

San Quentin News

EST. 1940

WRITTEN BY THE INCARCERATED

ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE

VOL. 2026 NO. 6

JUNE 2026 — ISSUE 193

SANQUENTINNEWS.COM

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION 2,370



Photos by Marcus Casillas //SQNews

Will Ferrell squares up to bunt.

Will Ferrell and Jon Hamm play hardball on 'streaky' day

The 2026 San Quentin Giants baseball season started with laughter and good competition.

Emmy Award-winning actor Jon Hamm, best known for his role as Don Draper in the drama series Mad Men, and actor Will Ferrell, best known for his role as Ricky Bobby in the hit movie Talladega Nights, showed up to play for LA LOVE and experience a day on the Lower Yard.

The first ceremonial pitch, thrown by Hamm, was followed up by Ferrell, who threw out the second ceremonial pitch. Before Ferrell threw the pitch he proclaimed, "I want you to know, if either team hits a home run I'll streak the bases!"

Warden Chance Andes contributed a few words, telling all in attendance that he is an LA guy at heart. "I am supporting San Quentin today and I want to thank the LA LOVE for coming," Andes said.

By Ben Greenspon
Staff Writer



Will Ferrell and Jon Hamm.

See LA LOVE on pg 4

In the first inning SQ Giants shortstop Carrington Russelle started the game with a deep shot to centerfield. Anthony Denard followed Russelle with a single that set the stage for the first two runs of the 2026 season.

Denard stole second base and stopped halfway to draw the throw which allowed Russelle to score the first run of the season.

In the fourth inning the SQ Giants rally was cut short when LA LOVE's shortstop Alex Ansoleaga made a sliding grab, turned, and threw out SQ Giant Vic Picazo to kill the rally.

SQ Giants center fielder Kameron Hamilton shined throughout the game, driving in the second run for the Giants and scoring the final run in the seventh inning. Hamilton finished the day going two for three with one RBI.

Law says brandishing gun more serious than stabbing

By Jason L. Jackson
Staff Writer

According to data from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, simply brandishing a firearm while committing a crime in California will earn an offender an additional 10 years in prison, nearly 10 times the amount he'd receive if he'd used a knife to stab someone.

The data highlighted that in 2024, more than 93,000 people, or more than 80% of all CDCR inmates in California prisons, were serving prolonged sentences of at least a decade or more.

Many of the prison sentences in California are exacerbated by enhancements or the amount of extra time a defendant can receive for certain aspects of their crime, including having a prior criminal record or using a weapon.

CDCR's data also revealed that one of the most commonly charged enhancements in the state is the firearm enhancement, or penal code 12022.53.

"I received three separate gun enhancements that totaled to an extra seven years added to my sentence," said James Miles, a San Quentin resident convicted of home invasion robbery. Miles said that although his crime was classified as violent under the penal code, there was no physical harm done in the commission of the crime.

The firearm enhancement is a product of California's "10-20-Life" law that was enacted in 1997 with the passage of AB 4 and SB 1530.

The law added Penal Code 12022.53 to the books, mandating an "additional and consecutive 10 years for the personal use of a firearm in the commission of a felony;" an additional 20 years for the "personal and intentional discharge of a firearm;" and a 25-years-to-life prison term for a person who "discharges a firearm causing great bodily injury." In the case of the 10 year portion of the law, the gun doesn't have to be loaded, or even work.

The law was passed in an effort to deter violent crime. At the time, the legislature declared "that substantially larger prison sentences must be imposed on felons who use firearms, in order to protect our citizens." The law had the strong support of then governor Pete Wilson (R), who coined the phrase, "If you use a gun, you're done."

See GUNS on pg 5

Sentence reductions erode public trust

By Bostyon Johnson
Editor-in-Chief

There are four ways that people can reduce prison sentences once they are incarcerated. When the public is not aware or informed about how that can affect original sentencing, it can cause voters to have a distorted sense of their state's justice system, according to a report by National Affairs.

The four methods are the California Board of Parole Hearings process, remaining disciplinary-free while in custody, actively participating in-prison programming, and the Elderly Parole Program.

"In all but a few states, someone who hears of a carceral sentence imposed in court should assume that the convicted person will spend significantly less time in prison," the report states.

The first method is through the California BPH process, in which a panel authorized by the state's statutes grants the suitability of an incarcerated person. The panel analyzes an offender's risk factors to determine if the individual can live in society without committing more crimes.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Division of Adult Institutions has a department that calculates parole eligibility dates

See PUBLIC on pg 4

Carceral segregation deeply rooted in prison systems

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair
Contributing Guild Writers

Is carceral segregation as American as baseball and apple pie, or is it a method of prison politics in the wake of survival?

Dartmoor is a British prison that was built in 1806-1809 to hold prisoners of war during the 1812 Napoleonic wars. The prisoners were housed in five two-story prison blocks at Dartmoor, and each floor housed 500 men. The prison was originally built to house 5,000 people, according to the Dartmoor Prison Museum.

At one time Dartmoor housed 6,500 Black and White American POWs, but violence between the races was untenable. The prisoners claimed they could not live amongst each other, stated American History Professor Nicholas Guyatt of Cambridge University in England.

The prisoners made a request to the British authorities to be housed in separate quarters. The request was granted, marking Dartmoor as the first racially segregated prison in American history — even if not on American soil

— stated Guyatt.

More than 200 years after the Napoleonic wars, San Quentin Rehabilitation Center took on the lead role of rehabilitation in California's correctional system. Here, racial segregation still exists.

In the early morning when SQ residents are released from their cells, hundreds of men walk down 46 steps to the prison's exercise yard. Once residents get to the bottom of the stairwell, they face the decision: to segregate or integrate?

The younger residents seem most prone to intermingling with different races, while the older crowd stay within their own. The most visibly segregated areas on the prison's yard are made up of Black and Hispanic residents.

"In prison I feel that people often times self-segregate in order to fit in and not draw unwanted attention to themselves," said SQ resident Desmond McKenzie, who has been incarcerated for more than 25 years.

McKenzie added that segregation has become "a reflex" in the American prison system.

In early 2025, SQ replaced its exercise

equipment on the Lower Yard, which was already in a racially segregated area. The new equipment was placed in the same area where the old equipment previously existed, leaving no options to de-segregate.

The SQ dining rooms are divided into three distinct areas of Black, White, and Hispanic seating. In the West Block dining hall, the majority of residents eat their meals with their own race, while smaller groups dine with friends of different races.

Resident Paul Hultman arrived at SQ in 2025. Upon entering the West Block dining hall, he sat in an area allocated for a different race, and soon received "dirty looks."

"A belligerent-looking guy of approximately my age quickly sat at the table across from me," Hultman said. "He silently maintained a gaze of extreme disapproval, scowling yet saying nothing." The man didn't say anything, but Hultman understood.

In the changing demographics of SQ, the social norms are shifting from

See CARCERAL on pg 4

T.V. CHANNEL GUIDE

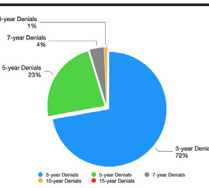
Residents miss channel guide

— STORY ON PAGE 5

PAROLE BOARD

Statistics on Parole Board Commissioners grants and denials

— STORY ON PAGE 6-7



MUSIC PROGRAMS

Healing through music programs

— STORY ON PAGE 10



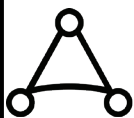
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We are supported by professional journalists, volunteers and prison administrators. Funding for the newspaper is through grants and generous donations from the outside community.

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ORGANIZATIONS

Prison college celebrates 30-year anniversary

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

Thirty years ago, what would become Mount Tamalpais College was born in San Quentin State Prison amidst violence, racial tension, animosity, suspicion, and meager resources. The first semester in 1996 consisted of two class offerings.

This April, the college celebrated its 30-year anniversary with a “Together We Climb” gala in San Francisco. Friends and partners of the school joined staff, current and former volunteer faculty, donors, and formerly incarcerated alumni to mark the milestone. MTC President Jody Lewen spoke to the gathering about the college’s origins and future path.

“What began in 1996 under extremely difficult circumstances has grown into an institution shaped by trust, academic rigor, and a deep commitment to human possibility. As we look to the future, our goal is not only to expand access to high-quality education in prison, but to affirm the humanity of incarcerated people and advance the contributions they are uniquely positioned to make to the world,” Lewen said.

Lewen came in to teach for the program in 1999 when it offered 10 classes attended by around 100 students and she stepped into the school’s leadership in 2000.

Some of today’s MTC students would be wide-eyed if they read her description of the College’s early years in December 2025’s “Letter from the President.”

“Most [students] were still writing their assignments with pencil; pens were scarce. Students scrounged together paper from clerical jobs or quarterly packages, and textbooks were donated by publishers or the occasional bookstore,” she wrote.

The college wasn’t called MTC at the time; that would come later. It was an extension of Patten College known as the Prison University Project. For about two decades the school would be the only on-site, degree-granting, liberal arts college in a California prison.

Prison staff scrutinized everything the program brought in and prohibited maps and some books based on the cover or title. Long and frequent lockdowns resulting from violence sometimes stretched 13-week semesters into six-month marathons.

Charges of overfamiliarity led to trips to the hole or bus rides to other prisons. “A teacher talking to a student one-on-one out of earshot of prison staff was viewed with deep suspicion,” Lewen wrote.

She recalled much hostility among prison staff to rehabilitative programs in those early years, but also talked about “a handful of key allies” that made the program’s survival possible. Some staff gradually came to see and respect the change they observed in the college’s students.

Lewen credited those students with a vital role in running the program, including delivering “mountains” of paper and verbal mail, mentoring and inspiring one another, and looking out for faculty and college staff, to name just a few of their contributions.

“The respect that those students earned ... eventually formed a powerful protective shield around the college that persists to this day,” she wrote.

MTC produced a “Then & Now Series” to celebrate the anniversary. There, alumnus and 2008 MTC graduate Raphael Calix testified to the transformation he experienced as a student of the school.

“I came into the prison system and found myself hopeless, believing that this was what I deserved in life—to be inside a prison ... [The volunteers] brought life into our bones by starting a college program ... That writing that I did, that reading that I did, brought me back to life. Literally. I was resurrected,” wrote Calix.

Sharing credit for the school’s success are its all-volunteer faculty, who Lewen acknowledged have for decades faced “... delays, cancellations, scant technology, sweaty classrooms, pouring rain, and Bay Area traffic.” The faculty, made

up of professors, graduate students and industry professionals, was a stabilizing force that recruited colleagues and “... forged the philanthropic origins of the fledgling program.”

The perseverance paid off. “Despite political and financial barriers, the college gradually gained trust from prison officials and a reputation for rigor and compassion among the prison population,” noted an MTC press release celebrating the anniversary.

Students, volunteer faculty, staff, donors, alumni, and other supporters all have contributed to position MTC as it stands today: an independently accredited liberal arts college that serves about 300 students each semester. The number of class offerings has more than doubled since Lewen’s first year in the program. The current summer semester lists 22 courses.

Five years ago, the college gained permission from prison officials to open a computer lab in the facility, a breakthrough that provided students with their first access to modern technology. Student Ed Tholl, who served as a Peer Computer Lab Assistant, also testified in the “Then & Now Series.”

“Gaining access to the computer lab was an eye opener—I never thought such a thing was possible inside of a prison ... MTC plays a great role in our personal growth and our ability to dream of a better future,” wrote Tholl.

MTC is the first college of its type that serves incarcerated students exclusively with a tuition-free associate degree. Students do not pay for books and, unlike in the early days, they are provided a liberal supply of paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, pocket dictionaries, and calculators in math and science courses, all paid for with donations.

As the college celebrates 30 years of service, San Quentin residents are uniquely positioned to avail themselves of the extraordinary opportunities the presence of Mount Tamalpais College lends to the rehabilitation center.

Aspiring public defenders discuss effective counsel

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

Thirteen law students, all of them aspiring public defenders, participated in a symposium with San Quentin Rehabilitation Center residents in Chapel B on Thursday, April 9.

The law students attended a variety of Bay Area law schools, from the Monterey College of Law to the University of San Francisco Law School. Many of them said they have internships with the Office of the Public Defender in San Francisco and added that they hoped to work there full time after graduation.

“I like helping the community and people in need of a fair trial,” said Angel Farfan, a student at Monterey College of Law. “Defending the weak is in my nature. I want to do as much as I can so that I can feel good about it at the end of the day.”

The event followed the familiar San Quentin format of guests sitting in a large circle interspersed with San Quentin residents who introduced themselves by name, county of commitment, offense, and sentence. Resident host Eric Allen started the event with a presentation, followed by smaller discussion circles.

Allen’s remarks immediately set the tone of the event with the pointed question, “Who here had a public defender at trial?” The answer demonstrated the importance of public defenders as 23 of the 26 par-taking residents — or 88% — raised their hands. Of the 23 public defender clients,



Future public defenders visit San Quentin.

17 — or 74% — had an opportunity to plea-bargain with prosecutors.

The concept of public defenders celebrated its 63rd birthday March 18. In the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court case of Gideon v. Wainwright, Clarence Earl Gideon sued Louis L. Wainwright, the Director of Corrections of Florida.

According to Westlaw, Gideon engaged in the breaking and entering of a poolroom. His crime did not succeed. Appearing in court without a lawyer and without funds to pay for one, he asked the judge to appoint counsel for him.

The judge said, “Mr. Gideon, I am sorry, but I cannot appoint Counsel to represent you in this case. Under the laws of the State of Florida, the only time the Court can appoint Counsel to represent a Defendant is when that person is charged with a capital offense.”

Gideon replied, “The United States Supreme Court says I am entitled to be represented by Counsel.”

This brief colloquy initiated one of the most groundbreaking reforms in constitutional criminal procedure. Gideon v. Wainwright required the states to provide counsel to all indigent defendants. “Gideon today is an icon of the American justice system,” said the Iowa Law Review.

During the small circle discussions, law students and residents addressed the role of public defenders and whether they adequately served the criminal justice system. Farfan, the student at Monterey College of Law, said, “Good communication

between counsel and client is absolutely essential. The more the public defender knows, the more the public defender can do. Without good communication, very little gets accomplished and a client may be found guilty. Even though public defenders don’t get paid by the client, they still do good work.”

Resident Donald Randolph said he had often thought of public defenders as “public pretenders,” but the symposium had changed his mind. “In Alameda County, we had the familiar problem of poor communication with public defenders and not getting full discovery. Now, sitting here, hearing and feeling the sincerity, compassion, and understanding was eye-opening. I truly hope the public defenders who came here can keep these characteristics,” Randolph said.

Allen, the host, thought of the event as powerful. “It’s great to have new public defenders overcoming past perceptions of ‘public pretenders’ who don’t really help you but just get you through the case. These future public defenders here can move the system in the right direction,” Allen said.

Law student Jackie Carrillo said she had done lots of work for victims, which gave her a good background for her goal of working as a public defender. Carrillo said she had come to San Quentin primarily to learn from the residents. “I am a student in my last year at SF Law and we all feel privileged to be here. There is something very special about the atmosphere at San Quentin,” Carrillo said.

San Quentin News
EST. 1940

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The *San Quentin News* strives to include our readers' voices in every issue. We invite prison residents, staff, and volunteers to submit letters to the editor and art for potential publication.

