

## Death Row inmate freed after serving more than 25 years



Photo by Lt. S Robinson

Benavides hugging his family members after being dropped off outside of SQ

By **Rahsaan Thomas**  
Staff Writer

A man who spent 27 years on Death Row walked out the prison gates on April 17, 2018.

“He appeared amazed to be on the other side of the wall,” Public Information Officer Lt. Sam Robinson said.

About eight people, including family members and his attorney,

awaited Vicente Benavides as he exited the prison as a free man.

Decades earlier, a Kern County courthouse convicted Benavides in the 1991 of first-degree murder and rape of his girlfriend’s daughter, 21-month old Consuelo Verdugo.

Benavides was sentenced to be executed and sent to San Quentin’s Death Row.

See **BENVIDES** on page 5



Photo courtesy of CDCR

Insight Garden Program founder Beth Waitkus and Sarah Cardoni lay down soil for the garden

## Folsom’s Insight Garden Project helps women connect back to nature

By **Marcus Henderson**  
Journalism Guild Chairman

California women prisoners are learning to go “green” as they gain skills in garden design and environmental education through the award-winning Insight Garden Program (IGP).

Folsom Women’s Facility (FWF)

and Central California Women’s Facility (also known as Chowchilla) have been added to the IGP’s long list of prisons that are finding rehabilitation through connecting with nature.

“Folsom was officially the first garden we’ve ever built in a women’s facility,” said Beth Waitkus, who founded the program at San

Quentin in 2002. “It was a really magical day. We got it done in one day, which was nothing short of a miracle.”

“Personally for me...to be working with women who so deeply connect with the earth is really wonderful,” Waitkus added.

See **GARDEN** on page 4



Behind San Quentin’s walls, there is a pair of programs dedicated to closing the digital divide, Code.7370 and TLMWORKS <https://tlmworks.org>. Tulio K. Cardozo, a former San Quentin inmate, runs one of them.

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The day he learned his solitary confinement would be extended, 17-year-old Benjamin Van Zandt killed himself in a New York prison. To bring awareness and bridge the gap between the public and those in isolation an advocacy group held an art exhibit in a Unitarian church in New York, showcasing photographs requested by and produced for prisoners in segregation, reported Newsday.

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## Queeny King performs at SQ

By **Kevin D. Sawyer**  
Associate Editor

At age 8, singer-song writer Queeny King sang in a Soviet Union prison. In March, she performed at San Quentin State Prison.

Dressed in black bell-bottom pants with buttons along the side and wearing a black blazer with a shiny brown blouse, King put on a look that, on its face, could have been interpreted as belonging to rock, goth, punk or the pop genre of music. It became obvious none of that was her once the music played and she started singing.

King’s song Run for the Hills

opened the early evening performance with DJ Kraig (Frank Tyler) working his digital magic from a table on the side of the stage. He’s also called the “Liquid Giraffe.”

When King sang Angel of Paris, the sounds and drum beats roared from the Catholic chapel’s sound system, taking the music back to the familiar sounds of MTV 1980s fresh, innovative European artists such as the Human League, and Nena. The song “Bette Davis Eyes” by Kim Carnes comes to mind hearing Angel.

See **QUEENY KING** on page 5



Photo by Raphaelae Casale

Queeny King and DJ Kraig in front of San Quentin



Photo courtesy of Beyond the Stats

Tina Curiel-Allen with Daniel Mendoza

## UC Davis combats prison stigmas with *Beyond the Stats*

By **William Earl Tolbert**  
Journalism Guild Writer

To combat the stigmas facing formerly incarcerated people at the University of California Davis, two students established the *Beyond the Stats* program to help the newly returning citizens adjust to college life.

The founders of the program, Tina Curiel-Allen and Daniel Mendoza, were also formerly incarcerated. The two established the support group and a magazine

on the campus to challenge the preconceptions of school administration and peers about who these incoming students are as people.

“We did a project, and asked students—without telling them our background— ‘how do you feel about being on campus with formerly incarcerated students?’” said Curiel-Allen to *San Quentin News*. “We were really surprised by some of the things that we heard.”

See **ZINE** on page 8





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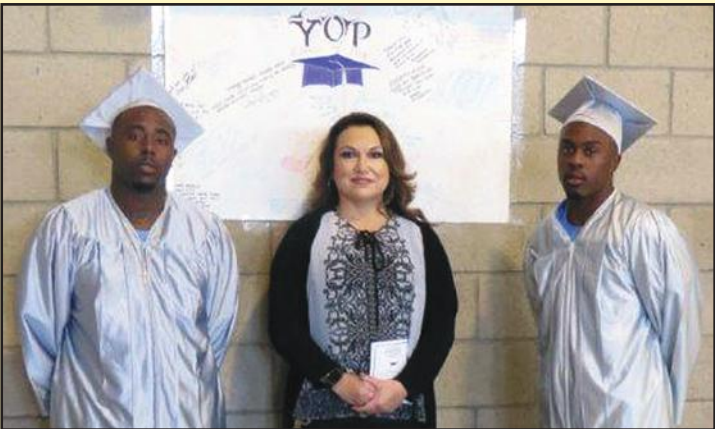
# Valley State Prison holds inaugural YOP graduation

By Marcus Henderson  
Journalism Guild Chairman

Valley State Prison (Chowchilla) celebrated a milestone earlier this year when it hosted its inaugural Youth Offender Program (YOP) graduation. The ceremony recognized 97 young prisoners who lived up to their commitments to complete various rehabilitative programs.

The graduates successfully reached their goals of earning high school diplomas or general education diplomas (GED), learning vocational trades or enrolling into college courses, according to the prison press release.

The young offenders personally selected the goals that they wanted to reach



Correctional Counselor II E. Alva, YOP Program Coordinator with YOP graduates M. Gibson and T. Washington

while serving their sentences at Valley State Prison. They were able to choose rehabilitative programs from the

prison's list of available options.

"We will throw life preservers in the water. It is up to you to swim," said Warden R. Fisher, Jr. at the ceremony. "This is your chance to do something different by preparing yourselves to transi-

tion into society with necessary life skills, education and career options.

"The choice is yours to make. We cannot make the choice for you, but we will guide you to the path of rehabilitation," Fisher added.

Warden Fisher spoke about the success of the program and encouraged the young offenders to continue their progress forward in terms of social development. He also recognized the YOPs' willingness to accept help from the volunteer mentors, a press release said.

The graduation took place inside the prison gymnasium where inmate facilitators and

mentors, along with numerous guests and administrators, provided encouraging speeches and support for the participants.

Correctional Counselor II E. Alva, the YOP coordinator, spoke and stressed the importance of integrity, commitment and perseverance. She expressed her appreciation for everyone's participation and applauded the commitment of the entire YOP faculty for their service to Valley State Prison's youth program.

"The cultural transformation of prison has taken on a new perspective," Alva said. "And the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has progressively moved forward in its efforts concerning rehabilitation."

Several inmate facilitators gave emotionally charged speeches that touched visitors and youth offenders

alike. The crowd gave a loud round of applause as the young offenders received their certificates, the press release said.

Some of the YOP participants were also recognized for graduating from Defy Ventures, an entrepreneurship development training program. Of the 123 youth offenders who started the program, 97 graduated and the remainder of the participants are still in progress.

Inmate mentors also benefited from the program over the last year by engaging in various training with both staff and volunteers from outside organizations. The mentors were also recognized for their participation with the YOPs at the January graduation.

"It has been a prosperous year for all participants, and we look forward to continued success in the future," CCI Alva said.

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- 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.
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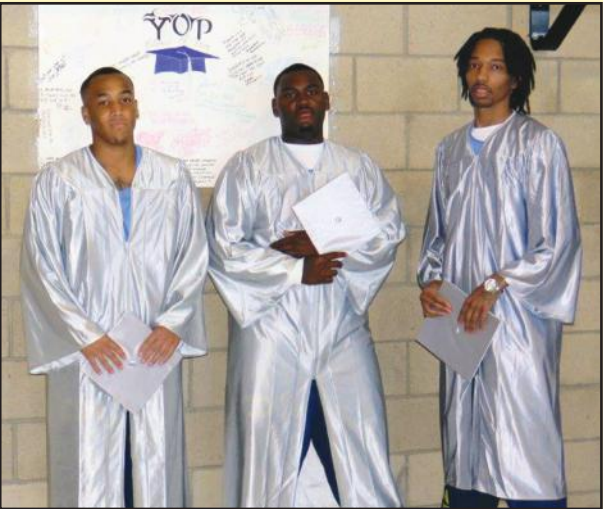
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Dog trainer and YOP Mentor V. Trillo and dog Daisy



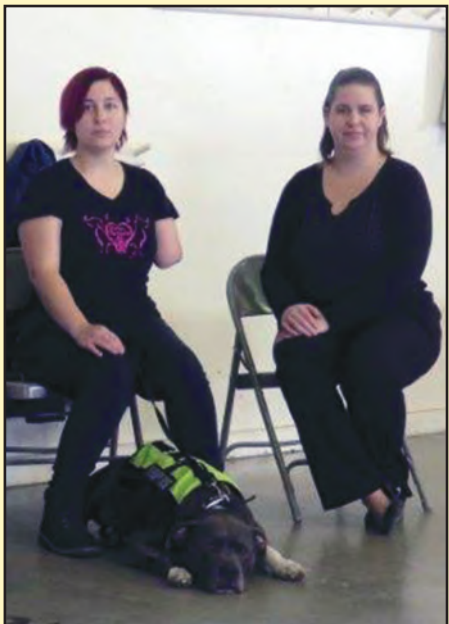
Dog trainer YOP Mentor L. Campos and dog Charlie



Valley State Prison's YOP graduates



VSP graduates with their mentors



Dog trainers K. Smith and G. Tollie



# Police continue to shoot about 1,000 people a year

## 987 people were fatally shot by police officers in 2017

By Joe Garcia  
Journalism Guild Writer

Police across the country shot and killed approximately the same number of people in 2017 as they did in each of the previous two years. Because there is no official nationwide tally of fatal police shootings, The *Washington Post* took charge and has compiled the most accurate

accounting of these incidents – 2,945 shooting deaths in all since 2015, with roughly 1,000 each year. According to the *Post’s* report, 987 people were fatally shot by police officers in 2017. “The numbers indicate that this is not a trend, but a robust measure of these shootings,” said University of South Carolina criminologist Geoff Alpert, who specializes in the

study of police use of force. “We now have information on almost 3,000 shootings, and we can start looking to provide the public with a better understanding of fatal officer-involved shootings.” Deadly police shootings came to the forefront of national attention in 2014 when an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, was killed by a White police officer in a

suburban community outside St. Louis, Mo. The controversy surrounding his death sparked a huge public outcry that contributed to the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement, the *Post* reported. The number of unarmed persons killed by police has shown signs of decreasing, according to the *Post’s* data. After 94 unarmed persons were fatally shot in 2015, that amount dropped to 51 people killed in 2016 and inched back up to 68 in 2017. “The national spotlight on this issue has made officers more cautious in unarmed situations,” said Chuck Wexler, the executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington-based think tank. His group developed training for dozens of departments aimed at de-escalating potentially violent encounters.

“We are giving officers more options like slowing the situation down and using time and distance to gain a tactical advantage,” Wexler said. In a 2015, the Los Angeles Police Department began to emphasize that their officers strive to preserve life in all encounters. In 2017, the LAPD started to award Preservation of Life medals to officers that demonstrate exemplary action in avoiding a fatal shooting. Local police unions were derisive, but top managers in the LAPD think de-escalation training has made a difference. “Our officers are in 1.5 million volatile encounters a year, so shooting someone is an incredibly rare event,” LAPD First Assistant Chief Michel Moore told the *Post*. “Yet we pull each instance apart to see what factors might have played a role and train our officers to

make that rare event even more rare.” About one out of four fatal shootings in 2017 involved persons experiencing some form of mental health crisis. “We call 911 for other medical emergencies, and they bring specially trained medical technicians, but when it’s a mental health crisis, we send the police,” said Ron Honberg of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. For each of the last three years, the *Post* documented more than twice the number of fatal police shootings than were recorded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which is limited by its reliance on voluntary data submissions from police agencies. The *Post* did its own research by sifting through local news coverage, public records, and social media reports.

# Bureau of Justice Statistics issues 2016 prison report

By Juan Haines  
Senior Editor

The federal government has been tracking prison populations across the nation since 1926. This year marked the 91st time the Bureau of Justice Statistics issued a report detailing its results. Key findings This was the third consecutive year that the number of prisoners with sentences of more than one year in prison declined.

- There are an estimated 1,505,400 prisoners in state and federal prisons as of Dec. 31, 2016 — 21,200 less than 2015.
- State prisons held 13,900 fewer prisoners in 2016 than in 2015, and the federal prison population decreased by 7,300.
- The national incarceration rate decreased 2 percent, from 459 prisoners per 100,000 US residents of all ages in 2015 to 450 per 100,000 in 2016.
- Nearly half (47 percent) of federal prisoners had been sentenced for drug offenses on Sept. 30, 2016, the most recent date for which federal offense data was available.
- The number of pris-

oners held in private facilities in 2016 (128,300) increased 2 percent from year-end 2015.

- The number of females sentenced to more than one year in state or federal prison increased by 500 from 2015 to 2016.
- 11 percent of prisoners sentenced to more than one year in state or federal prison at year-end 2016 were age 55 or older.

Incarceration and Race

- There were 6,100 more Hispanics sentenced to more than one year in prison in 2016 than in 2015; an increase of 1 percent.
- About 2.5 percent of Black male U.S. residents were in state or federal prison on Dec. 31, 2016 (a rate of 2,415 per 100,000 Black residents).
- Black males ages 18 to 19 were 11.8 times more likely to be imprisoned than White males of the same age. This age group had the highest Black-to-White racial disparity in 2016.
- Black males age 65 or older were 4.4 times more likely to be imprisoned than their White counterparts. This age group had

the lowest Black-to-White racial disparity in 2016.

- The imprisonment rate for Black females (96 per 100,000 Black female residents) was almost double that for White females (49 per 100,000 White female residents).
- Among females ages 18 to 19, Black females were 3.1 times more likely than White females, and 2.2 times more likely than Hispanic females, to be imprisoned in 2016.

Prison Bed Capacity

- At the end of 2016, a total of 14 states and the federal prison system met or exceeded the maximum measure of their prison facilities’ capacity, and 27 states and the federal prison system had enough prisoners in custody to meet or exceed their minimum number of beds.
- Five states housed at least 20 percent of their prison population in privately operated facilities at year-end 2016: New Mexico (43 percent), Montana (39 percent), Oklahoma (27 percent), Tennessee (26 percent), and Hawaii (25 percent).

# Nebraska inmate dies from double bunking in solitary

Harry C. Goodall, Jr.  
Journalism Guild Writer

The death of a Nebraska inmate in solitary confinement prompted the state to take measures to end double-bunking in its isolation unit. Terry Berry Jr., 22, was murdered by his cellmate Patrick Schroeder, 40, who was already serving a life sentence for murder at Tecumseh State Prison. Berry was at the end of his sentence and ready to be paroled. He was described as a “very talkative and bothersome” inmate in an article by the *World-Herald News Service*. Berry was serving a sentence for check fraud and kneeling a guard. Nebraska Inspector General of Corrections Doug Koebernick called on the state to stop the practice of double-bunking inmates in solitary confinement. Koebernick pointed to studies that found that punishing pairs of inmates with small cells—like the 7 feet by 12 feet and 7 inch cell that Berry and Schroeder shared—is risky for both in-

mates and prison staff. State Corrections Director Scott Frakes disagreed, placing complete blame for Berry’s death on Schroeder. “Mr. Schroeder had multiple avenues with which to address any concerns about his living situation, and he chose, instead, to kill Mr. Berry,” Frakes said. Frakes rejected the inspector general’s findings and has continued to double-bunk inmates in solitary, with the new addition of daily check-ups on inmates to ensure their complaints are heard. He also claimed that in his experience, double-bunked inmates are “as safe as in general population,” despite a lack of academic studies to support the claim that double-bunking can improve behavior. Solitary confinement has been shown to exacerbate mental and physical anguish, including illnesses. Schroeder had a reputation of having a temper and spent considerable time in solitary during the last 10 years of his sentence. He has since pleaded guilty to first-degree murder for Berry’s death, claiming

that his cellmate was a punk who wouldn’t shut up, according to the article. Concern for the mental health of inmates pushed state lawmakers to pass a law in 2015 attempting to reduce the practice of solitary confinement by pursuing alternative punishments. In the last fiscal year, the average daily number of inmates in solitary confinement in the state has dropped by 11 percent. However, Nebraska’s prisons are still the second most over-crowded in the country, with four prisons that double-bunk. The practice has been shown to be risky, yet state and county jails in several states continue it to deal with their budget and overcrowding. “We haven’t dedicated near the amount of money we need to for the prison system” said State Sen. Paul Schumacher of Columbus, who introduced the 2015 bill to reduce the use of solitary confinement. Despite the rebranding of the practice as “restrictive housing,” he said the punishment is “alive and well,” according to the article.

# Black incarceration on the decline while Whites are on the rise

By John Lam  
Journalism Guild Writer

The percentages of Blacks and Whites being incarcerated are converging. Nationally, Black incarceration rates are dropping, while Whites are on the increase, according to a *Marshall Project* analysis of yearly reports by the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics. The report found that between 2000 and 2015, the imprisonment rate of Black men dropped by more than 24 percent. At the same time, the White male rate increased slightly. The narrowing of the gap between White and Black incarceration rates is “definitely optimistic news,” John Pfaff, a law professor at Fordham University, told *The Washington Post*. Among women, the trend is even more dramatic. From 2000 to 2015, the Black female imprisonment rate dropped by nearly 50 percent. During the same period, the White female rate rose by 53

percent. The racial disparity between Black and White women’s incarceration was once 6 to 1, according to the Sentencing Project. Now, it’s 2 to 1. “If we want to continue or accelerate [that trend], we need to acknowledge it and figure out why it’s happening,” said Adam Gelb, director of the public safety performance program at The Pew Charitable Trusts and an expert on prison data. Prison system experts attribute the narrowing gap between Black and White incarceration to a number of reasons, including a general decline in crime and arrests; a significant drop in violent crime, which means fewer substantial prison sentences; a shift away from crack and marijuana toward meth and opioids in the war on drugs; and, the fact that criminal justice reform has occurred in cities, where more Black people live, while less progressive change has

occurred in rural areas. Another possibility: White people have faced declining socioeconomic prospects, leading to an increase in law-breaking among that population. From 2000 to 2009, Black incarceration for property offenses fell 9 percent, while White incarceration for those crimes increased 21 percent. Even so, racial inequality in the prison system remains a serious issue. At the current rate, the disparities would not fully disappear for many decades, according to the *Washington Post*. “Until we learn the true value of the lives we have wasted, and until we truly reckon with our nation’s history,” Michelle Alexander (author of *The New Jim Crow*) told the *Marshall Project* in 2015, “... we will find ourselves in an endless cycle of reform and retrenchment—periods of apparent progress followed by the creation of new systems of racial and social control.”

# Colorado corrections brings business courses to prisons

By De’jon Joy  
Staff Writer

There is a renewed emphasis on rehabilitation in the Colorado Department of Corrections prison system as Governor John Hickenlooper partners up with Defy Ventures to bring entrepreneurship, employment, and character development to Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility. The prisoners in the program, also known as Entrepreneurs-in-Training (EITs), met with Hickenlooper one-on-one and were given support and mentorship, reported the *Denver Business Journal*. “This program is a step toward lasting change for the men and women who want a second chance at life. We’re thrilled to have Defy here in Colorado,” Hickenlooper said. The nine-month, MBA-designed, training program

teaches the EITs executive coaching, financial investment courses, startup business techniques, parenting education and character development. An event in February took the participants through a Business Coaching Day where 78 EITs, aided by 50 volunteers from the business community, went through various workshops. The EITs had one-on-ones and group sessions with the outside business groups. The EITs also discussed reentry plans and résumés. The event led to much more than covering readiness skills, but also touched on mental health and the rebuilding of self-esteem, which gave rise to new aspirations for the men in the program, according to the article. After the nine-month training course is completed, the budding entrepreneurs will go through a Shark Tank-Style business pitch competi-

tion and then graduate. Catherine Hoke, who resigned in March, founded Defy Ventures in 2010 to allow those who are incarcerated nationwide to turn their intuitive business skills that once led to criminal activity into marketable skills toward legitimate careers. Since the inception of Defy Ventures, the EITs have started 165 businesses and created over 350 job opportunities. “Defy is deeply honored to partner with the Governor’s office and the Colorado Department of Corrections to bring our transformational program here,” said Bob Omer, Executive Director of Defy Colorado. With a mission to absolve negative perceptions of the prison population and as catalysts for people with criminal histories, Defy is here to stay—with hopes of expanding to other prisons within the state of Colorado, noted the article.



