

San Quentin News

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POPULATION 3,284



Warden Ron Broomfield (left) was among more than half a dozen staff and administrators who arrived at 4:00 a.m. on a Saturday to facilitate the distribution of hundreds of pizzas, muffins, chicken dinners and cheese steak sandwiches. Working alongside 14 incarcerated representatives from before the sun rose until after it set, the foodsale team served a line of customers that wrapped around two-thirds of the Yard.

Photos by Greg Eskridge

FOOD SALE GROSSES \$63K

San Quentin fundraiser benefits children of the incarcerated

By Carlos Drouaillet and Richard Fernandez
Staff Writers

After lengthy delays, San Quentin residents were treated to a special event — a food sale where they would buy delicious food not normally on their menus.

Hundreds of smiling, anxious men lined up for lengthy waits to collect their orders from top administrators and officers in the largest food sale in San Quentin history.

Warden Ronald R. Broomfield worked together with five senior administrative staffers to staff the event that started with food delivery trucks around 4 a.m. Nov. 20.

“I expect my staff to do this for the population. How can I not?” Broomfield said. “You lead from the front. It is good for the management team.”

“Prisoners spent \$63,000 with 10% of the profits going to a charity,” concluded Warden Broomfield.

Project Avary, an agency aimed at serving children of the incarcerated, is expected to receive part of the sale proceeds.

Saturday morning fog delayed the food pickup that ended late that night.

Once the fog lifted around 9 a.m., prisoners began lining up on San Quentin’s Lower Yard to pick up their orders of pizza, chicken, muffins and Philly Cheesesteak sandwiches.

A broadly smiling Tyler Lancaster said, “I was the fourth person in line. I thought it was pretty cool. I only waited about 40 minutes for my food.”



Lancaster ordered everything that was available. “We had a group pizza party where we shared the food with a couple of neighbors,” said Lancaster. “Together we enjoyed the Philly cheesesteaks, chicken meals, muffins, and assorted pizzas.”

He added that for him it was a special day because he had the opportunity to share with others the meals provided by his family. He was impressed with the appreciation expressed by his pals who received the food as a gift. “I am very thankful with my family for making this possible, with the SQ staff for their hard work, and also with Costco employees for preparing

See **FOODSALE** on page 4

Compassion Prison Project takes aim at prisoner trauma

Group promotes safer society by treating root causes of incarceration

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

Compassion Prison Project (CPP) founder Fritz Horstman and California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris visited Valley State Prison (VSP) to pilot a 12-part curriculum series called Trauma Talks.

“It was a three-day event that started with 100 men in blue in a giant circle in front of main control,” VSP resident Daniel Henson wrote in a letter to *SQNews*.

“CPP is on a mission to create trauma-informed prisons and communities that address trauma on both sides of the bars,” wrote Morgan Vicki Emmess in the workbook *Trauma Talks*. “Our dream at CPP is that all prisons in the United States become education and healing centers within three years.”

Trauma Talks educates people about our physiology as human beings; what happens to our brains and bodies when we are in a state of fight, flight, or freeze. It focuses on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to teach people that what happened to them while they were growing up has a direct effect on how they behave as adults today.

“It’s not that what they did was OK, absolutely not; it’s that we have to understand the mitigating circumstances,” Horstman told *Spectrum News* reporter Catalina Villegas. “Those men aren’t bad people. They did bad things, but they are not bad people. They are highly traumatized.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 97% of prisoners have had at least one traumatic childhood experience.

One in six males in prison studied reported being physically or sexually abused as a child, and many more witnessed traumatic events, according to a study done at Rutgers University’s Center for Behavioral Health Services & Criminal Justice Research.

TALKING ABOUT TRAUMA:

Fritz Horstman is the founder of the **Compassion Prison Project**, a program that educates both prison residents and staff on the lasting effects of childhood trauma.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk is the author of *The Body Keeps the Score*, featured in this month’s *SQNews* Book Review (pg. 23). He has assisted Horstman with CPP.

Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris is the Surgeon General of California. She is also the author of *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity*.

See **COMPASSION** on page 4

GTL tablets begin a slow rollout

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

California prisoners are receiving free Global Tel*Link (GTL) Connect Network tablets designed to help them communicate with the outside world.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has partnered with the Department of Technology to contract with GTL to enhance incarcerated communication.

“The enhanced communication project aims to strengthen the bonds between the incarcerated population and their families and communities,” wrote a CDCR spokesperson.

According to CDCR, “Tablets will be provided at no cost to families or incarcerated people, although certain premium features, such as streaming music services, may incur charges.”

GTL Tablet features can include

messages and e-cards, e-books, audiobooks and podcasts, news and sports, video-calling, and a free 15-minute video call every two weeks. Other features include phone calls, including one free 15-minute phone call every two weeks, music, movies and games.

The tablets are also being considered for use as a method for filing institutional grievances, buying commissary items, accessing a law library, self-help courses, and even for going to college online.

“I can’t wait,” said resident Mark Jarosik. “Having another point of contact with our family will actually help us emotionally. Our stress levels will go down. The sooner the tablets get here, the better.”

GTL says that its tablets will reduce recidivism, reduce stress, create responsible people, improve prisoner behavior, security and control, and increase operational efficiency.

“I think the free tablets will be beneficial because some people cannot afford them,” said Maurice Reed. “I also think it’s good because some people’s families are too far away to visit. The tablets can keep people out of trouble. ‘An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.’”

“I do worry about people breaking into them and messing it up for everybody. I worry about increased security searches because of the tablets, which are always an inconvenience,” said Reed.

The tablets will be clear see-through technology to make it easier for officers to inspect them for contraband. Family and friends will have to deposit money into a Getting Out account. They can download the Getting Out mobile app.

Some of these services can be accessed starting at 75 cents per month.

Donald Thompson has been incarcerated

See **TABLETS** on page 4



Photo courtesy of Global Tel*Link

A large screen, clear case, and the ability to make phone and video calls are just a few of the features available on the new Global Tel*Link tablets being provided free of charge to prisoners in all California prisons.

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Reentry hope waiting for vets



"Our program design is to 'meet the client where they're at.'"

—Kayla Owen
Case Manager

SQNews holds Q&A with Kayla Owen, Case Manager for HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Q: What do you want the incarcerated veterans to know about your program?

A: We want veterans returning from incarceration to know that HomeFirst has a wide variety of supportive services that can assist them with their reintegration into society. Our program design is to "meet the client where they're at" with the overall goal of increasing income, exploring employment opportunities, engaging in mental and physical health services, and finding and maintaining permanent housing. Our programs aim to remove barriers that veterans face in their efforts to return to self-sufficiency, whatever that may mean for each individual. Our agency and staff are dedicated to our mission to cultivate people's potential and to end homelessness.

Q: What has your experience been working with the returning veterans? How have your perceptions of the system and the people you help changed?

A: The HomeFirst experience with returning veterans is centered on the initial adjustment period. In many ways, they are "starting over" and adapting to a new environment and different structures, which can be overwhelming. We are often a landing space for veterans to have a safe, stable environment while figuring out their next steps. Many veterans want the support that our programs offer, and other times they aren't ready to engage in services. Fortunately, HomeFirst has a range of options and connections to community resources to meet veterans' needs. Those returning from incarceration may also find our environment and structured programs are helpful. If a less structured program is more appealing to you, we have that available as well.

A stigma surrounding people that were incarcerated is like a cloud of judgment and negativity, and this stigma can place a barrier to everyday life and trying to move forward. A criminal record can affect employment opportunities, familial relationships (support systems), affordable housing, and other areas needed to increase self-sufficiency. Those attempting to reintegrate into society should have the tools to create a new path without being denied the resources necessary to do so.

At any point, any person could be one step away from experiencing homelessness themselves, so compassion for the people we serve and the system we work in must come first.

Q: What have been the challenges and successes?

A: When a veteran comes into our program...in different instances, they face homelessness, mental health, physical health, and substance use issues and are overwhelmed with having to "start over." It can be challenging to trust a system that may have previously failed them. Our job is to build rapport, stay consistent in our efforts. When a veteran arrives at our program defeated and discouraged, one of the most rewarding things is to help them see their potential, that we are genuinely here to help, and that they can reach their goals one day at a time.

Marcos' Story:

Marcos, an honorable discharge Army veteran, found himself planning his release from prison after 14 years, with nowhere to go. He wrote to HomeFirst Services and qualified for early release into the Veterans Emergency Shelter Program (VESP). Of his experience in the program, he says: "I've got PTSD so I could talk to staff about things... they were able to help me reintegrate into society. Having someone right there onsite to help made it possible, as opposed to having to call someone on the phone or something. Every time I got mad at someone, Eric (VESP Case Manager) would be there to remind me why escalating it wasn't worth it — he would remind me to think about my grandkids. If not for this program, I would have ended up back in prison. I would have been on the street and gotten frustrated and just gone back in." During his time in the program, he received support to increase his VA income and advocacy to reduce his parole term. He connected to HUD-VASH, the VA's permanent supportive housing program, and HomeFirst staff helped him find an apartment that fit his needs. Today, when he looks back on his journey from incarcerated to housed, he reflects, "Home means family. Home means freedom."

Q: Do you work with any programs inside prisons and how do the incarcerated people respond to the program?

A: HomeFirst is not actively working with any programs

inside prisons. However, we have held presentations to veterans' groups inside prisons to get the word out about our services. The presentations have had a great turnout and outcome; we have received tons of letters! We can write to you and the Parole Board confirming that you have a program to utilize upon release from incarceration if you are eligible.

Q: How has the COVID pandemic affected the program?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic had a widespread effect on our programs, and we constantly had to evolve and adapt to the everchanging public health regulations and county guidelines. With the constant risk of COVID-19 outbreaks, especially in our congregate settings, we were able to place over 106 veterans into eight different hotel sites. Veterans placed in various hotel sites created new challenges — we noticed a lack of engagement in services and increased mental health and substance use challenges. We were constantly learning what was and wasn't working for the veterans and how we could provide our services most effectively. In a way, we lost a sense of community since we could no longer hold workshops and groups with our veterans due to COVID-19 restrictions. We were missing out on connecting face to face and had to get creative to find a way to bring everyone together. Increasing check-ins, implementing Zoom calls, and utilizing strength-based methods to keep our veterans engaged was trial and error. Over the past year or so, this has become our "new normal," and it requires work from both sides to ensure the veterans are receiving the full scope of our services.

We were provided with support from the VA Outreach Doctors. They made a significant impact in delivering ongoing testing, monitoring of symptoms, and providing veterans with the COVID-19

vaccination if they were interested. A great benefit of our veterans being in our program during the COVID-19 pandemic was that they had access to these resources, even if they were not eligible for VA healthcare.

Q: There are a few incarcerated women veterans. Are there any additional programs to meet their needs?

A: Women veterans may be eligible for several of our programs, including our Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program. This program seeks to prevent and end homelessness among veterans by providing rapid re-housing and homeless prevention assistance to qualified veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It focuses on short-term assistance leading to long-term stability for low-income veterans and their families and can include motel stays if short-term shelter is needed.

Q: What message do you want the incarcerated to take away about your program?

A: The overall message that I would like the incarcerated to take away from what our programs offer is that if you are a veteran needing supportive services, we are here to support you in a smooth transition back into society. Our programs have a wide variety of eligibility requirements and plenty of options, so don't hesitate to reach out! If you are interested in any of our programs, please connect with HomeFirst staff and we can find the right placement for you.

Q: Any future plans or goals for the program?

A: One of the main goals for our programs is to continue outreaching and spreading awareness about the services that we offer for our veterans. Additionally, we would like to present to incarcerated groups of veterans on a more frequent basis to let them know they have a place to go upon release. It is important to us that all veterans are recognized and are not forgotten.

Q: Please add any thoughts of inspiration or words you want the readers to know.

A: HomeFirst is one of the largest nonprofit providers of homeless services for veterans in the Bay Area. In the last quarter alone, we served over 300 veterans. Our organization envisions a community in which everyone has a home — with more than 40 years of experience, we've learned that everyone has the potential to get housed and stay housed. We are relentlessly focused on eliminating barriers to housing and creating stability for everyone we serve.

We truly believe that everyone deserves a second chance (and sometimes a third, fourth and fifth...) and has the potential to be successful!



HomeFirst welcomes
correspondence!

Letters can be sent to:

HomeFirst
Veterans Services
2011 Little Orchard St
San Jose, CA 95125

Photos courtesy of HomeFirst Veterans Services of Santa Clara County



Photos by Jesse Vasquez / Friends of San Quentin News

San Quentin News

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Guidelines for submission:

- >> Articles should be limited to 350 words and may be edited for content, clarity and length.
- >> Articles should be newsworthy and pertain to the prison populace and/or the criminal justice system.
- >> Letters to the Editor should be short, clear and to the point.
- >> Please do not submit material that is offensive, racist, sexist, or derogatory toward any group, as it will not be published.

Send your submissions to:

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DAPO's Parole Reentry Expo puts resources front and center in Oakland

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

In October, a Parole Reentry Center was opened in Oakland that promises a new approach to parolee services. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO) has partnered with Arsola's, an Oakland-based non-profit that provides reentry services, to provide a pathway to success for the formerly incarcerated.

DAPO resource service providers assisted with employment, housing and other community-based resources for women and men. The goal is to teach, inform and advise parolees about available resources, and life and job skills, according to the Office of Public & Employee Communications (OPEC).

"It's great to see CDCR is being proactive," said Jesse Vasquez, Arsola's Program Manager. "It used to be that community-based organizations would take the lead in providing services. But now CDCR is making it a one-stop-shop." Vasquez is the former Editor-In-Chief of *San Quentin News* at California's San Quentin State Prison.

Heading DAPO's Resource Center is Parole Agent III and DAPO Unit Supervisor, Steve Wheeler.

"It's rewarding because you're showing the people on parole supervision there is a different way. You're proving we can break the cycle," said Wheeler. "It's great when you see that they get it, when you see them progress by looking for employment, or you get them into training."

"That's when you see things

click and now they're on a routine, staying busy and productive. Seeing each step is amazing; seeing them get paid, graduating from apprentice programs, realizing they're on a career path, that's what helps them become a stable and productive family member. You get to see it from beginning to end. It's really rewarding," Wheeler concluded.

For the center's debut on Oct. 1, approximately 20 service providers were on hand. They assisted more than 40 parolees within the first two hours, according to Luis Patino Jr. of OPEC.

"I feel really good about the center opening," said Tonia Wells, a Parole Agent II known to her colleagues as the Walking Encyclopedia. "We had one person come in and he needed a birth certificate, housing placement, and employment. We were able to connect him to all that."

Participating program attendees such as Tradeswomen Inc., GEO Reentry Services, Center Point Inc., La Familia Reentry Employment Programs, Transitions Clinic, the Academy of Truck Driving and Open Gate, among others, were key to the success of the center's opening.

Getting the Oakland Reentry Resource Center up and running is a career highlight, said Wheeler.

"It's an evolution that's needed. We need to show, teach and provide resources to help people to become good neighbors," said Wheeler.

DAPO understands that rehabilitation is the key to a successful reentry for the formerly incarcerated, and has focused its support services

on providers whose goals meet those needs.

Non-profit community providers like the West Oakland Job Resource Center offer pre-apprenticeship programs for good-paying union jobs, career counseling, employment and financial services, according to Executive Director Joyce Guy.

"This is a great time for people to find work," said Guy.

Employment statistics in California show that many industries are facing staff shortages, according to the Office of Public & Employee Communications.

Women interested in apprenticeships in construction and other trades can rely on Ester Sandoval from Tradeswomen, Inc., who specializes in helping women break through the barriers in that field.

The Academy of Truck Driving offers training to receive a Class A or Class B Commercial Driver License in 30 days. The program is available to veterans, low-income and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Open Gate offers educational services. Certificates can be earned in an array of course cur-

ricula ranging from Automotive Technology/BMW Manufacture Training to culinary, welding, graphic design and small business entrepreneurship. The community-based nonprofit organization also offers help with obtaining AA and AS degrees. La Familia Reentry Employment Program (REP) currently works with Alameda County residents on probation to help with job placement, paid work readiness training, and subsidized and unsubsidized work opportunities. Career assessments are also available.

Wheeler gave praise to his Adult Unit probation staff, including Tonia Wells, and Sonia Sandoval, parole service associate, for being an integral part of the center's opening day success.

For their support and guidance, Wheeler gave thanks to Deputy Chief Administrator Jamal Rowe, Parole Administrator Ryan Youtsey, and Parole Agents II Dina Aguilar, Geoffrey Reiland and Art Valdez.

"For me, having heard stories about parole being retributive and vindictive and that they are just trying to send people back to prison, it was eye-opening," said Vasquez. "Instead, I see a wave of support from parole agents, service providers and staff. It's heart-warming and encouraging. We're turning a new leaf in reintegrating people who have been gone from the community for decades."

There are currently three Reentry Resource Centers in California: Arsola's Distribution Center at 7801 Edgewater in Oakland, Los Angeles Central/Mid-city Reentry Center at 2444 S. Alameda in Los Angeles and the Stockton Parole Office at 612 Carlton Avenue in Stockton.



Service providers, including employers, training program representatives, and community non-profit organizations gathered to meet the formerly incarcerated and provide greater access to their offerings, including groceries and personal care items (top).

COMPASSION

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Many of the men Horstman met at VSP were abused as children and grew up in the foster care system. They survived on their own at a very young age.

"A lot of them had no one to love them," wrote Emmess, "no one to take care of them or to teach them right from wrong."

The VSP men were questioned about their childhood experiences, according to Henson. The questions were related to verbal, physical, emotional, and even sexual abuse. As the questions were read, many of them stepped further and further into the circle.

"I sat down with Fritzi and told her about this book that changed my life called *The Body Keeps the Score*," Henson said. "Fritzi's eyes lit up. She said, 'That's the book that changed my life.'"

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk wrote *The Body Keeps the Score*. He also now assists Horstman with CPP.

On the third day of the event, the circle was cut in half and Dr. Burke-Harris stepped inside to speak to the men.

Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris: 'You have not been forgotten.'

Fritzi Horstman, founder of Compassion Prison Project, does not aim to excuse prisoners for the behaviors that brought them to prison, but rather to help them heal the original traumas which led to those behaviors, ultimately bringing about a safer society.

"Gov. Newsom sent me here to tell you all that you matter," she said, according to Henson. "You have not been forgotten."

Burke-Harris is the author of *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity*. She encouraged the men to focus on healing from the ACEs that led to their incarceration.

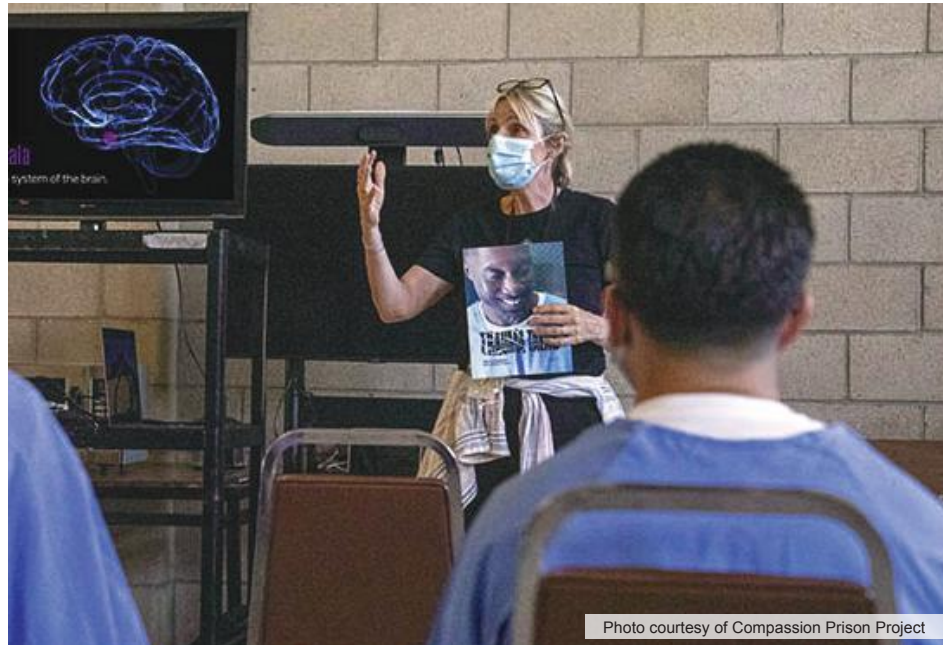


Photo courtesy of Compassion Prison Project

"Adverse childhood experiences are an epidemic," Burke-Harris told *Spectrum News*. "It's a public health crisis. It affects everything from our learning to our health, to our behavior to our mental health and development."

According to the Surgeon General more than 20,000

healthcare providers have been trained since January 2020 on how to treat with evidence-based interventions.

"We have the power to change outcomes. ACEs are not destiny," she said.

At SQ, men learn to process trauma and turn it into healing by participating in self-help programs like Guiding

Rage Into Power (GRIP). It's a group that was started by Jacques Verduin a decade ago. Verduin has graduated hundreds of men who had issues with childhood trauma.

"Focusing on trauma is the beginning of healing," said SQ resident Arthur Jackson. "It is the root of the problem."

Jackson graduated from

GRIP a few years ago and now helps facilitate the program. "Hurt people hurt people," he said. "Without knowing how to identify and deal with the trauma in our lives, we stuff it until we end up lashing out and hurting others."

Dennis Jefferson also graduated from GRIP and helps facilitate the program. "The way we act in the present moment is tied to whatever happened to us in the past," he said.

"It all goes back to that original pain," Jefferson continued. "Our bad behavior is always tied to past trauma and we have to recognize it in order to stop the behavior."

For Henson, meeting Horstman and Burke-Harris "was a historic event" that impacted him. There was a moment when many of the volunteers that visited VSP surrounded the men and held up signs that read "YOU MATTER" in all-capital letters.

Tears started to flow down some of the men's faces, wrote Henson. He believes it was probably the first time many of them heard those words.

"In three days we saw change happen," Emmess wrote, "and all 2,900 VSP residents received their own copy of the *Trauma Talks* workbook."

FOODSALE

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the delicious food," concluded Lancaster.

"The food received was a stress reliever and a good reward for good behavior with no fights despite all the postponements," said Julio Martinez. "I have no complaints. The food was tasty, acceptable to most inmates. I would give the food a 5-star SQ rating."

Martinez is a member of the Inmate Advisory Council (IAC), which regularly meets with administrators to discuss issues that affect the operations of the prison, including food sales.

"Management has tried for months to get food sales going," said Chief Deputy Warden Oak Smith. "We had a flare-up with COVID that caused a setback. Today we had a few hiccups but we are

Hundreds line up on Lower Yard to take part in pizza & muffin foodsale

planning to have food sales every three months."

The administrators and a crew of 14 prisoners passed out orders continuously until 3:45 p.m. Operations stopped during the institutional count and resumed around 4:30 p.m.

Smith says that the sale was a success and he wanted to work on a food sale for Death Row prisoners.

"We also know that canteen has been an issue and we are working on getting more products for canteen," Smith said.

The IAC members attending the event were Kevin Rojano, A. Ramirez, E. Lopez, R. Hernandez, F. Vargas, Michael Mackey, Steven Warren, Bryant K. Underwood, Julio A. Martinez, Perry Garner, Joe Garcia, DuBose Scarborough, Michael Williams and Jamie Acosta.

Administrative staffers included Warden Broomfield, Chief Deputy Warden Smith, Community Resource Manager Madeline Tenney, Capt. Maxfield, Capt. Dorsey, and Associate Warden Rosales.

Smith commended the coordinating team and management for their hard work. He also praised volunteer Sal who ran the snack bar and made multiple trips to pick-up the food.

Kevin Rojano, a prisoner member of the IAC, worked at the event as "a runner and bouncer at the gate," without stopping, he said. "Out of the 20-people crew working in the food distribution, only one had experience on this kind of work, the other 19 are amateurs like me."

"Management has tried for months to get food sales going... Today we had a few hiccups, but we are planning to have food sales every three months."

**—Oak Smith
Chief Deputy Warden**

Then *SQNews* asked resident K. Rojano if he would help again. "Now that we know what we are doing, yes," responded Rojano.

Jose Herrera, 72, said he did not place a food order because he expected more variety of items. Nevertheless, his neighbor gave him a couple slices of pizza and two muffins. "The quality is good because Costco's pizza, it's

good, and the muffins delicious" said Herrera. "I will participate next time if there is more variety, and hopefully they distribute the food here at the H Unit."

"If the food for the H Unit is distributed at the H Unit, it will help reduce the long lines and the waiting time overall," concluded Herrera.

Johnnie Ray Garcia Jr., 29, invested \$70 dollars in his food order, which included chicken meals, pizzas and muffins. He and a couple of his friends got in line around 10:30 a.m. when the line stretched about 250 yards.

"I and my friends Santiago Cantú and Jose Rodriguez were in line for more than four hours but since we

were together, the wait was less stressful" said Garcia. "We got our food around 3:30 p.m., just in time to return to our building by the official count."

"It was sunny and hot, and because I take hot meds, I went back to my building to get sunblock lotion to protect myself from heat exposure," said Garcia. "I offered sunblock to people in line and several inmates used some sunblock and appreciated the offer. Later, at the dorm, we shared some of the food with some neighbors."

Garcia said, "What motivated me to share my food is the fact that I know what it is like to be hungry, and my mother always thought to share with the needy."

**—Journalism Guild Writer
Raymond Torres contributed to this story.**

TABLETS

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ated for 26 years. He sees the new GTL tablet as an opportunity for older incarcerated people to learn how to use modern technology.

"I was locked up when they were called mobile phones and they were the size of a brick," Thompson said.

"My concern is whether or not CDCR is going to only allow us to communicate with approved visitors. I have family and friends who aren't allowed physical access into the prison, but I should be allowed to talk to them with the tablet," said Thompson.

In April the CDCR started providing the free GTL tablets to incarcerated people at Valley State Prison (VSP).

Daniel Henson wrote a letter to *SQNews* to tell us his tablet was not working properly. Henson said that his family and friends have been having trouble signing up to send messages on the Getting Out website app.

"Some of the issues that have been popping up during the roll-out phase include dropped video calls, choppy phone connections, movies

freeze for several seconds, slow connections, the apps shutting down or not responding," Henson wrote.

Henson said that incarcerated people's keyboards have been vanishing. Prisoners who have gone in to change their settings to alter the color of the keyboards or turn off sound lost their keyboards.

"My keyboard vanished," Henson wrote. GTL is supposed to forward him a new tablet.

The Prison Policy Initiative did a study in 2019 and concluded: "These free tablets aren't like the iPads you can buy in the store. They're cheaply made, with no internet access."

Regardless of any defects these devices might have, incarcerated people say the tablets are needed.

"SQ is overcrowded," said resident Rahsaan Thomas. "Sometimes the phone lines are too long to sign up to use the prison pay phones. There are not enough slots on visiting day for visitors to visit. There are 40 slots for a population of over 2,000 people."

Thomas said that the tablets

would help reduce the housing-unit phone lines and open up more space for visiting.

But some incarcerated people are skeptical of the new tablets.

"I think there is a hidden agenda behind them," said Jesse Blue. "I think they want to eliminate contact visits. They want to alleviate the hassles. It's convenient to do FaceTime, especially during lockdowns."

GTL is the phone service provider for all CDCR prisons. GTL is also providing service for video messaging and emails. In addition, the company provides the software for CDCR in-person visiting and video-visiting appointments.

Kiosks are being set up at prisons throughout the state to increase GTL services.

GTL has also partnered with *Sesame Street* to provide programming material for incarcerated people's children.

According to *Prison Legal News (PLN)*, GTL has had to pay out millions of dollars to settle lawsuits over the years for alleged violations of the Telephone Consumer Protec-

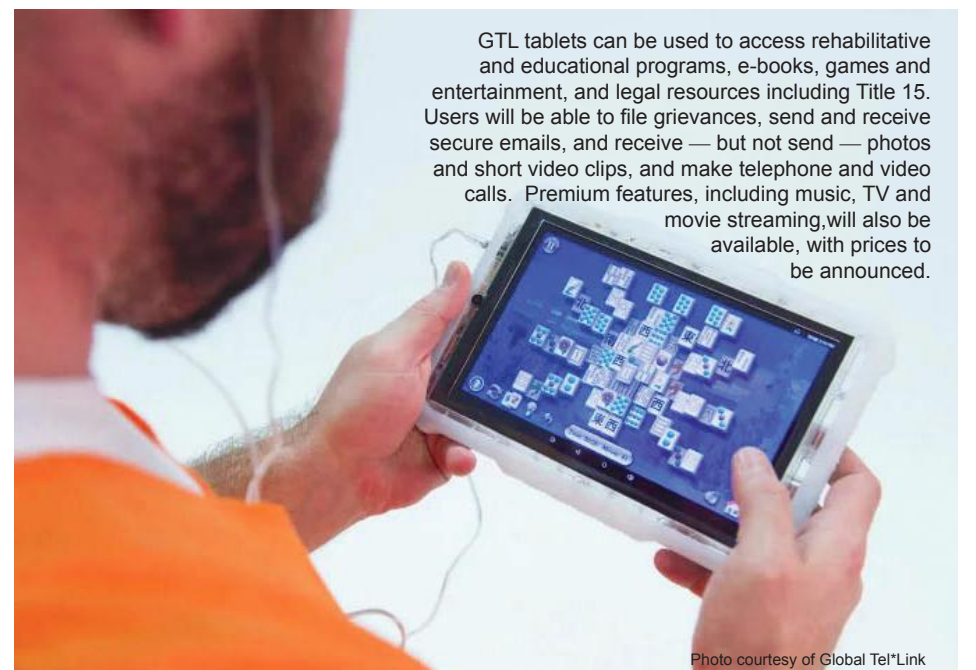


Photo courtesy of Global Tel*Link

GTL tablets can be used to access rehabilitative and educational programs, e-books, games and entertainment, and legal resources including Title 15. Users will be able to file grievances, send and receive secure emails, and receive — but not send — photos and short video clips, and make telephone and video calls. Premium features, including music, TV and movie streaming, will also be available, with prices to be announced.

tion Act of 1991 (TCPA).

