

San Quentin News



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Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

CTE students learn inside the classroom and out on a job

Construction training offers increased job opportunities

By Michael Johnson
Staff Writer

A vocational program is changing lives and instilling hope for a positive future for San Quentin prisoners.

The construction skills program enables prisoners to qualify for a number of career certifications and union memberships.

"This is a tough program that consists of 640 classroom hours, tests, workbook assignments and

280 hours of on-the-job training," said Lauro Perez, instructor for the Career Technical Education (CTE) construction program.

This program is also a part of the California Prison Industry Authority (PIA) and inmates receive pay for their assigned hours.

CTE also incorporates values and morals toward a solid foundation for growth and future opportunity, Perez said.

See CTE on page 11

Jurists look to San Quentin

Alameda Public Defenders seek input during forum

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Prisoners seeking to understand the role of public defenders invited Alameda County Public Defender Brandon Woods to San Quentin to talk about his vision for public defense. He said he is working to make significant changes to improve defense outcomes.

The purpose of the Sept. 6 forum was to "promote public safety by

building a bridge between public defenders and the incarcerated in order to develop strategies that address the social, environmental and economic conditions that foster criminal thinking and behavior," the event brochure read.

The forum began with 30 prisoners and about 30 lawyers from the public defender's office meeting in a large circle.

The participants broke into six small circles to discuss the prisoners'

experience with their public defenders and ways they could be better advocates.

When the groups rejoined the large circle, they talked about what they learned from each other.

The prisoners said they realized the difficulties that criminal defense attorneys undergo in performing their jobs and also the lawyers' passion for defense work.

See Alameda on page 20



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Alameda County Public Defenders personnel and participant inmates at the Plaza in San Quentin



Photo by FirstWatch

Professional Healthcare Workers doing blood test on inmates at the health fair

Professional healthcare workers showed up at San Quentin

By Aron Kumar Roy
Staff Writer

Personal well-being was the theme of the day at San Quentin's 16th Annual Health Fair.

A diverse array of professionals from the healthcare industry ventured inside the walls of San Quentin to educate the incarcerated about physical and mental health.

"Everybody matters and their health should be valued," said nurse Mike, a volunteer, "I've worked with underprivileged populations before and I believe that every person deserves the right to health education."

The event was sponsored by TRUST (Teaching Responsibility Utilizing Societal Techniques),

a self-help group at San Quentin specializing in teaching emotional intelligence and mindfulness. The 10-month curriculum is taught by Diana Kronstadt, Fran Engstrom, Quillen Powers, Helaine Melnitzer, and Susanne Siciliano.

Nurse Mike spent the day at the Nurse's Station measuring the blood glucose and cholesterol levels of the incarcerated. The Nurse's Station was one of several health activities on San Quentin's lower yard.

Other screening areas at the Nurse's Station included blood pressure measurement, body mass index calculation, vision testing and auditory exams. Incarcerated individuals filled out a tracking sheet, which was then used to re-

cord their results for personal documentation. When one of the student nurse volunteers gave an individual a result, they took the time to explain what each number meant and give tips on how incarcerated individuals could improve their health through lifestyle choices.

"Y'all need to stop eatin' all them soups!" one of the nurses yelled aloud in a general statement to all the men in blue, "All that sodium ain't good for your heart or your blood pressure!"

Larry Vitale, a professor of nursing from San Francisco State University, has organized troupes of nursing students to volunteer at the health fair for the past 16 years.

See Health fair on page 10

21st century training for a brighter job future



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Coding inmate graduates, coding instructors and visitors

By Juan Haines and
Michael Johnson
Senior Editor and Staff Writer

Top officials from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), as well as personnel from Governor Gavin

Newsom's office, celebrated the graduation of dozens of prisoners who completed highly-touted apprenticeship programs geared to prepare them for 21st century jobs once released from prison.

See Graduation on page 11



San Quentin Cancer Walk
October 12th and 13th

Yard Show October 19th

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San Quentin News staff member David Lê paroles after 13 years

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

In prison, David B. Lê, 35, is known to many as “the professor.” After serving close to 13 years of a 40-years-to-life sentence, he paroled from San Quentin in July.

“David is a young guy with an old soul,” said Tien, an inmate who did not give his full name. “I already miss talking to David and hearing his not-his-age, insightful advice. I’m happy that he gets to start his life over again.”

Lê was a *San Quentin News* staff writer, circulation manager, and donor outreach coordinator. He pioneered the Vietnamese translations of the paper.

He was also a math tutor for the self-help group Project REACH and a teaching

assistant for a Prison University Project algebra class.

“It’s that type of character that makes me confident that Lê is going to go on to do great things,” said inmate Anthony Faulk.

Lê used his time in prison to rehabilitate himself by first understanding how to come to terms with his previous unhealthy choices that led to a murder conviction.

Lê received his A.A. degree with an emphasis in social science from Lassen Community College in 2015. Afterward, he began to study for a B.S. in business administration through Adam State University, and plans to enter U.C. Berkeley.

His reputation as a dedicated and exemplary student earned him his nickname, “the professor.”

In 2016, Lê was a featured San Quentin TEDx speaker

(www.youtube.com, search [tedxsanquentin](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tedxsanquentin), and select clip titled, “Am I really a violent offender?”), and helped organize Asian community programs focused on common cultural issues at San Quentin.

“David is a young guy with an old soul, I already miss talking to David and hearing his not-his-age, insightful advice. I’m happy that he gets to start his life over again.”



Photo courtesy of Pastor Tom



Photo courtesy of David Lê

David Lê enjoying life as a free man

His desire and efforts to better himself and his community convinced former Gov. Jerry Brown to commute Lê’s sentence, which made him eligible for parole, that he was later granted.

“David Lê is an incredible human being,” said Marcus Henderson, *SQ News*’ editor in chief. “He is so humble. It’s certain people you are proud to know, and he’s one of them.”

“My life is better because David took the time to share Lê’s wisdom with me about improving ourselves and helping others,” said David Ditto, Lê’s successor at the News. “I look

forward to hearing of his continuing successes as a free man.”

News designer Jonathan Chiu referred to Lê as “a philosopher and believer in the human spirit.”

After leaving the prison, Lê sent words of encouragement to some of the men at San Quentin.

“So excited to be out,” Lê wrote. “I always hear that life out here is very busy, but to witness it has a somber feel to it.”

He included messages for the News staff:

- “Wali (Henderson), maintain the goodness that is inside of you.”

- “Juan (Haines), When I see people busy with their lives out here, I think about you.”

- (David) “Ditto... You’re the most level-headed person I know.”

- “Joe (Garcia), You are smart. Develop your heart.”

- “Jonathan (Chiu), you’re a talented person. I hope to see you out soon. And don’t sweat the small stuff.”

- “(Javier) Jimenez, fishing sounds good about now.”

- “Juan (Espinosa), you have a lot of living experience behind you. With that,

I believe you can use that to help people out here.”

- “(Aron) Roy, Tariq (Anthony Faulk), and Michael (Johnson), may your journey in prison be a positive one.”

- “Kevin (Sawyer), stay hopeful.”

- “To the Vietnamese translation group, I have not forgotten you.”

My biggest hope is to receive a photo of Lê standing under Sather Gate, the entrance to U.C. Berkeley’s Sproul Plaza, holding a letter of acceptance to the university. Maybe he’ll be holding a copy of *San Quentin News*, too.

Friends gathered with David Lê, second from right.

World class musician returns to SQ after long hiatus

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Blues harmonica player Mark Hummel, 63, returned to San Quentin State Prison in August to discuss his music and to play a few tunes for the men in the guitar workshop.

Kurt Huget, who teaches guitar on Thursday afternoons, introduced Hummel to the class before playing a blues tune as Hummel played improvised riffs on one of five harmonicas he brought with him to entertain and teach the class.

Hummel described the different techniques for playing the harmonica in first position, second or cross position, and third position. Then, he demonstrated as Huget played a Jimmy Reed blues tune on acoustic guitar.

"That's how Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie played," Hummel said about playing first position. "A lot of stuff I do when I play is called tongue blocking."

That is a technique that involves using the tongue to obstruct air passing through the holes of the harmonica.

"He's the gentleman of the blues," said Huget.

He also said Hummel has been wanting to come back to San Quentin for years. "He's a busy man."

Hummel travels all around the world to play harmonica, but when he had a window of opportunity he returned to the guitar workshop. It was his

second visit to the guitar workshop in five years.

"I've been going to Europe since 1986," said Hummel. He said that sometimes his band tours with him or he'll use some of the European bands and that the Finnish bands are really good. "Playing in Russia was one of the high points."

"I'm self-taught by listening," said Hummel. "As a harmonica player, we play by ear."

Hummel played the song "St. James Infirmary" on the harmonica in the third position, in the key of A minor, as Huget accompanied him on guitar. The class listened, observed and applauded when the two finished.

"That's a real hard position to play in because you're starting on a bent note," said Hummel, adding that all the music theory he knows is in relation to the harmonica. He said he uses chromatic and diatonic harmonicas.

"You can play four or five keys on harmonica if you know what you're doing," said Hummel. He also played octaves and said, "It gives kind of like an accordion effect."

It was a show-and-tell performance where Hummel explained drawing (sucking in air) on the harmonica, and blowing (pushing out air), blows and bends, how to change keys, and how he "learned a lot of what (he) know(s) by listening to records" from artists such as Little Walter, Junior Wells, James Cotton, Sonny Boy (both of

them), Jimmy Reed, Paul Butterfield and many others.

To share his experience, Hummel has written a book, *Big Road Blues: 12 Bars on I-80*.

"I called it that because that's the road we'd start a tour on and end a tour on," he said. "We've played hundreds of bars along I-80."

Hummel said the book title has a double meaning because it could mean 12 bars to drink at along the Interstate 80 freeway or 12-bar blues on Highway 80.

"It's always better when I practice," said Hummel, but he admitted he doesn't play every day. Two and a half years ago he suffered a heart attack but said he's proud of the fact that he's experienced 34 years of sobriety. "You gotta stay in shape to do this."

Inmate Gary Harrell, 64, was the only one in the room who played harmonica. "It was awesome," said Harrell. "The theory and concept and commitment to the harp. He was willing to share (his knowledge). It humbled me. It made me know that people care."

"You guys are really fun to hang with," said Hummel. "I love comin' here to talk music with you." But he cautioned, "If you get out (of prison) and are thinking of making a living playing harmonica—good luck!"

Hummel said a blues show audience in the United States is usually older, but that's not the case in countries such as Russia. "Blues really needs a young audience to help us survive," he said.

Hummel is also one of hundreds of musicians who work

with the organization Bread and Roses, founded more than 40 years ago. The following week he was scheduled to start a tour in Edmonton, Canada; Alameda, Calif.;

Martinez, Calif.; Providence, R.I.; and Hartford, Conn.

"One thing about the blues," said Hummel, "if you don't know them, you'll learn them."



Photo courtesy of Mark Hummel

Harmonica player Mark Hummel

Showcasing their talent the Soulbillies shake San Quentin



Photo courtesy of Ian Sethre

Soulbillies – Dan Babior, Melinda Borello, Ian Sethre, Mike Sloan, Shelley Flint

By David Ditto
Staff Writer

A Bay Area band stirred the souls of a hundred San Quentin prisoners with a high-energy Sunday night concert on Aug. 25.

Fliers posted in the cell blocks promised "A Night of Classic Soul." The Soulbillies delivered with a whirlwind performance that spurred the audience to dance, sing, laugh and clap for two hours of not-so-pure enjoyment.

The five musicians, dressed in all black, took the stage in the prison chapel and began with a couple of cover grooves, including Aretha Franklin's "Chain of Fools." Lead singer Shelley Flint belted out the lyrics as drummer Dan Babior and keyboardist Melinda Borello backed her up with the "Chain-chain-chain..." The energy had the audience nodding their heads and tapping their feet.

The five friends, who worked together at a nearby high school, formed Soulbillies in 2015. "We're from just up the road a bit. We're teachers. That's what we do," said bassist Ian Sethre. Sethre is also an instructor in the Prison University Program at San Quentin. On this night he brought in the whole band

for their prison debut. "We do covers and some original stuff. Some are not appropriate for church—for example this next song..."

Soulbillies broke into their original mambo "Another Lost Soul," getting the audience swaying again.

"How many of you have had Ian as a teacher?" asked Flint, as several hands went up. "Now you get to hear him sing."

"I don't think that's why they came, but it's going to happen anyway," replied Sethre as he flipped his silver-and-black hair back and took the microphone for another Soulbillies original, "Almost Rock Bottom." The country sound had the crowd bobbing, clapping, and singing along. Every face in the chapel was smiling, from the stage to the last pew.

Soulbillies shifted next to rocking out with "Hard to Handle." Flint was back on lead vocals. "Baby, here I am, I'm the girl on the scene / Come on baby, let me light your candle / 'cause I'm sure hard to handle now..." Her silver-blonde hair bounced as she danced, and Mike Sloan tore into a solo on his bright red electric guitar. Borello followed with a solo on the keys, her long, dark-brown ponytail swinging down to

the bench. Applause roared through the chapel.

The next song slowed the tempo down a bit with, "You tell me that you love me / It's a good thing you don't hate me..."

"If you haven't figured it out yet, most of our songs are about relationships gone wrong—they're a lot more fun than the other kind," said bassist Sethre. Soulbillies then took the crowd on a four-song journey, beginning with a cover of "Midnight Rider." The chapel swayed to the grooves. Then Flint pulled back her hair and straightened her blouse.

The band ripped hard into "Tell Mama," their biggest hit of the night. The audience yelled and cheered to Flint's "Mama'll make everything all right..." while she and Sethre danced to the hard-driving rhythm. The energy in the room crackled and the San Quentin crowd burst into thunderous applause.

A couple songs later, Babior sang the lead on a rendition of a Joe Cocker hit that had the crowd dancing, clapping and "Feel' All Right."

"How much time do we have left?" Sethre asked the crowd. "We got life!" one concertgoer yelled back. The band and inmates laughed out loud. "Let me rephrase that," inter-

jected the bassist. "What time is it?" Time for a dozen more songs, it turned out. One of the crowd favorites was "Voodoo Woman," which featured soulful vocals, an energetic drum solo and a groovy guitar solo by Sloan—all to uproarious applause.

The debut of the Soulbillies original duet "Damned If I Do," co-written by Flint and Sethre, kept the audience fired up. Then musician Jeffrey Atkins jumped up from the audience on to the stage with the band, introduced as "The sixth member of The Jackson Five."

He and Flint danced and sang to the band's lively rendition of "I Want You Back." The groove culminated with two soul-satisfying encores that sparked standing ovations. "That was awesome—really good energy!" said one concertgoer named Robert. "She knocked that Aretha Franklin out of the park!" commented another.

San Quentin News

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Behind the Scenes



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Suit alleges indifference over known health risk for prisoners

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

A group of California inmates who contracted valley fever are appealing their damage lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The suit names 14 former and present state officials who “just didn’t take it seriously,” said Benjamin Pavone, lead attorney for the 117 currently and formerly incarcerated people who contracted the disease.

Most cases are mild but “over a 10-year period, dozens of inmates throughout California died,” Pavone told *Valley Public Radio*.

The appeal challenges a negative ruling by the 9th District Court of Appeals.

The Supreme Court is expected to announce in October if it will hear the case.

The defendants include former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, officials at various prisons and former secretaries of state prisons.

Pavone said if the Supreme Court declines to hear the case, he will consider taking the case to the United Nations.

Federal court receiver J. Clark Kelso ordered Avenal and Pleasant Valley State Prisons to relocate 3,200 inmates known by the state to be at risk of contracting valley fever, especially African-Americans and those over 55 years of age.

Valley fever is primarily a disease of the lungs caused by the coccidioides species

of fungus, which grows in soils with low rainfalls, high summer temperatures, and moderate winter temperatures. Currently there is no cure for valley fever.

will need antifungal medication to help them get better. “On rare occasions, cocci can also spread to other parts of the body and cause a more severe form of illness.”

Attorney Ian Wallach called valley fever a life sentence that no judge had ordered. “Without the medicine, they will die; with the medicine, the quality of life is still unbearable.”

California has known since 2006 that segments of the inmate population were at greater risk for contracting valley fever, said Joyce Hayhoe, a spokesperson for Kelso, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.

A valley fever expert, Dr. John Galgiani, said California is ignoring a public health emergency. “Prison officials should be, but ap-

parently are not, acting in a manner consistent with a situation where the lives of individuals are at substantial risk,” according to the *LA Times*.

One victim is Altin Jefferson, 48, serving 25 years to life. He became ill 28 years ago at Wasco. After his condition worsened, he was sent to Vacaville where he was diagnosed as having valley fever.

After various transfers, he arrived at San Quentin in 2013.

Jefferson said he’s getting the best treatment he’s had here at San Quentin. “I continue physical therapy and constant monitoring. The medical care here is just good, but I have to be on medication the rest of my life.”

Court rules on legality of pot possession in prison settings

Felony violations out but rules violations remain

Possessing small amounts of marijuana in a California prison is no longer a felony, a state appeals court has ruled.

The court ruling was based on Proposition 64, which legalized recreational use of marijuana in California. “Possession of less than one ounce of cannabis in prison or a similar penal institution is not a felony,” ruled the 3rd District Court of Appeals in Sacramento.

Prisons spokeswoman Vicky Waters released the following statement: “We will evaluate the decision with an eye towards maintaining health and security within our institutions.”

Inmates are still banned from smoking or ingesting marijuana in state prisons, the California Department of Prisons and Rehabilitation has emphasized.

The court’s decision set aside the convictions of five

inmates who had been convicted of weed possession inside prison, which led to more time being added to their sentences, *NPR* reported June 14.

“We will evaluate the decision with an eye towards maintaining health and security within our institutions.”

“If you’re doing two years on a robbery, it does seem like a lot to have eight years added for possession of less than an ounce of marijuana,” attorney Dan Olsen told *FOX 40 News Sacramento*.

The appellate courts 20 page opinion was written by Presiding Justice Vance W. Raye. It said the Attorney General’s Office “Takes a huge leap” arguing that possessing small amounts of weed is legally banned in prison, despite plainly worded changes to California law. “The argument flies in the face of the plain language of the statute and common sense,” the ruling said.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra’s office argued before the court that the new law was absurd and would legalize the use of a controlled substance in prisons and encourage drug smuggling.

