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Second Chance Month highlights the power of personal transformation

By Marcus Henderson
Executive Editor

April is officially Second Chance Month. Every year, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs celebrates formerly incarcerated individuals for successful reentry. A high number of returning citizens, also known as formerly incarcerated, are in college, running social justice reform non-profits and working within the tech field.



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

Former San Quentin Phil Melendez now works as a representative for Smart Justice, an organization that advocates for prison reform. His transformative efforts while in prison have equipped him for a life of service on the outside.

San Quentin produces a lot of these formerly incarcerated citizens. Phil Melendez of Smart Justice, an advocacy prison reform organization, spoke recently at a press conference with Gov. Gavin Newsom on the power of self-help groups and rehabilitation. Melendez will be a part of a committee of the formerly incarcerated who will have input on Newsom's re-imagining of San Quentin into a Scandinavian-style prison model. Melendez's trans-

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Proposed amendment would restore voting rights to incarcerated

By Steve Brooks
Editor-in-Chief

This year, advocates for reform want to make voting in prison a reality for incarcerated people, who have been disenfranchised for years.

Assemblyman Isaac Bryan (D-Los Angeles), could give voters an opportunity to remove a part of California's constitution that specifically disqualifies people serving time in state or federal prison from voting.

"Disenfranchisement of incarcerated people does nothing to improve the safety of our communities or encourage rehabilitation," Bryan said on the steps of

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Cal. Reentry Institute hosts graduation

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

A San Quentin program aimed at preparing incarcerated men for freedom held a graduation for 23 men in January — the first since the COVID pandemic hit in 2020.

The California Reentry Institute ceremony was held in the Protestant Chapel, marking the end of the 24-month pre-release program that empowers, heals and transforms people, and supports reentry into society. The program also provides post-release care, including transportation, prepaid cell phones, clothing, groceries, and securing necessary documentation.

The course consists of 350 hours of curriculum, with

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NEWSOM: MAJOR CHANGES AHEAD FOR SAN QUENTIN



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

California's oldest prison to expand focus on education, rehabilitative programming

By Juan Haines
Senior Editor

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has announced the proposed transition of San Quentin State Prison into the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

The announcement came at a March 17 press conference that took place inside San Quentin State Prison and included not only journalists, but also formerly incarcerated people, state lawmakers and prison reform advocates.

Newsom said the current operation of the state's prison system "isn't working for anybody." The correctional officers' union supports the reforms.

The San Quentin Rehabilitation Center aims to provide the prison's 3,900 general population residents with lifestyle-changing programs and skills to help them return to their communities safely and avoid recidivism, San Quentin's Public Information Officer Lt. Guim'ara Berry said.

The planned changes "would make San Quentin the premiere rehabilitation center of the world," Newsom said, speaking in an area of the prison that was once a furniture factory, soon to become a hub

for the innovative new center.

The current system has "failed for too long" to keep the public safe, he said, referencing the nearly 50% recidivism rate for released prisoners. The reform is about "real public safety, keeping communities safe," and getting "serious about addressing crime and violence in our state," Newsom said.

A team of experts including victims and survivors of crime, community based organizations, formerly incarcerated and others will be tasked with doing the "design work" for the SQRC. Newsom requested that lawmakers approve the \$20 million he has earmarked in his proposed 2023/24 budget towards the project, with a goal of 2025 for it to be operational.

"If San Quentin can do it, it can be done anywhere else," Newsom said. "This is about reducing recidivism in this state, keeping people safe, and making sure that victims feel respected through that process."

■ The faces of public safety
Californians for Safety and Justice, also known as CSJ, is one

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CALPIA, The Last Mile applaud more than 50 graduates



Gregory Eskridge // Uncuffed

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

The California Prison Industry Authority and The Last Mile held their first graduation ceremony at San Quentin since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.

Over 50 residents were honored in the Feb. 8 ceremony at the Garden Chapel. Graduates were from The Last Mile's computer

coding and audio-engineering programs as well as CALPIA's Health Facilities Maintenance, Pre-Apprentice Construction, and Furniture-making programs.

The special day was even more special because family members were in the audience, some traveling from as far away as Texas.

San Quentin's Acting-Warden Oak Smith gave the first speech. "I want to thank all the

family members for being here — your support is what drives them," he said.

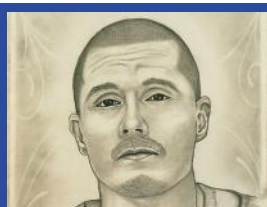
To the graduates, he said, "You have taken an important step on your journey, don't stop now ... keep challenging yourself to be the best you. There have been and will continue to be challenges to your success. When those challenges come, remember today and that you can accomplish anything you set

your mind to."

Next was CALPIA's general manager, William "Bill" Davidson. "You took control of your situation in a very positive way," he said. "I congratulate and recognize you for that. As you return to your communities, be good husbands, fathers, friends, neighbors."

Rickey Nolan, a Health Fa-

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BREAKING CHAINS:
KAIROS HOLDS FIRST
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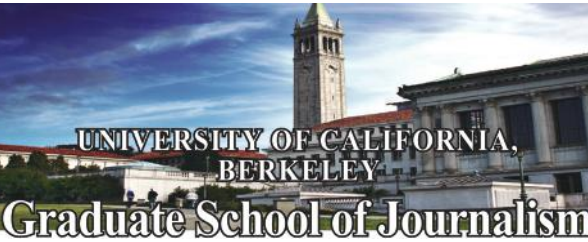
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PROFILE

San Quentin bids farewell to Fr. Manny

By **Anthony Manuel Carvalho**
Staff Writer

San Quentin’s Catholic Church is losing its leader for the second time in three years. Father Manuel Chavira Jr., who became the new chaplain in 2020, is being transferred by the Jesuit order, of which he is a member.

On Sunday, Feb. 10, Chaplain Chavira announced his departure, scheduled for April.

During his tenure, Chavira has greatly increased participation of Sunday Mass. He has also helped with the transition of Death Row residents as they integrate into general populations in selected prisons throughout California.

Vic Perella, a volunteer for 32 years, spoke about the SQ stay of Chavira, or Father Manny as he is affectionately called by the congregation.

“Father Manny apprenticed here for six years under Father Williams before becoming a priest. During his apprenticeship, he found Christ in a society that is forgotten, and he has come to love the residents and wherever he goes, his heart will always be here at San Quentin,” Perella said.

After the height of the pandemic, Father Manny revived the congregation when the prison reopened chapels in 2022.

Chavira created a class for beginners that teaches the nuances of the traditional Catholic faith. To accomplish this, he recruited Sister Sharon and Sister Josefa of the Missionaries of Charity across the bay in in Richmond. They now



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

lead the class every Monday.

Father Manny also restarted the Spirituality Class on Tuesday evenings, Bible Study on Wednesday afternoons, and a class about humility on Friday afternoons.

He led the rejuvenation of all Christian Christmas festivities when he restored the traditional wintertime holiday feasts. This included shepherding Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone’s return for the Christmas Eve Mass ceremony, which brought back a sense of normalcy to the chapel.

“The work he has done to get the church back on track was amazing,” said resident Peter Bomnerito.

Through the years, the congregation witnessed Father Manny’s humble attitude of service, which included walking the Lower Yard and the residents’ housing units

during times of lockdowns.

Father George Williams left San Quentin in July 2020 and relocated to the Jesuit Parish in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Shortly thereafter, Father Manny replaced Father Williams. Prior to his appointment at San Quentin, Chavira spent six years as a staff member for Father Williams.

Chavira said the Jesuits are reassigning him to Los Angeles to obtain his clinical pastoral education credential. His original assignment at SQ was for one year, but he asked to stay on for a second year.

After the conclusion of this second year, his superiors decided his next assignment should include the continuation of his education, which they believe will increase his aptitude for future ministries.

“I am truly torn about leaving San Quentin and prison

chaplaincy after only two years as the full-time chaplain,” said Chavira.

As Chavira prepares for his departure, key members of his congregation remain surprised about his transfer and are worried about the chapel’s future.

“I am stunned and so sorry about his departure!” said resident Alan Brown. “I prayed he would stay longer than Father Williams because he had a great vision for the church.”

Lead Catholic Clerk Arturo Melendez said, “Working for Father Manny has been the greatest experience in my Catholic life. As a convert, he taught me truth and advised me well through my spiritual journey. Father Manny does a lot more than most priests do out in there in the free world.”

The church’s choir director, Megan O’Brien, said, “Father Manny has been a faithful leader of the prison’s congregation. His spirit of holy unification was evident during the holiday season as he helped other religions celebrate Christmas as well. He served the community and probably saved the church from a COVID demise, and we are all thankful for that.”

During his chaplaincy, Father Manny embraced San Quentin residents of all denominations as Christians. Incarcerated pastor Stephen Pascascio of the Protestant Chapel said, “What he did to help revive Kairos was amazing, starting it again from scratch for the entire prison. For reasons like this, Father Manny made an impact in a lot of Christian lives.”

QUIET FAITH RETIRED BATTALION CHIEF MIKE BONNEL ON TWO DECADES’ SERVICE TO SAN QUENTIN

By **Edwin E. Chavez**
Spanish Journalism Guild Chairman

Little is known in the outside world when it comes to the things that volunteers do inside these prison walls — or the impact their service has on the lives of the incarcerated.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, San Quentin State Prison has been known as the mecca of rehabilitation among all CDCR institutions. All this has been possible due to the service of many outside volunteers coming into the institution to help in ways that no one could imagine.

There is an exception when it comes to Michael Bonnel, a 76-year-old retired firefighter battalion chief from San Francisco, who has been coming into San Quentin as a volunteer for the past 19 years.

When asked by *San Quentin News* about what drove him into the prison, he replied, “A friend of mine, he invited me over breakfast and asked if I wanted to come inside San Quentin and I started volunteering inside the buildings asking the incarcerated if they needed someone to pray with them or just to have someone to talk to.”

Bonnel’s journey continues with an open heart for others. The energy that he brings to the men in blue has become like a vessel of love and empathy in a confined environment that is not often seen.

“I never had a [father figure] in my life, although my dad was home, he wasn’t there to help me grow,” said Bonnel. “I came out of the Marines in 1968; I joined



Courtesy of Mike Bonnel

the revolution of the hippie movement.”

According to Bonnel, he became a believer of Christ after spending five years living the life of a hippie, experiencing alcohol and substances, trying to find himself in a world of darkness.

He credits his wife Linda Bonnel for all the patience and understanding that she has invested in their life together. Their journey began in 1965 and they got married in 1975.

Bonnel refers to his wife as the greatest individual next to Jesus in his life. He feels blessed to have such a wonderful human next to him and to take part in the journey they both share inside and outside these prison walls.

In 2007, Bonnel decided that he wanted to be more involved with the men in blue besides having the cell-to-cell approach. He went to see the

chaplain and asked to start an incarcerated Christian program that he facilitated in his outside church. The program *Authentic Manhood* was introduced to San Quentin and it lasted for over nine years. “This program was based on how to be a better husband, gentleman, father, a friend to other men,” said Bonnel.

His daughter Noelle wanted to be part of Restorative Justice, which motivated Bonnel to bring her in for workshops and healing circles.

Bonnel is affectionately known as Mike, and he continues to dedicate his time at San Quentin and refuses to give up on the need to help others change their life. He has sponsored multiple rehabilitative self-help groups.

After a long pause due to COVID-19, he returned with zeal overseeing programs like the Prison Fellowship, reminding us of the power of

love and dedication.

In 2010, San Quentin protestant chapel was without a chaplain, so Bonnel oversaw the chapel for 16 months until the arrival of a new chaplain.

“I had a relationship with guys here, meaning that they were comfortable with me running that chapel, said Bonnel.” Jokingly, he added, “I think that the administration was okay with me running the chapel back then, because I was a retired fire fighter.”

In those days, Bonnel used to spend up to 30 hours a week without pay and now he finds himself running a *Day of Silence* program. The program gives men in blue a safe place to worship at the Catholic Chapel on Thursdays and Fridays from 9:00 am to 3:30 p.m., giving the incarcerated population a chance to meditate and pray.

During these times the Chapel serves as a cathedral, a place of quiet and solitude for the soul, promoting peace.

Since late August 2022, San Quentin’s Protestant chapel has been once again without leadership, due to medical leave of the current chaplain. Again, Bonnel was asked if he could oversee the services for Sunday mornings and evenings.

“Whenever there are any issues with the guys, I try to sit down and talk so we can pray for them at times of need,” said Bonnel. “I am honored to be here; God has placed me where I belong.”

According to Bonnel, the last 19 years for him has been a gift from God. He feels privileged to be a man of service to the forgotten or to those on whom society has given up.

San Quentin News

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MUSICAMBIA SONGWRITING WORKSHOPS CULMINATE IN POWERFUL CONCERT

By Dante D. Jones
Staff Writer

Earlier this year, seven gifted musicians and singers arrived at San Quentin to give its residents an opportunity to express and display their collective talents through music.

The musicians were brought in by Musicambia, an organization created by Nathan Schram and Brad Balliet to bring the power of music to prisoners. Musicambia holds song-writing workshops at San Quentin and Sing Sing prison in New York state.

The 2023 workshop kicked off the New Year. Many residents applied and 32 were selected to participate in the five-day event from Jan. 17–21, which culminated with a concert performance.

Besides Balliet, the workshop was taught by Judith Hill, a world-renowned singer and musician who returned to bring her musical excellence to The Q.

Participants of the workshop arrived to the Protestant Chapel on the first day, excited to be a part of the event.

“I really don’t know what to expect because right now you really don’t know who’s gonna show up,” Zinnamon said. “However, it’s gonna be great to vibe with people musically that I don’t know. Overall, I’m curious and anxious.”

During the orientation, Balliet spoke to participants. “Hello everyone ... This is my third time being here and it has been one of the best experiences of my life,” he said. Balliet said the Musicambia team was excited to be at The Q and that “our only goal is to make your musical talents come to life.”

Eddie Arizmendez, a Latino man with a quiet demeanor and warm smile, was a first time participant in the workshop and said he felt blessed to be there.

Arizmendez added that coming to Musicambia and experiencing all different types of musical styles — after playing punk rock all his life — was a great experience for him.

He said that although there are great programs at San Quentin such as GOGI, GRIP, and many others, as a musician he has a hard time relating to those groups.

“These art programs like Musicambia are a life saver for me because it’s my rehabilitation. I wish that CDCR would recognize these music programs like all the others because for us it’s the language we speak,” Arizmendez said about his fellow musicians.

The workshop started with a song writing exercise, tasking participants with writing down song ideas. One song that emerged from this task was a collective effort titled, *Keep that Kind of Love*, which was performed at the concert.

They were also asked to come up with a theme for the concert. “We discussed a lot of words that could be the theme, but the word that resonated the most was love ... with all of its contradictions,” Balliet said.

For Grammy-nominated artist Hill, it was her second time working with the workshop. She arrived from L.A. on day two and said that it felt “awesome to be back.”

“Last time it was just an amazing experience,” she said. “I’m just happy to see everybody and I hope to be able to jam out with everyone.”

Matt Worth, professor of voice at San Francisco Conservatory of Music, brought several students with him. He

spoke about what it meant for the students to participate.

“It’s brought a greater understanding to the students about the lives they live. And also, a greater understanding of the prison industrial complex,” Worth said.

He explained that they read extensively about criminal and social justice in preparation for the collaboration, which is part of their winter experiential gap term between the fall and spring semesters.

Nina Jones, a powerful soprano opera singer who is a senior at The Conservatory, reflected on her first time visiting San Quentin.

“I didn’t know what to expect Then I got here and it was so fun,” she stated. She said that all her preconceived notions about incarcerated people were totally shattered.

“I won’t lie and say that I wasn’t apprehensive about coming in, because I was. But once I got around you guys, all that disappeared completely. This experience has truly changed my life,” Jones said.

The concert began with an upbeat reggaeton song called *Mas Qué Dolor*, which set the night’s tone beautifully.

Some of the songs covered emotionally difficult topics, like *December*, a soft, touching ballad by one of the participants who lost his mother while he was incarcerated.

“Sometimes it’s hard to say things aloud or even think them,” Balliet said during the show. “But when you make art, those things just come spilling out. Art is like the nozzle that gives these things purpose and direction.”

Fourteen original songs were performed, all originals developed during the workshop. This also included songs like a pop-inspired medley called *Angels Fall in Love* and an R&B track titled *Another Way*.

The concert was capped off with a funk-inspired song called *Live Your Life*, in which Jones belted out some high and smooth notes like Esperanza Spalding. For participants and audience members alike, the concert was a hit.

“These songs all have that special spark that comes from hitting the anvil of creativity. When you hit that anvil of creativity with your mind, sparks fly,” said Balliet. “And those sparks are these songs.”

—Joshua Strange
contributed to this article

Tam Nguyen showcases his smooth vocal talent while strumming an acoustic-electric guitar.

Funky Leonard Walker gets his groove on, digging deep on a four-string bass.

Outside collaborators brought together widely divergent stylistic elements and musical instruments, including brass, strings and woodwinds, melding all into a seamless performance.



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

Tinisch Hollins, executive director of Californians for Safety and Justice, has lost multiple family members to violence and incarceration. She believes that, through rehabilitation, former offenders can return to their families and communities and plan an active role in solving the epidemic of crime and violence.

Newsom continues efforts to reform California’s criminal justice system, prioritize rehabilitation during incarceration

NEWSOM

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of the organizations tasked with doing the design work for SQRC. Tinisch Hollins, its executive director, lost two brothers to gun violence and has had multiple family members serve prison sentences at San Quentin, some for decades.

“Too many times we’re in front of the podium talking about where the systems have failed, have failed our communities, have failed victims of crime, and have failed to rehabilitate or interrupt the cycles that we all want to see changed,” Hollins said.

Hollins described incarcerated people who have undergone “deep transformative work” who are prepared to “come back home” and “be part of the solution” to crime.

“They are the faces of public safety in our communities,” Hollins said. “They are the ones we call, instead of 911, when we want to defuse situations or we want to prevent crime from happening.”

Newsom emphasized that the responsibility is not just on those incarcerated, but on the community at large to “reconcile and to address these stubborn realities.”

“We are as dumb as we want to be,” he said, referring to the ongoing policies that have resulted in too many of the people who are released from state prisons ending up back behind bars within three years.

“... We perpetuate that system and we call that system, somehow public safety-orientated? Where’s the public safety in that?” Newsom said.

Newsom pointed to the roughly 50 to 80 people released from San Quentin monthly.

“Are they ready to reintegrate back in society?” he said. “Are they ready to be fully participatory in the life [in their communities]? Or are they bitter?”

Newsom said that the creation of SQRC would not be controlled by CDCR alone.

“This is the rest of government, departments, all of us growing together,” he

said. That’s what makes this very, very different ... We have to be in the homecoming business.”

■ Receivership continues

In 1976, California incarcerated 21,000 people in state prisons. By the time Newsom graduated from Redwood High, it was 50,000 and ballooned to 174,000 by 2006, he said.

In 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in to California’s prison problems, putting the state’s medical and mental health system under federal receivership and ordering a population cap of 137.5%.

More than a decade later, most prisons are still under receivership — and the population is hovering close to the court-ordered cap. There are close to 95,000 people incarcerated in state prisons currently, with only about 85,000 bed spaces to put them in.

Despite these tensions over population caps, Newsom talked about closing more prisons and getting away from the “perversity” of private prisons. The closures, however, have not led to people getting out of prison and returning to their communities. Instead, they are being transferred to other prisons causing local overcrowding.

Newly appointed San Quentin News Editor-in-Chief Steve Brooks also pointed out that infectious diseases, like COVID-19 and the flu, aren’t going away and are still causing quarantines.

“Packing people in these poorly ventilated housing units leads to unrest and a general state of depression among residents as they try to make it through the day,” Brooks said.

“You could probably implement the Scandinavian model just by single-celling the place,” Brooks said.

■ Continued overcrowding

Brooks began with a statement before asking Gov. Newsom a multi-part question: “San Quentin is the epicenter of rehabilitation in California — how would this plan deal with the chronic overcrowding at San Quentin and living conditions, and will violent offenders now be excluded from participating in programs at San Quentin?”

The programs would be available to San Quentin’s general population, Newsom

said, but he did not address the overcrowding issue.

“San Quentin has about 2,100 cells and 500 dormitory beds for the general population,” Brooks said, noting that the population of 3,900 is still growing. “Double-celling is rampant.”

San Quentin’s current programs include podcasting, newspaper/radio reporting, computer coding, audio/video engineering, construction technology, community college courses and other vocational training programs, which include things like plumbing, computer literacy and 3D drawing. The life-skills programs include drug counseling, anger management and domestic violence prevention classes.

“We have all the programs we need, but the waiting lists are up to a year long. It’s more overcrowded now than before the pandemic,” Brooks said.

The money requested in the governor’s budget is expected to help reduce the physical bottleneck in space necessary to expand rehabilitative programming and reduce waiting lists by renovating and repurposing the former furniture factory.



ACA 4 would allow CA prisoners right to vote

VOTING

Continued from page 1

the state capitol. “All the data shows us that voting reduces recidivism and increases community connectivity for people ...”

In 2020, the voting rights of formerly incarcerated people serving time on probation and parole were restored. Proposition 17 restored voting rights to approximately 50,000 people. This new proposal could restore the voting rights of over 90,000.

Thanh Tran is a former resident of San Quentin and an employee at the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. He was part of a group that helped develop policy before he was released 10 months ago. “Although we didn’t have the right to vote, I felt the transformative power of being civically engaged,” Tran said during a press conference.

Harry Goodall, 49, has been incarcerated 24 years without voting rights. “If the law still applies to us and can be used against us, then we should be a part of the civil process,” he said. “Removing this disenfranchisement is what every human being should be entitled to.”

Some lawmakers disagree with incarcerated people having the right to vote. “Voting is a privilege that should be taken away as a consequence of being convicted of a crime,” said Assemblyman Tom Lackey (R-Palmdale). “We don’t want people who have shown disrespect for our laws to be part of forming them, and that’s what this proposal does,” he said in response to the proposed legislation.

Statistics show that most incarcerated people are Black, Brown, or indigenous; they are overly represented in prison but underrepresented at the polls during election time. Latinos are 41% of the prison population and 38% of the state population, according to new research by Project Males, a Texas based research group.

California’s Black population only makes up 6% of the state, but represents 28% of the prison population, according to Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB). Some believe this is an issue of equity and justice.

There are ten times the number of Blacks incarcerated as opposed to Whites, according to a 2017 report cited by CURB. Blacks are 7.5 times more likely to be wrongfully accused of a crime than White people, according to the National Registry of Exonerations.

As many as 55% of people of color in prison are serving virtual or actual life sentences. Therefore, many Black and Brown people face disenfranchisement and are removed from voter rolls for life.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has recognized the inequities of race when it comes to the death penalty and Blacks being overly convicted and sentenced based on race. The governor decided to place a moratorium on the death penalty and has begun the process of dismantling Death Row. He also signed the historic Racial Justice Act legislation to give Blacks and other people who feel they were discriminated against on the basis of race an opportunity to challenge their convictions.

Arthur Jackson, 50, is another incarcerated person at San Quentin and a clerk at Mount Tamalpais College. He has been incarcerated 30 years. “People who have never walked in my shoes shouldn’t be making decisions that affect me. They are out of touch and don’t know what to do. That’s why this system is messed up,” he said.

Vermont, Maine, and Washington, D.C., currently allow incarcerated people the right to vote. However, Vermont is only about 1.5% Black. Maine is 1.8% Black, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

California’s new proposed amendment will have to go through several committees and receive two-thirds majority vote from both houses of the Legislature before it can be placed on the ballot for voter approval during the next election cycle.

“There is no other group of potential voters that would be more informed on the issues than incarcerated people if given the right to vote,” said Jackson. “We deserve to have a voice and to be heard in elections that will affect our lives now and when we’re released.”

CHANCE

Continued from page 1

formation inside prison walls and his service in society have provided him a voice within the halls of the state assembly and to the governor.

James King, another former resident, has landed a job as the state campaign manager for the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, an organization that advocates for prison reform. During the state’s COVID-19 pandemic, King took to the airwaves, both radio and television, with the #StopSanQuentinOutbreak coalition to bring awareness to the trials of prisoners within the state prison system. King has reached back and helped the incarcerated with commutation petitions. King continues to be an inspiration to

Second Chance Month highlights impact of self-help, rehabilitative efforts

those who seek to be a servant when they return home.

Adamu Chan, who learned his craft of filmmaking within the San Quentin Media Center, paroled and created a documentary film titled *What These Walls Won’t Hold*, also about the SQ COVID-19 outbreak. The 40-minute film details the relationships, struggles and connections that transcended prison walls during the deadly outbreak.

With these second chances at living a productive life, these people continue to reach back and promote public safety. They have taken their prison experience and represent change.

Watson Allison spent 35 years on San Quentin’s Death Row before he was re-sentenced to 25 years-to-life.

Phil Melendez of Smart Justice will be a part of a committee of the formerly incarcerated who will help shape Newsom’s re-imagination of San Quentin into a Scandanavian-esque prison model. Melendez’s transformation inside prison walls and his service in society have provided him a voice within the halls of the state assembly and to the governor.

Allison is the only individual from Death Row to complete the Offender Mentor Certification Program (OMCP). Allison paroled in 2020 and returned to work as a San Quentin free-staff counselor for the prison’s Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment (ISUDT) programs. Allison mentored many of the same men he once walked the prison yard with

in alcohol and drug addiction counseling. One could always see the surreal expression on his face as he walked to the prison gym for the ISUDT classes. Allison has since moved on to other endeavors, but a journey from Death Row to freedom shows the power of second chances.

San Quentin is unique, a place where formerly incarcer-

ated residents have returned to lead self-help groups, religious services and college programs. Seeing these people transcend from state prison blues to what the incarcerated call “street clothes” sets the example of what is possible.

There are programs and support groups such as Project Rebound that have helped returning citizens to get in and attend prestigious colleges such as the University of California - Berkeley and Stanford. The formerly incarcerated are making strides in all walks of life.

However, formerly incarcerated people still face housing and job discrimination, as well as social stigmas. Throughout the nation recidivism rates remain high and people of color are still dis-

proportionately incarcerated. There are continual debates between conservatives and liberals on the whys, which leads mostly to this see-saw effect on what public safety is and what needs to be done.

