

San Quentin News

THE PULSE OF SAN QUENTIN



VOL. 2013 NO. 4

April 2013

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

www.sanquentinnews.com

POPULATION 4,150

Journalist Suggests Changes To Solitary Confinement



File Photo

Peter B. Collins

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Journalism Guild Writer

California needs to significantly change its policies and practices on solitary confinement, a noted broadcaster said before a group of San Quentin

Prison journalists.

The speaker was Peter B. Collins, one of a growing number of journalists who report on issues that are important to inform the public about what is happening within America's prison system.

He has also become known as an advocate for prisoners' rights through activities including his liberal syndicated radio talk show.

"California's treatment of prisoners in solitary confinement is just slightly better than Guantanamo Bay," where terrorist suspects are imprisoned in Cuba, Collins told members of the San Quentin Journalism Guild recently.

Among the topics Collins talked about inmates who have

been placed in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's security housing units (SHUs).

Collins said placement of someone in solitary confinement for 30 years is "cruel."

He discussed a lawsuit filed by Jules Lobel, a law professor at the University of Pittsburgh who works with the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR-Justice.org).

"I support this lawsuit," said Collins. "By putting you in the SHU, it's a dead end cycle." He stated there is no possibility of parole for anyone in a SHU serving a life sentence.

It's "barbaric to lock men in the SHU 23/1, locked down, no

See *California's* on page 4



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

Joe Ybarra and Curly Ray Martin in S.Q. North Block Facility

Elderly Prisoners Kept Behind Bars

By Boston Woodard
Staff Writer

go and us(ing) your resources on rehabilitation for the ones that are going to get out..." -- Warden Burl Cain, Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola

The aging process is afflicting nearly all elderly prisoners in U.S. prisons.

The graying of the prisoner population is the outcome of

See *Elderly* on page 4

"When I came here and saw the elderly population, I said, 'God, well, why are they here? Our name is Corrections to correct deviant behavior (but) there's nothing to correct in these guys; they're harmless... (Y)ou actually create victims by not letting (elderly prisoners)

New Report Shows How Children End Up in Prison

By San Quentin News Staff

a child's likelihood of dropping out of school," according to Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

For six years, nearly one million seventh-grade Texans were tracked to verify the outcome of the Department of Justice study. Almost two-thirds of the

See *Children* on page 4

Children who are suspended, expelled, or arrested are more likely to repeat a grade, eventually dropout of school, enter the juvenile justice system and end up in prison, according to a new government report.

"Even one court appearance during high school increases

Data Reveals 3-Strike Offenders Need Substance Abuse Programs

San Francisco Chronicle and California Watch Reporters Investigate

By Charles David Henry
Staff Writer

The trials and tribulations offenders sentenced under California's Three Strikes law go through are more challenging than any other category of offender, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Substance abuse and mental illness problems of three strikers were the subject of an investigation by *Chronicle* and California Watch reporters.

Data collected from psychological substance abuse

and education profiles showed about one-third of all prisoners – including second- and third-strikers – need substance abuse rehabilitation, the report finds.

Since 2006, a risk assessment on 49,000 of 134,000 inmates in California prisons determined.

Three strikers are three and half times more addicted to alcohol and drugs than the 19 percent of low-risk offenders.

Nearly 70 percent of three strikers profiled showed a high need for substance abuse treatment compared to 48 percent

of all inmates tested. The numbers are stark for third-strikers whose last offense was a burglary: 76 percent scored high risk for substance abuse.

When measuring inmates "criminal thinking" risk levels, which indicate whether they exhibit anger or antisocial behaviors that spur criminal activity, the data shows that the scores of third strikers are similar to those of inmates with no strikes on their records. Overall, roughly 30 percent of

See *3 Strike* on page 3

Unmarked Graves Still Sit on Boot Hill

By Tommy Winfrey
Contributing Writer

Hundreds of poor San Quentin convicts have for decades been lying in unmarked graves in a ridge overlooking the prison, but that situation might change.

Redwood crosses used to mark the convicts' graves, located on the potter's field, called Boot Hill, but over the years the markers fell prey to vandals, or were consumed in numerous brush fires, according to a 1988 *Marin Independent Journal* newspaper story.

Executed prisoners or those who died at San Quentin without family to claim their bodies

were buried on Boot Hill until 1952.

Situated atop a ridge next to the firing range, Boot Hill is the final resting place of almost 700 prisoners.

In 1987, the Vocational Machine Shop decided to do something about the years of neglect and poor state of affairs of the graveyard.

Machine shop workers began recycling used brass from pipes and other sources in the prison, and melting them down in its foundry to create brass plates that would mark the graves. The plates bear a number, not the prisoner's name.

The project gained the atten-

tion of then-state Sen. Milton Marks, and was reported in the *Marin Independent Journal*.

Marks wrote a letter of congratulations to the prison and the inmates for all of their hard work on the project.

Somehow, the brass markers never made it to the grave sites, becoming another mystery hidden in the mist of San Quentin history, until Machine Shop Instructor Richard Saenz became involved.

About five years ago, Saenz found five of the brass markers.

Saenz discovered what the markers were intended for, and

See *Prison Grave* on page 4



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

Tommy Winfrey and Machine Shop Instructor Richard Saenz with two of the 696 grave markers.

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San Francisco District Attorney Calls for Sentencing Reform

"We Can Reduce Recidivism and Keep Our Communities Safe"

By George Gascón
S. F. District Attorney

Across the U.S., prosecutors can chart a new path on public safety by championing at both local and state levels one of the biggest ways we can transform our justice system in this generation—sentencing reform.

Right now, the U.S. puts more people in prison and jails than any other nation in the world. The costs associated with incarceration are staggering. California alone spends more than \$9 billion per year on prisons.

Despite all of these costs—economic, social, and systemic—the rate of people returning to a life of crime even after serving time remains all too high, with almost 65 percent of California's prison inmates re-offending after being released.

While California's Realignment effort represents a major change in our state's sentencing practices, it is primarily intended to impact system costs and incarceration rates—not public safety. So further change is needed.

Sentencing reform is one of the most important ways we can reduce recidivism and keep our communities safe. We can use two innovative strategies—sentencing commissions and alternative sentencing practices—to achieve our goals.

Most criminal law is developed legislatively through the political process, with mandatory minimum sentences and sentence enhancement laws changing every year. Often, this process is influenced by political reactions to high-profile cases or attempts to be "tough on crime."

The challenge of politically driven sentencing schemes is that the resulting hodgepodge of criminal laws is largely disconnected from the most effective strategies to prevent or reduce crime. If, for example, reducing recidivism were a major goal of the development and design of sentencing schemes, they would look very different than they do now.

Other states are using non-partisan governmental entities, called sentencing commissions, to assess existing sentencing schemes and propose alternate approaches. Several of these commissions have succeeded at revamping major penal code sections and bringing consistency and clarity to the jurisdictions' approach to sentencing.

In San Francisco, the District Attorney's Office led an effort to establish the first county-level sentencing commission in California, with the explicit purpose of assessing the impact on recidivism of current approaches to sentencing.

Our commission can serve as

a model for other state and local efforts.

While the commission is not empowered to change state law, it will be able to make recom-



Official Photo

D.A. George Gascón

mendations and build consensus among criminal justice agencies, service agencies, victims, and other stakeholders about the most effective strategies to reduce recidivism among various categories of offenders and offenses.

By holding these important discussions in a public forum, the commission can demystify sentencing laws and practices.

In addition to pushing for meaningful legislative change, prosecutors also can innovate our sentencing practices. Across the country, prosecutors evaluate criminal cases at three stages: charging, securing a plea or verdict, and sentencing.

At this third stage, prosecutors must determine what they think the case is "worth" in order to determine the punishment they will advocate for in the plea bargaining process or in court. This assessment traditionally involves focusing on the strength of the evidence in the case and the maximum allowable punishment.

Often, what's missing is an assessment of the most appropriate punishment in order to reduce the likelihood the offender will reoffend. A "recidivism reduction analysis" asks questions that go beyond the strength of the evidence and the penal code punishment guidelines. In other words, this analysis focuses on not just the offense, but also the person who committed it.

Studies on recidivism show that the longer a medium- to low-risk person is incarcerated, the higher the chance they will reoffend. So, if we are committed to improving public safety, understanding the risk level of each offender is critical to determining the most appropriate length of incarceration for that person.

The emerging science on recidivism reduction is a sea change in the criminal justice system.

It identifies what is known about behavioral and situational patterns and how they relate to the frequency of re-offending. Reducing recidivism then becomes an exercise in identifying an individual's "risk and protective" factors, from the offender's criminal history to alcohol and drug issues, mental-health issues, family history of involvement in criminal activity, and other factors such as employment, education, parenthood or other family responsibilities, and stable housing.

Prosecutors then can pinpoint the sanctions that most likely can motivate that person, to eliminate the risk factors and enhance the protective factors. Studies on a wide variety of programs point to sanctions, both punishment- and rehabilitation-oriented, that work better or worse with individuals at different risk levels.

This new alternative approach to sentencing—taking the science of recidivism into consideration—already is underway in the San Francisco DA's office.

We recently created the nation's first "alternative planner" position in a district attorney's office to support prosecutors in court. The ASP evaluates cases to review what is known about the risk level and protective factors of the offenders and then makes sentencing recommendations that will reduce the likelihood that the person reoffends.

In addition, the ASP acts as an investigator, conducting site visits to programs to determine their effectiveness in reducing recidivism, and also provides training for all staff so that the recidivism reduction approach can be integrated into the fabric of all case prosecutions.

Applying this surgical approach to our most scarce and expensive resource—jail—has allowed us the space in our system to properly deal with the violent and serious offenders.

As law enforcement leaders, we must have the courage to face the fact that locking everyone up is not winning. Recognizing that jails and prisons are not the answer to every crime or every offender is a paradigm shift that flies in the face of assumptions that we have built upon for many years.

Yet by grounding our work in a commitment to improving public safety, prosecutors can lead the way in reforming our sentencing laws and practices.

George Gascón is District Attorney of San Francisco and an occasional columnist for The Crime Report. He served as chief of the San Francisco Police Department from 2009-2011. This essay originally appeared in Justice in California, a publication of the Rosenberg Foundation. Gascón welcomes comments from readers.

We Want To Hear From You!

The San Quentin News encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles.

All submissions become property of the San Quentin News.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Limit your articles to no more than 350 words.
- Know that articles may 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 art work (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

Send Submissions to:

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Education Dept. / SQ News
San Quentin, CA 94964
(No street address required)

To receive a mailed copy of the San Quentin News,
send \$1.32 worth of stamps for postage to:

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1 Main Street
San Quentin, CA 94974

The process can be repeated every month, if you want to receive the latest newspaper.

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FOUNDATIONS

The Annenberg Foundation, Columbia Foundation, Marin Community Foundation, Pastor Melissa Scott, and RESIST

INDIVIDUALS

Violet Adkins, Alliance for Change, Anonymous, Bill Anderson, Daniel Barton*/Attorney at Law, Iris Biblowitz*, Christopher B., Jeffrey Blank, Bruce and Maris Budner, Kasi Chakravartula, Abby Chin, Yevgenya Chityan, Lita Collins, Kevin Danaher, Christine Dell, Barry Eisenberg, Jesykah Forkash, Geraldine Goldberg, William Hagler, Jordana Hall, Jun Hamamoto*, Danielle Harris, SuzanneHere!, Mary Hiester, Douglas Horngard, Jeremy Johnson, Chad Kempel, Richard Keyes, Elsa Legesse*, John Mallen, Rosemary Malvey*, Edwin McCauley, June McKay, Eugenia Milito, Kelly Mortensen, Adriana Navas, Leslie Neale, Thomas Nolan*/Attorney at Law, Daniel and Julia O'Daly, Caitlin O'Neil, Pat Palmer, Jay Parafina, Sarah Parish, J.S. Perrella*, Martin Ratner, James Robertson*, Lois and Steven Rockoff, Manuel Roman Jr., Diane Rosenberger, Jennifer Rudnall, Elizabeth Semel, Jonathan Simon, Ameeta Singh, Nancy Street*, Josh Taylor, Jim Thompson, Lori Vasick, Jeanne Windsor, Frank Zimring.

*Have made more than one donation

The Impact SQUIRES Has on At-Risk Kids

By Ted Swain
Journalism Guild Writer

"This works," a Los Angeles police officer said as he escorted 23 at-risk kids through San Quentin Prison.

In his two previous trips to San Quentin, Officer Gus Tarin said he noticed an immediate, positive impact on the behavior of youths he brought inside the prison walls.

"The program is a real eye-opener," said Tarin. He indicated some of the kids have the same issues as guys in here, and "that's huge" when it comes to communicating with troubled teens, he added.

One of the young visitors, Roman Jackson, commented, "The people in here are just like us."

The message from prisoners for the children: Learn how to make it to prison, because you're headed here if you keep on doing what you've been doing.

Tarin has come to San Quentin with the SQUIRES program to give kids a chance to experience prison, showing them where they might wind up if they don't shape up.

The San Quentin visit exposes young men to all aspects of prison life. From cellblocks to outside Condemned Row, the visitors experience the sight, sound, smell, feel, and taste of prison. Inmates conducted the tour for the youngsters.

