

To Our Readers

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

AS PEACE FACES tests from bombed buildings and conflict in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, embattled barricades on college campuses all across the U.S., and violence against political candidates, the very fabric from which democracy is woven is strained this summer.

Parallels may be drawn between trials faced more than a half century ago with the Summer of Love, Vietnam, and Kent State. What lessons have we learned? Reinhold Niebuhr writes from 1944: "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

IN THIS ISSUE:

Creekside with Warden Covello.....	3
Unlocking History: Black Bart (pt. 1).....	3
MA Bans LWOP Sentences for Youth.....	4
MCSP Re-Envisions Education.....	4
The Wordsmith; Big Red's Grammar Guide.....	5
Why Does Your Dog Do That?.....	5
LSA Offers Letter Bank Program.....	6
View from a Cushion: Face of My Father.....	6
PPI: The Mass Incarceration of Women.....	7
All About Blood Donation.....	7
PPI: Mass Incarceration (pt. 1).....	8
A Story of the Inside Circle.....	8
Earth Mother's Secrets; Healing Our Home.....	9
PJP: How to Start a Newspaper (part 2).....	10
Eating to Live;.....	11
Digital Literacy: Filing on Canvas.....	11
Mule Creek State Prison Channel Line-Up.....	12
Mental Health Management Plans (part 1).....	13
12 Steps of Insanity; Noetic Living.....	14
Inspector General Launches New Hotline.....	15
PREP Visits MCSP, Lists Courses.....	15
The Education Arc (part 2).....	16
The Helping Business.....	17
Elder Abuse in Prison (part 1).....	18
LSA Offers Correspondence Courses.....	19
Psych View: Placement Scores.....	20
The Importance of Newspapers.....	21
Sobreviviente Ofrece Su Consejo.....	21
Meet Our Neighbors: Bats at MCSP.....	22
Opinion: Edovo a Phishing Expedition?.....	23
L'Araignée de Notre Dame.....	24
Why Read the Classics?.....	25
Uncaged Writer: Prism Magazine Interview.....	25
California in Contempt.....	26
Business and Finance.....	27
Creative Arts Program.....	28
Psilocybin Therapy Can Reduce Crime.....	29
Tales from the Yard: Fireworks Fiasco.....	30



Mule Creek TUMI graduates. From Left—Michael Franklin, Gary Whiteside, Steven R. Waters, and Claude Foulk.
(H. Kim / Media Specialist)

Mule Creek Hosts TUMI Graduation

By Jason Davis, Feature Reporter
and Philong Huynh, Feature Reporter

ON APRIL 30, 2024, The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) held its first graduation at the Mule Creek State Prison. TUMI is a four-year program that fosters Christian fellowship, leadership, community, and service in giving its students the necessary tools for ministering to others.

The four graduates included Claude Foulk Jr., Michael Franklin, Steven R. Waters, and Gary Whiteside. For some, this took up to 12 years to complete due to myriad disruptions, including transfers to locations where TUMI did not exist and several protracted COVID quarantines that began in 2020.

Waters, a seminary college graduate with an impressive 3.96 GPA, journeyed eight and a half years from when he started TUMI at the Ironwood State Prison to today's graduation. He said, "Our walks must be righteous in speech, thoughts, and actions that are pleasing to God."

Whiteside also started TUMI at Ironwood, encountered many trials and tribulations, and took 12 years to graduate. In his speech he told the crowd how he has learned that leadership is about service and not about running the show, how grace and forgiveness has to be shown to others as Christ has shown to us, and "from an eternal viewpoint, the most important community is the family of God that we now belong to."

Foulk began TUMI in 2016 while at Mule Creek on Facility C. After finishing the prerequisite Fight the Good Fight (the first of 16 TUMI modules) curriculum, he joined TUMI. He recalls this was also staff sponsor Lynn Clevenger's first training class. Eight years later, Foulk expressed his deepest gratitude for Clevenger's unwavering dedication. "She is the utmost faithful to the group ... she has become our motivation."

Franklin is grateful after his eight-year journey for "the knowledge, and insight on how to minister the word, and being more available to people seeking the Lord." He looks forward to teaching the next cohort of Fight the Good Fight.

TUMI was founded by Chuck Colson, one of President Nixon's Watergate attorneys who went to prison. By the time he got out, his promise to himself and his fellow inmates was that he would never forget these men. Those who feel forsaken need only look to similar examples to realize God works through people like Colson to change lives. TUMI also runs similar faith-based programs like Angel Tree, The Academy, and Warden Exchange. Angel Tree is a re-entry
(continued on page 2)



(from Tumi Graduation, pg. 1)
program that also incorporates cognitive behavioral therapy.

Dr. Don Davis, founder of World Impact and the former executive director of TUMI, spoke through video message at the graduation. He told grads that they can be confident, clear, and courageous in their ambassadorship for Christ, fighting the good fight in bringing the message that “Christ delivers and Christ restores.” Davis donned a cap and gown (the very one from his doctorate in theology at the University of Iowa) and challenged TUMI graduates to live by their belief, not by what they see. “Be Christ-like, live by faith, not by sight,” said Davis eloquently.

TUMI’s curriculum consists of 16 modules spread over a four-year period. The first module is Fight the Good Fight, which has been taught by Waters for the past year and a half.

Clevenger was instrumental in initiating TUMI at Mule Creek, and she was brought in by Bob and Mary Gately, the initial facilitators. At the graduation ceremony, Clevenger was presented with a certificate of appreciation by Franklin. He spoke for all participants to express their heartfelt gratitude for her tireless advocacy, concern, and care for all the participants in the program.

In between speeches and prayers, music was provided by TUMI student Brian Warner, with selections such as “Open the Eyes of My Heart” and “I’ll Fly Away.”



Lynn Clevenger (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

His spirited performance got many in the audience clapping and singing along.

Joe Schmid, TUMI coordinator for California, reiterated TUMI’s central tenets of perseverance, fellowship, leadership, and service in spreading God’s love and in living by Christ’s examples. “The most rewarding thing for me is to see the transformation in these men,” said Schmid. This transformation is reflected in the graduates’ expressions of a new understanding of community and service.

