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SAN QUENTIN FOCUSES ON MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Wellness Month addresses psychological self-care

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

When a person starts to serve a sentence in a California prison, depression and despair are leading causes of mental health crises. Feeling abused and isolated are added factors.

Salinas Valley State Prison recorded the highest number of suicides during a 10-year period, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). San Quentin was a close second. The records show that from 2014 through 2019, suicides in state prisons rose steadily.

With that insight, San Quentin mental health professionals took action. On Sept. 9, the prison's Lower Yard was a place for talking about how to improve wellness at the Mental Health Awareness event.

E. Anderson, PsyD, is San Quen-

See *WELLNESS* on page 8



(Photo taken pre-pandemic)

Phoehn You, SQNews

San Quentin's deadly Coronavirus outbreak during the summer of 2020 led prison administrators to implement unprecedented lockdown protocols. Prisoners were restricted to their cells for extended periods without access to showers, phones, or exercise yards. During repeated quarantines, as mental health and other resources became unavailable, the incarcerated were forced to cope on their own with the stresses of prison life, exacerbated mental health symptoms, and isolation from loved ones and family support. Above, Joshua Burton kneels quietly in his cell and turns to prayer as a coping mechanism to deal with the overwhelming pressures of incarceration.

Mental health treatment in San Quentin's EOP program

By Jesse Ayers
Contributing Writer

A team of mental health professionals in San Quentin's H-Unit worked tirelessly during the pandemic to maintain the health and safety of the men in the Enhanced Out Patient (EOP) program.

H-Unit houses 100 Enhanced Out Patients (EOPs). EOP is a term that describes a level of mental health treatment. One of the tools the program utilizes is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), in which patients interact with each other and a facilitator to address trauma and related mental health issues.

Dr. Koblinski, known as "Dr. K.," discussed what it was like providing these services during the long lockdown.

Dr. K said, "[The work] ... is dealing with a lot of past trauma which re-surfaces when the patient is triggered.

See *EOP* on page 4

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

A federal court has expanded a mandate that requires California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) officers to wear body cameras.

"The court order originally only applied to the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility," the *Sacramento Bee* reported. Later, the court expanded its order to five prisons to include Kern Valley State Prison; California Institution for Women; California State Prison, Corcoran; and California State Prison, Los Angeles.

Earlier this year the State Legislature added \$90.6 million to the budget which is earmarked to cover the

Court orders use of body cams in prisons

cost of security and body cameras at all five prisons, according to the *Bee*. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the budget in July.

CDCR spokeswoman Vicky Waters said the department "is fully committed to transparency and accountability, and we want to thank the administration and the Legislature for funding the expansion of body worn and fixed cameras in various institutions," the *Bee* reported.

In late 2020, U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken granted injunctive relief to prisoners and ordered correctional officers at the R. J. Donovan facility who interact with prisoners to

wear body cameras. The injunction came in the wake of a lawsuit filed at the prison which revealed evidence that officers had physically assaulted a disabled class of inmates on a routine basis.

More than 100 prisoners signed declarations stating staff used unnecessary and excessive force against prisoners with disabilities at the R. J. Donovan prison.

"The court finds that this high incidence of incidents involving the class members tends to give additional credibility to the inmates' declarations ... that staff at RJD targeted class members and other vulnerable

inmates for physical and other forms of abuse," it was reported.

"One 47-year-old inmate had a seizure outside his cell at the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility," the *Bee* reported. "He later woke up to find that his wrists and ankles hurt badly. He alleged in his complaint that officers has stomped on his ankles and stepped on his hands before dragging him out of his cell."

Oversight by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found CDCR wardens were unwilling to standardize its disciplinary decisions in all 35 of its prisons after the department launched a new internal investigation system in

2019, which cost \$10 million.

In the five month period between April and August 2020, CDCR prisoners filed more than 50,000 grievances, the OIG reported. Wardens found 2,339 of those to be allegations of staff misconduct, but only 541 were referred to the statewide system.

Part of the new budget requires the CDCR to create a centralized screening practice for staff misconduct complaints, instead of individual prisons carrying out this function. One goal is to create uniformity in handling grievances alleging staff misconduct.

"Cameras are not only deterrents of illicit activity or misconduct," said Waters, "they can help with the ability to conduct after-the-fact reviews and investigations of incidents."

Ron Broomfield receives official confirmation as SQ's new Warden



Photo courtesy of CDCR

51-year-old Ronald J. Broomfield (above, right) has been sworn in as San Quentin State Prison's new Warden. Over the past 20 years, Broomfield has risen through the CDCR ranks to his current position, beginning as a Correctional Officer at Salinas Valley State Prison in 2001. From 2002 through 2017, Mr. Broomfield worked at California State Prison - Corcoran, where he rose from Correctional Officer to Correctional Counselor I and II, Correctional Captain, then to Associate Warden. He was promoted to Chief Deputy Warden in 2017, then became Acting Warden at SQ in 2020, just before the Coronavirus outbreak. "I'm always going to continue to do the best job I can," he said.

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairperson

Ten years ago, prisoners in Pelican Bay's Security Housing Unit (SHU) set aside their racial and political differences to work together to file a lawsuit about their conditions and to organize a hunger strike in peaceful protest.

They wanted Pelican Bay State Prison administration and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to address grievances that kept prisoners in the SHU indefinitely, sometimes for decades.

"I was there," said Art Ramirez, who spent over 33 years in the SHU — 24 of them at Pelican Bay. "The guards told us the only way out was to die, debrief or parole."

The prisoners said they were living in "almost total isolation" and spent "at least 22 ½ hours per day in windowless, concrete cells with perforated steel doors." They only left their cells to shower or exercise alone in an enclosed pen, court papers reported.

Prison officials responded that prisoners "may be assigned to the SHU if their conduct endangers the safety of others or the security of the insti-

See *STRIKE* on page 4

Hunger strike anniversary sheds light on SHU conditions



Photo courtesy of CDCR

A prisoner at Pelican Bay State Prison's Security Housing Unit is strip-searched. SHU prisoners are exposed to long periods of intense isolation and demoralizing conditions that experts say are psychologically damaging.

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Steve Brooks wins prestigious SPJ Award

SQNews Staff Writer recognized for 'Excellence in Commentary'

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

San Quentin News journalist Steve Brooks has earned the 2020 "Excellence in Commentary Award" from the Northern California Society of Professional Journalists.

Brooks was recognized for his articles "Hidden Heroes Forgotten Inside" and "Violent Criminals Deserve a Second Chance Too."

"I wrote 'Violent Criminals Deserve a Second Chance Too' to highlight how we incarcerated men and women exist as a mere abstract idea of the violence that exists in our society," Brooks said in an interview. "We are simply 'straw men' that the system uses as props to continue perpetrating the need for its own existence."

Brooks' award-winning stories were written during the prison's 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, prior to his joining the *SQNews* staff. During that time he submitted 10 projects to the Prison Journalism Project (PJP).

"'Hidden Heroes Forgotten Inside' was written to make the point that the penal system would have crumbled a long time ago without its incarcerated workforce," said Brooks. "They call us animals and monsters, but animals and monsters don't help keep the system afloat; incarcerated human beings do."

Brooks is currently co-facilitating *SQNews*' weekly Journalism Guild classes with Chairperson Joe Garcia.

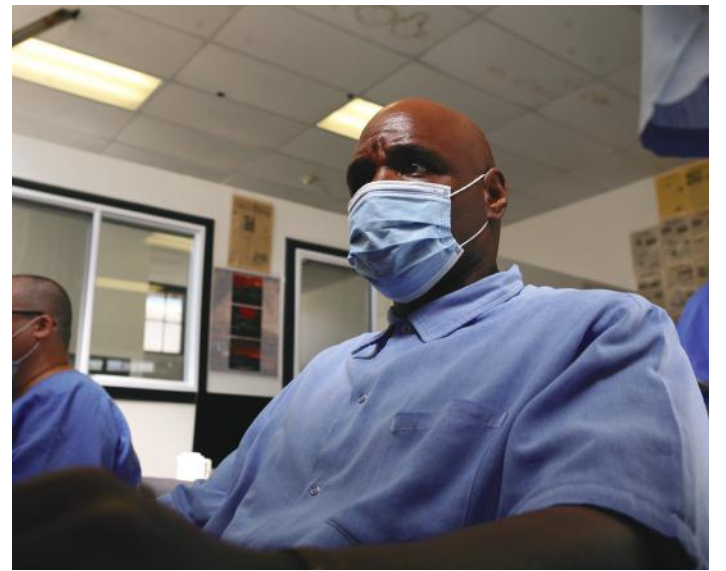
"Joe encouraged me to start writing for PJP. I figured it would be a good opportunity to continue honing my craft during the pandemic," said Brooks.

Brooks graduated from the SQ Journalism Guild class in January 2020. He credits his criminal and social justice reporting and writing to the guild and as the nexus for having received the coveted SPJ award.

"I like reminding everyone that their voice matters," said Garcia. "Steve's a real quiet dude with a cool perspective, and PJP's been a phenomenal platform for the incarcerated community. They have given us some great opportunities."

Brooks' work has been published in the *San Francisco Free Press*, *Street Spirit*, *All of Us or None*, and *Voice of Witness*.

"It felt good winning this award because it was my own original unedited work, with the exception of Shaheen Pasha of PJP, who actually titled the pieces," he said.



Phoeun You, *SQNews*

Steve Brooks used the pandemic's downtime to pen two articles for which he was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists

SQNews' History of Award-Winning Journalism

Brooks' "Excellence in Commentary Award" joins a long list of awards for San Quentin journalists including:

2020 – Five "Best of the Best" awards by the California Newspaper Publishers Association, for articles published in 2020

2017 – The Silver Heart Award from the Society of Professional Journalists

2016 – The James Aronson Award for Community Journalism

2014 – The James Madison Freedom of Information Award from the Society of Profession-

al Journalists for producing "a newspaper of exceptionally high quality" under "exceptionally difficult circumstances."

1968 – The Charles C. Clayton Award from the Southern Illinois University Department of Journalism

1966, 1967, 1972 and 1981 – "Best Prison Newspaper" award from the American Penal Press

SQNews staff continues to pursue its mission to report on rehabilitative efforts to "increase public safety and advance social justice" as a bridge between incarcerated citizens and the outside community.

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

Aaron Martin granted medical parole

Two state senators and two San Quentin program coordinators assisted Aaron Martin win a medical parole after he suffered two post-COVID strokes. Martin was given only 60 days to prepare for his suitability hearing.

The hearing was deemed necessary even though he couldn't talk or write after a month of physical rehabilitation in Marin General and Kentfield Hospitals. Martin is partially paralyzed as a result of the strokes.

At 23 years old, Martin was incarcerated for attempted murder, robbery, great bodily injury, and assault with deadly force. The Board of Parole had denied Martin seven times before. "They perceived (me) lacking of insight and remorse," he said. The denials called for rehabilitative programs. Martin completed almost all of the available self-help groups offered at San Quentin.

Martin's COVID-19 story began June 29, 2020. "During the height of the epidemic, I endured random testing, telling nurses my symptoms just continued. They could not tell me what COVID did to me and moved me to PIA. I filed paperwork for medical attention. Still fatigued, couldn't breathe right, a racing heart and dizzy; had diarrhea and kept forgetting things."

On Oct. 23 Martin suffered his first stroke. "They ask me if I could walk! I nodded or shook yes because I could not speak. An ambulance takes me to Marin General Hospital, isolated me, cuffing my leg to the bed," he said. Doctors estimate that the first stroke affected the left side of the brain, which affects speech. On Oct. 25 he stroked

again at the hospital. The new episode damaged motor functions on his left side.

"My speech, gone—I started to bark like a dog. I knew what I wanted to say but couldn't get it out. Rehab taught me singing comes from the opposite side of the brain from talking—so I would sing what I wanted to say." Doctors told him that two strokes are rare.

Martin fought to get back to San Quentin. If he stayed in the hospital, he would miss his board date and be rescheduled one year later or possibly receive a three-year denial. "I actually had to 602 (file a grievance) to leave the hospital, as I could not confer with my attorney," said Martin.

When Martin returned to the prison, the board delivered 18 questions and two essays to which he was given six days to respond, though he could not speak or write. "I thought I couldn't do this because I don't have time and can't use my hands. My counselor faxed it and somehow they got the answers on time. To this day I don't know how I did it."

Board commissioners could not understand him and asked for a continuance. They proposed either a postponement for seven to eleven months or a continuance for three months. A continuance would result in the same commissioners. A postponement would result in a new board and starting all over again. He requested an immediate hearing but the commissioners refused. Stipulating to a continuance, board members admitted that this was all new to them. "We need to figure out how to communicate with you," they said.

"At my hearing, they actually made yes and no signs! Even asked me to type on ZOOM! Of course, I could



Phoeun You, *SQNews*

Two California senators supported Aaron Martin in his bid for release before the Board of Parole Hearings.

not, so they said just write it down. My board took an extra hour compared to someone without a stroke," said Martin.

Mentors Mick Gardner of No More Tears and Jacques Verduin of GRIP, along with state Senators Skinner and McGwire, lobbied for his release. The board weighed Verduin's words heavily because he knew Martin very well.

Martin believes that other long-haulers should be released. "I do believe they (the board) were...sympathetic. (But) my district attorney and victim's family made closing statements, saying if I got out, I would attack someone else in my victim's family...I understand their objections...but do you believe a paralyzed man could attack anyone?" The experience with COVID taught Martin empathy, "not only for my victims, but also

for people in general. I almost lost my own life. Now, I know how precious life is... Almost dying made me realize the impact of my crime.

Martin's final prison words? "I am not angry; I am disappointed...the board demands we possess empathy, accountability, remorse and insight, yet these are tools they do not possess. It's ironic. Board members want us to have attributes they do not possess."

"To say I was lucky to be paralyzed...and then having to complete a task that is tougher than any free person could imagine—standing and debating the fact I was safe to return to society after almost dying. I will not rest until all long haulers get out.

"My biggest fear almost came true... dying before I got home to my wife, but I do forgive them."

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

A virtual fundraising event in August raised over \$70,000 to help finance printing and distribution of the *San Quentin News*.

An online flyer touted the event as “our opportunity to celebrate the transformative impact California’s oldest prison publication has had on the men and women incarcerated in the state and raise money to help the *San Quentin News* continue to further its mission.”

SQNews supporters from the Bay Area and across the country bid and donated during the online gala. The Reva & David Logan Foundation made a generous matching contribution. The online auction included sporting and theater tickets, art, books and restaurant gift certificates.

The event was put on by Friends of *SQ News* (FoSQN), the non-profit that facilitates outside financial support for the newspaper. Also helping was Amanda Weitman, a volunteer who is teaching *News* staff about philanthropy. “It was awesome,” she said. “Everybody was bidding away.”

San Quentin News raises funds because the state

does not pay for printing and distribution of the monthly newspaper or for its website management. Hundreds of individuals and organizations support the operation with grants and donations.

Originally the Gala was scheduled at a local venue, but due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings the event went virtual. The auction broadcast via a special live stream on the auction website, as well as on Facebook and YouTube. Video messages from news staff, advisers and supporters explained the importance of the *San Quentin News* to the community.

Participants listened online to the newspaper’s recent history: “Since its reinstatement over a decade ago, *San Quentin News* has become the foremost prison newspaper in the United States. The incarcerated journalists have produced award-winning reporting about criminal justice and mass incarceration, with the newspaper now distributed to all 36 [sic] California prisons as well as thousands of readers across the country.”

A featured speaker was Miguel Quezada, policy director at UnCommon Law. He previously was managing editor

Virtual gala raises over \$70,000 for *SQNews* operations



Photo courtesy of Friends of San Quentin News

Cory Mikhals appealed to online viewers, donors and supporters as the virtual host of the online fundraiser event that raised money for the *San Quentin News* and *Wall City* magazine.

of the newspaper. Quezada explained how working in the newsroom prepared him for reentry and success in his current position.

At one time *San Quentin News* printed only about 5,000

copies in the prison’s print shop, all for distribution within San Quentin. But in 2010 the prison’s print shop closed due to budget constraints. Adviser Steve McNamara then arranged for printing by an out-

side shop. The outside printer publishes the paper at his cost.

Later, the distribution of the paper expanded to all of California’s state prisons. Today 35,000 copies are printed and distributed. Much of

the current financing for the increased circulation comes from the Reva & David Logan Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and Rotary Clubs of Mission San Rafael, Novato and Oakland.

Financial support also comes from numerous individual and business donors. One such donor, Catherine Roach of Hamtramck, Mich., posted the following comment: “I look forward to getting my *San Quentin News* every month. The writing is excellent and the stories are very informative. I am happy to support such talent and hard work.”

Between 2011 and September 2019, *San Quentin News*’ fundraising efforts have generated just over \$1 million.

Much of the support for the newspaper is non-financial. Dozens of journalists and other professional advisers, paroled *San Quentin News* staff, the prison’s administration, and a myriad of volunteers facilitate publication of the newspaper in many ways.

—*SQ News Staff Writer David Ditto contributed to this article.*

San Quentin News

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The *San Quentin News* encourages prisoners, institution staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles, poetry and artwork. All submissions become property of the *San Quentin News*.
Guidelines for submission:
• Articles should be no more than 350 words and will be edited for content and length.
• Articles should be newsworthy and pertain to the prison populace and/or the criminal justice system.
• Please do not submit material that is offensive, racist, sexist, or derogatory toward anyone, as it will not be published.

Send Submissions to:
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RETURNING TO FREEDOM

Heriberto ‘Eddie’ Arredondo, Jr. released after 29 years’ incarceration

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Heriberto Arredondo, Jr., 46, a *San Quentin News* staff member, was released on parole in August. He was 16 years old when he was sent to prison. Thirty years later he is a changed man. Everyone in the newsroom called him “Eddie.”

“I was just a kid when I came to prison,” Arredondo said. He was found suitable for parole on Cinco de Mayo, the same day the COVID-19 pandemic modified program at San Quentin ended. He came into the newsroom and said, “I got good news and bad news. The bad news is I’m not gonna work here anymore. The good news is I’m going home.” Everyone cheered.

Arredondo worked two years for the *News*. He was a staff writer who translated many of the stories from English to Spanish. When other staff paroled he took on additional responsibilities, such as communicating with the men who write for the Spanish section of the newspaper.

“Eddie (Arredondo) was one of the kindest people I’ve ever met,” said Marcus Henderson, Editor in Chief. “He was passionate about telling stories on rehabilitative programs for the youth, and he was inspirational about running the Spanish Journalism Guild after Juan (Espinosa) paroled.”

