



San Quentin News

THE REVA & DAVID LOGAN FOUNDATION

WRITTEN BY PRISONERS – ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE



VOL. 2018 NO. 1

January 2018 Edition 100

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

www.sanquentinnews.com

POPULATION 3,965



The 100th Edition



Shaka Senghor visits prison

Shaka Senghor, a consulting producer for Oprah Winfrey's new program, "Released," which debuted on the OWN cable television network, visited San Quentin State Prison in November 2017.

5



Musicians rocked chapel

Incarcerated musicians sharing the stage with a gospel duo made up of a retired associate warden and a prison staffer, local Bay Area musicians, and a guitar/violin duo from Sacramento.

11

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

As *San Quentin News* celebrates its 100th published edition since the newspaper was revived in 2008, the paper's history is not known to most of its readers. *The News* has a predecessor. It's *Wall City News*, a publication started at San Quentin in the 1920s. It ran until the mid-1930s before it ceased operation.

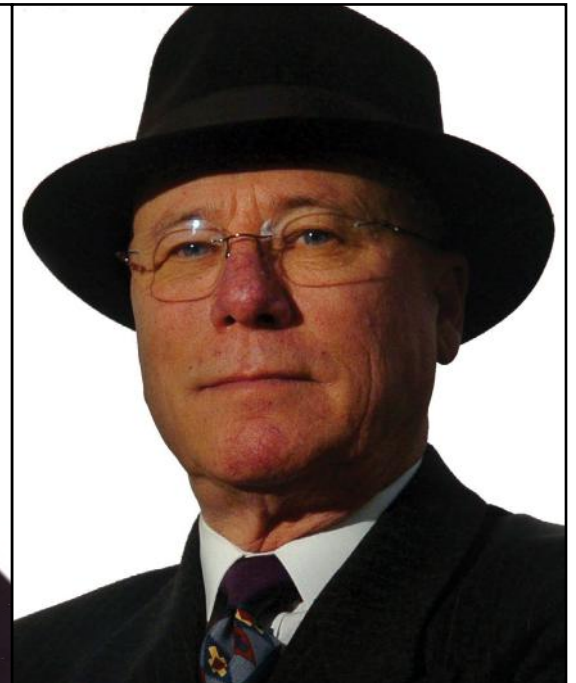
Several years later, Warden Clinton T. Duffy had an idea. In his book, *The San Quentin Story*, he wrote, "The grapevine throbbed with weird gossip ... I decided that the obvious answer, if we could swing it, would be a regular prison paper." He implemented a plan and "The first edition of *San Quentin News*, hand-set and printed on gaudy green paper, was published Dec. 10, 1940."

According to a 2012 article in *The Nation* magazine, "New laws and policies ballooned prison populations, strained budgets and led to an increasingly hostile attitude by the public toward prisoners. Journalism behind bars nosedived. From a high of 250 in 1959, prison newspapers and magazines today number less than a dozen."

At different periods throughout its history, the *News* has been suspended or shut down for different reasons, once after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled prisoner-run newspapers could not be censored by prison administrations. In the mid 1980s, the paper



Warden Clinton T. Duffy



Warden Robert Ayers, Jr.

File Photos

shut down and that interruption lasted more than 20 years. It was the last California prison newspaper.

As decades passed, *San Quentin News* was all but forgotten until Warden Robert Ayers Jr. decided in April 2008 to revive the out-of-use publication. He started by recruiting adviser John C. Eagan, who was later joined

by Joan Lisetor, who had worked with the newspaper in the 1980s, and Steve McNamara. They're retired journalists, editors and publishers. They were tasked with the responsibility to work with inmates who knew nothing about journalism.

In June 2008, Editor-in-Chief Kenny Brydon and several staff writ-

ers produced the first edition of the monthly *San Quentin News* inside the prison's print shop in more than two decades. Five-thousand copies of a four-page, black ink on gold-rod paper were distributed inside San Quentin.

See 100th on Page 12



File Photo

Former San Quentin Warden Jill Brown

Jill Brown reflects on her time as warden

Former San Quentin Warden Jill Brown's career allowed her to reinvent herself many times. In the process, she helped to improve the lives of inmates through rehabilitation.

Brown started her career working at a state hospital. She later found her

way to what was then the California Department of Corrections in San Francisco as a regional parole officer. She became a sergeant at San Quentin for a few years in the 1980s but didn't wear a uniform.

See *Brown* on Page 4

Addressing social justice inequalities



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Dr. Harry Edwards giving a very heartfelt speech to the audience as Brian Asey records and Van Jones and Pastor Earl Smith listen in the background

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

A roundtable centering on social justice inequalities in America took place Dec. 12 between two unlikely groups at the most unlikely place.

Earl Smith, San Francisco 49ers pastor, led a team of Bay Area sports personalities into San Quentin State Prison for a discussion with an audience of about 100 people, including inmates, community volunteers and prison staffers.

A major topic — the challenges athletes face when speaking publicly about mass incarceration and racism.

To protest the treatment of Blacks in America, 49er safety Eric Reid took a knee during the national anthem, along with ex-49er quarterback Colin Kaepernick. He didn't want Kaepernick's message to be misunderstood.

"Pastor Earl said kneeling is OK," Reid noted.

Reid continued that his mother and cousins, who served in the U.S.

military, do not feel disrespected by his peaceful protest.

The Arnulfo T. Garcia Sports and Social Justice Roundtable was moderated by Van Jones, a CNN political commentator and author of *Beyond the Messy Truth: How We Came Apart, How We Come Together*, (2017).

Jones founded #Cut50 in 2015, an organization aimed at reducing the U.S. prison population in half by 2050.

See *Justice* on Page 23



San Quentin News is written and produced by prisoners. We are supported solely by grants and donations from the outside community. To make a donation, visit our website at: sanquentinnews.com or send a tax-deductible check or money order payable to:

Social Good Fund
"Friends of San Quentin News"
P.O. Box 494
San Quentin, CA 94964
In the check memo section, please write
"Friends of San Quentin News."
Thank you for your support!

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
 Graduate School of Journalism



CDCR's Information Officer critiques *San Quentin News*

By Richard "Bonaru" Richardson
 Editor-in-Chief

One of *San Quentin News'* biggest supporters is also its biggest critic.

Krissi Khokhobashvili, information officer for California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (CDCR), who worked for eight years as a journalist, reviews all of the newspaper's stories, correcting grammar and fact-checking. If there are any mistakes, she's the first person to tell you.

Khokhobashvili began her job with CDCR right around the time the *San Quentin News* gained notoriety. When the newsroom won the prestigious James Madison Freedom of Information Award in 2014, Khokhobashvili, Jeffrey Callison and Terry Thorton came from CDCR headquarters to visit the *San Quentin News* staff.

As an eight-year journalist who was new to the CDCR team, Khokhobashvili was given the responsibility of working closely with the *San Quentin News*. Being that the *San Quentin News* is a small prison newspaper, Khokhobashvili believed she'd meet its staff once, and that would be that.

She had no idea what to expect during her first visit to San Quentin or any of the other prisons in California. It was a disorienting experience at first.

"When I saw Watani



Rahsaan Thomas, Krissi Khokhobashvili and Juan Haines sharing a laugh together

[Stiner], he scared me," she said. "He looked mean, and he didn't smile." Watani was a staff writer, who had a column called 'OG' Perspective. Khokhobashvili said that after meeting Watani she had no reason to be afraid of him and that he turned out to be a

very nice, peaceful, talented writer.

Her exposure to the *San Quentin News* staff and the likes of those like Editor-in-Chief Arnulfo Garcia began to shift Khokhobashvili's understanding of rehabilitation in a profound way.

"Partnering with the *San Quentin News*, I see big possibilities," said Khokhobashvili. And having a journalism career before she started working for CDCR helped her out tremendously.

Though at first a stranger to the prison experience, she is no stranger to the world inside a newsroom. She began writing her sophomore year in high school, when she joined the school newspaper. Her curiosity wandered through all the profiles of teachers and classmates she wrote about. Soon, it began to wander beyond campus news and into her small community in snowy Montana.

"One day I noticed this house appeared out of nowhere in the middle of a field in the town I lived in," said Khokhobashvili. "I thought I was seeing things."

She was curious and wanted to know where that house came from. Powered by journalistic instincts, Khokhobashvili researched

it."

The story ran in the school's paper, and even in the town's local publication, but they reprinted her work without giving her a byline or any credit.

That didn't stop her. She became the class valedictorian and majored in journalism at the University of Montana. Khokhobashvili continued her work in California, running two weekly newspapers and a magazine with a short-handed staff.

During her time as a copy editor, reporter, city editor, features editor and, eventually, editor, the newsrooms where Khokhobashvili worked and managed and earned several awards in the California Newspaper Publishers Association's Better Newspaper Contest, including for design, photography, opinion writing, special sections and general excellence.

At the same time, journalists had to brace for an unexpected transition when the internet went mainstream and newspapers and publications had to fight to preserve their livelihoods in a new age of digital media.

"I lost most of my budget, had to cut back on staff, and ended up working 60 hours a week," said Khokhobashvili.

She worked so much that "one night while working alone I went outside to get a soda, and left my keys in the office," recalled Khokhobashvili. "I locked myself out. When I called

my husband to pick me up, he was happy because he knew that I couldn't continue working that night."

Since her time with CDCR, Khokhobashvili has traveled to 23 California prisons. She is making sure that society recognizes the aspects of the rehabilitation that CDCR represents from personal experience.

"I always reach out to news organizations, asking them would they like to come inside of a prison so that they can see what rehabilitation looks like," said Khokhobashvili. "It would be better for them to report on stories if they had first-hand knowledge."

"I could have sat at my desk for 40 hours a week answering phones, but what good would that do if I have to write about what goes on inside of a prison?" she said. "I don't know what it's like to be in prison, sleeping in a cell at night. The only way I was going to make a difference reporting on the people in prisons is to get the story directly from prisons."

Her first story was about a music band at California State Prison-Solano. "Although the people there were welcoming and nice to me, I have been to places that were not so kind," said Khokhobashvili.

Lately Khokhobashvili has taken on more responsibilities at work so she does not write as much as she would like. However, she states that, "I wish every prison had a *San Quentin News* because everyone has a story, and their stories need to be heard."



Information Officer Krissi Khokhobashvili

File Photo



Krissi Khokhobashvili and the late Arnulfo Garcia in a very heated conversation

Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Oprah Winfrey visits Pelican Bay State Prison

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild
Chairman

Media powerhouse Oprah Winfrey brought the stories of California inmates into millions of American living rooms during a recent CBS 60 Minutes program.

Oprah entered the notorious Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit (SHU) to report on its changing conditions. She also debuted *Released*, a multi-part series on her cable network, OWN.

The six-part series follows the lives of six Black men and women as they reintegrate back into society. One of those featured is a former San Quentin inmate who once had a life sentence under the Three Strikes Law.

In the *Released* series San Quentin's own Kevin Carr was featured on the program and told his story of emerging from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) after 19 years.

Carr was convicted of stealing \$156 in children's clothing and received a 25-to-life sentence under California's Three Strikes



Photo by Terry Thornton

Oprah Winfrey interviewing Secretary Scott Kernan

Law. He regained his freedom thanks to a series of state propositions reducing the prison terms of non-violent offenders.

A judge resentenced Carr to 21 years. Carr spent his time in prison seeking to improve himself. While Carr was at San Quentin, he participated in numerous programs: a Christian fellowship group called Graced Out Ministries; Project REACH, a literacy program geared toward at-risk youth; and Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG), a pro-

gram that puts crime victims and offenders together to seek healing.

"I'll never forget back in 1997 when my judge sentenced me. I felt like my life was over," Carr said on camera in the first *Released* episode. "Now, I'm coming into a new world that I'm foreign to because so many things have changed. I feel like I'm at a disadvantage."

In an interview by phone with *San Quentin News*, Carr said he is currently working a union job. He credits San Quentin's CTE labor train-

ing course for helping him find a job when he got out of prison.

"It's been liberating," Carr said. "I have a sense of freedom. No other words for it. My morals and values have changed drastically."

"Being home, just being able to buy coffee, pay my rent, take my grandson to the beach, I've learned how to be grateful for the little things. It's liberating. I don't need a whole lot to be happy," Carr concluded.

As Oprah entered Pelican Bay, she wore her hair pulled back, signature wide-rimmed glasses and a green anti-stabbing vest as she walked and talked to Scott Kernan, the secretary of the CDCR.

The two discussed the SHU isolation unit, which some critics say constitutes torture. The two chatted about the effectiveness of the controversial segregated "supermax" prison over the years and the current reform movement to limit the practice of denying prisoners human contact.

Critics say the practice can cause mental illness, according to a *CBS News* article.

"How has your own personal perception of what it means to be an inmate—

a prisoner—how has that changed?" Oprah asked Kernan.

Kernan replied, "When I first came in, that person was the enemy. Now, 35 years later, I don't view the inmates as my enemy. They're people. They're all coming out to be our neighbors."

"Why wouldn't we spend the resources and create an environment, where ... when they come out, they're better people than when they got here? I just think it makes all the sense in the world. It's common sense," Kernan added.

After Oprah toured the SHU, Kernan helped remove her protective vest, and she was taken into the lower-security unit, where SHU pods had been reconfigured to have open cell doors and to allow prisoners to move around freely.

The transformation inside Pelican Bay came after California settled a class action lawsuit with the SHU prisoners. The ruling meant that CDCR could no longer confine prisoners in the SHU indefinitely. The suit also reformed the practice of "validating" a prisoner as a gang-member, thus making him a candidate for the SHU.

The *Released* series grew

out of an Oprah interview with author and former prisoner Shaka Senghor. Senghor, who spent 19 years in prison for second-degree murder after a drug deal went wrong, reported a *Huffington Post* article.

Senghor's book *Writing My Wrongs: Life, Death, and Redemption in an American Prison* moved Winfrey and helped her create this project to tell similar stories of redemption and refuge, said the *Huffington Post* article.

"I think narratives [can allow for] prison reform ... I mean, if you think about how we landed in this mess in the first place, it was based on the stories that were told about inner city kids being super predators and irredeemable," Senghor said in another interview with the *Huffington Post*.

"So, if those negative narratives can shape policy in a way that's harmful, then it only leads me to believe that the more positive narratives we have—the more honest, transparent [and] open human narratives that we're sharing—the more likely we are to shape policy that honors people's humanity," added Senghor, who eventually became a consulting producer on the series.

Alex Mallick fights for justice

By Richard "Bonaru" Richardson
Editor-in-Chief

As long as she can remember, Alex Mallick has considered herself a defender and protector, "a guardian of people."

"I dedicated my life to helping people," Mallick says. "I am so excited and full of energy when I wake up every morning and have something I believe in, a purpose in life."

For almost six years, Mallick has been in and out of San Quentin fighting for the rights of youthful offenders because she believes someone has to.

She volunteered at San Quentin for a youth offender lifer group called Kid CAT. Mallick says she was touched listening to the stories of juvenile offenders Charlie Spence and Anouthinh Pangthong.

Some of these youth offenders, like Curtis "Wall Street" Carroll, had just arrived at San Quentin when Mallick met them.

"I just couldn't believe that some of these juvenile offenders were sentenced to more than 50 years-to-life and could possibly die in prison," Mallick says. "I think people can grow and change. They just need hope."

While living in New York, Mallick worked at Rikers Island. She was surprised that some of her co-workers could demonize children. A co-worker told Mallick: "Don't look over at them. They're crazy. They're monsters," as she walked down a Rikers Island hallway.

"They were just kids and they were shackled together," Mallick explains. "Some were so little."

Although her journey to fight for youth justice was starting to take shape while working at Rikers Island, she gives all the credit to Elizabeth Calvin for guiding her in the right direction once she began working at Human Rights Watch.



File Photo

Alex Mallick in the Protestant Chapel at San Quentin

"Elizabeth Calvin and the Human Rights lens taught me about facts. I learned that facts are important and need to be corroborated with other facts when you're representing a criminal justice problem, or any problem," Mallick says. Calvin also taught Mallick that people directly impacted by the problem are the ones best suited to solve the problem.

Mallick considers Calvin one of the most influential and impactful persons she has ever met. She insists that the criminal justice issues are community issues and that every child is our child.

But by no means does Mallick claim to have the answers to our criminal justice problems. Nevertheless, she is thankful for those working to improve our system. "I found my community. I am just a small part of a bigger cause," she says.

Often, Mallick travels to Sacramento with a coalition of organizations and advocates for criminal justice reform.

This past year, Mallick was instrumental in getting criminal justice laws passed, such as SB 394, SB 395, SCR 48 and AB 1308.

After working with Hu-

man Rights Watch, Mallick went on to found her own organization, Restore Justice. Restore Justice works with currently and formerly incarcerated people, survivors of crime, district attorneys, legislators and others to restore our communities.

"I want to see people who have been in prison get out and do incredible things in their communities," she says.

Mallick says that because she doesn't like to see people misrepresented, she believes people must be empowered to tell their own stories. To that end she helped launch and supports a project in San Quentin called First Watch.

First Watch is the first video project of its kind where incarcerated men film, edit and score their own stories. They can be viewed on restorecal.org.

The videos produced have gotten hundreds of thousands of views online. Mallick wants to empower people to become leaders and advocates in their own communities.

"Restore Justice is not only for offenders," Mallick says. "I want everyone involved in the criminal justice system to feel restored."

Female inmates help battle fires



Photo courtesy of CDCR

Female firefighters at work

By Jesse Vasquez
Staff Writer

California's female inmate firefighters appreciate the opportunity to grow and give back to the community.

There are about 200 females in California's Conservation Camp program, which operates in collaboration with Cal Fire throughout the year.

"You get to save people's houses," said Melissa Logan, an inmate volunteer firefighter, who was at the Malibu Conservation Camp #13 according to NBC News. "You get to help people. It's really gratifying and empowering when you're driving by and people are holding up signs saying 'Thank you, firefighters,' and they're crying because you just saved their homes."

According to Bill Sessa, a spokesperson for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Conservation Camp #13 has been called out on 117 fires so far this year.

Although the training that inmate firefighters receive is significantly less than the three-year apprenticeship

that civilian firefighters are required to have, volunteer firefighters provide services that contribute to approximately \$100 million in savings for the state of California, *The New York Times* Magazine reported.

Female inmate firefighters earn about \$2 a day while at the camp and a dollar an hour while working on the fire line.

Another benefit of the inmate firefighter program is that inmates serve only half the time of their original prison sentence, Sessa said.

"A lot of women in the program are in there because they want to get to their children, but they don't need a broke-down mom when she gets home," said Romarilyn Ralston, a formerly incarcerated female who worked as a clerk at the California Institution for Women in Chino while training female firefighters, *PBS NEWS HOUR* reported.

Inmate firefighters face the same risks as civilian firefighters, if not more.

"We are the ones that do the line. We are the ones that carry the hose out. We're the line of defense," said Sandra

Welsh, a female inmate firefighter stationed at Malibu Conservation Camp #13, NBC News reported.

Last year, Shawna Lynn Jones, a female inmate firefighter, died while cutting a fire line to prevent the Mulholland Fire in Los Angeles County from spreading.

During election years inmate wages sometimes become political campaign issues.

"If you have people working for nothing or almost nothing, you've got slave labor," wrote Gayle McLaughlin in her campaign notes. McLaughlin, a former Richmond mayor, is a candidate for lieutenant governor of California. She supports the firefighting program but believes that inmates need to be paid fair wages.

"You have to be very positive and make the most of your situation and your circumstances," Helen Chung, a female inmate firefighter at Malibu's Camp #13, told NBC News. "But these are challenges that I've overcome, and I'm proud to be here."

Program celebrates 50 years of success

By Jesse Vasquez
Staff Writer

Project Rebound celebrates 50 years of giving former prisoners a second chance and promotes public safety by providing college educations to the formerly incarcerated.

Project Rebound functions as a supportive service for ex-offenders as they adjust to life on campus. They provide food vouchers, mental health support, counseling, and a variety of other pro-social services designed to ensure success.

"I found personally that it

helps having a support system with men and women who have been through some of the same experiences that I have, in terms of being adversely impacted by the criminal justice system," said Curtis Penn, San Francisco State University's Project Rebound director, in a KQED interview.

Project Rebound started in 1967, the same year that President Lyndon B. Johnson's Crime Commission issued their final report, "*The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*."

The commission revealed that lack of education, pov-

erty, race and community relations were contributing factors to crime. This gave President Johnson evidence to better address the underlying issues of crime in society.

The commission identified the need for community-oriented policing that involved residents working with police to help keep their neighborhoods safe instead of the brutal clashes between police and residents during the race riots of the 1960s.

The commission also concluded that setting more money aside for research and devising alternative ways to

deal with offenders could significantly reduce crime.

"For 50 years, this country has embarked on this madness of building more and more prisons and locking up more and more people in harsher and harsher conditions," said James Forman Jr., a Yale Law professor, during Project Rebound's 50th Ceremony, KQED reported. "But the question is, 'how are we going to move from some chatter to actual meaningful change?'"

The successful re-entry of ex-offenders, community support and collaboration are important components

for promoting public safety.

"It's easy for people to say, 'You know, get out of prison, get out of jail, go do the right thing,'" said Jason Bell, Project Rebound's regional director, "But what does that right thing look like if there are not places designed to receive people who are doing the right thing?"

There have been 150 graduates in the program, and they have an 86 percent six-year graduation rate, reported KQED.

John Irwin, the founder of Project Rebound, was a former prisoner. He earned a bachelor's degree from Uni-

versity of California at Los Angeles, a Ph.D. at UC at Berkeley, and then became a professor at San Francisco State. He wanted ex-prisoners to have an opportunity to get a higher education.

According to data from the Journal of Correctional Education 95 percent of the formerly incarcerated who seek education stay out of prison.

Project Rebound's dedication to assisting the formerly incarcerated achieve a college education contributes significantly, according to the commission's report, to "a safer and more just society."

BROWN

Brown holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with an emphasis in human resource management from San Francisco State University.

"I pretty much started my career in business services," said Brown. "It was very early in business services so the position wasn't established."

Brown rose to rank of associate warden in Soledad, where she worked on two different occasions, one of which involved solving labor, personnel and contract matters. From there she was promoted to correctional administrator and chief deputy warden.

Brown said she was fortunate working in a male-dominated culture, where the potential for discrimination and prejudice sometimes creates a hostile work environment for women.

"There were a lot of strong women who blazed that trail for me," said Brown. "I never experienced any harassment." She did, however, admit there were attitudes. "I think it depends on what prison you're at." She said remote prisons take a little longer to change opinions about women and other minorities, but it's not widespread, "and definitely not condoned by the administration."

Some men, not all of them, she said held to their biases. By the time she was in place, many of those issues that some male staff had toward women working in corrections had disappeared.

According to Brown, there was a time when women weren't allowed to walk the yard unescorted at San Quentin. "It was more reflective of society as a whole," she said. "As society evolves, we tend to see the same things happening" with corrections.

"They didn't have to figure out how to work with me," said Brown. It was how they acted that she says made it clear they wanted her there.

Reflecting on her time at San Quentin, Brown said as an institution it's able to get a lot done because of its many programs offered to inmates. While working at Soledad, she said inmates begged for transfer to San Quentin.

"At Soledad we didn't even know how to spell the word 'program,'" said Brown. She explained that at the time there were few rehabilitative opportunities beyond Alcoholics Anonymous, religion and substance abuse treatment so that made it

hard for prisoners.

"I retired at the end of 2007," said Brown. She now works on different projects like reentry hubs, changes to inmate classification and the inmate credit-earning program. "It's like a labor of love for me."

In the past three years, Brown has worked managing CDCR's Innovative Grants Program. She said the department gives grants to volunteer organizations that go inside prisons to work with inmates' rehabilitation.

The Last Mile program is funded to operate at Ironwood State Prison, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, California Institution for Women and Folsom Women's Facility, Veterans groups and GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power) are some of the other programs that will receive grant funding. "This gives them seed money," said Brown.

There are 40 to 43 programs funded at 17 prisons around the state, said Brown. Soon there will be 106 programs at 29 prisons. Grants will provide inmates around the state with better opportunity for rehabilitation and shorten the "have and have not disparity" between prisons with "embarrassing amounts of riches" and those with little, she said.

Brown said CDCR has to carry out court sentences and provide every person with a way not to come back to prison. "If even half could figure out how not to come back, it would be positive."

"San Quentin to me is a wonderful place," said Brown. "If you have to be in prison, San Quentin is the place. It helps when you start off with support for programs."

"From where I sit, (Warden Ron Davis) is really supportive of programs," said Brown. "Some things will work at a level-two (prison) that'll never work at a level-four." San Quentin is a level-two prison.

Brown also works with Soroptimist, a nonprofit organization operating in Marin County. "It's a coined word meaning the best for women and girls," said Brown. "We do scholarships for young women going to college." The organization also provides services to victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking.

"I keep dropping by San Quentin," said Brown. "Seeing graduations take place inside the prison is a good feeling. It's one thing to read about it, but it's another thing being there seeing it. I feel fortunate. San Quentin will always have a special place in my heart and in my life."

