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POPULATION 2,499

Families shoulder billions in cost for incarcerated loved ones

By **Bostyon Johnson**
Managing Editor

A report published by FWD, a criminal justice advocacy group in Atlanta, Ga., noted that families shoulder an estimated \$350 billion a year as a result of a loved ones' incarceration.

The estimate includes both direct expenses and long-term losses in household income, said researchers at Duke University and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, who collaborated with FWD.

"I work an average of about 120 hours per month at \$0.45 inmate cents an hour. I make around \$50 inmate dollars, subtracting 50% for strong-armed restitution," said resident Dante Knight. "My inmate dollar amounts to either just enough food to eat for five to seven days or hygiene."

Knight said taking care of himself in prison is difficult when he has to choose between beans and rice or toothpaste. So, in addition to prison canteen, he receives food, hygiene products, and money from his friends and family.

Family members spend an average of \$4,200 annually per incarcerated relative so they can purchase food, hygiene items, and clothing from prison canteens; this is because low wages for people in both state and federal prisons leave families to fill the financial gap. Some of those items are marked 600% above retail prices, said the report.

Knight said the cost of items at

the prison's canteen makes it hard to afford necessities and still have money to purchase food items.

"Adequate toothpaste costs just over \$5, floss picks at \$1.30, deodorant is shy of \$5, laundry detergent at \$2, and all-in-one soap costs over \$7. That eats up over three-quarters of my inmate dollars," said Knight. "On top of that there is a limit on food items I can purchase due to my dietary restrictions, which leaves me with little options."

Knight said he relies mostly on packages from his friends and family, purchased through a prison-approved vendor.

"Packages come in handy," said Knight. "We, the inmate population, should be allowed to widen our selection to more commercial corporations that have the ability to provide goods at inmate-friendly prices."

The California Code of Regulations, Title 15 provides that people incarcerated in California prisons can receive a package four times a year (once each quarter) from a prison-approved vendor.

Resident Jose Meza said that his family would like to see him earn some sort of living wage so that he can take care of himself. Meza said he receives a quarterly package and also relies on his family to place money on his books.

"If they pay us a minimum wage, it would take a big weight off my family's shoulder," Meza said. "The money I make in prison is not enough to do much with so my family spends around \$800 a

See **COST** on pg 4



Person posing as someone struggling with mental health

Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Self-inflicted deaths in prison increased 70% over 20 years

Suicide rate linked to childhood trauma and social stressors

By **Terrell J. Marshall**
Staff Writer

Every 11 minutes a person commits suicide in the United States, some while in prison.

According to reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, self-inflicted deaths in state prisons increased more than 70% from 2000 to 2024.

"Suicide is unlike other causes of death. It's incredibly complex," said John R. Blosnich of the USC Susanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. Each suicide inside prison is a

devastating tragedy that takes a toll on family and friends of those who die. Self-inflicted deaths significantly affect other incarcerated individuals and prison employees.

CDCR reports that the average suicide rate in California's prisons over the last 20 years was 21 per 100,000 individuals. In the general population nationwide, the figure is 15 per 100,000.

"Each suicide within CDCR is one too many and must be carefully examined for lessons and insights on how to prevent similar tragedies in the future," said CDCR's Annual Suicide Report.

The Light Keepers of San Quentin is a peer support team of incarcerated individuals trained in suicide prevention. They host discussions every Tuesday on how to support residents going through mental health crises. San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's Senior Psychologist Dr. E. Anderson, Family Nurse Practitioner Carrie Krupitsky, and Grief Counselor Peter "Ned" Buskirk lead the conversations.

In November 2025, Professor Blosnich participated in a Light Keepers discussion on strategies in suicide prevention. He said that

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Longtime volunteers left lasting impression across nation

By **Terrell J. Marshall**
Staff Writer

Admired members of San Quentin's expanded community, Willis and Linda Rice said goodbye after 25 years of fellowship and service.

"We've been to a lot of prisons all over America," said Mr. Rice. "But San Quentin will always be our home joint."

Married 58 years, Mr. and Mrs. Rice have brought music, fellowship, and humility into almost every state prison across the country. For the last



SQNews archive

Willis and Linda Rice

25 years, their charitable efforts have become program staples for the SQRC community.

"The memories that we carry from here will always be in our heart," Mrs. Rice said.

Sunbeams illuminated SQ's Chapel A and more than 100 parishioners, some with tears in their eyes, as Mr. and Mrs. Rice said goodbye at their last

Sunday Mass. They moved out of the state at the end of 2025.

Mr. Rice is a retired Air Force fighter pilot of 22 years. He said that one day his wife, a classically trained musician, approached him with a premonition, "I feel a calling to go on the road and praise the Lord with my harp," she told

See **RICE** on pg 4

2025 BPH denials cost \$1 billion to taxpayers

By **C. K. Gerhartsreiter**
Staff Writer

In 2025, a momentous event happened Oct. 7 — a Tuesday — at a parole hearing at Kern Valley State Prison. Commissioners of the Board of Parole Hearings decided to hand a 15-year denial to an incarcerated person, one of three denials of such length in 2025. The hearing participants might not have realized the significance of the denial, but the extra years had put the state over the one billion dollar mark in the implicit cost of parole denials for 2025.

The analysis that quantified the dollar cost exacted on public finances by the BPH worked like this: Parole denials would require a person with a life sentence to remain incarcerated for a set

number of years until that person could again seek release. This additional time would cost an average of \$133,000 per person per year — or \$1,995,000 for 15 years. Cumulatively, denials amounted to 999,229,000 until that denial from Oct. 7, which shoved the cost beyond the billion-dollar-threshold to the 10-digit number of 1,001,224,000. For all of 2025, denials computed to a cost of over \$1.3 billion.

This analysis focused on implicit cost of denials so to relate them to taxpayers as something more comprehensible than the abstraction of anonymous prison time. It meant to point out that parole denials carried an indirect price tag. The analysis did not consider present value or the time

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PAROLE SYSTEM

How a parole decision is made revealed in PPI study

— STORY ON PAGE 5



HOLIDAY REFLECTION

Residents emotional fortitude stretched during holiday season

— STORY ON PAGE 8

PRISON CLOSURE

CRC prison in Norco closes to save billions

— STORY ON PAGE 10



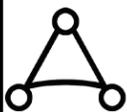
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PROFILE

Discipline and exercise allow for mind and body to work together

Resident shares how exercise helped his rehabilitation

By Jason L. Jackson
Staff Writer

Tyree Huntley has used discipline and exercise to transform his body, his mind, and the way he approaches life.

To most objective observers, Huntley is built like a tank. His physique is a product of years of pushups, pull-ups, and rigorous exercise routines. Growing up in Richmond, Calif., Huntley said he was accustomed to being physically active.

"I grew up playing football. I played quarterback and linebacker. I was always in shape because I stayed in the gym."

Huntley previously viewed exercise primarily as a physical effort, but after developing methods to help him cope with years of incarceration he has since learned to use it as a tool for maintaining his mental health.

Huntley has been incarcerated for nine years. He said a lot of these years have been plagued with bouts of depression, anxiety, and anger at himself for being involved in the criminal lifestyle that brought him to prison.

"I take full responsibility for being in prison, and that is where a lot of my anger comes from. I'm angry at myself because I knew better," he said.

Huntley's depression emerged early in his incarceration as the reality of being away from his children and family set in. The conditions he's experienced in prison have not been favorable either.

"It was hard having to deal with a situation where I have no control over my life, and where cops who rarely see inmates as human get to tell me when to sleep, eat and shower," he said.

The stress caused Huntley to eat away his feelings until he gained 40 unwanted pounds. He said that, "Gaining weight and getting out of shape is what caused me to start back working out."

Huntley noticed two things as he began to catch stride and build consistency with his exercise regimen: One, he shed the extra pounds like old skin; and two, his mood gradually improved. He said the more he worked out, the more confidence he developed and the better he felt about his ability to transform his life.

"I realize that exercise keeps me sane because I can release my stress and zone out and just focus on building myself," he said, admitting that he would be unbalanced and unable to function properly if he couldn't exercise.

Huntley has applied the discipline it takes to workout consistently to other areas of his life. Since arriving at San Quentin, he has earned his GED, started pursuing his associate's degree, and joined the plumbing program.

"Being in prison gave me time to myself so I could collect myself and focus on my education and being a better person," Huntley said.

Huntley has shown that exercise can be about so much more than building the largest chest and biceps. He believes



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Resident Tyree Huntley

mind and body work as a team, and that exercise, proper diet, and discipline can help to shape both.

Upon his release in 2027, Huntley plans to reconnect with his wife and kids while working to become a fitness trainer. His goal is to train busy dads whose hectic schedules leave little time to focus on themselves.

When asked to give some advice to men struggling with exercise and motivation, Huntley said, "Don't give up on yourself. Get focused on bettering your life and remember to love yourself enough to get in a better position."

Exceptional conduct leads to sentence recall

Resident starts gun violence prevention program



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Jemain Hunter co-founder Arms Down

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Editor in Chief

Jemain Hunter, 48, paroled in December. He is a co-founder of Arms Down, a self-help, gun-violence prevention program at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

Hunter's exceptional conduct in prison was the impetus for a judge to reduce his 34-years-to-life sentence to time served, with no parole. He served more than 23 years for attempted murder before he was resentenced.

"People don't know I'm in here trying to better myself," said Hunter. "The warden signed off." After a thorough review of his in-custody conduct and programming, a recall of his sentence was sent to the secretary of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for review, and then passed to the court.

Hunter's effort to help himself and others by creating the Arms Down curriculum, dialogue with lawmakers, prosecutors, and police to address gun violence in communities became the height of his rehabilitation journey.

"If anybody in here thinks it's cool to call home and hear a family member went to prison for a gun, raise your hand," Hunter said at the inaugural Arms Down gathering in 2024. Not a single hand went up. "That's what I thought."

At that first meeting, Hunter

discussed the false beliefs boys and men learn about guns. The men were open as they spoke of their first encounters with a firearm, and why they decided to carry one.

"It really hit me hard that if I got out, there was a possibility of reoffending," said Hunter.

There was a common thread among the men, and Hunter discovered many felt the same way even though they came from different backgrounds. To give everyone a voice, he made Arms Down diverse, to ensure everyone was heard on their beliefs about firearms.

Now Hunter wants to help change the city he did so much damage to during his youth.

"When you come home, make sure you come by and talk to me," Hunter said Fresno County Superior Court Judge Jeffery Hamilton told him.

"I know it's a hard job for him to put his trust in me," said Hunter. "And I'm going to honor that."

Before Judge Hamilton learned about Hunter, the 26-week Arms Down program caught the attention and support of San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins, the state Department of Justice, community-based organizations, CDCR officials and lawmakers.

"I'm highly supportive of making sure [Arms Down] gets replicated outside," said Jenkins.

"I'm blown away by what's happening here," said state Assemblymember Damon Connolly (D-San Rafael), who attended an Arms Down meeting. "I'm really impressed that San Quentin is taking the lead by creating a program for those who've used a gun — to better understand why they used guns, and the impacts. And just as importantly, how to impact society, and particularly the youth, in breaking the cycle."

"I want to be of service to my community," said Hunter. "I want to be there for them, the way they were there for me."

Hunter started his prison term at the level-4 maximum-security California State Prison Centinella. His sojourn through the CDCR continued through California State Prison Corcoran, Kern Valley State Prison, Pleasant Valley State Prison, and Folsom State Prison before he arrived at San Quentin's West Block in 2013.

"In every prison there was violence," said Hunter. "It was crazy how the culture had you on the defense."

"I did a lot of restorative justice for many years," said Hunter. At San Quentin, he was involved in other self-help programs such as No More Tears, Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous, and Financial Literacy. "I definitely want to make sure I can balance a checkbook," he said, adding that he was also a Youth Offender Program mentor.

Through one of the many narrow windows that rise to the fifth tier of West Block, overlooking the San Francisco Bay, Hunter used to view rowing teams, wind surfers, and ferries on the water. "Many mornings I'd sit there, drink my coffee and look out those windows," he said. "That kept me grounded a lot of times."

"The moral compass is for you," Hunter said when asked what advice he has for others. "If you want to succeed and be free, take advantage of opportunities. When people put trust in you, don't betray it."

Hunter's next mission is to visit a church. He said St. Rest did a prayer for him over the radio, so it is one of the first places he wants to speak about the Arms Down program and figure out ways to reach the youth in Fresno, Calif.

"This is something that's needed across America," said Hunter.

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EDITORIAL

Banned books in prison deter some readers from historical 'factual contraband'

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

In keeping with old traditions, departments of corrections across the country continue to suppress the purchases and possession of book titles prisoners read. It is a throwback to the time when African slaves were forbidden from learning to read, a crime punishable by death.

In some California prisons, possession of the "wrong" book could result in a prisoner receiving a write-up for a rule violation. In a worst-case scenario, such possession may place a target on a prisoner's back — a type of scarlet letter that signifies gang affiliation.

Even so, books admonish me to read because of two important quotes from history. After the Jewish Holocaust, their mantra became "Never forget." Then there is the quote by George Santayana, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

As new books are published each year, specific titles are considered contraband once they fall under the scrutiny of prison authorities who censor what their captives read. Think of it as the state's hybrid mindset of *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury, and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by Paulo Freire.

The first book is a fictional story about a society in which the government outlaws reading by burning books. The latter describes the "banking theory of education," a process where the oppressor makes "deposits" into the mind of the oppressed.

"The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed," said Steven Bikko, of the African National Congress. Bikko's statement is one measure of the foundation that explains why prison authorities ban books. More often than not, the label "contraband" is merely a smoke screen created by overseers to mask some truths.