Like most of the *News* staff, Arredondo was an early worker. He showed up at the newsroom after breakfast to help sweep, mop, disinfect tables and organize material so inmates, outside volunteers and prison staff would have a clean, safe and welcoming work environment.

Arredondo also helped to proof, coordinate and fine tune production of the *Wall City* Spanish issue, *San Quentin News*’ quarterly magazine; and he helped to coordinate the final publication of the Spanish Journalism Guild handbook.

Much of Arredondo’s time working in the newsroom was shortened by the COVID-19 pandemic that placed the pris-

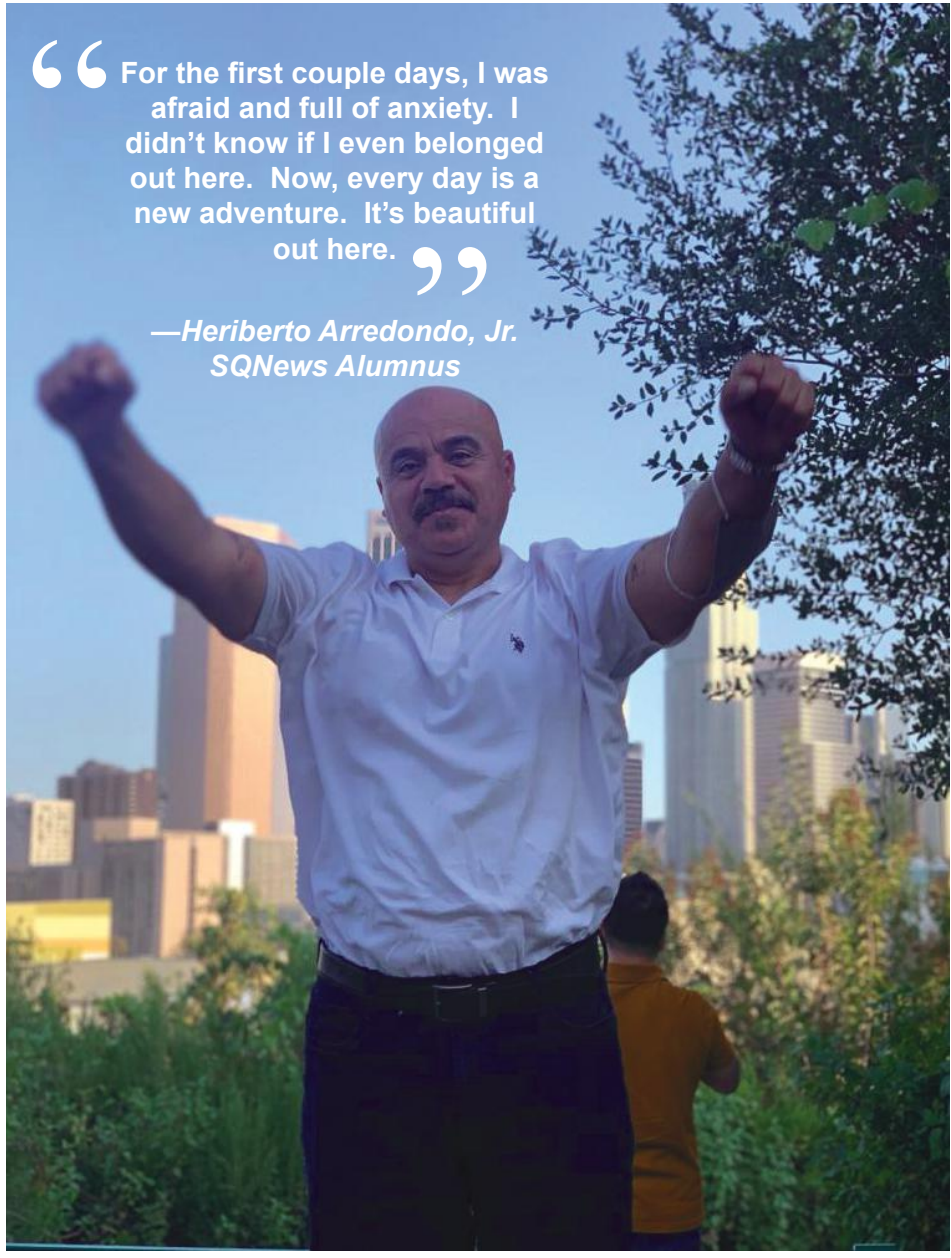


Photo courtesy of Heriberto Arredondo

“For the first couple days, I was afraid and full of anxiety. I didn’t know if I even belonged out here. Now, every day is a new adventure. It’s beautiful out here.”

—Heriberto Arredondo, Jr.
SQNews Alumnus

on a modified program for more than 400 days, but like most of the staff he worked from his cell.

During the pandemic he encouraged the Spanish writers to remain attentive for the time when *News* operations returned to normal, after the prison reopened. “He held the Spanish Guild together when things got

tough,” said David Ditto, who is the paper’s circulation manager and also speaks fluent Spanish.

“He really made us laugh,” said Ditto. “I’m going to miss his sense of humor the most. He really embraced the concept of teamwork from day one.”

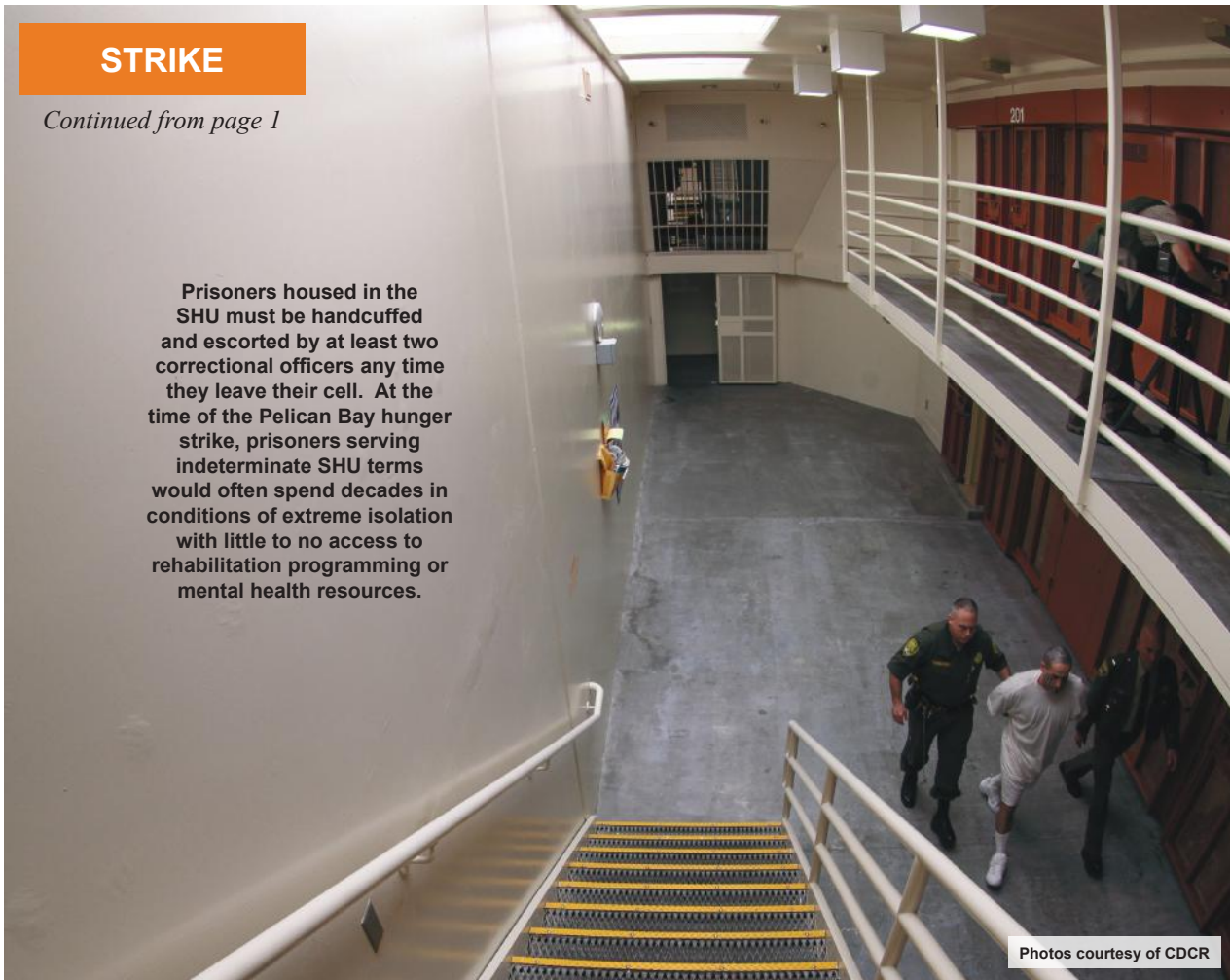
Arredondo paroled to the Los Angeles area and has ex-

pressed interest in working with the guys in the newsroom through its non-profit fundraising organization Friends of San Quentin News. He’s one of more than a dozen *News* alumni who paroled while active staff members of the newspaper since it restarted in 2008. All alumni have maintained a zero percent recidivism rate.

STRIKE

Continued from page 1

Prisoners housed in the SHU must be handcuffed and escorted by at least two correctional officers any time they leave their cell. At the time of the Pelican Bay hunger strike, prisoners serving indeterminate SHU terms would often spend decades in conditions of extreme isolation with little to no access to rehabilitation programming or mental health resources.



Photos courtesy of CDCR

Hunger strike sparked significant changes in segregated housing

tution.” According to CDCR, gang members and their associates fell into this category.

Ramirez lived within an eight-cell unit known as “the Short Corridor,” alongside Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos, Antonio Guillen and Sitawa Jamaa. The four men were part of a lawsuit and the hunger strike.

“We were all prisoners without any 115s (CDCR Rules Violations Reports),” said Ramirez. “But that didn’t matter to the officers at Pelican Bay.”

To “debrief” meant to provide information to the IGI (Institution Gang Investigators) about other prisoners’ alleged gang activity.

SHU residents who failed to debrief could have their SHU status extended repeatedly.

SHU conditions and isolation did often result in debriefings. But often, prisoners would debrief by making false or unfounded statements about others, it was reported.

Such “confidential” allegations would then be used to target individuals and groups for prolonged SHU terms.

For SHU prisoners who refused to debrief, their refusals could be used against them later by California’s Board of Parole Hearings (BPH,) resulting in denials of parole.

Over time, the Short Corridor Collective men — as they came to be called — chose to set aside long-standing racially based animosity and began to see themselves as part of a prisoner class with common grievances.

Collective action began with the first hunger strike July 1–July 21, 2011. The Short Corridor Collective presented the following list of grievances and demands:

- Eliminate group punishments and administrative abuse;
- Abolish the debriefing policy and modify active/inactive gang status criteria;
- Comply with the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s prisons and end long-term segregation;
- Provide adequate and nutritious food;
- Create and expand construc-

tive programming.

“That very first hunger strike was not taken seriously by a lot of prisoners,” said Ramirez. “Most of us only really lasted three to five days, so administration did not take it seriously either.”

But another hunger strike followed two months later involving all Pelican Bay prisoners. Despite restricted lines of communication, organizers were able to get other incarcerated communities within CDCR to participate.

From Pelican Bay to Corcoran to Tehachapi to Folsom and beyond, thousands of prisoners refused institutional meals in solidarity with those in Pelican Bay’s SHU.

“Still, the prison administration would not budge on taking any positive actions to remedy the conditions,” said Ramirez.

The Pelican Bay hunger strike sparked a movement that had a lasting impact on CDCR and continues to this day, court papers show.

Ashker and another SHU resident, Danny Troxell, began pro se litigation against CDCR in 2009 alleging violations of their constitutional rights, citing “cruel and unusual punishment,” “deliberate indifference” and 14th Amendment Due Process violations.

In 2012, Ashker became the named plaintiff in the landmark class action lawsuit, *Ashker v. Governor of California*, which sought to represent and include prisoners at every SHU within the CDCR system.

The Short Corridor Collective used all available resources to keep the public and media outlets informed about the treatment of SHU residents.

By 2013, a system-wide hunger strike involved more than 33,000 incarcerated prisoners across California. Even some county jail detainees participated.

Starting on July 8 of that year, some prisoners repeatedly refused state-issued meals. In addition, many incarcerated workers for Prison Industries Authority (PIA) refused to work their job assignments and faced disciplinary 115s.

“This could become a very

serious situation over time, because it seems we have a substantial group of people who are prepared to see it to the end if they don’t get real change,” said Jules Lobel, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, in a July 10 *New York Times* article.

The 2013 hunger strike that started in July persisted until Sept. 5, when state lawmakers like then-Assembly members Nancy Skinner and Tom Ammiano, along with Senators Loni Hancock and Tom Hayden, promised to hold public hearings about improving SHU conditions and policies.

CDCR maintained that SHU facilities are necessary to control the violence and crime associated with prison gang activity.

In October 2013, CDCR officials, civil liberties advocates and one former SHU prisoner testified before a joint session of Assembly and Senate public safety committees.

“I wonder if there’s been any reduction in gang membership as a result of putting so many people in SHU?” Skinner asked CDCR officials, reported *KPCC*.

Then-CDCR Deputy Director Michael Stainer said that CDCR lacked the capacity to track real data on overall results of SHU policies.

By then, 343 SHU prisoners had been released into general population. Stainer did not demonstrate any negative effects of their presence on prison safety.

Ashker v. Governor was court-certified as a class action in June 2014.

Plaintiffs enlisted psychiatrist Dr. Terry Kupers to investigate the psychological consequences of spending a decade or more in Pelican Bay’s SHU.

In his extensive 2015 report,

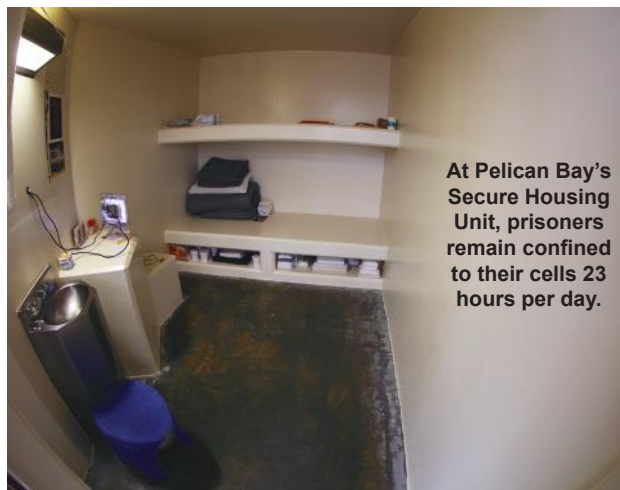
Kupers said that long-term SHU inhabitants “are severely damaged by the experience” and “those that are no longer in SHU find the quality of their lives significantly compromised.”

Kupers further said, “These negative effects of SHU confinement are relatively long-lasting if not permanent.”

On Jan. 26, 2016, the court granted final approval of a settlement that:

- Required CDCR to no longer place prisoners in SHU or administrative segregation “solely on the basis of gang validation;”
- Required that no prisoner be placed in SHU or administrative segregation “for a disciplinary term unless they are found guilty in a disciplinary hearing of a new SHU-eligible offense;”
- Required the “creation of the Restrictive Custody General Population Unit (RCGP),” where prisoners released from the SHU under the settlement agreement can be placed, if there is a “substantial threat to their personal safety;”
- Required a review of prisoners’ placement in the RCGP every 180-days to determine whether there continues to be a threat to the prisoner’s personal safety;
- Required CDCR to follow the existing administrative rules regarding how to use confidential information used against prisoners to ensure its accuracy; and,
- Required CDCR to give prisoners subjected to SHU terms documents that prove they are legitimately in the SHU for valid reasons.

Court monitoring of the settlement terms continues to be extended. As recently as April 2021, U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken said that due process violations by CDCR remain ongoing.



At Pelican Bay’s Secure Housing Unit, prisoners remain confined to their cells 23 hours per day.

H-Unit’s Enhanced Outpatient Program offers mental health treatment at a higher level of care

EOP

Continued from page 1

... It takes lots of therapy, over time, to heal from all of these past wounds ... Like many surgeries to remove a bunch of cancer.”

JA: What was it like for your staff when the pandemic hit?

Dr. K: “We were pretty much in survival mode, thinking ‘We just need to get through this.’ I think we were in denial, not thinking that the virus would really affect us, at least not here in San Quentin, and then ... When it did ... It was like ‘I need to stay safe (out there) to keep my patients safe (in here)’ because everybody else was working from home.”

JA: What does a “normal” day look like compared to a day during the pandemic?

Dr. K: “We normally have several different group topics running throughout the day and mixing dorms One and Two (the EOP Dorms), but in order to prevent the spread of COVID, we started running what we call “cohort” groups, where we no longer mixed the two dorms. Patients went to the same group, with the same peers, at the same time. ... During the summer when the numbers of positive tests for COVID rose in Facility A [H-Unit is Facility B], we brought the groups outside to decrease the chances of spreading the virus with the increased social distancing while still giving the patients a chance at group therapy.”

JA: What was it like for you personally?

Dr. K: “Keeping myself healthy, so that I can keep coming into work and providing group and individual therapy for the patient population was, and continues to be, so important to me. I was very strict about always wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing, and sheltering in place on my days off, so that I could continue to be there for my patients.”

JA: What were some of the obstacles you faced?

Dr. K: “It was the times when we felt we were most limited in providing therapy that our team saw we needed to use our creativity.”

JA: Would you care to elaborate?

Dr. K: “We realized that sometimes it was the smallest things that made the most difference.”

JA: Give me an example.

Dr. K: “Whether it was bringing a TV into the dorms to show movies for the patients, creating a group mandala, working closely with the California Re-Entry Program to provide the best possible pre-release plans, playing some of the patients’ favorite songs, or just continuing to provide them with the humanity; every little thing we did during this time was necessary and made a difference.”

JA: I know a lot of guys who wanted to be EOP during the pandemic, just to be able to have group, get therapy, and earn early release credits. I think they had CBT envy. (Dr. K and I share a laugh)

Dr. K: “I felt bad for the other dorms that didn’t have this opportunity. I did notice that through the stress and frustration of the patients; worrying

about their families, or patients who were preparing for early release, not knowing what was to be expected; the ability to maintain groups and weekly contact with these individuals absolutely helped maintain some sense of normalcy. The patients saw that we were continuing to come in and they were grateful for our dedication, even though we were possibly putting ourselves in danger by coming in here. We knew how important it was for them to see us, and for us to be there for them.”

Incarcerated person Derry “Brutha D” Brown discussed his experience in EOP during the pandemic.

JA: What was a highlight for you being in the EOP program during the pandemic lockdown?

