



San Quentin News

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Prisoners Give Back To the Community



Community Development Associations receiving checks from prisoners and Joint Venture

By **MICHAEL R. HARRIS**
Managing Editor &
KENNETH R. BRYDON
Editor in Chief

More than \$35,000 from San Quentin prisoners' salaries has been donated to three Marin County charitable organizations at a ceremony on Nov. 6, 2008. Prisoners

working with Joint Venture gave 20 percent of their earnings to this purpose; a program working to benefit several very different causes.

As a result of 1991 legislation allowing private businesses to come into the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Labcon has been

employing San Quentin prisoners for over 17 years.

Workers are paid minimum wage by these for-profit businesses and, after 20 percent is taken for Victim Restitution compensation, and another 20 percent for room and board, the remaining 60 percent is for the prisoners' use.

See **Giving Back** Page 2

Appeals Court Upholds Death Penalty Delay

By **ALY TAMBOURA**

The 1st District Court of Appeal refused to overturn a Marin County judge's ruling resulting in additional delays of executions at San Quentin State Prison.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation completed construction on a new execution chamber at San Quentin, prompting a Marin County court to find that the governor and prison officials failed to open up public hearings to California's changes in the methods used to administer the death penalty, in violation of state procedures.

The current execution procedure is part of a lawsuit filed by condemned inmates, who maintain that the method is inhumane under the U.S. Constitution that forbids cruel and unusual punishment. The case was ruled on by U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel in 2006, when he described the state's execution method as "broken." In the ruling Judge Fogel made recommendations to the state to improve the execution standard while addressing the concerns of the humane termination of condemned prisoners. The state in response implemented a plan to improve training and supervision of execution officers and

the construction of a new execution chamber. The construction project, which critics say was completed in secret, is the catalyst for the Marin County judge's ruling.

Earlier this year the U.S. Supreme Court heard a similar case from Kentucky in which the constitutionality of lethal injections was challenged. The Supreme Court's ruling upheld lethal injection as a "legal method of execution." The ruling will no doubt have an impact on the California lawsuit, according to legal professionals.

The state has the right to appeal the recent ruling, further exacerbating the delays in a solution to the execution concerns. In addition, the state will likely have to open the execution methods up to public scrutiny, taking months if not years to complete, say attorneys for death row inmates. The result of all of the legal wrangling will further delay executions in California where more than 670 prisoners wait for an outcome. The already three-year delay has kept some men alive who have exhausted all their options in the appeals process.

See **Death Penalty** Page 6



Warden Ayers Says Farewell To San Quentin

By **KAMAL SEFELDEEN**

After a long career in the U.S. military and 41 years in California corrections, Robert L. Ayers, Jr., 61, is leaving his command post as the 33rd warden of San Quentin State Prison.



Warden Ayers (left) with former prisoner Willie Rahman Green

When Ayers became the warden, many inmates and staff had mixed expectations. His critics would point to his Pelican Bay era while acting warden, but his supporters pointed to his heroism in rescuing an elderly fisherman, which earned Ayers a Medal of Valor.

Slowly, assurance and enthusiasm replaced the skepticism. Inmates and staff came to find him approachable and his administration has marked an era of encouragement to grow. Good ideas grew as micromanagement diminished, vague rules gave way to sensible and workable practice. Volunteers found a listener in the warden. Programs arose that were never heard of in San Quentin, like the Inmate Film Program endowed by the Discovery Channel, Victim Offenders and Stand-Up.

The warden is a striking figure as he walks unescorted around the prison, dapper in a Panama hat, civilian coat and tie.

As one of the lifer inmates puts it, "When you approach the warden with a question, he would shake your hand and look you in the eyes and give you full attention."

"Even to the last days in office, he defies the term 'Lame Duck,' and gives full attention to the establishment of the San Quentin Museum. I shall miss him," says Don DeNeve, who has been authorized to write the history of San Quentin.

"If there was a Hall of Fame for wardens, Robert L. Ayers, Jr. would be inducted on the first go-around. His overall knowledge and experience in managing prison operations is astounding. Staff that have had the opportunity to work side-by-side with him have benefited greatly. As a leader, he instills pride, integrity and has a great sense of vision," says John Curzon, associate warden.

See **Warden Ayers** Page 8

Court Ruling Expected On Overcrowding

By **DAVID MARSH**

Testimony has concluded in a landmark federal court case where a three-judge panel will decide if chronic overcrowding in California's overwhelmed prisons is the cause of unconstitutionally poor levels of medical and mental health care.

If the panel of three federal court judges rule against the state, another trial will convene early next year to determine remedies. Attorneys for prisoners in the class action lawsuit want the court to reduce the inmate population in the state's 33 prisons to no more than 104,000 prisoners. Their plan would require the early release of 52,000 prisoners over a two-

year period into treatment centers, county jails or on parole.

In order to prevail in the case, the plaintiffs (inmates and their attorneys) must prove that overcrowding is the leading cause of the substandard medical and mental health care. There is no indication of how soon a decision in the case will be handed down.

The civil rights case opened Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008 in a San Francisco courtroom and quickly



The SQ gymnasium overflowing with prisoners

took shape as a battle between prison and health care experts testifying for both sides. The state adamantly denies that the overcrowding itself is the primary cause of the poor level of care.

See **Court Ruling** Page 3

California Lifer Is Going Home

One Man's Journey to Freedom Through the California Prison System

By ALY TAMBOURA

After serving 27 years, 4 months in prison for a first-degree murder conviction, Ali Pertsoni has been released from San Quentin State Prison to return to his native country of Kosovo.

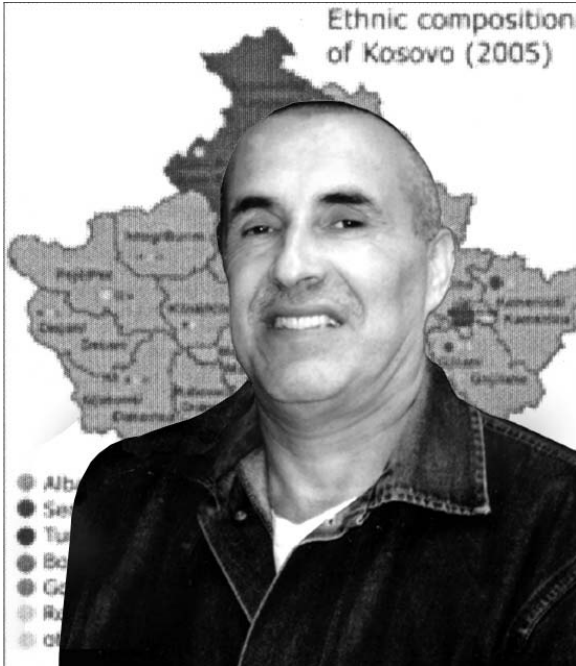
Before being granted parole, Pertsoni went before the Board of Prison Hearings (BPH) 11 times in as many years. Rejected the first nine times, Pertsoni was found suitable by the board in 2006, only to have the governor's office overrule the board's decision, denying him his freedom.

"At my second parole hearing one of the board members told me that I would probably die in prison," said Pertsoni. "I heard the mean words of the prison official ringing in my ears when I suffered a heart attack in 2005."

After his heart attack, and the 2006 parole denial, Pertsoni spent the following two years appealing the governor's ruling in federal court. Ultimately it was the BPH, re-evaluating his case in an en banc hearing, that resulted in a unanimous decision, which granted his parole. Furthermore, the governor's

office refused to review his case a second time, thus securing his release.

