

San Quentin News



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Michael Harris is free after 30 years

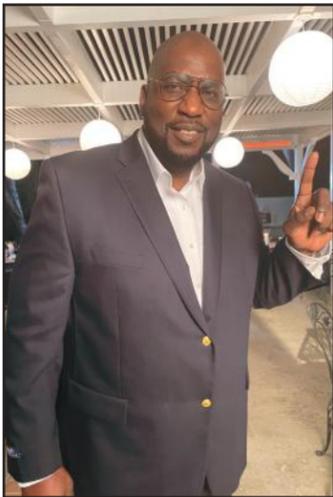


Photo from Michael Harris

Michael Harris

By SQ News Staff

Michael Harris, co-founder of Death Row Records and former *San Quentin News* editor-in-chief, has finally been freed. Harris was granted a pardon by former President Donald Trump, after serving 30 years in state and federal prisons.

We at *SQ News* send Harris our respect and support on his next journey. We are truly grateful to Harris. After San Quentin's print shop shut

down, it was Harris who paid for the continual printing and distribution of the *San Quentin News*. His leadership is a part of where we are today. Ivanka Trump, Snoop Dogg, MC Hammer, Chris Redlitz and Alice Johnson are credited for lobbying for his release.

We are pleased to reprint in part a *SQ News* Oct. 2011 interview with Harris, before he was sent to federal prison.

By Keshun Tate
Journalism Guild Writer

Q. Without going into details of your case, can you tell me what happened?

A. I became accustomed to surviving on the hard streets of Los Angeles at a young age. I made a lot of money in the drug business. When I opened my eyes to all the lives I had helped to destroy, it was too late. To this day, I'm still haunted about some of the things I done. I started creating businesses in the community with the intent to help people, hoping this would remove some of the dirt I had done. When I became a so-called "legit businessman" I learned how to carry myself accordingly — ultimately I gained a sense of purpose.

See Harris on Page 12



Photo from CDCR

Former *San Quentin News* staffers Aly Tamboura and Richard Richardson hug

Six SQN members make it home

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

San Quentin News lost six key staff members to parole during the year-long corona-virus pandemic that placed the prison on virtual lockdown.

"Losing six people in any organization is hard," said Marcus Henderson, the newspaper's editor-in-chief. "But all these guys who went home are more than my coworkers — they are my family. Now they're home with their families, and there

is nothing better than that."

Twenty-four hours after San Quentin State Prison was placed on a "modified program" last year in mid-March, Javier Jimenez, the newspaper's photographer paroled. He was saying his good-byes when it was announced that West Block was placed on medical quarantine.

Jimenez was more than the *News* photographer. He was a brother and friend to everyone who worked with him in the newsroom. When he wasn't at an event taking pictures, he was helping the *News*

team keep the office in shape. It was his self-assigned duty of helper.

Jimenez stuffed envelopes for mass mailings, bagged newspapers for distribution around the prison and helped to deliver newspapers. He organized computer files, swept, mopped, cleaned tables and anything else that made the work environment feel welcoming to all who entered the newsroom.

See SQN on Page 5

Trauma, change and growth

"I allowed my thoughts to lead me to a dark place"

By Richard
Contributing Writer

Healing is a journey that I have been on for over fifty years (it's a lifelong process for some). Early in my life I played on both sides of the fence, and by the grace of God I found inner strength, people who loved me enough to give me support, advice, and forgiveness to move forward. I only mention this so that you will have a better understanding of my thought process.

Frank was murdered in 1972. He was my best friend — like a brother. Frank was the oldest sibling of two sisters and three brothers. His father was not in their lives. The family lived in the projects. Frank played the role of father/brother to his siblings, and he was loved and respected by all who knew him. He was extremely bright (never knew why he wanted to hang out with a guy like me). Frank's goal was to become a physical therapist. I was his best man at his wedding, and he was going to be my best man at my wedding. He was a non-violent young man with a strong faith in God.

My life at that time was shaky — it's like I lived two lives. I was a student at the local City College and a member of the boxing team as well as the track and cross country teams. I was also a competitive boxer under the US Boxing Amateur Athletic Union (79 fights). I had excelled in all three sports. The other part of my life, at the time, was drinking and excessive

aggression toward others. It was easier for me to fight than talk. I had little to no coping skills (something I didn't learn growing up).

On August 4, 1972, Frank, his wife, my fiancée and I went to visit my brother, who had been recently released on parole. At the residence there was another young man who had also been recently paroled around the same time as my brother. Shortly after we arrived, for some reason, the young man rubbed me the wrong way. We argued and it escalated. In short, I allowed my "bullet proof" mentality, pride, and machismo to control my thoughts, words, and actions.

*"It was easier for me
to fight than talk"*

I taunted him until he eventually pulled out a gun and pointed it at me. I became more angered, turned my back on him, and told him he didn't have the nerve to pull the trigger. The next evening my brother and his partner showed up at my fiancée's and my engagement party. I told my brother he could come in but his friend had to leave (for obvious reasons). I argued with my brother's friend until Frank came outside and told me to go inside, that he would talk to the guy. No sooner did I go inside the house than I heard a gunshot.

I ran outside and saw Frank ly-

ing on the ground, bleeding. He died the next day in the early morning. My instinctive thought after Frank died was to seek "street justice." I looked for the young man until he was arrested two or three days later. The other thought that kept going through my head was that "if someone can't hurt me, because I'm not afraid of death, they will hurt someone I love, which would hurt me far more."

Death by murder, in my opinion, is the most difficult of all traumatic events to process. It's more complicated because it involves many emotions including hate, revenge, anger, and survivor's guilt in many cases. It leaves a deeper scar in our heart, and I can only imagine the pain and horrors our loved ones must have felt as they left this world and their loved ones left behind. Death of a loved one, especially by murder, can bring the best, or the worst, out of those left behind. In my situation, it brought the worst out of me.

The lowest point of my life was when I came home early in the morning hours, drunk, I sat in my car drinking, listening to music that reminded me of Frank. I allowed my thoughts to lead me to a dark place where my hardened heart turned on me. I took my gun out from under my seat. As I sobbed like a little boy, I played Russian roulette. God rejected my life.

See Growth on Page 6



Courtesy of CDCR

Incarcerated men using the CDCR telephones in the housing units

New CDCR contract helps families stay connected

By Vincent O'Bannon
Staff Writer

Reduced phone costs and a tablet program are coming to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the CDCR has announced.

A new six-year contract with Global Tel*Link (GTL) will reduce telephone costs starting March 19. All nationwide calls will be lowered to 2.5 cents per minute. Previously calls in California were 7.6 cents per minute and 21 cents per minute for calls throughout the rest of the U.S.

"Now more than ever, communication with family and friends is very important, and we want to make sure everyone has access to communicate with their loved

ones without worrying about the cost," said CDCR Secretary Kathleen Allison in a prison memorandum.

GTL will also eliminate the \$3 account set-up cost. A 99-cent transaction fee will be added to the call. Nationwide calls will be 37.5 cents for a 15-minute call, according to the memo.

"Each incarcerated person will receive 15 minutes of free phone calls and 15 minutes of free video calls every two weeks," said the memo. "To support the implementation of the free calls, incarcerated individuals will be given a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to make calls."

See Phones on Page 6

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Avenal State Prison joins the fight against Covid-19

San Quentin News Staff

Youth offenders at Avenal State Prison, along with its administration, launched a mask sewing project last year to support the outside community's battle against COVID-19.

The group made 5,000 masks and donated them to local homes for the elderly, homeless shelters and the Boys and Girls Club in Kern County, according to Jesus Cortez, incarcerated Youth Offender Program (YOP) mentor.

"This project was more than sewing masks; it was a learning lesson for all of us," said Cortez. "The value of an altruistic endeavor like this — the joy of caring for others and of being a service -- will surely stay with us all."

The YOP on facility B yard spearheaded the project with correctional counselor Crenshaw. The group worked three hours a day for 11 weeks to complete the job.

"Mrs. Crenshaw entrusted my colleague Rocky Hunt and myself with the task to assemble a team of YOPs, mentors, mentees and members of our community to commit to this labor of love," said Cortez. "From the start there hasn't been any shortage of reminders regarding how much the world has changed as a result of COVID."

"And being away from our loved ones during this unprecedented time hasn't made it any easier either," he added.

Farmworkers and local first responders also received some of the donated masks, said Cortez. Self-help



Photo from CDCR

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groups, organizations and people such as Leslie Lakes of Prison Arts Touching Hearts (PATH) and George Luna from Guiding Rage into Power (GRIP) helped support the project.

"We thank everyone who supported our efforts to make a positive impact through a program like YOP," said Cortez. "We thank family, friends, Mrs. Crenshaw, Lorraine Lopez, Capt. Gonzalez and Associate Warden Bailey. This project went beyond what we hoped for," he added.

Facility D yard residents were acknowledged for their hard work for making masks for the entire prison.

"The YOP community here has done something beautiful in light of the pandemic," said Cortez. Cortez also thanked his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



Photo from CDCR

YOP members in a class room setting putting together masks for a greater cause

IDEO workshop searches for real solutions

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

A designed thinking firm asked a room full of prisoners, "How might San Quentin turn into a place that serves the rehabilitation needs of new arrivals?" IDEO, known for creating the computer mouse, brought 11 of its staff to San Quentin's Protestant Chapel on Feb. 21 to brainstorm the question.

Three dozen prisoners met the IDEO staffers at six round tables. They came up with team names before getting to work; Maverick Innovators, Ennogene, Rascals, The Justice League, Team Innovative Solutions and Community Roots.

"We don't know what it's like to be incarcerated. You are the experts," said Sue-Jean Sung, the lead IDEO staffer. "So we'll defer to your experiences, the way you want to tell them."

As a warm-up exercise, the teams spent two minutes thinking about building something from just soap, cardboard and string.

They came up with; soap on a rope, jewelry, toy car, clothesline, coat rack, model airplane, entertainment center, dice, chessboard and pieces, picture frame, a present for someone who smells, fake teeth, and a toilet seat cover.

After the warm up, the teams dug into how to make San Quentin a place that serves the rehabilitation needs of new arrivals.

"A welcome committee

that gives the person the items they might need, including a haircut and shower," said George "Mesro" Cole-El. He added, "Washing every three days is gross. Washing every day is better."

The Justice League wanted to greet new arrivals with a welcoming committee that gave out hugs and intensive mental health evaluations.

"If you need us, just call The Justice League," was their call sign.

Community Roots designed a pocket resource guide to show new arrivals how to spend money at the prison's canteen, the location of religious services, how to use the telephone, visiting days and times, as well as the prison's daily activities.

Team Innovative Solutions wanted intensive orientation sessions to show new arrivals every self-help program, with follow up check ups.

Other ideas were to give new arrivals an individual mentor, time management assistance, and visits to the prison's college program.

IDEO's takeaway on the day:

"I'm usually pretty exhausted after these types of workshops, but I felt energized by the engagement, the ideas, and the people in the room," said Sung.

Katie Clark added, "The workshop was generative and so inspiring. I felt like it was so much faster paced than a typical IDEO workshop and for that I felt bad that we did not have more time moments (like rehearsing, iterating,

etc.)" Anna Zyllicz was tasked to ask the participants to reflect on what they learned from the day and describe it in one word. Here are a few: inspiring, enlightening and uplifting

"If we are working toward

a common goal, we can make a change," Zyllicz said.

Raylene Knutson said what would stay with her forever was "hearing individuals passionately and optimistically speak about the need to treat all individuals with compassion and humanity,"

She added, "Systems, relationships and trust break down when this is forgotten."

"There is such a huge difference between rehabilitation and incarceration," said Devin Peek. "I met amazing individuals whose paths led

to San Quentin (many times due to broken and biased systems)."

"What I have told my friends and family is that my experience at prison convinced me that prison shouldn't exist, period," said Jayme Brown.

Finding Medical Help After Incarceration

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

Formerly incarcerated individuals find success with California's Transitions Clinic Network (TCN).

TCN clinics train community health workers to support the unique health and re-entry needs of the formerly incarcerated.

"Our goals are to support healthy and successful reintegration back into the community. We want to empower individuals to take an active part in addressing their re-entry and medical needs," said a TCN health worker. "We also strive to provide meaningful employment for people with histories of incarceration, many of whom have been systematically excluded from jobs in the healthcare field."

To better assist new members, an assessment was made with the Transitions Clinic Network by interviewing formerly incarcerated people to find out how they can be better served for their medical system needs, according to a TCN article.