DB: “Although I suffered with mental issues during the COVID lockdown, I chose to stay away from seeking help from the mental health department within CDCR due to prior experience. ... However, as a result of a fight I had while being socially distanced in the gym, I was placed in the ... EOP level of care... After being placed in a treatment [group,] I braced myself as I awaited my past CDCR mental health trauma to resurface in my present moment. However, I was shocked to see that the doctor whose caseload they placed me on actually cared about me as a patient and a human being.”

JA: Who was that?

DB: “Dr. Kolbinski and I jumped right into my treatment goal of me ‘gaining focus.’ We not only shared groups together, she and I also shared one-to-one visits, once a week, via Zoom due to the COVID pandemic.”

JA: What convinced you to trust Dr. K after all of your past experiences with the mental health department?

DB: “What really convinced me of her being a restorative, vigilant, caring doctor was when she nominated me for something they call patient of the month. Here it is, this vigilant doctor is noticing something in me that I didn’t notice about myself.”

Here (on certificate) Dr. K states: “Mr. Brown, since you have been part of the EOP program in H-Unit, you have attended almost every single group and yard session. You participate on a regular basis. You are respectful to staff and peers and add a lot of positivity and creative ideas to the group setting. You are cheerful and always try to find the positive in difficult situations. You stand up for what you believe in and are focused on creating a better future for everyone around you. The EOP team has enjoyed working with you and we are grateful to have your positive energy in this space.”

DB: “Therefore, one of the highlights of my COVID lockdown experiences was meeting Dr. Kolbinski, a heartfelt front-liner who not only respects staff, but respects the incarcerated population and her patients, with the same stroke of love. Moreover, let’s see if this one doctor’s ability to love and care for humanity would autonomously spread throughout the CDCR mental health department in these present times.”

JA: How did that make you feel?

DB: “It made me feel accepted.”

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

Incarcerated women join California's firefight

Female prisoners log millions of hours in the battle against the state's intensifying wildfires

Year round, incarcerated women in California prisons are putting their lives on the line fighting fires up and down the state to limit major disasters, according to an Op-Ed by Jaime Lowe in the *Los Angeles Times*.

California prisoners started fighting fires in 1946. In an average year now, about 2,000 incarcerated men and women log about three million hours of service to fires and emergencies, and seven million hours of community service, saving tax-payers about \$100 million each year, stated the *Times* article.

In 2016, California had three all-female fire camps, all of them in Southern California. One of them closed in 2020.

In Lowe's recent interview with a camp resident named Bri, she said "Camp is what you make of it," and "It's a challenge every day," and "It's 99% mental," and "People can open their eyes and see the beauty here. It's healing."

"But those words were more than talking points," Lowe wrote. "She had evolved in camp. She told me she had chosen camp over being transferred to a community-based reentry program."

"This program is what changed me," she said.

Since 2015 the fire season throughout California has



Photo courtesy of Peter Bohler

Women of CalFire trek tirelessly up the side of a scorched mountain as smokey haze from wildfires fills the sky.

changed from the summer to fighting fires yearlong, putting a strain on the workforce. It's also a heavy burden on resources.

CDCR firefighters make-

up about 30% of the state's firefighters. There are 35 fire camps in 26 counties.

The makeup of a typical fire camp is not just firefighting; to keep the camp operational, it

needs cooks, clerical workers, groundskeepers, and workers to operate the water treatment plant.

The work for firefighters is tough, even when they are not

on call. Sometimes their day's activities start with them clearing roads and cutting excessive brush, and exercising.

The women have to stay in shape. The work they do is

very physically exhausting and if they are not in shape it wears on them mentally and hinders their work performance.

Correctional staff and L.A. County firefighters believe in the work the women are doing. They have to because the majority of the camps are in high-risk fire areas. The women are on call daily and need to be ready to get to a fire as soon as possible.

Lowe writes that staff at the camp "believe in the rehabilitative value of the program and get a lot of satisfaction out of it, and of course, there is a synergy between their support for the program and the success of the inmates."

During and after the coronavirus outbreak a lot of the camps are down because of the virus and women paroling.

Some other states are also using those incarcerated to fight fires. Over the last three years fires across the country have exploded, and without the help of prisoners their work force would be strained.

The women in these camps have to like what they are doing, because the pay for what they are doing is very minimal -- \$2.56 a day in camp plus \$1 an hour while fighting fires.

Recent legislation allows paroled firefighters to apply for certification in regular fire jobs.

By Steve Brooks
Staff Writer

Humanizing the survivors of SQ's COVID outbreak

A new organization is helping San Quentin's incarcerated cope with the fear and trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Humans of San Quentin helped humanize the men when COVID-19 ravaged the prison in the summer of 2020, leaving dozens dead and thousands trapped in cells trembling with fever.

Founded by teacher Diane Kahn, the organization's mission is to shine a light in every prison cell and reveal the humanity inside.

"The vulnerability I felt from people in blue touched me and I felt it was a crime not to share their stories from behind bars," Kahn said in an interview.

Kahn has collected over

140 stories from incarcerated people. She posts them on her Instagram platform. She also uses Facebook and Twitter and her Humans of San Quentin website to post stories. Her hope is to expand to Reddit and Tik Tok.

She said she has been blessed with the approval of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, SQ Warden Ron Broomfield and Public Information Officer Sam Robinson.

"Our aim is to give voice to the unheard," Kahn explained. "We post stories about simple everyday experiences that incarcerated people go through and the outside public can relate to."

Kahn got the idea from

Brandon Stanton, who started an organization called Humans of New York in 2010. Stanton's goal at the time was to publish 10,000 stories from everyday New Yorkers. His idea became a huge success.

Some of the stories presented to Kahn reflect that some prisoners have gone years without any ability to connect with family and friends. Some describe it as feeling like they're buried alive. "It essentially makes you feel dead inside," one person said.

Having connection with other human beings is a basic human need, Kahn said. She seeks to reawaken the humanity in all people by helping facilitate those connections.

When Michael Moore, 61,

wrote his story for HOSQ he was surprised at how it made him feel. "I no longer felt trapped on this island of incarceration," Moore said. "I was trying to let the world get to know me without realizing I had family out there who were getting to know me as well."

Moore said he left home at an early age to escape his childhood abuse. He ended up channeling his trauma into a life of crime. He eventually realized that he was trying to feel a sense of power and control over his own being.

When Philippe Kelly, 37, shared his story with the HOSQ he was also surprised by the response he got. "They sent me copies of everything,

with stamps and some of the comments that were posted about my story," said Kelly. "They kept in touch with me and let me know how I was doing on Instagram. There were people out there who actually wanted to write to me."

Kahn is assisted by two formerly incarcerated employees, Marcus Blevins and Joe Krauter. They help collect, edit and post stories. Incarcerated journalist Juan Haines also helps facilitate the program from the inside.

Most of the stories are from men, but Kahn said she welcomes women and those in the transgendered communities to share their stories.

Kahn said she is also interested in hiring formerly incar-

cerated people who are good writers and who have editing skills that can help further the goals of the organization. One goal Kahn has is to teach a class at SQ on how to write a first-person narrative and help incarcerated people build up their editing skills. She also seeks to publish a book entitled "The Humans of San Quentin."

Kahn said her organization has received a great response from the public.

"The future of HOSQ will be to provide wrap-around services," said Haines, whose hope is to help grow the organization when he is released. "It's about empowering incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, providing them a voice, employment, a platform for public engagement, and the opportunity to give back."

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

Transitions Clinic Network provides national healthcare resources for formerly incarcerated

"Health not incarceration" is one of the mottos of a group of medical advocates helping formerly incarcerated individuals with their health care and reentry needs.

The Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) operates 44 programs in community health centers in 10 states and Puerto Rico.

California has 21 programs in 14 counties, according to the network's website.

"Inside, healthcare is institutionalized and many individuals are never given an opportunity to manage their own health conditions," said Joe Calderon, Community Health Worker (CHW) at Southeast Health Center. "You're told what to do and when. In the community, you have to be in charge of your own healthcare. TCN community health workers are here to help you with that transition."

In their first two weeks of release, returning men and women are 12 times more likely to die or to be hospitalized, reported TCN.

"These deaths and hospitalizations can be prevent-

ed if returning community members get connected to healthcare at a clinic like the ones in our network," said Calderon. "In addition, many people in state prison have chronic health conditions like hypertension, cancer, substance use disorder, or mental health conditions, which can also be treated at clinics like the ones in our network."

The Southeast Health Center is located in San Francisco's Bay View-Hunter's Point neighborhood. It serves more than 150 formerly incarcerated patients every year, reported TCN.

San Quentin also has a TCN discharge clinic program. The TCN programs meet new patients one-on-one to create a reentry plan, based on the patient's health and reentry goals.

They assist with medication-assisted treatment plans, help patients activate their Medi-Cal insurance and teach patients how to sched-

ule their own appointments and refill their medications. TCN also has a technology coach to teach how to use computers, e-mails and cell phones.

"I feel like we are here to attempt to balance a scale," said David Durant, CHW and Redding SUD Counselor/Case Manager for Hill Country Community Clinic. "There are many obstacles waiting for those who transition home — purposefully crafted restrictions designed to hinder one's success, while simultaneously drawing attention to the fact one has a prior conviction, i.e., flashing neon sign, 'CONVICT HERE. BEWARE!'"

"We are seeking to turn that around and bring balance. We see the formerly incarcerated as sons and daughters of our community to be welcomed home, embraced, stood beside, encouraged and helped in their journey," Durant continued. "The flashing

neon sign is a signal for us to get in, get involved, and embrace the opportunity."

The TCN clinics also hired and trained Durant as a Community Health Worker.

Said Calderon, "We strive to provide meaningful employment for people with histories of incarceration, many of whom have been systematically excluded from jobs in the healthcare field."

Durant added, "...there is life after incarceration. I say this as someone who has been home for six years after spending three decades inside. I lived with the belief that I was not meant to live and die in a cement and steel cage and I began preparing while still inside for that life I wanted outside."

The network also helps patients sign up for food stamps, find housing, and advocates on their behalf to resolve problems with their parole or probation officer.

"We believe that giving

people access to the services they need to remain healthy and well in the community will keep them out of prison and jail," said Calderon.

Charleszetta Brown co-facilitates a support group called REMEDY for formerly incarcerated men and women and she encourages them to check on their health.

She is a Reentry Health Conductor in the African American Health Conductors Program, Contra Costa Health Services, in partnership with the Center for Human Development in Pittsburg, Calif.

"(The program) is a call to action to all county health care systems and social services to address the glaring health disparities and social inequities facing the returning citizen," said Brown.

She also hopes "to provide more structure around addiction — it too is a health disparity."

Medical advocates and

Transitions Clinic Network now produces a monthly healthcare column for the SQNews— Check it out on Page 10!

Global-TellLink TCN Reentry Hotline: (510) 606-6400 Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm

workers want to provide solutions and hope to those returning home from incarceration.

"Hope is the key ingredient to change," said Calderon, "and hope is the medicine that will allow you to address your own trauma. I challenge you to become part of the solution. I look forward to hearing you call our hotline or seeing you in person one day."

"Know this: we do this work because we care. We're here in the community, we want to help, and we're excited to welcome you home one day."

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

California is spending more than \$102,000 annually for each person held in the state's prisons, according to news reports. This cost is expected to increase to almost \$113,000 in fiscal year 2022.

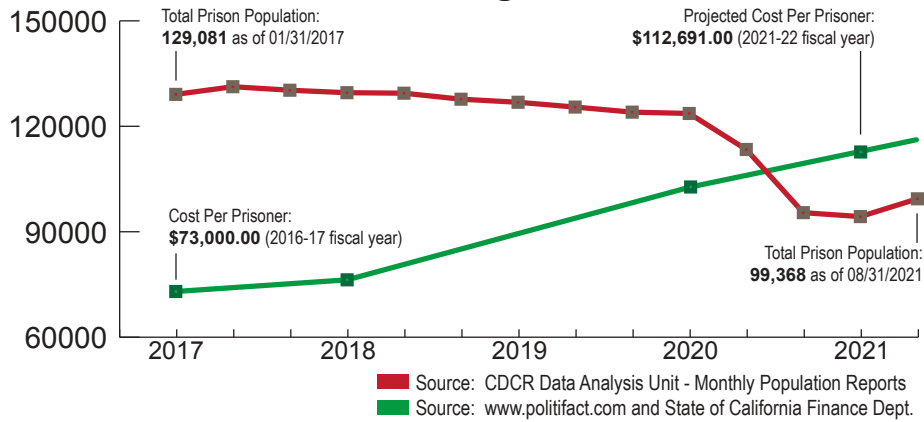
Despite reduced prison and parole populations, the state prison/parole budget climbed \$1.2 billion in the new year. Details of the spending were reported by the *Sacramento Bee* and the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

The state's incarcerated population declined by about 26,000 since February 2020. The reduction was accomplished in part by the release of low-level offenders during the coronavirus pandemic.

The recent average base pay of California's approximately 25,000 correctional officers was almost \$88,000, plus about \$15,000 in overtime pay. Figures for sergeants, lieutenants, and other

California's prison population shrinks while corrections budget continues to balloon

California's Prison Price Tag



"We're asking the state not to look at it just through a labor or economic lens, but look at the harm we've done through incarceration in California and focus on correcting that."

—Amber-Rose Howard
Executive Director
Californians for a Responsible Budget

Garcia, D-Bell Gardens, is the chairperson of a subcommittee that oversees prison spending.

"We need to be doing sentencing reform. It's our goal to help people rehabilitate and get back into their communities," Garcia said.

Amber-Rose Howard, executive director of Californians for a Responsible Budget (CRB), said, "We're asking the state not to look at it just through a labor or economic lens, but look at the harm we've done through incarceration in California and focus on correcting that."

CRB has advocated for the state to close ten prisons and urged sentencing reform and redirecting funds into rehabilitative programs.

higher-ranking officials were not disclosed in the articles.

"Correctional officers are essential to the functioning of this state," union presi-

dent Glen Stailey said in an emailed statement. "During the pandemic, we weren't on Zoom calls—we showed up in person for your shifts in

the toughest conditions, day after day. We are worth every penny."

California's per-incarcerated person spending made

headlines in 2017 when it topped \$75,000. At the time it was compared to a year of tuition at Stanford University. Assemblywoman Cristina

By AJ Hardy
Staff Writer

The California Legislature, in its 2021-2022 Regular Session, is currently considering several bills which, if passed, would change resentencing procedures. In some cases, that even means creating a presumption that resentencing is in the interest of justice.

Senate Bill 775: Felony Murder – Resentencing

Current state law allows some persons convicted of murder to petition a court directly for resentencing, even without the recommendation of prison officials or prosecutors.

This includes defendants convicted of felony murder or murder under the "natural and probable consequences" doctrine.

SB 775 would extend this eligibility to include:

1. Those convicted of murder when malice is attributed to them due solely to their participation in a crime; and,

2. Those convicted of manslaughter or attempted murder under the "natural and probable consequences" doctrine.

If passed, the bill would amend California Penal Code §1170.95 and allow those affected to petition the court for resentencing if they meet certain criteria. The law would require

CA Legislature considers expansion of resentencing law

the court to hold a hearing to determine whether the petitioner qualifies for resentencing, and to appoint counsel, if requested. The bill specifies that substantial evidence supporting the original conviction does not necessarily make a person ineligible for resentencing.

Senate Bill 483: Sentencing – Removing Enhancements

Before Jan. 1, 2020, sentencing courts were required to impose one-year enhancements for prior, non-violent felony terms, whether served in state prison or county jail. Additionally, before Jan. 1, 2018, sentencing courts were required to impose three-year enhancements for certain prior drug convictions, including possession for sale of opiates and hallucinogens. Under current law, these enhancements remain in effect, but are only imposed in certain circumstances.

If passed, SB 483 would add §1171 and §1171.1 to the California Penal Code and would render these enhancements legally invalid. Resentencing in most cases would be required, except when a lesser sentence

would threaten public safety. Each county, and the CDCR, would be required to identify those who have had these enhancements imposed and refer them to the sentencing court for recall of all invalidated sentence enhancements. Those who remain in custody only on the invalid enhancements — meaning they have already served their base term plus any still-valid enhancements — would have to be resentenced by Oct. 1, 2022, at the latest. All others would be resentenced by the end of 2023.

Assembly Bill 1540: Criminal procedure – Resentencing

Resentencing courts are required to follow Judicial Council rules in order to correct disparate or excessive sentences and make imposed sentences more uniform. The purpose of resentencing, as recognized by the Legislature, is to satisfy the interests of justice.

If passed, AB 1540 would amend Penal Code §1170 and §5076.1, and would add §1170.03. The changes are mainly subtle and apply to defendants who are recommend-

ed for resentencing by the CDCR, BPH or local prosecutor. For example, the bill would require the court to make its rationale for granting or denying relief part of the case record. The court would also be required to appoint counsel to represent the defendant, and to hold a status conference within 30 days of receiving the recommendation for resentencing. If all parties are in favor of resentencing, the court would be authorized to grant immediate relief, recalling and resentencing the defendant without a hearing.

AB 1540 would also require the court to assume by default that resentencing is, in fact, in the interests of justice, except in cases where it is shown that resentencing would jeopardize public safety. This could effectively shift, or at least significantly lighten, the defendant's burden of proving that relief should be granted.

The Legislative Counsel's Digest and complete text of these and other bills are available in the prison law library or online at leginfo.legislature.ca.gov.

Formerly incarcerated find it hard to vote

Returning citizens face numerous hurdles gaining access to the ballot box

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

Five million formerly incarcerated people in America must overcome a vast assortment of obstacles to enjoy the privilege of voting, reported *Vice News*.

"When you're unable to vote, on top of all those other issues like the hardships of searching for a job and housing, it just reinforces the feeling of being a second-class citizen that a lot of people express feeling after being released," said Gicola Lane, an advocate for voter restoration laws in Tennessee.

Countless policies and laws are set in place that cause feelings of dismay in formerly incarcerated people. The stress associated with feeling like a second-class citizen can cause a person to become frustrated with trying to vote and they revert back to crime, the June 10 story said.

Recently some states are having a change of heart concerning the disenfranchisement their laws and policies cause, allowing people to vote after serving their sentences.

Alabama has shortened its list of felony convictions that bar a person from being able to vote.

In California, a court can find a person with a criminal history is eligible to vote if they're a United States citizen, a resident of California, 18-years-old or older on Election Day; not currently serving a prison term, and not currently found mentally incompetent.

In Kentucky, people who are released from prison are required to make a direct plea to their state's governor to have their voting rights restored.

Alonzo Malone, an ex-con from Kentucky, told *Vice News* that it still bothers him that he was denied the chance to vote twice for the United States' first Black president, Barack Obama.