# Prestigious colleges learn about life from prisoners

By Rahsaan Thomas  
Staff Writer

Prison advocates and educators who believe in the benefits of classes held on prison grounds are seeking to revive a program that once brought Harvard students into prisons to learn desk-by-desk with incarcerated students. San Quentin already has similar programs.

“By creating opportunities for Harvard students to learn with and from students in prison, we demonstrate a commitment to transformative education, education that is rigorous and reckons with questions of justice and equity,” Kaia Stern, co-founder of the Harvard Prison Studies Project, said in a *Harvard Gazette* article by Jill Radsken.

At a recent conference held at Harvard, formerly incarcerated students, activists and academics met together to discuss the future of prison college programs.

In two Massachusetts correctional facilities, incarcerated men and women learned alongside students from Boston University from 2008 to 2013.

Stern hoped the conference would lead to reestablishing the integrated classrooms program she started with Harvard Professor Bruce Western, according to the *Harvard Gazette* article.

Assistant Professor Elizabeth Hinton, Stern and visit-



UC Berkeley journalism student Leticia Duarte talking with SQN contributor Marco Villa

ing scholar Garrett Felber organized the conference called Beyond the Gates: The Past and Future of Prison Education at Harvard.

**“The world looks a lot different from the vantage point of a prison”**

Felber founded Liberation Literacy with community members and incarcerated students at Columbia River Correctional Institution in Oregon in 2016.

“People who live and work in prisons know that education changes culture, reduces institutional violence, and interrupts intergenerational cycles of incarceration,” Stern said in the *Harvard Gazette*.

At San Quentin State Prison in California, UC Berkeley journalism students receive credits for entering the prison to help incarcerated men write, research and edit stories for the *San Quentin News* (SQ News).

William Drummond, a professor of journalism for 34 years, started the program in 2012 after being asked to support the newspaper by SQ News senior editor Juan Haines. Haines was in a Prison University Project



UC Berkeley students Ahna Straube and Nate Sheidlower working with SQN Journalism Chairman Marcus Henderson

journalism class taught by Drummond at the time.

Drummond said he noticed that the prison newsroom was a throwback to journalism basics. In society, they don’t have “real” newsrooms anymore and the focus of journalism is more about pursuing tech and digital and less about original journalism—editing and critical thinking.

“I thought this would be a chance to take students into an environment that is very much brick and mortar journalism—no distractions, no hotlinks and no worry about how many clicks,” Drummond said. “I thought my students would benefit from working side-by-side with a reporter.”

Drummond also mentioned that taking the journalism class at San Quentin gives his students perspective.

“Given their backgrounds, they would never have this experience,” Drummond said. “The world looks a lot differ-

ent from the vantage point of a prison.”

Ahna Straube, a 28-year-old UC Berkeley student majoring in political economics who is in the San Quentin journalism class, said, “I think I’ve learned more here in terms of having actual experiences. In a classroom, it’s a lot of theory but not real-life experiences.”

Straube appreciates the lack of distractions—there are no cellphones allowed inside the prison.

She doesn’t fear coming into a correctional facility. “I feel more comfortable here than I do on the Berkeley campus,” Straube said.

One of Drummond’s earlier students, Pendarvis Harshaw, was so inspired by Watani Stiner, an older man he met in the program in 2013, that Harshaw included him in his book, *An OG Told Me*.

Drummond has won awards for his journalism work at San Quentin, including the 2015 White House

Fellows Foundation and Association award called the John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award; and the Leon A. Henkin Citation for Distinguished Service 2016-2017.

Another program called Bridges to Universities reverses the integrated classroom model by using prepaid calls and a PA system for incarcerated people to give lectures at college campuses.

From prison, Emile DeWeaver, co-founder of Prison Renaissance, used the method to give lectures at both Hampshire College and the University of San Francisco.

“We need both models,” DeWeaver said. “There’s a limited number of people that can come inside a prison. Technology allows incarcerated people to show up on college campus on a bigger scale.”

There are plans underway for DeWeaver to give more guest lectures at Stanford and UC Irvine.



Photo courtesy of CDCR

Ivy Beverly laying new soil on garden bed



Photo courtesy of CDCR

Alicia Zaragoza working on potting new plants

## GARDEN

Continued from Page 1

The Folsom garden design was created from the different ideas of women prisoners, who came up with plans for their end-of-semester project. As part of the learning process, the women had to include drawings of their ideal landscapes.

Tylee Sewell, IGP facilitator, combined all the ideas for the project. Sewell is a permaculturist, one who develops agricultural ecosystems intended to be self-sufficient and sustainable.

The women learned permaculture techniques and planted pollinator-friendly plants using minimal amounts of recycled water. They learned hands-on skills in installing and maintaining the garden, as part of a plan to teach them to care for delicate things.

IGP feels these skills will be useful for those returning to their communities.

“A lot of people who are incarcerated come from communities that generally have more environmental injustices,” Waitkus said. “They live closer to pollution or toxic waste sites.”

“That’s an environmental issue. Fresh healthy foods should be available to everybody and not just processed food being sold at the corner liquor store,” Waitkus said.

“What they have learned from the program, they go back to their communities and advocate for food equity,” she said.

In the program’s third semester, the participants dig deeper into their “inner garden,” using emotional process work, eco-therapy approaches and developing communication skills.

“IGP teaches people it’s about more than just me, it’s about we, and it’s about all of us working together to create a better world,” Waitkus said. “We are (all) a part of the natural world, obviously, from soil systems ... to literally the cosmos. We are connected to

all of that.”

IGP also has a reentry and career preparation course for those who wish to pursue a career in the green industry. After the students are released, IGP attempts to get them green jobs.

“We are careful about wanting to include everybody,” Waitkus said. “There are different people with different timelines.”

As IGP continues to expand its program, it has gained more recognition by receiving California’s highest environmental honor, the Governor’s Environmental and Economic Leadership Award (GEELA).

“We accepted the award on behalf of all the people we work with inside,” Waitkus said. “It raises our visibility in the state. We’re hoping to work with other agencies like the California Department of Agriculture.”

The Chowchilla garden is set to be built this spring.

—Alex Matthews,  
UC Berkeley student,  
contributed to this story

## Advocates raise issues regarding incarcerated women

By John Lam  
Journalism Guild Writer

Issues regarding incarcerated females have been raised by five female criminal justice advocates at the 2018 American Conservative Union’s Conservative Political Action Conference.

The title of the CPAC panel: “Dignity for Incarcerated Women: Is It Really Necessary to Shackle Women in Labor?”

“People wonder if this is really a significant issue,” said Holly Harris, executive director of the U.S. Justice Action Network. “Yes. It is traumatizing not just for the woman giving birth but it also impacts the family and certainly there is research that says it impacts the bond between the mother and child.”

Only 21 states have outlawed the practice of shackling imprisoned women in labor.

“In some cases, the babies are taken away from the mothers without the mother having the chance to even hold her newborn baby,” the *Christian Post* reported.

According to Harris, about one in four female inmates is either pregnant or has a child younger than the age of one.

Other issues raised by the panel:

- Lack of access to children.

“Most of the women that I have encountered had substance abuse issues. It’s really, really hard to get the woman to focus in on her substance abuse issues when she doesn’t know where her kids are,” said Kathleen Dennehy, former head of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections.

- Females face a lack of necessary hygiene items, such as sanitary pads

“We have been working on bills in some states to make sure that women have the sanitary items they need,” said Jessica Jackson Sloan, a human rights lawyer and the co-founder of #cut50, a national movement to lower the U.S. incarceration rate.

Sloan also shared the story of one of her employees, a formerly incarcerated woman. “She knew what it was like to not have enough sanitary items that she would literally have to choose between bartering to get them or just staying in her cell for a week at a time when it was that time of the month.”

- Women’s lack of privacy from male guards while they are in the shower or receiving medical attention

“We had one woman who was providing testimony in California that she went into

medical and had a male guard see her in a state of undress and how that traumatized her from ever wanting to go back to medical for the next 10 years she was incarcerated,” said Sloan.

Policies vary by state and prison, but there are some efforts to fix these injustices. According to the *Christian Post*, Kentucky is working on a bill to ban shackling during labor and mandate appropriate nutrition for pregnant inmates.

Sloan spoke of a California bill to “get male guards out of bathrooms in medical areas.” She also said that Arizona had passed a bill to increase the monthly ration for sanitary pads and toilet paper for female inmates.

Kate Trammel, the senior state campaign manager for Prison Fellowship, said that although people were working for change in many states, she doesn’t think these female inmate issues are as high profile as they should be. “I work in state policy, and I rarely hear it discussed... But it is very much a real problem.”

Trammel added that because most females are in prison for non-violent crimes, they will benefit from the current push to reduce mandatory sentences for non-violent drug offenses. But female issues that don’t apply to men are apt to get left behind.



# Girls of color overlooked in the school to prison pipeline

By Marcus Henderson  
Journalism Guild Chairman

Girls of color, particularly Black girls, often are overlooked in conversations about the school-to-prison pipeline, making them more likely to be labeled early on as criminals.

According to research and reports, one in four American girls will experience sexual violence by the age of 18. But, for Black and Brown girls, traumatic experiences of sexual violence often lead them to the juvenile justice system, the sexual abuse-to-prison pipeline.

“When we fail to recognize and appropriately address their trauma, we deny girls the protections afforded to other victims of sexual abuse,” said a Rights4Girls report. “Too often, girls are criminalized for behaviors that are natural responses to trauma—behaviors such as running away or self-medicating through substance

use. In the worst cases, they are arrested and detained for prostitution, despite being victims of child sex trafficking.”

According to a report by MISSEY, an organization researching the sexual exploitation of youth, a pimp will recruit one in three teens who run away from home within 48 hours.

The instability of family and community, including a history of sexual and physical abuse, makes youth vulnerable to sex traffickers and exploiters.

“If your child or a youth you know runs away, it is important to ask why,” the Rights4Girls report said. “They might simply be testing boundaries as adolescents often do, but there also may be something deeper behind their behavior.

“They might be running toward safety or toward harm,” the report continued.

Nationally, Black girls are 40 percent of all sex traffick-

ing victims, according to a two-year review by the FBI. Los Angeles County reported that 92 percent of Black girls in its juvenile justice system identified themselves as sex trafficking victims. The majority were from poor communities in the southeastern part of L.A. County.

In Alameda County, 66 percent of child sex trafficking survivors were Black girls.

Native American girls, who are a small part of the national population, were five times more likely to be incarcerated in juvenile facilities than White girls. Native American women as a whole had higher rates of experiencing some form of sexual violence during their lifetime, compared to the larger population, according to a National Institute of Justice report.

In the last 20 years, the rate of Latina girls being sent to residential placements has almost doubled, which adds to their risk of child

exploitation.

Children placed in foster care are three times more likely to be subjected to abuse or neglect, the report said. In 2013, during a nationwide child trafficking raid that covered more than 70 cities, 60 percent of the children that were recovered were from foster care or group homes.

“On many occasions ... it is not the pimps who create this vulnerability—mostly they take advantage of it,” said a Georgetown University Law Center report.

As the girls encounter the various types of pimps, they undergo many forms of psychological manipulation. The “Gorilla pimp” uses force to overpower the girls. The “Romeo pimp” uses charms and gifts. The “CEO pimp” uses money and business strategies to swindle the girls, according to Sowers Education Group.

Through these interactions, the girls go through in-

timidation, threats and isolation. This process causes low self-esteem for the girls.

As the girls enter the juvenile justice systems, they face re-traumatization from routine procedures such as the use of restraints, strip searches or isolation, according to the *Georgetown* report.

The girls also risk being labeled “bad girls” if they have an aggressive response to this treatment. But in effect, it’s a self-defense mechanism to the history of the trauma, the report said.

“Major depression is four to five times more common in girls housed in detention and correctional facilities than in the general community,” the report said.

This leads to higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among the girls in the system.

In 2017, California banned law enforcement from arresting minors involved in the sex trade through Senate Bill 1322. The bill directed sex

trafficked kids toward social services, rather than cells.

But the change in the law has been slow to alter the culture of some law enforcement agencies, which continue to view these kids as criminals and not victims, said a *Crime Report* article.

“We would like to see ‘bottoms’ no longer arrested as co-facilitators,” said Megan Lundstrom, executive director of Free Our Girls, based in Colorado. “We would like people to understand that typically pimp and gang traffickers come from the same geographic areas and economic /social/educational backgrounds as their victims, which means there are larger issues such as poverty, racism and discrimination, and gender inequalities that are occurring to further fuel this issue.”

If you or someone you know may be involved in sex trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888.

## BENAVIDES

Continued from Page 1

Since the trial, the medical personnel that provided testimony supporting allegations that the child was physically abused changed their opinion.

The medical personnel on the case recanted after seeing the deceased toddler’s full medical records.

The complete file revealed there was no evidence of sexual assault when the girl was first hospitalized, according to the *Sacramento Bee*. They also concluded that “her genital and other injuries may have been caused by her medical treatment and some said her purported cause of death was ‘anatomically impossible,’” continued the article.

Based on the recant from the majority of the medical staff that worked on the case, the California Supreme Court found that the remaining evidence did not support first-degree murder.

Kern County District Attorney Lisa Green announced

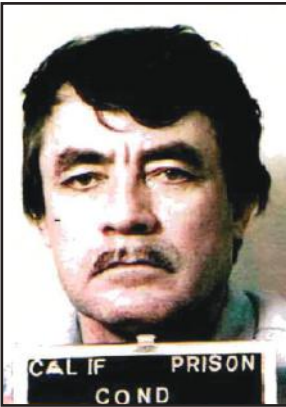
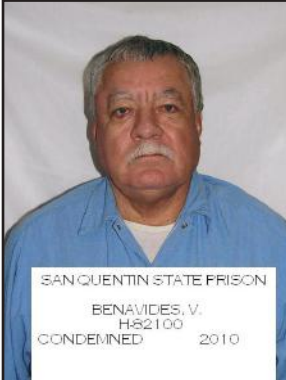
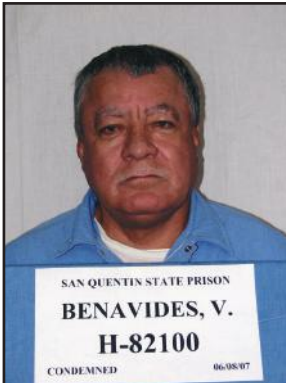


Photo courtesy of CDCR  
The ID photos of Vicente Benavides throughout his stay in Death Row



that her office won’t retry Benavides.

“Ms. Green concluded that retrying Mr. Benavides on a charge of second-degree murder would be extremely difficult, if not impossible,” said a Media Advisory from the Kern County District Attorney.

Additionally, the DA’s office announced they declined to prosecute Benavides, who is 68-years old, because he has already served more prison time than a sentence

for second-degree murder carries. Thus, it’s likely Benavides would be paroled anyway if reconvicted and resentenced to 15 to life for second degree murder.



Photo by Lt. S. Robinson  
Vicente Benavides with his loved ones and attorney outside of San Quentin’s entrance

Benavides, a native of Mexico, will receive reentry services courtesy of the state, if he decides to stay in California.

“Under state law, people

whose convictions were reversed based on insufficient evidence or who were exonerated are entitled to receive transitional services, which can include housing assis-

tance, job training, help in obtaining a valid identification card and other reentry services,” Deputy Press Secretary Terry Thornton said of CDCR.

## QUEENY KING

Continued from Page 1

“It’s not at all what I expected,” said DJ Kraig, who used a laptop computer, multi-channel mixer, dual-deck CD player and drum machine to mix and arrange music and rhythmic beats for King.

This was his first time inside San Quentin. Coming in, he said he had no expectations because he came in “to provide a gift,” adding that he felt

“fortunate” to come in and perform.

King said singer-actress Cher told her to say “hi” to the men at San Quentin. Cher is her mother-in-law. King is married to Cher’s son Elijah Almond, whose father is the late musician Greg Allman.

The audience of more than 120 inmates and outside guests related to King’s song “Perfect Day.” She said this is a true story about going along with your day when “s\*\*t hits the fan.” It too brings about ’80s nostalgia.

King writes her own mu-

sic. “I play a little guitar,” she said, but she uses synths and pads to create all of her music. “I try not to write bubblegum pop,” she said. Someone in the audience asked, “What’s bubblegum pop?” King responded, saying, “Taylor Swift. That’s bubblegum pop.”

“I grew up in a cult,” King said. The name of the cult was Children of God. “They had nothing to do with God.”

King said she grew up in the Soviet Union, “restricted” and not allowed to hear music. When she was a teenager, she decided to turn on the radio. The rest, as it is said, is history.

“Queeny is the name of my grandmother,” King said. Marie Angela is the name that she says appears on her passport. “Nobody calls me that.” King is her last name.

“Living a Lie” was another of King’s songs she performed. If readers remember hearing the ’80s song 99 Luftballons by the group Nena, then this is that kind of music. King’s song introduced subtle guitar lines in the background mixed in by DJ Kraig.

Kraig said he’s been a DJ since he was a kid. “It was another way to make money.” He started mixing on old-school vinyl records and still

knows how to use the pitch wheel on a turntable. He said in high school he bought a Roland 808 drum machine for its sound. These days, like many DJs, Kraig relies on digital technology.

“It’s a freak show, anything goes...It’s how the girls get down and how the boys romance.” The crowd really enjoyed the song “Freak Show” for its sound and lyrics. They clapped to the beat. King said the song is about a club she walked into in London. The scene she described was wild. One inmate asked for the name of the club.

“It’s really hard for me to sing this song,” King said during an interlude between songs. She said it was her father’s favorite song as she directed the crowd to sing along: “Carry me home, home, home...” The music had a low bass drone sound with strings in the background. King sang: “Standing at a crossroad, I want to find my way... Standing at a crossroad, I don’t want to be alone...”

Following that arrangement, DJ Kraig manipulated King’s vocals on another song to sound like a chorus was behind her as he scratched turntable sounds. His choice of string rhythms was also

reminiscent of music from the ’80s.

The crowd gave Queeny King and the Liquid Giraffe, DJ Kraig, a standing ovation. Kraig then sampled some of his other sounds for the audience during a question-and-answer discussion.

King said she decided to showcase her songs at San Quentin first—before presenting them to any record label. “I’m looking for someone to rap on a few tracks,” she said.

“I was thinking about the first place to sing after a hiatus,” King said. The inspiration for the duo to come to San Quentin, she said, was that “I had so much fun singing in prisons before.” She said these are some of the moments she used to share with her father, who passed away a short time ago.

One inmate who introduced himself as Robert thanked King for coming in to perform and sharing part of her life with the audience.

Inmate W. “Rico” Rogers, who plays keyboard in the prison’s R&B band, asked King if she could bring Cher to the prison. “I’m going to definitely try,” King said.

Another inmate shouted, “We believe in life after love,”

referring to “Believe,” one of Cher’s songs from the ’90s.

“This is great,” said music producer Tom Lapinski, one of the outside guests. He used to bring musicians in to perform at San Quentin from 1977 to 1999. “I want to come in and do concerts again,” he said. “There hasn’t been a (big) concert since Metallica.” He also worked with the organization Bread & Roses from June 1977 to December 1980.

After some urging, encores of “Perfect Day” and “Freak Show” were performed. The men loved it as they sang “It’s a perfect day” in the chorus. DJ Kraig mixed it up using his desktop technology as the crowd sang “freak show, anything goes.” The familiarity of both songs made them come off stronger the second time around as a few inmates got up and danced in front of the stage.

When the performance finally ended, many of the men gathered around King for a chance to shake her hand, speak, pose for pictures and get her autograph on pieces of paper. For one evening in prison, it was a Perfect Day because nothing hit the fan in another Freak Show where sometimes anything goes.