This is one of the best ways to discourage bad behavior, said Edwin Henderson of On A Mission, Inc., a Los Angeles



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

SQUIRES Sponsor Mana Jaundoo and SQUIRES Member Darnell Hill in front of the prison hospital preparing At-Risk-Kids for their escort through San Quentin State Prison

not-for-profit organization specializing in at-risk youth.

The young people learn there are two sets of rules they must follow: rules imposed by the state, and inmate-originated rules.

The SQUIRES program was started in 1964, based on an idea that some young people on a path to prison need a reality check. It was launched by Death Row inmate Ross Patch Keller,

who hoped it would help his son change his behavior. It originally was the basis of the "Scared Straight" and similar programs, but evolved into more of a counseling and mentoring focus.

The latest visit was coordinated by the Los Angeles Police Department.

The Southwest Division of LAPD has an office designated specifically to work with troubled teens. The Community

Relations Office (CRO) reaches out to the troubled teens and interfaces with Henderson's program and others to counsel and mentor at-risk kids.

CRO officers wear regular uniforms and provide the kids a role model. They have a gym and work out with the young men. They take snow and mountain trips together. They combat obesity with activity programs. And they bring them to San

Quentin.

"This program tells it like it is," said CRO Officer Cecilia Frausto.

"Each time I come to San Quentin, I am enlightened." Said CRO Officer Oscar Ibanez.

"I'm going to think a little more differently now!" said visitor David Ennis.

Kevin Watson said his visit would have an important impact on his future.

3-Strike Offenders Lack Substance Abuse Treatments

Continued from Page 1

all prisoners have "high-risk" thought patterns.

The investigation found judges gave Three Strikers particularly long sentences even though

they have "not necessarily committed violent offenses."

However, since the passage of Proposition 36, the Three Strikes Reform Act, most of these type of sentencing problems will decrease and some

offenders are being resentenced to modify their life terms.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation "provides in-prison programming to adult offenders. Programs include academic and vocational

education, substance abuse treatment, cognitive-based behavioral programs, transitional services, and employment programs," according to the Future of California Corrections. "All are aimed at reducing recidivism

while keeping prisons and communities safe."

Substance abuse treatment could have prevented some repeat offenders from becoming third-strikers, according to Southern Illinois University criminology professor Daryl Kroner, who was quoted in the Chronicle report.

A 2009 audit estimated the Three Strike Law would cost an additional \$19.2 billion in prison costs, if continued.

Long-Time San Quentin Volunteer Dies of Stroke

By the Lubin Family

A long-time San Quentin Prison volunteer, Hari "Ed" Lubin, passed away after a stroke.

Born in 1932, he died March 15 at Marin General Hospital, surrounded by family and friends.

"Hari loved life, food and helping people make the changes necessary to live in love and balance with themselves," his family said in a statement. "He moved to Marin and devoted his last 10 years to the prison programs. Change is Possible and Freedom in Prison. During that time, letters from men in his counseling programs described the profound changes he helped them achieve."

He was resident caretaker at Jug Handle Farm and Nature Center in Casper for nearly 10 years.

"Hari guided visitors toward a more harmonious relationship with the natural world. During that time he received a certificate in Hypnotherapy and began a practice and service that included counseling in Hospice, Men's Alternative to Violence, and the Child Abuse Prevention Program," the family reported.

In the late '90s, Hari became director of the spiritual teacher Gangaji's Prison Program and was introduced to the "lifers" in San Quentin.

"It seems he finally found his deepest passion in facilitating their transformation toward inner peace," the family said.



Family Photo

Hari "Ed" Lubin

Compassionate Release Easier In Fed. Prisons

By San Quentin News Staff

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has made it easier for offenders who suffer from terminal illnesses or deteriorating health to gain a compassionate release, reports The Wall Street Journal.

Under the new rules, when prison officials approve the request, it goes to the general counsel of the Board of Prisons, where the director of BOP files a motion to reduce the offender's sentence in federal court.

Elderly Prisoners Held Long Past Eligible Parole

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several important demographic trends, according to a recent study by the American Civil Liberty Union titled *At America's Expense: The Mass Incarceration of the Elderly*.

Tough sentencing guidelines that eliminate probation or home arrest as options are putting more elderly behind bars, according to the report.

Many men and women began serving their sentences as youngsters but have become seniors due to strict policies and pressures from state Legislatures that block early releases of elderly prisoners, the report finds.

Some older Americans have turned to crime because of economic hardship. Their offenses include passing bad checks, shoplifting (often involving the theft of food), DUI arrests, and other nonviolent crimes, the report finds.

Some men and women serving life sentences, who have been "programming" according to required participation by parole boards have been in prison long past their eligible release dates.

Joe Ybarra, 79, said he has a bad back, a prostrate problem, severe headaches, and is on high blood pressure medication. Ybarra is a frail man weighing approximately 130 pounds. "Just like everyone else, I have hope that I will see the streets again before I die," he said.

Ybarra was sentenced to 15 years to life, plus an additional five years, in San Francisco for second-degree murder in 1979. The parole board rejected Ybarra's application 14 times despite his age and medical ailments and disciplinary free prison record.

From 1980 to 2010, the U.S. prison population grew more than 11 times faster than the general population. The state and federal prison population increased by more than 400 percent, according to the ACLU.

California's prison population has decreased from 175,000 to approximately 119,000 since the

federal court's 2010 intervention. But the elderly population has continued to increase, according to corrections reports.

Prisoners age 50 and older are considered "elderly" because they are exposed to unhealthy conditions during incarceration, according to the National Institute of Corrections. Thus, they age faster than freemen.

In 1981, 8,853 state and federal prisoners age 55 and older were in prisons. Currently, the number is 124,900. Experts project by 2030 there will be more than 400,000. In other words, the elderly prison population is expected to increase by 4,400 percent during this 50-year span. The estimate does not include prisoners ages 50-54.

In 1992, New York City native Vinny Leone was convicted of kidnapping in Los Angeles County. He is serving a seven-to-life sentence plus eight years for a weapon. Leone, 73, says he has taken full responsibility for his crime, but he has been denied parole four times for "lack of insight," according to parole board records.

Leone, despite his age, works every day on San Quentin's upper yard keeping it ship-shape, hoping for a shot at freedom before it's too late. "All I can do is keep doing the right thing. Hopefully I'll have my shot at freedom where I can still do constructive things in the community," said Leone.

State and federal governments spend approximately \$75 billion annually to run the penal system, according to a 2010 study by Center for Economic Policy Research. www.cepr.net

Over the last 25 years, state corrections spending grew by 67 percent, substantially outpacing the growth of other government spending, and becoming the fourth-largest category of state spending.

In 2012, Human Rights Watch estimated it costs about nine times more on health care cost for an aging prisoner, compared to the average prisoner.

Prison Grave Sites Await Markers

Continued from Page 1

that they were made in his shop.

He immediately started looking for the other 691 markers that had been made for the graves.

Saenz searched the prison for the rest and inquired about them from many people he thought might know their whereabouts within the prison, with no luck for years.

Then, one day about two years ago, he got a phone call telling him the plates had been located in the back of a warehouse on a top shelf.

Now the markers sit in bins in a shed holding used parts for machines and pieces of metal, but they are under the watchful eyes of Saenz.

The foundry where the plates were cast has temporarily shut down, and its fate is uncertain at this point.

It has been more than 25 years since the brass markers have been cast and they still haven't made it to the grave sites on Boot Hill, and whether they ever will is uncertain.

Saenz says, "I want to see the project come to completion."

He adds, "The foundry has been a historical part of San Quentin, and I don't want to see these markers just go to waste."

Lt. Samuel Robinson, the San Quentin public information officer, said the administration wants to do the right thing by the grave sites, but is concerned that the markers might fall victim to vandalism.

Available statistical analyses report estimate that releasing an aging prisoner would save states between \$28,362 and \$66,294 per year per prisoner through health care, other public benefits costs. That number swells higher for old Death Row prisoners.

David Carpenter, 84, the oldest man on San Quentin's Death Row, has been there since 1984. Carpenter said that although he is an octogenarian and has ailments relative to his age, he is "doing OK." In Carpenter's case, there are added cost due to age-related medical issues.

Two years ago, Carpenter had his left kidney removed and takes medication for high cholesterol. "Even though I'm on Death Row, I can't complain about the medical care I receive at San Quentin. In fact, what medical issues I have are pretty much under control."

Carpenter said he sees a doctor on "chronic care" follow-up about every 90 days. Presently, he said the only medication he takes is for high blood pressure and for high cholesterol.

By law, prisoners on Death Row are not eligible for a compassionate release.

States can implement mechanisms to determine which prisoners pose little safety risk and can be released. Aging prisoners are the least dangerous of any cohort of prisoners as various studies show they have only five to ten percent recidivism rate.

The overall prison population is increasingly aging. In 2010, of the 1.5 million individuals in state and federal prisons in this country, 246,600 were age 50 and older. This number represents individuals held by state and federal authorities as prisoners, and does not include individuals under the control of county jails. Notably, 86 percent of prisoners serve time in state custody, as opposed to federal custody.

Like California, New York sends a minimum of two guards to go with prisoners transported to an outside hospital, and they need to be guarded 24 hours a day if they remain there.

Today, more than 14 times as many prisoners over the age 55 are serving time than there were in 1981, and experts predict that by 2030 prisoners age 55 and older will comprise more than one-third of prisoners in the United States.

Curly Ray Martin, 74, from Bakersfield has been in prison

since 1967. He was convicted of first-degree murder and was sentenced to seven years to life. His initial Minimum Eligibility Parole Date (MEPD), according to the law, was 1974. Over the years, Martin has been denied parole 18 times. "The parole board told me because of my violent history as a young person, I might re-offend." Martin has had a clean prison record for decades.

Martin suffered a stroke in 1996 and wonders if he'll ever be released from prison. "When I die, I want it to be as a free man. I am confident that one day, the parole board will get it right and allow me to prove that I am no longer a danger to anyone," said Martin.

Infirm elderly state prisoners are normally housed at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville.

Lee Goins, born July 28, 1927, is the oldest man in San Quentin.



Photo by Lt. Sam Robinson

Vinny Leone standing in front of North Block

California's Solitary Confinement 'Barbaric,' According to Journalist

Continued from Page 1

housing men and women above and beyond facility design capacity.

Collins' media credentials include work as a reporter, talk radio host, voiceover talent, producer, entrepreneur, and media consultant.

He has served since 1986 as board president of the Freedom Foundation, a nonprofit organization based at San Quentin. It was established to provide legal and investigative support for inmates who have been wrongfully convicted in California. Its advocacy has subsequently been transferred to the Innocence Project.

Collins has also worked with the Freedom Foundation to secure the release of inmates serving life sentences. He cred-

its Gov. Jerry Brown for honoring 82 percent of Board of Parole Hearings decisions to give parole dates to lifers who are found suitable for parole.

It's "going OK so far," said Collins. However, he said there are many politicians who want to be "careful about Willie Horton," the infamous 1987 Massachusetts case of a lifer who was released on a furlough and committed a brutal murder. It had a negative impact on then Gov. Michael Dukakis' presidential campaign the following year.

Collins said lifers have the lowest recidivism rate among prisoners released from prison in California. He said there is only one case where a paroled lifer violently re-offended by killing his mother.

Children That Drop Out of School Could Face Prison

Continued from Page 1

student for a discretionary violation nearly tripled the likelihood of juvenile justice contact within the subsequent academic year," the study shows. Arrest, detention and involvement with the juvenile justice system have "negative short-term and long-term consequences for children's mental and physical health, education success, and future employment opportunities."

Suspension or expulsion of a

The detrimental effect of court appearance were especially damaging to "children with no or minimal prior history of delinquency," the study says.

Failure to complete high school translates to "higher unemployment, poorer health, substance abuse, shorter lifespan, lower earning and increased future contact with the criminal justice system," the study concludes.

An 'OG's' Perspective

What to Tell Young Offenders ?

By Watani Stiner
Staff Writer

Recently I sat down with Pendarvis Harshaw, a 24 year-old Oakland freelance writer who met with the San Quentin News staff. In a one-on-one conversation, Pendarvis asked me a simple, but profound question that caused me to really think about my answer.

It was a rather straightforward question that I should not have hesitated to answer. After all, it wasn't that I hadn't thought about the question before. Nevertheless, I found myself scrambling for words that could adequately capture my thoughts.

As I sat with Pendarvis, he turned to me, with a serious expression, and said, "In your article you say you have something relevant and important to say to the younger generation. Then tell me, if you had the ear of the youth, what wisdom would you bestow upon them - what would you tell them?"

At that very moment, I wanted to deliver several meaningful messages all at once. I wanted to say something truly relevant, something that would inspire and provoke conversations. But, the more I thought about the question, the less precise I felt about the answer. I realized that the difficulty of answering this question was not due to lack of knowledge and understanding. Rather, it was from an inability to communicate a message and meaning in a language and logic that could be understood by young people.

As I thought about the question, I looked at Pendarvis and finally responded by saying, "I would tell them my story and have a conversation."

