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Lawrence Bartley leads new Marshall Project endeavor



Photo courtesy of Lawrence Bartley
Lawrence Bartley

By Rahsaan Thomas
Contributing Writer

The Marshall Project publishes stories about the experiences of those impacted by the penal system in the one place most incarcerated people don't have access to: online. That changed when Lawrence Bartley returned to society after serving 27 years in prison. He's now the producer of *Inside News Magazine* which shares stories published on *The Marshall Project* website in print form for 38 prisons.

On Oct. 12, Bartley attended a Society of Professional Journalists meeting at San Quentin and shared his story with incarcerated journalist.

See BARTLEY on Page 4



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Participants hold up trans lives matter sign on Nov. 20

SQ Transgender Day of Remembrance

By Joe Garcia
and Juan Haines

For the first time in its history, San Quentin State Prison joined the nationwide movement on Nov. 20 to memorialize 22 transpersons killed by hatred across the U.S. in the last year.

"Just because I'm not a part of society doesn't mean that as a transwoman I don't matter," said incarcerated trans activist Lisa Strawn, who spearheaded the Transgender Day of Remembrance ceremony in the SQ chapel.

"I am still a person and so are the 22 transpeople we are remembering today."

Many voices from the packed crowd responded, "That's right, Lisa."

"They deserved better than this," she continued. "To have been shot, stabbed and burned beyond recognition at the hands of murderers—it makes no sense."

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Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

The San Francisco Police department with San Quentin participants on Nov. 22

SF Police personnel visit SQ for second “Blue on Blue” conversation

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Two dozen San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) personnel made their way across San Quentin's Lower Yard on Nov. 22 and stood among men they may have previously arrested. It was a part of the second “Blue-on-Blue Conversation” (BBC) held at the prison.

Former SF Deputy District Attorney Marisa Rodriguez, now head of the San Francisco Office of Cannabis, organized the first BBC on May 24. “We thought this experience was powerful and eye popping,” said SFPD Commander David Lazar.

“Often we don't see the other side,” said SFPD Chief Will Scott

at the second BBC. “We make an arrest, testify and don't see the other side and how they are impacted.”

Deputy Chief Greg McEachern, added, “I want people in the department to see the impact and get a better understanding of their role and responsibilities as officers—to see the human side of things. When you put handcuffs on someone, there's a human being there.”

The line officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains as well as two civilians convened in the prison's Protestant Chapel. About two dozen incarcerated men, along with local Bay Area volunteers and a prison staffer, joined the officers in a large circle to introduce themselves.

Some police officers told the BBC participants, “We're ordered to be here.” Officer Michael Amorose added, “I don't mind gaining experience.”

After the introductions, the participants went into small circles for more personal discussions. The prisoners broke the ice by talking about their first interaction with the police. The officers talked about why they joined the force. The conversation topics varied from respecting each other in the community to the power of effective communication skills to de-escalate tense encounters.

See SFPD on Page 4

Annual Christmas Banquet brings out the holiday spirit

By David Ditto
Staff Writer

The spirit of the holidays filled the San Quentin Protestant Chapel for more than 300 volunteers and prisoners at the annual Christmas Banquet.

“It's such a joyous occasion. It's the best day of the year for so many of us!” said Fred Cole, one of about 250 men in blue.

Some 50 volunteers and the inmates braved the rain and wind on the cold gray Saturday morning, Dec. 7. Inside they joined in a heartwarming celebration to begin the holy holiday season.

Chaplain Mardi Ralph Jackson, dressed in festive red and black, greeted the guests with a warm smile and a handshake. “God bless you,” she said as they passed through the foyer into the beautifully decorated chapel.

Golden angels stood 12 feet high on both sides of the entrance. Green holly and pine garlands and wreaths with red ribbons and bows and glowing lights decked the windows, banisters and walls.

“Rejoice, Christ is Born,” announced two of the festive banners. The gathering crowd mingled and engaged in lively discussions.

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Avenal's "Timeless" group explores insight into our past



Photo courtesy of Avenal

Participants and facilitators of the "Timeless" group

By Adam Jennings Contributing Writer

At Avenal State Prison, the "Timeless" group is helping its incarcerated population explore the question "Can we grow into the men we want to be?"

"Timeless" is a long-term offenders group that is held in the prison's A Facility. The group aims to give the men insight through exercises such as gathering information from their formative years in an effort to

better understand how the men became who they were and are and how they arrived in prison.

The participants have a chance to gain awareness as they apply these exercises to their lives and current mindsets in regard to a vast array of criminal topics.

Today, post Prop. 57, the reality is that some individuals are attending self help groups just for R.A.C. (Rehabilitative Achievement Credits), rather than a true desire for introspection and change.

The "Timeless" program seeks to change this thought process. The group provides the skills to apply new knowledge to old ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. The program helps the men produce new constructive beliefs, manners and habits, instead of just simply going through the motions of being there.

The program goal is to help the participants improve themselves, the community and ultimately earn a parole date.

It's no easy task. But the group members are striving to be pillars of their current society. They are sharing what they have learned and also carrying themselves with an ever evolving sense of positivity and encouragement.

The "Timeless" members and facilitators understand that the only way they can grow into the men they want to be, is by fundamentally improving themselves. This can be accomplished by altering and improving

themselves on a daily basis. Then true change can manifest, giving their families and friends the men they deserve.

The group believes through hard work and dedication they can develop a community where this is both possible and celebrated.

Thanks go out to Rosemary Ndooh, program co-facilitators James Lynch and Manuel Rincon, all group members and staff sponsor, Lisa Robitaille.

It is through the service of all participating members that positivity is spread. Where they used to sow destruction, now, through their changes, they are setting good examples for future generations; breaking their own personal cycles of imprisonment with the realization that there is no right way to be wrong.

The hope is that the lasting effect of these changes will be felt long after they depart. A legacy that will truly be....TIMELESS.

Advocates launch #MeTooBehindBars for those incarcerated

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Sexual violence and transphobia in prisons are still taboo topics of discussion, even in the midst of some prison reform efforts nationwide.

"I was harassed and sexually harassed because I was GNC"

But a group of victims/survivors and advocates launched the #MeTooBehindBars campaign that aims to influence the #MeToo movement and to include the voices of those incarcerated who have or are suffering from sexual harassment or sexual abuse.

This new campaign has found its way to the steps of the California



Nghia from Survived & Punished speaking at the event



Photo courtesy of CCWP

Advocates and supporters in front of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation headquarters in Sacramento

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) offices in Sacramento. An Oct. 30 protest was held to raise the awareness of transgender, gender nonconforming (GNC) and queer people's plight within the state prison system, according to the Young Women's Freedom Center and California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) advocacy groups.

Advocates arrived in front of the building in vans. The participants arranged themselves in a circle and laid out the words "Me Too" on the ground and lined them with flowers. Speaking from the building steps, many of the

speakers shared their stories of being sexually assaulted behind bars, as each spoke from the building steps.

"There is so much violence against trans women inside. The culture is to blame women for the violence," said Attorney Jen Orthwein, who represents transgender women in California's men prisons, to *SQ News*.

"Many of the women I've worked with are gone. There was Allie, who was sliced in her neck and placed in solitary confinement. Her cellmate was constantly harassing her, and she begged to be moved.

"Another one of my clients was beaten by cellmates and

correctional officers, then...a noose was left in her cell. She was denied surgery and committed suicide the next day," added Orthwein.

In a call and response cry of "Me Too," "behind bars" activists walked in a circle chanting and holding protest signs.

"I was harassed and sexually harassed because I was GNC," said Stacy Rojas, who is formerly incarcerated and spoke at the rally. "People thought they could make me want to be a woman or show me that I am."

"From the very beginning of me stepping foot in jail and having them telling me to put on a dress—it's all in the way

they say it, the way they tell me to turn around and spread it. [They would] laugh at me. They would tell me that they would make me like it.

"There was so much sexual violence because of me being masculine presenting and being GNC," Rojas added.

Rojas understands the importance of speaking out and bringing awareness to the #MeTooBehindBars movement.

"It's not just my story, believe me. I have friends who would not speak out at first. They're embarrassed and ashamed," said Rojas. "Now they're standing up next to me screaming it out. It's not

that we're happy, but we're not going to...keep secret(s) anymore. I want them [people in authority] to understand that sexual assault happens, period.

"[It] runs so deep—trans women are looked at in a f@#ked up way," reflects Rojas. "Toxic patriarchal men look at them and are upset that they believe in their heads that they are men and can't believe that they want to be a woman."

"They can't understand what trans is at all," said Rojas.

Victims of sexual assault in prisons are encouraged to report incidents to their state's correctional internal affairs department—this includes if someone has been threatened with sexual assault or has experienced retaliation for reporting an incident, according to the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) posters within U.S. prisons.

In 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was signed into law. The goal was to create a zero tolerance policy around rape in prison. To date, San Quentin, along with most state or federal prisons in the nation, has PREA posters on the walls in all areas of the institution.

The "Shine the Light on Sexual Abuse" posters provide telephone numbers and addresses for reporting incidents. The phone numbers accept collect calls from incarcerated people.

SQ News has received mixed responses about PREA's effectiveness. Some people reported that it worked and others said they experienced some form of retaliation or no action was taken for their claims.

There have been various lawsuits filed against correctional departments nationwide, including CDCR. Also there are ongoing investigations into abuse claims by correctional departments, according to some court filing records.

Changing a culture of violence toward the LGBTQ community within prisons is one of the main priorities of the protestors.

"When you hear about sexual assault in the workplace, everyone is freaking out about it and saying that this has to stop. People are appalled while they are watching [it on] the news," said Rojas. "But there's thousands of people who can't complain at all."

"You're stuck in a place where nobody worries about you. There are thousands of people going through this and it's kept a secret."

—Madeleine Gregory,
a student at UC Berkeley,
contributed to this article.

San Quentin News

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We Want To Hear From You!

San Quentin News encourages the incarcerated, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles.

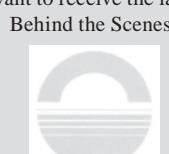
All submissions become property of the *San Quentin News*.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

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

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Crowd of participants bringing awareness to #MeTooBehindBars



Photo courtesy of CCWP
Sister Warriors advocate letting her voice be heard



Photo courtesy of CCWP
Participant holding up sign to free Kinzie Noordman



Photo courtesy of CCWP

Young Women Freedom Center's Amita Mota and Stacy Rojas at the event



Photo courtesy of CCWP
YWFC member speaking

Formerly incarcerated now the producer of Inside News Magazine

BARTLEY

Continued from Page 1

Bartley hopes incarcerated people engage with the articles he compiled about legal developments, prison programs, hope, social science and life inside and build off them like he eventually did.

Sentenced to 27 years to life at 17 years old, the Jamaica Queens, New York native started his time off blaming others for his predicament.

Eventually he learned to take accountability and sought an education at Sing Sing, a prison just outside of New York City. Though private funding taking over where the Pell grants for incarcerated students ended, Bartley managed to earn a master's degree in professional studies.

In college at Sing Sing, he learned a valuable lesson – how to pitch and to always be ready with one.

A special guest came into Sing Sing at the time and had a cool discussion with the class, Bartley said. When the guest left, the professor cursed out the students.

"I brought this dude in here whose been all around the

world and none of y'all had a pitch ready," Bartley quoted his professor as having said.

Bartley took the lesson to heart.

Also while at Sing Sing, Bartley helped put together a TEDx Talk and, along with a small group of others, he invited legislators into the prison to discuss laws.

".....," Bartley said. "I'd like to think we made some moves towards making that happen."

Because of the positive moves Bartley made, the administration at Sing Sing called on him and his small group of about five men whenever VIP guest visited, which included Warren and Doris Buffett, Usher, Harry Belafonte, Ice T, The department of probation and the Chief of police.

Despite the success gained for incarcerated people, other residents called them a "secret society."

"We made moves to put people down with it and they wasn't ready to do the work," Bartley said. "We never ostracized anyone though; we kept giving them chances."

It was Bartley's struggle to make parole that help land him a job with *The Marshall*

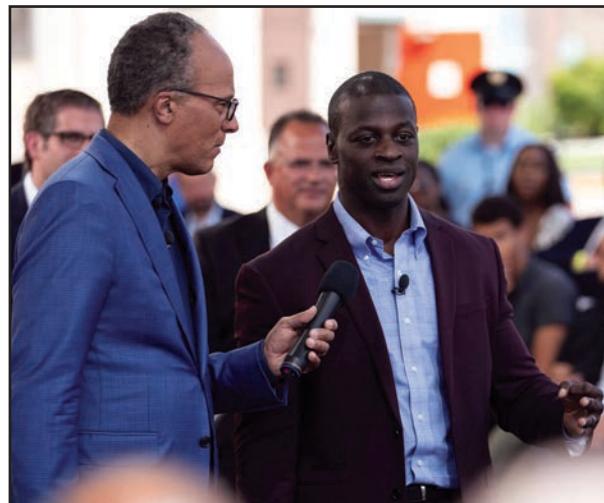


Photo courtesy of Lawrence Bartley

Lawrence Bartley speaking with NBC's Lester Holt



Photo courtesy of Lawrence Bartley

Bartley on stage preparing a pitch

Project. Denied five times by the board, he wrote about his experience and sent the story to *The Marshall Project*, which published it in its Life Inside section.

After he made parole on the next try in 2018, he walked through the doors of *The Marshall Project's* offices to talk about his experiences and landed himself a job.

The lesson he learned in prison about pitching lead to the creation of Inside News. Bartley told his bosses of a

plan to get *The Marshall Project* into dozens of prisons.

"I lined up all my ducks on how we gonna do it, how much it was gonna cost, what pilot facility I was gonna use and laid out my pitch," Bartley said.

The pitch was accepted and Bartley has rapidly expanded.

Just 14 months after coming home on parole, he brought a house in Connecticut for the wife that stayed down with him through his incarceration and their kids.

However, 90 days later, New York parole hadn't approved his transfer so he had to stay in New York.

"I was used to not being around my family in prison but it's totally different when you're around them every day," Bartley said. "The system is supposed to be there to help you when you're doing good."

Bartley awaits rejoining his family but in the meantime, he happy that they will get a good education in the upper middle class Connecticut neighborhood.

"I'm most proud of my children's education," Bartley said.

Before leaving the media center, Bartley noted the access to computers, the accomplishments of *San Quentin News*, the *Ear Hustle* podcast, *First Watch* and San Quentin TV and said, I've visited dozens of prisons and nobody else has it like you guys. What you do here can pave the way for people at other prisons.

SFPD

Continued from Page 1

"I came with an open mind, and I'm taking away the experiences of people and their interaction with police," said Officer Amorose. "I told the people in my circle about my experience, and they took something away."

Deputy Chief McEachern added, "My thoughts are not the same as when I first became an officer 29 years ago. Now, they are, 'How can I give newer officers my knowledge? When you

grew up, how did you see the police—what were your views?' Knowing that could help our young officers."

Rafael Cuevas, an incarcerated peer-to-peer educator, said, "What would help is to give better choices to people who think it's okay to break the law—arresting people who break the law and sending them to prison does not stop crime, but arresting them and then offering them better choices will have better outcomes."

Troy Young, who recently earned parole suitability, added, "Talking works. There's power in just

speaking a kind word—speak to the community—every time I see you and you speak to me. That's what you'll be remembered by—it's how we treat each other that counts."

After about an hour in the small circles, the participants went back to the large circle to talk about what they've learned.

Chief Scott talked about a poll that asked SFPD personnel about their values.

"What rang through was everybody wants to be treated with respect; it didn't come from me; it came from the officers," Scott said.

He said a major topic in his small circle was being treated with respect by police officers, "Sharing that is profound."

Officer Nathan Chew added, "If you're respectful and not judgmental, even with a ticket or arrest, it's returned. You have to show that compassion and respect."

Sergeant Jeffery Aloise, a 20-year veteran with SFPD, works in the Mission District.

Aloise said he understands the power of having a good relationship with the community as well as the importance of trust—"to treat people the same, as human beings." He said, "Having the experience of coming into San Quentin and being in this forum will help."



Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

For the past three years, Marcy Ginsburg has been coming into the prison once a week as a facilitator for Criminal Gangs Anonymous (CGA).

"CGA forces men to dig into the deep recesses of their lives. It's unbelievable to see their change, just from talking."

In an effort to be honest and to change his criminal thinking, Antoine Smith said, "I had to become accountable, and in order to do that I had to look at myself."

Referring to the experience of talking to police officers at both BBC events, *San Quentin News* (*SQ News*) staffer Juan Espinosa said,

"I feel more confident to approach a police officer and be a part of the community."

Lieutenant Derrick Jackson is a 24-year veteran with SFPD.

Jackson previously worked with the gang task unit. He now works robbery. He said his experience investigating robberies gives him the chance to see some of the social factors that lead to crime. He said that his experience in San Quentin, of witnessing healing, lets him "see a system that's working."

SQ News adviser Nikki Meredith expressed hearing "cultures of cruelty" from listening to the shared experiences of police officers and prisoners. She was, however, encouraged about the future of policing in San Francisco after hearing an older officer say that the younger officers are "the most educated, well-trained class we've ever had."

After hearing many of the incarcerated men speak honestly about the reasons they chose a criminal lifestyle, Chief Scott commented that accountability was also an important factor in his belief in second chances.

"Being here gave me a new understanding of accountability," Scott said. "This puts accountability at a high level."



Photo by Lt. S. Robinson



Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

Facilitators, participants and San Francisco Police at the Garden Chapel

SQ Veterans Day brings chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Veteran's Day brought the chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, Mary Anne Carter, inside San Quentin to mingle with artists and incarcerated veterans. Joining Carter was Alma Robinson, executive director of California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA).

"From the moment I walked in this room I was blown away by the visit and beautiful art," Carter said after she walked into the prison's art studio. "I look around at these images and I know that could be in any gallery in the world."

SQ resident Scott McKinstry has been involved with Arts in Corrections (AIC), sponsored by the William James Association since 2001.

McKinstry said that he's known people involved with AIC who later earned parole.

"Their involvement in the arts program helped them communicate better," McKinstry said. "I got interested in arts for my rehabilitation. I read a study that showed how the skills learned from art are not like the traditional kinds of learning. The learning from art is used right after you've learned them."

When statewide budget cuts were imposed in the mid-2000s, Arts in Corrections (AIC) funds were also reduced. Some volunteer artists, however, continued devoting time to the prisoners and still taught inside. From that experience, Robinson said that she learned how much the cuts affected incarcerated artists.

"It taught them time management and discipline,"

Robinson said of the incarcerated artists.

Robinson said that after telling prison officials about the resilience of the incarcerated artists, the state restored funding for arts in corrections. She added that the "positive message" incentivized art funding in five other states, Texas, Michigan, Ohio, Louisiana and New York.

When the visitors left the art studio they headed to a small bungalow on the prison's Lower Yard to meet with participants in a veteran's program and an artistic ensemble program.

Once inside the building, they were seated in a semi-circle.

The programs, Veterans Healing Veterans From the Inside Out (VHV) and the Marin Shakespeare Company have formed a connection for storytelling and healing.

The veterans write scripts based on their military backgrounds.

The plays address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other kinds of trauma that the veterans have experienced. Facilitators of VHV have discovered that incarcerated veterans' inner reflective work through the VHV curriculum curtailed the suicide rates for incarcerated vets.

Chris Marshall and Juan Carlos Meza, who both performed in Shakespeare at SQ plays, gave the veterans acting training to help them tell their stories and deal with trauma and PTSD.

"In the beginning of the class, there was one participant who could not do a 'trust fall,' but by the end even he was able to do it," Meza said. "Sometimes, acting out the

feeling is better than dealing with it from any other method."

Marshall added, "By acting it out or seeing others act it out, there is sympathy, empathy to see it in third person allows forgiveness for self and others. The release is a physical sensation."

Marshall explained that participants co-write the performances to get a full arc of stories.

"It takes about four months to figure out how to share the story," Marshall said. "Last year there were seven drafts before we got one that worked."

Meza demonstrated how to create a story by asking four people from the audience to the center of the circle to face each other.

He asked the four to be a rock. Then he called two other people from the audience and

asked them to be "fire" by kneeling with hands up imitating flames—fingers wagging.

Meza then asked the audience if they remembered campfire stories.

"Weren't those the good days?" Meza asked. "It was done to tell stories, when you see fires, you see comfort. But we don't have that today. Everyone wants to be heard, number one is feelings, everyone wants to be felt and know what you're not alone, but the essential one is love—the things that keeps the fire going is our stories."

At the end of her visit, Carter said, "What has stuck with me the most is talking to the individual artists—the hope they see. Moreover, the arts have become their release for understanding how to change their life and in some cases why their life has to be changed."

Call to action for renewed faith during October Revival Week

By Anthony Manuel Caravalho Staff Writer

San Quentin Protestant chaplain, "Mother" Mardi Ralph Jackson, and some of the member leaders, took time to discuss the church's Revival Week, which was celebrated during the third week of October.

Revival Week is celebrated with weeklong services from Wednesday through Sunday. It featured the chaplain, Elder Derrick Holloway, Pastor Harry Hemphill and outside members of the Protestant faith which included Deacon "LT" who brought key members of his congregation from The Church of I Sit at the Table located in Houston, Texas. He opened the week-long celebration.

The beginning of Revival Week, sought a spiritual breakthrough as Pastor "LT" demanded that all Christians "have to die (death=surrender to god) and we must shed light into a dark environment of today's non-believing world," said the preacher.

"We do this by sharing the love of Christ and celebrating the fact when you lose (give up sin or fleshly desires) you gain God," he continued.

The rest of the week ended as strong as it started. Pastor Harry Hemphill paved the way for Mother Jackson, who then was followed by the church's Elder Derrick Holloway.

Pastor Hemphill enjoyed his last revival week when he led the Saturday night service.

It was his last service preaching as an incarcerated man. "Pastor Harry" was scheduled to go home on Monday Nov. 4, after he received a date from the Board of Parole.

Pastor Hemphill emphasized the season's instruction of change was designed to give eternal hope of a new life and love to all.

Young Christians must understand death through the acceptance of Christ's resurrection—that he died for all of us—is this the only way to be saved. Once truly believed, they will not be afraid to shed their sinful ways," said Pastor Hemphill.