Next month, look for full stories on our four esteemed graduates and their personal journeys through TUMI.

Brian Warner (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

News Briefs

HARTSVILLE, Tenn. (USA Today) — Twenty-six men graduated from a nine-month addiction program in Tennessee’s largest prison. It was the first program of its kind in Trousdale Turner Correctional Center in Hartsville.

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (USA Today) — The Alabama Supreme Court has authorized the nitrogen hypoxia execution of Alan Eugene Miller, setting the stage for the state to have at least four executions this year. Miller’s execution would be the second carried out using nitrogen gas, the Alabama Attorney General’s office says.

YORK, Pa. (USA Today) — Gov. Josh Shapiro announced an initiative that would result in the state getting half of its energy from solar arrays around the state. The move, according to a news release, would lead the nation in getting energy from renewable sources, ahead of states known for getting energy from solar and wind sources such as California and Texas.

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FAMILIES UNITED TO END LWOP
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MULE CREEK POST

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by P. Covello,
Mule Creek State Prison
Warden



Mule Creek Has Unique Programs for Residents

NEXT MONTH, MULE Creek State Prison residents will begin their fall college classes. What is exciting about this semester is the abundance of unique programs available to our students.

We have hundreds of students enrolled in community colleges, some by correspondence and some with in-person instruction, all hoping to earn an associate degree or professional certificate. We also have dozens of students taking classes through California State University's Sacramento campus to earn a bachelor's degree in communication studies. Several students are taking classes online from California State University-Dominguez Hills to earn a master's degree in the humanities. And this fall inaugurates the state's first ever seminary program, providing a bachelor's degree in field ministry, right here at Mule Creek. On top of these college-level programs, hundreds of students plug away each day in classes leading to their GED certificate or to a vocational certificate.

Next month will also see the rollout of the prison's peer support specialist program, residents trained to provide mentoring services to their peers in a variety of settings.

Here at Mule Creek, we are leading the way in providing varied opportunities for growth and success. Keep it up!

The Mule Creek Fallen Families Resource Foundation helps correctional officers and their families who are going through difficult times.

For more information, contact one of the following staff members:

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Stage Coach Bandit, Pt. 1

By Don Chaddock, Inside CDCR Editor



BANDITS OF THE Old West were the stuff of legends and penny novels, many of them ending up as repeat offenders or hanging at the end of a rope. There were exceptions, such as the notorious stagecoach robber Black Bart.

Information contained in the Library of Congress indicates Black Bart robbed 28 stagecoaches between 1877 and 1883. He was apprehended Nov. 12, 1883, and four days later entered a guilty plea. According to San Quentin records, he was 48 when he arrived to serve his six-year sentence.

Who was Black Bart?

That was the question haunting Wells Fargo agents and lawmen in Northern California. Known as the gentleman bandit, or the Poet of the Sierra, Charles "Black Bart" Boles was a wanted man. Hiding behind boulders on dusty stagecoach routes, Boles would step out while brandishing a gun. His favorite targets were the Wells Fargo stages. He was polite, never fired a shot, and usually left behind poems for the investigators.

Military records indicate he was a veteran of the Civil War, fighting with the 116th Illinois Infantry Volunteers. In the military, he reportedly earned the rank of sergeant. After the war, he returned to the family farm with his wife and three young daughters. He did not swear, drink, or smoke. After being arrested in San Francisco, Boles admitted his guns were never loaded because he didn't want to hurt anyone; he'd seen enough bloodshed during the war.

Black Bart's first appearance as a bandit in California was Aug. 3, 1877, when he robbed a stagecoach making its way from Fort Ross to the Russian River. Using a double-barreled shotgun, he politely demanded the treasure box and mailbags be thrown to him. After robbing a Quincy-to-Oroville stagecoach on July 25, 1879, he left behind a poem:

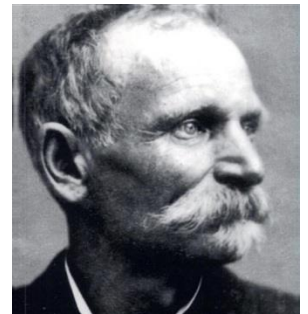
*Here I lay me down to sleep
To wait the coming morrow,
Perhaps success, perhaps defeat,
And everlasting sorrow.
Yet come what will, I'll try it on,
My condition can't be worse.
And if there's money in that box,
'Tis money in my purse.*

It was signed "Black Bart, the Po8."

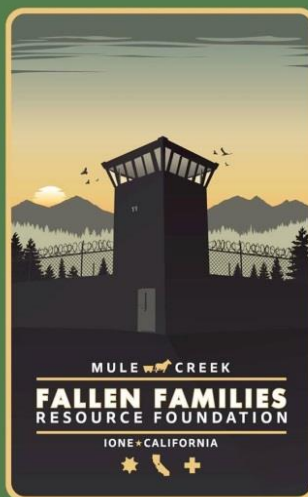
He hit stagecoaches running from Jackson to Ione, Lakeport to Cloverdale, Laporte to Oroville, Ukiah to Cloverdale, Yreka to Redding, and many others. One driver thought to catch Bart and claim the reward, but he was outfoxed. Dan Shealy, a driver of a stage running out of Copperopolis, told detectives, "I'd gotten about five miles out of old 'Cop' when somebody sung out 'Halt!' and I heard two sharp clicks. Seems as if the (horses) knew what's the proper thing for they stopped as quick as if they struck a stable. Then somebody in the bushes asked me pleasant-like to hold my hat on with both hands for some buckshot might blow it off. ... I dropped the express chest with \$1,100 of Wells Fargo's coin and drove off just like it was the regular thing. When the posse got back there they found an old ax that he'd used to bust the box, and on the cover he'd stuck this:

*Once I toiled for gold in ditches,
Now with ease I amass riches,
Daniel; now I'm on this lay,
I'll come against another day.
And I'll send the corpse in time."*

Then the bandit hit Shealy's stagecoach again.



