

San Quentin News



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POPULATION 2,450

LWOP women released after years behind bars

By Nathan McKinney
Managing Editor

Women who have served decades in California's state prisons are given a second chance at life after enduring some of the state's harsher sentencing.

The Drop LWOP (Life Without Parole) sentencing, compassionate release and other re-sentencing campaigns launched by the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) advocacy organization helped secure some of the women's releases.

"(The) best part of coming home—I have been embraced with love," said Yvette "Chocolate" Brown, to The Fire Inside, the organization's newsletter. "(The) worst part of coming home is leaving people behind and knowing they should have a chance to be free. Which is why I am already speaking out and advocating for people still in prison and always will."

Brown served 22 years of a 35 years to life sentence for a third strike offense. She was represented by the Stanford Law School Three Strikes Project on a 1170(d)(1) re-sentencing petition to the courts.

"It was a fluke that I applied," said Brown. "I did not think I could prevail on such extraordinary release. The criteria sounded like I met them, but I did have write-ups in the past, though I had been write-up free for eight years.

"A counselor e-mailed Sacramento to check the criteria and found I did meet them," Brown added.

CCWP welcomed Chocolate home with smiles and hugs.

As CCWP continues to advocate for more releases, their core principle of Caring Collectively provides much needed support for the women still incarcerated.

"I'm allowed to be open and honest about my life without judgment," said incarcerated person Kelly Vaughn, about CCWP visits to her prison. "They've been there when I needed help contacting my family, they've helped me with some legal situations, they help keep

Continued--See WOMEN, Pg. 4



Photo courtesy of: California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)

"(The) best part of coming home--I have been embraced with love.
(The) worst part of coming home is leaving people behind and knowing they should have a chance to be free."
Yvette "Chocolate" Brown, released 10/1/2020 after 22 years in prison.

Changing the culture at Riker's Island

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson



Photo by: Phoeun You, SQNews

Commissioner of the New York City Department of Corrections Vincent Shiraldi flew to California for one day with one specific goal—to step inside San Quentin and learn about its transformative culture directly from the incarcerated community.

"Everyone knows San Quentin is the great success story," said Schiraldi. "I'm here to take a good look at the type of programming you guys do in here."

Appointed as commissioner just weeks before his May 24 visit, Schiraldi immediately looked to San Quentin as the model for flipping the narrative from negative to positive on NYC's notorious Rikers Island.

Hollywood film producer and longtime social justice activist Scott Budnick helped Schiraldi connect with SQ administration to make the special visit happen.

"I've worked with Vinny many times to reform the juvenile system in California and DC,"

"Everyone knows San Quentin is the great success story. I'm here to take a good look at the type of programming you guys do in here."

Vincent Shiraldi
Commissioner
NYC Dept.
of Corrections

Continued--See RIKER'S, Pg. 11

Marin Court Hearing Takes Center Stage

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairperson

For the first time ever, public court hearings were live streamed via Zoom inside San Quentin. Prisoners convened daily in the chapel to watch friends, neighbors, corrections officials and medical experts testify about SQ's devastating COVID-19 ordeal.

More than 300 SQ residents alleged claims of "deliberate indifference" and "cruel and unusual punishment" in the historic class action law suit that ultimately placed the rampant overcrowding of mass incarceration on trial.

"We weren't deliberately indifferent," commented SQ Public Information Officer Sam Robinson. "It's a high bar to prove."

"We believe the outcome will be in favor of the State."

Spanning 12 days of testimony May 20 to June 4, petitioners' attorneys laid out a scathing indictment of administrative actions and missteps that caused one of the deadliest COVID-19 outbreaks to hit any U.S. prison.



Photo by: Phoeun You, SQNews

Petitioners originally filed the suit seeking immediate release from the horrors of COVID-19 at San Quentin.

But now that SQ's incarcerated community has either recovered or died, attorney generals for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) argue petitioners'

claims hold no merit because prisoners are no longer in danger.

"They want to stand up for CDCR and make it about the conditions now," said petitioner Duane Gillespie after hearing respondents' opening arguments. "But we couldn't

Continued--See HEARING, Pg. 11

<<Over 300 residents at San Quentin State Prison filed Habeas petitions in the Marin Court to challenge conditions and actions which led to the deadly 2020 Coronavirus outbreak. At left, the proceedings were broadcast in the SQ Protestant Chapel as Judge Geoffrey M. Howard presided over an evidentiary hearing in the case.

Covid Stats	CDCR	SQ
Total Inmate Cases:	49,408	2,241
Last 14 Days:	33	0
Active In-Custody:	33	0
Released While Active:	606	44
Resolved:	48,542	2,169
Total Inmate Deaths:	227	28
Total Staff Cases:	17,002	459
Total Staff Deaths:	28	1

Source: cdc.ca.gov
As of 06/15/2021

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

When programs reopened after the COVID-19 lockdown, Yoga instructor James Fox was one of the first volunteers to return to San Quentin State Prison.

"We were able to get into facilities via Zoom, but we sent in a lot of print material," Fox said on June 15, just before his first class.

Fox, who facilitates yoga programs in 19 states as well as in Europe and Mexico, took the time away to rewrite the free book *Yoga Path for Healing and Recovery*, which he makes available to incarcerated people. He has been teaching yoga at San Quentin since 2002.

"We spent the time training about 150 new teachers, from all over the country," Fox said. "That was the advantage of teaching online."

Program Profile: Yoga Returns to San Quentin

Fox, concerned that women prisoners needed yoga instruction too, asked Josefin Wikstrom to write *Freedom from the Inside*, geared for women prisoners.

"We were getting around 250 requests for a book every month, from all over the country," Fox said. "We weren't sending it out to women prisoners, which is why we wrote the new book."

To enroll in a class, show up and be ready to make a commitment until December, Fox said.

Classes are available Tuesdays in the ARC building for the General Population, 1300-1445 (18 students) and also on Fridays in Chapel C, 1100-1245 (18 students). Members of Veterans Healing Veterans can attend classes on Thursdays in the ARC building 0900-1145 (18 students).



Photo by: Phoeun You, SQNews

Yoga Instructor James Fox never misses an opportunity to share what he has learned on his journey. LEFT: Fox strikes a pose, finding center amid the SQ educational garden.



Photo by: Phoeun You, SQNews

PROGRAMS

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

SQ Roofing Project's ambitious aims

The most expensive project in CDCR to include the use of incarcerated men was near completion at San Quentin's PIA facility before the prison was locked down due to the Governor's State of Emergency on March 12, 2020.

CDCR approved a working partnership between qualified contractors and the men of the Inmate Daily Labor (IDL) program for a 4.5 million dollar demolition and construction of PIA's roof.

Prior to the Covid outbreak, the original job schedule was for 6 months and included 8 phases of roofing around key operations down stairs. The operations affected were PIA, CTE, and Coding. In spite of delays from leaks caused by the January 2020's rains, the project was still on time prior to the quarantine.

Melding outside professionals and incarcerated men, has led to no major injuries and productivity has stayed on schedule pre-Covid. "I'm proud of my crew... I couldn't be more pleased with my staff," said Vivian who manages a crew consisting of two custody officers, six supervisors, and 30 inmate workers.

"It's a great opportunity when we hire guys. Our goals then become teaching them and getting them familiar with construction, because when they get good at their craft here on the job, they can become tradesmen. This apprenticeship allows them to be hired almost immediately at outside union halls which are empty because the younger generation has selected "IT" jobs—California needs workers now," said the supervisor of PIA's Inmate Work Labor (IWL) program, Steve Vivian.

Vivian's claim regarding the need for construction workers was verified on Channel 7 News on June 18. Channel 7 reported for every five construction workers retiring post-pandemic, only one person is available to replace the departing workers.

The project, in full view on the lower yard, actually began design in 2017. Specifications included demolishing and installing 100,000 square feet, or 2.5 acres of roof. The incarcerated residents were paid one dollar per hour for



Photo by: Steve Vivian, CDCR Construction Supervisor II

The most expensive construction project ever undertaken utilizing inmate labor in CDCR history.

their skill, which makes their job the highest paid job at San Quentin. In return, they receive training and exposure to an occupation that will transfer to all communities.

The incarcerated learn more than a trade. "We have all races working together with one common goal... we do the job safely and on time. It's a coalition of color, comedy and harmony...always laughing," said senior incarcerated tradesman James Patrick Benson who has been on the job since the beginning.

Benson has 20 years of construction experience and notes he has done everything, "from laborer to carpentry, to masonry to plumbing." He began roofing in prison in 2014 through Inmate Day Labor (IDL) now called IWL. With his experience, he has been on the PIA Project since day one—which he said was July 2019.

According to Benson and Vivian, there are approximately 30 incarcerated men on staff. "Before the pre-Covid lockdown, we had just replaced 5 people from the initial employment team."

Also on the job site are state required Cal OSHA union-trained, tradesmen. This crew consisted of one

foreman; six roofers; one carpenter; one laborer; and one electrician. The outside specialists are union casuals who act as supervisors that manage and implement Vivian's leadership philosophies. Their responsibilities include maintaining state regulations and ensuring guidelines throughout the project.

The project featured single ply roofing of four twenty foot rolls of membrane. The membrane, seamed together as one unit, insures a complete weather and water proofed sheet that comes with a ten-year manufacturer's warranty.

New window openings, prepped and covered by the new roof, were cut-out after the arrival of the window sections. The roof is now one seam after the window installation. "Work was on time and scheduled for completion by 3/27/20. We were just waiting on the windows when the State of Emergency shut us down," said the supervisor who manages projects here and at Solano.

Incarcerated Mendocino resident Mark Radcliffe loved the physical work. A lumberjack in the forests on the coast, he stated, "I appreciated being adopted by the

IDL family. It's financially and psychologically rewarding. I am proud to be an asset to Steve."

Both Benson and Hedges shared common insight. "... it's not a me job...it's a we job--I've got passion for what Steve is up against...we are for him," said Benson.

Hedges added, "Steve admonishes our guys to take advantage of outside roofers to learn as much as possible."

Both agreed, "It's about the job."

Vivian, who has been in construction most of his adult life mentioned jobs are posted throughout buildings and require one to two interviews. "All I ask for is a full commitment," said Vivian.

Vivian added, "San Quentin's rehabilitative incarcerated programs extend past the vital healing and restorative spectrum the prison is known for--CDCR's premiere prison also includes trades that are applicable upon the incarcerated's release. We look forward to helping the individual grow and enjoy giving them more experience, as we repair the West and South Block kitchens in July this year."

San Quentin News

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

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Behind the Scenes



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The Editor's Desk

By Marcus Henderson, Editor-in-Chief

By Marcus Henderson
 Editor in Chief

Loud cheers erupted in San Quentin housing units as former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty of second degree murder and charges of manslaughter of George Floyd. Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes, an action that set-off worldwide protests.

"That was the first time I ever rooted for the prosecution," voices screamed over the five tiers.

More cheers and celebrations exploded throughout the nation when the U.S. Congress and President Joe Biden signed legislation to make Juneteenth (the final end of slavery) a federal holiday.

In spite of all the joy and celebration, Congress still has not passed the George Floyd Act that would ban police choke-holds, no knock warrants and "blanket" qualified immunity for officers.

