

# San Quentin News

EST. 1940

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ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE

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## Empowerment, solidarity, #METOO



Wikipedia

### Youth counselor Tarana Burke empowers women to stand up against sexual harassment

By Jerry Maleek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair

Tarana Burke, an activist who worked at a youth camp for Black girls, encouraged them to express their anxieties and intimate stories. At the camp, Burke encountered a girl named Heaven who took a liking to her; Burke found that the girl was hyper and struggling with anger, she was always pulling the girl out of trouble. According to the activist, Heaven revealed to Burke that her mother's boyfriend had been sexually abusing her. A survivor of sexual assault herself, Burke found the girl's story to be troubling. She referred Heaven to another counselor, and afterwards wished she had told the girl "me too."

"I will never forget the look on Heaven's face," Burke said. "The 'Me Too' movement started in the deepest [and] darkest place in my soul."

In 2006, Burke founded the 'Me Too' movement, to empower vulnerable women through solidarity and empathy who have experienced sexual harassment, encouraging them to stand up for themselves, according to Wikipedia.

She was born on September 12, 1973 and grew up in the Bronx, New York. Burke was sexually assaulted twice in her young life. Burke's mother encouraged her

to become an advocate for young girls.

Burke attended Alabama State University, later transferred to Auburn University in Montgomery, and after college moved to Selma to become an activist.

Burke is a twice-published author of: "You are Your Best Thing: Vulnerability, Shame, Resilience, and the Black Experience," and: "Unbound: My Story of Liberation and the Birth of Me Too movement."

TIME Magazine dubbed Burke a silence breaker among other activist as the 2017 Person of the year. In 2018, she was named one of the Time's magazine's most 100 influential people.

The movement catapulted in 2017 after 1980s "Who's the Boss" sitcom star Alyssa Milano tweeted about film producer Harvey Weinstein's sexual assault case. Sharing her own story, she encouraged women to start using the phrase 'Me Too.'

Burke stated that the movement's objective was to hold perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable, and to develop solutions that will have a long-term impact on sexual harassment in the workplace. So that one day, nobody ever has to say "me too" again.

The movement has made various impacts on academic institutions, churches, and included false sexual harassment claims.

See ME TOO on pg 5

## America's Got Talent star performs concert

By Steve Drown  
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin's Chapel B was filled to overflowing with a loud and energetic crowd singing and dancing to the incredible and rousing sounds of Dee Dee Simon and her band, The Truth.

"When I perform, I perform as if it's my last time," said Simon, who is an America's Got Talent Golden Buzzer winner.

Simon and The Truth covered a wide range of musical genres, from Bruno Mars's classic, "24K Magic," Chic's "Good Times," to Prince's "Kiss." The band rocked on each number and sounded like the original artists performing their numbers. Simon kept her energy up throughout the performance.

The Truth consisted of seven members: two keyboard players, a drummer, a percussionist, a bass player, a guitar player, and a back-up singer. They eagerly awaited Simon's arrival on stage as house music from the chapel's PA system filled the room.

Simon stepped out on stage dressed in a glittery outfit, sporting her signature hairstyle: long on one end and short on the other. "This is for y'all," she said, pointing her pinky ring to the sky. Then the show opened with "Hold On, I'm Comin'."

See DEE DEE on pg 4

## Personal data breach affects hundreds of thousands

### \$6.5 million dollar settlement impacts several prisons

By Michael Callahan  
Staff Writer

Several residents in San Quentin say their personal information was stolen while they were serving time in prison.

A class-action suit against Correct Care, a medical claims processing company, involved nearly 600,000 incarcerated persons in four states.

"I feel like it's the helplessness that makes you hate the system. It is frustrating that we are not out there to fight for our rights. We are targets and vulnerable," San Quentin resident Ted Hingst said.

According to HealthInfoSec, a settlement was reached for a breach of personal healthcare information possessed by Correct Care Integrated Health organization. The \$6.5 million settlement affected several prisons and correctional facilities in California, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina.

The lawsuit alleged negligence and

breach of implied contract between 2012 and 2022. Compromised information included names, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, certain health information, and trust account information. A stolen identity can also lead to fraudulent filings with the IRS.

Lee Covarrubias, another San Quentin resident, said he experienced identity theft before, and it left him in a lot of fear and anxiety. "It was stressful. I felt a part of my life was taken away, and I felt insecure."

As someone who's been incarcerated for 7 years, Covarrubias said a person's identity is invaluable and the fear of having one's identity stolen while in prison causes anxiety.

A notification was sent to the possible victims, and proof of the claim was required to receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket losses up to \$10,000 or an alternative

See DATA on pg 4



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Zoe Mullery stands at podium prior to a question and answer session with participants

## William James 15th creative writing event

By Eric Allen  
Staff Writer

The creative writing workshop 'Brothers in Pen' held its 15th annual public reading at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center inside Chapel B.

The event was hosted by SQ News Editor-in-Chief Kevin D. Sawyer, who has been a part of the writing

program for 14 years, and now on his 10th public read.

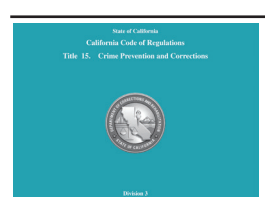
The event focused on participants sharing their creative writing in front of an outside public audience and residents. This presented an opportunity for the participants to have an outlet where they shared their stories.

Twenty-one participants shared a five-minute story formed around

a two-pronged prompt: a theme of metamorphosis in addition to a reflection in a puddle.

Longtime creative writing instructor, Zoe Mullery, expressed her gratitude for those who made this class possible. She said that she still finds joy coming into San Quentin after 26 years of volunteering.

See READ on pg11



**PRISON CULTURE**

Boots and belts should be provided to all inmates

SEE PAGE 2

**COLON CANCER MONTH**

1 in 2 men will get Colon Cancer sometime in their lifetime

SEE PAGE 7

**ASL CORRESPONDENCE**

First ever American Sign Language correspondence course

SEE PAGE 10



**MUSICAMBIA**

Annual 5-day workshop features talented musicians

SEE PAGE 12



## MISSION STATEMENT

*San Quentin News* reports on rehabilitative efforts to advance social justice and to improve public safety.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE *SAN QUENTIN NEWS*:**

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## PRISON POLICY

# Prisoners rights to boots and belts

*According to California Code of Regulations each inmate shall be issued boots and belts but many San Quentin residents are without*

By **Kevin D. Sawyer**  
Editor-in-Chief

A reasonable amount of rehabilitation for prisoners includes the state's expectation that a man would make some effort to pull himself up by his bootstraps. The idea presumes a man possesses boots.

Last year, a flier posted in San Quentin's housing units asked, "Do you need boots?" and "Do you need a web belt?" More than 75 men signed the flier with one objective in mind: to receive boots and belts.

"They wouldn't give [boots] to me because I didn't have a job," said Jarrod Childs, who arrived at San Quentin two years ago.

Childs said he received a pair of black California Prison Industry Authority slip-on, loafer-type shoes — technically called "espadrilles" — footwear usually having a fabric upper part and a sole made of a flexible material, such as rope or rubber.

"I came up on hand-me-downs [boots]," said Childs. "My buddy gave me his pair when he went home."

A copy of the Boots and Belts flier went to the Inmate Advisory Council — a liaison group of prisoners who work with the administration to resolve issues of disagreement with the population.

Some prisoners said San Quentin's laundry staff has enforced an "underground regulation," by refusing to provide prisoners with a pair of state-issued work boots. Instead, prisoners are told they must have "a work card." Belts are virtually nonexistent at the institution.

According to the California Code of Regulations (Title 15, Section 3030): "Each inmate shall be issued: Work shoes,

one pair. In addition to the items... each male inmate shall be issued: Belt, web, one." The regulations also state: "Shall be issued."

When a person is incarcerated within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, their reform theoretically begins the moment they are housed at their receiving institution's reception center.

"Has San Quentin laundry staff stated that 'You need a work card to get boots?'" the flier asked, and "Has San Quentin laundry staff told you 'We don't have belts?'"

Victor Torres has been housed at San Quentin for three years. He said the institution's laundry staff refused to issue him boots. "They said no — only for workers." Instead, he was given a pair of loafers. "They're uncomfortable. They're cheap." He said the shoes get soaked in the rain.

"This is my third set," Johnathan Martinez said about the black loafers issued to him. "I don't feel safe wearing these. It looks like they have grip but they slip on the stairs. They used to give us these in the county (jail)."

State employee G. Martinez worked in the institution warehouse. He filled in

for Matthew Sheldon, the laundry supervisor, when *San Quentin News* stopped by for an interview. According to Martinez, Sheldon "relies on the LOP" (Local Operational Procedures) enforcement of the policy to not provide boots to prisoners who do not have jobs. He said the policy is centered on safety, but an inmate laundry worker said boots have been issued, "on a whim."

The institution's Department Operations Manual Supplement, dated April 2021, states in part, "Upon arrival at San Quentin Reception Center, inmates will receive state clothing and linen pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Article 2, Section 3030... A full complement of clothing documented on the Clothing Receipt is: One (1) belt, web, One (1) pair of work boots."

"Belts and boots should be issued for every inmate arriving at San Quentin from another facility," Michael Beaudette wrote in a grievance filed last year. "I would think with San Quentin being the new 'Rehabilitation Center,' things would change around here, but these underground restrictions on withholding state-issued clothing articles

is proving to be a challenge to that designation."

Beaudette wrote in a letter that he arrived at San Quentin in 2015. He provided to the *San Quentin News* the full text of his grievance. "I am sending you this information for you to use as you see fit," he wrote in a letter.

The first response on Beaudette's grievance reads: "After speaking with Materials and Store Supervisor G. Martinez, there are no belts to be issued to the inmate population here at San Quentin, but that issue is being addressed." In spite of the regulations, Beaudette's grievance was denied.

"I have no problem fighting for the little I have coming from CDCR..." Beaudette wrote in his letter. He appealed the grievance decision.

Beaudette received a reply that reads, "The Office of Appeals finds the institution currently does not have any web belts to issue out." The response continues, "The belts are on order from the Prison Industry Agency. A lot of products are on back order due to the crisis that occurred from Covid-19."

"One big problem with that statement is that CDCR has not issued out these belts pre-pandemic," wrote Beaudette. "This is just another fine example on how CDCR wants the inmate population to follow the rules and regulations laid out for us in the Title 15, yet it's a one-way street—their way!"

"It is absolutely ridiculous to expect an inmate/resident to walk to a program on the yard when its pouring rain out, in those stupid slip-on shoes," Beaudette wrote.

The annual costs to house one state prisoner in California now exceeds \$130,000.



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

## Organization seeks to shrink carceral footprint

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

Smart Justice of California hosted its first forum with Young President, bringing awareness to anyone that has been impacted by the justice system. Their goal is to transform prison into a rehabilitation center.

"San Quentin is unlike any institution in the state, keep in mind that this is an essential institution," said Warden Chance Andes. "Outside movies, lockup, and books portrait San Quentin as the worst prison that housed the worse of its criminals."

According to SJCA, they have led efforts to shrink California's carceral footprints since 2017. The organization also improved conditions for those impacted by incarceration, by educating and emboldening policymakers to achieve meaningful criminal justice reforms. Through their Get Proximate Initiative, SJCA were able to bring over 400 legislators, community leaders and donors into direct contact with incarcerated individuals, facilitating conversations about accountability and rehabilitation.

Andes started working for CDCR at the age of 22, when politicians were hard on crime and the Three Strike Law and the death penalty were enforced. He credited the

rehabilitative efforts from the incarcerated and CDCR which shows to be working when the incarcerated are earning AA degrees in their forties, and fifties, and internalizing self. Roots to public safety come from inside out.

"It is important to bring people with influence proximate with incarceration, the best way for people from the outside to understand the potential for healing is to sit with people who are incarcerated to hear your stories," said Anne Irwin Director of SJCA.

The administration estimated that approximately 30 percent of the incarcerated men housed at SQ are still caught up in the criminal lifestyle. And he hopes that additional efforts could be put in place as to who they are transferring into this institution.

The administration is focused on making the entire prison into a single cell status. Andes believes that we are getting there.

A panel was composed with three incarcerated people and Phil Melendez who is a former resident of SQ. Arrested at 19, he spent 20 years prison.

Kevin D. Sawyer talked about the fact that 20 years ago there were no opportunities as the ones that have been highlighted by the warden here at SQ. The Board of Parole Hearings are focused on what kind of programming the incarcerated have been

involved during incarceration. They are looking a parole packages.

According to John Levin he was found suitable for parole a week prior to this event. He emphasized how this process took a toll on him. Reflecting that when he first committed his crime he was 45 years old and didn't have any idea what prison was all about. He was full of shame for killing his wife and her dog. He was not taking his self-help seriously until he saw other incarcerated people transform and he wanted to model the same. He attributes his suitability to the fact that he took the self-help seriously.

Another penal member Juan M. Haines explained how this rehabilitation center is in a cultural shock. In retrospect, he witnessed Melendez's transformation and how many former incarcerated going back to the society after their transformation.

"Healing, Rehabilitation, Public Safety, this is why Juan can come to my house and everyone you will met," said Melendez.

The incarcerated visitors formed four small circles where they discussed:

What we have learned in our healing journeys.

What would you have needed to not commit harm in the community?

What were the pivotal moments (a-ha moments) in groups or classes for the

incarcerated?

Which curricula spoke to them and why?

What is something they are hopeful for these days?

At the end of the event a big circle was formed where people shared.

According to Melendez, over 10,000 lifers have parole since 2009, after a court ruled that the BPH cannot longer hold the person forever.

One of the visitors, CEO for Children Business Amy N. found this experience inspiring. She said she learnt about the courage of people to transform during incarceration. "I think it put on perspective and that time you guys have to dedicate to your own mental health and self-reflection and improvements is inspiring," said Alexandra H. Operations.

"Ten years ago I voted to keep the death penalty and to keep the Three Strikes Law, because I believed harsh penalties were justified. I didn't see people who committed crimes as regular people, and I've regret my vote ever since I was incarcerated five years ago. Since then, I've spent the last five years desperately trying to communicate with people outside these walls on what is wrong with the system, and why it is unjust. I am very glad that these entrepreneurs have the courage to come in and see it for themselves," said John Liu, an incarcerated person.

San Quentin News

EST. 1940

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Your Voice Matters!

The San Quentin News strives to include our readers' voices in every issue. We invite prison residents, staff, and volunteers to submit their original articles, letters to the editor, and art for potential publication. Submissions should be clear, concise (350 words or less), true, and of interest to our incarcerated community.

By submitting your content, you consent to these SQNews policies:

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EDITORIAL

By Kevin D. Sawyer  
Editor-in-Chief

People keep asking me why I returned to San Quentin News. As the newspaper approaches the 17-year-mark since its reappearance in 2008, preparations are underway to scale up and standardize the operation. Moving forward, what will that look like?

As I write, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent to construct a state-of-the-art building at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, which will include a brand new media center. It, and my loyalty to "the company," San Quentin News, is the reason I have returned to the newspaper—and to take care of unfinished business.

Nearly three years ago, I left the newspaper to join The Last Mile's first cohort of audio engineering students. I completed the coursework, graduated, and later used my time to do freelance reporting for other publications. I also maintained my commitment to San Quentin News and became one of its contributing writers.

For more than 10 years I served the paper in many capacities—seen and unseen. I began writing through its Journalism Guild, with no intention of becoming a staff member. An unforeseen 3 a.m. job assignment washing dirty food trays in San Quentin's kitchen changed my mind. One of my editor-in-chief predecessors, the late Arnulfo Garcia, brought me on as a staff writer. For that I am grateful. I moved quickly to become Journalism Guild Chairman, and Associate Editor.

Jesse Vasquez, executive director of Pollen Initiative (the nonprofit that sponsors San Quentin News) asked me to take the position of editor-in-chief before he paroled from the position. I declined. It was my second rejection of the job. Richard "Bonaru" Richardson had also asked me to

accept the position before he paroled as EIC. "If you don't take the job then you don't have the right to complain about what happens at the newspaper," Vasquez said to me.

"I know," I said. "I won't complain, but I can always quit." In my absence, San Quentin News' standing as an inmate-run publication, in my opinion, had been compromised. The Covid-19 pandemic besieged the newspaper and caused it to lose ground, and in a short time many of the senior staff paroled and some of our advisers from outside retired.

Despite what outsiders read, San Quentin News has struggled, and more than a few alumni, readers, and journalists on the outside urged me to take the helm, perhaps because I was the only person left at the prison who understood its storied past, structure, operational procedures, business department, volunteers, and mission.

San Quentin News was revived in 2008 as a four-page publication, produced in the vocational print shop, located in now-demolished Building 38. Ironically, it's the location of the new rehabilitation complex—the same place the newspaper experienced its rebirth, and will return.

Before the podcasts Ear Hustle, UnCuffed, or video productions of Forward This (previously First Watch), there was only San Quentin News and San Quentin Television (SQTV). More often than not, the latter two entities operated independently. If not for the success of San Quentin News there probably would be no media center.

From the beginning, with the help of countless volunteers and the support of the administration—San Quentin and the CDCR's Office of Public Employee Communications—we were making history. I arrived at the prison three years after the newspaper's 2008 comeback. The staff produced news in a desert where

the incarcerated population was bereft of information about the prison system. Along the way, Arnulfo Garcia made certain we endorsed rehabilitation.

As time vanished, and people paroled, it became easy for me to forget history. I'd forgotten about the hundreds of weekly staff meetings, deadlines, writing, editing, healthy debates, layout meetings, tours from outside, and the hustle and bustle of the newsroom.

Those who worked with me used to hear me say, "San Quentin News is not a self-help group. It's business, and I'm a company man." It's a non-profit newsroom, thanks to our generous donors and grant funders. We, and everyone who has ever read an issue of the newspaper, are deeply indebted to our supporters.

Moving forward, San Quentin News will continue to fulfill its mission "reporting on rehabilitative efforts to increase public safety and achieve social justice." With that comes maintaining its 0% recidivism rate for those who have paroled from the newspaper.

I had to ask myself why I left the newspaper before I agreed to return. The first answer was easy. I conveniently and selfishly turned my back on my brothers, past and present. Realizing that, I know now that I have to complete what we started. Now I have an opportunity to work with the stakeholders who will propel San Quentin News into a 21st-century media center.

More importantly, I have a responsibility to lay a sustainable foundation for future journalists who will follow in my footsteps. I have the opportunity to continue shaping a legacy in the Golden State. And I am mindful of the 76 staff members who have worked for "the company." I have known or worked with all but nine of them.

They are listed below:

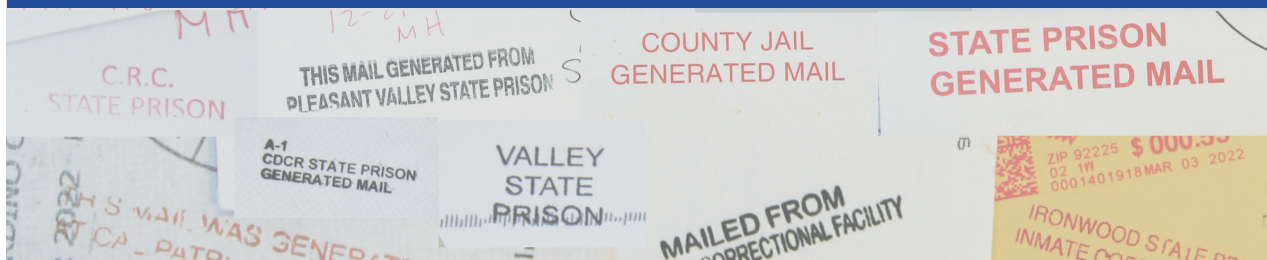
Side Bar:

- 2008- Kenneth R. Brydon, Michael Harris, Aly Tambora, David Marsh
- 2009- Darrell C. Hartley
- 2010- Arnulfo Garcia, Fernando Lemus, Kevin O'Donnell, Richard Richardson, Julian Glenn Padgett, Drew Piazza
- 2011- Cole Bienek, Stephen Yair Liebb, Juan Haines, Gary Scott, Micheal Cooke
- 2012- Richard Lindsey, Boston Woodard, Ron Koehler, Kris Himmelberger
- 2013- Phoeun You, Charles D. Henry, Kevin D. Sawyer, Watani Stiner, Malik Harris, Rahsaan

- Thomas, Ted Swain
- 2014- Mike Endres, Sam Hearnes, Emile DeWeaver
- 2015- Miguel Quezada, Chung Kao, Wesley Eisiminger, Keung Vanh, Eddie Herena
- 2016- Wayne Boatwright
- 2017- Jesse Vasquez
- 2018- Curtis Roberts, De'jon Joy, Juan Espinosa, Timothy Hicks, David Ditto, Joe Garcia, Javier Jimenez
- 2019- Aron Roy, Jesse Blue, Michael Johnson, Vincent Turner, Anthony Faulk, Aaron Taylor, Charles Crowe, Anthony Carvalho, Heriberto

- Arredondo
- 2020- Kerry Rudd, Vincent O'Bannon
- 2021- Edwin E. Chavez, Nathan McKinney, Andrew J. Hardy, Steve Brooks, Carlos Drouaillet, Richard Fernandez
- 2022- Joshua Strange, Dao Ong, Jerry Gearin, Pheng Ly, Bostyon Johnson, Dante D. Jones, Cainen Chambers
- 2023- Michael Callahan, Randy C. Thompson, C. K. Gerhartsreiter, Aristeo Sampablo, Willy Alarcon
- 2024- Arsenio P. Leyva, Eric Allen, César Martínez

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Former Warden trail-blazed way

Dear SQNews,  
I'd love to give the man known as Clinton T. Duffy born in 1898, from his birth was destined to become Warden of San Quentin Prison. I first read about his pure love for human beings in San Quentin News paper Vol. 2024 No. 8 August 2024 Issue 171. I don't know if anyone knew this truth about him. He had love and great compassion for the masses of the incarcerated as Jesus had on all people He encountered.

—Earl Houser Jr  
Mule Creek State Prison

Longtime fan challenges SQNews

Dear SQNews,  
I have been a fan for around 15 years now, I think you should do more stories about educating the prison system about fentanyl because most of the population will be

paroling someday, the threat is real, it's mixed in every drug and it doesn't care who it kills. So please the prison systems Narcan and educate the population about fentanyl.

—Jeremy Willis  
Tehachapi, CA

Voice for justice impacted

Dear SQNews,  
Thank you for your great reporting, and for being a voice for the justice-impacted.

—Nathan Sessing  
Tehachapi, CA

Resident firefighter cannot wait for new issue

Dear SQNews,  
First, I would like to thank you for the very informative publication you put together on a monthly basis. While I was at Sierra Conservation Center, I looked forward to getting my hands on the next issue of the "San Quentin News." I started a little

collection (Starting with VOL. 2023 NO. 1) which I currently share with my fellow firefighter inmates, here at the Vallecito Conservation Camp.