After many hugs, his eyes full of tears of joy, Pertsoni departed SQSP Nov. 24, es-



Recently released Ali Pertsoni in front of a map of his home country Kosovo

corted by immigration officers. He will spend a short time in an immigration holding facility until the long airline flight to his family home in Gjakova, Kosovo, a nation which earlier this year gained its independence from Serbia.

"I am a free man, returning to a free Kosovo after 35 years. I am really going home," said Pertsoni.

Born in Kosovo in 1954, Pertsoni lived a simple life on his family farm. In his adolescence he became involved in a humans rights movement which held demonstrations against the repressive Communist government. His activism against the government led to him being a wanted man. Believing his life was in danger, Pertsoni fled to Austria, staying in a refugee camp until 1975 when he received political asylum in the United States.

"I love my home country. I didn't come here (America) for a better life, I came here to save my life," said Pertsoni.

In the United States Pertsoni met and married his wife of 33 years, Yuri Pertsoni, who has been beside him during his 27 years of incarceration.

The Pertsonis' have been a fixture in the SQ visiting room for almost a decade. It is in the visiting room that all who know Pertsoni witnessed his love for life. Always with a smile, quick witted Pertsoni embraced us and our families with a caring heart that will not be forgotten.

"I have watched so much happen in the visiting room. I've seen marriages, divorces

and watched many children grow up right here in this room," said Pertsoni.

When asked how he felt about being paroled, Pertsoni lights up. "It is my faith in Allah, my wife and my focus in doing the right thing that has kept me going all of these years. Some prisoners get rejected by the BPH and give up; instead of staying on track they use drugs and get caught up in prison politics and violence. Not me; I never gave up. I learned a trade (vocational dry cleaning), I didn't use drugs, and I stayed away from trouble. It was a sacrifice sometimes to do the right thing, but I knew in my heart that this day would come."

Pertsoni gives a lot of credit to the self-help and community-based programs at SQ for aiding him in his successful bid for parole. He attended and completed classes that include: Trust Fellows, Mankind, New Leaf, Victim Offender Education Group, Coaching Process, Attitudinal Healing and many others in his stay at SQ.

"There are so many volunteers and staff members that I want to thank, so many that didn't give up on me and the other men here at San Quentin. Thank you, thank you, thank you," said Pertsoni in his farewell.

Health and Wellness Corner

We would like to announce the first ever "Health and Wellness Corner" column here at San Quentin News. Each month, a University of California, San Francisco health professional student will answer questions that you submit about health issues. Inquiries will be answered in the next month's paper. Feel free to ask us questions about any medical concern that you have, and it may be answered so that everyone can benefit. If you have a question, put it in a U-Save-Em envelope addressed to: "Health and Wellness Corner," UCSF Doctors (Dr. Shira Shavit) – Medical Box. If you include your name and number, they will be kept confidential. Note that this column is for general medical questions. Here are two examples of questions that we would be able to answer in the column:

- I have Hepatitis C and was wondering, can I pass it to my partner when I get out?

- Does the flu shot really cause the flu?

If you do not feel well or have an URGENT medical concern, fill out a 7362 request for services form to see your housing unit medical staff.

Giving Back

Continued from Page 1

Once these amounts are withdrawn, 20 percent more of each check earned must go into a savings account that the inmates receive, and, if there are family members to support, another 20 percent must be sent directly to care for their needs.

The remaining 20 percent still exceeds the possible earnings from any other prison job. Each year, the San Quentin warden decides which Victim's Services program will receive the funds, and Warden Robert Ayers, Jr. selected this year's recipients to be three Bay Area programs: Marin Abused Women's Services (\$10,851), Bay Area Women Against Rape (\$10,851), and Sunny Hills Services (\$14,468).

Marin Abused Women's Services and Bay Area Women Against Rape focus on violence against women while Sunny Hills Services provides protection and assistance to abused children.

The San Quentin Labcon does assembly work, packaging over a million disposable pipet tips a week that are used in laborato-



Labcon employee's posing with donated checks

ries all over the nation. Employing 30 men in blue, the business is headquartered in Texas and owned by Tipton Golias, says Glenn Alexander, who supervises the work crew.

Representing Labcon at the event was Jim Happ, president of the company. Happ finds the arrangement with CDCR and San Quentin very good. Alexander says that the workers average \$400 every two weeks. Prisoner Robert Lott uses some of the money to pay for his wife's visits from Alaska.

As opposed to the customary \$200 "Gate Money," having an account waiting with a sizable sum of money provides a sense of accomplishment walking out the door. Many who parole with minimum resources find themselves returning to the "fast money" of crime. Building a good work ethic and having enough money for living ex-

penses until work is found improves a parolee's chance of a successful parole.

"You get used to punching a clock," said Lott, talking about how it helps to improve a person's worth ethic. "It's a product that you have to get out on a schedule." The San Quentin Labcon employees feel that their contributions make a real difference to those their donation will help, and the money earned will help them start a new life.

At the presentation were representatives from all three recipients. As the checks were handed over, each Victims Services' representative expressed their great appreciation for the hard work of the men. They said that, in this time of tight budgets, these large amounts will help them to continue their vital services. They shook hands with the many employed prisoners, thanking them again.

Visiting Rooms Upgrade To Digital Photos

By KENNETH BRYDON

Film for Polaroid cameras has become a thing of the past, and the San Quentin visiting room is now using digital cameras and color photo printers.

The digital age has delivered crisper images and larger photos. "It takes a little longer," says visiting room Officer P. McNabb, "but is worth the wait."

The Men's Advisory Council worked with the San Quentin administration to bring about the new system.

All three visiting room areas are equipped with their own cameras and printers. The digital cameras arrived in the visiting room in November. Other than a change in cameras, everything else remains the same; photo ducats are still purchased through the prison canteen for the same price.

McNabb explained that two pictures are taken and then the cameraman offers a choice of which one to print. The camera is brought over to

the small color printer at intervals, and in approximately 20 minutes the photos are delivered. McNabb also said that since the arrival of the new camera the number of photos being printed has doubled in the North Block visiting room.

Condemned Row Visiting Officer M. Bock says that taking photos for the condemned has greatly improved. Aiming the digital camera through the access port of the visiting enclosures is very easy with the camera's large viewing screen.

Photos have the option of being printed with the date on them. Future developments being worked on are finding a way to allow visitors to pay for the photos and, when requested, the placement of the digital photos on the internet. Visiting Room Lt. K. Evans said that most other prisons in CDCR have yet to change over to the digital format and continue to use Polaroid film. So far, everyone interviewed about the new system gave high praise for the quality of the photographs.

1940: Clinton T. Duffy Orders San Quentin Reforms

(Part 2 of a 3-part series)

On Monday morning, July 15th, at 6:30 a.m., Clinton-Duffy entered the office for his first day as warden. By 9 a.m. he had fired six guards and banned the use of loaded canes, whips, straps, rubber hoses and other forms of corporal punishment.

He then directed the inmate painting crew to obliterate the nine-inch circles on cell block floors where prisoners were forced to stand for hours at a stretch without moving or talking.

In the same order, he abolished the head shaving of new arrivals since he felt that entering a prison was humiliation enough; he refused to perpetrate the added indignity of a medieval practice inherited from early California Spanish days. In addition, the stenciling of large black numbers on the backs of convicts' clothing was eliminated.