Youth correctional facility helps 15 offenders graduate

By Noel Scott
Journalism Guild Writer

Fifteen youth offenders graduated last month from Johanna Boss High School, which is inside the O.H. Close Youth Correctional Facility in Stockton.

"Do not let your past kill your future," said Clay Rojas, Parkside Church's pastor. Rojas, an ex-offender himself who served three years in federal prison, was the keynote speaker at the ceremony, reported Alameda Carpizo for the *Stockton Record*.

"It's possible, guys. It's possible that our life can look completely different," Rojas told the graduating class.

In the United States more than 50,000 people under the age of 21 fill our juvenile detention centers, the U.S. Department of Education reports.

Rojas said that these young graduates, who have been told they would never amount to anything, should take their graduation seriously as a great accomplishment.

"I'm nervous to see my

grandma, parents and girlfriend," said Jabin Villarreal, the 20-year-old class valedictorian. "But, it feels good for (them) to see me graduate. They told me they're proud of me."

Fellow graduate Javon Sullivan, 19, has already planned his future and looks forward to studying political science at Howard University in Washington, D.C. "I'm proud of myself for (graduating)," Sullivan said.

For Sullivan, graduating high school was a major milestone because not many people in his family have.

He really wanted to do this for his mother. "Even with these circumstances, she wanted me to come out with a diploma," he said.

"It's a big deal for them," said Larry Hammond, a teacher at the Johanna Boss High School. "For most of these kids, school was never a priority, and once graduated, they have earned a big step in their life."

Hammond also reminded the young graduates that high school shouldn't be the end of their education, and he encouraged them to continue learning.



Photo by Ike Dodson

Damani Watts part of the fifteen students graduated Johanna Boss High School inside the OH Close Youth Correctional Facility Oct. 20. The youth celebrated the occasion with attending family and DJJ staff

Louisiana prison reforms release 1,400 inmates

By David Taylor
Journalism Guild Writer

Louisiana has launched major prison reforms with the release about 1,400 inmates who were serving time for non-violent and non-sex offenses, reported the *KLFY Newsroom*.

The releases on Nov. 1 came after Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards signed a package of 10 criminal justice reforms to reduce the state's prison population by 10 percent. The reforms will scale back the parole/probation population by 12 percent over the next decade, according to *KLFY*.

"Ninety-five percent of people who are incarcer-

ated will ultimately return to our communities," said Lisa Graybill, deputy legal director of the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is an entity that is part of Louisiana's Prison Alternatives (LPA). "It is in everyone's interest for them to succeed upon release. To ensure that happens, we must provide a support system to facilitate success, prevent recidivism, and protect public safety."

Under the reforms, prisoners can earn 5 percent more in "good time" credit toward release. Previously prisoners were eligible for release after serving 40 percent of their sentences; now it's 35 percent, reported *KLFY*.

Now people are being re-

leased an average of eight weeks earlier than their projected release date under the prior policy.

The reforms required a pre-release curriculum and reentry programming for all individuals eligible for release.

"Probation and parole officers are prepared," reported *KLFY*. "Their caseloads will rebalance within six months as additional reforms – those that will allow individuals to earn compliance credit and terminate their supervision early – go into effect."

Louisiana hopes to save \$262 million by reducing the number of people in prison and the length of their sentences. Reportedly 70 percent of the savings the state will

reinvested into programs to improve public safety by preventing crime and reducing recidivism.

"The Department of Corrections already releases approximately 1,500 inmates per month; about the same number of people who would have been released in two months will now be released in one," the article said.

The changes were supported by the LPA coalition; SPLC; American Civil Liberties Union; and Voice of the Experienced, a grassroots organization of formerly incarcerated people. These efforts led to the appointment of a task force and the passage of reforms based on its recommendations.

One man's journey with the revitalized newspaper

Editorial

By Richard "Bonaru" Richardson
Editor-in-Chief

In June 2016, I became the editor-in-chief of *San Quentin News*.

I never thought I would be editor-in-chief of anything, but being able to work with *San Quentin News* staff gave me the courage to move forward.

John Wilkerson, the print shop instructor when *San Quentin News* was revived in 2008, taught me how to better myself. He is the reason why I believe in being independent instead of dependent.

When I began working in the print shop, I was hesitant because of the stories floating around about a guy who chopped his fingers in a paper cutter.

As I walked around the old



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

San Quentin News Adviser John Eagan



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

San Quentin News Advisers Jan Perry, Linda Xiques, Steve McNamara Bottom: Joan Lisetor and Nikki Meredith

printing press machines that were scattered throughout the shop, it seemed as if the cutter was staring me down like fresh meat.

The cutter had this "Caution" tape on it as if it was a crime scene.

When Wilkerson took the tape off and turned on the cutter, everybody in the shop stopped what they were doing because it sounded like a jet engine exploded.

When the blade hit the table, the ground shook.

One day Wilkerson guided me over to the cutter and said, "I'm going to show you how the paper cutter works."

As he was explaining to me what to do and what not to do, he was also telling me about the guy who chopped his fingers up and pointed



File Photo

Former San Quentin News Instructor John Wilkerson

to the spot where the blood stained the area.

He stepped back from the cutter and said "start cutting." I was so scared that I couldn't remember anything he said after "blood shot over there."

But despite the many hours and days of building up the courage to cut paper, before long I was cutting every paper in the shop.

While helping Wilkerson print the *San Quentin* newspapers, the phone rang. He looked at me and said, "Watch the paper and make sure it don't get jammed in the machine."

I knew how important this job was, so I was a little nervous. When the paper jammed in the machine my heart stopped. I could see Wilkerson look up from behind his desk at me because the machine makes this loud noise, like a car crash, before it cuts off.

I froze and was confused; he gave me this long look as if to say, "Well, fix it." I began replicating what I had watched Wilkerson do so often. Before long, I had the machine back up and running.

When I overcame those barriers of doubting myself, I felt the strength of being able to achieve something I never thought was possible.

Another skill I learned came from Aly Tamboura.

He taught me how to lay out and design the *San Quentin* newspaper using Adobe Creative Suite 3. When they



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

San Quentin News Adviser William Drummond

transferred him to an out-of-state prison, I had to remember what he taught me and put it to good use.

Designing and laying out the newspaper can be very tedious and overwhelming at times, but one thing you learn in prison is how to be patient ... even when everyone on the staff wants to change their story a day before the newspaper gets printed.

It can be very difficult trying to publish a monthly newspaper behind bars, especially when there are people with the power of authority who do not want us to succeed.

When the *San Quentin News* was suspended for 45 days in 2014 for something that should not have happened, we realized the importance of our job.

On Aug. 1, 2017, *San Quentin* was locked down for 20 days. When we resumed our normal schedule, the *San Quentin News* room had been

searched and almost everything was confiscated, including our computers.

For two months, the *San Quentin News* worked to produce a newspaper with only one computer and we still managed to produce the next issue on time.

Overcoming obstacles isn't new to *San Quentin News* because we have always found ways to achieve our goal for the greater good.

Our goal is to report on rehabilitative efforts to increase public safety and achieve social justice.

I always listen to the *San Quentin News* advisers when they have advice to offer. My biggest challenge now is to gather up everything I have learned from Arnulfo Garcia, Kenny Brydon, Michael Harris, Malik Harris and Aly Tamboura and offer it to the prison population, where they can benefit from what *San Quentin News* can provide.



File Photo

San Quentin News Adviser Yukari Kane

Shaka Senghor visits prison to speak about change

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

Shaka Senghor, 45, a consulting producer for Oprah Winfrey's new program, *Released*, which debuted on the OWN cable television network, visited San Quentin State Prison in November 2017.

Senghor said he wants to collaborate with men in prison. He knows about incarceration because he served time, 19 years in prison for second-degree murder in Michigan. Seven of those years were in solitary confinement.

"I spent two decades with these men," said Senghor. "Friends don't leave friends behind."

He said there's no turning back to that past life, but "I had to come to see the brothers in (San Quentin). That's important to me."

Dressed in all black, wearing neatly groomed dreadlocks and a closely trimmed gray beard, he entered the prison's media center recognizing that the men there were doing "serious stuff," in a positive way.

"Guys in here have some kind of responsibility for what they send home," said Senghor, adding that recidivism hurts their efforts. "Our biggest battle is when one guy gets out and f**** up." That, he said, reflects on everyone who is incarcerated. Still, he likes working with people who "get it."

Senghor also collaborates with Van Jones, of #CUT50, whom he met at MIT's media lab during a fellowship. He said they sometimes discuss the spiritual aspect of their work. "Van always wants to know how we can get better."

Recently, Senghor, Jones

and Michelle Alexander, attorney and author of *The New Jim Crow*, spoke at the Ella Baker Center in Oakland, California. "This raises the importance of men and women coming home," he said. "It's about accountability to keep ourselves sharp."

"The premiere episode of *Released* follows three black former inmates who each committed different offenses but face similar experiences of fighting to stay out of prison after being released," the *Huffington Post* reported.

The episode follows the journey of Sam Johnson and Kevin Carr, recently paroled from San Quentin State Prison, and explores how they reconnect with their families after years of incarceration.

Senghor said he never imagined that he would do this kind of work. "Some days it seems all surreal."

Not too long ago, Senghor was invited to Germany to visit a prison with a contingent of prison activists and wardens. He admitted to having prejudices going to a German prison—thinking of Auschwitz—but when he arrived he said it was "mind blowing" because it wasn't an "antagonistic atmosphere."

According to Senghor, German prisoners are allowed to go out into society and return to the prison to serve their sentences. He said in Germany, prisoners are treated like citizens.

"If this is happening in Germany, what can we do here?" Senghor said. He said in Germany, they have "life-long sentences" where people are not sentenced to die in prison.

One poignant experience he recounted was discussing his years of confinement in



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Jessica Jackson-Sloan and Shaka Senghor in the SQ newsroom

U.S. prisons with a German prison warden. Upon hearing that Senghor spent seven years in solitary confinement, the warden cried, "We

would never do that to one of our citizens."

Senghor wrote the book *Writing My Wrongs: Life, Death, and Redemption in an*

American Prison, which has appeared on *The New York Times* best-seller list. "Sometimes it's emotionally draining when you have to reflect on your worst moment," he said. "It's about my journey and growing up on the streets of Detroit. It's also about going to prison and coming out on the other side."

Senghor had many interesting stories to share with the men at San Quentin. He spoke of meeting President Obama when he was invited to the White House. Initially, he was not allowed in because of his criminal record. However, Jones spoke up, mentioning that Senghor was forced to stay outside. Jones then looked directly at the president.

Senghor said "they scrambled to get me in." Later, the

White House apologized and changed its policy.

"I always keep (my) book with me when I'm traveling," Senghor said. When he met Obama, however—who he said is "super cool and cares about the issues,"—he didn't have a copy of his book. It didn't help when Obama said, "So, I heard you wrote a book." (He was able to send him a copy later.)

Senghor recalled reading *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in prison and imagining getting Oprah to read one of his own books.

Commenting on his writing and his connection with *Released*, Senghor said, "I believe I have a voice in this space, and I have a responsibility to say something positive. You can't get through tough times without having someone inspire it."

Campaign aims to revamp parole policies

By Angelo Ramsey
Journalism Guild Writer

A nationwide campaign is under way to reform parole policies in American prisons, according to *Truthout*.

More than 60 grassroots organizations across the nation are challenging the way parole commissioners focus heavily on the nature of the crime instead of whether the inmate poses a danger to the public at the time they meet the board.

"Parole boards are so deeply cautious about releasing prisoners who could come back to haunt them that they release only a small fraction of those eligible," Beth Schwartzapfel wrote in *The Marshall Project*.

In 2015, New York parole commissioners denied release to 80 percent of the more than 12,000 applicants interviewed, according to the *Times Union*. In Wisconsin, only 4 to 5 percent of paroles for life-sentenced prisoners are granted, according to *Truthout*.

Activists have had some victories, securing the ouster of three New York parole commissioners and forcing the resignation of another, according to *Truthout*.

They also stopped the passage of a New York law that would have mandated those convicted of the most serious crimes to wait five years to reapply after a denial.

In Maryland, a new law

passed that requires the governor to review each grant for parole within 180 days. This is a welcome change from the 1995 state law that effectively ended the possibility for anyone serving a life sentence to receive parole, according to Walter Lomax of the *Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative*.

While in prison, Lomax taught himself to read and write, earned a GED, and an associate degree in business. He also excelled at his work-release job, wrote and edited a prison newsletter, and earned many certificates of achievement.

Lomax was refused parole four times and served 40 years behind bars because Maryland law requires the

approval of the governor for every parole decision, according to the *Open Society Institute*. Now, Lomax campaigns with Justice Policy Institute to remove the governor from the process for people sentenced to life.

The common mentality of parole boards is often as simple as, "Why take that chance? Let's just keep everybody locked up," according to an article in *The Atlantic* by Marc Morje Howard, the director of Georgetown University's Prison and Justice Initiative.

In March 2017, there were 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States, with many having little chance for parole, *Truthout* reported.

A legacy of Nonviolent Communication

By Jesse Vasquez
Staff Writer

A program about feelings and needs isn't what you'd expect in a prison for hardened criminals, but one has made all the difference in the lives of countless men. Nonviolent Communication (NVC), a yearlong class offered in San Quentin for about 16 years, helps people develop a personal awareness that can enrich their lives through effective communication.

Prison is one of the most difficult environments in which people must interact.

Prisoners adjust to an array of housing arrangements: cells smaller than a dog kennel and dorms that resemble flea markets. In these living accommodations, inmates have to co-exist with cellmates, or bunk buddies, who sometimes have complex personalities and mental health issues.

"This program has given me a voice. I didn't know how to communicate because I couldn't explain what I really needed," said Jesus Perez, a student facilitator. "I really like learning to identify the needs behind a person's request because sometimes emotional outbursts can seem overwhelming, but they hide a need."

NVC teaches participants to recognize their emotions and to take personal accountability for them; participants learn that no one else can make them feel anything. The program also helps students to build and repair relationships by helping them understand the personal needs that motivate themselves and others.

Through the program, students deepen their own understanding of how their personal backgrounds have contributed to their reactions and responses in life — and what the impact of those actions has been on others.

"NVC changed me. It has helped me deal with a lot of issues, especially my anger," said Faheem, another inmate student facilitator. "I am not the same man I was a few years ago."

Most people, according to the class philosophy, struggle to identify and understand the basic human needs that, if unmet, can fuel negative behavior and misunderstandings. Needs can be both emotional and physical; for instance, a kid in poverty who goes to school hungry is less likely to be able to concentrate in class and may be prone to bursts of irritability. Those feelings are symptoms of the need for sustenance.

The class teaches its students how to identify their emotions and the underlying needs behind them so that they can express themselves in a way that is both constructive and doable.

During group sessions, NVC participants are exposed to dramatizations of real-life scenarios that show how understanding a person's heightened emotions can facilitate communication that enriches both parties.

Sharran Zeleke, the group coordinator for Nonviolent Communication, encourages her class to participate in "dyads," in which students pair up to discuss a personal mat-

ter for a few minutes, to build connection and community.

The exercises prepare the participants when confronted daily with the uncertainties of life. Participants are taught three options for connection and response:

Participants can practice self-connection, which is grounding themselves in their needs and understanding their feelings.

Participants can express themselves considering the other person's feelings or needs.

Participants can show empathy, validating their own and the other person's needs.

The class challenges participants to come out of their comfort zone, ask questions that can clarify misunderstandings, and ultimately reach a point of empathy, which is the ideal way to find connection with oneself and others.

"It's impossible to do a 'don't,'" said Sheila Menezes, who has sponsored the program for three years and has been living out the principles of nonviolent communication for eight. "'Don't be inconsiderate' is impossible. Because you're not telling me what being considerate means specifically to you."

Participants learn to identify their own needs in order to communicate them effectively.

"I didn't realize that people can't give me what I don't clearly ask for," Perez said.

Students also develop critical thinking skills, like distinguishing between what is really happening and what



Photo by Jesse Vasquez-SQ News

Gene Atkins, Sharran Zeleke, Andrew Gazzeny, Sheila Menezes and Billy Fuller

they are telling themselves is happening.

"This program really helps you stop and think about what's behind the other person's words instead of getting caught up in your own thoughts," said Timothy Holmes, a first-term life prisoner and NVC participant.

But for some men, exploring the dynamics of human connection through emotional intelligence can be an uncomfortable experience.

Earlier this year there was a class discussion around the need to extend the class from 4:30 to 5 p.m. It turned into a heated debate because some men were under the impression that it was another government attempt at control.

Instead it was just a program need, so that participants would accumulate the necessary hours of rehabilitative-achievement credits to benefit from a two-week sentence reduction under Proposition 57.

"Our past has a way of distorting reality for us," Sheila said. "We all have a personal point of reference through which we see the world. Sometimes that view

hinders us from growing and connecting with the humanity of others because we hold on to the past and our pain."

Carlos Moreno, a student in the program, said that prison forces you to shut down your emotions to survive. Feelings are seen as a sign of weakness.

"But now I understand the importance of allowing myself to feel," he said. "It's what makes me human."

University helps prisoners learn

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

The University of Arizona English Department, with the encouragement of the state of Arizona, has initiated a writing and literary program to rehabilitate prisoners, reports *The Arizona Wildcat*.

They started the Prison Education Project, now called Prison Instruction to Change Minds (PRISM) last spring and enroll up to 20 inmates each term. The goal of the curriculum is to improve prisoners' critical thinking and comprehension skills, gain rhetorical awareness, and engage with the texts to reflect on their lives and hopes for the future.

"Part of the overall purpose of the program is to reach out to a community that is underserved and give them a sense of purpose—that they are doing something constructive with their time," said Marcia Klotz, project director and assistant professor in the department of English.

"There is something profound about having that kind of interaction, being able to come into a group that has such a deep appreciation for what you are able to help them with," Klotz told *Arizona Wildcat* reporter Tori Tom.

The fall program which started Oct. 4, is not an accredited course, instead it offers certificates of completion.

"I would love to have these classes count for credit," Klotz said. "That's the long-term goal."

A high school diploma or General Educational Development certificate is a prerequisite to enroll in the classes.

The Arizona Department of Corrections population data showed the Tucson prison complex housed 4,963 inmates in September, of which 2,230 qualified for PRISM in Whetstone and Catalina facilities, according to the article.

"We would like to expand (the program)," said Klotz. "There's a lot more interest than we can accommodate."

Bryan A. Smith, convicted in California in 1982 for attempted robbery, second degree murder, and attempted murder, is both a University of Arizona psychology graduate (class of 2012), and a mitigation specialist for the Pima County Public Defender's Office.

Smith conducts local motivational talks to tell his story and convince inmates that they too can succeed academically. Smith said he, like other inmates, always assumed that he was academically inadequate and that "college is not for them."

The 55-year-old Smith, a former inmate at San Quentin State Prison, spent 26 years of his life behind bars, and obtained an Associates of Arts Degree in 2003 through San Quentin State Prison's Patten University Project.

"Growing up, I never thought I'd be able to get a higher education," Smith said. "But I realized at some point that 'I'm going to graduate to get a degree.' This energized my future and opened up my world."

"The reason why I am an activist for education in a prison system is because it is a very strong activity for personal transformation," Smith said. "Taking those preparatory classes, getting the individual help, seeing my peers do it and the environment [all] helped me grow to learn about myself."

PRISM plans to broaden the program for inmates next semester by having any retired or current faculty members come to lecture for a day.

The purpose of this expansion is to expose Whetstone inmates to more classes, in the event that they decide to pursue a college education upon their release from prison.

Un legado de Comunicación No violenta

Un programa de sentimientos y necesidades no es algo que esperarías encontrar en una prisión para criminales rudos, pero este ha hecho una diferencia en la vida de muchos hombres. Comunicación No violenta o CNV, una clase de un año que ha estado corriendo en San Quentin por casi 16 años, le ayuda a los participantes desarrollar un sentido personal que puede enriquecer sus vidas a través de la comunicación efectiva.

La prisión es uno de esos ambientes donde la gente tiene que interactuar. Los reos tienen que acostumbrarse a una variedad de arreglos de hogar como una celda más pequeña que un criadero de perros y dormitorios que parecen mercados de pulgas. Encima de vivir en esas condiciones, los reos también tienen que compartir la celda con gente con complejos y asuntos de salud mental.

"El programa me ha dado una voz. Yo no sabía cómo comunicarme porque no sabía cómo explicar lo que necesitaba," dijo Jesús Pérez, un asistente de los estudiantes. "Me gusta aprender a identificar las necesidades de tras de las peticiones de las personas porque en veces los alborotos emocionales pueden ser aplastantes, pero esconden una necesidad."

Comunicación No violenta les enseña a los participantes como reconocer sus emociones y tomar responsabilidad por ellas; aprenden que nadie puede hacerlos sentir algo. El programa también les ayuda a los estudiantes a construir y reparar relaciones con ayudarlos a entender las necesidades personales que los motivan a ellos y a otros. Por medio del

programa los estudiantes profundizan su entendimiento de cómo su pasado ha contribuido a sus reacciones y respuestas en la vida, y el impacto de sus acciones en las vidas de otros.

"CNV me cambio. Me ha ayudado a tratar con muchos asuntos especialmente mi coraje," dijo Faheem, otro asistente de los estudiantes. "No soy el mismo hombre que era hace unos años."

De acuerdo a la filosofía de la clase, muchas personas luchan por identificar y entender las necesidades básicas, que si no se cumplen, pueden llevar a comportamiento negativo y malentendidos. Necesidades pueden ser emocionales y físicas; por ejemplo, un niño que se va a la escuela con hambre esta menos preparado para poder concentrarse en la clase y estará más propenso a alborotos emocionales. Los sentimientos son síntomas de la necesidad, sustancia.

La clase le enseña a los estudiantes como identificar sus emociones y las necesidades de tras de ellas para poder expresarse en una manera constructiva y simple de cumplir.

Durante las reuniones de los grupos, los participantes son expuestos a dramatizaciones de escenas de la vida real que demuestran como entendiendo las emociones alteradas de otros puede facilitar comunicación que enriquece ambos involucrados.

Sharran Zeleke, la coordinadora de Comunicación No Violenta, anima a su clase a participar en ejercicios de parejas para hablar de asuntos personales y criar conexión y comunidad.

Los ejercicios preparan a participantes que diario son

confrontados con las incertidumbres de la vida. Los participantes aprenden tres opciones para conectar y responder:

Los participantes pueden encontrar conexión personal, lo cual es cimentarse en sus propias necesidades y el entendimiento de sus sentimientos.

Los participantes pueden expresarse considerando los sentimientos y necesidades de la otra persona.

Los participantes pueden enseñar empatía, validando sus necesidades y las de la otra persona.

La clase reta a sus participantes a salir de su zona de confort, hacer preguntas que pueden aclarar malentendidos, y finalmente llegar a un punto de empatía lo cual es la manera más ideal de encontrar conexión con uno mismo y otros.

"Es imposible hacer un 'No hagas,'" dijo Sheila Menezes, quien ha patrocinado el programa por tres años y ha estado viviendo los principios de Comunicación No Violenta por ocho. "'No seas desconsiderado' es imposible porque no me estás diciendo que significa ser considerado para ti."

Participantes aprenden a identificar sus propias necesidades para poder comunicarse efectivamente.

"Yo no sabía que la gente no puede darme lo que no pido claramente," dijo Pérez.

Estudiantes desarrollan la habilidad de pensar de una manera crítica, como distinguir entre lo que está pasando en realidad y lo que ellos se están diciendo que está pasando.

"Este programa de verdad

—Jesse Vasquez

California Coalition for Women Prisoners introduces Alisha Coleman to the world

By Jessica-Bennett-Roberts
Contributing Writer

I introduce to you Alisha Coleman, our new staff at the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. Alisha was introduced to CCWP through the FiredUp! group that is offered in the San Francisco County jail. At first Alisha was hesitant about the group, until she met the women of CCWP. According to Alisha there was a genuineness to the women representing CCWP that she had yet to see in the many different outside facilitated groups. Alisha is a published author of *The Fire Inside* having had a poem she had written published during the time of Occupy San Quentin. Once Alisha was released in 2012, it seemed that fate was on her side; she was reunited with the ladies at CCWP. It was a happenstance kind of thing where a friend she meets at the program was getting a visit from the women at CCWP. Alisha is also a member of our Spitfire Speakers Bureau, representing CCWP at community

events. Now that Alisha is a member of our staff her main focus is to be a voice to the voiceless. Her outlook on the work she does here at CCWP is that it is ongoing, each day that she makes it in to respond to the women's letters and be an advocating force for those who have no one to turn to is an accomplishment. For Alisha,

the process of letter writing is not a task or a job. Alisha approaches each letter with compassion, understanding, and hopefulness, even at times becoming emotionally attached to the plight of her sisters in bondage. Being a formerly incarcerated person, Alisha knows the hurt, pain, and despair that is embodied in the experience of prison. For Alisha, this

work is neverending, and is a passion and connection that will continue through her life. Her hope is that once she is gone someone else will see how much she cared and continue the work. Alisha Coleman is a fighter in this ongoing, neverending cycle of incarceration. She is a voice for those who have been silenced and an advocate for those who need her most.