Charles "Black Bart" Boles



MULE CREEK POST Submissions

Freelance writers, staff, and others may submit articles or material to the Mule Creek Post, % MCIC AW's Office, P.O. Box 409090, Ione, CA 95640, or by interdepartmental mail if living at MCSP. Submissions may be edited for length and content and become the property of the Mule Creek Post (authors retain intellectual rights to original material). When submitting legal news articles, include source material documentation. Include your name, CDC#, and address.



Massachusetts Bans LWOP for Youth

By Earl S. Breckenridge,
Feature Reporter

ON JANUARY 11, 2024, the Massachusetts Supreme Court abolished life-without-parole (LWOP) sentences for 18-to-20-year-olds. The court’s 4-to-3 decision follows Washington and Michigan, as well as Canada and the U.K., which exclude mandatory LWOP sentences for emerging adults.

The court stated that “Proportionality of punishment is determined based on the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society.” The court further stated that “neuroscientists and behavioral psychologists know significantly more about the structure and function of the brains of youth than they did years ago.”

The court considered evidence gathered from leading specialists in the fields of neuroscience and social science. It concluded: “Emerging adults (1) have a lack of impulse control similar to sixteen and seventeen year olds in emotionally arousing situations, (2) are more prone to risk taking in pursuit of rewards than those under eighteen years and those over twenty-one years, (3) are more susceptible to peer influence than individuals over twenty-one years, and (4) have a greater capacity for change than older individuals due to the plasticity of their brains.”

In reaching its landmark decision, the court relied on four factors: precedent; recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions; contemporary standards of decency; and legislative, state, federal, and international findings.

“The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court’s comprehensive review informs it that the United States Supreme Court precedent, as well as the Supreme Judicial Court’s own precedent, dictates that youthful characteristics must be considered in sentencing, that the brains of emerging adults are not fully developed and are more similar to those of juveniles than older adults, and that contemporary standards of decency in the Commonwealth and

elsewhere disfavor imposing the Commonwealth’s harshest sentence on this cohort. Consequently, the Supreme Judicial Court concludes that a sentence of life without the possibility of parole for emerging adult offenders violates Massachusetts Constitution, Declaration of Rights Article 26,” the court said.

In dissenting opinion, Justice Lowry noted, “In the Commonwealth, individuals eighteen and older are considered adults; they receive the rights and consequences associated with adulthood; and the contemporary standards of decency, expressed through legislation, demonstrate support for this severe punishment for this most severe crime.” The dissent also noted concerns regarding separation of powers — it is the legislature’s duty to prescribe punishments. However, the majority, “reiterated that youth is not simply a ‘chronological fact’. ... Rather, ‘[i]t is a time of immaturity, irresponsibility, impetuosity[,] and recklessness. ... It is a moment and condition of life when a person may be most susceptible to influence and to psychological damage. ... And its signature qualities are all transient.’”

Source: *Commonwealth v. Mattis*, 493 Mass. p. 216 (2024)

MCSP Re-Envisioning Correctional Education, Rehabilitation

By Earl S. Breckenridge, Feature Reporter
and Jason Davis, Feature Reporter

THE POST-SECONDARY and Continuing Education (PSCE) program appears to be etching its way into the California Model with expanded resources — offering workshops on computer literacy and technology, and developing personalized education plans.

At the Mule Creek State Prison, Coastline Community College will no longer offer typical correspondence courses, as all the classes will be conducted online through Canvas starting with the fall semester of 2024. This comes after the initial pilot program was successfully tested this last spring semester.

Developing a Student Education Plan (SEP) is an integral part of the trajectory of a successful college education. Via correspondence, students can contact Incarcerated Student Program coordinator Cydney Piper at Feather River College, and Tracy Hemmenway of Student Support Services at Folsom Lake College for assistance developing an SEP.

With assistance from outside family and friends, students are encouraged to access Parchment.com, an online platform that allows students to send, request, and share credentials. This will streamline applicants’ information when applying for degrees, as all your educational information will be available in one location.

Once students have received their degrees, in order to receive credit within the institution, they must apply to receive their Educational Merit Credit. For details, graduates should see their facility’s PSCE administrator.

This year, the prison’s PSCE received 200 new e-learning tablets split between the five facilities at Mule Creek. The tablets will offer Division of Rehabilitative Programs (DRP) classes and access to student Canvas accounts. DRP courses added to the tablet include Self-help with Journaling 101, Success after Prison, Lyrics as Poetry, Human Condition, Job Skills, Healing Through Creative Practice, Economics, Communication in Our Lives, Braille Through Remote Learning, and Humanities.

Prison life is quickly becoming less about doing time and more about preparing for a successful future. There seems to be a correlation between increased education and lower recidivism, as evidenced by the actions of the California Legislature. In addition, education alters prison life in a positive and meaningful way.

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The Wordsmith

By Rob Sharp, Post Reporter

OFTEN, AS INCARCERATED people, we are at a distinct disadvantage because we don't understand the words lawyers and judges use in court and in the documents. Even words that seem common to most people become foreign in a courtroom. So, this is the first of three articles to help shine a bit of light on the word tricks the legal community plays on us poor, dumb mortals.

Consider the word *minute* as in "minute order." This is not the portion of time equal to 60 seconds, but is pronounced *my-OOT*, meaning "small," literally "a small order." It also has the meaning of an order paying attention to the small details of the case.

Typically, courts that hear appeals use Latin terms in decisions. The reason for that is American Common Law, which is based on English Common Law, which is in part based on Roman Common Law that was in Latin. Also, Latin was for many centuries the language of scholars, along with Greek.

How about the phrase *voir dire*, pronounced *vwahr DEER*? The French phrase literally means "to speak the truth," but in legalese it means "to examine a prospective juror or witness for competency." That's what the lawyers do when they *voir dire* a pool of prospective jurors.