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN  
Queeny performing on stage



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN  
DJ Kraig mixing his beats



# Reflecting on the responsibilities of being a mother and parent

## EDITORIAL

By Richard “Bonaru” Richardson  
Editor-in-Chief

“Women mature faster than men” is something I heard often while growing up. When I reflect on my childhood and the men I have associated with, it was easy to see how

true that statement is. I remember women who had to raise their children on their own and I wondered where the fathers were during that time. Did they love their children? Did these women leave their husbands as my mother did because of abuse? Perhaps they ended up like me, in prison. It is a fact that my children wondered the same thing I

did about my absent father. I am no different from the next man as I begin my 21st year in prison. When I glance across San Quentin’s prison yard, I am not surprised to see those father figures that I searched for while growing up. There is a large number of aging men behind these prison walls, and many of them have been incarcerated for 20, 30 or even 40 years.

When I was in Centinela State Prison from 2001 to 2007, I watched a family of four — two sons, a father, and an uncle, all with life sentences — continuing to follow a false belief system that landed them in prison. Now, there is an influx of young men coming to prison. Many of them were not even born when I began my prison sentence. Do I blame my generation for not being responsible enough to break this prison

cycle? I once believed the deceptions about gangs, and I am ashamed to say I followed that same belief system that was not right. I find it hard not to blame the generation before me; however, I would rather find a solution so that we can be responsible for our own actions and somehow, some way, break this cycle of incarceration. Although it has taken me a long time to mature my way

of thinking and appreciate life, I hope the so-called men I know can now bear the burden we put on the wonderful women in our lives. I love and respect the strong women I know; however, I must realize that I have a duty as a man and father to help guide the younger generation to a better future. My responsibility is to help men mature a little faster than I have over the years, or else the battle against generational incarceration will be lost.

## Detailed report about prison healthcare

By Juan Haines  
Senior Editor

On any single day, more than a million people are held in state prisons across the nation where substance abuse, mental illness, and contagious diseases are widespread. Fact: Nearly all people complete their prison sentence and return to the community. A first-of-its-kind report requested detailed information from prison officials about their prisons’ inmates and healthcare delivery systems, such as how they fund and deliver the prisoners’ healthcare, how they make their budgets, how they compare with one another, and some reasons for differences. The report, “Prison Health Care Costs and Quality,” by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Vera Institute of Justice sought to paint a picture for policymakers,

administrators, and other stakeholders to help improve policies and programs for incarcerated people, state residents and taxpayers. Their research found:

- Departments of correction collectively spent \$8.1 billion on prison healthcare services for incarcerated people in 2015—perhaps 20 percent of overall prison expenditures.
- Healthcare spending per inmate varied in 2015—from \$2,173 in Louisiana to \$19,796 in California.
- States reported wide-ranging strategies to corrections and healthcare staffing.
- Treating prolonged illnesses is a growing challenge and expense in state prisons, worsened by an aging prison population. From

fiscal periods 2010 to 2015, the share of older individuals in prisons rose in 44 states. State prison officials recognize the importance of providing consistent and stable healthcare for those returning to the community. Prison officials took a range of steps, often in partnership with other state agencies, to ease reentry from a healthcare standpoint. According to the research, state prisons house large numbers of people with serious health issues—some have diseases that could spread inside and/or outside prison. Nearly all prisoners will return to their communities. Unhealthy citizens contribute to recidivism. Prisoners’ healthcare while incarcerated and after release is of vital public interest.

## Letters to the Editor



It’s five days after my total hip replacement, and Sonoma Valley Hospital is trying to send me back to San Quentin. Unfortunately, there wasn’t enough space on the fourth floor for me in the prison hospital. Dr. Brown told me that I would be going to California Health Care Facility (CHCF) in Stockton. Now I’m thinking, “What in the hell did I get myself into?” Because, I still remember the bad publicity the prison was receiving once it opened in 2014. The news stations reported bed bugs, roaches and rats. They also reported that the prison couldn’t get enough workers to come to Stockton. Plus, other prisoners who came from the prison said they didn’t like being there. However, I had no choice in the matter and, immediately, I called on God to guide me on this journey and allow his will to be done. And yes, his will was done!

Two hours later I arrived at CHCF, and I thought that I was arriving at an airport. The prison is huge, and there are bright lights everywhere. As I was wheeled into a side door I approached the holding cells; little did I know I was at R&R. About 20 minutes later I’m wheeled over to Medical. Now just to remind you, I’m five days removed from a total hip replacement, and I’m in a lot of pain. Once I’m seen and given medication I’m wheeled away to D Facility Building A, cell 119, which is Ad-Seg. I am so out of it that it didn’t even matter. Two days later I’m wheeled to Building D3B, cell 117.

All the bad publicity CHCF had been receiving was uncalled for and not warranted because my stay at the health care facility was velvet! The entire staff was very professional, caring and compassionate, the prison and the health care system is state of the art. I was treated like a real human being, and the whole time I was there I was called Mr. Hollingsworth or Sir. My heart opened up so much while I was at Stockton because what I witnessed was so sad and heartbreaking. At times I had to hold back the tears because the prisoners I made friends with there were dying of cancer, will never walk again, and are in wheelchairs permanently. There are prisoners who are bed-ridden, and what impressed me was that although they were restricted in some kind of way, they continued to smile and even laugh at times. Seeing this changed my life forever! It allowed me to humble myself to the point of feeling grateful and blessed to only be here recovering from a total hip replacement.

The RNs (registered nurses), LVNs (licensed vocational nurses) and the CNAs (certified nurse’s assistants) are at the top of their trade and don’t mind helping or assisting prisoners, whether it’s changing crappy diapers or putting lotion on my feet and then putting on my sock and shoes. Overall, I will grade the health care facility of CHCF an A because not only does the staff deserve it, they earned it. CHCF is also a very nice and laid-back place to do time. “E” yard is the mainline yard, and it’s huge. There are four dorms and several EOP buildings on this yard, along with a mini canteen. Throughout the entire prison your breakfast, lunch and dinner are brought to you, as well as your canteen. Yes, there is no waiting in line for three to four hours once a month. They also offer PWC, which is permanent work crew, and that’s all cell living on A Facility.

In closing, I would like to personally thank all of the staff in D Facility 3B who helped me along the road to recovery. Dr. Oureshi Paatkintola. RN Delos Santos, RN Tuazon, LVN Talabay. LVN Sulley, CNA Pazitaden, CNA Kaur, and Ma Linda. A special shout out to CNA Musa, CNA Baliola and “wound lady” RN Virtudazo. The three of you were hands-on with me continuously and were very, very professional, and I am the lucky one to have you waiting on me. I am truly grateful and appreciative for all you did. I had a blast and God bless. Last but not least, a shout out to my physical therapist Anne. Thank you for challenging me but at the same time harnessing my physical drive so I wouldn’t overdo it. CO Tellesen and Van Loon, thank you for being so welcoming. To all the prisoners in D3B, stay strong and keep the faith.

Peace,

Eddie Hollingsworth III

### MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2018 SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLAME OF HOPE TORCH RUN SOLANO STATE PRISON, VACAVILLE, CA B.O.L.D.: *BEYOND ORDINARY LIFE* DOINGS PRESENTS FLAME OF TORCH RUN:

Beyond Ordinary Life Doings would like to welcome all to come join us in a Special Olympics fundraising FLAME OF HOPE TORCH RUN event featuring our local Special Olympic athletes and our very own talented Solano bands. This event is for you. Special Olympics gives with their hearts every event they attend, some of these athletes and their families struggle sometimes with life’s obstacles, yet they always have the courage, strength and fight within themselves to never give up in life because they don’t live for themselves, they live for you and me. The heart of these athletes is pure, they live to give us the opportunity to see how precious and special life is no matter how you are. This event is to give back what they give to us, road to success, life of meaning and most importantly, words of hope, freedom and acknowledgment that one can succeed when one is given the opportunity.

HOPE: *HELPING OUT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE*

If this is what you’re pushing for, join us with a smile, give us love and appreciate life with purpose. You are making a huge difference in the lives of many people all around you.

<https://specialolympics.donordrive.com/event/FlameofHope>

## \$2.5 million awarded to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment

By Forrest Lee Jones  
Journalism Guild Writer

The state of California has awarded \$2.5 million to the Pasadena Police Department to provide the formerly incarcerated with mental health and substance abuse treatment, as well as other services that would integrate them back into society, reports *Pasadena Now*. The money was awarded by the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) after passage of Proposition 47, a voter-approved initiative that reduced many nonviolent felonies to misdemeanors, saving the state millions in jail and prison-related costs. Lt. Jason Clawson, who was in charge of the grant process, said the Pasadena Police Department is the only city police department in the state to receive such an award. The funds will be used to remedy current gaps in services and to expand existing services. The police department will act as the lead agency for the grant project and promote coordination between the service providers. “This is a breakthrough program for this city,” said Mayor Terry Tornek, following Clawson’s presentation to the City Council. Councilmember Victor Gordo agreed, saying the

funds are a “proud moment” for Pasadena. According to Clawson, the funds will be distributed through the Flintridge Center for reentry services to specific populations, such as detained adults and juveniles charged with or convicted of a crime and with a history of mental health or substance use problems. In the past, Flintridge has provided reintegration services to over 500 ex-cons, with 93 percent not returning back to jail. The new funding will allow for an additional 250 people, above the original 500, according to *Pasadena Now*. Some of the other organizations that also will benefit from these funds are: Amer-I-Can, 2nd Call, Live Above the Hype, ACTS Thrift Store, LA Incubator Consortium and Lake Avenue Church, all of which are in Pasadena. The services that these organizations will provide are as follows: Substance Abuse Treatment for those reentering society from prison under the Drug Medi-Cal program. A new Community Services Representative position will work with Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) and substance abuse counselors to process referrals, organize services at specific locations, advise on behalf of clients, help individuals and families to ac-

cess services when needed and eliminate barriers to resources. Amer-I-Can facilitators provide their curriculum to gang-ravaged communities and will act as a link for community members gradually transitioning to Flintridge for additional services. Enough extra funding will be provided to the Amer-I-Can facilitators to pay community workers for 180 hours of mentoring and 60 hours of training. The Live Above Hype program provides coping skills for youth living in high-risk circumstances, and will provide youth-focused outreach for those with substance abuse and mental health disorders. The curriculum combines social skills and cognitive learning that promotes character and pro-social values. ACTS Thrift Store, a non-profit organization that provides credit vouchers for food and clothing, will be able to provide additional services to those in the community. The funding will also allow The LA Incubator Consortium, which facilitates law clinics, to train more attorneys and law students to hold clinics for an additional 90 clients. Finally, the Lake Avenue Church, which assists people facing eviction, will be able to increase their services from three households per year to 15.

### Corrections to last Issue:

In April SQN: CBS’s Ted Koppel visits Ear Hustle mistakenly attributed asking the men questions to Lesley Currier, it was Suraya Keating.



# Life of crime overturned by positive choices now leads to a new life

## Kid CAT Speaks!

By John Lam  
Journalism Guild Writer

A variety of rehabilitative programs, including dance, helped Anouthinh Pangthong turn his life around despite a rocky youth and 21 years in prison since the age of 15.

“Life in prison can become tedious, doing the same thing over and over. Sparks of violence would break the monotony. When an opportunity came to do something different through dancing, I jumped at the chance. My life has since been anything but ordinary,” said Pangthong. “Dancing really saved my life.”

Pangthong, known to his friends as Choy, is the latest Kid CAT member to be found suitable for parole.

Like many youth offenders of Asian descent who have been incarcerated since the ‘90s, Choy was an immigrant born in a refugee camp in Thailand, when his single mother fled her home country of Laos during war.

When he and his mother arrived in the United States, Choy was only 7 months old. His mother remarried and gave birth to two younger brothers. She and Choy gained

citizenship.

“I didn’t have much of a relationship with my father growing up,” said Choy. “He was an alcoholic and gambler.”

As a child, Choy often served as an interpreter for his mother. When he translated incorrectly, his mother would often verbally and physically punish him.

**“My whole family has been waiting over 20 years to welcome him back home and now it’s finally here”**

“She made me feel worthless, and it really affected how I felt and perceived myself, and I carried this throughout most of my adult life,” said Choy.

Because of the migratory nature of his stepfather’s work, Choy and his family moved around often into crime-ridden neighborhoods.

“Although I lived in a bad neighborhood, it embraced me by giving me the attention and affection that I didn’t have at home,” said Choy.



Courtesy of Anouthinh Pangthong  
Anouthinh Pangthong at age 12

At 8 years old, Choy began serving as a lookout for neighborhood crack dealers and was paid a dollar each time he notified the dealer of an incoming cop car.

“I would take that dollar and go play video games at the liquor store,” said Choy. “By the age of 11, I started to sell crack cocaine and later joined a gang at 12.”

The only saving grace Choy remembered from his childhood was playing football.

“Playing sports was the



Courtesy of Anouthinh Pangthong  
Younger brother Tony Douangmalalay, niece Caylen, Mother Pat, nephew C.J. and younger brother Caven

best decision I ever made, football taught me about teamwork, responsibility and building camaraderie,” said Choy. “But when my family decided to move away from Willow when I turned 12, everything changed. I stopped playing sports and embraced the streets instead.”

Choy began to get into fights at schools and was ultimately expelled for bringing a knife.

Three weeks before turning 16, Choy made a horrendous decision that would end a life, and send him to prison.

“On the night of my crime, I led three younger friends to steal a car, and I ended up murdering the man I was trying to rob.”

After two weeks on the lam, the police arrested Choy. He later pled guilty to first-degree murder and was sentenced to 25 years-to-life.

“My mom blamed herself for what I had done. I felt I had to take accountability for my actions and show her that it wasn’t her fault but mine alone, so I pled guilty,” said Choy.

For most of his incarceration, Choy straddled the fence. While working to accumulate vocational skills, he sold methamphetamines, tobacco, and cellular phones.

As a result, Choy accumulated 11 disciplinary write-ups.

“In 2010, I was in solitary confinement for a cellphone possession, when I made a decision to change my life,” said Choy. “Still my change didn’t come easy, it took years.”

When Choy arrived at San Quentin in 2012, he renounced his criminal lifestyle and availed himself of many self-help groups and education. He also became a program facilitator for Criminals and Gangmembers Anonymous, Kid CAT’s First Step curriculum, ROOTS (Restoring Our Original True Selves), and mentoring youth through SQUIRES (San Quentin Utilizing Inmate Resources, Experiences and Studies). He especially relished his roles in Artistic Ensemble and Shakespeare plays.

“I really regretted taking so long to change,” said Choy.

“It took writing out my crime in detail to understand the magnitude of what I’d done – especially the harm that I caused to my community of Stockton.”

In 2016, Choy spoke about his offense at an event with survivors of crime. In attendance was Michael Tubbs, mayor of Stockton, where he had committed his crime.

After the event, Tubbs told Choy, “We forgive you. Now come back and help us improve; you are part of the solution.”

On Aug. 8, during his first parole board hearing, Choy was found suitable for parole.

At a recent event at San Quentin, Choy’s brother, Tony Douangmalalay, remarked about Choy’s pending release. “I’m so proud of my older brother and the journey he has made to become who he is today. Now all he talks about is his goals of helping kids and doing outreach in our community.”

“My whole family has been waiting over 20 years to welcome him back home and now it’s finally here.”

## Youth Justice Coalition Survey

Youth Justice Coalition needs your help with their survey.

This organization is seeking information on those who were convicted under the felony murder rule in California and under certain aspects of second-degree murder.

Does any of the following apply to you?

First-degree felony murder: all participants are liable for homicide

Whether one performed the homicidal act or not, or was even at the scene of the killing—all are liable for first-

degree murder.

Second-degree felony murder: All participants in an inherently dangerous felony are liable for homicide

A killing may be murder in the second degree if a death occurred during the commission, attempted commission or flight from a felony that is “inherently dangerous to human life.”

Second-degree murder: The Natural and Probable Consequence Doctrine.

The California Supreme Court has held: “For example, if a person aids and abets only

an intended assault, but a murder results, that person may be guilty of that murder, even if unintended, if it is a natural and probable consequence of the intended assault.”

If any of those circumstances apply to you, please write to:

Youth Justice Coalition  
Attn: Legal Clinic  
P.O. Box 73688  
Los Angeles, CA 90003

The Coalition is a nonprofit organization that advocates for prisoners. It is staffed by former inmates and families of the incarcerated.

## Reforms in Illinois juvenile system blocked by youth assaults

Reforms in Illinois’ juvenile justice system are under attack by prosecutors who are responding to a steady flow of staff complaints to law enforcement over youth assaults.

“State officials and juvenile justice advocates say the prosecutions are fueled, in part, by employees’ resistance to the statewide reforms,” *ProPublica* reported.

Workers at the Harrisburg Illinois Youth Center have sought more criminal charges for assaults on staff over the past two years than employees at the state’s four other juvenile facilities combined.

Highlighting the systemic issues is the behavior of three youths: Jaylan Banks, 17, who punched a guard; David Hayes, 18, who spat in a guard’s face; and Lavell Staples, 18, accused of shoving a guard.

A few years ago, these incidents would have resulted in a loss of privileges, earned time in solitary confinement, or added time of 30 to 180 days to their juvenile sentences.

In these situations, however, the authorities filed criminal complaints with the Harrisburg police. Upon conviction, Staples received a four-year term, Hayes sentenced to six years, and Banks received eight years.

“If I didn’t catch this case, I would have been home already,” said Staples. “They sent me down here so they can throw me away.”

The American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois accuses the Harrisburg staff of creating an “alternative correctional system” to drive a steady flow of prosecution for what it describes as “trivial” incidents.

In response to the public outcry over guards filing police reports on juvenile detainees, Illinois guard union representative Eddie Caumiant said, “It’s their right to seek justice and press charges.”

“People have to be responsible for their actions,” one guard told *ProPublica*, speaking on condition of anonymity. “I don’t want to go to work and get hit. If I was at

home and somebody hit me, I’d press charges.”

Prosecutorial zeal also contributes to harsh court sentences, according to *ProPublica*.

“This is a pretty simple situation as far as my role in it,” said Jayson Clark, Saline County’s attorney who prosecutes Harrisburg offenders.

“This county will prosecute you for aggravated battery if you lay a hand on a guard. The fact that they’re in a juvenile facility...doesn’t make them any less culpable.”

In response, attorney Jennifer Vollen-Katz, the executive director of the prison watchdog group John Howard Association, said Harrisburg’s staff may have legitimate complaints, but sending the young men to prison is not the way to address them.

“The outcome of these cases are so dramatically out of sync with anything that resembles justice. Six years for spitting? We are sacrificing lives to make a point, and that’s simply not OK.”

—John Lam

## 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 Speaks c/o *San Quentin News*, 1 Main Street San Quentin, CA 94964 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.

### The Beat Within

A Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

**Kid CAT and *The Beat Within* hold monthly writing workshops. *The Beat Within* conducts writing workshops in juvenile detention centers throughout the country. Kid CAT Speaks will publish one topic each month. Your writing should reflect a positive message that 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!**

**How do people around you describe you? A criminal, friend, lover, athlete, or a student? Importantly, how do you define yourself? Do people describe you as different from how you see yourself? If you had the opportunity to redefine yourself, who would you be?**

**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 offenders, 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.



# Parolees’ hard transition from stigmatized past

By Joe Garcia  
Journalism Guild Writer

Convicted felons continue to be stigmatized by their criminal past, particularly when they search for legitimate work. But employers are facing a growing, nationwide pressure to change their anti-felon hiring policies.

Upon reentry, finding and maintaining employment becomes the main factor that determines an inmate’s success or recidivism. The “ban the box” movement seeks to abolish the yes or no question about felony conviction on standard job applications, according to a recent *Inside Sources* article.

“Any sentence for criminal activity will, for many, ultimately become a life sentence of under- or unemployment,” wrote Arthur Rizer and Rachel Liebman in an article on the issue. “That destructive cycle needs to change, and businesses have a big role to play.”

Nearly one-third of Americans have criminal red flags on their jackets; and 95 percent of the 2.3 million people currently incarcerated will eventually be released into society.

“We cannot afford to toss aside this vast human potential....These millions of former inmates will hit the streets of a country that has, for the most part, locked them out of economic opportunities, consigning many to a cycle of homelessness, crime and poverty,” according to the article.

*“In a strong economy, there should be room for everyone who wants to and can contribute work and talent”*

Almost 60 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed a year after their release, while those who do sustain employment are paid on average 40 percent less than persons without any criminal record.

Because one-third of all U.S. jobs require some type of professional license or certification, routine background checks prevent ex-

offenders from being qualified for such work—even when the job does not entail any public safety considerations.