Sunday morning the anchor of Bay Area Protestants and chaplain here at San Quentin, "Mother" Mardi Ralph Jackson, stayed within the core theme of the week.

the entire crowd rose to its feet. "The Lord is good."

Chaplain Jackson joined the Garden Chapel Worship Team, a choir of nine with four musicians, in singing, "We worship You for who You are...hallelujah."

Then an elder opened in prayer, "Thank You, Father God, sup with us, bless us and keep us while we worship You...Amen."

"Hallelujah!" praised Chaplain Jackson. "On behalf of the men in blue and myself, we welcome you. Thank You, Jesus. We worship Him today. We honor Him. He is worthy."

"We acknowledge every man who worked to turn this sanctuary into a place of celebration. Thank you, Elder Derrick Holloway, thank you brother Christopher Harris. Thanks to the men in the kitchen cooking right now, the crew at the door, musi-

cians, men in leadership and Spanish ministries. Thanks to all our volunteers who sacrifice without any pay and give of themselves in the Lord's service."

"Joy to the world, the Lord has come," rang out through the chapel as the Worship Team began singing anew. The audience, still standing, joined in the spirited performance, "Let earth receive her King."

The next song had everyone clapping and swaying to the rhythm, "...Glory to the newborn King."

Next came Tim Young on acoustic guitar, followed by an a cappella solo of "He is Able." Both performers received standing ovations.

Evangelist Paula Bates from Prayer Garden, who volunteers inside San Quentin with the Greater Love program, had this message: "I can't help myself but lift

my hands and say, 'Glory hallelujah.'"

In her bright red, black and white dress, Bates complimented the stage decorations that included poinsettias, wrapped packages, wreaths and stockings and a 12-foot-high Christmas tree with lights, garlands, balls and an angel on top.

The entire audience stood as Bates began to sing, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, what a wonder You

are." The musicians joined in and guests sang along, waving their raised hands.

The Prodigal Sons quartet then captivated the audience with a medley, "Merry Christmas to you...Silent night, holy night, Christ the Savior is born..."

The audience responded with joyous praise, cheer and applause. The in-house talent continued with two brothers rapping, "The plan God has for you;" a Spanish prayer, "Gracias Padre bendito, todo para Ti;" and "Amazing Grace" a cappella.

Then came the feast served to everyone: barbecued chicken leg and thigh, turkey ham, macaroni and cheese, barbecued beans, corn, potato salad, a roll with butter, cake with chocolate icing and punch. The banquet was so well attended, some of the premium table seats were used twice.

"This is way better than standing in line in the rain for a tray of the same old stuff," said one San Quentin resident, thoroughly enjoying the top-notch dining experience. "This is even better than Thanksgiving!" commented another.

The voices of fellowship from each table's conversations kept the chapel warm during supper, even as the cold storm continued outside. A couple of volunteers were talking with a San Quentin resident at one table. Chris Clark, a volunteer with Cornerstone Fellowship, has been coming into San Quentin for six years.

"This is amazing. God is bringing glory right to where we are," said Clark. After struggling with addiction for

28 years, faith transformed him. "I had my come-to-Jesus moment and woke up with a new hope and a new high," he shared.

"I really love coming here, I love being here, I love the fellowship and the testimonies," said Ronda Clark, who has been volunteering with Cornerstone at The Q for about a year. She and Chris have been married for five years and they share the same sobriety date in 2012.

"I tried it once and I was hooked," said Ronda about the Christian Fellowship volunteer program. "You don't even know how much we are blessed by you. It warms my heart every time. Even after we leave the prison, we keep you in our hearts and prayers."

The Clarks pray with the inmates during the evening services. They will be here two more times in December, including Christmas caroling in the cell blocks.

Rick Burger has been a San Quentin resident about three years. He expressed appreciation for the chapel volunteers and the opportunities they bring: "Thank you for sharing your blessings with us. I hope I can be as big a blessing to others, inside and out." Burger continued, "If someone would have told me when I was in county jail that when I go to prison, I would attend college, go to church and work, and become an amazing soldier for God, I would have told them, 'Let's pray for something a little more realistic.' This chapel is a miracle."

As the dining slowed down, entertainment resumed. Soothing acoustic

guitar by David, a SQ resident was followed by a "parable" by comedian Jesse Ayers that got the crowd roaring with laughter.

Chaplain Jackson took the stage once again to present the certificates to the volunteers. "The San Quentin Garden Chapel Christian Fellowship presents these certificates to you to express our gratitude for you and all you do to share the love and fellowship of Jesus Christ with us," she said to each group. Representatives came onto the stage to accept the certificates and say a few words.

Some of the groups and volunteers recognized were 19th Street Baptist Church, Second Chance Ministry, Man to Man Ministries, Hillside Covenant, Tiburon Baptist Church, Malachi Dads, Aldo Yannon, Steve Wiegert, Overcomers, Evangelist Leslie Smith, New Faith Cathedral, Brother Donald Mack, Pastor Tom Pham, Elder Darryl Jenkins, Pastor and Sister Hippie, Evangelist Sam and Karen Knapp and Larry Wilson.

"How many mighty men of God we have here!" said Chaplain Jackson. The audience burst into a standing ovation.

"During this season, if you feel like giving up or if you feel like you're all alone, remember God loves you. Jesus is your hope," said Evangelist Paula. Then she closed the celebration with a strong and soulful song, "He is the reason...Jesus is the reason..."

The sun shone in through the chapel windows as the storm outside cleared and the guests began to trickle back out to the garden.

CHRISTMAS

Continued from Page 1

Guests filled the hundreds of seats at place settings with red cups and Christmas napkins on tables draped with red tablecloths. Mini Christmas tree centerpieces glowed with alternating color lights and "Believe" ornaments glittered with gold on each of the 34 tables.

The annual banquet acknowledges the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who share the love of Christ with the chapel's congregation throughout the year. The guests of honor, the volunteers from all the Christian fellowship groups, sat side-by-side with the men in blue at each table.

"Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" began the emcee as



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Guests dining at a previous Christmas Banquet



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Chaplain Mardi Ralph Jackson

Passionately the young Christian supports Deacon "LT's" demand to die (surrender) for God.

Being more conscious to our readers in the New Year

Editorial

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Happy New Year! Yeah, another year down and a decade gone. For those who have been incarcerated since the 1980s and '90s, we have officially moved into what we call the Buck Rogers dates (named after the late '70s TV show). This term was coined to show how far off someone's release date was back then, so good luck in this decade.

As times change and new generations are born, languages, terminologies and definitions can also go through a metamorphosis. Now we are in a time of criminal justice reform, a time where self-identification for some people and

organizations has also taken a shift.

It's a time where using pronouns such as they/them for gender nonconforming (GNC) people has gained traction. In short, words have power; they can either build someone up or tear them down.

San Quentin News wants to put our readers on notice that we will start being conscious of not using the word inmate(s). We are not taking away this word as an option for our contributors or our journalists.

But, we are in the process of creating acceptable word options such as the incarcerated, incarcerated people, inside participants, etc. For those who have returned home, terms such as returning resident, formerly incarcerated person or system-impacted will be used.

We do understand the power of the media and word choices,

where we are addressed as inmates, offenders or convicts. It's about humanizing the incarcerated people. We are not monsters, our crimes or any other negative label.

None of these different word choices takes away having accountability for the harm that has been caused to victims/survivors or the community as a whole. This does not include the truly innocent of crimes, because we know these people exist as well.

Using words that generalize people and other negative epithets can create societal stigmas that can hinder rehabilitation or a successful reentry. This doesn't help public safety.

I know and understand that some incarcerated people don't care what they are called one way or the other. Everyone's opinion is valid, but as a news agency we are aware of the debates going on regarding what

incarcerated people should be called in the media, as well as how to address individuals.

Prison reform advocates and organizations and some government officials are adopting new guidelines to stay away from language such as felon, or ex-con, etc., to help remove barriers for returning residents. We who are incarcerated need to know that there are people fighting to show the rest of the world our humanity, especially those who have returned back to society. We applaud and support their efforts. In our role as journalists, we share in the efforts to also support and inform our readership in a healthy way for their human transformations—most of the times we get this right, and sometimes we can make mistakes.

But overall, we want the best for everyone, especially

those who seek redemption in these dark places called prisons.

Changing what we call ourselves may take some time to have some psychological affect, but we must put forth our effort.

Well, when it comes to celebrating New Year's Day, some people make resolutions. I guess I recommend focusing on choices and changes. One has the choice to change one's life for the better or stay in the same place mentally, emotionally and even physically. The choice is yours.

So for you young people, who have just started doing your time or are involved in some questionable activities, take notice. When we were sentenced we were given what we called Buck Rogers dates. For your generation you have Terminator, the

movie set in the 2040s. Understand this: that's just 20 years from now.

If you think you can't get or serve that type of time, just ask any OG, who has served two decades or more. It's a reality.

Lastly, we as a news agency not using the word inmate(s) may seem trivial. But the alternative is supporting thingify-ing (objectifying) us as incarcerated people.

In self-help groups, we learn not to do the same thing. When you thingify (objectify) someone you take away their identity as a person who has feelings, emotions and families, where it's easy to cause them harm. What about us? Don't we have the ability to change or have remorse? Or are we not people?

It's just food for thought.
*Once again,
Happy New Year!*

LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK: Dear San Quentin News

Can America continue to ignore the massive impact excessively harsh incarceration tactics are having on this country? How many children must go through life without a mother or father because we refuse to address alternative resources that would allow families to be reunited sooner.

Most child psychologist agree that alienating children from either parent leads to "toxic stress" resulting in lasting psychological and physical health problems. As children grow older without parental guidance of both parents, it can also lead to criminal behavior spurred from the anger or confusion of a missing parent in their life for so long.

Almost all – 91 percent – agreed that the US criminal justice system needs reform. 61 percent preferred shorter sentences to spending on incarceration. Eighty-nine percent of crime victims favored additional spending on schools and education over building more prisons and jails.

So it seems the only ones who support excessive incarceration is our government. The people have spoken and are largely against excessive sentencing, and for prison reform. The government does not control the civilian, we control the government. They serve America. It's time for the government to do what the public demands of it.

Jeremy Mount, Federal Correctional Institution, Sandstone, MN

Dear San Quentin News,

My name is Jessie Garcia from Centinela Prison. I've been reading the articles in the San Quentin paper about running for a few years now.

I started a 100 mile club about four years ago here at Centinela. We currently start from July 1st to June 30th for runners to complete 100 miles or more. We have between 40 to 50 runners. We have about 20 who complete between 100 to 1,000 and a few who complete over 2,000 miles.

We started this year having a 3 mile race. I'm planning on expanding to have 2 mile and 6 mile races also. The reasons I'm writing is to ask if the next time you get ready to have a 3 mile race if it would be alright if you let me know 4-6 weeks ahead of time and we can run one over here and can send you our times to compare with your runners and see how we place. Kind of like a competition. I hope this is something you would be interested in so we could get other prisons to do the same.

I hope that you take this into consideration.

Sincerely,

Jess Garcia, Centinela State Prison

To San Quentin News,

My name is Danna Dan Vongamath, I am finally in prison at the Wasco State Prison Reception Center. But before I caught the chain, I was housed in a facility (a county jail) in Orange County. While I was there fighting my case for six months. I never in my entire life have taken so much verbal abuse, threats, personal property abuse, causing tension between other races fights and riots, all from an Orange County deputy. I am so tired of not saying anything, so tired being scared to talk about it. These past couple of months, inmates and deputies were getting into it. But the local county newspapers made us inmates look like the incidents with the deputies were for no reasons and that we are the ones with animal like behavior. I don't ever think a deputy will ever come forward to the media that he has been abusing his power. How can we stop being abused? Who's right and who's wrong? Because they have a badge does that make them have the right to inflict pain and harm, mentally and physically? This is America so America I'm asking for your help.

Danna Dan Vongamath, Wasco State Prison

To San Quentin News:

I've written before about how I was shocked at the intelligence, integrity and openness of your writers. These feelings of mine are strengthened with each issue.

I get to read words from actual real people who have evolved from desperate, fierce criminals...who have transformed themselves into beings of compassion. I am not making this up. There are examples of this all through the San Quentin News...

Then in the September 2019 issue on page 17 in News Briefs (#4), Sharee Miller, in prison for murder, speaks of the OPPOSITE: actual law officers performing horrendous torture. This is something ELSE that goes on that I'd not known: there are people whose job it is to PROTECT humans from torture and crime, who are themselves "desperate, fierce criminals..." and Miller having the guts and integrity to report it, at her OWN risk.

The San Quentin News helps me see the WHOLE picture. I send blessings and support and love to all San Quentin people.

Nyla Blair, Outside Supporter

Dear San Quentin News,

First and foremost I would like to thank ya'll for publishing my article in the October 2019 issue, titled "Pelican Bay Inmates Breakdown Barriers of Stigmatization." It's important that people all over especially California see the faces of the people who are making a heartfelt solid effort to stop racial tensions, violence in prison. Daily we are tested.

A lot of people do not like to see African Americans, Whites and Mexicans playing sports together, taking pictures together or greeting each other with a hug. Sometimes C/O's say we are getting soft. Teaching individuals methodology instead of ideology is hard work. Getting people to think has always been a tough job, yet we are having success at Pelican Bay. I'm hoping my article reaches gangs everywhere and influences them to try peace to make our communities safer. A special shout out to all of ya'll at the San Quentin. Be on the lookout for more of my writings.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

Emphatically, Little John Perry, Pelican Bay State Prison

San Quentin News,

In writing this letter, I express a grave concern I have regarding the Prop. 57 law. My main concern is the fact that it was created with discriminating efforts. Discriminating towards violent offenders. Violent offenders need just as much help as anyone else serving time. It makes no sense to exclude them, simply because their crime was considered "violent." How are we (violent offenders) supposed to successfully transition into society after serving an extensive amount of time behind bars? Milestones, they can have milestones! That's all? What about all these enhancements and add-ons for a crime we've already paid for? Milestones will definitely help, but are not sufficient enough for proper rehabilitation. SB1393 takes away the 5-year enhancement for a serious felony and SB136 takes away the 1-year enhancement for prior felonies. What about the 3-year enhancement for a violent felony? Once again, laws are coming into existence that are backed by discriminating preference!

I'm not complaining, I know I messed up, but seriously an 11-year sentence to be served at 85% (now 80%) is a bit excessive! And, not being eligible to the many benefits that are available through Prop. 57 hurts me. I just want to get well, and part of getting well is making it home to my wife and family as soon as possible.

Vincent Caico, Deuel Vocational Institution

To Editor,

I'm over here in Corcoran State Prison, in the ASU (Security Housing Unit). I came across your newspaper while searching for the legal library address there at San Quentin. First I would like to say good work, the paper is great. Keep up the good work. Next I am trying to request a recall and resentencing form for the enhancements I was given. It's Assembly Bill 2942-Penal Code 1170(d) (1). I've been struggling trying to get this form for a minute, any help will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and help.

Respectfully,

Randall Hinson, Corcoran State Prison

Prisoners' Lives Matter

People don't stop being humans when they offend society and commit crime

On the contrary we lose some of our best citizens at their prime. In fact it is inside of their cell that many prisoners rehabilitate themselves

Coming out into society as reformed people having left the older version

Of their lives behind on prison shelves

Instead of breaking the fallen down even further we should pick them up

Let them drink from the fountain of change till they do away with their hiccup

They did wrong and must be held accountable for their acts

Recidivism is a blight on society and statistics prove these facts

Men and women deserve a second chance when they are locked away in prison

These are our fellow citizens who went astray with their vision

A prison number doesn't make them any less of a human being

We all just have to guide their sight back to a civilized way of seeing

Drugs play a major role in their fall

Addicted to chemical substances under the influence of alcohol

Many were at their lowest common denominator when they became criminals

Therefore we must all stand up and mentor better choices for the millennials

We can't just lock up our citizens and throw away the key

The ultimate goal is to rehabilitate them so they can contribute to society

The world can't afford to only see incarcerated people through the lens of

Their past clutter and clatter

Although we must never forget the victims of crime prisoners lives also matter

Bobby Bostic

Jefferson City Correctional Facility, MO

9-year-old Illinois boy charged with murder and arson

By Kerry Rudd
Journalism Guild Writer

An Illinois court recently charged a nine-year-old boy with five first-degree murders and arson for starting a mobile home fire that killed five people.

If convicted, the boy's young age makes juvenile probation the only sentencing option available. He's too young to be placed in any juvenile detention facility, according to an Oct. 22 *Chicago Tribune* article.

"He made a terrible mistake, but he's not a monster," said his mother, Katie Atwood.

The newspaper reported, "When he sat (in court), his feet only touched the ground if he slid forward in his chair, and his head barely reached above the top of the seat."

The charges stem from an April fire. Four of his relatives and his mother's boyfriend died in the inferno.

Judge Charles Feeney read the charges to the boy. The proceedings were slow-going because the judge had to explain a variety of legal terms to him.

The boy was read the first count by the judge, which alleged "he committed the offense of first-degree murder and you...set fire to trailer residence...thereby caused the death of Jason Wall."

When asked by the judge whether he understood, the boy indicated that he didn't by shaking his head.

"What don't you understand?" the judge asked.

"What I did," the boy replied.

"He made a terrible mistake, but he's not a monster"

Judge Feeney then started over again. He stopped on certain words to define them for the boy.

Later in the hearing the boy's court-appointed attorney, Peter Dluski, intervened.

"Your honor, I apologize. He told me he doesn't know what 'alleged' means," Dluski said.

Later in the hearing came the term "arson."

"He wants to know what arson is, your honor," Dluski said.

"Arson is the name of a crime, that you knowingly caused a fire to occur at real property..." the judge explained.

In April the county medical examiner's office ruled the deaths as homicides after consulting with the county sheriff's office, state fire marshal's office, and the local fire protection district.

State Attorney Greg Minger of Woodford County brought charges against the boy over six months after the deaths.

The boy was taken into protective custody after the fire. Ever since then he's been a ward of the court.

"Though the boy is too young to be incarcerated, if he is convicted and violates terms of probation a judge can sentence him to county detention once he's 10 years old and state juvenile prison if he's 13," according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

15 year plea deal for powdered milk mistaken as cocaine

By Dillon Kim
Journalism Guild Writer

After police mistook powdered milk for powdered cocaine upon searching a homeless man in Oklahoma, the man pled guilty and was sentenced to 15 years in state prison.

Unable to post the \$50,000 cash bond to escape the confines of the Oklahoma City Jail, Cody Gregg, 26, falsely pled guilty to drug-trafficking charges. Gregg had faced drug charges in the past.

According to an article by Dillon Thompson on AOL.com in August, Gregg was stopped by police for an alleged traffic violation. Gregg attempted to flee on his bicycle but was caught and searched. Upon finding a "large amount of white powder substance" on Gregg, the police arrested him.

According to the incident report from the police, the arresting officer "believed [the powder] to be cocaine based on my training and experience." Police said the white powder substance tested positive for cocaine.

A laboratory tested the white substance two months later and found that it was not cocaine. Once Gregg found out about the new test results, he attempted to withdraw his guilty plea. Gregg told the judge that the white substance was actually powdered milk he'd gotten from a local food pantry, reported *The Oklahoman*.

His petition ultimately was successful: all charges against Gregg were dismissed, and he was released.

Jason Lollman, a public defender in Tulsa, Okla., told NBC News that it is common for suspects in custody to falsely plead guilty to crimes they did not commit. By doing so, they can avoid local

incarceration while they wait for their trials to start. Instead, they can be incarcerated in the prison system which is designed for longer-term sentences. That may have been true here. Lollman said that the Oklahoma City Jail, where Gregg was held, is in "a generally awful jail" which, according to *The Oklahoman*, had at least six inmate deaths this year.

"The cash bail system, posting cash bail, is a problem," Lollman told *The Oklahoman*. "If they can't afford an attorney, they're not going to be able to post bond to get out."

According to Lollman, he regularly talks his clients out of falsely pleading guilty. "Sometimes it's like we, the attorneys, have more stamina than the clients do," he told NBC News. "But that's because we're on the outside, and they're in jail."

Florida can't use restitution or fines to stop ex-felons from voting

A federal court ruled that Florida cannot deny felons the right to vote based on their inability to pay fines or restitution.

"In his order, U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle of the Northern District of Florida halted the implementation of SB 7066, which required felons to pay all restitution, fines and fees before they are eligible to vote," reported *Court-house News* on Oct. 18.

Months after Amendment 4 passed via landslide vote, state lawmakers passed SB 7066.

Amendment 4 is a constitutional amendment that restores voting rights to most felons once they have completed the terms of their sentences. That includes probation and parole. Restitution and fines are not mentioned in the amendment.

Judge Hinkle's ruling only applies to the 17 plaintiffs in the case. The judge suggested Florida implement a system for felons to

prove that they are unable to pay.

"When a state wrongly prevents an eligible citizen from voting, the harm to the citizen is irreparable," Judge Hinkle's written order said.

The court's ruling leaves approximately 1.4 million felons without relief.

"When a state wrongly prevents an eligible citizen from voting, the harm to the citizen is irreparable"

"Each of these plaintiffs have a constitutional right to vote so long as the state's only reason for denying the vote is failure to pay an amount the plaintiff is

genuinely unable to pay," the judge wrote.

Florida's Supreme Court is now reviewing the governor's petition to define what "all terms of a sentence" means in the constitutional amendment. That court will analyze whether restitution and fines are implied in the language of Amendment 4.

Judge Hinkle also said the U.S. Constitution does not prohibit voting eligibility based on a person's financial resources.

According to a study submitted to the court by University of Florida political science professor Daniel Smith, almost 80% of felons have outstanding debts.

More than 2,000 felons registered to vote in Florida in the first three months after Amendment 4 took effect. And thousands more have registered since, advocates say.

Before Amendment 4, Florida was one of only three states with a lifetime ban on felon's voting rights.

—Kerry Rudd

New transparency law goes into effect for public disclosure

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Writer

A new police transparency law went into effect in early October, leading to the public disclosure of Santa Clara County Sheriff Deputy David Tempra's firing over a 2015 beating death.

Tempra was fired for lying about the death of Michael Tyree, a mentally ill inmate. Deputies Rafael Rodriguez, Matthew Farris, and Jereh Lubrin were arrested and charged with second-degree murder in Tyree's beating, according to *KQED News*.