"Many returning community members have a lot of chronic health conditions that need to be taken care of, but have questions about how to do it," said one TCN community health worker (CHW).

TCN community health workers noted that people leaving prison with serious health issues [cancer, substance abuse and mental health conditions] could greatly benefit from their network of clinics that help those in need find housing, work and other necessities, and employ one formerly incarcerated CHW in every clinic.

The need for the program came to light when formerly incarcerated individuals who were scheduled to come to the program instead ended up in the Emergency Department. Collaboration with community members began and TCN was born, according to the article.

When asked what currently incarcerated people can do, David Durant, SUD Counselor/Case Manager for Hill Country Community Clinic and Community Health Worker, responded, "Assuming that this is related



Photo from CDCR

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to accessing services through TCN, call the hotline. Get familiar with what is and is not available in the area you're paroling to. Call and schedule an initial appointment even before you are released and see about getting your Medi-Cal approved before release."

The TCN program started in 2006 at the Southeast Health Center located in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco. Today it has 44 programs nationwide, with plans to have a medical home in every community in the U.S. that is affected by mass incarceration, the article noted.

The re-entry program "Is a call to action to all county health care systems and social services to address the glaring health disparities and social inequities facing the returning citizen [formerly incarcerated]," said Re-entry Health Conductor Charleszetta Brown, of the African American Health Conductors Program, Contra Costa Health Services, in partnership with the Center for Human Development in Pittsburg, Ca.

With 21 programs in 14 California counties, TCN has served over 10,000 formerly incarcerated people.

In addition to housing and employment, TCN members help to obtain Medi-Cal insurance, help find and make medical appointments, and



access medication refills. And for those men and women who want to learn how to use computers, email, or their new cell phone, TCN has a technology coach to help them do that.

New members get one-on-one help in creating a re-entry plan based on their individual health and re-entry needs, the article stated.

Research studies have shown that patients in TCN programs have better health and are less likely to make emergency room visits or become hospitalized.

"My advice to those who are incarcerated is the important thing to do is look for hope in your life. Hope is the key ingredient to change and hope is the medicine that will allow you to address your own trauma," said Lead CHW Joe

Calderon. "I challenge you to become part of the solution. I look forward to hearing you call our hotline or seeing you in person one day. Know this, we do this work because we care. We here in the community, we want to help, and we're excited to welcome you home one day," the formerly incarcerated Calderon concluded.

TCN would like anyone looking to make a successful re-entry into society after incarceration to make TCN a part of their re-entry plans.

"For me personally I feel like we are here to attempt to balance a scale. There are many obstacles waiting for those who transition home — purposefully crafted restrictions designed to hinder one's success while simultaneously drawing attention to the fact one has a prior conviction [i.e., flashing neon sign, "CONVICT HERE BEWARE!!!"], said Durant. "We are seeking to turn that around and bring balance. We see the formerly incarcerated as sons and daughters of our community to be welcomed home, embraced, stood beside, encouraged and helped in their journey. The flashing neon sign is a signal for us to get in, get involved, and embrace the opportunity.

You can call the TCN Re-entry Hotline at (510) 606-6400 Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST, to talk to a formerly incarcerated TCN CHW. This number accepts collect calls from institutions that use Global-TelLink.

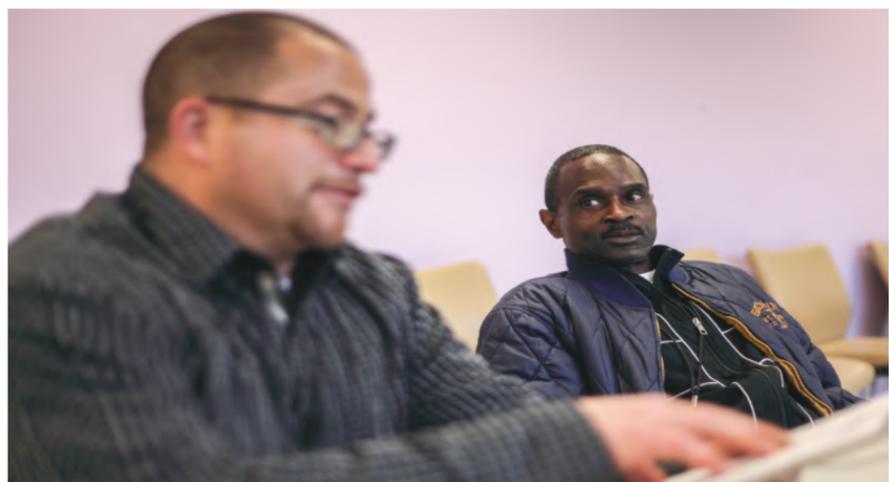


Photo from CDCR

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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.

Send Submissions to: San Quentin News 1 Main Street San Quentin, CA 94964

For incarcerated people that want to receive a copy of the San Quentin News in the mail, send \$1.61 worth of stamps for postage to the above address. The process can be repeated every month if you want to receive the latest newspaper. Behind the Scenes



The San Quentin News is printed by Marin Sun Printing, San Rafael.

Letters To The Editor—Let The People Speak

*Editor, San Quentin News,
My cousin Vanessa G. has been a constant blessing in my life and her continued support has made my prison incarceration bearable. She has been a positive figure of encouragement during my rehabilitation. She put up the money to bail me out when I was arrested. After I acquired legal representation, she would drive me to my court dates. As soon as I started my prison term, she wrote me letters and sent JPay funds; so that I could purchase canteen items. Needless to say, I don't ever think I'll be able to repay Vanessa for all the emotional and financial support she's provided me. There are not enough kind and compassionate souls as hers in the world. Yet, kind spirits like hers are vital to rehabilitating (us). Which is why I hope Vanessa and other angels like her can be honored in your newspaper. Thank You.*

C. Perez Jr.

Jamestown State Prison

"Solitary Confinement"

I'm in a 15x10 foot cell — It's dark as hell — food's late again, oh well — portion are so small — I'm over 6 feet tall, is that all?

I have no money on my books — with unfair restitution — they're the real crooks — I hear noises all night — sleep is a luxury — don't believe the hype.

There is no mirror — so I slowly wither — maybe someone will visit me. This place is like a horrible disease — I hope every day for a better situation — people are cruel with no hesitation — the notice to the public is my real hope — this is the only way I seem to cope — unfortunately this is my assignment...

You are a witness to harsh solitary confinement.

By A. Geh

Vacaville State Prison

Race is a very tricky subject around the world or around the corner. I'm not Black, Spanish or Asian. I am White. I'm not racist. I know what it's like to be called the N-word. My lips are a little larger than a lot of White women. I went to an all-White private school growing up. And they constantly called me N-word lips. At first, I didn't know what the word was. I'd never heard it until I started grade school. It really did wonders for my self-esteem (that's sarcasm) I went home every day crying for a long time. But my mother consoled me greatly. She said someday the boys/men would love my lips. And she was right. So here's a shout out to all women with big lips. You are beautiful creatures, created by God. And don't let the bastards get you down!!!!!!!

Life's not fair when you live in a cage, Head sick, heartsick, full of rage. It's like your soul is turned to stone — You feel like nothing, you feel alone.

Sometimes I try to think past myself and that helps a little. But then I get tired. So damn tired. I can't explain; it's not like I am sleepy.

I am wide awake. But I haven't the energy to help other people anymore. I can't help myself. I can't do it anymore. And still I sit in this zoo, this cage. Locked windows, locked doors. I hate the sound of keys jingling in my ears. It just makes me cry on the inside. To know I'm locked in a cage, Head sick, heartsick, full of rage. It's like my soul turned to stone. I feel like nothing, I feel alone.

From: E. Adams

Alton, Illinois MHC

Four-time Pulitzer Prize-winner inspires *San Quentin News*

"I think we're living in a time where truth is up for grabs"

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

David Barstow, a four-time Pulitzer Prize-winning, investigative reporter for the *New York Times*, spoke to incarcerated journalists at San Quentin, one week before the COVID-19 pandemic changed life at the prison a year ago.

In an interview, Barstow, told the reporters at *San Quentin News* they have a huge opportunity to tell stories that no one else can tell.

"I think that the hardest thing for you is to wake up and try to see this place (San Quentin State Prison) with fresh eyes," said Barstow. "It's a skill you really need to try to internalize."

Several months after Barstow's statement, the world viewed San Quentin with "fresh eyes" as Coronavirus swept through the prison, killing 29 inmates and one correctional sergeant, and infecting thousands of prisoners.

Because some of the incarcerated journalists did not want the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to control the narrative about COVID-19 at the prison, they took Barstow's advice and have been writing stories on the subject for *San Quentin News* and other publications.

"I think we're living in

a time where truth is up for grabs," said Barstow. "We're in a contest between a world of truth and a world of lies." He said investigative reporting is an important skill to combat lies and to create an "informed citizenry."

"The ability to speak truth to power is being sharply curtailed," said Barstow, adding that in other parts of the world it's not allowed.

"Investigative reporting takes you into all these areas that you would never expect to be," said Barstow. But the expectations are high on his end too, so he has to hit home runs. "I don't get paid to hit singles and doubles."

Barstow told the *San Quentin News* that investigative journalism takes a certain level of commitment. There are two things he said someone needs. They are relentless persistence and abnormal curiosity. "You have to do your homework," he said.

During Barstow's interview, he said, "You have to have a strong sense of justice. You have to have a sense of wanting to let people see what is right and what is wrong."

Barstow worked for the investigative unit of the *New York Times* for 20 years. During his tenure there he was awarded his first Pulitzer Prize for his

story about a pipe foundry company in Alabama that had a bad safety record.

The second time he won was for a story on U.S. secret propaganda for war in Iraq. Third was for a story on how Walmart bribed its way across Mexico, and the fourth was for Donald Trump's crime of tax evasion where the statute of limitations has run out and he cannot be prosecuted. "I spent 18 months on that story," said Barstow.

At the *Times*, Barstow said the investigative unit was allowed to write about whatever they wanted, anywhere, with the full backing of the publication.

Barstow runs the Investigative Reporting Program at University of California Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism. But he imparted his wisdom to discuss the power of investigative reporting with the *San Quentin News* is what we have found," he said.

What's hard about investigative reporting, Barstow said, is "you carry a burden" because "stories have consequences." He said companies can get shut down, people can go to jail. "It's an extra burden. It's also very lonely work. It's not glamorous." He said it can keep you up at night knowing that you may have outed someone in a story.

"We have to think in in-

vestigative reporting on how to be protective," said Barstow. For him, he makes a solemn promise that he will go to prison before giving up a source.

"We're in a contest between a world of truth and a world of lies"

"The promise I make to my source is that your life and your family's life are more important than my story," said Barstow.

"You're trying to get people to open up," said Barstow. "It requires building a relationship of trust." His favorite thing to do is get people to talk, but he admitted "it's psychologically difficult."

Barstow said the relationships built with sources are fundamentally different than those in regular journalism, and some people take a huge risk to talk.

Barstow said he disagrees with traditional investigative reporting where there are findings, people are contacted and then everything is laid out. He said if a reporter is in pursuit of

truth, they should be honest up front. For several reasons, he goes to his subjects as early as possible.

First, because he thinks it's fair, and when a subject is contacted early they say more.

"You learn a lot by how they react," he said, such as them being evasive, defensive, threatening, or lying.

For example, Barstow said, "Concentrated power pushes back." He cited how death threats against reporters have increased in recent years, particularly because of rhetoric about journalists being "enemies of the people" and "fake news." He said investigative reporting can be aimed at important institutions, such as government, corporations and religions.

Pushback comes in many forms, said Barstow, and he's been offered all kinds of things to go away, such as flattery and seductive questions like, "Do you like to ski?" He's even had people take out full page ads in publications to push back.

He urged the men at *San Quentin News* to do investigative reporting. He said it's not about getting the right quote, but getting the story in the right context. That's the essence of investigative reporting, asserting the hard truths. "Are we going to organize ourselves around truths or lies?"

Barstow has been in the news business for 30 years. He said he feels things have shifted, though, like the "nonsense" that's being spread among business leaders, politicians and churches. "It comes in all kinds of different forms," he said, adding that business leaders are building their companies on lies.

"I came to Berkeley to recruit," Barstow said about his work at the university's Investigative Reporting Program. But recruiting comes in different forms too, such as in a prison newsroom.

Barstow said his approach is that of a human being. "You gotta be able to look yourself in the mirror the next day. When I see things that are fundamentally wrong, that draws me in."

