

# San Quentin News

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## California Supreme Court makes own modification to three-strikes law



Wikicommons

California Supreme Court building, Sacramento

By Jerry Maleek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair

Two strikes based on the same set of facts? “Not anymore” says California’s Supreme Court as they clarify the language of the 31-year-old Three Strikes Law.

In the case of Troy Lee Shaw, the Court handed down its interpretation of the qualifying second and third strikes.

In December of 2025 the California Supreme Court determined that an offender must have two separate failed attempts at reform before receiving a harsher sentence. The Court used the baseball analogy — a defendant does not get two strikes with one swing of the bat.

“The language of California Supreme Court in *People v. Shaw* is so broad in its application, it seems

judges are trying to right a wrong,” said San Quentin resident Tyrone D. Jones, 46, incarcerated for 26 years under the Three Strikes Law.

In 2002, Shaw was convicted of two counts of vehicular manslaughter. Eighteen years later, he received a 25-years-to-life sentence after facing drug possession charges that were

See STRIKES on pg 4

## Loud noise over PA system cause for health concerns

By Terrell J. Marshall  
Staff Writer

The loud public address system used to make announcements inside the housing units at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center is taking a toll on residents and causing health concerns.

According to Chris Berdik’s research in *Discovery Magazine*, loud noise has the power to cause permanent and irreparable hearing loss, which can negatively affect a person’s mental health.

“Most officers use the PA system properly,” said SQRC resident Robert Gomez, 56. “But some of them blast the volume all day long and start yelling as soon as they get here.”

On average, residents housed at SQ hear more than 80 announcements daily. Correctional officers use the facility’s PA systems to inform incarcerated people of scheduled unlocks, when to receive medication, attend appointments, or to get on the ground during an alarm.

Some residents are worried that the cumulative attacks on their ear drums by the loud noise coming from the PA speakers are negatively impacting their health. Berdik’s research about hearing loss validates their concerns.

Berdik found that sounds are essentially waves of energy that trigger cascades of molecular collisions inside the eardrum. Loud sound waves damage the inner ear, causing hearing loss.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that more than 40 million American adults have noise-induced hearing loss, a number that could exceed 73 million by 2060.

According to resident Stuart

Clarke, 69, some days there is no escaping the barrage of noise coming from the facility’s PA system.

“Some officers claim we can’t hear them as justification for making such loud announcements,” said Clarke. “It’s not that we can’t hear them, it’s that we can’t understand them because they don’t enunciate properly when they are yelling.”

Sound is measured in decibels. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health suggests a limit of 85 decibels of exposure over eight hours. Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency recommends that people cap their exposure at 70 decibels — comparable to the sound of a dishwasher — over the course of 24 hours.

Berdik’s research revealed that sound energy bends the hair cells that line the components making up the inner ear, sending electrical signals to the brain through the auditory nerve. He cautions that loud sounds do not just bend hair cells, they break them, destroying their connections to the auditory nerve.

Berdik added that eventually the battering caused by higher decibels will kill off entire cells, disrupting the flow of neural messages to the brain.

“Your ears don’t care if the decibels come from your job, your local bar, or your power tool. They don’t care whether the music blasting from your ear buds is rock, country, or hip-hop,” said Berdik. “If the sound is loud enough, it will cause damage.”

His advice to those exposed to loud noise is to wear protection; otherwise, there is danger of losing part of their sonic world forever.

See SOUND on pg 4

## Single-cell living provides safer living conditions

By Terrell J. Marshall  
Staff Writer

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center stands on the front lines of providing safer living conditions for incarcerated people by providing more widespread single-cell occupancy.

In January, the SQRC community heard construction noises and witnessed loads of barbed wire, steel isolation cells, and debris hauled away from the prison’s former administrative segregation Carson unit of South Block — which was disbanded in 2023 — during renovations.

“With another prison closing soon, there was a big push to get this unit open,” said South Block Lt. Campbell.

Campbell said the effort to repurpose Carson was twofold: it

expanded on plans to provide more single cells for the general population and made space for the potential intake of incarcerated people.

SQRC’s move toward providing more single-cell housing units is in line with what some California policy makers and prison officials said is in the interest of incarcerated people, prison staff, and public safety, according to an article in *CalMatters*.

California’s incarcerated population has declined from 173,000 people in 2006 to under 90,000 today. Many agree it is time to rethink potentially harmful double occupancy housing situations inside prisons.

Through Gov. Gavin Newsom’s term, changes to resentencing and parole eligibility have helped to release thousands of incarcerated

See SINGLE on pg 4

## Lawsuit filed over inhumane conditions at California City Detention Center

By Kevin D. Sawyer  
Editor-in-Chief



Wikicommons

California City Detention Facility

Detainees held at California City Detention Facility, in the Mojave Desert, filed a lawsuit against Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security to challenge alleged inhumane conditions of confinement.

The plaintiffs in the 71-page class-action lawsuit have accused ICE, DHS and government officials of civil rights violations of their right to due process of law, right to consult counsel, and other abuses prohibited by the First and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

According to the lawsuit, there are also alleged violations of The

See LAWSUIT on pg 4

### FATHER FIGURES

Families cope with male figures absence from home

— STORY ON PAGE 5



### CDCR BUDGET

CDCR budget increases as incarcerated population declines

— STORY ON PAGE 5

### WOMENS HISTORY MONTH

Women recognized for their achievements

— STORY ON PAGE 6-7



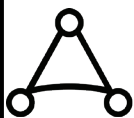
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**PROFILE**

# Correctional officer's dedication to sports left impact on resident teams

By **Martin Keith DeWitt**  
Journalism Guild Writer

One correctional officer's dedication to sports benefits the residents of San Quentin Rehabilitation Center.

Lower Yard Officer S. Finkbohner has assisted athletes in the facility for the past nine years regardless of their sport by providing controlled access to recreation lockers. The lockers contain the uniforms and equipment that athletes need to compete in sports of all types and the tools required to maintain the fields and courts.

"Without Finkbohner's unrelenting dedication to the program, our Saturdays would be lost," said Jerry "J.B." Brown, coach of the San Quentin Warriors under-40 basketball team.

Finkbohner's love of sports goes back to his childhood, during which he played multiple sports while growing up in the North Bay.

Although his sports career was cut short by injuries, he continued to be involved in athletics by lending his experience to others as a coach. "I have a good understanding of what works and what doesn't, so I share because most guys here are just playing street ball," said Finkbohner. "Here everyone is secure and there is no judgment."

When Finkbohner was 23 years old he was approached by a family friend, Miss O'Brien, who was a Correctional Counselor III at Folsom. She encouraged him to attend the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Academy, which he did.

During his career as a correctional officer he also managed the Petaluma Leghorns American Legion under-19 baseball team. In 2025, his team became state champions, which helped him to provide a positive impact on the San Quentin Giants baseball program. For the SQ Giants, he has recruited outside teams for them to compete against. Finkbohner also provided high-level instruction to players by getting former major league players to visit the team and provide knowledge to improve their individual skills. In doing so, he improved the quality of baseball being played at the institution.

Finkbohner has recruited teams he has competed against, including the Yuba City, Calif., Stripers American Legion under-19



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Retired SF 49er Frank Gore with Correctional Officer S. Finkbohner

senior league team, a team that were 2023 state champions; he also recruited Butte Community College from Chico, Calif. Finkbohner continues to be a liaison as he arranges future games that include teams like the Fresno Athletics, the West Sacramento Samurais and the Alameda Athletics and Merchants.

Former professional athletes and private baseball instructors Chaz Meadows and coach Jason Ferber have come to San Quentin and led hitting and fielding drills. They also donated high-tech pitching and hitting tools to assist team members who are trying to improve their baseball skills.

San Quentin Giants' team captain Carrington "The Natural" Russelle related a story of a time when he was working on his fielding and Finkbohner, whom he did not know, approached him on the field and gave him some tips on how to make backhand catches. After getting to know him, Russelle sought out Finkbohner to get advice on pitching.

Finkbohner's first experience in athletics was playing basketball at the Boys & Girls Club in the third grade. At age 12 he was part of the first wave of travel ball baseball teams. Basketball was his first love but he excelled at baseball.

At Casa Grande High School he participated in basketball, baseball and football for all four years. At age 17 he played

on the American Legion under-19 senior league team. After high school he started coaching baseball at the junior high level and coached at several local schools. In the 2020-21 season, Finkbohner began coaching football at Saint Vincent High School as a passing game coordinator. That team won state championships in 2023 and 2024.

"As his partner and friend, Finkbohner is always willing to give input, advice, and coaching to staff and their families when asked," said Correctional Officer J. Azevedo, who works with him on the Lower Yard.

San Quentin resident Patrick Poteat, who assists in the maintenance of the baseball diamond, finds Finkbohner to be accommodating to his needs while being lighthearted, extremely professional and helpful in the execution of his responsibilities.

Bhatt explained that C/O Finkbohner provides Bhatt with observations of the SQRC sports complex while he is off-site. He said Finkbohner's ability to interface with the volunteers and the teams give him a line of communication that will be missed. Finkbohner is transferring jobs to the hospital.

"It will be hard when [Finkbohner] moves," said physical education teacher/coach Kuntal Bhatt. "He is a staple and makes sure things run smooth."

## Principal focuses on education within rehabilitation



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Principal Henderson

By **Anthony Manuel Carvalho**  
Sports Editor

As the San Quentin Model celebrates its grand opening of Governor Newsom's 240-million-dollar learning center, recently appointed Supervisor of Correctional Education Programs, Principal J. Henderson spoke of his experiences and philosophies that will mold the education department.

"As Nelson Mandela says, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,'" said Henderson. Henderson was named SQRC's education leader in November of last year.

Henderson spent seven years at California Men's Colony and exhibits a philosophy that is in line with the planned future of SQRC.

"I have always heard positive things about SQRC, and with the new learning center opening, it felt like the right time to make a change," said Henderson. "The principal job at SQRC is unique due to the volume of programming options, so

being flexible and open-minded is key to continuing and enhancing success at SQRC.

Henderson spoke of the enormity of opening the new facility and the progress of hiring additional staff for all areas. "If [the hiring goal is] successful, this will help alleviate waitlists and allow us to offer additional programs," said Henderson.

Henderson said his vision is in alignment with Governor Newsom's, Ex-Director Ron Broomfield, and current SQRC Warden C. Andes' goals as it relates to preparing the residents to re-enter society. "Whenever a student is getting ready to parole, I always ask about their rehabilitation journey," Henderson said. "Each time education always comes up, which points to the importance of education within rehabilitation."

He also stated that networking and developing relationships with stakeholders is a key to making the successful transition especially during the education departments' times of stress that his staff will endure during the opening. "I think it is important to always remain calm and focus on the daily 'wins.'" There will always be issues and stress that arises, but focusing on the positive helps to overcome the struggles."

It is that "daily wins" focus that has residents who loiter around the current education center concerned. None of the complainants would state their concerns on record, but incarcerated staff that works in the current education center spoke well of the new principal.

Education clerks Will Frank and P.A. Pandey are inspired with the consistency and fairness of Henderson.

"My impression of Principal Henderson is that he is the new head of the department and he's definitely different than former Principal Wheeliss. Henderson and Wheeliss have different management styles, but everything I see from him defines efficiency," said Pandey. "He's an

efficient guy and he's doing everything inside of the Education Department as he gets used to the culture of our rehabilitation center. Education doesn't run Victim Awareness, Anger Management, Narcotics Anonymous, none of that."

Pandey said that Principal Henderson now wants residents to turn in written requests so he can be more streamlined with his time and track the requests because he is busy opening the new Learning Center.

"I understand the concerns of the residents who can no longer print or copy group papers but Principal Henderson has a different philosophy than Wheeliss," said Pandey. "That responsibility is outside the parameters of the Education Department, so it may appear strict, but it is policy."

Education clerk Frank said, "Principal Henderson deserves our patience as he transitions from a higher level facility to the new Learning Center at SQRC and I have found him to be a qualified leader for this progressive approach to rehabilitation and education."

Henderson believes peer-to-peer programming, like the Peer Literacy Mentor Program that was established by A. Sufi, can be utilized during the education departments' expansion.

"I [believe that] peer-to-peer programming allows our education program to support more students that we would normally," said Henderson. "Peer-to-peer programming also gives the mentors an opportunity to learn leadership skills and give back to the SQRC community."

As he observes all the assets that make-up the education department, he said he feels his skill-set that includes strategic thinking, relationship building, time management and adaptability, will help the new education center prosper in a more expedient manner.

"We've got the right person to raise the education center to new heights," said Warden C. Andes.

# San Quentin News

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## EDITORIAL

# Must be well-read to be a jailhouse lawyer

By Kevin D. Sawyer  
 Editor-in-Chief

Two widespread endeavors of active and passive resistance in prison are violence and litigation, respectively. As anyone might imagine, senseless acts of violence in a carceral environment is a zero sum game.

Yet, those two paths open to prisoners run parallel with Chairman Mao Tse Tung's expression: "War is politics with bloodshed, and politics is war without bloodshed."

An effective act of resistance, through politics, is the written word. In lieu of wielding the proverbial sword, the mighty pen will do the job. In prison, a proxy for politics, legislation, and law — "war without bloodshed" — begins with paperwork.

In California, "602" is a verb — the jailhouse lawyers' first strike in a long course of legal action. The formal document is the CDCR Form 602, Grievance. An administrative grievance is a starting point for learning how to litigate. It is also required before filing a suit in state or federal court, but this is not legal advice.

Inside the nation's prisons, it is jailhouse lawyers who undertake the principled ambition to challenge daily injustices behind bars. To become an effective jailhouse lawyer, it is imperative to know the history of one's state, its carceral systems, and to acquire the skills needed to navigate the American system of jurisprudence.