"Your conduct has cast considerable doubt on your integrity and character," the firing decision read. "You have tarnished your reputation and violated the public trust. You have dishonored the Sheriff's Office, your fellow Correctional Deputies and Officers, and our profession."

Rodriguez, Farris and Lubrin all faced trial and

subsequently were convicted and sentenced to 15-years-to-life in 2017.

Tempra, who was on duty the night Tyree died, controlled the doors that provided access to Tyree's housing unit. He failed to report the use of force against both Tyree and Juan Villa—another inmate beaten in the same unit that night. Tempra reported that he didn't hear any noise.

The Sheriff's criminal investigation concluded that Tyree could be heard screaming for several minutes "and was accompanied by the sounds of thumping, wall banging and what sounded like blows to a person's body."

Tempra only admitted this during a fourth round of questioning, said *KQED*.

Tempra was also initially hesitant to report seeing Farris and Rodriguez do "knuckle bumps" as they left the module, where Tyree

lay dying on the cell floor. He only admitted this after an inmate reported seeing deputies doing "fist pounds" after they finished searching the cells.

Tyree's spleen and liver were severed as a result of blunt force trauma. According to an autopsy report, that was the injury that killed him.

The Tyree family's attorney argued that the county is responsible for Tyree's death. "Juan and Michael should have been on a psychiatric unit, not 'protective custody,'" attorney Paula Canny said.

Deputy Koret Shettleworth, who attended the sheriff's academy with Rodriguez and Farris, said, "There was a level of inmate abuse that was deemed acceptable" at the main jail.

The Sheriff's Office has subsequently updated training procedures and has revised its use-of-force policy.

Oklahoma releases 462 incarcerated people in wake of reclassification

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

Oklahoma has released 462 prisoners in the wake of a law change that reclassified numerous felonies as misdemeanors.

It was one of the largest single-day releases of prisoners in U.S. history, according to *The New York Times*.

Oklahoma has one of the nation's highest per-capita incarceration rates, the *Times* reported Nov. 4.

The state voted to reclassify simple drug possessions and low-level property crimes as misdemeanors, rather than felonies, to help reduce its incarcerated population. Gov. Kevin Stitt signed a bill earlier this year that applied the decision retroactively.

"This event is another mark on our historic timeline as we move the needle in criminal justice reform, and my administration remains

committed to working with Oklahomans to pursue bold change that will offer our fellow citizens a second chance while also keeping our communities and streets safe," said Stitt in a statement to the *Times*.

The governor's office expects the mass-commutation to save the state \$12 million.

The action was celebrated for its bipartisan nature by Isi Ofer, director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"What's happening today is an important step forward, but much more is needed," Ofer added.

Screams of joy from family members and friends welcomed the 70 women leaving the Dr. Eddie Warrior Correction Center in Taft, Okla.

A newly liberated prisoner, Tina Martin, 52, would have served another seven years in prison.

"It means the world to me," said Martin. "It was

God that got me here and the governor."

Julie Fair Loth, 28, who was serving time for drug possession, hugged her mother and her husband outside the correction center.

"I can't even put words to it," Loth said.

Loth told the *Times* she was "overwhelmed" to reunite with her family.

"Our concern is that without the necessary community support, we could see these people back in the criminal justice system within six months," said Andrew Speno, director of Oklahoma for Right on Crime, a conservative organization working to reduce incarceration rates.

Speno praised the commutations but urged further action.

The parole panel considered 814 case files and recommended 527 for commutation. Sixty-five were being held on detainers, leaving 642 inmates to be released.

Upcoming federal execution of intellectually disabled man

"Clinicians, not judges, should determine clinical standards, and judges, not clinicians, should determine the content of the Eighth Amendment"

By Vincent O'Bannon
Journalism Guild Writer

An intellectually disabled man scheduled for execution in January claims it would violate his constitutional rights.

He is Alfred Bourgeois, one of five prisoners chosen by the U.S. Justice Department to be put to death in January 2020.

Bourgeois' lawyers claim his execution would violate his Eighth Amendment rights against cruel and unusual punishment, *Rolling Stone* reported Aug. 21.

The case has raised exceptional interest because of membership changes on the U.S. Supreme Court since

its Eighth Amendment standards in 2014 and 2002.

In Atkins v. Virginia, the court declared in 2002, for the first time, that the Eighth Amendment bars the execution of intellectually disabled prisoners whose cognitive functions would render their executions cruel and unusual punishment. Controversy has surfaced over IQ score standards.

"Clinicians, not judges, should determine clinical standards, and judges, not clinicians, should determine the content of the Eighth Amendment," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in Moore v. Texas that examines the Atkins' test, the story reported.

Bourgeois was sentenced to death by a jury in Texas in 2014 for torturing, sexually molesting and beating his 2 1/2-year-old daughter to death. His lawyers claim he cannot be executed because his intellectual disability has never been evaluated under the new Eighth Amendment standards imposed by the Supreme Court, the story noted.

Bourgeois' initial claim that he was "too disabled to be executed," was rejected by a federal judge in Texas in 2011 and again by the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 2013. The Fifth Circuit has ruled that he previously and unsuccessfully raised the disability claim and cannot raise it again.

Tempra was fired for lying about the death of Michael Tyree, a mentally ill inmate. Deputies Rafael Rodriguez, Matthew Farris, and Jereh Lubrin were arrested and charged with second-degree murder in Tyree's beating, according to *KQED News*.

"Your conduct has cast considerable doubt on your integrity and character," the firing decision read. "You have tarnished your reputation and violated the public trust. You have dishonored the Sheriff's Office, your fellow Correctional Deputies and Officers, and our profession."

Rodriguez, Farris and Lubrin all faced trial and

Incarcerated cooks learn top notch skills as they reenter the workforce

**By Aron Roy
Contributing Writer**

A class of men incarcerated at San Quentin graduated from a cooking course aimed at teaching them top notch skills for reintegration into the workforce once released.

Thanks to the Quentin Cooks program, the eight men showcased their newfound skills on Nov. 13 by preparing a four-course meal for visitors from outside the walls of San Quentin.

"The food was astonishingly delicious," said San Francisco Public Defender Manojar Raju. "But I think if more people were able to meet everyone in here and get to know them, they would be astonished by their resilience and determination to succeed."

The theme of the meal was "Winter Squash Five Ways."

The incarcerated chefs prepared the meal with assistance from instructors Chef Huw and Chef Adelaar.

Several graduates also returned to help.

"I just thought we were going to go in there and pretty much make some meals," said graduate Breon Mosely. "But we also got to learn what it was like to work on a team, how to plan out a meal, how to use the equipment, and learn how a kitchen overall runs."

To begin the night, the cooks served butternut squash agro dolce with burrata cheese and chili crunch oil. A perfectly paired squash, apple and turnip soup was served along with the agro dolce.

The appetizer was a salad of roasted delicata squash, kale, cranberries, pumpkin seeds, chicories, winter citrus and goat cheese.

The entrée: grilled Allen Bros. rib eye steak, squash



Photo by Michael Johnson
Students preparing an appetizer course in the kitchen

and chard gratin, roasted mushrooms, and salsa verde.

To satisfy the guests' sweet tooth: pumpkin cannoli with mascarpone, pistachios and cocoa nibs.

"The food was so flavorful, and the guys got really creative with the squash," said

Hadi Razzaq, who also works in the San Francisco Public Defenders office. "This is the kind of food I would expect at a fancy restaurant."

After the meal, cofounder of Quentin Cooks Helaine Melnitzer delivered a heart-warming speech, thanking ev-



Photo by Michael Johnson
Students preparing dessert

eryone who made the program possible.

"We're not just a culinary program; we're a skills based program, helping men-in-blue to succeed," said Melnitzer. "Of the 55 men who have graduated so far, many of them released, as far as we know, none have returned to prison."

unteer work in the community.

"The most precious thing you can give somebody is your time, because you can't get it back," said Melnitzer.

Dombroski shared the spotlight with the chefs who come to San Quentin for the five hour class on Wednesday mornings. "Chefs Huw and Adelaar, I never would have imagined I would find chefs whose passion for the program exceeded that of the founders.

"This is the kind of food I would expect at a fancy restaurant"



Photo by Michael Johnson
Quentin Cooks founder Helaine Melnitzer (center)

"Every time one of our released men gets a job, it's like Christmas for us," Melnitzer added.

Melnitzer, along with co-founder Lisa Dombroski, won a Jefferson Award this past August for her efforts associated with the Quentin Cooks program. A Jefferson Award is a weekly honor given to a community member for vol-

The graduating men not only value the culinary skills they learn in the program but also the opportunity they have to pursue a career in the culinary world once they are released.

"As we got to learn all these skills and techniques, we would think about how to utilize them," said Mosely. "The program helps you to find a job when you're released so that you can use these skills. You may have to start at the bottom, but if you're determined, you can climb the ladder, hopefully become a chef, and be able to run your own kitchen one day."

A new feature introduced at the Quentin Cooks sixth graduation banquet was entertainment by Quentin Cooks graduates.

Jason Griffin opened the show with a poem. Kerry Rudd and Jesse Ayers each performed humorous skits, which had the whole crowd laughing. Finally, Derry "Brotha Dee" Brown finished with a song called "My Best Friend."

"The program just keeps improving with every cycle," said Santhosh Daniel, a filmmaker who comes in to follow the Quentin Cooks program. "Every guy who's getting out and doing well contributes to a track record of success."



Photo by Michael Johnson
Visitors enjoying the prepared food



Photo by Michael Johnson
Elisabeth Schwarz handing out certificates

Keeping the conversation going about HIV on World AIDS Day at SQ

**By Juan Haines
Senior Editor**

Almost 20 years ago, Andrew Yancy felt a small lump on his neck. He told a nurse he thought it was a spider bite. There were examinations and tests — the results shocked him — he had been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Since then, Yancy says he's serious about educating people about HIV. He had a chance to make good on his word, when two local non-profits geared to serve those suffering from HIV/AIDS came to San Quentin the day after World AIDS Day.

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a term that applies to the advanced stages of HIV infection.

"The most important thing is keeping the conversation going," Yancy said, "and not for just HIV patients — everyone needs to be involved."

"This is an important issue," said Lisa Strawn, prisoner and emcee of our first-ever Transgender Day of Remembrance. "It's about saving lives, not just the LGBTQ community. There's tattooing, drug use and not everybody is going to be up front. This day is important in so many ways. So, it's disappointing that there aren't any medical staff here."

The non-profits that came to talk to the prisoners. Until There's A Cure and AIDS Project of the East Bay (APEB), work toward HIV/AIDS awareness and providing services to those directly impacted by the virus.

"We need to get past being shunned, afraid to shake hands," said Ed Jones of APEB. "Those living with HIV should not be shunned away."

APEB holds discussion groups to talk about the stigma and challenges faced.

"It's a good way to vent and share when there's something going on," Jones said. "It's a great place to go, and we feed you."

The National Institute of Health reports that, today, there are medications for HIV treatment and to prevent its transmission, which enables a person to live a nearly normal lifespan.

APEB operates a health clinic that, in addition to offering patient care and case management, is involved with community outreach

and testing. The non-profit also has a workforce education and training program, transgender support services, youth activities as well as pastoral care and counseling.

"I can relate to being here," said APEB staffer, Mikiya "Fefe." "I'm transgender, and I was in prison for three years and transgender." She told the audience that she knows firsthand what it's like not to be educated and not have support or guidance and then go back to the streets. I want to be a beacon so no matter what background you come from you have support."

Dora Hanna, executive director of Until There's A Cure, assists those with felony convictions obtain housing. The organization also has raised more than \$23 million by selling bracelets to

support non-profits focused on HIV/AIDS related issues.

"When you're homeless, the risk of infection from HIV goes up," Hanna said. "If you self-medicate and engage in risky behavior and have poor eating habits, the risk goes up. Until We Find A Cure aims to eliminate barriers and to make the drugs more accessible. Everyone deserves a place to live."

HIV is found in certain bodily fluids of people living with HIV, including blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids and breast milk. HIV can be transmitted by:

- Unprotected vaginal or anal sex, and, in very rare cases, through oral sex with a person who has HIV; blood transfusion of contaminated blood.

- Sharing of needles, syringes, other injecting equipment as well as exposure to other sharp instruments.

- From a mother with HIV to her infant during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

If a person living with HIV is on antiretroviral therapy, which effectively suppresses HIV in the body, their chance of transmitting HIV to another person is greatly reduced. This class of drugs is available to prisoners in California.

For more information, write to:

APEB
8400 Enterprise
Way, Suite 118
Oakland, CA 94621

Q & A with Chairman Si Dang Inspiring humanity

KidCAT Speaks!

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

Si Dang just completed his first full year as KidCAT Chairman. He turns 44 on Jan. 17 and approaches his 25th year of incarceration for first-degree murder and attempted murder.

Dang sat down with *SQ News* for a Q&A about himself and his vision of KidCAT.

Q: So many people ask—what's KidCAT really all about?

A: Inspiring humanity. We use those words a lot lately, but just think about what that truly means. It's about service—giving back and connecting with our community.

We're always here to support our youth and youth offenders—to encourage, inspire and remind them that people really care about them.

Q: What's the most valuable lesson you've learned over the last year?

A: Always have an open mind. Working with our members, I've learned to listen more and take advice. Being able to communicate and work together as a team to get things done—that's what counts.

I'm amazed by the ongoing support from all

our partnerships—*The Beat Within*, Huckleberry House, Project Avary. Their dedication and commitment inspires all of us.

Also, I want to send my deepest thanks to our incredible volunteers and all our members for their hard work.

Q: What's the biggest lesson you've learned throughout your entire incarceration?

A: The value and strength of family. I'm so fortunate that my family's always been there for me through thick and thin—my mom, sisters and brothers.

That's why I emphasize and foster that same sense of family in KidCAT. All of us benefit when we support and take care of each other.

Q: What's the most important thing young lifers need to know as they do their time?

A: They need to understand that it's okay to ask for help. Don't be afraid to reach out and admit your vulnerabilities. The strongest people are those who understand they're not alone.

Q: If you could visit and speak to kids in juvenile halls, what would you say to them?

A: There are many people who care and love you. Don't ever give up hope. Stay strong, believe in yourself and go to



Photo by Jonathan Chiu
Si Dang at the KidCAT Banquet in 2018

school—don't turn your back on education.

Q: What can you say to all the folks who've requested KidCAT's First Step curriculum and are looking for guidance?

A: First of all, I want to sincerely apologize for the long delay. I know how committed so many youths around the system are about trying to learn our curriculum.

My biggest vision for 2020—we will get First Step out and into the hands of all those who asked.

Q: What's your biggest hope for 2020?

A: Reaching out to more supporters and advocates in law enforcement, the judicial system, and higher education—and continue to raise awareness of youth issues.

Q: What can you tell our readers about the impact of newly signed legislation?

A: Especially with Senate Bill 965 and the potential to earn credit off of their minimum parole eligibility date, that's going to bring a lot of hope to youth offenders.

I think of all the possibilities and potential to not just gain freedom—but to gain a sense

of hope and to motivate and encourage the youth to better themselves.

Q: Who's one celebrity you'd love to invite to a KidCAT meeting?

A: That's gotta be Gov. Gavin Newsom. He's such a strong leader, and I totally respect that. He stays with integrity, compassion and heart.

Q: What's one thing you'd say to Governor Newsom?

A: As a youth offender—we can change and become better people. We have the ability to heal within ourselves within the community.

Q: Why is a second chance so important?

A: Nobody's perfect. People can change. To give them a chance to do something better—why not give that?

Instead of always locking them up and throwing away the key, give them that chance to grow and give something back to society.

Q: Why do you believe you deserve a second chance?

A: Honestly, I don't think I do. Andy Tran, the innocent person I killed—he didn't get a second chance. I'm just grateful to serve others and continue doing what I do.

Andy Tran and Sen Dang (no relation), they were both innocent victims. I always try to honor them, their families and the community of Stockton for all the harm I caused.

Q: Who's made the biggest lasting impression on your life?

A: My mom, Thu Pham. From day one, she never gave up on me and was there when I was at my most vulnerable. She's my true hero—the strongest person I know.

Any final thoughts for all of KidCAT's returned citizens out there?

Thank you for continuing to represent KidCAT in the best possible way—even after you got out.

All you guys continue to advocate for the youth, and we love you.

San Francisco to replace Juvenile Hall with rehabilitative center

By Dillon Kim
Journalism Guild Writer

San Francisco voted to close its Juvenile Hall and replace it with a smaller "rehabilitative center" to provide a more home-like setting for youths who don't need to be detained but can't return home.

The Board of Supervisors voted 10-1 on June 4 to shut the facility by the end of 2021.

Mayor London Breed and some other community leaders oppose the facility's complete closure and instead support institutional reform.

"What about a teenager charged with murdering someone? Someone's son or daughter is dead and so what happens to that young person?" said Breed. "Sometimes there is a need [for incarceration]. And so what does that look like?"

California law mandates that certain juveniles must be held in a secure facility.

According to a recent report in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, juvenile delinquency rates in the U.S. and California have declined over the past decade.

Last January, just forty-five youths remained

housed in SF's juvenile hall—less than one-third of its full capacity. At that rate of occupancy, the city spends almost \$270,000 annually to incarcerate a single child, according to numbers released by the Young Women's Freedom Center.

Additionally, *HuffPost* reported that San Francisco's population is only 5% Black—yet Black children comprise 60% of its incarcerated juvenile population.

Supervisor Catherine Stefani was the only holdout to vote "no" against the ordinance.

"I do believe this piece of legislation is well-intended. I'm on the same page in terms of why we are doing this," said Stefani. "But when we flip that page to the solution, I'm not there yet because I have a hard time closing Juvenile Hall with a date certain and without a plan in place."

The new ordinance creates a 12-person team that will include city officials, juvenile justice experts and community members—all working to develop feasible alternatives to youth

incarceration. It also calls for redirecting the funds allocated for Juvenile Hall to programs that support youth mental health treatment and academic aid.

As a 16-year-old, Leticia Silot spent time incarcerated at the city's juvenile hall. She spoke about her experience recently in an interview for *KQED on National Public Radio (NPR)*.

"Man, it felt like forever. I don't even know what time it was half the time because they take the clocks out," Silot recalled. "They don't let us have clocks in the building, so it's like—it's very confusing."

Supervisor Matt Haney told the *Examiner*, "The harsh truth is that the incarceration of children in jail-like environments, behind steel doors in concrete rooms, does not work. Incarceration adds trauma and pain to the lives of children who have often experienced an unimaginable amount of trauma and pain."

"Kids need treatment, support, education, community-based, non-incarceration-based opportunities. They need better than we are doing now."

Dear KidCAT

My name is Davion Keel, and I'm currently serving 25 years-to-life. I was 15 at the time of my crime. I'm 29 years old now.

My reason for writing today is to thank you for this avenue where our voices get heard. Coming into the system, I knew nothing. And at 15 years old, I thought I knew it all. I didn't know anything about being restored and restorative justice.

I always thought I was normal. Only after maturing and really being honest with myself with 100% true love, I tapped back into that human side I've always had and admitted that I was lost. Insecure, I had no integrity. I always wanted to be accepted because as a child I never had a father, or mother or anyone to ask me, "What's wrong, Davion?"

Well, one person asked me, "What's wrong?" ...just so happened it was a gang member. And getting affirmation from him—and others like him—that became my life.

It took me until I was 26 to finally be a man and stand up for the betterment of myself. I started attending self-help groups and found interest in people building people—in the right way, to prosper the world. CGA (Criminal and Gangs Anonymous) was and is a big part of my life. I plan on teaching kids at the same juvenile hall I grew up in.

Which brings me to your curriculum... I'm planning on getting a transfer, just to join. I feel all kids and youth need the tools of KidCAT and CGA. It really helps to develop emotional intelligence in the ghettos where a lot of kids are getting locked up—like my 15-year-old self. I just wanted to thank you again. Save a spot for me.

Davion,

Great to read about your transformative growth. The world needs to know about all these stories—each of our stories. KidCAT is rooted in sharing and learning from each other, supporting each other, building each other. We see all that in your letter.

Our hope for 2020 is to get our curriculum out there and available to everyone who wants it. We welcome you, but we also don't want transferring here to be the only way for guys to go through First Step.

Anyone at SQ is welcome to take First Step on Sundays from 6-8. Each cycle takes six months to complete. If you do get over here, we look forward to your participation. It's always great to meet our readers face-to-face and really get to know them in person. We can't wait!



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 inmates 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. KidCAT 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 KidCAT Speaks!

Words from the wise, quote of the week - "Although slavery may have been abolished, the crippling poison of racism still persists, and the struggle still continues." - Harry Belafonte (born 1927) is an American singer, songwriter, activist, and actor. Throughout his career, he has been an advocate for political and humanitarian causes. Do you agree or disagree with this quote? Where do you personally stand when it comes to racism? What about this country/the world we live in? Share your thoughts, from what you have experienced and witnessed. "Although slavery may have been abolished, the crippling poison of racism still persists, and the struggle still continues."

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 but 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.

Tehachapi hosts 3rd Ethics Bowl against CSU Bakersfield

Submitted by Dian Grier
CCI Press Release

For the third consecutive year, CCI (California Correctional Institution at Tehachapi) has hosted the annual Ethics Bowl against California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB). This year was a tie breaker for CCI, with a 3-0 win. "Intellectual Sports" such as ethics bowls are gaining status and momentum throughout colleges in the United States. Every year, cases are developed by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics and are used by all ethics teams nationwide. Ethics teams are given packets of case studies four to six weeks prior to the competition. These cases are real and hypothetical cases. The team prepares by considering the ethical implications of each case. At the competition, the two teams present their case, rebut and then answer questions from judges. This year the Ethics Bowl at CCI had judges including three doctorates, one MBA and a reporter from *The Bakersfield Californian*, who wrote an article that made front-page news in Bakersfield. See: <https://www.bakersfield.com/columnists/robert-prince>.