“But there is hope for a better path,” according to the article. “...Twenty-nine states and 150 jurisdictions have implemented ban-the-box policies that delay employers—in most cases, just public employers—from asking about criminal convictions until a conditional offer of employment has been extended.”

“Too many employers still rely on discriminatory biometric information, like fingerprints and name-based background checks,” the authors wrote. Such methods fail to take into account inaccurate, outdated or incomplete data, any mitigating factors surrounding the offense, the age at which the crime was committed or the number of years since the offense.

“In a strong economy, there should be room for everyone who wants to and can contribute work and talent,” the article concluded. “...No one who has served their time should be expected to automatically serve a ‘life sentence’ of unemployment.”

# Former prisoners working for the places that once housed them

By Harry C. Goodall Jr  
Journalism Guild Writer

Across the country, former prisoners are finding jobs in the prisons where they were once housed yet still run into employment obstacles, according to the *Marshall Project*.

At least 30 states have hiring policies for former inmates. New programs, such as the New Mexico Returning Citizen Program, are being created to help the transition from inmate to state employee. “At the beginning it wasn’t easy,” said Cindy Stubbs, after doing time in a North Carolina prison. “Some people in society feel when someone is able to come out of prison and make a good salary and a good position, they don’t feel like you are deserving of it.”

Stubbs manages 22 male prisoners in a North Carolina prison Braille plant. She learned to translate books into Braille while in prison. She interviewed at the plant prior to release.

Stubbs had to adjust to being back in a place she was desperate to leave. A place she was directed to “Stay behind the yellow line” or responded to staff with a “yes sir or no sir.” One day an

administrator had to remind her “You are not an inmate anymore,” according to the article.

California does not employ ex-offenders in positions where sensitive information, such as access to personal or medical information on inmates and staff, is available. Texas limits hiring of ex-offenders to positions of substance abuse counselors and construction workers. Yet, former prisoners convicted of certain sex crime are disqualified.

*“He’s going to be interacting with the same inmate population he served time with”*

“I really want them to know there is hope out there,” said Larry Vene, a former Washington state inmate, who now trains inmates in wastewater management. “They listen to me because I’ve lived what they’re living.”

David Van Horn found a job working inside a prison

through the New Mexico Returning Citizen Program, after spending 20 years in prison.

“I was very apprehensive,” said Van Horn, who was hired to work in the officer cadets’ cafeteria.

Van Horn was paid \$17 an hour, prompting some prison officials’ outrage with the former inmate being hired.

“He’s going to be interacting with the same inmate population he served time with, while earning more than the officers who protect him,” said Robert Darnell, a union chapter president. “It’s a bridge too far.”

Van Horn is no longer working there, according to the article.

In Wyoming, former inmates have to wait five years after release to be hired. Minnesota has a one-year waiting policy.

Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC) began hiring formerly incarcerated prisoners under a new law.

“We knew that as we were going out every day talking to the business community and asking them to hire our parolees, that it would be hypocritical if we wouldn’t hire them ourselves,” said Chris Gautz, a Michigan DOC spokesman.”

## ZINE

Continued from Page 1

*Beyond the Stats* was created in 2017 and has grown to 12 members. The magazine is currently on its third issue. Curiel-Allen is a fourth-year Chicano studies major and Mendoza is a fourth-year sociology major.

Both discovered that they shared the experience of being incarcerated after the two were paired in a class project.

“Once you’ve been incarcerated you can’t experience the world the same way,” said Curiel-Allen. “The sociology department on the UC Davis campus is pretty conservative. I saw what was happening, that the learning wasn’t going both ways.

*“It’s very troubling, that the research is done through this lens of objectivity. It’s frankly kind of hurtful”*

“It was always like, ‘I’m the professor, I have the knowledge that I’m imparting to you.’ That underscored the urgency for us,” added Curiel-Allen.

The institution did not leave much room for different kinds of knowledge, which prompted the two students to put together the magazine and program, said Curiel-Allen. The professors would talk about the Black and Chicano community with a sense of detachment from the experience, she said.

“It’s very troubling, that the research is done through this lens of objectivity. It’s frankly kind of hurtful,” added Curiel-Allen. “Because they were lecturing about our streets but it was obvious they had never



A *Beyond the Stats* event at UC Davis

been there.”

“The most realistic way to change that narrative was through the zines, short for magazine,” said Curiel-Allen, “because it was cheap and accessible.” She is the editor of *Beyond the Stats*’ zine, a writer, poet and essayist.

She uses a template for the magazine on a computer and prints in black and white to save money. The two founders have an advisor who is a prison abolitionist. They didn’t ask the college for support because they didn’t want to get co-opted by the University or to need approval by a publisher.

The magazine is filled with poems, personal statements and interviews from members and friends of the movement.

Mendoza spoke about his experience in an article in *The Aggie*, a UC Davis publication.

“I went from one institution that was meant to keep me in to one that’s meant to keep me out,” said Mendoza. “Transferring was very hard, trying to navigate this big system.”

“I found myself in tough situations my first year, at risk of dropping out and doing dumb stuff,” added Mendoza.

When Mendoza began his

academic career, he said he tried many times to confide in different people, seeking help to navigate around the bureaucratic policies.

“There are good people out there with good intentions,” Mendoza said. “But every time I tried to talk to someone, I felt like I had to lie about who I was and change my story so they would feel comfortable.”

*Beyond the Stats* also holds events where 50 to 60 people attend, said Curiel-Allen. The next class is titled: “Education as a freedom: aka AmeriKa, this is how you

made me.”

The syllabus was written to be a counterpoint to the classes *Beyond the Stats* members are in.

“Our goal is to use an almost completely narrative-based approach,” said Curiel-Allen. “We want people to think: ‘How are identities shaped by institutions? What is to be gained by complete objectivity in research of these communities?’”

“What is lost when you are not part of the community you write about” she added.

While *Beyond the Stats* members work to change the

narrative of returning citizens in college institutions, they understand about growing consciously and carefully.

“Absolutely, formerly-incarcerated students feel a lot of stigma,” said Curiel-Allen. “There’s always the question of whether or not it’s internalized stigma or if it’s external; but it really doesn’t matter, because it’s still there.”

“We need to find other students like us. We need to make ourselves visible,” she concluded.

—Arielle Swedback, UC Berkeley student, contributed to this story



# Coming back to prison to help bridge the digital divide

PROFILES

By Wayne Boatwright  
Staff Writer

Behind San Quentin's walls, there is a pair of programs dedicated to closing the digital divide, Code.7370 and TLMWORKS <https://tlmworks.org>. Tulio K. Cardozo, a former San Quentin inmate, runs one of them.

Cardozo is in charge of TLMWORKS, a coding development joint venture. It pays a whopping wage of \$16.49 an hour to inmates.

"I've got to make four client calls this afternoon," said Cardozo as he guided me to the TLMWORKS offices. "Why don't you speak with a few of our team members first?"

The men of TLMWORKS are completely quiet as they write code for clients ranging from private companies and municipal governments to nonprofits and our own *San Quentin News*.

The coding rooms have numerous customer logos framed and hanging like tro-



Tulio Cardozo speaking with TV and podcast host Sway

phies on the walls. Each one represents a successful client project.

Anouthinh Pangthong chimed in when asked about what sets Cardozo apart, "Tulio believes in us. Everything that I've done here is identified 'PROUDLY DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED AT TLM WORKS.' He makes us shine."

Cardozo appreciates the importance of respect. He was a San Quentin H-Unit dormitory yard inmate for

more than three years.

"From 23-30 years of age I was incarcerated; this is my chance to give back to society," said Cardozo about one of his main reasons for returning to San Quentin.

As the on-site manager, Cardozo's chief role is keeping each project on task and time.

"The way I learned this stuff is by trial and error. Just like you are now but you have the benefit of my experience," Cardozo told a



Tulio Cardozo coding with student

teammate, Jason Jones, who was working to optimize a client's website.

Around us, tech-jargon was flying hot and heavy: "Debugging Node from JavaScript" and "Have you used Chrome DevTool to allow you to decompile more efficiently?" asked Cardozo of Jones.

The work vocabulary is necessary to facilitate precise communication of what the team needs to do on a given client-project. A key procedure for Cardozo, is to explain a specific skill then find a way to convey it to all the other inmate-employees of TLMWORKS.

"These men learn cutting-edge technology through Code.7370, and then we keep their skills up to date [at TLMWORKS]," said Cardozo.

The consistent opinion heard from the TLMWORKS team is that Cardozo demands the best of them and does all he can to provide them with the tools and skill sets needed to succeed.

"He walked the same path as we do. The fact he came back here as a success tells me that I can also have a career in coding," said Jones.

"I've been involved with

The Last Mile since 2013," said Harry Hemphill. "Working for TLMWORKS for almost two years already. My salary is \$16.50 an hour for an average of 30 hours a week.

"He was an inmate and was in H-Unit where I live. He taught himself to code, left prison and started his own web-design shop.

"My passion is to start my own dev-shop," Hemphill continued. "He is guiding me to be able to have all the skills necessary to become my own boss. It is not his job; what most impresses me about Cardozo is that he is compassionate and really wants each of us to succeed at TLMWORKS and on the outside."

When asked about the most difficult aspect of working at San Quentin, Cardozo said, "The process of how to work without direct connection to the net always adds complexity to an already complex process."

Authorized to have internet access, Cardozo must walk inmate-workers through the information that will help them do their job. Tutorial videos verified by Cardozo as appropriate and authorized for release was played to the team.

"This is first and foremost a business. All our employees know that both the company and they are accountable to our clients," he said.

All of the TLMWORKS inmate employees were graduates of CODE.7370 training program also offered at San Quentin.

If an inmate can complete at least two of the six-month CODE.7370 training cycles, he can apply to work at TLMWORKS. All the current employees have completed all three cycles offered by CODE.7370.

"There is real opportunity here," Cardozo emphasizes, "If you really connect in this space, if it excites you and you want to come back to class and challenge yourself, we have the tools to allow that."

When asked about the key to successes at both CODE.7370 and TLMWORKS, Cardozo said, "You can believe in yourself. This is the best opportunity to practice here and learn what it is like to work on a team at both a professional and individual level. There is no better time to build professional habits than right now."

TLMWORKS is growing. "I now have six people on my roster and looking to hire more when the next batch graduates [from CODE.7370].

"We operationally can handle about three projects at one time right now. We have a well-developed pipeline of potential clients. Like many development shops on the outside, we don't have a shortage of projects, rather of talented people. We will hire as many as can come through the CODE.7370 program," said Cardozo. "If you are qualified and able, I will consider you as a serious candidate to become part of our team."



Tulio Cardozo conversing with Jon Gripshover

## Taking on the task to teach a new way of thinking in coding

By Juan Haines  
Senior Editor

In spite of the monumental challenges, Jon Gripshover, a supervising instructor, without fail, walks to a classroom in prison industries four times a week to teach incarcerated men computer coding.

"This was one of the first times in my life that I saw hard work and determination not get the results sought after, even after 110 percent effort," Gripshover said. "That was one of my profound moments in teaching"

Gripshover notes that in coding, "you're wrong 90 percent of the time. You have to get used to it. You have to see mistakes as opportunities for taking a different path to solve a problem, not as a failure."

Why is he so committed?

He said working in prison has been the most challenging, yet rewarding, job that he has ever had.

According to Gripshover, the program not only teaches coding, it also teaches new ways of thinking.

"We teach methods to work your way out of problems," Gripshover said.

On the day of the April 3 interview, he walked from his office and into a brightly lit classroom of about two dozen incarcerated men sitting at desks with double-screen computers. Lines of numbers and figures filled their computer screens — others had programs running.

Gripshover stepped on an elevated platform. The men stopped typing and conversing

to hear his announcement.

"I want you all to know how important our site visit by Slack will be tomorrow," Gripshover told the men about the electronic messaging firm. "Even though, they want to see what you guys can do, they also want to spend some time with you to understand who you are."

Gripshover planned to show the Slack executives three programs that the inmates developed.

Iris is an automated tax filing application; Geek Sheet is an e-commerce cite for people who like purchasing "geekie" items, like Star Wars memorabilia; and Jolt is a localized search engine (like Google) dedicated to educational computer networks.

"This is an opportunity, not only for you, but for what this class represents — that you are not just criminals serving time, but you are also a good resource for Silicon Valley," Gripshover said.

Creator of Iris, Angel Falcone, said, "What's unique about Iris is that it is a running account of income and expenses, and it prepares the application and files it electronically without having to go to a tax preparer."

Falcone sat at his workstation, working on "The Challenge of the Day," which is a coding problem Gripshover gives the students to solve.

"For me, this one is kind of hard. I've been working on it for about two and a half hours. But, it's these exercises that help us understand coding."

The program, called Code.7370, is an innovative technology-training program that began in 2014 at San Quentin State Prison. It is the brainchild of venture capitalists Beverly Parenti and Chris Redlitz. The duo teamed up with the California Prison Industry Authority and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to manage the program.

Gripshover said when he took this job, he was told that not everyone would pass. But, that was against his "no child left behind, no matter what," philosophy, he said.

"I am the kind of person who takes people where they were at," Gripshover said referring to the time when he worked with at-risk youth. He said, however, getting youngsters out of crisis didn't solve their overall problem. It always turned into, "what next?" Gripshover said he felt education was key to success.

When he took the job at San Quentin, Gripshover said, "I didn't like hearing the notion that people would fail and drop off. But, six months later, I learned that because people have different starting points of learning and people learn at different levels, es-



Coding student asking Jon Gripshover a question about a program

pecially in the prison setting, some are more suited for this kind of training than others— simply put, not everyone can be a coder."

Code.7370 provides teacher's aides to assist struggling students. The TAs graduated from the program. They crosscheck with the struggling students to ensure that all the resources provided in the curriculum have been exhausted. If the TA is unable to solve the problem, Gripshover steps in. If all else fails, Gripshover does internet research through a website dedicated to coding problems.

"My first week in CDCR, I was told thanks more than I have in my life," Gripshover said. "I feel good about the work that I do."

TA John Levin said, "Jon makes sure that we are given the latest and most current materials. It is a self-paced class, where there are different tracts, which allows people to progress at their own pace.

"Jon allows me to share my experience to the class. This program lets me keep my skill set current. I have a marketable skill once I do get out of prison."

"The men here value what we have created," Gripshover said. "I feel safer here than the last high school where I worked. It's still prison, but I try to inject a little humor here and there during the day. The right people with the right humor take away from the daily tension of life in prison."



A student speaking with Jon Gripshover in his office



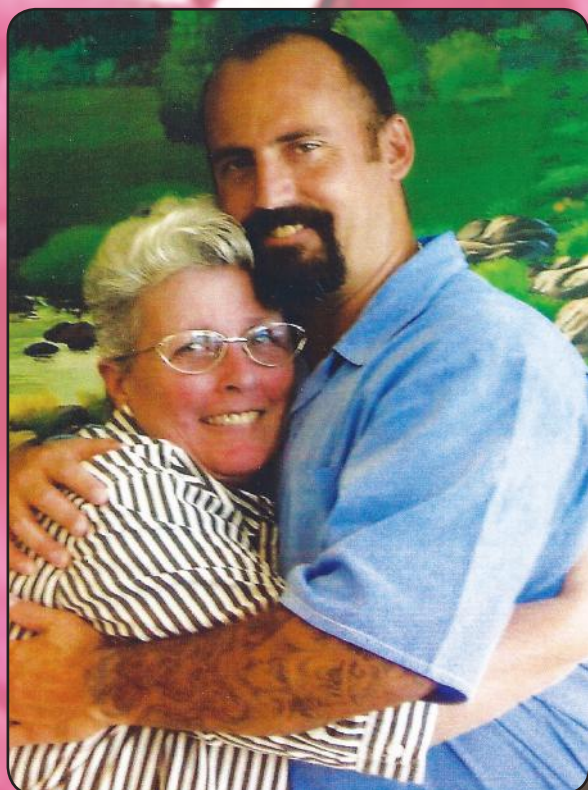
# Celebration of Our Mothers for th



*Ama, I just want to take this opportunity in this special day to express how lucky I am for having an amazing mother like you. Mother, I Love You So Much*



*Happy Mother's Day  
To the world's greatest mother, wife and lover Mrs. Veronica Lynn Coulson Sr. #1 From your E.T.R.L. Davie XO*



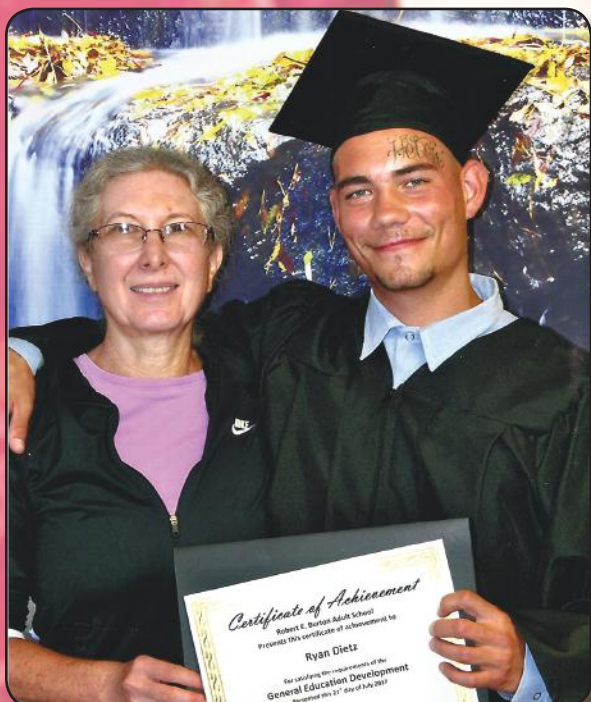
*Happy Mother's Day Mom from your little boy. With all the crazy choices I'd made in life and sure was blessed with one outcome Ma 1 to Go xo*



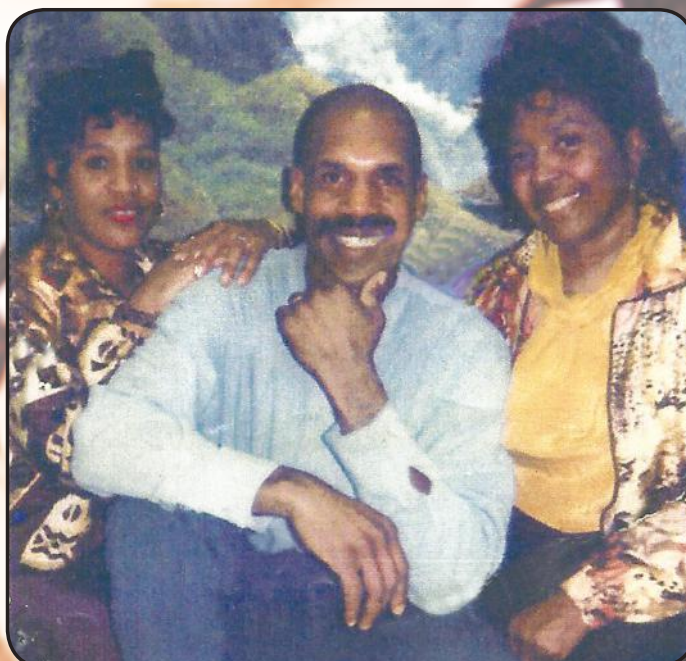
*Happy mother's day to two of the best mother's I know — Dee Dee and my mother Jackie. I love ya'll both and truly appreciate your 3,200 mile journey, clearing metal detectors, subjecting yourselves to prison rules just to spend a few hours visiting me.*



*Happy Mother's Day  
R.T.S.*



*My Mom means the absolute world to me. Through all of the pain I've caused over the years, she continues to push me to become the best person I can be.  
I Love You so much Mom!*



