

San Quentin News

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Photo by Adnan Khan

Judy Appel speaks with *San Quentin News* staffer Wayne Boatwright

Judy Appel talks justice

By **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

Berkeley Unified School District board member Judy Appel sat down with *San Quentin News* to brainstorm on solutions to criminal justice issues that she can take to Sacramento, if she wins an assembly seat this fall.

"I'm very concerned about our criminal justice system and the way we lock people up for really long times," Appel said. "We put people away for so long without trusting people with a second chance."

Following the footsteps of her

mentor, retired State Senator Loni Hancock (D-Oakland), Appel said she believes in working with the people affected by a problem to come up with the solutions.

Appel came into the newsroom with Alden Feldon. Both are part of the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, which supports *San Quentin News* because they believe this newspaper provides public safety solutions. At the table was Editor-in-Chief Richard "Bonaru" Richardson, Senior Editor Juan Haines and Staff Writer Wayne Boatwright.

See **APPEL** on page 4

Transforming former inmates



Photo courtesy of the 24th Street Theatre

Rise Up section from *A Man Like Me*

By **Marcus Henderson**
Journalism Guild Chairman

From the prison to the streets, the transformation of a man. That's the subject of "*A Man Like Me*" – a play created by four former prisoners taking advantage of "The Dads Back!" Academy.

The academy is a reentry organization, run by Friends Outside Los Angeles County (FOLA), us-

ing theater to reintegrate parolees and formerly incarcerated men back into society. The arts program is run in partnership with the TheatreWorkers Project, which provides theater workshops called "Moving Forward" twice a month, mostly in Southern California.

This allows the academy members the opportunity to redefine their personal narratives through improvisation, movement and

writing, Susan "Susie" Tanner, TheatreWorkers Project director, told the *San Quentin News*.

"A Man Like Me" is performed by some of the academy members for peers, at-risk youth, families, and the public. Two of the authors perform, but the other two dropped out when they found employment.

See **DADS BACK!** on page 11



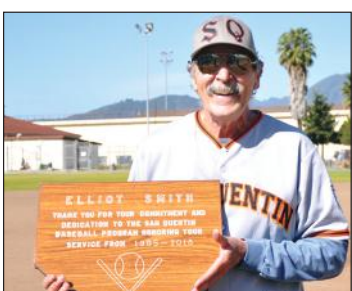
More than 100 advocates, family members and friends chanted "Drop LWOP ... drop LWOP ... commute all 5,000!"

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The Buddha Dharma Group of San Quentin held its fifth ordination ceremony April 15.

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San Quentin opened its 2018 baseball season with both joy and sadness.

Page 19



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Zuill Bailey performing in the San Quentin Chapel

Grammy award winning Zuill Bailey performs in SQ

By **Kevin D. Sawyer**
Associate Editor

A Grammy Award-winning cellist, Zuill Bailey, performed an hour-long concert at San Quentin State Prison's Protestant Chapel.

Bailey is considered one of the premier cellists in the world, and yet he decided to play before an audience of prisoners, staff and volunteers in a place where few artists have ever set foot. After achieving so much renown, Bailey visited the

prison on April 27 to share his music with men who rarely partake of the fine arts.

"It's very special to be here," said Bailey. "I'm looking forward to sharing this kind of uncommon music on this 325-year-old cello."

"This is the first time I heard the cello play like that," said inmate Eddie DeWeaver. "I want to know why I'm so tore up. I want to know why I'm crying," he asked Bailey.

See **BAILEY** on page 9

The impact on children of incarcerated parents

An audience of fathers at San Quentin State Prison cried as they watched the screening of a film that showed the impact on children when their parents go to prison.

"I almost broke down three times," *San Quentin News* staffer Dejon Joy said, as he described how one tear came out of his eye—three times.

"My boys are tattooed on my hand; I've been in the visiting room with my sons and on the other side of GTL (Global Tel Link,

the prison collect-call phone system company). I feel like you were telling my life. The film was perfect."

The movie is called *Tre Maison Dasan: A Story of Boyhood Marked by the Criminal Justice System*. It is told completely from the perspective of three kids from Rhode Island—Tre Janson, 13, Maison Teixeira, 11, and Dasan Lopes, 6.

See **TRE MAISON** on page 10



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Prisoner watching the documentary premiere at the chapel



SQN Staff with Lance Armstrong, Beverly Parenti and Chris Redlitz

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Raising awareness of California's 'Life Without' policies

By Marcus Henderson
 Journalism Guild Chairman

More than 100 advocates, family members and friends chanted, "Drop LWOP, drop LWOP, commute all 5,000!" at an Oakland town hall on March 24, denouncing California's use of life without parole sentences, also known as LWOP.

The California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) hosted the event to educate the general public and raise awareness about the state's LWOP policies. California has approximately 5,000 prisoners serving life sentences without the chance for parole, according to the CCWP press release.

"We believe that all people in California serving the inhumane LWOP sen-

tence should be commuted to parole-eligible, allowing people a chance to go before the parole board," said Adrienne Roberts, who works for CCWP and led the discussion at the event. "Ultimately, LWOP is a living death sentence and needs to be eliminated from the penal code," added Roberts.

In the penalty phase of cases involving "special circumstances," the defendant sometimes is sentenced to life without parole instead of the death penalty. But CCWP members argue that LWOP is really worse than a death sentence. (The state presently has around 750 persons on Death Row.)

Terah "Sage" Lawyer, Ny Nourn and June Lee -- all formerly incarcerated women -- shared their prison



Photo courtesy of The Fire Inside

MCs Adrienne Skye Roberts and Aminah Colbert with Panelists Terah "Sage" Lawyer, Ny Nourn and June Lee

experiences and gave insight into the LWOP community at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla and California Institution for Women (CIW) in Corona.

"For me, to speak my truth is helpful," Nourn told *The Fire Inside*, CCWP's newsletter. "I just want to help the next person."

Nourn was released May 2017 from CCWF after serving 16 years for a crime she said she did not commit, according to the newsletter. Nourn was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without parole. She appealed her case by submitting expert reports stating that she suffered from Battered Women's Syndrome. Nourn was then resentenced to 15 years to life.

After Nourn paroled, her ordeal was not over. Upon release, she was immediately detained by the U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and held in a detention center to face deportation proceedings. Nourn was born in a refugee camp in Thailand after her mother fled the war and genocide in Cambodia. They eventually came to the U.S. five years later as refugees.

At her deportation hearing, Nourn testified that her former boyfriend was still threatening to kill her, and with the state of corruption in Cambodia, he can have her killed there for about \$100. Nourn and her supporters believe she will be much safer in the U.S.

"Black and Brown people are disproportionately sentenced to LWOP, revealing prosecutorial bias and racial discrimination," said Ivette Alé of Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB). "Of the nearly 200 people serving LWOP in California's women's prisons, the

overwhelming majority are survivors of abuse, including intimate partner battering, childhood abuse, sexual violence and sex trafficking."

In addition to speakers, the audience heard audio clips from women serving LWOP produced by CCWP's "A Living Chance" storytelling project. There was a question and answer period with the panel.

The audience then broke into smaller groups that focused on topics such as Strategies to Influence the Governor and Using Social Media in the Campaign.

"People took away ideas for how to plug into the work and where their place is in the fight against LWOP," said Roberts. "I think people were moved by seeing and feeling the emotional impact that LWOP has on individuals, families and communities."

"I think people took away a better understanding of what it means to be sentenced to

LWOP and the very limited options that people have for possibilities of freedom," added Roberts.

At the event, CCWP and CURB advocates commended Gov. Jerry Brown for commuting the sentences of 14 people and pardoning 56 to mark the Easter holiday. Among them were seven serving life without parole. The commutations included three people in women's prisons, two serving LWOP.

"These unprecedented commutations indicate that the governor recognizes that people have the capacity to change, grow and be rehabilitated, which an LWOP sentence denies," said Roberts. "We are hopeful that over the course of his last year in office, Brown will continue to grant pardons and commutations, especially to the thousands of people serving LWOP sentences. Such a bold stance could serve as a model for commutation and sentencing reform throughout the country."

Hearing the news of the Easter commutations, advocates became hopeful that LWOP sentences in California could be dropped for good, said the press release.

"We are extremely humbled by Governor Brown's act of grace," said a group of women at CCWF, said the press release. "We have believed and persevered through despair, and now we feel that a miracle of hope is transforming our lives."

After the event, guests took commutation postcards to distribute and many others committed to joining letter-writing campaigns of the Drop LWOP and A Living Chance Storytelling to End Life Without Parole.



Photo courtesy of The Fire Inside

Audience of more than 100 at the CCWP rally in Oakland

San Quentin News

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Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Limit your articles to no more than 350 words.
- Know that articles will be edited for content and length.
- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances.

(For that, use the prison appeals process.) We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.

- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.
- Poems and artwork (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

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Behind the Scenes
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Aging cons enter new and unknown world on parole

Some are fearful because they don't know what their future holds

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

Aging cons who survived the causes and consequences of long-term incarceration are being released from prison across the country. They are paroled into a society full

of high-speed diverse technology while still carrying the stigma of an ex-felon, and the transition is not easy.

That was the focal point of a recent report from the Urban Institute. The 2017 report, "A Matter of Time: The Causes and Consequences of

Rising Time Served in America's Prisons," highlights a current legal environment that places people in prison for long periods and shares the stories of several who made it through.

"I'm a human being," said Ramona Brant, a formerly in-

carcerated woman whose story was shared in the Institute report. "Each one of us has a story to tell, and if you would just take the time to listen, you would be amazed at how similar I am to you."

These inmates have been waiting for their freedom for a long time, but some are fearful because they don't know what their future holds and taking that first step out can be daunting.

One stated purpose of imprisonment is to rehabilitate people so they can re-enter society, but the reality is it punishes the convicted person for their conduct. The Urban Institute reported extremely long prison stays can exact devastating costs from the persons incarcerated.

Case in point: in 1995 Brant was sentenced to life without parole for her first conviction for drug conspiracy—a mandatory penalty that even the sentencing judge thought was too severe, the article reported.

For 21 years she said, she missed out on being a mother to her babies. Now her babies have babies.

Brant was the best mother that she could be. At the start of every year, she wrote her kids' teachers, asking them to understand the children's situation.

When President Obama

granted Brant clemency in 2016, she paroled to Charlotte, N.C., at the age of 51.

"Everything surprised me," Brant said. "Everything was new. Everything was different."

For the first time, Brant saw flat-screen TVs, filled out paperless applications and saw backup cameras in vehicles. She had to learn many common social skills all over again.

"Everything surprised me, everything was new. Everything was different"

Cell phones are now in everyone's pocket. Parking meters accept credit cards. And subway tokens are long gone.

But adapting to those changes pales in comparison to the challenge of returning home after decades in prison and starting over at an age when most people are already established in life.

Stanley Mitchell experienced turmoil upon his release at the age of 63, said the article.

After his release from serv-

ing a 35-year term, he could never obtain tranquility. Nightmares kept him up at night, and knocks on the front door spooked him.

Not everyone who's been inside for a long time loses the life they had before.

Nelson Rivera served 17 years in prison before his release at the age of 45. Even though he and his wife ended their marriage while Rivera was incarcerated, his children stood by him.

"I have four children," Rivera told the Institute. "There were times where I felt like I was going to lose my family—my children mainly—and thank God, we stood strong."

The Urban Institute's report talked about the need for a serious change to the criminal justice system in this country. It presented possible alternatives to long-term sentences and proposed approaching criminal justice from a new angle.

But while drastic reform may be possible, it hasn't come yet, and there are people still serving long sentences and being released into a new and challenging world. More robust and accessible reentry programs, rehabilitative services, and government support are needed for the aging former, and current, inmates to succeed after incarceration.

Colorado requests \$30 million to re-open two shuttered prisons

By Harry C. Goodall, Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

The Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) is requesting more than \$30 million to re-open two state prisons due to a rising prison population, according to Bethany Blankley of Watchdog.org, reprinted in the *Pueblo Chieftain*. If this request is granted, CDOC will reach an operational budget of close to \$1 billion.

Some advocates point to the state's "war on drugs" policy for the rise of the prison population and believe that investing in drug treatment programs would be more cost effective.

"Many taxpayers are tired of paying exorbitant costs for policies that don't work, like the war on drugs," said Christie Donner, Executive Director of the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (CCJRC). "Colorado does not need more prisons. It needs a more sensible drug policy that treats drug use as a public health issue instead of a criminal justice issue."

CCJRC released a new report stating that the filing of felony drug cases more than doubled for the state between 2012 and 2017. A charge of simple drug possession made up the majority of the cases filed, according to the *Pueblo Chieftain* article.

Colorado's legislature tried to reform its drug laws when they passed Senate Bill 13-250 in 2013. The intent was to send high-level dealers to prison and give community supervision and treatment to individuals charged with possession, the article said.

But the bill had the opposite effect. Those sentenced for "simple drug possession" increased between 2015 and 2016 and the majority of those were women.

"Despite reform efforts, the war on drugs continues to play an outsized role in fueling Colorado's prison population and, in turn, its prison budget," Donner said. "No one thinks the status quo is stemming the flow of either illegal drugs or drug addiction, and yet it not only

persists but is getting worse, particularly for women."

The CDOC is requesting the reopening of Colorado State Penitentiary II in Cañon City at a cost of \$18.8 million. The second prison is Huerfano County Correctional Facility, with an operational cost of \$12.3 million. The CDOC already has a budget request of \$922 million for its fiscal year 2018-19 and these additional funding requests would push its budget to nearly \$1 billion, reported the article.

"The legislature should revisit the state's drug sentencing structure," said Pete Lee, House Judiciary Committee Chair in a statement, "(and) come up with some new ideas for reaching that original goal and redouble efforts to steer people struggling with addiction into treatment rather than prisons."

The effort to reopen Colorado State Penitentiary II died in a state House committee May 8. CDOC may still reopen Huerfano with the permission of the Joint Budget Committee alone.

"Mass incarceration is inextricably linked to mass under-education in America," according to Elizabeth Hinton in The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/06/opinion/prisons-colleges-education.html>

Tulsa county jail's mental health pod a step in the right direction

The Tulsa, OK, county jail used to place their mentally ill inmates in the same bare cells as everyone else. Now, the jail sports a new mental health pod, where some of those inmates can access a more relaxed and therapeutic environment, according to a report from the *Tulsa World*. That is a step up, proponents say, but it's not a solution. The root of the problem, David Van Risseghem of the Public Policy Committee for the National Alliance on Mental Illness told the *World*, "we're criminalizing mental illness. We're punishing people instead of helping them."

The 106-bed pod opened in April of last year with funding from a voter-approved tax increase. Currently, it is only open to men; women and juveniles are housed in the jail's medical wing.

The crux of the problem, however, is since many state-run mental health facilities closed in the 1960s and '70s, the number of mentally ill people incarcerated has risen, leaving it to the corrections facilities

to make do.

"Those people didn't just go away, said Jail Administrator David Park. "Now we're treating them in jails and in prisons."

The new mental health pod is in a level four security setting. It is divided based on the needs of inmates: one side is under 24-hour suicide watch, while the other was compared to dorm living with access to recreation yards and television.

The new housing units are always full, according to Park, and DOC records indicated more than half the state's prison population has a history of mental illness.

"Is it big enough? Probably not. I would say 'build it, and they will come,'" Park said. "If we could add capacity tomorrow, it would fill up. But you have to manage the resources that you have, and I would say we're doing that pretty well."

Although the jail has a psychologist and psychiatrist on staff, it's not a mental hospital.

"We're a jail," Park told the *Tulsa World*. "We're do-

ing our best to give people treatment they need, but we're still a jail, and we can't change that."

The families of mentally-ill jail inmates believe more change is necessary.

When Mary Welton went to the new mental health pod to visit her son, she was shocked to find him inside a cell with bare white walls, a stainless steel toilet and a slab for a bed, according to the article.

"Even after all these years," said Welton, "I wasn't prepared for how lonely he looked." Prior to this visit, she had always gone to a designated visiting area.

Her son, Jeff Welton, suffers from paranoid delusions, which has led to many arrests over the years, including this latest one in 2016. His mother says Jeff's mental condition has deteriorated since then and he sometimes doesn't recognize her or his father.

According to the *Tulsa World*, she said bitterly, "If they can't deal with psychiatric issues in jail, they should not put them in jail."

—Harry C. Goodall Jr.

Advocates provide clean water for Massachusetts prisoners

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

Advocates in a Massachusetts community are raising money to supply prisoners with bottled water at the state's MCI-Norfolk facility due to complaints of terrible drinking water at the institution, according to a *WBUR News* article.

"People will tell you that you need clean drinking water to survive"

Prisoners say the water is smelly and looks like black tea.

"People in the community shouldn't have to be put in a position to raise funds to provide water for people incarcerated in our state prison system," said Greg Diatchenko, a former prisoner at MCI-Norfolk.

Deeper Than Water is the advocacy group helping prisoners buy cases of bottled water from the prison com-

missary. The group members say the bottled-water distribution temporarily stopped when a prisoner passing out the water was placed in solitary confinement.

"The folks inside are human, you know?" said Christine Mitchell, a Deeper Than Water member and Harvard doctoral student in public health. "And so they deserve the basic human rights that we all have out here, too. We know [the DOC has] the money and the resources to provide clean water, and they haven't done it."

Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) officials said the water is drinkable and meets state standards. But they said some of the samples collected at the prison contained higher-than-normal levels of manganese, which can cause a neurological disorder similar to Parkinson's disease and other health problems.

"You're in the care and custody of the Department [of Correction]," Diatchenko said. "They're supposed to provide health care, dental, nutritional food. Anywhere, people will tell you that you need clean drinking water to

survive."

The Department of Environmental Protection ordered the DOC to install a new water system, slated to go online in May, and said it would fine DOC for delays, according to the article. Problems with funding and the project bidding process caused the delays, said Christopher Fallon, a DOC spokesperson.

As for the prisoner who went to solitary confinement, Fallon said state law bars him from discussing whether any inmate was placed in segregation.

"I can tell you generally that no one would ever be placed into segregation for hoarding water," Fallon said, adding that the group should have worked with prison officials instead of passing out bottled water on their own. "We can't allow an inmate to have power over other inmates and say, 'I'm going to be the one'" to distribute things, Fallon said.

Mitchell and her group said because of the DOC's failure to address the problem, which has been going on for years, Deeper Than Water would not have trusted DOC to distribute the bottled water.

Upcoming Events for San Quentin

- June 8th - Prison University Project graduation
- June 14th - Butterscotch
- June 15th - Code 7370 graduation
- June 23rd - Lower Yard Music Variety Show
- June 29th - Barbershop Forum

Norco program provides more than just an education

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

Prisoners at the California Rehabilitation Center in Norco are getting a higher education and earning time

off their sentences through the Norco College program, reports the *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*.

The new prison program started in February 2017. Norco's original plan was

to start the program in the fall of 2018, but that was not soon enough for prison officials.

"They said, 'We want it now,'" said Jason Parks, Norco College's interim

dean of instruction.

Bryan Reece, Norco College president, added, "It's right in our backyard and it's in our core mission. We are trying to educate historically under-served populations. These folks just happen to be in prison."

"Not everyone in prison is the same people when we're released from prison," Norman Jordan, 55, a participant in program said to the *Daily Bulletin*.

Courses in English, communications and counseling were offered at the beginning of the program. For the fall semester there were 105 students enrolled. All the prisoners have less than 10 years to serve on their sentences.

