

Judges, lawyers get firsthand look at incarceration

By Timothy Hicks
Staff Writer

A large group of judges and lawyers visited San Quentin on Nov. 2 to gain understanding about a place where some of the people they sentence may end up residing.

The judges had been instructed by CDCR not to disclose their names to the SQ residents. But during their visit the group was impressed by the openness and candor of the incarcerated men who guided their tour.

After welcoming the group and providing a brief history of the prison's programs and general structure, SQ tour director Vincent Turner Jr. told the judges, "We are up here to not only be better public speakers, but mainly we are here to show you all what being fully accountable for our crimes looks like."

The guides introduced themselves in succession after the judges were seated on the Catholic Chapel's pews. San Quentin resident Ricardo Romero was working as a tour guide for the first time. He talked about having an opportunity to meet the judges and to demonstrate some accountability.

"I want them to know that change is good and possible," Romero said. "Accepting what I done and being accountable and being able to identify triggers and causative factors is always good to show them [judges]. It lets them see that we are more than just our crimes."

Turner then invited questions from the judges, whose field trip was mandatory. One remarked that it was good for them to get a look at conditions within the prison. Raw perspectives were provided by their experienced, incarcerated guides.

The judges began to ask a series of questions. "Is there a reason for stating the names of the victims of your crimes?" one judge asked after hearing the men relate details of their crimes.

Veteran tour guide Rafael Bankston responded, "We state their names to show more accountability of our crimes. Tour guide Tare Beltranchuc added, "We also do it to recognize their [victim's] humanity."

The tour was guided by Vincent Turner Jr., Tare Beltranchuc, Chase Benoit, Kevin Brinckman, Greg Eskridge, Gabriel Granado, Michael Pulido, Tommy Wickerd, Louis Sale, Rafael Bankston, Ricardo Romero, George Yacoub, Jamal Green, Oscar Acosta, Tim Hicks, Kenny Rogers and

See JUDGES on page 4



Lt. G. Berry / Public Information Officer

A DAY OF HEALING

San Quentin News hosts violence prevention symposium

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

San Quentin held its first violence prevention symposium, the Day of Healing, in the Garden Chapel on Nov. 4. An intimate offender/victim dialog ensued between currently and formerly incarcerated individuals and survivors of violent crimes. "Vj g'O gpf 'Eqmcdqtcvkg.'cp'qti cph c'vqp'tqqvgf 'lp'c'tguqtcvkg'lwu/ tice perspective, co-hosted the gathering. "Vj g'qdlgevg'y cu'vq'f'kuewui'xlevo 'lo r cev.'xlevo 'cy ctgpgui.'cpf'c long-term strategy to promoting public uclgv{0

Trino Jimenez, a crime survivor, stood in the middle of a healing circle and spoke passionately about his oldest brother, who was murdered by a Black man in 1986.

"I found myself wanting to hold an entire community responsible for the actions of one man," said Jimenez. "For me it was facing [the] reality that my brother was gone. It didn't break my heart, it shattered my life."

The entire room was silent as Jimenez described his brother Julio. The murder was so brutal that the funeral was closed-casket.

"So many lives were damaged from this action. How many birthdays and Christmases were missed?" Jimenez asked. He has vowed to channel his grief into making change in the lives of

people who commit crimes, and "do whatever is needed for the healing process."

Jimenez visits juvenile hall facilities to speak to youth who have committed murders, seeking to change the trajectory of their lives.

"I have received so much healing in this process of visiting this space and you guys," Jimenez said.

The Office of Restorative Justice Archdiocese, Young Women's Freedom Center, and CDCR's Office of Victim Services also attended the event. Miguel Quezada and Rebecca Weiker, co-founders of The Mend Collaborative, spoke about the impor-

See HEALING on page 4

END of an ERA

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

December 31 marked the last day of a year and the last day of an era. Captain Samuel Robinson walked out of San Quentin State Prison to end his 26-year career with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Robinson went from walking the tiers of Death Row to managing one of the most innovative programs that ever existed inside a prison. His well-deserved retirement sends him to family in Houston.

Gov. Gavin Newsom called Robinson a "problem solver" who "saw an opportunity and used it to help build out a full-fledged media center that promotes rehabilitation, reentry, accountability, and of course, positive human transformation."

See RETIREMENT on page 12-13

SQ Public Information Officer Sam Robinson retires



Vincent O'Bannon / SQNews

Captain Samuel Robinson stopped by the San Quentin Media Center in his fully pressed uniform and signature smile

California offender records to be sealed under new law

By Henry Ortiz
Reprinted by permission from
Marin Independent Journal

If the goal is to make California safer, the state took a major step in the right direction last month after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed groundbreaking legislation that gives people who have been arrested or convicted of a crime a genuine chance to turn their lives around.

Having spent 18 years living inside our state's prison facilities, I know from personal experience how much this will help.

Authored by Democratic state Sen. Maria Elena Durazo of Los Angeles, Senate Bill 731 allows almost all old convictions to be permanently sealed once a person has fully completed their sentence and gone four additional years with no further contact with the justice system.

The law creates the most comprehensive sealing system in the nation, and ensures an old conviction or arrest record does not permanently prevent someone from achieving their goal of a second chance. For the first time, Cal-

See SB 731 on page 4



◀ HISTORY:
CALIFORNIA
PRISONS AND THEIR
CONTRIBUTION TO
AVIATION HISTORY

—PAGE 17

LEGAL:
GOV. NEWSOM SIGNS NEW
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
BILLS INTO LAW, VETOES
THREE OTHERS

—PAGE 10

PROGRAMS: ▶
RJ DONOVAN
HONORS 41
NEW CALPIA
GRADUATES

—PAGE 3



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PROFILE



Photos by Tony Singh / SQNews

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Retiring education officer leaves legacy of compassion, professionalism

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

After more than 10 years, San Quentin’s education front desk is getting a change of personnel. Correctional Officer E. Sanford retired from his long-held post. Sanford worked within CDCR for more than 20 years, most of them at San Quentin, including on Death Row.

Sanford was always of service to both the incarcerated and his colleagues. His strong, humble, and professional spirit consistently shined through with every interaction. He was instrumental in helping prisoners navigate their educational and rehabilitative needs.

“My first day here at San Quentin, I met CO Sanford at the Education Annex sitting at the desk. I told him I was looking for a G.E.D program. I been out of school since 1978,” said San Quentin resident Rodney “Pitt” Baylis. “Sanford said, ‘OG, if a man your age is brave enough to say he needs help on my watch, these are the rules. If you keep the yard bullsh*t on the yard I will keep my home bullsh*t at home. I will make sure this will be a safe environment for you to get the education you deserve.’”

Baylis earned his G.E.D and has since graduated from Mt. Tam College.

Another Sanford rule was that everyone was going to receive respect in the education area, be they prisoners, teachers, volunteers, COs or other staff.

“We are all human beings no matter the situation,” said Sanford, explaining the basis for this rule.

In 2016, Sanford presented a guard’s perspective on rehabilitation as San Quentin held its first-ever TEDx event. The event displayed diverse viewpoints from the incarcerated and from staff.

“My life is on the line every time I come to work,” Sanford said at the event.

Those who pass through the education area will truly miss Sanford’s presence. He has helped many people dressed in prison blues grow into facilitators who help other prisoners. He met incarcerated people where they were, and mentored them to bring out their best.

“I don’t believe the day of his retirement has come to



Correctional Officer E. Sanford’s retirement is a bittersweet affair, with the 20-year CDCR veteran having made a huge impact on both the incarcerated and fellow officers alike from his post in the education department (top photo, and above) with colleague C.T. Smith.

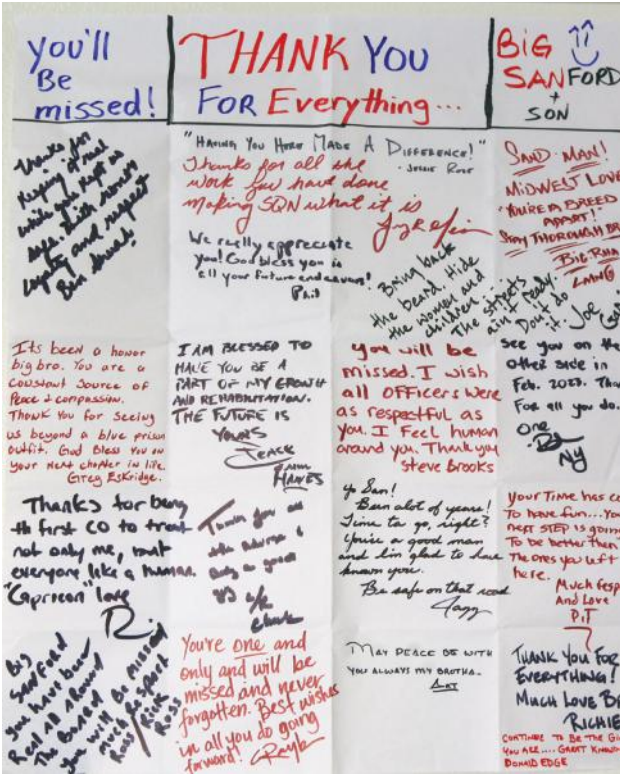
(right) Sendoff messages by incarcerated residents whose lives he has touched. On his way to the education gate with incarcerated resident Vince Turner (below), Sanford plans to explore the possibility of creating a transitional program for parolees.

pass,” said Baylis. “Sanford stayed the same man I met 10 years ago. He never pushed his authority. When he had something to say he would pull you to the side and have a polite conversation with you.

“He never pushed the ‘I’m the CO and you’re the inmate.’ [That] power dynamic never showed in him, not once. That wasn’t in his DNA,” Baylis added.

Knowing the daily struggles that prison life imposes on all parties, the incarcerated people who know Sanford thank him for treating us like people no matter our crimes. We remember your TEDx talk, where you left this compelling advice:

“Life has revealed to me that everyone has a chance. I ask that you extend your hand and show them the way to jobs and shelter,” said Sanford, about helping people reenter society. “When I retire, hopefully, I can set up a transition home for the incarcerated.”



San Quentin News

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Photo courtesy of CDCR

CALPIA General Manager Bill Davidson, CDCR Secretary Kathleen Allison, and Associate Warden Laurene Payne celebrated recent CALPIA graduates at RJ Donovan. Grads received nationally-recognized certifications and/or state certified apprenticeships upon program completion.

CALPIA GRADS HONORED AT RJ DONOVAN

By Michele Kane
CALPIA Assistant
General Manager,
External Affairs

Rain couldn't dampen the spirits at a graduation ceremony hosted by the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) at RJDonovan Correctional Facility (RJD) in early November. Forty-one graduates received their nationally recognized job certifications and/or state-certified apprenticeships. CDCR Secretary and Prison Industry Board Chair Kathleen Allison spoke at the graduation. "We believe in second chances, and this is your second chance," said Secretary Allison. "You are breaking that cycle of incarceration for generations to come. We applaud you for your accomplishments."

'Hard work, commitment
and dedication'
Family and staff cheered on

the graduates. CALPIA's General Manager Bill Davidson also shared words of encouragement. "Today is the culmination of a lot of hard work, commitment, and dedication on your part," said General Manager Davidson. "Thank you for taking the initiative and signing up for our programs and being that example of good when you return home." Associate Warden Laurene Payne also recognized the graduates for a job well-done. "We here at RJ Donovan are honored to see you graduate and wish you all the best," said Associate Warden Payne. "As I have heard before, today's incarcerated is tomorrow's neighbor and we believe in that." CALPIA programs reduce

"Thank you
for taking the
initiative... and
being that example of
good when you return
home."
—Bill Davidson
CALPIA
General Mgr.

recidivism and enhance prison and public safety by providing incarcerated individuals with job training opportunities for successful re-entry.

CALPIA success stories
Kenyatta Kalisana returned to his community in 2008, becoming a successful commercial diver thanks to CALPIA at California Institution for Men. He started working as a certified welder and commercial diver in California and then the Gulf of Mexico. Kalisana is now back in prison as the lead commercial dive instructor for CALPIA. "Add more tools to your toolbox and continue to better yourselves and your employability," said Kalisana. "Not only did

CALPIA teach me a profession, they also showed me a forgiving nature and trust in the programs they stand behind."

Participants graduated from various job training programs, including CALPIA's Healthcare Facilities Maintenance (HFM) program. The program teaches participants how to clean at a hospital-level. Graduates work in hospitals, dental offices, and own their own cleaning businesses. A former graduate who was incarcerated spoke about his success from the HFM program. Timothy Jackson is the CEO of Quality Touch Cleaning Systems in the San Diego area. He and his staff clean bio-tech companies, legal firms, and other businesses. "The HFM program and CALPIA helped me to get where I am today. My hope is to empower your perspective for your future," said Jackson. "Embrace post incarceration and be the best you as you move forward in life."

DREAMING BIG

Bob Goff's Love Does program
awards scholarships to four
San Quentin residents

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

Four San Quentin residents received college scholarships from the Love Does Prison Education Scholarship Program, ranging from \$8,000 to \$12,000, after attending the Dream Big workshop. The mission of Love Does is to remove the financial burden that hinders incarcerated people from pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree. Love Does "provides scholarships to deserving inmates seeking to pursue an undergraduate or postgraduate degree," according to the Dream Big workshop application. "The financial burden has been killing my family. The scholarship has taken a load off my family, which is liberating," said Raul Higgins. The challenge of adding something like college into your daily routine can be difficult. "Now it is all about managing my time and it's daunting and scary, but for so long we go through our day doing the same thing," said Ryan Pagan. He described how he deals with adding college to a routine that is similar to the movie *Groundhog Day*. "Messing up doesn't mean you are a mess up. It means you're a dreamer who's willing to take some risks, get a few scrapes, clear away ashes, and build some new foundation,"

said Bob Goff, who is a New York Times best-selling author, a motivational speaker and the founder of Love Does. This was the organization's first year granting scholarships to the incarcerated population, noted on the website. The scholarships pay for the tuition and books for one year of schooling with Adam State University and Ohio State University. Reginald Thorpe, a scholarship recipient, said that during the pandemic, he "wanted something to do. In order to keep busy, I relied on education and programs. I believe it's the best way to prevent violence anywhere." Love Does encourages incarcerated people at San Quentin and represents a resource for successful integration back into the community. Earning a high school diploma or a GED is an achievement that Brian Asey described as the "greatest feeling when I graduated," which he did during the height of the pandemic through correspondence. "I cried because it was unexpected. I wanted to finish school because I learned that college was not hard," said Asey, who has taken a liking to Adam State University and has registered to attend in the near future. Having the opportunity to finish college is a big goal that the men spoke about. "I will take full



Tony Singh / SQNews

Bob Goff's team with scholarship recipients

advantage of this opportunity," said Asey. The Dream Big workshop experience, which included 35 residents, "was inspirational... You got to meet successful people and hear them share their stories and have them listen to ours," said Pagan. When there are modified programs or quarantines in the housing units, it is "easier to focus," said Pagan, who thought it was going to be a lot harder than it actually was to complete school assignments. Pagan earned his associate's degree when he was at High Desert State Prison in 2020. He said he "never knew I was going to have the money to attend higher education." "I utilized my past experiences while coming up with career ideas to better serve the community inside and outside of the walls," said Higgins. Thorpe talked about his experience of applying to Ohio University prior to the Dream Big workshop. When he received the registration package and saw the cost, he became discouraged. Thanks to Dream Big, he will attend Adam State without that burden. "They came at the right time. My family is happy and wants to see what I am going to do next". Higgins received his associate degree in 2010 through correspondence with Coastline College while he was incarcerated in Solano. "I'm so excited that I've done all the self-reflection on myself and realized how valuable I am to others who I'm serving, because I'm at my best when I'm serving," said Higgins. "I want to thank Love Does and the organization overall for allowing me to be the best version of myself," said Thorpe. "I want to thank Warden Broomfield and the SQ community for creating the environment for me to thrive, excel and allowing me to adopt the programming culture."

JUDGES

Continued from page 1

Kevin Sample. All responded to the judges' questions.

As the willingness of the incarcerated men to be candid became clear, the questions continued to flow. "How do you feel about the judge who sentenced you?" asked an inquisitive judge.

Responses from the incarcerated men took a variety of forms: One talked about never making a connection with the judge presiding over his case; one mentioned a judge who seemed not to care; another expressed not being able to understand what was happening in his trial.

Jamal Green said that he felt like the judge who presided over his case actually was on his side and was fair.

Romero said he missed the opportunity to be more mentally present in the courtroom at the time of his trial.

"I didn't trust him [the pre-

Judges, lawyers get new perspective on prisons during San Quentin visit

siding judge] at the time but, I wish I could have opened up a lot more at that time," said Romero. He has been incarcerated for 21 years.

Among the incarcerated men guiding the tour the collective amount of time amounted to more than 500 years, including multiple life sentences.

Some of the judges appeared surprised by the sum of the sentences among their guides. Some shook their heads in disbelief and a flurry of hands were raised with more eager questions.

"What can we do to redirect people from prison who come before us?" asked a judge. "What programs help the most for you guys?" asked another. "Has anyone had contact with their victim's family?" The questions kept coming and the incarcerated men continued to answer

them.

Then a judge asked a question at the root of the cycle of crime; "What can we do for youth that are going through the system?"

"Try to understand that when you deal with juveniles, you have to consider their causative factors and get some insight to their choices," responded tour member Mike Pulito.

Other topics discussed included the following: What role did substance abuse play in your crimes? Were your parents an issue? What about child welfare and foster care? What were your experiences in court? What is life like on level-four yards and what's the difference between that and level-two yards? How do you stay away from negativity while in prison? What could we do to stop crimes from happening?

One judge asked a question that caught some of the men off guard, "What would you tell your younger self?" "I would tell myself to have hope," said Bankston.

The team of incarcerated guides received a standing ovation upon conclusion of the question/answer session.

The judges toured the prison's historical sites, such as the dungeon, the prison hospital and Death Row. Some of their perspectives may have been changed.

One judge said that she did not want to come at first because she did not want to see people of African American descent gawked at like caged animals on display or some laboratory experiment. But she was glad that she came.

Upon leaving, some of the judges expressed empathy and compassion for the incarcerated.

SB 731

Continued from page 1

Governor signs bill to allow permanent sealing of old convictions

ifornians with a record will no longer be restricted from getting good-paying jobs, living in stable housing, or contributing the full measure of our talents to supporting our families and communities—instead of being steered back into the streets.

Nearly 8 million people in California — 1 in 5 residents — have a criminal record. That's 8 million Californians that many employers would not hire once they perform a background check. That's 8 million human beings who struggle to secure housing because landlords will not rent to them. That's 8 million people who could be denied normal parental opportunities, such as a chance to volunteer at their children's school or coach their child's little league team — because of an old conviction.

And because so many people living with records have families, their partners and children — through no fault of their own — are also denied access to these basic necessities.

As a troubled teenager who grew up in Stockton and Los Angeles, I made some bad choices. Looking back, a lot of those choices stemmed from a fundamental desire to survive in a brutal environment, where I was pinned between poverty and neglect on one side and the so-called war on drugs on the other.

But now, decades later, experience and wisdom have changed me. I am not the same man. In prison, I created a nonprofit organization that worked to address the trauma afflicting so many who come into — and out of — our state's justice system. Since my release, I have dedicated my life to addressing community trauma in my adopted hometown of Sacramento.

Nevertheless, I am still not free. When I applied for jobs for which I was clearly qualified, I was rejected because of my record. When I've tried to find housing, I have been denied because of my record. Even though I completed my sentence, was released from parole, and had no contact with the system, my record still haunts me.

Yes, there are horrible crimes that require accountability. But most of the people I met in prison were driven there by a will to survive in a hostile world. Sadly, the brutal, dehumanizing experience of incarceration does little to improve things — and sometimes makes them worse. Exiting the system with a record leads to the kind of desperation that pushes too many people to repeat the choices that got them imprisoned in the first place.

If we are serious about protecting the safety of people in California, we must continue to focus more of our energy and resources on prevention and healing, rather than incarceration. Increased access to public health supports, such as mental health services and substance use treatment — along with safe and stable housing and opportunities for employment and education — will generate far better results.

Until then, California can be proud about once again leading the nation by extending opportunities to the millions of people who have already paid their debt to society and want nothing more than the chance to help establish safety and well-being in our communities.

Henry Ortiz is a senior staff community organizer for Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and the Northern California chapter coordinator for TimeDone, a national network of more than 80,000 people with old records. Distributed by CalMatters.org.

AROUND THE WORLD

Adviser Jan Perry
Baja California



HEALING

Continued from page 1



Above: Laverne Taylor is a crime survivor and former LWOP lifer who shared her journey of victimization and incarceration.

Right: Incarcerated participants and volunteers created notes and images of what needs to be healed in their hearts.



Photos by Lt. G. Berry / Public Information Officer

tance of the Day of Healing.

"Those who have done harm have the skillset to serve survivors in the healing process," said Quezada, who is formerly incarcerated. "We support people where they are at."

Quezada served 25 years on a 40-year-to-life sentence, the last five at San Quentin. His sentence was commuted by former Gov. Jerry Brown.

Quezada facilitates meetings between incarcerated individuals and survivors of crime and their families. His focus is on creating a restorative healing process.

Laverne Taylor is both a survivor of crime and a formerly incarcerated woman who at one time was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. She shared her journey of victimization and incarceration.

"Everything affected my soul walking in here," said Taylor as she scanned the circle of prisoners and guests. "The jackets you wear, I printed CDCR on them."

Taylor is a victim of abuse, and said that those experiences made her "want to go harder, not to be a victim," as a woman in gang life.

"Being a victim never goes away ... it's easy to do what we know," Taylor said. "My healing journey started right here ... in these circles. Once we get to know ourselves in the healing process, it does not matter where we are. It's difficult but we do it every day."

Trino Jimenez spoke to the incarcerated population about what he wants to see from those who are working toward being released from prison.

"[I want to] receive a vow

from you; that you will never enter into that space [and] to never harm anyone else..." Jimenez said. "You have to own, be transparent, acknowledge and take responsibility for the things that you have done."

Taylor added, "Hurt people hurt people, and healed people heal people. Prepare yourself for the apology that you may not ever get. When I got through the shame and fear of what I did, I was able to heal."

After a short break, everyone gathered in smaller groups to discuss past hurts and traumas while also receiving support. Following the discussion, everyone was instructed to draw or write on the following prompt: "What in your heart needs to be healed?"

"Be gentle and careful

with yourself," said Rebecca. "Today might be a day where you are the positive ripple to another person. It's about responding to all the needs of the people."

Later the groups reconvened in the large circle, and Taylor asked everyone to "stomp your feet, clap your hands and snap your fingers." She passed in front of each person, signaling when to switch to the next act. When the activity stopped, the room was silent. Taylor said the activity demonstrated that after the storm comes the calm.

"Hope is in us. But it's not the hope for freedom, [it's] the hope to heal and help others," said Taylor.

—Marcus Henderson, Juan Haines, Anthony Carvalho and Richard Fernandez contributed to this story.

PROFILE

Q&A with financial literacy adviser Joaquin Wallace

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

Financial literacy is vital to the success of incarcerated people returning to society. Dr. Joaquin Wallace, a licensed financial advisor, has provided assistance via in-depth workshops for San Quentin’s Project LA/The Bay T.R.U.S.T reentry program. Dr. Wallace sits downs with SQNews:

SQN: Please tell us a little bit about your background as a Financial Advisor.

JW: I have been a licensed Financial Advisor for Prudential since 2017, and I have been in the financial planning and advising space since 2014, starting with Penn Mutual as a licensed insurance agent.

SQN: Why is financial literacy necessary for incarcerated people reentering society?

JW: First and foremost, it’s essential that financial literacy is identified as a required knowledge base, that everyone must have a fundamental understanding of the compulsory components, i.e., increasing credit scores, reducing debt, increasing savings. Yet, there are many other components of financial literacy, including but not limited to budgeting and understanding the role of financial institutions prompting one to become banked versus unbanked.

SQN: What were some of the topics you touched on in

the workshops?

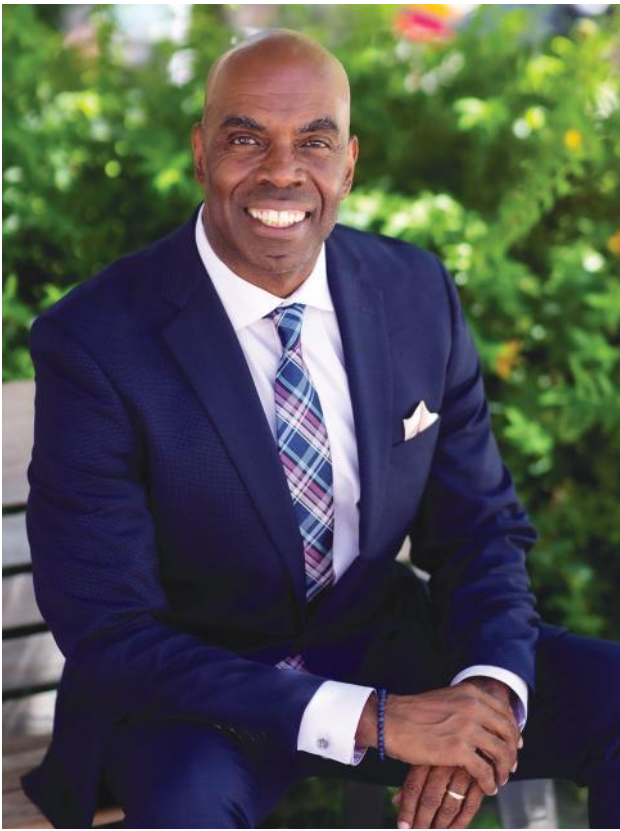
JW: We discussed during our workshops — for the most part, for those who find themselves incarcerated, I would suspect that many of their decisions had a direct correlation to the inability to meet their innate needs, such as food, water, shelter and safety, e.g., Maslow’s Five Hierarchies, which was introduced and discussed during the workshops. With that said, when the opportunity to re-enter becomes available, financial literacy coupled with navigating through Maslow’s Five Hierarchies of needs can profoundly affect their ability to negotiate the many challenges connected with re-entering into society.

SQN: How do you see financial literacy in the scheme of criminal justice reform?

JW: Financial literacy should be a curriculum facilitated and taught within correctional facilities. Without the proper knowledge, you are creating a perpetual cycle that continues to permeate inside the low- to moderate-income communities, which are statistically dominated by members of the Black and Brown communities. Therefore, the inability to understand the fundamental components of financial literacy continues to be a focal point for those identified above.

SQN: What do you mean by that?

JW: Consider that our first introduction to financial lit-



Courtesy of Dr. Joaquin Wallace

Dr. Joaquin Wallace promotes financial literacy among incarcerated to help battle poverty, economic exclusion and recidivism.

eracy can be branded as your intrinsic environment, which ultimately shaped you and your beliefs; consider this your money script and ideas, which are unconscious attitudes regarding money, often a result of the emotional attachments you have experi-

enced during your childhood. For that reason, your money script and ideas have impacted your decision-making and education in financial literacy.

SQN: From where do most people learn their financial management?

JW: In this case, your par-

ents, siblings, grandparents or self-proclaimed community financial aficionados and your guardians responsible for your welfare took on the obligation as your personalized money manager. Therefore, your financial education has been generational-willed and passed to you unbeknownst, creating a perpetual cycle. For that reason, formal training while instructing from a Servant Leadership perspective can be beneficial, sustainable and long-lasting.

SQN: What do you say to people who don’t think incarcerated people should have your program?

