San Quentin News

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Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

Beto O'Rourke talking with incarcerated people at San Quentin

Former presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke visits SQ

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Chairperson

Presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke, who have since dropped out of the race, came to San Quentin Sept. 18 to witness firsthand the power of rehabilitative transformation.

A small group of prisoners met with O'Rourke in the SQ chapel to speak about how they used their incarceration to become better human beings—fully cognizant of the harms they once caused society.

"One of my big takeaways is that we are all capable of change," O'Rourke said to news cameras outside SQ afterwards. "When we focus on the person's ability to make that change and their ability to transition into civilian life successfully—there's a better outcome not just for that former inmate… not just for the taxpayer….

"There's a better outcome for this country."

O'Rourke and his team's arrival—devoid of any fanfare—brought choir practice to a standstill as the inmates stopped to introduce themselves and shake the presidential hopeful's hand.

"How can I go to my constituents and tell them why I support releasing you?" O'Rourke asked of the prisoners who greeted him.

Seven incarcerated SQ tour guides opened the discussion by asking those present to join in a moment of silence to honor fallen victims everywhere, including those killed amongst the recent Texas mass shootings in O'Rourke's home state.

*See **O'ROURKE** on Page 11*

Incarcerated female veterans may face higher degrees of trauma

Photo courtesy of CIW

CIW's staff and incarcerated Honor Guards together to honor those who had fell on 9/11, September 2018

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

What happens when former U.S. service men or women find themselves behind bars, trying to process hidden traumas after serving in the military?

For incarcerated female veterans, the traumas they face may be doubled due to suffering from abuse prior to serving and while on duty in the military, according to a *National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women* report titled *Responding to the Needs of Women Veterans Involved in the Criminal Justice System*.

The criminal justice system and other human service agencies that fail to identify women under their care as veterans can create barriers for women seeking necessary help and services, said the report.

"Remember, veterans have learned not to be weak or to display weakness. They have been trained as warriors and do not want to be seen as victims," said the report.

Women veterans who return home from active duty have very little or no time to readjust to civilian life, the report said.

*See **VETERANS** on Page 4*

11th annual Walk for a Cure

By David Ditto
Staff Writer

A sea of pink flooded the San Quentin Lower Yard as more than 100 prisoners and dozens of volunteers enjoyed a sunny fall weekend to support the fight against cancer. They joined to build, serve and inspire their SQ community in the 11th annual "Walk for a Cure."

*See **CANCER** on Page 12*

No More Tears violence prevention program originates from the heart

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

As the sun was setting on San Quentin, dozens of incarcerated men and Bay Area citizens gathered in the Protestant Chapel to break bread, on Sept. 14, in celebration of No More Tears, a violence prevention program.

Mick Gardner, executive director of the program established in 2002, revealed that in the last three years, 43 participants of No More Tears returned to the community and none returned to prison.

Pointing to the incarcerated men, Gardner said, "They put it together—the idea came from the heart and mind of Lonnie Morris. The sincere passion that this man has for this organization—he deserves an award, and with that said, this certificate is for the shining success of No More Tears."

*See **TEARS** on Page 11*

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

No More Tears' Lonnie Morris (center) with Mattie Scott (center right) and members of Healing for Our Families and Our Nations

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

CDCR Undersecretary Kathleen Allison, BPH Chief Psychologist Cliff Kusaj and BPH's Jennifer Shaffer holding up Hope T-shirts

Raising awareness during 2nd annual Mental Wellness Week

Incarcerated and outside members of the San Quentin community joined forces to emotionally support one another and raise awareness during the prison's second annual Mental Wellness Week.

"This week is about all of us coming together to encourage hope—no one should feel they have to go it alone," said Dr. S. McCarver, SQ's Chief of Mental Health for the last four years. "There should be no stigma for simply reaching out for help—reaching out for support."

The schedule of daily events from Sept. 8 to 14 included a highly anticipated panel featuring Board of Parole Hearing (BPH) Executive Officer Jennifer Shaffer and BPH Chief Psychologist Cliff Kusaj.

*See **WELLNESS** on Page 13*

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Avenal State Prison holds first annual Children's Hospital art donation

By B. Wilson
Contributing Writer

This is the first annual Valley Children's Hospital hobby donation on C-yard. By Ms. D's graciousness we were able to host a hobby donation for the children. Those photographed participated by putting their talents together, in a joint effort to bring joy to a child's heart through arts and crafts. The items donated included: drawings, paintings, cards, colorings, models, paper-mâchés, bracelets, necklaces, beanies, stuffed animals, etc. We have so many talents and what better way to use those talents than donate to a child who must endure much more than we do at such a young age.

I encourage every yard in this facility to find the time to donate to those less fortunate. As difficult as our struggles maybe, they do not compare to a sick child's. Your thought alone can bring strength; our prayers can expand their horizons, and our change and growth can bring healing. If it's just a smile on a child's face then that should be enough. A special thanks to Ms. D for making this a reality. Make a difference!

The pain, suffering, and damage that our hands have done is unthinkable. For many of us, we can never make up for the harm we have caused. But does that excuse us from giving back? From making an effort to repair our lives and the lives of others? There is no better way to accomplish this than giving to those less fortunate.

Here at Avenal State Prison, on Facility C, the men had the opportunity to put their talents together for a cause very precious and dear to every one of our hearts, giving back to children less fortunate who must endure a struggle far greater than our own.

These gentlemen you see here helped, with the use of their hands and creative talents, made the items on display. From drawings to paintings, from bead items to sculptures, even a knitted R2D2 and Darth Vader were made for the kids at the Valley Children's Hospital in Madera. The amends process begins here, and being a part of this was a tremendous blessing and a privilege.

I would like to give a special thank you to Mrs. DeArmand for being the link we needed for this special event to take place. Her willingness to help us get the hobby donations to the children made all this possible.

The weight of the harm we caused weighs heavy. With every moment we spend dwelling on the weight how will we ever be free of it? The only way to lessen the weight is to give what has so freely been given us. The majority of us have second chances in life, one of those children might not. To give back what we've taken; peace, stability, security, and maybe even a life, seems impossible. But with each kindness, with each selfless act of service, help, and giving we have the opportunities to bridge the gaps that our decisions and crimes have created. It's never too late to give back. I am so thankful to be a part of the healing and what is happening here at Avenal State Prison. Even beyond these fences, for all my fellow incarcerated men who take the initiative and make amends by giving back, I applaud you. I'm encouraged. Now becoming men of honor. Our crimes do not define us, they have the potential to rebuild us, if we let them. Let the past give you motivation in giving to those who need us in the present which will inevitably create a safer tomorrow.

Barry Wilson, Avenal participant

Photo courtesy of Avenal State Prison

Artists holding up their work

Photo courtesy of Avenal State Prison

Variety of bead and knitted work

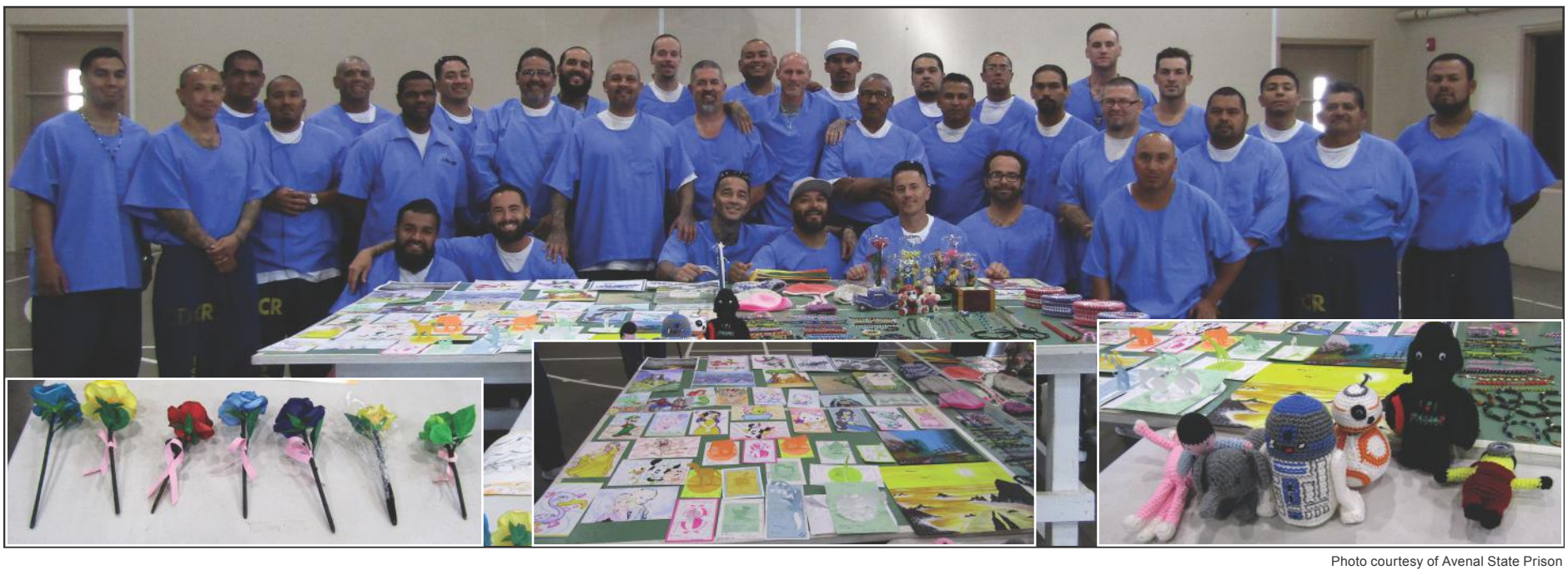

Photo courtesy of Avenal State Prison

All those who created artwork pieces featuring roses, cards, and knitted R2D2 and BB8 (inserts) for the Valley Children's Hospital

Filmmaking teams premierè *College Behind Bars* at SQ

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

Acclaimed filmmakers Sarah Botstein and Lynn Novick brought their latest effort, *College Behind Bars*, to San Quentin for a premierè screening organized through SQ's Prison University Project (PUP) on Sept. 18.

Shot on location inside several east coast correctional facilities, the documentary examines the struggles and triumphs of incarcerated students participating in the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI)—a college program much like PUP, under which instructors enter prisons daily to teach accredited courses.

"This is a very special audience for us," Botstein told *SQ News* before screening the film. "We're very interested in having conversations with another student body getting their education in prison."

Novick added, "We're very much aware of this program and how tightly focused it is on its students—just like BPI. Jody Lewen's why we came here today.

"Somebody should do a similar film about her and the program here," said Novick.

Botstein and Novick are partners of renowned documentarian Ken Burns. In July Burns visited San Quentin and previewed his latest PBS special, *Country Music*. At that time Burns said he'd like the Botstein/Novick project to also be shown here.

Salih Israel and Elitha Smith—both central figures featured in the prison education documentary—came for the screening and participated with Botstein and Novick in a discussion afterward.

"I'm here to represent my brother," Smith said to a packed PUP classroom. The documentary shows her visiting Rodney Spivey-Jones throughout his journey of achieving a bachelor's degree while incarcerated.

"He's all I have left," Smith says in the film. "Those short visits—four to five hours long—every single word matters because it extends for months until the next visit."

A U.S. Army veteran and West Point graduate, Smith visited Spivey-Jones in between her deployments to Afghanistan. In the film, Spivey-Jones spoke about the ever-present danger of terrorist explosive devices and how that menace underscored the value of their time together.

"The film shows so many incarcerated people doing amazing things—inside and upon release," Smith told the classroom. "It gives me hope that when my brother gets out this might be him."

Starting at about 3:15 p.m., the preview included a 45-minute excerpt from the documentary. A corrections officer interrupted the ensuing Q&A presentation around 4 p.m. to conduct the mandatory statewide prisoner headcount.

"I did 20 years of counts," Israel told the audience as everyone waited quietly while the count proceeded. "I know what it's like to be in a place where you can't be heard."

Recently paroled, Israel graduated through BPI and now works for that same organization. Botstein, Novick, Smith and Israel traveled the country previewing the film segment at different venues in 15 cities.

Previews are planned at New York City's iconic Apollo Theater and the National Black Caucus. The team also went inside Indiana Women's Prison with the film.

SQ was the second correctional institution to view the film. "We try and get into facilities wherever we go and do screenings like this," said Novick.

Botstein and Novick took their cameras inside three different BPI sponsored facilities in making the film. They spent more than four years filming classes, interviewing incarcerated students and BPI faculty, celebrating graduations and detailing families' reactions.

Photo courtesy of Skiff Mountain Films

Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) graduates celebrate at Taconic Correctional Facility in June 2017

Possibly best known for their epic documentary *The Vietnam War*, Botstein and Novick were immersed in that production when Novick got invited into a BPI class as a guest lecturer in 2012.

"As filmmakers, we already know that there's an infinite number of stories out there that need to be told," said Novick. "Right away, I saw for myself these really amazing students and their amazing stories.

"Being a guest teacher, I experienced some incredibly nuanced and sophisticated conversations. Speaking with Sarah, we knew someone had to make this film."

Once *Vietnam* finished production, Botstein and Novick turned their eyes back to BPI.

"Through her connections teaching, Lynn was able to get permission from the corrections people and Bard University," said Botstein.

"When we first started filming," added Novick. "It was just on a wing and a prayer—and a dollar."

A powerful moment in the film captures student Tamika Graham's mother and her expressed displeasure at how her daughter is somehow being rewarded for her crimes with a taxpayer-paid college education.

"I didn't know the program was privately funded," said Graham's mother, Sonya, on film. "All I know is my daughter got a free diploma."

Julia Louria, a BPI representative who came for the SQ screening, described how the program is actually funded. "It's 80% privately funded, overwhelmingly by individuals and also foundations," said Louria.

"There's such an unfairness around the huge costs of college right now," said Novick. "Everyone should have access to a college education—inside or out of prison.

"Of course, this film touches on the importance of prison reform—those politics are actually part of the story."

BPI founder Max Kenner is shown in the film immersing himself within the incarcerated population and actively working to motivate correctional institutions to recognize the rehabilitative benefits of offering their prisoners higher education.

"The way Max came in and got BPI off and running—that stuff only happens because people like him take the time to actually start engaging with incarcerated individuals," said Israel.

Elitha Smith spoke to *SQ News* on her way off the yard about her brother and how education affected him.

"I definitely saw, from the moment he went in, a difference," she said. "I think my brother was a little bit arrogant before. He was always well spoken, but he didn't understand how to really use his words. Incarceration didn't help him.

"BPI immediately changed him. Now he's more pensive—he listens more than he speaks. He asks more questions than he answers and considers others' points of view.

"His life's been catapulted, and I just pray to God he's released in the spring of 2021."

Rather than continue on the tour of scheduled screening events with the production team, Smith said she would be flying back East. She already had plans to visit her brother the next Saturday.

Photo courtesy of Skiff Mountain Films

Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) students in a literature seminar at Taconic Correctional Facility.

San Quentin News

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Behind the Scenes

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Photo courtesy of Skiff Mountain Films

Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) Debate Union defeats Harvard University in September 2015

Photo courtesy of Skiff Mountain Films

Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) students conjugate Spanish verbs at Eastern New York Correctional Facility.

Photo courtesy of Skiff Mountain Films

Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) students at Eastern New York Correctional Facility in an advanced bachelor's degree seminar.

San Quentin's Boot Hill to exhume veterans for proper burials

By Elton Kelley
Journalism Guild Writer

Complying with a 1935 law, Marin County has agreed to exhume San Quentin's Boot Hill veterans and give them each proper burials in a national cemetery with full military honors.

San Quentin opened its doors for business as California's only prison in 1852. It was meant to house over 3,000 of the most notorious, most hardened, most deadly and condemned criminals in the state. Unfortunately, not everyone made it out alive from what was then the State's maximum security prison.

Many such unlucky souls were buried in the prison's own cemetery which opened in the early 1920s. Dr. Charles Bacon Boudwin, a military veteran, is buried in the cemetery. Boudwin died in 1944 after having served less than one year of his two to five year term for performing an abortion. Boudwin served in both World War I and World War II.

Boot Hill, as the grave site is called, now holds the remains of nearly 700 former inmates that have died since the grave site opened and before its closing in 1952.

A current San Quentin prisoner and U.S. Navy veteran (1978-82), Anthony Taylor, said, "This was a violent prison back then. That's a lot of people, more than 23 deaths per year."

Like Dr. Boudwin, many of Boot Hill's residents are also veterans of America's military service, according to an article published in the *Marin Independent Journal* March 03, 2019.

"They had been Honorably Discharged and should be buried with other vets"

Marcus Blevins, a San Quentin prisoner and a veteran of the U.S. Army (1975-78), questioned why these people weren't claimed by their loved ones. Then he realized that some of the inmates were from families who may have wanted to claim the decedents but couldn't afford the cost of a funeral.

Boot Hill was likely built by prison labor about 100 years ago and is now showing its age. Constructed entirely of cement, Boot Hill's ornate arches, thick fencing and decorative stone-like filigrees were built to preserve the dignity and respect of those departed. All of it now sits decaying and blackened with Bay Area algae after having been assaulted by local weather, time and seabirds leaving their white marks of disrespect.

Photos show simple but decaying headstones bearing only a number to identify who's buried below.

San Quentin is not unique in its having interred indigent peoples and forgetting them. *The Independent Journal* also reported that more than 287 decedents are buried near the Marin County Juvenile Hall near where the county once operated an indigents' hospital and farm for poor folks from 1880 to 1963. It is likely some of the people buried there are also veterans, said the newspaper.

As well, the cremated remains of untold numbers of civilians and veterans are resting peacefully on the shelves of several Marin mortuaries, the *Journal* reported.

Edward Leon, owner of Monte's Chapel of the Hills, where Marin County currently sends its unclaimed bodies, said he couldn't say offhand how many urns he has in storage. Jack Thornton, manager of Mount Tamalpais Mortuary and Cemetery in San Rafael, which used to provide final services to the county, said they have more than 45 urns filled with unclaimed remains. It is unknown how many of these unclaimed remains are U.S. military veterans.

And in Oregon, 3,500 urns with ashes of human remains were discovered on the shelves of Oregon State Hospital. The newspaper said an estimated 1,000 of them may be veterans also needing proper military placements.

Marin County is acting in response to an obscure and loosely enforced law passed in 1935 directing where Honorably Discharged military veterans are not to be interred. The county is finally taking action to move the veterans to properly designated graves provided by the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

Carl Raybon, veteran of the U.S. Marines (1982-86) and current President of the Veteran's Group of San Quentin (VGSQ), said "Marin County footing the bill (for the move) is a great way to honor the men who went into battle and then died here."

Sean Stephens, director of the Marin County Veteran's Service Office, said "Once the remains are delivered to a national cemetery, all costs are covered by the Veterans Administration. The piece of land, the headstone, the niche—it's all free. There is an Honor Guard and flag. It's an awesome tradition."

Raybon said, "What Marin County is doing is a super thing, seeing to it that the remains of veterans are properly disposed."

Gary Cooper, also a former Marine (1966-68) and past-president of the VGSQ, agrees, "They had been Honorably Discharged and should be buried with other vets."

However, exhuming and relocating the former inmate veterans does not sit well with everyone. Ken Wilkerson, a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corp commented, "I consider the effort (by Marin County) to be a complete waste of time. Those inmate veterans screwed up, got sent to prison. So what of their remains?"

James Cook, a veteran who served during Vietnam, joined up with the Missing in America Project and is taking on the job of rounding up the remains of veterans to see that they get transported to a national cemetery.

Cook said, "It never occurred to me that there would be this problem." Cook participated in the moving of four veteran remains to the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, California, where they were greeted "by hundreds of people gathered to commemorate the arrival of the remains of 124 veterans," reported the *Journal*. "I was just so moved," said Cook.

The newspaper also reported that in 2010 the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 1644, streamlining the process for moving unclaimed American veterans from mortuaries to national cemeteries.

VETERANS

Continued from Page 1

"Military women with children are less likely to have the same support networks as military men," said the report. "Single mothers and women veterans whose husbands are still serving on active duty must immediately begin caring for their children."

These same women can suffer from the same combat-related trauma as their male counterparts, such as being fired upon by enemy forces, rockets, sniper fire, and seeing others killed or wounded.

Women veterans have a higher rate of unemployment compared to male veterans, according to the report. Single mothers or women veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma (MST) experience homelessness at a higher rate than civilian women.

One in five female veterans has experienced military sexual trauma compared to one in 100 male veterans, according to a study by the Veteran's Health Administration. MST is defined as experiences of sexual assault or harassment while on active military duty.

In a sample of U.S. Navy recruits, 15% of new male and female recruits reported traumatic histories. The women recruits reported higher percentages of past childhood traumas of physical or sexual abuse, the report revealed.

In the U.S. Army, 22% of women stated that they used alcohol as a way to cope with stress in their lives, reported the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

This substance abuse can lead to anxiety disorders, depression, and PTSD. Without proper treatment these women can spiral down into unemployment, homelessness, or the criminal justice system.

These dynamics should be considered when working with female veterans in the justice system, noted the report. If the women had a negative experience with the military, it can cause them to refrain from seeking help from the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA).

"Some women in the military may have been ostracized, isolated or punished for reporting abuse," said the report. "Since these women were assaulted while serving in the military, it is unlikely that they were able to elicit support from their loved ones."

The full effects of these past traumas, prior to entering the military or being re-traumatized while in the military, are still being researched.

"We need to understand that the issues facing women veterans in the justice system may be complex as a result of untreated trauma, mental illness, and substance abuse, and their unique military experiences," acknowledged the researchers.

Even though women veterans make up a small population in state and federal prison, they do have high rates of co-occurring disorders among women veterans in general. While incarcerated, more may attempt suicide or engage in self-harm than other women in the general population, according to the report.

By screening and identifying the military status of the women who enter prison, the criminal justice system can provide the necessary resources for women recovering from these traumatic experiences or suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD.

Currently, the California Institution for Women (CIW), a state prison, has the Veterans in Prison (VIP Post 1) program for the vets who live there.

"Women veterans may have strengths that can be mobilized to mitigate risk for future criminal behavior," concluded the report. "Women in the military often have achieved higher education levels and have a steady job history when compared to other justice-involved women."

Photo courtesy of CIW

CIW Honor Guard walks at the AVON 39th Walk to End Breast Cancer in 2018

A journey of recovery and reclamation for Officer Calvo

Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

Correctional Officer Calvo with his kitchen crew

By Aron Kumar Roy
Journalism Guild Writer

Before coming to San Quentin, Correctional Officer Calvo was homeless and living on the streets, alcohol ruining his life.

Calvo described himself as a functional alcoholic, who held a job, but was drunk all the time. Due to the progressive nature of alcoholism, his problem got worse over time. Calvo, who is retiring after 18 years at San Quentin, shared his insights about life's struggles in an exclusive interview with *San Quentin News.*

"I didn't care about the consequences of my drinking," said Calvo, " I was a slave to alcohol."

Antwan "Banks" Williams, co-creator of the popular podcast *Ear Hustle*, worked in the prison's kitchen with Officer Calvo.

Williams remembers an incident that changed his viewpoint about correctional officers.

"I worked night shift, and we had just got done cleaning up. Officer Calvo and I were standing around, and he opened up to me about his addiction problem and how he has been clean and sober for 20 plus years," said Williams, "That was the first time ever that a staff person has ever shared something like that with me. What it did for me is it made me look at him as a person outside of his occupation."

"He didn't have to treat us the way he did, with the utmost respect," said Williams. "I find that to be admirable, and I enjoyed the two years working with him."

Before coming to San Quentin, Calvo said, he was on a downward spiral. After several blackouts and waking up in hospitals, his family and friends decided they could no longer help him.

He was forced out of the house and began living on the street.

It was during this period of homelessness that he had a spiritual revelation, a moment of clarity that made him question his lifestyle.

"I finally surrendered and asked God for help," said Calvo, "I turned myself in to detox. From detox I turned myself in to a 90-day treatment program, and it changed my life."

Several San Quentin prisoners said Officer Calvo did not just have respect and professionalism for his kitchen staff, but for all incarcerated individuals.

"I first met Calvo during Ramadan of 2017," said Abdul Halim, a mentor for the Coalition for Justice and incarcerated computer coder with The Last Mile program," He came and found brother Rashad and I to figure out how to make sure that we didn't run into any problems receiving our first meal to break our fast during Ramadan."

During the Islamic holiday of Ramadan, observant Muslims incarcerated in California prisons receive their food at special times because they may only eat before sunrise and after sunset.

Halim said that timing the meals can be problematic. Calvo made sure that the kitchen was properly prepared to fulfill the needs of the participants in Ramadan.

"I learned afterwards that he (Calvo) does that every year," said Halim.

Outside of work, Calvo volunteers his time helping to feed the homeless and helping others overcome addiction.

"Over the past several years the prison system has made more changes toward rehabilitation. Education and training is important, but if an inmate has an alcohol or drug addiction, the issue has to be worked on first on a daily basis or they relapse and lose everything," said Calvo, "I know this from my own life experiences."

Calvo has a sponsor and helps new participants in AA work through the Big Book and the 12 Steps.

He understands the importance of a strong support network. Sergeant Hasan, one of Calvo's supervisors, helped him through difficulties in his life such as losing his father and a divorce. "It was hard working in this prison environment and going through those life experiences, but Sergeant Hasan made sure I got the help I needed, and for that I'm truly grateful," said Calvo.

