

— A DAY OF HEALING —

# SAN QUENTIN HONORS VICTIMS

## Yard event brings victims' rights organizations together with the incarcerated

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

Nearly 200 San Quentin residents gathered on the Lower Yard to honor victims and survivors on the last day of Victim Awareness Week.

The event opened with SQ's religious leaders praying for togetherness and healing.

Survivors joined the incarcerated in a "silent walk" around the Yard holding up signs and banners displaying the words "Accountability," "No More Tears," "Stop the Violence," "Responsibility," and "No More Harm."

"We want to create that space for everybody to learn and reflect and bring community together," said former SQNews Managing Editor Miguel Quezada, a cofounder of Mend Collaborative.

Other organizations at the event included Californians for Safety and Justice, Broken by Violence, and No More Tears, all of which focus on restorative justice and healing opportunities for victims and survivors of crimes.

Rebecca Weiker is the co-director and a cofounder of Mend Collaborative. She thanked both survivors and offenders for coming out and said, "We are grateful to be together to walk and to honor the people who are



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

In late April, San Quentin prisoners came together with formerly incarcerated and advocates for crime victims and survivors to commemorate Victims Awareness Week. Attendees included Mend Collaborative co-founder Miguel Quezada and Tinisch Hollins, champion of victims' rights and executive director of Californians for Safety and Justice.

no longer here, whose memory we are honoring today. The way to heal is by connecting."

San Quentin's Chief Deputy Warden (A) Landon Bravo commented on the importance of this day as a time "to give back to the society out

there that's been impacted by crimes that occurred, and we want to make sure that we recognize them, honor them, and reflect." Bravo asked that we show respect and consider the impact our choices have on society as a whole.

Many survivors took the stage to share their stories and the ways violence affected their lives.

Tinisch Hollins, executive director of Californians for Safety and Justice, said that her attendance reflected her wholehearted belief that healing is the

way to keep communities safe and repair the harm that's been done.

"Even if you're not interacting with the person who harmed you or harmed your family member, [it matters] just knowing that there are people in our communities, even in this place, who are doing the work to understand the harm that they experienced or the harm that they caused. We need you, our fathers and brothers. Everything you do here matters and I want to remind you that you have connections on the outside that need you," said Hollins.

Ebony Antoine, executive director and founder of Broken by Violence, said that we should be "focused on healing because hurt people hurt people and healing can happen here in prison ... at home ... anywhere." Antoine and her children witnessed her husband's murder in 2010.

"I am here because I am a survivor. If we focus on healing, we can leave the world a better place," she said.

One SQ resident talked about the understanding that he received by hearing from the survivors. "It was a good thing that people came here ... to understand us. I learned that I need to heal and not be so angry," said Vic-

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## DEATH ROW TRANSFERS FACE MIXED REACTIONS

By Steve Brooks  
Editor-In-Chief

Two clocks, three telephones, and a light green death chamber will soon be a memory as California moves to complete the dismantling of its Death Row.

Attention has turned to transferring the remaining 465 people on Condemned Row to facilities other than San Quentin, since Gov. Gavin Newsom has announced that the historic prison will become a rehabilitation center.

"I feel great that Death Row will be no more, especially now that the world can see how racially motivated it is," Condemned Row prisoner Darren Stanley wrote in a letter to SQNews. "To be taken and placed in a general population setting is a greater opportunity to provide as well as receive the energies of humanity."

Stanley goes by the name "Knowledge Born God Allah" in connection to his culture. For him Death Row is a troubling place. "There is a foul energy here and some people have took this energy as life when in fact it's death," he said.

Bob R. Williams Jr. has a different take on Death Row. "I got here when I was 20 years old. This place is pretty much all I know because I have nev-

er been anywhere else. Death Row is where I grew up, where I became a man," Williams wrote for the Prison Journalism Project in 2022.

For some crime victims, the closure of the Row is not welcome news. Someone on Death Row abducted and murdered Sandra Friend's 8-year-old son.

"To hear this news is devastating," Friend told NPR news.

Some incarcerated people are also apprehensive. "I have concerns with a serial killer merging with general population if that person has not changed," said Rahan Asaan. "I do understand though it is an advantage for those who may be innocent of their crimes."

William Harris lives in H-Unit. "I am not a fan of being around people who don't care about my life. But part of me also says that some of these guys are different and deserve an opportunity to thrive."

Patrick Demery, another incarcerated person, put it bluntly. "If somebody from Death Row comes to my cell talking about moving in with me, I am giving them the cell. For someone like me it is a threat to live with someone who has nothing to lose."

One name for San Quentin is Bas-

See DEATH ROW on Page 4

## ASL: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

### Prisoner-led sign language course gets go-ahead

By Juan Haines  
Senior Editor

After submitting six proposals over seven years, Tommy Wickerd is teaching a sign language class in the most unlikely place — his prison of residence.

Motivated by his relationship with his Deaf brother, Wickerd has sought to bridge communications between hearing and non-hearing people during two decades of incarceration.

The first American Sign Language (ASL) class at San Quentin, taught with Wickerd's own curriculum, began in mid-February with about 45 incarcerated students.

"Having an American Sign Language class at San Quentin is important for many reasons," Dr. Worthington, Vice Principal of San Quentin's Education Department, said. "It can break language barriers and provide access to communication." Beyond that, "it allows hearing and non-hearing people to give help to each other as well as receive help, making winners on both sides of rehabilitation," she added.

John Gutierrez, 36, has been incarcerated for about five years, the last two at San Quentin. His job as



Dante D. Jones // SQNews

Tommy Wickerd (left) provides instruction to Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and unimpaired residents during a Saturday afternoon Sign Language class.

signment is to assist fellow residents with disabilities. He wears a gold smock bearing an Americans with Disabilities Act label, to show that he is an ADA incarcerated worker.

"When I got here, I noticed that there was a Deaf community [in my housing unit] and I didn't know how to communicate with them," Gut-

ierrez said, especially since the men in his unit don't always carry notebooks for written communication and "hearing aids give some of the guys headaches, so they don't wear them all the time."

Gutierrez imagined that not being

See ASL on Page 4

## CINCO DEMAYO

### A history of Mexico's iconic celebration

By Manuel Dorado  
Journalism Guild Writer

To many Americans, Cinco de Mayo is mostly an excuse to drink imported beer, take shots of tequila, and feast on Mexican food. Ask around and many people will think it is Mexico's version of America's Fourth of July.

Critics contend that this tends to perpetuate negative stereotypes of

Mexicans and promotes excessive drinking, while missing the important history that Cinco de Mayo represents.

The truth is that Cinco de Mayo actually commemorates a specific battle that marked the beginning of the last invasion of Mexico by a foreign power — the Battle of Puebla de Los Angeles on May 5, 1862. In addition, Mexico actually became a sovereign nation over 50 years ear-

lier and celebrates its Independence Day holiday in September.

The frustration of Mexican citizens at this ignorance is captured by Felipe Garcia, 46, a former resident of San Quentin who said that he "hates it when people think Cinco de Mayo is the Mexican Independence Day. They have no idea that our Independence Day is Sep-

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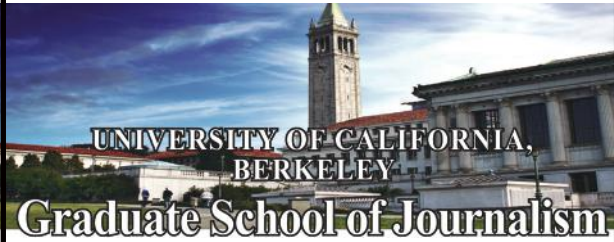
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PROFILE

— H I D D E N   H E R O —

# WHO IS SCOT CALDWELL?

*Our patron saint of printing continues to support SQNews in retirement*

By Charles Crowe  
Senior Editor

The *San Quentin News* would not exist without the support of donors, advisers, advocates and others who champion and contribute to the newspaper's cause in various ways.

A critical supporter is Scot Caldwell, the owner of Marin Sun Printing. Caldwell facilitates the printing of 35,000 copies of the paper each month and 3,000 copies of *Wall City*, the newspaper's magazine. Without him, the cost of printing the publications would be much higher and perhaps not possible at all.

Caldwell got his start in the printing business as an after-school job in 1969, inserting newspapers and cleaning the shop. Later he would get formal training in the trade from a union printing school.

His connection to the *San Quentin News* grew out of his relationship with the newspaper's longtime adviser, Steve McNamara.

McNamara once owned Marin Sun Printing and employed Caldwell. When he sold the business to a new owner, Caldwell continued working as its lead pressman.

In 2001, Caldwell purchased the printing press and became Marin Sun's proprietor.

Meanwhile, until 2010, the *San Quentin News* was using an ancient, sheet-fed Heidelberg letterpress that was located in the prison's Prison Industry Authority. There they produced about 5,000 copies of the newspaper for *San Quentin* residents.

But the prison print shop closed in 2010 under pressure from state budget cuts. The newspaper had to find printing services outside the walls.

To meet the need, McNamara asked Caldwell to print 7,500 copies of the news-



Courtesy Scot Caldwell

Scot Caldwell stands proudly in front of a Marin Sun Printing press in 2018 (above). Caldwell's support of *San Quentin News* allowed the monthly newspaper to flourish after the closing of *San Quentin's* print shop. Caldwell, now retired, continues to coordinate the printing and distribution of *San Quentin News* and *Wall City* magazine through third-party printers at cost (inset).

paper each month. Caldwell not only agreed to provide the service, but graciously agreed to do so at an affordable cost.

Later, Caldwell joined forces with the Healdsburg Printing Company and moved his equipment to their building.

When the Healdsburg operation closed down a couple of years ago, Caldwell arranged for the services of two print operations, Folgers and San Francisco Offset, to facilitate printing of the *San Quentin News* and *Wall City* magazine. That arrangement

continues to this day.

When asked why he has supported *SQNews* faithfully for so long, Caldwell answered, "I think it is good to help get the paper out; everybody I've given a paper thinks it's great."

McNamara told *SQNews* that the Bay Area was once a major printing center where numerous presses were in operation providing soup-can labels for valley producers. But the soup label printing industry has gradually died off and nearly all of those printing

presses are gone. *SQNews* asked Caldwell if he thinks printing presses will become obsolete, making it impossible for the newspaper to exist in its current form. "I think papers will be around forever," he said. "People still like reading something in their hands."

Beyond the printing, Caldwell facilitates delivery of all 35,000 copies of the paper each month. About 5,000 go to *San Quentin*, where the newspaper's staff delivers them cell-by-cell to *SQ's* incarcerated residents.

The printer mails most of the remaining 30,000 copies to all of California's state prisons, several county jails and youth facilities, legislators, libraries, universities, friends, supporters, donors and incarcerated people across the nation.

While the newspaper continues in its printed form, *SQNews* has added an online presence on various platforms.

Caldwell is humble about his long record of service to the newspaper and its readers. "Just trying to get the word out," he says.

## Former youth offender earns his freedom

By Dante D. Jones  
Staff Writer

*San Quentin* resident Philippe "Kellz" Kelly, 39, walked through the prison's front gates with his newly granted freedom on February 8.

Kelly, a youth offender from Los Angeles, served 23 years behind the wall. In December 2018 he received a commutation from then Gov. Jerry Brown, and after three tries at the Board of Parole Hearings, he was finally granted his parole.

"I was shocked. Happy. Excited. I had a new sense of possibility, like I just may be able to get out of here and live a life on the street," said Kelly about receiving a date.

Kelly's journey through the prison system is one of strife and triumph.

He was given up as a young child by his mother to his aunt. Throughout his life, Kelly says he always felt a lack of acceptance and love.

"I couldn't understand why my mother didn't want me," Kelly said.

This internal conflict led him to the streets, searching for a sense of belonging. That search led him into a life of crime.

Kelly's experiences in prisons such as High Desert and Old Folsom were challenging. However, during his time at

Centinela he was forced to "learn how to jail."

"The dudes on that yard was about no-nonsense because anything could get you killed," he said.

It was there where he began to understand the seriousness of his situation and how to discipline himself.

Kelly said he learned quickly how to not put himself in situations that would get him caught up.

Although Kelly learned to navigate the land mines of a prison yard, his rehabilitative efforts at that point were non-existent.

Being sentenced to life for the murder of Tony Cox, Kelly believed that prison was where he would die.

"When I found out that the point system [which determines an incarcerated person's security level] was about to change, I started making a plan to escape," he said.

Kelly said he stayed discipline-free long enough to be transferred to California Men's Colony-West (the Colony) — a level-two yard. Since he thought that he was never going to get out, Kelly thought that the Colony would be his chance to make his plan of escape a reality.

However, a major turning point took place in his life that changed Kelly's thought process.

"In a victim's impact group



Archive Photo

Philippe Kelly strikes a pose on graduation day after receiving his certificate from the Guiding Rage Into Power program.

a Hispanic lady told a story about how her son was murdered ... She was crying ... and it made me think of Mr. Cox's family. I realized in that moment that this is the way I made them feel when I murdered Tony," said Kelly.

He became a peer mentor. Kelly started making progress with his rehabilitative efforts and later wrote a letter to Heather Hart, who was the program coordinator for the Prison University Project, asking her to help him transfer to *San Quentin*.

Once Kelly transferred, he joined groups like Addiction Recovery Center Counseling, SQUIRES (youth diver-

sion program), Criminal and Gangs Anonymous, and Computer Literacy, during which his perspective on getting out began to change.

Shortly before his release, Kelly graduated from The Last Mile: Audio Engineering program.

"It has given me a chance to improve my skills and [gain] hope that I will succeed once I ... [go home]. It's a great program and I encourage everyone to sign up," Kelly said.

Kelly said he has numerous people to thank for his success, rehabilitation, and freedom.

"But, if I would pick one I would have to give all props to Lilliana Paratore [of Uncommon Law]," he said. "She pushed me to see my life issues on a deeper level ..."

Kelly was asked what message he would give to the brothers he's leaving behind.

"So, I would say that I'm not leaving brothers behind. It's more like see you later. And my message would be: if you want to get out of here you have to do the work ... Do not give up," he said.

He encourages incarcerated people to just "keep programming ... because there's so much available to us. And lastly, get into anything that you can use as a trade that can get you paid."

Kelly continues to inspire his community with his story.



San Quentin News

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# Celebrating World Press Freedom Day

By Kate McQueen  
Wall City Adviser

In early 1800, when an impoverished New York attorney named William Ketelas found himself locked up in a debtor's prison, he took an unconventional approach to securing his release. He founded a newspaper.

Called *Forlorn Hope*, Ketelas's paper is widely considered the first newspaper produced behind the walls. It devoted its pages to ending the imprisonment of debtors and generally promoting prison reform. Surviving archival copies indicate that the paper ran for less than a year. But the paper's end corresponded with passing of the first federal legislation on bankruptcy, which encouraged a more liberal approach to debt forgiveness. Ketelas was a free man by September of that same year. Coincidence? In his book *Jailhouse Journalism: The Fourth Estate Behind Bars*, historian James McGrath Morris entertains the idea that it might not be.

*Forlorn Hope* may have been the first prison publication to directly influence a person's release from imprisonment. But it certainly wasn't the last. One of the most heartening side effects of a healthy prison press has been its ability to be, quite literally, a vehicle for freedom.

Two stories from two different parts of the U.S. illustrate this power. The first takes place in mid-century Iowa. In the summer of 1948, Tom Runyon joined Lloyd Eddy as the co-editor-in-chief of Iowa State Penitentiary's magazine, *Presidio*. A bank robber serving a life sentence, Runyon knew the pain of long-term confinement intimately. He wanted to use his platform to draw attention to the plight of Iowa's lifers, of which there were plenty, thanks to the use of heavy mandatory minimums.

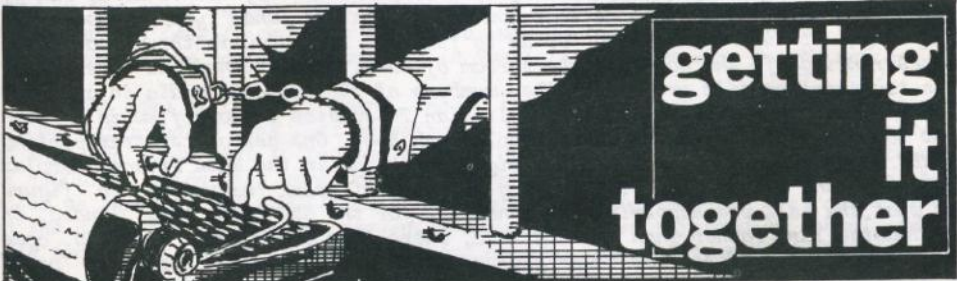
"Eddy and I hit the lifer problem time and time again, never letting up," Runyon wrote in his memoir *In For Life: A Convict's Story*. The Iowa governor seemed open to suggestion; by the end of 1948, he had commuted the sentences of fourteen men to "terms of years," making them eligible for parole.

One of Runyon's strategies was to write a column called *Leaves from a Lifer's Notebook*. The holiday column of 1949, *Christmas Behind the Eight Ball*, had particular sway. The piece told the story of Ole Lindquist, a Swedish immigrant who had been given a life sentence in 1909, at age 19, for killing a police officer during a bar fight. Then 40 years into his term, Lindquist had almost no contact with the outside world — not a single visitor and no letters in 20 years. Still, as Runyon showed in colorful detail, Lindquist maintained his dignity and remained, where it counted, much like free Iowans.

As Runyon explains in his memoir, several state newspapers reprinted the story; a radio version ensured national coverage. As a result, Lindquist received hundreds of Christmas packages and letters filled with support. And *Presidio* found many new outside subscribers. The greater message was also received; readers wrote to Gov. William S. Beardsley, and not long after, he requested that the parole board review the cases of all lifers in the state. Lindquist was paroled in 1952 and married one of his newly discovered pen pals. Runyon acquired a national platform through *Collier's* magazine, *The New York Times* and eventually his own memoir, although did not live to see his own release. He died of a heart attack in the penitentiary, in 1957.

A story with similar results appeared two decades later in *The Angolite*, a magazine produced at Louisiana State Penitentiary, colloquially known as Angola. *Conversations With the Dead*

*Prison newspaper history illustrates the power of the press to be a vehicle for freedom and change*



That's the boss laughing in the photo on this page, something she's been doing ever since Long Island University officials told her that we had won the 1980 George Polk Award for Special Interest Reporting ... laughing, probably recalling the voices of cynical skeptics who, over the years, warned: "Peggi, you let them go too far. You can't trust convicts - they'll fall on their faces and drag you down with 'em." Some maybe, perhaps even most. But she thought differently about us and consistently backed us and our endeavors in spite of the voices. Now, everything's turning up roses - and she's laughing. Can you blame her?

The Polk Awards were established by Long Island University in 1949 in memory of the CBS correspondent killed while covering the Greek Civil War. It is one of the most prestigious journalism awards in America, second only to the Pulitzer Prize and is given annually in recognition of special achievement in journalism upon the recommendation of a 126-member panel of advisors composed of media executives, heads of journalism schools, writers, and former winners of the award. This marked the first time the award has ever been given to prisoners in its entire 32-year history. And while it's not the first national press award we've won, it's definitely the biggest.



BILLY, "THE BOSS", WILBERT, & TROY (Kneeling)

Courtesy The Angolite, jstor.org

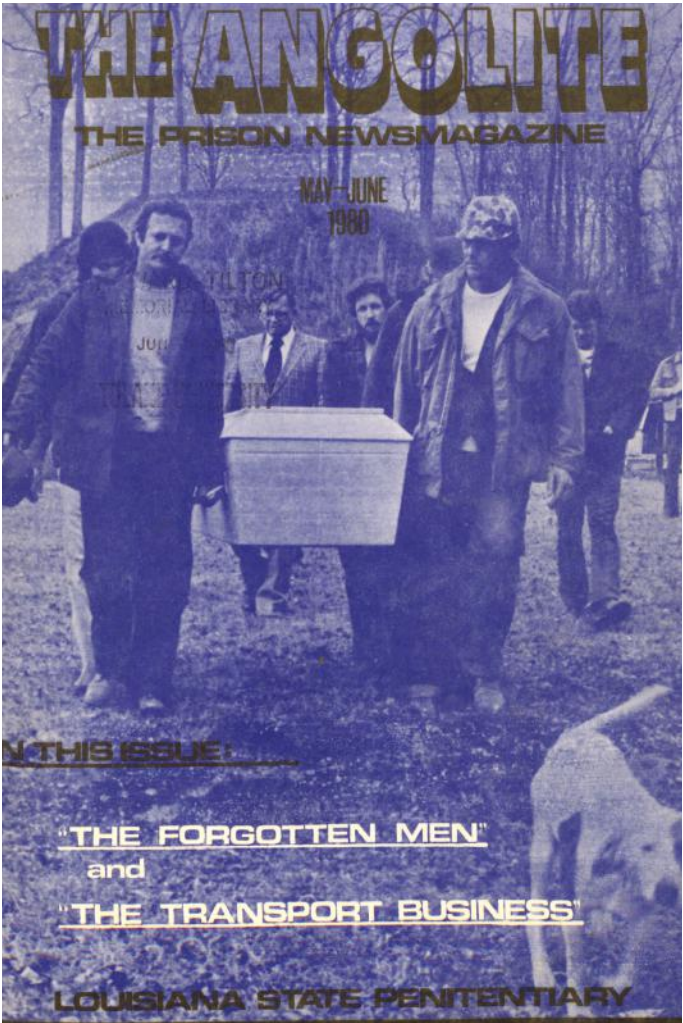
In the 1970s, editor Wilbert Rideau (above right) penned *Conversations With the Dead*, humanizing several men serving life sentences. The coverage garnered attention from outside media, eventually led to the release of six prisoners, and earned the American Bar Association's 1979 Silver Gavel Award.

was written by the magazine's longtime editor Wilbert Rideau, who, as coincidence would have it, was serving life for the same crime as Runyon. The article profiled six so-called "living dead" — men who remained at Angola over decades because they did not have the means or connections to advocate for release. One of their subjects, Frank "Cocky" Moore, holder of Louisiana's oldest active prison number, was illiterate and had no family outside to help him with the clemency process.

Rideau rendered a deeply moving portrait of these men's situation. Readers responded in kind. As with Lindquist, Moore's case was widely publicized by outside media and in 1980, Gov. Edwin Edwards commuted Moore's sentence. He was released shortly thereafter. The five other men featured in the article also gradually regained their freedom.

Rideau had to wait another 21 years to go home. In the meantime, he transformed *The Angolite* into a powerful journalistic force. For *Conversations with the Dead*, the American Bar Association gave Rideau its 1979 Silver Gavel Award for "outstanding contribution to public understanding of the American system of law and justice." It was the first time in the association's history they honored an incarcerated writer. Rideau went on to win more high-profile prizes, including the George Polk and Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards, and several National Magazine Award nominations.

Runyon and Rideau were writers of great ingenuity. But their work was only as good as the freedom their publications commanded. In his memoir, *In the Place of Justice: A Story of Pun-*



Courtesy The Angolite, jstor.org

ishment and Deliverance, Rideau describes the privileges C. Paul Phelps, Louisiana Department of Corrections deputy director in the 1970s, extended to the magazine, in hopes of improving the quality of life and work inside Angola — unrestricted access to

research material, a telephone, and even permission to leave prison grounds under guard to report. Imagine how changed the carceral system could be if today's prison press had this level of access, and this quality of good faith from audiences.





Tinisch Hollins, executive director of Californians for Safety and Justice, leads a silent march alongside survivor Nicole Gardner of Mend Collaborative and formerly incarcerated Lonnie Morris.

DEATH ROW

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## California’s controversial move to shutter death row

tille by the Bay. Beautiful scenery surrounds the walls. Ferries and kayaks pass within shouting distance daily. But the prison has a bloody history of killings of both guards and prisoners. Four hundred and twenty-two executions have occurred at San Quentin, beginning with hangings in 1893, of which there were more than 200. In 1938, authorities installed the gas chamber. By 1967, executioners had gassed 194 prisoners to death, including four women.

Aaron Charles Mitchell, convicted of the murder of Sacramento police officer Arnold Gamble, was the last to die during that period. Mitchell allegedly shouted, “I am Jesus Christ!” as his executioners dragged him to the chamber on April 12, 1967.

Court challenges halted the use of the death penalty following Mitchell’s execution. Executions didn’t resume until the early morning hours of April 21, 1992. Robert Alton Harris faced the gas chamber for the slayings of two 16-year-old boys.

From that point on the mechanism of death became lethal drug cocktails, used only a few times in California. The most prominent of these executions was that of Stanley “Tookie” Williams.

Because the death penalty is rife with constitutional concerns over lethal injection, racism, mental illness and miscarriages of justice, executions have stalled.

In 2019, Newsom declared a moratorium on executions. In January 2023, he announced his intention to turn Death Row into a “healing center.” If he realizes that goal, the 671 people sentenced to death may never have their sentences carried out. But the death penalty will still exist in California and prosecutors can still pursue it.

One significant challenge to the death penalty is that many on the Row have mental health problems. California was first state to open a Death Row psychiatric ward, which was filled to capacity within a year.

In 2016, Kamala Harris, then the state’s attorney general, asked the state’s Supreme Court to remove Ronnie McPeters from Death Row and resentence him to life without parole due to his mental health condition.

Nathan Barankin, then chief deputy attorney general, said his office considers some on Death Row so “grievously incompetent” that they can never face execution, and that the state should declare them incompetent and remove them from the Row.

“There are individuals on Death Row old enough to be grandfathers, with mentalities of 12-year-old children, still believing in a child’s idea about life,” said Stanley.