New arrivals to prison may wonder how someone becomes a competent jailhouse lawyer. There is no clear answer, or easy step, but it is possible to learn a measureable amount of law behind bars. Over time, it may become necessary for a prisoner to learn how to protect his or her rights, health, and safety.

Reading is a first step, but urban novels and manga genres will not help because the science of law is not entrenched in entertainment, escapism or fantasy. Seize the time. Do not waste it on meaningless nonsense.

After three decades behind bars, I am still amazed that so many incarcerated people do not read or understand basic civics. I also find it remarkable how after conviction many prisoners do not understand the simple steps of appeal from superior court up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"They don't teach that stuff in school," is a typical response I hear. To that I say, "So what?" To me, that is a juvenile response to an adult problem. Unless a mature prisoner is mentally impaired, or is

severely uneducated, it is unreasonable for them to expect someone to hand down an unsolicited teaching of the law.

This is about volition. Prisoners usually make an effort to learn what they consider important. For example, where does an inmate learn how to acquire a cellphone, drugs, or other contraband in prison? That information does not exist in any regulations, law books, or prison operational procedures.

However, if enough importance is placed on the procurement of illegal items, some prisoners will go to great lengths to learn how to acquire them. No one imprisoned is likely to disagree. An education — in law or other studies — should be no different, even if it does take a little longer to obtain.

A hard-hitting reality in America, though, is the vast majority of society could not care any less about a prisoner who came from an underserved, over-policed community, plagued with drugs, gangs, violence, and a well-established pipeline from school to prison.

It matters little whether a court was right, wrong, or indifferent when it convicted a person. Once imprisoned, it is the responsibility and obligation of a prisoner to find a way out. A good place to start is by reading the transcript of trial proceedings, motions filed, abstract of judgment, any appeal, and other court documents. It is the only way to analyze what happened, and why.

Know your rights. If you are in the Golden State, read the California Code of Regulations, title 15. Its Division 3 covers prison, and Division 2 covers the Board of Parole Hearings. I am always astonished at the number of prisoners serving life sentences that have never read Division 2, or simply do not know it exist.

A person who does not know his or her rights cannot exercise those rights, and too often, there are any number of state agents willing to exploit such ignorance, to the detriment of the uninformed prisoner.

Reading is a way to become well versed in the law. I recommend *Legal Research* by Stephen Elias & Susan Levinkind. In California, the nonprofit Prison Law Office publishes the *California State Prisoners Handbook*. It provides a comprehensive overview on nearly every type of legal action filed by prisoners in the state. The book may be available in prison libraries, West Law, or LexisNexis, and on tablets provided by Viapath/GTL, Aventure/Securus or other communications service provider.

Another useful resource is the *Prisoners' Self-help Litigation Manual* (John Boston & Daniel E. Manville). It is helpful for federal litigation such as civil rights complaints, and may be available on

computers in prison law libraries and on tablets.

It is doubtful prisoners read Latin or know many legal definitions. To combat that limitation, get a law dictionary. Read the U.S. Constitution, and supplement that reading with books on philosophy to elevate critical thinking skills. Read books on English grammar, and learn to write cogent legal arguments.

Understand how to use state and federal case reporters, and how to "Sheppardize" cases. Familiarize yourself with the state Penal Code, Government Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Rules of Court, and connect the dots.

This may all seem like esoteric information, but in time, the well-read prisoner will appreciate U.S. Supreme Court cases, such as *Batson v. Kentucky*, which bans jury selection based on race; *Teague v. Lane*, which places a bar on "retroactivity" when a new law passes; and *Strickland v. Washington*, the controlling case on ineffective assistance of counsel.

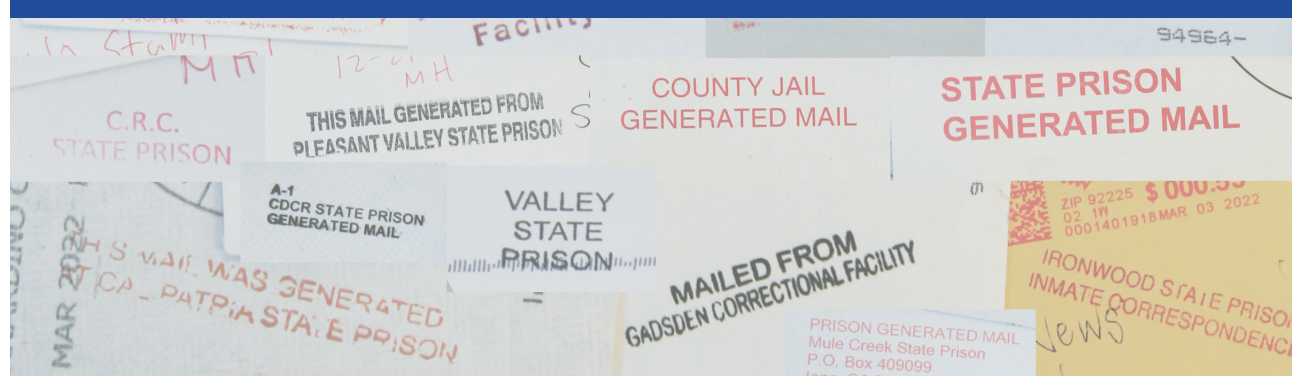
The Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act should give pauses to every prisoner newly convicted at trial. The mid-1990s law mandates prisoners file a federal petition for writ of habeas corpus, to challenge their conviction and or sentence, within one year of a denied appeal by the highest state court. Because a prisoner is not entitled to federal attorneys, he or she may be on their own.

This is where prisoners can help each other, whenever possible. Still, watch out for jailhouse lawyers with ulterior motives — those who may make overconfident claims and promises to "get you back in court," for a fee. For some of them, it is part of their jailhouse hustle. They are not lawyers and more than likely not licensed by the state bar to practice law. They can also cause irreparable harm like creating procedural bars for an inmate in a court of law.

On the journey to learn the law, become intimately aware of the Prison Litigation Reform Act. That 1995 law set prisoner *pro se* litigants back 50 years, ostensibly, to stop the flood of "frivolous" lawsuits. There is some truth to that last statement, so here is a word of caution: Do not become a Vexatious Litigant. It has the longest definition 15 CCR, Section 3000. Now get started, and good luck.

Much of this information was extracted from the essay, "Jailhouse Lawyering from the Beginning," by Kevin D. Sawyer. It was first published in 2021, by the UCLA Law Review (Discourse), 68 UCLA L. Rev. Disc. 98.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear *SQNews*,

I very much wish you could send me the *SQNews*. I spent almost 42 years in East Block, your wonderful paper is a real blessing. A big hello to everyone there.

—Gerald Stanley  
 California Medical Facility

Dear *SQNews*,

I have been a fan of your publication for over a decade. The news it reports on activities at San Quentin and California Prisons has been invaluable. We see *SQNews* as a shining light to how incarcerated people can improve their lives.

The state of Nevada prisons is in serious decline. I find myself wondering how the two states are so close yet so far from its humanity. Please keep up the good work.

—Wayne Vierra  
 Ely State Prison, Nevada

Dear *SQNews*,

Well I hope this finds you with a smile. Here in Florida we are at a policy change for Passover. This puts into question Jewish Law on Kosher diet for rights. There is a lot of case law on it but who knows what they will do to us next. Take care and keep up the good work.

—Ronald Robinson  
 Raiford, Florida

Dear *SQNews*,

Reading true journalism is a great thing for folks incarcerated, all can read relatable issues and problems that occur no matter the institution. Thank you please send me a copy of the newspaper.

—T. Buklup Chiemwichitra  
 California State Prison-Sacramento

Dear *SQNews*,

I want to give thanks and appreciation for the effort put forth by everyone involved in making your publication possible.

As an incarcerated individual, I find

that receiving a hand written letter during mail call is arguably the most effective way to lift someone's spirits. While, you may feel like you are stuffed under a rack somewhere in the outerspace SHU program, a letter makes you feel like you matter to the world again. I look forward to new issues, thank you.

—S. Solomon  
 Delano, Calif

Dear *SQNews*,

I am writing because I am a huge fan and have been for years. Everytime I am in custody I try to secure your newspaper, having limited time/access to a tablet. I would rather have a physical copy for myself. I look forward to reading your papers. As it has always been a very trusted and even preferred outlet I have come to trust for my news and topics I feel are relevant to me and my life.

—Christian Davis  
 Nevada City, Calif

## Prop. 36 didn't do enough

### STRIKES

Continued from page 1

weighed in hand with his former convictions.

In the *Shaw* decision, the Court stated if there were two offenses committed in a sequence against two victims, it counts as one strike. The High Court added that if there were one victim in the same set of facts resulting in multiple felonies, it counts as one strike.

In his concurring opinion with the Court's majority, Justice J. Groban stated that the aim of the Three Strikes Law was to discourage recidivism and focus on reform.

In its decision, the Court cited its 1998 ruling in *People v. Benson*. The defendant was convicted of two prior felonies for residential burglary and assault with the intent to commit murder. He entered his neighbor's home unlawfully and stabbed her.

In the *Benson* case, the Court determined that when multiple convictions arise out of a single act, the trial court should have dismissed one strike.

The decision also cited the 2014 case *People v. Vargas*, in which the defendant had a previous conviction of robbery and carjacking; both convictions arose out of the same set of facts. The Court agreed to review the *Vargas* case to see if the trial court should have dismissed one of the priors.

In 1994, California voters enacted the Three Strikes Law in response to the high profile murders of Polly Klaas and Kimber Reynolds, which were committed by previously convicted felons, according to Stanford Law School.

The law's objective was to punish repeat offenders by removing them from society using lengthy prison terms. Six months after the enactment of the law, there were 7,400 second-strike and third-strike cases filed statewide, according to the Legislative Analyst's Office.

In California's criminal justice history, more than 90 percent of felony prosecutions were plea bargains. The guilty pleas dropped significantly since the enactment of the three-strikes, defendants have

refused to entertain plea bargains, opting to take their cases to jury trial, when facing a mandatory minimum of 25-years-to-life, noted by the LAO.

CDCR statistics reveal that the Three Strikes Law has disproportionately affected defendants who are African American, mentally ill, and physically disabled.

In 2012, California voters modified the Three Strikes Law with Proposition 36 to eliminate non-serious and non-violent felonies that prompt a second and/or third strike.

As a result, California released more than 1,000 incarcerated people. Stanford Law School reported that the recidivism rate of this group stood at less than 2%.

The California Supreme Court ruling has made its own modification of the Three Strikes Law, which may include previously excluded incarcerated people.

"People serving a Three Strikes sentence have been excluded from criminal justice reforms for many years," Jones said. "I now feel vindicated."



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

PA speaker system in housing unit

## SQ residents need earplugs to tolerate ear-damaging announcements

### SOUND

Continued from page 1

A meta-analysis in *Berdik's* research found hearing loss raised the risk of depression by 50%. It also found that people with mild hearing loss doubled their chance of developing dementia.

Housed directly across from a PA speaker, resident Marcus Gallegos, 59, suffers from hearing loss and recently received a hearing aid. Ironically, he cannot wear

the device indoors due to the volume of the PA system.

"Sometimes that damn speaker is so loud it hurts my ears even when I'm not wearing my hearing aid," said Gallegos.

Gallegos suggested that placing an additional speaker closer to the officer station might help them better understand the negative impact of the PA system's volume first-hand.

Audiologist Deanna Meinke is a professor at University of Northern Colorado and co-director of the organization

Dangerous Decibels. She said that noise-induced hearing loss is irreversible and the only effective antidote is prevention.

Meinke said that earplugs are a cheap and easy way for people to protect their ears, and that those exposed to loud noise would be crazy not to use them.

"Hearing, like our other senses, connects us to the world, and severing those connections cuts deep," said Meinke.

San Quentin offers disposable foam earplugs to residents concerned with loud noise.

### SINGLE

Continued from page 1

people. Newsom has shut down four prisons, with an additional closure currently in the works.

The governor's administration stated that the only reliable way to bring down corrections spending is to close prisons. It is estimated that with each prison closed, California will save \$150 million a year.

San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins has visited SQRC numerous times over the last few years and spoken with residents about cellmate-on-cellmate violence, along with the stress that comes with sharing a cell.

"We want people to have the opportunity to return back to our community, and we want them to do that in the healthiest manner," said Jenkins. "You can't do that if you're in an environment that causes chaos and stress, or you can't sleep, you're having confrontations, you're irritable because you're sleeping with one eye open."

In 2025, Jenkins worked with Assemblymember Damon Connolly (D-San Rafael) to draft Assembly Bill 1140 that purposes establishing single-cell pilot programs at four California prisons.

Although the bill did not make it to Gov. Newsom, it advanced in the California Legislature and is expected to

## SQRC moving toward single cell occupancy

return in 2026.

The bill states, "To properly be able to engage in rehabilitation programming, incarcerated persons must be able to sleep without fear of physical harm."

Connolly said that single-cell housing units additionally promote safer work environments for corrections officers and staff. "It fits in, in my view, with the larger objectives that the governor and many of us have pursued," he said.

Built more than 150 years ago, San Quentin and Folsom prisons were originally designed with one-bunk cells.

During mass incarceration efforts in the 1990s and early 2000s, the corrections department welded and bolted extra bunk beds into almost every single-person cell across the state. They also placed bunk beds into spaces never intended for housing, like hallways, gyms, and even stairwells.

After decades of overcrowding people at 200% capacity, prison rights litigation eventually forced the system to address the issue. Current housing rates across all 31 state prisons stand at about 120% of designed capacity, noted the *CalMatters* article.

Since mass incarceration numbers have dropped, the California Correctional Peace



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Cramped double-occupancy quarters

Officers Association has lobbied against further prison closures and, in general, supported emphasis on

rehabilitation for incarcerated persons.

"The threat of violence and tension in shared cells...

fosters conflicts amongst cellmates, necessitating intervention from correctional officers, who place themselves in jeopardy, thereby escalating the overall parties involved," the CCPOA said in a support letter to Connolly.