I am writing this monthly column because I want to let young people know that my story is part of their story, and all of our stories have a meaning and a message. Each story is part of the human experience. For even a sad and tragic story has its les-

sons. We must hear those stories and connect with them in the process of moving toward a better self, society and world.

If we understand the responsibility we have to share the lessons of our stories, we can realize that we are generational teachers and students to each other. We are heirs and custodians of a legacy. We must receive it and pass the historical baton.

Passing the baton is something I have come to understand about life. It's what brought me to meet Pendarvis who has a photo essay project on his website called "OG Told Me."

Armed with poignant questions and a camera, Pendarvis described his activities by saying he "moves about the community of Oakland, snapping photos and gathering snippets of wisdom from 'OGs.'" He goes through Oakland, sees an "OG," and asks them questions—inviting them into a conversation. From their conversation, he takes a picture and quote to post

it on his site.

After learning about "An OG's Perspective," Pendarvis said he liked both the concept and content of the "OG" column. He told me that he sees this column as a creative and effective way to generate conversations between the older and younger generation.

The more I talked to Pendarvis, the more questions he asked. He asked me about my views and values on a range of critical issues.

He was particularly interested in the perspectives of OGs and how they interact with the younger prisoners here at San Quentin. He was also curious about the degree and manner of respect younger prisoners elect to show the OGs. What do young prisoners want to know? What and how much are OGs willing to share? Is there a distance or a sense of generational obligation and responsibility on the part of OGs?

Talking to Pendarvis made me feel like I had another connection to the younger generation—to someone in the community trying to make a difference. In addition, our conversation helped me realize what I want to share

with the next generation.

For the youth, I wish to pass on personal and social stories of struggle and sacrifice—stories of family and community and of violence and reconciliation. I tell these stories, not in any self-righteous, preaching or condescending manner. I tell these stories in a manner that raises critical questions, inspires dignity and determination, and invites dialogue, debate and conversation. I realize that once a generation falters or neglects to pass the torch, a disconnection and a generational breakdown inevitably emerges.

Now, I ask the OGs the same question Pendarvis asked me.

If you had the ear of the youth, what would you bestow upon them - what would you tell them?

Send your answers and your age, so we can put them on the table for a dialogue. Once a few of the answers have been considered, this column will be open for the younger generation to respond.

OGs, please put your answers in a U-Save-Em envelope addressed to San Quentin News, Education Department, and drop it in the mail.

Is California Ready for a Sentencing Commission?

By Lizzie Buchen, M.S.
Center on Juvenile and
Criminal Justice

In January, while defiantly declaring the end of California's prison crisis, Gov. Jerry Brown insisted further reductions in prison overcrowding "cannot be achieved without the early release of prisoners serving time for serious or violent felonies," a move he said would "jeopardize public safety."

In other words, now that Realignment is sending low-level offenders to local custody instead of state prison, those who remain in prison must remain there to protect the public.

This sentiment reflects the state's myopic reliance on incarceration for controlling crime and treating society's problems.

Brown's Realignment plan addresses one major source of the state's unnecessary incarceration: Most people who commit low-level offenses should not go to prison. But he rejects one that is just as important: Many people who committed serious or violent offenses do need to serve some time in prison to protect the public, but we keep them there for far too long. And the terms are getting longer.

If California wants a sustainable solution to its prison crisis, it needs to rethink its increasingly harsh sentencing policies across the gamut of offenses — not just the low-level targets of Realignment and Proposition 36.

A recent study by the Pew Center on the States found that Californians who committed violent crimes can expect to serve an average of seven years in prison; in 1990 they would have served less than three.

Looking at people who committed murder, those who were released in 2009 served an average of 16 years; now they can expect to serve more than 50. This lengthening of sentences for violent crimes is a major reason California's prisons are overflowing and will continue to do so.

In 2009, nearly 100,000 of the state's prisoners were doing time for violent crimes, a number that will only grow as the exit door continues to recede.

A significant driver of these long sentences is sentencing enhancements — additional prison time for circumstances such as using a gun, gang involvement, and repeat offending. Although Three Strikes has received the most notoriety, an equally draconian California sentencing enhancement is 10-20-Life — "Use a Gun and You're Done."

Under 10-20-Life, anyone older than 13 who uses a gun while committing a serious felony (including robbery, homicide, kidnapping, and many sex crimes) will serve harsh sentences on top of the "base" sentence for the crime: 10 extra years for brandishing a gun, 20 for firing the gun, and 25-to-Life if firing the gun results in serious injury or death. These enhancements are often longer than the time served for the crime itself.

For example, a person who commits or attempts second-degree robbery would serve, at most, five years if no gun was present. If the person fires a gun

during the robbery, he will serve 25 years, an enhancement four



Lizzie Buchen in the S.Q. newsroom

times longer than the base sentence.

A person convicted of first-degree murder with a gun will be sentenced to at least 50 years to life, twice the sentence of one who killed using another method, like strangulation, poison or an ax.

The enhancements are mandatory and cannot be struck by a judge; the only way to avoid them is to waive your right to a trial and plea bargain. The law is one of the most punitive gun enhancement policies in the nation. Fresno photographer Mike Reynolds, who drafted both Three Strikes and 10-20-Life, has said the latter "makes Three Strikes look like a piker."

Gun enhancements are appealing alternatives to gun control because they purportedly take out only the "bad guys" who use guns - not the "good guys" who merely shoot guns for healthy fun and games. Ex-

tremely harsh enhancements are thought to enhance public safety by: 1) deterring people from committing crimes with guns, which are much more likely to result in serious injury or death, and 2) incapacitating criminals who use guns, who are purportedly more violent individuals.

This logic is not supported by evidence, and comes at a high cost to California citizens.

Research shows that the deterrent effect of punishment is linked to the certainty, not the severity, of punishment. Incapacitation is less theoretical — a person

is not likely to commit additional crimes against the community while incarcerated — but the number of crimes prevented by confining such a diverse group of people is difficult to estimate.

Incapacitation also offers diminishing returns as the prisoner ages, as criminal behavior rises throughout the teenage years, peaks in the mid-20s, and then drops precipitously after 30. Recidivism rates also drop steadily throughout life.

Moreover, a report by the National Research Council found no clear evidence that gun enhancements affect gun-related crimes, and concluded that those that had found any crime reductions were "difficult to interpret." Other studies have come to similar conclusions.

For the prisoner, longer is certainly not better: As the years go by, prisoners often become more distant from their families and communities, less employable,

and more deeply ingrained in prison culture (becoming "institutionalized"), all factors that hamper reentry.

Though the public is not likely to see less crime due to 10-20-Life, they are footing what will soon be an enormous bill as the enhancements keep people confined well into old age.

California already spends an average of \$52,000 per year to house each state prisoner, and that figure doubles for those aged 50 and older. A 2003 estimate (which assumed prisoners would cost a quaint \$35,000 per year) predicted that by 2025 the CDCR would pay at least \$4 billion per year for elderly prisoners alone. That's money that could be better spent on rehabilitation, addiction treatment, and community-based programs, with a far greater payoff in public safety.

The striking irrationality of these laws demonstrates the need for a sentencing commission that can help California ground its sentencing laws in solid research. San Francisco is leading the way with its own Sentencing Commission, which is developing evidence-based sentencing policies founded on principles of justice, proportionality, and a commitment to public safety.

If the state does not follow suit, we will be stuck with unjustifiable and costly enhancements that result in, as criminologist Peter Greenwood writes, "thousands of defendants serving unusually long terms because somebody came up with a theory and a good bumper sticker title that captured the public's fancy."

Lizzie Buchen is an adviser to the San Quentin News

Turning 35 Years Old in Prison

Managing Editor's note: I was editing an article submitted by contributing writer Tommy Winfrey and he told me that he was turning 35 in April. I knew he came to prison as a teenager. I asked him after spending nearly half his life behind bars what does it feel like to turn 35 in prison? Here's some of what he said.

For some people, turning 35 is a big deal. But for me, April 8 is just another day in prison, where I have celebrated every birthday since I was 19 years old.

A lack of planning is the reason I've celebrated so many birthdays in prison. I went where life took me and let other people make all the choices for me.

I ended up in prison because I took another man's life. In the end, I was the one who decided to take that life. With over 15 years of hindsight, I know I made that choice because I was trying to take control of my own out-of-control life.

I must live with this decision every day, and I am constantly reminded of it by my surroundings.

Now, almost 16 years later, I am wondering what my 35th birthday would have meant if I weren't incarcerated. I wonder what it would mean to me if I did not take a man's life.

Sometimes I imagine my life might have included a wife and a couple of kids, but reality sets in and I know this is far from my truth.

When I committed my crime as a 19-year-old, I never

imagined making it to my 25th birthday, let alone my 35th.

Now that I am turning 35, I am wondering where my youth went, I am also wondering if I will ever experience a normal life.

"I was just a young kid trying to survive in prison"

When I came to prison at 19, I saw and experienced things that many people cannot even imagine. On my first day in prison, I was given a number to replace my name. Violence, oppression and loneliness defined my early days in prison.

Then, I was just a scared young kid trying to survive in prison. As I have grown older, I am not so scared anymore, and that kind of scares me.

I spent my youth trying to not be young. Now, I wish I could have it back. However, I know that is not the way life works.

I know that now, because I did grow up. I know I cannot take back the horrible things I have done. I know I cannot go back and erase those times that I regret.

Instead, I must live with all of my decisions – the decisions I made, and the ones that were made for me. Turning 35 years old in prison is a reminder of all those mistakes I made as a kid.

Over the last few weeks, I have reflected intensely upon



Photo by Sam Hearnes

Tommy Winfrey presenting his idea for the Last Mile

my mistakes and wondered what my future will bring.

I have finally started making plans for my future. I have finally decided to live for tomorrow, instead of just for today. I have finally learned that every day on this planet counts.

Turning 35 in prison is probably not that different from turning 35 in the free world, but I wouldn't know.

There are so many things I don't know about the free world -- things I think I should know, things every 35-year-old should know. I just don't know what those things are.

Tommy is a graduate of the San Quentin entrepreneurial program The Last Mile. As a talented artist, his business idea, Art Felt Creations, is featured in the February edition of San Quentin News. He regularly writes prisoners profiles for the San Quentin News. He is currently enrolled in photography and philosophy classes at the Prison University Project. He answers questions for the website Quora

www.quora.co/Tommy-Winfrey

Health and Safety Concerns Prompt County Jail Suits

By Jason McGinnis
Contributing Writer

Some county jails are facing lawsuits and similar federal oversight due to overcrowding. It's the same issue that forced the state to relieve its over-crowding by shifting some low-level offenders to county control.

Some of the state's overcrowding was relieved by the Realignment plan. But several studies claim the U.S. Supreme Court's order to bring the prisons to constitutional levels will not be met by the Dec 27 deadline.

Seventeen of the state's 58 counties currently have a court-ordered jail capacity limit.

LAWSUITS

The lawsuits filed against the counties claim overcrowding harms prisoners' health and safety. Counties are getting some state funding to accommodate and house the increase in jail populations.

Since the 1980s, many laws have been implemented which keep offenders locked-up longer, regardless of the nature of the offense, which has dramatically increased the incarcerated population of the California.

The main driver of these conditions is the state's Penal Code, which has become a "morass of complicated sentencing requirements developed over the decades more

out of 'tough on crime' political posturing than science about what prevents crime," Lenore Anderson wrote in a Sacramento Bee article.

Anderson claims that these issues can be solved by fixing the Penal Code and enhancing county innovation.

The Public Safety Realignment Law of 2011 allowed for the redistribution of certain low-level offenders to county jails by allocating a portion of state funds for county jails to adding jail capacity.

How the counties spend Realignment funding varies from county to county. Here are some examples:

Three of the 17 counties under federal oversight are Sacramento, Santa Barbara, and San Diego.

Sacramento County has been allocated \$13 million in 2011-2012 for Realignment. Added jail capacity will take almost half of the funding, while health care treatment gets nothing.

San Diego County has received about \$11.2 million under the law. One percent of the money is allocated for new jails, while health care would get about 12 percent of the funding.

Santa Barbara County will add jail capacity with about \$760,000 of its \$3.8 million in state funds. Health care services will get nearly \$560,000. Almost \$2.4 million will be spent on the sheriff's and probation departments.

Documented Problems Haunt American's Prison System

'LONGER SENTENCES CREATE AN AGING PRISON POPULATION'

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

At the end of 2012, several problems continued to plague American prisons, which Human Rights Watch and The PEW Charitable Trust have documented.

The poor, the elderly, children, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities are significantly impacted by U.S. prison policy, according to Human Rights Watch, 2013, Events of 2012 (www.hrw.org).

Educational disparities also affect who is imprisoned in the U.S., according to *Collateral Cost: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility*, by the PEW Charitable Trusts (www.economicmobility.org) and www.pewpublicsafety.org.

"Those without a high school diploma or a General

Equivalency Diploma are far more likely to be locked up," the PEW report finds. "While one in 57 white men ages 20 to 34 is incarcerated, the rate is one in eight for white men of the same age group who lack a high school diploma or GED."

PEW finds black men "face enormously dim prospects when they fail to complete high school. More than 37 percent of black male dropouts between the ages of 20 and 34 are currently behind bars."