In October 2020 a New Jersey judge approved a \$25 million settlement agreement between GTL and New Jersey prisoners who paid up to 100 times the actual phone rate between 2006 and 2016, according to *PLN*.

The company has also been

sued for charging unlawfully inflated prices for collect calls made by incarcerated people throughout the U.S.

In Washington, D.C. a lawsuit alleged that GTL and others engaged in unlawful schemes to maximize their profits at the expense of powerless individuals.

"At the end of the day, I still want the free tablet," Thomas explained. "We have to have access to new technology to prepare us for re-entry and to prepare us for the next pandemic shutdown. Incarcerated people just have to continue filing lawsuits until GTL treats us right."

Peer Literacy Mentor Program unveils ‘word wall’ training program

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

“Word walls” are helping San Quentin residents develop skills in English, history and math.

The Peer Literacy Mentor Program (PLMP) is viewed as both an educational tool and an art form. Word walls are a way to make a classroom more friendly and inviting.

The San Quentin word walls are all similar: small pieces of paper or cards have a word written on the front and a definition on the back, and those papers are then posted on a wall. The end result is a wall covered with words.

Word walls “provide a place to post high frequency words that have already been taught,” said Samantha Cleaver in a June 2018 article on the *WeAreTeachers* website. “Students can use the words as a reference during reading and writing, making them more independent while teaching them how to use a reference tool.”

Word walls are utilized in various areas of the C1 classroom, located behind

the main education building.

“This is my way of giving back. It allows me to work one on one with students seeking various education goals,” said C. Carter.

Supervisor A. Sufi introduced various training methods, with an emphasis on the value of visual aids when teaching people different concepts and lessons.

H-Unit PLMP trainees developed the first word wall in C1. Their wall was the inspiration for building additional word walls.

The Branches of Government build members had this to say:

“Working with these guys was really refreshing because it was such a natural process. Everyone brought their own strengths and weaknesses,” said Aron Kumar Roy.

“It was a new challenge that I had never done before. At the end of the day we actually learned a lot and had a lot of fun doing it,” Tay Reed said.

“The challenge is to cover classroom walls with something engaging and educational for students,” said

Steven Joyner.

Additionally, other PLMP mentors have created word walls to aid in classroom learning.

One of these additions is called a Cylindrical Mercator Projection.

“Learning modalities plays a key role in the teaching of geography,” said Mark Jarosik. “The Mercator Projection mobile questions allow students to explore our dynamic world.”

D. Mora’s addition to the word wall stated, “The map is cylindrical, including cards containing slide out tabs with questions written outside and answers found inside.”

There are many things in our world that art can express.

“Exploring a world map connects the student to the amazing world around us,” said M. Moore.

The word walls are seen as works of art. People say they can see a picture and the picture will say a thousand words.

Word walls have created movements in many school systems.

“The intention of the math wall is to engage their curiosity. So when they’re interacting with the wall, hopefully it will inspire them to ask questions. They can go to it and gain a visual perspective on math,” said Don Evans.

The ‘Parts of Speech’ wall creators said:

“I thought it was important to see the parts of speech. This would help students become better writers,” said John Czub.

The Parts of Speech wall has phrases to aid developing writing skills.

“My inspiration for the word wall is simple — the more resources we can provide for our students, the better change we provide towards lasting change,” said M. Shukry.

The Peer Literacy Mentor Program was created by Gov. Gavin Newsom. It operates within state prisons as an aid to people seeking higher education.

PLMP mentoring operates Monday–Friday from 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Interested persons can schedule in-building mentoring.



D. Mora (left) and Mark Jarosik, participants in Gov. Gavin Newsom’s innovative Peer Literacy Mentor Program, demonstrate a 3-dimensional Mercator Projection model as part of the word wall program. “Learning modalities play a key role in the teaching of geography,” Jarosik said. “The Mercator Projection mobile questions allow students to explore our dynamic world.”

Phoehn You, SQNews

Prisoner uses life experience to teach young men

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Staff Writer

After decades of incarceration, personal study and self-exploration, Harry Goodall Jr. decided it was time to own up to the part he played in his undoing, and become a man.

Self-destruction wasn’t the answer—that much Goodall did know. But once he discovered what a productive alternative looked like, he decided to share it with juveniles who may be headed down the same path that led him to prison.

How to Become a Man (2021) is Goodall’s answer, drawn from many resources and people who inspired him to not only change, but to give back to society.

“I used to go to a writing workshop called The Beat Within,” said Goodall. “Its founder, David Inocencio, has been going inside juvenile facilities for the past couple of decades. What [Inocencio] did in adult facilities was have us write from prompts, to be shared with the juveniles. He always made mention of how the teens loved the OG’s [Original Gangsters in prison vernacular] perspective, and that they valued our stories.”

Some men in prison talk about starting self-help programs, but Goodall did it from prison. *How to Become a Man: A Self-Help Guide* is but one tool that comes with Goodall’s workbook *Maturity Isn’t a Right, It’s a Passage*.

Goodall tackles the struggles of growing up as a Black male in America with the invisible yet inherent obstacles that stunt growth and maturity. The key, he writes, is to look within yourself, not outside. He offers advice based on his own life experiences, and what he sees impacting youth in contemporary times.

“I knew that I’m not the only one who went through the things I did in life,” said

Goodall. “I realized admittance was the first part of healing, and that if I shared what I learned [in groups], it would give everyone a fighting chance to not grow up in the system.”

Goodall said there’s a dual part of reconditioning that needs to take place. “I can’t solely concentrate on restorative justice or rehabilitative techniques for at-risk teens alone, and not include the parents,” acknowledging what he said is “turmoil in the household.”

Goodall said he’s optimistic about his program’s reach. “The curriculum, along with the self-help book, will be distributed in every juvenile justice detention center, every probation department, and every junior high school in the state of California.”

The course is a 12-week program “that will make students more consciously aware of dilemmas that may appear in life,” said Goodall.

Lesson 1, for example, teaches at-risk youth about “Warning Signs,” and helps them to identify many of the false beliefs of what it is, or takes, to be a man. Lesson 2 delves into the young male’s notion of “Money, Power, Respect and Love,” leading to “The Saboteur Cycle” of self.

The final Lesson 12, “Be the Ambassador of the Change You Want to See,” teaches students to believe in themselves and to define their goals.

To accompany his writing, Goodall is also working to produce the training video, *Innovative Rehabilitation*, “A 12-step self-help course to curb juvenile incarceration.” Its purpose is to help facilitators teach the curriculum.

Goodall is a member of Awareness Into Domestic Abuse (AIDA) and has written for *San Quentin News*, *The Beat Within*, *Prison Journalism Project*, and *San Francisco Bay View*.

Chef offers second chance to former felons

Restaurateur tackles unemployment among formerly incarcerated

By Randy Hansen
Journalism Guild Writer

Kurt Evans is a chef, restaurateur, activist and educator who is helping formerly incarcerated people merge back into society using the influence of food.

Evans is focused on providing them with culinary training, responsibility and employment.

“Chefs aren’t just people in the kitchen anymore,” Evans said. “Somebody can look at your food and be like, ‘That’s great, but what change can you make through the lens of using your food?’”

He recently signed over his ownership equity of Down North, a neighborhood pizza spot in Strawber-

ry Mansion, Philadelphia, to employees. Down North opened in March 2021.

“Down North was created to be a fair and equitable work environment for formerly incarcerated people. My plan was never to be the chef at the pizza shop,” Evans said.

He connected food to criminal justice in 2016 by using his Instagram to share information.

Somewhere around 27% of formerly incarcerated people in the USA are unemployed, according to recent figures from the Prison Policy Institute. The pandemic only increased this

percentage.

The formerly incarcerated employees of Down North are paid above minimum wage with shared tips and have no hierarchical titles.

Evans plans to launch Project M.O.R.E. in January 2022. It’s a 12-week mentorship program for formerly incarcerated food entrepreneurs in Philadelphia. Those who complete this program will receive \$3,000 to use towards their business, according to Evans.

In 2018 Evans began hosting the End Mass Incarceration dinner series, helping the formerly incarcerated to join forces with activists and

policymakers. The dinners raised monies for bail funds, expungement clinics and criminal justice nonprofits.

Nineteen dinner events have been held in Philly and one in Alaska. “Food is an equalizer,” Evans said, “I haven’t met too many people that don’t like to meet up over food.”

He is also working to expand Everybody Eats Philly, a nonprofit he co-founded with fellow chef Stephanie Willis in May 2020.

This nonprofit distributes meals and fresh produce in food deserts. He hopes to launch a food truck to help the cause.

California expands resources for newly released

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

California has just launched the nation’s first statewide coordinated effort to bolster the re-entry process, helping to support incarcerated people who are released from prisons and jails, according to *The Associated Press*.

The group, named the Re-Entry Providers Association of California (REPAC), was formed to pool resources and coordinate efforts to better serve the incarcerated community, according to the Oct. 29 article. In addition, the group will lobby state and local governments and seek increased funding to help the newly released find jobs, housing, childcare, transportation, training, and other essential services.

The aim is to amplify the voices of the formerly incarcerated, who make up a crucial sector of society and simply do not get the resources and support they need, said REPAC Director Donald Frazier.

In a typical year, California releases up to 35,000

people, a number that spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet the state spends more on mass incarceration than it does on the entire University of California system, an average of over \$100,000 per incarcerated person per year. By comparison, funding for re-entry services has lagged far behind, despite its importance to reducing recidivism and protecting public safety, according to organizers.

San Quentin works with the non-profit California Re-Entry Program, which provides 24 volunteer advisors to help incarcerated people at San Quentin prepare for re-entry and for parole board hearings.

San Quentin resident Curtis White described this re-entry support as “absolutely invaluable,” and said that it provides the opportunity for advisors to have one-on-one meetings with incarcerated people, which allows them to get a sense of each person’s specific needs and point them to resources that fit.

“More funding would always be helpful,” said Judith

Tata, the program’s director. “There is definitely funding out there for re-entry services but there is also too much competition between providers for that limited funding.”

Underfunding means re-entry services often lack the resources to break the cycle of repeated incarceration, said Steven Kim of Project Kinship, an Orange County re-entry service provider and member of REPAC. This cycle can create a pattern that repeats for generations.

A 2018 study by Californians for Safety and Justice found more than half of people with a criminal record have difficulty finding a job, and more than a quarter have trouble finding housing, according to the *AP* article.

White recalled how during the COVID-19 pandemic, “guys leaving were panicking, some of them were only days away from their release and didn’t know where to go. I’d get a kite on the tier from guys asking for help and I’d tell them to get in touch with the California Re-Entry Program. They were a lifeline.”

He says that re-entry can be the last line of defense against recidivism, especially for younger guys who need access to these resources to plan for the future.

Tata said the Re-Entry Program is looking to expand its gate services, which includes pickup at the gate and transport to a halfway house, as well as a new backpack that comes stocked with a basic cellphone.

“In our experience, providing support and helping with a smooth process during the first 24 to 72 hours after release is absolutely essential to avoiding relapse and to the successful transition of our clients,” said Tata.

Raising awareness of the importance of re-entry services and increasing funding for critical gaps, like gate pickups and early transition services, is what REPAC can help to achieve.

“REPAC is going to be that essential unified voice that we need,” said California state Sen. Maria Elena Durazo. “...There’s no better time for REPAC to have begun.”

By Timothy Hicks
Staff Writer

Supreme Court considers ministers' presence in death chamber during execution

A Death Row inmate's religious request to have his pastor place hands on him during his execution is being examined by Supreme Court Justices, said the *Associated Press* (AP).

John Henry Ramirez is sitting on Death Row in Texas for killing a convenience store worker during a robbery in 2004. The AP said that he stabbed the clerk 29 times and robbed him of \$1.25.

The question that Supreme Court Justices are concerned with is whether or not their decision will open up a trove of cases from other death row inmates who may have similar religious requests during their executions.

Ramirez is requesting that his pastor be able to touch him during the execution, even if it's on the foot, said the article.

"What's going to happen when the next prisoner says that I have a religious belief that he should touch my knee? He should hold my hand. He should put his hand over my heart. He should be able to put his hand on my head. We're going to have to go through the whole human anatomy with a series of cases," said

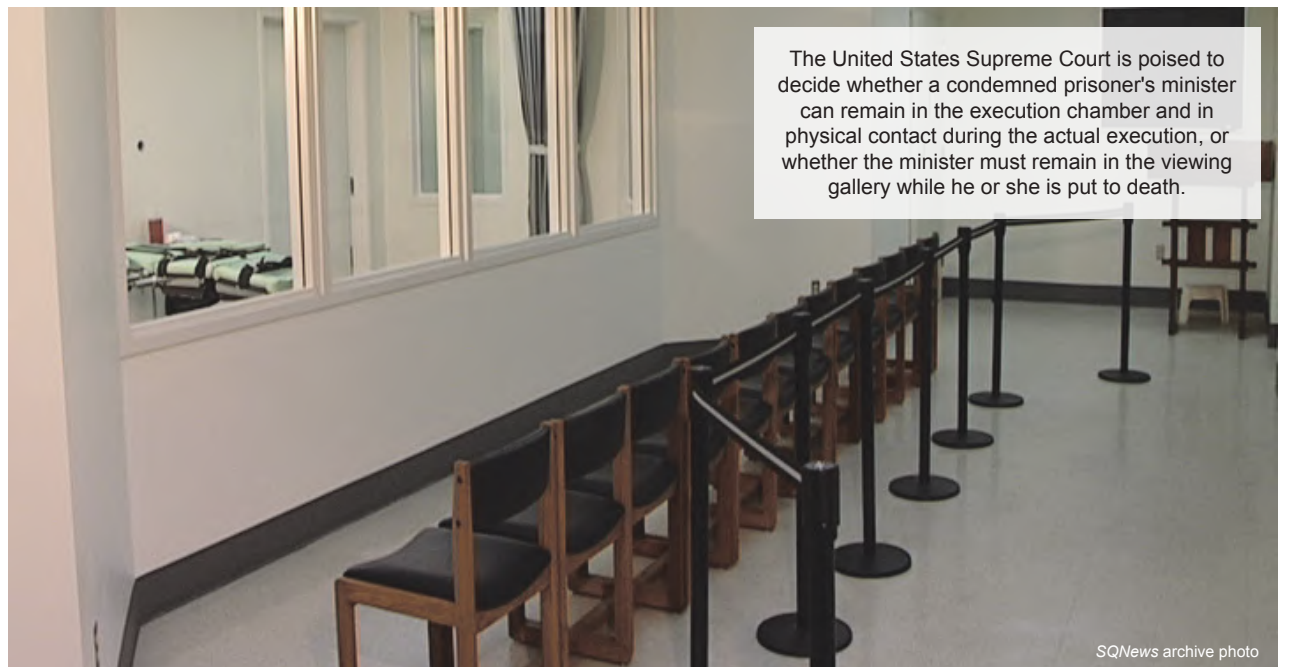
Justice Samuel Alito.

Other concerned Justices are Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who asked whether all states would make similar accommodations if they rule for the plaintiff.

The Ramirez case failed in Texas and in the lower courts, but the Supreme Court put a cessation to his scheduled Sept. 8 execution just so they could hear the case.

Freedom of religion is covered by the First Amendment of the Constitution. Ramirez's attorney Seth Kretzer told Justice Thomas that a federal law that protects the religious rights of prisoners requires the state to accommodate him.

Three liberal Justices are siding with Ramirez's argument, said the article. Justices Elena Kagan, Stephen Breyer and Sonya Sotomayor pointed out that Ramirez's chaplain will be a safe distance away from the restraints. Justices Kagan and Breyer noted that the practice has been



The United States Supreme Court is poised to decide whether a condemned prisoner's minister can remain in the execution chamber and in physical contact during the actual execution, or whether the minister must remain in the viewing gallery while he or she is put to death.

SQNews archive photo

done in the past.

But Justice Clarence Thomas agreed with Texas's state Solicitor General Judd Stone II, who said that Ramirez's request is just an

effort to postpone his execution. Justice Thomas asked what the Justices are to do if they believe that Ramirez has changed his request a number of times.

The State of Texas objects to having a free person in the room and touching a Death Row inmate at any time during the execution. "An outsider touching the

inmate during lethal injection poses an unacceptable risk to the security, integrity, and solemnity of the execution," said Texas in briefs filed with the court.

Death Penalty Info Center's 2020 report notes 'historic lows' in executions

By Steve Drown
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom suspended California's death penalty in 2019 by executive order. Other states had abolished capital punishment by the end of 2020, said the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) Year End Report, *The Death Penalty in 2020*.

California passed several reforms last year to address racial disparities in death penalty cases. The California Racial Justice Act "allows prisoners to use statistical evidence of racial bias to challenge their sentences."

Newsom became the first sitting California governor to file a "friend-of-the-court" brief related to the "unfair and uneven application of the death penalty." The brief argued that all Americans, no matter their race or ethnicity, deserve the

COVID prison deaths exceed recent state-imposed executions in the United States

same rights.

According to DPIC "new death sentences and executions reached historic lows in 2020."

"Though the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on both sentences and executions, the U.S. was poised for its sixth consecutive year with 50 or fewer new death sentences and 30 or fewer executions even before the pandemic shut down court proceedings nationwide," said the report.

Data gathered by *The Marshall Project* and *Associated Press* shows that 1,571 prisoners nationwide died of COVID-19 as of Dec. 10, 2020, exceeding the total number of executions performed in the modern era

of the death penalty (1,529). The report also noted: 1) Deaths from COVID-19 among death row inmates rivaled the number of executions this year, with at least 16 confirmed cases of Death Row prisoners who died from COVID and 2) Thirteen death row prisoners died from COVID-19 in California, matching the number executed since the state reinstated the death penalty in 1978.

DPIC reported that 2020 executions displayed "systemic problems" with the application of the death penalty. These included racial bias, disregarding victims' family wishes, and inadequate appellate review.

A 2020 Gallup poll on at-

titudes toward capital punishment found that 55% of Americans support the death penalty. That is tied with 2017 for the lowest support in 48 years. The 43% who oppose the death penalty is the highest recorded since 1966.

Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen announced in July that his office would no longer seek the death penalty. Rosen credited a transformative visit to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, and the nationwide movement for racial justice sparked by the murder of George Floyd. "It has changed our country and our community," Rosen said. "It has changed my office. It has changed me."

Victims and prosecutors angered by transfers of condemned prisoners

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

Prisoners sentenced to death can now be transferred to other California prisons, according to the *California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's* website.

A newly implemented transfer program for Death Row's incarcerated, the "Condemned Inmate Transfer Pilot Program" (CITPP), will allow qualified prisoners to be housed in general population, reported the *Orange County Register*.

The two-year pilot is an all-volunteer program that will provide limited job opportunities for the condemned to help pay court-ordered crime victim restitution, said the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) website.

The CITPP program was

birthed by language incorporated in Proposition 66, the voter approved initiative of 2016.

Participants in the CITPP program will follow the same governing rules as other general population prisoners; however, they will acquire the classification status of a prisoner serving a sentence of Life without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP).

Volunteers for the program must not have any pending charges, been found guilty of certain disciplinary offenses within the last five years, and not be in restrictive housing because of disciplinary reasons, reported the July 28, 2021 article.

The Orange County District Attorney's Office has criticized the program, raising concerns of security if "cop killers, multiple murderers and prison gang

leaders" were placed in the general prison population.

According to CDCR, staff at receiving institutions will review all case factors to determine eligibility, which include: custody level; security risks; medical, psychiatric and other program needs; along with any safety concerns and notoriety of the eligible candidate.

"It was a kick in the gut," said Steve Herr, whose son Samuel, along with Juri "Julie" Kibuishi, was killed by a Death Row prisoner. "It would have been nice for them (CDCR) to at least notify me... If I could, I would kill him [his son's murderer] myself. But that isn't going to happen, so I want the harshest possible penalty."

Proposition 66 also provides that prisoner restitution deductions for the formerly condemned increase from 50 percent to 70 percent.

CITPP participants will continue to have priority legal library and attorney visits, and telephone privileges, but will not be allowed to participate in the overnight family visit program.

Prison officials have indicated that there are currently 60 prisoners involved in the program.

"That has meaning to these families; the location, the restrictive setting, all that matters," said Matt Murphy, a former deputy district attorney who prosecuted a CITPP participant. "We are not talking about someone who stole a car stereo. We are talking about a man who ruthlessly murdered two people so he could go on a honeymoon..."

Murphy has also raised the question as to whether or not moving condemned prisoners without notifying victims and their families violates victim's rights.

"It's like night and day. Like going from a Motel 6 to a Regent," said Herr of the Death Row transfer program, reported the *Register*.

Japanese prisoners sue over same-day executions

By George Franco
Journalism Guild Writer

Japan's same-day execution law has prompted two Death Row prisoners to file a lawsuit, the *Insider Sun* reports.

The attorney for the men, Yutaka Ueda, is alleging that these same-day executions provide no time for an appeal, or for the men to mentally prepare to die.

"Death Row prisoners live in fear every morning that that day will be there last," said Ueda. "It's extremely inhumane."

In a 2009 press release, Amnesty International Health Care Director James Walsh called it "cruel, inhuman and degrading."

"Each day could be their last and the arrival of a prison officer with a death warrant would signal their execution with-

in hours," Walsh continued. "Some live like this year after year, sometimes for decades."

According to the suit filed in the district court of Osaka, the men are asking for 22 million yen (\$194,000 US dollars) in compensation.

The Japanese central government said that the same day executions are designed to prevent the men from suffering before their executions, according to *Reuters*.

Japan currently has 112 people on Death Row and hasn't actually utilized its death penalty in two years. Prisoners die by hanging in Japan.

Japan is one of only a handful of industrialized nations that still have the death penalty. The U.S. and China also have it. But a number of those nations haven't performed executions in years.

Killer executed despite intellectual disabilities

By Randy Hansen
Journalism Guild Writer

On Oct. 5 Missouri executed Ernest Johnson — despite claims by death penalty opponents and Johnson's attorney that killing him violated the Constitution because he had intellectual disabilities.

In one court filing, Johnson's legal team said IQ tests had indicated he had the intellectual capacity of a child, according to an *NBC News* article. However, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson denied Johnson's request for clemency and said the state would carry out the execution.

The execution was Missouri's first since May 2020, as the pandemic put a hold on death chamber operations.

"The state is prepared to deliver justice and carry out the lawful sentence Mr. Johnson received in accordance with the Missouri Supreme Court's order," said Parson.

On Feb. 12, 1994, in a closing-time robbery at Casey's General Store in Columbia, Johnson, 61, used a claw hammer to fatally bludgeon manager Mary Bratcher, 46, and em-

ployees Mabel Scruggs, 57, and Fred Jones, 58.

Some of the family members of the victims were in favor of putting Johnson to death. Bratcher's son, Rob, said, "I don't want to sound inhumane, but if there's any pain, so be it."

Johnson was lethally injected at the state prison in Bonne Terre, according to the *NBC* article. He was pronounced dead at 6:11 p.m. local time, a Missouri Department of Corrections spokesperson said.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to take up Johnson's case when his attorney argued that brain damage put him at risk of severe and painful seizures if executed by lethal injection.

In August, Johnson asked to be executed by firing squad, but the Missouri Supreme Court denied that also.

"None of this excuses what Johnson did," said former Gov. Bob Holden. "But if our state is to be guided by the rule of law, we must temper our understandable anger with reason and compassion for the most vulnerable among us — including Ernest Johnson."

U.S. prison population drops by 300K

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

The number of incarcerated adults dropped by nearly 300,000 in America the past decade, new U.S. Census figures show.

Almost two million remained locked up, but the 2020 Census report shows that nationwide the incarcerated population has dropped 13%.

“Roughly one-third of the drop in the total numbers occurred in just two populous states — California and New York,” the *Marshall Project* reported Sept. 20, 2021.

Some attribute the vast reduction in the prison population to COVID-19 and the precautions that have been put in place to reduce over-crowding.

According to data provided by the *Marshall Project* tracker, state prison populations dropped by about 100,000 between April and June 2020. Experts attribute the drop in population to several things, one of which is that “[t]he court system and parole offices slowed down as they moved operations online.” This reduced the number of people who were sentenced or caught up in parole violations.

The reduction is also attributed to a drop in the number of people arrested for drug crimes, and traffic stops.

San Quentin resident M. Ali expressed his views with these words: “As of lately it has been an increase in SQ population, largely due to shady legislation. This is

But U.S. still leads world in global incarceration rates

By John Krueger
Journalism Guild Writer

Louisiana has recorded the highest incarceration rate in the world, with California not far behind, Prison Policy Initiative reports.

“Compared to the rest of the world, every U.S. state relies too heavily on prisons and jails to respond to crime,” said the September report.

In Louisiana, 1,094 of every 100,000 are incarcerated — more than 1% of the state’s population.

The report compares every state in the U.S. with other countries. It concludes Louisiana would lead the world in per capita incarceration rates.

Using that comparison, 34 American states have higher incarceration rates than any other country in the world.

California ranks 37th in the world — higher than countries such as Cuba, Thailand, Costa Rica, and Uruguay.

PPI research associates Emily Widra and Tiana Herring compared incarceration rates pertaining to violent crimes throughout the United States to those of the rest of the world.

For the purpose of their research analysis, violent crimes include four elements: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape/sexual violence, robbery, and aggravated/serious assault.

Countries such as South Africa, Panama, Costa Rica and Brazil have murder rates twice that of the U.S., yet much lower rates of incarceration.

California’s incarceration rates are lower than the national average, but the state locks up more than double the rates in Mexico and Canada.

unbelievable, ‘cause we are still in a pandemic. There is not enough free room based on the influx of receiving incarcerated persons. Something must be done.”

A major function of the Census is to divide the state’s population into more or less equal legislative districts. Some districts take advantage of “prison gerrymandering,” which means adding to the political power of rural areas where many prisons, jails, and detention centers are located.

A report from the Vera Institute of Criminal Jus-

tice shows that the numbers of those entering the prison system is starting an upward trend.

West Virginia, in particular, has had an increasing number of people awaiting trial sent to local jails. From 2010 – 2019, West Virginia’s jail population grew by close to 30%.

“We used to have county jails, but counties couldn’t afford them,” said Quenton King, a criminal justice policy analyst. “So now we have regional jails, where about seven counties share one, but even then counties

have difficulty paying their share.”

The article indicated that the prison population in West Virginia will continue to grow.

“We have local elected leaders, prosecutors and magistrates who still fall into this old school mindset of incarceration being the way to fix social ills,” said Eli Baumwell, the advocacy director for the ACLU of West Virginia. “Until that changes, unfortunately I think the state is going to keep seeing these numbers climb up.”

Virtual court hinders criminal defendants

By Raymond Torres
Journalism Guild Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic curbed live court proceedings and created serious concerns about defendants’ rights, the Stanford Criminal Justice Center reported.

The center analyzed the quality and adherence of virtual or remote criminal court proceedings in its report, *Virtual Justice?*

Live-streamed video and teleconferencing replaced many in-person activities.

“The pandemic hit so suddenly and there was no time for our criminal legal system to examine best practices and study the effects of moving to virtual court before its implementation,” SCJC Executive Director Debbie Mukamal told *Stanford Law School News and Media*.

“But over the past year, this

project has sought to learn from some of those swept up in this impromptu experiment,” the Aug. 5, 2021 story reported.

The study showed that many aspects of virtual court proceedings hindered criminal defendants from accessing legal services, and thereby diminished the overall quality of justice received.

Mukamal also said she believes the *Virtual Justice?* analysis can help inform America’s criminal legal system on how to best utilize virtual technology in the post-COVID future.

Stanford law school students put the report together as part of their course of study entitled, “COVID-19 and the effect of video technology on indigent defense services.”

Stanford Law Professor Robert Weisberg said he believes virtual technology

weakened attorney-client communication. Defense attorneys agreed the shift to virtual proceedings damaged lines of communications with their clients.

Video and Zoom monitoring intruded on the sense of confidentiality normally associated with attorney-client conversations. Building relationships and the virtual dynamics of sharing discovery also proved troublesome.

“Being able to discuss what is happening in real time with your client while a proceeding is taking place is central to the role of a criminal defense attorney,” said Weinberg. “Doing court by Zoom undermines this function.”

Defense attorneys and judges believe that the lack of access to virtual technology inevitably hampers incarcerated persons. Virtual

platforms do not contain the physical cues and emotional impact of a live trial.

The use of virtual technology, or “trial by screen,” can impact the defendant severely. Collateral damage — such as harsher sentences, lack of empathy and a lower trust in the legal system — was the main concern expressed by those interviewed in the study.

Constitutional ramifications, such as the right to confront a witness (the confrontation clause), were also at issue.