There is, however, a story Barstow regrets writing. It was a profile on the youngest prisoner in Florida, named Eddie, that ran in the *St. Petersburg Times*. He said the story stuck with him because of how unpredictable reporting can be.

Barstow holds a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

He said visiting the San Quentin newsroom reminded him of the very first newspaper he worked at. "I feel like I'm home again."

SQN

Continued from Page 1

In addition to his skills as a photographer, Jimenez prepared pictures for layout using Photoshop.

"I don't do nothin'," Jimenez would say, jokingly, when some *News* staff asked what he did all day. The truth is, doing everything was nothing to Jimenez because he enjoyed his time in the newsroom. He was a team player.

Jonathan Chiu paroled shortly after the lockdown. Like other *News* staff, his life sentence was commuted by former Gov. Jerry Brown.

Because Chiu lived in North Block, his departure during the pandemic was uneventful as staff in West Block and H-unit could not say good-bye to him properly. But everyone remembers his unwavering contributions to the *News* team.

Chiu served *San Quentin News* in many capacities. Quiet and humble, his talent was often overlooked as he moved around the office as a stop gap to keep the *News* operation in motion. When asked by visitors what his job assignment was, he modestly replied, "I do the crossword puzzles." He would later explain why.

"Any legitimate paper in society has a crossword puzzle," said Chiu. "I figured it would bring something exciting to the paper. That was my personal way of contributing."

Chiu was also the newspaper's technical support with computers and software. He served as managing editor and worked many years designing and laying out the newspaper and *Wall City* magazine. He trained other staff, and he did photography when called upon. Sometimes he even wrote stories.

Chiu said working for *San Quentin News* is not a job someone is assigned to randomly. He knows because he was recruited when he worked in the media center's movie broadcast room. He left that job to work in Prison Industry Authority, but by 2015 he found a home at *San Quentin News*.

"It's a job you have to want to go to," said Chiu. He said it was like family. "It's good and bad, but overall we got along, sometimes not."

"San Quentin overall has been a very interesting experience," said Chiu. "I didn't go there with the idea I'm going to get out. I got the opportunity for rehabilitation, and to accomplish things." That led to his commutation of sentence.

Chiu said Lt. Sam Robinson

was a good supervisor and that he met a lot of great people at the prison.

When the pandemic forced the newspaper to shut down temporarily, Chiu worked with other *News* alumni on parole to help produce the newspaper on the outside. The incarcerated staff remained on modified program but mailed their stories out. Chiu transcribed many of the handwritten and typed stories and prepared them for editing, proofing. He also resumed his old design and layout job.

Chiu currently works full-time as a hotline coordinator at the nonprofit Transitions Clinic Network, which provides medical services for people returning home from incarceration.

Michael Johnson was a writer on the *News* business team whose primary responsibility was to ensure the digital version of the newspaper was posted online.

A go-between from *San Quentin News* to The Last Mile coding course, Code 7370, Johnson had permission to walk a flash drive of files and images over to the *News* computer in coding and place them into Word-Press software. TLM staff later moved the data to the *News* website.

Johnson provided *News* management with website updates for reports and weekly staff meetings with outside advisers, and each month he made sure Google analytics for the website were available so staff could monitor the website traffic. Through it all, he often found himself in a troubleshooter role when problems came up or a design change was needed.

Johnson earned his Master's degree before he paroled. He was living in H-dorm housing unit so *News* staff in North Block and West Block did not have a chance to bid him a righteous farewell. But everyone was happy that he made it home to his family.

Aaron Taylor arrived at San Quentin in December 2011. He was the sports editor for the *News* and described himself as "the voice of sports at the Q."

The *News* senior editor, Juan Haines, convinced Taylor to write for the newspaper.

"We were at Calipatria (State Prison)," said Haines. "I first met him when I was playing basketball and he was standing under the rim, commenting the game. He

was popular because he was giving everyone nicknames."

Haines said he and Taylor were reacquainted at San Quentin and formed a friendship that led to Taylor joining the *News*. "It had its ups and downs," Haines said. "He had to learn about working for a newspaper and reporting. But he picked it up and became a great sports writer."

Taylor attended games, and often covered them with his unique style of play-by-play. He paroled last year in October, with plans to "take a shot at the pros," broadcasting live sporting events.

"Play by play, for me, brings the audience into the game," Taylor wrote. "I understand that getting on the pro level is going to be tough, but no one ever achieved their dream by staying in one place."

Taylor wrote that he's "leaving out of prison much healthier than when [he] came in," referring to his mental, spiritual, emotional and psychological well-being. He gave credit to the many self-help programs at the prison.

"Self-help groups work if you want them to work," Taylor wrote. "So my example in CDCR is one can create positive platforms despite the haters that surround you."

"So, stay real," Taylor advised. "Be always in service to others, even as you seek to heal yourself." And, he added, "Stay woke."

Taylor, nicknamed Showtime, was honored recently as the guest public address announcer at a Golden State Warriors basketball game. After the game, Warriors star Stephen Curry, who knew Taylor from a number of visits to San Quentin, presented Taylor with a big hug and the game ball.

Juan Espinosa took on many responsibilities during his two years with the newspaper. He did the Spanish translations, design and layout of *San Quentin News* and *Wall City* magazine, and he helped to run the Spanish Journalism Guild. He plans to stay involved with the *News* family of alumni on the outside. "I think we can still make it happen," he said. With technology, he said all he needs is a phone and a computer.

"It's bittersweet to get out of here," said Espinosa. He was happy to parole but sad to leave *San Quentin News*. "We all had different attitudes and personalities, but that made the paper strong."

As a Mexican national, Espinosa was told ICE was com-



Photo from Juan Espinosa

Juan Espinosa with Caballo, Pako and Raul

ing to deport him. Because he served a little more than 28 years, he was not going to fight it.

"There's no point in me staying two or three years in a detention center," said Espinosa. Instead, he wanted to be close to his family.

Espinosa said he was not going to forget about other Mexican nationals. He plans to contact the Mexican consulate to get information for Mexican nationals in California prisons, "to fight for social justice," he said.

Espinosa said he wants to use his skills to write stories about others who have been deported to Mexico but are not making out so well. He said he also wants people to know the truth about what happens in prison, like the disparity of release on parole for people of color.

"It looks like it's not balanced," said Espinosa. "There's a lot of social racism in prison."

Richard "Bonaru" Richardson is the last of the original *San Quentin News* staff that resurrected the newspaper in 2008, when former warden Robert Ayers Jr. decided to bring back the publication.

Richardson started off as an offset printer operator, before the print shop shutdown. He worked with Aly Tamboura, Kenny Brydon, Michael Harris, and the late Arnulfo T. Garcia. The latter three served as editor-in-chief of the newspaper, and all paroled before Richardson, who served 23 years of a 47-year sentence. His sentence was commuted by former Gov. Jerry Brown.

Richardson also served as the newspaper's editor-in-

chief, but it was a longer road for him to get there than for the others.

"I was trying to figure out who I was, a Black person among so many Black people in prison," said Richardson, who could not read and write when he arrived in prison. He said the pivotal moment in his life came when he decided the criminal life wasn't for him. "What nudged me was the Prison University Project. Jody (Lewen) told me I needed to expand my education."

Richardson also credits his print shop supervisor, John Wilkerson, as a "father figure" who taught him discipline and responsibility. "He saw that I needed direction and he guided me to the most responsible machine." He said that machine was "the prisoner."

After crossing that barrier, Richardson said he learned to trust people outside the inmate population, such as newspaper supervisor Lt. Rudy Luna and *News* advisers John Eagan, Steve McNamara and Joan Liseter.

When the print shop closed, Richardson was lost. "I didn't understand my value at that time," he said. But he'd built a good relationship with everyone, and because of that "they asked me to stay with *San Quentin News*."

When Lt. Robinson took over as the newspaper's supervisor, Richardson said, "That's when I really opened up in trusting people on the other side of the fence." He described his relationship with Robinson as more like a big brother. "I learned how to be accountable and responsible not only for myself, but

to those who I am around."

Richardson learned to use Adobe InDesign software and became one of the newspaper's layout and design editors. Years later he was assigned the position of managing editor and eventually became editor-in-chief.

"I began to understand what I could do with my job with the *News* — not only tell stories but find solutions to problems we all have," said Richardson.

Haines has known Richardson the longest. The two met at Soledad State Prison. "I joined the Journalism Guild and (Richardson) was the layout designer, and I was a writer," said Haines. "He pretty much held things together as far as actually producing the newspaper. He quietly went about his business building a newspaper each month. He stayed out of the heavy politics of running the newspaper."

Haines said Richardson's leadership qualities began showing after Garcia paroled. "It became apparent to me, because I relied heavily on (Garcia)," he said. "I've seen (Richardson) grow into a true leader who could navigate between staff and prisoners in a respectful and dignified way."

Those six parolees make up a third of the *San Quentin News* staff. What is perhaps unique about working there is that it is one of the few jobs in American journalism where the ultimate goal is to quit, an odd spin on "freedom" of the press.

-- Juan M. Haines, senior editor, contributed to this story.



Photo from Jonathan Chiu

David Le hugging Jonathan Chiu on Chui's release date



Photo By Javier Jimenez

Javier Jimenez, Richard Richardson and Jesse Vaquez

Texas-another broken prison system

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

Thousands of people incarcerated in Texas had to endure inhumane living conditions in a subfreezing weather emergency, while also battling the COVID-19 pandemic, reported the Workers World.

"Many of the inmates [at Clemens], my husband included, fear going to sleep because they're afraid they're going to die in their sleep," said Lauren Byrd-Moreno.

Many of Texas prisons are over 100 years old, including Clemens, according to the February 2021 article. In the Ramsey Unit, prisoners complained of bone-freezing wind that blew through cracked, broken, and missing window panes in the housing unit.

"We are freezing," said Nanon Williams, incarcerated at Ramsey, told the World. "This prison is 112 years old and was falling apart before this latest disaster. We have no heat, no water, very little cold food. Dinner tonight was a piece of cornbread and some peanut butter."

Williams added that on

the first day of the storm, only 10 guards came to work. Ramsey houses almost 2,000 prisoners with more than 400 employees, reported the article.

"(The) heat was off for almost four days. Only then did we get an extra blanket," said Williams. "Almost everyone has had COVID at Ramsey and the respiratory problems are still here. Coughing can be heard all over the place."

Almost half of all Texas prisons did not have running water or their faucets did not function properly. People defecated in paper bags for relief and some set fires in the units to keep warm. Also some pictures of fingers and toes split open from frostbite went viral from contraband cell phones, reported Gloria Rubac of the Workers World.

Death Row was also without water for days.

"Yes, the water is out, but my water at home is out too," came a response from the Polunsky Unit, according to the article.

Texas' prison system is ageing and there are quite a few decrepit units. The older prison units are south of Houston closer to the Gulf of Mexico and the Brazos

River, which often floods the units and the occupants are transferred to other units, noted the article.

The Texas Department of

Criminal Justice board has continued to refuse to advocate funding for proper maintenance of its prison system, said the article.

A Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesperson told The Houston Chronicle that all the prisons had heat and they "try to keep it at 70

degrees F."

"Seventy degrees below zero, maybe," said Anthony Graves, formerly incarcerated, to the Chronicle.

Closing LA County's Men's Jail

By Harry Goodall
Journalism Guild Writer

A task force was created to map out a pathway to close the Los Angeles County Men's Central Jail (MCJ) by July 2021, according to the Los Angeles Sentinel.

One analysis is the county would need to transfer prisoners to other county jails and fund sufficient community-based services to support diversion programs for mentally ill offenders, according to Supervisors Hilda Solis and Sheila Kuehl in a last-year proposed motion, reported Elizabeth Marcelino, City News Service, in the Nov. 5, 2020 Sentinel.

"I don't know that we can get to a level where we can close this facility without a replacement," said Supervisor Kathryn Barger. "We cannot turn a blind eye to the

fact that not everyone can be diverted. Those who remain in custody are worthy of meaningful treatment."

The MCJ was built in 1963 and houses roughly 4,000 of the nearly 13,000 individuals held in the L.A. County jail system, stated the article.

Sheriff Alex Villanueva and the Board of Supervisors noted the old jail is not suited to house prisoners, especially those with mental health issues. Also the sheriff believes cutting the jail population without building another facility would threaten public safety, said the article.