Many in the legal community admit that the court’s ruling has caused some confusion, *NPR* reported.

—By Alfred King

Avenal and Pleasant Valley prisons had infection rates hundreds of times higher than the state average, *Valley Public Radio* reported.

Health Care Services issued a fact sheet that stated that some of these people

Innocent man exonerated after spending 45 years in prison

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho

Staff Writer

A Michigan man became the longest-serving inmate to be cleared of a crime after serving 45 years for a murder he did not commit.

The state awarded Richard Phillips \$1.5 million for the wrongful conviction.

Michigan law provides up to \$50,000 per year for every year a wrongly convicted person spends in prison. He was not paid for the 45 years because 15 years also involved an armed robbery conviction, for which he also maintains his innocence.

While waiting for the outcome of his lawsuit, Phillips sold artwork he created in prison to make ends meet.

“We have an obligation to provide compensation to these men for the harm they suffered,” Attorney General Dana Nessel said in a statement May 17.

The exoneration was the work of The Innocence

Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School. Its investigation discovered that a co-defendant of Phillips told the parole board in 2010 that he had “absolutely no role” in the crime, according to *The Associated Press*.

The AP cited two more cases of compensation recently paid out by Michigan for wrongful convictions:

- Neal Redick served nearly 16 years for criminal sexual conduct he did not do. He will receive \$780,000.

- Ray McCann served 20 months in jail and prison after feeling pressured to plead no contest to perjury in a homicide investigation. He will receive \$40,000.

The advent of Innocence Projects has led to a number of wrongful conviction cases across the country.

Recent California cases included:

- Quentin Morris was released from a wrongful conviction of murder after serving 27 years.

- Navy Seal Keith Barry was imprisoned for

three years for a rape he did not commit. He told a reporter, “Nothing the Seals instructors dish out—in fact, nothing Al-Queda or the Taliban could dish out—compares with the hell endured after being accused of rape.”

- The state paid Luther Ed Jones Jr. \$1 million for spending 20 years in prison for a wrongful conviction of child molestation.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has created a moratorium of the death penalty. He cited estimates that at least four percent of people sentenced to death in the United States are “likely innocent.”

The Readers Digest reported a Pew Research report that 2 to 8% of people incarcerated in state prisons (estimated at 2 million) are housed for crimes they never committed.

A Department of Justice report estimated that as of 2018 at least seven million Americans are imprisoned for crimes they did not commit.

Governor Gavin Newsom reversed 46 parole grants

By Noel Scott
Journalism Guild Writer

It’s still too early to tell if Governor Gavin Newsom marches to his own drum—or if his tenure coincides with Governor Brown’s agendas, reported Anita Chabria and Taryn Luna for the *L.A. Times*.

Since taking office Gov. Newsom has stopped 46 paroles for murderers. This marks a steep increase from the actions of former Gov. Jerry Brown, who only reversed 28 parole grants for murderers in 2018. Newsom is on pace to match Gov. Brown’s peak of 133 reversals in 2014, report *Chabria and Luna*.

This stands in stark contrast to Gov. Newsom’s controversial decision to halt executions, despite the will of California voters who rejected the ballot measure to abolish the death penalty in 2016.

Gov. Newsom also sought review by the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) of 33 parole grants given to those convicted of a serious felony such as a sex crime.

Trenton Veches was one of the 33 cases reviewed. Veches was convicted in 2003 and sentenced to two concurrent life terms for multiple counts of child molestation. Veches nevertheless won parole, report *Chabria and Luna*.

Gov. Newsom’s parole interventions have many questioning his policies and whether he’s trying to keep serious offenders in prison or just being cautious in lieu of his political future.

Veches’ attorney, Charles Carbone, wonders if Gov. Newsom’s actions represent a new policy or merely concern due to criminal justice reforms like Proposition 57.

In 2016, legislative changes, such as Proposition 57, and legal rulings added many new categories of crime to the list of those eligible for release. Attorney Michael Romano, who heads the Three Strikes Project at Stanford Law School, says, “There is an incredible backlog and bottleneck” when it comes to parole hearings, and Proposition 57 alone could add another 4,000 hearings to the BPH’s current case load.

One of the parole grants that Gov. Newsom reversed was for Jesus Cecena, 57, who killed Officer Archie Buggs in 1978. Cecena, who was 17 years old at the time, was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. In 1982 the sentence was reduced to seven years to life. In Gov. Newsom’s decision he wrote, “Despite his many years of incarceration, Mr. Cecena has not sufficiently explained his callous actions on the night of the crime.”

According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations, 15 of the 33 cases Gov. Newsom sought for reconsideration involved inmates with current or past sex offenses.

Only Gov. Newsom knows if he will follow Gov. Brown’s posture on parole or establish a stricter stance. Criminal justice reform advocates await indications of a clear philosophy. The optimism raised by Gov. Brown, however, gave inmates hope, and that hope motivated inmates to seek out rehabilitative programs and groups.

Female incarceration in the U. S. is causing an impact on society

By Elton Kelley
Journalism Guild Writer

America is leading the world in incarcerating women, and this is disrupting many families across the country, the *American Civil Liberties Union* reports

The United States has nearly four percent of the world’s female population. But about a third of the female prisoners in the world are in the U.S., *ACLU* statistics show.

“When you think about the image you have of our mass incarceration crisis, it probably is not a mother who comes to mind,” the *ACLU* said in its May 12 web posting.

Incarcerating moms and disrupting their families is the fastest growing incarceration demographic in the country, the report says. Blacks are twice as likely to be incarcerated as Whites, the posting states.

Pretrial detainees who have not been tried or convicted of any crime make up 60 percent of women held in local jails, the story notes. Most are women who are held pending charges and cannot post bail, reported the *ACLU*.

“When you think about the image you have of our mass incarceration crisis, it probably is not a mother who comes to mind,”

The posting highlights the case of Faith Bartley, who spent three months in jail for misdemeanors because she couldn’t

pay the \$260 bail. She lost her home and employment.

Fifty-six percent of all women serving terms are doing so for drug or property offenses, *ACLU* numbers revealed.

For example, Lauren Johnson got picked up for having trace amounts of drugs in Texas, where that is a felony. She was removed from her home, where she cared for her three kids and nearby grandmother.

Johnson told the *ACLU* the mass incarceration crisis will continue to impact women until they’re “able to access treatment and services” outside of the criminal justice system.

Former Pennsylvania prisoner Dana Lomax-Williams said she was strip-searched, sexually violated by male guards, and sent to solitary for being noncompliant.

The *ACLU* reported Pennsylvania changed its laws, now mandating that females not be searched by males.

Congress looks at equalizing courtroom dynamics

Bill introduced to bring defense budgets more in alignment with prosecutors

**By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer**

A bill was introduced at the national level by presidential hopeful Senator Kamala Harris that addresses the unfair advantage prosecutors have over public defenders in criminal cases.

In May, California's ex-attorney general introduced a bill called The Ensuring Quality Access to Legal Defense Act (EQUAL Defense Act) to ensure quality access to legal defense. The bill would allocate \$250 million in federal aid to encourage pay parity

between public defenders and prosecutors and to lower the unmanageable case loads of public defenders.

According to the *ACLU's* Criminal Law Reform Project, the U.S. Supreme Court established over 50 years ago that, "in our adversary system of criminal justice, any person [hailed] into court, who is too poor to hire a lawyer, cannot be assured of a fair trial unless counsel is provided for [them]." Twenty years after that, the court said that not just any counsel would do, but that counsel must be "effective."

Kanya Bennett and Ezekiel Edwards, both of the *ACLU*,

cited California's Fresno Public Defender's Office as a glaring example of case overload caused by the lack of allocated dollars.

They noted the national mandates set for defense attorneys are for case loads not to exceed 150 felony cases and 400 misdemeanor cases. Currently Fresno public defenders are handling a minimum of 418 felony cases and 1,375 misdemeanor cases per year, according to statistics compiled by the *ACLU*.

With a 365 day calendar reduced to an estimated 198 working court days in this state, forecasts for each public defender in Fresno esti-

mate they must close 9.05 cases per 6.5 hour day.

In Orleans Parish, Louisiana, budget shortfalls have forced defenders to put indigent defendants on waiting lists for representation.

Bennett and Edwards reported the constitutional crisis revealed in Fresno and Orleans Parish can be seen across the country because of inadequate funds budgeted for defending indigent individuals.

Currently the nation is spending approximately \$200 billion on criminal justice yet only allocates \$5 billion, or 2.5%, to defending the accused.

Sen. Harris' proposed bill would only increase the defense budget by .125 percent of the total judiciary budget.

One program that addressed violations of the "right to counsel" guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment was the Dept. of Justice's creation of the Access to Justice Office in 2010. The office's mission statement included the goal to "help the justice system efficiently deliver outcomes that are fair and accessible to all, irrespective of wealth and status."

That program was funded through 2021, but the Access to Justice Office was summarily closed by the current Trump Administration, according to the *ACLU*.

Pew Research and New York District Judge Jed Raykoff estimate that 2 to 8% of imprisoned persons are wrongfully convicted. In America this total is estimated to surpass 600,000.

The *ACLU's* Criminal Law Reform Project reached this conclusion about "The urgent need to insure robust public defense systems... America warehouses over two million people behind bars. If low-income people caught in the carceral system do not have zealous advocates, they will continue to be overcriminalized, overincarcerated, and deprived of their rights, without functioning public defender systems, we cannot meaningfully reduce the staggering number of people held in pretrial detention, wrongful convictions, or abusive prosecutorial practices."

Yet to fiscally adept Americans, it's obvious that even if Senator Harris' Equal Defense Act passes, an increase of .00125 percent will not be enough to stave off most wrongful prosecutions.



They found a home among others with similar stories

**By Lisa Strawn
Journalism Guild Writer**

On May 1, the first Transgender Support Group began at San Quentin Prison with two mental health clinicians and me as an adviser on Wednesdays in the hospital, so the transgenders can support each other as a group.

The group meets from 1:30-3 p.m. on the second floor of the hospital with J. Lopez and J. Spohn, who both have a master's degrees in social work. Lopez has a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology.

"The transgender group is needed because this population of people is marginalized, and the group offers a place for medical and mental health issues to be addressed as a group," Lopez said. "The transgenders are more than worthy of their own group."

The group begins each week with everyone doing a check in to see how all are doing. The number of transgenders varies between 10 and 16, who attend the group depending on other activities they may have that day, such as work, school or other events that may come up on the day of the group.

The curriculum for the group centers around such topics as acceptance, self-esteem, transgender advocacy. No subject is off limits for the group.

Spohn said, "The group has taken off really well, as everyone has amplified each

other to grow stronger." He also said, "Other groups take a lot longer to achieve this sense of belonging."

The support group has also in such a short time developed allies on the outside from Kay Temple Kirk, who works at the Gender Health Center in Sacramento. She has sent resource packets to the group and has given her support to the group for any future materials the group may need.

Also, the Prison Law Office has sent materials in for the transgender group for transgender advocacy while incarcerated.

The support group allows anyone who wishes to speak about their transition.

While speaking to the group, Tanya Rose, a transgender at San Quentin, said this about her transition: "Sometimes you have to be an advocate for yourself and pay attention to what your body is telling you. I was ready for hormones and that my mom is my biggest cheerleader, and loves me."

Kayla Chavez, another transgender, said, "I don't seem so alone because the stories of other girls, transcends into feeling a sense of belonging."

"I began my transition a year ago, and that I see we are all cut from the same cloth in the beginning."

Holly Gustafson, who attends the support group, was asked what it means to be a transgender. Holly

said, "Someone that's beautiful inside and out."

Lopez was asked what it took to get the transgender support group up and running, and how has the response been from the mental health staff and administration.

"It was quite simple," she said. "Myself and Mr. Spohn came up with a proposal and presented it to management. The response has been positive from supervisors, management and fellow clinicians."

Lopez also said that, so far, medical staff has sat in on the group as well as Associate Warden T. Allen. "The group has scheduled other guests from the outside as well," she added.

Spohn said, "I hope the group will be a permanent fixture at San Quentin, because the transgenders will always be a part of the prison."

He also said, "I do think the transgenders are worthy of a support group and they know the value of being together as a group. And they can all learn from each other."

Lopez said, "If anyone identifies as transgender and wants to be added to the support group, they can send a form 22 to J. Lopez or J. Spohn to mental health."

She added, "It's in the hopes of support and community advocacy and to understand how transgenders are important to shape the changes of the community."

Realignment may have created more dangerous county jails

**By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer**

Since the U.S. Supreme Court ordered California to overhaul its overcrowded prisons in 2011 and realignment reforms were implemented, inmate-on-inmate homicides have risen 46 percent in county jails statewide.

Killings have tripled and even quadrupled in several counties, according to a report by Jason Pohl and Ryan Gabrielson of the *Sacramento Bee*. Pohl and Gabrielson speculate that realignment has changed conditions in county jails to mirror conditions in once-overcrowded prisons.

Autopsy reports show victims have been stabbed, bludgeoned or strangled with jail staff finding bodies hours after the attacks.

The state's largest county jail population, Los Angeles County, has been the exception to the rise of jail homicides. A federal court order placed the nation's largest jail system under an outside monitor in 2014 overhauling operations after officers were caught

allowing fights among inmates and other abuses. Los Angeles County has not had a homicide in more than three years. However, for the rest of California jails, inmate homicides soared by 150 percent, from 12 killings seven years prior to realignment to at least 30 in the seven years after realignment.

Seven years prior to realignment, Riverside County had only one jail inmate killed; five prisoners have been killed since. In the same period, San Diego County went from two to five homicides.

The diversion of people from overcrowded state prisons has changed jail populations to a mixture of people accused of crimes and those convicted of felonies. Three-quarters of those killed in jails since 2011 were awaiting trial, according to Pohl and Gabrielson.

"You have the importation of prison politics into the county jail in concert with people being there longer and having to handle their problems there," said Jonathan Caudill, professor of criminology at the Uni-

versity of Colorado, who has studied realignment in California. "It's like fire and gasoline."

Julio Negrete was booked into Riverside County jail on drug charges in 2013. The next day officers went to escort Negrete to a bond meeting but couldn't find him. They searched the cell from top to bottom, found some bloody socks, then found his strangled body under the lower bunk. Video footage showed he had been attacked 10 hours earlier. Jail officials said in a written statement that the sheriff's department is "always troubled" by inmate violence and investigates every assault in its jails.

Former San Francisco County Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi who now reviews inmate deaths in county jails said that the system has fundamental blind spots. "Those who are hell-bent on committing murder know how to defeat those blind spots."

Attorney Michael Bien represents inmates in lawsuits against California prisons and several county jails cited boredom and frustration alone.



Photo by FirstWatch

Mental Health Clinicians and facilitators J. Spohn and J. Lopez

Changes coming to San Francisco County jail – free phone calls

**By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer**

Two dramatic changes are coming to the San Francisco County Jail – free phone calls for prisoners and reduced markups for commissary items.

"These fees are overwhelmingly paid for by the friends and families of the incarcerated, especially low-income women. It was a clear equity issue," said the mayor's spokesperson, Jeff Cretan.

Mayor London Breed's office estimated the elimination of excessive charges paid by families of the incarcerated will cost the city about \$1.7 million a year.

The changes were initiated by Mayor Breed and Sheriff Vicki Hennessy, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported June 14.

Interviews with San Quentin prisoners illustrate the disparity of items charged throughout the state's vending companies and using one of the most popular items as an example – Top Ramen soup. Alameda County jails charge \$1.25 each or \$30 per case of 24 packages. State prisons charge 25 cents each or \$6 per case. Minutes for phone calls and initial hook-ups for the connecting parties range from free to \$6 per call.

In May of this year, New York City became the first county to offer free phone

calls and a paid internet service, the *New York Post* reported.

Currently California prisons are examining offering inmates the real-world experience of internet communication.



LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK



Before These Walls

Before these walls, I laughed out loud and freely
 After these walls, my laughter sounds strange and forced
 Before these walls, I loved first and doubted later
 After these walls, I rarely love and always doubt
 Before these walls, I saw the best in everyone
 After these walls, I seek what's below the mask
 Before these walls, I smiled at my mirror's reflection
 After these walls, I see a stranger staring back at me
 Before these walls, I managed my healthy fears of tomorrow
 After these walls, I see a fuzzy future just out of my view
 Before these walls, I enjoyed the company of friends
 After these walls, I am reluctant to call any "friend"
 Before these walls, I sat content in a world I earned
 After these walls, I wait for charity (for even necessities)
 Before these walls, I was a whole woman awaiting motherhood

After these walls, I fall asleep
 looking at pictures of my stranger
 child

Before these walls, I had a full
 life

After these walls, I have a
 hollow shell



Dorothy Maraglino
 CCWF

Greetings from a locked down OG, I'm writing this letter to give thanks and praise to Richard Richardson and Lt. S. Robinson and the many others (which is too many to name) who make the SQ News possible. The SQ News is very informative and entertaining especially to those of us in reception, ad seg (administration segregation) and the SHU (Security Housing Unit).

For some of us this is our only source of information and entertainment to an outside world, which is yet behind the walls.

I want to bring up a topic about the murals on the walls in the San Quentin chow halls. I got to experience those works of art in 1988 at the age of 22 when I walked into SQs West Block reception for my first term. And the cable car and medusa are two of the many attractions in SQ that have always stuck in my mind.

SQ has so many more good and bad that our young bucks will never get to experience. OGs you know what I am talking about. But these works of art (which I believe should be in a museum) are hard to explain to someone. These are works of art that he or she has to experience for themselves. Can you please print a photo for all the readers around the world to experience who would otherwise never get the chance to see them.

One last thing for all the OGs who know how different the system is today with all the classes and vocations and self-help programs that are offered that allows us the opportunity to change and be the men and women our society can be proud of.

We as OGs, it's our job to encourage all the young bucks to take advantage of all the opportunities, vocations and self-help programs that are offered today. Because they have a chance that we never had and if we as OGs do our job then maybe our young bucks won't have to sit here years from now with the title of OG.