Alisha Coleman and Hafsa Al-Amin at the CCWP Office

Photo courtesy of CCWP

No Bans, No Walls, Sanctuary for All!

By California Coalition for Women Prisoners
Contributing Writers

Since Trump took office, the federal government has escalated its attacks on immigrant communities. Banning entry to the United States for people from eight countries, eliminating DACA, and increasing the number of ICE arrests by 43% are just some of the ways that the Trump administration has implemented its anti-immigrant agenda.

On the other hand, communities have come together in many ways to resist these assaults and immigrant people being held in detention centers have stood up against abominable conditions, fighting for their dignity and freedom.

In June 2017, a group of nearly 30 women detained by ICE at California's Adelanto Detention Facility (run by GEO, the private prison group) started a hunger strike to protest their poor treatment. They demanded better medical care, lower bond amounts, to be reunited with their children and families, and to be treated with basic respect by the guards. The Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, also run by GEO through a contract with ICE, has seen a series of hunger strikes since spring 2017 to protest terrible conditions which include the reportedly rampant use of solitary confinement and guard assaults on detainees.

On July 20, 2017, a remarkable collection of persons gathered in front of the ICE

offices in San Francisco to urge ICE to release Veronica Zepeda from Mesa Verde Detention facility in Bakersfield. Ms. Zepeda has a serious heart condition and the guards have not allowed her to get medical care. Veronica escaped death threats from gangs in her native El Salvador by going to Mexico.

Veronica sent a greeting to the gathering on July 20:

"I say this from my heart: I am an abused woman, but I am here looking for the opportunity to move forward for my beautiful children, whom I love so much....My life has changed so much in detention. I'm afraid to lose my life here in the Mesa Verde Detention Center. During the past six months that I have been here, I have had three mild heart attacks and several fainting episodes. I'm afraid that one day my heart will stop...The officers here cannot take me to the hospital until they receive ICE authorization... I send hugs and blessings. God bless you today and forever! I love all of you. I wish God will allow me to meet you in person soon."

Zepeda was released from Mesa Verde on July 28 after immigration Judge Dana Leigh Marks ruled that she should be released on her own recognizance. *Mother Jones* reported Zepeda will now move to Houston, and her case will move to the Texas immigration court docket.

CCWP stands in solidarity with all the courageous women and men who offer examples of courage and resistance that can inspire us all.

Folsom women receive 3-D design training

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

Behind battleship gray walls and razor wire fences, women inmates are training for future jobs in technology at Folsom Women's Facility, according to the *Sacramento Business Journal*.

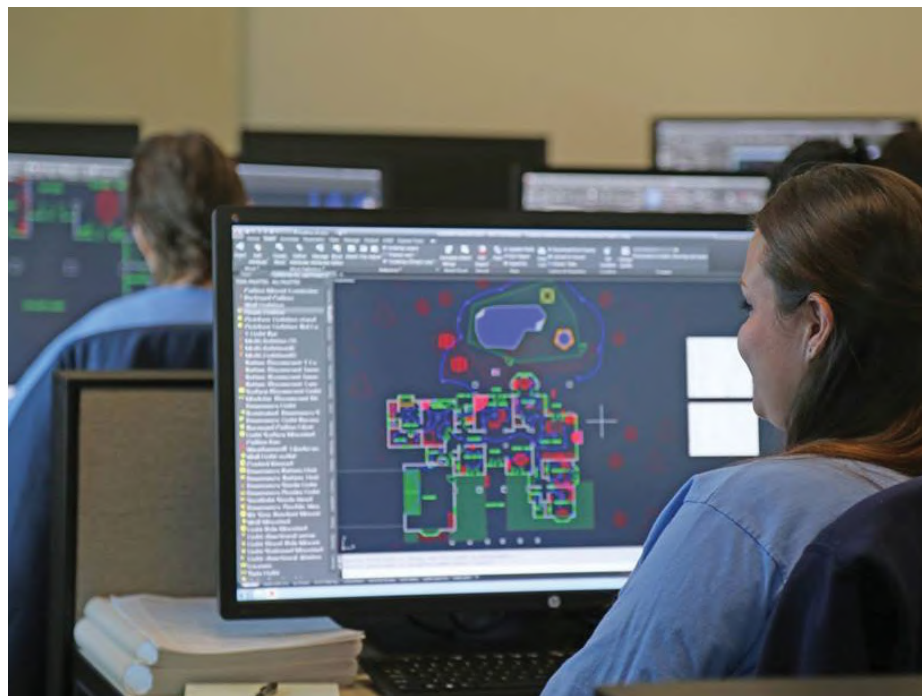
Some of the inmates participating in the classes have served decades in prison; others are short timers. But all have five years or less until they are eligible for parole. "It gives me hope for a future," said Kara Stull, 29, who has been in the tech program for more than a year. "I know that I don't want to go back to the lifestyle that I was living."

Stull has completed a course on 3-D design software Revit. In December, she will take a test for certification on the software AutoCAD. The AutoCAD program was created by Autodesk, Inc., a San Rafael-based engineering and design software company, which authorized its use at Folsom.

Stull said she is already exploring a few drafting jobs on the outside that pay around \$27 hour, according to the article.

"I absolutely love this program," said Ebony Brown, 37, who has been at the prison since April. "It makes me feel like there's hope; they give us a chance here."

Brown will be eligible for parole in October 2018 and



A female offender learns job skills at one of two new tech facilities

Photo courtesy of CALPIA

hopes her skills will help her land a job once she is released.

About 108 women have completed the tech program in the approximately three years it has been at Folsom. About 50 of those former inmates have been paroled since, and 25 have gotten tech-related jobs on the outside, reported the *Business Journal*.

"We think tech is the answer to future recidivism," said Chuck Pattillo, general manager of California Prison

Industry Authority. He noted that none of the 50 women who paroled after completing the tech program have returned to prison.

The tech industry is taking an interest in corrections, Pattillo told the *Business Journal*. In 2015, Pattillo met with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg when he visited San Quentin State Prison.

Money to fund the technology program is generated through sales of products by CALPIA. It costs \$360,000 annually to provide 56 slots

in the tech program. A similar program outside the prison walls would cost around \$25,000 per student, according to Pattillo.

CALPIA generates more than \$230 million a year through inmate industries. Around 8,000 inmates statewide participate in its programs.

Since it costs the state \$75,000 a year to house each inmate, Pattillo thinks big savings will result when trained inmates don't return to prison.



Veronica Zepeda and her children

Photo courtesy of California Coalition of Women Prisoners



Photo courtesy of CALPIA

Two new tech facilities were opened in October



Photo courtesy of CALPIA

Kathleen Allison, director of the Division of Adult Institutions, cuts the ribbon at one of the facilities

Intimate partner violence accounts for 15 percent of all violent crime. One in three women and one in four men in the United States has experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. Husbands are five times more likely to kill wives than vice versa. A third of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate male partner or ex-partner, according to FBI reports. <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf>

Fiesta Latina en la Graduación de TRIP en Español

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

El 18 de noviembre fue un día de festividad y música para 24 estudiantes que se reunieron como una tribu para elogiar al programa que les

cambio sus vidas.

Los participantes se graduaron del programa Transformando la Ira en Poder (TRIP) el 10 de noviembre.

TRIP tiene una duración de 52 semanas. Es un pro-

grama de comprensión sobre la toma de responsabilidad por parte del ofensor que lleva a los participantes a realizar una introspección. Los estudiantes se enfocan en cómo usar formas prácticas para sanar las heridas

causadas por llevar una vida violenta.

La meta es aprender a sentirse conectado con otras personas. Sentirse parte del mundo más allá de sus propias necesidades - y más allá de sus errores del pasado.

Cada clase es considerada una Tribu y adquiere su nombre al combinar todo el tiempo que los presos han estado encarcelados, más el tiempo que les tomó cometer sus crímenes; otros factores también son considerados al nombrar la tribu, pero tienen menos impacto. Estos participantes forman parte de la tribu 609.

En el 2015, la maestra Lucía de la Fuente, adaptó culturalmente y tradujo el currículo del inglés al español, lo cual hizo posible la creación del primer programa de GRIP en español en las prisiones de California, exclusivamente para los presos de habla hispana.

El programa GRIP fue posible gracias a la coordinación entre Arnulfo García y Lucía de la Fuente. Tristemente Arnulfo falleció en un accidente automovilístico el 23 de septiembre.

Una foto de Arnulfo y una pequeña piedra de río descansaban en una silla colocada en el centro del salón de clase, mientras Lucía de la Fuente hablaba acerca de las 52 semanas de clase y de las pruebas y tribulaciones que enfrentaron.

Lucía comentó, "este programa no hubiera sido posible sin los facilitadores", refiriéndose a Taré Beltranchuc, Marco Villa, Jorge Heredia, Jaime Sánchez, y Alexis Ruiz.

Los participantes formaron un círculo con la manos en los hombros de su compañero de alado y comentaron como TRIP impactó sus vidas.

Luis Orozco comentó, "antes de tomar el programa de TRIP, no sabía nada acerca de mis sensaciones corporales y emociones". "Ahora todo el tiempo que me encuentro en una situación de riesgo, presto atención a las señales de mi cuerpo, mis emociones y mis pensamientos para poder responder y no reaccionar".

El facilitador Marco Villa, añadió "esta piedra representa un recordatorio de como el grupo se desarrolló y creció, tuvo el privilegio de mirar el cambio positivo en todos, el trabajo y aprendizaje que obtuvimos no termina aquí, - continua por el resto de nuestras vidas. Debemos de enseñar a los demás lo que aprendimos".

Villa expresó que GRIP en español le ayuda a mantenerse en contacto con sus emociones permitiéndole re-

sponder en vez de reaccionar en situaciones de peligro.

Como tradición de GRIP, cada graduado escoge una pequeña piedra de río como un recordatorio de la tribu.

Alberto Andino comentó, "cuando miro mi piedra, un lado esta lisa y el otro lado rasposa. La parte lisa me recuerda del trabajo interno que he hecho hasta la fecha. El lado rasposo me recuerda del trabajo que todavía me falta por hacer".

Una vez que cada persona tiene su piedra de río, todos se paran para formar un círculo y sostienen la roca en su mano derecha. Con las dos palmas hacia arriba y abiertas, las rocas se van rotando de la mano derecha hacia la izquierda hasta que las rocas completan una vuelta.

Taré Beltranchuc indicó, "escogí la roca más defectuosa porque me recuerda como me sentí cuando llegué al programa por primera vez. Beltranchuc también señaló, "Cuando lanzas una piedra al río crea efecto y forma unas hondas que van creciendo en el agua - antes de tomar el programa GRIP, las hondas eran negativas, pero ahora esas hondas se convirtieron en positivas". "TRIP me dio las herramientas para navegar en la prisión. Me ha ayudado a poner un alto al ciclo de la violencia generacional en mi familia. Constantemente comparto lo que he aprendido con mi familia, especialmente con mi hijo Tare Jr.

Finalmente, Beltranchuc agradeció a los participantes de la clase por haber confiado en los facilitadores y dijo que todos deberían de sentirse orgullosos por haber terminado el curso.

Jorge Heredia comentó, "nos gustaría cerrar cada graduación con una buena comida. Comer juntos es una parte importante en nuestra cultura. Nos ayuda a mantenernos más unidos".

Guadalupe Aranda, José Díaz, Martín López, y Viera entretuvieron a los participantes con música tradicional mexicana, incluyendo una canción dedicada a Arnulfo García, "México Lindo y Querido".

Por último, Lucía de la Fuente expresó, "llegamos sin saber cómo llorar, como sentir, como ser y nos vamos ahora con un nuevo razonamiento en nuestras mentes y con nuestros corazones en nuestras manos".

"Since 1971 there have been only five years with lower violent crime rates than 2016." Reports Timothy Williams even though violent crime in U.S. rose for the second year in a row. The New York Times, Sept. 25, 2017 www.nytimes.com

Ofensores Sexuales no Violentos Demandan al CDCR

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

Un grupo de ofensores sexuales no-violentos están demandando al Sistema Penitenciario de California al excluirlos de una posible libertad condicional bajo la Proposición 57.

La Proposición ofrece una oportunidad de libertad para ofensores no-violentos, pero el Departamento de Rehabilitación y Corrección de California (CDCR) adoptó reglas que excluyen a todos los ofensores sexuales, incluyendo crímenes no-violentos.

"Al excluir a estos individuos, el CDCR anula el voto de la mayoría de los Californianos, quienes aprobaron la Proposición 57 sabiendo que esta proposición beneficia y es aplicable a todas las personas con ofensas consideradas no-violentas", subraya la demanda presentada el 27 de abril por la Alianza de

las Leyes Constitucionales de Ofensas Sexuales.

La abogada Janice Bellucci, quien presentó la demanda, señaló que solamente la Legislatura del Estado tiene la autoridad de corregir la proposición, no CDCR, reportó *The Courthouse News Service*.

"La ofensa más fácil de entender para la gente es posesión de pornografía infantil, la cual es una ofensa que no incluye violencia o contacto físico", Bellucci comentó en una entrevista telefónica. "Cómo es posible que el CDCR piense que puede cambiar el significado de una felonía violenta?"

Los ciudadanos californianos aprobaron la Proposición 57 con un porcentaje de 64-35. El gobernador Jerry Brown incluyó la proposición en la boleta de votación y fue apoyada por el Partido Democrático de California

(California Democratic Party) y la Unión Americana de Libertad Civil (American Civil Liberties). Casi \$14 millones de dólares fue invertida en esta proposición, la mayoría de ese dinero proviene de la gobernación de Brown) mencionó el reporte.

La nueva ley permite la consideración a una libertad temprana para los ofensores no-violentos, provee incentivos para los presos que participan en programas de rehabilitación, y les dará a los jueces — no a los fiscales— la autoridad para decidir si un menor será enjuiciado como adulto.

Los prisioneros cumpliendo sentencias de vida sin la posibilidad de salida y los que tienen pena de muerte no califican para beneficiarse de esta proposición. Prisioneros condenados por crímenes violentos están excluidos de consideración de libertad condicional de ofensores no-

violentos pero si se benefician.

Después de la elección, se redactó una regulación de emergencia. Esta excluye a los ofensores sexuales registrados y no violentos, de ser considerados para obtener su libertad temprana bajo la nueva ley. El Jefe de la Asociación de Oficiales de Probación (The Chief Probation Officers Association) elogió la decisión.

"Estamos sumamente agradecidos con el departamento por lo bien que trabajo con nosotros durante este proceso y por escuchar nuestras aportaciones como líderes que somos de los programas de rehabilitación en la seguridad pública", los oficiales de probación comentaron en una declaración. "Las regulaciones reflejan lo que sabemos esta en los programas y tendrá un gran impacto positivo en la seguridad de nuestras comunidades".

Sin embargo, el profesor Larry Rosenthal del Dale E. Fowler School of Law en la Universidad de Chapman, indicó en una entrevista a *The Daily Journal*, "El demandante parece tener un caso fuerte basado en el lenguaje de la iniciativa. La demanda podría ser interesante y a la vez una prueba para el nuevo Fiscal General Xavier Becerra, quien podría decidir no defender la demanda".

Rosenthal también apuntó que si la Legislatura "olvidara poner una felonía violenta en la lista, y posteriormente rectificara esa omisión, la Proposición 57 no intervendría".

Una propuesta respaldada por los republicanos que podría realizar exactamente eso. El Bill 75 del Senado hubiera elevado unas 20 ofensas consideradas no-violentas a violentas, evitando que sean considerados bajo la Proposición 57. Algunos de esos crímenes incluyen asaltos sexuales a una persona inconsciente, tráfico humano, disparar desde un vehículo y otros más. El Bill murió en el Comité de Seguridad Pública del Senado (Senate Public Safety Committee).

'Somos ciudadanos de esta tierra – de estas tierras'

Por de la Fuente y
Daniel López

Estados Unidos es el hogar de la segunda comunidad mexicana más grande de todo el mundo. Los mexicanoamericanos, o como dicen en este país del norte, Mexican Americans o Chicanos, han vivido en estas tierras gabachas desde hace más de 400 años.

Estas dos tierras del norte del continente, ahora conocidas como Estados Unidos y México, han tenido una historia estrecha desde mucho antes de la colonización; en ese entonces, tierras que no estaban labradas por muros sino por lazos sanguíneos. Ahora, tierras separadas; tierras peleadas; aunque tierras amadas, al fin y al cabo.

No obstante, aquellos

quienes inicialmente habitaban aquí, marcaron una pauta en la migración y la identidad chicana y paísa: unión, cultura y raíces. De una frontera a la otra, el corredor migratorio plantó sus cepas: Mexicanos cruzando el norte y mexicanos viviendo donde siempre habían vivido. Mexicanos luchando por su cultura, tradición, dignidad y derechos humanos y civiles.

Hemos visto a César Chávez levantar la voz por los campesinos hispanos. A Juan Felipe Herrera luchar por las comunidades indígenas y migrantes, en sus poemas y en su activismo. A Sylvia Méndez exigir acceso educativo equitativo por los estudiantes hispanos. A Rodolfo "Corky" González organizar a los mexicanoamericanos para demandar el derecho al voto y la sindicalización. A Dolores

Huerta gritar "sí se puede". A cientos de activistas y luchadores sociales hispanos que no se han callado ante el abuso, el robo y segregación de nuestra cultura en estas tierras del norte.

Y cada día somos más quienes venimos de "abajo del Río Bravo": desde Centroamérica hasta el desierto, año tras año, cientos de miles de migrantes se dan a la dolorosa, difícil y arriesgada labor de buscar un futuro mejor para ellos y sus familias. Un futuro incierto pero prometedor. Un futuro que muchos hemos luchado con el sudor de nuestras frentes y el cansancio de nuestras manos. Un futuro en tierras que tienen sabor latino.

A ti, hermano migrante, te toca seguir luchando por todos nosotros. La lucha por la paz y la igualdad.

Los 'Veteranos' son Masacrados en el Ultimo Partido del año

By Eddie Herena
Staff Writer

Christian Cervantes y Nikhil Kanade, del equipo "The Outsider", anotaron tres goles cada uno y le propinaron la primera paliza al equipo de los "Veteranos" del San Quentin 10-2.

Jarewd Bernstein, Adrian Subercaseaux y Reid Rosenberg se aprovecharon de la falta de concentración de la defensa.

Jesús "Morelia" López, mencionó "en mis 35 años como jugador de fútbol, nunca había perdido un juego así".

Carlos Meza, Defensa de los "Veteranos" de San Quentin, comentó "esta fue

el peor juego defensivo" y nunca controlamos la media.

El partido de Fútbol del 12 de noviembre se jugó bajo pésimas condiciones. El pasto estaba mojado y en algunas áreas había mucho lodo. Sin embargo, el clima era el ideal para jugar fútbol esa mañana. Era un día soleado y el aire era fresco. Desafortunadamente para el equipo local no fue un buen día.

Mientras el equipo de los "Veteranos" trataba de parar la masacre, Ceasar McDowell entretenía a la porra con sus comentarios.

Kanade, tuvo el partido de su vida al abrir el marcador al minuto 15. Un minuto más tarde anotó su segundo

gol del encuentro y dio un pase para que "The Outsider" tomaran una clara ventaja.

A pesar de las quejas de los "Veteranos". Subercaseaux, registró el cuarto gol al minuto 21 y antes de finalizar la primera mitad Cervantes anotó el quinto gol al minuto 43.

Los "Veteranos" no encontraron respuesta a la ofensiva del equipo visitante y fue un alivio el que se haya terminado la primera mitad.

Frustrados y sorprendidos, los "Veteranos" pospusieron el discurso habitual del medio tiempo para el final del partido y decidieron reunirse para planear la estrategia de la segunda mitad.

Taré "Cancún" Beltranchuc,

de los "Veteranos" comentó "son muy rápidos y no podemos seguir jugando desorganizadamente", pero así se vieron durante la primera mitad.

El portero Marco Villa, mencionó "el peor error fue la inconsistencia de la defensa. Andrew Crawford, director técnico del equipo "The Outsiders", añadió "ellos no han aprovechado sus oportunidades y nosotros sí".

Al iniciar el segundo tiempo, Cervantes anotó el sexto gol al minuto 46. "The Outsiders" continuaron moviendo el balón y sofocando a la defensa con su juego agresivo.

Al minuto 60, Cervantes anotó su tercer gol del

partido. Sin embargo, los "Veteranos" corrieron con un poco de suerte cuando Jake Bishop, portero de los "The Outsiders" cometió un autogol en el minuto 63.

Faltando 25 minutos para culminar el encuentro, John Windham, metió el segundo gol para los "Veteranos". El marcador era 7-2 hasta ese momento.

Bernstein y Kanade incrementaron el marcador respectivamente al minuto 75 y 76. La última anotación del encuentro surgió de un pase de Mike Globis para Rosenberg.

Kanade, quien es uno de los goleadores del equipo "The Outsider", mencionó "se siente bien obtener una

clara victoria". Cervantes es otro de los líderes anotadores con 6 goles en dos partidos.

Sam Kunz y Kerry Muller, dos ex-jugadoras de la Universidad de Claremont Mckenna, fueron las asistentes del director técnico.

Kunz comentó "creo que los Veteranos necesitan nuestras habilidades para dirigir", también mencionó que anhela regresar la próxima temporada con su compañera Muller.

Finn Michaelson, quien visitó esta prisión por primera vez, le recordó a todos los jugadores "que el fútbol es una cosa, pero convivir con ustedes es algo muy especial".

Reflecting on 2017 with appreciation and gratitude

Kid CAT Speaks!

By Charlie Spencer
Contributing Writer

As 2018 opens with new possibilities of hope, Kid CAT would like to take a moment to reflect on 2017 with a bit of gratitude. This past year brought many meaningful changes to the criminal justice system and provided a landscape of hope for a number of youth offenders who previously had none.

Some of the key changes include AB 1308, which extends the youth offender parole criteria to the age of 25; SB 394, which allows youth offenders sentenced to LWOP a "meaningful" chance of parole in their 25th year of incarceration, and Proposition 57, which, in part, reverses the "direct file" clause of Proposition 21 that afforded prosecutors the discretion to try youth offenders as adults without judicial input. Proposition 57 also expands "good time" credits to many offenders.

These three pieces of legislation add to the recent passage of laws, which recognize the redemptive nature

of youthful offenders and the power of hope to drive that potential.

In fact, in 2017, our organization directly experienced the hope provided by these kinds of legislation. As a result of SB 260 and SB 261, we had a 100 percent grant rate for our members who appeared in front of the board. Five of our members were found suitable, and three have already returned to their communities with great success this year alone.

Their success is not strictly due to the recent passage of "youth" legislation, however. It is also due to each of these men taking accountability for the hope provided by the legislation and working intentionally to transform their lives as a result of it. It is our hope at Kid CAT that everyone affected by these laws will do the same and give themselves the best opportunity for freedom and success.

It is also with gratitude that in 2017 Kid CAT was able to accomplish some important goals. Among these were finalizing the Kid CAT curriculum and facilitator's manual so that they could be sent out to all of you, creating a Youth Offender Program

(YOP) curriculum and beginning to run classes for YOP inmates, responding to all correspondence sent by our supporters, sponsoring a fundraiser (which helped raise more than \$8,000 to benefit programs that assist children with incarcerated parents), and holding a hygiene and donation drive to help support the Bay Area's homeless youth.

Additionally, this year we participated in two filming projects. The first, with Sonoma State University professor and counseling department chair, Dr. Adam Zigelbaum, is a short educational film highlighting the difference between guilt and shame. It will be used to help train future volunteers and counselors.

The second project is a documentary-style film that follows four of our members through the prison system and documents their experiences. It is being filmed and produced by Kid CAT vice-chairman Sha Wallace-Stepter in collaboration with volunteers Avery Peterson, Lulu Orozco, and Brian Asey. It is our hope that this particular film will work to inform the public about the experi-

ences of youth offenders in the adult justice system.

Kid CAT wants to thank everyone who worked tirelessly to help us reach these goals. It is with a great deal of gratitude that we close out 2017 and turn our attention to the new goals of 2018.

This year, one of Kid CAT's main goals is to seek out and create new opportunities and partnerships for advocating in the realm of youth and juvenile justice. It is our hope to hold at least two symposiums by the end of 2018 with this specific purpose in mind. It is our intention that at least one of these events will be held with local youth probation departments in order to help inform them of more productive strategies in dealing with youth offenders.

Furthermore, Kid CAT

would like to expand its San Quentin YOP program. We have set the goal of finding and getting approval for additional space by March. It is our desire to create a more consistent meeting space for these young men and give them more support and opportunity for programming.

Other goals include utilizing our resources to support new legislation introduced in 2018, strengthening our inside relationship with the Education Department in order to provide additional educational support for YOP offenders, continuing our charity work with the Avery Foundation and the Huckleberry House, finding new strategies to include more youth offenders' voices from various prisons through Kid CAT Speaks, and creating a connection and partnership

with a transitional house that will assist Kid CAT with the reintegration needs of youth offenders.

It is our hope that 2018 will be as productive and inspiring as 2017. As all of the new legislation begins to take hold in 2018, we encourage everyone to take advantage of these opportunities and work to create meaningful changes in their own lives.

In closing, our organization would also like to extend its congratulations and gratitude to the San Quentin News for their great work in reaching their 100th issue.