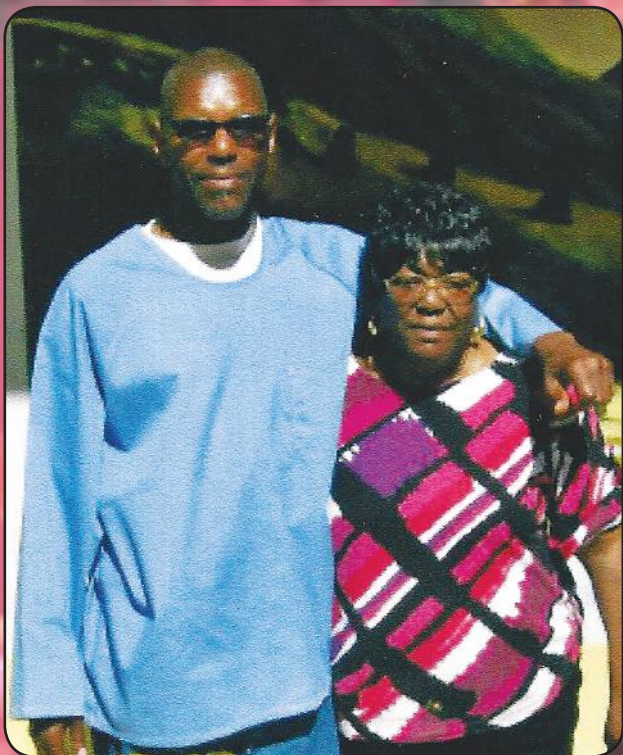
*God blessed me 57 years ago when He assigned me to you. Happy Mother's Day Mom!*



*Happy Mother's Day. Momma I Love You. I thank you and I'm so grateful to have a mother like you in my life. Teresa.-Vicent Turner Jr.*



# The Love and Support They Give Us



*Momma, it's not the goodbye that hurts, but the flashback's that follow  
RTP 12-28-14  
Your Son, Malcolm*



*My beautiful mother, Alyce I love and miss you. Happy Mother's Day, Everyday. Earlonne*



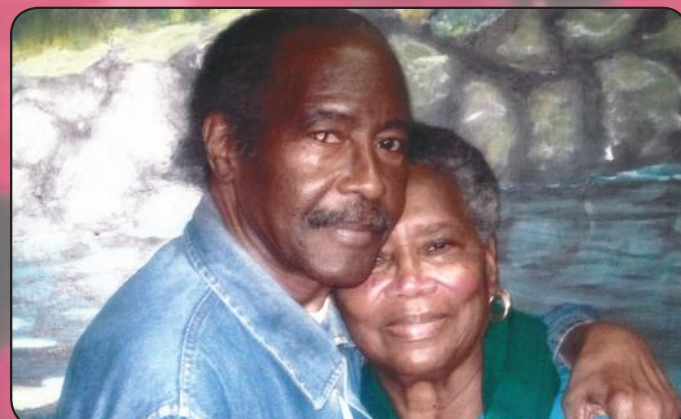
*Seeing you for the first time in 12 years was the best gift you gave me, and you being with me through the ups and downs in life, I am grateful to have you in my life. Happy Mother's Day. C.M.H.*



*er's Day Mom. Love & Miss  
P. Benson (Gumby)*



*Honoring a Mother is a privilege, despite my Mother's death she still lives within my heart. The unconditional love she showed me, gave me inspiration to change my ways. There is no greater love than a Mother's. Maleek and Mom Dorothy Lee R.I.P. June 3, 2007*



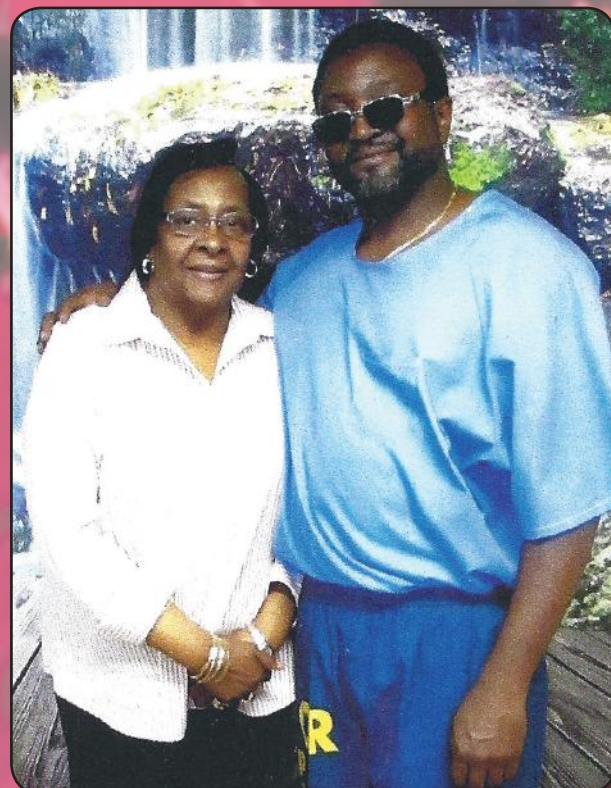
*Ruthie, it was your beauty that caught my attention when I first saw you. And I am still acting like a moth to a flame, when I'm with you. Happy Mother's Day. Just Me Jamal*



*Happy Mother's Day  
"Pastor Faye" Gone by never forgotten, may your legacy forever live. Son,  
Brother Newman*



*Mom, thank you for your long suffering and unconditional love. I Love You deeply.  
Your Son, Rob*



*My #1 Stunna, I Thank God for you, giving you the strength to hold me down through it all...Happy Mother's Day, Today and Everyday...  
Love U I Do ♥♥♥ Thomas*





Baxter is family to us, so we only feed him the best, and that's Blue Bison Dog food! Blue Bison Has...

- Organic Chicken
- Wild caught salmon
- Non-GMO whole wheat
- Grass fed beef
- Caviar

I'm not part of the family any more, so I get this...

- Pink slime
- Monsanto corn
- Soy Derivative
- Glued chicken parts
- Malto-Dextran
- Amonia
- Cancer causing additive

Cartoon

Cartoon by J. Chiu  
Illustration by Fred Tinsley



Snippets

Apples are members of the rose family. Apple trees take four to five years to produce their first fruit and contrary to popular belief, 80% of an apple’s soluble fiber comes from the pectin—the white, fleshy part of the apple—not the skin.

UV rays can penetrate and change the structure of skin cells.

Giant clams are the largest living bivalve mollusks but are incapable of locomotion and can usually live for 100 years or more.

Uranus is extremely cold and is often referred to as the “ice giant.” The temperature on Uranus is shockingly -318°F.

Rats may not have gallbladders or tonsils but all are born with belly buttons.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

By Jonathan Chiu / Edited by Jan Perry

Across

1. L.A. area college (Abbr.)

4. Draymond Green's org

7. Towing company

10. Craze

13. Laundry detergent

14. Precedes drum, bud or drop

15. Clothes

18. House pest

20. Andrew Garfield's \_\_\_\_\_ Ridge

21. Let's Make \_\_\_\_\_

22. US Supreme Court associate justice Fortas 1965–69

24. \_\_\_\_ up: Angry

25. Schreiber of *Ray Donovan*

26. Human acid (Abbrv.)

28. Tooth covering

31. Very (Fr.)

33. Elizabeth of *The Handmaid's Tale*

34. A string of prayer beads

35. \_\_\_\_\_ of Engagement

37. Sci-fi weapon

39. Janney of *Mom*

42. Locklear of *Melrose Place*

43. A type of dog

44. Category

45. Sharp nail

46. Energy

48. Cut

53. Organically grown vegetarian food, cooked without salt for Rastafarians.

51. Monetary unit of Norway

52. German speaking canton in Switzerland

55. Cool

58. Hand language (Abbrv.)

60. Outlaw James

61. Vietnam movie by Oliver Stone

64. Cut off

66. Midnight sprint

67. Depressed

68. Maude's husband

69. Minivan alt.

70. Before

71. Actress Adams or Ryan

72. Surgical rooms (Abbrv.)

Down

1. Flower part

2. Financial worry

3. Life choice

4. Astronaut Armstrong or playwright Simon

5. Night creature

6. Region

7. City in Georgia or Greece

8. Cardiologist's org

9. \_\_\_\_\_-rivals

10. Pawn show offering

11. Countess of Lovelace

12. Footwear store

16. Scrape by

19. Jodie Foster & Mel Gibson movie

23. \_\_\_\_\_ before everything

27. Ski resort in Colorado

29. Ship's calmer side

30. Young salmon

32. Member of a people of northwestern Sierra Leone

33. 33 Across' former show *Mad* \_\_\_\_

34. Army supply

36. Jennifer or George

38. Adult male deer

39. Factor of 10<sup>-18</sup>

40. Shakespeare's King

41. Tear

42. Female crab

44. Jokes

47. *King of the Hill* character

49. Typical response from a parent to a teenager

50. Dominate

54. Industrial city in N. England

56. Swallowed

57. 1832–83 French book illustrator Gustave

59. 68 Across' neighbor

60. Lewen of SQ's Prison University Project who met with President Obama in 2016

61. Inmate legal term

62. Basic monetary unit of Latvia

63. Belonging to us

65. Jackson or Hill

12

13

18

21

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43

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Answers from last issue's Brain Teasers

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Movies

1. PULP FICTION

2. WAYNE'S WORLD

3. TOY STORY

4. A FEW GOOD MEN

5. FIGHT CLUB

6. DICK TRACY

7. EYES WIDE SHUT

8. CAPE FEAR

Dogs

1. SPANIEL

2. TERRIER

3. BEAGLE

4. DOBERMAN

5. COLLIE

6. GREYHOUND

7. MALTESE

This month's Brain Teasers:

Place the digits 1 -9 into the empty cells so that the three rows across and three columns down form correct arithmetic statements. All calculations involve only positive whole numbers and should be performed from left to right and top to bottom, ignoring mathematical order of operations.

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Draw a single continuous line around the grid that passes through all the circles. The line must enter and leave each box in the centre of one of it's four sides. Black Circle: Turn left or right in the box, and the line must pass straight through the next and previous boxes. White Circles: Travel straight through the box, and the line must turn in the next and/or previous box.

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The letters F-A-D-E have been dropped from the words and phrases below, with all spaces removed. The letters F-A-D-E were extracted in left-to-right order, although not necessary consecutively. What are these words and phrases?

1. BIRDOPRAIS

5. ROOGRN

2. ETHERUSTR

6. UNNGAMS

3. OMICENMN

7. PUFD R

4. ALLOSUDN

8. AC

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

San Quentin News 1 Main Street

San Quentin, CA 94964



ESPAÑOL

Por Tare Beltranchuc, Jorge Heredia and Marco Villa Contributors

“Me siento muy decepcionado con el sistema de mi país,” comentó Joe Ibarra de 85 años de edad, al *San Quentin News*. Ibarra es originario de Harlingen, Texas, pero sus padres son Mexicanos. Ibarra señaló las dificultades que enfrentan los reclusos de edad avanzada en las prisiones de California. “Soy uno de los pintos más viejos en el sistema,” añadió. Ibarra, junto con Ramón Pineda y Antonio Mancilla, de 74 y 76 años de edad respectivamente, han purgado más de un siglo en prisión por homicidio en segundo grado. Una entrevista realizada

en San Quentin a presos de la tercera edad, reveló que algunas de las limitantes más comunes para que estos presos sean encontrados elegibles ante la Comisión de Libertad Condicional (BPH—Board of Parole Hearings) son: la falta de perspicacia acerca del crimen, el carecer de apoyo familiar como resultado del fallecimiento de la familia inmediata y enfermedades que hoy los aquejan. El BPH le ha negado su libertad condicional a Ibarra en 15 ocasiones por falta de entendimiento más profundo de su crimen. “Me piden que haga más programas, pero ya no se me pega nada, se me olvidan las cosas.” Como prueba de su gradual pérdida de memoria, Ibarra comentó con lágrimas en los ojos, “Después de 38 años en prisión a veces ni a mi familia reconozco. Mi hermano me visitó después de largo tiempo sin vernos y no lo

pude reconocer hasta que se terminó la visita. Se fue con el corazón roto.” Al igual que Ibarra, existen cientos de reclusos que debido a su avanzada edad les es imposible aprender o retener información educativa que incrementa sus posibilidades de obtener una fecha de salida. Otro de los factores que limita a este grupo de prisioneros a obtener su libertad condicional es la falta de apoyo familiar y comunitario requerido por el BPH. “Durante los primeros años hice todo lo que estaba a mi alcance para obtener mi libertad, mientras contaba con el apoyo de mi familia. Sin embargo, eso no fue posible y con el paso de los años empecé a desilusionarme,” dijo Pineda. En el año 2017, el BPH le negó 5 años. “Esta última vez me pidieron cartas de apoyo de mi familia. Me

siento atorado en este lugar. Me es imposible conseguir el apoyo que me piden. Mi familia ya estaba avanzada en edad cuando torcí y ya han fallecido. Me siento frustrado porque de no cumplir prácticamente nunca podré salir de este lugar. Me piden algo que nunca podre darles,” comentó con visible frustración Pineda, originario de Sinaloa, México, y quien lleva 38 años en prisión. Para empeorar su situación, la BPH requiere a presos como Pineda purgando una sentencia de vida comprobar por escrito un lugar de residencia (conocido en EE.UU como casa de transición) en su país de origen. Desafortunadamente, el no contar con alguna carta de éstas instituciones limitan aún más sus posibilidades de algún día obtener su libertad condicional. “Solicite una carta de aceptación a varias casas de transición y nunca recibí una respuesta,” enfaticó Pineda. Además, con el paso de los años la salud física de Pineda se ha ido deteriorando. “Pienso que sería muy difícil pagar por mis necesidades médicas, como mi insulina y medicamento para mis

reumas”. Pineda también mencionó, “hay días en que me pongo a reflexionar y pienso que sería mejor no salir de este lugar. Ahora solo saldría a dar lástima y a sufrir, aquí por lo menos me dan atención médica”. Por su parte, Mancilla lleva 33 años en la prisión y le han negado siete veces la libertad condicional. A diferencia de Pineda, Mancilla cuenta con el apoyo familiar. En su pueblo natal, Colima, México, trabajo como chofer de camiones de carga y tractorista. Sin embargo, no tiene un documento que avale estas habilidades. Hoy “Me piden que les lleve una vocacional, pero como no tengo mi GED no puedo entrar a los talleres vocacionales. Se me hace difícil obtener mi GED por mis 76 años de edad, el idioma inglés y mi estado de salud física. Me enferme de cáncer en el estómago y deje de asistir a la escuela. Todavía, estoy bajo tratamiento.” Después de ser diagnosticado con cáncer estomacal, Mancilla explicó, “se me ha vuelto muy difícil y muy cansado estar en la tabla y hablar de mi crimen. Me siento muy mal, el

estrés emocional me debilita físicamente. Esta es una de las razones por las cuales he renunciado al derecho de estar presente durante mis últimas tres audiencias.” Mancilla anhela poder salir de la prisión, reunirse con su familia, y volver a trabajar como chofer y tractorista. Sin embargo, su enfermedad le impide asistir a clases para obtener su GED y poder ser aceptado en alguna vocacional. Por su parte, Pineda comentó, “Cuando tenía a la familia viva me interesaba salir y hacia lo que me pedían. Tenía la ilusión de ver a mis padres y cuidarlos. Hoy ya perdí la esperanza de salir libre.” Ibarra tristemente externó, “cuando me encontraron elegible mi familia y amigos me compraron ropa y mucha comida para hacerme una fiesta. Yo regale todas mis pertenencias pensando que ya me iban a soltar. Pero el Gobernador me quitó la fecha de salida.” Frustrado, Ibarra añadió, “Fue como si me hubieran roto una promesa. Como si se me hubiera acabado el mundo. Como un perro cuando le quitan el hueso.”

# Los Outsiders comienzan la temporada de soccer con el pie derecho



José Meléndez elevándose en un intento desesperado para anotar un gol

Por Rahsaan Thomas Staff Writer

Los Outsiders, equipo visitante de fútbol soccer, vencieron al equipo de San Quentin por 5-3 en el primer juego de la temporada. “Extrañe durante el invierno al equipo de fútbol soccer de San Quentin”, comentó Dario Abramskiehn, del equipo visitante. “Son un grupo especial de personas.” Miguel Martínez, jugador del equipo de San Quentin, añadió, “esto es algo especial para todos nosotros. Nos encanta reunirnos para jugar fútbol.” Los miembros de la comunidad que vienen a jugar los diferentes deportes a San Quentin dejan de venir de noviembre a marzo. El juego que se llevó a cabo el 24 de marzo dió comienzo a la nueva temporada. El equipo de San Quentin gano la mayor parte de los juegos del año pasado, hasta que pidieron un mejor nivel de competencia. Andrew Crawford, entrenador y patrocinador, respondió a la petición y el equipo de casa fue derrotado en los últimos juegos. Este año, Los Outsiders iniciaron la competencia de la misma manera en que concluyeron la anterior. Entre sus 11 jugadores se encontraba un ex-jugador profesional. Aiden Leonard, quien jugó para Brown University hasta el 2014. Después formo parte de un equipo profesional en Costa

Rica. También contaban con el defensa Alex Lentz, quien jugo para U-Mass Anherst. “Es motivador competir con jugadores de calidad”, Lam Le, de San Quentin, comentó. “Ahora estamos jugando mejor.” San Quentin integró su equipo, de 11 miembros, utilizando jugadores de los dos equipos de la prisión (OG’s y Youngsters). En el minuto 7, Los Outsiders abrieron el marcador con un golazo de Abramskiehn, uno de sus jugadores estelares. Posteriormente, Lentz impidió que el equipo local empatara el marcador, ya que desvió el balón cuando su portero ya estaba vencido. El primer gol del equipo de casa lleo al minuto 21 por medio de un tiro penal. Jesús “Morelia” López venció al portero con un cañonazo, empatando el marcador a 1-1. Al minuto 32, Crawford envió un centro diagonal y el balón lleo a los pies de Leonard, quien aprovecho la asistencia para anotar el segundo gol del equipo visitante, poniendo el marcador 2-1. Al minuto 47, Carlos Ramírez, del equipo de San Quentin, empató el marcador 2-2. Cinco minutos después, el equipo local le dio la vuelta al marcador 3-2, con un gol de Miguel Gutiérrez. Los Outsiders tomaron su segundo aire y respondieron con tres anotaciones contundentes.

Al minuto 70, Rohit Ramchandani empató el marcador 3-3 al vencer al portero Jesús Pérez. Ramchandani fue criticado el año pasado por Ceasar McDowell, el distractor oficial de San Quentin. Al minuto 73, Jordi Ortiz le dio un pase a Leonard, quien solo empujó el balón dentro de la portería, convirtiendo el marcador a 4-3. Abramskiehn aumentó el marcador a 5-3 para Los Outsiders, siendo este el último gol del partido. Pérez se lanzó para detener el cañonazo, pero no fue suficiente. Al término del partido, ambos equipos formaron un círculo a la mitad del campo y expresaron lo que la visita de Los Outsiders significaba para los jugadores de San Quentin. “Al llegar ustedes es como si trajeran el mundo hacia nosotros”, Juan “Carlos” Meza comentó. “Nos hacen sentir relevantes. Todo hombre aquí se ha comprometido a ser un buen ciudadano y ustedes nos están ayudando con eso.” Leonard, quien vino a jugar a San Quentin por primera vez, dijo, “afuera solo escuchábamos de ustedes. Cada uno de ustedes se está esforzando al máximo. Es inspirador. Me mantiene humilde y con gratitud para lo que tenemos allá afuera.” —Traducción por Tare Beltranchuc y Marco Villa

By Tare Beltranchuc, Jorge Heredia and Marco Villa Contributors

“I feel very disappointed with the system in my country,” said inmate Joe Ibarra in an interview with *San Quentin News*. Ibarra is originally from Harlingen, Texas, but his parents are Mexican. 85-year-old Ibarra is in unique position to understand the difficulties that elderly inmates experience in the system. “I’m one of the oldest pintos [OGs] in the California system,” he said. Fellow inmates Pineda and Antonio Macilla, who are 74 and 76 years old respectively—have cumulatively served more than a century in prison for second-degree homicide. In an interview conducted in San Quentin, the three elderly prisoners revealed some of the most common limitations elderly inmates face in achieving eligibility for parole: a lack of insight, lack of surviving family, and chronic illnesses. Ibarra says the parole board (BPH) has denied him 15 times for lacking a deeper understanding of his crime. “They ask me to do more programs but nothing sticks with me anymore, I forget things.” As proof of his gradual memory loss Ibarra commented, with tears in his eyes, “After 38 years in prison, I sometimes can’t even recognize my family. My brother visited me after a long time and I could not recognize him until the visit was over. He left with a broken heart.” There are hundreds of inmates like Ibarra, who due to their advanced age are unable to learn or retain educational information that increases their chances of getting an exit date. A lack of the family and community support that is required by the BPH is an-

other factor that limits this group of prisoners’ ability to obtain conditional release. “During the first years I did everything in my power to obtain my freedom while I had the support of my family. However, that was not possible and over the years I began to become disappointed,” said Pineda. In 2017, he says, the BPH denied him 5 years. “This last time they asked for letters of support from my family. I feel stuck in this place. It is impossible for me to get the support they ask me for. My family was already advanced in age when I entered and have now passed away. I feel frustrated because if I do not comply, I will never be able to leave this place. They ask me for something I can never give them,” Pineda, originally from Sinaloa, Mexico, who has been in prison for 38 years, commented with visible frustration. The BPH requires lifers like Pineda to verify in writing a ‘place of residence’ (known in the US as a transition house) in their country of origin. Without a letter from one of these institutions, elderly inmates are further limited in their chances of someday obtaining conditional release. “I requested a letter of acceptance to several transition houses and I never received a response,” Pineda emphasized. Over the years Pineda’s physical health has deteriorated. “I think it would be very difficult to pay for my own medical needs like my insulin and medicine for my rheumatism.” Pineda said regarding future release. “There are days when I start thinking and I think it would be better not to leave this place. Now I would just go out and give pity and suffer, here at least they give me medical attention.” Mancilla, who has been in prison for 33 years, says he’s been denied conditional release seven times. Unlike

Pineda, Mancilla has family support. In his hometown of Colima, México, he worked as a cargo trucks and tractor driver. He does not, however, have documentation that verifies these skills. Now, he says, “[The parole board] asks me to take a vocational [course], but since I do not have my GED I can not enter the vocational workshops. It is difficult for me to obtain my GED at 76 years old, because of my lack of English and my state of physical health. I got sick with cancer in my stomach and stopped attending school. I’m still undergoing treatment.” Since being diagnosed with stomach cancer, Mancilla explained, “It has become very difficult and very tiring to face the board and talk about my crime. I feel very bad, emotional stress weakens me physically. That’s one of the reasons why I have waived the right to be present during my last three hearings.” Mancilla yearns to be able to leave the prison, reunite with his family and return to work as a truck and tractor driver. However, his illness prevents him from attending classes to get his GED and be accepted in a vocational program. “When I had living family, I was interested in going out and doing what they asked me to do,” Pineda said. “I had the dream of seeing my parents and taking care of them. Today, I’ve lost hope of being free.” Ibarra sadly expressed, “when they found me eligible for parole, my family and friends bought me clothes and lots of food to throw me a party. I gave away all my belongings thinking that they were going to let me go. But the Governor took away my departure date, “In this instance, Ibarra said, “I felt like a promise had been broken. As if the world ended. Like a dog when you take away his bone.”