Republicans recently have taken the lead in voter suppression with new photo ID laws, limiting the number of mailing voter drop boxes, and the criminalization of giving food and drinks to voters standing in line to vote.

Some Republican-led states have also passed "protest" laws where it's legal to run over protestors blocking traffic. What?! There are laws being passed to criminalize abortion, homelessness and transgender rights.

But there is no support for a bi-partisan commission on the January 6 Capital riot, where five people died, including police officers. It was just like any other day when people come to visit the Capital, said one Republican congressman.

Confederate flags were waved through the halls, boots were placed on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's desk, chants of "Kill Vice President Mike Pence" echoed in the halls, and congressmen and -women hid in chambers—yeah! That's a happy day?

As some of us sit in prison slowly watching the silent

criminalization of everyday society, what went underreported was that the New York Police Department marched a 70-pound police robotic dog through a Manhattan public housing complex, according to the New York Times.

The four-legged digital dog was deployed for a hostage situation, reported the Times. The robotic dog has been shown on videos running and dancing with human-like flexibility. It also is strong enough to tow an 18-wheeler.

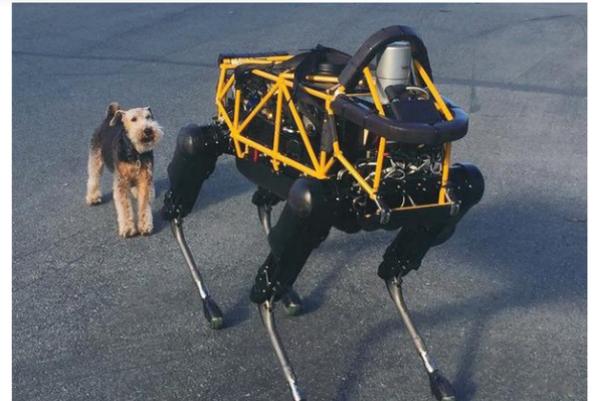
There are roughly 500 robotic dogs in the field worldwide, said a spokesperson for Boston Dynamics (creator of the robots), according to the article. I grew up watching Robot Cop and Terminator in the '80s and a lot of times the films did not end well. Just like in the movies, these robotic dogs are remote controlled (by whom?) with limitless data capacity and cameras for surveillance. But this company said it doesn't use artificial intelligence, noted the Times article.

There is legislation to ban the NYPD from weaponizing the robots as well as drones. We will have to see how that goes. Isn't it strange that these devices are being introduced into the communities of poor people of color?—where the outcry can be squashed.

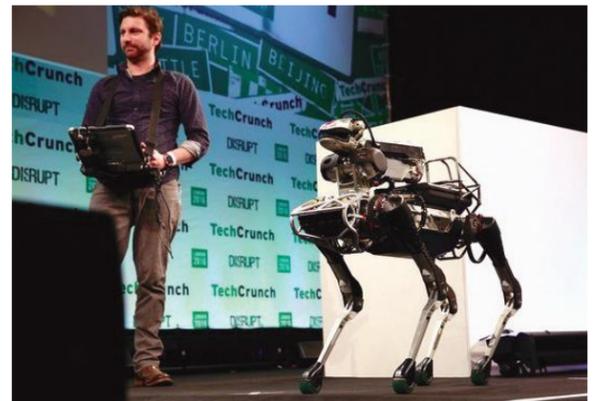
Could it just be a testing ground for the rest of society? In prison, there are slight policy changes all the time that can have a major impact. So I can just imagine the effects of the new laws on law abiding citizens.

Criminalization seems to be grounded in fear, blaming criminal justice and social reforms for the rise in crime. While most people released from prison, mainly former lifers, have processed their traumas and learned some form of emotional intelligence, these things have to be demonstrated to be released by the parole board.

But we are not teaching emotional intelligence in school. The country is busy debating if we should be teaching "Critical Race Theory" (the historical perspec-



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ive of all races and not just Whites) in school. We have become so scared of each other—people believe their way of life is being threatened. These are the new "culture wars."

The reality is if one shifts too much to the "Right" or

too much to the "Left," one would become off balance. So, are the country and the state of our affairs off balance? Have we lost so much of our humanity that we have to be guarded by robotic dogs? Why do I even have to ask the question?

Letters to the Editor

Inmates, Covid and Lupus?

Dear Editor:

My name is Tania Le'June Washington, and I am a prisoner here at the Central California's Women's Facility in Chowchilla, California.

I am so scared right now and feel compelled to raise awareness about the lack of medical treatment for women suffering from Lupus during this pandemic.

After a year-long battle with immune system complications, I was finally granted a Lupus Panel. On December 22, 2020, I received notice in the mail from our medical department that said I'd

tested positive for Lupus and would receive a follow-up appointment with a Rheumatologist. It is now April, 2021, and I have not been seen by the rheumatologist or a Lupus specialist.

Lupus is a lifelong autoimmune disease that can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other ailments. It causes your body's immune system to attack your own tissue and organs. Inflammation caused by Lupus can affect different body systems including the brain, heart, red blood cells, kidneys, lungs, skin and bones.

If untreated, it can lead to fatality.

Lupus is hereditary and was passed down to me by my father, who passed away from the disease in 2010. It is now progressing throughout my body, triggering asthma, fatigue, joint pain, and swelling in my breast and lymph nodes.

Recently, I had a follow-up appointment with an RN at CCWF and explained my frustrations about the lack of care I was receiving. He laughed and taunted me, saying, "Aw, prison sucks huh?" We argued for five minutes before I ran out of his office, feeling helpless but not hopeless. Sure, we are in the middle of a pandemic, but does that mean that our needs for medical care go unmet?

On January 6, 2021, two women still battling Covid were forced out of quarantine and re-housed and assigned to my room. CCWF has eight-person cells with a shower, toilet, and two sinks. It is impossible to socially distance. With the growing

inmate population, the wave of positive cases goes up and down, causing the inmates to be displaced once they leave quarantine. These women were still sick. They were coughing and experiencing shortness of breath. The officers who moved them in the room didn't check to see if I was listed as a chronic care inmate. In my condition, if I catch Covid, I may not survive it.

Luckily, my regular housing staff came in the next day and moved them out of my room. Close call right?

But what's next? With the fourth wave of the Covid variant approaching and the lack of medical remedies to treat my Lupus (at least until someone calls the specialist to come and see me), I am a sitting duck. Surely CDCR has some kind of treatment plan for men and women suffering Lupus, right? I was not handed down a life or death sentence in prison, yet I feel as if this may be the last place I see if I don't receive help soon. Thank you.

SQ's Newest Quarantine: Gastroenteritis

By Timothy Hicks
Staff writer

San Quentin has been hit with another virus. Residents seem to not be able to catch a break from suffering through the effects and consequences caused from virus outbreaks.

From COVID-19 woes to a stomach virus now known as gastroenteritis or, the Noro virus better known as a form of stomach flu.

The Gastroenteritis virus (Stomach flu), has made its way through other parts of the prison but, it hit West Block the hardest. The number of residents who had the virus is inaccurately known so far. It is believed to be in the hundreds.

SQ residents are wondering how are all these virus' getting into the prison and why is it that residents are the ones who are being most effected by them.

What is it that is actually causing this new virus here? Where did it come from? Many residents speculate that it came from the pigeon droppings that are stained around the eating tables residents use.

Residents say that the rats in the kitchen poop over the food trays when workers left trays unattended overnight. And particles are served with food.

Moreover, residents believe that SQ is just over crowded and it is too antiquated to still be a functioning prison.

"Prisons can become breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses, and diseases can spread like wild fire," said long term resident Anthony Watkins,

who has been incarcerated for 23 years now on a life sentence. Watkins has also been here at the Q when other virus outbreaks has spurred.

"Prisons can become breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses, and diseases can spread like wild fire."

Anthony Watkins

"In the past 10 years many viruses have broken out at San Quentin. The Norovirus was here before also Staphylococcus, known as Staph infection. We had a Chicken pox scare. I was here when the legionnaires disease hit in 2017 and people ended up with pneumonia," said Watkins.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit at the prison in 2020, Watkins was one of the

2000 plus residents who was effected by it. He contracted the virus and endure some of the complications that comes with the virus. Not only did he absorb the mental and physical issues caused by the virus' he also was subjected to other inconveniences such as quarantines.

Quarantines have been used to try to contain virus' that occur at the prison. Residents who are not sick with

the virus has to endure these shut downs as if they too are sick. Quarantine, which is basically another form of lockdown do not really cure the virus itself, but it does cause frustration to the residents.

"It seems that quarantine and 'so called' modified program has become the new normal," resident Eric M. said. "I welcome the day when we (West Block) can resume the activities that make

us part of this SQ community." Since the most recent virus hit West Block the hardest, the Unit was quarantine for the longest duration.

Most residents do not report being sick to the Medical staff for fear of being confined to quarters or locked down. That's a fear residents shared during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic at the prison.

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

Forty-four of California's 58 district attorneys have sued the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to block recent changes in the way good conduct credits are calculated. The changes, which took effect May 1, could eventually result in earlier releases for thousands of the state's incarcerated, said the Associated Press in an article dated May 26.

The objections to the changes are based on procedural grounds. The district attorneys argue that Corrections Secretary Kathleen Allison erred in using an emergency declaration to skirt the usual regulatory and comment process.

The lawsuit argues that the only emergency cited by the department was a need to conform to guidance in the govern-

nor's nearly one-year old Budget Summary.

"There is no actual emergency," the lawsuit argues. "Nowhere in the supporting documents is there an explanation of how last year's budget has become an operational need for the adoption of the regulations on an emergency basis."

The plaintiffs ask the Sacramento County Superior Court to scrap the regulations and bar implementation of the changes to the credits.

Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, who has political aspirations to be state attorney general, is leading the opposition to the credit changes. "Allowing the early release of the most dangerous criminals, shortening sentences (by) as much as 50%, impacts crime

victims and creates a serious public safety risk," she said.

But the department cites voter approval of Proposition 57, which allows earlier parole for most incarcerated people, as authority for the recent changes to good conduct credits.

The department "filed regulations to promote changes in good behavior credits, and followed all policies and procedures by the Office of Administrative Law," said CDCR. The department committed to "continue to work with our partners to promote rehabilitation and accountability in a manner consistent with public safety."

The changes will impact about 76,000 incarcerated people, many in prison for violent offenses. Of these, about 63,000 will prospectively serve

two-thirds, rather than 80%, of their sentences. About 13,000 others will prospectively serve half, rather than two-thirds, of their sentences.

Incarcerated people in minimum-security work camps and serving on firefighting crews will earn a month of earlier release for each month served.

The counties of San Francisco and Los Angeles were prominent among the fourteen counties that did not join the lawsuit. The district attorneys of those counties have been active backers of criminal sentencing reforms.

San Quentin resident Andy Halperin expressed frustration with how the media have portrayed the changes to the good conduct credits. "These credits are not giveaways," he said. "They are the result of rehabilitative efforts."



Photos courtesy of California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)



WOMEN, Continued from Page 1

me focused by sending me educational books and keeping in contact with me through mail.

"The CCWP organization really is a huge part of my life. They give me hope for justice and faith for freedom," Vaughn added.

CCWP has members both inside and out who are peer health facilitators, lead peer-support groups and provide services to jailhouse lawyers.