Second Chance Month is designed to recognize the importance of helping individuals and communities in supporting the safe and successful reentry of the hundreds of thousands people who return from some form of incarceration each year. A second chance is not about forgetting the harm that has been caused to victims or survivors; it’s about using that pain and hurt not to reoffend and to advance oneself to a higher state of humanity.

A second chance involves true healing.

PROGRAMS

Former San Quentans return to honor Enneagram graduates

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

A self-help program that gives San Quentin residents the opportunity to learn the dominant traits of their personality held its annual graduation in the prison’s Protestant Chapel in mid-January.

The 12-week course, Enneagram Prison Project, gives participants the chance to live free even while living behind the wall.

Patrick Demery, one of the 33 graduates, sat in a circle with supporters and other visiting guests to celebrate accomplishments in the program.

“I have never had a soft place to land and [this program has] given me that soft place. I was afraid to allow myself to be vulnerable. You know more about me than anybody on this earth. [The program] has taught me that I deserve love, peace, and safety,” said Demery.

The program is supported by Susan Olesek. She teaches participants how to free themselves from their own prisons. Nine personality identifiers help participants understand past experiences and how their dominant personality traits molded past situations



Enneagram Prison Project’s 2023 graduation celebrated the accomplishments of nearly three dozen SQ residents and featured formerly incarcerated program veterans who returned to The Q for the special event.

Vincent O’Bannon // SQNews

- The Enneagram system identifies nine different personality types:
- Idealist/Reformer
 - Giver/Helper
 - Performer/Achiever
 - Romantic/Individualist
 - Observer/Investigator
 - Skeptic/Loyalist
 - Epicure/Enthusiast
 - Protector/Challenger
 - Mediator/Peacemaker

scribed his type as a “nine,” said that acquiring this information allowed him to understand the loyalty issues he had prior to incarceration. He noted that the program could be a solution to incarceration because individuals learn about themselves.

As the graduation ended, attendees shared lunch and conversed with alumni, administration, volunteers, and staff as they look forward to the next session of the Enneagram Prison Project.

“One of the greatest things to invest in is people. EPP introduced Alex to Alex and I’m so thankful that somebody loved me when I didn’t love myself,” said Senegal.

and relationships.

Formerly incarcerated members also attended the graduation, sharing their experiences with Enneagram and talking about how it continues to affect their lives today.

“I discovered that all the things that I wanted or needed in my life were already in me. Life is hard but if you have the will, EPP has the way for you. It’s not about who I was before, but about who I am to-

day,” said Chuck Stubblefield.

Stubblefield has been working with the project for nine years. When he was a resident of San Quentin he met Olesek in one of the very first Enneagram circles. Since 2020, Stubblefield has been the manager of a program in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco where he helps the people in that area.

Many board members, ambassadors, and administrative staff who participate in the

success of the Enneagram program attended. Like Stubblefield, Alex Senegal is a key figure in Enneagram. He also met Olesek while incarcerated. He dedicates his life to the success and rehabilitation of people who have no voice.

“I love being able to participate in my life. I wrestled and struggled with anything good about me, [but] because Alex learned how to love Alex, all this goodness flows out to others because everyone is

worth having that. To have conversations with my kids and family and give them the support they need as a dad and a grandfather is also important to me,” said Senegal.

Olesek opened the floor to the graduating class asking, “Where are you right now?” Many graduates stood and spoke about their experiences, their personality types, and the meaning of learning that information.

Another graduate, who de-

EOP crafting program offers creative coping outlet to incarcerated patients

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

A project that teaches incarcerated people to crochet blankets for donation to local animal shelters is inspiring participants and keeping needy animals warm through the winter.

“Crochet is a great meditative practice. It also creates a physical product that will give some comfort to a shelter animal,” said participant Steven Joyner.



Joshua Strange // SQNews

Crochet master Steve Joyner displays a hand-made masterpiece: a crocheted blanket for homeless pets awaiting adoption.

sition to a shelter, being moved from cage to cage, or finally going to a new home, Comfort for Critters says the familiar smells and softness of their blankets can “make all the difference.”

“I know how grim animal shelters can be All too often, cats and dogs only have newspaper to lie on,” said Hazel, a Comfort for Critters volunteer. “Blankets make such a positive difference in their lives. And when they’re happy, they get noticed more, and they get adopted.”

Dr. Bloom says that while crocheting is straightforward, it takes patience and perseverance to learn, which improves frustration tolerance. She said such life skills will benefit participants during and after their time in prison. She also said crocheting requires both hemispheres of the brain to work together, which benefits brain health and development.

Patience and perseverance were needed to get through all the interruptions and hardships the class encountered during the COVID pandemic, but to the joy of all involved, the program is now up and running again.

Project participant Carl Jones said he had never crocheted before, but was happy to learn something new. Dr. Bloom said Jones had a knack for it and was a quick study.

Jones proudly displayed his miniature blanket, saying it would be perfect for a Chihuahua. He said that it made him

feel good to think about a little dog staying warm because of his blanket. Jones thanked Dr. Bloom and prison staff for doing “something outside of the box.”

In comparison to Jones’ blanket, Steve Joyner made an enormous one fit for a Great Dane, or perhaps a Chesapeake Bay retriever, a breed he knows well from his childhood.

Joyner said he mistakenly made the first chain stitch along the border too long, but at that point he was committed. He said it took him almost a year to complete the blanket, but he is glad that he did.

“It was something that I looked forward to every week — a chance to learn a new skill,” Jonyer said. He added that he hopes the program continues and wants to keep crocheting after his release.

Dr. Bloom said that at Pelican Bay, program participants have “open access to yarn and crochet hooks so they can craft during their leisure time” in their housing units. She said she would support adding that option for participants at The Q in their dorms, if possible.

Participant Tim Huffman said, “Learning how to crochet, that’s something that’s hard to do. It took a while to get it down, but now I don’t even need help anymore.”

Dr. Bloom said she is “so proud of Mr. Huffman because he wanted to give up but he never did.”

Mental health treatment goes modern with virtual reality headsets



Vincent O’Bannon // SQNews

By William Harris
Journalism Guild Writer

A new virtual reality therapy program is being provided to some residents at San Quentin State Prison to get a meditation experience unlike any other.

The TRIPP Company app for Oculus device users was approved by Warden Ron Broomfield and Dr. Schmidt of the Enhanced Outpatient Program in H-Unit. San Quentin is the first location using the program.

“The idea comes from my patients saying that they didn’t have a place to quietly meditate,” said Dr. Michael Chazan, who requested permission to use the program. I thought I would have a difficult time getting the group approved, but I got the OK right away.”

Chazan bought the device in December 2020. “My idea was this technology would address issues like hyper-vigilance and having a quiet, safe space to learn how to meditate,” he said.

These guided meditation apps are used to treat anxiety, depression, adolescent Attention Deficit Disorder, substance abuse, drug craving, work stress and burnout. Participants with schizophrenia who go through virtual reality therapy also show significant reduction of aggressive behavior, according to studies from the TRIPP Company.

TRIPP’s website says it is a pioneering research-based company with a focus on wellness and substance-free mental health solutions.

The company’s virtual real-

ity meditation app encourages users to focus on their breath while viewing engaging visuals. This app enables feelings of awe, relaxation, mindfulness and connection with fellow meditators.

“TRIPP has mind-altering capabilities with binaural [soft musical] beats that act like a recreational drug to the human mind,” according to the company.

Dr. Chazan brings his personal headset to the program group in San Quentin. He fits the headset on each patient when it’s their time and puts on one of the 50 available programs. The patient is sitting when the program begins; however, while the program is running they can get up and interact how they want with what they’re seeing.

“Soothing narrations, audio-visuals and the occlusion effect gives the mind a feeling of relaxation. The feeling literally shuts the head down and takes one to a whole new world,” according to TRIPP.

“One forgets their depression for a while.”

The meditation therapy program lasts 24 weeks.

“I really am able to meditate well,” said one resident participant who didn’t wish to be identified.

“This is the best group I have. I can’t wait for Mondays,” said incarcerated person Mitchell Cash. “I went to one of the groups and was very impressed with how easy it was to follow. It was like floating through space.”

Another patient said he found it to be an excellent program, working wonders for mental health therapy. He said the hope is it can be expanded to help more incarcerated people suffering from serious mental health conditions, especially those who are afraid of the side effects from medication.

“Users can change their emotions and alter their feelings without the need to travel or take drugs,” according to TRIPP.





Second annual Mourning Our Losses event honors 13 lives lost

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

The second annual Mourning Our Losses event drew nearly 100 residents of the SQ community. The memorial, which honored 13 lives lost since 2021, took place in the Protestant Chapel on February 24.

Mourning Our Losses is a nonprofit organization based in Texas that tracks and honors those who have died while living or working behind bars, according to the organization's website.

Supporters of the organization and some formerly incarcerated people attended the memorial to celebrate those who have passed. Leonard Brown was back for the first time since paroling from San Quentin in 2022.

"Over my 33 years of incarceration, I saw so many brothers that did not make it along. One thing I know about prisoners is that we share a common thing about death. Most people don't

mind dying, but it's the dying in prison that is hard. Every day we should honor one another because we never know," said Brown.

San Quentin residents Robert Kuikahi and Bronson McDowell created portraits of the memorialized individuals. The portraits sat on chairs behind the podium.

"It was a good way to give back and honor someone that passed. I hope that I captured their liveliness in the art that I put out," said Kuikahi who added that the portraits are a donation to the MOL organization.

Arthur Jackson, president of the MOL committee inside San Quentin opened the ceremony by calling out the names of the 13 people who passed. As Jackson called out names, attendees walked in a line to view the portraits and pay their respect. The incarcerated eight-member band called *The Greater Good* played "*Nebsay Song*" during the viewing. Jackson introduced Brown.

Brown took the stage and spoke about returning to the prison after serving 33 years behind the wall. He told a story of working in San Francisco and a choice he made to throw a dying mouse in the trash.

"I struggled the rest of the night because I felt like I discarded life," he said.

Several SQ residents paid heartfelt tribute to the people they cared about through spoken word, poetry, storytelling, or a song. Jerry Gearin read *A Death of a Friend*, which was about the death of his friend Leonard Walker who passed away during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"[Leonard] knew where all the old motorcycle clubs were ... The Oakland A's was his favorite baseball team, and the Oakland Raiders was his favorite football team," said Gearin, who also spoke about their sports rivalry, which made the audience laugh.

Guitarist Robert Walthall

performed a song that he wrote for his mother, whom he lost 10 years ago.

"Looking in the mirror, I can see her eyes. And every time I see my face, it makes me realize that part of her survives," sang Walthall in the song he titled "*Mom*."

The powerful lyrics continued as Michael Adams sang a song titled "*Precious Lord*" representing his faith in God.

"Lead me on to your light. Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home. When my life is almost done, Lord hear my cry, hear my call, precious Lord lest I fall, take my hand, precious Lord lead me home," sang Adams.

Leaders from each denomination came out to share words of life and celebration. Muslim leader Imam Mohammad expressed how honored he is to be here. He talked about holding the hand of an incarcerated person at the hospital on a Sunday and then learning that the person had passed away

on Monday. He said that he would never hear the man's voice again.

"Even if you do not believe in God, we represent each other. Verily we are from God and to God we shall return," said Mohammad, who closed by giving three important points of advice to anyone grieving a death.

Don't make any major decision after someone dies.

Try speaking to the loved ones of the deceased to say what you didn't get a chance to say when the person was here.

If possible, go to the place of burial and talk to that person's soul.

Native American leader Hector Frank gave a powerful speech on the connection that all people have with the Great Spirit and each other. He thanked all in attendance for letting him be himself as he conducted a ritual and prayer.

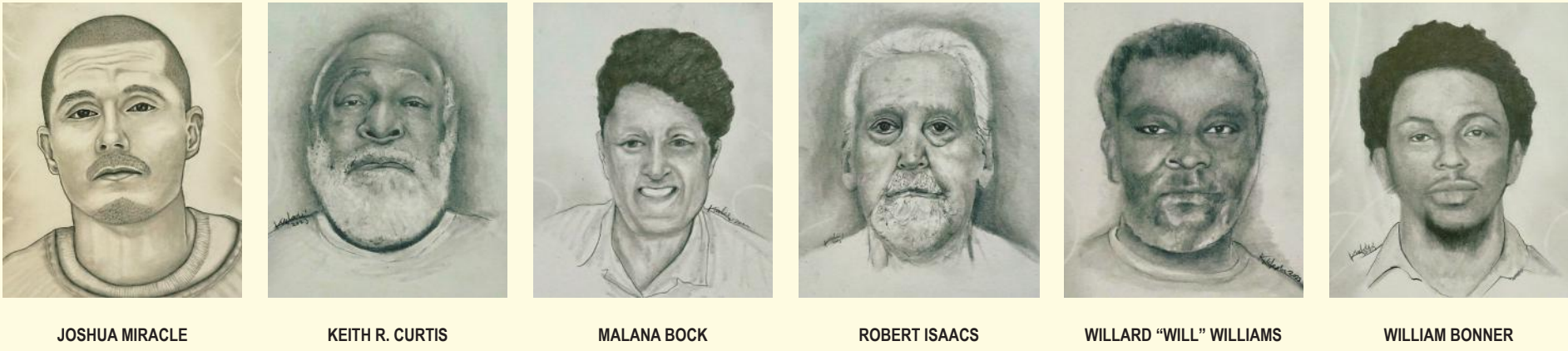
Removing a lighter from his pocket, he set fire to

Unfortunately, an image was not available to honor **Juan Luis Ariza, who passed away on December 23, 2021, at the age of 43.**

some cinnamon in a large seashell-like bowl. With a bunch of large feathers in one hand, he fanned the smoke as he passed each portrait; a burnt offering.

"It's not who you are or where you're going, but what you leave behind. If you just live, then it is a waste of time. Things don't happen by mistake. We came here in remembrance of these brothers and a sister. They're in a holy place ... Don't pity them, pray for them," said Frank.

— Juan Haines
contributed to this story



Growing research shows impact of poor nutrition on prison violence

Studies: Healthy diets tend to reduce antisocial behavior, mental health symptoms

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

Jokes about prison food are hardly new, but emerging research shows that the poor nutrition common in prison diets can lead to increased incidences of violence and mental health problems.

Conversely, better food and nutrition can improve conditions in prisons for both the incarcerated and those who work with them.

"When you watch TV shows about prison, it's all about the fights. They never talk about our food," said John Avila, who was formerly incarcerated, to the *Arizona Republic*.

Yet data show the two topics are related.

A series of scientific studies conducted in a variety of prison settings over several decades found a 30% decrease in violent incidents on average when nutrition was improved, according to a 2022 article in *BBC Science Focus*.

The *BBC* reports that this

sharp reduction in violence is superior to the outcome of psychological-based treatments for violent offenders.

The studies used nutritional supplementation in randomized, blind, and placebo-controlled trials — considered the gold standard for medical research — in prisons to test the effects of addressing nutritional deficiencies, *BBC* reported.

"Anti-social behavior in prisons, including violence, is reduced by vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids ...," wrote Bernard Gesch of Oxford University, the lead researcher of one of the studies.

BBC reports that these conclusions are consistent with studies of children that link low intake of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids to negative behaviors like physical aggression, defiance, and vandalism.

With little downside, relatively low cost, and other benefits to mental and physical health, the *BBC* article notes that improving food and nutrition in prisons appears

to be a cost-effective way to reduce expenditures on health care and security in carceral settings.

This matches the conclusions of a report by Impact Justice titled *Eating Behind Bars: Ending the Hidden Punishment of Food in Prison*.

"Along with declines in physical health, nutrient deficiencies contribute to a wide range of mental health and behavioral issues, including depression, aggression, and antisocial behavior," the report states.

Security and healthcare are the most expensive line items in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's annual budget.

California spends an average of \$106,131 a year per incarcerated person, according to 2022 government figures. Of this, 31.7% goes to healthcare of all types and 42.3% goes to security while only 2.3% goes to food service. That's about \$3 a day per person for all three meals, although this number was recently increased to over \$4 a day to account for inflation.

For context, the National School Lunch Program's reimbursement rate of \$3.66 per meal, as reported by the *Arizona Republic* in 2022, would

equate to \$10.98 a day. Another state-run institution, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, allocates about \$8.25 per day to feed residents in its long-term care facilities as of 2020, as reported by Impact Justice.

According to CDCR's operation manuals, the standardized menu used by its institutions follow a low salt, low fat, "Heart Healthy" diet consistent with the daily dietary guidelines issued by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine. The menu specifies 2,200 to 2,600 calories per day, assuming that a person eats all the items for all three meals.

The Impact Justice report, however, states, "Most prisons now rely on refined carbohydrates (e.g., white bread, biscuits, and cake) to reach the mandated calorie count, and many have turned to fortified powdered beverage mixes as the primary source of essential nutrients — a cheap but woefully inadequate alternative to nutrient-dense whole foods."

Given all the money spent incarcerating them — more than the cost of an Ivy League education — some residents of San Quentin wonder why the food isn't better and more

filling.

Resident Martin Martinez said the food often doesn't taste good and the portions are "happy meal-sized." He said when he was incarcerated over ten years ago the portions were bigger, meaning he didn't have to spend as much on canteen food.

"I was exercising and was in great shape, but now I'm afraid to work out because I'll starve," he said, explaining that he can no longer afford much at the canteen.

According to the *Arizona Republic*, this is common. "Starvation and poor-quality food send prisoners flocking to the commissary with the money their family sends or with the small sums earned through work," stated the article.

Yet commissaries feature processed food loaded with sodium, trans fats, and sugary carbohydrates, which are widely known to contribute to high blood pressure and diabetes, among other problems.

At the end of 2019, CDCR rolled out the "Healthier Canteen program," as noted in a 2022 report on the Inmate Welfare Fund by the Office of State Audits and Evaluations. The new program aims to promote "healthier eating through reduced pricing for healthi-

er items, [educate] inmates about healthier eating habits, and [improve] the nutritional content of meals served at all institutions."

Kimberley Wilson, the author of the *BBC* article and a former prison worker, observed, "The discussion around prison nutrition often becomes contentious in relation to philosophical conflicts as to whether the function of prison is rehabilitation or punishment. But whether or not you think offenders deserve quality food, the relationship between improved nutrition and overall prison safety is much less complicated."

Norway is an example of a correctional system fully focused on rehabilitation. Their prisoners can purchase fresh groceries, access kitchens, and share meals with correctional staff, as reported in the *New York Times Magazine*. The country's recidivism rates are among the lowest in the world, according to a study commissioned by the Norwegian Correctional Service.

"Given that 95% of incarcerated people are eventually released, their physical and mental health is ultimately a community and societal concern," stated the Impact Justice report.

HISTORY

JEFF CRAEMER: CURATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

Founder of the San Quentin Museum began building photo, artifact collection in 1984

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism Guild Chairman

Jeff Craemer is curator of San Quentin prison’s museum, and steeped in history.

Craemer was born and raised in Marin County and observed San Quentin as he grew up “from a distance.”

“Back then there were no bathrooms inside the cells,” Craemer said. “They only had buckets on the back of the cell floor and there was no heat in the cells.” He added, “In one cell they housed five prisoners.”

The museum is crammed with prison mementos, including a model of the gallows, the noose used in the last hanging, weapons confiscated from prisoners, firearms used by guards over the years, a mockup of a prison cell, many old issues of the *San Quentin News* and numerous photos.

In 1960 Craemer saw the Spanish cellblock demolished and rebuilt as The Adjustment Center.

He started regularly coming into the prison in 1984, when then Associate Warden Richard Nelson worked with him to collect photographs and materials for a museum.

Nelson connected Craemer with a grant writer to generate funding for the museum and continued to help accumulate items for the museum. One piece looked like an ordinary pen, but when opened, it turned out to be a deadly weapon.

When its collection became sufficient, the museum held a Grand Opening in June 1986. A local television station as well as CNN covered the event.

Craemer recalls how Clinton T. Duffy’s appointment as warden in 1940 changed the prison’s culture.

Duffy initiated a number of programs for prisoners, a departure from the prevailing mode of “lock-em-up and throw away the key.” He supported the furniture factory and a vocational trade school to teach prisoners new skills and prepare them to lead a productive life.

By the time Craemer became involved in the San Quentin museum work, Duffy’s reforms were established and had begun to attract the attention of staff in other prisons.

“I remember how men [staff] from other prisons came to see all the vocation training and wanted to have the same programing in their prisons,” Craemer said.

■ ■ ■

With historical documents and other museum pieces, Craemer documented how San Quentin prisoners contributed to the war effort during World War II.

He recalls shipments of supplies arriving at the prison and the incarcerated building things for the military.

“Warden Duffy knew how to organize things,” Craemer said. “They made cargo nets for the ships and huge bumpers for the ships to prevent them from damage as well as the submarine cable nets to prevent a Japanese West-coast naval invasion.”

Prisoners built assault boats, assembled, painted and laced bunks used in the transport of battle-bound troops and made ammunition boxes and military boots — all without pay.

“I have pictures where in the dinner hall there were no divisions,” Craemer said. “All the men were sitting together and assembling war ration books.”

Warden Duffy escorted First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt through San Quentin for a National Security Award ceremony to honor prisoners for doing their part in the war effort.

■ ■ ■

As to women at San Quentin, Craemer remembers the execution of Barbara Grant in 1955. “She had the vocabulary of a longshoreman and a teamster,” he recalled.

Craemer also talked about the August 1979 escape of John Waller, William McGirk and Forrest Tucker in a 14-foot-long canoe built of wood and plastic sheets.

“They built the boat in the furniture factory and took off,” Craemer said. “They pretended to be fishing as they paddled away.”

On the side of the boat the men had painted *Rub-a-Dub-Dub Marin Yacht Club*, which according to a Feb. 13, 1981 *San Quentin News* article “made the vessel appear so innocent that a guard in the San Quentin tower who saw the men sailing away with some difficulty called to them to ask if they were all right. The men assured him they were.” The boat had begun sinking but made it safely to shore.

Authorities arrested McGirk in San Rafael two months later and captured Waller in Gilroy in April 1980. Tucker disappeared.

Craemer would have liked to have the boat



Photos courtesy of Tom Lapinsky

The San Quentin Museum (top) officially opened in June 1986 as the brainchild of Curator Jeff Craemer and Associate Warden Richard Nelson.

Artifacts in the museum’s display cases include numerous models of rifles and pistols (right) used by prison guards over the years, as well as shackles and chains (center right) worn by prisoners.

Among the most macabre items in the museum is a tattered and frayed noose (bottom) used on the San Quentin gallows before the gas chamber became the state’s official method of capital punishment in 1938.



for the museum’s collection, but prosecutors kept it as evidence in the trial.

■ ■ ■

Craemer clearly remembers the events of August 1970. He was working for his family newspaper, the *Marin Independent Journal*.

He recalls that Jonathan Jackson walked into a Marin courthouse and took hostages. The plan was to negotiate the release from San Quentin of his brother, George Jackson. The plan failed and ended with a judge, Harold Haley, Jonathan Jackson and two prisoners killed in a barrage of bullets. Craemer says he still sees pictures of this horrific event in his head.

Craemer says all kinds of people visit the museum and inquire about San Quentin’s history.

It’s not unusual, said Craemer, for someone to ask him to help track down a long lost relative once incarcerated at San Quentin. Typically these folks cannot find help anywhere else. Craemer digs into documents and records and does his best to help.

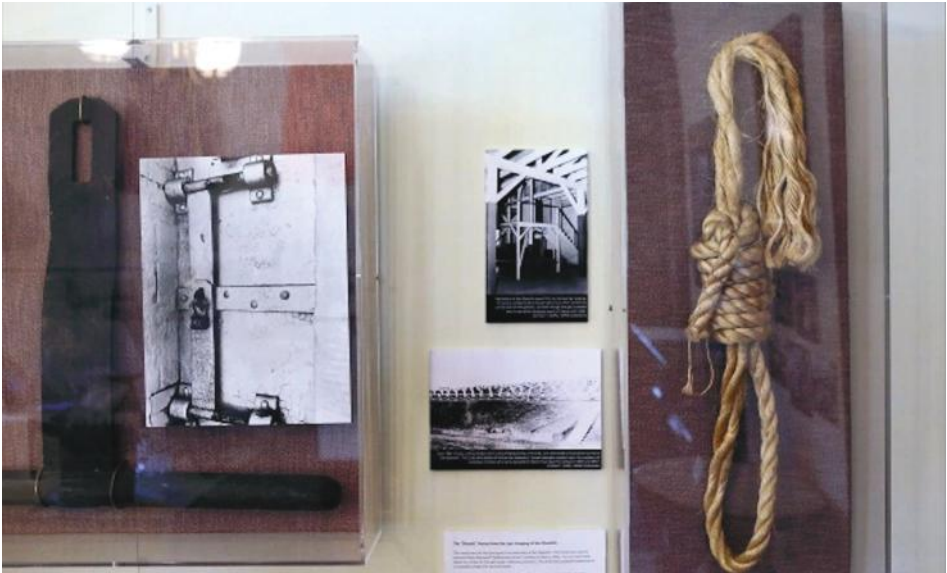
He remembers one search reaching back to 1854 to find a woman’s relative.

“This teary-eyed woman got a sense of relief that she was able to find her long-ago ancestor,” Craemer said. Then, he recalls a man in a black coat claiming to be a relation of Wyatt Earp and a young woman who claimed to be the great-granddaughter of Wells Fargo bank robber, C. E. Bolton, better known as Black Bart.

Craemer mentions two publications that tell the history of San Quentin well. *This is San Quentin*, is a folio of sketches depicting the history of the prison. The book, originally published around 1944, has a foreword written by Nelson when he was president of the San Quentin Museum Association.

The other is the first edition of *San Quentin Inside The Walls*, published in 1991. The picture book includes photos of prisoners as they first enter the prison, of Death Row, of the famous and infamous, of women inmates, as well as other aspects of the prison’s history that readers might find interesting.

The museum, located just outside the gates of San Quentin, is open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



NEW YORK

Growing number of exonerations nationwide spawns new industry

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Contributing Writer

As the number of exonerations slowly rises across the country, so do the wrongful conviction claims against states.