Addressing the SQRC community at a February town hall meeting, Warden Chance Andes said he was "working toward" providing residents with more single-cell housing by this spring.

SQRC's Carson unit opened in February, adding 210 single-occupancy-cells to the 238 already occupied by residents in the neighboring Donnor unit.

Warden Andes said construction is currently underway inside the vacated East Block building formerly known as Death Row. He said repurposing the building will provide another 500 single-occupancy-cells to the general population.

Since the completion of Carson, department heads have pushed work crews to finish repairing East Block as soon as possible, said SQRC resident and plant operations employee Walter Sprafka.

Housed in Donnor unit, Sprafka said the peace of mind that comes with having a cell to himself goes beyond privacy and safety concerns; it means not having to

worry about a possible rules violation because of what a cellmate did or brought into the cell.

If an officer finds a weapon, drugs, or cellphone inside a cell, it is common practice to give both cellmates a rules violation.

"Getting a write-up for something you didn't do is definitely possible when you have a cellie," said Sprafka. "Once you get a disciplinary infraction, regardless of whose fault, it stays on your permanent record."

Since residing in Donnor, Sprafka said the anxiety that comes with having a cellmate has gone away. Now he can better concentrate on his rehabilitation efforts and prepare to meet with the parole board.

Two ways Warden Andes is working toward his goal of making San Quentin Rehabilitation Center a benchmark for other prisons to follow are by revamping buildings to provide more single-occupancy cells for residents and opening new education buildings.

"I would love to spread our model across the state," Andes said. "Ours is very unique — the location, the atmosphere — and what we are building here give us the opportunity to set an example so others can move forward and develop their own vision."

### LAWSUIT

Continued from page 1

Rehabilitation Act, which "requires entities that receive federal funding, such as ICE and California City Detention Facility, not to discriminate against people with disabilities."

"In their haste to warehouse hundreds of men and women in this isolated facility, Defendants have failed to provide for the basic human needs of the people for whose lives and wellbeing they are legally responsible," according to the lawsuit.

The complaint filed late last year describes how

detainees are forced to live in "small concrete cells" with inadequate clothing, poor nourishment, and not enough water. There are also claims of people who have been denied "basic medical care," spaces for the disabled, and "access to their lawyers and their loved ones."

Prison Law Office filed suit in the United States District Court (Northern District of California). The Plaintiffs are also represented by counsel from Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP; the California Collaborative for Immigrant

Justice; and the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation National Prison Project.

In 2014, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation rented then-California City Correctional Facility "...as a means to reduce its state prison population," *San Quentin News* reported. At the time, the private prison was owned by Corrections Corporation of America, which subsequently changed its name to CoreCivic.

"It's a very restrictive

program," Patrick Callahan said about California City. He was a state prisoner who transferred to San Quentin from the private prison, which was operated by CDCR correctional officers. "It's a glorified county jail, run by the state."

To reopen California City, in April 2025 ICE signed a contract with CoreCivic, a for-profit prison company, according to the lawsuit.

"This contract, worth \$130 million annually, contemplates holding up to 2,560 immigrants in the

facility, making California City the largest detention facility in the state," the lawsuit states. "The facility is decrepit. Sewage bubbles up from the shower drains, and insects crawl up and down the walls of the cells. People are locked in concrete cells the size of a parking space for hours on end, and officers threaten them with violence and solitary confinement."

According to the lawsuit, other complaints involve cold temperatures described as "frigid," for detainees who cannot afford expensively

priced clothing at the commissary.

"Friends and family members who travel to the Mojave Desert to see their loved ones must do so across heavy glass; people detained at California City cannot touch or hug their children," the suit alleges. "The facility sharply limits access to lawyers, leaving people bewildered and largely incommunicado."

The Plaintiffs are seeking declaratory and injunctive relief, among other remedies to contest their conditions of confinement.

## REFORM

# Families cope with absence of male figure in home

By Jason L. Jackson  
Staff Writer

More than one million men are currently incarcerated in state and federal prisons throughout the United States, leaving families to cope with their absence.

Timothy Durant is more than a resident at San Quentin; he is a father who is supportive of his family back in Southern California. Durant believes that men represent the security of a community — physically, financially, and emotionally — and without good men in a community it can become vulnerable to abuse.

“A lot of times, just the presence of a strong man can improve an environment, and I’ve been guilty of not realizing how important I am to my kids and my family,” said Durant. He recalled how his father was not “hands on,” leaving him without a healthy blueprint to model.

Studies conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics reveal

that there were 1,124,435 men incarcerated in U.S. prisons at the end of 2023. Black and Hispanic men accounted for a combined 645,000 incarcerated men, more than half the total number. Black men made up the largest percentage of incarcerated men. With 379,400 Black men imprisoned in 2023, they had an incarceration rate that was five times that of white adults, and twice that of Hispanic adults.

Research from the Office of Justice Programs reveals that the absence of male role models within a community can lead to increased rates of violence and violent crimes, especially among the youth.

“The violence comes from various reasons. Oftentimes in our neighborhoods there are few male role models, a lack of jobs, and drugs, and everyone is fighting for what little is available,” said SQ resident Makeith Mason, a native of Richmond, Calif.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that Black people suffer from the highest murder rates in the U.S.

Mason recalled how the lack of men in his family became the catalyst to him turning to the streets not only in search of other men to be around, but to find ways to provide for his family.

“Young boys end up in positions where they have to play so many roles they shouldn’t be in because of the lack of men around,” said Mason.

According to an article by *Retiredom*, the roles that young boys inadvertently assume often lead them into criminal lifestyles that end in death or incarceration, creating a cycle that perpetuates the growing absence of men in communities while placing further strain on families.

“For the women in my family, I had to be the son, the brother, friend, protector, and provider while still a teenager,” said Mason.

Mason said because he was a major provider, his family suffered financially and emotionally after he was sent to prison.

Jennifer Schwartz of

Pennsylvania State University said in a report that persistent strain on families can affect the relationships incarcerated men have with their community.

“My kids are disappointed in me because I’m here. I missed my daughter’s prom and her graduation. It’s been a lot. Plus, a lot has happened to them that wouldn’t have happened if I was there,” said Durant. “My girls feel less protected. No men around creates a void in women’s lives, and they can become lonely and desperate for the wrong attention.”

Studies by *Retiredom* highlighted that the absence of male role models can have a negative impact on the maturity of young children, especially young boys.

Aside from the increased probability of violence, research from *Retiredom* reveals that without men present to help raise them, young boys may develop low self-esteem, struggle with emotional control, become less productive in school, and develop issues

with creating and maintaining relationships. These factors can make a young man less prepared when graduating school, finding a job, or raising a family.

“There is a gap because the male perspective has been removed from a house that ends up predominately occupied by women,” said SQ resident Michael “Mik’ael” Walker, Jr. Walker said the absence of men leaves a void that result in young boys not learning how to be masculine in healthy ways, potentially causing them to make volatile decisions in life.

Schwartz wrote that he effect from years of mass incarceration has rippled through communities, leaving hundreds of thousands of men in prison and families without the male influence needed to thrive.

“The absence of men means the foundation of the community becomes weakened, and leaves us underdeveloped as a people, mentally, economically, spiritually, and socially,” said Walker.

## Library helps foster family connections through literacy

By Terrell J. Marshall  
Staff Writer

Usually, the small San Quentin Rehabilitation Center library is full of incarcerated people quietly reading, doing legal work, or researching a school project.

The non-profit organization Friends of San Quentin Library disrupted the typically tranquil setting when it offered residents an opportunity to pick out books and send them home to their loved ones free of charge.

“My six-year-old son reads to me on the phone all the time,” said resident Rick Namey, 48. “He’s into dinosaurs and space, so I picked one titled ‘Dinosaur Stories.’ Truly this is a gift for us both.”

While excited voices of dads, grandpas, brothers, and uncles echoed off the walls, San Quentin’s Head Librarian Gabriel Loiederman talked about the contribution of

FOSQL. The nonprofit fosters the vitally important positive connection between incarcerated people and families through literacy and storytelling.

In total, 1,100 books were placed in 350 packages, labeled, wrapped, weighed, and stamped “postage paid,” by SQ library staff and then shipped to recipients.

“Library Larry” Ryzak, 72, incarcerated 40 years, works in the prison’s library. He said it’s a lot of work to sort, display and process that many books, but the excitement he hears from residents about the selection they have made for their child makes it all worthwhile.

“A lot of folks in prison struggle and don’t have money to buy gifts for their family. I know how it feels, I’ve been there,” said Ryzak. “Trust me; what’s happening here is not just for the kids. It’s also a gift for the dads.”

The collaborative effort of San

Quentin library staff, FOSQL, and Copperfield’s Books in Larkspur, California, San Quentin’s nearest bookstore, helps families stay connected.

Founder of FOSQL, Kristi Kenney, said the goal of the nonprofit is to open the SQ library to the larger community, and nurture a connection between the public, incarcerated people, and their families through the joy of reading.

Kenney said the prison’s neighboring townspeople and Copperfield’s Books is who provided the opportunity to stay connected through literacy. “People in Larkspur bought and donated all the books you see here today,” Kenney said.

Eagerly browsing the vast selection on display, resident Bobby Armendariz, 53, wanted to make just the right choice for his seven- and eight-year-old granddaughters.

“They love the books I send home,” said Armendariz as he reached into his backpack and pulled out a picture. “This is my granddaughter showing off the books I’ve sent her,” he said of the photo of a little girl seated next to a coffee table covered with books.

Books chosen included general non-fiction, early readers, craft activity, teen chapter, Spanish, sports, graphic novels, middle-grade chapter books and a dozen other categories.

Resident Cesar Vallejo, 52, picked out a “Disney Princess” book to send to his wife who babysits his four-year-old niece. Vallejo said his niece is on the autism spectrum and the books he chose have bright illustrations his wife can use to help the child’s progression.

Vallejo also chose an “Atlas of Lost Kingdoms,” for his eight-year-old nephew, a book that will help him discover mystical lands,

lost cities, and vanished kingdoms.

“His dream is to become an astronaut, and these books will help expand his imagination,” Vallejo said while admiring the large hardcover atlas.

Mingling amongst the crowd, volunteer Pam Franklin helped guide residents through the book genres and age-group selections.

“I’ve seen tears in the eyes of some of the men picking out books,” Franklin said. “It means the world for them to be able to send something home to their family.”

Resident Rick Hernandez, 62, picked out two books for his great granddaughter: one filled with illustrations of puppies and the other titled, “A Child’s First Bible.”

“I hope she sticks with it,” Hernandez said while holding the book. “Now she can say my grandpa gave me my first Bible, and hopefully one day we can read it together.”

## POLICY

## Alien removal process for prisoners in effect in Louisiana

By Bostyon Johnson  
Managing Editor

Prisoners find hope after a special parole panel grants early release to nine individuals in Louisiana, but there’s a catch.

The three-member panel didn’t review disciplinary records or ask prospective parolees about remorse, but voted unanimously to grant parole to all nine of the prisoners, according to an article in *Propublica*.

“Today you’ve been paroled,” said panel chair Steve Prator, “to go straight into an ICE facility for deportation from the United States.”

The purpose of the “alien removal process” was to deport immigrant prisoners without legal status. But in the article, Louisiana’s Governor Jeff Landry said early release programs offend victims of crime.

Several residents at San Quentin talked about how they would respond if California were to create a similar program, offering residents a one-way plane ticket to another country with one catch: they would never be able to return to the U.S.

Resident Ramiro Ramirez said he knows dozens of people who would jump at the opportunity for deportation no matter where they ended up.

“It’s just like when a person

is dead in the cemetery, because I don’t have contact with my ex-wife or my kids,” Ramirez said. “I just stay away because I don’t want any problems.”

Ramirez said he has family in Sacramento, but since his incarceration, he has not had any visits from his family.

Resident Brett Mohr said the biggest challenge is not losing contact with his family and starting his life over in a country he’s never visited. The biggest challenge is losing his opportunity to change his old habits.

After five years of incarceration, Mohr said he is done hurting other people. His focus is on his rehabilitation.

“I’m not done yet and that’s as honest as I can be,” said Mohr. “I want to be done with my old life and I want all my tools in line.”

Resident Enrique Sandoval said he would not leave, but he said he’d like to continue his rehabilitation to earn his freedom and return home to his family.

“My rehabilitation is important at this point in my life because I don’t want to hurt any more people,” Sandoval said. “I feel free in this prison because the programs I’ve been in taught me how to see life differently.”

At a hearing in August 2025, Francis Abbott, executive director of the Louisiana state

parole board said “Parole granted for the purpose of deportation is fundamentally different from discretionary parole granted to individuals who have demonstrated readiness for community supervision.”

The *Propublica* article reported that a person’s behavior behind bars and their risk to the public are some of the factors a regular process considers. However, the new deportation panel doesn’t work under the same guidelines and responsibilities as a regular parole process.

“Under the new law, the deportation panel operates unbound by the restrictions and responsibilities placed on the regular parole process,” the article said.

Two categories of offenders are ineligible to appear before the new panel: individuals with sex offenses or persons sentenced to more than 10 years for a violent crime.

The expedited legislation raised concern with Bridget Geraghty, senior counsel at the MacArthur Justice Center, a Chicago-based legal nonprofit focused on prison reform. In the article, Geraghty argued for expansion of the initiative.

“They have the ability to release a lot of people to parole, and they are choosing to only do it for this specific group because it’s politically popular,” said Geraghty.

## Governor’s 2026 CDCR budget increases as population declines

Nearly six percent decrease in population  
and two percent increase in budget

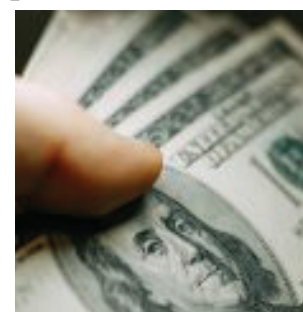
By C. K. Gerhartsreiter  
Staff Writer

Gov. Gavin Newsom’s budget for 2026-27, published in the January 9 “Governor’s Budget Summary,” showed no surprises for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. For the most part, the budget budged upward while estimates for the number of incarcerated persons nudged downward.