"They (CCWP) push limits and rearrange boundaries for a population that was once forgotten behind these walls," said Tamara Hinkle.

"The fact that strangers with lives of their own care enough to invest time, money and busy schedules to people they've never met—whose cause was deemed 'lost'—is priceless," she added.

CCWP leaves no stone unturned as they fight for women prisoners' rights. They have established the Survived and Punished coalition, a group committed to survivors of domestic violence. They recently launched the Reproductive Justice Program, a project to combat coerced sterilization of women prisoners.

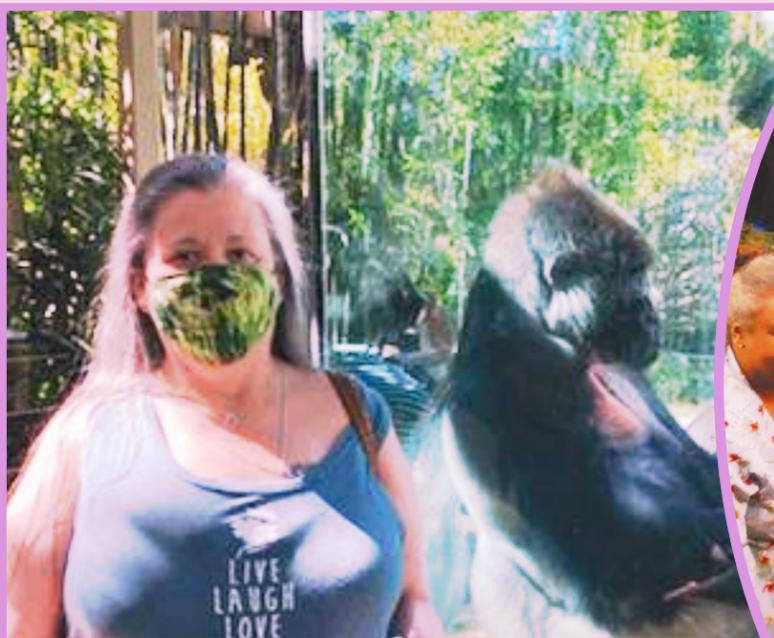
They co-sponsored Assembly Bill 1007 legislation for the third year in a row to compensate survivors of forced sterilization, according to The Fire Inside.

The advocacy group was instrumental in the passage of California's Racial Justice Act (AB 2542) that prohibits the state from seeking or obtaining a criminal conviction, or imposing a sentence based upon race. Also CCWP is on the frontlines for the Vision Act (AB 937) to stop ICE transfers in California. These campaigns are mostly led by formerly incarcerated advocates.

"AB 2542 is an unprecedented piece of legislation and long overdue in correcting a historically anti-Black legal-punishment system," said Romarilyn Ralston, formerly incarcerated and CCWP Policy Associate, in a press release, reported The Fire Inside.

The law became effective in January but is not retroactive.

Ny Nourn, another formerly incarcerated CCWP alumna, is leading the charge to stop CDCR and ICE deportations. "CDCR reported 1,400 ICE transfers between January and May 2020 alone," she told The Fire Inside.



Tara (second from left): "All six of us combined to give the state 123 years." >



TOP LEFT & TOP RIGHT: Velma Henderson served 38 years of an LWOP sentence before being resentenced and released.
ABOVE: Joann Parks, released January 12, 2021.
RIGHT: Tammy, Tara, Yvette "Chocolate" own, April, Shone, Tyrina and Dolores.

Continued, next page

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

A former lifer now offers hope and direction to hundreds of abused women in California with a sole purpose – help incarcerated women gain a renewed sense of self.

“A woman with a vision empowers an empire of women to do more, see more, and be more,” said Dana Cheatum, founder of Total Women Empowerment Life Coaching Inc. (TWELC), via telephone.

TWELC, launched in 2017, provides workshops for women to avoid the pathways to self-destruction and how to reclaim their lives post incarceration.

“Many women are trapped in dysfunctional relationships, suffer from low self-esteem, and feel unloved and unwanted, which after time, can feel normal. I want to help them shed the old image of themselves and see the beauty and strength within,” said Cheatum. “The function of freedom is to free someone else – This quote by author Toni Morrison is my daily call to action.”

TWELC, Cheatum said, was founded on the principles of 4 E's: Expose, Educate, Encourage and Empower.

“Image makeover is important. It is all about understanding why you create the image you created in the first place. Whether it was due to physical, emotional, relational or financial traumas, each individual will walk away with

an understanding based upon their own tangible experience of where they are, and how they got there,” said Cheatum.

Pre-COVID, TWELC held monthly healing workshops for women incarcerated at the Federal Correctional Facility (FCI) in Dublin, CA, and worked closely with the S.F. Probation Department for women on probation.

“After serving 25 years and 330 days of incarceration, I left prison spiritually grounded, emotionally stable, and academically equipped. I knew God's plan for me and I went and did what He set before me to do,” Cheatum said.

Cheatum, formerly known as Dana Robinson, legally changed her last name after being paroled, which she said was the first step of reclaiming herself after obtaining her freedom.

“When I went to prison, I realized that I was academically inadequate. I began to understand that I chose dysfunctional relationships because I did not feel worthy of love. But the most profound realization was this – That when you don't know where or who you are in life, you don't realize that you need to get through something.”

“And that is why I founded TWELC. I wanted to help women, especially lifers, learn the fundamentals of establishing and preparing for their future. To relearn to live in a world where the systems have changed since the time they went in.”

Dana Cheatum: From Life Sentence to Life Coach



Photo courtesy of: Dana Cheatum



Photo courtesy of: Dana Cheatum

Dana Cheatum, founder of Total Women Empowerment Life Coaching, Inc., provides services to female former lifers on parole.

The workshops, said Cheatum, are designed to create a different mindset in the women than the destructive one that put them on the path to a life sentence.

“My faith led me to get involved in self-help groups while inside, and in them I began to learn who Dana was. I began to understand how I got to such a place. With that, God's plan for me became clear,” Cheatum said. Adding, she wants to provide an outline of direction for women. Direction she didn't have prior to her becoming incarcerated at the age of 18 for murder.

Under her TWELC umbrella, Cheatum created the Living Life On Purpose Academy (LLOPA), and is actively pursuing sponsorship and

donations for her most recent endeavor.

“LLOPA's mission is to provide former female lifers with 6-12 months of cost-free living in an environment that is conducive to what someone who has spent a lifetime behind bars needs.” Which, she says, isn't provided in those other homes.

Cheatum said there are two types of homes: Transformational, and a word she does not like to use, Transitional.

“The difference in the two,” said Cheatum, “is that my 'transformational home' does not call for women to go through 30 hours of groups after spending years in groups. 'Transformational' addresses the essential needs that are not met at those 'other' houses.”

“Basic life skills, such as learning how to bank, open checking and savings accounts and how to build credit responsibly. To learn to type, gain computer operation skills, and how to navigate the complexity of these new cell phones. It's the little things that help build a person up. Which takes care, time, personal attention,” she added.

TWELC and LLOPA function on guiding principles that were created to uplift, empower, and inspire current and former women lifers.

“Our services are designed to meet the women where they are,” said the San Francisco native who earned an Associate's Degree in Social and Behavioral Science. Cheatum also earned a Drug and Alcohol Certification through the

Offender Mentor Certification Program (OMCP) while incarcerated.

At 52, Cheatum says she's just getting started, and that her biggest project to date, is acquiring funding for an LLOPA home for the women she represents who need the support.

“I met the lady who has been mentoring me in 2007. Her name is Geanine Hobbs. I was a program mentor for the Substance Abuse Program (SAP) while inside, and she was at the time regional director for the Phoenix House.

“Geanine was someone I could talk to about my fears and about succeeding. She believed in me and helped me see things about myself that I could not see. She still mentors me today,” said Cheatum.

“While other incarcerated people who earn their parole return to family and community, incarcerated immigrants face ICE detention and deportation solely because of where they were born,” Nourn added.

“We are fighting for the Vision Act to respect and save lives here in California, and to establish a national model for an inclusive and just policy for all immigrants,” Nourn concluded.

At least six women recently released from CDCR were welcomed home by CCWP. Combined, they had served a total of 123 years, noted the Fire Inside.

Shyrl Lamar, formerly sentenced to LWOP, was released in December. She served 34 years and is happy at home with her son and family. Velma Henderson served 38 years on an LWOP sentence before being freed in February. Zyaire (Aakifah) Smith served 29 years before being released from the California Institution for Women (CIW).

The women credit the core principle of CCWP, Caring Collectively, for providing hope and support while they worked through their traumatic pain, low self-esteem and shame to become social advocates.

“Caring collectively means that no one is left out, left behind or forgotten about,” said the incarcerated Vaughn.

Linette Gallindo, who was released under SB 1437 (felony murder rule), said, “I just want to tell the women and men who are still inside to hold on because I never thought my day would come, but look at me now!”



LEFT: Valerie Bolden dances to celebrate her freedom outside the fences.
BELOW LEFT: Aminah Elster proudly wears a T-shirt with a positive message-- "Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done."
BELOW RIGHT: Former LWOP Christina Martinez poses on February 4, 2021, after receiving commutation and parole.
BOTTOM: Supporters rally in front of Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla, California on August 22, 2020.

San Quentin News would like to extend our support and a heart-felt congratulations to these happy Ladies of Liberty! We wish them the absolute best on parole and in life.



Photos courtesy of California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)



They got no wings...



...But they can still fly!

Photo series by Phoeun You, SQNews

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

SQ residents celebrate as Juneteenth becomes America's newest national holiday

San Quentin residents joined Americans everywhere observing the new national holiday, Juneteenth, celebrating the formal end of slavery.

"I think it came at perfect timing for our small world here," said K. Bhatt, teacher-coach. "To re-open our community, to come together to promote positivity, camaraderie and friendship is a unique opportunity. Inside prison here now is a great example of community coming together."

The San Quentin celebration was held the day before the official Juneteenth holiday, June 19.

Juneteenth was made an official holiday on June 17 when President Biden signed it into law. At his side was Opal Lee, 94. After decades of marching for Juneteenth

to become a national holiday, she finally got her wish.

"I just know that the time has come for us to work together despite the disparities we have, and disparities we do have," said Lee in a TV interview.

In a place where depressing circumstances are familiar, San Quentin prison celebrated the milestone as a victory with the residents on June 18 by hosting a set of intramural basketball games.

Juneteenth banners displayed among a racially diverse crowd signified the day. SQ resident Clenard "Cee Cee" Wade said, "Given the recent developments, the passage (of the) law, given all we

been through—the pandemic and all, not only in America but here in SQ—is the beginning of a new day where hope, promise and fulfillment has now been made possible."

Stephen Pascascio was the musical engineer of the day and he set the tone for the crowd with his old-school and new-school hit list of song selections to play over the PA system.

"This is my first Juneteenth I ever experienced," said Pascascio. "I'm from the country of Belize, and I never heard of it until I came to prison. I look forward to the education of it."

Standing in the middle of the basketball court, Jamal

Harrison gave a short speech on the history of Juneteenth and other historical figures.

In his speech Harrison said, "It's important to remember all of the Blacks who died for us and it's important to know that the percentage of Blacks in this country is low while the percentage of Blacks in prison are higher than any other race."