The falsely convicted and imprisoned face the daunting prospect of trying to rebuild their lives while simultaneously fighting legal battles to receive their rightful compensation for being wrongfully incarcerated.

Such claims can take years to settle, said Corey Kilgannon of the *New York Times*, leaving the exoneree without cash or credit to help them pay their bills. Thus, many exonerees

turn to firms that offer loans for pending court settlements, including exonerations.

These firms typically advance funds based on anticipated future payouts from court settlements such as for slip-and-fall, car accidents, and medical malpractice cases. The *Times* article explained that exonerations have turned into a niche sector, but that these loans come with high interest rates.

The cash advances also come with uncertainty — if exonerees fail to collect from the court, lenders often must forgive the advances. If the court payouts do materialize, then lenders receive a hefty percentage as a reward for taking the

risk of a failed settlement.

For many exonerees, the bargain is worth the price in order to have funds to begin rebuilding their lives. “I needed a service and they provided it,” said one exoneree quoted in the article. “Most people aren’t willing to take a chance on any of us.”

While appealing to some, this business model concerns some prisoner advocates.

“These are among the most unjustifiably victimized people in our society, plucked out of their lives and thrown behind bars. To then monetize them seems a little harsh,” said civil rights lawyer Ron Kuby.

The article cited some of the rates charged by these firms.

For example, New York residents Huwe Burton took an advance of \$500,000 and paid 28%; Sundhe Moses took an advance of \$489,413 at a rate of 33%; and Fernando Bermudez took an advance of \$290,000 and ended up paying back roughly twice as much. Such rates far exceed the state’s 25% limit on usury interest rates.

Jonathan Moore, a lawyer who works on exoneration compensation cases, said that he tries to counsel his clients against these high-interest loans, but he admitted that such firms provide a lifeline. The *Times* also said that this niche sector has grown more competitive as lenders follow exoneration cases closely.

Firms defend their high-interest business model by stressing that they risk losing the entire advanced amount if the exoneree’s wrongful conviction compensation claim against the state fails, the article said. The legal claim is the sole collateral for an exoneration loan.

Abraham Arouesty, the vice-president of a firm that lends to exonerees, said the loans are viewed as a gamble by lenders and that the rates they charge are calculated to reflect the risk of losing the entire advance.

However, the article quotes Donna Lee Jones, the president of another firm that provides exoneration loans. Jones

said that advancing funds for future wrongful conviction lawsuits make exceptionally good bets because they have often gone through years of appellate court scrutiny and vetting by lawyers handling the claims.

The *Times* article quoted Jeffrey Gutman, a law professor at George Washington University, who cited a total of \$2.65 billion in court payouts from 716 exonerees. These payouts averaged \$3.7 million per exoneree, the equivalent of \$318,000 per year in prison. The business model is expected to continue to grow given that the National Registry of Exonerations added 367 cases in 2022 alone.

OREGON

Benefits of drug use decriminalization delayed

By Stuart Clarke
Journalism Guild Writer

Oregon voters approved decriminalizing personal drug use in 2020 and focusing on drug addiction treatment instead, but the results to date have been underwhelming, *The Associated Press* reports.

Along with decriminalization, Oregon’s Ballot Measure 110 aimed to raise revenue from recreational marijuana sales and drug possession fines to fund addiction treatment and related services.

However, an audit of the new law’s implementation released this year highlighted the lack of progress in its implementation. Shemia Fagan, Oregon’s secretary of state, said it would be premature to call it a failure, but acknowledged its slow progress to date, including delays in funding for treatment programs.

James Schroeder, director of the Oregon Health Authority, said funding delays were caused in part by “ambitious implementation timelines and stretched Oregon Health Authority staffing resources due to the pandemic.”

In the meantime, drug abuse and over-

dose deaths have followed upward nationwide trends, according to the *AP*. Oregon ranks second in substances use disorder and 50th for access to treatment.

According to the auditors, only 1% of the people who have been ticketed for drug possession and given a hotline number have sought help via such treatment services during the first year of implementation, which began February 2021.

Critics said officials were wrong to presume that simply expanding access to treatment would be sufficient to get those suffering from drug addictions to seek help.

“Without some external pressure, most people will not attempt to reduce their drug use via treatment or other means,” said Keith Humphreys, professor of psychiatry at Stanford University and a former senior adviser in the White House Office of National Drug Policy.

Recommendations in the auditors’ report were candid in acknowledging the bureaucratic failures that produced insufficient and uncoordinated services, according to Humphreys.

However, he added that, “In contrast,

the report does not deal adequately with the fact that statewide efforts to use tickets/fines for drug possession to incentivize people to enter treatment was a complete failure.”

Notably, Oregon’s law is modeled on similar successful efforts such as in Portugal. However, Portugal is much more vigorous in getting people into treatment, said the article.

According to Schroeder, the success of the measure depends on the ability to solve challenges such as expanding treatment capacity and better supporting counselors and health care workers.

Fagan said she was a strong supporter of Measure 110 given that her brother has struggled with drug addiction. She said her family “couldn’t find an inpatient facility to take him, despite the fact that he had really hit rock bottom.”

She added that her brother has finally received help but emphasized the high stakes.

“Make no mistake, this is a matter of life and death,” Fagan said. “Measure 110 must work because real people’s lives hang in the balance.”

NEVADA

Judge overturns ex-gov’s sweeping commutations

By Rahan Asaan
Journalism Guild Writer

A Nevada judge halted the outgoing governor’s last-minute attempt to have all 57 Death Row prisoners’ sentences commuted because victim families were not properly notified as required by law, the *Associated Press* reports.

Then-Gov. Steve Sisolak recommended the state parole board, which includes the governor, grant commutations on Dec. 20. But District Court Judge James Wilson Jr. ruled that victim families were not notified.

“I think that is required to show the capital murder victim fairness and respect for his or her dignity,” Wilson said.

An emergency petition filed by Reno Republican District Attorney Chris Hicks prompted

the ruling, the *AP* story reported.

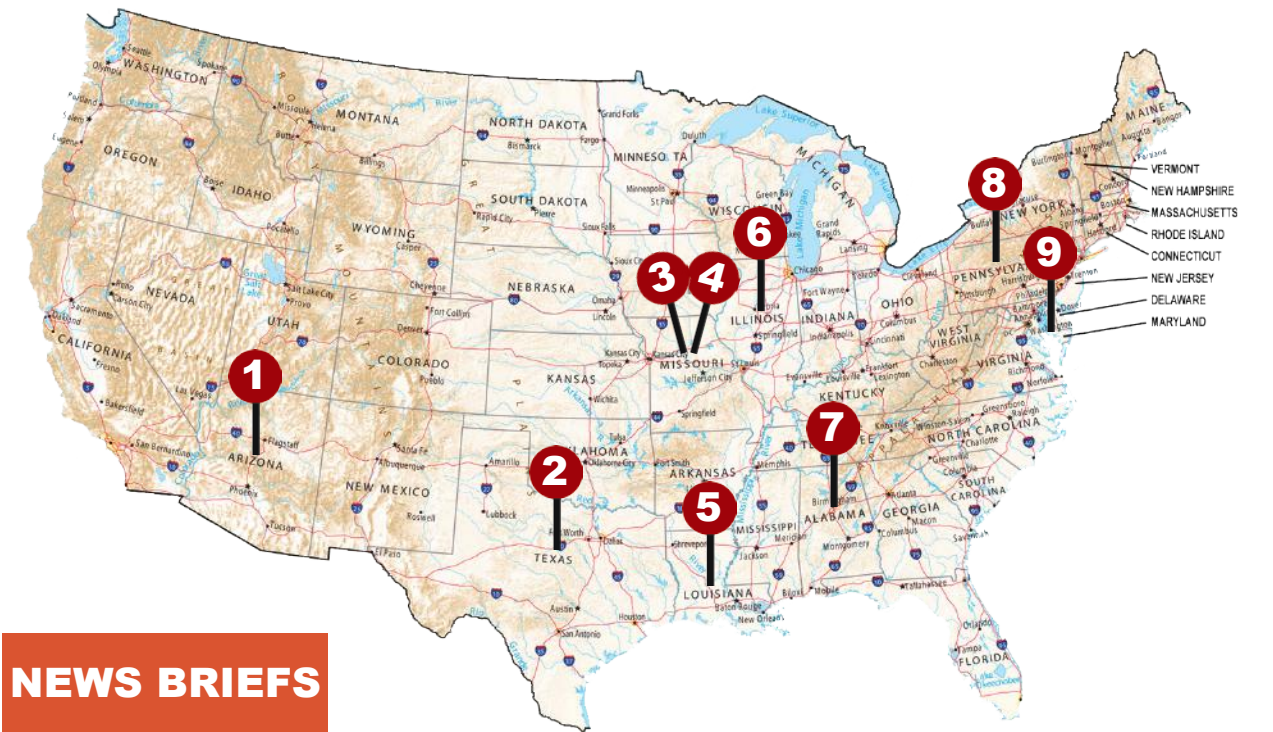
Sisolak had hoped to reduce the sentences of all of the condemned inmates from death to life without the possibility of parole before Republican Joe Lombardo was sworn in as governor.

There hasn’t been an execution in the state of Nevada since 2006.

Longtime Las Vegas Public Defender Scott Coffee supports abolition of the death penalty and says the system in Nevada is irreparably broken and cannot be repaired.

“It’s been a false promise to victims for too long,” Coffee said. “To some extent, it’s lip service to tell them that there will be some kind of retribution for the death of their loved ones when the reality is that it just doesn’t happen.”

- 1. Arizona** — (*Arizona Republic*) An independent commission will have oversight of the state’s chronically troubled prison system said Gov. Katie Hobbs in January. The commission will first report its findings to the public in November. The governor’s executive order stated that the commission’s creation reflects “an urgent need to provide transparency and accountability of Arizona’s correctional system.” The announcement came shortly after the appointment of Ryan Thornell as incoming director of the Arizona Department of Corrections. Thornell, whose tenure as director began Jan. 30, was previously deputy commissioner of Maine’s state prison system. “Incoming Director Thornell cares about transparency and it’s one of the main reasons he’s the right person to tackle these types of problems,” said Hobbs.
- 2. Texas** — (*Fox News*) Texas executed Death Row inmate Wesley Ruiz via lethal injection for the murder of a Dallas police officer in 2007. It was the state’s second execution in 2023 and the fourth in the nation this year. Ruiz shot Senior Corporal Mark Nix following a high-speed chase. Nix’s relatives were present to witness the execution.
- 3. Missouri** — (*AP*) Fifty-year-old Lamar Johnson walked free Feb. 14 after serving 28 years of a life sentence for a crime a court decided he could not have committed. Circuit Judge David Mason explained that his decision was based on “reliable evidence of actual innocence — evidence so reliable that it actually passes the standard of clear and convincing.” The state’s attorney general’s office fought to keep Johnson imprisoned until the moment of the judge’s decision. The attorney general’s office “never stopped claiming Lamar was guilty and was comfortable to have him languish and die in prison,” said Johnson’s attorneys in a statement. “Yet, when this State’s highest law enforcement office could hide from a courtroom no more, it presented nothing to challenge the overwhelming body of evidence that the circuit attorney and Lamar Johnson amassed.”
- 4. Missouri** — (*AP*) The City of St. Louis agreed to a class action settlement with 84 people arrested in a 2017 protest spawned by the acquittal of a police officer tried for the 2011 shooting death of Anthony Lamar Smith. The \$4.91 million payout amounts to about \$58,500 per person. The police formed a “kettle” around the protest area, ordered dispersal and arrested everyone caught in the perimeter, including bystanders. The proposed settlement requires a judge’s approval. The city denied any wrongdoing. Additionally, several people settled individual claims exceeding \$5 million against the city in connection to the protests.
- 5. Louisiana** — (*Reuters*) The Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections routinely and deliberately holds incarcerated people beyond their legal release dates in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, said the U.S. Justice Department in a January statement. The Justice Department found that between January and April 2022, more than one-fourth of people remained in detention in the state’s prison system beyond their release dates. Of that group, almost one-fourth served at least 90 days more than their sentences required. “LDOC is deliberately indifferent to the systemic overdetention of people in its custody,” wrote the Justice Department. The state said that it is reviewing the report.



NEWS BRIEFS

- 6. Illinois** — (*USA Today*) A youth shot at the age of 12 in a pre-dawn SWAT raid gone awry will receive \$12 million as a result of a settlement in the case. The SWAT team was in Amir Worship’s home to arrest his mother’s boyfriend on a drug charge. An officer shot Worship with an AR-15-style rifle, shattering his kneecap and damaging other bones. Four years later, the boy has been through five surgeries, is permanently disabled, and will need multiple knee replacements in his lifetime. The SWAT team knew there were children in the home. They entered the room Worship shared with two brothers shouting commands and pointing rifles at the boys, who offered no resistance. Then the officer’s gun went off. Several investigations concluded that there was no misconduct by the police.
- 7. Alabama** — (*AP*) A mentally ill man froze to death in a Walker County jail cell two weeks after his arrest. His family said he spent his jail time naked in a concrete cell and their lawsuit against the County suggests that Anthony Don Mitchell, 33, was also held in a “walk-in freezer or similar frigid environment and left there for hours.” His body temperature upon his arrival at an emergency room was 72 degrees. The lawsuit quotes an emergency room doctor who tried to revive Mitchell, “I am not sure what circumstances the patient was held in incarceration but it is difficult to understand a rectal temperature of 72° F ... while someone is incarcerated in jail ... I do not know if he could have been exposed to a cold environment.”

- 8. Pennsylvania** — (*The Patriot - News*) Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro will not sign death warrants, a continuation of the practice of his predecessors. At times in his political career Shapiro has staunchly supported the death penalty in certain cases. However, he said that his views on the penalty have “evolved over time.” The state has executed only three people since it re-instated its death penalty in 1976. Some have been on Pennsylvania’s Death Row since the 1980s. Previous governors have called for death penalty reforms; Shapiro is calling for repeal. “We shouldn’t aim to fix this system,” said Shapiro. “The commonwealth should not be in the business of putting people to death, period.”
- 9. Maryland** — (*AP*) A series of court-ordered reforms in 2017 have resulted in a significant decrease in use of force incidents involving the Baltimore Police Department. The changes stem from a federal investigation that revealed “a pattern of unconstitutional and discriminatory policing practices, especially against Black residents,” wrote *The AP*. Since the investigation, the department remains under a consent decree that provides for the oversight of a federal judge. A report to the court revealed that a critical staffing shortage and inability to hold wayward officers accountable still hamper the Baltimore department. But citizen complaints about officer conduct are down. “The findings in this report move us yet another step closer to rebuilding the trust of the community and strengthening systems of accountability across the department,” said agency spokesperson Lindsey Eldrde.

NORTH CAROLINA

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Contributing Writer

Upon release, parolees often find themselves confronted by various Catch-22 scenarios. Jobs, licenses and identification, and receiving benefits all depend on having an address. Having an address sometimes depends on having some of the other items on that list.

In New Bern, North Carolina, an organization called Tried By Fire, Inc. hopes to help incarcerated women overcome such bureaucratic contradictions upon their release from prison, says an article by Todd Wetherington in *The Sun Journal*. Tried By Fire provides an address for three to four months at “My Sister’s House,” a temporary shelter for up to eight women.

“When someone comes out of prison the first thing they need is a photo ID,” said Deedra Durocher, the organization’s resource coordinator. “If they do not have a viable address they can’t get that, which means they can’t get a job, they can’t get a driver’s license, and they can’t apply for some of the benefits.”

Currently under construction, the two-story house has a sign that says, “My Sister’s House – Where your past doesn’t matter.” This affirmation reminds future residents that regardless of their transgressions, they have found a welcoming place for a fresh start.

The house will not charge

Organization helps women overcome reentry obstacles



rent. Once tenants obtain a job, they must set aside part of their pay “that will allow them to pay a first month’s rent and utility deposits when they’re out on their own,” Durocher said. Tried By Fire will also provide budgeting and financial literacy classes, according to the article.

“Living together where they’re going to share household chores and meal planning means they’re going to have to learn teamwork and be aware of leadership,” said

Durocher. “I’m hoping we will have people who move on from My Sister’s House that will come back and offer peer counseling and mentoring with the whole ‘I’ve been there and done that’ experience that they can share.”

Habitat for Humanity donated the 80-year-old home that stood on the land where My Sister’s House now sits. The structure had suffered severe damage from water and by termites. Even worse, it needed a new foundation.

The board of directors of Tried By Fire decided to demolish and rebuild, the article said.

Work on a new 2,760 square foot house began Sept. 2021 and Durocher expects a certificate of occupancy at the end of February or March. She hopes My Sister’s House can start admitting tenants in April. The project cost about \$347,000. Local businesses provided in-kind donations of cabinetry, appliances, and other home essentials, bringing Tried By Fire’s out-of-pocket expenses down to \$275,000.

The four-bedroom house’s ground floor has a common living area and a conference room that doubles as a computer room and library for classes. The house also has a large kitchen and dining room and an office with sleeping quarters for overnight staff. The second floor has four double-occupancy bedrooms.

“They will be surrounded with a tremendous amount of support that is going to come from volunteers who have signed up for our counseling or tutoring services,” Durocher told *The Sun Journal* about the house’s future residents. “We’re turning something that was a blighted property into a place to call home.”

OHIO

\$1.3M settlement reached in wrongful conviction case

By Cainen Chambers
Staff Writer

After 21 years of incarceration for a crime he didn’t commit, Ralph Smith, 49, was awarded \$1.3 million for his wrongful imprisonment, according to a story in the *Complex*. Smith was falsely convicted of an armed robbery in Ohio in 2000 for which he was sentenced to 67 years in prison.

Prosecutors alleged that Smith, who is Black, and another Black man broke into a dwelling that was occupied by a family and ordered the parents to open a safe. The alleged victims claimed Smith and his accomplice stole rare comic books, jewelry and approximately \$10,000 in cash.

The two parents pointed out Smith in a lineup of pictures. However, there was no other evidence to suggest that Smith had committed the alleged act. Regardless, Smith was convicted of multiple felonies including aggravated burglary, aggravated robbery, and kidnapping.

After 20 years of maintaining his innocence and pursuing legal recourse, Smith contacted defense attorney Joseph Landusky, who agreed to help.

“When I read about his case and started getting into it, I really believed that a crime didn’t even happen in this case,” Landusky said according to reporting by WBNS-TV.

On Smith’s behalf, Landusky filed a motion for a new trial that highlighted exculpatory evidence such as a handwritten police report that contained “numerous observations expressing skepticism about whether a crime had occurred,” reported the *Columbus Dispatch*.

Landusky stated Smith was “sentenced to 67 years in prison for a crime that was not even committed by anyone. When first responders showed up, there were no footprints in the snow.”

In response to the motion, Fairfield County Prosecutor Kyle Witt did not seek a new trial and rather decided to drop all charges against Smith in 2021. This cleared the way for Smith to file a wrongful imprisonment lawsuit, which resulted in the \$1.3 million settlement reward from the state of Ohio.

Smith said he was looking forward to supporting his family and rewarding his legal team with the payout.

SOUTH CAROLINA

SC pushes ‘shield laws’ to protect lethal drug suppliers

Randy C. Thompson
Journalism Guild Writer

South Carolina is pushing to enact a law to shield the identities of pharmaceutical companies that supply the state with drugs used for lethal injections, according to an article by *The Associated Press*.

The state is looking to end its 12-year period of being unable to carry out executions due to a failure to secure the needed lethal drugs after its supply expired in 2013.

“Even if we pass this — I want to be clear — this is not a guarantee that we’re going to get the drugs. It’s just another tool we can use to talk to companies,” said Bryan Stirling, director of South Carolina’s corrections department.

If enacted, the law would protect the identities of those

involved in the manufacture, selling and handling of lethal drugs used for executions.

South Carolina’s struggles to carry out executions began after pharmaceutical companies started refusing to sell their drugs to prison officials out of concern for reputational harm due to the intended use of taking human lives, said the article.

State officials have also feared that prison employees involved in the execution process would not participate if their names were made public. Of the 14 states that have carried out the death penalty within the last five years, most already have similar shield laws in place.

The push for a shield law in South Carolina began after Death Row inmates challenged a 2021 law that would have

allowed executions to resume by either firing squad or the state’s hundred-year-old electric chair.

Lawyers for South Carolina’s 30 Death Row inmates faced with this choice argued that both execution methods are cruel and unusual punishments. However, all sides involved in the case agreed that lethal injection is legal. Thus, for now, the issue of South Carolina moving forward with its executions returns back to the state’s inability to find a supplier for the lethal drugs.

Victim advocate Laura Hudson said it is an insult to the victims that the state is unable to carry out court-ordered executions. She said the state has a duty to carry out retribution for the murder of people’s loved ones. On the other side of the debate are cries for transparen-

cy and respect for due process.

Allie Menegakis, founder of South Carolina for Criminal Justice Reform, expressed concern about the ramifications of the proposed shield law.

“When we’re talking about someone actually killed by the government, what is being used to kill, where this drug comes from, and whether it is safe, whether it has been regulated — you and everyone else will have no access to that information,” she said.

As of January 2023, the bill had been approved by a state Senate subcommittee and was scheduled for full committee review before going to the Republican-dominated state legislature for a vote. If the law is approved, the state would still need to find a compounding pharmacy to mix the lethal drugs prior to their use.

NATIONAL

Panel weighs compassionate release, firearms penalties

By Jad Salem
Journalism Guild Writer

The U.S. Sentencing Commission is considering changes in federal sentencing guidelines, focusing on compassionate release and increased penalties for firearm violations.

The commission unanimously approved its policy priorities for the amendment year ending May 1, 2023 at a hearing on Oct. 28, 2022.

The two significant changes were made by the First Step Act of 2018, a law containing a number of criminal justice reforms that are aimed at reducing recidivism and improving conditions at federal prisons in the U.S., according to a new report by the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

One change is that an incarcerated person can file for a compassionate release, without having a motion filed by the

Bureau of Prisons. This procedure is optional because they have not yet been placed in the commission’s guidelines. This technicality put most appellate courts on hold, because defendants’ motions do not apply.

“The conflicting holdings and varying results across circuits and districts suggest that the courts could benefit from updated guidance from the commission, which is why we have set this as an important part of our agenda this year,” said Judge Carlton W. Reeves, who acts as commission chair.

In addition, national debates have centered on what constitutes “extraordinary and compelling reasons” for compassionate release, with varying outcomes, reported the article.

Additionally, the “safety valve,” which exempts certain drug trafficking offenders from statutory mandatory minimum penalties, was mod-

ified by the First Step Act. The act made certain offenders with more than one point in their criminal history eligible.

Section 5C1.2 will be revised by the commission to take into account the revised statutory criteria and the two-level reduction in the drug trafficking guidelines that are currently attached to the statutory safety valve.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Acts provisions for higher penalties for some gun offenses are among the criminal provisions that the commission stated it intends to enforce, along with other legislative measures that call for commission action.

More than 8,000 letters of public comment were submitted in response to the commission’s September publication of tentative properties and invitation to comment.

The commission expressed

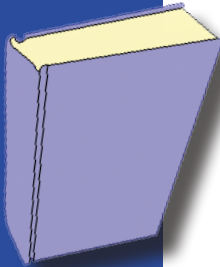
appreciation for feedback received through public comment. “As we now pivot to work on the final priorities set forth today, we look forward to ... our continued interaction with the public to ensure the federal sentencing guidelines properly reflect current law and promote uniformity in sentencing.”

Additionally, the commission will begin a number of multi-year projects, including an examination of diversion and alternatives-to-incarceration programs, as well as other aspects of the guidelines pertaining to criminal history.

“A number of judges and others within the court family expressed strong support for the programs within their own district,” Reeves stated. “The commission looks forward to hearing more from experts and researching more fully the benefits of these programs.”

Something to think about...

The Marshall Project has requested lists of banned books from every state prison system in the United States. About half of the states maintain lists of prohibited books and those lists contain more than 50,000 titles.



TENNESSEE

Termination of Memphis officers unusually swift in Tyre Nichols case

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

The rapid firing of five Memphis police officers following the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols is unusual according to some experts in law enforcement practices, *The Associated Press* reported.

“It’s rare for a police department to act so quickly,” said David Thomas, a professor of forensic studies at Florida Gulf Coast University and former police officer. “It never happens this quickly.”

Officers Taddarius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills Jr., and Justin Smith were all fired less than two weeks after the Nichols arrest. All five are Black, as was Nichols.

Nichols was initially stopped and arrested for reckless driving. After attempting to run and being confronted by officers, Nichols complained of shortness of breath. He was taken to a hospital where he died three days later.

Officials said that the officers were dismissed for their excessive use of force and failure to render aid. Body camera footage of the incident has not been released; however, relatives of Nichols are pushing for its release.

“In the old days, you’d have

the officer’s word,” Thomas said. “If the victim were still alive, you’d have their testimony. If someone died, you’d have the examiner’s report. With body cameras, the evidence is right there.”

Body cameras can unveil the entire story if they are working for the full duration of an incident. However, officers may forget to turn on their camera or intentionally turn them off, *AP* reported.

According to the *AP*, officials will usually determine if the involved officers have violated department policy prior to termination.

“The seriousness of the job action is based on the severity of the violation,” said Patrick Oliver, director of Cedarville University’s criminal justice program and 28-year veteran of law enforcement. “There is far more scrutiny of police today.”

“In many agencies, the initial decision to fire an officer begins a lengthy appellate process that can take months to complete,” Oliver said.

A civil rights investigation was opened by the U.S. Department of Justice to look into the incident. Additionally, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is assessing the use of force by the officers, *The AP* reported.

LAW & POLICY

‘BASIC’ ACT TAKES AIM AT CANTEEN PRICE GOUGING

SB 474: California Sen. Josh Becker hopes to eliminate excessive markups on commissary items

By Steve Brooks
Editor-in-Chief

“Coming soon, Top Ramen noodles will be \$1.00, if you don’t support the new BASICs act.” That’s what a sign reads on a San Quentin housing unit bulletin board.

Senate Bill 474 (the Basic Affordable Supplies for Incarcerated Californians Act) is authored by Sen. Josh Becker (D-Peninsula). The bill seeks to eliminate excessive markups on items sold at canteens in prisons across California.

“This bill alleviates cost pressures for incarcerated people and their families by eliminating price markups on items purchased in California’s prison canteen stores,” wrote Becker.