The allocation of \$14.2 billion, a slight 2.1% increase from the \$13.9 billion in the budget from 2025-26, came from the same sources: \$13.8 billion from the General Fund and \$400 million from other funds. About \$4.1 billion of the allocated funds would go to health care, the same number as last year.

“While the budget is balanced in the 2026-27 fiscal year,” the Governor’s Budget Summary said, “with a discretionary reserve of \$4.5 billion, it projects a deficit of roughly \$22 billion in the 2027-28 fiscal year and shortfalls in the two years following.”

The document said population projections for the CDCR would continue to decline. Autumn “projections estimate the average daily



adult incarcerated population for 2025-26 to be 89,162” (down from spring 2025 projections of 91,672). The same paragraph continued to say it projected a “population of 87,613 in 2026-27, a decrease of 5.5 percent from the spring [2025] projections.”

The Governor’s Budget Summary noted, “In the longer term, the population is projected to decline to 84,664 incarcerated individuals by June 30, 2030.” The Governor’s Budget Summary also numbered “adult incarcerated individuals age 55 and older as more than 19,000” and its next sentence stated, “Older incarcerated individuals tend to have complex needs that drive higher costs.” The dollar allocation for healthcare remained unchanged at \$4.1 billion.

The text also mentioned

Proposition 36, passed in Nov. 2024. Original projections of a population increase of 1,878 (in 2025-26) and 3,597 — upon broader implementation — have failed to materialize: “Fall projections now indicate Proposition 36 impacts will be 562 in 2025-26 and approximately 1,200 upon full implementation.”

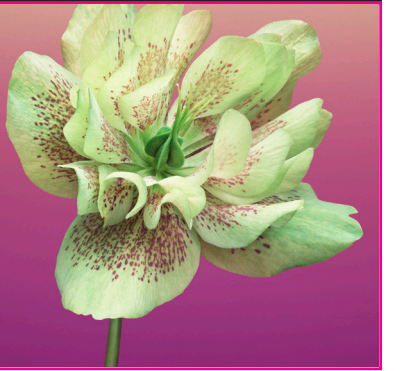
For parolees, the state expected the active parolee average daily population to number 33,816 in 2025-26, declining to 32,432 in 2026-27. A further expected decline would reduce the parole population to 30,785 by June 30, 2030.

Put in perspective, CDCR expenditures for 2026-27 would measure at about 5.2% of the total of expenditures of \$349 billion. K-12 education equaled about five times as much and only state expenditures on transportation appeared in a similar range.

“This January budget is not the final word,” said Gov. Newsom in his address to the California Legislature. “It is a beginning — a statement of purpose. In the months ahead, we will work together to refine a final budget that looks beyond a single year, mindful of the obligations to the people we serve.”



# Women's History Month



Women's liberation march

Photos courtesy of Wikicommons

## A woman's journey from the projects to the Supreme Court

By Jerry Malek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair



Justice Sotomayor with President Obama and Vice President Biden

Jenny from the Block made hits, but Sonia from the Bronx made history as the first Latina to sit on the United States Supreme Court.

Sonia Sotomayor was born on June 25, 1954 in the Bronx borough of New York City to her native Puerto Rican parents, Juan and Celina Sotomayor.

S. Sotomayor was raised in a Puerto Rican community in the Bronxdale projects. Her mother purchased a set of Encyclopedia Britannica to emphasize Sonia's education, a purchase uncommon in those projects, according to Wikipedia.

"I was going to college and I was going to become an attorney, and I knew that when I was ten. Ten. That's no jest," Sotomayor said.

In 1970, due to the increasing drug use and gang activity in the Bronxdale projects, the Sotomayor family found a safe haven in the Northeast Bronx.

As a result, Sotomayor attended Cardinal Spellman High School, where she joined the school's forensic team and was elected to the student council, graduating as class valedictorian in 1972, according to Wikipedia.

Sotomayor cited affirmative action and her academic achievements as the reasons why she was accepted to Princeton University. She said her experience at Princeton was life changing, saying that she felt like "a visitor landing in an alien country" because there were very few Latinos at the school.

Sotomayor felt too anxious to inquire and ask questions in class; she said her literacy and vocabulary skills were not the same as non-Latino students. However, she spent long hours studying in the library, working hard in the summers with a professor to improve her skills, knowledge, and confidence, noted Wikipedia.

She was a student activist, advocating for Latin American history classes and hiring Latino professors. She co-chaired the *Acción Puertorriqueña* organization, a social and political hub that advocated for increasing opportunities for Puerto Rican students, noted Wikipedia.

Sotomayor graduated from Princeton in 1976 with highest honors and received her Juris Doctorate in 1979 from Yale Law School, where she became an editor for the *Yale Law Journal*.

She was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1980 and worked as an Assistant District Attorney in New York for more than four years, noted Wikipedia.

After working for seven years in private practice, Sotomayor was confirmed in 1992 to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. In 1998 she was confirmed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Her appointment to the Court of Appeals was delayed because U.S. Senate Republicans feared it would lead to a Supreme Court nomination, stated Wikipedia.

Some opponents found Sotomayor to be confrontational, saying she used her line of questioning to make a point rather than to seek an answer to a question.

"Some lawyers just don't like to be questioned by a woman," said Second Circuit Judge Guido Calabresi. "[The criticism] was sexist, plain, and simple."

On May 26, 2009 President Barack Husein Obama nominated

Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a Senate confirmation hearing she was criticized by Republicans for a line she used in a 2001 Berkeley Law lecture: "I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life."

Obama's nomination mirrored his campaign promise that nominated judges would have "the empathy to understand what it's like to be poor, African-American, and disabled," according to Wikipedia.

She was confirmed to the Supreme Court in a 68-31 vote by the U.S. Senate in August 2009. As a Supreme Court Justice, Sotomayor identified with the rights of criminal defendants, which was demonstrated in her written opinions, noted Wikipedia.

In her first Supreme Court dissent Justice Sotomayor wrote a stay of execution for Jason Getsy, a convicted murder-for-hire defendant, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

In a 1995 Ohio murder-for-hire plot, Getsy shot Charles Serafino seven times. He survived, but his mother, Ann Serafino, was shot and killed.

Getsy's lawyers claimed he should be spared the death penalty, stating that other participants, including John Santine, the main conspirator, did not receive the death penalty, stated the *L.A. Times*.

The Court's majority opinion denied Getsy's appeal in a 5-4 vote. Getsy, 33, was put to death by lethal injection.

Sotomayor's opinion was supported by fellow Justices John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen G. Breyer, noted the *L.A. Times*.

In 2010, Sotomayor received a cash advance of \$1.2 million to write her memoir, *Mi mundo adorado* (My Beloved World); three years later her book was published in Spanish and English, according to Wikipedia.

In a *New York Times* book review, Michiko Kakutani wrote "...[Mi mundo adorado] is an eloquent and affecting testament to the triumph of brains and hard work over circumstance, of a childhood dream realized through extraordinary will and dedication."

## Althea Gibson - first Black female tennis champion sets the stage for more to follow

One obstacle after another, Althea Neale Gibson broke various ethnic, athletic, and social barriers in her quest to make history in American sports.

Gibson was born on August 25, 1927 in Silver, South Carolina to Daniel and Annie Bell Gibson. Her parents worked as sharecroppers on a cotton farm.

Gibson was banned from playing in the United States National Championships at Forest Hills (the US Open), a place where black people had never played, according to Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia.

"No Negro player, man or woman, has ever set foot on one of these courts", wrote Journalist Lester Rodney. "In many ways, it is even tougher...than Jackie Robinson's when he first stepped out of the Brooklyn Dodgers dugout."

In 1950, Gibson became the first Black player to receive an invite to the premier tournament at Forest Hills.

Gibson was one of the first Black athletes to cross the color line in international tennis. She faced similar experiences as Jackie Robinson at a time when racism was common in sports, according to Wikipedia.

In 1956, Gibson became the first Black tennis player to win a Grand Slam event. She won the French Open and in the following year she won both Wimbledon and the US Open.

Gibson ranked number one in 1957 at Wimbledon, known as the "world championship of tennis." She defeated Darlene Hard, and became the first Black woman or man champion in the tournament's 80-year history, noted the Free Encyclopedia.

In her career, Gibson won 11 Grand Slam events. In 1957 and 1958, the Associated Press crowned her Female Athlete of the Year; she received more than 80% of the deciding votes.

Gibson played aggressive tennis, her powerful serve manipulated opponents. Her tennis serve enabled her to score easy points; she liked to play the net scoring her own points instead of forcing opponents into errors, stated Wikipedia.

Afterwards Gibson returned home to New York, she became second Black person to Jesse Owens honored with a ticker tape parade.

Gibson's legacy lives on in professional tournaments, schools yards, and recreational parks. When a Black or Hispanic child picks up a tennis racket for the first time, Gibson has touched their life, noted Wikipedia.

"I am honored to have followed in such great footsteps," wrote Venus Williams. "Her accomplishments set the stage for my success, and through players like myself and Serena...her legacy will lives on."

— By Jerry Malek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair



Althea Neale Gibson



Serena Williams



Venus Williams



Billie Jean King



Incarcerated woman



Incarcerated woman

## Condiciones e infraestructuras al encarcelamiento femenil

Por Edwin E. Chavez  
Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

El número de mujeres encarceladas ha crecido inimaginablemente en los últimos 20 años alrededor del mundo, con un aumento de 60 por ciento a nivel global.

En los Estados Unidos el 4 por ciento de la población mundial de mujeres y niñas habitan en esta nación. Sin embargo, un cuatro por ciento de esta misma población se encuentran recluidas en el sistema de encarcelamiento masivo.

En el estado de Sur de Dakota en EE.UU., sobre pasa la tasa mundial con 338%, del encarcelamiento femenino, seguido con el estado de Montana con una tasa de 282%, y en tercer lugar se encuentra el estado de Idaho con 277%. Siguiendo con el cuarto lugar El Salvador, con un índice de 245%.

Un reporte de States of Womens Incarceration: The Global Context 2025, por Emily Widra y Aleks Kajstura, publicado en septiembre del 2025, registró datos globales que indicaban que más de 740,000 mujeres y niñas se encuentran encarceladas, y en muchos de estos casos en condiciones principalmente deplorables.

El encarcelamiento femenino sigue en aumento bajo condiciones insalubres, como la falta de nutrición adecuada, servicio de salud física y mental, entre otras necesidades especiales e indispensables que se requiere durante su confinamiento.

En Latinoamérica la infraestructuras de las instituciones de encarcelamiento femenino, no fueron creadas para las necesidades en la población femenina, tal como las reclusas resaltan que usan el fregadero para múltiples actividades de limpieza, tanto personal como de utensilios, reportó Josefina Solomon en su artículo llamado "Crimen y Castigo: Mujeres Y Cárceles En América Latina".

Wendy Morales, abogada, activista y voluntaria

dentro los penales de ambos sexos del país de Honduras, compartió en una entrevista telefónica con *SQNews*, que en este país a las mujeres encarceladas se les brinda la opción de poder convivir con sus bebés hasta la edad de cuatro años, adentro de en una unidad llamada Casa-Cuna.

Esta unidad se encuentra adentro de la institución penal y de acuerdo a Morales, hasta el momento cuenta con un total de 30 madres conviviendo con sus hijos. Añadiendo que aproximadamente hay 2,000 mujeres encarceladas, muchas de ellas han sido condenas por delitos de drogas.

Ella explica que en el país de Honduras hay 22 prisiones y que cinco de estas son para el encarcelamiento exclusivo de mujeres, en las que varias se encuentran por crímenes contra la salud como el contrabando o transporte de sustancias ilegales.

De acuerdo a Morales en 2023, un motín en la Penitenciaría Nacional Femenina de Adopción Social, en donde 46 reclusas perdieron su vida.

Disturbios como estos no se habían visto antes en penales de mujeres en América latina, los videos de vigilancia dentro la prisión fue usados como evidencias contra las acusadas en sus juicios criminales.

Resultando en año adicionales de a las reclusas involucradas del motín de hasta 30 años por cada muerte de las 46 fallecidas. quienes inicialmente tenían una sentencia de 30 años por sus delitos. Y que acabo de un veredicto se estimó un total de 1,410 años en total a cada participante.

La discriminación contra las reclusas del género femenino en EE.UU., entre los años 1954 y 1956 en el estado de Carolina del Norte específicamente en la prisión Raleigh. Un motines fue un problema inesperado en esta prisión estatal, causándole la muerte a varias reclusas.

Estas mismas reclusas estaban reclamando

violaciones por condiciones inhumanas e inseguridad por parte de los guardias de seguridad, afirmando violaciones sexuales especialmente contra mujeres Afroamericanas. Según reporto, Chelsea Kiefer, en su artículo llamado "Cuando Los Indefensos Se Levanta: Dinámica Social en 1950's Carolina Del Norte Disturbios en La Prisión De Mujeres".

El juicio registrado en el año 1975 de Joan Little, mujer Afroamericana acusada por la muerte de un guardia Anglosajón, al defenderse a un intento de violación por este oficial correccional. Los abogados de Little presentaron argumentos basados en el testimonio de Little siendo víctima de abuso sexual.

De acuerdo al reporte de Kiefer, este caso fue enfocado al impacto social que su juicio trajo a los derechos de las mujeres en referencia a las condiciones de encarcelamiento inhumanas, abusos sexuales y una combinación que no les otorgaban los derechos humanos básicos en los años 50s.