—Alfredo Ortega  
Angels Camp, CA

SQNews on tablet in WA

Dear SQNews,  
I am currently incarcerated in Washington State, I am currently in solitary confinement. I have read all of your Newspapers that are on my tablet. I find your Newspaper very amazing and with all the information that you guys provide in it. I'm able to present the administration here with ideas for better programming.

—SRTC Monroe  
Correctional Complex  
Monroe, WA

Reader seeks legal matters

Dear SQNews,  
I am writing to you because

I really would like a newspaper from the San Quentin News. I see there are a lot of helpful things that could help me attain a future release and other legal matters. But it is always good to know there are some positive things you guys do for the inmates, I really hope to get a newspaper soon.

—Dewayne Wright  
Fairfield, CA

Former resident requests paper

Dear SQNews,  
I am incarcerated in the Yuba County Jail and I have no way to send money for the newspaper every month. I would, but my hands are tied due to issue. I was an inmate in Quentin a year and a half ago. Quentin was a nice place and I have lots of friends there I used to enjoy your magazine is there some way you can send me the magazine please. Thank you.

—Vincent Ciulei  
Yuba County Jail  
Marysville, CA

DEE DEE

Continued from page 1

Simon and The Truth cover a wide range of musical genres in performance



San Quentin nurse Dee Dee Simon



Residents dancing and singing along



Resident musician Moises Ramos and percussionist Mio Flores

Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

originally recorded by Sam & Dave. She then sang “PYT” (Pretty Young Thing), by Michael Jackson.

“Head to toe, that’s the theme tonight,” said Simon to the audience.

“To see the moving and dancing put me out of my comfort zone,” said Richard Rivali, 51. “Everyone came together in unity with no animosity. They should have more of this. I called my family and told them about the show.”

“Who’s in here tonight? West Block? North Block?” Simon asked, naming all the facility housing units.

During one period of the performance, Simon sought people from the audience to highlight their talents. She asked for everything from “clean rap,” to poetry, to Latin rappers, and opened the stage to them all.

On the song “Maria Maria,” by Carlos Santana, incarcerated percussionist Moises Romas was invited to the stage to sit in and perform with the band. Romas’ talent was conveyed to The Truth’s percussionist, Mio Flores, prior to the show. He played a solo segment during the number. Flores said he had served time at SQRC years ago and knew the importance of an opportunity

such as that, so he gave back to a fellow musician.

“If AGT would’ve let me do my thing, we would’ve been cool,” said Simon. She was given the opportunity to perform because “they called me,” she said.

Someone in the audience asked Simon how she lost on AGT. “Because they [the public] didn’t vote,” she said. “I knew I had to get the Golden Buzzer because people don’t vote.”

A healthcare professional by trade, Simon acknowledged that some of the men might be having issues that are heavy on their minds and encouraged them to push on. “I love the California Model, but do it for the outside,” she said, inspiring the men to work on themselves.

Simon said she views her work at San Quentin as helping guys to do better to leave. “I tell guys to get involved,” she said. “(Rehabilitation) is here for you if you want it.”

Tommy Wickerd was very impressed with the concert. He is incarcerated and works with the hearing impaired. He said he was extremely proud that Simon acknowledged the interpreters and called a hearing-impaired rapper up on stage to perform.

At the end of the show, Simon introduced the members of The Truth.

Keyboardist Dana Salzman has four albums to her name. She said that performing at San Quentin was “not what she expected.”

Patrick Bradley, 45, the guitarist, has been playing since he was 12 years old.

Danielle Wansley, 40, has been playing drums since the age of 9. While the performance met her expectations, she said, “Everybody has their saying about you guys—dangerous, violent—but it was cool.”

Samantha Jones, Simon’s back-up singer, has been with her for 13 years. “I didn’t know what I would experience [here],” Jones said. She was really impressed and moved by the responses of the residents.

Keyboardist and musical director, Charles Boomer, kept the band moving. He added an incredible vocal solo on “The Best of My Love,” by The Emotions.

Simon closed the show with Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believing,” a song she said she said it was not exactly her favorite song because it was one of the numbers sung by her competition at AGT. During the song, she pointed the microphone in the crowd’s direction, and said, “Don’t stop

believing.” “I want to thank y’all for partying with me,” she said in closing the show.

Simon has been performing for decades. She started singing to “stay out of trouble on the streets,” she said. Along the way, she experienced a lot of disappointment, but continued singing. “You can’t just wake up and be a star.”

Simon has received a lot of work from her AGT performance. She performs practically every weekend, after working all week in San Quentin’s medical department. One of her recent gigs was opening for a major comedian in Las Vegas.

“The overwhelming support has been a gift to me,” Simon said about her San Quentin performance. “I don’t play when it comes to my craft. I’m not going to jeopardize what I love to do to give you a mediocre show.”

“This was the best audience I’ve ever had,” said Simon. “The room was electrifying, and I’ve performed in front of 18,000 people in person and over 20 to 30 million on the internet.”

—Kevin D. Sawyer  
Contributed to this story

DATA

Continued from page 1

Four states including California impacted by breach

cash payment was sent from the settlement.

The report stated the class members who chose the cash payment will receive money after all other claims were paid. Plaintiff attorneys will receive one-third of settlement and the five lead plaintiffs will receive service awards of \$2,500.

“We don’t have tools to help ourselves, and we have to rely on someone from the streets just to start the process, if our information is stolen,” Hingst said.

He said he was notified of the data breach and is worried because he has assets which could be stolen.

Due to California’s Consumer Privacy Act, incarcerated individuals who are eligible class members may receive an additional amount equal to half the alternative cash payment.

According to Health Information Privacy Protection Act Journal, another case of an incident of a privacy attack against Lamoille Health Partners in Vermont was confirmed in June of 2022.

The report stated California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation discovered suspicious activity, but was unable to confirm if unauthorized individuals hacked sensitive data. The occurrence which may have affected more than 230,000 individuals was reported to the U.S. Health

and Human Services Office for Civil Rights.

Besides incarcerated people, the data breach targeted individuals who had been tested for COVID-19 between June of 2020 and January of 2022, including staff members, visitors, and others.

According to HIPPA Journal, incarcerated individuals’ information had not been impacted, but there was evidence of files which contained information on the Mental Health Services Delivery System dated back to 2008.

Residents’ information and data included information in the Trust, Restitution, Accounting, and Canteen Systems as well as individuals who paroled and were involved in the state’s substance use disorder treatment programs dating back to 2021.

The Journal stated CDCR discovered the breach during routine maintenance and that new procedures and a replacement computer system were in place to limit the possibility of further breaches.

“We are still citizens and just because we are locked-up, we have a right to be protected from identity theft,” Covarrubias said. “Being provided the right knowledge to protect ourselves inside and outside of prison is invaluable.”

SOCIAL IMPACT

Transgender community reacts to executive order

Dismay and concern over changes to transgender rights impacts incarcerated persons’ mental state

By Tyrone Luqman Jones  
Journalism Guild Writer

Hours after taking the oath of office, newly-elected President Trump signed an executive order declaring that the United States government will only recognize two biological sexes, according to the *L.A. Times*.

The executive order states that males and females are defined by reproductive cells and at the point of conception, which has also caught the attention of some pro-choice advocates.

The gender definitions in the order also extend to federally issued identification such as passports and visas. Federal agencies have also been directed not to house persons identifying as men in women’s correctional facilities or detention centers. Funding for gender reassignment surgery will also cease to exist under the Trump’s orders, according to the *L.A. Times*.

San Quentin resident Aaron Zendejas, 40, who identifies as a transgender woman, said that she is deeply dismayed by the messaging coming from the Oval Office.

She said that even though Trump was elected by the people, one must still consider the source; emphasizing that the president is a convicted felon and admitted womanizer.

“It’s been a struggle during my 16 years of incarceration,” Zendejas said. “I came out as transgender in 2012 and I’ve endured harassment and bullying. Now the exact same bullying is coming from the leader of the free world.”

Zendejas feels sympathy for the president, stating that because of his advanced age, it may be difficult for him to change his inherent prejudices. She feels that Trump does not understand the courage it takes to “come out” as transgender in American society.

Kellan Baker, director of the Institute for Health Research and Policy at Whitman-Walker, an organization focused on LGBTQ+ health equality, noted that the order did not make any distinction centered on whether

someone sought medical transition or altered their identity papers, stated the article.

“It [the executive order] seems to be trying to waive a federal policy wand and make transgender people disappear, which is an impossibility,” Baker said.

Trump says that his administration rejects liberal “gender ideology” and he says he plans to restore “biological truth” and “biological reality” to America, according to the *Times*.

“In practice, what this order means is that the administration is not only denying transgender have rights, but that they exist,” said David Cole legal director for the ACLU. “There are about 1.5 million people in the United States who are transgender, and that reality cannot be denied with an executive order.”

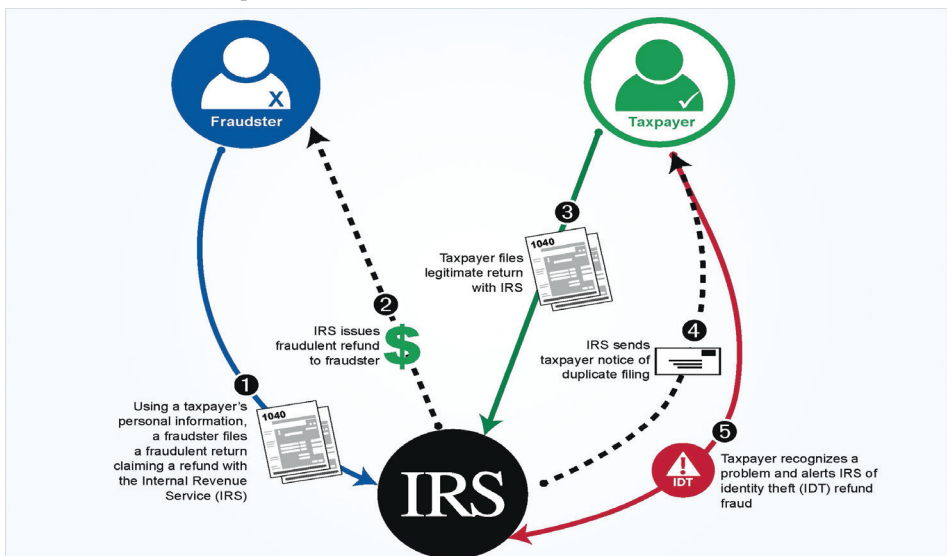
The Supreme Court has not ruled on whether government discrimination against transgender people is unconstitutional, choosing to defer the issue to the States.

However in 2020, Cole won a 6-3 ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court that forbids job discrimination against employees based on their sexual orientation or gender identification.

The Federal Civil Rights Act prevents employers from discriminating based on sex or race; the Court opined that discrimination against LGBTQ+ employees was considered discrimination based on sex. The Court’s conservative majority signaled it is likely to uphold laws in Republican-led states that limit the rights of transgender adolescents, according to the *L.A. Times*.

SQ resident Anthony Tafoya, 35, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, expressed his concern for adolescent transitioning teenagers witnessing the signals coming from the Administration of President Trump.

“I would tell any transitioning young person to keep going because it’s only four years and once people wake up, the next President will protect them,” Tafoya said. “Next election those alienated youth will be old enough to vote and make their voice and vote be heard loud and clear.”



Cycle of example of a successful identity theft, refund, fraud, attempt

ME TOO

Continued from page 1

#METOO movement inspires representation for incarcerated women

In 2017, the 'Church Too' movement was created in response to the trending 'Me Too' movement to stop abuse in the church.

In early 2018, an Evangelical women created the hashtag #SilenceIsNotSpiritual as a way to spotlight how abuse is handled in the church.

This was a response to a video admission of a youth pastor who assaulted a 17-year-old girl. The 'Me Too' movement also came to the University of California. Hundreds of reports emerged from UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UCLA, and UC San Diego.

A sexual harassment case in UC Irvine led to the removal of several officials and professors. The movement also highlighted false claims of sexual harassment that damped the majority of allegations.

Wrongful accusations are only 2% of 10% of all reports, according to Wikipedia. These fallacies are the reason why some women are scared to report being sexually assaulted or harassed.

They are afraid no one will believe them or fear being embarrassed or humiliated, which may expose them to other assailants. There are critiques of the 'Me Too' movement for lacking in the representation of minority women, especially when these women are more likely to be targeted.

"If wealthy, highly-visible

"This is your movement too. When your life is forever changed by sexual violence, where can you turn? Who can help you? What are the words you need to hear most?"

women in the news and entertainment are sexually harassed, assaulted, or raped - what do we think is happening to women in retail, food service, and domestic work?" asked activist Charlene Carruthers.

According to survivor Farah Tanis, there are social pressures on Black women not to report Black men; they may be viewed as disloyal against their "brothers"

Burke herself criticized the movement for ignoring Black women, and encouraged women of color not to drop out of the movement even if the media is not listening.

"This is your movement too," she said. "When your life is forever changed by sexual violence, where can you turn? Who can help you? What are the words you need to hear most?"

The movement's work continues to bring awareness to the growing range of survivors, such as Black women and girls, and the LGBTQ+ communities.

"We're here to help each individual find the right point of entry for their unique healing journey," Burke said.



Tarana Burke



Alyssa Milano



#ME TOO protest



Protesters outside Donald Trump hotel

Photos from Wikipedia

Grassroots organization advocates for incarcerated voters' rights

Since the 1920s The League of Women Voters has impacted elections of state and local governments



Free the Vote participants



Old picture of some of the National League of Women Voters

Photos from Wikipedia

By Michael Callahan Staff Writer

Just two months removed from the presidential election, the League of Women Voters visited San Quentin to discuss voting rights and to educate residents on the importance of "one vote."

The non-partisan grassroots organization has protected democracy by expanding voting rights. Through education and litigation, LWV advocated and empowered voters at the state and local level.

"People do not think about the votes after the fact, we look at each vote as a human being," Chair

of Justice Committee Pat Beaupre said. "People do not vote because they do not understand the value of their vote, especially if you have been disenfranchised."

Pat said on the local level, the LWV provided information on candidates and ballot issues in a personal and trustworthy way. By hosting forums, the organization aimed to present all the facts from all sides. She said the LWV supported the authors of the Racial Justice Act and a large part of their work has taken place in jails and prisons.

"Our smaller committees address state issues and the result is information for voters," Nancy Weber

said. "We spend time on restorative education to help bring understanding to voters."

She said she felt sad whenever someone called voting "not a right" and not worth doing. "It is empowering to vote," Nancy said, as she encouraged her audience to contribute.

"Formerly incarcerated have shown positive results when released and do vote. It is a way to stay involved in the community," Nancy said. "One vote is a vote. It is a small numbers game."

She said only Maine, Vermont, and the District of Columbia allowed felons to vote in prison, but 23 states have extended voter rights

upon discharge from parole, which included California. Nancy said California has considered a change.

"Politicians and officials would be at your doorstep if you had the right to vote," Nancy said. "We want to end voter suppression for Californians with a criminal record and give formerly incarcerated people an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to become productive, contributing members of our society."

The LWV supplied San Quentin residents with an Easy Voter Guide on ballot issues prior to the mock elections held in the prison. The guests and attendees discussed the propositions

that passed and Proposition 6, which did not pass.

"People believe in mass media to inform them and can easily be influenced by campaign ads," San Quentin News Editor-in-Chief Kevin D. Sawyer said.

Nancy encouraged the residents to do their best to supply voters with information necessary to make informed choices on bills, despite what appears as a disproportionate disadvantage for the incarcerated.

"We are working with the public defender and probation to inform formerly incarcerated on their right to vote," Nancy said. "Nationally

we are focused on making democracy work for all."

The LWV started in Chicago in 1920, just six months prior to ratification of the 19th amendment, which extended the right to vote to women. The constitution had given states the power to set voting requirements, but states had used this authority to deny the vote to women.

According to a printout of the website, the LWV was a leader in the women's suffrage movement and empowered women to participate in a more perfect democracy.

"The message to the public should be [that] we matter and we have something to contribute," Jerry Gearin said.

# Food for Rehabilitation: Other states provide examples for California to follow

By Joshua Strange  
Contributing Writer

California is being left behind when it comes to realizing the benefits of wholesome food and healthy diets in correctional facilities. While the California Model reform effort may eventually improve access to quality food for people incarcerated in CDCR facilities, several states are showing what is possible — and cost effective — through their innovative food programs.

Leading the way nationwide is the Maine Department of Corrections, and in particular their Mountain View Correctional Facility. According to a report by Impact Justice, titled “Eating Behind Bars: Ending the Hidden Punishment of Food in Prison,” the food program at Mountain View serves to dispel the myth that healthy, quality meals in prisons are not feasible.

The facility’s food service manager, Mark McBrine, previously worked as an organic farmer and in the hospitality industry. “Food can be medicine or it can be poison,” said McBrine, according to the report.

To implement his vision of food as medicine at Mountain View, McBrine established partnerships with local farms to source vegetables, meat, dairy, and whole grain flour, creating a win-win sourcing arrangement.

Ingredients at the facility are also grown in large on-site gardens and an adjacent seven-acre apple orchard.

The facility’s two-and-half acres of gardens produce an impressive 150,000 pounds of produce per year, tended to by gardener positions from among the incarcerated residents.

McBrine shared that his facility, the facility averages over 30% local produce while staying approximately \$100,000 under

budget. Despite this budget surplus, examples of menu items include roasted turkey, heirloom carrots, homemade muffins, and fresh baked bread.

The prison also has a well-reputed culinary training program run in partnership with the nonprofit Hospitality Maine, providing apprenticeships for graduates. Additionally, incarcerated people working on grounds-keeping crews are encouraged to enroll in a Gardener’s Master Course run with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, increasing opportunities for meaningful employment upon parole.

This innovative food effort is aided by supportive policies by the Maine DOC, which encourages sourcing produce from on-site or in-state farms, according to the report. Importantly, the Maine DOC allows the facility’s food service managers considerable control over menu planning and food purchasing in consultation with the department’s contracted dietitian, resulting in greatly improved quality of ingredients and meals.

This is in marked contrast to CDCR policies, which dictate a standardized statewide menu for every institution and mandate extensive sourcing of lunches and meal ingredients through the California Prison Industry Authority.

“The quantity is not so great and the quality is straight garbage,” said Jason Cole, who works in the H-Unit kitchen.

At the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, administrators are aware of the need to improve the quality of the food service as part of the effort to “reimagine San Quentin.” Even so, progress has been slow.

San Quentin’s food Manager, Warren Clark, said during a meeting with incarcerated residents that he is working with CDCR

administrators and dietitians at the state level to try to test and improve the standardized menu while meeting the state’s dietary mandates. Besides the current constraints of standardization, Clark also has to contend with a food budget of only \$4.30 per person per day for all three meals. For context, the state of California runs residential facilities for veterans with an allocation of \$11.80 per day, as reported by Impact Justice.

According to the CDCR’s operations manual, the department “shall provide inmates with a healthy and nutritionally balanced diet, served in an orderly manner with food flavor, texture, temperature, appearance, and palatability taken into consideration.” This is in stark contrast to what most incarcerated people express about their experience in California’s prisons.

“I believe that improving the quality of the food served and access to good food is absolutely essential to making San Quentin into an actual rehabilitation center,” said resident Kenny Rogers, who is chair of the Inmate Advisory Council’s subcommittees, on food resources, and the California Model. “I think that improving our food is the single most important thing that we can readily do to make believers out of the population that real change is underway.”

To that end, Rogers said he has been impressed with the willingness of Clark and other kitchen staff to collaborate and work toward solutions. He said there are some exciting food initiatives in development that his committees are helping to bring to fruition.

The concept of food as medicine is a pathway to improve the quality of food served in prisons as well as improve morale and reduce medical expenditures, which eat up a third of CDCR’s budget.

“Part of embracing the normalcy pillar [of the California Model] like

## SIDEBAR

Other Food Innovations at US Prisons:

The dining hall at the Cedar Creek Corrections Center in Littlerock, Washington has a wall of windows and outdoor eating area for both residents and staff.

The Northeastern Correctional Center in Concord, Massachusetts operates a restaurant open to the public called Fife and Drum that is staffed by incarcerated culinary trainees.

The Noble Correctional Institution in Caldwell, Ohio holds outdoor cookouts for incarcerated men preparing to be released along with their families.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has a program called Herbs Behind Bars where nearly 60 facilities across the state grow culinary herbs to enhance their meal service.

The Sustainability in Prisons Project, which is a partnership between Washington State DOC and the Evergreen State College, runs educational classes and environmental projects including bee keeping, food gardens, composting, and captive breeding programs for endangered plants and animals. Projects are run in collaboration with scientists, college staff and students, and incarcerated people.

Maryland has launched a Farm to Prison Project that helps to connect correctional facilities with small-scale farms to source high-quality fresh seasonal produce.

The Center for Good Food Purchasing provides structures and support to help public institutions, including prisons, transition to more local, healthy, fair, and environmentally sustainable procurement practices, while leveraging purchasing power to shift vendor practices.

World-class chef Dan Giusti started an organization called Brigaid, which places culinary professionals in school and prison kitchens to train local staff in cooking whole food from scratch to make delicious and nutritious meals appropriate for large-scale institutional cooking while meeting budgets and nutritional requirements.

Each housing unit at the Noble Correctional Institution in Ohio has its own small garden that residents tend to and eat from as they wish. Some of the units have prep tables with toaster ovens and George Foreman grills to compliment the typical microwaves and hot pots.

in Norway is being able to build and reinforce the ability to make smart food decisions,” said Dr. Garcia-Grossman, a primary care physician and doctor of internal medicine at a UCSF-affiliated hospital in San Francisco, who has conducted research on the effects of incarceration on health.

During a phone interview, Garcia-Grossman said that CDCR’s food system “leaves a lot of room for improvement.”

Food is medicine and investing in food as a preventative health

measure can help prevent various health conditions down the line. She said Frankly, it’s atrocious what they are serving.”

Residents such as Kelton O’Connor hope that CDCR will be inspired to follow the lead of prison food service innovators, whether in Maine or Norway, who are showing what’s possible.

“Right now, in [California’s prisons] we have a right to kill ourselves with food but not the right to heal ourselves with food,” O’Connor said.

# CDCR regionalizes and restructures leadership

*CDCR’s objective is to provide better access to programs, reentry, support*

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

Beginning Jan. 1 of this year, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shook up its leadership structure. Henceforth, the 32 institutions will be grouped into one of four regions, overseen by four regional leaders and their team.

The objective of the reorganization is to provide residents with better access to programs, reentry opportunities, mental-health support, improved safety and security, and more accountability by all the people involved, according to the CDCR website.

“We’ll be able to work together with the healthcare and rehabilitation regional leaders,” said acting Associate Director Byran Phillips. “To make this successful, it takes a team.”

Providing residents with access to education, vocational training, substance use treatment, and mental health support are important pieces of the overall plan to lower the recidivism rate. One way to accomplish this task is by creating tailored programs that address the needs of facility-specific populations.

