

San Quentin News



WRITTEN BY PRISONERS – ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE



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POPULATION xxx

HOPE
SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Mental Health
Wellness Week from
September 8th to 14th**



Photo courtesy of CDCR

California's out-state prisoners brought back

By Aron Kumar Roy
Staff Writer

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation announced that it has ended the practice of housing prisoners in out-of-state facilities.

But San Quentin inmates who have served time in private lockups say those prisons are much better than California institutions, even though they dislike the separation from their families.

"I was pissed off when I found out I was coming back to the state. Prison out there was much better," said inmate Michael "Kofy" Taylor. "The overall feeling was better out there. The living quarters were much more comfortable," Taylor said, in agreement with the general sentiment among the several other San Quentin inmates interviewed, "Those facilities weren't overcrowded like the ones in state. The cells were so big there. They were actually comfortable for two men to live in."

The last California inmates housed out of state recently returned from La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, AZ—a private prison facility run by CoreCivic. CDCR said it will not renew its contract with the private prison corporation.

"This is a historic day for CDCR, as the department has ended its reliance on out-of-state facilities, thus ending an era that began 13 years ago at the height of California's prison overcrowding crisis," said CDCR Secretary Ralph Diaz in a press release.

California's out-of-state prison population peaked in 2010 with more than 10,400 inmates housed in private facilities located in states such as Mississippi, Tennessee, Arizona, Oklahoma and Michigan. The practice originally began in order to help alleviate the overcrowded state prison system—which was operating at more than 200 percent of its design capacity.

See *Prisoners* on page 4

Hamilton cast visits San Quentin



Photo by Raphale Casale

Members of Hamilton cast and crew with SQNews advisors Monica Campbell and Jan Perry

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairman

The world proved wide enough for San Quentin prisoners and the San Francisco production of Hamilton to come together as one community.

At the invitation of SQNews advisor Jan Perry, members of the cast and crew welcomed the June 21

opportunity to take a quick tour of the prison while getting acquainted with some of its incarcerated residents.

"Their visit totally enlightened me," said SQ tour guide Ron Ehde, incarcerated for the last 23 years. "They opened my eyes—not just to how important the arts are—but really just how open and friendly the theater arts community is. I was

blown away by their warm-hearted spirit.

"These people are like tree huggers for humanity."

For performer Donald Webber Jr., who plays Aaron Burr, coming to San Quentin underscored the many doors opened to him through starring in Hamilton.

"You get a chance to see things you never thought you'd see," Web-

ber told SQNews. "Being a part of Hamilton, I feel so lucky."

"The show changes people who come to see it—makes them want to change the world."

"We're telling a story—an old story—but to this day it's one that people easily can parallel to their own lives."

See *Hamilton* on page 9

San Quentin's college class of 2019

By David Ditto and Aron Roy
Staff Writers

On a sunny June morning overlooking the bay, 12 incarcerated scholars were honored at the 2019 Prison University Project (PUP) graduation. University instructors, staff, classmates and family of the graduates gathered in San Quentin's main visiting room to celebrate the conferring of Associate of Arts degrees in liberal arts to the men in blue.

As "Pomp and Circumstance" sounded, the 2019 graduates began their procession, and PUP Board Chair Maddy Russell-Shapiro's eyes were already welling up with tears.

"One of the things I love about PUP is that the students are going

to become a growing body to represent the carceral state and represent the truth of what's really going on in here," she said.

"This is an achievement we all can be proud of," said valedictorian Tommy "Shakur" Ross.

He described to the audience the research project he did in one of his PUP courses. "I am most proud of this work because it altered my worldview about women, igniting the initial spark that led to my identity as a feminist."

"Now who would've thought that I, a former full-fledged, hard-core, misogynistic gangbanger, would be writing papers on feminist theory? But here I am!"

See *Graduation* on page 10



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Visitors and inmates making the circle of peace at the Lower Yard

A walk on the yard sends youth to camp

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

"We march in solidarity, we all are behind bars," were the lyrics of a rap song that blared through a massive speaker on San Quentin's Lower Yard. The song captured the voices and themes of SQ Project Avary's 3rd Annual "March for the Next Generation."

The June 22 event had inmate Philippe "Kells" Kelly and Eric McCarty of Project Avary rapping those powerful words in front of a host of prisoners and guests.

"Incarceration carries so much grief with it that it lasts throughout generations," said Zach Whelan, Project Avary's executive director. "That's why it's important to connect with the men here to help break that intergenerational cycle."

Project Avary is a Bay Area organization dedicated to helping kids of incarcerated parents. This was the third year the organiza-

tion partnered with San Quentin's Kid CAT program, an incarcerated youth support group, to hold the event.

This year the march raised more than \$1,500 from the men inside. A matching fund campaign for the walk received \$24,000 from outside donors. The donations will send 24 kids of incarcerated parents to summer camp.

"Everyone knows what happens to a person once they get arrested—they get put behind bars, but no one really knows what happens with the kids," said Ziri R, 18, of Project Avary. "I was put in a foster home until I was adopted by my father's sister."

"To this day his absence hurts me. I used to think I didn't need him—that I'm better off without him. I realize that's just me trying to pretend I don't care. The truth is I always cared."

See *Avary* on page 12



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

PUP graduates class of 2019

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Program coordinator Heather Hart bids farewell to PUP

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairman

San Quentin's Prison University Project (PUP) waved goodbye to Program Coordinator Heather Hart on July 3. But she leaves intent on continuing her fierce advocacy goals in a potentially broader scope—through philanthropic influence.

"After four years here, I started to feel like there was more I needed to learn, more skills I needed to acquire in order to get to a place where I could make the most impact," Hart told *SQNews*. "Exploring this world of philanthropy, I want to see for myself. How are resources—money—given to the community?"

"I'm really interested to learn how people decide how to distribute the money to the causes that they consider to be pressing. It's a gap in my knowledge—something that I feel is super important to know."

"I believe it's a responsibility I have to the community to build that skill-set, so when the time comes and there's an opportunity, I'll be equipped to answer that call."

Hart started working for PUP in 2015 after first entering SQ to work for the California Reentry program.

"This job really broke down the dichotomy for me—you know, between service provider and beneficiary," she said. "I worked at nonprofits my whole career,

so that dynamic existed. This job made me totally question that division."

"Getting to know the students—hearing about their personal experiences—I came to understand that there's just such a wealth of information, knowledge and talent already well in existence within the student body."

"All we need to do is help actualize that paradigm shift. They have everything they need to help themselves. We just need to provide them access to opportunity."

PUP student Edmond Richardson vividly remembers a moment where Hart guided him in the right direction: "When I joined Last Mile coding, I was selected to be a presenter for one of my projects. I was nervous, scared—really doubting myself," he said. "I came back here, the PUP office, to practice, and I was freaking out. 'I can't do this.'"

"Heather walked by and I started telling her how I'm not gonna do this. But she was there to tell me, 'You're being your worst enemy—just get out of your own way. You are enough.'"

That bit of encouragement and reassurance from Hart took place almost two years ago, but Richardson said the conversation sticks with him like it was yesterday.

"It impacted me so much," he said. "Now, whenever I find myself in moments where my mind's filled with all those destructive thoughts—I think back to what she said to me..."

"Thanks to Heather, I know to get out of my own way, embrace every opportunity—because 'You are enough.'"

"I never told her any of this and now I wish I'd expressed to her the impact she had on me while she was still here."

Incarcerated PUP Clerk Corey McNeil, part of the 2019 graduating class, witnessed Hart's many behind-the-scenes acts of support and understanding.

"That's what Heather does," said McNeil. "And really, all the PUP staff interact with us in that same way. It's the biggest reason I enjoy working with them—they're all real people—just totally unpretentious and caring folk."

STEM PUP's Coordinator Neil Terpkosh equally appreciates Hart's contributions to the day-to-day dynamics of PUP. He joined the team around the same time she did, in 2015.

"She's always challenging us, asking, 'Why do we do it this way? How could this be better?'"

"Oh my God, Heather taught me so much about encouraging people to just be exactly who they are," said Terpkosh. "We learned a lot about being coordinators together."

Hart described the lessons she herself learned at PUP—albeit easy lessons, she said, but nevertheless they're lessons that really can only be learned by being immersed into this community.

"It's not like I'm giving anything to you guys," Hart said. "I'm part of a community where we're doing things together. I had to be willing to change my mind to things and see that."

"That two-way relationship straight blew up the whole dichotomy for me. It's mutual—I'm learning as much as what others learn."

James King, another incarcerated PUP Clerk, worked integrally with Hart for several years. "Heather's commitment to her values of radical inclusion and respect for all embodies what PUP is all about," King stated.

Coordinator Allison Lopez said she has too many fond memories of Hart to count—both personally and professionally. Lopez became part of the PUP staff a little more than six months before Hart.

"Heather came here with all this professional experience and critical thinking skills," said Lopez. "She loves to question 'the way things are.'"

"She's always challenging us, asking, 'Why do we do it this way? How could this be better?'"

"Heather was like a constant force on our team, driving the critical thinking machine—especially toward improvement. She genuinely brought tools on board to do that—strategies and tools that are usable, transferable."

Student Wilson Nguyen pointed out how "helpful and nice" Hart always was to him and all the other incarcerated students. "I remember when I was on the verge of dropping one of my classes, but Heather, Allison and one of the teachers encouraged me to stick with it," he said. "They taught me to just be positive and stay motivated—that really made a big difference for me."

"I never met people like that who encouraged me to do my school stuff. Most grownups in my life—only a handful ever cared."

"PUP staff genuinely care about my education. That means a lot."

Hart's philosophy became clear when asked about the relationship between education and rehabilitation.

"I'm not necessarily comfortable with the term 'rehabilitation' because I think that implies a person is broken and needs to be fixed," she said. "On one hand, education—like a formal degree—provides access. You now have something you can show that is valued by society."

"On the other hand, there's a real power that comes from learning, especially learning to interact with the world around you."

"If done well, education is actually connecting you with yourself, so you can be more intentional about how you will impact—or be impacted—by the world around you."

One word consistently came up whenever students and staff spoke about Hart's departure: "bittersweet."

"I want what's best for her, but it leaves a hard-to-fill hole in the team—as far as I'm concerned," said Lopez. "Heather is woven into so many things and the way we do things here..."

"Some are sustainable, some more susceptible to her absence. I'm just such a Heather fan. Anything is better if Heather is involved."

Hart is not at all worried about PUP's future without her. "PUP does great work that needs to continue to happen—and it will," she said. "I can't wait to come back for open mic, graduation, ROOTS, etc."

"Now that I'm not PUP staff, I'll have to be cleared like the public, but as long as programs will have me and clear me—I'll be there."



Photo by Allison Lopez

PUP coordinator Heather Hart taking a walk outside SQ

Arizona rethinks its ban on prison literature

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

The state of Arizona lifted its ban on the book *Chokehold* after gaining national attention for banning the book written about the U.S. criminal justice system policing Black men.

"An uproar over the ban of *Chokehold: Policing Black Men*, including threats of a lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union, prompted Arizona prison officials to review a publication blacklist and reverse suspending the book," National Public Radio reported.

A growing number of state prison systems, including California, bans prisoners from possessing certain books, deeming them contraband.

Chokehold was written by Georgetown University criminal law professor and former federal prosecutor Paul Butler. His publisher notified him in March that the book was "unauthorized" in Arizona prisons.

"The notice did not specify what led to the decision," The Associated Press reported.

The ban drew criticism from a number of prisoner and First Amendment advocates, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

"In order for them to ban a book, they have to show the restriction is related to a legitimate prison interest," ACLU attorney Emerson Sykes said. "There's no interest to keep inmates from learning about the criminal justice system and policing."

Sykes challenged the book ban in May with a letter written to Charles Ryan, Arizona's director of corrections, the Arizona Republic reported.

"The very people who experience extreme racial disparity in incarceration cannot be prohibited from reading a book whose purpose is to examine and educate about that disparity," Sykes wrote.

In a blog, Anne Branigin said, "America is taking more and more books out of its prisons..." She said books critical of mass incarceration are often banned.

Chokehold is "the metaphor of the deadly police tactic used to force people into submission," Branigin wrote.

Five years ago, Eric Garner, a Black man died after Daniel Pantaleo, a White New York City police officer, used the choke hold to subdue him.

"I can't breathe," were Garner's last words before he succumbed to cardiac arrest, the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Associated Press) reported. "The medical examiner ruled (his) death a homicide caused by a police choke hold."

"To prohibit prisoners from reading a book about race and the criminal legal system is not only misguided and harmful, but also violates the right to free speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and...the Arizona Constitution," wrote Sykes.

The U.S. Supreme Court case, *Turner v. Safley*, makes an allowance for banning certain books in prisons if the ban serves penological interests such as preventing violence, riots, resistance, a work stoppage or anything that may jeopardize the safety, security or orderly operation of an institution.

"Corrections does not have a blanket list of prohib-

ited magazines, newspapers, books, or music," the *Republic* reported.

The California Code of Regulations, Title 15, section 3134.1 (e), contains the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) Centralized List of Disapproved Publications. Books not included on the list are sometimes banned by officials arbitrarily and later challenged in court.

"Under certain circumstances, it is permissible to prevent incarcerated people from reading materials of their choosing," Sykes wrote. "However, it is unconstitutional to censor a book that educates prisoners on how legal, penal, and other institutions have shaped their own lives and poses no threat to the safety and security of the facility."

Butler, who is Black, wrote *Chokehold* after he was falsely accused of assault and arrested, "an event that dramatically changed his view of the justice system," the Republic reported.

"During the trial, I experienced for myself a lot

of things that defendants I'd prosecuted said were evidence of how unfair the system was: Police lied, witnesses who knew what happened didn't come forward," the *Republic* reported Butler telling *The Guardian* in 2017.

Butler said he was acquitted in ten minutes because "I could afford the best lawyer in the city, had legal skills and social standing, and because I was innocent." But he said "the experience made a man out of me. It made a Black man out of me."

When *Chokehold* was banned, the ACLU said Arizona corrections officials gave no explanation for it.

"I am concerned that many people in custody are subject to other illegal and unfair acts by jailers that most people on the outside never hear about," Butler said to *NPR*. "Providing books to inmates promotes literacy, rehabilitation and civic engagement."

According to Branigin's blog, Sykes' letter "points out that *Chokehold* explicitly disavows violence..." She also pointed to Georgia, North Carolina, Florida and Wash-

ington forbidding free books sent to prisoners.

After the ban was lifted, Sykes wrote a letter stating he is pleased Arizona corrections officials removed the ban on *Chokehold*. He did, however, state the long fight over what books prisoners can access is far from over, *NPR* reported. "These bans are taking place in prisons and jails around the country," he told *NPR*.

In 2015, *Prison Legal News* sued the Arizona Department of Corrections for censorship after the department stopped allowing the monthly publication into its prisons. The department spokesman at that time, Andrew Wilder, told Capitol Media Services the department's action was ensuring "the safe, secure and orderly operation of (its) prisons."

"If rehabilitation is taken seriously and preparation for a life after prison is taken seriously, then prison officials have every interest in promoting education among those who are trying to understand how they got to where they are, and how to make sure they don't come back," Sykes said.

Fear of the outdoors - one result of long term solitary

By Harry C. Goodall Jr
Journalism Guild Writer

Frank De Palma spent more than 40 years of his life inside Nevada's state prisons for second-degree

murder, grand larceny, battery, and attempted murder. Twenty-two of those years were spent in solitary confinement, where he developed acute agoraphobia as a result of the prolonged time

alone, reports *The Marshall Project*.

While serving time at Ely Maximum Security Prison, De Palma was sent to solitary for his own protection. While there, he assaulted a prison guard, so he was kept there. During his confinement in solitary, De Palma slowly began to experience what he called "the opposite of claustrophobia." He began to fear leaving his cell even to exercise.

"It was suddenly like all the air around me became a pressure force...I couldn't breathe. I started banging on the door to the yard to go back inside," he said.

He began to have panic attacks. He experienced tightening in his chest that resembled a heart attack. He stopped taking showers because he feared having too much open space around him. When light began to bother him, he covered up his one window. He lived in darkness as much as possible; only then did he feel safe.

As the years passed, his psychosis grew to the point that when he began to suffer toothaches he used strong

nylon string from his mattress to perform crude extractions in his cell rather than go see a dentist. His behavior did not go unnoticed by the guards. They would tease him by threatening to pull him out of his cell.

During this time, as a coping mechanism, he created his own fantasy world. He'd imagine shopping in a grocery store, tapping melons to see if they were ripe, meeting fictitious people—scenarios that sometimes led to romantic relationships.

De Palma experienced these fantasies so often that reality and fantasy became blurred. The memories of his real life began to fade. "I literally forgot that I had a family," he told the reporter from *The Marshall Project*.

Eventually a psychologist, the warden, and a couple members of the emergency response team came to encourage him to exit his cell. De Palma assumed this was because he was due to leave prison soon. During these first encounters he could barely speak. It had been so long since he actually uttered

words that his speech was garbled. It took the prison team more than several hours to coerce De Palma out of his place of refuge.

A guard told him, "Just keep your eyes closed, and hold onto me," and led him out of his cell while De Palma clutched the guard's belt.

De Palma was transported to Northern Nevada Correctional Center for psychiatric aid. During the several-hour trip, he continued to keep his eyes closed. To pass the time, he concentrated on the pain caused by the tight handcuffs that had been placed on his wrists.

Upon arrival, he asked to be sent back to Ely, a request that was denied. De Palma stayed in the psychiatric ward getting treatment for his acute case of agoraphobia for 10 months. He began to understand that the behavior he displayed was in no way human or normal.

De Palma had a gradual ascent out of acute agoraphobia. It began with short durations of time outside, until he was able to be moved back into the general population.

He was finally released from prison after serving a total of 42 years, 9 months, and 15 days. Transitioning back into society has been hard because he still suffers somewhat from agoraphobia. While wearing a hoodie given to him by a friend, De Palma thought he saw someone closely behind him. In a panic, he quickly turned his body towards the person, causing him to fall to the ground. There was no one behind him, only the hoodie attached to his shirt. On another occasion he walked into a Walmart and noticed himself on one of the big screen TVs. He was horrified, fearing somehow they'd put him into a computer.

To relax, he went to a bathroom stall and locked himself in for 15 minutes until he regained composure. He realizes that a part of him still craves a dark, safe abyss.

De Palma revealed to his interviewer that he is troubled by thoughts that prison has been his whole life, and he questions, "Am I going to make it out here? Am I too damaged to ever belong?"

San Quentin News

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Behind the Scenes



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Allegations of slave labor tarnish drug rehabilitation program's record

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

A well-known drug rehabilitation foundation is using its patients in Texas and Louisiana for what critics call "slave labor."

The Cenikor Foundation said the workers' pay goes to offset the cost of their participation in a two-year work-rehabilitation program.

"It's the closest thing to slavery," said Logan Tullier, a former Cenikor participant who worked 10 hours a day at oil refineries, and laying steel rebar in 115-degree heat. "We were making them all the money."

Over the years the foundation has sent its patients to work for over 300 companies, according to *thead-*

vocate.com in an article written by reporters for the Center for Investigative Reporting.

Working so many hours a day leaves little time for rehabilitative programs, the article noted.

Ethan Ewers said the courts ordered him to complete Cenikor's program and he worked 43 days straight unloading cargo containers in oppressive heat. After working so many days in a row, he was too tired to go to meetings or groups.

"I said, 'You need to give me a day off because I can't do this anymore,'" Ewers said he told Cenikor brass. "It was absolutely ridiculous."

Cenikor charges less than temp agencies and its staff members get incen-

tives to work the clients long hours. The more money staff brought in, the bigger their bonuses, the research revealed.

Some of Cenikor's patients are working up to 80 hours a week, not seeing any of the money and at risk for injury and other health issues, according to the article. One worker died of job injuries in 1995.

Bill Bailey, Cenikor's chief executive officer, earned more than \$400,000 in 2017. *theadvocate.com* reported he repeatedly declined requests for comment. But in a statement, Cenikor officials said the work provides "a career path for clients to be hired by companies who traditionally do not hire those with felony

convictions, allowing them to return to a life of being a responsible, contributing member of society."

Fewer than eight percent of those who entered Cenikor graduate from the program, and therefore never receive a job that pays, the article noted.

Cenikor insists that they follow all state and federal laws.

However, the Supreme Court ruled in 1985 that working for free in a nonprofit -- even one with a rehabilitative purpose -- was a violation of federal labor law.

According to *theadvocate.com*, research has found that many drug rehab programs throughout the country have become "little more than lucrative work camps for private industry."

Kern Valley State Prison recognizes graduating class of Substance-Use Disorder Treatment program

By Benjamin Norton
Contributing Writer

Today is not another run-of-the-mill day in Kern Valley State Prison. The D-Facil-

ity Visiting Room is packed full of people, all with cause for celebration. The energy in the room is palpable. Today is graduation day for the Substance-Use Disorder Treat-

ment Program (SUDT). It is a day of jubilation for dozens upon dozens of people, not all of them inmates.

Warden Pfeiffer was kind enough to come and share

some inspirational words about being an agent of change while having the courage to stand out from the crowd. Ms. Chavez, the Acting Program Director for the host, Geo Reentry Group, gave praise for the hard work and dedication it took, day after day, to internalize the curriculum and complete the program. The guest speaker, Alexandar DeVora, an ex-inmate now eight years free, spoke of the possibilities the future holds. Speaking from experience he shared that we can overcome our past to become not only a success in our own right, but a shining light to others.

The sound of excited conversation and laughter fills the air. Lined up in the back of the visiting room are the dozen or so family members who are able to attend and share in this achievement with their loved ones. Every single one of their faces beams with pride and love as they watch their sons, brothers, uncles, and fathers walk

forward when their name is called to receive their certificate of completion. Thunderous applause echoes from other graduates and current SUDT and CBT participants who are able to celebrate this occasion with their friends, while looking forward with anticipation to their own graduation day.

Luis Manzanares, an unofficial mentor to many, speaks of the significance that this event holds for everyone involved. "This ceremony is the antithesis of what the men on this yard are accustomed to. Constantly hearing that this is the 'worst yard in California' can take its toll on an environment. However, a lot of us here are trying to rid the yard of that mentality. There are good people doing good things here and this gathering is a reflection of the sincere effort at change being given here."