"Because we're wearing blue doesn't mean that we're not human," said Osmar Castro, 39, referring to his blue prison clothing. He has four years and three months to serve on a 12-year sentence, according to the article.

Inmates can earn time off their sentences by participating in and completing educational and vocational programs.

The faculty is equally enthusiastic about this new program. "They're knocking on the door," said Parks. "They're saying, 'Please, pick my major.'"

A *Daily Bulletin* reporter sat in on a presentation by students of a Communica-

tions Storytelling class.

"My presentation is on how Robin Hood became an outlaw," prisoner Robert Beebe told the class.

The 41-year-old Beebe dropped out of the ninth grade then joined a gang. He did two two-year prison terms prior to being arrested for attempted murder in the mid-'90s.

"This is like getting a whole new life, getting this education"

"When you don't come out with a clear mind, you go right back to what you know. And I went right back to the area, the people," Beebe said. "I never really looked for a job and just chose to commit crimes."

Beebe has been incarcerated for 19 years on a 20-year sentence, and completed his GED while in segregated housing.

"I've been going positive since then," he said. "I've dropped out of the gangs. I've changed where I'm living at, my whole mindset, everything's changing."

Beebe continued with his story of Robin Hood. How he committed a crime (killing a

deer in the king's forest) that carried a death penalty and fled into the far woods to join a group of other outcasts.

"That day was the last day of his life without enemies," said Beebe.

Prior to enrolling in this program, Beebe earned an associate's degree in theological studies that awarded him a six-month deduction off his sentence and will allow him to parole in a few months.

Beebe said getting a college education has changed his life.

"When I came in here, I didn't have college on my mind. I didn't think I'd ever make it out of prison," he said. "I started with one course and now I do five, six at a time. It benefits me; it keeps me away from the negative out there. I am in here every day. If I'm not at work, I'm in here."

If paroled, he plans to pursue a higher education.

"This is like getting a whole new life, getting this education," he told the reporter.

A 2013 Rand Corp. study revealed inmates who participate in educational programs are 43 percent less likely to return to prison. They are also 13 percent more likely to become employed after released. The study suggested that every \$1 invested in prison education saves taxpayers \$4 to \$5 after a prisoner released.

SQ parolee helps troubled teens through the creative outlet of music

By Achilles Williams
Journalism Guild Writer

By the time John Wallace was released from San Quentin, he had written 75 songs.

John Wallace, 39, who discharged in 2003, founded a project called STOP (Surviving the Odds Project) to help deter at-risk youth from falling into the school-to-prison pipeline. Fifteen years after his release, he's showing kids the creative outlet he wished he had at their age.

The former gang member now empowers at-risk youth through musical self-expression at Legion Beats in San Rafael, reported the *Marin Independent Journal*. His first class of 13 students will write, record and create a music video over the course of a few weeks. In May, they'll have their first live performance.

"I wanted to give back to where a kid wouldn't have to suffer any longer or blame others for what they're going through and learn how to express themselves," said Wallace, who grew up in Marin City. Wallace started by focus-

ing on kids in Marin County schools, not far from where he was incarcerated; he focused particularly on those at the greatest risk of being expelled, bullied or behaving in a manner that cries out for support.

"We did an ice-breaker where I told the kids, 'Tell me something that you wouldn't want anybody to know about yourself,'" Wallace said.

Surprisingly, the kids revealed secrets and stories that had a profound effect on them, like the murder of a sibling. Wallace himself had experienced bullying and trauma, too.

"We want to get them to express this type of stuff through music or express how it's making them feel, without using profanity and without using glorification of drugs and street life," Wallace said.

Long-term, Wallace hopes to establish STOP as a wide-spread after-school program.

"We're just scratching the surface right now. I know what it's like being an at-risk youth and dealing with my skin color, for one, growing up in Marin City, and



John Wallace

the criminal justice system," Wallace said.

After years of expressing himself on paper, Wallace released his first album, "All of My Life," last December under the stage name Freedom because of what music has done for his life. His biggest supporters throughout his journey are his future mother-in-law and his fiancée.

"Her mom has always said, 'I wish other people could see your light shine bright, because it's shining really bright right now. You have something to offer,'" Wallace said. "I just have to keep believing that."

New 50-bed mental health facility slated to open in Southern California

By Antoine L. Smith
Journalism Guild Writer

The state's prison system plans to build a new 50-bed mental health facility in Chino for Southern California inmates.

Working, drawing and preliminary plans are budgeted in at \$3.6 million and will probably be completed at the end of 2019," Bill Sessa, spokesman for the

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), told the *Chino Champion* newspaper.

He noted there is a shortage of mental health beds in Southern California.

CDCR is required by law to provide mental health care to inmates, from counseling to medications to crisis beds, Sessa said.

The proposed facility would be located at the Cali-

fornia Institution for Men in Chino, the March 31 story said.

The 48,000-square-foot hospital would be built inside the prison and will cost \$56.6 million, Sessa said.

There are currently 373 beds for mental health patients in CDCR prisons, Sessa said.

Local opposition has surfaced in the past over mental health facility plans.

By Harry C. Goodall Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

California State Prison, Corcoran has changed dramatically since it opened 30 years ago, according to an officer who has been there since the beginning.

"It's turned to the better," Correctional Officer Rey Aguirre said, at ceremonies marking the 30 years of Corcoran history.

Corcoran was the 19th of the current 35 prisons built in California. It opened in February 1988 with a cost of \$262 million, the *Hanford Sentinel* reported March 29. The prison houses 3,202

inmates and comprises nine facilities. The prison was built on 942 acres and the nine facilities span over 515 acres.

"A prison of this magnitude and complexity as CSP Corcoran can only operate as well as it does because of the amazing staff that operate it day by day," said Warden Martin Biter.

"Corcoran State Prison is second to none in my heart. I am honored to have had the privilege to work here with such outstanding people at this prison that I believe are not only making a difference, but are inspiring change."

Corcoran prison staff were

recognized with certificates and presented with a coin for their 30 years of service.

"I think we're getting more response out of the community and out of the inmates themselves. There's not as much turmoil that we used to have back in the day," Aguirre commented.

In attendance for the ceremony were Corcoran City Council members Jeanette Zamora-Bragg and Patricia Nolen, Mayor Raymond Lerma, Vice Mayor Sidonio Palmerin, and representatives from the offices of state Sen. Andy Vidak and Assemblyman Rudy Salas.

Corcoran prison 30 years later

APPEL

Continued from Page 1

After hearing about how successful San Quentin State Prison has been with rehabilitative programing that transform lives, she asked, "Can programs work at other prisons?"

Haines replied, "Definitely. It's a matter of getting buy-in from the yard and the administration."

One of the news guys also suggested a way to stem gun violence -- making it mandatory to teach the practice of restorative justice to kids in school. Appel already supports the idea and has worked with SEEDS, an organization that trains teachers in the use of restorative justice in the Berkeley School District.

"I believe there is healing in the process of forgiveness and making amends," Appel said.

She said she discovered restorative justice while looking for ways to stop the school-to-prison pipeline.

"Restorative justice really resonates with how I feel we should be dealing with this," Appel said. "Kids need to know somebody loves them."

Then she asked about whether teaching restorative justice practices in neighborhoods where there is violence would work.

The response was that using mentors who have relatable experiences would get the kids to buy in.

Feldon, who had remained quiet until toward the end of the meeting added, "Most people think it's a zero sum game. If people realized that everyone is a resource, everyone is a gold mine that we lose every time we lock someone up or suspend them from school -- if we looked at each other as resources rather than competitors, then rehabilitation would be a no brainer."

Appel responded, "I love the idea that everybody is a gold mine."

Appel is running for the Assembly seat currently held by Tony Thurman of District 15, which covers the East Bay from North Oak-

land to Hercules, Richmond, Albany and El Cerrito.

"I've really been a social justice advocate for 25 years," Appel said. "I feel it's the right time to bring my skills, empathy and bold leadership to the Assembly."

Appel said while taking care of an older sister with mental health issues, she saw her struggle and get kicked out of school. That instilled in her the desire to become an advocate.

The licensed attorney said she has fought for homeless people, been part of the Drug Policy Alliance, and worked on the founding board of the Ella Baker Center with Van Jones before joining the school board.

Now the Pittsburg native wants to help increase the chances of success for returning citizens by making it easier to get the necessary licenses to work certain jobs.

"I believe most of the inequalities in our culture are imbedded in structural racism," Appel said. "That has led to people in power not letting certain groups of people succeed."



Photo by Adnan Khan

Judy Appel and Alden Feldon talking with SQN staff members Juan Haines and Wayne Boatwright

Appel wants to make licensing permits discretionary instead of having a strict bar that keeps someone from getting a license because of

an unrelated crime.

She's also interested in ways to bring rehabilitated people home from prison faster.

"If you could get out sooner and bring the wealth of you out into the world, that's a win, win," Appel said.

Arizona provides inmates more feminine-hygiene products

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

The Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) is changing its policy concerning the supply of free feminine-hygiene products for woman prisoners, after overwhelming support from formerly incarcerated women and the outside community, reports *The Republic*.

"I want to thank all of the women and men from all around Arizona and all over the world who spoke up, who bravely testified and shared their stories, and those who contacted lawmakers directly," said Rep. Athena Salzman (D-Tempe.) "Your voices made the difference."

The change in policy will affect the close to 4,000 women at the Arizona State Prison

Complex-Perryville, the only state prison for women.

ADC said it would change its policy from supplying the women prisoners 12 pads per month to 36. The policy update prompted Rep. T.J. Shope (R-Coolidge) to remove a bill that would have made such changes a law.

"When I first became aware of this issue, I reached out to ADC and urged them

to explore changing the policy, as an administrative change can be implemented much quicker than a change in statute. I thank ADC for their responsiveness."

After his bill was withdrawn, Shope started to receive tampons and pads in the mail. Women posted photos of their mail on social media with the hashtag #LetItFlow. The protest was meant to urge Shope to call a second hearing on the bill, according to *The Republic*.

Former Perryville prisoners testified that they had to wear multiple pads to prevent bleeding, because the quality of the pads was so poor. One woman said she made "make-shift" tampons by taking them apart and using them to be more comfortable at her yard crew job.

The women prisoners had to asked an officer if they need more than the 12 generic-brand pads allotted, a

request the officer could deny. The women were allowed to possess up to two dozen free pads at a time. If they prefer tampons, the women must purchase them.

At the prison store, a 20-count box of Playtex tampons costs \$3.99. Since the prisoners' pay starts at only 15 cents per hour, they would have to work 27 hours to buy one box.

Salzman had introduced House Bill 2222 to authorize the ADC to provide an unlimited number of menstrual products to female inmates free of charge.

Salzman would like to expand the policy to include tampons. She said she has "a commitment from the governor's office" to explore the idea.

The ADC said in a statement that it appreciated and values the comments and feedback it has received regarding the sanitary napkin

products issue.

After a department review of current policy, an inmate now may request and, without charge, receive additional pads, if necessary. Additional product options will continue to be available through the inmate store.

"We believe this change addresses and resolves, in an appropriate and timely fashion, the concerns raised," said ADC statement.

Advocates for the women still believe more can be done.

"It's unfortunate that the department is so unresponsive to the needs of people in its prisons that a nationwide conversation was required in order to get the department to take action on this," said Will Gaona, policy director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona. "Certainly this is an improvement on the department's previous policy, but not a perfect one."

Florida reduces in-person visits with more video

By Harry C. Goodall, Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

Florida never seems to pass up the opportunity to make a bad situation worse, according to the *Tampa Bay Times*.

Are prison video calls a convenience or a scheme to make money for prison officials?

Florida ignores criminal justice reform and spends around \$2.4 billion annually on its prison system, which in this situation means reducing in-person visits, according to *Times* columnist John Romano.

There are studies that show inmates who stay connected to the outside world are less likely to re-offend. It also leads to better-behaved inmates, who anticipate family visits, according to the article.

"We value in-person visitation; we absolutely do. But given our current (financial) situation, this is our best option for safety reasons," said Michelle Glady, Department of Corrections (DOC) spokeswoman.

"I know there's a lot of emotion and fear among family members out there, but we're not eliminating in-person visitation."

"The possibility of revenue is probably the leading factor"

The video calls have actually replaced in-person visits in many jails (but not many prisons) around the country, which creates complications with fees for money transfers, services and downloads, according to the article.

"They're reducing our days so they can make money on video visitation. Money is what motivates these people," said Jewie Tryon. Her husband is serving a 25-to-life sentence. She has started a petition on change.org to stop the reduction of visiting days.

"When you take away the

only honest-to-God reason for rehabilitation these guys have, you're going to have trouble. I promise you that."

Her thoughts were echoed by an analyst at the Prison Policy Initiative. "We know family visits reduce recidivism, and they create a safer prison environment," said Lucius Couloute. "I can't think of a good reason for wanting to eliminate visiting days. The possibility of revenue is probably the leading factor."

The DOC acknowledges the power of in-person visits yet the possibility of cutting the visitation in half due to budget issues is still on the table. Their reasons are lack of staff to safely handle weekend visits, according to the article.

Florida had been working for two years with the South Florida contractor JPay, whose opinion is that the video calls are meant to supplement, not replace the contact visits, according to the article. Representatives from JPay were contacted but did not respond to an interview request.

Massachusetts Republican governor signs major criminal reform bill

By Achilles Williams
Journalism Guild Writer

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker has signed a major criminal justice reform bill that had overwhelming Republican and Democratic support, reported *Boston Herald*.

"This is a huge victory for justice and shows what we can accomplish together," said State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, (D-Boston). "Years and years of advocacy by community leaders, legislators and powerful Black and Brown grassroots organizers created a sea change in Massachusetts politics."

The measure was approved 37-0 in the Senate and 148-5 in the House.

The new criminal justice bill changes the substance of a broad range of reforms such as: the state bail system, solitary confinement in prison, programs that divert some youthful offenders, people struggling with mental health issues or drug addiction away from involvement with courts, reported the *Herald*.

"Viewed as a whole, the bill takes our criminal justice

system and makes it better," Baker said.

The law also allows expunging crimes that are no longer crimes, such as possessing small amounts of marijuana, while cracking down on those trafficking in the synthetic opioids fentanyl and carfentanil. It protects witnesses against intimidation and increases penalties for repeat offenders who operate under the influence (OUI) and for corporate manslaughter.

"This is a huge victory for justice and shows what we can accomplish together"

The new bill provides mandatory minimum sentences for assault and battery on a police officer causing serious injury. It also repeals several mandatory minimum sentences for low-level drug offenses, changes the level for a theft to be considered a

larceny from \$250 to \$1,200 and changes the minimum age from 7 to 12 for criminal accountability.

Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan, a Democrat, called the new law "a meaningful step forward in reforming our criminal justice system."

Ryan said she was proud that "restorative justice practices" provided other means to intervene in the lives of at-risk youths and young adults by offering new options.

The startup cost of the new bill will be \$15 million for the remainder of this fiscal year. Total cost will be \$40 million in the 2019 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

A new criminal justice bill will follow to address issues such as parents' option to testify against their children rather than prohibiting their testimony. But parents should not be compelled to testify, reported *The Associated Press*.

The bill continues access to sealed criminal records, considered critical to firearms licensing decisions and checking the background of child care workers.

NY's pilot package program not well received by inmates and families

Earlier this year, New York state suspended a pilot program forcing families of inmates to buy from a limited number of private vendors when sending care packages to their loved ones.

New York began its own private care package pilot program at the start of the year at Taconic, Greene, and Green Haven Correctional Facilities. The plan was to extend it to all state facilities, according to a report from *The Marshall Project*. While the program was in effect, family and friends of inmates could only send care packages from select private vendors—care packages that had been pre-approved and pre-assembled—instead of

buying items from stores of their choosing. With this program, New York joined hundreds of other corrections agencies, including California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, that are in the big business of prisoner care packages.

But, the program was not well received.

"Concerns have been raised by families of inmates regarding the availability and prices of products under this program, concerns we do not take lightly," said Thomas Mailey, spokesman for the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, in a press release.

For example, the program

was meant to prevent contraband in New York prisons, but *The Marshall Project* reported that it also severely limited the books available to inmates. Taken together, the five approved vendors offered only 77 books, 24 of which were coloring books.

Those in favor of the suspension said the program restricted inmates' ability to maintain personal relationships outside prison. "New York State has led the country in many ways in fighting recidivism and reforming the criminal justice system," said Caroline Hsu, a Prisoners' Right Project advocate, adding, "I would hate to see us take a step back."

—Harry C. Goodall Jr.

"The state typically spends \$71,000 a year to house an inmate. It costs about \$5,000 total to help put one [incarcerated] student through community college," reports Fast Company.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/40547877/californias-prison-education-system-is-yielding-impressive-results>

Transgender woman suing Massachusetts challenging her placement in an all-male prison

A transgender woman is suing the Massachusetts Department of Correction for requiring her to serve her sentence in an all-male prison. In the lawsuit, the 52-year-old inmate alleges she was groped and taunted by inmates and correctional officers, reports *Jezebel*.

According to the *Boston Globe*, the suit states that the inmate—identified only as Jane Doe—"has been subjected to constant humiliation." The document describes alleged mistreatment during a strip search.

"Male guards forced her to stand, cuffed and naked, for 30 minutes, in front of the open door to her cell, exposing her body to at least a dozen male prisoners who gawked and made crude sexual remarks about her breasts."

The suit also says male correction officers have referred to her and other transgender prisoners as "wannabe women."

Court papers revealed that "Jane Doe" is requesting the right to be transferred to a women's prison.

If the suit is granted by the court, she'll be the first transgender woman in the state of Massachusetts to be housed in a women's prison without undergoing gender reassignment surgery.

Prison officials informed the transgender inmate that she is not eligible for transfer until she has the surgery, despite the fact that she has lived openly as a woman and received hormone therapy for 40 years, the lawsuit says.

Jennifer L. Levi, director of the Transgender Rights

Project at LGBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, told the *Boston Globe*:

"In 2017, it is a total shame that this state—with so much broader policy recognizing the humanity of transgender people—doesn't recognize that humanity in our correction system. They're serving time for underlying offenses, but they're not supposed to be punished for being transgender. That's wrong."

Federal guidelines dictate that transgender inmates cannot be placed based

solely on their anatomy. According to *Jezebel*, federal prison officials are mandated to give "serious consideration" to where those inmates would feel the most comfortable. Advocates for transgender inmates say the majority of state prisons have failed to adopt this rule.

Massachusetts is not the only state to have adopted confusing rules for transgender inmates. In 2015, *The New York Times* told the story of transgender inmate "Passion Star," who

says she was raped and beaten for over a decade during her incarceration at a men's prison in Texas. Star told *Jezebel* in 2015 that although policy was important, enforcement also played a critical role in protecting transgender inmates.

"Texas says it has good policies" when it comes to trans inmates, Star said. "But those policies aren't followed or respected by people in positions of power."

—Forrest Lee Jones

Youth offender who realizes opportunity a little too late

Kid CAT Speaks!

By John Lam
Journalism Guild Writer

Many youth offenders who find themselves incarcerated at San Quentin fail to recognize the opportunities available to them and end up transferred to higher level institutions due to behavioral infractions.

"I didn't realize what I had here in San Quentin," said Andrew Joseph Biovin, 21, a youth offender who was deemed a program failure and was transferred out of San Quentin. "Now I want to go to programs and learn all I can. Now, it's real. Now I care."