JW: Those who consider that educating and providing financial literacy is not an essential antidote to eliminating poverty and economic exclusion are a part of the ongoing issues that continue to permeate, which linger and exacerbate, thereby increasing crime and entry into correctional institutions.

Eliminating financial literacy is a fragment of a more significant societal problem that targets the Black and Brown communities to work towards eradicating poverty and creating financial inclusion.

SQN: What did you take away from your workshops working with Project LA/The Bay?

JW: Before participating in the workshops, I didn’t know what to expect. I have never been incarcerated and never

had any inclination to go to San Quentin. However, I was encouraged by the level of engagement from those who attended, as their excitement suggested that the message delivered was well received. I felt that if I could impact one person, I would be successful in meeting each where they are currently with the hopes that they can retrieve the messages discussed when they re-enter society.

SQN: What message do you want the incarcerated to take from understanding the power of financial literacy?

JW: Continue to learn and educate, and each one teaches one. Deliver the message and look to stay on track to reach financial well-being.

SQN: Any future goals you are working on?

JW: Currently, I am working on a book, podcast and several other projects promoting my financial model that will allow individuals to successfully identify, educate and develop tangible and realistic expectations and solutions to meet individuals’ financial well-being.

SQN: Do you have any added words of inspiration you want the readers to know or remember?

JW: The more you know, the better positioned you will be. Continue to read and educate yourself and remember your C-D-C when you re-enter. You have a Choice, and your Decision has a Consequence.

EVENT

BOOK GIVEAWAY HELD BY FRIENDS OF SQ LIBRARY

Local nonprofit sends books to prisoners’ kids for Christmas

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Staff Writer

San Quentin’s library held a holiday book fair event Dec. 2, where incarcerated men were given a chance to mail books to their families free of charge.

Friends of The San Quentin Library, a non-profit organization that supports the prison’s library, sponsored the event.

The group also supports a wish list, taking specific requests from residents and finding books that are not available in the library. In addition the Friends help bring library technology into the 21st century by making laptops and printers available to the incarcerated.

A San Quentin resident had a vision to help incarcerated men be a part of their children’s lives by sending books to them.

“We should look out for the parents of incarcerated children by getting books to their household. And at the same time, we can learn from this event so we can make it better next time,” said Kai Bannon, an incarcerated library worker whose idea became reality.

At 10 a.m., 18-20 men entered the library and began circling the tables in search of books to send to their children, grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Due to the limited number of available books, each resident was allowed to send out three books.

“The fact that the books and postage was free to us, when we did not have money to send them to our families—I will remember this,” said San

Quentin resident Ralph Flynn.

The titles of the books for adolescents and pre-teens ranged from *Dr. Seuss*, *Tales of a Tadpole*, to *African Icons*, and *Science*. There was also a selection of books for toddlers, as well as young Spanish-language readers.

Smiles and joy could be seen on the faces of the men attending the event, especially recent arrivals to the prison who have not had the experience of San Quentin events.

“Honestly it is very uplifting. I did not think I would see this type of turn out,” said resident Chad Miller.

The incarcerated were enthused about the opportunity to have an impact on their loved one’s lives.

“I want to send some books to my nephew; he lost his father and has been acting out, so I want to instill some positive encouragement,” said Darin Williams, an incarcerated library worker. “Books can be a getaway to find solutions,” he added.

“When I was at Pelican Bay prison, I encountered two gentlemen that could not read. I spent one hour a day with each of them, just like I taught my children to read,” said Palmer, a resident library worker.

Looking at the big picture, the prison’s librarians showed support for the event, which attracted more people into the library.

“I see the value of this event if parents are not able to be there with their children,” said Gabriel Loiederman, senior librarian.

The event lasted for two hours and the majority of the



Photos by Vincent O'Bannon / SQNews

Above: Books donated from Amazon and Copperfield Books were available in a variety of topics and age groups. **Right:** SQ residents select books to send to the children in their lives.

books were chosen. The library patrons also sent messages of encouragement on greeting cards provided by the sponsors.

“Amazon and Copperfield Books donated the books that were made available to the incarcerated. More books in Spanish will be made available next year,” said Kristi Kenny, a supporter of the event and former bookstore manager.



CGA: San Quentin chapter returns after long pause

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

After a long absence due to COVID-19, San Quentin's Criminal Gangs Anonymous (CGA) rehabilitative group is back in action.

San Quentin's CGA began meeting in 2011. Its purpose is to help incarcerated people who are recovering from a gang or criminal lifestyle. They come together to address their lifestyle addictions and to pursue meaningful change.

Participants work through a 12-step program in open forums. Step three reads, "We made a decision to let go of destructive self-will in exchange for spiritual principles, becoming willing to seek God's care and protection, as we understood God."

The program promotes accountability for the actions of its participants, and an understanding of destructive behaviors and belief systems that led to a life of crime. Participants focus on the impact of crime on victims, on victims' families and the ripple effect on the wider community.

Corey Willis, chair of the program, once paroled from a life sentence and subsequently returned to prison on a parole violation, along with additional charges. He stresses how important it is to surrender all of one's criminal belief systems. "Holding onto distorted beliefs, old identities and sometimes old associates, can trigger old behaviors that will put you back into the cycle of addiction."

Willis particularly appreciates step 10 of the program, which encourages a daily reflection and a review of the

earlier steps to ensure continued progress. It emphasizes having the courage to pursue real change, and effectively express one's emotions.

"Being honest with myself, [being] open-minded and willing to expose all my character defects, [is] a must for my authentic self to flourish," said Willis.

Michael Sperling, another CGA participant, says he has benefited from step seven, which encourages participants to process negative thoughts when they arrive by replacing them with positive thoughts, so that positive behaviors can follow.

"CGA means to me ending that criminal gang thinking and lifestyle," said participant Sperling. "I am learning the 12 steps and I am applying them into my life."

The program gives the participants an opportunity to examine the addictive behaviors that led to illegal activities, regardless of social backgrounds. It identifies three phases in the cycle of addiction.

- **The Obsession:** The irresistible and persistent idea, desire, or emotion to do something until, we convince ourselves to act.
- **Compulsion:** To act on the persistent idea, desire or emotion, repeating the act over and over again, and justifying the action with the continuing force of ongoing obsession.
- **Progression:** The longer we repeat the act the more the cycle spins out of control and gets worse.

One facilitator reflected on his own cycle of addictive behaviors. He shared his memories of finding the acceptance of his peers in his early teen



Photo by Vincent O'Bannon / SQNews

San Quentin CGA participants engaged in broad discussions about their recovery from gang and criminal lifestyles.



years while trying to find himself. From an early age, he felt that he did not belong at home. With his peers, he found acceptance but not comfort. He reflected on how this lifestyle led to taking another person's life and wasting his own behind bars.

San Quentin offers the assistance of a sign language in-

terpreter to CGA participants who cannot hear or speak, so that everyone has the opportunity to explore their criminal thinking. "I feel blessed to have the ability to be in the program through the assistance of an interpreter. We understand more about our choices or decisions," said deaf SQ resident Erain Valarta.

SQNews interviewed hearing-impaired SQ resident Matthew Hamm with the assistance of a sign language interpreter. When asked what he would tell another member of the hearing-impaired community about his experience in the program, Hamm said, "CGA helps with criminal thinking and how to rehabil-

itate; it also helps us ... improve ourselves upon release."

The San Quentin group works closely with other chapters of CGA throughout the state, as well as other behavioral modification groups that focus on gang awareness, disassociation, and prevention; using the 12-step process in an open forum setting to achieve recovery; helping those with lifestyle addictions to criminality desist from crime; and other recovery paradigms.

CGA empowers each participant to make a conscious choice to change their attitude and transform their thinking so that they can smoothly transition back into society. Participants make themselves

vulnerable while sharing their stories. They work through their traumas and examine distorted beliefs systems. By denouncing their past criminal belief systems, they vow never to hurt another human being.

"I come to SQ to work with CGA because I see change and men can change their criminal thinking when given the right tools," said Marcy Ginsburg, who has volunteered with CGA for the past six years. "It gives me an immense amount of pride that I can play even a small role in someone changing for the better or learning something about themselves. I am honored to be a part of something that helps so many."

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

The lobby of San Quentin's Garden Chapel was filled with Shakespearean costumes. The actors were from San Quentin's Shakespeare program and the Marin Shakespeare Company.

"This is therapy, this is humanity — in prison, people, we wear masks. In this program, I take it off and exercise hidden talents I didn't know I have," said incarcerated actor Derry Brown.

On October 21, 2022, the actors performed an adaptation of Shakespeare's "Richard III," a famous play about the King of England who struggled and fought to keep his crown away from his adversaries.

San Quentin resident Steve Drowns played Richard III — a towering role that has the third-most lines of any of Shakespeare's many characters.

"King Richard was Steve Drowns and Steve Drowns was King Richard. I had to review my old criminal self and in doing so, I saw how much I have changed," he said.

Marin Shakespeare's Company Executive Director Suraya Keating said the "performance is reason to celebrate the spirit of resiliency because the human journey is not easy. But you have grown stronger."

Keating returned to San Quentin with Bob and Lesley Currier, who are the outside originators of San Quentin Shakespeare, along with 32 volunteers and outside guests who attended.

Bob Currier said, "It's incredible to be in a show with the men-in-blue."

Marin Shakespeare pays tribute to 'the Bard' with production of *Richard III*

San Quentin actor Kunta Rigmaden, who played King Richard's ally Hastings, said, "I learned my lines on Thursday for the first time. I procrastinated, but I won't let anybody down. This is a family."

Attendees watching a San Quentin Shakespeare program quickly saw the rehabilitative benefits of the program. A local high school teacher who came in for the first time said, "Meeting the men gives me sadness, when I see how long they have been here and how much time they have to do, because they have so much to offer humanity."

"Richard III" tells the story of a leader struggling with his humanity and character flaws that control his state of mind and actions. Drowns said he could relate to King Richard's fragilities.

"The program allowed me to take off my mask to find the true Steve," said Drown.

The incarcerated actors gained insight and developed camaraderie. They shared their experiences with the audience after the play.

"As a LGBTQ person in prison, I was never accepted, not even by my family," said a tearful Adriel Ramirez who played King Richard's wife, Lady Anne. She said that through personal development, she can now feel confident while interacting with others.

"These incarcerated actors should be out helping the next



Photo by Vincent O'Bannon / SQNews

San Quentin residents Steve Drowns as King Richard III and Adriel Ramirez as King Richard's wife, Lady Anne, during their Shakespearean performance.

generation to stop intergenerational violence; they have weathered through so many obstacles," said Alejandra Wahl, assistant director to Keating.

"I've been locked up since I was 16. I turned 28 this year. My character, Lord Hastings, had full integrity, which teaches me what I try to carry every day," said Kunta Rigmaden.

Ryan Manetta talked about how substance abuse led him

to prison. "This program allowed me to come out of my shell without abusing any substances," he said.

Other incarcerated actors said acting in a Shakespeare production inspired them and transformed them.

"I thought I was supposed to watch; now I'm performing," said Darwin "Talls" Billingsley, now a veteran actor. "I'm shy; I was frightened to be on stage as a participant. Now it's like part of

an addiction. People laughed at me when I started readings, but Janice and Kate taught me memorization, etc. and the veteran [actors] embraced me too. Being a part of something for real makes me feel free!"

Despite the program's success, San Quentin is at risk of losing its long-running Shakespeare program due to lack of funds. Lesley Currier addressed this issue after the production of "Richard III," telling attendees that the Cali-

fornia Arts Program is terminating funding for San Quentin Shakespeare. She noted that the program started at San Quentin in 2003 and has since grown to offer theater at 14 prisons.

"Do not worry, this program will not end," said assistant director Alejandra Wahl. "It will get funded."

Wahl said that the outside guests in attendance and the vibrant community committed to rehabilitation in Marin County would help raise the money needed.

Currier estimated the San Quentin Shakespeare program costs somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year to cover all expenses. According to the Curriers, during an uninterrupted, quarantine-free year, San Quentin Shakespeare and the Marin Shakespearean group collaborate on five plays.

"It's a sanctuary to be with people who promote positivity in a negative environment," said Braydon "Ten" Tennison, who played young Prince Richmond.

Since 2003, the Marin Shakespeare Company has worked at 14 California prisons and with system-impacted youth. They also sponsor the Returned Citizens Theatre Troupe, a group of actors who have survived incarceration to tell stories of importance through theater. You can see videos of past Shakespeare for Social Justice performances on the Marin Shakespeare Company YouTube page. They welcome donations in support of their work in social rehabilitation. Please contact Lesley Currier at 415-499-4485 or Lesley@marinshakespeare.org to lend your support.

REENTRY

LOCKSTEP VENTURES

Change needed in venture capital hiring practices

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

Companies need to do a better job of offering jobs to about 650,000 people freed from America’s jails and prisons each year, *Blavity News* says.

Twenty-seven percent of those released are left to survive without employment. This lack of jobs creates voids in housing, healthcare and eliminates the possibility of obtaining custody of their children, authors Marcus Glover and Michael Franti report.

“And without these things, staying out of prison is a battle many will lose,” the June 3 article said.

Glover and Franti are leaders of the national venture capital firm known as Lockstep.

The firm insists the incarcerated work pool must become recognized and more visible and viable in America.

The op-ed defined “post-conviction poverty,” as the “socio-economic fallout of exclusionary hiring practices.”

Lockstep and its leaders call the hiring practices, “real and damaging.”

Glover and Franti cited communities like the Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, which they say have become impoverished due to the war on drugs and mass incarceration. The partners argue that these are failed policies that have stripped communities of color from gaining meaningful employment.

Glover and Franti point to Terrance Stewart’s take on why finding employment for formerly incarcerated populations is difficult.

Stewart, previously incarcerated, works for an employment advocacy agency called Time Done. He believes that identifying a job applicant’s conviction automatically denies candidates any chance of being hired in today’s world.

Time Done explores employment hurdles faced by the previously convicted. The employment advocacy group estimates that nearly 70 million Americans have a criminal



Left: **Marcus Glover**, Co-founder and managing director of Lockstep Ventures.
Right: **Michael Franti**, activist, musician, humanitarian, and award-winning filmmaker who also serves as advisor for Lockstep Ventures.



record, with 8 million in California alone.

Assuming that discriminatory hiring bans remain in place for the remaining life of returning citizens, Time Done estimates that people not hired due to criminal records cost the state of California over \$20 billion in lost Gross Domestic Product.

Glover and Franti believe the national economy can no longer overlook any qualified candidate, even the predominantly Black and Brown for-

merly incarcerated, for any reason. “We stand at a moment of unprecedented labor shortages, and the private sector no longer has the luxury of blindly discarding qualified candidates,” they wrote.

To change discriminatory hiring practices, Lockstep calls on all venture capital companies to mandate a fair-chance view of hiring. Glover and Franti’s company is now referring to the hiring of formerly incarcerated people as a moral and corporate responsibility.

Discrimination persists despite ‘Ban the Box’ laws

By Daniel Chairez
Journalism Guild Writer

Formerly incarcerated people are still facing many obstacles finding employment despite “Ban the Box” laws.

After serving almost 20-years of a life sentence, Oakland native Adam Garcia went home in November 2019 to an unfamiliar world of technology.

Garcia spoke of the challenges he faced when applying for jobs; he entered a world of LinkedIn and Indeed. Garcia also found a pattern when applying to jobs: “I went through so many different final interviews and I noticed that on face level, everything was going good,” Garcia told *The OaklandSide*. “And then I noticed when it came time for a background check, tones started to change.”

Garcia said that potential employers’ attitudes shifted when discussing the background check; their body language became different. Garcia found that on many occasions hiring managers would say that they were denying him the job due to lack of professional experience.

But in reference to his criminal record, Garcia said, “It’s one of those things where it’s just like, well, what other reason if not for that?”

The Fair Chance Act, aka “Ban the Box,” passed in 2018 to prohibit companies which have five or more employees from inquiring into prior imprisonment history throughout the hiring process. But companies have ways to circumvent the law.

Stacy Villalobos, a Legal Aide at Work attorney, said she has uncovered over 150 violations in the month of July 2020 alone, according to the article. Villalobos’ group was part of a coalition that brought to light multiple violations in Southern California.

According to Villalobos, violations of the Fair Chance Act occur throughout the interview process. Some prospective employers were upfront about it; others had more subtle methods.

“At the base level, we’re all people,” said Garcia. “And if we are all just treated as the worst thing we ever did in our life, then that’s always going to be that scarlet letter. But we’re more than just one aspect of our life.”

Garcia signed up for a job training course from a company called Checkr. Daniel Yanisse and Jonathan Perichon founded the company in San Francisco in 2014. The company developed a background check tool for employers that also helps level out the playing field for formerly incarcerated people.

Through this training program Garcia met Kate Leidy. Her organization, Strively, focuses on creating what the article calls a “prison-to-tech pipeline,” to help formerly incarcerated people get jobs in the tech industry. Strively works with the Center for Employment Opportunities to get formerly incarcerated people into tech sales positions.

“Recidivism and unemployment are married to each other” said Leidy. “And so if we don’t get people the opportunity to support themselves in a meaningful way, then we’re punishing people for their entire lives for something that happened 20 years ago.”

Recidivism is what Leidy’s organization hopes to affect by breaking down some of the cycles related to incarceration.

The Center for Employment Opportunities operates inside San Quentin State Prison. The program prepares those waiting for release to write resumes and prepare for interviews.

But Garcia, who wasn’t at San Quentin, couldn’t attend these workshops. He only met Leidy as a recently released parolee.

“What I still love about Kate is she’s very open, honest, and transparent,” said Garcia. “She was telling me, ‘We’re going down uncharted territories here, but I don’t want that to deter you.’”

According to Garcia, part of what the program did was to help him regain his self-confidence. It was Garcia’s first time networking online. Strively helped him learn how to navigate the process, mentoring Garcia until he was up to speed.

Garcia said his optimism remains strong, as does his hope for a society “where companies don’t have those stigmas and stereotypes associated with formerly incarcerated individuals, but really open their minds up to the potential and value that Fair Chance candidates bring.”

Mt. Tam, Stanford mull Three Strikes partnership

By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

The California Three Strikes Project at Stanford Law School and Mount Tamalpais College are considering a class where law students and incarcerated people sit together to learn about criminal justice reform.

Mike Romano, the director of the Three Strikes Project and author of Proposition 36, a law designed to reduce the sentences of nonviolent third strike offenders, brought Three Strikes Project deputy director Susan Champion and staff attorney Milena Blake to San Quentin to pilot the idea during a two-day workshop.

“If you had a magic wand, what would you do to create a more just system?” Romano asked the incarcerated residents and his 16 law students in attendance.

Romano has been teaching at Stanford for more than 15 years. He has been appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to chair the committee to revise the penal code. Romano also recently celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the passage of Prop 36.

“I am confident that you guys have as much to teach our students as we do,” Romano said to the group of incarcerated students in attendance.

Champion, a former professional actor, started as one of

Romano’s students. She helped secure the release of a nonviolent three striker under Prop 36, who went on to start his own successful business.

“I am really interested in finding ways to help people succeed,” Champion said. “A lot of reforms have left you behind and we want to hear from you. I really want this to be a two-way street. We really want to hear your perspective.”

In preparation for the class discussion, law students and incarcerated students were asked to read the same homework packet that analyzed the justice reform movement in California since realignment—a law that houses some nonviolent offenders sentenced to prison in county jails.

Romano discussed the history of reform in California beginning with the Plata/Coleman decisions that sent the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s medical and mental health services into federal receivership.

“After the U.S. Supreme Court found that CDCR was violating incarcerated people’s rights to adequate medical and mental health care, a series of laws developed,” Romano said.

Students began to list that series of reforms, which started with realignment, then Props 36 and 47, and finally Prop 57.

Staff attorney Milena Blake

helped write the language for Prop 47, a law that reduced certain felonies to a misdemeanor. Romano pointed out that this law actually led to more releases than Proposition 36.

“If I had known Prop 36 was going to get 70% voter approval, I would have pushed for more,” Romano said. “I would have made sure those who had first-degree burglary cases qualified under the law.”

Romano said the reform movement must now include both future lawyers and the incarcerated in order to reach a place of equity, fairness and justice.

“Part of what I want you to take away from this conversation is that they are at the top of the legal pyramid and so are you,” Romano told the incarcerated.

Romano also asked students to think about what reforms could have the greatest impact today. He asked students to consider what category of people or groups they believe need policy changes the most.

Discussions erupted about violent offenders, youth offenders, the elderly, three strikers, people with long enhancements and the mentally ill.

The group also discussed whether or not lawmakers should be more focused on parole board reform.

“Should policymakers be focused on new reforms or im-

plementation of reforms that have already been made?” Romano asked.

Once the students got comfortable working together, the discussion grew lively and incarcerated students joined with law students to strategize about what policies would make sense. At that point, nobody seemed to want the class to end.

At the close of the workshop, students spoke excitedly about the prospect of teaming up in the future for a class where both groups could get credit toward their educational degrees.

Cheyenne Joshua is one of Romano’s students. She is currently assisting a nonviolent three striker with his case. She has also interned with the public defender’s office. Joshua said participating in the workshop was helpful for her career goals.

“I think as a law student I need to hear incarcerated people’s opinions about crime and punishment,” Joshua said. “I enjoy helping individual clients, but what I really think I want to do is work at the policy level once I’m out of law school.”

Romano plans to return to San Quentin with his students in the spring.

“I really admire Jody and Amy and I love working with my students and Mount Tam students,” Romano said.

Dehumanizing labels adversely affect returning citizens

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Staff Writer

State lawmakers, an international organization and a non-profit all advocate to change the negative labeling of incarcerated people as “felons and inmates” to less harmful terms that are not tied to slavery and white supremacy.

“We need to give people back the wholeness they deserve,” said Sheila Stubbs, a Wisconsin state representative. She added that it’s important to give those who are in jail and former offenders a “sense of belonging” in the community by referring to them as people rather than inmates.”

Dane County, Wisconsin,

Sheriff Calvin Barrett “hopes the language change will help humanize incarcerated people and reduce recidivism,” as reported in *The Wisconsin State Journal, Police* in August 2021.

A legacy of dehumanization characterizes mass criminalization and incarceration, according to People First, non-profit aimed at changing how incarcerated people are viewed by the public. Labels that dehumanize incarcerated people affect their self-image and public perception as they return to society.

Eddie Ellis of the Nu Leadership Policy Group told People First, “If we cannot persuade you to refer to us, and think of

us, as people, then all other efforts at reform and change are seriously compromised.”

Words like “felon” and “inmate” diminish support for formerly incarcerated people, as well as the opportunities that could make them safe and free, according to People First.

BMC International Health and Human Rights, an advocacy organization aimed at changing the narrative, says that stereotyping contributes to acts of discrimination and exclusion from social services, which in turn affects health and overall well-being.

Language can help change how the incarcerated view themselves and how society views them, says the *The Wis-*

consin State Journal.

BMC added that incarcerated people are the community that they come from and return to. Formerly incarcerated people have a greater need for mental health services than the general public. However, stigma as well as discrimination impacts access to these services.

BMC advocates respectful language to reduce harm and suffering, to foster constructive and humanizing labels, to engage people and respect their preferences, cultivating self-awareness.

“If you mislabel someone it can be traumatic and abusive, that’s why I prefer neutral labels,” said Tony Tafoya an incarcerated person at SQ.

Zoe Mullery, Watani Stiner start writing workshop for returning citizens

By San Quentin
News Staff

Creative writing teacher Zoe Mullery and former San Quentin News staffer Watani Stiner are teaming up to start a creative writing class. The class will meet on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Canticale Farm community in Oakland.

The workshop is open to all formerly incarcerated writers, but space is limited. While all formerly incarcerated writers are welcome, the focus will be on those recently released. Those writers will find support and encouragement during their reentry transition through their participation in the class.

ticipation in the class.

Zoe has been teaching creative writing through the Arts-in-Corrections Prison Arts Project, sponsored by the William James Association, since 1997. She has also been serving as instructor in the Brothers in Pen creative writing class at San Quentin since 1999.

Watani has been a member of Brothers in Pen since 2003. He was continuously involved in the group until his parole in 2015. His memoir is in the final stages of editing and will soon be ready for publication.

For more information, please contact Zoe at brothersinpen@gmail.com.

US-MEXICO BORDER

Feds ask for psych testing of undocumented parents

DOJ seeks verification of mental suffering for parents separated from children at border

By Rahan Asaan
Journalism Guild Writer

Parents separated from their children at the U.S.-Mexican border under President Trump’s 2018 zero-tolerance policy are suing the U.S. for trauma they suffered as a result of the separations. Now the Justice Department is requesting that a federal judge require psychological evaluations to verify their suffering, reported CNN.

Under the zero-tolerance policy, when adults crossing from Mexico into the U.S. were apprehended and jailed, children, some of whom were infants, were taken.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a class-action lawsuit in 2019 on behalf of several affected families. The Justice Department walked away from a settlement with the families last December and went back to court.

Justice wants its own expert to examine the parents suing, though the department acknowledges the anxiety, trauma, and emotional distress the parents suffered. President Biden condemned the Trump Administration for its separation policy prior to the suits and referred to it as “outrageous behavior” warranting financial compensation. However, the President gave no specific details as to the amounts parents should receive.

“It’s bad enough that the

Biden administration has not provided a meaningful settlement to the families ... but now the Biden administration is using taxpayer dollars to hire doctors to try and diminish the harm,” said ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt.

In what the Justice Department refers to as “standard practice” for allegations of severe emotional injury, the psychological exam requested would consist of a clinical interview and a testing portion that includes a personality and emotional function test and a trauma-specific test.

“That is hardly consistent with President Biden’s statement that the separations were criminal and an historic moral blemish on our nation,” Gelernt said.

A government watchdog has found that children who were removed under Trump’s “zero tolerance” policy experienced trauma, reported CNN. A Health and Human Services inspector general report from 2019 documented details describing inconsolable crying children who believed that their parents had abandoned them.

The Biden administration has created a reunification task force to help reunite families and provide services to those families. Parents have reunited with 487 children in the United States, but the parents of 151 children are still unaccounted for, said the report.

TEXAS

No immunity for state corrections in veteran’s medical device lawsuit

By Earl Warner
Journalism Guild Writer

A state appeals court has denied immunity of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice from a lawsuit when it refused to replace a device for Robin Smith, an incarcerated person who relies on the device for relief from a rare and painful condition, according to *Bloomberg Law*.

“Smith, a Marine Corps veteran, lives with loin pain hematuria syndrome, which causes severe abdominal pain, made worse by everyday activities such as walking,” the Oct. 12 story said. He was using a spinal cord stimulator to alleviate the pain and doctors approved a full SCS replacement in 2011, according to the article.

Smith received a 35-year prison sentence before the replacement procedure could take place.

“Smith’s altered legal situation did not alter his unfortunate medical situation,” Judge Kurt D. Englehardt’s opinion said. “He repeatedly complained of pain to prison doctors and ‘sought the SCS replacement the VA had prescribed him before his legal troubles interfered.’”

All of Smith’s administrative appeals were denied by the Texas Department’s staff. They allegedly rebuffed the referrals Smith received from the VA and instead prescribed Ibuprofen. He was also given work assignment restrictions to manage his pain.

The court held that a 2018 decision made by the 5th Circuit in *Delaughter v. Woodall* gave the defendants a “reasonable warning that any policy of categorically denying SCS replacements without regard to an incarcerated person’s serious medical need constitutes an Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference,” Englehardt said.

“Any policy of categorically denying SCS replacements without regard to an incarcerated person’s serious medical need constitutes an Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference.”