The PEW report points out problems that children of incarcerated parent have, such as the "emotional and psychological trauma of separation" leading to "an increased risk of juvenile delinquency."

Racial and ethnic minorities are overly represented in prison. African-Americans comprise 13 percent of the

American population, but represent almost 29 percent of all arrests, according to the HRW report.

Bureau of Justice Statistics numbers show 3.1 percent of African-American men, 1.3 percent of Latino men, 0.5 percent of white men are in prison, reports HRW.

HRW finds the U.S. "incarcerates more people than any other country," and violates practices contrary to human rights principles, "such as the death penalty, juvenile life-without-parole sentences, and solitary confinement."

Longer sentences create an aging prison population, according to HRW. From 2007 through 2010, prisoners 65 and older grew 94 times faster than the total sentenced prisoner population during that same period. The HRW report finds "prisons are ill-

equipped to handle this aging population."

"Those without a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma are far more likely to be locked up"

In 2011, more than 95,000 people under age 18 were held in adult prison or jails.

With about 2,600 juveniles serving life-without-parole sentences in 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled such mandatory sentences were unconstitutional. The HRW report found progress in abolishing

life-without-parole for juveniles. HRW reported nearly every juvenile serving life-without-parole reported physical violence or sexual abuse by prisoners or corrections officers.

Non-citizens in the U.S. number about 25 million with nearly 11 million deemed in "the country without authorization," HRW reports. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency deported a record 396,906 non-citizens in 2012. A record 37,000 non-citizens were charged with illegal entry—the most prosecuted federal crime.

HRW reports a downward trend in the use of capital punishment in the U.S. The report notes 33 states still have the death penalty and in 2012, there were 42 executions. Connecticut and the District of Columbia joined 16 other states eliminating the death penalty.

Report: N.Y. City Shifts Arrest Policies, Reduces Correctional Population

By Jason McGinnis
Contributing Writer

A shift in arrest policies in New York City has led to a decrease in the state's overall correctional population and a reduction in the city's crime rate, according to a new report.

Between 1998 and 2008, crime in New York City dropped 72 percent, from 719,887 reports to 198,419, according to a study by the Vera Institute for Justice titled *How New York City Reduced Mass Incarceration: A Model for Change?*

The report finds one of the factors was police making fewer felony arrests and more misdemeanor arrests since the 1990s.

Other factors included reducing the number of people in jail

awaiting trial who pose no risk to public safety, providing programs in state prisons to ease re-entry once an offender is released, and increasing the use of probation.

Those policies had a significant affect in decreasing the state's correctional population without affecting public safety, the report states.

"The reduction in felony arrests should not be viewed as a decision by the NYPD to ignore serious crime. Rather, it reflects a shift in police strategies to focus on so-called 'quality of life,' 'zero tolerance,' or 'broken windows' approach which turned into the 'stop and frisk' strategy. These policies focus law enforcement resources on misdemeanor crimes such as loitering,

trespassing and vagrancy," the report states.

"To what extent New York City's policing strategy contributed to the drop in the crime rate is a complex question unanswered by the data in this report," the study noted.

Unlike most other areas in the state and country, New York City has a vibrant array of alternative sentencing programs that the report believes have contributed to its lowered crime and incarceration rate. This may also explain why the number of individuals sent to prison in New York counties outside of the city did not decline during the same period.

Despite the decline in the state prison population, the Department of Corrections operating



budget for New York actually increased from \$1.5 billion in 1998-99 to \$2.5 billion in 2006-07. According to the study, this initial increase resulted because the state did not close any facilities. But beginning in 2011, the budget began to stabilize with the closure of 10 prisons as well as many other camps, housing units and dorm facilities.

"These results show that policy changes at the local level

can have a dramatic and lasting impact on state prison as well as jail, probation, and parole populations," the report states.

The report concludes that the case of New York's reduced prison population and crime rates demonstrates why local policies are just as vital as state legislation, and that other states could benefit from similar strategies to "reduce the national epidemic use of mass incarceration."

Lifers Found Suitable, Still Uncertain of Their Release

By Tommy Winfrey
Contributing Writer

Being found suitable for parole as a lifer in the state of California does not mean one is automatically released.

The lifers' suitability for parole is considered after they have served their base term. But as a few lifers at San Quentin have experienced, being deemed "suitable" does not mean they will be released.

Mike Villanueva recently discovered this after his seventh parole hearing.

He was found suitable for parole by a two-member panel after 20 years in prison, but Gov. Jerry Brown bounced his case for a new hearing by a 12-member panel. His crime: conspiracy to commit second-degree murder.

This put Villanueva in limbo, uncertain of his new parole date or whether he would be released on parole.

In 1988, voters passed Proposition 89, which amended the California Constitution. This amendment grants the governor the right to review all decisions made by the parole board,

which he appoints. Proposition 89 gave the governor the right to reverse some parole board decisions and remand others back to the full board, as in Villanueva's case.

For non-murder cases, the governor has 120 days to remand the case back to the full board for review, called an En Banc hearing. The governor has this same right to refer murder cases back to the full board, and an additional 30 days to reverse parole decisions of convicted murders.

Villanueva said when he was found suitable, he believed the 120-day governor's review period was just a formality, but when he found out the governor referred his case to En Banc, he felt hurt. "I was hurt because I showed the board I was suitable and the governor was not acknowledging this fact," Villanueva said, adding, "Instead the process seemed political to me."

California is one of four states that give the governor the ultimate say in lifer's parole decisions. The board is bound by the law in making a decision on

a lifer's parole suitability, but the governor's parole policies usually play a role in how these laws are interpreted.

"The process ultimately puts parole in the hands of a politician, (and) as a result, the decision is often influenced by public opinion," Villanueva says.

In the 1980s, Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis decided to let inmate Willie Horton leave prison temporarily through a state furlough program, which allowed prisoners to go home on certain weekends. Horton committed a heinous rape while out on a furlough. As a result of his decision, Dukakis was labeled "soft on crime" and cost him votes in the 1988 presidential election.

In his book *Thinking About Crime*, author Michael Tonry argues that legislation is based on public opinion, which is usually misinformed because of sensationalized cases in the media, like the Horton case.

The sensationalism of the Horton case sent a clear message to all politicians that the voting public holds politicians responsible for future crimes

of released criminals, and reinforced favorable attitudes toward tough-on-crime policies — such as Proposition 89.

Danny Linn knows the power of Proposition 89 first hand.

Linn was convicted of second-degree murder, and sentenced to 15 years-to-life in 1998. He was found suitable for parole during his first parole hearing nearly 15 years later, and would have been released around March 2, 2013. But on the 29th day of the final governor's review period, Jerry Brown denied his parole date.

Linn says the whole process was like an emotional roller-coaster.

"What I don't understand is why the state spends so much money on paying parole board members and psychologists to make determinations about parole, and one person can come behind them and reverse the decision on speculation alone," Linn says.

Linn says he is staying positive for his next parole hearing in August or September. "I'm not looking at this situation as a setback," Linn says, "Instead, I will continue to do the work on

myself that will eventually lead me out of prison."

Villanueva's case was heard by all 12 members of the parole board at his En Banc hearing on March 19. His suitability was affirmed. Villanueva said he was relieved by this decision, but he believes the process should be reformed.

Villanueva says he believe that a review period of a decision that was made in a few hours is OK, but also the determination of review should be taken out of the governor's hands. He envisions a system where everyone will get the same level of review by paid career civil servants instead of being subject to the review of a politician who has political interests to consider.

"Although I believe I was treated fairly by Brown's appointees, our legal system would be improved if it were changed from one that appoints parole board members, to a system where a person would apply to become a career civil servant as a parole board member."

No such plan is scheduled in the immediate future for the state of California.

Statistics Show Ineffective Treatment For Juvenile Girls in Corrections

By Emile DeWeaver
Journalism Guild Writer

The juvenile justice system serves girls ineffectively, according to Improving the Justice System for Girls: Lessons for the State.

Statistics draw disturbing correlations between tragic home lives and juvenile incarceration for girls. The report said 88 percent of 1,000 girls it studied who were detained in California, had serious mental or health prob-

lems.

Based on a report from the California Youth Authority, Ventura School, "74 percent (of female wards) reported being hurt or in danger of being hurt, 76 percent reported witnessing someone being severely injured or killed, and 60 percent reported being raped or in danger of being raped."

Many female wards also have health needs related to pregnancy and childbirth. Twenty-nine percent of the girls in the study

had been pregnant at least once, and 16 percent had been pregnant while incarcerated.

Though arrest rates have been falling in recent years, statistics showed that between 1997 and 2009, when the rate of incarceration for boys declined 24 percent, the rate for girls remained about the same.

Researchers say they believe the justice system consistently misses the mark with girls because the juvenile system has failed to implement reforms that

address the needs particular to girl offenders.

Despite the growing body of research that calls for gender-responsive reforms, researchers say they believe there are few statewide efforts to reform the juvenile justice system for girls. A 1998 report released by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) put forward the following guidelines for gender-responsive reform efforts:

- Programs should be all fe-

male whenever possible;

- Girls should be treated in the least restrictive environment, whenever possible;

- Programs should be close to girls' homes in order to maintain family relationships;

- Programs should be consistent with female development and stress the role of relationships between staff members and girls; and

- Programs should address the needs of parenting and pregnant teens.

SPORTS

Curbing Aggression Through Boxing and Finding Inner Peace



Photo by Gary Scott

Perry "Spike" Simpson Beating up the punching bag on the S.Q. Lower Yard

By Phoeun You
Staff Writer

Boxing training is helping a former gang member in San Quentin release anger, curb ag-

gression and find inner peace. "Through boxing I can let go of negative thoughts and negative energy," said Perry "Spike" Simpson, 46. "I am no longer angry and insecure. I

am able to think and see clearly without acting out in an aggressive way."

He trains by jumping rope and pounding a punching bag in the prison's Lower Yard.

Simpson said growing up in a gang-infested neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles was where he developed his aggressive behavior. "Where I came from, you either go to school, be a square and get bullied, or become a gang member. I chose gangs," he said.

In a household with an absent father, Simpson said he ran the streets and joined the gang at the age of 11 to fill the void of emptiness. He admitted his criminal lifestyle resulted in constant run-ins with the law. At 13, Simpson was arrested for burglary and is currently serving a life sentence under the Three Strikes Law.

Raised without a father, his grandmother, mother, and older sisters played a big role in his upbringing. "I had to be the man of the house," said Simpson. He added, "These women in my life was everything to me and they was my biggest supporters."

Unfortunately, deaths in his family contributed to his deviant behaviors. In 1986, his grandmother passed away from natural cause; in 1987, his older sister was kidnapped, raped and murdered; and in 1988, while waiting for his mother's visitation in prison, Simpson received notice that she had passed away from consuming the wrong medication. "Their deaths made me anti-social," said Simpson.

A childhood friend and men-

tor, "LaLa," said that before boxing, "Simpson was impressionable, mentally corrupted, based on the influence and image of others. With a better understanding of boxing, he has discovered his own potential and is ready to make a contribution to society under the influence of his true self."

"I am no longer angry and insecure. I am able to think and see clearly without acting out in an aggressive way"

"I want to thank my mentors and training partners: Emo-Tip, Duck, Mujah, the General, LaLa, and Clay for showing me that boxing is also a mental sport that brings calmness," said Simpson. He adds, "I've found the fountain of youth and I plan to continue this (boxing) for the rest of my days... until my body can't take it no more."

With the practice of boxing Simpson hopes to make amends to his daughters RoRo, 21, and Ryan, 15, and sister, Fila, for also being an inspiration, which helped him continue to keep on his path towards redemption, said Simpson.

4th Annual 3-Mile Race Sees Record-Breaking Performance

By Frank Rouna
Contributing Writer

Three runners of the Thousand Mile Club broke Ronnie Goodman's all-time record in the San Quentin 4th annual Three Mile Race.

Seventeen people took part in the event, which was held in San Quentin Prison on Feb. 23.

Eddie Herena ran his last mile in 5:53 and finished in a fast 17:36, taking 44 seconds off the existing record.

"It was like a big burden lifted of my mind," said Herena. "I tried to stay relaxed and trust the work that I put in. I was shooting for the record and my expectation was to get under 18 minutes."

Herena said that he did in-

tense interval training three days a week to prepare for this event.

Miguel Quezada, who had gone out at a relative conservative pace of 6:05 for mile one, and 12:11 for his first two miles, finished with a strong 5:41 final mile and took over Gutierrez to finish in second place in a fine 17:52.

Angel Gutierrez hung on to

run a strong 17:57 and all three runners, Herena, Quezada and Gutierrez easily broke the existing three-mile record.

The pace was fast from the start as Herena and Gutierrez were determined to push the pace and break the Ronnie Goodman's existing San Quentin three-mile record of 18:20.

The first quarter of a mile was ran in a sizzling 74 seconds and

the runners went through the first half of a mile in 2:39. They then settled into a steady six minutes per mile pace and came through the first mile in 5:39.

They continued to run together through two miles as they ran their second mile in 6:04 and came through two miles in 11:43. That's when the big three took off to record-setting finishes.