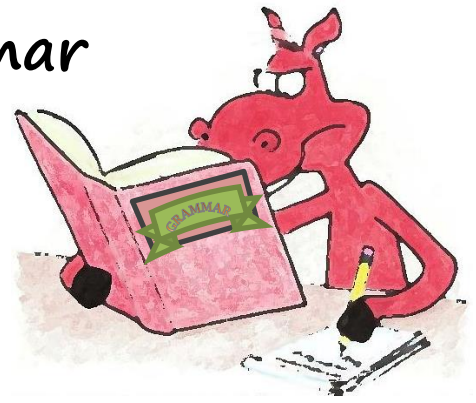
Another Latin phrase, *mens rea* (*menz RAY-a*), means "a person's mental intent to do the thing," that he or she is accused of doing contrary to the law. And then there is *actus rea*, (*ACT-us RAY-a*) which means "the act itself," or "the crime charged."

A last term generally stated in appellate decisions, is *stare decisis*, (*STAR-ay deh-SEE-sus*), which means "to let the decision stand." In other words, the reviewing court is agreeing with the lower court's decision.

Next, we'll look at a few more legal terms that may have had you scratching your head.

Sources: *Black's Law Dictionary*, *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*

Big Red's Grammar Guide



GOOD WRITING BEGINS with the basics. Here in my grammar guide are more things a writer should know. This month we'll continue our look at basic sentence structure. Remember, every sentence must have a predicate and a subject, and the words must contain a complete thought.

Last month, we began our discussion of complements, more specifically direct complements. This month we'll talk about another kind of complement, the **object complement**.

Object Complements

Another kind of complement used with a transitive verb is an **object complement** (sometimes called an *objective complement*); it elaborates on or gives a fuller meaning to a direct object. Object complements can be nouns or adjectives. Take a look at this sentence:

Karen asked her friend Paulette for a ride home.

In this sentence the direct object is *Paulette* (Karen asked whom or what? *Paulette*), and the noun *friend* is the object complement (it helps to complete the information about the word *Paulette*). Object complements that act in this way — that is, they elaborate on the direct object — are nouns or pronouns.

Object complements can also be adjectives. Look at this sentence:

On a whim, Matthew painted his fingernails blue.

The direct object is *fingernails* (Matthew painted whom or what? *fingernails*), and the adjective *blue* is the object complement (it elaborates on the word *fingernails*). Object complements that act in this way — that is, they describe the direct object — are adjectives.

Next month, we'll continue our lesson on complements, which are the additional parts of a sentence needed to complete their meanings.

Sources: *Grammar and Composition*, Prentice Hall, 1990; Susan Thurman, *The Only Grammar Book You'll Ever Need*, Adams Media, 2003; *The Associated Press Stylebook*, The Associated Press, 2017; *Essentials of English*, Barron's, 2000.

Why Does Your Dog Do That?

By Al Rice, Copy Editor

WE'VE ALL SEEN dogs tilt their heads when they hear an unusual sound or word they are familiar with, such as "squirrel." Have you ever wondered why they do this?

"It's believed that dogs tilt their heads as a way to orient sounds," says behaviorist Dr. Ragen McGowan. "They may be positioning their heads and ears in a way that helps them better determine where a sound is coming from."

As a former dog owner, I think it's a sign of intelligence that they recognize the word, or are curious about a sound. It seems to show their excitement, or at least interest, in the word or sound and their way of communicating this interest to the most important person in their lives. But what do I know?

Dogs are adept at communicating with their humans in many ways. Take the "puppy-dog eyes" trait that all dogs seem to possess. In fact, this trait is not found in wolves or other wild canine species. Only the domesticated dog has acquired the special muscle that allows them to make this expression, and they only use it for communication with humans.

Of course, the reasons for tail wagging are a no-brainer, even for dumb humans. *Psychology Today's* Dr. Stanley Coren says that a dog's wagging of the tail is like a human smile: the dog is happy to see us — excitedly or in polite greeting. However, if the tail is tucked between the legs — according to the American Kennel Club — it might be afraid or submissive.

What about licking? Well, dogs lick to demonstrate affection or when they want attention. Personally, I have always loved doggy kisses, as long as I don't think too hard about what they were licking beforehand.

Source: *USA Today*, May 13, 2024

If you or someone you know needs help, contact the National Suicide Hotline 988, Badge for Life, or BLUE H.E.L.P.; or tell a staff member immediately.



LSA Offers Letter Bank Program

By Vanessa Nelson-Sloane,
Life Support Alliance

LIFE SUPPORT ALLIANCE (LSA) has been assisting lifers who want to make a sincere apology to their victims and victim’s families via The Amends Project since 2015. At first, via in-person workshops; then in 2020 by a correspondence course. Over the last eight years, hundreds of lifers and other incarcerated individuals have been able to successfully take the important rehabilitative step of writing that apology and amends letter.

A couple of years ago, our Amends Project was selected as one of the handful of programs authorized to submit completed amends letters to the department’s Office of Victims and Survivors Rights and Services (OVSRS) Offender Letter Bank. These letters are then made available to victims and survivors should they choose to read them. In addition, they are available for review by the Board of Parole Hearings and the governor’s office as part of reviews for parole and commutation.

However, we do not automatically review and pass on any letter sent to us.

Apparently, there is a rumor making the rounds that our services are simply available for the asking, as we frequently receive numerous amends and apology letters. These letters are unsolicited, unschooled, and, in most cases, unsatisfactory. As eager as we are to help, we cannot accept

or vet letters from those who have not gone through The Amends Project course. Please, unless you’ve been or are currently a student in the Amends Project, don’t forward your letters to us. We will return them to you, unread, unvetted, and unsubmitted to the OVSRS. If, however, you’d like to be part of the Amends Project course, there are two options open to you:

- Order the correspondence course, available for purchase on our website, or by letter to us.
- Participate in a workshop for the Amends Project when we come to the institution where you are housed. And if you want to speed up that process: If you’re involved in any self-help groups, ask the group sponsor to contact us about scheduling an in-person workshop at your location.

Like most things in the department and parole suitability, there is a process to reaching the goal. We’re happy to assist those who want to take this important step in their rehabilitation, via participating in the Amends Project.