Also in attendance are the counselors who worked diligently and with extreme patience with all of the graduating classes. Ms. Balderas,

Mrs. Clark, Ms. Pedroza, Ms. Lopez, Ms. Mattox, Ms. Trujillo, Mr. Alcantar, Mr. Sebreros, and Mr. Zacarias, among others. Each one proud of "their guys" because they all experienced firsthand the strength and vulnerability it took these 50-plus graduates to crack that hard shell and begin to open up. Digging into the past and beginning the healing process is not an easy thing to do. These men and women would be the first to admit that not every day was a "walk in the park." And that was OK. If every day had been easy, it would have diminished the accomplishment. It was the resistance, the emotions and the struggle that the men persevered through that made the journey more memorable and the end destination a triumph.

A sincere congratulation to the SUDT graduating class of 2019, here in KVSP and elsewhere all across the state.



Photo courtesy of Benjamin Norton

: Back Row (left to right): Estrada, Guardado, Lambert, Villa, Abel, Sapiens, Front Row: Norton, White, Tucker, Hernandez

Veterans find healing through sharing their experiences

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

San Quentin's Catholic Chapel provided space on June 27 for a small group of Bay Area volunteers to meet with incarcerated veterans who'd just completed a rigorous year-long therapy program designed to help them overcome past traumas, including PTSD.

The program, Veterans Healing Veterans from the Inside Out (VHV), began in 2012 by then-incarcerated Ron Self. Self believes giving military veterans the chance to write about their lives is therapeutic, which is why he says Narrative Therapy opens the door to healing. Self has since paroled but continues to work with VHV.

Several outside volunteers, including Sarah Alexander, spoke to seven of the nine graduates as they received certificates of completion.

"I hope that you can take in your hearts what you've given me," Alexander said. "Our VHV groups are all about connection. You touch people outside in ways that you might not imagine. Each of us has the opportunity to share our stories and

be listened to—that's the reciprocal nature of narrative therapy.

"The theme of today's stage is the cost of pent-up and repeated traumas with no healthy release."

Referring to Ron Self, VHV program director Rebecca Haskell said, "This is his heart and this is his life. He is so proud of you. Embracing this program is allowing you to embrace aspects of yourself that you weren't aware of and didn't understand. The healing is within you, but VHV allows you to express it."

Mary Donovan of Cal Vets, who formerly worked with VHV, said, "When we make un-judgmental space for a person tell his story, in their own time, they move to healing. We do this by listening. Listening is the essential act. Listening draws out the story."

Graduate David Anderson served in the Navy and was honorably discharged twice.

"Probably the most important thing that narration does is allow you to express your emotions and feelings in words," Anderson said. "There is something very healing in being able to put

our experiences, thoughts, emotions and feelings into words."

Tom Ucko, one of the VHV community volunteers, talked of being nervous the first time coming inside San Quentin and walking around unescorted.

"Sitting in my first group, I was stunned," Ucko said, after hearing about an extremely violent crime.

Ucko said his judgment faded as he began to learn that the men were no longer the men who commit-

ted their crimes—that there was regret and shame exhibited from each story.

"Hearing about childhood trauma was especially challenging to listen to—tears were shed," Ucko said. "In the safety of the circle, I was able to share my traumas and tell my truths. I felt nourished and loved."

Carlos Smith talked about how VHV helped him with PTSD, the moral injuries he suffered and how his actions have consequences.

"This program has given me a reason to open my heart and mind and make a positive change deep within my inner beauty," Smith said. "VHV has shown me that there's a better solution to solve problems and deal with my demons, rather than acting out in anger and violence."

"Amazing Grace" was sung by Rick Harrell.

"It's a real privilege to be here with you guys," Harrell said. "I'm not here to sing to you, but to lead you in singing."

Haskell acknowledged graduates who'd transferred to other prisons—John Robb and David "Solo" Bennett.

"Everyone in this room is an ambassador for VHV," Haskell said. "If you feel like this program has impacted you in a meaningful way, scream it as loud as you can."

The new VHV graduates are: David Anderson, Ian Brown, James Dunbar, Darrell Gautt, Andrew Gazzeny, Jerome Hermosa, Emery Milligan, Carlos Smith, and Paul Stauffer.



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

Veterans Healing Veterans members and volunteers celebrate their graduation

Prisoners

Continued from Page 1

"The use of out-of-state facilities was always meant to be a temporary solution to the significant prison overcrowding we experienced in the mid-2000's, and due to meaningful prison reforms, we have been able to bring our inmates back to California and closer to their families," Diaz said.

This is a major step toward fulfilling Gov. Gavin Newsom's promise to reduce the Golden State's reliance on out-of-state and private prisons.

California's historic change comes as the private prison industry is under nationwide scrutiny, accused of plac-

ing profits, rather than public safety, as its main goal. But some SQ prisoners who were housed at these facilities disagree.

"Out-of-state prisons are a well-oiled machine. They are pro inmate," said Patrick Ryan, H-unit Men's Advisory Council Chairman. He was housed out of state for two years at La Palma Correctional Facility in Arizona and North Fork Correctional Facility in Oklahoma, both owned and operated by Corrections Corporation of America, now known as CoreCivic.

"Out-of-state prisons were amazing. The cells were huge, we got three hot meals a day delivered to your cell, canteen delivered to your building, ice machines, microwaves, three 65-inch TV's in the

day room, Xboxes, air conditioning, four yards, and two gyms," said Ryan. "The food was way better out of state and you got paid to go to school. They actually had food sales, too. They had the same rehabilitation programs as they do in-state."

"Getting a visit wasn't more difficult for me," said Ryan. "I'm originally from Florida, but I also have a house in Southern California. In both instances, Oklahoma and Arizona, it was closer for my family to visit me than it is now that I'm at San Quentin. But for most guys, it was further for their family to come visit out of state."

"Medical was very slow there," Ryan said. He was asked about any drawbacks to being incarcerated out of

state in a private facility: "The 602 (inmate appeal) process was horrendous; it was slow because we had to mail them back to California. They weren't done in-house."

San Quentin resident Taylor said that it feels great to be back closer to his family, but he preferred the living conditions in the out-of-state facilities. He was housed out of state at Florence Correctional Facility in Arizona, Tallahassee County Correctional Facility in Mississippi, and La Palma Correctional Facility in Arizona before being transferred to San Quentin four years ago.

"I did get a visit from my parents while I was out of state. My parents were coming to Mississippi for a family reunion so they happened

to stop by and visit me," said Taylor. "I'm from San Francisco, so it should be pretty self-explanatory that it's a lot easier for my family to visit me here."

CoreCivic's founder, Terrell Don Hutto, according to *TIME Magazine*, ran a cotton plantation the size of Manhattan in the 1960's, which operated mainly off of unpaid, Black convict labor. He then went on to found Corrections Corporation of America, now known as CoreCivic, one of the largest private prison operators in the nation.

Other states, such as New York, have taken measures against private prison corporations, according to an article in *Forbes*. The state of New York is prohibiting private prisons from operating within

the state and divesting its state pension funds from CoreCivic and GEO Group (another large private prison operator). Latest legislative efforts are attempting to prohibit banks chartered in the state of New York from "investing in and providing financing to private prisons."

Inmate Taylor shrugs off such financial issues. "They're making money off of us right now, so knowing that they're making money off of us through the private prison operators is no different. At least we were comfortable out there," Taylor said. "The only thing better about being back in a prison in Cali is that I don't have to put my family through the hassle of traveling half-way around the country just to hug me."

California's dark secret: prisoners sentenced under prior guidelines have little hope of ever being released

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Some men serving life sentences in California say they're "political prisoners." While there's technically no legal definition for the term, some facts and evidence suggest they may be right.

At San Quentin State Prison, there are men who have served 40-plus years, continuously. These men are survivors of carceral Darwinism, having lived through changes in state politics, parole laws, parole boards, restructured prisoner classifications, a prosperous prison guards' union, crime victims' influence on laws,

changes to the death penalty, and the most violent period in California prison history.

They're called "7 Ups" in prison vernacular, a slang term for those sentenced to life and eligible for parole after serving seven years. That was before 1977, when Senate Bill 42 passed and was signed into law by former Gov. Jerry Brown, the first time he held office from 1975-'82.

Seven-ups are serving life sentences under California's old Indeterminate Sentencing Law, where judges imposed indefinite time. Under this law, different prisoners convicted of the same crimes spend fluctuating lengths of time in pris-

on. Today, some 7 Ups have no idea when, if ever, their sentence will end.

Changes in California politics and the policies of all governors since Brown have politicized parole decisions. "They use this against all life prisoners," said Johnny "Zakiy" Arafiles, 66. He's been incarcerated since age 25.

Arafiles was sentenced to a 7-Up term for murder and was found suitable for release by the parole board in 1991. But Gov. Pete Wilson reversed the decision beyond the time allowed to do so. California's Court of Appeals upheld that decision.

"This is bad law," said Arafiles. He's appeared before 16 different parole boards while his sentence lengthens and his chance for freedom diminishes. "There are so many in here being illegally detained because they don't know the law, and they're (parole board) taking advantage of it."

From 2000 to 2008, the parole board denied 98% of cases. The remaining 2% of cases that the parole board granted release during that time were overturned 60% of the time by Gov. Gray Davis and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, according to author Keramet Reiter's book 23/7.

"It has been clear to me that there is a general conspiracy to prevent life prisoners from paroling, especially those whose offenses include murder," wrote Albert M. Leddy in a July 2000 declaration. He's the former district attorney of Kern County, Calif., and former Board of Prison Terms chairman. "I am informed that Gov. Gray Davis has expressed his policy that no murderer offender will be paroled on his watch."

Parole boards have become more punitive over the years, many 7 Ups say. When some of them were sent to prison, parole was granted by the Adult Authority. It later changed to the Community Release Board, then to the Board of Prison Terms (BPT). Today it's the Board of Parole Hearings.

Allen "Squirrel" Ware, 64, was arrested in 1974 and subsequently convicted on a first-degree murder charge. He was the lookout on a burglary, not the actual killer. Still, he was given a 7-Up sentence under the rescinded felony murder law, changed last year by Senate Bill 1437.

"Today we find you credible," the transcript from Ware's 21st Board hearing reads. He said the parole board

apologized for not believing him sooner.

Ware was incarcerated at the peak of California's prison violence, when between 1970 and 1974 there were 82 murders, 11 prison guards and 71 prisoners, according to Reiter.

"...there is a saturation point in practically every man's servitude beyond which every additional hour is wasted and destructive punishment"

Tough-on-crime posturing, 7 Ups said, placed them in the crosshairs of political intrigue. In Leddy's declaration, he wrote, "After Governor Wilson's election in 1990, he substantially intervened to reduce parole grants; in actual effect his policy practically eliminated paroles. He accomplished this, first, by appointing and reappointing BPT Commissioners known to disfavor parole or to favor a 'no-parole' policy."

"Convicted murderers don't deserve any more breaks," Wilson said in his 1992 State of the State speech. In his 1994 speech, he said, "We can't let killers walk out of prison early just because they've done a good job folding shirts in the prison laundry."

"The most you would do is 11 to 12 years," Arafiles said about the 7-Up sentence. "If you did 13, you were messing up."

Terry "Duck" Alexander, 73, has been incarcerated nearly 43 years after his conviction

for a 1977 murder in San Jose, Calif. He received a 7-Up sentence and has appeared before different parole boards at least 13 times.

"There's no set guideline for what it takes to be rehabilitated in California," said Alexander. "When you go to the Board and they read about you, they're looking at past tense. They like to dwell on the past."

Under the Indeterminate Sentencing Law, a prisoner's individual conduct and rehabilitation was what the parole board considered to determine who was released. But rehabilitation was expunged from the state's Penal Code by Governor Brown in 1976, replaced with the Determinate Sentencing Law, which stated, in part: "The Legislature finds and declares that the purpose of imprisonment for crime is punishment."

"Although the reluctance to grant parole began in the early '80s under Governor Wilson's regime, BPT panels denied parole in over 99% of cases by employing procedures that violate the parole statutes and regulations," Leddy wrote.

Some 7 Ups say for the state to release them now would be to admit its past wrong, which was to deny them parole for so long, because they're intricately tied to past underground political decisions.

More than 30 years after many 7 Ups arrived in prison, Governor Schwarzenegger added the word "Rehabilitation" to California Department of Corrections. 7 ups say nothing has changed.

As former San Quentin warden Clinton Duffy wrote in 1952, "...there is a saturation point in practically every man's servitude beyond which every additional hour is wasted and destructive punishment."

San Francisco adopts free phone calls for inmates

Inmates in San Francisco county jails will be allowed to make free telephone calls, which is expected to reduce these costs passed on to their family and friends.

In June, the city's mayor, London Breed, and sheriff, Vicki Hennessy, announced plans to cut costs of phone calls and commissary items sold to inmates, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

In a statement, Breed said "This change is an important continuation of our efforts to reform fines and fees that disproportionately impact low-income people and communities of color."

San Francisco's Financial Justice Project, an organization inside the treasurer's office that analyzes fines and fees imposed on the poorest residents in the city, reported nearly 80% of

telephone calls made by inmates from its jails are paid for by families and friends, mainly low-income women of color.

"These practices are predatory and disproportionately affect poor people," said Public Defender Manohar Raju. "Reducing the financial burdens of phone fees for incarcerated people will allow them to stay better connected with their loved ones and gives them a better chance going forward after their release."

The city reported that it costs \$300 in a little over a month for someone to accept two 15-minute calls a day.

"When people are in jail they should be able to remain connected to their family without being concerned about how much it will cost them or their loved ones," said Breed.

According to the mayor's office, San Francisco will be the first county jail system in the nation to get rid of such costs. The city expects to make the changes within a year.

"Breed set aside about \$1.7 million in the city's two-year budget for the Sheriff's Department to eliminate the fees charged for phone calls and the sometimes dramatic mark-ups placed on jail commissary merchandise," the *Chronicle* reported.

"I'm really proud that San Francisco is putting people before profits," said State Senator Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles). "When people can stay in better touch with their families and support networks, it eases their reentry and it reduces recidivism."

—Kevin D. Sawyer

California legislature advances bill to compensate victims of involuntary sterilization

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairman

Pending legislature aims to compensate victims of an old California policy that once resulted in forced or involuntary sterilization on individuals deemed unfit to reproduce.

Under California's eugenics sterilization program, state institutions from 1909 to 1979 legally sterilized certain disabled or mentally ill persons—without valid consent. Eugenics was the scientific practice of selectively weeding out inferior genetic specimens.

"The sterilizations at the women's prisons primarily targeted Black and Brown women as well as poor white women," said Hafsah Al-Amin, Program Coordinator for the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP), in a press release. "They were intended to stop the reproduction of a population whom the state would rather see caged, disenfranchised and infertile."

Assembly Bill 1764—the Forced or Involuntary Sterilization Compensation Program Bill—provides for monetary reparations to any verified survivors of the eugenics laws, which California repealed in 1979. The bill fur-

ther allows for compensation to the hundreds of women needlessly sterilized during their incarceration post-1979, usually while in labor, giving birth or during other surgical—and vulnerable—procedures.

"They were intended to stop the reproduction of a population whom the state would rather see caged, disenfranchised and infertile."

According to CCWP's press release, state records reveal that almost 250 women throughout California's prison system were involuntarily sterilized throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s.

Written by Assembly Member Wendy Carrillo, AB 1764 is endorsed by California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ), the Disability Rights

Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) and CCWP.

"The majority of sterilizations were done on women and girls, and disproportionately impacted Latinas, who were 59% more likely to be sterilized than non-Latinas," said the press release. "California officials apologized for this historical wrong in 2003."

"Recently the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors issued a public apology for non-consensual tubal litigations of Mexican-origin women at USC/LA County Hospital in the 1960s-1970s, yet the history and legacy of California's eugenics laws are little known."

"As reproductive justice advocates, we recognize the insidious impact state-sponsored policies have on the dignity and rights of poor women of color who are often stripped of their ability to form the families they want," said CLRJ Executive Director Laura Jimenez. "This bill is a step in the right direction in remedying the violence inflicted on these survivors."

Aside from financial compensation, AB 1764 will designate historic markers at selected sites—to raise social awareness of the human rights

atrocities inflicted on thousands of people in California.

If signed into law, California would become the third U.S. state to fund compensation for victims of state-sponsored eugenics laws.

AB 1764 would also make California the first state ever to give compensation to women involuntarily sterilized while they were incarcerated.

"The number of people sterilized under the 1909 eu-

genics law in California account for one third of all the recorded sterilizations that occurred in the United States in the 20th century," said CCWP. "It is important to note that administrators of the law at the time had broad discretion in practice to decide who was classified as 'unfit'."

"For 70 years, it was legal for Californians to be sterilized just because they were disabled or someone

thought they were disabled," said Susan Henderson, Executive Director of DREDF. "California's Sterilization Compensation Bill helps provide redress to disabled survivors who were wrongly sterilized against their will."

"Taking responsibility for this injustice is the necessary next step to guard against future state-sanctioned abuse and discrimination."



Photo courtesy of CCWP

Women Advocates of CCWP and CLRJ supporting Bill

Grammy-nominated Nipsey Hussle remembered

EDITORIAL

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Happy Birthday and rest in peace, Nipsey Hussle, born Ermias Asghedom. On March 31, the late rapper was gunned down in front of The Marathon Clothing store, his place of business in the Crenshaw District of South Los Angeles. Nipsey Hussle would have been 34 years old on August 15.

I didn't know you as personally, but I bought your 2019 Grammy-nominated debut album "Victory Lap" and a couple of your mix tapes "Slauson Boy Volume 1" and "Bullets Got No Names Volume 1-3."

Your tragic murder made me reflect on my own act of

senseless violence. My role in the ongoing Black on Black violence. The hurt and pain of crying mothers, wives and children. Growing up in South Central myself, I know and understand the gang culture.

Wherever a simple dispute ends with gun violence, retaliation and decades of more murders, the Black community suffers. As the saying goes: one Black man died, the other in jail. The cycle continues.

We lost a young king who transformed his life. He went from a gang member to a business man who reinvested in his community. Nipsey was different from most other young rappers.

He promoted investing in real-estate rather than cars and jewelry. He started his

own music label "All Money In." This allowed him to own the rights to his music.

Nipsey bought the strip mall in his neighborhood on Crenshaw and Slauson, where



his store sits. He had plans to renovate some of the space for affordable housing units that would include healthy food options, reported the Los Angeles Sentinel.

He launched the "Too Big to Fail" initiative to bring the tech industry to the 'hood. The initiative focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs for the inner-cities.

Nipsey was scheduled to meet with the Los Angeles Police Department's top brass to discuss ways to reduce gang violence and start youth programs. He was killed the day before the meeting. Nipsey Hussle made money and gained fame but he never left his community.

Something we seem to love the most could become the thing that does us in. Nipsey

Hussle has become one of a growing list of rappers, the voices of our community, who died from gun violence. We lost 2Pac, Biggie, Mac Dre and XXXtentacion.

This list does not exclude the countless men and women whose names only their families know. The pain and grief is real even for someone like me, who caused harm. The ripple effect is real – just a few seconds of violence can cause a lifetime of pain.

When I called home to check that my uncle was outside watching Nipsey Hussle's funeral procession going down the street, he spoke about the large crowds and the peace of the city paying homage to one of the city's own.

Ermias "Nipsey Hussle" Asghedom leaves

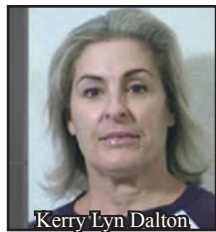
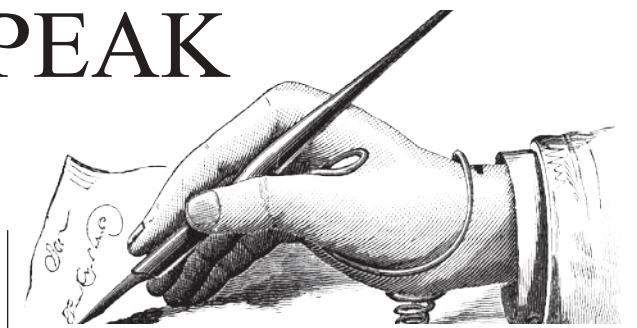
behind a wife, two kids and family members who love him.

We recognize you in your final lap, Nipsey. The marathon continues. Much love and respect.



LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK

letters to the editor



I'm a woman on California's Death Row. I have been on Death Row for over 23 years. I think this newspaper does a lot of good and I like that you write about women on Death Row. But before people make assumptions about us, they should talk to all of us. There are women here who were horribly abused by men and that caused them to be here. They need a "voice" too. I

worry that they are forgotten. If you speak for us, I feel that you should include our voices.

Sincerely
Kerry Lyn Dalton

Dear San Quentin News

Last year I read an article about an Inmate Johnson winning a scholarship from the ChungAhm Scholarship Foundation. Thanks to that article, I applied for a scholarship and won one too. For that I am grateful.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Alvarado

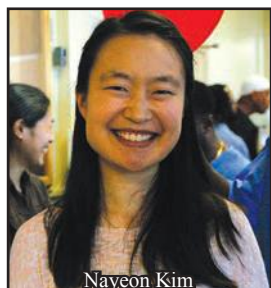
I just finished reading Kunlyna Tauch's article "An Interview with former Death Row prisoner" (May 2019) and I just gotta write...

I've had this just gotta write feeling several times while reading this issue, but this time I actually picked up my pen!

This is an incredibly fabulous, down-to-earth, intelligent, heart-opening newspaper- The *San Quentin News*.

It's shocking: the depth y'all communicate. Article after article... all relevant to humanity.

Thank you and God bless you!
Nyla Blair



By Nayeon Kim

"Crimmigration" law can be very complex, so it receives less attention from the advocacy community than its relevance warrants. There are not a lot of low-cost immigration legal services in the Bay Area that have the capacity or expertise to manage cases with criminal convictions. This is definitely an area that needs the investment of many more allies,

training, and resources. It would be great to see an immigration system that allows for more community participation, so there is space for the families and friends of people in proceedings to have a say in the defense of their loved ones. I think it is important that the communities of incarcerated immigrants be included in expressing their stake in the outcome of the cases, and influence the decision-making process.