All-Madden Quarterback Talks About the Skills He Developed in School

By Gary Scott
Sports Writer

San Quentin All-Madden flag football team's quarterback Royce "Gator" Rose explains how he gradually developed his quarterback skills.

At El Cerrito High School, Rose got his first chance to play the quarterback position. "During my freshman year, my best friend, who played running back, was cut from the team. At that time, we had too many running backs on the team, so I volunteered to play quarterback so I could make the team."

He commented how he had a sub par quarterback IQ. "I really didn't know how to run a play, nor did I understand schemes," said Rose. "I was basically an

athlete that threw the ball three to four times a game in a running shoot offense in my freshman year."

Rose got better as he learned through game experience. He said, "My sophomore year, it took me three games to get on the field. I played for the varsity team and I started to learn the game a bit more."

Rose played for the Mason and McDuffy baseball team, which is a recreational city team. He played Pop Warner football for the Richmond Steelers. He played baseball, basketball, and football on his high school team, the El Cerrito Gauchos.

"My brother introduced me to sports," he said. "I grew up watching him play and it inspired me. I started playing



File Photo

Royce Rose breaking a tackle while playing with the El Cerrito football team

baseball at 8 years old until high school."

He described his quarterback grade as above average. "I had good skill players, so it made it easier for me. We were all on the

same page and it made it easier to play my position.

Rose also plays for the San Quentin A's baseball team and he attends Patten University's Prison University Project.

"I'm beginning to become a student athlete," he said. "I'm taking school more seriously. When I went to college on the outside, I did just enough to get by."

The Bittermen Basketball Coach Talks About Playing in Prison

By Ruben Harper
Contributing Writer

Unity and sportsmanship are key to athletes coming to San Quentin to compete with prisoners, said Ted Saltveit, head coach of The Bittermen basketball team.

Regarding racial harmony, Saltveit noted The Bittermen are white and Asian men, while the San Quentin Kings are mostly black with one Hispanic.

The Kings defeated the visitors 67-62, but there was obvious good feelings all around.

"We were nervous when we first came in to the prison to play," said Saltveit about his team's inaugural basketball experience March 9 against the Kings.

"The outside inner league basketball minority teams in the Oakland area had a good sports program, and the S.Q. Kings remind us of that same fun," said Saltveit.

"The San Kings give us a good challenge after all, it comes down to being just a game of basketball," said Saltveit.

"We were nervous when we first came in to the prison to play"

Saltveit described the interwoven sociality of his team's camaraderie with the Kings as a revolving circle of familiar racial basketball interac-

tion. He said his teammate's participation with the Kings is reminiscent of their basketball plays in the inner cities of Northern California.

The Bittermen point guard Sungbae expressed appreciation for the opportunity to compete with the Kings.

"We are a group of guys from various connections across Northern California," said Sungbae. He also emphasized that "the majority of our team went to college together, and we are a prison-only team."

Kings Head Coach Orlando "Duck" Harris said he expects his players to present themselves in a positive manner.

"My mind set is: The Kings' policy is to just play basketball and let me worry about any calls as a head coach," said Harris.



Photo by Gary Scott

Bittermen basketball team on the Lower Yard

"Most of the (drafted) players on the Kings are student athletes, and they attend college programs here in San Quentin," said Harris. He also mentioned

that, "Not only are they expected to set (good) examples for the younger men, but they are to do so for the general population too."

Kings Start Their Season Opener With a Win Over Bittermen



Photo by Michael Nelson

Tare "Cancun" Beltranchuc dribbling the basketball up the court for the Kings

With composure and a will to be victorious, the San Quentin Kings basketball team made critical fourth-quarter baskets in their season-opener, defeating the outside team called The Bittermen, 67-62.

With eight minutes left in the fourth quarter, the 40-and-over Kings held a narrow 43-41 lead.

With 4:20 left in the fourth quarter, Kings point guard Billy Wilson drained a three-pointer from the top corner; the key to maintaining the Kings' lead of 57-53.

The Kings' other point guard, Tare "Cancun" Beltranchuc, got the rebound and hit Wilson with an assist to give the Kings a 59-53 lead.

The Bittermen's head coach Ted Saltveit called an immediate timeout. He told his players they were not playing with enough energy, and they needed to stay focused.

"The Kings are competitive and they are our rivals," said Saltveit later about his team's experience with the Kings under pressure.

The Bittermen capitalized on the Kings' failed attempt at a layup, and responded with a

three-pointer of their own to decrease their deficit to 62-58.

After a Bittermen's turnover, Kings forward Thad Fleeton went down for layup to increase the Kings' lead to 64-58.

"I think that our overall energy was good and our communication was good on the court," Fleeton commented after the game.

The Bittermen made two free throws with only 46 seconds left in the fourth quarter. However, it was not enough to change the momentum of the game. The Kings countered with a made free throw and a steal that led to a score as they went on to win the game.

Before the start of the fourth quarter, Kings Coach Orlando Harris emphasized to his players that they were expected to make good shots, with an inside-out offensive game plan.

"Overall, I think they per-

formed well," said Harris.

He also said, "We're not where we exactly want to be as a team yet. (However), I was impressed with my players' poise and sportsmanship. I liked the ways they conducted themselves as men representing the San Quentin Kings basketball program."

After the game, Beltranchuc commented, "It was a long time since I played basketball. I have to get back to practicing. The more I play with my teammates, I know I will get better because I will get used to them."

Beltranchuc also said he is honored by the selection as the only King of Mexican background, and this motivates him to positively contribute to his team's success this season.

—Ruben Harper



Photo by Gary Scott

San Quentin Kings posing on the Lower Yard basketball court

San Quentin's Annual Tuberculosis Testing

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL INMATES: ANNUAL INMATE TUBERCULOSIS TESTING STARTS APRIL 26, 2013

East Block, AC and NS: Mid-April

California State Law requires that every inmate be screened yearly for Tuberculosis. San Quentin will start doing the annual Tuberculosis testing in the next few weeks. If you have had negative TB tests in the past, you will be tested. If you have had documented positive TB tests in the past, you will be screened for symptoms, but not tested. You are required by law to be screened!

What Is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis is a disease of the lungs that is commonly called TB. TB is caused by a germ that floats in the air. You can be exposed to TB if a person with infectious TB disease talks, coughs, sneezes or sneezes. This sprays TB germs into the air around you. Anyone nearby can breathe the TB germs into their lungs. Some of these people could become infected with TB.

Why Is It Important To Have A TB Skin Test?

You can be infected with TB and not know it. TB germs can live in your body without making you sick right

away. The TB Skin Test can tell you early that you need treatment.

Residents of prisons are at risk for developing TB. Since TB is spread through the air, all people who share the same air space can get TB. Residents of prisons are at risk for developing TB. Inmates should be tested regularly to make sure TB does not spread.

The TB Skin Test can catch TB early. The earlier you find TB infection, the easier it can be to treat.

What Is A TB Skin Test?

A TB Skin Test is a simple test to determine whether a TB infection is present. A small amount of PPD (purified protein derivative) is injected just under the skin with a sterile, unused needle. This forms a small bump, which soon disappears.

You may experience some redness or minor swelling in your arm – this is not unusual or harmful. You may have had a TB Skin Test recently. It is not harmful to have another. PPD is not a blood product. You can not get AIDS from a TB Skin Test.

The Skin Test is read 48 to 72 hours after the test is given. The medical staff read the test by feeling, and then measuring, the firmness at the site of the test. If your test is not read within 48 to

72 hours, it must be repeated.

What Is A Positive Skin Test?

When the Skin Test measures greater than 10 millimeters, your test is positive. In some higher risk individuals, a Skin Test measuring five millimeters is positive. A positive test does not necessarily mean you have the disease. It means you have the germs in your body and need follow-up. It is important that a medical evaluation be performed. You will be scheduled for a visit to the clinic.

What Does A Negative Skin Test Mean?

A negative skin test means one of the following:

You have not been infected with TB, or

You may have been infected with TB, but it's too early to tell, or

Your immune system is weak and did not react properly. This can happen with cancer and HIV patients.

What Do I Do If My TB Skin Test Is Positive?

You should receive a medical evaluation, which could include a chest X-ray. Your doctor may recommend medications for you to take. An appointment will be scheduled for you in your clinic at the earliest available time.

—By Dr. E. Tootell

Health & Wellness

By Dr. E Tootell
Chief Medical Officer

Paroling soon? Don't forget to arrange for medical care on the outside.

The institution will provide 30 days of prescription medications when you leave. You will need to see an outside medical provider to get a new prescription for medications.

Most county clinics require ID (like a driver's license) for you to be seen. We can also provide you a verification letter that explains that you have been incarcerated recently, which may help. You can now make an appointment with most DMV offices to expedite your driver's license appointment.

You will not receive any over-the-counter medications when you leave, such as naproxen, ibuprofen, or loratidine. You should take your over-the-counter medications with you when you leave. You can purchase these medications at any pharmacy, such as Walgreens, Rite-Aid, or CVS. Look for the generic version of these medications (usually the pharmacy has its own brand) which will cost less.

If you would like assistance to make a medical appointment when you leave S.Q., please contact your health care provider. The provider can either print out a list of county health care clinics that offer low-cost services, or refer you to the discharge planner who can help you make an appointment.

Make copies of the relevant medical records by contacting the medical records department. X-rays, CT scans, specialty consults, and vaccinations are important for your new medical provider to have. If you are currently receiving controlled substances such as methadone or Tylenol with codeine, your new medical provider will likely request documentation that you received these medications while incarcerated.

If you are eligible for disability (SSI), we can help submit the application. Eligibility criteria are:

You are physically unable to work for at least a year after leaving prison.

You have a firm parole/discharge date.

You will leave prison within 90 to 120 days from the submission date of the SSI application.

Good luck, and please do not return to prison.

U.C. Berkeley Report The Cost of California's Justice System

By Jason McGinnis
Contributing Writer

The size of California's criminal justice is mostly in line with the national average, but costs are significantly higher, according to a University of California study.

It is still unclear what impact realignment will have on costs and public safety, according to the report by the UC Berkeley Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy titled California in Context: How Does California's Criminal Justice System Compare to Other States? www.warreninstitute.org.

California accounted for 12.1 percent of the U.S. general population in 2010, but made up about 10.6 percent, 11.8 percent and 14.3 percent of the jail, prison and parole populations in the United States that year, respectively. The September 2012 report calls all those proportions "in line with what you would expect for a state of over 37 million people."

California spending per capita on corrections in 2008 (the latest figures available) was 56 percent higher compared to the national average, at \$373 per capita compared to \$239 per capita, respec-

tively.

"Focusing on state prisons and the average annual cost per prisoner, California is again significantly higher than the national average, specifically 51.6 percent higher in FY 2010. California spent an average of \$47,421 per state prisoner compared to the national average of \$31,286. Based on a 2010 survey by the Vera Institute that included 40 states, California ranked sixth in annual cost per state prisoner," the report says.

"What remains to be seen is whether these reforms (realignment) result in significant sav-

ings to taxpayers and improvements in public safety. It will be interesting to see how California measures up to other state criminal justice systems after realignment-related changes are well established," the report concludes.

All four California criminal justice populations examined in this report underwent significant growth between 1980 and 2010, but the populations under the jurisdiction of the state government – prison and parole populations – grew significantly faster than the jail and probation population, which are the two

the criminal justice populations under the jurisdiction of county governments.

The growth in the state's prison and parole populations far exceeded national-growth levels between 1980 and 2010. The prison and parole populations in California increased 572 percent and 708 percent respectively, while the national growth rate for each was 317 percent and 204 percent, respectively.

The report comments that realignment's shifting responsibility for low-level offenders from the state to counties, "makes sense."

Study Addresses Reducing Prison Overcrowding and Public Safety

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

A new study offers recommendations for reducing prison populations without jeopardizing public safety.

"Research shows that the most cost-effective ways to increase public safety, reduce prison populations, and save money are to invest in proven community-based programs that positively impact youth," according to the report by the Justice Policy Institute.

"Evidence-based programs for youth have shown to produce up to \$13 in benefits for one dollar spent in terms of improved public safety," according to the report titled, *Behind the Times: President Obama's FY2013 budget focuses on prison and policing when prison populations have fallen for the first time in 40 years.*

Federal spending on programs geared toward improving the lives of juveniles will decrease by \$18-\$245 million. "This reduction for juvenile programs

can result in more youth being held in juvenile facilities and poor conditions," the report claims.

The federal prison system will cost taxpayers nearly \$7 billion this year. One billion will pay private prisons contracts. Paying police will cost \$4 billion. "This spending pattern will most likely add incarceration costs, and will outweigh any increased federal revenue for local law enforcement with marginal public safety benefits," the report states.