He said he felt like he was the "Invisible Man," like he did not exist.

Florida resident Chandra McNealy was denied the right to vote at the age of 18 because she was convicted of possessing narcotics. It took her five years to get a job and even longer to be able to vote.

"I felt horrible. It makes you feel like the mistakes you made before you even thought about having children are now going to cause your children to suffer," said McNealy. "It makes you wonder why. I served my time, I served my debt to society. Why can't we move on now?"

In Iowa City, Iowa, Eric Harris' right to vote was revoked after he was sent to prison for possession of marijuana, leaving him unable to vote on the national and local issues he read about. Discontent caused by the many barriers to his

I served my time, I served my debt to society. Why can't we move on now?

—Chandra McNealy

Federal prison system severely understaffed

By Jad Salem
Journalism Guild Writer

Juan Ramon Rodriguez-Barbosa, 47 years old, hung himself and died on May 26 at FCI Mendota, a medium security prison west of Fresno. Rodriguez-Barbosa was serving time for illegally reentering the United States after being deported, said *The Associated Press*.

He was found hanging in the prison's segregated housing unit by officers doing their 30-minute required checks on inmates. The officers called for assistance, but staff members who normally would have responded were unable to leave posts where they were filling in as correctional officers.

This prison, like many run by the U.S. government, was understaffed, said sources who spoke with the *AP* on conditions of anonymity. The death, which appeared to be suicide, raises questions as to whether the agency can carry out its

Staff shortages have food preparers, teachers filling in as prison guards

mandated duties to ensure the safety of prisoners and staff members, the *AP* said.

Nearly one-third of federal correctional officer jobs are vacant in the U.S. This shortage has led to prisons using cooks, nurses, teachers and other free staff to guard inmates. The Bureau of Prisons says that all of their prison workers are trained as correctional officers, regardless of job titles.

The Bureau of Prisons insisted that at FCI Men-

dota there were appropriate numbers of staff and that staff members responding to the call "immediately initiated life-saving measures" in an effort to save Rodriguez-Barbosa.

Hours before the death, FCI Mendota Warden Douglas White wrote to the entire staff to complain of unfavorable media coverage that "painted a negative image" of the prison. He said it was "time to stop talking and printing negative informa-

tion" about the staff there.

The Bureau of Prisons has launched what it calls a "hiring frenzy," hiring 4,000 staff in 2020, with plans to hire 500 more. A spokesperson said the agency has held about 20 hiring events this year, both virtually and in-person.

"We absolutely would like to see as many hiring initiatives in the works as possible," the agency said in a statement. "Hiring events are only one component of our recruitment efforts, and while we want them to proceed as planned, due to institutional needs, they may be postponed."

Two were held in May, one at Mendota and another for federal jails in New York City—facilities that a federal judge recently said were "run by morons" where inmates are kept in "inhuman" conditions.

47-year-old Juan Ramon Rodriguez was found hanging in his cell in FCI Mendota's segregated housing unit. With nursing staff reassigned to guard duty, there was no one to respond to calls for assistance.

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

FCC creates new phone rules for prisoners

Federal regulators have lowered the rates on fees for out-of-state calls made from prisons and jails, Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) reported in June.

This was an “historic order” that indicated lower rates — which are different from fees — may be forthcoming. This will go along with new Federal Communication Commission (FCC) rules for companies to follow that provide inmate-calling services in correctional institutions.

“The FCC’s newest order applies only to out-of-state calls, where the caller and called person are physically in different states, but not to in-state calls, where the caller and called person are physically in the same state,” PPI stated in a blog. “Importantly, the FCC says that companies must charge the out-of-state rate unless they know where the parties are *physically* located.”

Past rate structures applied by telephone service providers were primarily based on the

area codes of originating and terminating telephone numbers. This, according to PPI, will no longer be allowed, so third-party services that provide phone numbers outside of called numbers’ area codes will not be advantageous in receiving better rates.

“These newly lowered caps are not in effect yet, and won’t be until 90 days after official publication,” PPI stated. When that happens, PPI said it will update its post regarding the publication of the rates.

PPI reported that family and friends of incarcerated people can expect rate caps. In prisons there is one exception: “Out-of-state calls will not cost more than 14¢ per minute. . . . The exception is that the FCC is allowing companies to charge higher rates if a mandatory state statute or regulation requires a commission payment to the facility.” But total rate caps cannot exceed 21 cents per minute”



New FCC rules, including caps on fees and charges for collect calls made by prisoners, will make it easier for the incarcerated to maintain contact with family and support networks.

Phoeun You, SQNews

under the FCC Order.

“For jails with an average daily population of 1,000 or more: With one exception, out-of-state calls will not cost more than 16 cents per minute. Previously, rates were capped at

either 21 or 25 cents depending on whether the call was collect or debit. The exception is that the FCC is allowing companies to charge higher rates if a mandatory state statute or regulation requires a commission

payment to the facility.” The FCC order, however, does not allow the total rate cap to exceed 21 cents per minute.

All other jails’ out-of-state calls will no longer cost more than 21 cents per minute.

“When the new regulations take effect, collect calls and debit calls will both be capped at 21 cents.”

All international calls from jail and prison will be capped at out-of-state rates, “plus the amount that the provider pays to an underlying wholesale carrier for the cost of the call,” PPI reported. “Prior to these rules, international calls were not subject to price caps.”

PPI reported that an exact cap on such international calls may be difficult to calculate “because the ‘underlying wholesale’ cost is not widely known.”

Single-call services from prisons and jails from service providers such as Text2Connect™ and PayNow™ will be capped at \$6.95 per call, plus any applicable per-minute rate. “We have previously found that companies were charging \$9.99-14.99 for a single telephone call,” PPI stated. It added that third-party monetary transactions such as fees for MoneyGram payments and Western Union — which can be as high as \$9.99 — will have a cap of \$6.90 per transaction.

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

No search warrant necessary

Companies surrender vast amount of personal info to law enforcement without court order

person’s data.

Tech giants Apple, Facebook, Google, Instagram and Microsoft are major suppliers of personal information to local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, according to an article by *The Associated Press*.

The most recent figures available, which cover the first half of 2020, show that over 112,000 requests for data went to Apple, Google, Facebook and Microsoft from local, state and federal officials. Social media platforms provide a “treasure trove of information,” said Lt. Robert Salter of the Newport, R.I. police.

“Everything happens on Facebook,” Salter said. “The amount of information you can get from people’s conversations online — it’s insane.”

These tech giants have provided so much information about people’s comings and goings that some are calling it a bonanza or “the golden age of government surveillance.”

It has become increasingly easier for law enforcement to apprehend those suspected of crimes by following their online trails, said Cindy Cohn, executive director of a digital rights group called Electronic Frontier Foundation.

She says that these tech companies claim they are forced to divulge this information; if they don’t, the law will go to a judge to get a subpoena to access the

Facebook and Instagram disclose more data to the local, state, and government agencies than all of the others, *AP* reported. When pressed by the public as to why they are sharing their users’ personal data without first letting them know, they say that most of the data they are forced to share is considered “noncontent” data.

Cohn and others are calling for reforms of the old surveillance rules, written years ago, that are still in place.

“Our surveillance laws are really based on the idea that if something is really important, we store it at home, and that doesn’t pass the giggle test these days,” Cohn said. “It’s just not true.”

Government has gotten good at hiding its tracks about these disclosures. By working with judges, they get a gag order that keeps their requests secret, and they continue to abuse our freedom to privacy, the story noted.

The rich, the powerful, and even members of Congress are not above being investigated, and their accounts are tapped into and examined.

Other tech companies opening their records and accounts

include Amazon, Lyft, Airbnb, Uber, and Verizon.

When you spend your money at these facilities or online, your privacy is up for grabs — not just by the ordinary criminal or cyber-criminal, but by law enforcement authorities, the story noted.

The majority of people using these tech companies out there are trying to make their lives more comfortable, kick-it with family and friends, and meet new people.

Law enforcement would have you believe that if you just did not commit crimes, you would not have anything to be alarmed about, the story said.

Fearful that your online privacy will continue to be screened, digital groups suggest that you put up more firewalls or use some sort of encryption technology to make your information harder to decipher.

Until then, the police will continue to short-circuit constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and carry on breaking into your accounts, *AP* said.

The internet is an ocean of information. Just like cyber criminals, law enforcement will continue to fish for yours.

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Community-driven public safety recommended

The federal government has implemented new public safety strategies that are difficult for communities to understand, the Urban Institute reports.

“Too many families, particularly families of color, live in neighborhoods that have suffered from decades of disinvestment, and are excluded from neighborhoods with opportunity,” the report stated.

The Urban Institute (UI), a federally funded program, created the Project for All, which is designed to aid impoverished children. UI produced a 13-page report highlighting its areas of emphasis in the September 2020 study.

“The harms of trauma, victimization, and heavy justice system presence tend to cluster in communities experiencing concentrated poverty and multiple forms of disinvestment,” said the article.

UI feels that these issues are heavily present in communities predominantly composed of Latinx, Native American, and Black people. It maintained that during the times that new policies are presented, the predominant part of these communities are not present.

The nationwide uproar to defund police departments was spurred on by the killings of Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor,

and George Floyd, to state a few. This has sparked a policy to build other safety systems.

The hopes are that these new programs can create non-law enforcement funding that can provide better results with public safety. In particular, the Minneapolis City Council has voted to redirect some law-enforcement money to shift funding to community-based programs.

“These community-driven strategies often exist entirely outside of police, prisons, jails, and community supervision,” the article said.

The focus of the community-driven strategies also shift, depending on the needs of the community. One organization in Los Angeles shifted its focus to COVID-19 awareness and aid during the pandemic.

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, also known as the 1994 crime bill, enabled large-scale expansions of police departments, and greatly limited any sentencing reduction programs.

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services was also created by this legislation. It provided incentives for states to adopt truth-in-sentencing statutes. These statutes greatly reduced credits earned in pris-

on and increased community policing.

Recently, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a federally funded initiative, was created to help reduce incarceration and reinvest the funding in other areas of the justice system.

“Each of these federal efforts has shaped public safety decisions at the state and local levels,” said the article.

Previously, federal investments have primarily focused on the more traditional justice system agencies, such as prosecution, policing, and corrections.

The Urban Peace Institute provides funding to programs like the Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) that curb L.A. youth from joining gangs. It also mediates shootings to help reduce retaliation, the article said.

The report suggests the following changes:

A network of community-based organizations — ties to specific neighborhoods.

Intermediary organizations that have trusting relationships with grassroots leaderships.

Local government participation from non-law enforcement entities — coordinating public efforts with grassroots partners.

By Heriberto Arredondo Jr.
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

Prison medical staff often lack qualification

Report: Unlicensed doctors and disgraced medical professionals likely contributed to severity of institutional COVID outbreaks

Free citizens can pick their medical provider and choose good care or at least not go back to a doctor they find incompetent. Prisoners don’t have that option.

Federal and state prisons routinely hire under-qualified, unlicensed and even disgraced medical staff, the *Marshall Project* reported July 1.

Since 1999 the nonprofit National Commission on Correctional Health Care has recommended that the credentials of prison and medical care staff be the same as those working on the outside, reported the article.

Those in charge of the federal prison system’s Health Services Division during the COVID-19 emergency didn’t have medical licenses, said union leaders, prison health care workers and prisoner rights advocates.

Critics argue that part of the reason that prisons weren’t able to handle the coronavirus pandemic properly is because states allow medical staffers in

correctional facilities to work under licenses restricted due to past disciplinary issues.

The lack of qualified staff may have contributed to the 258 inmate deaths and the nearly 50,000 COVID-positive inmates as of late June, the report stated.

Politicians and union leaders criticized the federal Bureau of Prisons, which failed to follow its own pandemic plan by pressuring guards to work while sick and also by buying knock-off N-95 masks.

States like California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas have shown troubling hiring practices, according to investigations and court records. Some state officials said they vetted doctors on a case by case basis and provide adequate care, according to *The Associated Press* and *The Appeal*. A few states

said that they couldn’t find enough doctors otherwise and couldn’t compete with private practice salaries, according to *The Oklahoman* and *Prison Legal News*.

Andrew Armstrong is a law professor at Loyola University in New Orleans, and has studied prison medical care. “To people who are inside, it’s not always clear what the credentials are of the person who is treating them,” she said. “They have a general sense that they are getting the people who can’t get jobs anywhere else.”

The author of the *Marshall Project* story, Keri Blakinger, said, “When I was locked up in New York a decade ago, our vetting process came down to rumors and fear. ‘Don’t go to that doctor — he gropes people,’ one of my friends warned me. ‘That nurse only gives you medication if she likes you,’

said another.

“There were stories about women who had the wrong teeth removed or got the wrong medication, or one lady who was so constipated she supposedly went septic and died. We usually didn’t know if the rumors were true, but we knew they could be — and we made our health care decisions accordingly.

“Sometimes, that meant we refused medical care or just didn’t seek it out. During the pandemic, prisoners from New York to Texas to California told me they hid signs of illness or refused treatment because they didn’t trust prison officials or medical staff. That suspicion is one reason some incarcerated people are still reluctant to get vaccinated.”

The *Marshall Project* reported a little over 46% of U.S. prisoners have gotten

at least one shot, compared to more than 66 percent of the adults in the overall population.

Dr. Yvon Nazaire was accused of mishandling medical treatment of nine women who died and one woman who ended up in a vegetative state. Nazaire and other prison officials ignored the woman’s medical distress and accused her of faking her symptoms, reported the *Marshall Project*.

Nazaire was hired as a medical director in Georgia even though he was still on probation in another state. The state paid over \$3 million to settle lawsuits involving him and another doctor. Nazaire was fired in 2015 and the state sanctioned him when his medical license expired, reported the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

When the coronavirus hit the federal Bureau of Prisons last year, the senior official responsible for overseeing health care and safety in all of the more than 120 lockups was Nicole English, a career corrections officer who had a graduate degree in public administration and lacked

any hands-on health care experience. At the height of the pandemic, she left that position and her replacement, Michael Smith, also had no formal medical education.

Union leaders have blamed the federal prison system’s poor handling of the pandemic on higher-ups who lack medical expertise — such as the assistant director overseeing the Health Services Division.

Aaron McGlothlin, union president at the federal prison in Mendota, Calif., is among the correctional workers who said the agency’s handling of the pandemic is proof of the need for more medical expertise among the system’s executives.

“They spent \$3 million buying UV portals,” McGlothlin said. “They said these killed the coronavirus — but they weren’t FDA-approved.” That was one of the reasons he declined the vaccination at work and decided to wait several weeks to get the shot on his own.

“I don’t trust the agency,” he said of the Bureau of Prisons. “I’m not putting my health and safety in the hands of the BOP.”

Coping while incarcerated

WELLNESS

Continued from page 1

tin's Suicide Prevention Coordinator. "CDCR has put a lot more emphasis on mental health," Dr. Anderson said, referring to retrofitted cells and added crisis beds for prisoners who need a place to decompress after a challenging event.

A few days after the Lower Yard event, the preventative measures were tested. The cellmate of Michael "Mika" Mizuo, 56, attempted suicide.

Around midnight on Sept. 14, Mizuo noticed a serious problem with his cellmate. He immediately called "man down" to get help from the correctional officers.

After the ordeal, Mizuo was given the opportunity to talk to a mental health clinician. The clinician told Mizuo that what he did saved his cellmate's life.

"I think that this whole experience showed me what a victim really goes through, because I had to deal with the traumatic effects of my cellie trying to commit suicide," Mizuo said. "I hope that what I did gives him the chance to get the help that he needs."

At the yard event, San Quentin's Chief Psychiatrist Dr. Burton talked about what to do in case of a mental health challenge. He told prisoners that assistance is available "24 hours, seven days a week."

He said that if someone thinks their problem is "routine," they could submit a sick call slip and a clinician should see them in about a week.

"If it's ever at the point where it's pressing, talk to the officer in your unit," Burton said. He continued, if the problem seems "very serious, then call 'man down'" and emergency treatment will be provided.

Anderson considered the COVID crisis, adding, "I think one of the most necessary things is to pay attention to where support is needed. San Quentin has a great crisis intervention team that does great work — if you let any staff member know that you're in a crisis, and a team member will help you."

Louis Light, 50, has been incarcerated 26 years. He has spent the past 12 years in San Quentin.

He didn't seek mental health help when he first got to San Quentin. He didn't want to be thought of as a "head case, weirdo, or psych-med-guy."

"The first five years that I've been at San Quentin, I was depressed and lonely and I'd isolate myself," Light said at the event.

Eventually, Light spoke to someone in an outpatient mental health program who encouraged him to enroll, too.

"The clinicians I talk to help me speak about what's really hurting me inside and get rid of the shame and fear of people judging me," Light said. He says being a part of the yard event is a way to be involved in the San Quentin community. "Instead of hiding, I'm encouraging guys to be a part of CCCMS (Correctional Clinical Case Management System). The stigma of CCCMS is a myth. It can change

your life — it changed my life." CCCMS is an outpatient treatment program in which clinicians normally see patients every 90 days. However, psychology students from around the country provide additional treatment to prisoners under the Psychology Internship Program. "It's like a medical residency," said A. Berendsen, Psy. D. "About 60 prisoners are getting weekly treatment from the program."

Andress Yancy, 59, said that after a death in his family, he attempted suicide. He then enrolled in the CCCMS program. He said the program and religious beliefs taught him to have compassion for people.

"I've changed my life from being hurt and hurting people to being healed and helping to heal life," Yancy said. "For me, it doesn't matter if the person is incarcerated or a staff member. I'm there to help. The Mental Health Awareness event lets me give back to the community."

Yancy is part of an incarcerated team of mental health service providers that include Light, Sergio Alvarez, Eric Rives, Stephen Pascascio and Brian Assey.

"I used to have a stigma about mental health until I got to San Quentin and began to understand that mental health is just as important as physical health," Alvarez said. "It's an honor and privilege to be a part of this program. Everybody needs somebody!"

Eric Rives, also a survivor of a suicide attempt, says he "now value(s) life and want(s) to help others and bring awareness to mental health."

He says the number one benefit of the CCCMS program is that there is an open line of communication between patients and doctors.

Office Technicians Angeli-que Villasana and Tanisha Andre-Simmons coordinated with Pascascio to set up a small stage for poetry reading by prisoners. Staffers from the substance abuse program participated by singing "Stand by Me."

Easels displayed artwork. Warren "Philly" Corley read a letter dedicated to Darrel Gault, who died from COVID-19.

"Darrel was my friend — we miss him dearly," Corley said. In tears, he read from a handwritten letter that praised Gault's life.

"He died the way he lived, with courage, joy, and giving people whatever was needed," Corley read to prisoners and prison staffers.