Love and respect to all,
 Donny (olskool) Oliveira

Donald Oliveira
 Tracy DVI



San Quentin Chow hall Cable Car Mural

Dear San Quentin News,

Thank you for the articles about CDCR's "Black Letter" authority to recall sentences pursuant to Penal Code Section 1170(d), codified at Title 15, Div. 3, Section 3076 Et. Seq. (August 2019). Also, I wanted to bring Title 15, Div. 3, 3076(a)(2) to your attention, which authorizes the Secretary of CDCR to request a recall of an inmate's sentence "if information was not made available to the court in pronouncing the inmate's sentence [and the information] is brought to the attention of the Secretary [of CDCR], who deems the information would have influenced the sentence imposed by the court."

I, and I think many inmates, would live to learn how to initiate these Section 3076(a)(2) requests. Thank you for your time and keep up the great work!

Rogelio V. Morales
 CMC East

Letters to the editor

Dear San Quentin Staff Members,

First and foremost, I would like to say how proud and excited of the great work you all do in providing us with all updated information of what's going on in our society.

My name is David Esparza. I'm incarcerated at Pleasant Valley Prison. I've been incarcerated since 2001. I'm serving a 35-year to life sentence, 10 years for the attempted murder and 25 years to life for a gun enhancement. In 2016, I came across San Quentin News where you guys did a survey about the gun enhancement punishment. I wrote back about that survey and your staff writer Mr. Raasaan Thomas had responded back to my letter.

I know that they passed SB620 in 2018, but it's not retroactive so it doesn't apply to me since I've been incarcerated for 18 years. It would be highly appreciated if you can share some update information about the gun enhancement.

Continue on your hard work and dedication it's very important and appreciated. Thank you kindly for your time.

Sincerely,

David Esparza
 PVSP

Let me just say, your article, Landmark Prop. 57 Ruling in re McGhee was very promising and McGhee has been very blessed to have Mr. Rudy Wilkins as a bro! I'm on my 4th (prison) number. I'm in Valley State Prison with nonviolent criminal threats. Last year, while at CIM (California Institution for Men), my case went to Sacramento.

At that time, I had nothing to bring to the table B.P.H. (Board of Parole Hearings). This time I've got (I think) all my ducks in a row. Group milestones, self-help, a vocation in computers and what I did not have last time, a letter from me, explaining what my future plans are and how I would be a good choice for them to accept me as someone who isn't a threat to my community and that I should be paroled.

And get this, my own dear Mom, who was the plaintiff, also has written the B.P.H. too! I don't know, but I've done all I can. You guys please keep your fingers crossed, and Mr. McGhee, good luck too!

Thanks,

John Ernst
 VSP

To the Editor:

As I'm considering the duties of the governor's new appointed heads of CDCR; Ralph Diaz, the Secretary of CDCR, Kathleen Allison, the Undersecretary of CDCR, Connie Gipson, the director of adult institution for CDCR, I begin to wonder about the duties of the institution heads.

What came to mind was the effectiveness of the grievance process, and now that the governor has three new appointees, what changes on behalf of the inmates living conditions and treatment from C/Os (correctional officers) will occur as a result of their new occupation?

Not that I'm proud to admit this, but out of all the correctional and sheriff's in-custody facilities, I have never seen where inmates, especially indigent did not receive shower shoes.

Here, in "reception", where we're being housed in cells that absorb heat, and are in limbo for two to three months waiting to be endorsed, we are being subjected to entering communal showers and risking the high possibility of acquiring some aggressive case of athlete's foot. Once we've discovered we caught it, then how long would it be until we obtain, and fill out the medical slip and receive treatment? Why did the administration heads decide to discontinue issuing out those 49-cent Styrofoam flip-flops in the first place?

Perhaps, now that there are legislative changes occurring and Proposition 57 being realized, there might be a change in the social environment inside and outside of these institutions and empathy being applied in advancing true social justice.

C. Edwards
 CIM

In reading the book "Transcending Reflections of Crime Victims", I notice that all of the victims suffered from relatively the same kind of pain and grief regardless of what type of crime that were committed against them. Whether it was rape, robbery, murder, kidnap, burglary, or other so-called minor crimes, the hurt, pain and suffering was basically the same.

There are four stages of grief on the death of a loved one: the first is disbelief, the second is anger, the third is depression and the fourth is acceptance.

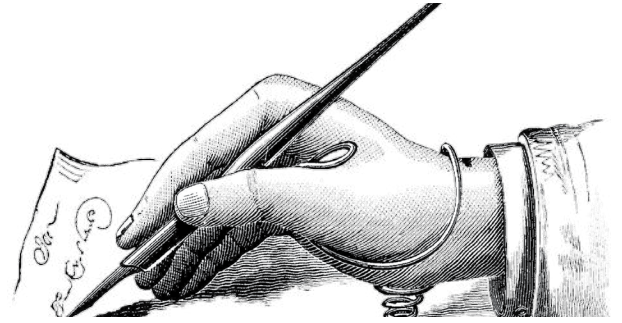
The loved ones of the victim often suffers from grief and pain which range from rage, anger, revenge, hatred, sadness, depression, hurt this is known as the ripple effect. This ripple effect, affects the victim's children and the children of the victim's children, and everyone who knows or hears about what the offender has done.

Now that I understand the impact that my crimes had on the victims, my responsibility also apply to all the home invasions I committed, I have devastated multiple lives. I can only imagine the counseling and therapy...my victims had to go through and it's possibly that their hate and fear extends to all African American men because of what I done. I took away joy and happiness from all my victims and caused them misery.

One of the stories from the book "Transcending Reflection of Crime Victims" was from Ms. Wilma Derksen. She blamed herself because her daughter called her to pick her up, but she was busy and told the daughter to walk.

Ms. Derksen said blame is a cousin of anger, meaning that when you blame someone for something- you are actually angry with that person. Also, blaming yourself for something causes you to be angry with yourself and your anger is released on family, friends and people who have nothing to do with what your anger. (Guilt and blaming yourself cause anger) You have to be willing to forgive yourself and others in order to overcome the anger that's caused by guilt and blame.

Gary Johnson
 CTF



by Tom Rudderow

Part One

It was August 24, 2006. Even though I have a brain injury from this experience and a very damaged memory, I will likely never forget that date. That day I was talking with my friend's fiancé. "What is up with kids?" I asked her, meaning black kids. They had been becoming more and more abusive to me, pushing me around, taking my stuff, while I was waiting at a bus stop. I had been noticing this increasing over the past year. She is African American and talked to me about racial anger that gets carried from generation to generation. "Interesting," I thought. "Let's talk about this more later." then off I went.

It was about 9:00 as I walked down the dark street leading to the BART when a young man approached me and said something about what they were about to do to me and then said, "I'm sorry we have to do this." "Oh shit, I'm in trouble," I thought as, like a deer in headlights, I was taken by my shoulder and guided off the road where, I presume, his partners were waiting in hiding.

When I woke from a coma three days later, which they were unsure I would survive, I must have remembered there had been more than one attacker as a friend, who was sitting by my bed, said I suddenly sat up and said, "James, I've got to forgive these guys. How do I do that?" Then I fell back asleep. When I woke again it was done. I have never had a moment of anger or vengeance toward these four guys, just concern, compassion, and curiosity. How could someone do something like this to someone they didn't know? The police caught all four not long after the incident. Three of them said that they just knocked me down to rob me, as they had been doing to others. The fourth guy, they said, had kept kicking my head until they thought they were leaving a dead guy.

So, I began the long trek of dealing with a brain injury plus PTSD. (What a strange world that is. I was thinking about making a tee shirt, "PTSD. I got it but I don't get it.") What felt real was how I would often wake up in the middle of the night hearing someone calling my name, and I knew it was Ray, the youngest of the four the other three blamed. "What is this connection I seem to have with this guy?"

During the first year I had many questions going around in my head, why? how?, and I would make up answers (as I have discovered is a common thing for crime victims), until I did meet him and I was able to ask the only guy who might know the answers to my questions, which the State does all it can to prevent us from having any interaction. After we met, the questions in my head stopped. If he don't know ain't nobody knows. Now I can let it go. One question I had, though, was how could this have happened to me?

Almost a year after the incident I was informed that Ray was to be sentenced, having accepted a plea bargain, and I could write a letter and have it read to him in court. My letter said that I wanted him to know that the person he is going to prison for holds nothing against him, that I was hoping he would use this time for healing himself. And, I said, I'm very concerned about him so I will be trying to find a way to meet him. I spent the next 3 1/2 years trying to find a way to meet Ray. Finally I connected with a VOD (Victim Offender Dialogue) facilitator Jack Dison who contacted Ray and said that the guy he nearly killed would like to meet him in a VOD.

For the next year and a half, Jack met with Ray and spent time with me, preparing each of us to meet. Jack said I needed to talk about how I've been harmed. I didn't want to do this. It wasn't my intention to rub Ray's face in it. Jack had a hard time believing I held no animosity toward Ray, and didn't want it suddenly coming out unexpectedly during the Dialogue. I was grateful for this process because I wasn't sure myself if something was hiding in there. Maybe my miraculous forgiveness experience was all a result of the brain injury or PTSD. We discovered together that it was real. I always say that I never believed much in miracles until one happened to me. I consider the forgiveness I was given a full blown miracle. It changed my life, and Ray's.

RE:STORE
JUSTICE

KidCAT members unite and bid farewell as leadership roles transition

Youth offenders and prisoners focus on incorporating the entire community

KidCAT Speaks!

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

The latest graduating cycle of KidCAT's First Step curriculum marked the end of a distinct era in this groundbreaking program's history.

The youth offender support community celebrated and said heartfelt goodbyes on June 30 to four of its outside volunteer facilitators—and also to inside lead facilitator, Fateen Jackson, who was found suitable for parole and returned to society Oct. 1.

"It's a bittersweet experience that several of us are leaving the program," said Jackson. "Nat, Channing, Tayyibah and Lily were instrumental in making sure that the guys inside were not forgotten.

"Their continued commitment to the First Step program is greatly appreciated, and they'll surely be missed."

An added bonus to the festivities included the return

of Anouthin Pangthong—a formerly incarcerated youth offender, KidCAT member and First Step graduate, who paroled from SQ in 2018.

For the last three years, Natalie Bell has devoted her Sundays—and also many Thursdays—to come into SQ as the main outside facilitator and work with KidCAT to form a cohesive team.

"This is one of those rare programs, where people that you work with on the inside will get out—be released," observed Bell. "To see our work actualized in real time, it's incredibly gratifying.

"At least 20% of our graduates that I've seen get out and every inside lead facilitator has paroled so far."

"For me, coming back is a great honor," said Pangthong, who everyone at SQ knows simply as "Choi."

"Folks in here are just as deserving—or more—to be out there with me.

"Noticing and observing the camaraderie inside this building and how people interact with each other—that's what I miss the most about being around you

guys. That's why I wanted to come back inside today."

Jackson shares the same sentiments about the community he is about to leave behind. "I do intend to stay connected to the KidCAT program upon my release—in whatever way I'm needed," he said. "I'm not going to forget about my brothers inside.

"It was awesome to see Choi again in a different capacity—to see him as an outside person was surreal. That's the endgame for all of us."

KidCAT Chairman Si Dang himself graduated with this First Step class—a longstanding requirement for full-fledged KidCAT membership.

"The KidCAT community is not just about youth offenders and prisoners," said Dang. "We focus on incorporating the entire community—outside and inside—to better serve the youth in any way we can.

"So many truly wonderful people continue to be a part of KidCAT. It's overwhelming at times."

Lilly F. facilitated First Step for her second time. "It's deeply moving to see the changes that happen within the participants from beginning to end," she said. "They're all different—each of them their own unique snowflake.

"So many positive transformations happened right here as a direct result of the incredible amount of insight gained from this curriculum."

"The First Step curriculum gave me the ability to understand the root of my belief system—my thinking, my behavior," said Jackson. "And those eight modules contributed to a deeper understanding of how I was ultimately affected by those beliefs."

The outside facilitation team made sure to let Jackson know that their support will not cease once he leaves SQ.

"At least 20% of our graduates that I've seen get out and every inside lead facilitator has paroled so far"

"Whatever you need on the outside, Fateen, if it's within my capacity to provide it for you, I'll be there," said Bell.

"We're so grateful for your ability to juggle many different needs, many different commitments as our lead facilitator," said Lilly F. "I'm sure those skills will play into your success on the outside. And yeah, I'm echoing Nat here—whatever you need."

Tayyibah H. spent two years as a First Step facilitator. "First and foremost, this is about not forgetting that incarcerated people are part of our community," she said. "You all deserve the opportunity to grow and heal from trauma—the opportunity to connect with the outside to share ideas, share space.

"Through every curriculum cycle, the process of self-exploration allows us to



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

KidCAT facilitator, Fateen Jackson

examine our own identity—past, present and future."

Tayyibah H. also wanted to emphasize and acknowledge Ronald Carter's efforts as he prepares to assume Jackson's duties for the next cycle.

"To witness and be a part of all your personal growth—you're going to be a great lead facilitator when Fateen leaves," she said.

Channing Richmond, the fourth outside volunteer to be ending his tenure, reflected back on why he originally committed his time to the program.

"I actively made a decision to come in and do this because of my personal philosophy to provide support and true compassionate presence to all who need it," said Richmond. "I have been privileged and honored to be here with you. Everybody comes into this space in a different way to create a beautiful mixture of self-exploration.

"My life's taken some twists and turns—things I have to prioritize. Leaving your program right now truly feels like a loss for me.

"I trust in my absence you'll work to find other outside facilitators. The spirit of KidCAT lives on no matter what—it's not about us."

Bell would not disclose what her new plans are, other than to say she is leaving to pursue her social reform goals in a more expansive realm.

"Everything finally came together, and all the puzzle pieces just fit. I'm proud and

excited to see what the future has in store," she said. "Someone said the most important step in any journey is the first.

"During my three years with the program, I've gotten to know and support so many of my peers and comrades."

"Natalie was the anchor of the outside facilitators. She ensured the curriculum stayed on course that everything started on time," said Jackson. "She has the professionalism and character to facilitate gracefully without judgment."

Pangthong addressed the group after everyone—graduates and facilitators—accepted their certificates and spoke about their personal journeys through First Step.

"Acknowledge the hard work y'all have done for yourselves. We don't always take the time to appreciate what we've accomplished together," he said. "It took hella years, but we arrived!

"Acknowledge and know your own true potential. Once you see that in yourself, nothing can get in your way."

Receiving their First Step certification: Chase Benoit, Markee Carter, Joseph Demerson, Ryan Dietz, Vashon Jones, Max Lopez, Juan Meza, Brett Ownbey, Michael Pulido, Shawn Reyes, Ricardo Romero, Jaime Sanchez, Hieu Thai, Alvin Timbol, Thanh Tran, Bradley Ware, Rhone Watson and Troy Young.

Dear KidCAT

I am more than the sum of my faults—it's a basic concept that allows us to see the good in ourselves. Many of us have guilt over our past; but what is guilt good for if we don't use it to motivate us to be better?

It took many years of introspection and stripping away my old thinking patterns to become the person I am today, and it often feels as if I am invisible to the world. I long to be seen, not for my bad choices, but for the new man I've become. The world I live in has never met this new me, and that makes me sad—because in a way I haven't been able to meet the world, either.

As a human who recognizes the miracle of life, I have to believe that my life is worth more than to pass through this world like a ghost. Should my one shot at existence on this planet be defined solely by one crime that happened in seconds?

How does one find inspiration in the face of death by incarceration? Coming to prison with a sentence of 174 years plus six additional life sentences makes you feel as if you are drowning—you feel as if your soul is dying and you don't know how your body continues to breathe.

Drugs, gangs and illegal activity are the easiest things to sign up for. For a kid who already has issues loving himself, it's a recipe for disaster. I had to really deconstruct my thought processes and figure out why—exactly—I was making these bad choices. I had to change my distorted thinking habits and negative self-talk. If I want someone to fight for me, then I have to be someone worth fighting for.

Hope is what drives me today, but it wasn't easy. How does one find hope when the court sentences you to die in jail? I found hope unexpectedly and in an unconventional way. I was sponsored by an app called STRE.AM, and I started to receive positive feedback from all over the world giving me credit for my positive attributes. This shattered the distorted view I had of myself and society.

Most of my life, I have been told by police, D.A.s and corrections officers that I was worthless. I thought society hated me, but now I realize society is a reflection of me. After getting so many positive vibes from all over the world, I fell back in love with humanity.

It changed my life, and hope was born again within me.

Jessie Milo

Dear Jessie,

Your story resonated deeply throughout the KidCAT community and within our SQ newsroom; and we want our readers to be encouraged by your message of hope.

Your words directly impacted one KidCAT member in particular who'd just gone to the parole board following a commutation by Gov. Brown and was then given a three-year denial. Your positive outlook on life helped him rethink his own situation and all of us thank you for bringing the smile back to his face.

You asked the question, "What is existence without freedom?" He wants you to know that the fact

you can change a life with your words is your freedom—that you can help another human being, that you can breathe, that you can change and realize the harm you've done—that is your freedom.

Do not stop or ever give up. Always understand that you are worth the change you are making. You inspire change in all of us. You are the farthest thing from invisible.



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

The Beat Within

A Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

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

Living on the streets - Sadly, it appears more and more people are living on our streets, living in their cars and vans, or camping in our parks. This week we want to know have you ever been homeless? What were the circumstances that led to your being homeless? Were you with your family or by yourself? Where did you sleep? What was the worst thing about being homeless? How do you feel when you see a homeless person on the street? If you haven't been homeless, do you know anyone who is/has? How did you (or they) get off the streets, or are they still on the streets? Share your thoughts on living on the streets.

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.

Two restorative justice classes celebrate completion

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Incarcerated men and community members from the local San Francisco Bay Area met in San Quentin's Protestant Chapel on Aug. 16 to celebrate the graduation of two restorative justice programs.

The Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG pronounced "vogue") and Next Step honored dozens of incarcerated men who completed the year-long programs, sponsored by Insight Prison Project (IPP).

"The transformation I see in so many of you is why we keep doing the work that we do," said IPP Executive Director Leonard Rubio.

Rubio talked about the violence prevention program No More Tears, another IPP-sponsored program at San Quentin.

"It's not about one individual, it's about what we do together," Rubio said, near tears with his voice breaking. "Hurt people hurt people and healed people

heal people," he continued. Rubio spent 23 years incarcerated before paroling from San Quentin in 2010.

Joyful Noise Gospel Singers opened the ceremony with several songs.

Glitches with clearances prevented some of the more important guests—formerly incarcerated VOEG participants—from attending. In fact, nearly half the choir, including its leader, didn't make it to the event. The remaining members, however, recruited some community guests and renamed the choir Joyful Noise Gospel Singers plus Community.