Prisoners as well as the correctional staff say they will miss Officer Calvo.

"I want to thank him on behalf of all of the people who live in H-Unit for always being a genuinely caring and respectful individual," said Halim, "Shukran (Arabic for "thank you"), Officer Calvo."

America has a dark little secret - ADX

The Federal Government's highest security prison put prisoners in the harshest conditions

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

Florence, Colorado, is home of the Federal Government's highest security prison: The United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX),

According to experts, ADX prisoners are exposed to more extreme conditions of isolation and sensory deprivation than any other facility in the country. ADX was designed to deter those locked- up from plotting an escape. Cells are made of concrete with narrow windows that barely let in light. Outdoor cages for exercise, each about five by 10 steps, are built within a walled enclosure that resembles a swimming pool. Every prisoner spends 22 to 24 hours a day alone, reports Aviva Stahl in *The Nation*, June 4, 2019.

Blocked from interviewing current ADX inmates, Stahl interviewed men who had been held there as recently as 2015. She also interviewed defense attorneys and doctors knowledgeable about force-feeding. After 18 months of intensive research, she was able to break the silence on America's most un-scrutinized prison.

Former ADX prisoner Mohommad Salameh was placed in H-Unit, the highest security section of the prison in 2002.

During his 10 years in H Unit, Salameh was force-fed nearly 200 times in response to hunger strikes.

Salameh's ability to read, write letters and make phone calls were limited by special administrative measures (SAMs). He wasn't allowed to speak to other prisoners. The FBI monitored every aspect of his life, and he was barred from TV and radio news. All reading material had to be approved.

ADX is allowed to take 60 business days to mail out a letter in Arabic and 60 days to process an incoming one. If Salameh wrote a January letter to his mother in Jordan, he might not hear back before July.

Effects of long-term isolation can lead to mental impairments such as paranoia, hallucinations, hypersensitivity to stimuli and suicide attempts. Men at ADX grew so psychologically unstable from being alone they smeared feces onto open wounds and swallowed razor blades according to a lawsuit filed in 2012.

Salameh was convicted of participating in the first World Trade Center attack in 1994, which killed six people and injured more than 1,000. Prior to his arrival at ADX, he served time in several high-security prisons without being subjected to communication restrictions. After the 9/11 attacks on America, he and other individuals convicted of earlier terrorism offenses were moved to ADX.

SAMs were created in 1996 after the Oklahoma City bombing by American-born terrorist Timothy McVeigh. The regulations give the US Attorney General discretion to impose measures if there is believed to be a "substantial risk" that a prisoner's communication could pose a public threat. Regulations do not require a consultation with a judge. Criteria for SAMs has never been disclosed. Salameh and others in H-Unit have gone on hunger strikes to demand their SAMs be lifted.

Salameh came of age when Palestinians in Israeli prisons were going on repeated hunger strikes to protest their conditions of Israeli confinement. Salameh understood refusing to eat could be an effective means of resistance.

The number of prisoners under SAMs began to multiply from 16 in November, 2001, to 30 in June of 2017. The majority have been Muslims, according to a 2017 report by Yale Law School and Center for Constitutional Rights, which said the criteria to place under SAMS was not the person's "demonstrated capacity to communicate dangerous information but rather the prisoner's religion."

In November of 2015 after Salameh had not eaten in 34 days a team of guards dressed in riot gear appeared at his cell door ordering him to "cuff up." A week earlier when he was too weak to comply, guards had entered his cell and dragged him out. Not wanting to be man-handled again he struggled to pull himself to his feet. The force team attached irons to his legs and handcuffed him. They took him to the medical treatment room, where he weighed in at 139 pounds. When asked if he would "drink this nutritional supplement voluntarily, by mouth?" Salameh refused. Guards stepped forward and strapped him into a black chair. A physician's assistant took a long tube and inserted it through his nostril and down into his stomach, then the nutritional liquid was dripped through the tube into his body. Salameh said afterward the PA didn't pull the plastic tube out gently, "He pulled as he is pulling it out a bull's nose… He was trying hard to force me to stop my hunger strike by any way of means even if he causes me excessive pain."

During another force-feeding, the PA attempted to feed Salameh 16 cartons of Novasource, (about a gallon of liquid) which caused him to repeatedly vomit up the contents of each carton.

The investigation by The Nation found that many human rights abuses that were perpetrated against hunger strikers at Guantanamo—and inspired public outrage—are occurring on American soil on a regular basis.

A spokesman for Bureau of Prisons said, "It is BOP's responsibility to monitor the health and welfare of inmates and to ensure that procedures are pursued to preserve life."

According to United Nations officials and medical experts, by force-feeding with the apparent intention of inflicting harm and not just providing treatment, the BOP is violating not only medical ethics but also international law.

Many top American companies were founded by immigrants

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

About 45% of America's top companies were founded by immigrants or their children. These firms brought in $6.1 trillion in revenues in the fiscal year 2018, according to a recent report.

This figure put into context is larger than the GDP of Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom, reports the New American Economy Research Fund.

These companies are strong drivers of both the American economy and the global economy. Employing 13.5 million workers, a population, if ranked as a state, would be America's fifth largest, the July 22 report says.

The report, called the New American Fortune 500, revealed that 223 companies were founded by immigrants or their children. Of those companies, 101 were founded directly by people born outside of America. Children of immigrants founded 122 of the 500.

New York leads the nation with 35 firms founded by immigrants. California was second with 29, followed by Illinois with 21, Texas with 18, Virginia with 12, Florida and New Jersey with 10 each.

These companies play a significant part in the states economies. New York reported 56.3% of GDP was brought in by these firms. In Illinois the percentage was 70.3% of GDP.

The New American Fortune 500 reported 3.2 million immigrants own and operate businesses.

Maine and Vermont encourage the incarcerated to cast their vote even while in prison

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

When most felons go to prison they lose their right to vote in most of the 50 states, the strongest exceptions being Maine and Vermont, reported *Mother Jones*.

Depending on what you were convicted for, states like Mississippi, Alaska and Alabama let some of their prison population vote.

Volunteers at the Maine and Vermont prisons come into the facilities to register prisoners to vote and give them encouragement, by letting them know that their vote is very important.

Law librarian John Sughrue, who works at one of Vermont's prisons, thinks that voting is imperative, the only "effective tool" prisoners have. Yet he noted that only a small percent of the population exercise their right to vote.

"It seems the current political climate has rendered us inexorably divided," he wrote via the prison email system.

Madeline Motta, who volunteers in Vermont's prisons and helps register prisoners to vote, said of her effort that most of the prisoners are their own worst enemies, according to the article.

"We explained to inmates that elected officials are making decisions about your quality of life both while you are incarcerated and once you are out," she noted.

More variables need to be looked at as to why those who are incarcerated and can vote, don't vote. They feel that their votes will not make a difference. A high percentage of the inmates cannot read or write, so filling out a registration ballot becomes an issue. Since they are cut off from the Internet, most can't get news or form opinions about issues or candidates.

Executive Director of Prison *Legal News*, Paul Wright, says that lower turnouts among prisoners are to be expected.

"We don't have much of a democracy when it comes to candidate choice," he said. "Making the conscious choice in refraining from exercising your rights is just as important as exercising them," Wright told the *Mother Jones* reporter.

Just like outside on the streets, inside prison walls you have voter apathy among the incarcerated.

Several states are working on solutions that will allow the incarcerated to vote or get back their voting privileges/rights once out of prison.

Ten states and Washington, D.C., are currently trying to pass legislation to get prisoners the right to vote while in jail, according to *Mother Jones.*

Connecticut follows NY in providing the incarcerated free phone calls

By Charles Stanley Longley
Journalism Guild Writer

If Connecticut follows the lead of New York City, its prisoners may soon get free phone calls. NYC began allowing free calls earlier this year.

"The day it took effect in New York City, prisoners' calls increased by 38%," said Bianca Tylek, executive director of national prisoner advocacy group Worth Rises.

"Is the punishment from prison supposed to be that you are now completely severed from society, an outcast?" asked State Rep. Josh Elliot, a Hamden Democrat, who introduced legislation to make phone calls free for prisoners. He wants to make it possible for poor people to stay in touch with their families.

The bill won approval from the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee but was delayed in the writing appropriations committee. It is hoped that something will radically decrease the cost of the calls.

One complication in Connecticut is the possible loss of income made by the calls. "In the 2018, Connecticut inmates made $13.2 million in calls. The state took $7.7 million in revenue from the phone calls, which are handled by a vender contracted by the state," said Securus Vice President Joanna Acocella. Securus is a company that provides phone services to inmates.

"The Department of Correction is supportive of efforts that increase communication between offenders and their loved ones, which will hopefully help reduce the rate of recidivism," said Correction Department spokeswomen Karen Martucci.

"The point of making phone calls free to community members and their incarcerated loved ones is to encourage and promote communication," Tylek said.

Currently, inmates and their families must set up an account with a minimum of $20 to prepay for calls.

"They receive two-minute warnings when they are about to run out of time and are charged for the full 15 minutes, whether they use all the time or not," said Tylek. She says Connecticut is second only to Arkansas when it comes to the amount inmates are charged for phone calls.

Joanna Acocella claims that costs vary from state to state based on the infrastructure and services provided. "The calls we facilitate are supported by extensive monitoring and investigatory tools that prevent them from being used to harass a victim or plan a crime, cresting cost far beyond what is involved in a traditional call made outside of a prison environment."

The UK revises prisoner work furlough policies

In the United Kingdom, more prisoners are being allowed to take outside jobs while serving their sentence.

Both England and Wales have adopted new policies concerning the release of prisoners to work in the community, *BBC News* reports.

This change in current policy comes as the government seeks ways to reduce re-offending, which comes as a high cost to society.

"Step in the right direction"

The new direction and shift in policy comes six years after the previous rules had been tightened. This was due to the case of Ian McLaughlin, who while on a temporary work release in 2013, stabbed and killed a man.

In 2018, 7,700 inmates were able to participate in these work release programs, allowing them to spend working hours outside of prison in the community. Some were even allowed overnight stays according *BBC news*.

Now, with new less restrictive policies being implemented, the number of inmates who are allowed to work outside of prison is expected to increase by several hundred.

A new application makes the process more efficient, according to officials. An inmate may take and pass a rigorous "Risk Assessment" test right away rather than having to wait until he or she is within 12 months of release.

Justice Secretary David Gauke told *BBC News*, "The evidence and common sense suggest that prisoners who go into work after they leave prison are less likely to re-offend. If we just dump them out of prison having not done anything to get them ready for work, then I'm afraid the risk of re-offending is that much greater."

Organizations and others in the community have come to realize the value of employing prisoners and are being encouraged to join the 300 who have already signed on to participate.

The Prison Reform Trust welcomed the new policy, calling it a "step in the right direction," but added, "There is much farther to go."

—Alfred King

Reflecting on the Texas murder of an unarmed Black man

Editorial

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Amy Guyger, the White former Texas officer who killed unarmed Botham Jean, a Black man in his home, was found guilty of murder last month. Race normally wouldn't or shouldn't be an issue when it comes to a tragedy, but with the inequalities in the U.S. criminal justice system it will most likely be a part of the conversation.

As an incarcerated Black man, what surprised me were a few events that took place that shocked most people and sparked many debates from those incarcerated and those on the outside. First, a police officer was held accountable for murdering a Black person, though numerous other officers were either not prosecuted or were acquitted. Second, she was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

But what really drove some people crazy was when the brother of the victim hugged and forgave Guyger. Then another shocker, Judge Tammy Kemp, a Black woman, also gave Guyger a hug and a Bible, which sparked its own debate about the separation of church and state.

If that wasn't enough, the prosecution's star witness was murdered not too long after the trial was over.

Man, we got a lesson into the multifaceted nature of our criminal justice system: restorative justice, disproportionate sentencing and possible witness intimidation. But what amazed me the most was the debate, especially among those incarcerated, about the victim's brother hugging and forgiving the offender (Guyger), which is an example of Restorative Justice.

I'm around people every day, be they men in blue or volunteers, who believe in Restorative Justice. Many people believe in and fight for prison reform. Should my views change because she was a police officer who "tripped the hell out," as we say in the neighborhood, for breaking into someone else's house and killing them?

I know many people who have done senseless things, including myself. Do I want forgiveness from the people I have harmed? Do you want forgiveness for your past or present indiscretions? I have had the chance to witness the healing power of victim/offender dialogue firsthand: check out prior issues of *SQ News*. We also have a Re:Store/Survivor column. But Guyger was a police officer, some argue. She should have known better. True.

If she were Black—not to mention if the roles were reversed and it were a Black man who shot a White woman—do I think there would be the same treatment? History says most likely not. There are people serving life sentences for stealing a slice of pizza or drug possession. So Black people and people of color are disproportionally sentenced throughout the nation.

There is so much pain in the community when justice is not balanced. But when it comes to forgiveness, this doesn't mean one forgets. Forgiveness is not just for the one who has offended, it can start the healing process for the victim/survivor or their families.

Constantly reliving that trauma can affect one's quality of life. There are still people being denied 20 to 30 years later at the parole board because family members are still attending the hearings and seeking some form of justice.

So I have to commend the brother and the judge for breaking the status quo when it comes to the criminal justice system. Everyone has his or her own time to heal. It is not for me to judge someone else's pain. But I am of the same opinion as Danielle Sered, author of *Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration and a Road to Repair*.

"We need these stories of extraordinary forgiveness and the complication they introduce. They are critical testaments to the human capacity for compassion. They, like the pained stories of hungry revenge, deserve their place in our public consciousness," Sered wrote.

"But like those other stories, they are not fully representative of most survivors. Most of us lie in the vast space between complete hatred and full forgiveness," Sered continued.

Racism and violence are, sadly, a part of the fabric of our society. I'm inside looking out and seeing that our nation is in desperate need of empathy and emotional intelligence—the main qualities that are required for someone to be found suitable at the parole board to go home.

Violence is violence and police violence is violence. As I finish up this editorial, another Texas officer shot and killed a Black woman who was inside her own home. I sit sad and confused. So what will be the new debate?

Let The People Speak— Dear San Quentin News

In your April 2019 (Edition 115) issue of the *SQ News* ran an article about my having been found suitable for parole after nearly 50 years of imprisonment.

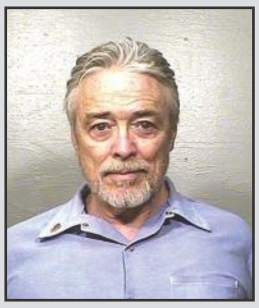


Photo courtesy of CDCR
Bobby Beausoleil

Now, ordinarily I would've felt honored that the editorial staff of *SQ News* had taken an interest in my situation. I have long admired the [organization's] efforts around humanizing prisoners, promoting a higher level of understanding between citizens in the greater community and incarcerated population.

To begin with, the title. The unfortunate placement of an apostrophe (Manson's Follower) makes it seem as if I were the only follower Manson had - when in fact I was never at any time a follower of his. While I was an associate of Charles Manson and his so-called family, I was not a resident member of the group or a follower of Manson. Since then, or until recently, I have usually been referred to as an associate or former associate, terms, I don't much mind being used in that context.

I can and do forgive the editorial staff for failing to preserve journalistic integrity in this case.

Enclosed is a copy of an open letter I wrote to my family and friends a few weeks later.

A few weeks have lurched by since I received a letter from Gov. Gavin Newsom informing me that the parole board's decision to grant my parole had been rescinded by his office. Since then I have been sitting with my thoughts and assessing my feelings around this development.

There is the profound disappointment of being confronted by yet another setback, attended by a lot of other emotions. Certainly, I share many of these feelings with all the people who care about me, who have been let down by this outcome as well.

From a place of experiencing it firsthand, my heart goes out to the thousands of men and women, and their families and friends, who have been subjected to this specific kind of treatment. It is a cruel system that holds out the promise of a second chance after decades of imprisonment only to snatch it back at the last minute. I would be lying to myself and everyone else if I said it doesn't hurt.

In this desperately confused and fearful era we're living in, too many people are retreating to their respective tribal camps, building the walls around them higher and higher while painting others thought to be outside of them with brushes loaded with shades of stark black and white, fingers twitching over the butts of their weapons just in case someone crosses a line. Too few people are willing to listen to a point of view that may be at some odds with their own; too few are willing to forgive wrongful or insulting behaviors they perceive in the other.

Nelson Mandela – a man who suffered greatly while imprisoned by the state for his stance against tyranny – famously said that the withholding of forgiveness is a poison one takes while hoping someone else will die. My arrival at this understanding comes out of having experienced both sides of the equation.

As politicians come, Gavin Newsom is a good one. I continue to believe he will do many good things for the people. For this very reason, he is attracting quite a lot of opposition to his policies and decisions, and some of it is uncompromisingly hostile. This early in his governorship he must be cautious in deciding what battles he will take on. My case presents some extra challenges due to its being associated with crimes that garner a lot of public fascination and the greater scrutiny this may bring to decisions relating to it. Some who are in opposition to my parole have chosen to politicize the process by exploiting this.

There is no blame here; at least not aimed at anyone outside of myself. This is just another thing I must bear in consequence to some terrible failures in my youth. I alone own responsibility for my past failings. Unfortunately, not all the consequences are borne by me alone. To everyone who feels hurt or shame or sadness as a result of this current setback and the attention around it, I am truly sorry.

My release on parole will be reviewed again in a year. In the meantime, I will continue to plan and prepare for my eventual release from prison as I have been since the parole grant in January, because it would be foolish to wait until the decision becomes final before making these preparations.

To all those kind-hearted souls who have advocated for my release, know that I continue to draw encouragement from your support. I express my gratitude in my resolve to carry on in my fight for the simple dignity of redemption and reconciliation. God gave me this ground to stand on, and by God I will stand on it.

In peace and serenity, love holding at the center, trusting to the supreme intelligence at the foundation of all existence.

Bobby Beausoleil
California Medical Facility October 2019

Worthy of Their Sacrifices

I had been incarcerated for almost seven years. I coasted through the system, took a large amount of classes just for show and tried to avoid the everyday drama of prison yard politics. I continued to blame my victim (my wife Renee) for the crime I am responsible for, took no accountability, and just didn't "get it." I only wanted to falsely fill the empty voids in my life and get out of prison as soon as possible. Then, on February 17, 2018, I was called to the property room and my life was forever changed.

I knew I hadn't ordered any items and really didn't want to depart my weekend TV shows. I reluctantly got dressed and went to property, where I had to wait in line, outside, during winter in the Midwest. I made it to the window, signed the yellow property receipt, and received a book with some papers attached. The book looked cool with the face of a soldier on the front and was titled Stories of Faith and Courage from the War in Iraq and Afghanistan. I read the letter of support that was heartfelt and filled with compassion, knowledge and direction. It was from Gold Star Mom Debbie Lee. Her son, Marc Lee, was the first Navy SEAL killed in Iraq: Aug. 2, 2006 – Battle for Ramadi. I remembered Marc's death due to the fact I was attending combat medic school and preparing for war that year.

As I started to turn the pages of my new found treasure, I noticed a handwritten message on the dedication page. I studied those monumental words, written in red ink, and it felt like a prize fighter had punched me in my solar plexus. My breathing paused, I felt my pulse bounding, eyes glossed over, and my pupils narrowed as I experienced a visual osmosis of the message. Several deceased soldiers, my friends, flashed before my eyes. I saw it, and by God, I felt it. The message: "Shon, live your life worthy of their sacrifices." – Debbie Lee

My emotions and thoughts went into a thousand directions as if a hand grenade went off inside my head. My past dishonesty, lack of moral courage and integrity, those I harmed, my suicide attempts, and chaos I created needs to be addressed. I wanted to save the world right now – at this moment. I needed to make things right for my family, community, veterans and God.

Accompanying the book and letter from Mrs. Lee was a copy of Marc's last letter home – before this death. Marc's Glory Letter emphasized "purity, morals and kindness." I realized I first needed to bring closure to my crime – if there ever can be – by telling the truth, exposing my faults, and hoping that others can start to heal.

The first step was to admit all of my offenses, to the best of my memory, since alcohol was a contributor. I started by writing down the turmoil I put my family through. I compiled those events into a 10-page essay titled Demobilization. I needed to tell the story and bring my wife back to life. Not only was she a teacher at a college of nursing, she worked in an emergency room on weekends. I'm a numbers guy. With Renee's untimely death, caused by me, there is a ripple effect in the universe. I have to account for every nurse she may have taught in her classes that would have gone on to save lives. Not only that, but also those she would have directly affected by working in the ER. Those are some big numbers. Her passion was helping others. I have to carry on her life's purpose. I can't work in the medical field due to the felony conviction, but I will share the story in hopes of preventing other families from pain and destruction. So I called up a television station and agreed to admit to what I did on the air. I had previously told many lies about my wife in an attempt to justify my crime. I needed to start being a man and "worthy of their sacrifices" for our country.

As my passion and zeal shot out of the gate like a bull, I'm still a work in progress. I reconstruct my personal identity by showing love through service to others. I have to reorient my identity significantly with the limitations of being a felon. That message, in my heart, came from a multitude of sources – Debbie Lee, Marc Lee, Renee and God.

I now have a purpose, a mission and a lot of work to do.

Shon Pernice
Moberly Correctional Center

Salutations! Peace be upon you. I have read many issues now of your paper, and it has been very informative, useful and productive to my situation, something that I have come to truly enjoy reading. So, today, I have decided to reach out, write this brief note, and enclose these stamps to receive an issue or two of your paper. I appreciate it. Please look up my location and forward to me wherever I may be, due to me being in the process of relocating. Thank you and God bless!

Respectfully,
Reginald Howard
Corcoran State Prison

Hey guys, what's going on there? Enclosed are a couple of fairly recent Mule Creek Posts. We always enjoy getting the new *SQN*; you all are awesome. We especially like the Spring *Wall City*; the stories and photos are impressive. WP. Drummond's editorial is something we have quoted and referenced in several aspects. Looking forward to the next one. Till next time, keep up the good work.

All our best,
D. Razor Babb, Editor-in-Chief
Mule Creek Post

Governor Gavin Newsom signs new justice bills into law

Press Release

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed 25 bills on Oct. 8 aimed at setting a path to reform California's criminal justice system, he reported in a news release.

The bills include support for those reentering the community after serving their sentences, including creating a system to automatically expunge records of individuals previously convicted of low-level offenses, as well as reform unfair sentencing practices, and enhance support for victims of crime.

"I am signing more than two dozen bills that give hope to those that have earned a second chance in our communities, and also support victims of crime," said Gov. Newsom. "These bills show a new path to ensure our state moves closer toward a more equitable criminal justice system."

One of the bills signed is AB 1076 by Assemblymember Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, which will create an automated record clearance system for qualifying low-level offenses, so an individual's records can be sealed in a more efficient manner, as is their right pursuant to California law.

Under AB 1076, the California Department of Justice will establish the automated record clearance system for individuals arrested or convicted after Jan. 1, 2021, and will replace the current one, in which individuals must petition directly to the court. The new system will exclude registered sex offenders and those with any pending criminal charges.

"People shouldn't have to pay for their mistakes for the rest of their lives. A fresh start improves an individual's chances of succeeding and reduces the likelihood of recidivism. Automating the record clearance process will enable former offenders to get back on their feet and lead productive lives," said Assemblymember Ting. "Our economy and society pay the price when job-seeking workers are shut out."

"Many Californians living with past criminal records have completed their sentences and paid their debts, yet still face thousands of legal prohibitions preventing eligibility for jobs, housing and many other keys to family stability and economic mobility," said Lenore Anderson, president of Californians for Safety and Justice. "It's time for meaningful rehabilitation. By signing this bill, Gov. Newsom is giving people living with old records long overdue relief and a real path to stability—and that is better for public safety and the economy. With this new law, California is emerging as a national leader in reintegration for families and strengthening communities."

For other criminal justice-related bills signed Oct. 8 *(see boxes below)*

SENTENCING

• **SB 136** by Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, removes the one-year sentence enhancement that is applied to current sentences for each prior felony jail or prison term served.

• **AB 484** by Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, removes a mandatory minimum sentence for certain drug crimes, allowing for judicial discretion in imposing any period of confinement.

• **SB 36** by Sen. Robert Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys, improves transparency for pretrial risk assessments by requiring regular validation of assessment tools and requiring the Judicial Council to publish a yearly report on its website with data related to outcomes and potential biases.

• **AB 1618** by Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, prohibits plea bargains that require a defendant to generally waive unknown future potential benefits of changes in the law that may occur after the date of the plea.

RELEASE AND REENTRY

• **AB 278** by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, D-Sacramento, allows the California Conservation Corps to accept applicants who are on parole.

• **AB 1261** by Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, eliminates the requirement for individuals convicted of a certain drug offense to register with local law enforcement.

• **SB 310** by Sen. Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley, permits a person with a felony conviction to serve on a jury, unless they are on any form of supervision for a felony conviction, or are a registered sex offender.

• **AB 1668** by Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, D-Los Angeles, establishes the Education and Employment Reentry Program within the California Conservation Corps and authorizes the director to enroll formerly incarcerated individuals.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS

• **AB 917** by Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes, D-Grand Terrace, further expedites the victim certification process for immigrants, including when the victim is in removal proceedings, for the purposes of obtaining T-Visas or U-Visas.