He also mentioned that two years after President Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation in 1863, Blacks were still not free in Texas. A group of African Americans would meet at a church in a secret area and celebrate their unrecognized freedom until U.S. marshals announced

their freedom publicly in Texas on June 19, 1865.

Harrison named African American freedom fighters DenMark Vessel, Nat Turner, Paul Bogle, Claudette Colvin and little Bobby Hutton.

"I spoke on them because it's important to know about them (as) forgotten models of our history," Harrison said. "This is a celebration of the fight and the struggle we been through. If you know about your past, you will know your future."

Basketball Coach Kash stated that celebrating Juneteenth in prison is a beautiful thing. He said he was in-

Continued, next page

TOP ROW: Action on the court was non-stop throughout the Juneteenth celebrations as participants aim for the stratosphere.

RIGHT: Sports referees gather for a pre-game strategy session: (in stripes, from left) Robert Lee, Ishmael Ibn, "Downtown" Brown and James.



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTU

Juneteenth 2021 S

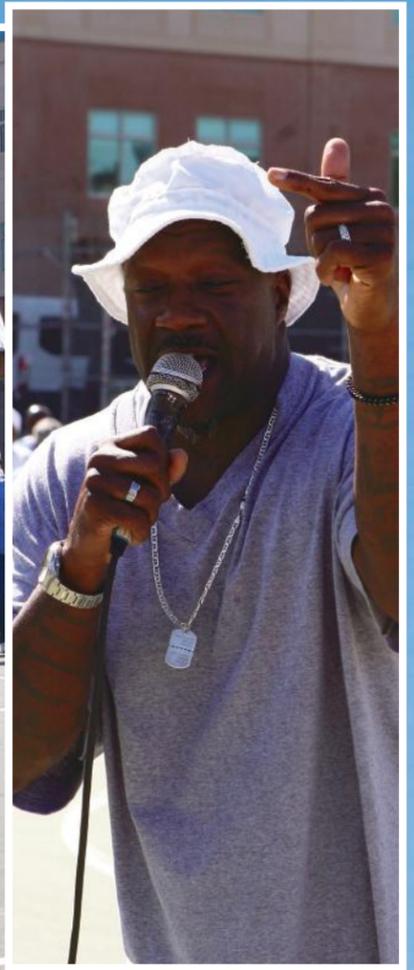
A passionate discussion...



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV



Photo series by Phoeun You, SQNews



...followed by a moment of silence.

TOP ROW: SQ residents speak on the history of Juneteenth and the importance of remembering the history of slavery in America.

RIGHT: Participants bow their heads for a moment of silence and remembrance to honor the victims and survivors of slavery. 1

BELOW: Players gather on the sidelines for a team meeting.



Photo by Phoeun You, SQNews



Photo by Jerry Welsh, SQTV



Photo by Phoeun You, SQNews

formed of Juneteenth by his family when he was young — a testament to the importance of passing down historical knowledge to generations to come.

Before the games got started, SQ resident pastor Derrick Holloway blessed the crowd with an ancestral prayer. Men were circled around the court and on the tables in silence.

Nate Collins was the MC of the day and he called the play by play of the games.

“It was an experience and I appreciate the opportunity,” said Collins. “I love to represent the men in blue and have fun with everybody, especially on a special day like today, Juneteenth, and I learned something from Mall in his speech. I never heard of them people he mentioned before.”

Collins used his spunky and comical technique of calling the plays, along with sideline critic and SQ comedian Charles “Pookie”

Sylvester, to keep the crowd laughing.

“I have an active way of seeing things happen and turn it into something funny,” said Sylvester. “I wanted to bring some excitement to the game, too. I like the celebration of Juneteenth and I’m happy we can finally come together for a good cause, plus inform some people because a lot of people didn’t know what this all means.”

Before the game, captain Alan “Black” McIntosh of the team Cookies said, “It’s not gonna be a competitive game. We gonna win by double digits.” At half time, Cookies led 31–21 over team Better Than Y’all.

Alex from team Better than Y’all tried to keep his team in it, but his 23 points, 2 rebounds and 7 assists were not enough. The 45-year-old “Black” McIntosh scored 40 points. Cookies won 65-53.

“My body felt good,” McIntosh said. “I been preparing for this season. When I’m healthy I’m hard to stop by anybody. I’m the healthiest I been in two years. That’s why I knew my prediction would come true.”

The halftime show was graced by Rhashiyd “Raw-LMNO” Zinnamon with a performance of his song “Here It Go.”

“It’s good to have good energy out here and to have fun,” said Zinnamon. “That’s why I like doing these per-

formances; I like to see the smiles on the faces.”

Zinnamon later performed another one of his songs, “Melodixx,” in the halftime of the later game between Don’t Talk Shoot vs. Power House. Don’t Talk Shoot won, 51–50.

Enjoying the activities was 1,000 Mile Running Club President Tommy Wickerd. Wickerd was part of an old ideology of racist White men in prison for decades. Wickerd’s mind-set has grown into a more inclusive way of thinking.

“Twenty years ago I would of felt out of place being at something like this in prison,” Wickerd said. “But today it’s cool to be a part of this. Blacks went through a lot to finally get here. It’s still racism today, but it starts with us (Whites). Everybody is still equal. That’s why it’s cool to have this cultural awareness.”

Wickerd listens to rap music, too, and he said he hates the songs that use the “N” word.

Sports Celebrations

Snippets

Forty-five men have been President of these United States.

Revolutionary War seamstress Betsy Ross designed the first American flag.

Emancipation for Black Americans was officially granted by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

Every day, foreign-born people become citizens of the U.S. through a process called Naturalization.

Originally, the USA was comprised of thirteen independent colonies.

Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776 with forefather John Hancock's signature the largest and most prominent.

Monuments for Washington, Lincoln, and Kennedy are linearly designed as part of the Nation's capital mall.

CROSSWORD

Edited by Jan Perry

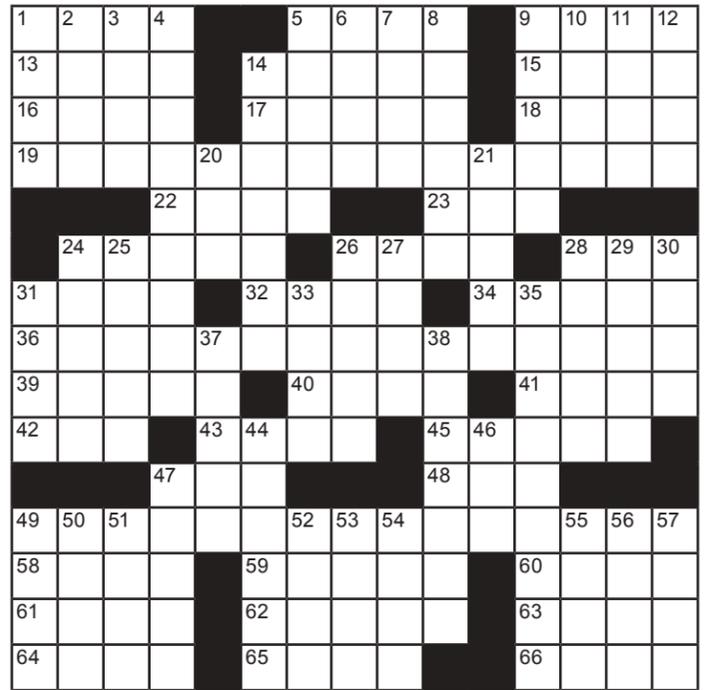
Across

1. Pause
5. Actress Rae
9. Uncalm condition
13. Precedes achiever, age or all
14. A type of gas
15. '90s magazine
16. Zeus turned into a swan to woo her
17. Kingdom
18. Precedes of Man or of Portland
19. Leaving prison before you die
22. ____ masqué
23. WWII secret British military service
24. Chip's dip
26. Pixar movie
28. ____ Caps
31. Mexican currency
32. Intl. alliance since 1949
34. Organic compound
36. Leaving prison in your 20s give you this
39. Luxury brand
40. Philippine Muslim
41. Possesses
42. English sick days (Abbr.)
43. Chocolate maker
45. City in W. Germany
47. Southern movie of 2006
48. Mild oath
49. Leave prison behind
58. ____ vera
59. Southern petrel
60. Precedes Grey, Hines or Marshal
61. Alan of M*A*S*H
62. Corners
63. Type of act
64. Charge
65. Pair of people
66. Stony waste matter

Down

1. "Hello" in Spanish
2. Kitchen appliance
3. News beginning
4. A nurse or fight can do this
5. Thoughts
6. Bodies of water
7. Auction
8. Not quite
9. Type of gibbon
10. Local (In.)
11. Precedes an hour, a dozen or adder
12. Endure (Scot.)
14. Scotland neighbor
20. Precedes Vegas or Cruces
21. Smelled
24. People with supposed insight
25. Sara Bareilles' org.
26. Greek mountain
27. Crime genre
28. Packs
29. Fluorescent signs
30. Arraignments (Abbr.)
31. Sony devices
33. Brand used by the roadrunner in cartoons
35. Carries
37. Horrid
38. Asiatic trees
44. Run to the altar?
46. Eternity
47. In the lead
49. Southernmost of two arms of the Rhine
50. Departure from the norm (Prefix)
51. Type of bread
52. Pakistani language
53. Capital of Latvia
54. Prepared the soil
55. AWOL Nation song
56. Brand of office paper
57. Thrash

Idioms



By Jonathan Chiu



Last Issue's Answer

July Sudoku Corner

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

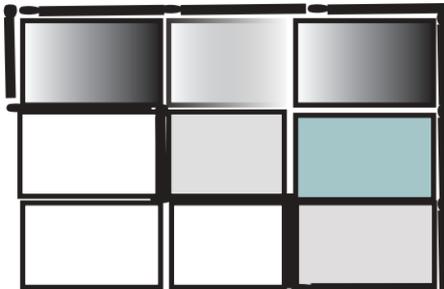
	3	5	9					2
			8		7			
7		9				5		
5			2			8	7	
3								5
	6	8			9			1
		7				1		8
			7			1		
2					8	9	5	

June's Sudoku Solutions

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

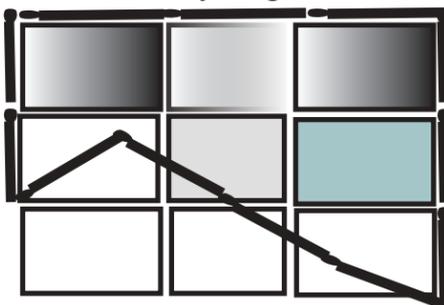
5	2	8	3	4	9	6	1	7
9	6	1	7	5	2	4	8	3
4	3	7	8	6	1	5	9	2
7	5	9	4	2	8	3	6	1
3	8	6	9	1	7	2	4	5
1	4	2	6	3	5	9	7	8
8	1	5	2	9	6	7	3	4
2	9	4	1	7	3	8	5	6
6	7	3	5	8	4	1	2	9

Last Edition's Answers



3x3 Reduction

If the length of each matchstick is "a" then the area of this square is 9a². You can move 4 sticks to change the square in 2 ways to get 6a²



Crying Babies:

On average, children laugh 10 times per day.

BRAIN TEASERS



The Coin-Bucket Challenge:

Distribute the 10 coins above into three buckets as follows:

1. No bucket is left empty.
2. One bucket must contain 7 coins.
3. One bucket must contain 3 coins.

Is this possible?