Harmonica player Gary Harrell, an incarcerated artist and musician, rhythmically chimed in with the singing as the nearly 100 audience members kept the beat with hand clapping—two guitar players-in-blue stood stage left improvising with the upright bass player from Joyful Noise.

"As they were singing those songs, I wanted to start preach-

ing up here," said host Darell "Obadiah" Flowers. "VOEG has been a great experience for me. This year has been challenging," he said. "Change and transformation has a struggle. But we are resilient. VOEG has been an intricate part of my life."

Orlando Harris has been a VOEG peer educator for more than a decade.

"We've done some terrible things to get here, but they don't define who we are," Harris said. "If you're serious about this work, it will change your life."

Derrick Holloway talked about his experience attending the two-day Survivor's Panel. The panel consists of survivors of crime who tell their stories.

"VOEG opened me up to what I've done," Holloway said.

"I was very scared...you know...when you've committed a terrible crime...when I had to share my crime is when it connected with me," Holloway said. He is serving a life sentence for murder.

Spanish VOEG facilitator Christina Madariaga is so impressed by the program, she talks to her mother regularly about the work the men do on themselves. "Those men are so beautiful," she tells her mother.

Romeo Bacos talked about how writing a crime impact statement and remorse letter affected him. He said the pinnacle for him was during the victim/survivors panel.

"There is a saying, 'You can know about Alaska, an Eskimo can tell you all about it.' Our victim/survivor panel knows

everything about pain, loss, and extreme heartache," Bacos said.

He said that during the lunch break, he asked one woman on the panel what he could do to help her on her healing journey.

She replied, "Hold yourself accountable."

In tears, Bacos said that those three words further motivated him to continue his mission to give back to all the people he's harmed.

"It is my vision that there will be no need for a VOEG class, until then, I will not stop," Bacos said.

One of the original outside facilitators for VOEG, Rochelle Edwards, told the graduates, "It's been a great honor and journey...I hope it continues."

Spanish band Gerry and the Tornados played traditional Spanish music. The last song, "Blue by You" was performed in Spanish, with the last verse sung in English.

Gerry Sanchez-Muratalla, guitar/vocals; T. Lamas Muratalla, guitar/vocals; B. Marroquin, vocals; J. Vieyra, bass

SQ veterans lose innovative facilitator Rebecca Haskell

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild
Chairperson

Rebecca Haskell, an outside facilitator working with Veterans Healing Veterans (VHV), has impacted San Quentin's incarcerated veteran community like few have before her.

Haskell's exuberant and immersive style of leadership training enabled SQ's dedicated core of veteran facilitators to reach new levels of interactive communication—an essential skill to promote genuine healing.

"Rebecca helped create a healthy environment where we could build a tremendous bond within our group," said Reginald Cooper, a VHV facilitator who trained with Haskell for over two years. "Because of her, we were all able to better help our vets open up and speak about traumas that earlier had caused them to shut down."

"A major factor has been lost to VHV."

Haskell chose to step away for personal reasons—internal VHV issues she'd rather not comment on—but she highly values her time within SQ and is set on volunteering at the prison in some other capacity.

"I'm really excited to explore other opportunities to get involved in the San Quentin community," she said. "I could write a novel about what I've learned since I first started coming in here."

"Being around these guys validated and reinforced my own personal philosophy that anyone can be a great leader or facilitator if given the support and opportunity."

"And that the amount of heart and soul people put into their work is a direct payoff—it directly then impacts the people they're working with."

Haskell used her extensive educational background and outside community connections to bring in guests who could offer SQ veterans specific insight into specialized fields—such as the neurobiology of trauma, public speaking, music therapy, movement therapy, meditation, moral injury and, especially, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Former Marine Brian Corder arrived at SQ in 2018, and experienced the benefits of Haskell's VHV work right away. "Rebecca has one of those personalities that immediately promotes positive interactions and cooperative involvement," said Corder. "She knows what she's doing—and you could really

see that with the quality of professionals she brought in to help us."

Haskell brands herself as a Social Justice and Education Consultant. "My client base tends to be centered around prison programming and education," she said. "VHV had their own curriculum put together, and they had questions on how to make it better—make it more user friendly for their participants to navigate."

"I tried to establish a safe place where we could learn new facilitation techniques, new ways of presenting yourself as a leader in the group."

Veterans Group of San Quentin Chairman Carl Raybon, USMC, made great personal progress in working through his own trauma and he gives Haskell props for all the improvements she's contributed to VHV.

"Rebecca's a person of extremely impeccable character, just a wonderful person altogether," said Raybon. "She's always receptive to whatever another person has to share, and she uses her skill set to personalize every conversation—which made me feel like I've known her forever."

"She's a taskmaster, a real energizer bunny. She makes things go as planned. No matter what obstacles came up, Rebecca stayed on task and got the job done."

Corder recently drafted a proposal for state senate consideration which aims to implement prison reforms for incarcerated vets. Through Haskell's tenacious contact efforts, Corder's proposal made it into the hands of advocates who can move it further along the legislative process.

"Rebecca helped point me in the right direction. She has this gift for getting people together in a way that benefits all parties involved, where everyone wins," said Corder. "It's very unfortunate—the way she was removed from the program. It's not due to anything she's done on her end."

"That's what sucks—it's something out of our control, but it directly affects this current cycle of vets."

"It's not going to be the same without her," agreed Cooper. "As a facilitator, she helped me build skills to be better able to listen and empathize—to notice the different emotional changes we go through."

"It was a real blessing to have her volunteer her time to VHV. Anything she contributes to San Quentin is a bless-

ing. We need more people like her."

Haskell pointed to everyday lessons in humility and kindness as her biggest takeaways from being inside SQ.

"We all need to do a better job of listening to each other and asking questions—giving people the benefit of the doubt," she said. "We are all carrying around our entire lives with us all of the time, but if only we can try to remember to be more generous toward each other."

She continues to hold strong opinions about prison reform and social justice advocacy.

"Every person in the United States—just like jury duty—should be encouraged to volunteer inside a prison," offered Haskell. "I've spoken on this so much that it's like a broken record for me."

"But if each person spent one day in prison a year, maybe we'd treat people differently."

"Prisons are designed to be out of sight—out of mind. But when you 'otherize' people, you forget about their humanity."

James Dunbar, incarcerated clerk for the Veterans Information Project, has been serving his fellow vets at SQ since 2015. He's seen his share of outside volunteers come and go.

"I know Rebecca more through her reputation amongst the other vets than through personally working with her myself," said Dunbar. "But when I heard she was discontinuing her role within VHV, I felt for our guys. It's a great loss."

Raybon expressed his optimism at seeing Haskell back at SQ soon. "She's someone you can really trust and that'll make you go the extra mile to relate to what she's saying, what she's trying to teach you," he said. "Hopefully, VHV's loss will become a huge gain for other programs here."



Photo by Javier Jimenez SQN

VHV volunteer
Rebecca Haskell

Street Spirit Editor in Chief Alastair Boone talks about her work



Photo courtesy of Alastair Boone

Editor-in-Chief of *Street Spirit*
Alastair Boone

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

Alastair Boone is the editor-in-chief of a publication aiming to empower its target population. *Street Spirit* is a San Francisco Bay Area-based homeless advocacy newspaper. Local unhoused residents run the paper, which was founded in 1995.

During a visit to San Quentin last May, Boone shared her story and explained that under her direction *Street Spirit* will continue to grow. The native San Franciscan said she'd like to end the prison-to-street-to-prison cycle. "I watched the people on the street grow exponentially. It's impossible to ignore," said *Street Spirit*'s new leader.

Boone visited *San Quentin News* where she volunteers as an advisor for the newspaper's magazine, *Wall City*. During a question and answer session, Boone shared the experience, insight and knowledge she gleaned during her career.

Boone's story begins with her roots in the Bay Area. The 25-year-old received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and Creative Writing from University of California, Berkeley in 2016. The following year, she relocated to the East Coast to begin her journalistic career with *Atlantic Media's City Lab* in Washington D.C.

Boone wanted to make a "journalistic impact," but she found her responsibilities at City Lab impersonal and dull, so she came home. Boone's return coincided with new ownership at *Street Spirit*. Soon after

changing hands, *Street Spirit*'s editor-in-chief, Terry Messman, announced his retirement.

Boone took on the position as the paper's first female editor-in-chief. As the paper's only full-time employee, Boone works as a voice for what she described as an under-resourced—and expanding—population. "I have big shoes to fill," said the new editor-in-chief.

As a new editor, Boone wanted more experience. A colleague recommended she volunteer for the *San Quentin News*. At *SQ's news* office, she quickly discovered the similarities between *SQ News*, *Street Spirit* and the communities they serve.

Both communities are disenfranchised and marginalized; both contain unheard voices, she said. "Incarcerated people have the same issues as the homeless," she told a full classroom.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, former inmates are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public.

The similarities became concrete when Boone said she discovered major flaws in the Alameda County's homeless count. On the annual count of Oakland's homeless population Boone spent an early morning looking unsuccessfully for un-housed people in the winter cold. She couldn't find a single homeless person to count, despite knowing they lived in the neighborhood she patrolled.

"How is this possible, especially in a city where its high-visibility homelessness problem was recently designated a humanitarian crisis by the United Nations?" she asked.

Boone described discrepancies in the way the homeless are counted and how methods vary within government agencies. She stressed the need for accuracy between federal groups like HUD and local groups such as Alameda County's census takers which takes census called the Point in Time Count.

Boone believes this count, which happens every two years, "must unify the defini-

tion of homelessness and insure the accuracy of data gathered by each group," she said.

Accuracy becomes her focus as the counts influence budget allocations to homelessness outreach groups throughout the Bay Area. "There is no doubt the homeless are undercounted in every region of the United States," said Boone.

During her tenure at *Street Spirit*, Boone has learned 80% of the Bay Area's homeless who were priced out of the market or who had become victims of the dotcom sprawl, were tenants or homeowners themselves, living in homes up to five years earlier. She also agreed that approximately 60-65,000 San Franciscans live in their vehicles.

Her strategic plan for the growth of *Street Spirit* includes securing a new distribution partner for the paper in Oakland while increasing her staff. She is also partnering with web creator Design Action Collective to build a website for *Street Spirit*. These objectives are in line with her vision to become a "go-to" news source for homelessness news.

"A robust web site is critical to reaching this goal," she told *SQ News*.

Another long-term vision includes initiating a writing workshop where unhoused people can come to process the stories they want to tell. She believes the people in her workshop will gain confidence in their ability to communicate in writing.

Her goals also include the creation of a San Quentin Style newsroom, a goal that for now seems like a "dream world" away.

"We are fortunate to be in one of the most progressive regions in the world, and I believe we will not turn a deaf ear to this epidemic," said Boone.

Becoming one of the nation's leading advocates for the homeless, Boone hopes to give the population a platform for safe affordable housing, while affording them the dignity to re-evolve back into society.

"This is the city I live in. I'm going to take responsibility," she said.

Local television station honors three with the Jefferson Award for their public service at San Quentin

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

San Quentin employee Raphael Casale has been presented The Jefferson Award for Public Service for her behind the scenes community work.

Casale is an office technician who works in the San Quentin warden's office.

She also runs the prison's music program and is one of the staff sponsors for the SQUIRES (San Quentin Utilization of Inmate Resources Experiences and Studies) program that allows inmates to mentor at-risk youth. "I love kids," she commented.

Allen Martin from KPIX channel 5 interviewed Casale for a news broadcast in September.

"I get to work with a lot of wonderful people," said

Casale. "I was blessed to be assigned to two different groups. I want to make the groups better." She said there's therapeutic value in both programs.

UNSUNG HERO

Casale also provides support to staff in other parts of the prison, to volunteers, and to inmates who work in the prison's media center. To many, she's one of San Quentin's unsung heroes, or in her case "Shero."

As a sponsor, Casale is recognized by many inside and outside of the prison for the work she does beyond the scope of her day job.

"How can you put money on things that change someone's life?" said Casale. "How could I not support that?"

Casale said inmates who work with youth in the SQUIRES program become aware of why they made a choice to commit crime and get to know themselves better. She said the kids open up to the men.

By talking to the kids "they (inmates) get a snapshot of their life," said Casale. The men feel good about being able to help the kids. "It's really healing. It's a win-win for both."

"There are people here at San Quentin who work traditional prison jobs ... She is one of those people who looks beyond the eight hours and gives more of herself"

"Just one person can make an absolute difference in their (the kids) life," said Casale. "Many of them have experienced being beaten or worse." Because many inmates have suffered the same type of early childhood trauma, "when these kids come in, they're talking to men who already know them."

"There are people here at San Quentin who work traditional prison jobs," said Lt. Sam Robinson, the prison's public information officer. "She is one of those people who looks beyond the



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

KPIX anchor reporter Allen Martin and award winner Raphael Casale during the interview

eight hours and gives more of herself."

Robinson said Casale, affectionately known as Raphie, "brings all the energy to these programs that she brings to the warden's office."

NOMINATION

Brian Asey, the inmate who nominated Casale for the award, said, "She's a very unique person. I can only imagine what it's like being in her shoes. I know that she does a lot around here."

Asey said during a recording of a Youth Offender Program (YOP) audio mix, he observed Casale leave on a Friday night and return on a Saturday morning for another project.

He said he wanted her to know that what she does is appreciated by the inmates at San Quentin.

Inmate David Jassy, who produced a mix tape for some of the YOP inmates, said to have Casale come and sit with them gets them enthused, and her support means everything. "When they see that she likes what they're doing, it adds to their confidence," he said.

Casale explained that the YOPs, like those who participate in SQUIRES, have to be honest with themselves and vulnerable. No negative content, derogatory or abusive language is allowed in recordings. "It takes a lot of bravery," she said. "A lot of people don't have that or the humility."

The SQUIRES youth program takes place on Saturdays, so Casale wasn't able to demonstrate her hands-on approach with the kids. The KPIX news crew was able to follow her to the loft above the prison's Arts in Correc-

tions building. There they observed a typical rehearsal with the hip hop band Contagious, where Jassy and the band performed three original songs.

"It's been really important to be able to build that program," said Casale. She said there's a lot of stress in prison and music can release the stress. "It opens your mind up to some things you've never thought of."

Casale started working at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as an off-site medical scheduler and was later hired to work in the warden's office. She's worked at San Quentin for 11 years.

"Being a self-help sponsor, I do get paid for it, but that's not all of it," said Casale. "I'm becoming a better person, too. I'm learning about myself. If I were to get another job, I would always come back as a volunteer."

The Jefferson award is given annually by local television station KPIX



Photo courtesy of Raphael Casale

Raphael Casale

Helaine "Lainy" Melnitzer



Photo courtesy of Lainy Melnitzer

By Aron Kumar Roy
Staff Writer

By teaching the incarcerated men of San Quentin high-end culinary skills,

Lainy Melnitzer and Lisa Dombroski earned the Jefferson Award for Public Service on Aug. 28.

The program they founded, Quentin Cooks, will help the men find gainful employ-

ment upon their release.

"Our receiving the Jefferson Award is more a testament to the grassroots nature of this program," said Dombroski, "I feel we, as volunteers, get as much out of the program as our students. While we are solely volunteers, it is the men we serve that continue to make our program successful."

Dombroski developed a true appreciation for food while traveling through Patagonia in South America. She realized that at each mealtime, conversations, stories and community were all centered on the food.

Later she was inspired to bring her love for the culinary arts to those who are often overlooked and underserved.

Teaming up with Melnitzer, who was already volunteering at San Quentin with a group that connects inmates with the local community and a reentry program, they decided to start the Quentin Cooks program.

"My vision for Quentin Cooks is that there will be a continuous flow of gradu-

ates from the program that we are able to place in meaningful employment," said Melnitzer, "I feel that the program is so good due the Chefs Huw and Adelaar who teach the class."

"It's so humanizing to be in the Quentin Cooks class. They really treat us like we have the ability to succeed," said Nathaniel Reichert, a current participant in the program, "I've always loved good food, but I never knew I could make good food. Being a part of this class is helping me realize my potential."

The 12-week class meets on Wednesday mornings for five hours.

Throughout the class, the men democratically decide the dishes that they will make. Chili, curries and homemade cheeses are just a few of the dishes that the student cooks learn to make.

The Chef's Warehouse donates dry goods and equipment for the program, while VegiWorks donates all of the produce and meat.

The class culminates in a graduation banquet, during which the incarcer-



Lisa Dombroski

ated cooks prepare a several course meal for visitors from the Bay Area culinary community.

"I go into all of this believing that one person can help

the world. If you've helped one person, you've helped the planet," said Melnitzer, "You never know the extent of the ripples from a pebble that you throw in the pond."



Photo courtesy of Lisa Dombroski



Photo by FirstWatch

Spiritual help offered by volunteers at the health fair



Photo by FirstWatch

One on one inmate and doctor's advice being given at the health fair



Photo by FirstWatch

Hearing test being performed by SQ medical personnel



Photo by FirstWatch

Nurse giving an eye exam



Photo by FirstWatch

Mental health information offered by SQ healthcare Staff



Photo by FirstWatch

Chiropractic adjustment station

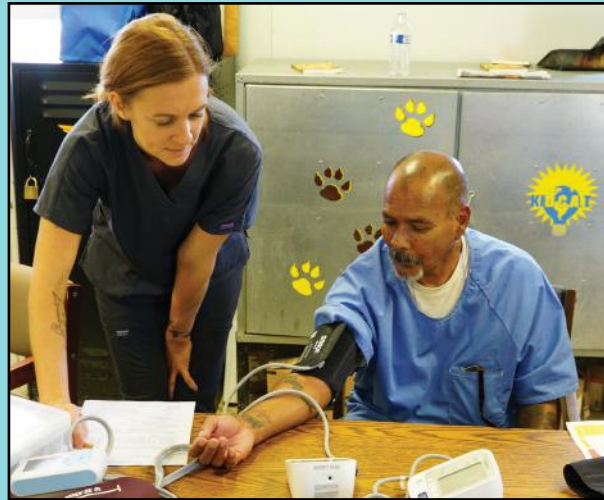


Photo by FirstWatch

Medical staff doing blood pressure checks



Photo by FirstWatch

Acupuncture needles being applied to participant inmate

“Everybody matters and their health should be valued”

Health Fair

Continued from Page 1

“It’s a symbiotic relationship as our students are changed by this as well,” said Professor Vitale. “The educational aspect of volunteering here allows the future nurses to be exposed to the marginalized.”