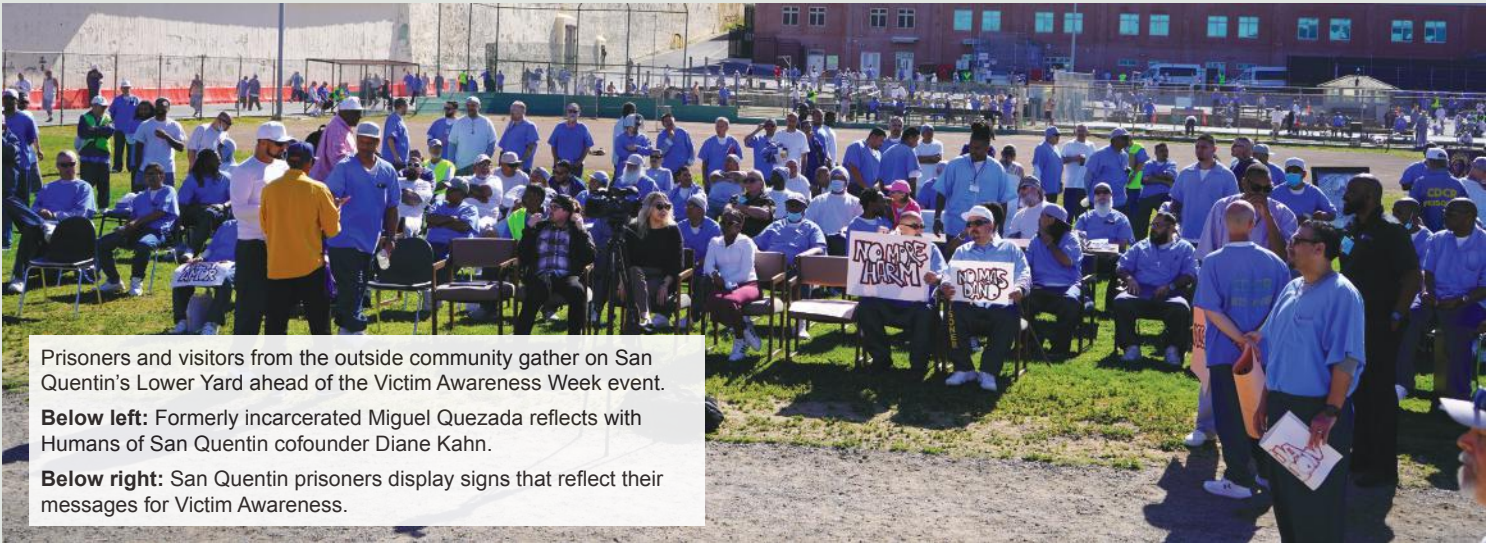
The death penalty disproportionately impacts Black and Brown people. In October 2020 Newsom filed an Amicus brief arguing that racism historically infects the ultimate penalty.

California voters passed Proposition 66 requiring people with death sentences to work so they can pay restitution, with 70% of their pay going to victim’s families. They have to leave Death Row to do this.

During the COVID-19 pandemic CDCR implemented a two-year pilot program that transferred more than one hundred condemned prisoners from San Quentin and another 10 from the Central California Women’s Facility.

“At those institutions that may receive people from Death Row, I ask that you welcome them,” the Director of the Division of Adult Institutions, Connie Gipson, wrote in a memorandum. “This will be a big change for them, and I appreciate everybody’s patience and understanding as they settle into their new locations.”

The last execution in California was more than 17 years ago.



Prisoners and visitors from the outside community gather on San Quentin’s Lower Yard ahead of the Victim Awareness Week event.

**Below left:** Formerly incarcerated Miguel Quezada reflects with Humans of San Quentin cofounder Diane Kahn.

**Below right:** San Quentin prisoners display signs that reflect their messages for Victim Awareness.



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

## San Quentin residents honor victims, survivors with silent walk

### VICTIMS

Continued from page 1

tor Candelario.

Lonnie Morris, formerly incarcerated at San Quentin, said he wanted to make amends with his actions.

“The reality is there’s too much pain, too much grieving, too often. We contribute to it. If we don’t come together, the pain and grief of ‘hurt people hurt people’ will continue,” he said.

Survivor Nicole Garden of Mend Collaborative talked about being on a healing journey. She asked for support from all in attendance.

“Be kind and be patient with me as I tell my story,” she said as she told of moving from Boston to escape violence, traveling with only

two suitcases, her children and a dream, just to have violence reach her two years later when her daughter was killed.

“I got a call from her friend,” she said. She learned that her daughter was in a passenger seat during a drive-by. “My son took it hard because he got shot and he lived, but [his sister] got shot and she died. If I can do this and carry this pain in my heart, you can heal, too.”

Hugo Arredondo was moved by Garden’s story. “[Her experience] impacted me as a father; I don’t know how I’d be able to pick myself ... and even get into public affairs to make active changes in society. She inspired me,” Arredondo said.

Laverne Taylor, a facilitator with Mend Collaborative and a former lifer, discussed her transformation from victim and victimizer to a contributing member of society.

“The day I woke up and realized that I am no longer a victim, and I have made many victims in my wake, that’s when I changed,” she said. Taylor served 26 years on a LWOP sentence.

San Quentin resident Mark Cadiz attended the event said how honored he was to hear the vulnerability of the survivors. “It is good for the women to come in here and speak about what they suffered in their lives so that we as prisoners see the trauma that we caused,” he said.

Incarcerated musicians and others spoke or read poems during the event. Artwork created by residents was on display. The Greater Good and Amigos De Ranch, both incarcerated bands, played selections honoring and commemorating survivors and victims alike. Resident Rapheal Bankston read a poem about accountability and respon-

sibility and Kevin Sample talked about what remorse meant to him.

Community Resource Manager R. Gardea addressed those in attendance, “It’s a good day. Survivors have delivered some very strong speeches for you all. I hope you can take something from them and learn something for your own pain as well,” he said.

“This has helped them heal and to move on. They said they need you all as well to begin your process so you can get out and be better people and be part of this one day from the other side,” Gardea added.

Hollins expressed the essence of the event, “Our future depends on what happens here. We are all depending on you — your story has the power to heal. It’s not written in laws, it’s written in love.”

—Juan Haines and Edwin E. Chavez contributed to this story

### ASL

Continued from page 1

able to communicate might be intimidating and frustrating. Then he learned that Wickerd, a fellow ADA worker, offered an ASL class. Enrolling in the class was a “no-brainer” for him.

After the first couple of classes, Gutierrez began to be acquainted with members of the Deaf commu-

nity at San Quentin.

“It’s good to get to know these new people,” he said. “I found out how funny they are and all the different personalities.”

Wickerd invited every Deaf person at San Quentin to the class, including Jamie “Happy” Paredes, who began attending the course. “I want to improve my sign language skills too,” Paredes signed, with Wickerd interpreting. “Not all Deaf people know ASL.”

Wickerd has an aide to assist with the class, Albert Campos, Jr., who is also Deaf. Campos has been incarcerated 11 years and at San Quentin for about a year.

Campos said through an interpreter that he supports the ASL class in the hope that it will enable hearing folks to communicate with the Deaf community.

“It’s hard for people in the Deaf community to make friends in the hearing world if we can’t communi-

cate,” Campos signed.

Since he began assisting Wickerd, people have been coming to Campos to learn new signs. “I’m impressed by the students who are making an effort to sign,” he added.

Once he paroled, he plans to come back into the prison to help sustain the ASL class.

“I want to give back to the San Quentin community,” he signed. “It’s all about our culture and education.”

## New Sign Language class taught by incarcerated



CINCO

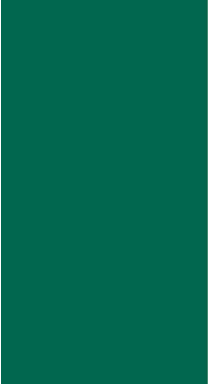
Continued from page 1

tember 16th.”

Most people know that the Spanish first plundered and colonized Mexico, but it was actually the French who were defeated in the Battle of Puebla de Los Angeles.

In 1861, Mexico defaulted on its repayment of foreign debts due to the burdens of a recent civil war and the Mexican-American War, according to Wikipedia and History.com.

Mexico was able to reach a settlement with Spain and Britain over the debt, but France under Napoleon III had an eye on expanding its empire into “Latin American” and refused the agreement. Instead, French troops invaded Mexico at the eastern port of Veracruz and with plans to march on Mexico City.



Mexico’s national flag represents freedom from colonial control.

Cinco de Mayo: A symbol of hope and determination

Ignacio Zaragoza. Over 500 French troops were killed in the initial battle, compared to only 100 Mexican casualties. The vaunted French army had only lost one other battle over the previous 50 years of conquests around the globe.

The war continued and a larger force of French troops later won the second battle of Puebla and took Mexico City in 1864. However, France withdrew its troops in 1866 due to mounting losses and because the U.S. was emerging from its Civil War and providing increasing aid to Mexico.

In an interesting footnote to history, had France quickly conquered Mexico as Napoleon planned, he would have provided support to the Confederate States in the Amer-

even in the most challenging circumstances we can overcome and triumph,” is another.

Celebrations to commemorate the victory at Puebla first started in San Francisco, according to an article in *The Journal of American Folklore*. In 1863, an entrepreneur sponsored a Cinco de Mayo dance, and this tradition of private dance celebrations continued into the 1950’s.

Since then, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a public commemoration of not just Mexican nationalism but the bi-cultural heritage of Mexican immigrants and the broader pan-Latin movement that includes Central Americans.

In the 1960’s, in the era of César Chávez and the United Farm Workers, Chicano activists raised awareness of the holiday. They identified with the victory of indigenous Mexicans over the French invaders in their modern struggle to overcome discrimination and economic exploitation in California.

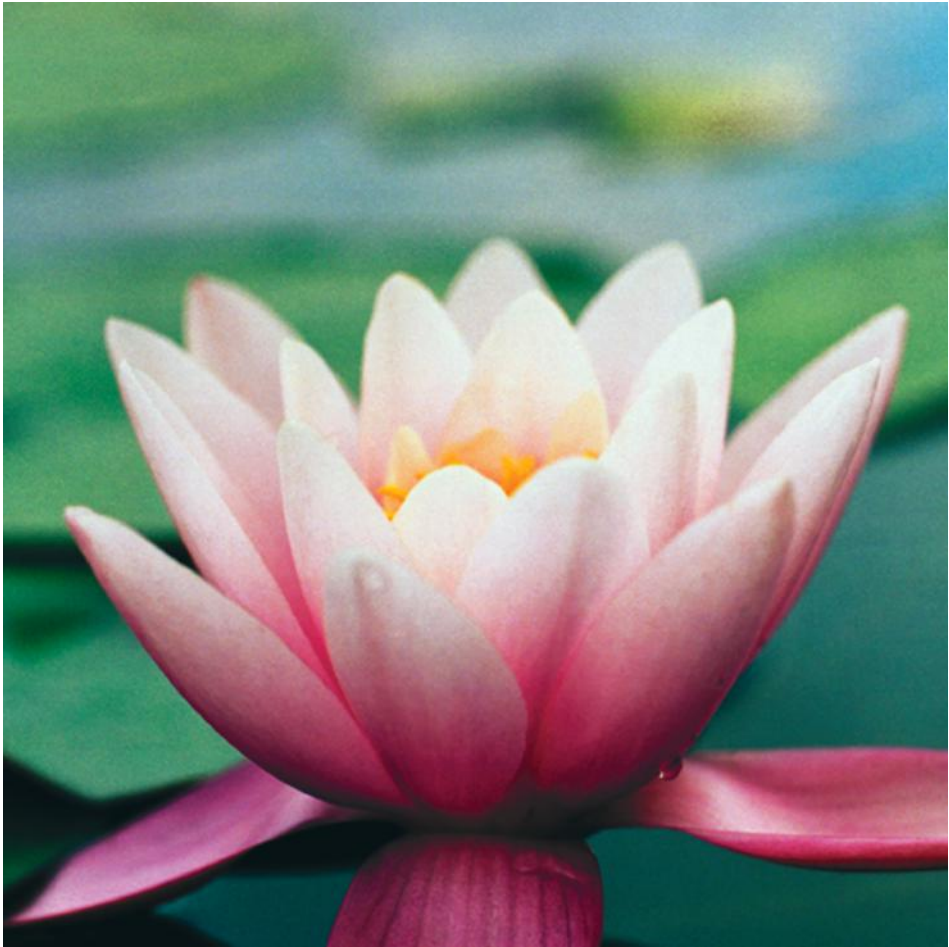
More recently, on college campuses in the Bay Area, organizers of Cinco de Mayo events emphasize the pan-Latino aspect of the celebration and its symbolism of the power of “strength in numbers” to overcome adversity.

Some of the largest Cinco de Mayo festivals are held in America in cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston. Los Angeles’ Fiesta Broadway has been billed as the largest Cinco de Mayo celebration in the world, where more than half a million people have attended.

Regardless of your reasons for celebrating, now you know more about the important history of Cinco de Mayo.

Feliz Cinco de Mayo, y que viva la fiesta! But also remember the popular Cinco de Mayo saying, “In the face of adversity, we must never give up!”

MAY IS AAPI CULTURAL HERITAGE MONTH



San Quentin News recognizes the many contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the movement to end violence and to bring rehabilitative programming to the San Quentin community and other prisons statewide.

REENTRY

New startup uses advanced analytics to reduce recidivism

By Joshua Strange  
Staff Writer

An innovative tech startup is helping to improve the criminal legal system’s handling of prisons, parole and probation to reduce recidivism and improve community safety, *STANFORD* magazine reports.

Its software can also alert parole officers when people are eligible for release from supervision or qualify for good-behavior programs.

Thanks to the new tech startup, Recidiviz, this approach is coming to correctional departments across the country in an effort to produce better outcomes, improve rehabilitative treatments and inform policy decisions.

“I was shocked that this system, which touched every community — and sits at the intersection of mental health challenges, addictions, economic mobility, and poverty — didn’t have modern analytics,” said Recidiviz co-founder Clementine Jacoby.

She is a former product manager at Google who helped create the non-profit Recidiviz in 2018, according to an article in the December 2022 issue of *STANFORD*, her alma mater’s alumni magazine.

Jacoby started looking for ways to apply modern analytics to criminal justice reform in 2015 under Google’s policy of allowing its employees to pursue socially beneficial projects with 20% of their paid time.

“I grew up with a dad who is a political scientist and a mom who does addiction counseling,” Jacoby said, describing her interest in the

topic. She noted that she has family members who were incarcerated, which has contributed to her belief that “criminal justice reform was the most important public policy issue of our time.”

Recidivism is generally defined as re-arrest, re-conviction, or re-incarceration, usually within three years of a person’s release.

Determining statistics such as accurate recidivism rates proved problematic for Jacoby and her team. They found that the applied definition of recidivism varies widely, as does the quality of data. Such statistics are necessary to allow useful comparisons between programs, counties, prisons, states or categories of incarcerated people.

“One of the key heartbeat metrics for the system was fundamentally incomparable — and that was just the tip of the iceberg,” Jacoby said.

“Collectively, the 50 directors run an \$80 billion system. They have hundreds of thousands of staff,” Jacoby said, regarding state corrections departments. “You probably have better analytics on your personal website than these folks get on their flagship programs.”

There is an urgent need to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitative and reentry programs and help to prevent re-incarceration, she noted. As proof, citing the statistics that once a person is arrested, the likelihood that they will be arrested again in a nine year window is as high as 83%.

One of Recidiviz’s goals is to help



“I was shocked that this system, which touched every community — and sits at the intersection of mental health challenges, addictions, economic mobility, and poverty — didn’t have modern analytics.”

—Clementine Jacoby  
Recidiviz Co-Founder  
Photo courtesy Recidiviz

reform advocates understand the likely outcomes of various policies through modeling so they can make informed decisions and more convincing arguments.

“Recidiviz provides these services for free for a lot of nonprofits,” said

Molly Gill, vice president of Families Against Mandatory Minimums. “That’s incredibly valuable. Most criminal-justice nonprofit organizations don’t have the staff or expertise or resources to do this kind of analysis themselves.”

The program’s analytics also improve efficiency for correctional workers. For example, its online platform can create an instant profile of people on parole or probation for corrections staff. “Instead of going through 13 steps, we just have one,” says Joshua Graham, a director of community supervision from Tennessee whose district is responsible for 5,000 formerly incarcerated people.

“It increases safety because it leaves less room for error. It helps us reduce recidivism by giving us an opportunity to actively and efficiently manage the cases that we have,” Graham added.

Parole officers in California are also beginning to benefit from Recidiviz’s analytics.

In a follow-up email interview with SQNews, Jacoby clarified that her organization is working with parole agents and leaders from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

“Now, we’re in the process of developing a tool that will surface all the positive milestones and achievements of people on parole,” she wrote. “The tool will give parole agents the information they need to provide positive feedback to their

clients, which studies have shown can significantly increase client success.”

Recidiviz provides on-going services to 11 correction departments and offers public-facing dashboards for journalists, researchers and interested community members. According to the *STANFORD* article, Recidiviz built an open-source database that aggregates, cleans and analyzes public data about criminal legal systems.

Jacoby lauded CDCR for its interest in using advanced analytics to improve the reentry process and she supports continued collaboration.

“Moving forward, we hope to expand our partnership with CDCR ... We hope to provide real-time insights to leadership on which policies are working, where resources should be focused, and how CDCR can continue to safely reduce the incarcerated population,” Jacoby wrote.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Recidiviz used its tools to help 34 states and the federal government identify incarcerated people suitable for medical release or other forms of early parole.

In the *STANFORD* article, Jacoby commented, “The federal prison system released 11,000 people early during COVID-19, and only 17 committed new crimes, only one of which was violent.” This equates to a recidivism rate of less than 1%.

“These tools probably sound quite basic,” Jacoby said. “But they didn’t exist and in many places still don’t exist.”



REHABILITATION

STUDY: BOARD GAMES CONTRIBUTE TO WELLNESS

New research from University of Calgary shows social and rehabilitative benefits

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

New research and programs highlight the value of board games, both inside and outside of prisons, to promote sociability and brain development.

An article in *Inspirationfeed Magazine* cited studies that reveal the positive impacts of playing games such as Scrabble.

Scrabble helps build vocabulary and maintain the brain's plasticity, as well as facilitating the development of relationships and helping people learn English more quickly, the studies found. Other developmental benefits include an enhanced sense of self-worth and recovery of memory, said the article.

Peter Sargious, a physician at University of Calgary, wanted to know if playing Scrabble had measurable effects on the brain. He conducted an experiment with 24 participants, half of whom were expert at Scrabble and half of whom had never played the game.

The study tested participants' ability to rearrange jumbled letters on a computer screen in order to form proper English words. Sargious' team concluded that the twelve Scrabble experts used a different part of the brain to work the task than their counterparts.

"Many people think of the



HEALTH BENEFITS OF BOARD GAMES

- Improves memory formation and cognitive skills
- Reduces risks for mental diseases
- Lowers blood pressure
- Speeds up reflexes and responses
- Reduces stress
- Bolsters immune system
- Can be an effective therapeutic treatment

Source: Health Fitness Revolution

Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

human brain in terms of 'use it or lose it'.... To develop proper cerebral connections, you have to constantly challenge your brain," said Sophia Van Hees, one of the study's co-authors.

The brain is flexible in the sense that we can train differ-

ent areas to complete similar tasks, said Van Hees.

Many programs for incarcerated individuals aimed at pro-social, therapeutic environments and behaviors are available in San Quentin.

Kevin Carreon, a recreational therapist with the En-

hanced Outpatient Program at San Quentin, discussed the benefits of game playing. He noted that the activity could be a means to practice control of egos because in each game someone must win and someone must lose. Additionally, game playing requires the

parties to engage in a relationship with mutually respected boundaries.

Carreon's approach relies on leisure and recreation in the form of gaming as a therapeutic model to open people up socially, an outcome beneficial to both prison admin-

istrators and the incarcerated population.

"Socialization is huge for people who may be anti-social or have social issues. These common interests pull people in. All the social barriers break down with game play," said Carreon.

Relative freedom: Donner Earned Living Unit

By David Ditto  
Associate Editor

A cell block last used as overflow housing for Death Row has been transformed into an honor unit for disciplinary-free residents of San Quentin.

The purpose of the "Earned Living Unit" is to incentivize prison residents to participate in rehabilitative programming and stay out of trouble. The first residents moved into the new ELU, the Donner section of the Q's South Block, to find conditions unlike any other housing unit they had ever lived in.

"I can breathe easier," said Michael Callahan. "The first thing I noticed was the clean air," especially compared with the dusty, smoky, stale air in his old block.

Callahan said the cleaner, quieter environment, increased phone access and individual showers bring peace of mind. He moved in with a cellmate but hopes to get a single-occupancy cell. That's the biggest incentive for many who sign up to move in. But it's not enough just to sign up.



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

"Your spot on the waiting list is dependent on your ability to stay involved in programs and stay disciplinary free," read the response to one person's request to move in.

Not everyone wants to move. Many prefer to stay in the other blocks because their jobs or friends are there, or because they don't want the added scrutiny or stigma of living in an honor unit.

Inside the ELU, within a month, the first residents created a list of expectations for the newly forming community. Guideline number one: "Any music or noise within your cell shall be kept at a level that does not allow other cell occupants to hear it."

Other guidelines included expectations to keep cells clean, remain violence free, and "respect both staff and fellow inmates as you yourself wish to be respected." They also prohibit blocking visual inspection into cells, illicit drug use and sexual behavior. Those are already CDCR regulations. The difference in the ELU is that these residents are now making a commitment to each other to create a positive environment or

move out.

"We already kicked out five or six," said Sgt. Steadler, giving an orientation to the new arrivals in March. One guy had a tattoo needle, and another had cell phone contraband.

"If you're not sure about something, come talk to us," Steadler said. "We want that relationship and we can talk through 99% of the problems. Lt. Haub and I both have an open door policy."

Haub called Donner ELU "the model of what East Block is going to become." Converting East Block into another ELU is part of former SQ Warden Ron Broomfield and Gov. Newsom's \$20 million plan to continue transforming the prison into an innovative rehabilitation center.

Broomfield and Newsom talked and shook hands with the residents of the new Donner ELU when they visited in February to see their plan in action. CDCR has begun their planned transfer of all residents of East Block, currently Death Row, to

other prisons. "The state wants this program to succeed," Haub said. "The administration does. We do too. We want you to succeed."

Haub said he knew of eight guys who had received parole dates since moving into the Donner ELU. One of them is Wyatt McMillian, one of the first to move in when the unit opened in October.

"I was a screw up," said McMillian, who spent more than three decades in prison. He said he had worked hard to change and had not been involved in any violence since 2010.

"I earned this," he said, crediting the less crowded, more respectful culture to helping him rehabilitate and better prepare for his sixth parole board hearing.

McMillian was found suitable for parole in November. "The difference was me," he said. "I was able to prepare peacefully, connect the dots, and get past that last bit of shame." He was released from prison in April.

The perseverance of prisoners

By Vincent E. O'Bannon  
Staff Writer

Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people are proving skeptics wrong by transforming themselves through self-help and self-discovery programs.

In-person rehabilitative programs in prison, from Anger Management to the Victim Offender Education Program (VOEG), have given incarcerated individuals in-depth understanding of the impact crime has on victims and victim's families.

However, some anti-reformists, like police unions and many district attorneys, say that too often the focus is on reforming the criminal while ignoring their victims.

But many reformed criminals have made it their duty to recompense their victims and the communities they have harmed.

"I paroled from San Quentin nearly 10 years ago. The reason I haven't relapsed back into my previous criminal behavior is because I delved into the self-help groups San Quentin provided, and I made victim awareness my sole focus," Francisco Gonzalez told SQNews.

that criminals will never be more than the crimes they have committed.

Rehabilitation data for those with determinate vs. indeterminate sentences indicate that an incarcerated person's story does not end with criminal proceedings.

For fiscal year 2015-16 (the most recent CDCR adult recidivism data available), the data showed that of 23,812 determinate term prisoners, 23% returned to prison — compared to 3.2% of those with indeterminate sentences.

"They [society] don't know how hard nor how many years I've spent changing the way I think. Today I finally know who I am thanks to rehabilitation groups," said Rodriguez. "I am a totally different person ... All I want people to do is see me for the man I am today and not the criminal I was years ago."

Said Graham, "The self-help groups I took in prison helped me to understand why I wasn't able to view my victims humanely and why I caused them so much hurt and trauma."

Federal data indicate four of 10 incarcerated persons surveyed experienced some sort of mental health issue relating to their criminality, reported *Shared Safety Solutions*.

"Mental health can be seen in nearly every crime you witness on your daily newscast. Especially and particularly during instances where police officers goad an apparently mentally disturbed person into a fatal situation," said Total Women Empowerment Director Dana Cheatum.

"There needs to be a system in place to bring more awareness to the signs of mental illness. When a person who is going through a mental health crisis approaches law enforcement holding a knife — such as the fatal incident in San Francisco a few years back — it should be apparent to trained responders that there are mental instabilities present," said Cheatum.

For many prisoners, like Rodriguez, who discovered self-awareness and empathy for others, it was their first introduction to rehabilitation and to making living amends on their road to redemption.

San Quentin hosts more than 50 rehabilitative programs that weigh heavily on victim awareness along with reforming criminal thinking.

"Before prison I lived my life by the rules of the streets, which meant I didn't care about anyone other than myself and my gang. The day I discovered the words 'character defects,' my life changed forever," said Jorge Rodriguez.

Although self-help and self-discovery is not required, it helps incarcerated people identify the "who" and the "why" of their crime.