A person receives two educations. The first is obtained through public or private educational institutions. The second, and perhaps the most important, is the education acquired through one's volition. In prison, the latter is done by reading, which requires time — something all prisoners have and would be wise to not waste.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation maintains its Centralized List Of Disapproved Publications, which is codified in the California Code of Regulations (Title 15, Section 3134.1). Although prisoners may read the regulations, the list of banned books is not comprehensive, nor is it readily available.

Last year, a change in the law made it a requirement of the Office of the

Inspector General to post the CDCR's banned book list on a website. News flash: Prisoners do not have direct access to the Internet.

After I read a couple of books last year, I discovered the books were on the CDCR's list of disapproved publications. I did not lose any sleep over it, though, because there was no way I could have known the books were banned. I learned that news when I read my subscriptions to *San Francisco Bay View* and *All Of Us Or None*.

Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression, and the Long Attica Revolt, by Orisanmi Burton, is banned in California and in several other states. It supposedly advocates lawlessness, violence, anti-government behavior, blah, blah, blah.

I read *Tip of the Spear*, and if anything, it reveals the history and illegal tactics used by government to repress organizations such as the Inmates Liberation Front, the Black Liberation Army, and of course the Black Panther Party. Some unlawful methods used were orchestrated by the CIA's Operation CHAOS, and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's Counter-Intelligence Program.

"A close reading of *Tip of the Spear* will reveal that it advocates only that people think in radically different ways about the historical role of prisons in U.S. Society," Burton wrote in an open letter. "I reject the notion that my book 'advocates ... lawlessness, violence, anarchy, or rebellion against governmental authority,' or that it 'incites disobedience,' as was claimed in a memo from New York prison officials."

Burton's bold research and writing is what I call factual contraband. It is a counter-narrative and withdrawal of the "deposits" in the minds of the oppressed. He provides modern-day prisoners with a window into the past; a view they may juxtapose with their present conditions of confinement.

What Kind of Bird Can't Fly. That is not a question. It is the title of another book banned by the CDCR. Guess what? I read it too. I also met the author, Dorsey Nunn, on one of his visits to San Quentin. His book is a memoir, which he begins by discussing how the law and discrimination set the trajectory of his life.

"Agreements written down on paper in plain ink had kept Black people and other minorities from buying into certain neighborhoods," Nunn wrote. "California had more of those so-called 'racially restrictive housing covenants' than any other state."

Not surprisingly, Nunn entered prison at a young age. In chapter two of his book, titled "Gladiator School," he described Deuel Vocational Institute

in the early 1970s. His story solidified in my mind the long-established tales told to me by other prisoners forced to become gladiators at DVI.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, some motives to justify banning Nunn's book, "...tells of an inmate making a weapon." Recall the title of chapter two. Another story discusses an officer's death, which did not implicate Nunn, and "The third describes how Nunn once 'traded in marijuana.'" All true. I read it, cover to cover.

Like Burton, though, Nunn reveals a fact about the prison system that goes beyond embarrassment. It is an indictment of the system that I could not shake, where he writes, "You can't have a gladiator fight without a Roman in charge. And true enough, it was DVI guards who stirred up the sh**, spreading rumors, passing whispered lies and truths in the ears of prisoners like unpinned grenades... We were gladiators, forced to entertain the Romans. And the Romans were the pigs and the entire system that put them in charge."

While incarcerated, I have read hundreds of books. Because of that, I have had to fight the Romans due to their nomadic scarlet letter always in search of a victim. It took me eight years of filing grievances and litigation to extricate myself from their contemptible narrative.

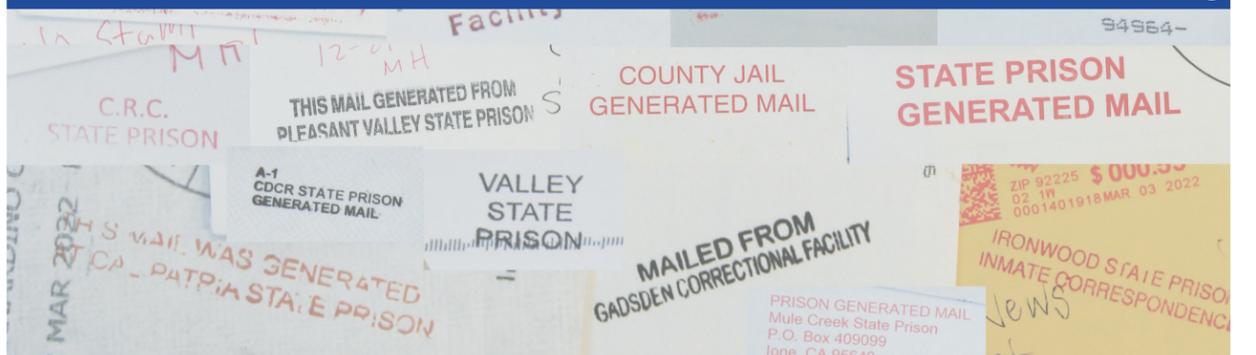
My First Amendment right was attacked because of my unconventional political views, or as Nunn fittingly wrote, "...the more politicized we became, the more we were punished." The federal case, *Sawyer v. Chappell, et al.* (Northern District Court), settled the matter after a reversal in *Sawyer v. MacDonald, et al.* (U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit).

Before my settlement, I wrote about my reading in a poem: "All that George, Huey, Mao, and Che, could land me in Pelican Bay..." I read because it furnishes my mind with greater independence and freedom of thought, so brainwashing by the prison industrial complex does not take root.

Jack Henry Abbott described it well in his breakthrough book, *In The Belly Of The Beast*, where he wrote: "Every minute for years you are forced to believe that your suffering is a result of your 'ill behavior,' that it is self-inflicted. You are indoctrinated to blindly accept anything done to you... That is why they now have 'education programs' in prison... so we learn only what they want us to learn."

Slaves were never supposed to learn to read. This captive did, though, because my generation was educated on the outrageous sentiment of racists who said, "If you want to hide something from a ni**er, put it a book."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FROM INSIDE SQ



Dear *SQNews*,
Thanks for publishing my last letter. We still have not heard whether or not the facility will approve our proposal for a Rehabilitation Programming Unit. I had a question about the measures being taken regarding cooling measures in the summer heat. Our cells are like pizza ovens with no airflow and they get up to 90 degrees when we are locked down. Is CIW alone in these inhumane conditions?
—Christine Reynolds,
California Institute for Women

Dear *SQNews*,
Here I am again after a small career in incarceration, which I had retired from in '91. Leaving San Quentin I told myself "Never again."
Currently I'm housed in California's Reception Center Delano and I spend the

majority of each day in a fairly large cell. At certain times of the day (like high noon) it's so hot in here it's like being in a sauna.
Yesterday I got my hands on the June 2025 edition of the San Quentin News. Bravo! Awesome publication. I first read about the paper in the book "Ear Hustle." At the time I thought it was just a flyer. Boy was I wrong. Well done. The lay out of the *SQNews* is very professional. The entire team that puts it together should pat themselves on the back, well done, much Kudos!
—Frank Anderson,
North Kern State Prison

Dear *SQNews*,
My reason for giving you my bona fides is to show you what I've done in spite of the situation I'm in. I'm

53 years old. I have five children and eight grandchildren. I have written several books, including Dutch 1, 2, & 3, Dynasty, Thug Politics, and I co-wrote *Death Around the Corner* with C. Murder. Several of my books have been made into movies and TV series.
I know it will be inspirational to people free or otherwise to see what's possible, regardless of circumstance.
—Kwame Teague,
Nash Correctional Institution,
Nashville NC

Dear *SQNews*,
I love what you are about. Love and paying it forward! Soon I will be receiving your newspaper monthly. I also love my Queens at CCWF Paper Trail.
—Earl L. Houser Jr.,
Mule Creek State Prison

Listening to someone and being empathetic can deescalate a situation

SUICIDE

Continued from page 1

Adverse Childhood Experiences, combined with added social stressors, lead to suicide ideation.

Blosnich said typical life events like losing a job or getting a divorce might be the tipping point for someone already in distress.

“Suicide prevention is not just one thing,” said Blosnich. “It’s really about understanding the individual, their background, and that they are not defined by one period in their life.”

Light Keepers members told Blosnich how they aid people in their community who feel worthless, agitated, hopeless, angry, or trapped into believing there is no reason to live.

Light Keepers Mentor Mark Cádiz said every situation is different when someone is in crisis. Once a Light Keeper recognizes that a person is expressing suicidal ideation, they deescalate the situation and then urge the person to connect with a mental health professional.

The most important tool in a Light Keeper’s toolbox is active listening, said Cádiz. Most of the time people just need someone to really listen to what they have to say.

Asking a person in distress open-ended questions, listening, identifying the problem, and being empathetic will defuse the situation.

Blosnich’s study, published in *American Psychologist Journal*, noted that adverse childhood trauma is a chronic public health disaster. His research suggests that ACEs lead to high-risk behavior and that it’s necessary to fully understand cumulative trauma when targeting suicide prevention.

Dr. Anderson said bringing in outside resources to further train the Light Keepers has helped strengthen their ability to respond to residents in crisis.

Erick Wick, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served 33 years in prison, is a suicide prevention trainer working with Swords to Plowshares in San Francisco. He sat down with the Light Keepers in October 2025 to discuss

methods he has used to stop people from taking their own lives.

Wick said that in the mental health space, if people don’t trust you, they won’t talk to you. His more than three decades in prison and service in the Marine Corps helps him connect with both veterans and parolees through their shared lived experiences.

Having intervened in a number of potential suicides, Wick said the first thing to understand is that those with suicide ideation do not want to die. That is a major misunderstanding about the nature of suicide.

“Not wanting to live and wanting to die are two very different things,” said Wick. “If a person is in a certain level of psychological pain, and their brain is in crisis state, they will do anything to escape.”

In a crisis state, a person is not thinking clearly and impulse control is not where it should be. He said about 4% of people have suicide ideation. Of those, only a fraction commit suicide.

Although that seems like a very small number when viewed as a percentage, it’s still 50,000 people in the U.S. that take their own life every year. What if one of them is a friend or family member? Wick asked.

“It’s important to remember when you’re talking to someone in suicide crisis, you’re their lifeline, you’re their anchor, you’re the one holding them in this life,” said Wick.

Wick explained that all someone must do is be there for a person in crisis. Don’t do anything extraordinary, just be quiet, listen, ask them open-ended questions, and keep them talking.

Wick said that if a person is not in crisis state then they are not in real danger, but it’s still important to encourage them to seek care. He has never turned his back on a person. He stays with them as long as he must, and in most cases, it takes about an hour.

“Small price to pay to keep a person alive as far as I’m concerned,” Wick said. “There’s no magic. There’s no secret sauce. Shut up, listen, and keep them talking.”

Skilled job training for SQ residents

By Terrell J. Marshall
Staff Writer

High demand for enormous artificial intelligence data centers has caused a construction boom, creating lucrative job opportunities for those with trade skills.

According to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, the associated Builders and Contractor Trade Group estimates a shortage of more than 435,000 construction workers throughout the United States.

“There aren’t enough people to build the magnitude of work out there right now,” said Sundt construction firm president Chad Buck in the article. “There’s only a set pool to pull from, and every contractor in the country is trying to pull from it right now.”

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center offers vocational training programs and jobs to residents seeking skills necessary to fill the high demand for workers in the construction industry.

Vocational Plumbing, Painting, Plant Operation/Building Maintenance/Electrical, Correctional Construction Management Labor, and CAL Prison Industry Authority Construction Training Education Labor are available to those housed in the facility.

According to SQRC, these programs offer residents an opportunity to experience, obtain, and apply real life skills that prepare them for a future career in construction.

Along with adding experience to resident’s work profile, SQRC states these jobs and programs provide those preparing for parole board hearings with reentry strategies. In addition, gaining work experience and recognition presents well to employers when residents are released, helping people make a smooth transition back into society.

CAL PIA CTE labor are offering residents milestones, training certificates, apprenticeships, networking skills, and connections with California American Job Centers.

Resident Kamsan Suon, 51, said after becoming a certified welder at Solano State Prison he transferred to SQRC and completed the vocational plumbing program. He now works in the SQ vocational paint shop with a goal of learning as many trades as he can and so he can start a career in the construction field when released.

Suon said the skills he has gained have built his confidence and strengthened his work portfolio by adding more experience to his resumé. He added that learning to fabricate metal, and perform plumbing skills like sweating pipes, installing toilets, sinks, and jobsite safety practices will make his qualifications more attractive to employers than other people seeking the same jobs with less experience.

“My goal is to take full advantage of the

hands-on training now, so when I get out, I can get a high paying job in the union,” said Suon.

According to ZipRecruiter.com, there are many union construction jobs available right now.

The website notes salary for journeyman union construction workers in the U.S. range \$51,000-\$115,500 per year.

Current union trade positions available include electricians, plumbers, labor representatives, bricklayers, millwrights, commercial drivers, metal stud framers, painters, drywallers, and many other trades. Most trade unions offer four-year apprenticeships, noted the website.

SQRC resident Sergio Linares, 43, is working toward a career as a union painter. A few months shy of graduating the facility vocational painting program, he is confident his new skills will make him an asset to employers.

“The program taught me everything: jobsite safety, preparation, and finish work applications,” said Linares. “That’s what contractors are looking for in a professional painter.”

Resident Jack Anderwald, 72, has 35 years over-the-road trucking experience and is a current facilitator for SQRC’s Concrete Rose trucking program. Anderwald said that construction does not start until a truck driver brings the equipment and the material to the jobsite.

“Whenever there’s a construction boom, there’s always a higher demand for truckers,” said Anderwald. He added that Concrete Rose is a great opportunity for people to learn basic trucking skills that can lead to a lifelong career.

Anderwald said that a lot of the jobs and programs at SQRC have a long waiting list, and many residents are frustrated while waiting for enrollment. He said that just like out on the streets, learning to network and finding ways to develop one’s skills is important, even while unemployed.