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

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EDITORIAL

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

**By Bostyon Johnson
Editor-in-Chief**

Walking the yard in early May, I heard recurring themes that we as a newspaper must be aware of, look into, and address. For example:

"Why San Quentin News doesn't write about people who can't get out of their job assignments because their boss won't sign the job change slip?"

"Why ain't nobody talking about bringing back the hobby craft program?"

"I want to hear more about future events and new changes in the prison system."

"What's happening with AB 622?"

Some of what I heard were concerns and some were grievances, separate things. If you have a concern that needs to be highlighted or addressed, let us know.

As to grievances, most of what I heard went something like this, "The administration is doing such and such ... and y'all should (fill in the blank)."

Rarely does the person expressing this type of grievance want their name mentioned or want to be interviewed and quoted in the newspaper. San Quentin News does not use anonymous sources unless withholding the individual's name protects their safety and security or that of the institution.

San Quentin administration reviews, approves, and clears all content we publish. San Quentin News strives to maintain a balanced working relationship with the administration.

Does that make us an administration-run newspaper? I don't think so, but some opinions may differ. That's the reality of prison journalism.

San Quentin News is a community service newspaper and our main objectives are to:

Inform our incarcerated readers of changes in laws and policies that can

affect them.

Inspire people to participate in rehabilitative programs by highlighting the insight people participating in those program gain after they've completed the work and earned the recognition.

Encourage people to be creative and hopeful by highlighting the talent of those creating artistic works behind the wall.

For the most part, we publish news and policy information, profiles, events, artwork, sports, and programs at San Quentin. I talk to the population here. I also read letters from incarcerated people at other institutions who said they don't read the San Quentin News because it's all about San Quentin.

In a way, I like hearing complaints that "it's all about San Quentin" because this is where more peer-led programs happen and that's to the credit of the people who live and work here.

I had a conversation with the Warden about the hobby craft program and the likelihood of it returning and he said, "The plan is to aim for the end of the year." I believe that there are so many other things going on that are beneficial to those willing to do the work or participate, that a hobby craft program might be near the lower end of priorities.

Someone asked me about writing stories that address future events. Our newspaper is monthly and the timing of its issuance is erratic and unpredictable due to matters beyond our control. Such a publication is not conducive to anticipating and writing about future events.

Rather, we hope to coordinate with the administration so we can produce digital flyers and notices for posting on the tablets. We also plan to create more Criminal Justice News segments for those who prefer on-screen news broadcast.

When it comes to bills like AB 622, San Quentin News will continue to bring that

information to you as it becomes available. Such information is also available via newsletters from organizations like Initiate Justice and Ella Baker Center.

San Quentin News has moved to the new Learning Center and we are working diligently to gain positive momentum and trust with incarcerated populations in and outside of California.

What is San Quentin News doing to help inform, inspire, and encourage incarcerated people?

A mission statement. We have re-focused our mission statement as follows: To report news and stories that impact incarcerated people.

Evolving Content. We are working toward publishing content like personal essays, poetry, and creative writing.

Expanding Digital Newspaper. We are working with our outside advisers to develop and expand a digital newspaper that works properly.

Creating an Events Only Page. Because the cost of printing the newspaper has gone up and there have been complaints that the newspaper is event heavy, some of San Quentin's events will be only in the newspaper's digital form. Those events and graduations not in the printed newspaper will be accessible through EDOVO, the educational app, and available to your family and friends via the website and social media. This is a work in progress.

Hiring More Staff. We are looking to increase the number of people on our staff to help build a positive culture.

With San Quentin News' move to the new Learning Center come new goals, new staffing capacities, and new opportunities to create content using better technology and equipment. But we cannot produce our best content without you, the reader. Your suggestions, criticisms, and comments are always welcomed and valued.

CORRECTIONS

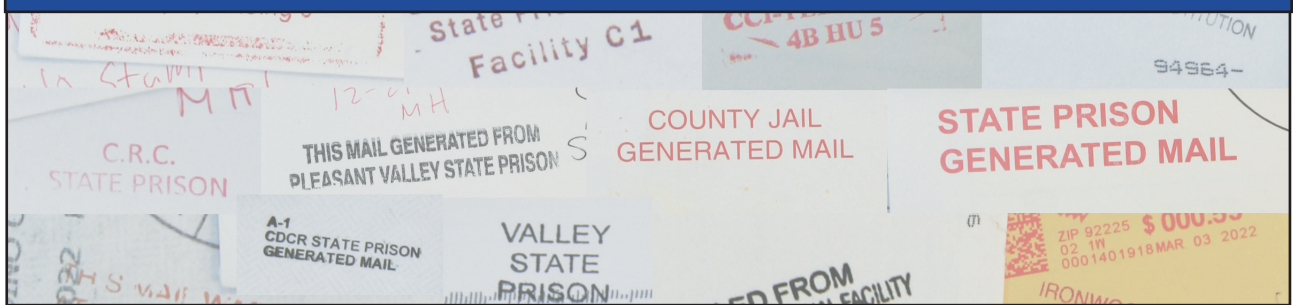
1) In the March 2026 issue, *SQNews* published an article on the front page entitled "Single cell living provides safer living conditions." In the article we reported that "San Quentin and Folsom prisons were originally designed as one-bunk cells." That statement was presumptive and not grounded in evidence. *SQNews* does not have information about the intentions of the designers of the cells at San Quentin and Folsom.

2) The *SQNews* March 2026 issue included a story on page 10 headlined "Overpopulation a concern for Colorado's Corrections." The same story appeared on page 9 under the headline "San Quentin Tennis Association a competitive force to reckon with"

instead of the intended tennis story. We will run the tennis article in the July issue of *SQNews*. We apologize for our error.

3) In *SQNews*' April 2026 article titled "Protestant Chaplain Ang passes away," we erred when we attributed quotes to current and formerly incarcerated residents. Some of the quotes were five years old and had originally been used in an August 2021 article titled "Reverend Yat Ang, SQ's new Protestant Chaplain." The quotes were therefore taken out of context and were not suitable for the April 2026 article. *SQNews* apologizes to those quoted and to any others offended by improper use of the quotes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear San Quentin News,
First and foremost thank you for all that you guys do with providing us with valuable information about things and situations that are taking place and the opportunity to voice our opinions, situations, and concerns. For some of us that really matters. I'm currently serving a five year sentence. I would really like to receive a subscription of the paper. I'd highly appreciate it. Hopefully one day I can post my own story in the paper. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Paul Grijalva,
Wasco CA.**

Dear San Quentin News,
Yahoo! I just received the January and February issues. When I get issues of the paper they are extremely popular here. Whether the topics are specific to California or they cover prison policy issues nationally, the stories give inmates here a great sense that Nevada prisons do not reflect the norm. SQN is available on Edovo for older issues but, the Edovo software make the paper almost unreadable. I may be the only person that reads those. I am excited to read every word of every story in the days to come so please send me more copies of the paper. Thank you very much.

**Wayne Viera,
Ely State Prison, Nevada.**

Dear San Quentin News,
Restitution! I write to you today to talk about the restitution bullying. I hate the fact that they're charging us and taking away from us. It's sad how they can get away with taking our money. Not only that they are taking away from us, but also our families money as well. So what can we do to fight back and stop the restitution altogether?

**Terrence Boston,
Wasco State Prison.**

Dear San Quentin News,
As a female incarcerated at CCWF, I often turn the pages of your newspaper green with envy. As a woman in the carceral system I am the minority in the incarcerated person population. I love the work being done at SQ with amazing programs, and events that bridge the outside and inside communities. Last weekend, I got more than a taste of community support spirit at the first-ever San Quentin Film Festival at CCWF. It seemed as though I was transported out of prison on that glorious Saturday. I was truly able to feel like a person again. The day was filled with connection, laughter, and expression with guests from all different backgrounds.

My spirit soared as I felt the old feelings of acceptance, importance and interconnectedness. I just wanted to say thank you to all involved in making it happen. I would also like to acknowledge the reoccurring topic which was the desire of the men at SQ to bring us women the spirit of community and inclusion. I felt honored and not forgotten. We are all in the struggle together. We see you.

**Heather Howell, CCWF
Chowchilla, California.**

Dear San Quentin News,
I'm writing about an article written in the February 2026 issue titled "Exceptional conduct leads to sentence prevention program." Great story. I respectfully request instructions on how I can start an "Arms Down" group here at Kern Valley State prison. Any assistance you can bless me with would be highly appreciated. I really believe this group would be well received here and would catch fire in Los Angeles County. Arms Down would help teach about gun violence and help the rehabilitation of those within these prison walls. Thank you for your time and effort and to helping me with this endeavor.

**Salvador Negrete
Kern Valley State Prison**

LA LOVE

Continued from page 1

LA Love compete with SQ Giants in first exhibition game of the season



Photos by Marcus Casillas //SQNews



Photos clockwise from left - Will Ferrell and Jon Hamm. Will Ferrell and Jon Hamm with Warden C. Andes. San Quentin Giants team. LA Love player strikes out. Jon Hamm strikes out. Player safe at the home plate.



During the top of the eighth inning, LA LOVE first baseman Jack Donaldson hit the first homer of the year at the Field of Dreams. Donaldson's two-run homer had fans eagerly awaiting to see if Ferrell was going to be true to his word. Ferrell's ability to make people laugh was on display when he ripped off his LA Love jersey and ran around the outfield shirtless, reminding everybody of Ferrell's classic streaking scene in the hit movie Old School. Ferrell kept his pre-game promise, creating an uproar of laughter throughout the administration, staff,

volunteers and residents who lined the Field of Dreams. Both staff and residents celebrated all day and looked for autographs and photo ops with Ferrell and Hamm. The fans were appreciative that he participated in the year's first exhibition game as well. "That dude is crazy. Running naked in a prison he's never been in before," said resident Raoul Sanchez. "He's got balls and fortunately we didn't see them." After his historic jaunt around the outfield, Ferrell said Hamm had invited him to come to San Quentin last year to play some baseball, and this

year the schedule worked out. Ferrell said he is glad he came and he plans to be back. "This is an amazing experience. I actually was surprised by how much activity is here. I don't make light of the fact it's a prison setting, but I feel the love and friendship here," Ferrell said. Love and friendship were expressed for SQ Giants manager Richard Williams, who was unable to attend the game due to an injury. Assistant coaches Angelo Mecchi and David Roy took the reins and helped lead their team to their first win. "I don't look at wins or losses, but the overall dealings with outside teams.

I want to beat them, but with grace," Roy said. Patrick Kennedy returned for his fourth game against the SQ Giants. "Walking down to the yard is unique; I get anxiety and real excitement. I have mixed feelings when we have to leave — it's a privilege to come here," Kennedy said. LA LOVE pitcher Justin Halpern, a show runner for the television series Abbott Elementary, started the game by throwing a nice fast ball. As soon as Halpern got up in the count he began mixing it up with his slider, which gave the Giants problems. Actor Hamm said he plans

to keep coming back for the annual baseball game and that he really enjoys the experience. "We are all only a couple of bad decisions from being in here. I have a lot of empathy and understanding for the guys here," Hamm said. "Whoever comes down that hill to play us, I want them going back home with a new perspective of the SQ Giants — along with a loss," said Hamilton. Volunteer SQ Giants coach Phil Snyder, who helps coordinate the team's schedule and recruits outside teams to play, said he knows they will face some talented

teams this season. "I believe the SQ Giants are a good team, but the competition has gotten better as well. There's going to be some intense games this year," said Snyder. After the Giants 7-5 victory both teams gathered around the mound and expressed gratitude for the competition and camaraderie. Closing out the event the players and coaches huddled up, hats in hand, heads on the next man, as they finished with a prayer. When the huddle broke, shouts of "Amen" and "baseball" could be heard across the yard. SQ baseball is back!

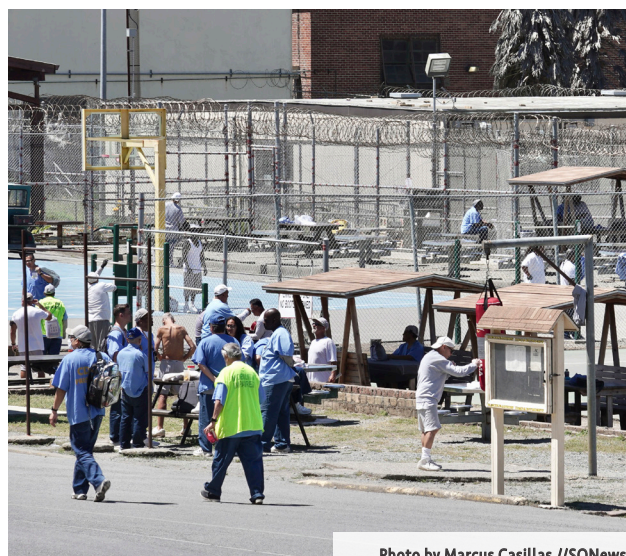


Photo by Marcus Casillas //SQNews

Segregated yard.

Racial segregation still exists throughout the prison

CARCERAL
Continued from page 1

segregation to integration. People in SQ have found commonalities in sports, self-help, education, and music. "Music heals the savage beast," said SQ resident Amos Carter. "I use music to expose myself to other cultures, and to expose other cultures to mine." Carter said that while it's difficult to convince people to give up segregation, finding common ground is easier than most people think. SQ resident Raul Aguayo said he has experienced push-back from his Hispanic community for teaching guitar in

English. He stated that he has been demonized and called "worthless, no-good, and a traitor to his people." "Music can be the avenue through which we can all view each other in a brand-new way without biases, judgments, and or delineation," Aguayo said. Judy King, a math preparatory teacher for Mount Tamalpais College, has been an educator for 26 years. In the past, she says her students would self-segregate into groups of Black, White, and Hispanic. "The social problem of segregation is that people have been segregating since they were kids, by staying within their local communities," King said.

PUBLIC
Continued from page 1

of those incarcerated. To make the determination for suitability, the parole panel considers the offender's central file, medical and mental health records, substance use and treatment records, the incarcerated person's testimony, and statements from others collected before and during the hearing. Community members can track an incarcerated person's location and parole eligibility date via the information search website <http://inmatelocator.cdcr.ca.gov> or by calling CDCR's Identification Unit at (916) 445-6713. Incarcerated people can gather information about their parole eligibility dates and credit earnings by contacting their assigned correctional counselor in the institution where they reside or through the CDCR appeal process outlined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, section 3481. "If there is a change in the law or the person is resentenced, CDCR's Case Records Services will recalculate the person's parole eligible dates, if necessary. In addition, a parole eligibility date may be moved up based on credits that may apply to the person's sentence. Credit-earning is governed by regulations found in Division 3 of Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations and can be changed through the state's administrative rule-making process," reported the California Parole Hearing Process Handbook. The second method by

Criminal justice credibility evident throughout process

which a sentencing discount is earned is when an incarcerated person remains disciplinary-free while in custody. The third method by which an incarcerated person can earn a sentence discount, unless prohibited by law, is participating in education, treatment, or rehabilitative programming. The CDCR Adult Institutions, Programs, and Parole Operations Manual defines adult programs as academic education, Career and Technical Education training courses, library services, student support services, and a transitions course. The goal of these programs is to provide education and career training to increase public safety and reduce the chance of a person returning to prison. The last method by which people in prison can receive a sentence discount is through the Elderly Parole Program. According to the California Parole Hearing Process Handbook, persons 50 years of age and older who have served a continuous 20 years in prison may be eligible for a parole hearing under the Statutory Elderly Parole Program or the Court-Ordered Elderly Parole Program. People excluded for parole eligibility under the SEP program are those sentenced to Life Without the Possibility of Parole, those sentenced under California's "Three Strikes Law" for a second or third strike, or persons convicted of first-degree murder or a peace officer. Also eligible under the

COEP program are persons who are at least 60 years old and have continuously served 25 years of incarceration. Excluded from those eligible for the COEP program are people sentenced to death or Life Without the Possibility of Parole. "Each person's earliest parole eligible date is provided to them and is publicly available on CDCR's website via the California Incarcerated Records and Information Search (CIRIS) application," the California Parole Hearing Process Handbook reported. The reality is, people in prison can earn time off their sentences. However, the general public's assumption is that when someone is convicted of a crime and is sentenced, the conviction is a guarantee to victims and survivors that the offender will spend the entire sentence behind bars. This deception can cause the public to lose trust in the criminal legal system, view laws differently, and lean more toward harsher sentences, which damages the systems credibility, reported National Affairs. "Damaged credibility decreases compliance, increases resistance and subversion, sparks vigilantism, and weakens the purchase of shared norms," said the article. History has shown that people comply with the law when it is reliable and in line with societal norms. Otherwise, it loses its social influence if it doesn't represent what society views as justice.