In 2013, a new law AB1276,

allowed new offenders between the ages of 18 and 23 an opportunity to serve their sentences at a lower level security prison like San Quentin, to have access to free on-site college programs like Patten University and a plethora of other rehabilitative and vocational programs that are available.

Miguel Sifuentes, a Kid CAT member and facilitator of a youth offender group called "BE-IT" (Benefiting Each Individual Together) works at Receive and Release (R&R) and, in that role, has a unique perspective on how some youths are coping at San Quentin, how some succeed and some fail. He had two interactions with Biovin at R&R and observed a difference in the youth's attitude between the two.

"The first time he seemed conflicted about being transferred out. The second time I saw Biovin was months later when he was on a layover in R&R, being transferred to another institution. This time, I immediately recognized something was different about him. He had matured somehow in the months since I last saw him."

"Youth issues are especially close to my heart because I am a youth offender; when I first entered into the system, I had to go to a Level 4 prison due to my age and crime," Sifuentes said. "I understand how some of these young people are trying to adhere to a belief system, and [have] normalized acts of criminal thinking and fail to see the opportunities to change due to peer pressure.

"I hope that I can share Biovin's story so that youths reading this story can learn from his mistakes.

"Biovin had disciplinary problems that had invalidated his stay here, and his story is not unique. In my experience as many as a few hundred young men have gone through a similar pattern, many of whom will not make it back to a lower level like San Quentin," continued Sifuentes.

"I made a giant mistake, and now I want to help others not make the same one by sharing my story"

"During Biovin's second time at R&R, we spoke for about an hour and a half, through a small tray slot in the holding cell where Biovin was in. He told me that he was previously in San Quentin for about a year and a half and is now on his way to a Level 4 (maximum security prison) after brief transfers to a level 3 (medium security) at California's Men's Colony and Vacaville. There he had additional disciplinary problems and is facing the possibility of a criminal prosecution."

Like many youth offenders, Biovin was exposed to



Andrew Joseph Biovin with NFL player Brendon Ayanbadejo

some limited rehabilitative programs at San Quentin but found it difficult to completely break away from old behaviors.

Among the disciplinary infractions incurred by youth offenders are: fighting, drug possession and/or failed drug tests, cell phone possession, and a "high speed chase" (running from staff) usually in reaction to one of the above.

Biovin was no different. "I used to say to the 'O.G.' lifers, 'You don't know what you're talking about,'" he said. "Everything they told me now is real. Now I see with my own eyes that other places ain't cool.

"I messed up, I wish I could

go back, do well, and make a different decision. Now I understand, I threw away my opportunity," said Biovin.

"I made a giant mistake, and now I want to help others not make the same one by sharing my story. Now, I understand why lifers want to give back because I want to help others avoid the same problems I had too."

In response to Biovin's comments, Sifuentes said, "I was sad to see him in trouble, and yet tremendously happy to see his newfound insight. He's everything I hope a young person could know for him/herself and say. Yet it came at a high cost. I hope these other young guys 'get it' before it is too late."

CA senators to introduce bill barring juveniles from adult courts

Two California senators introduce a bill that would bar prosecutors from trying juveniles 15 years old and younger in adult court.

The proposal that would bar prosecutors from asking that minors be tried in adult court if they were 14 or 15 years old at the time of their crime... (is) one of several in a package of bills introduced by Sens. Holly J. Mitchell (D-Los Angeles) and Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens)," The *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Other bills proposed by Mitchell and Lara would repeal a one-year sentence enhancement for prior felony convictions and allow judges discretion to strike prior serious felony convictions that may require defendants to serve an additional five years in prison, according to the *Times*.

The goal of these new legislations "is not about slapping a wrist and sending (kids) home," said Mitchell. "It is about acknowledging that we as adults, as a society

of adults, have failed you, our systems have failed you."

Standing in opposition to keeping youth offenders out of adult court and rescinding sentence enhancements are law enforcement lobbyists and Sen. Jeff Stone (R-Temecula).

The criminal justice system has undergone enormous change in the last six years, said Cory Salzillo, legislative director for the California State Sheriffs' Association.

"We are not giving the system enough time to adjust," Salzillo said, pointing to the passage of Proposition 57 and other efforts to reduce the state's population.

In 2016, California voters approved Prop. 57, which in part prohibits prosecutors from charging youths in adult court without a judge's approval. The California Supreme Court, affirming a lower-court ruling in February, found that provision could retroactively apply to pending cases.

Stone, citing a case of 15-year-old in Alabama

who beat another man unconscious with a baseball bat, said, "There is a narrow window (of defendants) who should not be kept in the juvenile justice system."

Testifying before a senate public safety committee in April on the proposals, Frankie Guzman, an attorney with the National Center for Youth Law, relayed his own experience being in the juvenile justice system.

Guzman said, when he was 14, prosecutors labeled him a hardened criminal after he and a friend brandished handguns as they held up a liquor store. As his case dragged on, he was allowed to remain in the juvenile justice system, where he had access to education and counseling.

"I learned, I really learned, what I did wrong and why," he said. "I am not an exception but a representation of what happens when young people who commit the most serious crimes get the support and services that they need."

—John Lam

Dear Kid CAT

My name is Saul Martinez and I have been incarcerated for the past 20 years and on Jan. 9, 2018, I was found suitable for parole during my first board appearance.

My hearing lasted five hours, and when the time came for the victim's family to speak, they spoke about pardon and forgiveness. By the time the board announced their decision, they said I no longer posed a danger to society and they found me suitable for parole.

I was able to have a successful hearing through a number of groups that I have attended. Of particular importance in my transformation to be an accountable person today: Prep Turning Point courses taught me how to be transparent, Anger Management classes taught me how to address my character defects, and Gang Awareness and Recovery group enabled me to denounce the destructive environments of prison with its code of silence.

I want to share my story with others who are incarcerated so that they too can find inspiration to believe that they can achieve the success that I have found.

In the course of the next four months, I will be deported to Mexico, where I will continue my rehabilitation, recuperation and amend my life.

Saul Martinez
Centinela State Prison

Dear Saul,

Congratulations on being found suitable for parole. We hope that you will find success in Mexico and continue using what you have learned in prison to help those in your new community. Thank you for sharing your story.

Good Luck!

For free correspondence courses write to:
Prep Turning Point
2049 South Santa Fe Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90021

"According to a RAND analysis, every \$1 invested in [inmate] education generates at least \$4 in economic return," reports Fast Company.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/40547877/californias-prison-education-system-is-yielding-impressive-results>

Kid CAT curriculum now available

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

If you are interested in creating a Kid CAT branch/youth offender support group at your institution, please have your sponsor/volunteer or community partnership manager contact Kid CAT Speaks c/o *San Quentin News*, 1 Main Street San Quentin, CA 94964 for a copy of our curriculum and facilitators manual.

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

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

is broken into eight modules:

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

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

The Beat Within
A Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

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

Tell us a time when you were lied to by someone you had a close relationship with. Describe how you felt. Tell us, if you can keep it respectful, what you think led up to the lie and what happened as a result.

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

Kid CAT (Creating Awareness Together) is a group of men who committed their crimes in their teens and were sentenced as adults to life terms. The group's mission is to inspire humanity through education, mentorship and restorative practices. Kid CAT Speaks wants to hear from all offenders, educators, and policymakers concerning juvenile justice issues and rehabilitation. Contact us at San Quentin News, Attn: Kid CAT Speaks, 1 Main St., San Quentin, CA 94964.

Several new policies to help hire formerly incarcerated

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

In spite of the negative stigma of a felony conviction, new policies developed by local, state and federal officials will encourage employers to hire the formerly incarcerated, according to a Rand Corporation report.

Policies such as “Ban the Box,” certificates of rehabilitation, the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Department of Labor Reintegration of Ex-Offender grants, even with limitations, improve the chances of the formerly incarcerated for employment, the Rand study found.

“To inform policies and programs aimed at improving employment rates for ex-offenders, we conducted

experiments to examine employer preferences regarding policy options targeted to incentivizing the employment of individuals with felony criminal records,” Rand stated.

According to the Rand study, there are several theories that attempt to explain the “consistent negative relationship” between the formerly incarcerated and employers, which results in poor labor market success for many of those with criminal records.

“Employers’ primary concerns are violent convictions and low skills,” according to the Rand study.

Having a criminal record is associated with low productivity and reliability, it was reported. This, according to Rand, explains why ex-

offenders receive fewer job offers and earn less money.

“There are two sets of economic discrimination theories to explain why firms choose not to hire ex-offenders even when they possess the necessary skills for a job,” Rand reported. First, “employers worry that their clients or employees associate ex-offender status with being a high-risk worker.” Second, “employers cannot be certain about the productivity levels of prospective workers.”

The Rand study focused on policies designed to ease employer concerns by offsetting “actual or perceived costs of employing an ex-offender.” For example, in 1996 the federal tax code made available a credit to for-profit companies that employ groups that

face certain barriers to entry in the job market, including “ex-felons.”

Another way to increase employment opportunities for ex-felons is the “Ban the Box” (BTB) policy that limits the use of an applicant’s criminal history by employers when making hiring decisions.

“By delaying employers’ ability to use a job applicant’s criminal history as a signal of low employability, BTB policies aim to encourage ex-offenders to apply for positions,” Rand reported.

A certificate of rehabilitation can also be used as an incentive for employers to hire the formally incarcerated. According to Rand, “a certificate of rehabilitation (CoR) is a judicial order in which, typically, a court determines that an individual has shown exemplary behavior and declares them judicially rehabilitated.” Eleven states, including California, provide some form of this certificate.

Because an ex-offender’s loss of driving privilege can negatively affect an employ-

er’s decision to hire them, some employment and training programs for ex-offenders include a transportation component, the Rand study says, adding also that “auto ownership has been shown to increase employment rates.”

“To identify policies that could increase employment rates of workers with criminal records, we conducted two policy experiments using a survey-based, modified-discrete choice experiment approach,” Rand reported.

Rand chose a tax credit and a private staffing agency to test employers’ preferences within its experimental hiring design.

“While the policy features studied in the experiments are largely hypothetical, they are based on the federal WOTC; local and state BTB laws; services of probation, parole, and re-entry programs; and services of employment or staffing agencies,” the study stated.

Some results from the study indicate that employers that used the baseline staffing agency would forward a

candidate with the necessary skills and a nonviolent felony conviction to the next round of recruitment 42.9 percent of the time.

It was reported that seven out of 10 employers “would consider hiring a candidate if, in addition to the baseline package, there was also a guaranteed replacement worker program (65.6 percent) or a certified work performance history.”

Other results show that if an ex-felon job candidate with the required skills and a nonviolent felony conviction was supported by a tax credit, about six out of 10 employers would forward the candidate on to the next level of recruitment.

Lastly, “approximately five to six out of 10 employers said they would forward the candidate on to the next recruitment round if they had secure, consistent transportation,” Rand reported, adding finally that “the candidate with validated work performance is 24.4 percent more likely to be considered for a job than the other candidate.”

Project Fresh Start helps parolees achieve their dreams

By Amir Shabazz
Journalism Guild Writer

In New Haven, Connecticut, Amenzo King has a dream. He wants to own his own hot dog stand.

It may sound humble, but for King this dream is a big one. He’s been in and out of prison for over 20 years, but now, through the reentry program Fresh Start, he feels success is on the horizon.

“They changed my life,” King said in an article in *The Politic* by reporter Molly Shapiro. “Now I’m happy with myself. I’m happy that I’m moving along, doing something. Fresh Start showed me the way.”

Project Fresh Start, a program founded by former New Haven mayor John DeStefano and revitalized by current mayor Toni Harp, focuses on helping former prisoners successfully navigate reentry. The program helps with basic needs. Coordinator Clifton Graves says that the top three issues that most people face coming out of prison are “jobs, housing and usually health care,” according to the article.

Many people do not have ID or a bus pass upon release. The program provides returning citizens with temporary IDs, waiving the \$10 ID fee for those recently released. “Ten dollars may not be a lot for us, but for people who come through that door, it’s a lot,” Graves said. “What we’re doing here is helping people as best we can.”

Fresh Start’s other main goal is helping with the par-

don process. The staff say pardons provide opportunities for former prisoners that they may not have with a past criminal conviction hanging over them.

In Connecticut, there are two types of pardons: expungement pardons and certificates of employability. The first completely erases a person’s criminal record, while the second certifies that despite their record, the person is employable.

“When they get their record expunged, their whole life changes,” Graves said.

In 2015, Connecticut’s Board of Pardons and Paroles received 1,103 applications, and granted nearly half. According to the article, the application costs are prohibitive for many people. In Connecticut, it costs \$50 for an individual to obtain their criminal record, \$5-\$25 for fingerprinting, \$1 per page for police reports, and several more dollars for notarizing the applications.

“In Connecticut, even though we still complain about how this system could be better, it is a lot better than a lot of other states in the country, where it’s much more difficult to get a pardon,” Graves said.

Graves believes that the diversity of the Fresh Start staff, who come from New Haven and know many of the people who walk into the office, makes the program unique. No matter who comes through the door, he said, they try to create an environment where folks feel welcomed.



Courtesy of Project Fresh Start
Coordinator Clifton Graves

Donald Morris, an employee of the program, got involved through his religious community. His involvement is also personal. He was once in prison.

“I connect on the personal level. I have been homeless at one point,” he said, adding that he knows what it’s like to be sent from place to place once a person gets out. “I know what that struggle feels like.”

Sandra McKinnie, who works for the program, said that they are devoted to providing second chances. “We are all people. Folks are not the mistakes we have made,” she says.

Once people have served their time, McKinnie believes they should be able to lead their lives no different from those who have no criminal history.

“It is ... our inherent responsibility as a community to try to surround these people with the necessary resources so that they can sustain free lives,” McKinnie said.

China teaches prison inmates e-commerce before release

By Harry C. Goodall Jr
Journalism Guild Writer

More than 30 prisoners at Qiao Si Prison, the largest prison in China’s Zhejiang Province, received a training course in e-commerce last December, according to an article by Jenny W. Hsu for an Alibaba publication.

Taobao University, which offers the e-commerce course, was established in 2009 as the educational arm of Alibaba, the Hangzhou-based tech giant. A team of e-commerce specialists and industrial players are involved with the university.

The program’s primary aim is to teach online business methods and worldwide practical insight. Topics covered in the course include how to launch and manage a successful cyber-store and inventory, dealing with customers, creating invoices, and keeping track of what

equipment to buy.

Su Su, an instructor at Taobao University as well as a vendor on an online retail platform, came to the prison to teach the e-commerce course.

Qiao Si Prison is one of the few prisons in China that teach marketable job skills to inmates prior to their release. Other pre-release programs include courses in reintegration, tea cultivation, tailoring, auto repair, and massage therapy.

“There are definitely many talented individuals inside here,” said Su Su, who admitted being nervous on the first day of her prison assignment. She recalled a “bespectacled prisoner who was able to quickly resolve some technical issues with the audio-visual system in the classroom that day.”

When Su Su arrived to teach the lesson, “the last thing she expected to see,”

according to Hsu, was a well-lit room with well-mannered prisoners “eagerly waiting” to take in the lesson she had prepared. During the session, Su Su shared the struggles and successes she encountered while opening an online shop from scratch, along with stories from her exchanges with customers.

Prison officials told reporter Hsu that all the prisoners who attended the class are well-educated and held white-collar jobs prior to incarceration. But despite having marketable skills prior to coming to prison and learning additional skills while in prison, a great many of these formerly incarcerated people find it hard to secure a job after release.

The e-commerce course was added to the curriculum to provide former inmates an option to bypass a job search and start their own businesses online.

Trump’s federal staff cuts hurt prisoners, staffers and officers

By De’jon Joy
Staff Writer

President Trump initiated a hiring freeze and applied federal staff cuts that have appeared to be counterproductive to correction officers, staffers and prisoners.

Since January 2017, when the hiring freeze came into effect, there have been 6,000 positions cut nationwide, according to a *VICE News* article. The current inmate-to-correctional officer ratio has nearly doubled from 4.4 to 1 in 2015 to 8.3 to 1 as of today.

To help deal with the loss of staff, prisons are using augmentation. Augmentation is utilizing education, kitchen and medical staff to cover critical guard positions. Prior to the freeze, this method was only used in emergencies or training sessions. However, due to the cuts it has become a norm.

For instance, Paula Chavez teaches GED and parenting courses at a federal prison in Big Spring, Texas. She is no longer doing as much teaching since the prison staff has been gradually decreasing.

Now Chavez, instead of performing her classroom duties, is monitoring housing units alone with 300 inmates to oversee.

“You’re increasing the hazard of the position when you take someone who doesn’t know what the keys go to,” Chavez said. “I’ve never been in a situation where I’ve felt the fear of what’s going to come, like there is today. If this doesn’t stop, someone is going to get killed. It’s going to happen.”

The impact of moving staffers such as teachers to guard positions has affected the prisoners’ education as well. The percentage of prisoners who have earned their GEDs has dropped from 40

percent in 2016 to 17 percent in 2017, according to *VICE News*.

“With these cuts, we’re going back to the old Bureau of Prisons that warehoused human beings,” said Shane Fausey, a lock and security specialist at a federal prison in Allenwood, Pa., who has been with the bureau for 25 years.

Many correction officers who voted for Trump thought his law-and-order approach would provide an increase in investment for the federal prison system, but they feel that promise has fallen short.

President Trump and members of his administration have outlined prison reform as a top priority. He even mentioned this in his first state of the union address, yet the hiring freeze does not appear to benefit staffers, correction officers or prisoners in the federal prison system.

Indiana hires more formerly incarcerated with state’s help

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

More and more employers are hiring former inmates with the assistance of Indiana’s state and local government reported the *Indianapolis Business Journal*.

“We [aim to] better prepare our offenders for opportunities in today’s economy with more high-demand critical training that they need to succeed once they are out,” Gov. Eric Holcomb said in an interview with the *Journal*.

One example of these ef-

forts is Indianapolis’ HIRE program. The initiative started in 2012 with 300 employers and has since grown to nearly 1,140 businesses, with a 97 percent retention rate.

The city of Indianapolis also plans to offer tax breaks to companies that hire ex-offenders. The Metropolitan Development Commission, and possibly the City-County Council, must approve such employment agreements between employers and ex-offenders.

Brooke Daunhauer, reentry director for the Office of

Health and Safety, told the *Journal* that the department aims to provide inmates with the necessary soft skills and hands-on training that would give former inmates a career pathway upon their release.

“I’d like them to have an employer willing to hire them when they get out,” Daunhauer said. “That’s something we’re working toward.”

The *Journal* also reported that “the Indy Chamber recently won a second year of funding for a program that helps former inmates become entrepreneurs.”

SQ Buddha Dharma group holds fifth ordination ceremony

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

The Buddha Dharma Group of San Quentin held its fifth ordination ceremony April 15. Preceptor and volunteer Zen Priest Jiryu (Mark Byler Rutschman) conducted ceremonies inducting eight new Bodhisattvas.

The Zen Buddhist Lay Ordination Ceremony derives from an ancient ceremony that marked a person's entry into monastic life. For laypeople today, the ceremony represents a way to publicly affirm a commitment to centering one's life around benefiting others instead of pursuing self-centered desires.

"Om Homage Shakymuni Buddha" (an invocation for Buddha's presence) was chanted by the group of inductees, consisting of seven state prisoners and one female volunteer.