"Information about medical, mental health, substance-use disorder and other specific needs is critical to understand as the committees consider where certain services and programs can be provided to meet those needs as MCJ closes," said the re-

port.

Debates rage about building a large-scale mental health jail versus civil rights advocates wanting better smaller community-based substance-abuse and mental health centers.

"The need for a jail facility in the downtown area is a key factor in the local criminal justice system," said Tab Rhodes, president of the Peace Officers Association. "Men's Central Jail is needed at this point to provide wraparound services that deal with rehabilitation not currently available at other remote jail facilities in the county: ease of visits ... specific housing for high security concerns and centralized access to the downtown courts," he added.

Racial equity has also been a part of the closure debate and plan. Pre-COVID there was an increase of both Black men and women in the county jail

system. Black people represented 29% of the jailed population before COVID, but after COVID their numbers increased to 31%, while incarcerated Whites dropped from 15% to 12%, according to the article.

An overall population drop occurred with an effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus within the jail, but the population has increased again since resuming court and custody practices, said the report.

"A higher proportion of White and Hispanic/Latinx people and a lower proportion of Black people were released early compared to their representation in the jail population," the report concluded.

The task force is scheduled to release an update on the closure this year.

Phones

Continued from Page 1

Valley State Prison began setting up PINs on Feb. 25. All other institutions will activate PINs by March 18. Until PINs are implemented, GTL and CDCR will continue to offer two free phone call

days per month, according to the memo.

"The new tablets will launch mid-May at Valley State Prison, and roll out to all CDCR institutions in the following months," said the memo. "It is expected that every adult institution will have tablets by the end of 2021, and all fire camps will have tablets by the end of March

2022."

The tablets will allow approved individuals to send and receive emails, photos and short videos from loved ones. Also there will be a variety of informational and rehabilitative content.

"All activities will be closely monitored," said the memo.

The tablets will be provid-

ed for free, but some features such as music subscriptions may charge a fee. Indigent incarcerated individuals, those with less than \$25 in their trust account for 30 consecutive days, will receive five free message credits per week.

"Scheduling and eligibility criteria for use of tablets are in development and will be

updated as more information is available," said the memo. "However, the free Webex video visiting system remains in place."

Tablets will be available for those who would want to make video calls in a different location, or to offset visiting-room limited video visiting stations' availability. Video calls will cost 20 cents per minute.

The new contract will allow for more communication and technology services for prisons statewide.

"We know staying in touch with loved ones on the outside is important," said Secretary Allison. "Not only to remain connected as a family, but also to help you stay motivated and get ready to return home."

Growth

Continued from Page 1

I continued to cry like I had never cried before. I also was dazed and wondered why God had denied me the peace I was searching for. Many of us who have hit rock bottom eventually find courage, self-love, self-forgiveness, purpose, hope, compassion, love for God, and empathy (for self and others). Our gift for overcoming what we thought was impossible is a new heart (a new and better life).

Frank's death made me face my mortality and challenged my "bulletproof" mindset. Eventually, I allowed God to come into my life. I dropped my pride and accepted help from those who cared and loved me (later I made the best out of the worst).

The list below shows other ways Frank's death impacted my life:

- Fear of getting close to others for fear of losing them — I sabotaged many of my relationships, including my first marriage
- Survivor's guilt — my brother also shared this feeling
- Hate in my heart — no room for love
- Alcohol abuse — trying to self-medicate to cover the pain
- Feeling of unworthiness
- Suicidal ideations
- Nightmares — I would dream at times watching Frank being shot and feeling helpless (as well as other nightmares)
- Lack of trust of people in general
- Depression — I would occasionally sit in darkness, drinking a beer, listening to oldies/ Motown music and, thinking of the old days, become depressed...this was my way of honoring Frank

One of my barriers in healing was my lack of courage to see who I had become and the self-destructive path I was on. I was also too prideful to seek help. My thoughts also told me that if I received any "head treatment," it would weaken my mind so I wouldn't be able to protect myself (fight). I didn't see anything wrong with me. I thought everybody had the same thoughts that I had. Further, I had no resources to turn to even if I wanted help. Justice to me means having compassion and empathy for those impacted by the justice system. Today, more than ever before, the inequities of people of color have come to the forefront of what reforms need to be made to make things right. I believe that one of the most effective tools that helps bring justice for the victim and awareness of the impact of victimization is Restorative Justice. There are three pillars of Restorative Justice: 1. Harms and Needs: who was the harmer, what was the harm and how can it be repaired? 2. Obligations: Who is responsible and accountable and how can she/he repair the harm? 3. Engagement: Victims and Offenders have an active role in the justice process. I have been a volunteer for Restorative Resources for over seven years and have witnessed the powerful positive impact it has on all involved. Speaking the truth, and from your heart, will make a big difference the majority of the time. My greatest source of my strength has been my faith in God, as well as the birth of my daughter. My wife has also been my source of strength, my cheerleader, my inspiration, my moral compass, and my rock. My wife convinced me to seek therapy. EMDR is a treatment that helped me enormously. I am a survivor of two other murders; my younger brother and his son (my nephew), 18 years apart. I witnessed my brother and two nephews, each time they were paroled, come out the same (no changes) or more damaged. My other nephew died from his addiction around one month prior to my nephew's murder. All three of them had early educational challenges and never graduated from high school. They also all had childhood trauma, mental illness, and a drug addiction. My brother and nephew (the one who died from his drug addiction) had both served lengthy sentences. All three were heavily involved in gang life. It seemed to me that common sense would prevail throughout the criminal justice system, that these risk factors should be addressed while incarcerated, during re-entry, and followed up while on parole. There are many studies that show that persons who are incarcerated for lengthy periods of time tend to have a higher level of mental illness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In 2019, 65% of inmates released from California prisons were returned within three years. (The average CDCR recidivism over the years has been over 50 percent.) In essence, we don't need longer sentences, we need CDCR to create policy that will provide effective programming for all inmates who have the risk factors noted, and that the programming be facilitated by qualified providers. We also need policy to implement early intervention for youth with childhood trauma, mental illness, and addiction. Further, parents should be offered services when their children have risk factors early on that could hinder that child from becoming the best person God intended them to be. I have a few things that I do if I am triggered or start to feel down: Pray and meditate on the scripture words

- Read or write poetry and read affirmations
- Hit my punching bag and shadow box
- Walk and talk with my wife
- Check my negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones
- Count my blessings for the things that I'm grateful for
- Service others
- Watch a funny or inspirational movie

Thank you for this opportunity to share my story and to make a difference.

Richard,

"We are not defined by our past; our future is determined by the choices we make today."

RE:STORE
JUSTICE

Siendo repatriado despues de decadas

Por Juan Espinosa
escritor contribuyente

Deportados después de salir de prisión

Después de pasar casi tres décadas de mi vida en la prisión, finalmente recuperé la libertad.

El 2 de diciembre del 2020 salí de la prisión de San Quentin. Apenas había llegado a la oficina de salida cuando fui abordado por un agente de inmigración.

Después de las preguntas de rigor tales como nombre, fecha de nacimiento, nacionalidad y cuantos años había permanecido en los Estados Unidos, me esposaron de pies y manos, y me subieron a una camioneta van que me transportó al Centro de Inmigración en San Francisco, California.

El agente de inmigración en San Francisco me volvió a hacer las preguntas que previamente me habían hecho, con la excepción de

preguntas adicionales como los nombres de mis padres, cuánto tiempo había permanecido en los Estados Unidos antes de mi arresto, por cual frontera había cruzado a la Unión Americana, en que trabajé, nivel de educación y varias otras preguntas que ni siquiera recuerdo.

Mi preocupación era cuál sería mi destino, ya que por los problemas del COVID ignoraba si me deportarían inmediatamente o sería llevado a un centro de inmigración en espera de ser deportado.

Después de todo el interrogatorio, me decidí a preguntar al agente cuál era mi situación. El me contestó, "bueno, si quieres ser deportado mañana mismo estarás en México, solo tienes que firmar tu deportación voluntaria".

La verdad es que ni siquiera lo pensé y le dije, "¿dónde firmo?". El me dijo que sacaría mi archivo y en unos minutos me traería el

formulario que tenía que firmar.

La espera no fue fácil. Pasaron un par de horas antes de que el agente volviera con los papeles que tendría que firmar. Una vez terminado ese trámite, fui llevado a un cuarto para esperar a quién me llevaría hasta la frontera.

Cuando llegó la hora, otros agentes me entregaron lo que llevaba conmigo y me hicieron firmar un recibo por un cheque con el monto del dinero que tenía en mi cuenta dentro de la prisión.

Después de eso, ahora si estaba de camino hacia la frontera. Los oficiales de inmigración hicieron varias paradas en centros de inmigración. Estos lugares pasan desapercibidos porque no tienen ningún rótulo o algo que los identifique como tal.

Tras cinco o seis paradas detuvieron a un paisano de nombre David, a quien según supe, lo arrestaron poco antes

e iba también a ser deportado.

David me comentó que ni siquiera le habían dado la oportunidad de contactar a su familia. Me dijo "no traigo dinero y no sé cómo me iré para mi casa".

Yo me sentía un poco confiado en ese aspecto, pues traía el cheque que me habían dado y por lo menos me serviría para pagar un boleto de autobús y llegar a mi destino.

Finalmente a las 6 de la mañana nos encontrábamos esperando que se abriera la puerta de la garita mexicana para poder ingresar a territorio mexicano.

En México una agente nos recibió muy amablemente. Me preguntó por mi nombre, fecha de nacimiento, lugar de origen, nivel de educación y cuánto tiempo había permanecido en los Estados Unidos.

Después me tomó una foto e imprimió una hoja con mi información, la cual me serviría para viajar a mi destino

final. Me dio indicaciones y me dijo "siga esa línea, al final le estarán esperando".

Caminé por dicha línea unos 100 metros y al final, como me había indicado, había varias personas las cuales me tomaron la temperatura y me hicieron preguntas acerca de si tenía síntomas de COVID. Me dieron un desayuno el cual consiste en un sándwich, un jugo y una fruta, además de un kit con artículos para la prevención del Covid.

Después de varias preguntas me dieron un teléfono celular para que pudiera llamar a mis familiares. Al momento yo solo tenía el número de un amigo que tengo en Tijuana para que me recogiera en la garita.

Mi amigo me llevó a su casa. Me preguntó si traía dinero para poder viajar y yo le dije que sí que traía un cheque y que solo tenía que cambiarlo. Con ese dinero, le dije, viajaría a la casa de

mi hermano en la Ciudad de México.

Mi amigo me llevó a desayunar. Luego me llevó a varios lugares para cambiar el cheque, pero en ninguno de ellos pude cambiarlo debido a que era de los Estados Unidos.

Me sentí un poco molesto y a la vez preocupado porque no sabía cómo le haría para viajar sin dinero. También me sentía un poco triste porque mi ilusión era no decir nada y solo llegar a casa y darle la sorpresa a mi familia.

Yo seguí con la misma idea de darle la sorpresa a mi familia. Así que llamé a un amigo que me envió dinero y así pude comprar un boleto de avión y viajar a casa.

La bienvenida fue más que grata ya que pude abrazar a mi madre a quien no veía por más de 30 años, a mis hermanos los cuales dejé cuando eran unos niños y ahora ya son grandes y tienen sus propias familias.

Demanda por discriminacion en Los Angeles "Estos policías van a pagar"

By Vicent E. O' Bannon
Staff Writer

El Grupo de Ley Justicia X (Justice X Law Group) está demandando el departamento de la policía de Los Angeles, por la difamación de mujeres y hombres de descendencia Afro Americana y Latinx como miembros de pandillas.

Los demandantes Afro Americano y Latinx afirman de que están siendo discriminados bajo pólizas no escritas y escritas por el

departamento de policía en la ciudad, reporto The Los Angeles Sentinel.

"A la edad de 18 me lanzaron así una situación adonde la policía me sacaron de mi casa, dijo Brandon Costas, "Yo me estaba enfrentado un sentencia de vida por algo que yo no vi pasar."

Para "los individuos que han sido mis identificados como miembros de pandillas- la desventaja financiera y económica es incalculable," dijo el artículo del 6 de

Agosto.

"Nosotros estamos ablando sobre la criminalización de la gente que vive en ciertas vecindades. Lo que ellos (la policía) están diciendo es de que si tu estas alrededor de ciertas personas tu eres socio de pandilla," dijo el abogado Christian Contreras.