Coercing an offender to accept a plea deal before going to trial is an incentive. This type of coercion can presumably deter others in the community from committing crime, and the sentence discounts can save taxpayers by removing the expensive cost of incarceration. Once the public understands the sentencing deception, problems may arise, reported National Affairs. However, sentencing deception does not deter active criminals who are familiar with imposed sentencing guidelines and laws. The long-term incentive for lawmakers to show that they are "tough on crime" overrules the effect of revealing the truth to society about sentencing practices. National Affairs journal pointed to two important goals for sentencing courts to consider. The first is a truthful, publicly imposed sentence, not a longer sentence. States should direct judges to impose sentencing practices to line up with the amount of time an offender will realistically serve. Secondly, politicians should defend the time-served practices to their constituents, as opposed to masking them. "True transparency would entail all jurisdictions making data about their criminal-sanctioning practices publicly available," said the article. "Sentencing transparency is the only path to a criminal-justice system that does justice, avoids injustice, and earns back credibility with the community."

SOCIAL JUSTICE

GUNS

Continued from page 1

It should be noted that between 1993 and 1998, there was a 37.8% decline in firearm related homicides, and violent crime was down overall, primarily due to existing laws and heavy policing at the time, according to the Violence Policy Center.

Some say the gun enhancement goes too far, especially when compared to enhancements for the use of weapons other than a firearm.

"Carrying a gun is only meant to terrorize your environment or to kill. The potential to do harm is greater, so I understand what the laws are meant for," said Miles. "The truth is, I didn't hurt anyone. I made the choice not to cause physical harm, and that

should be considered during sentencing."

Penal Code 12022(b) (1) refers to anyone who uses a deadly or dangerous weapon, such as a knife, in the commission of a felony. Violation of this code results in an additional one year in prison. Additionally, Penal Code 12022.7 adds as little as three years, and a maximum of six years if the weapon used resulted in great bodily injury.

The range of punishment between possession of and the use of a firearm can result in as little as 10 years and as much as two decades in state prison.

But, as the law reads, an offender can stab someone

or beat someone with a blunt object, resulting in a victim "becoming comatose due to brain injury" or "suffering paralysis of a permanent nature" and receive no more than an additional six years.

"I received a one year enhancement for using a knife in my case," said San Quentin resident Tamar Thompson. Thompson was sentenced to seven years in state prison for stabbing a person multiple times, six years for the assault and one year for the enhancement.

Further data from multiple sources, including CDCR, has shown that the gun enhancement law is disproportionately applied to people of color.

For example, Los Angeles

County convicts and sends more people to prison than any other county in California. CDCR data shows that between 2010 and 2016 the county convicted more than 2,500 Black and Hispanic men of gun use, resulting in thousands of years of additional prison time. This is compared to only 78 White men convicted under penal code 12022.53(b) during the same period.

Research from the California Policy Lab detailed how Black and American Indian people are most likely to receive enhanced sentences, followed by members of the Hispanic community. For example, Wisconsin University showed that Black

people in California are 16 times more likely to receive stand alone gun enhancements than White people in similar conditions.

In recent years, the Racial Justice Act, a 2020 law meant to "prohibit conviction or sentence on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin," added Penal Code 745 to the code, helping people incarcerated in California seek remedy to the disproportionate application of the gun and other enhancements, and the lengthy sentences they produce.

"You would think that judges would be able to see that something is flawed in our system. And the flaws come from ideas, and the

ideas come from biased stereotypes placed on people of color. Those stereotypes make it easier to direct laws and place enhancements on those people," said Miles.

In the age of prison and criminal justice reform, the opportunity exists to revisit and possibly revise the nearly 30-year-old gun enhancement law, while reconsidering existing laws that give so little prison time for the violent use of other weapons when serious harm is inflicted.

"People need help, support, and resources to do better, not harsher laws, because a gun enhancement is not going to stop someone from picking up a gun. Real hope deters crime" said Miles.

East Block housing unit opens to general population

By Terrell J. Marshall
Associate Editor

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's "first of its kind, first in the nation" reputation continued to grow when the general population moved into the newly remodeled East Block formally known as "Death Row."

"I know many of you have anxiety and have questions about what's going on," SQRC Warden Chance Andes said, surrounded by residents and staff. "We are here today to talk about the future."

On any given Friday during the spring of 2026, the warden stood in the middle of the Lower Yard basketball court in a series of impromptu town hall meetings and spoke to the community about SQRC's continued evolution. On this day, with the backdrop of a recently opened \$239-million Education Center, he posted a question to an audience of hundreds:

"Who knows how many we

have in our population right now?" Andes asked. "That's right, we are hovering right around 2,500. And the reason the numbers are so low is because we are moving toward single-cell occupancy." Loud applause and shouts of excitement echoed across the yard in response to another of the Wardens' historic moves.

On May 4, two years after the condemned to die residents of SQRC disbanded to various prisons across the state, the notorious 175-year-old institution took another progressive step forward by repopulating East Block.

The purpose of the move is to provide SQ residents every opportunity to return to society in the healthiest manner possible. According to Andes, that starts with single-cell housing units. "If we relieve the tension and the conflicts amongst those who share a cell, we not only reduce violence, but we provide people with a space for growth."

Andes' public address

included the history of a time when the Bay Area prison once housed 6,500. He said the times of warehousing people at SQRC are over, and that it's time to give residents room to focus on themselves, a chance to learn, and the opportunity to reflect on the damage they caused others.

Resident porters, volunteers, and plant operation employees have put thousands of hours of effort into the ongoing East Block renovations.

"This unit was in bad shape when we first started," resident electrician Ferdinand Flowers said. "We've gone through every cell and given the building one hell of a facelift."

The remodel uniquely upgraded century old cells into new "community spaces," — areas designed and built to normalize incarcerated housing conditions that parallel outside living.

Some renovations include "kitchenettes" with microwaves and sinks. Other spaces

have designed "game rooms," with tables and chairs. The demolition of a century old shower area now has laundry hook-ups for washers, dryers, and a table for folding clothes.

"I've been doing time for a while now and I've never seen these kinds of accommodations in a housing unit," East Block Porter Eric Vestal said.

Reopening East Block was the next step in line with SQRC's mission to help incarcerated people make a smoother transition back into society.

Andes' booming voice announced that the collective goal is to become the best rehabilitation center in the nation, but to do that everyone has to work together and be accountable for their actions.

"We are going to have to challenge ourselves," the warden said. "With all these changes come a lot of opinions, and not everybody agrees with what we're doing." He added, "I'm believing in you; and you will be afforded opportunities

to do things that have never been done before, but the rules still need to be followed."

Andes gave an analogy of a person getting a speeding ticket who must pay a fine for breaking the law. He said just like in free society, there are consequences for those who do not follow the rules.

Reopening East Block will make room for every housing unit inside SQRC to become single-cell occupancy, except for one. According to Andes, Badger unit has 250 cells that will remain double occupancy and reserved for those who do not want to "get with the program." Residents who receive a rule violation will lose their single-cell privilege and move into Badger. Residents who exceed level-two points for accruing multiple rules violations will transfer out of the facility.

"If you are out of bounds, disrespecting staff, or passing contraband, there will be consequences," Andes said. "Just like in society, we all must

follow the rules."

Warden Andes is the driving force behind the continued unprecedented transformation of what California Gov. Gavin Newsom calls the "preeminent restorative justice facility in the world." Andes' order to occupy East Block shined another ray of hope on those living in society's shadow by providing them a safer place to focus on their road to redemption.

East Block Porter Jack Anderwald said since settling into one of the 520 freshly painted single cells he has been able to unpack more than just his property.

He said he never allowed himself to really feel the stress that comes with living so closely to someone else. Now that he has some privacy, he's been able to decompress and focus on going home to his family. "What I don't have to do is worry about is when my cellie is going to use the toilet," Anderwald said. "This place is a game changer."

Channel Guide outage outrages San Quentin residents

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

In today's television-centric San Quentin, having a guide to help with show planning would go a long way to optimize one's leisure time. Luckily, almost all television sets (except for the pre-flatscreen "Bubble" sets) have integrated channel guides using "metadata" to display exactly what content would appear on the screen and when.

On March 2, the channel guides stopped displaying their helpful information. San Quentin Rehabilitation Center residents felt lost in their screen time planning. Soon, they started to inundate San Quentin's TV department with complaints.

For some residents, the channel guide played an active role in their rehabilitation. "By having a television guide on my TV allows

me to plan my day," said resident Dale Moore, "but more importantly, it allows me to exclude shows that portray certain situations that I do not wish to see because they go against my rehabilitation goals."

The problem happened during the days that coincided with the move of the local television broadcast equipment to the new Learning Center from the former education complex. Housed for decades in a backroom of Education A-Building, the equipment did its job of distributing the television signals (and the metadata) after they left San Francisco's Sutro Tower and arrived at San Quentin.

"I understand the frustration," said Skyler Brown, senior television specialist and department head of SQTV. "I know why you guys need the metadata and it is a great frustration, a terrible

frustration, that it has been lost and you've had to navigate the television channels without that information. I feel for the population and I am trying to get it back, but right now I don't know what to do to get it back."

Brown explained, "A TV specialist working with headquarters standardized the channels across the whole state." He elaborated that the new channel assignments put certain channels (Fox, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, etc.) on the same channel numbers at every facility in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. "I guess they just wanted to standardize the channels to make it easier for the population to find whatever station they're looking for."

Brown continued, "When they did that, it caused the metadata to drop. I told them about this problem and they said that they didn't change

the signal so whatever was coming in before is the same and should still be the same. I told them that it wasn't and they're saying 'we didn't do anything different with the signal so there's nothing we can do to get it [the metadata] back.'"

Resident and Media Center worker Tony Tafoya offered an amended explanation. He said, "What I think happened was because [the TV specialist from headquarters] was less than a month from retirement, he just rushed to set up the entire system and now we are stuck with what we have."

Asked who could repair this problem, Tafoya replied, "Nobody that I know. Nor do our television specialists here at San Quentin have the knowledge or the training to actually fix this issue. Until we get an expert who knows how to set up the actual channels, we will not be able to

figure it out. The short answer is: no one knows." He added that the person who made the change had since retired.

Even resident Lee Jaspas, SQTV's most experienced employee (he has worked there since 2013), found himself in the dark about a solution. He echoed Brown's theory, but with more technical detail: "I believe the problem involves the new formatting of our television channels. I believe that once channels were moved from their broadcast frequency to a frequency other than the broadcast frequency (for example, Channel 9 now shows up on Channel 6), the metadata transmitted with the original broadcast is left out of the formatting and is therefore not transmitted through our system to the end user."

Asked about a solution, Jaspas replied, "We're guessing that's the problem,

but I don't have the full technical expertise to fix it. No one here does. In my mind, the solution is to reformat the system to include the metadata." Jaspas added, "I will continue to do my best to provide those who can reformat the system with as much information as I can, based on my experience and education, and to continue to provide information about what is being received by the population so that they can exercise their best judgment in completing the repair of the system."

Resident Nick Johnson said, "I wish they had told us what went wrong because I spent hours rescanning, thinking that something went wrong with my TV set." He then voiced the wishes of many SQRC residents: "I wish they would fix it and I also wish the channels would go back to their original order."

Non-profit works to reverse ban on incarcerated writer's memoir

By Jerry Maleek Gearin
Journalism Guild Chair

A non-profit agency made an appeal to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to reverse its decision and allow access to the works of a formerly incarcerated person.

The American Civil Liberties Union is

displeased with CDCR's banning of Dorsey Nunn's memoir, "What Kind of Bird Can't Fly."

Nunn spent more than nine years at San Quentin as a young adult, and after his release he dedicated his time as community organizer, advocating for positive growth and development, according to the ACLU.

"In short, 'What Kind of Bird Can't Fly' is precisely the type of reflective and empowering literature that should be available to people in California's prisons," ACLU stated.

Nunn's memoir depicts his successful transition back into society, which may illuminate a pathway of rehabilitation for those serving time.

The non-profit noted that when the department is determining allowable literature, Black authors are disproportionately prohibited.

In the book Nunn emotionally describes his life experiences, reflecting on personal accountability, transformation, and the rebuilding of his life.

In February 2026 the

ACLU said it sent a letter to CDCR encouraging the department to lift the ban from its prohibited list of publications. The non-profit organization noted that there are state laws requiring transparency regarding the records of its evaluated books.

The organization has aspirations that CDCR will

reconsider its decision and allow incarcerated people in California access to Nunn's book.

"Allowing access to this book (What Kind of Bird Can't Fly) would be consistent with California's commitment to rehabilitation, education, and the dignity of those in its custody," the ACLU stated.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

2025 Number of Hearings, Most to Fewest

Commissioner	Suitability Hearings	Stipulations, Waivers, Postponements, and	Total Hearings
Weiss	212	44	256
Ndudim	198	51	249
Ruff	186	49	235
Kozel	191	43	234
Long	191	42	233
Sheffield	188	45	233
Schneider	182	47	229
Chappell	174	51	225
Sharrieff	161	64	225
Dobbs	179	42	221
Purcell	146	71	217
Muniz	162	54	216
Garland	157	58	215
Barton	132	81	213
O'Meara	168	41	209
Minor	157	49	206
Taira	162	44	206
Thornton	166	40	206
Cassady	151	48	199
Infante	147	48	195
Nwajei 1	117	35	152
Sargent-Burns 2	14	1	15
TOTAL	3,541	1,048	4,589
AVERAGE	161	48	209

BPH denies 10,000 years in 2025

By C. K. Gerhartsreiter
Staff Writer

The California Board of Parole Hearings denied an aggregate of 9,886 years to incarcerated persons in 2025, according to an analysis and interpretation of Board of Parole Hearings data extracted from the five most recent issues of the quarterly *California Lifer Newsletter*.

This new quantitative perspective of the carceral landscape came from the metric "Aggregate Years Denied," which multiplied the number of denials by their duration. As an example, five 10-year denials would produce a number of 50 Aggregate Years Denied, or 50 AYD. The *CLN* showed data for 4,589 hearings, but did not include one-year denials given to parole violators, which amounted to 139 for the year. Added together, the BPH denied a total of 10,025 years.