Math Stumper:

Use three fives to form a mathematical expression that equals six.

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

San Quentin News, 1 Main Street, San Quentin, Ca. 94964

Por: Carlos Drouaillet
Reportero asociado

Aunque mandan inocentes a prisión, fiscales no corrigen errores

Las estadísticas indican que hubo 2,770 exoneraciones en Estados Unidos desde 1989, significando más de 25,000 años perdidos de la vida de prisioneros que eran inocentes. Opinó Karyn Sinunu-Towery del San Francisco Chronicle.

Aparte de haber costado millones de dólares en compensaciones, vidas aplastadas y familias destruidas. Todo eso sin que el verdadero culpable fuera buscado ni procesado, escribió Sinunu-Towery.

Y aunque el costo a los contribuyentes y el daño humano es excesivo, los fiscales no aceptan su responsabilidad, ni mucho menos investigan las causas de dichas injusticias, para evitar que continúen. Yo como retirado fiscal con casi 40 años en justicia criminal, he observado la misma situación en dos casos de condenas injustas, Según el periódico San Francisco Chronicle.

Visualice que un avión de su aerolínea experimenta un accidente y se cae, pero la línea aérea no investiga las causas. También visualice que su cirujano ampute la pierna equivocada de un paciente, y no se molesta en averiguar cómo sucedió el error.

Ahora visualice, que en todo el país, la gran mayoría de fiscales no analizan los métodos de trabajo de sus abogados y policías quienes han provocado que un individuo inocente sea convicto y sea privado de su libertad, por un crimen que él o ella nunca cometió. Tristemente eso es lo que sucede hoy en

día, escribió, Karyn Sinunu-Towery.

Yo, aunque ya estoy retirado, he visto dos casos de este tipo durante mis casi 40 años en justicia criminal, según el artículo.

En una ocasión trabajando con "Northern California Innocence Project" [Proyecto Inocencia del Norte de California], participe como miembro del equipo legal para liberar a Jeremy Puckett, quien eventualmente, fue encontrado inocente en el Condado de Sacramento, por un asesinato que no cometió.

Junto con el grupo legal, comprobamos que la condena que recibió Puckett, fue provocada por errores gubernamentales y falsedades como: falsa evidencia médica, evidencia restringida de los policías, el no permitir que el jurado escuchara su coartada y por perjurio, de un testigo que lo acusó al recibir beneficio del gobierno. [Sinunu-Towery] A pesar de que el Señor Puckett perdió su libertad por 19 años y aunque las causas de la injusticia deberían ser evaluadas, aún no ha sucedido, reporto Sinunu-Towery.

Los fiscales y abogados que ignoraron inocencia del Sr. Puckett, deben de informar a sus empleados, al público o a la policía de sus errores cometidos. Pero ni aun la reputación de Puckett ha sido reparada, pues el sistema se niega a borrar la condena criminal de su expediente. Antes del caso de Puckett, trabajé también en el proceso para comprobar la

inocencia de Rick Walter que ya tenía 12 años en la cárcel del Condado de Santa Clara, en el 2003. Acusado por un homicidio del cual era inocente. Igualmente, las causas de esta condena falsa incluía; restricción de evidencia, testimonio falso de individuo que involucro a Walker, a cambio de una reducción de su condena. [Sinunu-Towery] Después de que una extensa lista de errores divulgados se presentara a los empleados en el 2004, un precursor de la Unidad Integra de Condenas (Conviction Integrity Unit), fue formada. Solo para ser desmantelada en el 2007, dijo Sinunu-Towery.

Hace poco tiempo, el Fiscal del Distrito de Santa Clara Jeff Rosen me pidió que presentara a sus empleados, en detalle, las causas de la condena-falsa infringida al señor Puckett. En mi presentación mostré a los abogados presentes, como, evidencia reprimida, identificación dudosa, perjurio, acuerdos secretos y testimonio médico cuestionable; provocaron la condena de un individuo inocente.

Presentaciones analíticas como estas deberían llevarse a cabo como parte esencial de cada oficina fiscal. Y primordialmente en cada oficina que ocasione situaciones similares, reporto Sinunu-Towery.

Muchos fiscales electos han iniciado, en los últimos 10 años, su propio proyecto inocencia generalmente conocidos por "Unidad Integra de Condenas." Jan Scully Abogada de Distrito

en Sacramento, dijo que ella no necesita una "Unidad Integra de Condenas" imitando a otros condados en California. Y añadió, "Mi oficina entera es una unidad integrada." Irónicamente, su oficina participo en la disputa contra los reclamos de inocencia del señor Puckett, según Sinunu-Towery.

Como se observa, este rechazo de reconocer y analizar errores no es un simple descuido – es con frecuencia deliberado. Y aunque, desde aquel tiempo, Sacramento, y otros condados, han fundado una "Unidad Integra de Condenas." Sin embargo, esos grupos no han examinado encarcelamientos dudosos, ni de manera pública é interna analizado a profundidad las condenas erróneas, reporto Sinunu-Towery.

Como consiguiente, se comprende que sin transparencia en la conducta fiscal, las condenas injustas continuarán y el costo a los contribuyentes aumentará, dijo Sinunu-Towery.

Pero no tiene que ser así; pues con integridad mi aerolínea y mi doctor, analizaran sus errores y prepararan en forma correcta a sus empleados. Seguidamente los fiscales electos y abogados harán también lo justo, creando una atmósfera agradable y podamos vivir en una más justa y bien informada sociedad.

[Karyn Sinunu-Towery es fiscal retirada y escribe para el Silicon Valley Ethics Roundtable]

Veterano de la NBA sufre racismo en la cancha

Por: Timothy Hicks
Sports Writer

Nativo de San Francisco y de la NBA Jeremy Lin aguantó racismo en la cancha de baloncesto, reporto el Daily Jornal.

Lin está en la Liga G del los Warriors y izo un comentario en las redes sociales dirigiéndose sobre la cruel terminología de ser llamado "coronavirus en la cancha".

El Asiático Americano estrella de la NBA se dio cuenta que no es excluido del racismo en este país, no importa tu estatus social.

"Siendo un veterano de 9 años de la NBA no me protege de ser llamado "coronavirus" en la cancha, escribió Lin. El artículo no dijo específicamente cuando paso el incidente. Pero, si describió que el técnico director Steve Kerr está detrás de Lin y en su esquina. El técnico director y campeón actual, completamente detesta cualquier discriminación que causo que Lin hablara en contra del racismo de Asiático Americanos.

"Ser Asiático Americano no significa que no conozcamos la pobreza y el racismo", dijo Lin.

Ultimamente han habido muchos ataques en contra de la comunidades Asiáticas. Desde que empezó la pandemia y el expresidente Trump lo llamo el, "el virus chino" los Asiáticos han estado en la mira y

atacados. Otras estrellas y profesionales han criticado el tratamiento a las comunidades asiáticas, pero el Taiwaneses Americano Lin, se gano el sobrenombre de "Linsanity" por voto popular cuando estaba con los New York Knicks, también se a ganado el aprecio de su tecnico.

"Muy poderoso" dijo Kerr. "Felicitó a Jeremy por sus palabras y eco sus sentimientos del racismo a las comunidades Asiáticas Americanas".

Lin (32), jugó 29 partidos para los Warriors como principiante en 2010-11. Reporto el artículo. El fue con los New York Knicks donde se le dio el nombre de "Linsanity".

Después de ver todos los recientes ataques de Asiáticos Americanos y el racismo de sus colegas en la cancha, Lin es optimista de poder compartir su voz para seguir la pelea en contra del racismo.

"Ser un hombre de fe no significa que no luche por justicia para mi y los demás", dijo Lin. ¿Pero, están las cosas cambiando?

"Así que aquí estamos otra vez, compartiendo nuestros sentimientos. ¿Alguien esta escuchando?"

Traducido: Rafael Bravo

ESPAÑOL

Fiscales demandan para que prisioneros no puedan ser liberados temprano

Por: Víctor Tapia
Escritor contribuyente

La mayoría de fiscales en California, cuarenta y cuatro de los 58 demandan al estado sobre las reglas de buena conducta en las prisiones que pudiera liberar a miles de prisioneros, según el periódico Associated Press.

La Secretaria de correcciones Kathleen Allison uso la declaración de emergencia para expandir las reglas que dan créditos de buena conducta. Las reglas nuevas darían la oportunidad a 76,000 prisioneros de acumular créditos para reducir sus sentencias, reporto Don Thompson.

La demanda alega que el uso de la declaración de emergencia evita el proceso público de comentarios y regulaciones que usualmente se usa. La demanda pide a un juez de la corte Superior del condado de Sacramento que excluya las regulaciones e impida al departamento de corrección conceder cualquier crédito de buena conducta hasta que haiga pasado por el proceso regular, reporto el artículo.

Aunque la ley tomo efecto Mayo 1, 2021 los prisioneros tardarían meses o años para actualmente acumular suficientes créditos para poder reducir sus sentencias. La demanda contiene que "No hay una emergencia actual, y no pueden satisfacer los requisitos de emergencia", según el artículo.

Las reglas afectan a 63,000 mil presos convictos por crímenes violentos, permitiéndoles prospectivamente a servir dos tercios de sus sentencias en vez de 80%. Y a 10,000 prisioneros convictos de crímenes de un segundo crimen serio, pero no violento y a casi 2,900 con su tercer crimen no violento 'third strikers' (convicto de tercer

crimen que reciben sentencia de cadena perpetua) que serán elegibles para ser liberados después de servir dos tercios de sus sentencias en vez de 80%, según el artículo. Prisioneros de mínima seguridad en campos de trabajo y prisioneros que trabajan de bomberos serán elegibles bajo las nuevas reglas de obtener un mes antes de su libertad por cada mes que estén en el campo de trabajo.

Los fiscales alegan en su demanda que la única emergencia fue el deseo del departamento de correcciones de seguir "(La) dirección del resumen de presupuestos del gobernador" del año anterior. "En ninguna parte de los documentos de apoyo, da una explicación que indique como el presupuesto de año pasado se convirtió en necesidad operacional para adoptar regulaciones en base de emergencia", según la demanda.

El fiscal de Los Ángeles George Gascon y el fiscal de San Francisco Chesa Boudin, no fueron parte de la demanda. Al contrario ellos creen y apoyan los cambios en las sentencias criminales.

El Depto. de Correcciones dijo que, "archivo regulaciones para promover cambios en crédito de buen comportamiento, y siguió cada procedimiento y pólizas de la oficina de leyes administrativa". Además que tenía la autoridad bajo la proposición 57 que los votantes aprobaron en el 2016, permitiendo a los prisioneros libertad condicional antes de tiempo, según el artículo.

En un comunicado el departamento de correcciones prometió que "continuar trabajando con sus socios a promover rehabilitación y contabilidad en una manera consistente con la seguridad pública", según el Associated Press.

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) leads the nation in vaccinating its prison population, according to a study done by the non-profit Prison Policy Initiative (PPI). The study revealed 75% of the state's prisoners are vaccinated.

North Dakota – which has a considerably smaller populace and prison population – is the only state that has vaccinated a greater percentage of its prisoners, 91% according to PPI.