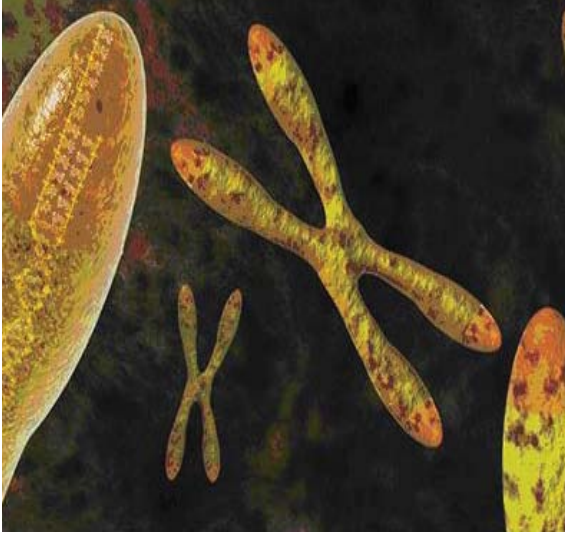
The research found local gov-

ernments that spent money on policing increased their prison populations "without necessarily improving public safety."

President Obama has expressed concerns about the nation's incarceration rate; however, the latest budget on federal prisons "seems to be at odds with that trend," the report states. "The Bureau of Prisons has about 226,000 people, and proposals are to reactivate facilities in Mississippi and West Virginia. The budget also included an additional \$314 million to

acquire 1,000 private contract beds."

The federal government should invest in programs that have positive and long-lasting effects on individuals and communities, such as "community-based substance and mental health treatment, evidence-based prevention programs for youth, employment, job skills and education in under-served communities, and lastly, diversion programs that will keep citizens from entering the corrections system," the report concludes.



Telomeres (tinted red) protect chromosomes like the plastic tips on shoelaces. The length of telomeres may be a marker for longevity. (Carol and Mike Werner / PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC)

Duke University Links Negative Life Experiences to Longevity

By Kris Himmelberger
Staff Writer

Negative life experiences may affect longevity, says a Duke University study.

Researchers analyzed DNA samples from several 5-year-old children and reanalyzed them in five years. The researchers found that the children who suffered physical abuse, bullying, or had witnessed adults engage in domestic violence had “the fastest erosion of their telomeres, compared with children who experienced just one type of violence or did not experience violence at all.”

Telomeres are specialized structures that are central for cellular replication. “They are essential for protecting chromosome ends,” says Carol Greider, a molecular biologist at the Johns Hopkins University, who was awarded a share of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for telomere research. “When the telomere gets to be very short, there are consequences,” she says, noting the increased risk of age-related ailments.

Several other studies have also linked trauma to telomere erosion.

A study of 5,243 nurses nationwide found that those who suffered chronic stress and phobia had visible physical effects and significantly shorter telomeres than those who didn’t. “It was like looking at someone who is 60 years old versus someone who was 66 years old,” said Olivia Okerke, the study’s lead author.

In a separate Post Traumatic Stress Disorder study, participants were asked whether they had a history of severe childhood trauma, including neglect, family violence, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

The results showed that those that suffered the greatest childhood trauma had shorter telomere length. Interestingly, those participants without a history of childhood abuse had telomere length equal to those of the healthy control group.

There are no studies on prisoner stress and its impact on telomeres, but it is known that they suffer stress on a daily basis.

University of Santa Cruz Professor Craig Haney studied the effects of prison on prisoners and found “the fact that a high percentage of persons presently incarcerated have experienced childhood trauma means, among other things, that the harsh, punitive and uncaring nature of prison life may present a kind of ‘re-traumatization.’”

A San Quentin prisoner who goes by the name Ramirez characterized prison as stressful, a place where every waking hour is controlled. “There’s an element of fear,” he said. “You have to follow the administration rules and the convict rules. It was all so stressful that I lost 90 pounds and started taking antidepressants to cope with the stress.”

“San Quentin is a better environment than most prisons,” Ramirez says. “It’s like being on a college campus. The fact that there are different sports and geese all around, I feel very grateful to be here.” The only complaint Ramirez has is the long waiting list for self-help classes.

Scientists don’t understand exactly how negative life experiences accelerate telomere erosion, but they believe positive behavior and having an active lifestyle through exercise, such as running, may slow down the negative erosion of telomeres.

New Sentencing Method Gives Judges Flexibility

By San Quentin News Staff

California judges are now able to slow down jail populations through a new sentencing method that gives courts more flexibility on where offenders serve their sentences. The method, called split sentencing, allows offenders to serve part of their sentence locked up and part on probation.

SENTENCING

Split sentences are the result of the state’s prison population reduction plan, called realignment.

Realignment went into effect July 2011.

The number of split-sentenced offenders averaged 560 per month since realignment, totaling 21,500 felony offenders.

After realignment, the number of offenders sent to state prison was 20 percent higher

than predicted, the report finds. Furthermore, jail populations were 11 percent higher.

Many county jails were already overcrowded before realignment, according to the Winter 2012 newsletter published by the Chief Probation Officer of California: *Mandatory Supervision: The Benefits of Evidence Based Supervision under Public Safety Realignment*. <http://www.cpoc.org/realignment>.

The research showed offenders had the best chance of staying out of jail after release when they were involved in re-entry programming while incarcerated and then released into a supervised and structured program.

RISK ASSESSMENT

According to the report, offenders responded best when officers used risk assessment

to determine the best plan for individuals to avoid criminal activity, used community-based services, paid special attention to high-risk offenders and took immediate action against offenders who violated the law or rules of probation.

Since realignment, nearly 16,500 offenders were sentenced to “straight time” with no mandatory supervision after release, the report states. These offenders were more likely to reoffend because they had no assistance reintegrating into the community once they were released, the report finds.

“These facts have two conclusions,” the report states. Sentencing offenders to straight time contributes to overcrowded jails. In addition, people coming out of jail without any treatment are more likely to recidivate than those who are supervised and case managed.

Counties Vary on Prison Convictions Under Gov. Brown’s Realignment Plan

“These Significant Inequalities Need Resolution”

By Juan Haines
Managing Editor

There’s a wide disparity between California counties on how many people are shipped off to state prisons, a new report says.

Since Gov. Jerry Brown shifted responsibility for some low-level offenders from state to county control on Oct. 1, 2011, San Francisco County has spearheaded the new approach to crime and punishment. If other counties followed the lead, 25,000 fewer offenders would have ended up in state prison, the report says.

“The prison population has remained steady since September 2012, and shows little signs of further reduction”

San Francisco’s solution: use of alternative sentencing includes, electronic monitoring, home detention, residential treatment beds, restorative justice classes, substance abuse services, parenting classes, employment counseling and services, and transitional housing.

Risk and needs assessment evaluations are given to offenders 60 days before re-

leased. Post-release services include home visits, outpatient behavioral health treatment and cognitive behavioral interventions.

“Statewide, six percent of people arrested for non-violent crimes were sentenced to state prison, but the figure was 16 percent in Kings County and only one percent in San Francisco County, according to the report by *Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice*.

“For drug offenses, arrestees in Kings County were 19 times more likely to serve time in state prison than in San Francisco County — and 35 times more likely than in Contra Costa County.”

The shifting of low-level offenders to county control is called Realignment. It was California’s response to a May 2011 U.S. Supreme Court ruling to reduce its prison population.

The “in-state prison population has fallen 17 percent since the implementation of Realignment,” finds the report. However, “the prison population has remained steady since September 2012, and shows little signs of further reductions.”

California’s 33 prisons are designed to hold 79,959 offenders. The order determined California could incarcerate 109,944 people without violating the constitutional ban against cruel and unusual punishment. The state’s prisons held 119,274 prisoners as of March 13.

A major problem is that

many counties continue to send low-level property and drug offenders to state prison, the report claims. In addition, significant county-by-county differences in sentencing are creating “both civil rights and economic concerns” leading to “overcrowding and lawsuits, and create higher state taxpayer liabilities than do low-imprisonment, self-reliant counties that manage more offenders locally,” according to the report.

The 5-, 10-, or even 20-fold disparities in the likelihood of a drug offender, a petty thief with prior convictions or a check forger being sentenced to prison in one county versus another county raises serious questions about equal application of the law.

“These significant inequalities need resolution either by tightening Realignment standards to further restrict prison admissions, or by state sentencing guidelines that accomplish the same goal of reserving prison space for people convicted of violent, serious, or sex-related crimes.”

Sentencing commissions establish either advisory or mandatory guidelines for ranges of sentences allowed for each offense, with allowances for mitigating and aggravating factors.

“Without comprehensive sentencing reform, a solution to the costs, high recidivism rates, and legal crises plaguing California’s prison system will likely remain elusive,” the report concludes.

BOOK REVIEW

A Survival Journey From 1945

By Juan Haines
Managing Editor

After reading Mitchell Zuckoff's *Lost in Shangri-La*, one big question lingered as I hungered for more out of this miraculous saga of survival. How did this Wonder Woman, Tarzan and Indiana Jones adventure get "lost" in American history?

The New York Times best-seller chronicles the true story of a U.S. Army plane on a sightseeing mission that slammed into an uncharted valley in Dutch New Guinea in May 1945, toward the end of World War II. Only three of the 24 soldiers survived the crash.

The survivors included Corporal Margaret Hastings, who "considered herself an independent young woman who, as she put it, drank liquor, but not too much, and liked the boys, but not too

much." The press dubbed Hastings as "Queen of Shangri-La."

The leader of the survivors was Lieutenant John McCollom, whose twin brother died in the crash.

Although Tech Sergeant Kenneth Decker survived the crash, he suffered a life-threatening head injury.

Zuckoff uses McCollom and Hastings' journal entries from the time to piece together the story of their survival and rescue.

"How Decker got to his feet I shall never know," Hastings wrote. "But he did, and staggered uncomplainingly after McCollom, determined to do his share of the work."

Hastings herself was suffering from third-degree burns and gangrene developing on her legs.

"Fearing that her legs would have to be amputated, and that Decker's infections

would fatally poison his blood, we were all wondering if the medics would reach us in time," Hastings' journal reads.

"New Guinea was home to more missing airplanes than any country on earth," Zuckoff writes. The treacherous, uncharted terrain made it nearly impossible to enter or leave the area on foot.

Adding to the survivors' dread: Japanese soldiers were lurking somewhere in the jungle.

Ignorance about the valley's indigenous occupants gave the survivors yet another problem to think about. However, after establishing contact with one of the tribes, a cross-cultural exchange and friendship developed even before rescue plans began.

Hastings' journal documents the native's culture, describing their dress and

religious practices, as well as the important role loyalty played in their lives.

The natives greeted close friends or relations, by saying "Hal-loak-nak," which translates literally to "Let me eat your feces." Its true meaning – "I will do the unthinkable for you."

About a week after the crash, rescue planes spotted the survivors.

The rescuers had "no maps, no safe drop zone, no predicting the natives' response, and no exit plan," Zuckoff quotes Captain Earl Walters as warning his troops at the time. Nevertheless, every paratrooper in the survivors' base volunteered to jump into Shangri-La. Walter eventually chose 10 troops for the mission.

After several rescue plans were discussed and subsequently discarded, it was determined that the only feasible plan was to land a glider into the valley. The rescuers would then use a plane flying about 20 feet off the ground to snatch the glider back into the air – which had to be done three times due to the glider's weight limit.

Austrian actor and filmmaker Alexander Cann parachuted on-site to document the survivors' two-month ordeal and their ensuing rescue. (Cann's connection to San Quentin — he played a prison guard in the 1937 movie, *San Quentin*, starring Humphrey Bogart.)

Even though the survivors established friendly relations with the natives during their stay, "the outsiders' presence had disturbed their routines, their wars in particular," Zuckoff writes.

While finishing his research for the book in February 2010, Zuckoff saw a young native man wearing a t-shirt displaying President Barack Obama.

"Asked if he knew the identity of the man on his shirt, he smiled shyly and said no," Zuckoff writes.

In the decades following the rescue mission, Western influences flooded into the secluded valley, forever changing the lifestyle of its inhabitants, according to Zuckoff.

"They were warriors and independent people," Zuckoff concludes. "Now they're serfs in their own country."

S.Q.'s Retired Community Partner Manager Misses Old Friendships

Hello SQ News!

First off, let me say how much I miss all of you. I am at a loss for words to adequately express the depth of my feelings for you all, and simply want you to know you are remembered fondly and wishes well every day.

After being out for nearly nine months. I am still trying to settle into my new life here in Fl. It is a strange thing to hear crickets or cicadas instead of alarms all the time. The air here is thick with humidity most days. The people are 99.9 percent friendly and down to earth, yet I still feel like I am a stranger in a foreign land. Eight years in prison definitely made an impact one and how I see the world.

I still have difficulty sometimes relating to "free people" because so much of my time was spent immersed in the limitations inherent in the incarcerated world. It's as though I don't really know how to act without someone telling me what I can and can't do. Strange, but true. Definitely an adjustment and a growing up, again, of sorts. Personal accountability, discipline, and a sense of purpose are the concepts most difficult to put into practice now that I'm "on my own". I guess I hadn't fully realized how much I came to depend on you all, my brothers, for moral support every day. I knew I would miss you all when I left, but I really had no idea what it would end up feeling like. I can tell you know; it's painful. It's emotionally

and mentally and physically painful. Not being able to see you, talk with you, laugh with you, brainstorm and work on projects with you—it leaves me feeling empty and adrift.