SB 474 is estimated to save incarcerated people and their families \$30 million each year.

According to a 2020 Inmate Welfare Fund audit report, the average markup of CDCR canteen items was 65% above prices paid to vendors.

In a 2020 report from Impact Justice, three-fifths of formerly incarcerated people surveyed said they had not been able to afford canteen purchases, and 75% reported that access to food was limited by their own and their families’ finances.

“When I can’t afford canteen there is an issue,” said incarcerated person Anthony Tafoya. “It’s too expensive. My family puts money on my books every month, but



Price hikes on essential hygiene items leave even the basics out of reach for some California prisoners...



...and those who lack financial support from loved ones are forced to subsist on what is issued by the state.

Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

I went from spending \$50 to \$70 and now \$200 for some of the same items at canteen. It’s ridiculous.”

Incarcerated people at San Quentin are allowed to shop at the canteen once per month and can spend up to \$240 if they have a prison job assignment.

California prisoners generally make between 8 cents and 37 cents per hour, according to the *California Code of Regulations title 15. 3041.2*.

Carl Raybon has an 18-cents-per-hour clerk job and a \$15,000 restitution fine. Fifty percent of his monthly check goes toward his resti-

tution. He is usually left with between \$9 and \$12 to spend at canteen.

“I cannot purchase anything outside of basic necessities,” said Raybon. “Purchasing anything from vendors is out of the question. A book of stamps costs \$12. I think if they raise the canteen prices they should consider raising our wages to meet the demands of those prices.”

There have been no pay raises for prisoners in California in over 40 years. However, here at San Quentin some prisoners say prices on favored items continue to rise every month.

Incarcerated people like Tafoya and Raybon do have access to weekly indigent supplies of one small bar of soap, one roll of toilet paper, one razor, one toothbrush, tooth powder and floss bands.

They have no alternative but to purchase scented soaps, breath-freshening toothpaste, moisturizing lotion, hair grease and deodorant. Some prisons even sell the incarcerated tampons, toilet tissue and bottled water.

According to a San Quentin canteen price list, scented soap ranges from \$1.00 to \$1.65, deodorant costs from \$2.10 to \$3.75, lotion \$2.95

to \$6.40, hair grease \$3.30 to \$3.65, shampoo \$1.95 to 2.05, toothpaste \$2.30 to \$5.50, laundry soap \$1.10 and laundry powder \$2.40.

According to the report “Who pays? The True Cost of Incarceration on Families,” issued by the Ella Baker Center in 2015, the markups impose a heavy burden on families who support an incarcerated loved one because nearly two in three families with an incarcerated family member were unable to meet their family’s basic needs, including food and housing. Nearly half the families surveyed were unable to afford the costs associ-

ated with a conviction.

SB 474 is being co-sponsored by several policy advocacy groups including the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, the Women’s Foundation California, Legal Aid at Work, and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. It is also supported by San Quentin’s Civic Engagement Group.

“The passage of this bill is of great importance to the prison population and our families who suffer the financial burden of these price increases,” said Steven Warren, the Inside Fellow for the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

ADVOCATES SEE PROMISING RESULTS FROM PRISON REFORM

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

Advocates of criminal justice reform are pointing to promising examples of solutions that are reducing incarceration and improving community safety, and in the process changing narratives around crime and punishment.

Too often, tough-on-crime policies fail to address root causes and because of this, fall short of delivering their promised results, according to Phillip Atiba Goff, chair of African American studies and professor of psychology at Yale University.

By contrast, the promising examples work by addressing the root causes of crime through the model of strengthening communities to keep everyone safe, Goff wrote in a Dec. 13, 2022 Op-Ed in the *New York Times*.

“If throwing money at the police and prisons worked, America would probably already be the safest country in the history of the world. We are not, because insufficient punishment is not the root cause of violence,” Goff wrote.

Root causes of crime have been key elements of several San Quentin discussion forums between incarcerated residents and members of the San Francisco Police Department.

Common themes expressed at these forums about the roots of crime include childhood trauma, parental abuse and neglect, lack of resources, low self-esteem, broken trust, anger, drugs, gangs, and poverty; in other words, systemic problems that need systemic solutions.

“I think it’s often a simple matter of necessity sometimes — no food, no rent, maybe an addiction too,” said Sgt. Eric Solares during one of the forums in 2022.

SQ’s Michael Moore added to Solares’ comment, saying, “I’ve asked myself the last 26 years, ‘Why did this happen?’ For me, it all goes back to my childhood and a lack of intervention when I was young.”

Many participants in these forums — whether wearing a blue prison uniform or carrying a badge — have emphasized the importance of reaching out to youth and having successful interventions at an early age.

One of the solutions Goff cites is in Denver, where a five-year research study examined the benefits of providing housing subsidies to people at risk of being un-housed. The study reported a 40% reduction in arrests for participants related to their stable housing.

In Brooklyn, participants who completed a diversion program for young people facing charges for illegal gun possession had 22% lower rates of re-arrest compared to those who went to prison.

In Washington State’s capital of Olympia, Goff noted a new police unit formed in 2019 provides voluntary and confidential crisis-response assistance by officers. It reduced arrests and logged over 3,108 crisis interventions. Notably, no injuries have occurred to crisis responders.

In a new program, 911 dispatchers in Austin, Texas have the option — in situations with no immediate danger — of transferring calls to mental health clinicians. Since the program’s start in 2019, 82% of transferred calls did not require the involvement of police, resulting in savings to the city of \$1,642,213.

According to Goff, such successes are inspiring local governments from New Jersey to New Mexico to restructure their budgets to invest in the “social deter-

minants of health and safety.”

Despite these innovative successes, Goff notes the ingrained narratives about crime and justice are slow to change, in part due to special interests that have a stake in the status quo.

“The tough-on-crime narrative acts like a black hole. It subsumes new ideas and silences discussions of solutions that are already making a difference in people’s lives,” writes Goff.

Goff contends that statistics from successful alternatives help, but that new and more accurate narratives about crime and punishment are needed. He wrote, “If you want policies that actually work, you have to change the political conversation from ‘tough candidates punishing bad people’ to ‘strong communities keeping everyone safe.’”

Goff notes this new narrative is gaining momentum as local governments and nonprofits look to copy programs that aim to address the root causes of crime and show proof of results. He points to organizations like One Million Experiments that “are tracking innovations aimed at producing scalable solutions that do not rely on punishment” for helping to fuel evidenced-based stories that propel the new narrative.

“I have seen the message of ‘strong communities keeping everyone safe’ open the minds of Republican voters, Democratic voters and many in between,” writes Goff. “It is backed up by science.”

The sentiments are mirrored at SQ. In the closing circle of one of the law enforcement forums, resident Desmond Lewis said he appreciated “people coming together to use their highest level of intelligence to come up with solutions for problems we all see.”

9th Circuit upholds reform measures

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals recently upheld a ruling enforcing reforms aimed to protect incarcerated people with disabilities in California’s prisons from abuse by correctional officers, reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

The three-judge panel cited persistent problems with a “staff culture of targeting inmates with disabilities” in their decision.

The reforms stemmed from complaints of abuse from incarcerated people who are members of a class-action lawsuit against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The original lawsuit, filed in 1994, alleged that abuse related to their mental and physical disabilities amounted to a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The 9th Circuit Court upheld most of the reforms and said the mandates were necessary because of CDCR’s “prior failures to improve their accountability systems in the absence of specific, court-ordered instructions.”

The reforms, mandated by a federal District Court judge in 2020, aimed to improve the behavior of correctional officers.

The District Court’s ruling required body-cams in six prisons, more stationary cameras and restrictions on the use of pepper spray. CDCR was also directed to increase supervision of staff and improve protocols for investigating and tracking abuse as well as disciplining officers found responsible.

In their unanimous decision, Circuit Judge Michelle Friedland stated that the evidentiary record supports the conclusions of the lower court’s previous ruling.

Friedland wrote that this record indicated “ongoing violations of class member’s rights at the prisons, but also a common source of the violations: the lack of ... measures to address officers’ misconduct, which fostered a staff culture of targeting inmates with disabilities.”

Vicky Waters, a CDCR spokesperson, said the department was reviewing the ruling and that many of the reforms were already implemented.

“We are committed to ensuring accountability and results-driven changes to address the issues raised by the Dis-

trict Court,” she said.

A plaintiffs’ attorneys, Gay Grunfeld, agreed that many of the reforms were already in place, adding that the 9th Circuit Court’s decision will help ensure that reforms aren’t undone, in particular the camera requirements.

“Without cameras, a code of silence reigns and the statements of incarcerated people are not believed,” Grunfeld said.

In an interview with *CalMatters*, a top prison expert provided context for the ongoing problems in the state’s prison system, as reported by *ABC 10 News Sacramento*.

“It used to be the model of prisons in the country. They used to have a big treatment orientation, they hired social workers, and basically it was at the forefront of a rehabilitative model of incarceration,” said Francis Cullen, former president of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and the 2022 recipient of the prestigious Stockholm Prize in Criminology.

He noted that under Gov. Ronald Reagan, California’s prison population fell from 26,000 to 18,000. However, he explained that in the 1960s and ‘70s, there was an attack on the rehabilitative model for a variety of reasons.

“California became punitive in its politics,” Cullen said. “The things that were done ... were all justified on the notion that we want inmates to suffer. The more they suffer, the less likely they will be to reoffend, which isn’t actually true. But that was the logic. And the result, I think, was a disaster.”

The six prisons named in the ruling are the men’s facilities in San Diego, Lancaster, Delano, and the two in Corcoran, as well as the women’s facility in Chino.

The 9th Circuit panel upheld all of the reforms ordered for the Richard J. Donovan prison in San Diego, and for the other five, it did not uphold the requirement for increased supervision and restriction on the use of pepper spray.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs’ and a court-appointed expert will continue to monitor compliance with the reforms, including reviews of camera footage of alleged incidents of abuse.

The original lawsuit, known as the Coleman class action, is ongoing.

—Joshua Strange

State watchdog releases contraband audit results

Office of the
Inspector
General issues
report on COVID-
era contraband
interdiction
measures in
state prisons

By SQNews Staff

A state audit of contraband coming into California’s prisons found that drugs continued to infiltrate facilities even after visitor restrictions were implemented due to COVID concerns.

The audit was conducted by the California Office of the Inspector General at four prisons from Mar. 1, 2019 to Jan. 7, 2022 to assess the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s “controlled substances interdiction program.”

The four facilities were not identified in the January report for security reasons.

In the cover letter to CDCR Secretary Jeffrey Macomber, Inspector General Amarik K. Singh said that inmate visitation was not the source of drugs smuggled into the audited prisons.

“We understand that reducing the prevalence of drugs in California’s prison system is an ongoing challenge for the department,” Singh wrote. “However, drugs have entered prisons even after the department implemented COVID-19 response efforts and suspended in-person visiting.

“The avenues for drugs en-



SQNews archive photo

Officers of CDCR’s Investigative Services Unit conduct routine canine training as part of the department’s ongoing drug and device interdiction efforts. According to a recent audit by the California Office of the Inspector General, canine searches were

among the most effective means of detecting and deterring controlled substances. However, the report also noted that canines, along with highly effective electronic drug scanners, were underutilized.

tering prisons during the first year of the pandemic, with visiting restrictions in place, at primary entry points, remained staff, contractors, official visitors, and mail,” Singh stated.

CDCR suspended visitation for incarcerated people from Mar. 11, 2020 through Apr. 10, 2021 to mitigate the potential exposure and spread of COVID, the report noted.

A key finding of the OIG report was that two of the

most effective measures to intercept contraband and prevent its distribution in prisons were not put to use enough.

“Despite recognizing that canines are among the most effective resources to both deter and detect drugs, the department under-uses its canine program,” the OIG report stated.

The report said CDCR has the legal authority to use canines to search not only in-

carcerated people and their property, but also anyone entering prisons, including correctional officers, free staff, volunteers and visitors.

The other effective measure highlighted in the report is electronic drug detection devices, which can include ION scanners, millimeter wave scanners, portable spectrometry, low-dose x-ray body scanners and parcel baggage scanners.

The report said, “The de-

partment acknowledges the usefulness of electronic devices in detecting drugs, yet only deploys the devices in limited circumstances.”

The report named illegal street drugs such as heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine, as well as cannabis products that are legal in the state but banned in prisons.

In general, the OIG audit found entrance screening procedures to be inadequate

and inconsistently applied, such as those at pedestrian entrances for employees.

“At the three prisons we visited, we observed entrance officers conducting routine bag searches that consisted of glances lasting one or two seconds or officers permitting large bags to be carried into prisons without checking for identification or opening the bags. At times, officers failed to conduct searches at all,” stated the report.

The OIG report did not include comments or responses from CDCR. Officials told *The Sacramento Bee* in an emailed statement that the department continually assesses ways to implement application of these detection and intervention techniques in a consistent manner statewide.

“Contraband interdiction and focus on curbing overdose deaths as a result of illegal contraband is, and will continue to be a top priority for the department,” CDCR officials stated.

They also said the department is considering improvements to the interdiction process outlined in the OIG’s report and will continue to use a multilayered approach, according to the January article in *The Bee*.

“This approach includes providing substance use disorder treatment, heightened physical security, dismantling drug distribution systems, disrupting gang activity, and closing avenues of entry for contraband,” CDCR officials stated. “This approach enables CDCR to reduce the amount of contraband entering institutions, minimizing its availability to incarcerated individuals.”

2023-24 BUDGET PROPOSAL SPURS PUSH FOR MORE PRISON CLOSURES

Californians United for a Responsible Budget takes to social media to urge Gov. Newsom to shutter 10 additional facilities by 2025

By Steve Brooks
Editor-in-Chief

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) has launched a media campaign to convince Gov. Gavin Newsom to close ten prisons by the year 2025, according to the *Davis Vanguard*.

The organization’s executive director, Amber Rose-Howard, took to social media and held a statewide rally with other prison reform advocates and hundreds of citizens in response to California’s proposed 2023-2024 budget.

“A serious roadmap for more prison closures means closed prisons must be torn down and repurposed for positive non-carceral use,” Rose-Howard told hundreds of online attendees.

Isa Borgeson is the Inside/Outside Senior Organizer for the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, “Today our state spends \$18.6 billion on corrections every year,” she said. “And in the Governor’s proposed budget released just earlier this week, corrections spending increased by another half a billion dollars, despite further projected population drops of 6.6%.”

CDCR recently announced the closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison in Riverside County, the third such announcement in two years. The other closures were the

California Correctional Center in Susanville and Deuel Vocational Institute in Tracy. This has increased the number of empty prisons in California.

“Rather than keeping closed prisons in warm shutdown mode, costing taxpayers millions, closed prisons should be torn down or repurposed for positive non-carceral use,” Yoel Haile told the *Davis Vanguard*. Haile is the director of the Criminal Justice Program at the ACLU in Northern California.

“Prisons that they close should be torn down,” said Gary Green, a 61-year old resident of San Quentin. “I am sure many incarcerated laborers would love to help with that project.” But Green doesn’t think prisons can be repurposed for other uses without the state being tempted to reopen them.

“We are in a state with 34 prisons. That don’t make no sense; crime is not a business. Keeping people locked in cages for the rest of their lives is ridiculous,” he said.

The People’s Plan for Prison Closures is a comprehensive blueprint put together by the CURB organization to point out all the reasons why more California prisons should be closed. In it the organization argues that prisons are a public health emergency. They are racist institutions that disproportionately im-

pact black, brown, native, indigenous and other people of color. They are environmentally hazardous and unaffordable. CURB also points out that more Californians now desire de-carceration.

Several recommendations have been made by the organization to end extreme sentencing, expand elderly parole eligibility, increase commutations, and invest in community based support services.

The People’s Plan points out that there are approximately 35,000 people in California prisons over the age of 50. This is an age in which many experts agree that people have typically aged out of crime. The average age at which a person is sentenced to Life Without Parole in California is 19. But the age at which it is commonly accepted that a person’s brain is fully matured is 25.

Another point made in CURB’s report is that at least 33% of people in California prisons have been diagnosed with a serious mental health need. The organization argues that many people who are incarcerated need treatment as opposed to long-term incarceration.

The organization also found that 92% of incarcerated women reported being abused in their lifetime. This is information that is typically mitigating at sentencing,

but women are facing longer periods of incarceration.

But the biggest problem CURB sees is the systemic racism that exists in our criminal justice system, which even Gov. Newsom has recognized with the passage of California’s historic Racial Justice Act and the creation of a Reparations Task Force.

Black people represent 6.5% of California’s total population, but 28% of the prison population, according to the organization. Blacks are typically overcharged, over-sentenced, and in many cases receive the death penalty at a disproportionate rate.

The organization is calling on the governor to stop the systemic racism by closing at least 10 prisons in the next 5 years.

However, incarcerated people like Mr. Green see another problem with this process.

“Looks like they are just shifting people from one prison to another like musical chairs,” he said. This place is full of people who just came from all these closed prisons and it wasn’t built for this many people to be on the mainline.”

San Quentin’s population has grown to almost 3,900 and counting. The only logical solution to relieve this overcrowding will be to release more prisoners. *The People’s Plan* has provided a roadmap for doing that.

CDCR budget grows in spite of looming prison closures

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Staff Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom’s proposed 2023-2024 budget includes an increase for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation although eight prison facilities will experience full or partial closures, the *Sacramento Bee* reports.

Newsom’s overall state budget of \$297 billion for 2023-24 includes total expenditures of \$14.5 billion for the prison system.

The state closed the Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy in September 2021 and has also ordered complete closures of the California Correctional Center in Lassen County and Chuckawalla Valley State Prison in Riverside County.

The governor also anticipates partial closings at Folsom’s Women Facility, at Pelican Bay State Prison, at California Men’s Colony in San Luis Obispo, at the California Rehabilitation Center in Riverside County, at the California Institution for Men in San Bernardino County, and at California Correctional Institution in Kern County.

The *Bee* reported that in 2020 the California’s Legislative Analyst’s Office estimated closing five state prisons would save California taxpayers \$1.5 billion a year. However, despite the closing of prisons and a decreasing prison population — estimated to fall to 87,295 by 2025 — departmental budgetary allocations to CDCR are not decreasing.

In addition to the reduction in the incarcerated population, the governor’s administration forecasts the parolee population to decline from 43,668 to 36,473 in the next four years.

Californians United for a Responsible Budget is an organization that supports more prison closures. The group maintains that any successful transformation of the penal system must include a roadmap for how California can diligently reduce prison expenditures.

Amber Rose-Howard, executive director of the organization, told the *Bee* that the governor should pull more money away from CDCR and redirect that money directly into communities affected by the closures and to cities which must improve infrastructure to support formerly incarcerated people.

“The budget’s investments in positive programming for incarcerated people are important, but the state must focus on life-affirming investments within the community in order to sustain reduced reliance on prisons and to increase public safety,” Howard said in a news release.

GRADUATION SEASON COMES BACK AROUND AT SAN QUENTIN

California Reentry Institute holds first graduation ceremony since 2020

CRI

Continued from page 1

small processing groups, personalized case management and parole planning.

In the opening ceremony, Grace, a soon-to-be ordained minister, led the event in prayer. She told the graduating class, "I am very proud of your resilience, your compassion. I am very proud of your accomplishment."

The graduation was hosted by the institute's Executive Director Collette Carroll, who has been volunteering at the prison for 22 years. Carroll told residents that her late husband started the first self-help program at SQ.

"There is nothing more amazing than transformation — seeing a flower bloom and become something beautiful. You become men with integrity," said Carroll.

The ceremony included a video showing paroled graduates. Participants were excited to see the people whom they said were an inspiration to the graduating class.

On the video, program graduate Phil Senagal told current SQ residents, "I am glad you have completed the process. Don't let this be the end of your journey."

Gary Harrel, another paroled graduate, said, "I went to CRI in 2018. It's good you went through the program. Don't be afraid to ask for help."

Some of the graduating class related their experience going through the program.

"Carroll told me to stop feeling bad for myself; you are not your crime," said Kenneth Cooksey, who joined CRI in 2019.

Graduate Donald W. Thompson commented, "When I see a man shedding tears, that's character; it's because there is no shame."

SQ Warden Ron Broomfield told the graduates, "There are programs that are flashy, and might not represent what we are. We all try to transform our lives. I am very proud of the graduates. Do you know what repentance means? It means rethink what you have done."

The class began in February 2019, was interrupted by the pandemic, and did not return until December 2022. Some of the participants transferred out and made it back for this graduation.

Those who remained at SQ during the pandemic were provided with materials to continue their studies.

Director Carroll introduced Sam Vaughn, co-founder of CRI, and an executive board member. "I call him my son from another mother," she said.

Vaughn told the graduates, "We do not get to choose; we take what we get. The world does not understand what it's like to be in prison ..." He spent 10 years in prison, with some of that time at San Quentin.

He told the men it will not be easy when they get out. "Things may be challenging for you. Do not give up, because you cannot."

Carroll told the graduates to honor victims and survivors. "We cannot do that if we do not honor ourselves."

Graduates received certificates from Ryan Morimune, representing the California State Association of Counties. He was joined by program resident facilitators Bruce Fowler, John Gillies, and Marty Spears.

Graduates also received a letter of recognition from State Sen. Steven Bradford and a letter of recognition from Contra Costa County Supervisor Ken Carlson.

"You cannot give what you do not have. Talk about being blessed to be a blessing, you are truly a blessing in my life," said a guest named Betty.

Program supporter Cindy Ayala told the class, "For me to be here and celebrate is an honor. You inspire me more than you ever know — the resilience you showed by showing up."

A guest named Patricia said, "Congratulations to you all. We appreciate if you go out to the world and spread the love." Her son was killed in a drive-by shooting.

Another guest referenced the story of Moses, who killed a man in Egypt and did not start doing the Lord's work until his elder years — as evidence that it's never too late to turn your life around.

Attendees enjoyed refreshments, including Subway sandwiches, potato chips, and bottled water.



Photos by Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews



Top: Graduates of the California Reentry Institute gathered on stage in the Garden Chapel to celebrate their achievement with program facilitators and members of CRI's executive board.

Far left: Program participants gather with facilitators and volunteers in small groups.

Near left: Graduate Kevin Sample proudly displays his certificate of completion, along with a letter of commendation from the California State Senate.

Near right: Grads were addressed by Ryan Morimune, legislative representative for the California State Association of Counties.

Far right: Oops — Cindy Ayala and Wade Norman may have gotten their certificates mixed up.



CALPIA hosts impactful graduation for The Last Mile and PIA certification programs

CALPIA

Continued from page 1

cilities Maintenance graduate, said the ceremony was unlike anything he had ever experienced before.

He said he feels hopeful after successfully completing the 2,000 hours of apprenticeship to earn his certificate. "Now when I get out," he added, "I don't have to rely on just one thing, I have multiple choices."

One of the speakers was Last Mile graduate Ricardo Romero, who distinguished himself by completing both computer coding and the audio-engineering programs.

Before turning his life around in prison, he said he was "more comfortable at failing than succeeding because I became great at quitting. I quit on my family, my community, and myself."

Yet he added, "Who we are today is not by chance — it's because of our accomplishments, it's because we didn't quit, it's because we believed in ourselves and each other."

Last Mile graduates had high praise for program staff. "They treat you like a human being, not like a convict," said graduate Charles Robinson. "They do that unconditionally, and that's why this program works."

One of those staff is Katy Gilbert, an in-person classroom facilitator. "I feel truly honored to be part of their growth Some of them had never even touched a computer before and are now making websites," she said.

The Last Mile started in 2012 at The Q and is now in over a dozen locations across the nation.

Last Mile alumnus Chris Schumacher was at the event. Thanks to The Last Mile, he launched a successful

career in tech after his parole.

"There are opportunities waiting," he said. "The work that you put in now will pay off in the future. There's a Last Mile community out here waiting."

One member of that Last Mile community in the waiting is Kevin Kelly, a "returned-citizen advocate" for the program, who was the last speaker at the event.

"I'm so proud of each and every one of you guys," he said.

He explained that his journey from being first arrested at the age of nine to being homeless, addicted, incarcerated, and eventually paroled was not easy. "The real work begins when you walk out that gate," he said, adding that if he could find sobriety and success, so could they.

For the new audio engineering program, it was the first-ever cohort of graduates.

"I'm humbled that I got to be a part of an amazing class and experience music in a new light," said graduate Kevin Rojano. "This program has helped me ... to do more with my life and time to acquire the skill I need to be successful."

Graduates were met with boisterous cheers, friendly callouts, and beaming smiles as they were called up one-by-one to receive their certificates.

As Last Mile graduate Lawrence Cox-Davis walked to the stage, his sister jumped up and shouted out with pride, "I love that man!"

Afterwards, graduates soaked up the moment. Many of them were amazed to be relaxing with their loved ones outside of a visiting room or to be reunited after far too long apart.

Amidst the hugs and occasional tears of joy, one mother could be heard saying, "Wow, look at this! This is really nice."

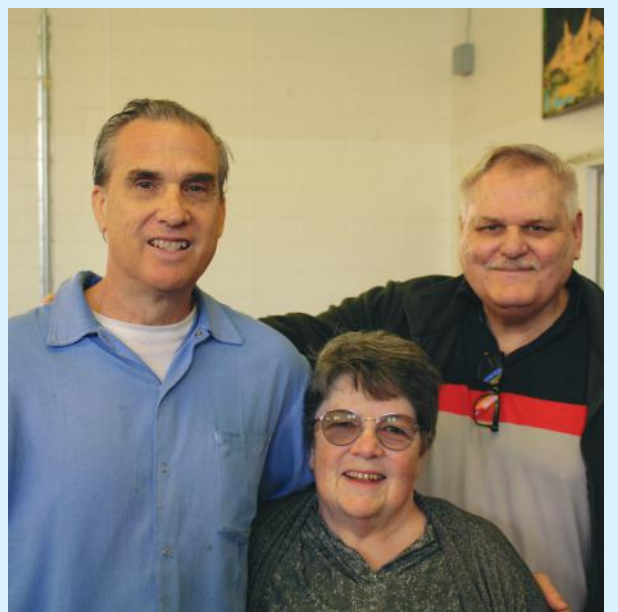


Photos by Gregory Eskridge // Uncuffed

Last Mile graduate Wilbert Frank poses for a photo flanked by CALPIA and SQ administrators.