A pamphlet was available for the incarcerated population to give to their friends and family in the free world. It contained information to set straight suicide myths and truths:

You can't stop people who want to kill themselves — false.

Most people who are suicidal do not really want to die, they just want their emotional pain to stop — true.

Talking about suicide will only make it worse — false.

Talking through feelings can help someone realize their need for help — true.

Telling a mental health professional that someone is talking about suicide is betraying their trust — false.

Helping someone in a time of need shows you care for and respect them — true.

The pamphlet, *A Guide for Family & Friends*, provided a Mental Health Hotline: 916.691.1404

Mental health staff emphasize the importance of hope, healing & self-care



Photos by Phoeun You, SQNews

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism Guild Chairman

Los sentimientos de soledad y depresión pueden llevar a las personas hacia una desesperación absoluta.

Atados por la tristeza y depresión muchos prisioneros son amenazados con problemas mentales que pueden llevarlos al suicidio en la prisión.

En California los oficiales de las prisiones han descubierto como estas incapacidades contribuyen en el aumento de suicidios en las prisiones en comparación con suicidios en nuestras comunidades.

El departamento de correccionales (CDCR) del estado de California ha reportado que en los últimos 5 años el suicidio entre prisioneros ha aumentado en comparación con la última década.

La misión del CDCR del departamento de salud mental, es de prevenir los suicidios y salvar vidas con la intención de educar y ofrecer un tratamiento mental a los reos.

Debido a esta crisis de salud mental, los profesionales en San Quentin tomaron cartas en el asunto. Por consiguiente, el 9 de septiembre el equipo de salud mental se reunió con los prisioneros en la yarda de la prisión.

Ahí les informaron cómo pueden recibir ayuda mental no solo en momentos críticos pero también cómo prevenir el suicidio.

La doctora E. Anderson, Psy.D. de San Quentin es la coordinadora para la prevención del suicidio.

"CDCR ha puesto mucho más énfasis a la

FACING PAGE: At the height of the SQ Covid outbreak, prisoners suffered extended periods of total confinement and isolation.

ESTA PAGINA: John Hayes reflexiona en los años que ha pasado encarcelado.

PINTURA ANEXA: "Sentimientos Vacíos" por Gerald Morgan, un hombre postrado reflejando desesperación.

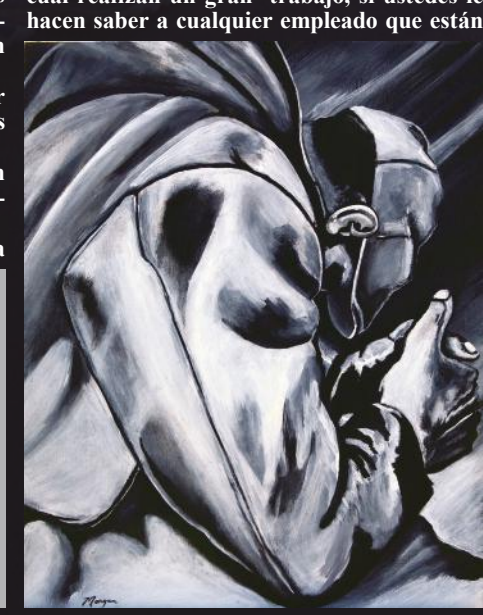
salud mental," dijo Anderson, refiriéndose a las celdas de la prisión que están equipadas para situaciones de crisis mental para disminuir la depresión después de un evento crítico.

En este evento el doctor Burton quien es el jefe de psiquiatras, hablo sobre la ayuda disponible en salud mental, "24 horas, siete días a la semana."

Burton dijo a los prisioneros que si ellos creen que su problema es de "rutina", ellos pueden someter la forma 7362 que está disponible para todos los reos, así un trabajador social los atenderá en una semana.

"Si estas en un punto de depresión, habla con un oficial en tu unidad," dijo Burton, el añadió, "si el problema es muy serio, entonces llama "hombre-caído, hombre caído" y el tratamiento de emergencia será otorgado inmediatamente.

Considerando la crisis de COVID-19, Anderson añadió, "Yo pienso que lo más importante es poner atención en donde se necesita el apoyo," la prisión de San Quentin tiene un equipo de intervención durante una crisis, en cual realizan un gran trabajo, si ustedes le hacen saber a cualquier empleado que están



Manejando la Salud Mental estando encarcelado



en crisis, un miembro del equipo le ayudara. "Hay muchas maneras para expresar las emociones y pensamientos a través del arte", dijo Joe Belem. "El arte es un lenguaje universal".

Refiriéndose a una pintura que refleja la imagen de una persona con su cabeza inclinada y sus manos unidas en posición de postración y desesperación.

Otras obras también fueron exhibidas en el evento Conciencia de la Salud Mental de la prisión. Arte hecho por prisioneros expresando sus talentos y emociones durante episodios de depresión.

El evento fue organizado por doctores del Sistema Directivo Correccional de Casos Clínicos (CCCMS por sus siglas en ingles), que es un programa de tratamiento mental que normalmente atiende pacientes cada 90 días.

Igualmente existe el programa de estudiantes que está coordinado por la doctora A. Berendsen, Psy.D. que da la oportunidad a alumnos de las universidades de los Estados Unidos para ofrecer tratamiento a casi 60 prisioneros.

"Es como una residencia médica", dijo Berendsen.

En el pasado, los prisioneros hispanos han tenido un estigma sobre la salud mental, dejándolos vulnerables por miedo a ser juzgados por otros prisioneros quienes mal interpretan la ayuda mental como una debilidad.

"El machismo y la inseguridad dentro del sistema no me dejaba pedir ayuda", dijo Belem, "amigos míos han perdido la esperanza por el miedo a ser juzgados por otros prisioneros".

Hay muchos prisioneros como Belem, quienes no saben cómo salir de la depresión y poder conectarse con sus emociones y sentimientos en una manera saludable.

Belem es uno de los afortunados en escapar de la depresión expresándose de una manera talentosa y única en sus poemas.

El da un toque fuerte y derrama su dolor, por medio de su poema ante su audiencia.

SQNews trató de entrevistar a prisioneros hispanos de diferentes nacionalidades y desafortunadamente la mayoría de ellos no

monstro interés en participar en la entrevista sobre la salud mental.

Con la excepción de un hispano americano. El señor Raymond Rodríguez de 65 años quien ha estado encarcelado por los últimos 20 años, expresó como ha sufrido de depresión después de que su madre y su hermano fallecieron durante su encarcelamiento.

"Durante un tiempo me sentí en un punto bajo de mi vida, en lo que me sentí bien deprimido y enojado," dijo Rodríguez, "quería estar en casa con ellos dos al salir, eso era mi sueño."

Rodríguez agradece a los psicólogos y al equipo que trabaja en el manejo de la salud mental, por toda la ayuda y apoyo que le han dado en los momentos de desesperación y duelo, que pudo llevarlo al suicidio.

El ha aprendido a cómo prevenir el suicidio, pero lo más importante es como solicitar la ayuda que está disponible.

No hay manera correcta de como pedir ayuda o como procesar la depresión en la prisión.

Lo único que importa es reconocer que necesitamos ayuda o tratamiento.

"Desahogándome de ir el dolor al aire y lo tomo como mi propia terapia." Dijo Belem.

"Muchos prisioneros latinos no quieren participar en terapias tal vez por miedo o por sus inseguridades," dijo Victor Tapia.

Prisioneros como Tapia reconocen la importancia de recibir ayuda mental con profesionales, en un mundo oscuro que está lleno de angustia y violencia.

El no tener el valor de pedir ayuda para la depresión, ha elevado las estadísticas de suicidios en las prisiones.

Usualmente, pensamos que no podemos prevenir que alguien se suicide, esto es FALSO. Si usted conoce al alguien que está viviendo momentos críticos, por favor contacte al departamento médico o de salud mental, esta acción puede salvar una vida.

Estudios han demostrado que la mayoría de las personas que tienen tendencias suicidas realmente no quieren morir, ellos solo quieren escapar del dolor emocional y por eso debemos unirlos en la lucha contra el suicidio.

RE:STORE

SURVIVORS

By Helen
Gun Violence Survivor

In February we acknowledge National Gun Violence Survivor week. I would guess that many of you, like me, are survivors of gun violence. It's a club no one wants to be part of, but we have no choice in that.

Forty years ago, my 27-year-old brother David was shot and injured and it changed our lives forever. At the time I was a carefree college student who adored my

older brother who called me Ducky. I thought David the lucky one because he could do anything he put his mind to and he charmed everyone. David was handsome, a skier, woodworker and master in martial arts; he played guitar and loved music and fast cars. He had lots of friends, was happily married, owned his home and worked in a hospital as a respiratory therapist.

Everything changed one rainy evening when I answered the call from my sister-in-law, a nurse. David had

been shot by an angry driver through a crack in the window when he was pulled over on the side of the road to let him pass. The bullet entered the left side of David's neck and traveled down through his spinal cord, severing it. David survived because his friend who was in the passenger seat pulled his bloodied body across the arm rest to drive him to the emergency room. David was in intensive care and would never walk again. Stunned, I managed to take down the details to tell my family before completely breaking down.

Sometime later we found out that they had caught the shooter: a 19-year-old who had thrown away the gun he shot David with. When they tracked him down, he had another gun, an unlicensed gun. How easy it was for him to find another gun — it's shameful really, the easy access. How different the

Honoring David

Gun violence survivor voices call to action in brother's name

outcome might have been if he had not had a gun.

After almost a year in hospitals, David was discharged. His wife had divorced him so our parents dropped their lives to take care of their adult son who was paralyzed from the chest down. Can you imagine the impact? A healthy, independent man suddenly confined to a wheelchair. Can you imagine the humiliation of having a home health aide changing your diaper, your catheter, bathing you, dressing you because you couldn't do it yourself? Your mother cutting your meat for you? And the constant pain was unbearable. It wasn't much of a life for David, or our parents, and there was little joy in that home. After 16 years of pain and frustration David, sick of it all, killed himself with stored up pain medications. It was heart breaking.

While that bullet didn't

kill David immediately in 1980, it did kill his spirit and tore a hole in the lives of every member of our family. From that day forward I would never look at marriage, relationships or family in the same way and that is only a fraction of the impact of that bullet.

For so many years I was alone in my experience, but sadly that is no longer the case. Gun violence is commonplace and that is unacceptable. A few years ago, I joined a group called Moms Demand Action and was introduced to the Everytown Survivor Network. These groups, including gun violence survivors, work tirelessly to end gun violence. Finally, someplace to offer me a voice and actions to take to end gun violence and begin the true healing process.

Until the day that gun violence becomes a rarity, I ask

While that bullet didn't kill David immediately in 1980, it did kill his spirit and tore a hole in the lives of every member of our family. From that day forward I would never look at marriage, relationships, or family in the same way and that is only a fraction of the impact of that bullet.

you to use your voice and actions to honor David and the hundreds of lives impacted by gun violence daily, and work to prevent other families from enduring a preventable tragedy.

HEALTH

Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) hosts a monthly reentry health-focused Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column. This column is a space where we can answer questions regarding healthcare in reentry. Our goal is to provide information and empower individuals to prepare them for healthy reentry. For this column, we will focus on Medi-Cal, the public health insurance system in California.

We're thrilled to be able to communicate with the incarcerated community. In future columns, we will be talking about many different topics, such as health insurance, MAT (medication assisted treatment), prevention and treatment for Hepatitis C and HIV, defining and finding gender-affirming care, managing chronic conditions, and much more.

Transitions Clinic Network: FAQs about Medi-Cal

What is Medi-Cal?

Medi-Cal is health insurance for people in the community who make less than \$17,775 taxed income per year. Medi-Cal is California's version of Medicaid, which is

the nation's public health insurance program for people with low-income. Almost everyone who is coming home from incarceration is eligible for Medi-Cal. You may not be eligible for Medi-Cal if you

are covered under another health insurance plan, such as one through your family or spouse.

Why should I care about health insurance?

While you are incarcerated at CDCR, the State pays for your health care services. In the community, when you see a doctor or get medications, payment is required. Health insurance, such as Medi-Cal, helps pay for these services.

What does Medi-Cal pay for?

Medi-Cal covers "medically necessary" care. This includes doctor and dentist appointments, prescription drugs, vision care, mental health care, and substance use disorder and/or alcohol treatment. Many clinics in the community accept Medi-Cal. You should ask if your doctor or clinic accepts Medi-Cal before getting care or you may get a bill.

Does Medi-Cal cover dental care?

Denti-Cal is FREE insurance that pays for some dental services. It is available to

anyone who qualifies for Medi-Cal. Dental services are usually separate from medical services. You may need to go to a different provider or clinic for dental services.

Medi-Care and Medi-Cal sound very similar. Are they the same thing?

No. Medicare is health insurance for people 65 and older or those who are on social security disability insurance (SSDI), regardless of income. Medi-Cal is health insurance for people who are low-income. You can be enrolled in

both plans at the same time if you meet the criteria. This is called "dual eligibility".

When is the best time to apply for Medi-Cal? Can I apply for Medi-Cal before I leave prison?

You will need Medi-Cal when you're home in the community and want medical services. The prison has staff who will help you apply 1-3 months before release. We'll share more information about the Medi-Cal application process in the next month's FAQ column.

Services that Medi-Cal pays for include:

- Emergency room visits
- Checkup or routine physical exam
- Substance use disorder and/or alcohol treatment (including buprenorphine, Methadone and Naltrexone)
- Mental health treatment
- Hepatitis C treatment
- HIV treatment
- Eye exams & glasses
- Prescription medications
- Lab work

Services that Medi-Cal does **not** pay for:

- Vitamins and supplements
- Over-the-counter medications (medications you can buy on your own at the store without a doctor's prescription)
- Anything considered cosmetic instead of "medically necessary"

Transitions Clinic Network

TCN is a network of community health clinics that serve returning community members. Their staff have experienced incarceration and reentry, and can connect you to medical services.

If you have any healthcare reentry questions, call collect Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm.

**Transitions Clinic Network
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By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

In March 2021, well-known cardiologists discovered COVID-19 "cuts through the vertical muscle tissue of the heart." They found COVID-19 is more than a respiratory disease and consider the virus harmful to several vital organs, including the heart.

Journalist Julie Langelier's report in *Science Translational Medicine* revealed the findings of the Gladstone Institute's report filed March 15.

Gladstone Institute is a nonprofit organization using state-of-the-art science and technology to combat disease. The facility has an academic relationship with UCSF and employs Dr. Bruce Conklin, a professor at UCSF; Dr. Todd McDevitt, a bioengineering and therapeutic sciences professor at UCSF and virologist Dr. Melanie Ott. The trio exposed heart cell damage to varying doses of SARS-CoV-2.

Reporter Langelier said the virus's target is long strands of

muscle fiber that allow the heart to beat. The report's images verified the muscle strands are "essentially chopped into pieces."

The doctors believe heart damage appeared at the beginning of COVID. In fact, Langelier reported the Santa Clara county woman known as the first coronavirus death in the U.S. actually died of a heart attack caused by the virus. Before the heart attack, she appeared healthy.

"Even today, because she didn't have a cough, when we knew about it, people would have sent her home essentially," said genetic disease researcher Bruce Conklin, M.D.

Gladstone is trying to understand the entire process. The team invented procedures enabling scientists to use stem cells to create live, beating heart cells. Injections of COVID-19 then infect heart muscle strands, in which they are then able to

observe heart damage.

Researching the full range of the damage could take time. Dr. McDevitt cautioned, "We haven't seen the movie — we've seen snapshots of a process that's very dynamic. Putting that story together accurately so we can understand it... you know, questions such as when would be the time to treat people?"

"Long-hauler" COVID patients increase in number and solutions become very important. The heart cannot repair itself, so Gladstone researchers focus on long-term damage that will show up years later.

COVID-19 causes deaths from heart damage. Patients experiencing symptoms from COVID-19 may be diagnosed with heart problems several months later. This trend is common among the elderly incarcerated at San Quentin.

Incarcerated resident Ben Carmack, 74 years old and in-

carcerated for 28 years, was a man who was walking 15-20 miles per day before COVID-19 ravaged his body. "I'm lucky now if I can get five miles in," said Carmack.

The North Block resident still has dizzy spells, chest pains and shortness of breath, yet the medical staff still tells him he is OK. "They say I have no symptoms, but my blood pressure wavers around 90 over 200 sometimes."

Carmack was infected at the end of June, was vaccinated early this year, and still has complications from COVID-19. He has received the now traditional battery of tests from Marin General, which included a stress test in September, and a pulmonary test few weeks later.

"The technician at Primi Pulmonary told me and others that there is an eight month waiting list of San Quentin men waiting to get tested at the facility. There is definitely something going on

around here that no one is telling us," said Carmack.

"Doctors have learned more and patients like Carmack are still being turned away," said incarcerated chiropractor Doc Martin.

"We noticed many of the cardiomyocytes (heart muscle cells) illustrated very strange characteristics," reported McDevitt. "We were seeing (things) completely abnormal; in my years of looking at cardiomyocytes, I had never seen anything like it before." The team noticed that when cardiomyocytes were exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the sarcomeres in some of the cells looked as if they had been diced into small fragments. These sarcomeres control the coordinated contraction of heart cells to produce the normal heartbeat.

"The sarcomere disruptions we discovered would make it impossible for the heart muscle cells to beat properly," explained McDermitt's partner Dr. Conklin.

They also discovered that nuclear DNA then disappears from many of the heart cells. Without DNA, cells can no longer per-

form any normal functions.

"It's the cell equivalent of being brain dead," Conklin added. "Even after scouring scientific literature and conferring with colleagues, we cannot find these abnormal cell features in any other cardiac disease model. We believe they are unique to SARS-CoV-2 and could explain the prolonged heart damage seen in many COVID-19 patients."

The team received patient samples, which confirmed the physical changes they saw in the lab. Even in patients not previously identified with COVID-19 related heart disease, evidence of structural defects in the heart muscle cells was found. Further testing is needed to confirm the findings, but immediate comparisons are striking.

"The (defects) haven't been identified in patients before, so they may have been overlooked," said McDevitt. "I hope our work motivates doctors to review their patients' samples to start looking for these features at a higher magnification, which will be the true test of our (theories)."

CDCR's 3-phase plan for reopening prisons



San Quentin's empty Lower Yard. At the height of the prison's coronavirus outbreak, the yard was home to "Tent City," where dozens of prisoners were temporarily housed to ease overcrowding. Today, as SQ experiences repeated preventive quarantines, the Lower Yard is frequently deserted as prisoners are confined to their housing units.

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

A detailed plan has been adopted for restoring normal operations to California prisons after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Roadmap to Reopening was the work of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS).