The first case, in which CCI led, was called "A Miscarriage of Justice" and considered Alabama's law that prosecutes pregnant women who the state feels have put their

unborn child at risk. This case was presented based on a real case in which Alabama prosecuted a mother for the unexpected consequence of the death of her fetus. In this case, the mother started a verbal altercation, which turned into the other woman shooting her gun, which ricocheted and hit her fetus, killing it. The mother and victim of the shooting was brought up on charges for involuntary manslaughter by the state of Alabama. This case was complex ethically and CCI took the side that women should have rights over their own bodies, even during pregnancy, and that cases such as this one can be a slippery slope, ultimately denying too many women's rights. CSUB agreed with CCI, adding their perspective to the case. CCI answered multiple questions from judges, clarifying their position and proving they had fully considered all aspects of the case.

The second case this year consisted of "Callout Culture," which considered whether our "callout culture" or "cancel culture"—in which an individual is called out on social and regular media—is helpful in changing societal norms or hurting individuals who are put in the spotlight. The case considered if this behavior is activism or a dysfunctional new aspect of our social media-driven society. CSUB summarized that callout culture has some positives, but is not activism and is hurting so-

society and individuals. CCI responded that there might be better ways to have conversations and foster a society of forgiveness instead of a society that points the finger and damages people's reputation as well as careers. So again, the two sides agreed that this is not a positive for society, but both teams brought differing perspectives on how to address change.

After the Ethics Bowl, CSUB went on to compete in regionals, which took place December 7 in Phoenix, Arizona. CSUB asked if they could use CCI's research for their event, which CCI offered. CSUB's team consists of third-year philosophy students who practice weekly based on what they have learned throughout their classes.

After the event, the philosophy students asked the inmates about their plans for their futures. All of the five team members from CCI have plans for higher education or are currently attending college through Cerra Cosa University here at CCI. Robert Price, the well-known reporter from *The Bakersfield Californian*, commented on how poised and intelligent CCI's team presented, which is a common remark by outside observers seeing the CCI Ethics Bowl for the first time.

CCI's team puts in four hours of class time per week,



Photo courtesy of Tehachapi

CSUB and CCI Debaters of the 3rd Ethics Bowl

preparing through research and practice. The group was developed and is coached by Dian Grier, LCSW, and is considered a mental health group designed to stimulate thinking and perceive the world through multiple lenses. The time the men put into this group helps them in multiple ways. Many of the inmates see the group as a chance to increase social and presentation skills, decrease levels of depression and anxiety, and find purpose within the prison environment. The group consists of 25 inmates who helped prepare for the bowl, but only five were chosen for the presenting team. The other team members were in the audience, cheering on their colleagues. The group consists of all ages, races and viewpoints, which add to the therapeutic benefits of the program. The group continues to discuss and



Photo courtesy of Tehachapi

Debater at the podium giving his remarks



Photo courtesy of Tehachapi

Outside debater giving his rebuttal



Photo courtesy of Tehachapi

Debaters going over debate topic



Photo courtesy of Tehachapi

Host giving opening remarks

New York's Riker's Island Jail scheduled to close in 2026

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

After years of debate and discussion, Riker's Island Jail in New York is scheduled to close in 2026, according to Amanda Ottaway of *Courtroom News*.

With a reputation as one of the worst facilities to incarcerate human beings, politicians and the community of

Queens, New York, felt that it is time to shut Riker's down.

"Not another person should ever have to suffer through the inhumane conditions and the culture of abuse and violence that Riker's fosters," Brandon Holmes, campaign coordinator for #CLOSEErikers, said.

Queens and the rest of New York are now faced with finding alternative housing for

the current prison population. It is still up in the air whether or not to build new facilities in Queens or move the prisoners elsewhere.

When news of the jail's future closing got out, some politicians signed-off while others did not. Those who are in favor of closing the facility feel that the jail has a horrible reputation for violence. Many are concerned about over-

crowding and poor health conditions.

Others feel that closing the jail would incur the wrath of the public. The five boroughs in New York would have to come up with a plan on where to build another jail facility.

The opposing sides are looking into measures and proposals to slow down the process. Councilman Andy King, who voted not to close

the jail, said he would like to see these proposals' positive impacts before jails are put into neighborhoods.

Those who live in the inner city and suburbs are pushing back and putting up resistance. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who opposed the closure, pointed out that the proposal does not have a codified timeline for closing Riker's.

Members of the city's Land Use Committee feel that setting the goal of completion for 2026 gives both sides time to iron out the kinks and come-up with a solution that satisfies everyone.

In the meantime, Riker's Island will continue to operate and live-up to its legacy as one of the worst jail facilities in the country for the next seven years.

Red Hoop drumming group brings sounds of life to SQ Pow Wow

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

The Nevada Red Hoop drumming group brought the sounds of life to San Quentin's Native American Spiritual Group Annual Fall Pow Wow. The thumping sounds of traditional drumming filled the prison's visiting room, blending with the scent of sage, circle dancing and chanting from the outside spiritual elders.

"The elders and drummers coming in helps us learn more about our ways as a people"

The pulsating drumbeats simulate the rhythm of a heartbeat, which represents the sign of life, be it from man or animal, according some Native traditions.

"The drum is alive — just as any human being is," said Martin Montgomery, one of the Red Hoop drummers. "An animal gave its life for this drum — and the wood to produce the heartbeat sound."

"The drums and our traditional songs have the ability to change emotions and they have made their way to us today," added Montgomery.

The Nov. 15, sacred event celebrated the unity of the human family and its connections through the heart.

The Red Hoop Drum group consists of more than 20 drummers, but only three



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Participants surrounding the Red Hoop drummers celebrated the unity of the human family

were able to make the trip, due to rescheduling of the ceremony. The group consisted of Montgomery, Ivan Julianito and Brandon Heredia, the son of the Native American Spiritual Group's chaplain.

The trio chanted each song energetically as they

uniformly pounded the large drum. The more than 90 incarcerated participants and volunteers swayed and step dance throughout the event in ceremonial circles symbolizing the infinity of life.

The dancing and singing is part of the spiritual healing led by the sacred instrument.

"The elders and drummers coming in helps us learn more about our ways as a people," said Dennis "Wolf" Gilbert, participant. "They show us that we are not hated but loved and not forgotten."

"It keeps us on the Red Road (spiritual road.) I want to raise my grandson in our ways," Gilbert added.

Montgomery can relate to this statement. His father was incarcerated in a Nevada prison.

"Your family needs you. And that's spoken from a kid who grew up while his father was incarcerated," said Montgomery. "My father shared a lot of stories about how the system changed him. He wanted to give us an alternative and he taught us the drums — learning our culture help save us," added Montgomery.

Montgomery credits his father for starting Red Hoop. The group name comes from his grandfather who found a horse, back in the day, with a red hoop around its eye. The horse used to do tricks such as dancing and bowing.

The grandfather thought it was from a circus or something. So he began asking the people in the surrounding area whose horse it was. No one seemed to claim it.

"Being here is like coming full circle," said Montgomery. "It makes you feel grateful. What my father learned in prison he passed on to us; now I'm sharing it with these men."

The drum is one of the major parts of Native life. The songs and drum rhythms are passed down through the grandparents or elders. Most of the Native drummers are versatile in Southern and Northern tribal drum rhythms. The drums are used for tribal marriages, prayers and calling people together.

After the opening purification ceremony, where the participants smudge themselves with smoking sage, the guests mixed with the Native group to perform the ritual Grand Opening Dance.

Everyone left the visiting room; the men formed one line and women made another one. The two groups danced and stepped their way back into the room to create two circles around the drums.

"The women dance closer to the drums, because they are our hearts," said Gregory "White Eagle" Coates, San Quentin resident and Straight Dancer. "The men are on the outer rings, because they are the protectors."

Montgomery paused the drumming and asked some guests to come up and form two rows of seven people. He asked each person to make a rhythm with their bodies; some made sound with their mouths, snapped fingers, clapped hands and beat sounds on their bodies.

Then Montgomery had everyone do his or her sound in unison, creating an ensemble of music.

"We are all relatives. We all represent that rhythm of the heartbeat, and that was shown in the music we created together," said Montgomery. "If we can see each other as human beings the world would be a better place."

The spiritual ceremony ended with traditional food and strong loving words from visiting elder Lee Polanco, Sr., 81, who was a former San Quentin corrections officer and chaplain.

"I seen two of my sons go to prison, and that hurts as a parent. I buried a lot of people, so doing this prayer work is not a game for me," said Polanco. "I come here because I love these guys, be it the men-in-blue or green."

"I will tell the guys in blue don't ever give up — it's never too late to learn. I hope you get out and never come back," he concluded.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Native American Adviser Hector Frank Heredia smudging the visiting room in preparation for the ceremony



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Gregory "White Eagle" Coates and Straight Dancer regalia



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Bill Churchill, Lee Juarez Polanco, Sr. and Joyce sharing a quiet moment



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Heredia, Polanco, Sr. delivering the opening prayer at the ceremony

The value of Prison to Employment Connection on return

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Prison to Employment Connection (PEC) reached a milestone at San Quentin, completing its 10th session and graduating 44 men, who learned how to present themselves to future employers.

One of the highlights of the program was Employer Day in November, where 196 interviews took place with inmates inside the prison's Protestant chapel. They were conducted with potential companies that hire the formerly incarcerated. A subsequent graduation ceremony was held two weeks later for the Session 10-44 graduates.

Keeping with tradition, Diana Williams, PEC executive director, spoke to the audience comprised of inmates, guests and PEC volunteers. She said the rate of recidivism in California is more than 60%. "That means 26 of the men in this room would come back to prison within three years of their release." She offered employment as one of the key solutions to reduce recidivism.

According to Williams, recidivism is cut in half when those who are formerly incarcerated find employment. For those who have jobs upon release from prison, recidivism is 3.3% to 8%, she said.

"To date, 253 men have graduated from PEC," said

Williams. "Of those, 153 have paroled and only one has returned to prison," leaving her program with a 1% recidivism rate.

"This program is everything I thought it would be. You guys treated me like a human"

"This is a blessing to me, something I've been needing my whole life," said Edmund Johnson, 47. He's been incarcerated 24 years. "I think the program is excellent. It's teaching me to use my transferable skills. It's teaching me how to talk to employers."

Williams explained how during months of preparation the men learned personal and work related interests. They studied work values, resume writing, interview skills, their incarceration history, and used it all to create "packages of success." She said they also worked on learning how to reframe rejection.

"It's designed to connect the men to themselves," Williams told the audience of employers and career specialists. "Men in this



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Returning citizen Nelson Butler speaking with a student

program experience a renewed hope."

Williams said 68 men started the class in August. Four months later, the Session 10-44 graduates attended a ceremony in the Catholic chapel, where they received certificates and other paperwork that will allow them to find employment upon their release from prison.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Michael Belton, 58. "I signed up, and I wasn't sure, but I said 'what do I have to lose?' I actually gained something from it."

He said PEC taught him to be open about his criminal history.

Gary Falkman came in from Realty One and the

Oakland Rotary Club. He had toured the prison previously and said he learned about the programs in prison, and it made an impression on him. "I'm back here to help others find what they're passionate about," he said.

Checkr is a San Francisco-based company working to modernize the background check process.

"Our mission is to promote fair chance hiring," Rebecca Rabison said. "We do that by trying to provide more employment opportunities for people with conviction histories."

"Socializing" the idea of second chances, Orrian Willis works for the City of

San Francisco's Office of Economic and Work Force Development. It funds 45 job training programs, 13 of which focus on technical training. It was his third time attending Employer Day. "In our labor market, the demand is starting to recognize the talent" (of the formerly incarcerated).

Willis asked, "If people do their time why are we still punishing them when they get out?" Adding, to give them employment, "I think it's our fiscal responsibility."

"I was nervous and excited, not to mention I almost fell off the chair for giving me such an opportunity of a lifetime," said Edwin Chavez,

44. He said he's never had a job interview in his life. He's been incarcerated for 25 years.

"I love it," said Steve Garrett, 34, who's been incarcerated for 18 months. "I think it's a great program. The opportunity and skills that they're giving us is what we need to stay out of prison."

Elizabeth Toups, of the Jewish Vocational Service, had visited the prison previously during a graduation ceremony. "I was so impressed with what everyone was doing here," she said.

The San Francisco-based organization works with people from all backgrounds to help them get jobs.



Prison to Employment Connection's Employer Day in November

Learning citizens through job opportunities and connections



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Participants of the Prison to Employment Connection's 10th session

"Sometimes that involves connecting them to training," she said.

When the interviews were completed, the guests reconvened to seats on the stage in the chapel. Williams commented that this 10th PEC session had the largest group of supporters attend Employer Day. Twelve of them stood up and received a warm applause from the men.

Jay Minteer was one of those supporters. He said another supporter, Tom Lacey, introduced him to PEC. He said it's a worthy cause to make sure people don't come back. It was his first time inside of a prison.

"I was impressed when I walked in and shook everyone's hands," said Minteer. "It works when you shake someone's hand and look someone in the eye."

"Thank you for believing in these men and this program," said Williams. She introduced and thanked the inmate PEC volunteers who've also gone through the program and come back to help others. "As outside volunteers, we can only do so much for the program."

Williams explained how the program was started before introducing Nobel Butler, who came up with the idea to provide inmates a head start on employment

before parole. When he was incarcerated, he wanted to know how to get a job and to present employment prospects to the parole board.

"I just really wanted to come back and say things that other people (said to) me, so I really wanted to give back. This is my opportunity," said Butler. He paroled and said he's been gainfully employed ever since. The audience applauded his success. "My purpose here today is to give you guys hope. I think maybe I did something half right."

"I realize life is an interview," Williams said, a PEC graduate now on parole, told her. She acknowledged and thanked PEC volunteers Lisa

Trustin and Gabrielle Nicolet.

This was Trustin's second session. "It's not different because we experienced the same transformation the men make connecting with their own hope," she said.

"It's always different," said Nicolet. "There are different challenges, like lockdowns, that present challenges. The prison population is different than it was a year ago."

She said the core of why she volunteers is because prisoners need help. It was her sixth session.

As the guests sat on the stage, they received feedback from many of the inmates.

"I want to thank you for your friendly demeanor," said Richard Richardson. "This program is everything I thought it would be. You guys treated me like a human."

The employers and guests also shared their comments with the men.

One said, "This is the second time I've come, and each time there's a new excitement."

Another said, "You all should be teaching people how to interview."

Their remarks kept coming.

"I've looked at a lot of resumes, and I can't tell you how much I'd like to see more of these," said another guest.

At the graduation ceremony, Williams asked, "How many of you would have taken this class if you weren't getting RAC (Rehabilitation Achievement Credits) credits?" About 90% of the men raised their hands. Then she read the interview results of the PEC graduates and said they did as well or better than people on the outside. The percentages from low to high:

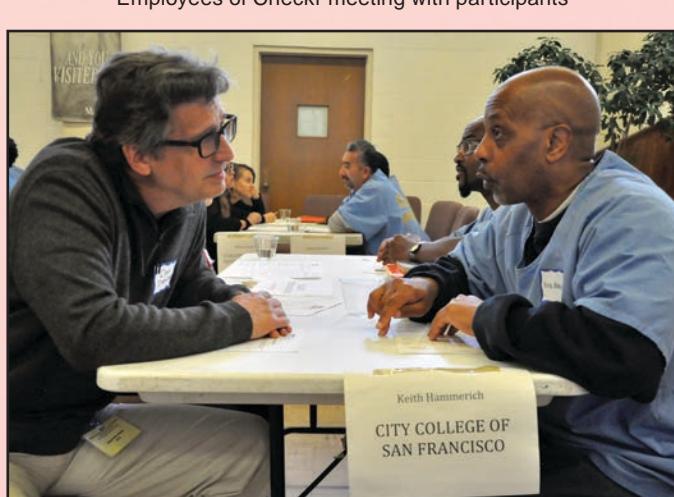
5 Excellent 42%
4 Above average 39%
3 Average 19%
2 Below 0%
1 Poor 0%

Derry Brown said someone suggested he take the program. He went through the class and has now become a facilitator for the program's 11th session. He said he'd never completed a resume or had many jobs and that his youth was swallowed up with incarceration.

"I didn't have any of these skills," he said. "So for me to go through this process was inspiring."

In addition to Williams, Angel Falcone has been a volunteer for all 10 sessions. He told the men, "Every job is your business school" and advised them to do the best they can on every job.

"Everything we learn, we're going to need," said Dwight Kennedy, who volunteers for the program. "Take what you've learned and apply it to your life."

Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Employees of Checkr meeting with participantsPhoto by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Diana Williams giving a speech to the audiencePhoto by Javier Jimenez, SQN
A participant interviewing with City College of San FranciscoPhoto by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Participants greeting employers as they come into San Quentin

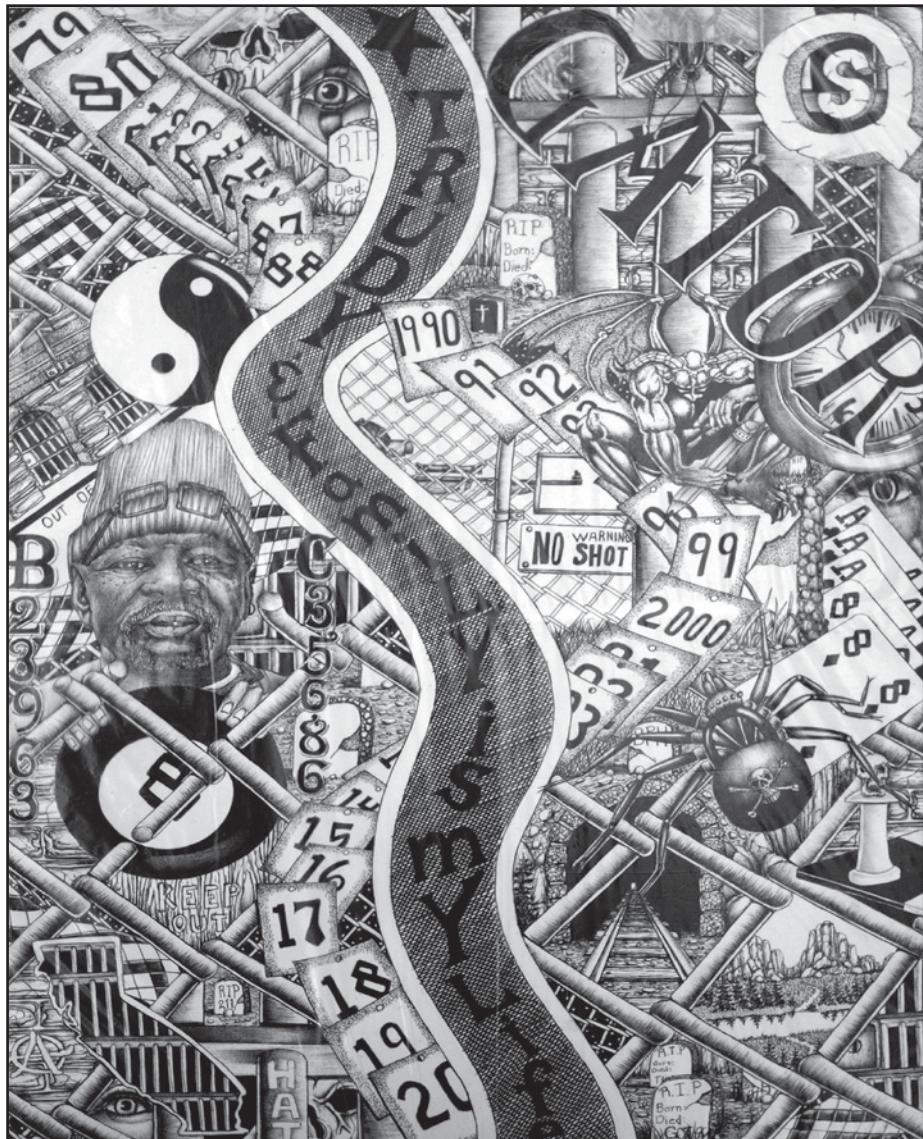
CARTOON

BY JOHN KRUEGER, ILLUSTRATION BY KELVIN ROSS

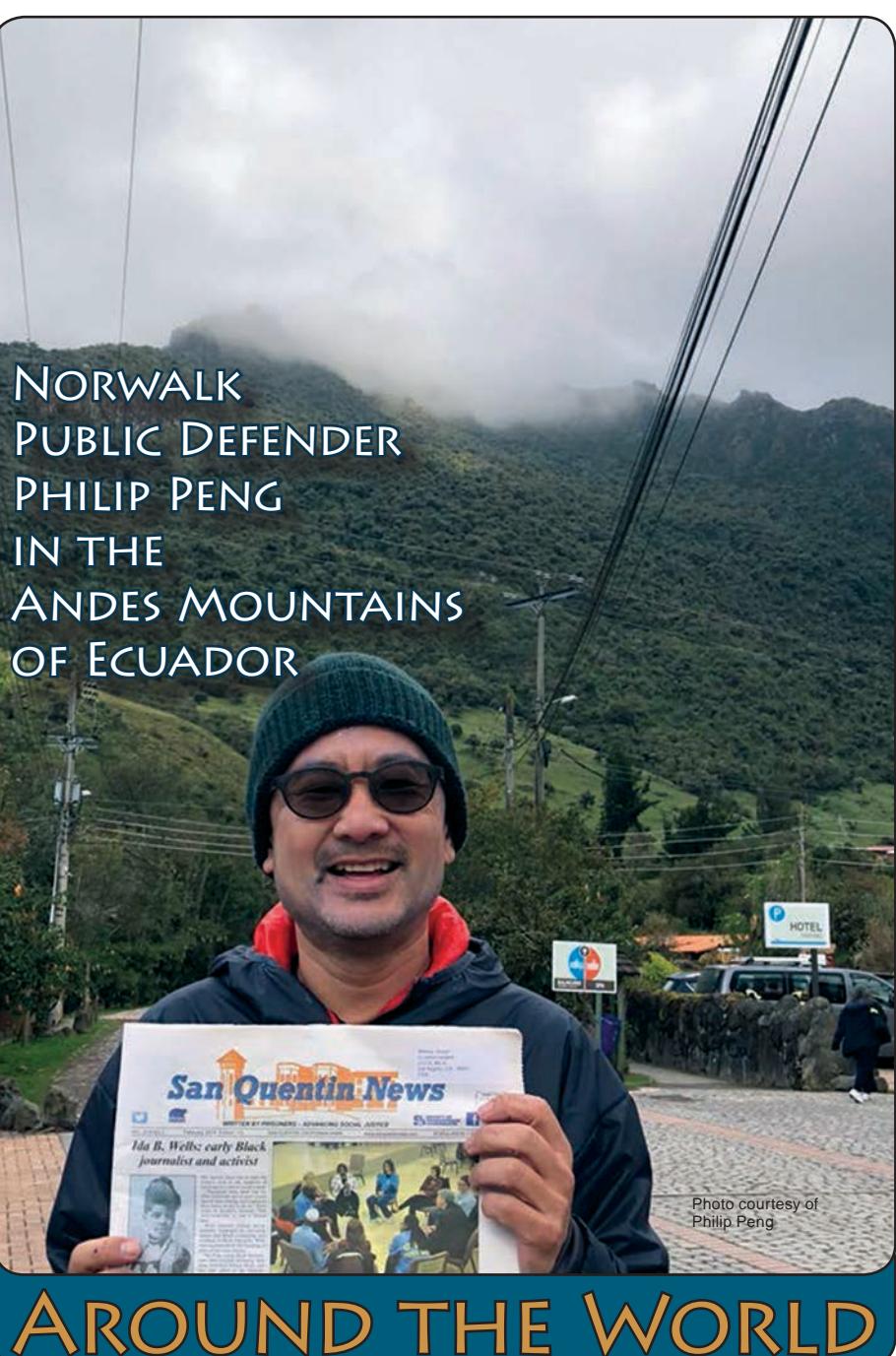


A R T

By Ronald Gabriel



Black Ink on 2-Ply Cardboard



AROUND THE WORLD

Tras cuatro décadas en prisión, enfrenta el reto de vivir en libertad

Español

Por Daniel López
Reportero

Después de pasar cuatro décadas en prisión, Joe Ibarra de 86 años, quiere hacer historia.

