Boldin wrote in the *Register*.

Too many youth are often sent to adult court and sentenced to prison where they face abuse, solitary confinement, and over use of restraints.

Davis and Boldin are of the opinion that presidential candidates should commit to

reducing youth incarceration and closing youth prisons. They should also encourage gubernatorial candidates, assembly persons and city councils to get involved.

Candidates should commit to removing young people from adult courts, jails and prisons which increase the likelihood they will re-offend. Federal authorities should also hold states accountable for using harmful practices like solitary confinement, say Davis and Boldin.

They say young people should be set up for success upon re-entry. Their

record should be sealed or expunged. They should be provided educational and employment opportunities, and youth voter registration should be encouraged. Young people and their families should have a seat at the table during policy decisions so they can use their personal experience to help others.

“In our work with children and youth, we have seen firsthand just how much they have to offer their families, their communities, and this nation,” Davis and Boldin are quoted. “It’s a win for all of us when we give them a real shot at success.”

Sports@The Q

Dear Kobe,

“...I wish I had the opportunity to do play by play for just one of your games...”

Dear Kobe,

You don't know me. I'm a fan speaking for fans that asked me to send this letter to you from The Q. Here, there are Laker fans that love and miss you, alongside Warrior fans that respected you. We are going to miss what you meant to the game of basketball.

I've watched you since you came into the NBA in 1996. I wondered what type of player you'd become, coming straight from high school.

It didn't take long for me to see what you were capable of doing with the ball in your hands.

I was speechless.

I saw in you Michael Jordan, who was an idol for both of us.

I saw that deadly, killer look in your eyes. I saw that same look in Jordan's eyes when he stepped on the court. The look that makes your competitors lower their gaze.

The look that says, "Gimme the rock and watch what I do with it."

The look that says, "None of y'all can stop me, I'm destined for this."

The look that says, "I dare you to try and stop me. Step up and see if you can do it."

The look that says, "Nothing you do in this game will stop me from achieving what I am destined for: Greatness."

The look that says, "The Champ is here!"

I heard ex-NBA player Bruce Bowen, a legend for his defensive skills, say on the radio the day you left us, "At first, I didn't like Kobe. I thought he was arrogant, entitled. But, I came to respect him. He brought out the best defender in me and he still went a step higher."

Pundits are trying to



Photo from video posted on YouTube by The NBA Freak

Kobe rising up well above the rim to slam it down

compare you and LeBron James. But LeBron didn't see it that way.

LeBron said, "I'm happy to be in any conversation with Kobe Bryant, just humbled. He's a five-time NBA champion. The man

has two jerseys hanging up in the Staples Center. To pass him up on the scoring list? It's surreal. To be compared to him? That's huge. I play in the house that Kobe built. I'm blessed to be in that conversation."

Bryant. We're going to miss what you did on the court. But we're also going to miss what you were going to do with life after basketball.

Now, you and Gianna -- the Mambacita -- can play ball together in the clouds. You can teach her your signature fall-away, while we watch for the next person to step up and fill your shoes.

Players like you come around only once in a generation.

You were the Black Mamba, the deadliest assassin on the court.

During your playing years, people called you arrogant.

After you stepped off the court, they called you another name: mentor.

I saw fans crying for you and Gianna; fans all over the world chanting your name: "KOBE! KOBE! KOBE!"

You did it. You became The G.O.A.T. The Greatest Of All Time.

I just wish you didn't have to leave us to do it.

Thank you for being you. We are all going to miss you.

Peace, my brother.
Aaron Showtime Taylor
The Voice of SQ Sports
#thankyouKobe #BlackMamba #8theGreat #deucefour #LakerGOAT #Mambacita #girldad

—By Aaron Taylor

The Q reacts to loss of Kobe Bryant

The death of Kobe Bryant and his 13 year old daughter Gianna – along with the other seven people on that fatal crash – has had an impact on the San Quentin community as a whole.