Below left: CALPIA General Manager Bill Davidson and San Quentin Acting Warden Oak Smith stand alongside the mother of graduate Messigh Perrygarner as she accepts the diploma in his stead.

Below right: TLM grad Mark Kinney was one among a number of graduates whose family attended the ceremony to laud their loved ones' achievements.



Top: Graduates of The Last Mile and CALPIA certification programs proudly display their hard-earned diplomas.

Far left: Audio engineering graduate Kevin D. Sawyer enjoyed the ceremony in the company of his son and sister.

Left: Formerly incarcerated Last Mile alumnus Kevin Kelly returned to SQ to talk about his work in the community as a returned-citizen advocate for TLM.

Right: Michelle Kane, from the Office of Public and Employee Communications, addresses graduates with a warm smile and words of pride and encouragement.



EDUCATION

CSU, UC campuses offer programs for formerly incarcerated students

Programs ‘invaluable in reducing rates of recidivism’

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

California colleges and universities have created numerous programs to help formerly incarcerated people earn degrees and shape new lives. One result was significantly lower recidivism rates, the *Visalia Times-Delta* reports.

The programs operate at 14 state university campuses and nine University of California sites.

“The work of these organizations has proven to be invaluable in reducing rates of recidivism,” the Dec. 22 article said.

An annual report provided by the California State University showed that in 2021, Project Rebound reported a recidivism rate of zero from 2016 to 2020. A report released by the state of California in 2019 showed 62% of people released from a state prison in 2017 returned to prison.

Project Rebound, started by Professor John Irwin in 1967, is a great method for individuals to go from prison to earning their bachelor’s degree at San Francisco State University. The Underground Scholars Initiative, which was created by two college alumni at UC Berkeley in 2013, aims to support educational equality at all nine UC undergraduate locations.

“I immediately was looking for what programs I could do to better myself — not because I thought I would ever go home, but because I knew that the only thing I could do for the people at home was be the best version of me I could be,” said Duncan Martinez, who was sentenced to life without parole in 1994 for killing his roommate. Martinez served 27 years in prison and was released in 2021. He is a Master of Fine Arts student at Cal State Los Angeles.

The EdSource California Student Journalism Corps studied these organizations and spoke to students and administrators involved in

Project Rebound and Underground Scholars to understand the impact of these programs in the community.

San Francisco State and CSU Long Beach are among the 14 California State University campuses that offer Project Rebound programs. Out-of-state campuses like Rutgers University in New Jersey would like to adopt their own version of the program, the report noted.

Steven Hensley, incarcerated at the age of 17, is now a law student at UC Berkeley. While incarcerated for six years, he learned that prisons are not very aware of student needs.

“There was usually one book per class of 10-20 people. It was almost impossible to get those books. My perspective originally was that there is no hope. I’m going to come out of this cell with a criminal record. I’m not going to be able to go forward, have a career, have a family, have a normal life. And that wasn’t the case,” Hensley said.

After his release, Hensley worked his way into Fresno State University and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. The Northern California chapter of the ACLU elected Hensley to its board of directors, where he currently serves. He gave credit to Project Rebound for the hope that he gained.

The expansion of the Underground Scholars Program at UC Irvine has allowed incarcerated individuals to take classes while still in prison. Of the 55 students in the program, 25 continued to earn their degree after release from prison, according to the report.

The formerly incarcerated face many barriers, but Hensley says that he received support from other students and faculty members at the college.

“Students are usually open and most teachers are open, especially humanities professors. I have nothing but good things to say. There’s always hope even when it seems like there’s not,” said Hensley.

ARRESTED VETERANS GRADUATE FROM INNOVATIVE ‘TREATMENT COURT’ IN MARIN COUNTY

By Richard Halstead
Marin Independent Journal
Reprinted by permission

Army Veteran Jeffrey Barbe was homeless when he was arrested on a drug offense. Now he says he’s a student on track to study prelaw at the University of California at Berkeley.

“If it wasn’t for this program, I’d probably still be on the streets stuck on meth,” said Barbe, one of nine former military service members honored in Marin Superior Court this week after graduating from the county’s new veterans treatment court.

The court, which was launched in July 2021, gives veterans the opportunity to have criminal offenses dismissed or expunged from their record if they complete a rehabilitation program.

For his success, Barbe credited Veteran Affairs social worker Brian Dobbs for not giving up on him.

“Brian had to put me back in treatment three times,” Barbe said.

Approximately 60 veterans have been referred to the program since its inception. District Attorney Lori Frugoli said more than nine veterans have completed the program successfully since then, but she couldn’t supply an exact number.

“There are veterans who were successful in veterans court and had their cases dismissed, but we were unable to contact the team,” Frugoli said. “We have had different public defenders and district attorneys on the formal court as well as private counsel.”

Frugoli said that many veterans who were initially referred to the court did not qualify as a veteran or were facing charges that made them ineligible for the program. The court is open to veterans, active-duty service members, reservists and members of the National Guard who have a probation-eligible criminal case.

Marin County Superior Court

Judge Roy Chernus, who oversaw the court’s creation and presides over it, said Marin judges resisted the idea of its creation for years because they thought there were too few veterans in the county to make it feasible.

“That was clearly wrong,” Chernus said.

One initial hurdle was identifying veterans who have been arrested. That is now being done with the assistance of the Marin County’s Sheriff’s Office. The agency taps into a federal database, the Veterans Re-entry Search Service (VRSS), an automated system operated through the Veterans Administration that can locate veterans who are incarcerated nationwide.

Sheriff’s Deputy Phil Marsh said five veterans were in Marin County Jail on Tuesday, a typical number. Marsh said that thanks to VRSS he has identified 10 veterans who were booked into the jail and did not claim veteran status.

He said some were in the military for a brief time or discharged under other-than-honorable circumstances and felt that they didn’t merit any special consideration.

“Believe it or not, some inmates say they’re veterans to try and get accepted to veterans treatment court, but the response back from the VRSS inquiry will dictate otherwise,” Marsh said.

Marin County Veterans Service Officer Sean Stephens, who championed the creation of the veterans court, said that besides helping to keep veteran’s criminal records clean, the court plays an important role in getting them enrolled for services such as medical care.

“I got introduced to so many new services at the VA because of this,” said Kenny Barber, a graduate of the court, who was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Barber, 46, who served 21 years in the U.S. Coast Guard, was required to attend Alcoholics Anonymous

meetings as part of his rehabilitation.

“Even though I’m finished with this, I’m going to keep going,” Barber said. “It’s a good group.”

Barber said he suffers from anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder after weathering a hurricane in a small Coast Guard boat. He said he’s had a number of friends die by suicide.

“When I hear about stuff like that it is kind of a trigger,” Barber said.

Of the 85 men who died by suicide in Marin from 2019 to 2021, at least 15, or 17.6%, were veterans, according to the county public health department. The Marin County Department of Health and Human Services currently knows of 21 homeless veterans in Marin.

One third of veterans self-report having been arrested and booked into jail at least once, compared to fewer than one fifth of civilians, according to a report released last year by the Council on Criminal Justice think tank. The report also cited Justice Department data showing that nearly 8% of those incarcerated in state prisons and more than 5% of people in federal prisons were veterans.

The report stated that veterans have multiple risk factors that place them at higher risk of incarceration. These include combat-related trauma and post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, substance abuse, adverse childhood experience and sexual trauma while in the military.

In addition to Frugoli, Public Defender David Sutton, Chernus and other judges, Tuesday’s ceremony was attended by three county supervisors and Rep. Jared Huffman.

Michael Pritchard, who became a youth counselor after making a name for himself as a stand-up comic, addressed the graduates, saying, “We love you. We’re your community. We care about you deeply. We want you with us.”

‘Collateral consequences’ derail already-fragile prison education

By Charlotte West
College Inside Editor
Reprinted by permission

■ **The fragility of prison education**

A student who — after someone he knows gets a job at the prison where he is incarcerated — is transferred midway through his college course.

A student who is told he can’t enroll in classes the next term because his cellmate brought back “contraband” food from the chow hall and he has a possible disciplinary infraction. (His name is eventually cleared.)

A woman who served an additional year in prison because she didn’t receive time off her sentence for earning a degree after her college program shut down.

These are just a few of the examples of how education inside can be delayed or ended altogether. The collateral consequences that go far beyond not finishing a degree.

Earlier this year, I started reporting on the closure of the Washington State Reformatory and the way it disrupted education for the students of University Beyond Bars, the college program that operated there. It was an extreme example of the type of interruptions that occur on a daily basis in prison.

There were a lot of potential issues to dig into. Should a college program be a reason to keep a prison open? What are the trade-offs that incarcerated students have to make



about their education? Do they transfer to another prison that has a program they want even if it’s far away from friends and family?

But what stood out most to me was just how little control students have over their education in prison. Unlike their peers on the outside, incarcerated students don’t have freedom of choice when it comes to college or major. If you want to study sociology but the only thing available is a welding program, you study welding.

And there’s unequal access to college options across states and even within facilities, exacerbated by things such as length of sentence and conviction.

For the final story that we co-published with the Seattle Times, I wanted to focus on what happened to the 50 students who were transferred to other prisons all over Washington state. Tracking them down wasn’t easy, but thankfully the prison grapevine is alive and well. Using JPay, a secure email service, I wrote to over 50 people who referred me to their former classmates.

The results were disappointing but not surprising. Over half of the 38 associate’s students in the program had been unable to continue their education.

Twelve of the men were receiving a bachelor’s degree



The Washington State Reformatory shut down in October 2021. Its closure interrupted the education of 50 incarcerated students who were transferred to other state prisons.

in the liberal arts through Adams State University at the time of the closure — none of them have been able to finish their degrees as they lost access to the private scholarship funding their correspondence courses. A handful of the advanced students were within a few courses of earning their bachelor’s, and some had helped with grant writing and fundraising in the years prior to the closure.

One student who got out said they were waiting until they got more familiar with technology before they continued their education outside. Another still inside said he’s taking whatever classes he can

inside and hopes they’ll count towards his degree. Many of the others who weren’t able to enroll have given up, want to transfer to a different prison with the program they want, or are waiting to see if Pell Grant restoration brings more opportunities.

■ **‘Working toward solutions’**

The story of University Beyond Bars and the Washington State Reformatory raises questions about who — correctional agencies, colleges, or non-profit partners — is responsible for ensuring continuity in prison education. The landscape will become

increasingly complicated as Pell Grant access expands next year.

Ultimately, the department of corrections has exclusive control over where the students are transferred. When the reformatory closed, officials said they “were committed to working toward solutions” with partners such as the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, which coordinates the state’s 34 colleges.

Under normal circumstances, the Washington corrections department has an education hold that prevents students from being transferred while they are enrolled

during a degree program. But when the reformatory shut down, students were sent all over the state.

Although University Beyond Bars provided the department of corrections with a list of the students enrolled during the final term the program operated, students said that no one from the department, or any of the colleges serving the prisons where they were transferred, ever followed up with them.

When I contacted Seattle Central about the impact of the closure, the campus spokesperson referred the inquiry to University Beyond Bars. The college staff, with the exception of faculty, were working on top of their regular job duties and had little to no direct contact with students. Without having a dedicated staff member working with incarcerated students, college staff didn’t know who their students were.

When the prison closed, University Beyond Bars staff lost access to the students. The staff tried to ensure that all associate’s students were equipped with copies of their transcripts and an understanding of what classes they still needed to finish their degrees, but couldn’t otherwise provide further support.

With full Pell Grant expansion next year, colleges and their partners will need to figure out how to minimize disruptions and find ways to allow students to continue to build on the work they’ve already done.

Ethics Bowl: Mt. Tam College hosts dialog with UC Santa Cruz

By David Ditto
Associate Editor

The University of California Santa Cruz debate team came to San Quentin to compete with the home team’s incarcerated students on Feb. 26.

The two teams debated in front of a live audience of almost 100 inmates and college faculty and staff in the Q’s Garden Chapel.

“Welcome to the Ethics Bowl Match hosted by Mount Tamalpais College and The Center for Public Philosophy at UC Santa Cruz,” said MTC Chief Academic Officer Amy Jamgochian.

“Education, like Ethics Bowl, is not just about knowledge. It’s about listening to each other, engaging in dialog, and considering other perspectives. This is an example of what MTC is about and just what the world needs now.”

MTC coach Kyle Robertson described how the Ethics Bowl is different from other forms of debate.

“In Ethics Bowl, the teams are not assigned a position. They argue what they actually believe. They are judged on respectful civic engagement with the other team’s views and moving the conversation forward,” he said.

“The biggest audience the Santa Cruz Ethics Bowl team ever has is here inside San Quentin.”

MTC coach Kathy Richards introduced the debaters and judges. MTC coach Connie Krosney and UCSC coach Jordan Dopkins sat in the front row.

The first ethical dilemma presented for debate centered around the murder of Emmett Till in 1955, one of the most notorious acts of racist violence in American history. Till, a Black teenager, was found lynched days after a young



Photos by Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Above: Flanked by fellow team members, Mt. Tamalpais student Tony de Trinidad addresses the ethicality of delayed accountability.

Below left: Students from UC Santa Cruz take notes in preparation for their response to Mt. Tam.

Below right: The event’s three-judge panel weighs the merits of each team’s contributions.



White woman accused him of making advances on her.

Richards asked the MTC team, “Would it be ethical to arrest, indict, and prosecute Carolyn Bryant as an accomplice in the murder of Emmitt Till?”

“It would be ethical,” answered Angel Alvarez. “It is unethical that Bryant has not been held accountable.”

He said that Bryant was partly to blame because she knew that in the Jim Crow South her accusations would likely lead to Till’s murder.

Rob Tyler continued MTC’s response, saying that from a

utilitarian perspective — aiming to bring the most good to the most people — the time and money spent to uphold the laws was worth it because of the importance of bringing justice to victims, particularly to the marginalized.

Ben Tobin added that, considering our nation’s history of 400 years of slavery, Emmett Till is exactly the champion we need to get behind.

“Justice demands that we do what’s right and validate Emmett Till’s humanity, no matter how long it takes,” he said.

The incarcerated team’s time ran out, and the visiting team

responded.

The UCSC team, including Kevin Bui and Forrest Hensiek, agreed with the SQ team’s position.

Charissa Ziegler asked whether it’s ethical to use the same justice system, which was utterly unjust to Till and his family, to attempt to finally bring justice now, or if changing the system would be a better approach.

UCSC also asked whether incarceration of the now 88-year-old Bryant as an accomplice in a murder that took place seven decades ago is really ethical.

MTC’s Tony de Trinidad answered, saying that accountability is just, regardless of delay or Bryant’s age. He said that if she is not fit for prison, there are more compassionate sentencing alternatives.

Then the judges engaged the prison college team. Eliezer Margolis asked how MTC’s position weighed whether or not Bryant knew her false testimony would likely result in Till’s murder. Marian Avila Breach asked if Bryant’s conviction, made possible partly due to her recanting her accusations against Till, could have a chilling effect on others com-

ing forward with the truth in other cases.

The second ethical dilemma considered a nurse who administered the wrong drug, resulting in the death of her patient. The nurse admitted her error, citing distraction, complacency, and a faulty dispensing system.

Was it ethically correct for RaDonna Vaught to be charged with criminally negligent homicide?

“No, it was not ethical,” answered Niall Kinkead for UCSC. He said her action led to the patient’s death, but a homicide charge would create fear of retribution that would discourage others from coming forward honestly in future cases.

Hazel Uber Kellogg continued, saying that Vaught was to blame, but not entirely. He stated that nursing care system flaws, including 20-hour shifts and understaffing, also contributed to the patient’s death.

MTC’s Jessie Rose responded, disagreeing with UCSC’s position that implementing a more stringent retraining system would help, considering that the hospital actually tried to cover up the error.

Then judge Jeanne Proust entered the dialog with UCSC, asking, “Do we really need malintent for punishment, or is misconduct sufficient?”

UCSC responded to the comments, and stated that Vaught’s misconduct was not sufficient for a homicide charge. Sharan Sethi added that the fundamental problem — the institutional culture — needs to be addressed, and the hospital bears some responsibility.

After the intense 90-minute Ethics Bowl dialog with the two teams, the judges unanimously declared the prison’s Mount Tamalpais College debate team victorious. The audience erupted in huge applause and cheers.

HEALTH

REASONS TO SMILE: ORAL HEALTH AND DENTAL CARE



Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) is a network of community health clinics that serve returning community members. TCN clinics are led by Community Health Workers (CHWs) with lived experience of incarceration who support people with their healthcare and reentry. TCN hosts a monthly Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column. This column is a space where we answer questions about health care and empower individuals to prepare for healthy reentry. This month we are writing about oral health and dental services.

■ Why should I pay attention to my oral health?

We don’t think of our teeth much until there is a problem, but if you have ever had a toothache, you know how important oral health is! Taking care of your teeth, gums, and mouth is important for our overall health, especially as we get older. Aging and not taking care of our mouth can cause tooth decay, tooth loss, or gum infections. These problems make eating more difficult and can increase the risk of other health issues! Good oral health can help you keep your teeth for the long haul and prevent diabetes, heart disease, and even breathing problems.

■ What can I do to keep my teeth and gums healthy?

Some common-sense daily practices for good oral health include:
Brush your teeth (and tongue) at least twice a day.
Floss at least once a day.
If you wear dentures, clean your dentures twice daily. Brush your gums with a soft brush.
Eat a healthy diet. Limit sugary snacks and drinks which can cause cavities.
Do not smoke or chew tobacco. It can

stain your teeth, give you bad breath, and cause cancers.

See a dentist for regular check-ups and cleanings every year.

■ How do I pay for dental services in the community?

While you are incarcerated at CDCR, the State pays for your health care services. In the community, having health insurance helps pay for these services. Medi-Cal is California’s public insurance (Medicaid) program for people with low-income. Most people coming out of prison qualify for Medi-Cal. You will want to apply for Medi-Cal insurance before leaving CDCR and call the county to turn on your insurance when you get out. If you are on Medi-Cal, you qualify for the *Medi-Cal Dental Program*.

■ What dental services will Medi-Cal pay for?

The Medi-Cal Dental Program will pay up to \$1,800 in a year for certain dental services (or more if it is medically necessary). Many of the services you will need are offered free or at low-cost through Medi-Cal. Though keep in mind, some services that are covered may require special approval before your insurance will pay for it. And there may be some services that are not included in your Medi-Cal. When you go the dentist, you will be asked to show proof of your insurance and you may be required to pay a small amount up-front for some services, called a “co-pay”.

■ How do I find a dentist in the community?

After you get out, you will have to find a dentist in your local community that accepts Medi-Cal insurance. Sometimes health clinics offer dental care and sometimes you have to go to a separate dentist

Medi-Cal DOES cover:

- Yearly teeth cleanings and exams (including x-rays)
- Yearly fluoride treatments
- Fillings, crowns, and root canals
- Tooth removal
- Some partial or full dentures
- Emergency services
- Transportation support if medically necessary

Medi-Cal DOES NOT cover:

- Orthodontics (braces)
- Bridges
- Tooth implants
- Gum treatments

office. If you need help finding a dentist, you can visit SmileCalifornia.org or call (800) 322-6384. Once you find a dentist, call to schedule an appointment (and don’t be surprised if you must wait weeks or months for your appointment). Even if you don’t need dental care right away, it’s a good idea to make an appointment with a dentist for a regular checkup and to keep your teeth healthy! If you feel you need dental care sooner (due to a broken tooth, tooth pain, or some other concern) let the dentist office know and ask about emergency care or walk-in services.

Keep those teeth healthy each day and keep on smiling!

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 M-F 9am-5pm.

Federal policy change will allow incarcerated patients to enroll in Medicaid prior to release

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

For the first time ever, prisoners will be able to enroll in Medicaid and receive the federal health benefits prior to their release from prison or jail.

The announcement of the change was made by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on Jan. 26, according to media reports. Previously, federal law prohibited Medicaid money from being spent on people in custody.

The new exemption rule will allow incarcerated people — first in California and then in other states — to enroll and begin accessing limited benefits such as mental health services and drug addiction treatments up to 90 days before their release.

The aim is to smooth their transition back into society with less disruption of essential medical services, explained Medicaid administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. She noted that the new rule will “make unprecedented advancements in health care for incarcerated individuals, who have long been underserved.”

California could serve as a model for other states to follow as Medicaid embarks on this major new effort for the first time. At least 10 other states

have since applied for the same exemption under the new rule, *The Associated Press* reported.

Officials in California announced that their goal is to have such benefits available for incarcerated people in the state starting in 2024, according to the *AP*.

The first step will be to assess the Medicaid eligibility of all people incarcerated in the state. Those who are eligible will have a “care plan for reentry” developed for them, said the article.

The state’s Medicaid director, Jacey Cooper, said this process could take at least two years to complete for all California prisons.

California releases roughly 500,000 people from its prisons and jails every year, and of these, an estimated 80% meet the qualifications for Medicaid, the *AP* article stated.

Reentry proponents note the positive effects of the new rule will extend beyond health care to provide greater stability for the formerly incarcerated.

“Right now, there is an enormous barrier to care when people leave prison and jail,” said Vikki Wachino of the Health and Reentry Project at the Commonwealth Fund. “As you know, many times when they’re released, they’ve been left to fend for themselves, with very, very few supports.”

WILD HORSES

Prison farm employs ‘gentling’ method to reshape horses, humans

By Bostyon Johnson
Staff Writer

Every day, prisoners inside a Wyoming prison farm rise to the challenge to transform wild horses that once roamed badlands across the West into well-trained riding horses that are adopted into new homes. As highlighted in a *60 Minutes* report, the 640-acre facility is known as the Wyoming Honor Farm. With its manicured lawns, tidy buildings, and a simple four-foot fence that separates the prisoners from freedom, it more resembles a dude ranch than a prison. There are no towers or armed guards.

The lucky 30 participants of the prison’s horse program train wild mustangs using a method known as “gentling.” This approach replaces force with patience for both the people and the horses.

“The horses are a major role in what betters those men,” said farm manager Travis Shoopman. “They can teach you life lessons every step of the way — teach you that you got something in you that you didn’t think you had. They can teach you that it’s OK to be afraid, but it can still be done. Nothing’s impossible.”

In addition to learning how to train horses, incarcerated participants also learn how to control their reactions and behaviors.

“We are in the people business and helping the horses is extra,” Shoopman said. “They learn to not lie to themselves about their feelings. They learn to control [themselves] whether it’s highest of high emotions or the lowest of low emotions.”

One of the participants, Michael Davis, explained the dynamic. “If you’re mad, if you’re sacred, that horse knows before you ever even



An incarcerated resident of the Wyoming Honor Farm works with one of the program's horses.

Photo courtesy of Bureau of Land Management - Wyoming

touch it. You have to control your feelings considerably with the horse because it is so easy for them to pick up on your mood.”

The mustangs trained at the farm once roamed free on federal lands in wild herds. The Bureau of Land Management regularly corrals wild horses and ships them to enclosed pastures or farms like the Wind River Wild Horse Sanctuary in nearby Lander, Wyoming.

Jess Oldham and his family, who run the sanctuary, are paid by the government to feed and care for the horses after they are removed from the public lands. In turn, the sanctuary provides horses to the training program at the Wyoming Honor Farm.

Warden Curtis Moffat spoke to value of the horse program in achieving rehabilitation. “We don’t provide the sentence to ‘em. We don’t provide the punishment for ‘em.

... Our job is to supervise ‘em while they are here. And hopefully return ‘em to society where they’re responsible individuals, where they can be law-abiding citizens.

“I think this program goes a long way to do that. And I want to make sure they get out and ... they’re gonna be successful. And they aren’t gonna reoffend.”

Peytonn Suchor is an incarcerated trainer who talked about what it felt like to enter a training pen with an 800-pound wild horse. He said his experience was one of heart-pounding excitement, but that the powerful connection he builds with the horses over time cannot be explained.

“It’s taught me responsibility. It’s taught me what I wanna do for a career when I get outta here. This makes you look at life a whole different way,” Suchor said.

After training the horses,

the incarcerated participants also deal with the heartache of losing the horse when they are put up for adoption at an auction. The horses can easily sell for thousands of dollars, said the *60 Minutes* report.

Buyers from all over the country visit the Wyoming prison farm in the summer for its horse auctions. The visitors inspect the newly trained horses before the mustangs take the stage for sale, hoping to find that special one. In just one auction, 34 horses went to new homes and the money raised contributed \$65,000 to the Bureau of Land Management to offset its costs, according to the report.

“Yeah, Wyoming has tendency to do things a little differently ‘cause we’re a smaller state,” said Warden Moffat. “And I think it’s one of those things ... until you see it you can’t actually believe it yourself.”

Canine rehabilitation programs prove successful

By James Daly
Journalism Guild Writer

Rehabilitation comes in many different forms. The introduction of dog training programs in selected prisons across the U.S. has proven remarkably successful in rehabilitating humans and canines alike.

In the years after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger added “rehabilitation” to the California Department of Corrections name, dog programs were introduced at several prison yards in California. And here at San Quentin, a new dog program is slated to take shape in the near future.

In a typical prison dog program, dogs rescued from shelters are brought into the prison for rehabilitative training so they can be adopted out to forever families. Over the years, some of these programs have transformed into high-level service-dog training programs. The graduating canines are placed into service for wounded military vets or other disabled adults and children.

The power of prison dog programs to promote growth and development in incarcerated people has garnered national media attention. The *Huffington Post* published an article about the dog programs of Washington’s state prisons.

Devonte Crawford, a handler in the elite Brigadoon Service Dogs program at the Washington Correctional Complex, told the *HuffPost* that the program has expand-



Photo courtesy of Sustainability in Prisons Project and Washington State Department of Corrections

ed his horizons.

“Being a part of the program was completely different than anything I done before,” Crawford said. “The program has taught me ... how to utilize my creativity and imagination to produce the results that I want, and strengthened my social skills and coping abilities in stressful situations, while forcing me to be more structured and disciplined.”

Another dog handler from the program, LeLand Russell, Jr., said the program has restored his sense of confidence and self-worth after being sentenced to 63 years in prison. “Training these dogs has helped me to stay focused on serving a greater purpose than myself.”

He added that his focus on the dogs keeps him “from being involved in prison drama, while allowing me to use my time productively toward a

cause I really believe in.”