"Ten thousand years is a staggering number, it's outrageous, it's a crazy number. I've never looked at board denials in the aggregate before, but I am not surprised because I know that board grants

were really low in '25," said Michael Beaudette, 66, a San Quentin resident with a board hearing in 2032.

Beaudette said, "We focus a lot on grant rates, but we should also take a much closer look at denials, especially since the board gives us so many of them." For Beaudette, the AYD metric stood as a bellwether. He said the AYD number looked perfectly round, easy to understand, and easy to remember and so should stand as the number the board should make an effort to beat in the future.

Why did the numbers turn out so poorly? The *CLN* said BPH leadership agreed that the well-known issue of incarcerated persons gaming the system to avoid paying restitution must take the blame for the cloud. That cloud, though, had a silver lining: "The biggest impact of this issue is behind us now and we will begin seeing fewer denials based on this issue going forward ... Or, as we told the board at a recent executive meeting, 'Commissioners, this issue (restitution) is a dead horse. Stop beating it.'"

The *CLN* added a message for incarcerated persons engaged in restitution avoidance: "[I]f you are still playing that game, STOP it now."

The analysis separated the 4,589 total hearings into 3,541 "suitability hearings" that involved only grants and denials, and 1,048 "other hearings" that involved stipulations, waivers, postponements, and continuances. The *CLN* data occasionally showed some minor differences from the data printed from the BPH website, but these differences did not significantly affect the outcome of the analysis. The number for one-year denials came from the analysis of printouts from data available at the BPH website.

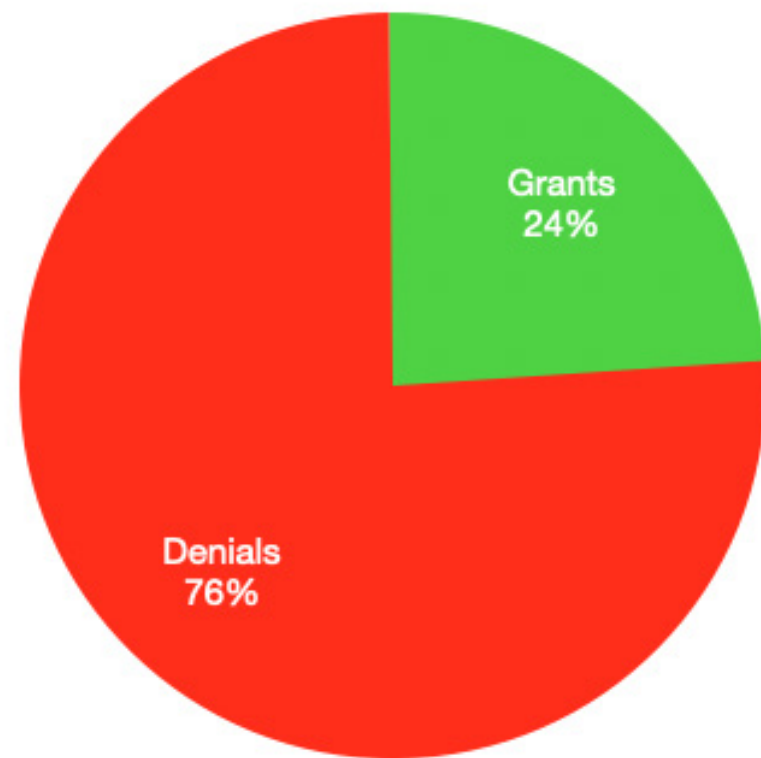
Data published on the BPH website only listed a bare minimum of information. More data would have added transparency to board decisions and could have explained, for example, whether commissioners with low grant rates conducted hearings more at Level IV facilities or at rural facilities without much programming.

Beaudette said he looked forward to better numbers in the future. "I would like to reunite with my family, and I can be an asset to fight recidivism. By the time I go to board, I hope the 10,000 number is a lot lower," he said.

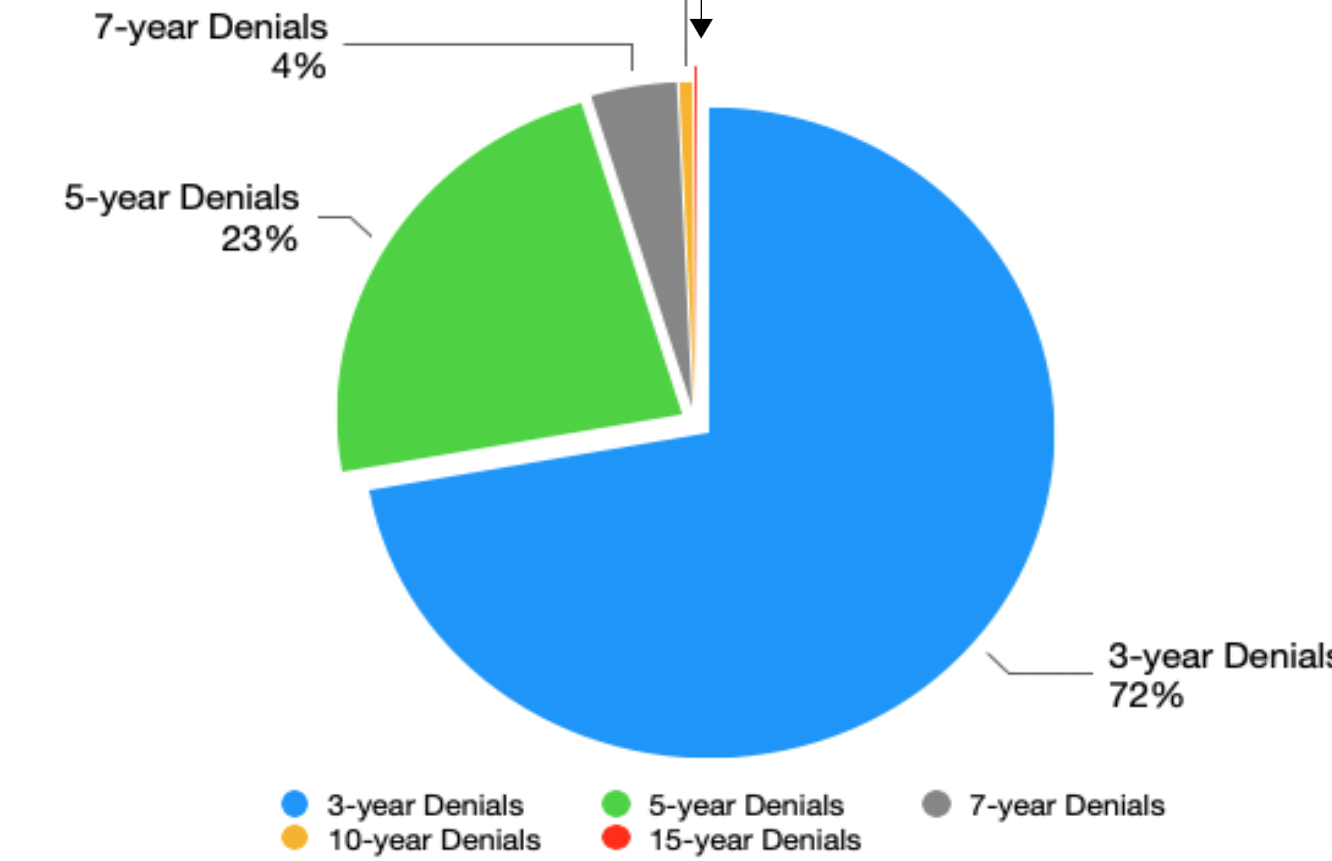
Grants/Denials Numbers

2025	
Grants	853
Denials	2,688

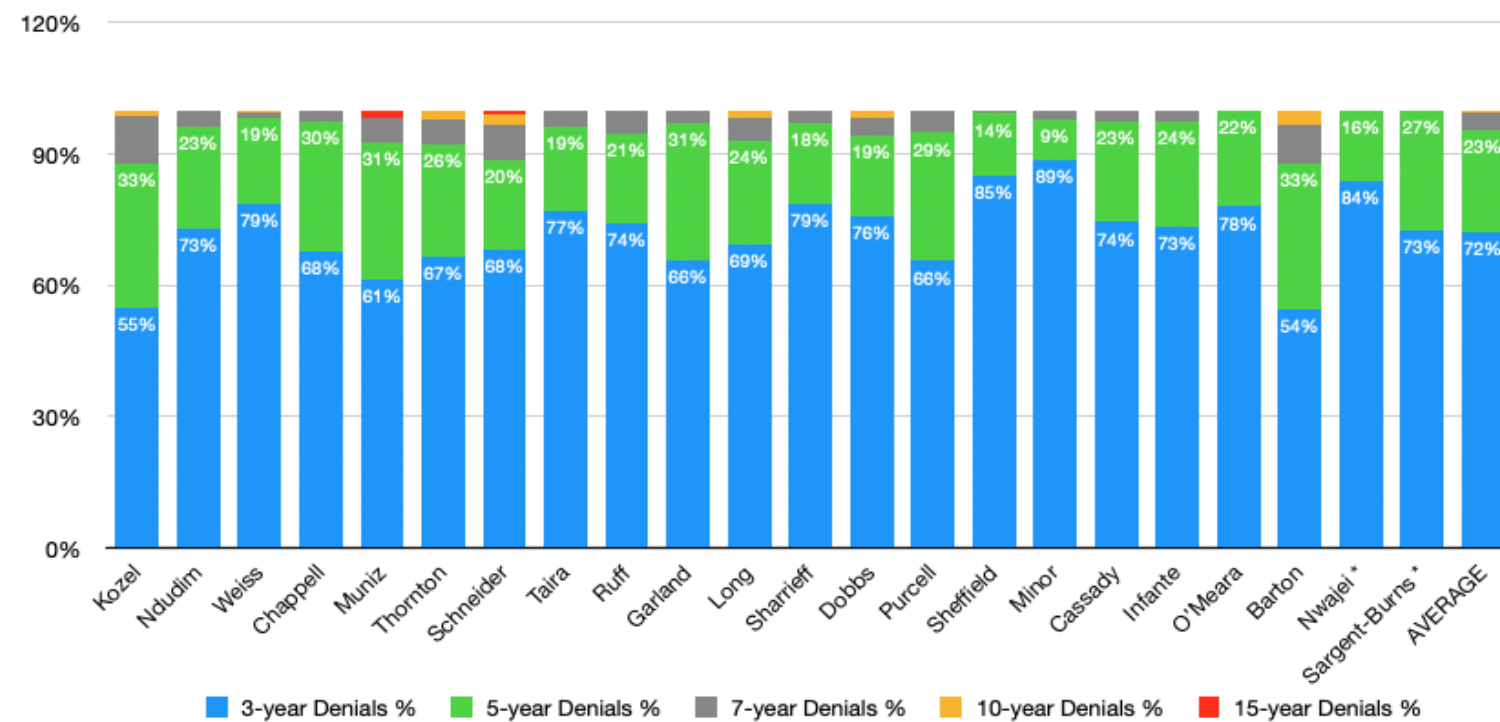
2025 Grants and Denials



10-year Denials 1% 15-year Denials > 1%



2025 Denials by Length as a Percentage of Total Denials



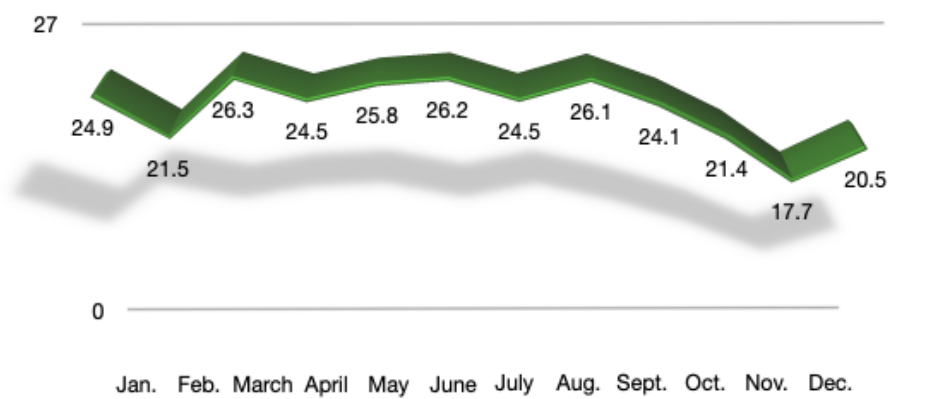
These columns show denials by year as a percentage of each commissioner's total denials. Example: if a commissioner handed out 60 3-year denials and 30 5-year denials, the number in the blue section would show 60% and the number in the green section would show 30%. See table on Medium- and Long-Term Denials for 7-, 10-, and 15-year denials.

Parole decisions require agreement of two commissioners but this analysis focuses only on the lead commissioner. * Commissioner Nwajei left the BPH in August and Commissioner Sargent-Burns joined in December. Analysis and graphic by C. K. Gerhartsreiter from data provided by CLN.

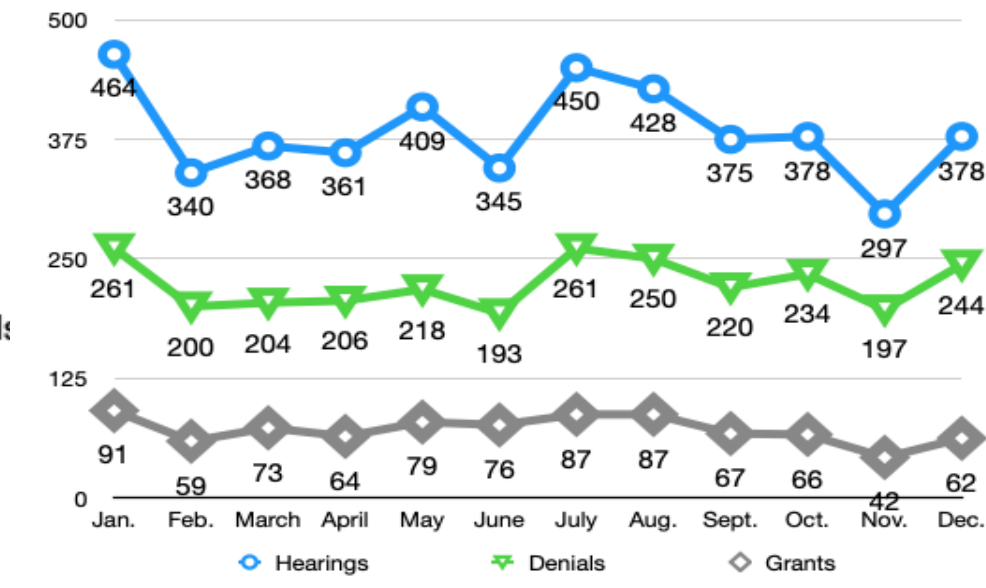
2025 Hearings, Denials, and Grants

2025	Hearings	Denials	Grants
Jan.	464	261	91
Feb.	340	200	59
March	368	204	73
April	361	206	64
May	409	218	79
June	345	193	76
July	450	261	87
Aug.	428	250	87
Sept.	375	220	67
Oct.	378	234	66
Nov.	297	197	42
Dec.	378	244	62