## Elderly prisoners face hardships when going before the board



# Solitary Watch offers inmates photographs beyond a gray wall

By Achilles Williams  
Journalism Guild Writer

The day he learned his solitary confinement would be extended, 17-year-old Benjamin Van Zandt killed himself in a New York prison. To bring awareness and bridge the gap between the public and those in isolation, an advocacy group held an art exhibit in a Unitarian church in New York, showcasing photographs requested by and produced for prisoners in segregation, reported *Newsday*.

“Viewers are able to see not what incarcerated people see, but what they envision—the vivid and varied thoughts, objects, images that all minds produce, independently of senses and circumstances,”

said Jean Casella, co-director of Solitary Watch, the national advocacy group sponsoring the event.

There are at least 80,000 people held in solitary confinement on any given day in U.S. prisons and jails, some for months, years, or even decades, according to Solitary Watch.

“When we came across this figure... I thought it was a typo... how could this be going on and nobody knows about it, nobody’s talking about it?” Casella said, in an interview with *San Quentin News*. She also pointed out that: “They’re not sent there (to solitary) by a judge and jury, they’re sent there by prison staff because they smoked a cigarette or mouthed off to a guard or at

worst were fighting.

According to Casella, “Solitary was invented in 1829 by Quakers who actually thought they were doing something good, because the punishment of the time was like whipping or the stocks... they quickly discovered that it didn’t cause people to be reformed at all, it drove them crazy.”

The art exhibit was inspired by the Photo Requests from Solitary (PRFS), a project run by Solitary Watch. This project takes the written ideas of the prisoners and pairs them with distinguished photographers who fulfilled the images.

For example: “I would like to have a painting of the outdoors, maybe a wooded scene, with maybe a doe and

twin fawns,” requested an inmate in solitary confinement named Hershel, reported *Newsday*.

Capturing these images as photographs, which can then be sent back to the people who conceived them, completes an artistic collaboration that acknowledges the shared creativity and humanity of individuals on both sides of the prison walls, notes the Solitary Watch website.

Viewing the photos at the exhibit, Van Zandt’s parents told *Newsday* their son would have liked one of a white wolf in a snowy nighttime landscape.

Prisoners in New York, Illinois and California have requested photographs ranging from general New York City scenes to hyper-specific im-

ages, like one of an African-American female with hazel eyes wearing leather pants posing next to a powder-blue Benz, reported *Newsday*.

Casella said they have done 40 to 50 photo requests for California prisoners, but due to working without a budget they are not taking more requests from California prisons. They are now taking requests only from New Jersey and Pennsylvania prisons.

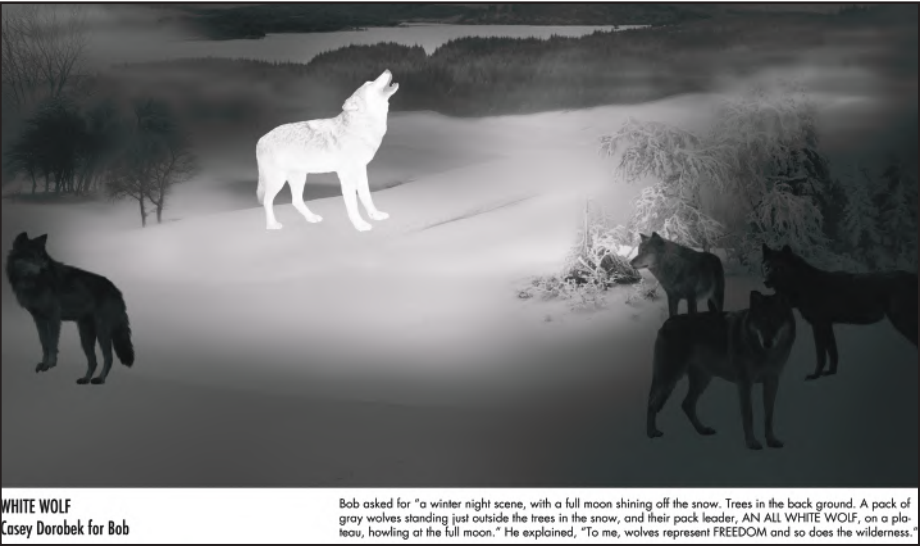
“For the first time, we’re going to be crowd-sourcing the fulfillment of the requests,” Casella said. Visitors to future art exhibits can get copies of the requests and reprints of the photos. The prisoners’ requests will also be posted online on the new website [www.photorequests-fromsolitary.org](http://www.photorequests-fromsolitary.org) and visitors

to the website can opt to submit photos to fulfill the written requests

The next photo exhibit will be at the Eastern State Penitentiary in May. The Philadelphia prison closed in 1971 and is now an historical and exhibition site. This exhibit will be held in two former solitary cells and will run for a year, said Casella.

Currently Van Zandt’s parents are advocating for the New York State Legislature to pass the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement, or HALT Solitary Confinement Act, according to *Newsday*. The bill would limit solitary confinement to no more than 15 days.

Andrew Beale,  
UC Berkeley student,  
contributed to this story.



**WHITE WOLF**  
Cassey Dorobek for Bob

Bob asked for “a winter night scene, with a full moon shining off the snow. Trees in the back ground. A pack of gray wolves standing just outside the trees in the snow, and their pack leader, AN ALL WHITE WOLF, on a plateau, howling at the full moon.” He explained, “To me, wolves represent FREEDOM and so does the wilderness.”



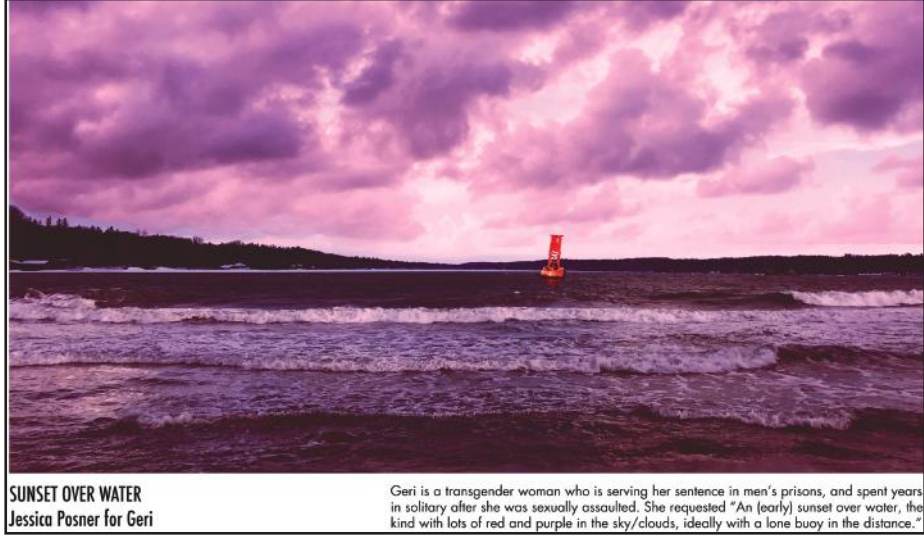
**AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY TREE**  
Keisha Scarville for Keith

Keith requested an image that would represent a family tree, with multiple generations celebrating various life events. He wanted the photo “to show/express the unity and growth of family when times are good and bad. I miss my family, being there for them.”



**MANHATTAN SKYLINE**  
Frank Jump for David

Many people who have been in prison for a long time request photos that will stir old memories. David, who has served nearly 20 years, asked “to see the water, the FDR, all tall buildings, people, cars etc. It reminds me of when I was out. I use to take long walks around the city.”



**SUNSET OVER WATER**  
Jessica Posner for Geri

Geri is a transgender woman who is serving her sentence in men’s prisons, and spent years in solitary after she was sexually assaulted. She requested “An [early] sunset over water, the kind with lots of red and purple in the sky/clouds, ideally with a lone buoy in the distance.”

## Implementation of nature videos to improve solitary behavior

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.  
Journalism Guild Writer

The behavior and well-being of inmates in solitary confinement can be improved by showing them nature videos, according to a study published in 2017 by *Frontiers in Ecology and Environment*.

In the study, inmates in solitary confinement were shown nature videos consisting of images of oceans, forests,

estuaries, rivers, rain and deserts for 45 minutes a day up to five times a week. The room was nicknamed the “Blue Room” due to the blue glow projection of the videos, according to an article by Natalie Delgadillo on governing.com. The study showed a 26 percent reduction in disciplinary referrals, according to the article.

“The idea that [nature videos] would be helpful makes

real sense to me,” said Stuart Grassian, a psychiatrist who has conducted research in the effects of solitary confinement.

“In any situation of restricted environmental stimulation, any enhancement becomes important and helpful, if it involves the anchoring of attention,” he continued.

The study was carried out at Snake River Correctional Institution in Oregon, which

has now created a nature channel for female inmates’ private televisions, according to Chad Naugle, sustainability program manager at the Oregon Department of Corrections.

“We’re trying to find something for the female inmates because they have higher rates of self-harm,” said Naugle. “Anything we can do to eliminate those costs and staff overtime is sustainable

for the institution, and it’s also a safety thing.”

“I am [also] hoping for an increased sense of well-being generally,” he added.

The Oregon prison has created a “crisis unit” cell that acts as a blue room.

This type of research was first conducted in 1984 by Roger Ulrich, who showed that patients healing from surgery needed less pain medication when they had a window to nature.

Most inmates in solitary confinement spend up to 23 hours a day isolated from other humans. Solitary confinement can lead to violent outbursts, depression, anxiety and hopelessness, according to the article.

There are varying opinions as to the effectiveness of this study.

“I haven’t read the study, and I don’t want to comment endorsing it or not, but I’m very skeptical about whether something so modest would be effective at overcoming negative psychological effects that are so serious,” said Craig Haney, psychology professor at University of California Santa Cruz.

“Whether peoples’ mood

improve is a separate question from [that] of whether they’re suffering from how they’re being treated. The real question ought to be why people are being confined in an environment where they have no opportunity to be in real nature.”

State prison systems are limiting solitary confinement as a form of punishment, according to the article.

For example, Colorado inmates with mental health issues are not placed into solitary confinement, and Pennsylvania and Massachusetts have limited isolation as a form of punishment, according to the article.

Nalini Nadkarni and Tierney Thys conducted the study at the Snake River Correctional Institution.

“Both Nalini and I, our motto is put nature where it is not,” said Thys, a research associate at Cal Academy of Sciences and co-author of the study.

“My background is as a filmmaker [for *National Geographic*] and a marine biologist. I’ve seen that time in nature has a therapeutic aspect that is underappreciated,” Thys said.

## Pennsylvania inmate awarded \$325,000 for 37 years in confinement settlement

By Michelangelo Ramsey  
Journalism Guild Writer

A Pennsylvania inmate who spent 37 years in solitary confinement has been awarded \$325,000 in a settlement, according to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Arthur Johnson of Philadelphia, who spent more than half his life in solitary confinement, filed a lawsuit claiming that his 37 years spent alone in a small cell amounted to cruel and unusual punishment and

violated his right to due process.

Johnson was released back into the general prison over a year ago, after a U.S. district court judge ordered his reintegration in late 2016. Johnson is housed in State Correctional Institution Greene.

“It has been a big adjustment,” said Bret Grote, Johnson’s attorney. “Being surrounded by so many people in the yard, in the cafeteria.

“Issues like wanting to

self-isolate, dealing with anxiety and despair, they remain with everybody I’ve known who’ve been in 20 or 30 years,” Grote continued.

Johnson had no meaningful physical contact with another person since 1979. He was not allowed any contact visits and spent at least 23 hours a day locked up in his cell, according to the article.

Johnson, who is serving a life sentence for a gang-related murder, had several

attempted escapes in the 1970s and 1980s. This led to him being placed in solitary confinement. Johnson has remained free of any serious infraction since 1987. In court documents he has been described as a “model inmate” by a deputy superintendent.

As part of the settlement, the state agreed to move Johnson to an institution closer to his family and not to return him to solitary confinement for his past offenses.



# French journalist films journey of San Quentin Death Row inmate

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.  
Journalism Guild Writer

Keith Zon Doolin is on death row despite evidence of his innocence, according to Agnes Buthion, a French journalist who has directed a documentary called “20 Years on Death Row.” Interviewed by *The Fresno Bee*, Buthion said that she hoped to highlight Doolin’s innocence.

In 1996, Doolin was convicted of a crime spree

shooting six sex workers in Central California. The result of his conviction was a sentence of death. Doolin is housed in East Block at San Quentin death row.

During her filming Buthion interviewed Doolin and visited the crime scenes. She also interviewed other people involved with the trial.

“I can’t say and don’t know if Keith Zon Doolin is guilty or innocent,” Buthion told *Bee* reporter Pablo Lopez. “But, I am certain that

his trial lawyer failed him.” Her conclusion was that he did not get a fair trial.

Doolin’s trial attorney, Rudy Petilla of Fresno, resigned from the State Bar of California in 2004, possibly due to allegations of misconduct from another case. In December 2013, Petilla died at age 73.

Doolin had no previous criminal record and was working as a truck driver at the time of the crimes.

During an on-camera in-

terview, David Mugridge, a Fresno attorney, provided a sworn declaration that he possessed evidence that could exonerate Doolin. The evidence was from his former client, Josefina Sonia Saldana.

This Saldana evidence is crucial in the eyes of Doolin’s attorneys. She had testified under the name Josefina Sonya Hernandez during Doolin’s trial, swearing that she heard gunshots, dogs barking and a loud voice that

said, “Oh my God, oh my God.” But, she never called the police, according to the article.

Saldana’s testimony pertained to the death of Peggy Tucker, who was killed Sept. 19, 1995, behind Saldana’s home. Doolin was convicted of killing Tucker and Inez Espinosa, and seriously wounding three other women.

unless compelled by a court.

The California Supreme Court upheld Doolin’s death sentence in 2009, citing the eye-witness testimony of the surviving victims and ballistic evidence from Doolin’s personal handgun.

In 2016, Doolin’s death-penalty lawyers, Robert R. Bryan and Pamela Sayasane of San Francisco, petitioned the California Supreme Court for release of Saldana’s testimony. The court has yet to rule on the petition.

Buthion spent two months in Fresno last year shooting her documentary. The Fresno Police department and prosecutor were invited to participate in the documentary but declined to participate.

Buthion told *The Fresno Bee* that her investigation raised doubts about his conviction, and she thinks Doolin may not have committed all the crimes.

According to Buthion, the French are fascinated with real-life American crime stories. Her documentary on the Doolin case is set to air in four 50-minute segments on *French TV*.

## States seeking lethal injection cocktails from the black market

By John Lam  
Journalism Guild Writer

Some states have turned to the black market to obtain scarce lethal injection drugs that have caused botched executions, according to *Reason.com*.

According to the report by C.J. Ciaramella, investigative journalists found that, “these states have turned to untraceable cash transactions, unregulated pharmacies, and overseas scammers to buy drugs to fill the veins of condemned inmates.”

Some experimental combinations have even resulted in botched executions.

Further complicating the matter, Virginia and 14 other states have passed secrecy laws that may hide the identities of pharmacies that provide death penalty drugs.

“Officials argue such secrecy keeps the flow of necessary drugs unimpeded—but it also leaves death row inmates, their lawyers, the press, and the public in the dark about how governments are wielding the gravest of their powers,” Ciaramella reported.

Some other findings:

- In an attempt to avoid leaving a paper trail, an Oklahoma state

official drove across state lines and purchased execution drugs from a pharmacy using petty cash.

- Despite a U.S. Food and Drug Administration ban on importing sodium thiopental, the active ingredient in executions, three states paid an India company, Harris Pharma, run by a man with no pharmaceutical background, to send the drugs to them.
- Nebraska ordered \$54,000 worth of the drug from Harris—enough to perform

300 executions. The FDA confiscated the shipment, leaving Nebraskan taxpayers on the hook.

- Due to the difficulty of obtaining Midazolam and sodium thiopental. Nebraska is looking into using a never-before-tried mix of four drugs: diazepam (Valium), potassium chloride, cisatracurium besylate (a paralytic, banned for animal euthanasia) and fentanyl citrate, the super-strong opiate responsible for a wave of overdoses in the U.S.

## San Francisco offers safe injection sites

By Rahsaan Thomas  
Staff Writer

If you can’t stop using heroin, San Francisco is willing to violate state and federal law so you can do it safely. In July, the city plans to open two sites that will allow shooting up under secure conditions.

“I’m fully supportive of the city moving forward, just like we did with needle exchange before it was technically legal,” state Sen. Scott Wiener (D) said in a *San Francisco Chronicle* column. “We need to do everything in our power to keep people healthy, to get people off the streets so they’re injecting in a safe space indoors instead of on people’s doorsteps or in public parks and to make sure we can intervene quickly if they overdose.”

Intravenous drug use is against both state and federal law, but Wiener has a bill that, if passed into law, would protect anyone associ-

ated with safe injection sites from facing state charges. The Assembly passed the bill last year, but it is two votes short in the Senate and would still need Gov. Jerry Brown’s approval.

*“We consider the use of clean needles as a public health issue”*

Still, San Francisco isn’t waiting on the state law or worrying about Pres.Donald Trump targeting them.

“I’m more worried about people dying in our streets,” Barbara Garcia, director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, said in the *Chronicle* article.

An estimated 22,000 drug users openly shoot up in public areas, often scat-

tering dirty needles on San Francisco sidewalks. Public Health officials expect 85 percent of San Francisco’s intravenous drug users to use the safe sites, keeping dirty needles off the streets and saving the city \$3.5 million a year in medical costs. Medical and social services will also be available at the safe sites.

The concept isn’t new. Canada, Australia and Europe provide safe injection sites. Also, cities like Seattle, Baltimore and Philadelphia are considering opening their own.

The public supports safe injection sites. A survey conducted in January by David Binder Research surveyed 500 registered city voters in English and Cantonese. They found that 67 percent of respondents back the idea while 27 percent opposed.