“Nothing is stopping people from picking up a book to gain knowledge in their chosen field,” said Anderwald. “Whether you want to be a carpenter, plumber, or a truck driver, in order to master a trade, you must put in the work, including book work.”

Anderwald noticed that many people in this digital era do not want to get their hands dirty. His instructor used to tell him to do what it takes to land that first job, that would lead him to a better job, and that job would lead him to a career.

“Trust me, anyone who puts in the work now to develop their skills in a trade, won’t have any trouble getting a job when they get out of prison,” said Anderwald.

According to SQRC counselor’s office, residents wanting to apply for CAL PIA CTE Construction Labors, or other programs geared toward a career in construction, are to send an Inmate Request for Interview, GA Form 22 in or speak to their counselor.

Support from families of incarcerated cost an average of \$1,803 a month

COST

Continued from page 1

year on packages.”

As an ADA worker, Meza attends to persons with disabilities by helping them get to and from medical appointments, self-help groups, church services, and canteen. Meza said that when he spends his \$30 at the prison canteen, his focus is on maintaining his hygiene and appearance because it makes him feel good when he looks good.

“I decide to get hygiene over food because I like to take care of myself,” he said.

An annual survey of state and local government finances by the U.S. Census Bureau reported that state governments spent over \$66 billion on corrections in 2023.

Surveyed families self-reported losing an

average of \$1,803 per month to expenses like traveling to visits, phone calls, time off work to drive to court appearances, and childcare expenses, according to a related article in the *Missouri Independent*.

Additionally, when the primary provider for a family goes to prison, the remaining family members may face extreme circumstances like relocating.

“At the end of 2023, there were more than 1.25 million people in state and federal prisons, a 2% increase from the previous year,” according to data from the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics. “The vast majority were serving sentences longer than one year and were held in state prisons.”

Researchers said that if the steady increase of current incarceration rates continues, families could see their financial burdens rise to \$3.5 trillion cumulatively over the next decade, noted the *Missouri Independent*.

Grant rates fall dramatically in 2025

DENIALS

Continued from page 1

value of future expenditures; it represented all values in 2025 dollars.

For this story, 12 incarcerated persons declined to comment in interview requests, citing fear of retaliation by the BPH. They all said they had life sentences with at least one denial.

Although the BPH often (but not always) advanced hearing dates, the BPH (or the parole applicant) also postponed hearing dates. This analysis did not consider advancements and did not include the year’s 1,643 postponements.

For the annual cost of per-person-incarceration, this analysis used data from the report “California’s Prison Population,” by the Public Policy Institute of California, which said, “The average cost of imprisoning a person for one year has risen ... to \$133,000 in 2024.” The analysis used “Parole Suitability Hearing Results” data available on the BPH website.

Parole grants fell drastically in 2025. The analysis calculated grant rates by taking grants and dividing them by grants plus denials. Statewide, grants have numbered 844 and denials have numbered 2,775, producing

a grant rate of 23.3%.

A historical survey of parole grants with data from the BPH’s “Report of Significant Events” showed that 9,736 grants and 19,696 denials occurred between 2017 and 2024, making the average grant rate about 33%. The current grant rate figured about 10 percentage points below that average. Only twice, in 2017 and in 2022, have grant rates fallen below 30%. In 2018, grant rates reached a high of 38.8%.

One could make the point that higher grant rates could negatively affect public safety, but long-term data have clearly indicated that recidivism for persons released after a life sentence has historically remained a very small number.

The most recent data in the April 2025 “Report of Significant Events” showed that between 2011 and 2020, the BPH has released 6,220 persons. Only 166 — or 2.67% — have reoffended (according to the state’s definition of recidivating “with any new felony or misdemeanor conviction within 3 years” of the fiscal year of release).

Despite the 97% success rate of lifer parole, the BPH’s decisions that produced their high rate of denials indicated a very high degree of caution. It also indicated a big expense for taxpayers.

Couple's faith drove their acts of service in prisons

RICE

Continued from page 1

her husband. “That was more than 35 years ago,” he said.

The couple hit the road to answer the calling in the early ’90s, and since then Mrs. Rice’s angelic piano and harp melodies have reverberated in churches and been heard by parishioners all over the world.

“Playing in the churches opened the doors into the prisons,” said Mr. Rice. “At one point we were doing 50 concerts in 50 days twice a year,” said Mrs. Rice.

For decades, the two carried their message of faith, hope, and humility to thousands who otherwise might not have had a chance to experience such altruism.

Mrs. Rice said that people began to refer to her as the “harp lady” and her husband the “harp carrier,” as he escorted her and her big blue 47-string instrument into prisons.

In 2000, after a decade on the road, their faith-driven tour landed them at San Quentin. The couple said that after two and a half decades attending both the Protestant and Catholic services. They now consider the facility’s chapel their home church.

“We renewed our 40-year and 50-year marriage vows here at San Quentin,” Mr. Rice said.

In 2014, the Rices expanded their presence in the prison beyond the chapel. Mrs. Rice started teaching a humility class, as well as giving piano lessons to those in the Arts in Corrections program.

“Linda didn’t just teach our humility class, she exemplified it,” said SQ resident J. Dorsey.

Before Death Row disbanded in 2024, Mr. Rice said his faith led him to bring the word of the Lord to the condemned residents there. After an extensive vetting process, he began to lead fellowship groups on The Row in East Block.

The Death Row chapel, situated at the end

of the cellblock, was a converted shower area the size of two small bedrooms reinforced with grade steel panels. An always-present armed guard walked a raised gun rail that circled the space.

To the front of the chapel was a secure area with a podium for his Bible and from there, behind a screened panel, he lead the fellowship, bringing the word of the Lord to less than a dozen men at a time.

For his flock were three old wooden benches bolted to the floor and three black isolation cells at the back for segregation. Officials separated the men based on gang affiliations, crimes, and other factors.

Mr. Rice said that bringing fellowship to those isolated from the rest of the world gave them a chance to foster a sense of purpose, a connection to the rest of humanity.

He added that it is important to see people for who they are now and not to define them by their worst moment in life.

“Some of those men have been living in society’s shadow for more than 30 years,” he said. “I wasn’t there to judge them. I was there to help them build their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”

After decades of community service, the married couple of nearly six decades said it is with mixed emotions they are moving out of state. “It’s like leaving our family,” Mrs. Willis said.

Since finding each other on the first day of college in 1965, the couple said they built a life together that has always centered around their faith.

Mr. Rice said the foundation of a solid union starts with Christ at the top. He believes that by focusing on something greater than oneself, the relationships throughout a person’s life will continue to strengthen and grow.

“If success is measured by the care a person has shown to others, then the number of people Linda and Willis Rice have influenced makes them the most successful people I’ve ever met,” said SQ resident Michael Fangman.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Study finds static case factors outweigh persons' transformation

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

When parole boards focus on static factors, on minor slipups, and on the “optics” of granting parole in certain cases, discretionary parole systems fail to realize their potential as tools for decarceration, according to a Prison Policy Initiative report.

“Parole in Perspective: How parole decisions are made” is part two of PPI’s reporting on discretionary parole systems in California and 34 other states. The study found that in spite of steady repopulation of prisons post-pandemic, the overall number of parole grants declined from 2019 to 2024. The authors cite the factors above, in part, to explain the decline.

In parole hearings, static elements like criminal history, victim and law

enforcement opposition, and the nature or severity of crimes of conviction, all over which the parole applicant has no control, often trump his or her transformation and readiness to return to society, said the report.

Report author Leah Wang wrote that putting heavy emphasis on the original crime of conviction and prior criminal history during parole hearings and risk assessments amounts to a “second sentence” based on issues already addressed by a judge upon sentencing.

“When judges determine sentences, they are first and foremost considering the nature of the crime ... A sentence with the possibility of parole indicates that the judge ... believes the timing of the individual’s release should depend on their acceptance of responsibility ... completion of required programming, their demonstrated plan for

going home. ... The judge has already considered the criminal case itself.”

Often working against parole hopefuls is “tunnel vision” evaluation of parole candidates’ accomplishments and slipups, wrote Wang. Commissioners focus on a single write-up or minor rule violation to discredit an otherwise trouble-free record.

“This double standard cannot be overstated,” wrote Wang. “Overstated good behavior is not good enough to earn parole, but even minor misbehavior can serve as a reason to keep someone behind bars.”

Another obstacle to parole grants is what PPI dubbed the “optics” of granting parole to certain offenders. Several states have parole guidelines that require considering whether a release may “... ‘diminish’ the seriousness of the crime, or undermine respect for the law.”

South Dakota requires the board to evaluate the “... ‘effect on the administration of justice.’” Montana often refers to “Strong objection from Criminal Justice Agencies,” as a boilerplate cause for denials. These guidelines prioritize optics over preparedness of parole applicants, wrote PPI.

Parole denials are often justified with calls for specific further programming or treatment. But long waitlists or lack of availability can prevent applicants from accessing the required programming. Wang wrote that this problem results from “siloes” systems in which parole boards mandate programming but prison administrations control participant access.

If the required programming is available on the outside, PPI recommends granting parole so applicants can return to

their communities for the mandated treatment.

PPI found that in most of the systems evaluated, “... the burden is on the parole applicant, not the parole board, to demonstrate readiness [for parole].” PPI recommended “In reality, most parole applicants do not pose a risk to the community; therefore, an effective parole system should instead start with the presumption of release then require the parole board to justify why release is inappropriate.”

Some states flip the script by practicing presumptive parole in limited scenarios. Rather than requiring applicants to prove suitability, the burden shifts to parole boards to demonstrate non-suitability.

In Hawaii, in the absence of good cause or specific criteria, parole is required when the result of a risk assessment is “low.” In Colorado, a full-board majority is required

to deny parole to an eligible applicant with an approved parole plan.

Discretionary parole takes its name from the liberty parole commissioners have to deviate from statutory guidelines in order to grant or deny parole in individual cases. However, PPI concluded that in the systems they studied commissioners are prone to apply discretion to deny rather than to grant parole.

Wang suggested that boards with stronger representation of commissioners with relevant lived experience or clinical knowledge might exercise their discretion by advocating for release more often.

PPI’s overall assessment is that discretionary parole is a “broken promise” and the authors quote a Marshall Project writer who 10 years ago said, “no one really knows how to get parole.”

OIG exposes heat and cold in prisons

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

Whether one believed in climate change or not, excessive heat in prisons has remained a reality that few incarcerated persons would regard with skepticism. The report *Audit of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s Management of Temperature Conditions Within California’s Prisons* by the Office of the Inspector General made clear that extreme temperatures have created risks that could easily turn lethal.

The OIG inspected practices of dealing with heat at High Desert State Prison, at California State Prison in Corcoran, and at California State Prison in Los Angeles County. The review considered indoor temperature logs, examined methods used for managing extreme heat, and evaluated the capacity to maintain reasonable temperatures under conditions set forth by a court-mandated “heat plan.” The results exposed several deficiencies.

“Our audit found that custody staff at the three prisons we reviewed did not consistently complete heat logs as required by the heat plan. When prison staff are not regularly monitoring temperatures in the housing units, they may not take precautionary measures when there is excessive heat, which jeopardizes the health and safety of the incarcerated population,” said a prefacing letter to Jeffrey Macomber, secretary of the CDCR.

The litigation of *Coleman v. Newsom* brought about a heat management plan, or for short, a “heat plan.” Its implementation fell to California Correctional Health Care Services.

The report said, “Individuals who take mental health medications are at increased risk of developing adverse effects including life-threatening conditions when exposed to excessive heat. Extreme heat has been linked to an increased likelihood of death and violence among the incarcerated population. Studies have linked higher temperatures to an increased prevalence of aggression,

self-harm, and suicide attempts.”

Since its start, the heat plan required daily monitoring and documenting of temperatures in housing units to determine whether incarcerated persons would need protective measures, especially if they took medications that caused heat sensitivity. The report said the heat plan, typically in effect from May 1 to October 31 (year-round at some facilities), has three stages. Stage I would start if the outside temperature would rise to 90°F; Stage II would apply if the indoor temperature would reach 90°F; and Stage III would kick in if any inside area (even the kitchen) would rise to 95°F.

The OIG reported sparsely on heating and cooling equipment, stating, “Prisons do not consistently perform preventive maintenance on their heating and cooling systems.” The report blamed “Budget challenges and inconsistent completion of preventive maintenance” for inhibiting the ability to maintain outdated heating and cooling equipment.

The OIG interviewed a teacher at High Desert who complained about classroom temperatures above 86°F. The teacher suffered a heat-related illness. According to the report, “If prisons were required to comply with Cal/OSHA standards, the working conditions described above would be considered unacceptable.”

The report’s recommendations said to “prioritize replacing heating and cooling equipment that has outlived its useful life and is no longer effective,” and to “establish statewide policies and procedures for plant operations staff to effectively track and complete preventive maintenance on heating and cooling equipment ...”

The OIG briefly looked at the opposite end of thermometers. Excessively cold temperatures presented a problem at some facilities. The report said “five prisons in California experienced 100 or more days of temperatures below 40°F in 2024” and in “January 2024, Corcoran received 36 complaints about cold temperatures,” which fell as low as 30°F during the winter of 2024. A resident at

Corcoran told the OIG “even inside in his cell, he can see his breath during winter months.”

“Not all prisons offer sufficient clothing for incarcerated people to protect themselves from the cold,” the report continued, and “denim jackets are thin and do not provide sufficient warmth for cold temperatures.” Many facilities did not offer the lined, thicker jacket the CDCR has available — “the department leaves this decision to the discretion of each prison.”

The CDCR “received fewer complaints concerning the cold temperatures” in facilities that offered the warmer jacket and the OIG issued the recommendation that “The department should consider providing the incarcerated population the option of receiving a thicker jacket to protect individuals during cold weather.”