The SQ News has always been a strong supporter of Kid CAT, and the justice issues surrounding youth offenders. Without their support, Kid CAT would not be able to reach out to all of you. Thank you SQ News!!

'System of Care' helps troubled teens

By John Lam
Journalism Guild Writer

Several counties in the U.S. have implemented a new program that has helped to keep kids out of the juvenile justice system, according to *The Crime Report*.

Called "System of Care," the program is "changing the way the county addresses juvenile crime" since it was launched in November, wrote Anne Jungen in Wisconsin's *La Crosse Tribune*.

The program focuses on kids in school. System of Care "fills a gap between how schools handle misconduct and what the juvenile justice system provides by addressing the [troublesome or acting out] behavior without a ticket or arrest," the *Tribune* reported.

The purpose of System of

Care is to hold students accountable.

"It's not about being soft on crime. It's about being smart on crime," said Curt Teff, La Crosse School District supervisor of Integrated Supports, who helped develop the program.

The urge to create this program stemmed from La Crosse County's high juvenile arrest rate, which was higher than the state average, according to a study by the Carey Group, a consulting firm retained in 2008 to examine the county's juvenile justice system.

Some of the juvenile arrests reported included:

- Disorderly conduct
- 62 percent arrests occurring on weekdays
- 25 percent of arrests were at public schools
- One-third of cases re-

ferred to criminal justice system resulted in being counseled without formal charges

"Kids are neurologically wired to do stupid things. When we arrested them, we were contributing to making them worse," said Judge Steven Teske, who helped establish a System of Care in Clayton County, Ga.

Systems of Care was founded in 2003 and has reduced juvenile arrest in schools by 71 percent, while graduation rates rose 30 percent, according to Judge Teske.

"The System of Care seeks to help kids who need it," said Teske. "We identify causes for the behavior and match them with resources so they can develop coping skills that will help them function in school."



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Brian Asey filming a documentary called 'Growing Up Behind Bars'

Dear Kid CAT

Dear Kid CAT,

I'm a youth offender and have been incarcerated since 1994. I'm now 41 years old. I was convicted of first-degree murder facing the death penalty. I took a deal for 25 years-to-life.

In 2014, I went to the parole board and was denied five years for being violent. The parole board only lets out who they want. We dwell on hope and faith way too much and lack reality. They let a few people out and everybody gets all happy. My question is, how long does hope and faith last? Why do we continue to trick our minds to have hope and faith? Don't get me wrong, I'd love to get out. But reality is, I don't think I'll get out. It's because of my crime, law enforcement was involved. It's good to have hope, but understand reality. I'm a gang member dropout and I did a lot of programs, and

the board just looked at me crazy.

Sincerely, Jessie F.
California State Prison,
Corcoran

Dear Jessie,

We recently received a letter from a gentleman who was also recently denied five years at his parole board hearing in August and we found his words really inspiring and applicable to your situation. We feel it was best for someone who has gone through what you have gone through and has served a similar amount of time to answer your questions. Here's what he said:

Dear Kid CAT,

On Aug. 3, 2017, I was found unsuitable for parole. I'm currently serving 15-years-to-life for murder and am a youth offender

candidate under SB 261, but I have garnered over 20 disciplinary writeups, last one in 2014, when I committed to a better way of life. I will return to the parole board in 2020 and will make it out. Introspection is key, we must heal and gain emotional strength and never give up.

After 20 years of incarceration, I am a believer in the power to rehabilitate and heal. We can all inspire those around us like those that have paroled and everyday prove in society how second chances aren't taken for granted. If you are like me or still have some time before your board, be honest and ask yourself, "How did I get here?"

Take this time to reflect and find your inner freedom and truth.

Sincerely, Ignacio M.
Correctional California
Institution

Kid CAT curriculum now available

Attention Readers: Kid CAT Childhood development curriculum and facilitator manual is now available.

If you are interested in creating a Kid CAT branch/youth offender support group at your institution, please have your sponsor/volunteer or community partnership manager contact Kid CAT chief sponsor Ronda Wisher at (415) 454-1460 or email her at ronda.wisher@cdcr.ca.gov for a copy of our curriculum and

facilitators manual.

The curriculum's objective is to help participants address the root causes of criminal thinking, childhood trauma and violent behavior. It accomplishes this by helping participants explore three phases of their lives:

- Past (childhood to pre-conviction)
 - Present (current incarceration)
 - Future (post-release).
- The 26-week curriculum is

broken into eight modules:

- Masculinity
- Self-identity
- Identifying emotions
- Consequences
- Communication
- Environmental influences
- Compassion
- Empathy and forgiveness

A typical session consists of written assignments, self-exploration, lectures and group discussion.



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 may help 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!

An unsolicited act of kindness - when was the last time you did something nice for someone just because you felt like doing it and not because they asked you to? Who did you do it for, and what made you want to do it? How did you feel when you did this thing? How did the other person react? Was he or she surprised by what you did? Were you surprised by your own action? Tell us the detail.

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

Kid CAT (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. Kid CAT Speaks wants to hear from all the juvenile lifers, educators, and policymakers concerning juvenile justice issues and rehabilitation. Contact us at **San Quentin News, Attn: Kid CAT Speaks, 1 Main St., San Quentin, CA 94964.**

G.R.I.P. graduates five tribes in 2017

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Families braved fog and rain to watch their loved ones graduate from one of San Quentin Prison's most highly touted self-awareness programs.

A week later, the sun reflected off the ocean waters as another round of men graduated from the same program.

Phyllis Smith, who traveled from Atlanta, said the program gave her son, Harry "ATL" Smith, 28, what he could not find in his childhood experiences.

"Harry lost his father at 3," Phyllis said. "He's had uncles and such, but he's always looked for someone to show him what it means to be a man. The television only gave him bad images. It made him think being a man meant making a lot of money."

The program is called GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power). It is a 52-week comprehensive offender-accountability program that takes incarcerated men on a journey deep inside themselves.

Participants learn how to use practical approaches to heal wounds that, more often than not, came from leading violent and fractured lives. The goal is to learn how to feel connected, responsible to others, and part of a world beyond their own needs—and beyond their past mistakes.

GRIP has graduated 364 men in the last five years — 98 of them have been released to the community — and none has come back to prison.

"The Navajo describe an offender as he or she who acts as if they have no relatives. In other words, if you're not bonded, you're not accountable," said Jacques Verduin, GRIP executive director. "So, the GRIP Tribe provides the member their relatives."

Each GRIP class is identified as a Tribe. "It's kind of like a gang, but we flipped it for constructive purposes."

Tribes get their names by combining all the time the inmates have spent incarcerated, plus the amount of time it took to commit their crimes. Other factors also play into the naming process but have less impact.

"We have five tribes graduating 150 men this year who have served a combined 4,008 years," Verduin said.

Fathers & Sons

Eric Crutcher gave an emotional speech about abandonment.

"Growing up without my father killed me inside—deeply. I blamed my father



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

One of five GRIP tribes at graduation

for not being there.

"For most of my life, I was cut off from my feelings. I felt like my lifestyle and crime was my badge of honor. I wanted to hurt my father and for him to hurt like me.

"But today I forgive my father for pain and hurt that he gave me."

Darnel "Moe" Washington lost his son to gang violence.

"I felt so much guilt for not being there for my son's funeral," Washington said. "I became upset with myself."

He then explored the grieving process for the parents of the person he murdered, like the experience of a mother seeing a dead son. Washington said that empathy gave him an understanding of a mother's pain.

"I had to hold myself accountable," Washington said.

Washington has since worked in a Restorative Justice workshop to bring offenders and crime survivors together for healing purposes.

Mothers & Sons, SISTERS & Brothers

Graduate Kevin Neang, 23, is into his sixth year of incarceration. He's scheduled to get out of prison in 2020 and plans to live in San Francisco.

"I haven't accomplished anything since the eighth grade," Kevin said, sitting with his mother, Annie Vinoukkun, and sister, Sam Neang.

GRIP was the first program he has taken in prison.

"The 'safe container' really worked for me so that I could share and have the courage to be vulnerable," Kevin said. "I could face my shame and know that I am not what I did. I could have remorse."

Kevin's sister and mother

could see the changes he has made.

"He's my youngest brother; now he's like our oldest brother. The whole family feels like that," Sam said.

Kevin's mother added, "Our whole family revolves around my young baby boy. He brings good vibes to the family."

"The robe hung in my office wall for a year. I was grateful. This robe is symbolic of Muhammad Ali to speak his mind."

Kevin said that now he has an understanding of victim impact.

"I was able to see what my actions did. I know that I will never commit any more harm," Kevin said. "It's official — as of today, I am a peacemaker!"

John Parratt, 64, hadn't seen his older sister, Lois Turner, in 23 years.

"It was very emotional for me. He's my little brother," Turner said. "I'm 14 years, 6 months and 9 days older than him. When I knew that I was going to make it to San Quentin to see my brother, everything just fell into place."

Parratt called the program The Cream of the Crop.

"One month ago, I had a heart attack and then I found out I have diabetes," he said. "On top of that, I had prostate cancer. It has been in remission for a year.

"The program taught me how to stop, observe and process things happening around me," Parratt said. "I learned how to get rid of negativity and stay peaceful. I wanted my sister to see the changes in me."

Hurt People—Healed People

"This wasn't easy getting here," said Guss Edwards, who is in his 34th year of incarceration. "I did eight and a half years in solitary confinement. But, thanks to the hunger strikes, I'm here today."

He said GRIP allowed him to face his inner demons.

"When I got to my parole hearing, all the spirits of facilitators were in the parole hearing with me and the commissioner said, 'You are no longer that person who committed that crime on June 24, 1977. You are no longer a danger to public safety.' I was granted parole," Edwards said and was greeted with audience applause.

The Muhammad Ali "Victory" Robe

Each year, a GRIP participant or facilitator is honored with a boxing robe engraved with Muhammad Ali's name. It is awarded on an annual basis to somebody who "against great odds, came out on top."

Melissa Davis, a Marin County probation officer who teaches a GRIP domestic violence course and is a survivor of crime, received it last year.

"The robe hung in my office wall for a year. I was grateful. This robe is symbolic of Muhammad Ali to speak his mind," Davis said.

She handed the robe to Nicolas Garcia and Carmen Vargas in honor of their

brother, Arnulfo T. Garcia, a GRIP facilitator who earned his way out of prison after nearly 17 years but died in a car accident two months later.

"Arnulfo was a peacekeeper and peacemaker and editor of *San Quentin News*. It is my honor to award this to Nick and his family," Davis said.

Nick, who spent nearly four decades behind bars, earned parole in late 2016.

"It's a good feeling to accept the robe for my brother," Nick said. "I'm very emotional, because I feel the presence of 'Nufo in the room. I feel the sensation in my heart, because I also feel the love from everyone who loved my brother. I'm here to honor you and the work you've done."

The GRIP Facilitators

Susan Shannon recognized Nov. 17 as the day that marked the death of Tony Miles, brother of facilitator Vaughn Miles.

Shannon wanted Vaughn to teach a grieving class. Vaughn was reluctant, but after Tony was killed, Vaughn became one of the most effective teachers of grief and loss, Shannon said.

"He's helped hundreds and hundreds of men on the inside to learn how to grieve," Shannon said. "Strangely, because of Tony, many people have benefited, through Vaughn, the lessons of grief and loss. I would like to, in honor, make Tony a lifetime member of GRIP."

Fateen Jackson said Hill Harper's latest book, *Letters to an Incarcerated Brother*, defined the male-role belief system well.

"Taking full responsibility is the first step of true

manhood," Jackson said. He learned that by reading the book.

Jackson told the graduates that they are in control of their humanity and that they must challenge their old belief systems and show love to everyone.

"A man understands the pain and damage — the suffering that he's brought to his victims and families. In our true manhood, there is no denial or shame about recognizing that," Jackson said.

Monique Thomas, a GRIP facilitator trainee, brought her father, Roy Buckner, to the Nov. 10 graduation.

"It was good for my dad to see the work that I do," Thomas said. "He's always apologetic for not being there for me as a kid."

Buckner said that GRIP could be applied to "every facet of your life," adding, "I see my daughter as an exceptional person."

Ayoola Mitchell sat on a survivor's panel for one of the graduating tribes.

"It's not a normal society where people are so disconnected and don't understand it's damaging," Mitchell said. "The healing of our country and culture begins with the work that you are doing in that GRIP room." She added, "You can't put people in a box and not believe that it is not our problem."

Survivors

Crime survivor Christine Mason's mother was killed by random violence.

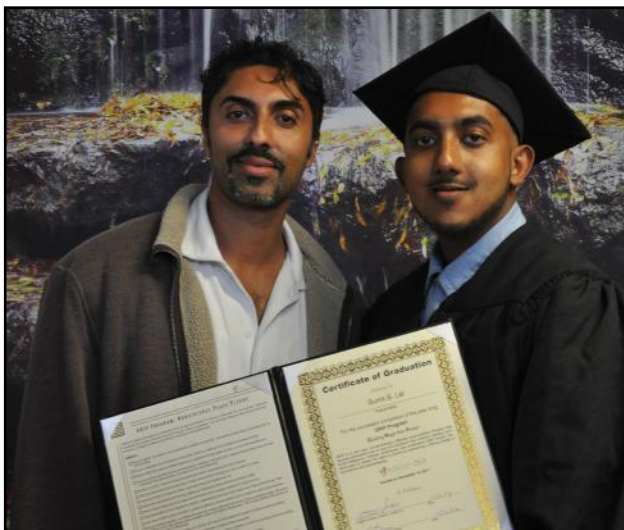
"Nobody is born in a vacuum. No one is born bad," Mason said. "I will never be able to find all the unhealed persons, but there are places to engage. There isn't anyone who couldn't benefit from dealing with past traumas — the military and police could benefit. Restorative Justice is the way to turn it away from violence and get to healing."

Glenn Hill served 41 years behind bars. He's been out of prison for about a year.

"I was free a year before I got out of prison," Hill said. "GRIP has helped me stay out. When somebody bumps into me on BART, I don't get mad; I just get out of the way."

Graduate David Dorsagno combined all of the GRIP acronyms, such as STOP, Q-TIP, ID Moment, etc., to create a lively spoken-word piece, explaining how the program keeps participants on the straight and narrow.

Chaplain Mardi Jackson's benediction praised GRIP as "a program that is impactful in ways that are tangible," adding, "what a vision Jacques has for you all."



Graduate Sumit S. Lal with family during the GRIP graduation



The Spanish GRIP class with the Mexican Consul at during graduation



Luis Cardenas, Luis Orosco, Maria Cardenas, Irma Cardenas and Alejandro Cardenas

Photos by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Musicians rocked San Quentin's Catholic Chapel

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

San Quentin State Prison, known by its warden, Ron Davis, to be "The Titan of Rehabilitation," one-upped itself with a spirited collaboration. Featured were incarcerated musicians sharing the stage with a gospel duo made up of a retired associate warden and a prison staffer, local Bay Area musicians, and a guitar/violin duo from Sacramento.

There was standing-room only for the nearly 350 people stuffed in the prison's Catholic Chapel on Nov. 10.

"I believe in the healing power of music," said Lisa Starbird, a representative of Bread and Roses Presents.

Starbird co-hosted the event with San Quentin Radio producer, Louis A. Scott, winner of a 2017 Society of Professional Journalists award for his radio productions coming from the prison's media department.

Grammy nominee David Jassy and violinist Giorgi Khokhobashvili stole the show.

There were whoops and hollers coming from the audience as Jassy's hip-hop lyrics to Khokhobashvili's piercing violin strokes had heads bobbing with hands in the air.

Most of the performances had the audience of San Francisco Bay Area community members, inmates and prison staff on their feet.

Starbird got the audience into the right mood when she sang Let it Shine.

Let it Shine was rhythmic and had the audience clapping with a sing-along chorus "Big, Bright, Brilliant, Beam of Radiant Light Shine."

The incarcerated men had plenty of support by the administration, resulting in the numerous standing ovations.

"I always had a feel for music. That's why I got into



Audience enjoying the combination of musical talent

the music program here," said the warden's assistant, Raphael Casale.

Casale said when she first took over the program, she noticed one of the bands was not diversified. However, things changed when inmate Darryl Farris took on a leadership role.

"He encouraged everyone to bring the music they liked," Casale said. "He has become a well-rounded musician, and it's been a great pleasure working with him."

Farris played bass guitar for Continuum. Alan Brown and Chris Coppe, guitars; Joe Thurson, drums; Wilbur "Rico" Rodger, keyboard, performed Why I Am.

And The Show Went On Young and old, Black, White, Mexican and others as well as volunteers and prison staffers enjoyed all genre of music — from hip-hop to folk and country to gospel and Brazilian jazz.

Felipe Ferraz, guitar and vocals, performed Brazilian jazz with Khokhobashvili.

The jazzy sound brought a distinct whoop from the Hispanic inmates who recognized the style of music as the violinist whined and cried to the steady beat of the guitar's chopping and

smooth lyrics. "This right here is music," Ferraz said. "It's not the fame. It's just music," adding, "It has been a pleasure. This is a place that is peaceful and full of love."

The two have been performing together for about 10 years.

The hip-hop performance by Jason "Alias" Jones, Antwan "Banks" Williams, and Leonte "AV" Amos was a history lesson on oppression and a motivational piece about moving forward in spite of being oppressed — They keep steppin on me, but you gotta just keep steppin'.

Not to be outdone, hip-hop artist Jessie "JJ" James performed Dear Mr. President. The lyrics come from a letter he wished to send to President Donald J. Trump, asking if he cares about the poor.

JJ was joined on the stage by Alias, Banks, and AV, followed by several other inmates dancing in the center aisle. One inmate walked the aisle passing out blank envelopes to send to the president.

OTHER ACTS

Mark Jeffery has been volunteering at San Quentin for about five years. He

Casting away hate and separation: One inspirational speaker shares his views on building a better world

A religious historian told a San Quentin audience that not understanding the difference between religion and faith makes it easy for bigotry and fear of other cultures to exist.

Reza Aslan spoke in the prison's Protestant Chapel on Dec. 1. About 50 inmates and a dozen men and women from the Bay Area attended.

A person who has faith believes that there is "something beyond the material realm," Aslan wrote in his book, *God: A Human History*.

"Religion is more about an identity, not beliefs," Aslan said. "When a person tells you, 'I am Jew, Christian, or Muslim,' they are not telling what they believe, and they are telling you who they are as a human being."

The "compulsion to humanize the divine is hard-wired in our brains," Aslan writes. "We fashion our religions and cultures, our societies and governments, according to our human urges, all the while convincing ourselves that those urges are God's."

He said that two people could go to the same exact scripture, read it, and go

away with entirely different meanings; as an example, he pointed to how slave-holders and abolitionists justified their positions from a theological perspective.

Aslan said that his scholarly endeavors come from "a deep spiritual hunger."

He explained that if a person studies different religions to get an understanding of God, they'd learn that most religions are saying the same thing. "They use different expressions and ways to get to the same place."

Aslan was born in Iran. When the 1979 revolution began, his family left the country and moved to San Jose.

Aslan's religious journey consisted of being a Muslim, converting to Christianity, and then back to Muslim. He then married a Christian woman. However, during their courtship her mother's misconceptions about Islam affected how she saw him. To break down those misconceptions, Aslan began to socialize more with his mother-in-law. Afterward, she began to see him as the person that he is.

He encourages everyone to interact with people who

practice different religions from theirs. "Learn about them, talk to them; you'll quickly realize that we believe the same thing," he said.

He pointed out that many people think that bigotry comes from a lack of education or ignorance.

"But there are some really educated bigots. Bigotry is the result of fear. Education and information cannot change fear," he said, referring to religious fear. "Fear resides in the heart."

"The best way to get around bigotry is to get to know each other as a human being. Put the religion aside, and discuss your values."

Looking into the future of religion and faith, Aslan said he believes that religion and science are converging into a common understanding of the universe because neither practice can fully figure out the answers humanity seeks.

"I think we'll see a slow melding of the two," Aslan said. "In 3,000 years, they will be the same thing. Religion is not going anywhere. Religion is not anti-science."

— Juan Haines



Louis A. Scott and Lisa Starbird hosting the event



Former A.W. K.J. Williams and Debra Wynn singing gospel

performed The Devil's Door and Orphan Girl with vocalist Margot Biehle.

"The Devil's Door goes to a dark place, but it comes back to the light," Jeffery said. "You can feed the devil or push it away."

The song has a folksy sound with Jeffery's twanging guitar and Biehle's harmonic backup.

Orphan Girl is about "a deep and tortured" song writer, Biehle said. The cracking country song is about a dispirited girl and her life struggles. During the performance, the chapel's silence set the mood her singing evoked.

Joey Mason and Mike Adams collaborated to perform Renew Me — about

hardships and renewing one's life.

"When Mike brought this song to me, I was in a dark place," Mason said. "When we need help, you have to ask for it. When he showed me this song, the lyrics just came to me."

Debra Wynn vocals, Timothy Wynn keyboard, and KJ Williams vocals performed My Soul Says Yes and I Love You Jesus.

"This is just a snapshot of what heaven is going to look like," Williams told the audience before singing.

As Williams sang I Love You Jesus, the audience clapped in rhythm and sang along with "Yes, Jesus Loves Me."

San Quentin's Jazz

Band, Just Us, lead Charlie Spencer, and band members Denali Gillespie, Charlie Ross, Terry Slaughter, and Joe Demerson performed Tashae.

Demerson's saxophone echoed in the chapel, sending the audience to their feet.

"Music is the relaxation in my incarceration," Spencer said. "Stevie Wonder said it best, 'It's a language in itself that everyone can understand.'"

One of the closing acts was I Will Always be Your Friend, an original composed by Richie Morris and accompanied by Spencer and Dwight Krizman.

Closing out with a sing-along was the Mexican Band with Feliz Navidad.



David Jassy, Dwight Krizman and Giorgi Khokhobashvili on the violin making beautiful music

The centennial edition of the

100th

To increase capacity and depth of stories, the News created a journalism guild to teach other inmates how to write using the Associated Press journalistic writing style.

By 2010, a new editor-in-chief, Michael Harris, co-founder of Death Row Records, was at the helm. That same year, the print shop closed due to budget cuts and nearly sealed the newspaper's fate. But adviser McNamara arranged for the printing to be done at Marin Sun Printing, a company he once owned.

To print 5,000 newspapers each month wasn't free, so Harris paid for it out of his own pocket. But soon after Harris left San Quentin, his money went with him. Because of that, McNamara created the Prison Media Project and applied for a grant from Marin Community Foundation to help fund the paper as a nonprofit using a fiscal sponsor. Donations and grants from the Annenberg Foundation and Columbia Foundation became the tipping point.

In 2011, then Editor-in-Chief Arnulfo T. Garcia and the staff had a vision to expand *San Quentin News'* reach to inmates in all California state prisons. By 2013, with the guidance of the University of California Berkeley's Haas School of Business, a plan was developed for expansion of the newspaper to make it accessible to inmates



File Photo

Top: Richard "Bonaru" Richardson, Krissi Khokhobashvili, Juan Haines, Terry Thornton, the late Arnulfo Garcia, Jeffrey Callison, Steve McNamara, Kevin D. Sawyer, Watani Stiner, Ricky "Malik" Harris. Bottom: Linda Xiques, Joan Lisetor and John Eagan

throughout the state. *San Quentin News* San Quentin News was making progress. But early in 2014, the administration suspended the paper for 45 days for what was officially deemed "circumventing the editorial process." During the suspension, however, the paper won The James Madison Freedom of Information Award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

Those events gave the newspaper national media exposure in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *The Daily Californian*, *Marin Independent Journal*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and the *Columbia Journalism Review*. The attention didn't go

unnoticed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The CDCR sent three staff members from its press office to meet with the *News* staff and its advisers. At the time, some staff thought the paper was going to be shut down. But the CDCR's objective was far from closing or controlling the newspaper. In their words, they wanted to "make it better."

With a dedicated team of advisers—who work behind the scenes meeting with staff, editing, proofing, emailing, and making negotiations outside — the newspaper continued to expand. Today, it is a 20-page, color publication. It has a staff of 15 men

who write, edit, photograph, design and layout the paper, and create content for the website, www.sanquentinnews.com.

With recent grants from The Logan Foundation, the *News* now prints 30,000 copies. With the help of Warden Ron Davis the newspaper is now distributed to all 35 California state prisons as well as individuals in 43 other states, and several hundred donors.

News advisers John C. Eagan and Yukari Kane are primarily responsible for strengthening the Guild's writers with weekly lessons and sitting with the men to provide one-on-one instruction. In the last four years,

San Quentin News' Journalism Guild writers have contributed more than 600 by-lines to the newspaper.

After all the writing, editing and proofing is done, CDCR Public Information Officer II Krissi Khokhobashvili reviews every article, holding her office to its word to make the paper better. Then San Quentin Public Information Officer Lt. Sam Robinson reviews the completed paper before the newspaper goes to press and is released on the internet.

San Quentin News serves as a bridge between incarcerated citizens and the outside community. Its mission statement states: "*San Quentin News* reports on rehabilita-

tive efforts to increase public safety and achieve social justice." This has been done by hosting forums with district attorneys, lawyers, judges, teachers, and a congresswoman to present a different viewpoint on incarceration, rehabilitation and reentry.