"Si tu provocas el miedo a alguien, no puede haber igualdad en la justicia con miedo. Nosotros le tenemos miedo al sistema de justicia criminal: Nosotros le tenemos miedo a la policía y

ellos lo saben," dijo Stephen King, co-fundador del Grupo de Ley Justicia X. "Ellos nos están quitando la habilidad ganarlos un sueldo para (nuestras) familias."

Miles de gente Afro Americanas y Latinx pueden haber sido afectados por estas mis clasificaciones, noto este grupo de ley. "Hay más de 20 policías bajo investigación y 57 cargos," según el artículo.

"Estos policías van a pagar," dijo King. "Ellos saben lo que hacen es malo..."

Ellos están tratando de quitarlos lo que hemos estado construyendo," él le dijo a reporteros en una conferencia de noticias.

"Este proceso judicial es enorme," dijo el abogado de derechos civiles Austin R. Dove. "Es una de las demandas más grandes que jamás hemos presentado contra la ciudad de Los Angeles, esta demanda habla a cerca del corazón de toda la corrupción que a destruido y devastado muchos Hombres y mujeres de raíces Negras e

hispanas. Es más extenso de lo que la gente piensa."

El Grupo de ley Justicia X están cometidos en ayudar cambiar un sistema que creen que está fallando las minorías, según el reporte.

"Ellos piensan de que ellas están arriba de todo el mundo y que pueden maltratar a todo mundo porque tienen una insignia," dijo el abogado Humberto Guizar sobre la mentalidad dentro el departamento.

—Traducido Por:
Edwin E. Chávez

Immigrantes que reciben indulto o perdón siguen siendo deportados

Por Heriberto Arredondo
escritor contribuyente

La deportación sigue siendo la realidad para presos indocumentados que hayan recibido un indulto o perdón de la sentencia por parte del gobernador, según un artículo del Immigration Reform.

En fechas recientes 10 individuos indocumentados recibieron un indulto o

perdón por razones médicas por parte del gobernador de California Gavin Newsom, pero eso no los protege de ser deportados del país, dice el artículo escrito por Matthew Tragesser.

"Aunque estos individuos reciban un remedio legal por sus crímenes...el ICE (Agencia de Inmigración y Aduanas) puede ejercer su autoridad y determinar sobre la deportación de un inmigrante indocumentado", escribió Tragesser.

En el mismo artículo Tragesser cita una entrevista de la revista Forbes con el gobernador Newsom en la cual éste aclara que "(los perdones) eliminan barreras contraproducentes al empleo y servicio público, restablecen derechos cívicos y responsabilidades, y previenen injustas consecuencias colaterales a la deportación y la separación permanente de familias. Un indulto modifica una sentencia y con frecuencia permite al preso

comparecer ante una audiencia de libertad, en la cual los comisionados determinan si es apropiado liberar al individuo".

De cualquier modo, subraya Tragesser, ICE examina totalmente la historia de inmigración de cada individuo incluyendo su historial de crimen para determinar si son sujetos a deportación.

"Ni un perdón, ni una reducción de pena pueden proteger a un individuo extranjero de la deportación", señala

Tragesser.

La Agencia de Protección y Aduanas no contempla clases o categorías para exentar a extranjeros de la aplicación de la ley. "Cualquiera que viole la ley de inmigración, de acuerdo con el INA deberá ser arrestado, detenido y ser deportado de los Estados Unidos si hay razones para ello", dice el artículo.

Tragesser apunta que la administración de Joe Biden puede detener las deportacio-

nes apoyando las acciones de gobernadores y funcionarios.

"[Yo] no estoy seguro que esto les dará un indulto (de no ser deportados) pero sin duda debería," dijo Dale Gieringer, director de Cal NORML, una organización sin fines de lucro en la misma entrevista de Forbes.

Desde el inicio de su administración, el gobernador Newsom ha concedido un total de 145 indultos y perdones por razones médicas, indica el artículo.

Criminal prosecuting plea bargains: is it flawed or beneficial?

"90% of criminal cases in the United States end in a guilty plea"

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Plea bargaining is a flawed and possibly a coercive process that goes beyond just guilt and innocence, but it can have positive results, according to attorney Rachel Rossi in an Op-Ed in the Los Angeles Sentinel.

More than 90% of criminal cases in the United States end in a guilty plea, cited Rossi. She is a former candidate for Los Angeles district attorney and a former federal and county public defender.

"Our justice system is far from perfect," Rossi wrote

in the Nov. 5, 2020 article. "And plea bargaining has many flaws that reflect the larger problems within the system and society at large.

"But in the right hands, prosecutorial discretion provides the power to scale back on mass incarceration, promote public safety, and ensure restorative and just outcomes," she added.

Unlike courtroom TV and movie dramas, a guilty plea occurs when someone faces a real risk of losing their job, housing or their children to foster care.

"Under these circumstances, there is a strong incentive to plead guilty if

it comes with the promise to go home soon," said Rossi. "It's not surprising, then, that studies have shown pretrial detention increases a person's likelihood of pleading guilty by 46%."

With hundreds of cases scheduled a day, judges, district attorneys and defense lawyers can become incentivized to find a resolution to the cases. Los Angeles has approximately 7,500 people in its County Jail on any given day for pre-trial lock up, according to the article.

"There is precious little time to determine what results will adequately en-

sure public safety, respect the interests and wishes of victims, and be consistent with the facts," said Rossi. "Every actor in the criminal justice system is faced with incredible pressure to keep cases moving and get them resolved," said Rossi.

Innocent people sometimes plead guilty under this type of structural process.

"In nearly 11% of the nation's DNA exoneration cases, innocent people entered guilty pleas," said Rossi. "And these are just the cases where DNA made it possible to overturn a conviction; researchers do not know how

many innocent people have in fact pleaded guilty," she added.

Statistics show that creating a diverse group of prosecutors decreases the likelihood of racial disparities in sentencing, said Rossi. However, 95% of elected prosecutors in the U.S. are White, which can result in a disproportionately higher rate of Blacks going to prison than Whites in the plea deals, she noted.

Plea bargaining can help bring humanity into the justice system process, a reason to not do away with the procedure entirely.

"It can allow a prosecu-

tor to look at a person and situation and decide whether treatment, programs, employment or other outcomes would better ensure public safety," said Rossi. "For an example, a person experiencing a significant mental health crisis who yells out a threat could be charged with a felony 'strike' offense and face years of prison time.

"By virtue of the plea bargaining process, a prosecutor has the power to charge the individual with a misdemeanor instead, to pursue alternatives to incarceration as a sentence or...refer the person to mental health treatment," she added.

Tough seasons ahead for San Quentin A's

By Malik Ali
Contributing Writer

Last season, the San Quentin A's finished with a 38-2 record, placing the team in the upper echelons of SQ sports history. Going into the 2020 calendar, the team will be facing tougher competition. The word has spread to several local semi-pro teams about the A's and they want to face the team.

Manager Richard "Coach Will" Williams, V.P. of baseball operations John "Yahya" Parratt, outfield coach Terry "Lefty" Burton, pitching coach Anthony "Bruno" Carvalho, and infield coach Douglas "Doug E. Fresh" Abineau were at the helm of the 2019 season's ship, steering their crew to the unprecedented win total. We gathered inside the media center to sit down and talk baseball.

MA: Last season, the A's had a 38-2 record. Let's just be blunt: how did you guys get that done?

Doug Abineau: This is the first year that we had a real team, not guys who thought they were entitled to play. Everyone knew their role and everyone understood it was a privilege to play, not an in-

herent right to be on the field.

Richard Williams: As manager, I felt fortunate to be a part of the experience. The staff we have and the team formed a bond. The 33-game win streak was not that important. What was important was having each player do their best and leave it all on the field.

John Parratt: We had a lot of discipline. The guys were always present whether rain or shine and we had coachable players. Guys just needed to give what they had in them. After that, we worked with what we had. We worked as a team and everyone was held accountable.

Terry Burton: I think we learned from previous seasons' shortcomings. At game time, everyone was there to play and we came together as a team. There was very little backbiting — which was a major problem in previous years — and a contributor to team disunity. Because we approached this season differently, we had a memorable season that'll probably never be matched.

Anthony Carvalho: We gelled together. It was also therapeutic; this team helped me to improve my life.

MA: Talk to me about your experiences with baseball and where you guys are from outside these walls.

JP: I come from a baseball family. I'm raised in Redding and lived in Sacramento. I went to Shasta College in Redding, California, and played there. I've been at San Quentin for 10 years.

DA: I started in the Pony League (15 to 18 years old). I've coached in the Colt League — which is semi-pro players — since the age of 22. I've been here at The Q coaching for five years.

AC: The first time I touched a baseball? I was 7, right after Bob Gibson struck out 17 Detroit Tigers in the World Series in '68. I wanted to be like Bob Gibson. I won 62 straight games, from Little League to Sunset High School. In my senior year, I lost my first game. I turned down a full scholarship from UC Berkeley Bears, instead going to USC. In the minor leagues, I played for the Fresno Grizzlies — the Giants' farm team.

RW: I've played Little League since 7 years old; I also played at Riverside Junior College. Here at The Q, I began as an umpire, then

as a staff coach, then finally, as manager. I was born and raised in Smyrna, Tennessee, then moved to Riverside County, in Southern California.

MA: What were your goals as players and as individuals?

TB: In 2005, I came here to The Q to get myself together. My sticking point was to play baseball here and to transform myself. I wanted to inspire others beyond the baseball team. Since then, I've been a facilitator for Narcotics Anonymous for almost 14 years, which is my foundation and my pillar.

JP: In 2009, I entered a group called IMPACT. One of the tenets is to use your legs for your foundation, your arms for your strength, the torso for your heart, and your head is your headquarters. Currently, I'm the Prison Industry Authority (PIA) Health & Safety coordinator for the past 10 years.

DA: Well, in 2015, I fought to not come here for family reasons. They sent me here anyway. I got a job in the canteen, where I am still today. I heard about the baseball team, which was split between the Giants and A's.

Somehow I made the team. I'm taking Anger Management and Narcotics Anonymous. It's through the groups that I've discovered what fueled my drug addiction, which led to me committing the crimes that I did.

AC: I didn't want to come here initially because of the damage that I brought to my family's name. When I got here, I saw Jeff "Dewey" Dumont throwing in a game. I called some of my old baseball buddies and told them, "This team they have here is equivalent to an AA league." I am involved with TRUST, PUP, Bible Studies and AA.

RW: I wanted to transfer to Soledad but it was closed for intake. When I found out I was going to San Quentin, I remembered what I'd heard about the baseball program, so I took it as a positive omen. I was asked to umpire but declined based on the attitudes of some of the players on the team at the time. I like baseball but I love my family, so I had to forsake some of the things that I liked so I could focus on my freedom. I'm in NA, Project LA and Coalition for Justice.

MA: Who are some of your favorite all-time base-

ball players?

DA: I liked Derek Jeter. He played the game the way it should have been played, on and off the field.

JP: I'm a San Francisco Giants fan, period.

RW: I'm a Cardinal fan, so definitely "The Wizard" Ozzie Smith. I also liked Rod Carew, Tony Gwynn and Pete Rose.

TB: Charlie Hustle! (Pete Rose)

AC: Mark McGwire, Ricky Henderson. Tom Seaver is my favorite pitcher and Willie Mays is my all-time favorite player.

MA: I want to thank you coaches for coming in for this interview. It's important that people know who we are and what our experiences are that help to form what we've evolved to. You guys get the closing statements.

DA: "Never give up" is what we would like to say, even when we were down.

RW: Sports will bring out who you really are. To other incarcerated citizens: Think about your choices and take the time to think about their ramifications.

JP: TEAM: Together, Everyone Achieves Magnificence.

First women's event basketball hosted

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

On Jan. 31 Fox hosted women's basketball in the Big East Sports event. It was the first time, according to its commentators.

Led by Hall of Fame Head Coach Geno Auriemma, the UConn Huskies beat the DePaul Blue Devils, 100-67.

Coach Auriemma is no stranger to victories; he also took the 2002 UConn women's college team to a 39 and 0 winning streak and Championship. So, navigating his 2021 women's teams to a victory was nothing new to him.

The game was a shootout between the Huskies Evina Westbrook, Christyn Williams and Paige Bueckers against the Devils Darrione Rodgers, Sonya Morris and #22 Allen.

The first-round recruit Bueckers was three for three

by the second quarter and her enthusiastic leadership had her team hitting on all cylinders.