The Face of My Father

By Mark Daigre, Post Columnist

IN *THE DARK Tower* series by Stephen King, the author’s main character relates a story about how when we act in ways that are harmful, “we have forgotten the faces of our fathers.” The same is true for us when we create damage in the world, when we committed the crimes that resulted in the sentences we serve — we have forgotten the faces of our fathers.

In a very eloquent way, King is saying that we forgot our basic, fundamental responsibility to the communities around us: our families, our children, and ourselves. We forgot how to be responsible, productive, and caring human beings who are positive additions to society.

Forgetting the face of my father can be a conscious act, one of disregard, an intentional throwing away of the social constraints that were given us. It can also be an unconscious accumulation of learned behaviors, manners, and expectations. But what does it really mean to forget the face of one’s father?

Most of us inside knew we were breaking the law when we committed the crimes that resulted in the sentences we serve. We knew that what we were doing would harm someone, and we did it anyway. Somehow, in those moments, we put our perceived wants, needs, and desires above the needs of others for safety. Somehow, we were able to justify violating someone else’s boundaries to satisfy our selfish wants or needs for whatever reason.

So, how can we remember the face of our father? What do we need to do to allow for any possibility of redemption? How do we invite accountability and forgiveness into our lives? Is it even possible to be forgiven and can we hold ourselves accountable and in some way be redeemed?

It is up to each of us to allow for the possibility and pursuit of forgiveness and redemption. These must come from the inside long before they can come from others. If one feels the need for forgiveness, most spiritual traditions teach that first we need to forgive. When looking for accountability, we must — without question — be accountable for our actions, both those in the past and today. The only way through these difficult parts of being human is to allow ourselves to experience them; we all get to allow others to have lapses in judgment, thought, and action — and then forgive them.

Accountability comes about through holding ourselves to a higher standard of behavior than we do others. And then, redemption comes through the act of giving of the self, over and over and over again. It is through giving of the self — granting forgiveness while allowing others to fail and still be accepted — that we are given the chance to see our failures in the same loving light of our father face.

Remembering the face of one’s father can require the life-long effort of holding our behavior and attitude to our own highest standard, while allowing for missteps and mistakes by ourselves and others, consistently forgiving the harm done to us through inability, lack of knowledge, or intentional malice.

No one should be a perpetual victim who never defends themselves; speaking up for and protecting others as well as our self is part of being responsible. However, with practice and consistent effort, we can learn to do so without creating harm in the process.



Together we can do this, one step at a time.

LIFE SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Life Support Alliance provides correspondence courses to prepare you for release and for the Board of Parole Hearings. Write to find out about the **Connecting the Dots, Denial Management, RISE, and Amends Project** courses. Also ask about the **Parole Plan Roadmap!**

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Are you a GRIP graduate preparing for release, with questions about reentry, etc.?

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PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

The Mass Incarceration of Women

By Aleks Kajstura and Wendy Sawyer,
Prison Policy Initiative

WITH GROWING PUBLIC attention to the problem of mass incarceration, people want to know about women's experiences with incarceration. This report provides a detailed view of 190,600 women and girls incarcerated in the U.S. We pulled together data from 446 state prisons; 27 federal prisons; 3,116 local jails; 1,323 juvenile correctional facilities; 80 Indian country jails; and 80 immigration detention facilities; as well as in military prisons, civil commitment centers, and prisons in the U.S. territories. Most notably, more incarcerated women are held in jails than in state prisons.

Approximately 60% of women in jails have not been convicted of a crime and are awaiting trial. Avoiding pretrial detention is challenging for women, but not because courts consider them to be flight risks. It is far more likely that women with lower incomes than men have a harder time affording bail. About 32% of convicted incarcerated women are held in jails, compared to about 13% of all people incarcerated with a conviction.

While stays in jail are generally shorter than stays in prison, jails can be especially deadly for women. Women have a higher mortality rate than men in jails, dying of drug and alcohol intoxication at twice the rate of men. And the number of deaths by suicide among women in jails increased by almost 65% between the periods of 2000-2004 and 2015-2019. In addition, women are more likely to enter jail with a medical problem or serious mental illness and, while incarcerated, are more likely to suffer from mental health problems and experience serious psychological distress.

Jails also make it harder to stay in touch with family than prisons do. Jail phone calls are often at least three times as expensive as calls from prison, and

other forms of communication are more restricted — some jails don't even allow real letters, limiting mail to postcards. Increasingly, both prisons and jails are doing away with real mail altogether and contracting with private companies that scan and then destroy postal mail.

The numbers serve as the foundation for reforming policies that

lead to incarcerating women in the first place. Too often, the conversation about criminal justice reform starts and stops with the question of "non-violent" drug and property offenses. While these make up more than half of the offenses for which women are incarcerated, all offenses — including the violent offenses that account for over a quarter of all incarcerated women — must be considered in the effort to reduce the number of incarcerated women in this country; particularly in light of the fact that many survivors of domestic and sexual abuse have been incarcerated for violent crimes that occurred in response to gendered violence and abuse.

Among women, incarceration is not indiscriminate, and reforms should address the disparities related to LGBTQ+ status, race, and ethnicity. A 2017 study revealed one-third of incarcerated women identify as lesbian or bisexual, compared to less than 10% of men. The same study found that lesbian and bisexual women are likely to receive longer sentences than their heterosexual peers, and more likely to be put into solitary confinement. In addition, black and American Indian or Alaska Native women are consistently overrepresented in state and federal prisons: Women in prison are 48% white, 17% black, 19% Hispanic, 2.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.7% Asian, and 13% "other."

Finally, let's not forget that mass incarceration targets girls, too. Nearly 7,000 young women and girls are caught up in various systems of confinement, very often for minor and even non-criminal offenses. Like their adult counterparts, confined girls often report identities that are marginalized in the U.S. along lines of race, gender, and sexual orientation.

This article was edited for length. To read the entire report, "Women's Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie," write to: Prison Policy Initiative, P.O. Box 127, Northampton, MA 01061, or go to PrisonPolicy.org.