CDCR Secretary Macomber responded to the OIG in a letter that concluded the report. “The Department is committed to maintaining safe and humane conditions for all individuals in our custody and all staff in the institutions and acknowledges the oversight in this area is important. CDCR recognizes the critical need to advance efforts to manage indoor temperatures across housing units.”

In the letter, Macomber discussed “a three-year pilot program to explore effective strategies for managing indoor temperatures across its institutions” that would “involve installing improved cooling and insulation options on two housing units at Kern Valley State Prison, California State Prison Los Angeles County, and the Central California Women’s Facility.”

The pilot “intends to map out future options using all available means to address indoor temperatures,” with “broader solutions for facilities where upgrades may be necessary.” Macomber referenced funding and fiscal constraints, but also pointed to several recent improvements of cooling systems.

“CDCR is studying the complexity of the problem and creating new solutions,” wrote the secretary.

Transgender prisoners' protections against assault are under attack



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As the State’s PREA Ombudsman, we provide an outside, independent process for you to report allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment inside the State prison system.

PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA)

All reports of sexual abuse or sexual harassment may be reported to any CDCR staff member. You may also contact the OIG, an independent State agency designated as the State’s PREA Ombudsman. Provide details about the PREA allegation in your report, including people involved, witnesses, dates, and locations. Federal law requires that we immediately forward your report to CDCR for investigation. If you request to remain anonymous, we will not provide CDCR with your name or other identifying information. If you think CDCR mishandled an investigation into PREA allegations, you may also report this information to us. For further information, please see California Penal Code section 2641, and Federal PREA Standard section 115.51.

Todos los informes de abuso, o acoso sexual, pueden ser reportados a cualquier miembro del personal del Departamento de CDCR. También puede comunicarse con el personal de las Oficinas del Inspector General (OIG), que es una agencia independiente designada como el mediador (Ombudsman), de PREA en este estado. Proporcione detalles sobre la acusación de PREA en su informe, incluyendo las persona(s) involucradas, los testigos, las fechas y los lugares. La ley federal requiere que enviemos inmediatamente su informe al Departamento de CDCR para una investigación. Si solicita permanecer en el anonimato, no

Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

PREA sign located within the institution

By Kevin D. Sawyer
Editor-in-Chief

The US Department of Justice plans to rewrite its policy on protection for transgender prisoners, a move directed by President Donald Trump.

In 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act passed. The DOJ said it will revise the law because its language clashes with a Trump mandate to “recognize two sexes, male and female,” according to *Bloomberg News*. “[The DOJ] directed auditors to pause portions of their facility reviews that pertain to treatment and conditions for ‘transgender, intersex, and gender nonconforming inmates.’”

“[PREA] requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics to carry out, for each calendar year, a comprehensive statistical review and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape,” the DOJ reported. “The act requires the Attorney General to submit — no later than June 30 of each year — a report that lists institutions in the sample and ranks them according to incidence of prison rape.”

In December, DOJ principal Deputy Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Tammie Gregg said, “Until these updates are finalized, and further guidance is provided, effective immediately, applicable federal and non-federal correctional facilities shall not be held to” obey sections of the law that provides protections for prisoners in conflict with Trump’s mandate.

Advocates for transgender people and prisoners stated, “Altering standards in the

Prison Rape Elimination Act will make detention facilities more dangerous,” *Bloomberg News* reported.

Under current PREA directives, and California law, the state’s Office of the Inspector General issues reviews of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s policies, practices, and procedures.

In August 2025, the OIG sent a special report to the CDCR secretary. “In this review, we assessed departmental responses to 74 of 288 (26 %) alleged violations of [PREA] that were investigated and closed from March 2024 through August 2024,” the OIG wrote. “The 74 cases we reviewed were reviewed by prison Institutional PREA Review Committees from March 1, 2024, through August 31, 2024.”

The OIG special review assessed CDCR investigations made against prisoners by examining “departmental responses to PREA allegations at three different stages: identification, investigation, and institutional oversight and review.”

Of the 74 alleged PREA violations examined in the August OIG review, the majority were “unsubstantiated.” These were 42 nonconsensual sexual acts; 21 abusive sexual contacts; and two acts of harassment. Two allegations were “unfounded” (nonconsensual sexual acts and abusive sexual contact) and seven were “substantiated.” The latter were three nonconsensual sexual acts and four abusive sexual contacts.

The OIG made five recommendations to the

CDCR for improvement, which include audio and videotaped interviews of alleged victims; PREA investigator training; wardens to require corrective action if staff fail to comply with law or departmental policy; more monitoring; and identify and document areas for corrective action when noncompliance occurs.

In response, the CDCR Secretary wrote in part, “while the OIG report identifies several opportunities for improvement, it is crucial that the evaluative framework accurately reflects the established standards and practices governing our investigations. The Department remains dedicated to refining its processes and ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals within its facilities.”

According to *Bloomberg News*, transgender people have been targeted by Trump directives, which include his declaration that their gender ideology was “disconnected from biological reality.”

“Removing accommodations for trans people will provide ‘a green light’ for predators to sexually assault incarcerated adults and children who are already disproportionately at risk,” said Linda McFarlane, executive director of Just Detention International, a human rights organization that works to eliminate sexual abuse against prisoners, *Bloomberg News* reported. She said the change in policy is spreading confusion among prison officials who have worked decades to introduce common sense rules to end prisoner rape. “This is not and should not be a political issue.”

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Opal Lee

Viola Ford-Fletcher

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

Viola Ford-Fletcher, the oldest living survivor of a violent massacre, died over one-hundred years after a prosperous community was destroyed.

Ford-Fletcher was born on May 10, 1914, in Comanche, Okla., to Lucinda Ellis and John Wesley Ford. Seven years after her birth, Ford-Fletcher's mother woke her up in response to the violent attacks, according to Wikipedia.

The family fled the city of Tulsa to escape the violence; they lost everything except the clothes on their backs.

"I will never forget the violence of the White mob when we left our home," said Ford-Fletcher. "...I still see ... Black bodies lying in the street. I still see Black businesses being burned. ... I [still] hear the screams."

Her family lived in Tulsa's Greenwood district, known as "Black Wall Street." The community had nice homes and Black owned grocery stores and banks; the neighborhood was a refuge for Black people during segregation, according to Wikipedia.

As a result of the attacks, hundreds of people were killed and 30 blocks of a vibrant community were burned to the ground.

The attacks were a result of a Black man accused of assaulting a White woman. A group of people gathered outside a Tulsa courthouse to prevent the man from being lynched.

White residents responded with overwhelming force, which began the destruction of the Greenwood neighborhood, according to abnews.go.com.

"I could never forget the charred remains of our once-thriving community, the smoke billowing in the air, and the terror-stricken faces of my neighbors," Ford-Fletcher wrote in her memoir, "Don't let them bury my story."

The attacks had been forgotten for decades until 1997, when Oklahoma lawmakers formed a commission to investigate the incident. Ford-Fletcher said the City of Tulsa used the victims' names to generate profit for the city, according to Wikipedia.

Ford-Fletcher spent much her life advocating for reparations and testified before the United States Congress in 2021 to heal the damage caused by the racial incursion. Ford-Fletcher and her brother subsequently received \$1 million from New York philanthropist Ed Mitzen, noted Wikipedia.

"Mother Fletcher endured more than anyone should, yet she spent her life fighting a path with purpose," said Tulsa's Mayor Monroe Nichols.

In 2021, Ford-Fletcher visited the African country of Ghana with her brother. They met Nana Akufo-Addo, the sitting President. Ford-Fletcher was crowned "Queen Mother." She was also given a Ghanaian name, Naa Lamiley, which translates as "somebody who is strong, somebody who stands the test of time," according to Wikipedia.

Ford-Fletcher said her faith and the close-knit Black community gave her the support she needed.

Surrounded by family at a Tulsa hospital, she died on November 24, 2025 at the age of 111.

Belvagene Davis

Belvagene Davis' journalistic determination through education, adversity, and racism left behind a legacy of respect and admiration.

In 1932, Davis was born in Monroe, Louisiana, the eldest of four children. When Davis was a child, her family lived with numerous relatives throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, eventually finding an apartment in West Oakland, Calif., according to Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.

"I learned to survive. As I moved from place to place, I learned to adapt," Davis said. "When I got older, I just figured I could become whatever it was that I needed to become."

Davis attended Berkeley High School in Berkeley, Calif. She graduated in 1951, the first in her family to earn a high school diploma.

Davis was accepted at San Francisco State University but could not afford the tuition. Instead, she took a job as a typist for the Oakland Naval Supply Depot, earning \$2,000 a year, according to Wikipedia.

Over the next several years, Davis worked as a freelance reporter for several Black publications. From 1961 to 1968 she edited the *Sun Reporter*.

Davis' reporting interests were racial and gender issues, which included the Jonestown mass suicide-murders, and the 1990s crack epidemic.

In the mid-1960s she covered the Republican National Convention in San Francisco; some of the attendees chased her and a colleague while yelling racial slurs.

Around the same time in Forsyth County, Georgia, Davis covered the Civil Rights Movement. A white woman spat in her face as Davis attempted to interview her, noted the Wikipedia.

In the face of adversity Davis persevered, becoming known for her calm demeanor.

"Belva knew instinctively how to keep everyone in check. Amid all these prima donnas, she had so much class, so much presence, and so much intuition," said KTVU reporter Rita Williams.

In 1966, Davis worked for KNEW radio station in Oakland, Calif., and then was hired by KPIX-TV, a CBS affiliate in San Francisco, becoming the first Black woman TV journalist on the West Coast, noted the Wikipedia.

During her career Davis received eight Emmy Awards and a lifetime achievement award from the American Women in Radio and Television and the National Association of Black Journalists.

Davis had symbolic value to the Black TV audience, wrote Bill Cosby in the forward of her autobiography *Never in My Wildest Dreams*.

"[She was] someone who sustained us, who made us proud," Cosby wrote. "We looked forward to seeing her prove the stereotypical ugliness of those days to be wrong."

On September 24, 2025, in the city of Oakland, Calif., America lost an accomplished journalist. Belvagene Davis was 92.

—By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair



Assata Olugbala Shakur



Gayle King



Althea Gibson



Serena Williams



Big Mama Thornton



Aretha Franklin



Queen Latifah



Viola Davis

Assata Olugbala Shakur

By Jason Jackson
Staff Writer

Assata Olubala Shakur is known to many as the face of revolutionary resistance.

Born JoAnne Byron in the Queens borough of New York City on July 16, 1947, Shakur changed her name in 1971 as her identity continued to evolve through her studies of Black history.

"I wanted a name that had something to do with struggle. I didn't feel like no JoAnne, or no Negro, or no American. I felt like an African woman," Shakur wrote in her memoir *Assata: A Biography*.

Assata grew up with a voracious appetite for knowledge and credits her aunt Evelyn for educating her with books and trips to museums, theaters, and art galleries. She attended City College of New York, where she became increasingly involved in civil rights organizing and political studies, according to her autobiography.

After college, Assata moved to Oakland, Calif., and joined the Black Panther Party. She would eventually return to New York and lead the Party's chapter in Harlem, N.Y. She

worked with the Black Panther's Free Breakfast for Children program and with community-based health clinics. She left the Black Panther Party in 1971 and joined the Black Liberation Army.

It was during Assata's time with the BLA that she, along with two other members, were charged in 1973 with the murder of a New Jersey State Trooper. She was convicted for the crime in 1977.

BLA members helped Assata escape from prison in 1979, and she became a fugitive of justice. She became one of the FBI's most wanted before making her way to Cuba, where she was granted asylum in 1984.

Assata remained in exile until her passing on September 25, 2025.

She is remembered by many as a political activist and revolutionary thinker who fiercely advocated for the education and empowerment of oppressed people around the world.

"I believe that the priorities of this planet have to be completely changed and instead of policies that destroy the earth, that destroy the water, that destroy human beings, I believe in a policy that protects people, that makes people live in a community; a world community," Assata said in a 1996 interview with reporter Dorsey Nunn.

Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton

Many remember Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton as being a uniquely talented artist whose influence is imprinted across jazz, blues, and rock and roll.

Born in Montgomery, Alabama on December 11, 1926, Thornton was raised in the church, surrounded by the gospel music that she says helped spark her interest in singing.

Thornton also studied singers of her time, including Bessie Smith and Memphis Minnie. She would eventually teach herself how to sing, play the harmonica and drums.

"My singing comes from my experience. I never had no one teach me nothin'," said Thornton. "I never went to school for music or nothin'."

Thornton began her music career in 1940 at the age of 14, after winning a talent show where she was awarded a spot with the band Sammy Green's Hot Harlem Revue. She sung with the band throughout Alabama and Georgia for eight years.

Thornton left the Band and settled in Houston, TX. While in Houston, she began singing for music producer Don Robey, and later signed a record contract in 1950 with his Peacock Records where she recorded some of her first songs.

Thornton's big break came in 1952 with her standout performance at the famed Apollo Theater. It was at that time she recorded her biggest hit, "Hound Dog." The song sold 500,000 copies and spent several months on the top music charts.

New York University music professor Maureen Mahon credited the song as "an important beginning

of rock-and-roll, especially in its use of the guitar as the key instrument.

Many people are familiar with Elvis Presley's 1955 recording of the song, but few realize that a Black woman did the song three years before him.

Over the years, Thornton would go on to write and record several albums and other hits, including the song 'Ball & Chain', which was made famous by Janis Joplin.

Big Mama made her name during a time when racial inequalities contributed to the lack of credit many Black artists, including Little Richard, Muddy Waters, and Chuck Berry did not receive for their contributions to the musical genres that would change the world, according to Wikipedia.

Thornton's biggest recognition would come in 2024 when she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Thornton passed away in 1984, leaving a legacy of musical genius behind.