El abuso de las mujeres encarceladas sigue siendo expandido a otros países del mundo como el caso de Nigeria. Las mujeres son condenadas desproporcionadamente en este país. Biko Agozino en su reporte "Mujeres Niguerias En Las Prisión Secuestradas Bajo Ley", describe la discriminación, injusta que sufren las mujeres de ese país.

"Sorprendentemente se descubrió que muchas de las mujeres de tez negras que habían encerrado era completamente inocente", además de las precarias condiciones del encarcelamiento de mujeres en países considerados como tercer mundo no son repodas, según dijo Agozino.

También se enfocó desde una perspectiva más criminológica, encontrando que La Ley solo se enfocaba en el castigo individual, usando este término "castigo" para los inocentes. Describiendo el encarcelamiento de aquellos que han sido falsamente condenados, concluyó Agozino



19th century women's prison

# Errores en corte de California debido al uso de IA

Por Marco Serna  
Spanish Journalism  
Guild Writer

La oficina de fiscales en California utilizó la Inteligencia Artificial (IA) para presentar cargos en por lo menos un caso criminal, el cual presentó errores conocidos como "Alucinaciones". Reporto un artículo publicado por *El Guardián*.

Basado en el reporte de Cecilia Nowell, la oficina del fiscal de distrito del condado de Nevada en el norte de Ca., recientemente uso la IA al presentar un caso criminal ante la corte, el cual resultó en una orden judicial equivocada. En una declaración al periódico "Sacramento Bee", el fiscal de distrito Jesse Wilson aseguró que el caso fue retirado una vez que el error fue descubierto.

Nowell agregó que los abogados de Kyle Kjoller, presentaron una orden judicial en la corte del tercer distrito de apelaciones, demandando sanciones a los fiscales por errores



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia

## El uso de Inteligencia Artificial en el condado de Nevada

descubiertos en el caso.

Acorde a lo publicado, Kjoller es representado por un defensor público y la organización sin fines de lucro "Civil Right Corps". La

corte de apelaciones negó la demanda de sanción sin dar una explicación. Los abogados identificaron errores similares de los fiscales en otro caso, los cuales fueron presentados en

corte, a pesar de todo la corte de apelaciones desmintió y Kjoller fue convicto en el caso.

*El Guardián* informó, que los abogados de Kjoller

presentaron una petición ante la corte suprema de CA. basado en tres casos anteriores con errores típicos de IA. Hasta el momento La Corte Suprema no ha hecho una decisión para

revisar la petición. "La dependencia de los fiscales en la IA puede violar reglas de ética", afirmó el abogado de Kjoller, "y representa una amenaza a los derechos y el debido proceso legal de los acusados".

Nowell destacó una declaración al periódico del "Sacramento Bee" en donde el fiscal de distrito Wilson aceptó el uso de IA en uno de sus casos, pero no en el caso específico de Kjoller, asegurando que los errores encontrados fueron humanos.

De acuerdo al artículo, este caso en CA es probablemente el primer ejemplo de fiscales utilizando IA para presentar casos ante la corte.

"En ningún momento fue la intención de engañar a la corte", dijo Wilson "el declarar lo contrario, distorsiona los hechos". El fiscal aseguró que debido a que errores fueron encontrados e identificados, se requiere a los fiscales verificar cada orden judicial, y no depender de material generado por IA sin antes confirmar con fuentes confiables.

# Condiciones en un facilidad detención terrible

Traducción por  
Aristeo Sampablo

Los encarcelados en el centro de detención de California City en el desierto de Mojave presentaron una demanda contra el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas y el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, para impugnar las supuestas condiciones inhumanas de confinamiento.

Los demandantes interpusieron una demanda de 71 páginas acusado a ICE, DHS y funcionarios del gobierno, en violación de los derechos civiles, derecho al debido proceso legal y el derecho a consulta a un abogado entre otros abusos negados por la Primera y Quinta Enmienda de la Constitución de los Estados Unidos.

Según la demanda, también hay supuestas violaciones a la Ley de Rehabilitación que "exige a las entidades que reciben fondos federales como ICE y el centro de detenciones de California City, no discriminar a las personas con discapacidad".

"En su prisa por reunir a cientos de hombres y mujeres en esta instalación aislada, los acusados no han podido satisfacer las necesidades humanas básicas de las personas por cuya vida y bienestar son legalmente responsable" según la demanda.

La denuncia presentada a finales del año pasado describe como los detenidos se ven obligados a vivir en "pequeñas celdas de concreto" con ropa inadecuada, mala alimentación

y escasez de agua. También se denuncian casos de personas a quienes se les ha negado "atención medica básica", lugares para personas con discapacidad y "acceso a sus abogados y seres queridos".

El Bufete de Abogados de Prisiones, presentó una demanda ante el Tribunal de Distrito de los Estados Unidos, (Distrito Norte de California). Los demandantes también están representados por los abogados de Kecker, Van Nest & Peter LLP; la Colaboración de California para la Justicia de los Inmigrantes; y el Proyecto Nacional de Prisiones de la Fundación de la Unión Estadounidense por las Libertades.

En 2014, el Departamento de Correcciones y Rehabilitación

de California alquilo el Centro Correccional de California City... "como una medida para reducir la población carcelaria estatal", *San Quentin News* informó. En ese momento, que la prisión privada era propiedad de la Corporación Correccional de Estados Unidos, el cual cambio su nombre a CoreCivic.

"Es un programa muy restringido", dijo Patrick Callahan sobre California City. Siendo un preso estatal que fue transferido a San Quentin desde una prisión privada, operada por un funcionario correccional de CDCR, "es una cárcel de condado glorificada administrada por el estado".

Para reabrir California City, en abril de 2025, ICE firmó un contrato que según la

demanda incluía a CoreCivic, una empresa penitenciaria con fines de lucro.

"Este contrato, con un valor anual de 130 millones de dólares contempla alojar hasta 2,560 inmigrantes en las instituciones, convirtiendo a California City en el centro de detención más grande del estado", según la demanda, "Las instalaciones están deterioradas. Las aguas residuales burbujan por los desagües de las duchas y los insectos trepan por las paredes de las celdas. Las personas permanecen encerradas en celdas de concreto del tamaño de un estacionamiento para auto durante horas y los agentes los amenazan con violencia y en aislamiento".

Acorde la demanda, otras

quejas se relacionan con temperaturas frías descritas como "gélidas" para los detenidos que no pueden permitirse ropa de precio caro en la tienda de provisiones.

"Amigos y familiares que viajaron al desierto de Mojave para ver a sus seres queridos, deben hacerlo a través de un grueso cristal; las personas detenidas en California City no pueden tocar ni abrazar a sus hijos", la demanda alega. "Que el centro limita drásticamente el acceso a abogados, lo que deja a las personas desconcertadas y prácticamente incomunicadas".

Los detenidos están solicitando medidas cautelares y declaratorias entre otros recursos para impugnar sus condiciones de confinamiento.

# Una crisis que sigue en aumento

Por César Martínez  
Staff Writer

Datos recopilados por casi dos décadas demuestran un aumento de muertes por intoxicación o el uso de drogas en cárceles de condados y prisiones federales. De acuerdo a un artículo publicado por *Prison Legal News*, escrito por Douglas Ankneym.

La Oficina Federal de Estadísticas de Justicia reportó un incremento del 600 por ciento de muerte por intoxicación o uso de drogas en cárceles federales y 200 por ciento en cárceles estatales entre los años 2001 y el 2018. Siendo el 2018 con más muertes reportadas por esta agencia.

"La crisis de opioides en las cárceles y prisiones estadounidenses se ha disparado en el resto del país. En 2021, el 75 por ciento de las muertes por sobredosis al consumo de opioide —principalmente por el fentanilo— lo que elevó la cifra nacional de muertes por sobredosis de todo tipo de drogas...", acorde a lo escrito.

En el 2009 una encuesta realizada en la cárceles

de Puerto Rico y que a su vez fue publicada en *Harm Reduction Journal*, reveló que al preguntar a un grupo de 1,155 prisioneros si habían sido testigos de alguien intoxicado por una sobredosis, 488 hombres y 37 mujeres declararon que sí. Además 361 hombres y 29 mujeres afirmaron la muerte de una persona por abuso de sustancias.

Según el artículo, The Marshall Project reveló que antes del 2013, las muertes por sobredosis nunca han superado el quinto puesto en California, aunque otros datos inciertos indican una alta tasa de muerte entre reclusos donde resaltan los estados de Arkansas, Maryland y California.

Sin embargo, otro reporte insinuó que no hubo ninguna muerte relacionada por sobredosis de fentanilo entre el primero de enero de 2013 al 30 de marzo de 2021. Pero un grupo de investigadores contradijeron esta versión al demostrar que hubo "90 eventos reportados al constar con 179 sobredosis relacionados con fentanilo".

"De esas 179 sobredosis, 138 (77 %) ocurrieron en cárceles y el 41 (23 %) ocurrieron en prisiones.

Setenta y seis ( 42.5 %) terminan en fallecimiento", indicó *Prison Legal News*. Añadiendo que 13 de los 40 incidentes ocurrieron en la Prisión Estatal Mule Creek California.

TMP reportó, en una entrevista a un prisionero usando un celular de contrabando relato como unos prisioneros, "cayeron inconscientemente con regularidad... usualmente fumando papel mojado con K2 líquido [una marihuana sintética], de lo que ellos no están realmente seguros si contienen fentanilo o PCP [phencyclidine] también".

*PBS News* reportó, que el Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación de Alabama presentó una discrepancia en datos provistos por dicha agencia, al indicar que en año 2021 se reportaron siete muertes por sobredosis, sin embargo "tres de estas muertes fueron clasificadas como "muerte natural".

"Las personas en la prisión a menudo consumen drogas cuando están solas y pueden ser reacias a pedir ayuda si hay un problema" mencionó el Profesor Harold Pollack de la Universidad de Chicago.

# Encubriendo injusticias

El oficial de policía Connor Grubb junto con Departamento de Policía en el estado Columbus, Ohio. Intentaron encubrir detalles de un incidente en donde un oficial trató de ocultar su identidad bajo una adaptación de la ley Marsy. Acorde al reporte escrito por Stephen Starr que fue publicado por *El Guardián*.

Starr describe los hechos que ocurrieron en el año 2023, afuera de un estacionamiento en donde el oficial Grubb disparó a Ta'Kiya Young, quien en ese momento se encontraba embarazada. El oficial Grubb declaró, que Young intentó arroyarlo mientras él trataba de arrestarla por un supuesto robo en la tienda de Kroger.

"Dos vidas fueron postpuestas. No es solo la de Ta'Kiya, sino también la de su hija no nacida que no llega pisar esta tierra", dijo el abogado Sean Walton en una conferencia de prensa.

*El Guardián* informó, que de acuerdo a la cámara de video de la policía se ve como el oficial le dispara al parabrasis impactando en el pecho de la víctima, mientras Young manejaba su carro lentamente al lado derecho del oficial. Por este hecho el oficial fue elegible para entrar en la ley provisional de Marsy.

La publicación indica que este tipo de casos son

muy comunes y que en años recientes la tendencia sigue aumentando en los cuales los oficiales involucrados en incidentes fatales han podido ser beneficiados con dicha ley.

De acuerdo a la historia detrás de la ley Marsy, dicha ley provee a las víctimas de crimen, el anonimato al proteger su identidad y en el cual está bajo el Código Penal § 3041.5. the "Victims' Bill of Rights Act of 2008". La ley es dedicada en nombre de una Universitaria de 21 años, quien era estudiante de educación especial para niños discapacitados. Marsy falleció mientras trataba de detener a su novio para que no se suicidara el 30 de noviembre de 1983.

La familia nunca fue notificada que este individuo fue puesto en libertad bajo fianza y sin que ellos tuvieran la oportunidad de apelar la decisión. La madre de Marsy se impresionó al ver al hombre que mató a su hija en un supermercado local.

El 21 de noviembre 2025, el artículo comunicó que la corte del condado de Franklin encontró no culpable al oficial por la muerte de Ta'Kiya Young. "La Ley Marsy viola el derecho al debido proceso de los acusados, aumenta la posibilidad de condenas injustas y socava los principios del sistema legal estadounidense. Además,

desmantela varias iniciativas recientes de justicia penal que cuenta con el amplio apoyo del pueblo estadounidense", afirmó Ríchael Powers, experta en justicia penal de la Universidad de Cincinnati.

Según lo escrito, otro caso similar ocurrió afuera de una tienda Target en el estado de Florida en donde supuestamente Jayden Baez de 20 años intentó embestir a un oficial y por alto el uniformado disparó, matando a Baez en la escena.

Por el incidente el oficial se benefició por la ley Marsy. En este estado muchos oficiales que están involucrados en incidentes donde civiles mueren o sufren graves lesiones buscan la protección de la Ley Marsy.

Starr describe varios hechos similares en el estado de Ohio, Dakota del Norte. Sin embargo algunos jueces dictaminaron que la aplicación de la ley a las fuerzas del orden es "controversial" y expresan su rechazo a su aplicación.

"La forma en que se aplica la ley de Marsy a la policía en el ejercicio de sus funciones al actuar en nombre del Estado es inapropiada y constituye un mal uso de la ley", dijo Emily Cole de la organización Familias de Ohio Unidos por Acciones y Cambios Políticos.

—Por César Martínez  
Staff Writer

SPORTS

# San Quentin Tennis Association a competitive force to reckon with

By Martin Keith DeWitt  
Journalism Guild Writer

Colorado's Department of Corrections faces an overcrowding dilemma due to manpower deficiencies and an accumulation of eligible parolees.

The Colorado State legislature's Joint Budget Committee denied the Department of Corrections' petition for nearly \$2.5 million to fund more than 780 additional bunks due to an unanticipated surge in population, according to Capitol News Alliance.

The department failed to address the ongoing causes of the overcrowding crisis and the retaining of people who qualify for parole, stated Capitol News Alliance.