Delays, such as temporary disruptions in program delivery and access to services are commonplace with large projects such as this. CDCR’s goal for the four regions is to tailor programs to be region-specific. This will ensure programs and services are relevant, but they could vary depending on the facility, said CDCR website.

The reorganization will create a more rehabilitative-focused correctional system that prioritizes individual growth, safety, and successful reintegration, according to CDCR. The approach aligns with the broader effort to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and enhance



## Side Bar:

The four regions and their respective institutions are:

- Region I: Sacramento**  
 Folsom State Prison  
 California State Prison, Sacramento  
 High Desert State Prison  
 Pelican Bay State Prison  
 Mule Creek State Prison  
 Sierra Conservation Center  
 California State Prison, Solano  
 San Quentin Rehabilitation Center
- Region II: Fresno**  
 Central California Womens Facility  
 Valley State Prison  
 Salinas Valley State Prison  
 Correctional Training Facility  
 California Health Care Facility  
 California Medical Facility  
 California Institution for Women
- Region III: Bakersfield**  
 California State Prison, Corcoran  
 Substance Abuse Treatment Facility  
 Avenal State Prison  
 Kern Valley State Prison  
 North Kern State Prison  
 Pleasant Valley State Prison  
 Wasco State Prison
- Region IV: Rancho Cucamonga**  
 Calipatria State Prison  
 California Correctional Institution  
 Centinela State Prison  
 California Institution for Men  
 California Rehabilitation Center  
 Ironwood State Prison  
 California State Prison, Los Angeles County  
 Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility

the well-being of incarcerated individuals. The website provided these details of the plan:

The plan includes changing how healthcare is coordinated. The regional healthcare teams will collaborate with the Division of Adult Institutions and California Correctional Health Care Services to ensure residents receive medical and

mental health services in a timely and consistent manner.

The leadership teams will be responsible for ensuring that individuals in prisons have access to opportunities, regardless of their prison’s location. CDCR is improving its data-driven performance metrics to ensure that gaps and inequities are eliminated

and decisions are made based on evidence.

Thereportsaidthatimproving safety and security is important for staff, administrators, and the incarcerated population. Collaborating with program coordinators will ensure that environments are conducive to safety and rehabilitation at each facility. The new leadership teams will supervise

the distribution of staff and resources to facilities as needed.

“By [spreading out] leadership and emphasizing regional oversight, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation aims to improve the delivery of services and programs, ultimately benefiting the incarcerated individuals,” the announcement said.

HEALTH

# March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

MARCH IS COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

## COLON CANCER IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF CANCER DEATH IN THE CDCR

1 IN 21 MEN WILL GET COLON CANCER DURING THEIR LIFETIME

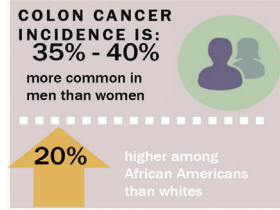
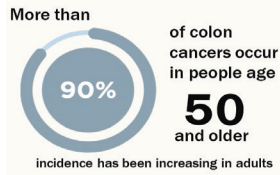
IF YOU ARE REFERRED FOR COLON CANCER SCREENING, PLEASE DO IT. IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Provided by San Quentin Medical Staff

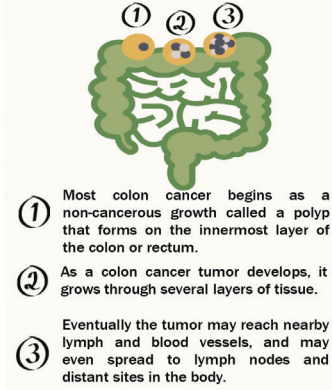
## COLON CANCER - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Colon cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in both men and women in the United States, and the second leading overall cause of cancer deaths.

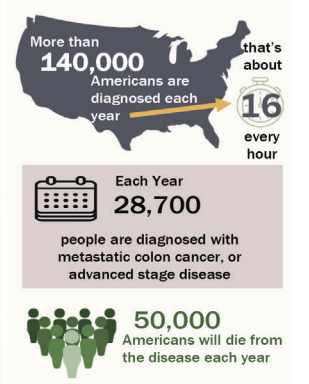
### WHO GETS COLON CANCER?



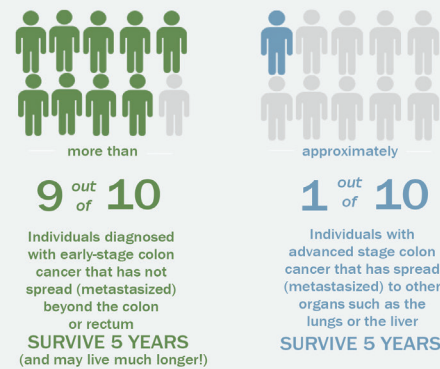
### HOW DOES COLON CANCER DEVELOP?



### HOW MANY ARE AFFECTED?



### CATCHING COLON CANCER EARLY IS IMPORTANT



### WHAT ARE SOME WARNING SIGNS?

- Changes in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation or narrowing of the stool
  - A constant need to evacuate the bowel
  - Blood in the stool
  - Weakness & fatigue
  - Cramping or abdominal pain
  - Unintended weight loss
- 

### REFERENCES:

- This guide was adapted from the guide available on Genentech: [Genentech: Understanding Colorectal Cancer](#)
- United States Preventive Task Force: Colorectal Cancer Screening: [Recommendation: Colorectal Cancer: Screening | United States Preventive Services Taskforce](#)
- American Cancer Society, Colorectal Cancer Detailed Guide: <http://www.cancer.org/groups/cid/documents/webcontent/003096.pdf>
- American Cancer Society, Colorectal Cancer Facts & Figures 2011-2013: <http://www.cancer.org/groups/content/@evidencebasedsurveillance/documents/document/acspc-028323.pdf>
- National Cancer Institute Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results Stat Fact Sheet: Colon and Rectum: <http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/colorect.html#survival>

## Chief Medical Officer says colon cancer screenings have importance

By Michael Callahan  
Staff Writer

Incarceration is bad for your health. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in California prisons, and incarcerated persons tend to have a higher mortality rate than the population on the outside.

"I feel it is important to check for colon cancer because I was told it is higher in males. I would rather be safe, and the fact that they can detect and treat it before it is too late," San Quentin resident Carlos Sanches said.

March is Colon Cancer Awareness month and when asked, several residents said they were unaware of the danger posed by colon cancer.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation provides screenings to detect colon cancer and refer for treatments.

"People may decide not to test, but it is the obligation of the care team to explain the importance of preventative measures for colon cancer," said Dr. A. Pachynski, Chief Medical Executive at SQRC, said. "I want to destigmatize the perceptions around colon cancer screenings."

"I believe there are many reasons why a colonoscopy should be done, and it's not just for cancer," resident C. Rooms said. "Colon cancer took my father, so that it is possibly heredity is a scary thing to think about."

Rooms felt that CDCR should offer testing at younger ages if there are risk factors. He also believed there were not enough preventative measures in the system and often services are not available until symptoms begin to show.

Colon cancer is a growth of cells in the large intestine that begin as clumps called polyps. These polyps often do not cause symptoms and generally are not cancerous, but can turn into colon cancer over time, which is why doctors recommend regular screening tests.

According to a *Cancer Medicine* article, several studies have reported higher cancer prevalence among incarcerated people compared to the general population. "Health care is constitutionally guaranteed during incarceration, stated the article. Incarcerated individuals (in Canada and other settings) often do not receive recommended cancer screening or experience significant delays in screening during incarceration."

Resident A. Kramer said he has faced barriers with healthcare services during

his incarceration, often feeling as though his needs were ignored. "We should have the option to pay if we wish to get routine procedures."

Dr. Pachynski said residents can pay for their own treatments but the costs include custody protection to and from the hospital or clinic.

"There is a 90% colon cancer survival rate if treated in early stage. It is easier here to provide proper health care than on the outside," Dr. Pachynski said. "But there is a perception of lack of access or people do not know how to ask for what they want or need, so I believe communication and trust are part of the issue."

Several other risk factors include old age, family history with colon cancer, inflammatory bowel diseases, low-fiber, high-fat diet, not exercising regularly and obesity.

Dr. Pachynski said that more than 48% of the population is 50+."Our screening percentage is higher than some prisons. Eighty-three percent of our residents eligible for colon cancer screening have been screened in the last year." She said if there is no evidence of cancer in the initial colon screening, then another is not needed for 5-10 years, but if a

fit test is administered it requires an annual check. Pachynski said if there are abnormal findings in the tests then a reference to a local off-site oncology group is made for treatment.

"I had a colonoscopy at CMC and they were on it, but each prison and doctor is different," Kramer said. "The fasting and requirements leading up to the procedure was worse than the procedure itself."

Despite difficulties, incarcerated individuals can help themselves by making several healthy lifestyle changes to help reduce the risk of colon cancer. Officials have several recommendations:

- Eating the fruits, vegetables, and grains in state-supplied meals will provide vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants, which may help prevent cancer.
- Exercising most days of the week for at least 30 minutes and maintaining a healthy weight are highly recommended.
- Also, abstaining from smoking and alcohol are preventative measures to lowering the risk of cancer.

"I would not disagree that educating persons on medical services is an area we can focus on better. I want to understand how to reach people more," Dr. Pachynski said.

# Ozempic weight loss program inspires life changing habits

By Tyrone Luqman Jones  
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin resident Hamed Ali Daneshmandpourlashgari, 41, says he has been struggling with weight loss most of his adult life, weighing at his heaviest about 325 pounds.

He is a recipient of the prison's new program to combat obesity and diabetes and has been receiving Ozempic injections for more than two months. Having already lost 50 pounds within that time frame, he openly attests to its effectiveness and benefits not just to his physical but mental health as well.

"Losing weight has helped me with my confidence," he said. "I feel like I can stand in front of a person and present my best self. I'm so thankful to CDCR for starting this program."

Though the Food and Drug Administration approved Ozempic for use in 2017, according to Wikipedia, it wasn't until October of 2023 that the CDCR approved the distribution of the medication for weight loss in prisons.

Fortunately to date, incarcerated people are now eligible to receive the weight loss drug if they have a Body Mass Index of more than 30 percent. The suitability of the drug has also been extended to other residual properties of being overweight, according to the San Quentin Medical Department.

San Quentin's Primary Care Physician Morgan Yao-Cohen M.D. oversees plus-sized

residents' weight loss journey. Dr. Yao-Cohen said she likes to see first if her patients can lose weight through exercising and eating healthy foods without the assistance of the medication.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, Ozempic is an injectable medication that helps treat obesity and lower blood sugar (glucose) levels for Type 2 diabetics. Due to its incredibly fast-paced and effective results, the medication has gained lots of popularity; its ability to affect the part of the brain that processes hunger, increasing how full a person feels after eating, requires the care and direction of a medical professional.

According to Dr. Yao-Cohen, she aims to clearly and consistently articulate to her patients' the possible side effects, and the way the drug works within the body, before prescribing the medication. And like with most prescriptions, while there can be risks, she is grateful to hear about the positive impact the weight loss is having on her patients.



Artwork by Chuck van Vliet

"My goal is to always offer the same level of medical care that individuals receive in society," Dr. Yao-Cohen said.

San Quentin resident James Johnson, 34, said he gained over 100 pounds from "stress eating" while housed in California's North Kern State Prison reception center. Though he believes that all bodies are beautiful, obesity had begun to affect him physically. Now since being prescribed Ozempic in November of 2024, Johnson said that he has over lost 54 pounds.

"I feel fantastic physically and mentally. My confidence is at an all-time high, plus I'm back doing my yoga," Johnson said. "If I could meet the person that made this program possible, I would tell him or her thank you for meeting me halfway; the medication is the start, keeping the weight off is up to me."

Another San Quentin resident, Ray T. Rivera, 39, struggled nearly his whole life with body image and health issues, at his heaviest nearly weighing 300

pounds at just five feet four inches tall. Rivera attests to the psychological reassurance and confidence Ozempic has given him since starting it. Having been teased about his height and weight from a young age, he reflects on how such bullying and the socially constructed images of beauty, especially in the media, created a sense of self-loathing in him that led to criminal behavior.

"Everywhere I looked; TV, movies, and magazines, I was being indoctrinated and sold an image of what beauty was, and none of these people looked like me," Rivera said. "America wasn't the place to grow up as a fat kid in my day."

Rivera added that the weight loss is as much for his well-being as his health because he now recognizes that a positive body image enables a healthy mindset. Rivera said he currently weighs less than 200 pounds for the first time since middle school.

Countless individuals inside and outside of San Quentin can attest to the life-changing qualities of Ozempic as a medication, which encourages many to become the best version of themselves. San Quentin residents are taking important steps toward healing and rehabilitation. Daneshmandpourlashgari now likes to use his free time to volunteer in the San Quentin chapel area to help out with events and says his weight loss has given him the energy to be not just a more active person but a helpful participant within the community he resides.

# Wildfires impact felt miles away

By Tyrone Luqman Jones  
Journalism Guild Writer

News of Southern California's devastating wildfires has spread far and wide, inspiring some San Quentin residents to become firefighters.

Various news outlets report that between 783 to more than 1,000 CDCR firefighters were deployed to Los Angeles to fight the wildfires, which have claimed approximately 27 lives and consumed over 40,000 acres, according to *TMZ News*.

San Quentin resident and Los Angeles native Andre Potts, 35, shared how deeply affected he was by the news of lives lost and homes devastated in Pacific Palisades. The tragedy overwhelmed Potts, motivating him to help.

"I feel that becoming a firefighter will give me an opportunity to serve and uplift a community that I often times brought harm to as a youth with my criminal activity," Potts said.

Potts added that he had requested a transfer to fire camp prior to the recent fires, and has been preparing his body for the rigorous training.

According to *The Week*, dependence on prison labor in California is almost as old as the state itself. In the 1850s, San Quentin State Prison was built by inmates held on nearby ships. In the early 1900s, road camps were promoted as a path to reintegrating with society by instilling a work ethic and personal responsibility into convicts.

Since World War II, California has relied on a unique group of firefighters to battle its fires. Although their numbers have varied over the years, imprisoned firefighters have sometimes comprised as much as one-third of its firefighting

force, *The Week* reported.

Recently, reality TV star and business woman Kim Kardashian visited the Ventura Training Center, an organization that trains formerly incarcerated individuals to become firefighters.

Kardashian called on California Governor Gavin Newsom to increase the pay for incarcerated firefighters, who she called "actual heroes," according to *TMZ News*.

According to the *Marshall Project*, incarcerated residents make between \$5.80 and \$10.24 per day as firefighters. They may earn an additional \$1 per hour in emergency situations – capping at \$26.90 for a 24-hour emergency shift.

In a written statement, CDCR Secretary Jeff Macomber stated that incarcerated firefighters are an "essential" part of the state's response to the wildfires.

"Their commitment to protecting lives and property during these emergencies cannot be overstated," wrote Macomber.

Tasks such as spreading fire retardant and operating fire hoses are left to fully-employed firefighters. By contrast, incarcerated firefighters generally work on "hand crews" that use people-powered tools to clear brush and create firebreaks to stymie the spread of wildfires. It is common practice for these hand crews to work in 24-hour shifts.

Firefighting is voluntary for incarcerated people; the work can be dangerous, and even deadly. Four incarcerated firefighters have lost their lives in the line of duty in recent years. Their names are among the residents honored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, according to *Smithsonian Magazine*.

A 2018 *TIME Magazine*

report revealed that incarcerated firefighters are four times more likely to be hurt by fallen objects than their professional counterparts, and eight times more likely to incur injuries related to smoke inhalation. The report also showed that 1,000 incarcerated firefighters required hospital care during the succeeding five-year span.

"We are right on [the] fire's edge," said Justin Schmollinger, who oversees the Conservation Camp for Cal Fire. "...You're down there at times fighting fire with hand tools and you're seeing a lot of fire with no water; so it gets intense."

Potts stated that the pay does not match the danger that incarcerated firefighters face. His own motivation for going to fire camp was to combat the helplessness he felt seeing the wildfires ravage his community.

"I can't watch the news coverage of the wildfires without becoming emotional, being that I'm from SoCal [Southern California]" Potts said. "To me, firefighting is a noble profession; I want to dedicate my life to saving people's lives and property instead of taking lives and property."

Potts added that at his sentencing hearing, the judge recommended that he go to fire camp once he served enough time and met the CDCR requirements. He now considers fighting fires to be his calling.

"My father was an incarcerated firefighter. I remember how proud that made me feel when my dad told me what he was doing with his time," Potts said. "I want to be able to tell my own son that I'm saving lives and people's homes. Hopefully he'll be proud of me as well."

# Despite decades-long sentence resident finds hope through growth

## *Instability and emotional withdrawal in the past for resident since transformation*

By Jason Jackson  
Journalism Guild Writer

Jarvis Garner, incarcerated since he was 14 years old, found redemption from a life of crime and violence through hard work and hope to help him face a 47-year-sentence.

Garner, 37, housed at San Quentin for less than year, grew up in Stockton, living with his parents, and his two brothers.

He said he comes from a loving, close-knit family, even though he admits that his family experienced a lot of constant moving while his parents were searching for work. That instability continued when drugs was introduced to his community when he was 5-year-old.

He says his neighborhood became "chaotic and traumatic." Garner watched as his mother became addicted to crack cocaine, and recalls feeling "bad and abandoned" as it happened.

"I saw a strong, beautiful woman be reduced to stealing, becoming homeless, and being neglected by her family," Garner said. "Both my parents worked a lot while trying to take care of the family. It kept them in and out of the house so I ended up being raised by my brothers."

It was under the care of

his brothers where Garner received some of his earliest experiences with crime. He committed armed robbery when he was 10-years-old with one of his brothers. He looked up to his brothers and wanted to do whatever it was they were doing.

"We got into the [criminal] lifestyle because of our environment. It's what we knew all our life so it didn't seem bad. We were just living," Garner said.

In 2002, Garner was arrested and convicted for robbery, carjacking and kidnapping, and sentenced to 47 years.

He remembers feeling emotionally withdrawn at the time of his arrest, and not even being afraid.

"I was apart of a lifestyle that said this was supposed to happen, that it was normal. Looking back, ...I was too committed to the stupidity," Garner said.

At Folsom State Prison in Sacramento Calif., Garner met an older man from his neighborhood named James. He began to mentor Garner, who says that it was the wisdom, and guidance of mentorship that prompted him to change his life and begin walking on a positive road.

James told Garner to learn how to love before thinking and let his actions follow. "I never forgot that," Garner said.

Garner has earned his G.E.D.; he has become

a skilled painter in the apprentice program and mentors the youth who are walking the same negative path that he once did.

He spends most of his time attending self-help classes, which include an anti-weapon group called Arms Down, and Narcotics Anonymous, and plays for San Quentin's Kings basketball team.

Through doing the self-help work Garner revealed he is a much different person than the boy he was 23-years-ago.

Kojo Cluchette, a resident at San Quentin, has known Garner for more than 6 years. He says that he has watched him become more responsible over the years.

"I've watched him mature from someone who played around too much to someone who takes change and growth very seriously," Cluchette said.

Over the years, Garner has become more positive, confident and learned to take initiative in his own growth. Upon release, he plans to reconnect with his family, start a business, and put his experiences to use in service to his community.

"I've spent years missing out on the ability to grow naturally or to experience love... to be vulnerable. Now I'm excited to get out and live a productive, simple life," Garner said

**1. California (The Register)** – Assembly Bill 247 could provide raises to incarcerated firefighters. CDCR officials reported that incarcerated firefighters work "around the clock cutting fire lines and removing fuel from behind structures to slow the fire spread," the report said. Sen. Sasha Renée Pérez, D-Glendale, said on Instagram that "these California inmates are risking their lives, working long hours in dangerous conditions, while being paid as little as \$10.24 a day," Pérez said.

**2. Texas (The Texas Tribune)** – President Donald J. Trump is using a 1798 Alien Enemies Act to assist the launch of his mass deportation program. In 2023, Texas passed Senate Bill 4, making it a crime to enter the country illegally. However, SB 4 is on hold pending litigation. President Trump has said he signed the Laken Riley Act, which would make crimes like shoplifting and larceny deportable.

**3. Minnesota (The Star Tribune)** – A new Federal oversight plan has been approved between the Department of Justice and the Minneapolis Police Department to revamp the training, policies, and discipline in the police department to address its systemic problems. "It was important that we get it right. We owe that to people here in Minneapolis. This was not a race to the finish line," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division.

**4. Alabama (Montgomery Community Media)** – A new report from the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Over-site found that housing



providers were violating the Housing Justice Act. The OLO suggested that people with low level crime convictions be given a chance to obtain rental housing. However, according to the OLO, staff shortages "have likely had an adverse impact on effective enforcement of fair housing laws."

**5. Florida (Bloomberg)** – US Attorney General Pam Bondi has shifted her outlook on criminal justice reform. Prior to her new position, Bondi rarely gave second chances to formerly incarcerated voters. "There are many conveniences in shifting her tone around the clemency process. It is a process that benefits Trump and benefits his friends who have broken the law," said Jasmine

Burney-Clark, founder of Equal Ground, a voting rights organization.

**6. Virginia (Rocktown Now)** – Danville Community College started a new partnership with the Virginia Department of Corrections. The partnership will expand the number of programs offered at Green Rock Correctional Center and ensure that the incarcerated students have an opportunity to complete their educational goals. "...We are creating pathways to meaningful employment and reducing recidivism by equipping students with industry-recognized credentials ..." said Melissa Mann, Dean of Career & Technical Education at the college.

**7. South Carolina (The New York Times)** – A federal investigation revealed a high number of violence, overdoses, sexual assaults, and deaths in the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center. The DOJ reported that the facility failed to protect the constitutional rights of the inmates. Leonardo Brown, the county's administrator for the facility disagreed, saying that since making significant changes and renovations, weapon assaults are down 82% in the facility.

**8. North Carolina (Associated Press)** – Outgoing Governor Roy Cooper commuted 15 death sentences to life without the possibility of parole a week before leaving office.

"After thorough review, reflection, and prayer, I concluded that the death sentence imposed on these 15 people should be commuted, while ensuring they will spend the rest of their lives in prison," Cooper said. Chantal Stevens, executive director of American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina applauded Cooper's action.

**9. New Jersey (Politico)** – Just weeks after President Biden's clemency act, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy pardoned 33 people and commuted the sentences of three women convicted of murder in his first clemency act since taking office seven years ago. "Over the course of their lives,

each one of these women has suffered immense hardship," said Murphy. The governor has enacted several criminal justice initiatives during his tenure, like expanding expungement and restoring voting rights to people on parole and probation.

**10. New York (Associated Press)** – The son of Marcy Correctional Facility inmate Robert L. Brooks claims in a federal lawsuit that the guards "systematically and casually beat him to death." A watchdog group reported staff abuse after interviewing the residents in October 2022. Governor Kath Hochul has ordered officials to start the process to fire those involved in the attack.