"I've been happy. There have been dull moments, but you have to take as worst as you are going to get it or else you may never see it. I've been happy and I'd like to stay that way," Big Mama said about her life before her passing.

—By Jason Jackson
Staff Writer

La tasa de reincidencia resalta el benéfico del programa DRP

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair

En Californiana, la tasa de reincidencia criminal ha disminuido un 78% acreditando este éxito a los programas de reinserción a la sociedad dentro de las cárceles, de acuerdo al reporte de Meredith Kelly, de Davis Vanguard el 23 de agosto 2025.

Estos datos fueron proveídos por la oficina del gobernador Gavin Newsom de California, informando que el 34% de esta tasa se acredita a las personas masculinas sin reincidencia y el 44% para las mujeres sin reincidencia. Newsom destacó el trabajo de estos programas y sus beneficios contra la reincidencia, los niveles de criminalidad y de seguridad pública en el estado de CA.

Quienes participaron en estos programas entre los años 2019-2020, con un 80% de las mujeres y un 74% para los hombres ya no volvieron a reincidir tras su

liberación a las comunidades. De acuerdo al Departamento de Correccionales y Rehabilitación de California se informó que la tasa de reincidencia de estos participantes solo fue del 15% entre las mujeres y 14% para los hombres.

Kelly resaltó la postura de CDCR, sobre el beneficio de estos programas para las personas anteriormente encarceladas y con probabilidades menores de una reincidencia.

Además de que la Oficina del Gobernador Newsom y Trabajadores también destacaron que los programas tienen un impacto meramente positivo en las personas que estuvieron encerradas.

“El programa nuevo de reingreso a la comunidad en Fresno va ayudar a personas en poder regresar a sus hogares con las herramientas necesarias para poder prosperar”, dijo el secretario de CDCR Jeff Macomber.

La División de Rehabilitación de Programas, se enfoca a que los ex reclusos participen

en programas afuera de las instituciones de CDCR, bajo la supervisión y guía de esta división. Y mientras participan en estos programas de autoayuda se le otorga el privilegio de trabajar en la comunidad.

San Quentin, ha sido identificado como una prisión con una reputación negativa. Sin embargo Newsom renombro la prisión como un Centro de Rehabilitación, siendo la primera institución en EE.UU., enfocado en la seguridad pública basándose en la educación como tema a reforzar y así hacerle frente a la reincidencia, además de ensalzar el lema de “tratamiento no castigo”.

“Estamos asegurando que las agencias de la ley tengan los recursos que necesitan para poder bajar los índices de crímenes”, dijo Newsom en el año 2023, anunciado la aportación de \$267 millones de dólares a la construcción y ampliación de nuevos centros para los prisioneros, siendo la aportación más grande en la historia del estado de California.

Estado mental en tiempos de navideños

Por Aristeo Sampablo
Escritor Contribuyente

Una de las últimas encuestas realizadas en los años más recientes por National Alliance on Mental Illness, Director Médico Ken Duckworth en la página electrónica www.nami.org/newsroom, indicando que las tristeza navideñas contribuye al estado emocional de las personas y que los estadounidenses lo conocen como Holidays Blues.

Para algunas personas, el recordar es revivir los sentimientos durante la decoración del árbol navideño, la comida, las reuniones inesperadas, aunado al nerviosismo a los instantes previos a las doce campanadas, casi imposible comer las doce uvas y correr con las maletas durante las doce campanadas.

Los días festivos son sinónimo de fiestas llenas de decoraciones, reuniones en las que en ocasiones significa viajar miles de kilómetros para volver a ver a esos seres queridos una vez más, comida que llenan el paladar más exigente, regalos que posible pasaran para el

próximo año solo cambiando la envoltura y/o conversaciones interminables de lo que paso el año (finalizado) y los anhelos de lo que se espera del siguiente.

Momentos alegres y tristes que para muchos quedan en ese baúl de la memoria y a las que se tienen acceso en cualquier momento.

Sin embargo, para el residente Sergio Linares quien ha pasado sus últimos 17 años encarcelado, los últimos meses del año son un periodo lleno de huellas agriadas.

“Porque se me hace muy especial guardarlo en mi corazón y pues me hace recordar eso buenos momentos que tuve, para mi...recordándolo es como siempre tenerlo en mi corazón apreciarlo, valorarlo y mirar todo lo que perdí”, expreso el residente Linares.

Según Duckworth, para muchas personas la temporada navideña no siempre es la época más maravillosa del año, lo que muestra la encuesta que es una enorme necesidad que las personas se acerquen y se cuiden entre sí, para mantener

el espíritu de la temporada.

“Esta vez que recibí las tarjetas [navideñas], me dio un poco de nostalgia y emoción por sus palabras que ponen, porque son palabras que llegan al corazón, esos es lo que me motiva [siento que] ellos están ahí apoyándome”, concluyó Linares.

Para este fenómeno conocido como Holiday Blues y las respuestas negativas sobre las emociones percibidas durante esta fiestas en la encuesta realizada por NAMI, reportan que la época navideña contribuye a sentirse triste o insatisfecho; ya que a los encuestados les aflige el estrés financiero, soledad, demasiada presión, expectativa no realista, recuerdos de momentos felices del pasado que es contradictorio al presente o el no lograr compartir estas fechas con seres queridos.

De acuerdo a varios estudios el fenómeno Holiday Blues o La Tristeza Navideña en español, destacan distintos trastornos mentales, sin embargo, problemas mentales a corto plazo deben tomarse en serio, porque pueden llevar a la ansiedad y la depresión clínica.

El tráfico de drogas por correo

Por César Martínez
Staff Writer

La Oficina del Alguacil en Nueva York, está implementando un sistema de escaneo para el control de drogas, esta tecnología le hace frente al contrabando de drogas, ya que la falta de nueva tecnología de escaneo afectan la seguridad de los empleados y la población encarcelaria, en los centros correccionales a lo largo de los EE.UU. Acorde una publicación de *AMERICANJails*.

La publicación destaca que los dos centros más grandes de detención de máxima seguridad del condado de Erin, NY, han estado enfrentando el desafío por la introducción de drogas.

Según la publicación, el condado cuenta con máquinas de escaneo, sin embargo, no puede detectar con certeza las anomalías en las cartas recibidas y menos identificar los componentes de estas drogas.

El objetivo principal es que estas drogas no lleguen a los encarcelados por medio del

correo personal. Ante este desafío de los centros no puede considerar detener la entrega de correo solo por sospecha.

El condado de Erie menciona que el correo es una manera de comunicación que los presos tienen derecho para estar en contacto con sus seres queridos, contribuyendo su salud mental y a la rehabilitación.

AMERICANJails, añade la dificultad de estas prisiones para la detención a la variedad de drogas ilícitas, tales como la heroína, el fentanilo, la cocaína, entre otros ya que cada vez los traficantes siempre usan técnicas cada vez más sofisticadas para la introducción de estas sustancias a través del correo postal.

Más de 400 correos con drogas añadidas por día, se estaban infiltrando por su gran demanda entre personas encarceladas quienes tienen problemas por el uso de drogas. Añadiendo, que otros encarcelados usan estas mismas como moneda de cambio por su valor dentro que puede alcanzar tres veces

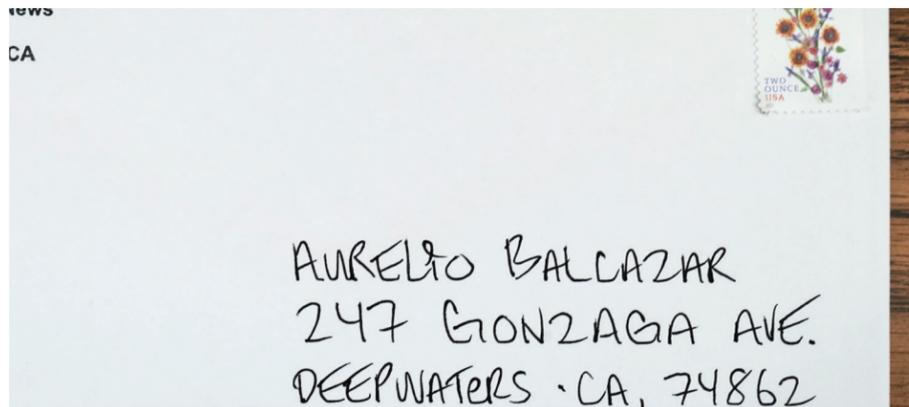


Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

su precio, en comparación a su valor en las calles.

De acuerdo a la publicación, la infiltración de subexpone, estaba provocando el aumento de peleas entre los encarcelados, creando un peligro inminente a los oficiales quienes debían poner mano dura por el uso de esta drogas en los centros penitenciarios del condado de Erin.

Las practicas establecidas como el entrenamiento de los oficiales, la unidad

Dirigido a uno mismo

canina, máquinas de escaneo, monitoreo de llamadas telefónicas y el uso de informantes no eran suficientes para detener esta crisis, aunado principalmente a la carencia de nueva tecnologías.

El artículo indica, que ante esta dificultades los oficiales del condado de Erin se presentaron a una conferencia patrocinada por Asociación Americana de Prisiones, en donde las compañías Eclipse Screening Technologies y

VerVision, ofrecieron una solución donde afirmaban que su tecnología de escaneo podía detectar cualquier sustancia ilegal en los correos postales.

“La tecnología se basaba en imágenes hiperespectrales, un proceso mediante el cual se capturan cientos de imágenes espectrales únicas, en todo el espectro electromagnético en una porción infrarroja de onda corta”, acorde a lo escrito por la publicación y que originalmente fue desarrollado

para el uso del Departamento de Defensa de EE.UU.

Añadiendo que el Jefe del Condado Erin invito al Jefe de Narcótico del condado, arreglando una demostración simulando cartas con drogas ilícitas y que posteriormente la maquina arrojaba resultados contundentes al identificar cada carta que contenía algún tipo de sustancia ilícita, generando así una cofinancia para sus empleados, reforzando la seguridad a través de la identificación del contrabando y así disminución de la violencia en los centros por dichas sustancias.

AMERICANJail reportó, que los representantes del condado de Erin y representantes de estas compañías llegaron a un acuerdo para la adquisición de esta nueva tecnología para estos centros.

Esta alianza entre los Centros y el Departamento de Defensa, ha proporcionado un gran beneficio sus instalaciones, disuadiendo a los encarcelados y haciéndoles saber que el correo no es más una opción para el contrabando de estupefacientes ilícitos.

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Champaign, IL 61820

Nevada/Las Vegas

823 S 6th St,
Las Vegas, NV 89101
(702) 477-2200
<https://consulmex.sre.gob.mx/lasvegas/>

Actualizaciones sobre la legislación 2025-26

AB 1071 (Kalra) — “Racial Justice Act 2025” — The CA Racial Justice Act Court Procedures:

Hará cambios que aclaran el proceso para los reclamos de la ley RJA. Implementara cuatro (4) cosas: establecerá un requisito para designar un abogado. Asegurar el acceso a evidencias relevantes para que los peticionarios puedan afirmar su reclamo de la RJA. Garantizara un método para presentar reclamos de la RJA después de la condena, separado de una petición de habeas corpus y proporcionar más opciones para los correcciones disponibles

a un juez después de que el tribunal determine que hubo una violación de RJA.

Fue firmada por El Gobernador el 13 de octubre de 2025 y entrara en efecto el 1 de enero de 2026.

AB812 (Lowenthal) —Reconsideration for Incarcerated Firefighters:

Autoriza al CDCR a recomendar que los bomberos encarcelados sean considerados para una nueva sentencia, si les quedan 2 años o más en su sentencia.

Fue firmada por El Gobernador el 13 de octubre de 2025 y las

regulaciones de CDCR deberán estar listas para julio de 2027.

AB(Bryan)—Increased Wages for Hand Crew Members:

Aumentara el salario que reciben los miembros de mano de obra encarcelados por las horas trabajadas mientras activamente combaten los incendios llevándolo al salario mínimo federal (\$7.25 p/h).

Fue firmada por El Gobernador el 13 de octubre de 2025 e incluye una “cláusula de urgencia”, lo que significa que este aumento salarial se aplica de inmediato.

SPORTS

Temporary fixes to yard cause safety concern

By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Sports Editor

The off-season is a time for reflection and healing for an athlete's mind and body. Municipalities use the time to repair their facilities. This is not the case for San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's basketball court.

The court, home of the SQ Warriors, is located on the Lower Yard and remains in disrepair during its off-season.

Media, visitors, and outside sports teams including the Golden State Warriors come to play basketball and bring hope to the residents.

Yet, as the SQ Kings and SQ Warriors plan try-outs and engage in pre-season practices, the question remains, how much longer will the basketball court remain playable.

The year 2026 may be the year that the SQ sporting community considers. For the safety of all players on the court, residents in the sports community discussed asking the GS Warriors to stay away due in part because of the substantial upgrade needed. During light sprinkles, a person can see puddles, dips, and holes in the court.

"It's not really playable because of the cracks and



Baseball field with little grass patches and uneven ground

divots, and the surface closest to The Last Mile building is very slippery," said SQ Warrior Charles "Pookie" Sylvester.

The court was used infrequently for over a year, following an application of a coat of light gray substrate. Incarcerated workers tried to improve the surface by laying a level application of Quik-Crete before topping the court off with blue epoxy paint two seasons ago.

"It was supposed to be great but now it's horrible," said SQ Warrior leader Keyshawn "Steez"

Strickland.

San Quentin basketball players and volunteers practice and compete against supporters who travel hundreds of miles each year to sustain the legacy of the prison basketball league.

Some outside teams play in San Quentin's dimly lit gym, but that venue cannot come close to holding the fans that attend the prison's outdoor Golden State Warrior events.