The big shot blocker, Oliva Nelson-Ododa of the Huskies, had an impeccable defense against the Devils, holding them to only eight three-pointers, which was a low for DePaul.

The other first-round recruit of the Huskies, Christyn Williams, was also on fire and raining buckets. Between her and Bueckers, it seemed that whatever the pair threw up in the air landed in the basket. The Huskies entered into halftime with the lead, 47-33.

Bueckers held the half-time high with 15 points and 7 assists with zero turnovers. According to Network commentators, Bueckers was recognized in high school as the conscience player of the year. She also was known for her ability to facilitate.

At the start of the second half, the Blue Devils double-teamed Bueckers; that shut her shooting capabilities down. However, that did not stop her from getting other players into the game and using some of Coach Auriemma's other basketball weapons in his arsenal of play-makers.

Westbrooks stepped up and knocked down a couple of quick three-pointers, stretching their lead even further. Other players got in on the action and contributed their percentages.

But it was Evina Williams who took over and captured the high score of the game with a whopping 29 points and took her team to another victory.

At The Date Of Jan. 31. The Huskies Were Ranked #3 And 11 Wins 1 Loss

Blue Devils Were Rank # 17 With 9 Wins And 4 Losses.

Hall of Famer Hank Aaron remembered

The sports world lost a legend and praised Hall Of Famer, Henry Hank Aaron (86), recently. The retired baseball star passed away in his sleep at home, according to local news stations.

Born in 1934, Aaron lived during the times when just being a Black man in America was within itself a burden to bear. Racism was prevalent and was faced daily back then. The legend always dreamed of becoming a baseball player and following in the footsteps of another baseball great, the late Jackie Robinson.

Aaron played in many baseball leagues, including the Negro League. He became famously known in 1974 when he became the first Black man in major league baseball to break a White man's home run record. He broke the legendary Babe Ruth record with his 715th home run and earned

the nickname as "The Home Run King."

Back then it was unthinkable for a Black man to succeed a White man in that fashion and Aaron used to receive threatening letters in the mail because of his success.

"I couldn't even open my mail," said Aaron in an interview. "I had to wait for the F.B.I. to come open my mail for me."

**"I couldn't even
open my mail"**

When he broke Babe Ruth's record in 1974, his parents met him on the field to greet him, and that was his inspiration.

Although that was a great day and was considered the best day of his life, it was also the worst because of the death threats he would receive.

He was 40 years old then and he continued to press on and further added to the lead of home runs. When he retired, he left the baseball world with a staggering home run record of 755.

In 1982, Hank was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. His record stood for many years until another Hall of Famer from the San Francisco Giants named Barry Bonds broke the record with ball number 756.

If you are 30 years or older, you can remember all the fuss over that fortune ball. As it stands, people of color have held the home run record since, and they, like all of the players in the league, do it all for the love of the game and for the fans.

"When I looked in the stands and I saw all those Black people, I just couldn't let them down," expressed Hank.

—By Timothy Hicks

Speaking with SQ's intramural basketball league championship legends

By Aaron Taylor
Ex-Sports Editor

There's only one person at The Q that can boast the following: Intramural Basketball League (IBL) Championship three of the last six years, two as a player and one as a coach.

4 on 4 Championship Basketball League (CBL) Title winner as a player, then the following season, as a coach. Top scorer for the 40 and Over SQ Kings four of the five seasons he's played for the team.

Even with these impressive accolades, Demond "Oola" Lewis (pronounced Ooh-La) is more than a basketball player. He's taken part in several criminal justice forums, including the Barbershop Dialogue with Paul Chambers of KTVU, twice.

Like many athletes housed at San Quentin, Oola is more than just a person who can run, jump and shoot. He is thoughtful about life, both inside and outside of prison.

AT: What does it mean to you to have a voice when it comes to addressing the inequities in the criminal justice system with law enforcement and justice representatives that come inside The Q?

Oola: It gives me an opportunity to see the process firsthand, especially when it comes to dealing with the magnitude of the things that one has done in the past.

AT: How has being here at The Q shaped the way you view criminal justice reform?

Oola: I've been given the opportunity to change in a mature way, to make decisions that are more wholesome, to communicate with a variety of people that I normally wouldn't have a conversation. Being here is the master chain link to grow and develop in a productive way. One of the greatest feelings is to have peace come upon you.

AT: From an organizational perspective, talk about sports at The Q.

Oola: When I arrived, I was impressed by the level of competition. I was out of shape and getting laughed at in the beginning. I had to remind the skeptics that even though I was out of shape, I was here to win.

AT: Talk about a poignant sports moment since you've been here.

Oola: I got the opportunity to shake hands with Bob Myers and Kevin Durant. I've touched and held the Larry O'Brien trophy. That was humbling for me because I enjoy the entire spirit of San Quentin Sports.

AT: Are you a family man?

Oola: Absolutely, absolutely! I have two daughters, Dominica and Calista Lewis, and one son, Demond Jr. Even though there are circumstances that are prevailing for me and my family, I am very devoted to them and their growth.

AT: Does that mind state transfer over to how you relate to the youth here at The Q and throughout the years

inside?

Oola: You can see that this is a worst case scenario for ideal family structure; however, I use this to my advantage. I use basketball — and sports in general — as a way to open myself to them, making them comfortable and relating in a constructive way. Everything I do is planned in a way.

AT: Talk about the word "respect" and how you apply it to your teammates as well as your competitors and contemporaries.

Oola: When that whistle blows, I'm getting you off of the court, period. My job is to do what I need to do, to do what is needed to win. It's not personal, and it's not just physical. It's also psychological. Now, when we're off the court, I have respect for all things and all people. That's how I see it and I live by that code.

AT: Excluding yourself, who is the most prolific athlete that you've seen at The Q and why?

Oola: Oh man! That's

deep, that's deep. The Franchise (the team that he won three championships with as a player and coach) has produced so many great players that I can't name any one player. The Franchise is and was an athletic brotherhood. Every player who suited up for "The Greyshirts" (the nickname of The Franchise) can bask in the glory of being a part of that.

AT: Okay, we're gonna do something a bit different at this point. We're gonna play "First." I'm gonna ask you some questions about the first thing you're going to do after you're released. Ready?

Oola: (Laughing) Alright, let's go.

First breakfast: Denny's, Grand Slam!

First person to call: My mother.

First set of clothes: Jordan, head to toe.

First hug: My kids.

First kiss: My grandkids.

First lunch: Bacon turkey melt!

First place to visit: My grandmother, Julia

Hawkins', grave.

First sporting event: If it's football season, it's the Niners!

First dinner: Uh, crustacean. If I'm local, I'm taking my mom to dinner.

AT: Thank you for sitting with me. I hope our readers appreciate the cerebral nature of your answers. You have the closing statement.

Oola: It's difficult to believe that not nourishing a thing will help it grow. Everything must be nourished to have the ability to flourish. At The Q, we're being given the opportunity to relearn and be reeducated. We're regaining holistic health, becoming better sentient beings, ready to return to society. The Q has been pivotal in this transformation. I thank my family for the support to push forward, in reeducating myself and also teaching others about the roles and positions of what it means to be a father, a son and a brother.

(Malik Ali contributed to this interview)

Project Homekey to house the formerly incarcerated

By Henry Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Huey P. Newton, the Black Panther icon, will be the namesake of a recently renovated Oakland, California, building to house the homeless and the formerly incarcerated, thanks to Elaine Brown, former Black Panther leader and other social advocacy groups, according to the Oakland Post.

"There is no population at greater risk of homelessness than people being released back into society, who suffer wholesale denial of housing and employment solely because of their former incarceration, most of whom are Black men and women," Brown told the Post.

Brown spearheaded the acquisition of the property with \$21 million in Homekey program funding from both the state and the City of Oakland's Housing Departments. Brown is currently CEO of Oakland & the World Enterprises, a nonprofit organization.

The Newton building is located at 392 11th Street in downtown Oakland. It was the former Traveler's Hotel. The purchase of the building is the result of a partnership between Brown's nonprofit, Oakland's MPI Homes, Affordable Housing Associates, and McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS), a St. Louis-based developer.

Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) and

Donald Frazier, BOSS's executive director, were credited with securing the agreement with the Health Care Services Agency and the Alameda County Probation Department, according to the Post.

Boss will oversee and operate support services for the men and women returning home from prison and housed at that location.

Sheila Olatoye, director of the City of Oakland's Housing Department, was also thanked for securing \$7 million of city funds included in the total funds awarded.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, the state Department of Housing, and the Oakland City Council were acknowledged for their contributions to making the purchase of the building hap-



Photo by Eddie Herena

The Newton building in downtown Oakland was recently acquired with \$21 million in Homekey project funding

pen. The Homekey program is dedicated to purchasing and converting properties to assist people experiencing or

at risk of homelessness. The program will focus on hotels, motels and vacant apartment buildings that can be renovated, according to the ar-

tle. "We are grateful to have this opportunity to provide some place for them," said Brown.

Native Americans' annual Spring Pow Wow at San Quentin

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

"Rich in Culture, Rich in Tradition," read a blazing red banner at San Quentin's annual Spring Pow Wow. The February 28, event was to celebrate the incoming Native American New Year.

"When the flowers begin to blossom it signals to us the New Year has arrived," said Hector Heredia, SQ Native American chaplain, beaming with joy.

In North American Indigenous cultures, the New Year is at the end of January or the first part of February, based on constellations and moon phases, according to a Manataka American Indian Council website article. The New Year is the time to celebrate the return of the sacred foods. According to some tribal tradition the first food that was created was the salmon and the second food was the deer, said the web

article.

Family, guest and prisoners filled San Quentin's visiting room for the festivities. Indian Sun, Hoop and Fancy dancers twirled and stomped around the visiting area to bless the event, as the scent of sage purified the air. The coronavirus scare and the deaths were not lost on the large crowd minds. The Native elders chanted the "Black Wolf" song, a sacred prayer to honor the medicine men and the ancestors, as the colorful tribal dancers move around the pounding ceremonial drum.

"It's the ceremony of life and death," said Michael Paul Littlevoice, a visiting Fancy Dancer. "The drum and song is to honor our medicine people who are dwindling."

Littlevoice said he's from the Ponca tribe, but the "Black Wolf" chant came from one of the oldest clans of the Choctaw tribe. Littlevoice, dress in colorful

rainbow regalia and eagle feathers, travels around the country performing the traditional Buffalo and horse dances. The dances are for purification and healing as the steps are intended to banish evil.

"I don't dance for entertainment," said Littlevoice. "I dance for you all and your families healing. Dance is prayer and prayer is the key to life."

Lee Planco 82, a visiting elder, spoke about the Native American struggles to get religious services and up holding Indian rights within the nation's correctional systems such as: sweat lodges, opposing grooming standard (cutting off their hair) and performing sacred rituals.

"We have to honor the ones who have fought for these things," said Planco, who is a veteran, retired correctional officer and chaplain. "It took us seven years to get a sweat lodge in a Nevada prison.

I had to tell their administration that I fought for this country and that includes the Freedom of Religion. They thought about it for a second and said ok," reflected Planco.

Planco and Heredia, both military veterans, have a long history of Indian advocacy work. They both were a part of what they call the "Longest Walk." In 1978, Native Americans walk from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. to protest 11 bills that were before Congress at that time that would have limit rights to tribal government, hunting, and fishing. Also the bills would have restrict access to social services by closing Native American schools and hospitals.

The 3,000-mile march start from Alcatraz Island in San Francisco. The marchers were a mixture of Native and non-Native Americans. The group of more than 2,000 would stop along the route

and hold "teach-ins" about Native culture, beliefs, and practices in various cities and towns, according to Global Nonviolent Action Database. The trip took five months, but after more than 12 days of demonstrations and rallies in the D.C. area Congress rejected all 11 proposed bills.

"Don't take for granted the things you have," said Planco, to the men in blue. "We never had jails or prisons in our ancient world. So get out and don't come back here—get out and honor your mother."

Gregory "White Eagle" Coates, San Quentin resident, performed a song honoring all women on his cedar flute. Visiting Hoop dancer Eddie Medril, taught the prison residents the Hoop dance.

"The dance tell a story of creation and honoring your ancestors," said Medril. "When people walk as an individual it's easy to forget their foundations. But when you start to look back at your

ancestors, you can say I come from that and that will give you the strength of more than you.

"Then you will know that you are a part of an empire and become unstoppable," Medril added.