At San Quentin State Prison, state certified drug counselors, who once used drugs, support safe injection sites.

“Ideally we opt for total

sobriety; however, we recognize that harm reduction is beneficial in the initial stages of recovery,” said Martin Walters, 50, incarcerated. He’s a California Association for Drug/Alcohol Educators (CAADE) counselor.

“We consider the use of clean needles as a public health issue, like preventing AIDS, rather than addressing addiction. But, it’s a great start.”

Quinton Walker, 60, agrees. In the past he used heroin and nobody could tell him anything or do anything to get him to quit until he had a realization that the drug was going to kill him. Thereafter, he sought help and beat his addiction. Now he’s a CAADE counselor.

“I don’t think people are going to start using drugs because the needles are free,” Walker said. “I think the sites will keep people alive until they reach the point in their lives where they find hope and are ready to seek help quitting.”

## New containment system to combat illegal prison cellphones

By Kevin D. Sawyer  
Associate Editor

The use of contraband cellphones by inmates in prison shows an increase in crime and violence across the country, according to a press release in *Digital Journal*.

Because of the alleged increase in crime, Securus Technologies is selling its Wireless Containment Solution (WCS) for operation inside of jails and prisons around the nation, the *Journal* reported. The private cellphone network operates inside jails and prisons to

specifically stop unauthorized communication from contraband cellphones.

“This controlled network denies all unauthorized cellphones access to any commercial mobile network, giving corrections agencies’ administration and security staff control over potential crimes and violence conducted by, and sometimes on, their inmates and others,” it was reported.

According to the *Journal*, the WCS Securus system has capabilities unmatched throughout the nation that were not thought possible.

“It is the only available so-

lution that is greatly enhancing the safety of correctional officers and the public by effectively controlling and managing contraband cellphones used illegally by inmates,” the *Journal* reported.

Last year and earlier this year, Securus announced it was investing over \$40 million in its WCS system to “eradicate contraband cellphones from the nation’s correctional facilities.” It was reported that it uses state-of-the-art technology and software-defined radio technology that strongly controls radio frequency distribution.

“Securus and its valued

partner Vanu, Inc. deployed its Spectrum shield cellular suppression technology,” the *Journal* reported.

“Vanu has been committed to making a difference in developing a solution to prevent and to manage illicit cellphone use in correctional facilities,” said Andrew Beard, Vanu’s CEO.

Securus Technology is a Texas-based company that serves more than 3,500 correctional facilities and law enforcement agencies. More than 1.2 million inmates in the United States use the Securus inmate-calling phone service.

### ATTENTION ALL INMATES: ALL DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT (DME) NEEDS A 7536/SUPPLY RECEIPT

- Ostomy supplies
- Protective Helmets
- Disability Vest
- Hearing aid
- Wrist Support Brace
- Crutches
- Walkers
- Wheelchair
- Noninvasive Airway Assistive Devices
- Incontinence Supplies
- Urologic Supplies
- Foot Orthoses
- Knee Braces
- Spinal Orthoses
- Diabetic Supplies/Monitors

## Jamaica uses Restorative Justice to fight crime

By Timothy Hicks  
Journalism Guild Writer

Jamaica’s Justice Minister Delroy Chuck has found alternative ways to fight crime by using restorative justice practices, according to the *Jamaica Observer*.

“Getting wrongdoers to accept responsibility is the essence of restorative justice, which is why I am so committed to having restorative justice spread in every nook and cranny...every schoolroom, every church and every inner-city community across Jamaica,” Chuck said.

Chuck’s initiative will focus on youth violence, urban street gangs and social media, according to the article.

Training for school administrators and 8,000 Justices of the Peace in the practice of restorative justice and mediation will begin over the next two years, the article states. Each school is expected to have at least three trained

practitioners, and the judiciary would be educated about restorative justice and child diversion processes.

Chuck’s comments and plans came out of the Ninth International Restorative Justice Conference in New Kingston. The theme of the conference was “A Restorative Approach to Gang Violence.” The event was held to mark Restorative Justice Week, which took place in early February.

First responders, community leaders and other support groups will also undergo training in the restorative justice process this year.

To reduce crime and violence, Chuck said, the government is determined to use all measures necessary.

“People will know about it and know how they can resolve disputes and (make sure) that stability, peace and calm can be created and (maintained) across Jamaica,” Chuck said.



# By day, she interviews scientists, by night, a dystopian novelist

## A 2018 Elizabeth George Grant for her novel-in-progress, *The Clearest Way into the Universe*

**By Juan Haines**  
**Senior Editor**

Mackenzie Smith spends her days at a university interviewing scientists. Her nights are devoted to revising her dystopian novel. It's about two sisters, on opposite coasts, trying to reunite. She spent Feb. 28 in a non-fictional place—San Quentin State Prison. There, she shared stories with inmates in Zoe Mullery's creative writing workshop. "The writers are engaged, talented and committed to

their writing—far more than I've experienced," Smith said. They read the short story *Yours* by Mary Robinson. In *Yours*, the young Allison, 35, is married to 78-year-old Clark. The story takes place as the couple sits outside their home cutting up jack-o-lanterns for Halloween. Lawrence Pela noticed that Allison wore a wig but didn't expect that she was dying. Richie Morris thought the characters complemented each other.

"Their age wasn't an issue," Morris said. "They were both coming to the end of their lives." James Metters said he liked the symbolism that the jack-o-lanterns represented—"with all the different facial expressions." No wasted words is what struck Nelson Butler. "There was little need for back story," Butler said. "I was able to use my imagination to fill in the rest of the story and still get what she wanted readers to get." Next, they read *Dinosaur*

by Bruce Holland Rogers. It's a man's whole life told in three paragraphs. The story begins from a boy's perspective, progresses into adulthood and, as his health declines, regresses back to childhood. Kevin D. Sawyer spoke about the irony in the story. "In the end, he became a dinosaur," Sawyer said. "Something that's extinct." Smith asked the men to pay attention to time and images in the stories. The class created a list of activities that two people can do. Their list included Frisbee, basketball, Scrabble, seesaw, playing the electric guitar, making love, card games, bank robbery, patrol and tango. Then, they named images: Campbell's tomato soup, G-Shock watches, Colgate Two-in-One Toothpaste, glasses, a rippling lake, neon signs, a dead mouse, a greenhouse, ants, a crown, an electric

chair and a cross. Smith asked the men to choose some of the activities and images to make a story. When the men read their stories, every one of the activities and images appeared. Smith's stories and nonfiction have appeared in *ZYZZYVA*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and *TriQuarterly Online*, among other journals. She is the recipient of a 2018 Elizabeth George Grant for her novel-in-progress, *The Clearest Way into the Universe*. Smith holds degrees in creative writing from Carnegie Mellon University and Oregon State University. She has taught writing workshops in Belize, India, Montenegro, and Timor-



Courtesy of Mackenzie Smith  
Mackenzie Smith

Leste and has also taught incarcerated women in Oregon. A former Fulbright Fellow and Luce Scholar, she is currently a science writer for University of California Berkeley's College of Natural Resources.

- 25% Drop in State prison incarceration
- 10% Drop Statewide average in county jail populations
- 22% Drop in Felony findings

according to "SAFE AND SOUND: ..." by Californians For Safety and Justice Nov. 2017



### NEWSBRIEFS

**1. Kentucky** – A new study shows that three out of every five inmates in the state have children. That adds up to approximately 32,700 kids, according to a Kentucky Youth Advocates report, "Minimizing the Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children." Kentucky has the second-highest rate in the nation of children who have been separated from their parents due to incarceration, the report states. The report recommends releasing low-level offenders prior to trial so parents can work and care for their children, when it is safe to do so; supporting family ties during incarceration; and minimizing financial barriers against formerly incarcerated parents so that they could adequately provide for their families.

**2. Colorado** – A federal appeals court ruled that nine immigrant detainees could represent a class of about 62,000 others detained at a government-contracted GEO Group, Inc. facility in Aurora for the past 10 years, *National Public Radio* reports. The lawsuit claims that they are forced to work for no pay, "under the threat of solitary confinement as punishment for any refusal to work." The lawsuit also claims that the "Voluntary Work Program"—where detainees earn \$1 a day as painters, food servers, barbers, laundry workers and bathroom cleaners—violates the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which prohibits forced labor and a state law forbidding "unjust enrichment."

**3. Alabama** – "For over a year, Alabama's Department of Corrections has ignored the urgent need to protect people

with serious mental illness from placement in solitary confinement," said Maria Morris, senior supervising attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The state has at least 152 prisoners with a "serious mental illness" in solitary confinement, which is in violation of a judge's directive, given last summer, to move seriously mentally ill people out of segregation "as soon as possible," SPLC reports. The violation was revealed during the first day of a trial to address how the DOC will rectify its use of solitary confinement.

**4. Dallas, Texas** – Anthony Graves spent 12 years on Texas' Death Row. Graves moderated a panel of candidates for Dallas County district attorney in February on ways they'd prevent wrongful convictions like his. "I understand better than most how bad that can go if they decide to abuse it. I lived that injustice," Graves was convicted for involvement in the killings of six people. He was exonerated in 2010 after an alleged accomplice recanted and after the revelation of misconduct by the district attorney's office.

**5. Jackson, Miss.** – For the second consecutive year, the state's house voted unanimously to create a commission to study the issue of restoring voting rights for felons, the *Daily Journal Jackson Bureau* reports. The bill was killed in 2017 in the Senate Elections Committee. "The whole idea about restoring suffrage is to make sure people have a fair shot of getting back on their feet," said Rep. Cheikh Taylor, D-Starkville, a coauthor of the

legislation. Taylor said restoring voting rights would help felons who had served their time become responsible citizens. Mississippi has one of the highest percentages of disenfranchised felons, studies show.

**6. Maryland** – Gov. Larry Hogan issued an executive order that would formalize a process to decide whether to grant parole to inmates serving life sentences for crimes committed as juveniles, the *Washington Post* reports. The state is under "legal and political pressure" to reform its criminal justice system. No juvenile lifers have been paroled in more than 20 years. "Since taking office, our administration has sought to bring balance to Maryland's criminal justice system, which includes offering individuals who have paid their debt to society a second chance to live productive lives," the Republican governor said as a part of a statement in the *Post* article.

**7. Santa Fe, N.M.** – Five inmates held in a maximum-security prison filed a handwritten lawsuit in a state court, alleging that prison officials were warehousing people with severe mental illnesses in inhumane conditions and that the only mental health service was medication, reports *The New Mexican*. The inmates say they spent up to 23 hours a day in solitary confinement. Prison officials told *The New Mexican* that "prisons in New Mexico provide drug-abuse programs; intensive outpatient therapy; DWI, anger management and drug suppression programs; and recidivism reduction services to inmates, including those in the Predatory Behavior Management Program at the center of the five inmates' complaint. Prisoners can put in requests to see behavioral health professionals at any time."

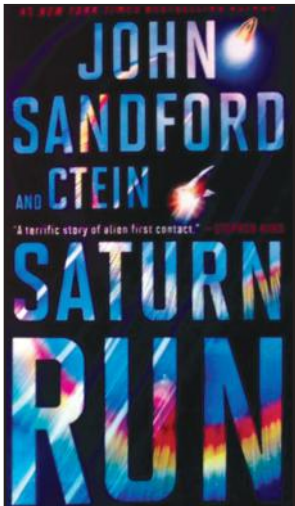
**8. Illinois** – Gov. Bruce Rauner wants to cut the state's inmate prison population by 25 percent by 2025, according to *The Crime Report*. The state prisons held less than 10,000 inmates in the 1980s, but the number jumped to more than 48,000 by 2015, giving Illinois the eighth-largest inmate population in the nation. The state has an annual prison budget of \$1.3 billion.

## Sci-fi thriller of first alien contact in the future

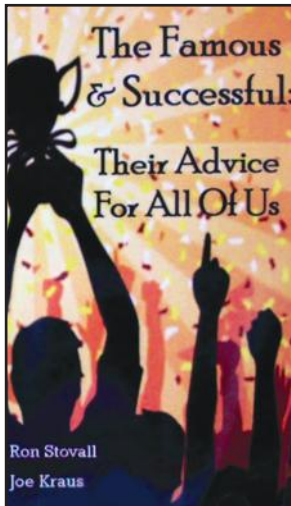
### BOOK REVIEW

**By Juan Haines**  
**Senior Editor**

Last month's review, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, dealt with earthlings' effort to increase the human galactic footprint. Ursula K. Le Guin took readers way, way into the future to tell a tale about humanizing other worlds. By comparison, authors of *Saturn Run*, John Sandford and Ctein peered just around the corner of time in *Saturn Run*, (2015) to tell a tale about Earth's first alien contact. Everything takes place in the late 2060s after a large object headed to Saturn is spotted and is decelerating. What follows is a space race between the Americans and Chinese to find out the intentions of the alien object. Both super-powers realize the potential boon of getting their hands on alien technology. The story is full of adventure as well as unexpected and unpredictable plot twists, making *Saturn Run* an easy and enjoyable read. It's the how and why of the earthlings' quest to learn about the aliens that drives the plot of *Saturn Run*. The how turns out to be the science behind interplanetary space travel. What is exceptional is the well-developed, logical-sounding science about what happens during the long voyage. Sandford/Ctein are smart enough to heighten readers' interest by adding an actual illustration of the spacecraft. Readers learn early on that the main reason the United States and China want to be first to Saturn is purely materialistic. Sandford/Ctein did a good job injecting the political reality of international conflict, especially under today's strained relationship between the two major super-powers. What I particularly liked—the Chinese are not demonized. Readers are presented with an empathetic perspective, like what would you have done, if put into a similar situ-



ation? However, there is dubious behavior by self-centered characters — nobody is perfect. By the end of the story, not everything gets resolved, yet there's a sense of believability. The characters have to deal with living on a spacecraft for more than a year, enduring tight quarters and the isolation space travel brings. Incarcerated readers can relate when John Clover, in conversation with another traveler about living in isolation, comments that people are sent to prison every year and "they get used to the isolation." There are obvious expectations about the results of putting a group of men and women in a tight space, for a long period of time—sure enough, the first fight is over a sexual relationship. Another well-interjected dilemma — suspected sabotage. What is interesting about the novel is the amazing amount of detail crafted into the storyline. Sandford/Ctein thought of every conceivable detail that could come up with the first extended space adventure. Reading *Saturn Run* makes you think you understand space travel. Not only did I agree with Stephen King: "Fast, scientifically believable, and peopled by characters who become good friends." But I too, "read the last 100 pages in a single setting, and was sorry to see it end."



Also Well Written: In a 13-year project, Ron Stovall's incarceration was merely a speed bump in publishing *The Famous & Successful: Their Advice for All of Us* (2017). Joe Kraus, editor and author of *The Autograph Collector's Magazine*, co-wrote this celebrity advice anthology. During the project, Stovall sent famous people a prescription form, which they filled out as a way to provide advice. Wayne Brady said, "Always Follow Your Dreams." Marla Gibbs said, "Learn to talk to God and to listen." John Travolta said, "Dreams can come true. Study leads to success." Cokie Roberts said, "Listen to your mother." Henry Winkler said, "You have greatness in you. You must use it for greatness." The late Robin Williams said, "Laughter is the best medicine." Even though I don't know the specifics of why or how long Stovall is in prison, his stated reason for sticking with the project is what resonates with me because I too have harmed many people in my life and every day wish there were a way I could apologize: *To the people I've caused harm, mentally, physically and emotionally, I ask for your forgiveness. I accept full responsibility for my past acts. I realize there is no excuse for those actions. For all of this I deeply apologize.*



# The passion of running stretches beyond the prison walls

By **Rahsaan Thomas**  
Staff Writer

From the yard inside San Quentin State Prison, Chris Schuhmacher used to look up over the walls at Mt. Tam, thinking one day I'm going to get there. Now on parole, he's arrived and he continues using the two things that got him through his bid—running and computer coding.

"Chris exemplifies the spirit, drive and determination of someone who wants to succeed and set an example for others," Beverly Parenti, co-founder of the Code.7370 coding program at San Quentin, said.

Schuhmacher works as a software engineer for Fandom, a company that is like a Wikipedia for media, entertainment, music and video game content.

His journey to become a software engineer started in prison with exercise and an entrepreneurship program called The Last Mile.

While in The Last Mile program founded by Chris Redlitz and Parenti,

Schuhmacher came up with an app concept that would help people use exercise to overcome their addiction to drugs and alcohol. He named it Fitness Monkey.

"Exercise produces the same hormones and endorphins in the brain that drugs and alcohol do," Schuhmacher said. "So it was really logical for me to develop an app around providing people with exercise and workout programs as an alternative to drugs and alcohol."

The app is designed to track how long a person stays sober down to the minutes and seconds. It will also act as a fitness tracker and a social media support system for a community of recovering addicts, said Schuhmacher.

The concept for Fitness Monkey came from Schuhmacher's own life.

He struggled with addiction in society and ended up incarcerated over a drug-related crime for 17 years.

In prison, he cleaned up, took yoga and played tennis. To become a better tennis player,

he started running with the 1000 Mile Club.

"It was through the 1000 Mile Club that I found I had a love for running and not just hitting a tennis ball around," Schuhmacher said. "I ran my first marathon in 2011."

He ran on Monday nights with the club sponsored by members of the Tamalpais Runners Club including the former president Frank Ruona, along with Kevin Rumon and Diana Fitzpatrick.

He could see Mt. Tam by looking over the walls on the yard while running with fellow club members.

The 1000 Mile Club gave him a sense of camaraderie. He ran with John Levin and Tommy Wickerd on Saturdays.

"As close as we were in confined quarters and really getting to know people on a human level, I don't think I'll ever have that kind of solidarity amongst other people," Schuhmacher said.

Schuhmacher remembered his Fitness Monkey concept when The Last Mile program

evolved into the coding program Code.7370. There he learned how to build his app.

He also met the Fandom team when they came to the Code.7370 graduations.

"When I got out, I reached out to them, and they set me up for an interview," Schuhmacher said. "They started me with an internship that turned into a full-time job in January."

Schuhmacher said he's also working with developers at Santa Clara University's furlough innovation hub to build the Fitness Monkey app.

Schuhmacher said he talked Fitness Monkey with Lance Armstrong on Armstrong's new podcast called Forward.

They also talked about taking accountability.

"I think we all fall down sometimes, and we all make mistakes and sometimes we don't deal with it in the best of ways," Schuhmacher said. "It's really about trying to take ownership of it, be responsible, make amends. And I don't think it's so much about forgiveness, but it's about moving forward and just trying to be better than you were the day before."

Schuhmacher continues to run in solidarity with the 1000 Mile Club.

"The 1000 Mile Club and



Photo courtesy of Frank Ruona

Chris Schuhmacher passing another runner at the Mt. Tamalpais in the Dipsea Race

all the volunteers' support and encouragement didn't end at the gate," Schuhmacher said. "They signed me up for a Dipsea Race in Marin."

The annual Dipsea Race takes place on a course running through the woods and up and down hills of Mt. Tam. Schuhmacher ran the race last year.

Coach Fitzpatrick has won the race twice.

"They talked about that race for years while we were on the inside," Schuhmacher said.

Through an email list,

Schuhmacher gets updates on all the 1000 Mile races in San Quentin.

"When I hear about those events, I do my own event on the outside," Schuhmacher said. "When they were doing the New Year's Day half-marathon, I got a couple of buddies and we did a half-marathon in solidarity with the guys at San Quentin. I tell everyone I can about the positive stuff that those guys are doing. It's really important to me. I never want to lose that connection."

## Tennis season at San Quentin

### Mill Valley and Lagunites Tennis Club came into SQ opening day



Photo by Eddie Herena SQ News

Paul Allenye getting to return a ball

By **Salvadore Solorio**  
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin Tennis team's opening day matches were a mixture of wins and losses with visiting community participants.

Members of the Mill Valley Tennis Club and Lagunitas Tennis Club came into San Quentin for opening day festivities.

In preparation for the opening day, the San Quentin tennis

court was scrubbed and a new net installed.

Tennis sponsor Sharon Schyler with guest Chris Morgan played against Inside Tennis Team members Paul Alleyne and Earl Williams. The guests won 4-3 to set the tone.

Visitors Jeff Heely, a tennis player for 50 years, and Eddie Pateri enjoyed another guest win over San Quentin team members Chester "Toe" Boddie and Clay Long, 4 to 3.