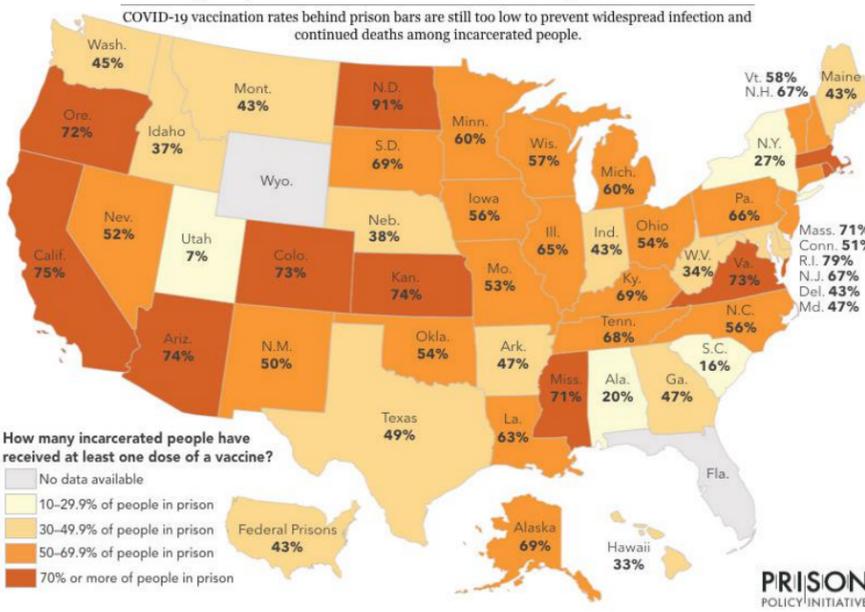
"Only ten states have vaccinated more than 70% of people incarcerated in their prison systems," PPI reported. "Some of these states – Massachusetts, Oregon, and California – included incarcerated people in the early phases of their vaccination schedules."

Most state prison systems failed to prioritize vaccinations for inmates, according to the PPI study. Seven months after vaccines were made available, only 55% of the nation's prisoners had been vaccinated.

"To meaningfully protect people in prison, incarcerated people need to be vaccinated at much higher rates than we're seeing thus far," PPI reported.

Seventeen state departments of corrections and the federal Bureau of Prisons had vaccinated less than half of their incarcerated population, PPI reported. The states with the worst vaccination rates were Alabama, South Carolina and Utah. At the time of the study, Florida and Wyoming had not released any vaccination data.

About half of people in state and federal prisons are vaccinated



CDCR vaccinates three-quarters of prison population

"Since vaccinations started in the U.S., there have been too many avoidable deaths," PPI reported. "In Nevada, for example, one-third of COVID deaths in prisons occurred this year. New Hampshire's first COVID prison death didn't occur until December 30, 2020, and there have been two more deaths in 2021."

PPI previously reported that many states gave early vaccination access to correctional staff, "under the misguided assumption that a fully-vaccinated staff would act as a preventive 'barrier' between incarcerated people and the communities surrounding prisons."

According to the study, a significant number of correc-

tional staff in the U.S. have refused to get vaccinated, holding "the median staff vaccination rate across the country (at) just 48% at last count."

PPI relied on data from the UCLA Law COVID-19 Behind Bars Data Project, The Marshall Project/Associated Press, and other state-specific sources such as state Department of Corrections websites and articles accessed in May.

Data up to this time reflected the CDCR had given at least one vaccination dose to 68,445 prisoners out of a population of 91,341. The study indicated that vaccination numbers could be higher if prisoners had more confidence in state healthcare systems.

"Many incarcerated people are wary of the prison medical system, and for good reason: prison medical systems have long been notorious for unethical experimentation and inadequate medical care," PPI reported. "To address these concerns, public health experts have been clear: education is crucial to vaccine acceptance behind bars."

It was reported that nearly 397,000 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 since March 2020, and that "the virus will only continue to spread without widespread vaccinations behind bars." PPI recommended that states invest in fast-tracking vaccine education and administration for prisoners.

Steve Brooks
Contributing Writer

After a year of suffering through the deadliest outbreak of disease in history, the sun is finally shining for SQ sports. The exercise yard is full of vaccinated people, and sports have been resurrected at San Quentin State Prison on the third Saturday in May 2021.

"It feels good to get out to play basketball, to be able to exercise and see some of the guys I haven't seen in a while," said Demond Lewis aka "Oola", as he dribbled the basketball. Lewis struggled to get his body to do some of the complex moves he hasn't done in a while.

There was a flurry of excitement as men from every sport checked out sports equipment, including the scoreboard for basketball. The sidelines were littered with old friends and acquaintances who were passing balls around and sharing stories of both death and survival.

Some incarcerated people hadn't changed a bit, but others looked rail thin with hollowed-out eyes, and others were clearly over the weight they were a year ago. Many were complaining of breathing difficulties, memory problems and fatigue. But some felt better after excepting the moderna vaccine.

The benefits of sports after Covid

"Not being out on the baseball field this past year was torture," said Brandon Terrell who agreed to taking the vaccine. "For me baseball is therapy." Before the pandemic Terrell spent most of his time on the baseball field glove in hand practicing the game.

For almost a year the San Quentin exercise yard had been shut-down and its baseball field of dreams had been turned into a nightmarish medical triage center lined with tents. San Quentin, or the "Q" as it is often called, became ground zero for a disease that traveled all the way from Wuhan China, sickened thousands and left twenty-eight people dead, including one corrections officer.

As the deadly coronavirus plague stalked its victims throughout the "Q" the basketball, handball, baseball, soccer field, and tennis courts were left silent and the running track was left deserted without its runners. "It wasn't the same," said soccer player Juan Ramirez, as he bounced a soccer ball on his knee. "It felt like you were missing something and you couldn't find it."

When the COVID outbreak began, incarcerated people were kept confined to their small cramped cells for twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Muscles were deteriorating, Waistlines were expanding,



Ballin' on Juneteenth

cholesterol, blood pressure, stress, and anxiety levels were rising higher and higher. After the outbreak cooled, the men began to get limited outdoor time without sports.

"This past year was the toughest of my incarceration physically, emotionally, and spiritually," said member of San Quentin's tennis club Robert Barnes. "My inability to swing my tennis racket, participate in self-help groups and go to church kept me full of stress and anxiety."

Besides the psychological toll, many of the athletes said they suffered from a general feeling of malaise from sitting around and not getting enough sun. The concrete and steel of the prison cell sucked the life from their bodies slowly. The floor in the cell isn't big enough to pace so all the athletes can do is sit or lay in their bunk til it hurts.

"When I wasn't able to run it felt like I had just gotten arrested and lost my freedom all over again," said Tommy Wickerd, President of the 1,000 Mile Club. Wickerd is used to clocking a thousand miles a year on the track. He caught covid-19 and suffered some fatigue, depression, memory loss, while gaining weight. He is now on pace to making a full recovery.

Having sports back at San Quentin is not just about dunking basketballs or hearing the sounds of bats cracking as people hit homeruns. It is about boosting morale, rebuilding communities, and giving human beings the much needed exercise to finish the healing process after experiencing such a devastating disease. Sports can help restore hope, purpose, and resilience here at the "Q". It is much needed. And sports help people deal with the roughest of times.

Sports Tier Talk With Tim

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

Brooklyn Nets guard Kyrie Irving sparked a conversation about changing the NBA logo to Kobe Bryant on Instagram earlier this year. The *Detroit Free Press* published an article on March 1 saying Irving told his 14 million followers that it's "Gotta happen, idc [I don't care] what anyone says. BLACK KINGS BUILT THE LEAGUE."

The conversation spread like wildfire to sports fans, as you could imagine. Therefore, I decided to ask a couple of SQ basketball program head coaches their thoughts on this issue.

Jerry "JB" Brown, 54, and Anthony "Tone" Evans, 57, are a couple of San Quentin's best B-ball orchestrators. Each led their respective SQ team to championship titles — both coaches say they love the game of basketball. Each has been involved in the sport for decades.

Jerry "JB" Brown: I've been coaching basketball for 40 years.

Timothy Hicks: That is a very long time. I can imagine that you must really miss the courts since this COVID stuff has hit.

JB: Yeah, pretty much.

TH: What do you think about the suggestion Kyrie Irving made about changing the long-standing NBA logo of Jerry West to Kobe Bryant?

JB: I agree with it. Because I think he [Kobe] changed the game of basketball. He went straight from high school to the NBA.

Anthony "Tone" Evans: Although he [Kobe] deserves a place of honor in the NBA for all that he did for the game, I just don't think it should be that one.

TH: Why?

AE: There may be some pushback on that issue. Adam Silver may not allow that. And besides, Kobe's family might be faced with some bad press. People might bring up the past things Kobe was charged with and it may not be good. Plus, I'm about creating diversity and being inclusive, even though the league is made up of majority Black players,

Jerry West was a good pick, too, and he did a lot for the league. In this environment, it might be some White people who might not agree with the change. It's also all kinds of other races of people who might not agree.

The *Press* reported a 2020 study by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports that said 74.2% of the league's players identify as Black or African American, which is clearly noticeable without the stats.

TH: Do you think it's time for a Black man to represent the NBA in general?

JB: Jerry West was good, but this is a way to pay tribute to one of the greats. No disrespect to Magic Johnson or Julius Ervin or any of the other greats.

TH: Right, even Jerry West agrees in some way that it's time for a change. He does not even acknowledge himself as the logo, the *Press* said. He even suggested that Michael Jordan should be the logo. The article mentioned Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Those would be some great choices, too. However, the article called Kyrie Irving subjectively biased for picking Kobe because he grew up in the Kobe era, watching Kobe and idolizing him in his 28 years. So why do you think Kobe would be the best choice? We got LeBron James, Steph Curry and Kevin Durant. The list goes on.

JB: Everything Kobe did for the NBA was phenomenal. He's the player that represents the modern days of the NBA. Yeah, I can agree that he is a good pick, but I'm kind of leaning towards Tone's views. I like Kobe and I am a fan of his. He's the only player who I compared to the great Michael Jordan in his time, but it's so many more super star players to choose from that impacted the game and the league that are more deserving of such an iconic place in the NBA.

AE: Yes, Magic, Kareem, Jordan, Gasol, Blake Griffin. The list is long. And like I said, Kobe was a wonderful player, one of my favorites, but he may spark some controversy if that happens.

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

Ready for sports

Most restrictions are lifted and the athletes at the Q are ready to get back to doing what they love and that is, playing sports.

The Q has been on COVID-19 hiatus for over 14 months and it shows in the athletes. Most athletes are eager and excited to be back in the swing of things but, their physical endurance is not equivalent to their desires to play.

Also, the lack of exercise most athletes has experienced may have caused a drastic weight gain and it

shows in their performance on the field. So, getting back to sports activities to off-set the lethargy, folks are eager and excited.

"My first game was horrible and I couldn't even finish the game, I couldn't even score," said former SQ basketballer Jamal Harrison.

"I missed sports really bad. Before COVID I weighed 205 pounds. I was able to play two full court games, I was jumping high, quicker and playing for at least two hours a day."

The Oakland native Harrison gained 30 pounds dur-

ing the COVID lay-in. But, pounds was not the only thing being added. As a component residents effected from the pandemic also have to deal with the mental matters.