All About Blood Donation

By Al Rice, Copy Editor



AT LEAST ONCE a year I hear of the need for blood donations to the local community blood banks, and each time I lament that incarcerated folks under California's supervision cannot donate. The reason is that California Penal Code §3502 protects our rights "against biomedical research, with the exception of experimental or newly developed drugs for those seriously ill, where the treating physician believes this to be in the incarcerated patient's best medical interests, and the patient gives informed consent." While one may argue the point, this is why the department says it cannot allow blood donations by incarcerated people. Still, it's a shame that we cannot contribute to our local communities in this way.

According to the American Red Cross, there are several types of donations:

- Plasma donations are used for emergencies, and AB blood types (positive or negative) are best for trauma situations.
- Platelets are the cells that clot to stop bleeding. Platelet donations are commonly used in cancer treatment and organ transplants.
- Power Red donations take only the red blood cells, which are used for serious blood-loss situations.
- Whole blood donations are used for surgery patients and trauma situations.

Depending on the type of donation, the process can take from one to three hours. Whole blood donation is quickest, and the American Red Cross encourages this type of donation for anyone, no matter the blood type. Whole blood can be donated six times each year, with a minimum of eight weeks between donations.

With over 90,000 incarcerated residents in California institutions, willing incarcerated donors could make a difference in lives saved.

Source: *USA Today*, May 13, 2024



(Zameena Mejia / CNBC.com)

PRISON

POLICY INITIATIVE

A Look at Mass Incarceration,

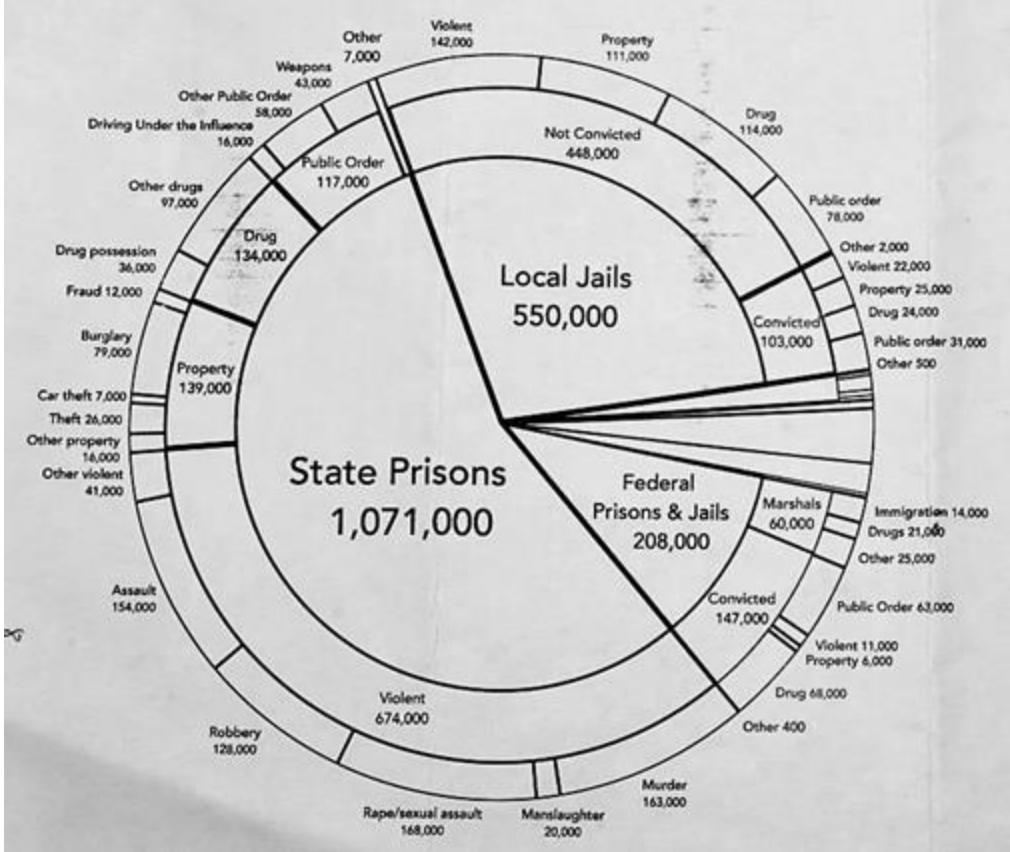
Part 1

By Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner,
Prison Policy Initiative

CAN IT REALLY be true that most people in jail are legally innocent? How much of mass incarceration is a result of the war on drugs, or the profit motives of private prisons? Have popular reforms really triggered a crime wave? These essential questions are harder to answer than you might expect. The various government agencies involved in the criminal legal system collect a lot of data, but little is designed to help policymakers or the public understand what's going on. As criminal legal system reforms become increasingly central to political debate — and are even scapegoated to resurrect old, ineffective “tough on crime” policies — it's more important than ever that we get the facts straight and understand the big picture.

Further complicating matters is thousands of federal, state, local, and tribal systems that hold over 1.9 million people in 1,566 state prisons; 98 federal prisons; 3,116 local jails; 1,323 juvenile correctional facilities; 142 immigration detention facilities; and 80 Indian country jails; as well as military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories — at a system-wide cost of at least \$182 billion each year. The report offers needed clarity by piecing together data about these disparate systems of confinement. It looks at where and why people are locked up in the U.S., and dispels some common myths about mass incarceration to focus attention on overlooked issues that urgently require reform. This big-picture view is a lens through which the main drivers of mass incarceration come into focus.

In 2022, about 469,000 people entered prison gates, but people went to jail more than 7 million times. Some are arrested and make bail within hours or days, while others are too poor to make bail and remain in jail



How Many People Are Locked Up in the United States? (Graph provided by Prison Policy Initiative)

until trial. Only a small number (about 102,700 on any given day) have been convicted, and are generally serving misdemeanor sentences of under a year. At least 1 in 4 people who go to jail will be arrested again within the same year — often those dealing with poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse disorders, whose problems only worsen with incarceration.