“Criminal defense lawyers have worked heroically during the pandemic to ensure that our clients are treated fairly and humanely in the criminal legal system,” said Martin Antonio Sabelli, president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. “That is why their input was fundamental to this report.”

SF public defenders protest delays, court closures

By Joshua Grant
Journalism Guild Writer

San Francisco public defenders gathered outside City Hall in protest of court closures and delays that continue through the COVID-19 era — in violation of criminal defendants’ 6th Amendment rights.

The courts have been taking care of non-urgent civil cases, including trials to evict people from their homes, while criminal cases have not been prioritized, reported the *Davis Vanguard*.

“The court is supposed to enforce the law, not break it,” said SF’s Public Defender Mano Raju. “Public defenders will not stand by while members of our community are denied their right to a speedy trial, locked up for a year...”

Raju was one of the five “Super Friends” gathered in front of the Hall of Justice. They filed a civil lawsuit against San Francisco Superior Court for violating the 6th Amendment’s right to a speedy trial.

The lawsuit seeks to end the court’s now-routine disregard for criminal cases while it holds jury civil trials for monetary damages.

SF public defenders pointed to the case of Kalief Browder, a young man held in New York’s Rikers Island jail for allegedly stealing a backpack. When he appeared in court after three years, his case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

Raju spoke about how Browder would later take his own life as a result of trauma caused by all that time being unduly locked up.

Public Defender Landon Davis said, “We are the most progressive city in the United States, and we have our own version of Guantanamo Bay right around the corner. This

is absurd.”

Davis added, “They are being held in a dirty, smelly cell, 23 hours out of the day, no ventilation, no place to move, and if they are lucky, they get one hour out of that cell.”

Davis said that these people are not getting counseling, have no library access, and they receive vitamin D pills because they get no sunshine. “This is modern-day torture.”

Jade Ariano of the Western Advocacy Project explained how San Francisco courts have recently prioritized nonessential civil cases like evictions.

“The only logic that can explain this is a carceral one rooted in racism and classism,” said Ariano. “The fact that over half the people sitting in jail are Black, when only 5% of the overall population of San Francisco is Black — it is not a coincidence.”

Raju mentioned a client he represents who expected his October 2021 hearing to be his last day in court but instead was bound over for trial.

“They put the case over. They didn’t put it over a couple of days. They didn’t put the case over a couple of weeks. They put the case over to February of 2022, months past the last day,” he said. “Justice delayed is justice denied.”

Dozens of people attending the protest held signs displaying things such as “Free Our People, Open the Courts.” Many signs also stated number of days past individuals’ trial deadline—ranging from 180 days to 299.

The courts and legal system shouldn’t forget Browder, said Raju. “He wasn’t killed on the streets, but he was murdered by the system. We should never forget that lesson of life.”

Newsom signs new law to strip badges from abusive cops

By Randy Hansen
Journalism Guild Writer

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation that might strip the badges of police officers who act criminally or with bias. It was one of several criminal justice reform bills signed recently.

One measure sets statewide standards for when officers use “kinetic projectiles” like rubber bullets, chemical agents or tear gas to break up peaceful demonstrations, *The Associated Press* reported.

The new legislation requires training officers to use less lethal options when someone is at risk of death or serious injury, or “to bring an objectively dangerous and unlawful situation safely and effectively under control.”

De-escalation and verbal warning tactics should be used first, the Sept. 30 story noted.

Police can no longer aim rubber bullets, beanbags or foam rounds at anyone’s head, neck or other vital areas.

Another law creates a new

state license, or certification, for law enforcement officers — one that can be revoked. The change will end “the wash, rinse, repeat cycle of police conduct,” said Democratic state Sen. Steven Bradford.

“Many times it’s said Black and Brown people hate the police,” said Bradford, who is Black, “We don’t hate the police. We fear the police. We fear the police due to lack of trust.”

Law enforcement organizations and Republican lawmakers called the bill biased because only two of the nine members of a new disciplinary board will represent the police.

The remaining seven board members will have professional or personal backgrounds related to police accountability.

The new legislation restricts face-down holds that lead to positional asphyxia — the cause of death for Angelo Quinto, who died after a San Francisco Bay Area officer pressed a knee to his neck in 2020.

JPay ordered to pay \$6 million for fraudulent practices

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Writer

Federal auditors detected fraudulent debit card practices by JPay, a private equity subsidiary providing financial transaction services to the incarcerated and their families. The company was ordered to pay \$6 million for overcharging former prisoners by adding hidden fees to the debit cards they are issued upon release from custody, according to the *Washington Post*.

“[The company] exploited its captive customer base,

harming the newly released and their families,” tweeted CFPB Director Rohit Chopra.

JPay, under the agreement, cannot attach any fees to the debit cards it provides to those released from prison, except for an inactivity fee after 90 days. JPay debit cards contain money earned from prison jobs and money received from people’s families.

Before leaving prison, incarcerated people are required to set up an account with JPay in order to receive their “gate money” (state benefits). The

CFPB found that the fees attached to the debit cards were in some cases different from the ones disclosed on the recipients’ cardholder agreements.

“JPay cooperated fully with the CFPB in this matter, guided by our organization’s transformation agenda that emphasizes working collaboratively with regulators, reforming certain past business practices, and making products and services more affordable and accessible,” said a statement from Jade Trombetta, a JPay spokesperson.

In 2013, JPay reported a profit of more than \$500 million. The company was started as an electronic money-transfer service in 2002. It allows families to send money to their incarcerated loved ones to buy commissary items. The company expanded to more than 1,000 facilities nationwide, and was later acquired by Platinum Equity Partners.

Mark Barnhill, a Platinum Equity partner, said the company has corrected “certain past practices” and is cooperating with regulators.

Resentencing barriers eased by new legislation

New year brings new changes to make PC 1170 process more effective

By Elizabeth Fraser and Danielle Harris,
The Freedom Project at the
San Francisco Public Defender

For many years, California Penal Code section 1170(d)(1) has authorized judges and a small number of criminal system officials to request that a person's sentence be recalled and considered for resentencing to a lower term.

Until recently, referrals under PC 1170(d)(1) were extremely rare. Then in 2018, two law changes led to more referrals being made. First, Gov. Brown gave CDCR funding to identify incarcerated people who might be good candidates for resentencing. Second, AB 2942 was signed into law, giving district attorneys the power to refer people back to court for resentencing. Since then, CDCR has referred approximately 2,000 people back to court and an estimated 100 to 200 cases have been referred by district attorneys.

But resentencing has not been as effective as lawmakers and advocates envisioned and this year new laws were passed to allow resentencing to reach more people: AB 1540, AB 124, and SB 483 all go into effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

What does AB 1540 do?

AB 1540 strengthens incarcerated individuals' procedural rights during recall and resentencing, clarifies what the court must do when it gets a resentencing referral, and limits judicial discretion to deny resentencing.

Specifically, AB 1540:

- Ensures that all people referred for recall and resentencing have a right to an attorney;
- Requires a judge hold a status conference within 30 days of receiving a resentencing recommendation, where an attorney will be appointed;
- Makes clear that a person referred for resentencing has a right to be notified about the referral;
- Clarifies that a judge can resentence someone to a lesser-included or lesser-related offense;
- Clarifies that a resentencing judge shall apply any changes in the law that reduce sentences or allow judicial discretion;
- Provides a right to a hearing; and,
- Creates a presumption that a person will be resentenced, overcome only if the court determines that the individual is an "unreasonable risk of danger to public safety," as defined in Penal Code section 1170.18(c). This means that resentencing can be denied only if the court finds that the person poses an unreasonable risk of committing a violent felony "superstrike" if released. Superstrikes include: homicide, solicitation to commit murder, violent sex crimes, sex crimes against children, assault with a machine gun on a peace officer or firefighter, possession of a weapon of mass destruction, or any serious or violent felony punishable in California by life imprisonment or death.

In addition, the amended resentencing law will be moved from Penal Code section 1170(d)(1) to a new section 1170.03 and the Attorney General is added to the list of agencies that can refer people back to court in cases that they prosecuted.

Recall and resentencing under PC 1170.03 is technically available to all persons, regardless of their conviction or sentence type, but individuals cannot benefit from it unless one of the listed state actors makes a resentencing recommendation. CDCR's rules that guide who it refers back to court for resentencing are in Title 15 sections 3076.4 to 3076.5. Some DA offices have their own criteria for considering resentencing referrals.

What does AB 124 do?

The new 1170.03 requires the resentencing court to consider anything that is relevant to a just sentence, like age, disciplinary record, record of rehabilitation, and diminished physical condition.

Because of AB 124, 1170.03 also requires the court to specifically consider if the person:

- Has experienced psychological, physical, or childhood trauma, such as abuse, neglect, exploitation, or sexual violence;

- Was a victim of intimate partner violence or human trafficking before or at the time of the offense; and/or
- Was under the age of 26 at the time of the offense.

What does SB 483 do?

SB 483 authorizes courts to retroactively remove 1-year prison prior and 3-year drug prior enhancements from the sentences of currently incarcerated people. Anyone who has one or both of these enhancements is eligible for resentencing, unless the 1-year enhancement was imposed for a prior conviction for a sexually violent offense.

CDCR is required to identify every person in their custody who is serving a sentence that includes one of these enhancements, and provide this list to the sentencing court. Incarcerated individuals who have served their base terms and are only serving time for enhancements must be identified by March 1, 2022 and the courts must recall and resentence each of these individuals by Oct. 1, 2022. Everyone else must be identified by July 1, 2022 and resented by Dec. 31, 2023.

SB 483 guarantees a right to counsel. And the 483 court can apply any other legal changes that allow for reducing sentences as part of this resentencing. Judges may also consider post-conviction factors like age, time served, disciplinary record, record of rehabilitation and evidence that reflects a diminished risk of future violence or that continued incarceration is no longer in the interest of justice.

If you are eligible for SB 483 relief and believe you might have a case for relief beyond removal of the 1-year or 3-year enhancements, ask your attorney how to get the most benefit out of this new resentencing opportunity.

What you can do to push for resentencing in your case

Though you cannot ensure a resentencing recommendation from CDCR or the DA, you can put yourself in the best possible position by avoiding new write-ups, participating in positive programming, and/or pointing out any of the trauma-informed factors that AB 124 now requires courts to consider.

Ways to seek resentencing:

- Ask your counselor or prison staff to recommend you to the CDCR Secretary.
- Write to the CDCR Office of Legal Affairs to notify them of your eligibility for enhancement resentencing at:

**California Department of
Corrections and Rehabilitation**
P. O. Box 942883
Sacramento, CA 94283

- If you are currently serving only enhancement time and are eligible for SB 483 relief, you can file a petition for writ of habeas corpus after Jan. 1, 2022 and ask the court to put you on calendar without delay or waiting for the CDCR identification timeline.

- Write to the district attorney and public defender in the county of conviction and request consideration for resentencing. Include a statement of remorse and accountability for your commitment offense and list educational, vocational and self-help programs you have completed. Prepare a relapse prevention plan, parole plans, and gather support letters from institutional staff, program facilitators, family and friends and send those too.

If you have remained disciplinary free or have only minor rule violations, you should state this in your letter. This is particularly recommended if your case is from Santa Clara, San Francisco, Riverside, Contra Costa, San Diego, Yolo, Merced, or Humboldt counties, as these counties will be receiving increased state funding for resentencing over the next three years. Other counties with active DA resentencing units include: Sacramento, Alameda, San Joaquin, and Los Angeles (though note the LA District Attorney has said people should not apply directly—you still can but you may not want to spend much energy on it).

Stay tuned for additional updates as these new laws go into force in 2022, as well as future legislation that continues to expand resentencing opportunities.

New original sentencing laws in effect for current defendants

By David Oranje
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed new laws that cut back on numerous sentencing enhancements and ease the state's sentencing requirements.

Starting in January, non-violent drug offenders will no longer face mandatory prison or jail sentences, according to an Oct. 12, 2021 article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

"The Democratic-controlled Legislature and Newsom have approved further sentencing cutbacks over the opposition of police groups and prosecutors," the article said.

Felonies that impose one of three sentence possibilities—such as the three, six, or nine years under penal code 245(b) or three, four or six years for robbery—will only require the maximum incarceration in the most extreme cases.

Significant new limits on

sentencing enhancements relating to the use of a firearm, infliction of injury, priors, or gang enhancements, which can increase sentences by one to 25 years, are also part of Sen. Nancy Skinner's D-Berkeley SB81.

Senate Bill 81 adds numerous sentence considerations for a judge, such as the defendant's mental health, age at the time of a prior conviction, racial implications and overall length of sentence. The bill discourages sentencing terms of 20 years or more for relatively minor crimes. The *Chronicle* said that currently a judge can refuse to impose increases "in the interest of justice," but that standard has been narrowly applied.

An annual report by the California Commission for Revision of the Penal Code reported in February 2021 that Black and Latino people were disproportionately affected

by sentencing increases under previous laws.

Increased sentences for a defendant's criminal record or gang membership "are both just and logical," Jeannine Pacioni, prosecutor for Monterey County, said in opposition to Skinner's bill.

But according to the Commission, "Defendants given longer terms for use of a gun were 81% Black, Latino or Latina." More than 92% of gang enhancements were given to Blacks and Latinos despite a proliferation of White supremacist gangs.

California's prison population rose to nearly twice its design capacity in 2011 after 35 years of increased sentences.

A defense lawyers' group called California Attorneys for Criminal Justice said the current system of lengthy sentence enhancements "has contributed to California's mass-incarceration crisis."

CA ends mandatory minimums for drug crimes

By Randy Hansen
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed legislation ending mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenses.

"Mass incarceration of non-violent drug offenders hasn't reduced drug use or addiction," the bill's sponsor, Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, tweeted. "Time for a new approach."

Wiener said California's prisons and jails are filled with people of color who have committed low-level, non-violent drug offenses and who would be much better served

by non-carceral options like probation, rehabilitation, and treatment, according to *The Associated Press*.

But there was some pushback from the California Association of Highway Patrolmen, which denounced the new law, SB73, saying that existing penalties "work as a deterrent or a reason for individuals to get the treatment they need to turn their lives around," the *AP* reported Oct. 6.

The California Police Chiefs Association said it "sets a dangerous precedent ... and would jeopardize the health and safety of the communities we are sworn to protect."

Wiener has sponsored some controversial legislation such as "safe injection sites," and allowing a judge discretion to prevent a young adult convicted of gay sex with a minor from registering as a sex offender. Also, Wiener called for decriminalizing psychedelics, and that a person knowingly infecting a person with HIV be charged with a misdemeanor or instead of a felony.

SB73 changes the current law, which says anyone selling or possessing for sale more than 14 grams of heroin or PCP must have jail time. Effective January 2022, judges can sentence offenders to probation.

CA eases gang-related sentence enhancements

By Brandon T Genest
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed a bill restricting gang enhancements in sentencing, the *Associated Press (AP)* reported.

This bill is the latest in a series that the governor hopes will relax tough-on-crime policies from previous administrations that led to huge racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

"Gang enhancements have long been used against people of color far more frequently than their White counterparts," Democratic Assemblywoman Sydney Kamlager told the *AP*.

The bill was originally

proposed by Kamlager, who also served on the California Committee on the Revision of the Penal Code.

The Committee found that "99% of those given a gang enhancement in Los Angeles County are people of color."

The leader of the committee, Michael Romano, said that the committee "is committed to improving public safety for all Californians while reducing unnecessary incarceration and inequity in the criminal legal system."

The California Police Chiefs Association said that the bill could force prosecutors to prove the crime was gang-related prior to adding the enhancement.

The California District Attorneys Association said in a statement that judges "should be given discretion and flexibility" in cases involving gang members, using systems already in place.

Another bill signed by Newsom and sponsored by Democratic Sen. Nancy Skinner requires judges to give "great weight" to mitigating circumstances that favor dismissing enhancements that can greatly extend the length of prison sentences.

"The bill sends a clear message to our courts: Let's use sentence enhancements judiciously and only when necessary to protect the public," Skinner said.

Alabama offers second chances for drug crimes

By Brandon Genest
Journalism Guild Writer

The Cullman County Drug Program in Alabama is offering drug offenders a second chance at success while bypassing a jail or prison sentence, the *Associated Press* reports.

The program has taken a new direction under District Judge Chad Floyd, the drug court's third director since its inception in 2008.

Program participants often "have issues with low self-esteem [and] a background where nobody really taught them to have a sense of self-worth," Floyd said. His goal is to help participants realize their full potential and "move beyond the choices that got them into

my court."

At a minimum, Floyd requires the participants to commit to one year in the program, including random drug screens and 48 intensive outpatient sessions.

Participants must plead guilty prior to entering the program. The court will then hold the sentence in abeyance (temporary suspension) pending completion of the program.

If the participant fails out of the program, they must complete the prison sentence.

The program is fully funded by the participants, who must pay \$175 a month to remain in the program, in addition to completing 52 hours of community service.

Typically, any candidates who have been charged with

felony possession of a controlled substance qualify for referral. Those with violent felonies, trafficking charges, or other serious crimes are ineligible.

One recent graduate, Brandon Hill, said that the program helped him.

Floyd offered Hill his praise, saying, "I don't think we'll ever see him in our system again."

According to Floyd, the 49% of those who failed the program "are rearrested on drug charges within three years." Graduates, however, have seen a scant 3% recidivism rate during that same timeframe.

"They're playing the long game to invest in themselves and better their own lives," said Floyd.

Newsom focuses on California's homeless epidemic

By Joshua Grant
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom recently focused attention on California's growing crisis of unhoused residents and signed new legislation aimed at getting them the support and services they need, according to *The Associated Press*.

Tens of thousands of homeless people live in cities, large and small, across the wealthiest and most populated state in the nation. Yet over \$2.4 billion was spent on homeless programs in the last three years, according to the Sept. 29 article.

"In California, there are enough homeless children to fill Dodger Stadium five times," said Assemblywoman Luz Rivas, D-Arleta.

One of the new laws requires all of the state's school districts and charter schools to identify and refer homeless children and their families to



Nearly two and a half billion dollars were spent on homeless programs in the last three years, yet encampments like this continue to propagate across the country.

"Housing and health go hand in hand, and this law will save lives because it recognizes the importance of both."
—Julie Snyder
The Steinberg Institute

support services.

Unlike before, the new laws will give the state more say over how the money is spent.

The state's prior homelessness council will be replaced

with the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. This newly formed group will consist of directors of a half dozen state agencies.

Public perception of the

homeless problem is something Newsom recently addressed in a Los Angeles news conference.

"We live in a situational world where people want to

see results immediately," he said. "But when it comes to these issues, it takes years and years to see those results."

California's new budget includes \$7.4 billion to pay for 30 housing and homeless programs, with projects totaling over \$12 billion in the next two years, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. But local governments won't be able to get the money without a plan.

"No plan, no money," Newsom said. "We're coming in

not just with sticks, but with real carrots."

A federal judge recently overturned a ruling requiring the city and county of Los Angeles to find homes for all of its residents of the city's "Skid Row."

One hundred "high profile" homeless encampments have been identified across the state, and Newsom has "attached timelines and strategies to begin to clean them up permanently."

Homeless with chronic health conditions will benefit from a new law that prioritizes and directs California's share of the National Housing Trust Fund to go towards their housing, reported AP. California is projected to receive \$130 million from the Fund.

"Housing and health go hand in hand, and this law will save lives because it recognizes the importance of both," said Julie Snyder of the non-profit Steinberg Institute.

By Randy Hansen
Journalism Guild Writer

California prosecutors must have a judge's approval to try juvenile defendants in adult courts under the terms of Proposition 57, a criminal justice reform bill voters approved in 2016.

A major supporter of the provision is George Gascón, the recently elected Los Angeles County district attorney. He has imposed a policy in his office of refusing to try teens as adults, the *Los Angeles Times* reported Sept. 6.

Some of the prosecutions affected are for serious, violent crimes like murder, rape and kidnapping.

Victims, advocates angered by Gascón's handling of juvenile defendants

"For the families that I have spoken to and been involved with, it has been really devastating," said victims' rights advocate Kathy Cady, who represents half a dozen victims' families.

"They are very angry at Gascón. They don't understand why the district attorney's office is not trying to protect them. They feel like they have been sucker punched."

Proposition 57 also provides that if a case is decided in juvenile court, the defendant can-

not be held past the age of 25.

Three-hundred and forty teens faced trials in California's adult courts in 2016. The number fell to 158 in 2017, and in 2020 only 25 teens were tried in adult courts.

Alisa Blair, a former public defender serving as Gascón's special adviser on juvenile cases, said that several cases she handled in Los Angeles County involved victims who didn't want to see minors facing long prison terms, and in one case they wanted no prison time.

Blair described a 2013 case in which Kevin Orellana was stabbed to death on a Reseda handball court by two brothers. The police considered the incident gang-related.

The younger brother was a teen at the time. The older brother started the fight and the younger brother joined the fight to defend him, said Blair.

"It's a tragic situation, but it completely lines up with adolescent behavior," she continued, "For him to receive a life sentence on facts that

very arguably could have been defense of another is just not where we are in the state of the law, in the way that the state, and the country, are viewing juveniles."

But when Guillermo Orellana, the victim's older sibling, heard that one of the defendants who had been sentenced to 15-to-life in 2015 will probably be released in 2020, he said: "They killed my brother. We're not going to get him back; now it makes you feel like they're doing it again."

In Sacramento County there is pushback against progressive prosecutors. Since 2017, 22 juvenile defenders have sought transfer of their hearings from adult to juvenile court, but the DA's office has argued that 15 of those cases should remain in adult court.

Of those 15 cases, seven will remain in adult court, decisions on another seven are pending, and a judge has ruled that one will go to juvenile court, said Chief Deputy District Attorney Rod Norgaard.

Norgaard said the way Gascón is handling Proposition 57 cases addresses defendants' concerns but doesn't consider how that affects the victim or their families.

Federal officials review housing policies for transgender prisoners

By Cassandra Evans
Journalism Guild Writer

Federal prison officials are reviewing transgender prisoner housing policies in the wake of rollbacks imposed during the Trump administration, *The Associated Press* reports.

The action came after a U.S. District Court judge recommended the Bureau of Prisons consider housing a transgender prisoner at a female prison.

The prisoner is Emily Claire Hari, formerly known as Michael Hari, who was sentenced to 53 years in federal prison for the pipe bombing of Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington, Minn. No one was injured, AP reported.

"It will now be up to the Bureau of Prisons' Transgender Executive Council — a group of psychology and correctional officials — to determine where to house Hari," according to the AP.

There are 156,000 federal prisoners housed in 122 federal prisons across the country. At least 1,200 of them identify as transgender, according to a Department of Justice official.

The Obama Administration's policy for housing transgender prisoners called for the council to "recommend housing by gender identity when appropriate." The Trump administration amended that language to require the committee to "use biological sex as the initial determination."

The Transgender Executive Council was established in 2016 under the Obama administration, and it consists of about 10 people including two psychologists, a psychiatrist, and prison-designation experts.

The Bureau is committed to providing all incarcerated persons with a safe and humane environment, "including providing gender-affirming housing where appropriate," a Justice Department official told AP.

"According to court documents, Hari informed a Minnesota jail deputy in late December about her gender dysphoria, and requested to be moved to a women's facility and provided with hormone replacement therapy," the article stated.

There are many different things the department considers when housing transgender prisoners, including the individual's disciplinary records and availability of bed space.

Hari told her attorney she wanted to make a full transition, but she knew she would be ostracized from everyone and everything she knew, according to her defense lawyer Shannon Elkins.

Elkins wrote that Hari was living a double life and was planning a trip to Thailand for a male-to-female surgery, according to transcript documents; she also said Hari was purchasing female clothing while buying military fatigues for the militia.

Brothers awarded \$75M for wrongful conviction

\$1 million per year judgement for two men cleared by DNA after more than three decades' incarceration

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

Two half-brothers, one on Death Row for years, were awarded \$75 million for being wrongfully sentenced for a murder they did not commit, according to *The Associated Press*.

DNA evidence overturned Henry McCollum's and Leon Brown's 1983 conviction for the brutal murder of an 11-year-old girl, said the May 15 article.

"The first jury to hear all of the evidence — including the wrongly suppressed evidence — found Henry and Leon to be innocent, found them to be demonstrably and excruciatingly wronged, and has done what the law can do to make it right at this late date," Raleigh attorney Elliot Abrams, who was part of the brothers' legal team, said after the trial.

A total miscarriage of justice kept McCollum on Death Row for 31 years, becoming North Carolina's longest-serving prisoner to be on the Row.

The murder took place in 1983 in a rural part of the state.

It came out at the jury trial that both brothers had low IQs and that their comprehension of all of the facts and proceed-

ings in the 1983 case were over their heads.

The question of the brothers' IQs never came into the original investigation. Officers who were assigned to the murder inquiry briefly questioned the brothers, then put together a confession packet, and coerced the brothers to sign it, according to the brothers' attorneys.

Guilty as charged and sentenced to death at 15 and 19; the younger brother's sentence was later commuted to life in prison.

The brothers spent the better part of their youth locked up and suffered damage to their mental health. The oldest brother now requires full-time care as a result of mental health conditions caused by his time in prison.

After years of proclaiming the men's innocence, attorneys picked up their case, challenging both the evidence and the confessions.

The lawyers requested to examine DNA evidence which later exonerated their clients, and led to the arrest of a convicted murderer, who lived next-door to the young girl who was murdered.

"I've got my freedom," McCollum said. "There are still a lot of innocent people in prison today. And they don't deserve to be there."

Boudin's connection to 'incarceration crisis'

By Bruce Bowman
Journalism Guild Writer

San Francisco's top prosecutor, Chesa Boudin, raised some eyebrows when he said that the vast majority of American households have had a family member spend time in jail or prison.

Boudin was on PBS's *Amanpour & Co.* when he made the statement about his parents being in prison.

"My earliest memories are going through metal detectors and steel gates, just to see my parents, just to give them a hug," Boudin said. "I've now been visiting my father in prison for nearly 40 years."

Boudin based his claim on a 2019 study led by Peter K. Enns, a Cornell University professor of government and public policy, according to the *Washington Post*.

The study was designed for FWD.us, a nonprofit founded in 2013 by Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, and says, "The data show that 45% of Americans have ever had an immediate family member incarcerated." A breakdown of those families by ethnicity shows that 63% of Black families, 42% of White and 48% of Hispanic families have been impacted, just shy of Boudin's statements.

"The overall rate of Americans who have had an immediate family member behind bars, 45 percent, is remarkably high but not quite a 'majority' and far from a 'vast majority,'" said

Washington Post reporter Salvador Rizzo.

"The D.A. was referring to a study by criminal justice non-profit FWD.us and Cornell University," said Rachel Marshall, a spokeswoman for Boudin. "[That study] found that 64% of U.S. adults have had an immediate or extended family member spend time in jail or prison and described the situation nationwide as an 'incarceration crisis.'"

However, this 64% is only possible when combining the percentages of immediate and extended family members who have spent time behind bars.

"The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world," said the *Washington Post*. In all the data from the article, Blacks were always first in the percentages of adults in prison or jail.

Enns, when reached to reconcile the difference, stated:

"You are correct that our research found that close to half (45%) of adults have had an immediate family member who spent at least a night in prison or jail at some point in the family member's life. Sixty-four percent have had an immediate or extended family member who spent at least a night in prison or jail at some point."

No matter the data percentages, Blacks were always in the higher percentile levels of people who have experience with incarceration in the United States of America.

Grass-roots domestic abuse program holds workshop on Lower Yard

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

The widespread, epidemic problem of domestic abuse throughout the country was the recent focus of a group of San Quentin prisoners.

Sixty men gather in the Lower Yard for a workshop sponsored by Awareness into Domestic Abuse (AIDA) of San Quentin. The Oct. 23 event introduced the community to the problem with help from men serving time for domestic violence.

Floyd Collins, San Quentin resident and originator of AIDA, opened the ceremony and introduced all the facilitators and speakers. Collins started AIDA at Soledad State Prison, where his program became certified as a Rehabilitative Achievement (RAC) program.

The group learned that in 2020, domestic violence accounted for 160,646 calls for police assistance in California, while in the United States, more than 10 million adults experience domestic violence annually.

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence report stated that domestic violence is a pattern. Many experience repeated acts of abuse annually. AIDA's mission statement includes facilitating change regarding the cycle of violence.

Keynote speaker Larry

Johnson is in prison for domestic violence murder. He has served 23 years on a 15-to-life sentence.

Johnson described his rehabilitative programming: "I took anything with 'domestic violence.' That's what I need to be a part of the rest of my life."

Michael Beaudette, the lead facilitator of the PREP correspondence courses for the prison, is also a facilitator for AIDA. He added, "I believe the AIDA workshop was a complete success. AIDA is focused on one particular form of crime, domestic violence."

"Abuse makes this program much needed. It also shows that abuse extends far beyond physical violence alone — that verbal, economic, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse fall under the umbrella of domestic violence. It brings us to the conclusion that for us to become better human beings, abuse is completely unacceptable no matter what. Insight into domestic abuse starts with AIDA."

Johnson reflected on some positive feedback from his opening speech and the overall workshop. An audience member told him, "A guy who used to get angry and jealous is now searching for the answers as to why he does what he does."

He hopes the people in attendance realize what domestic violence and domestic

abuse looks like. "The differences and, more importantly, the signs and cues to stop domestic violence and domestic abuse must be instilled before the crime happens."