I thought I would immediately look for similar work here in Florida, but I have not been able to find anything that compare with being there with you all. Doubtful that anything ever will. I was so blessed to have had the time with you there that I did. My hope now is that I can figure out what I am suppose to do with that experience and knowledge from here on out.

"As I continue my job search here, I am hopeful I will find a teaching position which allow me to work with 'at-risk' kids"

I knew I needed to decompress after being there so long, but now that I feel like I can breathe and think clearly again, I am getting anxious that I don't know which direction to go in next. This limbo time is difficult for me. As most of you know, I don't really how to "slow down". I always told those of you who told me to "slow down" that I only have two speeds: Go, and Stop. And, while I am a big fan of getting some rest once in a while, being in this "stop" mode for so long is

not natural for me; it's getting uncomfortable. Those of you who've participated in Jacques Verduin's classes know about "sitting in the fire" with whatever you've got going on. I guess this is my version of "sitting in the fire". Sure ain't easy. My hat's off to those of you who've done it and continue to work on it.

To help me feel like I was "doing something" again, I signed up to participate in a Half-Marathon, which takes place in Washington, DC, April 28, to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. I did it because I know several people who are dealing with blood cancers, and wanted to do something to further the possibility of them living long and fruitful lives despite their diagnoses. One of those people is Dominick (Dee, New York) Whitaker, whom I came to through the S.Q. Thousand Mile Club. To see his determination and positive spirit was always inspirational. I wish I could go for practice runs with him now for this half-marathon I have coming up! He will be with me in spirit as I go the 13.1 miles as best I can on April 28.

As I continue my job search here, I am hopeful I will find a teaching position which allowed me to work with "at-risk" kids. But so far, God has not made a path evident, so I continue to pray on it and get prepared for the moment when the opportunity comes, so I can with purpose.

Despite trying to "do good"



Photo by Michael Nelson

Laura Bowman speaking to the crowd on her last 2012 Avon Breast Cancer Walk in San Quentin

here, hearing the news of Ron Taylor's passing, and the denials of parole for many of the men I know, and then the deaths of several cherished volunteers, my heart aches and I am despondent and feel inconsolable without being around you all. Because, no one can relate to what I'm feeling, it's like being an expatriate of sorts. I'm sure that the guys who are now on the outside have a similar kind of feeling. None of us wants to stay in there indefinitely, but we miss it in a weird way once we're out. Well, we miss SOME of it!

In my fumbling attempt to convey through words what I am feeling at being apart from you all, I hope the essence of it had come thought. And that what I stated at the beginning: I miss you and continue to be humbled by the knowledge that life really does go one without me.

I am proud of all of you for continuing to do the good things you do. You were doing it before I got there. You

tought me how to be a part of it and how to encourage others to be involved, too. And you keep doing despite the comes and going of me and countless others. That is the definition of perseverance, patience, and purpose.

As I said often during my time there, even though I came to be there as a teacher, I learned much more from the men I worked with than I ever taught. Thank you for that. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your circles and for taking me into your confidence. My gratitude to you as my teachers is endless. My life is so much richer for having known you.

God bless each of you and your loved ones. I look forward to a day when I can share time with all of you again, inside or outside.

My best to you all.

Laura Bowman-Salzsieder

Editor's Note: Laura is the former San Quentin community partnership manager.

Report Indicates Incarcerating Californians Did Little to Secure the Public's Well Being

By San Quentin News Staff

The significant increase in more Californians being jailed since the mid-1970s did little for public safety, according to a new report.

"Our dramatic increase in prison and jail for nonviolent offenders has had little discernable positive impact on public safety," the report finds.

More than 1,000 laws were enacted since the mid-1970s, which escalated the number of people going to prison and fewer being released—resulting in overcrowded prisons, the report states.

CAPACITY

The growing population forced California to expand its prisons designed capacity to 83,219 and its jails to 76,000.

The expansion of the prison system's capacity, the rapid growth in incarceration rates and lengthening of terms – as well as people held in jail pending trial – contributed to the overcrowded conditions and prompted multiple lawsuits, according to the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice report, Local Reform in a Realigned Environment: Data Driven Strategies to Enhance Public Safety (www.cjci.org).

POPULATION

Longer sentencing laws have caused California's state prisoner population to balloon from 19,000 in the 1970s to 93,000 in 1990, the report added. In the same period, the county jail population increased almost threefold, from 25,000 to 70,000.

Furthermore, the report as-

serts idleness, poor conditions and the affects of incarcerating offenders with minor offenses with hardened criminals, along with inadequate reentry management and support, "has the unintended consequence of increasing recidivism upon return to society."

COURT RULING

In 2010 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled California's prisons were so overcrowded that they constituted "cruel and unusual punishment," and capped the prison population at 110,000.

In response to the ruling, the state Legislature passed a law, called realignment, designed to meet the cap by June 27, 2013. However, the deadline has since been extended to Dec. 27.

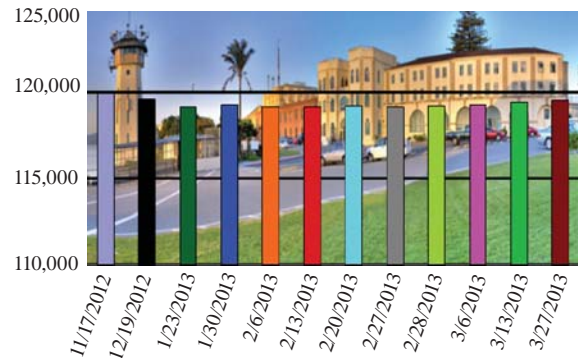
An examination of CDCR

records show that since July 2012, the population has been hovering around 119,000 – 9,000 more than the cap.

"This shift in responsibility for lower-level offenders to California's 58 counties, has

presented significant challenges and necessitated a re-consideration of established sentencing practices and the development of a broader array of community sanctions," the report concludes.

CDCR Institutional Population Data Provided by CDCR
Court Ordered Population Cap=110,000



'Decriminalize Mental Illness in New York's Criminal Justice System'

By Boston Woodard
Staff Writer

The criminal justice systems needs to cut costs, and one of the main ways of doing that would be to decriminalize mental illness, according to the executive director of the Correctional Association of New York.

"For us to take resources – not just money, but brain power – and devise solutions to incarceration, especially for young people and the mentally ill, outside the criminal justice system," Soffiyah Elijah, 57, said in an interview placed on the internet.

"If a response team of social workers could be brought to the scene, we could have much better outcomes. Having the involvement of knowledgeable social workers could cut down on deaths and allow police officers to deal with real crime. We need to decriminalize mental illness," she said.

Elijah said the state should have mental health courts and provide facilities for those with mental illnesses.

"It costs about \$56,000 a year to incarcerate someone. You could provide a whole lot of mental health services for a lot less than that. I'm not minimizing the fact the person may have done something dangerous or violent, but a person with mental illness is not best served in a prison setting.

"If we don't get their mental illness resolved, the likelihood they will hurt someone else again is increased.

"We need a lot more doctors in the system, and caring doctors," she said. "Medical and dental care should not be being filtered through the correctional

officers, because withholding medical and dental treatment is a way for them (correctional officers) to retaliate against people who are incarcerated."

Another problem within the New York prison system is rape and sexual abuse, especially in Attica, a maximum-security prison where most of the inmates are serving long sentences, she said.

"Sexual harassment and sexual abuse throughout prison is rampant, but Attica is particularly bad," said Elijah. "Attica has the second-highest reported rate of staff sexual misconduct for male prisons in the nation. If you count women's prisons, it's third, as Bayview (a medium security women's prison located in Chelsea, N.Y.) is second."

In the past, Elijah urged state officials to shut down Attica, saying Attica prisoners could be moved to other facilities in New York. "Attica has a long, ugly history and that has never been cleared since (the famous riot in) 1971," she said. "There were 8,000 empty prison beds last year and the governor closed 3,800, leaving 4,200."

Elijah stated that New York is trying to lower prison costs by keeping more people from behind bars.

To help curb the growing number of young offenders, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg started a Young Men's Initiative to help reduce the number of black and Latino men in prison.

"Any programs we can put in place to address the problems facing young people are a step in the right direction," Elijah said. "We really need to break down the cycle of young peo-



File Photo

Soffiyah Elijah

ple following their parents into prison."

According to Elijah, about 80 percent of the people who are incarcerated in New York are reported to have a drug problem.

"Even if they're not serving a drug-related offense, it underlies their crime, even if they are not always able to identify it as a reason; the robbery they committed was driven by a drug problem." Some prostitutes offend because of a drug problem, she noted.

Elijah said decriminalizing all drug usage would also lower the cost of running the prison system. "It's a slippery slope to start drawing divisions (between, say, marijuana and heroin) so decriminalize all drug usage and medicalize it instead."

The likelihood prisoners will succeed when they get out is very low, she said. It is imperative that "we reeducate and change the mentality of the people working in prisons and society, and take a humane look at how to reform the criminal justice system," she added.

"If we only look at the statistics and adopted a rational stance, we'd see the approach we've taken for centuries has failed," concluded Elijah.

The group she heads monitors conditions in state prisons. She is the first woman and first person of color to head the 170-year-old organization.

BEAUTY IN CELL BARS

By Spoon Jackson

*We lock ourselves up
Not because of the bars and
Steel that surround us
Not because life doesn't bend
To our every whim
But because of the projections
We place onto our worlds
The judgments, the I can'ts
The trying to please everyone
While not pleasing ourselves
By seeking the beauty on the outside
That is surely within
For prisons are created internally
And are found everywhere
We allow unnatural and unreal thoughts
To be our walls, our limits
Because of the damn we build to
Stop the universal love, the light
It's all within ourselves
This paradise you go to of beauty
And love
There's peace, where along with the
Eagle you may soar
A place inside that was inspired
From the inner and above
Which are one I the same
The world may not bend to
Your every whim
But it will flow wherever you
Want it to go,
Where it's supposed to go
There's no beauty in cell bars.*

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Book Review

By Randy Maluenda



CATCH 22 (By Joseph Heller) Classic tale of irrelevant hijinks on a WWII airbase.



BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND (By Joyce Meyer) Bible-based primer to living a spiritual life.



ANGER (By Thich Nhat Hanh) Spiritual-based primer on anger management.



MUSIC LAW (By Rich Stim) A book on how to run your band's business.



THE NAMESAKE (By Jhumpa Lahiri) Culture clashes in sometimes brilliant, often murky tale of growing pains in immigrant family portrait of an Indian family.

RATINGS: **RRRR**

Top responses are four ribbon progressing downward to one: Responses which are two or less are not recommended reading.

Sudoku Corner

By Anthony Lyons

Last Issue's Sudoku Solution

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

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

Complete This Puzzle Win a Prize!



When Johnny went to pick up his canteen the worker asked him, "didn't I just see you picking up your canteen?" Johnny replied "no that was my brother, we look exactly alike, we were born on the same day in the same year, and we have the same parents, but we're not twins".

Explain how that is possible?

The answer to last month's puzzle is: The number are arranged in Alphabetical Order

Congratulations to: Bill Suff, and Scott Peterson for winning last month's puzzle.

Congratulations to: Chris Schuhmacher for getting last month's puzzle right.

Rules

The prizes will be for completion of brain twister puzzles. All puzzle submissions should be sent via u-save-em envelope to San Quentin News/Education Department. Only one entry per person.

All correct submissions will be place in a hat. The winners will be picked by drawing the first two answers from that hat.

First Place: San Quentin Fitness Gray Ball Cap
Second Place: 4 Granola Bars

Prizes will only be offered to inmates with privilege group status that allows for the prize items. Inmates transferred, sent to ad/seg, or otherwise not available to claim their prize will result in forfeiture.

The answer and winner's names will be published in the next issue of the San Quentin News.

Snippets

Cottontails are wild rabbits. They are found in Canada, the United State, and parts of Central and South America. The most common species is the eastern cottontail, which is also referred to as the Florida cottontail.

Ostrich eggs are the world's biggest and toughest eggs. They weigh slightly over 253 pounds.

The Christians in many European countries call Easter Pascha, which comes from the Hebrew word Pesach, which means passover.

The 8th-century English Scholar St. Bede proposed that Easter derived from the early English word Eostre, which some scholars say was the name of a pagan goddess of spring.

Orthodox use many factors to calculate the date of Easter.

New plant life that appears in spring symbolizes the new life Christians gain because of Jesus's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

The German word eostarun, which means dawn is thought to be an incorrect translation of the Latin word albae, meaning both dawn and white. Easter is considered a day of white because newly baptized church members wore white clothes at Easter observance.

Anglo-Saxons celebrated Eostre, the Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility. Colored eggs are hidden during Easter. They represent the sunlight of spring.

In the Northern Hemisphere, Easter is usually held on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the first day of spring. It can also occur on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25.