It would be great to see Bay Area organizations re-imagine ways that can create equity in the current balance of inequity. Sometimes we only see our limitations, but there are many ways to be creative if we really put our heads together. Immigration and criminal justice issues are intertwined with housing issues, education issues, and public health issues, too.

Many people want to help but don't know how. Collaboration is essential for an issue that so polarizes our country. On a micro-level, conversations are important to keep having. Our society needs to keep up, stay ahead, and consciously decide how to accept, reject, or transform messages that our government and media produce. Today, those messages tend to vilify immigrants, which can also distort messages about immigrants with criminal records in cynical ways. The messages that pit immigrants against each other for the sake of political favor and appeal reveal our divisions and discourage strength in unity. Our country has a habit of dichotomizing immigrants in a "good immigrant vs. bad immigrant" scheme. This eventually undermines everybody who buys into that narrative. Many advocates still rely often on photos and stories about vulnerable women and children, which risks estranging people who don't fit into the box (men, people with criminal convictions, etc.). It is always important to humanize any people we objectify; women and children are no exception. Our country fails to adequately care for women and children in so many ways already, so it seems far from being ready to care for everybody else, too. However, it's important not to fall into this deficit mindset that make us pick and choose among many people in need. We should talk thoughtfully about the experiences of all immigrants, listen to them respectfully in all their complexity, acknowledge them as human, and build consensus about policy from there. The policy that we write and vote for needs to work for more people than the small populations it serves now, and not at any one group's cost. Accounting for complexity is the key to building toward a vision that includes the voices of all people and validates everybody's worth.



Photo courtesy of Re:Store Justice

Betty Sweet and son

By Betty Sweet

On December 17, 2004 at 9:35 PM, I was awakened by a loud knocking downstairs. I groggily stumbled down the stairs and opened the door to see two policemen. "What did he do?" I asked.

"He did nothing ma'am. He was shot".

"Shot?" I whispered in disbelief. "Is he dead?"

"No ma'am, but you need to get dressed so we can take you to the hospital."

With trembling hands, I hurriedly dressed. When I returned downstairs, the policeman had gotten off the phone and I could tell by the look on his face that I was about to hear some bad news.

"He didn't make it".

"He didn't make what?" I yelled in disbelief. "He's dead, ma'am."

I fell to my knees, clutching my chest in agony as I slowly crawled to the bathroom to throw up yellow-greenish, sickening bile. The pain was so excruciating that my spirit left my body and I watched me from above.

Just a week before Christmas and my whole world was forever changed. Jason was my 18-year old son, a beautiful young man with a loving and generous heart. He was robbed of \$500 and shot in the chest. What's a grieving mother to do?

Well, I can't speak for anyone else but myself. I did what I had to do to try to quell this trauma and pain. After the funeral and all the company had died down, I began my journaling journey. Months later, as I re-read

them, I noticed the strategies or steps that I'd taken on my journey toward peace. This discovery morphed into my book: *Survivor to Thriver – A Mother's Journey Toward Peace After Her Son's Murder*.

Take a chunk of your heart and spread it over some paper. It goes, oh, such a long way. – James T. Mangan. Writing allows you to get everything out – good and bad – on paper, in black and white. The seven strategies toward healing that I identified in my book morphed into a ten-week Write to Heal Program – a one-hour weekly "pull-out program" for secondary school children with PTSD.

Another thing that was crucial for my healing was attending support groups with grieving mothers like myself. Through my association with Justice for Murdered Children, I was privileged to meet Rebecca Weiker, from Restore Justice.

I was intrigued with her prison reform program and couldn't wait until I was cleared so I could see what it was like to enter a prison as a provider instead of as an inmate's visitor. Plus, I wanted to further my connections and resources for my Free 4 Lyfe re-entry program for ex-offenders.

After my clearance, I was involved in a Transformative Justice Symposium at CIW. It was a two-day event re: Healing from Violence: Exploring Trauma & Resilience. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. There were 30 survivors, 30 incarcerated women, and 20 people from the DA's office, judges, wardens, commissioners, mental health providers – 80

People in total. We were divided into groups of 10. There were 4 incarcerated women in my group. They had all been convicted of murder.

These prompts incited such honest and poignant heartfelt responses that everyone was reaching for the box of Kleenex in the middle of the circle. Every circle was experiencing the same raw emotions as our group. The empathy that I felt for these "murderers" was overwhelming. I felt their pain and remorse. I kissed and hugged each of them as we sobbed together.

I went to sleep with them on my mind, but dreamed about the person who murdered my son. We had been writing each other for five years until he pissed me off and I stopped for five years. Those ladies had shown me real regret and remorse, the same thing I'd received through his letters. They made me start writing to him again. The joy and love I received from him was worth it. He stated he wants to look me in my eyes, hug me and tell me how sorry he is. I'm planning to visit him sometime this year. There's Nothing like the Power of Forgiveness!

RE:STORE
JUSTICE

Getting a rare second chance in prison

How one youthful offender reclaimed his life with the help of others

KidCAT Speaks!

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairman

Ryan Dietz arrived at San Quentin in 2016 ready to succumb to all the usual pitfalls that await youth offenders—substance abuse, cellphone activity and peer-pressured violence.

Instead, the 19-year-old found a supportive community of mentors and positive role models that guided him onto a better path and a brighter future. Dietz paroled from SQ on July 7 with a heart determined to pay that forward.

“Ultimately, prison gave me back my life,” Dietz told *SQNews*. “When I look back, I know I’m always going to be grateful for this experience—I know that sounds funny, but it’s true.”

Dietz entered the system as a teenager hooked on crystal meth. He’d already been in and out of rehab numerous times. Fortunately for him, he crossed paths with guys at SQ who were ready to help.

Dietz said that Charlie Spence came up to him on the yard and asked if he was a youth offender. “He told me about a group I needed to join, with nothing but other youth offenders in it.”

Spence, a former KidCAT Chairman and lifer, who paroled last year, left a lasting impact on Dietz, encouraging him to take an active role in the YOP (Youth Offender

Program) community, particularly KidCAT and BE-IT (Benefitting Each Individual Together.)

Dietz didn’t just participate in these groups—he eventually became a facilitator and mentor himself.

“I’m not religious, so I don’t want to say ‘blessing’, but it pretty much was a blessing to land at San Quentin,” said Dietz. “There are just so many people here willing to give me the time to help me out.”

Kenny Vernon, Tommy Wickerd, Chris Deragon and Charlie Spence are the guys Dietz said kept pushing him to be his best.

Wickerd first met Dietz years before, when he was called-up with Dietz’ uncle at Lancaster.

“It’s crazy...I can’t even remember the guy’s name right now,” said Wickerd. “But he knew I was serious about working with youngsters. He told me about his 16-year-old nephew messing with drugs and possibly hanging around with gang members.”

Wickerd, who’s been incarcerated now for the last 18 years—and sober for the last 17—had facilitated Lancaster’s Youth Diversion program, and, at the time, was also Vice Chairman of CROP (Convicts Reaching Out to People).

“I wrote the kid a four-page letter, just telling him what was waiting for him if he continued doing what he was doing,” said Wickerd. “But later, you know, his

uncle told me he was still f---ing up out there.”

Dietz eventually visited his uncle at Lancaster, and Wickerd happened to be there at the same time visiting with his wife.

“Man, when my uncle told them it was me, Tommy came straight up to me—his wife is there, too, yelling at me,” said Dietz. “He said, ‘Look youngster, you keep it up, you’re going to end up in prison with me. And this isn’t the lifestyle you want.’”

“When I realized Ryan was standing in front of me at SQ three years later, I felt like I’d failed him,” said Wickerd. “I felt like crap because my own son was out there making bad choices, and now someone I’d tried to mentor had ended up in prison.”

“Ryan was a little jerk when he first got here, too— young and ready to do whatever he had to do, and not in a good way.”

Dietz only had about a 10th grade education, so right away Wickerd ushered him into the education building and introduced Dietz to the CDCR teachers who were helping Wickerd complete his own GED.

“Once I got in there, I actually liked it,” said Dietz. “I didn’t feel pressured, because I was making the choice myself.”

Dietz flew through the coursework and passed all the GED tests within three months.

After that, Dietz also completed SQ’s Substance Abuse

Program (SAP), participated in Coalition For Justice, graduated KidCAT’s First Step curriculum, enrolled in the Prison University Project (PUP)—and worked as a vocational carpenter.

Vernon, 52, took it upon himself to get Dietz into vocational training, so that Dietz would have some viable job skills to take with him to the streets.

“I had to talk my supervisors into taking a chance on Ryan, but I told them I’d be responsible for training him and getting him up and running,” said Vernon. “Now that Ryan’s leaving, they want me to go find another motivated youngster for that spot—all because Ryan worked out so phenomenally.”

“Kenny taught me everything I needed to know,” said Dietz.

The two men—over 30 years apart in age—developed a deep connection, eventually celling-up together for the last year. Everyone quickly began referring to Vernon as Dietz’ “prison daddy.”

“I’m just proud of the kid. He put so much positive work into himself,” said Vernon. “At first, you have to push these youngsters to succeed, but then you need to let up and see if they can make the right decisions on their own.”

At one point, Dietz found himself faced with a personal dilemma: there can be a stigma attached to prisoners who choose to serve their time at SQ. The situation is complicated but, for Dietz, it was a choice between what was best for his personal advancement versus how he might be labeled at other prisons.

“At first, I was really unsure,” said Dietz. “I didn’t know what I was gonna do. I talked to Chris, Tommy, Kenny, but it was Branden [Riddle-Terrell] who told me something that stuck in my mind.”

“He said, ‘Listen to yourself. You’re already worried about what people at other prisons think of you—and you don’t even know those people yet.’”

“That just made me understand—other people’s opinions, unless they are positive, don’t really matter.”



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Ryan Dietz and “Prison Daddy” Kenny Vernon

Though it was difficult, ultimately Dietz made the decision based on what increased his chances for a successful reentry.

“This is the first time in my life that I’ve actually applied myself to positive things,” he said. He explained, for example, that the relationship he had with his mom had always been strained but that was beginning to change. “Now she’s starting to trust me a little more.”

Becoming a KidCAT member helped put things in perspective for Dietz.

“It was weird, because when I first got into that group on Thursdays—everyone acted like adults,” he said. “I wasn’t used to it. The love and respect everyone shows each other, I’ve never seen nothing like that.”

“Learning to handle conflict in a respectful way—respectfully disagreeing with someone—those were all new things to me.”

Philip Senegal first met Dietz in 2017. “He was a shy little guy back then,” recalled Senegal. “He’s a lot more engaging now—a lot more comfortable with himself.”

Senegal wanted to relate an incident that demonstrates Dietz’ growth and maturity: “He and a Black man got into a verbal confrontation over the ‘N’ word. One of Ryan’s White buddies, I guess, used that word—the Black guy thought Ryan said it.”

“Two days later, I could tell Ryan was still troubled by how it all went down. He wasn’t sure how he should handle the situation, but he

wanted to reassure the man that he didn’t agree with his friend’s behavior.”

Senegal, a Black man himself, advised Dietz to just talk to the guy, man-to-man, and offered to be there to facilitate that conversation. But, Dietz felt it was something he needed to do all on his own.

“Ever since then, I kinda latched onto the kid,” said Senegal. “I saw him in a more favorable light. He’s been sincere in his rehabilitation. As this population has evolved, he’s evolved right along with it.”

Dietz said the biggest lessons he’s learned happened by simply being around his fellow KidCAT members.

“I wasn’t comfortable with myself, so I was always looking for validation—that usually came from doing stupid things,” he said. “When I learned to be okay with me, that’s when everything changed.”

“People started to give me actual respect, instead of that fake respect when you do violent things. Doing the positive things I’m doing today, people appreciate me for who I am.”

Dietz plans to take these lessons home to the Tarzana Treatment Center—a youth rehab with which he’s extremely familiar.

“I’ve gone through there three times, but I never listened,” said Dietz. “I need to share my story—a story from a still-young perspective.”

“Maybe I can get through to kids like me and say, ‘Look, this is what happens when you don’t listen.’”

Dear KidCAT

Dear KidCAT,

May this letter find you and your staff members in the best of health and care. My name is Jose Amador, I am incarcerated at Ironwood State Prison (level 3).

The reason for this letter is concerning one of your articles the I read in the *San Quentin News*. It had to do with Proposition 57 and the KidCAT program. It’s good to hear that these youngsters that are coming into the prison system now are not sent to level fours—and that they also have YOP (youth offender) programs that help with new arrivals.

When I came into the prison system there were no programs for lifers—“life” meant life. I was sent to level 4 Calipatria, where I was caught up in the cycle of violence that came with having a life sentence. 19 years into my life sentence, they passed these new laws. For me, Senate Bill 261 gave me a light to see at the end of the tunnel. I have to get my G.E.D., go to Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Anger Management—things I never did before.

Now I am partaking in some self-help programs through the mail. I am also on the waiting list for many more, which it can take up to a year to get enrolled. Since I have four years to go to the board, I am put on the bottom of the lists. So I am left with looking for help through programs that may help through correspondence courses.

My question is do you have any self-help programs that I can correspond with through the mail? If so, how can I sign up?

Thank you for all the good work you do for us. And thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jose Amador

Jose,

Great to get your letter, and so glad that you understand there is absolutely a real light at the end of the tunnel. In order to maintain the integrity of our program, the KidCAT curriculum is not available through the mail. Prisoners need to have the Community Partnership Manager (CPM) at their facility contact our CPM at SQ for more info. Also, we are in the process of updating our entire curriculum right now, and that will take us several months—so please bear with us on that.

Here’s some correspondence programs we’ve had positive interactions with:

PREP Turning Point
P.O. Box 77850
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Creative Options
Academy of Human Development
P.O. Box 808
Lyons, OR 97358

Partnership For Reentry Program (PREP)
2049 S. Santa Fe Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90021

KidCAT appreciates your commitment to self-improvement. Keep it up—and please continue to let us know about your progress. Your voice matters. Don’t ever forget that, Jose.

CRIMINON International
431 N. Brand Blvd., suite #305
Los Angeles, CA 91203

Golden Hills Adult School
#1 King’s Way
Avenal, CA 93204

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

The Beat Within
A Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

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

Power Without Violence – Do you know people that have the respect of others when they enter a room? Who are these people? Maybe a family member, teacher, coach or counselor? Where does that power come from? How would you describe it? Do you have a personal power? How do you use it? Can you relate an example where you, or someone you know, was able to exert power that did not involve violence? Do you believe the old saying that “the pen is mightier than the sword?” *The Beat Within*

P.O. Box 34310
San Francisco, CA 94134

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

San Quentin kicks off its summer concert series

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

The San Quentin Music Program kicked off its summer concert series with a socially conscious Juneteenth Celebration on the prison's Lower Yard.

The June 15 jamboree provided funk, soul, oldies but goodies and rap music to a yard that was full of activities, from basketball to exercising. Even the smoke from the Native Americans' sweat lodge didn't distract the crowd of more than 60 people from surrounding the stage for a musical interlude.

The multi-talented band Contagious was truly infectious with its mixture of rap, rock and African-Caribbean music. Bob Marley, the reggae icon, would have smiled down on these masterful musicians' soul-inspiring set.

Lead rapper/singer David Jassy's socially conscious lyrics and wordplay sought to educate as well as entertain. The 45-minute set showcased original songs such as "Gambia," an ode to Africa and Jassy's family roots.

"Not the Mistakes I Made" and "These Walls" were some of the crowd favorites. But it was the song "All of a Sudden" that provided the food for thought for the day.

"How did we go from Africa to picking cotton, to picking on each other," Jassy questioned, through his rap.

Kevin D. Sawyer, keyboardist; Lee Jaspar, guitarist; Darryl Farris, bass; Paul Comeaux, vocals; and James Benson, drums, rounded out the band. Each musician's musical skills were beyond professional—they were great.

Juneteenth is the celebration of the final slaves being

freed from Texas in 1865. It was two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This year marks the 400th year since the first enslaved African arrived in America.

"Juneteenth is a wake-up call to incarcerated people to recognize that they are free mentally, but just like the brothers in Texas, many don't know it," said Farris. "It's a reminder of where we came from and what we are still going through."

"In order for slaves to be free, they had to work on one accord. We too can be one voice," he added.

The band Just Us treated the crowd to some '80s music. Jeffery Atkins, keyboardist/lead singer, entertained the audience with the showmanship of a stage veteran. Atkins danced, posed and pointed at different band members as they displayed

their talent on their instruments.

Charles Ross worked the drums, Leonard "Funky Len" Walker handled the bass and Raul Higgins dazzled with the percussion.

The band performed "Situation Number Nine" by R&B group Club Nouveau, which Atkins was a member of back in the '80s. The crowd sang along to the song verse by verse.

"I'm feeling inspired—we're here in recognition of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation," said Atkins. "We're here in the spirit of forgiveness."

"Having an outlet for music—there is no other feeling like it. It's a rush. It feels like freedom," he added.

For Higgins, the performance was surreal. He was just found suitable for release by the parole board after serving 21 years of incarceration.

"I have always loved music, but alcohol and drug addictions prevented me from really getting into it," said Higgins. "Now that I'm sober, I can appreciate it...music is a form of meditation to me."

Higgins expects to perform at one or two more events. He is trying to find a balance between band practice, helping others with board preparation and AA meetings.

Wilbur "Rico" Rogers was back at the keyboard jamming with The R&B All-Stars. Rogers suffered a heart attack in February and has been recovering.

"I'm thankful to be here. God is good," said Rogers. "This event is all about unity. Some of us naturally learn it, but we have to teach it to others. Unify around something that has meaning to everybody."

The band performed "Joy and Pain" by Maze, featur-

ing Frankie Beverly, and other soul classics. The group brought on stage a young Eric "Maserati E" Abercrombie to rap on an Isley Brothers song.

Lee Jaspar lent his guitar skills to the All-Stars. Darryl Farris played bass, Anthony O'Neal's rhythmic drumming rounded out the group.

"It's a privilege to be able to sit down and enjoy the festivities with different people of all races and ages celebrating being alive," said spectator Husain Jaheed. "It's important to remember the struggles and sacrifices that our ancestors made. We should never forget."

The day brought a sense of peace, harmony, and enjoyment to all participants and bystanders.

"They say money makes the world go around, but real music makes the world move forward," observed Jassy, imparting more wisdom.



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

left to right: Lee Jaspar, Jeff Atkins, Paul Comeaux, Charles Ross and Leonard Walker



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Lee Jaspar, Paul Comeaux, Anthony O'Neal and Leonard Walker



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Kevin D. Sawyer on background vocals and playing keyboard



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

James Benson on drums and Darryl Farris on bass



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Charles Ross on drums



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Paul Comeaux singing



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

James Benson on drums



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Wilbur "Rico" Rodgers on keyboard



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Lee Jasper, Eric Abercrombie, Darryl Farris, and Jeff Atkins

Juneteenth weekend celebration at San Quentin

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

The 2019 Juneteenth weekend at San Quentin concluded with speeches and musical performances in the prison's Catholic Chapel. About 70 inmates and a handful of outside guests attended the evening event.

The prison's R&B band New Syndication of Funk (NSF) was the driving force behind the music playing songs such as "What You Won't Do For Love" by Bobby Caldwell. Lee Jaspar delivered a memorable solo on guitar, and Rico Rogers was unmatched with his solo on the keyboard.

Inmate Paul C. Hamilton was one of the organiz-

ers and host of the early evening event. "I'm going to tell you what time it is" (about prison), he said at the beginning of his speech. "It's serious business."

Hamilton asked the audience, if they had five minutes to get on a bus departing from prison to take them home, which direction would they go? H-Unit, West Block, or North Block?

"At the end, when I finish speaking, you will know the answer to the question," said Hamilton, explaining that "darkness symbolizes ignorance" before he told a story of how the worst place in Europe put men on a ship and sent them to Louisiana with slaves.

Inmate Tim Young played original music on an acoustic guitar using a looped progression of major-seventh and minor-seventh chords as inmate Michael Mackey rapped and inmate Adriel Ramirez played the drums.

The trio performed the original song "The One You're Overlooking," a song about history, and current events with an overall politically conscious message. It was met with a warm round of applause.

Young said "time alone" inspired the song. "Me myself, thinking about this life and how I felt."

NSF returned to the stage to perform oldies such as "That's The Way I Feel About You," by Bobby Wom-

ack, "Can't Hide Love," by Earth Wind & Fire, "It Just Gets Better With Time," by The Whispers, and what has seemingly become their anthem "Joy and Pain," by Maze, featuring Frankie Beverly.

"It's the second time we've ever done this song," said Rogers, before the band played its original song "Visions." Tony "Tone" O'Neal and Rogers traded off singing with Rogers doing most of the chorus as Paul Comeaux played the tambourine. Jaspar added a jazzy guitar solo to the mix.

"We live in a world now today where the color of our skin and sexual preference is more important than our character," Mackey said,

quoting rapper and author Sista Souljah. Then he sang "Sweet Dream or Beautiful Nightmare," using prerecorded sound tracks from a CD played on the chapel's PA system. "I'm just venting," he said when the song ended.

Hamilton's sermon continued about prison being "a serious situation." He said we live in a time where we can be exposed to the truth. "Some societies control the news and laws." He said it's how propaganda is disseminated.

"We don't pay attention" (in prison), said Hamilton. He said there are people of color telling you that you can't go anywhere. "We have to pay attention to what happened in the past."

"That's why it took us so long to get the message (about the end of slavery), because we weren't paying attention," said Hamilton. "Whose fault was that?" His message was about law, freedom and being vigilant about what's happening in prison. "If you don't hear your name, you won't get on the bus."

At the end of the show, the performers and speakers all gave thanks to Sister Aurora for helping them produce it. "I thought it was great," she said. "Good beats and vocals. I enjoyed it. A lot of participation."

Inmates Jamie Acosta and Eric Rives worked the sound and mixing for the event.