Professor Vitale wants people to realize that incarcerated individuals are people too and to treat the less fortunate with dignity.

Another popular area at the health fair was the gym. Activities in the gym included chiropractic adjustment, acupressure therapy, diabetic education, and a Tai Chi exercise.

“When I got my backed cracked, I felt all the tension leave my body,” said Yahya Malik who recently transferred from High Desert State Prison, “It helped with my self-awareness cuz I didn’t even know I was tense.”

He also enjoyed the Tai Chi exercise.

“I ain’t never done that before,” said Malik, “I thought it was a martial art, but it’s more like a moving meditation.”

Reverend Deborah Lee from the Asian Prisoner Support Committee led the Tai Chi sessions. It was her seventh year attending the health fair.

“I always get a lot out of it, to see all of the programs at San Quentin,” Reverend Lee said.

David Liao, a massage therapist from the American College of Traditional

Chinese Medicine in San Francisco said he had some apprehension before coming into San Quentin, but once he started meeting the incarcerated individuals his apprehension “melted away.”

“It’s awesome. I love what we can do to help you guys,” said Liao.

The diabetic station educated the men in blue about lifestyle issues regarding diabetes. The station was sponsored by the diabetic program, a 16-week class that teaches incarcerated individuals with diabetes how to monitor their blood sugar and teaches them about their disease.

“I think it’s important to empower the men,” said Kim Bailey, a nurse and sponsor for the San Quentin diabetic program.

In the education building, a mental health class taught the men in blue about general mental health, sports, leisure, mindfulness, through a jeopardy-style game. Handouts included: “How to Meditate,” “Gratitude,” “Recreation Therapy Boggle” and “Organ Systems Crosswords.”

Near the baseball diamond, the incarcerated got a chance to sit down with doctors to have their health questions answered, such as the appropriate amount of water to drink each day or what kinds of food to stay away from. After the conversations, the doctors gave each

incarcerated person a granola bar. Also on the lower yard were tables for the California Reentry Program, Centerforce, CDCR Mental Health, LRC(Love, Respect, and Communication), and Health Education(Alameda County Public Health Services and UCSF residents).

“We’re here to sign up people who aren’t familiar with our program,” said Anne F. of the California Reentry Program, “Whether they have a parole date or a release date, we can help get them ready for parole, get their resume ready for employment opportunities, help them find housing, help get the necessary identification they’ll need upon release Social Security card, California I.D., etc.”

The California Reentry Program has regular meetings on Tuesday nights and Friday afternoons. During these meetings, attendees are individually assisted by a reentry specialist to plan for a successful integration back into society upon their release.

At the Love, Respect and Communication (LRC) table, Dr. Arnold Chavez spoke to groups of five individuals for three-minute segments, explaining the principles of LRC.

“When we think of love and respect, communication is the foundation for both of these. We need to have strong

communication skills,” he said, “You wouldn’t be here if you’d communicated better. Can I say that?”

Most of his audience nodded their heads in agreement.

At the spiritual healing station, prayers could be heard in both English and Spanish.

Jose Gomez, a volunteer at the spiritual healing table, attended with his wife Micaela Carteno.

“It’s a blessing for me, to give a little bit back as God has given to me. I receive love from God. I give love to my brother,” said Gomez.

The Centerforce table showed a video which covered topics such as hepatitis, STDs, tuberculosis, HIV, as well as warnings about risks associated with tattoos and drug needles.

Each San Quentin resident was given a ticket which listed the different stations at the fair. After going to each station, a stamp was given to each individual. After receiving three stamps, attendees were able to redeem their ticket for a toothbrush and a mini toothpaste.

“Before coming in, I had an expected fear of inmates, prejudices and anxiety, but I will recommend this day to all nursing students,” said nursing student Alina. With a smile on her face, she said about prison, “It’s not what it’s like on television!”



Photo by FirstWatch

Medical staff working with inmates at blood check station

"The CTE Laborers Program has changed the trajectory of my life forever"

CTE

Continued from Page 1

"As a youth, I'd beat the pavement day in and day out, trying to become employed only to be turned away time and time again," said Roosevelt "Askari" Johnson Jr., a CTE graduate and current teachers' assistant. "That was

"due to the lack of experience which, by the way, is one of the contributing factors that made it easy for me to embrace a criminal life style."

Another inmate, Jamaï Johnson, said, "This construction trade will enable me to provide for my family, while giving back to the community by literally rebuilding what I once brought destruction to as a youth... Upon release, when I get my [driver's]

license, the CTE/PIA program will pay my first year union dues and purchase my tools."

Perez, who has more than 21 years of experience in the laborers union, commented, "For the union construction industry, this is a time of optimism, promise and opportunity. All leading economic indicators for the construction industry point to steady and continued growth as we

finally remove ourselves from the depths of one of the most debilitating recessions of our lifetime.

"Since I started teaching here last March, every guy who has successfully completed this program has gone out and hustled up work in the trades."

APPRENTICE WAGES

Upon graduating the CTE/PIA program and paroling, an individual can join a laborers' union as an apprentice making \$19.75 an hour. A carpenter's apprentice can earn from \$24.70 to \$29.04 an hour in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Askari also said, "The CTE Laborers Program has changed the trajectory of my life forever in that I have little to no concerns about employment upon my release."

He said he recommends the program to others in San Quentin and "I also believe this program should be made available in every prison in California."

Perez said, "I come from an immigrant family, 21 siblings, poor; all we know is how to work. The great thing about the union is that if you can

work hard you can find work. You do not even necessarily need to know how to speak English; as long as you can work hard, someone will hire you. I even worked 10 years as a contractor."

JOURNEYMAN WAGES

Perez said a union journeyman laborer can make as much as \$33.75 an hour, with an additional \$23.55 an hour in fringe benefits. He also stated that an apprentice laborer gets a raise of \$2 an hour every six months, after finishing an apprentice class. An apprentice laborer must complete seven required classes and 4,000 hours of on the job work experience in order to become a journeyman laborer. A union carpenter makes \$48.40 an hour in wages in the Bay Area, plus \$30.51 an hour in fringe benefits.

CTE/PIA student Evan Page said, "Since I have been enrolled, I have gained certifications and experience in the construction trade as well as a positive outlook regarding my future work opportunities... I believe through this program I have gained enough knowledge and drive

to truly succeed in the working world."

CTE training covers asbestos abatement, scaffold building, concrete placement/termination, and demolition/deconstruction.

Also, confined space, soil compaction, trenching and excavation, metal and wood-stud framing, drywall/sheet-rock/finish taping, floor prep, grade checking, concrete finishing, underground piping, general and industrial industry OSHA rules and regulations.

"The inmates coming in here knowing nothing, being green..." Perez said. "Let me tell you something, one time I was sent back from a job because I was not good enough... I do not want that to happen to any of these men in this program. The lord has me here teaching. Seeing lives being transformed inspires me. I love coming to work, and I love my job. We have a positive atmosphere; we joke, and have a great time."

Anyone interested in this program should send an Inmate Request Form to Lauro Perez at the CTE program requesting an interview for the next scheduled program entry.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Graduates from the Career Technical Education program

"I represent that we can become productive members of our community"

Graduation

Continued from Page 1

"This is a milestone—a turning point in your life," said San Quentin Warden Ron Davis to the 35 incarcerated graduates amid the large audience that gathered for the Aug. 27 event. "You come to San Quentin and you have the chance to be a better person. The skills you get here are the final key."

Host Michelle Kane with the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) added, "When most people think about CALPIA, they think of license plates and furniture. But we have programs that are self-supporting at all institutions. Coding began in 2014." She added that no graduate paroled from prison was ever re-arrested. "I see so many success stories from the guys on the outside."

CALPIA General Manager Scott Walker, congratulated

the graduates for doing the "hard work and taking a step in the right direction."

Deputy Secretary of Corrections Kathleen Allison, when introducing Beverly Parenti, recognized that even after the budget cuts of 2012, Chris Redlitz and Parenti brought The Last Mile (TLM), an entrepreneurial training program, and Code.7370, a computing coding program, to San Quentin.

"When Chris and I started TLM," recalled Parenti, "it was just the two of us with a crazy idea. Now we have 25 employees. We could not do it without you all. We believe in you and we ask you to believe in yourself"

Parenti emphasized that the skills the men are learning allow them to be "positive influences" in their communities. "They've help prove that when people believe in a smart idea, they can have a lasting influence on the rest of the world."

Formerly incarcerated Jason Jones is a TLM and Code.7370 graduate.

"Never underestimate the belief in something bigger than you are," Jones told the incarcerated men. "Dreaming about where you want to go allows you to build your legacy, and your legacy is the one thing that will go beyond your life."

Ollie Hurd spent three years incarcerated at San Quentin. Today he is the Director of the Laborers Union Training Center for Northern California.

"I represent that we can become productive members of our community," Hurd said. "That's all I ever wanted was an opportunity and CALPIA makes this possible for all of us. Programs like this exist right now; everyone is involved in the positive process."

Hurd said the training center has a "direct entry program" for people who graduate the pre-apprentice program.

"They just have to contact our training center, which is located at 1001 West Side Drive, San Ramon," he added.

Gary Roberson, a Pre-Apprentice Construction Labor

graduate, commented that finishing the course allowed him to prepare himself for gainful employment upon reentry into society.

"I want to get out and work on 'fixer uppers,'" Roberson said. "I want to get my own 'flip this house' company—Roberson Realty."

THE GRADUATES

Code.7370

Instructor: Jon Gripshover

Robert Barnes, Nicola Bucci, Yu Chen, Daniel Colondres, Wilbert Frank, Dejon Joy, Kennard Love, Gregory Morris, Gabriel Ostolaza, Mark Radke, Bryan Richie, Vah Saechao, Chai Saetern, Roy Sorvari, Moua Vue, Troy Whietley

Pre-Apprentice Construction Labor

Instructor: Lauro Perez
Walter Cook, Danny Geyer, Jamaine Gurley, Jamaï Johnson, Montrell McDuff-

ie, Royce Miller, Evan Page, Shawn Reyes, Gary Roberson, Darius Sommons, Rodney Thompson, Bruce Wells, Address Yancy
Pre-Apprentice Roofing

Instructor: Julian Hurtado

Arron Gilmer, William Hopper, Gregory Jones, Jeremiah Lee, Tijue McGhee, James Walton



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

PIA General Manager Scott Walker and CET instructor Lauro Perez



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Graduates and instructors from the CALPIA Training Program

AROUND THE WORLD

Dr. Susan Rahman in front of the wall that divides Palestine and Israel



Susanne Karch with sisters Gunilla and Agneta on the small island of Käringön off the West Coast of Sweden



Marcy Ginsburg, in Asti, Italy



PUP instructor Sophie FitzMaurice across the pond



Yukari Kane in Montpellier, France

Empleo en la prisión: Una jornada laboral que se paga en centavos

Por Oscar Aguilar
Escritor Contribuyente

Los prisioneros en el estado de California trabajan un promedio de ocho horas por día, pero ganan centavos en vez de dólares.

José Ledesma de 69 años de edad y quien cumple una sentencia de 15 años, dice que su trabajo en la

cocina de la prisión de San Quentin no le ayuda mucho porque debido a su horario le es difícil participar en programas de rehabilitación, además que solo gana 11 centavos por hora. “El sueldo es pésimo porque no me alcanza para nada”, dijo Ledesma.

Como parte de su condena, Ledesma debe pagar el 55 por ciento de su salario como

restitución, lo que significa que mensualmente le quedan solo \$6.92. Esa cantidad le alcanza apenas para comprar sus Ultrex vitaminas que cuestan \$5.80 y una pasta de dientes de las más baratas. Fuera de su alcance quedan otros productos básicos como desodorante, cepillo de dientes, jabón y champú. Para comprar todo eso, Ledesma necesita trabajar alrededor de dos meses.

Además del bajo sueldo, el trabajo en la cocina de la prisión es muy estresante debido a la mala organización de los trabajadores. Ledesma dijo que tal vez si el sueldo fuera mejor, todos los trabajadores pondrían más empeño y serían más responsables.

Alex Bracamonte es otro preso de 61 años de edad que también labora en la cocina. El dijo que se siente un poco incómodo porque su empleo interfiere con su educación, pero el trabajo no es pesado y se siente a gusto con sus compañeros. “Me siento triste con ese salario, pero lo hago porque me gusta trabajar, me entretiene y me hace sentir que no estoy preso”, comentó Bracamonte.

Bracamonte tiene ocho meses trabajando. Empezó ganando ocho centavos y nunca le han subido el sueldo, pero aún así dice que trabajar le hace sentir mucho mejor.

De acuerdo a un reporte del Prison Policy Institute, en una prisión del estado de California ningún prisionero puede ganar más de 37 centavos por hora trabajando en la cocina. (Estos salarios son solo para trabajos que no requieren ningún entrenamiento especial). Además del pago que recibe un preso algunos están sujetos a una deducción como el pago de restitución impuesto por las cortes.

El Título 15 del Departamento de Correcciones dice que “cuando un preso tiene una obligación de pago de restitución impuesto por la corte, el departamento de correcciones debe deducir el 50 por ciento o el balance de la deuda, cualquiera que sea menor de los salarios, o depósitos en la cuenta del preso sin importar la fuente de ingreso. Además se aplica una deducción adicional del 10 por ciento por costos

administrativos para un máximo total del 55 por ciento.

El reporte del Prison Policy Institute señala que los bajos salarios que se pagan a las personas encarceladas afectan sus posibilidades de éxito cuando son liberados.

“Con muy pocos o nulos ahorros, ¿cómo van a poder pagar el costo de comida, casa, salud, transporte, pensión para sus hijos y los costos de la supervisión?”, indica el reporte. “Las personas con condenas por crímenes graves no son elegibles para recibir beneficios como estampillas de alimentos y enfrentan barreras para encontrar empleo y vivienda. Muchos dejan la prisión (a veces) con un boleto de autobús y \$50 en el bolsillo. Así que las ganancias de su trabajo en la prisión pueden ser esenciales para el éxito y supervivencia de una persona cuando regresan a sus comunidades”.

Mes de la Herencia Hispana, un reconocimiento a la contribución de los hispanos

Por Juan Espinosa
Diseñador gráfico y escritor

El Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana conmemora y reconoce las contribuciones que han hecho los hispanoamericanos a la sociedad y cultura estadounidense, y honra a los cinco países c e n t r o a m e r i c a n o s , Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, y Nicaragua que celebraran su independencia el 15 de septiembre, así como a México que la festeja el 16 de septiembre.

La celebración de la hispanidad tiene sus raíces en la época del presidente Lyndon B. Johnson, quien emitió la primera proclamación que ordenaba la semana del 15 y 16 de septiembre como la Semana Nacional de la Herencia Hispana.

La Proclamación Presidencial decía lo siguiente:

“Deseando dar un tributo especial a la tradición hispana, y teniendo en mente el hecho que nuestros cinco vecinos de Centroamérica celebran su independencia el 15 de septiembre y México el 16 de septiembre, el congreso por la Resolución Conjunta con la Casa (Blanca) 1299, ha pedido al presidente emitir anualmente una proclamación destinando la semana incluyendo el 15 de septiembre y el 16 de septiembre como la Semana Nacional de La Herencia Hispana.”

Otros presidentes siguieron el ejemplo con proclamaciones similares que no solo celebraban la independencia, sino que fueron más allá al reconocer la contribución de los hispanos a la economía, cultura y sociedad de los Estados Unidos.

Entre 1969 y 1988, los presidentes Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter y Ronald Reagan emitieron una serie de proclamaciones

anuales las cuales designaban la semana del 15 y 16 de septiembre como la Semana Nacional de la Herencia Hispana.

Estas proclamaciones celebraron las contribuciones a los Estados Unidos de los hombres y mujeres de origen hispano, y reconocieron el trabajo de los exploradores hispanos y los primeros colonizadores de las Américas.

En 1988 el congreso pasó una ley que estableció el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana.

El 14 de septiembre de 1989, el presidente George H. W. Bush proclamó un periodo de 31 días a partir del 15 de septiembre y terminando el 15 de octubre como el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana.

Entre 1990 y el 2018, Los presidentes George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, y Donald J. Trump han emitido proclamaciones anuales para celebrar la hispanidad a lo largo de un mes.

Rechazan correlación entre inmigración indocumentada y crimen

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

No existe una correlación significativa entre inmigrantes indocumentados y crimen, sugiere una reciente investigación.

Un estudio realizado por el Marshall Project y el *New York Times* reveló que los crímenes violentos y de propiedad disminuyeron entre 2007 y 2016 en áreas donde viven inmigrantes indocumentados.

El estudio desaprueba la retórica de la campaña del Presidente Donald Trump. Como reportó David Knowles de *Yahoo News*, Trump afirmó que México está enviando personas que tienen muchos problemas. “Ellos están trayendo drogas. Ellos están trayendo crimen. Ellos son violadores”, dijo Trump en eventos de su campaña política.

El nuevo estudio es consistente con los resultados de análisis previos como los siguientes:

En 2018 el Instituto Cato encontró que en Texas, los inmigrantes —legales o indocumentados— cometieron menos crímenes que los resi-

dentos nacidos en Estados Unidos.

Un diferente estudio de Cato concluyó que los inmigrantes indocumentados son menos propensos a ser encarcelados que los nativos americanos.

“típicamente vienen a América a buscar trabajo, no a cometer crímenes”

El periódico “*Criminology*” condujo un estudio separado en marzo del 2018. El estudio reportó que los estados del país con más inmigrantes indocumentados tienen más bajas tasas de crimen que aquellos con menos.

En un artículo del 13 de mayo de 2018, el *New York Times* observó que el Marshall Project y el reporte del “The Upshot” fue el primer análisis, a larga escala, de cómo inmigrantes no-autorizados afectaron el crimen desde el 2007. El reporte indicó que los cambios en poblaciones indocumentadas,

tuvo poco o nulo efecto de crimen en las áreas consideradas.

El Pew Research Center estima que el número de inmigrantes indocumentados que vivían en los Estados Unidos en 2016—se redujo 1.5 millones desde el 2007.