Many within the population wanted to offer their condolences and say a few words about the man known as "The Black Mamba."

"Kobe is the Jordan of my generation, someone I idolized growing up. After I watched him on TV, I would go outside and emulate his moves on my brothers," said Montrell McDuffie, an All-Madden Flag Football player housed at The Q.

James Metters stated, "Kobe's death is a wakeup call that death can happen to anybody, at any time, poor or rich. That we should live everyday happy and healthy."

Salvador Clement from Southern California offered his thoughts. "It's a big loss for his wife. She lost two persons that she loved. What makes it worse is the media is still talking about the accident. I send my prayers to the family of those who lost their lives."

Greg Eskridge, one of the founders of KALW 91.7 and a former SQ Warriors power forward, said "I'm a diehard Lakers fan, and what Kobe did for the Lakers organization and city of Los Angeles, for the NBA – at home and internationally – as well as being the type of family man and a father? My heart is raw in its emotion for his family and children. We lost some great role models in that helicopter crash."

Trevor Byrd, a former SQ Kings, Giants and A's player said, "I'm a post playing career Kobe fan. What he did for the league

away from the game, he was huge in China. He is a global icon, on the level with Jordan, Magic and Barkley when you think of it."

Many of the men here at The Q spoke about Kobe as a father.

Vaughn Reid offered, "I believe that his demonstration of fatherhood was very good. I recognize him to be completely involved in the development and nurture of his girls."

Golden State Warrior fans at The Q had kind words and memories as well.

Wilson "Well Built Will" Nguyen, guard for the SQ Warriors, stated "He was one of the greatest. What's really sad for me is that his daughter won't get a chance to live a long life. That has got to hurt."

"The Black Mamba is in the top 5 of the NBA's all-time greats, he was a bad boy," Wayne Tariq Mobley said enthusiastically.

Mobley is a Bulls fan.

"Kobe's untimely passing felt like a close and personal death that deeply moved my spiritual consciousness," a New Orleans Pelicans fan stated.

Joshua Griffin stated "Baseball is my sport, but I definitely know the Black Mamba." After a pause, he offered an afterthought: "Legends never die."

Whether one was a Kobe fan, or a basketball fan, it's clear that the impact of the man that Magic Johnson has deemed "The Greatest Laker Of All Time" has transcended his sport and was revered as a global icon.

Dennis Jefferson was reflective in his thoughts. "Kobe said in an interview that basketball is what he does, not who he is. This affected me because it made me realize that I'm bigger than the crime I committed."

—By Contributing Writers



Photo credit: NBA

Kobe draft photo 1996 with Jerry West



Photo courtesy of Instagram

Kobe Memorial inside the Los Angeles Staples Center



Photo courtesy of Keith Allison from Kinston, USA

Kobe vs Washington Wizards in D.C., February 3, 2007.



Photo courtesy of Instagram

Kobe, the Black Mamba and Gianna, the Mambacita

League MVP listens to the incarcerated

**By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson**

The Milwaukee Bucks and league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo entered a Wisconsin prison facility with a lot more at stake than just basketball. They came to listen to the voices and stories of the incarcerated.

Organized by film producer Scott Budnick and the NBA's Play For Justice initiative, Wisconsin Gov. Tony

Evers and Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes joined members of the Bucks organization inside the Racine Correctional Institution Dec. 17.

"The whole point is to humanize the people behind bars," said Budnick, founder of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) and producer of *Just Mercy*. "That's how we get the voters and legislators to change laws."

"It was great to see the governor suit up and play ball with the men in prison."

Gathering first in a prisoner visiting room, everyone sat in a healing circle with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals for a heartfelt discussion on criminal justice, prison life, rehabilitation and hope.

"Just coming here, listening to them, going through what they have to say and listening to the pain they have—it's amazing," said Antetokounmpo in a television interview with WTMJ Milwaukee.