"We become family today; we have become brothers and sister. It was the right time for me," Susan Terris said.

When asked about her choice to take precepts in a men's prison. "As we say, due to many causes and conditions, this is the right place with the right people."

With a traditional call-and-response of bells, Jiryu led the ordination procession of new adherents to an altar adorned with statues of the Buddha and Bodhisattva Maitrea. Jiryu then symbolically cleansed the altar and chapel with a sprinkling of water.

Priestess Kanshin (Erica



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Buddha Dharma Group members and inductees in the San Quentin Garden Chapel

Grevenmeyer) led the inductees into the chapel chanting "Om Homage Saky-muni Buddha." Jiryu then welcomed celebrants to the Jukai ceremony at San Quentin.

After a ritual of purification, the inductees were given the ordination of the compassionate path of five precepts.

"We never practice alone," Jiryu reminded the candidates seated before him and the altar. Candidates repented past karma by adhering to the

three Refuges of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The group paid homage to ancestors, to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the past, present and future.

Afterwards, inductees chanted the confession "All my ancient tangled karma from beginning-less greed, hate and delusion, born through body, speech and mind, I now fully avow."

Among the vows were promises to continue the Buddhist practice to: not kill,

not take what is not given, not speak untruthfully, not misuse sexuality and not consume intoxicants.

Inductees were given Wagesa robes (a garment worn around the neck) along with new names. The new Bodhisattvas placed their robes on their heads and the robe chant was recited by all.

Newly ordained Bodhisattva Jeffrey McCormick has been participating in the Buddhist lifestyle for two years. He decided ordination would

provide a base "to make myself a better person and to better understand the Buddhist way of life."

Ino (assistant to the head priest) Ronnie Cooper, who is the senior student, congratulated the new Bodhisattvas.

"When Bodhisattvas are born, Buddhists all over the universe rejoice," said visiting Priestess Fyru of Green Gulch Buddhist community.

The new Bodhisattvas are: Wayne De France — "Leaping Beyond"

Walter Johnson — "Joyous Lamp, Living Oneness"

Susan Taret — "Luminous Effort, Mutual Liberation"

Jeff McCormick — "Gliding Phoenix, Nourishing Path"

Hung Vu — "Wisdom Peak, Boundless Refuge"

Steven Charra — "Dharma Eye, Heart Treasury"

Jesse Spinner Pi — "Wisdom Storm, Authentic Awakening"

Bruce Bowman — "Pure Vow, Dawn Liberation"

ZUILL BAILEY

Continued from Page 1

"I'm trying not to cry while I play," Bailey replied. "It makes me happy. It makes me sad. The cello is unique—all of the great composers felt like this."

"The cello can do basically anything," Bailey said. "The more you know, the more you want to know" about classical music. The Stradivarius cello he played was built in 1693 and is on loan to him for life. "It's a storytelling instrument."

"As you hear this (cello), think about the sound and the instrument," Bailey told the audience. "What makes the cello special to me is its acoustic. Silence to me is music. Soft stuff is music. I can control it with the bow."

Bailey did more than play. He educated the audience about the cello and the bow

string (made of horse's tail) and demonstrated how it works. He talked about the 100-year-old bow he used. It's made from Brazilian wood. He described how rosin, made from tree sap, is rubbed on the bow to make the hairs stick to the strings on the cello.

He described the Stradivarius as the greatest example of the cello. He said it's supposed to make the lowest tone and its origin is that of a bass instrument. But the cello's long neck and fretless construction allow a wide range of tone.

"The cello has a maple back with spruce face and everything is held together by a weak glue," said Bailey. He played the first three notes of the theme from the movie Jaws. "It (cello) was made to play Jaws," he said as the audience laughed.

Bailey opened his performance playing *Bach Cello Suite No. 1*. He didn't have an orchestra or symphony to accompany him. He went at it alone and stunned listeners, some of whom had never heard a cello played live.

He explained how the cello plays high notes and low notes. He said its best playing level is in the middle range, in the speaking voice. The range of high and low frequencies were sonically present as he played and the dynamics of slow rhythm, velocity, vibrato and melody emphasized the instrument's uniqueness.

There's a difference between a solo artist and an orchestra, Bailey

said. "Mozart didn't write anything for the cello...So, for me to play Mozart, I have to get other musicians."

"There's an indescribable feeling that comes from playing inside a facility like this, to share this music," said Bailey. "It gives a wide range of emotions. There's a healing aspect. I hope that it makes a bright spot in everyone's life."

Bailey said he wanted to play solos by Bach to highlight the cello's evolution in music and show how it advanced in modern times. "It can hold a melody," he said. "The first things played will be without a melody. Then I'll take it to another place."

Prelude was the second piece performed, then *Allemande* and *Courante*. Bailey said the vibrations are very common. "It's very centering. Music is an escape. It makes time stand still. Every time I pick up the instrument, it's a different thought. It brings me in a place of perspective that's hard to explain."

The audience applauded Bailey between songs to show their appreciation for his performance. He told them he's not around people much.

"I wanted to be a musician. I didn't understand the solitude," said Bailey. "I'm by myself 95 percent of the time. Is this healthy?" He said 310 days out of the year he's on the road performing around the world and talking to audiences is the only way he gets to have this kind of exchange.

"I could play all day, but I wanted to have an exchange," said Bailey. He talked to many of the people in audience in an impromptu question-and-answer session. He discussed how he sometimes feels before performing. "If I get nervous then, it means I care," he said.

"I have my utilitarian cello that I take around to places like Alaska, to kids and other

places to make music accessible," said Bailey. The following weekend he was scheduled to perform with the Marin Symphony at the Marin Civic Center. He said he will play in Istanbul, Turkey, soon.

"At 4 years old, I started playing the cello," said Bailey. Someone in the audience shouted, "We could tell." Laughter. "I loved playing so much that my parents had to stop me."

"I think the opportunity to hear a Grammy award-winning musician in such a personal space is great," said Susanne Karch, a volunteer with *San Quentin News*. "How often do you get an opportunity to ask him questions? He seemed like he really related with the audience."

Someone listening to classical music for the first time would quickly realize Bailey is a virtuoso on the cello. He displayed an easy sense of humor, and given his standing in the music world, he was disarmingly humble.

"Any symphony is the heartbeat of a culture," said Bailey. Because of this, he involves himself with the communities he visits by participating in outreach programs, a flier promoting his concert stated. "He works diligently to make classical music accessible to all, visiting schools, retirement homes, hospitals, and intensive care units."

As the concert continued, Bailey performed *Sarbande*, *Minuet 1 & 2*, *Gigue* and *Bach Suite No. 3*, and he repeatedly engaged the audience.

The chapel's rectangular dimension and acoustics didn't dampen the listening experience. Bailey, who attended the Juilliard School of Music, used his cello to control the sound and tease the physics of space.

Bailey talked about his hand size and how he discov-



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Playing the cello resulted in Zuill Bailey having different size hands

ered his left hand is larger than his dominant right hand. It grew after so many years of playing the cello at a young age. One day when he was a teenager playing basketball he accidentally palmed the ball. A friend pointed out that his left hand is larger than the other.

Someone asked Bailey if he ever wanted to quit playing. "Yes. All the time as a kid," he said. "I hated my cello because it made me feel imperfect. But it made me challenge myself."

At 15, Bailey was told he wasn't good enough. But he said the cello reminded him that he was human. He said music taught him discipline. "All the things that come with being a musician are life lessons," he said.

He completed his performance with *Prelude*, *Gluck* melody from *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, and "Go to Sleep," *Brahm's Lullaby*. Before playing the latter, he asked the audience to take a deep breath and to close their eyes. When the music eventually faded, silence filled the chapel. He told the audience there's a place "where our minds can go when there's silence."

"The cello makes me feel,"

said Bailey. "I struggle every day with putting my heart on the line and having somebody write in a paper criticizing (me). I've learned to live and believe in what I'm doing, knowing that I'm doing my best."

Juan Haines
contributed to this story

Zuill Bailey is a renowned recording artist with more than 20 titles. He won a best solo performance Grammy Award in 2017 for a Live Recording of "Tales of Hemingway," by composer Michael Daugherty. He also recorded with the Nashville Symphony conductor Giancarlo Guerrero and won a Grammy for best composition for "Tales of Hemingway," and Best Compendium. Bailey grew up in Northern Virginia and comes from a musical background. Early on, he was inspired and influenced by Rostropovich, Director of the National Symphony. Bailey's mother is a pianist and his father holds a doctorate in both music and education. His sister is a violinist.



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Zuill Bailey performing Brahms' Lullaby

New employment policies to help hire formerly incarcerated

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Writer

Music superstar John Legend is using his celebrity status to gather national support for Unlocked Futures, a new foundation aimed at helping formerly incarcerated persons develop into successful entrepreneurs.

Legend is already committed to criminal justice reform through his FreeAmerica initiative.

He joined forces with other philanthropists to coordinate a \$500,000 grant from Bank of America. They used it to launch eight startup ideas from former prisoners and persons impacted by incarceration, according to a *Nation Swell* article.

Too often incarcerated individuals are locked out of job opportunities because of their past, said Grammy-winner Legend. "I have seen that entrepreneurship is a viable way for formerly incarcerated individuals to build sustainable livelihoods and contribute to their communities and neighborhoods."

Unlock Futures selected its debut group of potential entrepreneurs based on their vision to reshape the severe economic landscape confronting persons formerly



Grammy-winning John Legend with members of Unlocked Futures

Photo courtesy of Unlocked Futures

incarcerated. The foundation offers them a support network of funding and mentorship.

"A lot of people in prison are entrepreneurs," Dirk Van Velzen, one of Unlock Futures' inaugural recipients, recently told the *San Quentin News*. "They are just in the

wrong market."

Van Velzen founded the Prison Scholar Fund in 2006 while he was still behind bars. He gained national attention for his ongoing pursuit of academic excellence while still in prison. Since his release in 2015, his mission has been to make educational

opportunities available to as many prisoners as possible.

"The same skills that help you sell stolen goods or drugs are the same skills that will help you sell something that won't get you arrested," Van Velzen commented. "The skills are transferrable; they just need to be refined. Education helps."

"Our job is to help people transition into society to break the cycle of recidivism and homelessness," he said of his Prison Scholar Fund. "We do that through education, when incarcerated, and workforce placement when they get released."

New Swell estimates the overall cost of America's mass incarceration at \$80 billion annually. The Unlock Futures entrepreneurship all share common goals of curtailing that fiscal impact and also changing the public perception toward people who were formerly incarcerated.

"Entrepreneurship is not

just about starting businesses; it is about seeing problems as opportunities," said Jason Cleveland, founder of the tech platform Obodo—another Unlock Futures recipient. "It is about seeing beyond the now to what is possible."

Obodo streamlines the process for nonprofit organizations to reach out and assist parolees getting acclimated back into society—"returning citizens." Cleveland, himself a Missouri native, visits prisons in his state to inspire and encourage prisoners about the possibilities of entrepreneurship.

"Most people there do not understand that they are already entrepreneurs," Cleveland explained. "They don't see that they have been finding unique solutions to problems their entire lives."

"Oftentimes, when these people are provided with a framework for making different decisions and given the

tools they need to move forward, they do."

Amanda Alexander founded the Detroit Justice Center to provide her community with attorney services and also find economic opportunities for those in and around the prison system. She suffered the incarceration of her father for part of her childhood, and is also one of the eight first-time Unlocked Futures recipients.

"Ultimately, it's not about the eight of us and our work; it's about movement building," Alexander said. "Mass incarceration has touched every part of our society, so it's going to take a broad movement to bring it down."

"Folks in the cohort are always talking about the brothers and sisters they left behind in prison and wanting to reach out to them. ... My aim is to ensure that families caught up in the criminal justice system aren't shut out of the city's future."



John Legend at the Unlocked Futures meeting

Photo courtesy of Unlocked Futures

TRE MAISON

Continued from Page 1

"As adults, we don't listen to kids a lot," Denali Tiller, director of the film, said. "We think we know what they need. I haven't seen a lot of kids allowed to have their own truths. It became important to me to make a film directly from their perspective, meeting them where they are and allowing them the space that they need."

The director used her resources and the help of producer Rebecca Stern to make the film possible.

"It's not my place to be a helper or to be a savior; it's just that I had the resources," Tiller said. "This is their film; this is really them...I just used my White privilege to support the kids as best as possible."

Each boy had a different dynamic.

Janson's anger and resentment over his father's incarceration are shown through his outburst and weed smoking. Teixeira, who has Asperger's Syndrome, is sweet and self-aware. Lopes, the youngest of the bunch, is naïve, believing his mother was at school and his father was in a place he calls Trinidad.

"Trinidad is a place where dads live that can't find a place to live," Lopes said in the film.

The documentary showed the kids' daily lives, such as answering the phone when



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Maison Teixeira

their parents call collect and seeing their parents on prison visiting days. Also, the film displayed the pain of finding out that their mother or father, whom they looked up to, was guilty of committing a violent crime.

"I have two grown sons, and I saw in the film what I thought might have been the pain and suffering that might have happened in my sons' lives because of the decision I made that caused me to come to prison," said Dwight Krizman, 63, who is serving a life sentence.

The film also revealed that kids love their parents in spite of the crimes they committed.

Tiller hopes the film will help children impacted by incarceration get the resources they need. Her strategy is to take the film on a tour of communities of children, incarcerated parents, schools, prosecutors and judges.

"One in 14 kids is impacted by having a parent in prison,"

Tiller said. "That's at least one kid in every classroom, and teachers don't even know it's an issue that affects students in their classroom. I want to help stakeholders in their lives have access to resources to help the kids."

The film's website, tremaison-dasan.com, links people to resources like Joyce Dixon-

Haskett's curriculum that helps kids through the grief and trauma of having a parent in prison. It's called Levels of Responses to Traumatic Events (LORTE).

According to Tiller, Dixon-Haskett was trafficked, and she shot and killed her perp. Sentenced to natural life, she got out after 17 years.

When Dixon-Haskett went to prison her kids were 6 and 8—they were 23 and 25 when she came home. Her work became providing and building support systems for children with incarcerated parents.

Tiller, now 25, heard that Dixon-Haskett created the curriculum.

Tiller, then a film student at the Rhode Island School of Design, sought out Dixon-Haskett, who paroled in 1994. Intrigued, Tiller started going to visiting days for children and parents at a prison in Rhode Island.

As she got involved with the kids, she became attached.

"They have become part of my life," Tiller said. "Through them, I saw a world that I was not exposed to, that was invisible to my privilege of being White."

The movie started as a trailer and school project and developed into a full documentary with the help of crowd funding sources like Kickstarter.

While working at Picture Motion, Stern saw the trailer on Kickstarter and was blown away. She donated \$75.

"We raised \$20,000," Tiller said. "I started the feature film when I graduated."

Later down the line, Stern reached out to Tiller and ended up becoming the producer.

Stern's prior background includes being a production coordinator on *Cartel Land* and co-producer on *Netizens* as well as the *The Bomb* on Netflix.

"Tre Maison Dasan is the first film where I was the main producer," Stern said. "I wanted to make something that was important to me."

Neither Tiller nor Stern planned to visit San Quentin on April 12. They came to the Bay Area to show the film at the San Francisco International Film Festival.

When Dr. Hollander, who oversees mental health care at San Quentin, saw the film, she called Public Information Officer Lt. Sam Robinson. With

only 48 hours' notice, Lt. Robinson arranged for Tre Maison Dasan to be screened in the chapel.

"I saw the film and thought it would be pretty impactful," Dr. Hollander said.

With flyers announcing the showing of the film taped to the wall at the last minute, turnout to see the film was low—about 10 people. However, Tiller plans to come back to San Quentin and show the film again. Also, she plans to have it played on the San Quentin institutional channel.

"It's a must-see for everyone in prison, especially those who have children," Krizman said.

—Rahsaan Thomas



Photo by Eddie Herena, SQN

Dr. Hollander, Denali Tiller and Rebecca Stern watching the documentary premiere in the SQ Chapel

Dads Back! Academy helps break the cycle of intergenerational incarceration

DADS BACK!

“It’s one of the double-edged swords because their reentry was successful, but for us it was like “Oh, what are we gonna do?” said Tanner.

“So we replaced them for the performance component. We replaced them with two actors but all of the material was created by the men, and it was then fashioned into a play by a professional playwright.”

TheatreWorkers Project also produced a play titled “Found Suitable” in conjunction with The Francisco Homes, a transitional housing organization in the Los Angeles Area. The project and program mainly help paroled lifers.

“Our point of view is that everybody has the capacity to be an artist, no matter what their background, no matter what their experience. Everybody has a story to tell and I really believe that,” said Tanner. “The basic premise of theater is that it is an ensemble art activity so unless you’re doing a one-person piece you have to work with other people.”

“The Dads Back project mainly targets African American men, while The Francisco Homes project is multi-ethnic,” said Tanner.

Tanner is no stranger to working in and visiting prisons. She taught writing workshops at California Institution for Men (CIM) in Chino and theater workshops at California Institution for Women (CIW) in Corona.

Tanner has visited San Quentin for an art exhibit and some theater performances.

“I was so moved and impressed by the work that Amy Dowling does [at San Quentin] with her Artistic Ensemble and also what Marin Shakespeare Company does,” said Tanner. “It really made me even more committed to wanting to continue to do this kind of work, because I find it transformative for myself as an artist; but I also see how working on a creative project with other human beings changes people no matter who they are.”

The Dads Back Academy has extended its workshop series to include three women who are alums of the academy.

“The material is going to be generated by the women,” said Tanner. “It will be their stories. Two of the men who were in the original performance piece that we did are going to join during the rehearsal process and they’re going to be playing some of the male voices that may emerge.”

The Dads Back Academy offers more than the theater program. They have job readiness workshops, substance abuse treatment programs and a “Parole to Payroll” program that includes job-seeking activities and job placement.

Its “Incarcerated Parents Program” [IPP] helps the returning fathers develop and maintain positive relationships with their children during and after incarceration. One of the primary goals of the Friends Outside organization is to help break the cycle of intergenerational incarceration.

“If you’re a father and you lose connection with your son or your daughter, they have a higher incidence of being at risk to repeat and become incarcerated themselves,” said Tanner. “It just becomes this



The A Man Like Me Cast, director and youth leadership participants after a performance at 24th Street Theatre

Photo courtesy of the 24th Street Theatre



Photo by Susie Tanner

Dads Back! Academy Moving Forward theatre workshop participant doing a trust exercise with teaching artist Jim Macdonald



Photo by Jim Macdonald

TheatreWorkers Project Director Susie Tanner with Dads Back! participants during a trust exercise

vicious cycle.

“One of the things that Friends Outside focuses on is parenting skills, fatherhood and motherhood skills and also they have a very strong program organizing family visits so families can go and visit their incarcerated relatives,” added Tanner.

There are some requirements for the IPP program: The father must have a case with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The father can’t have a “stay away” or restraining order in criminal court or in the dependency court which prevents them from having contact with their children, according to the FOLA website.

Since the workshops have become effective tools for rehabilitation and healing,

the projects were awarded grants from the California Arts Council Reentry through the Arts and California Arts Council Artists Activating Communities.

Jim Macdonald and Marlene McCurtis are part of the TheatreWorkers Project team of artists that work with the returning citizens along with Tanner.

“One of the things that is most important when folks are reentering society after being incarcerated or while they’re incarcerated is to develop trust in other people and to be able to work with a variety of individuals,” said Tanner. “We just happen to be the program that is helping them to do just that.”