"Quiero llegar a los 120 años", dijo desde la casa de transición en la que se encuentra desde febrero de 2019, cuando finalmente obtuvo la libertad.

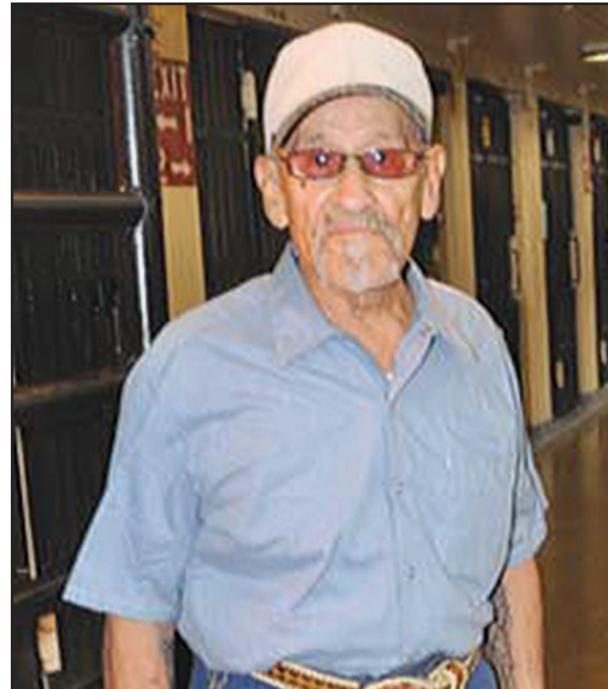
"No me querían dejar salir. Mi sentencia fue de 15 años a cadena perpetua y me llevaron 40 años, ¡fíjate que crueldad!".

Para Ibarra, salir de prisión ha sido como volver a nacer. "Parece que nací ayer... Esta bonita la vida", dijo. Sin embargo, se ha enfrentado a un mundo en el que "la gente va caminando y hablando sola por la calle" y adaptarse no ha sido fácil.

"Salí sin documentos, perdí mi fe de bautizo, mi acta de nacimiento, seguro social. He tenido que batallar para agarrar mi ID de California", contó. "Fui a la oficina de libertad condicional y me mandaron a otra oficina; me dijeron que tengo que demostrar que soy ciudadano, si no me van a quitar la ayuda".

"Hace poco agarré mi seguro social para poder recibir ayuda de \$600 dólares, que no ayudan mucho", dijo Ibarra.

Ibarra participa en un programa de reinserción para personas recién liberadas de prisión en Los Ángeles. El programa es dirigido por la Hermana Teresa y les brinda diversos apoyos para evitar la reincidencia. Por lo regular, a las personas que salen de la cárcel se les da una pequeña fiesta de bienvenida con galletas y pastel.



File Photo
Joe Ibarra

Ibarra recordó lo difícil que fue el proceso para obtener la libertad. Cuando compareció ante el Panel de Libertad Condicional (Board of Parole Hearings) le negaron su salida porque en la opinión de los comisionados, él no mostraba remordimiento por sus acciones, además de que tenía mal récord en prisión.

Sin embargo, en su penúltima audiencia, el panel lo encontró elegible para salir, pero poco después el gobernador vetó su salida. Ibarra dijo sentirse asustado pero contento de estar fuera de prisión. Sin embargo, hay algo que extraña de sus días en San Quentin.

"Extraño a mis amigos de la prisión. Aquí la gente es diferente, aunque gracias a Dios estoy libre y contento ahora le pido a Dios que me permita vivir hasta los 120 años", dijo Ibarra.

Finalmente Ibarra salió en libertad el 14 febrero del 2019. "El día de los enamorados", recordó.

Apagan fuegos y salvan vidas, pero su salario es menor al mínimo

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Más de 3,000 prisioneros ayudan a combatir los incendios en California, pero su salario es mucho menos del mínimo.

Los reclusos que trabajan en los incendios forestales en el estado de California ganan entre \$2.90 y \$5.12 al día, más un aumento de un \$1 durante incendios de emergencia, según un artículo de Fortune. com.

Según el artículo el mayor incentivo para los reclusos que escogen cumplir parte de su condena en unos de los 43 campos de fuego, es la reducción de su sentencia. Una legislación aprobada en el 2014 incluye crédito de dos días de crédito por uno de trabajo para todos los prisioneros. Esta propuesta ha enfrentado mucha oposición.

"La extensión del crédito del dos por uno para todo prisionero (en instituciones de mínima seguridad en California) hará más difícil cubrir las camas accesibles ya que los reos de nivel bajo y que están por crímenes sin violencia preferirán participar en otro tipo de programas (en unidades de seguridad mínima) que les da el mismo

beneficio en lugar de sufrir las agotadoras actividades físicas y el riesgo de lesionarse en los campos de fuego", dijo la Senadora Kamala Harris (D-Ca.)

El artículo también menciona una declaración jurada de Vimal Singh, un oficial de CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) quien dice que aumentando los créditos de liberación temprana disminuiría la población en los campos de fuego.

"El medio ambiente en las prisiones pone una presión única", dijo David Fathi, director del ACLU. "En realidad hay muy poco en las prisiones que es voluntario, hay un diferencial de poder entre los guardias de seguridad y los internos. La relación de captores y empleados crea un riesgo significativo de explotación y abuso, nos debemos de mantener en alerta por eso". "El programa de Campo de Conservación fue fundado en 1945 y se estima que el estado de California ahorra \$100 mil millones cada año", indicó el artículo de Fortune. com.

Las estadísticas de los últimos 35 años muestran que seis prisioneros bomberos

han muerto por heridas obtenidas durante el combate de incendios. Esta noción pone al descubierto de cuál es el precio que los presos están dispuestos a pagar para obtener su libertad.

"Los reclusos no deberían ofrecerse para combatir incendios peligrosos simplemente porque la alternativa es estar encerrado en una celda", añadió Fathi.

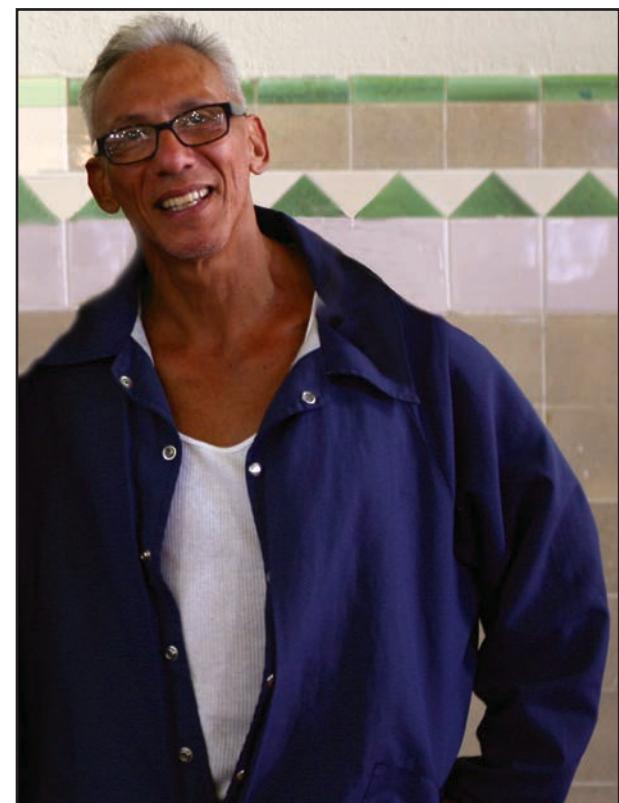
Hubo dos memorándums producidos al respecto del pago a los reclusos. Uno de los memorándums sugiere que el pago a un interno debe incrementarse de \$1 dólar, que ha sido el sueldo durante los últimos 40 años, a \$2 dólares por hora. El memorándum indicó que aun a ese ritmo el estado ahorraría \$24.6 mil millones comparado con lo que le pagan a bomberos contratados. El memorándum también advirtió que "menos cuadrillas de prisioneros bomberos resultara en la dependencia de grupos federales, de condados y privados durante los períodos de actividad en alto riesgo de incendios. El costo de un turno de 24 horas fluctúa de cuatro a ocho veces más alto comparado a un equipo de reclusos", según el artículo de Fortune.



File Photo
Unidad de bomberos de la prisión de San Quentin en California.

"Los prisioneros están altamente desprotegidos por las leyes de salud y seguridad que protegen a todo los demás trabajadores de condiciones peligrosas en el trabajo", dijo Fathi. "No son cubiertos por OSHA. No pueden formar uniones para mejorar sus condiciones de trabajo. Cuando pones todas estas condiciones juntas los prisioneros son más vulnerables comparado a los trabajadores que combaten los fuegos o hace otro trabajo en esta sociedad".

Cuando los prisioneros son liberados son incapaces



Raul Higgins

Photo by Juan Espinosa

allí feliz pero con miedo", dijo Higgins.

Cuando una persona encarcelada es encontrada elegible para salir en libertad condicional tiene que esperar un promedio de 150 días antes de que el gobernador tome la decisión final.

Higgins dice que contaba los días y pensaba en los planes que tenía una vez que saliera de prisión.

A los 132 días de espera Higgins recibió la noticia que ninguna persona encarcelada quiere escuchar: El gobernador Newsom le había quitado el día de salida, y eso me afectó muchísimo", dijo Higgins.

Higgins dice que tiene 35 años como músico y en la prisión toca las congas en el grupo musical de la iglesia.

La música y ser parte de la iglesia, le da ánimo para sobreponerse a su situación.

"Seguiré echándole ganas, ya que como cristiano tengo la esperanza de que un día Dios abra las puertas para que pueda regresar a casa", añadió Higgins.

Por Daniel López

Higgins dijo haberse sentido muy triste por el dolor de su familia, en especial de su madre de 88 años quien preguntaba por qué y no entendía lo que estaba pasando.

"Me dolió mucho, pero más por mi familia y hermanos. La terapia psicológica que he estado recibiendo me ayudó a sobreponerme a la noticia de que el gobernador Newsom me había quitado el día de salida, y eso me afectó muchísimo", dijo Higgins.

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Por Daniel López

entrenamiento para reclusos liberados. El programa de 18 meses puede enlistar a 80 personas en libertad condicional pero no dará licencias de EMT después de la graduación. CALFire le ha ofrecido posiciones a dos de los graduados recientes.

La Unión de Bomberos Profesionales de California, que cuenta con más de 30,000 miembros, ha luchado contra el plan, dice el artículo de Fortune.

—Traducido por
Heriberto Arredondo
Reportero

Tarifas por trámites migratorios aumentarán hasta 60 por ciento

Español

Por Juan Espinosa
Diseñador gráfico y reportero

Tarifas por trámites migratorios aumentarán hasta 60 por ciento

La administración del presidente de los Estados Unidos Donald J. Trump presentó en noviembre una propuesta para aumentar el costo de los trámites para solicitar asilo en Estados Unidos, obtener la ciudadanía y para renovar DACA.

Bajo esta propuesta, una persona que quiere hacerse ciudadana tendrá que pagar \$1,170 en lugar de los \$725 que se cobraban anteriormente, lo que representa un aumento de 60 por ciento.

Un documento de USCIS detalla los incrementos propuestos, los cuales también incluyen un cobro de \$50 para tramitar una solicitud de asilo. Si la persona que pide asilo pretende trabajar en Estados Unidos, tendrá que pagar \$490 para tramitar un permiso de trabajo.

Los soñadores también serían afectados con la propuesta de Trump, ya que

ahora tendrían que pagar \$765 en lugar de \$495 por la renovación de su estatus. Esto representa un aumento de 55 por ciento.

La propuesta fue publicada en el Federal Register, el 14 de noviembre.

El abogado de migración, Allen Wernick asegura que el aumento de tarifas es un intento más del presidente Trump por dificultar a los inmigrantes legalizarse y obtener la ciudadanía.

“El plan para eliminar las condonaciones de pago tendrá un efecto devastador en el derecho de los residentes permanentes a hacerse ciu-

dadanos”, escribió Wernick en su columna semanal que se publica en varios diarios del país.

El Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DHS) indicó que los cobros actuales no permiten recuperar los costos de procesar las solicitudes de inmigración.

“DHS propone ajustar los cobros en un promedio de 21 por ciento, añadir nuevos cobros para ciertos beneficios, establecer múltiples cobros para solicitudes de trabajo temporal –no inmigrant– y limitar el número de beneficiarios en ciertas formas”, dice la propuesta. “Los ajustes

de cobros son necesarios para recuperar los costos asociados con administrar los beneficios de inmigración, salvaguardar su integridad y eficientar la adjudicación de beneficios”.

La administración alega que las ganancias adicionales ayudaran al presupuesto de \$207 millones que el presidente Trump designó para el Departamento de Inmigración y Naturalización de los Estados Unidos.

Melissa Rodgers, la directora de programas de Centro de Recursos Legales del Inmigrante en San Francisco dijo al *New York Times* que “Esta administración está tra-

jando asiduamente para poner barreras a los inmigrantes”.

Citizen Path, un sitio de Internet que ayuda a inmigrantes a procesar solicitudes de migración indicó que los incrementos no entrarán en vigor inmediatamente, ya que la propuesta estará abierta a comentarios del público por un periodo de 30 días después de su publicación.

“Las nuevas tarifas no entrarán en vigor hasta que el proceso de revisión federal finalice. Este proceso generalmente lleva varios meses. Hasta entonces, las actuales tarifas permanecerán seguirán vigentes”, indicó.

Socialización Masculina

Por Tare Beltranchuc
Reportero

Los hombres no lloran, aguantate como los machos, no seas maricón, no te dejes de nadie... Estas soy algunas expresiones comunes que los niños escuchan a una temprana edad.

La socialización masculina inicia con las expectativas que la sociedad tiene de los hombres. Este proceso empieza desde el momento en que los padres se enteran del sexo del bebé. Al nacer los niños varones empiezan a ser formados en base a las expectaciones de una cultura machista.

Francisco Huizar 30 años, un preso en la prisión de San Quentin lo recuerda con claridad. “Cuando me lastimaba, me aguantaba especialmente cuando había otras personas alrededor”, dijo Huizar. “Cuando no se te permite expresar tus emociones corres el riesgo de lastimar a otras personas.”

dad) llores. Los hombres no lloran”.

En muchas sociedades se enseña que la masculinidad, el ser ‘hombre’ implica no poder expresar emociones tales como dolor, tristeza, miedo y otras más. Sin embargo, el suprimir las emociones no es saludable.

“Cuando me lastimaba, me aguantaba especialmente cuando había otras personas alrededor”, dijo Huizar. “Cuando no se te permite expresar tus emociones corres el riesgo de lastimar a otras personas.”

En un artículo en la revista Psychology Today, la doctora Julie Shaw aborda el tema de la abrumadora presencia de hombres en las cárceles y se pregunta el por qué de ello.

“Desafortunadamente, la sociedad enseña a los hombres explícita e implícitamente a no inhibirse cuando se trata de agredir”, escribe

Shaw. “Desde pequeños, a los niños se les enseña que la agresión y la violencia son parte de la hombría. La arrogancia es vista con logro masculina; y la violencia –como un medio para defendida, es a menudo celebrada”.

Las normas culturales de una sociedad machista esperan que los hombres sean autónomos. Los padres enseñan a sus hijos varones que deben ser independientes.

“Las personas con la que me socializaba durante mi crecimiento me decían que los hombres resuelven sus propios problemas y no pidan ayuda”, dijo Huizar. Él creció con la idea que debería ser autosuficiente, lo cual impidió que se beneficiara de la ayuda de otras personas.

Como parte de su socialización, Huizar, aprendió de su padre a ganarse el respeto de otras personas a través de la violencia e intimidación.

“Las malas influencias me enseñaron a no permitir que nadie me faltara el respeto. Si alguien me falta el respeto, tengo la obligación de hacer que me respete, lo cual implicaba el uso de la violencia física”. Huizar creció pensando que hacia lo correcto. Ahora entiende que no era respeto lo que le tenían, sino miedo.

Con frecuencia, los jóvenes que no cumplen con las expectativas de una sociedad machista enfrentan discriminación, insultos homofóbicos y son ridiculizados no solo por otros jóvenes, pero también por sus padres.

Los padres contribuyen de una manera directa o indirecta a la socialización masculina al: educar a sus hijos de una manera diferente, establecer reglas distintas y tener expectativas diferentes.

“Por el momento no tengo hijos, pero en un futuro si los

llego a tener los educaría de una manera diferente en una forma puedan demostrar sus sentimientos y sus puntos de vista, dependiendo la situación que enfrenten en el momento. Que sean genuinos en su personalidad y tomen decisiones inteligentemente mirando diferentes ángulos de acuerdo a la situación o problema personal sin tomar la violencia como la primera alternativa, como es la creencia de una sociedad machista”, añadió Huizar.

Shaw asegura que es irresponsable socializar a los niños pensando que no necesitan controlarse, que pueden lastimarse mutuamente sin consecuencia, que no es bueno actuar de manera respetuosa y tranquila con los demás.



Photo by Brian Asey

Francisco Huizar

“Debemos ser cuidados de no facilitar la violencia al pensar erróneamente que es parte de la experiencia masculina”, dice Shaw.

Xóa Đì Chủng Tộc Trong Hồ Sơ

VIETNAMESE

Tác Giả: Anthony Manuel Caravalho
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Dùng công nghệ để xóa bỏ tài liệu chủng tộc từ báo cáo của cảnh sát trước khi công tố viên quyết định buộc tội có lẽ sẽ giảm sự chênh lệch chủng tộc trong hệ thống công lý của Mỹ, San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon tường thuật.

Gascon dùng sự giúp đỡ của các kỹ sư máy vi tính từ trường đại học Stanford đề nghị ra một chương trình dùng để che giấu sự phân loại chủng tộc từ báo cáo của cảnh sát.

“Nếu chúng ta có thể loại bỏ thành kiến về chủng tộc, chúng ta có thể trở thành một quốc gia tốt hơn”, Gascon nói trong một cuộc phỏng vấn với tờ báo San Francisco Chronicle đăng ngày 13 tháng 6.

Công cụ “buộc tội không phân biệt” được nghĩ ra bởi

Stanford’s Computational Policy Lab.

“Khi tôi mới trở thành quan chức không, tôi quan tâm về việc hệ thống công lý ánh hưởng đến chủng tộc từ báo cáo của cảnh sát.

Gascon chú ý đến sự bất bình đẳng chủng tộc khi việc này ánh hưởng đến hệ thống công lý của tiểu bang Cali và đưa ra thông kê chứng minh rằng người da đen và người da nâu tiếp tục bị bắt và buộc tội nhiều hơn là người da trắng.

Một nghiên cứu bởi Public Policy Institute of California trong năm 2016 cho thấy rằng số người bị bắt giữ là 41% da nâu, 36% da trắng, và 16% da đen. Người da đen chỉ chiếm 6% tổng dân số.

Một cuộc nghiên cứu khác từ năm 2008 đến 2014 cho thấy rằng so sánh với toàn tiểu bang thì sự bất cân bằng chủng tộc ở San Francisco thì lớn hơn nhiều. Cuộc nghiên cứu cho thấy rằng người da đen chiếm 6% tổng dân số, nhưng lại chiếm đến 41% số người bị bắt giữ.

Cuộc nghiên cứu trên được thực hiện bởi đại học Berkeley và đại học Pennsylvania.

Thủ tục buộc tội của San Francisco hiện tại có ý định

giảm đến mức tối thiểu thành kiến của đội điều tra. Họ không khám xét hình ảnh hoặc phim ảnh tiết lộ chủng tộc của bị cáo.

Đến khi chính thức buộc tội, một đội công tố viên đặc lập sẽ kiểm tra lại nếu có bằng chứng cụ thể để tiến tới.

Gascon nói rằng công nghệ mới này có thể dùng trong toàn quốc.

Công nghệ trí khôn nhân tạo sẽ tổ chức báo cáo của cảnh sát và tự động xóa đi chủng tộc của những người liên quan. Nó cũng sẽ xóa đi tên của những người liên quan kề cả cảnh sát, nhân chứng, và can phạm trong khi giải di dí chỉ hoắc là địa điểm mà có thể ngụ ý chủng tộc của can phạm trước khi

văn phòng quan chủ không xét lại.

Quan chủ không nói rằng văn phòng ông ta sẽ dùng công cụ mới này vào khoảng 80% cho những vụ án mới.

Những vụ án như là giết người hoặc là có liên quan đến vũ lực thì sẽ không được dùng ngay lúc này.

Văn phòng của San Francisco Public Defender từ chối bình luận.

Từ năm 2016, quan chủ không cũng đã tìm cách giải quyết mau việc xóa đi hơn 9,000 vụ án có liên quan đến cần sa.