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Steve McNamara, Kimberly Fisk, and Crystal Clayton, Neil Cunningham and Roeya Bannazizi



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

The Hamilton troupe gathered to view prison accommodations



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Donald Webber, Jr., Darilyn Castillo, Marja Harmon, and Sabrina Sloan



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

The troupe was offered a rare visit inside San Quentin's dungeon



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Director of communications Scott Walton, Sabrina Sloan and Neil Cunningham at the prison chowhall



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Feeling the confines of a cell firsthand

"I left feeling incredibly humbled. I was shocked by my ignorance"

Hamilton

Continued from Page 1

Multiple institutional alarms punctuated the Hamilton folk's already abbreviated two-hour visit. As incarcerated men in blue obeyed numerous "Alarm—yard down" commands from prison loudspeakers, the reality of incarceration became more vivid.

The parallels between Burr's legacy and the incarcerated community are not lost on Webber.

"The most famous thing Burr ever did was kill another person," he said. "He should've known the world was wide enough for both him and Alexander Hamilton, but he ended up letting jealousy and anger turn into the biggest mistake of his life."

Webber described the great duality that's at the center of his stage character. "Before the show starts, we all know pretty much what Aaron Burr did. We know him as the villain, the bad guy—a really evil person."

"The course of the show gets people to see his more human qualities. Yes, he acted badly, and that ruined the entire rest of his life, ruined his legacy, his family name."

"All in all, people connect deeply with our portrayals and realize at the end of the show that it's okay to disagree—just don't let all that fester into hate."

"That's such a relevant message for today's societal issues. The world is wide enough to include everyone."

Antwan Williams, who's been incarcerated for 13 years, said he had two memo-

orable conversations, one with an actor and one with a crew member.

"I felt really comfortable and valued in my humanity because none of their questions stemmed from my worst decisions," said Williams. "They came in and they see us as people. That's what I did, too—I wasn't star struck."

Williams particularly felt connected when one person opened up to him about an incarcerated relative who had died behind bars.

"This person said the man did a lot of time and passed away from an illness while he was still incarcerated," said Williams. "Afterwards, the system ended up sending his mother the medical bill."

"It makes you think about the available quality of healthcare. Did his illness go untreated because it took so long for them to look at it?"

"That's a part of their life this person might not have shared with just anybody."

Actor Rick Negron plays King George. As everyone—prisoners and outside guests alike—went around introducing themselves, Webber yelled out during Negron's turn, "That man was in Michael Jackson's 'Bad' video!" which brought a chorus of healthy laughter.

Negron, a dancer on Broadway back in the '80s, said it's true.

"Michael was a strange guy, super shy. But when the cameras came on and it was time to perform—he turned into a whole 'nother person," Negron told SQNews. "I realized later he must have been an abused child, who needed his art as an outlet."

During his SQ introduction, he spoke about the pow-

erful relationship between rehabilitation, change—and the arts.

"I've seen throughout my career that art can truly be a healing medicine for all," said Negron. "And we see it every night when we perform Hamilton. The show's message revolves around communicating and changing people's minds."

Because one of the alarms interrupted an interview question mid-sentence, Negron later graciously sent a written response: "The visit to SQ was a mind blowing and eye opening experience. The complexity of the institution and the population changed my perceptions."

Like Webber, he understands the dualities involved in playing a multilayered role and reflected on the question of King George: "Unfortunately, he started exhibiting bouts of mental illness. However, it didn't really hamper him until much later in his life," said Negron.

"In the show, it's easy to make him a two dimensional buffoon, but I've tried to make him relatable and empathetic."

Part of their brief tour included a stop at SQ's infamous "dungeon"—where prisoners were once left in total darkness for days with only three buckets to keep them company—one for water, one for food and one for excrement.

SQN staff writer Aron Kumar Roy, who'd never seen this part of the facility before, ventured back into the dungeon's deepest corners—an area devoid of any outside light. Overwhelmed by the total darkness, his mind filled with visions of the inhumanity that place represents, Roy

suddenly felt anxious, agitated and uncomfortable.

"I've got to get out of here," he said.

Assistant Company Manager Crystal Clayton overheard Roy and visibly noticed his distress. "Come on, let's get you some fresh air," she said, touching his elbow ever so briefly in a guiding gesture toward sunlight. "It's gonna be alright."

"It struck me how much she cared for my wellbeing," Roy said later. "Something like that shouldn't be out of place, but in here—I guess it still is."

Adamu Chan has been incarcerated for 10 years. He said it was easy to see the Hamilton group's genuine communal nature.

"I've had the opportunity to talk to a lot of outside people here," said Chan. "And it seems like those in the arts community just come in with a different perspective. You know—they're more progressive."

"You could really tell that they were consciously trying to understand what life is like here—what our experiences are like."

Chan spent a little time speaking with Production Stage Manager Kimberly Fisk. "She said her family worried about the possible dangers waiting for her, coming into San Quentin, into a prison setting," Chan said. "That was difficult for me to hear in certain ways, because of all the people I know in here who are not dangerous."

"But by her just being here—and being comfortable and safe enough to tell me that—these kinds of interactions are important for us to have, especially as we (the

incarcerated) gain more and more of a voice."

Another alarm went off as the Hamilton tour exited South Block's chow hall, leaving prisoners stranded on the ground as the visitors headed back to the outside world.

"Bye guys, we'll see you later," waved Fisk and others. They may have meant that literally, too.

Actor Marja Harmon later sent her own written response back to the SQ community: "I left feeling incredibly humbled. I was shocked by my ignorance and assumptions of the prison system, environment, and its citizens," she said. "I didn't

have any idea of what to expect other than what's been depicted on TV/film."

"I didn't know I would experience such openness and so many smiles...I regret how many conversations were cut short, but I know they will be continued. I look forward to seeing you all again."

Pending scheduling conflicts, SHNSF (Shorenstein Hays Nederlander San Francisco) Director of Communications Scott Walton hopes to bring Hamilton and SQ together again—potentially in an even bigger way. That remains to be seen.



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Gathering in the chapel plaza



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Baluazizi, Crystal Clayton, and Sloan



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Performer Sabrina Sloan



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Performer Donald Webber, Jr



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Performer Marja Harmon



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Asst. Company manager Crystal Clayton



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

Casting leaving SQ after an informative tour



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Matt's niece Jessica Nguyen, San Nguyen Matt's dad, graduate Matthew Nguyen, graduate Kamsan Suon, Askari Powers, Theresa Nguyen Matt's mom, Matt's sister Martha Nguyen, and nephew Brian Nguyen



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Keynote speaker Kenneth Hartman

The alluring calls of a higher education resonate within the walls of this prison

Graduation Continued from Page 1

Ross thanked his family, including his fiancée, "She has been my inspiration."
 "I've seen him become more of a critical thinker," said Ross' fiancée, Adrienne Skye Roberts, after the ceremony. "He's always been hardworking and disciplined."
 Graduate Matthew Nguyen's family was also in attendance.
 "I'm so happy my son finished college!" said San Nguyen, Matthew's father. "I believe his future will be very good."
 Matthew translated in Vietnamese for the *San*

Quentin News interview with his father, who was dressed in a suit and tie for the occasion. San Nguyen said his son looked very handsome in his cap and gown. "This is my first time attending a college graduation," he said. "It's very emotional."
 "I'm really proud of him," said Matthew's sister Martha Nguyen. She said that because her brother was incarcerated, the two of them went to college together.
 "I had no idea about the Prison University Project," she said, "I'm thankful Matt had the opportunity to get his degree."
 "Even though he did something bad, he turned his life around," said Matthew's mother, Theresa Nguyen.

"I'm overwhelmed," she said during the post-ceremony celebration, "just trying to take everything in."
 Matthew's niece Jessica and nephew Brian were also celebrating the graduation. Brian said his uncle's accomplishments in college at San Quentin inspired him to excel in high school, where he graduated the week before.
 Graduate Timothy Young's family also attended the graduation. "It's a huge accomplishment!" said his sister-in-law Anjeanette Young. "I'm very proud of Tim and everything he's learned on his journey."
 "The college program changed my life and the way I see the world," said Timothy Young. "It opened doors,

and I have more hope for my future."
 "He's very humble, and he doesn't start trouble," said Tim's brother Clifton Young. "He's 100% genuine," added their sister Sandra Webb.
 "People are capable of becoming better than their worst moments," said keynote speaker Kenneth Hartman, development coordinator and prison programs specialist at the Catalyst Foundation. He was incarcerated for 38 years with an LWOP (Life Without Parole) sentence until he received a sentence commutation from Gov. Jerry Brown and was released in December of 2017.
 "People outside are not waiting to throw rocks at you

when you get out," Hartman said. "I have not had a single negative encounter with a single person out there."
 "I attribute my success to all the instructors and tutors who treated me as the student they knew I could become," said graduate Sumit Lal to PUP Development and Communications Director Lauren Hall in an interview. Lal is the youngest member of the graduating class.
 "I've seen such a tremendous change in him. He's made such a big change in such a small time," said Lal's brother, who attended the ceremony. Lal paroled from San Quentin just days after his graduation.
 "Me sentí muy emocionado, contento porque fui

capaz de lograr algo que cambiará toda mi vida," (I felt very excited, happy because I was able to accomplish something that will change my whole life), said graduate Juan Espinosa, describing the ceremony. He said that learning English, his second language, at the same time was difficult and sometimes frustrating—but worth the effort.
 PUP's mission is to provide excellent higher education to those at San Quentin, to support increased access to higher education for incarcerated people, and to stimulate public awareness about higher education access and criminal justice.
 Louis Calvin, Nythell Collins, James Evans, Jose Luis Lopez, Corey McNeil, Jerry Smith and Kamsan Suon rounded out the dozen graduates of PUP's class of 2019.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Jody Lewen, PhD., Executive Director of PUP



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Nate Breitling, Interim PUP President

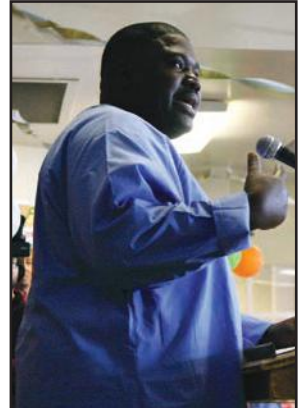


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Speaker Jack Benford



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Graduate Timothy Young with brother and sister

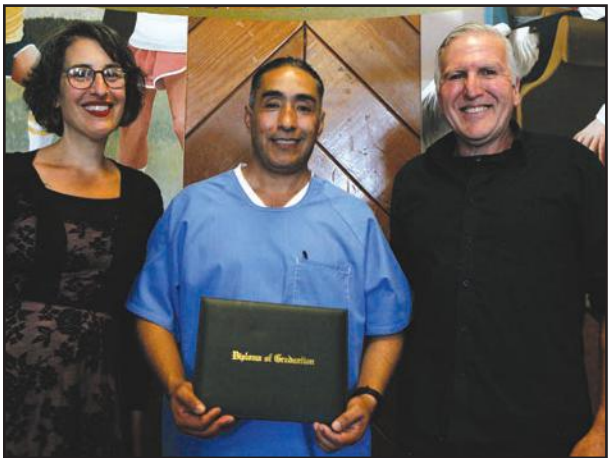


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Dr. Susan Rahman, graduate Juan Espinosa and Carlos Salmon

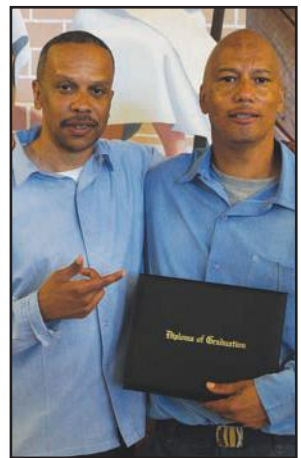


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
James King and Corey McNeil



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Rick and Renee Roberts, Valedictorian Tommy "Shakur" Ross, Adrienne Skye Roberts, Fania Davis and Reggie Davis



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Graduate Jose Luis Lopez



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Nythell's uncle Richard McCline, PUP tutor and graduate Nythell Collins



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Graduate James Evans



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Graduate Sumit Lal and family



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
Graduate Louis Calvin

An emerging class of peacemakers from San Quentin

Restorative justice program GRIP continues its legacy of healing with its newest grads

By Juan Haines and Anthony Faulk Staff Writers

After examining their lives, past traumas, their crimes and taking accountability of it all, nearly 150 incarcerated men underwent a “rite of passage” in San Quentin’s visiting room that ended with the men pledging to live as peacemakers.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Xavier Issac Delgadillo Consul General of Mexico in San Francisco, Ca.

Guiding Rage Into Power (GRIP), the 52-week offender accountability program, held graduations on the last two Fridays of June. Incarcerated men, their families, and guest from San Francisco Bay area communities where all in attendance.

“GRIP takes participants on a healing journey deep inside themselves to come back out transformed and ready to serve others,” said Jacques Verduin, the restorative justice pioneer that founded GRIP over 20 years ago.

GRIP participants learn how to recognize and manage emotions that lead to violent behavior, how to deal with the difficulties of daily life, and how their offenses impacted their survivors and the community. Weekly sessions are co-facilitated by those who have completed the program and been recommended by other facilitators.

During the June 28 ceremony, graduate John “Yayah” Johnson spoke about the

group’s mission to become peacemakers, learn emotional intelligence, be mindful and understand how their decisions and actions affect others.

“We learn to be responsive and not reactive. We found the ability to sit in the fire, we learn how to power with, not power over.” Johnson said.

Graduate John “Red” Drew said GRIP taught him how to deal with anger, abandonment, fear, shame, and physical and verbal abuse.

“These emotions are not mine,” he said. “These emotions belong to my pain and trauma that was implanted into my life,” Drew said.

Each group of around thirty people is identified as a ‘tribe,’ which is based primarily on the cumulative number of years the members have served. Graduate Lorenzo Romero talked about key insights he gained, and bonds he formed within his tribe, Tribe 842.

“We were so authentic and honest,” Romero said. “We were able to recognize damage and pain that we caused our victims, ourselves, our families, and our children. We are hurting humans who are able to begin the healing process.”

At each graduation survivors of crimes talked about their experiences bringing tears to some in the audience.

During the June 21 graduation, Patty O’Reilly, whose husband was killed by a drunk driver, shared how her daughter Siobhan—8 years old at the time—asked to meet her father’s killer. Patty initially refused. But the determined Siobhan (also at the graduation), made a greeting card to send the prisoner.

Patty said the request felt like divine intervention so she did what was necessary to meet the offender. She said the meeting was “a moment of grace” that led to forgiveness. Now Patty volunteers as a surrogate victim – someone

who tells their story to offenders and engages in dialogue with them – which she describes as a “spiritual journey” from God.

“I get hope with programs like GRIP,” Patty concluded.

During the June 28 graduation, Elle O’Dowd talked about how she began to recover after her daughter, Emily, was killed by a drunk driver in 2009.

“She was amazing, snorted when she laughed, she was beautiful and... she was gone —my life fell apart,” O’Dowd said of Emily. “It came down to ‘how do I want to live my life?’ I saw a bumper sticker that said, ‘Love Wins.’”

She went on to share how she had a conversation with the offender and how he was able to take responsibility.

“He had the courage to face me. I realize the courage that it took to stand in front of the woman whose daughter he killed. At that moment, he became Alan to me, not the person who killed Emily. He became human, to me,” said O’Dowd.

After congratulating the graduates and thanking them for their work, O’Dowd ended her presentation to a standing ovation, repeating the words, “Love wins—love wins—love wins.”

Veronica Jackson, wife of graduate Arthur Jackson told a story about a fly that was bothering them during a visit. She said she tried to kill the fly until Arthur questioned her motivation and commented it was just a fly doing what flies do. She said her husband’s concern about the “little things” made her see his transformation into caring about the “bigger things.”

Anthony Denard graduated on June 21 with his wife there to see him.

“It’s a big accomplishment having family here to see this progress in my life,” Denard said. “It’s a way to teach them to make better choices in life so they don’t make the mistakes that I did,” he said, referring to his two young stepsons.

Both sons looked up at their stepfather with pride.

“I’m proud of him. I’m amazed that he made it this far,” said stepson, Zabien Fortenbery.

Denard’s other step-son, Zyvhon Fortenbery, added, “I’m glad that he’s doing this hard work and that he’s not doing more bad stuff so that he can be back with us. I’m glad that all men are doing work to get out.”

There were frowns and quiet shaking of heads June 28 when Susan Shannon, a founding facilitator for GRIP, talked about the new direction her life is taking and how that will limit her future involvement with San Quentin GRIP.

“I’m just changing my base. I’m not leaving GRIP,” Shannon said. “We have unpacked the hardest parts, the most vulnerable parts. We’ve sat in that fire together.”

Xavier Issac Delgadillo from the Consulate General of Mexico in San Francisco, one of the outside guest speakers for the June 28 graduation, spoke about the consulate’s concerns and services for Mexican citizens who are incarcerated.

“We contact them frequently,” Delgadillo said. “We try to facilitate tools to make their release easier. We are proud that our community is involved in this program. This kind of teaching will help them to find an answer.”

Spanish speaking graduate Angel Villafan talked about what it meant to be a peacemaker.

“Due to language barriers, a lot of people lose their voice,” Villafan said. “I want to be that voice that could translate how important the GRIP curriculum is. For the rest of my life, I want to make sure that my past does not become someone else’s future.”

Formally incarcerated men, Bernard Moss, Miguel Quezada, Kenneth Hartman and Vaughn Miles were allowed back into the prison to talk about how GRIP helped their transition back to the community.

“There’s opportunity out there,” Miles said surrounded by inmates he once did time with.

Now working with youth in the city of Richmond, California, Miles said the skills he learned in prison enabled him to use active listening and non-judgmental, validating communication with youth—even when he doesn’t agree with what they’re saying.

“What I do is share a piece of my story when I was in the same lifestyle that the youth is in,” Miles said. “Then they’re more inclined to listen. Then there’s the fact that I’ve been in prison, to them that gives me ‘street creed.’”

GRIP Co-director Kim G. Moore shared her insights about GRIP graduates.

“In my experience, GRIP graduates are the most emotionally intelligent people I’ve ever met,” Moore said. “I want GRIP graduates in my neighborhood. I want my 11-year-old daughter to know men like you, men who can understand their emotions.”

Siobhan O’Reilly, the former 8-year-old girl who asked to visit the man who killed her father, echoed similar sentiment. When asked about what message she would send those incarcerated, she said “Always remember you’re human with the capability of loving and being loved.”



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

GRIP graduates from Tribe 842



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Siobhan and Patty O’Reilly



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

GRIP graduates from Tribe 933



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

GRIP graduate John “Red” Drew



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Facilitators Jaime Sanchez y Tare Beltranchuc, graduate Jose Luis Velazquez and outside facilitator Lucia de La Fuente



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

TRIP graduates Tribe 379



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Elle O’Dowd



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Miguel Quezada, Vaughn Miles, Monique Thomas, Susan Shannon and Bernard Moss

Avary Walk

Continued from Page 1

Ziri talked about her experiences in elementary school and how her classmates would talk about their dads. She would watch them run and hug their dads picking them up from school.

"I overcame that pain and turned it into motivation,"

said Ziri, who is headed to Sacramento State University. "I hope you are proud of me, Dad; I know Mom is."

More than 200 participants walked a lap of silence around the rocky dirt track to start the march. The festivities included prayers, speeches, poems and music that bought smiles and tears. Jonathan Rivas, KidCAT participant, shared his story about being a father in prison and his fear of the intergenerational effects for his daughter.

"I had to watch my daughter grow up through a county jail window," said Rivas. "I feel that I have failed as a father; by coming to prison I lost that privilege. My older brothers, father and uncles have been to jail. I won't say it's hereditary, but I do see the cycle."

"I wanted to be different from my dad. He used to beat me. He would be angry and frustrated all the time. He never showed me love or compassion."

"I just want to be different and teach my daughter how to be at peace. She deserves a great father," Rivas added.

Consuelo R. spoke about raising children while the father is in prison, giving back and Project Avary.

"I think people need to see this [event]," said Consuelo. "As people of color, sometimes we feel entitled not to give anything back. Coming here made me look at prisoners in a different way. I will give back more."

Consuelo thanked Project Avary for the program where her children can meet with other kids going through similar issues. Her son has a mentor to share things with, if not with her. Now her daughter has joined the program.

"I didn't think having her father in jail would affect her as much as my son, but it has," said Consuelo. "I've seen a change since she started the program: she has opened up more to me and she is more joyful."

Consuelo left the men with these words.

"Everything you do doesn't only affect you, it affects everyone connected to you. So please, go back and call your son, daughter or family member and tell them how much you love them, because trust me, they are waiting patiently for your 15-minute call."

Throughout the speeches, various prisoners and guests participated. Fateen Jackson, who expects to parole soon, performed a spoken word piece titled "Revealed."

"Losing all sense of self and scared to ask for help as if it was death itself."

I came to prison because I didn't listen to my intuition.

That would've put me in a different position.

And a better condition that I currently live in," Jackson's poem concluded.

Cesar, an Avary participant, who goes by the rap name Solo, engaged the audience with his song "It's a Cold Game." Cesar's catchy hook had the crowd repeating it.

"There no friends in this cold game (uun)," he rapped.

Cesar said he has an album coming out titled "Ridin' Solo."

Antwan Banks and Eric "Maserati E" Abercrombie, SQ residents, rocked the event with a medley of their original hip hop and rap songs. Their masterful lyrics and musical production gave the yard a true concert vibe.

"There was a force of energy that ignites you after experiencing this event," said Mary Richards, an administrator for San Francisco Unified School District. "Being responsible for over a thousand students, you are always looking for the next best things to do."

"We have to give our teachers the opportunities and the tools to empower the kids who have an incarcerated parent," Richards added.

The day ended with all the participants forming a large "healing circle" and in unison reciting, "With every step we walked, it's a healing for our families. We are thankful for the future things coming."