• **SB 22** by Sen. Connie Leyva, D-Chino, requires law enforcement agencies to submit rape kits to a crime lab or other rapid-turnaround DNA program within 20 days.

• **SB 375** by Sen. Maria Elena Durazo, D-Los Angeles, extends the deadline for victims of violent crimes to file an application for compensation from three years to seven years.

• **AB 433** by Assemblymember James Ramos, D-Highland, requires a hearing in open court before early termination of probation, and for crime victims and their attorneys to be made aware of early termination of probation.

• **AB 415** by Assemblymember Brian Maienschein, D-San Diego, authorizes the California Victim Compensation Board to compensate a crime victim for the costs of temporary housing for a pet and for any pet deposit that may be required for relocation.

• **AB 629** by Assemblymember Christy Smith, D-Santa Clarita, authorizes the California Victim Compensation Board to provide compensation equal to loss of income or support to victims of human trafficking.

YOUTH OFFENDERS

• **AB 1394** by Assemblymember Tom Daly, D-Anaheim, eliminates the imposition of any fee charged by a Superior Court or probation department to an applicant who files a petition to seal Juvenile Court records.

• **SB 394** by Sen. Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley, authorizes a court, in consultation with the prosecuting entity and the public defender, to create a pretrial diversion program for defendants who are primary caregivers of a child under 18 years of age.

• **AB 965** by Assemblymember Mark Stone, D-Scotts Valley, authorizes the secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to allow persons eligible for youthful offender parole to obtain an earlier youth offender parole hearing by earning certain educational merit credits, subject to CDCR regulations.

• **AB 1423** by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, D-Oakland, establishes a process for juvenile offenders to request to return their case to Juvenile Court.

• **AB 1454** by Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, increases the award amounts available through the Youth Reinvestment Grant Program and allows nonprofit organizations to apply for grants through the program.

ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION

• **AB 1331** by Assemblymember Rob Bonta, D-Alameda, addresses data gaps and improves access to criminal justice data by establishing reporting requirements across the system and clarifying existing law regarding access.

• **AB 45** by Assemblymember Mark Stone, D-Scotts Valley, prohibits CDCR and city and county jails from charging inmates a co-pay for medical visits.

• **SB 399** by Sen. Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, requires the appointment of two members of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training who are not peace officers and have expertise in implicit and explicit biases, cultural competency, mental health and policing or work with vulnerable populations.

• **AB 1215** by Assemblymember Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, prohibits law enforcement from installing, activating, or using a facial recognition system in connection with a law enforcement agency's body-worn camera.

• **AB 1600** by Assemblymember Ash Kalra, D-San Jose, shortens the notice requirement in criminal cases when a defendant files a motion to discover police officer misconduct from 16 days to 10 days.

- *Other criminal justice items the governor undertook this year included an Executive Order halting executions in California, which he announced in March.*
- *He also announced earlier this year that the CDCR's Division of Juvenile Justice would shift to the Health and Human Services Agency beginning July 1, 2020.*

Recent decline in most US state prisons still insufficient

By The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Most states have downsized their prison populations in recent years, but the pace of decarceration is insufficient to undo nearly four decades of unrelenting growth.

The recent pace of decline would take 72 years to cut the US prison population by 50%, according to a new analysis by The Sentencing Project's Senior Research Analyst Nazgol Ghandnoosh.

US Prison Population Trends: Massive Buildup and Modest Decline finds that 39 states and the federal government had downsized their prisons as of 2017.

Five states—Alaska, New Jersey, Vermont, Connecticut and New York—led the nation in reducing their prison populations by more than 30% since reaching their peak levels.

Some Southern states, which have exceptionally high rates of incarceration, also achieved double-digit percentage reductions in their prison populations since reaching their peak levels, including Alabama (25%), South Carolina (17%), Louisiana (16%), and Mississippi (15%).

Fourteen states downsized their prisons by less than 5%.

Eleven states, led by Arkansas, had their highest ever prison populations in 2017. Additionally, Alaska—one of the current leaders in state decarceration—repealed several aspects of its major criminal justice reform initiatives in 2019.

While some critics have charged that decarceration would lead to rising crime, states with the most substantial reductions in their prison populations have often outpaced the nationwide crime drop.

Clearly, waiting seven decades to substantively alter a system that is out of step with the world and is racially biased is unacceptable. Expediting the end of mass incarceration will require accelerating the end of the Drug War and scaling back sentences for all crimes, including violent offenses for which half of people in prison are serving time.

San Francisco looks towards changing its language relative to justice involved persons

Supervisors hope to eliminate stigmatization by changing criminal justice labels

By Charles Crowe Staff Writer

San Francisco officials urge a softening of criminal justice language to more humanize incarcerated people.

"The words 'felon,' 'offender,' 'convict,' 'addict,' and 'juvenile delinquent' would be part of the past in official San Francisco parlance under new 'person first' language guidelines adopted by the Board of Supervisors," the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported Aug. 18.

"Going forward, what was once called a convicted felon or an offender released from jail will be a 'formerly incarcerated person,' or a 'justice-involved' person or simply a 'returning resident.'"

The city's Board of Supervisors passed a non-binding resolution encouraging the change by police and courts. The newspaper said the district attorney "is already on board."

Supervisor Matt Haney joined nine other supervisors in voting for the resolution.

"We want them ultimately to become contributing citizens, and referring to them as felons is like a scarlet letter that they can never get away from," Haney explained.

"We don't want people to be forever labeled for the worst things that they have done."

The non-binding resolution was passed in July.

Mayor London Breed did not endorse the resolution because it is non-binding, according to the mayor's spokesperson, Jeff Cretan. However, "she is always happy to work with the board on issues around equity and criminal justice reform," Cretan said.

The San Francisco Police Department has taken note of the board's action and has "made our members aware of the resolution and are researching possible impacts on operations and communications," said police spokesperson David Stevenson.

Study advances alternative form of criminal justice

By Juan Haines Senior Editor

A new study outlines a restorative justice strategy based on "public redemption" that the authors claim produces lower recidivism rates than traditional criminal justice punishment strategies.

Public redemption, the study claims, produces an avenue for offenders to tell the truth and be accountable for bad deeds with an outcome that's beneficial to all parties in the community.

The University of Pennsylvania Law School wrote the research paper, "The Opposite of Punishment: Imagining a Path to Public Redemption."

"Our criminal justice history has been almost exclusively based upon advertising the negative example of conviction and punishment as the means by which we condemn prohibited conduct," the research concludes. "Perhaps it is worth at least experimenting with a system of positive examples to promote these same important goals."

The paper "explores how and why such a system of public redemption might be constructed, the benefits it might provide to offenders, victims and society, and the political complications that creation of such a system might encounter."

The research takes into account the power of confessions and apologies, making amends, deserved punishment, future criminality and exceptional cases. It also considers that "there will be political objections to such a system from both the anti-punishment school and the law-and-order school, making legislative creation of such a program complicated."

The researchers suggest that the policy could begin with governors using their clemency and pardon power toward offenders who go through the redemption process.

Retail giant Alibaba gives workshop on working in E-commerce

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

As part of an interviewing workshop, Peter Stern, from online retail giant Alibaba, told about two dozen incarcerated computer coders that learning Mandarin is a big plus, if they want to get a job with the E-commerce company.

Although the Chinese firm does not have a policy on hiring formerly incarcerated people, Stern said that his inspiration to be involved with San Quentin's incarcerated population came after visiting the entrepreneurial program, The Last Mile (TLM).

TLM, established in 2012 by venture capitalists Chris Redlitz and Beverly Parenti, prepares prisoners for today's business world by teaching them how to engage in social media and other new technologies. The nine-month program helps students develop business plans that are presented to corporate leaders during a Demo Day.

Redlitz and Parenti expanded TLM in 2014 by creating Code.7370, which is a computer-coding course. Since then, Stern has dropped into the Code.7370 class to inspire the students.

Prior to the Aug. 21 workshop, Stern prepared a PowerPoint presentation to show the incarcerated coders Alibaba's rapid growth. It currently has surpassed Wal-Mart with over $1 trillion in sales.

The workshop began with Alibaba representatives using employer/potential employee role players to demonstrate the STAR system.

The STAR system role players show that when a potential employee understands an employer's Situation (S) the job requirements are revealed. The role players then illustrate that potential employees must be able to identify the specific Tasks (T) that are needed to perform the job. Understanding the Situation and Tasks allows a potential employee to understand what Action (A) he or she needs to take in order to secure the job. Successfully demonstrating these aspects would Result (R) in employers recognizing that the potential employees know the job and would be a successful hire.

At the end of the workshop, there was a question and answer session. Many of the coders' questions centered on when to bring up former incarcerations to employers.

"When to bring up being incarcerated is important. Tell the employer what you've learned from your incarceration experience. Tell them about the programs that you've taken. Show them the change in your life. Look at it as an opportunity to demonstrate who you are at the time of your interview," Stern told the incarcerated men.

Alibaba representative Tobie Louw told the incarcerated coders, "Thank you for letting us know about your world."

Formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs successful in business

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Entrepreneurship does not define where you have been, but where you are going. Formerly incarcerated Teresa Hodge, Marcus Bullock, and David Figueroa have all launched successful businesses despite all having a troubled past that led them to prison, reported the *ABA Journal*.

"It was as if prison provided a moment of clarity—a place to plan and figure out life and to determine how to start over—and yet somehow there was this huge disconnect from that vision and desire to actually being successful," Teresa Hodge told the *ABA Journal* on how her vision started in prison.

Teresa Hodge launched R3 Score, which is an algorithm based score and report that uses your education level, along with arrest record, facts from your life and volunteer work to create a score. The score is much like a credit score with 300 being the lowest and 850 the ceiling. These scores could be used for bank financing, commercial contracting, and occupational licensing or other opportunities.

"I kept seeing that over and over in prison: the spark in someone's eye saying. 'I'm going to make it,'" said Teresa Hodge. "And then the return of someone whose light had been dimmed by reality."

After his release from prison, Bullock filled out over 141 job applications for various positions.

"The question on the application was 'have you been convicted of a felony within the last seven years?' said Bullock. "I want to create my own destiny instead of relying on someone else. I'm naturally an entrepreneur, I sold candy in school."

Bullock created Flikshop, an app that allows family and friends to take a photo and add a message that is printed on a postcard and sent to a correctional facility for a cost of 99 cents. He received a grant to help him launch the business by Unlocked Features, which is affiliated with John Legend, a recording artist and criminal justice advocate.

According to the article, Bullock goes into prisons frequently to teach inmates basic entrepreneurship skills to launch their own business.

"I'm never going to tell them it's going to be easy, but this is the first step," he said. "Now, entrepreneurship isn't for everyone. But for those who want it, let's give them an opportunity to provide for their families."

"They can leverage up and learn about business and marketing," Bullock said. "If we do this right, we're changing the world, we're changing the narrative."

David Figueroa took his dreams and has built a crew of three, a foreman and two men, recently released from prison. His company is called Second Chance Renovations. His goal is to hire ex-cons and give them the opportunity he never had.

"Every time that I checked the box that asked whether you were a convicted felon, I never got a call back."

He feels that ending the cycle of mass incarceration starts with each potential employer.

"People think they're thugs, scum. But they still have kids," said Figueroa. "They still have bills. I think the system is rigged to keep a certain amount of people in prison."

According to the ABA Journal, Figueroa has accomplished his goals since his release from prison 14 years ago. He had his gang tattoos lasered off, found a lovely woman he married, has a career, a job he loves.

"I used to be really heartless. I had no emotions, said Figueroa. "Once I had my children, it completely changed me."

The ABA Criminal Justice Section has been working for over a decade to remove the barriers that most ex-cons find when released from prison.

"There can be lifelong consequences for not only a felony conviction, but also for a misdemeanor conviction," said Lucian Dervan, chair of ABA Criminal Justice Section and associate professor of law at Belmont University College of Law.

Yet many former inmates don't attempt to have their prison records sealed or expunged even when they are eligible because they don't know how to do it or lack the legal help they will need,

A study by the Harvard Law Review found that only 6.5 percent of legally eligible ex-convicts that could expunge their record in Michigan had actually done so within five years.

"Affording these individuals a way to expunge or seal their nonviolent convictions recognizes both the accomplishments of the individual in building a life free from further contact with the criminal justice system and the need to reduce the collateral consequences of a conviction," stated Resolution 109B, which was passed this January by the ABA House of Delegates.

Working to shift philanthropic investments to include prison education

By Anthony Manuel Caravalho
Staff Writer

"Education of incarcerated people must be included in the overall strategy to transform society," said Dr. Jody Lewen Executive Director of San Quentin's Prison University Project (PUP) in a July 23 interview with *SQ News.*

Dr. Lewen 's opinion is shared by an increasing number of educators, legislators and philanthropists nationally. Education is earning a position as a cornerstone for the incarcerated individual's successful return to society.

Recently, the Vera Institute of Justice's Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education conducted a study of 201 offenders from six minimum and medium-security prisons. In a June 2 report, Inside Philanthropy.com presented the results of the Vera study that confirmed education has now become the fourth characteristic vital to a successful reentry.

Previously, employment, housing and transportation were recognized as the three factors vital to a successful return.

The Vera Pathways study involved three states; North Carolina, Michigan and New Jersey.

The 5 year program, funded by the Ford Foundation, the Sunshine Lady Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Open Society Foundations and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, required participating states to offer inmates an array of courses and reentry tools that were to continue upon their release. The study's mission statement included inmates receiving encouragement to continue their postsecondary education after they are released.

College programs for incarcerated people currently include academic institutions like Columbia University's Justice in Education Initiative which is funded by The Andrew Mellon Foundation. That curriculum is designed to focus on current and formerly incarcerated persons in New York State.

Other top educational prison programs have expanded in the last decade and are vigorously competing for philanthropic dollars, albeit in an inclusive and supportive approach. According to Dr. Lewen most of the competitors in this field are "allied by common goals."

Nationally leading incarcerated educational centers include the prestigious Bard Prison Initiative, a program which is affiliated with the Bard College of New York and California's highly respected Prison University Project (PUP) at San Quentin State Prison. The Ford Foundation has aided in the growth of the two prominent colleges, allowing Dr. Lewen's Prison University Project to become a leader in prison education for over 10 years.

Photo by Eddie Herena

Prison University Project students at work in class

Dr. Lewen stressed the need for donors to understand the critical role of education for incarcerated people in any strategy for systemic change. "The funding sources do not always get the importance of education," she told the *SQ News.* "The great challenge is a lot of philanthropic foundations dichotomize between advocacy for the incarcerated versus education for them."

The Vera Institute report supported Dr. Lewen's educational beliefs when it found inmates who complete a credentialed education program are more than 40 percent less likely to reoffend.

The study also stated that every dollar spent on educational programs results in a $5 cost savings when compared to re-incarceration.

Though Dr. Lewen's colleagues agree that education, along with other reentry efforts, can reduce recidivism, she is still unsatisfied with the level of direct commitment for incarcerated education.

Her vision includes formerly incarcerated people leading the march for social reform. "They (the philanthropists) often cannot imagine the potential of incarcerated students as advocates for social reform."

"Changing the focus of philanthropic investment will only happen when we change the hearts and minds of society," she emphasized.

Ad agency ConCreates embraces incarcerated employees

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

ConCreates is an advertising agency started by a former prison inmate and staffed by 436 incarcerated men and women—plus 319 ex-cons successfully working on the outside, reports fastcompany.com

"Our mission is to challenge the stigma of how society views people with criminal history, as well as how people with criminal history view themselves," said Vincent Bragg, a cofounder of the firm.

"If we're able to show them they're not just a bank robber, or not just a drug dealer, that they have creative potential, then we can show them an opportunity to take a new career path," Bragg continued.

Bragg served five years in federal prison for a drug conviction and during that time he read more than 400 books.

He was released in 2016 and enrolled in the entrepreneurial program at Defy Ventures, an organization that helps formerly incarcerated people create legal business ventures and develop careers.

Bragg started ConCreates while in prison, after meeting Joe Nickson, now a contributor to ConCreates. Nickson was working at the time as a consultant on an ad campaign for Jonathan Shokrian of MeUndies.

"We were able to give (Shokrian) some ideas that took his company from doing $50,000 in sales a month to $934,000 with only two campaigns. That was the birth of ConCreates," said Bragg.

"We built a creative network based on certain individual skill sets. Where most might see a bank robber, we see a strategist," said Bragg.

ConCreates' co-founder Janeya Griffin said, "We want to help rehumanize them. When you go into prison, you're dehumanized. Rehumanizing comes from them using their skills in a positive way."

Assistance in setting up the new agency came from Tim Jones, executive director of 72andSunny, a New York agency that works with brands Samsung, Facebook and Smirnoff.

"The new agency is looking to work directly with clients and other partners including creative agencies, PR and research firms, and production companies," *fastcompany.com* reported.

Jones said the real light bulb for him was, "That criminality is often just creativity without opportunity. We don't think one mistake should define a human lifetime. We think there is this raw creative force that resides in prison today."

Contributing individuals are paid for every idea they contribute, with increases as the idea progresses. Ten percent of the company is owned by the network, Bragg said. "We have profit-sharing, so there is a sense of pride in ownership."

Air Force vet commits to working with youth organizations

KidCAT Speaks!

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

Will VanBrackle served his country in the U.S. Air Force. Now he serves the Bay Area youth community by helping the kids of incarcerated parents through Project Avary—and by volunteering as a KidCAT facilitator inside San Quentin.

A troubled youth himself, VanBrackle faced his own life struggles before finding a path to being of service.

"As a teenager, I spent a lot of time doing the wrong things in the wrong places, a whole lot of dumb stuff—the same kind of activities that lead guys to wind up in here" he explained.

"Had my luck been different or had I been a different color, those things could have easily landed me in an establishment just like this one. I was very fortunate," he said.

To escape poverty and what he perceived as a dead-end existence, VanBrackle enlisted in the military.

"I joined the Air Force with all the dreams and aspirations that one recruiter could fill my head with," he said. "During my time serving in the military, I experienced more than any poor kid from Pennsylvania could have wished for."

VanBrackle's plan to spend a full career in uniform, however, became derailed through numerous tours of duty.

"Five years later, I had more time deployed to combat zones than time spent state side," he said—the glint of a thousand-yard stare almost returning to his eyes. "I had lost best friends, relationships and family.

"I felt like I was in an endless cycle of self-harm that was being fueled by the military. I was broken—physically, emotionally and mentally."

With only a two-week break between deployments, VanBrackle realized he needed to break the cycle. According to him, his superior officers offered him no choice but to declare that he was "mentally unfit to go."

"Had I not said those few words, they were prepared to throw me in jail for failing to obey a lawful order," he stated. "But it enabled me to start getting the treatment I needed."

The USAF relieved VanBrackle of all his duties and eventually discharged him for PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

"Distanced from friends and coworkers, I was isolated at a time when I needed support the most," he said. "There were no support groups, mentoring or help. I was alone.

"My time in the military was over, and I knew serving my country wasn't the service I was best suited for."

VanBrackle began forging a career for himself in the food service industry, eventually finding a niche as a personal chef for well-to-do families.

"But I was not fulfilled," he said. "Something was missing."

With his wife Kellene by his side, he would listen to stories shared by her parents—stories spanning 40 years of professional service in the medical field. Beyond their retirement, his in-laws still served as volunteers, consultants and advocates for their community.

Photo courtesy of Will VanBrackle

KidCAT's Will VanBrackle and his wife, Kellene

Photo courtesy of Will VanBrackle

VanBrackle preparing a fish for dinner

"They continue to inspire Kellene and me. We would sit in awe," VanBrackle said. "It was those nights and those conversations that motivated me to find my path."

Kellene became a program director for Project Avary, the local organization designed for children with a parent or loved one incarcerated. Often serving as a communal safety net, Project Avary provides outdoor adventure days, summer camp, retreats, and lots of family-style meals—all free of charge through donations and funding.

"From the late night work sessions to the long camps, watching her give her all for these children and this community has been nothing short of inspirational," he said. "Mostly, we try to make sure these kids get the chance to have fun and be surrounded by love."

A tight-knit crew devoted to their work, Project Avary welcomed VanBrackle's culinary expertise. It didn't take long for them to embrace him as family.

"Once I met and cooked for the children, it felt like every light bulb in the world had been turned on," he said. "My head was spinning and my heart was exploding.

"I didn't know it, but Project Avary was what I had been looking for."

It hurts VanBrackle deeply to see and hear kids deprived of some basic elements in growing up happy—good food in a family environment.

"One of the reasons I love cooking for Avary is watching the children and counselors come together over a shared meal—passing dishes, trying new things, chatting about the ups and downs of their day," he said. "Families across the globe look so different, but sharing food together is a fundamental experience that has been going on for centuries.

"To see them so happy eating my food is the best feeling in the world… and Project Avary is what brought me to KidCAT."

At San Quentin's annual Avary Walk in 2018, VanBrackle met members of KidCAT for the first time while he and Kellene got to know the men responsible for organizing the fundraising walk.

Each year, KidCAT encourages everyone at SQ to participate and donate at least five dollars to Project Avary. With fund matches pledged by outside donors, KidCAT was able to help raise over $18,000 in 2019.

"It was the same feeling I had when I first started working with the children of Avary," said VanBrackle. "Kellene and I went home with our heads spinning. It took a few days to come down from that.

"That experience, combined with our current world events, left me feeling like I needed to do more. I just wasn't sure how I was going to be able to come back inside."

VanBrackle's mind never strayed too far from KidCAT's mission of serving the incarcerated youth offender community and at-risk youths outside of prison.

"I had long stretches of time between seeing the members of KidCAT," he said. "It's a lot harder to get in here than you'd think, but I eventually wiggled my way back in."

Through the advice and assistance of longtime KidCAT volunteer Bev Shelby and SQ's Community Partnership Analyst Dina Durano, VanBrackle became an official member of KidCAT's facilitation team.

"I had a lot of time to think about the why," he said. "Why this path? Why San Quentin? Why these men?

"Project Avary is there to break the cycle of incarceration and give the children an outlet. But who and what is there for these men?

"Why are we as a community not doing more to help these men? So when they rejoin society they are more than ready? Who is there to tell their stories?"

The same reason that KidCAT became involved in helping raise funds for Project Avary now became a reason for VanBreckle to extend himself into the KidCAT family and SQ community.

"These men share some of the traits I see in the children of Avary—perseverance, resiliency, hope, potential and love," he said.

VanBrackle wants the world to understand, empathize and join him in his cause.

"I serve to help reduce the stigma of incarceration. I serve to create awareness in our community," he said. "I serve to be the bridge between these men and their future home.

"I serve to make our community better as a whole for everyone."

To learn more about Project Avary, go to www.projectavary.org or write to KidCAT Speaks.

Dear KidCAT Speaks

My name is Nathan Ramazzini, and I am a juvenile LWOP (Life Without the Possibility of Parole) prisoner. I've been incarcerated for 22 years, since I was 16.

I'm currently the Vice Chairman of KidCAT at High Desert State Prison. KidCAT became activated here about a year ago and is attached to a sponsor through this facility's Community Resource Manager (CRM) office.

The only materials we have available to us right now are the first four First Step modules—Emotions/Sensations; Self-identity; Masculinity; and Environmental Influences. We really need the remaining four modules to complete the First Step curriculum.

I know the *SQ News* says to write your SQ Community Partnership Manager (CPM) through our CPM or sponsor, but we haven't been able to make any progress that way. We've been told that your CPM cannot be reached through phone or mail. It feels like we are on our own here.

Can you give us some direction on all the things KidCAT is into at SQ? I am interested in having our group work through the Power Source book. I just need some ideas on how to grow KidCAT under the different conditions we face up here. Warden Spearman has done his best to improve the staff culture at High Desert, but things won't change overnight.

Any advice or insight you can provide us right now would be greatly appreciated.

Nathan,

Great to hear from you. Hang in there, and don't get discouraged by the runaround.

KidCAT is in the midst of presenting your letter—and so many others—to our administration to demonstrate the need for these issues to be resolved.

You are not alone. Please do not forget that.

One of the biggest takeaways from the history of KidCAT is how young men came together on their own under adverse prison conditions to support one another. You're already doing that. Whether it's in your building during limited dayroom, on the yard sporadically—or just cell to cell whenever possible, KidCAT members need to nurture each other, ask each other questions, discuss their lives.

Mentors benefit from the experience just as much, if not more, than the guys they counsel. Keep that in mind. You mentioned Power Source—and our guys here went through huge transformations of their own—both as peer facilitators and participants.

In whatever capacity you can, Nathan, do your best to be of service within your incarcerated community. Just be there to support your KidCAT counterparts and mentor them to be there for each other.

This is not a "one and done." KidCAT Speaks will contact you soon directly and provide some new information, once we get the answers we seek. And that goes for all those out there who read KidCAT Speaks and have written us about our curriculum.

We appreciate your efforts and know you'll continue to do your best for everyone up there.

Here's the address to write to about any Power Source questions:

The Lionheart Foundation
P.O. Box 4145
Dedham, MA 02027

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

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

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

Earliest Event - How far back do you remember? Can you remember when you were a baby? This week we want you to tell us about your earliest event that you can remember. What about this memory sticks out for you? How would you describe this memory? Is it something that is beautiful or something that brings pain? How old do you think you are in this memory? How do you experience the memory? Is it vivid or vague? Positive or negative? Are you re-experiencing the memory as it originally happened, through your own eyes, or are you watching yourself "acting" in the memory? Now think back and tell us about your earliest event.