Johnson spoke about "misinformation" regarding domestic violence.

He said that domestic violence should be seen as a two-part issue, domestic abuse and domestic violence.

Both of them impact society as a whole, from the immediate victim, to the family, to the entire community.

He said people need to understand the total cycle of violence. "For a perpetrator, the honeymoon period generally starts during the very first date. He or she then accumulates information from the 'good times' into their brand of abuse. They then manipulate and harm their partner. From the first meeting on, the trap of an abuser is set."

"The bottom line is DV & DA can be prevented," said Johnson.

Resident Steven Warren shared his experience of the day's workshop. "AIDA's event was an absolute success. I was nervous and excited just to be speaking and encouraging change and growth."

"In the old Male Role Belief System, we bottle things up. Through change we must acknowledge that we need a space to get real — to be-

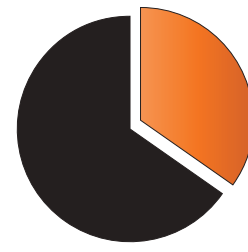
come vulnerable — and we need to take account for our ways, habits, behaviors and faults. AIDA and our workshop is just the start of identifying and addressing domestic abuse and its many forms. I am proud to be a part of team AIDA."

Collins was happy with the turnout. "For men to stand outside, stationary, with the potential of rain, for two and a half hours, seeking information regarding domestic violence, that showed their awareness and commitment to gaining insight and empathy."

AIDA is currently in development stages to become certified programming at San Quentin and has plans to expand throughout California prisons. "The San Quentin proposal will be on the [program manager's] desk within a couple of months."

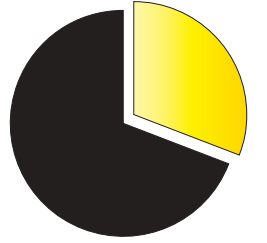
"For now we are holding process groups, and/or workshops on the Lower Yard on Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.," said Collins.

Collins praised the mentors in the program: Steven Warren, Jesus Escobar, Michael "Egypt" Shukavy, Jerry "Malik" Gearin, Michael Beaudette, Timothy Ross, Vincent O'Bannon and Harry C. Goodall Jr. "None of the workshops are possible without the AIDA group. I am blessed they are not deterred and believe in the mission statement of AIDA to stay the course."

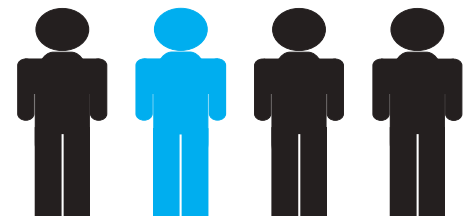


34.9% of all **women** in California have experienced physical or sexual violence, or stalking, by an intimate partner.

31.1% of all **men** in California have experienced physical or sexual violence, or stalking, by an intimate partner.



In the United States, **one out of every three women** and **one out of every four men** will experience physical violence by an intimate partner.



Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2020)

Award-winning podcast pays dividends, looks to the future

Ear Hustle's Rahsaan Thomas prepares for freedom, incorporates new sound designer

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Rahsaan "New York" Thomas is co-host and co-producer of *Ear Hustle*, and he has some big shoes to fill.

"I hope to have a chance to parole within the next year or so, and look forward to seeing what the skills I picked up at San Quentin lead to for me," Thomas told the *Current*.

Ear Hustle is a podcast recorded at San Quentin State Prison's media center. It's been downloaded over 54 million times. The program was created by then-prisoner Earlonne Woods, and Nigel Poor, who initially entered San Quentin in 2012 as a volunteer instructor for a college class.

Though Poor's background is photography, she served in a variety of volunteer roles in the San Quentin media center. Her volunteer work with *San Quentin Radio* sparked relationships with Woods, Antwan "Banks" Williams, and John "Yahya" Johnson, who came on board with Thomas in 2018.

The *Ear Hustle* platform was a spinoff from San Quentin's radio show, *KALW*. In 2016 Woods and Poor began to move into straight storytelling, or what they termed "journeyism."

Williams joined the duo around that time. The team produced a segment and submitted it to Radiotopia Podquest, a forum operating under PRX Network. PRX distributes and promotes shows that promote and grow podcast audiences, and also aids in raising revenue.



In 2018, before the coronavirus pandemic changed the way incarcerated and unincarcerated San Quentans were able to create side-by-side, Earlonne Woods and Nigel Poor frequently spent hours collaborating in the Ear Hustle studio. Their efforts have paid off over the last several years, generating millions of downloads for the podcast and earning multiple media awards.

"It looked and sounded good, and it was a new and fresh perspective that wasn't out there yet," said Radiotopia and *Ear Hustle* Executive Producer Julie Shapiro.

The *Ear Hustle* segment won \$10,000 for being a Podquest finalist plus a stipend to produce the first season.

"*Ear Hustle* is more than its episodes and awards," said

Shapiro. "It's really about changing how people think about incarceration and people who are incarcerated. So, being able to employ guys who get out, and potentially women down the road, it's the next level of what the show is for."

Woods was noted for being in the Media Center typing away on an iMac from early morning to late at night. All

of this was done voluntarily. His hard work and dedication eventually paid off when his sentence was commuted by then-Gov. Jerry Brown. He left San Quentin after serving two decades in prison. A month later, Woods was hired to continue co-producing *Ear Hustle* from the outside.

"When I got my first check, I just kept looking at it in

my account through an app," Woods said. "I literally had a check in the bank."

Woods has created a non-profit called CHOOSE ONE, an acronym for (Can Hip Hop Overturn Oppressive Sentencing Enhancements). Its goal is to abolish California's "Three Strikes" law.

The other founding team members have also paroled

and are doing well. Williams comes into the San Quentin media center now as a volunteer, and Johnson is earning a living utilizing skills that he developed while at San Quentin.

"I loved working on *Ear Hustle* inside, but there's nothing like being paid for the work you actually do," said Johnson.

"I worked with [Los Angeles prosecutor George] Gascon, did a podcast with [San Francisco prosecutor] Chesa Boudin, and worked with a Supreme Court Justice."

Thomas, who came on board in 2018, has a direction in mind for *Ear Hustle*. "I would like to see *Ear Hustle* get stories from prisons in other states. God willing, if I'm released, I will get stories from New York."

S. "Rhashiyd" Zinnamon, the sound designer who replaced Williams in 2019, and intern Tony Tafoya, contributed some thoughts about *Ear Hustle's* future.

"They sky is the limit," said Zinnamon. "I was taught by some of the best. I happened to be embraced by a brand that exists. I personally believe this is the best thing to happen to me. By coming from a music background, I have a platform like *Ear Hustle* to do it from. I can honestly say the training I got has given me insight into some really beneficial programs."

"Rahsaan always keeps me humble, and he's teaching me how to craft a really good story. If there is one thing he's really good at, it's finding and then sharing a great story," said Tafoya.

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

Federal prisons throughout the country are experiencing a shortage of prison guards, and using other staff members to fill in, according to *The Associated Press*.

Cooks, teachers, nurses and others work as guards and often pick up more than 60 hours in overtime shifts to keep the prisons running, but this quick fix is causing serious problems for prisoners and administration.

“You can’t do programming, you can’t have safety, you can’t have a lot of things that make prisons operate without proper staffing,” said Kevin Ring, president of the advocacy group Families Against Mandatory Minimums.

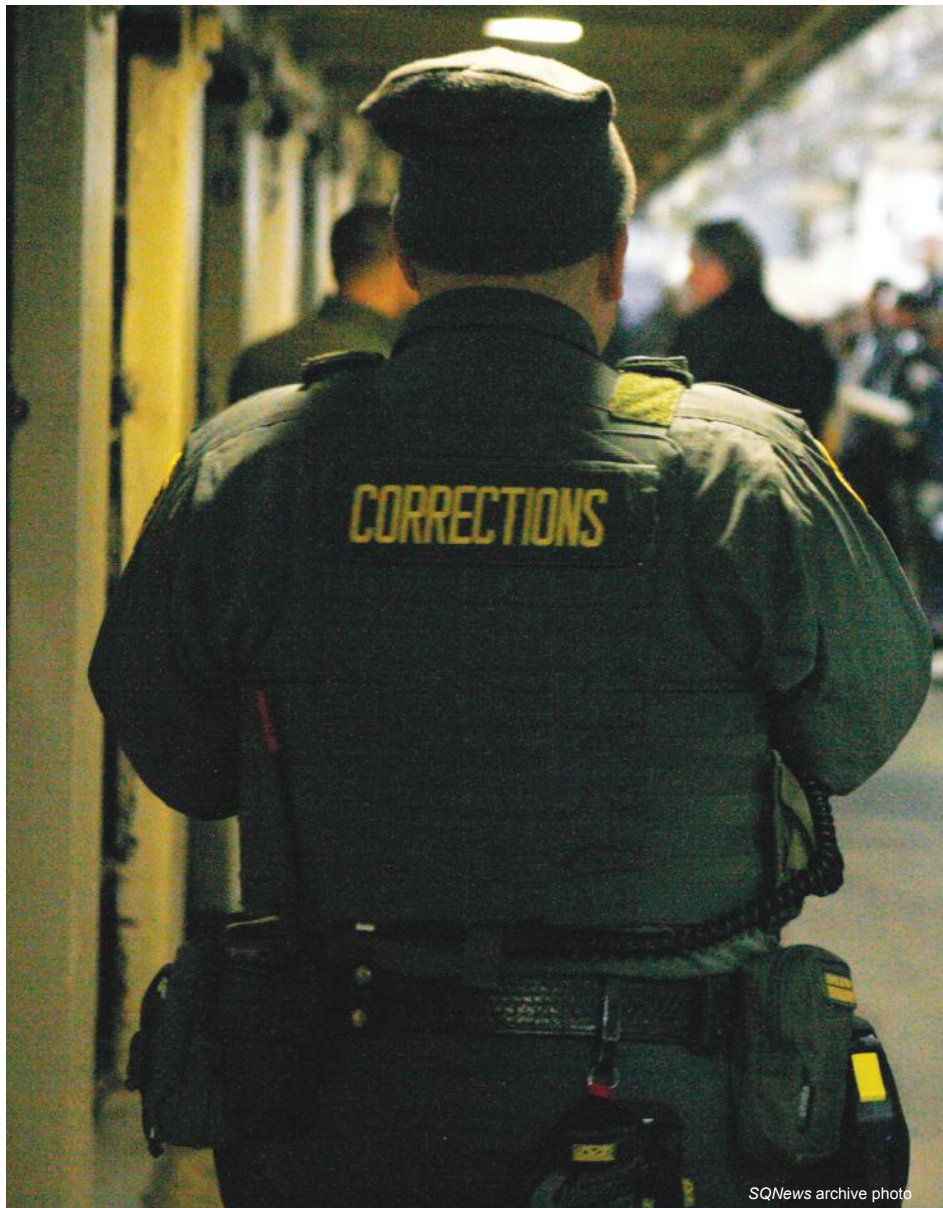
The lack of prison guards puts serious pressure on those who are filling the void. By pulling other employees away from their jobs to work as prison guards, the system creates an unhealthy and dangerous work environment, the story said.

“We’re tired of the agency putting a price tag on our lives,” said Aaron McGlothlin, the union president at FCI Mendota in California. “We’ve had staff members killed in the line of duty. We’ve had staff members injured in the line of duty. At what point do they realize they’ve got a problem to fix, and quit putting a Band-Aid over it?”

Union officials said the current starting salary of \$43,500 is not enough to attract new prison guards, nor make up the deficiency in the Bureau of Prisons, which has recently lost about a third of its workers.

They also said that the current budget will not fix the hiring quotas, maintain order or stem the tide of overworked employees who are burning out rapidly.

A number of coronavirus outbreaks spread rapidly through federal prisons across the country in 2020, putting additional strain on an already stretched correctional staff.



SQNews archive photo

Federal prisons face critical staff shortages

Out of the 20,446-plus employees that work for the system, roughly 7,000 caught the virus, with 235 prisoners and four staff members dying.

After the virus subsided, the federal Bureau of Prisons was left with 13,762 workers who were already working overtime and doing the work of two or three people.

This came to a head when

famous prisoner Jeffrey Epstein took his own life at one of the most secure federal prisons in the country, the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York. The two prison workers guarding Epstein were both working overtime, and one of them was a warehouse worker who had been assigned to work as a guard.

The *AP* article said the Bu-

reau of Prisons hired 4,000 new correctional officers in 2020.

But that will not bring them up to 20,446 they had in 2020. Until the new hires arrive, there will continue to be upticks in violence, the loss of educational programs, and self-help groups will continue to decline due to staff shortages, the story reported.

Staff shortages mean more cell time in Kansas

By David Oranje
Journalism Guild Writer

Staff shortages in a Kansas maximum security prison have led to increased cell confinement and decreased access to programs for prisoners, reported the *Associated Press*.

Department of Corrections spokesperson Carol Pitts said the system-wide problems are worst at the state’s El Dorado Correctional Facility in Butler County.

A Sept. 15 memo sent to inmates and their families by Corrections Department Secretary Jeff Zmuda said that staff short-

ages “top the list of the challenges we face.” The state is emphasizing recruiting efforts to alleviate the problem.

The *Topeka Capital-Journal* reported that the incarcerated population fell during the pandemic, and that some housing units were closed to reduce the need for staff.

The El Dorado facility faced staffing shortages prior to the COVID pandemic, and has been the site of past unrest. Gov. Laura Kelly has declared an emergency at the facility on two occasions, once in 2017 and again in 2019, both times due to staffing shortages.

previously contracted out to community rehabilitation companies,” said the article.

Citing the need to protect the public, Justice Secretary Robert Buckland supported overhauling a department with a history of lax supervision.

“The Government is backing the new Probation Service with more money and more staff so that the public is better protected, crime is cut and fewer people become victims,” Buckland said.

“The work probation does to protect the public from harm and rehabilitate offenders is too often overlooked but it is vitally important given 80 percent of crime is reoffending.”

As part of the new control procedures, lie-detector test-

ing will be required within three months of release and afterward every six months for the following: terrorists, sex offenders, and domestic abusers convicted of murder, violence, or of breaches of restraining orders.

Additionally, violent gang members, stalkers, and domestic abusers will be subject to “electronic tagging,” which is 24-hour per day satellite tracking. Exclusion zones have been implemented to bar gang members from their former territories and domestic abusers from their victims.

Electronic tagging will alert probation officers to “potential breaches of license such as a breach of curfew or an exclusion zone and to locate an individual

should we have immediate concern about their behavior,” according to the document.

Probation officers will no longer be allowed to check on offenders by phone. They are now required to visit them face-to-face at least once per month.

“Face to face contacts should be a minimum of every four weeks. For cases assessed as presenting high or very high risk of serious harm, weekly contact should be maintained other than in exceptional circumstances,” the new rules stipulate.

Under the partially-privatized system, up to 40% of probation subjects were supervised via telephone every six weeks rather than by face-to-face contact.

GTL explores virtual reality for prisoners

By Rickey Goins
Journalism Guild Writer

A prison technology company is exploring offering virtual reality to incarcerated people, *Vice* reports.

Global Tel*Link Corporation (GTL) stated in their filed patent documents that the illusion of freedom through virtual reality would allow an inmate to “for a brief time, imagine himself outside or away from the controlled environment.”

The patent document says the technology could be used as a substitute for in-person visitation, the Sept. 9 article said.

“The news signals the continued ways contractors such as GTL try to monetize their literally captive audience,” *Vice* stated. GTL also offers phone call services and sells entertain-

ment tablets to prisoners.

“GTL’s patent for replacing in-person prison visits with virtual reality lays bare the company’s ultimate goal of mediating all interactions between incarcerated people and the outside world,” said Cooper Quintin, a technology activist with Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Vice reported VR was used in 2017 by prisons to rehabilitate and prepare soon-to-be-released incarcerated persons in how to do simple everyday tasks that had changed because of newer technology — such as “self-service checkouts in grocery stores and doing their laundry.”

In 2020, the *Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality* examined possible ways that VR tech could be used to enhance punishment.

Virginia prisons end early COVID releases

By Vincent E. O’Bannon
Staff Writer

Panic over COVID-19 in the Virginia Department of Corrections has come to an end—and as of last summer, so have early prisoner releases, reported the *Associated Press* (AP).

The state of Virginia eased all distancing and capacity protocols earlier in 2021, citing increased vaccination rates and declining hospitalizations and COVID positivity rates. In addition, the Virginia DOC said they were planning a phased-in approach, following federal guidelines, to allow visitors back into correctional facilities, the article said.

“The early release plan was an innovative way to ensure the safety and security of our incarcerated population, as well as the public,” said Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security.

Strict eligibility guidelines that limited the number of prisoners eligible for early release “just wasn’t as far-reaching as we’d hoped,” said attorney Maisie Osteen.

“The scope was just far too

narrow and really didn’t offer the relief we were hoping for and a lot of other advocates were hoping for,” added the Legal Aid Justice Center’s Civil Rights and Racial Justice Program attorney.

According to the *AP*, Virginia lawmakers paved the way for the DOC to consider early release for many of its nearly 24,000 prisoners during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. An estimated 2,114 prisoners were released from state and county facilities under the COVID State of Emergency, but the authorization for the early release plan ended on July 1, 2021.

“Governor Northam will continue to work with our public safety and public health officials to monitor infection and vaccination rates in Virginia and consider mitigation measures as necessary,” said Alena Yarmosky, Northam’s spokesperson.

“About 70 percent of the inmate population has now been vaccinated against COVID-19, and there are no current cases among the population,” said Department of Corrections Director Harold Clarke.

NY governor aims to improve prison education

By Randy Hansen
Journalism Guild Writer

Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York has signed new legislation creating a commission to study and develop a plan for improving prison education programs, *Finger Lakes 1* reports.

“When incarcerated individuals reenter society, it’s critical we ensure they are prepared and ready to forge a path for themselves and their families,” said Hochul.

The Governor is following the lead of California and other states, which have decided that education is the key to ending mass incarceration.

Hochul’s plan falls in line with the upcoming Second Chance Pell Grant experiment set to begin in 2022-23, allowing incarcerated people to receive up to \$6,495 in aid to pursue college degrees while in prison.

“The state prison system has to do a better job at preparing people in prison to re-enter society so they can lead meaningful lives,” said Sen. Kevin Parker.

This legislation fights recidivism in New York prisons

by empowering the Governor and members of the state’s Senate and Assembly to appoint nine people to form the commission and develop an in-depth report for the improvement of prison education programs.

Assemblyman Charles Barron added, “This bill speaks to moving the prison industrial complex from punishment to education and eventual liberation of the incarcerated. We must build a society where education is prioritized over incarceration.”

Historically, the recidivism rate across the country has revealed a system that is broken when it comes to rehabilitation. Studies show that the rate of recidivism decreases dramatically in direct proportion to the degree of higher education obtained by an incarcerated individual.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, post-secondary education programs help lower recidivism. Incarcerated people who obtain their college degrees cut their recidivism rate in half: the higher the degree, the lower the recidivism.

England steps up monitoring of probationers

By Vincent E. O’Bannon
Staff Writer

Lie detector testing and electronic monitoring will become British probation officers’ new standard of supervision for many of the criminal offenders they oversee.

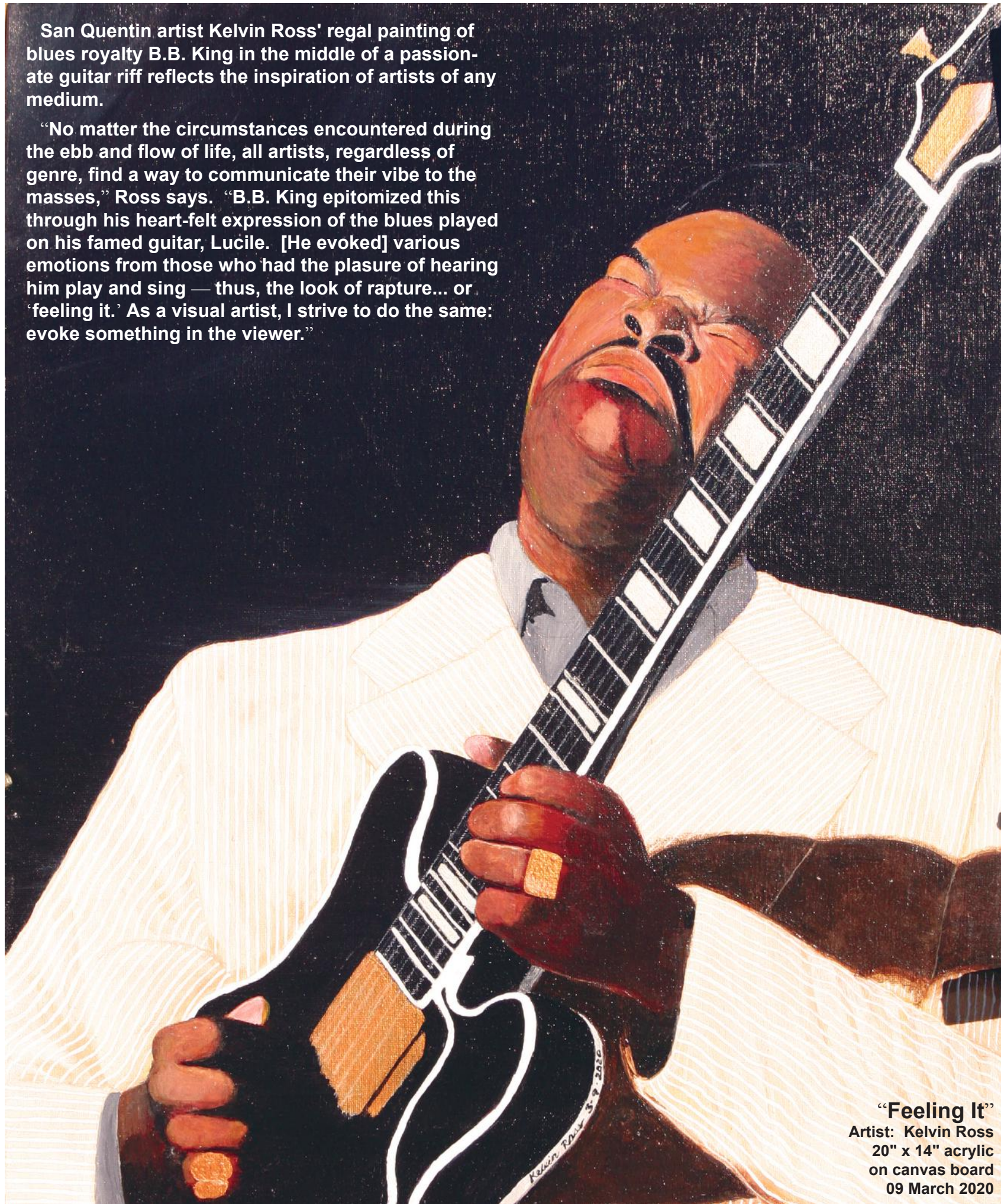
In response to increased recidivism, a renationalization of a previously partially-privatized probation system will result in an overhaul of supervision protocols, reported *The Telegraph*.

The changes are laid out in a document titled “National Standards 2021.”

“[It is] drawn up for the unified probation system that brings back under control the management of thousands of offenders that was



FROM TOP: Banda Esperanza ("Band of Hope") jams out to provide musical accompaniment to the day's activities; dedicated nurses provide the COVID vaccine and booster shots; musical duo Grace and Aaron (off-camera) combined the bright brass staccato with smooth vocals and sweet keyboards; medical staff remained on-hand throughout the event to offer coronavirus guidance and issue snacks and goodies.



San Quentin artist Kelvin Ross' regal painting of blues royalty B.B. King in the middle of a passionate guitar riff reflects the inspiration of artists of any medium.

"No matter the circumstances encountered during the ebb and flow of life, all artists, regardless of genre, find a way to communicate their vibe to the masses," Ross says. "B.B. King epitomized this through his heart-felt expression of the blues played on his famed guitar, Lucile. [He evoked] various emotions from those who had the pleasure of hearing him play and sing — thus, the look of rapture... or 'feeling it.' As a visual artist, I strive to do the same: evoke something in the viewer."

"Feeling It"
Artist: Kelvin Ross
20" x 14" acrylic
on canvas board
09 March 2020



Photos by Phoehn You, SQNews



Walkenhorst's sponsors major holiday event

Live music, speakers, give-aways and spectacular art exhibition

By Richard Fernandez
Staff Writer

Hundreds of San Quentin residents flooded the Lower Yard for a holiday celebration that included music, art and treats.

It was scheduled to replace a number of indoor events cancelled because of the COVID pandemic.

Some 3,000 men got a "Golden Ticket" they could exchange for a bag of goodies, donated from the package company Walkenhorst's. Added to the bags were 5,000 peppermint patties, made possible by a donation drive by *San Quentin News* adviser Amanda Weitman. The prison's main kitchen baked cookies and brownies.

"This is the first time I saw the general population instead of the media center," said Weitman. "I was amazed at how many young men are here and I was especially surprised at the amount of elderly White men."

"This event was meaningful to the incarcerated community of San Quentin. We must show how much good goes on behind these walls. Donors continued calling me up to the last minute. It was truly amazing."

Walkenhorst's has been donating to SQ events since 2014. Natalie Tovar, the company representative, has a connection to the prison.

"My dad was once here in the past, so it's nice to come back and give back," said Tovar. "We had 3,000

bags, and they may have had as much as \$5 worth of items. I want the prison population to know that we do read your comment cards and respond to them. They are important to know what you would like to have in the catalogs."

The Dec. 10 event required close to two months of planning.

"I'm still experiencing a little PTSD from the food sale," said Warden Ron Bloomfield, referring to a November event. "Thank you to Madeline Tenney for putting this all together. This is our first major event on the yard. We do hope to stay open and remain at Phase Three. We will continue to listen to our professionals. I wish everyone Happy Holidays, knowing we are now in a better place."

Tenney commented, "COVID changed the world for two years. San Quentin's a casualty of the pandemic, just like its neighbors. As Delta and Omicron variants restrict holiday seasons around the world for the second year, San Quentin is not immune to restrictions or eliminations of spiritual events." She added, "I think collectively we did a great job to show the community we care."

The event also allowed residents to get vaccination questions answered.

Choirs from Cornerstone and Brave Churches sang Christmas carols for the event. San Quentin's Spanish

house band sang Jose Feliciano's "Feliz Navidad" to the delight of the crowd. Outside band Aaron and Grace performed Frank Sinatra songs and other classics.

"We hope our music offerings lift people because we're talking about human hearts and souls here. It has been a lifelong goal to come here and share," said the duo Aaron and Grace. "It's an honor to share some music with the prison. I hope more local artists will volunteer after the pandemic as well."

An art exhibit featured many incarcerated artists' perspectives of life behind bars or their cultural affiliations. Attendees, especially recent arrivals to San Quentin, marveled at the impressive artwork and program.

"This is my first event. I have been reading the *SQNews* for 11 years and saw the events and celebrities. I always wished to come here and be a part of something. The possibilities that are present is a great opportunity to be a part of," said SQ resident Randy Gibson.

Resident Norman Rose added, "This is the first time I have seen a Peppermint Patty in 32 years."

Hilcer Mendez, who recently came to San Quentin, said, "The lines were long but what we are receiving is good. I also enjoyed the English and Spanish music."

SQ resident Honorio Hernandez Meza added, "This is something new to me, I am glad I came to participate. I have never experienced anything like this in other

prisons."

San Quentin medical staff offered COVID booster shots and passed out stress balls.

"Mental health only had 200 stress balls. They needed more," said resident Michael Beaudette. "This is the first event since the Day of Peace. It's nice that they gave it to us. I don't know the main theme. I guess sharing and caring — get out and meet others. All units are out here. Everyone seems to be patient."

As the event ended, some of the attendees expressed their appreciation.

"This was something very positive, a way of support to us," said SQ resident Victor Calzada. "Some inmates I know don't go to the canteen because they don't have money."

"I want the [recent] transfers to learn what San Quentin is all about. I want to promote peace and tell the transfers to leave all drama behind you at your other prisons," said Community Resource Manager Tenney. "San Quentin doesn't do gangs or violence — we do rehabilitation. And please remember our staff comes here to do a job, but we have a lot of staff who truly care."

Among the events cancelled were the annual Christmas caroling in the cellblocks and the annual Christmas banquet in the Protestant Chapel.

--Villa Marin, Benjamin Marquez and Anthony Manuel Carvalho contributed to this story.





Upumoni Ama, un antiguo residente de San Quentin, instruye a un grupo en riesgo de encarcelación, acerca de la cruel realidad de ser arrestado, enjuiciado y encarcelado.

SQNews de las fotos de archivo — pre-pandemic (2018)

La ley SB 203 protege derechos Miranda para adolescentes

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

Ser esposado y puesto en el asiento trasero de un carro-patrulla o ser interrogado por detectives veteranos como sospechoso, puede ser abrumador para adolescentes y niños menores. Bajo estas circunstancias, los adolescentes podrían no entender completamente sus “derechos, y podrían ser presionados y aceptar dar falsa confesión” según el Imprint-Youth and Family News.

El Gobernador Gavin Newsom firmó el proyecto de ley (SB) 203 del Senado de California, convirtiéndolo en ley. Esta ley extiende la protección de los derechos Miranda (el “derecho” constitucional contra incriminación propia, y el derecho de guardar silencio,) para jóvenes de 17 años o menos. Adolescentes que son detenidos, ahora tienen el derecho de consultar un abogado antes de ser interrogados por la policía, ya sea en persona, por teléfono o por conferencia en video, según el artículo.