"I have spent decades working on changing who I was that tragic day," said Rodriguez. "I had no understanding of who I was — only of who I portrayed myself to be."

Leonard Graham, a former prisoner and current advocate for prisoners' rights, said, "After years of self-discovery, victim awareness classes, and mindful thinking, I was able to root out the cause and effects of my criminal thinking."

Many survivors of crime believe



TECH PROGRAMS

# Collaborative audio engineering program gains momentum

By Kevin D. Sawyer  
Contributing Writer

Becoming an audio engineer at San Quentin State Prison is a reality. Imagine learning to edit, mix, and master recorded tracks of music, commercials, promotions, spoken word and podcasts.

In partnership with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and California Prison Industry Authority (CalPIA), the non-profit The Last Mile (TLM) is training the incarcerated in audio and video production.

More than a decade before Gov. Gavin Newsom announced his plan to convert the 171-year-old prison into a rehabilitation center, The Last Mile was producing entrepreneurs and computer coders. In April 2022 the organization began its Audio and Video Production (AVP) program.

“This program has given me new direction, and really brought to the forefront a past dream that I thought died when I came to prison,” said Erik Rives, 52, who’s been incarcerated 32 years. In the 1980s, he was a roadie for Bay Area heavy metal bands. “I really loved the music, people, and wanted to learn how to be a front-house engineer.” He’s now the teaching assistant for the course.

“It took brave people at a high level at CalPIA, CDCR and TLM to conceive of a class like this and have confidence that it could work,” said Jon Gripshover, a supervisor in CalPIA. He said CalPIA’s partnership with TLM has been synonymous with coding. “Both now offer so much more,” he said, adding, “We offer modern-day relevant technical vocations.”

“Upon receiving my acceptance letter into the program ... I was overwhelmed with excitement,” said Messigh Perry-Garner, 30. “I never would have thought of becoming an audio engineer.” He’s been incarcerated 14 years, and said the course changed his view of rehabilitation. “This is the best thing that has



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

happened to me.”

The course did not have an on-site instructor to teach AVP. Instead, students relied on the books *Pro Tools 101 & 110* to learn Pro Tools software. To supplement that reading, and some hands-on work, they also read *Audio Engineering 101* and *Modern Recording Techniques*.

Twice each week, CalPIA and TLM staff facilitated class participation in two-way, remote instruction over the Internet, with TLM audio engineers Dan Tinkler and Walker Delbo. Through a special Google application, the class used a Learning Management System (LMS) to read, watch instructional videos, download and upload assignments, and take tests. LMS describes a variety of computer-based educational platforms. TLM uses the LMS called Canvas, a popular web-based platform.

If students had technical questions they sent email “tickets” to Tinkler, who re-

sponded right away.

“I have had to find new ways to teach some of the concepts without being able to walk around the classroom and help students individually,” Tinkler wrote in an email for this story. “There are limitations with the education we’re able to provide, due to the environment.” He said this means students do not get hands-on experience with microphones and other recording equipment. “On the other side of that, they have spent that extra time working inside of Pro Tools and working with editing and mixing real audio projects. That is a skill that takes a lot of time and practice, and I feel that our students excel in that area.”

Tinkler said the difference between TLM students and those on the outside is “Students who are incarcerated don’t skip class because they don’t feel like going and they remain engaged throughout the duration of the lesson. I don’t have to remind our stu-

dents to pay attention or wake them up during class.”

Tinkler started his audio engineering career in 2010 and joined TLM in the summer of 2021. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Audio Production, and a master’s in Sound Arts and Industries. “Without my education I would not have learned about physics, electronics and acoustics,” he said.

“The remote instructions were very helpful and informative,” said Kevin Rojas-Nieto, 27. “Dan, our instructor, did a phenomenal job in keeping us engaged and moving through the curriculum smoothly, with help from Walker [Delbo].” A Millennial, he described himself as a “gamer” because he loves to play video games and wants to learn that aspect of production.

The newer teaching methods adopted by TLM aided Ammen Shinti, 68. He’s a keyboard player with experience as a computer consul-

tant, and in products and tech support. He has worked with bands and musicians such as Earth Wind & Fire, George Duke, Miles Davis, War and the Rolling Stones. “Every so many days we would have a stand-up,” he said. “We got to discuss what was in our way, and what progress we were making.”

Katy Gilbert joined TLM a little more than a year ago. One of her duties is to make sure students are successful in the classroom. “It’s sort of known that the job is giving students support,” she said. At the start of each class, she facilitated stand-up conversations in the classroom. She said tech companies do the same. “Students know where their classmates are at, and it’s for us to know where the class is as a whole.”

Experienced or not, the class studied editing, mixing, gain staging, acoustics, dynamic and effects processors, microphones, frequency response, sample rates, bit depth

and more. The studies came into play when they edited and mixed songs by different artists, in various genres. They also worked on a 14-minute podcast.

Students delved into techy stuff, like watching videos on Lynda.com, such as *The Anatomy of Reverberation*, that describes Sabine’s Equation. It illustrates how long it takes a sound level to fall by 60 decibels. The class also learned that predelay is the gap in time between direct sound and the onset of the reverb tail, measured in milliseconds.

“Prison education is an area where there’s a lot of opportunity to make an impact,” said Walker Delbo, TLM’s audio-video production manager. He helped develop the course curriculum and establish partnerships with organizations to donate educational resources for the course. “I figured out a long time ago that I like educating people, and I like knowing my effort is making meaningful impact.”

Philippe Kelly, 39, said he learned the most in the areas of editing and equalization. “Those things go hand-in-hand with each other, especially with spoken word projects, so those two things have stuck more than anything else.” Kelly has since paroled.

The second audio engineering course started in April, with 12 new students. Each of them had to apply and interview. “Participation in the program is restricted to people who have worked hard to improve themselves intellectually and emotionally,” according to Wikipedia.

Chris Redlitz and Beverly Parenti founded TLM in 2010. In 2014, TLM launched Code.7370, the first computer-programming curriculum inside a U.S. prison where students learn HTML, CSS, JavaScript and Python. Since then, Code.7370 has expanded to prisons in seven states. Putnamville Correctional Facility, in Indiana, offered the first TLM AVP program, currently on its third cohort.

## Tech education column debuts in SQNews

Monthly articles will help educate the incarcerated on information technology

By Sherman K. Newman  
Contributing Writer

**Welcome to Tech Block 42**

It’s time for the incarcerated in CDCR and beyond to become technologically aware — more specifically, computer literate.

TB42 is here to share computer technology information in an effort to bridge the digital literacy divide between the incarcerated and the society into which they will return.

The more computer and information technology (IT) knowledge acquired, the better one’s ability to use the internet and the applications that live on it.

Every thriving, working person should have on their computer one of the two platforms Google Workspace or Microsoft Office 365 services, examples of the type of information technology (IT) platforms available to assist users in daily productivity, for business or leisure.

In line with the transformation of SQ announced by Gov. Gavin Newsom at his recent SQ press conference, expanding practical technology training will prepare more incarcerated people for integration back into modern society.

### TECH BLOCK 42

We live in parallel worlds, one physical, and the other digital. For the incarcerated, it’s been all steel and concrete. A glimmer of hope showed when CDCR allowed The Last Mile/CTE-CODE 7370 coding and Mt. Tamalpais College to have laptops and use them in living quarters.

However, the majority of the incarcerated in California are in prisons that don’t provide tech training, or their prison libraries don’t carry updated technology books.

TB42 has answers to questions for those in tech deserts.

**Tech Talk:** you’ll learn about the new words and phrases used in the context of the article.

A key component to learning and understanding computers today is applications (apps). Apps perform various tasks and jobs as programs downloaded from the internet onto desktop computers and mobile devices, i.e. smartphones, tablets and laptops. More depth about apps to

come.

Operating and managing the devices we use can be daunting, especially for those of us who have never used technology before. It is important to know how to load software onto them, how to navigate apps by using icons or symbols, etc. Some of these skills come only from doing.

These types of experiential practices will ease future efforts to gain familiarity with computer usage.

From my own experience, attaining competence in using computers takes time and self-initiative.

TB42 will provide information for incarcerated people interested in learning computer science, internet networking, and blockchain technology.

Here is a practical solution to the dearth of tech information the incarcerated face, an opportunity to become enlightened. Those who want hands-on technical education during incarceration should

ask their respective institutions to provide basic tech education in preparation for parole or release.

**Why the incarcerated need tech ed**

Our society uses the internet as its primary means of communication, viz., email, messaging apps, and voice over internet protocol (VOIP). The average user is adept in using devices (smartphones) and applications that access the internet, and has an advantage over those who don’t have access to the technology.

It’s imperative that the incarcerated become as well versed in basic computer use as those in free society. Incarcerated people understand, however, the limitations on what we can learn and the related concerns for public safety.

But as has been demonstrated, allowing the incarcerated to learn tech is not a Trojan horse to further crime or misbehavior, but a liberating tool that will transform one from a state of technical ignorance, to one of digital participation in modern society.

TB42 has a passion for tech and we want to instill that passion in SQNews readers too.

TECH TALK

Computer technology comprises many terms/words that are uncommon to the everyday person. This is where we will explain uncommon terms, give explanations, and definitions that will enhance your learning and understanding of computer technology.

As an example, we use the term “technology” in this article; some folks may understand the word according to their experience with technology or are just familiar with the word without knowing the true definition of what it actually means.

According to Wikipedia, Etymology—Greek, science of craft, techne, art, skill, cunning of hand, “Technology is the collection of techniques, skills, methods, and processes used in the production of goods or services or in the accomplishment of objectives, such as scientific investigation. Technology can be the knowledge of techniques, processes, and the like, or it can be embedded in machines which can be operated without detailed knowledge of their workings.”

Have questions?  
Write to Tech Block 42 in care of  
San Quentin News!



CORRECTION

In March, we ran an article titled *SQNews talks to AIDA cofounder Vanessa Silva-Collins*. The article said that AIDA (Awareness Into Domestic Abuse) had hosted a first-ever event for survivors of domestic violence at the California Institute for Women.

This information was not accurate, and we would like to extend our apologies to the brave folks at CIW who built the event from the ground up. This was actually CIW's second Domestic Violence Event, the first taking place in 2021. AIDA did not host the event; rather, as an invitee, they set up a resource booth to offer important information to the incarcerated.

Vanessa Silva-Collins contacted us to make a correction. "AIDA did not host the event and was only a participant," she wrote. "We don't want to take credit away from the actual people who hosted the event."

CIW's DV event was originally proposed by resident Kym Cano and brought to life through collaborative efforts between prison staff, IAC reps, and incarcerated survivors and abusers alike.

Kym reached out to set the record straight and convey the inspiration behind her original proposal: "I noticed a great need for a [Domestic Violence] event here at CIW," she wrote, "because the majority of incarcerated women at CIW have experienced DV at some point in their lives. Many inmate survivors and abusers have Post Traumatic [Stress] Disorder, anxiety, and depression. We needed more help and information that could assist us in our recovery."

IOWA

## Proposed dismantling of Iowa’s community based corrections program criticized

**By James Daly**  
Journalism Guild Writer

Stakeholders are harshly criticizing Iowa’s plan to dismantle its locally-run Community Based Corrections system, according to a Feb. 27 report in *Axios*.

For more than 40 years, the system has provided an alternative to incarceration for less serious offenders, and given local officials oversight of thousands returning from prisons to communities on parole or probation.

The eight independent Community Based Corrections agencies currently oversee about 41,200 people, in contrast to the 7,900 held in Iowa’s prisons, reported *Axios*.

A board made up of about 20 volunteers governs each of the judicial districts, setting policies, providing budget input and overseeing operations. Board members include judges, supervisors and other citizens. A director and hundreds of volunteers serve under the board.

Gov. Kim Reynolds has asked legislators to make the local boards advisory councils only, with directors reporting directly to the Iowa Department of Corrections.

The Reynolds administration says that the move will streamline the system and save millions of dollars annually. A Virginia-based consultant estimates that the annual savings at about \$3 million.

Department of Corrections Director Beth Skinner explained to legislators that Community Based Corrections directors should report to her department, rather than to local boards, because the bulk of their funding comes from the state.

But the plan received universal condemnation from local advocates, current and former board members, and a former

**1. South Dakota — (AP)** The state has doubled down on mass incarceration as virtually all of a recently authorized \$390 million investment in its prison system will go to construction of more prisons. Republican Gov. Kristi Noem signed the legislation in March. Legislators expressed strong support for the spending as the bill moved through the legislative process. Rapid City will receive \$60 million to build a new women’s facility while \$54 million will finance a men’s prison in Sioux Falls. The largest portion of the funding, \$270 million, will fund additional men’s prisons in the future.

**2. Arkansas — (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)** Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced the state will respond to overcrowded local jails by expanding the bed capacity of its prison system. Sanders announced plans in March to spend an estimated \$470 million for prison construction and to add \$31 million in annual operating costs. The plan will add 3,000 beds to the system’s existing 13,436. The state’s sheriffs signaled to lawmakers last year that the situation in local jails had reached a crisis point. Attorney General Tim Griffin said the additional bed space would help free jails to hold more people convicted of misdemeanors. At the same time, policies governing parole releases will be more stringent.

**3. New Mexico — (CNN)** New Mexico has joined at least 24 other states and the District of Columbia in banning life sentences without parole for offenders who committed their crimes under the age of 18. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the bill in March. The wave of state laws

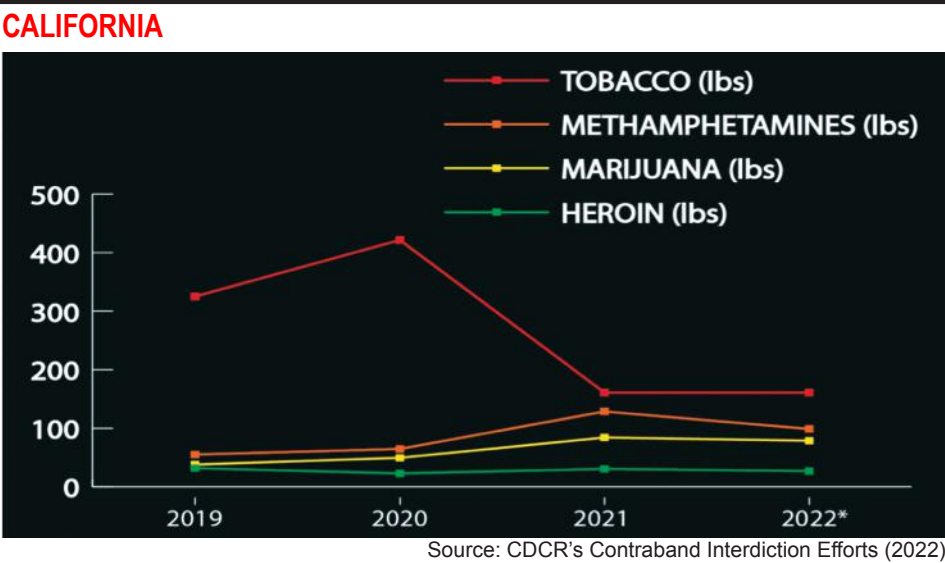
NEWS BRIEFS

By Charles Crowe  
Senior Editor

banning the practice follows a Supreme Court ruling in 2021 that made it easier to issue such sentences. Democratic state Sen. Kristina Ortez was a sponsor of the bill. "When children commit serious crimes, they should be held accountable, but they should not spend their entire lives in prison without a chance for redemption," Ortez said in a Facebook post. Republican legislators argued against the measure, saying that it will allow serious crimes to go unpunished.

**4. Arkansas — (AP)** A lawsuit alleging that detainees of the Washington County Jail in Fayetteville

were subjects of a COVID-19 drug treatment experiment without their knowledge will move forward, ruled a federal judge. Dr. Robert Karas allegedly gave the prisoners ivermectin, a drug approved to treat various ailments including lice, worms and skin conditions, but not to fight COVID-19. "The incarcerated individuals had no idea they were part of a medical experiment," a news release from the Arkansas ACLU said. Medical staff told the inmates that the treatments consisted of steroids, antibiotics and vitamins. Detainees were unaware of the drug’s potential side effects including skin rash, nausea and



## CDCR releases COVID-era contraband interdiction report

**By Andrew Hardy**  
Staff Writer

Recent installation of high-resolution cameras at San Quentin is a small part of the state’s efforts to scrub contraband from its prisons, according to a report produced by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The report cites technology such as high-resolution audio-video surveillance, body and baggage X-ray scanners, various metal and magnetic detectors, and forensic cell phone technology designed to detect and interrupt cellular signals as part of that program, as well as K-9 teams trained to sniff out both narcotics and cellular devices.

These efforts “provide a good foundation for preventing contraband from entering institutions,” said the report.

Data compiled from 2019 through the first half of 2022 reflect these efforts, illustrating a number of trends in the seizure of contraband. The number of seized cellular devices

has declined from a high of nearly 10,500 in 2019 to an estimated 7,000 in 2022 — representing a nearly 35% decrease.

Confiscation of drugs has varied widely by substance. Discoveries of heroin, for example, have remained relatively flat: an average of just under 28 pounds per year. But marijuana discoveries spiked in 2021, with 128.7 pounds confiscated, roughly double the amount of the previous year. And seizure of methamphetamines also increased in 2021 before dropping slightly this year.

These data point to the mixed effect of the COVID-19 pandemic — and the accompanying restricted access to prisons statewide — on the introduction of contraband to prison facilities. Suspending “most non-essential movement into the institutions” and cutting off prisoners’ in-person interactions with family, visitors and volunteers might have hindered the smuggling of contraband, the report suggested. It also may have reduced both overdose deaths

and the number of arrests of people attempting to introduce contraband.

Overdose-related deaths in the state’s prisons have declined from a high of 63 in 2019 to a six-year low of 22 in 2021. But CDCR has attributed the decline to the rollout of the Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment program and suboxone-based Medication Assisted Treatment, not to contraband prevention efforts.

“CDCR strongly believes a multilayered approach is the most effective way to reduce contraband activity,” the report concludes, including substance use disorder treatment and physical security measures, as well as “dismantling drug distribution systems, disrupting gang activity, and closing avenues of entry for contraband.”

In these ways, CDCR remains committed to reducing contraband, the report said, calling its efforts “critical to disrupting the criminal enterprises that threaten the safety and security of the institutions and the public.”

to “heinous and destructive” behavior on the part of the incarcerated subject. Even in those cases, solitary confinement is limited to 15 consecutive days or 20 days within a 60-day period. The suit claims officials are extending segregation without meeting the narrow criteria.

**7. West Virginia — (AP)** A non-believing inmate sued state correctional officials for requiring religious-based programming as a condition of release from incarceration. Among the programs cited in the complaint are Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotic Anonymous, described as “infused with Christian practices,” including the Lord’s prayer. Attorneys with American Atheists represent Andrew Miller, who is serving a non-determinative sentence at the Saint Mary’s Correctional Center and Jail. American Atheists advocates for atheists rights and for separation of church and state. The organization’s president said that the rights of non-Christians “do not get set aside simply because a person is incarcerated.” A corrections spokesperson declined to comment on the pending litigation.

**8. Wisconsin — (AP)** Gov. Tony Evers has issued 933 pardons during his term, more than any other Wisconsin governor. Among these are the 159 incarcerated people pardoned April 7, most of them low-level offenders. “Each pardon recipient’s journey is unique, and each deserves the opportunity for a new start,” said Evans. His Republican predecessor, Scott Walker, didn’t pardon anyone during his two terms in office. Pardons do not erase criminal convictions, but they do restore certain rights.



MICHIGAN

# \$70M program trains prisoners in tree care, sets them on career track during reentry

By Gary Beavers  
Journalism Guild Writer

A utility company partners with corrections, teaching the incarcerated to trim trees around power lines in response to rising demand. Scott Steffes is serving time at Michigan’s Parnall Correctional Facility, but that will not keep him from moving up when he is released. He is part of a \$70 million program at Parnall’s Vocational Village that trains inmates to manage tree trimming for Detroit-based DTE Energy, according to the *Associated Press*. “I didn’t know what I was to do upon my release. I didn’t

know where my life was headed,” said Steffes. With this program, Steffes and others receive training that will give them a career when they get out. They will eventually have the opportunity to earn between \$70,000 and \$120,000 per year. A DTE Energy spokesperson stated that fallen trees and branches account for 70% of power outages, so there is a big demand for tree trimmers. “We still need a ton of tree trimmers. Trees, they’re constantly growing,” said Terry Lockhart, a manager at DTE Energy. A recent powerful storm packing winds more than 70

mph downed trees, branches and electrical lines. This caused power outages for more than 400,000 homes and businesses in Michigan. Nearly a million customers lost power the previous year due to these storms. This program is designed to prevent these types of outages, according to *AP*. When Steffes and the other members of this vocational village training group leave prison, they will enter DTE’s Training Academy. They will receive a daily wage of \$50 for the first two weeks and \$100 for the remaining five weeks, said the story. Their starting pay is \$17.50 and increases to \$32 per hour

ILLINOIS

# Cook County seeks to address racial inequity

## Chicago organization aims to dismantle the bias of criminal justice institutions

By Jonquil Thomas-Weisner  
Journalism Guild Writer

Illinois’ most populous county has hired a consulting agency to introduce concepts of racial equity to the county’s criminal justice system. Cook County’s Justice Advisory Council announced in January that it would work with the Chicago Regional Organization for Anti-Racism (ROAR) to address systemic racism in the county court system. The organization works to dismantle White supremacy culture inside criminal justice institutions, according to a story by *Fox News*. “Our theory of change begins with understanding the root of the problem is White supremacy, enshrined in and reproduced by our systems and institutions,” the organization said. “White supremacy produces a culture of domination that conditions systems, institutions, and people to uphold and legitimize Whiteness and its ways as normal, standard, moral and universal.” The organization’s ethos borrows from critical race theory, the concept that many of America’s institutions grew from structurally racist systems based on slavery that White people continue to benefit from today. A \$500,000 grant from the Justice Challenge and the John D. and Catherine T. MacAr-

Our theory of change begins with understanding the root of the problem is White supremacy, enshrined in and reproduced by our systems and institutions.

—Chicago Regional Organization for Anti-Racism

thur Foundation funds the contract. ROAR offers clients nine-12 month audits to determine whether an institution harbors systemically racist practices. The organization and Cook County did not immediately respond to requests for comment from *Fox News*. ROAR also offers trainings about White cultural domination in the U.S. and how White supremacy is framed as normal and universal throughout American institutions. One such training, hosted by ROAR trainer Emily Drew, asks participants how White people can better support people of color and fight racism in their communities. “How can White people engage in efforts to dismantle racism in ways that do not reproduce or place unfair burdens upon people of color to be our teachers?” a description of Drew’s speaking engagement reads.

NEVADA

# Involuntary servitude heads to NV voters in ’24

## Referendum could abolish prison slavery in the state if passed

By William Harris  
Journalism Guild Writer

Nevada will join a growing tide of states seeking to rid their constitutions of involuntary servitude as criminal punishment by placing the issue on the ballot in 2024, according to the *Associated Press*. The measure passed the state’s assembly and senate in February for the second consecutive year, making it eligible to go to a vote by the people. “I don’t know that we have fully accepted this very pain-

ful past. And what you don’t face, you can’t fix,” said Democratic Sen. Pat Spearman of North Las Vegas, a co-sponsor of the resolution. The language in the Nevada constitution that allows involuntary servitude as punishment for crimes is almost identical to that included in the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, making the practice acceptable, “in the punishment for crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” Among other states, Colorado led the movement to ban

involuntary servitude from its constitution in 2018. Utah and Nebraska followed suit in 2020. Alabama, Oregon, Tennessee and Vermont approved measures to prohibit the practice last year. California will put the matter to voters on its 2024 ballot. More than 40 supporters, lawmakers, and formerly incarcerated people gathered in Sacramento to discuss forced labor in prisons, said the *AP*. On the federal level, Congress has yet to scrub the language from the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Three-fourths of the states must ratify any such attempt. Nevada state Sen. Dallas Harris, D-Las Vegas, commented on ongoing efforts to change the federal language just before voting on the state measure, “While we can remove this from our state constitution, it still remains in our federal constitution and I urge my colleagues in the federal government to make similar steps today,” said Harris. “In the immortal words of Melissa Jefferson, better known as Lizzo, ‘It’s about damn time,’” she added.

CONNECTICUT

# No COVID hazard pay for guards

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

A federal appeals court ruled that corrections officers are not owed hazard pay for alleged exposure to COVID without adequate protective gear at their workplace, according to an article in *Bloomberg Law* by Jennifer Bennett. In 2020, nearly 200 correctional workers at a low-security federal facility in Connecticut sued in an effort to collect

hazard pay. However, a lower district court threw out the case in 2021. The corrections officers appealed in 2022. But in a 10-2 vote in February, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit agreed the lawsuit was without merit based on current Office of Personnel Management regulations for hazardous duty and environmentally differential pay. “The potential ramifications of this case are far-reaching and cut across the entire feder-

al workforce,” said Judge Raymond T. Chen. “That is not to say that such differential pay may not be warranted; rather, OPM’s schedules — as currently written — do not cover these kind of situations.” In the court’s written opinion, it said that the relevant categories in the OPM regulations — virulent biologicals and microorganisms — don’t cover “ambient exposure to serious communicable diseases transmitted by infected humans.”