The Beat Within
P.O. Box 34310
San Francisco, CA 94134

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

TRUST facilitators go home but find new blood to lead

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

TRUST participants, members and facilitators share one last photo before leaving prison

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Great companies and organizations are the ones that can stand the test of time and San Quentin's T.R.U.S.T rehabilitative group is one of those programs.

The transformative group hosted its 14th Annual San Quentin T.R.U.S.T Graduation Ceremony and banquet. The October 10 event honored more than 60 people graduating from three different programs: The Health and Wellness Group, Project L.A., and T.R.U.S.T. (Teaching Responsibility Utilizing Sociological Training) classes. The Spanish Anger Management group was also in attendance.

Robb Rogers, Project L.A. chairman, and Philip Senegal, T.R.U.S.T vice chairman, both received warm goodbyes and congratulations for being found suitable at the parole board. The two longtime members expect to be released at the end of the year.

The men who "do programs" at San Quentin get out, said Steve Emrick, SQ's recently retired Community Resources Manager. "The parole board and the outside community recognize the work that is being done in these programs. I hope all of you who take part in the programs walk away with the things you learned and become productive returning citizens."

The large crowd of volunteers and graduates recognized Rogers for his humble and direct personality that helped shape the Project L.A. program.

"After 38 years, I look forward of being home. This program provides all the necessary tools to survive upon release," said Rogers. "I'm going to get involved with the Jericho organization once released. I look forward to helping the people coming after me."

Project L.A. is a goal-setting and pre/post release program that assists people from Southern California with their re-entry needs. The Jericho organization, based in Los Angeles, works closely with the program.

"When people from our community are housed this far away they need this type of program," said Saun Hough, executive director of Jericho, who also was formerly incarcerated. "We let the men know that they have a team when they come home. I once walked this road (incarcerated and reentry). I'm honored to be a part of someone else's team. We are on the ground, we provide real-time support and help those returning navigate the resources."

Hough served more than 20 years in prison and has been free for eight, but every so often he reflects on his life journey.

"I was sitting in Dunkin' Donuts the other day and I start thinking about my freedom. I began texting my daughter, then my wife and I just said, 'I'm home—I'm home!'"

Hough said he prays to keep having that feeling.

Senegal is waiting for his second chance at freedom. He is one of the last founding members of T.R.U.S.T., established in 2003.

"I shall not do harm to myself, my family or my community; that is the golden rule of T.R.U.S.T," said Senegal. "I'm no longer the cancer that did harm to my community. Now, I'm that healing agent."

What motivated the founding of the group was when former Gov. Jerry Brown, who was the Mayor of Oakland at the time, stated on a news program that the core problem and the rise of crime in the community and the surrounding area of Alameda County was due to the influx of incarcerated people coming from San Quentin, said Senegal.

"This program provides all the necessary tools to survive upon release"

"We took offense to that statement and wanted to change that perspective. So with the help of the prison administration, they brought the curriculum inside and we developed the program," he said. "If you don't invest in yourself, change can never come about."

Since the start of the program it has graduated hundreds of men within the prison. It also hosts the SQ Health Fair, the largest medical event, probably in the country, for a prison.

"We're losing key leadership but we welcome the new blood coming in," said Diana Kronstadt, one of T.R.U.S.T's sponsors. "Phillip bought us the history of the program with him. Robb is such a talented guy. I think they will do good things on the outside—their presence will be missed."

Kronstadt expressed confidence about the continued longevity of the program while the new graduates smiled as they walked across the chapel stage to receive their certificates of completion.

"I feel selfish because we learn so much more than we give to these programs," said Christina Laird, program volunteer. "These guys are masters of de-escalation. I learned how to use the 'I statement' from them. I had a chance to use these techniques at my job and I just own that space.

"These guys are preparing themselves for society," Laird added.

Louis "Louie" Light, T.R.U.S.T member and MC of the event, kept the mood festive and on schedule with his humor, plus seriousness. He made sure everyone had their time to speak and get their picture taken.

The SQ Jazz band provided soul-soothing instrumentals as the participants enjoyed their meals and their accomplishments.

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

TRUST's Lanie Melnitzer, Christina Eckstrand, Anna Shoop, graduate Michael O'Neal, with Project LA's Catherine Lonazo and Saun Hough

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Susanne Siciliano, Melnitzer, Eckstrand, Shoop and Quilley Powers cheer as Diana Kronstadt speaks

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Eric Post

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Sergio Alvarez

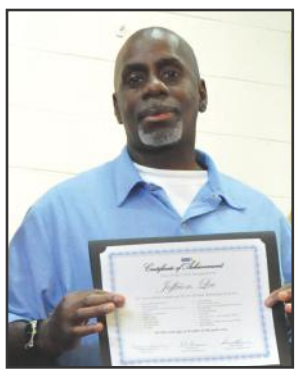


Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Lee Joffrion

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Matthew Medina

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Anthony Waldrip

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Jess Puentes

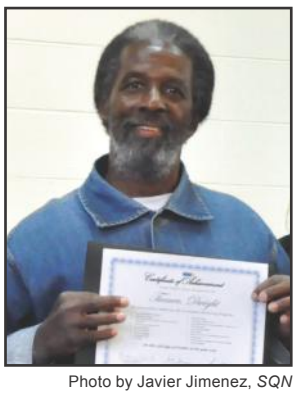


Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Dwight Turner

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Robert Rush

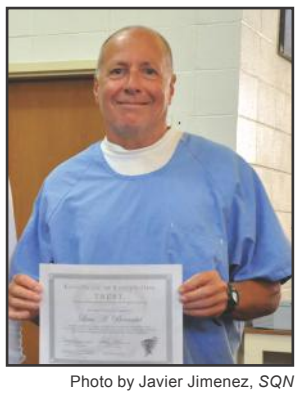


Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Louis Bernabai

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Graduate Nick Lopez

No More Tears banquet celebrates stopping the violence in the community

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

No More Tears' inside and outside facilitators with participants

TEARS

Continued from Page 1

Morris accepted the award as Gardner chanted, "We are community—stop the violence," and asked the audience to respond with, "We're community stopping the tears."

The give and take was repeated several times.

"When I received the appreciation award, I felt overwhelmed," Morris said later. "We don't work to stop violence because we look for awards or recognition but because it is work that is designed to save lives. However, it's good to know that your peers recognize the work you do."

Morris has served more than 40 years in prison on a 7-year-to-life sentence. He was recently denied parole in May 2019. His next parole board appearance is scheduled for 2022.

"We recognize the unique perspective of former perpetrators and value their ability to bring solutions to the communities where they once contributed to the problem," the event program read. "Our work is made possible by the support of community leaders, correctional staff, concerned citizens, and families impacted by violence and crime."

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, who regularly visits the program, talked about seeing people who once participated in No More Tears walking around or working in the community.

"We continue to struggle to come in here on a regular basis to provide services for housing and employment," Carson said. "My instruction and learning is what can I do for your return to be successful. I'm blessed to work with other elected officials that listen to you to understand what you need to return you back home."

Joey Mason, a former No More Tears participant, left San Quentin to freedom about a year ago.

"One thing that struck me here is that there was a lot of empathy in this room," Mason told the audience. "We know to keep showing up, keep doing the work. Our lives are being enriched by being here."

Incarcerated No More Tears facilitator Dwight Kennedy added, "Doing the work—that means getting to know yourself. Don't do it for the board, do it for yourself."

While everyone feasted on hamburgers with cake and cookies for dessert, musical acts provided entertainment.

The hip-hop vocals of Jennifer Johns and keyboard of Kev Choice were inspired by "love, humanity, love and community," Johns said.

Rafael "Nephew" Bankston performed spoken word, highlighting how the No More Tears philosophy affected his incarceration experience by focusing on its workshops aimed to put "a face on violence."

What no more tears means to me, truthfully
All the workshops combined confined in my sleep
Reflecting who I was— not who I be
Allow me to express my no more tears dream.

Ear Hustle podcaster Antwan "Banks" Williams acknowledged the people who inspired and mentored him throughout his incarceration.

"The way that these men have treated me has changed the way I treat others," Williams said. "It was the people who told me that I was somebody to them. Now that I am somebody, I want to tell somebody that you're somebody to me."

Williams then went into a spoken word performance repeating the lines:

I never really felt like somebody
Till somebody told me that I can
Be somebody
Now I'm somebody who just wanna tell
Somebody that you're somebody, you're
Somebody to me!

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Returning citizen Joey Mason with volunteer Chérie McNaulty in the audience

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Rafael Banskton on stage

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Keith Carson from the Alameda County Board of Supervisors speaking to the audience

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Abdullah Mustafaa (T. Matthews)

O'ROURKE

Continued from Page 1

"We'd also ask you to be vulnerable today," said Kevin Neang, who will be released at year's end after serving almost nine years for a manslaughter plea agreement. "Close your eyes and think of somebody you love, a person you would do anything for.

"Imagine if we could look at each other—everybody—in that same light."

Photo by Lt. S. Robinson

Beto O'Rourke with Father George Williams (back), SQ staff (second from right) and SQ tour guides

Watson Allison, incarcerated now for over 37 years, stood before O'Rourke and described his own personal journey from Death Row to substance abuse counselor and advocate for change.

"O'Rourke told me that I'm the first person he's ever talked with who was actually from Death Row," Allison told *SQ News*. "He said he was very intrigued by my level of insight and my humble demeanor.

"I know he was surprised when I told him I support the idea of capital punishment—even in my own circumstances. But the way the death penalty has been administered so unjustly across the country, that's what needs to be changed."

The tour guides, whose convicted crimes and prison terms offered a wide range of perspectives, wanted to know what topics O'Rourke would most like to hear about.

"Whatever you're willing to share with me, whatever thoughts you have on any issues—prison reform, climate change, I'm here to listen to you," said O'Rourke.

"I talked to him about how we need to do away with Three Strikes and mandatory minimum sentencing," said Ron Ehde, incarcerated 27 years for second degree burglary. "And he was listening. Man, he was really listening.

"Me, a three-striker serving 50-years-to-life, sitting across and dialoguing with a presidential candidate—only at San Quentin."

O'Rourke's staff took notes while each prisoner offered his own narrative toward significant pieces of the criminal justice reform puzzle: childhood trauma, the school-to-prison pipeline, substance abuse, sentencing reform, wrongful convictions—and the potential for change.

Choir member Dwight Krizman said, "My impression was O'Rourke was taken aback when he realized that only a small portion of inmates were positively affected by Proposition 57.

"He definitely seemed shocked at how slow the implementation of the law's execution was by CDCR itself and their reinterpretation of what the voters voted for."

Allison explained how one of O'Rourke's staff commented on the prisoners' level of accountability and how they consistently referred to their victims by name. "They did not expect that type of format coming in here—where we honor our victims, put our victims first," said Allison.

A planned tour in August needed to be canceled when the shooting crisis erupted back home in El Paso, and this time the prisoners' insights proved more relevant than O'Rourke walking the facility.

"Once we got rolling and opened up to him, Lt. Robinson [who escorted O'Rourke in] told us, 'There's no time for a real tour—you guys keep doing what you're doing,'" said Ehde. "O'Rourke was trying to really gain clarity on a bunch of stuff."

Choir member Kelvin Ross sat in the pews and listened to their interaction.

"Remorse and personal accountability seemed to intrigue Beto as the men shared their testimonies," noted Ross. "And later they questioned him on his thoughts regarding crime and punishment.

"I am curious if the narrative concerning real prison reform and excessive sentencing will make its way into the national conversation and effect a positive change—as opposed to the same age-old rhetoric from a new set of talking heads."

—Anthony Caravalho and John Krueger contributed

San Quentin CARES 11th annual Walk for a Cure

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Participants begin the walk with a "lap of silence" on San Quentin's Lower Yard

CANCER

Continued from Page 1

"We begin with a lap of silence to remember those we have lost to cancer and show support for survivors and those currently in the fight," the public address speaker announced as the walk began shortly after 9 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 12.

Participants wore pink ribbons and "SQ CARES" wristbands as they enjoyed live entertainment and inspirational testimonies. Many shared their personal stories while walking together during the two-day event.

"I love being in here," said Kevin Eshleman, a restaurant manager in the North Bay. He also volunteers with another group inside San Quentin. "These are genuinely good people," he said while walking with a couple of inmates.

Willie Burrell said he was walking because he enjoys doing something positive. He said he is serving three years "this time" and has been learning skills during his three months at San Quentin.

"I feel so privileged to be here," said Amanda Nixon, visiting prison for her first time. She works with breast cancer patients and is a 13-year survivor of breast cancer herself. "I began crying during the first lap, remembering those who have passed from cancer."

Nixon said she has done other cancer walks and learned about this event through her connection with the Women's Cancer Resource Center (WCRC) in Oakland.

The WCRC receives all the proceeds from the "Walk for a Cure" this year—about $7,000. Over its 11 years, the San Quentin event has raised over $50,000 toward the fight against cancer. Inmates, volunteers and outside sponsors donate to the cause each year.

"It is a huge honor to once again be the recipient of your contributions," said Penni Hudis, WCRC executive director and chairperson of the Board of Directors. Addressing the crowd, she commented, "Thanks to people like you—our donors, who make all this possible ... we make life a quality life for women with cancer."

"About 70% of the people we serve are low-income," said Hudis. She described some of the services the center provides as a lifeline for cancer patients, including an information and referral hotline and emergency financial assistance. "Thanks to Warden Ron Davis, all staff, volunteers and the internal committee."

"You are truly making a difference in people's lives," said Christine Sinnott. She is the development manager for WCRC. Sinnott read letters from cancer patients whom WCRC helps, expressing how they are inspired by the donations and the stories of heartfelt community service by the incarcerated people in San Quentin. "I think these clients' letters say it all. From the bottom of our hearts at WCRC, thank you," said Sinnott.

"I'm so grateful to San Quentin CARES and the dedication of the committee volunteers and inmates," Sinnott added. She said the donations of $5 each from the inmates are so meaningful because they equal about one week's income.

San Quentin CARES (Compassionate Accountability Responsibly Expressed through community Service) has organized the "Walk for a Cure" since its beginning in 2008. It is an inmate-run program headed by a committee of a dozen inmates and four community volunteers.

"This is a great opportunity to build community," said Hieu Thai, who joined the committee this year. Incarcerated since 2005, he will be eligible for parole consideration in about 10 more years. "Volunteers who come in begin to understand us and see that we are able to serve our communities."

Tien Pham is another new committee member who sees the value of community service. He said he is following in the footsteps of outgoing member Son "Sonny" Nguyen. They met in prison 14 years ago.

"He's a good role model to follow. I've seen the change in him. Now I want to be of service," said Pham. "My hopelessness has been converted to a sense of purpose. Today is the highlight—seeing my contribution." Nguyen was on the SQ CARES committee for about three years and was recently found suitable for parole.

"I'm really proud to be part of this," said inmate John Levin, who also joined the committee this year.

Pink-clad volunteers mingled with the men in blue, circling the quarter-mile track.

"This walk was started by inmates and keeps going because of the amazing things they do to keep this community alive," said Kim Bailey, a community volunteer who co-founded SQ CARES 11 years ago. "Thanks to all of you for your contributions and for sharing your stories."

"When you think of prison, you don't think of this," said B. Rousse, a philosophy writer who was in San Quentin for his first time. "The people I'm meeting today are hugely inspirational—full of resilience, good humor, friendliness, strength of spirit and a sense of community."

Rousse facilitated getting a San Quentin inmate art show hosted by Cords Gallery in Oakland. The show is another annual event sponsored by SQ CARES.

"The entire gallery is dedicated to the show with dozens of pieces—drawings and paintings—during the First Friday street fair," said Alicia Maria, who also came in to the prison for the first time for this year's "Walk for a Cure." She is an artist and art teacher who also helped facilitate the art show space and has held shows there for her high school students.

Maria's student artists attend their shows. "People really want to make the connection between the art and the artists. During the San Quentin shows, the artists are missing. That's what brought us to this event here— to make that connection."

"It's frustrating to me how much you are forgotten by so many people," said Rachel Bailey, a volunteer with SQ CARES, helping pass out the ribbons and wristbands. She has been coming into San Quentin for about 11 years. "But we want you to know that people outside care about you," said Bailey.

"They show us that people care about us and that we are a part of their community too," said incarcerated artist Chanthon Bun. He has donated art to the art shows and designed the pink T-shirts for this year's walk.

"This is a community-building event where the unique San Quentin inside community inspires people outside to invest in themselves, improve, and redefine themselves," said SQ CARES co-founder Chris Bailey. He said that all prison staff and volunteers from all programs and groups are encouraged to sign up online and participate.

This is the second year the SQ CARES "Walk for a Cure" was in October, which is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Kim Bailey, a community volunteer who co-founded SQ CARES

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Guest Emily Nonko on stage

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Inside and outside committee members of San Quentin CARES

Mental Wellness addresses hope and how to ask for help

WELLNESS

Continued from Page 1

They came to speak about and clarify how the BPH regards documented mental health issues—and how being involved in prison mental healthcare potentially affects a lifer's parole suitability.

SQ's Chief Deputy Warden Ron Broomfield set the week's tone with a personal story about his own struggles with severe depression and his reluctance to share his experience with others.

"I'd been asked to speak twice and declined both times, but seeing all you guys' interest in mental wellness gives me the courage to address you today," he told an audience of prisoners, staff and volunteers on the Lower Yard.

"Working at Corcoran in 2009, I developed serious depression," he said. "I could hide it at work and act like everything was fine.

"But where I couldn't hide it was home. They got the worst of me."

Broomfield described how his wife threatened to expose his mental problems with his coworkers if he refused to seek help.

"I remember sitting in my car out in the Corcoran parking lot, trying to summon up the courage to talk to someone," he continued. "It was probably the most courageous thing I've ever had to do."

"I always thought of myself as a healthy person, but hope really started when I sat in that car and decided I was going to talk to someone," he said. "You can be free and a prisoner in your own mind—or locked up but free inside your mind."

One of the week's organizers, Dr. R. Thomas of SQ Mental Health, urged Broomfield to speak at the event. "I'm so grateful he shared his story with you guys," she said. "It was incredibly brave of him."

Guys who know they need help are afraid to ask for that help...'the Board's not gonna let me out.' But believe me; nothing could be further from the truth"

The ongoing theme of hope brought a packed crowd to the SQ chapel Sept. 11, where prisoners were ready to hear what Kusaj and Shaffer had to say about the BPH process.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Undersecretary Kathleen Allison gave opening remarks before Kusaj and Shaffer engaged with the chapel audience.

"I'm passionate about this subject and have remained focused on suicide prevention," said Allison. "It's each and every one of [us] — our responsibility. If you see someone who might be in distress or mental crisis—reach out."

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Participant David Rodriguez asking BPH's Jennifer Shaffer a question

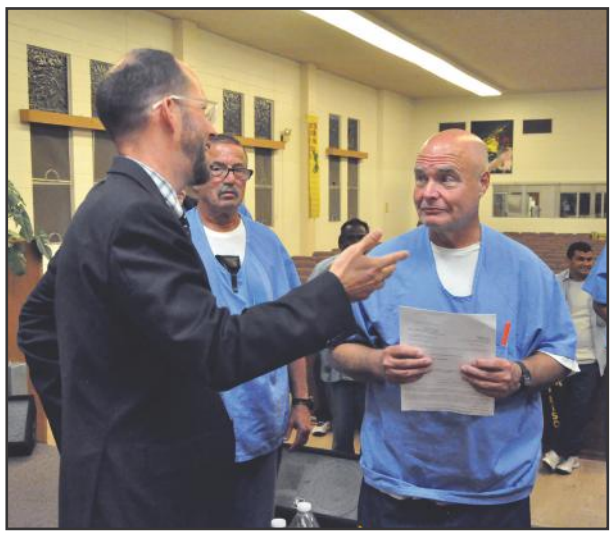


Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Cliff Kusaj answering questions from participants

Describing Shaffer as "a real rock star," Allison set the stage for her by saying, "If you're not a risk to public safety, she's going to do everything she can for you."

Schaffer started by connecting the history of the BPH to the evening's mental wellness theme—Hope Looks Forward.

"In 1979, California sentenced 907 prisoners to life with the possibility of parole," Shaffer detailed. "And in that same year, only one person was actually granted parole.

"But take 2018, Jerry Brown's last year in office. 1,016 prisoners were admitted into the system with life with the possibility of parole sentences—while 1096 prisoners were found suitable.

"That's the first time since 1978 that more lifers were paroled rather than sentenced."

Shaffer then focused her presentation on discussing potential parolees' concerns about how receiving mental healthcare might reflect badly on their CDCR record.

"I know there's a lot of myths out there," she said. "Guys who know they need help are afraid to ask for that help.

"So many of you think if you need help, 'the Board's not gonna let me out.' But believe me; nothing could be further from the truth.

"Think about it—plenty of people on the outside go get help. That's actually healthy behavior."

Shaffer encouraged the SQ crowd to utilize all available mental health resources, both inside and also after they are paroled.

"It's an incredibly stressful time in your life to be released from state prison," she said. "That's a big reason why the Board stresses transitional housing—not so we can watch you more closely, but so you're surrounded by people who've walked the same path."

Shaffer soon segued into what the majority of the audience came for—clarity on what the Board expects to see before granting a lifer's parole date.

"We want to see if you've done the work," Shaffer explained. "If you have truly transformed, you'll be speaking a different language. You'll show more insight—be more aware, more intuitive, more in touch with how you think."

Shaffer also stressed the importance of understanding the difference between acknowledging the victim impact on an offender's community but without carrying the shame of their crime around with them.

She detailed a research paper written by Kusaj which analyzed some psychological factors between offenders who recidivate and those who do not.

"What's the difference?" she asked everyone. "Shame. If you find it hard to like yourself, you'll find it incredibly difficult to create a positive narrative.

"Try to think of the bad things you may have done as in the third person. Learn how to explain who that person was and how they're different today."

Kusaj set out to answer the following questions: What are the Board psychologists looking for? What changes do they want to see? What should guys expect during their psychological review?

In regard to psych review expectations, Kusaj explained, "Ultimately, we need to be able to understand, contextualize and make sense of your violent actions—and how that's been mitigated over time.

"Can you make sense of the darkness, badness and wrong decisions? Have you matured and changed during your incarceration?"

He listed a compendium of psychological and emotional shifts he directs his staff to look for—such as being open and honest versus circumventing the truth or rejecting violence as a problem-solving solution, or being fair and forgiving versus being vindictive and punishing.

"In short, we want to see life transformations," said Kusaj. "When we evaluate risk assessment, it's quite simple. What went wrong in your life? And where are you now?

"Don't rehearse. Don't try to anticipate our questions. You're there to try to help the psychologist better understand your crime-causing factors."

Kusaj also wanted the audience to recognize the structural difference between a forensic interview rather than a therapy session.

"Think of it more like a job interview. Because of time considerations, expect to be interrupted," he said. "Expect to be challenged. We're neither advocates nor adversaries. Our interests lie solely in your safe release to the community."

Although Kusaj was nowhere near giving the full explanation he'd hoped to offer, Shaffer stopped him to allow the panel to field questions from the eager crowd. Most questions inevitably revolved around each prisoner's personal BPH experience.

Allison and Shaffer eventually started a list for each person to write down their name, CDCR# and specific issue they want resolved.

Shaffer assured the crowd that every BPH scheduling commitment will be fulfilled. "Last year, we held 5,300 Board hearings statewide, and this year we've got 7,300 scheduled," she said. "We'll continue that pace every year until everyone who should be seen is."

Allison equally reassured everyone that her CDCR office is reviewing every single prisoner's file for 1170(d) resentencing consideration.

"You guys don't have to submit anything to us," she said. "If you're disciplinary free, done exceptional programming or fit any of the enhancement criteria, we'll petition the court on your behalf.

"We've had amazing success from the courts so far. Our priority is always going to be focused on the guys who already have the most time in. Those are the cases that need to be reviewed first."

The last two days of Mental Wellness Week consisted of pure community interaction and celebration. The chapel shook with energy and emotion on Sept. 13 as prisoners and staff alike took part in a talent showcase—opening up and performing pieces themed around mental health.

Dr. K. O'Meara, CDCR Regional Health Administer, took to the podium and read an essay by Death Row prisoner Joseph Manuel Montes.

"It's important to represent those who can't be here themselves tonight," she said.

The highlight of the talent show may have been Dr. Thomas' promised rendition of Sade's "Soldier of Love." The audience cheered in awe and appreciation as Thomas hit all the right notes without batting an eye.

Fully participating at every event that week, Thomas and her vocals underscored the commitment of the SQ Mental Health staff to stay immersed in this community.