"Until there is a plan or plans to address why the releases are lagging the admissions and why that's changed and what we can do about that, it's very hard for me to support more beds," said Senator Judy Amabile (Colorado).

The vote to deny the



SQNews archive

Outside volunteers participate in a game with residents

petition came down to a partisan split with Republicans in favor of the Bill and Democrats voting against it by a 4-2 margin.

Republican lawmakers Rep. Rick Taggart and Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer favored the bed expansion

petition. They agreed with their liberal counterparts about the shortsightedness of the DOC and advised of the inevitability of having to fund the request, according to Capitol News Alliance.

Kirkmeyer acknowledged that the lack of foresight

should be addressed even though it has no bearing on whether or not to spend the additional outlay. Delaying the decision could be viewed as a means to hold the department accountable.

The DOC's procedures have created exasperation among

lawmakers in regard to how the department is operated, said Kyle Giddings, deputy director of the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition,

"There's...5,000 people inside of DOC past their parole eligibility dates," said Giddings. "Why aren't we

working on getting those folks out and fixing technical parole violations?"

Giddings added that the source of the overcrowding is minor parole violations such as the skipped check-ins.

The DOC has had to use maintenance workers, case managers, and teachers to perform correctional officer duties as a result of manpower deficiencies within the department, said Hilary Glasgow, executive director of Colorado's correctional union WINS, according to Capitol News Alliance.

The state implemented its Prison Population Management Plan in August because of the high occupancy percentage, as indicated in the department's most recent report.

"When you put someone in prison, you have to have staff who are there to help run the systems of the prisons," said Glasgow. "At its best, the prison can be a place for rehabilitation, and at its worst, it's a warehouse. Right now we're somewhere in between."

## Opening Day arrives as resident challenges status quo

By Anthony Manuel  
Carvalho  
Sports Editor

African-Americans represent 22% more incarcerated persons (28% versus 6% in MLB) than the grand 'ole game employs, according to The Harvard Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law.

As opening day arrives at the major league level and in prison baseball, SQ Giants players like Aaron "June" Miles wanted to challenge the status quo.

"I'm inviting Magic, Reggie, Steph Curry, and all of MLB to see incarcerated ball players who could have played — just for the chance to stop our kids from becoming stats," said SQ Giants Aaron "June" Miles. "Earvin, our race turns its lonely eyes to you, challenging you to come see our solutions, because you've got abilities to change the world to what it should be."

The passionate challenge stemmed from SQ Giants players' viewing a historic 2022 San Francisco Chronicle "Sporting Green" headline that read "No Blacks In The WS [World Series]."

The 2022 fall classic between the Houston Astros and the Philadelphia Phillies employed no African-born African-American baseball players, which marked the first occurrence since Jackie Robinson donned a uniform for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.

In 2025, the LA Dodgers, employed one African-American player; Mookie Betts, who stars for the perennial champions.

"I can't believe that in 2022 there were no Blacks in the World Series," said SQ Giants centerfielder Kameron "Kam" Hamilton, "and Magic's champion LA Dodgers only employed one of us."

The Press Democrat reported that a 66% decline in African-American ball players has occurred since the peak participation mark hit 18.1% in 1981. Today, only 6.2% of the league's Black ballplayers are American-born.

"The slow whitening of baseball seems to have done as much damage as the outright bigotry that Jackie Robinson, Willie Mays, Bob Gibson, Reggie Jackson, Curt Flood and countless others endured," said resident Allen Crews. "MLB starts a couple of academies in inner cities and yet 'Magic' [Johnson, Dodgers owner] hasn't addressed the biggest issue in baseball. My generation doesn't even acknowledge the game that changed the world."

So, what happened? The amateur draft, stricter age requirements in some states in the U.S., and lower taxation overseas shifted player development to Latin America.

Mark Armour and Daniel Levitt reported in Baseball Demographics that the number of Latino players more than doubled in 30 years from 7.7% to 16.1%. That is the polar opposite to the plight of African-American players. Baseball Demographics also reported Asian participation in MLB increased to 2.1% in 2016, from no players in 1993.

The problem starts in Little League and is getting worse because of an elite travel team culture. The cost for one child to play, beginning at age 6 up to 18, could exceed \$21,500 per season, according to North Texas Baseball Select. The article noted that a family could spend \$200,000 just to help their kid chase a mega-contract.

Miles stated that the travel league phenomenon eliminates inner cities' opportunities in baseball, leaving faint hope that a future big leaguer will follow in the shadows of Willie Mays and Reggie Jackson. Instead, economically disadvantaged areas have become baseball deserts, devoid of chances for African-American players. He asked "where is the next Darryl Strawberry, Eric Davis, or Doc Gooden?"

Miles said that we may have seen African-American ball players flourish for the last time, because today the last generation of baseball players may be in the penitentiaries of our country.

## Finishing last is a victory for one marathoner

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center marathoners and supporters believe every runner wins. But when the event concludes, there is one individual standing truly victorious as he completes the race: the last person crossing the finish line. This year's victor is Albert Campos Jr., the 38th and last person to finish the race.

"Thoughts [that] I wouldn't make it because of my cramps around lap 40-43, stopped as I realized I didn't want to give up because of my belief in God, and my own persistence," said Campos Jr. "I also finished because I wanted to give back to the community, my victim(s) and for my family."

Campos said that when he reached lap 70, he felt he ran out of energy. But because there was a huge personal fan

base that included "a lot of running coaches, education staff, my coworkers from the Peer Literacy Mentor Program and the SQRC community, especially Jaime 'Happy' Paredes. All of them continued to support me until I completed the marathon."

As the laps eroded layers of protection from his Hoka running shoes, Campos Jr. staggered and cramped as he completed the agonizing trek.

Four hours, five minutes and two seconds after Hugo Dimas finished the first sub-three-hour marathon at SQRC, completing the 105 laps to capture the first place trophy, Campos Jr. crossed the finish line like a punch-drunk warrior after one round with Iron Mike Tyson.

"You did it" exclaimed a 1000 Mile Club volunteer

as everyone clapped in American Sign Language (both hands in the air) for Campos Jr. "That's the deaf culture," said Campos Jr. "And I just can't thank everyone who showed me full support, including my brother Tommy Wickerd, who first invited me to become a 1000 Mile Club member."

Campos Jr. has been a member of the 1000 Mile Club since 2022. He estimates he truly has run 1000 miles this year.

"I was blessed to not be injured at all throughout the year and was mentored by all of our senior track residents and the volunteers who come in to train us at least once a week," said Campos Jr.

Fellow runner Eliezer Prado, who finished 90 laps of the marathon, said of

Campos Jr., "Truly amazing to see a man not endowed with athletic ability of a classic runner finish this event."

"There are more ways to win in life than coming in first-place," said third-place finisher Jose Maya. "Al represents perseverance and humility for all who have suffered by his actions; I call that a winner."

Campos Jr. said that advocating for the entire deaf community during his incarceration also contributed to him finishing.

"Today, I felt normal. When I ran, no one treated me as [having] special needs, and that's how we all wish it could be in life everyday," said Campos Jr.

—Anthony Manuel Carvalho  
Sports Editor

### TIER TALK

## SQ runner sets marathon benchmark



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Jose Fajardo

Imagine throwing a perfect game the first time you ever pitched, breaking the single-game rushing or passing record during your first start, or bowling a perfect 300 the first time you visited a bowling alley.

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center resident Jose Fajardo, a member of the 1000 Mile Club, did essentially that the

first time he ever participated in the San Quentin Marathon last year. Fajardo broke a record that was thought to be insurmountable when he beat Markelle "The Gazelle" Taylor's marathon record of 3 hours and 16 minutes in the prison's 105-lap marathon.

Fajardo credited the "coaches and runners (who) put pressure and inspired me to leave it all out on the track that day."

The 44-year-old Fajardo is known as a floater because when he runs he looks like he's running on clouds as he listens to music.

"Music puts me at ease and although I don't dance, my running is my dancing to the music," Fajardo said.

Fajardo used the track club's rigorous training schedule to help him dance into the record books for its marquee event.

He said he started with three-mile runs in January, increasing every month to gain the endurance to run the half marathon and the two- and three-hour runs. Fajardo has continued to thrive this year: He just missed breaking Taylor's record in the half marathon,

winning in a time of 1:18:58, just 69 seconds off Taylor's mark.

The record-setting marathoner credits recently released Tommy Wickerd for discovering his talents. Fajardo said he met Wickerd in 2022 and was invited to join the 1,000 Mile Club.

"To me [running] is an escape from what I've been thinking or doing during the week," Fajardo said. "I also use the time to plan what I'm doing later in the week. Running also helps me sleep better."

Residents describe Fajardo as humble, and they cite his work in programs such as Light Keeper and Restorative Justice.

Fajardo believes sports programs are self-help that teach hard work, discipline, community engagement, communication, and health.

"Those skills are not only used in SQRC, but they are transferrable out in society," he said. "The choices I made and behaviors that I've made in the past can't change, but today I'm able to wake up every morning and live for that day."

As a successful resident

who loves being challenged to grow, Fajardo also loves being challenged on the track — although few can stay up with him.

"I do enjoy when I'm running out on the track and a runner challenges me and runs alongside me as we start sprinting," Fajardo said. "There's a rush of adrenaline for that period until either one of us slows down."

Taylor has made a career of running since his release. Fajardo said it's irrelevant whether he follows suit and no one can take away his "most vivid memory of winning my first marathon race."

Fajardo encourages anyone interested in the 1,000 Mile Club to come out on a Monday night and practice. He said it's never too late to make running a part of your daily priorities.

When he started eight years ago at age 36, Fajardo couldn't run more than 10 laps. Now, he's a record-setter.

"It begins with one lap at a time," said Fajardo.

—Anthony Manuel Carvalho  
Sports Editor

## COLORADO

# Overpopulation a concern for Colorado's Corrections

*Petition denied for \$2.5 million to increase housing bunk availability*

**By Martin Keith DeWitt**  
Journalism Guild Writer

Colorado's Department of Corrections faces an overcrowding dilemma due to manpower deficiencies and an accumulation of eligible parolees.

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## FAITH

## Message of hope and gratitude as year ends

**By Aristeo Sampablo**  
Staff Writer

At the end of the year, a small community inside San Quentin got together to celebrate spending time and a meal as one union under the same faith.

For San Quentin's Chaplain David Lal, the event was more than just getting together with a group of incarcerated individuals. Lal has been coming into the prison for close to a decade and being of service alongside the men behind bars. He said his compassion for the men in San Quentin is what keeps him coming back year after year.

"My son got in trouble and went to jail. One day the Lord said 'I have taken your son, but I give you 500,'" said Chaplain Lal. "The Lord changed my mind and helped me to not judge, but to love. I believe that God gave me so much that I have to share it."

With the chapel filled to capacity, the joy of love and service was in the air. The church choir began by performing a number of songs such as "The Goodness of God," "How Great Is Our God," and "Jesus the Messiah."

Chaplain Lal took the stage to share messages of hope and encouragement for the men and women present.

Chaplain Lal recalled his journey over the past decade and said that it had not been easy for him. He said that he has faced a numbers of challenges over the years of coming into

the prison and preaching to residents in the San Quentin community.

"I want to see you men go home to be with your families. If what I do saves lives and brings families together, then I have done my job" said Chaplain Lal. "Because when they hurt, I hurt."

Pastor Lal's services have not gone unnoticed, say many grateful residents. One of those residents is Nehemias Vasquez.

Vasquez said that he was satisfied to be able to translate for the Spanish-speaking community during Pastor Lal's sermon at Sunday's service.

"For several years Pastor Lal has been a fundamental pillar for the Christian Church... Pastor Lal understands and relates to our loss, pain, and separation," said Vasquez. "He also understands what our loved ones go through while we're incarcerated."

For countless years, San Quentin has continually counted on volunteers who have dedicated years to being of service to the incarcerated population. Pastor Lal is an example the type of person who doesn't mind spending time out of his life to be of service.

"I have witnessed his passion, humility, humbleness, commitment, and love toward us, knowing he could be with his family on Sunday evenings, but he choose to be here with us," said Vasquez. "That means a lot and we're grateful."

## CONSTRUCTION



Photo by Marcus Casillas // SQNews

Residents walk the track as forklift and truck drive by

## Roadway traffic not a concern for residents

**By Charles Crowe**  
Staff Writer

San Quentin residents walking, running, working out, or just getting fresh air share the paved areas of the prison's Lower Yard with a considerable amount of vehicular traffic.

Police cruisers and electric-powered carts, medical transport vans and ambulances, an 18-wheeler delivering an MRI trailer, buses coming and going from R&R, delivery trucks and forklifts, dump trucks and cement mixers, and cranes and construction-related vehicles compose the wheeled menagerie.

Traffic has been unusually heavy this past year. There is construction adjacent to East Block, part of the transformation of San Quentin from state prison to rehabilitation center. That work accounts for the cement mixers, dump trucks, cranes, and other vehicles heading to the construction site.

Residents circumnavigating the yard are on alert as they pass through the paved area between the baseball field and the big wall, looking over their shoulder and favoring the edges because they know they are likely to encounter a vehicle ahead or behind.

To get a sense how much traffic there is, *San Quentin News* counted vehicles on the Lower Yard on three different days, each time for two hours. The approach was strictly anecdotal, not at all scientific, and purposely timed to count during the heaviest traffic hours.

The counts took place on weekdays and second-watch hours when medical traffic is especially high, construction work is bustling, and maintenance workers are busily scurrying around in their electric carts. A reporter counted 130 vehicles in those six hours, about one vehicle every three minutes, more than 20 per hour on average.

San Quentin residents seem to take the situation in stride. Luis Gonzalez leaned against the wall across from canteen to make room as a large cement mixer crawled past on its way to the construction zone. Gonzalez

didn't seem to mind.

"We can't do anything about it so we just have to deal with it," he said.

For those who have lived on yards where the presence of even a single vehicle meant yard recall, sharing their recreation space with cars, trucks, forklifts and electric carts is a novel experience.