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



Photo by Susie Tanner

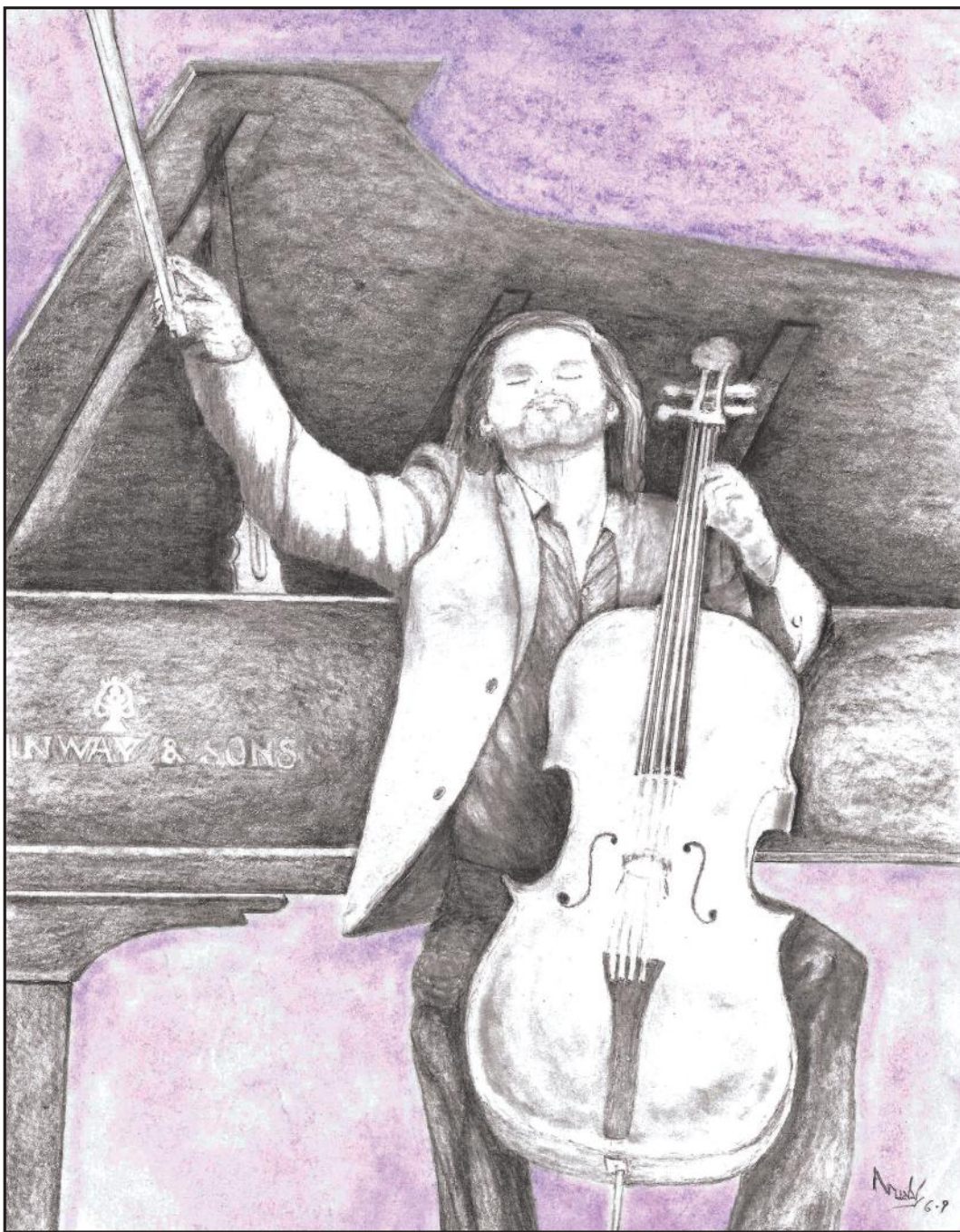
Dads Back! doing a physical theatre exercise showing freedom

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



San Francisco and the East Bay as seen from atop the Marin Headlands

Photo by P. Jo



Artistic rendering of Cellist Zuill Bailey
'Unfretted'

Armed with horsehair bow, The cellist reaches down through, Vertical teachings, Through horizontal stratagem, Discovering subtle, powerful sound itself, Spreading life in its natural state, Floating in songs disciplines compiled, Colliding far above the, Serpent's judgment, Above digital, electric lies, Acoustical sound resonates across time, Penetrates false bravado, Like the point of a dagger, Buried to its hilt and twisted, Acoustic sound binds us all together, Fuses us into one culture, Indifference and prejudice shudder, Confused, They try to hate, Frightened by their own emotion, Frightened by life's audible truth, Unfiltered feelings loose, Brought forth and breathing, Through unfretted fingerboard, Sublime classical sound, Enfolds us all, In its depth and rich tones, Unmatched in purity, It protects our souls like armor, In the lair of the serpent

Drawing and poem courtesy of Mike (Muddy Six-Nine) Hedger

AROUND THE WORLD



Karen Lausa from Words Beyond Bars
at the Great Wall of China

Photo courtesy of Karen Lausa

Snippets

Pope elect Stephen was only pope for three days from March 22 to 25, 752 dying of apoplexy before he could be consecrated.

In a deck of playing cards, the King of Hearts represents Charlemagne.

Fascism is an extreme authoritarian and nationalistic right-wing system of government and social organization.

First lady Grace Coolidge once taught at a school for the deaf.

Lead is used for a wide range of purposes, providing x-ray shielding, fish weights and in batteries.

Energy comes in many forms, including heat, light, motion, electrical, chemical, nuclear, dark and gravitational.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

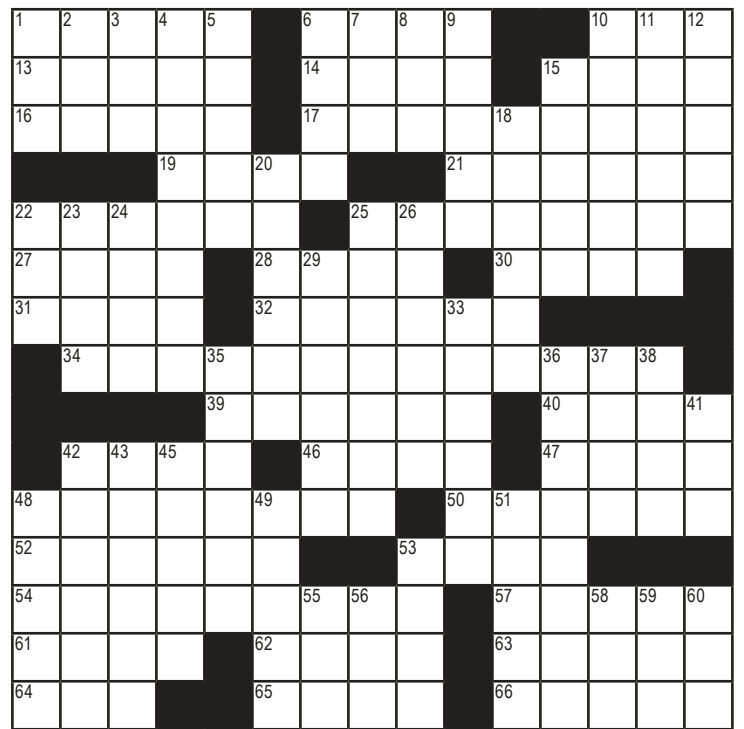
By Jonathan Chiu / Edited by Jan Perry

Across

1. Fluid filled sac at a joint
6. Coupled
10. Where prisoners go for help (Abbr.)
13. Worries
14. A Hindu queen
15. Precedes Spring or League
16. Brag
17. Type of sci-fi villain
19. All roads lead here
21. Touch on
22. Vedic hymn
25. Legendary perpetrator of an airplane heist
27. Love (Sp.)
28. High school singing show
30. Part of a tobacco pipe
31. Urgent
32. Form of theatrical singing
34. SQN adviser and author of *The Manson Women and Me; Monsters, Morality, and Murder*
39. Type of syndrome that affects young men
40. Type of *Girls* on Broadway
42. Investment house comp. ____-CREF
46. Roman emperor
47. Rihanna album
48. The G in OGs
50. Counterbalance
52. Start of a play
53. Travel and food magazine
52. What 34 Across' book may be inappropriate for
57. Precedes hell or Cain
61. Flat bread
62. Sandwich cookie
63. Quotes
64. Precedes warrior or tourism
65. Another type of bread
66. Son of Henry Ford

Down

1. Children's book that was turned into a movie in 2017
2. Net address
3. ____ Speedwagon
4. Star Wars alternative
5. British politician who was the first woman to sit in the House of Commons, born Nancy Witcher Langhorne
6. Endure (Scot.)
7. Military drone (Abbr.)
8. Black cuckoo bird
9. Tree or color
10. Group of improv actors
11. Type of two-seated bicycle
12. Luke Bryan song "Drink ____"
18. Not open
20. Long-tailed crow with a raucous voice
22. Insane
23. Ugandan dictator Idi
24. It's used to wrap some sushi pieces
25. Erases
26. Carrier
33. Replace part of a building
35. NPR forum host Michael
36. Horror movie lingo
37. Electrical therapy
38. Loathe
41. Parasitic egg
42. Strategy
43. As a whole (L)
45. Monetary unit of Israel
48. Peninsula in SE Quebec between the St. Lawrence River and New Brunswick
49. A Native American of W. South Dakota
51. Slapstick
53. Unit of time (Brit.)
55. NPR host Glass
56. ____ culpa
57. ____ no skin off my nose
59. ____ a man about a dog
60. Immigrant class



Sudoku Corner

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

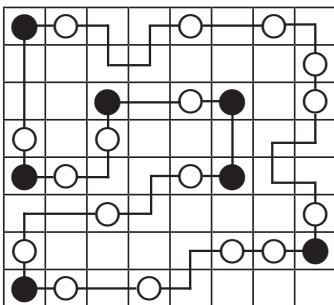
	8	4		2				
	7							5
			9					6
7						9	1	
			7					
	2		6					4
	3				1			
							8	
				7		1	5	3

Last Issue's Sudoku Solutions

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

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

Answers from last issue's Brain Teasers



9	+	6	-	8	=	7
+		÷		-		
7	+	3	÷	5	=	2
÷		X		X		
2	X	4	+	1	=	9
=	8	=	8	=	3	

- Fade Away
1. birds of paradise
 5. roof garden
 2. feather duster
 6. fun and games
 3. Of Mice and Men
 7. puff adder
 4. all of a sudden
 8. facade

This month's Brain Teasers:

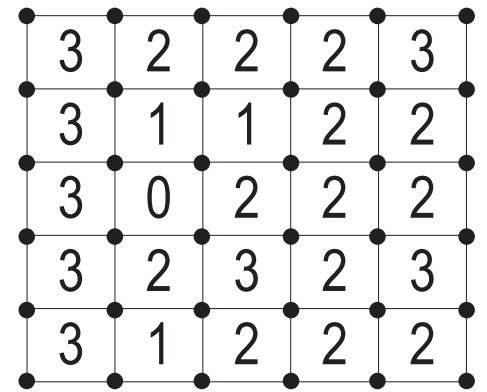
Synonym Trios

Change one letter in each trio of words to create synonym. For example, THIEF, MAID, FOREMAST becomes CHIEF, MAIN, FOREMOST.

1. CONGEAL, HIKE, CROAK
2. ENSURE, ABODE, EAST
3. LOOSE, HEED, COD
4. VALVE, STATUTE, NORTH
5. INDENT, CREASE, REVISE

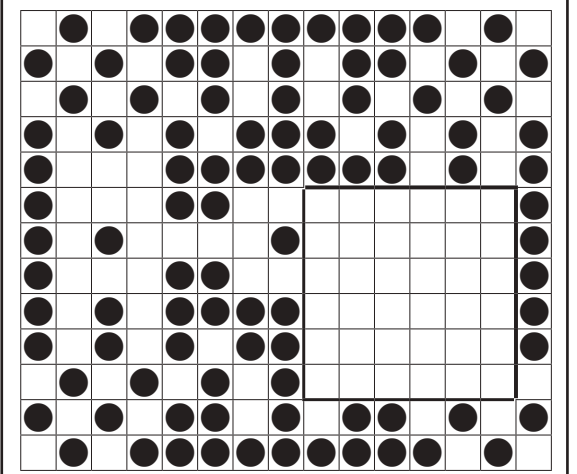
Loop Link

Connect adjacent dots with either horizontal or vertical lines to create a continuous unbroken loop which never crosses over itself. The numbers in these boxes tell you how many sides of that box are used by your unbroken line.



Pots of Dots

How many dots should there be in the hole in this pattern?



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

San Quentin News 1 Main Street
San Quentin, CA 94964

California desea restaurar el derecho al voto para los presos

ESPAÑOL

Escrita por **Rahsaan Thomas**
Staff Writer

California se une al movimiento nacional para restaurar el derecho al voto para los presos.

Una institución no lucrativa denominada Initiate Justice está buscando apoyo para el Restore Democracy Act, el cual podría restituir el derecho al voto a todos los encarcelados y los que se encuentran en libertad condicional en California.

Si se recaudan suficientes firmas para llegar a las urnas y de ser aprobada por los electores en las elecciones del mes de noviembre, el derecho al voto podría restaurarse a aproximadamente 162,000 Californianos, según el fundador del Initiate Justice, Taina Vargas-Edmund.

La petición necesita obtener más de 585,407 firmas para abril 17 para llegar a las urnas. "La gente que se encuentra afuera puede animar a sus seres queridos a reunir firmas para la petición y contactarse al initiatejustice.org para enviarles las solicitudes a través de nuestra página de

internet o correo electrónico", comentó Vargas-Edmund en una entrevista.

Los derechos al voto varían de estado a estado. Algunos estados imponen prohibiciones permanentes, a menos que el gobernador les otorgue el perdón, mientras que en otros estados se reintegra el derecho al voto una vez que cumplan con los requisitos de la libertad condicional o probación. Únicamente en los estados de Maine y Vermont se permiten el voto a personas que se encuentran cumpliendo sentencias en la prisión del estado. En California, las personas pueden votar en las cárceles del estado siempre y cuando estén esperando un juicio o estén en probación, pero este derecho a votar no aplica para las personas que estén en las prisiones estatales o en libertad condicional.

Florida prohíbe el derecho a votar a las personas que hayan estado encarceladas en las prisiones del estado a menos que el Executive Clemency Board les conceda ese derecho una vez más. Opositores del Gobernador Rick Scott mencionaron que sus quejas influenciaron en las decisiones, de acuerdo al artículo Slate por Mark

Joseph Stern.

"La idea principal de restaurar el sufragio es de asegurarnos que la gente tenga una oportunidad justa para establecerse."

En Florida la organización Floridians for a Fair Democracy realizó una petición al Second Chance Voting Restoration Amendment para solicitar una restauración automática del derecho a votar para los ex-convictos al completar el término de su libertad condicional o probación y pagar la restitución impuesta por el estado, según el artículo Slate. La enmienda excluye a las personas convictas de muerte o crímenes sexuales. La enmienda calificó para las urnas del mes de noviembre del 2018 con 760,000 firmas certificadas.

Una decisión reciente de la corte federal podría ayudar a restaurar el derecho al voto a 1.7 millones de ciudadanos, incluyendo 1 de cada 5 afroamericanos, aunque la medida no sea aprobada por los electores.

El Juez Mark Walker de la Corte del Distrito de los Estados Unidos encontró que el proceso para restaurar el derecho al voto bajo Scott quebranta los derechos de la

Primera Enmienda de la libre asociación y expresión.

Los críticos acusan a Scott de perjuicio al mencionar que él restauró el derecho al voto únicamente a las personas que verificó tener principios conservativos.

Mientras que la Suprema Corte de los Estados Unidos no ha llegado a una decisión final sobre sí la Primera Enmienda protege los derechos al voto, Walker, llegó a una conclusión citando dos opiniones de Samuel Alito de la Suprema Corte de Justicia de los Estados Unidos, que contundentemente sugiere que el acto de votar constituye una forma de expresión protegida por la Primera Enmienda, de acuerdo al artículo Slate.

Mississippi prohíbe de por vida el derecho a voto a aquellas personas que hayan sido convictas de ciertas felonías, a menos que sean reintegradas por la legislación o el gobernador.

Las felonías que califican para una prohibición de por vida son: pirómano, robo a mano armada, adulterio, soborno, fraude, extorsión, cheques sin fondos, cleptomano, falsificador, hurtar, asesinato, obtener dinero o propiedades bajo engaño, mentir bajo juramento, violación, recibir propiedad robada, robo, hurtar madera, robo de vehículos, robo de artículos rentados.

En un estudio del 2016 por Sentencing Project encontró que el 9.6% de la población adulta de Mississippi es inelegible al voto.

Miembros de la Casa Gubernamental de Mississippi en forma unánime votó por la creación de una comisión para el estudio de la restauración



Photo courtesy of Taina Vargas-Edmond

Voluntario de la institución Initiate Justice registra a un posible simpatizante

de los derechos al voto para aquellos que hayan cometido crímenes, de acuerdo a un artículo de Bobby Harrison en el Daily Journal.

"La idea principal de restaurar el sufragio es de asegurarnos que la gente tenga una oportunidad justa para establecerse", mencionó el Republicano Cheikh Taylor, D-Starkville, co-autor de la Legislación de Mississippi, de acuerdo al Daily Journal. Taylor también añadió que reanudar el derecho al voto ayudará a los prisioneros que hayan cumplido sus sentencias a llegar a ser ciudadanos responsables.

La presión para separar el derecho al voto de los castigos al cometer un crimen esta vigente en otros estados también.

Virginia, tiene una prohibición de por vida en el derecho al voto para los

culpables de crímenes al igual que Florida. Virginia tiene dos enmiendas que van a las urnas para que los electores decidan la situación. Mientras tanto el ex -gobernador Terry McAuliffe reintegró el derecho a voto a 173,000 ex -presos por medio de un perdón individual. El actual Gobernador Ralph Northam ha jurado en varias ocasiones reinstaurar el derecho al voto a los ex -presos por igual.

En Louisiana, una demanda está en camino que cuestiona sí el concepto "bajo la sentencia de prisión" aplica a los que están bajo libertad condicional o probación.

Tan solo el restaurar el derecho a voto a todos los ciudadanos en Florida podría haber afectado las elecciones de George W. Bush y Donald Trump.

—Traducción por Tare Beltranchuc y Marco Villa

Hermanos Unidos derrota al equipo B de San Quentin, 8-0



Photo by Rahsaan Thomas, SQW

El portero Marco Villa defendiendo la portería de los Hermanos Unidos

Escrita por **Eddie Herena**
Staff Writer

El equipo "B" de fútbol soccer de San Quentin inició la temporada con una derrota de 8-0 en un partido amistoso ante el equipo visitante, Hermanos Unidos de la Universidad de Berkeley.

Los equipos "A" y "B" de San Quentin han perdido los últimos cinco partidos, incluyendo los últimos tres partidos de la temporada pasada. El partido atrajo a prisioneros como Percy Paul, un recién llegado a esta institución. "Me emociona el solo mirar a estos jugadores y definitivamente quiero ser parte del equipo", añadió Paul.

La llegada de nuevos prisioneros podría ser lo que los equipos de San Quentin necesitan.