On the Lower Yard, the Field of Dreams is the oldest baseball field in the nation, even older than Rickwood Field in Birmingham,

Alabama.

Incarcerated athletes from the SQ Giants, The Hard Timers, the All-In Flag Football League and SQ's soccer team, all brave the dried-out, uneven playing field. The field is bordered by a dirt track embedded with rock and granite, the remains of past construction projects.

"The 49ers, Giants, and Warriors, who we are blessed to have an association with, can hopefully contribute to make our facility safer," said Warrior coach Jeremiah "JB" Brown.



Crack in the basketball courts asphalt

The Warriors and Giants organizations allow their office staff, as well as players trying to make the team and their coaches, to play on the San Quentin facilities.

SQ Warrior Alonzo Craft asked rhetorically, "Why don't they make the basketball court grippy like the tennis court?"

With a quarter-billion dollars invested in re-imagining San Quentin, Brown said that the state can develop a private-public venture with supportive area sports teams that witness the value of the friendly

competition among residents, volunteers, and inside staff.

All should be able to take for granted the safety of San Quentin's sports facilities, but they cannot.

Perhaps the Field of Dreams, the Madden gridiron, the Frank Ruano Track, and the Blue Demon Court can be what they ought to be.

Residents may be able to play on a field like the one in the movie "Sandlot," but our visitors are trying to make us champions by bringing in champions. Everyone deserves better.

Photos by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Sports betting adds to gambling epidemic

By Jarvis Garner Jr.
Journalism Guild Writer

According to the American Gaming Association, every 3.6 seconds a bet is made in the United States as Americans have dramatically increased their sports betting and gambling addiction since the landmark *Murphy vs. NCAA*, ruled on in the United States Supreme Court.

The *Murphy* case allowed states to legalize sports betting in 2018 and has led to a gambling epidemic that has made its way into professional sports.

Today, with gambling being legalized, the temptation to fix games has been chronicled as prominent NBA figures, and other athletes, have been arrested

by the FBI for multiple forms of illegal gambling.

Most notably NBA hall-of-famer and former head coach of the Portland Trailblazers, Chauncey Billups was charged with rigging high stakes poker games.

The FBI alleged the rigged games spanned for years as Billups lured unknowing NBA players and whales (a term used to describe a person with unlimited access to money) to rigged poker games with promises of them playing along-side celebrities.

Billups was arrested and charged with wire fraud, money laundering, extorting and gambling, according to Reuters' Joseph Ax and Maria Tsvetkova.

Fox news, Ryan Morik

also reported that another marquee NBA player; Terry Rozier was arrested and charged in 2023. The arrest report alleges his involvement stemming from a game in which he played less than ten minutes before citing a foot injury.

Rozier had informed bettors as to the injury and they placed huge wagers on Rozier to perform poorly and won substantial amounts of cash for the illegal bet.

Rozier's attorney Jim Trusty claims the government over stepped its legal boundaries when accusing his client of these allegations of sports betting schemes.

According to FBI Director Kash Patel, Rozier and at least 30 other people were part of a FBI probe into

alleged illegal gambling with ties to the Mob.

More specifically, NYC prosecutors who partnered with the FBI, alleged members of organized crime families including the Bonanno, Gambino, Lucchese, and Genovese families were involved with Rozier and several NBA insiders who divulged sensitive information about upcoming games to their criminal counter-parts.

According to American Gaming Association, illegal sports betting schemes, crime organizations, and average Joes wagered an estimated \$85 billion in the underground or illegal sports betting market.

The Journal of American Medical Association stated

opportunities for sports agencies and bookies to scam the public out of millions or billions of dollars in the legal gaming industry has become more prevalent.

The exhilarating feeling of cashing in on the big bucks often over powers a person's sheer will to think logically and act compulsively, leaving experts to resolve gambling as an addiction, according to a study done by Maine Institute of Medicine.

"I think those NBA guys were operating with a criminal mentality not addiction. Being incarcerated allows me to see that because I used to think the same way," said resident Sonney. "I really don't know if gambling's an addiction or even something bad for that

matter, I just think people should be held accountable for their actions and if you do have a problem, ask for help. For me, I don't gamble at all."

"One thing is for certain, too much of anything can become a problem if we don't manage it accordingly," said resident Ryan Chavez.

If you're an NBA player, a grocery store warehouse worker, or an incarcerated person on the path to redemption, ask yourself this, how much does gambling really cost?

For more information regarding addiction and recovery contact Narcotics Anonymous world services @www.na.org, phone #(818) 773-9999

Residents talk about correlation between domestic violence and Super Bowl

Domestic violence programs at San Quentin report that during Super Bowl Sunday there are more domestic violence arrests in the nation than on any other day.

"One of the heaviest betting, drinking and celebratory days for what is perceived as the last bastion of a misperceived male dominance — infiltrated by women for one game — cheering for the cutest quarterback, the team with the best uniforms and not having a true buy-in nor understanding of the game. With their male partner intoxicated and gambling, that is a recipe for disaster," said resident Raoul Sanchez.

The programs' analysis was corroborated by La Troupe University's Centre for Sport and Social Impact, which sponsored a report that suggests aggression through America's most watched sporting event lends itself as a toxic elixir for domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

According to La Troupe's report titled *Major sports events and domestic violence:*

A systemic review, domestic violence continues as a global epidemic in which 27% of women over the age of 15 years report they've been subjected to domestic violence.

The report states that additional risk factors for domestic violence during major events such as the Super Bowl may include harmful masculinities that involve poor attitudes towards women, male peer relationships and the harmful use of alcohol.

Because of these risk factors, the report concludes that violence against women increases during major sporting events and results in an increase of reported domestic violence cases.

The report found that during football game days there are higher total domestic violence arrests compared to other Sundays. Football game days had higher mean scores for domestic violence arrests than basketball or baseball game days.

"Super Bowl is trying to establish itself as a national holiday, so I do see the relationship between the two,"

said resident Lou Barnabei.

Kirsty Forsdike, Ph.D., Grant O'Sullivan, Ph.D., and Leesa Hooker, Ph.D., authors of the La Troupe study reported that a rivalry game that produces an unexpected loss has a greater effect on domestic violence reporting than a non-rival game (20% vs. 8%). They also reported that frustrating games, which are defined as games where there are a high number of sacks, turnovers or penalties, and unexpected losses following frustrating games, are associated with a 15% increase in domestic violence reports as compared to unexpected losses following non-frustrating games (7%).

If the team is in play-off contention and is either playing a rival or the game was frustrating, resulting in an unexpected loss, there is a 17% increase in domestic violence reports as compared to a 13% increase for all play-off games.

Researchers found that the connection between an upset loss and a spike in domestic violence reports occurred immediately after a game and

not during or several hours post-game completion.

The La Troupe report sampled 26,051 domestic violence reports and 2,697 domestic violence incidences of violence during high profile games and concluded that when games matter the most, there are more domestic violence dispatches.

The La Troupe report concluded that there is a significant correlation between Super Bowl games and an increase in domestic violence.

La Troupe concludes, "That it is not just a major sporting event that is associated with an increase in domestic violence, but rather it may be the culture of a particular sport in a particular country, compounded by the potential significant rivalry between teams and how important, or emotionally salient, the game is."

The report said domestic violence is under-reported to police, and that other information sources for determining domestic violence incidences are needed for future studies — sources that may

include hospital admissions and calls to helplines — that may better identify delays between a game, time of the domestic violence incident and actual reporting or calls for help.

The report added that the impact of alcohol is not clear. However, it does assume alcohol is a risk factor for domestic violence and has been connected to

sports and violence.

Development of interventions that can target these events has so far been hampered by a lack of scholarship and a lack of accountability within the sports industry.

—By Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Sports Editor

The World Health Organization states domestic violence 'refers to behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors'. The organization also reports that men are the most frequent perpetrators of this violence. Domestic violence against women and children has significant effects on victims—survivor's physical and mental health and well being, which may be long lasting.

Health consequences for women include depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress, poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes (such as abortion, pre-term birth, sexually transmitted infections) and chronic pain. Children experience detrimental changes in behavior (aggression and/or mood disorders) and disrupted development. Along with health costs, there are serious social and economic consequences.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>

CALIFORNIA

Prison closure sparks interest in return of luxurious resort

By Terrell J. Marshall
Staff Writer

Closure of the California Rehabilitation Center in Riverside County in 2026 will save \$150 million annually for the state but will displace over 1,200 employees.

Some city officials celebrate the announcement, hoping that closing the prison in Norco, Calif. will restore the property to its former glory, once a luxurious resort location, according to a *Press-Enterprise* article.

The California Correctional Peace Officers Association has a different take on the notice and alleges the closure will have serious and disruptive consequences. "It affects not only... officers and their families but also the broader Riverside County community, which has relied on the stability of these jobs for decades," spokesman Nathan Ballard wrote.

Ballard added that the results of this closure should not go unnoticed and will force transfers, fracture families, and in many cases, end some notable public safety careers.

Brian Charest, Phil Peng,

and Tina Ogata are outside volunteers who helped establish the Born to Run Running Club for residents in the Norco facility in 2024.

According to Peng, a retired Los Angeles Court commissioner, they teach more than fitness and nutrition in the program; they also focus on the power that results when an individual develops a growth mindset.

Charest, a professor at University of Redlands, said the closure will have a direct impact on the CRC community who worked hard to establish a positive rehabilitative program.

"Running can be a vehicle for all kinds of change within a person, both physical and mental," Charest said.

Volunteer Ogata said closing the prison will hinder residents from learning valuable life skills to make a successful transition back into society.

"Each week participants spend one hour in the classroom before spending one hour out on the track," Ogata said.

Peng said the membership of the club has doubled since its inaugural event, thanks to the support of the

Norco Community Resource Management team and residents.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation officials stated that it's making every effort to mitigate the impact on volunteers, staff, and the population throughout the prison's inactivation process. "The state will provide support to the affected local community and workforce with an economic resiliency plan," CDCR noted.

California state prisons house around 91,000 inmates in 31 prisons this year, a 47% drop in population from a 2006 count of 173,000. This is the lowest level since the late 1980s, noted the article.

In 2012, a court-appointed receiver looking at CRC's health care estimated a cost of \$1.4 billion to repair the buildings at CRC. The 2012-2013 state budget then proposed to close the prison by 2016.

In 2015, Sen. Loni Hancock, D-Oakland, informed CDCR that

CRC was full of rats and cockroaches and was missing floor tiles. More than a decade later, the prison's closure plan will finally come

to fruition in 2026.

According to *Press-Enterprise*, this property has a fascinating history that dates back to the grand opening of a luxury hotel in 1928.

The establishment provided hot mineral baths and an 18-hole golf course to guests that included Buster Keaton, Babe Ruth, Will Rogers, Charlie Chaplin, and Clark Gable. Amelia Earhart also used the hotel's private airstrip to practice takeoffs and landings.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt converted the one-time resort into a Navy hospital in 1941, according to the CDCR website.

The hospital became CRC when it was donated to the state and turned into a drug rehabilitation center. In 1957, prisoners moved in alongside patients.

Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco said he is not a fan of the CRC closure and sent a statement from his gubernatorial campaign.

"Gavin Newsom's soft-on-crime policies continue to put criminals ahead of victims. Shutting down another state prison... isn't reform, it's reckless," noted Bianco.

CDCR terminates weight loss drug program

The line of incarcerated individuals at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center waiting to receive injectable medication on Tuesday mornings recently got smaller as SQ began weaning patients off GLP-1 drugs prescribed for weight loss.

"If I need it for my health, why are they taking me off of a medication that is beneficial to me?" asked SQ resident Michael King.

King received a letter from California Correctional Health Care Services in December indicating that his prescription for weight loss medication would end in 2026.

The notice said that to align with Medi-Cal standards and as part of CCHCS' ongoing efforts to promote continued access to medications after release from CDCR, obesity will no longer qualify individuals for prescriptions to medications such as Wegovy, Ozempic, Mounjaro and Zepbound.

San Quentin residents taking the drugs for diabetes or other qualifying health conditions may still receive the GLP-1 medications.

The notice said that King's prescription is for weight loss and was terminated for that reason. "I'm sorry that this is the case, but these new rules have my hands tied," said King's physician.

According to an October 2025 article in *Shots—Health News*, a survey showed weight loss drugs have helped reduce obesity rates to 37% of U.S. adults, down from 39.9% three years ago.

The survey found that the numbers of Americans taking weight loss drugs under the brands Wegovy, Ozempic, Mounjaro, and Zepbound has more than doubled during the past year and a half. Approval to use these drugs to treat obesity in the U.S. came in 2021, the *Shots* article reported.

In October 2023, CDCR began distributing the same drugs to incarcerated individuals diagnosed with obesity and diabetes. SQ residents whose body mass index exceeded 30 qualified as obese and became eligible to receive the GLP-1 medications. As of 2026, residents previously qualified solely due to a diagnosis of obesity no longer qualify for the medication.

According to *Shots*, persons on the outside are also running into barriers hindering access to the popular weight loss drugs.

Dr. Fatima Stanford, a Harvard University obesity specialist, said that access to these drugs will soon be an even bigger issue. She said that many private insurers are stopping coverage, and patients without insurance will pay \$500 more a month to receive the medication.

While drug makers are working on a less expensive pill version of the drugs, the added cost for treatments would be out of reach for many, said Stanford.

SQ resident Marcus Gallegos said he lost 55 pounds in 10 months taking the weight loss drug. He said side effects included diarrhea and upset stomach and that the severity of the symptoms varied depending on the dose he received. After stabilizing his dosage, the uncomfortable side effects went away and the weight loss benefit outweighed his temporary discomfort.

Along with injecting the drug, Gallegos' weight loss journey included changing his diet and attending the exercise movement class offered to all residents at the facility. His prescription is for both weight loss and other underlying health conditions, which qualifies him to continue receiving the drug.