The orders issued by the acting warden during the first hours of his new administration were a shock to the older guards, especially those who remembered Clinton as Officer Bill Duffy's mischievous kid running around the residential areas. Gossip, rumors and comments of "meddling amateur, he's issuing orders right and left" and "he'll get his ears pinned back soon enough" filtered through the prison that morning. Just be-

fore noon, five guards stomped into the warden's office and resigned. "You're turning San Quentin into a playground," one of them said, "and we don't want to stick around for the riots that are coming."

Duffy rose from his chair behind the large desk and said simply, "I'm much more interested in the reactions of men who cannot march into this office to speak their piece." With that he walked out and across the small parking lot into the old three-story parapet structure which served as the control point for the "inside." Duffy told the half-dozen officers assembled there that he was going into the big yard alone.

To the horror of the tower officers, Duffy crossed the gardens and past the battered Spanish cell block and hospital and strolled into the large, uncovered concrete yard. Years later, in his 1950 autobiography, Duffy wrote,

Thousands of men swarmed over the stone flats, shifting and turning to loosen the press of bodies, men doing nothing, men going nowhere. Their clothes were shapeless and dirty gray; they walked with a slouch and some talked from the corner of their mouths. I stood there for a moment, watching the gray pattern, the light faces and

the darker ones, the tired eyes of the old and the cold eyes of the young. They knew I was there. The news had already swept across the yard and I could see the solid mass ripple, like water kicked up by the wind. I suppose I should have considered that there were men in that yard who had no use for me or any warden; that there were also men



Clinton Duffy: Warden
1940-1951

who had murdered other men for small change or just for the hell of it. There were probably no less than 200 knives, daggers, blackjacks and other hidden weapons somewhere in those thousands of pockets and sleeves. I suppose I should have remembered that I was no longer a clerk but a man who might be worth kidnapping because I could order gates unlocked and guard fire withheld."

But Duffy didn't think of these things. As demonstrated time and again during the 11 years that followed, he saw the men on that yard not as strangers or criminals or even numbers on file cards, but as individual human beings whose virtues and faults he knew better than anyone else. After all, he had studied and prepared their case histories for the parole board.

From the yard, the new warden walked directly into the mess hall and watched the last men for lunch shuffle in and out. Overhead, on the steel catwalks stretching across and around the 200 foot hall, four gun guards were marching their restless patrols, their automatic rifles prodding the air.

Then and there he decided that since guns were not exactly an appetizing influence, he would ban them from where men ate. Duffy then noticed that the lukewarm beef stew being served that day had little or no beef in it. "Beef costs money," said the civilian steward. "Why don't you add dumplings to your stew for a change?" asked Duffy. "Can't be done. Never been done," replied the steward.

"Tomorrow you serve stew again. This time with dumplings and once a week thereafter," Duffy ordered, deciding the prison would soon have a new steward. Furthermore, he would increase the inmate food budget

of \$.19 a day to \$.75 a day.

To the officers' infinite surprise, the new warden walked leisurely back to his office unharmed. Duffy was secure in the knowledge that unlike many a prison reformer before him, he was personally strong enough not to confuse fairness with softness.

That afternoon, Duffy continued one of the most dramatic housecleaning jobs in penal history. He tore up the previous warden's list of prison stool pigeons and stripped convict politicians of their power.

Already a brutish captain was gone as well as six other sadistic "screws" and five disgruntled old-timers who considered the kid crazy. The dungeon was dead. And so were the lashes, straps and rubber hoses. Numbered uniforms and shaved heads would never again be seen at San Quentin.

Starting the next morning, convicts placed in isolation would no longer be fed from buckets. A modern cafeteria would be installed as soon as possible and a dietician in place by week's end. Duffy's final order on his first day as warden was to order the laundry to press all inmate shirts and pants. "Such small things will foster the rebirth of self-respect," he told his staff.

(Researched and written by Don DeNevi. Part three will appear in the next issue of the SQ News)

Court Ruling

Continued from Page 1

The historic case began more than 21 years ago when Jay Lee Gates, an inmate at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, filed a lawsuit in Sacramento federal court protesting the quality of his health care. The Gates' lawsuit was eventually converted into a class action lawsuit and combined with two subsequent class action suits also over unconstitutionally substandard medical care.

The three-judge panel is composed of District Judges Thelton E. Henderson of San Francisco, Lawrence K. Karlton of Sacramento and Circuit Judge Stephen R. Reinhardt of Los Angeles. Each of the three judges formerly oversaw one of the three original class action lawsuits which together formed the present case.

Each jurist was appointed to the panel by the chief judge of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals under provisions of the Federal Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1996. It is the first time judges have acted under the 1996 act, which, ironically, was originally designed to limit the power of judges in prisoner rights cases.

The Act authorizes the formation of a special judicial panel which may, in extreme cases, order the early release of prison-

ers if the panel decides that all other options have been exhausted.

Henderson and Karlton have each already ruled that the state is providing unconstitutionally substandard medical and mental health care in violation of inmate's rights. Karlton ruled in 1995 that the state's prison mental health system violated the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment. Henderson in 2005 made a similar ruling regarding medical care and appointed a federal receiver to take over the medical system through a three to five year rebuilding period.

In his 2005 ruling, Henderson found that an inmate was dying unnecessarily every six to seven days as a result of poor quality health care.

Attorneys for the state maintain that conditions are improving and they are quick to say that California now spends an average of nearly \$14,000 a year per inmate on medical care, a figure among the highest in the nation. Experts in the areas of inmate health care and prison operations are scheduled to testify for both sides.

"The state has put its money where its mouth is," said Paul Mello, an attorney for the state. He points out that state spending

on prisoner health care has jumped from \$345 million in 1995 to nearly \$2.2 billion today. "There have been significant improvements," he said.

Meanwhile, attorneys maintain that three of the state's 33 prisons currently hold about 230 percent more inmates than they were designed for, and that such overcrowding prohibits prisoners from having jobs or going to educational and rehabilitation programs. Classrooms, gymnasiums and meeting rooms have been converted to dormitory space.

The state currently has over 5,000 male inmates housed in private prisons in states such as Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arizona, and Tennessee in response to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's 2006 declared state of emergency due to prison overcrowding. An additional 3,000 inmates are scheduled to be shipped out of state by the end of 2009, according to the CDCR website.

Attorneys for the inmates played a clip of a television interview for the court in which Schwarzenegger says "the situation is a recipe for disaster." He also said that he didn't blame the courts "for stepping in to try to solve the (prison) health care crisis that we have, the overcrowding crisis that we have. For decades the state of California hasn't really taken it seriously."

The Schwarzenegger admini-

stration maintains that steps are being taken to reduce the population, including changing parole policies and adding rehabilitation programs in an effort to reduce recidivism. They say that massive spending has been approved to add additional beds and space in the prison system.

The Schwarzenegger administration has rejected recent attempts by the federal receiver overseeing medical operations, J. Clark Kelso, to collect the \$8 billion he says he needs to build medical and health centers and improve existing facilities.

And all of this comes at a time when the state is staggering under a budget deficit which has ballooned to a mind-boggling \$11 billion. As of Oct. 1, 2008, the state owed \$57.3 billion in outstanding debt in addition to another \$78.2 billion that has been previously authorized for borrowing.

If the state borrows all of the money that the Schwarzenegger administration has requested for prison beds and additional medical facilities it will cost the state taxpayers \$1.2 billion each year to repay the debt. The administration plans to finance the construction with a type of bonds that do not require voter approval.

The three judges had originally decreed that testimony in the non-jury trial's first phase would conclude by Dec. 19, 2008, but the

quick pace of the much-watched trial has surprised many courtroom observers. No date has been set for a decision in the trial. The judges have in the past made numerous rulings sympathetic to, and in favor of, the inmates' cause.