The roadmap, dated April 20, was developed to ensure a smooth transition for each prison to safely resume the "new" normal programming.

It was developed by the Department, working closely with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to combat COVID-19.

An outbreak is defined by these entities as three or more COVID-19-related inmate cases within 14 days. The specific criteria from moving from Phase 1 to Phase 2 involves a minimum of negative COVID cases, along with no new outbreak cases in a 14-day period.

The phases are as follows:

Outbreak Phase (Phase 1)

»Each facility can be considered separate within an Institution, pertaining to the facility's separation of inmates and staff.

»The end of an outbreak is defined as 14 days with no new outbreak cases identified in the given facility.

»Outbreak testing must continue throughout Phase 1.

General provisions while the facility is within the Phase 1 designation are as follows:

»Dayroom access allowed within same living quarters, with showers allowed with cleaning between uses.

»Yard/provisions of meals within the same housing units is allowed.

»Sports equipment may be used only by one inmate, with the equipment cleaned after each inmate usage.

»Recreational activities (card games, board games etc.) may be used by inmates who live within the same unit/cohort.

»All students receive independent packets.

»All students shall be administered educational assessments, with social distancing.

»Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment (ISUDT)

participants receive Program Engagement Packets from ISUDT AOD Counselors.

»Mental Health (MH) referrals and routine appointments, which may be done at cell front. The MH Nursing may provide in-cell activities and packets.

»Law Library by paging only. Recreational reading materials will be provided within each housing unit.

»Closed to in-person and family visiting, and activities involving outside groups.

»Video visiting is allowed.

»Phone calls allowed with cleaning between uses.

»Congregate religious activities are not permitted.

Phase 2

Includes a partial reopening and the gradual easing of Phase 1 restrictions. If the facility has an outbreak, the facility must immediately return to Phase 1 restrictions. If there is time needed to investigate a potential outbreak, the facility will remain in Phase 2 pending the investigation.

Phase 2 "Increased movement and programming" provisions are as follows:

»Library and Law Library access resumes.

»Increased dayroom access to include more participants and/or hours.

»Inmate Activity Groups (Arts in Corrections and other volunteer groups) will be contacted by the Community Resource Manager (CRM), who will coordinate the return of community-based organizations (CBOs) and volunteers in accordance with the Department's COVID-19 mitigation protocols.

»All education courses return, including Career Technical Education (CTE), and in-person college courses, where physical distancing can be maintained.

»ISUDT Integrated/Offender Mentor Certification Program services will resume in-person/group settings, where physical distancing can be maintained.

»Indoor/Outdoor congregate religious services are permitted within the same facility with social distancing.

»On-site Mental Health, Dental, and Medium Priority Health Care services resume.

»Mental health service groups must maintain physical distancing.

»Inmate workforce resumes.

»No family visiting. Other in-person visiting will tran-

sition to a hybrid model in accordance with the Visiting Memorandum procedures, which specify a combination of in-person and video visiting as determined by each facility's warden.

Phase 3

Phase 3 is indicated by CDCR as "New Normal Programming." The progressive reopening of programs and services will be reviewed and implemented weekly by the institution.

With COVID precautions in place, each facility will resume:

»Normal in-person visiting.

»Family visiting may resume.

»All rehabilitative programs.

»Normal process for filming, media requests, and stakeholder tours.

»Normal programming for DRP, self-help programming, and ISUDT, etc.

»Congregate religious activities are permitted.

The CDCR/CCHCS memorandum stated that if the facility experiences a subsequent inmate outbreak, the facility must revert back to Phase 1 restrictions.

Here are reactions from some San Quentin residents:

T. Lang, 22, said, "None of this makes sense. We keep getting punished for something we have no control of. I've just read the latest L.S.A. and it says that it's the guards that bring most of the virus in. So if it's the guards, why are we (incarcerated people) being punished?"

M. Vilkin, 70, who had previously contracted COVID and was re-housed at the time in PIA, said, "It is common knowledge that healthy people have mild symptoms. I believe that people whose immune system has been compromised should be protected by isolation, but the virus should be allowed to run wild amongst the rest. We're killing our economy. Statistically speaking, people who would have died in a few weeks, or months anyway are counted as killed by the virus."

L. Rodriguez, 43, "They need to stop transporting people here from other prisons. If we are on quarantine, we need to have paper trays and not hard trays. They need to supply us with hand sanitizer and bleach."

By Steve Brooks
Staff Writer

While people in society were shocked when schools, churches, restaurants, and salons were shut down due to the pandemic, prisoners weren't shocked when their rehabilitation programs were shut down.

For years, prisoners have had to rely on each other and assistance from people in the outside world for their rehabilitation.

"During the outbreak my mom and my sister helped me develop my timeline so I could take ownership for everything I've done wrong when I go to Board," said San Quentin (SQ) resident Darren Settlemyer. "I keep in touch with my AA sponsor who lives in San Jose, and I took some PREP courses."

The Partnership for Re-Entry Program (PREP) is run by the Catholic church in Los Angeles. It provides prisoners correspondence courses in domestic violence prevention, victims awareness, anger management, criminal thinking and in other areas.

Richard Fernandez has been the PREP facilitator for the North Block housing unit at SQ since 2019. "I have helped 80-100 guys since the outbreak. This is my way of giving back," said Fernandez. "I like to see the men network amongst each other and help each other."

Residents often stop by Fernandez's cell to pick up PREP material. Once the participants complete their lessons, Fernandez uses his own personal stamps and whatever stamps are donated by participants to mail it to the PREP organization. The participants are then awarded certificates of completion.

At least a dozen prisoners serving life sentences who had been taking PREP courses during the pandemic were released by the parole board.

Many organizations — like the Timeless Group, Crim-

Rehabilitation hurdles in the COVID era

Anon, Lifers Support Alliance and the American Correctional Counseling Institute (ACCI) — help fill the void in rehabilitation at prisons by providing correspondence courses. PREP is one of the most popular.

Donald Edge has been facilitating the PREP program in the Alpine housing unit at SQ for the past six months. "I have helped at least 30 guys complete courses and get chronos and certificates."

It is generally understood amongst the population of prisoners serving life sentences that they are expected to take a pro-active approach to their rehabilitation regardless of lockdowns or deadly pandemics.

Boards of Parole Hearing Commissioners often tell lifers to do book reports or to find an outside organization if no prison programs are available.

"I was taking PREP courses and I was finishing up GRIP and the TRUST program during the outbreak here through correspondence," said resident Ron Goffrion, who was sick with COVID-19 for a month and had to be transferred to an outside hospital.

Prisoners often facilitate many of the rehabilitation programs that do exist within the prisons. They are assigned as peer mentors or they volunteer to facilitate alcohol and drug counseling groups inside prisons. Interacting with each other is how many residents at SQ said they've learned to manage their anger and sobriety.

"I really got motivated when I came to SQ and saw how guys were able to openly express themselves without being judged," said resident Dennis Jefferson. "I like talking to people who want to talk about improving them-

selves."

Self-motivation has been the key to Jefferson's rehabilitation. Jefferson didn't let the COVID-19 pandemic stop him from doing PREP courses. He also did correspondence with Crim-Anon and ACCI organizations. "My father helped me pay for some courses at ACCI that costs between \$45 and \$90."

Michael Baldwin Sr., who was released from Corcoran State Prison in 2018 after serving 27 years in prison, said his rehabilitation came from a lot of soul-searching and the aide of fellow prisoners.

"When you go to prison there's no one coming to your cell door saying "hey, this is the crime you committed, here are some of the reasons why you committed that crime, and these are the programs you need to take to make sure you resolve the issues that led you to commit the crime," Baldwin Sr. told the *Valley Citizen* on April 22.

As Baldwin points out, the system doesn't normally guide any prisoner through the rehabilitative process. Neither the judge or any corrections official will tell you how to resolve your problem.

As prison rehabilitation programs begin to reopen, unlike the rest of society prisoners say they won't experience any new normal. Prisoners all across the state will likely experience more of the same.

"The truth is that rehabilitation, as it's structured in our prison system today, just doesn't work the way society may think it does. The truth is that inmates are turning to each other for support and strength in dealing with the issues — the addiction, the violence, the anger — that led them to commit crimes in the first place."

CA increases canteen spending limits

A September memo from the CDCR Accounting Services Branch (ASB) has authorized a roughly 10-percent increase to the spending limit for each privilege group.

The canteen spending limits had not seen an increase since January 2010.

Elvira Melendres, ASB's

acting Associate Director, recommended that institutional canteen managers stock additional inventory in preparation for the increased spending limits.

The memorandum acknowledged that "there are current delays in accessing some commodities due to the pandemic, but we see this as

a short term issue that we expect to level off as manufacturing returns to normal."

New spending limits effective October 1, 2021:

- Group A - \$240
- Group B - \$120
- Group C - \$60
- Group D - \$60
- Group U - \$240

—AJ Hardy

Arkansas jail under investigation for using anti-parasitic to treat COVID

An Arkansas jail is under investigation by the state Medical Board for giving its prisoners an anti-parasite drug to treat COVID-19, *The Associated Press* reported.

Ivermectin, a drug used to treat animals and people for parasitic worms, head lice and skin conditions was provided without their knowledge to jail detainees who caught COVID-19, the story disclosed.

"I asked what are they, and they'd just tell me vitamins," Edrick Floreal-Wooten told the *AP*. "With me being sick and all of us being sick, we thought that they were there to help us. I never thought they would do something shady."

Jail physician Dr. Rob Karas defended the use of ivermectin to treat COVID-19. Karas said he has prescribed it to jail detainees and patients at his clinics that are significantly sick with COVID-19 since late 2020.

"They were pretty much testing us in here is all they were doing, seeing if it would work," said William Evans, a jail resident. He told the *AP* he was given the drug for two weeks after he tested positive for COVID-19.

According to Dr. Karas, no detainees at the jail were forced to take the drug.

"I do not have the luxury of conducting my own clinical trials or study and am not attempting to do so," Karas wrote. "I am on the front line of trying to prevent death and serious illness."

Karas said that he has personally taken the drug and given it to family members to prevent COVID-19. He has also recommended ivermectin as a preventive measure for COVID-19.

However, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved ivermectin to prevent or treat

COVID-19 patients.

The drug's manufacturer, Merck, said in February that it had no evidence that ivermectin is an effective treatment for COVID-19. Both the American Medical Association and pharmacists have called for an immediate halt to the use of the drug to treat COVID-19 without clinical trials, according to the *AP*.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sent out an alert about the trend to doctors in early September. The CDC said there is no evidence that ivermectin is effective at preventing or treating COVID-19. Side effects from the drug include skin rashes, nausea, and vomiting.

Since the summer began, calls to poison control centers about ivermectin overdoses have multiplied to five times the normal number, the story said.

—Steve Brooks

Historical Snippets

2018 October 30: "Whitey" Bulger, organized crime boss, age 89, was killed shortly after arriving at a federal prison in W. Virginia.

1967 October 20: An all-white federal jury convicts seven defendants of murdering of 3 civil rights workers in Meridan, Mississippi.

1964 October 5: In the largest mass-escape since the Berlin Wall was built, 57 East German refugees escaped to the West after tunneling beneath the wall.

1957 October 25: Cosa Nostra crime boss Albert Anastasia is murdered in a barber's chair in NYC, probably by fellow mobster Joe Gallo.

1946 October 15: Nazi leader Hermann Goering committed suicide by swallowing poison in his Nuremberg prison cell just hours before he was to hang for war crimes.

1934 October 22: Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd, American gangster and the FBI's Most Wanted criminal, shot dead at age 30 by federal agents in Ohio.

1931 October 24: Notorious Chicago gangster Al "Scarface" Capone received an 11-year prison sentence for income tax evasion. In 1934, he was transferred to Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary near San Francisco, Ca. He was paroled in 1939, suffering from syphilis. He retired to his mansion in Miami Beach where he died in 1947.

1618 October 29: Sir Walter Raleigh, famed British explorer, was executed in London for treason on orders from King James I.

CROSSWORD

By Jonathan Chiu
Edited by Jan Perry

Across

1. Charities
5. Restaurant staff
9. "That's interesting"
12. Old world energy
13. Bodies
15. 4.0
17. To draw out
18. Key
19. Type of med
20. Not hitting on all cylinders, e.g.
23. SNL's Davidson
24. TV program
25. Elect
28. French river that flows into the Scheldt
29. Govt. org.
30. Crush
33. Actress Watts
35. 3 (Prefix)
36. Selves
37. "I've been down for so long now"
41. Jazz's James
42. Time
43. Type of dress
44. Dress accessory
45. Ship speak
46. Fellow
48. Greek mythological night goddess
49. ___ Taylor
50. PTE abbr.
52. "Hold your horses"
60. Middle Eastern country
61. Country singer Adkins
62. Terrible
63. "Of ___ and Men"
64. Bankrupt energy company
65. US lake
66. ___-Na Na
67. Firms up
68. Slit

Down

1. Anti-suppressor org.
2. A borrower gets one
3. Anti-alcohol org.
4. Rest
5. When doubled with *Bang, Bang*, a movie
6. Calms
7. Actress Fanning
8. Coasted
9. ___ la vista
10. Crush
11. Female horse
14. Intervenes
16. Type of Jordans
21. Artifact
22. Actor Butterfield
25. Arrival
26. Singer LaBelle
27. Pastry
29. ___ Lanka
30. Over
31. A type of jokes
32. English city
34. Actress Farrow
35. Most 70s and 80s movie slang
36. Finless fish
38. Type of speaker
39. Rather than
40. New Age singer
45. Whichever
46. Talisman
47. Greek city
49. Condition with 4 Down
52. Pop figure Kardashian
53. Greek mythological goddess of discord
54. Apiece
55. Pitchers
56. Not common
57. Car accessory
58. Pelley who created *Paranormal Activity*
59. Necessity

"More Figures of Speech"

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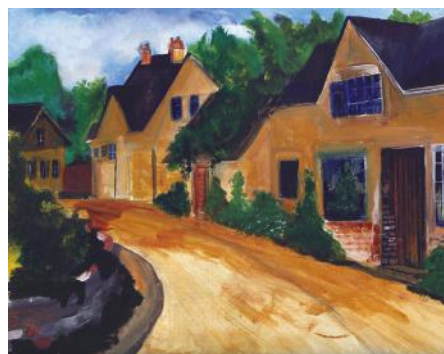
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Last Issue's Solution

Mental Wellness Month yard show exhibits SQ residents' art



September 9, 2021, brought an exhibition of beautiful art pieces created by SQ prisoners, as well as speakers from professional mental health backgrounds. Speakers included E. Anderson, Psy.D, SQ's new Suicide Prevention Coordinator. Dr. Anderson and others from the outside community wanted to provide hope and options to those in the prison population who might be experiencing severe depression or even suicidal thoughts or desires. Anyone who is feeling lost or is considering suicide is strongly encouraged to reach out to a mental health clinician or any staff member to discuss their situation.



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SUDOKU (Last month's solutions)

BOOK REVIEW

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

American Dirt

By Jeanine Cummins

A mother and her 8-year-old son flee northward from deep in southern Mexico. Hard on their heels is the cartel intent on their murders. Cut off from conventional means of travel, Lydia and little Luca resort to “La Bestia,” the perilous freight trains poor migrants ride to Mexico’s northern border.

At the same time, Soledad and Rebecca, teenage sisters from the mountains of Honduras, are under the curse of their extraordinary beauty. Threatened with rape and enslavement by the narcos that have invaded their idyllic home, they run north by the only means their poverty allows, the same dangerous rails that carry Lydia and Luca.

Meeting on the trains by chance encounter, these four join to form a makeshift fam-

ily on the run. Danger pursues them and threats lie in wait on the long road ahead. Will any of them make it to a new life in Los Estados Unidos?

Jeanine Cummins is a master storyteller, and with material like this, *American Dirt* is a commanding, exhilarating read. The action is relentless and intense, and Cummins offers gut-wrenching, detailed descriptions of events, situations, emotions, and people.

Consider how Cummins describes the girl Soledad’s remarkable beauty: “Both girls are very beautiful, but the slightly older one is dangerously so. She wears baggy clothing and an intense scowl in a failing effort to suppress that calamitous beauty ... The girl is so beautiful she seems almost to glow, more

colorful than the landscape in which she sits ... it all recedes behind her. Her presence is a vivid throb of color that deflates everything else around her. An accident of biology. A living miracle of splendor. It’s a real problem.”

The unusual beauty of the sisters promises unwanted attention as they flee north without the protection of family.

With equal skill, Cummins describes a mother’s fear of attempting to board a moving train with an 8-year-old, the murderous heat of the Sonoran desert, and the terror induced by the close pursuit of a gang of remorseless killers.

But *American Dirt* is more than just spectacular storytelling. It is a timely look at those seeking refuge at our southern border. While Lydia, Luca,

and the Honduran sisters are fictional characters, it is not hard to imagine that they represent many of the real stories, as well as the character and heroism, of those fleeing north from the broken societies south of our border.

For her part, Lydia never dreamed that she would be a hero or, for that matter, even a migrant. She often wondered about the migrants before calamity overtook her middle-class existence. “All her life she’s pitied these poor people ... She’s wondered with the sort of detached fascination of the comfortable elite how dire the conditions of their lives must be ... that this is the better option. That these people would leave behind their homes, their cultures, their families, even their languages, and venture into tremendous peril, risking their very lives, all for the chance to get to the dream of some faraway country that doesn’t even want them.” Suddenly, Lydia and her little boy are among the migrants’ ranks.

Finally, *American Dirt*

suggests an entirely fresh notion of what a hero looks like. The story’s heroes are unexpected and improbable: an 8-year-old boy; two teenage girls; a bookish, middle-class Mexican mom; and a lean coyote who ferries illegals across a hostile desert to a new life.

The reader can’t help but consider what sort of “American” citizens these heroic characters could potentially be. They are people of sterling quality. Rather than degrade the quality of American citizenry, the characters in this book would enhance that citizenry.

American Dirt is only 378 pages long. It’s a quick, heart-pounding read. The story is not just about those flocking to our border. It is equally about us, about our response to the urgency of our

neighbors’ need. And it’s immediate. The events depicted, although fictional, are not at all far-fetched. If you read it, you will not easily lapse into old assumptions about the anxious faces at our southern border. Don’t miss this important and powerful book.



NEWS BRIEFS

Pennsylvania — The advocacy group Straight Ahead! is supporting two new bills. The first would allow the possibility of parole for over 5,000 currently serving sentences of life without the possibility of parole. The second bill offers the same benefits to an aging incarcerated population instead of focusing on a fixed number of years.