Darren Settlemyer has been on yards where you had to get down for the presence of a vehicle, even a little electric cart. He doesn't mind the "vehicle on the yard" scenario at San Quentin.

"I'm grateful that we have access to this yard when a vehicle is present," said Settlemyer. He said that the arrangement works best when drivers and pedestrians are considerate of one another. He expressed wonder at scenes of individuals stopping to talk in the middle of the most heavily traversed area, seemingly oblivious to the traffic that invariably comes.

Most vehicle operators are considerate of pedestrians, announcing their presence with a polite tap on the horn and moving slowly through the congested area. And most pedestrians seem to understand their responsibility to be alert and to get out of the way so vehicles can pass safely and easily.

On balance, it works. While counting, the reporter saw only two instances of obviously angry or disgruntled drivers or pedestrians. One person walking the yard gave a special high sign to a car that had passed him moments before. Perhaps a horn blast that he thought was less than courteous startled him.

A delivery truck driver who had his window rolled down muttered invectives about a cement mixer that had entered the narrow passage at the same time from the other end.

The East Block construction project won't last forever and traffic serving that work will end. Lower Yard traffic will return to its usual level, much greater than on most yards, but manageable when drivers and pedestrians are mutually aware and considerate.

## HEALTH

## Forum focuses on board and healthcare

**By Jason L. Jackson**  
Staff Writer

San Quentin held its healthcare forum inside a packed chapel full of incarcerated residents. The forum was hosted by members of the medical department and the Peer Support team. Residents in attendance were eager to have some questions answered regarding the health department and recent development with the Board of Parole Hearings.

A highlight of the forum was the question and answer session between Peer Support Specialist Marcus Shepard and Parole Board Director Scott Wyckoff. Shepard had the opportunity to answer five questions submitted by residents at San Quentin. Questions covered topics ranging from suitability to the issue of false positives connected with the drug testing associated with Medicated Assistance Treatment, commonly known as the Suboxone program.

Regarding suitability, residents wanted to know if a rules violation within the last three years would automatically result in a parole denial.

Director Wyckoff stated that a rules violation would not automatically disqualify someone for parole eligibility, and that parole commissioners are better trained to deal with the context behind an infraction.

"The commissioners want to know what happened, and how does the violation relate to your controlling case factors?" said Wyckoff.

Healthcare executive Shannon Garrigan opened the event with a statement that expressed the healthcare department's desire to promote transparency, and informed the incarcerated population on what the healthcare team does.

"There are issues around healthcare that the population needs to be educated about, and we work with peer support specialist to accomplish that," said Garrigan.

Monica D., a registered nurse at San Quentin, reiterated these points and provided beneficial information regarding medical appointments, data statistics, and the importance of receiving cancer screenings.

"The healthcare team is comprised of a team that works with all disciplines and departments in order to support healthcare staff and bring direct and timely healthcare service to the population," said Monica.

Director Wyckoff also advised residents to be personal when comprising their written statements to the board.

"Tell us how have you changed that brought you to prison, and how the classes you've taken have assisted in that change," said Wyckoff.

Marcus Shepard expressed that he is glad the director decided to accept the invitation and believes the conversation "went well, even though there is more conversation that needs to be had."

Shepard has worked with the Peer Support team for one year, and said Peer Support Specialists work hand in hand with medical staff as liaisons between the healthcare team and the incarcerated population.

"There are residents who know what the need from medical but are unable to explain their needs, and that is where Peer Support comes in," said Shepard.

Shepard said the Peer Support team is looking forward to sponsoring a healthcare forum with the health department possibly every quarter, in an attempt to keep the population informed and included in their own treatment.



## SQ Arts in Corrections lose funding

By Kevin D. Sawyer  
Editor-in-Chief

The Arts in Corrections program at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center was notified that its funding through the William James Association would not be made available for at least one year.

Financial support for AIC at San Quentin was cut short when the California Arts Council rejected a WJA proposal for funding.

"They literally told us in January there's no more funding coming in," said Art Hazelwood, an instructor employed by WJA. He teaches drawing and runs the open studio on Saturday mornings. "Last year when they cut funding, that cut my class in half."

Scott McKinstry has been incarcerated at San Quentin since 2004. He is an artist and is a well-established participant in the AIC program. "It's already affecting the program," he said, because it will limit teachers.

WJA's mission, according to its website, states that it "... promotes work service in the arts, environment, education, and community development. Our work has been primarily centered around transformative arts experiences in non-traditional settings, serving men and women in and after prison and high-risk youth. Acting on the conviction that the fine arts enrich, heal and unite communities, the William James Association has brought exceptional artists into prisons and jails throughout California and other states since 1977."

Annually, more than 2500 individuals benefit from WJA supported funding, according to its website. Fifty-three staff and teaching artists are employed, serving 11 counties, and "75% of its funds are allocated to support WJA art workshops."

Carol Newborg has been teaching art through AIC programs more than 40 years; 15 of those years have been at San Quentin. In a letter for this story, she wrote about being a witness to "...so many people [who] find themselves through the arts, be it drawing, painting,

writing, music or acting, that I know the arts can help support deep and permanent change and rehabilitation for many."

Participants — some named, and some anonymous — in AIC's creative writing program submitted WJA written testimonials to express what that program means to them. Their words, however, were not considered.

"For me, writing fiction helps me see the world through the eyes of others — the eyes of the characters I create," Todd Winkler wrote. "Since being part of the WJA creative writing program, I've created characters who are fleeing oppression, characters suffering various forms of discrimination, and characters victimized by crime. Creating these pieces helps me develop empathy for others."

"The creative writing workshop made me hungry to tell my stories," one participant wrote. "I wonder what my prison experience would have been if I had not found creative writing; and I shudder when left to imagine what time I would be wasting on Wednesday nights in the absence of the program."

"Creative writing has helped me expand my self-expression," another participant wrote. "The group structure allows me to learn how to accept critical feedback and incorporate it into my writing. It inherently helps me to refine myself while creating a space to genuinely consider other people's idea of what a story should look like."

James Bottomley described himself as a "neophyte fiction writer" when he joined creative writing in 2014. He paroled from San Quentin last year in mid-February. "I am pleased to say that the writers group was one of the most rewarding experiences in my life," he wrote.

"Each story reflects the strength of creative expression as a tool for growth, resilience, and reimagining what's possible," WJA's website states. "Through paintings, poems, and shared experiences, these individuals remind us that transformation begins with opportunity, creativity, care,

and extending humanity."

In 1977, William James Association started the first in-prison arts program. It spawned Arts in Corrections after the success of a fine arts pilot project established by Eloise Smith at California Medical Facility in Vacaville, Calif., and became a national model for prison arts programs.

"The long and successful history of Arts in Corrections, studied by many from around the world, and statistically proven to significantly lower recidivism by California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's own studies, shows that the types of programs offered by the William James Association are too important to drop at San Quentin," Newborg wrote.

"When funding gets cut, it isn't just a program that disappears; it's a corridor of transformation," Watani Stiner wrote in a letter for this story. "William James Association didn't 'teach' me writing so much as it returned me to myself. In a place designed to erase your name and replace it with a number, that classroom handed me a pen like a set of keys and said: unlock the human. We weren't doing homework, we were doing witness. We were practicing freedom in sentences, building a bridge out of concrete and time. And let me be plain: the cheapest thing this society can do is pay for cages. What it can't afford is the cost of souls left untended."

According to WJA literature, the first time its funding was eliminated was in 2003, and again in 2010 when state budget cuts were made. At the time, funding from private sources became the stop-gap for WJA at San Quentin.

The state legislature funds the California Arts Council which provides grant funding to Arts in Corrections through the William James Association.

When WJA was funded by CAC it was a good way to keep it going, said Hazelwood. "Some years CAC says great," he added, but "It's not a good funding solution to fund arts programs [in prison]. People are holding on hoping [WJA] will get funded."

## First amendment rights upheld in 20-year appeal

By Jerry Maleek Gearin  
Journalism Guild Chair

An Islamic scholar's First Amendment rights enabled his release from federal detention 20 years after the 9/11 attacks.

The U.S. government said Ali Al-Timimi, who had been sentenced to life in prison, used his lectures to encourage Muslim men to get military training and fight American troops in Afghanistan, according to the New York Times.

Al-Timimi served 20 years in federal detention for 10 criminal convictions, including solicitation of treason. His legal team argued their client only counseled his followers amid post-9/11 anti-Muslim sentiments, stated the Times.

A three-judge panel in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., vacated all of his criminal convictions.

"Plenty of speech encouraging criminal activity is protected under the First Amendment," wrote Federal Appeals Judge James Wynn. "The First Amendment's protection does not depend on the popularity or palatability of the message conveyed."

The Muslim men actually purchased weapons and received paintball tactical training in the state of Virginia, prompting them to be nicknamed the "paintball terrorists."

The men never fought against any American troops but some received lengthy prison terms because of their training, according to the Times.

Al-Timimi's appeal lasted 20 years. Jonathan Turley, counsel to Al-Timimi and a law professor at George Washington University, said this case "stands as one of the longest direct appeals in history."

In 2005, at the time of Al-Timimi's sentencing, Judge Leonie M. Brinkema of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia called the mandated federal sentencing guidelines "draconian."

In September 2020, Judge Brinkema gave Al-Timimi his conditional release from a super-maximum security prison in Florence, Colo. Turley drove Al-Timimi to Northern Virginia, where Al-Timimi took up residence and lived without incident under court supervision, according to the Times.

"When courts refuse to allow convictions based merely on the expression of ideas, no matter how alarming those ideas may be to some," said Federal Public Defender Jeremy Kamens, "they vindicate the First Amendment's core promise and demonstrate the strength of our system of government."

### YOUTH

## Vulnerability and accountability subject at Kid CAT ceremony

By Michael Callahan  
Layout Designer

For the first time since Covid, Kid CAT (Creating Awareness Together) celebrated almost 100 residents who completed First Step, which centers on addressing trauma, or Junior Lifers Support Group, which focuses on parole board preparation.

For 15 years, Kid CAT has guided youth and lifer-term offenders through mentorship, compassion, and edification. Their vision is to inspire individuals to grow into caring and productive members of their communities.

"Vulnerability is really important and if you go to Board; emotional intelligence is key to understanding where your emotions come from so you can deal with them appropriately. Today is a testament to the work you put in which is amazing because most people outside prison don't," said Trevor Lawson, Kid CAT's Chairman.

Since the inception of Kid CAT, Dr. Z has volunteered

*"Today I realize my masculine self is a man of God; someone who is accountable and responsible for his actions."*

his time to help educate residents on elements of denial, criminal thinking behaviors, victim impact, domestic violence, and the causative factors of their crimes.

Dr. Z told attendees about how his experience sky diving was similar to their rehabilitative journey. He said no matter how unnerving something is, it does not mean you cannot turn that experience into something amazing.

"Trust yourself to have skills to handle life, especially when you feel unprepared. You have the ability to coast and know your chute is available, so be ready to skydive," Dr. Z said.

Several other volunteers spoke about how the individuals who completed

the programs affected them. They discussed how their accountability, vulnerability, honesty, and commitment to personal growth should be replicated outside the prison.

Resident Eliazar Guerra said, "Those of us in here that came in young, we are the future. We can be the kind of change out in society that is needed."

Guerra said change starts with involvement in programs and working with people mentoring others to step out and into that light. "Vulnerability is our most accurate measure of courage."

Certificates were passed out and entertainment was provided by members of Kid CAT as attendees enjoyed Drewski's BBQ.

"I was a person who did not care about others or myself," resident Aaron Moton said.

Moton came to prison at 23 years old. He said the toxic masculinity part of the First Step curriculum resonated most. "Today I realize my masculine self is a man of God, someone who is accountable and responsible for his actions."



By Akbar Bey  
Kid CAT Writer

Being a part of Kid CAT has been a great learning experience for me. The group has aided my ability as an incarcerated individual to reflect on my childhood and other early life experiences that molded me into the individual who committed his life crime.

Growing up, I picked up the habit of numbing myself to things that were going on with me internally, due to trauma, abuse, the drug addiction of people who raised me, and the deaths

of loved ones.

External factors, such as the constant change in environment, had me adapting constantly to positive and negative behavior. As I grew older, I found myself taking on habits and traits that were a result of unaddressed issues. I did not take time to identify my issues. I refused to think about their root causes, and I did not want to revisit painful memories. I needed to take time to reflect on myself.

Instead, I made a conscious decision to ignore warning signs and bottled up everything inside me, which set me on the path to prison.

Since being a part of Kid CAT, and its first step JLSG and executive body, I have been able to see where I began to derive my values from growing up. I have been able to identify not only my triggers and character defects, but more importantly, look back and see where these things originated.

Whether reflecting on my own definition of what being a man looks

like; thinking about what toxic masculinity looks like and comes from; to thinking about value systems and what I held close to my heart as a self-image I wanted growing up and how I want to be remembered after I'm long gone, Kid CAT directed me.

The program has helped me sharpen myself so I can review my core belief system, as well as my core values, to see what is negative. Now I can heal from past pain, and make better decisions in the present and future.

I can say that this program has shown me not only how much stress I was going through prior to incarceration, but how far I have come in my journey in positive self-change. I feel like when it comes to being in prison, a lot of groups focus on what a person did, or what they had going on while growing up, and they all kind of state, "Well, don't let it happen again."

Whereas Kid CAT identifies the problems, shows where the

problem gained traction during one's upbringing, and then shows how to challenge the problem and prepare for a better future.

I constantly hear about the past when it comes to incarceration, which is okay because it helps me hold myself accountable for past decisions, but what about the future? If a man or woman spends many years of their life in a box, but cannot look to their future, when does the rehabilitation began?