The 9th Circuit Court rebuffed the state's strenuous attempts to block formation of the three-judge panel, ruling it (the 9th Circuit) had no jurisdiction in rejecting the state's appeal. Any appeal of the three-judge panel's ultimate decision must go directly to the more conservative U.S. Supreme Court. California Republican lawmakers are preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court in the event that the panel orders an early release of inmates.

The powerful prison guards' union, which went to court in an unsuccessful attempt to block the Schwarzenegger administration's plans to transfer inmates out of state, openly supports the inmates' lawsuit. Attorney Gregg Adam of the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association says overcrowding increases tension and an atmosphere of violence behind bars, and has a "dehumanizing effect on correctional staff."

California's prisons currently hold approx 170,000 prisoners in a space designed for just over half that number.

Insight Factor at Work

The Graduates of "Victim's Offender Education Group Next Step"

By DARRELL C. HARTLEY
& MICHAEL R. HARRIS
Staff Writer
Managing Editor

A group of violent crime survivors and perpetrators recently came together for a remarkable night of healing.

The Oct. 20 graduation event began with the soaring majesty of a choir, whose words of wisdom ultimately set the tone for the evening in Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel.

It was the concluding evening of The Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG), a 22-week course that covers such topics as crime impact, self as victim, cycle of offense, impact on victims and relapse prevention. At weeks 20 and 21 the VOEG facilitators create a safe space for dialogue with a panel of victims.

This allows victims of violent crimes to share their experiences and the profound effects that crime continues to have on their lives. It is an open dialogue with the convicted men of the program, who are also given an opportunity to outline the impact that their crimes have had on themselves, their victims and society in general.

The cases of the victims and perpetrators are not usually connected. Instead the experience serves as a medium for connecting people that remain in pain.

"This is a historical night in San Quentin," said Patrick Mims, a co-facilitator of the program. Beginning in 2004, with a class of 13, VOEG has graduated 79 people. Mims spoke for all when he thanked The Insight Prison Project Executive Director Jacques Verduin, Restorative Justice Program Manager Rochelle Edwards, and VOEG facilitator Jack Dyson for their foresight in creating this program and Warden Robert L. Ayers, Jr., Deputy Chief Max Lemon and Community Partnership Manager Laura Bowman for allowing programs like these to become commonplace at San Quentin.

Edwards took center stage and first thanked her guests, the survivors of violent crimes. She also thanked The San Quentin administration, IPP represented by Verduin, IPP Program Director James Fox and Associate Director/VOEG facilitator Jamie Karroll, VOEG facilitator Jack Dyson, VOEG co-facilitators William Amos, Robert Frye, Patrick Mims, Dennis Pratt, Leonard Rubio and Phillip "P.J." Seiler.

Finally she offered tearful, heartfelt thanks to her husband for his encouragement and support. Edwards spoke of the commitment and dedication the graduates maintained during the 12-month course that went four months beyond schedule. "We were at the one year mark and you were asking me when we were going to graduate. In as much as I wanted for you to graduate, I just was not ready to let you go. Now that you are here, I want to let you know that



VOEG graduates with their diplomas

I am so happy that we had the extra time. I am very proud of you."

Edwards went on to give special thanks to all invited guests and Catholic Chaplain Father Stephen Barber in his tireless efforts in supporting Restorative Justice Projects.

Guest speaker Brian Smith, who paroled from San Quentin in 2007, gave a moving, inspirational speech on how he does his very best to be a force of change to those who remain in the clutches of negativity, self-loathing and addiction. Employed as an addiction counselor at a local substance abuse center, Brian said, "Change begins in the here and now and not in the hereafter. I changed my life because it was not just the right thing to do; it was the only thing to do. My change was not for the parole board, not for family, not for somebody else. It was for me. It is up to you how you want your new beginning to end. I know that you can and will do it."

Several members of VOEG Next Step graduation class of 2008 spoke of their appreciation for the program, the facilitators and group members.

Ronald Martin said, "Through this program, my life is definitely changed forever."

Bobby Brown spoke of "the opportunity to connect and find growth in the process."

Darnell Hill vowed that he will "continue to do everything I can to become a source of change in the lives of those who desire to do so. Don't listen to what I say, watch what I do."

Steve Higuere said he is "thankful and grateful for who I am today and most assuredly will never hurt anyone ever again."

Richard Lindsey added, "It's about doing the work!"

Greg Sanders spoke on how VOEG has allowed him to "become a better man through and through."

Albert Hernandez says that VOEG has "taught me special lessons that I can share for a lifetime."

Juan Navarette thanked VOEG for the opportunity to serve others.

Harry Barton said that he has "learned a great deal about my crime, myself, and the lives of

others."

Tuan Tran stated that VOEG has "raised his consciousness to understand the impact that I caused in the life of my victim's family."

James Houston stated that he is most thankful that VOEG "allowed me to become accountable and responsible for my crime, to find the courage to forgive my father and challenged me to listen, speak and be heard."

Demetrius Daniel credits VOEG for his "continued commitment and focus in being a mentor to those who endure their own difficult circumstances."

Edwards, Dyson, Karroll and Verduin presented diplomas to each of the graduates of VOEG. At the end of the diploma presentation, Verduin presented Edwards with a purple leather-bound journal from a group of women in Nepal, which will be signed on an individual page by each VOEG NEXT STEP graduate.

Additionally, there was a wide variety of commentary from participants, administration and guests.

Bowman said she was delighted on how well the event turned out. "What a night! The program was excellent. I am looking forward to the next series of graduations."

Fox commented on a personal level how profound the evening was for him. "Just take a look around you; there is a great deal of healing in this place."

Former ARC/ACT I&II Director Claire Elizabeth DeSophia said that she was impressed on how well organized the event was. "I appreciate how each graduate spoke from the heart on how the VOEG program has changed their lives and how the spirit of the choir in music and singing rang through."

Smith added, "What more can I say? There is a great sense of purpose in this place. I can see and feel positive change here. I was pleased to be involved."

At the conclusion of this historic evening, the East Bay Church of Religious Science choir, graduates and audience formed a circle and sang a song of joy and healing.

Verduin summed up the evening in only one word: "Awesome."

SQ Addiction Counseling Program

By DARRELL C. HARTLEY
Staff Writer

The greatest quality an Addiction Recovery program can possess is Unconditional Positive regard—the ability to accept everyone with love, compassion and respect. The program is under the direction of Addiction Recovery Counseling Center Clinical Director Rick Baez and the gold standard of addiction counselor training in 42 countries and 38 states: CAADAC (The California Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselors).

Additionally, the addiction counselor educational requirements and responsibilities have been enlarged to include greater focus on pharmacology, skill development in the selection and use of diagnostic measures, and proficiency in multidisciplinary treatment planning and healthcare delivery.

As it relates to alcohol and drug addiction, Warden Robert L. Ayers spoke directly to the issue of recidivism stating: "This was an idea dreamed up by the men in blue here; their efforts have put this thing on the map. These counseling re-

sources will be used to break this vicious cycle. We are taking additional steps to target the guys in orange, 60 percent of which have six months or less and 20 percent are Reception Center violators."

Inmate David Sievers, a 2007 ARC graduate, says the program gave him "hope, strength and courage to stay clean and sober."

Addiction counselor trainee Clinton Avalos adds, "Understanding addiction has allowed me to never second guess others who are taking necessary steps in addressing their pain."