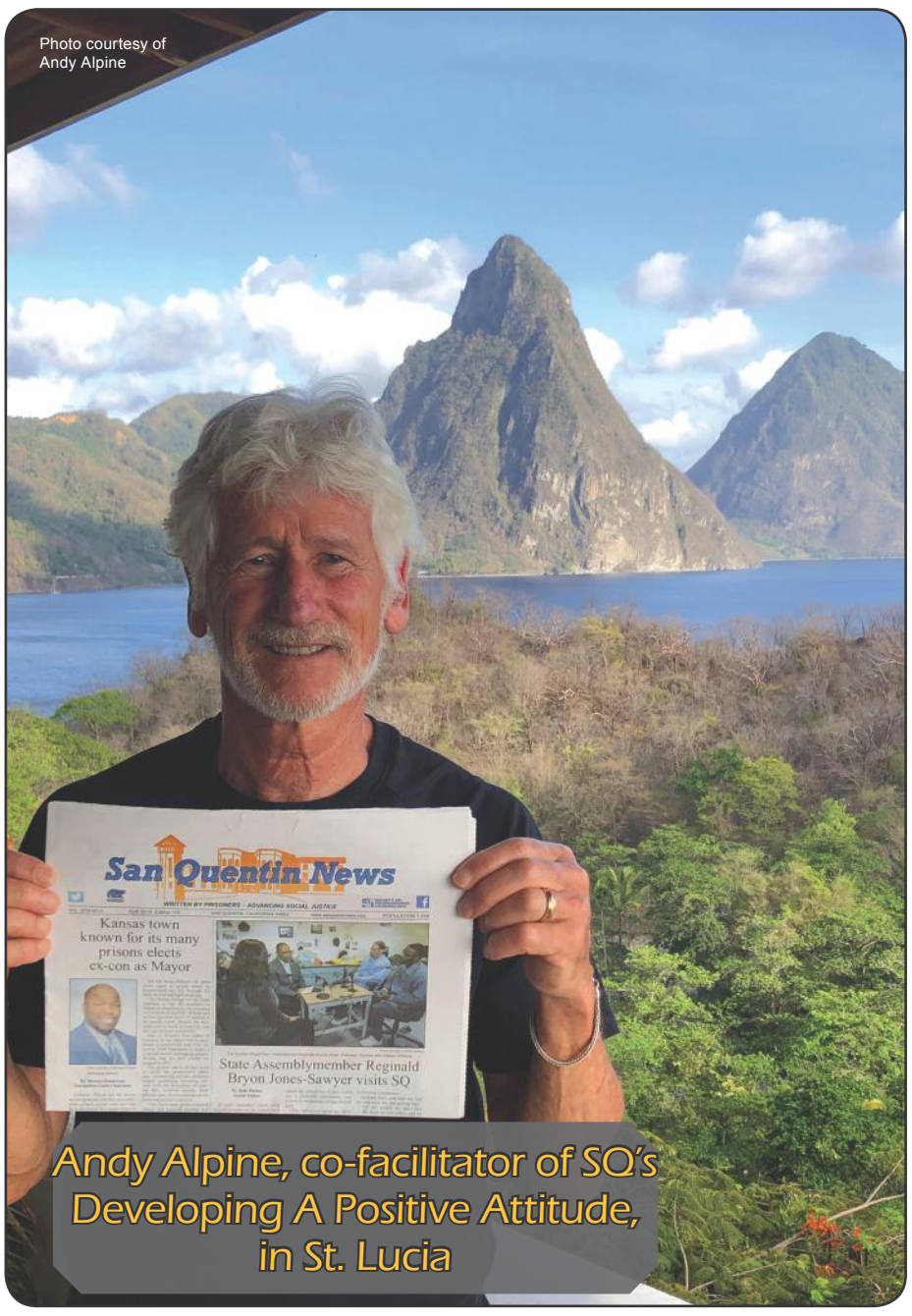
—Joe Garcia
—David Ditto and Anthony Faulk contributed

San Quentin and Pink Patch Project host A Pink Day at SQ

Photo by Raphaele Casale

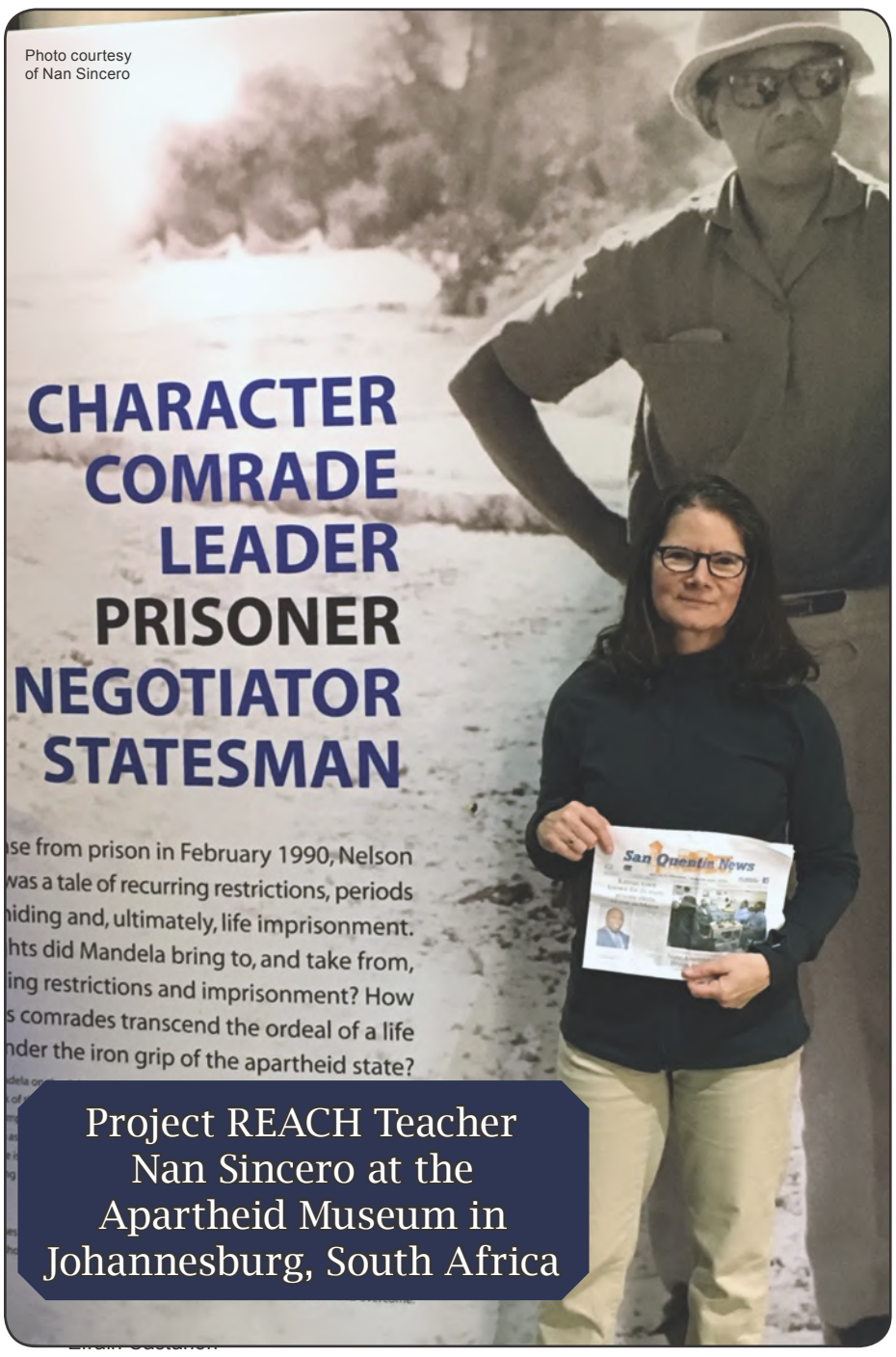
Correctional and administrative staff in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month in front of SQ's Tower 1

Around the World



Andy Alpine, co-facilitator of SQ's Developing A Positive Attitude, in St. Lucia

SQ News Adviser Jan Perry at the Eiffel Tower in Paris



Project REACH Teacher Nan Sincero at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa

Gordon Melvin on the banks of the Peace River in Northern Alberta

Photo courtesy of Gordon Melvin

La meta no es solo ganar un maratón sino ganar una batalla de vida

Foto: Juan Espinosa, *SQN*

Voluntarios y miembros del 1000 Mile Running Club y miembros del Skid Row club de Los Angeles en la Lower Yard de SQ

Español

Por Juan Espinosa
Diseñador gráfico y escritor

El 1000 Mile Running Club llevo a cabo la octava carrera anual de tres horas de entrenamiento con miras al maratón del mes de noviembre. Un promedio de 25 corredores se anotaron para participar y batir sus propios records. La carrera comenzó a las 8:40 a.m. el 12 de octubre.

La peculiaridad de algunos de los corredores es que comparten historias similares ya que ellos personalmente o algún miembro de su familia son sobrevivientes del cáncer.

Tommy Wickerd, presidente del 1000 Mile Running Club ha sido parte del club por cuatro años. En ese lapso ha acumulado 5,600 millas y algo que dice lo ha motivado a seguir adelante es el recordar la batalla que su madre enfrentó contra el cáncer.

"Recibo la fuerza de mi madre y pienso en lo que paso en su batalla contra el cáncer," dijo Wickerd.

"Ella me mando una foto en donde está completamente sin pelo debido a la quimioterapia que estaba recibiendo. Eso me hizo pensar lo luchadora que es mi madre y me motiva para correr una milla más cuando siento que ya no puedo más" dijo Wickerd.

Wickerd comentó que en el club de corredores todos se sienten como una gran familia. "Ninguno de los corredores que conozco le quiere hacer daño a su cuerpo especialmente usando drogas y eso es muy motivante para mí", dijo Wickerd.

En el entrenamiento de octubre, nueve voluntarios encargados de contar las millas de cada uno de los corredores recibieron las indicaciones del entrenador Frank Rouna, quien también recordó a los corredores que no se esforzaran mucho. "Recuerden, este es solo un entrenamiento", les dijo.

Rouna es el fundador del 1000 Mile Running Club en San Quentin y ha estado en el club por cerca de 14 años. "Hay un par de los primeros miembros del club que todavía participan, el club ha crecido considerablemente en los pasados 10 años y tenemos más corredores entrenando", dijo.

Mike Keeyes de 72 años, uno de los corredores de San Quentin dice que ha sido parte del club por cerca de cinco años. "Me uní al club para unirme a la comunidad de corredores y proveer apoyo a esta comunidad", dijo Keeyes.

Keeyes es un sobreviviente de cáncer de próstata y dice que el correr también le ha ayudado a mantenerse saludable.

Keeyes también ha inspirado a otros reos que han decidido formar parte del 1000 Mile Running Club.

Keeyes dice también que en el club de corredores ha conocido gente que ha tenido muchos problemas médicos como cirugías de corazón abierto, obesidad y de adicciones a otras sustancias. "Se han sobrepuesto a estos problemas corriendo y usándolo como una forma de terapia, no se den por vencidos", dijo Keeyes.

Kevin Rumon, otro de los voluntarios y quien también es un sobreviviente de cáncer de garganta dijo: "El ser parte del club me da mucho más de lo que yo doy viniendo como voluntario. Admiro a la gente que dentro de la adversidad deciden tomar decisiones correctas".

Rumon ha sido parte del club por cerca de 10 años.

Jim Maloney, también sobreviviente de cáncer, dice que se enteró del club por medio de un amigo y ha formado parte de éste por cerca de cuatro años. "Al principio no sabía que esperar al venir a una prisión, pero inmediatamente sentí la bienvenida cariñosa de los corredores, y eso me hizo seguir viniendo. Ahora cuando me voy de aquí me siento con un corazón pleno y lleno", dijo Maloney.

Michael Johnson dice que parte de su motivación es mantenerse saludable ya que su madre también es una sobreviviente del cáncer de seno. Esto también llevo a su hermana a hacerse un masectomía ya que ella tenía un alto riesgo de desarrollar cáncer de seno.

"Todo eso me llevo a hacerme los estudios para ver si yo también era propenso a desarrollar cáncer y salí positivo de BRCA1 que significa que yo también estoy en riesgo de desarrollar cáncer de seno y pancreático, y ahora corro mientras pueda, no sé qué pueda pasar mañana", dijo Johnson.

Jim Morris, otro de los voluntarios, dice que empezó como donador de zapatos para los corredores del club y finalmente se unió a éste en el 2014.

"Nadie me dijo nada de lo que podía esperar de la gente en prisión, y tuve que dejar toda la ideología que tenía tomada de las películas. Una vez aquí, los corredores me trataron muy cordialmente, no escuché malas palabras ni gritos, eso me sorprendió muchísimo", dijo Morris.

Las tres horas terminaron con los corredores agotados pero contentos por su logro, a pesar de un par de alarmas de seguridad que les quitaron el ritmo. Los corredores más sobresalientes fueron: Fidelio Marin con 24 ½ millas. Mark Javosik con 23 ¾ millas. Steve Reitz con 21 ¾ millas. Brett Ownney 20 ¼ millas. Michael Johnson 18 ¼ millas y John Levin con 18 1/8 millas. Finalmente el veterano corredor de 72 años, Mike Keeyes terminó con 17 millas.

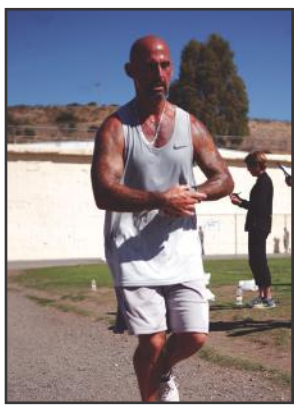


Foto: Eddie Herena, *SQN*

Tommy Wickerd corriendo en la Lower Yard

Foto: Juan Espinosa, *SQN*

Jim Maloney en uno de los entrenamientos

Foto: Juan Espinosa, *SQN*

Kevin Rumon entrenando con los corredores

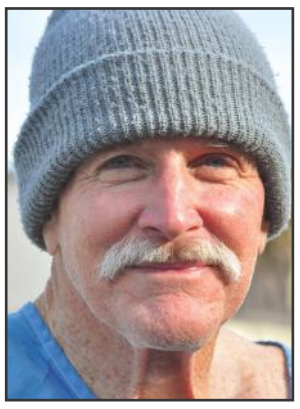


Foto: Juan Espinosa, *SQN*

Michael Keeyes en la Lower Yard

Foto: Juan Espinosa, *SQN*

Michael Johnson entrenando para el maraton

La diversidad de los deportes en San Quentin hacen la diferencia

Por Pedro Espinal
Escritor de periodismo

Los deportes en la prisión de San Quentin tienen una larga e interesante historia que ha contribuido al entrenamiento y espíritu competitivo de muchos reos.

Al comienzo del siglo XX los prisioneros jugaban deportes en el campo de recreo. Aunque los deportes no eran tan variados como ahora, se divertían jugando béisbol, softbol y desde luego corrían y hacían ejercicio. el encargado de educación fisica, K. Bhatt, (The coach) tiene en su oficina una foto del recuerdo, es una foto uno de los primeros equipos en San Quentin con fecha de comienzos del siglo XX. "Yo pienso que el béisbol en equipo se jugó aquí desde hace mucho", dijo.

La popularidad de los deportes dentro del penal ha aumentado en parte por la visita de equipos de afuera que vienen a competir con los equipos de dentro.

Uno de estos voluntarios es John Brewster, quien por 15 años ha visitado San Quentin para jugar baloncesto en las canchas del penal.

"Primero jugué en contra de los San Quentin Warriors pero al ver la popularidad del juego, pedí permiso para formar otro equipo para los internos, los San Quentin Kings", dijo.

Los deportes en San Quentin les dan a los internos la oportunidad de practicar y vivir la pasión por su deporte favorito. Los reclusos tienen varias opciones ya que San Quentin es una de las pocas prisiones que recibe visita de equipos de jugadores de ambos sexos en deportes como el softbol y el tenis. Sharon quien es voluntaria dijo, "He estado viniendo por diez años".

Beth, otra jugadora de tenis empezó a venir a San Quentin desde el 2018. "Me encanta venir aquí, los muchachos son agradables y mejores jugadores que muchas mujeres de Marin County y también tienen mejor conversación", dijo.

Para Jeff, también jugador de tenis, el amor al deporte y un versículo de la Biblia lo inspiran a visitar la prisión. "El tenis es un deporte competitivo, pero aquí en San Quentin no es tanto quien gane o pierda, sino que jugamos por amor al juego", dijo. "Me motiva venir a San Quentin por lo que dice Mateo 25:36". El versículo al que se refiere Jeff dice en esencia "No olviden a los prisioneros".

Otras disciplinas deportivas que se practican en San Quentin son: competencia de carreras en el 1000 Mile Running Club, fútbol americano, voleibol, handbol (frontón), juego de herraduras, y el rey de los deportes, fútbol.

"Los San Quentin Earthquakes se organizó como equipo en el 2016 para competir con equipos de afuera", dijo el mediocampista Tare Beltranchuc.

El equipo profesional de la MLS, Los San Jose Earthqquakes es el patrocinador del equipo de San Quentin y en fechas recientes donó uniformes nuevos a los jugadores de la prisión.

Carlos Meza un jugador de los San Quentin Earthquakes dijo, "ya hemos jugado con equipo Hermanos Unidos, quienes fueron el primer equipo contra quien jugamos. En aquel entonces Hermanos Unidos era dirigido por el técnico y veterano de guerra Alfredo Figueroa. Este equipo estaba integrado por universitarios de Berkely, San Francisco State y Stanford. Otros equipos fueron San Francisco Glens y Los San Francisco Deltas".

Dwight Kennedy, entrenador de fútbol americano En San Quentin All-Madden dijo que el deporte y los voluntarios le han ayudado en muchos sentidos.

"El poder participar y mezclarme con los voluntarios deportistas hacen diferencia en mi rehabilitación", dijo.

El arte de aprender a convivir con un celi en una pequeña celda

Español

Por Daniel Lopez
Escritor de peridoismo

Si algo ha aprendido José Vieyra en los 37 años que ha estado encarcelado es que programar el tiempo y convivir con su 'celi' como si fueran un equipo, es la clave para sobrevivir el amontonamiento y conflicto que genera compartir una celda en la que difícilmente dos personas pueden estar de pie.

"El secreto es tratar de programar para no estar los dos en la celda al mismo tiempo; si tu compañero va a la escuela en la mañana, tú te apuntas en la tarde", dice Vieyra. "Tiene que haber entendimiento, como en un equipo: vamos a hacer esto o aquello; vamos a comer, vamos a hacer ejercicio. Ya se terminó el ruido, vamos a dormir".

Como la mayoría de las personas encarceladas en la Prisión Estatal de San Quentin, Vieyra comparte una celda con otra persona. Las celdas son de aproximadamente 10 pies de largo por 4.6 de ancho; En ese espacio reducido, apenas cabe una litera con dos camastros; el retrete y un pequeño lavabo, además de dos pequeños estantes de seis pies cúbicos en donde los reos guardas sus pertenencias, como comida, y ropa. Si uno de los internos está de pie, no alcanza a tocar las paredes sin tener los brazos completamente extendidos, y cuando lo hace el compañero debe estar sobre la cama.

De acuerdo al *SQ News* la población de la prisión fluctúa entre 3.000 a 4.000 internos, lo que se debe a que San Quentin también es un centro de ingresos (recepción).

Con excepción de los prisioneros condenados a muerte, la mayoría de los internos comparten una minúscula celda con otro compañero. En días normales, se organizan para hacer la convivencia más llevadera. Pero la situación se complica cuando la administración ordena encierros forzados y no se les permite dejar su celda por varios días o semanas, salir al patio o participar en los programas educativos y de rehabilitación.

"Cuando no te llevas bien con tu compañero es un tormento, pura lloradera, puras broncas", dice Vieyra. "Parece como que pusieran dos leones en una misma jaula y lo único que saben usar es la violencia".

Pedro Espinal quien ha estado en prisión por más de 22 años coincide con Vieyra y dice que la paciencia es importante para sobrellevar el encierro forzoso.

"He aprendido a ser paciente; sin embargo. Cuando nos encierran por un periodo largo al tercer día me empiezo a sentir ansioso, como atrapado en un callejón sin salida porque no puedo asistir a la escuela, ni tampoco me puedo bañar", dijo Espinal.

En el 2011 el sistema de correcciones de California enfrentó una crisis de sobrepoblación en su sistema carcelario por lo que la Corte Suprema ordenó reducir la población hasta el 137.5 por ciento de la capacidad total para la que fueron diseñadas las diferentes prisiones.

La solución inicial para cumplir esta orden federal fue transferir reos a prisiones fuera del estado, pero a pesar de ello, la sobrepoblación continuó.

En agosto pasado, el Departamento de Correcciones anunció que los últimos reos confinados en prisiones fuera del estado serían regresados a California. Aunque esa medida puede beneficiar a presos que estaban fuera del estado, muchos de ellos podrían ser hospedados en San Quentin.

Internos como Vieyra y Espinal dicen que no se puede hacer nada al respecto lo mas importante es seguir adelante y asi poder pasar el tiempo sin contratiempos.

"Lo importante es aprender a vivir en estas condiciones y tratar de pasar el tiempo en estas lo mejor posible, aparte de aprender a convivir con las personas sin importar el tamaño de la habitación", dijo Vieyra.

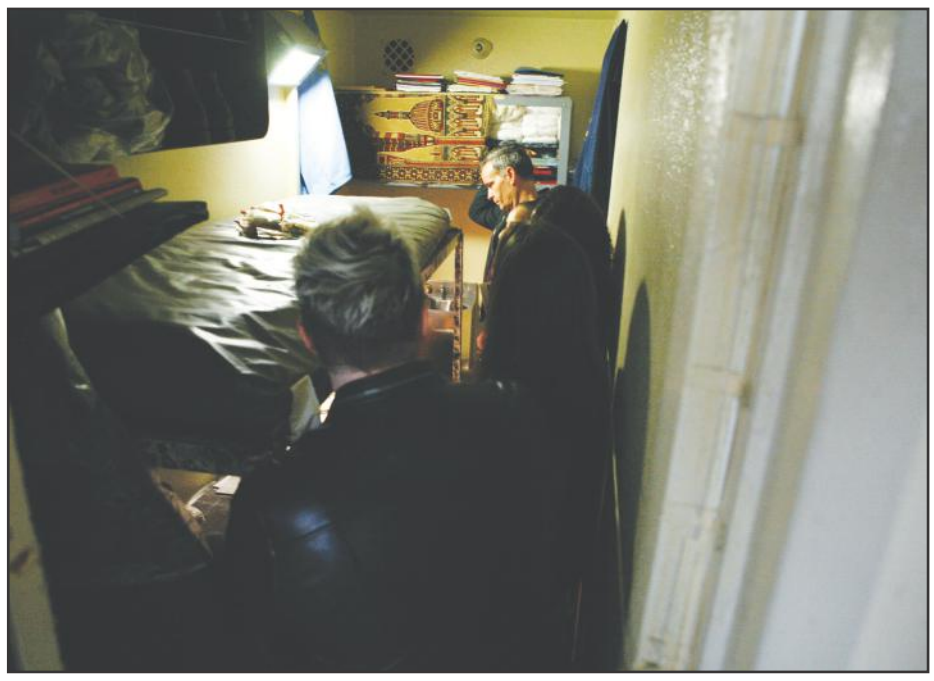


Foto: Javier Jimenez SQN

Visitantes dentro de una celda en San Quentin

Ân Xá Của Thống Đốc Brown Và Newsom

VIETNAMESE

Tác Giả Leonard F. Brown
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Thống Đốc tiểu bang Cali, Gavin Newsom, đã dùng quyền hành pháp để che chở bảy cựu tù nhân khỏi bị trục xuất bởi chính phủ Trump , theo báo cáo của *L.A. Times*.

Ân xá của Newsom gồm có hai người tỵ nạn Campuchia, nhắm đến hủy bỏ lệnh trục xuất của Tổng Thống Donald Trump.

"Bằng cách ân xá cho những người đang thay đổi cuộc sống của họ, Thống Đốc muốn lấy đi những chướng ngại đến việc làm và những dịch vụ xã hội, phục hồi dân quyền và trách nhiệm, và ngăn chặn những hậu quả bất công đối với những người có tiền án," văn phòng Thống Đốc nói trong một thông cáo.

Hay Hov ở Oakland, một trong hai người Campuchia được ân xá, phạm tội cố sát và tham gia băng đảng năm 2001.

Anh ta bị sở di trú bắt giam vào tháng Ba nhưng được thả ra ngay sau đó, theo tờ báo *L.A. Times*.

Kang Hen ở San Francisco, người thứ hai được ân xá, bị kết án trộm cắp vào năm 1994, khi anh ta 18 tuổi. Anh ta có một con trai bốn tuổi và người phối ngẫu bị bệnh tim và thận. Anh bị sở di trú bắt vào tháng Tư.

Gia đình Hor và Hen bỏ trốn sự diệt chủng ở Campuchia vào thập niên 1980s và đến Bay Area khi họ còn nhỏ.

Ân xá không phải tự động chấm dứt trục xuất nhưng nó xóa bỏ tiền án dẫn đến sự trục xuất của chính phủ liên bang.

Tất cả bảy người được ân xá đã hoàn thành bản án của họ.

Năm người còn lại là:

- Jeffrey James Allen, bị kết án buôn bán cần sa.
- David Paul Ingram, phạm tội làm giấy tờ giả.
- Joe Dick Rector, phạm tội lái xe dưới sự ảnh hưởng của rượu và chất ma túy.
- Reza Saltani, phạm tội chuyên chở và buôn bán thuốc cấm.
- Dolores Ruth Taylor, phạm tội chuyên chở và buôn bán thuốc cấm.