"In 2020 I was stuck in the cell eating, bored and depressed," said Harrison. "I was stressed out. During that time I had loss my mom to COVID and other family members too."

Playing sports can be considered a life saver to the incarcerated in some form, or at least a good way to ease the

pain and tension caused by the issues of life.

"I'm a borderline diabetic and I used to eat all the bad foods like; honey buns, beef logs, soups and chips on the late night," Harrison explained. "I had developed a heart condition and bad blood pressure. Plus, wearing the mask didn't help with my breathing neither. Now that sports are back I can breathe better and most importantly, since we opened back up I can talk with my family more."

Harrison concludes, "My energy is not all the way back and I'm not at 100% back yet, but I'm getting there."

Rehabilitation through tennis

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

Orlando "Duck" Harris finally got found suitable on Feb.2, 2021 after serving 38 years in prison. He credits the Tennis program for his rehabilitation and changing him into a better person.

Harris was denied parole four times in the past and the impact of those denials slowly diminished him.

"I felt that I wasn't being heard. I felt that I wasn't being seen," said Harris.

"To finally get found suitable by the panel, I felt that they finally saw the authentic me, a person who had done the work. It felt good."

Harris did the work by completing other self-help programs such as T.R.U.S.T. (Teaching, Responsibility, Utilizing, Sociological, Training), VOEGE, and CRI(Community, Re-entry, Institute). Harris also completed his GED and got his AA degree in 2016. With his mom and his long term female partner at his side, Harris pressed on to striving for his betterment.



Photo by: Phoehn You, SQNews

LEFT: Preparing for a serve that might exceed the speed limit.

Harris joined the Tennis club in 2010 as a member and it was there where he achieved his fulfillment. He loved the game so much and stuck with it until he eventually rose to become the clubs commissioner.

"Tennis rehabilitated me totally, said Harris. "For me it was being able to show

some outside people the true and authentic side of me that helped me a lot. Being able to share my story with some people who don't know me and who saw me as more than just my crime made me feel like I was a person."

The SQ Tennis club is instrumental to residents like Harris over all benefit. Being

able to play against retired Tennis Stars like the Bryant brothers and other retired community leaders was some of the things Harris loved the most.

"It took me out of the element of prison," Harris said. "It gave me a sense of normalcy being able to compete against some regular people."



Photo by: Phoehn You, SQNews

RIGHT: Reaching for the sky to return a stratospheric serve.

When COVID hit the prison and put the program to a halt, Harris said that he was traumatized. He was missing the communal aspect of life and the socialization from the playing of Tennis.

"It was hard on me. I was worried about the outsiders and wondering was they ok. I couldn't exercise or use my

arms as much either," said Harris.

Harris injured his rotator cup trying to assist with the serving of food to the residents during the lock down. Now that the program is back, Harris is ecstatic that he can finally play again.

"Although I can't get out there and play like I used to due to my injury," said Harris. "I still get out there and practice with the fellas." Now that Harris is leaving he fears for the integrity of the program and who will be the new representation of the men in blue. Some of the standards Harris look for from the guys in the tennis club are; transparency and

honesty with the volunteers. Being respectful and having integrity is most important, but it's also one other thing.

"We're very picky about the guys we allow in the club," said Harris. "But to me what's more important is the attitudes a person might have. Attitude is the key. You gotta have a high level of a good attitude."

NEWS BRIEFS

1. Arizona—Prison officials are taking steps to use hydrogen cyanide, the same gas used in Nazi extermination camps, to kill death row inmates, *The Washington Post* reports. Arizona is one of 27 states to use capital punishment; however, executions are on pause after a lethal injection in 2014 prompted review of death chamber protocols.

2. Illinois—A new bill would expand voting and civics education for incarcerated youth older than 17 and within a year of release, the

AP reports. The bill would ensure youthful offenders have access to voter registration, information on how to vote, and opportunities to co-facilitate the civics education curriculum with their peers in state juvenile facilities.

3. Wisconsin—The rate of vaccinations in prisons exceeds the vaccination rate for the state as a whole, the *AP* reports. Wisconsin DOC data shows 8,972 people (47.2% of the eligible prison population) had been fully vaccinated as of June 8, compared to 41.7% of eligible state residents overall, Wisconsin Public Radio reported.

4. South Carolina—The

state's Supreme Court set an execution date of 6/18 for one of two death row prisoners suing the state over a new law forcing prisoners to choose between dying by firing squad or electrocution, the *AP* reports.

5. Louisiana—On 6/10, lawmakers blocked efforts to create a path to release for an estimated 1,500 prisoners convicted by non-unanimous verdicts, said the *AP*. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2020 that non-unanimous verdicts were unconstitutional, but decided earlier this month that the decision wouldn't be applied retroactively.

6. Texas—Quintin Jones,

41, was put to death May 19 in Huntsville, Texas. Absent were two journalists scheduled to attend the execution but whom prison officials accidentally failed to summon, the *New York Times* reported. He was the 571st person to be executed in Texas since 1976.

7. Michigan—Ray Gray, 69, after spending 48 years in prison for a fatal robbery, pleaded No Contest to second-degree murder on May 25 in an extraordinary compromise to settle his claim of innocence and set him free, the *AP* reports. The plea agreement erased a first-degree murder conviction and life sentence to qualify him for release.



8. Kansas—Olin L. "Pete" Coones, 64, spent 12 years in prison before being exonerated of murder and granted \$826,301 compensation to settle a lawsuit he'd filed. Coones died from cancer on 2/28, just 108 days after his release. His lawyers say the cancer went undiagnosed during his wrongful incarceration.

COURT, Continued

be in court back then when it happened. I'm a little upset about it."

Stemming from the ill-fated transfer of 122 prisoners from the California Institute for Men (CIM) on May 30, 2020, the massive SQ outbreak ran unchecked for months and led to 28 incarcerated deaths.

One year later, prisoners attended the Zoom hearings and listened to petitioner after petitioner testify about the inhumane treatment they incurred during the COVID-19 shutdown and subsequent outbreak.

Orlando Harris experienced the rapid spread of COVID-19 firsthand in SQ's North Block. He took a front row seat in the chapel every day.

"It's all backwards with these people," said Harris. "When we go in front of the parole board, all we ask is that they look at who we are today—not who we were 20 years ago, 30 years ago."

"But in this case, they only want to talk about right now, today. They don't want to be held accountable for the mistakes they made last year. How crazy is that?"

The incarcerated audience packed the chapel

May 25 and 26 to see Acting Warden Ron Broomfield face tough questioning from prisoners' rights attorney Charles Carbone.

"Your Honor, I request the court's permission to treat the witness not just as a respondent, but as THE respondent," Carbone asked of Marin County Superior Court Judge Geoffrey M. Howard.

Under heavy fire, Broomfield did his best to defend the prison's so-called COVID-19 "mitigation and surge plan" by deflecting questions of accountability. He often said he didn't recall or didn't have the necessary information to answer.

Attorney Khari Tillery continued to push Broomfield the next day on SQ's inadequate staffing procedures, nonsensical quarantine housing protocols and other administrative failures.

"They made him look incompetent," said petitioner Michael Calvin Holmes. "He wouldn't take responsibility for anything. He kept passing it off on medical—but murder is murder."

"They think because it happened to us it makes it less illegal. If it had happened to a bunch of college students in a middle class neighborhood, they would have lost their shirts already."

Broomfield—just like every other respondent witness—refused to concede that San Quentin's maximum "design capacity" of 4000 needs to be reduced by 50% to protect its incarcerated population from infectious disease.

"There's just too many people living in these deplorable conditions," said petitioner Juan Haines. "How can they defend against that?"

"Even Derek Chauvin had a better defense than these prison officials."

When asked under oath if, as Warden, he is responsible for the health and safety of every San Quentin prisoner, Broomfield answered "Yes."

Expert after expert gave detailed testimony about the stifling effects of overcrowded conditions where two prisoners live cramped within 4'x11'x8' cells stacked atop each other in five-tiered buildings.

Medical and science experts described the atrocities they observed inside SQ as "foreboding" and "the worst outbreak in a correctional setting I've ever seen."

UCSF's Dr. David Sears, epidemiology specialist Dr. Meghan Morris, infectious disease researcher Dr. Daniel Parker, CalOSHA biohazard investigator Channing Sheets—they all agreed that

the only way to effectively mitigate any viral danger is by drastically reducing SQ's population.

In the context of the overall effectiveness of SQ's COVID-19 safety protocols during the outbreak, petitioner attorneys asked, "What would the end result have been if San Quentin had simply done nothing at all?"

The experts each said the outcome would have been exactly the same. SQ's physical architecture and poor ventilation render mask wearing and isolated quarantining all but pointless, given its grossly compacted living conditions.

Aside from prisoners' claims, CalOSHA cited San Quentin for numerous "willful" violations of workplace safety regulations. Investigator Sheets testified that SQ continues to appeal the citations as a stall tactic.

A previous California court decision in October ordered the SQ population reduced down to 1,775, but that ruling has since been appealed and vacated.

The pressing realities of COVID-19 forced CDCR and SQ to drop the total occupancy under 2,500. But those days are over now, as busloads of new arrivals threaten to fill the prison back up.

"CDCR's gonna do what they want," said petitioner Larry Williams, who testified about being an incarcerated critical worker exposed to cell after cell and tier upon tier of his infected peers.

"Hopefully this case will bring about some real prison reform—where they actually do something, not just say they gonna do something."

Respondents presented only one infectious disease expert, USC's Dr. Jeffrey Klausner, who testified that SQ has developed enough herd immunity for maximum occupancy, due to its current 80% incarcerated vaccination rate.

When questioned about SQ staff's meager 50% vaccination rate, Klausner stated that officers don't interact enough with prisoners to meet the scientific criteria for "exposure."

But even as Klausner gave testimony, SQ's West Block—a building with more than 600 residents—was suffering a norovirus outbreak that caused the entire housing unit to be quarantined for almost two weeks.

Attorney generals continually objected to the relevance of any facts beyond the limited scope of COVID-19, but attorney Taylor Reeves used her cross-examination of another respondent witness to

get the current norovirus situation admitted into evidence.

CIM Associate Warden Jason Bishop worked at CIM when the fatal transfer occurred and subsequently took a temporary position at SQ during the outbreak.

"Do you know when the first inmate died of COVID-19 at San Quentin?" petitioner attorney Thomas Brown asked. "Do you know the name of the first inmate who died?"

"Do you know the name of the last inmate to die? Do you know any of their names?"

Bishop did not know the answer to any of those questions.

Petitioner Jesse Johnson sat in the chapel every day to view the hearings in their entirety. "I just see them dodging blame, passing the buck, telling lies," he said.

"I'm just doing this for the people who suffered and died here—and for the future people who become incarcerated here," Johnson said of his reasons for joining the lawsuit and testifying. "I'm doing it for them."

"Someone needs to hold this place accountable for what happened, so this never happens again."

RIKER'S, Continued

Budnick said. "He reached out and said, 'I'm taking over Rikers. Can you help?'"

As society begins to fully realize the harmful and counterproductive impact of mass incarceration, progressive thinkers like Budnick and Schiraldi hope to reshape punitive penal institutions by focusing attention on restorative justice and rehabilitation.

Schiraldi's team included First Deputy Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, Deputy Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Eric Cumberbatch and David Muhammad of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform.