Gascon đã tuyên bố rằng ông ta sẽ không ứng cử khi nhiệm kỳ kết thúc cuối năm này.

—Dịch giả-Hiếu Thái

Tái Phạm Tội Tại San Francisco

Tác Giả: Alfred King
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Vào khoảng 43% số người được thả ra từ trại giam ở quận hạt San Francisco bị tái bắt giữ trong vòng 3 năm.

Tài liệu được thu thập bởi văn phòng của nhân tố viên San Francisco theo dõi tỷ lệ tái phạm tội của 9,407 người trong trại giam, tờ báo San Francisco Chronicle tường thuật.

Những ai phạm tội bao hành và trộm cắp thì tỷ lệ bị tái bắt giữ càng cao hơn, tài liệu cho thấy như vậy.

Trong số 965 người bị kết án trộm cắp, 72% bị tái bắt giữ và 45% bị tái kết án. Trong số 882 người bị kết án hành hung, 49% bị tái bắt giữ và 21% bị tái kết án. Vào trong số những người bị tái kết án buôn bán ma túy thì 54% bị tái bắt giữ, với 20% bị kết án vì phạm tội mới, tờ báo Chronicle tường thuật vào ngày 17 tháng 9.

Tài liệu thu thập từ những sự kết án và tuyên án cho

những người trưởng thành phạm tội vào những năm 2013, 2014, và 2015.

Chi có 6% trong số 2,320 người uống rượu lái xe bị tái bắt giữ trong khoảng thời gian 3 năm nói trên.

Mục đích là để minh bạch, nhưng nó cũng là một công cụ cho những người làm chính sách đưa ra quyết định tốt hơn và do lường sự công hiệu, công tố viên George Gascon trình bày.

Ông Gascon nói rằng tài liệu đưa ra sự hiểu biết sâu sắc vào bên trong việc thi hành pháp luật, sự kiểm soát trong cộng đồng và chiến lược giúp đỡ các công chức trong hệ thống công lý sử dụng tài nguyên hiệu quả hơn.

“Ngoài y tế công cộng, thi an toàn cộng đồng chiếm phần lớn nhất của ngân sách của địa phương và chúng ta sử dụng nó mà không biết sẽ thành công hay không, việc này có thể là sự bắt đầu của một cuộc đàm luận khác”, Evan White trình bày.

Bước đầu này “gia tăng sự trong suốt trong hệ thống công lý và chúng tôi hi vọng các tham quyền khác sẽ làm theo,” Evan White trình bày.

—Dịch giả-Hiếu Thái

Tác Giả:
Harry C. Goodall, Jr.
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Quận Los Angeles đã đóng ý trả \$53 triệu tiền bồi thường cho các nữ tù nhân đã nhiều lần bị nhục mạ bằng cách bị khám xét, theo lời tường thuật của tờ báo Los Angeles Times.

Một thỏa thuận được chấp nhận qua một vụ kiện tập thể đã được trình tòa vào năm 2010 với 87,937 phụ nữ đã bị khám xét 421,718 lần vào giữa tháng Ba năm 2008 và tháng Giêng năm 2015 tại trại giam của trung tâm Lynwood, Cali, theo lời tường thuật của tờ báo vào ngày 16 tháng Bảy.

Tờ báo này nói thêm là, “Các phụ nữ bị ra lệnh đứng xếp hàng ngoài trời, ép buộc khỏa thân và vất quần áo của

họ xuống nền xi măng. Dưới chân họ, nền xi măng bị ô nhúng bởi xăng dầu và kính huyệt của những nữ tù nhân trước đó”.

Thêm vào những hành vi nhục mạ là các nữ tù nhân đang trong thời kỳ kinh nguyệt. Họ bị ép buộc lột bỏ tất cả băng vệ sinh dùng cho kinh nguyệt, làm cho máu chảy xuông chân họ và đọng lại trên đất. Những vụ khám xét này đều thực hiện bên ngoài của trại giam.

Những việc khám xét này đều làm ngoài trời bất kể thời tiết lạnh hay mưa gió. Không có gì là kính đáo dê che ngoài một hàng rào kẽm gai hú hỏng. Những sự kiện này xảy ra theo sự chứng kiến của những nhân công khác phái của trại giam.

Cộng thêm vào là một vụ kiện buộc quận Lynwood

phải trả thêm \$4 triệu khi những nữ tù nhân cáo buộc là các nhân viên nam cai quản nhà tù đã lạm dụng tình dục trong lúc khám xét họ.

Sau những vụ kiện cáo này đã làm cho các trại giam ở quận Los Angeles sắp đặt các hệ thống giống như ở phi trường để ngăn chặn đồ bất hợp pháp vào trại giam.

Theo lời tờ báo tường thuật, giống như sự kiện của nữ tù nhân thì các nam tù nhân đang thua kiện về việc bị áp bức bạo lực tại trại giam quận Los Angeles. Những sự kiện này đang dưới sự điều tra từ nhân chúa của liên bang. Sau khi kết thúc điều tra, ít nhất là 12 công nhân cai quản trại giam tại quận Los Angeles bị bắt và khởi tố đưa vào tù, bao gồm cả trưởng cai quản trại giam Lee Baca.

—Dịch giả-Tú Trần

Cái Giá Của Sự Khám Xét Thiếu Nhân Đạo

Remembering a friend, veteran and devout church goer

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Tony Burch was a Navy veteran; however, it was his smile and singing that made him popular in San Quentin State Prison. He passed away on Nov. 6. He was 67 years old.

Burch's memorial began on Nov. 18 with a Color Guard of incarcerated veterans, with Garvin Robinson, Ernie Soltero, Carl Raybon and Brian Corder carrying the American and POW flags inside the prison's Protestant Chapel.

After the flags were set in front of the chapel's stage, Taps sounded and more than 100 of Burch's fellow men-in-blue stood in his honor and

saluted the flags or held their hands over their hearts.

Church elder Darryl Hill sang one of Burch's favorite songs, "Why Don't You Pray For Me?"

"He used to like to have fun and wouldn't want anyone to be sad"

"It is an encouragement that even though we are incarcerated, we can celebrate Tony's life," Carl Solerdo said. "The brother showed his love and always had a smile."

Trent Capell and Patrick Bayliss read passages from The New Testament.

Chaplain Mardi Ralph Jackson took the stage and talked about Burch as a God fearing man.

"This is a peaceful occasion. We honor this faithful man to this ministry. He was always respectful and conducted himself as a man of God," Jackson said. "I can thank God for Brother Tony Burch. He never said anything derogatory but was always glorifying God when he talked to me."

Several men-in-blue followed Jackson to tell stories about Burch.

"God allowed me the pleasure to meet Brother Tony," Hill said. "We played cards,

Scrabble, cooked and ate together. What I remember most, during the card games, he wasn't that great, so he'd make excuses and say, 'I think you're pencil whipping me,'" Hill said, which brought laughter. He added, "I have a lot of fond memories of him. He taught me how to listen and to be respectful. He'd bring me to scripture to correct me. He was always claiming and living Christ."

Larry Histon talked about having a conversation about Burch with an incarcerated hospital worker. Burch was on his way to the outside hospital. The hospital worker told Burch, "I'll see you when you get back." Burch replied, "I'll see you on the other side."

David Rodriguez sang a song in Burch's honor.

Here's what others said: "I played Scrabble with Tony. He'd put down a word that you were sure was not in the dictionary, but when you challenged it and looked it up, there it would be. Then the next time he'd put down a word that you didn't know, you'd be scared to challenge it. Later on, you'd look up the word and it's not in there."

"Tony, I know you're up there in Heaven," one person said before singing a heartfelt rendition of "Amazing Grace."

"He was always talking about what God had done for him."

Incarcerated veterans added:

"I knew Tony in the U.S. Seabees."

"He was good company. He was consistently Tony."

"He used to like to have fun and wouldn't want anyone to be sad."

"He used to tell me that it made him happy to see me dancing round and round as we were singing to the Lord. He slipped away from me, but I'm going to catch him."

One person read a poem that ended with the poet singing Anchors Aweigh.

Before he passed, Burch said to a friend, "I hope I come back a better man."

The Color Guard ended the memorial with Taps being played one more time.



Photo by Eddie Herena
Tony Burch with James "Shorty" Dunbaraluting on 2017 Veterans Day



Photo by Eddie Herena
Tony with a children's baseball set at the annual SQ Veterans' Toy for Tots Drive in visiting



Photo by Eddie Herena
Tony Burch with the US Marines at a veterans event in 2016

Remembering Patrick Maloney's 40 years at San Quentin

Patrick Maloney taught art to incarcerated men at San Quentin for more than 40 years, his first 10 years were spent voluntarily teaching condemned men on Death Row.

Maloney was born, Feb. 5, 1938. He passed away on Aug. 18, 2019, surrounded by his loving family and his art at the home that he built in Nicasio in the late 1960s.

His generosity enriched thousands of lives as he often worked with those on the margins of society: recent immigrants, the incarcerated, juvenile offenders, and low-income and at-risk children and families. He went out of his way to learn from other cultures and from others' experiences.

Maloney once said, "I make art to maintain my connection to life."

A memorial service was held on Nov. 10 at the Whiper Snapper Restaurant in San Rafael. Maloney designed the

restaurant's interior and it is filled with his artwork including chandelier and walls.

"Patrick was a community artist before the concept existed in America," Katya McCulloch, an Arts in Corrections (AIC) instructor since 2004. "That is something that his family allowed us to share. So, the memorial was precious that it brought together Patrick's family and the community that treasured him so much."

At the memorial, McCulloch read the following words of praise from several incarcerated men enrolled in San Quentin's AIC program:

Bruce Fowler: You couldn't help but admire Pat. He's the first person I've met that never said a negative word about anyone or anything. He taught me so much more than how to paint; because of him, I strive to be a kinder, more compassionate person. I will always honor his memory and never forget the eight years that I

was blessed to have him in my life. I will forever love and miss you my dear friend Pat.

We took a liking to one another as if we'd been best friends all our lives"

Gary Harrell: Patrick always kept his word and showed up on time at 7:45. I started working with him in 1996 from fear of not being able to draw. After a few years, I started to draw. I learned so much about art listening to Patrick, a very soft-spoken man that told me, stay focused on the subject matter.

Lamavis Comundoiwilla: I'd never have become who I am without his teaching.



Photo by Jonathan Chiu
Maloney with his AIC students at his retirement celebration in Feb. 2019

He changed my life. I began thinking of productive ways for art and for that, I am forever thankful.

Jeff Isom: Pat was a very kind, caring and loving indi-

vidual. Even in his struggles, he was selfless – always thinking of others beside himself.

Stan Bey: We took a liking to one another as if we'd been best friends all our lives.

Orlando Smith: I could never imagine Pat being upset or angry or upset or in a bad mood or snappy—he was the most mellow person I ever met—he'd make people feel super comfortable.

Anthony Vasquez-Ramirez: We talked a lot. Sometimes it had nothing to do with art. I think that one of his best qualities is that he had the willingness and ability to listen. He had the patience, willingness, and ability to just listen. I know that as a painter and family man, that he had an interest in young adults, teenagers who found themselves caught up in the criminal justice system. He was a one-of-a-kind man, extremely artistic, patient and a good teacher. I know he's in a good place. We need more good people like him.

—Juan Haines



Photo from patrickmaloneyart.com
Pat Maloney with his art



Photo courtesy of Carol Newburg
Kurt Huget, Auntie Jun Hamamoto, Dunya Alwan, Pat Maloney, Steve Emrick and Amy Ho at 2018 event

Snippets

New York's Brooklyn Bridge has a suspension tower set on sand instead of bedrock.

Electricity consumed by the United States is approximately 3.892 trillion KWh (measured in 2007) making it the largest consumer with China a close second.

Water consumed in a lifetime by each individual will exceed 16,000 gallons.

Yogurt consumed by Americans is estimated to be 300,000 tons each year.

Earth's surface and atmosphere is infiltrated by 100,000 tons of space dust every year.

Alphabets originated in present-day Syria around 1500 B.C.

Raindrops fall 600 feet per minute or an average speed of 7 miles per hour.

CROSSWORD

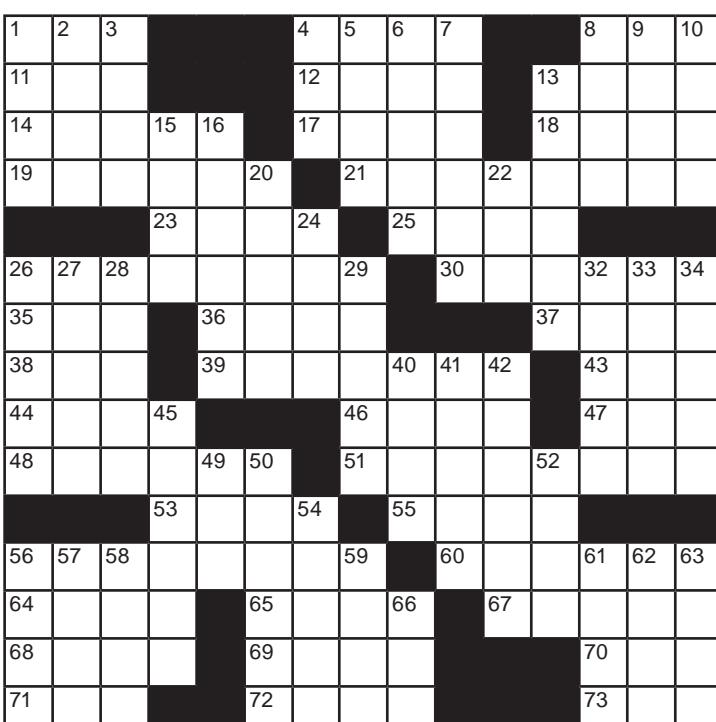
Edited by Jan Perry

Across

- Medication regulatory org. (Abbr.)
- Child's learning necessity
- Internet TV channel
- Asian name prefix
- Board
- Pacific resort locale
- Shadow
- Light
- Smooth
- Liberation
- Drink
- Approaching
- Ernie's BF
- Famous Depression-era photographer
- Jimmy Gluck actor
- Ortiz of *Ugly Betty*
- Author Harper
- Fight
- Antonym of antiquated
- Main actor of TV show *JAG*
- Observe
- Shan
- Give him ___ up
- Director Howard
- Singer of "Rocket Man"
- A compound whose molecular structure alternates silicon and oxygen atoms
- Spielberg movie
- Smear
- Foot rests
- Casual wear
- Gear
- Time
- Singer Bob
- Lotion ingredient
- Grandmother
- Stop ___ moment's notice
- Rent (Brit.)
- Medical tests
- Bucket's pair

Down

- Former state
- Satisfy
- Ding-dong
- Viper
- Prison rumor
- Name in the Bible
- Main actor of *Roxanne*
- Reid of American Pie
- Diary
- Partake
- Deliveries
- Smooth floor covering (Abbr.)
- Actor who starred in *Men At Work*
- 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 of 26
- Intense workplaces (Abbr.)
- Type of cancer cell
- 's Peak
- Melissa of *The Rookie*
- Navi of *NUMB3RS*
- Souls (Sp.)
- Musical work
- Synthetic fiber
- ___ et quarante
- Ancient country where Olympia was located
- Unloads
- Actor who starred in *Ocean's Eleven*
- This is serious
- Vet locale
- Western movies actor
- Medical photo
- Grass
- Semiprecious stone
- "A ___ of Two Cities"
- Dutch portrait painter Peter
- Crooned
- Shellfish
- Green Hornet's sidekick
- Bite
- Ethiopian prince

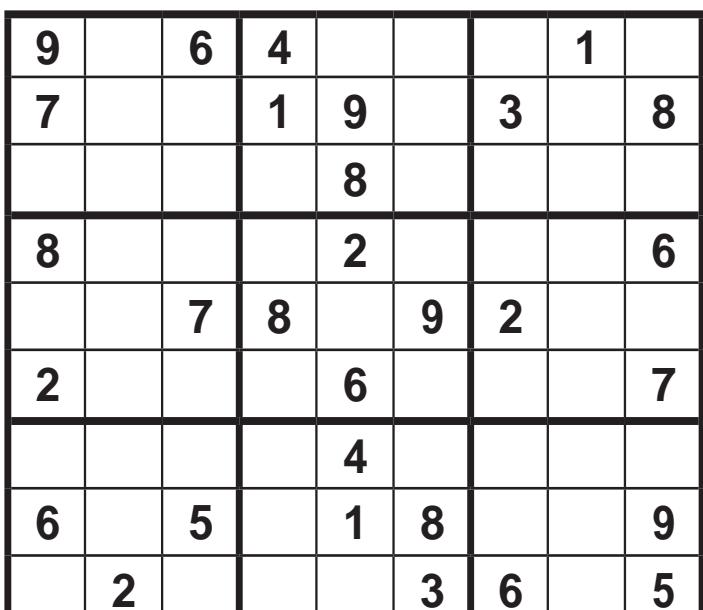


By Jonathan Chiu



Last Issue's Answer

Sudoku Corner

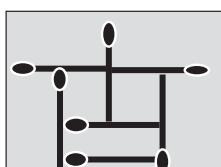


Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

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

Last month's Brain Teasers answers

EXTRA SQUARE



Latin Squares

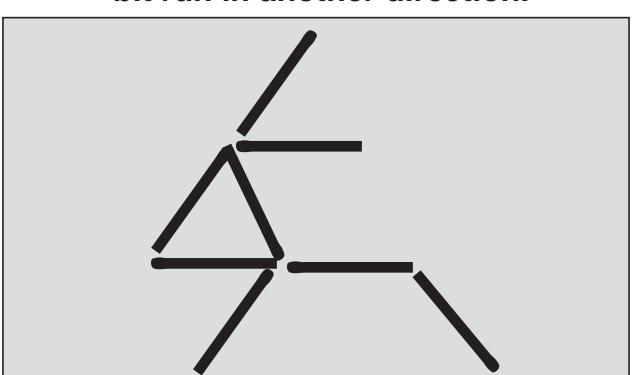
B	F	E	A	C	D
F	A	D	C	E	B
D	C	A	B	F	E
A	E	C	D	B	F
C	B	F	E	D	A
E	D	B	F	A	C

Quit Smoking

40 days; he smoked 2/3 of a cigarette, leaving a butt equal to 1/3 of a cigarette; piecing together a new cigarette (1/3 butt + 1/3 butt + 1/3 butt= one new cigarette). The original 27 cigarettes made 9 new cigarettes from the butts to total 36. 9 more butts = 3 more cigarettes and 3 butts made 1 more; ($27+9+3+1 = 40$). One cigarette/day=40 days.

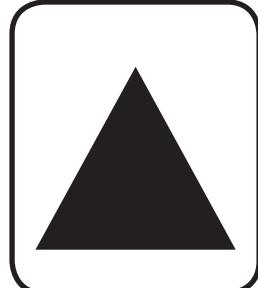
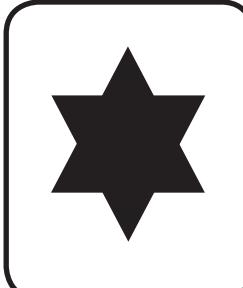
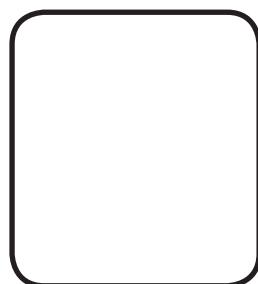
BRAIN TEASERS EXTRA SQUARE

Move three matchsticks to make the rabbit run in another direction.



Decorative cards

4 cards, each one has black or white on one side, and a star or triangle on the other. How many cards - and which ones - must you turn over to work out whether every black card has a triangle on its other side



If 7 is a prime number, cross out all the A's and E's below; if not, cross out the C's and L's. If the square root of 625 is 25, cross out the I's and R's; if not, cross out the C's and U's. If 0°C and 10°F are the same, cross out the B's and M's, and S's; if not, cross out the X's. What do you have left?

C A O X L E U E M I B R U X S E

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

A journey of losing of a loved one and working through the trauma

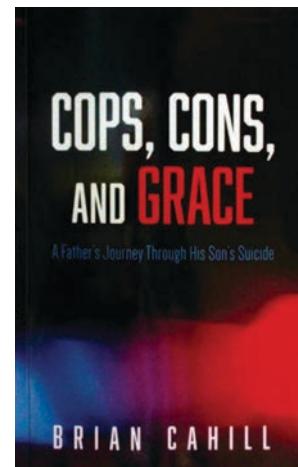
BOOK REVIEW

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Brian Cahill granted his granddaughter's wish when he decided to write about her father, John Cahill. *Cops, Cons, and Grace: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Suicide*, (2018) is a recount of how a father reconciled the suicide of his beloved son and found dignity for his family.

Cahill takes readers on a step-by-step path to a fulfilling grace, rooted in service to police officers while supporting the spiritual needs of incarcerated men.

In the book's introduction, San Quentin's Catholic Chaplin George Williams writes that Cahill found healing and strength at the prison after the suicide of his son, a 42-year-old police officer, plunged him into unimaginable grief. "This gripping, personal and inspiring journey reveals the power of grace over death as the author channels his heartbreak into loving action, honoring his son's life by teaching suicide



awareness and prevention to police officers."

Cahill is not only concerned with healing wounds, he's also committed to preventing them from occurring by raising awareness of suicide risks.

"...I've learned the research shows that most people who commit suicide — not just cops but almost everyone who does it — believe they're a burden, and those who love them will be better off when they're gone."

His anguish is still palpable: "My wife has told me I have to forgive myself. My counselor has told me I have to forgive

myself. And now I'm standing in a prison chapel and a convicted murderer is telling me that I have to forgive myself."

He writes about how remarkable it is that a prisoner at San Quentin, a man who may never get out of prison, tells him in the nicest way possible "to get a grip, to get some perspective."

It seems difficult to comprehend why an incarcerated person would want to read about the suicide of a police officer because they represent entities believed to be against each other. But it is Cahill as a father and role model that incarcerated people rely on in their healing journey.

"I find him to be an inspiration and model of how a human being can support others around him in diverse ways," said Dwight Krizman, who participates in the spirituality class he teaches at San Quentin. "It's stunning to see how he can be present in the depth of his experience. I've been able to accompany him with his personal pain and share that with him."