## Incarcerated uniquely disadvantaged in bankruptcy filings

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Staff Writer

Corporate bankruptcies happen more often than anyone would want them to happen. Most of the time, they deal with companies that have insufficient assets to pay bills. Bankruptcy courts usually oversee fair resolutions in the interest of both creditors and borrowers. Bankruptcies can also deal with companies that have plenty of assets to pay bills. The “Texas Two-Step” style of bankruptcy filings splits assets and liabilities into separate units and then bankrupts only the unit with the liabilities. If successful, the company would keep its assets and get rid of its liabilities.

What if such a strategic bankruptcy would affect incarceration? *Bloomberg Law* said Corizon Health, Inc., filed a Texas Two-Step bankruptcy to deal with medical malpractice claims at its prison health care facilities. Corizon spun off all of its medical malpractice claims into Tehum Care Services, a new company it formed solely for putting it into bankruptcy to settle such claims. A judge rejected a \$54 million settlement, said the story.

“If they approve a settlement, they are forcing people to take whatever they give them, and that is not right,” formerly incarcerated claimant David Hall told *Bloomberg Law*. In 2016, Hall injured his wrist for life because of poor care at a Maryland jail in which he served less than one year on a misdemeanor conviction, said the story.

The Corizon doctor had told Hall that his wrist injury “would self-heal,” Hall told *Bloomberg Law*. In reality, Hall had suffered a “severe fracture.”

Hall won a \$770,000 malpractice claim from Corizon, later confirmed on appeal, but the court affirmed the judgment one day after Corizon had filed for bankruptcy, said the article. Hall’s claim, now reduced to a claim against a bankrupt entity, has since joined the cue of hundreds of other claims against Tehum, the newly formed successor company. In a bankruptcy court settlement, Hall may end up with less than his judgment.

The article characterized incarcerated persons as uniquely disadvantaged in dealings with claims in bankruptcy filings. Corene Kendrick of the National Prison Project at the ACLU told *Bloomberg Law* that incarcerated persons must deal with the imperfect U.S. mail system and must rely on mailrooms staffed by prison officers. “Prisoners may receive filings late — if they get them at all,” the article said.

The article quoted Jackie Aranda Osorno of Public Justice, a legal advocacy nonprofit, as saying that Bankruptcy courts operated at a speed and a level of complexity with which incarcerated persons would have problems keeping up. Another Tehum claimant said he had received notices of two hearings “just one to two days before they happened, making attendance impossible.”

The article said Hall wanted Tehum’s bankruptcy dismissed, which would give him and other claimants the ability to pursue claims individually. Tehum counterclaimed that the bankruptcy settlement would actually help incarcerated persons, for “navigating the state court system” has as many complications “as dealing with the bankruptcy process.”

Another danger in the Corizon bankruptcy scheme has to do with other troubled prison medical providers copying the strategy to avoid paying claims, said the article. Prison health care providers Armor Health Management LLC and YesCare Corp. have taken measures similar to Corizon. Tehum’s case could provide “a blueprint for other contractors to do the same,” said Public Justice’s Aranda Osorno.

## DOJ addresses cultural needs within corrections

By Harold Bicknell  
Journalism Guild Writer

A Department of Justice program found communication, caring, and compassion the key to addressing cultural needs within corrections.

According to the DOJ Office of Justice Programs, the mission of the Visiting Fellows Program by the Bureau of Justice Assistance supports corrections agencies by developing and transforming jail and prison environments and providing cross-developmental opportunities for staff, practitioners, and researchers.

“The way the prisons and jails are designed, the way the policies are enforced, creates a situation where they [staff and residents] often feel disrespected, put upon, definitely harmed,” said Danielle Rudes, Ph.D. in a podcast called “Justice Today.” She said her fellowship focused on enhancing spaces and cultures within correctional facilities.

Rudes discovered that staff requested more appreciation and communication from the leadership. When she interviewed staff, most complained about the lack of coverage for double shift workers. If these stories go unchecked because of the lack of communication with management, they become a staff’s perceived reality, Rudes said in the article.

Despite difficulties surrounding her research, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, Rudes discovered a possible source to assist in the transformation of negatively charged jail and prison environments. “It was fascinating how much the staff wanted to be helpful to each other and the residents — and something that most people probably don’t know, the residents want to be helpful to the staff, and they want to be helpful to each other.”

## Progressive prosecutors ousted in anti-reform push



George Gascon

By Jerry Maleek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair

In 2024, two progressive California prosecutors were ousted from their offices, as critics claimed their policies increased crime rates.

Pamela Price was elected Alameda County DA in 2022 and recalled two years later. During her tenure she put into place policies to safeguard against racial bias in lengthy sentencing enhancements, according to *the Press Democrat*.

Cynthia Chandler, who was the policy director for Price’s office, says that the former DA focused on root causes in response to crime. The idea was to send offenders to diversion programs as alternative to incarceration, asserted the *Press*.

“Ultimately, what’s behind the vision of a progressive prosecutor is a prosecutor who is committed to the ethical mandate placed on prosecutors to search for truth and justice,” Chandler said. “And the search for truth is not furthered by seeking out a pound of flesh.”

George Gascón, a former San Francisco police chief, was elected District Attorney in Los Angeles in 2020, but in 2024 the voters of Los Angeles County gave the office to Nathan Hochman, a former federal prosecutor and onetime Republican.

Gascón was dubbed San Francisco’s

“godfather of the progressive prosecutor’s movement.” He relocated to Los Angeles and ran a successful campaign against longtime incumbent Jackie Lacey, according to *Ions California*.

In his first week in office Gascón revealed that he would not seek the death penalty, not charge children as adults, and not use sentencing enhancements for life without parole.

“You can’t just burn the system down,” said Anne Marie Schubert, former Sacramento County District Attorney. “They get elected and then all of a sudden, they implement policies that are so far removed from being a real prosecutor who is seeking balance and accountability.”

Price and Gascón campaigned on similar policies, but in 2023, the anti-reform movement accomplished a big victory in the recall of San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin.

Opponents claim that DAs such as Price and Gascón declined to prosecute low-level offenders, who remained free and brought an increase in shoplifting and car burglaries, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

According to the California Department of Justice, between 2014 and 2023 there have been over nine million property crimes in California. Law enforcement has solved more than 700,000 cases; this is less than 1%, the article stated.



Pamela Price

A District Attorney’s Office does not singlehandedly reduce or increase crime rates; they occupy immediate positions largely concerned with prosecuting crime after it happens, according to the *Brennan Center*.

Progressive prosecutors’ opponents have made claims that “pro-reform strategies” have enabled crime to increase, noted the news.

However, within the last 10 years, the rate of incarceration has reduced 30%; during this time the State of California saved millions of dollars re-allocating monies to youth programs, mental health services, and drug rehabilitation, the *IC* stated.

Roy Behr, an advisor to L.A. democratic campaigns, advised lawmakers to meet each other halfway on criminal justice reforms. Not doing so would isolate voters who want to bring justice to the instabilities of “smash-and-grab robberies,” the *L.A. Times* reported.

“Voters want police to behave fairly and justly,” said Behr. “They also want to be able to go to a store and not worry if someone is going to come running through and do a smash and grab.”

Cyn Yamashiro, a former Los Angeles County public defender, stated that district attorneys always had the authority to charge offenders with a felony revolving around retail theft, reported the *Times*.

## Reparations for survivors

City of Palm Springs approves \$27 million package for Black and Latino families

By Tyrone Luqman Jones  
Journalism Guild Writer

Palm Springs, Calif., officials have approved a \$27 million reparations package for Black and Latino families displaced in the 1960s.

The agreement addressed the leveling of a predominately Black and Latino neighborhoods, known as Section 14, in order to make way for more commercial development in the city. According to the *Oakland Post*, numerous families of color lost their homes, neighborhoods, and livelihoods in the process.

Many of the survivors and their descendants called for reparations since the city issued a formal apology in 2021.

San Quentin resident Edward Carter Jr., 53, grew up in Palm Springs in the 1970s and 80s.

“Palm Springs is a tourist destination, known for its swanky golf clubs and courses,” said Carter Jr. “If you was Black or Brown, or if you had a job at all, it was in the service industry, and if it was at one of them golf clubs, you better stay invisible, or else...” Growing up in the desert town was a tough life, he said.

He added that he was aware of the apology the city issued and that he felt grateful for it. He said that more cities and the government as a whole should issue an apology for what was done to African Americans and Latinos in the United States.



Peaceful protesters seek economic justice

Civil rights attorney Areva Martin acted as lead counsel for the effected families in the lawsuit that resulted in the agreement.

“We are making history in Palm Springs,” said Martin. “This agreement demonstrates that it’s never too late to acknowledge past wrongs and take meaningful steps toward justice.”

Initially, plaintiffs were asking for \$2 billion for the 300 survivors and their descendants before settling for the current figure. Now, the agreement contains \$5.9 million in direct payment along with \$10 million for a first-time-purchaser assistance program and \$10 million for a community land trust directed at inexpensive housing. Other provisions include \$1 million for diversity

and inclusion initiatives, a renamed park, and a monument to honor the displaced families, according to the *Oakland Post*.

Palm Springs Mayor Jeffery Bernstein dubbed the settlement a reasonable and fair resolution, expressing optimism that the settlement would set a nationwide model for reparations.

While this agreement follows a comparable reparations program established in Evanston, Ill., California’s statewide efforts at reparations encountered opposition following Governor Gavin Newsom’s rebuff of a state-level reparations program early last year.

Nevertheless, the Palm Springs step may provide momentum to similar programs elsewhere in the U.S.

## EVENTS

## First-ever sign language correspondence course for residents and staff

By Terrell J. Marshall  
Journalism Guild Writer

San Quentin residents and correctional officers signed up for the first-ever American Sign Language correspondence course at the facility.

According to the ASL facilitator, Tommy Wickerd, the course is an 11-week "Sign Can You" that teaches ASL as a second language. He is the first SQ resident to be hired by the CDCR as an American with Disabilities Act interpreter.

The program's primary focus is to alleviate language barriers between prison staff, residents, and the hearing impaired community.

"It's great that we have this program available," said SQ's Associate Warden Ponce. "I encourage everybody to take the opportunity to learn new ways to communicate with each other."

The program succeeded in summoning officials, medical and education staff, counselors, residents and correctional officers. All arrived ready and eager to learn a new language to assist them in further connecting with their shared community.

An introductory video from The Marshall project highlighted Wickerd's personal journey in becoming a passionate advocate for the ASL program.

"My older brother is deaf," Wickerd told the audience. "The need to communicate motivated me to learn how to sign."

Wickerd noted that in June 2019, he saw that the hearing-impaired residents were arriving at San Quentin, and he felt a need to start an ASL class.

There have been 64 resident graduates from ASL classes since Wickerd started the program. Some of the graduates have also gone on to become volunteer interpreters.

The community-wide Green and Blue ASL class represents a step further into realizing this dream, initially slowed by the pandemic.

Wickerd thanked Dr. Paul Greenberg who donated the "Sign You Can" quick-start guidebooks that teaches how to get started. The book focused on 341 sign language illustrations which help develop a vocabulary for beginners to have conversations.

"The sign vocabulary was carefully chosen to relate to our everyday lives and things we talk about," Greenberg wrote.

Many of the correctional staff received an ASL instructional DVD via e-mail. Residents are able to view the video on the institution's CCTV (CH 1.08) where it is played on a loop. The recording shows an interpreter, modeling the correct way to sign each illustration, as well as the letters of the alphabet.

The curriculum is a 3-module packet that is to be completed and then submitted to the Education Department. Each participant is required to pass a language test prior to graduation.

"This is so exciting," said Dr. Anderson of the SQ Mental Health Department. "I think I can catch onto this one easier." It was a sentiment shared by several attendees.

SQ Correctional Officer Phillips said he believed the event would have an impact on his day-to-day work.

"It will be helpful to improve my communication skills with the deaf community," he said.



Wikipedia

12-member 2014 Chanticleer group

## Grammy winner Chanticleer presents a cappella concert

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Staff Writer

One could not have harmony if everyone sang the same note. Without diversity, harmony would never arise — an idea applying not just to music.

In music, harmony has always revealed itself best in singing a cappella. Chanticleer, a 12-member Grammy Award-winning a cappella ensemble based in San Francisco, sounded harmonious in San Quentin's Chapel A on January 11, as the group presented a dozen songs with superlative and unrivaled precision. In other venues, tickets to hear them would often run into hundreds of dollars.

"It took us eight years to get them to come," said sponsor Linda Rice, a classically trained pianist added that she had heard them perform at least 20 times. "They're so, so, so good. I'm just in awe every time I hear them."

The musical term "a cappella," defined as "without instrumental accompaniment," meant that during Chanticleer's performances, only voice — and perhaps the occasional finger snapping — provided the concert's sound. "I have never seen a show like this. They're awesome," said San Quentin resident Luis Lopez, 29.

Chanticleer consisted of Andy Berry, bass; Tavian Cox, countertenor; Luke Elmer, countertenor; Jared Graveley, bass-baritone; Matthew Knickman, baritone; Vineel Garisa Mahal, tenor; Matthew Mazzola, tenor; Cortez Mitchell, countertenor; Bradley Sharpe, countertenor; Logan Shields, countertenor; Andrew van Allsburg, tenor; and Adam Brett Ward, countertenor.

Having six countertenors — tenors with an unusually high range — counted as a great feat for Chanticleer, for countertenors have always counted as a sought-after rarity, said Rice. She added that she considered Chanticleer's countertenors especially high quality.

In his introduction of the group, van Allsburg said Chanticleer started in 1978 and had its origins in music from the Renaissance. It has since expanded its repertoire to classical, jazz, gospel, and popular music.

Chanticleer's music director, Tim Keeler, sat in the audience during the concert. "I am here just for moral support," he said. Keeler joined the ensemble as a singer and ascended to its music director in 2020. "We perform about a hundred concerts a year and during the last Christmas season, we did two concerts a day," Keeler added. "We will go to Clemson [University] in South Carolina next, then to Savannah, then Florida, and then to Tennessee."

An interview with bass and former Whiffenpoof member Andy Berry demonstrated Chanticleer's remarkable vocal prowess. While standing perhaps three feet in front of him, his speaking voice in conversation resonated so powerfully that one could literally *feel* his every word as he spoke. Berry received his undergraduate degree from Yale (Stiles, '13) in psychology and then advanced to graduate school at the Yale School of Music. He said he performed in Mozart operas and hoped for a future career in that field.

Countertenor van Allsburg started the evening's performance with "Straight Street," soon joined by a solo

from tenor Mazzola, rounded out by countertenor Sharpe. The most unusual song of the evening came from the contemporary composer Majel Connery (b. 1979). Countertenor Adam Brett Ward explained Connery's song "I Am a Cloud" as "part punk rock," but the song also had a passage reminiscent of Gilbert & Sullivan's "I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major General" performed in spoken-word style.

The audience had the most familiarity with the song "Both Sides Now" by Joni Mitchell. "The concert was absolutely incredible," said resident Timothy Holmes, 60. "The talent of these young men is beyond comprehension. It was such a blessing to have them come in."

Chanticleer received Grammy Awards for John Tavener's "Lamentations and Praises" and its commissioned works "Colors of Love." The group also received the Dale Warland/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming. For his contribution to the African-American choral tradition, Chanticleer's Music Director Emeritus Joseph Jennings received the Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award.

As a nonprofit, Chanticleer receives support from the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Bob Ross Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

San Quentin Chaplain Fr. George Williams said, "We are lucky that San Quentin can attract world-class musical groups. Experiencing music like this enhances our effort to rehabilitate."

Sponsor Linda Rice said, "They're so great because they are humble."

## Dungeons and Dragons game designer visits San Quentin

By Michael Callahan  
Staff Writer

As San Quentin Rehabilitation Center culture slowly transitions toward promoting rehabilitation, several programs have made great efforts to connect the inside community with the outside.

Intrigued by the work of individuals in San Quentin, Jason Tondro, a senior game designer for the games Starfinder and Pathfinder, attended a recent gaming event. Tondro said he worked as a senior designer on the Dungeons and Dragons team.

"D & D and other games like it create empathy and everybody wins," he said.

He said he came into the prison to learn, listen, and play D & D, wanting to see how games inside differ from the outside. After working with the residents, he said he envisioned an adventure game tailored to gameplay in prison.

"I am deeply grateful for all the students present today," he said. "I have enormous respect for what everyone is doing here."

Skunkworks hosted the event. The nonprofit organization has met weekly to combine the insights and ideas

of incarcerated individuals and professionals outside. Through this collaborative initiative, the team has collected evidence-based research for the administration with policy recommendations and hosted several events in an effort to transform prison gaming culture.

"Our stakeholders are invested in criminal justice reform," said Skunkworks Executive Director Kai Bannon. "It is about connecting community inside and out."

Nearly two-thirds of the attendees at the event had never participated in roleplay games. Besides D & D, the group offered Starfinder, Pathfinder, and Star Munchkin.

"I usually sign up to do something different," resident Jose Gutierrez said. "I am a creative guy and gaming allows me to use a different aspect of my mind. I get into the imaginary stories."

Resident Freddy Lopez, a first time gamer, said the ability to interact and have a good time with a diverse crowd drew him to gaming.

"I am able to get out of my comfort zone and do something different," Lopez said. "No matter the background, and different walk of life."

After 17 years of staring

down the same walls of incarceration, resident Robert Davis said the imagination-aspect intrigued him. "I appreciate getting out of this place into a new world and realm," he said.

He said gaming helped him to envision himself as a better person, a healer, a cleric, or someone living in medieval times.

Notable guest Piper Kerman, author of the book "Orange is the New Black," attended the event by invitation of a friend.

"Often we think too much," Kerman said. "We should take advantage of opportunities for creative and imaginative thinking."

Kerman, released from prison in 2005, said incarceration did not encourage creativity, but she believed in a million ways to turn creativity into something productive, like writing a book.

She believed her motivation to write about her experiences in prison, which educated the public on the transformation of people in prisons, helped change hearts and minds.

"Doing narrative work is essential and if you have done the work then you can reframe your identity," Kerman said.

## Rapper Project Pat joins victim-and-offender healing circle

By Larry Ali Deminter  
Journalism Guild Writer

The healing started from within as self-help group No More Tears sponsored a victim-and-offender healing circle at San Quentin.

In attendance were 15 to 20 SQ residents, Mrs. Tiffany Love Rawlings and Dr. Clemmie Greenlee from Beauty Behind Bars, Rapper Project Pat, and a traveling Christian ministry from Tennessee.

The sponsors, Mick Gardner and Lonnie Morris, who co-founded the nonprofit group No More Tears, hosted the event. The sponsors' collaboration was a direct response to the violence

in the Oakland community. No More Tears' healing circle has been open to visitors at San Quentin since 2002.

The age-old saying of "hurt people hurt people, and healed people heal people" has had a positive impact on the lives of others.

Dr. Greenlee stood on the edge of the circle, taking a moment to compose herself as she wiped away tears rolling down her face, saying that her child's killer was never convicted.

"I hated y'all, all of y'all, 'cause my son was killed. Twenty-nine years old, [his] brains blown all over the curb...it broke me," said Greenlee. "He was my only child. But I don't hate y'all no more. I don't. I love y'all."

Dr. Greenlee said San Quentin had changed her attitude toward people incarcerated for murder, even though the person who killed her son was never convicted, and he went free. She added that an eyewitness refused to testify against a known gang member for fear of reprisals.

Greenlee's first trip to The Q was a bitter adventure years earlier. She had no desire to be in a room with men convicted of murder. She challenged one of the residents; they both did not expect what happened next.

They spoke for approximately ten minutes and tears flowed from Greenlee's eyes, matching the man's gaze with remorse and empathy.

"I went to find my son's killer the day after I left San Quentin," Greenlee said.

She managed to contact her son's killer by telephone. He had been in federal prison for 18 years since her son's murder.

She told the attendees that they have spoken since then on every Mother's Day. Greenlee admitted that she wrote letters supporting his release, including depositing money into his trust account.

According to Greenlee, her interactions with the person she says is responsible for her son's death has put a strain on family ties. She says that she chose to reach out for her own healing.

The men listened intently. One resident noted that victim

offender dialogue might not be for everyone. "Everybody is not ready for that form of group therapy," said SQ resident Anthony Pandy.

Project Pat, the rapper, joined the healing circle. There were quilts painted with group values that lay in the middle of the healing circle.

He opened up, sharing spiritual growth stories and encouraging everyone to embrace the healing power of forgiveness.

"That forgiveness God gives is also for you to forgive yourself," he said.

Pat said he now stands to leave a legacy beyond rap in between these prison bars; he is a coach and healer for incarcerated people. Despite his rap lyrics, Pat has chosen to become a

solution to the social problems of violence in his community.

According to the program, incarceration is a fundamental divide between the victims and keeping the public safe from future crimes. What if the people locked away held the key to someone else's healing?

The U.S. Department of Justice recorded 6,419,060 violent crimes nationwide in 2023. On any given day, another 1.9 million people are locked up in the U.S., according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

On January 17, 2025, Project Pat's 21-year-old son, Patrick Houston Jr., was tragically shot and killed at a Tennessee park, according to Hip-HopDX a social media outlet.

READ

Program empowers individuals to learn the power of the pen through storytelling

Continued from page 1

Todd Winkler

Kamsan Suon

George Coles

Arturo Vazquez



NEWS

2025 Brothers in Pen

"I just believe listening is a basic human need," Mullery said. "We all need to be listened to; it's an essential need of human beings."

Brothers in Pen has been a voice to numerous incarcerated people empowering them through creative storytelling. The event brought an enormous amount of outside support like Alcatraz park ranger Siena Hinshelwood who listened to the stories shared.

Hinshelwood said that she was impressed with the way incarcerated people consistently worked towards improving themselves, to become better humans, changing the narrative of people in prison.

"Not many people work on themselves on the outside," Hinshelwood said, seeing firsthand how people can come out of prison and make good with life after confinement. She said she enjoyed working with formally incarcerated SQ resident Troy Williams with Restorative Media.

Four SQNews journalists, Michael Callahan, Clark Gerhartreiter, Kevin D. Sawyer, and Edwin E. Chavez, expanded their writing craft beyond journalism by presenting public reads of their personal life experiences and fictional accounts of characters.

Six formally incarcerated men took to the stage by sharing stories of hope, redemption, and change. They have been a part of 'Brothers in Pen' during some point in their incarceration.

Micheal Yahya-Cooke,

paroled from San Quentin in 2017, participated in Brothers in Pen for six years. He also wrote articles for SQNews during his incarceration. He said that finding purpose did not come easy after he was released, but with support and dedication, he expanded his storytelling and continued to flourish. He is currently pursuing screen and fiction writing.

"I believe in the power of the pen," Cooke said.

Resident Joshua Strange shared a story called "Back to the Land". In the story, he reminisced about his younger self kindergarten. His parents moved out of his homeland to the United States to pursue the American dream.