After sharing their personal stories, participants formed teams to play a scrimmage game coached by Antetokounmpo and his Bucks teammates Sterling Brown, Pat Connaughton, George Hill, Kyle Korver and D. J. Wilson.

The NBA players got to turn the tables and draw up plays for their own Head Coach Mike Budenholzer, who played on the all-inclusive squads along with other Bucks coaching staff.

"We care about you," Budenholzer said to Racine's incarcerated community. "We're waiting for you when you get out," reported the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

Gov. Evers said the Play For Justice event "shines a light around issues of criminal justice reform."



Photo courtesy of Play For Justice and Scott Budnick
Milwaukee Bucks guards at the Play For Justice Event



Photo Provided by Play For Justice and Scott Budnick
NBA Great LeBron James shares a moment with Michael B. Jordan



Photo Provided by Play For Justice and Scott Budnick
Giannis Antetokounmpo Coaches Play For Justice participants

One participant, Tommy Brown, was about to be released from Racine three days later, after spending almost 30 years behind bars for an armed robbery conviction.

"It will be strange, almost like stepping out of a spaceship to a new dimension," he said.

Another man, Donald Jackson, entered the criminal system at age 12. "Today I'm thankful," he said to everyone around him in the circle. "I see a lot of idols here. Man, it's overpowering."

Antetokounmpo opened up about his own misdeeds as a youth, things he admitted he was not proud of. He shared insight into his own family history and memories of his late father.

"Even when you're still in here, you want to do better," said Antetokounmpo.

Wesley Griffin won't be released for several more years, but he felt moved by Antetokounmpo's words. "We're human beings, and everyone makes mistakes," said Griffin.

"Sitting down in a circle like this, you stop judging. You start seeing how it is," said NBA champion Korver, before speaking directly to one man, who revealed his own painful struggles with incarceration.

"I'm sorry, brother. I'm sorry," Korver told him. "I

don't know what the answer is. We have to keep sharing our stories."

Hill, another NBA champ, told the circle about his own rough childhood on the streets of Indianapolis before saying, "You're not a monster. You're a human. You were going down the wrong path at the wrong time."

Many of the participants talked about the aspects of outside life that their incarceration deprived them of—missed holidays with their families, graduations they couldn't attend, children they couldn't watch grow up.

John Casper shared how his son had asked him, "When are you coming home?"

"I don't have an answer to that," said Casper.

"For me it has always been important to see the good in people," said guard Connaughton. "I believe in second chances."

Bucks guard Brown described the problems with his arrest in January 2018 that resulted in his current lawsuit against the city of Milwaukee for excessive use of force and civil rights violations.

"A lot of work needs to be done with the criminal justice system," said Brown. "I need to do my part."

Play For Justice also sponsored events where the Sacramento Kings entered

Folsom State Prison and where the Los Angeles Lakers and LeBron James welcomed youth offenders from the Ventura Correctional Facility into their practice gym.

Budnick said he has high hopes to bring WNBA organizations and Play For Justice to a women's facility in California.

One formerly incarcerated individual, Jacob Brevard, participated in both the Folsom and Racine dialogues.

"This is a university," he said. "You can learn a lot here."

Budnick launched Play For Justice in partnership with the Represent Justice Campaign and the film *Just Mercy*. The movie stars Jamie Foxx in the true story of a wrongfully convicted innocent man on Alabama's Death Row.

Michael B. Jordan and Brie Larson co-star as Bryan Stevenson and Eva Ainsley, the legal team that worked to free *Just Mercy*'s real-life protagonist, Walter McMillian.

"It's going great right now," said Budnick in late January when *Just Mercy* was in its third week of national release. "It's all about showing folks the injustice in the criminal justice system."

"Governors, district attorneys—we're making sure all kinds of prosecutors and stakeholders see this film."