Crawford had similar sentiments. “It has given me a sense of being involved with society, because the dogs I train will go to someone in need, while helping to bring balance, purpose and happiness to such a negative environment,” he said.

Typically, prisoners spend months training and socializing their dogs in preparation for new lives. Prisoners often find it difficult to say goodbye to their loving dogs after spending so much time with them.

Crawford told the *HuffPost* about letting go of his beloved canine companions. “What keeps me going is I know the dog is going to someone who really needs their help. What I do is for something bigger than myself. I also know there are more dogs that need my help,” he said.

The author of the *HuffPost*

article wrote, “For the individuals lucky enough to be a part of them, these programs offer a chance to give back to the communities they previously harmed. The programs are an investment in the rehabilitation taking place in the prisons that host them, and a benefit to the individuals who receive the dogs, as well as to the dogs themselves.”

Russell said the dogs give him unconditional love, which helps him to find his true self. “I can be myself. The dogs love me for who I am — I don’t have to fake being some mean angry person to impress others, and often that’s how prison functions. I don’t want to be violent, or even act like I am. Plus, how can the innocence of a puppy not humble you?”

“These dogs leave an everlasting paw print on your heart, and memories that will last a lifetime,” Russell said.

Prestigious French literary prize contenders judged by incarcerated

500 prisoners select winner of Goncourt Academy Prize for literature

By Joshua Strange
Staff Writer

A panel of incarcerated people has been chosen to pick the winning book for a prestigious new prize in France.

The prize is gathering international media attention for the composition of its award jury — men and women incarcerated in the country’s prisons.

The government-sponsored “Goncourt de détenus” prize (Goncourt of detention) is a version of France’s long-standing top literary prize named for the Goncourt Academy.

Over 500 incarcerated people from 31 prisons participated in debating about and selecting the winning book from a list of 15 finalists recently published in France, *The New York Times* reported.

“Just because we’re inmates it doesn’t mean that we aren’t worth anything or that our opinions aren’t worth hearing,” said Mathilde, an incarcerated woman who participated in the judging.

Under French law, only first names are used to protect the identities of incarcerated people and the reasons for their incarceration are not made public.

The Goncourt de détenus prize comes at a time when the country’s incarcerated population has grown to a record high of 72,000, exceeding its design capacity by over 11,000 people, the story stated.

The *Times* article noted that France has its share of tough-on-crime proponents who criticize its prisons for being too soft, but there have been positive reactions to the new book prize.

“Bringing literature to people, not cutting them off from it, that’s really great,” said Marlene Brocail, who manages a bookstore in the town near the Orleans-Saran Penitentiary Center where many of the award jurists are detained. “You aren’t judging what they did. You are judging literature,” she said.

The *Times* article reported that the first annual prize was awarded in Paris on Dec. 15 to Sarah Jollien-Fardel for her book *Sa Préfère*, which translates to *His Favorite*. The book focuses on a woman struggling to deal with the legacy of her father’s physical and psychological abuse.

Some of the incarcerated jurists identified with the woman’s struggles because of their own adverse childhood experiences. When debating the book, one incarcerated man said that reading it reminded him of the value of “confronting the demons from your past.”

“When I was young,” he added, “I repeated a lot of the violence that I suffered as a child.”

The article said that the process of reading and discussing was just as important to the participants, if not more, than the selection of the winner. Video conferences allowed award jurists from different prisons to debate the books.

“Whenever culture, language, and words advance, violence recedes,” said Éric Dupond-Moretti, France’s justice minister, about the prize. “Time in prison has to be a time of punishment, but also of transformation.”

The benefits of the book

“Just because we’re inmates doesn’t mean that we aren’t worth anything or that our opinions aren’t worth hearing.”

—Mathilde

prize attracted the attention of the country’s top prison administrator, Laurent Ridel. He praised the effort, saying that it respected the rights of incarcerated people to cultural activities while also reducing tensions and improving working conditions for staff. “It’s a win-win. You can’t build anything on humiliation or frustration,” Ridel said.

Some of the incarcerated participants spoke to that humiliation and frustration. “I’m fed up with being here,” said Eddy. “But this felt good.”

Another, who had contemplated suicide, said, “The hardest thing, when you arrive in prison, is that everything is obliterated,” he said in reference to the loss of one’s network of family, friends, work colleagues, and more. “These workshops are fundamental. It changes everything,” he added.

The original idea for the Goncourt de détenus award came from the National Book Center to foster acculturation, critical thinking, and promote civic engagement. The center provided the books for the program and brought in some of the authors for prison visits to discuss their books with the incarcerated jurists.

Philippe Claudel, an author and secretary general of the Goncourt Academy, said he favors “making prisons as open as possible, so to speak, to really make it an integral part of our society, not a closed off and unknown environment that becomes an object of fear or ignorance.”

The power of words to transform is also being promoted at San Quentin. The SQ library hosts a popular book club, with books such as Brian Stevenson’s *Just Mercy* or Cormick McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* recently being read and discussed. The books are provided to participants for free by the nonprofit Friends of San Quentin Prison Library, according to SQ resident Kai Bannon, who works in the library and is one of the organization’s founders.

“We see the library as being key to the effort to raising literacy levels, which helps improve post-release outcomes,” Bannon said. “It’s also important because we live in an impoverished environment and books are one way to enrich that.”

Bannon noted such efforts are especially important given that basic education test scores reviewed by the organization reveal that 49% of SQ’s residents read at lower than an eighth-grade level and 18% below a fourth-grade level. He agreed that incarcerated people have value to add to the literary world, including some of the best books of all time that were written by incarcerated people — such as the *Count of Monte Cristo*, a classic by Alexander Dumas, or the contemporary hit *Shantaram* by Gregory David Roberts.

FAITH

Dozens gather to honor Kenneth “Musa” Bailey

By Cainen Chambers
Staff Writer

The incarcerated recently held a memorial service for long-time San Quentin resident Kenneth “Musa” Bailey in the Garden Chapel. Although escorts were required because of limited visibility, more than 70 people were in attendance.

Graced Out Ministries, which holds services every Saturday night, hosted the March 11 event. Paula Bates and Aldo Yanney, both volunteer Christian ministers, were also in attendance.

“Although Musa was known as being grumpy sometimes, he loved the Lord and I know he is in a better place,” said Yanney as he gave an emotional farewell to his friend. Musa attended the Greek and Hebrew language class that Yanney has taught at San Quentin for years.

The incarcerated made a memorial for Musa, with a picture of Bailey surrounded by flowers. Time was given for the incarcerated to come up and view the memorial as they said their final goodbyes. Several men got up to speak words of remembrance about their friend and the impact he had on their lives.

Paula Bates told those in attendance that Musa always said he would rather stay in prison for life than to get out and risk forgetting about God.

The “Graced Out Choir” sung three soulful selections which touched those in the



SQNews archive photo

audience. Many sang along to the gospel classics, “Going Up Yonder” and “I Shall Wear A Crown.”

Musa served as an usher and a choir member at the Garden Chapel for years under the leadership of Chaplain Jackson.

Tommy Hall, a member of the choir, was reflective during the service, stating, “I really enjoyed the service because it gives us all a time to reflect and pay our respect to those who we’ve lost at San Quentin. I love being at a prison that gives us the opportunity to properly mourn like anyone else in society has a chance to mourn their losses.”

The service was concluded with an awe-inspiring solo performance from Bates, who brought many to tears and to their feet. She also encouraged the men to make a decision for Christ while they still had time.

Musa died from pancreatic cancer and will be remembered for his straight-forward nature, and his love for both the truth and God.

San Quentin’s legacy of faith spans 165 years

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

San Quentin’s legacy of church activities goes back to 1858, when Gov. Weller directed the warden to provide Sunday religious services. In December of that year, volunteer Rev. Gilbert began offering Protestant services in the mess hall.

In 1860, Father Gallagher held the first official Catholic mass. Archbishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany gave a sermon in the mess hall in May 1860. He presided over confirmations of those who had drifted from the church.

The archbishop came to America in 1840, participating in missionary work. Moving to the Bay Area in 1853, he became California’s first archbishop.

Throughout the years, California’s prison chaplains have provided spiritual rehabilitation to incarcerated residents.

Early chaplains helped incarcerated people with their reformation, making religion the first self-help opportunity in the system, according to a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation press release.

“Men are not bettered or materially improved simply by confinement; there must be something built-in if they would go out of the institution fit to return to society,” said San Quentin Chaplain Oliver C. Lazure in 1920.

“It is up to you on the outside of the prisons to give them a square deal. It is because they have a cold reception when released; men who have been to prison become discouraged and commit

crimes, and sent back to us at San Quentin,” said Lazure.

Government officials believed chaplains would aid rehabilitation, guiding offenders on a path of morality.

The first ethical teacher at San Quentin was C.C. Cummings, appointed in 1870, followed by Rev. Hiram Cummings. In 1881, William Hill worked as the prison’s “moral instructor,” and after two years, he became the first “prison chaplain,” said the news release.

The Rev. Larry Newgent served as the chaplain at San Quentin for more than a dozen years. He discussed his views on the causes of crime and the nature of those incarcerated, noted CDCR.

“It’s bad company, thirst for thrills, the desire to be tough, that starts them [on the criminal path]. They become hardened and calloused. The time to do something [to help them] is when they are youngsters,” Newgent said in 1932.

In 1965, a San Quentin chaplain asked Frank Sinatra, accompanied by the Count Basie Orchestra, to perform for the incarcerated people.

“I enjoy being with the public almost under any circumstance regardless of where it is or why,” Sinatra said. “So I do my utmost to fulfill that responsibility as a performer and a man of public life.”

Today San Quentin is a self-help facility. Many of the incarcerated residents strive to improve themselves before returning to society.

The prison has made religious services available to all faiths. San Quentin currently has chapels for Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Native Americans.



BREAKING CHAINS

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Staff Writer

The Christian community known as Kairos returned to San Quentin State Prison and held a spiritual retreat for selected residents on President’s Day weekend. It was the first retreat since a three-year pandemic hiatus.

Kairos’ theme was to “Break the Chains” of human oppression and sin by following the teachings of Christ. San Quentin Kairos is one of the longest-running programs at the prison. A correctional officer employed at the prison and a chaplain who was a survivor of a shooting started the retreat in 1989.

The spiritual retreat serves as an initiation into Kairos and has introduced interdenominational faith to over 2,300 incarcerated people at the prison over the years.

“The weekend would never occur without the assistance of Raphaelle Casale [San Quentin’s Assistant to the Warden]. She put up with our stress and listened to our concerns in a supportive way,” said Kairos’ Inside Coordinator Martin Coyne.

“Policies have changed and she magnificently navigated us through the new protocols. Raphaelle should be a part of our team of Angels just for how she supported us and set up the new training that is required for all visitors.”

The initiation weekend happens twice a year — on President’s Day weekend and on Labor Day. Leadership from SQ’s Catholic and Protestant churches select 42 residents to attend from 240 applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sixteen previous participants were servants at this year’s retreat. They also supported the outside leadership team, which consisted of 55 community volunteers — 13 core apostles, 28 clergy leaders, and 14 Angels.

Lead Servant Wyatt McMillan, who is scheduled to parole soon, said he felt honored to serve the Kairos community before he leaves.

“Through Kairos, my transformation reached a higher level. I connected with Christians who mentored me and showed me how to live with purpose by being an asset to my community through service to others,” McMillan said.

The volunteer team featured returned citizens Kevin Sykes, James Alexander, and David Boatwright. They served a collective total of 75 years in the California penal system.

“My walk with Christ started right here at San Quentin, and I am blessed to return every year with Kairos,” said Alexander, who performed the duties of head servant.

Tedrick Sims, who is paroling after 35 years, spoke about Kairos’ global influence. “At

Kairos 55: One of SQ’s longest-running programs holds four-day spiritual retreat



Photos by Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Kairos #37 in Vacaville [prison], I watched the Summer Olympics in London, England. In the stands, a man was wearing a Kairos cross. The next day at the retreat I discovered Kairos members are all over the planet,” he said.

This year’s event totaled 43 hours spread over the four-day weekend. New members benefited from synchronized prayer that gave them love and support from the global family of Kairos. Attendees learned about a type of love known as agape — a nonromantic, unconditional spiritual love for one another. For some, it is the first time they have been truly accepted anywhere.

After the retreat, incarcerated persons shared insight regarding the influence of the life-changing event.

Resident Anthony Gomez said, “The most loving, supportive brotherhood I have ever experienced. I did a lot of soul searching and a little crying. I am ... thankful to be able to take part in Kairos #55.”

“Coming into the weekend I had no idea what to expect,” said participant Lukas Healy. “Kairos blew my mind! It’s a weekend of deep emotional and spiritual revival, and allowed me to have a genuine brotherhood of faith and love. Thank you to everyone who made Kairos #55 possible.”

Nicholas Casteel said, “In my third year of incarceration, I find this miracle! Kairos was an amazing opportunity to meet like-minded Christians from the community ... I hope everyone experiences it for themselves. I now have my grandmother and family joining Kairos on the outside.”

Spiritual adviser Deacon John Storm said that in addition to monthly reunions and the semiannual retreats, Kairos also provides other programs. This includes “Kairos Outside,” where retreats designed for the wives, girlfriends, daughters and sisters of incarcerated men allow family members to get closer to God.

Coming on the heels of the



TOP: Members of Kairos 55 gather under the Garden Chapel’s high-flying cross, a long-standing tradition of SQ’s faith community.

ABOVE: Spanish-speakers say ‘hello’ to the camera from Kairos’ San Mateo family.

LEFT: Formerly incarcerated Kevin Sykes is a frequent flyer at Kairos retreats and reunions, sharing his story and encouraging others to stay grounded in their faith.

BELOW: Wyatt McMillan stands alongside veteran volunteer Vic Perella.



pandemic, there was concern if enough outside Kairos volunteers would be able to enter the prison to participate in the retreat to celebrate the new members’ graduation.

“In the past Kairos [retreats], hundreds came in for the graduation ceremony. Due to new restrictions, we were reliant on the incarcerated alumni who are here,” said resident and co-lead servant Pedro Benitez.

Benitez said there was uncertainty at the last minute as to whether the retreat would happen because the institution modified programming before the event.

According to volunteer Max Drever, approximately

150 past San Quentin graduates showed up to surprise the new graduates of Kairos #55. Together they celebrated the completion of the retreat.

During graduation, 88-year-old volunteer Vic Perella and 87-year-old incarcerated resident Peter Bomenrito expressed their feelings.

“It’s amazing to watch people grow into Godly people, and it was miraculous to see all the wonderful alumni,” said Perella, a 1991 alumnus.

Bomenrito, a 1997 alumnus, said, “Adding more candidates to God’s flock is what Kairos does. For this, we get to celebrate God.”

ESPAÑOL

Por Idalio Villagrán y
Aristeo Sampablo
Spanish Journalism
Guild Writers

EL gobernador de California Gavin Newsom firmo leyes que entraron en efecto enero 1, del 2023, y rechazó otras cuatro, informó Iniciar Justicia (*Initiate Justice*), en su carta informativo *The Inside Journal*.

Iniciar Justicia, es una organización sin fines de lucro compuesta por personas que han sido impactadas en varios aspectos de su vida por el sistema carcelario del estado de California. Esta organización consiste en 45,000 miembros en ambos lados; adentro de la prisión y afuera en la sociedad, según reporto el informativo en octubre del 2022.

Las siguientes leyes fueron firmadas por el gobernador y ya estan en efecto:

■ **AB 256 (Kalra):** *El Acto de Justicia Racial Para Todos.* Esta ley hace que las protecciones contra el racismo en los tribunales sean retroactivas. Bajo la AB 256, estas son las siguientes formas para desafiar la inclinación racial en el caso de alguien.

- Inclinación racial explícita, por un abogado, juez, un oficial que apoya la ley, testigo experto o jurado involucrado en el caso.
- Uso de lenguaje discriminatorio en el tribunal y durante los procedimientos criminales, sean intencionales o no.
- Inclinación racial en la selección del jurado, tales como remover toda o casi todas las personas de color del jurado.
- Disparidades estadísticas en cargos y condenas esto significa, que hay evidencia que gente de una raza son proporcionalmente acusados (as) o condenados de un crimen o aumento de sentencia.
- Disparidades estadísticas en sentencia esto significa que hay evidencia que gente de una raza recibe sentencias más largas o más severas, incluyendo la pena de muerte o vida sin salida bajo palabra, (LWOP) por sus siglas en inglés.

La información estadística para sostener las disparidades va a estar disponible en el futuro:

- **Enero 1 2023:** Individuos enfrentando la deportación o sentenciados a la pena de muerte.
- **Enero 1 2024:** Individuos encarcelados por una felonía.
- **Enero 1 2025:** Otros con una condena de felonía dentro o después del 2015.
- **Enero 1 2026:** Todo aquel con una condena de felonía.



File photo

LAS NUEVAS PROPUESTAS DE LEY ESTAN EN EFECTO

Anuncio: No todas las siguientes leyes fueron reportadas por Iniciar Justicia pero pueden impactar las vidas de encarcelados. San Quentin News no es parte de este proceso y no somos abogados, por favor no nos contacten por razones legales. Les recomendamos que se comuniquen con sus representantes legales en sus distritos o sus abogados públicos, para obtener más información sobre estas leyes.

la pérdida de oportunidades educacionales, vivienda, beneficios públicos, custodia de los hijos, y de estado migratorio.

■ **SB 1106 (Wiener):** *El Acto de un Comienzo Cuevo.*

Esta ley previene que la restitución actúe como una barrera para alivio del historial criminal como borrarlo o sellarlo.

Borrar o sellar los historiales criminales incrementa acceso a empleo, educación, vivienda, y otros servicios sociales los cuales apoyan una re inserción exitosa.

■ **AB 2167 (Kalra):** Alternativa al Encarcelamiento.

Esta ley requiere que los tribunales consideren alternativas al encarcelamiento, incluyendo, programas de los tribunales de justicia colaborativa, desviación, justicia reconstituyente y libertad condicional. Esta ley también

declara la intención de la legislatura, que casos criminales usen los medios menos restrictivos disponibles. Esta ley no es retroactiva y no cambia la discreción de los jueces, pero alienta a los tribunales a parar de depender en la encarcelación.

NUEVAS LEYES TOMARON EFECTO ENERO 1, 2023

Ocho propuestas firmadas a ley; el gobernador vetó dinero de salida, aumento de pago para reos

Lo siguiente es una extracción de la Esquina de Póli-za por Iniciar Justicia – reimprimido con permiso.

Las siguientes propuestas de ley no son patrocinadas por Iniciar Justicia (*Initiate Justice*), pero podrían impactar materialmente las vidas de gente encarcelada. Nosotros no somos patrocinadores de estas propuestas de ley, así que por favor no nos escriba pidi-

endo detalles. No ofrecemos consejería o representación, así que por favor contacte su defensor público o abogado para más información.

Abajo esta una lista de las propuestas de ley que pasaron la legislatura y fueron firmados por el gobernador. Las propuestas de ley firmadas toman efecto en enero 1, 2023.

■ **AB 960 (Ting):** Mejora libertad condicional médica para que más gente encarcelada sean elegibles para libertad compasiva.

■ **AB 1706 (Bonta):** Asegura a todas las personas convictas por cannabis, que serán re sentenciadas y sus casos removidos.

■ **AB 1766 (Stone):** Asegura que a más gente que está saliendo de prisión estatal, le serán otorgadas identificación válida del estado, si el departamento de vehículos tiene los documentos necesarios en archivo.

■ **AB 2657 (Stone):** Asegura que la gente en espera de ser ejecutado, quienes son incompetentes, no serán ejecutados y serán re sentenciados a vida sin posibilidad de libertad.

■ **SB 990 (Hueso):** Permite a la gente ser puestos en libertad condicional en condados

que son los mejores para su educación/entrenamiento vocacional.

■ **SB 1008 (Becker):** Hace las llamadas telefónicas gratis en las prisiones estatales e instituciones juveniles.

■ **SB 1139 (Kamlager):** Requiere que CDCR que notifique a los familiares cuando una persona encarcelada es enviada al hospital o en otras emergencias médicas.

■ **SB 1209 (Eggman):** Permite a que más veteranos sean re sentenciados, quienes han sido excluidos en propuestas previas, particularmente si trauma de experiencia militar no fue considerada como factor mitigante al tiempo de ser sentenciado. Sin embargo, gente convicta de sección 667 o su crimen requiere registración en conformidad a la subdivisión (c) de la sección 290, no son elegibles.

Las siguientes propuestas de ley fueron vetadas por el gobernador y no continuarán progresando:

■ **AB 2730 (Villapudua):** Permite a la gente que saldrá en libertad dentro del plazo de 2 años, a ser hospedados en domicilios de estudio para recibir más entrenamiento vocacional antes de obtener su libertad.

■ **SB 1304 (Kamlager):** Aumento de dinero de salida a \$1,300 al salir de prisión.

■ **SB 1371 (Bradford):** Aumento de pago por trabajos en CDCR, por un plazo de 5 años.

Las siguientes propuestas de ley fracasaron y no llegaron al gobernador:

■ **AB 937 (Carrillo):** Termina las transferencias a inmigración ICE después de completar la sentencia en prisión.

■ **AB 300 (Cortese):** Este propuesta de ley hubiera reformado la ley de circunstancias especiales para que solo la persona que tomó la vida de alguien, y no los cómplices, recibieran vida sin posibilidad de libertad. La propuesta de ley no era retro-activa.

■ **ACA 3 (Kamlager):** Esta enmienda constitucional hubiera removido servidumbre involuntaria de la constitución. Como no paso la legislatura, no aparecerá en el sistema de voto este noviembre.

—Raymond Torres y Wilfredo Alarcón contribuyentes

By Carlos Drouaillet
Staff Writer

Pregunte a cualquier aficionado de fútbol, ¿Quién es el jugador más famoso de fútbol de la historia? La respuesta seguramente será Pelé.

Pelé, el máximo jugador de fútbol del mundo, nació en Brasil Minas Gerais con el nombre Edson Arantes do Nascimento. Él recibió el nombre de Edson en honor al inventor Thomas Edison. El adoptó el apodo de ‘Pelé’ desde niño por tener problemas para pronunciar el nombre del portero del equipo Vasco da Gama ‘Bilé’, según el reporte de *Los Angeles Times*.

Los aficionados de fútbol alrededor del mundo entristercieron cuando se enteraron que Pelé falleció el 29 de diciembre a la edad de 82 años, de acuerdo con las fuentes informativas.

En una entrevista Pelé dijo, “Yo nací para jugar fútbol, así como Beethoven nació para escribir música, y Michel Ángel nació para pintar”, escribió *The Week Magazine* en enero.

“Nadie disputa la grandeza de Pelé y su enfoque en anotar goles. El número exacto de goles en su carrera será por siempre un tópico a debatir”, reportó *La Prensa Asociada*. “Pelé decía muy seguido, que una de las razones por lo cual debería ser considerado el

máximo jugador de todos los tiempos, por su enfoque en anotar más de 1,000 goles”.

Por sus propios cálculos, Pelé fue el máximo anotador en la historia del fútbol con 1,283 goles en 1,366 partidos. Sin embargo, *La Prensa Asociada*, publica que Pelé anotó menos de 800 goles en su carrera deportiva.

El record Mundial de Guinness, atribuye a Pelé con 1,279 goles en 1,363 partidos, declarando que los goles en ‘presentaciones especiales’ después de retirarse fueron incluidos, pero no especificados, de acuerdo con *La Prensa Asociada*.

Por su parte la ‘FIFA’, que es la organización gobernante del fútbol mundial, acredita a Pelé con 1,281 goles en 1,363 partidos. “Pelé anotó más de 100 goles en una temporada en dos ocasiones, en 1959 (127 goles) y en 1961 (110 goles), dice *La Prensa Asociada*.

La grandeza de Pelé fue sin comparación entre los aficionados al fútbol en todo el mundo, gracias a su legado por el deporte y también por su personalidad dentro y fuera del campo de juego.

Sergio Medina 33, futbolista residente de SQ dijo, “Pelé siempre cuidó de su madre de 100 años quien aún vive. Él nunca fue persona de escándalos ni de vicios, más bien fue persona disciplinada hasta



File photo

Homenaje póstumo al Rey Pelé

el día de su muerte”.

Un reporte de *Los Angeles Times* especifica que Pelé también es admirado por estrellas actuales del fútbol como Cristiano Ronaldo, quien tiene el record de 819 goles colocan-

dolo a la vanguardia. “Pelé es el jugador más grande en la historia del fútbol” dijo Ronaldo “Y solo habrá un Pelé”.

“Pelé fue una inspiración para aquellos quienes aman el fútbol en todo el mundo”,

dijo Elvis ‘Chino’ Martinez 39, residente de San Quentin, quien practica con el equipo local “Los Terremotos de San Quentin”.

La popularidad de Pelé cruzó fronteras. Duran-

te la guerra en Nigeria, los militares de los dos frentes declararon dos días de tregua únicamente para que los soldados pudieran ver jugar a Pelé por televisión, según el artículo del *Tribune-Review*.

“Yo creo que fue un revolucionario en su tiempo, ya que las personas de color, no eran aceptadas en clubes grandes dentro y fuera de Brasil”, dijo Medina “Pero a pesar de las limitaciones, él fue el que le enseñó al mundo el estilo de juego de Brasil ‘jogo bonito’, que significa [juego bonito]”.

Pelé fue el invitado especial de al menos tres Papas en el Vaticano, seis emperadores, ocho presidentes, 15 reyes y más de cuatro docenas de jefes de estado. Él fue embajador de las Naciones Unidas por ecología y el medio ambiente. También, y Embajador Buenaventura de la UNESCO, y, como Ministro de Deportes de Brasil, propuso una ley para reducir la corrupción en el fútbol, una ley que llevo a conocerse como la “Ley de Pelé”, reporta *Los Angeles Times*.

Pelé fue el máximo exponente del fútbol por su calidad y “jogo bonito”. Tostao, compañero de equipo de Pelé durante una Copa Mundial, dijo, Pelé era “Simplemente impecable”.