“Ninguna persona joven debería hacer una desinformada decisión legal, una que podría costarles 20 años de su vida,”

dijo Jerome Dixon, testificando por teléfono en el Senado del Estado, ayudando a pasar el proyecto de ley, facilitando así, su llegada al escritorio del Gobernador.

Dixon testificó que a la edad de 17 él fue sometido a 25 horas de interrogación policiaca, sin ninguna representación legal. Al final el pasó 21 años y medio en prisión, según el artículo.

“Aquellos de nosotros quienes valoramos la constitución, en vez de ciegamente enfocarse en asegurar convicciones a todo costo, estamos obligados a respaldar la clase (de ley) imaginada por la SB 203,” dijo Chesa Boudin, la fiscal de San Francisco.

Ahora en San Francisco, antes de que los menores sean interrogados, se requiere que los abogados les expliquen sus derechos Miranda.

El Senador del estado Steven Bradford (D)-de Gardena escribió esta ley porque le preocupaban las confesiones de menores, dijo el artículo.

El se refirió al infame caso de 1989 *De los Cinco del Parque Central*, en donde un grupo de adolescentes afro-americanos y latinos fueron falsamente detenidos, por la supuesta violación de una corredora en Nueva

York. Los de 14, 15 y 16 años de edad sufrieron crueles interrogaciones y confesaron falsamente por el crimen. La historia es dicha en la serie de Netflix “Cuando Ellos Nos Miran.”

“La gente joven debe saber sus derechos, y ellos no deben estar solos cuando están siendo interrogados,” dijo Bradford.

Los sospechosos menores de 18 constituyen el 35% de todas las confesiones falsas, de acuerdo a un estudio citado por La Revisión de Leyes de Carolina del Norte. Adolescentes no siempre tienen la capacidad mental o madurez para comprender los derechos Miranda, o lo que significa renunciar a ellos, encontró la Asociación Americana de Psicología en sus estudios, reportó el artículo de The Imprint-Youth and Family News.

Sin embargo, la ley fue llamada “innecesaria” por algunos sheriffs y fiscales a lo largo del estado, quienes dijeron que la ley podría hacer ciertos casos más difíciles de procesar.

“Atándole las manos a los que aplican la ley impidiéndoles investigar apropiadamente, significa que nosotros dejamos a muchos menores en riesgo,” dijo Geraldine Wong-Williams, fiscal del Condado de Orange,

hablando de parte de la Asociación de Fiscales de California y la Oficina Fiscal del Condado de Orange, ella añadió, interrogando la juventud quien pueden ser ambos, víctimas o perpetradores de algún caso de asalto sexual de juveniles puede entorpecer la investigación, reportó el artículo.

El fiscal Boudin dijo, la habilidad de su oficina en procesar los crímenes no ha sido impactada negativamente por las nuevas protecciones legales en su ciudad o condado. El tomó en cuenta las cámaras de seguridad, incremento de evidencias forenses y datos electrónicos, y los fiscales toman en cuenta las confesiones “menos y menos,” dijo el artículo.

California e Illinois son los únicos dos estados que requieren un abogado que explique a los jóvenes de 15 años o menos, lo que significa el impacto de renunciar a sus derechos Miranda. Otros estados están trabajando en leyes similares que dirigen las interrogaciones de la policía con adolescentes en su custodia.

La SB 203 no entrara en efecto hasta el año 2024; bajo la actual ley se extienden las protecciones solo hasta la edad de 15 años, dijo el artículo.

El proyecto AB 2054 cambia a trabajadores de salud mental en ‘first responders’

Nuevas leyes exigen a los Departamentos de Policía poner más atención cuando intervienen en la comunidad

Por Heriberto Arredondo
Escritor Contribuyente

En solo 11 segundos hubo 11 disparos y una madre perdió su vida, después que la policía respondiera a una llamada de crisis mental. Un hombre perdió su vida durante 40 segundos a las manos de la policía, después de sufrir un episodio de crisis mental.

El proyecto de ley AB 2054, que es el acta de *Reacción de Comunidad, Iniciativa Para Fortalecer los Sistemas de Emergencias* (CRISES por sus siglas en inglés), requiere que programas que apoyan la comunidad intervengan en vez de la policía, en situaciones de crisis mentales u otras situaciones de emergencia, reportó Quinci LeGardye para el Oakland Post.

Una en cada 4 personas pierde la vida a manos de la policía mientras sufren un episodio mental y en unos casos siendo desamparados, reflejó un estudio hecho por el Centro de Promoción de Tratamiento (*Treatment Advocacy Center*) en el 2015, según el artículo.

“Les tomo 40 segundos para matar a Stephen, 40 segundos”, dijo Addie Kitchen en una conferencia de prensa el 22 de Septiembre. Kitchen es la abuela de Steven Tyler quien murió en Abril, ella añadió “Cuando el oficial caminó adentro y miro que era negro y desamparado, ya tenía en mente lo que necesitaba hacer. Él no pensó en, tu sabes, tal vez de tomar un paso atrás.”

El anfitrión de la conferencia de prensa fue el concejal Sydney Kamlager (D-Los Angeles) quien es el autor de AB 2054.

La policía de San Leandro mató a Taylor en Abril 2020 mientras sufría un episodio de crisis mental además siendo desamparado, dijo el Post. El dolor de su muerte todavía le pesa a su abuela.

“Nadie en el mundo debería sufrir la pérdida de alguien por la policía. Si hubiera muerto porque lo atropelló un auto, eso no hubiera sido tan duro”, expreso Kitchen al Post. “Pero cuando la policía se supone los protegen-los están asesinando porque somos negros, porque somos desamparados, porque estamos sufriendo una crisis mental, nosotros necesitamos ayuda. Nosotros necesitamos ayuda y estamos rezando para que el gobernador entienda por lo que estamos pasando.”

Kamlager es parte del Electorado Legislativo Negro de California, y explicó como las interacciones negativas con la policía afectan a la comunidad. “Interacciones con la policía puede inducir terror en muchas personas que históricamente han sido traumatados por los que ejercen la ley”, dijo Kamlager, reportó el Post. “Con frecuencia estas interacciones son letales. A menudo, las personas nada más quieren soluciones para sus problemas. Ellos solo desean que la emergencia o la crisis se resuelvan, pero tienen miedo de hablarle a la policía debido

de hablarle a la policía debido a las consecuencias”.

“Nadie en el mundo debería sufrir la pérdida de alguien por la policía. Si hubiera muerto porque lo atropelló un auto, eso no hubiera sido tan duro”.

—Addie Kitchen
(Abuela de Steven Tyler)

La policía solamente recibe 8 horas de entrenamiento acerca de intervención en casos de salud mental, comparado con 60 horas de entrenamiento con armas de fuego, según un estudio hecho por el Foro de Investigación Ejecutivo de Policía “*Police Executive Research Forum*”, reportó el artículo.

La AB 2054 podría ayudar personas necesitadas de vivienda y que requieren ayuda para la salud mental. También proveería fondos económicos a organizaciones de la comunidad que ya existen como la *Mental Health First* (Salud Mental Primero) en Sacramento, declaró el artículo.

“Esto es reacción comunitaria a crisis comunitaria, y ya estamos haciendo esto. Nosotros estamos allí”, dijo Cat Brooks, cofundador del proyecto anti terror a la policía. “Ay organizaciones al nivel local como la mía, pero las estamos manejando con muy bajo presupuesto, gracias a voluntarios que dan generosamente de todo corazón, porque nosotros sabemos y estamos cansados de que miembros de nuestra comunidad sigan muriendo”.

Myra Micalizio, una madre, murió a manos de un teniente del Departamento de Sheriff del condado Butte en Abril 2018. Ella fue balaceada 11 veces a solo 11 segundos de que llegara la policía.

“La agencia de policía no llevo para proteger y servir ese día. La agencia de policía llevo y mataron a mi mama que estaba en crisis mental”, dijo Hali Mckelvie hija de Myra Micalizio en el artículo.

“Ellos le dieron una mirada, pusieron sus prejuicios, y se dijeron esta mujer es una amenaza a la comunidad y es mi decisión de matarla”, dijo Mckelvie en el artículo.

La legislatura del estado redactó la AB 2054 y varios otros proyectos de ley que tiene que firmar el Gobernador Newsom antes de Septiembre 30, y así se convierta en ley automáticamente, dijo el artículo.

“AB 2054 es verdaderamente una carta de amor a la posibilidad, una idea para que las comunidades puedan cuidarse uno al otro”, dijo Lateefah Simon, Directora de Comité del BART (transportación rápida del Area de la Bahía) en el artículo. “Que las organizaciones locales basadas en la comunidad y profesionales entrenados en comunidades seleccionadas, reciban los recursos y la oportunidad de ser una fuerza adicional para crear seguridad”, concluyó la Directora Simon.

La anarquía gobierna en las cárceles de Nueva York

Por Raymond Torres
Escritor de Journalism Guild

Las condiciones dentro de la prisión de Rikers Island continúan alzando preocupaciones después de seis prisioneros muertos, cargos de homicidio, negligencia criminal contra un capitán, y por la libertad accidental de un alegado asesino, informo el *New York Times*.

Una ola de violencia ha dominado a Rikers Island, mientras oficiales, agotados por estar trabajando sin descanso turnos triples y hasta cuádruples, siendo extremadamente agotador para muchos de ellos.

La falta de empleados ha provocado el cierre en otras instituciones. “El penetrante nivel de desorden y caos en la institución es alarmante”, dijo Steve J. Martin, el experto en correcciones, designado a vigilar el sistema carcelario, que la está pasando muy mal. Los problemas que están infectando el departamento carcelario que están penetrando, son sistemáticos y profundos y han sido traspasados y aceptados por todos los niveles de empleados y por la administración.

Steve J Martin también ha notado que el índice del uso de fuerza llevo muy por encima de lo normal en cinco años.

Más de un año después que

el COVID 19 llegara al sistema carcelario de Nueva York y enfermara a miles, el Departamento de Correcciones (DOC por sus siglas en inglés) empezó a sumergirse en una crisis administrativa, violencia y muerte, reportó el periódico.

El Departamento de Correcciones de la Ciudad de Nueva York tuvo problemas después que salió un reporte en el *New York Daily News*, en marzo, que alegó que más de 1,500 llamadas telefónicas entre acusados y sus abogados fueron grabadas ilegalmente.

A finales del mes anterior varios oficiales y otros empleados del departamento enfrentaron cargos por soborno y por traer contrabando dentro de la prisión. Reportó el *Daily News*.

Los guardias entrevistados describieron que estaban muy cansados para poder separar a los presos por peleas, completar documentos y hacer reportes administrativos. Algunos oficiales dijeron, los horarios son muy largos y esto provoca irritabilidad e impaciencia al trabajar con prisioneros.

Los oficiales carcelarios dijeron que más de 2,000 oficiales – más del 20% de la fuerza laboral – están ausentes por enfermedad, o incapacidad laboral, y la moral del personal está muy baja.

La falta de personal ha provocado que los residentes encarcelados falten a sus reuniones con sus abogados y a tener acceso limitado a servicios básicos como a la tienda de comestibles, servicios médicos y salud mental, así como a la biblioteca legal. Reportó el periódico

Yo puedo asegurarles que nosotros hemos tomado todas las medidas de seguridad que estamos adecuadamente preparados de personal y que la operación sigue adelante, dijo la comisionada Cynthia Brann del (DOC) de la Ciudad de Nueva York (NYC), quien renunció en mayo.

Pero según el administrador federal en su reporte de 342 páginas revela un panorama alarmante y diferente. Intentos de suicidio e incidentes de hacerse daño propio también han estado aumentando en las cárceles de la ciudad. En marzo, 148 personas encarceladas se hicieron daño a sí mismos – 12 con heridas de seriedad, según datos de los Servicios de Salud del Departamento de Correcciones.

La respuesta a los intentos de suicidios ha sido inadecuada debido a falta de entrenamiento del personal. El DOC dice que hasta mayo, solo el 10% de los 9,000 oficiales de NYC y sus supervisores recibieron un curso requerido en la prevención de

suicidios.

Enfatizando el tema, fiscales de Manhattan presentaron en abril cargos contra la capitana de correccionales Rebecca Hillman. Los cargos son de – homicidio criminal negligente porque ella dejó a Ryan Wilson colgado en una celda por 15 minutos en noviembre pasado y alegan que ella no permitió a ningún oficial ayudarlo.

Thomas Carlos Camacho, de 48 años, estaba en una unidad de observación de salud mental en Rikers Island este marzo cuando fue encontrado insensible y de rodillas con su cabeza metida en la ranura de la puerta donde ponen las esposas para maniatarlo, más conocido en inglés como “cuffing slot.”

Camacho, falleció en un hospital después que le habían concedido “libertad compasiva” de la cárcel. Un abogado representando a la familia dijo que Camacho debía de haber sido mantenido bajo vigilancia constante. El hijo de Camacho, Kevin Carlo, dijo que su padre sufría de esquizofrenia.

“Él era un hombre temeroso de Dios,” dijo Carlo. “él tenía dos hijos y nietos quien lo amaban. Nosotros simplemente queremos respuestas. Queremos que alguien tome responsabilidad”.

Padres e hijos, hermanos, amigos y encarcelados marcharon lentamente en silencio para honrar a aquellos que perdieron sus vidas en la pandemia mortal del coronavirus. Imágenes, dibujos y fotos de las personas que fallecieron fueron llevadas cerca del corazón de los que marchaban a seis pies de distancia y usando mascararas para protegerse del enemigo microscópico.



SOLIDARIDAD SILENCIOSA

Por Carlos Drouaillet
Escritor
Editado por
Tare Beltranchuc

Lamentando Nuestras Pérdidas (MOL) efectúa una marcha silenciosa en el campo deportivo de San Quentin, en honor a las vidas perdidas por coronavirus



Fotos por Phoeun You, SQNews

La hermandad de los prisioneros en San Quentin hizo acto de presencia desde las primeras horas de la mañana del 5 de noviembre, cuando los voluntarios y trabajadores hacían los preparativos para el evento Mourning Our Losses (MOL).

MOL, es una entidad no lucrativa que tiene sus oficinas centrales en Texas, creada para honrar a todos aquellos que fallecieron mientras vivían o trabajaban detrás de las rejas y para detectar y sacar a la luz el costo moral de la encarcelación masiva nacional, de acuerdo con la página Web de la Organización.

La cofundadora de MOL Kirsten Pickering, apoyo el evento para dar la oportunidad a la comunidad de San Quentin de reunirse y honrar la memoria de las vidas de aquellos que fallecieron durante la pandemia de COVID-19 y así mismo celebrar la vida de ellos.

El evento dió inicio en forma muy emotiva con un desfile en silencio en muestra de solidaridad, mientras se oía la canción "Adiós" (Good bye). Al avanzar, los prisioneros, empleados y voluntarios sostenían nostálgicamente en sus manos fotos y bosquejos de amigos y familiares que perdieron la vida detrás de las rejas. Al término de esta caminata se rindió tributo a las personas que perdieron la vida con un momento de silencio, seguido por 27 campanadas que representa la infinidad en la religión Budista.

En este significativo evento asistió personal educativo de Mount Tamalpais College (MTC), voluntarios de los programas de ayuda propia, líderes religiosos y otros visitantes. Así mismo, este acontecimiento contó con la participación de violinistas, poetas, guitarristas y cantantes, quienes presentaron canciones apropiadas a la ocasión. Los oradores ofrecieron palabras de ánimo e inspiración a los asistentes, destacando un mensaje de comprensión, amor y consuelo a la audiencia.

Entre los presentes se encontraba Nicolas Appert de 25 años de edad, un interno que llegó al evento para honrar la memoria de su amigo Mike Hampton. Appert dijo al SQNews, "Hampton era como un hermano mayor para mí, su partida me lastimó mucho pero yo sé que él está en Gloria."

Pickering expresó, como ella se preocupó cuando la gente infectada de COVID estaba muriendo en las prisiones, condados, cárceles juveniles y centros de detenciones de inmigración.

Ella inició con MOL como voluntaria después de que ella leyó los estudios de la Universidad de California en Los Angeles (UCLA). "Proyecto de Estadísticas de COVID-19 Detrás de las Rejas", que muestra que los brotes y muertes fueron ignorados.

Bruce "Bro J" Bowman de 66 años de edad, experimentó los estragos de la pandemia muy de cerca. La administración lo trasladó de la Unidad "H" (área de dormitorios) a una celda del "Edificio Norte" donde supuestamente estaría más protegido. Bowman dijo, "Por un lado quisiera acusar a la administración por las inconveniencias, pero por otro lado entiendo que la pandemia fue algo nuevo para San Quentin y para el mundo entero." El agregó, "Cuando el sargento Polanco sucumbió al Covid todos nosotros en el edificio "Edificio Norte" sentimos la pérdida de un hombre bueno".

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Kelsey Kauffman, fundó el programa, Mourning Our Losses, (MOL). Ella trabajó y estudió acerca de las prisiones por 50 años. Posteriormente dirigió el programa de colegio en la prisión de mujeres en Indiana por seis años, siempre apoyando a los encarcelados. Al darse cuenta que los políticos y oficiales no estaban poniendo atención a la sobrepoblación en las prisiones, ella usó su energía y tiempo para disminuir el número de prisioneros(as).

Giovani Mayo lamentó la pérdida de su compañero de celda, quien murió días después de ser infectado por el Covid 19 en el condado de Los Angeles. Mayo expresó, "Para mí era solo mi amigo, pero pienso que es una situación muy difícil para la familia, sus padres, hermanos ya que es algo doloroso que nunca se les va a olvidar". Danny Chairez se enteró a través de una llamada telefónica, que su tía y abuelo habían sido infectados. Chairez reveló al SQNews, "Unas semanas después mi tía murió, pero la salud de mi abuelo mejoró y pudo regresar a casa. Sin embargo, la salud de mi abuelo se agravo nuevamente y regresó al hospital donde meses después falleció sin que nadie pudiera visitarlos".

Ascensión Hernández comentó que durante la pandemia le fue "De la fregada". Él se infectó estando en la Prisión Delano. Hernández dijo, "experimente síntomas de presión sanguínea muy baja, respiración dificultosa y falta de apetito. Sin embargo, estoy muy agradecido con las enfermeras y doctores de Delano porque hicieron un buen trabajo, de lo contrario no estaría dando esta entrevista en vivo".

Al final del programa, las conversaciones continuaron entre organizadores, internos y visitantes, quienes coincidieron que lo más triste de perder un ser querido, fué el no poder despedirse de ellos.

—Richard Fernández contribuyó con este artículo.

Ishmael Freelon steps down as IBL Commissioner

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

Intramural Basketball League (IBL) Commissioner Ishmael Freelon is stepping down more than a decade after he co-founded the league. He hopes that whoever replaces him can handle the responsibility.

"I'm stepping down as commissioner because it's just time to move on," said Freelon.

The commissioner is not pointing a finger at anybody. He just does not feel like being responsible for the league anymore. He said that the challenges of leading the league have changed over the years.

"I'm tired of dealing with guys who may still have that prison mentality that they came to prison with. It's a lot of new people here at the prison and some guys never had any structure of the rules. Back in the day when guys like Anthony



Phoenu You, SQNews

Cofounder of the Q's Intramural Basketball League, Ishmael Freelon has served as League Commissioner for over ten years. Recent changes in the prison's population have led him to turn his responsibilities over to someone new.

'Half-Man Half-Amazon' Ammons were here, guys like him had different attitudes and were teachable. There are still some guys

here with some good attitudes, though, but new guys (are) coming to the prison and that's the possible challenge," said Freelon.

Over the years, many of the league's players had to be traded and some have even quit. Despite all the ups and downs, Freelon still said that the "league was a success."

"I'm getting older and I might not have the vigor in dealing with the new round of people here at the prison," Freelon said. "I still want them to get the opportunity to experience the good of playing the top sport here at the prison."

A prospect to replace Freelon as commissioner is Jamal "Dr. J" Green. He hopes to get the opportunity to change the face of the league.

"I plan to change the league and bring teammates together because it's more than just basketball we are playing," Green said. "I want to show the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) that it's more than just groups that help us. I plan to be that good example for the youth to emulate, on and off the court. On the court we build

character and other personal growth that helps us in our rehabilitation."

Green was one of Freelon's top choices among potential replacements. He saw special qualities in Green's personal development over the years.

But Freelon's choice must be approved by a league committee. General Manager Brian Asey hopes that whoever takes the commissioner's position will inspire San Quentin's new athletes and young players to play with the same enthusiasm as those who played before them.

"Because those who have since paroled are living good productive lives," said Asey. "The ball we play in here is more than just basketball. It's about the relationships we make with those we meet who take time out of their lives to come in here to support us. We don't ever want to take that for granted."

Jamaal "Do It All" Harrison supports Green becom-

ing the next commissioner. He said that over the years he and Green have become good friends. Harrison said that Green is dedicated to the sport and he would be a good choice.

Commissioner Freelon said that whoever takes his place will have a huge responsibility. But the character that the job builds is worth the responsibility it demands.

"I learned that communication is the key. Listening to others is the foundation. Meet people where they are at. Because some people are struggling with finding out who they are as a person. Sacrifice your time and be willing to hear people. Because we all have something to give. We have something that others can use. Know that there is no room for big 'Is' and little 'Us.' I learned that as commissioner you have to have thick skin because you will be tested," said Freelon.

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

After a strange start to the day, runner J. Strange, 46, obliterated the competition at the San Quentin 1000 Mile Club's first three-mile race since the COVID-19 shutdown.

With smooth, easy strides and the long, lean body of an ultra-runner, Strange took off like a light, crossing the finish line in an impressive time of 18 minutes and 31 seconds.

"I got out fast and I ultimately ran a good race like I wanted," said Strange, who battled COVID-19 for a month and initially experienced some heart trouble.

After a delay in the opening of the main exercise yard, the sun looked happy and there was a comfortably cool breeze dancing

against the skin. The lines on the running track were freshly painted. The black 1000 Mile Club banner hung on the chain link fence of the ARC trailer and waves of wind caressed it.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, none of the volunteer coaches were allowed into the prison. Tommy Wickerd hung up the picture of the club's head coach, Frank Ruona, from the iron bars of the baseball scoreboard. The club's president then stood by with ink pen and clipboard in hand, signing up participants the same way he saw his "prison dad" Coach Ruona do on numerous occasions.

Twenty-five men signed up

and began warming up their legs and lungs and meditatively preparing themselves to break the red caution finish line tape. Four others were handed lime green stopwatches to keep track of lap counts, courtesy of athletic Coach K. Bhatt.

Among the lap counters was Mark Jarosik, the team's fastest runner since 2019, who was noticeably absent from the race. He is still nursing an ankle injury and was advised by doctors to sit this one out. All of the men gathered before the race to take a team photo and a photo of themselves standing next to Coach Ruona.

Without Jarosik, no one was in shouting distance of

Strange for the entire race. Strange ran his first lap in a blistering time of 1:17 and his first mile in a time of 5:53.

Steve Reitz, a 1000 Mile Club veteran, turned in a smooth and calculated race, running just under seven minutes a mile to finish in second place in a time of 20:50. "It feels good to be back out here again," Reitz said. "It feels like we're finally getting past COVID and I am just grateful to be running again."

Mike Ybarra, who has been with the club for the past two years, snuggled in behind Reitz for the entire race and managed to take third with a time of 21:04, which he said is 17 seconds

faster than his time in 2020. "I felt great today; it's great to be back running," said Ybarra. "It's an anxiety relief." Ybarra and Reitz had their own battles with COVID-19 but said they were able to recover quickly without any complications.

Since the outbreak, the 1000 Mile Club has also signed up a lot of newcomers; among them Steve Warren and Richard Acosta. Acosta ran a personal best of 22:12. Coming in behind Acosta were John Levin (22:43) and Wickerd (23:22). Warren ran a modest and respectable time of 24:04.

"I'm excited to be a part of this club," said Warren. "I didn't know if they were

going to have the race or not. I ran down here just in time. I look forward to running with this club."

The race was originally scheduled to take place on Sept. 4 but was cancelled due to the Delta variant trying to run a race of its own through the prison. It almost didn't happen again on the anniversary of 9/11. But the yard opened at 10 a.m.

The start time for the race was set for 10:45 a.m. Ten strides into the start of the race, a security alarm sounded and the men had to sit on the ground. Ten minutes later the alarm cleared and the race began again and went off without a hitch.

"We have a very excited group of guys out here ready to run," said Wickerd. "This was a fun and very successful day. I look forward to our next race."

Strange leads pack in 3-mile race

WNBA champ captures award



Illustration by AJ Hardy, SQNews

Maya Moore was honored with the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage after her fight for justice on behalf of Jonathan Irons.

that positively impacts the world — something Moore challenged viewers to do as she spoke to audiences watching the broadcast of the award ceremony on ABC.

"These sacrifices we make in sports are great, but I would invite you to see them as just pointers to the sacrifices of life that matter most, the ones that are centered around helping each other live to the fullest," Moore said. "Sacrificing the power you have to humanize someone else. Power is not meant to be gripped with a clenched fist or to be hoarded. But power is meant to be handled generously so we can thoughtfully empower one another to thrive in our communities for love's sake, championing our humanity before our ambitions."

That fight for humanity transitioned into a fight for love. The two fell in love during Moore's initial quest for justice for Irons. He had been sitting in a prison cell for 22 years when they were introduced to each other through the prison ministry program. Moore became deeply involved in Irons' case and began a cam-

paign for his freedom, which led to her creating the Win with Justice organization. She put her WNBA career on pause to focus totally on Irons' freedom, even though he was just her friend at the time.

The two are now married. After Irons was released, he popped the question. At the award ceremony, the two sat side by side during the event at a table while the rain sprinkled down from the sky. On stage Moore proceeded with her speech.

"Jonathan, I'm just so happy for you. Y'all, let's just say hallelujah, first of all, that Jonathan is sitting here right now," Moore said. "I don't ever want that to get old, just the miracle of your life and who you are."

Her four WNBA championships, two Olympic gold medals, one WNBA MVP award and three All-Star MVPs — as well as her many other accolades — didn't compare to her passion for fighting for prison reform.

Moore spoke about "the courage it takes to love when it's hard," said the *People* article. The fight for her husband's freedom could have been easy if the previous judge had known about the evidence presented to the judge that freed Irons.

Just like all those who received the Ashe award before her, Moore's name stands in the presence of greatness.

—Timothy Hicks

WNBA coming to the Town?

On November 16, the Oakland City Council voted unanimously for the African American Sports and Entertainment Group (AASEG) to enter into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA), for the group to buy the City of Oakland's half interest in the Coliseum Complex, reported the *Oakland Post*.

After lengthy conversations with the City Council members in February 2021, the AASEG received an impressive (6-0-2) vote to move forward with the process.

Many new supporters have linked up and joined the group's efforts to bring the WNBA to Oakland, along with other housing and economic opportunities.

WNBA Champion and four-time WNBA All-Star Alana Beard is one of the recent supporters who have joined the group, said the *Post*.

"I'm grateful for this opportunity and excited to help bring a WNBA team to Oakland. The AASEG has done an incredible job of getting us to this point and has garnered tremendous support from influencers in the local community. I am hopeful our vision, passion and collective efforts will lead to the return of professional basketball in Oakland," said Beard.

Other ex-WNBA players have banded with Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan and a host of

supporters. Nancy Lieberman is one of the most celebrated WNBA basketball players in the group who supports the agenda of the AASEG.

Lieberman embodies the meaning of what the AASEG is pressing for, said the *Post*. She has a legacy of being an advocate for social and racial equality throughout her career. She also is a big supporter of the minority community, to whom she gives credit for supporting her and inspiring her through the years.

Lieberman gave Vice Mayor Kaplan praise for what she calls "a full court press-style" for the way she supports the AASEG — which in turn caters to women sports, housing and jobs for the homeless and formally incarcerated populations.

Lieberman's business partner, Gary Reeves, is advocating for a home ownership pathway to make it easier for those who want to pursue their dreams of home ownership. Lieberman and Reeves' group provided over \$1 million dollars in free PPE that serviced under privileged communities.

Oakland natives Shonda Scott and Samantha Wise are accomplished businesswomen who are also members of the AASEG. Alicia Garza, co-founder of the International Black Lives Matter Movement, and Gina Johnson Lillard, Reginal Director for the

"I'm grateful for this opportunity and excited to help bring a WNBA team to Oakland... I am hopeful our vision... will lead to the return of professional basketball in Oakland."

—Alana Beard
All-Star WNBA Champion

Western Region of Mothers of Professional Basketball and the mother of basketball super star Damian Lillard, are supporters of the venture as well, said the article.

Gladys Green, 97, is an East Oakland spiritual leader with a huge presence. She is part of the pack leading the charge and fought for decades for equal rights for African Americans. Also in the group is AASEG leader Ray Bobbitt, one of the few males in the group.

The AASEG sent a powerful message to the council expressing the importance of women in leadership positions and the ownership of a WNBA franchise in the Bay Area.

Little girls and women who love basketball may be inspired to know that someone who supports the rights of women's and girls' sports is on board with the possibility of the WNBA coming to Oakland.

—Timothy Hicks

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

SQ's All-Madden Football team tried to kick off a season this year, to no avail. However, it held one exhibition game with intertwining messages of inspiration and social justice recognition, all in honor of Coach Dwight "Sleepy" Kennedy scoring a "touchdown" by making parole.