—Kurt D. Englehardt
Appellate Court Judge

ILLINOIS

Sheriff fights recidivism by reducing costs and fees charged to incarcerated

The Washtenaw County Sheriff belives one way to overcome reincarceration is through reducing the debt incurred by detainees

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

A sheriff in Illinois is working to reduce the fines and fees that prisoners are charged in an effort to prevent recidivism and reduce the cost of incarceration, a radio report says.

“As we think about how do we break this cycle of recidivism and the lack of strong community, you know, one of the ways for us to help break the cycle is to not contribute to the financial debt of folks by adding on fees associated with their incarceration,” said Washtenaw County Sheriff Jerry Clayton.

Writer Anna Spidel of *State-side Michigan Radio* noted that the goal of incarceration is to prevent recidivism while rehabilitating individuals.

The debt carried over by someone reentering jail or prison creates a financially stressful situation for family members who might become reluctant to place money on the incarcerated person’s account, which prevents the incarcerated person from accessing goods and services.

In 2019, Washtenaw County created the debt relief fund in an effort to fight ongoing

financial burdens placed on families of people who become re-incarcerated. For example, the \$4.20 it costs for a 15-minute phone call earns the county \$1.75 million dollars a year. Attacking this fee will help ease the financial burdens by allowing incarcerated people to maintain contact with their family. This contact can easily be reduced by expensive phone calls. Some states are eliminating phone fees.

A significant percentage of individuals end up in jails or prison because of financially related occurrences, which is why reducing the financial burden of incarceration is important, according to the Aug. 15 article.

Incarcerated individuals have access to goods and services, but may become discouraged because of a previous debt carried over from a prior incarceration, the article says.

The model in which governments directly profit from the financial hardships of prisoners and their families harms incarcerated people and the government agencies, according to Sheriff Clayton.

“There is a cycle here that I think we have to find a way to break. And I think we break it as governmental entities,” said Sheriff Clayton. “We should not try to balance our budget on the backs of people that are incarcerated. That is really important to us.”

1. Kentucky — (AP) State officials are promoting a Prison-to-Work-Pipeline program aimed at connecting incarcerated people with employment as they step out of prisons and jails, reported the Associated Press Nov. 7. Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear’s administration is working with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to further the project. “The goal is for reentering inmates to have a job offer and ready to start work the day they walk out of the gate,” said Kerry Harvey, the state’s public safety secretary. Employers will be able to conduct virtual interviews with people who are still incarcerated. Prospective hires will be assisted with resume and interview preparations. The governor touted the anti-crime aspect of the program, saying that helping formerly incarcerated people find employment will reduce the likelihood that they will commit new crimes.

2. New York — (New York Times) Lawyers representing people incarcerated at Rikers Island have asked the judge monitoring the troubled jail system to impose a receivership, reported the *New York Times* Nov. 14. Problems leading to this news included 18 deaths among the jail population in 2022, an increasing rate of stabbings and slashings, and increasing use of force by correctional officers. The article reported that many of the problems at the facilities are the product of “persistent staff absenteeism.” In September 2021, nearly 2,000 of the facilities’ 8,000 staff were calling in sick every day. A union contract provides that corrections officers at Rikers have unlimited sick leave. “Last week, federal prosecutors in Brook-



lyn charged three officers with lying about being sick while continuing to collect their salaries,” wrote the *Times*. Staffing shortfalls have meant that people held at Rikers are not having their basic needs met, reported the *Times*.

3. Alabama — (AP) A former state correctional officer and gubernatorial candidate has called for federal intervention in Alabama’s prison system, reported the AP Nov. 5. Stacy George described Alabama’s prisons as a “third world country with a concrete floor.” Incarcerated residents of the state’s prison system went on a work stoppage in September to protest conditions in the facilities. “The U.S. Department of

Justice has an ongoing lawsuit against Alabama over prisons it says are ‘riddled with prisoner-on-prisoner and guard-on-prisoner violence,’” AP wrote. The state is having problems hiring and retaining facility staff. The Department of Corrections reported that staff levels fell from 2,177 on Oct. 31, 2021 to 1,879 on June 30, 2022.

4. Nevada — (AP) The former head of Nevada’s prison system is claiming that he was pressured to lie about a bomb maker’s escape from a Nevada facility before being forced to resign, AP reported on Nov. 4. Yvanna Cancela, Chief-of-Staff to Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, responded to the former state prisons director

Charles Daniels’s claim by accusing him of attempting “a political shakedown for more than \$1 million taxpayer dollars.” The story begins with the September 23 escape of a convicted bomb maker, which Daniels claims he did not learn about until four days later on September 27. Daniels alleged in a press conference that the governor’s office pressured him to lie about the timeline of the escape, and then threatened to fire him. Daniels resigned on September 30. An Oct. 28 letter from Daniel’s attorney to state officials sought a settlement of seven years’ salary for Daniels, a total of \$1.05 million. The letter said that otherwise, Daniels would file racial and age discrim-

ination claims against the state. Las Vegas police arrested the escaped bomb maker on Sept. 28. AP reports, “Daniels’ departure renewed a spotlight on trouble including violence and chronic understaffing at Nevada’s seven prisons, nine conservation camps and two transitional housing centers.”

5. Louisiana — (AP) A federal judge has ruled that officials of the state’s David Wade Correctional Center were “deliberately indifferent” while housing mentally ill prisoners in inhumane conditions that violate both the Americans with Disabilities Act and Eighth Amendment protections against cruel punishment, reported the AP

Nov. 3. U.S. District Judge Elizabeth Foote’s ruling said the prison used solitary confinement as “a depository” for mentally ill incarcerated people which only makes their condition worse. “We strongly disagree with the ruling,” said Ken Pastorick, spokesman for the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. Non-profit organization Disability Rights Louisiana advocated for the incarcerated in the case. The group’s lead attorney, Melanie Bray, praised the judge’s ruling. “When people with mental illness are sent to the state prison as punishment for a crime, the state has an obligation to provide baseline mental health care,” Bray said in a press release.

NATIONAL

By Dante D. Jones
Staff Writer

On Nov. 8, 2022, four states in the union chose to move this country closer to a nation free of forced labor in every way.

Over 75% of voters in Alabama, Oregon, Tennessee, and Vermont approved legislation that would amend their states’ constitutions to eliminate language that allows slavery and involuntary servitude as a punishment for crime, according to the *Sacramento Bee*. (Louisiana, a fifth state in this past election that also had this issue on its ballot, voted against banning slavery from its constitution.)

National coordinator for Abolish Slavery National Network, Max Parthas, called this one of the ‘biggest tests’ for the nation.

“(It) was a win for us because it exposed the underbelly of the Jim Crow South and how dependent they are on slave labor,” Parthas told the *Bee*. “Slavery was legal. These states have never seen a day where slavery was not legal.”

According to the *PBS Newshour*, Vermont’s constitution

Four states end forcible prison labor

no longer has language that allows any form of slavery or involuntary servitude.

In 1777, Vermont was the first state to abolish adult slavery from its constitution for anyone 21 and older unless bound “by law for the payment of debts, fines, costs or the like” or by their own consent.

“We think it shows how forward thinking and good-natured Vermonters are and we’re looking forward to using it as a springboard to do a lot of work on dismantling systemic racism going forward,” said Debbie Ingram, executive director of Vermont Interfaith Action and a former state senator who sponsored the proposal.

Chattel slavery was federally banned in 1865 thanks to the Emancipation Proclamation. However, the bill had a built-in loophole: a person could be subjected to involuntary servitude if convicted of a crime.

California, one of the most



Kitchen workers at the serving line preparing food trays for the incarcerated population

progressive states in the union, just recently was presented with the opportunity to amend its constitution by outlawing indentured servitude, but lawmakers failed to get it on the ballot.

The bill, drafted by State Sen. Sydney Kamlager, D-Los Angeles, would have given California voters a chance to make their voices heard on this issue but lawmakers denied them that right because of

concerns that prisoners would be paid minimum wage as a result if it passed.

Kamlager, who won a seat in the House of Representatives, told the *Bee*: “I continue to say (if you) support slavery and involuntary servitude being in the state constitution then you continue to support a racist and Confederate past.” She described involuntary servitude as a “stain” on California’s conscience.

Anti-slavery activists could also point to the Governor’s recent veto of SB1371, a bill that would have increased incarcerated people’s pay for CDCR jobs over a five-year timeline, as a sign that the state is not willing to address the nation’s biggest sin.

According to a report by the *PBS Newshour*, since the time of the Confederacy, when southern states fought to keep chattel slavery even after the Civil War, lawmakers have been trying to curtail and/or completely eradicate forced

labor from the country’s prison system.

In recent years, forced labor in U.S. prisons has become a multibillion dollar industry; while the people who perform that labor are paid pennies by comparison—if nothing at all.

Refusal to perform any forced labor can result in anything from loss of recreation, phone calls, visits or even sometimes an incarcerated person can be sent to The Hole. It’s not hard to compare these types of punishments to those utilized during the antebellum slavery years, reported PBS Newshour.

“The 13th Amendment didn’t actually abolish slavery—what it did was make it invisible,” Bianca Tylek, an anti-slavery advocate and the executive director of the criminal justice advocacy group Worth Rises, said in an *AP* interview before Election Day.

She said that passing these types of legislation, particularly in states like Alabama, “is a great signal for what’s possible at the federal level.”

“There is a big opportunity here, in this moment,” Tylek said.

FEDERAL

Former Oregon prison director to head beleaguered Federal Bureau of Prisons

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

The new head of the scandal-plagued federal Bureau of Prisons says she believes in good government and transparency.

Colette Peters told *The Associated Press* she will work to “create an environment where people can feel comfortable coming forward and talking about misconduct.”

Peters replaced Michael Carvajal as the director of the federal Bureau of Prisons. She was director of Oregon’s state prison system before Attorney General Merrick Garland swore her in on Aug. 2, 2022.

The *AP* reported that the change was part of the Biden administration’s attempt to repair the federal Bureau of Prisons after the discovery of corruption, misconduct and abuse within the agency. Investigations conducted by the *AP* led to Carvajal’s resignation in January, after a Senate subcommittee opened an inquiry regarding the actions within the Bureau of Prisons’

122 facilities.

Whistleblowers informed the *AP* of deteriorating facilities that were mold-ridden and had poor sewage, which left a foot of human waste on yards at a federal prison in Atlanta. Prison employee whistleblowers also reported about facilities where “so many rats were in the food service area, employees would leave the prison’s doors open so stray cats could take care of them.”

Carvajal’s administration retaliated against the whistleblowers and transferred them or forced them to resign, the story said.

During the Senate subcommittee investigation, Carvajal refused to take accountability for the Bureau of Prison’s “culture of corruption and misconduct” that was pervasive throughout his department for years.

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., a ranking member of the Senate’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, said that Carvajal’s leadership was “almost willful ignorance.” Johnson described Carvajal’s thinking as, “don’t want to know what’s happening be-

Colette Peters’ goal is to “create an environment where people can feel comfortable coming forward and talking about misconduct.”

low me. Don’t want to hear about rapes. Don’t want to hear about suicides.”

Carvajal denied wrongdoing and insisted that he had been kept away from internal problems by his staff. This excuse coincided with his admission that the size and structure of the Bureau of Prisons led to the multitude of infractions.

Carvajal’s lack of accountability upset senators at a bi-partisan level. The mounting pressure from Capitol Hill forced Carvajal to submit his resignation in January of this year.

A six-month search for his replacement led to Peters’ appointment. She is the second director in the federal Bureau of Prisons to have no prior ex-

perience with federal prisons.

Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco led the search and complied with the Biden administration’s strategy to overhaul leadership at the top of the organization. The *AP* reported that Monaco’s search focused on reform for the agency, attempting to rid itself of ethical issues it has dealt with for decades.

During Peters’ inauguration, she said she was “humbled, honored and proud to serve,” as leader of the Bureau of Prisons.

The Bureau of Prisons employs more than 30,000 people and has an \$8 billion budget. Peters takes over an organization that is plagued by documented sexual abuse from its correctional officers as well as other widespread criminal activity by staff. Results of the investigation revealed a troubled institution that has had dozens of escapes, deaths and dangerously low staffing levels that slowed down emergency responses.

Attorney General Garland said he had “full confidence” in Peters’ ability to improve the Bureau of Prisons.

LOUISIANA

Court: Non-unanimous verdict rule not retroactive

By Cainen Chambers
Staff Writer

A new rule that non-unanimous convictions cannot be used by the state of Louisiana will not apply retroactively, the state Supreme Court has ruled.

Louisiana voters approved a state constitutional amendment ending the practice of convicting people without unanimous rulings in 2018, effective for crimes committed after Jan. 1, 2019. Only two states recognized non-unanimous convictions at that time.

Louisiana’s highest court ruled Oct. 21 that prohibitions against non-unanimous jury convictions do not have to apply retroactively. The ruling was in response to the case of Reginald Reddick, who was convicted of murder by a 10-2 vote in 1997. But an advocacy group estimated the decision affects more than 1,500 prisoners.

In 2020, non-unanimous verdicts were also declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. But the next year, in *Ramos vs. Louisiana*, the Supreme Court said that

its invalidation of non-unanimous verdicts applies only to future cases and to cases in which a defendant’s appellate options had not been completely exhausted.

Louisiana State Supreme Court Justice Scott Crichton wrote in the ruling that the use of non-unanimous jury votes dates back to the late 1800s and was believed to be a way to discourage African American participation in juries.

However Justice Crichton’s stated “there are racially neutral, legitimate, and rational arguments justifying a non-unanimous jury rule.”

Justice James Genovese offered a partial dissent, writing, “I find that a new trial should be ordered in cases where an African American defendant can prove, by a preponderance of evidence, that an African American juror dissented from the majority voting to convict the defendant of the charged crime.”

The Promise of Justice Initiative wrote in a statement on the ruling, “This is a loss for every Louisianan. Our courts must protect our fundamental rights and freedoms.”

INTERNATIONAL—IRAN

Fire kills eight in Iranian prison

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

A fire killed eight detainees at Iran’s Evin prison near Terhan, which has for decades housed political prisoners as well as those convicted of criminal charges, according to reporting by *The Associated Press*.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard and the country’s Intelligence Ministry both operate their own cells at Evin, holding dual-nationals and prisoners with connections with the West, reported *AP*.

The fire started in the prison’s eighth ward that houses political prisoners. Iran Prison Atlas, a California-based rights group that collects data on Iranian prisons and prisoners, said the fire started in a sewing workshop.

Satellite photos show the burning roof of a large building in the northern section of

the prison. A video of the fire purports to show people throwing liquid on the flames. Audio from other videos includes what appears to be gunfire and the sound of an explosion from an unidentified ordinance tossed into the complex, reported *AP*.

Authorities have blamed “rioters” for the fire. Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, Iran’s judiciary chief, blamed “the enemy’s agents” for the incident, referring to outside actors including the United States and Israel.

The regime has generally blamed the same outside influences for unrest in Iran over the weeks leading up to the fire in the prison. The unrest followed the Sept. 16 death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman who died in the custody of the regime’s morality police.

Evin prison has a long history of abuses, according to human rights activists. It has

been the site of executions and amputations prescribed as punishments under the country’s Islamic laws, said the *AP* article.

The *AP* reports that it received a series of videos leaked by a group of hackers that showed fighting and “grim conditions” at Evin.

Jason Razaian, a journalist with *The Washington Post* who spent 544 days in an Iranian prison on allegations of spying, commented on conditions at Evin prison.

“Evin is no ordinary prison. Many of Iran’s best and brightest have spent long stretches confined there, where brave women and men are denied their basic rights for speaking truth to power,” Razaian wrote on *Twitter*.

The European Union has sanctioned 11 Iranian officials and four additional entities over the protests, freezing assets and imposing travel bans.

VIRGINIA

Federal court ruling protects prisoners’ religious head coverings

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled that the Virginia Department of Corrections was violating the religious beliefs of an incarcerated man by restricting his use of a head covering, reported *The Washington Post* on Nov. 8.

A three-judge panel ruled unanimously the department’s policy required the incarcerated man in question, David Richardson, “to either violate his religious beliefs — by refraining from wearing a head covering at all times — or risk discipline.”

Before Richardson’s suit, the agency gave its individual prisons authority to decide policies regarding head coverings, said *The Post*.

Policies at the Deerfield Correctional Center in Capron required residents

to remove head coverings in various locations, including the chow hall, administrative buildings and visiting rooms unless wearing the head cover was part of “an approved religious activity.”

Following the Richardson lawsuit, Virginia’s Department of Corrections changed their policy to allow residents to wear their head coverings anywhere in the prison as long as they removed them upon request to be searched, *The Post* reports.

In a previous ruling, Judge Henry E. Hudson wrote that the policy governing head coverings was not unduly burdensome on Richardson since he “retained the ability to wear a head covering in many areas of the prison” and that the “restrictions were rationally related to the

penological objective of security and policing for contraband.”

The Appellate Court overrode Hudson’s decision, stating that “Richardson holds a sincerely held belief that his religion requires that he wear a head covering at all times and in all places. Deerfield’s head covering policy placed Richardson between the proverbial rock and a hard place.”

Richardson continues to pursue a court order to stop the Virginia prison from reverting to its previous policy on head coverings. An attorney for the state told the court that the “ability to change a policy certainly exists.” However, the attorney also stated that the department “has no intention to go back.”

—Cainen Chambers

LAW & POLICY

SF DA reinstates policy allowing juveniles to be charged as adults

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Contributing Writer

Newly elected San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins reinstated the policy of charging 16- and 17-year-olds as adults for crimes that she called “egregious,” wrote Megan Cassidy in *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

Former District Attorney Chesa Boudin had ended the practice, but Jenkins believes that juvenile prosecution does not allow for proper rehabilitation because such prosecutions typically release offenders at age 23, the article says.

“By the age of 23, can we have done what we need to rehabilitate somebody who has committed a very heinous crime?” Jenkins asked in *The Chronicle*.

According to the article, Jenkins formed a Juvenile Review Team that will form an opinion about whether to seek adult charges. The team consists of the head of the juvenile division, the chief of victim services, and the chief of the criminal division that would prosecute the case. All three of them report to the District Attorney’s office.

The Juvenile Review Team’s opinion will go to Jenkins, who will make the charging decision, but state law says that the ultimate decision rests with a judge. State law does not allow adult prosecution of anyone under 16, regardless of the crime.

Crimes “heinous in nature” potentially prosecuted under this policy include attempted murder, forcible sexual assault, kidnapping, torture and aggravated mayhem.

Smart Justice California, a criminal justice advocacy group, voiced concerns about the change. A prosecutor “who is at all committed to both science and fairness must keep kids out of the adult system,” said Anne Irwin, the group’s executive director, in an e-mailed response to *The Chronicle*, adding, “Putting them into adult prisons all but guarantees they will lose the opportunity to get the care that kids need.”

Juvenile proceedings emphasize rehabilitation, while adult courts focus more on punishment. Similarly, Juvenile Hall offers more behavioral treatment and mental health for young offenders than adult prison. Youth convicted as adults could end up transferred from juvenile facilities to adult prisons to serve the remaining time on their sentences after turning 18.

Yoel Haile, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California’s director of Criminal Justice Program, called Black and Latino youth at greater risk of prosecution white youth. “Of the 11 young people whose cases were transferred to adult court in San Francisco from 2006 to 2016... none were white.”

Smart Justice California’s Irwin said that Jenkins’s policy “purports to meet this minimum standard for a moral prosecutor, but in reality, it also leaves room for her office to charge many kids as adults.”

Jenkins says that she generally does not believe in charging youth as adults, and she confirmed that, in the past, youth of color were disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system, the article said. Jenkins said that no juvenile cases prosecuted by Boudin should have transferred to adult court.

“As a D.A.’s office, we must retain prosecutorial discretion to ensure that we protect the public and deliver justice in our most serious and egregious cases that is fair and proportional,” she told *The Chronicle*.” Jenkins’s policy took effect September 13.

DNC calls for release of indigenous rights activist

By Patrick Demery
Journalism Guild Writer

A major campaign is under way seeking freedom for Indigenous rights activist Leonard Peltier, who has been incarcerated for 46 years.

The Democratic National Committee voted unanimously to pass a resolution urging President Joe Biden to grant clemency to Peltier, who is considered by many to be America’s longest-serving political prisoner.

Clemency has also been urged by celebrities and international human rights leaders, including Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Coretta Scott King and Amnesty International USA.

Peltier was convicted of murder in the killings of two FBI agents during a 1975 shootout on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

Advocates for his release have raised several problems with his trial including racism, lack of evidence, and evidence suggesting the FBI was partially responsible for the shootout.

Peltier’s advocates also include a former U.S. prosecutor who pleaded with Biden to grant clemency. Earlier this year, the DNC’s Native American Caucus issued a statement calling Peltier’s imprisonment, “one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in modern history.”

According to the *Huffington Post*, the DNC’s resolution states that Peltier, who is 77, should be freed “given the overwhelming support for clemency, the constitutional due process issues underlying Mr. Peltier’s prosecution, his status as an elderly inmate, and that he is an American Indian, who suffers from greater rates of health disparities and severe underlying health conditions.”

The *Huffington Post* noted that Biden has already demonstrated a willingness to address past injustices against Native Americans, citing his intent to examine the country’s history of Indian boarding schools and his appointment of Deb Haaland as the country’s first Indigenous Secretary of the Interior.

“It is highly appropriate that consideration of clemency for Mr. Peltier be prioritized and expatiated, so that Mr. Peltier can return to his family and live his final years among his people,” the DNC resolution concludes.

New laws to take effect Jan. 1

Eight bills signed into law; governor vetoes gate money, prisoner pay hike

Following is an excerpt from
Initiate Justice’s Policy Corner
Reprinted with permission.

The following bills are not being sponsored by Initiate Justice but could materially impact the lives of incarcerated people. We are not sponsors of these bills, so please do not write to us for details. We do not offer advice or representation, so please contact your public defender or attorney for more information.

Below is a list of bills that passed the legislature and were signed by the Governor. Signed bills go into effect January 1, 2023:

- AB 960 (Ting):** Improves medical parole so more incarcerated people can be eligible for compassionate release.
- AB 1706 (Bonta):** Ensures all people with cannabis convictions will be resentenced and have their cases dismissed.
- AB 1766 (Stone):** Ensures more people leaving state prison will be issued valid state ID’s, if the DMV has the necessary documents on file.
- AB 2657 (Stone):** Ensures people on Death Row who are incompetent will not be executed and will be re-sentenced to LWOP.
- SB 990 (Hueso):** Allows people to parole to counties that are best for their education/vocational training.
- SB 1008 (Becker):** Makes phone calls free in state prisons and juvenile facilities.
- SB 1139 (Kamlager):** Requires CDCR to notify families when an incarcerated person is sent to the hospital or in other medical emergencies.



Stock image

- SB 1209 (Eggman):** Allows more veterans to be resentenced who have been excluded from previous bills, namely if trauma from military experience was not considered as a mitigating factor at the time of sentencing. However, people convicted of Section 667 or an offense requiring registration pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 290 are not eligible.
- The following bills were vetoed by the governor and will not be moving forward:**
 - AB 2730 (Villapudua):** Allows people within two years of release to be housed in a campus setting to get more vocational training before release.
 - SB 1304 (Kamlager):** Increase gate

- money to \$1,300 upon release from prison.
- SB 1371 (BradFord):** Increased pay for CDCR jobs over a five-year timeline.
- The following bills were not successful and did not make it to the Governor:**
 - AB 937 (Carrillo):** Ends ICE transfers after completion of a prison sentence.
 - SB 300 (Cortese):** This bill would have reformed the special circumstances law so only the person who took someone’s life, not accomplices, could receive an LWOP sentence. The bill was not retroactive.
 - ACA 3 (Kamlager):** This Constitutional amendment would have removed involuntary servitude from the constitution. Since it did not pass the Legislature, it will not appear on the ballot this November.

New law blocks prosecutors’ use of rap lyrics as evidence in criminal cases



Photo by Dao Ong / SQNews

California has a new law banning the use of a rap artist’s lyrics to prosecute crimes.

Focus of the legislation was Anere Brown, also known as X-Raided, who spent 26 years in prison. In his trial the prosecution played lyrics from his rap records and tied them to the Sacramento murder of community activist Patricia Harris, the *Sacramento Bee* reported Sept. 29.

Brown was 17 years old at the time of his conviction. Prosecutors used lyrics from his album “Psycho Active” to aid and ultimately prove their case.

“I don’t know how many calls for help were on my first album,” Brown said. “Looking back at that, it would be incredibly alarming to have some 17-year-old child write

Psycho Active. The dark subject matter contained in that project should not have been in the brain of a 16 or 17-year-old child. It calls for concern.”

Prosecutors also used lyrics in prosecuting Shawn Thomas, another Sacramento rapper known as C-Bo. Prosecutors argued that his lyrics violated his parole.

The lyrics were in his 1998 song, “Deadly Game,” which also featured X-Raided. The words in the song were in response to California’s Three Strikes Law. They detailed how C-Bo felt; that as a Black man he was a target of the traditional establishment: law enforcement, the legal system, and the workplace.

Another musician prosecuted in part on the basis of lyrics was Donald Oliver,

best known as Lavish D or CML.

“They look at who you’re associated with and group you in with them and assume they know what type of activities you’re into. You’re rapping about things that sound familiar and that’s when they get to picking through lyrics,” Oliver said. He called the practice a “lazy” investigative method that works to the detriment of Black artists.

Oliver noted that most rappers are not living the lives they portray in their music and some even have ghost writers penning lyrics for them.

The measure known as the “Rap Lyric Bill” because of the history of lyrics that depict life in Black communities serving as evidence in prosecuting hip hop musi-

cians. It passed both houses of the Legislature unanimously, reported the *Bee*.

The law will potentially protect other kinds of artists, such as filmmakers and writers. The bill’s author, Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, called the bill an attempt to limit opportunities for prosecutors to create “explicit or implicit bias” against a defendant.

“This bill is an acknowledgement of the systemic racism being involved. It is a huge thing for me. Because he specifies the intent behind this is not just to protect artist rights but also to protect minorities and people from disadvantaged backgrounds from being prosecuted and literally persecuted as well,” said Brown.

—Patrick Demery

NATIONAL ISSUES



Stock image

Legal loopholes enable bail bond firms to avoid forfeiture payments

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Staff Writer

Some bail bonds companies in a few states pocket the money clients’ paid them instead of paying the court the amount of forfeited bail, the *Prison Policy Initiative* reports.

This is enabled by legal loopholes that leave taxpayers on the hook for millions of dollars, according to the October 2022 story.

Some state laws favor bail bondmen’s forfeitures. Unless the judge and prosecutor act fast, the bonds agents can file a motion to set aside forfeiture, while their client who skipped bail remains free, reported the article.

The public would be appalled if they knew how little of forfeited money was turned over, the story maintains.

This is not a local problem but a systemic one. The way the legal system backs the bail industry is a practice called “doubling up.” Some suspects obtain release on bond and court pretrial supervision, according to the article.

Not only does doubling up relieve bond agents from having to monitor clients, it also burdens pretrial service agencies, which are held in reserve for people under their supervision.

The report brings together evidence from authorities to show that the system is dysfunctional by design, and that legal and procedural loopholes in the industry keep companies from paying when defendants do not appear in court.

The bondsman’s job is to bring people to justice, but their deep pockets lobby for loopholes to avoid regulation, this lobbying has a track record of killing reform legislation making it easier not to pay forfeitures, according to the report.

Operating risk free, bail industries bond out jailed people who cannot afford bail in exchange for a non-refundable fee, promising to pay the full bail amount to the courts, said the story.