Kid CAT has helped give me the skills to show when I earn my freedom back, I can handle the real tests of rehabilitation, which is life beyond these walls. Being a part of this program has shown me how to be open with others when it comes to communication with my emotions. This was far from an easy task for me because I grew up with the mentality that the world won't stop spinning for my problems so why should I spend time tripping over something that nobody else cared about.

I never realized how many people were going through the same thing as me, if not something similar. Kid CAT has connected me with people who on a daily basis are trying to fight their own demons and make a genuine change to show our communities that we are not the crimes that brought us to prison.

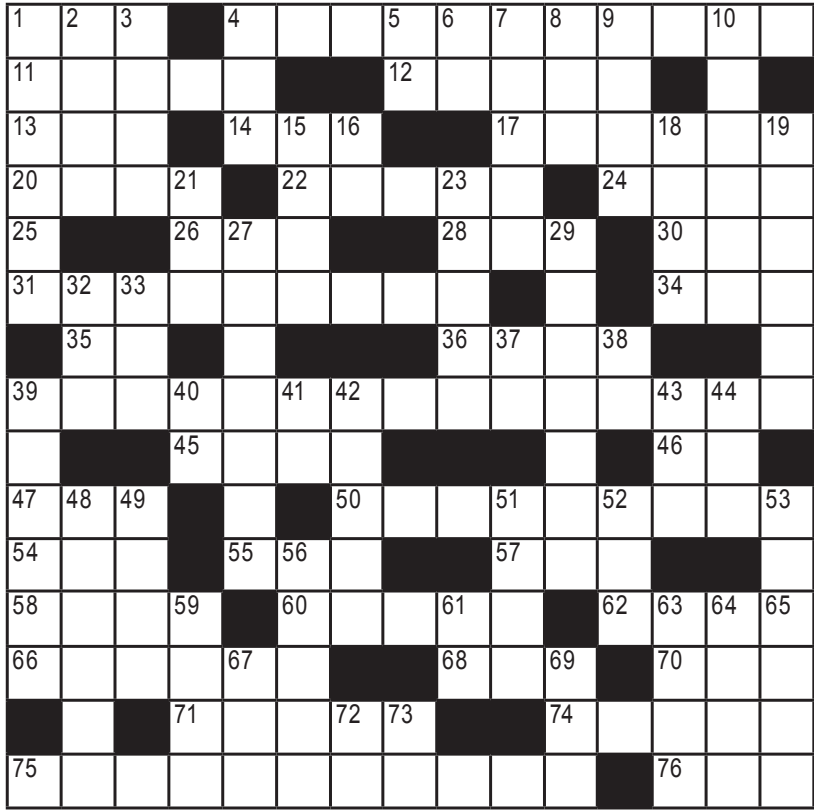
It feels good to know that I am doing the work, to show my community that the terrible choice I made was one that will never be repeated because I am taking accountability in my actions — but also having the integrity as a man to make sure that I change my way of thinking, not just for myself, but so that one day I may be able to help someone else who may be in the same head space I was once in. I can help others to choose a better path and possibly save multiple lives. I believe I owe this to society, and Kid CAT has helped me gain more skills to help me with my living amends.

GAMES

CROSSWORD CLASSIC
Created by Michael Fangman

"Wake Me Up When You Go-Go to the 80s"

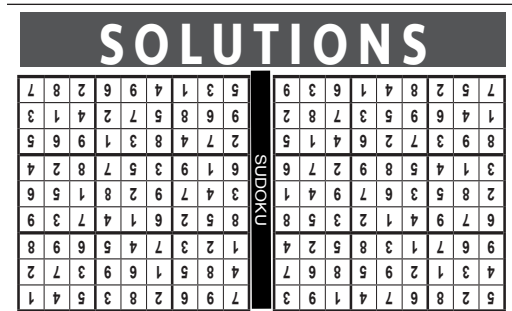
Edited by Jan Perry



- Across
1. This sitcom character came from the planet Melmac and liked to eat cats
4. If your friends don't do this dance "then they're no friends of mine."
11. Actors are often in search of them, especially Oscar-worthy ones
12. Crewing requires one (2 words)
13. A brief note
14. Trent Reznor's band (abbr)
17. A mixed-up comic strip beagle that slept on top of his dog house
20. Buckwheat's catch-phrase
22. This -graph made geometry colorful
24. On Hawaii-Five O, he "booked 'em"
26. This pen can bring relief to some
28. They've been monitoring TV in the UK since 1962 (abbr.)
30. A sherpa can help to get you there
31. The second version of this famous battle station looked unfinished, but was, in fact, "fully operational!"
34. \_\_\_\_\_ brenica: Bosnian city where in 1995 Serbs massacred thousands
35. A fancy IOU (abbr.)
36. Very, very long periods of time
39. Where Marty went at 88 mph
45. Mileage right off the assembly line
46. Agent 007 hated this Dr.
47. In short, "no known nicknames"
50. George Lucas named his ranch after this famous Jedi
54. Nancy told kids to "Just Say No," while Ronnie threatened them with this branch of the DOJ
55. Madness brought this musical style to "Our House" via MTV
57. Some GI Joe dolls had a bionic one
58. The first four letters in many memos
60. This feeling of listlessness and dissatisfaction was personified in Disney's movie Inside Out 2
62. A semi-circular or polygonal recess inside a church, usually in the East and containing the altar
66. Where to find the Kansas statehouse
68. This prefix essentially means "three"
70. They sang "There She Goes," from "How I Married an Axe Murderer"
71. It replaced computer printer ribbons
74. The Beatles sang of an eternal one
75. Men \_\_\_\_\_ (4-across singers)
76. "Owner of a Lonely Heart" band

- Down
1. The Govern-ator
2. This Republican Senate leader was more than a little
3. Red Hot Chili Peppers bass player
4. Its format is ###-##-####
5. Their motto was "It's in the game!"
6. KY neighbor
7. They are sometimes crazy, but can always be counted on if you need to walk the dog
8. Russian agreements
9. This Ranger SS moved to 3B when he became Jeter's teammate
10. I-down was looking for this Sarah
15. Wife to Osiris, she was to many ancients, a goddess of fertility
16. Neptunium on the table
18. Breakfast fare: Quaker \_\_\_\_\_
19. Robin Williams played this sailor
21. No, not \_\_\_\_\_, perhaps later
23. A peep-show in a box (17th century)
27. These particles are each a quantum of light
29. "Great Space Coaster" newsmen Gary woke to this every morning\*
32. US Government Agency charged with regulating pesticides (abbr.)
33. Mandela's political party (abbr.)
37. LF, CF, or RF
38. These two letters identify a Saint
39. Burt Reynolds in a Trans Am
40. How Sly defeated Clubber Lang
41. A Hawaiian honey-eating bird, now likely extinct
42. Where you're headed if the plane is landing at Lindbergh Field (2 words)
43. A brief unknown
44. She was famously v. Wade
48. He was "Ben" to 50-across
49. You must be 50 years old to join this
51. Deadheads are grateful for the life of this recently deceased musician
52. She played Marty's mom (39 across)
53. These pieces allowed young Drew to lure 72-down into her closet
56. Long before he was Neo, he was Ted
59. In need of a trip to the dentist?
61. Where you can find BYU
63. Some would eat this colorful doh
64. Not at all different
67. "I am the walrus, \_\_\_\_\_ ka choo!"
69. They often precede \_\_\_\_\_ and or but's"
72. See 53-down
73. This factor makes your blood + or -

\*If you got this without cheating, you hereby win all crosswords forever.



BOOK REVIEW

Inequities haunt homeless and poor to the grave

Author advocates for dignity in death and dying

By Charles Crowe Staff Writer

Persons experiencing homelessness face daunting challenges and inequities in their daily lives. Shunned and ignored, they are prodded to move along to what the author calls "the space that remains."

In "Too Poor to Die, The Hidden Realities of Dying in the Margins," author Amy Shea lays bare the cold truth that those inequities often dog the homeless through the time of their dying and even into the grave.

Shea presents her exposé in a series of nonfiction, personal essays that blend seamlessly into a compelling narrative. One such essay, "Remembering the Forgotten, The Space That Remains," takes place in a modern-day potter's field in the author's hometown of Fresno, California. After a brief ceremony in 2018, the county buried 740 unclaimed dead en masse. Such burials are periodic; these bodies had accumulated for nine years. Each of the 740 six-by-nine inch boxes held one set of cremains, all buried together in two wooden coffins in graves identified only as lot numbers 58 and 59, no names.

"Death is supposed to be the great equalizer," wrote Shea. "The thing we all experience regardless of our class, race, or any other identities we've held or experiences we've had in life. Yet not all deaths are created equal. Not everyone has a good or dignified death or is treated with respect and dignity once dead."

Although intensely researched — Shea's bibliography spans 29 pages — "Too Poor to Die" is not detached, academic writing. The author doggedly pursued her topic in person, on the street and on the road.

Her quest for understanding spanned more than a decade and carried her from Fresno to such disparate locations as Phoenix, Boston, Salt Lake City, Lexington, and England.

She frequented coroner's offices, morgues, hospices, medical facilities, and homeless shelters. She delved into documentary films like "A Certain Kind of Death," with its graphic scenes of lonely deaths discovered only when neighbors smelled bodies decomposing. As described in her essay, "Field Notes of a Tombstone Tourist," Shea haunted graveyards and cemeteries to contemplate the humble spaces that hold the

remains of those who die on the margin.

The writer sought to learn from those whose daily business is caring for the poor, the homeless, the sick and the dying, as well as those tasked with disposing of dead bodies or cleaning up scenes of death. She sought the insights of cemetery groundskeepers, street doctors, nurses, social workers, and staff at end-of-life facilities and homeless shelters. Often, the writer saw in these places the heroic efforts of some who care for the homeless and those approaching death. In some cases she worked side by side with them.

Shea worked in the foot-care clinic of St. Francis House, part of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless program, as "foot-care assistant." Her duties included "setting up basins for foot soaks and working with nurses to assess the condition of patients' feet, distributing socks and towels ... application of creams and powders, engaging [patients] in conversation (to establish rapport, which can result in the identification of further medical issues) ..." In this role she confirmed the importance of foot health to one who must walk everywhere, and keep walking, because home is a sidewalk where loitering is prohibited.

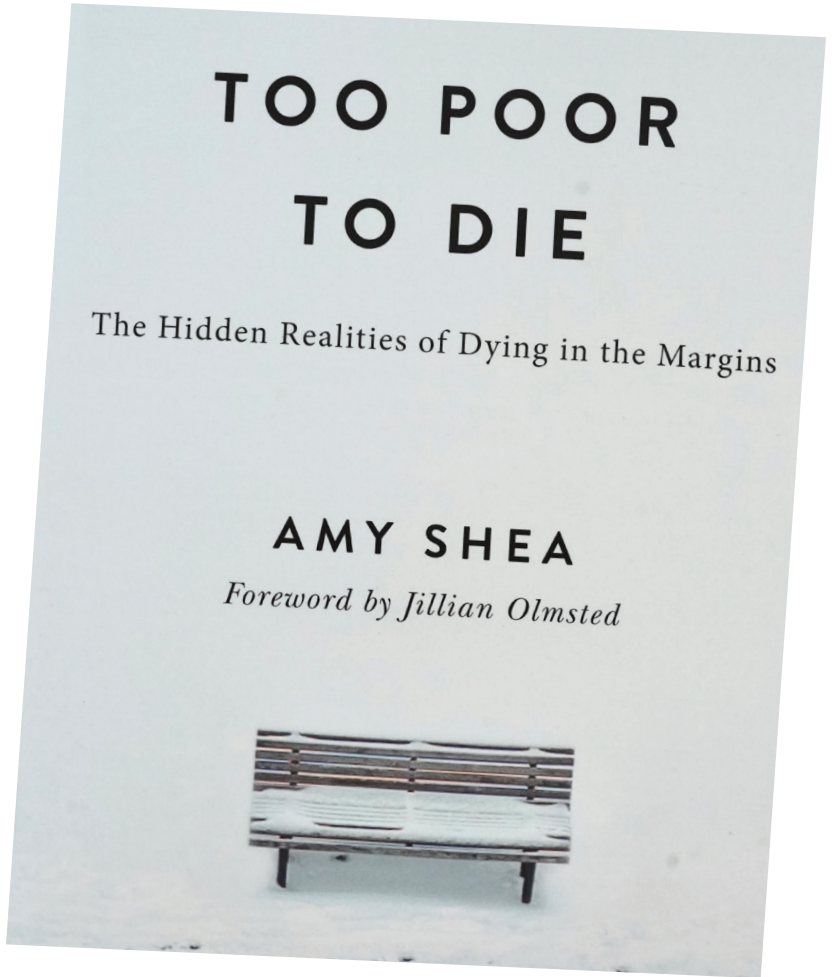
In Salt Lake City, Shea learned from staff and residents of the INN Between, a facility she described as "... medical respite and end-of-life care for people

experiencing homelessness." There she sat and conversed with residents living out their final days in hospice.

As her work progressed, the author saw how lack of shelter affects health and healthcare. In clinics and at homeless shelters she witnessed the intense wear on bodies from constant exposure to the elements (burns from laying on hot concrete or pavement, frostbite from the cold, among other things). She saw that without a secure place, life-sustaining medications cannot be properly stored or refrigerated, and can be lost to theft or sudden encampment sweeps. For these reasons among others, Shea argued in her book that "housing is healthcare" (her emphasis).

"Too Poor to Die" is unapologetic activism, a call for compassion for those who die on our margins. Shea wrote, "Regardless of where we come from ... we should agree that dignity in death is something that should be afforded to everyone, not just those that can afford it."

In prose that once stark and compassionate, the writer has tapped into an almost universal value, that the dying and the dead deserve dignity and respect. As a reader, one is compelled to consider if those experiencing homelessness deserve respect any sooner. Students of Mount Tamalpais College may recognize Shea as the director of the College's writing program. Students may borrow the book from the Mt. Tam library.



SUDOKU