A pesar de que el portero del equipo B, Jesús "Chuy" Pérez salvó su portería en ocho ocasiones, no pudo evitar que los Hermanos Unidos promediaron un gol cada once minutos debido a que no tenía una defensa sólida.

"Necesitamos tener una mejor estructura y esforzarnos más", comentó el portero del equipo B, Pérez. También añadió, "es un buen inicio porque nos hace ver en que

áreas necesitamos enfocarnos."

El partido del 22 de abril trajo consigo nuevos jugadores como Freddy Cruz de 19 años, quien comentó, "no sabía que esperar, pero ustedes son a todo dar."

Chris Gómez, quien no tenía idea de los deportes que se practican en la prisión subrayó, "Aunque existan éstas paredes, eso no detiene a la familia."

Debido a que el equipo de los Hermanos Unidos no tenía suficientes jugadores, Juan Carlos Meza, Taré "Cancún" Beltranchuc, Alexi Ruiz, Miguel Gutiérrez y Marco Villa (como portero) ayudaron a completar la alineación del equipo visitante.

"El primer gol del partido llegó al minuto 5 a través de Manuel Esqueda de los Hermanos Unidos. Posteriormente, el mediocampista Juan Carlos Meza anotó el segundo gol al minuto 15. El delantero "Cancún" Beltranchuc registro el tercer gol al 39.

Al finalizar el medio tiempo el marcador era 3-0, a favor de los Hermanos Unidos.

Durante el medio tiempo los dos equipos intercambiaron saludos y los jugadores de

San Quentin expresaron su agradecimiento por la donación de los 40 zapatos de fútbol "Nike."

Andrew Crawford, patrocinador del programa de fútbol en la Prisión de San Quentin y orquestador de las donaciones, comentó, "es emocionante ver [a los jugadores] con los zapatos de fútbol." Crawford enfatizó que los zapatos de fútbol son solo el principio del apoyo que por mucho tiempo el programa de fútbol anheló.

En el segundo tiempo, Miguel Gutiérrez anotó al minuto 50 y 60. Por su parte, Christian Cervantes igualó el número de goles de su compañero al marcar al minuto 65 y 85. Al término del partido, Cervantes bromeó acerca de su humildad por no completar su tercer gol del partido como ya es costumbre.

Alexei Ruiz, jugador de San Quentin, anotó el último gol del partido para sellar la victoria de los Hermanos Unidos al minuto 89.

Finalmente, Julio Martínez, defensa del equipo B comentó, "No importa que hayamos perdido, me divertí."

—Traducción por Tare Beltranchuc y Marco Villa

Abogado señala: 'prepárense para su libertad'

Escrita por **Juan Haines**
Senior Editor

Abogado señala: "prepárense para su libertad."

El camino a la libertad es riguroso para los hombres y las mujeres encarceladas en las prisiones de California, comentó Mike Romano, Profesor de leyes de la Universidad de Stanford, ante una audiencia de aproximadamente 150 presos que se reunieron en la Iglesia Católica, el 19 de enero.

Kevin "Bilal" Chatman, quien acompañó a Romano y a dos de sus colaboradores, comentó: "sé que no es fácil que Mike venga a esta prisión y les diga estas cosas. Tenía seis sentencias de vida y 150 años. Pensé que nunca saldría y continuaba metiéndome en problemas. Pero cuando la Proposición 36 fue aprobada en el 2012, deseaba regresar a casa, así que cambié mi comportamiento para demostrar que no era la misma persona de antes."

Romano expresó que la aprobación de la Proposición 36 fue "histórica". Fue la primera ley aprobada por los votantes para liberar a los presos de la prisión. Romano cree que fue "la primera en la nación".

La nueva ley permitió la liberación de Chatman en el 2013; quien, posteriormente, consiguió empleo como gerente de operaciones en una compañía de logística. También trabaja en el Estadio Levi, donde fue nombrado empleado del año en el 2014.

"Existen empleos allá afuera", comentó Chatman, mientras hablaba acerca de terminar la práctica que los empresarios utilizan para preguntar a los solicitantes de empleo, si han estado en la prisión.

"Nosotros estamos trabajando para prohibir la casilla (donde se pregunta si una persona ha estado encarcelada) de las solicitudes de empleo", Chatman indicó. "Somos ciudadanos que estamos regresando a la sociedad y no nos identificamos como ex convictos."

Romano llevó a Chatman a la capital del Estado para reunirse con legisladores y demostrarles cómo es un ciudadano rehabilitado. Los Legisladores intrigados por Chatman, escucharon cuidadosamente su historia.

Romano mencionó que está molesto con el liderazgo del Estado porque fueron ellos los que crearon la sobrepoblación en las prisiones: "fueron ellos quienes lo enviaron a la prisión", subrayó. "Ellos actuaron como si estuvieran frente a alguien quien había sobrevivido un choque de avión, pero fueron ellos quien ocasionaron el choque."

Exitosamente, Romano y sus colaboradores trabajaron con otros grupos, las cuestiones sobre las reformas en la prisión para eliminar los procedimientos de sentencias obligatorias. El equipo de reformistas de la prisión busca expandir los créditos para la reducción de tiempo

para los presos. También están solicitando a la Corte Suprema de California obligar a los oficiales de la prisión a considerar la liberación adelantada de los (three-strikers) que no tienen crimen con violencia.

"Si la corte acepta esta petición, tardaría unos dos años para que tomaran una decisión", comentó Romano. "Eso les da (a los presos) tiempo para portarse bien y que tomen programas. En el mejor de los casos, estarán frente a la audiencia de libertad condicional (BPH) antes de tiempo."

Muchas de las preguntas que los presos le hicieron a Romano eran sobre cómo funciona la audiencia. Romano respondió a la mayoría de éstas, mencionando que el Gobernador Jerry Brown desea liberar más presos — siempre y cuando, el índice de asistencia a programas sea mayor.

"No sabía que privilegio era el contar con todos los programas que la Prisión de San Quentin ofrece", expresó Chatman. "Si no asistes a los programas de auto-ayuda y no tratas de conectarte contigo mismo, cometes un gran error."

Romano añadió: "continúa preparándote para que cuando estés frente a la corte, la audiencia de libertad condicional o el gobernador, puedas demostrar que estás listo para reincorporarte a la sociedad."

—Traducción por Tare Beltranchuc y Marco Villa

Report outlines domestic extremist-related killings in 2017

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Associate Editor

In 2017, extremists from a wide array of groups committed 34 "domestic extremist-related killings," according to a report by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). [http://www.adl.org/news/press-release/adl-report-white-supremacist-murders-more-than-doubled-

in-2017]

"White supremacists were responsible for the majority of extremist-related killings in 2017, as is usually the case each year," the ADL reported. That, however, was not true in 2016, when the numbers dipped to 13 percent.

"Twenty of the 34 extremist-related murders in the United States in 2017, or 59

percent, were related to right-wing extremism," the ADL reported.

"Islamic extremists were responsible for nine of the 34 killings (26 percent) documented in 2017," the ADL reported. "Over the past 10 years, Islamic extremists have been responsible for at least 99 of the 387 documented extremist-related murders (26

percent)."

The majority of Islamic extremists murders have been carried out by only a few individuals who had a high rate of casualties, compared to the numerous deadly small-scale murders done by other extremist groups, it was reported.

In 2017, "five of the 34 murders (15 percent) were committed by Black nationalists," according to the ADL. "The Center on Extremism includes both Black nationalists and anarchists in the broader category of the 'left-wing extremism,' while acknowledging that Black nationalists include some adherents who don't necessarily fit neatly within that category."

In 2016, some of "the most significant Black nationalist-related violence since the early 1980s" took place, according to the ADL. It said there should be concern about this group as a "possible emerging extremist threat," but it is smaller than threats modeled by Islamic extremists and those by right-wing extremists.

The report categorizes extremists as anti-government, Islamic extremists, White supremacists, Black nationalists and alt lite, an offspring from the alt right. Subgroups of these extremists organizations "adhere to or are influenced by more than one extremist movement," it was reported. In these instances, extremists are categorized by their ideology.

Some right-wing groups, for example, are influenced by the White supremacist movement, militia movement, sovereign citizens, and anti-government extremists. At least one murder was committed by the alt lite, the ADL reported.

According to the report, "Prior to 2017, the alt right was overwhelmingly an online phenomenon, with people expressing opinions in online venues ranging from 4Chan and Reddit to Twitter and Facebook, as well as more obscure sites and platforms."

The report said the 2016 presidential election and media attention "energized" alt right and alt lite adherents to get in-

involved in the real world. From that, groups like Identity Europa were formed. They have engaged in protests and the August "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, VA. These groups are also responsible for the dissemination of racist literature on college campuses in the United States and Canada.

The ADL report stated that some divergent alt right groups "reject explicit White supremacy while retaining the alt right's other hateful views of Muslims, immigrants, LG-BTQ individuals, the left and especially women."

"Over the past 10 years (2008-17), domestic extremists have been responsible for at least 387 murders," the ADL reported. "Of these, 274 (71 percent) were committed by right-wing extremists of one type or another."

"It is quite likely that the future will see yet more violent acts stemming from the ranks of the alt right and the alt lite as more of their adherents move their activities into the real world" the ADL report concluded.

US Appeals Court rules on deportable convictions

By Joseph Hancock
Contributing Writer

For the purpose of fighting deportation, a carjacking conviction in California does not always qualify as a violent crime, according to a recent federal court decision.

The United States Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit held that carjacking under California Penal Code 215(a) does not qualify as a crime of violence under federal law because the state statute does not require "physical force capable of causing physical pain or injury to another person."

In the *Solorio-Ruiz v. Sessions* case, at issue was whether Mexican native Roberto Solorio-Ruiz was deportable because of his 1995 carjack-

ing conviction. *Solorio-Ruiz* applied for relief from removal under a law that allows residents who had been lawfully domiciled in the United States for seven consecutive years. A waiver is available in certain circumstances but not when the applicant has served more than five years for an aggravated felony.

The Board of Immigration Appeals found *Solorio-Ruiz* ineligible for a waiver because of his carjacking conviction.

The Ninth Circuit concluded that a conviction for carjacking under California Penal Code 215 is no longer categorically a crime of violence. They based their decision on the United States Supreme Court ruling in

Johnson v. United States, 559 U.S. 133, 140 (2010), which held that the physical force that a crime of violence entails must be "violent force—that is, force capable of causing physical pain or injury to another person." Furthermore, the Ninth Circuit held that their prior holding in *Nieves-Medrano v. Holder*, 590 F.3d 1057, 1058 (9th Cir. 2010) no longer has standing after Johnson.

However, the question of whether California carjacking is a theft offense under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (43) (G) remains open and the Ninth Circuit remanded the case to the Board of Immigration Appeals to consider that issue.

In *Solorio-Ruiz v. Sessions* DAR 01/30/18 at page 988.

CA bills aim to reform law for juveniles and adults

By Eunisses Hernandez
Contributing Writer

Sacramento, CA —On April 4, the California Senate Public Safety Committee voted to pass Senate Bills 1392 and 1393, half of the Equity and Justice Package, authored by Sen. Holly J. Mitchell (D-Los Angeles) and Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens). The two Senate leaders are joint authors on bills that together seek major justice reforms for juveniles and adults.

"Mass incarceration is a massive moral failure and policy failure. It's a moral failure because we now know that it is injurious to families and to the economies of low-income communities, and that its violence has been directed overwhelmingly at Black men and Black women, Latinos and Latinas," Mitchell said, according to a press release by Californians for a Responsible Budget (CURB). "As a matter of public policy, paying for long prison sentences is the worst use of public safety dollars. We must stop wasting taxpayer dollars on a failed policy."

The passage out of committee comes in the wake of the California legislature passing two historic sentencing reform measures in 2017: SB 180 (The Repeal of Ineffective Sentencing Enhancements) authored by Mitchell, which repealed the three-year sentence enhancement for prior drug convictions; and SB 620, authored by Senator Steven Bradford (D-Gardena), allowing judges to strike unwarranted gun sentence enhancements.

SB 1392, the Repeal Ineffective Sentencing Enhancements (RISE) Act of 2018, authored by Mitchell, repeals California's one-year sentence enhancement for prior felony convictions and

passed with a 5 to 1 vote. SB 1392 would repeal one of the most commonly used sentencing enhancements that adds one year for each previous prison or felony jail term, which impacted one-third of people convicted in 2017.

SB 1393, the Fair and Just Sentencing Reform Act of 2018, reinstates judicial discretion to the application of the five-year sentence enhancement for each prior serious felony at the time when a person is currently charged with a serious felony. This bill passed the committee with a 5 to 1 vote. According to data from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), there are about 100,000 years' worth of the five-year enhancement applied to people currently under CDCR custody.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, "California has more than 100 separate code sections that enhance sentences" based on a person's current offense and/or record of prior convictions. As of 2016, 79 percent of people under CDCR custody had some kind of sentence enhancement attached to their base sentence; 25 percent had three or more enhancements stacked on.

Proponents of the measures argue that these policies will help restore balance in the judicial process, address extreme sentences, and reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system by preventing people from having their sentences doubled or tripled because of enhancements and reducing jail overcrowding and wasteful spending on incarceration. The bill's co-sponsors and community members who have experienced extreme sentencing celebrate the passage of this bill out of

the Public Safety Committee as a step toward victory for families and communities who have faced separation and destabilization for too long as a result of ineffective "tough on crime" policies that disproportionately target people of color.

"These bills are a long overdue step toward restoring fairness in our courtrooms," said Romarilyn Ralston, of the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. "They recognize the critical importance of reuniting parents with their children, which is key to sustaining healthy communities."

"The outcome of today's hearing builds on the growing momentum in California to enact criminal justice reforms that divest from ineffective mass incarceration policies and invest in community-based solutions like mental health care, education and substance-use treatment," said Amber-Rose Howard of CURB. California voters have also shown their support for such reforms by voting for Propositions 47, 64 and 57, and advocates laud lawmakers for demonstrating their commitment to following the will of the people by enacting legislation that prioritizes safety instead of punishment.

Co-sponsors of the legislation include ACLU of California, Californians United for a Responsible Budget, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Drug Policy Alliance, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Friends Committee on Legislation California, Pillars of the Community, Tides Advocacy, Women's Foundation of CA, Women's Policy Institute, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. Euhernandez@drugpolicy.org

Lawsuit challenges mandatory checks for SHU inmates

By Timothy Hicks
Journalism Guild Writer

California lawsuits are challenging frequent mandatory checks of inmates in Security Housing Units, claiming they cause unconstitutional health problems according to a California Patch article.

"It's torture," said Penny Schoner, who attended a February rally in San Francisco in support of the prisoners. "If you were in a cell 24 hours day and being awoken every half hour night and day, what could you do?"

California inmates housed in Security Housing Units (SHU) can suffer from sleep deprivation, headaches and dizzy spells due to mandatory "welfare checks" in the SHU, the plaintiffs claim.

A federal judge is set to decide two lawsuits over the SHU use of suicide checks and

welfare checks. The prisoners claim that the noise of the metal wand pounding against a metal pad outside their cells every 30 minutes is causing sleep deprivation. Plaintiffs claim the checks are cruel and unusual punishment.

The rally was organized by the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity (PHSS) Coalition, a San Francisco Bay Area organization working to end sleep deprivation.

Plaintiffs Christopher Lipsey and Maher Suarez also allege they suffered blurred vision, anxiety, impaired memory and inability to concentrate because of the checks, a Feb. 9 article in *California Patch* said.

Lipsey is currently housed in California State Prison, Corcoran SHU. Suarez is now in Solano but was held in Pelican Bay State Prison SHU.

U.S. District Judge Vince

Chhabria is weighing whether the two lawsuits may be transferred to the federal court in Sacramento or dismissed.

The welfare checks began as a result of a 1990 class action lawsuit settlement about inmates' mental health, the article said. Prisoners who are held in isolation SHUs generally spend 22.5 hours per day in their cells.

Within the past two and a half years, the PHSS Committee to End Sleep Deprivation heard complaints from about 14 different California prisons about the noise, according to Verbena Lea, the organization's spokesperson. "Metal on metal" is the wording used by other inmates describing the alleged noise, Lea said.

State lawyers claim the noise is not excessive and want the lawsuits dismissed, citing the settlement of the 1990 lawsuit.

Supreme Court rules on bail hearings for undocumented immigrants

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

The U.S. Supreme Court in early March ruled 5 to 3 in the case of *Jennings v. Rodriguez* that the Immigration and Nationality Act does not permit regular bail hearings for undocumented immigrants detained by U.S. immigration officials, according to *The Atlantic*.

The five justices of the majority ruled that the Immigration and Nationality Act statute does not permit bail hearings for immigration prisoners and accordingly authorized officials to hold detainees for weeks, months and even years.

In 1994 the Immigration and Naturalization Service, on any given day, held about 5,500 immigrants in detention facilities. In 2017, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) projected a 2018 detention population of 51,379, which would make its Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) division almost the seventh-largest prison system in the country.

The ERO has quietly expanded into a loosely supervised and secretive system that has held detainees for multiple years without due process, according to the article.

In fact, as of the latest data, in 2016, only about 10 percent of detainees were held in federal facilities; roughly 25 percent were housed in state, county and city facilities, and 65 percent were held in private for-profit prisons.

Critics contend that the local and private detention facilities, which are governed by agreement with ICE officials, are rife with poor physical conditions, inadequate medical care and physical and sexual abuse of the inmates, according to *The Atlantic*.

This exploding population of prisoners is fueled by an influx of arrests. Most people have not been charged with or are awaiting trial for any crime. Many have done nothing wrong, except request admission to the United States under our law when Customs and Border Protection Officers believe they are not entitled to do so.

Throughout much of the nation's history, immigration law and policy were focused on helping new immigrant populations assimilate to American life and gain citizenship instead of arresting, prosecuting or expelling new arrivals, said Hiroshi Motomura, a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles.

This old policy has changed into an internal-espionage and police-control apparatus aimed at controlling "illegal immigrants."

In his dissenting opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote, "I would find it alarming to believe that Congress wrote these statutory words in order to put thousands of individuals at risk of lengthy confinement all within the United States but all without hope of bail. I would read the statutory words as consistent with, indeed as requiring protection of, the basic right to seek bail."

The Supreme Court refused to consider the constitutional issues at play in the case, sending it back to the Ninth Circuit, where it originated.

Tennessee schedules three executions after nearly a decade

There are 60 inmates on Tennessee's Death Row awaiting execution

By William Earl Tolbert
Journalism Guild Writer

Tennessee has scheduled three executions this year, after nearly a decade without them, according to *USA Today*.

Dozens of Death Row pris-

oners lost challenges to the use of the death penalty and lethal injection. The Tennessee Supreme Court has consistently ruled in favor of the process.

"The intended result of an execution is to render the inmate dead," wrote Chief

Justice Jeffrey Bivins in his official opinion, upholding the state's practice of executing the condemned by lethal injection.

The execution dates of James Hawkins, Billy Ray Irick and Sedrick Clayton have been confirmed by the

Tennessee Department of Correction, according to the article. They will be executed on May 9, Aug. 9 and Nov. 28, respectively. The last execution was in 2009.

"Both Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Clayton had their convictions confirmed by the

Tennessee Supreme Court in 2017," said Barbara Peck, a spokeswoman for the Tennessee Supreme Court. "They have one year to file a petition for post-conviction relief. They may also have federal appeal options."