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Visitors and inmates starting the march silent lap



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Amy Deleon thanking the men for raising the money for Avary



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Ziri R. take lap after her speech

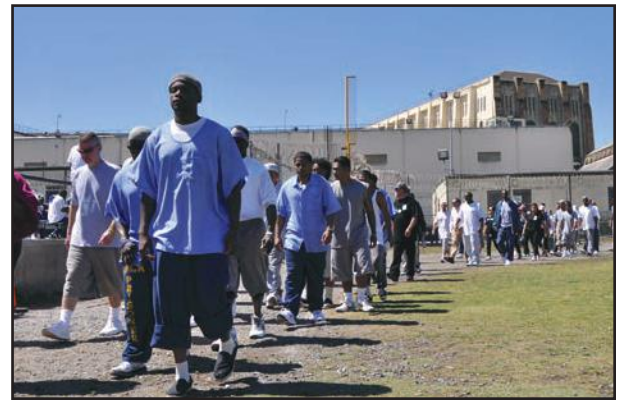


Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Inmates and visitors enjoying the walk on the Lower Yard



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Tommy Wickerd speaking about being a father in prison



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Cesar of Project Avary performing



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Participants taking laps on the Lower Yard



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Consuelo R. giving the crowd words of wisdom



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Avary visitors at the ARC Building



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Eric McCanty shared how having incarcerated parents affected him



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Eric McCanty and Philippe "Kells" Kelly performing the Avary song



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

People enjoying the concert on the Lower Yard

Snippets

Aglockenspiel, a musical instrument similar to the xylophone, has a series of metal bars and is played with two hammers.

Venus is covered with raging active volcanoes, and her thick clouds of sulfuric acid produce the most corrosive acid rain in our entire solar system.

Earth's atmosphere, which is rather thin, is a mixture of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, 0.9% argon, 0.3% carbon dioxide, and trace amounts of other gases.

Raspberries have an exceptional amount of antioxidants, like quercetin, anthocyanin, catechins, pelargonidin, kaempferol, gallic acid, and cyanides-color dependent, of course!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

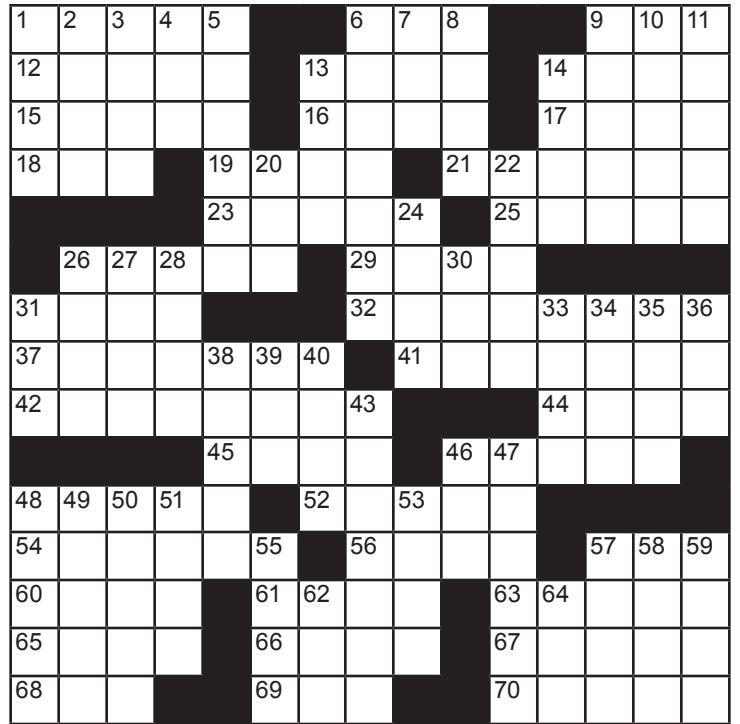
By Jonathan Chiu / Edited by Jan Perry

Across

1. Director of *Midnight Express*
6. Man who behaves dishonorably against a woman
9. PBS instructional cooking show (Abbr.)
12. When daylight arrives
13. String of prayer beads
14. Knowledgeable guy
15. Type of bean
16. Stonestreet of *Modern Family*
17. Seaweed gelatin product
18. Pelican Bay to Calipatria (dir.)
19. Char
21. Characteristic
23. Comedian Murphy
25. Actress who played *Felicity*
26. Rapper and designer West
29. Leisure
31. Mexican currency
32. Actor who starred in *Short Circuit*
37. As an alternative
41. Acute infectious disease
42. Model and actress who starred in *Driven*
44. Sound label on a movie screen
45. Innocent person
46. An edict of the Russian government
48. Actress who starred in *Unfaithful*
52. Clutch
54. Roman middle names
55. Tel-_____
57. Helicopter pads e.g. (Abbr.)
60. Periods of time
61. Crown
63. Apple computer made from 1999-2006
65. Spanish liqueur
66. Picnic crashers
67. Phone maker who was in competition with Blackberry and Motorola
68. "Steal My Sunshine" group
69. Opinion
70. Re:Vision's incarcerated writer

Down

1. Police batons
2. Singer Fonsi
3. Actress Bancroft
4. Fan
5. Actress who starred in *Blade: Trinity*
6. Actress who played Princess Leia
7. Famous boxer
8. Immigrant protection in US
9. Wood boring tool
10. Actress and singer Lords
11. Actor who play Snake Plissken
13. Notebook maker
14. New Zealand pigeon
20. City in the Netherlands
22. Ulrich of *Scream*
24. Precedes Cape, End or Point
26. Understands
27. Apprentice (Abbr.)
28. Galaxy's brother
30. Office address (Abbr.)
31. Precedes hole, face or safe
33. Duct
34. Finales
35. Stripped
36. Snake warning
38. Daytime talk show host
39. A winglike structure
40. Barriers
43. Actor who play *Dick Tracy*
46. Israeli submachine gun
47. Actor who starred in *King of Queens*
48. Actress who played in *Law & Order SVU*
49. Michaels of *SNL*
50. With great speed
51. Loch _____
53. Lotion brand St. _____
55. Resorts
57. Thor's brother
58. Mint
59. Heroin
62. Ortiz of *Whiskey Cavalier*
64. ____ choy



Sudoku Corner

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

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

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

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

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

Last month's Brain Teasers

TIC-TAC-TOE: PLAY TO LOSE

only O can successfully play to lose. so O is next to move, and must play in the lower right.

		X
	O	
X	O	

1	8	7	2
1	8	7	2
+			
3	7	4	4

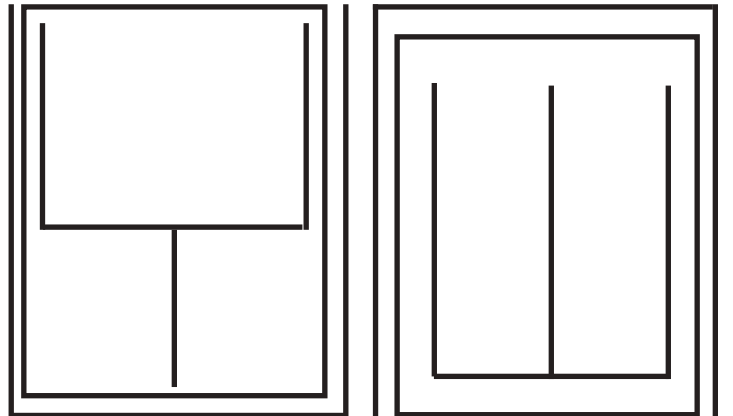
BRAIN TEASERS OF THE MONTH

Carrier Pigeons

As a driver approaches a bridge, he notices thta the maximum weight allowed is 20 tons. He knows that his empty truck weighs 20 tons. However, he has a cargo of 200 pigeons, which weigh 1lb each. As the pigeons are asleep on perches he stops the vehicle, bangs on the side to wake the birds, who start flying around, then drives over the bridge. Is he correct?



WHAT IS THE SECRET MESSAGE HIDDEN IN THIS PATTERN?



MATH PROBLEM

Mehitabel operated on a peculiar shopping system. she wouldn't allow herself to spend all her money in one place to start, as she had been warned not to do. Therefore, last Saturday she spent half of what she had plus \$3.00 at Jones's clothing store, for a blouse; then she spent half of what she had left plus \$1.00 at Smith's, and trotted off for stockings to Brown's where she spent half of what she had left plus \$4.00. She was the out of money. How much had she started with?

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

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

Nayeon Kim se despidió de la Universidad de San Quentin

Por Juan Espinosa
Diseñador gráfico y escritor

Una de las más fervientes colaboradoras de Prison University Project (PUP) en la Prisión Estatal de San Quentin, dejará de ser voluntaria para continuar sus estudios en leyes en

City University of New York.

Nayeon Kim inicio su trabajo como voluntaria en PUP en 2017. Ella impartió clases de inglés (101B, 99B,) y español (Español 101 y 102), y ayudó a planear el programa Diversidad, Igualdad e Inclusión con un comité de estudiantes.

SQL se ha dado a la tarea de dar a conocer el trabajo de personas que como Kim ayudan en la rehabilitación y educación de las personas encarceladas. Los voluntarios usualmente donan su tiempo para apoyar los esfuerzos de los internos para estudiar y estar mejor preparados para su reintegración a la comunidad.

Kim dijo que antes de trabajar con prisioneros, su percepción del sistema carcelario era limitada, "Yo estaba completamente desconectada del sistema de prisiones", dijo. "La existencia de la gente en las prisiones eran nociones distantes, estereotipos, proyectados por las

películas y noticias de televisión".

Kim aseguró que como una persona de color, se interesó en la experiencia de personas como ella. "Me preocupó por todos los que han sido impactados por el sistema de prisiones y planeo seguir mostrando mi solidaridad con la gente encarcelada en todo lo que pueda".

La voluntaria dijo que lo que más le gusta del PUP es cuando los estudiantes empiezan a desarrollar un interés por la lectura y la escritura.

"Me gusta cuando los estudiantes abren su mente y empiezan a pensar críticamente. La educación nos reta en una forma única y nos motiva y nos guía en esa dirección".

"Ser voluntaria de PUP me ha permitido conectarme con personas con quien nunca hubiera tenido la oportunidad de conectarme. Las personas están constantemente creciendo y cambiando, esa ha sido una de mis mayores felicidades en la vida", dijo Kim.

Los estudiantes de Kim no tienen más que halagos hacia ella. Dicen que es una mujer excepcional, comprometida con su trabajo, profesional, comprensiva, y una persona que motiva aún en los peores momentos de la vida.

Como profesora de español también ha demostrado ser especial. Muchos de los estudiantes también enfati-

zan el que una persona como Kim venga a ser profesora de español cuando éste no es su primer idioma.

"Aprendí mucho con Ms. Kim. Ella siempre me tuvo paciencia y se tomó el tiempo de ayudarme y motivarme cuando yo pensaba que no podía más," dijo Thomas Bernidakis, quien fue uno de sus estudiantes.

J.L., quien también tomó clases con Kim dice "Le estoy muy agradecido por haberme enseñado a ser más humano y ayudar a mis compañeros cuando lo necesitaban. Gracias a ella ahora veo la vida de una manera diferente y sé que es muy importante ayudar a la gente que lo necesita. El haberla conocido ha sido una bendición."



Foto cortesía de Nayeon Kim

Profesora de PUP
Nayeon Kim

Encuentra en el servicio comunitario un medio para combatir la soledad

Por Tare Beltranchuc
Escritor contribuyente

La receta para evitar la soledad, crear nuevas amistades, mejorar la salud y bienestar personal, podría ser

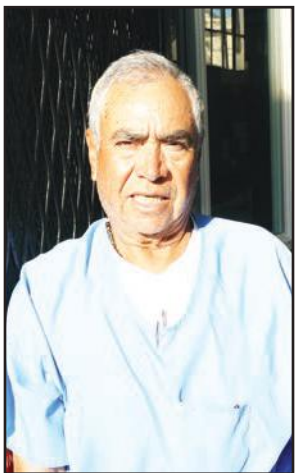


Foto: Javier Jiménez SQN

José López en la oficina de SQN

el estar al servicio de la comunidad.

Recoger las piedras del campo de fútbol, ofrecer agua a los jugadores y levantar la basura de los jardines podría tener grandes beneficios a nivel personal. Para José López, de 68 años, estas son algunas de las actividades que voluntariamente realiza y que han sido de gran bendición.

López, se encuentra en la Prisión de San Quentin cumpliendo una sentencia de 10 años.

López comentó que a pesar de sus 68 años se siente como de 50. "Uno de los beneficios de estar activo y al servicio de la comunidad ha sido el mantenerme físicamente saludable", dijo. A su edad todavía juega frontón, fútbol y hace lagartijas.

"El ser acomedido es una cualidad que aprendí de mi padre a temprana edad", mencionó López en una entrevista

con San Quentin News. Le encantaba pasar tiempo con su padre Alejandro López, y observaba como siempre se esforzaba por ayudar a las personas de edad avanzada y de escasos recursos.

Las cualidades y valores que adquirió de su padre, le han sido de gran ayuda durante su encarcelamiento. Según López, el estar al servicio de la comunidad de San Quentin, le ha ayudado a desarrollar buenas amistades. "Aquí he conocido personas de buen corazón con quienes tengo una buena amistad".

Además, ayudar a otras personas le ha servido para no sentirse solo a pesar de no estar con sus seres queridos. El contribuir a la comunidad ha hecho que su encarcelamiento sea menos doloroso. "Siempre ando buscando oportunidades para estar al servicio de los demás."

López, mejor conocido como "El Mecánico de San

Quentin" por la comunidad hispana, nació en Cuyacapan, Jalisco. Su apodo hace referencia a su amor por la mecánica.

"Empecé como aprendiz a los 12 años y me jubilé reconstruyendo transmisiones a los 67 en los Estados Unidos," dijo López. "La mecánica es mi pasión, y nunca lo hice por dinero. A través de la mecánica empecé a estar al servicio de otras personas. Siempre he preferido hacer cosas que me agradan y no por el dinero."

López concluyó que el estar al servicio de otros tiene muchos beneficios.

"Me siento feliz cuando ayudo o contribuyo en algo positivo. Me ayuda a tener nuevas amistades. Evito la soledad. Me siento más joven. Siento que mi vida tiene un propósito y es una manera de contribuir para una mejor sociedad."

Giảm Án Treo

VIETNAMESE

Tác giả: Anthony
Manuel Carvalho
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Quốc hội đang giới thiệu một luật mới đó là cắt bớt phần nửa án treo cho những trọng án nghiêm trọng ở tiểu bang Cali.

Điều luật mới, AB 1182, sẽ giảm bớt giám thị án treo từ một năm xuống 180 ngày. Điều này sẽ giúp cho những người đồng thuế tiết kiệm được hàng trăm triệu đô la theo lời thống kê của tác giả, một nghị viên của Quốc Hội đảng Dân Chủ bà Wendy Carrillo của thành phố Los Angeles.

Án treo là một phần gia hạn của trại giam cho những tù nhân khi được mang án phải thông qua thủ tục, sự giám thị là để bảo đảm thuận lợi chuyển tiếp khi trở lại xã hội.

Tờ báo California Globe tường trình vào ngày 20 tháng 4 là những người chống đối điều luật này đang yêu cầu hủy diệt điều luật này. Họ cho rằng dự luật này là tiêu biểu cho "hành động nuông chiều tội phạm của ngành lập pháp mà thống đốc và nhà lập pháp của tiểu bang cõ nhét thêm vào để qua mắt các công chúng không chú ý đến điều luật này vào những năm gần đây," tường trình từ Michael Hanisee, chủ tịch của hội đoàn công tố viên ở thành phố Los Angeles.

Điều luật như AB 1182 chỉ tập trung vào cảm giác của cựu tù nhân, chứ không lo cho sự an toàn của dân chúng, phản nản từ ông Michael Rushford, chủ tịch của hội đồng hình luật. "Đảng Dân Chủ đã thật sự phá nát sự quản chế tù nhân của tiểu bang," ông Rushford thêm vào.

"Kể từ khi điều luật đã được tu sửa của AB 109, được thông qua vào năm 2011... tội án bạo lực đang trên đà gia tăng, đảng Dân Chủ đã thông qua bộ luật mới và khởi đầu bỏ phiếu để định nghĩa lại, và tu sửa lại những tội án bạo lực trở thành nhẹ đi để con số thống kê phạm tội được giảm xuống," ông Rushford thêm vào.

Những người ủng hộ bao gồm một tác giả đang nghiên cứu vấn đề của một đại học tại trường UC Irvine, người này cho biết không có căn cứ gì cho thấy rằng tội phạm gia tăng bởi kết quả của bước đầu thả sớm, tờ báo New York Times đăng tin vào ngày 21 tháng 1.

Tờ báo Times tường trình rằng các nhà nghiên cứu là ông Bradley J. Bartos và ông Charis E. Kubrin tìm không ra chứng cứ liên kết giữa điều luật tu sửa để so sánh với điều luật AB 1182. Thêm vào là nghị quyết 47 để cải cách và sửa đổi đã được dân chúng chấp thuận vào 2014, giảm bớt những vụ án không bạo lực trở thành vụ án nhẹ.

"Vào lúc này tôi nghe rất nhiều khiếu nại về nghị quyết 47 làm ảnh hưởng đến tội án trong tiểu bang", ông Kubrin nói với tờ báo Times rằng, "nó

đầu ảnh hưởng gì đến việc tội án nghiêm trọng gia tăng."

Sự nghiên cứu tìm thấy lượng gát và trộm cắp đang gia tăng, như các nhà nghiên cứu quyết định rằng nghị quyết 47 không phải là yếu tố đó, tờ báo Times tường thuật.

Ông Rushford nói rằng kết quả của sự nghiên cứu đem lại thuận lợi cho việc thả sớm "lạ tin tức giả" ông đưa ra bằng chứng của thống kê lúc 2018 của bộ điều tra liên bang đã tìm thấy là tội án nghiêm trọng đang gia tăng đến 58.3 phần trăm ở những thành phố lớn của tiểu bang.

Ông Rushford cũng cáo buộc rằng có khoản 25,000 tội án dính dáng đến tài sản không có báo cáo, tội án trong vòng tiểu bang có thể gia tăng đến triệu án nếu nhiều tù nhân được thả.

Hanisee xác nhận AB 1182 sẽ lấy đi mất quyền giám sát để nhiều phạm nhân nguy hiểm nào đó, bao gồm các phạm nhân bị buộc tội với tấn công tình dục bằng bạo lực.

Bộ luật này cũng sẽ giảm bớt đi giám sát án treo từ một hay ba năm hoặc một hay hai năm cho những phạm nhân với tội trạng "nghiêm trọng".

AB 1182 cũng yêu cầu tội nhân được miễn án treo sáu tháng nếu không qui phạm án treo. Trong luật này các phạm nhân chỉ có thể được "xem xét" lại nếu được miễn án treo sớm.

Bộ luật này sẽ lấy đi khả năng của nhà giam ở Cali quyền quyết định cho tù nhân nào sẽ bị giữ lại để giám thị lâu hơn.

— Dịch giả: Tú Trần

Phục hồi quyền bầu cử cho cựu tù nhân

Tác giả: Anthony
Manuel Carvalho
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Nội chính trị đang sôi nổi về việc có nên phục hồi quyền bầu cử cho cựu tù nhân.

Sự thăm dò gần đây cho thấy rằng chuyện này đã bị số đông những người ghi danh bầu cử thuộc đảng Dân Chủ và đảng Cộng Hòa phản đối.

Cuộc tranh luận này được đưa lên hàng đầu gần đây bởi ứng cử viên tổng thống Bernie Sanders, người đã nói rằng nên cho phép cựu tù nhân quyền bầu cử tại cuộc họp ở tòa thị chính vào ngày 23 tháng 4 này.

Theo sự thăm dò của Hill và Harris X thì có đến 69 phần trăm số người đã ghi danh bầu cử nói rằng những ai đã từng vào tù vì phạm trọng tội không nên được bầu cử.

Con số này tăng đến 89 phần trăm cho những người từng vào tù vì phạm tội có liên quan đến khủng bố. Vox Media cũng cho hay rằng thành viên của đảng Cộng Hòa sẽ phản đối việc cho phép cựu tù nhân phạm trọng tội bầu cử nhiều hơn là thành viên của đảng Dân Chủ...85 phần trăm so với 61 phần trăm.

Ông Sanders nói rằng "Ngay cả những người tệ hại" như là kẻ đặt bom tại cuộc chạy đua đường trường ở Boston...nên được cho phép bầu cử.

Thượng nghị sĩ Kamala Harris thuộc đảng Dân Chủ từ tiểu bang Cali, và Eliza-

beth Warren thuộc đảng Dân Chủ từ tiểu bang Massachusetts, hiện đang bày tỏ rằng họ mở rộng về ý định cho phép toàn thể cựu tù nhân phạm trọng tội quyền bầu cử, căn cứ theo một câu chuyện của Vox Media vào ngày 30 tháng 5 này.

Ban đầu hai ứng cử viên tổng thống này đã phản đối đề nghị của ông Sanders, như đã được báo cáo bởi tờ báo The New York Times vào ngày 28 tháng 4.

Phóng viên Catherine Kim vẫn tiếp tục sự phân tích của cô về sự thăm dò của Hill và Harris cho Vox Media. Cô kết luận rằng sự thăm dò đã phản ảnh các nhóm chúng tộc bị ảnh hưởng nhiều nhất bởi hệ thống công lý tội phạm thì sẽ chắc ủng hộ quyền bầu cử cho người phạm trọng tội.

Con số mà cô ta đã báo cáo cho thấy người da trắng và người Mỹ gốc Châu Á sẽ chắc phản đối nhiều hơn về việc cho phép cựu tù nhân phạm trọng tội quyền bầu cử, 74 phần trăm và 82 phần trăm nói riêng. Chỉ có 43 phần trăm cử tri thuộc người da đen hoặc là người Mỹ gốc Châu Phi phản đối ý định trên.

Sáu mươi phần trăm thuộc gốc Mỹ La Tinh bày tỏ rằng không nên cho phép người phạm trọng tội quyền bầu cử, ngay cả khi dân số trong tù của tiểu bang Cali thì gần 40 phần trăm là người gốc Mỹ La Tinh.