Pennsylvania — The Human Rights Coalition’s Solidarity Not Solitary is supporting two bills that would limit the duration of solitary confinement and prohibit the use of isolation for certain vulnerable populations. The bills also provide alternatives to solitary as discipline for most infractions, and a step-down program to prevent abrupt transitions from solitary confinement back into general incarcerated populations or outside communities.

California — *The Sacramento Bee* reports that the union representing Califor-

nia’s correctional officers will oppose mandated COVID-19 vaccinations for its members. A federal overseer requested a judge to require vaccination of everyone entering the state’s prisons. Meanwhile, the state’s Department of Public Health is preparing vaccine guidelines

for prison health care facilities. The union intends to ask the state to halt the Department’s order in anticipation that its terms will violate the union’s contract. As of the date of the *Bee* article, about 52% of the state’s prison employees were fully vaccinated. At six pris-

ons, the vaccination rate for state prison employees was less than 40%.

North Carolina — To reduce overcrowding in prisons, a state program has paid county jails to house certain classes of offenders even though the jails are already above 100

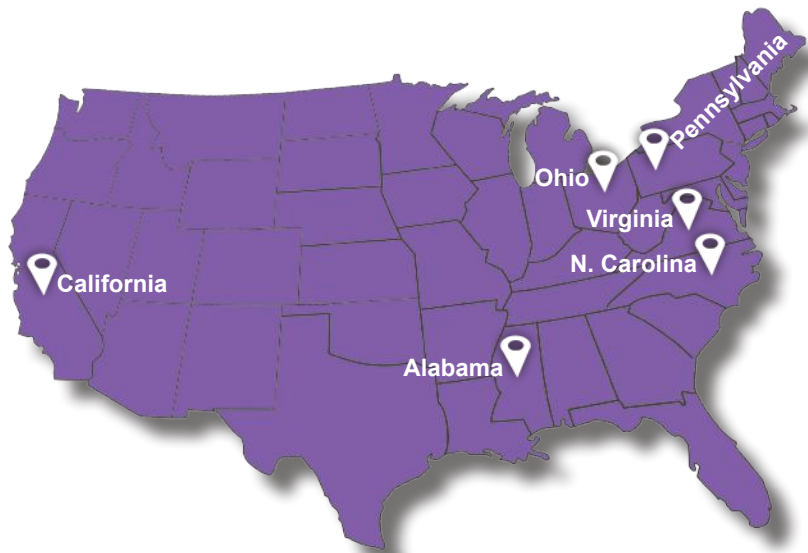
percent capacity, *The Associated Press* reports. County jails have long held those serving less than 90 days on misdemeanor convictions. The program provides funding to house misdemeanor offenders regardless of the length of their sentence. Luke Woollard, an attorney for Disability Rights North Carolina said, “The conditions we found are extremely dangerous for all people in these overcrowded jails ...”

Ohio — Prison officials plan to scan incoming mail and deliver digital, rather than paper, copies to prisoners in an effort to stop the inflow of physical mail soaked with drugs. Legal mail will be exempted, reports the *AP*. Service contractor Global-Tel Link said “digital mail becomes another source of actionable intelligence for investigators.” Incarcerated person Peter Kenney prefers a handwritten letter, which he calls “priceless,” to a digital copy. “It takes all the sentiment out of it,” he said.

Alabama — As lethal in-

jection drugs become harder to get, some states are searching for alternative methods to kill the condemned. Prison officials in Alabama developed a system to carry out executions with nitrogen gas, reports the *AP*. The deaths would result from breathing a nitrogen only, oxygen-free gas, which has not been tested. Critics likened it to human experimentation. Oklahoma and Mississippi have also authorized the untested nitrogen execution method.

Virginia — The state’s governor posthumously pardoned a group of Black men executed in 1951 for the rape of a White woman, reports the *Washington Post*. The men were known as the Martinsville Seven. They were convicted by all-White juries in trials that spanned only eight days. The governor issued “simple pardons,” which do not address guilt or innocence but acknowledge a lack of due process and racial inequity in the cases. Forty-five men, all Black, were executed for rape in Virginia between 1908 and 1951.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not By Choice – By Chance

I’ve had plenty of time to vindicate my mind, heart, plus my soul, from my tribulations. Incarceration is self-inflected humiliation. In a mirror I see a clown looking dead back at me.

A tear or two falls and so does my head. What I cherished most in life has been put on pause. My imaginations now from behind these walls and gates are of a new person. My past actions of trying to get over in life illegally has me now saying, look at me now, Mr. Incarcerated written on my face and both hands.

—Jay Anderson
SCI Brenner
St. Petersburg, FL

Blurry Rights, Vivid Wrongs

Every day it seems the news has stories about horrible acts of violence. There must be a complete paradigm shift in how this continuing cycle of antagonism/retaliation is perpetuated. If not, then I’m afraid we’re only going to see these seemingly endless atrocities escalate.

We are facing a worldwide crisis in mental healthcare. I have firsthand knowledge of how easy it is to “fall through the cracks in the system.” If there is ever going to be measurable progress in diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders, we must first remove the stigma which prevents full

disclosure of these painful and personal struggles. Only then will we be able to properly identify the problem and make well informed decisions in regards to treating these issues proactively.

It used to frustrate me when I would seek help and their main criteria for treatment was, “Do you want to hurt yourself or others?” Well, of course not! That’s the entire reason for me seeking help in the first place. I want to deal with this now, before it gets out of hand and affects my quality of life or those around me.

Unfortunately, it was then that I gained the valuable insider knowledge as to why these overworked, underpaid people in charge of intake and screening were so jaded. Right there in the waiting room, the guy next to me leans in and says with a grin, “Just tell them you’re hearing voices and they’ll give you the good stuff.” Then another woman starts explaining that if I say “this and that” then I might qualify for a “disability check.” I wanted to scream at both of them, “Shame on you!” I wasn’t there to get dope. I wasn’t there to run some pathetic con artist game to extort state funds. I like to work, and I’m certainly not some dope fiend. I’m just an old blue-collar guy of average intelligence who’s known for a long time

that much of the stuff going on in my head is not right.

I know I’m not violent or mean. I’ve never started fights, and I’m certainly not a bully. However, as far back as I can remember, I was painfully aware of my limits for tolerating such foolishness. Oh sure, I was taught right from wrong. I was supposed to hold myself to some higher standard and either walk away or turn the other cheek. But what about “them” (the bullies)? It didn’t make sense that I have to follow the rules while they do whatever they please.

All my life I’ve tried to stay out of the way. Since I already know I’m a weirdo; it’s my little way of avoiding problems.

—Brian Fuller
Hondo, TX

Murder — In Theory

You are receiving this correspondence on behalf of thousands of men and women sentenced to life in state prison because of what is called a murder “theory.” I am speaking on behalf of so many who are seen today as criminals, and their voices are so easily disregarded. It is unnerving. Senate Bill 1437 has been put into action to resentence those who were, “in theory,” found guilty of first-degree murder and were not found to be the actual killers.

How can a jury, even when

educated of the character of another human being, judge what is in that human being’s heart? Somewhere along the line here, these people started to “put the cart before the horse,” if you will, and we have become far too quick to take away the lives of these people who have already suffered far too many injustices.

Being around these women, it is obvious to not only another inmate, but to the staff as well, that these people are victims of abuse themselves. And to have to be abused and suffer at the hands of a blatantly corrupt and compassionless “justice” system is horrific. “Proposition 7 eliminated the requirement that both principals and accomplices be personally present during the commission of the act or acts causing death, then broadening the scope of accomplice liability to defendants who “physically aided and abetted the acts causing death.” If our laws need reevaluating to this extent, then our system needs reevaluating as well. These are human beings -- mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, friends. These are people. Regardless of the past, these are fellow human beings. Something must be done.

—Sarah Marie Sims
Central California
Women’s Facility
Chowchilla, CA

GTL expands free calling for all California prisoners

Telephone service provider collaborates with CDCR to offer additional free call minutes

Global TelLink (GTL), the telephone service provider for all California prisons, recently issued the following release explaining the expansion of free calling minutes for all prisoners:

All incarcerated individuals will receive 75 minutes of free calling every two weeks starting on September 19, 2021. The minutes do not need to be used at the same time, but any unused minutes within the two-week period will not roll over and no credit is given.

This program replaces the previous 15 minutes of free calling. You must be registered within the phone system for PINS and know your PID (the eight-digit number on your CDCR ID card) and selected 4-digit private code (PIN) to take advantage of the free calling program. If you have not registered, you can do so

by dialing “111” and following the prompts.

En Español: Todas las personas encarceladas recibirán 75 minutos de llamadas gratuitas cada dos semanas a partir del 19 de septiembre de 2021. No es necesario que los minutos se usen en el mismo momento, pero los minutos no utilizados dentro del período de dos semanas no se acumularán ni se otorgará crédito. Este programa reemplaza los 15 minutos de llamadas gratuitas anteriores.

Debe estar registrado en el sistema telefónico para obtener los PIN y conocer su PID (el número de ocho dígitos en su tarjeta de identificación del CDCR) y el código privado (PIN) seleccionado de 4 dígitos para aprovechar el programa de llamadas gratuitas. Si no se ha registrado, puede hacerlo marcando “111” y siguiendo las indicaciones.

SPANISH

Papa Francisco habla en contra de la pena de muerte



Stock photo

El Papa Francisco urge el fin de la pena de muerte.

Por A.J. Hardy
Escritor contribuyente

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO —

Después de siglos de evolución, el Papa Francisco ha declarado la posición de la Iglesia Católica en contra de la pena de muerte y la cadena perpetua, haciendo el llamado para su total abolición en su nueva encíclica, "Fratelli Tutti" según el noticiario American Magazine.

"No olvidemos que ni siquiera un asesino pierde su dignidad personal, y Dios mismo promete la garantía de esto", dijo el Papa Francisco citando St. Juan Pablo II's "Evangelium Vitae" (The Gospel of Life). "El firme rechazo de la pena de muerte demuestra a que magnitud llegamos para reconocer la inmutable dignidad de cada ser humano y para aceptar que él o ella tiene un lugar en este universo", el añadió.

Una encíclica es una carta

Papal de vital autoridad enviada para instruir y clarificar la enseñanza oficial de la Iglesia. Con más de mil millones de católicos en el mundo, la nueva encíclica del Papa Francisco podría influenciar las enseñanzas sociales de misericordia y reconciliación por todas partes. El anterior Capellán Católico de San Quentin, el Padre George Williams, S.J., elogió la postura del Papa. San Quentin es el hogar de los que están condenados a muerte en California, donde el Padre Williams miro el daño hecho al espíritu humano, en persona. Él le dijo al reportero del noticiario American Magazine que vivir bajo las sentencias de cadena perpetua sin esperanza de libertad, es más cruel que ser ejecutado inmediatamente.

El Papa Francisco también dijo que la cadena perpetua es "la pena de muerte secreta" y condeno su uso.

"El miedo y resentimiento puede fácilmente guiar el punto de vista del castigo, a una manera vengativa e inclusive cruel en vez de ser parte en el proceso de sanación y reintegración a la sociedad," dijo el Papa Francisco en "Fratelli Tutti" urgiendo el retiro de la venganza en la ecuación de la justicia criminal.

Durante cientos de años, la Iglesia oficialmente apoyo la pena de muerte, o por lo menos no se opuso. El catecismo Romano original, escrito en los 1500's aprobaba la pena de muerte bajo dos condiciones: ... asesinato legal pertenece a las autoridades civiles ... [para] castigar a los culpables y proteger a los inocentes" dice el catecismo Romano original.

Sin embargo, históricamente siempre ha habido oposición de quitarle la vida a una persona como medio de castigo.

"Desde los primeros siglos

de la iglesia, algunos claramente se oponían al castigo capital", el Papa Francisco escribió, citando la súplica de misericordia de San Augustine hacia dos asesinos.

En el año 1995, el Papa Juan Pablo II se opuso a la pena de muerte, diciendo que los crímenes que garantizaban la pena de muerte eran "muy raros, si no prácticamente inexistentes" según el artículo. Después en 1999, el revisó su posición y busco la eliminación de la pena de muerte completamente, posición que reafirmó en el 2011 su sucesor el Papa Benedicto XVI.

En "Fratelli Tutti", Papa Francisco dijo "No se puede dar paso atrás a esta decisión, hoy decimos claramente 'la pena de muerte es inadmisibles' y la iglesia está firmemente comprometida al llamado de su abolición mundialmente".

—Traducido Por
Heriberto Arredondo

Una víctima más a causa del COVID-19

Las prisiones de migración luchan en contener el virus

Por Timothy Hicks
Reportero

Ramiro Hernández Ibarra de 42 años fue el décimo hombre en morir desde Octubre estando en custodia del ICE, según el periódico Los Angeles Times.

Ibarra estaba detenido en un hospital en el sur de Texas mientras esperaba ser deportado. La causa de su muerte reporto ICE fue por complicaciones relacionadas a un golpe biológico-séptico.

La pandemia del Coronavirus ha puesto al descubierto las prisiones y las instalaciones de detención alrededor del mundo. Los que abogan por los emigrantes han pedido al ICE que liberen por los menos la mitad de sus detenidos, los cuales no sean violentos o acusados de crímenes.

Aunque ICE no ha reportado ningunas infecciones de COVID-19 los agentes proveen antifaces y los de-

tenidos enfermos son puesto en cuarentena por medidas preventivas, según el artículo.

En la prisión de San Quentin se implementaron medidas preventivas desafortunadamente, no previno las muertes de 28 personas por complicaciones del COVID-19.

Ibarra intento cruzar la frontera varias veces y pudo ingresar 8 veces voluntariamente según el artículo. Desafortunadamente su último intento fue su fin.

En San Quentin la prisión está bajo orden judicial para reducir la población que requiere que liberen o trasladen prisioneros para reducir la población al 50%.

Incluyendo los que esperan ser deportados por ICE. La meta es para poder salvar las vidas a los que están expuestos a condiciones crueles y al Coronavirus.

—Traducido Por
Heriberto Arredondo

Tres prisiones juveniles cierran en California

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

Las Autoridades citan el alto costo en encarcelamientos de menores en comparacion de ofensores adultos

El periódico L.A. Times reporta que California esta lista para cerrar sus últimas instituciones de detención juvenil en julio del 2023.

En el condado de Los Angeles, centros de detenciones de seguridad y alivio albergará jóvenes que hayan sido arrestados y convictos. Bajo el plan del condado tendra lugares de detención, como si fueran casas pequeñas, serán parcialmente equipadas con tutores creíbles que son un grupo de hombres y mujeres que fueron encarceladas anteriormente y cambiaron sus vidas. Los centros estarán localizados cerca de los hogares de los jóvenes. Estos centros consistirán en tener puertas abiertas y aseguradas (seguridad), según el periódico L.A. Times.

Frankie Guzman, directora de Justicia Inicial para jóvenes del centro nacional de ley juvenil, dijo lo siguiente, hay cosas peores esperando a los jóvenes que el sistema corriente, "como tratar de sobrevivir en una yarda de nivel 4 de máxima

seguridad".

Frankie Guzman, purgó varios años en detenciones juveniles de California-le preocupa que jueces mandaran a jóvenes ofensores a prisiones para adultos, si es que no hay un reemplazo propio en el sistema de prisiones de la División de Justicia Juvenil, de acuerdo al artículo de L.A. Times. La institución de detención juvenil de Ventura y dos más en Stockton son las últimas prisiones juveniles pronosticadas a cerrar.

Pararan la admisión de jóvenes en julio, excepto en condiciones especiales. Los jóvenes estarán bajo el nuevo Departamento de cambio juvenil, en lugar del Departamento de libertad provisional. Una alegación juvenil de maltrato y preocupación de presupuesto del estado de California ha impulsado los esfuerzos de reforma.

Algunos jóvenes encarcelados en centros de detención de Stockton se han quejado de no tener un acceso justo a trabajos o tiempo de recreación. También que

algunos oficiales de corrección favorecen a miembros de pandillas perjudicando a aquellos que quieren dejar las pandillas, según el artículo.

"Ese lugar tiene una cultura y clima retorcida", dijo un maestro (que desea permanecer anónimo), que trabaja dentro del (DJJ) Depto. de Justicia Juvenil, reporto el New York Times. "Es profundo y calcinado y es muy difícil de cambiar".

El centro de Justicia Criminal para jóvenes, es un grupo no lucrativo que divulgó un reporte en el 2019 que decía que el personal del Depto. (DJJ) instiga violencia, reenfuerza conflictos raciales y étnicos, y legitimiza a pandillas institucionalizadas, reporto el artículo.

En diciembre, otra vez el grupo Centro de Justicia Criminal para jóvenes critico al (DJJ) por alegaciones administrativas, más el contagio de Corona virus en sus, que infectaron un 13% al personal de 1,400 miembros dentro de departamento y a 203 presos

juveniles dijo el artículo del Los Angeles Times.

Al estado de California le cuesta \$268,000 dólares al año por cada prisionero juvenil comparado a \$102,756 dólares por cada prisionero adulto, según al presupuesto del Gobernador Gavin Newsom, reporto el artículo.

Kenzo Sohe, anteriormente encarcelada en una de las detenciones del (DJJ) dijo lo siguiente al periódico New York Times, "El sistema invirtió en herramientas de castigo como rociador de pimienta, balas de hule, armas, macanas, pistolas eléctricas, gas lacrimógeno y otras armas letales como modelo de primer cuidado.

El estado prometió más de \$200 millones de dólares al año para el ajuste del sistema de justicia juvenil del estado a las autoridades de los condados (municipios). El dinero pagaría para albergar y cuidar a jóvenes en las instalaciones de detención en los condados (municipios).

—Traducido Por
Victor Tapia

En el estado de California muchos prisioneros perdieron la vida y otros apenas sobrevivieron la pesadilla de haber sido infectados con el virus del COVID-19. Sobrevivir un ataque cardiaco y no poder respirar, hablar, caminar, o pensar claro, cuando todo se les olvida a las víctimas del virus fatal.

"Cuando trataba de hablar se oía como que estaba ladrando un perro." Dijo Aaron Martin de 53 años de edad, quien ha estado encarcelado por 31 años.

Los doctores le explicaron al señor Martin que la habilidad de hablar viene del lado izquierdo del cerebro y que él había perdido la habilidad de pronunciar sus palabras.

Según el Sr. Martin, los doctores piensan que el derrame cerebral que afectó su habilidad de hablar ocurrió el 23 de octubre del 2020, y que el segundo ataque cardiaco que sufrió dos días después, le paralizó la parte izquierda de su cuerpo.

Traumatizado por los

efectos del COVID-19, Martin no podía dormir en la noche por el miedo de morir. Durante el día Martin se dormía mientras su compañero de celda lo cuidaba asegurándose de que él se encontrara bien.