With a sense of the big picture comes the next question: Why are so many people locked up? How many are incarcerated for drug offenses? Are the profit motives of private companies driving incarceration? Or is it really about public safety and keeping dangerous people off the streets? There are a plethora of modern myths about incarceration. Most have a kernel of truth, but these myths distract us from focusing on the most important drivers of incarceration.

A Story of the Inside Circle

By Marty Williams, Production Editor



THE ORIGINAL INTENT of the Circle created by Pat Nolan in the late '90s was to bring men's issues into the mire of toxic self-belief and violent masculine models of prison. This was addressed not by the current method of demonizing masculine culture, but by understanding it by way of culture, world myth, and story. It drew from the works of Robert Bly (*Iron John*), Joseph Campbell, and other writers, poets, and workers in the Men's movement that originated in the 1970s. It was set up to accept — not manage, but compassionately accept — the anger and violence men are burdened with carrying, as other emotions of sadness, grief, and joy are usually deemed unacceptable emotions for men. The Circle members were trained and prepared to evoke, contain, and facilitate anger, violence, relationship issues, grief, and distortions in thinking, while creating a safe space for tears, roaring, and discovery of where many of us first began to lose our lives. Traditions from Africa, Australia, and Native America were introduced as a link to a historic lineage of brothers, fathers, grandfathers, and teachers that go back to the origins of humanity; men earned Spirit Names that reflected their path or nature, and often reclaimed the name they had in childhood. They learned to see themselves not as the threat, but as the protector of their own shattered innocence, and thus of the innocence of others.



Pat Nolan
(Photo by Jim Carlson / insidecircle.org)

Aside from the training, the beating of mattresses, the role-play and chants, there was learning about masculine archetypes in the king, warrior, magician, and lover; there was seeking and finding the inner child and learning what his deepest needs were. Men were changed forever, and went on to become leaders in the faith-based and group cultures of prison.

We can't go back in time. In current culture we don't even speak of “men's issues.” But in its day, it saved lives, and its influence still persists in California prisons.



By Richard “Lonewolf” Legan,
Post Columnist

PALM OIL IS derived from the skin of the fruit of the African palm (*Elacis guineensis*). It is used in cooking, cosmetics, and several foods. The juice of the palm leaves treats cuts, wounds, and headaches. The sap is used in wine.

The palm leaves are used for thatching the roofs of shelters, and the heart of the plant can be eaten.

So next time you look at a plant, you might say to yourself, “I wonder what that’s used for.” They are man’s gifts from the Creator!

Richard Legan is the author of *More Valuable than Gold* published by Wild Willpower, available at RichardLonewolfSurvivalSchool.com. He has been teaching on this topic for nearly 40 years. The information in this column is for educational purposes only. In no way is this column intended to diagnose or treat any ailments.



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Methane Menace

WHEN THE FIRST oil well was drilled and the “black gold” came gushing up out of the earth, a colorless, odorless gas called methane was inadvertently released into the air. Over the decades since, its presence in the atmosphere, in combination with carbon dioxide, has created a greenhouse effect which is responsible for global warming.

Today, after over a hundred years of fossil fuel extraction and consumption, there is a trillion-ton-thick layer of these two greenhouse gases blanketing the planet. It acts as insulation, preventing heat from radiating out into space and causes worsening weather extremes such as melting sea ice, floods, drought, heat waves, and megafires. Even though methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) are both greenhouse gases, they are very different, some good ways, others bad.

While methane makes up only one third of all greenhouse gas emissions, it is 80 to 100 times more potent and destructive than CO₂ because it traps 90% more heat. Known as a “super pollutant,” it is a major culprit in climate change. The good news is that it has a short life span of seven to 12 years, as compared to CO₂ which can persist for hundreds of years. Current amounts of CH₄ in the atmosphere are 150% higher than pre-industrial levels and are increasing yearly. And 60% of CH₄ emissions are the result of human activity: fossil fuel extraction (leaking wells, outgassing at refineries, pipelines), animal agriculture, landfill and waste water treatment. The other 40% comes from natural sources, mostly wetlands.

Methane emissions were stable after peaking in the 1980s, but have been increasing since 2007. Most likely, this is a result of enhanced precipitation from climate change stimulating microbial activity (decomposition) in wetlands and thawing permafrost. Yet oil and gas production is by far the largest source of this pollutant.

Oil companies have a long history of creating and neglecting CH₄ leaks. Over the boom years, oil industries found it cheaper to waste the gas that escaped during extraction by “flaring” (burning off the gas in a giant torch) rather than making the upgrades to capture the gas and prevent leaks.

Recently, the Biden administration enacted new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules to address this problem. For the first time, fossil fuel companies will be forced to pay hefty penalties when their CH₄ emissions exceed certain pre-set levels. These rules are meant to encourage the oil industry to adopt practices reducing emissions and thus avoid fines.

Under the new rules, companies will have to pay \$900 per ton of emissions over the limit. The amount will go up to \$1,500 per ton by 2026. The financial cost will encourage the industry to cut CH₄ emissions, thus preventing wasted energy and harm to consumers.

With advances in AI, monitoring and detecting leaks will be easier. AI can be used to analyze satellite data to spot methane emissions at their source. Previously, only a few sources were known, but with AI, thousands of leaks can be detected each year, translating vast amounts of data faster and more efficiently than humans. According to Antoine Halff of Kayrooz (a climate analytic firm), “For detecting methane, AI reveals things that couldn’t be known before. If you eliminate CH₄ emissions you can quickly have an impact on the curve of global warming.”

This application of AI will facilitate comprehensive global monitoring and

ensure compliance with the new EPA rules. Europe has already enacted stricter regulations on leaks from oil extraction.

The AI data analysis can be used to verify the accuracy of the oil companies’ reporting on their CH₄ emissions. In the near future, with all-seeing eyes in the sky and a superbrain behind them, the invisible methane menace will meet its match.

Sources: NOAA Global Monitoring Lab 2023 report; “All Things Considered,” NPR Jan. 2 & 12, 2024

Green House Gas Emissions for 2021

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂): 36 billion metric tons (metric ton = 2,204 lb.). Energy production is the largest source of CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels for electricity and transportation. Also, from deforestation and industrial processes.