California estimates that bond companies owe the state well into the millions. In Los

Angeles County, 1.1 million forfeited bonds went unpaid in 2016-17, according to the story.

California courts do not have the infrastructure to follow up and file lawsuits. Because the bail industry is a for-profit industry, companies do not pay expenditures if they are not forced to, said the report.

In Texas, Harris County officials say that \$26 million is owed in unpaid forfeitures. In some cases the forfeitures are a decade old. Investigative reports also show that \$35 million is owed to Dallas County.

In 2011, New York City bondsmen owed \$2 million for 150 cases in which judges ordered bail bonds.

The powerful incentive bail bonds create is to ensure court appearances. If commercial bail bonds are to have utility, the process must be simplified until these steps are taken the bonds are not worth the paper they are written on, asserted the story.

“If you don’t show up for court, the bondsmen sits back and waits because they know

Policies and practices allow bail bond agents to escape accountability; the only way to enforce forfeiture payment is for governments to suspend bail agents’ authority to write bonds.

— Prison Policy Project

the sheriff is going to bring them back,” said a North Carolina district attorney.

Most people who have warrants for failure to appear are arrested, but these arrests are paid with public funds, according to the Criminal Justice Planning unit in Jefferson County, Colorado.

The magazine *Mother Jones* investigated the financial records of 32 insurance companies that underwrite bail bonds. The publication showed that the companies pay less than 1% in forfeitures.

In the State of Virginia, a bail bond agent was caught using a fake death certificate, and false addresses to avoid paying forfeited dollars. Bail bond companies often give false address to avoid being served forfeitures, said the article.

Policies and practices allow bail bond agents to escape accountability; the only way to enforce forfeiture payment is for governments to suspend bail agents’ authority to write bonds, according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

Midterm election results suggest support for criminal justice reforms

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

Leading up to this year’s midterm elections, TV ads featured Republicans blaming Democrats and progressive prosecutors for rising crime rates. Republicans made the issue a major piece of their campaign platform, according to numerous media reports.

Despite these attacks, progressive prosecutors and criminal justice reform supporters won widespread victories across the nation, according to a summary of midterm results by The Marshall Project. Meanwhile, Republicans candidates generally underperformed in the 2022 midterm elections.



Stock image

Oakland's new DA, Pamela Price

In New York, for example, democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul won her reelection bid. According to reporting in *The Atlantic*, she was attacked by a conservative super PAC for supporting “the state’s disastrous cashless bail experiment” and for being unwilling to “remove liberal prosecutors ... who too often downgrade charges for dangerous criminals.”

Pennsylvania’s Lt. Gov. John Fetterman won a U.S. senate seat over TV personality and GOP candidate Dr. Mehmet Oz, who focused on the Democrat’s record on crime and criminal justice reform. The National Republican Senatorial Committee tried to associate Fetterman with “sanctuary cities, weak prosecutors, crime skyrocketing — failed liberal policies making us less safe,” according to *The Atlantic*.

The Marshall Project reported progressive prosecutors won elections in several states — both blue and red. This included Hays County near Austin, TX and Des Moines Iowa’s Polk County, as well as Minneapolis’ Hennepin County, Seattle’s King County, and Oakland’s Alameda County among others.

In Minneapolis, voters elected a former public defender who promised to create a police accountability unit in the DA’s office. Seattle’s winning DA candidate beat out an opponent who promised to push back on all the “overboard with social reform.”

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Oakland’s new District Attorney Pamela Price is a civil rights attorney and reform advocate who made history as the first Black person in the county to hold the office.

Such push back seemed likely to succeed after the recall of San Francisco’s progressive DA Chesa Boudin earlier this year. Boudin had become a lightning rod for “tough-on-crime” critics amid frequent media reports on crime during the pandemic.

Since then, Los Angeles’ progressive DA George Gascón survived a recall attempt and the midterm success of progressive prosecutors appear to vindicate criminal reform advocates. According to reporting by the Pew Research Center, voters concerned about crime leading up the midterm election did not appear receptive to “tough-on-crime” policy arguments recycled by Republican candidates.

Proponents of the progressive prosecutor movement contend such polices have proven ineffectual and have disproportionately harmed people of color and disadvantaged communities. Columnist Chris Geidner said these progressive victories will be “a counterpoint to lots of the national reporting on criminal justice politics.”

The constant barrage of negative attack ads on TV during the election and common media narratives about crime contain assumptions that crime rates are going up and that progressive prosecutors and criminal justice reforms are to blame.

However, the actual data shows neither assumption is true. Statistics reported by the Pew Research Center and The Marshall Project sourced from the FBI and the Bureau of Justice Statistics reveal that national crimes rates for both violent and property crimes have been declining since high points in the 1970s through the 1990s.

The only exception is homicide, which according to the statistics has increased during the pandemic by approximately 30% to a rate of 7.8 people per 100,000. The Pew Research Center noted that murder rates are still well below previous highs and homicide remains the least common type of violent crime.

Yet at the same time, a recent Gallup poll cited by the Pew Research Center found that the percentage of Americans who believe crime rose in their area is the highest it’s been in the last 30 years.

The discrepancy between actual crime rates and the perception of crime by the public speaks to the potential influence of the media and statements from political candidates, in particular Republicans emphasizing crime on the campaign trail, among other potential factors, noted the Pew Research Center.

As for the second assumption, a comprehensive study released by the think tank Center for American Progress in Oct 2022 discussed in the *The Atlantic* article refutes the claim that policies by progressive prosecutors have increased crime.

Led by a team of academic researchers, the study compared crime rates in cities with progressive prosecutors versus those with more traditional and conservative DAs. No meaningful difference was found in trends for larceny or robbery between the two groups, and homicide rates had increased less in cities with progressive prosecutors.

“I think it’s really important to emphasize the extent to which we looked for a relationship and found none” between progressive policies and increased crime, said Todd Foglesong of the University of Toronto, one of the co-authors of the study.

Progressive prosecutors have now won elections in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, Seattle, Oakland, and Los Angeles among other cities. According Philadelphia’s progressive DA Larry Krasner, as cited in *The Atlantic*, about 20% of the nation now lives in jurisdictions with a progressive prosecutor compared to virtually none 10 years ago.

The progressive prosecutor movement typically includes common policies such as reducing the use of cash bail, rarely prosecuting juveniles as adults, supporting more prison diversion programs, more vigorous prosecution of police misconduct cases, and discouraging the criminalization of social problems like homelessness.

DOJ faces backlash over lack of transparency in prisoner deaths

By Dante D. Jones
Staff Writer

The Department of Justice is facing bipartisan criticism from U.S. senators for its lack of transparency in reporting deaths of incarcerated persons throughout the United States, according to the *Oakland Post*.

Sens. Jon Ossoff (D-Georgia) and Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin), members of the Senate’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations issued a report called “Uncounted Deaths in America’s Prisons and Jails: How the Department of Justice Failed to Implement the Death in Custody Reporting Act” in September 2022 after a 10-month inquiry.

In an interview, Sen. Ossoff told the *Oakland Post*: “This 10-month bipartisan investigation of deaths in American prisons and jails has revealed shocking, long-term gaps in federal oversight, including hundreds of uncounted deaths in 2021 alone.”

According to the report, the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013 (DCRA 2013) is a reauthorization of a sim-

ilar law implemented in 2000 that “requires states that accept certain federal funding to report to the Department of Justice about who is dying in prisons and jails.”

When a custodial death occurs, the 2013 bill requires that each state in which a death occurs provides “at a minimum” the DOJ with the person’s name, gender, race, ethnicity and age. It must also provide the date, time and location of the death, plus a brief description of the circumstances surrounding the death.

The report stated that the Subcommittee discovered that the “DOJ will be at least eight years past-due in providing Congress with the DCRA 2013-required 2016 report on how custodial deaths can be reduced.”

According to the report there were approximately 990 prison and arrest-related deaths that went unreported by the DOJ in 2021; and “70% of the data DOJ collected was incomplete.” Furthermore, despite internal warnings from the DOJ Office of the Inspector General and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the report stated that

the DOJ’s failures were preventable if they would have implemented effective data collection methodology.

The report also found that out of the 990 uncounted deaths, approximately 341 were prison deaths disclosed on states’ public websites.

Also, about 649 were arrest-related deaths that were disclosed in a reliable, public database kept by a non-profit focused on civil rights, though none of the above data was collected by the DOJ.

Co-sponsors of the bill, which passed with bipartisan support in both branches of Congress back in 2000 and 2013, described the critical importance of collecting death data as something that would bring a “new level of accountability to our Nation’s correctional institutions”; “provide openness in government”; “bolster public confidence and trust in our judicial system”; and “bring additional transparency.”

According to the *Oakland Post*, relatives of incarcerated persons, along with local community organizations and the NAACP have been demanding “transparency and accountability” when

people die in custody.

They have accused the local county sheriff’s office, which oversee the county jails, of not maintaining accurate information regarding in-custody deaths.

They have also demanded that health care and treatment of incarcerated people be improved over-all.

Activists also cite the failure of the sheriff’s office to produce complete information pertaining to in-custody deaths. The *Oakland Post* reports that in 2021 at least 40% of the deaths that occurred lack detailed descriptions of why the death happened.

“This information is critical to improve transparency in prison and jails, identifying trends in custodial deaths that may warrant corrective action—such as failure to provide adequate medical care, mental health services, or safeguard prisoners from violence—and identifying specific facilities with outlying death rates,” read the report.” “DOJ’s failure to implement this law and to continue to publish this data is a missed opportunity to prevent avoidable deaths.”

RETIREMENT

Continued from page 1

Newsom's video message, recorded during the *SQNews* annual fundraiser last September, paid tribute to Robinson. Newsom praised the Captain for "overseeing programs that create space for empathy, understanding and communication."

Incarcerated residents of San Quentin see Robinson as a trail-blazer dedicated to enriching the lives of everyone he meets. "He's the epitome of optimism, because he wants the best for everybody," said Steve "Rhashiyd" Zinnamon, sound designer for the podcast *EarHustle*. "He believes in second chances. He treats us like men as opposed to a prisoner or anything else."

Nigel Poor, cofounder of *EarHustle*, met Robinson in 2012. She was initially intimidated because as a community volunteer she "had to talk to him all the time" about getting episodes of the podcast approved. She soon discovered that Robinson is "caring and easy to talk to, if you earn his trust." Having earned that trust, she didn't want to let him down.

"I feel like I owe it to him to be the best person I can be, because Sam is a person who would do anything to guide the guys inside toward rehabilitation," Poor said. "Incarcerated guys and people who work in the prison respect him, so that tells me that he's a righteous person, something that's really hard to do in this environment."

Earlone Woods, cofounder of *EarHustle*, paroled from prison in 2018. Woods described Robinson as someone "who deals with people as they are in the moment. He didn't use his job to continue to punish people. He used his job to rehabilitate. He's the R in CDCR."

Brian Asey produces videos for San Quentin television in the prison's media center. Like Poor, he met Robinson in 2012. He says that Robinson is the first correctional officer who saw him as a person and not an inmate.

"He'll give you the opportunity to be the person you want to be. He doesn't see color. He's the same way with everyone," said Asey. Robinson showed him a unique brand of professionalism.

As Robinson, often referred to as the "Mayor of San Quentin," ends his career with CDCR, the prison's staff and residents are poised to continue his legacy of optimism.

The Unexpected Career

Robinson recognizes the impact that a schoolteacher, Mr. Shields, had on his life.

"He took an interest in me and took the extra step to keep me out of trouble," Robinson said. After a risky encounter when Robinson was 14 years old, Mr. Shields met with his parents. Subsequently, Robinson transferred to St. Elizabeth, a private school. He recalls, "I didn't want to go to prison, so I did the right thing."

Robinson's life changed once he recognized the importance of a good education. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in engineering from San Jose State University in 1996. After graduation he worked several jobs as a security guard.

At the same time, about 20 of his relatives were working at San Quentin. But he says that being a correctional officer did not appeal to him because people from his East Oakland neighborhood were serving time, some at San Quentin.

His uncles encouraged him to consider the position. They thought that their young nephew would be able to handle the challenge of working in a prison that held folks from his neighborhood. One uncle reminded Robinson that he'd been around people doing wrong all his life, but that had not stopped him from "doing the right thing."

Robinson was persuaded and took the job. After less than a month with the department, he saw that being a correctional officer was a good career move. As a rookie, Robinson says he was mentored by his uncle; he saw how an effective correctional officer conducts himself. He quickly perceived that treating incarcerated people with respect and dignity fosters a safe environment.

San Quentin's Public Information Officer

Robinson moved up the ranks of CDCR and in October 2007 became San Quentin's Public Information Officer. One of his duties as PIO was to conduct tours of the prison. In this role, a quiet and subtle optimism became evident.

He was not your run-of-the-mill PIO. "San Quentin has always had this maverick type of group of folks that live here, work here and done things a little bit different than the traditional," Robinson said.

Grand juries, judges, district attorneys, teachers, high school students, college students and various other elements of society regularly tour San Quentin. To help lead these groups through the prison, Robinson assembled a team of incarcerated residents that accompany the tours to help explain prison life and operations to the visitors.

In this way the PIO brought disparate groups of people together and provided them an opportunity to have a good look at each other.

"Lieutenant Robinson gives tours to show the outside community what rehabilitation looks like," said San Quentin resident Timothy Hicks, who became a part of the tour team six years ago.

"By doing the tours, Robinson gives us the opportunity to show the public that we deserve to come back to the community. The public can feel comfortable about us returning to society," Hicks said.

Robinson's 26 years of experience inside of prisons has broadened his belief that treating people humanely and with dignity earns trust, which is a vital element that fosters peaceful communities and in the end, does what we all want — brings us home to our families as better people.

Sam Robinson's duties as Public Information Officer have brought him into contact with a wide variety of people, including (counter-clockwise from left): Jody Lewen, president of Mt. Tamalpais College; Golden State Warriors power forward Draymond Green; Earlone Woods, formerly incarcerated co-founder of the award-winning *Ear Hustle* podcast; and Aly Tamboura, former layout designer for the *San Quentin News*, who is now working with non-profits aimed at criminal justice reform.

Robinson's enduring legacy within San Quentin's media center will be his trademark smile and human connection with those he worked with, including the incarcerated staff of *San Quentin News* and *Wall City* magazine, the *ForwardThis* video production team, and *SQTV*, and inside and outside members of the *Ear Hustle* podcast.

Far left: Sam Robinson in the *Ear Hustle* studio with Ted Koppel and a producer from *CBS Sunday Mornings*.

Left: Robinson with Krissi Khokhobashvili, Chief, Strategic Communications and External Affairs; then-CDCR Press Secretary Vicky Waters; *SQNews* advisers Linda Xiques and Nicki Meredith.

"It has been my absolute pleasure to work with Sam Robinson for the last five years. I consider Sam to be a mentor, confidant and friend. Sam is the embodiment of what it means to be a true correctional professional. Sam has greatly impacted the SQ population by restoring hope and dignity one conversation at a time. Sam enters into retirement with the deep respect of his subordinates, his peers and this administration. Wardens come and go, but there will only be one Sam Robinson. I wish him the best."
—Ron Broomfield, SQ Warden

Sam Robinson, counter-clockwise from below left: taking a moment to pose with Elmo at the San Quentin visiting room during an event for children of the incarcerated; alongside SQ Warden Ron Broomfield; with CDCR Secretary Kathleen Allison; and attending a recent media center meeting with SQ's new Public Information Officer, Lieutenant G. Berry.

EDITORIAL

Saying goodbye to a legend and embracing his legacy

By Marcus Henderson
Editor in Chief

In my journey with the *San Quentin News* some extraordinary people have challenged me, and touched and changed my life. Captain Sam Robinson is one of those extraordinary people. He is beyond inspirational. Robinson embodies what it means to be truly human. In this dichotomy of "cops and robbers," or in this environment, correctional officers versus convicts, the Captain rises well above political attitudes and viewpoints. He is a professional genius, not boxed-in by the standards of others.

He is known as the "Mayor of San Quentin" for a reason. There is not a person in the prison—be it a correctional officer, a staff member or incarcerated person—that he will not stop and listen to. I mean really stop and "listen to"—he lets you know that you are heard and he will go out of his way to help you if it's possible. Robinson's personality never varies; he treats everybody the same no matter your status in the prison.

He does not have one face or manner with correctional officers and another face or manner for the incarcerated population. He is who he is always. Over the years, I have never heard him raise his voice or seen a frown on his face, even if someone came at him sideways, which, if that ever happened, was rare. I don't know what Robinson's "superpowers" are, but I know they include kindness.

I am proud to call him a mentor in my life. I have watched his quiet leadership style. He led with care and not with fear. I admire him for being so comfortable in his skin. When it came to a discussion, or as he led tours of visitors into the prison, he had a way of asking you just the right question to prompt you to explain your life philosophies. He wouldn't challenge your ideas or beliefs; he just wanted to teach you to be clear in what you were saying and to have conviction.

Robinson instilled in us (the incarcerated who had the pleasure to be around him) that rehabilitation has more than one aspect, that as we work on ourselves, there are still victims and survivors of our crimes. "They have a right to feel what they feel about you and about what happened to them. You can't tell people how to feel," he would say. That gets your attention; it makes you look remorse in the eye. He didn't say it to shame you; he said it to challenge us to walk out our rehabilitation and make our amends in every circumstance.

Discussions with Captain Robinson were rich with wisdom, with truth and with reality checks. When incarcerated people unfamiliar with Robinson's ways would join our conversations and they would say "I caught my case," you could see the smiles come to our faces; we would just wait for it. At this point Robinson would ask, "What do you mean you 'caught your case'?" Was someone just throwing crime around and you caught one?"

You committed your crime—it's about having accountability. That was the message. There are rare people you meet in life; I am talking about people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, or Mother Teresa. For me, Captain Robinson is one of those people. He is a bright light in a very dark place. He would say he had "big shoulders" to carry the weight of the task he was given of protecting the rights of everyone within the prison, especially when he was San Quentin's Public Information Officer.

Under Robinson's guidance, a bunch of convicts were turned into award winning journalists working with the *San Quentin News*, the *Ear Hustle* podcast, the *UNCUFFED* radio program, and the *First Watch/Forward This* video teams—more than 20 incarcerated people who worked under Robinson's supervision in the Media Center have paroled with a zero-percent recidivism rate. More directly stated, not one has returned to prison.

The strangest and most amazing thing Robinson instilled in us (incarcerated people) was about giving other prisoners "second chances." You don't always have to discipline a person, you don't always have to fire someone, and you don't always have to send someone to administrative segregation (the hole), he said. Just turn the situation into a learning opportunity and teach responsibility. Wouldn't you want to be given a second chance for a bad decision?

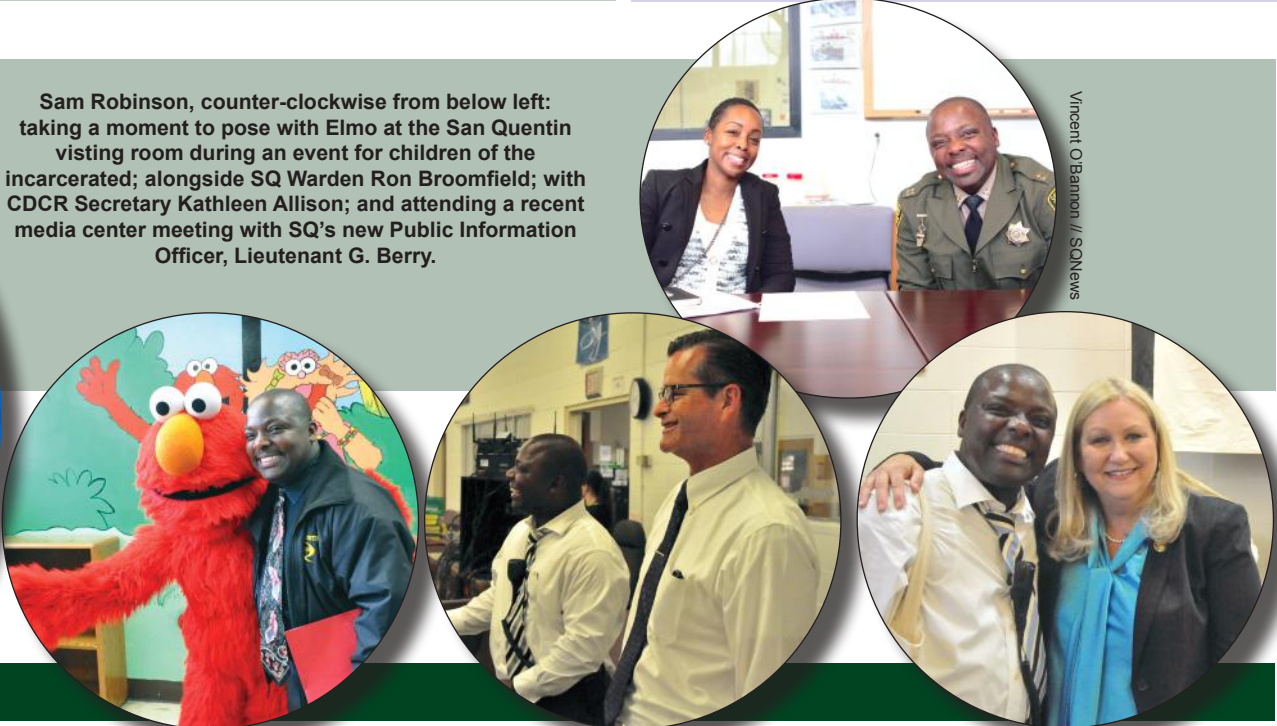
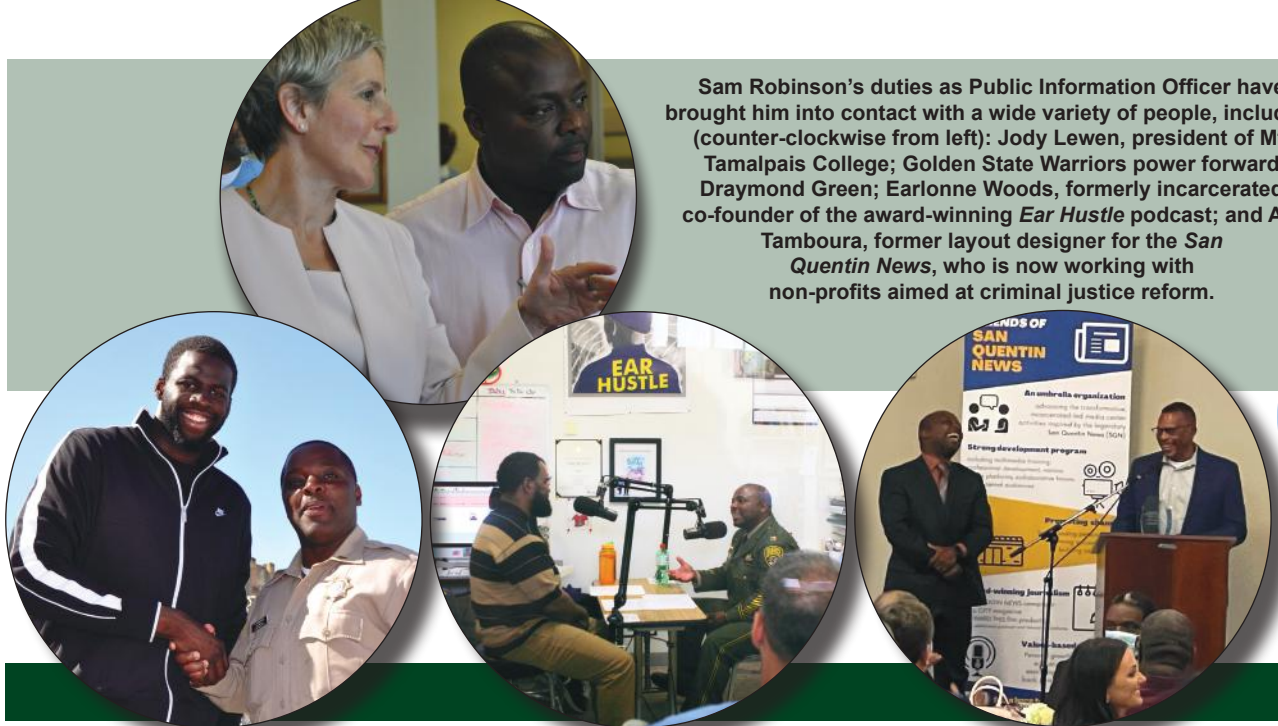
Robinson's humble spirit, infectious smile and laugh will be missed. Thank you, Captain Robinson, for restoring our humanity, even when we didn't see it in ourselves and others may never see it. Public safety is more than just punishment; it can be wrapped in care. Thank you from all of us.



All photos from SQNews archive unless otherwise noted

Photo by Eddie Herena // SQNews — Illustration by Andrew Hardy // SQNews

Captain Sam Robinson retires after 26 years of service to San Quentin



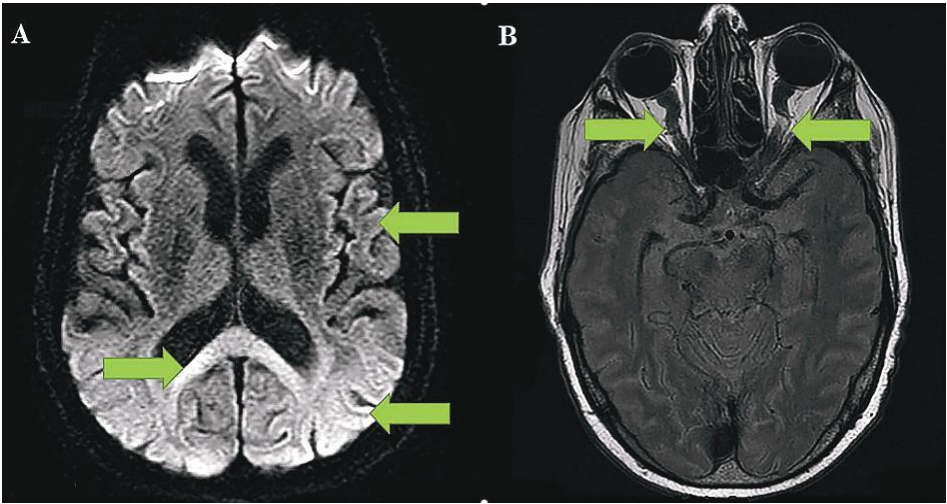
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HEALTH

Study: Covid-induced neurological impairment could last two years



Stock image

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

People infected by COVID-19 have increased threats of neurological and psychiatric damage up to two years after infection, Oxford University has reported.

“We found that the risks of post-COVID neurological and psychiatric outcomes follow different trajectories: the risk of cognitive deficit, stroke, dementia, psychotic disorder, and epilepsy or seizures remains elevated two years after SARS-CoV-2 infection,” Oxford’s Senior Research Fellow Maxime Taquet reported.

The study was published in the *Journal of Lancet Psychiatry*. Taquet configured data that highlights “long-hauler” psychiatric disorders. The study involved 1.28 million patients, making it the largest of its kind. The story was published in August in *Market Watch*, the *Washington Post* and *Time* magazine.

Oxford University collaborated with the National Institute for Health and Care Research Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre to

determine adults aged 64 and under had an increased risk of brain fog, and stroke. They also discovered those above 65 inherited an increased risk of brain fog, dementia and psychotic disorders.