"It would be a shame if they took me off the medicine, because I've always battled with my weight," Gallegos said. "Hunger cravings are real, and those shots once a week really curb my appetite."

Gallegos said that many residents are upset that CCHCS is weaning them off the medication. One of his friends used to take five different pills a day, but now he gets one shot a week. Like others, he said his friend is afraid of gaining the weight back when the prescription ends.

"Bottom line is whether you are on the medication or not, you can't outrun a bad diet," Gallegos said. "Exercise is a big part of losing weight, but it's the junk food that is fueling obesity."

—By Terrell J. Marshall
Staff Writer

Fatherhood in prison transcends generations

By Jason L. Jackson
Staff Writer

San Quentin residents prove that the power of fatherhood can transcend the distance and time that prison creates.

Twice a week, Marcus Shepard and his 15-year-old son work out for 45 minutes. Shepard calls his son on the phone or with the incarcerated video visiting app and proceeds to lead them through an exercise routine. After nine years of incarceration, Shepard said that he has had to become creative in his approach to maintaining a healthy connection with his son.

"I have a great relationship with my son, but it takes effort and initiative to show up and be there for him," said Shepard.

Numbers can be difficult to quantify, but national data from Fatherhood.org and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children show that around 47% of incarcerated men throughout the country are dads.

Similar to prisons throughout the country, San

Quentin is full of men who have had to become equally creative as they work to remain active participants in their children's lives while navigating a world of separation, sporadic lockdowns, and unknowns.

"The love that I have for my babies is what made me remain active in my children's lives," said Vance Sams, a SQ resident and father of three.

During his 15 years of incarceration, Sams said he had to work to overcome the shame and guilt he developed after leaving his young family and coming to prison. Overcoming these emotions helped him create better relationships with his kids.

"I wanted my children to grow mentally and emotionally from my situation. I wanted them to learn independence and to know that they could still be successful even though I'm not there," said Sams.

Men at San Quentin reveal how remaining consistent as a father can be difficult. Often times, men are moved hundreds of miles away from home, and contact with family is maintained through

"I have a great relationship with my son, but it takes effort and initiative to show up and be there for him"

phone calls, letters, and, if someone is fortunate enough, in-person visits. Assistance from family is also necessary for the fostering of healthy relationships.

"You need support from the other end. The other parent has to be open to facilitating the relationship or else it's not going to happen," said Phillip Pandey, a SQ resident and father of three. Pandey credits his wife for helping him maintain a great connection with their two daughters over the course of 16 years of incarceration.

Growth and maturity is also a common theme amongst the active fathers at San Quentin.

"I wasn't always the best father I could be because I was selfish and didn't put my kids and family first," said Pandey, who admitted that maturity has come through hard work, time, and experience. He is

now focused on maintaining the healthy communication he has with his daughters while instilling the life lessons that will help them be successful.

"I never lie to my daughters, and I teach them to always use their voice in the world," said Pandey.

Shepard facilitates a parenting program called Parenting Through R1 so men can learn skills and healthy methods to approach parenthood.

"My goal is to provide men with the tools to enable them to be better fathers and grandfathers," said Shepard.

Many men at San Quentin have learned that no matter how difficult incarceration can be on families, being a parent is still possible. Through growth, determination, and patience incarcerated fathers can still have a positive impact on their children's lives.

"I'm proud of my kids because they have accomplished all of their goals without me being there," said Sams, who urges fathers to "never give up" and remember to listen to their kids.

News Briefs inside California's prisons By Bostyon Johnson Managing Editor

1) The Correctional Training Facility (CDCR Press Release) –

The relaunch of the "We Care" program links at-risk youth with incarcerated men to hold a dialogue about the road to prison and the consequences of life choices. "We are committed to breaking the cycle and helping the next generation succeed," Warden Edward Borla said in the press release. The program includes five youth, six sponsors, and 18 incarcerated persons who hold virtual meetings monthly and in-person gatherings every other month.

2) Wasco State Prison (CDCR Press Release) –

Incarcerated firefighters helped the Kern County Fire Department by supplying water during a structure fire near Highway 46. Overall, the fire "impacted a mobile home with multiple additions, livestock animals, and vehicles," said the press release. The remote location of the structure fire made sourcing water difficult, but thanks to the cooperation and teamwork of the WSP incarcerated fire department, the Kern County Fire Department stopped the fire from progressing.

3) California (CDCR Press Release) –

A new step-down reentry program opened in Fresno, Calif., for people nearing parole. The partnership between the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Rehabilitative Programs, and TURN Behavioral Health Services offers tools that assist individuals to acclimate into society. "... Rehabilitation is not just an idea, it's a practice," said Sydney Tanimoto, with DRP Program Operations. "With visionary community reentry programs like this, California is leading the way forward in creating a new model for public safety."

4) Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison at Corcoran (CDCR Press Release) –

The incarcerated population raised close to \$6,000 to help feed families around Kings County through Operation Gobble. The program passed out Thanksgiving meals in the four pick-up cities: Corcoran, Home Garden, Avenal, and Kettleman City. Warden Morales, Chief Deputy Warden Jones, and Community Resources Manager J. Bragg joined other SATF staff to hand out meals and thanks to last-minute donors. Residents at Corcoran received pumpkin pie and mashed potatoes thanks to those donors.

5) Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla (CDCR Press Release) –

Residents involved in the Occupational Mentor Certification Program hosted a facility-wide food drive to feed families facing food insecurities. "I was motivated to bring this idea for the food drive to our OMCP after watching the morning news," said resident Kanoa Harris-Pendang. Non-perishable and monetary donations were collected November 7-21. CCWF Warden A. De La Cruz and Correctional Counselor (CC) III F. Singleton delivered a box of food and a check for \$1,100 to the Madera County Food Bank.

6) California Institution for Women (CDCR Press Release) –

Sack Lunch Saturdays, a nonprofit that strives to strengthen communities, provided Thanksgiving care packages to residents. The care packages included potatoes, canned vegetables, turkey stuffing, gravy, macaroni and cheese, and a gift card to purchase a fresh turkey. "Through the generosity of Sack Lunch Saturdays, women in the institution were reminded they are valued and supported, especially during the holidays," said the CDCR release.

COMMUNITY



SQNews archive

Residents and music instructors collaborate

Musical talents collaborate to perform original songs

By Jason L. Jackson
Staff Writer

Silky, smooth falsettos and blaring horns brought musicians together in weeklong Musicambia workshop.

Musicambia held its annual workshop at San Quentin, where seasoned artists, accomplished music students, and incarcerated people bonded over songwriting and the shared appreciation for all things music. The workshop culminated with a two-hour concert where participants performed 12 original songs created throughout the week. The musical genres ranged from R&B, jazz, to rock & roll.

"I love being able to work with a full scale band and to share my lyrics. It's a great feeling being seen and heard in a healthy way," said San Quentin resident Douglas Yim, who helped write lyrics to one of the original songs. Yim said he was inspired by the visiting musicians and loved the fact that everyone learned from each other during the process.

This year's workshop was attended by students from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Among the group were talented trumpet and trombone players, drummers, bass players, keyboardists, and vocalists. The students spent a week connecting with incarcerated artists, assisting with songwriting and providing useful tips with various instruments. They were invaluable contributors to the songs created during

the workshop.

"I would definitely do this again," said Trishsha Monterola, a vocalist and student at the Conservatory of Music, who works as a sound effects specialist on video games. She said the workshop afforded her the opportunity to connect with and learn from the incarcerated people who attended.

"Music is about connection. It is a medium that allows people to understand themselves and others," said Monterola.

Founded in 2013 by musician and composer Nathan Schram, Musicambia brings music into prisons to help incarcerated people "build community, creativity, and personal growth," according to the language on the program's website. The workshop gave incarcerated musicians the chance to build genuine connections, and share their stories through the music they created.

"Music has allowed me to vent my emotions and express myself. I'm often considered an oddball because I'm from another country, so I stay to myself a lot and pour into my music," said SQ resident Michael Mackey, who started rapping at the age of 13. After immigrating to America from Haiti, Mackey said he fell in love with Hip Hop culture and music after seeing the group and rap artists Digital Underground and Tupac Shakur perform for the first time.

"Music is universal. It is how I was able to bridge the gap between me and my new

environment," said Mackey. Mackey credits music for not only increasing his education and making him a better communicator, but with molding him in a way that enabled him to better connect with those around him.

More than the creation of songs, Musicambia showed music's unique ability to bring together people from different backgrounds, communities, and walks of life. Through their love for the art, seasoned professionals like Judith Hill rocked it out with students and aspiring artists, and people with little to no knowledge of incarceration shared their skills with men who have spent years in prison.

"Music has the ability to cross social borders. The people from Musicambia come in and work with us at our lowest, and they use music to help us connect and get to our highest," said SQ resident Oscar Wilde, who participated in the workshop for his second year and is looking to volunteer with the program after his release.

Musicambia revealed that rhythm and music notes are not pigeonholed into one group or category, but instead can be shared in numerous genres by anyone looking to build a bridge of connection.

"Music shouldn't be a commodity. It should be accessible to everyone and used to learn about different walks of life while helping people find themselves," said Monterola.

Kwanzaa: a reflection of principles through culture and community

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

San Quentin residents spoke about what three of the seven principles of Kwanzaa mean to them, giving their perspectives on community and family.

The principles of Kwanzaa consist of Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work), Ujamaa (Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith).

In 1966, Maulana Karenga authored the seven principles of Kwanzaa. He's a former professor of African Studies at University of California Long Beach, according to the *University of Sankore Press*.

"Our people have used these principles to overcome so much adversity and struggle," said SQ resident Michael "Mikael" Walker II.

Steve Embrey, 53, said unity is the best thing the community could have, that by coming together as a collective the community's success would be unstoppable.

Embrey used his hand as a metaphor to express unity. He spread all five of his fingers, separating them individually, "This is a sign of weakness,"

he said. He brought his fingers together making a fist and said, "This is a sign of unity."

Additionally he said that when people in the community are feeling down, the community should come together and lift them up.

Akbar Bey said that his parents always taught him and his siblings to stick together. Despite being in prison, when he talks to his sister on the phone the conversation is about being a part of the collective community.

Steven Warren is a poet incarcerated at SQ. He shared some written thoughts on what his ancestors would say to this young generation of descendants.

"I am your ancestor from the bloodline that carried the chains. I'm writing to you because the movement is not dead. It waits on you," Warren wrote.

Another resident revealed his perspective on self-determination as it applies to being responsible.

Ryan "Taz" Matlock, 30, said that prior to coming to prison he didn't know anything about Kwanzaa. His incarceration was a product of his own choices, but today he holds himself accountable.

Matlock added that it's

important to understand the principle of self-determination, to strive for something good, through positive responsibilities.

"There is a sense of urgency to encourage ourselves and speak for ourselves," Matlock said. "If I can do this so can you. Ask yourself: what does it mean to be a Black person?"

In just five words, an SQ resident spoke about his willpower through self-determination, self-consciousness, self-motivation, self-ambition, and enthusiasm, which are words of success, said 34-year-old resident Zachery "Soulja" Rideaux Jr.

Jonathan Watts, 28, said that self-determination drives his ambition to be an entrepreneur. He is a certified welder, and the money he will earn from that skill will help him start his own business once released.

In bringing in the New Year, resident Ralph "RB" Brown, 50, said self-determination means to stay grounded and give himself awareness by putting his best foot forward.

Incarcerated person Jarvis Garner Jr., 38, reflected on times when there was destruction in communities. Purpose for the community is a positive affirmation to rebuild the community.

Garner reflected on the history of the Watts riots of 1965, saying that the event devastated the community, and then the following year saw the creation of Kwanzaa.

"It's easy to destroy, and it's hard to rebuild," said Garner. "We have been doing the easy things all our life. It's time to try something different."

Traditions are something deeper than the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The community can bring a gift of peace to the community, to use constructive words as means of peace, said resident Walker.



SQNews archive

Candles representing the seven spiritual principles

50-year old non-profit provides incarcerated-trained service dogs to disabled person

By Ben Greenspon
Journalism Guild Writer

One dog at a time is being trained in the shadow of a notorious cellblock at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, where lies an oasis of tranquility, training and healing.

SQ resident Jared Hansen, 42, never imagined being a part of a dog-training program when he was transferred to the prison. He grew up in San Diego, Calif., without a dog; his family could not afford a pet, but he loved playing with the neighborhood dogs.

Hansen was accepted into the Canine Companions program and introduced to Artemis, a four-month-old Black Labrador; it was a moment he will always remember.

"The first night I couldn't sleep. I kept looking under the bed at Artemis. He'd be looking back at me, [and] it was sort of creepy," Hansen said.

Hansen's journey officially began April 4, 2023, when Canine Companions delivered Artemis and Wendell, the first two dogs to be trained. As cellmates, Artemis and Hansen would spend huge amounts of time together

within the next year.

Hansen now trains dogs for a minimum of two hours a day on the West Block recreation yard. What looks like sport and play, when Artemis is chasing Frisbees and balls, is actual training.

A partnership between Canine Companions and SQ allows qualified residents to interact with dogs in prison. The 50-year-old non-profit organization provides service dogs — at no cost and for life — to people with disabilities.

The first dog program was established in 1995 at Coffee Creek Women's Correctional Facility in Portland, Ore. Since then, Canine Companions says they have established 50 dog programs in prisons across the nation.

According to the American Kennel Club, the national success rate for a service dog training program is roughly 50%, and dogs trained in prison programs, like San Quentin's, have a higher success rate, right around 60%.

The dog park where the training takes place is roughly half the size of a basketball court in length and is surrounded by a waist-high wooden fence.

There is artificial turf, a canopy for shade, some

chairs and a giant mural depicting an outdoor-park-like theme, complete with dogs and trees that give the area a peaceful vibe.