He recalled that during summers, his entire family slept in old canvas army tents while cooking around campfires, whereas prison life consists of steel metal doors, alarm systems, and a lack of scenery that can interfere with life enjoyments. Strange now eagerly looks forwards to living in his natural habitat once free.

"People in prison like to talk about returning to 'the streets' when they parole, but I will be returning to 'the woods' [and] to my native habitat," Strange said.

At the conclusion of the event, all graduates took the stage together for a Q&A session where they welcomed questions from residents and outside guests.

One guest talked about the pro-social community built

inside prison despite all the challenges faced by those incarcerated. He put forward a question to the participants about educational opportunities and medical care challenges they face while in prison.

Resident Steve Drown responded with confidence; he started off with his experience of being incarcerated for 46 years. He discussed how he was exposed to the dangers of prison riots, lockdowns, and being treated badly by custody staff. Drown recently suffered a stroke and two cardiac arrest, and said that he wouldn't have gotten the same lifesaving treatment if he was at another institution.

Resident Michael Callahan talked about how his family hasn't gotten the opportunity to hear about his past traumas. He said that writing helps bridge that gap, and create a pathway for him to express what he been through to his family.

"Something I said must have resonated with him," Callahan said.

Mike Mullery, who is the program instructor's father, embodies consistency traveling to SQ for his 14th appearance. He shared his empathy for the residents of SQ and said that he is supportive of the men inside these notorious walls.

"I don't think prisoners are bad people, but I know they have done some bad things," said Mullery. "People are not the worst thing they have done. You don't even have to be in prison for that to happen."



Raul Aguayo



J. Lee Covarrubias



Juan Moreno Haines



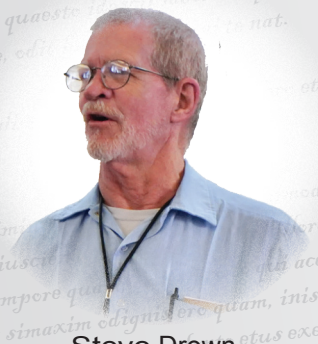
Joshua Strange



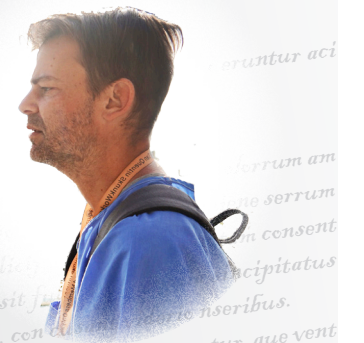
Bruce Davis



Stuart Ross



Steve Drown



Kai Bannon

## FILM REVIEW

## Finding spirituality along the traveled road

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Staff Writer

Some religionists might look for their places of worship in churches, in temples, in consecrated edifices representing their assorted forms of faith. Others might look for them in nature. Leon Logothesis looked for his places on the road. His spirituality involved travel, motion, motility and mobility — to stay static seemed anathema to him — and he recorded it all on film with the idea of “if you seek change, then go out into the world.”

Although Logothesis described his film as secular, *The Kindness Within* had a definitive spiritual bent. Speaking at San Quentin, dressed in a black hoodie, brown trousers, trainers, and a baseball hat, Logothesis looked thin, athletic, and fit. He confirmed his British accent as coming from North London.

“I have never been incarcerated physically,” he said at the start of his motivational movie event, “but in my mind, I have been incarcerated all my life.” He said he used to work as a broker in the City of London (the term referred to London’s financial district) but he declined to reveal the name of his former employer.

Logothesis referred to himself as “The Kindness Guy.” He called it “a nickname that I did not receive because I am very kind.” For Logothesis, kindness functioned as the key ingredient that gave humans their humanity. Logothesis said he had traveled the world to prove it human by relying exclusively on the kindness of strangers to supply him with meals and gasoline for his motorcycle.

“On the outside, I had everything I wanted, but on the inside, I wore a mask — and not a



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Residents watched *The Kindness Within* with Leon Logothesis

Covid mask,” said Logothesis about a façade that had long prevented him from sharing his emotional pain. “If we do not share our emotional pain, it will consume us, it will destroy us.”

*The Kindness Within* started with a quotation from Atticus, “Your scars are not your shame; they are your stories.” Logothesis conceived his film as a spiritual travelogue of India. He took his film crew there with the idea that he “would not leave until God is revealed to him.” The journey, “was not just an adventure, it was my last chance.”

In New Delhi, he walked the crowded streets wearing a brown T-shirt that said

“Ignite Your Spirit.” Logothesis presented to the audience not just his ego, but also his id. His stream of consciousness meandered into sub-consciousness as his explorations of the various religions meandered into expressions of universal grace.

In Diara, his next location, he visited the Church of St. John of the Wilderness. His central question of “How does someone who wants to be connected to God, meet God?” soon received the answer that he would meet God if he read the Bible. At departure, he said the church left him feeling moved.

At the Ajmer Sharif Mosque, his central question found the answer, “Pain is a source of blessing,” for “pain is the wound where

light enters.” Logothesis said, “Today, you have taken care of my heart, and I will never forget that.” Logothesis admitted, “By facing my pain, the dam broke. There was no turning back.”

He traveled to Dharamshala (in the Himalayas) next, a location well known as the home of the Dalai Lama. The place inspired him to conclude that the religions he encountered all have in common that the will of God revealed itself differently to each seeker.

Logothesis soon met with a Buddhist who believed in personal responsibility rather than a God. Next, a Rabbi put the truth to him plainly: “If somebody does not like himself, then how can he help others?”

In Amritsar, Logothesis visited the Golden Temple of the Sikhs. He donned an orange turban to blend in and began to serve God by serving meals in an organization that served 200,000 meals a day and turned away no one. The scale and the magnitude impressed him so much that he declared having found purpose and “Service at the very heart of divinity.”

He said, “If God is Love, then I just met God.” The film’s denouement arrived with Logothesis’ declaration that “The broken pieces had been put back together and I felt home.”

In a final jaunt to Rishikesh, he received two more pieces to his puzzle: “Truth is a magnet. Peace is a magnet.” He concluded to commit to peace within and then to share the peace.

He said good-bye to India and returned to his home in Los Angeles, satiated, enlightened, and ready to spread his word. So endeth the spiritual journey of Leon Logothesis.



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Ricardo Romero

## Environment impacts early childhood development

By Ricardo Romero  
Contributing Writer

“A human being is as sensitive to outside influences and forces as a seismograph is sensitive to an earthquake which is ten thousand miles away, indicating its direction, its position, its center, and its force.” — Luther Burbank.

Early childhood is the most extensive and important period in development. It is during this time period that children are most sensitive to the influences of their external environment. Young children try to make sense of their environments by adapting to different environmental factors. As we grow up, we interact with people, places, and things around us.

We internalize and learn what will help us survive and how to meet our needs. Early environmental influences have the potential to affect how we think feel and interact with society throughout our lives. — Excerpt from *Kid CAT: First Step, Module Four: Environmental Influences*.

For a majority of my life, I was a violent, greedy, reckless and irresponsible criminal who was cold,

callus, angry, immature, and impulsive. I cared about no one by myself. I became this way at an early age by growing up in low income, high-crime, and violent communities such as Marlborough projects in Brooklyn, New York. Trailer parks in Jacksonville, North Carolina and Fort Greene projects in Brooklyn, New York attributed to my distorted beliefs. In these communities, I witnessed fights, stabbings, shootings, robberies, drug deals, and drug use.

It was also in these environments that I developed unhealthy relationships with peers established through acts of violence, which progressed to criminal activities. Once I fought and got my expectations met, I developed the beliefs system that crime and violence were acceptable solutions to any problem I faced.

Eventually, I viewed my violence and criminal behavior as normal and became reliant on it to maintain my acceptance and meet my emotional and financial needs. As a result of my criminal activities, I developed extreme short-term thinking and poor

decision-making skills. I was reckless and irresponsible.

One of my distorted beliefs was that no one cared about me. It became my belief due to a chain of events that occurred I couldn’t understand, and because I couldn’t make sense of what was happening and why, it’s what I told myself to justify my behavior and actions. I ultimately developed the mind-set that it was my way or the highway. What I want and need comes before what everyone else wants and needs, which gave way to my greed and entitlement issues.

Another distorted belief that I developed came from experiencing racism and bullying through acts of violence, belittlement, rejection and humiliation; that belief was that there was something wrong with me, which resulted in me having low self-esteem, no confidence and trust issues; I had a very poor self-image of myself.

There was nothing I wanted more than to be accepted, seen, acknowledged, and most off all respected. I became willing to do anything to maintain and even build on that acceptance by any means necessary.

Building and maintaining my acceptance involved criminal activities such as violent fights, robbing people, stealing cars, breaking into and destroying property, selling drugs, and using weapons.

Through self-reflection and active participation in self-help therapy groups, I’ve come to understand that I had a choice to choose a different path and group of friends. There were a lot of people who were raised in similar environments as me, who had similar friends as me, and who experienced the very things that I experienced but didn’t rely on crime and violence to meet their need for acceptance, nor did they use crime and violence to meet their financial off any other emotional need they felt wasn’t being met.

I assure you I’m just as easily influenced today as I was in the past, the difference is who I’m influenced by, which are people who strive to be an overall good person with pure intentions. People who are dedicated to change and building healthy relationship based on mutual respect, admiration and sheer love for other human beings.

## MUSIC EVENT

# Music Cambia 5-day workshop reveals artistic talent and “Purpose”

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

Resident Alexander Parlato said his passion for poetry and music died after he was sentenced and sent to a prison where there weren’t opportunities for him to share his artistic talent.

“I stopped doing music in 2018 after going to High Desert. Prison had me depressed and there wasn’t anyone doing music,” said Parlato. “Coming to San Quentin reminded me that my artistry mattered. Music saved my life and I forgot that for a little while.”

Arriving at SQ, Parlato found that love for music when he joined the Music Cambia program, a five-day workshop that allowed residents to collaborate on original pieces based on a specific theme. The theme for this cohort was “Purpose.” The workshop ended with a concert performed by participants for the general population.

Outside musicians Brad Balliett, Sara Goldfeather, and Judith Hill together with resident performers created a large circle on stage for breathing exercises and some vocal warm-ups.

Balliett sat at the piano and in unison the whole room sang “Many mumbling mice-are making midnight music-in the moonlight migh-ty-nice.” The speed of the lyrics increased each time the lines were completed.

“The five-day workshop has lots of moving parts and not a lot of time, but the members are so creative that they bring it all together,” said Balliett. “The reality is that creative styles, music, and collaborations [are] doable

anywhere there are people, but when you build a frame for people to step into, then they feel comfortable being in that frame and just doing.”

Resident Luis Alvarez, a native of Ecuador and a self-taught musician of 45 years, said he felt angry with the criminal legal system and how it tore his family apart but that music has always relaxed him. He said that being involved in this workshop allowed him to experience something new.

“When I start to play music on the piano, I forget about the problems,” said Alvarez, standing on stage with the other 35 participants and waiting to be given a group number.

Music Cambia gathers individuals interested in showcasing their musical talents into an intense five days of collaboration and dedication.

Everyone was assigned a number as they broke into small groups of five or six people to work on their original piece(s).

Initially residents went back and forth over tempo and music style selections. As the musical groups developed their sounds, the room was overwhelmed with drums, pianos, and voices of people trying to get their words right. One group developed a slow tempo sound that included storytelling in a country style and included rap verses and a course.

As the songs developed, one could hear the confidence building as songs and rhythms became louder, giving the other groups a sort of call to action to showcase what they developed together.

“It makes me feel alive and seen. There have been times when I couldn’t get a job, but music has always been there for me,” said Parlato.

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

DATA SCIENCE

# Study finds no connection between zodiac signs and imprisonment

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Staff Writer

Would someone born under the sign of Aries more likely end up convicted of a crime than someone born under the sign of Cancer? Would an Aquarius gravitate to low-level offenses and a Gemini to more serious crimes? Which zodiac sign has the highest incarceration rate?

Skeptics of astrology might groan at such questions, while believers in the occult might perk up at such hypotheses. Up to now, though, neither group — actually, no one — definitively knew the answers.

Extensive research by the *San Quentin News* and the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism has found that no one has ever proved or disproved any correlation between zodiac signs and incarceration and crime. Searches of academic databases EBSCO and JSTOR, available at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center through Mount Tamalpais College, and searches of the wider Internet conducted at UC Berkeley, found no academic studies or similar articles about this question.

Astrology has a long history. Luis Campos Ribeiro wrote in the *Annals of Science* that up to the 17th century, astrology enjoyed a reputation as an academic discipline, and had a variety of practical applications, from weather forecasting to assessing the success of sea voyages. Astrology once made news but newspapers have since relegated it to the fluff pages.

This article, though purely statistical in nature and limited to a sample set of 3,200 Level II incarcerated persons at San Quentin in September 2024, definitively proved the answer. As of the date of its publication, it remained the first such research of its kind.

The question explored whether certain zodiac signs seemed more prone to incarceration and hence, criminality, than other signs. If yes, then SQRC should have a disproportionate distribution of signs.

The *San Quentin News* calculated that variations in the distribution of zodiac signs remained roughly close to one percentage point, or in statistical terms, quite even. In short: the data show that no one sign stood out as particularly criminogenic.

An analysis of San Quentin's population categorized the residents by zodiac-signs-by-building with percentages relative to the buildings. The category "San Quentin" categorized signs for the entire institution. In any category, the numbers remained close to the average of 8.33% (or 1 divided by 12, the number of signs). Leo and Libra showed the greatest divergences but these divergences remained too small to hold statistical significance. The distributions remained statistically even.

The analysis evaluated differences in the degree of seriousness of crime by comparing

Zodiac Distribution San Quentin Rehabilitation Center																				
Alpine			Badger			Donner			H-Unit			North			West			San Quentin		
Zodiac			Zodiac			Zodiac			Zodiac			Zodiac			Zodiac			Zodiac		
Cap	28	7%	Cap	35	9%	Cap	25	11%	Cap	55	9%	Cap	51	7%	Cap	68	9%	Cap	268	8.37%
Aqu	30	8%	Aqu	24	6%	Aqu	33	14%	Aqu	49	8%	Aqu	57	8%	Aqu	52	7%	Aqu	257	8.02%
Pis	34	9%	Pis	35	9%	Pis	20	9%	Pis	48	8%	Pis	49	7%	Pis	61	8%	Pis	255	7.96%
Ari	26	7%	Ari	23	6%	Ari	17	7%	Ari	53	9%	Ari	67	9%	Ari	64	8%	Ari	257	8.02%
Tau	36	9%	Tau	23	6%	Tau	18	8%	Tau	44	8%	Tau	60	8%	Tau	80	10%	Tau	269	8.40%
Gem	30	8%	Gem	46	12%	Gem	16	7%	Gem	45	8%	Gem	56	8%	Gem	70	9%	Gem	271	8.46%
Can	44	11%	Can	33	8%	Can	16	7%	Can	55	9%	Can	65	9%	Can	66	9%	Can	287	8.96%
Leo	31	8%	Leo	39	10%	Leo	25	11%	Leo	45	8%	Leo	71	10%	Leo	64	8%	Leo	290	9.05%
Vir	35	9%	Vir	36	9%	Vir	20	9%	Vir	47	8%	Vir	71	10%	Vir	65	8%	Vir	280	8.74%
Lib	19	5%	Lib	25	6%	Lib	15	6%	Lib	51	9%	Lib	58	8%	Lib	68	9%	Lib	247	7.71%
Sco	35	9%	Sco	35	9%	Sco	13	6%	Sco	44	8%	Sco	63	9%	Sco	66	9%	Sco	267	8.34%
Sag	37	10%	Sag	38	10%	Sag	16	7%	Sag	49	8%	Sag	52	7%	Sag	52	7%	Sag	255	7.96%
385			392			234			585			720			776			3,203		

Table shows the number of San Quentin residents with zodiac signs categorized by building with percentages relative to buildings. The category "San Quentin" shows the same analysis for the entire institution

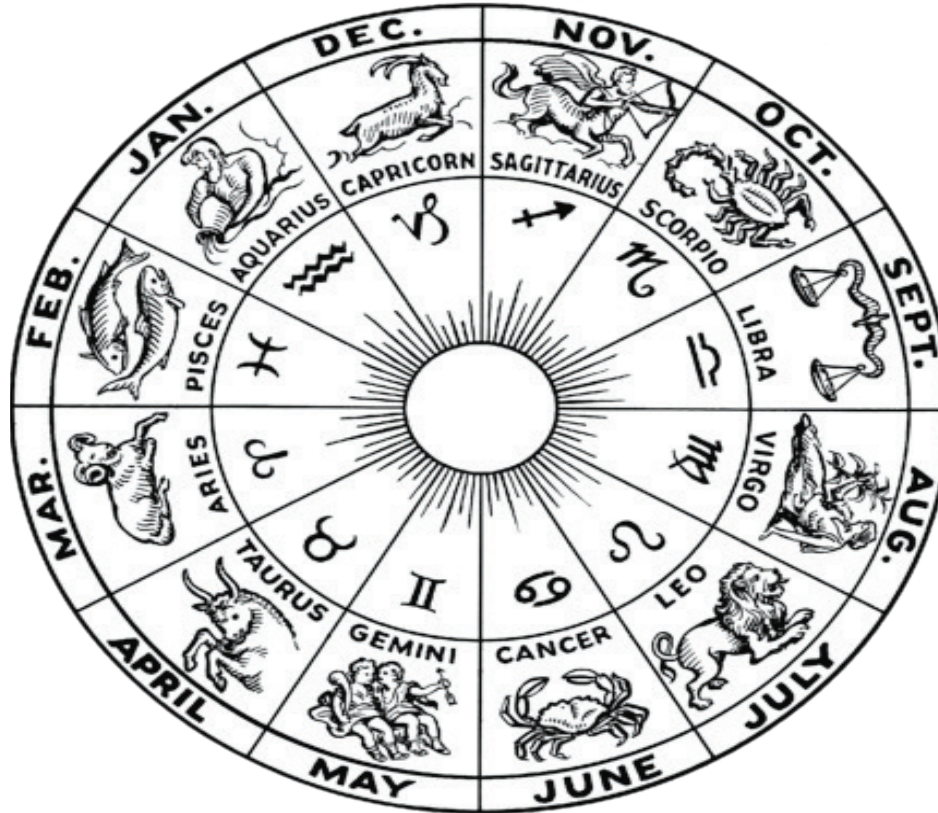
Analysis and table by C. K. Gerhartsreiter

zodiac signs at H-Unit, which housed low-level offenders with short-term sentences, with signs at the five other housing units, which housed offenders with more serious crimes and longer sentences or life sentences. As in the other examination, the distributions showed no statistically significant difference.

Both the *San Quentin News* and UC Berkeley Graduate Journalism School also looked for scientific evidence in academic papers that would verify astrology as a viable tool for prediction of crime, but neither one found any. Research with academic databases EBSCO and JSTOR also found nothing that lent any credibility to astrology.

One scholarly article attributed academic authority to astrology by associating it with parapsychology (the study of phenomena like telepathy and clairvoyance), but the writer of the article turned out to have worked as a practicing astrologer. A few other academic works considered the psychological results of astrology similar to the placebo effect — beneficial outcomes arising from positive expectations — but such a comparison, by definition, would prove astrology ineffective. No papers presented evidence that astrology functionally worked.

Astrology appeared best described by the paper "A double-blind test of astrology," published in the science journal *Nature*, Vol. 318, December 5, 1985, by Shawn Carlson. In the paper's conclusion, Carlson wrote, "We are now in a position to argue a surprisingly strong case against natal astrology as practiced by reputable astrologers. Great pains were taken to insure that the experiment was unbiased and to make sure that astrology was given every reasonable



Portable Network Graphics image

Zodiac calendar

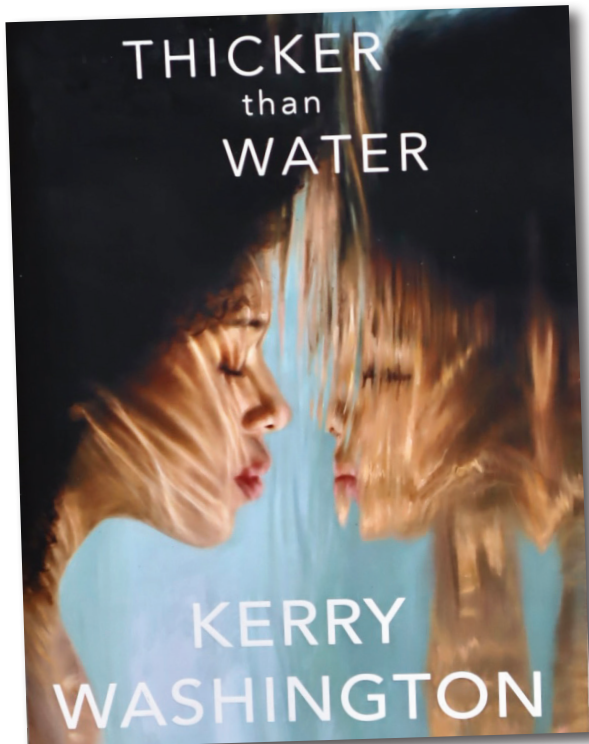
chance to succeed." Carlson's next sentence summarized his findings about astrology. He wrote, "It failed."

— Erika Zaro, who studies investigative reporting at UC Berkeley and has extensive expertise in astrology, contributed to the story

BOOK REVIEW

## A woman never out of place

Kerry Washington's memoir reveals complications from childhood to Hollywood



By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Staff Writer

My first acquaintance with Kerry Washington happened almost three decades ago. In the mid-1990s, my goddaughter borrowed my New York City apartment to

hold a party for her classmates from the Spence School. She invited a dozen of them, including Kerry Washington.

Every party guest referred to Kerry Washington by both of her names as if by custom (a practice continued in this review). As these high school students circulated in my living room, Kerry Washington and her very gracious and inseparable friend Yvette distinguished themselves. Amazingly, Kerry Washington knew the names of all the painters whose art hung on my walls.

Barely five feet tall back then, she commented on the paintings with expertise that 15-or-16-year-olds rarely possessed. She acted (but did not look) older than her age, able to hold a sophisticated conversation with me, about twice her age. Her opinions on art had left a lasting impression on me.

The second day of the San Quentin Film Festival marked the second time that Kerry Washington occupied the same room with me. Her visit prompted me to look for *Thicker Than Water: A Memoir* a few days later. The book detailed some of her high school partying in which she had posed as a grown-up, mentioning Soul Kitchen, a well-known NYC party venue.

At San Quentin, Kerry Washington again displayed her unique gift of blending in — she did not look like a gawking tourist, but like an

empathetic person who understood that life-reversals could happen. Whether telling readers about walking in the gritty neighborhood of her home in the Bronx or whether visiting the refined area of my apartment on Sutton Place, she never appeared out of place — a trait perfect for an actor.

Told in a way that would make readers feel more like eavesdroppers in a therapy session, the memoir showed extraordinary directness. As an author, Kerry Washington has a way of giving even ordinary events a sense of confidentiality, the kind of disclosures that might make readers feel almost privileged to read them.