"Rikers Island currently suffers from enormous violence and low staff morale," Muhammad explained. "The jail complex has not had programming for more than a year."

"We want to bring programming back, expand it, support the staff and provide high quality programs and opportunities to the residents of Rikers."

Accompanied by SQ's Acting Warden Ron Broomfield, the group entered the prison and gathered in the chapel garden area to listen to incarcerated residents share stories of personal growth.

"Programming" means everything—literally everything—to me," said Vincent Turner. "Coming into the

system at a young age, a lot of guys don't get access to the programs we have here."

"Being at San Quentin changed my life and gave me the chance to become a much better man for myself and for my family."

Yancey Andress spoke along the same lines. "Programming taught me what freedom means," he said. "Coming up in L.A. and Inglewood, I was too free—in a negative way."

"I didn't grab the actual reality of what real freedom is until San Quentin. Here, we learn to talk and communicate. That's how people get help."

Broomfield led the group "behind the wall" to check out Code 7370, SQ's nationally acclaimed computer coding training program, as well as the machinist trade school and the vocational computer literacy class.

Afterwards, they walked the yard on their way to the only prison media center in the world.

Because so much of what goes on at SQ doesn't exist in other prisons, Schiraldi wanted to know how corrections staff have adapted to the innovative mindset.

"How do things change?" Schiraldi asked. "How do I get my staff to buy in?"

Lt. Sam Robinson recalled his days as a Death Row officer in 2002-2003 when volunteers first became part of SQ's new era of positive development.



The team from Riker's Island held a stirring round-table discussion with the incarcerated.

"Seeing civilians come in—I didn't understand it," said Robinson. "It took time for me to see the relevance of programming."

He pointed out Lonnie Morris, who would soon be released after 40 years of incarceration. "I watched Lonnie go from convict to changed guy."

"I understand the mentality that your staff will have to overcome, but attrition happens. I've seen the change amongst our workforce. Now, it's just the norm."

Lonnie Morris tried to sum up 40 years of prison life in less than 10 minutes.

"On the mainline back then, it was kill or be killed. 'Cops don't run San Quentin. We run San Quentin,'" said Morris. "But eventually, we had to stop the war before too many people died."

"We had to start making a change. We began seeing the benefit of doing the right thing."

Particularly because Rikers is a jail and not a prison, Schiraldi asked about ways to help youth offenders embrace rehabilitation before they get caught up in prison politics and violence.

Rafael Bravo answered the question by emphasizing the value of mentorship. "Having someone who's been there makes a big difference. I was able to turn to guys who'd gotten off that negative path."

"These are guys who've been incarcerated for 20, 30 years, but they're smiling. They're positive. And I could look to them for guidance."

Anthony Gomez made sure Schiraldi's team understood the impact of a positive attitude from staff, too. "Kind words, taking the time to invest in me and say, 'Stay out of trouble'—they saw my potential."

"That human connection helps break the barrier between staff and inmate."

Cumberbatch thanked the guys for being so open and willing to share. "I stand in solidarity with you to dismantle these systems that all of us—our families, our communities—are wrapped up in."

"I look at you all as the practitioner, as the real genius to undo all of this."

Schiraldi told the SQ residents his first action as commissioner will be to move his office inside the Rikers facility. Previous commissioners ran the jail from an outside office.

First Deputy Maginley-Liddie, who also serves as Chief Diversity Officer, said she walks through Rikers every day to stay visibly approachable for one-on-one interaction.

"Definitely, it's clear how the concept of treating people like people has gotten San Quentin where it is today," said Maginley-Liddie.

"I go in [to Rikers] all the time. That's what I told Vinny. You have to go in and actually do it."

As the team walked up the hill to leave, Schiraldi spoke about his main takeaway from the day's visit. "We can do it at Rikers. San Quentin was once a horrible and dangerous place—just like Rikers. But not anymore. We can do it!"

Broomfield enjoyed the moment and reflected on what it all means—despite his subpoena to testify the next day as the respondent in a class action lawsuit filed against him by over 300 prisoners.

"I love being at San Quentin," said Broomfield. "It's like no other prison, so I experience a great sense of pride and hopefulness."

"I'm well aware that I didn't create this—I inherited it. My job is to insure that what happens here continues and grows."

Photo by Pheoun You, SQNews

By Jad Salem
Journalism Guild Writer

Banksy mural turns old British jail into historic treasure

A mural on a former British jail has triggered efforts to preserve the building from developers.

The Reading Gaol jail was up for sale, but a bid from building developers fell through, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

“Banksy,” a famous guerrilla artist, may have let his feelings be known about the project by painting a mural of renowned writer Oscar Wilde. It shows Wilde escaping from the jail on a rope made of a bed sheet tied to a typewriter. But the mural has yet to be claimed by Banksy, according to the article.

“I’d like to thank Banksy, or whoever else painted this, for their support for the campaign to save Reading Gaol,” said Member of Parliament Matt Rodda to the BBC. “This unique historic building should be saved for future generations.”

The artwork is described as compelling. “It would have been hard for an amateur to do in the dead of night using a scaffold,” said Professor Paul Gough, vice chair of Art University Bournemouth and a Banksy expert.

“It draws attention to the town, it brings people out on the street,” said Gough. “They then have a conversation and so public art is suddenly given a foreground at a time when people do want that level of diversion — and I think that’s terrific.”

Wilde was convicted and sentenced to Reading Gaol after his affair with Lord Alfred Douglas was exposed. He served his term between 1895 and 1897. His celebrated poem, titled Ballad of Reading Gaol, captured his time in the harsh Victorian penal system, reported the article.

The artwork has drawn a lot of attention and many took selfies with the mural. Also people would look out of their car windows to see the painting. Since the housing development bid fell through, advocates are happy to keep the campaign alive to turn the old prison into an art hub, reported the article.

“In the right hands, this gaol will evolve Reading into an internationally recognized historical and cultural destination,” said Toby Davies, Reading-based Rabble Theatre artistic director. The mural was

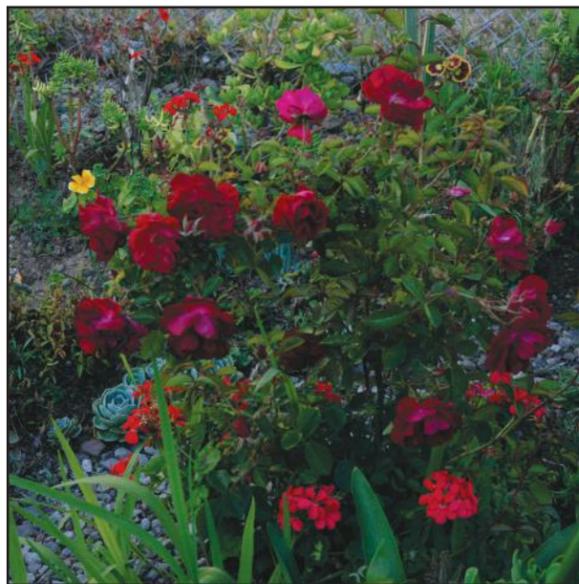


Photos courtesy of:

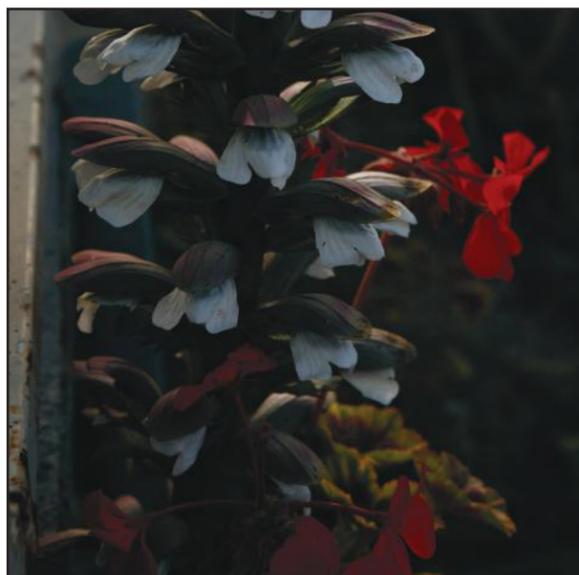
Banksy's mural depicts famous author Oscar Wilde's escape from the facility using a time-honored method: bedsheets tied together.

“built on the values of acceptance and diversity. Dare I say it, it looks like Banksy agrees.”

“built on the values of acceptance and diversity. Dare I say it, it looks like Banksy agrees.”



Photos by: Phoeun You, SQNews



By Aron Roy
Contributing Writer

A joyous reunion took place on June 4 when the Insight Garden Program returned to H-unit.

Volunteers Dan Geiger and Margot Reisner greeted seven San Quentin residents in the H-unit vegetable garden after almost 15 months of suspended program due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s nice to finally be back together as a group,” said Gabriel Maldonado. “We’re finally able to shed some of the bad energy from the pandemic and now we’re out here in the sun, immersed in the garden, starting fresh.”

San Quentin’s H-unit has two different gardens, which are tended to by the Insight Garden Project. The Rose Garden consists of flowers and other decorative plants, while the fenced off Vegetable Garden contains edibles.

The Rose Garden was not as perfectly manicured as it had been before the pandemic, but resident gardening expert Leopoldo Zaragoza did his best to take care of the garden during the lockdown. He devised makeshift tools out of sticks and other natural gifts, which he used during his limited yard time, to perform tasks such as pruning, landscaping and watering.

“The garden’s been neglected, not by choice, but because of the quarantine,” said Insight Garden Project member Carlos Drouaillet. “Zaragoza taught me so much about humanity, community and creativity. This took so much work to maintain.”

To begin, the group gathered in a circle, checking in with each other and participating in a guided meditation. As the participants closed their eyes and focused their breathing, Reisner encouraged everyone to take in nourishment, gratitude, and community while they inhaled and to let go of stress and worry as they exhaled.

After the meditation, the group moved on to tending the garden with tools such as gloves, shears, and trowels.

As the group began weeding and watering the garden, Geiger simultaneously ran a rose bush pruning workshop. He taught the participants how to cut back dead or overgrown parts of the plant to encourage new growth and flowers.

“When you’re pruning, you’re also designing the plant. Think about how you want it to look,” said Geiger. “It’s almost impossible to make a mistake — if you cut too much, they’ll grow back.”

Insight Garden offers peace, tranquility, time for personal reflection

The first class was entirely spent gardening and meditating. Insight Garden Project plans to resume its rehabilitative curriculum, which consists of studying topics such as climate change, landscape design, leadership, communication, spiritual development, and getting a green job.

The Insight Garden Project began in San Quentin in 2002 and now operates in 10 California prisons, according to Reisner. During the COVID-19 lockdown, Insight Garden Project sent participants correspondence packets in either English or Spanish, so that they could continue their rehabilitative work despite the lack of in-person classes.

“We garden outside, but we also work on our inner garden,” said Geiger. “We use gardening as a metaphor for our lives: growth, be healthy, and deal with pests.”

To wind down the class, the group moved into the vegetable garden to talk about the past year and how it felt to be back.

Even with a lack of attention, the vegetable garden had sporadic clumps of wild mint, lemon verbena, strawberries, kale, and garlic flowers.

“Roses are tall, strong, beautiful, and can defend themselves without aggression,” Geiger said. “You can really learn a lot from studying nature.”