Những ân xá đó đến trong khi Tổng Thống Trump liên tục đàn áp cộng đồng người Campuchia bắt đầu từ năm 2017, khi Trump ép buộc chính phủ Campuchia nhận thêm những người bị trục xuất.

Nhiều người Campuchia chạy trốn chế độ dã man của Khmer Rouge, đến Mỹ hợp pháp từ lúc nhỏ, đang đối diện với sự trục xuất, tờ báo *Times* tường thuật.

Theo báo cáo của sở di trú vào ngày 26 tháng Ba, có 1,784 người Campuchia bị lệnh trục xuất. Trong số đó, 1,294 người đã bị tiền án.

Newsom nói về sự ân xá trước những thành viên của hội Á Châu có trụ sở tại Sacramento.

Ông đã so sánh Trump như "kẻ mị dân" tại San Francisco, người đã tranh đấu cho đạo luật Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (một đạo luật cấm di dân đầu tiên đến nhóm tiểu số).

"Tôi luôn cố gắng hiểu về khoảnh khắc chúng ta đang sống trong sự sợ hãi ngoại nhân," Newsom nói. "Trong chúng ta ai đã học lịch sử đều biết rằng nó không phải vô tiền khoán hậu. Nó không mới mẻ gì. Nó rất là quen thuộc."

—Dịch giả: Dũng Trần

Cơ Quan Di Trú

Tác Giả Alfred King
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Tòa Tối Cao Pháp Viện Hoa Kỳ vừa đưa ra một quyết định đó là một bị cáo phải am hiểu rằng người đó đã phạm pháp thì mới có thể bị kết tội, slate.com tường trình.

Bỏ phiếu quyết định 7-2 cho rằng một di dân không giấy tờ hợp pháp bị cáo buộc với tội danh tàn trữ vũ khí trái phép phải nhận thức được về vấn đề hợp pháp của bản thân mình trước khi có thể bị kết tội cho tàn trữ vũ khí trái phép của liên bang, trình bày vào ngày 21 tháng 6.

Vụ việc dính líu tới Hamid Rehaif, một học sinh đã cư ngụ quá hạn tại Hoa Kỳ qua chương trình du học, đã đi đến chỗ tập bắn súng và dùng hai khẩu súng để bắn. Anh ta đã bị bắt và bị cáo cho tội trạng cư dân bất hợp pháp tàn trữ vũ khí trái phép, và anh có thể bị giam trong tù liên bang đến 10 năm.

Anh ta đã bị kết án và tòa tuyên án 18 tháng tù liên bang, và sau khi mãn án sẽ bị trục xuất về nước.

Anh ta kháng án lên tòa chống án 11th Circuit, nhưng phán quyết của tòa án vẫn giữ vững. Khi sự khiếu nại của Rehaif lên đến tòa tối cao 11th Circuit của Hoa Kỳ thì sự kết án được chấp thuận thay đổi hoàn toàn và hoàn lại cho tòa thấp hơn để xét xử lại.

Thẩm phán Stephen Breyer viết cho đại đa số nói rằng chỉ có một ít tầm quan trọng dành cho "chuyên gia phẩm đoán" một qui tắc của cách giải thích để đề nghị một tòa án tìm kiếm để xác định những nguyên tố trên, trong khi quốc hội không thèm chú tâm tới để viết xuống những yếu tố này. Điều phán đoán sẽ trở thành vững chắc hơn khi những qui định về mục đích thông thường đòi hỏi được viết xuống và hình phạt cho sự vi phạm về mặt luật pháp sẽ gay gắt hơn.

Thẩm phán Alito và Thomas bất đồng ý kiến. Alito viết rằng vụ án của anh Rehaif không phải là một trường hợp tàn nhẫn để truy tố một di dân nước ngoài, người mà đã được đem vào Hoa Kỳ bất hợp pháp khi còn bé để sinh sống và không hiểu biết nhiều về mặt hợp pháp của chính mình. Ông nói thêm Rehaif là một kẻ hung hăng người đã cố tình ở lại quá hạn, dùng tiền một cách lãng phí, và có lý do gì để thương hại cho anh ta.

Trường hợp này rõ ràng ảnh hưởng đến toàn Hoa Kỳ, theo tường thuật của slate.com, ứng dụng đến những ai hiện tại đang bị truy tố cho các tội trạng trên, như cũng có nhiều trường hợp đang khiếu nại và cũng đang bị câu lưu trong nhà giam của liên bang.

—Dịch giả-Tú Trần

Cải Cách Nhà Tù

Tác Giả Anthony
Manuel Caravalho
Hội Đoàn Tác Giả Nhà Báo

Hai việc thú vị sẽ được thay đổi tại nhà giam San Francisco là: dùng điện thoại miễn phí cho tù nhân và giảm giá đắc đỏ trong căn tin.

"Những lệ phí tràn ngập này buộc phải trả từ bạn bè và thân nhân của tù nhân, đặt biệt là các nữ thân nhân nghèo. Rõ ràng đây là một vấn đề về sự công bằng," được phát biểu từ một phát ngôn viên từ văn phòng của thị trưởng, Jeff Cretan.

Văn phòng của thị trưởng London Breed ước tính rằng việc loại bỏ đi những thứ mua mắc mỏ từ căn tin, qua các thu nhập được từ gia đình của tù nhân sẽ làm mất đi $1.7 triệu lợi phí cho quận này vào mỗi năm.

Sự thay đổi được khởi xướng từ thị trưởng London Breed và cảnh sát trưởng Vicki Hennessy, tờ báo San Francisco Chronicle trình bày vào ngày 14 tháng 6.

Phỏng vấn các tù nhân tại San Quentin minh bày vào sự chênh lệch của lệ phí từ các vật dụng được bán ra từ các công ty bán hàng hóa tại tù của tiểu bang và đưa ra một ví dụ tiêu biểu là mì gói "Ramen". Tù tại quận hạt của Alameda giá tiền là $1.25 cho mỗi gói mì hoặc là $30.00 cho một thùng mì gồm có 24 gói. Đối với tù tiểu bang giá tiền cho một gói mì là $0.25 và $6.00 cho một thùng 24 gói. Mỗi phút cho cuộc gọi điện thoại để bắt đầu cho hai bên thông qua có thể miễn phí hay phải trả $6.00 cho mỗi cuộc gọi.

Vào tháng 5 của năm nay, thành phố New York đã trở thành quận đầu tiên biếu tặng những cuộc điện thoại và xài dịch vụ lên mạng miễn phí, theo lời tường trình của tờ báo New York Post.

Hiện tại các nhà giam ở Cali cũng đang khảo xác để biếu tặng cho tù nhân một trải nghiệm thực tế của mạng lưới thông tin với một thế giới hiện đại.

—Dịch giả-Tú Trần

Utah prison population grows to near capacity with 199 beds left

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

The Utah prison system is near capacity, with only 199 beds spaces left.

The population growth rate is "simply not sustainable" said Department of Corrections Executive Director Mike Haddon, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

The past 18 months have seen an increase of 362 inmates entering the prison system, bringing the overall prison population to 6,766. Director Haddon shared his concerns about the number now in custody at a hearing of the Executive Offices and Criminal Justice Appropriations Subcommittee.

The state's maximum prison capacity is 7,000; Haddon's department is exploring both short and long term options, by prioritizing moderate and high risk offenders to cut back on the caseloads of probation and parole agents.

A new prison that was already under construction and was originally planned to house 4,000 inmates was scaled back.

State officials announced in April that the previous capacity will be reduced to 3,600 to offset $130 million in construction cost overruns.

The state is exploring other options including reopening a section of a previously closed prison at Draper, housing inmates in the county jail system, and putting more bunks in dormitories.

Director Haddon's department is looking at the causative factors driving the prison population increase, but he is not ready to draw any conclusions from the data.

Lawmakers listened but, so far, have taken no action. Rep. Eric Hutchings (R-Kearns) believes the pressure on the state's prison system will continue, saying, "To add a million people to the state and not give you any more beds is just kind of reckless."

San Quentin workers donate more than $7,000 to non-profits

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

San Quentin workers donated more than $7,000 of their paychecks to two nonprofit organizations selected by Warden Ron Davis that serve young people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

"I took so much from society. Now I can give back," said Ronald Bruce Carter at the Oct. 15 check presentation.

Tracy Herrmann said, "It's a big difference from the past, when I'd take."

Paul Huyck added, "It's a good thing to donate money to help society."

The three men are part of the Joint Venture Program, which was set up by prison administrators to coordinate local business with inmate labor. The local business, Big Dawg, builds refrigeration fan units for commercial refrigeration and freezers. Big Dawg pays prisoners industry-based wages for their labor. Prison officials manage the money.

- 20% pays for the worker's room and board
- 20% goes to pay off the worker's restitution or to victim's compensation
- 20% goes for family support, such as child support
- 20% goes to the worker's savings account
- 20% goes to the worker's inmate trust account for discretionary spending

Carter said the job allows him to do something constructive.

"I take pride in everything I do," Carter said. "Building something from scratch that could go anywhere in the world—from something I did."

Tracy Herrmann said the job "keeps my mind occupied and being productive. Plus, I'm giving back to society."

Paul Huyck said, "It gives us a chance to put money in the bank and have a better chance of making it."

The nonprofits, Misssey and Seneca Family of Agencies, each received a check for $3,611.29.

Misssey serves sexually exploited girls and women between the ages of 12 and 24 with personal development training and how to create life goals. The organization also provides clients a safe place and daily lunches.

"It's a place for the girls to talk about trauma and bad experiences," representative Destiny Webster said. "It's a place where they could be honest."

In regards to receiving money from people who might

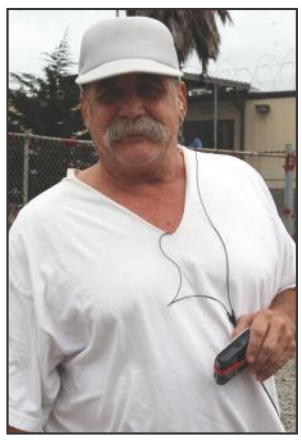


Photo by Juan Espinosa, *SQN*
JVP employee Tracy Herrmann

be responsible for some of the harm, Webster said, "There should always be a place to start over. You are proving a resource to help us to do our work. I'm honored to be here and see the people who've made these donations."

Webster, born and raised in Oakland, said it was her first time inside San Quentin. "Walking through the courtyard, it looks so much like my community," she said. "It's a humbling experience. I believe that everyone should be offered multiple chances."

Seneca Family of Agencies serves young people with mental health issues who suffered trauma or were negatively affected by the foster care system. The organization collaborates with local schools that have students with disabilities or have been impacted by trauma, abuse or neglect.

"The goal is for students to fully access their educational goals and thrive in school," said Representative Harben Porter. "We strive to close the achievement gap in California."

Seneca representative Caleb Hervey said that he joined the organization because of his personal experiences and seeing people disenfranchised in his family and the larger community.

"I wanted to be someone who gave back," Porter said. "My values line up with the family values of Seneca."

While receiving the check, Porter said to the workers, "A lot of people are just one choice from a life change."

He then thanked the prisoners for the donation, adding that the money would go toward "providing education, mental health care that is family centered, with a goal of getting rid of the inter-generational problem of people having to go through the prison system.

"The contribution will move beyond our organization to those in our network—the money will be well used. You are providing healing in our community," Porter said.

Twelve CDCR prisons are in dire need of repair

Don Spector, Director of the Prison Law Office: "Prisons are literally crumbling"

File Photo
San Quentin's West Block

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Twelve of California's oldest prisons are in need of repair or replacement, according a state-commissioned study recently made public.

San Quentin State Prison, California's oldest prison, built in 1852, is one of the 12 prisons that has "exceeded (its) expected useful life," the private consultant, Kitchell CEM said in its initial report to the state.

The study also included Folsom State Prison, the second oldest prison in California built in 1880, and prisons "repurposed" after use as military housing during World War II.

According to *The Associated Press*, the Kitchel CEM study does not provide an estimated cost to repair the 12 prisons. It did say, however, that "the projected cost to fix one prison built in 1955 was estimated at more than $763 million."

"Do the math—11 other prisons," said Donald Specter, director of the Prison Law Office, a nonprofit that works on major lawsuits concerning inmates' welfare. "Prisons are literally crumbling."

"The state committed $260 million over four years to repair leaking roofs at more than two dozen of the state's 35 prisons, where the cost of overdue maintenance is estimated at more than $1 billion," the AP reported.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) spokeswoman Terry Thornton said the department initiated the study three years ago. "It's to guide future planning and investment in the department's infrastructure needs," she said.

AP reported, "…while a majority of prison buildings and other infrastructure are 'beyond their useful life,' they may still be in operational condition," adding the completion of repairs would allow the prison to operate in the future.

"Decades of deferred maintenance have led to this," said Specter. "What the state has done is ignore the need to routinely replace some of these critical infrastructure for decades." He expressed concern that some areas at facilities are possibly uninhabitable, *AP* reported.

"These prisons have been put through the ringer," Specter said. "Many of them have not only been inhabited past their useful life, but they put thousands more people in them than they were designed for, so that takes its toll as well."

Many of the prisons are needed for the CDCR to remain below a population cap of 137.5% of design capacity imposed by federal courts, according to the *AP*. "The consultants recommended repairing some buildings but said others, including some housing units, should be replaced."

The *AP* said California Medical Facility in Vacaville was the only prison provided with a completed estimate of $763.5 million for repairs, and a CDCR medical facility opened six years ago in Stockton had an estimate of $839 million for repairs.

Spending for any improvements would have to first get approval from state lawmakers and budget officials, according to the *AP*.

"Three-quarters of a billion dollars just for one prison," said Spector, the *AP* reported. "The price tag is enormous."

Poet and thespian Donté Clark visits San Quentin

Poet and thespian Donté Clark, 29, visited a classroom at San Quentin on Aug. 11 to talk about his experiences of being a young Black writer from North Richmond, Ca.

"On the surface, my writing is about my feelings, but it's also about freedom," Clark told a group of six incarcerated men sitting with community volunteers, who are educators for Academic Peer Education Program (APEP).

Clark added, "I always wanted to come inside a prison to teach – but what can I offer? I came to understand, if I can't give information, I'll get information."

James Metters, one of the APEP incarcerated educators, said, "Donté came in and taught me the power of resilience. He models success as an African American growing up in an urban community. He reminds me that the sky is not the limit."

Clark talked about his early days of writing. He said the anger he felt from the lack of social or community issues showing up in literature was quelled through his own writing.

"When I was growing up, I was going through a lot," Clark said. "My parents and teachers didn't know how to handle me. But, writing down my feelings not only made me feel better, it helped other people."

Clark said appreciation for his writing passion showed up through community support for a workshop geared toward youngsters. The workshop participants began performing for each other, which gained attention—which grew the workshop until the performances became community shows.

"I'm trying to help raise awareness of what's happening in Richmond," Clark said. "I'm getting rid of that anger. If you still have anger and bitterness, you're still lost. I want to get to that place of harmony. I have to get rid of that emotional blockage."

Rick Ayers, an APEP volunteer, chimed in saying, "Donté would show up anywhere, paid or not paid."

Clark responded, "The workshops are for kids in the community — they help keep them out of trouble, inspire them to stay in school— with the goal of keeping the kids going."

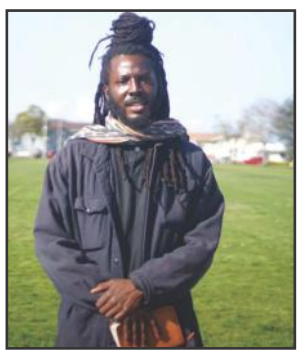


Photo by Pendarvis Harshaw/*KQED*
Donté Clark

Clark performed a couple of poems from his new book, KnowFreedom. Peer educators Raiveon "Ray Ray" Wooden and Philippe "Kells" Kelly followed with original spoken-word pieces of their own.

Referring to the performances, Diane Kahn, a PREP volunteer, said, "I felt as though Donté is on the level that he could speak to the experiences that incarcerated people go through."

Clark is working on a new piece called *Money* and a book based on a 14-day trip he took to Indonesia that speaks to peace and love.

—Juan Haines

Stanford professor audited Creative Writing class

Professor Adam Johnson of Stanford University came to San Quentin to sit in on a creative writing class for incarcerated men, facilitated by Zoe Mullery and sponsored by the William James Association. The Aug. 21 get-together between students and professor focused on: what led to Johnson's writing career, what creates a compelling narrative, and a review of *Fortune Smiles* (2016), Johnson's collection of short stories.

"He really encourages all of us, me included, to go to the difficult story – don't turn away from it – go to the story that we don't fully understand or have any understanding of," said Mullery.

The Pulitzer Prize winning author, who worked as a mason in his youth, said building solitary confinement cells in Arizona changed his life.

"We'd bring the walls up, and then I'd think about who's going to occupy this thing, and it was depressing the hell outta me," Johnson said.

After that, Johnson took a creative writing class to boost his grade point average and "that's that," he said.

Johnson talked about what he learned from Ron Carlson, his first writing teacher.

"The secret to great writing is learning to tolerate the not knowing of what might be and moving forward in a story in the face of uncertainty and that it might fail," Johnson said.

The students had read Johnson's collection of six short stories prior to his visit and were ready with comments about the stories.

Dark Meadows is the only story Johnson said he did not research.

Johnson said it was about people "who could go down paths where they could do the unthinkable" and be redeemed.

"The character was in a situation of struggling every day in his life to do the right thing," Johnson said. "He was a character that readers don't want to like, but he had characteristics that readers find likable."

Johnson said *Dark Meadows* challenges readers' beliefs about good and bad.

He told the students that the space for fiction is getting smaller and smaller as publishers looking for longer stories are dwindling.

As an early writer, he says, he had great experiences with

Photo Courtesy of Wikicommons
Adam Johnson

editors. But, as he developed, he has found his own voice, even if he has to labor to write a single paragraph.

"The act of writing is a noble endeavor," Johnson said. "It's meditative – I feel that I'm an average person, but to orchestrate my thoughts, I can say something above myself."

Mullery noted later that she's "picky" about people interacting with the class.

"The writers that I invite are people that I really respect, not only as writers, but also how they conduct themselves as a writer—not to just make a buck or be famous. And I think Adam Johnson is a great example of that," said Mullery.

—Juan Haines

Snippets

Twix was first introduced in 1979. The Twix candy bar was known as a "Raider" bar in France and Germany until Mars decided to standardize the name in 1991.

Yogurt in Armenia is called matzoon and in Egypt leben raib. Americans consume more than 300,000 tons of yogurt each year. It takes about 1 pound of whole milk to make 1 pound of yogurt.

Rats will eat their own feces, strictly for the nutritional value and they can live without water for an even longer duration than camels.

Ostriches are so powerful that a single kick at a predator, such as a lion could be fatal. Ostrich meat is a red meat that resembles beef and can be cooked in the same way. Unlike beef though, ostrich is very low in cholesterol, calories and fat.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

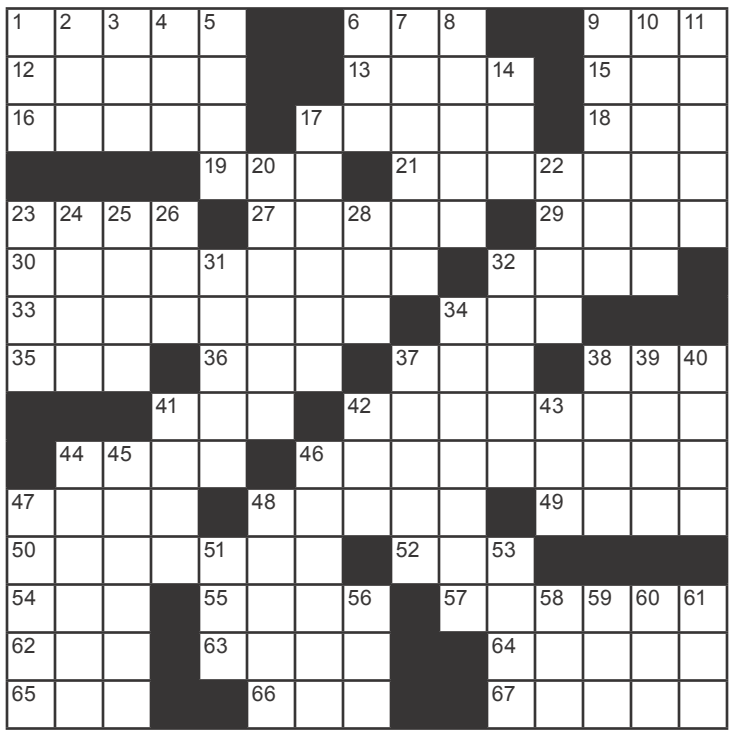
By Jonathan Chiu / Edited by Jan Perry

Across

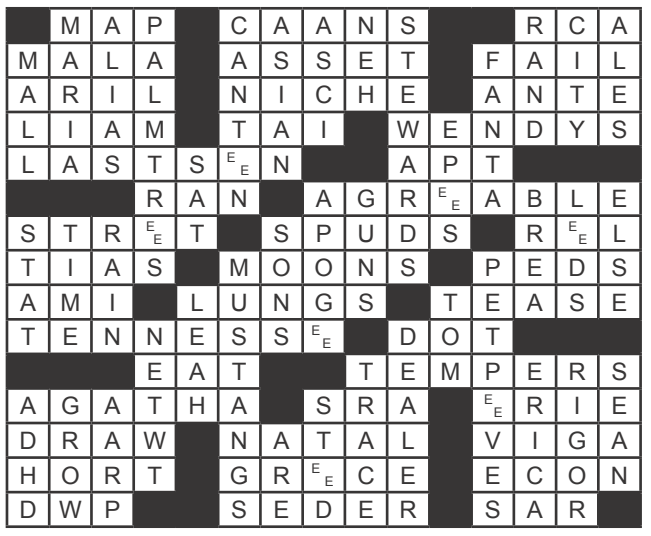
1. Characters
6. Bodily fluid (Abbr.)
9. Axel's band (Abbr.)
12. Director Gerwig of *Ladybird*
13. Mass
15. ___-Haw
16. Ben Folds Five song
17. Ancient region of the Eurphrates River
18. Cool
19. Guess (Abbr.)
21. Country music group
23. *Black* ____
27. Surveys
29. Iota
30. " Square Biz" artist
32. ____ Shan
33. Pop singer with mathematical signs as album titles
34. Singer Jon ___ Jovi
35. Science term (Abbr.)
36. Tex-___ style
37. Author Amy
38. Sonnet
41. More (Sp)
42. Actress who has starred in many rom-coms as the best friend
44. Flat boat usually towed by a tug boat
46. Tower of London guards and bottles of a particular gin
47. Yearn
48. Cap alternative
49. Besides
50. "American Idiot" band
52. Military rank (Abbr.)
54. Precedes Angeles, Altos, or Alamos
55. Pieces
57. "Fine Again" rock band
62. Netherland city
63. God (Sp.)
64. Group of three
65. Medical cond. (Abbr.)
66. Actress Cash
67. Elizabeth Ann _____ 1st native-born American saint

Down

1. Supreme woman (Abbrv.)
2. Sports great Bobby
3. Flower necklace
4. And so on and so on
5. Japanese wine
6. Computer's necessity (Abbr.)
7. Plain
8. Dog irritaters
9. Twizzle
10. Kevin of *SNL*
11. Get back
14. Stumble
17. Aromatic balsam used in medicine and perfumes
20. Releases
22. Principal
23. ____-*Up*
24. Mary Louise Parker TV show
25. Engineer's org. (Abbr.)
26. Maybe not
28. ___ Manuel Miranda
31. Sheldon's grandma
32. Skater Harding
34. Mean people
37. Porous rocks
38. W. European Russian city
39. Hunted animals
40. Originally
41. Bathroom brand
42. Boo
43. SoCal telephone comp. (Abbr.)
44. Haddocks
45. Romano, White, and Swiss
46. Cougar's target
47. Tips of a shoelace
48. Ancient region in SW Europe inhabited by Thracian people
51. *American* ___
53. Gets together
56. Org. where part of your paycheck goes (Abbr.)
58. 3 (Ital)
59. Stroke
60. Singer/composer Brian
61. Stimpy's pal



LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS



Sudoku Corner

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

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

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

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

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

Last month's Brain Teasers:

1. A shot in the dark
2. Go under the knife
3. A pair of Jacks
4. The United States
5. Earrings
6. Cat in the hat
7. Read between the lines
8. The seven year itch

Famous Critters
1. Chimpanzee
2. Mouse
3. Monkey
4. Horse
5. Bear
6. Frog
7. Horse
8. Skunk
9. Grroundhog
10. Squirell and Moose
11. Horse
12. Mouse
13. Bear

What does this say?

Puzzle from SQN reader James Turner

N	O	T	E
V	E	R	Y
O	N	E	W
I	L	L	G
E	T	I	T

Brain Teasers

What do they have in common?