"By the time I got to college, my relationship with food and my body had become a toxic cycle of self-abuse that utilized the tools of starvations, binge eating, body obsession and compulsive exercise," she wrote. "I would — when seeking to stuff my feelings — stuff my face, secretly binge-eating for days at a time, often to the point of physical pain, sometimes to the point of passing out." Her honesty would disarm any critic while teaching life-lessons and establishing Kerry Washington as firmly in charge of a future from which her past could not distract.

If told on camera, Kerry Washington's plain diction would not have Lara Mizrack's glorious-Technicolor-amazing-Cinemascope-stereophonic-sound, but a series of long takes of grainy black-and-white close-ups accompanied by discreet whispers. Kerry Washington would immediately know the previous sentence's Cole Porter references as having come from her former Spence classmate.

Kerry Washington freely discussed having had panic attacks as a 7-year-old. One

description of coping with such an attack during a parental argument deserved highest praise. "I can count on one hand the number of times that I have seen my mother cry. This was the second," she wrote.

Further pulling back the curtains on family secrets, Kerry Washington's book pointed out her complicated notion of identity and admitted to her mother having used a sperm donor. "I am not who I had been told I was from the beginning of my existence." The passage then revealed Kerry Washington as an optimist: "Somehow, the gift of finally knowing the truth outweighed the pain of what the truth was. At that moment, I was liberated by the revelation."

The book characterized her rise in Hollywood as almost inevitable, whether talking about her starring roles in *Scandal* or her work with Hollywood superstars like Quentin Tarantino. Her writing style stood on par with her accomplishments: she might very well have a future as an author.

As many Hollywood memoirs have done in the past, her story proved that nothing would make someone grow up faster than the reversals and disappointments of show biz. Hollywood, as Kerry Washington wrote about it, would certainly have comprised the ideas now associated in readers' minds with *developing* public personas, rather than *developed* ones.

The memoir portrayed a woman who truly valued her career and made it work for her with the sheer force of willpower. The ultimate lesson of *Thicker Than Water*: Success consisted in valuing hard work — and brutal honesty.

ESPAÑOL

# Celebrando el Mes de la Mujer

## Reconociendo la lucha por la igualdad de todas las mujeres en el mundo

Por César Martínez  
Staff Writer

El pasado primero de marzo, el Presidente de los Estados Unidos firmó un orden ejecutivo, en el cual puede afectar a miles de familiares de encarcelados quienes no leen, escriben o hablan, el idioma oficial proclamado.

El mandatario Donald Trump través de su mandato da a las agencias gubernamentales quienes proporcionaban los servicios lingüísticos poder de elegir si continúan proporcionando documentos y servicios en otros idiomas.

“Esta decisión afecta a las personas — si antes te sentías limitado te vas a sentir peor, porque no conoces del idioma. Para mí es un racismo legal”, expresó el reo del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin Juan López.

De acuerdo al artículo publicado por *La Voz de América*, esta decisión revierte el mandato de parte del expresidente Bill Clinton en el cual proporcionaba los fondos federales para proporcionar dichos servicios.

La decisión del actual mandatario se suma con el cierre por segunda vez del

sitio web oficial en español de la Casa Blanca y en el cual se reestableció cuando el presidente Joe Biden ocupó su cargo. Según la admiración reestablecería el servicio, el artículo indico que hasta ese momento no se había restituido.

Algunos residentes de SQ, comentan de como el mandato puede afectar significativamente a sus seres queridos. Para el residente José Monarca comentó, que sus hijas usar los servicios de traducción en español es necesario por que no se leer y escribir en inglés.

Ángel López García hablo de como para algunos hispanos que no tuvieron la oportunidad o solo aprendieron lo básico agregó, “Se nos dificulta en aprender nuestro idioma. Pienso que el inglés es necesario, pero no deben quitar nuestro lenguaje”.

*La Voz de América* revelo, que no es primera vez que legisladores del Congreso han intentado anteriormente designar al inglés como idioma oficial. Según el grupo U.S. English que apoya esta orden ejecutiva declaró que en EE.UU. más de 30 estados que designan el inglés como idioma oficial.

“Al dar la bienvenida a los nuevos estadounidenses, una política de fomento del aprendizaje y la adopción de nuestro idioma nacional hará que los Estados Unidos un hogar compartido y empodera a los nuevos ciudadanos para lograr el sueño americano”, cita textual de la orden ejecutiva.

La orden puede también crear temas de discusión entre los encarcelados. Mario Alberto Díaz residente de SQ opinó: “No creo que me afecte porque ahora me he comprometido a aprender inglés. Tengo que esforzarme para aprenderlo”.

Díaz comentó, como parte de su rehabilitación participa activamente en la escuela voluntaria para mejorar su inglés y de esa manera continuar con educación académica.

“Hablar inglés no solo abre puertas económicamente, sino que ayuda a los recién llegados a involucrarse en sus comunidades, participar en sus tradiciones nacionales y retribuir a nuestra sociedad”, agregó el mandato.

Martin Silva declaró que estas decisiones afecta a toda la gente. De acuerdo a él la gente hablan diferentes idiomas y entre más idiomas hablan la gente mejor le ira al país en la economía.



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Mujeres en el servicio militar



Hujan Public Domain

Maria Elena Oddone - “Una de las muchas mujeres activistas en Latinoamérica”



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Elementos de seguridad en CECOT



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CECOT

## La oferta “GENEROSA” del Mandatario Bukele al Presidente Donald Trump

Por Edwin E. Chavez  
Spanish Journalism  
Guild Chair

La oferta del milenio. El Presidente Salvadoreño Nayib Bukele está disponible a recibir criminales deportados de los estados unidos incluyendo con ciudadanía americana para encarcelarlos en su famosa mega prisión “Cecot”. [Centro Confinamiento de Terrorismo].

El enfoque de encarcelar a los ciudadanos Salvadoreños después de ser deportados sin cometer ningún crimen en su país a traído terror, preocupación para muchos reclusos del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin.

Sin embargo, estos mismo

prisioneros de ciudadanía Salvadoreños están anticipando no participar en sus audiencias de libertad condicionales, conocido como BPH. Por miedo de ser deportados e enviados a las prisiones de Bukele.

Recientemente, El mandatario Salvadoreño confirmó en las redes sociales que el plan es de encacerlar a todos los criminales en su prisión mega con una capacidad en detener asta 40,000 reos. Esta oferta “generosa” viene con una tarifa razonable hacia los estados unidos y sustentable para el gobierno Salvadoreño. según un reporte del 4, febrero por Vanessa Buschshlüter y Nathan Williams de la cadena BBC.

Según Juan Lopez- Urrutia,

lo que que Bukele esta haciendo es una injusticia. Pregunto, ¿si ya hemos pagado por nuestros errores aquí porque ahora vamos a tener que ser encarcelados solo por tener tatuajes que las personas se pusieron en la piel en su niñez?

Para algunos ser americano significa apoyar las ideologías de Trump y estar en favor de la política que trae polémica con el mandatario estadounidense.

El recluso Keven Shepler apoya a Trump. Esta en desacuerdo que las personas estén en el país ilegalmente. Hay un proceso legal y se debería ser honrarlo. El reconose que el proceso no deberían ser tan lento donde la personas tienen que esperar

años antes de que puedan entrar al país legalmente. “Necesitamos una reforma migratoria. El país siempre necesitara inmigrantes es un país de inmigrantes”, añadió Shepler.

El reporte de Buschshlüter y Willaims, resalto que el mandatario Salvadoreño se ha ganado los aplausos y el favoritismo con la popularidad por su mano dura contra las maras. Siendo elegido por segunda vez con una victoria grande en el 84% del voto popular.

Mientras hay miles y miles de personas encarceladas por alegaciones en asociaciones ilícitas. La Amnestia Intenacional ha criticado el cambio de violencia de maras con las violencias estatales

en el país. Algo que Bukele rechaza.

De acuerdo al artículo, las condiciones de los prisioneros son implorable enjaulados como animales en seldas sin ventanas. Los Derechos Humanos sigue criticando las condiciones en que sostienen a los reos.

“Los estados unidos esta profundamente agradecido haci Bukele. Nunca ha bido un país que haiga echo una oferta tan amistosa como esta”, dijo Marco Rubio el secretario de defenza de EEUU.

Según Loren Mears el sugiere que la fronteras entre los estados unidos y mexico deberían ser cerradas. Sobre el tema a la deportacion de niños quienes nacieron aquí o fueron traídos al país

cuando eran niños o no tenia la edad suficiente en tomar sus propias decisiones debería ser permitido en quedarse en el país.

El departamento de Correccionales y Rehabilitacion le proporciono a Leandro Gonzales la aplicación Notificacion de estrajeros y trasladados de prisioneros extranjeros. El nigo, firma el tratado de traslados de prisioneros.

“Tengo miedo de que cuando se liberado me bally arestar cuando bajo del avio en me metan a Cecot solo por tener tatuajes”, de claro Gonzales. “No soy de ninguna pandilla y CDCR lo ha confirmado. Si me ponen en Cecot mi vida esta en limbo en no saber si algun día sere liberado.”

# El impacto del rechazo de la Proposición 6

Por Marco Serna  
Spanish Journalism  
Guild Writer

En el mes de noviembre del año pasado, los votantes no votaron por una proposición que habría acabado con la esclavitud forzada en las prisiones de California. De acuerdo a una publicación de Cayla Mihalovich.

Basado en el artículo Mihalovich, el estado dorado es uno de 15 estados que permiten la servidumbre involuntaria. La Prop 6 fue rechazada en las votaciones del 2024, aun teniendo el apoyo de los líderes del partido demócrata, los sindicatos y decenas de grupos de defensa que unieron sus esfuerzos para finalizar un legado racista y abolir la esclavitud dentro de las prisiones.

“Hay mucha falta de información la gente no sabe cómo nos hacen pagar la restitución, no saben las reglas de aquí y no les dieron suficiente información, piensan que por ser presos debemos ser esclavizados”, dijo el reo del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin Isaac Linares.

Mihalovich en su publicación mencionó que en el 2022 el Gob. Newsom veto un proyecto de ley para aumentar el salario en las prisiones y crítico la Prop 6. También el departamento de finanzas de CA se opuso a la propuesta señalando que aumentaría el gasto anual de las prisiones en 1.5 millones de dólares.

En el artículo otro beneficio que se hubiera obtenido de la Prop 6, a prohibir la disciplina en aquellos que se rehúsen a

realizar un trabajo.

La escritora agrega en la publicación, que en California exige a miles de encarcelados trabajar en empleos que ellos no eligen, si alguna persona no completa su trabajo, ya sea por enfermedad, lastimadura o por alguna pérdida familiar, esta persona podrá enfrentar sanciones e incluso pueden llevar a la pérdida de privilegios como las visitas familiares.

Jorge Salguero residente de SQ comentó, que la gente de afuera no está informada del trabajo duro que se hace aquí adentro de la prisión.

“Yo trabajo por muchos años en la limpieza del edificio y me pagaban ocho centavos la hora, pienso que deberíamos unirnos más para que también nos paguen lo justo a todos los prisioneros”, agregó Salguero.

En la información menciona, que los defensores de la Prop 6 y expertos políticos independientes expresaron que el lenguaje usado en la propuesta pudo haber confundido a los votantes y pudo haber jugado un papel significativo en el fracaso de esta en las votaciones.

De acuerdo al artículo, el texto decía: “elimina la disposición constitucional que permite la servidumbre involuntaria de las personas encarceladas”, pero la palabra “esclavitud” no aparecía.

Mark Baldassare, Director de encuestas del Instituto de políticas públicas de California expresó, que las palabras “servidumbre involuntaria” pudieron haber requerido una explicación para los votantes.

J. Vásquez, un prisionero ex organizador del grupo de defensa Communities United for Restorative Justice Youth; dijo, “Si la proposición 6 hubiera incluido la palabra ESCLAVITUD en el título de la boleta, se habría aprobado igual que en Nevada”, y agregó. “La gente no pudo hacer la conexión entre las condiciones de trabajo actuales en prisión y la esclavitud”.

Defensores de la propuesta 6 dicen que la servidumbre involuntaria en prisiones de CA obstaculiza la capacidad de una persona encarcelada de participar en su rehabilitación. La rehabilitación pasa a ser una prioridad secundaria y crea barreras para un encarcelado de prepararse para su rehabilitación.

Lawrence Cox, asociado de defensa y organización regional en servicios legales para prisioneros con niños mencionó, que muchos de los programas que son parte importante para la rehabilitación son al mismo tiempo que la mayoría de los trabajos.

Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación de California (CDCR por sus siglas en inglés) recalzó, que a principio de este año, las tasas de reincidencia son más bajas para las personas que participan, obteniendo créditos y finalizan programas de rehabilitación.

“El rendir cuentas no significa ir a trabajar todo el día” agregó Vásquez “se trata de que la persona trabaje en sí mismo para que cuando regrese a la comunidad, todos seamos beneficiados.”



SQNews archive

Retrasando la libertad para muchos

## Apelando por la libertad en corte — Pro. 57

Por Aristeo Sampablo  
Staff Writer

La Audiencias de Libertad Condicional (BPH por sus siglas en inglés) dio una actualización de la demanda en contra de la Proporción 57.

De acuerdo al informe, la Fundación Legal de Justicia Criminal mantiene una demanda desde diciembre del 2023 en contra del Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación de California. Esto prohíbe indeterminadamente la liberación condicional, afectando a la gran población encarcelada.

El informe indica, que CJLF demandó a CDCR en la Corte Superior del Condado de Sacramento, alegando que no está autorizado en implementar estos criterios a personas que obtuvieron una reducción por créditos e hizo que la Fecha Mínima de Libertad Condicional fuera adelantada (haciéndolo más temprano).

La Proporción 57, que fue aprobada en noviembre 2016 y entro en vigor el primero de mayo del 2017. CDCR, tuvo la autoridad de otorgar créditos por buen comportamiento y promovió los logros de rehabilitación y de la educación.

La información revela que en enero 26 del 2024, la corte indicó lo siguiente:

- 1) Un alto, en aplicar los créditos de la Prop. 57 cuando calculen el MEPD
- 2) Un alto, en llevar a cabo

audiencias de liberación condicional basados en la MEPD

3) Un alto, al liberar a personas encontradas elegibles para la libertad condicional en las audiencias, realizado en estos acuerdos.

Basado en la actualización, CDCR apeló la decisión de la demanda y la corte emitió un alto parcial. CDCR, continuara aplicando los créditos obtenidos por la Prop. 57 y también continuara conduciendo audiencias de libertad condicional. Si la persona se le adelanta la fecha a la audiencia por MEPD.

Pero, CDCR **no podrá poner en libertad** a una persona después de ser encontrado elegible.

De acuerdo al nuevo proceso, CDCR removerá y recalculara los créditos de la Prop. 57, después que una persona que se le haya concedido la libertad condicional. Los créditos serán recalculados por el Servicio de Registro de Casos (Case Record Service) y el BPH.

El paro parcial impactara, a personas quienes están sentenciados indeterminadamente y que el BPH haya encontrado elegible para obtener una fecha de libertad condicional, por los créditos aplicados de la Prop. 57 que hizo que MEPD adelantara la fecha para la audiencia.

El informe también aclara, que personas encontrados apropiado para su libertad

condicional y se encuentran en custodia de CDCR. **No serán afectados** por el mandato son:

Con créditos MEPD antes del primero de mayo de 2017.

A Jóvenes con Día Elegibles a Libertad Condicional (Youth Parole Eligible Date)

Crímenes No Violentos con Día Elegible a Libertad Condicional (Nonviolent Parole Eligible Date)

Personal Mayores con Día Elegibles a Libertad Condicional (Elderly Parole Eligible Date)

CDCR, informa que a la persona que se le concedió la libertad condicional, BPH continuara revisando cual quiera nueva información de mala conducta en el cual pueda negar la decisión del BPH.

El informe menciona que los créditos continuaran reflejándose en el Sistema de Administrativo de Ofensores Estratégico (Strategic Offender Management System) o en el Registro e Información Searcy de encarcelados en California (California Incarcerated Records and Information Searcy).

BPH, menciona que el resultado de la demanda tardara por lo menos un par de años. Pero cualquiera que quiera más información puede comunicarse a:

(CJLF v. CDCR, et. a; No. C100274)

<http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/BOPH/> o llamar al teléfono (916) 445-4072.

## La Proposición 36 derrotó las 10 iniciativas del Gobernador Newsom

Por Marco Serna  
Spanish Journalism  
Guild Writer

El año pasado, el Gobernador Newsom, firmó un paquete de “Diez Iniciativas” enfocados al robo a minoristas. Sin embargo, los californianos tuvieron la oportunidad de votar por otra propuesta, La Proposición 36, el pasado noviembre, según *Los Angeles Daily News* escrito por Clara Harter.

Harter describe que el Gobernador, confió que su Iniciativa proveería herramientas para enfrentar la crisis sobre robos, disuadiendo a los votantes de aprobar dicha Iniciativa sin tener éxito.

El Instituto de Estudios Gubernamentales de la Universidad de Berkeley, encontró que el 56% de los votantes de California apoyaron la Proposición 36. Que es una ley más severa, ya que exige tratamiento a los delincuentes en comparación a las Diez Iniciativas del Gobernador.

“Ésta propuesta [Prop. 36] no tiene nada que ver con el robo a tiendas. Nos llevara a la época de la guerra contra las drogas de los 80’s y al encarcelamiento masivo”, dijo el Gobernador dando a conocer su punto de vista a dicha Proposición.

Según el Gobernador, su paquete de Diez Iniciativas se dirigía especialmente al problema de robo

incrementando. Incluyendo un equipo permanente de la Patrulla de Caminos de California, (CHP) por sus siglas en inglés, especializado en robos a propiedad, de acuerdo a Harter.

*Los Angeles Daily News* indico, que el asambleísta demócrata de Los Angeles Rick Chavez Zbur (quien contribuyó a crear las Iniciativas aprobadas por Newsom) comentó, la Iniciativa se enfoca a encarcelar a quienes cometan un alto volumen de robos, y no a quienes cometan crímenes para sobrevivencia.

El Alcalde de San Jose Math Mahon coincidió, que no se regrese a los tiempos de encarcelamiento masivo, dijo “Si bien este paquete [Propuesta por el Gobernador] es un primer paso importante para enfrentar esta crisis, [pero] no es más que eso, un — primer paso —. [Ya que], para enfrentar el aumento de robos se requiere el conocimiento total de las principales causas de esos delitos, la adición a las drogas y al alcohol, entre otros”, las cuales abarca la Proposición 36.

Luis Zamudio residente de SQ dijo, “El abuso de drogas y alcohol son una causa mayor de que se cometan esos delitos, pienso que sí serviría que les ordenaran tratamiento para la adicción”.

De acuerdo a otro artículo

escrito por Sarah Staudt, La Prop. 36 es una medida de “mano dura contra el crimen” que revivió las viejas políticas en el encarcelamiento masivo. Sin embargo un punto significativo de esta ley es que, “recortaría millones de dólares de los servicios de reinserción y prevención a favor de más sentencias de prisión...”.

Daniel N., un reo del Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin comentó, “La Prop. 36, va a llenar las cárceles. Los ciudadanos pagaran más impuestos para cubrir los gastos.”

Walmart y Target fueron las principales compañías que financiaron La Proposición 36. Reestableciendo varios delitos menores por robo a tiendas, al igual que otros delitos por uso y venta de drogas, considerados actualmente como delito graves. De acuerdo a lo escrito por Staudt.

*Los Angeles Daily News* reporto que según Newsom afirmó, que la nueva ley aprobada (Prop. 36) por los californianos no está enfocada en el tratamiento de drogas y no provee fondos necesarios para la rehabilitación.

“En general para 2029, se proyecta que la Proposición 36 deshará por completo el progreso logrado con mucho esfuerzo para reducir la población encarcelaría de California”, escrito por Staudt.

## Después de 44 años encarcelado finalmente liberado

Por César Martínez  
Staff Writer

Un hombre afroamericano, después de estar más de 44 años injustamente encarcelado, recibió 25 millones de dólares. Basado en la publicación de *CONCORD, N.C. presa asociada*.

El artículo recapituló los hechos en el caso, explicando que a los 21 años, Ronnie Wallace Long fue acusado por la policía local con cargos de robo, violación, y juzgado en el Condado de Cabarrus, Carolina del Norte. El jurado fue compuesto por hombres anglosajones. En el cual la víctima fue una mujer blanca.

“Reconocemos y aceptamos responsablemente por el significado error en juzgar y de la mala conducta deliberada por nuestros previos empleados, quienes llevaron al Sr. Long a una convicción ilegal y de su encarcelamiento,” dijo un representante de la ciudad de Concord.

En 1976, Long recibió dos cadenas perpetuas en un juicio lleno de

irregularidades. De acuerdo al artículo, el Sr. Long de 68 años gano varias demandas y una disculpa escrita por parte de la ciudad de Concord, Carolina del Norte.

La policía de la ciudad de Concord, la Agencia Estatal de Investigación (SBI), y la ciudad de Concord todos aportaron en el encarcelamiento y la violación de los derechos civiles del Sr. Long, informó, *presa asociada*

El abogado comentó que su cliente fue cuidadosamente seleccionado por oficiales de alto rango.

Acorde al artículo, el representante de Long, con la ayuda de la Universidad de escuela de leyes Duke, comentaron que nunca se tomaron en cuenta más de 40 huellas digitales y muestras de semen, los cuales después desaparecieron.

El Gobernador Roy Cooper concedió el indulto (perdón), después que en el 2020, una corte de apelación ordenara un nuevo juicio e inmediatamente obteniendo su libertad.

*La Prensa Asociada (AP)*

redactó que la comisión del estado otorgó al Sr. Long con \$750,000 dólares, la mayor compensación por la ley del estado. Incluyendo 3 millones de parte de la SBI, por su participación de ocultar evidencia. Incluyendo \$22 millones de la ciudad de Concord CN.

“Nosotros estamos profundamente arrepentidos por los errores del pasado, la que causo el enorme daño hacia el Sr. Long, su familia, amigos, y de nuestra comunidad,” citó una declaración de parte de la ciudad.

De acuerdo al artículo, el abogado declaró, “Este es el pago monetario más grande de la nación,” agregando que lo más importante para su cliente fue la declaración por parte de la ciudad.

“Si bien, no hay dimensión para restaurar todo lo que el Sr. Long y su familia les fue tomado, con este acuerdo nosotros estamos haciendo todo lo que está en nuestro poder para corregir el pasado y tomar responsabilidad,” mencionó la declaración de la ciudad.

## SPORTS

# Ryan Leaf talks about journey to sobriety

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho  
Sports Editor

Athletes sometimes hit rock bottom, just like the rest of us. Sometimes they might redefine themselves, turning out stronger than before.