Coalition for Social Justice graduates 17 participants

**By Timothy Hicks
Staff writer**

Karen Lovaas, PhD, the program coordinator of Coalition for Social Justice saw 17 of her 21 participants graduate from its sixth cycle on Feb. 12, in the ARC Building in San Quentin.

"The primary goal of the group is to help develop community leaders who deal with criminal behavior from a perspective of social justice and transformation," Lovaas said, explaining the mission of the group.

"I learn more in here about justice than I do on the outside," said Lovaas about her graduates.

Lovaas teaches The Rhetoric of Criminality and Punishments at San Francisco State University. She has been involved in American studies for 16 years, and she loves to share the prison experience with her students, she said.

"When I bring my students from the outside in here to see the men in class, it has a profound effect on the kids

when talking about justice from the guys' [perspective] on the inside," said Lovaas.

Although, coming inside prison has a joy to it for the kids, said Lovaas, it also is a heartbreaking one for the kids having to leave the men behind.

"Amazing how characters are missed from the outside world," Lovaas said. "It's magical how communities form in different ways."

I takes four months to graduate, and the men form close bonds in that time.

"It's beautiful how a group of strangers can form a community like this," said chairman and facilitator Royse Rose, 44, referencing Lovaas' statement. "How are you gonna want justice if you never say anything about the injustices you go through?" Rose told the men.

Rose has been facilitating the group since 2014, and he said it is an honor to give back and see the light of knowledge turning on for the men who get it. To give back is his greatest pleasure, he said.

A graduate who shares the same joy as Rose is Jamar Henry, 40.

"I'm excited to be graduating, and I plan to take the knowledge I learned in this class out on the streets with me when I parole in eight years," said Henry.

He is incarcerated for great bodily injury and said that the class has helped him see life more clearly now.

Third session volunteer Mary O'Sullivan has been coming to the prison for a year and a half. She called the ceremony "sweet" and said in response to Henry, "The world needs people like you who really know the system to be out there and guide the lawmakers to just laws."

During the passing out of certificates it is customary for each graduate to speak.

First time graduate Chase Washington, known as the class joker, made light of the times when he spent many days in jail.

"My mama used to always tell me that a hard head

makes a soft ass," Washington said. "Well, my ass is cotton right now."

The intimate crowd burst into laughter.

Other graduates Reese Rackley, 23, and Arthur Freeman, 39, are excited to find out how the law really works and are enthusiastic to go back to their communities to help make them better.

"I want my son Malik Freeman, who is in prison at Susanville, to see me graduating," said Freeman. "I want him to know that education

is the best route. I want him to be a better example for his little brothers and sisters."

When it was time for sponsor Nate Moore to speak, he kept it direct and to the point.

"Keep doing what you doing and get free."

Moore has been volunteering in the prison for seven years.

Mentors and facilitators congratulated the men and shared their sentiments for the graduates.

"The men grew into a cohesive crew of a community,"

said facilitator Aron Roy.

The purpose of the group is to learn more than law, said mentor Eric Crutcher, 46. "I've been a mentor for seven years, and I learned about many different justices," said Crutcher. "I saw this class save so many lives. I also helped a kid get off drugs, and to me that's priceless."

Coalition for Social Justice provides reentry services for returning citizens, and Lovaas recommends men who are returning to contact the organization Bonifide.

Coalition for Social Justice Graduates:
Graduates: Patrick Bellard, Jesse Blue, Matthew Brown Lll, Authur Freeman, Jon Golberg, Mario Gomez, Harry Goodall , Angelo Green De, Jamar Henry, Dejon Joy, Christopher Miranda, Wayne Mobley, Don Nicora, Reese Rackley, Vincent Rivera, Jasjit Singh, Ivan Staich, Jake Stebler, Curtis Thiessen, Clenard Wade and Chase Washington
Facilitators: Royce Rose, Phillippe Kelly, Bennett Alan, Aron Roy, Adamu Chan, Authur Jackson
Mentors: Ronald Carter, Eric Crutcher, Elton Kelly, John "Yahya" Parratt, Charles Ross

SQ music and lyrics workshop attracts professionals



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV
Brad Balliett, Musicambia

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Twelve songs, featuring music and lyrics written and performed by the men at San Quentin turned the prison’s Catholic chapel into a concert hall in January.