Since its comeback, nearly a decade ago, *San Quentin News* has resumed its status as an award-winning newspaper with award-winning journalists.

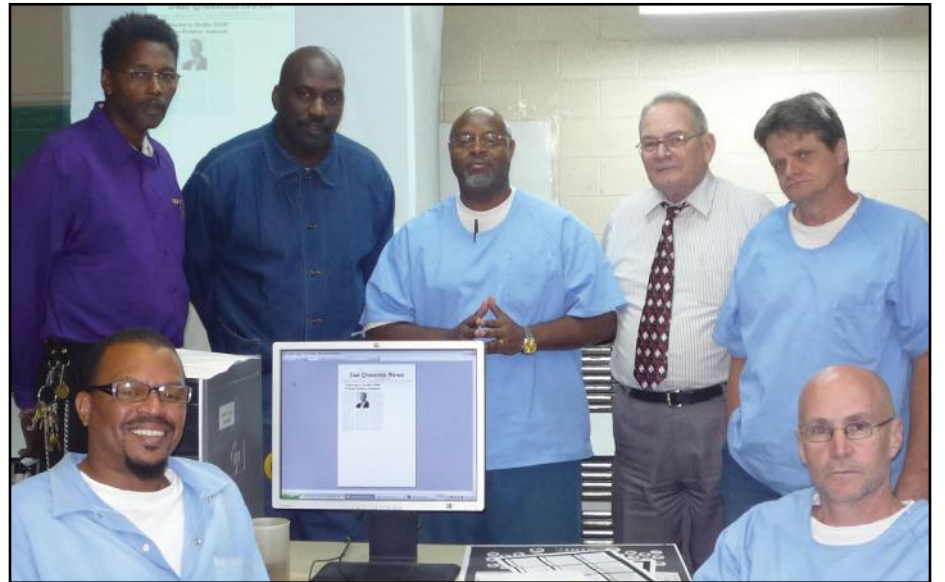
By the early 1980s, *San Quentin News* had won the Penal Press Awards multiple times as the best publication in its category, according to *The Nation*.

In 2014, the prestigious Society of Professional Journal-



File Photo

Top is the SQ News team from the printshop, including cameraman, Press Room Leadman, Composing Room Leadman, typesetter. Far right is Bill Little, one of the Voc Print instructors. At the top is "Little Joe" or "Crazy Joe" Morse



File Photo

Top: John Wilkerson, Michael Harris, D. Hartley, John Eagan David Marsh Bottom: Aly Tamboura and Kenny Brydon



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Society of Professional Journalists members in the San Quentin newsroom



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

SQ News staff Jesse Vasquez, Marcus Henderson and Rahsaan Thomas

The revived San Quentin News



1930 Wall City News

ists awarded the newspaper The James Madison Freedom of Information Award for outstanding reporting under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

In 2016, Associate Editor Kevin D. Sawyer received The James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism. Then, in 2017, the Society of Professional Journalists presented Senior Editor Juan Haines with the Silver Heart Award for being a voice for the voiceless.

Newspaper adviser Professor William J. Drummond went to the White House to receive The 2015 John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award. In his acceptance speech, he credited *San*

Quentin News for reviving his faith in journalism.

In 2015, with the assistance of volunteer Nancy Mullane, host and executive producer of *The Life of the Law*, members of the *News* became the first inmates in the United States to establish a satellite chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists inside a prison. The initial membership fees to join SPJ were paid by Paul Cobb, publisher of Post News Group.

Other volunteers contributed more than 1,800 hours to help *San Quentin News* in 2016 and over 2,000 hours in 2017. Counting its nine advisers, the *News* has more than 40 volunteers who come into the prison to help with the

newspaper.

For example, Drummond created a journalism class in the prison's newsroom, where dozens of students from University of California Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism have assisted inmate writers. The first UC Berkeley students began volunteering in 2013 after Drummond taught a journalism class at the prison in 2012.

In 2016, reporters from the California State University East Bay's student newspaper, *The Pioneer*, visited the prison newsroom. They now periodically reprint stories from *San Quentin News* in their student-run newspaper.

After hiring development manager Lisa Adams through



San Quentin News staff

Photo by Louis Scott

its fiscal sponsor Social Good Fund in 2017, the newspaper staff is now able to focus attention on news content and increasing its donor base. This is because the state doesn't pay for the paper's printing, distribution or website management.

Since its emergence nine and a half years ago, *San Quentin News* has documented the impact of mass incarceration in California and around the nation. The newspaper is the single source of information on prison policy, rehabilitation and reentry for thousands of inmates to learn about what's happening with the Three Judge Panel, Realignment, healthcare reform, Propositions 36, 47, 57, the

death penalty, and more.

Locally, the paper has covered events inside the prison. Where the mainstream corporate media has to rely on press releases from the prison administration to report, the *News* staff are literally boots-on-the-ground reporters. It has become the instrument for the United States to see what rehabilitation looks like inside prison.

For example, by covering the Prison University Project graduations, GED and vocational graduations, The Last Mile entrepreneurship program, Code.7370 computer program, Get on the Bus, the annual Health Fair, Day of Peace, and visits by the Golden State Warriors, the *News*

provides the outside community a different perspective on what can and does take place in a prison.

Moving forward, the *News* plans to publish a quarterly magazine, *Wall City*, which commemorates the publication that predates *San Quentin News*. It is also entering the realm of digital publishing to reach the global community.

Two wardens with a vision, several advisers, dozens of volunteers and inmates determined to write real news on what takes place in the evolving penal system are shifting opinions about incarceration with the intent to leave their world a safer place for everyone to live.



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Cal State East Bay, The Pioneer student reporters and staff, Christina Galanakis, Kali Persall, Gary Moskowitz, Marina Swanson, SQ News, Kevin Sawyer, Dr. Katherine Bell, Tam Duong, Jr.



File Photo

SQ News Researcher Richard Lindsey, SQ News Advisers John Eagan and Joan Lisetor



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Top: John Eagan, William Drummond, Arnulfo Garcia, Richard "Bonaru" Richardson, Steve McNamara. Bottom: Brittany Johnson, Felecia Gaston, Paul Cobb and Trinise Ferreira



File Photo

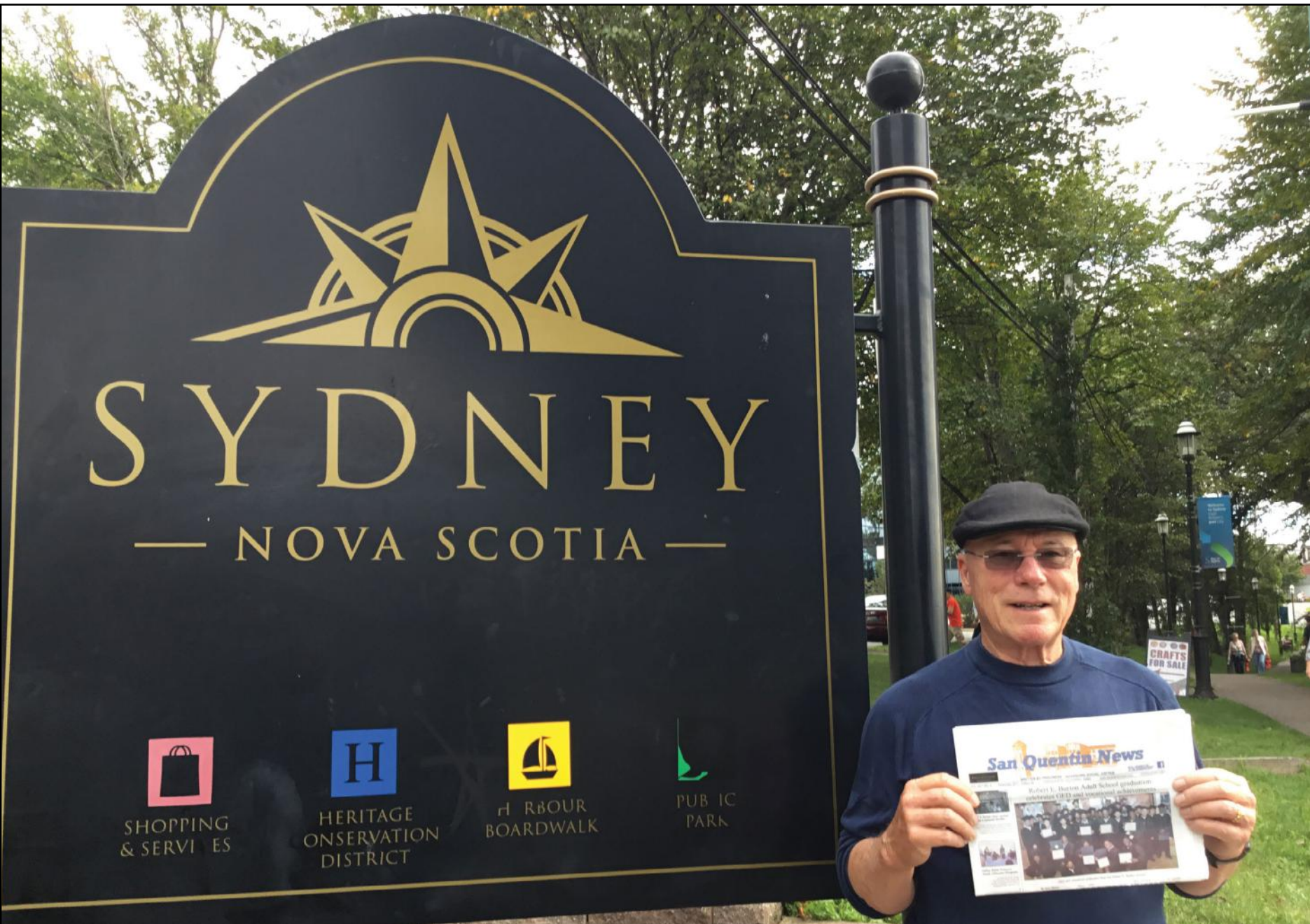
SQ News Advisers Joan Lisetor with Don Pino, and early SQ News Staff and the first Journalism Guild students

Arts & Entertainment



File Photo

A friend of SQN at Lake Usori next to a statue of the Datueba Devil, who removes clothing from the dead, and determines how deep their sins are by its weight



File Photo

Warden Robert Ayers, Jr. in Sydney, Nova Scotia in Canada

Prison to Employment Connection holds job readiness event

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

The Prison to Employment Connection (PEC) program hosted its sixth job readiness event at San Quentin State Prison, allowing dozens of inmates, employers, unions, apprenticeship programs and career path organizations to meet face-to-face.

Warden Ron Davis welcomed the employers and organizations, thanking them for their time. "At the end of the year, I'll have been warden three years," he said. "It never ceases to amaze me the events that happen here. The stuff you guys do here doesn't happen in other places."

Diana Williams, executive director of PEC, said, "Forty-seven (inmates) signed up, 36 made it through. They spent the last 11 weeks reading for this program. They created a packet of success. They learned about financial literacy. They're ready to go."

This graduating class had a few unusual guest learners from the prison's Youth Offender Program (YOP). Williams discussed how important it was for the YOPs to attend, "so they're not sitting here in 20 years," she said, acknowledging DeShante



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Employers, unions, apprenticeship organizations, educators and career path counselors

Jones, David Rodriguez, Darnell Stewart and Jesse Gomez.

"This is my first time going through anything like this," said Jones, a YOP inmate. "I got the chance to experience things at San Quentin that I never had."

The guests and older inmates in attendance applauded the YOPs. "Jesse (Gomez), you're the only YOP who met the criteria, showed up, did the work and completed," Williams said.

"This program was phenomenal," Gomez, 20, said to the audience. "I experienced something in here I never experienced anywhere else." This is his first time in prison. He's been incarcerated two years and will parole in a year. He's also enrolled in a GED class.

More than 100 inmates have graduated from the program since its inception two and a half years ago, and the number of inmate participants and outside guests is steadily growing.

More than 30 employers and representatives from various support organizations came in to take part in assisting inmates with reentry.

"All I need is a strong work ethic and positive attitude, and I can teach you the rest," said Jack Bronkie of Cala Restaurant.

"I love it," said Lonnie Tuck, from the Center for Employment Opportunity. "I met a few gentlemen who've graduated and it's good to see they're doing well. Those who take advantage of programs like this are ready, so it makes my job easy. I wish more facilities had programs like this."

Ellery Graves of Lao Family Community Development, Inc., said her organization provides case management, job coaching, and training. She heard about PEC through an email and said she's grateful to be here and meet people ready for

the next step. "I work with a lot of employers," Graves said. "I try to be a matchmaker, the in between. There are a lot of employers ready to hire."

Williams said recidivism at one time was more than 50 percent but has lowered in recent years, usually due to employment. "We create partnerships," she said. "I believe these connections make all the difference."

"If they're going out they need to get jobs," said Associate Warden Samara. "That's a good idea."

"I'm a three-striker and I've paroled twice before, to a park bench," said James Norton, 49. "Now I have an opportunity to parole to a house, which is cool. I go to the Board (of Parole Hearings) in three weeks. Even if I don't get a (parole) date, I'll help facilitate the next class."

Bre Davis used to work with the California Re-entry Program and has been an on-and-off volunteer with PEC for two years. "This is the type of thinking they have to start developing to succeed," she said about the young men in YOP.

"I support Diana (Williams) with anything she needs," Davis said. These things include helping the men with résumés, work exercises, interviews and class assignments. Davis also works with men and women undergoing reentry and others who are on probation in Alameda County. She has a background in sociology.

"I'm honored to be a part of this program," she said. "I do it because I want to, not because I have to. I'm also learning as I go along."

Patty Oxman is another volunteer who supports Williams. "It's important that the program is growing," she said. "I'm happy to be her (Williams') grunt so she can do the important work."

Lani Wilkins, of District Council 16 Apprenticeship Programs of Northern California, said he attended PEC a second time for "the opportunity to give back" because "some of you guys have worked hard."

"I would like everyone to know how rewarding it is," said Lorna Schea, of San Francisco City College's Culinary Hospitality Department. "Not just for the inmates but for us." She attended PEC to promote their three programs: basic skills, one-year certificate in food technology and dining services, and a two-year degree program.

"I was contacted by an inmate who read about (PEC) in *San Quentin News*," said Jennifer Rudd, also with SF-CC's culinary program.

It was the fourth appearance at PEC for Johnny Cochran, of Goodwill Industries. He said they hire people coming out of the criminal justice system. "I came because a friend of mine told me about the program and I wanted to be a part of it."

"I like to give thanks to the brothers," said inmate John Windham. "You stuck it out and you made it. This is what it's all about: making connections."

Williams has been volunteering at San Quentin for three years. She holds an M.A. in counseling psychology and is a Certified Professional Co-active Coach.

L.A. Kitchen helps those in need

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild
Chairman

After serving 31 years in various California state prisons, Kevin Williams, 52, was finally paroled and found his way to a job-training program named L.A. Kitchen to pursue his passion for cooking. Williams now has a job on the outside and a title, Strong Food Kitchen Assistant.

Williams is not alone. Other former prisoners are making major strides becoming chefs at L.A. Kitchen culinary school in Southern California. Some even had the privilege of preparing dinner at the Governor's Primetime Emmys Ball last September, according to a *Food and Wine* article.

"I went to prison at 17 years old and got out at age 49," said Williams. "All through my time in prison I worked in the kitchen, and when I got out, I was a cook."

In 2015, Williams came across an L.A. Kitchen memo offering a free 16-week program.

"They had this program feeding people on Skid Row, and I wanted to be part of that," said Williams.

Robert Egger, entrepreneur and philanthropist, founded the culinary program in 2013.

"I will work for that man, if it was only for \$8," said Williams. "He gave me a second chance at life."

L.A. Kitchen makes use of imperfect produce, transforming it into healthy meals and sending the finished product to shelters, the Ronald McDonald House, and Skid Row.

"We don't believe food nor people should go to waste," said Williams.

The program helps train formerly incarcerated adults, young adults who have outgrown the foster system, and those who are homeless, said the *Food and Wine* article.

"We provide support to all of our students," said Zaneta Smith, L.A. Kitchen's asso-



File Photo

Kevin Williams in the L.A. Kitchen

ciate director of clinical and student services. "I am the social worker on site. We provide short-term counseling that really helps. When individuals are released they want to reintegrate with family. If they were a lifer, don't have a resume, we provide them some services for that."

"We provide support to all of our students"

Williams said he spent the first 10 years of his incarceration trying to make a name for himself. "I had a lot of fights and got in trouble," said Williams. "Then I got my GED. That was a good feeling."

"That was a whole turnaround for me. I learned a lot of trades, but it was hard because people still wanted to see me as the hard-core gang member," continued Williams.

Williams said he started to address his anger issues and the gang problems once he saw people paroling. He added that he has been out of prison close to three years and has had no issues with law enforcement or drugs.

"Coming to L.A. Kitchen is like a whole new family. I graduated in class 4, and I

was voted class MVP because I helped a lot of the younger people," said Williams.

He learned knife skills and sanitation. He started off as a dishwasher, then got hired while doing his internship.

Williams now helps bring in financial contracts to support the program as the Strong Food Kitchen Assistant.

"I go to church and tell my story," said Williams. "Lifers got a story to tell. People say there's nothing out here. That's a foolish story. There's a lot out here. There's a lot of lifers doing good things. We can make an impact on the world."

"My goal is to help the youngsters. That's my plan" added Williams.

The Emmys dinner was held at the L.A. Convention Center and featured 10 L.A. Kitchen's graduates. Patina Restaurant Group catered the event and partnered with the L.A. Kitchen program to bring the formerly incarcerated people into its kitchens.

The team was under chief instructor and chef Charlie Negrete, noted *Food and Wine*.

No one watching the immaculate food preparation process could ever tell which members had less-traditional industry background, Eggers said, according to the article.

Ahna Straube contributed to this story



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Jesse Gomez speaks with potential employers as Dianna Williams and Dwight Kennedy watch



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

John Hesselbein interviewing with potential employer

Snippets

Created in 1950, the first TV remote control was connected by a wire.

Earth, above and below the sea level is 80% made up of volcanic origin.

No horse can breathe through its mouth. Horses also have seven blood types.

The most plentiful gas in the universe is hydrogen.

Unless the Earth is getting closer to the Sun, it will take about eight minutes for the light from the Sun to reach the Earth.

Right or left, a human hand contains approximately 27 bones in each one.

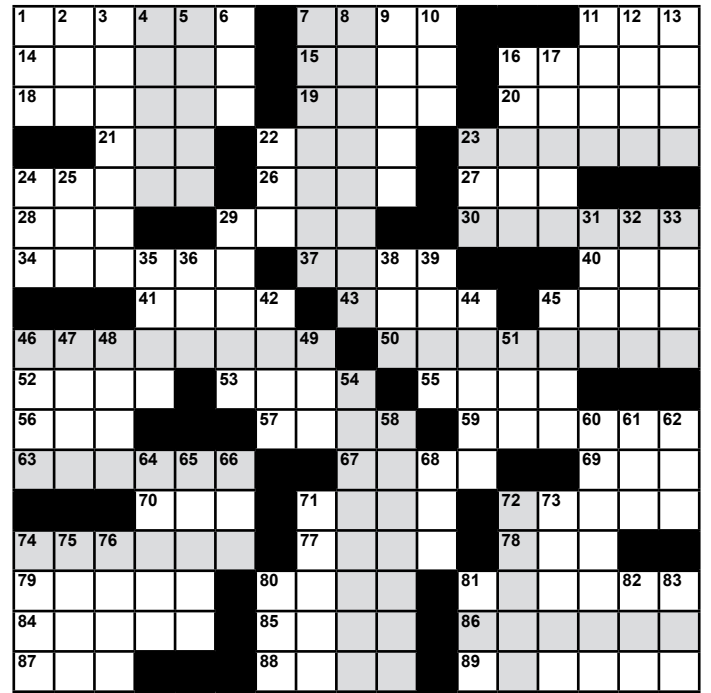
Years of living in the seas, the jellyfish is considered the oldest multi-organ animal which has been around for 500 to 700 million years.

WORDCROSS PUZZLE

By Jonathan Chiu/Edited by Jan Perry

Answer to last issue's crossword: *Elizabethtown*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Across</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capital of Kazakhstan Drugs UK political party formed in 1988 (Abbr.) "_____ again, Sam" Light beers popularized in Britain Malay fish stew Capital of Kansas Refuse to go on Potent Dismay Marriage goddess Death Row records co-founder Michael Iranian speak this King of the Huns Better Call Saul network When doubled, an African bloodsucking fly When doubled, a child's word for trains SQN Adviser Kane Hypochondriac's necessity Mountie's org (Abbr.) Word that precedes dances, pool, or dog Loyal Military deaths (Abbr.) '80s rock band SQ Public Information Officer SQN Adviser William Forewarning Injury Indefinite period Follows side or clown Table salt (Abbr.) Ornament that hangs loosely CDCR PIO Khokhobashvili Actress Long and Vardalos Type of rock Type of doctor (Abbr.) Browns Satan (Islam) SQN Adviser Linda Very dangerous things Unit of measure District outside of a city They can be white, green and black _____ of Shield Lariat About the thing (L) SQN Adviser Perry Depressed Lisa Loeb song Aphid that contains honeydew | <p>Down</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate ____-mo Person carrying a candle at a ceremony Former SQ Warden Robert SQN Adviser Meredith ____ disadvantage SQN Adviser Joan SQN Adviser Jon Spiritual head Computer encryption protocol (Abbr.) Rise NorCal city N. of Stockton One in favor of prohibition Famous killer whale Pharm comp. who also makes a manual Surprise! A type of fever Exchange of data over a network (Abbr.) Sun Devils' school Violent confrontation In addition A type of forest Apple device Tiger's attacker Director Wiseman Halfway Piece Borrow USA show Iowa State locate Comedian Chris Actor Sharif When doubled, a type of disease Arms bearing org. Rounsey's org SQN Adviser Steve SQN Researcher Richard Sulfuric acid relative Music company ____ Gatos Gush out Bible queen Fingers Long eared horse-like animal President's speech SQN Adviser John Country singer Cobb Gen _____ S. African plant with starlike flowers A type of racing bike |
|--|---|



LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

B	U	S	A	R	U	B	A	T	H	A	T	S
A	S	P	S	U	S	A	N	H	O	M	I	E
R	D	A	H	E	E	L	S	A	L	O	N	E
F	A	R	C	E	D	E	A	N	E	R	Y	
E	R	R	O	W	I	N	G					
S	U	P	T	L	I	M	E	E	S	L		
I	R	A	S	H	I	N	L	O	O	K	I	N
K	I	R	S	T	E	N	J	E	S	S	I	C
H	A	T	T	I	E	O	U	D	S	R	I	P
H	S	A	L	A	R	D	E	T	T	A		
			C	A	R	L	Y	S	T	S		
A	T	L	A	N	T	A	C	O	T	E	S	
C	R	I	E	R	O	N	E	G	A	E	L	I
C	A	R	A	T	I	D	L	E	R	A	L	A
A	M	E	N	S	S	O	F	T	Y	K	E	M

- Football scores
- Actress Naomi King
- Estimate on system operating costs (Abbr.)
- Fasten

Sudoku Corner

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

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

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

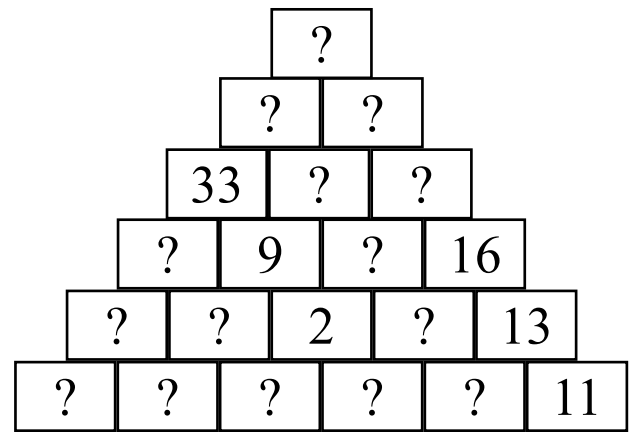
7	3	8	2	9	6	4	5	1
9	5	4	8	1	7	2	3	6
2	6	1	4	3	5	9	8	7
1	9	3	6	7	2	8	4	5
4	7	6	3	5	8	1	2	9
5	8	2	1	4	9	6	7	3
3	2	9	5	6	4	7	1	8
6	4	5	7	8	1	3	9	2
8	1	7	9	2	3	5	6	4

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

Answer to last month's Brain Teaser:

2	4	6	3	4	2
1	5	1	5	1	5
9	4	3	4	3	4
1	5	1	5	1	5
3	6	4	2	1	3
6	2	5	1	3	4
2	1	5	6	2	1
3	1	6	4	2	3




Each pair of blocks adds up to the block directly above them



FIND NEMO

N	O	M	N	M	M	M	O	M	M	M	
E	N	E	M	N	O	E	E	E	N	N	N
M	E	N	E	E	E	N	O	M	E	E	E
N	M	O	O	O	M	O	E	E	M	M	M
E	N	M	E	M	E	E	N	N	N	N	N
O	E	E	M	E	O	M	E	E	E	M	E
M	O	O	E	M	N	E	O	M	M	N	O
E	M	N	O	E	E	N	E	E	N	M	M
O	E	E	N	O	M	O	N	N	E	E	E
M	N	M	E	M	E	E	M	O	M	O	M
E	E	N	M	E	N	M	E	E	N	M	E
O	O	O	E	M	M	O	N	M	O	N	O

EACH ROW, COLUMN AND LONG DIAGONAL CONTAINS A JACK, QUEEN, KING AND ACE OF EACH SUIT

State's sex offender registry has low recidivism rate

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

New statistics show a low recidivism rate for some registered sex offenders in the state of Pennsylvania, a newspaper reports.