Irick could be the first execution, scheduled for Aug. 9. His attorneys asked the Supreme Court not to set a new execution date, the article stated. Hawkins is scheduled for May 9 but has the one-year option to appeal.

Irick, who has exhausted all his state and federal appeals, was set to die in 2014. He has been on death row

since 1986 at the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution in Nashville.

Today, there are 60 inmates on Tennessee's death row waiting to be executed. The electric chair is still legal in Tennessee. It was last used in 2007 but could resume in 2018, according to the article.

"The governor will defer to the Tennessee Supreme Court as the court sets execution dates," Jennifer Donnals, a spokeswoman for Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, said in an email to *USA Today*. "The governor will follow the law and the court's orders on this matter."

War correspondent and filmmaker reflects back on his fatal mistake

By Achilles Williams
Journalism Guild Writer

One thoughtless mistake traumatized many lives and landed Donovan Webster in prison, according to his account in *AARP The Magazine*. Webster was a writer, war correspondent and filmmaker, until he caused a fatal crash one night in August 2014.

Webster was driving intoxicated down a curvy mountain road, when he sideswiped Wayne T. White's car, causing it to be crushed by an oncoming 18-wheeler. Webster had an alcohol blood level of 0.10 percent, according to the article. The legal limit is 0.08.

"We lived in a small town. Everyone knew who I was, and everyone also knew my wife. And when I went to prison for killing a man, she became the public face of



File Photo

Donovan Webster

our family and my deed. It shamed her, unbearably so," Webster wrote.

As a war correspondent, Webster witnessed bloody conflicts and beheadings in Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan. He was part of a team sent to Southeast Asia after the 2004 tsunami. Those memories accumulated.

"Inside the zone, we all

wore surgical-style masks. If you didn't tiny particles of dust and rotting human flesh blown on the wind would attach themselves to your teeth and tongue and the roof of your mouth," Webster said, about the conditions immediately after the tsunami.

He was diagnosed three times with post-traumatic stress disorder. Psychiatrists prescribed Webster a litany of medications for anxiety, panic attacks and insomnia. He stopped taking the meds, which included Valium, Xanax, Lexapro and trazodone, and started drinking instead.

Webster never saw his drinking as a problem, but gradually, it overtook him, he said.

That drinking led to the fatal crash that took White's life. White was described as an invaluable member of the community. He was a farm-

er and churchgoer with a spouse, children, and grandchildren.

"My son and daughter are divided between wanting to love me and wanting to walk away from all the pain," Webster wrote.

Following almost two years in prison, Webster faced a broken family, no money and no job opportunities. Now that he's out, he is engaged in self-reflection and wrote that he has "powerful remorse" for his crime.

"But I have realized that there's some great power in being around long enough to comprehend that no matter the damage we've done, a new door will open," Webster concluded. "No matter what age you are, staging a comeback is only a matter of taking the rest of your life seriously and making the next smart move, and the next."

Positive changes in the criminal justice system lead to prisoners adjusting to free society

Positive changes in America's criminal justice system are exposing significant changes in helping long-term prisoners adjust to a free society.

"It's common to come out with untreated illness, chronic conditions due to age and neglect. How are they going to live?" asked Gretchen Newby, executive director of the Stockton-based nonprofit Friends Outside.

Long sentences versus a thaw in the parole process resulted in releases of long-term prisoners with long-term consequences, wrote Joseph Rodriguez and Nell Bernstein in an opinion article in the *The New York Times*, on April 7.

Following a decades-long prison boom, California's prison population declined 25 percent in the past 10 years.

Prisoners are now being released under a new pa-

role hearing shift, resulting in what is termed a "cluster effect," or prisoners being released with a plethora of problems up to and including: housing, jobs and mental impairments.

According to the article, 600,000 men and women are released yearly, with housing and jobs as the main challenges they face. These challenges are compounded by internal obstacles such as post-traumatic stress disorder and histories of abuse and neglect. These early injuries are exacerbated by the violence, humiliation and gripping isolation of prison life.

"It's a lot of work to unravel the garbage I created," said Jesse De La Cruz, who spent three decades in and out of prison. Former prisoners, he said are expected to "change everything they've done all their lives in three months. It doesn't work that way."

Daniel Silva, 60, spent 39 years in California prisons. Silva was still in prison when he began to develop the curriculum for the Self-

David Eng was sentenced to 17 years to life for second-degree murder. Following a 28-year stint, he had some family support outside. He later became a part of a nonprofit, Fathers and Families, to help newly released prisoners acclimate back into society.

Eng had six parole board hearings before being released. He kept a black binder documenting his efforts to gain parole. It contained plastic sleeves with certificates from the American Bible Academy, anger management classes, and workshops on "pro social values," abstinence contracts, relapse-prevention plans; a high school equivalency diploma, letters of apology, and letters of recommendation and support.

He routinely exchanges handshakes and hugs with persons he works with.

Awareness and Recovery program, which runs healing circles in several California prisons.

"You can get a person a job, get them into school, but if they're not at peace, they're not going to succeed," Silva said.

The San Joaquin Parole Re-Entry Court is run by Superior Court Judges Richard Vlavianos and Brett H. Morgan. They work with case managers in a downtown Stockton courthouse.

Together they have a three-hour session to offer a safety net of drug treatment, accountability, housing and individual and family counseling.

"You're trying to develop trust. If they think it's us against them, we'll never get anywhere," explained Vlavianos.

—Achilles Williams

Former prisoner files sexual harassment suit

By Salvador Solorio
Journalism Guild Writer

A former female prisoner at the Denver Women's Correctional Facility has filed a federal sexual harassment civil claim against Colorado prison officials and her former supervisor, the *Denver Post* reported.

The supervisor left his job but was never charged with the assaults, Susan Ullery reported in the legal filings.

Ullery reported she wore a wire to document the case against her work supervisor, Bruce Bradley.

Prior to wearing a wire, Ullery said she repeatedly complained to male employees of being sexually harassed but was told by one officer that she should be glad Bradley "liked her."

The lawsuit says Bradley would sneak up behind Ullery while she was doing a canteen inventory and press his groin against her buttocks, then moan in Ullery's ear.

The *Denver Post* April 12 story reported that in an attempt to stop the harassment, Ullery resorted to saying she was a lesbian. Bradley then suggested she should have sex with him and another woman. When a member of Ullery's family had died, Bradley suggested sexual activity to make her feel better.

Correctional Officer David Wang suggested to Ullery that she should put "Grandpa" Bradley in a good mood, she claimed. Wang allegedly overheard Bradley threaten to write Ullery up for disobeying a lawful order and suggesting she would lose her parole if she did not masturbate in front of Bradley.

After meeting with inves-

tigators from the Department of Corrections' inspector general's office in April 2016, Ullery was told that every time an accusation was made against Bradley, it was a "he said, she said" situation.

"The prison has the 'highest rate of sexual assault of prisoners by correctional officers in the nation'"

To provide hard evidence, investigators wired Ullery and sent her to work in the canteen with a promise to intervene before any sexual assault could take place. Bradley allegedly immediately paged her to his office and demanded Ullery show him her breasts and masturbate in his presence.

Investigators failed to intervene when Bradley became upset and walked around his desk, backed her up against a wall and groped her crotch, it was reported.

The lawsuit says investigators left her alone with Bradley for three minutes before a sergeant entered the office. Investigators later told Ullery the wire was not transmitting well.

The lawsuit says the prison has the "highest rate of sexual assault of prisoners by correctional officers in the nation." In 2009 the state was ordered to pay another female inmate \$1.3 million for being raped and coerced into sex acts.

Female correctional officers win lawsuit for hostile work environment

Female correctional officers have won a \$20 million settlement of a lawsuit claiming sexual harassment and a hostile work environment in federal prisons.

The settlement also includes 20 pages of procedural changes to improve employee safety, including improved training about sexual harassment, better monitoring for processing incident reports, and removing front pockets from inmate clothing to eliminate hidden masturbating.

The settlement resulted after a judge ruled in 2016 in favor of the lawsuit filed by

a collective of women working at the nation's largest male federal prison in Coleman, Fla.

The settlement was one of the largest class-action settlements leveled to date for pervasive sexual harassment, *The Washington Post* reported Jan. 27.

"These women walked into a high-security prison every day, knowing that they were going to be harassed by inmates and told by male colleagues and supervisors that they shouldn't be there," said Heidi Burakiewicz, lead attorney for the case.

The lawsuit alleged that

more than 500 female correctional officers, teachers, nurses and office services employees were subjected to a hostile work environment, sex discrimination, and deliberate indifference.

The lead plaintiff was Correctional Officer Taronica White. She said from the first day she started working at the new maximum-security prison, she routinely got catcalls as she walked across the exercise yard post and inmates exposed their private parts to her during count time.

White said she reported the incidents to her superi-

ors. Nevertheless, little to nothing was done to stop the behavior.

The Post reported that another plaintiff said one night she was exposed to 25 to 30 inmates masturbating. "It felt like a free for all ... I was afraid for my safety."

Sexual misconduct by the inmates remains a serious problem in a male prison, said Unit Manager Tammy Padgett.

Improvements are being made "but we still have growth to do," said Shirley Moore Smeal, president of the Association of Women Executives in Corrections.

"Some people would still rather not have women working in corrections at all."

"Women are drawn to these jobs for the same reason anyone would be, they are stable government jobs with low entry requirements," said Dana Britton, director of the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University.

Prisons provide attractive jobs in pastoral, economically depressed areas. Nevertheless, women's increasing presence in men's prisons has often sparked conflict with the men who

have traditionally held those jobs.

The Post article says that men's prisons did not start hiring women until the 1970s, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Today women account for 30 percent of correctional department workers; this includes community-based facilities, juvenile facilities, and jails.

A similar lawsuit involving the District of Columbia Department of Corrections was settled in 1999. Lawsuits have also been filed in New Mexico, Denver and Cook County, Ill.

—William Earl Tolbert

Nikki Meredith takes a detailed look inside the minds of the Manson women

BOOK REVIEW

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

It took Nikki Meredith more than two decades of prison visits, trips into the California desert, and prolonged research to knit her memories, reactions, opinions together and write the words that describe the crime and the punishment in *The Manson Women and Me: Monsters, Morality, and Murder* (2018).

What makes *The Manson Women and Me* a compelling read is the close scrutiny Meredith applies to investigating the mindsets, before and after, of Leslie Van Houten and Patricia Krenwinkel, two of the three women at the center of the “Manson Family” crimes. Meredith also provides a clear look at the women 40 years after their crimes. Susan Atkins, a third woman involved in the crimes, appears more briefly in *The Manson Women and Me*.

Meredith discusses her own life in the context of the culture and upbringing of that time, adding an historical and personal layer that makes the narrative relatable. While a student at Hollywood High School, Meredith joined a sorority-like social club that included a girl who years later became a trusted recruiter for the Manson Family. Another high school acquaintance be-

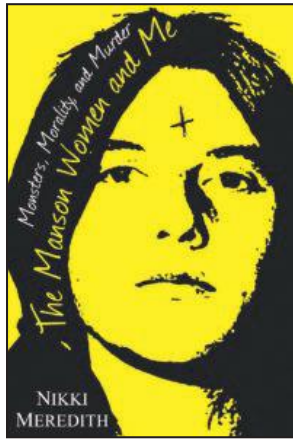
came an attorney on the prosecuting team at the Manson trials.

Meredith’s own movingly naïve, 1950s perception of how women should handle abusive relationships was interjected into the story, causing readers to think about the 1960s, when the crimes took place, and how much western masculinity influenced Van Houten and Krenwinkel.

Meredith is candid about her brother’s teenaged history with the criminal justice system, and writes about her own experience with high school peer pressures, something that all readers can empathize with — social status being vital to the self-image. However, when Meredith writes of the challenges she faced in her own life with the similar challenges of the Manson women, an uncomfortable question emerges: how could these mid-century, middle-class women commit these gruesome murders?

To address the question, Meredith cites psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton’s reference to the Germans during the Holocaust:

They were very ordinary men who became demonic, doing demonic things. They weren’t inherently evil. Human beings aren’t inherently evil. Rather we have the capacity for good or for evil and we become what we are through our own personal decisions.



In the end, journalists, psychologists, law enforcement, and the public might agree that a cunning psychopath manipulated the three women, but as Meredith points out, “they did choose to be with him.”

Meredith writes:

While I believe that Pat and Leslie were subjected to extremely manipulative techniques, it’s still astonishing that the socialization of a lifetime was stripped away in a few months and that it took more than five years for their basic humanity to re-emerge.

“I think that one of the things missed is that Pat and Leslie believed they were important to the world. They were looking for a cause greater than they were, like most of the Jihadists believe that by killing infidels they



Author Nikki Meredith being interviewed by Michael Krasny, the host of the NPR Forum

are making it a better world,” Meredith said on a KQED interview last April. “Manson had convinced them that wealthy families like the Tates, represented conventional society that represented evil in the world.”

The Manson Women and Me is about understanding the totality of human nature—empathy, and the lack thereof, come up in many of its chapters.

“There is something particularly chilling about a woman without empathy—much more frightening than a man without empathy,” Mer-

edith writes.

Meredith doesn’t hold back when describing the horrific and gruesome details of the Tate-LaBianca murders.

She researched the annals of history, comparing the Manson murders to genocides in Rwanda and Germany to as well as the cult suicides in San Diego and the Jihadist couple’s killings in San Bernardino.

An arduous journey of judgments, comparisons, and opinions are featured in *The Manson Women and Me* as the victims’ families and prosecutors seek what they

consider a punishment that fits the crime—to never be let out of prison.

After reviewing more than 60 books for *San Quentin News*, *The Manson Women and Me* has extraordinary interest for me. I know Nikki Meredith and what I enjoy most is her commitment to the understanding of human nature and our conversations centered on philosophies, politics, and prisons.

She’s an adviser for *San Quentin News*, and has been helping me with book reviews for about the last two years—although not this one.

Pendarvis Harshaw share tales of Oakland’s history

Pendarvis Harshaw recently spent some time inside San Quentin showing inmates creative ways to tell their personal histories. He used *OG Told Me*, his own memoir, as an example. It reads like a graphic novel. Its photo gallery of Original Gangsters (OGs) includes quotes of streetwise advice.

Harshaw’s “turf,” East Oakland, serves as the backdrop.

Your turf was where you grew up. Some of us had parents or grandparents who actually owned the land. For others, that land was nothing more than where your mother’s Section Eight voucher was accepted. If you stayed there long enough, put in a lil’ work, and knew some OGs around the way, you could call that your hood. Funny how we claimed a hood in which the majority of us had no ownership.

Harshaw reflected on a number of questionable decisions he made as a youngster. However, his honesty encouraged compassion.

The inmates enrolled in Zoe Mullery’s Creative Writing Workshop listened to Harshaw’s advice, inspiring their writing juices to flow.

First he asked the men to lay their palms flat on a blank sheet of paper and sketch a picture of their hands.

“You have 90 seconds to write everything you have on your hands,” Harshaw said after they completed the sketch.

Several men, inspired by their ring fingers, wrote about aspects of marriage on that part of the hand, while

others described family dynamics on their palms. One person wrote messages on his fingertips.

Next, Harshaw asked the men to write six-word stories:

Have no hero, make yourself one.

Doubt casts a shadow on dreams.

Kindness is a boomerang, fling it.

“I’ve done this exercise many times before, and I’ve never seen such artistic interpretations,” Harshaw said.

About five or six years ago, Harshaw visited San Quentin for the first time.

He remembered the Lower Yard jam-packed with men in blue walking around a dirt track, shirtless men on pull-up bars and a basketball game underway. Correctional officers posted at a guard shack kept a watchful eye on the placid scene — it wasn’t quite what Harshaw had expected.

“You would think the yard is a battlefield, but it’s not like ‘Oz,’” he said, referencing the famously violent prison TV show. “At San Quentin, you get to be human. You don’t have to conform to the rigidity of a maximum-security prison.”

The last chapter of *OG Told Me* brought out Harshaw’s thoughts about prison:

Prison only exists in



Photo courtesy of Pendarvis Harshaw

Pendarvis Harvey taking notes

the mind. No. Prison also exists in the heart. And the deepest darkest prison a man can be confined to is the regret of a love lost.

As he looked around the art studio where the creative writing class met, he commented, “If I didn’t know where I was, I would assume that I was in an art gallery in urban America. It looks like a loft in Brooklyn or New York. The portrait that jumps out is the one with the three-dimensional figure. There’s a lot going on in that painting — dark yet warm color,” he added, while reading, “Welcome to the Show,” a phrase that was painted onto the canvas. “There’s crazy detail. The heart’s bleeding on the outside.”

Harshaw currently teaches a creative writing class at the California Medical Facility, another prison in California.

To contact Harshaw: OG-ToldMe.com/Ogpenn@gmail.com

—Juan Haines



NEWS BRIEFS

1. Louisiana — Approximately 1,300 people in local jails have waited four years for their trials to begin and 70 people have waited for five years while their cases were pending, reports *The Times-Picayune*. The Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the accused the right to a speedy trial. State laws permit defendants to file a motion for a speedy trial, which would have to commence within 120 days for felony charges, or 30 days for misdemeanor, unless a judge determines a delay is justified.

2. Alabama — The Southern Center for Human Rights and the Alabama Appellate Center for Law and Justice filed a lawsuit against 49 Alabama sheriffs over how money is used for feeding inmates, reports WBRC Fox6 News. Etowah County Sheriff Todd Entekin defended using funds earmarked for food for inmates for personal use by saying, “The responsibility of feeding inmates and illegal immigrants that are in this facility is my responsibility. At times, my wife and I have had to take out loans for the cost of these meals.” The lawsuit claims the sher-

iffs are violating state public records laws by failing to disclose how they have personally profited by taking funds meant to feed those inmates.

3. Boston, Mass. — Governor Charlie Baker has signed a law that would overhaul the state’s criminal procedures, reports the *Boston Herald*. The new law makes a wide array of changes—from the state’s bail system to the use of solitary confinement in prison. Additional measures increase programs designed to limit the use of courts in youthful offender cases, those with mental health and substance abuse issues. The law expunges from a person’s record offenses that are no longer crimes, such as possession of small amounts of marijuana.

4. Louisiana — Legislation that would abolish the death penalty in Louisiana is moving forward in the state legislature, *The Advocate* reports. The move comes after the state’s highest court ruled Allen Robertson Jr. is not intellectually disabled and still eligible for the death penalty. Robertson was sentenced to capital punishment in 1995. Louisiana is one of 31 states in the U.S. to allow the death penalty.

5. Jackson, Mississippi — The state has “abandoned its responsibility to provide

basic needs” to inmates at a privately run prison that is excessively violent and fails to provide proper medical care, cites an attorney for the prisoners, according to *The Associated Press*. The American Civil Liberties Union and Southern Poverty Law Center brought a lawsuit against the state over conditions at East Mississippi Correctional Facility, which is home to 1,200 inmates, 80 percent of whom have been diagnosed with a mental health problem. Warden Frank Shaw testified during a five-week trial that the prison follows protocol and the facility is no worse than any other.

6. Santa Fe, NM — Attorneys for the last two death row inmates asked the state Supreme Court to consider similar murder cases with lighter sentences, *The Associated Press* reports. The high court is determining whether to move forward with the executions. New Mexico repealed capital punishment in 2009 without revoking death sentences against Robert Fry and Timothy Allen. Bill Richardson, governor at the time, signed the repeal without commuting their sentences.