The magnetic sounds of the pounding drums bought out San Quentin's new acting Warden Ron Bloomfield. Warden Bloomfield joined the festivities and shared words of encouragement and inclusiveness. He has been making rounds around the prison programs and services.

The New Year celebration ended with a feast of the sacred food of salmon and fry bread.

"Today was awesome," said Joe Renteria, SQ resident. "I believe everyone should experience this. If you look for your roots, you will find peace with the "Great Grandfather" just like a lot of us lost Indians do."

How Muslims are embracing Ramadan in the year of Covid-19

By Amir Shabazz
Staff Writer

Spiritual enlightenment, reflections and a quest for inner peace. These are sought by Muslims around the world, who are preparing to fast for the Holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. This year the fast is scheduled to begin mid-April at the sighting of the moon. Ramadan is the month the Holy Qur'an (the Muslim spiritual book) was revealed and it requires all Muslim men and women to

observe the fast for 29 or 30 days, depending on the next sighting of the new moon. There are some people exempt from the fast: the sick, travelers and pregnant women.

"I cannot wait for the fast to commence so I can work on all of my shortcomings and character defects and get closer to Allah," said A'De Johnson. "After the fast I feel cleansed of old sins, old negative attitudes and behaviors."

There are numerous rewards and benefits in the month. The fast is sectioned

into three parts: the first ten days are Allah's (God's) mercy, the second ten days are His forgiveness, and the last part of the fast is freedom from the hellfire, according to some traditions.

The fast is to shield or screen from the hellfire and is an act of purification. Those who fast should avoid food, water, sexual relations and vain talk during the daylight hours and concentrate totally on Allah. The fast is broken after sunset. The fast is strictly for Allah, according to some traditions.

"Even though our living

conditions haven't changed because of COVID-19 and we as Muslims find ourselves in the same position one year later, we long for Ramadan," said Johnson. "It gives us more opportunities to search our inner self for real peace and to get closer to Allah."

During the month, Muslims offer extra prayers day and night. Some read 1/30th of the Holy Qur'an each day, which would allow one to read the entire text in the whole month—with the hopes of gaining a deeper and greater understanding of

the scriptures.

The Qur'an is viewed as a healing, a guidance for mankind and a criterion between right and wrong to the Muslim community.

"It's a time for me to recalibrate and strengthen my relationship with Allah," said Marcus "Wali" Henderson, editor in chief of SQ News. "It helps me to refocus, to make amends to humanity, and to be a servant of Allah and mankind."

Most major faith groups have some form of fasting within their religion. Buddhists, Hebrews, Hindus

and Christians all have some form of fasting within their texts or traditions.

In Ramadan, Muslims seek to perform more acts of kindness and charity. They visit members of the community almost every night for religious discussions and to breakfast together (pre-COVID).

"Ramadan is not just a command, it's a privilege to spend the 30 days increasing one's prayers and worshipping Allah more," said H. "Muttakwaki" Manson.

Have a blessed fast — Ramadan Mubarak!

Texas considers renaming its stadium after Heisman Trophy winner

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

The state of Texas considered re-naming the field at Royal-Texas memorial Stadium after Heisman trophy winners Earl Cambell and Ricky Williams reported The Daily Journal.

Calling the thought merely a moderately warm start.

Black people as a whole are being celebrated for 28 days in the month of February, but the article says that is not enough for what Blacks went through.

From slavery up until recent protest, Blacks have been fighting for what most feel to be equality and social

justice in America, said the article.

Many Whites and other nationalities have joined that sentiment for Blacks and are now eradicating old relic statues, monuments and names of those who were attached to slavery and racism of any kind, from its places.

One area that is advocating for change is the renaming of Sports arenas and Stadiums. The Daily Journal points out that there are too many sports buildings named after Whites and not enough after Blacks. It raised the question while suggesting names for consideration.

Renaming UCLA basketball arena after Los Angeles

Laker legend Kareem Abdul-Jabar was one suggestion. And Georgia's football stadium after football great Herchel Walker. Even placing the football legend Jim Brown's name on the dome of Syracuse.

In all due respects, White sports players have contributed a lot to the world of sports and some may say that their names should also be on the buildings, especially if they have not contributed to the violence of racism or even was complicit to it in any form.

The Daily Journal is pointing out the lack of oversight of having more Blacks in honor as well. There are

only two Blacks who are honored in the Power Five football and basketball arena in that fashion according to the article.

"Many Whites and other nationalities have joined that sentiment for Blacks"

For basketball, there is Lawrence Joel Veterans

Memorial Coliseum of Wake Forest in North Carolina honoring an African American Vietnam War medic hero, who received the Medal of Honor.

The other is Iowa states Jack Trice Stadium honoring their first Black athlete Jack Trice who died tragically from injuries during a football game in 1923. With the contributions blacks have made in sports, one would assume that more Blacks like Jackie Robinson or Hank Aaron would have their names on some baseball arena somewhere as well.

The author of a children's book called *Football's Fall-*

en Hero The Jack Trice Story, Steve Jones honored Trice not only because he was worthy, but "He was trying to open doors for other African Americans," said Jones.

Wake Forest athletic director John Currie tribute Lawrence Joel as being a "Big part" of the unity between Wake Forest and Joels hometown Winston-Salem. Currie also desires that more African Americans would be noticed in that way.

"We have opportunities to make how we've honored people more inclusive of the heritage of our Universities, concluded Currie."

Snippets

Sudoku was invented in 1979. It is divided into three levels of difficulty, and it is enjoyed worldwide.

Food waste is a huge problem. About 931 million metric tons. That's how much food that researchers with the UN estimate was wasted in 2019, according to the Food Waste Index Report 2021.

A surprising side effect of pregnancy is that nails and hair grow faster than usual. This is due to changes in hormones as well as increased blood circulation and metabolism supplying nutrients.

Wood frogs in Alaska have been known to hold their urine for up to eight months, sticking it out through the region's long winters before relieving themselves once temperatures increase. The urine actually helps keep the animal alive while it hibernates, with special microbes in their gut that recycle the urea (urine's main waste) into nitrogen.

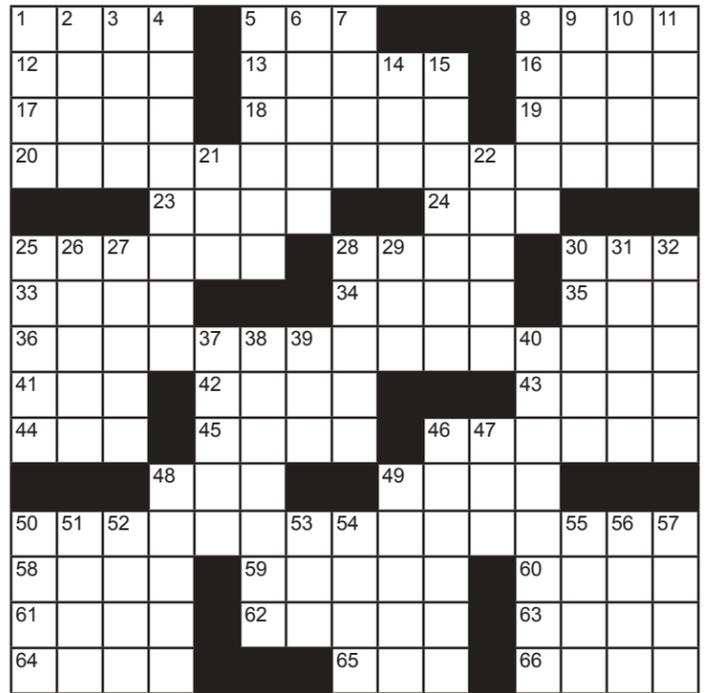
Crossword *Edited by Jan Perry*

Across

1. Stylishness
5. "OMG"
8. Group of people
12. Mexican wrestler Romero Loza
13. Actor Hawke
16. Actress Fanning
17. City in SW Russia
18. CDCR institution in Corona
19. Actor Tudyk
20. "Don't try to play me"
23. Scorch
24. ___-Been
25. Pork meatloaf
28. File format
30. Close friends, informally
33. Activist Baker
34. River in Switzerland
35. Before
36. "Let's enjoy what we have"
41. A ram
42. Ethnic group in SE Nigeria
43. Is (Sp.)
44. Text
45. Hairstyle
46. Type of coffee order
48. Space building, (Abbr.)
49. Tractor-trailer
50. "Everything's all right"
58. Town in Cameroon
59. Shinto shrine gateway
60. No worries
61. Decide
62. _____ Ahead, jazz fusion group
63. Amazon device
64. Singer Miguel
65. Govt. payout
66. American jazz trumpeter Bobby

Down

1. Large reptile
2. Ben Folds track _____'s Song
3. Thing
4. BBQ side
5. Social media app
6. Different
7. Low sound
8. Rips
9. _____ breve
10. Horny nail
11. Nashville state
14. Actress de armas
15. Uninteresting
21. Golf supporter
22. 90s electronic
25. Cooks
26. Collection
27. Dumps
28. MJ's once nickname
29. "They know nothing"
30. Small hunting dog
31. Excellence (Gr)
32. Flat topped hills
37. Cord
38. Counteracts
39. Type of tree
40. AARP members
46. 2000s R&B singer
47. Cable network
48. Summer treats
49. Slices
50. Programming language
51. Bible older twin
52. Italian white wine
53. Drunkard
54. God of War
55. Individual
56. Tennis great Arthur
57. Cat noise



By Jonathan Chiu

Last issue's answer



Sudoku Corner

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

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

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

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

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

Brain Teasers

Answers

- It has each number, zero through nine, listed in alphabetical order.
- The river was frozen.
- The letter S
- Nine-two parents, six sons and one daughter
- Short
- The rules of the race were that the owner of the camel that crosses the finish line last wins the fortune. The wise man simply told them to switch camels.



The Good Life: Each of the five neighborhood dogs is enjoying one of the following activities. Based on the clues, can you figure out what each pooch is doing?

Dogs: Saber, Ginger, Nutmeg, Pepper, Bear
Activities: Getting ears scratched, Playing catch, Taking a nap, Burying a chew toy, Going for a walk.

Clues:
 Pepper is either playing catch or burying a chew toy
 Neither Ginger nor Saber nor Bear is on a walk
 One of the dogs named after a spice is getting her ears scratched (and loving it)
 A dog who is not named for a spice is playing catch
 Bear is getting some exercise

Cryptic Questions:

B + E = G
 G - D = C
 F / A = D
 C - B = A
 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11
 Each letter (A-G) has one of the seven values listed above. No two letters have the same value. Match each letter to a number to make the equations work.

Fill in the Blank:

D _ I _ Y

How many common English words can you make by adding a letter to each of the blanks above? We found seven. Proper nouns don't count

Incarcerated Reentry Resource Directory



EDD Employment
Development
Department
State of California

FACT SHEET

CALIFORNIA TRAINING BENEFITS PROGRAM

The California Training Benefit (CTB) program allows eligible California Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, who lack competitive job skills to compete for jobs in the California labor market, to receive their UI benefits, which might otherwise not be allowed while attending a training or retraining program. Under the CTB program, the traditional rule of UI changes from that of partial wage replacement while the individual looks for work to one of assisting the individual in training or retraining in an effort to return to full employment.

Considering CTB Participation

Individuals who are approved by the EDD to participate in the CTB program do not have to meet the following eligibility requirements during the period of approved training:

- Look for work
- Be available for work
- Accept suitable work

There is an extension of UI benefits available only for eligible CTB participants, which is known as a Training Extension (TE) claim. A TE claim may be available when regular UI benefits run out before the period of approved training is completed and federal/federal-state extended benefits (extensions) are not available. However, there is no guarantee that regular UI benefits, a TE claim, or extensions will be sufficient to cover the entire period of approved training.

The California Unemployment Insurance Code (CUIC) provides the eligibility criteria for the CTB program and TE benefits which EDD staff must follow in order to approve CTB participation and allow the filing of TE claims. The EDD is prohibited from pre-determining CTB eligibility until the individual has started to attend school or training.

Base period employers are notified when an individual is approved for the CTB program, which provides the employer the right to contact the individual's need for training or retraining. When employers contest or appeal the CTB eligibility determination, it may result in a reversal of the original eligibility finding. If the original eligibility is reversed, the claimant has the right to appeal the disqualification.

CTB Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for CTB program participation, an individual must be eligible to receive California UI benefits, and notify the EDD as soon as the school or training attendance begins. Once the EDD has been notified, eligibility test finding is conducted by EDD staff to gather information to determine if CTB can be approved.