The ARC program has screened 266 inmates with 218 intakes. A total of 175 began treatment and 83 completed the four month addiction treatment program. Currently, there are 21 inmates in treatment. The intense, comprehensive process groups and informative presentations allow one to endure the circumstances of their trials with diversity being the greatest asset to this philosophy. This equates to a pre-eminent program that is powerful in its impact to each participant involved.

San Quentin Veterans Help Santa

By ALY TAMBOURA

The Vietnam Veterans Group of San Quentin (VVG/SQ) will be assisting Santa Claus in the San Quentin visiting rooms where he will be giving out gifts to the children and young family members of prisoners.

The gifts will be handed out by Santa and his elves in the visiting rooms starting Dec. 12 and will continue on Fridays and weekends until Christmas Day. Children from toddlers to 14 years of age are able to receive gifts, according to Santa. Santa is also available for pictures, so please remember to purchase your picture ducats ahead of time in the canteen.

The VVG/SQ is celebrating its 20th annual toy drive this year.

"Last year we handed out over 350 bags of toys," says Eddie Renteria, who is the only prisoner who gets to talk directly to Santa.



Photo By Eddie Renteria

The gift bags Santa will be giving out contain all sorts of goodies, according to Renteria. He says last year's gifts included games, basketballs, footballs, action figures, remote control cars and much more.

"The declining economy has had an adverse affect on some of our corporate sponsors' ability to donate this year," says Renteria. "But individual donations from people seem to be making up the difference."

If you wish to make a donation or have any questions contact Lt. Cramer at Ext. 5757

Arts & Entertainment

'Brothers In Pen' Third Anthology

By ZOE MULLERY

A new anthology of fiction and creative non-fiction is being written in an ongoing writing workshop at San Quentin State Prison by 12 men, mostly Lifers, all serious writers. A strong theme emerging from this collection is the nature of violence and its effects on human beings, and the kind of struggle required to turn violence around.

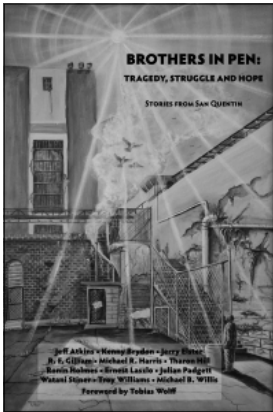
The subtitle of this anthology, "Tragedy, Struggle, and Hope," speaks to this kind of vision. However, the seriousness of the subject matter doesn't mean these stories are all

heavy and harsh. There is much humor, wisdom, complexity and hope to be found in these pages.

You'll encounter struggles of temptation and forgiveness, soul-searching inquiries into the past, tragic love stories, battle bots, psychogenic amnesia, first-person accounts of Black Power history, pre-historic family drama, gang cease-fires, tommyknockers, and much more.

The class had the honor of Tobias Wolff visiting and contributing a foreword for this book.

Proceeds from this book go through the William James Association to support the program. To order go to: brothersinpen.wordpress.com.



The Ophir Prison Marching Kazoo Band

San Quentin Receives 'The Ophir Prison Marching Kazoo Band & Temperance Society'

Bizarre events were happening in San Quentin. Warden Robert Ayers, Jr., stepped up to the microphone on the lower yard and announced that the California "State Prison" at "Ophir" was closed, and the members of the marching band were transferred to San Quentin. In a gesture of good will, these newly arrived (volunteer) "inmates" decided to put on a concert on the lower yard.

On Saturday November 22, 2008, the band came marching down the paved road from the Garden Chapel area. The group of misfits played their musical instruments while Captain Rufus T. Whizbang headed the procession. Rules must be totally slack where these dudes rolled in from, carrying contraband of every sort, including a rubber chicken. Hats which included beer kegs set off a lax dress code that no respectable convict might wear.

Proudly dragging the rubber chicken at the rear of the procession, the band marched to a prepared stage. With a few more bars of their marching tune, the band ended with a loud shout of, "Up yours!"

Captain Whizbang, wearing a pith helmet with a huge windup knob attached to the top, got the gathering crowd going with raucous talk of drinking beer. The part of being a "Temperance Society" seemed to be from a time before they all had slipped off the wagon.

The music was tight, playing familiar tunes. A SQTV video showed them on temporary community release marching in local parades. In the end, the inmates were applauded loudly by San Quentin prisoners. A reversal in the transfer must have come about, being that they marched back up the hill under heavy escort, never to be seen again.

-SQ News Staff

Snippets & Quotes

The most shoplifted book in the world is the Bible.

It used to be illegal to celebrate Christmas in the United States. Christmas did not become an official holiday until 1870. Prior to this the Massachusetts General Court, in 1659, ordered a five-shilling fine to be paid by any person caught celebrating Christmas. The law was revoked in 1681.

The two robbers crucified next to Jesus were Dimas and Gestas. Their names are not mentioned in the Gospels but can be found in the Gospel of Nicodemus, one of the many books of Christian Apocrypha.

You can die from drinking too much coffee. What is too much? According to researchers, a lethal amount of caffeine is about 10 grams. The average adult would have to drink between 50 and 200 cups in a quick succession to ingest 10 grams of caffeine.

Each square inch of the average adult's skin hosts approximately 20 million microorganisms. There are more microscopic bugs crawling around on a single person than there are humans on the earth. Ewww!

The German measles have their name because they were discovered by a German.

When I was a kid I used to pray every night for a new bicycle. Then I realized that the Lord doesn't work that way so I stole one and asked Him to forgive me.

-Emo Philips

Only two things are infinite—the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not so sure about the universe.

-Albert Einstein

LAST MONTH'S SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

A Christmas Poem

By LYNN

That first Christmas that was so long,
long ago
Was part of a true story that all of us should
know.

Jesus, God's Son, really did come,
To save us all and not just some.
Mary and Joseph knelt in reverence and awe,
While looking at the baby so holy and small.
The shepherds came from off the hill,
And all who are wise seek Him still.

The three kings traveled so long and so far,
Praising and thanking that God sent a star.
The angels sang and gave God the glory.
And just think, you are the reason for this story.

Reprinted from: A New Perspective
Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights
Still Water, MN

A Single Footprint

By HARRISON MISIOKA SEUGA

Shallow waters, soft rippling surfs that wash ashore on tranquil sands – displacing the permanence of innocence, like unsettled lands...

Unsettling the world with a single footprint --- impressions of progress implanted in her soil, displacing the cycles of nature's shores...

Rising seas – melting ice caps, tumultuous weather patterns, and dying trees – a single footprint buried to the knee...

Carbon monoxide – ozone depletion, global destruction by consumer production --- a single footprint, progresses induction... Acid rain --- acidic seas, oceanic sustainability over-arching availability...

Over-population – over-harvesting – over doing it, in a suffocating concoction...

A single footprint buried to the knee, sustainability sacrificed by industrialized greed --- progresses induction of global destruction --- a catastrophe in motion along rising oceans...



SUDOKU by George Lowe

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

Tragedy, Struggle and Hope

A Reading From San Quentin's Creative Writing Class

By RAPHAEL E. CALIX

On an overcast Sabbath morning at San Quentin by the Bay a very special reading was taking place in a classroom. Convicts and civilians gathered to listen intently to what the "Brothers in Pen" were about to share on this special day.

The experience of men making time work itself out was quite revealing. It spoke of the human spirit that strives and yearns for expression, serving as a survival tool as convicts reach deep within to discover the hidden meanings in life.