MISSOURI

# Lawsuit filed on behalf of Muslim inmates

By William Burley  
Journalism Guild Writer

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) filed a lawsuit against the Missouri Department of Corrections in March, claiming that officials assaulted a group of Muslim inmates during their prayers, reported the *Associated Press*. The incident took place at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne, Terre, Missouri. On Feb. 28, 2021, as nine men prayed together for the fourth time that day, an officer suddenly ordered them to stop. According to the lawsuit, the men had prayed together frequently in their housing unit following a lock down of their chapel due to COVID-19 measures. Two complied with the order and moved away from the area. As many as 20 officers gathered at the scene, handcuffing two other prisoners

“Once a person enters a correctional facility, they do not lose their most basic rights and become targets for violence and abuse.”

—Kimberly Noe-Lehenbauer  
Civil Rights Attorney

who had stopped praying, pepper-spraying the remaining five, and beating one of those, according to the lawsuit. Seven of the men ended up in segregation, but did not receive eyes washes, showers, clean clothing or medical evaluations following the pepper spraying. Prison officials charged the men with “acts of organized disobedience,” a charge later reduced to a minor violation. Officials transferred some of the men to other prisons

without cause and retaliated against others with continuing physical abuse and humiliation after they filed complaints, alleges the lawsuit. “This lawsuit is about holding state officials to account and upholding the rights of all citizens,” said a news release from Kimberly Noe-Lehenbauer, a CAIR civil rights attorney. “Once a person enters a correctional facility, they do not lose their most basic rights and become an open target for violence and abuse.” The lawsuit is seeking suitable damages by a jury trial, alleging violation of the prisoners’ constitutional rights, including the right to practice their religion freely. In addition, the suit seeks protection from discrimination based on race and from cruel and unusual punishment. The corrections department did not immediately comment on the lawsuit.

ILLINOIS

# Catholic Conference of Illinois stresses importance of restorative justice model

## Archdiocese pushes for shift in approach — from retributive justice to healing and reconciliation

By Anthony Manuel  
Caravalho  
Staff Writer

The Catholic Conference of Illinois issued a document intended to educate all lawmakers, members of the Catholic Church and leading clergy as to what the Gospel calls for when it comes to justice. Titled “*A Catholic Vision for Restorative Justice in Illinois*,” the report clarified the Illinois dioceses’ position regarding justice and highlighted the importance of a restorative justice approach. Emily Cortina, director of outreach for the Illinois archdiocese’s jail ministry, known as Kolbe House, said understanding restorative justice requires new perspectives about what the justice system is. “It shifts the mindset that’s driving the justice system from ‘What crime was committed and how will the offender be punished?’ to ‘What harm was caused and how can that harm be healed?’” Cortina said. Mary Clare Birmingham, director of Kolbe House, said the state’s current legal system imposes punishment as retribution yet fails to create healing or true justice. “Restorative justice is a set of principles for dealing with the harm of crime or any way we’ve harmed each other that is embodying the vision of justice that Jesus offered,” Birmingham said. “It’s justice

including accountability, mercy and healing all together. It ends with the restoration of the individual to the community.” Birmingham said that the current justice system fails to provide opportunities for directly making amends with victims or the community, and it fails to address the issues underlying the crime. “[With the current system] there’s no way forward, to go from harm to how that can be addressed and healed, and how we can be reconciled to each other.” As part of the restorative justice model, Birmingham said it is necessary to address all parties’ needs before healing and reconciliation can happen. Marilou Gervacio, director of social services/social justice for the Catholic Conference of Illinois, said the new vision for justice came at the urging of bishops who lead the Illinois dioceses. The report was years in the making after bishops assigned to the conference’s jail and prison ministry committee took on the task. Michelle Martin, reporter for the *Chicago Catholic*, wrote that restorative justice was not a new issue for the church. She identified a previous report originating from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2000. Titled, “*Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*,” the report

became a foundation for the current rebranding of the church’s approach to criminal justice. Cortina said part of achieving restorative justice is making sure adequate support is available for those returning from incarceration to help them successfully reintegrate back into their communities. Currently, the diocese and jail and prison ministries communicate and work together, but they would need considerably more resources to provide seamless support across diocesan lines. Restorative justice brings communities into the process. That is important for communities of color, which are most affected by both crime and incarceration, Cortina said. Birmingham said the report’s release was timely due to the continuing public debate around crime and incarceration. She said restorative justice is not “a pie-in-the-sky theoretical idea” because other organizations and countries that suffered from decades of conflict, for instance Northern Ireland and South Africa, use it successfully. “That’s why our work with the church and this statement are so important,” Birmingham said. “It’s the work of all of us in the community to have that mind shift that everybody mentions. We want to move beyond the polarity of who’s soft on crime and who’s hard on crime.”



LAW & POLICY

AG Bonta creates post-conviction integrity review

By Michael Callahan  
Staff Writer

California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced in February the formation of a new statewide Post-Conviction Justice Unit that will investigate potential wrongful convictions and identify incarcerated people who may qualify for resentencing. The post-conviction unit, staffed by two deputy district attorneys, will work with local district attorneys to review and investigate cases handled by the Department of Justice where there is evidence of integrity issues, wrongful convictions and where convicted people claim innocence. “We know our criminal legal system is not infallible,” Bonta wrote in the press release. “Whether it’s as a result of bias, changes in forensics or any other issue, our system is not foolproof.”

“While this is only a beginning it represents a critical step forward for further fostering a culture of integrity and transparency that supports trust in the law”

—Rob Bonta  
CA attorney general

The unit will also consult with counties that do not operate conviction integrity units in order to review convictions in those counties for integrity issues. In reviewing new credible information, these integrity units could exonerate people convicted of a crime. By investigating and resolving



File photo

claims of injustice, the unit will reduce harm while increasing trust in the justice system, Bonta’s press release said. “While this is only a be-

ginning, it represents a critical step forward for further fostering a culture of integrity and transparency that supports trust in the law,” Bonta said.

Legislation would restrict ‘crime-free housing’ rules

By Stuart Clarke  
Journalism Guild Writer

Proposed legislation would ensure that California property owners no longer be forced to use “crime-free housing” rules to evict or exclude tenants with criminal histories, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Crime-free housing rules make it harder for renters, in particular African Americans and Latinos, to find affordable housing and keep it, said the bill’s author, Assemblywoman Tina McKinnor, D-Inglewood. Such policies can force

property owners to evict tenants or refuse to rent to those with a prior criminal record, said the *Times* story. “It’s systemic racism. It’s a way to exclude Brown and Black people from living in their apartment buildings, living in their communities,” said McKinnor. A 2020 *Times* investigation confirmed that crime-free housing laws, enacted in more than one-quarter of all locally governed areas in the state, disproportionately affected California’s Black and Latino residents. The City of Hesperia cited rising crime rates as the rea-

son to pass housing restrictions. But in Hesperia, as in other communities, approval of the policies occurred while crime rates were stable or decreasing, and Black or Brown populations were increasing, said the article. The Hesperia rules required property owners to evict those suspected of criminal activity, even though the allegations did not lead to an arrest, charges or conviction. An investigation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that evictions of Black and Latino renters were more likely than evictions of White

renters under the city of Hesperia’s program. “Backers of AB1418 say that their intention is to bar specific crime-free housing rules that they believe are the most discriminatory and ensnare those who have not committed any crime or nuisance,” wrote the *Times*. Alameda County already prohibits such rules and also prohibits the voluntary use of crime-free housing policies by landlords. However, property owners elsewhere in California can still voluntarily screen and exclude tenants based on their criminal histories unless local rules prohibit it.

Taskforce on CA reparations to make final recommendation

In three months, California’s reparations task force will submit its final recommendations for a massive reparations program to the state legislature, the largest attempt in U.S. history to compensate Black descendants enslaved people, according to a report from *MarketWatch*. A 2020 state law established the nine-member task force to study and recommend a plan for the state’s reparations program. The task force recently held its final in-person meeting in Sacramento. Expert witnesses discussed the implementation of recommendations at the meeting, including racial-justice activists, legal experts and a fiscal

and policy analyst from the California Legislative Analyst’s Office. The panel reviewed and finalized answers to questions in five key areas in its proposal. The task force recommendations will focus on property theft, devaluation of Black businesses, housing discrimination and homelessness, mass incarceration and over-policing and health harms. Several questions about how the program will be implemented are still under consideration. The first is to determine the time frame of the alleged damages. The second is how the task force will define eligibility requirements for California residents. How long poten-

tial recipients have lived in-state is one consideration, according to the task force report. The task force is still deciding whether previously identified lineage-based descendants will receive compensation or if reparations recipients will only include direct victims of slavery and racial segregation. The task force proposed direct monetary compensation to applicants, statewide policies to revamp the education system, criminal-justice and healthcare reform. Chris Burton, a San Franciscan who believes he may be eligible to receive reparations from the state, said he was cautiously optimistic about the program but worries some members of the

public will fight it. “I work in supposedly liberal San Francisco,” Burton said. “They were extremely mad when Colin Kaepernick was kneeling. Can you imagine how they would feel about having to give their money?” Task force members have acknowledged some negative responses from members of the public, but the proposal has garnered broad support from a range of legal groups, including the Asian Law Caucus and several Asian- and Hispanic-American Bar Associations. The final task force report may include a point-counterpoint list of public reactions to the program. —Stuart Clarke

First conviction overturned under new rap lyric law

By SQNews Staff

A state appellate court has reversed the conviction of Travon Rashad Venable Sr., previously convicted of being the getaway driver in a 2014 drive-by shooting, reported the Orange County Register. The prosecution built a case against Venable by using a rap music video that featured him. The trial judge should not have allowed prosecutors to enter potentially racially biased evidence in the form of lyrics from a rap song, because such evidence is a form of creative expression, ruled the court. The ruling reflects a new addition to California’s Ev-

idence Code that aims to eliminate racial bias. The Decriminalizing Artistic Expression Act was signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2022. It did not exist at the time of Venable’s trial. “There’s no question the trial judge’s admission of the rap evidence in this case did not comply with the new requirements for admission of creative expression,” wrote Justice Marsha Slough. “There’s also substantial concern that admitting the evidence may have had the precise effects the Legislature sought to avoid.” Venable’s conviction was the first overturned by the new law, according to the *Register*.

Bill would fund education for at-risk youth

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Contributing Writer

A bill in the California legislature would increase funding for education in juvenile halls and alternative high schools to prepare at-risk youth for college and future employment, reported *The Sacramento Bee*. Assembly Bill 906 would change the funding structure for these programs, which is currently determined by average daily attendance. The new bill would instead set baseline funding, giving more predictability and stability for the finances of these programs. The funding model that uses daily attendance negatively affects funding of schools whose students stay for short periods,

according to the article. Baseline funding, which works by creating a set minimum — a base — of funds allocated for each recipient, would add predictability and stability for such schools, removing the ups and downs of funding for schools with temporarily placed students. Many educators believe that the current model does not support at-risk students who need to continue their learning while in juvenile detention or in continuation high schools, the article said. “Students in our juvenile halls deserve quality education, that’s how we turn their lives around,” said Gina Cuclis, the president of the California County Boards of Education and a member of

the Sonoma County Board of Education. “If you create a base, you won’t have to worry about declining enrollment,” she added. Cuclis called the bill a game changer for youth. Kindra Britt, of the California County Superintendent’s office, said that the funding would enhance existing programs. “The additional base funding will go toward highly specialized teachers, para-educators, counselors, mental health professionals, and others who serve students,” the *Bee* reports. The California School Board Association co-sponsored the bill, authored by Mike Gipson (D-Carson). About 400 school board members lobbied March 9-10 for this bill and for other bills.

No executions in California in 17 years

By Cainen Chambers  
Staff Writer

It has been more than 17 years since California last executed one of its Death Row residents in January 2006. Administrative processes, executive actions and various legal battles have been contributing factors to prevent executions during the period, according to *Fox 40* news. “We are starting the process of closing death row to repurpose and transform the current housing units into something innovative and anchored in rehabilitation,” a CDCR spokesperson told the *Associated Press*. The last incarcerated individual to be put to death was 76-year-old Clarence Ray

Allen, who was executed by way of lethal injection, noted the article. A U.S. District Court found that the process of lethal injection in California was cruel and unusual punishment, because the incarcerated would experience very high levels of pain. CDCR organized and submitted a new lethal injection process in 2009. They were willing to make this process public information, accepting public feedback. This process was again revised and submitted in 2010 to the Office of Administrative Law which subsequently rejected the draft and required changes. This revision has been extended several times due to a desire

to change the lethal injection from a three-drug cocktail to a one-drug cocktail, reported *FOX*. Lastly, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a moratorium in 2019 stopping all executions, saying the death penalty disproportionately affected people of color. African Americans make up only 6.5% of the state’s population, but they currently make up a third of the population on death row, according to *Fox 40*. For the last two years CDCR has been implementing a pilot program which allows qualifying candidates to be moved to appropriate programming yards at other institutions. It has been announced by CDCR that this program will remain permanent.

COVID UPDATE

Attorney General withdraws appeal of Marin Co. Superior Court ruling

By Danielle Harris  
Managing Attorney, The Freedom Project  
San Francisco Public Defender

In January 2022, the Attorney General filed a Notice of Appeal in the consolidated cases that had been the subject of the 2021 evidentiary hearing in Marin Superior Court; that concluded with Judge Howard’s order finding that CDCR exhibited deliberate indifference to the health and safety of incarcerated persons in 2020. The order did not grant affirmative relief because Judge Howard found the violation to be a historical one, given widespread vaccine availability. Although the Attorney General noticed the appeals, they sat dormant over the next eight months. The Marin County Superior Court did not take the usual preliminary appeal processing steps of sending the notices to the Court of Appeal. So, although the appeal was properly “filed” (through timely notices in Superior Court), they were never docketed in the Court of Appeal, the appellate record was not prepared, and no briefing schedule was set. Then, on September 30, 2022, the Attorney General withdrew its Notices of Appeal. Judge Howard’s order is thus final. In the event of a future contagious and deadly disease outbreak improperly managed by CDCR, incarcerated persons can simultaneously file an administrative appeal and a habeas petition. Appeal exhaustion requirements may need to be litigated — circumstances depending — but an emergency situation warrants urgent use of all available options.



# California lawmaker undaunted in efforts to end involuntary servitude in prison

By Steve Brooks  
Editor-in-Chief

A California lawmaker has introduced a bill to put an end to involuntary servitude in state prisons.

Assembly member Lori D. Wilson (D-Suisun) introduced Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8 (ACA 8). Wilson hopes this bill will fare better than a failed attempt last year to pass similar legislation in the state.

“Slavery must not be a pillar of California’s justice system and this amendment will remove the exception from our state’s Constitution,” said Wilson.

Last year, Sen. Sydney Kamlager sponsored Assembly Constitutional Amendment 3 (ACA 3), legislation to amend California’s constitution to get rid of involuntary servitude. The Senate rejected that attempt.

State Sen. Steve Glazer (D-Orinda) said slavery “was an evil that will forever be a stain on the history of our great nation.” But he said the proposed amendment was not about slavery, but whether California “should require felons in state prison to work,” according to a report by the *Associated Press* in June 2022.

“Banning the work requirement in our prisons would undermine our rehabilitation programs,” Glazer said. “Inmates will sue claiming their wages are too low, their hours

are too high or that it is unconstitutional to link good-time credit and early release to their willingness to work.”

Glazer said the state should change the amendment to make clear that involuntary servitude does not include any rehabilitative activity required of people in prison. But it appeared Kamlager would not support that, according to the *AP*.

About a dozen states are pursuing efforts to get rid of involuntary servitude this year, according to the Abolish Slavery National Network.

Lawmakers in Nevada are advancing legislation to remove involuntary servitude from their state constitution, following the lead of Alabama, Oregon, Tennessee and Vermont, states that banned forced labor last fall.

“This ACA is a massive step in California’s quest to end systemic racism,” said Sam Lewis, executive director of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition. “The Constitution of the State of California should ... not perpetuate the lineage of American slavery,” he told the *Los Angeles Times*.

Involuntary servitude language still exists in more than a dozen state constitutions and is a lasting legacy of chattel slavery in the United States.

In 2018, Colorado became the first state in recent years to revise its constitution to ban the practice, followed by Utah and Nebraska in 2020.



SQNews archive photo

In California, more than 40 supporters of ACA 8 gathered outside the state capitol, where lawmakers and formerly incarcerated people talked about the impacts of forced labor.

“Slavery is wrong in all its forms, and California, of all states, should be clear in denouncing that in its constitution,” said Wilson, who also chairs the California Legislature’s Black Caucus.

It wasn’t until 1974 that an amendment changed the state constitution to read, “Slavery is prohibited, involuntary servitude is prohibited except to punish crime.”

A task force California set up to recommend reparations

for the harm caused by slavery and racism has endorsed removing the exception clause and repealing the work requirement for incarcerated people, according to AB 3121 Interim Report Preliminary Recommendations from 2022. Final recommendations are due on June 30.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation requires most incarcerated people to work while in prison. Jobs assigned to individuals range from construction work and dog training to computer coding and hospice care.

The California Prison Industry, a state business organization, employs around

7,000 incarcerated people. The employees make a variety of goods including clothing, food, license plates and office furniture, which are sold mostly to state agencies and departments.

Some incarcerated people do menial service jobs. G. Green is a 61-year-old yard-crew worker incarcerated at San Quentin for 12 years. “I worked in the kitchen for a few years making 13 cents an hour,” said Green. “I then got this yard-crew job where I make 24 cents an hour. I only see about \$12 a month after restitution payments.”

Green said the prison doesn’t give him toothpaste, foot powder, dental floss, deodorant, and other important items. “The cosmetics I need to keep clean cost well over \$12,” he said. “Canteen prices are sky high and I cannot afford it even working eight hours a day.”

The Newsom administration warned that the constitutional amendment could require the state to pay inmates minimum wage, which in California is \$15 per hour. That would cost taxpayers about \$1.5 billion per year, according to Aaron Edwards, an analyst with the California Department of Finance.

Daniel Kramer has also worked in the kitchen at San Quentin. He has spent 23 years incarcerated and has been at San Quentin since 2021. “If you give people minimum wage they’d be

more willing to work and do a good job,” he said.

“I overhear a lot of prisoners saying they want to work, but not for pennies. [Free] prison kitchen employees get paid well to force us to get wet and greasy and do the grunt work,” said Kramer. “Involuntary servitude devalues a person.”

Orlando Smith, incarcerated for 26 years, is 56 years old. “I am too old to be carrying mop buckets up and down five flights of stairs for 8 cents an hour,” said Smith. “Involuntary servitude isn’t about crime and punishment, it’s about exploiting poor people.”

Prison officials say that jobs help reduce recidivism and allow incarcerated people to pay their restitution and other court-ordered fees. Participants returned to prison 26% to 38% less often, according to the California Prison Industry, and their work “provide[s] significant economic benefits to the state,” according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Smith said he worked in the kitchen for about a day and noticed that when people are forced to work they don’t respect their job. “Decarceration can offset the cost of paying reasonable wages for prison labor,” said Smith.

“California has the fifth biggest economy in the world; it’s not about money, this is about hanging on to the past,” said Kramer.



Stock image

## National trend sees police groups attempt to ‘tilt scales’

Rahan Asaan  
Journalism Guild Writer

Police unions are funding ballot initiatives and placing allies on oversight boards to undermine civilian monitoring of alleged misconduct, according to the *Marshall Project*.

Law enforcement groups are often resistant to civilian oversight and contend that police are more suited to judge misconduct, said the Jan. 21 report titled *How Police Unions Try to Tilt the Scales on Oversight Boards*.

As to civilian oversight,

“It would be akin to putting a plumber in charge of the investigation of airplane crashes,” said Jim Pasco, executive director of the Fraternal Order of Police, in a 2021 *Washington Post* article.

Political action is one method police and their unions use to resist accountability from civilian oversight, the story said.

“It can lull people into thinking there is some level of accountability when there isn’t,” said Abigail Cerra, former chairwoman of the Minneapolis Police Conduct Over-

sight Committee.

There are about 200 oversight agencies in the U.S. and their powers range from advisory to having the power to collect records during investigations and influence discipline, according to the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement.

Police unions want oversight boards to play a more passive role or they want their supporters to occupy board seats to affect the process, the article said.

Debates concerning the eli-

gibility of family members of law enforcement seeking to serve on boards are common, the article said.

Some anti-police activists say such boards work “against deeper change,” according to the article.

“Without any such check or oversight, people like Derek Chauvin are allowed to abuse their position with impunity,” said Cerra, who quit her board position last spring over the diluted oversight process. Chauvin was the officer convicted in the murder of George Floyd.

## ABA examines plea bargain process

The American Bar Association’s Plea Bargain Task Force released its 2023 report in February, revealing that “98% of criminal proceedings end in a plea bargain instead of a jury trial,” wrote JP Leskovich of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in *JURIST, Wikimedia (Tony Webster)*.

The Plea Bargain Task Force came into being in 2019, a creation of the ABA’s Criminal Justice Section. Its purpose is to examine and address the plea bargain process in the U.S.

“[T]he emphasis on resolving criminal proceedings through plea bargains negatively impacts the integrity of the process by creating ‘perverse incentives’ for lawyers and judges to conclude cases quickly instead of justly,” wrote Leskovich.

For example, in a plea-bargain intensive system, allegations of misconduct by law enforcement and other government actors are not subject to examination or remedy by the public when exposed at pre-trial hearings

because defense counsel does not litigate these issues, said the report.

The report also decries the lack of civic engagement when cases are often resolved via plea deals rather than jury trials, and notes that this reduces community oversight of prosecutors.

Black defendants are less likely to have counts dismissed or receive acceptable plea deals, demonstrating the systemic racial biases in the plea bargain process, the report says.

Marquese Whitaker is a San Quentin resident with a lengthy sentence. “I took a plea deal because I had no confidence that I could win in trial even though my case was weak,” said Whitaker.

“Going to trial without money, a good lawyer and resources means that if you’re found guilty in an unfair proceeding, the judge is going to stretch you out with the maximum amount of time they can give you.

“It would have really helped me if everyone approached this situation with any level

of fairness,” Whitaker said. “I barely knew anything about the legal process or what my rights were when it came to accepting a plea. The outcome would have been different if I were more informed.”

The ABA presented 14 principles that informed their analysis and suggested that those principles can aid policymakers, lawyers, and judges when they consider the plea bargain process.

Among those principles are the idea that a “vibrant and active docket” of trials promotes justice and that there are certain rights that defendants should never relinquish in a plea bargain.

The Task Force recommends general reforms that include the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences, adjustments to the rules of procedure to make it a more effective process, and the adoption of more rules that provide ethical guidance.

“The voice of a community is almost entirely lost in a system dominated by pleas,” the report said.

—Rahan Asaan

## DA Jenkins to drop manslaughter charges against former SFPD officer

San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins intends to drop manslaughter charges against a fired San Francisco police officer, according to the *Associated Press*.

According to a letter obtained by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jenkins implied that her review of the case factors revealed internal conflicts and that the charges brought by former San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin were politically motivated.

“The irregularities and facts that have come to light surrounding the case against officer Samayoa suggest that the charges were not filed in good faith,” Jenkins said in a statement. “[They] appear to have been politically motivated, and have made it impossible for us to proceed forward with this prosecution.”

The incident involved former San Francisco Police officer Christopher Samayoa, who shot and killed carjacking suspect Keita O’Neil during a chase in 2017. It was Samayoa’s fourth day on the job.

Boudin told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he filed the charges against Samayoa based on the facts. This led to Samayoa’s firing by the police department and a \$2.5 million settlement paid to O’Neil’s family, reported the *AP*.

“It’s clear Jenkins has been coordinating with the officer’s defense team to avoid a public hearing on the disturbing facts of the case,” Boudin said. “She is scapegoating me to try to divert attention from what this decision ultimately reveals about her: Jenkins will not hold everyone equally accountable under the law, she is deeply politically motivated, and she does not care about victims of police violence.”

In accordance with the O’Neil family’s wishes, Jenkins asked the attorney general’s office to review the case; the office confirmed the reception of this request in February.

O’Neil was suspected of stealing a van owned by the California Lottery and assaulting an employee of the agency. According to a police report,

officers chased the stolen van to a public housing area where O’Neil abandoned the vehicle.

According to body camera footage, O’Neil was initially running toward the patrol car. The car began to move, at which point Samayoa drew his weapon, opened the passenger door, and fired a single shot through the window. O’Neil was running in the opposite direction.

According to the article, O’Neil later died at a hospital. He was unarmed.

O’Neil family attorney, Brian Ford, referred to Jenkins’ decision to drop charges against Samayoa as “shameful and cowardly.”

“She is more interested in protecting murderous cops and attacking Boudin than in seeking justice for the citizens of San Francisco,” Ford told the newspaper. “But it means that Attorney General Rob Bonta has all the more duty to investigate and take up the prosecution of Christopher Samayoa for the murder of Keita O’Neil.”