According to recent government estimates, 7-23 million people in the United States have long COVID symptoms, including fatigue, breathlessness and anxiety that persist for weeks or months once the acute infection subsides. Damage from cases should increase as coronavirus settles into its endemic phase, proving it has the capability of affecting nearly every part of the body — including the brain, the stories reported.

The report notes COVID victims are at increased risk of having 14 neurological and psychiatric diagnoses, including stroke, brain fog, dementia, psychosis, anxiety and depression.

“Findings are relevant... for researchers seeking to identify the mechanisms underpinning brain sequelae of COVID-19, and for patients and clinicians wishing to know the neurological and psychiatric risks following

SARS-CoV-2 infections,” said the Oxford report.

David Putrino, director of rehabilitation innovation at Mount Sinai Health System in New York, studies permanent brain damage from the impact of coronavirus. His expertise analyzing the pandemic’s early stages qualified him to review the Oxford study. Putrino agreed with Oxford’s findings, stating he believes the report appears very troubling.

“It [the study] allows us to see without a doubt the emergence of significant neuropsychiatric sequelae in individuals that had COVID far more frequently than those who did not,” he said.

Strains that differed did not affect the study much as researchers cited Omicron triggered less severe immediate symptoms but had adverse, longer-term neurological and psychiatric damages when compared to the Delta waves.

Co-founder of the Patient-Led Research Collaborative, Hannah Davis, concluded the findings were meaningful. “It goes against the narrative that Omicron is more mild for long-COVID,

which is not based on science,” Davis said.

Maxime Taquet, author of the Oxford report, added that the results “highlight the need for more research to understand why this happens after COVID-19, and what can be done to prevent these disorders from occurring, or treat them when they do.”

“We see this all the time,” Putrino said. “The general conversation keeps leaving out long-COVID. The severity of initial infection doesn’t matter when we talk about long-term sequelae that ruin people’s lives.”

Long-COVID or Post-Acute COVID Symptom occurs when individuals possess at least one persistent symptom that remains after infection from COVID-19. Earlier research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates the growing problem, which remains for months, affects roughly one in five people in the U.S.

Here’s what the numbers say:

The global tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 topped 593.4 million in August of 2022, while the death toll rose above 6.44 million, according to data aggregated by Johns Hopkins University.

The U.S. leads the world with 93.3 million cases and 1,039,037 fatalities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s tracker shows that 223.5 million people living in the U.S. are fully vaccinated, equal to 67.3% of the total population. But just 107.9 million have had a first booster, equal to 48.3% of the vaccinated population.

Just 21 million of the people 50 years old and over who are eligible for a second booster have had one, equal to 32.7% of those who had a first booster.

Newsom to phase out Covid state of emergency

By Dante D. Jones
Staff Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom will discontinue the COVID-19 state of emergency order implemented in 2020, according to a report issued by the governor’s office on October 17, 2022, reported the *Los Angeles Times* Oct. 17.

The State of Emergency gave Newsom broad powers to respond to the pandemic. It allowed him to issue masking and vaccination mandates as well as temporary stay-at-home orders. It also allowed him to enter into billions of dollars worth of emergency response contracts, bypassing the usual bidding process. The State of Emergency will phase out on February 28, 2023. According to information released by the governor’s office, the timeline will give “the health care system needed flexibility to handle any potential surge that may occur after the holidays ...” It also stated that the timeline will give “state and local partners” time to prep for phasing out of the state of emergency successfully.

The SMARTER Plan—an acronym that stands for Shots, Masks, Awareness, Readiness, Testing, Education, Rx—will remain in place to continue to assist the state in its efforts to keep the virus at bay.

“Throughout the pandemic, we’ve been guided by the science and data moving quickly and strategically to save lives. The State of Emergency was an effective and necessary tool that we utilized to protect our state, and we wouldn’t have gotten to this point without it,” said Gov. Newsom. “With the operational preparedness that we’ve built up and the measures that we’ll continue to employ moving forward, California is ready to phase out of this tool.”

B. Raheem Ballard, a resident of San Quentin, says he is content with the Governor’s decision.

“For someone who has been through one of the worst pandemic situations in California’s prison history, I’m alright with Governor Newsom’s decision to scale back COVID-19 restrictions. Our lives have been so restricted: this whole thing of having to be covered up every place you go, restrictions on how we are housed and how we eat. I’m glad he’s bringing [the State of Emergency] to a close, because COVID is not going anywhere. We could stay in this hyper-cautious state all the time, but when would it end?” Ballard said.

“I applaud him over the last couple of years for being transparent and pro-active in handling this nightmare—one that seems to be coming to an end.”

Newsom’s office said that the state’s 81 million vaccinations over the course of three years lead to dramatic reductions in hospitalizations and deaths.

With mitigation measures such as vaccines and boosters, testing and treatments, masking and indoor ventilation, the Governor believes that the tools the state has will assist it in continuing to fight the pandemic once the State of Emergency ends in February.

“California’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic has prepared us for whatever comes next. As we move into this next phase, the infrastructure and processes we’ve invested in and built up will provide us the tools to manage any ups and downs in the future,” said Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, Dr. Mark Ghaly. “While the threat of this virus is still real, our preparedness and collective work have helped turn this once crisis emergency into a manageable situation.”

HIV: Prevention, Testing and Treatment



Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) is a network of community health clinics that serve returning community members. TCN clinic programs are led by community health workers (CHWs) with lived experience of incarceration and reentry who support TCN patients with their healthcare and reentry. TCN hosts a monthly Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column. This column is a space where we answer questions about healthcare and empower individuals to prepare for healthy reentry. This month we are writing about HIV — how to prevent, identify, and treat.

What is HIV?

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the immune system so the body cannot defend from other infections or diseases. This virus can be treated but not cured. HIV is spread by certain body fluids, most commonly through unprotected sex, sharing needles or syringes, or childbirth. Some symptoms of HIV include fever, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, diarrhea, and weight loss. If it is not treated, HIV can weaken the body and become *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)*, which can be life-threatening.

MYTH: You can get HIV from kissing or holding hands.

FACT: You cannot get HIV from saliva, from touching skin surfaces, or from sharing objects like toilet seats. It is passed through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, or breast milk.

MYTH: Only certain people get HIV.

FACT: HIV affects everyone. People of all genders and sexualities can get HIV.

MYTH: Medications can cure HIV.

FACT: HIV can be treated but not cured. Treatments will be required for life to stay healthy. Medications like PrEP and PEP can also help prevent you from getting HIV if you are high risk or exposed.

What are PrEP and PEP?

PrEP (*Pre-exposure prophylaxis*) is an HIV-prevention medication. It reduces the risk of getting HIV through unprotected sex by 99% and the risk of getting it through sharing drug-injection devices by 74%. Because HIV cannot be cured, stopping the spread of HIV is important to keep you and those around you safe. PEP (*post-exposure prophylaxis*) is a medication you can take immediately after exposure to HIV to reduce your chances of getting the virus. You must take it within 72 hours of exposure to HIV. It can reduce the risk of getting the virus by up to 80%. (All statistical information on HIV, PrEP, and PEP is from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention.)

What services for HIV are available in prison?

You can get tested and treated for HIV through medical services at CDCR. All patients at CDCR are offered HIV testing to check for the virus (called “screening”). You can also request testing. You may want to get tested more often if you have shared needles

or had unprotected sex. If you are living with HIV, treatment is important and you can receive medications to treat HIV while inside. Medications (called *ART — Antiretroviral Treatment*) can help you stay healthy and prevent spreading HIV to others. Most people can get the virus under control in six months with consistent HIV medications.

Unfortunately, you cannot get PrEP or PEP in prison — you must wait until you get out to get this preventative care. However, here are other steps you can take inside to prevent HIV: use condoms during sex and new needles/syringes for drug injection when possible and avoid getting new tattoos or piercings while incarcerated.

What services for HIV are available in the community?

When you get out, you can get many services in the community, including testing, treatment (ART), and prevention (PEP, PrEP, and harm reduction supplies like syringes and condoms). Services will differ by health clinic in the community. Some clinics have HIV-specific programs with lots of medical and social services. Some clinics may have doctors who do PrEP/PEP but others may not. Make sure to ask for what you want to find out if the clinic can meet your specific needs.

If you want to be tested for HIV, you can ask:

“Can I get tested for HIV? I think I may have been exposed or I want to make sure I’m healthy.”

If you want to see a medical provider to get PrEP and PEP, you can ask:

“Do you have PrEP or PEP? I want to make sure I don’t get HIV. Would you be able to write me a prescription?”

If you are living with HIV and you need

to start treatment, ask the doctor:

“I have HIV and need treatment. How can we begin that treatment?”

If you are already on HIV treatment, ask the doctor:

“I have HIV and am already receiving treatment. How can I continue it?”

What should I know before I leave prison?

You will meet with health care staff at CDCR to plan for going home. You should also sign up for Medi-Cal insurance. You will get 30 days of medications when you get out, but make sure to make a medical appointment as soon as possible!

Remember, preventing HIV is key and you can take steps to prevent it. Talk openly with your sexual partners about health and use protection for intercourse, avoid sharing needles or syringes, and consider getting PrEP or PEP from a community provider upon release. Remember that your health can also impact the health of those around you, both inside and outside of prison, and your daily health choices helps keep you and your community healthy.

If you are living with HIV, find a doctor you can work well with and stick with your treatment! Know that you are not defined by your status. There are effective treatment options available that can help you live a full, happy and healthy life.

If you have healthcare-related questions about reentry, feel free to write us at: Transitions Clinic Network, 2403 Keith Street, San Francisco, CA 94124. Or call our Reentry Health Hotline today at (510) 606-6400 to speak with a CHW and to see if there’s a TCN program in your community of return. We accept collect calls from CDCR. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

EDUCATION

HIDDEN GEMS
Contributed by Mount
Tamalpais College

What does it take to build a healthy community? We've been exploring this question by interviewing MTC alumni who are contributing to their communities in a variety of ways. This is the beginning of a series we're calling In the Community, focusing on returning citizens and the impact they have both outside and inside San Quentin.

Vaughn Miles and Jason Green are from Richmond and are now back in the community which they recognize so well. Both Vaughn and Jason now work for the City of Richmond Office of Neighborhood and Safety as mentors serving at-risk youth. We spoke to them to learn more about their backgrounds, their current work, and how they help young people in their hometown.

"Growing up, it was fun," said Vaughn. "We rode our bikes all over Richmond. We used to run our dogs; I used to be into pit bulls. I'd run my dog from one side of Richmond to the other side of Richmond. Those are the good times."

Jason Green said, "Growing up without a lot of money, and when the crack era started, I actually started selling drugs to pay my football fee. I was playing for the Richmond Steelers."

Growing up in rough neigh-

borhoods Vaughn and Jason adapted to their culture. However, consequences came with just navigating their environment.

"I'd rather hang out on the streets," said Vaughn. "I didn't just sell dope, I started off robbing. I did robberies and then slowed down the robberies and started selling drugs. School I didn't want to be there. I already know when I go there all I'm going to do is get teased. You don't have lunch money. I don't like going to the free lunch line."

Jason said, "[On the streets] you ran into money you never had before. You could buy things you never had before. And just our culture turning, being so materialistic from slavery and all that, we looked at each other's value as what do you have, what's appealing?" Jason explained.

Jason and Vaughn were both at San Quentin at the same time. Both of them facilitated and graduated from many self-help groups, and took courses at Mt. Tam College.

Said Vaughn, "I got my GED when I was in there and I fought to get that. I had to take

"Be serious about the man that you want to become. Not for the board, not for no female, not for nobody, but because you want to be a good person man."
—Vaughn Miles

the test a few times to get it. And then when I got that outta the way, now I wanted to go see what this college was about, and I know college was helpful in a lot of ways ... it started slowly building my confidence up, and then the staff, man they went all out the way to help you. It was nobody looking down on you or making you feel stupid because you didn't know something. You could have asked them the stupidest stuff and they sat there and broke it down with the purest of heart for you."

"Sitting inside them classes and getting help, and the people ... that's what helped

transform me out of my state of mind," said Vaughn. "When I stepped into that field of giving back, that became my desire."

This "desire" is a lifestyle now. Vaughn and Jason do gun violence prevention and conflict mediation.

"And our thing is to get in between it," Jason said. "And so, as I say, getting in between it is standing on street corners. It's risking our lives. ... We stand on street corners just to give them something, give them some knowledge, the wisdom of the day. Anytime we see them out. Maybe some resonate. Sometimes we say something, we drive away and they don't take heed, and they're dead."

Both Jason and Vaughn understand what it takes to build a healthy community. "We take these youngsters out to see things that they can aspire to be. Things that they don't see in their neighborhood. And a lot of times just to relax," said Jason.

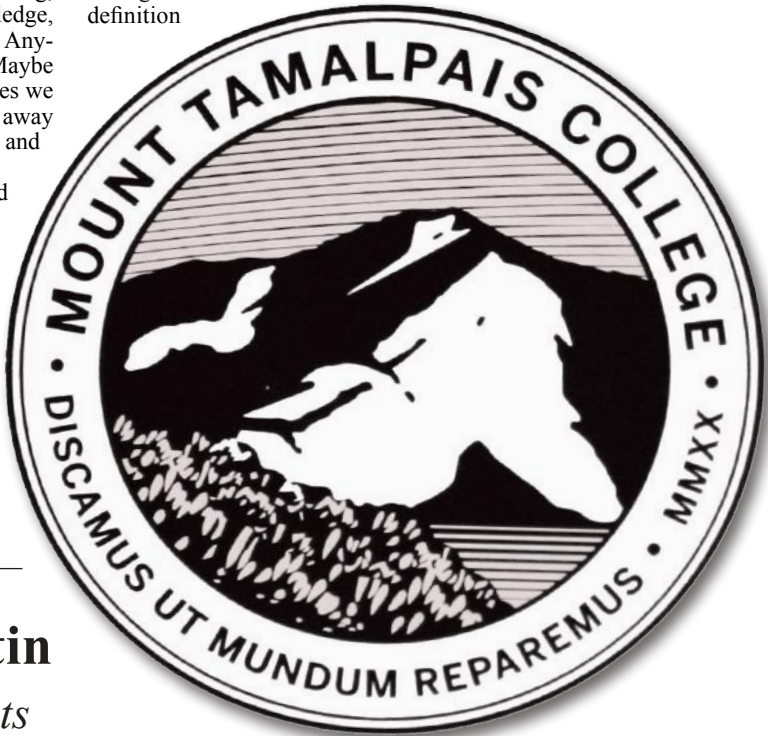
However, both also understand that change

doesn't happen in one day. "... take your life seriously man. Take full advantage of that education. Take full advantage of the people that are pouring into you, the programs," Vaughn stresses. "Be serious about the man that you want to become. Not for the board, not for no female, not for nobody, but because you want to be a good person man."

Having the strength to be accountable and help build the same community you've damaged is the definition

of making amends. Jason and Vaughn are both true hidden gems that lead by example.

Vaughn said "Do whatever you doing from the purest heart and within the best intentions man, and you will be fine. I don't care if you are struggling in a certain area; you're not as smart as somebody in a certain area. Be pure-hearted and have the best of intentions and you're going to get far."



USF students attend philosophy course at San Quentin
Experimental classroom integrates free and incarcerated students

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

A group of University of San Francisco students spent part of their fall semester in a classroom at San Quentin State Prison. They were taking a philosophy course alongside incarcerated students at the prison's onsite campus — Mount Tamalpais College. It was an eye-opening experience for both groups.

"The most thoughtful and dedicated students I have ever been lucky enough to have class with. Their dedication is beyond anything I've experienced, even at my institution where people pay \$50-75,000 a year to attend," said USF student Dana Baskett.

"A once in a lifetime chance to be on the same level as students from a great university — to be judged and graded equally by the same professor — that's truly amazing," said Mt. Tam's incarcerated philosophy student Ben Shurha.

The students studied side by side in Mt. Tam's Philosophy 271 class taught by Dr. Jennifer Fisher. The course introduces students to some of the world's great philosophers including Socrates, Hobbes, Rousseau, Rawls, Held, Mills and others.

For most of the USF students, attending the course provided their first look inside a prison and their first close contact with incarcerated people.

Anais Offley noted that the manicured garden areas at the prison's entrance are "strikingly reminiscent of USF."

"I didn't know what to expect," said fellow USF student Savannah Perry. "So the scariest part was lack of knowledge. That exact lack of knowledge perpetuates stereotypes and biases about incarcerated people."

The enthusiastic response



Courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Fisher

of their incarcerated classmates soon reassured the USF students.

"The media portrays prison as unwelcoming to a group of privileged students; to my surprise they were extremely welcoming, more so than any [other] classroom I had been in," said Will Murphy.

Sandy Yan praised her incarcerated classmates. "It felt [as if] I was in a normal classroom. They were engaged and so kind to us."

As the class progressed, fresh perspectives began to take shape among the visiting students.

"The level of engagement impressed me—every class. I've studied philosophy the past four years and it's a genuine pleasure to see the application of philosophical texts in the lives of Mt. Tam students," said Perry.

Dr. Fisher, who has volunteered at Mt. Tam since 2011, invested much time and effort in laying the groundwork for the integrated classroom.

"I worked with administrations from USF, Mt. Tam and CDCR for two years to establish this class setting. Student visitation approvals were finalized in September," said Fisher.

On Sept. 6, in anticipation of the arrival of the guest

students from USF, Fisher introduced her incarcerated Mt. Tam students to the curriculum the two groups would have in common.

"Social Contract Theory, as a basis of philosophy, shines a lens on our current society," Fisher said. "This semester you will sharpen that lens with students from the University of San Francisco."

Dr. Amy Jamgochian, Chief Academic Officer of Mt. Tam, expressed her appreciation for the accomplishment. "We're thrilled to see this course in action, trying to expand the inside/out model with one of our veteran professors," said Jamgochian.

Two Covid quarantines of the incarcerated students interrupted the semester, but the coursework continued via correspondence with the quarantined students.

USF students provided research assistance to their Mt. Tam cohorts to ensure that both groups had equal access to resources.

Students wrote a 2,000-word critical analysis related to Social Contract Theory, and presented their findings in a five-minute presentation.

According to the class syllabus, one aspect of the integrated education experiment was to further a USF vision of

developing leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world. Remarks by participating USF students reflected the thoughtfulness that the experience provoked.

"I am a supporter of social reform and intrigued by restorative justice as a more humane alternative. I don't know the exact solution, but there has to be a better option," said USF student Emma Grant.

Fellow USF student Jack Li said, "It's interesting hearing their [incarcerated] view on how social contracts should be constructed since they come from unfortunate backgrounds."

USF's Jade Cao reflected on long-term incarceration, "Should people really be punished their whole life just because they made a mistake?"

Anais Offley noticed that the restricted movements of the incarcerated "emphasized the dehumanizing nature of the whole system overall. It's not a place where humans belong."

San Quentin's Mt. Tam students welcomed the opportunity to make an impression on the students from USF. "What we changed was the mind of 15 brilliant future leaders. They got to see what social reform is all about," said Mt. Tam student Mike Nickerson.

Mt. Tam celebrated
as example of inmate
assistance programs

By Manuel Dorado
Journalism Guild Writer

Inmate assistance programs are a cost-effective way of reducing recidivism and helping the formerly incarcerated adjust to life outside prison, *The Crime Report* states.

The report notes that programs like the Prison University Project at San Quentin State Prison (now Mount Tamalpais College) are inmate assistance programs that help substantially reduce recidivism.

"Criminal justice reforms that use shorter imprisonment sentences and more frequent use of Inmate Assistant Programs can reduce crime, as well as the cost of administering the criminal justice system," according to the report.

In this research paper the university professors specifically address criticisms about inmate assistance programs that are often made. One is that they aren't cost effective.

Mount Tam College relies heavily on voluntary services from university teachers and students. But this program is considered to be an anomaly, according to the paper.

"The actual cost of running similar programs is very high," the authors acknowledge, sometimes exceeding the state's average cost of incarcerating one inmate.

"Because imprisonment generates small marginal deterrence effects when the sentence is very lengthy to begin with, a reduction in the

Such programs "can bridge the gap between the incarcerated and the general public, paving the way for the reintegration of the incarcerated population"

sentences for repeat offenders can lead to significant per-inmate cost savings without generating large increases in recidivism incentives," the authors write.

The study found that such programs are "crucial policy tools" for reducing mass incarceration in the world's most populous prison system. These tools can improve the lives and health outcomes of families, the report maintains.

Such programs "can bridge the gap between the incarcerated and the general public, paving the way for the reintegration of the incarcerated population," the authors concluded.

The Aug. 15 article is titled: "Inmate Assistance Programs: Toward a Less Punitive and More Effective Criminal Justice System." It was compiled by Professors Murat C. Mungan and Yijia Lu at George Mason University, and Eckmen Giray, an assistant professor of economics at Grand Valley State University-Seidman School of Business.

LITTLE SCANDINAVIA: Norwegian prison model takes shape at Pennsylvania facility

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

Prison officials in Pennsylvania are putting Norway’s progressive prison model to the test in an experimental housing unit nicknamed “Little Scandinavia,” according to an Oct. 2022 article in *The Conversation*.

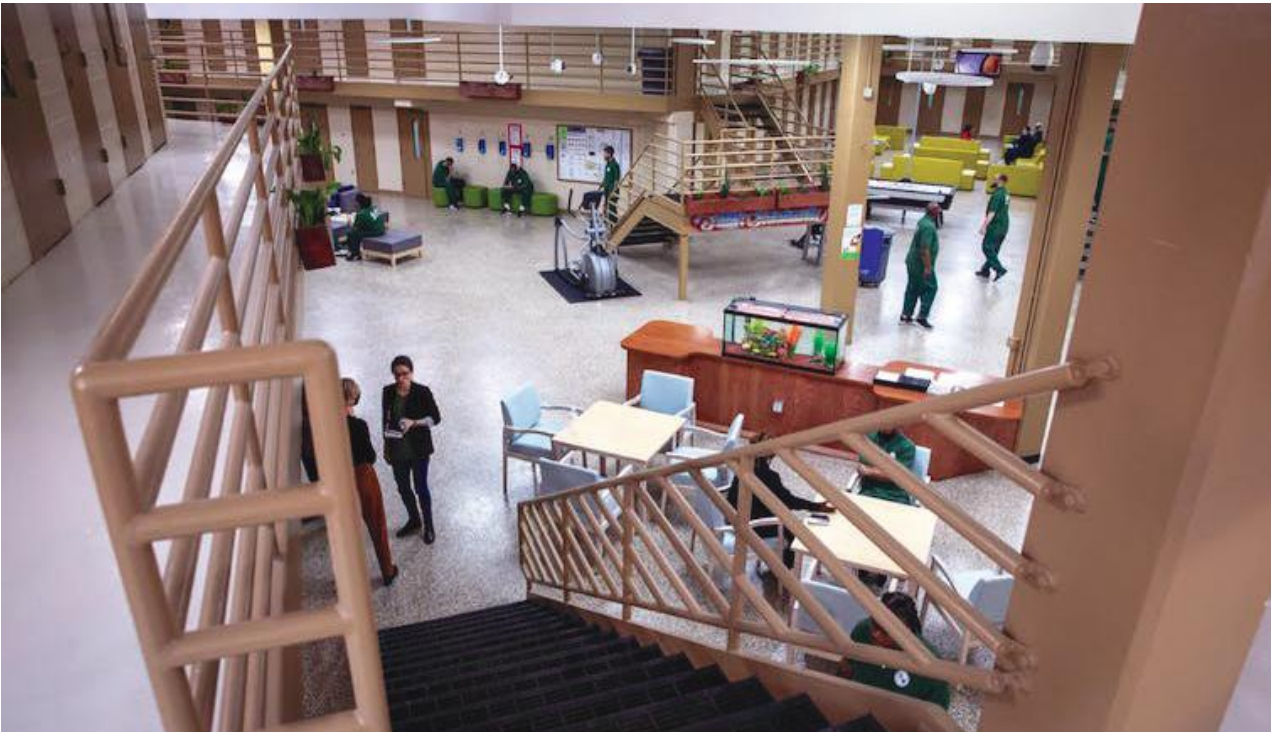
Little Scandinavia is part of the medium-security State Correctional Institution Chester, located outside of Philadelphia. It features amenities common in Norway but otherwise unheard of in U.S. prisons — single cells, a communal kitchen and a fresh grocery program through a local store among others. Live plants provide cheerful decoration in communal areas with a large, colorful fish tank serving as a focal point for people to gather around.

Inspired by Norway’s prison system, the experimental unit maintains a high ratio of staff to incarcerated — one officer for every eight residents. By contrast, the prison’s other units have ratios of one to 128.

As part of their training, officers in the unit toured prisons in Scandinavia, and received instruction on how to facilitate constructive communication with their individually assigned residents.

Residents are expected to manage their own schedules for work, school, or treatment programs. Data collection is in its early stages as the program continues to expand and evolve, but according to researchers, there have been no acts of violence thus far even with access to potentially dangerous kitchen equipment.

The effort is part of the Scandinavian Prison Project,



Courtesy of Creative Commonwealth Media

a collaboration between correctional services in Pennsylvania and their Scandinavian counterparts in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

Data to evaluate the program’s performance is being collected and analyzed by an international team of social scientists, according to the researchers in a 2021 article published in the *American Criminal Law Review*.

The Scandinavian prison model focuses on rehabilitation, normalcy, and humanness with an emphasis on facilitating interactions between correctional officers and those in their custody so they can be “better neighbors” upon their release.

Commenting on Norway’s

prisons after a tour, one officer said, “Everything that you saw emulated normalcy. There was nothing really other than the lock on their doors and housing units that state, you know, oh, this is a prison. [It] didn’t feel like a prison ... every activity from the time they wake up to going to bed, togetherness is encouraged ... The officers [are] with the inmates together [in] training and school and leisure activity, sharing mealtimes. Yes, it makes it less likely for people to commit offenses against each other. And it makes for [a] very much more relaxed environment.”

However, critics have derided this “soft” approach, saying it doesn’t punish crim-

inals enough. Skeptics claim it wouldn’t work in the U.S. due to cultural differences and because the costs would be too high given the much larger number of people incarcerated in America.

According to reporting by the *New York Times Magazine*, the incarceration rate in the U.S., the highest in the world, is ten times that of Norway’s. The U.S. currently incarcerates nearly two million people in its prisons, jails, and detention centers.

When it comes to cost, the Vera Institute of Justice reported that Norway’s flagship maximum-security Halden prison spent \$93,000 per incarcerated person in 2015. While this is more than the

\$31,000 spent on average per incarcerated person in the U.S., it is less than the \$106,000 spent in California’s prisons in 2021, according to government figures.

California’s recidivism rates, however, remain in excess of 50 to 60%. According to reporting by the *Detroit News*, a study by the U.S. Department of Justice estimated national recidivism rates are even worse, at over 75%. By contrast, a study commissioned by the Norwegian Correctional Service found theirs were around 20%, among the lowest, if not the lowest, in the world.

This project is one the first data-intensive tests of the Scandinavian penal model in

the U.S. The researchers note that, “A critical consideration of the basic nature of prison environments is often omitted from conversations about reform.”

Work designing the Little Scandinavia unit began in 2018. It was guided by Scandinavian design principles, and led by correctional officers from the prison, according to *The Conversation*.

The team, along with leadership from the Pennsylvania DOC, then toured prisons in Scandinavia for several weeks in 2019. The American correctional officers worked in Norwegian prisons alongside peer mentors as part of an exchange organized by the UC San Francisco-based Amend project.

The experimental unit was launched in 2020 with a group of six “lifers” who were selected from SCI Chester to serve as mentors for future cohorts, provide feedback to fine-tune policies, and develop plans for self-governance.