"It's really clear that all of the evidence and all of the data show that most sex offenses are committed by first-time offenders," said Emily Horowitz, professor of sociology and criminal justice at Saint Francis College, quoted in the article.

Court records for Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, revealed 75 cases were charged as sex crimes in 2016, and out of those 75, only two were committed by persons registered as sex offenders, according to *The Sentinel* story published on the cumberlink.com website.

Additional court records show 300 sex offenses charged in Cumberland County between 2013 and 2016, but only six involved registered sex offenders.

"For whatever reason, people who are on the registry have a very low recidivism rate, and if one is really concerned about decreasing sex

offenses, they kind of have to look elsewhere instead of people who have already been convicted of sex offenses," Horowitz added.

The low number of defendants on the sex offender registry may also be an indicator the policies are working, said David Freed, Cumberland County district attorney.

"You can look at that and say people on the registry aren't committing sex crimes," Freed said.

"Would they be more likely to do so if we didn't have a registry?" he asked. "I can't answer that...Is it effective? That's the question for all these punishments."

FBI data showed the rate of rape in Pennsylvania remained low at 25.8 per 100,000 people to 24.4 per 100,000 people, between 1990 and 2015.

During that time, Pennsylvania enacted its first Megan's Law requiring sexual offenders to register with Pennsylvania State Police's online database registry for public disclosure.

According to research done by *The Sentinel*, for a period of more than 20 years, there was no significant change

in the rate of rape compared with the rate after the implementation of Megan's Law.

"When we tell ourselves that these registries are going to be effective, or that they are going to protect children, or they are going to protect the community," said Carissa Hessick, University of North Carolina School of Law professor. "I think we need to dig behind that and figure out what that means."

Hessick said recent data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics showed just five percent of repeat sex offenders released from prison go on to commit new crimes within five years. Evidence is building for the argument that sex offenders have low recidivism rates, Hessick added.

"The public discussion surrounding sex offenders doesn't seem to match up very well with the social science evidence we have about sex offenders and recidivism," Hessick told *The Sentinel*. "It's not surprising the policies we've adopted aren't achieving their goals since they don't seem to have been based on complete or accurate information."

Court rules in favor of marriage for two prisoners

The Nebraska State Supreme Court reversed a lower court's decision approving two state prisoners' marriage to one another, according to *The Associated Press*.

Paul Gillpatrick and Niccole Wetherell filed suit against officials of the Nebraska Department of Corrections for repeatedly denying them an opportunity to marry at either one's prison or via video. The couple has been engaged since 2011.

The high court remanded the case back to the lower court due to procedural

errors in how the lawsuit was filed. The state Supreme Court said the lower court's decision was wrong because the suit was brought against prison officials as individuals, instead of in their official capacities, the Sept. 29 story said.

"Our clients are simply asking for the ability to marry," Danielle Conrad of the Nebraska ACLU said. "Our clients look forward to their day in court to affirm the clear precedent from the United States Supreme Court that states, 'Inmate marriages,

like others, are expressions of emotional support and public commitment.'"

Conrad said they will continue to pursue the case. Gillpatrick was sentenced to 55 to 90 years for second-degree murder in 2010. Wetherell was sentenced in 1999 to life for first-degree murder.

Nebraska State Attorney General Doug Peterson said he "will continue to defend the taxpayers from being forced to facilitate a videoconference wedding ceremony for these two convicted murderers."

—Forrest Jones

America's aging prison population



Old friends, Edwin "Fuzzy" Marquis and Louis "Wookie" Calvin on the San Quentin Lower Yard

"It's not a coincidence that Louisiana also has the highest incarceration level in the country and the second-highest wrongful conviction rate, according to the National Registry of Exonerations," concluded Reason. According to Reason, 85 percent of criminal defendants in Louisiana qualified for a public defender in 2016. Due to a lack of resources, 33 of the state's 42 public defender offices began turning away cases.

"The Disappearing Sixth Amendment" by C.J. Ciaramella in Reason magazine June 2017
REASON.com

Life without the possibility of parole is a growing possibility in the US

By Charles David Henry
Staff Writer

The courts last year sentenced 31 defendants to death, leaving a total of 2,800 prisoners around the country facing the threat of capital punishment.

That is "remarkable," said University of Virginia School of Law Professor Brandon Garrett. But Americans should think carefully about what is replacing the death penalty: "Life row," as Garrett describes it.

More than 50,000 prisoners are serving life without parole (LWOP) in America today — an all-time high. According to a study by the Sentencing Project, "Most (of the 50,000 LWOPs) were sentenced to life without parole even if they are guilty, they will not have the chance to argue against sentences that offer them no possibility of release or rehabilitation."

Most LWOPs have a difficult time getting a lawyer to review their cases after conviction, Garrett said.

Besides the LWOPs, thousands of other prisoners were convicted of nonviolent crimes, such as property offenses or drug offenses but are unlikely to outlive their prison sentences. Many were sentenced for sexual assault,

robbery or kidnapping. "An additional 150,000 prisoners are serving life sentences, and still more are serving 'virtual life sentences,' from which the prisoner will realistically never be released," the study said, because the minimum time is beyond their life expectancy.

In 2015, the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said, "The reality is that any innocent defendant is infinitely better off appealing a death sentence than a sentence of life imprisonment."

Under state and federal law, Death Row inmates are entitled to a lawyer once the appeal process is finished. On the other hand, an inmate sentenced to life without parole has no one working on his or her case. Even after a prisoner files habeas petition after petition, by himself, the judges can summarily dismiss all his claims, Garrett said.

According to the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of people 55 or older sentenced to more than one year in prison surged 400 percent between 1993 and 2013, to more than 130,000. The prisons have been filling up with an aging population whose plight is seldom

addressed in rehabilitation programs.

Elderly prisoners have greatly increased the burdens on the prison system, in part because of the medical care they require, the federal report said. California's Death Row lists four inmates age 80 or above, according to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) records.

Yet despite these increases, Governor Brown has been granting parole to thousands serving life sentences, including violent offenders. According to a 2013 CDCR report, "recidivism among those paroled lifers has been extremely low, and 'markedly' less than that of typical released prisoners."

Courts across the country continue to oppose life-without-parole sentences imposed against juveniles. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court held that juveniles' crimes must reflect "permanent incorrigibility" and then such sentences should be reserved for only "the rarest offenders."

The rise of the permanently incarcerated suggests that ending the death penalty is just the gateway into a larger problem. The professor says the next step would be to review lengthy sentences and ask, "How much is enough?"

By Achilles Williams
Journalism Guild Writer

America is facing problems as its prison population is aging, according to a *Pew Charitable Trusts* report.

"Nearly every state is seeing that upward tick in elderly state prisoners," *Pew* reports. "For state prisons, the consequence of that aging is money, more and more of it every year."

Many state prisons are forced to make choices between housing elderly prisoners or letting them go due to huge medical expenses, according to *Pew*.

HEALTHCARE

Health care for the elderly prisoner costs between four and eight times what it costs younger prisoners, the report said.

"It was the push for mandatory sentences and Three Strikes You're Out. So, we're seeing people who came to prison in their 30s and 40s and 50s in their 50s and 60s and 70s today," reported Linda Redford. She studies health issues related to elderly prisoners and directs aging and geriatrics programs at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Louisiana, Ohio and Vir-

ginia are among the several states that have a mechanism for elderly release, a "geriatric conditional release" law that makes old age grounds for consideration of early release.

In Virginia, for example, prisoners are automatically considered for release if they are 60 and have served 13 years or if they are 65 and have served five years, reported the article.

"Either you figure out ways to get them out of the prison system and on to Medicare or you choose to take a firm line that those patients have to do their time, and you need to fund those facilities and care services that are necessary," said Owen Murray, chief physician for Correctional Managed Care, University of Texas Medical Branch, which oversees health care for most of Texas' prisons.

For elderly prisoners, prison is a particularly treacherous place. Forced to climb to top bunks and up and down stairs, elderly prisoners become a weak link in a chain of younger, stronger prisoners. Conditions such as hearing loss, dementia and frailty can make it difficult to obey prison rules.

"If there's an old lion or gazelle, the young ones are going to take advantage," said Phillip Wheatley, a prison

caregiver.

MEDIAN AGE

The graying of American prisons reflects a spike in the median age of American prisoners since 1970. But this does not fully explain the steep increase in elderly prisoners. Corrections officials point to two factors: 1) the steady increase of elderly adults entering prison and 2) the radical changes sparked by the get-tough-on-crime mentality of the 1990s that resulted in longer sentences.

"Prisons weren't designed for patients who are getting older. They were designed for people 18 to 55" and who were able to walk, said Murray.

Decisions about aging prisoners and the risk they would pose to the outside world should better reflect their medical conditions, said Brie Williams, an associate professor of geriatric medicine at University of California, San Francisco, who studies aging in prison. "Health care professionals and criminal justice administrators should be coming together...to evaluate people for release.

"We need to develop different approaches to their parole that are informed by their medical state," she concluded.

Lawyer urges defendant to plead guilty in capital case

By Charles David Henry
Staff Writer

In the summer of 2011, defendant Robert McCoy met with his lawyer Larry English to discuss how to plead in a capital case, *The New York Times* reported.

English told McCoy that he wanted him to concede to killing the mother, stepfather and brother-in-law of his estranged wife.

Others committed the crimes, McCoy told English, and he wanted to clear his name.

However, English said in a sworn statement that “Robert was furious, and it was a very intense meeting. He told me not to make that concession, but I told him that I was going to do so.”

There was substantial evidence that he had done so, the *Times* reported.

There was no ambiguity in McCoy’s position that he was innocent of the murders, according to English. But, his “belief in his innocence was both earnest and delusional,” according to the *Times*.

“I believed that this was

the only way to save his life,” English said.

The dispute was settled in court.

“Admitting guilt in an attempt to avoid the imposition of the death penalty appears to constitute a reasonable trial strategy,” the trial court determined after finding that there was overwhelming evidence incriminating McCoy.

English believed McCoy’s credibility was at stake and “feared the jurors would not listen him to when he begged them to spare Mr. McCoy’s life in the second phase.”

According to a unanimous 2004 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Florida v. Nixon*, “Lawyers need not obtain the clients’ express consent before conceding guilt in a capital case.”

“Conceding guilt in a capital case is sometimes the right play,” according to the *Times*. In September, the Supreme Court agreed to decide whether it is permissible “even if the man whose life is at stake objects.”

However, the Nixon ruling did not address whether it

was permissible for a lawyer to disregard a client’s explicit instruction to the contrary.

“Mr. English is simply selling me out. ... This is unconstitutional for you to keep an attorney on my case when this attorney is completely selling me out,” McCoy told the trial judge, who denied his request to represent himself after he tried to fire English.

A Yale law school clinic accused English of not being an effective defense attorney.

In a legal brief filed in the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of McCoy, the law school claimed that English did not go far enough to test the prosecution’s case, which backfired when McCoy was found guilty of capital murder.

The Sixth Amendment to the United States guarantees a right to the assistance of counsel. However, a capital defendant has no right to a lawyer who insists on his innocence, the Supreme Court ruled. The Supreme Court also ruled in 1975 in *Faretta v. California* that “the client is boss.”

Norway’s prison ranked most humane in the world

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Writer

Norway’s Halden Prison ranks as one of the most humane prisons in the world — a place where the sole focus is rehabilitation, reported the Huffington Post. Turkey’s Diyarbakir Prison, on the other hand, is described as a facility that completely ignores all basic human rights.

U.S. prisons fall somewhere in the middle when compared to these other prisons. Colorado’s federal Administrative Maximum Facility is an example between the best and worst globally, according to the article.

Contrast that with what Huffington journalist Christopher Zoukis wrote about Norway’s innovative prison:

“The sole goal of Halden is rehabilitation, and to that end no expense is spared on art to create a beautiful and inspiring atmosphere, bright and airy cells with enclosed ensuites, bar-free windows, excellent workout facilities, a peaceful treed yard with (chess) boards and benches, and other such niceties.”

“Modern, cheerful, quiet and peaceful,” Halden is a supermax facility housing Norway’s worst offenders, but its guards are “trained to motivate, not intimidate inmates,” Zoukis wrote. “Robust vocational programming, on-site medical and paramedical facilities keep the prisoners’ bodies and minds in good working order.”

Simply known as the ADX, the Administrative Maximum Facility is considered one of America’s most notorious prisons, the article said. Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski is currently housed there. Named in a class-action lawsuit, ADX allegedly misdiagnosed or failed to diagnose many prisoners with severe mental illnesses.

The lawsuit claims that ADX housed prisoners with mental problems in segregated units for disciplinary purposes, denying them mental health treatment. The isolated housing conditions contributed to an increase in mental distress, which the claimants say caused them to act out and ultimately be subject to more severe discipline

and continued segregation.

“Attempts at suicide and self-harm were ‘rewarded’ with more punishment,” Zoukis wrote. “... the prison isn’t actually even permitted by law to house such prisoners.”

Diyarbakir in Turkey has a world-renowned reputation for torture, overcrowding, and atrocious living conditions. The 1980s were so horrendous at the prison that that era was labeled its “Period of Barbarity.”

Common tactics included beatings, sexual assault, electrocution, sensory deprivation, being strung up by the arms, and more.

“During the period of barbarity and beyond, hundreds of prisoners have died while incarcerated in Diyarbakir,” Zoukis wrote. “Causes of death include hunger strikes, beatings, self-immolation by fire and ‘mysterious’ deaths during interrogations.”

Norway’s incarceration rate is approximately 75 per 100,000 people, with the lowest recidivism rate in the world at around 20 percent. In the U.S., it is over 700 incarcerated persons per the same 100,000, with more than 70 percent of released prisoners being re-arrested within five years, according to the article.

“The U.S. prison system is certainly in need of reform, but compared to others around the world, it’s not the worst — nor is it the best — system on the planet,” Zoukis wrote.

“Between the two extremes — torture and intimidation versus a focus on education and rehabilitation — which method works best?”



Norway’s Halden Prison

Arizona Tent City shut down

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

Arizona’s infamous Tent City outdoor inmate lodging touted by former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio has finally collapsed under new Sheriff Paul Penzone, reported *The New York Times*.

“This facility is not a crime deterrent,” Penzone said in a news conference. “It is not cost-efficient. And, it is not tough on criminals. That may have been the intent when it was first opened, and there was a need.”

“But this facility has become more of a circus atmosphere for the general public. Starting today, that circus ends, and these tents come down,” Penzone continued.

Penzone announced his plans to shut down the facility after he took office on Jan. 1, ending Arpaio’s six-term reign as county sheriff.

Transfers have been underway since May with the final 370 prisoners transferred to other detention centers and the official shutting down of the 24-year operation in October, according to the article.

Arpaio defended the Tent City. “It’s been a great program, a great deterrent,” he said. “Had over half a million people come through

the tents. All convicted, doing their time.

“To this day, people approach me and thank me — parents about their kids having to go to the tents, and they straighten out,” Arpaio said reported the *Times*.

Arpaio’s “tough on crime” stance focused largely on illegal immigration. The Federal Court convicted him in July of ignoring an order to stop racially profiling Latinos. President Trump pardoned him in August.

“Women of color in Arpaio’s jails were particularly mistreated,” said Brian Tashman, a political researcher and strategist at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Latina detainees were “denied basic sanitary items” and were “forced to remain with sheets or pants soiled from menstruation,” said Tashman, citing a Justice Department report.

They were put into “solitary confinement for extended periods of time because of their inability to understand and thus follow a command given in English,” the report added.

Arpaio had bragged about his implementation of chain gangs for men and women.

“We had so many different programs. Chain gangs. I put

the women on chain gangs,” Arpaio said. “First one in the world.”

Tent City opened in 1993 and helped reduce housing costs for a surging inmate population. The seven-acre campus was outfitted with dozens of Korean War tents.

At its peak it held 1,700 inmates. The last several years had only 700 to 800 housed there, according to the article.

The county formed a committee to investigate the jail’s effectiveness. Interestingly, Penzone and Grant Woods, chairman of the committee, found that inmates preferred Tent City to traditional jails. The committee discovered that inmates preferred to stay outdoors instead of being cooped up in a cell most of the day.

“If the inmates voted, I’m telling you, it would be in the high 90 percentile or even 100 percent, they would like it to stay open, which is exactly the opposite of the image that’s been portrayed,” Woods said.

Tent City, with an annual operating cost of \$8.5 million, was a tremendous economic burden, according to Penzone. He expects that shutting it down would save Maricopa County \$4 to \$4.5 million a year.

Black Lives Matter protests Los Angeles jail expansion

By Achilles Williams
Journalism Guild Writer

A Black Lives Matter coalition gathered at the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration to protest the expansion of county jails, reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, led the demonstrators and launched the Justice L.A. campaign by asking county leaders to redirect funds allocated for new jails to community services instead.

“We can find \$3.5 billion to build more jails, but we can’t find money for schools.

We can find money for Olympics, but we can’t find money for parks. If you’ve got \$3.5 billion, invest it in the people,” said Greg Akili, who is also with Black Lives Matter L.A.

Some activists wore prison-orange T-shirts that read, “I am not the property of L.A. County jail,” as they stood among 100 steel-frame jail bunks set up on the street outside the Hahn Hall of Administration.

“These beds represent trauma, embarrassment, isolation, shame and death,” Jayda Rasberry of the Group Dignity of Power Now told the L.A. Times at a news conference.

Despite the protest going on outside, county supervisors approved a budget of \$2 billion to build a 3,885-bed replacement for the downtown Men’s Central Jail and a 1,600-bed women’s facility at the now-vacant Mira Loma Detention Center in Lancaster reported the L.A. Times.

After the budget vote, Cullors and others asked the board to delay construction until a review is completed on the effects of recent criminal justice reforms. “We don’t know what our projected prison population will be in the next 10 years. What we should be doing is getting a clear understanding of who’s in our jails,” said Cullors.

Arkansas Supreme Court Justices face lawsuit by Black judge

Arkansas’ Supreme Court justices are defendants in a federal lawsuit filed by a Black circuit court judge after he halted the executions of nine prisoners because the manufacturer’s drug was never intended to be used in capital punishment.

CNN reported that Judge Wendell Griffen, a Baptist pastor, was pulled off death penalty cases by the justices because he participated in a Good Friday rally against the death penalty. “He was photographed lying on a cot as part of the demonstration. He also wrote a blog post that week stating his belief

that the death penalty was not morally defensible — though his lawsuit points out that he did not argue it was legally indefensible.”

One justice concurred with the decision in part, but said the court’s move to permanently reassign all of Griffen’s cases without investigating first was too much. The court referred the matter to a disciplinary commission to investigate.

The Arkansas code of judicial conduct states: “Judges should maintain the dignity of judicial office at all times, and avoid both impropriety and the appear-

ance of impropriety in their professional and personal lives. They should aspire at all times to conduct that ensures the greatest possible public confidence in their independence, impartiality, integrity, and confidence,” the CNN reported.

Griffen’s lawsuit alleges that White judges engaging in criminal behavior were treated more fairly or less severely than he, “an African-American judge who has not been accused of criminal activity,” according to the report.

His lawyers argue he took part in the protests in his

personal capacity and didn’t wear his robes or otherwise invoke his judicial role. They also challenge the decision on due process grounds, citing that Griffen did not have a chance to argue his case in court.

Griffen is asking the federal courts to reverse the ruling by the state’s highest court, alleging that “he is being discriminated against for his faith and race, as an African-American,” it was reported. Griffen’s lawyers contend that his protests were an exercise of his First Amendment rights to free speech and freedom of

religion.

“Suffice it to say he is a remarkable man and thoughtful judge, and I could not be prouder to represent him,” his attorney Mike Laux told CNN.

“The Arkansas Supreme Court and other ‘powers that be’ have had it out for him for years because of his much-needed outspokenness on dire social issues in a state with a miserable history of protecting the disadvantaged and marginalized, especially those of color. The court and various state legislators have truly gone too far this time, and we intend to prove it,”

Laux said.

University of Chicago law professor Geoffrey Stone, an expert on the First Amendment, told CNN, “You have to show that the speech was directly incompatible with his functions. It’s not clear that anything he said was not compatible with his functioning.”

“My own view would be to say he’s perfectly within his rights to say the death penalty is immoral. As long as he is applying the law fairly, judges criticize the law all the time,” Stone concluded.

—By Charles David Henry

350 men honor Veteran's Day at San Quentin

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

Every year, the 11th day of the 11th month in the United States commemorates Veterans Day. It was no different in San Quentin for the more than 350 incarcerated men who once served in America's armed forces.

Nearly a dozen community supporters ventured inside the prison to pay their respect with about 50 of the incarcerated veterans who gathered in front of a stage set on the prison's Lower Yard.

The tribute began early Saturday morning with 1970s music blaring and the smell of burning wood coming from the Native Americans' sacred grounds.

In the distance, inmates played a pick-up basketball game against the Lincoln Hill Community Church. Across the yard, UC San Francisco Dons joined a match with the prison tennis team.

Meanwhile, on stage, the incarcerated veterans, many with combat experience in wars from Vietnam to Afghanistan, readied themselves to tell stories about their military experience.

First, though, everyone in the yard stood at attention as the national anthem played. All



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Sponsors and the Veterans Healing Veterans group on the Lower Yard

the veterans saluted the flag as the civilians and correctional officers held their right hands over their hearts.

At the conclusion of the national anthem, someone from the Native Americans' sacred grounds yelled the Marines' "oorah," which brought several whistles and an applause.

The tone of the event ranged from joyous to solemn.

"This is a very hard day for me," said veteran Eric Davison with his head hung as he earnestly recalled his service.

Davison served across the globe in the 1st Marine Division and 1st Force Recon Bat-

talion from 1988 to 1998.

Dennis Nelson, another veteran, served in the Marines. He did three tours in Vietnam, 1967, '68 and '69.

"Veterans Day honors all American veterans, both living and dead," Nelson said. "In fact, Veterans Day is intended to thank living veterans' dedicated and loyal service to their country. The biggest national debt is not government spending or federal deficits, but that debt America owes to these veterans."

David "Solo" Bennet, who emceed the Seventh Annual Veterans Healing Veterans

From the Inside Out Veterans Day celebration, said, "I consider myself as an advocate and a helper."

He added: "As a human being it is my responsibility to give back and pay forward the help and assistance given to me by people in my past."

JD Martin, who served in the 82nd Airborne, 173rd Airborne Division, said he watched the latest Ken Burns documentary on Vietnam.

"It showed all the trauma and horrors of the battles," Martin said as he read about what it meant to be a soldier during the Vietnam era.

"I will not be explicit because after 50 years, the horror is still there," Martin said.

Dennis Barnes served in Vietnam between 1967 and 1973. He did three combat tours.

"At this very moment, men and women are serving around the world under all kinds of weather. They are vigilant and of all races looking out for our freedoms. Be proud of them. We can complain about all kinds of things, but be thankful for our veterans — remember America needs you."

"The survival of democracy depends on the sacrifice of veterans," said James "Shorty" Dunbar, clerk for the veterans program. "The most cherished wish of all veterans is for peace."

The program's chairman, Gary Cooper, summed up the sentiment for many of the incarcerated veterans, "War, what is it good for? Absolutely nothing, and that's true. I will always be a veteran, before I am an inmate."

Tina Rutsch has been visiting San Quentin for about two years to help veterans to tell their stories through theatrical performances.

She said the experience of having the honor of laying a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as a teenager

was impactful to her.

"Since then, I've always had an interest in veterans, but my path went to the theater," she said. Years later, an experience with Marin Shakespeare Company gave her the chance to come inside San Quentin and work with incarcerated veterans.

She is currently recruiting incarcerated men for her next theater production.

"I'm excited. It is the third year for the Veterans Theater through Marin Shakespeare. We take ideas that the veterans have and share stories and experiences. We then connect shared stories and we talk and listen to each other to come up with the performance. We want to include all voices, veteran or not."

Emcee Bennet said, "I get great pleasure in making others feel better about themselves. Playing an intimate part in putting on the Veterans Day ceremony was very fulfilling in that it brought together people from different walks of life and even from different generations."

San Quentin Honor Guard Team Leader, Craig Johnson, presented the POW-MIA flag to the San Quentin firehouse.

The feeling of keeping a close eye on Saddam Hussein

Book Review

What history leaves unsaid will always be a point of controversy, especially for the defeated or the powerless. It is the job of the all-inclusive historian to look back and find parts of the record that are missing in order to put everything in place—to balance the interpretation of what took place.