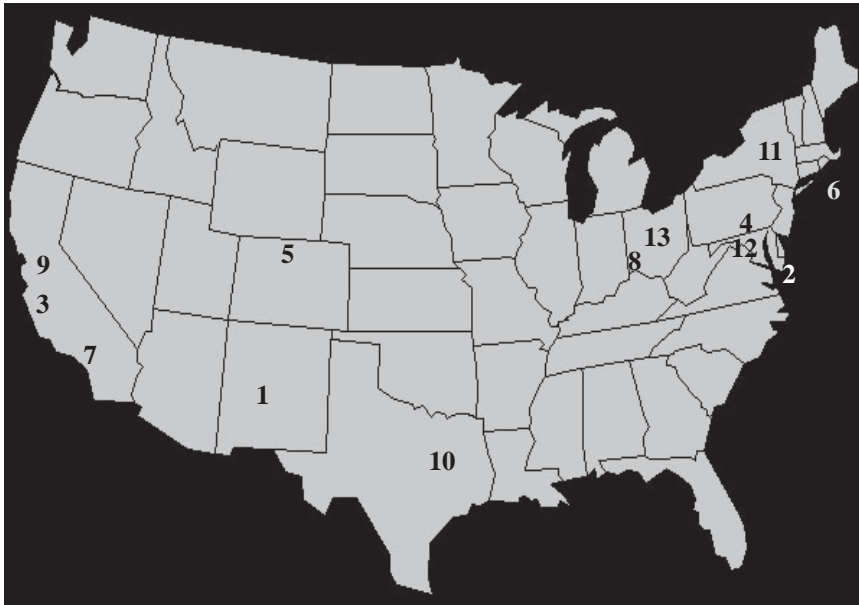
Lent is a season of fasting and prayer. Easter marks the end of lent. Eating meat was once forbidden during lent.



Featured artwork of Larry DeRossett



News Briefs



1. New Mexico—A man who spent nearly two years in a county jail’s solitary cell will receive a \$15.5 million settlement after a federal jury ruled that his rights to adequate medical attention and due process had been violated. Stephen Slevn, 58 was originally arrested in August 2005 on suspicion of driving while intoxicated and driving a stolen car, reports The Los Angeles Times.

2. Maryland—The state Senate voted 27-20 to end capital punishment and replace it with life in prison without parole. If the bill is finally approved, Maryland would be the 18th state to abolish capital punishment and the sixth to act since 2007.

3. San Luis Obispo—After spending 36 years behind bars, famed *Tower of Power* singer Rick Stevens was released from prison. In 1976, Stevens was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and two counts of first-degree murder.

4. Wilmington, Del.—The American Civil Liberties Union has filed court papers seeking to enforce protections of women prisoners from sexual assault. A court ordered prison officials to make reforms in 2011. Some of the changes ordered were more security cameras, and policies requiring two employees to be present before entering a cell occupied by only one prisoner, reports The Associated Press.

5. Denver—Robert Dewey spend nearly two decades locked up for a rape he didn’t commit. Dewey was eventu-

ally freed after DNA evidence proved he was not the rapist. He was living off food stamps and charity when the state Legislature began working on a bill that will compensate people who can prove they were wrongly imprisoned with at least \$70,000 for every year behind bars, according to The Associated Press.

6. Hartford, Conn.—The Connecticut Post reports arrests and incarceration rates for juvenile offenders have fallen off sharply due to “a series of community collaborations that discourage juvenile crime.” The state’s

plan of using community-based programs rather than juvenile jails has been cost-effective while cutting sharply into both overall crime and incidents of violence, the report said.

7. Los Angeles—The 124-year sentence of Andrew Luster, the great-grandson of cosmetic giant Max Factor, was vacated and he is scheduled to have a hearing for a new sentence, reports The Los Angeles Times. Luster was convicted on 86 counts of rape and drug charges in 2003. The judge said his unusually long sentence needs to be re-considered.

8. Cincinnati, Ohio—David Ayers was awarded \$13.2 million after a federal jury found that two Cleveland police detectives violated his civil rights by coercing and falsifying testimony and withholding evidence that would have exonerated him. Ayers was convicted of killing Dorothy Brown, 76, in 1999. He was released from prison in 2011, after spending 13 years incarcerated.

9. Oakland—A judge has exonerated two men within three weeks for wrongful convictions. Ronald Ross, 51, spent seven years incarcerated. New

evidence showed he did not shoot a man in West Oakland. Johnny Williams, 37 was freed after prosecutors conceded errors in the Williams’ conviction for raping a 9-year-old girl on her way to school in East Oakland, reports The San Francisco Chronicle.

10. Huntsville, Texas—Carl Henry Blue, 48 was put to death Feb. 22 for killing his ex-girlfriend, Carmen Richards-Sanders, 38, reports Reuters. The lethal injection was the state’s first execution this year.

11. New York—Jabbar Collins spent 16 years in prison for a murder a federal court overturned. He was freed in 2010, reports The Associated Press. Collins is now suing Brooklyn police and prosecutors for \$150 million for pressuring a witness to falsely implicate him in the murder.

12. Annapolis, Md.—The state Senate has approved a measure to end the death penalty that the House and Gov. Martin O’Malley support, reports The Associated Press. Opponents of capital punishment claim the death penalty is “costly, prone to error, racially biased and a poor deterrent of crime, while supporters insisted it must be an option for criminals who commit the ‘worst of the worst’ of crimes.” The AP reports.

13. Lucasville, Ohio—A single dose of pentobarbital was used to execute Frederick Treesh on March 6. Treesh was convicted for killing a security guard in an adult book store during a crime spree nearly 20 years ago.

Asked On The Line

Prisoners Who Love Music

By Angelo Falcone
Journalism Guild Writer

Many of the men at San Quentin love music.

“Asked on the Line” conducted 23 random, informal interviews with men in blue and asked, “What is your favorite type of music, favorite artist, and favorite song?”

Most have a favorite type of music. Some had two or three favorite types, and a few claimed to like all types of music. The top three answers in rank order were Jazz, Gospel, and R&B.

Bob Kaser and Victor Hernandez like Country & Western, Allen Brown and Benny Elmore like Rock, and Clifford Dobbins, Jabari Elbert, Douglas Manns and Rudy Walker all love Jazz. Elbert claims to enjoy jazz, rap, blues, oldies, and soft rock and Johnny Gomez likes Freestyle. Douglass Manns, Darrell Buchana, John Vaden, and Adrian Ramirez all love Gospel.

Richard Arnold said, “I like ‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s, and oldies.”

Kenyatta Leal said, “I don’t have a favorite type of music.

I like all types of music. It depends on my mood.”

Almost everyone that was interviewed had a unique favorite artist. Arturo Avalos likes Spanish pop singer Ricardo Arjona, Jesus Vallejo loves to listen to Los Temerarios and Marco Antonio Solis, and Juan Arballo enjoys the music of Camilo Sesto and Katinas. Dobbins likes Norman Brown, Nick Aranda likes Michael Jackson, and Joe Demerson likes Gerald LaVert and Grover Washington Jr.

As for favorite song, Lonnie Liner said, “I like ‘Don’t Mess with Mr. T’ by Stanley Turntine.” Walter Harden likes “I’m different” by Two Chain; Leroy Brown loves “All Eyes On Me” by Tupac; Adrian Ramirez likes “Can’t Give Up Now” by Mary Mary; and Rudy Walker likes “Yolanda, You Learn” sung by David Bowie.

“I like Classic Rock,” said Elmore. “One of my favorite songs is ‘L.A. Woman’ by the Doors.” Hernandez likes “Make Believe” by Conway Twitty and Dee Whitaker likes “Nature Boy” by Nat King Cole.

Editor’s Note

The articles and opinions published in the San Quentin News are the responsibility of the inmate staff of the newspaper and their advisers. These articles and opinions reflect the views of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the inmate population, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation or the administration of San Quentin State Prison.

Website Offers Help to Families of those Incarcerated

A new and free search engine, www.PrisonPath.com, provides information for the public. The site helps users in clarifying confusion and fear of the unknown when a loved one is charged and arrested, or sentenced to imprisonment in the United States. PrisonPath provides information including the ability to find a person incarcerated, visitation rules, contact numbers, and more about every American prison and jail. It also allows families and friends of inmates to communicate with each other on a specific page.



Prisoners United in the Craft of Journalism
In collaboration with students from the

Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



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Report Sheds Light on the World's Five Worst Prisons

Cruel and Inhumane Treatment



Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabana, Havana Cuba

By **Boston Woodard**
Staff Writer

Prisons are not supposed to be finishing schools, but some have achieved notoriety for being unspeakably cruel and inhuman.

The website akorra.com has posted a list of what it describes as the world's five worst prisons. The list includes prisons in North Korea, Africa, Syria, Tibet and Cuba.

Penitentiaries exist in nearly every country in the world, but the report says some countries have used incarceration as a way of either killing prisoners or driving them hopelessly insane.

Here is a list of the world's worst prisons, at least as far as akorra.com is concerned:

The distinction for being the worst prison in the world belongs to Kwan-li-so No.22 Haengyong (Camp 22), located in Hoeryong, North Korea. Camp 22 is filled with political prisoners. No recourse to human rights is available to the men, women, children and infants serving time in this draconian dungeon. North Korea is the "grandmaster of imprisonment and oppression," according to the report.

"The guards are brainwashed to thinking that prisoners are sub-human and are allowed to

do anything they want to prisoners" said the akorra.com report. Inhumane experiments



Tadmor Military Prison, Palmyra, Syria

are conducted on all prisoners, including infants. "When a baby is born and starts crying, the guards usually smother it to death or leave the baby face down on the ground to die."

One lucky prisoner who escaped said, "Prisoners in the

worst condition hardly looked like human; they looked like beasts." Approximately 1,000-2,000 prisoners die every year from hunger, beatings, and executions, the report said.

The akorra.com report concluded, "This is far from humane; it is more like a hidden holocaust that no one can do anything about. Animals receive much better treatment than this; they are being treated equivalent to an insect."

Gitarama Prison in Rwanda, Africa, is listed as number two on the short list of horrific prisons. With a population of 6,000 prisoners, Gitarama Prison has



Gitarama Prison, Kigali, Rwanda, Africa

Rwanda.

The third worst prison in the world, according to akorra.com is Tadmor Military Prison in Palmyra, Syria. The 4,000 prisoners face torture, hangings,

been known to beat prisoners until they are almost unconscious, then drag their bodies on the ground until they are dead, the report claims.

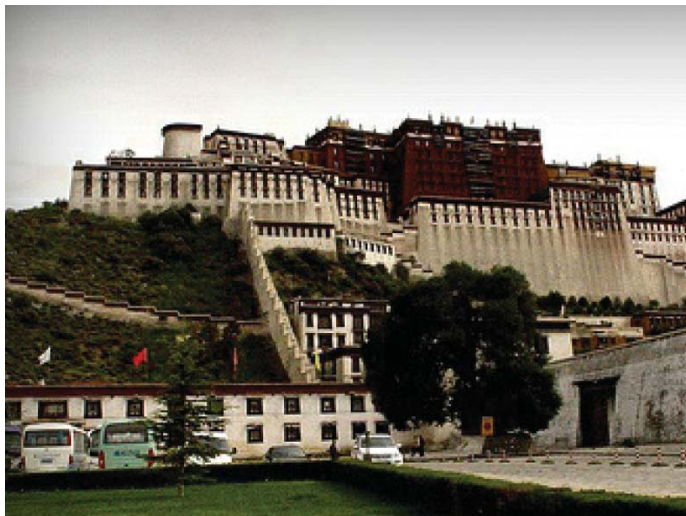
The number four spot is Drapchi Prison in Lhasa City, Tibet. The prison's population is estimated at 600. Prisoners can be killed on the spot for looking at a guard the wrong way, according to reports. If the prisoners protest, they could receive constant beatings or execution.

Drapchi prisoners stay in solitary confinement for so long, they lose the ability to speak; inmates are tortured and beaten if they resist, the report says.

The fifth worst prison in the world is the Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabana (la Cabana Political Prison) in Havana, Cuba. It has 75,000 prisoners, and they have no protections for human rights.

Anti-Castro people say that in Cuba, dissidents are thrown into Cabana until they become pro-Castro, or die first. Many Cubans have been arrested without warrants and convicted without trial, the report says. Cells are so small prisoners can barely sit down, and they can't lie down.

Mainline prisoners are given more privileges than political prisoners. One prisoner prayed, imploring Heaven that the "res-



Drapchi Prison, Lhasa City, Tibet

the dubious distinction of being the most-overcrowded prison in the world. Some 6,000 prisoners live in a unit designed for only 500 people. According to the akorra.com report, prisoners are so hungry they sometimes "bite chunks of meat out of each other" to survive. The floor of the prison is damp and filled with raw feces. If a prisoner injures a foot, gangrene slowly sets in, and the prisoner's toes eventually fall off.

The odor can be noticed a half mile away. With one in eight prisoners dying from diseases or violence, the survival rate is pessimistic. An ironic fact is that most of the prisoners are being punished for carrying out genocide against

beatings, and axe mutilations, the report says. In 1980, the Syrian regime's military shot



Kwan-li-so No.22 Haengyong (Camp 22), Hoeryong, North Korea

and killed all 500 prisoners in the prison; the worst prison massacre in the world to date, the report says.

Prison staff are reportedly given limitless authority regarding what they can do to the prisoners. Tadmor guards have

cue force" might be victorious, and the guards shot him in the head, the report claims.

The akorra.com website is the work of a writer named Luther Avery, who says its purpose is to publish "quality articles by quality people."

All Photos by Akorra