After a hiatus due to COVID-19, 29 more residents were added to the unit in May 2022. They were selected by lottery from the general population of the prison. In creating the unit, “Nothing was off-limits in the discussion of what should be changed and how” by the correctional team, stated the researchers in the *American Criminal Law Review*.

“It remains to be seen how these efforts will play out in the long-term,” wrote the researchers. “Data from this Project, and rigorous research on other efforts, can inform conversations about what the future of prison reform in the U.S. could look like.”

Hawaiian youth corrections eliminates imprisonment of girls

By Jad Salem
Journalism Guild Writer

As of July 2022, there were no girls imprisoned in all of Hawaii, according to reporting by *The Washington Post*.

In 2014, Mark Patterson took over as administrator of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility; 500 acres of farmland and the residence of 26 boys and seven girls between 13 and 19 years old, according to the article.

By 2016 his office in Kailua, Oahu only held five or six girls at a time. By June 2016 that number dropped to zero.

Patterson said this achievement was the result of a system-wide undertaking “20 years in the making,” to redirect girls from the carceral system and into trauma-based care programs. The number of detained boys has also greatly decreased in the last ten years, Patterson added.

Patterson said the children who are sent to the youth facility “have run away from programs 10 to 11 times” and are the most vulnerable of at-risk youth. However, other state authorities have concurred that “we no longer want to keep sending our kids to prison,” Patterson said.

“What I’m trying to do is end the punitive model that we have so long used for our kids, and we replace it with a therapeutic model,” Patterson said. “What kind of other environment is more conducive for her to heal and be successful in the community?”

Other states have also eliminated girls in long-term placement facilities, accord-

ing to the article.

Lindsay Rosenthal, director of the Vera Institute’s Initiative to End Girl’s Incarceration, said both Maine and Vermont have zero girls incarcerated statewide. New York City hasn’t had more than two girls in the state’s juvenile placement facility at a time.

This is part of a bigger pattern in juvenile justice reform. Starting around 2000, over 1,000 juvenile facilities have shut down, including two-thirds of the biggest facilities. Youth incarceration rates more than halved between 2000 and 2018, according to the Square One Project, a justice reform initiative.

Activists say most incarcerated girls are incarcerated for low-level offenses, often impacted by a history of poverty. Using limited data, researchers also believe a disproportionate number of detained youth are non-binary or transgender.

Gender-focused programming is fundamental, Rosenthal added, due to “the criminalization of sexual abuse” stemming from American colonization and slavery, which has led to the disproportionately high incarceration rates of Black and Indigenous women and girls.

“No matter what girls are charged with in the juvenile legal system today, the most common reason why they’re incarcerated, which most leaders openly talk about, is that they are not safe in the community,” Rosenthal said. “That’s wrong, and it has incredibly deep, historical

Shift in policy and practice focuses on girls’ history of trauma

roots.”

In May, the Interior Department released an investigative report into the deaths of children in the care of federal boarding schools, which operated from 1819 to 1969 and separated Native Hawaiians and Native American children from their families. Hawaiian schools include the Kawaioloa and Waialeale Industrial and Reformatory Schools, which merged to form the youth facility in 1961.

Patterson said the movement to replace punitive systems with trauma-informed care in Hawaii’s system began in 2004 when Judge Karen Radius, then First Circuit Family Court judge, established Girls Court. One of the first in the country, the program meant to address the particular violations and trauma of girls.

“News that there are currently no girls in the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility at this point in time is great news,” Radius said. “But we know it doesn’t mean we have solved all the issues facing girls and young women.”

Activists have focused on the disproportionate incarceration of Native Hawaiians throughout decades of Hawaiian criminal justice reform. Research by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in 2009 found that in Hawaii, Native Hawaiians were the most likely ethnic group to become incarcerated, and that their sentences were probably going to be longer.



Wikipedia

In 2014, Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility housed 26 boys and 7 girls between the age of 13-19. By June 2016, the number of girls imprisonment there had dropped to zero.

Patterson said that as far as he can tell, a disproportionate number of teenagers coming to the youth facility are Native Hawaiians — both girls and boys.

Toni Bissen is executive director of the Pu’a Foundation, an association aimed at healing and reconciliation efforts connected with the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

“The generational aspect of loss and power, poverty, violence that just kind of compounds,” Bissen said. “That’s why drugs, truancy and different kinds of things are out-

lets.”

The Pu’a Foundation held a pre-transition class for the last four girls at the facility. One important task was finding programs that could give them specialty care.

Cathy Betts, director of the Department of Human Services in Hawaii, said achieving zero incarcerated girls gave her “hope for the future” — and that trauma-informed care is vital for “any work involving humans.”

“You’ve got to understand that people’s blood, sweat and tears went into this moment,” she said, tearing up. “It

doesn’t happen overnight.”

Patterson is now turning his focus toward passing laws on trauma-informed care. In 2021, Hawaii established a trauma-informed care task force inside the Department of Health. On July 12, 2022, Hawaii also established a temporary office of wellness and resilience in the office of the governor aimed at implementing solutions identified by the task force.

Even with this achievement, Patterson said the work is nowhere near finished. “Now the question is sustaining zero,” Patterson said.

California prisons’ role in aviation history

Planes, dirigibles, mechanics are all part of CDCR history

By Don Chaddock
Editor, Inside CDCR Newsletter
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CDCR institutions have witnessed moments in aviation history while at the same time helped further the field through job training programs. Inside CDCR takes a closer look at the links between California state prisons and the history of aviation.

Officers shoot at plane flying over prison

“Shots were fired by guards when an airplane, disregarding warnings by Warden James A. Johnston, continued to fly over San Quentin prison,” according to the Healdsburg Tribune, April 30, 1923. (The plane) suddenly pitched forward and landed nose down in the soft earth at Baltimore Park, midway between Corte Madera and Larkspur.”

After five passes of a plane over San Quentin, correctional officers opened fire when it dipped low inside prison walls. Some news accounts at the time claim prison staff shot down the plane.

“(The plane) was shot down (when) the pilot ignored a warning to keep away from the prison and flew low over the walls,” reported the Santa Cruz Evening News. “The bullets shattered the plane’s propeller, and it made a spectacular nose dive, landing in the marshland. The occupants escaped injury (but) the machine was wrecked.”

Other reports indicate the plane overheated, forced to land in the nearby field. One of its wheels sunk in the marsh, causing the plane to break a propeller.

Filmmaker, pilot didn’t heed warnings

When prison staff reached the plane, the pilot was checking the damage while a camera man gathered his equipment. Rather than a contraband drop or escape attempt, the pilot had been contracted by a filmmaker.

Movie photographer John Stout argued he had all necessary permits to film, and fly, over the prison. He was getting footage for “The Woman with Four Faces,” about a prisoner escaping by using a rope ladder dropped from an airship.

Planes buzzing San Quentin had become so troublesome, Warden James A. Johnston told his staff to fire if planes came too close to the prison. At one time, Johnston even threatened to mount a cannon on the wall.

The pilot said he made five dips over the prison, then made two “side slips” directly over the yard, all at Stout’s direction.

Only a few shots were taken at the flying machine, according to Johnston. The pilot said he couldn’t hear the gunfire or warnings due to the noise of the plane’s engine.

Historic 1911 flight over San Quentin

Weldon Cooke, a 27-year-old pioneer aviator, made his mark on aviation history when he flew over San Quentin State Prison and Mt. Tamalpais, reaching altitudes of 4,000 to 4,500 feet.

“(Cooke’s) flight took him directly over San Quentin prison, where there are men who have never seen an (airplane),” reported the San Francisco Call.

During his flight, he dropped two letters, making him the first to deliver mail by airdrop in California.

The flight may not have happened if it weren’t for the incarcerated population and the warden. In early 1911, the incarcerated residents penned a letter requesting a fly-over.

“There are hundreds of men confined here who have never seen an (airplane) and some of us probably never will unless by courtesy of the aviator who will come this way,” states the letter signed The Prisoners of San Quentin. “With permission of the warden, (we ask) if it can be arranged for the machine to circle over the prison, so (we) have the opportunity to see it.”

The following year, Cooke became the second person in California to hold a pilot’s license.

In 1914, while flying in Colorado, he was killed when his plane crashed.

US Navy airship Akron flies over prison

The Akron, a military dirigible, was constructed in 1931 and became the U.S. Navy’s flagship for its lighter-than-air program. From New Jersey, the Akron embarked on a cross-country trip to Moffett Field in Sunnyvale near San Francisco. Across the country, people flocked to see the Akron along its flight path.

The experimental “aircraft carrier in the skies” conducted a series of tests, with flying cross country being one of the biggest. As an aircraft carrier, the Akron successfully received small fighter planes in flight, stored them in a hangar, then returned them to the air. The catch-and-release tests relied on a trapeze-like system.

Akron’s goodwill mission

From Moffett Field, the Akron flew a goodwill mission around the state, passing over cities large and small, before taking part in naval maneuvers with the west coast fleet.

On May 17, 1932, San Rafael mourned the loss of Captain Dollar, “whose life and name have been associated with maritime development for more than half a century,” according to news accounts. Town Mayor William Nock requested the Navy fly over the town to pay respects to Dollar. They responded by sending the Akron.

“The huge silver craft sank from the fog mists to a few hundred feet above the housetops and showered blossoms in a special tribute,” reported the Petaluma Argus Courier. “The (Akron) circled above the church where (Dollar) lay in state under guard of a military detachment, (showering) flowers down.”

Dignitaries from across the state attended the funeral, including Governor Rolph who led 60 honorary pallbearers.

Akron visible from prison yard

After dropping flowers, the Akron headed off, passing over San Quentin State Prison at 5:20 p.m., visible to staff and those



Photos courtesy of Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library

Weldon Cooke and his plane at the state fair in Colorado, 1914. Cooke, a 27-year old pioneer in aviation, made history when he flew over San Quentin State Prison and Mt. Tamalpais in 1911.



The USS Akron passes over San Francisco skyline in 1932. The Navy airship was the largest machine in the skies at the time.

in the yard. The airship’s next assignment was to anchor to the mast of the USS Patoka.

After maneuvers and flights as far north as the Canadian border, the Akron was in need of repairs. In June 1932, the Akron left California and returned to New Jersey after five days in the Golden State.

Akron disaster claims 73 lives

In 1933, the Akron was caught in a severe storm on the east coast, crashing into the sea. Survivors were picked up at sea by a passing merchant ship who saw the lights as the airship plummeted. A small airship, J-3, was sent out to assist in the search, joined by additional naval vessels. The J-3 also crashed in the storm, killing two.

In all, the Akron crash claimed the lives of 73 people. There were only three survivors.

One of those killed in the crash was Rear Admiral William Moffett, spelling the end of the flying aircraft carrier program. The Navy continued using blimps and airships for training and searches until the 1960s.

Deuel Vocational Institution trained airplane mechanics

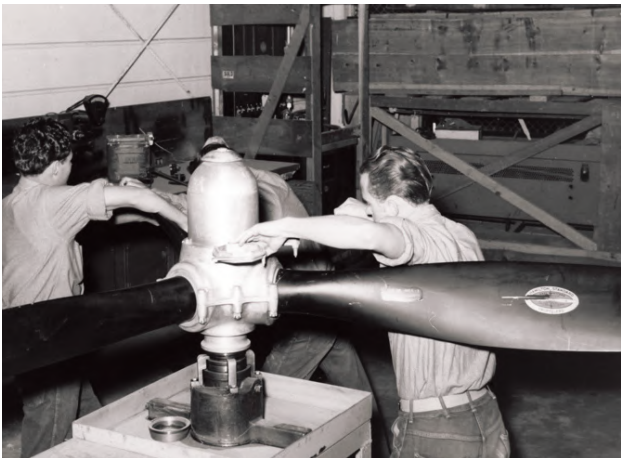
Deactivated in 2021, Deuel Vocational Institution had a unique job-training focus: airplane repair and maintenance. The Tracy location was actually the second for DVI, which began as the California Vocational Institution at Lancaster. Located at War Eagle Field, the institution incorporated available resources into a rehabilitative program.

Prior to becoming a state prison, the institution trained British pilots before the US entered World War II. After the war, vacant military installations found other uses, such as becoming state-run institutions.

Deuel replaced California in the name when it was relocated to Tracy. State Senator Charles Deuel was an advocate for establishing the institution at a permanent facility. He passed away before construction was completed.

Rather than do away with aviation-focused rehabilitative programs already established at DVI, they were transferred to the new location.

DVI operated at Lancaster from 1946 until 1953, when it moved to the Tracy location. At its new location, DVI operated from 1953 until 2021.



Above: A plane propeller test stand at Lancaster, California, the original site of Deuel Vocational Institution from 1946-1953, before the facility’s operations were relocated to Tracy, California. Below: A complete plane delivered to Deuel Vocational Institution.



SPANISH

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

AIDA es una organización cuya meta es crear conciencia sobre la violencia de pareja para erradicar la violencia doméstica. AIDA fue creada en el año 2014 como grupo focal de hombres, sin embargo, se convirtió en una organización sin fines de lucro en el 2019.

Vanessa Silva-Collins, Directora y Co-fundadora de AIDA, dijo “Me di cuenta que había un hueco que necesita ser llenado”. Ella añadió, “Nosotros vemos muchos programas dedicados a los sobrevivientes del abuso doméstico, pero ¿Qué hay de los autores del abusos doméstico? Ellos necesitan algo que les pueda ayudar a reconocer lo que es el abuso doméstico y el gran efecto que causa”.

AIDA comenzó a ofrecer sus servicios por correspondencia en inglés y español, por primera vez, en el 2021. Esta organización les brindó la oportunidad a las personas encarceladas a tomar este curso por correo, cuando las prisiones estaban cerradas por el Coronavirus.

AIDA consiste en 12 módulos y educa a sus participantes sobre el círculo de la violencia doméstica, la cual consta de cuatro fases: El aumento de la

AIDA hace conciencia de la violencia doméstica

Awareness Into Domestic Abuse

tensión, la explosión, la luna de miel y la calma. Los participantes quienes completan el curso reciben un certificado de reconocimiento.

A través del currículo, AIDA invita a sus participantes a reflexionar sobre las raíces y el impacto de la violencia doméstica en sus víctimas, comunidad y en ellos mismos. El curso acentúa que el abuso doméstico no solo

ocurre entre parejas, sino también entre padres e hijos. Hay personas que sufrieron abuso físico, verbal, emocional y sexual, sin importar su género. “Cuando una persona se compromete a cambiar, los resultados de su compromiso cambiarán,” dijo Floyd D. Collins el cofundador de AIDA.

Los datos estadísticos de AIDA demuestran que una

de cada tres mujeres y uno de cada 4 hombres han sufrido alguna forma de violencia física por parte de su pareja íntima. Las mujeres de 20 a 24 años corren el mayor riesgo de convertirse en víctimas de violencia doméstica y cada año, más de 3 millones de niños son testigos de la violencia doméstica en sus hogares. Éstos a su vez, tienen el doble de probabilidad de abusar a sus propias parejas

“Por mi machismo siempre quería tener el poder y el control sobre ella, la veía como un objeto que yo poseía”

—Pablo Ramirez

e hijos cuando se convierten en adultos.

Silva-Collins, quien tiene experiencia en el desarrollo infantil, reconoció que los niños que han sido expuestos al abuso pueden ser más propensos en abusar o llegar a ser víctimas del abuso. Por estas razones, ella comprendió la necesidad de crear un programa que ayude a ponerle fin al trauma generacional.

AIDA está disponible no únicamente para los prisioneros de San Quentin, sino también para toda la gente encarcelada en el estado de California y se está expandiendo a otros estados del país como Nueva Jersey también.

Pablo Ramirez, un residente quien completó el curso, dijo, “Aprendí que yo generaba todo tipo de violencia doméstica a mi pareja por mi inseguridad y celos le prohibía platicar con hombres. Él añadió, “Por mi machismo siempre quería tener el poder y el control sobre ella, la veía como un objeto que yo poseía”.

El programa esta buscado la manera de organizar diálogos en la comunidad con sobrevivientes de la violencia doméstica. AIDA está buscando establecerse como un programa de justicia transformativa.

Collins dijo, “Nuestra visión para AIDA es que pueda ser incluida y reconocida en cada prisión de California, que el programa pueda estar disponible para poder educar y ofrecer servicios de prevención a la juventud”.

Tranquillano Figueroa, comentó que el programa le ayudo a empezar a ver a su pareja con igualdad y tratarla con amor, igualdad y respeto. Él dijo, “Si tú quieres dejar de abusar a tu pareja y tener una relación saludable, te invito a que participes en este curso”.

Iglesia en la yarda

Prisioneros Cristianos se reúnen independientemente en compañerismo y adoración

En una mañana fresca y con una Biblia en mano, docenas de cristianos se reunían en la yarda para profesar su fe, buscar perdón y sanación.

La prisión de San Quentin está regresando a la normalidad, dándoles a sus reclusos la oportunidad de participar en las actividades cotidianas de antes. Mientras otras actividades sucedían en la yarda, ellos siguieron con su curso. Unos jugaban fútbol y otros jugaban baloncesto, compitiendo contra los equipos que llegaron a la prisión desde las comunidades de afuera.

Estos prisioneros de varias nacionalidades se congregaron y se guiaron con la palabra de Dios, usando las escrituras con sus biblias en la mano. Reflejaban así las escrituras del libro de Números, capítulo 21, versos 1-6.

“En el nivel mental la prisión siempre fue el fondo más bajo que hay pero ahora yo veo que hay la habilidad de hallar redención”, dijo Wilfredo Alarcón 50, un residente de San Quentin.

El coordinador, quien también es un recluso, dirigía el servicio y reflexionó en la importancia de la congregación entre los hermanos de su comunidad evangélica.

“Un hermano se disculpó porque no había venido aquí a congregarse con nosotros”, dijo Javier Pérez Trujillo, un residente de San Quentin. “Él se siente mal y le falta la hermandad de nuestra comunidad”.

Para muchos prisioneros el tener esa conexión positiva es importante ya que les ayuda a salir adelante en sus vidas. En el mundo de la prisión, es otra forma de renunciar sus comportamientos o mentes criminales.

“Yo he emprendido com-

partir experiencias con personas que nunca me había imaginado conocer y gracias a eso, cuando salga de este lugar, yo voy a poder ser un mejor padre, hermano o amigo”, dijo José Buendía, 53, de nacionalidad hondureña. “Poder comprender a la gente que está sumergida en las adiciones, me da la habilidad de ayudarlos a combatir sus adiciones”.

Mucho buscan la manera en cómo salir adelante en sus vidas participando en programas de auto rehabilitación y otros lo hacen buscando la salvación en sus religiones. San Quentin les da la oportunidad a sus reclusos de mejorar sus vidas y sus comportamientos.

Durante los tiempos festivos ellos se fortalecen en su religión, recordándose que sus familiares los extrañan y los esperan con brazos abiertos.

El coordinador habló sobre la voluntad de Dios y la importancia del comportamiento y cómo reconocer los defectos humanos.

“Satanás sólo viene a robar, matar, y destruir, pero Jesús Cristo viene a darnos una nueva vida”, dijo Pérez Trujillo.

La humildad hace que uno sepa apreciar.

“Cuando uno llega a la prisión uno cree que la vida se le acabó, pero este grupo en la yarda me está ayudando”, dijo Martin Carrillo, de nacionalidad guatemalteca. “Mi vida está cambiando y sé que todavía estoy en un proceso para mejorar mi vida”.

Al fin de sus servicios y antes de retirarse, ellos se congregan en círculo, oran y se abrazan, despidiéndose mientras regresan a sus celdas.

—Edwin Chavez

Inician el programa de llamadas gratis para prisioneros

Por Steve Brooks,
Journalism Guild Chair

Los reclusos en California van a poder hacer llamadas gratis a sus familiares y amistades empezando el 1 de enero, 2023.

Esto es gracias a la SB 1008, Acta para Mantener las Familias Conectadas; aprobado como ley por el Gobernador Gavin Newsom, el 29 de septiembre.

Las familias en California gastan un promedio de \$68.2 millones cada año con reclusos, dice Worth Rises, una organización no-lucrativa, que está trabajando en desmantelar la industria de prisiones.

“La habilidad para llamar a su pareja, hijos o amistades para instantáneamente poder compartir nuestros gozos o tristezas, es algo que la mayoría de nosotros lo tomamos en poco”, dice el autor de la ley, el Senador Josh Becker (Demócrata en la Península). El contacto telefónico es estrictamente controlado y costoso, el añade.

Becker visitó la capilla de San Quentin, Garden Chapel en agosto para compartir su nueva ley con los graduados del grupo ‘Guiding Rage Into Power, un programa que ayuda a los reclusos poner en práctica su nombre.

“Ahora que ustedes han hecho su trabajo, yo necesito hacer mi trabajo”, dijo Becker a la audiencia en San Quentin. “Tengo una ley este año para que obtengan llamadas gratis. Nosotros no deberíamos de cobrar a ustedes por el minuto, por la foto, por el correo-electrónico ni por llamadas por video”.

Esta ley fue diseñada para prohibir al condado, la ciudad, o agencia estatal, que reciban ganancias por proveer servicios de comunicación a personas bajo su custodia. El estado pagara la cuenta a cualquier servicio contratado

por proveer llamadas en las prisiones. No está claro como las ciudades o los condados van a responder a la Ley de Becker.

Según al senador, “empresas telefónicas depredadoras hacen un promedio de \$1.4 billones en la industria de telecomunicaciones a las prisiones.

Worth Rises, calcula que una de cada tres familias caen en deuda tratando de mantenerse en contacto con sus seres queridos”, El 87% de la carga cae sobre las mujeres, particularmente en mujeres de color, según la empresa no-lucrativa.

“El hecho es, de que la mayoría de la gente van a salir y queremos que estén conectados con sus seres queridos”, Becker dijo a los graduados del grupo de rehabilitación y al *Daily Journal*. “Queremos mantener este vínculo para que cuando ellos salgan tengan una red de apoyo y no estén propensos a volver a caer el nuestras prisiones, o regresen a nuestras cárceles.

California tiene la más alta tarifa de prisioneros sirviendo sentencias de cadena perpetua en el país, tres veces más que en Texas, aunque Texas es el 25 por ciento más grande en geografía” dice Becker.

En agosto 2022, se encontraban más de 25,381 reclusos sirviendo sentencias de cadena perpetua en California, de acuerdo con la Oficina de Investigación de CDCR.

Esta ley requiere que la Comisión de Utilidades Públicas establezca estándares de calidad para los individuos encarcelados. Tales estándares deben respetarse por los servicios de comunicación que proveen servicio a los centros de detención o de corrección estatal o local.

California es ahora el segundo estado para hacer llamadas gratis en las prisiones. El estado de Connecticut fue el primero en hacerlo en julio 2022. La



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San Quentin North Block casetas telefonicas

ciudad de Nueva York fue la primera gran ciudad de proveer llamadas gratis a los reclusos, seguido por San Francisco, San Diego, y Los Angeles.

Massachusetts y Kentucky están empujando por la misma legislatura. Otros estados están por seguir el ejemplo. Hay una ley similar en la Casa de Representantes de EE. UU.

El éxito de esta ley, según Becker, fue debido a las familias influenciadas, miembros en la comunidad y gente que ha sufrido del aislamiento mientras estaban en prision.

La visita de Becker a San Quentin fue con la intención

de poner en claro que el quiere proveer comunicación libre a cualquier participante en programas de rehabilitación y que desean hacer lo correcto mientras están en una prisión.

“Porque estoy aquí”? Becker se levantó y les pregunto a los graduados del programa de San Quentin mientras hablaba acerca de su nueva la ley. “Estoy aquí por todos ustedes. Y sé que no les fue fácil; esto es trabajo duro. Pero como Nelson Mandela acostumbraba en decir, “Parece ser imposible hasta que es hecho”.

— Traducido por Manuel Dorado

SE REANUDAN LAS COMPETENCIAS FUTBOLÍSTICAS EN SAN QUENTIN



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Earthquakes of San Quentin y el equipo visitante 'Outsiders' del Area de la Bahia. En Oct. 2019

Por Carlos Drouaillet
Staff writer

Ya que lo peor de la pandemia queda en el pasado y las cuarentenas se van disipando, se reinicia el Programa de Fútbol en San Quentin State Prison en octubre 2022. También los deportistas de la comunidad de San Quentin State Prison se aglomeran en el parque deportivo de la prisión para organizar torneos competitivos de sus deportes favoritos desde el inicio del verano.

Durante los meses del verano la mayoría de los programas deportivos iniciaron lentamente sus actividades. Al principio no fue muy evidente el cambio, pero desde la última semana de julio empezaron las competencias de tenis, basquetbol, fútbol, volibol, beisbol y atletismo, con la participación de jugadores y atletas visitantes.

La buena noticia para los prisioneros futbolistas es que un grupo de patrocinadores vendrá para apoyar y coordinar eventos para el Programa de Fútbol en SQ. La Asociación de Hermanos Unidos (United Brothers), quienes patrocinan el programa de fútbol dentro de la prisión, no solo viene a competir en el campo de juego, sino que también

ofrecen su amistad leal a los reclusos.

“El beneficio más palpable de este deporte es que comparto entrenando con mis amigos”, dice el jugador Luis Miguel Rodríguez Ponce, quien está cumpliendo una sentencia de cadena perpetua. “Y lo más importante es que me ayuda a alejarme de lo negativo”.

Los patrocinadores suspendieron el programa con la llegada de la pandemia de COVID-19 en febrero del 2020. Regresarán al fin de octubre o al principio de noviembre, de acuerdo con Ricardo ‘Tuca’ Morales uno de los tres entrenadores del equipo local ‘Earthquakes’ de San Quentin.

Mientras el programa se normaliza los equipos de fútbol de la prisión de San Quentin han continuado sus entrenamientos en el parque deportivo de la prisión y los futbolistas añoran re-encontrar los beneficios de salud mental y terapéutica en el deporte.

Los reos que participan en los martes y sábados no solo consiguen mantenerse físicamente preparados para los torneos futuros sino que también logran alcanzar otras satisfacciones personales, comenta Morales.

“El beneficio que recibo

del fútbol es que me mantengo sano”, dice Morales. “Me gusta ayudar al equipo Earthquakes de San Quentin así me siento útil a la comunidad SQ”.

“Al jugar al fútbol se me olvida que estoy preso, pues en el momento que estoy jugando solo pienso a quien pasar el balón y anotar gol” dice el mediocampista Elvis “Chino” Martínez que entrena con el equipo de San Quentin Earthquakes.

“Entrenar fútbol me mantiene saludable, fuerte y me enfoco en mis metas” dijo Jonathan D. Rodríguez, un prospecto de esta temporada. “Mis metas personales son: ir al colegio, jugar con los Earthquakes, y llegar a ser un ministro de la Palabra de Dios”.

Como regla general el deporte del fútbol, se practica en la mayoría de los países del mundo pues solo se necesita un par de zapatos, un balón, muchos jugadores y un campo abierto.

Actualmente la mayoría de los que juegan al futbol en SQSP no solo son estadounidenses, sino que también son de Sudamérica, Europa, Australia, África and Asia. Y como nuevamente el equipo de USA participara en la copa mundial muchos nacionales de

todos los grupos étnicos practican el deporte.

“El programa de futbol soccer, juega una gran parte en mi rehabilitación porque aunque experimento jugadas sucias y me hacen infracciones, no reacciono”, dijo Efraín Vallarta un jugador defensivo “que es sordomudo”, “lo que hago en vez de reaccionar es, controlar mi enojo y dejarlo ir; después de todo el futbol me ayuda a estar ocupado y así evitar problemas”.