The story gives readers an understanding of the trauma Cahill had to work through. He had to find both forgiveness and

remorse, something every incarcerated person knows about.

In an attempt to understand his son's suicide, Cahill sought guidance from a variety of experts such as psychologist Kay Redfield Jamison who, in her book, *Night Falls Fast* (1999) reminds us of how difficult it is to grasp the thinking behind the choice: "Suicide will have seemed to its perpetrator the last and best of bad possibilities, and any attempt by the living to chart this final terrain of life can be only a sketch, maddeningly incomplete."

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US.

The National Suicide hotline is 1-800-273-talk (9255)

The 10 most common warning signs of suicide are:

- Extreme mood swings and/or personality changes
- Increased fixation on death, suicide and/or violence
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Communicating feelings of hopelessness, such as saying they have "no reason to live"
- Communicating a desire/plan to die by suicide
- Giving away belongings/items of special meaning or significance
- Obtaining a weapon or other means of lethal self-harm
- Increased alcohol and/or substance abuse
- Engaging in risky and/or dangerous behavior
- Loss of interest in people, things, places and activities they previously cared about

Donté Clark returns to SQ's APEP with spoken word session



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

APEP's Eugenia Maluf, Rodney Baylis, Raiveon "Ray Ray" Wooden, Timothy Hicks, Donté Clark and James Metters in SQ Education

Donté Clark returned to San Quentin last November for a spoken word session and to rap with students seeking to earn their GEDs and go to college. Clark is a poet, who mentors young writers in Richmond, Ca.

The Academic Peer Education Program (APEP) hosted Clark's visit.

Peer educator James Metters talked about incarcerated educator, Bobby Evans, who envisioned opportunities for students to have access to GED studying after they get off work, and that's what's started APEP.

When Metters asked APEP students to address the class, an enthusiastic Charles Brandon told the group that San Quentin changed his life.

"I'm in computer literacy and on the waiting list for PUP. I want to learn coding, so I can work at Google," Brandon said. "I want to rap, learn filmmaking and real estate. I want my own clothing line and hopefully one day, I'll own a Starbucks."

Michael Kirkpatrick added, "There's a lot of positive talk around here. We don't

tear each other down. We build each other up."

Derry "Brotha Dee" Brown spoke about Clark's influences on him.

"It's what he's doing for the community. He knows us well — he blends in with us," Brown said. "There's a few individuals that know poetry, and I see they will enjoy his work."

Prior to Metters introducing Clark to the class, Brown and Raiveon "Ray Ray" Wooden performed a skit based on bullying, suicide and violence. Ray Ray's part was that of evil while Brother Dee played the voice of reason. After a standing ovation Clark took the stage.

Wearing a bright sun yellow beanie tilted slightly back to cover shoulder-length dreads Clark performed one of his poems.

He began by pacing back and forth in front of the classroom with hand gestures that shuffled the air. Then he spoke the lines with the hook, "Life sings me sweet songs. Love is a sweet song."

"Donté's second visit to San Quentin motivates peo-

ple and lets them know how far education and resilience can go, like he does as a writer—literacy helps us achieve our goals," peer educator, James Metters said. "To me, he is a perfect example of what could be achieved despite stratified communities, drugs or violence."

Clark works with the youth in Richmond and encourages young writers to put on performances."

"I just gotta write," Clark said. "It's hard to talk about. I just got to demonstrate it. Then people who see it, and they want to help."

After high school, one of Clark's college classes gave him the opportunity to work with youth. Writing was involved and "everything just fell into place."

"When people told me that I was a gifted writer, it was inspirational," Clark said. "I research a lot, read a lot and talk to people a lot. I also do a lot of listening and compare it to what I've read in books."

"Knowing how to connect with people makes me a better teacher."

—Juan Haines

Vermont prisons to reduce use of solitary confinement

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

Vermont is reducing the use of solitary confinement in prisons, striving to use it only "as a last resort," [wcax.com](#) in Burlington reports.

It's part of a movement across the nation, modifying

policies practiced for decades.

The goal is to rehabilitate rather than punish, said Mike Touchette, commissioner of the Vermont Department of Corrections.

"Our focus is to keep people in the most integrated and least-restrictive setting pos-

sible but commensurate with the safety needs," Touchette said. "So, it's an individual, case-by-case basis, and what we're able to achieve with that individual, and quite frankly, are they willing to be good partners with us and engage in conversations and therapy."

Raise The Age law to focus on teens sentenced as adults

By Emily Nonko
Contributing Writer

Until last year, New York and North Carolina were the only states that prosecuted all youth as adults once they turned 16.

The Raise the Age law, which went into full effect in New York in October, has raised the age of criminal responsibility to 18. North Carolina's Raise the Age law went into effect in December.

Both laws are set to change thousands of lives.

Before Raise the Age passed in New York, every year nearly 28,000 16- and 17-year-olds faced possible prosecution as adults in criminal court.

But the New York law is not retroactive, so the change doesn't extend to those most impacted by adult prosecution for youths. Those sentenced as adults when they were 16 and 17 will not see any change to the status of their sentence.

Dontie Mitchell, now incarcerated at Great Meadow Correctional Facility in Comstock, NY, is one such person. Mitchell was a first time felony offender at age 17, sentenced to 35 to 70 years in prison. Now 40, he has spent over half his life incarcerated for a robbery during which, he says, no one was hurt.

"The Raise the Age law says that at a certain age, you're not as culpable as older people," he said. "My life story fits that category." Indeed, momentum for Raise the Age came after research into brain development revealed the human brain is not fully formed until 25. Mitchell added he had a turbulent childhood in foster homes and a homeless shelter before committing his crime.

He recalled fears as a teenager entering the adult prison system and the lack of age-sensitive rehabilitation for youth offenders. Years later, as Raise the Age took shape, "there wasn't enough input from the real-life people affected," he said. "Amnesty should be given to youth offenders ... that is a blind spot of the law."

Mitchell mentors youth offenders already in the adult system, like Austin Parker, 20, and Alvin Marrero, 20. When Parker was 17 he entered a segregated juvenile unit within Coxsackie Correctional Facility, in Coxsackie, NY, then transferred into an adult facility on his 18th birthday. Prior to Raise the Age, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo separated youths from adults within adult prisons in 2015, to offer them "a better chance at turning their lives around and becoming productive members of society," he said in a statement. Parker didn't find those opportunities in the juvenile

unit. "No one really paid attention to what we were doing," he said. "I was not prepared mentally or socially to enter [the adult system]."

Marrero, now incarcerated at Five Points Correctional Facility in Romulus, NY, entered the system at age 16 in 2016. "This is a violent environment," he said. "Being young, I'm a small person, and you've gotta stick up for yourself."

This year, all 16 and 17-year olds were moved out of adult facilities in New York City and State — but nothing has changed for Mitchell, Parker or Marrero.

In the political push-and-pull of criminal justice reform, retroactivity is a complicated subject, said Julia Davis, director of youth justice and child welfare at the Children's Defense Fund-New York. The closest thing New York offers to retroactive reform is the opportunity for some past offenders, crime free for 10 years since the end of their sentence, to apply for clemency.

Davis said the next few years will be dedicated to Raise the Age implementation — transferring 16- and 17-year-old offenders into family court — as well as "collecting information that we can use for future reform." Advocate's goals for 2020 include closing the adolescent offender facilities within



Photo courtesy of Emily Nonko
Dontie Mitchell

state prisons, ending solitary confinement for youth — part of a larger movement to end solitary confinement across New York prisons — and ending prosecution of children under 12.

Mitchell, meanwhile, continues to speak out about youth still trapped in the adult system. While he has earned public support of a "Free Dontie Mitchell" campaign, his commutation applications to Governor Cuomo have gone unanswered.

"For the bill not to be retroactive is not only shortsighted but unjust," he said. "Cuomo keeps saying New York should be a 'progressive beacon for the nation' — then we can start by giving justice to our disadvantaged youth."

Bread & Roses perform for Death Row

Entire concert was videotaped for Death Row viewing

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Prisoners and outside guest Tony Saunders played a concert for the 700-plus men housed on the world's largest Death Row inside San Quentin State Prison.

More than 30 prisoners from the general population did musical performances in the prison's Catholic Chapel, but due to the security level of those on Death Row they were not allowed to attend. Instead, the entire concert was videotaped by the men who work in the prison's media center.

"Keep your head up and believe in better days," said Watson Allison. He spent 31 years on Death Row before his sentence was overturned. He's now serving his sentence in the prison's general population.

The diverse show opened with a rap performance by Rasheed Zinnamon, who was well received by the unusually high attendance of more than 100 prisoners and a few volunteers during the broadcast of a Sunday night football game.

"We are Banda Esperanza, and we send our regards to our brothers and sisters on Death Row," the band leader said.

The all-Hispanic band was joined by the audience with claps as the men sang, played three guitars, bass and drums. A loud roar, applause and whistling from the crowd followed their performance.

"I'm grateful to the administration for letting us have the music," one of the band members said before they performed. They were Jose Diaz, Martin Y. Vincente Gomez, Jose Veyra, Senor Figueira, Guadalupe Aranda and Adriel Ramirez.

"Tonight is all inclusive as you can tell," said Lisa Starbird of the organization Bread & Roses, which sponsored the event. Starbird looked for men willing to say on the microphone what they were grateful for. "If you're not involved in some kind of program (at San Quentin), there's something out there for you."

"Christ in Me Arise" was performed by members of the Catholic Chapel Choir that included the music, lyrics and harmony of Gino Sevacos, Dwight Krizman, Rick Evans, Daniel Lee, John Krueger, Kelvin Ross, Bill Harwood and Alan Brown.

"I'm grateful to Bread & Roses for bringing us the gift of music," a prisoner in the audience said. "One love!" he shouted out to the men on Death Row.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Andrew "Boots" Hardy (left-center) with Quentin Blue performing in the Catholic Chapel

"We all support you and send our love," a prisoner named Dennis said to the men on Death Row.

"I'm grateful for the blood and resurrection of Jesus Christ," said another prisoner.

The jazz band Free Fall, consisting of Greg "D" Dixon (guitar), Lee "Jazz" Jaspar (bass), Mark Kinney (piano) and Dwight Krizman (drums) performed a convincing selection that sealed its dominance as the go-to jazz ensemble.

Jaspar played the bass effortlessly as Dixon picked notes on the guitar and scatted note-for-note, in key with the music. As the music pushed on, each musician locked in and improvised with each other. They received a standing ovation.

A small technical problem with the audio stopped the show for about a minute, so Starbird improvised by passing the microphone around to give others an opportunity to speak about gratitude. The comments kept pouring out as the men encouraged the men on Death Row to stay positive.

"There's always hope," a prisoner in the audience said. "I thank God for the mercy He has shown me. We can all make better choices and be better people."

Starbird thanked the SQ media team for coming out to cover the event because it was a Sunday night, which typically receives little media coverage.

The band Quentin Blue performed a number of songs including an original tune called "Chamba's Mountain." It had a country vibe as singer Richie Morris and the rest of the men sang backup and played three guitars, piano, bass, mandolin and percussion instruments.

The ensemble was made up of Morris, Dwight Krizman, Joe Thureson, Bill Harwood, Andrew "Boots" Hardy, Ray Simpson and Chris Thomas.

"That was one of the funnest gigs I ever played," said Simpson, who played guitar.

Later, Starbird introduced Tony Saunders. She said he's "pretty amazing" for all the things he does like coming in to the prison to help. She also expressed gratitude to Father George Williams for allowing them to use the chapel for the event.

Saunders said he was happy to be able to play for the men on Death Row. "Know that you're thought of," he reminded them. "Don't think that nobody notices."

Using prerecorded music tracks on the first song, played over the chapel PA system, Saunders played the bass lines on his custom-made five-string bass. The melody of the song could easily be identified by his phrasing on the bass. He made the instrument speak to the audience. Then he used his voice to scat with every note as he thumped and plucked the instrument to the delight of the crowd.

"Don't try this in your cells alone," Saunders said with a big smile.

Then he did a solo and didn't spare any tricks as he made the bass growl. His fingers crisscrossed every octave of the bass fret board. Then he played "Purple Haze" by Jimi Hendrix as the audience clapped before he returned to his R&B, jazz improvised solo. The crowd applauded and shouted.

An appropriate song selected and performed for the men on Death Row was Saunderson's song "Always Thinking About You" from his 2016 album Uptown Jazz, produced by Saunders and Larry Batiste on the label SFRecords.

The show didn't end there. Jaspar, Krizman and Saunders performed an improvised piece that sounded like they've been playing together for years. Krizman led with a drum rhythm as Saunders and Jaspar followed on bass and

piano, respectively. Saunders' facial expressions let everyone know he was into the music.

"Two years ago, he (Jaspar) taught me some stuff," said Saunders of the first time they played together. He said that performance lasted about 40 minutes because they had so much fun.

After Saunders and friends, The Prodigal Sons took the stage by storm with a memorable gospel sounding piece. They were Michael Kirkpatrick, Greg Thompson, Calvin "Sincere" Carter, Michael Bootae and Derry "Brother-Dee" Brown. The lyrics and harmony were inspiring as the men sang: "Well, I went to the church last night, and my heart felt alright, 'cause Jesus got a hold on me."

The audience clapped and sang along as they performed this gospel/spiritual piece. No matter what one's faith, this song was very moving — reminiscent of civil rights freedom songs and marches for civil rights -- think Eyes on The Prize. Their harmony was magic, and the crowd stood up and applauded to let them know it.

After the show, volunteer Molly Kittle said, "I was struck by the love in the room. The quality of how every man — performers and audience — chose to use their voice to lift all of us higher."

"I love rap, '80s music, and gospel," said volunteer and guest Katie Burke. "The concert started with rap and ended with '80s and gospel, so I was happy. Thanks to all the musicians and to the camera people who covered the event."

Recording the "Concert for Death Row" was the SQT video crew of Brian Asey, Eric "Phil" Phillips, Jerry Welsh, Jaspar (show producer), Joshua Burton, and supervisor Skyler Brown.

The full concert will appear on San Quentin's institutional television channel in the coming weeks.

RE:STORE JUSTICE

By Angie Romero

A lot of people can pinpoint the day their life changed forever. Many of us graduate college, get married, or have a child and think "This is it, this is the day my life changed forever!" And I have had these days and these thoughts.

December 1, 2016 was a day that changed me forever. On this date my husband, Richard, was struck by a driver under the influence of alcohol at almost 3 times the legal limit. He was rushed to the hospital where he remained in a persistent vegetative state until he died on Christmas Eve. All because a 23 year old young lady chose to go out and drink and then get behind the wheel of a car.

Justice is defined in the dictionary as "the administering of deserved punishment or reward" and my family wanted justice. We wanted her life changed forever just as ours had been. We went through an 8 month court process and had a 7 year sentence handed down to the offender and justice was served, or was it? Yes, the DA got her sent to prison but she never said a single word to us or took responsibility for anything. She just sat there and took the punishment that was handed out. And while we had the opportunity to give Victim Impact Statements, I never felt she understood who my husband was and just how much his loss affected my family and I. She never acknowledged anything. All I kept asking myself was did she care? Did she care that she destroyed my family's life? That she took the man that meant everything to me and did she care?

It took me two years of depression, hatred and anger towards the offender before I realized that this was eating me up alive and was damaging my future and family. I stumbled upon the VOD program (Victim/Offender Dialogue) that the prison offered. So I started the process not even sure I had the guts to face the person who gave us this life we never asked for or wanted. So sure that she wouldn't even want to face me. She did agree to meet me and we started down the road to our face to face meeting. It wasn't a fast or easy process and there were some days I thought we were never going to get there but finally the day arrived.

The apprehension I felt that morning was through the roof, I questioned myself if I could still do this, and then finally the calmness (the peace of God?) that always kicks in when faced with difficult situations. I sat at the table and watched as she came in and sat down. What transpired in the next 2 1/2 hours was the justice I was seeking. I was finally able to share with her the person my husband was, the horrors my family went through, and finally was able to hear the offender say to me "I'm sorry" and take responsibility for the choices she made that night and to truly hear what I had to say. I walked away from that meeting feeling heard for the first time, the hatred and anger beginning to release its hold on me and with the feeling that maybe, just maybe I made a difference in her life.

The offender still has the rest of her sentence to serve and I still will not have my husband returned to me but the healing that was started that morning will continue to grow and do its work. Justice was finally served.

RE:STORE SURVIVORS

Sports@The Q

Island communities come together through ROOTS and sports at The Q



Photo by Adamu Chan, First Watch

From left to right: Kep, Danny Pitta, Tomasi, Andy Siona and Lay Maka at the Day of Peace 2019

**By Aaron Taylor
Sports Editor**

When you think of the island of Samoa and its connection to collegiate and professional sports, very large and powerful men often come to mind. However, Danny Pita, Lay Maka and Andy Sione are more than just large men that play sports. They are intelligent, thoughtful, introspective, and, as you're about see, they are fully in touch with who they are and what they represent. As members of ROOTS (Restoring Our Original True Selves) they've learned to tap back into their heritage, history, culture, language and religious beliefs.

As a team, they played in the 2019 Intramural Basketball League at The Q as "Top Shotta'z," as well as Maka and Pita playing on the All Madden Flag Football team, where Pita plays both offense and defense. Maka plays on defense as well as on the offensive line.

AT: What's up with my nephews! (Everyone starts laughing, sharing genuine smiles and hugs.) Okay,

what are your personal sports histories, as far as high school or on the collegiate level?

DP: (Laughing) I played sports at Jefferson High in Daly City. Football, track and field – 400m and 100m – and basketball. I played football and rugby for Laney College in Oakland.

AS: (Smiling) I played basketball at Phillip & Salaburton in San Francisco; it used to be called Woodrow Wilson High back in the day. I also played AAU for the Street Soldiers with Dr. Joe Marshall.

LM: (Nodding his head) I played football and rugby for Bountiful High (Utah); and WoodsCross High in WoodsCross, Utah.

AT: So, how do y'all connect what you do in sports to your overall approach to your Island heritage?

LM: (Lowering his head; speak softly at first, his voice gained volume and strength as he went into his response) Well, for me, as far as connecting through football, my older brother was going to NFL but he was killed before he could get to camp. I come from an

athletic family, so I'm fully representing what my family stands for; coming out of the ghetto, we're striving, so I'm finishing what my older brother couldn't even if I'm prison. That's why I chose to play for San Quentin's All Madden flag football team. It's part of staying connected to my brother when I'm on the field.

AT: During the ROOTS island cultural history presentation, Andy, you went into the Samoan language; talk to the people about the importance of learning ones original tongue.

AS: (Thoughtfully) The most important thing about it is that it is a part of the presentation of who we are, of who I am. I have to use the "Fa'a Samoa" (pure phonetically correct Samoan tongue), and in that, the "Alaofa A'ku" (phonetic sound) which means "we send our love in the highest respects." That connects us and connects me to my heritage and culture. It lets our guest know that we have the utmost humility and respect for them.

DP: (Here, Danny perked up in his chair to add on) And that, in the simplest way,

means we are sending our love through our vessels; football is football and its violent, even flag football. We aren't trying to injure anyone, but we're playing a violent sport, so we want to be aware of what we're doing and not intentionally hurt anyone.

AT: And is that why you make the distinction of saying that you're both Samoan and Tongan, but, still connected through heritage?

DP: (Serious) We rep Samoa and Tonga, period. We're one people. We aren't allowing anyone to make a false separation of our people ever again.

LM: (Nodding in agreement) We're still connected via language, religion, culture, etc. We are still part of the Polynesian landscape, don't ever get it twisted. We're one people.

AT: Where were you all born?

AS: Samoa, Faga'alau;

LM: Oakland, Ca. Town Business! (we all laugh)

DP: San Francisco, Ca. City Life! (still laughing)

AT: Who are some of your heroes or role models in sports and why?

DP & LM: Lofa Tatupu – he played for the Seattle Seahawks; Jesse Sapolu – SF

49ers, he has a Foundation that deals with bringing young islanders together. He's in Los Angeles and he gets guys out of gang banging and into athletics; Troy Palomalu – Pittsburgh Steelers; he went back to the islands and brought new equipment with him and real organized sports. That's huge to have different villages together playing football rather than warring with each other. He did that in 2010-13.

AS: (Leaning into the table to make his point) Also, Isaac Sopoaga – SF 49ers; I was in Samoa when he came and it was like a real football camp out there. It was cool. Then, after the tsunami in 2010, they came back: Samoan & Tongan NFL stars came to help and that showed us who they were, in the deepest form, with a full relief team.

It's like when Nipsey Hustle died. Crips and Bloods came together in Los Angeles, putting their differences to the side, and focused on what's right for a change and not the BS.

AT: I appreciate you young Uso's coming into the newsroom and doing this interview. I'm going to give you the closing statements. Let the people know how you feel about your responsibilities as young men that are also role models, even inside this incarcerated setting.

AS: (Serious) I take this situation and use it to learn and expanding on who I am as a person and as father, a soon to be husband; an uncle, nephew, a son. I'm still evolving into full manhood.

LM: (Introspectively) I'm Building myself into a better husband and son; to be more productive and right my wrongs. The future has something in store for everybody, so I wanna pay it forward with good energy. I wanna be an example of never being too late to chase your dream and what you believe.

DP: (After a long pause) My name is Danny Pita Jr, and my nickname is "Uso Heavy." I did stuff I'm not proud of as Uso Heavy; what I'm doing now is moving past my heavy heart. I'm a man from Samoa. At the end of the day, I round everything I do around my culture. I'm trying to be the man that I want my son to be when he grows up.

Sports Pics @ The Q



2019 SQ Hardtimers Softball Team season record: 15-3

Corrections to last issue's sports article: In the sports article about Alexandru Sinigur had his name misspelled. We apologize for this error.

Sports@The Q

Strong turnout and finish for the 13th Annual 1000 Mile Club Marathon

On a clear and crisp Friday morning, 30 of The Q's 1000 Mile Club members started the race at 8am for 13th Annual SQ Marathon.

One of the runners was going to be crowned a champion because the five previous winners were no longer housed at The Q. The favorite for the title, Fidelio Marin, took an early lead and held it for most of the run, but in mile 21, he twisted his ankle. The man right behind, Mark Jarosik, then took the lead and went on to win the marathon. Jarosik is now the sixth man to be crowned champion of the marathon, joining the ranks of Markelle 'The Gazelle' Taylor, Lorinzo Hopkins, Eddie Herena, Stephen Yair, and Chris Scull.