Oficiales de prisiones federales culpables de abusos sexuales

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

En 2022 este escándalo sacudió a la prisión federal de mujeres en Dublín California, generando el arresto de cinco empleados incluyendo el arresto del antiguo guardián Ray J. García, quien espera el procedimiento de su juicio, según reporto la *Prensa Asociada* el 29 de octubre del 2022.

La fiscalía federal anunció que Enrique Chavez, 50, se declaró culpable de un cargo de contacto excesivo sexual de una prisionera en la prisión federal de Dublín en el Area de la Bahía alrededor de San Francisco.

Chavez se enfrentará con una sentencia de dos años y con una multa de \$250,000, informó el Departamento de Justicia de EE.UU.

Según el reporte, Chavez era el supervisor de la comida hace dos años cuando cerró la puerta del cuarto que congelaba la comida de la prisión y atacó a la reclusa.

“El público confía que los oficiales correccionales se comportan con integridad, pero Chavez prefirió usar su puesto y poder para abusar sexualmente a una prisionera quien se encontraba bajo su supervisión”, dijo en un recado Zachary Shroyer, un agente especial encargado del

Departamento de Justicia y sirviendo en la oficina del Inspector General en Los Angeles.

La Prensa Asociada reportó que Chavez es la tercera persona que se hizo culpable de cargos semejantes. Añadiendo que el anterior capellán de la prisión James Theodore Highhouse fue sentenciado por cargos similares a siete años de prisión el pasado agosto, un castigo dos veces más grande de lo que es recomendado por las guías de las sentencias federales.

Otros acusados como Ross Klinger también se han declarado culpables por delitos de este tipo. Klinger era un técnico de reciclaje y está esperando ser sentenciado.

Estos abusos sexuales fueron manejados en secreto y las personas que trataban de reportar estos abusos se encontraban con represalias. La administración ignoraba las alegaciones, mandando a las recusas a las unidades de solitaria o transfiriéndolas a otra prisiones.

Ray J. García, el antiguo guardián, está enfrentando cargos por delitos sexuales en contra de tres mujeres en su custodia. García niega los cargos y su juicio tendrá lugar en el futuro.

¿Cuántos abusos no se declaran? ¿Cuántos guardia siguen abusando sin ser revelados y castigados.

FRAUDE AL DEPARTAMENTO DE DESEMPLEO DE CA

Por Carlos Drouaillet
Staff writer

Desde Sacramento y en forma oficial, Rob Bonta, Fiscal General de California, anuncia el miércoles 19 de octubre el año pasado, la aprensión de la persona supuestamente responsable por el desfalco de más de \$145,000 al Departamento de Desarrollo del Empleo (EDD por sus siglas en ingles).

Según los cargos, el cuantioso fraude se perpetró durante la pandemia del COVID-19 entre los años 2020 y 2021.

Dicho individuo que aún no ha sido identificado es acusado de utilizar además de su propio nombre la identidad de un par de asesinos convictos que actualmente sirven condenas en la prisión de San Quentin.

Los nombres de los asesinos Cary Stayner y Scott Peterson fueron utilizados a pesar que se encuentran en la cárcel desde el 2002 y 2005 respectivamente.

El presunto chantajista, no tuvo ninguna dificultad para cobrar los beneficios del seguro de desempleo de forma fraudulenta, de acuerdo con el boletín informativo del Departamento de Justicia de California.

“No permita que los nombres infames lo distraigan de a quiénes perjudicó realmente este crimen: los más vulnerables de nuestra sociedad”, dijo Bonta. “El robo de EDD perjudica a las familias necesitadas, a los padres que se quedaron sin trabajo durante una pandemia y a los californianos que luchan por sobrevivir. Por eso agradezco a mis agentes y a nuestros socios en el EDD y el CDCR por su trabajo conjunto en este caso”.

Se descubrió que la persona involucrada en el fraude trabajó para una agencia contratada por la prisión y así adquirió la información personal de los dos prisioneros, según el anuncio

emitido por el Fiscal General.

La secretaria del Departamento de Correccionales y Rehabilitación (CDCR), Kathleen Allison comento, “Una de nuestras principales prioridades ha sido investigar y colaborar estrechamente con nuestros socios del grupo de trabajo estatal en la cantidad sin precedentes de casos de fraude del seguro de desempleo que nuestro estado ha visto desde 2020”. Añadiendo que, “El departamento tiene recursos y agentes dedicados... para... garantizar que cualquier persona responsable de defraudar a los trabajadores californianos del acceso a los beneficios de desempleo rinda cuentas”.

En el condado de Contra Costa, un equipo de agentes del CDCR arrestó al sospechoso en octubre 15 de 2022 y fue inculgado cuatro días después por la Sección de Procesamientos Especiales de la División de Derecho Penal del Departamento de Justicia de California, especifica el anuncio.

Tanto el EDD de California como el del resto país pasaron por la misma situación con intentos de fraude. Mas sin embargo, la mayoría de casos fraudulentos estuvieron dirigidos a el programa federal de ayuda de emergencia para desempleados creado durante la pandemia. Dicho programa ya no está vigente y no contaba con garantías de protección como el seguro de desempleo, reporta el boletín del Fiscal General.

Los delitos de fraude, la evasión de impuestos, el robo de salarios, la venta de drogas ilícitas, y la piratería estan en la lista del TRUE Task Force, el cual es un grupo de investigadores (El Departamento de Justicia, del Departamento de Administración de Impuestos y Tarifas de California, y de la Junta de Impuestos de Franquicia de California).



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

VISITA OFICIAL DEL GOBERNADOR GAVIN NEWSOM A SAN QUENTIN

Por Juan Haines
Senior Editor

El gobernador de California Gavin Newsom anunció la transición propuesta de San Quentin Prisión Estatal a San Quentin Centro de Rehabilitación.

El anuncio vino en una conferencia de prensa dentro de la prisión estatal de San Quentin, el 17 de marzo, he incluyo no solo a reporteros pero a gente previamente encarcelada, legisladores estatales y abogados de reforma de prisión.

Newsom dijo que la operación vigente del sistema de prisión estatal “no está funcionando para nadie”. La unión de oficiales de corrección apoyan las reformas.

El Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin se apunta a proveer a la población general de 3,900 residentes de la prisión con programas de cambio de estilo de vida y habilidades para ayudarles a regresar a sus comunidades con seguridad y evitar la reincidencia, dijo la Oficial de Información Pública de San Quentin, Lt. Guim’Mara Berry.

Los cambios planeados “harían a San Quentin el primer centro de rehabilitación del mundo”, dijo Newsom, hablando en un área de la prisión que anteriormente era fábrica de muebles, y pronto llegará a ser el nuevo centro innovador.

El sistema presente a “fallado por mucho tiempo” para mantener al público seguro, dijo Newsom, y se refirió a la tasa de reincidencia de casi 50% para los prisioneros liberados. La reforma se trata de “seguridad publica real, para mantener comunidades seguras”, y ser “serios para tratar el crimen y violencia en nuestro estado”, dijo Newsom.

Un equipo de expertos incluyendo víctimas y sobrevivientes de crimen, organizaciones basadas en la comunidad, personas previamente y corrientemente encarceladas serán encargados de realizar el “trabajo de diseño” para SQCR. Newsom pidió que los legisladores destinen \$20 millones para el proyecto. Él puso como plazo el 2025 para que esté en condiciones de servicio.

“Si San Quentin lo puede hacer, puede ser hecho en cualquier otro lugar”, dijo Newsom. “Esto es acerca de reducir la reincidencia en este estado, manteniendo a la gente segura, y asegurándose que las víctimas sean respetadas en el proceso”.

Las Caras de la Seguridad Pública

Californianos para la Seguridad y Justicia también conocido como CSJ, es una de las organizaciones encargadas de hacer el trabajo de diseño para SQCR. Tinisch Hollins, la directora ejecutiva, perdió a dos hermanos por violencia de armas y ha tenido a varios

miembros de su familia cumplir sentencias en la prisión en San Quentin, algunos de ellos por décadas.

“Muchas veces estamos frente al podio hablando sobre donde los sistemas fallaron, han fallado a comunidades, han fallado a las víctimas de crímenes, y han fallado en rehabilitar o interrumpir los ciclos que todos queremos ver cambiar”, dijo Hollins.

Hollins describió a gente encarcelada que han experimentado un “trabajo transformativo profundo” quienes estan preparados para “regresar a casa” y “se parte de la solución” al crimen.

“Ellos son las caras de la seguridad publica en nuestras comunidades”, dijo Collins. “Ellos son los que llamamos al lugar del 911, cuando queremos resolver situaciones o queremos prevenir el crimen antes que ocurra”.

Newsom enfatizó que la responsabilidad no solo es de las personas encarceladas, pero de la comunidad en general para “reconciliar y tratar estas realidades persistentes”.

El dijo, “Nosotros somos tan tontos como queremos ser”, refiriéndose a las pólizas corrientes que han resultado en dos tercios de las 30 mil personas encarceladas que son liberadas de prisiones estatales terminar de vuelta tras las rejas en un periodo de tres años.

“¿...Nosotros perpetuamos ese sistema y nosotros llamamos a ese sistema de alguna manera orientado a la seguridad pública? ¿Dónde está la seguridad del público en eso?” dijo Newsom.

Newsom señaló a las 50 a 80 personas soltadas de San Quentin mensualmente.

“¿Estan ellos listos para reintegrar a la sociedad?” preguntó él. “¿Estan ellos listos para ser completamente participantes en la vida [en sus comunidades]? ¿O estan ellos amargados?”

Newsom dijo que la creación de SQCR no sería controlado por el CDCR solamente.

“Esto es el resto del gobierno, departamentos, todos nosotros creciendo juntos” dijo él. “Eso es lo que hace esto muy, muy diferente...nosotros tenemos que estar en el negocio de bienvenida-a-casa”.

Continúan con el límite en la población encarcelada

En 1976 California encarceló a 21,000 personas en prisiones estatales. Para el tiempo que Newsom se graduó de Redwood High, eran 50,000 y creció a 174,000 para el 2006, dijo él.

En el 2011, la Corte Suprema de E.E.U.U. intervino en los problemas de la prisión de California, colocando al sistema de la prisión bajo su supervisión y ordenó un límite en población encarcelada.

Más de una década más tarde, las prisiones todavía estan bajo supervisión- y el límite de población ordenada por la corte no se ha cumplido.

Hay alrededor de 95,000 personas encarceladas en prisiones estatales, con tan solo 85,000 espacios de camas para acomodarlos.

A pesar de sobrepasar los límites de población, Newsom habló acerca de cerrar más prisiones y de alejarse de la “perversidad” de prisiones privadas. Sin embargo, los cierres no han enaminado a las personas a salir de la prisión y regresar a sus comunidades. Ellos solo han sido transferidos a prisiones sobrepobladas.

El electo nuevo editor-principal, Steve Brooks también señaló que enfermedades contagiosas, como COVID-19 y la influenza no se estan disipando y todavía estan causando cuarentenas.

“Amontonar personas en estas unidades de vivienda sin buena ventilación llevan a la intranquilidad y a un estado general de depresión entre los residentes mientras ellos tratan de sobrevivir otra día”, comentó Brooks.

“Usted probablemente podría implementar el modelo escandinavo, tan solo con mantener este lugar con viviendas solteras”, dijo Brooks.

Continúa la sobrepoblación

Brooks comenzó con una afirmación antes realizar una pregunta de varias partes al gobernador Newsom: “San Quentin es el epicentro de rehabilitación en California - ¿Cómo podría este plan lidiar con la sobrepoblación crónica en San Quentin y las condiciones de vivienda, y serán ahora los ofensores violentos excluidos de participar en programas de San Quentin?”

Los programas estarían disponibles a la población general de San Quentin, dijo Newsom, pero él no comentó sobre la cuestión de la sobrepoblación.

“San Quentin tiene aproximadamente 2,100 celdas y 500 camas de dormitorio para la población general”, dijo Brooks, notando que la población de 3,900 todavía está creciendo. “doble-ocupación por celda es rampante”.

Los programas corrientes incluyen podcasting , reportaje periódico/radio, código de computadoras, ingeniería de audio/video, tecnología de construcción, cursos de colegio universitario comunitario y programas de entrenamiento vocacional, los cuales incluyen cosas como plomería, aprendizaje de computadora y dibujo 3D. Los programas que enseñan habilidades para la vida incluyen clases de consejería de drogas manejo de enojo y violencia doméstica.

“Nosotros tenemos todos los programas que necesitamos, pero las listas de espera son hasta un año de largo. La sobrepoblación es más ahora que antes de la pandemia”, declaró Brooks.

—Traducción en Español por Willy Alarcón

SPORTS

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

SQ KINGS AND WARRIORS HOLD 2023 SEASON TRYOUTS

The SQ Kings and the SQ Warriors have selected their new players for the 2023 basketball season after a strenuous and rigorous tryout session.

Coaches think this year’s hand-picked players are capable of getting their teams to the championship, which makes them more hopeful than last season.

SQ Kings Head Coach Ish Freelon said that he is confident in his new lineup and thinks that this season, his team, comprising 15 players over age 40, will go undefeated.

“I am truly impressed with the players we have now,” Freelon said. “I know that we will have a better season than the last one.”

He added two new towering players to his 2023 roster: J. Fleeman, 6’6”, and R. Carpenter, 6’2”. The new 15-man roster is also expected to step up and meet the standards of the league contract, one that is shared by the new SQ Warriors.

Warriors Head Coach Jeremiah “JB” Brown has a group of new talent that he expects to show up for the team and fulfill that obligation.

“I see some really good talent out here,” said Brown at the final day of tryouts. “These new youngsters are making my choices hard this season. I’m really only trying to fill two positions, but I like all these guys.”

After some running exercises and drill plays, the tryouts



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

Forty participants showed their mettle in this year’s tryouts, with 15-man lineups selected for each team after fierce competition.

concluded with a scrimmage where the coaches made the hard choices.

Forty players came to try out and see if they might win one of the 15 available jerseys. Brown said that he likes all 40 participants, but he had his watchful eye on newcomer

Kevin Oates and said that he was impressed by the young man’s skills and shooting ability.

Last season’s leading scorer, Keyshawn “Steez” Strickland, came out to support the newcomers and led the team with some chest passes and

shooting drills.


Another important factor in player selection was coming to practice. A few veterans were cut this season because of it.

Coach Brown said that he is only looking for two small forwards because other position players are veterans.

At the end of the Warriors tryouts, Brown had chosen his 15-man lineup, which included newcomer Kevin Oates. The 6’4” forward will be flanked by veteran big men Big Rick “Ibrahim Azim” Hale and Tyler “Drizzy” Cooper.

Last season both teams fin-

ished with two quite different outcomes. The Kings went under .500 while the Warriors were well over. With this season’s strategies, both head coaches are pushing the envelope by adding more requirements for the players to abide by.



LET’S PLAY BALL
Last year’s World Series was the first time since Jackie Robinson played in the Big Leagues that no American-born Black players took the field in Baseball’s crowning concatenation.

NBA Foundation invests in empowerment of system-impacted youth

NYC nonprofit Avenues for Justice to receive share of \$4.8M for education, mentorship programs

A New York City-based nonprofit, Avenues for Justice, will receive part of a \$4.8 million grant from the NBA’s philanthropic arm — the NBA Foundation — to support the non-profit’s programs, according to NewsOne.com.

Avenues for Justice, founded in 1979, creates initiatives that empower youth affected by the criminal justice system through education, mentorship, and workforce development. Its programs are designed for participants age 13 through 24, the article said.

“The vision of the NBA Foundation overlaps with the goals of Avenues for Justice and will allow us to expand our programming of skills training, mentorship, and job training for underrepresented youth,” said Alanna Rutherford, the nonprofit’s board chair.

The grant money will be

used to elevate Avenues for Justice’s work on eliminating recidivism, Rutherford said.

“By providing a means to establish a solid economic foundation, the Foundation grant will assist in achieving Avenues for Justice’s mission to divert underrepresented, at-risk New York City youth from lives of crime,” Rutherford added.

The grant will also support the organization’s HIRE UP program that works with at-risk youth.

Greg Taylor, executive director of the NBA Foundation, praised the work of Avenues for Justice, “The organization’s dedication to intervention and diversion for youth in systematically disadvantaged communities dates back decades, and we look to the continued growth of its impact”

—**Rahan Asaan**

SQ Niners hold 2023 season scrimmage

By Rahan Asaan
Journalism Guild Writer

The San Quentin 49ers held their first scrimmage game on the Lower Yard on a warm Presidents Day, Feb. 20.

Head Coach Bryant Underwood and Defensive Coordinator David Barela divided the 22-man roster into two teams to determine who would make the team and who may be cut.

“We’re looking for sportsmanship and knowledge of the game,” Coach Underwood said. “I expect 100% from everyone trying out, and I hope not to deal with messed-up attitudes and an unwillingness to play.”

Underwood and Barela chose their squads, called everyone in, and gave them a pre-game team pep talk about player expectations, then joined a prayer huddle.

“We won’t tolerate any swear words, disrespect, or racial slurs, specifically the N-word. Leave all of your aggression on the field,” Underwood admonished the participants.

Barela identified a few players that he thought may have potential defensive skills, but cautioned to the players that potential may not be enough.

“I have to take a good look at a lot of these players position-wise — who wants to be a starter in their chosen position and if they will actually play in only that position,” Barela added.

Of the many breakout players in the scrimmage, there were: Ryan “Taz” Matlock at wide receiver, Kolby Southwood at wide receiver and cornerback, Willie “Pit” Wilkerson at defensive back, Marcus “Q” Eugene at re-



SQNews archive photo

Twenty-two men came down to the lower yard to compete for a slot on the 2023 SQ Forty-Niners squad.

ceiver and cornerback, and Taioisi Shaka at quarterback.

Taz Matlock has been a resident at San Quentin for close to a year and has occupied almost all of his free

time engaged in sports.

“Football is my number one sport since I played Pop Warner and in high school,” said Matlock. “Football helps me channel and control my energy instead of me doing

stupid stuff.”

The scrimmage game kicked off with QB Shaka Mantagi throwing a few mid-field passes to advance the ball down the field, throwing to multiple receivers.

Shaka ran a route and threw across the field and into the end zone to Southwood for the first score of the game.

Southwood, 30, has been a resident of San Quentin for a little more than two years and was introduced to the game here.

“I’ve learned everything I know about playing football and all other sports at Quentin,” Southwood said. “Playing is the only time I really relate and connect with others. I speak better because of talking to my teammates.”

Receiver Marcus “Q” Eugene caught a pass from Shaka and scored a touchdown. Q would catch two more touchdown passes before the game ended.

Offensive plays were not the only highlights of the game. There were also a few notable defensive plays that showcased talent on the other side of the ball.

Marquese “Queese” Whitaker tested the offensive line every play until he forced the QB to throw an interception. There would be three more interceptions thrown during the scrimmage.

Coach Underwood seemed impressed at the end of the practice game and went to work deciding who would be the best fit for the San Quentin Niners.

“We want all types — different races and religions — so we can learn from each other,” Underwood said. “It’s not just in here, but outside these walls, too. What we’re doing is way bigger than football.”



Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Golden State Warriors, Prison Sports Ministries donate shoes to SQ basketball program

More than 100 pairs donated to SQ basketball program

The Golden State Warriors donated a lot of athletic tennis shoes to the San Quentin Warriors after their annual game last season. Along with a collection of shoes from longtime volunteer Bill Epling, the basketball program at SQ received over 100 pairs.

To be exact, a combined 104 pairs of shoes were donated to the SQ basketball program by Golden State and Prison Sports Ministries.

"I want Bill Epling and Don Smith from Prison Sports Ministries to know that we really appreciate them. I watched people change from them just coming in here and supporting the sports programs," said Basketball General Manager Brian Asey, who has been overseeing operations for the last five years.

The SQ Warriors players will get to play in some good-quality tennis shoes of all kinds, including the latest Steph Curry shoes made by Under Armour. Also included were low-top and high-top

Air Force Ones, made by Nike, and an assortment of other shoes that some players of the Warriors actually wear.

The basketball program has been receiving donated shoes from Epling and Smith's Prison Sports Ministries program for several years. However, the pandemic had all but stopped them from coming in.

When the pandemic lifted, Golden State was able to enter the prison for their annual game against the SQ Warriors, which restarted the donation conversation.

Asey said that it was the San Quentin Kings Head Coach Ish Freelon who urged him to have a conversation with GSW Vice President of Operations Mike Dunleavy, who was at the game with the assistant equipment manager of the GS Warriors, Marcus Hightower. The two had an instrumental role in the donation process. Hightower actually played impressively in the game against the SQ Warriors that day.

Once all the ramifications and paperwork were approved, a longtime volunteer for the basketball program, Ginnie Waters, received big bags of brand-new shoes at her doorstep. It was Waters, educator Zack Pryor, and the overseer of all sports and recreation at the prison, Coach K. Bhatt, who worked together to complete the process.

"Once I picked the shoes up, they went to my office," said Bhatt. "The shoes are for the guys who play on the team and they will get to wear them during the games and at practices."

General Manager Asey and the head coaches of the Kings and Warriors, Ish Freelon and Jeremiah "JB" Brown, distributed the shoes to the players by size for a Saturday scrimmage game and players got the opportunity to feel that comfort of having on a good shoe.

"I had on the teal color Crayolas made by Adidas," said Sadiq Davis, power forward for the SQ Warriors. "I

haven't had on any real shoes in about 15 years and they felt good. Wearing those shoes made me feel like I have to hurry up and get free. It made me feel like we got somebody that loves us out there. I want to get out so I can personally thank Bill Epling, Don Smith and Prison Sports Ministries, and especially I want to thank the GSW's organization for donating the shoes to us. It means a lot."

Navion Sparks had on some unique Dwyane Wade shoes made by Li Ning. Top promising player Tyler "Drizzy" Cooper had on the Bradley Beal shoes made by Nike.

Giving out the shoes, "It's one of the ways we use to get the young men here and newcomers to the prison involved," GM Asey said. "It means a lot to give men here something, because some guys here may not have nothing. To give them something like some shoes to get them inspired to do better means a lot."

CHECKMATE

Ian Hamilton crowned chess king, dethrones Demetrius Mitchell

By Timothy Hicks
Sports Editor

Ian Hamilton dethroned last year's chess king, Demetrius Mitchell, and became the new chess champion of West Block by winning the best games out of a three-game match.

"It was nerve-racking to sit across from a player that is far more superior in skill and experience [than I am]," said Hamilton.

His journey to chess champion started at other prisons. He said that, after losing numerous matches to opponents much more skilled than he was, he read the book *Chess for Dummies*.

After reading that book and others, Hamilton started accepting challenges. After arriving in San Quentin, he studied to increase his own skills and met other highly skilled chess players. Mitchell was one of them.

"I was in awe whenever I saw other men play," said Hamilton.

Hamilton did not participate in last year's tournament, but Mitchell told him he predicted Hamilton would become the next chess champ. Entering as an underdog at the end of December, Hamilton showcased his skills to a packed dayroom of residents.

After defeating four other players, Hamilton was face-to-face with his mentor. Among the residents who gathered around the table and hung over the tiers to see the match, Hamilton achieved his first victory against Mitchell with a pawn push that checkmated the king.

The next match ended with Mitchell's show of submission when he tipped over his king; a gentleman's admission of defeat.

"I was in disbelief to emerge victorious," said Hamilton. The gentlemen shook hands and Mitchell congratulated Hamilton on his win.

"Chess means so much to me. It has saved me in some very trying times. It is a great honor to be a part of this West Block community," said Hamilton.



Stock photo

SQ Kings victory upstages sports teams' picture day

It was picture day for the basketball and football programs Friday, Jan 20, on the San Quentin Lower Yard, but the comeback victory of the SQ Kings over the SQ Warriors, 11-8, stole the spot light.

The Kings gave the large crowd of SQ residents a dramatic comeback show that was outstanding and full of excitement.

The Lower Yard was the place where the athletes came out to take pictures for the upcoming seasons, but their competitive nature could not be captured in a picture frame.

Picture day meant more to the athletes than just photo shoots and footage. It meant something to be proud of. It meant something to share. It meant they could show their friends and family the progress they were making through the programs that support their rehabilitation in prison.

In particular, this day showed the athletes' confidence and the power of playing sports for rehabilitation.

"This day means a lot to me," said newcomer Jabari "JJ" Shabazz. Shabazz is a dual-athlete at The Q, playing as both a promising receiver for the football SQ Niners and a guard for the basketball SQ Warriors. "I want to send a copy of the paper with my picture in it to my family so they can see what I am doing in here, so they can see that I'm not in here messing my life up."

Due to the guys' competitive and athletic nature, the process of gathering footage turned into a pick-up game. Coaches of the SQ Warriors and SQ Kings, Jeremiah "JB" Brown and Ish Freelon, put together a four on four match. And the guys could not help but to allow the true athlete come up out of them.

The twin towers for the Warriors, power forward Tyler "Drizzy" Cooper, standing 6'7", and center, Big Rick Hale, standing 6'5," underestimated the smaller opponents. Though between the two big men, over half the team's points were scored.

The Warriors dominated the court at first. Game was going to 10 points. All of the boards and the inside lanes belonged to the reincarnation of The Admiral, David Robinson, and Tim Duncan of the San Antonio Spurs. Point guard Delvy Adams and shooting guard Keyshawn "Steez" Strickland were contributing to the press for the Warriors defense.

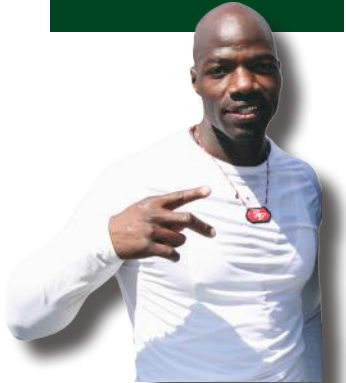
But, then came the dramatic uprising by the Kings' point guard, Tare "Cancun" Beltranchuc, and power forward Stan "LS" Tillman. The two started coordinating give and go plays and set up picks that allowed Tillman to start raining three-point shots from the field.

"It all came down to the I.Q. we have. When I play against the youngsters, it brings out my best game. I apply the game I have to overcome their speed," said Beltranchuc, referring to the younger team of the Warriors.

The Warriors held a comfortable lead over the Kings by eight points. Next shot made by them would win the game. But the speed and skilled dribbles of Beltranchuc, combined with the dime pass to "LS" Tillman for two long range three-pointers, gave the Kings the win over the Warriors and a team celebration.