Musicambia Composition Workshop was an intensive four-day event facilitated by the New York-based nonprofit Musicambia, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the William James Association. It offered space for inmates to collaborate and compose original music.

Students and faculty from the Conservatory worked non-stop with Musicambia’s Brad Balliett to guide the artists through the process of creating music.

“From the minute I walked into this room, I knew we were going to have a great week,” said Balliett, a bassoonist, songwriter, composer and teaching artist.

“I feel everyone benefits in the end,” said Matthew Gamboa, a Conservatory student and electronic music producer, who plays jazz guitar, bass and piano. “It’s a learning experience that goes two ways.”

On the first day, Jason “Jukebox” Griffin, 42, commented, “It would be cool to write music and connect with people.”

“I teach people how to sing,” said Matthew Worth, a faculty voice teacher at the Conservatory, who led the workshop with vocal exercises.

“This is a song writing project,” said Balliett. “Our goal is to bring your ideas to life.”

He had the group begin by writing songs in groups. By the end of the first five-hour day everyone was writing “their” song.

One song, “No More,” emerged on day two. It packed the chapel with energy. Griffin and Quincy Paige, 32, wrote and performed the song together. The Conservatory backed them to give the song weight that became heavier when Balliett came in on the keyboard.

Paige said “No More” was inspired by a phone conversation that he overheard in prison.

“I can’t take it anymore,” the caller had said before slamming down the phone.

“This is the only joyful experience I’ve had in over three years,” said Anthony Beamon, 38. “With this kind of collaboration — this is



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV
Song Writing Workshop members perform for the incarcerated in the Catholic Chapel

where music gets created.”

Dwight Krizman said that, despite the restrictions of prison, the workshop was “a place where the musical community of San Quentin can gather regardless of musical background, skill level and talent to come together and create.”

In an environment where many men self-segregate themselves, music is an equalizer and bonding agent. At the workshop it transcended boundaries between musicians and non-musicians, young and old, rapper and rocker, LGBTQ and straight, Asians, Whites, Blacks, Hispanics and others.

Men from all walks of life worked together on the song “On My Own.” The chorus told all their stories: “I am never so alone, than surrounded by broken souls...” Balliett worked as musical director on this tune and played the bassoon as Worth sang lead. Michail Thompson, a Conservatory student, added a poignant sound with his trumpet.

“I’m excited about what we have to offer together,” Thompson had said on day one. His skill playing classical jazz added an unanticipated but bright layer of sound to the workshop’s music.

The guidance and encouragement from Musicambia, the Conservatory and the talent displayed throughout the workshop revealed that prisoners can perform at professional levels in music and beyond.

“I’m really proud of everybody,” said Worth.

He said by day two people stepped on the stage with confidence and started to sing

with authority.

“It was great to see the rough draft,” said Rachael S. a composer on faculty with the Conservatory. “We’ve done so much work in two days, and there’s so much

broken pieces of a past life. In four days, the men were able to repair a small part of themselves and discover the talent lost or overlooked.

Everyone was serious, but notes, chords, charts, writing



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV
Matthew Gomba, SF Conservatory of Music

more to do.”

Rehearsals looked like scenes from American Idol as groups of performers and musicians gathered in the pews and in various corners of the chapel to collaborate. A cacophony of music and singing could be heard from all directions.

Underneath the men’s hard work were the dreams, struggles, aspirations and disappointments of confined men taking advantage of the opportunity to reconstruct

and vocal exercises could not contain the impulse of their creative nature. Following a break one afternoon, the men and the Conservatory students performed an impromptu spiritual song.