Ex-San Diego Charger quarterback and formerly incarcerated resident Ryan Leaf hosted The Last Mile's podcast at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center in January. Leaf attained the fame and fortune of which athletes around the world might only dream, then he fell and endured scars that have made him one of the nation's leading motivational speakers. Leaf spent 32 months for possession of narcotics, burglary, and other charges in the Montana State Prison system.

"The sally port was hard, coming back in and hearing the clanging of steel always traumatizes me," said Leaf at his first visit to SQRC.

The podcast, called Over The Walls, also has recorded shows in the Montana State Prison system. At SQRC, Leaf said that while he was incarcerated he experienced an epiphany, realizing he needed to change his life.

Since then, his recovery has allowed him to announce NFL play-by-play for Westwood One Radio. He also has advised NFL rookies on the pitfalls of fame and fortune.

Leaf recorded the podcast with three students from The Last Mile, SQRC's coding program before he spoke about his story of redemption and exhibited his views of social reform in front of a packed Chapel B.

"We're changing the stigma of justice impacted people. To the outside, these men are just criminals, just numbers, but SQRC has done so much, and I'm introducing you to some of SQRC's change agents," said Leaf.

Leaf admitted, "I had no idea what I was going to do upon my release. Everyone thought it was over ...once I was stamped with that [prison] number."

Leaf introduced the TLM students, Henok



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Ryan Leaf

Rufael, 46, Tam Nguyen, 44, and Anthony Tafoya, 35.

The trio spoke about their development through TLM as Leaf asked them about the moments that defined their advancement in their rehabilitation.

Nguyen said he started his criminal career as a 14-year-old before living through two prison terms.

"I was immature, not seeing the opportunities," said Nguyen. "I was a product of foster care, lived in households suffering from domestic violence, and I chose homelessness after my crimes. While in the hole at Kern Valley State Prison, I thought I'd die in prison. Finally, I realized everything was my fault"

He continued, "The only tech in prison was the pay phones on the walls. I came to TLM and told myself I could do this, and the teaching assistants and students helped."

Tafoya said he discovered how his crime affected his community. "My sister didn't talk to me. I didn't know if I could fix that, but

TLM allows me to move forward."

Leaf spoke about denial, rejections, and the shame he felt from his addiction and fall-out.

"About his fan mail, Leaf said, "I'd tear it up and throw it all in the trash; even the letters from Peyton and Eli Manning and my former coach Kevin Gilbride," said Leaf. "There were people reaching out to me but I always refused. I was self-absorbed and didn't care about anyone or anything but myself."

"There were times when I couldn't look at myself in the mirror," said Leaf.

He said his "subtle changes" included, "Finding my self-awareness, a mind change that was necessary to go home."

He asked the panelists about the causes of changes in their lives.

Rufael said witnessing his grandmother crying [at county jail] helped him change.

Some of Leaf's transformation happened in solitary confinement. "Having a resentment is like drinking poison, the worst place I could be is by myself. I was in the hole 83 days, because they claimed it was for my safety," said Leaf.

He spoke of the benefits of his rehabilitation.

"When you make it about someone else, your life gets better. TLM feeds into the idea that you can be your own boss. I was the boss of me and that was huge, my own content. That was unbelievable.

"The strengths inside versus outside? Outside you never hear 'I'm [expletive] hurting. Can you help me? And my guys got me," said Leaf. "[Outside] you're going to get kicked in the face, so remember to ask for help."

Leaf then relocated to Chapel B to speak to the sports community.

"I'm not a millionaire, high draft pick, star athlete," exclaimed Leaf, "I'm the junkie who made it."

As a star at Washington State University, the then-21-year-old Leaf received the highest-paid contract for a draftee, a \$31 million deal from the San Diego Chargers. Endorsement deals with Nike, Cadillac and Rolex followed before he suffered an injury that he said made

him addicted to pain pills.

"I took pills from family members, and friends. As I became more desperate I went into the homes of strangers in my hometown to steal pills," said Leaf.

On March 30, 2012 Leaf was arrested. He faced a 55-year sentence.

During his arrest, he ingested pills he stashed before being cuffed and spent his 83 days in solitary confinement, before being sentenced.

Leaf said he could not understand why he received only seven years. He then asked the judge for the maximum of 55 years.

He said the Montana State Prison system offered no rehabilitative programs. "I laid on my bunk watching the 'Red Zone' channel and getting addicted to Dr. Pepper," said Leaf.

Leaf spoke of his cellmate, a former Vietnam veteran who killed someone in a drunk-driving accident. Together, they volunteered in the prison library, and Leaf agreed to help teach reading to a Native American.

His cellmate called Leaf valuable to the incarcerated community, which inspired Leaf, who dedicated himself to recovery, and became a teacher's assistant for substance abuse counselors.

Leaf refused parole on two occasions. Only as his cellmate threatened to refuse his parole, too, Leaf agreed to his release.

On December 3, 2014, Leaf left Montana State Prison.

"It changed my perspective completely, it's not about me anymore," Leaf told the crowd. "Giving back will help others no matter what has happened in your past."

"I'm on a mission from God now," said Leaf.

Leaf said he would celebrate his 14th year of sobriety on April 1, added that he would work to continue to advocate recovery to others.

"I'm a flawed human being just like you," said Leaf, "I feel more comfortable inside these walls."

—Martin Keith DeWitt  
Journalism Guild Writer  
contributed to this story



2024 Super Bowl watch party in Chapel B

Photo by PIO Lt. G. Berry

## Second annual Super Bowl watch party

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho  
Sports Editor

As the Philadelphia Eagles dominated the Kansas Chiefs in Super Bowl LIX, a battle of attrition took place in San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's Chapel B.

Although correctional officers did not participate in SQRC's second annual Super Bowl Party this year, the attendance doubled — but to the chagrin of the pure football enthusiast.

"I'd rather watch this in my building because of the distraction of the video games," said resident Chris Christopher Granman, 45. He referred to the integration of three interactive games on large-screen TVs located against the north wall of the hall.

Resident football fans said the noise and attention to games such as Madden took away from the featured annual classic.

"We missed a lot of classic commercials and pre-game analysis," he said. "I'm leaving at halftime or when count clears."

SQRC's Chaplain Father George Williams, who had prayed for a better turnout this year, had a more positive experience.

"Just seeing the enthusiasm and liveliness in a fanatical environment is always fun," said Williams. "This type of event would never have been conceived without the commitment to the transition to rehabilitation."

Warden Andes, wearing his traditional Pat Tillman #40 jersey, visited with the resident fans during the game.

"This is much better than last year," said Andes as he greeted the residents. "The energy is a lot better this year and I see how the vision is growing."

SQRC's usual festivities of gluttonous eating, analyzing each other's Super Bowl predictions, and the rankings of the commercials happened in the units, as the

units had more communication between staff and residents than in the chapel for the second consecutive year.

The rehabilitation center annually experienced its traditional onslaught of "trash talking" and celebration in the living areas during the game, but the energy in the units also subsided as the Chiefs and Patrick Mahomes experienced their worst game in the Andy Reid era.

The decision to separate meals between staff and residents continued to leave a "sour taste" in some residents who felt slighted about the proposed community event.

"The weather, the coldness, and wanting to stay warm also attributed to most of us staying in our units," said resident John Krueger.

Super Bowl party host and IAC Volunteer Coby Phillips, 51, tried to maintain the enthusiasm of change. "To see the smiles, the high-fives and trash talking, where residents actually feel back at home cannot go without notice. I spent years on Level IV and III and never thought this could happen — the change in the environment and the change in people like me."

Phillips added, "Just opening the chapel up for recreational use to us should be gratefully cherished. We at SQRC, the staff and residents, work hard to rehabilitate society inside and outside and just the increase in traffic year-over-year should be celebrated. Next year, weather permitting, we could be viewing the game from the terrace on Governor Newsom's new building. Now that would be awesome."

Resident Victor Olguin, 41, said, "Warden Andes pushed his vision forward as the event grew to 150 residents cheering and laughing at the commercials and watching Kendrick Lamar put on a historic half-time show." The game might have been better, but I was amazed to see the video competition, and I'll be ready next year."

## 'All-comers' tennis workshop and try-outs

By Charles van Vliet  
Journalism Guild Writer

The presence of tennis at San Quentin is credited to the doubles champions known as "The Twins," aka, the Brian brothers, of the United States Tennis Association.

Twenty years ago, Bob and Mike Brian — USC alums — who were rock stars during their climb up the professional circuit, lost a wager that required them to finance the resurfacing of the tennis court at San Quentin.

A year later, they initiated a Saturday morning inside-outside tennis event, which brought outside teams into the prison each week to compete in camaraderie with incarcerated tennis players. The competition has become a tradition that now concludes each session with an inside-outside cheer.

The tennis court is open to residents during Lower Yard hours and is on a first-come, first-served basis. It is reserved during Tuesday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings for competitive matches, while an 'all-comers' tennis workshop is held on Thursday mornings, nicknamed the "San Quentin Tennis Academy."

The academy is designed to offer training and tips by professionals to improve residents' game. The program is run by resident and team member Earl Wilson and outside tennis pro Charlie Cutler who has been involved for 15 years.

This year, the league competition recognized the need for additional teams due to the overwhelming popularity of the inside-outside tennis teams concept. SQRC's tennis league provides personal tennis rackets and storage for shoes so anyone can participate

in a team-style environment during practice sessions.

Try-outs were held and teams were selected under the watchful eye of resident Wilson.

Resident tennis players hope to organize a mixed doubles tournament that would include outside participation. The SQ tennis organization said it hopes the event can become an annual event.

Residents Earl, Doc, Chris, James, and Paris have committed to helping shape the San Quentin tennis structure and culture. They have guaranteed the ability to inform the incarcerated community about regular updates of the SQ tennis community.

The SQ tennis community's primary mission is to demystify tennis's image as an elitist sport, similar to what the iconic Williams sisters accomplished.



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Residents playing tennis with outside guests





Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

94-FEET hosted a recent basketball game in the gymnasium

# 94-FEET wants to go national

**By Anthony Manuel  
Carvalho  
Sports Editor**

The graduation of 94-FEET highlighted a program that has a dream to go national to every high school in the nation, throughout all colleges, and even to the National Basketball Association. It all started with a basketball and the need to grow.

Jeremiah "JB" Brown, 58, head coach of the San Quentin Warriors, created a 94 FEET workshop, an intensive self-help group that teaches anger management and conflict resolution to cultivate a positive environment.

94 FEET became a reality through the support of volunteer Bill Epling, who never wavered in his commitment to start 94 FEET.

Brown and Coach Ray Abasta, 51, fostered the idea of the program over the years as they witnessed how their younger players appeared more mature than the general population.

The coaches noticed that the players developed and used life skills in their game, but that many of them

did not have the opportunity to continue using their skills in their daily lives in San Quentin.

Brown, who said sports required discipline, teamwork, patience, determination, and accountability, discovered that his players did not attend rehabilitation groups because they felt they did not fit in with the participants.

"This challenge created an opportunity for the coaches to form a group for guys like us that addressed conflict-resolution and self-help in ways they can relate to in the sport they love," said Brown.

Brown partnered with resident Jarrod "Deuce" Williams, 41, and Abasta to create materials that allowed the incarcerated players an opportunity to learn more about life.

"I hope 94 FEET will allow residents the opportunity to grow, mature, and learn at their own pace within the confines of the program, all while building and maintaining healthy relationships," said Abasta.

"We want to create leaders and mentors who illustrate exemplary conduct inside of 94 FEET. We also want

everyone to come together to complete a common goal to work together, learn together, and, more importantly, rehabilitate on and off the court so we can all change the our narratives and win in life."

"It's been a long journey, but we finally have received recognition for our basketball team, which spends up to 40 hours a week participating in basketball and other sports," said Epling. "The participants grow through the enrichment of volunteers who model good citizenship, and they honor the legacy of San Quentin sports and what it means to CDCR. To leave the court and remain dedicated to recovery has always been our goal and 94 FEET accomplishes that."

94 FEET is not just a program for all the athletes but it also sponsors an intramural team that is loaded with SQ Warriors.

Although designed for ballers of every sport, Coach Brown said the interest in the 94 FEET curriculum would make the program available to all residents, even non-athletes.

At the graduation of the first cycle, San Quentin's

ForwardThis filmed a meeting of the group that included the passing — or bounce passing — of a basketball to the next person contributing in the circle of recovery.

"What did the Super Bowl represent?" asked Coach Ray Abasta, who said the event reminded him "that on Super Bowl Sunday, there are more domestic violence arrests than any other day in America."

Abasta said the group proved insight as each member discussed anger and the triggers that led to anger. They also spoke about confidential topics that people do not address in all aspects of society.

"94 FEET will work on the outside, especially in the inner cities, where men do not possess support groups for one another," said Abasta.

### Team 94 FEET:

Elmer David Rodriguez, Keyshawn "Steez" Strickland, Velteese "Teese" Matthis, Donnell "JD" Pimpton, Navian "Smooove" Starks, Delvon "Relly" Adams, and Jorge Lopez contribute to 94 FEET's intramural team and program.

# Oakland's professional teams depart

## A's and Raiders move to Las Vegas

**By Tyrone Luqman Jones  
Journalism Guild Writer**

As the 2025 Major League Baseball season kicks off with ceremonial first pitches in stadiums across America, one will remain eerily silent.

Oakland, California — a city that lost the Oakland Raiders to Las Vegas and Golden State Warriors to San Francisco in recent years — lost its final professional sports franchise when the Oakland Athletics signed a deal to relocate to Las Vegas, according *ABC News Bay Area (KGO)*.

The economic impact of this departure will be felt in various ways. From stadium jobs and commercial and housing development to name changes on little league uniforms; that money will now flow in the new home town of the departed team.

"It's going to be a shot in the arm for [our] economy, in terms of a negative shot," said Alameda County Board of Supervisors President Nate Miley. "Definitely a hit to the economy, there are jobs at the coliseum, union jobs, [and] people depend on those jobs. If we built a new stadium, those would be construction jobs as well."

According to *Sportico*, the Golden State Warriors are the most valuable team in the NBA, with an estimated worth of \$9.14 billion. The Las Vegas Raiders are now the sixth most valuable sports franchise on the planet.

For some, civic pride and the emotional impact of the departure of Oakland's professional sports teams are not as quantifiable as the economic impact.

San Quentin resident Reginald Thorpe, 48, traces his Oakland roots back three generations. When he started his prison term over 25 years ago, all three sports teams made their home in Oakland. He remembers the teams as part of the tapestry of his childhood.

"As a young boy, one of my fondest memories was of watching Oakland A's legend Dennis Eckersley jogging

around the stadium perimeter before home games, or Ricky Henderson signing baseballs for me," Thorpe said.

He added that it saddens him that he can no longer afford to live in Oakland, but he intends to immerse himself in community service with the hopes of combatting the crime-related stigma he feels is attached to Oakland.

Ron Matthews, Alameda County's Little League president, says the A's have been great supporters of little league teams in Oakland and Alameda for the past eight years, providing uniforms to 24 teams every season at the cost of \$8,000.

"They've been a great partner to us. It's a terrible thing to happen to kids... [and] adults," Matthews spoke about the loss of professional sports teams. "It will affect our bottom line."

San Quentin resident Kenneth Gattison said his great-grandparents moved to Oakland in the early 1940s. He said that being a Raiders, Warriors, and A's fan has been a part of his identity since he was born.

"I was born into my fandom," Gattison shared. "My mom dressed me in an Oakland Raiders onesy the day she left the hospital with me when I was an infant."

Gattison, an aspiring filmmaker, added that his ultimate goal upon his release is to make a "Boyz N' Da Hood" style movie about Oakland's spirit and culture, aiming to reclaim some of the pride he feels was lost when the teams moved away.

"I'm not mad at the teams because they left, I'm mad at the city government and their failures," said Gattison. "No matter what, I'm still a Raider until I die."

The tourism bureau Visit Oakland said in a press release, "While the A's decision to move is disappointing, this will not break our Oakland spirit. Our strong resilient community will continue to proudly celebrate all the amazing things about the Town. This is what makes Oakland so incredibly special."

# The rehabilitative value of sports

**By Lawrence Randall  
Journalism Guild Writer**

Sports programs at San Quentin have lasted for more than 120 years and they have played a key part not only in rehabilitation, but also in the renewal of mental stability of the incarcerated community.

"After the death of a female friend, I became a drug addict at age 14," said Jorge Lopez, 36, a point guard for the San Quentin Warriors. "Playing basketball truly helps my mental health, it keeps me engaged and helps with my sobriety."

Lopez said he had sought validation and acceptance while in seventh grade. He had tried to take his life and had ended up in a psychological-evaluation ward. Afterward, he started playing basketball, which helped him get through that stage. "Basketball saved my life," Lopez said.

According to Lopez, the comprehensive sports programs at San Quentin have the potential to bring out the best in the residents, reacquainting them with the

*"Playing sports at San Quentin has given me a sense of normalcy, the power of sports has been very positive for my mental health"*

sports they had played in their youth, and in doing so, giving residents a chance to reconnect to their athletic process, as if they had never passed up the opportunities of their youth.

"Being in prison, where it can be very violent, being able to meet new people and see how playing sports is changing their lives, is the reason why it's important to have sports in prison," said Resident Malik Cutrer, 29, a defensive back for the San Quentin Niners.

Cutrer praised San Quentin administration for noting the rehabilitation value of sports and for having made the correct decision to offer many programs, from the novice level to the expert level.

"Loving the game and

learning more about the sport," said Cutrer, would "let me take that coaching home, and teach my sons, and other youth so they don't ever have to see the inside of a prison."

Jose Maya, 25, a wide receiver for the San Quentin Niners, said he relied on the influence of positive programming and its effect on his rehabilitation.

"Playing sports at San Quentin has given me a sense of normalcy, the power of sports has been very positive for my mental health," Maya said.

The rehabilitative value of San Quentin sports programs have also influenced the recreational staff.

Kuntal Bhatt, the Physical Education Teacher at SQRC, also known as Coach Bhatt, has served as P.E.T. at San Quentin for seven years. Bhatt, a former public school teacher, used to work as a vocational computer technology instructor.

"To help these men figure out their place in life is key," said Bhatt. "It has taught me patience and to learn how to

react to every situation. This job has affected my mental health positively and has even helped me in my personal life as well."

Bhatt said that whenever he has gone on vacation, he has communicated with sponsors about keeping this sports program going forward. He said the impact of sports has taught him about the importance of not leaving anyone behind while caring about the betterment of fellow humans, despite their past.

Donell Pimton, 30, a player for the San Quentin Warriors, said he fell in love with basketball at the age of nine. Pimton said that upon arriving at San Quentin, joining the San Quentin Warriors seemed a "no-brainer."

"Seeing the family-type of vibe at the facility, and having a feeling of that sense of love, honestly I was all in," Pimton said. "Basketball has taught me to never give up, to always trust the process. It gives me the mental tools to succeed when I return to society."



Oakland Raiders at the Coliseum



Oakland A's at the Coliseum

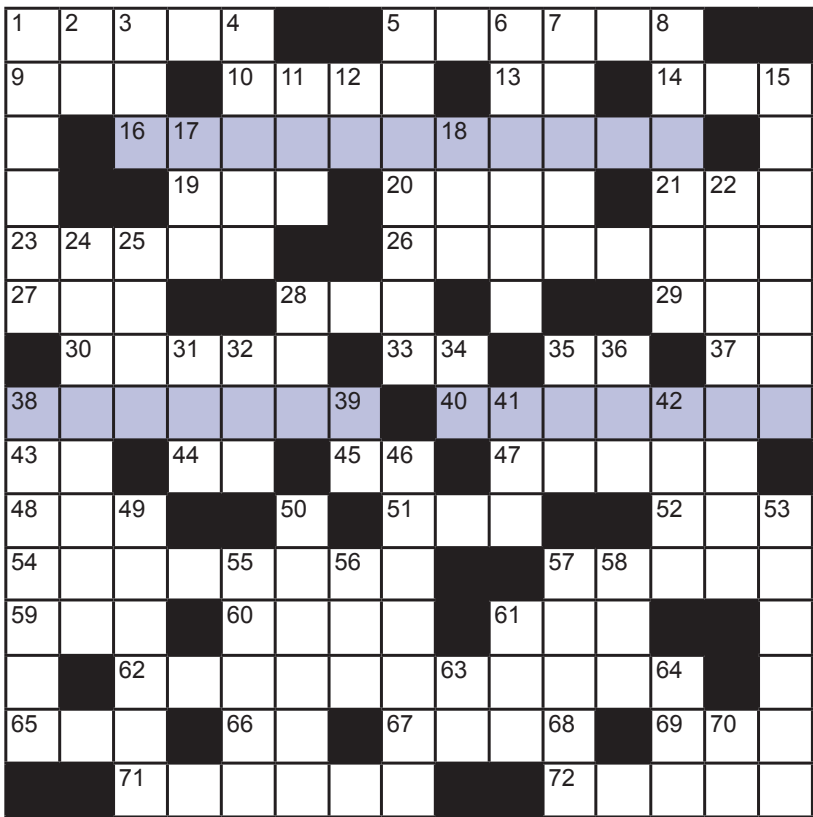
Wikipedia

GAMES

# CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Michael Fangman

“Shuffle on Over”  
 Edited by Jan Perry



Across

1. Sign labeling nearly 1/2 of all doors
5. Iron and copper workers (e.g.)
9. This admin. is a govt. over "sea" er
10. They often arrive after an accident
13. A community in recovery
14. One Quaker favorite
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Day  
(A song by 72-across)
19. Have a look
20. Homer's cry of frustration
21. This wagon took it on the run baby
23. They inspired the Greeks, but were sometimes thrown on college radio
26. Can be used on your horse's feathers
27. Your French love
28. Madness, Bowling for Soup (e.g.)
29. Sound of an upset tot
30. If you're on it, you might need rescuing
33. Some famous, silly knights say this
35. "Not you"
37. US st. and a Native Algonquin lang.
38. If stone masons had made an 80's dance movie filled with poppin' lockin' and spinnin' ?
40. Many a trip has been taken to watch this rock musical that follows a rock star named Pink.
43. These guys really know Watts (abb.)
44. Their slogan is: "It's in the game."
45. This company likes their Bud (abb.)
47. When I mixed the pancake batter grandma said, "You're such \_\_\_\_\_" (2 words)
48. He ate cats long before J.D. Vance
51. Comic book company responsible for GI Joe, Transformers and 30 Days of Night
52. Most common month for proposals
54. Christian rock band
57. The name of this TX town falls flat
59. If you spray yours on, you might end up looking orange
60. \_\_\_\_\_ Hosp. (M\*A\*S\*H unit)
61. A Hawaiian greeting that can be uplifting for some
62. Though this group's name dubs them "fashionable," this famous band has no drummer
65. The night before
66. A frequency (abbrev.) that also ends some Spanish verbs
67. Biblical city associated with Esau
69. Dutch insurance company that makes a pastime out of many a verb
71. \_\_\_\_\_ Peace (2-words)
72. With 53-down, this band, fronted by the voice of Jack Skellington, invited you to a party, asking that you "leave your body at the door..."