—Rahan Asaan



"My Mom passed away, but I know she loved me all through her life. I miss her and continue to love her, and I thank God for giving me such a loving Mom."  
—Victor Olguin

"Momma I love you, you are always there for me, you're my baby girl, family forever."  
—Dante D. Jones

"Mothers are one of a kind, and my mother was the most beautiful, caring, and loving mother, you're always on my mind, love your son."  
—Victor Hernandez

"I want to thank my ma for always being there through thick and thin, she never gave up on me." I want to express my gratitude with a Happy Mother's Day"  
—Derrell Davis

"I like to say happy Mother's day to all mothers, to the mother that's there and to the mothers not there. Mothers are a holy divine spirit, without mothers there would be no you. They create life."  
—KP

"I am thankful for the life she gave me regardless if it was not the best, I'm thankful for the life she gave."  
—Manuel Gonzalez

"Mom although you been gone for a couple of decades, I still think about and love you every day. May you be in heaven Insha Allah, (God Willing)"  
—Bruce Hanif Wells Jr

"Grateful for our mother earth, and moms before us, and the moms for them paving the way."  
—Christopher Craig

"Much love and respect to all the moms we wouldn't be who we are without you, the keepers of the warriors, thank you."  
—Maxx Robison

"For me a mother is the first person you are introduced to in this world. Internally in the womb, and externally held within her arms outside in the world."  
—Floyd D. Collins

"I am so happy I still have you Ma. God kept you in my life. No matter how bad my choices were in life, thank you for being there for me, my beautiful awesome Mama. Happy Mother's day, love always your son."  
—Tommy Wickard

"I would like to recognize all the single mothers who are raising their kid on their own. This is in recognition of my beautiful mother who is in heaven, she raised four boys on her own, it was not easy, but she did it, because of her I know how to love. Happy Mother's Day."  
—Jose Luque

"My mother passed in 1986, however, her love and strength continues to empower me and give me focus. Happy Mother's Day Hazel Adams in spirit,"  
—Michael Adams

"To my mother Gail Marie Mitchell-Taylor our relationship has had incredible ups and downs, but through the last seven years of incarceration, you have shown me the mother I have always wanted which inspires me to show you the son you always wanted. With Love and happy Mother's Day, your son"  
—Nakia "Majestic" Khantrell King

"To my amazing mother Maria, you are my rock. When the world was crumbling around me you held me up, even when I could barely hold myself up. I love you with all my heart."  
—Tone Alcantara

Mother: Words alone aren't enough to express my deepest gratitude, admiration and love for you. Your strength, sacrifices, your resiliency, your patience, and your grace have carried our family forward despite many obstacles. You embodied courage and love. For that I am forever grateful. Without you, there would be no me. Happy Mother's Day Mom!  
—Dao Ong



▲ Love, your son Adonis



▲ Love, from Clayton



▲ The best Mom in the world! Love, your son Dao



▲ Thanks for all the love, your son Aldo



▲ Thanks for all your love and support, your son Nardo



▲ You're incredible Mom, Love, Kolby



▲ Mom, you're my rock! Love, your son Rocky



▲ Mom, my words will always fall short of expressing my gratitude and love for you. We are doing it! Love, Nic



▲ Thank you Mom for all the blessings, Love, Franco



▲ Thanks for loving me unconditionally, love your son Miguel



▲ To my Mother Maria, your son Miguel



▲ To my Mom Yolanda, I love you. Love, Miguel



▲ Looking forward to your hug again Mom, Love, Amos



▲ Thank you for being there all these years, love Brendan



▲ You are loved and appreciated, always & forever, Love Adam



▲ Thank you for all the love you give to us Mom, love Yanci



▲ My protector from heaven, Love your son Raymond



▲ Happy Mother's Day Queen! Enjoy this special day, Michael



▲ Love you forever, can't wait to cook with you again, love Bos



▲ From sunrise to sunset, the memories you left will not be forgotten. Love, Maleek



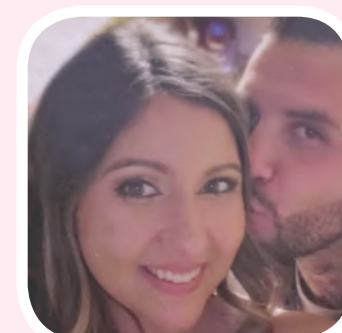
▲ Best Mom in the world! Love Christopher



▲ Happy Mother's Day! Love, Harddeep



▲ Together forever, love Edwin



▲ For all your amazingness. We love you, Garcia family

Happy  
Mother's  
Day

## MOTHER'S DAY A WORLDWIDE TRADITION

By Jerry Maleek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair

People around the world celebrate Mother's Day, honoring mothers' contributions to their families and communities.

In the United States as well as in other countries, Mother's Day observations reflect diverse traditions and cultural influences, according to *Wikipedia*.

In the 19th century, Ann Jarvis organized Mother's Friendship Day with a vision to bring together families divided by the stresses of the Civil War. Her daughter, Anna Jarvis, would carry on the concept, as described below.

A more formal observation of Mother's Day began on May 10, 1908, with a worship service at St. Andrew's Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia. Even though the first observation took place in a church, the day was not rooted in religion or religious beliefs.

"Most cultures celebrate mothers, because they are traditionally the main caregiver, which comes with great responsibility," wrote Mei-Ling Hopgood, author of *How Eskimos Keep Their Babies Warm: And Other Adventures in Parenting*.

According to the academic publication *Scholastic*, a Japanese version of Mother's Day became widespread after World War II. The focus was to comfort mothers who had lost sons in the war. Red and white carnations symbolized the sweetness of motherhood. Children presented a living mother with a red carnation, and displayed a white one if their mother had died. The custom has since evolved into using white carnations for everyone.

Ethiopia observes Mother's Day with its Antrosht festival in the fall. Families gather for meals and a celebration. Daughters customarily supply vegetables and cheese for the meals, with sons providing the meat. The Ethiopian custom includes singing and dancing, and acknowledging family heroes.

Following the many lives lost in World War I, the French expressed particular appreciation for mothers with big families, recognizing the importance of restoring the country's population. Mothers received medals and a flower-shaped cake.

Hindus recognize Durga, the goddess of mothers, in a 10-day fiesta called Durga Puja. The event, which dates back to the 16th century, serves as both a family reunion and a religious ceremony. A story frequently told in conjunction with the celebration is that of Durga bringing her children to their grandparents' home to show them off. Families invest much time and energy in decorating their homes, acquiring gifts and preparing food for the event.

In 1912, Anna Jarvis trademarked the phrase Mother's Day, to indicate through the singular possessive construction that each family should honor its own mother, rather than the plural possessive implying a celebration of all mothers around the globe.

President Woodrow Wilson used Jarvis's trademark spelling in his proclamation of Mother's Day in 1914, and other presidents followed suit.



EDUCATION

# Mt. Tam College offers ethics class

Course to help incarcerated understand own criminality

By Michael Callahan  
Staff Writer

An ethics class is helping some San Quentin residents understand what led them to crime — and prison — offering hope for rehabilitation.

Bill Smoot, an author and teacher at the prison's Mt. Tamalpais College, is leading the class for the fourth time.

The curriculum would be familiar to other professors of philosophy. Along with contemporary issues, it covers social contract theory, virtue ethics, Kantian and utilitarian ethics, and Socrates and Plato.

The makeup of the students would not be familiar. They are convicted felons ranging in age from about 30 to 70, Smoot said in a Jan. 9 blog post.

"When I tell people that I taught a college course on ethics at San Quentin Prison, they pause, waiting for a punch line," Smoot said. "There is none."

Smoot does not see an ethics course in a prison as ironic or contradictory. "Teaching ethics there is not more difficult but easier," Smoot wrote. "How often do the 'successful' people in society become so habituated to achieving and performing that the moral dimension of life — the value of everything we do — is lost sight of?"

Incarcerated students are in touch with that dimension, argues Smoot.

"It is with them, and that is why discussing ethics there is easier," he said. "It is easier because so much is at stake for them and they know it."

Smoot marvels at the candor of his incarcerated students, who live with anguish and regret over crimes committed years ago. Most people in the class are forthcoming, emphasizing that what they did when they hurt people was their responsibility. They are paying a price for their bad choices.

Incarcerated students understand the idea of a tacit agreement between society and its individual members, perceiving that obeying the law is the individual's part of the contract. But the

reciprocal obligation of society to the individual is less clear to people who grew to adulthood enjoying few societal advantages.

As Smoot has learned in 11 years of teaching for the Prison University Project at San Quentin, many of his students come from difficult backgrounds.

Their upbringings included deteriorated housing, living on mean streets, and witnessing the use of drugs and guns. They had abusive, addicted, and/or absent parents, and went to failing schools, Smoot blogged.

Accordingly, student interest peaked when discussing the Cornell West essay *Nihilism in Black America*, which offers an explanation of the plight of Black Americans, focusing on a loss of hope, morality and meaning. The discussion of this topic resonated with Black as well as White students, but left a somber mood.

A subsequent discussion of restorative justice brought energy back into the classroom. Philosophy often has this effect, wrote Smoot. Some subjects are more relatable.

"Beyond the immutable past lies the open future," he wrote. "Crimes can serve as springboards for restoration."

As discussed in Smoot's classroom, restorative justice "means that a person who has done wrong can work to make it right," he wrote.

"He can sincerely repent, apologize, and make restitution to his victims or their families. He can also work to restore himself — to become a person less broken and more whole, one who truly renounces his crime and who would not do something similar again."

Not every person who enters the restorative justice model will be successful, wrote Smoot. "Not everyone deserves the chance. But some do."

The professor reports that about 70 incarcerated students have taken his ethics class. He has also taught classes in English, film, and critical thinking at Mt. Tamalpais College.



Courtesy of csus.edu

# Sac State's Project Rebound purchases houses to help formerly incarcerated students

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

Sacramento State University purchased two homes to house eight formerly incarcerated students who are attending the school. The homes, managed by Project Rebound, will allow formerly incarcerated students to gain stability while pursuing their goal of higher learning, according to the *Sacramento Bee*.

The Project Rebound Consortium contributed \$550,000 towards the purchases. Other contributors included University Enterprises Inc., Sacramento State's auxiliary and the Office of President Robert S. Nelsen. They each contributed \$275,000, according to UEI Executive Director Jim Reinhart.

Aaron Greene, the director of Project Rebound at Sacramento State, said that people who participate in the program came from heavily disadvantaged backgrounds. Often locked up for decades, they have no history of credit, work experience, or a way to take care of their basic needs.

The two homes will have strict policies against drugs, alcohol, and smoking. "We also want to make sure that the neighborhood looks good and is kept clean, and offer help to people who might need it. We

want to be good neighbors," Greene said.

Student residents who participate in the program receive access to many necessities like transcripts, campus services, computers, bikes and workshops, and have celebrations for milestones, birthdays and holidays.

Trish Morris, an associate professor of sociology and executive director of Sacramento State's Project Rebound program, discussed the housing-related challenges that formerly incarcerated people face.

"Finding secure, stable housing is a challenge for people who have criminal records and a lack of rental history. Participants in the program must secure local housing or be paroled to the county where they were living prior to incarceration. Many end up on the streets or staying with friends or relatives," said Morris.

Sacramento State has also partnered with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to provide education to prisoners. Transforming Outcomes Project, a joint program, welcomes people incarcerated at Folsom and Mule Creek state prisons to apply for the program. Sacramento State faculty teaches classes virtually and in person inside the prisons to help inmates earn their degrees.



By Charlotte West  
College Inside Newsletter  
Reprinted by permission

Two hundred years ago, women were usually housed in the same prisons as men. But that changed in 1873, when two Quaker reformers, Sarah Smith and Rhoda Coffin, opened the first public prison for women in the United States — what would later become known as the Indiana Women's Prison.

History, it turns out, has a lot to tell us about the current state of women's incarceration. Today, around 172,000 women are incarcerated in the United States. But although they make up less than 10% of the total jail and prison population, women's incarceration rates have grown at twice the pace of men's according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

A new book, *Who would believe a prisoner?*, coming out in April, tells a number of shocking stories, ranging from a prison doctor who used his position as cover for nefarious medical research to private prisons run by the Catholic Church. The work, with chapters written by 10 incarcerated or formerly incarcerated women, challenges many of the things that historians thought they knew about the Indiana Women's Prison.

"By researching incarcerated women of the past ... we could revive and tell their stories while slyly critiquing the current carceral state," co-editor Michelle Daniel Jones wrote.

The women's research, which began in 2012 as part of a history class in a prison education program, was intended to be a short brochure. But there was so much material that

# History: Incarcerated women, then and now

the scope of the project quickly ballooned as the women found more questions than answers. Ultimately, the book complicates the narrative surrounding the prison's founders.

The team behind the book also had to fight for their own legitimacy throughout the process. Not only are the perspectives of their subjects — incarcerated women — often left out of dominant historical narratives, the incarcerated researchers also risked being dismissed because of their own status.

"We were not supposed to be legitimate, serious scholars doing legitimate work and really changing the narrative," said Anastazia Schmid, who wrote several chapters. "Hence the title of the book, *Who would believe a prisoner?*"

**'I am one of those women'**  
Schmid's research honed in on Theophilus Parvin, who served as the prison doctor in the institution's early years. He would later be remembered as one of the foremost gynecologists of the late 19th century.

Schmid was immediately skeptical when she came across records of his work 130 years later: What exactly was someone like Parvin, a prominent physician who served as the president of the American Medical Association, doing at a women's prison in a backwater state? Schmid suspected the doctor might be using his position as cover for using the women as human guinea pigs.

Professor Kelsey Kauffman, who taught that first history class, asked Schmid what theoretical basis she had for such a wild theory. Other scholars had, after all, documented



Courtesy of Indiana State Library

The Indiana Reformatory Institution for Women and Girls (1900)

Parvin's unquestionable contributions to fields of gynecology and obstetrics.

"I know," Schmid shot back, "because I am one of those women."

Schmid's own traumatic experiences with prison health care after she was incarcerated in 2001 informed her approach to historical research. During her incarceration in Indiana, she spent two years at a state psychiatric hospital in a state of "chemical restraint," where she was drugged with an extreme and potentially lethal amount of psychotropic medications, she said.

Based on her own lived experiences, she was sure the doctor was exploiting incarcerated women as human guinea pigs. Parvin would have seen the prison as the "most opportune space to ... poke and prod and do whatever the hell he wanted to do to these women," she said. As Schmid researched further, her hunch was correct. Parvin conducted medical tri-

als, subjected women to experimental surgeries, and tested drugs on them.

"Myself and probably every other women in this project, somewhere along the lines of the research, we found one of these women in history whose story so closely paralleled our own experience," Schmid said. "How could we not highlight the women themselves in their stories?"

**A missing piece of history**

Prior to 1873, women who were convicted of crimes in Indiana were housed at the men's prison in Jeffersonville. Smith and Coffin sought to create a more gentle, humane institution run by women for women. So, they opened the Indiana Reformatory Institution for Women and Girls, the prison's original name.

"It was supposed to be a very ... feel good kind of story," said Schmid, who was released in 2019 after a federal court overturned her conviction. After finishing a graduate pro-

gram in medical humanities, she now works as an independent scholar.

But what Schmid and her peers found was not the expected tale of female reformers rescuing female prisoners from male institutions. The women under Smith and Coffin's care were often subjected to unsanitary conditions, corporal punishment, and grueling work in the name of saving their wayward souls.

To help offset the cost of running the prison, the women labored in the prison laundry and helped fulfill manufacturing contracts by sewing overalls and shirts. In essence, the authors describe a 19th century blueprint for modern, for-profit prisons.

They also found that the Quakers weren't the only religious group attempting to get poor women and girls back on a righteous path. The research team discovered that women convicted of prostitution had been incarcerated in private

facilities run by the Catholic Church prior to the opening of the public prison — a missing piece of the history of women's incarceration.

**Origin Stories**

As the realities of what happened at the first women's prison come to light, the research team lifted up the stories of incarcerated mothers, daughters, and sisters who were very nearly forgotten by society. Almost every chapter in the book is named after one of the women they found mentioned in the archives.

It wasn't just the stories of historical figures like Belle, Minnie and Mary Jane — all women who had been incarcerated at the Indiana Women's Prison in the 19th and early 20th centuries — that they hoped to tell. The research team also wanted to focus on women because they are often overshadowed by men in contemporary discussions of mass incarceration, Schmid said.

They also took a research approach that acknowledged their own positionality to their subjects. "We just really own that the way in which we are observing the archive is valid, even in this captive experience," said Daniel Jones, who was released in 2017 and is now a Ph.D. student in American Studies at New York University.

She said she wanted to write the history of the Indiana Women's Prison to help people understand women's incarceration today.

"I'm a person who's interested in origin stories: how in the fuck did we get here?" Daniel Jones said. "We've got to go back to the very, very beginning."



HEALTH

# Medicaid funds to treat addiction in prison facilities

*Advocates say proposal would reduce crime, opiod-related overdose deaths*

By Michael Callahan  
Staff Writer

The federal government plans to allow states to use Medicaid funds for addiction treatment in correctional facilities, a reversal of a long-standing policy.

In 1965 when Medicaid was launched, the joint federal and state health-insurance program for low-income people prohibited the use of its funds for incarcerated people. The newly proposed Medicaid rules will reverse course and allow its use for mental health and addiction-related medical services in federal and state correctional facilities, according an article by *The Associated Press*.

The new rules are related to a previous revision of Medicaid that allows states to establish programs to enroll incarcerated people in Medicaid up to 90 days before their release. Officials and advocates contend that expanding Medicaid coverage to mental health and drug treatment for incarcerated people can help reduce crime and keep people alive.

“Treating substance abuse in jails and prisons is smart. It’s a smart move for our economic prosperity, for our safety and health of our nation,” said Dr. Rahul Gupta, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Dr. Gupta announced the plan when visiting the Camden County jail in New Jersey.

The majority of incarcerated people in jails and prisons meet criteria for drug dependency and abuse, according to the article.

Experiencing drug withdrawals while in detention can cause people to self-medicate through contraband street drugs, which can lead to overdosing and other problems.

In addition, incarcerated people are at especially high risk of dying from

an overdose upon their release, which is the leading cause of death for those recently released from custody. This is due in part because of the lowered tolerance for drugs such as heroin in people who quit using when in custody.

The new rule will allow state and federal correction departments to provide prescribed drugs to reduce harm and safely manage addictions as part of an approach known as Medically Assisted Treatment.

In California prisons for example, incarcerated people struggling with addiction can partake in MAT programs. Now, federal Medicaid funds can be used to help pay for such programs in prisons and jails across the nation.

“We’re really hopeful that this coverage will help people improve their health outcomes and avoid additional involvement in the criminal justice system,” said Gabrielle de la Gueronniere, a vice president at the Legal Action Center.

Similar to the world outside of prison walls, medicines for inmates can come with a large price tag. The costs of some MAT medicines are particularly high. This includes Sublocade, an opioid addiction treatment drug administered through a shot every four weeks.

For example, the Camden County jail that Dr. Gupta visited has spent more than \$528,000 since 2019 to provide Sublocade to 170 incarcerated people, according the *AP* article.

Nearly a quarter of the incarcerated people in the jail are receiving some form of MAT treatment for addiction, and the funding for the program relies on state budget allocations and grant money.

“It allows us to use those SAFE [grant] dollars to go further and to do more,” said Sarah Adelman, New Jersey’s human services commissioner.



Illustration: Andrew Hardy // SQNews

# Study: The darker side of daydreaming

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

There are numerous positive side effects of daydreaming, but recent studies show it’s possible to do it too much.

Daydreaming is useful as a coping mechanism and a guard against loneliness, according to an article by Giulia Poerio in *The Conversation*. The practice, which typically only takes a few fleeting seconds, can boost creativity, planning and problem-solving skills, but when it consumes several hours per day, daydreaming can become a disorder.

Called maladaptive daydreaming, the condition that causes people construct elaborate imaginary worlds for hours every day affects an estimated 2.5% of adults, according to a 2022 study.

The disorder, not yet formally recognized by medical professionals, appears to live alongside con-

ditions like anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and ADHD. One study found that maladaptive daydreaming and OCD were common to half of its participants, suggesting that the two disorders share mechanisms including lack of cognitive control, dissociation and intrusive thoughts.

The practice of deliberately immersing in self-constructed fantasies can date back to childhood, when children create imaginary worlds with intricate themes and scenarios that can become rewarding and evolve over years.

This created world is a protective space from the harsh reality that a child could be experiencing, the article said. Those realities may include traumas, difficult life events and social isolation. A child can find comfort in daydreaming as a tool to regulate stress.

But when people are unable or unwilling to process traumatic or

unpleasant events, daydreaming can become a compulsive and addictive coping mechanism that can exacerbate the original problem. It can also harm development of social building skills, according to some studies.

Those who live with this condition can take measures to control their behavior. In one study, a man reduced the amount of time he spent in the fantasy world through a combination of psychological treatments, cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness.

Social media has increased interest in maladaptive daydreaming, but mental health professionals have yet to officially recognize the disorder in psychiatric diagnostic manuals.

Once maladaptive daydreaming is widely recognized by psychiatrists, people who live with the disorder will be able to access a wider range of treatment options, Poerio said in the story.



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

## How are food and health related?

What you eat impacts your health and wellbeing in more ways than you might think. Eating certain foods can boost your immune system, increase your energy level, help control your weight, and improve your mental health. Many health problems are related to diet. For example, high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol can be caused by diets high in calories, sodium (salt), and sugars, combined with lack of physical activity and family history. Having these health problems can also increase your risk for cancer, stroke, and heart disease. The role food plays in our lives goes even beyond our physical health. Preparing and enjoying food can connect us to

# YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

*The food we put into our bodies has a direct impact on our physical health*

our communities and cultural heritage, help us relax, and be fun — food means a lot of different things to different people.

## How can I eat well while inside?

It can be difficult to nourish yourself while inside. We know that your food choices are limited and it’s often hard to come by fresh fruits and vegetables in prison. Most items available at the canteen are high in salt and may not be affordable to everyone. It may also feel hard to feel inspired by and connected to your food when you can’t

easily cook what you want for yourself. While options are limited, consider how to choose the foods that will help you feel your best.

A great tip we got from one of our CHWs for making ramen: use only half the flavor packet and then add more flavor with garlic or other seasonings you like. Ramen flavor packets contain a lot of sodium (salt), which increases your risk for high blood pressure and heart disease. This change still gives you that great flavor, while being a little more mindful of your health. Another tip is to swap out chips and candy

for snacks like granola bars or trail mix which have more protein and less salt/sugar. Swap sugary drinks for drinking more water. These changes may seem small, but they can improve your health in the long term. A first step to eating better is thinking more about what you are eating!

You may feel more connected to your food when you cook it and when you can share food with others. We asked returning community members at TCN to share what food they cooked inside that helped them feel connected.

## What should I know before I leave prison?

Before your release, start thinking about how your diet will play a role in your reentry. It will be exciting to have more food choices and more control over what you eat. You can reclaim your diet by buying what you want, eating what you choose, or cooking for your community. While it is a time of excitement, there will also be challenges. You will need to shop for groceries and cook meals on top of balancing your other needs and responsibilities. It is normal for people to struggle with gaining weight after release with more choices and eating convenient fast foods; many struggle with affording food or knowing how to cook independently.

Plan ahead for how you will manage this change.

Some things to think about: Where could you shop near home? How do you think you will prepare meals? How will you eat fresh fruits/vegetables and not just fast foods? Are there any foods you’re excited to try cooking on your own? Consider collecting recipes or getting advice from other folks inside or outside before your release!

## What can I do in the community to eat well?

Here are a few ideas to help you with eating well once you get out:

Apply for the *CalFresh statewide food assistance program*. You can enroll at your county social services office right when you get out or call the CalFresh info line:(877) 847-3663. You will receive monthly electronic benefits that will help you buy nutritious food at many markets and stores.

At your local grocery store, shop around the outer perimeter of the store, where you will find fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy. Foods that are packaged and processed tend to be in the middle aisles. Come in with a list of what you need to prevent overbuying. Depending on where you live, fruit & vegetable options may be limited or expensive — do the best you can with what is available.

Explore your local farmers’ market. If you have one near you, farmer’s markets are great locations to buy

fresh foods at an affordable price. You may find new fruits or vegetables to try! Many farmers’ markets take CalFresh benefits. They are also a great place to hang out, listen to music, and meet new people.

Explore other community food programs (like food shelves or distributions) that may help you keep your kitchen stocked. You can even ask at your health clinic if they have a food pantry or connections with a local food bank for fresh fruits and vegetables. In some cases, food banks visit health centers on certain days.

Rediscover the joy of cooking and eating! Enjoy the foods you have been missing and try new recipes. See if there are free cooking classes in your community. Gather with family or friends to enjoy your favorite foods with others.

What do you make inside to connect to your food? Submit your go-to recipe to us to be featured in future articles!

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

## Sharon’s Gumbo Recipe

TCN CHW Sharon enjoyed making this recipe inside for herself and others. You can cook it with different heat sources and adjust any ingredients with what you have access to!

### Ingredients:

Sausage & chicken (or any fresh/canned meat) (diced)  
1 can corn (drained)  
1 can carrots (drained, diced)  
Dried Okra  
Canned Tomato Paste  
Oil  
Water (1 cup)

Seasonings (optional): Salt, Cajun Salt, Lemon Pepper, Garlic, Red Pepper, Black Pepper, Ginger, Chicken or Beef seasoning packets from Top Ramen

### Steps:

Season meat with preferred/available seasonings and cook in a little oil until browned.  
Add tomato paste and water to meat and cook together for 15-20 minutes. Add additional seasonings to your liking.  
Stir in vegetables and cook for another 1-2 minutes. Serve with rice!



GRADUATION



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

# No More Tears: Graduates learn the tools of nonviolence

By Jerry Maleek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair

On March 11, 2023, No More Tears held a graduation ceremony for 39 San Quentin residents in the Addiction Recovery Center building on the Lower Yard.

The ceremony celebrated those who completed the 12-week No More Tears workshop, a self-help program that teaches participants how to communicate without using violence.

The workshop consists of a series of sessions that enables participants to identify violence in all forms, manage their anger, overcome personal triggers, and resolve conflicts in a non-confrontational manner.

No More Tears Executive Director Mick Gardner opened the ceremony with an invocation. "God be with us as we celebrate," he prayed.

Perry Simpson, a resident facilitator, hosted the event with assistance from co-host Imanhi Cheeks, a volunteer intern.