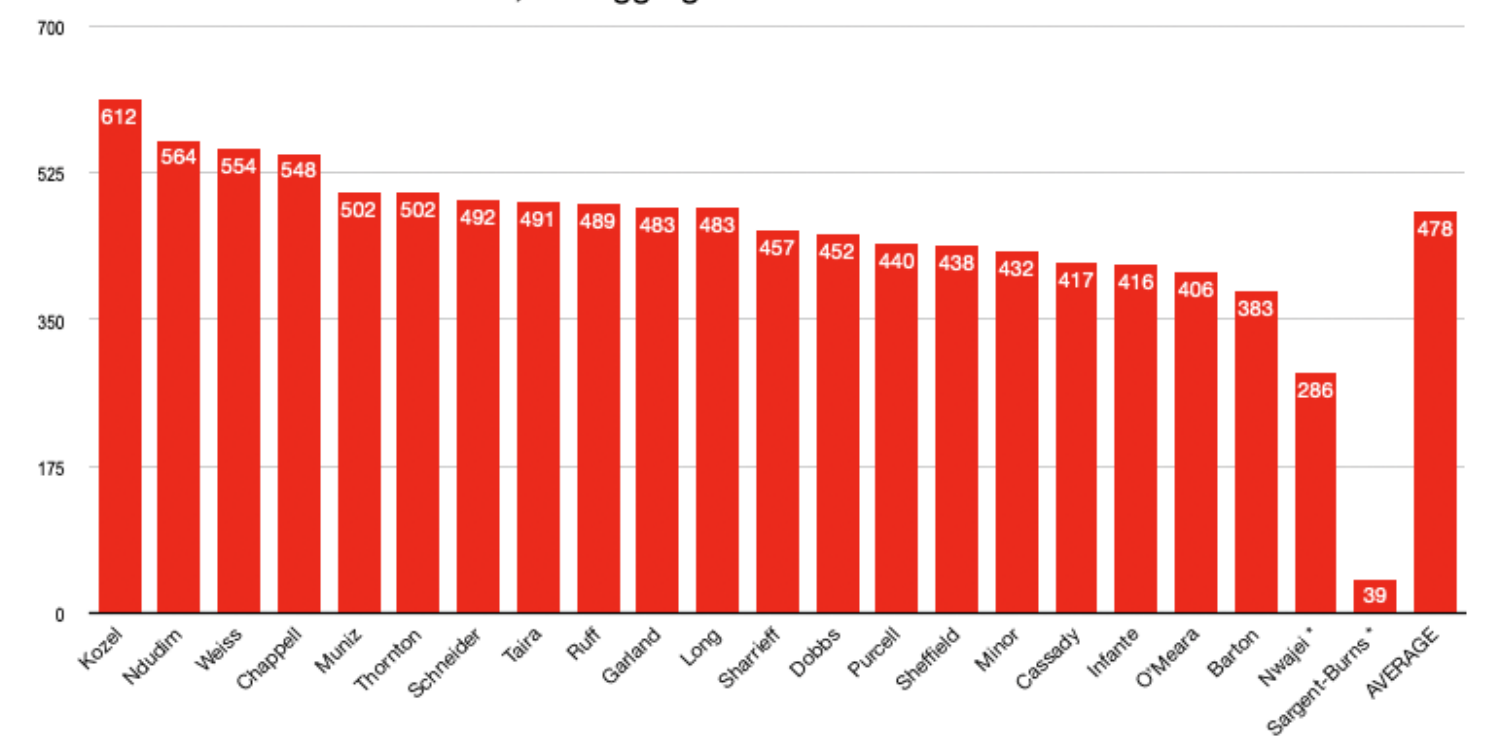
2025 Monthly Grant Rate (%)



2025 Hearings, Denials, and Grants



10,000 Aggregate Years Denied in 2025



These columns show the number of 2025 denials multiplied by duration, per lead commissioner. Example: 10 5-year denials calculate to 50 Aggregate Years Denied or 50 AYD.

Parole decisions [STET] require agreement of two commissioners but this analysis focused only on the lead commissioner.

* Commissioner Nwajei left the BPH in August and Commissioner Sargent-Burns joined in December. The calculation of the average did not include their data.

Data for 1-year denials not included, but if added, the total number of years denied in 2025 amounted to 10,025.

Analysis and graphic by C. K. Gerhartsreiter from data provided by CLN.

2025 Denials Per Hearing: Fewest to Most

Commissioner	Denials	Suitability Hearings	%
Garland	44	215	20.5%
Minor	50	206	24.3%
Purcell	53	217	24.4%
Sharrieff	55	225	24.4%
Chappell	62	225	27.6%
Barton	60	214	28.0%
Infante	56	195	28.7%
Muniz	63	217	29.0%
Cassady	58	199	29.1%
Kozel	69	235	29.4%
O'Meara	64	209	30.6%
Ndudim	77	249	30.9%
Taira	64	206	31.1%
Dobbs	76	221	34.4%
Thornton	71	206	34.5%
Weiss	92	257	35.8%
Sheffield	87	233	37.3%
Ruff	89	235	37.9%
Long	89	233	38.2%
Schneider	88	229	38.4%
Nwajei 1	60	152	39.5%
Sargent-Burns 2	11	15	73.3%

1 Commissioner Nwajei left the BPH in August
2 Commissioner Sargent-Burns joined the BPH in December
Decisions require agreement by two commissioners. This analysis focuses on the lead commissioner only.
Analysis by C. K. Gerhartsreiter from data provided by CLN.

El precio de la gasolina afecta a los encarcelados

Por César Martínez
Staff Writer

La población encarcelada esta siendo perjudicada por el alto precio de la gasolina y sus efectos son reflejados en depósitos a las cuentas, visitas de los familiares, órdenes de paquetes y la alza de precios a los artículos que se consumen dentro de Departamento de Correccional y Rehabilitación de California.

Ante este tema, se encuestó a un grupo de encarcelados en San Quentin, quienes manifestaron diferentes puntos de vista. Una situación que esta afectándoles de manera directa o indirectamente tanto a residentes como a sus familiares, un conflicto que esta creando preocupación dentro y fuera

de las prisiones.

“Mi hija ya no puede mandar más dinero para comprar comida en la cantina [tienda], porque ya no le alcanza con el salario que recibe”, dijo Luis Alvarez residente de SQ, debido a que debe pagar más por gasolina y reducir el apoyo le brinda a Alvarez.

Los residentes coincidieron que este conflicto entre Estados Unidos e Irán, esta afectando los bolsillos de personas que tienen un ser querido encarcelado. Ya que estos efectos, provocan que la cantidad de suministros mensuales que antes adquirirían por un cierto costo; ahora sean menos.

Mientras que algunos definitivamente ya no reciben ayuda económica, hay otros que ven una reducción al

apoyo mensual que les brindaban sus familiares, tal como el residente Manuel Garcia que comentó que si antes recibía \$150 dólares, ahora sus familiares solo pueden mandar \$100 dólares.

“El precio de la gasolina al subir afecta la economía de mi familia”, manifestó Fernando Salas otro residente de SQ. Al igual que Wilmer A. Martinez dijo, “La poca ayuda que mi familia puede ayudarme, es afectado por el gasto de la gasolina”.

Todos los encarcelados encuestados manifestaron la impotencia que sienten por los efectos debido a este conflicto, pero que agradecen el sacrificio que hacen sus familiares.

Muchas personas que viven en E.U., mandan remesas a sus familiares

es sus países de origen, y que en algunos casos son el único apoyo económico de una persona encarcelada. Tal es el caso de Abel Lezama residente de SQ, quien compartió que este aumento del precio a la gasolina no solo le esta afectado a él [depósitos], sino que de igual manera esta afectando a sus familiares que viven en México, ya que el familiar responsable de las remesas debe incrementar gastos en gasolina.

Otro tema importante entre los encuestados fue sobre las visitas familiares que reciben, ya que el alto costo de la gasolina esta limitando la frecuencia de estas visitas, manifestando que las visitas juegan un papel primordial para ellos y su rehabilitación. Estas visitas

fortalecen sus lazos familiares y aumentan el estado emocional de una persona recluida.

“Mi familia no puede venir porque viven muy lejos, [a] nueve horas y gastan mucho más”, dijo el residente Juan Aguilar.

Los residentes Jose Gutierrez y Eduardo de Jesus Castro explicaron como les esta afectando en sus visitas el saber que esta situación aqueja en los gastos de sus familiares para llenar el tanque de gasolina, y comparten un sentimiento de tristeza e impotencia.

Por último se coincidió en algunas encuestas sobre el efecto en la cantidad de paquetes que reciben los encarcelados. Tal es caso de Angeles Ruben, ya que su familia por el momento

solo puede mandar un par de paquetes por año en comparación al año anterior cuando recibía cuatro paquetes por año.

Los residentes reconocen las dificultades que sus familias atraviesan en la actualidad por este conflicto. “Es difícil pedirle ayuda a mi familia con el entendimiento que los precios han aumentado bien alto”, dijo Jose Fajardo otro residente afectado y preocupado sobre la situación actual.

De acuerdo a la Asociación Americana de Automovilismo, el precio de la gasolina hace un año fue de \$4.77/galón en el estado de California, por el momento las familias continúan siendo afectadas sin ver un alivio pronto para sus finanzas.

Centro de Aprendizaje en SQ

Por Edwin E. Chavez
Spanish Journalism
Guild Chair

El Centro de Aprendizaje—único en los Estados Unidos—abrió sus puertas con la inauguración del Gobernador Gavin Newsom el 20 de febrero del 2026 en el Centro de Rehabilitación de San Quentin.

Debido a que el 17 de marzo del 2023, el gobernador de California, anunció por medio de una conferencia de prensa dentro de la institución, que la prisión sería convertida en un centro de rehabilitación. Acontecimiento histórico que establecería oportunidades educativas adicionales para las personas encarceladas de esta institución.

En febrero 2026, el Departamento de Correccional y Rehabilitación de California, anunció que el proyecto innovador del Centro de Aprendizaje de SQ había sido completado. Duplicando las salas de clases educativas y con la posibilidad de contratación a más maestros, quienes asistirían en la educación de estudiantes, en grupos más pequeños.

“El sistema actual ha fallado por mucho tiempo”, dijo Newsom reconociendo que el sistema penitenciario no estaba trabajando para todos desde un enfoque a la rehabilitación. “La reforma hacia una seguridad pública es indiscutible, tenemos que continuar en sostener nuestras comunidades seguras,

hay que ponernos serios al combatir la violencia y el crimen en nuestro estado; esa es nuestra misión”.

En el 2023 SQ tenía una población de 3,900 personas, con espacios limitados y condiciones poco favorables para el aprendizaje. La población encarcelada opinó que este proyecto es el comienzo de una nueva etapa en la rehabilitación y aprendizaje, creando espacios para ofrecer programas educativos, vocacionales y de reinserción social.

La construcción de tres edificios, son sede de departamentos de educación de primaria, secundaria y de única universidad dentro de una institución de CDCR Mount Tamalpais Community College, salones dirigidos a la reinserción social, biblioteca, departamento de periodismo; producción y edición de videos, podcast; radio, un salon de ingeniería en codificación y salas de uso multiple, entre otros.

De acuerdo a la Maestra de Inglés básico A. Stanciu, continua con el mismo método de enseñanza que brindaba antes de la apertura del Centro de Aprendizaje. Sin embargo, ha notado entre sus estudiantes, más ánimos con el nuevo espacio e incluso expresó que “algunos de mis estudiantes han comentado que se sienten más libres y con dignidad”.

Steven Drown de 76 años de edad, quien ha estado encarcelado por 49 años, opina que este proyecto es benéfico en términos de

aprendizaje, recursos educativos y conexión para las personas que estarán nuevamente en las comunidades.

Un proyecto con un costo aproximado de 240 millones y el objetivo de preparar a los residentes para su reinserción social a travez de la educación.

Características no antes visto en un institución penitenciaria, además de contar con una universidad, también contara con una cafetería, en donde los empleados, oficiales correccionales y encarcelados pueden comprar bebidas y aperitivos.

Este proyecto cuenta con caminos entre los edificio, arboles, variedad de plantas, bancas de madera, mesas al aire libre y estaciones de transporte para los reclusos. Los edificios están equipados con elevadores para las personas con discapacidad, permitiendo a los reclusos la autonomía en operación de estos mismos.

“Lo bueno es que ahora todos nos sentimos conectados con nuestra libertad. Cuando entras a los edificios no miras celdas o barras”, dijo Miguel G. Izquiero de 23 años de edad residente quien sera liberado a inicios del 2027 y añadió “esto trae bastante tranquilidad y relaja nuestro estado mental, y me ayuda a alejarme de los dramas de la prisión”.

Este nuevo espacio educativo brinda un entorno ideal para la educación, salud mental y el crecimiento personal.

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Justice Department's report highlights sex offenders' recidivism

Misconception, coupled with myths, about recidivism in sex crimes has captured public attention, opinion, and perception of insecurity for decades.

Data show that a person who commits a sex crime and completes their sentence, including appropriate rehabilitation related to their case, is less likely to reoffend than someone who commits others types of crime.

“Perceptions are easily clouded with feelings and lack of accurate, authenticated data. There is no way for me to correctly assess if the perception proposed here is true or false. Without solid facts it’s not possible to conclude,” said resident of San Quentin Richard Evans.

The Justice Department’s

Bureau of Investigation reported that in 2024, a violent crime occurred approximately every 25.9 seconds in the United States including a homicide every 31.1 minutes, a rape every 4.1 minutes, and a robbery every 2.6 minutes. A total of 1,221,345 violent crime were reported, with approximately 63,509 of those being sexual offenses.

According to the report, sexual offenses include rape, sodomy, assault with an object, and criminal sexual contact. In addition, 52.1% of the offenders knew the victims, 26% were family members, and 9.1% were strangers.

Although this report indicates an estimated 4.5% decrease in violent crime between 2023 and 2024,

based on data from 562 agencies, it does not specify whether the crimes were committed by new or repeat offenders.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics used a benchmark created through meta-analysis, a technique or procedure that summarizes the results of one research study by combining the results of several independent studies. This data demonstrates recidivism rates among individuals after their incarceration over a five-year follow-up period.

This department only has one study up to 2012, compiling data from 34 states across the nation. It reported the crime rates at that time, showing a 79.3% recidivism rate for those who committed

vehicle theft, 78.3% for home burglary, 72.8% for robbery, 71.9% for assault with violence, and 48% for rape or sexual assault.

According to the data, 48% represents the percentage of those arrested for any crime within five years of release, not the percentage of those who committed another sexual offense. Meta analysis estimates that approximately 10-18% of individuals are arrested after release, depending on their treatment and follow-up status, and that those with serious sexual assault offenses reoffended.

The 2012 studies indicated a higher rate of recidivism in crimes such as vehicle theft and burglary, among others, compared to someone who committed a sexual offense.

They added that among those released with treatment, the recidivism rate dropped to 11% compared to other violent crimes.

Patrick Lussier, Ph.D., is a professor at the School of Social Work and Criminology at University Laval, in Quebec City, Canada. He compiled 500 data points from documents and studies carried out by specialists between 1940 and 2019 that identify information about recidivism among sex offenders in the U.S. and Canada.

“Some samples, especially in the USA, have been overused by researchers over the years, and those samples with high rates of sexual recidivism may have created a bias toward the

perception that these high rates of sexual recidivism were representative of all convicted offenders,” Lussier describes.

Studies also identify the erroneous perception and conclusion that people have formed regarding the risk of recidivism in sex offenders. Eighty years of studies and a decline in the trend since the 1970s prove otherwise.

“A sex offender can be rehabilitated. This process is life-long in an ongoing work to comprehend what the crime act(s) was, exactly how the crime happened and the motivations that propelled one to believe crime was a viable option,” said Evans.