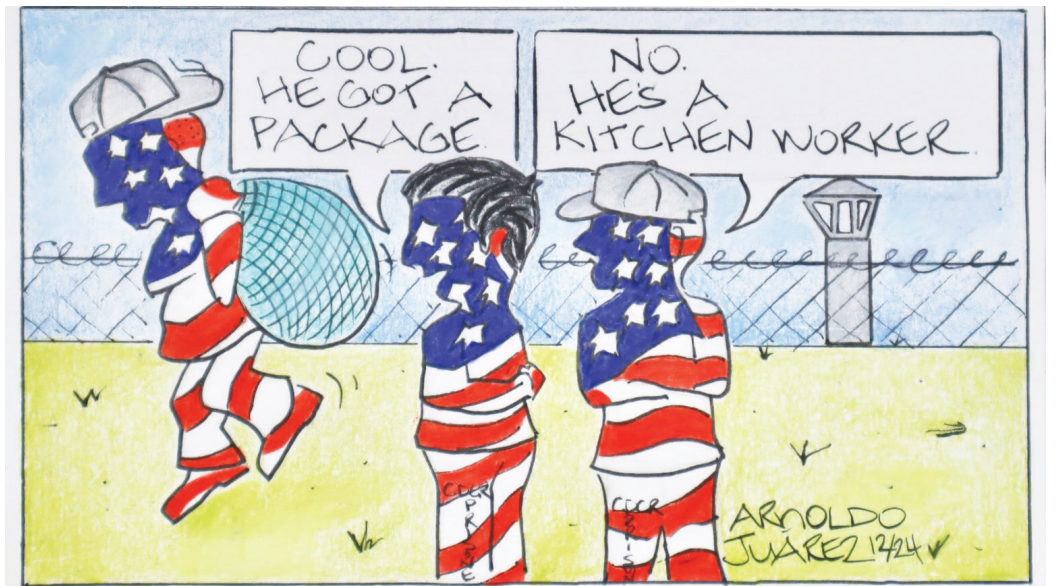
Down

1. A mystery wrapped in a riddle
2. Where the compass pts.
3. First half of a world wonder
4. If you are hearing these flowers, they're likely made of stone
5. He sees you when you're sleeping
6. "Utter words in a slow even voice"
7. It's bigger than a Trailblazer
8. More than just sadness
11. Common small business addr.
12. Derisive laugh
15. This blue follows yellow
17. Utilize
18. Native American inspired BSA org.
22. Effectively, an e-tablet stylus
24. Your mother told you to shake this off before you come back inside
25. Tells you where you can find Apples
28. This mask can also get you a lift
31. This Vanilla sampled both David Bowie and Queen at the same time
32. This "guy" has no nicknames, at least according to his "record"
34. Despite its title, this Stephen King novel is not about a clownish Cisco networking employee
35. The exclamation of the unimpressed
36. "Not me," said the ram to his mate
38. Boys who made your mom jealous (R.I.P. DJ Adam Goldstein)
39. This chemical symbol tastes salty
41. Hee \_\_\_\_ (Famous 1970's TV show)
42. \_\_\_\_\_ Romeo
46. The Dead Milkmen used this type of Camaro to run over their neighbor. "It was in all the papers."
49. This left-most shortcut on your Mac can help you if you're lost
50. To bring the outside in
53. See 72-across
55. That collection of slant-brimmed German hats your grandpa owned
56. We'll lend you the money to buy it, but only if your pts. are high enough. Likely 700 or higher.
57. A giveaway item
58. A young man OR "Only a \_\_\_\_" (Song made popular by 72-across)
61. This bank from Montreal, Canada is new to US consumers. (Hint: Its spokesperson doesn't like gnomes, except for that one. He "likes that one a lot.")
63. The main character in this eponymous 1990's TV show owned a bowling alley from which he practiced law.
64. It's the thing in Germany
70. Popular Vietnamese name that you can't go running or fishing without

## San Quen-Toons By Jesse Milo

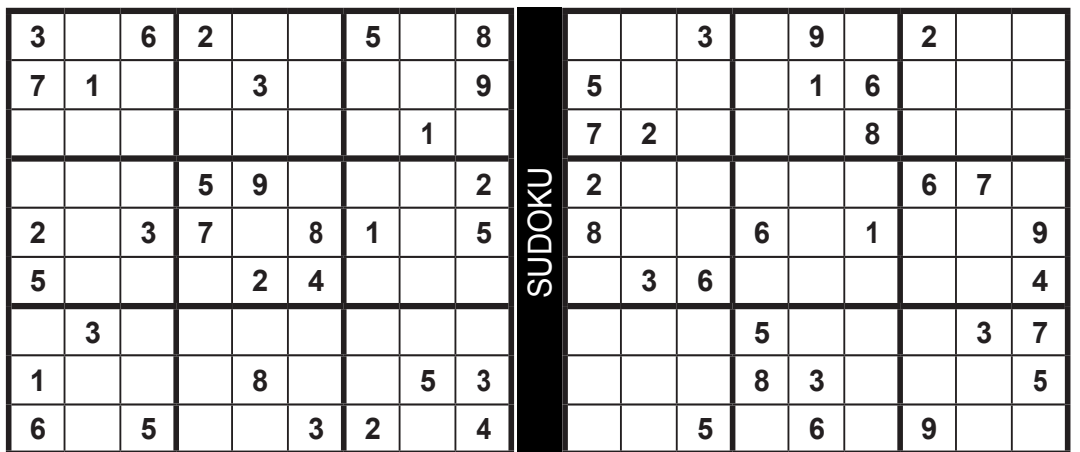


## Cartoon man from Soledad

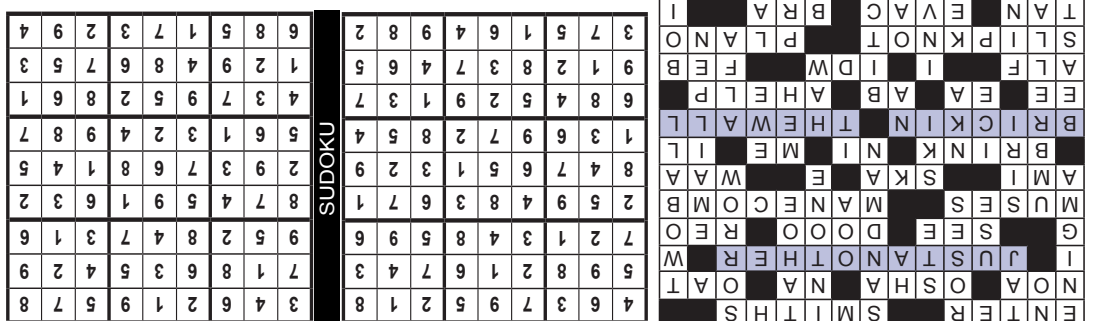


Artwork submitted by Arnoldo Juarez from Soledad

## SUDOKU



## SOLUTIONS



## PROFILE

# Vice Principal Dr. Worthington talks to SQNews



Dr. Worthington

By Edwin E. Chavez,  
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

**SQNews:** Besides being Vice Principal at Burton, what other positions have you held?

**J.W.:** Professor at online and on-ground higher Ed schools, (AA/AS, BA/BS, MA/MS courses), curriculum coordinator in District Office, elementary school principal, high school VP, teacher, investment banking, U.S. Navy

**SQNews:** What were your expectations about prison before you started inside? Were you nervous?

**J.W.:** I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't nervous due to the environment; I was a little nervous to be in a new job.

**SQNews:** Have your perceptions toward incarcerated students changed since you have been working at SQ?

**J.W.:** Yes, SQ students are the most motivated, knowledge-hungry, appreciative, and grateful students as a group that I've ever worked with. I had no idea this would be the case.

**SQNews:** What do you think is missing to make education more exciting and useful for incarcerated students?

**J.W.:** One thing that would make education more exciting, authentic, and accessible would be the ability to learn through projects. In the incarcerated setting, students are limited by the types of projects they can complete due to various restrictions. Those limitations are something we work around. Anything our teachers can create that leans toward multiple



Dr. Worthington, office assistant Ms. Henderson, and test administrator Mr. Long

intelligences and provides multiple access points to the content is helpful to our students' learning.

**SQNews:** As the Vice Principal, what expectations do you have from your students and coworkers?

**J.W.:** It's important to frame our work together as healthy, holistic, and humanistic. From that foundation, if we all work hard, support each other, extend grace to others as needed, we'll all succeed academically and professionally.

**SQNews:** Have you ever faced any unexpected hurdles with your adult students?

**J.W.:** No, but I've experienced unexpected hurdles within the system. Within CDCR, the constraints are many and with good reason. So, the challenge is to find a way to overcome obstacles within the confines of our system. It's kind of like a riddle that must be solved.

**SQNews:** In your opinion, do you think that the California Model has become a distraction or a benefit toward advancing social justice?

**J.W.:** I don't know that the California Model has been in place long enough to make that assessment. If our implementation goes as planned, the model will certainly advance social justice for everyone including residents, custody, staff. From my perspective, it appears that the California model is being taken seriously and so has every chance for success.

**SQNews:** For how long have you been working as an educator? When did you start working for CDCR and/or at SQ?

**J.W.:** About 25 yrs [as an educator]. Started working for CDCR in August 2019.

**SQNews:** Why it is important for you to work as an educator behind prison walls?

**J.W.:** I love learning. There's a lot to learn here from many different perspectives, and I appreciate that. SQRC is a microcosm of life outside prison; it's just that the room for error is much smaller here.

**SQNews:** What have been the biggest challenges you have faced in order to make sure that the students benefits from their education?

**J.W.:** Instructional time lost due to forces beyond our control. Students can learn everything they need to on their own, but in a classroom with a great teacher and supportive peers, they can learn the basics and so much more about life, relations, connections, and how to apply what they learn in school to real life.

**SQNews:** How does your Education department deal with the monolingual Spanish-speaking community and other minorities in terms of making sure that they, too, get the same opportunities that English speakers have?

**J.W.:** We follow the department's guidelines for all those with limited-English proficiency, and that is to immerse students in the English language. We can now access translation apps through the tablets and often other students/staff are multilingual and can help with assignments or translations.

Our goal in education is providing access to the content through multiple avenues, such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, artistic, music, etc. For our deaf students, we provide both certified ASL interpreters in-person and via remote services and for less official interactions, ADA peer support has been immensely helpful.



Photo by Vincent E. O'Bannon // SQNews

Dr. Worthington and Principal Wheelless

**SQNews:** What advice will you give to other educators throughout CDCR who don't have the same resource or approach toward teaching these minorities?

**J.W.:** All credentialed educators and education administrators are trained in how to educate minority groups. Best practices include collaborating with each other across schools and to share what works at different sites. We often work across school sites to enhance our efforts at our own site. I have many professional networks across the state, and especially in the northern region.

**SQNews:** Can you tell us what has been the happiest or proud moment in your career?

**J.W.:** Student successes are my happiest moments, and those often take a while to become known ... In prison, some of my happiest moments as a VP have been when I feel like I'm just doing my job in responding to an inquiry or a request, and sometimes students become overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude when I hear and see them, whether or not I'm able to honor their request. I do my best by doing right by our students, and it gets noticed.

**SQNews:** What have been the saddest moments of your career?

**J.W.:** I think the saddest moments in education are when miscommunication or misunderstandings occur between people working together because this can lead to missed opportunities.

**SQNews:** What do you think of social justice?

**J.W.:** I think social justice is necessary and am looking forward to the social justice reforms that are in progress, currently.

## Former NFL'er seeks clemency and pardons for incarcerated

By Eric Allen  
Staff Writer

Former NFL pro-bowler of the Seattle Seahawks finds purpose after hanging up his cleats and shouldered pads after a successful football career.

When Doug Baldwin Jr. retired from pro football, he felt himself at loose ends.

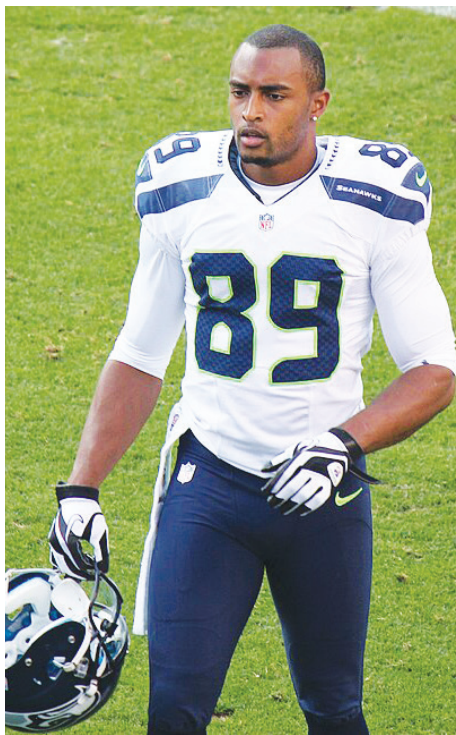
"I felt lost in the world, I didn't know where I stood" said Baldwin.

Baldwin went from catching passes in the Super Bowl to assisting incarcerated people in finding freedom through clemency and pardons in Washington State. After retiring in 2019, Baldwin was confronted with the struggles of life after football. For example, learning to cope with having a wife and family and three daughters with no instant gratification from the game he loved was a reality check.

In 2022 he became one of the five members appointed to Governor Jay Inslee's clemency and pardon board in the state of Washington. Alongside him, the other members consisted of a reporter of the court, an educational dean, a lawyer, and a former department licensing director. (The Washington State board is similar to the California Parole Board).

"I felt compelled to join it," said Baldwin. Baldwin, the son of a peace officer, utilizes his platform to highlight political issues that are important to him. His work on the board has provided him with the chance to tackle his passion for systemic justice reform and find purpose after a long and eventful football career.

The duties as board members are not only to attend quarterly hearing with the purpose of determining which cases are deemed more worthy of changing sentences, but also to listen in on hours of intensive testimony via



Wikipedia

Doug Baldwin

video conference.

While not all petitions have to be deemed extraordinary to be granted, according to GQ (spell out fully) Sports, the governor tends to concur with a recommendation when one is forwarded to his office.

"I look at people who come before our board and they're just like me," said Baldwin. "They are just human beings who are flawed."

And even before being appointed on the

board, Baldwin was already the face of civic-minded works. As a player, he declared that his teammates would lock arms in unity during the National Anthem as a way of advocating for better training for law enforcement officers, emphasizing de-escalation tactics when facing situations on the street.

Baldwin started playing football at six years old. During his professional career, he was known as "Angry Doug Baldwin" in the NFL. Football became his safety net, throughout all life challenges, he said. Faced with life after retirement, he is finding new skills.

Baldwin's first experiences serving on the board involved capital murder cases. Baldwin struggled getting through those hearings. Meanwhile, he prides himself on bringing a different perspective to the table, one valuing compassion, spiritual beliefs, mercy, and forgiveness. This approach brings a diversity of life experience to the makeup of the board.

Baldwin recalled hearing a case involving an aggravated rape. He said he does not enter these hearing with his mind made up. He said his intent is to go in being fair and compassionate, while also expecting the petitioners to be forthcoming when questions are asked, and to display remorse.

"We have to stay grounded in his philosophy and in our perspective of who we are. We are not the same individual we were when we were first locked up," said San Quentin resident Robert Moody, who has never met Baldwin, but admires his approach. "With more people like Doug, the better chances we have on getting out of prison with a second chance."

Baldwin spoke at length on his experiences reviewing cases of people from underprivileged communities. Lacking a good support system plays an integral role on someone's life, he said. This is why for

Baldwin, when it comes to the criminal justice system, he finds it difficult to see justice in a system that has so many systemic errors. "Justice doesn't follow through," he said.

Preparing for a hearing consists of going through stacks of paperwork. It can be extremely challenging to read every page, so Baldwin recognizes what other members are looking for; then he reportedly seeks the avenue overlooked by other board members.

During a hearing, Baldwin voted to grant clemency to a person convicted of a 34-year-old murder. He based his decision on the convicted person's ability to show remorse and his dedication to rehabilitation. He said he did not want to be judgmental and unforgiving. Baldwin felt withholding mercy went against his faith that all of us can be reached.

"None of us are a lost cause, we're all redeemable," said Baldwin.

He said he had to understand forgiveness before going into one of these hearings. He must check himself at the door mentally and emotionally, presenting the best version of himself in the hearings.

He said he had to keep in mind that this decision would affect the not just the petitioner. It would impact their community, observers in the room, future petitioners, and other board members to come.

Baldwin added that the altruistic purpose of the justice system is to incarcerate people who have hurtful mistakes in the real world and rehabilitate them so they can then return to the real world in a healthy and productive manner.

San Quentin resident Moody agreed. "If kids can evolve from ages 10-13, imagine how someone can evolve in 20-25 years when getting an education, vocational training and self-help groups in prison," Moody said.

ART



Picture of Cooper's girlfriend, Frankenstein mug shot, and locker art



## Resident's art makes connections

By Terrell J. Marshall  
Journalism Guild Writer

Meikel Cooper quickly assimilated into the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's culture of recovery by bridging the gap through artwork and communication.

Cooper stated that art has helped make connections with residents, free staff educators, prison officials, and correctional officers by attending self-help groups.

He said that art has the power to magnify shared values, beliefs, and experiences.

"Art can create a connection between people by opening up a dialogue and communication is the key to building relationships," Cooper said. "People talking to each other about art inspires me to keep creating."

Cooper revealed that his work can be seen throughout the Q. He painted a mural titled "Welcome to San Quentin" that is displayed on officers' desk in the education building.

His work is also displayed as "career milestones" on a correctional sergeant's locker, and a Frankenstein mug shot painted on the wall of South Blocks Earned Living Unit.

He facilitated various self-help groups on his rehabilitation journey that include Awareness into Domestic Abuse and Criminal, Gang Members Anonymous, amongst others.

He said in addition to attending groups and exercising, painting keeps him grounded and is the foundation of his improving mental health.

"Art is my sanity, my salvation, it keeps me stable in a sometimes unstable environment," Cooper said.

He explained that his passion for art dates back to his childhood, stating that he became mesmerized by prison art that was sent to his house.

Cooper spent years trying to mimic the intricate letter styles

and designs he received and art became his obsession. Then at age 14, he cut his teeth into the art world doing graffiti on the streets of Southern California.

"For years, graffiti was a negative addiction I chased every day," he stated. "Now my artwork is a positive reflection of my lived experiences and how far I've come in my rehabilitation and recovery."

Cooper's innovative work uses bold solid lines, mixing old-school methods with urban styles and techniques. His fresh color choices and familiar themes are his creative way to pay tribute to traditional art that connect with all cultures.

He explained, for decades, society looked down on all graffiti but now it has become a mainstream art form that is sought after and celebrated. "Doing graffiti is what helped me to create a unique and distinctive style," he said.

Instead of spray paint, he now uses acrylic paint on murals and larger pieces. He also uses graphite or color

pencils to draw portraits.

"Family's bonding because my art is very rewarding," said Cooper. His purpose is to create art that connects with people on a personal level.

Cooper explained that for the first time in 18 years of incarceration, he felt the change between the violent hardened prison culture of the past and the positive rehabilitation values adopted at The Q.

"I feel lucky to be a part of what is happening at San Quentin," said Cooper. "I want my art to reflect my rehabilitation journey and this is a place where I can excel at both to achieve my goals."

Having received so much positive feedback from his new community and admirers, Cooper now has aspirations to pursue an art career.

"Art is a lifelong passion that is helping me build relationships and create opportunities for my future endeavors," Cooper said. "Whether I open a studio, paint murals, or portraits, I am committed to pursue my craft and see where art takes me."



Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

## Art portrays enhanced version of lived experiences

By Edwin E. Chavez  
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

Adam Thomas, an incarcerated artist, embraced his roots and his appreciation of many styles of art and through multimedia pieces.

"Art is so important [a] cause, I can create something that is not there," said Thomas. "I can turn my feelings into something that I can see and put myself into a story I don't have direct experience with."

According to the artist, each drawing has a story, and his works showed his life narrative. Each piece depicted an enhanced version of his life.

His painting of the infamous Don Corleone from "The Godfather," showed a well-known character from the late 20th century. Thomas, a third generation Sicilian-American, remembered growing up in a culture in which the character and movie represented his people in American popular culture. Although it highlighted negative aspects of immigrant families in the early 1900s, Thomas, half Sicilian on his maternal side, admired the film's scenes of his family's homeland of Corleone, Sicily, and its vision of Sicilian families prospering through hardships.

True artists would find ways to enhance their skills. In the midst of discouragement and depression, Thomas hit a

breaking point and considered throwing in the towel, but he persevered. His painting of Master Yoda, a wrinkled, disproportioned, sci-fi creature, gracefully delivered wisdom.

Master Yoda represented an ode to the many artists who made a living from their art, a challenging and straining occupation. In his quest for perfection, Thomas' murals ended up displayed on the walls of Donner Section.

He painted a mural of a tiger perched in a dense patch of bamboo, a tribute to the traditional Japanese style of art, which Thomas considered a favorite. He also designed a tattoo of a Japanese dragon resting on his shoulder.

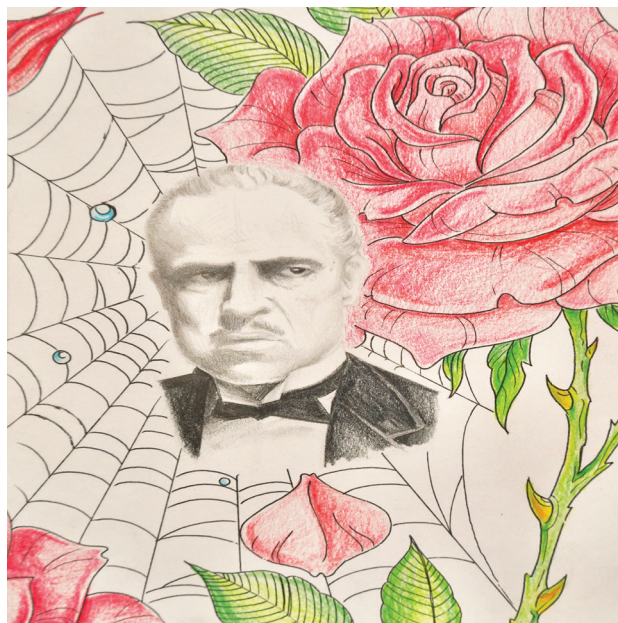
Thomas also painted the legendary Spider Man, kick flipping in the clouds while riding a Santa Cruz skateboard. A 3-D depiction of the superhero's skateboard showed the artist's reminiscences of the days in which he skateboarded on the urban streets of his home city of Sacramento.

Thomas took approximately 10 hours to complete each of the murals. The work gave the artist entirely new experiences.

"I create my art with a few things in mind, nostalgia of better times, determination and sense of freedom that I could never fully lose with the power that I have being an artist."



Master Yoda, Don Corleone and on the wall in Donor housing section, the legendary Spider Man kick flips, and a tiger



Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