With its 62-2 win over newcomers The New Era Squad, opening day for the All-Madden team marked the end of an era for Coach Sleepy.

Kennedy was granted parole earlier this year and has since paroled from San Quentin. He left these words with his players:

"All-Madden is a platform that has brought and will continue to bring people together. I especially want the young men who participate in the football program here to learn and build life skills and to teach each other to be social. It's important to me that they become men of good moral character and continue that path once they are released. I want this game to really mean something to the youngsters."

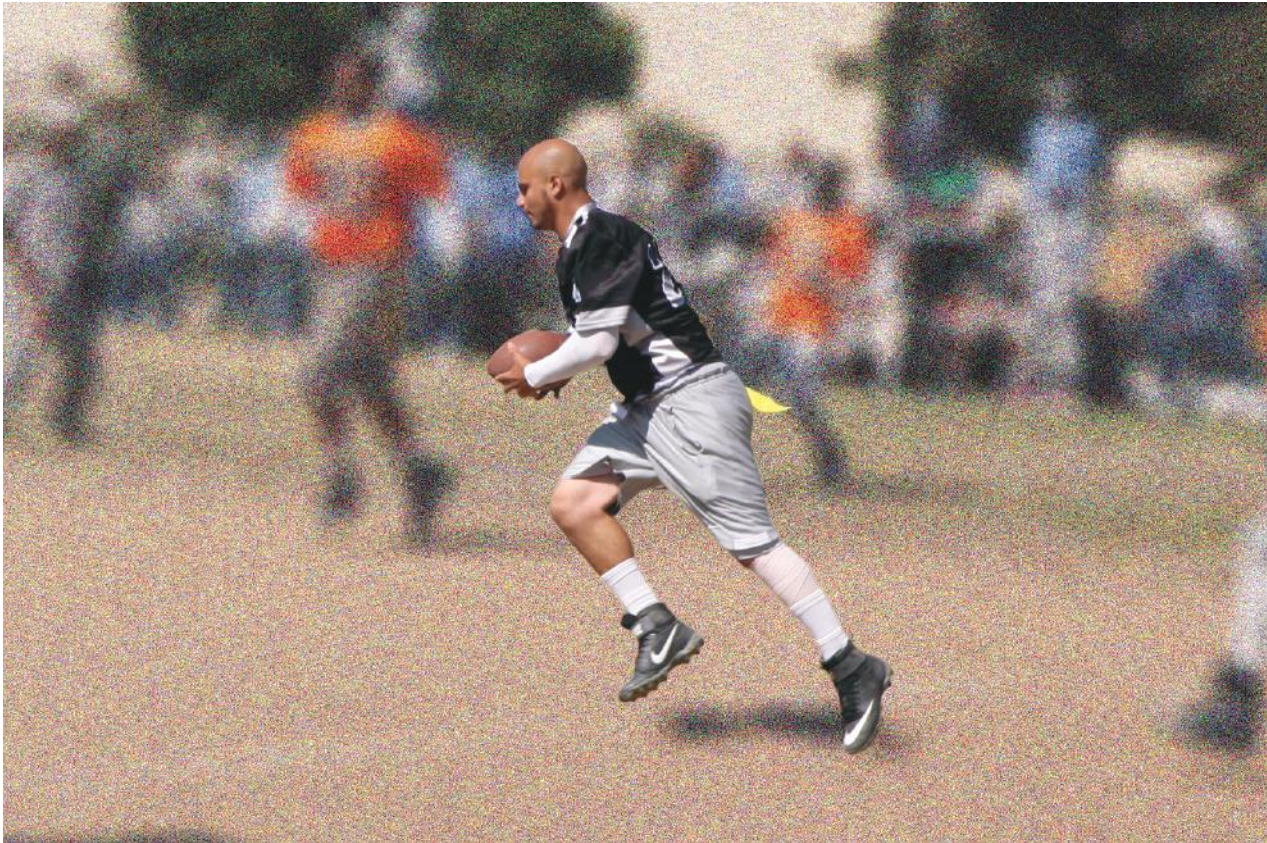
About the game: It took place on the baseball field on a Friday morning. The sky was clear with a mild breeze, and the atmosphere was one of excitement and electricity. Two teams took photos and gave interviews to San Quentin's TV media team headed by Brian Asey and Joshua "JB" Burton.

Before the game began, the *Star-Spangled Banner* was played — and several players from both squads took a knee in recognition of the social injustices perpetrated against people of color in the United States.

"It was a group thing that we did for social injustice and to take a stand for something that matters," said All-Madden center Jonathan Jimenez.

Defensive lineman Gregory

All-Madden's exhibition game



Original photo by Phoeun You, SQNews // Illustration by AJ Hardy, SQNews

Making a run for the fences: "All-Purpose" Trey clutches the ball and makes a sprint for the packed dirt of the end zone, contributing to the 62-to-2 point beat-down issued by the All-Madden Team to the New Era Squad. Trey, who recently regained his freedom, was named defensive player of the game.

"JuneBey" McDonald said, "I participated in the kneeling to support the youngsters. I understand the struggles of our youth and I support the Black Lives Matter movement. I want to see justice for the lives lost in a system that regards the lives of people of color as insignificant and disposable."

As the game-play began to build, former Seattle Seahawks "Legion of Boom" NFL player Brandon Browner gave his perspective on the event:

"Man, this is cool. This has a feel of normalcy to it and

gives us an opportunity to be out here to listen to music and to just have some fun. I am not out here to play, but the foundation is great."

Jamaal "Do It All" Harrison, Carrington "Brother C" Russele, and Anthony "T-Bone" Taylor were on the PA.

"We are going to call it as we see it," said Harrison. "If they can't play or catch, even though this is all in fun, they are going to get clowned. Make no mistake about it."

Both teams came together for an uplifting fellowship

prayer of praise, forgiveness and love given by Coach Kennedy. All-Madden won the coin toss by Darnell "Cleveland D" Godfrey.

On the opening drive, quarterback Brandon Riddle-Terrell threw a pass across the middle to stand-out receiver Montrell, who shook off two defenders to go 20 yards for an All-Madden touchdown. A two-point conversion attempt was successful, giving the All-Madden team an 8-0 starting lead.

"Before the game I imag-

ined I would throw at least two interceptions, bounce back and take the team to victory," said Riddle-Terrell. "I did see that. However, when I was getting into game mode, I took the time to talk with my grandpa who passed away a few weeks earlier — which was a tradition he and I had — and I knew the game would be a success."

In orange jerseys, the New Era team, with QB Charles "Pookie" Sylvester, lined up but went three-and-out, while play-by-play announcers Har-

ison and Russelle gave Sylvester a good dose of ridicule for his ineffective play.

With a 34-0 lead at the start of the third quarter, in his last game as a player, new Head Coach Bryant showed off his playing skills with a catch from QB Riddle-Terrell that Bryant ran for an All-Madden touchdown, giving his team a 40-0 boost.

Standouts on the All-Madden team were wide receiver #23 Montrell, who had three touchdowns in the first half; defensive player of the game "All-Purpose" Trey; Delvon Adams; and #18 Marshall.

On the other side of the ball, the New Era team changed QBs regularly as they tried to mount an offense against the dominant play of All-Madden.

The most notable standouts for the orange jersey team were #30 D. "Savage" Cox, #88 Southwood cornerback, #15 Supreme and #25 DeWayne Scott.

"Moving forward, we want to develop the new guys and continue to build on the platform of inclusion," said New Era's Head Coach Jerry "JB" Brown.

"With the enthusiasm that I see in these guys, I will do all that I can to get them there. I want to also thank Coach Bhatt and Lt. Robinson. Without those two, we could not have had the camaraderie that we had on the field today. We would not have a sports program to participate in. They have all of our utmost respect and gratitude."

To inspire the young athletes, Coach Kennedy delivered some encouraging advice:

"My outgoing advice for future players: stay focused and get to know yourself while you're here. Get involved in self-help programs. Take advantage of what's being offered around you. Play sports but don't become the sport. Most importantly, don't allow your situation to dictate your life."

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

Markelle Taylor, formerly incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison, has broken the three-hour marathon barrier, according to the *Marin Independent Journal*.

Running 26.2 miles at such a rapid pace, averaging 6 minutes and 50 seconds per mile or less, is a goal coveted by competitive long-distance runners. Taylor, 49, has received praise for both his running prowess and for his positive conduct since paroling in 2018 after serving 18 years.

"It's remarkable to see how well he is doing," said running coach Diana Fitzpatrick. "Having difficulties in life, like everyone has, is tough. But in the

grand scheme of things, he is doing amazingly well."

Taylor broke the three-hour mark at the Avenue of the Giants Marathon in northern California on Sept. 19 with a time of 2:56:19, earning him fifth place overall, and first in the men's 40-49 age group.

This is no surprise to those who ran with him on the yard as members of San Quentin's 1,000 Mile Running Club. Taylor was nicknamed "Markelle the Gazelle" and still holds all of the running club's records for those under 50 years of age, including a time of three hours and 16 minutes in the 105-lap marathon, according to club coach Frank Ruona.

"He made it look easy, and helped inspire me to be the runner I am today," said club president Tommy Wickerd. "I will always remember the first time I ran 10 miles. Markelle stood there in the rain yelling 'Let's go Big Tommy!' on every single lap, all 40 of them."

Taylor also qualified for and ran in the Boston Marathon, and recently completed the 110th Annual Dipsea Race in Marin County. According to the *Journal*, nine runners represented the 1,000 Mile Running Club in the race including: Taylor, club coaches, and formerly incarcerated runners Jonathan Chiu, Lee Goins, Eddie Herena, and Chris Schuhmacher.

"He's part of an accomplished group of runners now," said San Quentin resident Raul Higgins. "He put in the work, and it shows if you set a goal and pursue it with determination you can achieve great things." Higgins knows what he's talking about, given he once raced in an Iron Man Triathlon, which consists of swimming 2.4 miles, biking 118 miles, then running a marathon non-stop.

In addition to his running, Taylor stays busy with steady employment and managing his own sports clothing line, as well as meeting his parole obligations.

"I just want to help people," Taylor said. "That's why I'm

always working in the service industry. I love seeing people smile because someone is talking to them and helping them. Hearing them say, 'This made my day,' makes it all worth it."

Taylor espoused the benefits of running and the support runners give to one another.

"The running community is so profoundly beautiful and sweet," Taylor said. "They'll tell me we have to go for a run because they know mentally that keeps me balanced. There is no judgment there."

Coach Fitzpatrick noted the importance of running in Taylor's current success, as well as in his personal growth over

the years.

"Running keeps you focused and on a good path," she said. "It provides that discipline and framework, and a goal that is really healthy. A lot of the club learned that on the inside and it's really helping them a lot on the outside, like it does for all of us."

Taylor is thoughtful and grateful when reflecting back on his incarceration and hard earned freedom.

"All I had to go through in prison actually helped me navigate life's situations today," Taylor said. "I hope if someone reads this they get inspired. If you don't give up trying to find your authentic self, eventually you will get there. I am not my past. I am living in the moment to have a better future."

TIER TALK

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

Las Vegas Raiders' receiver Henry Ruggs was recently involved in a deadly car accident that killed a young lady, according to a recent local news report. Ruggs, who was allegedly under the influence of alcohol when the accident happened, was immediately released from the team. I thought about his situation, and I couldn't help but think about all the loss that was involved. Not only the loss of life, which is extremely incomparable, but, also the loss of Ruggs' career and all of his misfortune due to the incident, and how he must

On loss and tragedy with 'FM' Gurley

be feeling now that the initial impact is over. Someone who could relate to the impact of loss and misfortune as an athlete is Jermaine "FM" Gurley.

TH: What sports you participate in here at SQ?

JG: I play football for team Hit Squad in the intramural league. I play defensive and offensive line.

TH: How long have you been playing sports and football?

JG: I been playing sports ever since my school days when I was in the Oakland Unified School District. When I was in high school I loved wrestling, but I played

football too. I received the Championship ring when my team won the Silver Bowl in high school. I also went to Cal State East Bay on an academic scholarship.

TH: Oh, that's big. I can imagine that must have been one of the pivotal parts of your life. What did you like most of all about being in college?

JG: Aw man, most of all, what was most gratifying to me was working for the Community Youth Center where I got to work with the kids. Because I know that choices are different when you are younger versus when you are older.

TH: That's true. And the

decisions you might make when you are young could definitely determine your future. That's why it was good that you were catching them while they were young to hopefully teach them the right way wouldn't be so hard growing up. How was growing up for you?

JG: Growing up in West Oakland, there were certain elements there that were out of control. And that environment did impact me in a negative way, even though I grew up in a two-parent household. My dad used to always challenge me and say, "Try working." And he would tell me to stay in school. So

that stuck with me. I found out that I could make more money from going to school than being on the streets hustling. What my dad told me all the time was, "A slow nickel beats a fast dime."

TH: That's true. Living fast can almost certainly lead to your life being cut short. Which brings me to this question. Did you hear about the Raiders' receiver, Henry Ruggs?

JG: Yeah I did. When I first got the news, I compared his ordeal to some other person who is privileged. A White person with celebrity status. And since he is Black, their outcomes will be much different. However, I did feel sad for him because I believe that he really didn't set out to actually hurt someone.

TH: Maybe not, but he was

drinking and driving allegedly.

JG: Yeah, we are taught not to drink and drive. Especially while in a residential area. He's lucky that he didn't kill his self, too.

TH: I know you can relate to his situation. What have you learned since being in your current situation and losing all the things and opportunities you've lost?

JG: My situation is an eye opener. I hope that whoever comes up after me would see what happened to me and learn from it. It taught me to appreciate life and what I have. And the blessing for me about this experience is that at least it's not the end of the road. Who knows what the end of the road for Henry Ruggs will look like in his situation.

How to navigate healthcare in the community



Connecting to the care you need and deserve in a timely fashion is important when you get out of prison. There are different kinds of health care you can receive in the community. The kind of care you choose depends on ongoing or new health issues, the urgency of your problem, and your health insurance coverage.

What is primary care? Primary care in the community aims to address your everyday healthcare needs. Each person can select a clinic to call their “medical home” where they pick a primary medical care provider, which may be a medical doctor (MD), nurse practitioner (NP), or physician’s assistant (PA). Your primary care provider will help you stay healthy with routine health exams to track things like blood pressure and weight, and blood tests for conditions like sexually transmitted infections, diabetes, or cancer. Another goal of your primary care clinic is to help you monitor and control any health conditions you already have, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or asthma. Your primary care provider may order medications or suggest other treatments.

What happens if I have spe-

cial healthcare needs? Sometimes your primary care doctor will decide you would benefit from “specialty care”. Medical specialists help diagnose and treat very specific medical conditions, such as cancer (oncology), diabetes (endocrinology), muscle/bone problems (orthopedist), or skin conditions (dermatology), to name a few. Your primary care provider, who helps organize all your medical care, will typically need to make a referral for you to go to a specialty clinic. Check with your health insurance before seeing a specialist to make sure it will be paid for by your plan.

How do I see my primary care provider? Visits with your primary care provider should happen at regular intervals (every 3 months to a year depending on your health) or if a new problem comes up. It’s good to see the same provider each time so they can get to know you and your conditions. Most of the time, clinics will require a pre-scheduled appointment for you to see your provider, so you must plan ahead to make an appointment before you get low on your medications. Sometimes clinics will offer options for unscheduled “walk in” appointments. While health

care traditionally is provided in person, more options are being offered for “telehealth” — or health visits over phone or video. Telehealth is more common with the COVID-19 pandemic to limit contact, and it can also be a good option if you live far away from your clinic or have limited transportation. If you have access to a phone or computer, you can ask about this option when looking for a clinic. Your new provider may want to meet you in the clinic first before allowing telehealth follow-up visits.

What services are offered at a primary care clinic? The services that are offered will vary between clinics. While some clinics only have med-

ical care, others might offer additional services like behavioral health (including psychiatrists and counseling), addiction medicine (like medications for substance use such as Suboxone or Naltrexone), dentistry, insurance assistance, or social services. Community Health Workers work at some clinics in the community to build relationships with patients as mentors and advocates. Clinics that are part of the Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) employ Community Health Workers with lived histories of incarceration to help people who are coming home from prison. When you call to make your first appointment, you should ask what services

are offered so you know if the clinic will fulfill what you need and want. Also check that they take your health insurance, such as Medi-Cal, because each clinic accepts different types of insurance.

What’s the difference between an emergency department and urgent care? How will I know if I need emergency care? Emergency departments are for when you require immediate care for something that may be life-threatening. Walk-in/urgent care is a middle ground between your primary care clinic and the emergency department, where you can be seen without an appointment for an injury or illness that cannot wait until tomorrow to be treated. Emergency departments are open 24/7 and urgent cares have set hours. Urgent cares have a specific list of conditions they can help with, so they may have shorter wait times. If a new problem comes up and you’re not sure where to go for care, you can call your clinic to speak with a nurse or an on-call provider after hours about your new problem and they can help you decide when and where to be seen. Some health insurances will have specific costs associated with seeking emergency care. Keep in mind that urgent care

and emergency departments are not meant to take care of your everyday care.

Getting primary care as soon as you’re out of prison is important to keep you healthy and prevent you from having to seek emergency care. Typically, you will receive only a 30-day supply of your medications to take home when released, so finding a primary care clinic as soon as you can is important to continue your treatments. Activating your health insurance is a necessary first step to finding a doctor; if you have Medi-Cal (free public health insurance) you will need to call your county to let them know you are out so they can turn it on for you. Then call to make a primary care appointment as soon as you can, because sometimes you must wait to see a provider and to get your medications refilled. If you need specialty care, seeing a primary care provider as soon as possible is especially important so they can connect you to the specialist you need. The nurses at CDCR as well as the Transitions Clinic Network can help you plan for your health care after release.

TCN is a network of community health clinics serving returning community members. TCN programs are led by Community Health Workers who support returning citizens with their healthcare and reentry needs.

Please contact us if you have healthcare questions related to reentry, or to find out if there’s a TCN program in your community of return.

Transitions Clinic Network
2401 Keith Street
San Francisco, CA 94124
JPAY Email: TCNinfo@ucsf.edu
TCN Hotline: (510) 606-6400
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Summoning holiday memories

SQNews staffers reflect on good food, family connections, and cherished traditions

By Timothy Hicks
Staff Writer

During the Holiday season incarcerated people experience many different emotions. Feelings of despair set in, and loneliness envelops them. These are some of the feelings that plagued Raiveon “Ray Ray” Wooden, Steve Brooks, and Vincent O’Bannon during the 2021 Holiday season.

“Thanksgiving and Christmas are always stressful for me,” said Wooden in an interview 14 days before Thanksgiving 2021.

Wooden has been incarcerated for seven years. He said that out of all the holidays that happen throughout the year, Christmas is the most stressful for him. “Just a kid at heart,” he said. He really misses the rituals of celebrating that he and his family used to follow. One of those fun activities was sitting around the TV and watching his favorite fictitious Christmas movie, *The Grinch*.

“I miss fellowshiping with my family like that. Those were some of my favorite times I remember. So, now I just watch *The Grinch* on my TV when it comes on, just to feel like I’m with them for the holidays — even though it’s not physically, but it’s spiritual,” said Wooden.

The Grinch and other holiday cartoons like *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and *Frosty the Snowman* are what many people grew up watching, and they can relate to Wooden’s holiday ritual. Many incarcerated individuals are stuck watching their televisions around the holidays.

During the holidays, the prison experiences lockdowns due to staff shortages, which

also increases the stress level on the incarcerated, according to Steve Brooks.

“Thanksgiving is the worst for me. We don’t get no mail for four days; we shut down early while the staff go celebrate. We don’t get the full experience of the program around those times,” said Brooks.

Brooks is correct: prison staff close the prison down early so that they can feed all the residents. And after the meals are dispersed, the incarcerated have to celebrate the holidays inside of their cells.

It’s nothing like celebrating the holidays with family and some good food. The incarcerated have to go through the holiday season without the comfort of being with those they love.

For Vince O’Bannon, the prison visiting structure allowed at least some relief from his holiday blues when his wife would visit. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic made those holiday visits a distant memory.

“This may be the most trying time for me because of visiting. They only allow a certain amount of people in the visiting room at a time. As far as missing something, I not only miss my family, I really miss my wife’s cooking,” said O’Bannon.

O’Bannon says he really misses her mac and cheese and collard greens, which he could eat a whole pot of. But what he misses the most are the times when he would go out and shop for his favorite fresh Honey Baked Ham.

“I try not to think about it that much because I would get depressed. So I look at the positive side of things in everything,” said O’Bannon.

‘Safehouse Philly’ case moves forward

By Joshua Grant
Journalism Guild Writer

A battle is underway to legalize “safe-house” facilities that safely dispense drugs to addicts.

Eighty criminal justice leaders filed a brief urging the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider the ban on Safehouse Philly and other nonprofit safe drug use sites.

The Philadelphia facility won a case in February 2020 but lost on appeal in January 2021 under the federal “crack house” statute.

“The prior administration’s attempt to block a

public health response to the overdose crisis is perplexing,” Miriam Kinsky, Director of Fair and Just Prosecution, told *Filter*.

In July, Rhode Island was the first state to authorize a safe-house pilot program. Many states have taken note, including New York, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and California, where advocates have been trying to open safe use sites.

The “crack house” law prohibits “maintaining drug-involved premises.” It was written 35 years ago by then-Sen. Joe Biden.

The court originally decid-

ed Safehouse’s work is legal, because of the nonprofit’s intent to save lives — not sell state-banned drugs.

The amicus brief was filed by current and former district attorneys, state attorneys general, and President Biden’s U.S. Massachusetts attorney nominee, Rachael Rollins.

The brief argues that the government shouldn’t criminalize an evidence-based, lifesaving intervention like safe use sites.

“Given the stark evidence that criminalizing drug use only increases its harms, the prior administra-

tion’s attempt to extend the Controlled Substance Act to block a public health response to the overdose crisis is perplexing,” the brief stated.

In over 100 authorized sites in 11 countries, no safe sites have ever had someone die of an overdose on their watch, the Sept. 20 story said.

“We wouldn’t criminalize a parent who allows a child to use their house to safely consume drugs so they’re under a watchful eye,” Krinsky said. “We shouldn’t criminalize a nonprofit ... that is trying to do what 11 countries in the world have done.”

COVID pandemic adds to mental and physical effects of isolation on prisoners

By Brandon T Genest
Journalism Guild Writer

The number of incarcerated people placed in solitary confinement saw a five-fold increase during the peak of the pandemic, according to *Solitary Watch* and the *Marshall Project*.

This increase raises new concerns among prisoners and prisoner rights advocates of a new mental health crisis.

Long-term health risks of solitary confinement are well-known, especially in individuals who spend more than 15 days in isolation. These include heart problems, depression, and hypersensitivity to light, sound, smell and touch.

“People become a source of anxiety rather than support,” said Craig Haney, professor of social psychology at University of California — Santa Cruz. “Solitary forces prisoners to live in a world without people, and they adapt to it.”

The United Nations developed the Mandela Rules, which were named after Nelson Mandela, who was

imprisoned for 27 years, in support of reducing the use of solitary confinement.

The UN defines solitary confinement as “the confinement of prisoners for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact.” After 15 days, they say that solitary confinement amounts to torture.

Bryan Glant, an incarcerated individual at Monroe Correctional Complex in Washington state, was placed in an isolation cell upon testing positive for COVID-19 in December 2020. Glant was unable to leave his cell until his fifth day, when he received 10 minutes outside of the cell for a shower.

Other prisoners in similar situations describe going through recovery from COVID-19 without medical treatment, access to phones, or something to distract them from the stressors that come from living in solitude.

Although he was released back into the general population, Glant said that the memory is “still a source of anxiety” for him.

A fellow prisoner at Monroe, Jojo Ejonga, said that he was placed in a dirty cell. He wrote that “there was no pillow, cleaning supplies, TV — all the things [the Department of Corrections] had promised us was in medical isolation cells and reported to the public was a boldface lie — and had throw-up all over the floor by the toilet.”

When Ejonga complained about the conditions of his isolation, an officer told him “You’re in prison, you have COVID-19 and this is the only place you can be, so don’t come to prison next time.” He started a hunger strike, which lasted 13 days.

Conditions at San Quentin State Prison, the site of one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks during the summer of 2020, were similar. There, more than 70% of its residents were infected and 28 died.

Alex Ross, a 55-year-old incarcerated resident at San Quentin, was potentially exposed to COVID-19 when he received a routine blood pressure check. When told by staff that he would have to quaran-

tine at the prison’s Adjustment Center (AC), he refused.

After his refusal, he received a disciplinary write-up, which was later appealed and dismissed.

Fellow San Quentin resident David Jarrell described his time at the AC as being “stuck in a box all day.”

Residents sent to the AC for nondisciplinary reasons received the same treatment as those who were sent there for disciplinary reasons — mostly Death Row prisoners.

Jarrell said that he was allowed to leave his cell for a seven-minute shower once every three days and for 45 minutes outside in a small cage every two days.

Every time he left the cell, he had to strip down, bend over and cough, and get handcuffed.

In April, New York became the first state to ban solitary confinement when the Halt Solitary Confinement Act was passed into law.

Prisoner rights advocates hope this is the first step toward universal recognition of the UN’s Mandela Rules in the United States.

By Raymond Torres
Journalism Guild Writer

Supreme Court to decide how Three Strikes laws apply to minors

The United States Supreme Court will hear a case that tackles how the Three Strikes Law is applied to minors and will address the harsh mandatory minimum sentencing requirements and enhancements for children being tried as adults.

Defense attorneys will argue before the Supreme Court that extreme punishments like the death penalty and life without parole (LWOP) sentences, when applied to minors, are a violation of the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, says *Bloomberg Law*.

At issue is the test used to determine whether previously committed offenses satisfy the statute's "different occasions" standard. In *Wooden v. United States*, Wooden's argument was that the Sixth Circuit's opinion that multiple convictions arising from a single criminal act satisfy the standard is overly expansive in scope and violates the plain meaning of the statute.

In the *Wooden* case, prosecutors piled up multiple charges of burglary against him when he broke into a building that

housed multiple storage units. Each unit he burglarized, prosecutors claimed, counted as a separate crime under the statute. Per the statute, there is no attenuation in time needed between one crime and the next in order to be labeled a "career criminal." Judge Neil Gorsuch said, according to *Bloomberg Law*, "that the rule of lenity might be implicated as there was ambiguity as to what exactly Congress meant by crimes being committed on occasions different from one another." The assumptions presented by the judges illustrated the complexity for the court in developing a workable test that would result in consistent results.

The statute was meant to address truly habitual offenders. The labeling of children as "career criminals" during a single criminal act is nonsensical, said *Bloomberg Law*. The government's position and the lower courts incorrect interpretation of the ACCA'S (Armed Career



Stock photo

Criminal Act, also known as the Three Strikes Law) "different occasions" standard not only contradicts legislative intent but further affronts the constitutional requirement of

proportionality in sentencing under the Eighth Amendment when applied to minors.

Children's underdeveloped brains often result in making poor decisions. Trauma and

negative factors impact brain development and are a primary reason why so many children are system involved. The Supreme Court has consistently recognized that conditions

leading to juvenile crime are transient, not permanent. Thus, labeling a child an irredeemable "career criminal" is inconsistent with a fair and qualitative assessment.

The State argued that the "different occasions" element was satisfied so long as it showed an attenuation of time—no matter how slight—between elements of each offense. In the *Houston-Sconiers* case from the State of Washington, two teenage boys had robbed other kids of their candy on Halloween night. Even though no one was hurt, prosecutors charged the boys with seven counts of burglary and nine firearm enhancements, among other crimes.

The State treated each robbery as a separate occasion under the ACCA, triggering mandatory minimums under the statute.

Equating an individual's poor judgment on a single occasion with perpetual and irredeemable criminality is not justified when applied to adults, and unconscionable when applied to children. Congress would do well to remove minors from the harsh jolt of mandatory minimums all together, said the article.

Study: Black children often brutalized by cops

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Writer

Numerous children under age 16 have been treated brutally by law enforcement officers, a recent study concludes. More than half of those in the study were Black.

"The most common types of force were takedowns, strikes and muscling, followed by firearms pointed at or used on children," *The Associated Press* reported Oct. 19. "Black children made up more than 50% of those who were handled forcibly, though they are only 15% of the U.S. child population."

The *AP* said it analyzed about 3,000 instances of police force against children under 16 over an 11-year period. The data was provided by *Accountable Now*, a project of The Leadership Conference Education Fund. It covered incidents from 25 police departments in 17 states.

AP reported some incidents show that some kids were armed and others were undergoing mental health crises.

Currently, there are only a few states or cities that have disallowed the use of force

against children, the study said. African American children were not viewed with the same innocence as White children; therefore, Black children may have been suspected of a crime and faced the use of force more than their counterparts, noted the *AP* report.

"He (was) just a happy kid, riding his bike down the road. And 30 to 45 seconds later, you see him basically pedaling for his life," said Aaron Davis, father of Skyler Davis.

Skyler, a 15-year-old mentally disabled boy of Paris, Ill., was suspected of violating a city ordinance, which prohibits biking in certain areas. He was pursued by police into his home, thrown to the floor and handcuffed, then slammed into a wall, reported the article.

According to Aaron Davis, he saw police pulling Skyler — 5 feet tall and barely 80 pounds — toward a squad car with a "pure look of terror" on his face, said the report.