Các cử tri trẻ thì chắc đồng ý với ý định ủng hộ quyền bầu cử cho người phạm trọng tội. Năm mươi bốn phần trăm

của thế hệ Z cho rằng nên cho phép những người phạm trọng tội quyền bầu cử trong khi chỉ có 18 phần trăm của thế hệ baby boomers ủng hộ ý định trên.

Sau cuộc họp tại tòa thị chính, ông Sanders đã nộp một op-ed cho tờ báo USA Today. Trong đó ông Sanders đã viết rằng "Khi chúng ta nhìn lại lịch sử tại sao đất nước chúng ta cấm cựu tù nhân bầu cử, chúng ta phải hiểu rằng các nỗ lực để cướp đi quyền bầu cử của công dân là di sản của chế độ nô lệ và tiếp tục thái độ kỳ thị chủng tộc sau giai đoạn gọi là Jim Crow."

Sentencing Project báo cáo với Vox Media rằng người Mỹ gốc Châu Phi bị bỏ tù với tỷ lệ là 5.1 lần so với người Mỹ da trắng, họ mất quyền bầu cử vì đã ở tù qua.

Ứng cử viên tổng thống là thượng nghị sĩ Cory Booker thuộc đảng Dân Chủ từ tiểu bang New Jersey nói rằng cuộc thảo luận này thật là "thất vọng" bởi vì việc ưu tiên là nên giảm bớt tình trạng nhốt tù số lớn này.

"Nếu ông Bernie Sanders muốn đàm luận về chuyện nên hay không nên cho kẻ đặt bom tại cuộc đua đường trường quyền bầu cử, thì tiêu diêm của tôi là phóng thích người da đen và da nâu và người có mức thu nhập thấp ra khỏi tù," ông Booker đã nói như thế trong một cuộc phỏng vấn với đài truyền hình PBS vào ngày 29 tháng 4.

— Dịch giả: Hiếu Thái

Golden opportunities arise from California's recent changes in sentencing

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Craig "Qadree" Birch, 53, was serving a term of 40-years-to-life under California's Three Strikes Law before his sentence was recalled by the sentencing court for his "exceptional conduct." Under the newly passed Assembly Bill 2942, he was resentenced to 27 years and paroled from San Quentin in May.

Birch was arrested in September 1994 in Sacramento County and convicted in March 1995. He served 24 years and eight months for a first-degree burglary with enhancements for prior prison commitments.

"It's a learning experience on how I was able to go into the court system with no thought of what I was facing." He said he didn't think he'd serve that much time under the Three

Strikes Law, but admitted, he wasn't fully aware of the law when it passed.

"At the time, even though they had the law, I didn't care because I was going to continue on the path of committing crimes," said Birch. He was 28 back then and was thinking and acting as a person who was in favor of crime. He never considered the consequences. "I was in that mode (don't care about self, law and order, rules

and regulations) and I wanted to stay there."

While serving time in another prison, he said it was an older inmate who convinced him to take a look at his life and asked him if he wanted to be a hardened criminal, or change the way he thinks, "into a positive, a constructive individual."

"I was introduced to one of my first programs in Lancaster State Prison called Self-esteem," said Birch. "It built up my confidence level because I had low self-esteem about myself. From that point, I went into the substance abuse program to learn about my past addictive behavior, to get knowledge about why I was committing crimes."

Along the way, Birch said he took the course Office Services and Related Technology, and then a computer technical course at Lancaster. He said he kept going to prison libraries to read and research the law, and he became a practicing Muslim to follow the tenets of Islam.

"Those played a major role in my transformation," said Birch, who wasn't a follower of Islam before he came to prison. His Islamic name, Qadree, means "One who can achieve."

Birch continued to focus on self-development. "At Folsom [State Prison], I continued on the path with motivational development, and Tai Chi. I took peer education, healthy living, and I started my first college course." He said the prison had an Employment Development Department course that taught him how to write "winning resumes," and how to communi-

cate in interviews with potential employers.

"It continued on when I came to San Quentin," said Birch. "I've participated in the ARC program, Making Good, Anger Management, CGA, and Restorative Justice." He also took a class in investment planning.

"I stayed working in different assignments to keep me busy," said Birch. At 3:00 a.m., he got up to work in the prison's kitchen, but it was his education that consumed his time.

Through Lassen Community College, Birch completed Sociology I & II; Psychology I, II and IV; Philosophy/World Religion; Anthropology; Humanities I & II; Pharmacology; U.S. History (before and after the Civil War); three English courses; three Math courses; Food & Nutrition; and a Health class.

"If you don't have your high school education, get it and choose a career other than prison."

Coastline Community College offered Birch courses on Introduction to Business, Personal Finances, Management, and Organization Skills.

"I'm going to continue to work and continue on with my college education," said Birch. He's one class short of earning his Associate of Arts degree. "I still have plans to run a small business that deals with retail

and clothing. I'm just a little nervous."

Initially, Birch said he filed for recall of his sentence directly to the district attorney's office in Sacramento County where he was convicted. "I didn't receive a response from the DA," he said.

Believing the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the court that sentenced him would recognize his effort to rehabilitate himself, Birch said he wrote to the CDCR Secretary to ask what the procedures were to file for a recall of sentence under Penal Code 1170(d).

"The secretary of CDCR, without my knowledge, filed an 1170(d) about me being resentenced," said Birch. "My counselor advised me of it by calling me in to advise me of it in the month of February."

Before going back to court, Birch said two correctional officers wrote him letters of support, and four CDCR staff members wrote him letters. This, he said, was because they'd viewed his behavior and conduct over the years and got to know the man and not his crimes.

Birch was a young man when that OG [slang in prison vernacular for "original gangster"] convinced him to redirect his path on a positive course. Now he's following the old mantra "each one, teach one." His advice to the younger inmates: "If you're in society, either go to college, learn a technical skill. If you don't have your high school education, get it and choose a career other than prison."

GEO Group sees drastic drop in stock value

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho

Journalism Guild Writer

The value of stock of one of the major operators of private prisons recently dropped 16%.

The stock decline happened after major institutions placed a moratorium on financing private detention facilities. A number of agencies have also sold-off private prison stock.

In March, JP Morgan announced "We will no longer bank the private prison industry," reported *Newsweek*.

In a 2018 Business Standards Report, Wells Fargo Bank told industry analysts, "Our credit exposure to private prison companies has significantly decreased and is expected to continue to decline, [as] we are not actively marketing to that sector."

In 2018 alone, Wells Fargo and Bank of America collectively invested \$1.8 billion in the two major private prisons

firms - GEO Group and CoreCivic, according to Refinitiv.

The moratorium worried investors in GEO Group. They then raised questions about the reported mistreatment of detainees in their detention facilities.

The company's annual SEC filing included a statement which read, "The management and operation of correctional, detention and community-based facilities under public-private partnerships has not achieved complete acceptance by either government agencies or the public," reported Asher Stockler of *Newsweek*.

GEO Group's website and SEC filings reveal the company manages 75,000 beds throughout the country, creating first-quarter 2019 revenues greater than \$610 million.

The company's clients include Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Bureau of Prisons, the U.S. Marshals Service and multiple state and local agencies.

GEO and CoreCivic had California inmates in private prisons in states such as Arizona, Mississippi and Arkansas, besides housing state inmates in at least six facilities in California.

New contracts, such as a 10-year contract with the U.S. Marshals Service for a detention facility in Queens, N.Y., generated revenue growth of 10%, *Newsweek* reported.

In spite of the growth, the company is warning investors that growing public pressure to divest from the private prison industry "could have a material adverse effect on our business," the magazine reported.

The adverse effect forecasted by the companies could include the loss of bank loans for basic operational and expansion costs. The companies have borrowed up to 90% of their total cash holdings, according to an article published earlier this year in the *San Quentin News*.

New York considers elderly parole law inmates 55 and over may see relief

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

There is new legislation being introduced in Albany, N.Y., that would allow inmates that are 55 years of age to be eligible for parole after serving 15 consecutive years, according to the *Adirondack Daily Enterprise*.

This measure was introduced to the Senate by Brad Hoylman, a Democrat representing Manhattan. The measure however doesn't mandate the release of the prisoner.

Judith Clark is a 69-year-old who served more than 37 years for her role in a 1981 Rockland County armored truck robbery. During the commission of the robbery

two police officers were killed along with a security guard. Clark was paroled a week after the bill was introduced.

"It's nuts. It's unbelievable that a cop killer is being freed," said Sen. Bob Antonacci, a Republican from Syracuse, to the *Times Union of Albany*.

The number of elderly prisoners in the New York prison system has risen 81% since 2000, despite the drop in the number of the overall prison population. This increase has required correctional facilities to hire more geriatric nurses and establish care units to treat these elderly prisoners. Some of these elderly inmates suffer from dementia, heart disease and diabetes.

The recidivism rate for elderly inmates is 5% for those released when older than 50 years. The recidivism rate drops to 4% when released at age 65, according to the article.

The parole board noted in Clark's case her accomplishments while in prison, length of time served, her age, apologies to her victims, and her change of view from previous radical principles.

"There are so many more Judith Clarks out there—elderly, incarcerated New Yorkers who have honestly confronted their crimes, taken responsibility, served their time, and worked to change the path of their lives," said Sen. Hoylman after Clark's parole grant.

Pennsylvania Governor grants clemency to eight prisoners

By Charles Stanley Longley
Journalism Guild Writer

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf has granted clemency to eight prisoners serving life terms—more than any governor in the past 25 years, the *Philadelphia Enquirer* reports.

Granting commutations started to diminish when Gov. Richard Thornburgh took office in 1979. It all but ceased in 1994, after lifer Reginald McFadden was released and went on a kill-

ing spree, the newspaper reported.

Today commutations have to be recommended unanimously by the state Board of Pardons before the governor can consider them.

One clemency went to George Trudel Jr., imprisoned for 30 years without the possibility of parole.

He told the newspaper, "I went away as a juvenile. I went away from my mother's house, from being taken care of, to prison, where the state took care of me, I never paid a bill, I didn't know what it

was to have that sort of responsibility.

"It wasn't until I got that job and started working, and I was able to go to the store and purchase things with my own money, that I truly felt like a man. I felt, for the first in a long time, that I was able to hold my head high. And that's when I really started to believe that I belonged out here."

There are now more than 5,000 people serving life without the possibility of parole in Pennsylvania, according to the story.

Court finds support for resentencing un-persuasive

By Rahsaan Thomas
Contributing Writer

A sentencing court denied the head of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's recommendation that it reduce Juan Felipe Melendez' 16-year sentence due to good behavior.

"I felt terrible because my mom was there," Melendez said. "The time has been harder on her than me. Every time I talk to her, she's crying."

California Penal Code 1170(d) 1 gives CDCR, District Attorneys, the Board of Parole Hearings and County Correctional Administrators the power to recommend that a court resentence an incarcerated person to lesser time for reasons like exceptionally good conduct, retroactive changes in sentencing laws and for unauthorized sentences. However, the court does not have to heed the recommendations and in many cases, have not.

CDCR numbers show that as of Feb. 26, 2019 about 52% of its recommendations received a lesser sentence. The department has only issued 34 letters of recommendation for exceptional conduct.

Melendez went before Santa Rita County Judge David A. Cena, with more than 50 letters of support. He says the first letter he received was from the head of CDCR, Secretary Ralph Diaz.

"I was thrilled," Melendez said. "I was doing all these things because it was the right thing to do. I never expected to get any recognition from

CDCR, but the fact that someone was paying attention made a big impact on me."

Other supporters, aside from family members, who sent in letters or came to testify on Melendez's behalf included 26 formerly and currently incarcerated people.

"I can speak personally to the transformation that I saw firsthand and the impact that he had on me as a person," testified Marlin Jeffreys, who served time at Solano with Melendez. "For two semesters, Juan Felipe continually took time out of his day to help me study and learn algebra."

Besides tutoring, Melendez said he took every group available at Solano Correctional Facility, including Victim Awareness, Anger Management, Personal Transformation, Alternative to Violence, CDCR Psychology department Cognitive Behavior class, Prisoner's Outreach Program (helping at risk youth), and Peer Health. Additionally, he said he's a thesis away from getting a Master's Degree in Humanities and another in Political Science from California State University at Dominguez.

With everything going for Melendez, he believed he was going home and gave away his TV, hotpot and radio. Plus his 74-year old mom, Maria Christina Navarrete, who is a history professor and author, flew in from Columbia for the hearing.

"She was really hoping and certain that with so much support, he (the judge) was going to let me go," Melendez said. "She came on the very last day

because she wanted to be there when I got out."

The judge who held Melendez 1170(d)1 hearing was the same judge that presided over the armed robbery charges from 2006. Also at the hearing was the man who Melendez robbed of an expensive watch with a .22 Cal gun. No one was physically hurt and the watch was never recovered.

Melendez, who then worked at Applied Materials where he was an employee of the month, was arrested for the crime three years later. Police found the .22 inside Melendez's home with several parts missing from inside, which made it inoperable.

The sentencing court originally gave Melendez a total of 16 years, which included a 10 year enhancement for using a gun in a crime, for his first arrest and conviction.

More than 20 people showed up in court at the 1170(d)1 hearing to speak on behalf of the 42-year-old Melendez.

"We were just hoping he'd take one of the enhancements off," Melendez said.

The victim spoke against Melendez's early release.

"I was devastated," Melendez said. "When I had to speak, I was kind of torn, but I said I would like to address the victim. It's horrible that the burden that I imposed on him is still weighing down on him."

The sentencing court denied Melendez's resentencing request due to "The planning and sophistication in pretending to buy a watch, then taking the watch."

San Quentin thespians embody Shakespeare

*The players enacted *The Winter's Tale* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona**

By Juan Haines and
Michael Johnson
Staff Writers

Shakespeare at San Quentin performed *The Winter's Tale* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* on consecutive Fridays in May in the prison's Protestant Chapel. Marin Shakespeare Company began its first Shakespeare program at San Quentin in 2003.

Director Suraya Keating of Marin Shakespeare, invited each audience of more than 100 people from the local San Francisco Bay Area community and almost 90 inmates to sit together and enjoy the plays.

About *The Winter's Tale* Keating said, "One of the themes is that our minds can either enslave us when we get stuck in negative thoughts, or it could free us."

In the play, King Leontes heads toward a destructive path when he is hooked on the (false) belief that his wife Hermione is cheating on him with his best friend, King Polixenes. Rather than checking his own thinking, Leontes is set on pointing the finger of blame and punishing those he believes are at fault. As with most thoughtless negative behavior, Leontes' hurtful actions end up hurting himself in the end.

Regarding *Two Gentlemen of Verona* she said: "What does love mean to you, and have you experienced love? I

want you all to get in groups real quick and talk about this." It got the audience into the spirit of love.

Two Gentlemen of Verona is Shakespeare's first play, a story of two best buddies Proteus and Valentine who are infatuated with Sylvia, the daughter of Duke of Milan.

"Theater teaches me to look at other issues besides mine and realize that I need to be empathic with others for the greater whole, to sacrifice for the greater whole," said inmate Chris Marshall who plays Valentine, a gentleman of Verona. "Valentine is a young gentleman from Verona, who is in love with Silvia. However, he is unaware that she loves him; he's on a quest for friendship. The only problem is that his close friend is also in love with Silvia."

Keating says giving inmates the chance to perform Shakespearean plays is therapeutic—it's called Drama Therapy.

Daphne, an outside actor who played the role of Silvia and is currently working on a Master's degree in Drama Therapy said, "Acting has taught me not to judge; I cannot judge and be real with myself—in one word empathy."

Raiveon "Ray-Ray" Wooden who played the Duke of Milan said, "It helps me embrace my true self. I'm very animated; Shakespeare

gives us a chance to reflect on the characters we play and how we can put those experiences to use in our real lives."

Wayne Belize Villa Franco, who played Crab, Launce's dog, said, "I played the dog role because it reminds me of my past dog Kilo, who loved me, but I didn't know how to love that dog because of my addiction. I now know how to love. I played this role to say sorry to Kilo for not loving him properly. Acting has taught me empathy and compassion for all life."

Drama Therapy is another form of rehabilitation, which affects the individual, and helps create social change in the community, according to Keating.

"When I told my friends that I was going to a play within a prison they were somewhat conflicted. However, this was a great experience to see you all in your creative form," said Cindy, an outside guest during a question and answer period after *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Another audience member, Karen, told the inmate actors in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, "I believe in social justice theater. You men today have shown us all that you are rehabilitating yourself and breaking down barriers in the process."

"I have seen Shakespeare all over the world, but I've never seen such living theater as I've seen here," commented Vicky, an audience member of *The Winter's Tale*.

Another audience member, Nancy, who is a Shakespearean actor, told the inmate actors in *The Winter's Tale*, "Your humanity landed in a way I've never seen before. I think we can all identify with thinking freely as a community as we break down that fourth wall that's in our heads."

Actor Chris Thomas said, "Judging people or situations with a jaded eye can have dire consequences," regarding his take on acting in *The Winter's Tale*.

Actor Angelo Falcone added, "I look not for beauty, nor color of skin, but for a loyal heart, deep within. For beauty will fade, and skin will grow old, but a loyal heart will never go cold."

To learn skills of using the study and performance of Shakespeare and Drama Therapy to effect individual and social change, visit Marin Shakespeare Company: business@marinshakespeare.org for more information about training workshops.

The Characters in *The Winter's Tale*:

King Leontes, King of Sicilia: Antwan Banks Williams
R. Mamillius, son of Leontes & Hermione: Adamu Chan

Camillo, Lord & friend to King Leontes: Raiveon "Ray-Ray" Wooden

Paulino, Lord of Sicilia & brother to Antigonus: Richie Morris

Lord 1 of Sicilia: G. Jordan

Cleomenes: Nythell Nate Collins

Oracle of Apollo & Mariner: Rauch Draper

Time: Eric "Maserati-E" Abercrombie

Polixenes, King of Bohemia: Maurice Reese Reed

Florizel, Prince of Bohemia & son of Polixenes: Drew, Jr.

Clown, Shepherd's son: Philippe "Kells" Kelly

Perdita, daughter of Leontes & Hermione, raised by Shepherd: Suraya Keating

Autolycus, a roguish peddler: Chris Thomas

Hermione, Queen of Sicilia: Sharon

Emilia, friend to Hermione: Losdini

Antigonus, Lord of Sicilia: Ben Tobin

Jailer: Jad Salem

Lord 2 of Sicilia: Belize Villafranco

Dion & Bear: Red Bone

Time: John Ray Ervin, Sr.

Shepherd: Darwin "tall" Billingsley

Dorca, a shepherdess: Chris Marshall

Music Director: G. Jordan

Stage Manager: Brotha Dee

Music & Songs by: Brotha Dee, Chris Thomas, & G. Jordan

The characters in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

Proteus, a gentleman of Verona: Jack Spat

Launce, servant to Proteus: Edmond Richardson

Crab, Launce's dog: Belize Villafranco

Valentine, a gentleman of Verona: C.R. Marshall Sr.

Speed, servant to Valentine: A.A.

Julia, a lady of Verona (later disguised as Sebastian): Nythell (Nate) Collins

Antonio, father to Proteus: Darwin Tall Billingsley

Panthony, cousin to Proteus: Tommy

Lucetta, lady friend to Julia: Geno

Duke of Milan: Raygeta Sylvia, daughter to Duke of Milan: Daphne

Thurio, suitor to Silvia: Maurice "Reese" Reed

Eglamour, butler to Sylvia: A.D.A.M.U.

Host: Drew Jr.

Outlaw 1: Jeanne

Outlaw 2: John Ray Ervin, Sr.

Outlaw 3: David Anthony Strouth

Outlaw ensemble: Brotha Dee, Geno, Tall, Tommy

Music & Songs: Tommy, David Anthony Strouth, Blakk Flame

Stage Manager: Brotha Dee

The sounds of Woodstock filled the Catholic Chapel

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairman

Kurt Huget's guitar workshop for San Quentin inmates did it again—this time bringing the music of Woodstock to the SQ Catholic Chapel for a mostly acoustic ensemble performance.

No one remembered exactly whose idea it was to celebrate the iconic concert's 50 year anniversary—but they all agreed it was a perfect theme for their June 23 showcase.

"Woodstock means a lot to the older generation," said incarcerated guitar student Thomas Washington, age 74—a trained jazz saxophonist who has learned to play guitar over only the last year. "I was there in Greenwich Village back in that era. We had a formula for world peace back then, but the media threw a whole monkey wrench in it."

Lisa Starbird, coordinator for the volunteer music organization Bread and Roses, booked the chapel for the performance, and the guitar guys took it from there.

Huget spoke briefly between songs to give the event a little historic perspective. "We're keeping it real," he said. "Why not pay homage to the greatest concert in rock history?"

"Even though you make mistakes in life, you always have a chance to make redemption. That was sort of the underlying message between Woodstock and the war."

The set list included a wide range of songs written or performed by the legendary artists who made the

August 23, 1969, concert so ground breaking—Joan Baez; Creedence Clearwater Revival, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, Jimi Hendrix; Mountain, The Band, et al.

"Every one of these groups has written songs I've played here before," said Huget.

**"Even though
you make
mistakes
in life, you
always have a
chance to make
redemption"**

Joining Huget on the chapel stage, his students Louis Calvin, Billy Dooley, Douglas Ingram and Washington plucked and strummed on their acoustic guitars. Kevin D. Sawyer contributed the sound of an electric guitar to round out the night's full harmony.

Sawyer's guitar notes stood out on songs like Santana's "Black Magic Woman," where Washington provided lead vocals and harmonica player Gary Harrell came out of the audience to join in.

"I'm really proud of these guys," said Dooley afterward. "I just love playing together with all of them."

Incarcerated chapel technician Dwight Krizman ended up being the percussion man on a spur-of-the-moment invitation. He sat hitting bass drum notes on a cajon—or wooden box—during most of the

performance, also playing an assortment of handheld rhythmic devices, sort of like tambourines and bongos, that he called an "afuche, cabasa and djembe."

Ingram sang lead on "Me and Bobby McGee."

"I'm not singing it like Janis (Joplin) did, trust me," he said after Huget introduced him.

"This is the last song she ever recorded," added Huget.

"I had a blast," Ingram told *SQNews* later. "We've been working hard—Billy, Louie and me. It's been a real challenge for me."