In the beginning of 2023, word quickly spread across San Quentin that a dog program was on the way.

Several SQ residents have been in prison for decades; some of these men haven't seen a dog in over 40 years. The idea of having a canine companion running around the prison was mind-blowing for them.

The requirements to become a dog handler were: first an incarcerated person had to be disciplinary free for three years; then there would be a lot of responsibility and trust required, according to SQ's administration.

"The directors gave us professional training and a lot of support," Hansen said. "It was very challenging at first, but once I saw some success, it was very rewarding."

According to Canine Companions, there were 42 cues that Artemis needed to learn. Behavioral science, impulse control, and self-regulation all had to be taught. Hansen had his hands full, but he was up to the challenge.

"My whole program and

attitude changed. I found something special," Hansen said. "This is not like doing prison time; it's brought my life peace."

With 10 years left to serve, Hansen said dogs give him an "emotional boost" and stave off loneliness. He had found his calling, and he hopes to be part of the program until the day he walks out of prison a free man, and maybe even after.

"Dog trainers don't make a lot of money, but I could see myself doing this after I get out," he said. "It'd be a great second job."

As Artemis grew in size, so did the program. Every three months, another two dogs were delivered to San Quentin.

Hansen said he took his role seriously, and within a short period of time he became the lead trainer for the other incarcerated residents fortunate enough to be accepted into the program.

Then came the day that Hansen had to say goodbye to Artemis. Every dog that arrives at San Quentin will eventually be released back into society, paroled to a life of loving service.

After 12 months, Artemis would graduate from prison and begin "phase two,"

consisting of six to nine months of professional training through Canine Companions.

A whole year had passed, and Artemis was ready to begin phase two of the program.

"Two weeks before Artemis was leaving, I began to grieve. I started handing him off to other guys, distancing myself because it was going to break my heart," Hansen said.

Hansen had no say where Artemis would end up. He had done his best and prayed that the dog he spent a year of his life with would provide meaningful service to someone who loved him as much as he did. However, it would not be the last time they would see each other.

A couple of times a year, Canine Companions hosts a two-week-long meet and match on its Santa Rosa, Calif. campus. The purpose is to match the fully trained dogs with people in need of a service dog.

A man named Ben Carter was one of these people. Carter was a veterinarian from Portland, Ore., who was part of the dog program at Coffee Creek from 2016 to 2018.

But in 2018, Carter had back surgery and was paralyzed. He wound up in a wheelchair.

The man who devoted his life to helping animals was now in need of a service dog himself.

The clinic Carter worked at had even sponsored a dog. This means they paid all the costs associated with training that dog to become of service, which could be up to \$60,000.

Carter was placed on a waiting list, and a few years later, he was at the Canine Companions event. By the end of the event, Carter wrote only one dog's name on a card, "Artemis." He even underlined it, punctuating his desire for the dog. As fate would have it, Artemis had the special training that Carter required and he took Artemis home.

On March 28, 2025, one day before Hansen's 42nd birthday, Carter and Artemis came into San Quentin. Hansen got to meet the man who took Artemis home. It was one of those moments in life that neither man will ever forget.

For Hansen, seeing Artemis again was a joy and a blessing, a reminder of the journey they had started together.

"My mind was blown. It was amazing," Hansen said. "That was the moment that solidified why I'm doing this. Second happiest day of my life, behind the birth of my daughters."

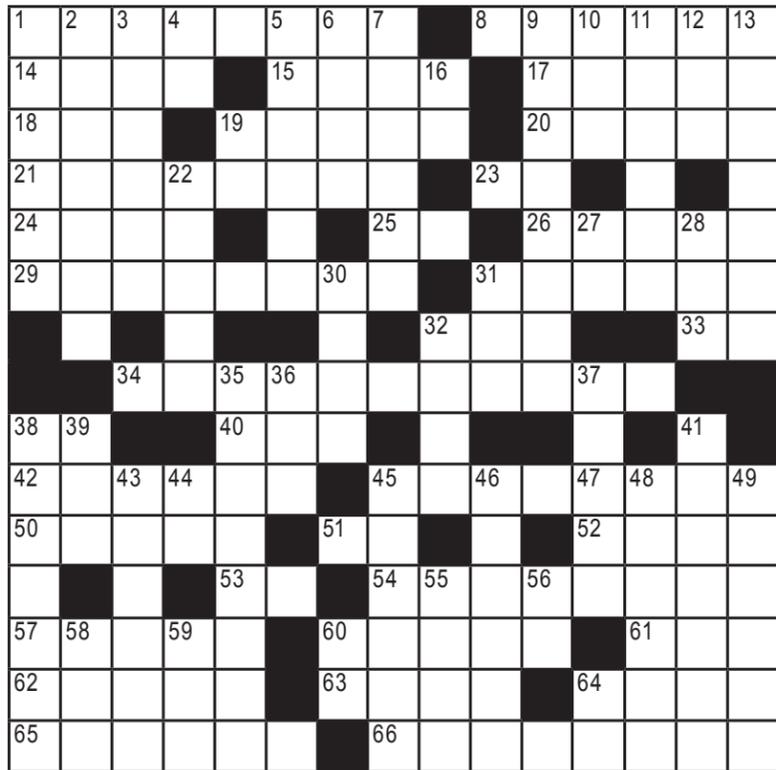
GAMES

CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Michael Fangman

"American History"

Edited by Jan Perry



- Across
1. Many of them sleep in Arlington
8. This bit of Americana used to deliver food on roller skates
14. Taylor Swift certainly had some
15. Not a construction location, but a way to offer credit
17. Japanese cartoon Speed
18. These often pop up, especially in your internet browser
19. He often sings the melody, while the baritone takes the harmony
20. This writing subject is also a park
21. Michael Stipe lost his
23. Rapper from the ATL
24. This berry grows in bogs
25. England is no longer part of it
26. You can find much on guitar necks
29. Technically, Washington's troops attacked these soldiers at Valley Forge... not the British.
31. What you might hear after stepping on a lawyer's toes
32. These days, it's Noem's home
33. Superego, ego, and ___
34. Our 42nd president could have sung this Schoolhouse Rock tune, especially on the steps of Congress
38. It's 3.14259...
40. Pauses in speech, often
42. The Beach Boys needed her help
45. Caesar, Napoleon & some penguins
50. This King Tryggvason ruled Norway 995-1000 AD
51. You can find much of the world at its New York headquarters
52. On compasses, they always sit opposite of the SSWs
53. This western territory officially became a state Sept. 9, 1850 (abbr.)
54. The 10th amendment of the US Constitution says that all powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved (2 words)
57. This foodie word which is used to describe "mouth feel" literally means "deliciousness" in Japanese
60. These can be hitched, tethered, fastened, moored, and if you're playing baseball, frozen
61. Narcan can be used to avoid these
62. Your grandmother might have made this drink, perhaps w/ marshmallows
63. This word, from the Latin emittere, means "to leave out"
64. Brooks & Dunn, Jan & Dean, etc.
65. Your inbox might be full of them
66. This right is a favorite of the NRA

- Down
1. The 4th amendment is meant to guarantee that a warrant is required to _____ a person's home/vehicle.
2. Arranged in a methodical way (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). In the military, given instructions by another, usually someone of higher rank
3. A round-trip ticket from Vegas
4. Worse than Cs
5. Minecrafted tropical trees pollinated by virtual bats and worshiped by villages filled with e-Mayans
6. A derisive MAGA term
7. They sang about their need for obtaining satisfaction
9. They set out the powers of the legislature in the US Constitution
10. Say this out loud and you're halfway to being a cheerleader
11. A filibuster standing on its head?
12. This technology company makes devices from component parts from other organizations (abbr.)
13. How your shirt might return from the cleaners
16. You can find DRs and RNs there
19. In Biology, it precedes the name of a species (abbr.)
22. These two words let you know the speech is about to end
27. One famous Bundy
28. Saying "yes" to Paris
30. According to some, a monster still lurks in this loch's waters
31. Minuteman II nearly out of its silo
32. General "Stonewall" Jackson lost this just prior to his death
35. This branch of the US government was born from Article III
36. In Pulp Fiction, she and John won a dance contest at Jackrabbit Slim's
37. This Doone makes shortbread
38. It often has its own grocery aisle
39. Where you would find the San Diego Gulls listed (abbr.)
41. Both 21-across and 11-down are one of these in the 1st amendment
43. A state in southern Mexico
44. It's in eastern Canada (abbr.)
45. You might do this in a catacomb
46. It's 100 centimos in Barcelona
48. Taylor spent much of 2025 there
49. Watch out! It's a snake!
55. A young Ron Howard on TV
56. They come after "esses"
58. Many sports figures thank her in post-game interviews
59. Me, in Provence
60. If you see these two letters together, you're likely on a passenger ferry
64. Usually a county's top prosecutor

BOOK REVIEW

A distant mirror into politics

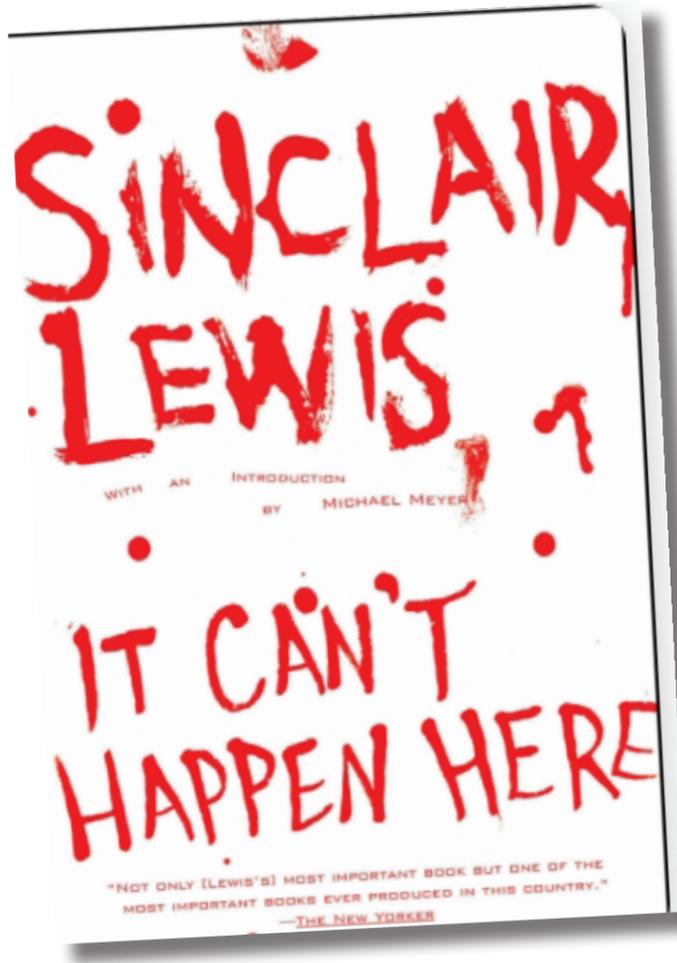


Photo provided by goodreads.com

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter Staff Writer

Could a president of the United States ever dismantle democratic institutions, silence the press, and establish a paramilitary force to crush dissent to save America?

"It can't happen here," said the character Doremus Jessup, a small-time Vermont newspaper editor, in chapter 16 of Sinclair Lewis's novel It Can't Happen Here (1935), written some 90 years ago.

Lewis preceded Jessup's answer with the prophetic quotation, "He simply did not believe that this comic tyranny could endure."

Jessup's disbelief concerned the fictional 1936 win of Senator Berzelius "Buzz" Windrip, "the first president inaugurated not on March fourth, but on January twentieth, according to the provision of the new Twentieth Amendment..."

Windrip's followers took his win as "A sign straight from Heaven... that proved that Windrip was starting a new paradise on earth."

Point Five said, "Annual net income per person shall be limited to \$500,000. No accumulated fortune may at any time exceed \$3,000,000 per

person." Such an idea—even without a translation into today's dollars—would certainly rid the world of a billionaire oligarchy and its disproportionate power.

Jessup's small voice in his small newspaper opposed Windrip at every stage of his takeover. The novel read like a how-to on taking over the U.S. A large part of the novel also concerned redistricting, not just in one state, but everywhere. Concentration camps appeared in chapter 30, and Jessup inevitably ended up in one.

In chapter 35, President Windrip, who considered Canada his property by manifest destiny, expressed anger that the neighbor to the north showed "no helpfulness about becoming part of his inevitable empire."

In this political apocalypse, the press fell first and then came universities. Arrests of college professors started in chapter 32, with the arrest of a Black professor at Howard University whose "professorship was taken over by a most worthy and needy white man..."

A few paragraphs later, the Black professor joined Jessup in a concentration camp. Much of the story took place at the Ivy League Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Since 1928, Lewis had lived in Barnard, Vermont, not far from Dartmouth, in a house he bought for his wife, the journalist Dorothy Thompson.

Mark Schorer's biography Sinclair Lewis: An American Life (1961) detailed that Thompson had interviewed Adolf Hitler in 1931 but three years later found herself expelled from Germany.

Schorer said Lewis could not have written the novel without Thompson's help. She supposedly helped him with other books, too. By 1935, Lewis, the first American recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, had already written the excellent novels Babbitt, Main Street, and Arrowsmith, all timeless classics that no one should miss.

It Can't Happen Here, though, has none of the gorgeous descriptions of Lewis's previous books; it read more like a proofed first draft. Schorer said Lewis started the novel in May 1935, and rushed it to a publisher August 12. It appeared October 21, 70 days later, which even today would seem a record for such a long book. Despite the sorely lacking literary quality, the work made up with its prescience.

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solution grid with numbers 1-9.

Word search solution grid with letters.

SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid with some numbers pre-filled.

Sudoku puzzle grid with some numbers pre-filled.