Los estudios que analizan los efectos potenciales de la inmigración indocumentada se llevan a cabo constantemente. El profesor Robert Adelman sigue de cerca los grupos como “Marshall Project” a través de sus investigaciones en la Universidad en Buffalo, NY.

Sus resultados verifican las resoluciones del Marshall Project, que generalmente concluye que la inmigración indocumentada no tiene ningún efecto en el crimen violento y que está asociada con reducción en el crimen de propiedad, sobretodo.

Yulin Yang, un miembro del equipo investigativo de Adelman, comentó que los inmigrantes documentados o no, “típicamente vienen a América a buscar trabajo, no a cometer crímenes.”

—Traducido por Carlos Drouaillet

Gobernador Newsom ayuda a siete exprisioneros contra deportación

By Leonard F. Brown
Journalism Guild Writer

El Gobernador de California Gavin Newsom uso su poder ejecutivo para proteger a siete ex-prisioneros de una potencial deportación por la administración de Trump, reportó *Los Angeles Times*.

El perdón de Newsom incluyó a dos refugiados de Cambodia. Los perdones fueron su primer acto de clemencia desde que tomó posesión como gobernador en enero.

“Al otorgar estos perdones a personas que están transformando sus vidas, el gobernador está buscando remover las barreras al empleo y al servicio público, restaurar derechos y responsabilidades civiles y prevenir consecuencias colaterales injustas para los convictos”, dijo la oficina del gobernador en rueda de prensa.

Hay Hov de Oakland, un refugiado de Cambodia perdonado por Newsom, fue convicto por conspiración para matar y por participación en una pandilla criminal en 2001.

Él fue puesto bajo la custodia de agentes de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE) en marzo, pero fue posteriormente liberado, reportó el L.A. Times.

Kang Hen de San Francisco, el otro refugiado de Cambodia, fue convicto de robo en 1994 cuando tenía 18 años. Hen tiene un hijo de 4 años y su pareja tiene problemas del riñón y del corazón. Hen fue puesto bajo custodia de ICE en abril.

Las familias de Hov y Hen huyeron al área de la bahía cuando ellos eran niños para escapar del genocidio en Cambodia en los 1980s.

Los perdones no terminaron automáticamente con el esfuerzo de deportación, pero removieron la ofensa criminal que motivaba la acción federal de desalojo, de acuerdo con el artículo.

Todas las siete personas que perdonó Newsom habían cumplido su sentencia.

Los otros cinco prisioneros perdonados fueron:

--Jeffrey James Allen, convicto por posesión de marihuana para la venta.

--David Paul Ingram, convicto por fraude.

--Joe Dick Rector, convicto por manejar bajo la influencia de alcohol y drogas.

--Reza Saltani, convicto por transportar o vender sustancias controladas.

--Dolores Ruth Taylor, convicto por transportar o vender sustancias controladas.

Los perdones se dieron por la continua presión del Presidente Trump sobre la comunidad de Cambodia,

presión que comenzó en el 2017 cuando Trump forzó a Cambodia a aceptar de regreso más deportados. Muchos de los cambodianos que enfrentan deportación vinieron a Estados Unidos legalmente cuando niños, escapando el brutal régimen de Khmer Rouge, reportó el Times.

Hasta el 26 de marzo, había 1,784 no-detenido nacionales de Cambodia, en los Estados Unidos con orden final de deportación. De estos, 1,294 tenían record criminal, reportó ICE.

Newsom habló sobre los perdones frente a miembros de la Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association con sede en Sacramento.

El comparó Trump con los demagogos en San Francisco, quienes apoyaron el Chinese Exclusion Act de 1882 (la primera prohibición de inmigración a un específico grupo de personas).

“Yo estoy constantemente tratando de entender el momento que estamos viviendo, la xenofobia, el nativismo que marca el populismo de este momento”, dijo Newsom. “Cualquiera de nosotros que somos estudiantes de historia sabemos que esto tiene precedente. Es difícilmente nuevo. Es muy familiar”.

—Traducido por Carlos Drouaillet

Governor's moratorium on death penalty has not stop capital sentences

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

The governor's moratorium on executions has not stopped some California district attorneys from seeking the death penalty in new cases they prosecute.

District attorneys “across the state have continued to pursue capital charges against defendants,” the Sacramento Bee reported July 17.

Lawyers working on behalf of Cleamon Johnson asked the state Supreme Court on July 1 to halt such

prosecutions, the newspaper said.

Johnson is a Los Angeles man accused of killing five people.

“In light of this paradigm shift, a California jury in a capital case cannot be expected to provide a fair and reasoned penalty-phase determination,” lawyers argued in a petition to the high court.

The court in a similar case halted the death penalty trial, the story said. Those actions indicate the court is taking the argument seriously, said

Robert Sanger one of Johnson's attorneys.

Prosecutors in their response to the court wrote any concerns about the governor's moratorium can be handled during jury selection.

“Jurors are routinely asked to set aside these types of things in order to reach a just verdict based on the evidence and the law,” prosecutors claimed.

“The real goal of this petition is to turn Governor Newsom's moratorium, which is nominally a reprieve, into a judicial abolition of the death penalty in California,” prosecutors wrote.

Ministry volunteers bring message of hope to San Quentin inmates

By Danny Nha Ho
Journalism Guild Writer

Where would you run for cover and whom would you take with you if you woke up tomorrow and the world had come to an end? Ask Pastor Tom Pham and his ministry team these questions and they'll tell you exactly what they would do – that is, running to God for cover and taking with them as many lives as possible.

It is this spirit that brought Pastor Tom, Pastor Loc, and Sister Kim to San Quentin many years ago. They have traveled a long distance; for Pastor Loc, it is an hour-long drive. Each owns a small business and has so many errands to run, but every Thursday, rain or shine, they find themselves sitting side by side with the men inside San Quentin's Protestant Chapel, leading and teaching a Bible study group. Even on Thanksgiving Thursdays, when his house is full of guests, Pastor Tom sneaks out and comes to San Quentin to worship God with the men.

Guest speakers are often invited from different parts of the world. They come from Texas, Arizona, Vietnam, and Germany to speak with the men.

"Attending the Bible study group while I was in San Quentin has enabled me to share with others. The group was so warm and welcoming. I felt like I was not alone. It got me closer to God," said David Le, who paroled in July 2019.

Since his release, Le obtained a job in accounting. He continues to attend college and reconnect with his

father. Nonetheless, Le still finds the time to attend Pastor Tom's church regularly. The lives that Pastor Tom and his ministry team have led have inspired Le to serve and give back to the community. "I recently volunteered to direct traffic at this year's annual event in Oakland's Chinatown, and I have also been volunteering at the Second Chance Life ministry group in San Francisco, where Pastor Tom presides," said Le.

Gary Vong, another former Bible study student, reflected, "Attending the Bible study group at San Quentin has helped strengthen my faith in God." Paroled from San Quentin more than a year ago, Vong has continued to receive strong love and support from the church. "With Pastor Tom, the difference is, he is doing it out of his love for God," said Vong.

Earlier this year, even while he was still on parole, but at Pastor Tom's invitation, Vong was able to travel to Seattle to give a testimony at a conference. He shared with the crowd how God changed him while he was incarcerated. "Many people were willing to receive my message with joy. The trip was great, and I needed that," Vong recalled appreciatively.

When a member of his ministry brothers is released from prison, Pastor Tom voluntarily takes a day off and picks him up at the gate. Pastor Tom then takes him out for his favorite dish as his first meal and spends some time with him. Financial support is also given at the church's expense.

What happens next is expected to fall into the magi-



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

Bible Study group with Pastors Loc and Tom and Sister Kim

cal hands of the fashionista, Sister Kim, who will then take the brother out shopping for new clothes. For those that have no taste for tight pants or for whom owning a pair of baggy pants is a matter of life or death, Sister Kim's message to them is, "good luck." "Stores no longer sell baggy pants these days. If you really want them, you will have to look really hard," Sister Kim noted playfully.

Finally, if the brother doesn't speak or read English well, Pastor Loc will provide him with a Bible in his native language. And not just any bible, but the best one out there. "When you give for God, you got to give the best," said Pastor Loc.

Over the years, more than 15 formerly incarcerated Bible study students have been added to Pastor Tom's church. For those who had no family or nowhere to go, Pastor Tom often opened up his home, offering a temporary place for them to stay until they were able to get back on their feet.

All have been working very hard to rebuild their lives. They rekindle positive family relationships with their loved ones. Many volunteer to serve and give back to the community and assist in the Second Chance Life ministry group in San Francisco that Pastor Tom teaches. None has returned to prison.

Today, Pastor Tom's church is mostly filled with formerly

incarcerated men. For some church members, this causes them to feel uncomfortable and to stop attending church. "Even with Christians, some can be very unforgiving; all we can do is pray for them," said Pastor Tom.

Many brothers inside San Quentin are looking forward to someday soon attending Pastor Tom's church. They speak of it with such resolve that it is certain their plans will come to fruition. "Prior to attending the Bible study group, my original plan was to parole to Sacramento, but now I will parole to San Francisco just so I can be a member in Pastor Tom's church," said Inmate Vadim Zakharchenko, who had a change of heart. Zakharch-

enko further told San Quentin News that he has not yet made his plan known to his mother and that she is going to be "pissed" when she finds out about it later.

Pastor Tom, Pastor Loc, and Sister Kim not only have been consistently exhibiting God's love by showing up every Thursday, but also by working tirelessly to turn many lives around both inside and outside San Quentin. Their words and actions have tremendously touched and affected many lives. Their sacrifices cannot be overstated, and they will, just as the Bible says, continue to serve as the salt and the light of the world for others for many years to come.

Ban Truyền Giáo Mạng Thông Điệp Của Hy Vọng Đến Với Tù Nhân Ở San Quentin

Bạn sẽ chạy trốn ở đâu và sẽ dẫn ai theo cùng nếu ngày mai khi thức dậy thế giới này đã đến ngày diệt vong? Nếu hỏi Mục Sư Tom Pham và ban truyền giáo của ông những câu hỏi này thì họ sẽ trả lời đích thật rằng – chạy đến Chúa để trốn và dẫn theo càng nhiều người càng tốt.

Cũng bởi tâm hồn này mà nhiều năm qua Mục Sư Tom, Mục Sư Lộc, và Chị Kim đã đến với San Quentin. Họ phải du hành trên một chặng đường dài; với Mục Sư Lộc, ông phải mất cả tiếng đồng hồ lái xe. Tất cả họ đều làm chủ một cơ sở thương mại riêng và ai cũng có nhiều công việc phải làm nhưng cứ mỗi Thứ-Năm, bất kể nắng hay mưa anh em cũng tìm gặp họ ngồi bên cạnh anh em trong Nhà Thờ Tin Lành ở San Quentin để hướng dẫn

và giảng dạy lớp học Thánh Kinh. Ngay cả Thứ-Năm của Lễ Tạ Ôn, khi mà nhà của ông tràn đầy khách mời nhưng Mục Sư Tom cũng trốn nhà để đến với anh em.

Khách phát biểu thường được mời đến từ nhiều nơi trên thế giới. Họ đến từ Arizona, Texas, Đức, và Việt Nam để chia sẻ với anh em. Anh David Lê đã được mãn tu trong Tháng-Bảy 2019 tâm sự rằng, "Đi nhóm trong lớp học Thánh Kinh ở San Quentin đã cho tôi động lực để san sẻ với nhiều người. Ai cũng ấm áp và nhiệt tình. Tôi đã không cảm thấy đơn độc và đã được đến gần với Chúa hơn."

Từ khi mãn tù đến nay, David đã đi làm bên ngành kế toán. Anh cũng còn đi học thêm ở trường đại học cộng đồng và hàn gắn lại quan hệ

với cha của mình. Dầu vậy nhưng anh cũng dành thời gian đi thờ phượng Chúa thường xuyên ở Hội Thánh của Mục Sư Tom. Tâm gương sáng mà Mục Sư và ban truyền giáo đã nêu đã đụng đến lòng David và anh đã dần dần thân phục vụ và san sẻ lại với cộng đồng. David chia sẻ rằng, "Gần đây tôi đã tình nguyện hướng dẫn giao thông cho lễ hội hàng năm tại Chinatown ở Oakland, và tôi cũng còn phục vụ tại hội truyền giáo Second Chance Life ở San Francisco do Mục Sư Tom quản nhiệm."

Anh Gary Vong, một cựu thành viên của nhóm học Thánh Kinh hồi tưởng rằng, "Đi nhóm Kinh Thánh tại San Quentin đã giúp tôi bồi bổ niềm tin." Được mãn tù từ San Quentin đã hơn một năm, Gary vẫn tiếp tục nhận lãnh

tình thương và sự trợ giúp từ Hội Thánh của Mục Sư Tom. Anh tâm sự rằng, "Sự khác biệt đối với Mục Sư Tom là ông làm mọi việc ấy bởi lẽ tình yêu mà ông dành cho Chúa."

Đầu năm nay, dầu Gary vẫn còn đang bị quản thúc, nhưng bởi lời mời của Mục Sư Tom, anh đã được đến Seattle để làm chứng ở một buổi hội nghị. Anh đã chia sẻ với mọi người rằng Chúa đã thay đổi anh trong chốn ngục tù. Gary nhắc lại với đầy lòng biết ơn rằng, "Nhiều người đã mở lòng đón nhận thông điệp của tôi với đầy vui mừng. Chuyến du lịch thật tốt lành, và tôi đã rất cảm động."

Khi mới thành viên từ nhóm học Thánh Kinh của Mục Sư Tom được mãn tù, ông sẽ nghỉ một ngày và đi đón người đó ở công. Kể đến ông sẽ mời người đó đi ăn món ăn khoái khẩu đầu tiên, rồi sau đó ông sẽ hàn huyên với anh ta. Tiên phục vụ cũng được ban cho anh ta từ ngân quỹ của Hội Thánh.

Điều tiếp diễn cực kỳ hấp dẫn với nhiều mong đợi sẽ được rơi vào đôi tay kỳ diệu của nhà tạo mẫu thời trang ấy chính là Chị Kim, là người sẽ đưa anh em đi sắm áo quần. Đối với những ai không thích quần bó hoặc làm chủ một chiếc quần rộng là một nan đề bán sống bán chết thì lời nhắn của Chị Kim dành cho họ là, "chúc may mắn." Chị Kim hài hước nói thêm rằng, "Cửa hàng bây giờ không còn bán loại quần rộng nữa, nếu

anh em vẫn muốn thì phải dốc lòng tìm kiếm."

Điều cuối cùng, nếu anh em không biết Tiếng-Mỹ, Mục Sư Lộc sẽ tặng anh em một cuốn Kinh Thánh bằng chính ngôn ngữ của anh em. Nhưng không phải bất kỳ loại Kinh Thánh nào đâu nhé, chỉ duy nhất một loại Kinh Thánh thượng hạng mà thôi. Mục Sư Lộc nói rằng, "Khi mình đại diện Chúa để cho thì mình phải cho những gì tốt nhất."

Qua nhiều năm, hơn 15 cựu tù nhân trong nhóm học Thánh Kinh đã được gia nhập vào Hội Thánh của Mục Sư Tom. Với những người không có gia đình hoặc không có nơi để đi, Mục Sư Tom thường cho họ ở tạm tại nhà của Mục Sư cho đến khi họ có thể tự lập được.

Anh em ai cũng làm việc tích cực để làm lại cuộc đời. Họ nhen lại quan hệ tốt lành với người thân. Có nhiều anh em tình nguyện phục vụ và ban phát lại cho cộng đồng cũng như chung tay xây dựng hội truyền giáo Second Chance Life ở San Francisco. Không có một anh em nào bị vào tù trở lại.

Hôm nay tin đồn ở Hội Thánh của Mục Sư Tom hầu hết là cựu tù nhân. Điều này làm cho một vài tin đồn khác cảm thấy khó chịu và ngưng không đi nhóm nữa. Mục Sư Tom buồn bã nói, "Ngay cả đối với cơ-độc-nhân, cũng có kẻ không có lòng vị tha; mình chỉ có thể cầu nguyện cho họ mà thôi."

Nhiều anh em trong San Quentin ao ước sớm ngày có được cơ hội đi nhóm ở Hội Thánh của Mục Sư Tom. Họ nói về điều này với đầy nhiệt huyết như chắc chắn rằng kế hoạch của họ sẽ đơm hoa kết trái. Tù-Nhân Vadim Zakharchenko chia sẻ rằng, "Trước khi đi nhóm trong lớp Thánh Kinh, kế hoạch ban đầu của tôi là sẽ trở về nhận lệnh quản thúc ở Sacramento nhưng bây giờ tôi sẽ về nhận lệnh ở San Francisco chỉ vì tôi muốn được làm một thành viên trong Hội Thánh của Mục Sư Tom." Zakharchenko đã quyết chí như vậy. Anh còn nói thêm với Tòa Soạn San Quentin rằng anh chưa hề thừa vói mẹ điều này và bà chắc chắn sẽ trở nên giận dữ khi bà biết được điều này về sau.

Mục Sư Tom, Mục Sư Lộc, và Chị Kim không những trung tín tỏ bày tình yêu của Chúa qua việc hiện diện vào mỗi Thứ-Năm, mà họ còn làm việc tận tụy để thay đổi nhiều cuộc đời từ hai phía trong và ngoài San Quentin. Lời nói cũng như việc làm của họ quả đã cảm hóa và chạm đến nhiều cuộc đời. Những chứng kiến của họ không tài nào nói hết được, và những chứng kiến này, giống như lời Kinh Thánh đã phán, sẽ tiếp tục được xem như là muối và ánh sáng của thế gian cho nhiều người cho mãi tận về sau.

—Tác giả: Danny Nha Hồ



Photo by courtesy of Pastor Tom

Members of Pastor Tom's church in San Francisco

Pelican Bay inmates break down barriers of stigmatization

The PEACE Group
By Little John Perry

Over the years, Pelican Bay has been considered the worst prison in California. Since its establishment in 1989, the 'Bay' has been infamous for housing the most hardened criminals the state holds—hence the even more infamous Security Housing Unit (SHU). There are countless tales of violence on both small and large scales. However, having grown weary of the endless cycles of bloodshed and indefinite terms of confinement—not to mention the way society viewed them—a group of prisoners, along with men who had been confined to the SHU for decades, came together in 2016 with a common goal: find a way to improve how we live in prison.