1. Paper, rag and kewpie
2. A pair of jeans, a pool table and a catcher's mitt
3. Barney. Socks, Millie and Checkers
4. An airplane, tuxedo, comet and horse
5. Jig, Twist and Tango
6. A monarch, MIss America and a broken tooth
7. Bowling alleys, seamstresses and hand grenades
8. Pike, ray, chub and tang
9. A pen, a newspaper and a squid
10. Clams, cabbage, bread and dough
11. Hardy, Cromwell and Twist
12. Rodham, Welch and Robinson
13. Malibu,Bel Air and Corvetter
14. An artist, a dental hygienist and a hairdresser

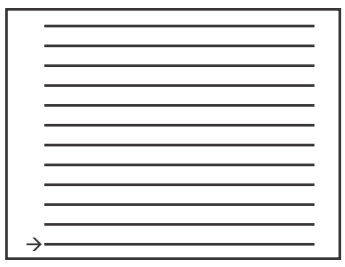
Presidential Nicknames

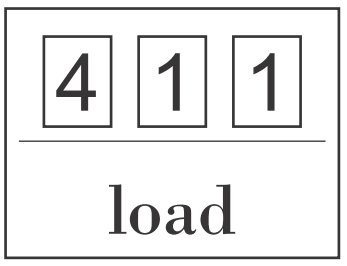
Can you identify these U.S. presidents by their nicknames?

1. Bubba
2. Dubya
3. The Teflon President
4. Give 'Em Hell Harry
5. The Rail Splitter
6. Ike
7. Silent Cal
8. Barry
9. Tricky Dick

Wacky Wordies

To solve these fun puzzles, look carefully at each frame, because the arrangement of the letters is a key clue to the familiar phrase contained within. For example, if the word *school* were placed high up in the frame, the answer would be *High school.* Or if the phrase "easy pieces" occurred five times in the frame, the answer would be *five easy pieces.*





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

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

Historical fiction gives account of the slave trade

BOOK REVIEW

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Homegoing, a debut novel by Yaa Gyasi (2016), explores the unhealed wounds of slavery, compellingly rendered through several hundred years, seven generations, fourteen characters over a span of two continents. The title, "Homegoing,"comes from an old African-American belief that death allowed an enslaved person's spirit to travel back to Africa.

The saga, which is conveyed in interlinked stories, follows two African tribes connected by half-sisters unknown to each other. One sister becomes a part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, while the other grows up in Africa.

The narrative has a distinctively feminine and African-based voice, making it a thought-provoking read, particularly to an American audience.

As an example, she describes the sensitivity that comes from caring for someone as if it's: *An unapologetic, unquestioning love like that of the stray dog that follows the man home from work every evening, happy, simply, to be allowed to walk nearby.* She describes The Castle's interior, a place where slaves were kept prior to their trans-Atlantic voyage to the Americas as such: There was no sunlight. Darkness was day and night and everything in between.

According to a blurb on the cover by *The Christian Science Monitor*, Gyasi has "a poet's ability to paint a scene with a handful of phrases."

Homegoing's chapter structure reminded me of *There There* by Tommy Orange (2019), reviewed in SQ News August 2019, where each chapter is an experience of a character. Orange shaped the storyline in the characters' desire to arrive at a place they all had in common, but Gyasi chapters are a character's experience that lasts a generation. Each of Gyasi's chapters also ties historical relevance to events, examples include: what it was like for African tribes to trade slaves to the English; how blacks lived through the convict lease laws after the Civil War; what it means to be a sharecropper; the reasoning behind The Great Migration; Africa's decolonization efforts.

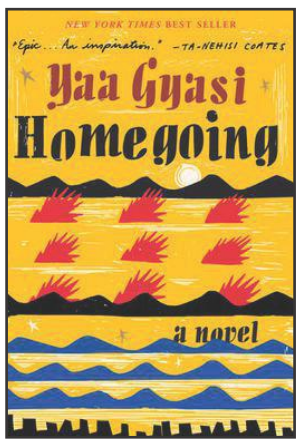
Gyasi's narratives interject a subtle sense of cruelty into how a racist society drains the life out of Black people; meanwhile, the desire of Black people to live peacefully and on its own terms is never lost.

(Editor's note: The saga of Black people striving for meaningful existence was told in *The Southern Phoenix*, Rosemary Jenkins (2017), reviewed in *SQ News* February 2018, an historical novel that examined The Great Migration and its connection to civil-rights.)

Both novels point out what happened during the height of Jim Crow when Blacks left the south, headed north and west to leave the direct and deadly racism of the south, only to land in a place where to the sophisticated and subtle racism of the rest of America still existed—it's called "unconscious bias" today.

Gyasi's characters reveal the emotional toll The Great Migration had on Black Americans as keenly shown in Willie's take on getting out of the south:

The first inhale of Harlem air was clean, no coal dust traveling in through the nose to hit the back of the throat, to taste. Just breathing felt exciting.



Gyasi's description of European treatment of Africans and its reconciliation through Christian forgiveness is particularly insightful:

Forgiveness was an act done after the fact, a piece of the bad deed's future. And if you point the people's eye to the future, they might not see what is being done to hurt them in the present.

Two thought-provoking chapters: Yaw addresses intergenerational trauma from an American perspective while Akua addresses the topic from an African perspective.

Gyasi does not leave out the "Back to Africa" movement. In the chapter titled, Marcus she describes African-based slave history as follows:

The dirty skeleton of a long-past shame that held the place together began to show itself in blackening concrete, rusty-hinged doors.

In spite of the acute pain and sadness threaded through each chapter, Gyasi finds a way to tie things together in a satisfying ending of an epic tale of struggle and triumph.

Remembering another fallen brother: Robert Bruce Garrett

The San Quentin community came together on Sept. 18 to pay tribute to the life of Robert Bruce Garrett, 69, who passed away July 30 after a long battle with cancer. He was born February 1, 1950.

Garrett, known to his friends as Lucky, leaves behind dozens of fellow men-in-blue, who said he was their barber. Others said they passed the day playing his favorite game, dominoes. Many more of his friends were in a Christian fellowship with him.

John "Gillie" Gillies became friends with Garrett at another prison and while at San Quentin shared a cell with him for seven years.

"When I first came to prison, he was there for me," Gillies said. "He took me under his wing and showed me the ropes." Gillies added, "He prayed a lot and always talked about Jesus – he'd read the Bible almost every night."

Jimmy Carson who's known Garrett for 37 years said, "I know Lucky is looking down on us." Speaking about his friendship with Garrett in the free world, Carson added, "I met his brother. One night I had a '55 Chevy, and we were riding around—we had the music up, enjoying the night."

Carson talked about reconnecting with Garrett in prison about 15 years later.

"Lucky was at an AA meeting sharing, and I went up to him and said, 'Are you Lucky?' I said, 'I'm Jimmy Carson.' He said, 'Boy you got fat,' and I said, 'You got old,'" which brought laughter in the chapel from about three dozen prisoners who sat with Linda and Louis Rise, church volunteers who teach a humility class.

"What a blessing Lucky was to Linda and myself," Louis said. Referring to visiting Garrett in the hospital, he added, "We were totally taken aback from the love that was shown to Lucky from everyone, including the correctional officers."

Kenny Rodgers did time with Garrett at Solano state prison.

"I knew him as a man of God and doing a lot of things for people," Rodgers said. "I remember being on hard times, and he brought me a jar of coffee."

Rodgers added, "He was comfortable with what was happening. It's a joyous time to celebrate his life."

Billy Dooley spent a lot of time with Garrett at San Quentin.

"I knew him as a man of God and doing a lot of things for people"

"This is real hard," Billy said. "We used to play handball. They called me Cinder Block—I'm short and fat, but he'd carry me to victory and tell me that I did that." After some chuckles from the crowd he added, "He taught me how to pray and be serious."

Billy then asked the audience to take a deep breath, let it out slowly and said a prayer for Garrett.

Here are other things said about Garrett from the men-in-blue:

Lucky was a faithful man to the study of God.

He was just a real down to earth guy.

This is not a sad time.

We had a good relationship. He had lots of conversations about how far the Lord has taken him.

We miss you cutting our hair in North Block. I know you're up there cutting hair.

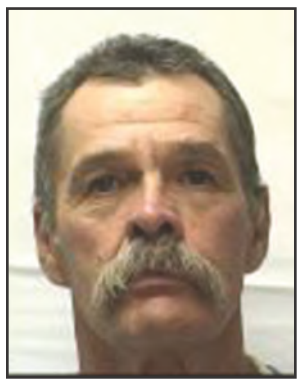


Photo by CDCR
Robert Bruce Garrett

You were always loving and kind. You were always honest in your love for God. I will see you in heaven.

He was my barber. Lucky was a baseball fan. The only fault he had was he was a Dodgers fan.

He'd give me a buzz cut that should have taken two minutes, (but) because he'd talk about God and that'll make it 15 minutes.

Lucky was an all-around good guy. He was my barber.

Lucky was a Christian. He loved to play dominoes. He's up there having a blast.

We played dominoes on the yard. When I played against him, I'd try to get him off his game by talking about the Raiders.

Lucky's favorite passage in the bible is Psalm 23. He especially liked the last line.

Quentin Blues, led by Richie Morris (guitar and vocals), performed somber tunes as well as an original song written by Andrew "Boots" Hardy (guitar and vocals) with the hook, "Won't you take my hand sweet Jesus, I'm finally coming home."

The rest of Quentin Blues are Dwight Krizman (bass), Chris Thomas (mandolin and vocals), Mark Kinney (piano) and Joe Thurson (percussion).

—Juan Haines

Art aficionados seeking new perspectives from prison artists

About a dozen San Francisco Bay Area art lovers in search of astonishing art ended up at San Quentin State Prison on August 21.

One of the visitors, Christine Lashaw, a curator at the Oakland Museum, says she's interested in telling stories about incarceration. Her idea is to display San Quentin art in the Oakland Museum.

"How can we get people thinking and doing different things about the people in San Quentin?" Lashaw asked.

A curator at San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art, said that she's looking for artists who currently have limited exposure to the art world, which brought her to San Quentin.

She talked about the 1940 murals produced by Diego Rivera as she stood in front of murals in the prison's South Dining Hall that were painted by Alfredo Santos in the 1950s.

Santos won a prison art contest to paint a mural on one of the 100-foot-long dining hall walls and began painting in 1953. After completion of the first mural, prison officials decided to allow Santos to continue painting. He has generally been credited with all six 12-foot-high murals on the walls of the dining hall. It's clear that some of the murals are the result of a community effort.

File Photo
Oakland Museum

While on the tour, Tomoko noted the similarities between Rivera and Santos. She said that it's clear that Santos drew on the work of Rivera.

In the arts studio Tomoko admired the work of incarcerated artists. "The art here is impeccable," Tomoko said to the assembled artists. "It's amazing to hear stories about people who have discovered their abilities and talents in prison."

A representative from Pro Arts Gallery & Commons [located at 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612] presented its publication, Pro Arts Commons, which aims to give readers an understanding of common spaces in Oakland.

According to the Pro Arts Gallery & Commons newsletter, spaces for public gatherings have been steadily disappearing. "It is not accidental that the land and resources belonging to and affecting the whole community are being commodified."

Some of the objectives of the organization include getting people to find new ways to reclaim public spaces as well as actively co-creating ideas, projects, programs, and published content.

Currently, Pro Arts Gallery & Commons also seeks material from San Quentin writers.

The tour ended with the outside artists and incarcerated artists agreeing to find ways for future collaborations.

—Juan Haines

NEWS BRIEFS

1. Texas — The Death Penalty Information Center reports that Texas has scheduled 13 executions between August and December, which is more than the rest of the U.S. combined. Two of the men have strong claims of innocence; two, authorities know did not kill anyone, and eight that show serious mental health problems.

2. USA — The Death Penalty Information Center reports that there have been 1,506 executions in the U.S. since 1976. The race of persons executed: 55.8% Black, 34.1% White, 8.5% Hispanic and 1.6% other. The race of the victims of those executed: 76% White; 15% Black, 7% Hispanic, 2% other. As of April 1, 2019, there were 2,673 people on Death Row in the U.S.: 42% Black, 42% White, 13% Hispanic, 3% other.

3. Missouri — Russell Bucklew was executed on Oct. 1 by lethal injection for killing a man in 1996.

4. Tennessee — The state's attorney general has petitioned the state Supreme Court to set execution dates for nine Death Row prisoners, *The Associated Press* reports. The state has executed five people since it restored executions over a year ago. There were three people executed in the state last year.

5. Juneau, Alaska — A federal judge has signed a settlement agreement between the state's correction department and two Muslim prisoners. Prison officials agreed to change the department's policies to accommodate Muslim prisoners during the holy month of Ramadan and to perform Friday religious services and hold study groups, *The Associated Press* reports. The department also agreed to pay $102,500 in damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

6. Michigan — A bill was introduced to prohibit the state from housing its prisoners in private prisons. In an interview with The Center Square, state Sen. Jeff Irwin said, "The private prison industry was inherently immoral because their financial incentive doesn't match with the rehabilitation goal of the criminal justice system." Irwin also said that since the state has instituted criminal justice reform, the prison population has declined from a high of about 53,000 to around 38,000, and he intends to continue pushing the trend.

7. Madison, Wisconsin — There are 23 counties in the state that charge inmates for room and board for the time they are incarcerated, *The Associated Press* reports. At least 40 other states also mandate incarcerated people to pay daily room and board fees.

8. Nevada — Slightly more than 12% of the state's prisoners were in solitary confinement from January 2016 through September 2017, the *Las Vegas Sun* reports. The Vera Institute of Justice reports that the state's use of solitary confinement is more than double the national average.

Divided opinion in San Quentin News' *Death Row survey*

By Leonard Brown and Juan Haines

A survey of all Death Row prisoners in California produced a divided opinion about capital punishment. The same was true of Gov. Gavin Newsom's March 13 moratorium on executions, which resulted in the state withdrawing its lethal injection protocol and closing down its death chamber.

In an ongoing effort to find out what people condemned to death think about capital punishment, last August, *San Quentin News* surveyed all 737 California Death Row prisoners, including the women in Chowchilla.

Of the 715 men on Death Row in San Quentin, 68 responded to the survey and of the 22 women on Death Row in Chowchilla, 10 responded.

A sample of capital punishment supporters' comments:

"Let's start carrying out these executions!" said a 49-year-old man with 21 years on Death Row. "Governor Newsom had no business going against the people's will! What good is your vote/voice if people like Newsom will only silence your vote/voice? I guess the people don't matter."

A 67-year-old woman with 18 years on Death Row said, "The people voted for it! It should be upheld."

A sample of capital punishment opponents' comments:

"It is not a deterrent and is disproportionately used as a sentence against poor minorities as well as a scare tactic tool by politicians with an agenda other than public safety," said a 45-year-old person with more than 20 years on Death Row. That person also said that the moratorium is "a positive step" and more needs to be done to end capital punishment.

(see box to left)

The survey provided space for respondents to write "other" comments:

A majority of respondents (supporters of the death penalty and those in opposition) asked to change the living conditions on Death Row, e.g., better/hot food, more time out of cells, and self-help programs.

- Women's average age: 54.3
- Women's average years on Death Row: 20.6
- Men's average age: 56.2
- Men's average years on Death Row: 23.1
- Overall average age: 56.1
- Overall average time on Death Row: 22.7

As of April 1, the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) reports that California leads the nation with the number of condemned prisoners—about twice the number of the next closest state, Florida.

DPIC also reports that since 1978, California spent more than $4 billion on the death penalty after considering pre-trial and trial costs, costs of automatic appeals and state habeas corpus petitions, costs of federal habeas corpus appeals, and costs of incarceration on Death Row.

California rejected two initiatives to repeal the death penalty by a vote in 2012 and 2016; in 2016, it adopted another proposal to expedite the appeal process.

The anonymous survey asked:

- What is your opinion on capital punishment?
- Do you favor Gov. Gavin Newsom's moratorium on capital punishment in CA
- What is your age?
- How many years have you been on Death Row?

The survey gave participants five options on their opinion on the death penalty:

Strongly agree that capital punishment ought to be a punishment
25% men 10% women 23.1% overall
Agree that capital punishment ought to be a punishment
20% men 30% women 21.8% overall
No opinion about it
0% men 0% women 0% overall
Disagree that capital punishment ought to be a punishment
7.35% men 10%women 6.4% overall
Strongly disagree that capital punishment ought to be a punishment
47.1% men 60% women 48.7 overall

Regarding the moratorium, the survey asked:

Strongly agree capital punishment ought to be ended in California
52.2% men 60%women 53.2 overall
Agree that capital punishment ought to be ended in California
1.5% men 10% women 2.6 overall
No opinion about it
3% men 0% women 2.6 overall
Disagree capital punishment ought to be ended in California
16.4% men 20% women 16.9 overall
Strongly disagree capital punishment ought to be ended in California
26.9% men 10% women 24.7 overall

RE:STORE JUSTICE

RE:STORE SURVIVORS

Survivor Column Part 2

By Tom Rudderrow

In 2012, nearly six years after the incident, Jack and I drove to the Folsom Prison. Jack and I waited alone before Ray came in. He crossed the room, walked right up to me, and we embraced...for quite a while. Can you imagine? A guy violently almost kills someone and, six years later, the first thing they do is hug?

I asked Ray if he remembered the letter I had written that was read to him in court five years earlier. It was expected to evoke his hostility.

Ray said, "That's the thing that changed my life." He said that when he arrived in Folsom he thought, "What if I meet this guy? I've got to change." He made a connection with a therapist, earned his GED, started on his AA degree, met Jack and experienced that deep therapeutic process. I was so grateful he was coming out in a few months.

When it came time to discuss my harm, I told Ray I didn't want to talk about it.

"No," he replied, "I need to hear this. I need to accept responsibility for what I've done." So I talked about all the headaches and dizziness I deal with and the very frustrating memory problems. I shared about the PTSD stuff, how I feel like I'm walking in a dream and feel totally disconnected from both the world and my own life.

Ray said that when he comes out he wants to help kids avoid his path, and he'd like for us to do that together. Then he said he wanted to write about that experience, and he also imagined us writing together. Then he added, "Maybe I'll be your healing."

I weep every time I think about this.

After he nearly took my life, after his life was changed by my letter, he wanted to help me escape PTSD-land by helping me reconnect with the world.

What is this connection I seem to have with this guy? Ray's story, that I got to hear in our meeting, was that when he was born both his parents were in prison so he lived with his grandmother until she passed away when he was 12. He then lived on the streets until, at 16, our paths crossed and he became incarcerated.

"What do you do on the streets?" Ray asked. "You rob people and sell drugs."

If our democracy was not in the mess it is in—not just catering to the wealthy but available for all—how differently would this have turned out? But was it only our country or Ray that was in need of emotional healing?

What I am about to share I have shared before and often I'm accused of blaming the victim (myself). All I can say is that this is my story, something I learned about myself. I'm not talking about anyone else's experience. I have always had a sense of being safe and protected. I used to do social work in Camden, N.J., one of the worst cities in the country. I would often walk the streets and friends were concerned that I could get injured.

"No, I won't," I would say, "I'm protected." The harassment from the Black kids had begun a year before and had become progressively worse until I was assaulted. I finally realized that a year before, about the time the harassment began, I had met a woman I was falling in love with who was in a troubled marriage. My plan was to be her friend until she left her husband. I would be next in line. Then I learned that she had left her husband, for a Black man. That whole year, as the harassment continued to worsen, I grew angry with all Black folks (except the folks I already knew, like my housemates and people in my church).

I always blamed my dad for being racist, thinking of him as Archie Bunker and me as Meathead. But here it was, inside me. I once had the opportunity to chat about restorative justice with a group of lawyers from Tibet. They spoke about karma functioning as payback. I said, "No, karma is seeing 'out there' what is 'in here.'"

And once I saw it in myself, I was able to heal it. While I likely would have been knocked down and robbed that night, I believe that the energy of anger I was putting out nearly led to my death. That is an explanation that makes sense to me. It does not excuse what Ray did.

Fortunately, it resulted in a wakeup call for me. And for Ray, too.

CA court upholds death sentence in prison officer murder

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

The California Supreme Court has upheld the death sentence for a man in the death of a prison guard, despite questionable testimony by prosecution witnesses.

The case involves Jarvis Masters, one of three Black Guerrilla Family members convicted in 1985 for the killing of Correctional Sgt. Dean Burchfield at San Quentin.

Andre Johnson was convicted of stabbing Burchfield to death. Lawrence Woodard was convicted of ordering the killing. And Masters was convicted of helping plan the killing, sharpening the knife used in the attack, and giving it to Johnson, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported Aug. 14.

Prosecution witness Rufus Willis originally testified that Masters helped in the planning, sharpening the knife before giving it to Johnson. He said later that the prosecutor threatened him, saying he would be sent back to prison if he did not cooperate.

Willis reported he feared for his own life, because he was a known informant.

Three prosecution witnesses have recanted, saying they testified falsely at trial.

Bobby Evans also testified against Masters but did not disclose at the time of trial that he had been given a deal in a separate case in exchange for his testimony against Masters.

The court, upholding the conviction and death sentence in 2016, sent the new post-trial allegations for review to former Marin County Judge Lynn Duryee.

"Witnesses against Masters were 'liars with highly unreliable and selective memories'"

After reviewing all the testimony, she concluded that the chief prosecution witnesses against Masters were "liars with highly unreliable and selective memories" as well as "career criminals and well-known snitches."

The recantations were no more believable than their original testimony, the *Chronicle* article noted.

The court, upon hearing those findings, reaffirmed Masters' conviction and sentence.

Justice Goodwin Liu wrote that Masters' attorney had challenged the credibility of Willis at trial, and presented evidence that Evans had been an informant in other cases.

Having heard all the evidence, the jury still found Masters guilty. The additional evidence reviewed by Duryee would not have changed the outcome.

Justice Liu, joined by Justice Mariano-Florentino Cuellar, wrote in a second opinion that it was understandable that Masters found Duryee's report unsettling due to the lies she attributed to the star witnesses.

Masters' attorney Joseph Baxter called the ruling "absurd."

"The court is saying, if the case is rotten to the core, it doesn't matter, because the court can't tell if you're lying now or if you were lying then. Jarvis Masters has never had a fair trial."

Masters, now 57, is from Los Angeles. He has become a Buddhist, counseling other inmates on Death Row.

He has written two books and gained the support of Sister Helen Prejean, a well-known death penalty opponent, and Bishop Desmond Tutu.

Death sentence overturned due to unreliable witness testimony

Prosecution witness recants identification of defendant as the assailant

The death sentence has been overturned for a former deputy sheriff because of unreliable witness testimony at his penalty trial, the California Supreme Court ruled. The court did uphold his conviction of two murders.

David Keith Rogers, 72, was convicted of 1st ddegree murder in the death of Tracie Clark, and the 2nd degree murder of Janine Benintende some 30 years ago, according to *bakersfield.com*.

The death sentence was overturned July 15 due to the discredited testimony of Tambri Butler, a prosecution witness in the penalty phase of his trial.

Rogers, a former Kern County deputy sheriff, will now serve a sentence of life without the possibility of parole unless the prosecution decides to hold a new penalty trial.

"I am now more concerned than ever that I wrongly identified David Rogers as the man who attacked me," Butler said in a Supreme Court declaration.

Butler's credibility came into question in 2011, when she claimed she was sexually molested by Rogers multiple times while in custody.

Rogers was arrested days after the Clark murder. He confessed, but denied any involvement in the murder of Benintende.

Rogers claimed his gun went off accidentally while he was threatening Clark to perform sex acts for $30.

At his trial his attorneys claimed he had been physically and sexually abused as a child. Mental health professionals testified that Rogers killed Clark while he was in an "impulsive, highly emotional state."

—Alfred King

Sports@The Q

In-Depth: Warriors' Emerald "The Ghost" Kemp-Aikens

By Malik Ali
Journalism Guild Writer

Emerald Kemp-Aikens is a 25-year-old man from Berkeley, Calif. He was on the San Quentin Warriors basketball team and enrolled in the education department in pursuit of his GED when he received some very heartbreaking news.

In May 2019, staff informed him of the passing of his mother, Shirl Kemp. He found out she was brain dead at Summit Health in West Oakland.

Dealing with the passing of a relative is difficult for everyone, yet there is a dynamic when this happens while one is incarcerated. Unless you or your family can afford to pay for the transportation and for an officer escort, you can't go to the funeral to grieve with other family members or be consoled by those family members.

I caught up to Emerald as he was heading to class and we sat down in an area of the yard in front of the education building on the lower yard.

MA: How are you doing? Peace and condolences on the passing of your mom. Tell me about her.

KA: I'm still dealing with it, but I had to quickly move on. I just found out that her sister—my aunt—just died as well, so now I'm dealing with that. My mom (*he shakes his head for a moment, gathering his thoughts*) she was the best person I know. She was too generous, you know? She would give her last to her friends if she loved you, and forgave those who wronged her.

MA: Did the prison offer you any counseling or anything like that?

KA: They offered to get me some mental health. They kind of forced me to talk to a clinician, so I spent an hour talking to that person. It didn't help. That person didn't ask me anything relative to what I was going through—but it's prison, you know?

MA: Yeah, these institutions need to evolve some when dealing with people who suffer a family loss while in here. Is that why you backed away from the SQ Warriors for a while?

KA: Yeah. I had to back away because the team was dysfunctional in my opinion, and I couldn't deal with both situations at the same time, so I stepped back so I could heal. It still hurts, but I'm dealing with it.