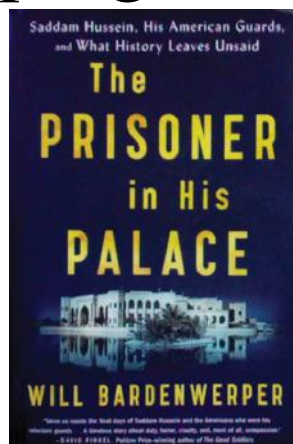
The Prisoner in His Palace by Will Bardenwerper (2016) is about Saddam Hussein's last days.

Bardenwerper, a military veteran, waited 10 years after Hussein's execution to give readers a look at the man considered to be a butcher by many, while those who guarded him saw grandfatherly qualities in this so-called enemy. He was under the watch of a dozen U.S. military policemen — called the "Super Twelve" — whose job it was to keep him alive and well to stand trial.

The contrast between what the American public knew about Hussein and the man the American guards experienced is striking and echoes many of the relationships between inmates and guards at San Quentin. The intimate interactions, over time, allow prison staffers and correctional officers to observe different aspects of inmates' personalities and to recognize authentic changes in thinking and behavior in men serving time for horrible crimes.

In the book, there are minor experiences that have outsized meaning to the guards. An American guard receives a Christmas gift from Hussein — a candle along with poetry the former dictator had written. The guard was grateful and moved.

On San Quentin's Death Row, there are men described as "the worst of the worst," who still develop meaningful connections with guards.



One poignant example occurred at a Death Row poetry slam last November. An inmate recited a poem dedicated to his son, and a correctional sergeant, who was affected by it, responded by saying, "By what you write, you guys are creating a legacy for your boys. Touch the people you touch and leave that legacy behind."

The main focus of the book is the way the relation-

ship between Hussein and the Super Twelve changed over time.

"At first, the MPs were careful not to engage him in conversation, limiting their interaction to chilly 'yes, sirs' and 'no, sirs.' But the soldiers spent twenty-four hours a day with him, broken into three eight-hour shifts, and some thawing on both sides was inevitable."

The book highlights the complexities of a man like Hussein and how the beholder affects perspective. The FBI's assessment of Saddam Hussein was that he was "someone who would exhibit a combination of extreme grandiosity and paranoia, no constraints of conscience, a lack of empathy and zero respect for the truth." But Dr. Jerrod Post, founder of the CIA's psychological profiling unit, referred to him as "the most traumatized leader I have ever studied." The doctor noted that Hussein grew up in an extremely

violent part of Iraq and had witnessed numerous killings within his family.

In contrast to the official evaluations, soldiers who guarded Hussein saw him as a poet and a man who cared about his daughters intensely. Although the media portrayed him as a kingly tyrant who spent lavishly and owned palaces throughout the country, the American guards discovered that "he lived in ordinary houses and rarely stayed in those palaces he built ... and genuinely didn't like the luxurious life."

"The Super Twelve had never gotten to know Saddam the dictator, only Saddam the imprisoned man. They believed they were doing the right thing in bringing some dignity to his existence."

Throughout the book, Bardenwerper describes how the guards discovered commonalities with their prisoner. One of the guards, Hutch,

had been struck by the fact that his grandpa and Hussein shared the same birthday, April 28.

"The way Saddam would just start telling a random story, out of the blue, reminded Hutch of his grandfather," writes Bardenwerper. "Like his grandfather, Hutch realized 'that was what Saddam was left with—his memories—and I was letting him talk.'"

Bardenwerper quotes the interpreter, Joseph, who said, "Will I miss Saddam the brutal dictator? Of course not. But will I miss sitting in the evening with him as a human being? Yes, I will."

Humanizing a person like Hussein may seem impossible to most Americans, but *The Prisoner in His Palace* is an affirmation of human dignity even in people who have behaved horrifically and in situations where you would least expect to find it.

—Juan Haines

News Briefs

1. Texas — Formerly incarcerated men and women won a major victory to end employment discrimination against hiring ex-offenders and to restore their civil rights for Fair Chance Hiring, reports *Grassroots Leadership*. The movement, called The Fair Chance, is a nationwide campaign that requires employers to consider candidates on their merit prior to asking about criminal convictions, moving the background check to the end of the hiring process. The Austin City Council voted in March 2016 to pass a Fair Chance Hiring Ordinance.

2. Louisiana — An effort to restore the voting rights of Louisianans who have felony convictions or are on parole or probation has been rejected by a federal judge. District Judge Tim Kelley called the disenfranchisement law



unfair but constitutional under state law, *The Times-Picayune* reports. The ruling has been appealed, asserting that voting is an unalienable right held by all Louisiana citizens, including those on probation and parole.

3. Jackson, Miss. — A legal group is asking a federal court to strike down Mississippi's constitutional bar preventing citizens from voting ever again after being convicted of certain felonies, *The Associated Press* reports.

Attorneys representing the disenfranchised citizens estimate that more than 50,000 Mississippians have been disqualified from voting since 1994 due to these convictions. About 60 percent are Black, in a state whose population is 37 percent Black. The suit describes the disenfranchising crimes as "an integral part of the overall effort to prevent African-Americans in Mississippi from voting."

4. Montana — The state is facing a \$227 million revenue shortfall, *Montana Public Radio* reports. CoreCivic runs the state's only private prison and has offered a \$30 million dollar bailout if state lawmakers would extend its contract for another 10 years. The \$30 million offer would cover about 13 percent of the revenue shortfall.

5. Tennessee — Men of Valor, a faith-based organization founded by ex-inmate Carl Carlson, is providing the formerly incarcerated education, training, counseling and treatment in an effort to tackle the state's nearly 50 percent re-arrest and recidivism rate, *The Tennessean* reports. Nationally more than two-thirds of all formerly incarcerated men are arrested again within three years after being released—within five years, 76 percent are rearrested.

6. Vermont — Vermont inmates transferred to a

state-run Pennsylvania prison last summer are being denied confidential phone calls with their attorneys at the defender general's office and are being discouraged — and sometimes outright prevented — from meeting with those attorneys during visits to the Pennsylvania prison, according to Vermont Defender General Matthew Valerio, *Vermont Public Radio* reports.

7. Washington — A federal lawsuit has forced state officials to move all juvenile defendants charged as adults to living conditions better than solitary confinement, *The Seattle Times* reports. The lawsuit filed by Columbia Legal Services noted that four teens awaiting trial and living in isolation cells received only 10 minutes per day of face-to-face conversation with a teacher, who slid work sheets under their door.

8. Nebraska — The second-most-overcrowded state

prisons in the nation are located in Nebraska, *World-Herald News Service* reports. In four of the state's prisons, inmates sent to solitary confinement are double-bunked. Last April, a double-bunked inmate was charged with first-degree murder for killing his cellmate, causing state lawmakers to look into the practice. The use of solitary confinement, which has been shown to exacerbate mental troubles and illnesses, has also drawn concern from state lawmakers, who passed a law in 2015 seeking to reduce its use.

9. Texas — Wrongfully convicted men and women are paid a lump sum of \$80,000 for every year they were behind bars, *The Dallas Morning News* reports. So far, that price tag is \$109,987,935. The money has gone to men and women who together spent a total of 1,160 years imprisoned for crimes they didn't commit.

USF Tennis Team revives player's dream

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

For the San Quentin Inside Tennis Team (ITT), playing tennis on a prison yard with the University of San Francisco Tennis Team is like a reunion, but for newcomer Chester Boddie, the day was like being blessed with a second chance while still incarcerated.

About twice a year, USF Tennis Coach Pablo Pires de Almeida brings his players into San Quentin State Prison. The 20-year-olds who came on Nov. 11 hailed from

Sweden, the Netherlands and Turkey. The USF team, who just capped off its season with an appearance in the North-West Regional semi-finals, played a few mixed games, ran drills and put on an exhibition.

For a born-again Christian tennis enthusiast with plans to train pros, the exposure was a God-send.

"All praise due to the almighty," Boddie said. "I'm glad they came in. I look at it as an honor."

Boddie recently arrived at San Quentin from another state prison.

He first learned to play tennis while serving 21 years in the federal prison system.

Once freed, he started playing in United States Tennis Association tournaments with the intention of becoming a tennis instructor. He said they ranked him a 5.5 and pro rank a 7.

"I want to get youngsters and train them like the Williams sisters," Boddie said. "I want to find people with the fire and cultivate them."

Drug addiction brought down his plans.

"I stopped going to tournaments — that's what the drugs

do to you," Boddie said.

After hitting bottom he was in misery and in pain. Boddie then decided to rob a bank with a fake gun. He failed to take the tracers out of the money before going home and received 20 years, 18 of which are from sentencing enhancements. He's 61 years old with 12 years served of his time.

"I was tired of being in and out of prison," Boddie said. "I was using drugs. I saw myself dying; I saw the pain of it. I couldn't take it no more. I thought money would bring happiness. I knew about taking tracers out of the money, but forgot — almost purposely. Getting caught has been a blessing."

During the visit with the USF team, the Christian teamed up with USF's Paul Giraud and showed off his skills in a drill Pires de Almeida calls the Brazilian.

"The Brazilian is like a Chinese fire drill," said tennis sponsor Martin Silverman, who escorted the USF team into the prison.

The drill consists of everyone lined up in pairs to challenge the King on the opposite side of the net. One killer overthrows the King or eliminates that opposing challenger. The King needs five points to win a game while the opposing team needs one killer to become the new King. Each ITT member paired



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

USF Paul Giraud teamed up with Chester Boddie

with a USF player to form six teams lined up against the King. Giraud and Boddie held the court down, winning three games before being dethroned. Then they took their King spot back from ITT's Paul "Black" Alleyne and Mert Zinzirli, 20 of Turkey.

"He (Boddie) is probably the most consistent player here," Orlando Harris said. "He has a knowledge of the game some of us don't have. He's made the talent level go up."

Zinzirli teamed up with Eric Moonga, 21, of Sweden, for an exhibition match against his USF team members Giraud and Marco Barretto, 22.

Tied at 5-5 and 6-6. The game broke when Alleyne lobbed the ball just over the net, turned and walked away believing Mert, who was be-

hind the serving line, couldn't get to the ball in time for a return. Mert charged forward, bent low and hit the ball underhand and over the net for the match point.

"Today was so nice," Zinzirli said. "I love playing here. It's lots of fun and a change for us, too."

Moonga added, "It's always good beating Paul."

Both teams parted with smiles.

Meanwhile, Boddie hopes recent changes in the law will bring him home within five years to continuing pursuing his dream of mentoring the next Williams sisters. In the meantime, he is teaching the men at San Quentin.

"Getting opportunity to mess with tennis again, it's like a blessing in disguise," Boddie said. "I teach others to be alive."



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Inside Tennis Team running drills with USF players

OG soccer team blown out



File Photo

The Outsiders smiling after beating the OGs

By **Eddie Herena**
Staff Writer

Christian Cervantes and Nikhil Kanade scored three goals each as their team, The Outsiders, crushed the San Quentin OGs, 10-2, in the OGs' final match of the season.

Jared Bernstein (who scored two goals), Adrian Subercaseaux, and Reid Rosenberg also took advantage of the OGs' breakdown on defense and lack of offense.

"In my 35 years of playing soccer, I've never lost this bad," said OGs middle fielder, Jesús Lopez, in his native tongue.

OGs halfback Carlos Meza added that their mid-field presence was nonexistent. "This was our worst defensive showing ever," he declared.

The field for the Nov. 12 match was muddy in certain areas; however, the sun was shining and the air was brisk. It was a great day for a soccer match but a terrible performance from the home team. Caesar McDowell, one of San Quentin's notorious hecklers, entertained the crowd while the OGs tried to stop the Outsider onslaught.

Kanade opened the scoring with a goal in minute 15. A minute later, he scored again; a minute after that, he assisted Bernstein as he

scored the Outsiders' third goal.

Although the OGs complained about the field's muddy condition, the injured Outsider, Subercaseaux, scored in minute 21. The sure-footed Cervantes scored The Outsider's fourth goal—his first—at minute 43 of the first half.

The OGs had no answer for the visiting team's five-goal first-half performance.

They were relieved when the half ended.

Frustrated and bewildered, the OGs skipped the usual half-time speech and huddled among themselves. "We can't play disorganized," said Tare "Cancún" Beltranchuc. But that is exactly how they looked on the field.

Marco Villa, the OGs' goalkeeper, said that their biggest mistake was their disparity on defense.

"They're really fast," Beltranchuc said.

Andrew Crawford, program sponsor and Outsider coach, said, "They haven't made their chances and we've made ours."

Cervantes picked up where he left off when he scored his second goal two minutes into the second half. The Outsiders continued to move the ball with ease and played aggressively.

The first hat trick came in minute 60 by Cervantes—his second hat trick in two

appearances.

The OGs got lucky in minute 63 off an own-goal by Jake Bishop, the Outsiders' keeper. Two minutes later, John Windham scored the OGs' first and only legit goal.

It was 7-2, Outsiders, with 25 minutes left in regulation.

Bernstein came through for The Outsiders with his second goal at minute 75, which was followed by a second player getting a hat-trick—Kanade at the 76th minute.

The Outsiders' tenth and final score came from Rosenberg at minute 89. He was assisted by Mike Globits.

"It's nice to get a clean win," said Kanade, one of two leading scorers for the visiting team, with five goals in three matches.

Cervantes, the hermano from UC Berkeley, has six goals in two matches.

On the Outsiders' coaching staff were two first-time visitors and former Claremont McKenna soccer players, Sam Kunz and Kerry Muller.

"I think you guys need our coaching skills," said Kunz, who looks forward to coming back next season with her coaching partner, Muller.

Finn Michaelson, also a first-time visitor, reminded the crowd that "Soccer is one thing, but chilling with you guys is cool."

Holiday tournament winners

During the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, incarcerated people celebrated with tournaments in dominoes, pinochle, chess and three-on-three basketball for granola-bar prizes.

"It's something to do that's outside the routine," said Jairo Pedroza, who came in second in the pinochle competition. "It's having a good time doing something you like to do."

All first-place winners received 15 granola bars and second-place winners received 10 each.

In a close pinochle card game, Gene Atkins and his partner, E. "Preacher" Rob-

inson, took first place over Pedroza and Rosales.

"Pinochle is the only game I play," Atkins said. "It releases a lot of stress and it feels great to win."

Rosales took second place along with Pedroza.

In the dominoes competition, James Smith and Ben Jackson beat out James Benson and D. Stewart for first place.

Benson and Stewart took second.

In chess, Mr. Sekona checkmated Anthony Coleman to take first place, leaving Coleman in second.

Head Warriors Coach Rafael Cuevas suited as a

player for the three-on-three basketball tournament. He played with Warriors Tyrrell Price Sr. and Torrión Hart, plus Kahlil Dallas. They battled through three rounds to reach the finals, where they won first place, 26-19.

Second place went to Joshua Burton, Jamal "Dr. Jay" Green and Jessie Blue.

"This tournament was a stress-releaser," Blue said. "It helped me keep from focusing on missing my family and focus on appreciating the holidays and taking a moment to reflect on the good things we did in the past."

—Rahsaan Thomas

Handball tournament builds camaraderie

San Quentin's handball court consists of a corridor wall outside a gym entrance, where there is only room for one game at a time. Some of the yard's best handball players lined up along that wall for the camaraderie of the Thanksgiving Holiday Tournament doubles competition.

"The guys that show up, these are the players," said Jeff Williams, who won the tournament with partner B. Burton. "They enjoy the game; that's what we're here for."

The secret to winning the tournaments seems to be playing with Williams, who

has won four, playing with a different partner each time.

Eight teams battled to reach the finals in one game elimination rounds to 15 points.

"Beside a workout, it's fun," player Eric Post said. "When all the ones with some game come out, it's even more fun."

In the semi-finals, Cedrick Shaffer and David Mageo defeated Post and Jamar Smalls, 15-12, to get to the championship.

Williams and Burton destroyed Walter Spracka and L. Davis, 15-7, to meet Mageo and Shaffer in the finals.

Davis had just returned from a family visit.

Mageo said he loves playing handball because "it knocks out a lot of time, and it's therapeutic when I whip a**."

In the game that decided who would be the Thanksgiving holiday weekend champions, Williams and Burton jumped out to a 4-2 lead, but Mageo and Shaffer tied the score up at 5-5. From there, Williams and Burton kept taking the lead, but Mageo and Shaffer kept coming back to tie the score—8-8, then 9-9.

Williams and Burton jumped out again, but this time Mageo and Shaffer stayed in their rearview. Williams finished off Mageo and Shaffer with a kill shot for a 15-10 victory.

All involved enjoyed the day and wish for more like it. "Handball releases stress. It's a good workout, gives me a sense of worth, and it's something positive to do," Spracka said. "I just wish we had more handball courts."

—Rahsaan Thomas



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

David Mageo and L. Davis playing against each other

H-Unit 3-peats, but Becky trophy confiscated

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

H-Unit three-peated in the Asian-Pacific Islander Holiday Tournament with a 32-30 win over North Block, the prior three-peat Champions. H-Unit's Dahvee "Sleep" Sophal iced the game from the free-throw line.

In past tournaments, the housing units at San Quentin formed teams that battled for a trophy created from cardboard, gold-foil and a Ping-Pong ball: the Becky with the Good Hair Holiday Championship Trophy. Becky was passed to the winning team after each tournament. Prison guards confiscated Becky in a shakedown so Kevin Neang dedicated the Nov. 12 tournament to his co-organizer's getting a parole date.



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Becky Trophy

"My good friend Vi Chau is going home after serving 23 years. I wanted to get us here to compete and have fun. It's a reward for all of us doing programs and staying out of trouble."

Chau, sentenced to 26-to-life for homicide, was found suitable by the parole board

in November. The Vietnamese native expects immigration to release him after about 90 days because he says they have to honor an agreement that the U.S. can only deport Vietnamese people who arrived in the states after 1995. He arrived in 1980.

"I'm ready to reunite with my family and get back into the community and do some good," Chau said. "ICE is gonna pick me up — it's frustrating but I have to accept it."

At 5-foot-6, Chau plays basketball with the best of them. He used basketball to stay positive while passing his time. He helped organize the tournaments to bring everyone together so they could have fun.

"Every time I play basketball, I feel like I'm free," Chau said.

He played point-guard for North Block and wanted to win to dedicate the game to Sophal and Neang.

H-Unit had other plans. North Block and H-Unit reached the finals after battling through the earlier rounds. The first team to score 32 would win the whole full-court basketball tournament.

David Le, Sagar Patel, Roland Paras, Harash Patang and Sophal represented H-Unit.

Adnan Khan, Will Tupou, Bikkai Singh, Alladin Pangilinan and Vi made up the North Block squad.

Le kicked the game off with a three-pointer for H-Unit, then led his team to a 9-2 lead with 5 points.

After five straight points scored by Pangilinan, North Block swung the game around. They took a 20-13

lead. H-Unit went on another run and took the lead at 28-22, needing only two more baskets to win the tournament. They decided to get those four points from behind the three-point line.

"I was so open, I was goaded into taking it," Patel said.

Le and Patel missed several three-point attempts that ended up as defensive rebounds for North Block.

Tupou started the North Block charge with a layup off a rebound.

But then Patel finally nailed a three to put his team one point from victory at 31-24.

Khan hit Pangilinan with a dime at the elbow, and he nailed a three. Khan followed with another to make the score 31-30.

A foul put Sophal on the

free-throw line with two chances to win the game. The first attempt bounced off the back of the rim. The second won the game for H-Unit. Sophal finished with 3 points, Patel 11 and Le 8.

Pangilinan and Khan refused to give up and combined for 21 points, 11 and 10 respectively, in the close but losing effort. Khan credits his determination to Sophal.

"Sleep [Sophal], I just don't like him," Khan joked. "That fire inside of me comes from that dislike of Sleep."

"That's why I made the game winning shot — for everybody who doubted me," Sophal said.

"He thinks hitting that game-winning shot extinguished my fire, but I like him even less now," Khan continued to joke.

Runner breaks two records coming in last place

In full view of a film crew, numerous hecklers, fellow runners, ultra runners who coach us and a flock of geese, I, Rahsaan "New York" Thomas, broke two 1000 Mile (running) Club records by completing my first marathon at San Quentin on Nov. 17.

The first record I broke was a group effort. Never before have as many people, 13 in all, completed the 105 laps around the prison yard.

The second was all mine. I set a club record for longest marathon time ever at San Quentin — 6 hours, 12 minutes and 23 seconds.

For the first few miles, it felt to me like flying down the highway when there's no traffic.

Still, Markelle "The Gazelle" Taylor glided past me twice before I finished a mile. No surprise — he took



Photo by Jonath Mathew

Diana Fitzpatrick running with Rahsaan Thomas

first with a time of 3:20:19.

For the first lap, *San Quentin News* cameraman Eddie Herena followed me while holding a Go-Pro

camera in his teeth by its extension. He did this to assist in the making of a documentary by Christine Yoo.

Even with the extra

load, Herena came in second with a time of 3:37:20, five minutes ahead of rival Chris Scull (3:42:25). Vincente Gomez came in fourth (3:42:42).

As Scull and Gomez finished, I wondered if Coach Kevin Rumon had an accurate count of how much farther I had to go. I'd watched him being interviewed as I passed instead of counting my laps. He claimed I still had about 13 miles to go as Tommy Wickerd finished with a time of 3:46:16. Wickerd's Sunday training partner, Jonathan Chiu, came in one second later.

By then my right calf cramped up and demanded I quit. For the next few miles, I walked half and ran half a lap while Sergio Carrillo completed his marathon in 3:51:52. He was the seventh finisher in under four hours,

setting another club record.

"Here comes 'New York' [Rahsaan], look at the Geriatric Kid," yelled incarcerated person Mike Webb.

Hecklers continued to clown about my ridiculously slow pace.

"I don't think you're going to make it!" Prison University Project Administrator Heather Hart yelled through the education office fence as I ran by.

Her doubts gave me a burst of energy and determination. I continued to walk/run while several club members finished.

Steven Brooks and John Levin completed their first marathons with respective times of 4:00:12 and 4:04:05 while I struggled to take another step.

Sixty-one-year-old Larry Ford beat me with a time of 4:06:25.

When Al Yaseng and the 60-year-old Lee Goins finished their 105 laps, with times of 5:01:43 and 5:03:52, I remained the last member still striving. Seven others quit short of the goal.

Sponsor Tim Fitzpatrick convinced me that I had put in too many miles to quit as he joined me for a few laps of more running than walking. Then he passed the baton to his wife, Diana Fitzpatrick, the two-time Dipsea race champion, for a mile or so.

Melody Anne Schultz took over. When she told me that at age 62, she'd set a world record marathon time of 3:15 in London that still stands, I knew I couldn't quit. I'm only 47.

For a minute, club coach/sponsor Frank Ruona, D. Fitzpatrick and Schultz all ran with me, but I fell behind.

Chiu, who had already run 26.2 miles, completed the last two miles by my side. With six laps to go, we took off running and didn't stop until I joined the elite club of marathoners.

There were still spectators around, including a film crew. I dedicated the win to all the kids on Little League teams that never got to play and to everybody who comes in last.

People joked about how long it took, but I'm proud to say I completed a San Quentin Marathon just weeks after Shalane Flanagan won the New York City Marathon. I want to do that one day.

By completing the marathon, I've entered a world of elite people—marathoners. However, more important to me, I've proven to myself that I can go the distance, no matter how hard, how painful or how much time it takes.

A few days later, Yoo and her assistant Zahava Hirsch returned, without cameras and wearing brand-new running shoes.

We ran laps during a club training session. Hirsch, 24, was starting her running career and Yoo ran for the first time in weeks. They completed about a mile and a half each.

Their inspiration: Me.

"You looked like you were dying and you kept going for six hours," Hirsch said. "When I run in the Olympics, I will be able to say I started my running career at San Quentin."

—Rahsaan Thomas

All-Madden victorious over The Chosen 27-12

The San Quentin All-Madden flag football team snagged four interceptions, including two in the second half by Jason Jones, to beat The Chosen 27-12.

On an overcast Nov. 4 day, All-Madden took the field hungry for a comeback. The week before, The Chosen showed up without former Oakland Raider Quarterback Andrew Walter and edged out a 28-20 victory.

"The last time they kinda put a smack down on us," All-Madden Coach Dwight Kennedy said. "We were anxious to get out here, and we played more aggressive."

Without Walter, or their normal QB Adam Perez, The Chosen relied on Phil Volta to fill in at quarterback. He played semi-pro with the San Luis Obispo Panthers as a fullback and defensive lineman.

All-Madden set the tone early with a touchdown run in by 19-year-old Anastacio Prado. With the extra point, the score was 7-0.

The first interception came early in the game. Volta launched a bomb that All-Madden's Calvin Willis caught lying on his back across the muddy football.

"That was a great interception," The Chosen Sponsor Pastor Wayne Jackson remarked from the sideline where he stood with his road dog, James Troutt.

"I came out here to share the Word and have the Word shared with me," Troutt said.



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

D. Ziyad Nickolson rushing The Chosen quarterback

"Inspiration comes from everywhere."

Troutt does Men's Ministry and sings in a choir.