— César Martínez
Staff Writer

SPORTS

Warriors open basketball season with loss, Kings win

By Martin Keith DeWitt
Journalism Guild Writer

Basketball season at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center has fallen into a familiar rhythm as both teams begin playing outside opponents.

On April 25, Prison Sports Ministries' Green Team challenged the San Quentin Warriors in their second game of the season, while Town Boogie faced off with the San Quentin Kings for the home team's season opener.

"There is some real competition," said Rob Landry, "moving up and down the court, the way it should be."

Landry, 25, a walk-on player for the 2022-2024 Tar

Heels basketball program at the University of North Carolina, made his first trip to San Quentin with the Green Team for the game. Landry said he thought people would be more off-putting, and was pleasantly surprised by the friendliness of the residents.

Warriors Coach Jerry "JB" Brown expressed a desire to play an inside-out offense, but forward/center James "J-Nine" Miles was not available after the first quarter due to a family visit, which ultimately did not occur.

The game was a low-scoring physical battle. At the end of the first quarter the home team led 14-13.

Then the Green Team turned up the heat, reversing their

fortunes and finishing the half with a 32-31 advantage. The game remained close as the visitors kept their slight edge at the end of the third quarter 55-54. The Green Team proved victorious as the game ended 81-78 in favor of the visitors.

"There's a lot of athletic talent on the Warriors, they just need to pass the ball around," said Correctional Officer C. Peppers, who enjoyed a bird's eye view of the game from the elevated podium in the gymnasium. "When you're going against a team bigger than you, you cannot force shots."

In the second game of the day, Thomas "T-Mas" Vaca, 41, made his coaching debut

for the San Quentin Kings, as he substituted for head coach Demond "Oola" Lewis, who was not in attendance.

"I'm eager to get this win," said Vaca.

Vaca wore a wrist band that repeated a famous quote made by the late Kobe Bryant, "Everything negative — pressure challenges — is all opportunity for me to rise."

Town Boogie got out to an early lead and finished the first quarter up 17-15. The Kings turned things around in the second quarter, and led at halftime 35-31.

At the half, Kings player Matthew Sheppard announced to both teams at center court that after being

a player and coach for the last two years he had been found suitable by the parole board, and would be going home in August. This news was greeted by cheers from all in attendance.

"I love and hate that I see you in here," said Town Boogie player Keith T. Gregory, "I love that I see you; I hate that it's in here."

"It's all about basketball," said Gregory. "It's a community, y'all my family."

Gregory, 43, went on to speak of his father who was in and out of prison as he was growing up. During his own amateur basketball career, Gregory had stops at Santa Rosa Junior College, Merritt College, and the University

of California Berkeley.

In the third quarter, Town Boogie reasserted themselves and finished with a 55-46 advantage. The fourth quarter saw the home team finish with a 73-67 victory.

Town Boogie player Ian Paratore, 34, who works with Gregory as a teacher and basketball coach at Head Royce High School in Oakland, made his first visit to San Quentin for the game.

"Coming in, you think there's going to be more checkpoints. I saw lots of high-fives; people talking," said Paratore.

Of the opening day win, undefeated first-time coach Vaca said, "We did this for Oola."

50th anniversary of saving the integrity of the American flag

By Anthony Manuel Carvalho
Sports Editor

Sports has shaped the identity of America, and has protected her integrity as well. Fifty years ago, Chicago Cubs center-fielder Rick Monday wove the symbol of the United States into the fabric of sports history.

On April 25, 1976, the LA Dodgers played the Chicago Cubs in Los Angeles. In the bottom of the fourth inning, two people hopped over the left-center field wall and scampered onto the outfield grass. Chicago center-fielder Rick Monday heard a noise that offset the pulse of the ballgame; he turned toward the perpetrators and saw them encircled together, spreading an American flag over the manicured lawn.

Monday, who at the time had been a reservist in the U.S. Marines for six years while enjoying a 19 year career as a professional baseball player, darted towards the demonstrators.

"In retrospect, I may have been thinking about bowling them over," Monday said. "But if they don't have the flag, they cannot burn it. So I scooped down and got the flag."

MLB News reported in taking custody of the flag, Rick Monday thwarted an attempt to burn it.

"I didn't know if it was on fire or not, but I did know one of the guys was not a [baseball player]," Monday said ten years earlier, just before the 40th anniversary of the incident. "He threw the can of lighter fluid at me, but he didn't have a good enough arm to hit me."

Monday said he remembered the

crowd at Dodger Stadium began to sing "God Bless America." As the flag-burners were apprehended, then-Dodgers third base coach Tommy Lasorda shouted profane remarks their way.

The Dodger Stadium scoreboard read: "Rick Monday...You made a great play," when Monday came to bat during the next inning.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the incident, Monday lent the flag to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. It is on display from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend as Cooperstown celebrates America's 250th birthday.

"It still catches a glimmer of attention for our country," Monday told the LA Times.

Monday humbly deferred from his importance in the event, saying that he was, "just a spokesman that afternoon for thousands and thousands, if not millions, of people in this country."

Monday was awarded permanent ownership of the flag once the court proceedings of the case were completed. In 2016, Monday told reporters that he and his wife Barbaralee have raised more than \$500,000 for military charities by showcasing the flag across the country.

He told the LA Times that he still gets letters every week thanking him for his actions.

"A great number of the letters are from people that were not even born at the time, which to me is encouraging," Monday said. "I'm also embarrassed by the attention that has been put upon me because I don't know anyone that would not have done the same thing."



Photo by Marcus Casillas //SQNews

Vic Picazo; pitcher for Giants.

SQ Giants winning streak comes to an abrupt halt

By Ben Greenspon
Journalism Guild Writer

The SQ Giants winning streak came to an abrupt halt at one. After defeating LA LOVE in last weekend's memorable pre-season game, the SQ Giants fell to their arch-rival the Mission in the season opener, 5-4.

On a chilly, breezy April morning, the SQ Giants and Mission went through their pre-game warm ups as the visiting team from San Francisco began their annual rivalry with the home team which usually includes three to four game each year.

Greg Snyder, a long time volunteer coach for the SQ Giants, also plays on the Mission and said he was torn about the day. "I just want to play baseball and [today], I can't root against anybody."

To commemorate the start of the 2026 season the San Quentin Veteran's Group Color Guard

gathered around the pitcher's mound and performed the National Anthem.

Recreation Staff K. Bhatt said he is excited for all the new seasons to start, not just the baseball season. "Generally we have a good team, over .500 for sure, [and] we have some new high level teams coming in," Bhatt said.

In the first inning SQ Giants Anthony Pintarelli hit a two-run double, and scored a run.

"We got it together a little more than last year, [and] personally I'm doing a lot of work to get better," Pintarelli said.

After the solid start the SQ Giants stalled out as the Mission scored two runs in the fourth inning.

Mission pitcher Aaron Hart threw a good fastball and closed out the game for Mission. This is Hart's first time visiting the prison and he said he felt a lot of energy here. "I expected to see a lot of guards, guns, [but] nothing like this," said

Hart. "I am surprised by how nice the people here are."

Hart reflected about the fact that his brother was just released from prison this year. "This gives me a different perspective, and I thank you guys for letting us come in," Hart said.

The Mission had a two-run lead going into the ninth before the SQ Giants' Rick Dias singled and drove in a run. As Dias cut the Mission lead to one, the Giants went on a hitting spree that loaded the bases and with two outs, Anthony "T-Tone" Denard had a chance to pull off the win in dramatic fashion, but an infield pop-fly closed the game out.

Denard humbly spoke of just missing a grand slam. "I tried not to overthink the situation and react like normal, but a questionable high-strike call changed everything," said Denard. "I got jammed up."

Even the best only succeed 30% of the time in baseball.

Professional athlete faces criticism over LGBTQ+ comments

On Monday, March 30, the Chicago Bulls challenged an individual's right to free speech when the NBA team terminated guard Jaden Ivey's contract and employment for exhibiting his Christian beliefs, calling his action "detrimental" to the team.

"The world proclaims LGBTQ, right?" Ivey had said. "They proclaim Pride Month, and the NBA does, too. They show it to the world. They say, 'Come join us for Pride Month to celebrate unrighteousness.' They proclaim it in the streets. Unrighteousness."

Anthony Tafoya, a San Quentin Rehabilitation Center resident who identifies as LGBTQ+, said, "Ivey shouldn't have been fired. It's not like he's an ICE agent

who killed someone."

According to Jacques Printup of Yahoo Sports Headlines, Ivey, who was drafted by the Detroit Pistons as the fifth player in the 2022 NBA Draft, went live on his social media accounts several times over the last few weeks. Printup cited "various sources" that said while Ivey was on his own livestream, he spoke about his own religious and social beliefs, including his beliefs about the queer community.

Printup reported that Ivey chastised the NBA for supporting the LGBTQ+ community by hosting Pride Month events.

Amid a flurry of social media activity, the Chicago Bulls cut Ivey from their roster. The Blasts' Melanie VanDerveer said Bulls head

coach Billy Donovan broke his silence on the matter just before his team's loss to the San Antonio Spurs on Monday, March 30, the day they fired Ivey.

VanDerveer reported that Donovan told the media that the Bulls have a "certain level of standards and expectations" for their players. "We've got to all be professional," Donovan said. "I think there's got to be a high level of respect for one another, and we got to help each other and then be accountable to those standards."

Jaden Ivey is not the only athlete who thinks that the LGBTQ+ community is living in "unrighteousness." New England Patriot TreVeyon Henderson appeared to support Ivey's

opinions about religion and social issues. Henderson himself spoke a Bible verse about inheriting the Kingdom of God.

When Ivey continued on other livestreams he blasted the Catholic faith, calling it "a fake religion" and later told a fan that God won't listen to sinners. Ivey also questioned the organization's decision to fire him in another online post, per ESPN, saying, "[The Bulls] said my conduct is detrimental to the team. Why didn't they just say, 'We don't agree with his stance on LGBTQ?' Why didn't they say that? ... How is it conduct detrimental to the team? What did I do to the team? What did I do to the players?"

According to VanDerveer,

Ivey called the Bulls organization "liars," adding, "Ask any one of them coaches in there 'Was I a good teammate?' All I'm preaching about is Jesus Christ, and they waived me. They say I'm crazy, right, I'm psycho."

Amid Ivey's controversial tirades about the LGBTQ+ community, Catholicism, and his abrupt firing, Donovan said that the mental health of athletes is important in today's society. "And I'm not passing judgment on what Jaden is or is not going through. But I do worry about that, not only for Jaden, but for all of our players," said Donovan. "Are we providing the resources, which I think we do, to help them in any way we can? I think if any player reached out and said 'I need some

help in this,' we could help them," he said.

San Quentin residents Kenny Rogers and Michael Beaudette spoke about Ivey's termination as well.

"I also believe in Bible verses that say such lifestyles are both abominable and detestable to our Holy Father," said Beaudette.

Kenny Rogers, a devout member of the Catholic chapel, said, "The problem lies with society's embracing of the marginalized in America. You can't say anything negative about those communities or you are 'BAD,' because cancel culture lives as free speech is in critical condition."

—Anthony Manuel
Carvalho
Sports Editor

ARTS

Music program brings healing and transformative power to individuals

By Michael Callahan
Managing Editor

Believe Music Heals has grown into more than a music program in its first three years, bringing healing and transformative power to individuals aspiring to find their voices.

The program has uplifted dozens on a journey through the creative process. Using breathing techniques, singing, and songwriting, residents from different backgrounds and talent levels tell personal stories that bring light and beauty into a dark place.

San Quentin Rabbi Paul Schefflar started the program when he reached outside the community for an electric guitar, award winning

Bay Area musician Essence Goldman responded, and the two collaborated. Goldman has released six albums on independent and major labels. She hopes to create albums for the incarcerated.

Resident Daniel McKie is one of the concept's beneficiaries. "This class gave me a voice and made me a whole better version of myself. My self-esteem has improved because Essence works with us at our pace and gives us a belief that we could pursue the vision of putting our songs and writing into music," he said.

McKie was incarcerated at 19 years of age. He said he has played guitar since he was 10, but he has never kept any of the songs he writes. Now 26, he is pursuing a musical

career. "Being an incarcerated lifer, I have finally found an outlet that saved my life," McKie said.

Self-taught and lacking confidence, McKie said at the beginning of the program he wanted to throw away the songs he wrote like he had always done. But the class made him a better version of himself and allowed him to overcome stage fright and confidence issues.

"I feel confident enough now to pursue my musical dreams. My songs are intended to grab the attention of younger people. I tell my life story to mentor and help someone so they don't have to go through the same dark path I did," McKie said.

Goldman believes that healing from illness and

past traumas comes through the music created by incarcerated persons and she challenges participants to unlock their creativity. She has recorded more than three albums full of music penned and performed by residents, many of whom had little previous experience composing.

"Music brings people together, creates community, and provides an opportunity to be seen and heard in new ways," Goldman said. "Doing that, we create authentic connection and new possibilities to pivot in our lives and make change."

Resident James Talivaa, incarcerated for 23 years, said the program afforded him the opportunity to be himself. He said he would write rhythmic songs that

were about his family and lived experiences.

"This program made me feel like I was noticed. I want others to hear my songs and hopefully they can relate," Talivaa said.

His songs are usually about downfalls, but he had an upbeat story about empathy for his nine brothers and how they treated each other. He said after he had kids he saw the similarities to his childhood experiences and wanted to tell those stories.

Rabbi Schefflar spoke about the transformation of Chapel C's space with the establishment of all the music programs. His ongoing support has enabled music in San Quentin to flourish and empower residents to tell their life's journey

through songwriting and performances.

"I do believe music heals not just people making the music. It is a blessing that goes through the player and through their creativity," Schefflar said. "The more we encourage and do this, the more light and beauty that come into the world."

Almost 20 of the graduates performed a song they wrote in front of more than 50 residents and guests.

"A lot of music being created is really heartfelt. I enjoyed how the feelings came through in their performances. It was impressive," resident Raymond Melberg said. "The Spanish performers stepped right into their culture and the music of their environment."

REENTRY

Mediation training creates job opportunities upon release

By Bostyon Johnson
Editor-in-Chief

Residents in the transformative mediation program at San Quentin learned that the skills and techniques they've been acquiring can lead to employment post incarceration.

Around 60 outside arbitrators visited the prison, led by Executive Director Deborah Levy of The Congress of Neutrals. The visit was to learn what it takes for residents to mediate under extraordinary circumstances and to understand why those in the mediation program are great candidates for employment opportunities after they leave prison.

"Recently we have seen incredible success by deepening our connection with transformative mediation training happening here in San Quentin," Levy said. "We have recruited graduates from San Quentin for the last two years [into] our training program."

TCN offers a 40-hour mediation training program that serves as a gateway for people invested in more holistic ways of resolving conflicts. The organization includes a mentoring program that guides new mediators as they transition from theory to the practical environments of the California court system.

Levy discussed one particular success story from San Quentin who came through TCN's training program: Jose Ramirez.

"There is no better example of this pathway than Jose Ramirez," Levy said. "He has become one of our most reliable mediators. His success rates in the courtroom have earned him direct praise from judges, who recognized his ability to find resolution in even the most difficult cases."

The transformative mediation program at San Quentin is supervised by Executive Director Rochelle Edwards of Harm to Health Collective. Incarcerated mediators are challenged to practice professional-level dispute resolutions through reflective listening, emotional intelligence, and understanding body language. But resolving conflicts in a prison setting is unlike mediations happening in society.