La Copa Mundial de Futbol se juega cada 4 años y este año la sede es Qatar en la península Árábica, en noviembre.

SQNews le pregunta al aficionado Jose Mojica, mientras golpea la bolsa de boxeo, ¿Qué piensas del futbol soccer? “Yo no lo practico al 100% pero si se lo que es y me gusta mirarlo”, dijo Mojica, reo quien creció con una familia de boxeadores de Granada, Nicaragua.

Aquí en SQ en la presente temporada 2022 hay tres equipos multinacionales que se preparan para un torneo de juegos semanales. “Dicho torneo servirá para seleccionar a los jugadores del equipo principal que competirá con los grupos visitantes integrados por asociación Hermanos Unidos.” explicó Morales.

Nuevo Presidente de Colombia apoya legalización de cocaína

El recién elegido presidente de Colombia ha demostrado desde antes de las elecciones, que tiene planes de cambiar las actuales regulaciones acerca de la póliza contra las drogas e implantar cambios referente a la extradición de traficantes de drogas, escribe Alexander Lekhtman para FILTER News.

El Presidente electo de Colombia Gustavo Petro enfatizo en su oratoria inaugural, los daños causados por las drogas en la sociedad colombiana y del mundo entero.

“Es tiempo para una nueva convención internacional que acepte que la guerra contra las drogas a fracasado, lo que ha dejado un millón de Latinoamericanos asesinados durante estos 40 años”, dijo el presidente electo. “La guerra sobre las drogas ha fortalecido las mafias y debilitado a los estados”.

Petro, apoya la legalización de la cocaína y productos derivados de la planta de cannabis y se opone a la destrucción de ellos en los lugares campestres, argumentando que crea pleitos y desavenencias entre campesinos y el ejército, de acuerdo al artículo.

Según Lekhtman, Petro puede hacer que Colombia se convierta el primer país que legalice y regule la industria de cannabis y está bien conectado al Congreso para legalizar la mariguana completamente.

También, [continúa Lekhtman], la clase de liderazgo como la de Petro no se observa saliendo desde México, Brasil, Chile, ni de Perú, pues hasta ahora él es el único presidente en Latinoamérica que habla tan seguro de lo que dice.

“Yo pienso hemos llegado a un punto aun antes de que Petro fuera electo, donde nadie cree seriamente que se pueda restringir el flujo de las drogas desde Latinoamérica”, añade Lekhtman.

El escritor del artículo está de acuerdo con el presidente Petro en cuanto a la legalización de las drogas men-

“La guerra sobre las drogas ha fortalecido las mafias y debilitado a los estados”.

— Presidente electo de Colombia Gustavo Petro

cionadas, pues considera que es buena táctica para cortar las ganancias a los ‘narcos’ dañando sus negocios.

Lekhtman, expresa su recomendación para los líderes de Latinoamérica escribiendo, “No se enfoquen en tratar de suprimir la producción o tráfico de drogas”. Añadiendo, “La prioridad real necesita ser de disminuir la violencia y corrupción asociada con el mercadeo ilícito que no puede ser suprimido efectivamente”.

Refiriéndose al comentario del presidente Petro acerca ‘la fuerte prevención del consumo de drogas’ dice Lekhtman, “aquellas personas que usan drogas y no ocasionan ningún daño para ellos ni para otros, deberían solamente dejarlos en paz”.

Para concluir Lekhtman dice que es importante saber que en Colombia los programas que ayudan con tratamientos de rehabilitación en contra de las drogas son programas organizados por iglesias evangélicas. El reconoce que no hay una solución mágica al problema y que hay problemas que no tienen solución como, y que la población podría preferir continuar con ‘la guerra contra las drogas’ nuevamente.

“Yo pienso que Petro necesita ser inteligente acerca de la retórica que usa, y resolver los asuntos concernientes acerca de la seguridad pública”, dice Lekhtman. “Lo importante para el presidente es acumular tanto apoyo como sea posible en el centro político de Colombia, para que pueda reelegirse y así sus pólizas progresivas persistirán después de él”.

—Carlos Drouaillet

La administración Biden lucha contra el crimen y las armas

Por Ray Torres
Journalism Guild Writer

El Presidente Joe Biden prometió tomar acción sobre la gente asesinada por uso de armas durante el discurso del Estado De La Unión. Según él, los republicanos siguen asustando al público cuando afirman que el crimen está creciendo, de acuerdo con el artículo en *Face The Nation* en mayo 30, 2022.

Según los titulares, las estadísticas del crimen siguen subiendo pero no todos los crímenes han aumentado, ni han crecido en un alto nivel histórico. La solución, dijo Biden, no es reducir a la policía - un grito de las protestas de justicia racial del verano 2020 para poder proponer recursos de departamentos policíacos a otras inversiones sociales. “La respuesta es financiar a la policía” Biden declara.

Robos de propiedad continúan disminuyendo pero el alza de homicidios contribuyó al aumento de delitos violentos. El porcentaje de homicidios está en 40% siendo más

bajo que en los años 1980s y en los ‘90s. Aunque Biden anunció aumentar la policía, las estadísticas no reflejan una reducción del crimen con esta acción, escriben Bryce Covert y Mike Konczal.

Si nosotros verdaderamente estamos preocupados en reducir el crimen, debemos invertir en programas que ayudan a bajar el crimen en vez de gastar tanto dinero para la policía. Debemos gastar más en las escuelas públicas. En experimentos en Michigan, unos investigadores descubrieron que cuando las escuelas primarias reciben más fondos, los estudiantes son menos probables de involucrarse en el sistema judicial como juvenil y menos probable de ser arrestados como adultos. Invertir en una educación de alta calidad durante su juventud reduce el crimen.

En varios estudios de programas de alta calidad de escuelas preprimarias en Michigan y en Carolina del Norte se descubrió que esos programas redujeron el enredo en crímenes violentos hasta

Invertir en una educación de alta calidad durante su juventud reduce el crimen

la edad de 54 años.

Darles algo que hacer durante el verano ayuda también. En el programa de “Trabajo Juvenil” del verano en la ciudad de Nueva York, que es el original de ese tipo en todo el país, se han reducido detenciones y condenas entre participantes.

Una investigación en 2020 reveló que cuando aumentan el Medicaid bajo el Acto De Beneficio Accesible, (Affordable Care Act), se reduce el porcentaje de delitos violentos y también se reduce la reincidencia de gente adulta. Perder la cobertura del Medicaid, mientras tanto, pone a la gente en más grande riesgo de ser encarcelada.

Ayudar a la gente a comprar comida nutritiva también reduce la probabilidad de seguir cometiendo delitos.

Los niños de familias que reciben estampillas de comida (Food Stamps) tienen menos probabilidad de ser encarcelados en el futuro. Usualmente cuando las estampillas se acaban al fin del mes, el porcentaje de robos sube. Excluir a la gente de estampillas por delitos ofensivos los conduce a más reincidencia, particularmente en crímenes motivados por dinero. En realidad, excluir a la gente condenada por ofensas de drogas de poder obtener asistencia pública también aumenta el porcentaje de reincidencia.

Conseguir domicilio a la gente en el desarrollo de hogares (Affordable Housing) en barrios pobres también reduce el crimen bastante. La gente y sus hijos que viven en viviendas públicas (Public Housing) y reciben

un vale-monetario a domicilio (VOUCHERS) son menos propensos de ir a la cárcel más tarde en sus vidas, según el reporte.

En el 2017, un análisis de 12 áreas urbanas reflejó que los departamentos de policía gastaron un alto porcentaje de su presupuesto- muchos hasta el 41%, once estados gastaron más en prisiones y cárceles que en la educación avanzada en 2013. Aunque los EE.UU. gasta en su total más en educación y en programas sociales que en nuestro sistema de justicia-las cortes, prisiones, y departamentos de policía- la proporción es más baja aquí que en muchos países europeos, de acuerdo a las gráficas del artículo.

Nosotros gastamos entre cuatro y 12 veces más en abordar la raíz del problema que en criminalizar a la gente, pero en otros países avanzados el porcentaje es hasta 22 veces más. Los EE. UU., combina el estado más recio penal en el mundo moderno con el estado más tacaño. El historiador John Clegg y el sociólogo Adaner Usmani

escriben, “Si este país verdaderamente quiere combatir el crimen, debe invertir en las cosas que hace la gente más alegre, saludable y entera.”. “Pero, obviamente deberían tomar y cambiar la forma de confrontar el problema entero”, escribe Bryce Covert.

Muchas ciudades en los EE.UU. invierten más en programas policíacos que en programas para el beneficio de la comunidad.

Esta es la suma que la ciudad de Baltimore, Maryland, gasta en programas sociales por cada dólar que gasta en la policía, y el porcentaje de gastos sociales comparado al gasto de programas penales:

- Programas de Prevenir la Violencia Juvenil: (1 centavo)
- Salud Mental y Abuso de Drogas: (1 centavo)
- Desarrollo de Empleo: (5 centavos)
- Avance Comunitario y de Viviendas: (12 centavos)
- Servicios Humanitarios: (14 centavos)
- Escuelas Públicas: (55 centavos)



DEFENSE PREVAILS

SQ Warriors dish up a beatdown over Green Team

By Rahan Asaan
Journalism Guild Writer

The San Quentin Warriors’ dominating defense helped them post a conclusive 81-67 victory over the visiting Green Team.

“If we play with energy, we’ll win,” said SQ Warriors Head Coach Jeremiah “J.B.” Brown before the game. “If we don’t, we lose.” So he won.

The Oct. 29 game jumped off at high noon and from the start, it was all gas, no break. It was played with high energy and intensity on that warm day. The court was surrounded by the SQ residents and players. This was a match that both teams wanted to come out victorious. However, even with the height advantage, conditioning overtook the Green Team’s veterans.

The SQ Warriors used their energy to rack up 40 of their 81 total points from free throws. But it was their defense which ultimately had 20 steals that contributed to their dominating victory.

Sadiq Davis was the high scorer of the Warriors, with 17 points, 5 of them free throws.

Rich “Big Rick” Hale had 14 points, 6 steals, and 10 rebounds. Murdock had 12 points and 6 rebounds, Dely Adams had 13 points, and the entire SQ Warriors team had only 5 turnovers.

Longtime volunteer Bill Epling brought the Green

Team into the prison to try and take the lead in the season series. He shared a specific reason why he decided to come with a different strategy for what he considered might have helped his team win.

“I hope to not get a technical foul like I did last week,” said Epling. “I look forward for the guys to get a good run and for strategy; we plan to keep the game close.”

The Green Team had more to offer than jump shots to help stay in range. Victor Hahs joined his dad on the court for the Green Team. He expressed what coming into the prison meant to him and how important it is to play the game he loves with his dad, Ted Hahs, who is a veteran of the Green Team.

“It means a lot playing with him,” the younger Hahs said, “San Quentin is his favorite place, [he] thinks you guys are nice and give him a great workout.”

Jamaal “Do It All” Harrison played in the game that his team lost last week to the Green Team. Although he was refereeing the game, Harrison matched up against the younger Hahs last week and said that it was one of his toughest matchups.

“Vic was one of my main reasons I got tired last week. It was his defense and he’s got good foot work,” said Harrison.

The elder Hahs struggled

on defense and offense during the first three quarters but his son made up for the slack.

“It’s a struggle for me right now, but I’m saving my energy for the fourth quarter,” said the elder Hahs. He was at 60% because he suffered an injury in the last game. However, he spoke highly and proudly of the performance from his son.

“He’s playing great with confidence and is doing incredible. He’s awesome. It’s fun to watch him build relationships with the incarcerated,” said Hahs.

The father and son stats showed no sign of any struggle from either. The former professional basketball elder Hahs put up 17 points and 6 rebounds. The promising Prodigal Son, Vic Hahs, was the leading scorer, finishing with 20 points and 5 rebounds.

Arguably the most underrated SQ Warrior, Ryan “Taz” Matlock, was an add-on for the Green Team and showed Coach Brown why he should not be slept on for the upcoming season. He finished with 13 points, 3 steals, 4 rebounds, and 1 block. He capitalized off a jump ball and scored a lay-up as well.

“It’s good that I got this time to play,” said Matlock. “At first, I was playing with a chip on my shoulder and wanted to show the coach that I can compete.”

Hale controlled the boards for the Warriors, with friendly

SQ Warriors used their energy to rack up 40 of their 81 total points from free throws and 20 steals

trash talk flying in all directions. While the Green Team trailed the entire game, there was one spectator who rooted for them even when times looked like it would take a miracle for them to overcome their deficit.

“I always root for the underdog,” said Carolyn Epling, the wife of Bill Epling, while pulling for her team to win the battle of a jump ball.

Green Team shooting guard Anthony G., who stands 5’8”, contributed 5 points and 1 steal. Warriors shooting guard, and new add-on, Keyshawn “Steez” Strickland, had 4 points, 2 steals, 1 assist, and 1 rebound.

“I’m glad that coach sees me in the light he sees me in, and I’m excited for our team’s future,” said Strickland.

Coach Brown said that he is proud of his team, in particular the performance by Matlock, which will make him consider giving him more playing time in the upcoming season.

SQ Kings beat team Bittermen

Spirited offense gets job done in second half

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

The series between the San Quentin Kings and the outside Team Bittermen stands at 2-4 after a tight contest.

The Kings won Oct. 29 in a nail-biting clutch game, 68-58. To keep the wins coming in, Coach Ish Freelon said, “We need to be more defense-minded and have more patience and believe in one another.”

Since Team Bittermen’s last match-up with the Kings, and their victory, Coach Mark and veteran power forward “Free” brought in some fresh legs to help clinch another win.

“I got some new ball players who really understand the game and know how to play,” said Free. He has been coming into the prison and basket-balling with the residents, and according to him, he enjoys being able to come in here and play some good games.

Tipoff was at noon, and from the start, the game was fast-paced. The full-court press was on by Team Bittermen, but that did not stop Kings forward “LS” from driving to the bucket and getting the and-one. His passionate game sparked an electric cord through the rest of his squad. The crucial fouls were being racked up on both teams and by the end of the first quarter, Team Bittermen held a comfortable lead, 20-13.

It was Team Bittermen’s 6’2” point guard, Andrew Wallace, first time inside of a prison, and he said that it was a great experience for him.

“I love basketball and being here makes me feel like I am at home balling on the streets with you guys. I love the basketball program here,” said Wallace while sitting on the bench for a breather. He has only been in the program for a short time after being introduced to it by “Free.”

“I was just curious and plus I wanted to be a part of something that has to do with rehabilitation and that can help the community,” said Wallace.

Both teams went to a zone defense that slowed the transitions. Kings player “EJ” was

blocking out the Bittermen’s big men under the boards. Team Bittermen stepped up the ball movement and switched the offense to man-to-man. The back-and-forth battle under the bucket for the left-handed layups leveled out the points, bringing the Kings within one at the half, 35-34.

An impressive comeback.

In the third quarter, momentum shifted towards the Kings after Tommy Hall nailed a crucial three-pointer that motivated the crowd and put the Kings in the lead for the first time, 50-49.

“We gotta the intense defense,” said Hall. The new Kings player all but mimicked Coach Freelon’s assessment.

“We can give them the perimeter shots and we just continue to get the rebounds.” Hall had seen the basketball program in the newspaper when he was at another prison and it drew him to want to be in it.

The Kings did not allow Team Bittermen to recuperate and new player Wallace would slump. However, another newcomer, Adha M., turned up the fire, and his 5’8” small frame and energy was electric.

“It’s my being in good condition from playing soccer that is kicking in for me,” said Adha M. He finished the half with 9 points, 2 assists and 2 rebounds.

Standing on the sideline after making two impressive back-to-back three-pointers, Kings number 2 guard Nash Batta looked anxious to get back into the game and help his team clinch the win even with a comfortable lead in the fourth.

“I think I contributed, but I want to continue more,” said Batta, who finished as the high scorer for the Kings, with 13 points and 2 rebounds. “Free” was Team Bittermen’s high scorer with 16 points, 3 assists, 1 steal, and 5 rebounds. Adha M. finished with 11 points and Wallace finished with 12 points and 7 rebounds. “LS” for the Kings finished with 8 points, 5 steals, and 10 rebounds. T-Mas had 10 points, 9 rebounds.

TIER TALK

Cal student with Iranian heritage shares passion for FIFA World Cup

The FIFA Men’s World Cup started on Nov. 21, 2022 and 32 teams play each other for the chance to become the Men’s World Cup Champions. Due to COVID fluctuating quarantines, the men in San Quentin have had very little of a season.

Just recently, the soccer team from the outside had to cancel a game before the holidays due to one of the mainline blocks being quarantined. Aside from pickup games with Outside volunteers, the men still would find a way to come together on some weekends to play the game they love and also bond over the sport.

To UC Berkeley student Armon Owlia, who comes into the prison to edit stories for the SQNews and earn extra credit for his journalism class, I had the opportunity to get him to share a little of his passion for soccer and how

he and his family would bond over sport.

Timothy Hicks: How is it going? From listening to your wealth of knowledge on sports, I figure that you are a soccer fan as well. The World Cup has started and I am curious to know which team are you are going for?

Armon Owlia: I’m fine and yes, I am a huge soccer fan. Man that’s a good question. Of course I am going for my hometown Iran, but I know that they won’t win it.

TH: Futbol is not my wheelhouse but I do watch the World Cup, especially when the USA is in it. So, who are your other alternatives?

AO: Well, I have six but, one is America. The others are Spain, France, Portugal, Argentina and Brazil – basically, any European country. I’m just a big fan of soccer altogether.

TH: How long have you

been a soccer fan?

AO: I’ve actually been a fan since I was about 8 years old.

TH: Have you ever played the game?

AO: Yeah, I tried playing it when I was young but I soon realized that I’m no good at it. (Smiles)

TH: Who or what was it that sparked your interest in soccer?

AO: One of my most memorable moments was when I was growing up with my family. Every year we would all gather around the TV and watch the World Cup. It’s a family tradition. Soccer was

and still is a sport that unifies people. That was one of the few sports my mom would watch -- my whole family, in fact.

TH: Who are some of your favorite soccer players?

AO: Pele, Lionel Messi, Neymar and David Beckham, to say the least.

TH: Men’s soccer just made history recently. They had its first woman referee to ever judge the Men’s World Cup, Katy Nesbitt. The games are in Qatar too, one of the world’s non-liberal places. How do you feel about the games being there?

AO: I’m boycotting the games this year because of it.

TH: Why?

AO: Their stance on human rights is ridiculous. The World Cup is a venue where politics meets sports, and can sometimes be a launch point for diplomacy, much like the Olympics. You know it’s the

case when Tony Blinken, the secretary of state, is one of the most notable guests. Had it been somewhere else, I would be watching.

TH: I am unfamiliar with their policies over there. What are some of the things that they do over there that make you feel the way you do?

AO: They don’t serve alcohol, which is fine, but kind of contradictory considering Budweiser is a sponsor. The one that bothers me though is their stance on homosexuality. A person would have to hide their sexual orientation if they are gay, and if it was found out or even something simple as kissing their partner or husband, they would be put to death. It’s unacceptable, straight up. So, because of that, I feel that I may not support the World Cup this year.

—Timothy Hicks



Stock image

SQ EARTHQUAKES RUMBLE OVER OUTSIDERS

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

The San Quentin Soccer team beat its longtime rivals, the Outsiders, 3-2 at the end of October. That hot Saturday afternoon on the Lower Yard on the Field of Dreams was full of soccer players and fans watching the excitement.

The Outsiders are led by Coach Dario Abramskiehn, who has made his way into the prison since 2017. “Just to have this experience to play with you guys is gratifying.” He has loved the game of soccer since the age of three.

Abramskiehn shared possibilities for soccer to desensitize the myth of prison. “You guys are normal people just like people on the outside and it’s a gift to me to come play soccer with you guys.”

The Outsiders brought in some advantageous players with a prolific soccer skillset that should have helped them win the game.

“We have to generate a strategy that builds play to keep the ball moving. One play is called a ‘through ball,’” said Toby, a member of the Outsiders. He explains the play design by writing on the dirt to illustrate how the play is executed.

The 11-on-11 competition was played with excitement and very high capacity, and on

the Field of Dreams. With a lot of rapidly moving parts, the players kicked up mushrooms of dust clouds. With the 4-4-2 defense, the Outsiders tried to stop the SQ team members from executing their play. A penalty led to a made corner kick by SQ striker Demetrias Mitchell in the first half.

“I appreciate their time, (the Outsiders), being able to network with the soccer community causes us to play on another level; it enhances our skillset,” said Mitchell. “I’m glad that the Outside teams are coming in.”

As a result of the COVID pandemic, it had been a whole season since this many outside soccer players came into the prison, with only seven outside players at the time. This particular outside team in challenge was comprised of several different players to make up the 11-man squad, outside and inside players.

The SQ soccer program is unique and very special, especially to 50-year-old SQ resident Louis Lopez.

“I never seen programs like it in here at SQ,” said Lopez. He stands in his active wear with a giant smile on his face that could bring extra light to the day. He has been incarcerated for 30 years and at SQ for three. He said out of all prisons he had been to, there



San Quentin Earthquakes soccer team takes on their longtime rival the Outsiders on the Lower Yard

were none like SQ.

An advent soccer fan, Lopez watched from the sideline excited as Outsider Toby did a backwards trick kick that shook an SQ player.

“I appreciate these guys coming out to play with us. They treat us like human beings and they motivate us,”

Lopez said.

At the half, with the team’s strikers making many attempts at the goal, the score was tied at one goal apiece. Outsiders Coach Abramskiehn watched from the sidelines as two opposing players did a dance in the middle of the field with the ball, trying to thwart off the

other from pressing down the field. Shouts in Spanish blurted out when battles were incited.

“The offense of soccer is just like that of the Warriors,” said Abramskiehn giving his analogy.

Towards the end of the second 35-minute half, the score was 2-2. A SQ goalie did a

leaping save that blocked the Outsiders player from scoring. The SQ offense pushed the ball down the field and that led to the tie-breaking, and eventually, winning goal.

At the end of the game, the group formed a circle on the field and shared heartfelt words of hope and encouragement.

USF Tennis: Long-time organizer energized by program’s restoration



Eddie Herena / SQNews

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

Charlie Cutler led the Northern California Tennis Club into San Quentin recently, restoring competition between inside and outside players as COVID-19-related restrictions on outside athletes ease.

Cutler has been bringing outside tennis players to San Quentin for the past 10 years to play alongside residents.

He said that he was “excited to have the tennis program up and running” and that he was working on expanding the program.

Three visitors joined Cutler at San Quentin, including a father and son duo. Each player teamed up with an incarcerated partner to face each other in doubles competition.

“I enjoy the sportsmanship of the men,” Cutler said as he watched four players battle it out on the court.

Cutler, a former assistant coach at the University of San Francisco, teaches a monthly class on the outside. He also organizes volunteers coming into SQ to play doubles matches.

Besides being a part of the Northern California Tennis Club and USF, Cutler was a 2010-2012 Armature Athletic Association player, a part of the future and challengers circuit in the professional tennis world.

The third volunteer who came into San Quentin with Cutler did not want to give his name, but said that he and his wife are huge fans of *Ear Hustle*. He said he came to the prison for a chance to interact and teach the game of tennis to those willing to learn.

As he watched the father and son play from the sidelines, the volunteer said how excited he was to be at SQ. He said that he got involved with SQ because he is interested in criminal justice reform and appreciates the invitation from the incarcerated people.

The visiting team came to compete, but ultimately the game was about having fun on the tennis court. They had nothing but good things to say about the men in blue and the quality of the tennis at SQ.

At the end of their match, the incarcerated players and the visitors rallied into a circle and thanked each other for the time and the challenge. Putting their tennis rackets together, they all chanted in unison “Inside/Outside Tennis.” Then they went their separate ways.

Giants legend Willie Mays pays visit to Oracle Park

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

Willie Mays returned to Oracle Park on September 28 for only the second time since the start of the pandemic, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Mays apologized to clubhouse attendees as Giant’s players lined up to greet him. “I want to make sure I keep up with the guys,” he said, and later emphasized, “I never missed so many games in my life.”

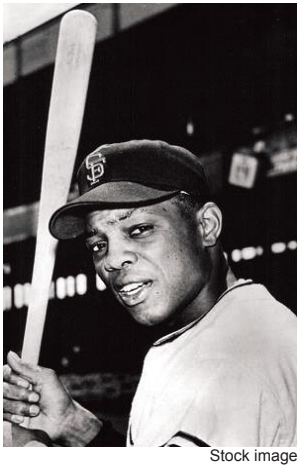
From 1950 to 1972, Mays played on Ebbetts Field and Candlestick Park with such style and grace that he established himself as a hero, and as someone who courageously broke color barriers in the City by the Bay.

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the baseball legend returned looking sharp and alert, radiating zest and vigor. The 91-year-old legend energized the clubhouse, just like he did during his first visit back to the park.

Mays, known as the “Say Hey” kid, followed in Jackie Robinson’s footsteps and exceeded the game’s expectations once he conquered his lack of confidence. Leo Durocher chose not to demote the rookie when he struggled.

Mays begged “Louie the Lip” to send him down to the minors because he believed he couldn’t hit major league curve balls, reported the *Chronicle*. Eventually Mays hit his first home run off Hall-of-Famer Warren Spahn and never looked back.

Mays finished an illustrious career with 660 home runs. Many believed that the “Say Hey” kid would have eclipsed Babe Ruth’s home run record if he hadn’t lost two years of his prime while serving in the Korean War.



Willie Mays, circa 1961

Mays shared the spotlight with teammate and Hall-of-Famer Willie McCovey. Giants’ announcer Lon Simmons always referred to them as Mays and McCovey. The duo cemented their own greatness and helped open the door to major league baseball for Black and Latino players.

Everyone remembers his cap flying off his head from speed generated during effortless pursuits of fly balls. With his back to the wall, he stole a potentially game-winning extra-base hit from Indians’ outfielder Vic Wertz in the World Series.

Dr. Carla Pugh, Mays’ personal physician, told the *Chronicle*, “Mays is doing amazing from a cognitive perspective. He’s at the top of his game. It’s rare to have situational awareness like he has, that bodes well for his rehab. I’ve never seen anything like that from a 91 year-old.”

When he played, Mays caught fly balls with his glove against his sternum or waist, inventing what became known as “the basket catch.” “Just don’t try to catch it my way. Catch it your way,” Mays told younger players.

Hardtimers set sights on 2023 return

The 2022 season of the San Quentin Hardtimers softball team will not continue due to recurring medical quarantines. Under the weight of the medical restrictions and other internal factors, Hardtimers’ equipment manager Chris Granman has set his sights on next season.

“We are a family of players and coaching staff who have come together to take on the best. We have beaten each team who has challenged us,” said Granman. He has been running laps around the infield during games every time his team

makes a homerun to honor a personal challenge between him and another coach.

The season has been limited to only a couple of games against outside teams, who the Hardtimers beat by wide margins. On Sept. 9, they beat the Outsiders 4-2, and on Sept. 11, they beat Prison Sports Ministry 23-11. The team management and coaches then decided not to finish out the season.

“Covid has made it hard for us to play all the teams who wanted to play us. Hopefully, next year we can play those teams and more,”

Granman said.

Normally, the softball team would meet on the Lower Yard at least once a week to play against an outside team. But due to the pandemic, outside teams have been nearly non-existent on the yard until very recently.

The medical restrictions have eased somewhat and the softball players have once again been able to showcase their skills on the Field of Dreams. But other day-to-day challenges have added to the limitations imposed by the quarantine and led to the

decision to shut the program down for the year.