A reading that captured close attention was the experience of one particular brother. Animated and passionate, he made some others shudder and listen more intently. His readings spoke to a tragedy of the inner cities, where a little girl had succumbed to the perils of drug addiction. Michael "Harry O" Harris, was caught up in this struggle to save her, but he himself was also a victim, because he was one of the players to bring large quantities of cocaine into her neighborhood. His life had been a classical duel between good and bad inclination where blind ambition had won out and he had become a "pusher man" to young and old alike. Suddenly, Harris woke up from what had been a nightmare, 20 years of dark dreams in a prison cell.

Another reading came from Jeff Atkins, whose life inside San Quentin was on installments. Most of his memories focused in on his bouts with drug addiction and the loss of his family. The ups and downs in his life must have made listeners feel dizzy. But his hope for a better life was quite evident as he, too, made strides to change and better himself. Sadness and setbacks have a way of bringing out the best qualities in a man. Maybe this



Steve Emerick and Zoe Mullery with the Arts in Corrections Writing Group

is why the civilian guests were eager to hear more.

The diversity of readings made for a good exchange between the reader and the listener. From the concrete jungles to green hills, people are the same wherever they happen to be.

Kenny Brydon read from his memoirs. He spoke of a funeral that had brought him face to face with loved ones. An event that was so emotional in the company of ones that are so close. "A body lying in a coffin" was a striking image for him to share, prompting reactions in the classroom that were stiff and still. Brydon's voice trembled; perhaps the past and the present had become one for him. All was done in the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness,

for himself and his family, or so it did appear.

Troy Williams, aka "Bones," began his reading from the pages of the book, "Brothers In Pen." His words enticed the listeners. Terrorism and relevant issues of today painted a familiar image. Police actions, resistance and repression, violence and brutality, all held the audience's rapt attention. William's descriptions came to life as his characters struggled to survive. Listeners were certainly living in the moment.

Now it was Luke Padgett's turn. He spoke in a clear and even tone: "How could being in a cage not change a man?" His expressive manner took the form of a theater musing, the classroom was a stage and Luke was the performer in a

play. "Natalie's" spirit came to life through him, and everyone began to know her almost as well as Padgett.

Jerry Elster's reading was alertly given in light of his current plight as a CDCR client. "Top Dog" was weaving his way through the maze of prison violence. In his reading of "Naked Feet On Cold Concrete," dodging shanks and gun towers was an everyday occurrence inside and a survival guide is what he was now sharing. Denials of parole piled up as accomplishments rained down. "Top Dog" was still in the pen and his end was near. William "Top Dog" Vanderbilt's body was dressed out to his family one sad day.

Ronin Holmes began his real life experience from the tip of his pen writing on his

heart. "The loss of a loved one inside leaves no room for mourning." He had to move on with his time in the joint. Love is never ending. "Giving it is better than accepting it." Many maxims lined his portrait of love within the walls. His thoughts cascaded into the heads of his listeners: "I believe in the power of love," and so he was happy and peaceful in the reading he now delivered.

Michael "Charlie K Complex" Willis shared from some of the horror stories inside the psychiatric wards and institutions. He spoke of innocence betrayed by the trusted and the fight of the depressed to be free. It was clinical, analytical and sharp. "Charlie K Complex" accented what was a masterful grouping and readings by the "Brothers In Pen."

After the readings, questions were thrown at the readers. Williams explained, "A lot of our stories have their roots inside of these places, and now this is our way of telling people outside about the positive side that makes us more than prisoners or convicts." Larry "Watani" Stiner spoke, "It provides the connection that will one day mend our communities." Steve Emerick (Arts In Corrections) noted that the stories covered a wide spectrum of emotions. Zoe Mullery, Arts Creative Writing instructor, expressed her reaction to the readings: "I was very proud. It was a memorable time for all of us. I love getting to see them shine with all that's in them. I get to see that often, each week during class, but it's good to have an audience from the outside hear the words and ideas from their hearts." Zoe's eyes were still glowing with pride. I am certain that she was not alone. San Quentin by the Bay is a historic place where history and historians are ever busy making it shine!

What Chanukah Means To Me

By CHAPLAIN HYMAN

It is light in the time of darkness. In the Maccabee struggle to worship as they chose, they showed the courage to fight for their values in the face of overwhelming adversity. The downside is that victory is sometimes more dangerous to the human soul than defeat. Human beings don't handle power well.



What Christmas Means To Me

By PASTOR MORRIS CURRY

On a winter evening in England, a lady and her son were driving as it began to snow. As it became heavy, the lady couldn't see, and she wound up in a ditch. The mother and son went and found a country home.



The lady of the house invited her in, and cared for her bringing hot tea and food. Later, the owner of the home discovered she had helped the Queen of England and her son, the heir to the throne. So, Christmas is a remembrance of a King who visited.

By FATHER STEPHEN BARBER

Christmas is the moment in history which unfolds the intersection between



divine human life. In the words of Barack Obama, "As God has his hand on the arc of human history. Christmas is the intersection between God and humanity in Jesus."

Death Penalty Delay Upheld

Continued from Page 1

Opponents of the death penalty see this as opportunity for Californians to reevaluate capital punishment, which was reinstated in the state in 1976.

The death penalty has been abolished in all western countries except the U.S.

Critics of capital punishment assert that in the U.S. at least 400 innocent people have been convicted of capital crimes they did not commit, of which 23 have been executed. As fatal errors escalate, many voters reconsider capital punishment.

In the U.S. there is declining public acceptance of capital punishment as a viable

deterrent to crime, say critics. This opposition is amid pressure by the European Union, whose members have expressed deep concerns about the increasing number of executions in the United States. All the more since the great majority of executions since reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976 have been carried out in the 1990s. Furthermore, in the U.S. offenders who are under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the crime may be sentenced to death and executed.

Opinion

A Room With a View of Death Row

By ALI R. MUHAMMED
Contributing Writer

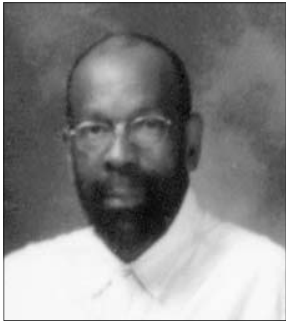
Where I lie there is despair, but above what demons haunt those who dwell there. As a Lifer who resides in north block, I often wonder about the plight of those condemned men who live on the sixth floor A section, known as North Seg. (North Segregation) a part of California's death row.

Albert Camus once wrote, "*What then is capital punishment but the most premeditated of murders, to which no criminal's deed, however calculated it may be, can be compared.*"

America's death row residents are men and women who walk the razor's edge between half-life and certain death. These are America's condemned who bear a stigma far worse than "prisoner." Life there oscillates between the

banal and the bizarre.

Unlike other prisoners, condemned prisoners are not "doing time." Freedom does not shine at the end of the tunnel. Rather, the end of the tunnel brings extinction. Thus, for many here, there is no hope.



All death rows' share a central goal: "Human storage" in an austere world in which condemned prisoners are treated as bodies kept alive to be killed.

To such men and women the actual execution is a fait accompli, a formality already accomplished in spirit. The state concludes its premeditated drama by putting the "dead" to death a second time.

To do justice for self, one must consistently battle the harsh reality that this is it and what can I do for the future, a day not yet dawned? Despair not of the "Mercy."

Journalism Taught with Appreciation

By COMANCHE

The fall semester of San Quentin's Patten's Prison University Project (PUP) offered a journalism course.

As a student enrolled in PUP for several years, the journalism class was a welcome change of pace. The time and effort Jody Lewen and Jennifer Scaife put into making this class available was greatly appreciated.

My quest for more knowledge is enhanced by their offering these innovative courses. Journalism has taught me how to write more effectively and eloquently.