Michael Adams led the groove and encouraged each musician to perform an improvised solo as he assumed the role of conductor. Conservatory students Gamboa, Thompson, Parsa Mirzaagha (guitar), Gavin Harris (drums), and Mark Kinney all



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV
Jim Turner showing off his key board skills

took turns showcasing their talent as they communicated with each other in a language only musicians understand.

Later, Adams and Beamon sang “I Can Feel Your Pain.” Adams delivered a soulful performance as he expressed “feeling all the world’s sorrow...”

As the workshop moved into the night, some Conservatory students appeared drained and exhausted, but they hung on like professionals.

By day three, an official set list of songs was created for a concert the following evening.

“There’s going to be a lot of down time,” said Balliett. By then they were preparing for the show, but that didn’t stop the men from perfecting their songs.

Rehearsal moved quickly and once it was determined a song was on track the singers were stopped for the next group to take the stage.

On day four, Balliett said, “My worst nightmare is that we get to 8 p.m. and we have three songs left.”

The show started with Thompson leading the charge with his trumpet on “Pattie’s Wish Dragon,” written by Ronnell “Rauch” Draper. The men sang a chorus that delivered an emotional message with rap and speech as the band accentuated the song.

“Believe it or not, on Monday morning that song did not exist,” said Balliett.

Richie Morris took the stage at San Quentin for the last time. “After 34 years in prison, the governor in his wisdom decided I can go home,” he said.

The song “Trying To Carry On” was a soulful piece written by Morris and performed previously.

Balliett played piano on “Grace Of God,” a song written by Kahlifah. Rachael S. sang a soft verse and Conservatory student Julio Cesar Martinez used the warmth of his deep baritone voice to sing the low end of the song. Gary Harrell played harmonica on the song, followed by Conservatory students Zoe Jo-Yun Lee on cello and Luke Chiang on violin.

On the song “My Life,” Paige engaged the crowd, and they clapped to the beat as he rapped. The horn sounds were the most prevalent throughout the chapel as the percussion instruments held a steady beat.

The music and chorus to “When You Think About



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV
Zoe Lee, SF Conservatory of Music

Me,” written and played on the piano by this author, sung by Kerry Rudd, who wrote the verses, received an earnest show of appreciation.

The crowd seemed moved during “A Christmas Hallelujah,” especially when Thompson soloed on his trumpet. They applauded in the middle of the song to show their gratitude.

On “Free My Dogs” Luke Chiang steered the song with his violin. Thanh Tran, 26, sang before the band punched in, like a track triggered from the mixer, as people in the first three rows of pews stood, bounced and applauded.

Derry “Brotha D” Brown and the choir performed “Everybody Needs Love” to end the night and leave everyone in a serene and thoughtful mood.

“This was awesome,” said Brown. “Hookin’ up with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music was an inspiration. I never worked with my vocals, but meeting Matt (Worth) helped me exercise my vocals so I could fluctuate my range. He assured me I was on the right track.”

“This is my first time playing rock and jazz,” said Lee.

“It’s a different genre for us,” said Chiang. “The energy in here was fantastic — not your typical audience.”

“We started talking about (doing) this in 2018,” said Rachael S. “We didn’t know where or what, but it’s been a long time coming.”

“I’ve been amazed at how Brad (Balliett) and the group have been collaborating,” said Carol Newborg, Program Manager for Arts in Corrections at San Quentin. “It’s been really high quality and seemed to involve everyone.”

“I had so much fun tonight watching everyone perform,” said Rachael S. “I’m really grateful people made time and space for us.”

“I couldn’t believe it,” said Bill Harwood, 65. “Three days got us here, and it lifted the roof off this place.”

“It was very inspiring,” said Larry Williams, 54. “I loved it, and everybody did so good. My heart feels so much better. I can sleep good tonight.”

“It’s my hope that Musicambia will come back here,” said Balliett.

The crowd cheered him on, applauding their endorsement for him and the Conservatory to return to California’s oldest prison.