The annual marathon is supported by coaches Frank Ruona, Kevin Rumon, Diana Fitzpatrick, Jim Maloney and many others and is the culmination of the 2019 running calendar, the team having ran a total of 12 races in 2019. The next racing schedule begins in late January/early February 2020.

—Aaron Taylor



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
2019 Marathon winner
Mark Jarosik at 3:16:38



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Coach Frank Ruona hands Finisher
Fidelio Marin an energy pak



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Finishers Moua Vue and Steve
Reitz rounding the track



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Finisher Alberto
Mendez

1st	Mark Jarosik	3:16:38
2nd	Fidelio Marin	3:18:24
3rd	Steve Reitz	3:41:53

Other runners who completed 26.2 miles:

Vicente Gomez, Moua Vue, Martin Gomez, Darren Settemeyer, Tommy Wickerd, Michael Johnson, Steven Brooks, Darrel Mora, Dan McCoy, Alberto Mendez, Oscar Aguilar, Heriberto Escalera, Tien Pham, Ben Tobin, Michael Keyes, Ramon Ruelas and Jonathan Chiu

22.5 miles	Ernie Soltero
20 miles	Wallace Jackson
18 miles	John Levin
17.0 miles	Jorge Lopezmaza
15.5 miles	Christian Dominguez
14½ miles	Daniel Arreola
11 miles	Larry Ford
10 miles	Charles 'Pookie' Sylvester
6 miles	Derrick 'Out Loud' Gray
5 miles	Rahsaan 'New York' Thomas



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Finishers Darrell Mora, Darren Settemeyer, John Levin,
Ben Tobin, Michael Keeyes and Vicente Gomez

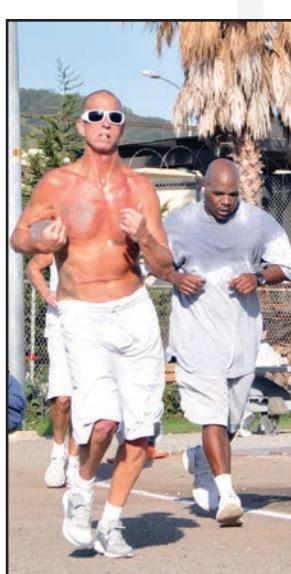


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Finishers Dan McCoy
and Steven Brooks



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Finishers Heriberto Escalera,
Tien Pham and Oscar Aguilar



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
1000 Mile Coaches Diana Fitzpatrick, Runoia and Jason
Thompson counting laps for San Quentin club runners

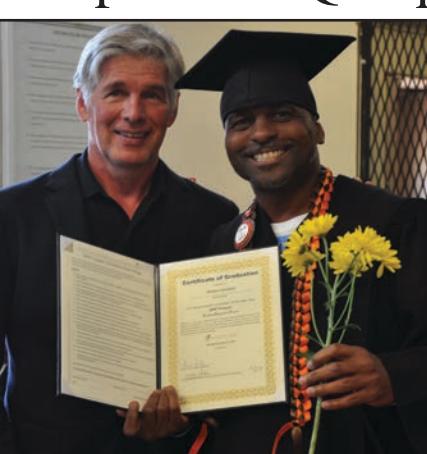


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Sylvester and Jacques Verdun at
GRIP graduation in June 2019



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Sylvester in the 2019 Annual
1000 Mile ClubMarathon

In-Depth: Charles 'Pookie' Sylvester striving to be part of SQ's sports program

By Aaron Taylor
Sports Editor

When we are thinking of iconic athletes that have been housed at The Q, there has been only one who has personified what it actually means to be a teammate.

Charles Sylvester – also known as Pookie – made his mark in sports at The Q in 2012 when the West Block Warlocks beat All Madden Flag Football team on MLK Jr. holiday game in January 2012. Pookie was open for a pass in the end zone, however, qb John Windham didn't see him, leaving the pocket and running for a touchdown. It was Pookie who threw the block that got the qb over the line. In March of 2012, Pookie was passed over when he tried out for the 40 & Over SQ Kings. He then tried out for the SQ Warriors, and was passed over again.

Pookie has never quit trying nor has he ever waivered in his striving to be a part of the sports programs at The Q. He finally made both teams, and although he never started a game, he played his role as a supporter from the bench until it was his time to play.

Pookie is also known for his trademark Intramural Basketball League teams, called "Pookie & The Boys."



Photo by Eddie Herena
Sylvester guarding GS Warriors
Asst. GM Kirk Lacob in 2016



Photo by Eddie Herena
Sylvester going for a pass
for All Madden in 2015

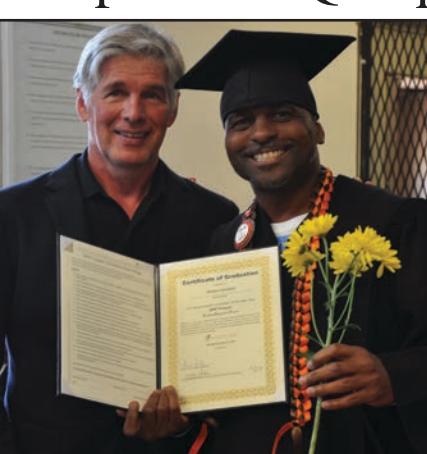
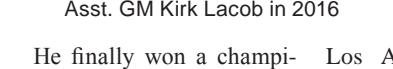


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Sylvester and Jacques Verdun at
GRIP graduation in June 2019



He finally won a championship at The Q in the CBL with No Fair Ones in 2014.

Pookie personifies the hashtag #Sports@TheQ and it is my honor to introduce him to our readers.

AT: You've been playing sports all your life?

Pookie: Yeah, since elementary school. Football and Basketball.

AT: You played High School ball?

Pookie: Yeah, for Fremont High in Los Angeles. Point guard for the varsity, But, no football.

AT: Did you play any college ball?

Pookie: I went to West L.A. in Culver City and to

Los Angeles City College to play ball, but it was a big mess so I didn't play.

AT: You first appeared in *The Show* at CTF-Soledad during the flag football season in 2011, then here at The Q for two years. Now, you're being interviewed for the San Quentin Sports; what have you actually done in sports to get so much recognition and publicity?

Pookie: That's the big question! (*We both start laughing at this*) My hustle? My defense? Everybody keep my name in their mouth so much (*he laughs even harder*), so I guess I'm a somebody! Whether I do good or bad, everybody

saying or chanting "Pookie!"

AT: (Laughing) What self-help groups have you taken?

Pookie: (*Catching his breath from the laughter*) Alternatives to Violence Program, Restorative Justice, Criminals and Gangsters Anonymous, Project LA and GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power).

AT: Did you get your GED since you've been inside?

Pookie: Yeah, in 2010. I graduated in full regalia.

AT: Okay, fun time. Name your top five favorite movies.

Pookie: *Beverly Hills Cop I, Enemy of the State, Independence Day, Friday the 13th and Phantasm.*

AT: Name your top five all-time favorite R&B songs.

Pookie: "Fortunately" by Maxwell, "Let's Chill" by Guy, "Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye, "The Whole Town is Laughing at Me" by Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, and "Can You Stand The Rain" by New Edition.

AT: Name your top five all-time favorite basketball players.

Pookie: Magic Johnson, Michael Cooper, Kobe Bryant, Tim Duncan and Scottie Pippen.

AT: You get to say one sentence to a group of 13 year olds. What do you say?

Pookie: "Respect your parents," It's as simple as that.

AT: Thanks for giving the people some of your time Pookie, its appreciated. It took some time to get around to this interview, so you have the closing word.

Pookie: My hats off to The Q for all the love and publicity to me, Pookie, and I'd like to thank all the brown card holders that come in and facilitate these sports programs. Also to the game officials and to the people that take part on the court and field, thanks. And, to the fans because, without them, the game wouldn't be exciting. Appreciate yall.

Ground-breaking event of Trans Remembrance Day at SQ



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Officer M. Hauwert in attendance



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Michael Acosta



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Azzaraya Rodriguez



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
James Villa with Nah.na Reed on stage

TRANS

Continued from Page 1

Audience members for the groundbreaking SQ event included California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) officials Kris Applegate and Amy Miller, trans Corrections Officer M. Hauwert and California State Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco).

"This is a really beautiful community of people who are supporting each other to make San Quentin—and the world—a better place," Senator Wiener told *SQ News* after the event.

"It's really moving to hear from incarcerated persons about the need for more love, less violence, more peace and less hatred."

Wiener and his policy team wrote Senate Bill 132 and are working to get it approved. SB132 aims to improve housing options for incarcerated transwomen—whether they've had gender reassignment surgery or not.

Although the first two rows of pews were reserved with signs for "outside guests," Senator Wiener and his aides sat in the third row with SQ prisoners.

"Thank you for being a part of what inclusion looks like today," Strawn said to Wiener and the entire chapel.

"Today is not just about 22 people, it's about the hundreds around the world who've been killed for no reason"

"Guess what—San Quentin got it right this year," said Strawn as she welcomed Lopez and Spohn up onstage.

"It's hard to be out at San Quentin," said Spohn, who moderates SQ's Queer Support Group. "It takes a lot of bravery. You're going to see a lot of brave people up here today."

The afternoon event featured a diversity of performers and speakers who took turns honoring the fallen members of the trans community.

"Today is not just about these 22 people," said Father Donal Godfrey from the Society of Jesuits. "It's about the hundreds around the world

who've been killed for no reason."

Godfrey asked everyone to join him in a prayer for inclusion, compassion and nonjudgment.

"I believe each of us is beautiful. Each of us deserves to be treated with dignity and love."

Nah.na Reed, with James Villa beside her, spoke the names of 2019's transgender victims while lighting electric candles. Throughout the event, the chapel's video screens continuously ran individual photos.

With most of the victim's being nonWhite, Strawn made sure to highlight awareness for the heightened risks and extra discrimination Black transwomen face daily.

"Racism is a key factor that pushes transwomen of color to be homeless and in part leads them to prostitution in order to survive," she said.

When Michael Adams walked onstage, he pointed to the video screens and said, "Looking at those faces, what I saw was beauty—but the struggle inside was not revealed.

"They walked in a courage that I didn't have. LGBTQIA—all of that—call us the alphabet people. What matters is that you just be true to yourself..."

"...because some people just don't wanna know," he said, introducing his song.

Adriel Ramirez sang "Amazing Grace," but first she said, "By God's love I'm still here today to represent the trans community."

Thanh Tran spoke before performing. "Lisa said to me, 'It's so important for men who identify as cis and straight to stand in solidarity with us,'" he said. "And that made me stop and think..."

"Why would anyone who feels marginalized want to marginalize anyone else?"

For those who don't yet know, cis is the adjective now used to describe a person who identifies with the same gender they were biologically born.

Soon to be released Azzaraya Rodriguez said she came to show solidarity for all her

trans sisters who've died or been killed.

"I am going to let the world know who I am before the world tells me," said Rodriguez.

Gouda Preston, a Black trans woman new to SQ, personally addressed the issue of violence against transwomen of color.

"Many times we are killed because people who don't know who we are," said Preston. "But in complete darkness we are all the same."

"Hatred can never do anything but take good people away."

Michael Acosta gave a poetic and scathing indictment of toxic masculinity. "You love to hate and hate to love," he said. "So go ahead and call her a fag again."

"But like Taylor Swift says, 'Shade never made anybody less gay.'"

Michael Mackey and Tim Young brought the crowd to its feet with their original song, "Why Me?"

With Young plucking away melodically on guitar beside him, Mackey rapped, "This for every transgender that done passed away." Every time he sang the hook about the governor, "I hope me and Gavin Newsom get to play this song together," the crowd responded in raucous cheer.

Max Hickson met Strawn almost two years ago and has cared for her deeply ever since.

"It's been a lot of long days and long nights putting this event together," he said. "I'm overwhelmed by all the support—the attendance, the laughs, the cheers, the messages that were given today."

"To take an hour or two and hear this message about our community, they see us in a more positive way—see us as human."

Hauwert, now on special assignment for CDCR in Sacramento, experienced many personal hurdles herself as a transwoman corrections officer at SQ in 2014.

"I was very emotional and upset by my treatment at first, but they got better," Hauwert said about her transition. "Now, all I'm feeling is an influx of love and acceptance."

"They're trying hard—not just to me, but to the entire trans community."

Amy Miller serves as an associate director for CDCR's Female Offender Programs and Services/Special Housing.

"The support for the transgender community from the non-trans inmate population and from staff makes me believe that as an agency, we are moving in the right direction," said Miller for Inside CDCR.

Asst. Secretary for CDCR's Office of Legislation Kris Applegate agreed.

"What the women of San Quentin put together was remarkable and emotional," said Applegate. "Seeing their dedication and the support of the rest of the incarcerated people and staff who attended was inspirational."

J. Lopez moderates SQ's Trans Support Group.

"They've been amazing," she said about Applegate and Miller. "I'm blown away by how supportive they've been."

Strawn said Applegate and Miller have become her "new pen pals—whether they like it or not."

"We planned this Transgender Day of Remembrance on only three weeks' notice," said Lopez. "It literally took us 100-150 hours of work and rehearsals."

"All the hatred and prejudice comes from a place of not understanding what it's like to be transgender, to be different from the norm. It's just biology—your brain."

"Gender dysphoria, it's scary for them to face. We all need to show empathy and understanding for what they're going through," added Lopez.

—Alfred King contributed to the article



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
CDCR Mental Health Primary Clinicians C. Spohn and J. Lopez

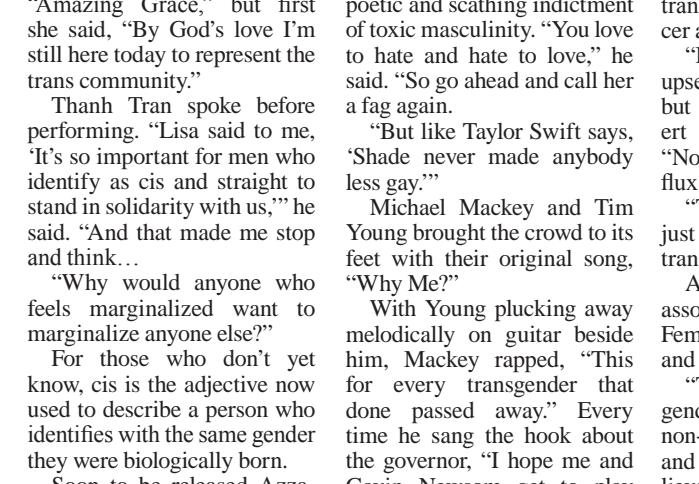


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Chris Wallace holding a Black Trans Lives Matter sign

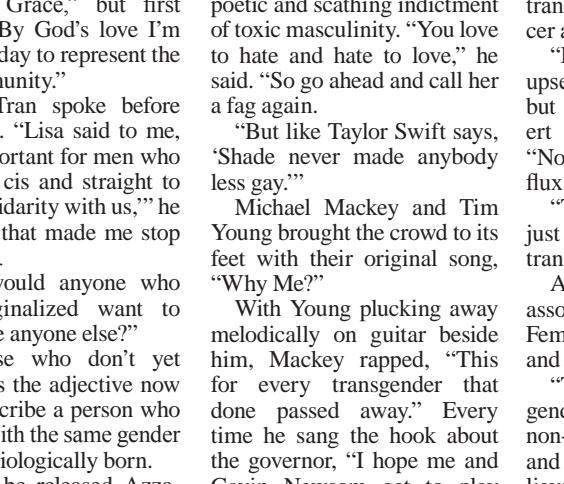


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Tim Young and Michael Mackey performing on stage

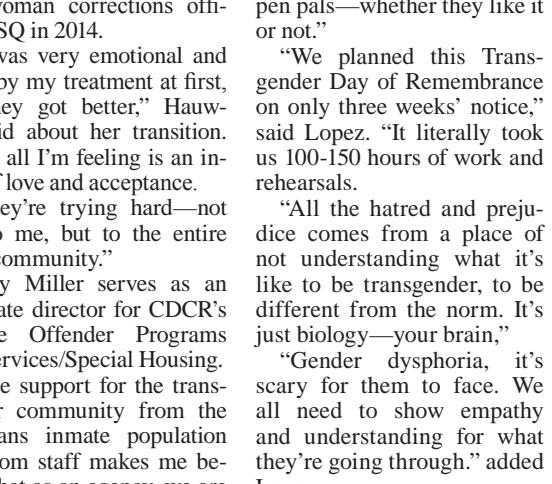


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Father Donal Godfrey of The Society of Jesuits and Adriel Ramirez



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Gouda Preston in the crowd



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Azzaraya Rodriguez



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Michael Acosta

World renowned magicians tour and perform at SQ

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

An international team of escape artists, grand illusionists, mind readers and tricksters descended on San Quentin State Prison for a special Nov. 26 performance right before Thanksgiving.

Set to make their Broadway San Francisco debut later that night, Champions of Magic chose to first visit SQ and dazzle prisoners with theatrical wizardry and humor.

"On paper, I'm sure a room full of 300-plus criminals seems terrifying," said Los Angeles magician Kayla Drescher. "But we didn't view anyone we met as their crime or their number."

"We were just happy to meet and perform for a great audience of human beings."

The British duo Young and Strange opened the show in the SQ chapel with their original signature illusion.

"We weren't sure what equipment to bring inside the prison," said Richard Young. "We came up with this trick when we were two broke teenagers—nothing but cardboard and some sharp wood."

With a bit of slapstick and comedic flare, Sam Strange got Young squeezed into a

standard-looking cardboard box.

"Caution—Heavy Load," Strange read the label, taking a jab at his partner's somewhat portly girth.

Strange then thrust 17 spears, one after another, straight through the box from all sides. Young's hand popped out the top—waving a white flag in surrender.

Strange drove one last spear smack down the center, a maniacal grin across his face. The standing-room-only crowd "oohed" in amazement.

Young gladly emerged after Strange pulled each and every stick out. The holes left behind clearly went through-and-through.

Mentalist Alex McAleer, another Brit, took the stage next. "I don't read palms or talk to the dead," he said. "I talk to the living."

"I can see you wondering, 'How can this British guy read my mind? Will it hurt?'"

McAleer turned his back while two prisoners wrote questions on slips of paper.

Brian Holliday put down the name of someone he cared about. "Give me some other information, too," McAleer told him. "But not too fast—nice and slowly for me."

Answers were placed in envelopes and sealed. "Close



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Kayla Drescher, Alex McAleer, Fernando Velasco, Producer Alex Jarrett and duo Richard Young and Sam Strange

your eyes," McAleer said. "I can tell you're picturing a name in your mind. It starts with a 'K.' Am I right?"

"She's not here, but you're thinking of Karen, your sister. And she's 21."

Holliday stood there in awe. "I'm still trying to figure out how he did it," he said later. "There's no way he saw me writing anything. Guys keep asking me if I was in on the trick."

Fernando Velasco, the 21-year-old magician from El Grullo, Mexico, performed next.

"There's a number of things you need to be an escape artist," he said. "I'm going to show you some of them."

Lisa Strawn volunteered to help bind Velasco securely with plastic wrap and duct tape. "Oh, I've got this," she said. "I'll make sure he's good and tight."

The other magicians began raising a four-sided curtain, yet almost instantly Velasco pulled it down. He'd gotten free—plastic and tape still hanging intact.

"The single most important thing you need to escape is luck. Lots of luck," he said.

Next came a boisterous and cheeky performance from the wide-eyed Drescher. Reenacting her teen years as a policeman's daughter, she chose "three young gentleman" from their seats to join her.

"No way. That's the name of the guy I went on my first date with," she said coyly after asking Brandon Riddle-Terrell his first name. "Ooh, and look at those big muscles—just like him, too."

Each man answered questions, trying to merit the one sealed envelope out of four with a "date" card inside. "Sorry, you didn't pass my dad's background check," Drescher said, dismissing them one by one.

Drescher's expressive personality kept the crowd engaged while her sleight of hand kept the final envelope and "date" card from the hands of any would-be suitor.

Young and Strange returned to close out the performance and asked everyone to join them in their final illusion.

"This is crazy. We're going to totally blow your minds," said Strange. "Lock your fingers up tight—and don't let go."

The duo then inverted their hands without letting go. The simple move proved impossible for the audience to duplicate.

The real magic, however, took place afterwards. The magicians, along with producer Alex Jarrett and Broadway SF's Scott Walton, toured SQ's North Block, Death Row and Main Chow Halls.

"My castmates and I are really passionate about politics, documentaries, etc.," Drescher told *SQ News*. "I remember watching, with my dad, trials of some of the people whose cells we passed on Death Row."

"That was an amazing experience, but also understanding that the justice and prison system in this country is... well... a mess. I was excited to learn from people who've experienced it firsthand."

When Champions of Magic walked inside North Block, Jerry Drawhorn, 26 years incarcerated, told them what their performance meant.

"I've never seen a magic show in prison," said Drawhorn. "Being down all these years around bad, ugly, evil—it's hard to keep your humanity."

"I'll always attend beautiful events like this because it keeps me grounded—keeps me going without going crazy."

Drescher and Jarrett later emailed about the impact SQ made on Champions.

"San Fran shows were good, but I can honestly say we all enjoyed our performance with you more," said Jarrett. "We've told many people what a positive experience it was for us. I hope it will inspire other performers to make themselves available if permitted."

Drescher added, "Growing up with a dad that's a police officer, you'd think I would view criminals as 'bad guys.' I was lucky to learn from him that one bad decision doesn't mean someone is a horrible human. The visit to San Quentin certainly showcased all of that."

"Later that night [in San Francisco] was the first time in a while our show hadn't gotten a standing ovation. I just yelled from the stage, 'THEY STOOD FASTER IN SAN QUENTIN!'

"We'd do a show for all of you every day if we could—haven't stopped talking about how lucky we are to have had this experience."



Mentalist Alex McAleer reading Brian Holliday's mind



Lisa Strawn wrapping Fernando Velasco in plastic



Kayla Drescher revealing one of the four "date" cards with volunteers



Kayla Drescher reveals Brandon Riddell-Terrell gets "no date"



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Sam Strange puts Richard Young into a box



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Strange thrusts wooden spears through the cardboard box



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Strange removes all the spears and Young comes out of the box unscathed