Our instructor, Nigel Hatton, a journalism instructor and former reporter is an excellent choice for providing the students with the best education available. Jody and Jennifer, kudos to you for making this student's journey in academia an enlightening experience.

H-Unit MAC Meeting

By DAVID MARSH

Present for the Administration: Capt. Dorsey, Lt. Ericson, Sgt. Taylor, CCI Morgan, Debra Sheldon

Time/Location: Admin. Bd. - H-Unit, Fri., 11-14-08

Topics of Discussion: Inmates must be on the movement sheet for 6:20 programs (Ranch will be escorted). • Problem with lists not making it to WP 13 was discussed. • Inmate/staff and staff/inmate lack of respect – along with incidents of inmates being verbally abused by staff. • Possible staff retaliation for 602's (Capt. Dorsey gave personal assurances that he would handle any retaliation).

• Dorsey objected strenuously to inmates submitting pre-typed/mass produced 602's (Dorsey says that staff will respond with pre-typed/mass produced replies). • Administration says that religious services will be duplicated

and offered in H-Unit (has not happened as of yet). • Staff reports that in January portable units for medical services will be set-up in the area below Tower 9. • Morgan addressed the issue of high control parolees leaving on Mondays instead of Fridays (issue to be decided by inmate's agent). • Dorsey says that phones will be repaired (dorms have reported subsequent improvement in number of working phones). • Taylor says that he will address the problem of slow release from chow hall in the morning (no improvement has been noted). • Council brought up the repair of beds – staff response was that work repair orders are as much as a year behind

• Slow pace of pill call lines in H-Unit was discussed (two lines are now being employed with some improvement noted). • Meeting was adjourned

The Doctor Phil Show Films at San Quentin

By DARNELL HILL

Is there a doctor in the house? San Quentin Utilization of Inmate Resources Experiences and Studies (S.Q.U.I.R.E.S.) has once again been given the opportunity to emphasize there are men here who stand accountable for their actions and are willing to do the work it takes to give back to their family, friends and communities. The Dr. Phil show and the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. program established a collaborative effort to motivate two young men, Chris, 14, and Brit, 18, to change their negative attitudes and behaviors before serious consequences take control of their lives: jail, prison or death.

Chris and Brit are two vibrant young men who are fighting the inner child within, while trying to understand family dynamics, unhealthy friendships and the right of passage into manhood. Chris and Brit arrived here in SQ around 9 a.m. on a Friday morning. The camera crew and one of Dr. Phil's directors, Stephen Doran came in. The doctor himself was not in the house, but there were eight "therapists" prepared and ready to build some emotional and sociological motivation within these two young men's hearts and minds. As Chris, Brit and the camera crew came through the many gates, bars and doors of SQ, they were met by eight S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members: Ernest Morgan, Michael Taylor, James Houston, David Monroe, Shaid Rouse, Jerry Elster, David Pretzele and myself.

As Chris and Brit shook our hands, each had a façade of

assurance on the outside but we were able to sense their fear. We quickly let Chris and Brit know they are not welcome here. As we began to walk through the lower yard we asked Chris and Brit to look the men in the eyes. We wanted them to get a feeling of the intensity and mixed emotions of fear and uncertainty that comes from walking for the first time across the SQ big yard with all eyes on you.

Once we arrived in the classroom we quickly began the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. introduction, which prepared Chris and Brit to be open and honest. Each S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. member gave a brief introduction of themselves, what kind of crimes we committed (murder, kidnap, robbery), and how much time we had spent inside. Between the eight of us we had over a hundred years served. More importantly, we spoke about getting to the point of no return with irresponsible behavior: drugs, alcohol and negative influences. Chris seemed to be pretty straightforward and open and honest with us. With his belligerent attitude and sarcasm, Brit thought he could BS his way through the whole process, but he soon realized he was dealing with the best therapist he had ever met. Slowly but surely he dropped the façade and came to the surface of truth.

Chris described himself as a teenager struggling with anger issues. Brit was a seemingly bright young man with arrogance and an ego so big that you could smell the stench. The experience and challenge for the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members was liberating and fulfilling. As

S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members we emulate the mode, "We don't scare straight, we communicate!" Our goal is not only to share our experience, but our hearts as well. We believe that troubled youth are motivated by examples that offer insight and encouragement. Our hope is that the kids we come into contact with will learn from their mistakes and make better choices in spite of the effects of dysfunctional households, friendships and communities.

The end result of Chris and Brit's experience with S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. was inspiring for everyone. Chris learned that his father's insults (stupid, worthless...) may be reflections of how his dad felt about himself. So Chris doesn't have to take it personally. Brit learned that although he says he doesn't care about his mom abandoning him, there are resentment and denial issues that are influencing his abuse of drugs and alcohol. Like many of us, Chris and Brit are trying to find answers to a never ending story — the effects of dysfunctional households. Although Doctor Phil was not in the house, we feel that some serious emotional healing took place. As S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members, once again we accomplished our goal through the planting seeds of insight and offering the gift of hope.

The Doctor Phil Show should air Chris and Brit's story sometime in November or December. Member's of the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. hope that those who read this article, or see the show, learn from the Chris and Brit stories.

Haterism What it Means to be a Hater

By MUJAHID ASAD
Contributing Writer

Most of us here at San Quentin have used the term "hating" at one time or another. And almost certainly, at one time or another we've also indulged in the act of hating, either consciously or unconsciously.

In looking around me, it has become apparent to me that hating has reached an all-time high over the past two years. I feel compelled to address this situation in the hope that it will help some of us stop the hating before it spreads further.

HA-TER (adv) i.e.: to hate, to spew ill will towards something. Someone who is generally negative and in bad spirits, someone who is constantly putting someone or something down, always finding fault in something, rather than seeing the good. A person who feels anger or jealousy for someone who has succeeded in something they have worked hard for. Someone who speaks badly or takes negative actions in an attempt to create problems for a

successful person.

"Hater" is a term that I originally heard some 15 or 20 years ago. While watching a football game with some friends, I heard someone say something bad about one guy's team and he replied, "You're a hater!" At the time I thought that it was an appropriate term.

Since then it has expanded into many different applications. Just as the applications of the word have grown, so have those that attempt to apply it to others. For I see them everywhere I go.

It's almost as if they are being mass manufactured. On a daily basis someone will say to me "I don't like him, or them." When I ask them why they feel this way, they really have no reasons. This all seems so crazy to me.

I am sure that we have all indulged in hater-ism at some point or another. As we mature and possess more knowledge, it just stands to reason that we would choose to discontinue this behavior. To hate is a wasted emotion that serves no purpose. It will harm the one

who hates much more than it ever could the one he hates.

More often than not when we examine why we hate, there is no basis for the way we feel. Some of these haters will expose themselves occasionally. They will allow it to reach a level where they may verbalize their hatred for you. Here is a reply that I once used towards hatred: "I'm flattered that you have put so much of your time into observing me. I really wish I could do the same for you; it's just that I've got too many things to do that are more important."

Here are a few questions that you might ask yourself to see if you have been engaging in hating: 1. When your homeboy is going home, is your first thought, "He'll be back!?" 2. When someone you know is getting a visit; do you think or say "Why would someone come visit him?" 3. Do you ever say something behind someone's back, purposely knowing they are going to hear about it, but not from you? 4. Have you ever wished you had something someone else had, and that they didn't have it?

Warden Ayers, Farewell!

Continued from Page 1

The following is a Q&A interview with Warden Ayers:

Q: There is common knowledge that you have a military background. Would you provide the readers with a brief history.