Surveillance cameras captured the chase on video. The family has filed a federal lawsuit against the police officers.

"When you are close to the kids, you work with kids ev-

ery day, you see that they are just kids, and they're doing what every other kid does," said Kristin Henning, director of Juvenile Justice Clinic at Georgetown University's law school. "Talking back, being themselves, experimenting, expressing their discomfort, expressing their displeasure about something — that's what kids do."

Savannah, 14, Telia, 11, and Jhaimarion, 7, were ordered to get down on the ground by police during a drug raid in Chicago. The family door was kicked in. Krystal Archie, the girls' mother, said she didn't know the people the police were looking for.

"[They] were told, demanded, to get down on the ground as if they were criminals," said Archie. "They were questioned as if they were adults."

Telia said she witnessed an officer put his foot into Savannah's back. Alleging emotional distress, every time Savannah sees a police car coming, her hand starts to shake, said the report.

Police officers may view minorities as being older than they actually are, reported the

article.

X'Zane Watts, an eighth-grader of Charleston, W.Va., was playing with his two-year-old cousin when three White plainclothes officers jumped out of a car with guns drawn and chased Watts into his house. He was mistakenly suspected of a burglary.

"The wrong flinch, they could have shot him," said Charissa Watts, X'Zane's mother. "The wrong words out of my mouth, they could have shot me."

The family filed a lawsuit and a settlement was reached, said the report.

While there is some guidance on how to handle juveniles accused of crimes or under mental distress, *AP* found no policy that addressed both issues together.

"I think that when officers understand the basic core components of development and youth development — their social, emotional, physical, psychological development — it can really help them understand why they might need to take a different approach," said Dylan Jackson, a criminologist at Johns Hopkins University.

Our monthly column by Project Avary contributors is a highly valued part of the San Quentin News. Staff and readers alike look forward to reading first-hand stories of connection and healing for children who have been unjustly, unfairly impacted by the incarceration of their parents. Project Avary's column will return to this space next month.



PROJECT AVARY

SF may close juvie, divert money to community-based youth offender services

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

The COVID pandemic has slowed down plans to close San Francisco's Juvenile Hall, but alternative actions have decreased the number of occupants, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports.

"It is unfortunate that we are behind schedule in closing the Juvenile Hall since that is the right thing to do," said Margaret Brodtkin, a member of the Juvenile Probation Commission.

As of June 30, only 15 juveniles were in the facility with a capacity of 150. San Francisco's proposed budget includes \$17 million for Juvenile Hall.

Rather than Juvenile Hall, youth have been referred to community programs. This makes San Francisco the first major city to curb incarceration of juveniles, the *Chronicle* reported.

Approximately 19 months ago the city deemed Juvenile Hall unacceptable detention for children.

"City leaders said divert-

ing the vast majority of juvenile offenders into community programs would ensure they never entered the legal system, never had a criminal record and got needed help. It meant juvenile criminal justice would deliver on its promise to provide services and support — not punish offenders," the *Chronicle* reported.

"The City does not need such a massively large building for a small and decreasing number of people in the facility. But we do need a safe and court-approved facility for those who need to be detained," said Jeff Cretan, Mayor London Breed's spokesperson. "Unless we are open to the reality of moving young people out of county when the courts require detention, we can't close until we have a new facility."

The task force responsible for presenting a closure plan to the Board of Supervisors did not submit its recommendations — after 18 months of planning. The deadline to close Juvenile Hall is December 2021.

\$370K grant to develop juvenile justice boardgame

By David Oranje
Journalism Guild Writer

The vicious cycle of underprivileged youths going in and out of the carceral system is not a game, but one has been developed that shows the obstacles and dead ends that exist in today's legal system.

Bernardo Semis created the tabletop board game, *The Run Around*, during his correctional sentence in Massachusetts in 2019.

It's designed to be impossible to win, as it traps Black and Brown children the way the systems of power do every day, he told *The Boston Globe*.

Each player starts with three characters of color placed in maximum security prison.

"Players hit a barrage of obstacles, like a lengthy parole journey of gray spaces and trap cards," the *Globe* report-

ed. "Even when you get out, you're stuck," said Semis.

Susan Rivers, executive director of non-profit games foundation iThrive, used \$370,000 in grant money from the William T. Grant Foundation to collaborate with Semis and a group of system-involved 17- to 25-year-olds.

The Sept. 28 *Globe* article reported everyone got together Saturday mornings with Rivers, educational consultant Janelle Ridley, and associate professor Beverly Evans of Lesley University to pinpoint failures in the justice system.

The youths described the effects such failures had in their lives. "There are stories on the board — their stories," said Ridley.

Rivers added that the game is "lonely and boring" and intentionally constructed without fun in mind. "Even dice felt too enjoyable."

Requiring the same level of

critical thinking as *Monopoly* and *Sorry Sliders*, the game's designers deconstructed the broken justice system, and players are charged to deal with its senselessness, said the *Globe*.

Designers incorporated their own experiences with incarceration, lack of support when reentering society, violence within their communities — and even their physical likenesses — into the game.

The completed version of *The Run Around* won a gold medal at the Serious Play Awards. Prior to taking top honors, the creators field-tested the game on law enforcement and educators at the Lesley Institute for Trauma Sensitivity.

Ridley said the game's goal was to reveal lapses within the current infrastructure of criminal justice systems — and to point out such prob-

lems to those with influence.

"It's an exercise in asking, Why is the system designed this way?" said Rivers. "Why are there not more opportunities? And why are there not more elements in this game — and in reality — that provide care and concern for the players?"

Massachusetts data shows Boston recorded nearly 7,800 youth arrests between 2009 and 2018.

With grant money running out soon, Rivers said iThrive and the S.E.E.D Institute, a partnership between iThrive and Ridley's nonprofit Transition H.O.P.E., continue to look for ways to raise funding for the future.

"We want change," said Semis. "We did not create *The Run Around* for us — it's for the kids growing up. I don't want young Black kids to figure out about the system the way I did."

Ohio courts make COVID shots condition of probation

By Ricky Goins
Journalism Guild Writer

Two Ohio judges have ordered defendants to get COVID-19 vaccinations as a condition of their probation or face prison time, the *New York Times* reported.

Franklin County Judge Richard A. Frye on June 22 gave probation to an offender who pleaded guilty to drugs and firearms offenses and ordered him to get vaccinated within 30 days or face 36 months in prison. Judge Christopher A. Wagner on Aug. 4 told a convicted drug offender, Brandon Rutherford, that as part of his release on probation, he must receive the vaccination within 60 days.

"I don't plan on getting it. I don't want it," Rutherford told *WCPO 9 News*. "So, for him to tell me that I have to get it in order for me to not violate my probation is crazy..."

"There is certainly a legitimate concern around ordering someone to do something that

pertains to their bodily autonomy," David J. Carey, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio told the *Times*. "They need to have a compelling reason to have to do so."

"Judges do have a lot of leeway in imposing conditions on behavior while on probation. But that leeway is not unlimited," Carey said.

Companies across the nation are setting mandates on employees and customers. Federal government employees are required to have the COVID-19 vaccine or get tested regularly. State and local government entities are also creating their own guidelines, the newspaper noted.

Michael Benza, a senior instructor of Case Western's School of Law, said, "I think the problem for this type of order is if the defendant would challenge it, I think there is a significant chance that the order would be found to be improper. It is a compulsion for a medical procedure."

\$400M in pandemic funds diverted to prison construction

By Bruce Bowman
Journalism Guild Writer

Alabama has diverted virus pandemic relief money to help build new super prisons and renovate old ones, *The Associated Press* reported.

The state Legislature approved the \$1.3 billion prison construction project and earmarked \$400 million of its \$2.1 billion COVID-19 relief money to help pay for the project.

Republican Gov. Kay Ivey quickly signed both prison bills, commenting "This is a pivotal moment for the trajectory of our state's criminal justice system."

The American Rescue Plan, signed into law by President Joe Biden, was designed to help Americans recovering from the pandemic.

Congressional Democrat Terri Sewell criticized expenditures as going against the intent of the pandemic relief plan.

"There are many needs here in the State of Alabama and there are many people who need these funds," Democratic representative Juandalynn Givan of Birmingham said. She voted against the bill in the Legislature.

The state Senate approved the use of the pandemic monies in a 30-1 vote and the over-

all construction plan in a 29-2 vote, according to *AP*.

"This was the right thing for Alabama to do," said Republican Sen. Greg Albritton. "We've got individuals working in conditions that are unsafe."

The project includes three new prisons: A prison in Elmore County with about 4,000 beds with added space for medical and mental health care, a second prison of 4,000 beds in Escambia County and a new women's prison.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said about Alabama's prison funding plan: "I would be surprised if that was the intention of the funding."

The American Rescue Plan passed in early 2021 with no votes from Alabama Republicans. Two Republican senators and six Republican House members voted against the bill, according to a Sept. 29 *Washington Post* editorial.

Advocacy groups have said the state should consider broader uses for the money, *AP* reported.

"It won't solve the problems plaguing the prison system. Only decarceration can do that," said Katie Glenn, policy associate at the Action Fund, a branch of Southern Poverty Law Center.

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Incarcerated people are packing food packages for the needy and developing employable skills at a Colorado prison.

The program at the prison operated by CoreCivic marked distribution of its one millionth package on Sept. 23, 2021.

"Some of the biggest benefits are learning job skills for reentry back into society," said Steven Salazar, CoreCivic facilitator for the Bent's Backpack Fulfillment Program (BBFP). "These offenders one day could possibly be our neighbors, so it's rewarding for

Colorado prisoners feed needy kids

us to see them obtain job skills that they can use to transition on the streets once they do return."

CoreCivic is a private prison ownership and management company. Its program operates at the Bent County Correctional Facility in Las Animas, Bent County, Colorado.

BBFP has been in operation since 2018. Its goal is to help hungry kids and others facing food insecurity. The program has been noted for providing food packages to those in need while training incarcerated people to pre-

pare the packages.

"It gives them a good feeling to give back and it's a worthy cause for them, but also is giving them job readiness skills for reentry," said Clair Perez, CoreCivic spokesperson.

There are typically 15 to 30 incarcerated people working in the program. The food packages they prepare are sent to food banks across Bent County.

These food packages have helped out in the past two years due to the COVID pandemic. The incarcerated employees are taught valuable job skills that may aid in their employ-

ment process upon release.

The incarcerated employees are taught warehouse operations skills. All are given a 40 work-session probationary period. Afterwards they become eligible for extra training and an industry-recognized forklift operation certificate.

"The milestone of reaching the 1 million bags packed is much bigger than the facility or myself or the offenders," Salazar said. "Because the way we look at it, hopefully, we've reached 1 million kids or other people in need."

Private SoCal prison remains open despite ban

By George Franco
Journalism Guild Writer

GEO Group's private San Diego, Ca., prison is attempting to keep its federal lockup operating despite President Joe Biden's executive order to shut down.

The Western Region Detention Facility (WRDF), a 770-bed federal detention center in southern California, received a six-month extension to a two-year contract that had expired on Sept. 30, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported.

In an announcement, GEO contended that it is best positioned to continue as WRDF's operator. GEO also noted that completely closing the detention center would cause pre-trial detainees to be incarcerated far from court attorneys and family in San Diego.

Last October, a federal judge upheld a California law that bans private prisons for civil immigration detention, but allowed these facilities to house federal marshals' detainees. This ruling is now under appeal.

Biden's order forbids the Justice Department from engaging in business with for-profit, private prisons in order to reduce incarceration and increase rehabilitation, according to the DOJ's Office of the Inspector General. Private detention facilities were criticized for inadequate safety and security.

Two other detention centers are in San Diego: Otay Mesa Detention Center, operated by CoreCivic and subject to the Executive Order, and the Metropolitan Correctional Facility, operated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

All three facilities have been criticized for failing to properly handle the COVID-19 pandemic by not implementing protocols that would protect inmates, the newspaper reported. To address overcrowding in the pandemic, the federal court worked with prosecutors and defense attorneys to reduce pre-trial, post-conviction incarceration to low levels in certain non-violent crimes, the story said.

Detention centers like these mostly handle pre-trial defendants with federal crimes, the

Union-Tribune said.

The city of McFarland — in Kern County with 16,000 residents, and 250 miles from San Diego — is expected to become the San Diego facility's intermediary.

In August, McFarland's city attorney suggested that the city pursue negotiations to enter into business with the Marshals Service, eventually subcontracting the service to the GEO group, according to the City Council agenda.

McFarland would get a \$500,000 administrative fee for its participation, which "could generate new revenue for the city," according to the city manager. It was not established who would pay the fee, since the city manager, who also acts as police chief, did not respond to a request for comment.

California's three affiliates of the American Civil Liberties Union wrote a letter urging the Biden administration "to defeat these blatant efforts to strip the Executive Order of any meaningful impact."

"Rather than permit GEO to use the next six months to ce-

ment the fate of the Executive Order as a dead letter, the Administration should use this opportunity to wind down GEO's involvement at WRDF entirely," the letter states.

GEO has turned to what it calls "various alternative contracting structures" in order to circumvent the president's executive order, but the ACLU considers the McFarland deal as a violation of that order.

"A similar deal has already kept Marshals Service detainees in place at one private facility, the ACLU notes," said the *Union-Tribune*. In March, the Marshals Service had a 90-day extension deal for its contract with private prison company CoreCivic. This contract extension allowed the continued housing of federal detainees at the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center, which also houses state and county prisoners, according to the article.

ACLU senior staff attorney Bardis Vakili notes that for a city as far away as McFarland, with no ties to San Diego, handing over operations presents the issue of accountability.

By Brandon T. Genest
Journalism Guild Writer

Ohio plans to digitally scan all incoming mail to prisoners in an attempt to curb smuggling of contraband drugs.

"Having the ability to digitally scan mail will cut down on contraband," said Annette Chambers-Smith, director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). The change will help to maintain "the important connections the incarcerated men and women have with

Incoming mail goes all-digital in Ohio

their loved ones," she told the *Associated Press*.

The department will send digital copies of the mail to prisoners by way of their tablets, which are used primarily for email and video calls. Legal mail will be exempted from this policy, which takes effect in January 2022.

Ohio has a \$22.7 million contract with Global Tel*Link, which includes digitalization of the mail as

well as phone and video calls between the incarcerated and their loved ones.

The primary goal of digitizing mail is to intercept paper soaked with drugs such as marijuana, opioids, and, in one instance, Raid bug spray.

Chambers-Smith added that 60% of Ohio prison residents have a history of serious substance abuse.

Jeanna Kenney runs a prisoner advocacy program

in Ohio and is married to an incarcerated person. She believes that photocopying and digitizing mail would not fully halt all contraband.

Kenney said that it is easier for the incarcerated to obtain drugs than it is for those on the outside.

Similar programs operate in Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and the federal Bureau of Prisons, the *AP* reported.

'Brady List' rarely used to combat police misconduct

By Vincent E. O'Bannon
Staff Writer

A 1963 Supreme Court ruling (*Brady v. Maryland*) requires prosecuting attorneys to turn over all exculpatory evidence to defense attorneys, including information pertaining to the credibility of police officers involved in the case.

The ruling was meant to provide more balanced justice during court proceedings by guarding against an unfair advantage for prosecutors, and resulted in the compilation of "Brady Lists," or registers of officers with histories of unprofessional or questionable conduct.

However, the Brady List is a tool rarely used to investigate an officer's history of professional conduct, according to the *Seattle Associated Press (AP)*.

In some states, prosecutors are required to reveal to the defense information about an officer with a history of lying, bias, excessive force, criminal

misconduct, theft or fraud.

"Instances of deputies lying in reports or during investigations do not simply affect the immediate case at hand. Instead, they may influence the outcome of every other case in which the deputy's testimony is considered," said a 2013 oversight report by the Office of Independent Review.

However, due in part to police union influence and disparities from state to state in the application of the Brady List, many jurisdictions don't even track police officer misconduct.

Amy Parker is with the King County Public Defense. "As a career public defender, I have listened to prosecutors routinely make the argument that defendants with prior unlawful uses of force/violence are more prone to violence and lack credibility. If prosecutors are going to apply that standard to defendants, then the same standard should apply to police officers when judging their conduct," she wrote in an email.

The *Brady* ruling however, "did not define the steps prosecutors and police officers must take to ensure defendants are informed or whether lists of troubled officers must be kept at all," said *AP*.

Dishonesty by an officer in Denver, Detroit, and Seattle, will land an officer on the Brady list—but using excessive force on the job will not.

"It's like there's a huge continuum and the result is you don't have the same procedures being followed not only across the country, but within individual states," said Will Aitchison, an attorney with Labor Relations Information Systems, a Portland, Ore. group that represents police officers in disciplinary appeals.

The state of Washington will require prosecutors to develop written protocols for collecting potential impeachment information by July 2022, reported *AP*.

In California, legislators approved requiring a list of sus-

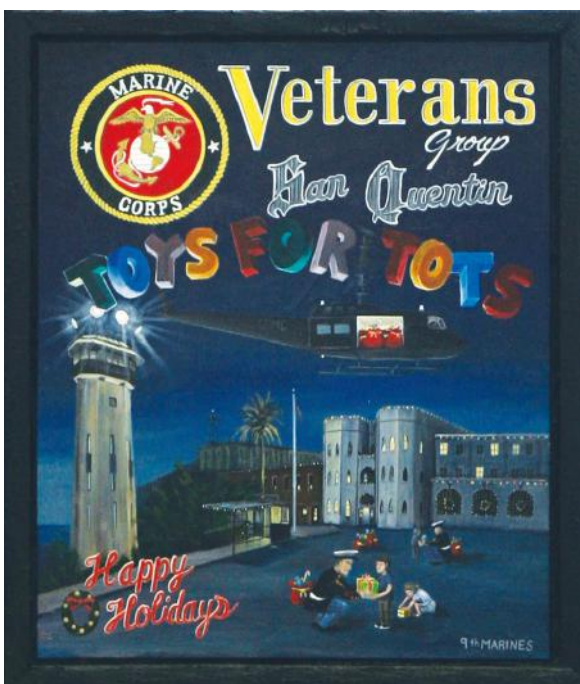
tained findings of "moral turpitude or group bias," but Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed the measure, citing the cost of funding a mandate of such magnitude.

"An officer accused of using too much force in an unrelated arrest has nothing to do with the impeachment of their veracity," said Dan Satterberg, a King County (Seattle) prosecutor.

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner said he believes that "prosecutors have both a legal and moral obligation to use Brady Lists," but says that local police have pushed back on its application.

Police misconduct records have been a hot topic for at least the past year in San Francisco, creating what has become known as a "do not call" list.

"If an officer's history is such that we just don't believe the officer, period, we will not use him to testify during criminal cases," said former San Francisco and current Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascon.



BY THE WAY: Bruce Fowler is the creator of this incredible "Toys For Tots" painting, which appeared in our November issue. We credited it to "Artist Unknown." Great work, Bruce! Our apologies.



Images courtesy of TheatreWorkers Project

TheatreWorkers Project plants seeds of freedom inside prison walls

By Nathan McKinney
Managing Editor

During the COVID-19 pandemic, prison volunteers and the formerly incarcerated produced powerful videos and audio projects at California State Prison-Lancaster (CSP-LAC). The inspirational productions were based on the words of incarcerated thespians (actors and artists).

The TheatreWorkers Project (TWP), a theatre-based prison workshop, had to pivot at the height of the pandemic to provide correspondence courses to its incarcerated participants.

“The Circle” (a video) and “Still Here” (an audio piece) were created from the coursework of the incarcerated. Allen Burnett and Louie Brash, both formerly incarcerated and members of TWP’s Project Re/Frame ensemble, performed in “Circle.”

The video and audio projects were later played on the prison’s institutional channel.

“I was turning the channels and I heard some familiar words ... my own words being spoken so eloquently and with so much passion,” said incarcerated person Donnell Campbell. “One of my freed brothers speaking my words. I felt like I was right there with him. Free, watching him speak. I was free in that moment.”

“The Circle” blends spoken word and movement to create a lyrical filmic collage, producer Susan Tanner, of TWP, told *SQNews*. The film was co-directed by Marlene McCurtis and Alexa Kershner, TWP teaching artists. The movie was selected for the Social Justice Film Festival.

“I’d had the pleasure of meeting them (Burnett and Brash in LAC); unfortunately those acquaintances were attached with Life and Life Without sentences,” said incarcerated person DeRon Perrin. “God blessed Louie and Allen with the opportunity to earn their release dates. Seeing them both perform in ‘The Circle’ was uplifting — not only was my words spoken but other gentlemen’s words as well.

“My spirit had awoken, I felt as if I was in that field and that structural building. I appreciate every single person who was involved,” added Perrin.

The TWP program has impacted the lives of those both inside and out.

“Working with TheatreWorkers Project while incarcerated was transformative,” said Burnett. “It provided me with a platform where I was able to express myself artistically that was both healthy and healing. Now having the opportunity to work with this amazing organization since my release is equally rewarding.

“It allows me to continue to practice rehabilitation and living amends while representing and supporting my brothers and sisters who are still incarcerated,” Burnett added.

Inside/Out, a chapbook, was also produced from the correspondence course. It featured visual arts along with the participants’ writing. The paintings were done by incarcerated members from the Prison Arts Collectives LAC program.

The TWP worked with formerly incarcerated artists from the Dads Back! Academy, a Los Angeles based reentry program, and The Francisco Homes, a transitional housing program.

Quentin Blue, a former San Quentin band, wrote and performed music for some of the projects. The group consists of Billy Harwood, Dwight Krizman and Richie Morris, all paroled from San Quentin.

Video and audio projects allow prisoners and the formerly incarcerated to experience the raw power of creativity and the performing arts

“I had the great pleasure of working with the TWP on three projects: *The Circle*, *Rituals*, and *Still Here*,” said Harwood. “Susie Tanner brought these projects to The Francisco Homes and gave so many men, just re-entering society, the opportunity to freely express themselves and to experience a sense of acceptance and validation that we hadn’t had before.

“The experience reaffirmed my belief in myself and through that I knew I was going to be able to make it, that I would succeed on parole,” Harwood added.

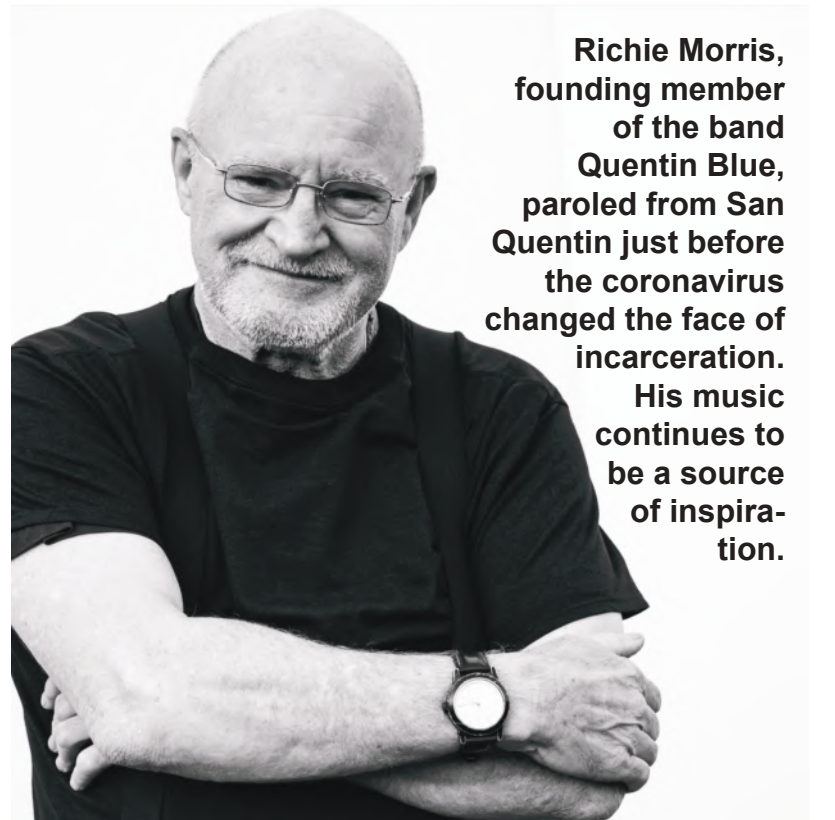
The workshops with The Francisco Homes were done via Zoom to have socially distanced still photo sessions and to produce virtual performance collections for *150 Days* and *Rituals*. *The Circle* was selected for the Social Justice Film Festival, as a part of the festival’s Opening Night: Prisoner Justice and the Art of Social Justice presentation.

TWP is now going back into Lancaster prison. They host workshops and have started a collaboration with Project Rebound.

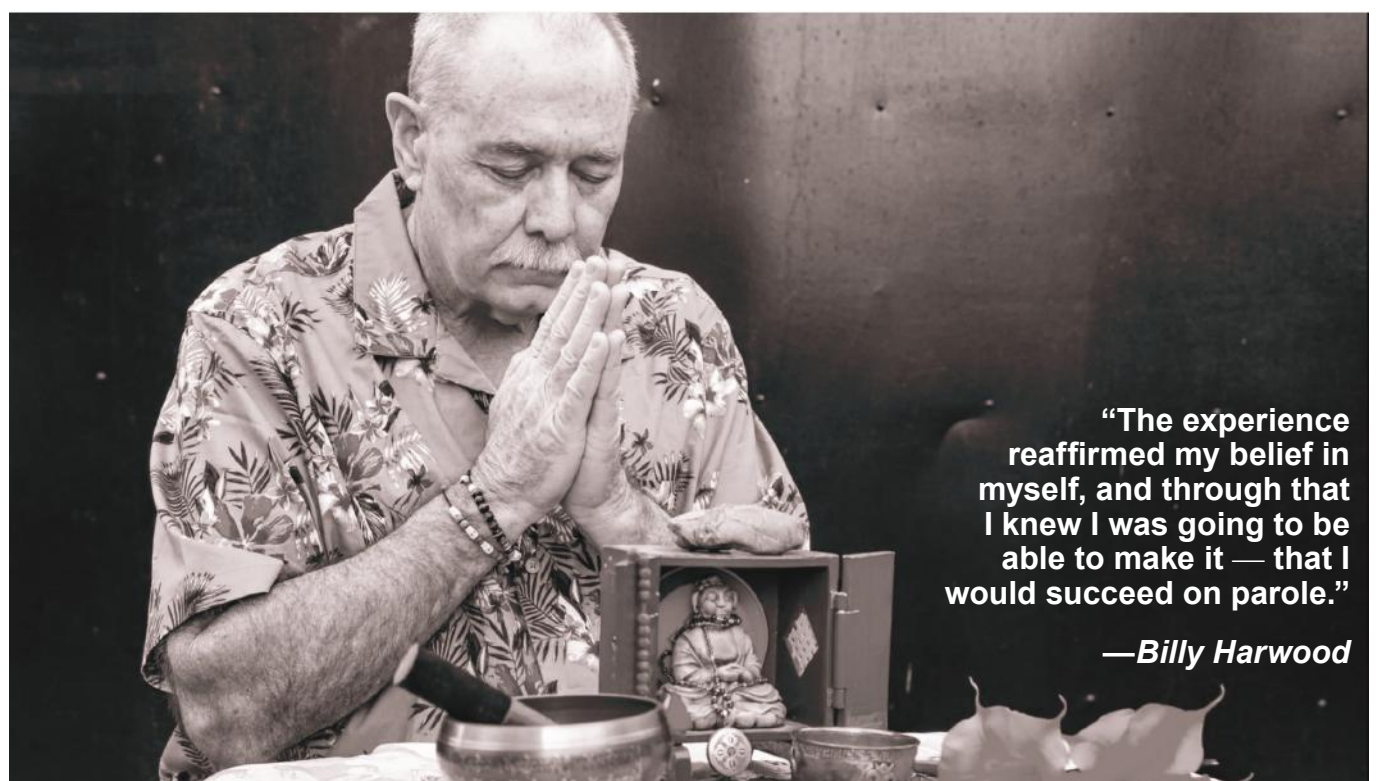
“TheatreWorkers Project is a blessing. It gives voice to our muted incarcerated community and reminds the public that there are beautiful human beings behind our prison walls who are worthy of redemption,” Burnett concluded.

“One of my freed brothers [was] speaking my words. I felt like I was right there with him. Free, watching him speak. I was free in that moment.”

—Donnell Campbell
TWP Artist



Richie Morris, founding member of the band Quentin Blue, paroled from San Quentin just before the coronavirus changed the face of incarceration. His music continues to be a source of inspiration.



“The experience reaffirmed my belief in myself, and through that I knew I was going to be able to make it — that I would succeed on parole.”

—Billy Harwood

SQNews Throwbacks: January 30, 1981

Another Blunder

IWF Funds Not Used To Buy Sumner's Coat

In our Jan. 23 issue it was reported that the Men's Advisory Council recently gave Warden Sumner a jacket which was purchased by the Inmate Welfare Fund (MAC Holds Annual Banquet for Members and Outside Guests'').

Walter Speights, president of the MAC, has informed the News that this is grossly inaccurate. The funds utilized for purchasing the Warden's jacket were the monies contained in the MAC's slush fund.

The News stands corrected and apologizes for the error.

During a discussion with our MAC president, it was suggested that a regular column—or whatever news coverage is needed—be submitted by the MAC. The News has determined that this would help inform the mainline of the changes effectuated by the MAC and perhaps make more people aware that the council is, indeed, attempting to work on behalf of the general population.