The hosts introduced graduate Rodney Baylis. Baylis read the No More Tears mission

statement: "To curb violence and detrimental behaviors within targeted communities by utilizing the special knowledge and experience of former perpetrators of violence and crime. These former perpetrators hold themselves accountable to bring solutions to communities where they once had contributed to the problems."

Formerly incarcerated Lonnie Morris, founder and president of No More Tears, explained the meaning of perseverance.

"In order to persevere you must preserve, which means to take something into position with the intention to later utilize it. If you walk out of this room and go back to what you were doing prior to No More Tears, you have wasted your time and our time," said Morris.

Reginald Thorpe, a program facilitator, then read the group's house rules. In short, the house rules were, "No foul language, no ethnic slurs, no cussin', no fussin', and no mussin'."

"I cannot help but to mention Lonnie; he gave us an opportunity to address our guilt

and shame. He never gave up on us," said Thorpe.

Next, Simpson introduced San Quentin resident and program facilitator Mel Warren, who led the audience through a chant signifying commitment.

"Committed to stopping the violence; I am committed to stopping the tears," the crowd chanted.

"No More Tears helped me become the man I want to be. It got me through some tough times," said Warren.

Violinist Rufael Henok entertained with a solo performance. "It's amazing when we change from a fixed mindset to a mindset of growth," Henok said.

Cheeks told the graduating class, "I am glad to be here. I am amazed how you pass on knowledge. You are a brother to each other, keeping each other accountable. I am proud of you all."

The hosts introduced special guest Timothy Young. He played a guitar instrumental titled *Music for Your Soul*. The crowd snapped their fingers and tapped their feet as Young entertained.

Some of the participants

talked about what the group meant to them.

Marcus Casillas: "Allowing my past actions that caused pain to others be a lesson for me today so that can I move forward in a positive and healthier way, treating others how I want my family to be treated."

Shakim Harrod Jr.: "No More Tears basically brought me to understand the things that I was doing and why I was doing them."

Phillip Kennedy: "If you want to have a proper attitude in healing yourself, you should take No More Tears and learn to understand and grow."

Staff and volunteers praised the graduating class, highlighting their accomplishments.

It is unique to challenge traditional ideas about what it looks like to be a man, said Mia Ritzenberg-Crary, deputy director of No More Tears. "Men now have the opportunity to process their anger and support each other without the pressure of wearing a mask," she said.

Volunteer Linda Heiderer said, "I've seen so much strength in you gentlemen. A

strong man builds his strength by building his muscles. A strong man builds his character. A strong man sheds his tears, and a strong man shows up for No More Tears."

Keynote speaker Cori Thomas, chair of the No More Tears board, gave the incarcerated men insight about perseverance through a story about her grandparents.

Thomas said her grandparents were the descendants of slaves. They had a dream to build a school in Africa, which would also help them escape prejudice in the United States. Their employers wanted them to go to Africa as missionaries but denied their request to build a school there.

They decided to use their own money to build the school, making their dreams a reality. The Lott Carey Mission School is there to this day, in Liberia in West Africa. A sign at the school's entrance reads, "Dignity, Perseverance, and Education, Est. 1908."

"When you wake each morning, think of me and my grandparents who traveled to Africa and built a school. By taking No More Tears, you

make the world a safer place," Thomas said.

Executive Director Gardner and Rafael Bankston, a resident facilitator, presented each graduate with a certificate.

"It is a tradition to honor our graduates with a certificate. We are a family, and for those who are graduating, we have a healing circle every third Saturday of the month, so you are invited," said Gardner.

Several graduates received special recognition, including Steven Sanchez and Anthony Guzman, who paroled during the workshop. Samuel Jones and Bradley Ware received special recognition for their "outstanding improvement."

Matthew Ham and Efrain Vallarta are hearing-impaired graduates acknowledged for their "outstanding participation." Graduates Baylis, Nicolas Johnson, and Steven Warren also received special recognition.

Staff, volunteers, and resident facilitators lined up to greet the graduates, giving out fist bumps and kind words. The event ended with a social time accompanied by refreshments.

# SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION Prison Fellowship Academy holds graduation ceremony

By Dante D. Jones  
Staff Writer

A celebration of 19 men who completed the one-year program for the Prison Fellowship Academy took place earlier this year.

Prison Fellowship Academy is a spiritually based self-help program that is spearheaded by Eric Nobles, the Academy's Bay Area field director.

"This program is designed for the men to meet two days a week where they are completing courses to help them become responsible citizens, said Nobles.

Nobles said that the program focuses on issues like authentic manhood and responsible thinking. His goal is to equip these men with the ability to be the "men, the fathers, the sons, the husbands that they truly can be without a lot of the distractions so that they can prepare themselves for reentry."

The graduation included a powerful speech from Chaplain Kenneth Reid, who was the keynote speaker of the event.

"The enemy [Satan]'s main objective is keep you off course with Him [God], to keep you away from a hundred-fold-level of intimacy with the Lord," Reid said during his speech.

Michael D. Adams, a graduate and facilitator of the pro

gram, was excited to be part of this event.

"What this program has done for me is allowed me to build fellowship with men in the same situation," Adams said.

Adams said that the Academy has given him the opportunity to learn that they all have the same struggles and are all trying to get to the same place spiritually in order to assist each other.

The event also acknowledged some outside individuals who help facilitate funding for the program.

"It's really great to meet a community that's helped us without even knowing us," Adams said.

Fellow graduate Tare Beltranchuc presented certificates of completion to the graduates.

"Thank you, everybody, for coming. I appreciate you all who contributed in putting this together," Beltranchuc said. "But mainly I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The event concluded with pizza and cake, followed by a time of mingling, fellowship, and laughter.

Nobles summed it up best: "If you look at all the different races, creeds, colors, faiths even ... and allow God to penetrate our hearts ... to debate and have differences of opinion, but yet be unified."



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

PRISON FELLOWSHIP ACADEMY GRADS:

Michael D. Adams

Juan J. Aguilar

Steven F. Coordova

Thomas F. Denove

Joseph A. Green

Nester Hernandez

Raymond H. Melberg

Gorden Starr

Victor M. Tapia

Gregory Ward

Duane A. Augero

Tare N. Beltranchuc

Peter Cornett

Fernando Diaz

Jaime Gregorio

Loren G. Mears

Pablo Salinas-Jacobo

James Still

Feliciano Valencia-Santiago



# Special Easter event held in SQ visiting room

## Easter Bunny's vist to SQ brings joy to residents and their families



San Quentin residents, and their families and children, were treated to a day of celebration with the Easter Bunny.

By Dante D. Jones  
Staff Writer

Easter weekend meant a day of togetherness with family and friends in San Quentin's visiting room this April.

The San Quentin Easter Spectacular, held on April 8, was a first of its kind event put on by San Quentin's Acting Warden Oak Smith and Public Information Officer Lt. Guim'Mara Berry. The goal was to bring a different feel to the visiting room experience for the Easter celebration.

"We're trying to normalize life for the population," said Smith, who attended the event with his wife. "And part of that is being able to come in and do things that we don't normally do in visiting, which is important."

Smith served popcorn and cotton candy to the residents and their families.

"It feels great to see the families here enjoying themselves as well as seeing the kids eating popcorn and cotton candy," Public Information Officer Berry said. "I think it's nice and creates a great atmosphere for everyone."

The three-hour event included music performed by residents of The Q, as well as arts and crafts activities for the children. The kids also got a kick out of a correctional officer dressed up as "Le-



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

roy the Bunny."

"Easter is a great time of the year," Smith said. "This is going to be more of the norm of doing things like this — having the team coming out to more family events."

Sgt. J. Graves said the event was "awesome." She said seeing the families interacting with everyone and taking pictures gives residents a chance to allow their loved ones to see them in a different light.

"As San Quentin moves towards the governor's vision of the prison becoming a rehabilitation center, events

such as this inspire hope that change is possible."

Keith Cash Sr., a minister from Bakersfield, and his wife attended the Easter celebration. They were visiting their incarcerated son. "It's truly a blessing to be here today to share some time with my son," Cash Sr. said.

He also spoke about the meaning of Easter to his family. "This is a day of forgiving .... We should take this time to be grateful for the things that we have. We should be thankful that Jesus died for our sins and that we can celebrate today

that we have life after this life right here," he said.

Nicholas Casteel, a resident of The Q, expressed his joy at being there with his family. "This is such a special day ... I'm so grateful to the warden for making this available to us."

"There's no place I'd rather be," said Casteel's mother, Dana. "Although we want Nicholas home, having the jazz music and the other festivities brings a little bit of home into here and it feels amazing."

What more can one say?

# SQ Jewish community observes traditional Passover feast

By Edwin E. Chavez  
and Juan Haines

This year's Passover celebration at San Quentin affirmed Devin Ben's belief that the dream of inclusivity for all people is realizable in any environment. He called the openness of San Quentin's incarcerated residents to the Jewish tradition "inspirational." He had not seen such openness in other prisons.

"My inspiration comes from extremely welcoming people who have been inclusive," Ben said referring to conversations with residents that he called "stories of transformation and inspiration."

"For me the idea of freedom from slavery takes on a new meaning for incarcerated folks and how they reconcile that idea within themselves," he added.

Catherine Metzger also noted the "openness and friendliness" of San Quentin residents. "I couldn't imagine the atmosphere ... it feels open and relaxed," Metzger said. "I know that from the outside, people think that when someone goes to visit a prison for a Seder it is to give to a prisoner when the prisoner is the one who is giving," she added.

Until this celebration restored the tradition, COVID-19 restrictions had prevented Seders at San Quentin.

The Passover Seder, which included staples like matzoh, haroset and horseradish, took place in the prison's Catholic Chapel, where scenes from Christian scriptures lined the walls. In the front of the room were Old Testament scenes of the Israelites fleeing Egypt and the Red Sea parting, depicted in paintings by San Quentin resident Ben Chandler.

About 70 incarcerated res-

idents and 14 outside guests gathered to hear Rabbi Paul Shleffar tell the Passover story.

"All of us should take a lesson to find ways to serve — to give and acknowledge what's in the way and find freedom from what's blocking us from reaching our potential. It's a different answer for each of us," said Shleffar, a San Quentin Chaplain since 2015.

They ate a holiday meal consisting of a chicken breast, salad, vegetables and mashed potatoes from Oakland Kosher. Those on Death Row received the meals as well.

A group of incarcerated musicians led by San Quentin resident John Zeretzke provided music for the event.

Before the meal, Shleffar asked 10 attendees to describe something that happened to them in their life that they had thought of as negative, and then to describe the blessing they received because of it.

One shared about thinking that he had lost his family by coming to prison; but they stuck by him the entire time.

One outside guest talked about losing her father, only to learn how people showed up in her life in that time of need.

A struggling artist talked about how a dying student showed her the true path of life.

Another resident talked about his daughter's placement in foster care; but since his incarceration, father and daughter have connected and reunited.

San Quentin Warden (A) Oak Smith was present at the celebration. "I am a Messianic Jew. I bar mitzvahed at the Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland," he said. "So Passover brings a lot of family member memories."

The warden talked about



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

Rabbi Paul Shleffar (above) tells the Passover story during the traditional Jewish feast of Passover.

his 25-year experience with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Smith came to San Quentin in 2015. Before that, he had never seen a lifer paroled. Yet part of his new job was to sign release papers for lifers. Confused by this apparent contradiction, he called a colleague at another prison to confirm his understanding of his new duties.

"You guys put the work in. You guys get the dates and you get to go out. It's an honor to be a part of that," Smith said. "It's been a blessing to be able to a part of a place where we can offer opportunities and see the population take advantage of the opportunities to improve themselves and get out of prison."





ESPAÑOL



## ¿Que madre no ha deramado sus lagrimas por su hijos?

Por Alfredo Moreno  
Journalism Guild Writer

El día de las madres es una celebración para honrar a la madre de la familia o a individuos como a la maternidad, lazos maternos, y las influencias de madre en la sociedad. Se celebra en diferentes días en muchas partes del mundo, más comúnmente en los meses de marzo o mayo. Se complementan celebraciones similares, ampliamente presionado por intereses comerciales, honrando miembros de familia, tales como Día del padre, Día de hermano o hermana, y Día de los Abuelos.

La versión moderna Americana del día festivo empezó en los Estados Unidos a principios del siglo 20 en iniciativa de Anna Jarvis, quien organizó el primer servicio de veneración y celebración del día de las madres en Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church en Grafton, West Virginia, la cual sirve como el santuario Internacional del Día de las madres hoy.

La versión Americana del Día de las Madres ha sido criticada por haberse hecho muy comercializada.

Jarvis misma, quien empezó la celebración como una observación litúrgica, lamenta este comercialismo y expreso que este nunca fue su intención. El primer día festivo moderno fue celebrado en 1907, cuando Anna Jarvis llevo a cabo el primer servicio de veneración al Día de las Madres en Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church en Grafton, West Virginia.

Su campana para hacer el Día de las Madres un reconocido día festivo en los Estados Unidos comenzó en 1905 año en que murió la madre de Anna Reeves Jarvis.

Anna Jarvis ha sido una activista por la paz quien aboga por los soldados heridos en ambos lados de la guerra civil Americana, y acogió el Día de las Madres en clubs de trabajo para discutir asuntos de salud pública.

Ella y otra activista de sufragio Julia Ward House han estado insistiendo por la creación del Día de las “Madres por la paz” donde las madres puedan pedir que sus esposos e hijos ya no mueran en las guerras. Jarvis quería honrar esto y asegurar un día para honrar a todas las madres, porque una madre es “La persona quien ha hecho más por ti que ninguna otra persona en el mundo.”

En 1914, Woodrow Wilson, Presidente de los Estados Unidos de América, firmo una proclamación designando el Día de las Madres para que se lleve a cabo en el segundo domingo del mes de mayo, como un día festivo nacional para honrar a todas las madres.

# REFLEXIONES DE AGRADECIMIENTO PARA NUESTRAS MADRES

“Mi mama no solamente es una súper-madre, pero un súper-abuela también. Criando a 5 nietos, ella en verdad es asombrosa.”  
—*Kolby A. Southwood*

“¡Una madre es lo más sagrado y puro que puede tener uno en esta vida! ¡Un amor verdadero, un amor fiel, un amor único!!”  
—*Luciano Borjas*

“Pido en oración siempre por mi madre, aunque nunca estubo conmigo y nunca supe lo que fue una madre. La quiero sobre todo las cosas y le deseo siempre lo mejor cada que hablo con ella.”  
—*Gabriel González*

Mujer inolvidable.  
Amor incondicional y verdadero.  
Dedicada y abnegada.  
Refugio permanente en sus brazos.  
Emprendedora y luchadora  
—*Jose Ramírez*

“El amor de mi madre es lo mejor de mi vida y que he tomado su consejo”  
—*Nazario Jerónimo Izara*

“Gracias madre por darme el privilegio de ser uno de tus hijos. Te amo y te extraño mucho, Dios te bendiga mamá.”  
—*Ricardo Utuy*

“Aquí mando un cordial saludo a la mujer que me dio la vida a mi madre querida, feliz día madrecita te amo”  
—*Luis Barrios Ixcolin*

“Pido al Señor que cuide mi aventura para poder a mi barrio regresar abrazar a mi madre con cariño y ternura y me cuide que nada malo me vaya a pasar”  
—*Ponciano Martínez*

“Hermosa madre al mandarte un te amo nunca sería suficiente. Este día de las madres te mando mi corazón entero”  
—*Daniel García*

“En su quimioterapia mi madre me enseñó que aun en los tiempos más difíciles podemos mostrar amor a nuestros semejantes”  
—*Felipe N. García*

“El consejo de mi madre es que me comportara bien y siempre hacer lo correcto. “Quisiera decirle que la amo con todo mi corazón”  
—*Julio Rivas*

“Como siempre andaba en las calles, mi madre siempre me aconsejaba que me cuidara y me portara bien. “Como

quisiera pedirle perdón y abrazar mi mama”  
—*José Cisneros*

“Aunque mi madre sufrió el rechazo de mi padre, ella no me abortó. En este dibujo mi madre tenía 17 años y estaba embarazada de mí. Le doy gracias a Dios por su apoyo y porque siempre ha orado por mí. La amo mucho.”  
—*Manuel Dorado*

“Mi madre Norma me ha demostrado su amor por 24 años y en 21 salones de visitas en las prisiones. Ella nunca me ha dejado solo”  
—*Miguel Sifuentes*

“Honestidad, respeto, humildad, integridad y amor por la vida, gracias madre por inculcarme esos valores y principios”  
—*Aristeo Sampablo*

“Mi madre es la única persona en el mundo entero con quien quiero estar. Ella me da

no pasa nomas porque si... Se toma de un corazón lleno de amor ternura y una amabilidad especial para ayudar, dar esperanza e inspirar...Feliz día de las madres”  
—*Memo Valencia*

“El día más hermoso; el día de la mamá, es un día muy especial celebrando con ramos de flores, regalos y sonrisas. El día que tendría que celebrarse todo el año, cada día, cada semana y cada mes.”  
—*Guillermo P. Hernández*

“Madre querida tu haz sido un ejemplo de amor, compasión, y paciencia hacia mí: Gracias por ser como eres y por las palabras de inspiración y esperanza que me dices cada día que te hablo”  
—*Carlos Drouaillet*

“Mamá, cada día que amanece. Yo quiero verte con tu sonrisa y tú mirada transparente. Yo no sé cómo explicarte con palabras lo que siento.

como si ella me diera fuerzas para seguir luchando y por eso le doy gracias a Dios que tengo a mi mamá.  
—*Guillermo P. Hernández*

“No hay suficiente palabras que puedan describir el amor de mi madre. En este día te doy el honor y agradecimiento que te me reses”  
—*Edwin E. Chavez*

“Sus manos tersas y delicadas como el pétalo de la más fina y bella flor, dan amor y ternura que llega al corazón”.  
—*Cesar Hernández*

Las madres son todas bellas y doy gracias a Dios por la mía Y pido que Dios la bendiga este día. ¡Cuánto amo a mi madre!  
“A pesar de estar encarcelado ella me ama incondicionalmente”  
—*Willy Alarcón*

“Gracias a Dios por mi madrecita. La quiero mucho. Ella es un regalo que Dios me dio.”  
—*Hijo Anónimo*

“Madrecita bonita chula y preciosa. Feliz Día de Las Madres. Gracias por ser la mejor madre del mundo, y por ser un buen ejemplo. Te quiero mucho”  
—*Sergio Argueta, Jr.*

“Para ti mamá, que eres lo más importante en mi vida y que siempre me has apoyado en las malas y en las buenas. Te quiero decir que te amo mucho :)”  
—*Ángel Martínez*

Mexican Mother’s Day “Gracias Mamá por todo; Gracias por cuidarme cuando yo estaba chiquito. Voy a salir pronto para ir a la Iglesia con usted y disfrutaremos unos buenos platillos juntos”  
—*Erick Maciel*

“Mi Mamá tenía un curioso modo de demostrarme que me amaba, ella me mordía y me nalgueaba cuando yo menos lo esperaba”  
—*Felipe N. García*

“Me gustaría pedirle a mi Mamá que me perdone por todas las noches en vela que sufrió por me. Me encantaría abrazarla y pedirle perdón por todo”  
—*Jose Cisneros*

“Yo recuerdo que mi Mamá me llevaba a la playa de Caleta cerca de Acapulco. También recuerdo los sándwiches de atún que me preparaba cuando yo tenía apenas siete años”  
—*Julio Rivas*

# CINCO DE MAYO

## Celebración de hermandad

Por Aristeo Sampablo y Idalió Villagrán  
Spanish Journalism Guild Escritores.

En el cinco de Mayo de 1862 ocurrió la batalla de Puebla en las cercanías de dicha ciudad en el cerro de Loreto. El ejército de la República Mexicana, bajo el mando del general Ignacio Zaragoza abatió al experimentado y mejor preparado ejército, francés del emperador Napoleón III, dirigido por el Conde de Lorencez Charles Ferdinand Ladrière, de acuerdo al reporte de la página de Wikipedia.

Esta batalla duro 62 días. Aunque México ganó la batalla no impidió que los franceses ganaran la guerra. Al año siguiente regresaron y ganaron esa segunda batalla, facilitándole avanzar hasta la ciudad de México, estableciendo el segundo Imperio Mexicano.

La batalla duró desde el amanecer, hasta entrando la noche. Los franceses se retiraron cuando ya habían perdido cerca de 500 soldados, y los mexicanos solamente perdieron menos de 100 en la conmoción.

Según lo revisó y actualizó la editora Amy Tikkanen en la Enciclopedia Británica.

**La causa**

La deuda externa de México ascendía alrededor de los ochenta millones de pesos de esa época: sesenta y nueve millones correspondían a Inglaterra, nueve millones a España y dos millones a Francia. El presidente Benito Juárez anunció que no pagaría tal deuda. Los tres países suscribieron la convención de Londres en la cual se comprometieron a mandar contingentes militares a México. Inglaterra y España se regresaron, pero Francia prosiguió, publicó Wikipedia.

**Diversas opiniones han sido compar-tidas por la comunidad en San Quentin.**

Por ejemplo Enrique Sandoval, residente de SQ oriundo de México dijo, “Aunque se ganó esta batalla, no se ganó la guerra, es por eso que para los mexicanos no es un día muy conmemorativo”.

Prisioneros como el Sr. Gerry Sánchez Muratalla comentó, “Es una celebración que no tiene un significado grande, ya que de todos modos fuimos conquistados por los franceses. En Estados Unidos, el 5 de Mayo es el ‘Día de la Herencia Latina’, particularmente en áreas con substancial población Mexicano-Americana”.

“Mi familia mexicana me dicen que celebrando el Cinco de Mayo es más una fiesta americana que una fiesta mexicana” dijo Dennis Coronado, otro residente de SQ de origen mexicano. “Mis tíos y abuelos, nacieron y fueron criados en California y así lo celebran”.

Gabriel Orendain, quien nació en este país y fue criado en Mexicali, México dijo, “Para la gente de Puebla, cuando se hicieron independientes de Francia, yo como mexicano le doy mi apoyo a la gente de Puebla”.

“Me siento muy orgulloso como mexicano. Es una conmemoración muy satisfactoria. Una batalla campal y sangrienta y ellos salieron triunfantes. Opinó Adolfo Vargas, mexicano. “Me hace recordar que la batalla mía espiritual, estando en prisión, también es una batalla espiritual donde debo triunfar, como los campesinos me debo de esforzar espiritualmente”, concluyó Vargas.

—*Raymond Torres contribuyente*



# ¿Estarán funcionando las prisiones en Latinoamérica?



Stock image

## Prisiones de centro y suramerica operan muy diferentes de EE.UU.

Por Edwin E. Chavez  
Spanish Journalism  
Guild Chairman

Exponiendo la estructura de las prisiones en Latinoamérica.

A profesionales como el profesor Michael Reed, se les ha dado la tarea de estudiar y visitar docenas de prisiones en Latinoamérica, con el solo propósito de investigar si el sistema carcelario trabaja en países del tercer mundo, según reportó Steven Dudleys de *InSight Crime*.

“Comencé a visitar prisiones en 1995, en Venezuela, cuando trabajaba como monitor de derechos humanos de las condiciones de personas privadas de la libertad”, dijo Michael Reed. “Esto hacía parte de un programa para impedir la tortura”.

Durante una entrevista con *InSight Crime*, Reed compartió sus experiencias dentro las prisiones de Latinoamérica. Señalando, que cuando visitó una prisión se sintió atrapado entre la sobre población.

El peligro dentro estas prisiones era evidente y las autoridades penales requirieron que el señor Reed firmara no hacerlos responsables por su vida. Derribando alguna esperanza de protección por parte de la autoridades.

Traicionado por el miedo y el olor que le atacó, se preguntó el mismo “¿A dónde están los barrotes?”, buscando la salida. Segundos después, sus pies se introdujeron a una ciudad repleta de seres, sumergida por la oscuridad, sin ninguna protección, según el reporte de Dudleyes *InSight Crime*.

Desde los 50 y 60’s las cárceles en Latinoamérica fueron diseñadas para retener a unos 1.500 reclusos a plena capacidad. La población en esas mismas prisiones creció a 3.000 personas en los 90’s.

La famosa prisión, La Modelo (Bogotá, Colombia) fue construida para un contenido de 300 a 350 personas (es una capacidad muy mínima.) Ahora alberga entre 1.200 y 1.800 personas.

Sorprendentemente, la comunidad encarcelada se organiza para poder mantener las necesidades de todas esas personas con solo 5 baños a su deposición. “Lo veo como un gobierno mágico”, comento Reed.

“Para mí la magnitud de orden que ellos [los reos] pueden producir, es simplemente fenomenal”, dijo Reed. “... Todo se basa principalmente en el miedo, pero esa disciplina puede funcionar”.

La manera como los reclusos se comunican entre ellos

mismos es otra forma de funcionamiento. Los códigos: gritos y alaridos ahogados, son elementos muy importantes.

“En estas prisiones tu vida está en las manos de los que tienen el control adentro”, dijo Reed. “En Colombia y Chile las cárceles están tan bien estructuradas que inmediatamente saben cuándo alguien ajeno está en sus patios”.

El artículo añadió, que uno de los elementos críticos para poder sobrevivir dentro de esta prisión en Bogotá, es el acceso al agua. En ciertas áreas no solo se necesita para consumirla, es también esencial para lavar ropa.

En El Salvador, las condiciones dentro las prisiones fueron peor aún. Reed entró a la prisión con un colega y de inmediato grupos distintos los llevaron a lugares aparte. Esa experiencia lo causó a perder la noción de con quién estaba. Él se encontró completamente aislado. Nadie se estaba comunicando con Reed hasta que lo llevaron a un espacio aparte donde apareció la persona que controlaba la prisión (el líder de la pandilla).