The biggest challenge is remaining objective in such a small community.

Resident Noah Winchester said his biggest challenge when it comes to mediating in prison is not doing more harm than good. He said the goal is to be careful not to offend while remaining authentic.

"The community here trusts us and if I don't do it right, that trust can be taken away all because I didn't handle the mediation correctly," Winchester said. "One of the tools I use is being able to sit in a mediation and be clued into the body language."

Incarcerated mediator Vernon Evans said the best part of his mediating comes when he's able to speak with disputants before the mediation.

"Being able to talk to the disputants before the mediation is where the meat of everything happens," Evans said. "I find that to be very valuable."

Evans said he lets the individuals know that he is just a referee and that they will be doing the work. This allows him to set the ground rules early.

Resident Michael Callahan, a facilitator in the transformative mediation program, said that the prison environment is ever-changing and as a mediator, he believes that violence can be curbed through mediations, but the individuals have to feel supported.

"We are out there preaching confidentiality in a space that can be volatile," Callahan said. "So for me it starts by recognizing if the person feels supported and safe."

Callahan said a tool he uses is role-reversal, where he challenges individuals to find another way of thinking.

Resident Sergio Alvarez is a facilitator for the transformative mediation program at San Quentin. He said that he has learned what listening really looks like and the practice has impacted his day-to-day conversations, especially when he knows a person is not listening to him.

"I used to need people to listen to me, said Alvarez. "But now that I know what mediation looks like, I can be more useful in the community."

When discussing the challenges of conflict resolutions, Levy talked about her years of mediating and said that the biggest challenge for her has been understanding that people's perspectives can change. She also said that for her, mediating should come with a goal in mind.

"Ultimately, my job isn't to coerce a settlement, but by using the tools of validating and pivoting, reality testing and patience, we can work to resolve impasses," Levy said.

She encouraged the incarcerated mediators to never give up and to know that even the most rigid person's perspective isn't set in stone.

Facilitators of the transformative mediation program are trained to be objective and neutral. They learn important skills to facilitate a structured conversation and dialogue.

Resident Benny Espinoza said that creating a safe space for people to come together to be heard is important. He said one way he views success in mediations is in his performance.

"For me, understanding that I did what I was supposed to do and allowing the people to agree on something basic is success to me," Espinoza said.

Executive Director Rochelle Edwards said that ultimately it's about harm being healed and repairing what has been broken.

"Mediation exists in the space between what is broken and what is possible," Edwards said.

Side Bar

To access the services of transformative mediation, send a request for services in a U-Save'em envelope to Transformative Mediation c/o Community Resources Office.

Focus Areas Served.

- Cellmates
 - Sports teams
 - Programs
 - Workplace Areas
- Not Served by Transformative Mediation program.
- Acute mental health crisis.
 - Financial disagreements.
 - Individuals unwilling to resolve a conflict.



Photo by Marcus Casillas //SQNews

Residents gather reentry information.

2026 Resource Fair a success

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

Programs designed to benefit members of the outside community as well as returning citizens were a recurring theme at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center's 2026 Reentry Resource Fair in April.

Chapel B was buzzing with reentry resource providers and forward-looking incarcerated persons within minutes of the start of the event, which was organized by San Quentin's People in Blue.

A rich and varied pool of vendor tables filled the big Chapel and the air was full of voices exchanging greetings and valuable reentry information. The room had a vibrant feel and each table was well attended by residents anticipating how to manage their return to the outside.

As participants circulated through the space talking to vendor representatives and picking up literature it soon became clear that the intended beneficiaries of the services were not only returning citizens.

Several of the programs had multi-pronged social goals. For example, Impact Justice presented an innovative program called the "home coming project." The program connects returning citizens with qualifying homeowners or renters who have a furnished, spare room they are willing to let to a parolee. Such potential hosts must have "an extra room and an open mind" notes the program literature. The innovative arrangement provides transitional housing to one party and rental income to the other.

Another program at the reentry fair with multiple beneficiaries was Farming Hope,

which offers an apprenticeship program in culinary skills to returning citizens. But the program also rescues food that would otherwise be thrown away and distributes it to "food-insecure neighbors."

Steve Brooks of People in Blue said the diversity of vendors with varied social objectives was intentional, an effort by the group to make the fair holistic in reach and impact.

Some of the programs were focused on children of incarcerated parents. Community Works' program called Project WHAT! (We're here and talking) advocates for Bay Area children aged 12-17 who have incarcerated parents.

"Project WHAT! raises awareness about the effects of parental incarceration on children, lifting up their voices and stories, with the long-term goal of improving services and policies that impact them," notes the program's literature.

Project Avary provides zero-cost programs for children aged 8-18 whose parents are incarcerated. The program includes online after-school support groups and mentoring, leadership training with paid opportunities for teens, weekend adventure retreats and summer camp.

Other programs focus on adults in the free community who have incarcerated family members. The Essie Justice Group - Healing to Advocacy Program is a community of women with incarcerated loved ones. The program offers a nine-week course that promotes connection and provides advocacy training.

Women who complete the program will "... be forever connected to a community of women with incarcerated loved ones, who will continue to support each other and work

together to advocate for what our communities need," notes the program's flyer.

Friends Outside provides visiting services, including emergency clothing, a place to freshen up, a sheltered place to wait for scheduled visits, children's activities, transportation, and help resolving issues that might prevent a visit.

Of course, attendees looking for services directed at returning citizens were not disappointed. They found information on housing, employment, education, vocational training, mental health, social services navigation, substance use, healthcare, food resources, financial literacy, and other reentry matters.

Resident Juan Flores paused near one of the tables and looked around at the many offerings. He said he was sometimes frustrated at previous fairs because the vendors were so busy it was hard to get to them. Things were going better for him at this year's event, which he described as "... more colorful, more interactive, more personalized, and [with] better availability of vendors."

Strong attendance at the reentry fair by vendors and residents ensured that numerous connections were made and much useful information was disseminated to benefit not just returning residents but members of the outside community as well.

Corey McNeil, who paroled from San Quentin and successfully integrated to life outside, manned a table for his employer, Mount Tamalpais College. McNeil stressed the importance of preparing for reentry before an incarcerated person gains their freedom. "Reentry starts in here, not when you get out," he said.

EDUCATION

Astronomy class affords residents opportunity to see outer space

By Charles Crowe
Staff Writer

Students of Mount Tamalpais College, San Quentin's onsite college program, gazed through a telescope at worlds far beyond the facility's walls while participating in an innovative astronomy course this past spring semester.

On a clear January evening, a volunteer instructor set up the tripod-mounted device outside the education building and turned it toward Jupiter, which was bright in the eastern sky. He used the attached viewfinder to focus on the planet and students took turns peeking through

the lens. They could see the big planet's larger moons with the aid of the powerful telescope.

"We have so few chances to see beyond these prison walls. But there we were, watching four moons orbit Jupiter almost 500 million miles away," said San Quentin resident and astronomy student Steve Matlak.

Later that same evening the device was turned toward the west where the students enjoyed a view of Saturn and its beautiful rings.

Student Kelon Williams was in awe. "Having the ability of the telescope in class made the observation projects so tangible. Looking at Jupiter

and Saturn while attempting to wrap my head around the distance of what I'm seeing was mind-bending."

This opportunity for incarcerated residents to study astronomy with the aid of a telescope was one manifestation of the recent evolution of San Quentin from prison to rehabilitation center.

Zaw Htet, PhD, the college's Math and Science Program director, coordinated with CDCR to make the telescope possible for the class. Previous Mt. Tam astronomy courses were not allowed to bring in such a device.

"It's wonderful to be able to arrange to bring in science equipment and supplies

for science classes, as meaningful science learning happens through hands-on observation," said Htet.

Timothy Young, another student of the class and avid space enthusiast, talked about his experience, "Being able to use a telescope in our astronomy class was awesome because space is [an] extraordinary and infinite area to examine. Wow!"

Research physicist Andrew Westphal and doctoral candidate Rowan Duim, both of the University of California, Berkeley served as Mt. Tam's volunteer instructor team for the innovative astronomy course that utilized the telescope.

Duim and Westphal "flipped" the classroom by minimizing lectures and instead emphasizing hands-on learning and collaboration among students. The telescope was an integral part of their hands-on, interactive approach.

The final observation assignment for the semester involved using the telescope to view a full Venus, which sat just above Mount Tamalpais on the horizon. Students took turns gazing at the bright planet, drew sketches, and took notes to record what they saw. They were to imagine themselves as Galileo seeing Venus through a telescope for the first time.

In Galileo's day, most people still considered Earth the center of the universe, a belief known as the geocentric model. Students were asked whether they thought Galileo would question the geocentric model based on what he saw when he viewed Venus through his telescope.

At the final meeting of the astronomy class in April, student Patrick Poteat reflected on what the telescope experience meant for him. "Really awesome to see through the telescope! Made the class extra special for me. I like all things space and to actually observe Jupiter's moons was a standout."

TRANSFORMATION

From gangs to groups — how a resident embraced rehabilitation

By Stuart Clarke
Journalism Guild Writer

A former gangster, drug dealer and burglar serving a life sentence at the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center has embraced its life-changing programs and now resides in an Earned Living Unit.

Richard Manual Duran, 69, retired his criminal past and now strives for self-improvement. He is focused on reparations to those he has harmed and is a mentor to SQRC residents who have a common past.

"Hope is not a strategy; you have to do the work. You have to stop embracing social culture with its activities and slang. Mental preparation is key to success and I've made the decision to change my life because the other lifestyle was a failed entity. I've chosen to abandon failed social strategies in exchange for successful rehabilitation," said Duran.

Duran was born in Southern California and raised there by his strict paternal grandmother. His father was an imprisoned gang member who periodically appeared in his life. He never knew his mother.

Duran grew up in a gang-infested neighborhood and frequently moved. It seemed to him that grandma was "running from something, which made it hard to keep relationships with peers and friends."

His childhood was traumatic and he was frequently assaulted by his grandmother with objects. "The physical aspect wasn't as bad as the emotional and psychological," said Duran. "She was putting me down and saying, 'You'll be just like your dad.'" He observed that most family members were drug addicts and alcoholics who practiced domestic abuse.

Duran joined a street gang at age 13 because he wanted acceptance, camaraderie and

protection. Thus began his criminal activities of shoplifting cigarettes and clothes, and stealing bicycles and car stereos. Concurrently, he began abusing substances due to peer pressure.

He dropped out of school in the 11th grade and by the age of 19 began being arrested for major crimes such as the sale of drugs, carrying a concealed weapon, burglary and grand theft.

"Peer pressure was a big motivator," he said. "What family and friends thought of you meant everything. I had to succeed in the criminal lifestyle or be excommunicated."

Before the arrest that resulted in his life sentence, Duran sold marijuana in the apartment complex where he lived. Being more concerned with achieving the objective from a criminal's point of view, he was unaware of harm inflicted on others.

"July 29, 1994 is the date that my life changed completely," said Duran. "I was

arrested for burglary and indifferent to the strife of others. I was successful selling drugs and gang banging for so long that I didn't worry about repercussions; they were imaginary." He received a Three Strikes sentence of 85 years-to-life.

Many years of incarceration wore on him. Duran was stabbed on an active yard but refused to retaliate. This event led him to safer housing where he eventually dropped out of the gang because "there is a sense of an unlevelled playing field. When you are initiated into a gang, they tell you everyone is equal. But when you encounter gang members in prison and they are not giving you what is sold to you, you see the injustices."

He realized, "I need to move past this or I'm going to end up in the Secured Housing Unit and never get out. I need to evolve and make an attempt to be the person I should be. I am in my fourth prison term. The same

personal proclivities of my first three terms were carried into my fourth with similar results."

"There's a sadness that comes thinking about the waste of years," said Duran.

Finally, Duran sensed that major change was immediately needed in his life when family and friends began avoiding his company. Upon looking at himself in the mirror, he was saddened to see a "pathetic shell of the person people used to know." He knew he had failed to become the son his parents wanted him to be. He decided to change and make reparations to victims, family and friends.

"You know exactly what Jesus means when He looks you in the eye and says to 'overcome.' He is referring to that single area of bondage that has wrecked your relationships for years," said Duran.

He added, "If a person doesn't deal with the obstacle

God puts on his road, God will see to it that the person faces the same obstacle later on down the road until it is either dealt with or the person dies without his victory."

When he was first incarcerated, there were little to no rehabilitation programs available except for Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, claimed Duran. He embraced rehabilitation in December 2005 while housed in the Centinela SHU.

Rehabilitation became his new goal in life. He completed self-help programs such as Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous, Alternatives to Violence, Gang Awareness and Recovery, and Celebrate Recovery. Additionally, he completed the Office Services vocation and earned a GED. Currently he has a full-time assignment and is involved in AA.

"We don't need more people at San Quentin. We need more San Quentin in the people."

Resident's struggle with fatherhood overcome through spiritual discipline

By Michael Callahan
Managing Editor

Parenting is challenging, especially from inside a prison, but a father's role in their kids' lives is extremely important.

Since 2012, Malachi Dads, a self-help program, has helped individuals transform their lives in Christ through dedication to a life of integrity, a practice of daily discipline and dependence on God, and a pursuit of godly character.

"My family knows there's something different with me. We look forward to a future outside so we can continue to restore trust and I can show them my change," resident

Edwin Tucker said.

Minister Otis Cole introduced this biblical curriculum after he went to Angola. He said that through his study his perspective on patience, compassion, and understanding scripture changed. "I allowed the word to get in me and then doing the word changed my heart."

At the end of the yearlong curriculum, the goal for a Malachi dad is that not only do their children walk with the Lord, but that the God-given vision would impact their family and multiple generations.

"[The] word of God changes the heart of a father; we help facilitate that change. Many

individuals have come through the program not knowing how to be fathers and love their kids," Cole said.

Staying in contact with family while incarcerated has become easier over the last few years with the introduction of tablets [a handheld device]. Individuals no longer have to stand in line to sign up for a scheduled time slot to call home, nor do they have to hope their call goes through the first time because they only have a 15-minute time slot. Most importantly, the violence and tension around the old-school wall phones has dissipated.

Richard Otto said the curriculum helped him to reintroduce himself to his child.

After 20 years of incarceration, he said he could not wait to educate his daughter about the knowledge of God and how this program helped him open up and talk about things not normally discussed.

"I missed out on her teen years and this class helped me fill in the spaces from my absence. When we come together, I could break into a conversation with my adult child and have difficult discussions," Otto said.

"I want to be that example my dad was for me to my son, so he will want a relationship with God," Tucker said. He said when he was younger, he admired his dad because he would see him praying on

his knees and this class helped him get back into a relationship with God.

"I have conversations with my parents about God and sow seeds of the word of God with my son. I encourage him to stay on a righteous path," Tucker said.

While technology has greatly increased the connection between incarcerated persons and their families, the authenticity and sincerity of letter writing as part of the Malachi Dads curriculum resonated with some of the graduates. Many of them spoke about the roundtable discussions, and how hearing others reflect on their study and meditation of the word of God had

changed their hearts. Others said that knowing and doing his will by listening to His voice will anchor you in his plan and set you free to live with boldness and freedom.

Certificates were provided to inside facilitators Harold Bicknell and Damou Evans, as well as graduates Edwin Tucker, Richard Otto, Augustine Rocha, and recently paroled Warren Corley.