Despite this, Granman is keeping his faith in the team and feeling the shared bond of unity among them.

“We came from hard lives, but we band together to become a team — a family,” he said.

Once the team finally regains its old cohesive flow, Granman is confident that they will continue beating every team that comes before them.

“Let it be known that we are the best!”

—Timothy Hicks

CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Jonathan Chiu

Edited by Jan Perry

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Across

1. ___ Quentin News
4. Pixar movie: “___ Story”
7. Base unit of area in the Metric system: 100 square meters
10. “Two Broke Girls” actress: ___ Dennings
13. A poem of praise
14. Minalable metals
15. PBS program (abbr)
16. Diamonds (slang)
17. Competitive physical activities
19. Having been sewn for germination
21. Compensation plan giving employees partial company ownership (abbr)
23. European nuclear research organization (abbr)
24. Actor Bruce or Laura
27. The nasal passages
29. “VEEP” actor: Tony ___
33. Baked flour, water and yeast
35. Semiconductor diodes that glow with voltage (abbr)
36. Pixar movie about an intelligent robot
37. Capital city of N. France’s Picardy region
39. Relating to heritage or nationality
41. “Elastic Heart” singer
42. List of chapters (abbr)
43. Brick, concrete and stone workers
46. Lead sulfide
49. Chinese province whose capital is Changsha
50. Generation
52. Forest fire starter
54. Biblical garden
55. Ragtime instrument
57. To consume or ingest
58. Greenhouse gas culprit
60. Not closed
62. Quarterly package company
65. To place in a grave, bury
69. 1990’s TV show starring Debra Messing: “___ & Stacy”
70. As in a special edition (abbr)
72. Found in the eye of the beholder
73. Author and poet famous for “The Raven”
74. Bill Gates’ original creation
75. Pole used for rowing
76. Chinese philosophy of harmonious behavior
77. Homemade bomb

Down

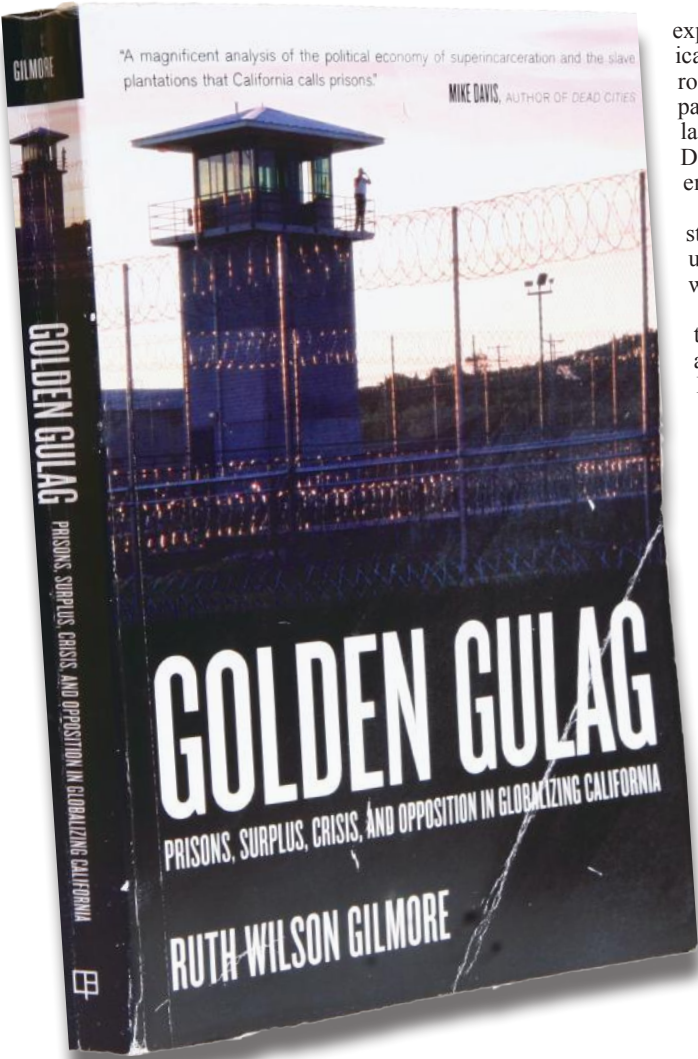
1. Universal distress signal
2. Adenosine diphosphate (biochem., abbr)
3. Keanu Reeves in “The Matrix”
4. VGSQ’s annual drive: Toys for ___
5. “War of the Worlds” author: ___ Wells
6. Plural of “thou” (archaic)
7. Syndicated news service organization
8. Valentine’s Day flowers
9. Drew Barrymore movie: “___ After”
10. SQ group for Youth Offenders: “___ CAT”
11. Snoopy’s alter ego: “WWII Flying ___”
12. To spread grass or straw for bedding
18. Resurgence or revival; an artistic period
20. Supplemental prison sentence added to base term
22. Friends or allies
23. To surrender formally
24. Infamous robber: ___ Cooper (initials)
25. Baseball player statistic (abbr)
26. Dreaming stage of sleep
28. In regards to (abbr)
30. Heavyweight champion: Muhammad ___
31. A type of corporation (abbr)
32. Suffix denoting an object of smaller size
34. Football Hall of Famer: ___ Sanders
36. Bruce Willis movie: “The ___ 9 Yards”
38. Indian flat bread
40. SQ urgent care clinic
43. Movie starring Matthew McConaughey and Reese Witherspoon
44. Scottish inflection for “one”
45. AWOL Nation anthem
46. Former Jets QB: ___ Smith
47. Warriors’, Lakers’ sporting association
48. Soccer: Following additional time (abbr)
49. Helium (abbr)
51. ATL state (abbr)
53. Indian monetary unit (abbr)
55. Italian noodles
56. Plural form of “opus”
59. Seaport capital of Norway
61. 19th century for “within”
62. Also, as well
63. Zuckerberg’s position at Facebook
64. Music media of the 1990s (pl)
66. Ron Howard character on the Andy Griffith Show
67. Homer Simpson’s bartender
68. Make it, then lie in it
71. Physician (abbr)
72. Pronunciation of “@”

BOOK REVIEW

GOLDEN GULAG

PRISONS, SURPLUS, CRISIS, AND OPPOSITION IN GLOBALIZING CALIFORNIA

By RUTH WILSON GILMORE



By Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

If you ever wondered why California became an incarceration state, Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s “Golden Gulag” provides some insight.

In her book, Gilmore talks about prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California. She demonstrates how the state wields enormous power over poor communities through the use of prisons.

Published in 2007, the book remains relevant in today’s age of mass incarceration. It speaks of what author Mike Davis describes as “the political economy of super-incarceration and the slave plantations that California calls prisons.”

The introduction is dense with details about California’s political economy. The central thesis is: California’s prison boom is a “prison fix” to a fourfold problem of surplus: capital, land, labor and state capacity.

Gilmore, a professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences and American Studies at the City University of New York (CUNY), focuses on aspects of mass incarceration that are less analyzed. She

explains the history of California’s political economy so that we understand the role of government and private capital, particularly in the form of billions of dollars provided by the military through the Department of Defense that helped influence the growth of the prison industry.

Gilmore contends that waging constant war, in one form or another, has undergirded the entire U.S. economy as well as California’s economy.

The year 1982 is critical to Gilmore’s thesis. It was the year the legislature approved prison building projects in Riverside, LA, and San Diego. It was also the year \$495,000,000 in general obligation bonds were approved to build prisons with the express goal of enhancing public safety. The legislature exempted CDC’s bidding and budgeting practices from competitive processes and instead assigned work to outside consultants to guarantee that construction moved quickly. That year the goal of prisons transitioned from rehabilitation to incapacitation.

When the legislature enacted the Determinate Sentencing Law it changed the purpose of imprisonment to punishment. Gilmore points out that a political crusade caused the prison population to grow exponentially. Gilmore demonstrates how California sacrificed its educational system to devise more social controls through the use of Land Revenue Bonds.

Gilmore also examines what became of the economic, demographic and geographic push for partnerships between CDC and various Central Valley towns who wanted to revitalize their economy through the labor and land improvements that would result. Corcoran is one of the places that become essential to Gilmore’s case study. The city suffered a serious economic downturn, in part because of ten years of climate change calamities. Most Corcoran residents were hopeful that a prison would put real property to work and generate employment.

Another city the book analyzes is Susanville. Gilmore writes that the local leadership was impressed with the potential of a prison to revitalize the city. The prison was built, despite vocal objections, but the town’s hopes were crushed. Employment and other opportunities for locals did not improve, confirming research that shows that, over time, prison towns compare unfavorably with depressed rural places that do not acquire prisons.

At the end of the book, Gilmore offers ten ideas to effect change through movements and community building. She offers suggestions to help recognize and confront the dehumanizing practices that led to mass incarceration and worldwide genocide.

“Change must be political, economic, spiritual, and most importantly, collective,” Gilmore writes.

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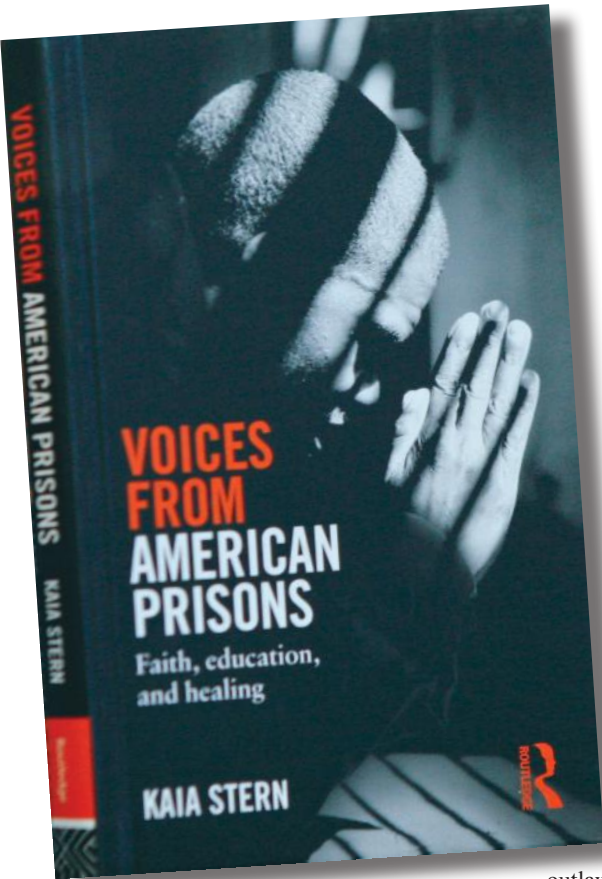
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VOICES FROM AMERICAN PRISONS

Faith, education, and healing
By KAIA STERN



Steve Brooks
Journalism Guild Chair

First published by Routledge in 2014, “Voices from American Prisons” by Dr. Kaia Stern is highly relevant for scholars, criminologists, social activists and anybody impacted by the “criminal justice system.” Dr. Stern is the Director of the Harvard Prison Studies Project and a visiting professor at Harvard University. She has been a student and teacher inside U.S. prisons for the past 25 years. She holds a doctorate in religion from Emory University and a Masters of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School.

In “Voices from American Prisons,” the interfaith minister analyzes the history of U.S. prisons and the crisis of mass incarceration through the lens of six men who participated in the Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in Ministry Program inside New York’s Sing Sing prison.

Dr. Stern uses the testimony of these formerly incarcerated men to demonstrate the transformative nature of education and how fundamental it is to helping solve the crisis of mass incarceration.

In the first two chapters, Stern powerfully illustrates the historical influence that religion has had on invoking what she refers to as “a spirit of punishment.” She shows how certain religious ideologies have cast people as essentially corrupt, evil, defective and inhuman. She points to biblical teachings, like the story of Adam and Eve and “Man’s fall from grace” as fostering specific notions of sin, evil and otherness. These ideologies have helped feed the conditions for “legiti-

mate outpourings of state violence” says Stern. It has fueled political narratives like “Lock them up and throw away the key.”

The connections Dr. Stern draws between religion and our crisis-ridden penal system are compelling. She doesn’t condemn religion, but instead unveils its counterintuitive destructiveness in shaping a prison system based on dehumanization, isolation and social death.

Dr. Stern vividly details how prisons that rely on a spirit of punishment don’t reform, but deform people. She suggests that to understand the theological roots of punishment in prisons, one must see how prison promotes the unhealthy idea that people are beyond redemption.

Using the analogy of Erving Goffman’s effects of a total institution, Stern poignantly connects her readers to the ways in which prisons desensitize people and make them accustomed to abnormal living conditions through “conformity and brutality.” She demonstrates how people in prison lose their identity, separateness and bodily autonomy, often resulting in state sanctioned sexual assaults and loss of human privacy. Dr. Stern indicts prison as a place that outlaws human emotions, contact, love and concern for others. It’s a place that helps drive people into isolation from family, friends and community.

What is most miraculous about Stern’s book is it shows how the six men who graduated from the MPS program were able to be transformed despite the nature of prisons. These men were able to overcome prison through the MPS program. Stern describes the MPS model as “transformative—emancipatory—and as a theological education” that uses a combination of the study of ethics, sacred texts and religious history, with ministry in the immediate prison community.

Students of MPS make a pledge to seek the “Shalom” and to live “emancipatory praxis” and create community. Here, Stern defines “praxis” as the process of reflection and action by which we move toward critical consciousness. She defines “emancipatory” as a process of education and theological consciousness. This practice provided the engine for cultivation and awakening under the guidance of MPS founder Bill Webber.

The men in the program were able to engage in quiet introspection and congregate as a community to practice their counseling and humanity in a prison.

As a result of the MPS program, these men became pastors and “wounded healers” in prison and beyond.

What is most persuasive about Stern’s argument is the way she highlights the capacity for human resilience and transformation in even the worst of conditions. By using these men’s stories, Dr. Stern is able to drive home her point: that prisons are out of touch, and that transformative education is needed to address the current crisis within what Dr. Stern calls our “criminal punishment system.”

SORRY FOR THE MAIL DELAYS

You — our incarcerated readers — write and send more than 50 letters to San Quentin News each month. SQNews staff members read and record all your mail, and respond to about 90% of your letters.

SQNews is currently experiencing procedural challenges sending mail out from SQSP into the U.S. Postal Service. We recently learned that many of our outgoing letters in the last year were postponed for months, and we apologize for any delays you have experienced in receiving our responses to you.

We are doing our best to get all the backlogged letters, newspapers and newsletters we have sent to our readers and donors delivered to you soon.

We truly appreciate your compliments and critiques because they keep us in tune with what you need and expect from your newspaper and remind us that SQNews’ mission is to serve our incarcerated community. Your stories and art provide the essential, diverse voices and perspectives of the incarcerated that SQNews shares with the world.

Meanwhile, thank you for your contributions and for your patience while we work to improve our correspondence with you, the valuable readers and supporters of SQNews.

—SQNews Staff

CORRECTIONS

In the December 2022 edition of San Quentin News, we incorrectly credited the Blue and Blue photo on Page 7. The photo should have been credited to Sgt. J. Graves.

In the December 2022 edition of San Quentin News, we said that Leonard Rubio had “started the Restorative Justice Interfaith Roundtable, and the prison yoga class.” Though Rubio did start the Restorative Justice Interfaith Roundtable, he was a participant in the yoga program, not the program founder. We apologize for the mix-ups.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILLINOIS ARTIST SHOWS LOVE FOR ARTS PAGE

Dear SQNews:

My utmost Luv & Respects to you all & thank you all for all you guys do! Well in coming through to get a new SQN Issue ... MY 4 stamps are inside this letter for my latest edition.

I Luv the Art Part ‘cause I’m an artist too ... Well you all take care.

Much Luv & Respect Always,

—Mickey Anderson, Sr.
A.U.S.P. Thomson
Thomson, Illinois

WISONSIN READER REQUESTS SQN

Dear SQNews:

My friend and I are currently serving time in Wisconsin State Prison and we would love to receive a copy of your newsletters if at all possible. You can bill me if need be. Thank You!

—Rachel LeVoy
Taycheeta Corr. Institution
Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin

DONOVAN READER NEEDS MORE INFO

Dear SQNews:

My name is Bobak “Ali” Azadgilani. Thank you for publishing such a great resource!

I am interested in the Re: Code/Coding 7370 programs. I am a BA student with UC Irvine at RJ Donovan and I am currently taking an Intro to Python coding class. I read your article “Chromebook for SQ coders” in the September 2022 issue of SQN.

I remember reading about Re: Code a joint venture program where prisoners get

paid \$15/hr. Can you please send me any past articles on that program? I remember 3 or 4 years ago SQN did an article on that program.

Basically I am looking for any past articles regarding computer coding. Can you please help me? My counselor will not help me. I want to transfer to a prison that is doing the computer coding joint venture. Thank You!

—Bobok “Ali” Azadgilani
RJ Donovan, California

AVENAL READER OPINES ON PRISON LABOR WAGES

Dear SQNews:

Your September 2022 Edition “Prison Labor,” the subject of prison low wages is close to home. I think there could be other options to wages. Personally I would like reduced sentences, like earned good conduct credits. Some workers would enjoy a suspension of restitution payments from earned prison wages, and as you mentioned keep some money going to social security. Wages have not gone up with inflation. That is showing an impact at the canteen with soups almost doubling.

I think that benefits and perks would increase voluntary service. Here we have guys that want to work but are displaced by those who are assigned and don’t want to be (same holds true for rehabilitation programs). We know for the most part the work we do is more valuable than the pennies we earn. The money CDCR paid out through COVID in overtime and contract labor maybe showed up in the budget.

Irony being CALPIA’s General Manager was in the same edition. That could be a

solution should they expand their programs to be more inclusive. Main kitchens could really benefit with Essential Skills for the Workforce (ESW), programs with some completed training workbooks that used to earn 3 weeks off each.

There could be some benefits for free staff too, not just pay out training and maybe some food service computer programs for inventory and food service quantity control.

I work in “Load Out,” in the Main Kitchen here at Avenal. I like my job, it helps time to pass faster and being a Christian I feel like I am helping to feed 4,000 people. The larger problem is the 25 pounds I have put back on though.

I make 13 cents/hour my top eligible pay. Thank God my Wife does a good job of supporting us.

—Chris (Last name withheld)
Avenal, California

HOPING FOR GATE MONEY INCREASE

Dear SQNews:

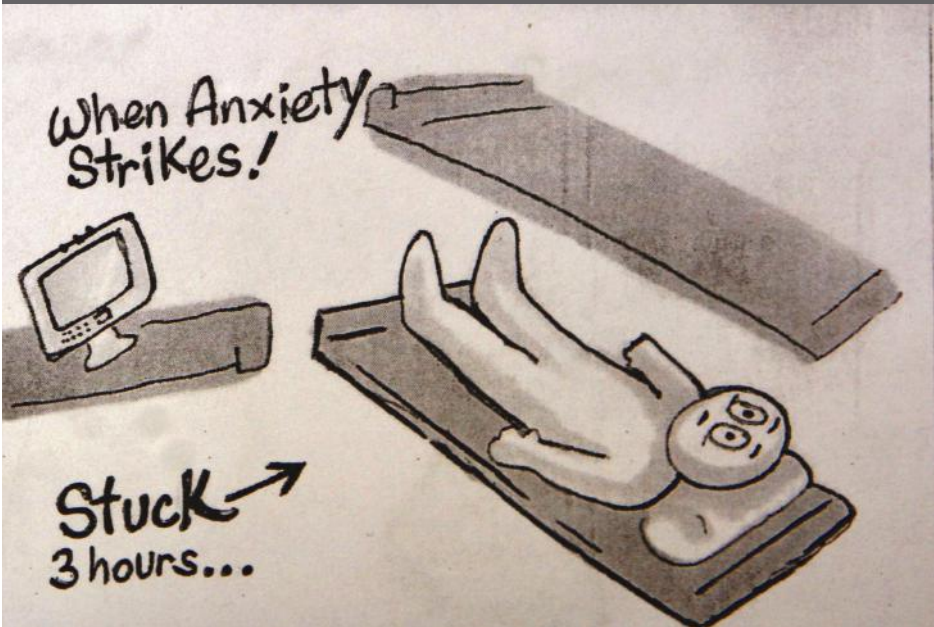
I want to say Thank You for the SQ Newspaper. I love reading it ... and I really hope the \$1,300 gate money goes through; \$200 is barely enough to buy clothes. Anyway, enjoy the rest of 2022, and let’s pray for \$1,300 gate money and no more COVID-19. Last but not least, stop non-designated facilities. That was the dumbest thing CDCR has ever done. I really hope it’s over!!!

—Lawrence Bierman
Delano, California

Thanks for the letter, Lawrence. Unfortunately, the gate money increase was vetoed by Gov. Newsom. More about new laws on Page 10.

—Ed.

When Anxiety Strikes by: Jessie Milo



ART

M I N I O N S

I N V A S I O N

Jorge Cuevas breathes life into his Minions through the ancient Japanese art of Origami

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism Guild Chairman

News flash; San Quentin has been invaded by Minions! Resident Jorge Cuevas creates the lovable characters based on the popular movies as a pastime.

“During my incarceration I knew that I was going to do a lot of time” said Cuevas. “So I asked myself; what I can do in order to survive in here? How can I stay busy so I won’t get into trouble?”

The answer Cuevas sought began to take shape at High Desert State Prison when a friend from Nicaragua introduced him to origami. “I feel blessed that my friend Diaz, who was my elder, saw something in me and passed the torch of creation to me.”

Cuevas utilized origami skills to fashion his Minions, a collection of which reside on top of his locker.

His creations include Monster, a mean, hairy, purple bad guy who is always angry and bent on eating all the other Minions.

Monster’s preferred first Minion meal is another Cuevas creation, Kevin, a rascally Minion who is all smiles.

Once Monster succeeds in eating Kevin, he has his appetite set on Kevin’s friend, Orlando, a Minion always on the run, his mouth wide open in a constant state of fear of Monster. Another cre-

ation, Stuart, has just one eye.

Cuevas first sketches the mouth, ears, and eyes of each Minion, establishing its persona. He identifies each one by emblazoning his name, the date, and where he was when he created the Minion.

The artist watched the *Minions* movie several times in order to make his creations more realistic and relatable to the original movie characters.

Besides the Minions, Cuevas also constructs picture frames and lunchmeat packs out of paper, and employs origami techniques to craft teddy bears holding roses.

He acknowledged that he had seen this kind of teddy bear and had even bought a similar one from another artist. That was when he decided to utilize origami to create a unique style by changing the shape of the bears’ ears, bellies and eyes.

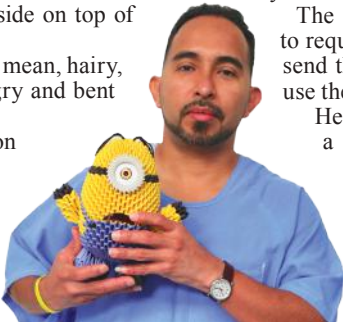
The artist often works in response to requests from fellow residents, who send the items he makes to family or use them to liven up their cells.

He thinks of his newfound skill as a gift from heaven. But his creations require hobby supplies in addition to skill.

Cuevas expressed gratitude toward his former boss and friend, Ms. Dana Chow. Chow supports his creativity by paying for the special purchase orders that provide materials for his work.

“When I first came to San Quentin, I thought that I was going to be given the opportunity to buy more supplies,” said Cuevas. “It’s sad to come to a lower level II prison and not be allowed purchase hobby supplies so that I can continue with my rehabilitation.”

If you see or hear a couple of panicky Minions scurry down the tier past your cell, don’t be surprised if Monster shoots past a few seconds later, hungry, angry and hot on their tails.



Stuart



Teddy



Orlando



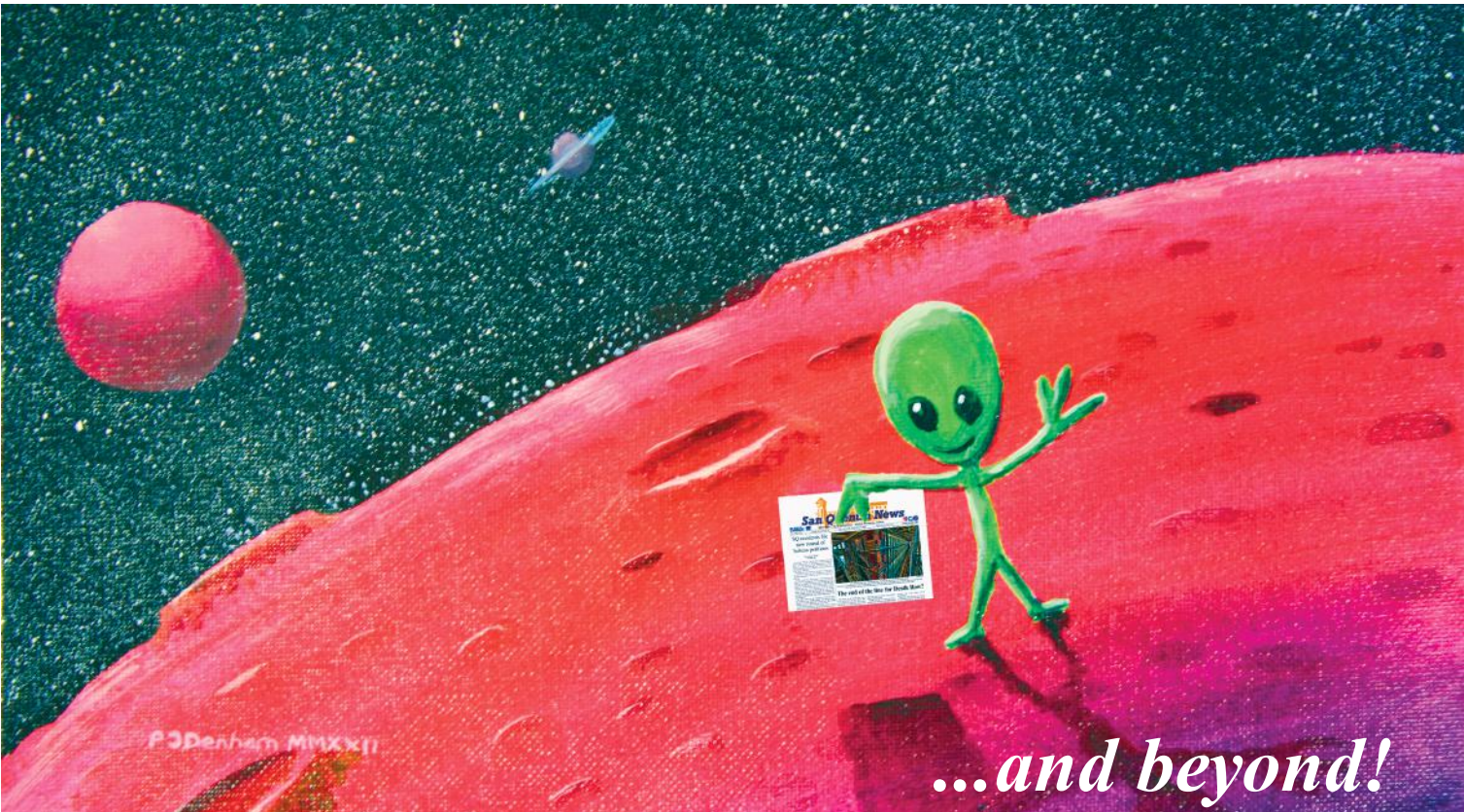
Monster



Kevin

SQ News
Around
the world...

Art by
Paul John
Denham
(CSP-COR)



...and beyond!