All-Madden struck again when Kent Craig ran in another touchdown.

"My wide receivers are doing their thing, the line is holding up, we all playing as a team," All-Madden QB Devin Cole remarked.

The Chosen struck back about 4:00 before halftime. Volta completed a 25-yard pass to Omar Bennett, who ran it in to make the score 13-6 All-Madden.

Bennett, now 38 years old, played wide receiver for Cal Berkeley from 1998-2000 and the University of Hawaii from 2001-03.

With less than three minutes left in the first half, All-Madden marched down the field into the red zone with a few good plays.

Cole dropped a dime pass into the hands of D. Ziyad

Nickolson for 15 yards.

Jones, pulling a LaDarnian Tomlinson-type move, lined up at the running back position but reversed roles to throw a 25-yard pass to Cole.

Cole ran for an additional 45 yards on the next two plays to put All-Madden in the end zone, where The Chosen held them without allowing another first-half touchdown.

Pastor Jackson delivered a halftime message about finding joy in good and in bad times. He was dressed in a hoodie, black baseball cap, sweats, and had both knees wrapped up, as if ready to join the game if his sons, Andre and Anthony, needed him on the football field.

With both teams circled around, he said, "No matter what happens, know you have power in God's Holy Spirit. You can lose a lot of things—I lost my hair—but

don't lose your faith."

In the second half, Cole made a pass from The Chosen's 10-yard line that Finis Jones intercepted and ran toward the goal. Right before crossing the goal line, Finis Jones was held up.

The Chosen received the ball half the distance from the goal line, leaving two yards between them and tying the game. As Volta cocked back to throw a pass, Nickolson snagged the ball out of his hands and completed the pick-six for a 19-6 lead.

Volta again threw an interception, this time to Jason Jones, who yelled in triumph, "I do this. I tried to tell you, I do this."

The Chosen responded on their next possession. Volta pushed through the All-Madden defensive line for a 10 yard gain.

"I'd rather run the ball because I like to run people over," Volta said.

Then he followed with a 10-yard pass to John "Dunnie" Windham, a San Quentin resident who played for visiting The Chosen squad. Windham caught the pass and ran it 50 extra yards for a touchdown, which made the score All-Madden 19-12.

All-Madden struck back with a 15-yard pass to Nickolson, who ran it down the sidelines for an additional 40 yards. Cole completed the drive with a touchdown pass to Kent Craig, who out-jumped the defensive in the

end zone for the catch and the 25-12 lead.

On the next possession, 51-year-old Brad Shells sacked The Chosen's QB for a safety, which increased the lead to 27-12.

"We're running the ball the rest of the way," All-Madden Coach Kennedy said.

After All-Madden went four and out, The Chosen had five minutes to make a comeback run. Volta, however, couldn't get a pass off. First All-Madden's Brontray Moore batted down Volta's pass attempt for the second time in the game.

Then Volta threw another pass that Jones intercepted.

"He's their star," The Chosen's Ryan G. said of Jones. "We shouldn't be throwing to his side, but we do. He beat us. It's all in good fun. It's actually fun to go up against someone who can play."

The teams all greeted each other with smiles and handshakes after the game.

"It's very heartfelt to know somebody on the outside cares to take the time to fellowship and be with us," Kennedy said. "It really means a lot. May God bless them."

All-Madden Defensive Lineman JohnRay Ervin Sr. added, "Having this opportunity means everything to me. This is me being free. This is my peace of mind and my humanity."

—Rahsaan Thomas

Kingdom Warriors win Basketball Championship

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

David Lee averaged 34 points a game throughout the Intramural Basketball League finals, but it was not enough for New Kids on the Block to beat the Kingdom Warriors. After losing the first game by default, Kingdom Warriors won three straight games to become the 2017 Champions.

"We did what nobody thought we were going to do," Lee said. "They had to put together a superstar team to beat a regular team like ours."

Kingdom Warriors is composed of players for the San Quentin Warriors, the elite basketball team that has represented the prison every year since 2012 against former NBA players and the Golden State Warriors' front court office b-ball squad.

They smashed through the

Intramural regular season undefeated then marched to the finals with only one loss, to the Dream Team, along the way.

New Kids on the Block struggled in the beginning of the season, falling to a 3-4 record. They bounced back to end the season 5-4. Then they dusted off two teams, including the Western Conference top-seeded Din-Al-Haqq, to reach the finals.

Game one went to New Kids on the Block by default. The Kingdom Warriors failed to show up for the scheduled playoff game.

In game two, Harry "ATL" Smith, who at 6-foot-5 normally plays center, showed off his shooting guard skills. He led his team with 35 points, including seven three-pointers. Combined with 26 points and 12 rebounds contributed by Andre "NBA" Belion and 14 points by Tevin Fournette, the Kingdom War-

riors routed New Kids even though Lee scored 40 points.

In game three, Lee put up another 41 points with 18 rebounds, followed by David Silva with 10 points and 12 rebounds, plus another 13 points scored by Laval Gordon.

New Kids lost 75-73 in their amazing effort.

Fournette led the Kingdom Warriors with 29 points followed by Smith's 20 points and 16 rebounds plus 15 points from Cornell "Fatality" Shields.

In game four, Fournette started to lead his team with 16 points, but early in the second quarter he bumped knees with another player. When no injury timeout was called, he melted down, and the referees ejected him from the game with the score tied at 38-38 with 18:39 left on the game clock.

"I blew up and couldn't hold my composure," Fournette said. "I'm going to re-take anger management."

Kingdom Warriors had to continue without one of its leading scorers.

"I believe in my team," Fournette said. "They can do it with me or without me. From the sideline, I'm giving them support."

Both teams battled back and forth. Silva banked a trey for the lead at 41-40 with 15:19 on the clock.

Then Belion answered with a layup in traffic that resulted in a foul plus the basket. He retook the lead at 45-43.

Lee answered, tying the score with an "and-none" after missing the extra point.

At the one minute mark, Kingdom Warriors led 63-61 and never looked back. They ran the clock down, forcing New Kids to foul Rafael Cuevas, the point guard for Kingdom Warriors and the SQ Warriors head coach. He nailed both clutch free



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News
Will Nguyen dribbling down the court

throws, which made the score 65-61.

New Kids turned the ball over on their last possession, ending any miracle comeback chances.

In what was his last game of the season on a prison yard, Belion led Kingdom Warriors with 17 points.

"I just had to leave y'all with a little something," Belion said. "It felt like a reunion because I got to play with ATL (Smith) and (Fournette) who I was at Folsom with. It felt like Folsom versus San Quentin, and Folsom won."

Smith, after giving all praise and glory to God, added, "It's been a remarkable season. It seals my career - to go out beating the Golden State team and winning the Intramural League Championship. It's also good to reconnect with my brothers."

Smith is scheduled to go home next year, before the next Intramural season begins.

As for this season, Gordon, who scored 18 for New Kids in the final effort, said, "It was fun - exciting."

Former professional basketball player drops 50 points

Prison Sports Ministry ("Green Team") overcame the San Quentin Warriors' surging fourth-quarter comeback and a head referee overturning a foul call to win in double overtime, 90-82. Dan Wohl, a former overseas pro, led the "Green Team" with a career high of 50 points.

"I don't think I've ever scored 50 anywhere," Wohl said. He also had 10 rebounds.

He added that his average was 20 points a game playing for Williams College in Massachusetts and about 7 playing pro in Israel.

For the last game of the San Quentin basketball program season, The Green Team showed up with another new

ringer — Seth Tarver, who played for Oregon State and an NBA D-League team called the Idaho Stampede. The game also marked the return of point guard Remy Pinson — who handles the basketball like Steph Curry — and Antoine Maddox, a former Washington General, among others.

The Warriors went with a starting lineup that didn't include its leading scorer, Allan McIntosh. He came off the bench.

Harry "ATL" Smith, a powerhouse in the paint, didn't make it to the game.

Both Tarver and Wohl, playing for the first time on a prison yard surrounded



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News
Tyrrell Price, Sr. shooting the ball

by incarcerated faces and barbed wire, missed their first three shots. But they came to life and started torching the Warriors. Tarver also dominated on the boards, finishing with 17 rebounds along with 23 points.

By the end of the third quarter, the Warriors were down 48-36. But they came charging back. Tevin Fournette and Tyrrell Price Sr. scored back-to-back buckets that brought their team within 5 with three minutes and 38 seconds left in the fourth. McIntosh followed with a spin move for a deuce inside.

With 24 seconds left and

the score 66-62, Jason "Boo" Robinson rebounded his own miss and scored to bring the Warriors within 2 points. He finished with 8 points and 14 rebounds.

Warrior point guard David Lee tied the score at 66 with a drive to the rack, leaving four seconds on the clock.

The inbound pass went to Tarver.

He had the ball just inside the 3-point line with a defender all over him as referee J. "Huggie" Davis called a foul with 1 second left on the clock.

Tarver headed for the free-throw line for two free shots at winning the game for the

Green Team just as head Ref Robert Lee overruled the call and the timekeeper to send the game into overtime.

"Referees don't decide games," Lee told the scorekeepers who argued the call.

In the first overtime, McIntosh immediately hit a 3 to give the Warriors the lead. But two steals by Green Team player Charles Lowery brought the Green Team back, capped off with a dunk by Wohl on a fast break, for a 75-73 lead.

McIntosh tied the score at 75-75.

When neither team scored in the last 41 seconds, the game went into another extra period.

Pinson swung the momentum with an alley-oop pass to Harry Webb, who caught the ball in the air and laid it up. That key basket made Webb's only points in the game although he started.

Wohl followed with a steal and the basket, followed by two 3-pointers for a total of eight straight points. The Green Team coasted through the rest of the second OT while the Warriors took three minutes to score their first basket.

Fournette led the Warriors

with 23 points, 9 rebounds, 3 steals and 2 assists.

Pinson had 10 points, 4 assists and 7 steals.

At the end of the game, the Warriors' general manager, Robert "Bishop" Butler, was honored. He was found suitable for parole on Nov. 16, after serving 23 years.

"I won't remember what this court is like without Bishop," Green Team sponsor Don Smith told the players at the end of the game.

Smith has ministered and interacted with Butler at San Quentin for more than a decade.

"As we congratulate Bishop, may God bless you all with hope," Smith said.

Green Teamer Lowery spoke about the power of basketball in making connections. It starts with one guy shooting around, then another person comes and starts shooting. Then more people come and a game starts and bonds form.

"It helps us connect; it saved me. It kept me out of trouble — this basketball, it's like a spiritual journey," Lowery said. "Don't be alone in your spiritual journey; be with people going through what you're going through."

—Rahsaan Thomas

San Quentin News

San Quentin News Staff

Arnulfo T. Garcia, Editor 2011-2017
Richard Richardson, Editor-in-Chief
Juan Haines, Senior Editor
Kevin D. Sawyer, Associate Editor
Wayne Boatwright, Managing Editor
Marcus Henderson,
Journalism Guild Chairman
Rahsaan Thomas, Staff Writer
Wesley Eisiminger, Staff Writer
David Le, Staff Writer
Charles David Henry, Staff Writer
Jesse Vasquez, Staff Writer
Eddie Herena, Photographer
Jonathan Chiu, Layout Designer
Richard Lindsey, Researcher

Staff Administrative Review

Lt. S. Robinson, Warden's Office
Sgt. R. Gardea, Warden's Office
Krisi Khokhobashvili,
CDCR Information Officer II (Supervisor)
Linda Xiques, Adviser
William Drummond, Adviser
Joan Lisetor, Adviser
Steve McNamara, Adviser
John C. Eagan, Adviser
Jon Spurlock, Adviser
Jan Perry, Adviser
Nikki Meredith, Adviser
Yukari Kane, Adviser
Lucia de la Fuente, Editora
Lisa Adams, Development Manager

Current and past copies of the *San Quentin News* are posted online at:
(www.sanquentinnews.com)
(www.facebook.com)

Permission is granted to reprint articles appearing in the *San Quentin News* provided credit is given to the author and this publication, except for articles reprinted herein from other publications.

We Want To Hear From You!

The San Quentin News encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles. All submissions become property of the *San Quentin News*.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Limit your articles to no more than 350 words.
- Know that articles will be edited for content and length.
- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances.
- (For that, use the prison appeals process.) We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.
- Poems and artwork (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

Send Submissions to:
San Quentin News
1 Main Street
San Quentin, CA 94964

For inmates that want to receive a copy of the *San Quentin News* in the mail, send \$1.61 worth of stamps for postage to the above address. The process can be repeated every month if you want to receive the latest newspaper.

Behind the Scenes

The San Quentin News is printed by
Marin Sun Printing, San Rafael.

Trailblazers win, yet end season tied with Kings

The visiting Trailblazers seized the final game of the season with a 74-60 win over the San Quentin Kings. The triumph brought the combined Trailblazer/Bittermen team record to 7-7 against the Kings.

The Nov. 18 game was the last for Aubra-Lamont "Coocoo" McNeely, Kings three-point specialist, who is scheduled to parole before next season begins.

"We're going to miss you," Kings Head Coach Orlando "Duck" Harris told him.

"We aren't retiring your jersey number," Kings shooting guard Charles "Pookie" Sylvester joked.

When the first quarter began, it was the Trailblazers putting on a three-point clinic. They nailed four in the first quarter, including one from the top of the key by Bittermen and Trailblazers coach Ted Saltveit.

"My teammates were looking for minutes so they started to get the ball to the coach," Saltveit joked. He ended with

8 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, and a block.

By halftime the Kings were already down 36-22.

Kings General Manager Brian Asey honored the scorekeepers, Jack Benford and Anthony Taylor, and encouraged them to share a few words.

"I tried out for the 40-and-over Kings, but coach said I eat too much fried chicken and bologna sandwiches," Benford joked. "I came out to keep the stats and enjoy the camaraderie. When I see outside people blow a gasket, I say, 'Ooh, they human.' It's entertaining."

The Kings closed the gap in the third quarter, led by Oris "Pep" Williams, McNeely and power forward D. "Zyad" Nicholson. By the end of the third, the Kings were down 50-43.

For the Kings, Williams led the game with 25 points, 8 rebounds, 2 assists and a steal; Nicholson added 15 points, 6 rebounds, 1 assist and a steal. In his final game for the Kings, McNeely dropped 10 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals

and an assist.

In the fourth quarter, the Trailblazers went on a run led by Ryan Steer's 29 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists, and 2 blocks.

Ian Ashcraft-Williams added 18 points, 13 rebounds, an assist and 2 blocks; Greg Tang contributed 10, with 5

rebounds and 4 assists.

"Two wins in a row and we didn't even need Ryan to score 30—he scored 29," Saltveit joked.

Steer added, "This [playing basketball in San Quentin] is unique. It's going to be a long winter without San Quentin."

—Rahsaan Thomas



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News
The Kings and Trailblazers waiting on the rebound

Inside Garden Program creates beauty in prison

By Wayne Boatwright
Managing Editor

Dragonflies, bumblebees and Monarch butterflies are daily visitors to the H-Unit garden planted and maintained by the Insight Garden Program (IGP). The program group meets every Friday afternoon in H-Unit, a dormitory yard at San Quentin.

For the past 15 years, the 1,200-square-foot organic flower garden has served as a thriving plot of vibrant drought-resistant plants, flowering herbs and ornamental grasses, including wild geranium, yarrow and Echinacea.

Beth Waitkus started the program in San Quentin's H-unit in 2002. Volunteers run IGP and some of its programs are also funded by California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) Innovative Grants Program. It now operates in eight California prisons (San Quentin, Solano, Avenal, L.A. County and both women's facilities and both medical prisons) as well as two Indiana prisons, plus a re-entry project in New York City.

IGP selected Chihico Wimbush, the Emmy award-nominated documentary film director of Dogtown Redemption, to create an eight-minute film about the program. This film will introduce IGP to the world.

In October, the H-Unit class pre-screened the film that celebrates the 15th anniversary



Photo courtesy of IGP and CDCR

Incarcerated men working in the garden

of IGP's launch.

After an opening shot of the Lower Yard blacktop, the film moves to scenes of H-Unit accompanied by a voice-over by inmates in the current gardening group:

"It makes me feel relaxed and peaceful."

"I want to teach my son how to plant."

"It takes generosity to learn to slow down and center myself on the garden."

"It taught me to be who I'm meant to be."

It's clear that IGP is an oasis and a haven for the men in blue amid razor-wire and watch towers.

After viewing the film, inmate J. Elron Mings said, "I hope the world gets to see that we are not just our crimes."

IGP's mission is to help the incarcerated reconnect to themselves, their communities

and nature by nurturing the soil, seedlings and their own inner lives. The transformation through connection to nature includes learning marketable green sector skills.

Anthony Forrest, a formerly incarcerated IGP participant, said, "It was like a new family because they care for you, and they help you in so many ways. Going to IGP helped me achieve the things I wanted and helped me find structure in my life...through connections with IGP, I was fortunate enough to have a job waiting for me."

In 2015 IGP added a series of raised planting beds as a vegetable plot in partnership with the Oakland-based nonprofit Planting Justice. The plot grows onions, garlic, potatoes and leafy greens with flowering plants intermixed to attract bees.

As institutional rules require



Photo courtesy of IGP and CDCR

Volunteers, staff and the men in blue posing in front of a garden



Photo courtesy of IGP and CDCR

Staff showing incarcerated men how to plant a garden

that all prisoners have equal access to resources within an institution, inmates cannot partake in the produce. IGP donates all its produce to the S.F.-Marin Food Bank.

In IGP's eight-year partnership with Planting Justice, the nonprofit has offered more than 30 jobs to former inmates, according to Planting Justice's Haleh Zandi.

For information on the Insight Garden Program go to insightgardenprogram.org, plantingjustice.org or email info@insightgardenprogram.org

JUSTICE

The event featured members of the Golden State Warriors (GSW) and 49ers organizations. Both 49er players and president and owner Tony York came along with sociologist Dr. Harry Edwards. Football Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott and Charles Hailey also attended.

The panel consisted of GSW GM Bob Myers; 49ers Reid, Robbie Gould and Louis Murphy; activist Pamela Black; and incarcerated men Aaron "Showtime" Taylor, Gus "Lumumba" Edwards and San Quentin News staffer Rahsaan Thomas.

Edwards founded the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which led to the Black Power Salute protest by two African American athletes during the 1968 Mexico City Olympics' award ceremony.

He opened the roundtable, talking about the huge platform today's athletes have, and said the "urgency of now" calls for addressing current social injustices, similar to the Civil War, women's suffrage,



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

The roundtable panel taking questions from the audience in the Protestant Chapel

anti-war movements and the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

"We came out of each of these better people," Edwards said.

Edwards called for free people to go inside prisons and talk to incarcerated people about the impact of mass incarceration.

"There is a need to con-

stantly keep in touch with the community," Edwards said. "There need to be clinics to talk to the young people. We must maintain contact with the community."

Since 2012, Myers has been bringing members of his staff into San Quentin to play basketball.

People don't understand

why he comes inside a prison.

"I tell them that the people I interact with are all good people," Myers said about the inmates he plays ball with, adding it has been a chance for him to open his eyes. "Each time I come here, I leave more educated."

Thomas told the athletes, "Coming in here shows that



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Aaron Taylor and Ronnie Lott after the event

somebody cares — somebody's shaking it up. We have a little of that kind of power at San Quentin News, but you guys have a mega-horn."

THE CHALLENGES OF RACE RELATIONS

"I didn't have to deal with a community where somebody got shot," said Myers. "Nobody in my community went to prison. I always ask myself, 'If one of these guys grew up where I did, would they be running the Warriors?'"

Myers spoke candidly: "I have no idea what it's like to be a Black man," or how it felt being Black, taking an elevator with White people and then getting strange looks or what it's like to be stopped by the police, based on skin color.

"If that happened to me 10 years ago, I'd still be pissed off," Myers said.

Myers talked about race relations at San Quentin:

"The White guys are still sitting with the White guys, and the Black guys are sitting with the Black guys. Why is that?"

Myers told a story about being 18 years old and in a college locker room:

"I saw Black guys putting lotion on their legs. I'd never seen that, so I asked them what they were doing. They told me they didn't want to be ashy. I didn't know what being ashy was. Then I asked one of my Black friends if he wants to use my razor. He told

me that he couldn't use a razor because it would give him bumps. I don't have a clue about being Black."

He challenged Blacks and Whites to interact better and closer:

"It's about unity. We have to walk past each other on the streets and see each other like seeing a friend."

Murphy said he respects White players who support social issues particular to Black people.

"We need to continue to meet people like Bob Myers, who walk across the bridge. If the roles were reversed, I question myself, 'Would I do the same thing as Bob Myers?'"

Murphy said although there's more work to do to end racism and stereotypes, "We're headed in the right direction."

Taylor challenged the audience to rely upon themselves and not on the government to bring unity.

"When we have this conversation, we need to be honest," Taylor said, emphasizing that Black people cannot have a conversation about race while pointing an accusatory finger at the other person.

"We need to look at each other without judgment," Taylor said. "We need to look at people without assuming things about each other," adding, "Either we going to be Americans, or we can keep up the tribalism."

—Rahsaan Thomas
contributed to this story



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Pamela Black and Hall of Famer Charles Haley talking before the event



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Van Jones listening to Branden Terrell ask a question of the panel

Criminals and Gangmembers Anonymous graduation

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

At age 19, having grown up in Los Angeles, Corey Willis was a gang member and a criminal who sold drugs. On the streets, he answered to the moniker "C-Money," and responding to the demands of street life, he killed a man.

Willis was sentenced to 15 years-to-life for second-degree murder, with a two-year gun enhancement. It's not uncommon for an inner city kid. A case like his is typically closed, and that's how the story ends — but not for him.

"The crime starts in your mindset," said Willis. "We tell ourselves what we need to hear in order to feel good about ourselves, in order to continue on in that destructive thinking. Distorted beliefs had me believe 'shoot first, ask questions last.'"

Today, Willis, now 48, is a free man. But his mindset cost him nearly 30 years behind bars. Before paroling from San Quentin State Prison on Nov. 6, he was chairman of the self-help group Criminals and Gangmembers Anonymous (CGA), which held its latest graduation the day after he paroled.

About 75 inmates from different CGA classes attended this early evening event held in the prison's Protestant chapel. They began with a moment of silence for the 26 victims killed in the mass shooting in Texas, and then they recited the Serenity Prayer.

"The Serenity Prayer is a very unique prayer for CGA," said inmate Tony "Pup" Waldrip, one of the group's founders and facilitators. He asked the men to think about what the prayer means. He reminded them, "We are the people who changed the way America does business," by incarcerating criminals, adding that now they're causing change to occur again, but in a positive way.

"It takes wisdom and courage to pursue change," said inmate and group facilitator Kenzo Jackson, 44. "This is a lifelong recovery," he told the men after thanking the group's outside sponsors.

More than a half-dozen facilitators took the stage and presented the CGA graduates with certificates of completion. The audience applauded them as they ap-



Photo courtesy of Corey Willis

Corey Willis, 48, in downtown San Francisco shopping shortly after paroling from San Quentin



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Top: Armando Flores, Manuel Negrete, Jorge Heredia, Chad Cleveland Bottom: Milo Flores and Rodolfo Torres



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Volunteers and Sponsors Erin West, Marci and Vivienne Florendo

proached the stage. It was a festive atmosphere, and the men appeared pleased with their accomplishments.

"I'm glad I completed this course because it gave me a chance to look at myself," said Jack Benfield. He said it was more than about not committing crime. "I had to change who I was."

The CGA program is modeled after the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-Step program. The men are taught from a 37-page booklet as they learn about "life-

style addiction to criminality," cycles of addiction and the impact it has on victims and offenders, among other subjects.

For example, Step 6 discusses a CGA member's "personal commitment to abandon (their) defects of character to practice decent, reasonable conduct through daily actions and behavior." They also use a Checklist of Flaws and Assets to evaluate themselves.

"There is no right way to do wrong," said Waldrip.

"CGA works. But it only works if you really use it."

Aaron Gilmer, an inmate in the prison Youth Offender Program, was the youngest graduate in the group. He's the same age Willis was when he entered prison. "I learned basically that I had to change my criminal thinking and the issues I had with my family," said Gilmer.

According to Willis, CGA's motto is "One less criminal, one less crime, one less victim." He said he no longer uses his nickname. "Everyone sees the growth and development (in me). If they choose to call me Corey (Willis), I welcome that. But I don't introduce myself as C-Money anymore."

Speaking prior to his parole, Willis said "I have to remind myself to be a man of my actions. Let 'C-Money' stay at rest and walk in the character of Corey (Willis)."

His advice to youngsters entering prison: "Try to do something different than the things that had them bound and brought them to prison. The next thing they know, they will have changed too."

Willis has a 28-year-old son and two grandchildren who live in Sweden. He said they have a good relationship. "I've been in here his whole life," he said. "I came in (to prison) as a kid, and I'll walk out as a man."



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Siverin Whitney receiving his graduation certificate



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

Dwight Kennedy, Tommy Ross, Fateem Jackson, Kenzo Jackson, Philippe Kelley, Richard Zorns, Bottom: Jack Benford



Photo by Eddie Herena-SQ News

D. Collier and Brad Ware on their graduation day