A: I entered the U.S. Army in 1966 and served Golf Company 50th Infantry (LRP). After my discharge, I accepted a direct commission to first lieutenant, Infantry. For the remainder of my reserve career, I was in the 91st Division, 7th PSYOP Battalion, and 104th Division, until my final assignment as commander, 1st Battalion, 415th Infantry, 104th Division after which I entered the Retired Reserve and completely retired from United States Army in 2007.

Q: Why did you choose to come back from retirement? Why San Quentin?

A: After my retirement in 2000 I continued to do some work with the department. I simply wasn't ready to completely quit working. In 2005 the CDCR asked if I would be the interim warden at Lancaster State Prison (LAC) for 60 to 90 days. That experience reminded me that it really was fun being a warden. Sometimes vexing, sometimes exasperating, but mostly fun. At the end of my tenure with LAC, I was asked if I would consider re-instating to be the warden at San Quentin. I knew SQ was experiencing difficulties — everything from keeping a warden to operational, personnel and litigation issues. Having spent my first 18 years in the department at SQ, I thought it would be a good "parting shot" to do whatever I could to help restore some dignity to SQ.

Q: What is your view on the rehabilitation efforts emphasized by CDCR?

A: San Quentin is widely known as the "program prison." Because of its location, history and name there is no shortage

of people wanting to come into SQ and help. Many of the program activities are evidence-based, scientifically designed processes intended to address behavioral, social or ideological issues which make it difficult for many men to stay out of prison. I was disappointed that SQ was not selected as a rollout institution for CDCR's efforts. I know there are significant resources in CDCR trying to put together comprehensive, state of the art, evidence-based program models. I also know a couple of sites (not San Quentin) have been selected to pioneer these models. When (if) they are ever started, I would hope to see an enhancement to public safety. If we can do something with incarcerated people to reduce their proclivity to, upon their release, create new victims then we have done something positive in furtherance of public safety.

Q: With the financial crisis facing the state, in what stage does SQ currently stand on revamping the Prison Health Care System?

A: The receiver's efforts are taking two slightly different tacks: 1. San Quentin and 2. Everywhere else. At San Quentin, building and staffing augmentation continue and are providing solid healthcare infrastructure. By the close of 2009 I expect San Quentin healthcare staff will be able to address 90 percent of inmates' healthcare issues on site. If attained, that will be an unqualified success for San Quentin and its inmate population.

Q: Some of your critics believe that you maintain a liberal policy advocated before your administration. What is the major difference in San Quentin before Warden Ayers, and after, as a matter of legacy?

A: I don't know about "liberal policy." I go back to what I said earlier about public safety. About 80 percent of the incarcerated people eventually go back to our communities. Do

we want them to return with the same values and thought processes they had when they went to prison? I believe we should do everything we can with incarcerated people to deter them from re-victimizing society (creating new victims) upon their release. That is public safety. If that makes me liberal, I guess I am guilty. The question of before and after is simple. San Quentin had built a reputation of being what I described as the epicenter of anarchy. People—staff, inmates, volunteers—pretty much did whatever they wanted. If a policy or procedure was inconvenient or unpopular, people just ignored it. Consistency was a relatively unknown practice. Those who did care about following policy and procedure had largely given up as they believed they were a minority. My goal was simple: get people to follow the rules — policy and procedures. And fairness becomes a stable element in the core of our day.

Q: There were many self-help programs born in San Quentin during your administration. Would you highlight some of these programs and the measure of their success?

A: I think most of these programs have been here all along. Our efforts were geared to structuring them into a cohesive and interdependent platform. The most striking example of this is the Stand Up program in H Unit. San Quentin staff has done this on its own. With such significant success there is still much to achieve. Equally important have been our attempts to engage local communities in these efforts. By building a continuum between the institution and the community to which a parolee returns, we strengthen a parolee's ability to succeed and ensure a positive impact on public safety.

Q: What do you see new for Condemned Row in San Quentin?

A: The funding has been approved. The building plans have

been finalized. The plans have gone out to contractors for bids. The tentative groundbreaking is set for early spring 2009.

Q: Many of the prisoners fear a major overhaul coming to educational and self-help programs once you depart. What assurance can you provide them?

A: None. As of this date, Nov. 17, 2008, I have no idea (honestly!!!!) who the next warden will be. However, I would expect the new warden to be wise enough to study the terrain carefully before setting off in any direction.

Q: How did you manage to work with the federal receiver in light of a constant tug-of-war between the receiver and the state, especially with many healthcare construction projects at stake in San Quentin?

A: We had and have a common goal: improving healthcare delivery systems in a correctional environment. We haven't always succeeded in that regard but we have always been able to come back around to our starting point and get back on track.

Q: Is this a departure to another field, or trip to where the fish are biting, and what advice do you have for the next warden, and to the prisoners?

A: I suspect I will do something in or around corrections. I am only sure that it won't be as a warden! I will take my time and see where I can be most useful. Advice for the new warden? If it's a sound policy or procedure, follow it consistently. If it's a bad policy or procedure, change it. Don't ignore it. Advice for prisoners? Do your own time. It's that simple. We have far too many inmates who think it's their business to get into other people's business and judge them or tell them how to behave. A bit less of that would do well for everyone's sense of well-being.

Robert Ayers, Jr., may say that he doesn't have a legacy, it's just all "common sense." But Robert Ayers, Jr., will, among other things, be remembered as the man who brought the *San Quentin News* to life after two decades absence.

We Want To Hear From You!

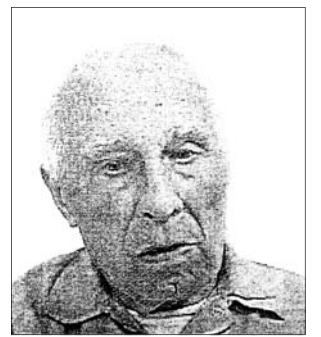
The San Quentin News welcomes and encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and people and entities outside of the institution to submit articles for this publication.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Please limit your submitted articles to no more than 350 words.
- Articles will be edited for content and length.
- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances. Use the prison appeals process.
- However, we do encourage submitting stories and/or articles which are news-worthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.
- Art work is welcomed (i.e. poems, songs, cartoons, drawings).
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

**Send Submissions to:
Education Dept. / SQ News
San Quentin, CA 94964**

(No Street address required)



Harry Hagy, CDCR No. A-53751, the oldest man in San Quentin, returned to his maker, Wednesday, December 3, 2008, 51 days short of his 86th birthday. Harry, died at Doctors Hospital of San Pablo, at 3:00 p.m. He was not able to regain consciousness or breath on his own. For those who knew Harry of 1-N-22, there will be a religious service at the Catholic Chapel on Dec. 11, at 2 p.m.

San Quentin News

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration, or the inmate population, and should be considered solely the opinion of the individual author unless specified.

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Chaplain Howard 1924 - 2008

Chaplain Harry W. Howard, born Sept. 22, 1924, passed away on Sept. 18, 2008.

Harry's loving wife, Kay, preceded him to Heaven in 1999. Harry is survived by two sons: Howie and Steve. Harry was devoted to his ministry of spreading the Lord's word. He worked for over 30 years in the California state prison system, and was a father-like figure to many prisoners. After retiring as a chaplain, Harry continued to volunteer at San Quentin State Prison as well as doing other prison ministry work. We have been privileged to know him. Well done, Harry.

san Quentin Print Shop

This publication is printed by the students in the San Quentin Vocational Printing Program.