7. Cheyenne, Wyoming — Eighty-eight state prisoners have been sent to a private Mississippi prison, *Wyoming News* reports. The transfer comes in response to ongoing staffing and space issues in the state’s prisons. The inmates are all high-level offenders; the majority serving life sentences. Lower-risk inmates are held in county jails across the state due to staffing shortages in the state prison system. The open beds created by moving inmates out of state will almost entirely be filled by inmates transferred from jails back to prison.

San Quentin baseball season opens as Elliot Smith retires

By Marcus Henderson
Journalism Guild Chairman

San Quentin opened its 2018 baseball season with both joy and sadness. San Quentin's A's defeated the visiting San Francisco Mission 11-8. But the retirement of long-time sponsor Elliot Smith was bittersweet for the free and incarcerated ball-players.

"Elliot carried this program for a long time," said A's sponsor, Steve Reichardt. "It's tough seeing him walking off this field for the last time."

Smith, 75, started volunteering in San Quentin in 1995 and all the memories of those past seasons rushed through his mind as he threw out the opening pitch.

"As I look back I have a lot of accomplishments," said Smith. "Many players have passed through here, and I hope I have brought them some light in their darkest place known as the cell blocks."

"I hope I have helped them learn how to deal with adversity," added Smith.

For 23 years, Smith was San Quentin's Baseball Program ambassador. He would prep numerous visiting teams on the prison rules, before walking them down the long winding road that leads to

the prison's Lower Yard and baseball field.

"I feel like I have influenced the outsiders who came in," said Smith. "By exposing them to the people inside and showing they are human beings. The visitors would go back out and share their experience with family and friends."

"I believe that helped people to be more tolerant and not treat people inside as animals in a zoo"

"I believe that helped people to be more tolerant and not treat people inside as animals in a zoo," continued Smith.

As Smith's chapter came to an end, the A's still had a game to play. A's veteran and utility player Anthony "T-Tone" Denard showcased skills of a MVP as he went 3-for-4 at bat with 2 RBIs (runs batted in). Denard even took the mound in a series to shut down the Mission who staged a rally in the eighth inning, when the team was down 9-5 to close the lead



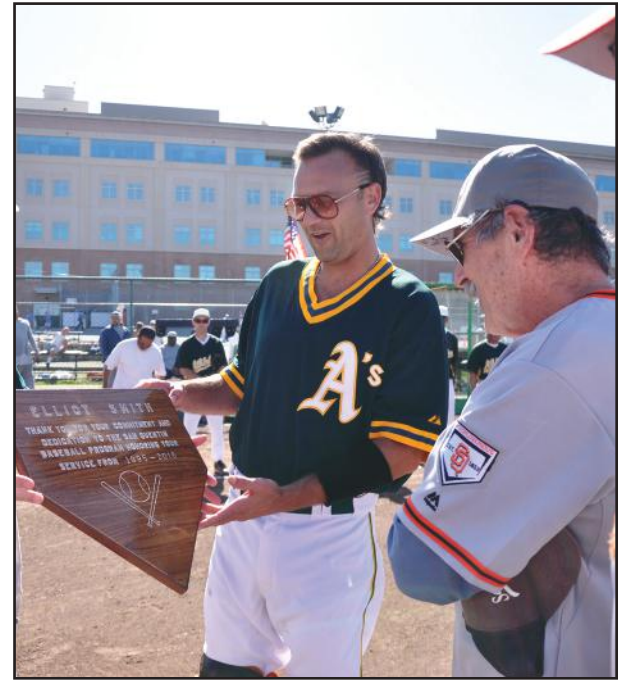
Elliot Smith coaching Christopher Smith on opening day

9-7 with the bases loaded. Denard walked in a run but fanned the next batter to save the lead 9-8.

"I want to thank Elliot for putting his blood, sweat and tears into this program," said Denard. "He gave me a chance to play a game I love. I was one who took the game from me on the streets. But through Elliot I relived my dream again."

Denard played in the minor leagues and had a chance to go to the majors, before being incarcerated.

"Coming here you have a sense of community," said Mission's Mike Nadolny. "I know it gives the guys a sense of normalcy. With baseball it teaches you how to work through your anxieties and helps you to dig deep into yourself and not to panic



Trevor Bird presents Smith with his plaque

when things are not going your way.

"I think this is what the guys can learn from this program," added Nadolny.

The Mission comeback ended in the bottom of the eighth. Mission's relief pitcher threw a wild pitch that shot past the catcher, allowing a run. A's Manuel Murillo smacked a line drive single past the second base gap to score another run for the 11-8 lead.

In the ninth, the Mission went down swinging. The A's tightened their defense, and with one final pop-fly to center field, they sealed the win.

"It all starts with teamwork," said Max Hickson, A's first-year player. "We have a good group of guys and that makes me want to play hard."

With the retirement of Smith the San Quentin's Giants' season is on hold, making the A's roster balloon to 20 players. The team's mixture of veterans and solid first-year players could prove to be a recipe for success.

As the game wrapped up, the A's teams formed a circle, placing their hands on top of each other and in unison yelled "Elliot" (Smith) on three. The 75-year-old will be remembered for always wearing the San Quentin's baseball jersey along with his beloved Chicago Cubs cap. The two teams were his two baseball passions.

"No matter how old you are, you still have life ahead of you, so do what you have to do to get out," said Smith, encouraging those in prison.

Father and his sons minister through football

To the Jackson family, it's about God, fatherhood and football. The three men will get in the mud – literally – to minister to San Quentin prisoners competing in flag football.

For the past eight years, Andre, Antoine and their father, Pastor Wayne Jackson, have volunteered to come to the prison as a team called the "Chosen" to take on San Quentin's flag football team, the All-Madden. The teams are evenly matched.

"...although they have made a mistake in life, it doesn't have to define their future"

"If you are a man that didn't have a father in your life to learn from, then open the Bible and see that God will show you how to love and correct any bad examples that may have come before," said Andre Jackson, his son.

"Even if you feel that you may have disappointed your child, it's never too late to make the attempt to fix it," added Andre, who has two children of his own.

Brother Antoine Jackson joined the fatherhood club last year after getting married. He receives a lot of wisdom from both his father and brother.

"I definitely wouldn't say that I know all that there is to know about parenting," said Andre. "But as a father, I just show my children the same love that my parents showed me. Love them and introduce them to God at a young age."

Andre was instrumental in bringing in the Chosen and sustaining San Quentin's football program.

"Our desire is to see them evolve as men and although they have made a mistake in life, it doesn't have to define their future," said Andre. "We get to hear about their families and they get to know about ours. We can discuss the struggles that life has thrown all of us."

"When it's all said and done, we want them to know



Antoine, Wayne and Andre Jackson

that there are a group of brothers that genuinely care and have love for them," continued Andre.

The Chosen and All-Madden rivalry is about brotherhood and fellowship, where those inside and visitors can witness the love of Christ, said Andre, where everyone both inside and free can gain from the sports program experience.

"Not every player that I bring in from the outside is saved," said Andre. "So my hope is that somehow, either through the way we play with good sportsmanship or by a testimony that is shared at halftime, someone who

hasn't given Christ a chance will have a desire to draw closer to Him and possibly give their life to Him."

The three Christian men and those who come in with them to form the team are fulfilling what they see as their commitment to the body of Christ. Andre picked the "Chosen" nickname out of the Bible. He discovered this passage from 1 Peter:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

—Marcus Henderson

Hermanos Unidos wins, 8-0, over SQ soccer team

By Eddie Herena
Staff Writer

San Quentin's B-Team opened its season with an 8-0 loss in a friendly match against U.C. Berkeley's Hermanos Unidos (United Brothers).

Both A and B teams — formally the OGs and Youngsters — have lost five consecutive matches dating back to last season.

The match drew an audience of prisoners like Percy Paul, a new arrival at the institution. "Just watching these guys got me real excited," said Paul. "I definitely want to get on the team," he added.

The new wave of prisoners may bring talent that San Quentin teams can use.

Although B-Team goalkeeper Jesús "Chuy" Perez had eight saves, the Hermanos averaged a goal about every 11 minutes against a defense that was non-existent.

"We needed more effort and structure," said B-Team goalkeeper Pérez. He added, "It's a great start and lets us know where we need our forces."

The April 22 match was an introduction for 19-year-old first-timer Freddy Cruz who said, "I didn't know what to expect, but you guys are cool."

Chris Gomez, also unfamiliar with incarcerated sports said, "The wall is up but that don't stop family."

The Hermanos were short-

handed so Juan Carlos Meza, Tare "Cancun" Beltranchuc, Alexi Ruiz, Miguel Gutiérrez, and Marco Villa (as goalie) helped fill the outside squad.

The first goal came in the fifth-minute from Hermanos' Manuel Esqueda. Meza, playing the middle scored in the 15th minute. Beltranchuc, playing as a forward, followed in the 39th minute.

The score was 3-0, Hermanos, at the half.

During the halftime both teams huddled mid-field, to exchange pleasantries and to give thanks for 40 brand-new black Nike cleats donated from anonymously.

"It's real exciting to see you guys with cleats," said Andrew Crawford, San Quentin's soccer program sponsor. He emphasized that the cleats were the beginning of the program's long awaited support.

The goals picked up in the second half off the feet of Gutiérrez who scored in minutes 50 and 60.

Christian Cervantes matched his teammate with goals scored in minutes 65 and 85. He joked after the match about being humbled for not completing his usual hat trick.

Ruiz, an incarcerated player, capped off the day for the Hermanos with his 89th-minute goal.

"It don't matter," said B-Team defender, Julio Martinez, referring to losing the match, "I had fun."

A look inside the bustling San Quentin prison library

By Forrest Lee Jones
Journalism Guild Writer

Every day, the San Quentin State prison library is bustling with activity. Inmates might be ordering books from the clerks at the counter. Other inmates might be sitting at tables, reading books and talking among themselves.

The windows in the librarians' offices provide a glimpse of San Francisco Bay as well as the mountains.

In the legal section, inmates pore over law books, which they can order from a slot through a window. They can also sit at a computer to research legal statutes or write briefs at one of the tables.

The library might look like many others outside of the walls, but it serves a particularly important function at San Quentin, where it is consid-

ered a space to help educate and rehabilitate prisoners.

The prison is well known for its programs such as Prison University Project (PUP) and Restorative Justice, but they are often full and have long waiting lists.

In such cases, the library allows the men to study independently. "The library begins where the classroom ends," said Senior Librarian Douglas Jeffrey, who is a member of the prison staff.

The idea of using the library as an educational and rehabilitative tool began nearly three decades ago with San Quentin librarian, Herman Spector, who used reading and writing to reform inmates through a program called "Bibliotherapy."

"Books for Spector were the deathless weapons of progress by which prisoners could



Senior librarian Douglas Jeffrey and Gabriel Loiederman

be paroled into the custody of their better selves," wrote Eric Cummings, author of *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement*.

One of the most popular sections has always been the

law library. Glen Mason, the lead law clerk, said patrons become so knowledgeable that some are able to get their cases overturned through their research findings.

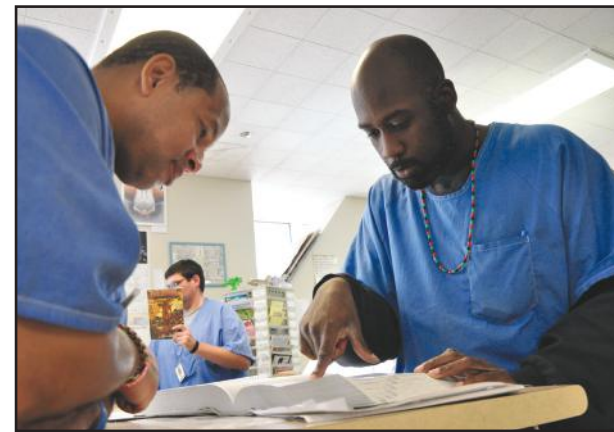
"There have been many inmates that have used the law library to research issues regarding their cases," said George "Mesro" Coles-El, a recreational clerk, who has worked at the library for five years.

One of those users is Ronald Chatters, who frequented the law library for two and a half years and is working on a brief to argue for a parole hearing under Proposition 57, which can give him an early parole consideration.

"The two years that I have been researching law has made me literate enough to help others with their cases," Chatters said.

Coles-El, who works as the lead circulation clerk, said even recreational books can be a valuable educational tool.

"Reading affects your



Worker Coles-El showing a patron info from a catalog

thinking," he said. "When you read, your thinking changes, which affects your behavior."

Coles-El himself has been changed by reading. "Before I spent time in the library, all I did was walk around and think negative thoughts, thinking about how I could get over on people," he said. "But then I read a book entitled *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie. Reading her book helped me to discover that most of the stress in our lives comes from being jealous of what others have.

"Her book influenced me to better thinking, which changed my behavior," Coles-El added.

Joseph Krauter, lead administrative library clerk, was also changed by a book. "Four years ago, I was an emotional wreck and going down in flames," he said, adding that he was on the verge of giving up on himself, his program and getting out of prison.

That's when his grandmother sent him a book called *Neuro-Tribe*, by Steve Silberman, about the history of

autism.

"The book showed me through pain and suffering that I can succeed and make something good of my life," Krauter said. "It helped me to focus and to immerse myself in programs that helped me better myself. Because of this book, I found hope."

Krauter described the library as a place where inmates can change their perspectives and thinking, and find books full of wisdom to help them do so.

Another librarian and prison staff, Gabriel Loiederman, said the library provides a space for forming positive relationships, which is an important component of rehabilitation.

"Whether it's two legal researchers discussing the merits of a case, or two students helping each other with algebra, the library is there to provide a free environment that can foster these kinds of constructive interactions that contribute to rehabilitation," he said.



Patrons working and looking up legal cases on the computer

Repairing a guitar leads to repairing chairs for the community

By Joe Garcia
Journalism Guild Writer

At the public library in Benicia, children and parents value the craftsmanship of San Quentin inmates. SQ's Furniture Shop recently volunteered its services for the restoration of more than 40 children's chairs badly in need of repair.

"The care and effort which was put into the chairs and the quality of the work was great," Helaine Bowles, Library Administrative Assistant, recently told the *Vallejo Times-Herald*.

Lacking funds to repair or replace the chairs, the Benicia Public Library heard about SQ's Wood and Upholstery Shops and contacted the California Prison Industry Authority for help.

"It's rewarding to do special projects, for the guys to showcase their skills to the general public," said Ron Glass, SQ Furniture Shop Supervisor. "It's something they can take pride in by giving something back."

"We have a good crew and 99 percent of our guys can get out and take those skills to work in any factory," Glass added.

The inmates who work on the projects have the ability to reshape more than just wood. Every now and then, they have the power to restore a man's sanity.

When a freak accident left a SQ Music Program guitar in pieces, Wade Morman, the inmate charged with its care, didn't know what to do. Playing that guitar had become his daily solace.

Morman's grief and distress did not go unnoticed, and the SQ community rallied around him.

"It's rewarding to do special projects, for the guys to showcase their skills to the general public"

"To see the hurt in that man's eyes, I knew we had to do whatever we could to help him," said Anthony Evans, an inmate known to everyone on the SQ yard as "Tone."

Evans, a skilled wood-

worker for the last seven years who'd helped restore the children's chairs, told Morman not to worry. With the help of Ronald Carter, another experienced woodshop worker, Tone resolved to fix the guitar on his own time.

Carter, known as "Sky-scraper" or "Sky" because of his height, made sure to get permission to search for a piece of scrap wood that could replace the guitar's body. Using a band saw, Sky traced the outline of a Stratocaster into the discarded red pine.

"It made me feel good to do it," Carter said. "I stay in the mix and always try to do better."

Evans spent hours of his spare time shaping the red pine by hand, turning junk

wood into art.

"I had no idea how we were going to rebuild that guitar at first," Evans said. "But when you do the right thing for the right reasons, God makes it all right."

Neither Evans nor Carter plays guitar or knows much about how the parts go together, so they turned to another co-worker, Shawn Reyes, to help with the fitting of components and assembly.

Reyes, a guitar man himself, knows Morman through the SQ Music Program.

"No matter when you'd go in West Block, Wade would be there on his tier strumming that guitar," Reyes recalls. "There was nothing we weren't going to do to make sure he was back where he belongs."

The three men told Mor-

man to meet them on the yard outside the PIA entrance to check their progress and help put the guitar back together. But that was all a ploy to surprise him with the finished instrument. Officers, free staff and inmates cheered side by side as Morman was handed the guitar.

"I had no idea that guys could care so much," Morman said. "There were some tears—I'm not ashamed of the wet eye moments."

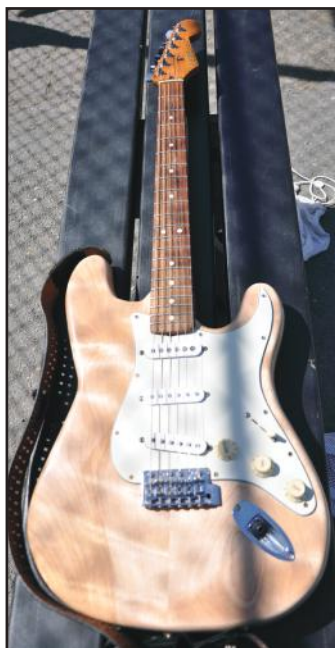
"I'm just happy to help him recover a piece of himself," Carter said.

"There were a lot of doubters," Reyes conceded. "It was great to see the look on their faces when we pulled it all off."

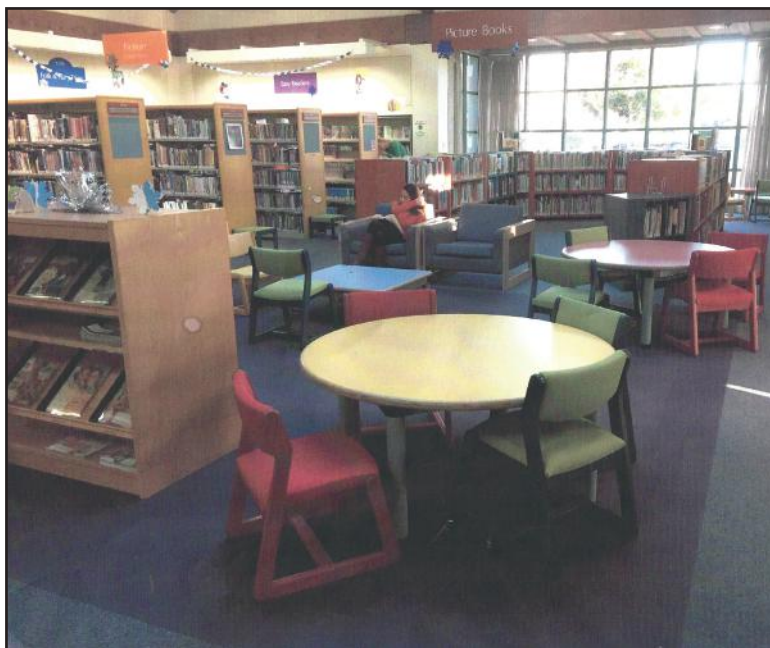
"The look of joy on Wade's face, that'll carry me for years," Evans declared.



Benicia Public Library reading area



Repaired guitar



Benicia Public Library's children's area

Photo Courtesy of SQ CALPIA

Photo by Eddie Herena, SQ/N

Photo Courtesy of SQ CALPIA