Era claro que alguien (no las autoridades) había dado una orden para que Reed y sus colegas fueran interrogados en esta prisión.

El sistema en el Salvador, Colombia, Chile, y Honduras es diferente en comparación de los EE.UU. Según el reporte, en Latinoamérica, las prisiones son operadas por el crimen organizado.

Reed compartió una situación en donde los guardias de una prisión en Honduras entraron con él a la prisión, con rifles de largo alcance, aclarando que normalmente, estas armas solo existen adentro, cuando son conseguidas ilegalmente, por los reos.

Según Reed, los guardianes los dejaron en medio de la prisión, solos, sin nadie a su lado. Abandonado a su suerte con sus colegas, ellos caminaron hasta que el jefe (un preso) habló con ellos.

El orden y la violencia son parte del control.

Según el reporte, en los años 90’s hubo casos de tortura en La Modelo. Como tortura, arrojaban a prisioneros en pabellones, con oscuros agujeros. Llenando recipientes enormes con agua, hacían que se la personas se metieran dentro por horas causándoles espanto.

El reporte concluyó enfatizando que es importante no seguir cometiendo el mismo error de retener a reos en esa clase de instalaciones que ahora están operando, cuando no hay nada humanamente posible que se pueda hacer para cambiar las condiciones.

# NUEVO JEFE DEL DEPARTAMENTO DEL SHERIFF EN EL CONDADO DE LOS ANGELES

Por Carlos Drouaillet  
Staff Writer

Robert Luna ha sido elegido como el nuevo jefe del departamento del Sheriff del Condado de Los Angeles, reemplazando al controversial Alex Villanueva.

“Los resultados fueron un resonante reproche por los cuatro años caóticos de Villanueva en ese puesto”, reportó *Los Angeles Times*. Fue “una tenencia durante la cual él se transformó de candidato sostenido por el apoyo de votantes progresistas, a ser un conservador, agente combativo que chocó continuamente con los oficiales electos y otros que lo supervisaban a él y a su departamento”.

Luna se retiró como jefe de la policía de Long Beach después de siete años.

“Quiero desearle prosperidad al Jefe entrante”, dijo Villanueva terminando su oratoria de aceptación. “La seguridad de la comunidad depende en su éxito”.

El agresivo estilo de reglas utilizado por Villanueva mientras lideraba el departamento del Sheriff, provocó la creación de la “Medida A”, la cual autorizaría a la Junta de Supervisores a reemplazar al jefe de la Policía. Dicha Medida fue aprobada por una abrumadora mayoría.

Durante su discurso de aceptación, Luna expresó su apreciación por la respuesta de los votantes, y llamó su victoria, “un claro mandato para traer nuevo liderazgo y responsabilidad al Departamento del Sheriff.

Luna añadió, “Yo miro hacia adelante, para trabajar con los talentosos y audaces juramentados y empleados profesionales del Departamento del Sheriff, quienes estan dedicados a mantener seguras nuestras comunidades”.

El departamento del Sheriff pasará por su cuarto ajuste de administración desde la resignación de Lee Baca debido a una investigación federal por corrupción, que lo mandó a prisión hace ocho años.

Luna heredará una masiva y problemática organización que implementa la ley, encargada de una red de centros de detención. Además, también debe lidiar con grupos de vigilantes reportados dentro del departamento del sheriff, reportó *Los Angeles Times*.

A Luna le esperan los prob-



Los Angeles Sheriff Robert Luna

File photo

necesitan tener tu confianza”.

El miembro de la comisión civil del ‘error por descuido’, Sean Kennedy espera que Luna se abstenga de “las controversias y evasivas, e intentos de intimidar a oficiales verificadores” utilizados por Villanueva, de acuerdo con el artículo.

Durante su discurso de concesión, Villanueva declaró que el periódico *Times* conspiró para crear un “narrativo falso” acerca de su efectividad y ética como líder, concluyendo, “Yo recuerdo un político que conocí hace tiempo... me dijo, bien, tu puedes ser un reformista, o tu puedes ser reelegido”, dijo él. “Yo estoy orgulloso de decir que soy un reformista. Yo no tengo el deseo de abandonar... mis principios solo para ser reelegido”.

Robert Luna fue entrevistado por la cadena noticiera de *KDTV-HD Univisión* en enero después que tomó el puesto como jefe del departamento del Sheriff del Condado de Los Angeles.

El comentó en referencia a la situación caótica del departamento, “Yo estaba claro durante la campaña que había corrupción” dijo Luna. “Pero yo trabajaré con el gobierno federal para erradicar eso”

También él explica que durante su carrera como policía siempre ha mostrado quien es él y de sus planes. Añadiendo que espera que los oficiales a su cargo tengan una nueva actitud hacia el público en general. “Yo quiero que los agentes traten al público como tratan a su familia”, concluyó Luna.

# Controversia por ejecuciones fallidas en Alabama

## Ejecuciones por inyección podrían ser suspendidas



La gobernadora Kay Ivey de Alabama, suspende la pena capital y ordena revisión exhaustiva del proceso.

File photo

Por Wilfredo Alarcón  
Spanish Journalism Guild

La gobernadora Kay Ivey, está poniendo una pausa al sistema de la pena capital después de tres inyecciones letales fallidas. Se ordenó una revisión completa “de arriba a abajo,” dijo ella.

La fallida ejecución de Kenneth Eugene Smith, causó que esta medida se iniciara. Smith es el tercer caso de falla desde el 2018, y es el segundo caso del estado. Aunque hubo una ejecución por el estado recientemente, esta se logró solo después de un retraso de tres horas al no poder hallar una línea de IV, según reportó Jay Reeves de la Prensa Asociada a *Marin Independent Journal*.

Toda moción de búsquedas de fechas de dos reos se ha de retirar, de acuerdo a un comunicado dirigido al fiscal general Steve Marshall. También se le ha pedido al Departamento de correcciones de ese estado que hagan una completa revisión

del proceso de ejecución. Aparte de los dos reos, el comunicado busca detener la búsqueda de cualquier otro reo y condenado a muerte, hasta que la revisión completa se finalice.

Sin culpar a los funcionarios penitenciarios o a las fuerzas del orden por los problemas, la gobernadora Ivey dijo – “aquí estan en juego tácticas legales y criminales que secuestran el sistema,” añadiendo, “por el bien de las víctimas y sus familias, tenemos que hacerlo bien.”

Por su parte el comisionado de correcciones John Hamm, aseguró que su departamento está completamente comprometido con esta orden de revisión.

“Confío en que podemos hacer esto bien,” dijo Hamm. “Todo está sobre la mesa,” destacó en un comunicado emitido a través de la oficina del gobernador. Y subrayó “desde nuestra estrategia legal para lidiar con la apelaciones de última hora, hasta como entrenamos y nos preparamos, hasta el orden y el

momento de los eventos en el día de la ejecución, hasta el personal y el equipo involucrado.”

El vocero del el principal fiscal del estado, Mike Lewis dijo que el “leyó los comentarios de la gobernadora y del comisionado [Hamm] con interés” pero no dijo que estaría de acuerdo con la solicitud de la señora Ivey. “Tendrá más que decir sobre esto en una fecha posterior,” añadió Lewis.

Los legisladores deben “hacer su parte para reducir la injusticia del sistema de pena de muerte de Alabama,” concluyó una organización sin fines de lucro, que aboga por los pobres, llamada Alabama Arise.

De acuerdo al reporte por Kim Chandler de la Prensa Asociada, el viernes 24, de febrero, la gobernadora de Alabama, Kay Ivey anunció que después de una pausa de tres meses las ejecuciones por medio de inyección letal serán resumidas.



SPORTS

By Timothy Hicks  
Sports Editor

The San Quentin Intramural basketball season opened with a fierce battle between Team Finishing and Team 94 Feet, ending in a double-digit, tough loss for Team Finishing, 63-34.

“They need a point guard to control the game,” said SQ Warriors power forward Greg Eskridge, who was observing the game from the sideline. “Where is y’all ball handler at?” Yell out Another spectator watching the game yelled out, sharing the same sentiment of Eskridge.

Team 94 Feet had a few big men in the green jerseys. They were towering over some of Team Finishing, who wore the black jerseys. However, the size of the smaller team was not to be underestimated. They used their speed and other strengths to compete.

The game began slowly on the hazy Saturday evening. The night breeze off the Bay coastal waters did not prevent the residents from coming out to see the battle on the court of the Lower Yard.

Team 94 Feet struck the first blow with a mid-range jumper from Taiosis “CC” Matangi, that put his team up early in the first. Early first quarter points came from guards Navion “Smoove” Starks and Taiosis “CC” Matangi, who led their team to a 17-4 lead.

The Finishing was struggling terribly on defense and offense and it seemed they were simply not prepared for the competitiveness of the other team.

But the power forward of Team Finishing, June Miles, was not letting his team go down without putting up a valiant fight. He received a dime pass from teammate “JR” Pimpton in the middle. Miles drew the foul and the and-one when he muscled his way through the blockage of Tyler “Drizzy” Cooper and Miquel Sequentes.

However, muscling his way through the defense forced Miles on the free throw line five times during the game, the most of any player on both teams. Consequently, he was also The Finishing’s leading scorer. Yet trying to keep his team in the game was a heavy weight to bear on his shoulders.

“Trying to carry my team through this game was rough,” said Miles. “I figured out that



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

**Team 94 Feet High Scorers:**

- Khurazze “Sauce” Williams-19 points, 2 steals
- “White Chocolate” Ryan -14 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals
- Taiosisi “CC” Matangi-11 points, 5 rebounds, 2 assist, 2 steals
- Navion “Smoove” Starks-8 points, 7 rebounds
- Tyler “Drizzy” Cooper was top rebounder with 8 rebounds

**Team Finishing High Scorers:**

- June Miles - 11 points, 5 rebounds
- “JR” Pimpton - 8 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 steals
- Ryan “Tazz” Matlock - 8 points, 3 rebounds, 1 steal

TEAM 94 FEET WINS BIG AT BASKETBALL OPENER

Intramural basketball league opens season with Team 94 Feet still undefeated

we need more practice and we especially need more guard play. But, most of all I give credit to the other team. They just out played us.”

Miles said that his team was missing one of their key players who actually could have made a difference in the game: center Big Rick Hale.

“Rick would of made a difference in the game but, I should of made more of my free-throws,” Miles said.

The game became a shootout between Miles of the Finishing and new com-

ers Mason “White Chocolate” Ryan and Khurazze “Sauce” Williams of 94 Feet. The two high scorers of 94 Feet out numbered the shooters in the black jerseys.

“It was fun to play with my teammates for the first time,” Ryan said. “This was my first time playing in an organized game in a while. But my team mate ‘Sauce’ had an awesome game.”

From the dominating 29-11 lead at the half, it was Team 94 Feet that led both 20-minute halves.

New Intramural Commissioner Derrell “Sadiq” Davis said that the season opener was a success and that he was proud of both teams for showing good sportsmanship on the court.

“I think last night’s game was good. Everything went well. We started on time and there was no arguments and the guys showed unity as a team. I saw that the residents really enjoyed the game too and even though one team was losing they still showed good sportsmanship,” said Davis.

San Quentin athletes battle ‘COVID monster’

Long-term coronavirus symptoms continue affecting the incarcerated at The Q.

The COVID beast came through San Quentin and tore through sports enthusiast like a tornado. Although the quarantine lockdowns has been fluctuating, some resident athletes have been doing everything in their power to defeat that looming COVID monster by any means.

“Whenever quarantine lock downs happen, I just work out in my cell and I watch basketball games on TV to continue learning the game,” said Keyshawn “Steez” Strickland, the One- and Two-Guard for the San Quentin Warriors.

The 6’2” leading scoring guard said that they [Staff] should treat the COVID virus like it’s just a case of the regular FLU now and that the incarcerated should not have to be quarantined any more for it. Strickland said that the protocols slow down athletes and the general population from becoming better people.

“Sports help me to be a better man,” Strickland said. “It helps me be patient and have integrity. We get to work with other people and build our tolerance for others. That’s what’s needed out there in today’s world.”

The COVID monster has affected relatively every part of the prison. Most days the Field of Dreams, located on the Lower Yard, is filled with tiny dust spirals of winds. It is also desolate with only the Canadian Geese and seagulls using it as their bathroom.

A toppled-over volleyball net occupied the abandoned section of the red clay at third base of the baseball field. The outfield was barren until the All-In intramural football team held a practice one Friday morning. That day was going fine on the muddy yard until, over the loud intercom, came the bearer of bad news: a C/O’s blaring voice echoing out, “West Block recall!”

Coach Carlos Smith was forced to stop the process of running drills with his team

“Sports help me to be a better man,” Strickland said. “It helps me be patient and have integrity. We get to work with other people and build our tolerance for others. That’s what’s needed out there in today’s world.”

—Keyshawn Strickland

and leave the field. Fortunately for him, his entire team is from the West Block Housing Unit where he’s located. After finding out that the building was quarantined, Coach Smith assembled his team and started running drills on the West Block Upper Yard.

“I believe that practice must go on,” said Smith. “Because that’s what brings us together and help keep us stay positive. So, being on quarantine do not matter.”

The hard concrete was a much different surface to maneuver on for his new players. But, Coach Smith told his new arrival Phillip Church, who weighed in at 446 pounds at nose tackle, to show up and to be open-minded.

“He plays with heart and I like that. He shows up and I accept all what he has to give on the field. I’m proud of him and all the team for their dedication,” said Smith.

The scare of the COVID monster quarantine lockdowns have athletes performing mental gymnastics and preventing some residents athletes from achieving their goals of rehabilitation, with the protocols seeming to change daily in the prison. However, most of the athletes are not allowing COVID to stop them from preparing for the next season of sports.

—Timothy Hicks

WALL BALL THERAPY

Finding human connection through sports in prison

By Rahan Asaan  
Journalism Guild Writer

One of the most consistently played and revered sports at San Quentin is handball. Those drawn to the activity have learned coping skills, focus, and socialization while getting in their daily exercise.

Handball is a contact sport involving two individuals playing against each other or in two-person teams.

“I’ve been playing since 1984,” said San Quentin resident James Nomura, 57. “I needed to find something to do with my time when I first came to prison, and I wasn’t good at basketball.”

The incarcerated have more than frequently used handball as a game to increase their stamina and athleticism. It’s a game of speed and concentration. Its players must remain

focused on their opponents and the rules of the game to win.

Nomura and Richard Duran, 67, a new arrival to San Quentin, have tally for the next game. Tally means they are next in line to play and are keeping score.

A player scores by serving the ball with the palm of his hand against a wall — trying to make it difficult for his opponent to return the serve. If the opponent misses, the serving player gets the point.

If the opponent returns the serve and the server cannot return it or hits the ball out, the point goes to the opponent.

Individual games go to 11 while doubles go to 15. Game points are often called “changa.”

Duran and Nomura are beginning their match with Duran serving a “burn” that

Nomura cannot return, giving Duran the first point. “Burn” is a technique used to score by hitting the ball against the wall so close to the ground that one’s opponent cannot return the serve, causing them to lose the point.

“I started playing handball way back in 1974 in the county jail,” said Duran. “I’m still playing because this game builds bridges that transcend ethnicities, at the same time giving me a good cardiovascular workout.”

Duran returns a serve from Nomura, who hits the ball out of bounds, giving Duran an opportunity at changa and the win.

“I find peace by focusing on the ball. It’s just me and the ball while I’m playing,” said Nomura during game breaks.

Watching on the sidelines with the next tally was Jonathan Martinez, 26. He was



Skylar Brown // TV specialist

happy when he saw the ball hit over the wall by Nomura, finishing the match.

“Man, I love this game,” said Martinez, a newly arrived San Quentin resident. “I’ve been playing since I was eight or nine; my childhood friends introduced me. This is the

best way to for me to relieve stress and keep focused.”

Martinez, like so many others playing the sport, uses handball as a tool to deal with anxiety, stress, tension and boredom. Handball is also an effective way to meet new people and develop lasting re-

lationships.

“I’ve had some very deep conversations while keeping tally,” Martinez said. “That’s one of the things I like best: staying away from politics, attitudes, and conflicts while getting to know people who think the same way.”



# 1,000 MILE CLUB RAMPS UP SEASON WITH 3-MILE RUN

By Rahan Asaan  
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin’s 1,000 Mile Club continued its season with a 3-mile run to help prepare its members for the annual team marathon, which is scheduled to take place in November 2023.

Head Coach Franklin Ruona, coach Kevin Rumon, and volunteer Jim Maloney were impressed with the 40 runners who showed up to run the race on a brisk February morning on the Lower Yard.

“Today’s race is the second race of the season,” said Maloney. “It’s a three-mile competitive race that is timed.”

The event normally requires about a dozen volunteer lap counters positioned around the starting line. While at least 20 volunteers applied to come to San Quentin for the competition, only three counters were medically cleared for the race.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an adverse effect on the ability of volunteers to be cleared to assist San Quentin residents’ running in competitions, according to race organizers.

“We do have a back-up plan to request other sports players to help count laps,” said Tommy Wickerd, San Quentin resident and 1,000 Mile Club president.

The counter shortage led to the race beginning at 10 minutes past the usual 9 a.m. start time.

“We’re going to run this three-mile race on the honor program,” Ruona told the runners. “Each runner will count their own 12 laps and when they run by the clock the twelfth time, tell us your time.”

Coach Ruona, with the inside help of Wickerd, has been able to keep the running club functioning with the aid of other runners willing to step up when necessary.

“That makes us an awesome running community as incarcerated people,” Wickerd said.

The race began with the 40 runners bracing for position at the starting line. Coach Ruona began the count down



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

at 10 and then yelled, “Go!” signaling the 40 runners to take off.

It did not take long for 1,000 Mile Club newcomer Jose Fajardo to secure the lead with a pace of 6:04 minutes per mile. Runners Juan Camargo and Marin Fidello were not far behind.

This trio of runners would maintain their lead positions throughout the race and finish in first, second, and third

place respectively. Their finishing times were 18:10, 19:48, and 19:50 minutes.

Two hearing-impaired runners, Jaime Paredes and Albert Compos, completed the race in a dead heat with a time of 28:40 minutes. They demonstrated what can be accomplished when working together.

The day’s 3-mile run attracted onlookers, many of whom signed up to join the

1,000 Mile Club.

“Running is an awesome community here in San Quentin,” said Wickerd, who has ran over 10,000 miles since being incarcerated. “Let’s go 1,000 Mile Club!”

The coaches encouraged residents to join the club and participate in the races. “We’ll have a race one Friday morning a month until the big marathon in November,” Maloney said.

## TIER TALK

# William Harris fired up on Kings’ playoff berth

For the first time in NBA history, two Northern California basketball teams are meeting in the postseason: the Sacramento Kings and the Golden State Warriors. Fans of each team are excited. But since the Kings have not made it to the playoffs for almost two decades, one of their fans is expressing his enthusiasm about his hometown team’s arrival to the big dance. William Harris, a resident at SQ, is from Sacramento. Of his 27 years incarcerated, two have been at SQ. Since his incarceration, he has not seen his home team make it to the postseason.

Timothy Hicks: How’s it going, man? I’m just going to jump right in it. How long have you been a Kings fan?

William Harris: It’s all good. Excited about my team. I been a Kings fan for as long as I can remember. For about 37 years.

TH: I know that Warriors fans are just as excited as you

are. But, I can imagine how the excitement must be for you, though, being that your team has not been to the dance in decades. Tell me some of the things you can remember about your team.

WH: I’m a huge fan. I remember when I was a kid and when I went to the Reggie Theus basketball camp. I remember seeing the old starters come on the court: Reggie Theus, Lasale Thomson, Odis Thorpe, Larry Drew and Eddie Johnson.

TH: Your team finally joined in on the dance floor at the post season this year. The Warriors been holding down the league for almost a decade now themselves. Four rings in the last eight years. How do you explain what’s going on now?

WH: It’s all in the coach we got now. The Warriors’ and Cleveland Cavaliers’ old assistant coach, Mike Brown, is leading the team now. He turned that team around.

His experience in the league makes the difference. That’s the one thing that the Kings have today that they didn’t have before.

TH: Can you compare the Kings of today to the Warriors of today?

WH: It’s hard to compare the Kings to the Warriors. Unfortunately, I have not seen them play yet. But I can say that the Warriors have a different pedigree. They got Klay Thompson, Curry, Green, Jordan Poole and they just got Wiggins and GP II back, too. But I’m definitely going for the Kings, though, regardless.

TH: Who do you know that is on the Kings that can give the Warriors a hard time?

WH: We got Harrison Barnes, De’Aaron Fox, Domantas Sabonis, Keegan Murry, Malik Monk and Lyles off the bench.

TH: The Warriors have never lost in the playoffs when all players were healthy under



Vincent O'Bannon // SQNews

Steve Kerr. You mentioned Harrison Barnes, from the old Warriors, good three-point shooter. But Klay just elevated his game and became one of the top-five three-point shooters in the league. The Warriors have shooters.

**Update: The Sacramento Kings were defeated by the Warriors in their series 4-3.**  
—Timothy Hicks

# SQ big-five sports programs begin workouts

By Timothy Hicks  
Sports Editor

Workouts have commenced in the prison for the “big five” sports programs and all teams are getting their practices back in so they can be ready for their upcoming seasons.

So far, the baseball, basketball, soccer, tennis, and 1000-Mile Running Club is practicing and running drills. Coaches are enthusiastic about running plays with the newcomers.

Although seasons for the sports programs last year were not able to flourish, prison buses are continuing to roll into the prison with new talent, making it difficult for coaches to pick during the tryouts.

Now, even with the continued threats of COVID in the side-mirror of prison life, sports teams are daring to get things going again. The question is: will the veterans return or will the newcomers that are flooding the prison with their presence take their place?

There is some pretty good talent arriving to the prison and the coaches are taking notice of it. The new sports program contracts installed for the players are giving them standards and procedures to abide by that may help coaches root out some of the tough decisions they may have to make.

It took the San Quentin Warriors and Kings basketball teams a couple of tryouts to establish their teams

rosters. Once they had gotten their 15 players each, the coaches ran some scrimmages to determine their starters.

Coaches on the gridiron presented a combine-style training to determining the players they would weed out for the future of the San Quentin 49ers football team. Along with the intramural teams, coaches will have some tough choices to sort through the new talent.

The San Quentin A’s baseball team ran practices filled with veterans and newcomers. Their season this year, however, is still questionable.

Meanwhile, over 40 members of the 1000-Mile Running Club had no troubles when the members ran circles around the quarter-mile track kicking off their season with a three-mile race.

The San Quentin Earthquake soccer team had a 20-man competitive match on the fútbol Field of Dreams while building up their cardio for their season.

The San Quentin Tennis Club slapped tennis balls across the court, preparing for what might be a hopeful and long-awaited new season.

Last season’s sports records were short for all prison sports teams and they did not level up. All teams usually would get to play at least 20 to almost 40 games per season.

All seasons have yet to begin officially, however, all of the teams have revved up their scrimmages to be prepared for when the outside challengers show up.