"Some songs were outside what I normally play. These guys helped me over the rough spots, and it paid off."

At multiple times over the last couple of months, various configurations of the ensemble members could be seen practicing together in nooks and crannies all over the facility—wherever they could gather for a little while to hammer out their song list.

"It helps strengthen my memory—all the practicing," said Washington. "Playing all these different tunes does a lot for your music comprehension. For me, it's great to be able to add another instrument to my repertoire."

Hypercritical Sawyer noticeably flubbed his "Star Spangled Banner" licks, and was none too happy about that. It's a song he's played and performed many times in the past.

"I should have kept my eyes on the sheet music, but I tried looking away from it," he said. "I'll have to try that again."

The set ended with Joe Cocker's version of the

Traffic song, "Feeling Alright."

"Come on everybody—sing along, stomp your feet, whatever you want to do," urged Huget.

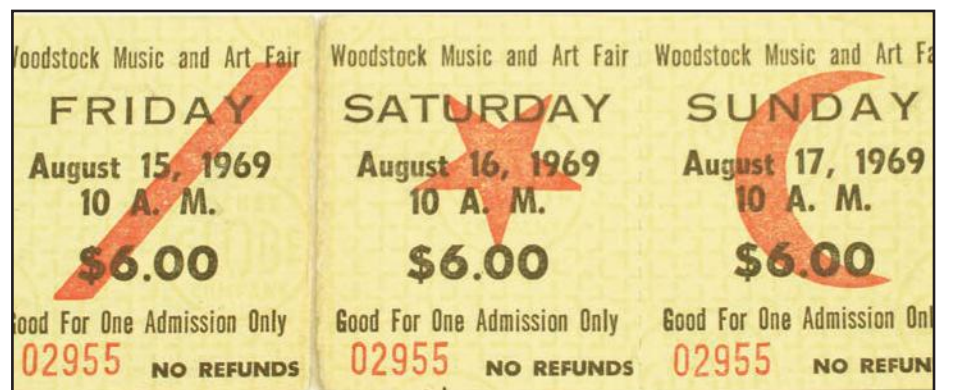
All the guys on stage motioned for Starbird to finish

the concert by getting on a mic. She reluctantly—but with a constantly wide smile—joined the men in song.

"Being able to bring music into your lives, whenever we can, means every-

thing to us," Starbird said when the music ended, and all the gear started to get removed from the stage. "We took a trip down memory lane with these guys."

"Goodnight—we see you and appreciate you."



Courtesy of Tom Lipnsky

Prosecuted Louisiana warden pleads guilty to fraud charges

By Elton Kelley
Journalism Guild Writer

A former Louisiana prison warden has pleaded guilty to federal fraud and conspiracy charges.

"He'll pay for it ... prison time will be recommended under the [federal] guidelines," said David Joseph, U.S. attorney for the Western District of Louisiana. "And he will pay restitution for the crimes."

Cain, 51, faced 17 counts of wire fraud and a single count of conspiracy, reported *theadvocate.com*. He is former warden of Avoyelles Correctional Center, which has since been renamed the Raymond Laborde Correctional Center,

The charges stem from transactions that may amount to as much as \$150,000 for the purchases of personal use items like guns, accessories, flat screen TVs, Yeti coolers, toilet paper, coffee and building supplies for the construction of a new house on prison grounds, according to the article.

Tonia Bandy, Cain's former wife and fellow prison employee, had already pled guilty to unspecified charges in the case. She was scheduled to take the stand along with Corrections Secretary Jimmy LeBlanc; both were expected to testify against Cain.

Cain resigned in 2016. He pleaded guilty at the last min-

ute, prior to Bandy and LeBlanc taking the stand, to two counts that "pertained only to purchases of gun and gun accessories, which amounted to less than \$1,000," according to Cain's attorney, John McLindon. "Cain admitted to those limited purchases and apologized to taxpayers."

"Even though he's only pleaded to two counts, it wouldn't be uncommon for the judge to consider the entire scheme," Dane Ciolino, a professor at Loyola Law School, told *theadvocate.com*. "The odds are the judge is going to use a larger number; that's the way it usually happens."

There There depicts the story of the Native American traditions

BOOK REVIEW

By Juan Haines and Libby Rainey

There There by Tommy Orange chronicles the lives of Native Americans in his hometown of Oakland, California. The result is a portrait of a community often erased from depictions of urban life. After many years of discussing books together San Quentin News senior editor Juan Haines and Berkeley graduate, Democracy Now producer and SQN volunteer, Libby Rainey jointly reviewed *There There*.

San Quentin News aims to tell stories about humanity and redemption that challenge assumptions about who imprisoned people are. In discussing books not only about mass incarceration, but also about America, love and loss, history and family, we get a better understanding of ourselves.

Libby: *There There* takes its name from a misinterpretation of a famous Gertrude Stein quote. In 1937, Stein wrote of her hometown Oakland, California “there’s no there there.” Her words have been cemented into cultural history as a literary diss of Oakland. But in *There There*, Dene Oxendene, a Native American also raised in Oakland knows Stein is referring to the far-reaching changes

that Oakland has underwent over the years, however:

For Native people in this country, all over the Americas, it’s been developed over, buried ancestral land, glass and concrete and wire and steel, unreturnable covered memory. There is no there there.

Just as Dene rejects the man’s incorrect understanding of the quote, Orange challenges racist portrayals of Native American people.

In its opening Orange writes, “We’ve been defined by everyone else and continue to be slandered despite easy-to-look-up-on-the-internet facts about the realities of our histories and current state as people.”

Orange – a member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma— offers a rebuke of these stories with a collage of stories about Native people across generations, classes, experiences and gender.

The novel rejects narratives of death and defeat, instead focuses on resistance and resilience. Orange writes, “Getting us to the cities was supposed to be the final necessary step in our assimilation, absorption, erasure, the completion of a five-hundred-year-old genocidal campaign. But the city made us new, and we made it ours.”

Juan: *There There* weaves Native American traditions into present-day urban life with strong over-

tones of suffering, broken promises, genocide and assimilation — there’s also cultural pride as well as cultural shame.

Orange created 12 distinct characters to illustrate the conflict, tension, drama, turmoil and anguish. The story’s authenticity comes from a narrative steeped in Native American culture.

An example, when Dene Oxendene finds out that his uncle is dying and asks: “How much time—”

“We don’t have time, Nephew, time has us. It holds us in its mouth like an owl holds a field mouse. We shiver. We Struggle for release, and then it pecks out our eyes and intestines for sustenance and we die the death of field mice.”

Tony Loneman, a major character, sees himself as someone with strong intuition and street smarts... “I’m smart where it counts,” But acknowledges that is not how other people see him — they see a generic Native boy.

Native American genocide haunts this passage, but Tony’s presence on the train represents survival. It raises a question often asked in the novel: what does it mean to be Native Americans in urban America?

Libby: This question of self-image recurs in *There There*. The characters often catch sight of their reflections — such as Tony Lone-

man in a TV screen or Dene Oxendene in the scuffed window of a BART train car.

Through their reflections, the characters confront their own images and the way they relate to their present environment. Orange writes, Native Americans, “...ride buses, trains, and cars across, over, and under concrete plains. Being Indian has never been about returning to the land. The land is everywhere or nowhere.”

Juan: As the story continues, Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield tells Orvil about Native American heritage:

“...Don’t ever let anyone tell you what being Indian means. Too many of us died to get just a little bit of us here, right now, right in this kitchen. You, me. Every part of our people that made it precious. You’re Indian because you’re Indian because you’re Indian...”

Each character experiences his or her identity differently. A character named

Blue’s perspective was created after being estranged from Native American culture:

“I knew I wasn’t white. But not all the way. Because while my hair is dark and my skin is brown, when I look in the mirror, I see myself from the inside out. And inside I feel as white as the long white pill-shaped throw pillow my mom always made me keep on my bed even though I never used it.”

Libby: The novel builds to a powwow at the Oakland Coliseum — an event that brings all the storylines and characters of the novel finally into common space and time—a crescendo.

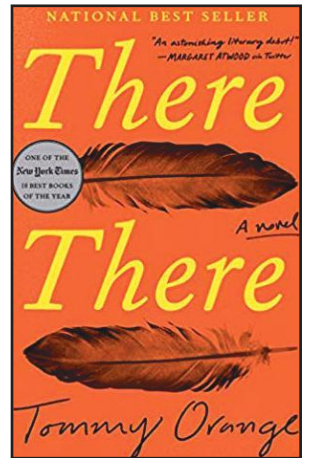
Juan: Just before the powwow begins, Orange delivers Orvil Red Feather’s perspective as to who he wants to be:

“Orvil looks around the room, and he sees all these men dressed up like him. They all needed to dress up to look Indian too. There’s something like the shaking of feathers he felt somewhere between his heart and his stomach.”

But, the quote that captures the spirit of the book for me:

“When you see the bubbles on the side of your grandmother’s face you’ll know that you don’t have to struggle to find the hero, the hero has found you — ‘they’re, there’ in the kitchen of your home.”

There There is about the banality of daily life and moments that change everything and it demands to be read once, twice and then again.



NEWS BRIEFS

Alabama — In response to a call to action from a coalition of prisoners, including the Free Alabama Movement and Unheard Voices OTCJ, Kinetik Justice and Swift Justice, four prisoners went on a hunger strike at the Limestone Correctional Facility in protest against corruption, abuse, and the lack of accountability for the inhumane conditions in the state’s prisons, *Truthout* reports.

Pennsylvania — As part of the Clean Slate law passed last year, state officials began sealing 30 million records that did not result in convictions, summary offenses and low-level misdemeanors committed by people who have not had any other charges within 10 years, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reports.

California — Detainees at the Yuba County Jail have gone on a hunger strike for the third time in 10 months, the *Sacramento Bee* reports. The immigration detainees are demanding newer facilities, better medical care and they are complaining that they should not be treated as criminals, like other inmates in the jail.

California — San Francisco-based Parole Agent Supervisor, Martin Figueroa helps former incarcerated people re-enter society through Peer Re-Entry Navigator Network, *KPIX* reports. PRNN provides life skills such as money management, job placement and addiction recovery support. Figueroa says he’s served about 700 people with a 95 percent success rate for keeping people from returning to jail.

Kansas — Over the past 15 years, prison officials have banned about 7,000 books, including *A Clockwork Orange*, *Invisible Man*, *Twelve Years a Slave* as well as issues of *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Us Weekly* and *Elle*, *KCUR* reports.

Arizona — Because *Chokehold*: Policing Black Men criticizes the U.S. criminal justice system corrections officials considered it “unauthorized content,” *National Public Radio* reports. However, in the face complaints and lawsuits, prison officials reversed the ban.

Georgia — Marion Wilson Jr. was executed on June 20 by lethal injection. Wilson was the 1,500th person to be executed in the United States since the return of the death penalty in 1976 according to the *Death Penalty Information Center*.

Kentucky — A proposed amendment on crime victims’ rights was voided by the state’s Supreme Court last June *The Associated Press* reports. The court ruled that the General Assembly is required to submit the full text of a proposed constitutional amendment to the electorate for a vote.

Florida — There have been more exonerations of death row inmates than any other state in the country — “in fact, there’s been one exoneration of a death row prisoner for every three Florida executions over the past four decades,” *Florida Phoenix* reports. Clifford Williams Jr., was sentenced to death and spent 42 years behind bars for a crime prosecutors now say he didn’t commit. His nephew was also exonerated. After his release, the 76-year-old Williams earned a new ranking: He is the 29th person to be exonerated from Florida’s death row since the 1970s.

Washington, DC — Thousands of sick, dying, and elderly federal prisoners who are eligible for early release will now have access to free legal representation in court

through the newly established Compassionate Release Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse, a collaborative pro bono effort between FAMM, the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL), is designed to match qualified prisoners with legal counsel should they need to fight a compassionate release denial or unanswered request in court.

Nevada — Gov. Steve Sisolak signed into law a bill which would ban the use of private prisons for services, such as housing and custody. Nevada now joins Iowa, New York, and Illinois in establishing this type of prohibition, *The Laughlin Nevada Times* reports.

New York — The state has been leading the way with respect to the private prison industry, having taken three actions against private prisons, *Forbes* contributor, Morgan Simon reports. First, prohibit private prisons from operating within the state; divesting state pension funds from the largest private prison companies, GEO Group and CoreCivic, and passing a bill that would prohibit NY State-chartered banks from “investing in and providing financing to private prisons.”

Utah — The state’s prison population growth rate is among the highest in the nation, despite recent criminal justice reform efforts aimed at diverting both adults and juveniles to alternative programs, *The Salt Lake Tribune* reports. In the past 18 months, the prison population has grown by 362 inmates, bringing the total count to 6,766 people. According to prison officials, the state only has 199 beds available within the prison system.

Former inmate Tung Nguyen faces a deportation order

By Danny Ho and Clark Gehartsreiter
Contributing Writers

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was knocking on Tung Nguyen’s door during a disturbance at a hip-hop concert at San Quentin State Prison in 2006.

While conducting a tour of the prison for about 50 non-profit workers and volunteers, a riot broke out between Black and Hispanic inmates. According to Nguyen’s interview for *OC Weekly*, correctional officers ordered all inmates on the ground, but Nguyen ignored their commands. He and his fellow inmate tour guides formed a line in front of the terrified visitors to protect them from the riot.

“Once we formed a line, I could see the fear in the [visitors’] eyes,” said Nguyen. “We ushered them to safety.” In a debriefing after the riot, the officers said that “we did a good job maintaining the peace,” Nguyen recalled.

In 2010, four years later, Governor Brown gave Nguyen a 2011 parole date for his heroic act.

Born a year after the fall of Saigon in 1976, Nguyen came to the U.S. in the early 1990s. Ostracized by classmates, who called him a “Nip,” Nguyen turned into prime recruiting material for a Vietnamese gang for protection. In 1993, at age 16, one of Nguyen’s fellow gang members fatally stabbed someone over an unpaid debt. Accused of first-degree murder and robbery alongside his associates, Nguyen did not think the charges would result in convictions, but the jury found him guilty. He received a sentence of 25 years to life.

Later when Nguyen was released on parole, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) waited outside San Quentin to arrest him. Nguyen was confined inside a federal building in San Francisco for two weeks. As a Vietnamese refugee, Nguyen had lost his U.S. Permanent Residency Status — his green card — because of his conviction.

Initially, Nguyen was protected from deportation due to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. and Vietnamese governments. The agreement vowed to harbor Vietnam War refugees such as Nguyen, who entered the U.S. before 1995.

However, this protected condition changed with the election of Donald Trump. In 2017, ICE started to arrest and detain Vietnamese refugees with criminal convictions. President Trump has since begun seeking to renegotiate the MOU to deport more people to Vietnam, pre-1995 or not.

Nguyen’s act of heroism at San Quentin once again saved him from deportation. Nguyen applied to then Gov. Jerry Brown for a pardon, and in 2018, on the day before Thanksgiving, he received the pardon. It was granted partly because of his courageous act during the riot. The pardon effectively erased his conviction, protecting Nguyen from ICE’s target list.

After his release from prison, Nguyen has lived an exemplary life. He successfully advocated for early parole hearings in SB260. He also founded the Asian and Pacific Islanders Re-Entry of Orange County (APIROC). After 2017, he shifted his focus to immigration in cases

that affected the Vietnamese community.

Vietnamese citizens who have run into problems with the law flooded him with calls. Many had entered the U.S. prior to 1995, the period protected by the MOU.

Nguyen says this has turned him into a case manager for such persons. He offers advice, explains to them how they can help themselves and describes to them the processes they may encounter.

Nguyen’s advocacy does not end here. In December, 2018, he helped organize a protest on the streets of Little Saigon, a Vietnamese area in Orange County.

That same month, “Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) led a coalition of 26 House members, who expressed dismay with the administration’s agenda,” reported the *OC Weekly*. A Dec. 13 letter signed by Lowenthal and his supporters read, “We strongly oppose any renegotiation of the MOU that strips the current protections afforded to Vietnamese refugees, including the exclusion from the agreement of pre-1995 immigrants and the humanitarian consideration provided to all others.”

In order to get MOU codified into law, Representative Lowenthal is counting on the 2020 election to change the balance of power in Washington, D.C. He believes any codifying of this issue while the administration is trying to renegotiate the terms of MOU will be unlikely to succeed.

Lowenthal considers comprehensive immigration reform as the issue of greater importance for the next administration, according to *The OC Weekly*.

In Depth: Helder Alveraaz



Photo by Eddie Herena

Helder Alveraaz

Helder Alveraaz, 42, is one of the better defenders in the intramural basketball league at San Quentin, is also proficient in other sports, as I found out in the following

interview. I recently caught up with him while he was shaving on the 5th tier in West Block to do this interview.

AT: How is it playing sports here at The Q?

HA: I like it here because there are no racial boundaries. I can play ball. Time is hard enough, but not having racial politics is much easier.

AT: So, that means at Wasco Reception, they're still pushing the racial divisions, even in sports.

HA: Yeah.

AT: What sports do you play?

HA: Basketball, Baseball, Softball and Tennis.

AT: And on the streets?

HA: I race mountain bikes out there. I rode for Harley Davidson, and now I race for Indian Motorcycle. I have 17 National titles and two world championships in Flat Track.

AT: Explain Flat Track Racing?

HA: It's like NASCAR but on a motorcycle.

AT: What are the top speeds?

HA: 180 mph average.

AT: If members of our reading audience Google your name, will they find all this? You know that people in jail are always behaving as though they're on 'Fantasy Island,' acting as if Mr. Rourke and Tattoo are introducing them as they make up all kinds of stuff that they did while on the streets.

HA: Yeah, they can look me up. (We're both laughing at this.)

AT: What type of educational pursuits have you done while inside?

HA: I got my GED here at The Q. I've completed Vocational Maintenance,

now I'm in SAP (Substance Abuse Program).

AT: What's it like playing on Canada Dry, one of the top teams in the intramural basketball league?

HA: I'm competitive. I like the game and I like the guys on the team. [Head coach] Lomack and I get along very well.

AT: What's your role on the team?

HA: I play defense, hustle, and shoot open jumpers.

AT: Do you participate in any self-help groups?

HA: I'm signed up for many of them, but the waiting list long.

AT: Okay, you get to pick your All Time All Star NFL Football Team. We're going to go position for position but, you can't pick any White players. (I explained to Alveraaz, this question isn't racial in origin but a way of narrowing the choices to test his knowledge of the league.)

Let's go!

HA: Are you really asking me that? That's good...that's good for real.

QB: Randall Cunningham & Michael Vick. RB: Barry Sanders; Roger Craig.

FB: Bo Jackson. TE: Kellen Winslow & Bennett. WR: Jerry Rice, John Taylor, Michael Irvin and Deion Sanders. KR: Ickey Woods PR: Tyreek Hill. DT: Refrigerator Perry & Dana Stubbs

DE: Reggie White & Michael Strahan. MLB: Singleary & Jack Ham. OLB: Lawrence Taylor & Julius Peppers. DB: Don Griffen & Lester Hayes. S: Ronnie Lott & Jeff Fuller.

AT: What city do you hail from?

HA: San Jose, California.

AT: If you had the chance to speak to your 12 year old self, what would you say in one sentence?

HA: "Be patient."

AT: What do you want the readers to know about you and your life experience?

HA: When I paroled the first time, I made a promise

that I wouldn't come back. I did what I needed to do to stay out, however, I came back because I made a mistake and I own the mistake -- no one else's fault but mine. [He was given three years for felony evading and assault with a deadly weapon.] I may not be guilty of the initial crime that brought me here, but because I didn't think at the crucial moment when I needed to? I created the circumstances of why I'm here giving this interview from behind the wall.

AT: I really appreciate you doing this interview.

HA: Let me say this: The Q isn't the same like it was in the 80's and 90's. This is a viable community looking to rehabilitate and return to society. That's why I play softball with the Hardtimers, because we're playing people from the outside community and that keeps us connected to humanity. I actually needed this reminder of what I lost so I'll appreciate my freedom even more when I'm back out in a few months.

—Aaron Taylor

Kings & Warriors Round Up

SQ KINGS 5/25/2019

The Outsiders lose 82-60, taking the Kings to 3-4 on the season. The Kings were led by recently signed Gary Brown, a former SQ Warrior player. Brown scored 16 points in 11 minutes.

The Outsiders were led by Geoffrey "Free" Gary with 23pts.

6/30/2019

The Outsiders came in and beat the Kings in a tight game. The Outsiders were led by Ryan "The Rifleman" Steer with 20pts.

The Kings were led by Oris "Pep" Williams (aka The Human Theme Song) with 19 and Gary Brown and Jaryd Newton with 15pts apiece.

KINGS SCORING LEADERS

7 GAMES:

- Joshua Burton 89pts - 12.2ppg
- Oris "Pep" Williams 74pts - 10.1ppg
- Derrick "Outloud" Gray 68pts - 9.7ppg
- Jamal "Do It All" Harrison 61pts - 8.7ppg

SQ WARRIORS 5/25/2019

The Warriors win a close one over Imago Dei, 77-73,

moving to a .600 winning percentage at 3-2. SQW was led by Emerald "The Ghost" Kemp-Aikens with 14pts 11rbs 7asts and 4stls, followed closely by Allan "PTSB" McIntosh with 13pts 7rbs 2asts and 3stls. Image of God was led by Big Brett with 26pts and Tony with 14pts.

Warrior veteran defenseman Montrell "Jack that thang Up!" Vines had his best offensive game since coming back from an ankle & groin injury over the past two seasons with 11pts, dropping two 3-pointers, two lay-ups and a free throw.

6/8/2019

Emerald "The Ghost" Kemp-Avery and Ricky "Rick Rebound" Joseph playing with Lincoln Hill, hit a 3-pointer three to begin the game, however, it wouldn't be enough to beat The SQ Warriors who won the game 94-83.

Anthony "1/2 Man 1/2 Amazing" Ammons led the Warriors with 24 points and 16 rebounds.

Joseph had 25 points and 15 rebounds while Kemp-Aikens had 13 points, 18 rebounds.

6/15/19

A solid first half turned into a disappointing 3rd quarter and 86-75 loss for the SQ Dubs against the Green Team. Four Warriors scored

in double figures and they led 40-37 at half-time. However, the Green Team took over in the 3rd, using height to their advantage.