There are two types of CTB program approval criteria the EDD uses to determine CTB eligibility.

Criteria 1

CTB participation may be approved assuming all other UI eligibility criteria are met and the EDD determines the training meets at least one of the following conditions:

- The training is authorized and verifiable by one of the following State or federal program sponsors:
 - Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
 - Employment Training Panel (ETP)
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
 - California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)
- The individual is an active journey level union member taking industry-related training approved by higher union.
- The training program and provider are listed on California's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL is online at <http://etpl.edd.ca.gov/waiv/etpl/index.htm>.

Criteria 2

Individuals not approved under Criteria 1 may have their CTB participation approved only if he/she meet all other UI eligibility criteria and the EDD determines the training meets all of the following conditions:

- The individual must be eligible for California UI benefits and be unemployed or partially unemployed for four or more continuous weeks or is unemployed due to a plant closure, or substantial reduction in work hours, or due to a mental or physical disability preventing the use of existing job skills, or due to technological changes in their occupation; AND

- The individual must be unemployed due to a lack of demand for his/her current skills in his/her local labor market, or his/her occupation is seasonal and he/she has no other skills in current demand; AND
- The training must relate to an occupation or skill which is in demand in your local labor market in California where you intend to seek work. When federal extension claims are in effect in California, certain prerequisites or remedial training is included; AND
- The training is taken at an approved training facility AND the training must be completed within a reasonable period of time, not exceeding 24 months (or not exceeding 48 months when federal extensions are in effect in California); AND
- The training must be full time, (typically not less than 20 hours per week, or 12 semester or quarter units) and intended to provide skills to obtain employment in a demand occupation; AND
- The individual must reasonably be expected to complete the training successfully, even if UI benefits are not sufficient to cover the entire period of training; AND
- The beginning date of the new training or retraining must be more than three years from the beginning date of the last CTB participation.

Training Extension (TE) Eligibility Criteria

Individuals are approved for a TE claim if they are eligible for CTB and inquired about CTB or have a CTB eligibility interview prior to receiving the 16th week of regular UI benefits. If the UI claim is less than 16 weeks, the inquiry or the eligibility interview must be made before the individual receives his or her last benefit payment.

Benefits Available

- Individuals participating in CTB who are otherwise eligible for UI benefits may receive their regular UI benefits during the period of CTB approved training. The amount of the claim award, not the length of training, determines how long UI benefits can be paid while participating in the CTB program.
- The TE claim provides additional benefits up to a combined maximum amount equal to 82 weeks times (x) the weekly benefit amount of the regular (parent) UI claim on which the CTB was approved. However, the maximum award of the parent UI claim and any subsequent new UI claim, and the payments on extensions, are subtracted from the maximum TE amount.

When extensions are available and an individual qualifies for these benefits, extended benefits may replace TE benefits.

EDD is an equal opportunity employer/program.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

- The TE benefits are payable until the training is completed, the maximum TE amount is paid, or the individual qualifies for a new claim or any extensions; whichever occurs first. However, TE payments are not payable during the summer months when individuals are not attending the approved training for three or more weeks.
- Individuals who qualify for a new claim or extension in California or any other state, must file the new claim or extension, and be paid from that claim or extension, even if the weekly benefit amount is lower. The requirement to be paid from the new or extension may not apply to TAA participants.

Tuition, Books, and Fees

The CTB program does not cover any educational or training-related expenses such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, or transportation. If you are unemployed, you may be eligible for federal financial aid, such as Pell Grants. For more information on federal financial aid, visit the Web site at www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov.

Approval Authority for CTB

CTB eligibility is based upon legislation contained in Article 1.8 of the California Unemployment Insurance Code, Sections 1269, 1269.1 and 1271, respectively. Information on how these laws are applied by EDD staff making CTB eligibility decision can be found in the Miscellaneous Benefit Determination Guide, Section 86, through this link: [www.edd.ca.gov/UIBDG/Miscellaneous MI 86.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/UIBDG/Miscellaneous_MI_86.htm).

Finding Training

The CTB program does not provide assistance in assessing training needs or identifying potential sources for training. The Labor Market Information section of the EDD Web site provides career information and can help identify occupations with the greatest demand now and in the future. Visit the EDD Web site at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov.

For More Information

For further information, to inquire about CTB, or to report that you have started training, please contact the EDD through the "Contact Us" link on the menu on the EDD Web site at www.edd.ca.gov or by telephone at:

English	1-800-300-9810
Spanish	1-800-328-8337
Chinese	1-800-547-3288
Mandarin	1-800-303-0768
Vietnamese	1-800-547-2858
TTY (non-voice)	1-800-618-0387

Reentry Hotline for people coming home



California Reentry Healthcare Hotline

Building stable, healthy lives. A clinic to call home.

Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) is a network of health clinics that have a special programs for people returning home from incarceration. There are over 21 TCN clinics throughout California. TCN started a Reentry Healthcare Hotline staffed by Community Health Workers (CHW) with histories of incarceration, aims to assist people returning home to get their health care needs met!

- Do you have questions about health insurance?
- Do you need help finding a healthcare provider to care for you in the community, refilling your medications (including MAT)?
- Do you want to connect to mental health or any specialty services upon release?

If Yes, **Call 1-510-606-6400** for information on connecting to care upon release. This number **accepts** collect calls from GTL. Have a pen and paper ready when you call.

Hours: Monday to Friday 09:00 am to 05:00 pm

You can also write to:
Transitions Clinic Network
2401 Keith Street San Francisco, CA 94124

Services (may vary by clinic):

• Social service navigation (Medi-Cal and benefits assistance)	• Nutrition
• Mental health services	• Dental
• Reentry support	• Health Education
• Primary care	• Medication management
• Medications for people living with substance use disorder (Suboxone)	• Hepatitis C treatment
	• Reproductive health
	• HIV treatment

Please note for previously listed resource Buddhist Prison Ministry will NOT be offering any more Pen Pals for their program

Apprenticeship programs

Department of Industrial Relations *Data is current as of 03/26/2021*

Acoustical Installer

Program length: 36 months

Starting wage: 60% of JM

Education prerequisites: High School/Ged/Equivalent

Additional prerequisites: Attendance of 9 week Pre-Apprenticeship Class

Physical requirements: Yes

Written Test: No Oral Exam: No

Additional requirements: Must be physically capable of performing the work of the Trade.

Contact information: Carpenters Training Committee For Northern California
www.ctcnc.org
 2350 Santa Rita Rd Pleasanton, CA 94566
 Contact person: Peter O'Farrell, Executive Director
 Contact phone / email: (925) 462-9640 training@ctcnc.org
 Applications taken: Continuous
 Veteran Benefits Approved: Yes

A/C & Refrigeration Service And Repair (Residential And Commercial)

Program length: 60 months

Starting wage: In accordance with published State Wages

Education prerequisites: High School/Ged/Equivalent

Physical requirements: Yes

Written Test: Yes Oral Exam: Yes

Additional requirements: An employer may require a physical examination at no cost to the applicant prior to indenture.

Contact information: P H C C Of The Greater Sacramento Area U.A.C.
 1820 Tribute, Ste. A Sacramento, CA 95815
 Contact person: Theresa Perez, Apprentice Coordinator
 Contact phone / email: (916) 640-0910 HVAInfo@phccgsa.org
 Applications taken: Continuous
 Veteran Benefits Approved: Yes

Air Conditioning Mechanic

Program length: 60 months

Starting wage: \$16.49 per hr.

Minimum age: 18

Education prerequisites: High School/Ged/Equivalent

Additional prerequisites: Proof of valid Ca. Driver's License during dispatch process and maintained valid as an apprentice.

Physical requirements: Yes

Written Test: Yes Oral Exam: Yes

Contact information: Bay Area Sheet Metal J A C
 1700 Marina Blvd. San Leandro, CA 94577
 Contact person: Benjamin Rivera, Administrator
 Contact phone / email: (510) 928-4969 BenR@smw104jafc.org
 Applications taken: Specified Intervals
 Veteran Benefits Approved: Yes

Harris

Continued from Page 1

Then one day I found myself in handcuffs because I failed at processing a situation correctly.

(Harris received a 25-years-to-life sentence for attempted murder and drug-related charges.)

Q. How would you describe your mindset when you started your 25-to-life sentence?

A. My ego was so strong that it wouldn't allow me to see the reality. When I arrived at San Quentin for the first time back in 1988, I was still a beast.

When I arrived at Quentin, at that time it was a Level IV. The atmosphere was intense and violent. I was still an ego-driven person due to all the unfinished business that I left on the streets. My physical body was behind bars, but my mind was still in society. I was constantly thinking beyond prison. When San Quentin changed to a Level II two years later, I was transferred to the



Photo courtesy of SQ News
Michael Harris in 2008

newly opened Pelican Bay Level-IV prison, where I did 18 months. After that I was transferred to various other state institutions: Tehachapi, Lancaster and Soledad, then back to San Quentin.

(Harris, who ran a vast

empire, found himself working as a porter in San Quentin, cleaning showers. He could have opted out of the position, but he said it was an experience that helped humble him.)

Q. What happened to help you see change?

A. It was natural for me to see that being locked up in a cage was unnatural. It took 15 years into my life sentence for me to really start seeing life from a different perspective. When you're looking at things differently, they start to look different. And, I also learned how to respond differently as well.

I sold drugs because it was an easy way out. In retrospect, it took eight years of soul searching to realize that the choices I made were actually weak choices. I was conditioned to think the way I did. I started reconditioning my brain by reading books about people, some of whom came from like circumstances and made a positive contribution to humanity. After reading these types of books and experiencing their lives vicariously, I became ashamed of the person I had once been. Today I believe that real power

comes from patience, perseverance and finding true meaning in your life.

Q. Was that really you? I'm referring to that beast.

A. That's a good question. The best way to explain it is to say I had a split personality. One personality protected the other. I was conditioned to act a certain way when exposed to certain environments or situations in the past. With a lot of hard work, I was able to liberate myself from the negative conditioning and allow the true me to emerge. I am no longer that beast, thank God.

Q. How do you believe the (self-help) groups helped you in regards to dealing with the Parole Board?

A. The groups helped me to be honest. Before I stepped into the boardroom, groups like T.R.U.S.T., Keeping It Real, and V.O.E.G (Victim Offenders Education Group) helped me to be able to connect with the real reason why I was in prison — realizing that prison had become my reality. Looking at the part I played in the crime, I embraced the fact that it was me who put me in prison. I accepted the fact that the world I knew was no more.

The groups also helped me relate to how learned conditioning was implemented into my lifestyle. Groups enabled me to be in front of a crowd of individuals and say I am not a big shot. I am now able to listen to feedback objectively. I went through groups because they were a good tool to get what I wanted, not to mention they were a requirement for lifers. Yet by going through them, I got more than what I expected; I found my authentic self.

Q. Is there any one person who has had an impact on your growth and development within the last 23 years of incarceration?

A. No. I believe my growth has been impacted or influenced, if you will, by a number of people and situations in many ways. I have also learned a great deal from negative things. Some people only look at the positive things for growth but I have learned from the negative things as well. One is learning how not to repeat those negative mistakes,



Photo courtesy of Harris

Michael Harris enjoying a little freedom

from the totality of the experience and examination that one goes through, if you do the work looking at all sides.

Q. What are you planning on doing upon release?

A. Plans are plans but what I'm passionate about doing is connecting with like-minded people — specifically young people who are poised to ultimately make some of the same mistakes that I have made in the past — by presenting myself as an example of why that's not such a great idea. Just as important is connecting with people who are in the solutionary business — as opposed to just focusing on the problem at hand and not actually elevating to the solutions that are needed — throughout this nation's disenfranchised communities.

(Harris also spoke about

publishing some books that have been in the works.)

Q. Are there any closing remarks you would like to leave with us?

A. If you don't know how to process, it will affect the decisions you make. Two thoughts I would like to put out there: One of the keys, in my opinion, is to become the "best you," not someone else's version of what your best you should be. Learn to be OK with your best you, period. And the other thing would be to learn the difference between "love" and "respect," which means different things to different people, but for me, I have found sometimes it's pretty easy to love somebody today and not love them tomorrow. But one would be hard pressed to respect a person one day and not the next, so I prefer respect.



Photo courtesy of Harris

Snoop Dogg and Michael Harris



Photo courtesy of Harris

Michael Harris with Alice Johnson



Photo courtesy of Harris

Michael Harris with Van Jones