"This program allows you to be a man led by the spirit versus worldly views and values. You not only strengthen your relationship with your children, but you can be a tool of God's to introduce Him to others," said resident facilitator Damou Evans.

YOUTH

KidCat kickstarts introspection and emotional intelligence

By Gregory Stevens
Contributing Writer



I arrived at San Quentin in May 2022 not knowing what "life" would look like or the belief my future would be filled with opportunity and hope. Shortly after being housed in West Block my journey crossed paths with Chase Benoit, Kenny Vernon, and Bruce Fowler - all KidCat members. They recognized I was in need of positive guidance and opportunity so they reached out offering advice

and encouragement. I witnessed their walk in life and inspired my willingness to be open-minded, seek change for myself, and strive to become an asset to the community.

I was invited to attend my first group, KidCat Juvenile Life Support Group. I was nervous, fearful of the unknown, and felt like a deer in the headlights. The curriculum presented and the terms spoken were totally foreign to me, but a spark was ignited and I kept showing up on Sundays.

I quickly realized this was a big blessing and the opportunity I needed to change the path of my life.

JLSG opened my eyes to a whole new outlook

and thought process. It has encouraged me to be accountable for my actions and challenge myself and my beliefs that drove my actions. The group kickstarted my reflection of my childhood and enabled me to examine how my values were shaped. It introduced me to emotional intelligence; something I had never heard of until then. I began to realize the effect of communication and listening, and to understand they are essential for me to succeed in my life going forward.

My dedication to personal growth, the group, and giving 100% effort didn't go unnoticed. When KidCat's First Step started after the Covid pandemic, I was offered

a chance to participate in the cohort. The curriculum offered me an opportunity to connect my adult self with my child self. It has helped me tremendously on my journey of self discovery and has given me a better understanding of myself.

KidCat First Step consists of eight modules that explore connection to childhood. It dives into emotions, sensations, and the ways they affected my choices and actions. We look into self identity and the dynamics of multiple identities. We learn about masculinity and where our beliefs about it originated. Environmental influences and consequences are broken down and examined.

We look at various communication models. We explore empathy and compassion to put these principles into practice. The final module is forgiveness. This allows us to rebuild and move on with our lives in a honest way. It says we will learn to grow and heal from our experiences.

Today I'm part of my third cohort of KidCat First Step. I'm honored to have been trusted with giving back by helping others and facilitating. It is an awesome feeling to contribute to the community that gives so much to me. I am truly grateful to everyone at KidCat for the countless doors it has opened and continue to open in my life.

GAMES

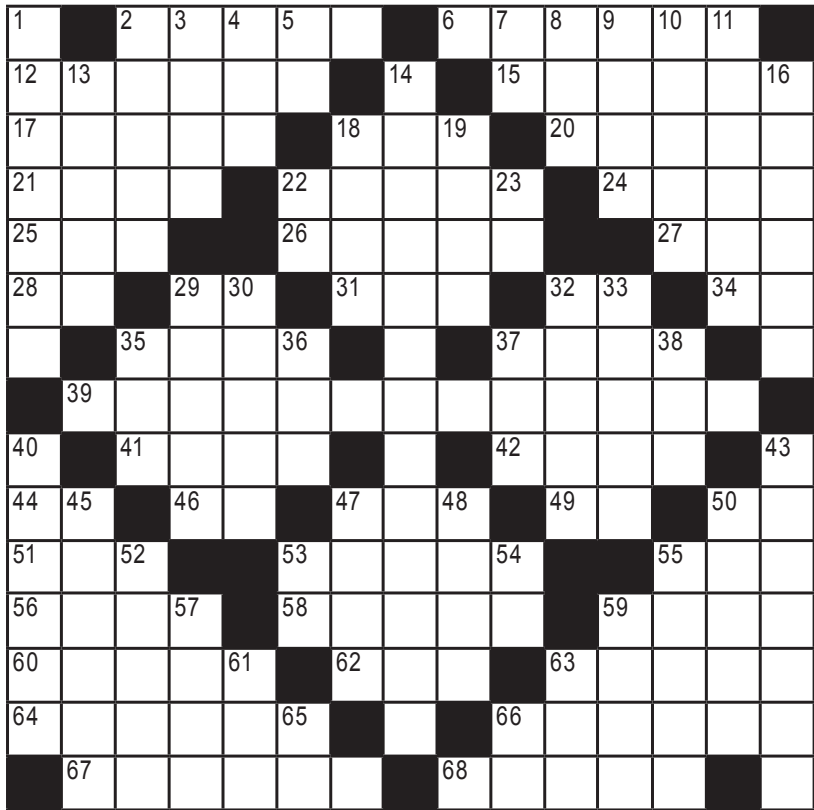
BOOK REVIEW

CROSSWORD CLASSIC

Created by Michael Fangman

"The Warmth of the Sun"

Edited by Jan Perry



Across

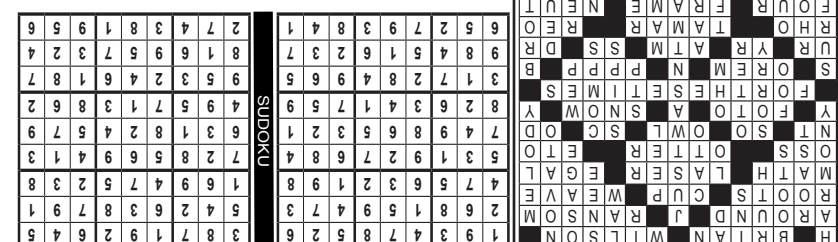
- 2. Family Guy canine
6. Best friend to a ship-wrecked Tom Hanks movie character
12. On every side
15. A kidnapper's demand
17. Jimmy Fallon's band
18. Cooking measurement = 8 ounces
20. Fake hair (slang)
21. Addition, Algebra, Calculus e.g.
22. A beam of intense monochromatic light used for drilling or cutting
24. ...-itarian: a person who believes that all people are equal and deserve access to equal opportunities
25. WWII US intelligence agency
26. Fish-eating mammal often seen eating and floating on its back
27. WWII acronym for war in Europe
28. Ice Road Truckers is filmed there (Hint: Its capital is Yellowknife)
29. Award winning Peter Gabriel album
31. Pooh's verbose tree-dwelling friend
32. You'll find Charleston there (abbr.)
34. A fatal amount of something (abbr.)
35. ...-Mat: 1970's era drive-up kiosk at which one could drop off used film and pick up developed photos
37. Hunger Games president played by the late Donald Sutherland
39. See 14-Down
41. North central Utah city near Provo
42. A podful of green legumes?
44. Ancient Sumerian city
46. 12 mo.
47. Europeans call it a "Cash Point"
49. Nazi special police force
50. You might find one in the ER
51. 17th letter in the Greek alphabet
53. A biblical heroine
55. A 1970's era Speedwagon
56. Marvel's Fantastic ...
58. It often hangs artwork
59. N on a gearshift (abbr.)
60. This door gets you in
62. The Palm Pilot was one
63. This word, which means "to drain away from the soil" comes from the Old English word leccan
64. An evening meal served scrambled?
66. This Myers was President Bill Clinton's WH press secretary
67. The ... formerly known as Prince
68. A famous cartoon woodpecker

- 3. This left-handed Babe hit HRs
4. Not outs, but...
5. A Superbowl must for companies
7. Iridium on the table
8. It comes before Dick Wolf's Order
9. A stifled sneeze
10. A member of the Native American tribe who occupies the Missouri River valley of the same name
11. This Spanish-named city, just north of SF, has a population of just over 50,000 residents
13. Comedian Nikki Glaser's specialty "I ... With 39-across, title of both the biography and bio-pic focused on this month's crossword theme (Another Hint: 2&6 Across)
14. Sometimes and "earworm," this series of musical notes develops itself into a song's main "theme"
16. This US Institute offers famous fellowship in political thought
18. This colorful part of an apple is sometimes removed for baking
19. Opposite of HI on most stovetops
22. This sign is seen at some crossings
23. A brief apology
29. A popular AI company used by some to organize meeting notes (Hint: See 26-across)
30. Quick cuts often made with scissors
32. Regular gamblers in Vegas ask for these - what often amount to free meals, hotel rooms, and show tickets
33. Dave Grohl's ... Fighters
34. Ω (measures electrical resistance)
35. These Pilots, fronted by the late Scott Weiland, sang Push (abbr.)
36. A basic network protection protocol
37. Little ... Girl (Beach Boys hit)
38. Greg to Marsha, Jan, and Cindy
39. Help Me ... (Beach Boys hit)
40. You have to be 50 to join them
41. Often, a child's first syllables
42. "What the ...?" (Stewie Griffin)
43. The ... Limits: 1960's TV show oft-compared to Twilight Zone
44. Incredulous letters that follow W
45. Rhenium on the table
46. Prepared, essentially
47. This managed real estate investment portfolio is required by law to pass at least 95% of its income through to investors
48. More than a want
49. This UK organization supports both the deaf and the blind (abbr.)
50. Astrological sign preceding Virgo
51. It's one-billionth of a second (abbr.)
52. 1st and 8th note of the musical scale

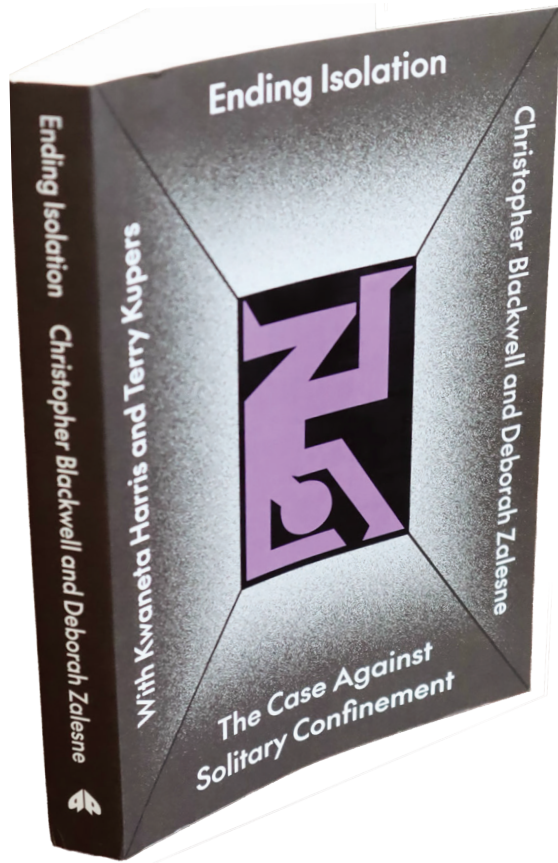
Down

- 1. A song's second musical part, one often creating a chord progression with a pleasing effect to the ear
2. In a time of war, these might be "on the ground"

SOLUTIONS



Inhumane conditions of solitary exposed



By Edwin E. Chavez Spanish Journalism Guild Chair

In the United States there are many incarcerated people serving time in solitary confinement who are subject to daily inhumane conditions.

From an incarcerated perspective, and as someone who spent over a decade in isolation, I can relate to the push to end isolation. I, too, spent years in multiple security housing units within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, including the SHUs at Pelican Bay State Prison and Corcoran State Prison.

In "Ending Isolation, The Case Against Solitary Confinement," authors Christopher Blackwell, an incarcerated journalist, and law professor Deborah Zalesne compiled stories of incarcerated men and women who are currently serving their sentences in isolation or have spent years behind the glass windows without any real human contact.

"While in the juvenile prison, I refused to follow rules and be controlled by authority figures — I rebelled, constantly. This led to my first solitary confinement at age 12, an experience that solidified my distrust for authority figures forever and drove me into a deep hate for 'the system.' They warehoused me until my sentence came to an end," said coauthor Blackwell.

Through personal narratives, this book hits strong points on how prison administrators across the nation use isolation to punish and retaliate against the incarcerated. In addition, it gives the perspective of professionals on isolation, and that of former employees who decided to leave their jobs after witnessing firsthand the dreadful conditions that people endure daily inside these modern dungeons.

Jeremy Busby is an incarcerated

journalist in Texas. He talked about his own personal experience, pointing out that Texas is a brutal place to serve time. He stated that most of the world knows this by watching how often executions are carried out there. He compared restricted housing units, where he has been held for years, to the execution chamber.

Busby compared the three-ingredient cocktail of the death chamber to solitary confinement. There, thousands of incarcerated people are subjected to a "... deadly three-ingredient cocktail of severe isolation, extremely deplorable living conditions, and inadequate mental and physical health care, which results in cold-blooded state-sanctioned murder."

According to Blackwell and Zalesne, solitary confinement was first introduced in the late 1790s at the Eastern State Penitentiary (or Cherry Hill). In 1826 it was established and came to be known as the Pennsylvania model, in which incarcerated people were confined to their cells and unable to speak or communicate with others. This approach of incarcerating people was highly influenced by the Quaker philosophy.

Quakers believed that isolating men under the harsh conditions of a cold concrete cell would give them the time to reflect, study and even pray in order for them to leave their "criminal ways behind." This barbarian and inhumane practice continues to be one of the deadly punitive approaches to incarceration.

According to professionals, even hundreds of years later this practice continues to be in place by subjecting people to horrible conditions.

Steven Nall spent five years in solitary confinement after he had an altercation with some guards. He recalls being roughed up and

taken to an isolation cell where he was stripped of his clothing. The cell didn't have a mattress, but rather a one-inch-thick rubber pad. According to Nall, the door to the recreation yard was kept open on purpose to let the winter air in.

"After this was done, the guards placed a fan in front of the door, turned it on high, and pointed it right at the isolation cell I was in. You have no clue how cold those next few hours were ... I had to earn my humanity back, clothing, and eventually a regular cell with a mattress."

Examples like this one in "Ending Isolation" reminds the reader that no human being should be forced to endure such abusive or barbarian conditions regardless of what they may have done to earn them a ticket to the hole.

Jeremiah Bourgeois survived seven and a half years in isolation. He shared how he was denied most of his meals for three full weeks. He remembered being able to smell the eggs early in the morning as the cart moved closer.

"After the officer handed the guy on the right side of my cell his tray, they bypassed my cell, handed the guy on my left side of my cell his tray, and then continued down the tier. They never looked in my direction. They never said a word. Lunch arrived four hours later, and again I was skipped," reported Bourgeois.

Ms. Kwaneta Harris writes about the horrible conditions and harm that solitary has had on her and other females. She also dives deep into the negative effects of solitary confinement and how it distanced her relationship with her daughter Summer Knight, whose entire childhood was with her mother in prison and in solitary.

"We only had one five-minute phone call every 3-4 months after midnight, when Summer was already asleep. It was like that for seven years! Sometimes because of staff shortages, the calls would be twice a year!" Summer came to believe that her mother Kwaneta was living inside a hole.

Micaela E. Romero, an expert at Neural Systems and Behavioral Research at the University of Washington, investigates neurobiological and behavioral impacts of social isolation. She discussed the physical and psychological harm of solitary confinement.

According to Romero, "... incarcerated individuals are subjected to conditions that many may consider too harmful even for many lab animals. In practice, the conditions incarcerated individuals face receive less ethical scrutiny than those lab mice."

She added that after hundreds of years using solitary confinement against incarcerated people there is no substantial evidence that this practice makes communities safer. On the contrary, there is "... overwhelming evidence that it causes harm and premature death."

I highly recommend this book as one of the top ten best collective items because it makes a strong case for ending isolation. Read this book.

SUDOKU