## NFL 2023 FIRST AND SECOND-ROUND DRAFT PICKS

### CAROLINA PANTHERS

• QB: Bryce Young (Ala)  
• WR: Jonathan Mingo (Ole Miss)

### HOUSTON TEXANS

QB: C.J. Stroud (Ohio State)  
EDGE: Will Anderson Jr. (Ala)  
C: Juice Scruggs (Penn State)

### INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

QB: Anthony Richardson (Florida)  
CB: Julius Brents (Kansas State)

### SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

CB: Devon Witherspoon (Illinois)  
WR: Jaxon Smith-Njigba (Ohio St.)  
EDGE: Derrick Hall (Auburn)  
RB: Zach Charbonnet (UCLA)

### ARIZONA CARDINALS

OT: Paris Johnson (Ohio State)  
G: BJ Ojulari (LSU)

### LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

EDGE: Tyree Wilson (Texas Tech)  
TE: Michael Mayer (Notre Dame)

### ATLANTA FALCONS

RB: Bijan Robinson (Texas)  
G: Matthew Bergeron (Syracuse)

### PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

DT: Jalen Carter (Georgia)

### CHICAGO BEARS

OT: Darnel Wright (Tennessee)  
DT: Gervon Dexter (Florida)  
CB: Tyrique Stevenson (Miami)

### TENNESSEE TITANS

OT: Peter Skoronski (Northwestern)  
QB: Will Levis (Kentucky)

### DETROIT LIONS

RB: Jahmyr Gibbs (Alabama)  
TE: Sam Laporta (Iowa)  
CB: Brian Branch (Alabama)

### GREEN BAY PACKERS

EDGE: Lukas Van Ness (Iowa)  
TE: Luke Musgrave (Oregon State)  
WR: Jayden Reed (Michigan State)

### PITTSBURGH STEELERS

OT: Broderick Jones (Georgia)  
DT: Keanu Benton (Wisconsin)

### NEW YORK JETS

EDGE: Will McDonald (Iowa State)

### WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

CB: Emmanuel Forbes (Miss State)  
CB Jartavius Martin - Illinois

### NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

CB: Christian Gonzalez (Oregon)  
EDGE: Keion White (Georgia Tech)

### TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

DT: Calijah Kancey (Pittsburgh)  
OT: Cody Mauch (No Dakota State)

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

WR: Quentin Johnston (TCU)  
EDGE: Tuli Tuipufu (USC)

### LOS ANGELES RAMS

G: Steve Avila (TCU)

### NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

EDGE: Isaiah Foskey (Notre Dame)

### NEW YORK JETS

C: Joe Tippmann (Wisconsin)

### MIAMI DOLPHINS

CB: Cam Smith (South Carolina)

### KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

WR: Rashee Rice (SMU)

### NEW YORK GIANTS

C: John Michael Schmitz (Minn)

### DALLAS COWBOYS

TE: Luke Schoomaker (Michigan)

### BUFFALO BILLS

G: O’Cyrus Torrence (Florida)

### CINCINNATI BENGALS

CB: DJ Turner II (Michigan)

### JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

TE: Brenton Strange (Penn State)

### DENVER BRONCOS

WR: Marvin Mims (Oklahoma)



CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Jonathan Chiu

Edited by Jan Perry

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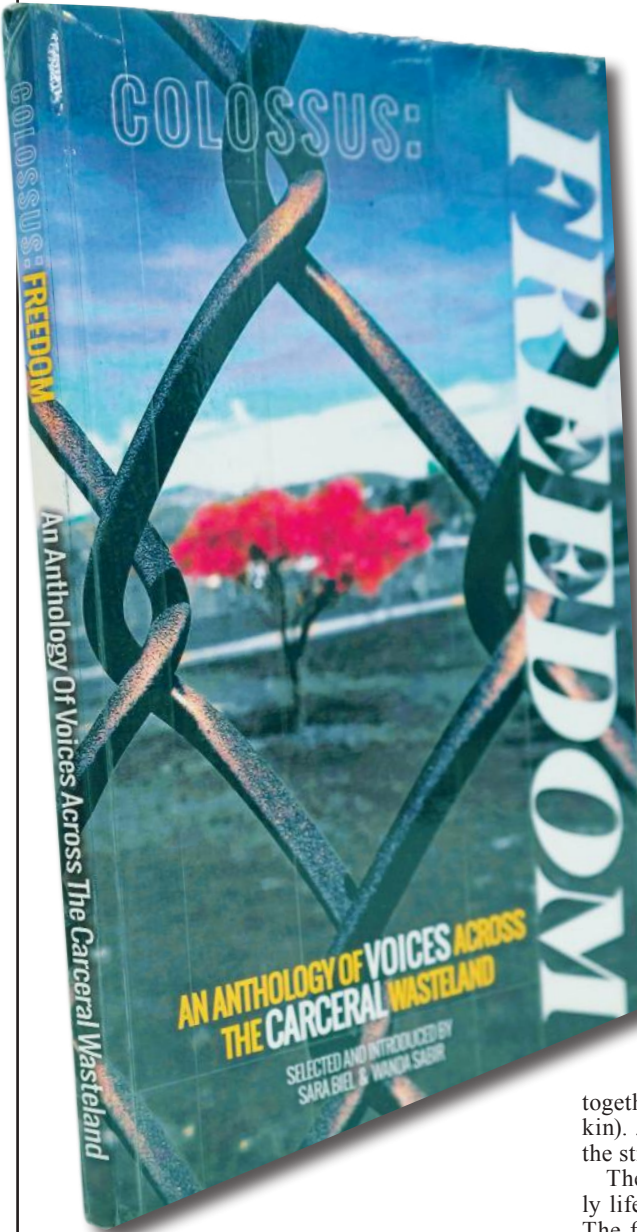
ACROSS

1. Michael Strahan's new TV show (Abbrev.)
4. New Russian intelligence network (Abbrev.)
7. Author Amy of "The Joy Luck Club"
10. Acronym of Tiger's association
13. Closed handshake
14. Travel wait term (Abbrev.)
15. Highway \_\_\_ 66
16. Cusack of "Castle"
17. Carry of "Person of Interest" and "Crowded"
19. Custom of folkway of the Irish people
21. Host of CNN's "United Shades of America" W.
23. Desert in Mongolia
26. To happen as a consequence
27. To draw on glass or metal with acid
31. To begin
33. This insect ruins picnics
34. With speed, swiftly
35. Song "Sweet Nothing" Calvin
37. Religious celebration on a Sunday
39. FM alternative
40. Audi race car model
41. Export/import tax
45. Balkin country occupied by Germans in WWII
49. Comedian Burnett
50. Acronym for daily food values
52. To surpass in achievement
54. A type of cheese used for salads
55. Thin and bony due to great age or hunger
57. Amy Acker's character on "Person of Interest"
58. Confirmation of receiving items in prison (Prison Slang)
61. Bag of products when you first arrived at a prison (Prison Slang)
64. Iranian language related to Old Persian
68. "Honest \_\_\_"
69. (Suffix) forming feminine names or titles
70. Abbrev. for Latin Legum Baccalaureus
71. Acronym of group that supports American military families
72. Acronym of synthetic drug similar to LSD
73. Electrified fish
74. Weep aloud
75. Network of Terry Gross' show "Fresh Air"

DOWN

1. Acronym of the value of a country's annual output
2. Spoil or disfigure
3. A gibbon
4. Cheese made by Greeks
5. Medical term for mouth like opening (Suffix)
6. Crazy or eccentric (Slang)
7. Force payment through bribery
8. What many prison yards lack (two words)
9. Astronaut Armstrong
10. Used to express disgust or disbelief
11. Acronym for Axl Rose and Slash's band
12. Football movie "\_\_\_ Given Sunday"
18. To run with a whirring sound
20. The last thing we did last night
22. Acronym for American branch military SEALs
23. Lexus car model
24. Asian classification in prison (Abbrev.)
25. Sheep's cry
28. Country duo Maddy & \_\_\_
29. Acronym of folk band with John Fogerty
30. Cartoon character \_\_\_-Man
32. Path for hiking or biking
34. Cartoon dog from "The Jetsons"
36. Acronym for the global bank
38. Goddess personifying criminal folly
41. "She so high" singer: \_\_\_ Bachman
42. Unit of land in the metric system
43. Brandon of "Superman Returns"
44. Irregular line formed on infinite number of irregular sections
45. Beach footwear
46. Homer's boss Mr.
47. OJ's trial judge
48. Gone by
49. Truckers' radio (Abbrev.)
51. Obviously
53. Result of even score basketball game (Abbrev.)
55. Slyness and cunning in dealing with others
56. "Talking Bodies" singer
59. Late Merle Haggard's song "\_\_\_ From Muskokee"
60. English economist Beatrice Potter
61. Skinny jeans or parachute pants are types of
62. Apple's former competitor
63. Game, \_\_\_, Match
65. Large cask for beer or wine
66. C.O.'s weapon
67. And not, or not, and not either

BOOK REVIEW



By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

I never thought that another person could understand what I have been through, but after reading the poems and essays selected and introduced by Sara Biel & Wanda Sabir, I saw that I was wrong.

The tome contains letters and experiences of families, victims, perpetrators, survivors and others affected by mass incarceration and the criminal justice system.

People both inside and outside prisons nationwide, but primarily from institutions in California, wrote the poems in *Colossus: FREEDOM – An anthology of voices across the Carceral Wasteland (2022)*. The stories of incarcerated contributors who wrote about their families; about separation, love, traumas, isolation, humanity, and freedom, resonated deeply with me.

Timothy Young, a friend, introduced me to the book. One day he hustled down the tier, excited that his poem, titled *Corona-Virus*, was in the book. He asked that I read it and “tell me what you think.” That sparked my interest because I love to read and write poetry.

Still, I let the book sit on my shelf for two days before I opened it, because the subject matter was

COLOSSUS:

FREEDOM

AN ANTHOLOGY OF

VOICES ACROSS THE

CARCERAL WASTELAND

Selected and introduced by  
Sara Biel & Wanda Sabir

folks’ experiences with incarceration. I feared it would only bring my focus to the cement walls and floors of prison life, and to the textures, sounds and smells that permeate these congested quarters. I don’t want to read about these things; I want to escape them.

But at my friend’s request, I skimmed the pages randomly without any real motivation to read the entire book — until the poem *Night Rain* grabbed me hard. Professor Wanda Sabir, activist, poet, arts editor and senior writer at the *San Francisco Bay View* newspaper, wrote the poem.

*Night Rain* evoked emotions that I have never experienced reading a book. The poem spoke to my childhood traumas. “We hard ‘cause we learned drinking formula, the formula. Even family is unreliable. Family can hurt you worse than an enemy. Something about the blood. The way family organs are stitched together along a seam (that fits perfectly next to kin). ... We are the girls who live in cars. Who walk the streets. Who ride BART all night.”

These paragraphs are like a narration of my early life. I did all of those things as a runaway teen. The first person to hurt me, verbally, emotionally and physically, was my stepfather; *Night Rain* got it right; family hurts.

As I read other selections, a sense of urgency came over me. Soon I dove deeply into the poems as the words seemed to jump off the page to tell the story of my life. In this connection with the book I felt less alone.

It took my imprisonment to make me understand that many people have experienced situations at least as bad as mine, if not worse. I believed that no one else could relate to sleeping on a public transit bus in San Francisco. This book, showed me otherwise.

I recommend this book because it reminds us that, in spite of life’s pitfalls and challenges, through writing we can help each other understand that things are not all that bad and that we are capable of overcoming.

“Reading changes people’s lives and causes them to excel to their highest heights. There is power in words ... It inspires us to want to become better when we read about someone else accomplishing their goals,” wrote Bobby Bostic in his essay titled *Reading Makes Me Free*.

All proceeds of *Colossus: FREEDOM* go to the California Coalition for Women Prisoners, an advocacy organization that supports incarcerated women’s rights.

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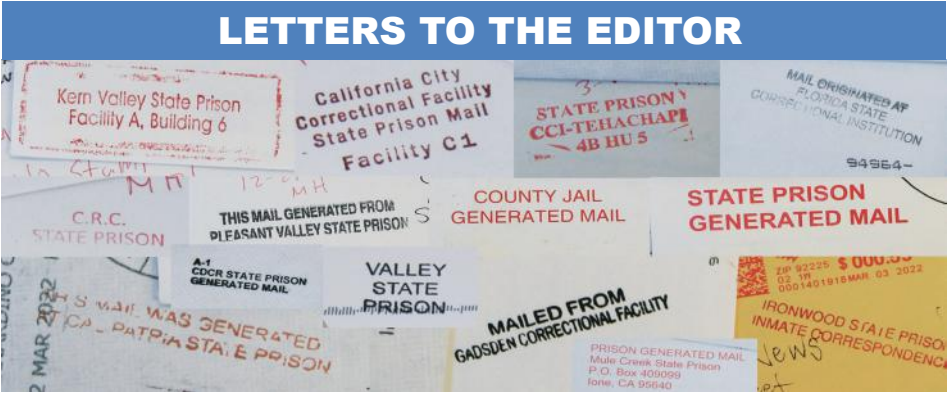
2023 April's Solutions

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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SAN RAFAEL READER  
PRAISES SQNEWS

Dear SQNews:

Last April I sent a \$100 donation and started receiving *The San Quentin News* and *The Wall* magazine. The Technical expertise, editorial content, writing skills, and timely articles have gotten better and better with each issue. The last issue of *The Wall* showcasing the art and artists flourishing within San Quentin was superb and most inspiring. I would like to commend and congratulate the men who have worked hard and diligently to master the many facets of print publication.

I'm enclosing a check of \$100 in continued support of this excellent endeavor that gives a voice and a venue to the incarcerated to express themselves, their views and their concerns,

Thank you for being the

conduit in providing an outlet to this group with a limited voice. I look forward to reading the next issue of *The San Quentin News*.

—*Diana Franco*  
*San Rafael, California*

L.A. VETS COORDINATOR  
COMMENDS SQN

Dear *SQ News*:

First let me congratulate you on your fine newspaper. I have been reading it since 1980, though for a few years, you were not published. This includes the wonderful years that Joe Morse (RIP), my good friend, was the Editor-in-Chief. I noticed over the years that at no time did the *San Quentin News* lose its high standards in reporting. Though with different Editors-in-Chief, the perspective changed, but it never was weakened or lessened in the quality of reporting. Further-

more, over the years it had grown from a just San Quentin paper to one of worldwide readership.

I am the National Veterans Foundations (NVF), Incarcerated Veterans Coordinator. This means that I have a very full case load of incarcerated veterans corresponding with me wanting information and assistance. With those Out-of-State incarcerated veterans, I always tell them they need to get the *San Quentin News* as it is very informative on what is going on in the world of incarceration. I believe this helps them out as most states do not have a prison newspaper.

Thank you and your staff for the wonderful newspaper and we hope for the continued success.

—*J. White*  
*Prison Outreach Coordinator*  
*National Veterans Foundation*  
*Los Angeles, California*

The California Model Survey

On March 17, Gov. Gavin Newsom came to San Quentin to announce plans to transform the prison into a rehabilitation center. As planning for the transformation begins, stakeholders will discuss what the new California Model of rehabilitation will look like. We anticipate that it will include up-scaling education, vocation, and reentry programs. The *San Quentin News* wants to hear your views. If you would like to join the discussion, please complete the survey below:

Please circle your answers.

1. Incarcerated voices should be heard when it comes to creating the new California Model of rehabilitation.

AGREE                      DISAGREE

2. A formal committee of incarcerated voices with years of lived carceral experience should be included in discussions about how to develop the California Model.

AGREE                      DISAGREE

3. Should the California Model apply only to level I and level II facilities?

YES                      NO

4. Are you interested in improving relationships between incarcerated people and prison staff members to make the California Model work?

YES                      NO

7. Are you willing to set aside prison and gang politics and program to facilitate the California Model?

YES                      NO

8. Are you willing to participate peacefully and nonviolently in a rehabilitation program designed to get you home to your family with education and job skills?

YES                      NO

9. Are you willing to work together and provide educational assistance to fellow incarcerated people to help make the California Model work?

YES                      NO

10. If you could design a prison to meet your rehabilitative needs and get you home healthy, with an education and vocational experience, what would it look like? Please use one separate sheet of paper (200 words or less) to answer.

Return Surveys to:

San Quentin News Survey  
1 Main Street  
San Quentin, California 94964

Survey from People in Blue

EDITORIAL

THE CALIFORNIA MODEL  
*Collaboration is key*

By Steve Brooks  
Editor-In-Chief

Anybody who has ever seen a Norwegian prison will probably think it is unimaginable that such a thing could take place at San Quentin. Officers dressed in khaki pants and dress shirts, clean buildings and beautiful landscapes with few incarcerated people, is not something that is easy to picture at California's oldest and most infamous facility.

I'd love to have access to single-celled living quarters, plants, fish tanks, puppies, personalized meals and private visits with family. But this seems like nothing less than a fantasy.

"It's like I'm in some sort of weird dream," said Jody Lewen, president of Mount Tamalpais College, as she watched Gov. Gavin Newsom's press conference where he announced his plans for San Quentin.

From my own perspective as an incarcerated person, I wake up every day to my current reality of prison overcrowding and dangerous living conditions. On the other side of the coin, every day San Quentin's officers walk into an environment filled with uncertainty. Some of them feel subject to constant threat. It makes them particularly anxious when they anticipate a "Norwegian-styled" prison, which in their minds is a potentially nightmarish scenario.

San Quentin currently houses more than 4,000 people, and it would be impossible to enact the envisioned California Model with the prison so densely populated. In addition, not all incarcerated people are well suited to live in such a unique carceral environment — one designed and focused on preparing its residents to go home. But there is a way to move forward.

Following Newsom's announcement, CDCR Secretary Jeffrey Macomber and CCHCS Receiver J. Clark Kelso issued a joint memorandum to their respective staffs entitled: *The California model: Changing lives one conversation at a time*. They named four pillars that will serve as the foundation for the new model. These are; dynamic security, normalization, peer support, and becoming a trauma-informed organization. It's a good start.

But as far as people in blue are concerned, the California Model cannot exist without officer buy-in. It is among the

officers and the incarcerated population that these conversations have to begin. The voices of those in blue are just as vital to the process of imagining the new model as are the voices of those in green.

Incarcerated people I've talked to believe that the prison's population must be lower, with a cap at no more than 100% of design capacity. Many of us want the option of single-celled housing. We want to live in a therapeutic environment where officers are educated, trauma-informed, dressed casually, and as much as possible, interact with the incarcerated population in a courteous and respectful manner.

We would like to have access to better food rich in fruits and vegetables, and to be able to buy many of the healthy, packaged vendor products that are currently available only to female prisoners.

We want full time assignments to rehabilitation programming, with access to education, and training in job skills and financial literacy.

Our ideal would be to work collaboratively with officers in the development of our parole plans. In return, many of us are willing to listen to what the officers need from us in the interest of working together to create a healthy, shared environment.

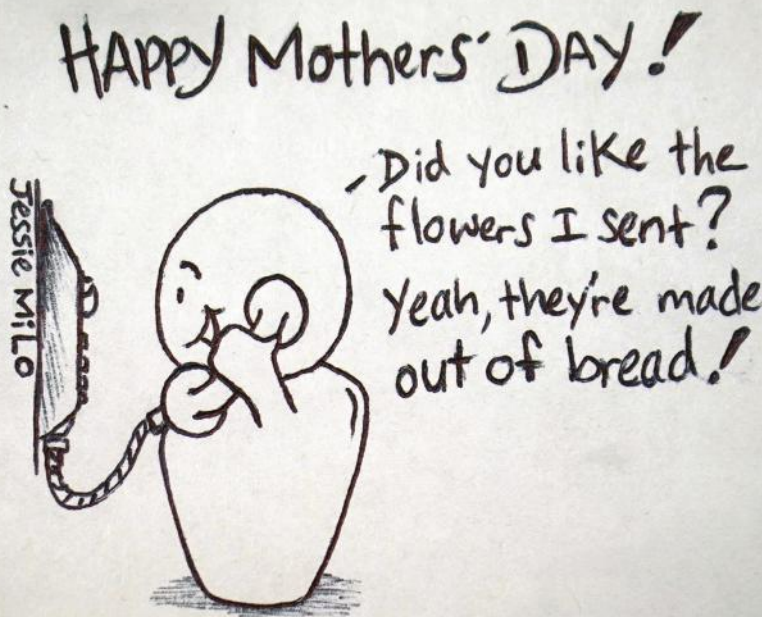
For far too long prison culture has been about violence, bloodshed, fear, heartache and pain. We have had to exist in a hyper-vigilant state of "fight, flight or freeze" without rest. It has caused us all tremendous stress, anxiety, depression, and PTSD. At his press conference, the governor said that 10% of CDCR's officers either attempt suicide at some point, or at least think about it during their careers.

"We need the warning label, like with cigarettes," retired California Corrections Officer Stephen B. Walker told Kaia Stern, co-founder of the Prison Studies Project. "This is hazardous to your health. I'm slowly being poisoned over a 35-year period and nobody tells me."

The buy-in for guards is that a therapeutic environment benefits them as well as the incarcerated. Current prison environments negatively impact the health and life expectancy of both groups. We have to work together to change that. It will be up to the people living and working inside San Quentin to bring the California Model of rehabilitation to fruition, regardless of any foundational pillars established by CDCR.

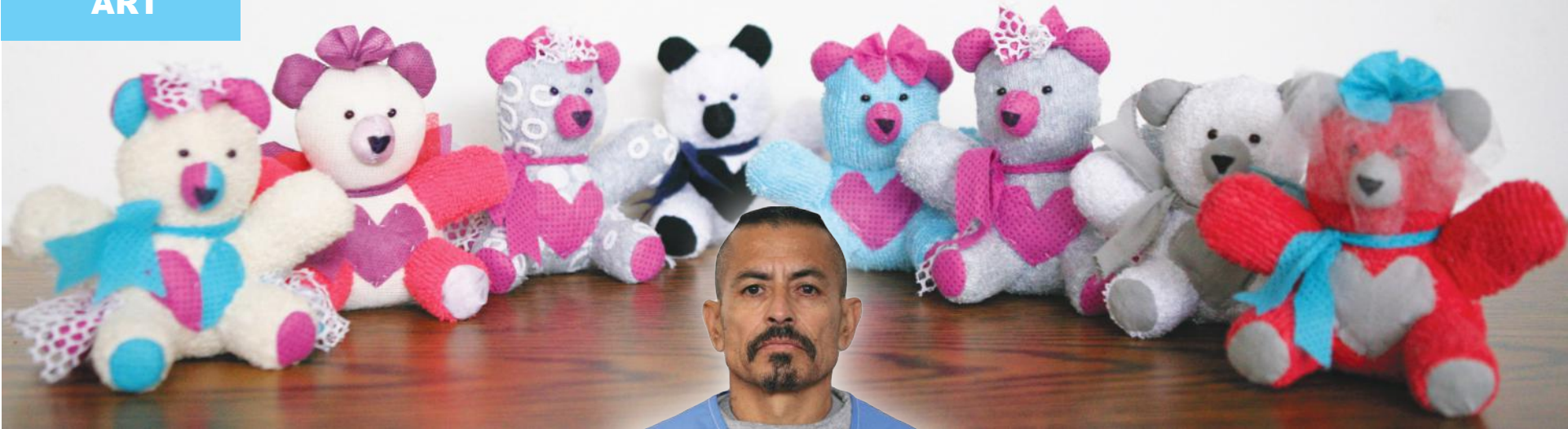
SAN QUEN-TOONS

BY JESSIE MILO (2023)





ART



Dante D. Jones // SQNews

STITCH-WIZ EZEKIEL GONZALEZ INSPIRED BY LOVE FOR HIS DAUGHTERS

By Edwin E. Chavez  
Spanish Journalism  
Guild Chairman

“My two daughters Jack-lynn and Lilly were the ones that inspired me to create these teddy bears,” said Ezekiel Gonzalez, 51, a resident of San Quentin.

Gonzalez’s talent seems anything but ordinary inside prison walls. He sews hand-made teddy bears and stuffs them with cotton, a craft and its products not often seen in a world of metal and concrete. When he first arrived at a level-four institution, the weather was so cold that he decided to improvise with the limited resources at his disposal. “When it was raining and [I was] walking around the yard, the bitter coldness was numbing my fingers,” said Gonzalez. “The first thought that came to mind was to make some gloves.” Gonzalez did not know how to sew, but he still tried it. He soon discovered that he could be creative, so he sewed to keep himself and others warm

during the winter. His four-year-old daughter loved the color pink, so he made her a 15-inch-tall, pink teddy bear. Unfortunately, the post office returned the pink teddy bear to its sender and the prison discarded it upon arrival. The artist estimates that he has produced more than 600 teddy bears since 2017. Each has its own unique nature and character. He has made ballerina bears, newlywed husband-and-wife bears, and a cowboy with a 10-gallon hat, chaps and a lasso. During football season, sports fans like to display their NFL teams. Gonzalez receives many requests for bears with team logos. He recently made a Green Bay Packers bear and a Dallas Cowboys bear. “I created a butterfly bear that represents a new way of life and says that change is possible for all those who want to do good,” said Gonzalez. The master behind the needle and the thread is open for



My two daughters Jacklynn and Lilly were the ones that inspired me to create these teddy bears.  
—Ezekiel Gonzalez

any challenge that comes his way. His artistic skill goes beyond creating teddy bears. For example, he has made stuffed boxing gloves modeled on the type professional fighters use. He also tailors clothing for those who like to look good during visits with their loved ones. One of his biggest accomplishments is a long-sleeve shirt constructed from a blue bed sheet, indistinguishable from one professionally made. After finishing the shirt, he realized that he was good at his new enterprise. “Sewing has helped me in my rehabilitation and with my inner inhibition,” said Gonzalez. “I use sewing a lot as a therapeutic measure to cope [with] the daily challenges that prison life brings.” Through his craft, the artist has found peace of mind. Sewing relaxes him in ways that he never knew possible.



Andrew Wadsworth finds healing with each stroke of the paintbrush

Andrew Wadsworth began his incarceration as a 16-year-old. He admits that his path to adulthood has had its challenges. Now 38, he’s in the early stages of realizing that a paintbrush is an excellent way to express himself. “It’s hard for me to express myself without coming off arrogant,” Wadsworth said. “With abstract painting there are lots of emotions—it’s hard to express just one.” Wadsworth “drip-spills” paint to create abstracts. He says the process allows him the freedom to express himself and “not feel self-conscious on what’s coming out.” He said that love and compassion are important aspects of his abstracts. He hopes the imagery encourages viewers to seek the same self-discovery that he’s found. Wadsworth’s creative process is artistic, not just on the canvas, but also within himself. “Let the world know that we may be in chains but our minds soar across the horizon seeking our next challenges,” he said. Wadsworth has found healing by baring some of his childhood traumas in his art. By connecting these traumas to his criminal thinking, he is able to gain insight into what landed him in prison. His first self-portrait is *Underdog*. It’s a statement

that being dragged, scrapped, and sabotaged will not deter him on his quest for redemption. He says that the painting gives him insight into the impact of his past criminal behavior. The bars represent the pain that he’s inflicted on his community and victims. The gold teeth are characteristics of “The Street Life.” As a basketball fan, Wadsworth has created *We Hustle Knicks* about his favorite team. He appreciates and feels passionate about the struggles of the Knicks, who last won an NBA Championship in 1973. He feels connected to the team because he, too, has withstood many struggles in life. “I painted this because people do not want to hear me talk about the Knicks,” said Wadsworth. “You don’t want to hear me talk about my team, but now you can see my team.” As an artist, Wadsworth has not given up on love. He believes in destiny while the world is upside down. An optimist to the core, he hopes that someday he will find true love. “When you put two and a four together it symbolizes love,” said Wadsworth. “Twenty-four as a whole number symbolizes destiny. When you put all this together it becomes the power of love.” —Edwin E. Chavez



Above: Andrew Wadsworth connects his personal life struggles to his beloved New York Knicks Championship drought. Top right: This piece symbolizes love, like Kobe’s love for his daughter Gigi. Bottom right: A self portrait of his own life’s reflective journey.