MA: Man, again, my condolences. Let's get into a little basketball, I know the first few questions were heavy.

KA: Yeah, okay, that's cool. I appreciate the concern though from you and the sports section of the paper.

MA: Word on the yard is that Aaron "Showtime" Taylor has nicknamed you 'The Ghost' on the court; how you feel about that?

KA: (Laughing) I do pop up out of nowhere at times, so it fits.

MA: When did you first get into sports?

KA: (Thoughtfully) Six. I didn't start playing basketball until I was 13. I played in leagues when I was young, but I didn't get serious with basketball till I was 13.

MA: What have been the benefits and drawbacks of playing with The Warriors?

KA: I didn't get any playing time. I was specifically not going on my visits, and I'm not getting any playing time? I could've dealt with everything else, but I felt like nobody on the team was better than me, and I'm only getting 45 seconds of playing time?

The positive thing was that I was able to get in good conditioning. My wind got better, my legs stayed strong, and I could think as I played. Also, the Prison Sports Ministry aspect is cool, too. I appreciate how they come in and get involved with our lives. That type of outreach within prison? I'm not used to that, so that is something that I'll be looking forward to next season.

MA: Thank you for taking the time to talk to our readers. It's always good when they get to know the people inside the jersey.

KA: Thank you for coming to talk to me. I like the sports section, so it's cool to be a part of something that's reaching out to young people like me.

Photo by Eddie Herena

Emerald "The Ghost" Kemp-Aikens on the court

All Madden 0-1 against Michael Vick's Georgia United team

By Dre'Quinn Johnson
Contributing Writer

San Quentin's Flag Football program opened the 2019 season in late September with All Madden playing Georgia United (GU), a team put together by former NFL quarterback and current Fox Sports co-host Michael Vick.

Final score? 32-14, with All Madden taking a loss on the their first Sunday night game.

"We played against a professional flag football team tonight," said head coach Dwight Kennedy. "We still showed up as a team, and I'm proud of what we did tonight."

GU plays around the country, has won multiple tournaments, and plays under Fast Track flag football rules. The All Madden team was unprepared, having practiced for a traditional game. Fast Track rules make all men on the offensive side of the ball eligible to catch passes, while traditional rules make offensive linemen ineligible.

Even though Vick wasn't there, GU showed The Q's football team why they are professionals.

All Madden opened with a turnover on an interception by Charles 'Pookie' Sylvester, who played with the visiting team at their request.

"If you want to win, put Pookie in," Sylvester said, with a huge smile on his face. "If you want to lose, do what you choose."

All Madden's defense made quick adjustments, getting running backs and receivers on the field to match up against GU's offensive speed.

"We got three interceptions to get our offense the ball, and I'm definitely proud of the way the defense adapted," said defensive coordinator Aaron "Showtime" Taylor.

Illustration by Javier Jimenez

But All Madden's offense struggled throughout the game. By the end of the first half, starting quarterback Brandon Riddle-Terrell had thrown one touchdown and three interceptions.

GU quarterback "BBG" (Black Baby Gesus) threw three touchdowns, running and escaping the pocket, gaining extra yardage with his scrambling. On one play, he showed his arm strength by throwing the ball sidearm on the run for a 15 yard completion and extending the possession for GU.

Even more potent was the post-game love shared by the visiting team.

"We're definitely coming back, and we're also spreading the word to help this program out because we believe in what you're doing here," said GU center Patrick Henderson. "We can see the rehabilitative power of sports and religion as well."

All of the visiting players congratulated the All Madden team on their spirit and taking the challenge to play under unfamiliar rules. They promised to get other teams from around the nation to come in and play some flag football at The Q.

Coco Guaff, Naomi Osaka and Serena Williams

By Aaron Taylor
Sports Editor

Good sportsmanship, among the current millennial generation, is lacking in today's social media environment. The impact that we have on a person or team that we've played hard to defeat, followed by the humility to uplift the defeated as one worthy of honor, is a lesson that seems lost in today's sporting atmosphere.

Then, there's Serena Williams.

Serena has been a role model on so many varying levels to young athletes in this century; we saw the fruits of her leadership on display at the U.S. Open between the up and coming star Coco Guaff and the No. 1 world ranked Naomi Osaka.

Coco is all gas when she's winning. Her passions are on full display, pumping the crowd up and drawing everyone in to her energy and emotion as a young tennis phenom.

Naomi, in contrast, is more reserved, more poised and displays external control of her emotions on the court. She's focused and precise in her actions on the court.

Both are a reflection of the person that they idolize: Serena Williams.

When Naomi beat Coco in their third round match at the U.S. Open earlier this year, Coco was crying, visibly distraught. The crowd was stunned, audibly sharing in Coco's pain at losing the match, yet cheering for Naomi—the winner.

What happened next, however, is a lesson for us all—especially if you're an athlete and competitor.

Naomi approached Coco, gave her hug, and asked "Would you join me on the court for the post-game interview, please?"

Coco was visibly struggling with her feelings. She said "No, I'll be crying the whole time. I can't."

Naomi gently coaxed her, saying, "Please, it would be my honor for you to join me."

This is a moment that we rarely see in today's athletic competitions.

In today's world with all its chest pounding, sideline antics; posting for likes on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter; focusing on my individual statistics—"Look at me! I did that! I'm the best!"—these two young athletes actually give us hope that true sportsmanship isn't lost and that class still exists.

Winning with humility and losing with honor was on full display in that moment at the U.S. Open this year thanks to Coco, Naomi and Serena.

San Quentin's 2019 Championship Basketball League Draft

By Rahsaan Thomas
Contributing Writer

Mekhi "Fly-Khi" Williams was the first pick in San Quentin's 2019 Championship Basketball League (CBL) draft.

"It's a cool feeling, being picked number one," Williams said. "Now I gotta show and prove."

Aaron "Showtime" Taylor created the CBL, which provides a positive activity for the incarcerated. Players of all skill levels and ages are drafted in rounds to ensure fairness and inclusion.

On Oct. 5, draft night, 10 coaches circled Taylor and CBL Referee James "Aka Tech" Carr in one corner of the prison gym. Each coach studied a list of available players. Seven draft rounds placed the players on their respective teams in the four-on-four league.

"Team Skills" coach Jamal Harrison had the first pick of draft. He smiled and used it to snatch Williams.

"We got a relationship deeper than basketball," Williams said about his new coach. "'Mal was the first to take me in and give me knowledge on how to run my program as a first-termer."

At 6 feet 1 inch and 210 pounds, the 21-year-old Williams is a Sacramento native. After moving to San Diego, he averaged 25 points-per-game as a freshman on the varsity team at Balboa Prep high school. There Williams played with Deandre Ayton, a longtime friend that the Phoenix Suns picked number one in the 2018 NBA draft.

Coach Jerry "JB" Brown picked San Quentin Warrior Jesse Blue second in the draft.

"My team was built not on talent, but on character – good guys that will buy into working together to win," Brown said.

Brown said he has 30 years coaching experience including coaching LeBron James when he played for the Oakland Soldiers in the Excellent Basketball Organization sponsored by Adidas in Las Vegas from 2008-2009.

The league for 17 and under also featured Deshaun Stevenson and the Lopez twins. Brown describes his proudest coaching moment as training his son who ended up playing pro overseas. Now Brown aims to make Blue the best player in the league.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to work with young men," Brown said. "If I can help somebody get through the day, I accomplished something."

Brown's sentiments are exactly what the CBL is all about.

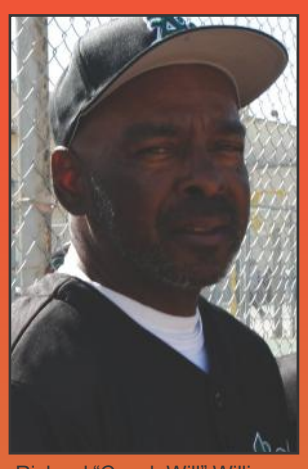
"The CBL has been around since 2007, but now it gets compared to Ice Cube's 'Big Three' –which I don't mind," said Taylor with a grin. "The main thing is to have fun as well as exercise sportsmanship."

San Quentin Athletics: 38-2

The San Quentin A's finished the regular season at 38-2, having a 33-0 win streak to begin the year. This is the best sporting record at The Q, ever. Below are the San Quentin Athletics coaches, general manager, players and game officials.

Michael Kremer
Director, Head Coach

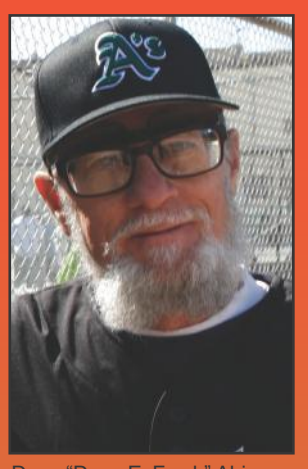
Steve Reichardt
Outside Head Coach



Richard "Coach Will" Williams
General Manager

John "Yahya" Parratt
V.P. Baseball Operation

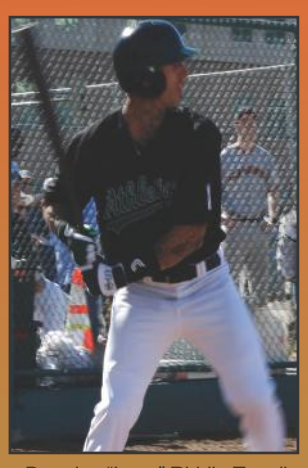
Terry "Lefty" Burton
Outfield Coach



Doug "Doug E. Fresh" Abineau
Infield Coach

Anthony "Bruno" Caravalho
Pitching Coach

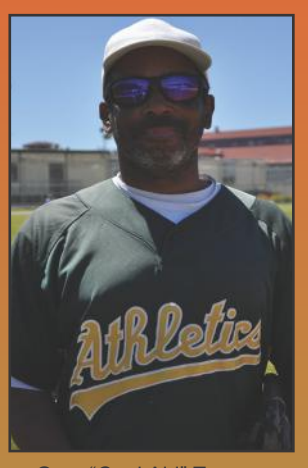
Anthony "T Tone" Denard
Co-Captain, 1st Base, Pitcher



Brandon "Logo" Riddle-Terrell
Co-Captain, Short Stop, Pitcher

Royce "Gator" Rose
Pitcher, D.H.

Robert "Big Smooth" Polzin
Pitcher, Outfield

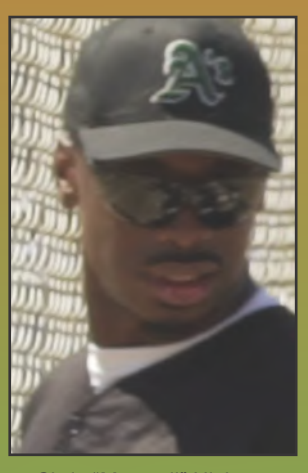


Gary "Cool Aid" Townes
Pitcher, Infield

Michael "Stoney Boy" Stone
Pitcher, Infield

Carrington "Suit & Tie" Russelle
2nd Base, Pitcher

Hassan "The General" Halfin
Catcher

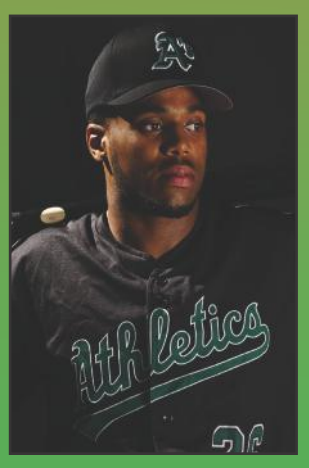


Chris "Maxwell" Hickson
Infield; Outfield

Juan "Ears" Navarro
3rd Base

Angelo "The Meech" Mecchi
Infield, Catcher

Leigh "Left Field Lee" Olden
Left Field



Austin "Baby Bo" Thurman
Center Field

Jesse "Sonic the Hedgehog" Rose
Outfield

Adamu "Cool Breeze" Chan
Outfield

Oscar "Gordo" Acosta
Outfield

John "Jay Double" James
Utility Player

Not pictured:
Head Umpire & SQ Sports Broadcaster Aaron Showtime Taylor
&
Umpires
Dewey Dumont
Dwayne Jones
Mike Oryall

Photos taken by:
Eddie Herena,
Jonathan Chiu
Javier Jimenez
of *SQ News* and
Jesse Rose of
First Watch

Anthony "Sadiq" Redwood
Goodwill Ambassador

William "Billy Bob" Ashton
Asst. Equipment Manager

Michael "The Body" Pulido
Equipment Manager

David "By the Numbers" Booth, **Scorekeeper**

Family, community and music fill Makahiki celebration

By Anthony Manuel Caravalho
Staff Writer

Sixty men in "Ocean Pacific Blue" along with 24 community members attended an annual Hawaiian celebration called Makahiki, in San Quentin's Visiting Room on October 4.

Family members drove hundreds of miles to celebrate the feast. "I've been to a lot of prisons and there is nowhere like this. It's all about family and community," said Louis Sale's wife who drove from San Diego.

"For today I was very impressed by the men's newly discovered talent and how it shines through their hard work and dedication," Adel "Auntie" Serafino, the cornerstone of the group said.

Entrance to the event began at 2 p.m. when all invited inmates passed 30 men who were strategizing about the day's festivities. Participants listened to a Bob Marley mix provided by event deejay Stephen Piscascio as the stage was set for performances.

The musical event started with a traditional Polynesian introduction. The story behind the song is "the person chanting has a house, a beautiful house in the forest…and my house is perfect except for the one thing missing….you, the visitor—and of course, you only arrive with love and respect," Patrick Makuakane told the audience, setting the tone of "family" for the show.

The chant was followed by the first dance from the eight-man team. It honored a prince who "went to jail like us because he tried to restore the queen's leadership against the white puritanical leadership that overthrew the culturally-based government," Makuakane said.

The second dance, called Halo Haina Lei, described Hawaii's mountain on the island of Lanai, the second wettest place on earth, where torrential rainstorms fertilize the valley. The dance is a metaphor for appropriations of land to, and fertility for, the Hawaiian culture.

"We are a family"

After the chants and dance, ukulele players set up their set. Brother Louis Sale introduced "Auntie" Adel saying, "Without Auntie we all would not be here today."

Her team opened with a Tahitian song the elders used to sing to their young people as they left for Hawaii. The song was titled "Tamari 'I Hokulea."

Other songs included solos by two men who are leaders in the Pacific community at San Quentin:

Louis Sale rewrote "Pahoho", a Tahitian song he dedicated to his wife. Pahoho is about the soothing sounds of the waves crashing against the reef while the approaching Queen is offered an apetahi flower by her loved one.

"Auntie" Adel introduced Brother "D" who has been at The Q for 12 years. D asked the audience to travel back to 1972 when he and his wife Margaret first heard Elvis's recording of "I Can't Help Falling in Love with You." "I was only 5 years old," said Margaret, D's wife since their marriage as teenagers. "And still going strong," D proudly responded to a cheering crowd.

At intermission, all comers enjoyed a traditional Hawaiian dinner, including shredded pork, marinated chicken, catfish, poi, coconut yogurt, mixed vegetables, coleslaw, soda and cookies. Tables opened in a traditional luau style that allowed the men, volunteers and family to dine together.

Here, Makuakane took time to reflect on his service at San Quentin.

Makuakane teaches island chant and dance to men at the prison every Thursday afternoon. Discussing his four years of service, he highlighted this performance as most rewarding. "This work over the years is gratifying as we provide culture, mentorship and most important of all community to our brothers here," said the native Hawaiian Makuakane.

"Makahiki" originated hundreds of years ago during a three-month moratorium placed on Pacific Island cultures during ancient and historical battles. Warring parties agreed on this cease fire to allow their warriors time to reflect, re-nourish and celebrate life," said Makuakane.

After intermission the men performed two more songs from "the land of the cowboys," known as Maui. The first invited people to learn a song about hot lava hitting rocks as it pours down the mountain. Then everyone in the room performed a song that included a volcano, which, in part referred to the power of a glowing sky "hot above the crater."

The day's final song Makuakane first learned as a child -- "Boy From Lapohoehoe." It was the first hula he learned and tells the story of a boy who likes to do what all young men in Hawaii aspire to do; they like to fish, eat and paddle.

"Auntie" Adel then shared her experiences with the group.

She reflected how she came to San Quentin through her relationship with Jun Homomato, who teaches origami.

In March of 2015, Homomato recognized Adel's passion for teaching and invited her to San Quentin. From that point on she was committed.

"Not one day after I started the ukulele class at San Quentin did I ever think this would end," Adel said. Her dedication and passion shows. "We are a family," she said, referring to Pacific Islanders.

The Native Hawaiian Religious Group (NHRG) allows them the opportunity to teach chants and traditional dance for San Quentin's men. NHRG gives men the ability to connect with their roots, providing a spiritual platform for any inmate wishing to find a peaceful path full of love from the Pacific Island community.

Through the years, Auntie Adel has spent countless hours with men who are driven by heritage to learn music and songs of the Hawaiian culture. Auntie Adel teaches the men performance styles of singing Island vocals and playing the four-string and eight-string ukuleles. "And remember with men being blessed to go home, we are looking for another 10-15 people of any race and ethnicity to join the NHRG. We hope each will get a slice of paradise," said Auntie.

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Auntie Adel's Ukelele Group's Neil Prudente, Chanton Bun, Tith Ton, Jackson, Adel "Auntie" Serafino, Jackson, Moua Vue, Sean Koyota, Patrick Makukane and Louis Salé

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

D. Kualapa leads Makahiki's culinary team (from left to right): Lay Maka, Tomasi Latu, Masi Tapealava, David Mageo, Chris Dancel, Kep tuiono, Kay Johnson and Andy Sione

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

(Left to right) Falau Toalepai with wife Lynette, Makukane with Makahiki guest

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

(Left to right) D. Kualapai with wife Margaret, Pita and his wife, Margaret and Toalepai

Annual KidCAT banquet celebrates service to others

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

KidCAT members, facilitators, and guests at the 2019 KidCAT Banquet on October 4, 2019

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

This year's KidCAT banquet celebrated the magic and power that comes through dedicating one's self to being of service to others.

Outside volunteers, CDCR staff, incarcerated men and returning citizens gathered in the San Quentin chapel Oct. 4 for an evening filled with food, laughter, reflection, the sharing of personal narratives—even a short skit.

"We're not just going to tell you what it means to be of service—we're about to show you," said the gala's emcee, Tommy Ross.

KidCAT Chairman Si Dang put the night in perspective by first acknowledging the original KidCAT members who started the youth offender support network in 2010.

"Three of those men are right here," he said, pointing to returning citizens Gary Scott and Charlie Spence—and also SQ's Nou Phang Thou, the last original member still incarcerated.

"Everyone deserves a second chance to pick themselves back up," said Dang. "KidCAT's mission focuses on always serving the most vulnerable group in society—the youth."

Unveiling the new improved KidCAT logo of a global shaped light bulb, Ross asked the audience, "What comes to mind when you look at that?"

Voices from the crowd responded with phrases like "worldwide" and "bright idea."

Vice Chairman Kenny Vernon began the presentations by talking about coming to SQ in 2014. "First Step was the first group I ever took here and to see other inmates facilitating it—I'd never seen that before anywhere," he said. "I was surprised by the outside facilitators, too.

"I asked them, 'How much are you getting paid for this?' I couldn't believe it when they said they were all volunteers."

Vernon explained how profound it was for him to hear them say that they got something out of volunteering—something far beyond monetary compensation.

"Later that night, I thought about the things they said about finding purpose, finding healing, becoming more empathetic," said Vernon. "Me, I only did community service twice in my life before prison, and that was because the court ordered me to.

"I asked myself, 'Is this something I could do?'"

Vernon then described how, for the first time, he made a small donation to a KidCAT fundraiser from his inmate trust account.

"Being recognized just for donating—it filled me with genuine pride. I'd done something that made a difference," he said. "After that, I was hooked.

"I stand before you today as living proof. Being of service changed me from a person I didn't like into a man with a head full of kindness and a heart full of love."

Will VanBrackle recently became a KidCAT volunteer facilitator, and he shared his own personal journey (*see page 9*). A professional chef, he encouraged the guests to appreciate each other while they ate.

Quoting the late Anthony Bourdain, VanBrackle said, "'You learn a lot about someone when you share a meal together.' I hope during our meal tonight you have a chance to learn, grow and love."

As KidCAT servers made last minute preparations, Ross wanted the audience to acknowledge Phang Thou, "a man who has truly dedicated himself to living a life of service."

True to form, Thou was busy working behind the scenes—sporting a plastic apron in the back of the chapel as he arranged plates of food.

"Being recognized just for donating—it filled me with genuine pride. I'd done something that made a difference"

The SQ Jazz ensemble played from the choir box while everyone dug into an institutional meal of quarter chicken pieces, battered fish, vegetables, tortillas, rice and beans. A legitimate and palpable family vibe filled the chapel.

Peter Nguyen recently became a member of KidCAT after being at San Quentin for a year. "There were some folks here who are just starting to come into the prison to volunteer," he observed. "It was really awesome to watch them open up, relax and become more engaged.

"By the end of the night, they just looked fully comfortable and at home."

The biggest round of applause greeted Ayoola Mitchell, a fixture at SQ. Mitchell regularly volunteers twice a week at the prison when she's not out traveling the nation to advocate for juvenile justice reform.

"We love you, Ayoola," was heard numerous times as she approached the stage to speak.

"Make sure to tell my kids about all this," she said to Scott, who now works with her after paroling six years ago. "They always say I'm the meanest person in the whole world."

Mitchell wanted to share her thoughts and experiences about how everyone's lives are linked together. She described her time as a counselor at the Santa Clara juvenile hall in 1995—and how shocking it was when so many minors came back from their court date with a life sentence.

One juvenile lifer who stood out in her memory then was Vinnie Nguyen, who would go on to become an original founding member of KidCAT and has since paroled. Mitchell noted how one of Nguyen's best friends at SQ was Scott—her own friend and advocacy coworker.

Peter Nguyen spoke after Mitchell and commented on what a tough act she was to follow.

"What motivates a person to serve can be as different as a fingerprint," he said. "When I was young, being of service was a nonexistent concept for me.

"Prison forced me to deep dive and reflect on the positive values my family, especially my mother, had tried to instill in me.

"KidCAT gave me the chance to finally return to being the person that my family raised me to be."

In between speakers, Ross shared his own insights about KidCAT. "I'm one of the elder members—an old guy, and when I first got involved, I really didn't expect to learn anything from men younger than me," he said. "I've never been so wrong. These young guys continue to teach me new stuff about life every day."

KidCAT members then performed "The Awakened Spirit of Service," an original skit written by Dang and Hoang K. Tran. Through drama and humor, the performance illustrated a young man's emotional path toward learning to serve his community.

After the applause died down, Ross introduced Gayle and Phil Towle, who have served KidCAT for years as mentors and personal counselors.

"Not only do they offer us their heartfelt guidance and love every week, but they also show us the model of a perfect marriage," Ross said about the couple who have been married 55 years. "Because of them, I know what a healthy relationship looks like."

The Towles traded lines from their joint speech. "When I volunteered at SQ, I had this arrogant notion that we were serving criminals who needed our superior wisdom and life experience to recover from their tragic lives," said Phil. "How naïve and embarrassing that looks today."

Gayle said, "Years later, as all volunteers will attest—we come to prison to have you men in blue teach us about being better human beings."

Phil asked the prisoners in the chapel, "Are you marking time until you get out of prison to live?"

"Or living now, as the best person you can be?" asked Gayle. "While you did not choose to live here—you can choose how you live here."

Gary Scott came onstage while Ross said, "Give it up for the prodigal son. He has returned. This is what six years of freedom looks like."

"Coming in here and seeing guys that I know from when I was incarcerated, looking at that new KidCAT logo, years ago I never would have envisioned this being so powerful," said Scott.

Lastly, Ross introduced keynote speaker Spence by referring to a well-known SQ video that depicted Spence breaking down in tears of vulnerability.

"Yeah, yeah—everyone knows I'm an ugly crier," said Spence as the crowd welcomed him. "I tried writing a couple of different speeches for tonight, but in the end I just had to tear them up.

"The only way to address you guys is to just speak from my heart."

Spence paroled last year after serving 22 years in prison since the age of 16. He spoke mostly about the difficulties he has faced in transitioning out.

"As great as freedom is, I want you guys to know that stepping in here today—it's the first time I've felt normal since I left," he explained. "It's really hard for me to connect with people on the outside.

"They haven't done the kind of work on themselves that we all have. I often question my socialization out there. I go check in at the parole office, and there I feel comfortable."

He told a story about recently hiking on nearby Mt. Tam, and how looking at SQ from up on the hill caused him to sit down and start crying.

"I broke down because I know so many of you that deserved to be standing there beside me," he said. "When I look around this room, I'm incredibly proud of all the amazing work you guys continue to do.

"My own freedom came when I learned to be of genuine service and serve others without caring about the recognition. Trust me, that's the real key to your freedom."

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

KidCAT Vice Chairman Kenneth Vernon

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

Former KidCAT members Gary Scott and Charlie Spence attended the KidCAT Banquet

Photo by Javier Jimenez, *SQN*

KidCATVolunteer Will VanBrackle