CDC Activates Three More Work Furlough Centers

The Department of Corrections has entered into a community re-entry program contract for female felons with Harbour Area Halfway House, Inc. This facility is located at the Hoffman House, 940 Dawson Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90804, Phone (213) 434-0036.

Another work furlough center will be utilized at the Upland Re-entry Program, 1360 West 20th Street, Upland, CA 91786, Phone (714) 623-0604.

The Stanislaus County Work Furlough Program is also an established county program now. The CDC contract provides for 20 beds for male and female felons who are no closer than 30 days but not more than 90 days from their scheduled parole date.

Male inmates in the program will be housed at the Stanislaus County Honor Farm in Modesto.

Placement in the program is limited to those selected inmates who are considered to be residents of Stanislaus County.

Court Frees Man Facing Gas Chamber

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A guilty plea by a man sentenced to die in San Quentin's gas chamber has led to the reversal of his sentence and conviction.

The state Supreme Court ruled Monday that because Billy Lee Chadd's plea was entered against his lawyer's advice, he must be freed. The ruling, however, doesn't bar his retrial in the 1978 throat-slashing death of Linda Hewitt of National City, near San Diego.

Chadd was sent to San Quentin's death row after his conviction, but since October he has been held in jail in Nevada awaiting trial on another murder charge there.

In a 4-2 decision by Justice Stanley Mosk, the court said since a 1973 amendment to the state's Death Penalty Act, a capital-case defendant can't plead guilty against the advice of his attorney.

The court also overturned convictions based on guilty pleas in a second death and in a

San Quentin News THE PULSE OF SAN QUENTIN

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Friday, Jan. 30, 1981

Handicraft Program

Hobby Shop Lacks Funds To Meet Population Needs

By Jimmy Price

While the average visitor to San Quentin's outside gift shop may be concerned with little more than purchasing a unique and novel bargain, there is really something of a man's story in every item of the arts and crafts sold there. They are each products of a prisoner's struggle — against boredom, against inactivity, against a daily barrage of messages that seek to undermine his worth as a human being.

"I started working with leather to make money," admits San Quentin prisoner Leonard Davis, "but I've stayed with it for more reasons than just that. Mainly, I enjoy it. Regardless what your craft is, it is a part of you, an expression of yourself. I get a real satisfaction in what I do... and it sure beats walking the yard or running the tiers."

Davis is one of about 350 men actively involved in the handicraft program here, which also includes such other crafts as jewelry making, silkscreen, ceramics, woodworking, and the visual arts.

The support center for these activities is the hobby shop,

headed by Lois Wu, handicraft manager. Ms. Wu explained that the creative arts are invaluable in restoring and maintaining a person's sense of self-worth.

"Let's face it," said Wu, "the prison experience is very damaging in terms of a person's mental, emotional and spiritual health. The therapeutic value of these arts in the healing process is unquestionable. These men really need creative outlets."

Ms. Wu added that while the handicraft program is not considered to be vocational, the skills acquired there are valid skills that can very well lead to self-employment on the streets, and she feels the program should be given more support.

Guidelines for Parole Adopted

SAN QUENTIN — The California Board of Prison Terms last week adopted guidelines on when prisoners serving murder sentences under a new law in California prisons, including San Quentin, will be eligible for parole.

Warning Shot Stops Assault on Sergeant

A warning shot had to be fired to stop an assault on the third watch sergeant in D Section Jan. 28. According to Mike Madding,



LOIS WU advises hobbyist Pappageorge.

Dennis Stanworth, who said he has been hobbying off and on for the last eight of his 14 years here, told the News that too many people seem to think that the hobby program is just play.

"On the contrary," said Stanworth, "the hobbyist must learn to think, plan and take responsibility for his own success. Besides the skills I've learned in working the crafts — and I've tried my hand in most all of them — I've also had to develop a good business sense. I have to know what sells and I

Continued on page 2

Lockdown Caused By Bogus Rumor

CROSSWORD By Jonathan Chiu Edited by Jan Perry JANUARY'S CLUES: Think About It

Across

- 1. Super Bowl 50 Network
4. ___ King Cole
7. ___ Set of equipment
10. A quick gentle tap
13. Mixture to thicken a stew
14. Oxygen
15. Adams of "Man of Steel"
16. Light flexible leather
17. 37 Across companion
19. Seaport in SE Italy
21. San Quentin News Advisor
23. TV show "___ Upon a Time"
26. To make amends
27. Movie "___ Raider"
31. Kelly Clarkson song "___ You've Been Gone"
33. Significant other in Korean
34. March's book review about schools

- 35. Marvel superhero paroled from SQ
37. City & port in Canada
39. Healthy once a day routine (Abvr.)
40. Chemical symbol for table element 44
41. City in SoCal Valley
45. Capital seaport of Guinea
49. Fog, mist, or steam
50. "Holy Diver" Band
52. City in central Chile
54. Bridges of Stargate-SG1
55. Saturn has more of this than Earth
57. To live a debauched life (slang)
58. 34 Down had 88 of these
61. Prison Slang: For getting items from cell to cell
64. Yogi gesture of salutation
68. Canton of EC Switzerland
69. Unknown John or Jane

- 70. "The Simpsons" game console
71. Internet company merged with Time-Warner
72. Acura's sports car
73. To wander or go astray
74. Pirate's grunt
75. 1 Across comedy starring Anna Farris

Down

- 1. Re-entry program
2. A drunken spree (Slang)
3. Gov't agency that investigates insider trading
4. Apple music player
5. Tyler of "The Talk"
6. Capital of N.J.
7. Japanese swords & Kawasaki motorcycles
8. Mental picture of conception
9. Banks of the "America's Next Top Model"
10. It's mightier than the sword
11. Computer keyboard button
12. Boxing term
18. VCR button
20. Yelchin of "Star Trek"
22. CDCR's Mental Health program
23. Windows, MAC, Android are forms of this
24. Actress Long from Friday
25. 24/7 news channel
28. ___ Clean detergent
29. Soldier lost in combat (Abvr.)
30. Canadian prov., borders Idaho/Washington
32. Forest fire starter
34. Acronym of Emotional Intelligence class
36. Intel's alternative
38. Character Gold of "Entourage"
41. Singer Corinne Bailey ___
42. Pollution agency
43. Sighing or rustling sound
44. Jackie Robinson was this (Singular)
45. Classic western TV show
46. Latin dance
47. Type of beer
48. Annual classification for prisoner (Abvr.)

- 49. Class of words expressing action (Abvr.)
51. Form of payment
53. ___-Ha moment
55. House of the Lord of a?
56. Flight of steps
59. "___ Along" starring Ice Cube & Kevin Hart
60. A ruler or prince in a

- Muslim country
61. Clothing that PETA opposes
62. Govt. tax agency
63. Tom Clancy's Rainbow ___
65. Uncle ___
66. More than enough
67. Dutch disease

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-75 indicating starting points for clues.

Word search grid with the words 'SAN TOY ARE KAT ODE ORE POV ICE SPORTS SEEDERD DERN NARES HALE BREAD LED WALLE AMIENS ETHNIC SIA TOC MASONS GALENA HUNAN AGE EMBER EDEN PIANO EATS COAL OPEN ACCESS ENTOMB NED LTD ART POE DOS OAR TAO IED' hidden within.

Two 5x5 grids of numbers for 'Last Month's Solutions'. Grid 1: 3 5 2 1 8 9 6 4 7, 1 8 9 6 4 7 3 5 2, 4 6 7 2 5 3 9 1 8, 2 7 8 5 9 4 1 3 6, 5 9 3 8 1 6 7 2 4, 6 4 1 3 7 2 8 9 5, 9 1 6 7 2 5 4 8 3, 7 2 4 9 3 8 5 6 1, 8 3 5 4 6 1 2 7 9. Grid 2: 8 6 7 1 4 2 3 9 5, 9 2 4 3 6 5 8 7 1, 3 5 1 8 9 7 2 6 4, 2 8 6 5 1 9 4 3 7, 5 4 3 2 7 8 9 1 6, 7 1 9 4 3 6 5 8 2, 6 9 2 7 5 3 1 4 8, 4 7 8 9 2 1 6 5 3, 1 3 5 6 8 4 7 2 9.

Small crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Small crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader connects with Re:Store Survivor story

Dear *SQNews*:
Greetings. My name is D. Gonzalez. I'm currently incarcerated in California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi, California. My reason for writing is in regards to an article that I read in the September 2021 issue on page 10 titled "Survivor finds strength to heal," by Jane Survivor. As I was reading Ms. Jane's article, I felt in my heart that I needed to write. Ms. Jane's story had a great impact in my life because I can understand how her life was greatly impacted. At the end of her story she said, "I still struggle with understanding how and why he could do what he did to me. I hope one day he might tell me." She deserves to know the answers to her questions. Thank you for your time, and may God bless you.

—Danilo Gonzalez
CCI-Tehachapi

Writing today to 'stay forever free'

Dear *SQNews*:
First let me say thank you for sending me your newspapers. I'm both humbled and grateful by the work that is being done by all those involved in the publication of this wonderful newspaper. I came across a section of your paper that said "we want to hear from you," so I'm sending you what's on my mind and in my heart today by way of a poem. My heartfelt message to the free world.
If I could say anything to a poet, writer, singer, rapper or even a musician, free from this prison life that I live daily, my words would sound something like this...Write! Write to stay forever free. Write with every breath you have until the day you die so that it will become your legacy in this world of ours. I write today in hopes of having a voice for tomorrow. So now allow me to share a piece of my poetry that I put together for no specific design, other than to write:

"Struggling With Today's Effort"

My heart is crumbling into dust, not pieces. There is no reconstructing the damage, I'm bleeding. I want redemption for my penance, as the lost seek divine forgiveness. Hope is all that I have, and it's a fine thread from heaven. Despair is a razor rendering the cord unwoven. I'm on borrowed time with an impossible interest rate in fear of having the loan called in. I grow weary from all this prison life, so I'm going to rest. Perhaps tomorrow I'll try again.
—Darrell Sharpe
MCI-Norfolk

Trouble accessing free international phone calls from GTL?

Dear *SQNews*:
Hello there, thank you for your publication. I enjoy catching up on your news stories. Good job!
I need your help with the GTL free telephone calls. I was born in Africa. I want to utilize the free GTL minutes to communicate with family there. I saw an article regarding that information from the September 2021 Edition. I tried calling Nigeria, but there was no response. I tried calling Uganda, but again there

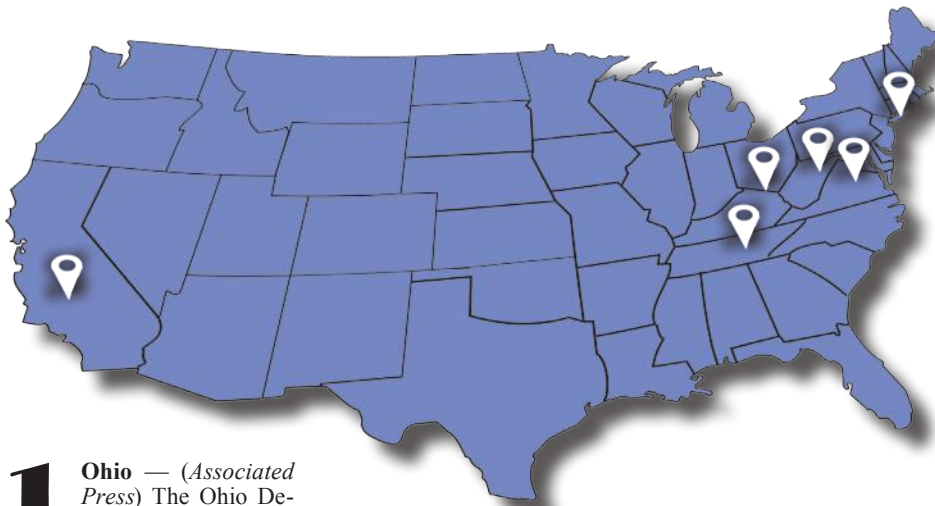
was no response. Can you guys help me? Nobody here seems to know how to address this issue. I would truly appreciate your help.
Thank you.
—Jackson Gumisiriza
Chuckawalla

Proposal for incarcerated blood donors

Dear *SQNews*:
There is a cause that I've been working on named "karma." Karma is a partnership between CDCR and The California Blood Center and/or The Red Cross, to organize blood drives; allowing staff and inmates to donate blood. Needless to say, there is currently a shortage and dire need for people to donate blood. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for citizens to donate, creating a shortage, country wide, especially with rare blood types. I believe that thousands of prisoners statewide would be willing to step up and potentially save someone's life by donating blood, assuming they meet the health criteria. Participation would show society, families, and themselves that they are in a stage of rehabilitation that will change not only their lives, but the outlook of CDCR and society as a whole.
This cause is near and dear to my heart. I've been working on a plan of action for the past six months. I understand that a lot of coordination and work must be done on CDCR's and the organization's part to make it happen, however, I do have a simplified step-by-step plan and campaign ideas, such as utilizing CDCR institutional channels, i.e., posters, memos, and MAC-representatives to get the word out and appeal to the humanity of prisoners and staff alike.
We have all been affected by the loss of a loved one due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and have felt the pain of helplessness. This will give us an outlet for our grief and a means of giving back to society instead of taking from it. Imagine all the lives we can save.
Thank you for your time.
—Johnny Grimaldo
CSP-Corcoran

'Inside A Two-Way Mirror'

My life is a two-way mirror. I can see everyone on the other side clearly, but they cannot see me.
Sometimes I feel you can't even see me and I'm banging on my side of the glass screaming for help. But when people look, all they see are themselves in the mirror, and that little glimmer of hope I had fades away once again. I see the world moving forward, but I am stuck in the past, which is my present, trapped behind a double sided layer of glass; a mirror. I am alive inside of here, but I am dead out there and each day that passes, I know the feeling, that feeling to be the living dead. I hold on to the light which shines bright as sun rays in my dark filthy dungeon of despair and hopelessness. Eager for the freedom of living, for to be alive and loved is the ultimate feeling. Abuse and starvation; batons and tear gas bombs explode around me all a part of this subjugation. I stare through my side of the mirror looking into the souls like a window while they check their make-up and adjust their glasses, burning inside flames continue to rise like a Phoenix from the ashes, living dead inside of a two-way mirror as time passes.
—Robert A. Barnes
Salinas Valley State Prison



NEWSBRIEFS

1 Ohio — (Associated Press)

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction plans to supplement its more than 6,000 fixed security cameras by outfitting guards with body-worn cameras. Ohio's pilot program began after a judge ordered the devices for guards at a state prison in San Diego. After an Ohio inmate died in a struggle with guards last January, the state's pilot program accelerated. The guards' union suggested spending the money on more guards, not more cameras, citing the redundancy of additional cameras. One advantage of body-worn video equipment cited is their audio feature. Other states outfitting at least some guards with body cameras include; Georgia, Florida, New York, Virginia, Wisconsin and California.

2 Kentucky — (AP)

Prison officials in the state are providing inmates with copies of legal mail instead of original documents. The American Civil Liberties Union and the Department of Public Advocacy are suing to stop the practice, which they say violates inmate rights and the confidentiality of the mail. The Kentucky Department of Corrections said that the practice does not

violate inmate rights and that officials are responsible for preventing the flow of contraband via the mail. The ACLU said that there is no evidence that contraband enters prison via legal mail, and that the copies provided are often incomplete.

3 Pennsylvania — (USA Today)

Philadelphia has banned traffic stops for minor violations like broken taillights. The law distinguishes between "primary violations" that will still prompt stops because they involve public safety, and "secondary violations" that will not result in stops. Some police departments have used the stops as a pretext to search for weapons and drugs. Critics say that the stops disproportionately affect people of color. A recent, highly publicized example was the case of Daunte Wright. Police killed Wright during a stop that started be-

cause of expired registration tags and an air freshener dangling from his rearview mirror. The 14-2 vote by the City Council gives police 120 days to educate and train officers before implementation of the new rule.

4 California — (AP)

In September a federal judge mandated COVID-19 vaccinations for all California prison employees entering a prison, as well as for certain inmates. But in late November a panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals stayed the order pending an appeal. The mandated deadline was set for Jan. 12 but the stay blocks enforcement until the appeal hearing, sometime in March. The September order allowed exemptions for medical or religious reasons.

5 Massachusetts — (GBH News)

State prisons are operating normally, even though

150 employees are still not in compliance with an Oct. 18 COVID-19 vaccination mandate. In October Gov. Charlie Baker activated as many as 250 National Guardsmen as a contingency measure during litigation over the vaccine mandate. However, so far it has not been necessary to use the guardsmen in place of unvaccinated correctional officers. The non-compliant employees have been suspended without pay, first for five days, then for 10. If still not vaccinated, employees are subject to termination. Terminations may now be due in some cases. However, the Department of Corrections is not providing information about disciplinary actions.

6 Maryland — (The Washington Post)

The state's General Assembly overrode Gov. Larry Hogan's veto of a bill that stripped his ability to overturn parole decisions for people serving life sentences. Maryland was one of only three states that still allowed that power to governors. The Assembly's action follows years of debate between proponents of tough-on-crime policies and prisoner advocates, who say the parole process is over-politicized. In 1995, Parris Glendening, then governor of the state, said, "Life means life." In the ensuing two decades, Maryland governors routinely overturned parole recommendations, effecting predominately Black inmates. About 77% of the state's prisoners serving life sentences are Black, in contrast to about 30% of the general population.

CORRECTIONS
In our December 2021 edition, we ran a story on the Genesis Project, by Kevin D. Sawyer, in which we misspelled the names of Helaine "Lainy" Melnitzer and Judith Tata. We apologize for the mixup.

BOOK REVIEW

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

"The Body Keeps the Score" was written by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk. This book is a good resource for survivors of abuse and care providers. It reached the *New York Times* best seller list for science in 2019. Some describe this book as painfully hard to read. Its stories are sad, dark, and horrendous. But it is also enlightening on how trauma shapes our inner being.

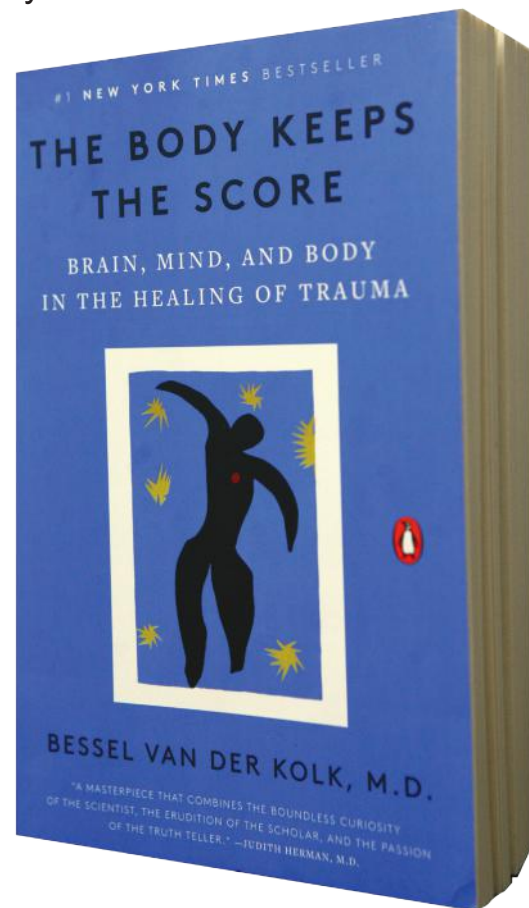
Much of this book is devoted to the experiences of childhood sexual abuse and ways in which to access healing. But it also covers a broad range of traumatic experiences and offers healing solutions for them all.

The tremendous amount of information in this book is difficult to summarize. It discusses trauma ranging from childhood neglect to sexual abuse of all forms and beyond that have lasting impact on the human body and mind.

Dr. van der Kolk discusses three main vehicles for healing: 1) "Top down" interaction, and reconnecting with others in order to make conscious sense of one's experience; (2) The use of medication to manage alarm reactions that result from trauma, e.g., anxiety, PTSD; and 3) The "bottom up" approach of allowing the body to have "experiences that deeply and viscerally contradict the helplessness, rage, or collapse that results from trauma." Many trauma survivors benefit from a combination of all three approaches, but one of Dr. van der Kolk's aims is to call attention to the lack of use

The Body Keeps the Score
Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

By Bessel van der Kolk



of the third approach.
In the final section of the book, Dr. van Der Kolk builds for readers an expansive understanding of trauma. He presents the history of its study, its biological and neurological impact, its role in childhood development and attachment relationships, and its lasting impact on the mind.
Throughout these sections of the book, powerful anecdotes from decades of professional experience are interwoven with research findings and insights into the obstacles that arise in the scientific study of trauma. These anecdotes and the entire book can be a hard read, but such accounts are an important part of the whole and ultimately empowering as we grow in awareness of trauma. The reader gets a window into the depths of post-traumatic despair, but also the boundless heights of human resilience. Encountering both aspects alongside each other becomes another chance for those without personal traumatic experiences to glimpse the difficulties many survivors live with and manage on a daily basis.

Pathways to recovery are also discussed in the last section of this book. It touches on the role of language in achieving clarity before delving into lesser utilized practices that have helped trauma survivors, such as theater, dance, yoga, somatic experiencing therapy and the more well-known eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), all of which can be ways to lessen the impact of memories of traumatic events. There is no

one fix that works for all people and one of the overriding themes of abuse recovery is the growth of autonomy — including sifting through options for healing.
The Body Keeps the Score travels from its beginning to an advanced lesson in the experiences of trauma. When one recognizes the prevalence

of childhood sexual abuse and other traumas, it becomes about understanding people in our own lives and our communities, which is part of making those communities better each day. As someone who was personally impacted by childhood abuse, I recommend this book. It can be found in paperback and other formats.

ARTS

Michael Mackey takes his pen for a walk on paper

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

Many incarcerated men continue to discover their talents and attributes behind bars, leading some of them to create animated characters.

Prison can be a dark place — or a place for the incarcerated men to find themselves as the healing process begins to take place in their lives.

“You know how people take their dogs out for a walk? Well, I take my pen or pencil out for a walk on paper,” said Michael Mackey. “I enjoy this exercise and it keeps me balanced in here.”

During his incarceration, Mackey has come up with his own style and trademark for his drawings by allowing his imagination to run wild in an environment where art has its own identity.

Drawing animations or cartoon strips on canvas in prison is not common, nor is displaying these figures during yard or open unit; Mackey has done so and to his credit he recognizes how his willingness to draw in the presence of others has given him the opportunity to meet new people from varying walks of life. “Just to spark a conversation; that is something I enjoy,” Mackey said.

Mackey takes pride in his craft by pointing out a favorite from his many projects, which is the red and black picture of Majin Boo that he painted. It is rare for him to paint his artwork. Nevertheless, he seems surprised as to how good this project came out.

“Majin Boo” is a character in an animation cartoon called Dragon Ball Z (DBZ). Majin



Boo doesn't like weakness and strives to better himself, to be the strongest in the world.

The blue picture he created is a character called "Gotanks;" he's two people in one body, which is done by a method called Fusion that combines them together into one being. It makes them a strong person, stronger than they were before they fused together.

He drew two different stages: the first stage is called Super Sayian 2 and the second transformation is called Super Sayian 3. It's like a power-up.

Having the knowledge of how these characters are relat-

ed to each other in the series, Mackey also created the third picture with a green background, and the character on it is called "Goku." He's the main character in DBZ series.

“He reminds me of me being the oddball, discovering who you are as a person,” Mackey said, “despising what the world thinks of you by overcoming obstacles that come along in your life.”

He acknowledges how his skills have played a positive role in his rehabilitation.

“I create art because it's something that I control and create,” Mackey said. “It's a



Edwin E. Chavez, SQNews

Mackey has come up with his own style... allowing his imagination to run wild in an environment where art has its own identity.

Michael Mackey (below center) finds inspiration in the “Dragon Ball Z” animation series, including characters like Majin Boo (far left) who shuns weakness and pursues strength.

Photos by Vincent Turner, SQNews



hobby that turned into a passion and is relaxing at the same time.”

Mackey says there are two aspects to drawing that he considers beneficial. The first is being able to teach someone else how to draw; the second is how art attracts people — in a way it unites us all.

After 18 years of incarceration, he never imagined how his newly discovered skill would change his life inside a prison cell. Mackey takes pride in his animated figures, showing a soft and unique part of himself as a person who finds peace and tranquil-

ity in his art.

He has been challenging his skills in a different style by creating a portrait of the famous actor John Wayne, who starred in many westerns. Mackey admitted during an interview that he didn't really enjoy doing portraits at first, but later on, after drawing Japanese animation, he became better at drawing portraits.

He said he had tried to do portraits while attending Richmond High School art class, but he got discouraged because he felt that he didn't do good work, and didn't like what he created. So he left portraits

alone for years.

“What I started doing was converting people into cartoon characters. In the process of that, I somehow got good at drawing portraits,” Mackey said, “I knew this after I drew a portrait of my daughter Adriana Mackey and it turned out to my surprise very well.” From that point on he felt confident that he could do portraits and this is what drove him to do the portrait of John Wayne.

He is currently working on his next big project by combining portraits with animation on giant posters.

Quint Clark's comic styling brings the funnies to SQNews

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairperson

SQNews continues to discover talented incarcerated men who express themselves through the gift of art.

Quinterrious Clark, 48, a San Quentin resident, has developed his own characters and brought them to life in his cartoon series, *Sam's Aqua Adventures* and related spin-offs. Quint's character style is colorful and entertaining, though he also ventures into Western realism and other genres.

He has been drawing since he was 10 years old. At that young age he started with character pictures of his parents, siblings and family members who posed for him as he went to work creating them as characters.

It was not long before he realized that he had a gift and allowed himself to become more creative in his projects. During his incarceration he has not limited himself and has allowed his imagination to go wild by giving life to his characters.

“I found serenity through drawing my pictures,” said Clark.



Photos by Pheun You, SQNews



He pointed out a picture of a boy sitting on the sun who is creating the universe; the boy is also holding the earth and the moon in his hands. This particular drawing is called Young Jesus, because according to the artist, Young Jesus created the

earth along with his father.

Clark told SQNews that he always wanted to draw for a newspaper or a magazine. His dreams have now come true.

One of his many pieces that he considers a standout is a Western-style picture of a cowboy who is hiding in the bushes with his revolver in his hand, aiming at oncoming enemies, while an eagle soars across the horizon searching for his meal in the middle of the desert. Clark describes how this eagle already sees his meal and is getting ready to get it.

Clark named this picture “Pending Danger” because he feels that we're all surrounded by danger. He mentioned how complicated this project was for him; it took him three days to complete.

He also sketched a skull

on top of a broken-open light bulb, and says that the light bulb represents life itself. The broken glass of the bulb symbolizes shattered life, the Light of Death.

“I called this the ‘Light of Death’ because our lives go through a cycle of light and then that light goes out at the end, symbolizing death,” said Clark.

Sam's adventures allow Clark to stretch himself creatively, and the cartoon features some of his new friends, which are based on different parts of his own personality. The comic features a shark named Sam and a fish name Rasco. Sam and Rasco are best friends: Rasco feels down, emotionally, and Sam is like a big brother trying to lift up Rasco's spirits.

“Part of *Sam's Aqua Adventures* is that they are always getting into something like two young adults,” said Clark.

Clark described how Rasco has a job at a barnacle company, knocking the barnacles off the boats with a chisel and hammer.

“Sam is unemployed and goes around looking for things to get into,” said Clark. “He is looking for adventures.”

There are other characters too, like Rasco's boss who is a catfish named Cat, and a preacher named Petey the Preacher, who is also a fish, and let's not forget to mention Rasco's wife, Gabby, a guppy fish, and many other friendly characters.

Clark has lately been working on his newest project, *Sam & Friends*. It's an *Aqua Adven-*

tures spin-off cartoon series with father-and-son seahorses.

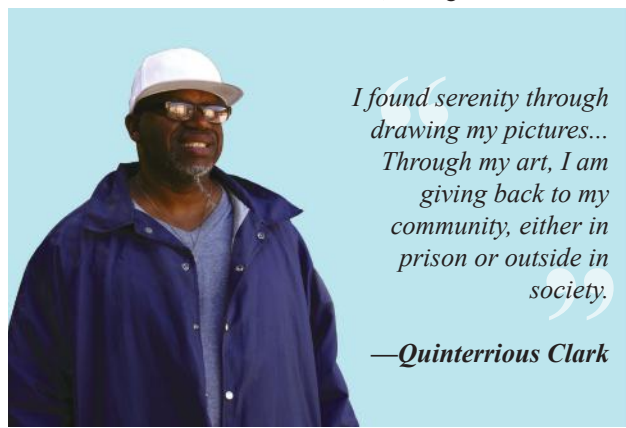
“Through my art I am giving back to my community,” said Clark, “either in prison or outside in society.”

When asked why he pursues that style in prison, Clark says, “I always thought about drawing stuff for museums, because I wanted other people to see my work.”

He proudly displayed his art on a table, admitting with a smile how this is therapeutic and beneficial for him.

“It soothes my mind and it takes me out of all my negative elements just in general,” said Clark.

Clark's artistic ways know no barriers. He also writes poetry for his audiences — let's not forget that art is a universal language.



I found serenity through drawing my pictures... Through my art, I am giving back to my community, either in prison or outside in society.

—Quinterrious Clark