Tras múltiples terapias físicas y de vocabulario, Martin sigue progresando en la jornada de recuperación, aprendiendo como caminar y hablar de nuevo, siendo un proceso intenso y acompasado.

Durante la pandemia en San Quentin, muchos otros prisioneros se encontraron en la oscuridad y no sabían cómo protegerse de este virus letal.

Este terrible virus dejo sin vida a 28 prisioneros y a un sargento correccional.

"En lo alto de la pandemia, entre junio y agosto del 2020 fui hospitalizado en la ciudad de San Francisco

dos veces," dijo el Señor Otto Delcid de 66 años de edad y quien ha estado encarcelado por 16 años.

Durante una entrevista, Delcid manifestó que él todavía está muy enfermo del pulmón derecho que le quedó dañado por el virus y no funciona apropiadamente, también comentó que su memoria continúa afectada.

"Yo estaba bien preocupado, emocionalmente me sentía bien triste porque sentí que iba a morirme," dijo Pablo Ramírez de 54 años de edad, y añadió, "no solo me afectó el sistema respiratorio pero me dio una gran fiebre con escalofríos y sudaba en las noches con dolores de huesos."

Los hispanos que solo hablan el español se encontraron confundidos y aterrizados al no poder comprender la situación en la

cual ellos se encontraban.

Durante la pandemia en la prisión de San Quentin, los doctores no sabían que hacer o como explicarles a los prisioneros hispanos, en su idioma, como cuidarse o evitar ser contaminados por el virus.

Los empleados de emergencias respondían a las alarmas de auxilio a todas horas del día, cuando el virus estaba más fuerte, acabando con las vidas indiscriminadamente.

"Hombre caído, Hombre caído," gritaban los prisioneros declarando las emergencias de vida o muerte, cuando no podían respirar se quedaban sin oxígeno y con una tos incontinente.

La pandemia dejo muchos prisioneros hospitalizados en la comunidades locales donde fueron llevados, otros fueron trasladados a la en-

fermería de la prisión y los que solo tenían síntomas leves del virus fueron trasladados a la yarda adonde instalaron una gigantesca casa de campaña.

También en la casa de campaña, eran monitorizados por enfermeras y enfermeros tomándoles la temperatura y signos vitales con frecuencia.

"Algo que los doctores no van aceptar, son los síntomas que tuve en mis ojos; era una sensación que me quemaba, las lágrimas que derramaban mis ojos me impedían ver y me sentía mejor solo hasta que me los lavaba con jabón," dijo Ramírez.

Prisioneros como Martín, Delcid y Ramírez, fueron seriamente afectados por el virus que los debilitó física y emocionalmente dejándoles con problemas de memoria. Estas son cicatrices que

pueden afectarles el resto de sus vidas.

Muchos prisioneros continúan viviendo con el miedo de ser re-infectados con la nueva variante del COVID-19, conocida como Delta.

Después de estar 31 años encarcelado y sobrevivir dos ataques cardiacos que le paralizaron la parte izquierda del cuerpo, el señor Martin fue liberado.

Desde el mes de julio de 2021 se encuentra ya en casa con su esposa y familia disfrutando la libertad y recibiendo terapia y tratamiento médico para su recuperación.

No todos los prisioneros fueron tan afortunados en obtener su libertad condicional, otros como Delcid y Ramírez continúan encarcelados y viviendo un día a la vez esperando por esa oportunidad de algún día ser liberados y regresar con sus familiares mientras se recuperan de los efectos del COVID-19.

— Edwin E. Chavez

El periodo posterior al COVID-19



(Photo taken pre-pandemic) Eddie Herena, SQNews

“Running satisfies my fervent passion to elude reality, if only temporarily,” says Jarosik. “To reflect, to dream, to feel free.”

SPORTS

**By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor**

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit San Quentin and tents took over the Lower Yard, all sports were tabled and so were some residents’ ways to find their peace.

Despite the obstacles presented by prison hurdles, some residents use the sport of their choice to find the freedom they seek. One of those sport events that have been missing is the 1000-Mile Running Club.

That is the event that resident Mark Jarosik said allows residents at the Q to get out of the element of prison and enter into another reality of calm and serenity when running.

Jarosik is the winner of the 2019, 1000-Mile marathon, and he said that it wasn’t just the winning of the marathon that brought him peace, but it was the simple comfort of just getting out on the track and running, doing something he simply enjoys doing.

“For me brisk runs exceeding thirty minutes stimulate cognitive skills, concentration and sleep quality,” Jarosik said.

He said it’s the nightly jangling of the guards’ keys that keep him awake.

“There is no room for peaceful reflections, no time for anyone to relax without

the loud sounds of the guards on the PA systems,” said Jarosik.

Many days and nights are spent in the discomfort of those conditions but, when running Jarosik experiences a different type of comfort.

“(Running) relieves stress and liberates anxieties. Even more important, running satisfies my fervent passion to elude reality if only temporarily; to reflect, to dream, to feel free.”

Now that the Club is almost back in full sprint, Jarosik anticipates getting back to doing what takes him to that peaceful place.

“I look forward to starting back running but, due to an ankle injury I have to start back at the beginning of the New Year,” Jarosik said. “I wish I could join the guys. Because for me running is a way to establish time while in prison but, I wish all the 1000-Miles runners good luck.”

Since Jarosik can’t join the team yet, he has found another program to participate in that substitutes for the euphoric feelings he receives from running.

“I participate in a Governor Newsom implemented program called the Peer Literacy Mentor Program (PLMP). It is a good distraction for me,” Jarosik said. “It’s a construction of thought processing program. Myself and a group of other guys, about 20 of us, are being trained to be tutors. It’s a good way for me to give back.”

Grudge match: Two old B-ballers go one-on-one

On July 9, two SQ B-ballers challenged each other to a one-on-one game of basketball. The 2020 DuPont Award-winning and Pulitzer Award-nominated *Ear Hustle* co-host Rahaan Thomas, 50, and Trevor Woods, 54, the older brother of Earlonne Woods, the formerly incarcerated co-founder of the hit podcast, settled their differences on the court.

“He was ridiculing me and calling me a bum. I called him out several times and he finally decided to take the challenge. I wanted to represent all the nerds out there,” said Thomas with a laugh. The ordeal drew a huge crowd of SQ residents who placed friendly spreads on who would win. Thomas was the underdog. SQ Warriors B-ballers Alan McIntosh had Woods winning by four points.

SQ camera crews from First Watch and SQ TV captured the battle on film. It was comical seeing the two old men scramble shots and watch while the other took open shots.

“He wanted to play physical and wear me out,” said Woods. “That’s how I got wore down, but I also knew that I had him beat over so I lagged on guarding him and would just let him shoot them ugly jumpers he would shoot.”

Thomas struggled for a bucket and it appeared that Woods was going to skunk him

until Thomas scored his first shot. The crowd erupted in a shocking congratulatory cheer.

“I was trailing 5-0 and I knew I would get skunked. I knew he had more stamina than me, but when I made that first bucket, I was super happy,” said Thomas.

Eventually the “ugly jump shots” from Thomas dropped into the bucket and brought him up and over Woods to a 10-7 lead.

“I saw what should have been the grudge match of the century. I saw elbows, head punches and body blows. It was Wrestlemania. If the Thriller in Manila had something to do with basketball, then this was it,” said Harry Goodall, who watched the match from the sidelines with the rest of the spectators.

Woods came back and won the game, which went to 16 points. Woods hit the game-winning shot with a layup that went over the top back of the backboard and dropped into the bucket. Moreover, the game that the two played was more than just a grudge match. Woods wanted to honor his late son by beating Thomas in the game they love. At the end of the game, in honor of his son, Woods held up a novel his son Tyler wrote called “Through the Eyes of a Ski Mask.”

—Timothy Hicks

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Commissioner, coaches, team captains and referees breathe life back into The Q’s intramural sports leagues

**By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how The Q’s incarcerated residents manage the facility’s sports programs — creative ideas are keeping athletes and spectators excited about the games.

Nearly a year later, the SQ is in phase-3. Outside coaches cannot come in the prison. With that, the incarcerated coaches created intramural leagues.

Although there are restrictions, the coaches figured out how to make it happen. Surrounded by a group of passionate and talented coaches, the commissioner Ishmael Freelon and general manager Brian Asey is keeping the hoop dreams alive for the players.

SQ A’s Baseball manag-

er Will Williams is keeping America’s favorite pastime rocking on.

Football coach, Dwight “Sleep” Kennedy paroled, but players still have an opportunity to get some play in through new All Madden Football head coach Bryant Underwood and assistant coach Jeremiah Brown.

The Intramural leagues have been going on for several months and SQ sports lovers are enjoying the ability to watch sports again.

In the past, championship winners were awarded prizes such as granola bars, sodas and candy. Now it’s just all for fun and bragging rights.

To be able to come out to the yard and play good competitive ball for awesome coaches is a commendable blessing. It takes a true passion of the sport for athletes

to continue the drive and determination for sports. And that’s what make SQ resident coaches rock stars.



One of San Quentin’s intramural sports league referees provides feedback and guidance to players while observing social distancing protocols, even when outdoors. Coronavirus protocols have made the post-quarantine sports comeback a challenge.



Phoeun You, SQNews

TIER TALK

SQ resident Terrence Varner is a true fan of Olympic track and field

The world Olympics got underway and one of the most coveted wins is in Women’s track and field. Jamaica stacked the deck in the 100 meters with three talented runners, Elaine Thompson Herahs (gold medal), Shelly Ann Frazier Pryce (silver medal), and Shericka Jackson (bronze medal).

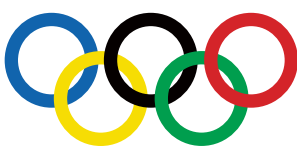
Previously, one of the U.S. hopefuls that would have had a good shot at medaling and possibly winning the gold medal was Sha’ Carri Richardson. She was disqualified after winning the race that would have sent her to the Olympics to compete in the Women’s 100m and the 200m. Because she tested positive for marijuana, she was suspended from the Olympics for 30 days and she missed the

race, along with the possible loss of millions of dollars in endorsements.

After Jamaica won the medals in the Women’s track and field, I spoke with SQ resident T. Varner, 43, who is a true fan of Olympic Track and Field. I asked for his thoughts on the situation with Sha’ Carri Richardson and whether or not the U.S. would have had a better chance at winning a medal if she was there to compete.



TH: So, T, being the fan that you are of track and field and the Olympics, I’m sure that you have something to say about the race the Americans lost to the Jamaicans in the women’s track and field?



TV: Yes. Although I like seeing all the countries have a shot at winning in the matches, I think that Jamaica always has the fastest runners in the Olympics. Usain Bolt, Shelly Ann Frazier Pryce and Elaine Thompson-Herahs.

TH: Yeah, that’s true. We had a good chance if Sha’ Carri Richardson would have been in it to run this year, though. How do you feel about her situation? I think it was a poor choice.

TV: I agree. Not only did

she make a poor choice, I think that she was failed by her management. Somebody should have been in her corner guiding her not to do that. However, the Olympic Committee could let that one slide, I think.

TH: Why?

TV: Because the state she smoked the weed in was legal to do so there. And she got on TV in front of the whole world and apologized for doing it. The Committee should change its rules on how it deals with women. She’s not the first woman to be banned for some type of drug use.

TH: Who was the other one?

TV: Brianna McNeal was suspended for five years for just missing her drug test after she had an abortion. She even

had a note from her doctor saying she just had the procedure.

TH: That’s something to look at, but rules are rules right? We know that those who make the rules are the ones who are always right. Even when they are wrong.

TV: Yeah, it’s a trip. I just think that since she was accountable for her mistake, she should have been given a second chance.

TH: Second chances are necessary. But once again it’s bias — how those who can enforce the laws can also break the laws with impunity. But, hey, there are consequences for our actions.

TV: Yep, apparently so. I hope she can bounce back stronger, though. Because I know

America wishes she was able to race despite the situation.

TH: Yep, she was seen on a local news broadcast during the Olympics, clapping back at America and asking, “Y’all missing me yet?”

TV: She is a feisty little thing. (Laughs)

—Timothy Hicks

CORRECTION
In the September edition of SQN, an article on page 15 mistakenly identified Dwight Kennedy as Dwight King. We apologize for the mistake.

Robert Guzman's hands express his father's legacy

ARTS

By **Heriberto Arredondo Jr.**
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

Robert Guzman is a 54-year-old Native American who found a new life as an artist and amateur counselor in prison.

His bloodline includes Ute, Blackfoot, and Mexican. He arrived at San Quentin in 2019. Throughout his 21 years of incarceration, Guzman honed skills he developed as a young boy working with leather, beads, paints and woodcarvings — talents he learned first from family, and then different members of his community.

"As a little kid my grandma taught me how to sew. After that, I saw other people doing bead and leatherwork. It called to my heart," Guzman said. "I was about 10 or 11 years when I started woodcarving, and my dad taught me how to use hammers and chisels to carve wood figurines such as bears and birds.

"My dad was the greatest inspiration to me for beadwork. He taught me leather crafting, and how to make necklaces and bracelets from jade and sapphire. We would buy the stones rough (meaning, stones we had to polish and shape) before we set them on a belt or necklace."

After his parents' divorce, the effects of their separation made Guzman see the world differently. He said he faced many hardships growing up and being hurt as a child left

him feeling empty and alone. "It's like food. You need food to survive. Beading was like nourishment to me. It was my time for prayer and ceremony."

Guzman realized he needed to change when, as he reflected on his past, the devastating pain he caused his victims deeply affected him.

"In the process of acknowledging my shame, I broke down from the guilt and overwhelming sadness I felt. That's when I understood I needed to change and seek help. Today when I build something I'm thinking about my past and present. Those who I offended, how I offended them, and the better choices I could have made. I understand today what I should not do and how not to act," said Guzman.

"It's about accountability and accepting responsibility for my crimes and my actions. I'm proud to say that I'm now able to give back to society through my beadwork and art teachings with a better understanding of myself."

Today Guzman's spirituality guides him and is reflected in the warm responses he receives from the men he encounters in San Quentin.

"It's funny because I don't look for people to counsel but people come to me seeking advice. They feel like they can trust me with their story. They tell me I understand them and that I am always smiling. They say I see the best in people. I credit it all to my Creator," said Guzman.

Self-help programs throughout his incarceration have helped Guzman to make better choices in life.

"I took a vow of nonviolence in 2006, which to this



Photos by Phoeun You, SQNews



Robert Guzman (left) connects to his Native American heritage through his art.

Above: "My Dad was the greatest inspiration to me for beadwork," Guzman says. Many of his creations are given away to bless the positive people in his life.

Right: A rising Phoenix is at the center of Guzman's paintings: "One who rises from the ashes and is reborn."



day I have been able to continue. Although I've been challenged a lot, today I'm able to talk with people. I'm able to ask them questions like 'what are they going through' or 'why they are hurting.' I'm able to ask myself 'what can I

do to help myself through my life journey and my walk with the Creator.' And in that, I've learned to be a blessing not a burden."

Altruism plays a major role in Guzman's life.

"Through my beadwork I

am able to do giveaways to people who are on a positive path or on their way home from prison. Just to be told 'thank you for being a friend' and blessing them with something nice and a prayer satisfies me. My paintings are of

a Phoenix, of one who rises from the ashes and is reborn — to protect, bless, and watch over people. I use the four direction colors of my people so that they will always be protected. It's not a hobby, it's a way of life," he concluded.

By **Edwin E. Chavez**
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

Arthur Yeary brings people and animals to life

San Quentin State Prison has a diverse population of artists who work in a variety of styles and mediums. Each edition of *SQ News* seeks to highlight the amazing creativity among us. Arthur L. Yeary is one such artist whose incredible talent shines brightly.

"When I was 13, I started learning how to draw by doodling," said Yeary. "The fastest way to learn how to draw is with little quick pictures so that you can get a lot of repetitions."

At age 63, Yeary has been incarcerated 24 years, XX of them at San Quentin. Creating his own legacy through his art and unique style, he brings people and animals alive with figures so realistic they look like they're about to pop right off the canvas. He is often found at the unit's four-seater tables, sketching portraits for his peers or working on his latest masterpiece.

Yeary has been drawing for family and friends for decades, taking great pride in the authenticity of his creations.

"Back then I decided to do realism because I noticed reality looks better than anything that people can make up," said Yeary.

He has mastered the ability to look at things and draw them. Now his objective is being able to draw things realistically without looking at them. He is confident in his ability but believes that he can still improve and wants to continue building his skills.

When asked what benefit he gets from his art, Yeary's eyes light up and he replies, "I can use my time for something better than just playing games



Left: More than 40 hours went into this depiction of a mandrill, the world's largest species of baboon.

Bottom left and right: Yeary has been creating portraits for family, friends and fellow incarcerated persons for decades.

Right: At 63, Yeary values both creativity and originality in his art. This outlet has allowed him to cope with the last 24 years' incarceration.

Photos by Phoeun You, SQNews



or watching TV. This is positive; it keeps me from being depressed or negative."

Coping with incarceration has not been easy for Yeary. Through his art, he discov-

ered peace of mind that keeps him living in harmony behind bars, which is something that many other prisoners struggle with.

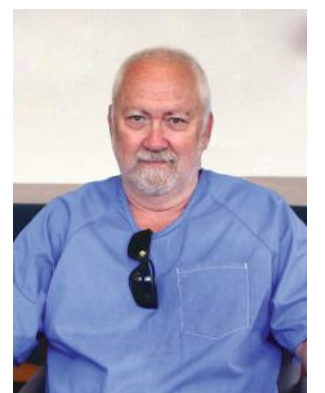
For Yeary, creativity is im-



portant in art, as is originality. He loves drawing animals because he feels challenged by their complexity, and he believes in their beauty. He spent over 40 hours creating

a mandrill baboon, which is the largest species in the world. "I always thought that they were beautiful," Yeary said.

As a fan of the famous TV



series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, he once completed a portrait of the series' star, Sarah Michelle Gellar. He likes the way Buffy always saves the world and offers his compliments to the writers of the show.

Unlike other artists, Yeary has a personal set of rules and guidelines to live by. He refuses to draw any nude or pornographic figures. He considers himself a religious man and Christianity is part of his life.

During an interview he proudly expressed his ability to have done several portraits of Jesus Christ in the past.

"Christian art is meaningful to me as well," he said.

Yeary sometimes displays his projects during open unit in West Block, exhibiting his art on the floor while he sits on a wooden bench nearby and watches hundreds of other prisoners walk by, admiring his work, which includes a detailed portrait of Tarzan.

Tarzan has its own share of fame at SQ. "Tarzan represents strength and vitality in the wild," Yeary said.