Heely has been coming into San Quentin for four years. He said he enjoys the camaraderie of San Quentin's tennis team. Heely has also spent time with the Special Olympics tennis program and witnessed a Special Olympics game that had a volley of 80 returns.

Morgan said it was "very satisfying to win," and "they (San Quentin players) get better every time." Morgan added that incarcerated people are "just like us and this is a lot of fun."

Chester "Toe" Boddie and Clay Long managed to win 4 to

2 matched up against two visiting lefties, Heely and Pateri.

Pateri's very strong backhand was not enough to win the game.

"We got outplayed and I just played like crap," Pateri said. He also did echo a common complaint about the court fences needing to be moved back "at least five feet."

*"More than anything I enjoy playing against outside people"*

Pateri, age 45, attributes his good health to tennis and has hopes of playing until he is at least 65.

Paris Williams, teamed up with Morgan, won their mixed match against Tim Thompson and Schyler, 4 to 3.

"I have been playing for two years. The game is exciting and the exercise itself is great," Paris Williams said. "More than anything, I enjoy playing against outside people."

Number one ranked San Quentin tennis player Boddie said, "The opening festivities were beautiful. We will have a fruitful year. Tennis is alive and well at San Quentin."

## SQ Kings look good in loss to Trailblazers

By **Lloyd Payne**  
Journalism Guild Writer

The San Quentin Kings looked good in their pre-season opener. But, they lost the March 24 game 62-53 to the visiting Trailblazers.

The Kings took the green-blue outdoor basketball court dressed like professional players in brand-new jerseys, white with gold lettering and black stripes plus a gold crown on the front with "Kings" written underneath.

Ryan Williams Steer, a Trailblazer sponsor and player, designed the uniforms.

Although the Kings played a sluggish first half and fell behind by 13 points, new recruit Trevor Bird showed promise. He made three of his first four shots.

"I like to get in, energize the team, and get a rotation going, but I wish I had more wind to keep the energy up," Bird said.

In the free world, Bird played football. In prison, for the past few years, he's played baseball for the San Quentin Giants. This season, the all-around athlete decided to add basketball to his resume.

"The beauty of the sports

program is it brings in visitors, and I get to play with other races, just as if I was in the community, and it gives me a healthy respect for community," Bird said.

Bird finished as the second leading scorer for the Kings with 10 points in his debut. Point guard Tare "Cancun" Beltranchuc led the Kings with 11 points.

In the second half, the Kings tried to make a comeback, but three Trailblazers had double-doubles to keep them ahead.

Greg Tang led the Trailblazers with 16 points, 14 rebounds, 5 assists, 2 steals and 2 blocks, followed by Steer with 15 points, 11 rebounds and 2 assists. Rob Nesmith added another 15 points and 12 rebounds with 2 assists.

Oris "Pep" Williams tried to put the Kings on his back in the fourth quarter, but he couldn't get it going. He scored six points with 12 rebounds.

"I played decent," Williams said. "I didn't play my usual game. I wasn't looking to score. I was trying to play



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQ News

Trailblazer Greg Tang getting back on defense

defense and assist new players on the team."

King point guard Joshua Burton, who scored 9 points, with 5 rebounds and 2 steals, said, "I need to tighten up on my decision making."

Bird added, "We're still searching for team chemistry. Once we know each other, we'll definitely get the wins this season."

## New volunteers to referee games but still face the same complaints

A new cast volunteered to take on one of the toughest jobs at San Quentin—refereeing basketball games.

"It's challenging," Antonio Manning, new ref and former SQ King, said about refereeing. "You have to deal with different attitudes and personalities."

Veteran ref Robert Lee, 62, added, "It's the hardest job on the yard. With every call, 50 people are going to hate it, and 50 people are going to like it."

Complaints about the officiating at San Quentin have persisted for years. As the head ref, Aaron "Showtime" Taylor, is out to change that with a mostly new eight-man squad and new system.

Taylor's system involves the



Photo by Eddie Herena SQ News

Veteran ref Robert Lee in 2017 advising the old referee crew Willie "Butch" Thompson and Ishmael Freelon

refs rotating so one of them is always in the best position to see the action.

Despite the difficulty of

being second-guessed and heckled, these men still want to be referees.

"After playing for five years

as a King, I look at it as what more can I contribute?" Manning said. "As a ref, I can bring more control and add to the community here. Also, I see myself doing this out in the community as well."

New ref Troy Smith added, "I don't need to be a ref and didn't want to, but I was asked so I agreed. I love sports, and I don't internalize the calamity."

Lee said, "I want to stay involved with the game I love but can't play anymore. Also

I want to stay connected to this community of inside and outside people like Bill Epling and Bob Myers."

Epling sponsors Prison Sports Ministry, which brings members of the community into the prison for basketball games and ministry. This includes Myers, the general manager of the Golden State Warriors.

Three new refs got their first test on March 24. Manning, Anthony Thomas and Wayne "Tariq" Mobley coached the Kings season opener.

Throughout the game, the refs stayed professional as the complaints stacked up.

"We need Butch and Huggie back!" a King joked about wanting the old referees

return.

"All three out of bounds calls were wrong," Trailblazer Steve Lamb said.

"You got to be kidding me, yo!" Trailblazer Geofrey "Free" Gary yelled after, while he was shooting, a King made contact, and there was no call.

The referees mistakenly sent a King to the free-throw line. After a ref timeout, Oris "Pep" Williams took the ball and went to the free-throw line. The refs believed he was owed two free throws and allowed him to shoot them. Williams said he missed both on purpose.

Lee said, "They're new. Give them a chance."

—**Rahsaan Thomas**



# Tamalpais Runners Club help runners in six-mile race

**By Rahsaan Thomas**  
**Staff Writer**

During a six-mile race, the sun beamed down through the clear blue sky onto the San Quentin yard, making the runners thankful to have new caps donated by the Tamalpais Runners Club.

*“It was a rough day but I did better than I thought I would do”*

“I think the hat is responsible for giving me my personal best time today,” said John Levin, a member of San Quentin’s 1000 Mile running club. “I think it has aerodynamic properties.”

He finished the six miles in

44:18, more than two minutes faster than his prior best time of 46:35.

The gray caps have the 1000 Mile Club logo on them and adjustable straps in the back.

The Tamalpais Runners Club also donates sneakers annually for all members who have been in the 1000 Mile Club for more than six months. In addition, Tamalpais provides community support for parolees who remain in the Bay Area and want to continue their running. Former Tamalpais president and current 1000 Mile Club sponsor Frank Ruona said they give returning citizens free memberships and pay for race entry fees.

“They (the Tamalpais Runners Club) think we are



Photo by Jonath Mathew, courtesy Christine Yoo  
Runner Steve Brooks

doing a good job here, helping with the rehabilitation of you guys,” Ruona said.

Tamalpais member Dylan Bowman added, “I think we

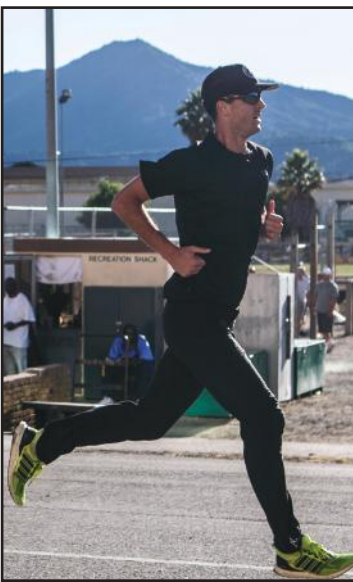


Photo by Jonath Mathew, courtesy Christine Yoo  
Professional ultra marathon runner Dylan Bowman on the Lower Yard

have an obligation to give people the support they need to be positive members of the community—because if

you don’t, you are no longer a community. It’s important because most will be released back into society.”

Bowman is a professional ultra-marathon runner. In 2017, he won in Croatia, and in 2018 he took first in the Rotorua New Zealand 100-mile race. He volunteers at San Quentin to support the runners.

“I think the club is important because running as exercise is a great metaphor for life,” Bowman said. “It’s learning to deal with these circumstances in a reasonable way and always seeking improvement. It’s difficult but rewarding.

“That’s why I think it helps with rehabilitation. It helps you deal when adversity arises in your everyday

life; it helps you deal with it with a steady disposition and the confidence that you can get through.”

Steve Rietz, a 1000 Mile Club member, said, “I’m grateful. Good advice and good equipment have helped me improve.”

He ran a personal best time of 41:48.

The race results were predictable. Markelle Taylor took first place with a time of 35:37, his second fastest time.

Eddie Herena secured his spot at second place, beating Chris Scull 37:26 to 39:04.

Steve Brook came in at 44:44 despite the fact that he went to work in the kitchen at 3 a.m., thinking the race would be rained out. When he found out it was sunny, he came to the race straight from work at 8 a.m.

“I had to mentally get into it,” Brooks said. “It was a rough day, but I did better than I thought I would do.”

# ROOTS’ Solidarity Run helps raise fund and spirits of the community



ROOTS’ members at the finish line at the Oakland Run Festival

**By Lloyd Payne**  
**Journalism Guild Writer**

While community volunteers ran in the Oakland Run Festival to raise money for an ethnic studies program at San Quentin State Prison, 33 incarcerated men ran in solidarity with them.

The Asian Prisoner’s Support Community (APSC) ran to raise funds for the Restor-

ing Our Original True Selves (ROOTS) program on March 24 and 25.

“Our community and volunteers, in their free time, ran to raise money for us,” Kevin “K” Neang, the ROOTS incarcerated chairman, said. “Let us show solidarity and run with them.”

The 33 incarcerated participants completed a combined 141.5 miles. The group included

men who weren’t athletes but who ran in support. Even men like Thanh Tran, who never attended a ROOTS class, ran 53 laps, the equivalent of a half-marathon.

This marked the second year APSC and ROOTS ran to honor incarcerated family members or friends in prison, naming their running teams after their incarcerated loved ones and



ROOTS’ basketball event with Top: Danny Thongsy, Nate Tan, Roger Chung, Troy Smith, Asian Health Services member and Chau Vi. Bottom: Donte Smith, Nghiep Ke Lam, Tracy Nguyen and Zitsue Lee

raising funds in support. This year’s goal was to raise \$15,000 for ROOTS. It took a week and half, but they reached their goal, according to Tracy Nguyen.

Nguyen, a volunteer for both ROOTS and APSC, ran in a relay portion of the Oakland Run Festival. There was also a 5K race and a half-marathon.

Last year, Nguyen ran for Team Free Lee, in honor of

a San Quentin inmate who has since been released. This year, Lee ran with Nguyen and Nghiep Ke Lam for Team “Free Tran,” in honor of Sa “Mega-Tran” Tran, whom immigration officers arrested after he paroled from San Quentin. (Tran is fighting the deportation.)

Nguyen said her team used a basketball tournament to train

for the run. It didn’t help.

Team Tran came in last, partly because the next runner arrived to the relay point late.

Besides meeting its fundraising goal, the race succeeded in achieving its larger agenda of strengthening ties in the Asian community.

“We came in last but Tran was first in our hearts,” Nguyen said.

# New soccer season kicks off on the San Quentin Lower Yard

The visiting Outsiders soccer team out-kicked the San Quentin squad, 5-3, in the season opener.

“I’ve been missing San Quentin soccer all winter,” said Outsider Dario Abramskiehn. “There’s a special bunch of guys here.”

SQ player Miguel Martinez added, “This is a big thing for all of us. We love to come together and play futbol.”

Community members coming into San Quentin to play sports stops every year from November to March. The March 24 game kicked off the new season.

Last year, San Quentin dominated until they asked for better competition. Sponsor Andrew Crawford re-

sponded, and San Quentin lost the last few games of the season.

This year, the Outsiders picked up where they left off. The 11-member squad that came in contained a former pro. Aiden Leonard played for Brown University until 2014. Afterward he played pro in Costa Rica. They also had defender Alex Lentz, who played for U-Mass Amherst.

“It’s motivating to play with somebody,” SQ’s Lam Le said. “Now we are playing better and competing.”

San Quentin fielded 11 members from both their OG and Youngster teams.

In the 7:09 minute, Outsiders scored their first goal off the foot of Abramskiehn.

Lentz saved his goalie, who was out of position as the SQ team tried to kick in a goal.

SQ’s first goal came off a penalty kick. Jesus “Morelia” Lopez blasted the ball past the goalie to tie the score at 1-1 at 21:07.

At 32:46, Crawford kicked the futbol passed the defense to Leonard, who power kicked the ball into the net for a 2-1 Outsider lead.

SQ’s Carlos Ramirez responded with a goal at the 47 minute, that made the score 2-2.

In the 52 minute, SQ pulled ahead 3-2, when Miguel Gutierrez scored.

The Outsiders charged back with three goals.

At the 70:00 minute, Ro-



Photo by Rahsaan Thomas  
Jesus Morelia Lopez running down the field

hit Ramchandani, who the San Quentin heckler Ceasar McDowell clowned last year, tied the score 3-3 with a kick

past the goalie Jesus Perez.

In the 73:00 minute, Jordi Ortiz kicked the ball to Leonard, who scored the goal. 4-3.

Abramskiehn increased the Outsiders’ lead 5-3 when Perez fell as he tried to defend the goal, which left a large section wide open.

Both teams formed a circle mid-field and expressed what the day meant.

“You guys coming in brings the world to us,” Juan “Carlos” Meza said. “It makes us feel relevant. Every man here has made a commitment to be a citizen, and you guys help us with that.”

Leonard, who played at Quentin for the first time, said, “We only knew it from the other side. You guys are working hard to better yourselves. It’s inspiring. It keeps me humble and grateful for what we have out there.”

—Rahsaan Thomas



# SQ parolee serves up more than just coffee in Antioch

By Joe Garcia  
Journalism Guild Writer

Coffee entrepreneur John Krause can relate to the slim employment prospects most ex-cons face upon parole. As a former San Quentin inmate himself, Krause spent over a decade in and out of prison before opening Big House Beans (BHB).

Based in Antioch, BHB's production facility now roasts thousands of pounds of premium gourmet coffee beans per month—supplying restaurants, coffee shops, and tech companies throughout California. But Krause's business plan goes far beyond simply turning a profit.

"I really want to embrace the community to create more jobs and include people with barriers," Krause recently told *San Quentin News*. "I'm not ashamed to use my company as a platform to tell my story."

Krause remembers being homeless and fearful after he

was released with \$5 and a BART ticket in his pocket.

"I was afraid that I wouldn't find something quick enough and would slip through the cracks for the umpteenth time," Krause said in a 2015 *East Bay Times* interview.

During his last stint behind bars, Krause became a counselor for San Quentin's Substance Abuse Program and attributes SAP for causing a pivotal change in his own mentality. Krause wants to continue paying forward the profound benefits he's gained through rehabilitation and community support.

"I don't want to shun people in society who everybody else is shunning," Krause told *KTVU FOX2 News*. "I want to embrace them and continue to love them until they learn how to love themselves."

Welcomed into Danville's Community Presbyterian Church, Krause was given job opportunities and the encouragement to pursue his own



John Krause with the Big House Beans staff

Photo Courtesy of Big House Beans

business ventures. With the help of the church's support network, he was able to gather investors and secure loans, refurbishing a \$35,000 coffee

roaster as the springboard for BHB.

"I hope my testimony will encourage people who are where I once was or have family members where I once was—struggling with addiction, in and out of prison, and on the verge of losing hope."

Krause's mission and his company's goal is to not only provide superbly roasted coffees, but to offer second-chance opportunities to ex-offenders and other men and women struggling to find sustainable work. BHB additionally raises money for job training and supports community rehabilitation programs.

Krause just expanded BHB to include a new flagship café in Brentwood.

"I jumped in with not a lot of coffee or retail experience," he admitted. "So I took a step

back to revamp my marketing and branding before refocusing on how and when to serve the community best."

"John's a blessing to work for," said Big House employee and ex-offender Juan Valdez (and yes, that is his actual name). "It's a good job and finally I get to do something I really love to do."

"You know if you have the look, like you've been in prison, it makes it definitely worse," Valdez said about his own facial tattoos and prison ink to ABC7 News. "It also makes it hard when you have to do a background check just to find a place to live."

Not every attempt by Krause to embrace a troubled employee ends in success. He told *San Quentin News* about one recovering addict who had worked reliably for weeks be-

fore suddenly failing to ever show up again.

"The phenomenon of that craving for a drug is so powerful," Krause explained. "One of the hardest things about trying to really help people is that some people aren't ready."

"I went to San Quentin for the first time for a high-speed chase, evading police... I was definitely under the influence," he recalled. "I remember each time I got out from prison, I swore that was the last time, but then I'd be back on drugs within days."

"Now I look back and my heart is broken for the immense levels of ignorance and brokenness in people in prison, most of whom have been abused, neglected, or abandoned."

—Claire Gelbart,  
UC Berkeley student,  
contributed to this story



Photo Courtesy of Big House Beans

John Krause conducting a coffee tasting of the Big House Beans (inset)

# Oakland's Clean 360 cleans up in helping returning citizens

By Marcus Henderson  
Journalism Guild Chairman

In a harsh job market for the formerly incarcerated, the Clean 360 soap factory is taking the lead in business by giving returning citizens a paying trade in manufacturing and customer service.

The East Oakland business is run by Roots Community Health Center, a non-profit, under its Emancipators Initiative that provides jobs and overall re-entry support.

"Our factory is a training ground," said Aquil Naji, Roots chief operating officer and chief business officer. "The people we work with, their academic levels are usually low. But if you come work at 360, I guarantee you that you'll know algebra in a couple months."

Clean 360 produce soaps with exotic names like Lovely in Lace, Heaven, Lemon Explosions, and Citrus Exfoliation. As the company grew they added fragrances Saffron Citrus, Blooming Rose, Floral Sunrise and Peaches and Cream. It also is expanding into bath bombs and shower gels.

"I recently got a letter from someone at San Quentin asking for a job," said Naji. "Writing to me from inside prison and asking for a job? That shows moxy. I want to reward that kind of drive."

Clean 360 employs 16 people and six of those are former lifers that served 20-30 years, said Naji. The company hopes to include 15 to 20 pensioned jobs.

Clean 360 developed an overall support group system

that teaches the returning citizens life skills.

"A lot of the people we work with have been incarcerated since they were kids," said Naji. "They don't have the soft skills we learn as young adults in the wider world. I will pay you while I'm teaching you these principles."

"We'll be addressing your finances while you're learning these skills — we can't expect these people to go to school when they have to put food on the table and survive," continued Naji.

Clean 360 does something unheard of for most businesses: It keep its employees on the clock if they have to go see their parole officers or have a doctor's appointment during a workday.

"Our society says, 'okay you've been subjected to 10

years of incarceration, we're going to let you out early on parole.' If I take you off the clock it's punitive," said Naji. "I don't want to penalize you too, just because you have to go see your parole officer."

Naji said, a lot of their employees suffer from chronic health issues and can stay home if they need to. Whatever their employee needs in order to be a successful member of society, Clean 360 will accommodate that need, he added.

"Those who are caught violating our expectations, we don't throw them out to the dogs," said Naji. "We have a panel to consider how to address the issue. You have to really mess up to get kicked out. We just really don't tolerate violence."

Naji added that anyone who

has been locked up for 20 or 30 years has discipline, and he expects that discipline when you back in society.

Clean 360 seeks to expand its business to making industrial soap and seeks to employ formerly incarcerated women by opening a candle factory.

The company is also embarking on a major task of trying to get its products inside of prisons and jails commissaries, as well as taking on the prison phone industry.

"If we're allowed to be a part of the business model inside of prisons we can affect the rest of the players," said Naji. "I have requested to speak with several different facilities about taking over the telephone systems. If we take charge of the telephone systems, we'll reduce rates."

Naji believes letting the

company's actions speak for itself and redirecting its revue to reinvesting in the community.

"I will not march. I will not write letters. We will use our business acumen to be a part of the prison systems," said Naji. "You cannot affect the economics of the prison system from the outside."

Clean 360 hosted a Summer Soap School for youth development. It also has a store and factory in Southern California located in the Inglewood area, according to its website information.

The company products and ingredients are cruelty-free. They contain no animal products and are never tested on animals, said its website.

—Arielle Swedback,  
UC Berkeley student,  
contributed to this story



Photo Courtesy of Clean 360

Formerly incarcerated citizens working for Clean 360



Photo Courtesy of Clean 360

Workers in the Clean 360 soap factory preparing soap baskets