McIntosh led the Warriors with 24 points followed by 18 apiece scored by Delvon "The Funky Basketball Player" Adams and Ammons. Joseph snatched 22 rebounds against the taller opponents.

Patrick "P.L. Smooth" Lacey and Dan "The Destroyer" Wohl led the Green Team with 19 apiece.

6/30/2019

Imago Dei came into The Q without Teon "T-1000" Connor and took a tko 109-105 to the SQ Dubs.

The Dubs were led by Ammons and Adams, both with 22; Jesse Blue dropped 20, Walt "The Mixer" Cook had 17, followed by Ricky "Rick Rebound" Joseph with 12.

Imago Dei were led by Mike with 34 and John with 28.

STATS LEADERS (4gms):

- POINTS: McIntosh- 100pts 25.0ppg Ammons - 47pts 11.7ppg
- REBOUNDS Rick Rebound - 22 (3gms)
- ASSISTS (3gms) W. Cook 10 E. Kemp-Aikens 10
- STEALS (3gms) E. Kemp-Aikens 10 D. Joy 10



- T. Harris 8
- FOULS (3gms) Ammons 9
- TURNOVERS (3gms) Each player has a minimum 2 per game that they've played.

(A. Mikkelson of the Journalism Guild, Michael Johnson and Rahsaan Thomas contributed to the round up.)

Sports Quiz

Test your knowledge of sports players by matching them to their nicknames.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Marvin Hagler | The Great One |
| Freddie Brown | Greek Freak |
| Ray Mancini | Zeke |
| Roberto Duran | Plastic Man |
| David Klinger | Downtown |
| Andy Dalton | Charlie Hustle |
| Pete Rose | Big Papi |
| Randy Johnson | Big Game |
| Roger Staubach | The Executioner |
| Fran Tarkenton | Big Shot Bob |
| Stacey Augman | Mr. Big Shot |
| Chauncey Billups | Petro |
| Bernard Hopkins | Boom Boom |
| Robert Horry | The Dodger |
| Rik Smits | Frantic |
| Giannis Atentekompo | The Big Unit |
| James Worthy | Broadway |
| Tim Hardaway | The Red Rifle |
| Isaiah Thomas | The Gunslinger |
| Reggie Miller | Legend |
| David Ortiz | The Knick Killer |
| Wayne Gretzy | The Dunkin' Dutchman |
| Drazen Petrovich | UTEP 2-Step |
| Larry Bird | Marvelous |
| Joe Namath | Hands of Stone |
- Aaron Taylor

In the KidCat Softball game, everyone is a winner

By Leonard F. Brown
Journalism Guild Writer

Two teams of young offenders launched their Kid CAT softball festival with smiles and laughter and a 17-4 score. "The same skills used in softball are the same skills applied by the Kid CAT organization, such as when working together planning and organizing events here at San Quentin," said Kid CAT Chairman Si Dang, 43. The game featured the Junglecats versus the Wildcats on a breezy evening, with Mt. Tamalpais peeking out from the clouds in the background. The goal: to build community solidarity among the men who committed their crimes

as minors. "Building community and team dynamics of working together as a team," Dang said. "We have new members coming in. This is an opportunity to connect with them, to bring out their abilities in sports and otherwise at the emotional level and spiritual level. This will really help to empower us as an organization." Kid CAT member Ronald Carter, 54, commented, "It's important to show unity, to show that we can get along with one another and to just have fun." The game began with the Junglecats up to bat. The Wildcats defense appeared to get off to a good start, by getting two easy outs, but

thing quickly shifted when Riddle-Terrell Brandon hit a line-drive into left field, then scored off an RBI error at first base. After that, the Junglecats' offense roared to life, scoring one run in the first inning, four in the second, two in the third and three in the fourth. The defense held the Wildcats scoreless in the first three innings. "Although many of us do not wish to be out here in this cold, I believe it's important to build character," said Wildcat Peter Nguyen, 26. "... it strengthens our relationship with others." The Junglecats would pick up another 10 runs through the fourth, fifth and sixth innings.

Fidelio Marin comes in 1st in the 10-MileRun

By Frank Ruona
1000 Mile Club Coach

10-Mile Run

- Fidelio Marin 1:04:28
- Steve Reitz
- Chris Scull
- Vicente Gomez
- Sergio Carrillo
- Tommy Wickerd
- Martin Gomez
- Alberto Mendez
- Bruce Wells
- Moua Vue
- Brett Onwbey
- Jonathan Chiu
- Michael Keeyes
- John Levin
- D. Settlemeyer
- Michael Johnson
- Dan McCoy
- Nicola Bucci
- Al Yaseng
- M. Jones-Ismael
- Altamirano
- Clifton Williams

On a sunny Friday morning in mid May, the 1000 Mile Club completed their 4th annual 10-mile run.

Fidelio Marin once again took an aggressive pace as he ran 5:59 for his opening mile and 12:05 for his first two miles.

This was the fastest 10-mile run by someone not named Markelle Taylor.

Michael Keeyes, at 71 years old, finished in the 13th place.

Keeyes set a pace for his first mile at 8:44 and ran his second mile at 8:23, settling in over the entire race with an 8:34 per mile average.



File photo

Fidelio Marin

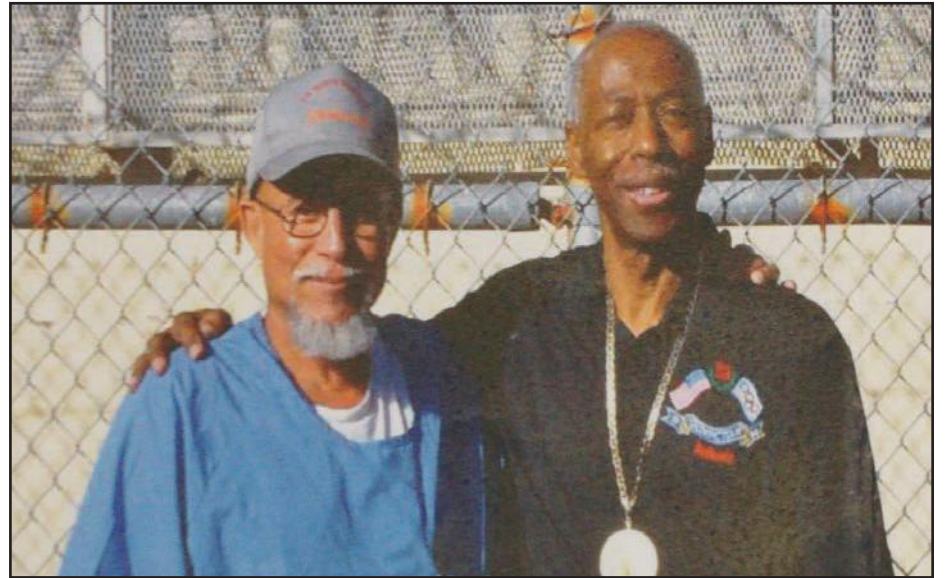
- Ernie Soltero
- George Moss
- Wallace Jackson
- 8-Mile Run
- Jose Torres
- 5.50 Miles
- Steven Brooks

SPORTS @THEQ

Eddie Hart returns to The Q



PhotoScan courtesy of Google Photos



File photo

Eddie Hart, Coach Bert Bonnano and Ralph Ligons in 1972 at the Eddie Hart Testimonial dinner.

Ralph Ligons and Eddie Hart at San Quentin, 2017

**By Steve Brooks
Contributing Writer**

Since 2012, the 1000 Mile Running Club honors Olympic Gold Medalist Eddie Hart with an annual track meet on the lower yard at SQ. This year Eddie Hart is honored to see his old friend, Ralph Ligons, and to pay homage to members of the 1000 Mile Running Club.

"I've been coming in for about four or five years now. It never gets old," said Hart, proudly displaying gold medal draped around his neck.

Ligons is the co-founder of the 1000 Mile Running Club. He and Hart went to high school together, where they ran on the same track team. Later, they were roommates at the Olympic village in the 1972 Munich games.

"Eddie taught me everything I know about

running," said Ligons, showing off an old black and white photo from their running days.

After reminiscing, Hart greeted faces both old and new beneath the baseball scoreboard. Many were excited to meet Eddie Hart and to sign up to participate in several running events.

Hart shared his story about losing a close friend and bouncing back to set the 100-meter dash Olympic record, which launched him to the 1972 Munich games—and win gold. He also offered running tips.

Among those honored was Glen Mason who has run over 20,000 miles since he has been with the club. "For me, running is a lifestyle now," said Mason. "It's what I do."

Ligons was acknowledged for running over 18,000 miles. Chris Scull was acknowledged for running

over 8,000 miles. Over a dozen 1000 Mile Club members have run between 1,000 and 6,000 miles.

"People don't realize how much hard work happens on this track," said new club secretary Wickered. "These dudes should get some credit for that."

Club member's endure hours of pain and injuries to achieve their personal goals. "When I run I feel better, I think and I do better," said Troy Dunmore, who has run over 2,000 miles.

After paying homage to club member's for their individual commitment it was time for the day's events.

After a minor delay to clear the track, runners lined up in the summer breeze for the premiere event: the 100-meter dash. When the dust settled, H-Unit's young Andrew Watkins was crowned the

winner with a time of 11.98 seconds. In the over-50 division, Clifton Williams won with a time of 15.49.

Fifteen runners competed in the one-mile-run, a sizeable field. The crowd favorites—Fedelio Marin and Chris Scull—were tight through the first quarter mile. But Marin opened his lead and won easily with a time of 5:03.01.

Next was the four-by-one, quarter-mile-relay, with another competitive field. The team of Andrew Watkins, Ben Tobin, Danny Geyer and Michael Johnson beat out Vicente Gomez, Sergio Carrillo, Martin Gomez, and Fedelio Marin by less than four seconds.

The Half Mile Run came down to a battle between Oscar Aguilar and Mark Jarosik. Aguilar, who was able to pull away from Jarosik on the second lap for a finish time of 2:37.24.

Jarosik broke the over-50 record set by Wickered in 2017 by running a time of 2:41.28.

Watkins won the 200-meter-dash with a time of 27.73 seconds. Clifton Williams also repeated as the 50 plus winner with a time of 32.26.

"It's nice to be healthy again," said Williams, who has battled injuries.

The next event was the 400-meter-dash. Watkins won with a time of 1:08.39. The final race of the meet was the Distance Medley Relay, a two-and-a-half-mile relay. Watkins, Tobin, Geyer, and Johnson prevailed with a time of 16:31.30.

Moua Vue, Brett Ownbey, Tobin, Geyer, and Johnson were declared official ironmen for competing in all seven events. Watkins, who ran five events and placed first in all of them,

was declared top runner of the meet.

Afterwards, Club Member's thanked the volunteer coaches for making this event possible. Head Coach Frank Rouna, Kevin Rumon, Jim Maloney, Jim Morris, Mark Stevens, and of course Eddie Hart.

"I'm blown away by the respect and love I get when I come in here," said Hart, as he closed out the event. "I will take it to my grave". When away from SQ, Hart works tirelessly, helping children through his "All In One" foundation. He is a coach, mentor, and community activist, who tries to teach youth to live healthy lives and fulfill their own dreams.

Before it all ends, Ligons, reminisced about a time he almost beat Hart running. "Remember that time, Eddie?" he asked. Hart just smiled.

The A's Are Undeclared 17-0!



Illustration by Javier Jimenez

**Aaron Taylor
Sports Editor**

I have a lot of opinions about sports, especially on the professional and collegiate level. However, I'm going to use this opportunity to talk about a team inside The Q.

For the past several seasons, San Quentin State Prison had two baseball teams, The Giants and The A's. Over those seasons, both teams were mediocre at best. Split-

ting the teams meant splitting the talent and both teams struggled.

However, during the 2018 off-season, the program made a radical shift. There would be one team. That team would consist of the top players on the yard.

The team manager is now Richard Williams.

His assistants are the top veteran baseball managers at The Q:

John Parratt
Anthony Carvalho

Terry Burton
Doug Abineau.
The equipment manager is Michael Pulido.

The only baseball team now at The Q is the San Quentin Athletics and that team is undefeated. Their record is 17-0 as of 7/10/2019.

O. Acosta
A. Chan
A. 'The Professional' Denard
T. Halfin
C. Hickson
John James (i.r.)
Angelo Mecchi
Juan Navarro
Leigh Olden
Brandon Riddle-Terrell
Jessie Rose
Randall Stockton
Michael Stone
Austin Thurman
Mark Wiley

There are five pitchers in the rotation. Rob "Big Smooth" Polzin, Royce "Gator" Rose (i.r.), Gary "Cool Aid" Townes and Carrington "Suit & Tie" Russelle and Riddle-Terrell closes games as well. Between these five pitchers, they have collective era in the low 3.0's.

Can you imagine an MLB club with a pitching rotation that had that kind of earned run average?

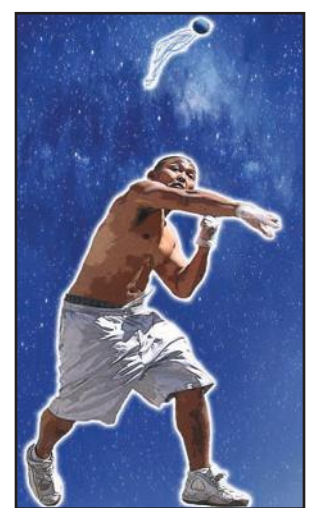
The team is averaging 14.5 runs per game. The closest game this season was a 9 inning 5-3 win over the Santa Monica Suns, the first game of a double-header on 6/29. Other than that, every contest has seen The A's in the mid-teens in runs each game.

The teams defense is stellar to say the least. Double plays have become the norm. At every position on the field, the defense is backing up the pitching, to the point that Townes went into a sixth inning of game with a no-hitter earlier this season.

Thurman is a player with multiple talents who has a legitimate shot at playing on the professional level when released. The team also has Denard, who was a draft pick to the Toronto Blue Jays, along with returning MVP from last season Riddle-Terrell, they make up a powerful and formidable line up to visiting clubs.

If you haven't had a chance to come out and watch the A's this season, you should find an opportunity to attend a game.

This season, The A's are the truth and being undefeated means my opine is fact based.



Sports Logos @The Q



All Illustrations by Javier Jimenez

ROOTS celebrates, tradition, inclusion and freedom

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairman

San Quentin's Asian community organized a festive and all-inclusive ceremony to honor "Super Cycle 5"—the latest graduating class of ROOTS (Restoring Our Original True Self).

ROOTS Chairman Kevin Neang served as emcee and made sure the June 9 event reflected great reverence for history and tradition, while also keeping a positive perspective on the future.

"I guess we're really going to be Asian today," joked Neang after he was thrown a bottle of Sriracha sauce instead of a microphone. "We usually serve nachos and burritos at these things. It got me thinking—how can we truly celebrate our culture?"

To solve this paradox, ROOTS enlisted Danny Ho and Hieu Nguyen, the event's "Iron Chefs," to serve up a luncheon of spring rolls, rice cakes, shrimp chips and other Asian treats—even the obligatory fortune cookie.

Equally important to the day's theme: each person received a handcrafted origami panda as they walked in the door.

"The panda represents a true freedom fighter," Neang told everyone later. "Just look at the panda: I'm Black, White, Asian—everyone loves me."

"That's why racism is stupid. Ask everyone, 'Where's your inner Panda?'"

ROOTS invites prisoners of any ethnicity to participate and focus on their own cultural identity. The diverse crowd of members and guests reflected this ideology.

Outside facilitator Tracy Nguyen led the celebrants in a Unity Clap.

"We start every class with this—first a slow beat, like a heartbeat," she explained. "This is how the '60s farmworkers out in the fields came together against language barriers—leaders

like Dolores Huerta, Caesar Chavez.

"On the yard—separated by skin, by color, by language, the Unity Clap is for us to honor what we learned from our ancestors."

Longtime ROOTS member Phoeun You spoke: "Let's call in our ancestors, parents, the loved ones that have passed on," he said. "Let's bring them here—in our hearts, in our sacred space. Feel our ancestors being present right now."

Neang introduced "the first Asian professor I ever met in my life," Roger Chung, who teaches Ethnic and Asian studies at Laney College.

"When we circled up to tell our stories, we found ways to restore and heal," Chung said. "We found ways to heal across racial and ethnic lines—across gender and sexual preferences."

Neang introduced ROOTS founder Eddie Zheng as "an individual who impacted me before I ever met him." Zheng spent 21 years behind bars—including SQ, before regaining his freedom and organizing the Asian Prisoners Support Community (APSC).

APSC advocates against human rights violations and unjust incarceration and deportation policies.

"Take a deep breath everyone. That breath sustains our lives," Zheng said. "Walking into this building and passing the sweat lodge, I can't help but be reminded that we're all on Native American land right now."

"Through ROOTS, we decolonize our mind—decolonize the violence. We must understand our history."

Zheng accepted the "Asian Heroes of the Year" award on behalf of APSC, and he described how they and ROOTS all came into existence.

"We wanted the institution to understand the value of having our culture and history acknowledged," he said. "With the will of the

people who are inside the prison industrial complex—we made that happen."

Nghiep Ke Lam—"Mr. San Quentin," who paroled from SQ in 2015, spoke about the power and impact of ROOTS.

"This is one opportunity to actually grow," he said. "There are many opportunities. Don't be afraid to ask for help."

"One day y'all ain't gonna be wearing blue no more. Don't just focus on getting out—focus on staying out."

Self-described "Blacknese" Joe Hancock wanted to pay tribute to Kasi Chaknavartula, a devoted outside facilitator unable to attend that day.

"She made our LGBT segment possible," said Hancock. "I want to thank her for teaching us how to smash patriarchy."

Jimmy Vue successfully transitioned from SQ's level 2 to finishing his term at the level 1 SQ Firehouse. He received special permission to return for a couple of hours and celebrate with his peers.

"At my recent psych evaluation, they asked me, 'You're not a lifer—why do you want to go through the ROOTS Reentry? Why not just go back to your family?'" Vue said.

"But I told them, 'I want to prove to people that this program works. I want to contribute to the program that helped me.'"

Neang introduced a person who he said "really makes me smile, Auntie Jun,"—Jun Yamamoto, known throughout the SQ community for her Friday evening origami classes. "Because of her, I can call myself a real O.G.—origami gangsta."

"This cycle was really about healing," said Jun as she teared up emotionally. "You all promote this on so many levels. Your commitment speaks to the healing power of art."

She acknowledged ROOTS' and her incarcerated students' contributions

toward folding hundreds of origami cranes that protesters took on a recent pilgrimage against ICE facilities in Crystal City and Dilly, Texas.

"These projects are meaningful because it reconnects us to our community," she said.

Neang introduced graduate Francisco Ortiz as the "Chinito Amigo."

"When I first got sentenced to life, my wife said, 'Whatever happens inside, don't lose yourself—be who you are,'" said Ortiz. "Because of this group, I found myself again."

"Auntie Jun showed me my life is like a piece of paper—I can fold or reshape my life and make anything I want."

Graduate Thanh Tran gave personal testimony and performed an original song about his own struggles as a youth offender and a Cambodian immigrant. His chorus of "We just need a fighting chance," captured his sentiments on both fronts.

Louis Sale played ukulele and sang "Tamari'i Hokulea," a native Tahitian verse sung to the youth as the first ship left the island for Hawaii.

ROOTS members performed the Haka—a Samoan tribal dance. Danny Pita quickly coached the crowd to participate with the traditional sound effects: "mili, mili, mili" (rubbing of hands); "pati-ia, pati-ia" (one clap); "lua pati-ia" (two claps).

The entire audience roared for "lua patia mai le o"—where everyone claps twice in unison before yelling, "Oh!"

The joyous communal sounds set the stage for the event's keynote speaker—Ny Nourn, a formerly incarcerated woman who not so long ago was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole (LWOP).

It took years, but Nourn's murder conviction was eventually overturned.

"Raise your hands," Nourn prompted the incarcerated men. "All of you are going home!"

"Commit to your freedom. Commit to community work. I owe a great deal to all the people I never met. My story is not unique."

"I've been out barely a year and a half. My reward is to be out there fighting for your freedom. You're looking at someone who was never supposed to be out in the first place."

Outside facilitator Nate Tan read from a letter he'd written to the group back when he missed ROOTS' Cambodian Day after his father suffered a stroke, and he stayed by his side at the hospital.

"I realized I had Cambodian role models outside my immediate family, and they were the guys locked up behind bars," Tan read. "I think as I grew older, I looked for spaces where I didn't have to explain myself, and it was with you guys inside..."

"I guess all this is to say my Cambodian narrative has always been rooted in the poverty, in the violence, and the struggle. But after meeting all you guys inside, my story now includes helping to get you all to freedom."

Kamsan Suon awed the crowd with a powerful reading of "Dead Memories"—an original poem he wrote about the layers of intergen-

erational trauma caused by the Khmer Rouge massacre.

"It's amazing how far people have come," Chung later said about Suon. "I've seen him use laughter, humor, comedy to heal."

"To see him come up now—a college graduate," Chung said about Kuon's 2019 Associate of Arts degree from the Prison University Project. "It shows the growth in him."

"If people could come see us now—the people who believe that incarcerated people can't learn. It's an important moment when we're able to heal those broken connections to education."

Facilitator Hien Nguyen interned for APSC before earning a fulltime position within the organization. "When you organize and create these kinds of spaces, it can be radical," she told SQNews. "Celebrating growth—it's a radical thing."

"It gives people a sense of hope and possibility in the midst of adversity, pain and suffering."

Neang is slated for release in December, after serving almost nine years.

"I never knew that there are so many people out there who care about me and my family," he said. "Y'all saved my life. No one is free until we're all free."



Photo by Chanthon Bun

Roots graduate Javier Jimenez and Roger Chung



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Keynote speaker Ny Nourn (front) and Nate Tan (back)



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Roots graduates with "Auntie" Jun Yamamoto



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Tan, Tracy Nguyen, Hien Nguyen, Kevin Neong and Chung



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Jimmy Vue



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Eddie Zheng and "Auntie" Jun