Thus, the PEACE Group was founded. PEACE is an acronym for "Prisoners Embracing Anti-Hostility Cultural Evolution." The idea for the PEACE Group came from Jessie Perez, who had been housed in the SHU for many years. Although Perez transferred to another prison before he could

see the idea become reality, it was not in vain. The idea was passed on to Tino Pese, who eventually built the group by bringing together a diverse group of men from all walks of life. These men put their heads together and quickly made the group a reality.

The PEACE Group on B-yard has been up and running since 2017. Group meetings consist of five or so men from each ethnic segment coming together and having conversations on topics such as mediation between individuals, mediation between races, reducing interracial violence, how to communicate more effectively, how to reduce tension on the yard, how to reduce the risk of violence, as well as other similar discussions—all for the purpose of creating a positive and less antisocial environment. The group also facilitates sports tournaments; teams are made up of men from all different races and associations. At one point in time, it was unheard of for all races to play sports with each other on



Photo CDCR

Members of the PEACE group in Pelican Bay State Prison

a maximum security GP yard, but in these events we see that we actually can put aside our differences and biases for a greater common good. We also want to learn and use proven conflict resolution methods to improve individual quality of life, including etiquette and the

proper treatment of women, learning how to respect and appreciate different cultures and backgrounds, and how to engage in productive conversations with different kinds of people.

The ultimate goal of the PEACE Group is to put an end to racial violence in

prison. Many wars in the past were due mainly to a lack of communication, knowledge and understanding. We want to prevent these things.

Don't get me wrong. Prison won't become peaceful overnight, but no goal can be achieved if we don't try. At this time I would like

to thank everyone at Pelican Bay who has put real effort into making things work. Without y'all, Pelican Bay would be the last place anyone wants to be.

Special shout outs to Ms. Silva and Ms. Roberts and the members of the PEACE Group.

Valley State Prison honors program participants Its annual Motivational Tour highlighted the group's progress

By Joseph Hader
Contributing Writer

For the past three years, the Youth Offender Program has held its annual Motivational Tour at Valley State Prison, celebrating its progress and honoring its participants and supporters.

This year's event was a bit different, however, more inclusive, more outside-the-box. The annual event had more entertainment and

musical performances than ever before, including a first-time prison performance by the Grammy award-winning R&B group Club Nouveau. It was also the first time non-YOP participants were allowed to attend and partake in any YOP event, a change signaling the program's growth.

On July 10, Correctional Counselor II/YOP Coordinator E. Alva opened the event highlighting the importance

of the moment. She then introduced VSP's Warden R. Fisher, Jr.

"Some of you count the days, and some of you make the days count," said Warden Fisher at the YOP graduation ceremony on January 9. At the YOP Third Annual Motivational Tour his speech was equally profound. In praising the Youth Offender Program, he described it as a positive alternative to prison's negative influences, seeing it as a catalyst for change and a source of light for those seeking genuine growth.

Shortly afterwards Club Nouveau took the floor singing five of their hit songs, including "Lean On Me." During that performance the crowd unified into a single body of excitement and harmony, singing along to the stirring words of "Lean on Me."

A heartfelt speech by YOP Mentor E. Quintanilla and poems by inmates E. Schuyler, C. Kilber, C. Abreu, and M. Moulayi followed the performance, drawing from the audience a warm applause.

During the event the talented inmate violinist H. Rufeal also won over the crowd, playing the national anthem with such powerful beauty it mesmerized the audience. This sort of experience was not only a first for many, but also a break with prison stereotypes and with prison norms.

Next, inmates J. Smith and B. Gonzalez performed solo songs; J. Santos and J. Ramos performed a duo, as did inmates L. Baca and E. Huapaya.

Inmates D. Jones, J. Ceja, and G. Gladden wrapped up the performances with some break dancing, lighting up the gymnasium with laughter as they "did the robot"—as they called it.

YOP Resource Officer B. Hernandez followed, delivering positive and encouraging words; his speech, though brief, was as effective as it was genuinely from the heart—a positive message of rehabilitation.

S. Prater, lead singer of Club Nouveau, and CCII/YOP Coordinator E. Alva respectively delivered the

event's final speeches, leaving listeners with a message of hope and encouragement.

Dignitaries and other honored guests in attendance included Director Division of Adult Institutions C. Gibson, CO/photographer (Avenal) A. Zavala, Re-evolution group B. Van Sickle, H. Lazar, and K. Dinsmoor; B. Vasquez, Chief Deputy Warden P. Vera, and Captain R. Baker.

All things considered, the teamwork of YOP partici-

pants, the tireless efforts of prison staff, including Public Information Officer D. Barksdale, YOP Coordinator/CCII E. Alva, YOP Resource Officer B. Hernandez and Warden R. Fisher, Jr. as well as the performances by special guest Club Nouveau, and everyone else, made this year's YOP Third Annual Motivational Tour not only entertaining, but also living proof that the Youth Offender Program keeps evolving—changing lives.



Photo by A. Zavala, Avenal

Club Nouveau S. Prater and V. English



Photo by A. Zavala, Avenal

CCII E. Alva and CCII R. Acosta



Photo by A. Zavala, Avenal

H. Lazar, B. Van Sickle, K. Dinsmoor, B. Vazques, and Re Evolution with YOP mentors

Big Wheels to the Big House covers victimization as well as hopes and dreams

BOOK REVIEW

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

"The world is cold and dark...Who cares?!" That's what's on the book cover of *Juvenile Offenders: From Big Wheels to the Big House* (2018) by Rosemary Jenkins.

The page-turner is a learning journey of what it's like to survive unthinkable victimization, learn to be accountable and then, in the process, generating personal hopes and dreams.

Juvenile Offenders is an anthology from about two dozen writers, all living in that cold, dark place called prison. That being said, it's hard not to care after taking in their stories — each from a person directly affected by the criminal justice system. Readers get the opportunity to peek into the writers' lives through candid commentaries that depict what it's like to live behind bars. Articles from San Quentin News are

included in the anthology, some that I've written.

Writer Mark Edwards *Vigil* is one of the strongest voices in the anthology. He navigates readers chapter by chapter, aptly called *Juvenile Offenders*, described as "...the collective journey through time of those whose articles are included in it. Each writer has run the gamut of the prison system and has come to realize that there is more to life than wasting what remains of it — lost in the grips of drugs, gangs, and criminality."

Writer Ronald Patterson describes the grip of criminality and coming to realize it as follows: my friends and I were fascinated with players, hustlers, gamblers, dealers, and gangsters because they played by their own rules, despite the law. Ignorantly, we admired and emulated them and would eventually turn into monsters who killed people and destroyed our community.

Patterson's ability to articulate the impact that his

crimes have had on others allows readers to witness maturity under the most unlikely circumstances; Patterson illustrates the resilience of the human spirit.

Juvenile Offenders is far more than the realization of mistakes and redemption thereof. It is divided into sections that address criminal justice reform advocacy, among the examples: it touches on the benefit of offering aid to college bound incarcerated students; it looks into the "ban the box" campaign (an effort to end employers from asking formerly incarcerated people about prison convictions prior to hiring); as well as the connection between mental health and incarceration.

Here's what Rosemary Jenkins writes about domestic violence:

"These victims are subject to constant threats, in part, because the offenders have the power to take advantage of their positions in the family hierarchy." Her goal in *Juvenile Offenders* is to "define, inform, and educate about

domestic violence, offering instruction in on how to recognize such cruel behavior and what to do about it."

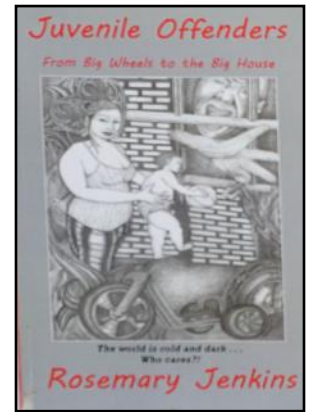
Jenkins' article in the anthology, *The Mentally Ill Do Not Belong in Jail*, is also solution based. She writes that people with mental health and drug abuse issues should be treated with appropriate counseling, not punishment.

The chapter, "Vignettes, Poems, and Artwork by Inmates — Writings Meant to Inspire" is the most entertaining section of *Juvenile Offenders*. It begins with nine pages of artwork that depicts the emotional toll incarceration takes on human

beings. From *Big Wheels to the Big House* is a drawing by A. Wilson that's used as the book cover. The first image is of a mother holding a child and is placed next to *Vigil*'s piece, *Thinking of You*, a greeting card style drawing of flowers and roses—followed by pages of poetry and illustrations that cover subjects such as redemption, cause and effect, aging while incarcerated, and hope.

Juvenile Offenders closes with *Vigil* writing about getting out of prison after 36 years and working toward preventing anyone from going down the road he once traveled. He now teaches

youngsters how to recognize and seek authenticity and care from the people around them.



California expands higher education access for prisoners

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

463,000 nationwide prisoners, said Brian Walsh of the *Vera Institute of Justice*.

A new program offering bachelor's degrees to prison inmates is thriving in Los Angeles County.

"It's about making people who can reach all their potential," said Bidhan Roy, an English professor for the program at Lancaster in the Mojave Desert.

The bachelor's program allows each student to take up to two classes per semester. It currently relies mostly on donations and/or private money from the nonprofit *Renewing Communities*. This nonprofit gave the school \$256,984 as a three-year grant for the classes.

California now spends nearly \$81,200 per year for each prisoner housed in a state prison. It only costs an additional \$5,000 for a prisoner's full time college enrollment, according to Wayne D'Orio for *The Hechinger Report* printed in *USA Today* on July 12.

Many of prison college education programs were gutted when President Clinton and then Sen. Joe Biden barred prison inmates from gaining Pell Grants to pay for college classes.

The Obama administration installed a pilot program to allow Pell Grants for some prisoners. As a result, the number of prisoners in college programs grew from 1,504 in 2016 to 5,000 prisoners in 2017, according to *USA Today*.

Since 2014, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation reports the number of inmates who received passing grades increased from 5,725 to 13,301 the following year.

Some lawmakers are trying to remove the ban entirely on inmates receiving Pell Grants. It would affect about

has 45 classes at these two prisons.

In June, the Andrew W. Melon Foundation gave Cal State LA a three-year grant of \$750,000 to continue the bachelor's program offered at CSP Lancaster.

One of the students in Lancaster, Bradley Arrowood, is now free on parole.

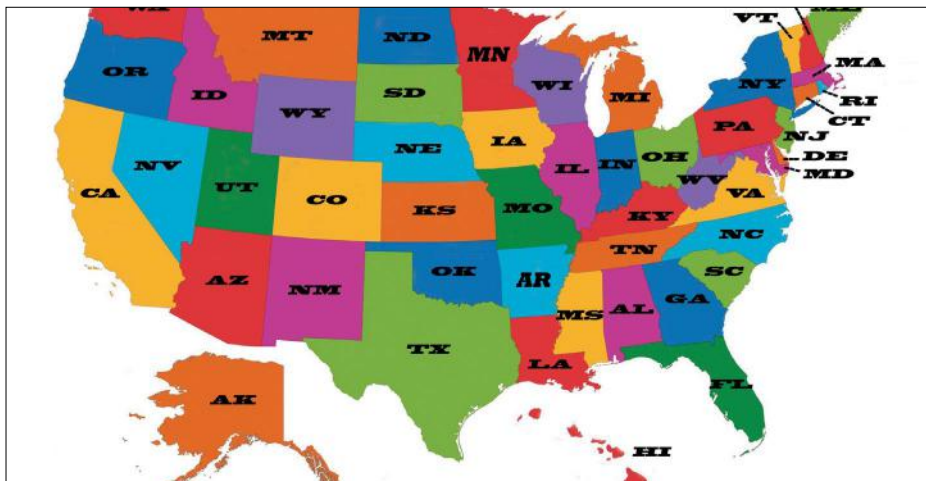
"When I was a kid, I was told I'd never amount to anything," said Arrowood. "Had I not gone in for this offense, I was either going to end up dead or kill someone else." In 1995 he was sentenced to life without parole, and I "deserved every bit of my sentence," Arrowood, now 49, said.

The Lancaster program was started by Bidhan Roy, an English professor, while he was volunteering at the prison. He saw the ambitions of the students and persisted with Tiffany Lim, Cal State LA administrator to start a Bachelor's degree program.

The success of the program is because of the students' willingness to learn and transform their lives. Many of them know that as a lifer serving a sentence for murder, or attempted murder, it's unlikely they'll have a career, said CDCR Lt. Richard Ochoa. But their studies also impact their family members, encouraging some of them to aspire to college too.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN
San Quentin 2019 Patten College Graduates



NEWS BRIEFS

USA — A new report Can't Pay Can't Vote by the Civil Rights Clinic at Georgetown Law shows that 30 states still keep people from voting by use of what can be called a poll tax. Eight states include explicit payment requirements within their election laws, two states retain permanent disenfranchisement laws and require payment of legal debts for clemency eligibility, and 20 states require completion of parole and or probation for voting rights restoration and payment of legal debt is included as a condition of one's parole or probation.

NYC — Mark Denny was awarded \$9.75 million by city officials for the 30 years he spent in prison for a rape and robbery that he did not commit, the *New York Post* reports. Court papers showed that "The NYPD's fabricated and/or coercive evidence, which was presented to the prosecution prior to trial through false written and oral reports and to the jury through their false testimony at trial, was the sole basis of Mr. Denny's conviction."

St. Paul, Minn. — Prison officials sent a record number of more than 8,000 people to solitary confinement in 2018, according to *WCCO/CBS*. Last June, corrections officials implemented new regulations that increase the maximum time allowed in solitary from 90 days to a year.

Oakland, Calif. — Civil rights lawyer, Anne Butterfield Weills, known for

ending the use of indefinite solitary confinement in California prisons, has been banned for life from communicating with prisoners amid allegations that she talked to incarcerated clients with contraband cell phones, *The Mercury News* reports. Weills alleged in a lawsuit, filed last March, that the ban is retaliation against her for joining a 2009 federal lawsuit against the state's use of segregated housing units in the state's prisons.

Chicago, Ill. — Cook County jail detainees are playing round-robin chess against detainees around the world, including England and Russia, *CBS Chicago* reports. The program began in 2012 as a way to help people develop critical thinking skills, patience and other qualities needed to navigate life behind bars and move inmates in the right direction when they get out of jail, officials say.

Chicago, Ill. — A new report by Reclaim Chicago, The People's Lobby, and Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice shows during Kim Foxx's second year in office, the number of sentences of incarceration decreased by 19%, reports of violent crime decreased by 8%, and that incarceration generally made communities less safe. The report recommends raising the threshold for felony retail theft charges to \$1,000, increased use of resolving felony convictions that do not lead to incarceration by connecting people to mental health and substance abuse programs and improved training of prosecutors to use discretion in seeking alternative

prosecutions and reasonable plea deals.

Mississippi — A lawsuit claims that the opportunity to win seats in the state's legislature are weakened for Black candidates by arbitrary voting rules, such as lifetime voting bans for a number of felonies that are mostly applied to Blacks, such as limber larceny and writing bad checks, according to the *Starkville Daily News*.

Tennessee — Death Row inmate, Stephen West, told prison officials that he wants to be executed by electric chair, *News Channel 5*, Nashville reports. West was convicted in 1986 for kidnapping and killing a woman and her teen daughter. He was sentenced to death the following year.

Hartford, Conn. — Corrections officials say they will begin testing prisoners for the Hepatitis C virus to avoid a lawsuit, the *Harford Courant* reports. State lawmakers estimate the cost for treatment at up to \$158 million, depending on how many of the 13,000 prisoners have the virus.

Phoenix, Ariz. — The state's incarcerated population has asked a federal judge to take over all healthcare operations in the state's prisons, *The Associated Press* reports. Attorneys representing 34,000 prisoners claim that the state has not made improvements that were promised nearly five years ago in a previous settlement.

Huntsville, Texas — Billy Jack Crutsinger, 64, was executed by lethal injection on Sept 4 for the 2003 killing of two women in their Fort Worth home. Crutsinger was the fifth person executed in Texas this year and the 14th executed in the US this year.

Seven more years to apply for state victims funds

By Alfred King
Journalism Guild Writer

California crime victims would have another seven years to apply for state victims funds under legislation introduced in the State Senate.

The current deadline is three years. Approximately 100 crime survivors fail to apply in time for about \$84,000 each year, *Witness LA* reported July 21.

The measure is SB375 by Sen. Maria Elena Durazo (D-Los Angeles.)

The California Victim Compensation Board "covers expenses that arise in the wake of a crime, including medical treatment, mental health counseling, burial expenses, and income loss," *Witness LA* reported.

Most who are eligible to receive funds simply do not

apply or by the time they realize funds are available, the three-year deadline for filing has expired, the story noted.

A survey conducted in 2013 by Californians for Safety and Justice estimates one out of three who are eligible do not file for compensation — with young people of color the least likely to know about the program.

In Depth: Kenneth Dozier Sr.

Kenneth Dozier Sr. is 49 years old from Los Angeles. He was convicted for attempted murder in 1997 and is serving a 38-to-life sentence, having served 24 years thus far.

He and I met on an unusually hot Saturday morning on West Block yard to do this interview. I had approached him about being featured in the newspaper a few months back, but I also wanted the timing to be right. This interview was conducted in the midst of the Intramural League playoffs, where his former team, The Franchise, is in the second round of the playoffs and have an opportunity to win a fourth title in five years.

AT: How long have you played organized sports?

KDS: Since the age of 10 or 11, playing basketball for Bethune Jr. High in South Central, Los Angeles.

AT: Basketball is only one sport you played growing up?

KDS: I also played Pee-Wee Pop Warner football for Jefferson High.

AT: So, you get to prison in '98, and you're at CSP-LAC (Lancaster), Level IV; what was the sports atmosphere there like?

KDS: It was high quality and big. A lot of participation amongst all the races.

AT: So, in the late '90s, on the Level IV's, it was well understood about interacting in sports with different races?

KDS: Being on a Level IV, it was so many politics that also interacted with sports. Betting, playing, talking about sports...reading about it, analyzing sports...you had a chance to learn the game in a harsh and sometimes violent environment, where sports was actually used to be a venting process and not a source of violence.

AT: You played against the #1 team on the facility at that time, the African Stars. What was it like beating that team?

KDS: Good. The African Stars had a stacked-deck team, lot of the best ballers, so I went to a team with some team players called The UnderDawgs, not the stars of the yard, and we took them down. I've always went against the odds, the underdog.