—Timothy Hicks

TIER TALK



Before Montreal "MD" Vines made parole in the beginning of the year, I had the opportunity to have a chat with him about his dedication to basketball and change. He has been on the San Quentin Warriors for a decade, with many seasons developing his skills on the court and personal growth in prison life that earned him the right to become a prime example for those who are looking to overcome similar issues as he did.

Timothy Hicks: What's going on with you? I'm glad I

Q&A with Montreal 'MD' Vines

On his way out the door, SQ Warriors veteran shares his thoughts on dedication and self-growth

was blessed to catch up with you before you left.

Montreal Vines: Yeah, it's good. What's up with the people?

TH: All good. I just wanted to celebrate you on your contributions to the basketball program here at the prison. You did a lot. What position you play?

MV: I play for the Warriors here. I'm a shooting guard.

TH: How long you been playing?

MV: I been playing for 10 years. I love what I do.

TH: I been seeing you on and off the court. You are a real one. What make you love the game of basketball and when did you first realize it here?

MV: I remember when the Golden State Warriors came up here. I saw Mark Jackson. I saw the other Warriors and I got to play against them. That

was big to me. I loved the game ever since.

TH: I talked to the head coach, Jeremiah Brown, and he had some good things to say about you. Things like how you are not just a good basketball player, you also are good at mentoring the youth. He spoke real highly about you. How do you feel about that?

MV: That feels good just to hear that. Yeah, I just be myself and the youngsters gravitate towards me. I reflect back on times when I was young once. So I can relate to them. I just teach them the good things to do instead of the negative ways.

TH: That's wassup. I also recall them retiring your #10 jersey. They threw a big celebration for you about that. How did that make you feel?

MV: That felt good. It felt good to know that I had that

much love from them.

TH: Yeah, that's huge. You must have left an impression on them that much. Knowing that you are about to leave soon all this must be weighing a toll on you?

MV: It's a lot to take in after all these years. Then to wake up and it's over. It's a blessing to be leaving though.

TH: Yes it is. Now that you are leaving, what's your plans? Do you plan on continuing to play ball on the outside?

MV: Yep, a few of the guy's that were here has since paroled and they are having talks of starting up a league out there. I will look into that. But I still will keep in touch and contribute to the program in here some kind of way.

TH: That's wassup. I wish you all the best out there. Good luck out there brother.

—Timothy Hicks

CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Jonathan Chiu

Edited by Jan Perry

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Across

1. 'Yes' in nautical terms
4. World Bank affiliate promoting private sector growth (abbr)
7. Kitchen measurement smaller than TBSP
10. National TV network featuring *Abbott Elementary* (abbr)
13. Biblical nephew of Abraham
14. Pro-gun lobbying group
15. Coalition for psychiatrists in the US (abbr)
16. Measurement of vehicular velocity (abbr)
17. God's most beautiful angel
19. Huntsman's cry
21. 1600 hrs. routine
23. Nonsense (informl)
26. *The Martian* actor Matt ____
27. Immoral habits
31. *Footloose* actor Kevin ____
33. Giorgio Armani cologne: *Aqua di* ____
34. Six in a million (pl)
35. Lengthy, abusive criticism
37. To haul or carry
39. *Negative*, *Ghost rider*
40. Nerdy kids' least favorite class
41. Trash receptacle
45. First name of the Governor
49. *Ocean's Eleven* actor ____ Affleck
50. Industrical city in E Netherlands
52. Deep feeling of sorrow or loss
54. Thailand's largest ethnic group
55. To spin around
57. Beloved
58. Prison bus; also, vodka brand
61. Limited visibility (prison slang)
64. Whiskey distilled mainly from corn mash, with rye and malt
68. Spanish exclamation of approval, esp. in bullfighting
69. Searching airport agency (abbr)
70. Mr. Tina Turner
71. System for classifying blood types
72. Imitation of the sound of a hard hit
73. Informal literary contraction of 'ever'
74. Programming language used to add style to a web page
75. The dot character in Morse code

Down

1. The entirety
2. Yourself
3. Yadda-yadda-yadda (abbr)
4. Facts and figures (informal)
5. Father of modern psychology
6. Spiderman villain
7. Kat Von D's preferred medium (pl)
8. Rafael Nadal's motherland
9. Tropical evergreen with feathered leaves
10. *Trainwreck* actress ____ Shumer
11. The gatekeeper of freedom for CA lifers (abbr)
12. Asian comedian Margaret ____
18. The blood of Greek gods
20. Even and smooth
22. An over-share (informal)
23. Tiny gun using compressed air and round lead pellets
24. Fruit of a grain cereal plant
25. Futuristic or technical genre: ____-Fi (abbr)
28. Anger
29. Police officer (slang)
30. Chemical symbol for element named for Albert Einstein
32. Fictional children's detective: ____ Drew
34. Capital of China's Henan province: ____zhou
36. Death pronouncement (abbr)
38. Artificial respiration (abbr)
41. Exclamation of satisfaction
42. Fed'l insurance agency for retirees
43. *Grey's Anatomy* actress Katherine ____
44. January 1st (2wds)
45. Cardiovascular exercise
46. Sequential arrangement
47. Dishonest statement
48. Fed'l narcotics bureau
49. X-rays using computerized tomography
51. To make a hole
53. Chemical symbol for element named for France (abbr)
55. Taut
56. What a vacuous person gets by on
59. Religious ceremony or sacrament
60. What an ambulance chaser does
61. Device for unlocking car remotely
62. Forming commercial names (suffix)
63. Precious stone or crystal
65. Decidedly no-good
66. Jedi knight: ____-Wan Kenobi
67. In no way; to no degree

BOOK REVIEW

BAD BOYS, BAD MEN

Confronting Antisocial Personality Disorder (Sociopathy)

By Donald W. Black, MD

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

Bad Boys, Bad Men by Dr. Donald Black explains how childhood traumatic experiences can cause antisocial behavior that leads to destructive choices as an adult, which can inflict lasting damage.

One of the book's many characters is Ernie. Dr. Black begins Ernie's story with his adoption by John and Dorothy Walker as a young child. He describes how Ernie was a charming and intelligent boy with a great smile. The Walkers provided him with the essential elements of a good home, but his adoptive mother beat him for violations of her strict rules.

As he grew, Ernie began to emerge as a troubled youth. He got into fights with his peers, was caught shoplifting, and was eventually expelled from school. He began to spend time in juvenile detention services where he slashed another boy with a razor while confined in a reformatory. In connection with this incident, Dr. Black wrote that Ernie "was proud of how he manipulated the reformatory's staff."

Dr. Black describes antisocial behavior as a form of rebellion against society, a refusal to accept the obligations that tie individuals in a society to one another. A young person engaging in antisocial behaviors may go on to lead a life of crime if such tendencies go unaddressed, Dr. Black explains.

Ernie's story caught my interest because his childhood affected his adult life, to which I could relate. His troubled childhood escalated into spending 17 years in prison — armed robbery, receiving stolen goods, burglary, and attempted murder appeared on his record with more than 20 arrests.

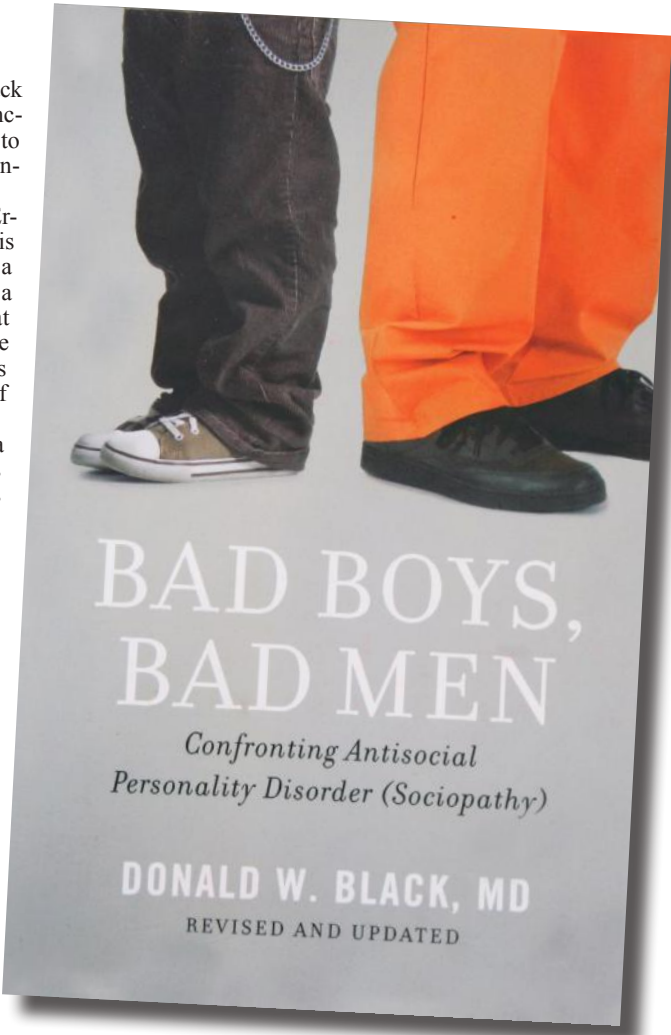
The narrative of Ernie's story sounded too close to home for me, and I identified with the trauma experienced. The book reminded me that my choices during my own troubled childhood contributed to my destructive choices as an adult. Like Ernie, the abusive decisions I made as an adult led me to have problems with law enforcement, and led me to prison.

Dr. Black writes that those who suffer from an antisocial behavior and other related disorders do not seem to understand or care about the difference between good and bad on an intellectual or emotional level.

Reading this book gave me greater understanding of myself, a greater understanding about my own destructive choices in my past. There was no one in my life who knew how to nurture an inner-city youth like me who had been exposed to too much trauma.

The book attributes bad parenting, defective genes, and childhood abuse as causative factors in antisocial personality disorders. According to the author, signs of antisocial disorder include aggression towards people, destruction of property, deceitfulness, and theft. These are signs that I knew all too well.

I never knew the exact nature of what antisocial behavior was until I read this book. The explanation Dr. Black gives is thorough and to the point. He notes that women suffer less from such disorders because they are more likely to express their emotions compared to



men. Dr. Black's point resonated with me because the young men of my era did not show their emotions and this carried on into my adult life.

Dr. Black says people are fascinated with antisocial behavior because people have an interest in wickedness, such as is all too often in the news from the likes of Saddam Hussein to Jeffery Dahmer. The book also entails Mike Tyson's antisocial behaviors that provided tabloid fodder for years. This made me wonder: Does our fascination with antisocial behaviors and disorders help or hurt our society's ability to facilitate healthy childhood development?

This book contains numerous stories and scientific explanations that illuminate the exact nature of antisocial behaviors and related disorders. Most incarcerated people have been antisocial at one time or another — this is how many of us ended up in prison after all.

Yet as we cross the threshold of rehabilitation and self-realization by discovering new revelations about our past and current behavior, we are also better able to understand other people who suffer from the same challenges.

After reading *Bad Boys, Bad Men* I can attest that the saying, "each one, teach one" is true because Ernie's story has taught me new revelations about myself, and maybe it can for you as well.

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Q&A WITH IMAM MUHAMMAD

Pearls of wisdom for Ramadan

By Dante D. Jones
Staff Writer

The holy month of Ramadan has arrived. A 30-day Islamic fasting ritual that is observed by more than a billion people worldwide from the end of March to the end of April, Ramadan is one the five pillars of the faith.

SQNews spoke with San Quentin Muslim Chaplin Imam Muhammad Fasih about the importance of this time of year.

SQNews: For the men and women across the state, what does Ramadan mean to you and what should it mean to them?

Imam: Ramadan is something that is a personal experience between you and Allah. Allah is the only one that knows how you feel when you're hungry and how you feel when you are thirsty, so therefore this is personal relationship between you and Allah.

SQNews: How should Muslim (or non-Muslim) who are observing Ramadan conduct themselves in this holy month?

Imam: Try not to argue when faced with conflict. When you face a difficult situation,

observe patience and when given a blessing, be grateful.

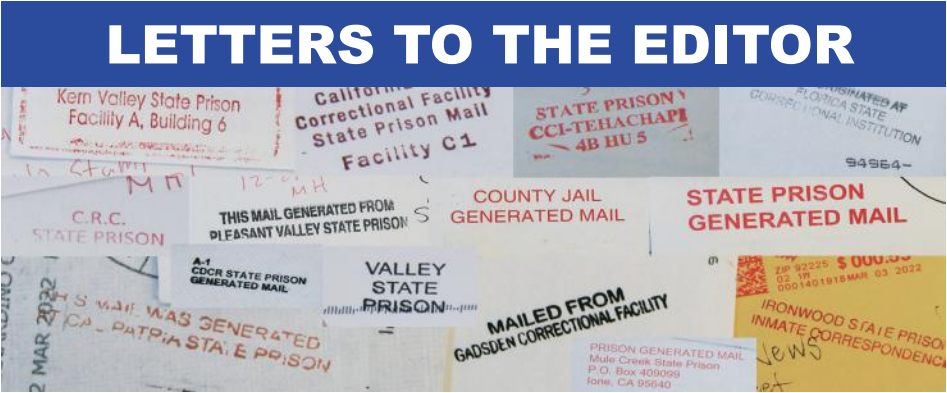
Another thing about Ramadan is that while we are fasting we get to feel a little bit of what it means to feel the hunger of people who are homeless or those who may be dying of hunger. So, because we know where our next meal is coming from we must be grateful and give all praise to Allah.

SQNews: What pearls of wisdom would you like to leave with the men and women to keep them focused on Allah in this holy month, and throughout the year?

Imam: This is truly a month of mercy. Be merciful to yourself and be merciful to others. After Ramadan is over we need to spread the mercy of Ramadan throughout the year. Lastly, be thankful to Allah that we get to breathe another day and that we are alive. Only Allah knows what is really in our hearts and minds, so let us be mindful that we must strive to walk a path of righteousness and continue to prepare ourselves for paradise (God willing).

SQNews: Thank you, Imam. Ramadan Mubarak.

Imam: Ramadan Kareem.



KUDOS FROM
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Dear SQNews:
I appreciate and enjoy receiving the SQNews the past year and look forward to receiving it again.
Sincerely,
— Carole C. Cool
Berkeley, Calif.

NORTH KERN READER
SALUTES SQNEWS

Dear SQNews:
Salutations. My name is Rene Franco and I am currently at North Kern State Prison.
I came across a *San Quentin News* and read a lot of your articles. I like what you do for incarcerated persons. Your newspaper has a lot of insight which I liked.
Much Obligated,
— Rene Franco
CSP North Kern
Delano, Calif.

LIFERS SADDENED
BY PENDING CLOSURE
OF CALIFORNIA
MEN’S COLONY

Dear SQNews:
The majority of inmates here are greatly saddened by the proposed closure of the California Men’s Colony, West Facility. Many lifers spent a lot of years trying to get here and they are now faced with being thrown back into the “system” that they thought they had escaped from. I am not a lifer, but I recognize their distress and embrace their cause as if I too were a lifer.
The California Men’s Colony West facility of CDCR is considered by many to be its crown jewel.
Instead of grey walls and structures, there are colorful flowers and vegetable gar-

dens throughout. Inmates hand-feed wild turkeys, raccoons, squirrels and feral cats, and many various species of birds.
Dogs being trained to assist veterans and first responders with PTSD add to the animal population.
CMC West is supported by diverse religious denominations, services and programs.
California is generally considered to be a progressive state on the cutting edge of many new approaches to old issues with the exception of mass incarceration and poor rehabilitation.
CMC West should be a proving ground for new rehabilitation programs for other correctional systems rather than being closed.
— Dennis M. Daly
California Men’s Colony
San Luis Obispo, Calif.

FORMER SQ
RESIDENT PRAISES
CONTINUITY OF
SAN QUENTIN NEWS

Dear SQNews:
If it weren’t for your paper and your program, I’d be so unaware of what goes on in the prison or what opportunities I have as an inmate at North Kern State Prison.
This is my second term and I did time in San Quentin my last term. I remember how much I loved getting a copy of the paper when it rolled out.
Thank you for 83 years of journalism and inspiration!
— Reginald Tave
CSP North Kern
Delano, Calif.

CORCORAN COMIC
ARTIST HEADING TO
SAN QUENTIN?

Dear SQNews:
It’s an honor to have my comics published in *San Quentin News*.

I am sending you four more comics with this letter, and I sent a few in January as well.
I went to committee and asked for transfer to SQ.
I am now awaiting endorsement to SQ. It is up to the CSR. Can SQ staff pull me there?
I meet all requirements: I am a level 2. I can climb stairs and I am vaccinated. I am drug free, non-violent, and have served 21 years thus far.
I would love to work for SQNews. and to do the Journalism Guild class to learn. I also want to join KidCat, Humans of San Quentin, and Brothers Keepers.
I am currently a contributing writer for *Prison Journalism Project* and have been published. I also work as Senior Inside Organizer with Initiate Justice, inside organizer for F.U.E.L. (as a lifer, not an LWOP), organizing CSP-Corcoran’s Youth Anthology, contributor to the Compassion Prison Project, and I just petitioned for my associate degree.
They have 30 days to transfer me from 2/23/23. So I should be endorsed around March 13-17. I hope the transfers CSR sends me there.
Sincerely,
— Jessie Milo
CSP Corcoran
Corcoran, Calif.

Hey Jessie! Thanks for dropping us a line, and for all of the creativity you put into your craft. We’ve been honored to print your comics and bring a little humor to our readers.
Believe it or not, you’re not the first person to pick up the *San Quentin News* and be inspired to transfer here. Our coverage of rehabilitative opportunities is meant to inspire readers to seek change and personal betterment, and we’re always glad to hear that these stories are having an impact.
If and when you make it to *The Q*, drop by the newsroom!
— Ed.

EDITORIAL

Changing of the guard

A message from your new Editor-in-Chief

By Steve Brooks
Editor-In-Chief

As we embark on a momentous new era of transformation at San Quentin State Prison, I am proud to report a changing of the guard at the *San Quentin News*. I have decided to accept the role offered to me as Editor-in-Chief of this historic newspaper.

It was not without deep and deliberate contemplation that I accepted this challenge. I made sure that I was willing to dedicate myself to continuing the legacy of this award-winning publication. I made sure I had the support of the SQNews team, both the incarcerated staff and our volunteer advisers. I hope that I also have your support as readers of the *San Quentin News*.

I consider it a great responsibility to serve as a voice for those in cells without a voice. I take seriously the duty to influence the narrative around incarceration so that people in the outside world see all of us as human beings. With that in mind, I will work to ensure that you continue to receive quality news and information from a diverse group of writers who understand the needs of the incarcerated population.

Over the last 16 months, I have enjoyed each role I have played in serving this community. I was a proud staff writer, Journalism Guild Chair, *Wall City Magazine* manager, and I am proud to be the lead anchor on both our *Criminal Justice News* broadcast and *The Pulse*. Each of these roles

has helped prepare me to serve my future community when I am finally free to return to the larger society. And they have been opportunities to make amends for my past crimes in new ways.

I give a lot of time and energy to further the goals of this organization because I believe in its power to promote transformation. The *San Quentin News* changes lives, and in doing so it increases and enhances public safety. We do this by showing incarcerated people what transformative programs are available and what is possible if they apply themselves. We strive to inspire incarcerated people to journey down a road to rehabilitation.

I know my new role comes with great responsibility to incarcerated people across the state and the country who love this publication. I inherit a legacy from, and owe a debt of gratitude to, all those who have come before me over the last 83 years to make this newspaper what it is today. Among those are the Editors-in-Chief of the more recent history of the *San Quentin News*: Michael Harris, Arnulfo T. Garcia, Richard “Bonaru” Richardson, Jesse Vasquez, and Marcus Henderson.

I believe that change is good. As the change in leadership of the *San Quentin News* intersects with the pending transformation of San Quentin prison to a rehabilitation center, I perceive an opportunity to continue transforming; becoming a better and better newspaper and a better and better person.

EDITORIAL

Honor, service & restorative justice

Marcus Henderson moves to executive editor

By Marcus Henderson
Executive Editor

I am honored to move into my new role as the Executive Editor of SQNews. It has been a privilege serving as SQNews Editor-in-Chief for the past four years. This transition allows me to focus on the newspaper’s administrative needs and our growing projects that aim to enhance our future. It’s been a blessing to have learned under great leadership

from past executive editors and editors-in-chief. They instilled in me my passion for restorative justice and changing the narrative of what it means to be incarcerated. I will continue to bring those skills into my new role: being a voice for the voiceless.

As SQNews moves into a new era, I truly believe and have faith in our new team leaders to continue the traditions and standards that have made SQNews what it is.

UnCommon Sense

Submitted by Jessie Milo
CSP-Corcoran

ART



Hector Cadena's portrayal of Selena Quintanilla (above) honors the celebrated singer's memory and her role as the Queen of Tex Mex. His other artwork includes *Por Tu Maldito Amor* (far right), inspired by a song by Mexican charro singer Vicente Fernandez.



Commemorating a Tex Mex queen

Hector Cadena honors the late, great Selena Quintanilla

By Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chairman

In April, a San Quentin artist dedicated his art to the late Latin Tex-Mex queen Selena Quintanilla, an icon in the Hispanic community.

"I love drawing. It is a passion for me; besides, it keeps me out of trouble," said Hector Cadena. "I use my talent as a tool to escape from the reality of all the negative stuff that goes on inside prison."

When the artist is in a creative mood, he places himself in the moment. For example, if he is drawing a car, he imagines himself driving away from prison.

To commemorate the anniversary of Quintanilla's passing, Cadena worked for several days sketching her beauty with one goal in mind: to honor her.

"Every time that I hear one of Selena's songs, such as "Como la Flor" (Like a flower), it inspires

me to keep going in life," said Cadena.

Quintanilla's song likens life to a flower that blossoms before dying out. In contrast, the singer's legacy continues to flourish nearly three decades after her tragic death.

Cadena's artistic talents are varied. He carved a miniature Bible out of a state-issued soap bar. He used coffee to stain the sculpture. This lends realism to the small holy book, making it appear old and worn. Cadena's favorite scripture is *Psalm 23*, an anthem for many incarcerated Christian men.

One of the artist's pieces seen on this page, "Por Tu Maldito Amor," (For Your Hateful Love),

is a reflection of a recent chapter in his life. It is named after a choral song by the late, famous Mexican charro singer Vicente "Sigo Siendo el Rey" (I continue to be the king) Fernandez.

Through this creation, the heartbroken artist found healing from a past disappointment that arose from a toxic relationship. A close look reveals small details that include meticulous broken hearts, prison bolt wires, and what he considered the kiss of death from someone he loved dearly.

As a passionate artist who pours out his heart to the world, Cadena's art expresses a lifelong yearning for love, but "One must know how to love oneself first," he said.



One of SQ's newest artists honors lives lost to COVID

"I am a person who wants to bring happiness to all, by placing a smile on people's face, a shimmering of hope," said Shelley Small, a new San Quentin arrival. The artist considers himself a person with multiple talents, who is a caring and giving person.

One of his goals is to bring out the hidden talents that others' might have. Showing his talent is another form of teaching others: they, too, can be creative in a restrained environment such as prison.

Small shared that the majority of his art comes from pain. Due to his upbringing, as

a child he was not able to express himself, so he created art at an early age. "I sketch a lot, I took out all my frustration on drawings," he said.

The artist has many talents. He is a caring friend and a help to others. His art promotes peace during quarantine conditions.

Small's style varies and he never titles his art. When asked about his three favorites, he replied, "I feel that we have not been accepted in society. I spent all my life behind these bars since the age of 12. I only spent one year out there and now, I am 48 years old."

A favorite piece shows four men and four women in blue. One of them reflects a beacon of light. In another painting, a red and blue flag waves behind prison bars, with a masked person inside a cell, as Americans outside look into the prison, surrounded by clouds that look like smoking tombstones.

The tombstones bear no names, representing the people who died from COVID throughout the world. The vision promotes closure, a knowledge that loved ones lost are in Heaven. The painting is aimed at those outside prisons and at incarcerated persons

throughout the world.

When Small was housed at Jamestown, the Williams James Association, through Arts and Corrections, encouraged him to make postcards from his art, which he has done with this particular piece.

"I have PTSD; art helps me challenge my thoughts, it helps me put things in a different perspective," said Small. "Though things may seem ugly to me, it brings out the world's beauty, changes my mood, thinking, attitude, it heals wounds."

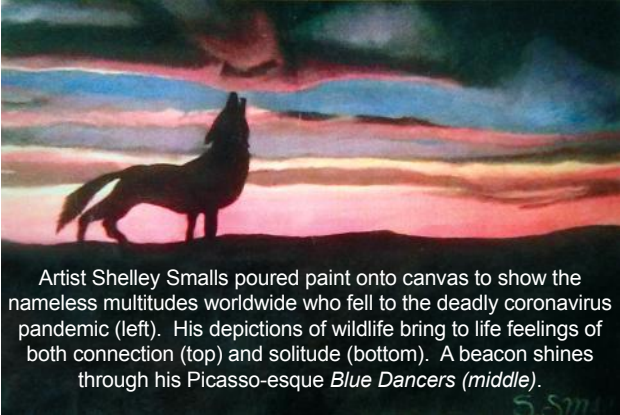
Having natural gifts, Small has brought his talent alive with a painting of two elephants in the wild. The entangled beasts are in the fight of their lives. He also has a beautiful piece of a wolf in the midst of a horizon at sunset.

According to Small, most of his paintings have a hidden signature, a sketching of two small roses. "These two roses were for my mother and grandmother who passed away, the roses that I was not able to give them," said Small. "You will find roses in some of my other paintings, signifying someone that I loved."

To some incarcerated men, art is a universal language that connects emotions and inner selves to heal unspoken pain.

This painting depicts all the pain and emotions throughout the day that follow him until the sun goes down along with the unsettled feelings of loneliness.

—Edwin E. Chavez



Artist Shelley Smalls poured paint onto canvas to show the nameless multitudes worldwide who fell to the deadly coronavirus pandemic (left). His depictions of wildlife bring to life feelings of both connection (top) and solitude (bottom). A beacon shines through his Picasso-esque *Blue Dancers* (middle).