AT: In the intramural league here at The Q, you were a member of the team D Don't Do It. Talk about that experience.

KDS: It gave me a sense of being a member of a positive community.

AT: Now, I know that you could've made the SQ Warriors as a power forward in 2012-14, but you never chose to go out for the team. Why?

KDS: Because I wanted to play for a team that played for each other. The Warriors were one-dimensional and selfish.

AT: Then, you became a founding member of The Franchise here at The Q, the only team that has completed a three-peat in 2014-16. What was special about that team?

KDS: Camaraderie. Each member played for each other, no one was above the other. It was a cohesive unit. Sometimes we argued, but it wasn't a derisive or tear each other down type of argument, it was more "What do we need to do to overcome the adversity in front of us to win?" type of struggle amongst ourselves. It wasn't always pretty, and if you weren't on the team, it may have looked dysfunctional. However, once we decided on a path, we all went forward together and we won three straight titles.

AT: Yeah, beat my team Madd Skillz in the 2014 semi's too! (*We both laugh at this.*) In the third title run, against the Bay Area Ballers,

The Franchise was down 2-1 in the finals. In that pivotal fourth game, your team was down by 28 points halfway through the third quarter; in the final 20 seconds of the fourth, you had two steals and two three-pointers to get your team into overtime and eventually win that game. What did that feel like?

KDS: It felt good being a part of a winning community.

AT: Yeah, I get that, but that was some Reggie Miller v. New York Knicks type stuff in that game. What do you remember about the moment?

KDS: I remember everybody hollering about we was going to lose.

AT: You're in school now, getting that GED. What's the drive behind that?

KDS: In 2006, my daughter asked me to help her with a math problem and I couldn't help her. In that moment, I said that'll never happen again. I needed to better myself. When I was young, I didn't have a chance to really get an education. Now, I have kids and grandkids. At Soledad, I started after the GED, but was transferred (to The Q) in 2011. Right after I arrived in West Block—before I was even classified—I went



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Kenneth Dozier Sr.

to education. I talked to Mr. Shimmel and told him I need to be in education and nothing else. I was assigned two months later. I'm close to receiving that GED, too.

AT: Okay, test time! Name your all time all-star Los Angeles Lakers team...Go!

KDS: Huh? What? Point guard: Magic. Shooting guard: Nixon. Small forward: Cooper. Power forward: Worthy. Center: Abdul-Jabbar.

Off the bench, I'll get Kurt Rambis, AC Green, Jamal Wilkes, Brian Shaw, Byron Scott, Kobe Bryant and Glen Rice.

AT: You get the chance to talk to a 13-year-old Kenneth

Dozier...what's one sentence that you say to yourself?

KDS: "Be true to yourself."

AT: Thank you for giving this interview. Many people don't know we've known each other and have been friends since 1998 when we met at Lancaster, so I appreciate you sharing some of who you are. You get the closing statement.

KDS: No matter where you may be in life, you can always become a winner within yourself and with those that love you. Push forward, push forward, push forward, push forward...keep pushing and you will win.

—By Aaron Taylor

Sports Quiz Answers for July, August & September

- 'Marvelous' Marvin Hagler
- 'Downtown' Freddie Brown
- Ray 'Boom Boom' Mancini
- Roberto Duran 'Hands of Stone'
- David Klinger 'The Gunslinger'
- Andy 'The Red Rifle' Dalton
- Pete Rose: 'Charlie Hustle'
- Randy Johnson: 'The Big Unit'
- Roger 'The Dodger' Staubach
- 'Frantic' Fran Tarkenton
- Stacey Augman: 'Plastic Man'
- 'Mr. Big Shot' Chauncey Billups
- Bernard 'The Executioner' Hopkins
- Robert 'Big Shot Bob' Horry
- Rik Smits: 'The Dunkin' Dutchman'
- Giannis Antetokompo: 'The Greek Freak'
- 'Big Game' James Worthy
- Tim Hardaway: 'UTEP 2-Step'
- Isaiah Thomas: 'Zeke'

- Reggie Miller: 'The Knick Killer'
- David 'Big Papi' Ortiz
- 'The Great One,' Wayne Gretzky
- Drazen 'Petro' Petrovich
- Larry Bird: Larry Legend
- 'Broadway' Joe Namath
- Kobe 'the Black Mamba' Bryant
- Darryl Dawkins: 'Chocolate Thunder'
- Dominique Wilkins, 'the Human Highlight Reel'
- The Dominator, Dominick Hasek
- Marshawn Beast Mode Lynch
- Iron Mike Ditka
- Ervin Magic Johnson
- The Professor, Azuma Nelson
- Pernell Sweet Pea Whitaker
- Muhammad Ali, the Louisville Lip
- Steve Air McNair
- Frank the Big Hurt Thomas
- Walter Payton Sweetness
- John Madden Mad Man
- Mean Joe Greene
- Mark Eaton Man Mountain

- Kenny Sky Walker
- Dikembe Mount Mutumbo
- Vince Carter, 1/2 Man 1/2 Amazing
- Ted Dibiassi, the Million Dollar Man
- Dwayne The Rock Johnson
- Thomas Hitman Hearn
- Mr. October, Reggie Jackson
- Joe Louis, the Brown Bomber
- James Bone Crusher Smith
- Earl The Pearl Monroe
- Walt Clyde the Glide
- Frazier
- John The Beast Mugabe
- Larry Johnson Grand Ma Ma
- Minnesota Vikings Purple People Eaters
- Vernon Mad Max Maxwell
- Cynthia Cooper, Lady Jordan
- Washington Redskins The Hogs
- Kevin Durant the Slim Reaper
- Derrick Pooh Rose
- Pittsburg Steelers, The Steel Curtain

- Florence Griffith-Joyner, Flo Jo
- Chad Ocho Cinco Johnson
- Eldridge Tiger Woods
- Cincinnati Reds, The Big Red Machine
- Dominique Dawes, Awesome Dawsom
- Dennis Rodman, The Worm
- Susie Chapstick Chapman
- Cleveland Indians, The Tribe
- Kurt Rambis, Clark Kent
- Renaldo Skeets Neimiah
- New York Giants, The G-Men
- Jimmy Soopa Fly Snooka
- Rowdy Roddy Piper - WWF
- Willie Mays, the Say Hey Kid
- Willie Stretch McCovey
- Willie Flipper Anderson
- Billy Johnson White Shoes



What drives Fidelio?

Carlos Drouaillet Journalism guild writer
Fidelio Marin was born in 1970 at the San José farm, near the city of Izucar de Matamoros, Puebla in Mexico. His childhood was one of poverty, limitations, and chores around the house without time to study. Marin grew up without learning how to read nor write: there weren't any schools in town. Marin is now a prisoner at the q (SQSP), serving a 16 years-to-life sentence. Prior to SQSP, Marin has participated in self-help programs in search of his rehabilitation.

Cd: What motivated you to focus and be positive?

Marin: While attending the self-help programs I knew I had to change and not the other people; the marathons I've run and the programs at SQSP have helped me so much in my rehabilitation.

Cd: What motivated you to start running?

Marin: In 2013 at Soledad, a friend invited me to run to fight my obesity; I expected to lose weight, but I enjoyed it and continued running as a way to meditate.

Cd: What was your line of work prior to your incarceration?

Marin: I worked for a landscape-company as a gardener when I arrived in 1986. I learned the trade and started my own business in 1998. My landscape business allowed me to provide for my family's needs, but unfortunately with the extra income, I started drinking constantly. Consequently in 2008 I lost my business and my freedom while intoxicated provoked the death of a person unintentionally.

Cd: How were you as a free person?

Marin: I was a good worker; but my addiction to alcohol led me to make the wrong decisions.

Cd: How has prison impacted your life?

Marin: It impacted me for the better. Today, I make good decisions, without lies and without anger; I even refrain from using profane language.

Cd: How did you adjust to your life in prison?

Marin: I asked for advice from inmates that appeared

honest and by listening to the counselors.

Cd: What goals do you plan to reach during this time?

Marin: Remain positive, work daily on my rehabilitation and graduate from GED.

Cd: How is your relationship with family, friends and clients while being in prison?

Marin: My family is good. I give advice to my children and brothers; they take the advice better now than when I was a drunk.

Cd: What are your biggest accomplishments while in prison?

Marin: A better relationship with God and 11 years of sobriety.

Cd: What are your immediate plans once paroled?

Be a good husband, father and son. Open a business and work hard in the community and to help in rehabilitative programs, as well as motivational programs for the youth.

Vicente Gómez y martin Gómez trained together with Marin to keep in shape. "Marin has been of great support to me." Commented v. Gomez, and concluded, "and I had helped him too."

SQ A's end streak; 35-2

It was a normal Saturday evening at The Q during an abnormal baseball season.

A team came in for the second game of a double header. Earlier in the day, The A's won the game by their usual double digit margin.

Except, this evening, August 31st, 2019, with The A's 33-0 and looking to get to 34-0, a young 21yr old pitcher from Pacoima, Ca. took the mound.

They called him "Bucky."

He wore glasses and looked very studious on the mound, warming up and seemingly nonchalant.

Bucky threw a curve ball and a 2-seam fast ball that caught The A's off guard. Bucky was looking to make a statement with his pitches.

The A's, after winning easily in the morning game, made a crucial error, well, two crucial errors. The coaching staff can be said to have underestimated the Southern California Baseball Association after their performance just 6 hours earlier.

The A's batted 14 players, way too many.

Then, there was Bucky.

The Southern California Baseball Association ended the San Quentin Athletics win streak and Bucky was given the game ball by team in a show of their usual good sportsmanship.

The A's are now 35-2 as they've started another streak.

Let's put the winning streak into perspective:

NCAA Division I, University of Connecticut Women's Basketball: 111 games.

NCAA Division II, Ashland University Women's Basketball: 73 games.

NCAA Division III, Washington (MO) Women's Basketball: 88 games.

NCAA Division I, UCLA Men's Basketball: 88 games.

NCAA Division II, Winona State University Men's Basketball: 57 games.

Julio Caesar Chavez started his streak on Feb. 5, 1980 and was ended Sept. 10, 1993, going 87 straight wins.

Minor League Baseball, Salt Lake City Trappers of the Pioneer League: 29 games.

The 71-72 Los Angeles Lakers went 33-0 from 11/5/1971 - 1/9/1972...

The San Quentin Athletics may never be recognized by "legitimate" sporting outlets for their accomplishment, The A's are the best team that The Q has seen in its sports lifetime, and they have set a gold standard for the other sports teams to aim for.

By Aaron Taylor



Photo courtesy of Patrick Blake "Bucky" outside SQ

Cousins get MVP & MOP at I.B.L. All Star Game

By Aaron Taylor
Sports Editor

Keiandre Arrington and Ronny Murillo are cousins who are housed in West Block at The Q.

They both play for the Intramural League team "Hit Squad." However, in the All-Star game, they played against each other.

Murillo scored 32 points, three rebounds, one assist, five steals and was voted the All-Star game's Most Valuable Player. Arrington scored 31-points, 21 rebounds, three blocks and was voted Most Outstanding Player of the losing team.

"I felt unstoppable. I was knocking everything down," said Murillo, who also goes by A.I. "Some people thought all I do is shoot, so I went to the rim and now they know my offensive game is balanced."

The league has seven teams, so players were picked at random, pitting teammates against one another. The teams were picked by league referees Ismael Freelon and Robert Lee.



Cousins Arrington(r) and Murillo(l), after Intramural League All Star game

Photo by FirstWatch

"This is one of the best All-Star games I've ever played in," said Top Shotta'z Jamal "Do It All" Harrison. "It was fun and competitive. I'm really proud of A.I. and Big Baby (Arrington). They showed their a---s off today, big time."

Team Ishmael came out running, taking an early 10-point lead, which eventually grew to a 27 by half-time.

In the fourth quarter, Lee put together four players from The Franchise, the league's number one team. They cut deep into the lead, bringing the teams within three points with under two minutes left.

In the final two minutes, the game came down to fouls and free throws. This is where Murillo earned his MVP status, knocking down six free throws and securing victory for Team Freelon 89-84.

"When I play basketball, whether for the SQ Warriors or in the Intramural league, I don't feel like I'm in prison. It takes me somewhere else, makes me feel good," Arrington said. "That's how the All-Star game felt, it felt like freedom."

What does Sports@The Q mean?



Bryant Brothers and members of the Inside Tennis Team, 2011

Photo by xxx



Ex-NFL QB Andrew Walters (Far right, back row) and The Chosen Flag Football team, 2017

File photo

Prison Sports Ministries has been involved with the sports program at CSP-SQ for almost 18 years. It began with Pastor Earl Smith and the San Quentin Pirates Baseball Team in 2002. That evolved into the San Quentin Warriors Basketball Team in 2004, followed by The Q's All Madden Flag Football Team in 2007. Athletes who play sports against prisoners at The Q say it's one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives..

When asked their reaction to an email inviting them to play ball at San Quentin, the usual answer is, "Sign me up! I wanted to come in here!"

First-time players have described the experience as they turned the corner at the top of the hill and saw the field and the yard below:

"That's when it really hits you: you're inside of San Quentin State Prison..."

"It's surreal"

"The view of Mt. Tamalpais just over the wall is gorgeous, then you look and see guys walking around in blue and exercise clothes..."

"It's just something you have to experience..."

Many stars have competed at The Q, including Spaceman Bill Lee and Ted Lilly of the MLB; Ronnie Lott and Jim

Harbaugh of the NFL; Mark Jackson, Steve Kerr and Bob "Big Money" Myers of the Golden State Warriors.

During the early days of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, former 49ers Eric Reid and Robbie Gould participated in a sports and social justice forum.

Even Rinaldo "Rugger" Ardizoia, the oldest of the great Yankees, came to watch an opening day game here. Imagine that.

Let's not forget that NASCAR drivers and pit crewmen have come to The Q.

Then, there's the most important athletes, the coaches

and sponsors of our sports programs:

Frank Ruona, Kevin Rumon, Jim Malone, Tim & Diane Fitzpatrick, Mark Stevens, Superior Court Judge Craig Mitchell, "Fast" Eddie Hart - '72 Olympian. Mike Kremer, Steve Reichardt; Bob Sharakan. Ken Philpot of the baseball program. Prison Sports Ministries was built and supported by Bill "Dollar Bill" Epling, Don "Donnie Fabulous" Smith and Ted Brewster. There are dozens more who are not named that support all the leagues here at The Q.

Visitors have broken their noses, dislocated their fingers,

scraped and bloodied their knees.

Some have earned nicknames for their game and their humanitarian work.

Others cussed out the referees. They cuss more than we do, but we have to be on our best behavior; Prison Sports Ministries players pray before and after each game.

The prayer is the example we set each week and can be replicated outside.

Visitors bring in their wives, children, girlfriends, parents and grandparents and acquaint them with team players.

"Babe, this is my friend Alan, the one they call 'Black.'"

"Mom, this is Anthony, '1/2 Man 1/2 Amazing.'"

"Son, this is Brandon, the pitcher I told you about in that 'Religion of Sports' piece."

"Dad, this is Dwight, the guy I told you about that ran past me for that touchdown."

"Grandma, this is Austin, the phenomenal baseball player I told you about; Austin, my granny is a huge baseball fan and I've told her all about you."

This is what "Sports@TheQ" is all about.

—By Aaron Taylor



Photo by Eddie Herena SQN

Draymond Green and Nancy Mullane, 2016



File photo

Dumont, Rinaldo "Rugger" Ardizoia, Bonilla-Thompson 2017



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Jimmy Conrad and Angel Villafaña, 2019



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Chief Public Defender Brendon Woods informing SQ community about the changes made by his office to better represent its clients

Woods said, "There are actors in the system that don't want to see change"

ALAMEDA Continued from Page 1

Woods told the nearly 30 prisoners that he takes his job very seriously.

"When we think about Oakland, home of the Black Panthers. But it wasn't until 2012 that there has been a Black public defender," Woods said.

As to why he became a public defender, Woods said, "I was born into a lower income home that was impacted by the system. I want to advocate for people so that they are not negatively impacted by the system."

The three-hour forum included a PowerPoint presentation by Woods to explain a "Holistic Defense." Slide-by-slide, he explained the duties of a civil attorney, the Clean Slate Program, the need for social workers and family defense attorneys as well as

immigration attorneys, parent advocates, investigators and policy and community organizers.

"There are actors in the system that don't want to see change," Woods said regarding the difficulty in getting these programs running.

As an example, he pointed to changing the Public Defenders Mission Statement.

The old mission statement read, "The mission of the Public Defender is to provide a fully competent, effective and ethical defense for each client whose representation has been entrusted to the office; to conduct that representation in a manner that promotes fairness in the administration of justice; and to provide all mandated legal services in a cost effective and efficient manner."

After reading the mission statement, Woods looked to the audience and said, "To provide all mandated legal services in a cost effective and

efficient manner. What does that mean?"

He then read the new mission statement, "To zealously protect and defend the rights of our clients through compassionate and inspired legal representation of the highest quality, in pursuit of a fair and unbiased system of justice for all."

He discussed Clean Slate, which is a program designed to assist people in obtaining or improving employment opportunities as well as improving access to housing and other services.

Of the 2,854 motions filed in 2018 for Clean Slate, 2,746 were granted. Woods said Clean Slate has a 96% success rate.

He also brought up the Social Worker Program (SWP).

To date, SWP served over 1,155 people. The courts accepted 85% of treatment plans instead of incarceration and 88% of clients who received treatment did not recidivate.

Woods is the first African American to be appointed Chief Public Defender in Alameda County and is the only Black Chief Public Defender in California.

To put the challenges that Woods faces in context, other

Alameda County department budgets are:

- Sheriff – \$299.5 million
- Probation – \$114.3 million
- District Attorney – \$69.2 million

• Public Defender – \$40.7 million

The Alameda County Public Defender office is comprised of 105 attorneys, 18 investigators and 38 support staff to manage 3,300 new cases monthly.



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Ismael Rosas, social worker Manuel Ortiz, and Johnathan Rivas listen to other participants



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Alameda's Chief Public Defender Brendon Woods, Antoine Smith and public defender's staff



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Public Defenders and inmate at the forum



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Forum participants listening attentively to Woods' speech



Photo by Javier Jimenez, SQN

Inmates and members of the Alameda Public Defenders Office exchanging ideas and sharing personal stories