Methane (CH₄): 365 million metric tons. Agriculture (livestock and rice paddies), landfills, natural gas production, biomass burning, wastewater treatment.

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O): 7.6 million metric tons. Agricultural fertilizer use, livestock manure, industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion.

Sources: Real Climate Website (NOAA), IPCC Report, 2021

Starting a Prison Publication

Part 2
By Prison Journalism Project

SO YOU’VE CAUGHT the journalism bug and you’d like to start an inside newspaper. But how do you begin? Here in part 2 of PJP’s Quick Guide, you’ll learn more about what we’ve learned about prison newspaper style and content, necessary resources and partnerships, timelines and much more.

If the department of corrections (DOC) is the primary funder, your publication’s financing could be pulled from custody, the commissary, the education or the rehabilitative budget, depending on your publication’s main proposed value for your facility. Factors to consider: You might face more direct editorial oversight, and it may be difficult to change the publication’s size or the scale of operations as you grow.

Outside of the DOC, prison publications have used a range of fund-raising methods, including grants, subscriptions, and donations (e.g., legacy gifts, sponsorships, crowd-funding on social media by volunteers outside). The administration will probably ask you for details about cost. Here are some to consider:

- **Distribution:** How are you going to get your publication into the hands of your readers? This will always be your biggest expense.
- **Equipment and supplies:** Even if you are producing a digital publication, you’ll want to factor in the expense of at least one computer for processing and layout (see the “Equipment List” section for more information).
- **Printing:** If you are proposing a publication on paper, think about how many issues you plan to print. Be aware that printing costs less the more you print.

Regardless of how your publication is set up, someone — the superintendent or public information of-

ficer — will most likely review the content prior to publication. This should be treated as an important partnership because they will be the gateway for your publication to reach readers and fulfill volunteer and information requests.

Be prepared to have some articles rejected by the administration because of security concerns, victim privacy, or other reason. If a story is rejected, you will need to replace it in the layout prior to printing. If possible, find out the objections to that piece so that you can learn from them. You might be able to avoid such problems in the future by including more supporting outside data and more voices (including the administration), or by altering the tone of a piece.

Know that the approval process can significantly lengthen production time. To minimize issues, consider working with the administration on a memorandum of understanding — a legally non-binding agreement between two parties — to establish the concrete nature of their oversight and expected timelines for their review process.

Writers and Other Staff

It’s a good idea to encourage submissions from everyone, but Brian Scott, former editor of The Nash News, North Carolina, recommends keeping your staff small in the early days because it allows you to focus on building your publication’s identity. “More people means more input, and while you’ll want that eventually, it can be too much in the formative days,” he said.

Be sure to provide specific guidelines about the length and style of articles, and to get signed permission to publish their stories. To solicit submissions, you could ask for permission to put up flyers or place a submissions box in high-traffic areas outside the chow hall, the library, or recreational areas. Consider providing writing prompts, especially around the holidays.

JoyBelle Phelan, a PJP staff member and former managing editor of *The Inside Report* in Colorado, emphasized the importance of selecting your staff carefully because new publications can bring heavy scrutiny. People who lack integrity and deep commitment could set you up for failure.

Gervasio Torres Jr., of Florida’s *Endeavor*, suggested requiring a writing sample and an interview with the publication staff before hiring a writer.

Volunteers

People outside the prison system are a vital part of successful prison publications. They can provide support such as outside research for articles, editing, and fact-checking. They can also act as ambassadors in the local community. If they have journalism or journalism education experience, they can also provide training in writing, editing, layout design, and more. The most effective volunteers are consistent and reliable. Whenever possible, invite your volunteers to staff meetings.

To find volunteers, consider reaching out widely to local media organizations, universities, community colleges, and service-based clubs. “I would highly recommend outside resources consisting of professional journalists, photographers, graphic designers, and professors from universities and professional media outlets, organizations that are willing to come into the facility to coach and co-create with the aspiring talents at a prison newspaper,” said L. Maurice Martin, a former editor at *The Prison Mirror* in Minnesota.

Equipment List

- Not all facilities will permit the equipment below, but it doesn’t hurt to have a wish list:
- At least one computer for file storage and layout. More computers will allow multiple writers and editors to work simultaneously.
 - Individual word processors, like Neos or Chromebooks, for the writers.
 - At least one printer.
 - Layout programs. Adobe Creative Suite (which includes InDesign and CreativeCloud) is ideal if you have some form of internet access in your facility. Offline programs like Microsoft Publisher or Mac Notes also provide simple publishing templates.
 - Desks or other workspace, ideally in a designated room or area that you can use as a newsroom.
 - A digital camera.
 - Audio recorders.
 - Paper for printing, and paper, notebooks, pens, and pencils for reporting.

Tip: Check around to see if you can borrow or access any of the above through existing educational or recreational programs. Some publications print their papers through a correctional industries print shop; if that isn’t possible, perhaps you can work with an outside printer via a volunteer or the supervising editor.

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Be sure to catch Part 3 of “PJP’s Quick Guide to Starting a Prison Publication” in the August 2024 edition of the Mule Creek Post

The **Prison Journalism Project’s** mission is to help incarcerated writers and those in communities affected by incarceration tell stories about their world using the tools of journalism: gathering and testing facts; writing with nuance, texture, and insight; and reaching a thoughtful audience. Submissions may be made electronically or by mail:

Email: submissions@prisonjournalismproject.org
JPay email: prisonjourn@psu.edu
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Follow the Prison Journalism Project (and prisoner-written stories) on social media: [@prisonjourn](#) on Twitter and Instagram, [@prisonjournalism](#) on Facebook. They may also sign up on the PJP website for *Inside Story*, a monthly e-newsletter.

Eating to Live

By Sean “Sharif” Neal, Lead Reporter



“One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” —Unknown

IN 2019, THE California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shifted from a diet high in saturated fat, sodium, and carbohydrates, to a fiber-rich, vitamin-packed diet that includes a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Known as the Healthy Heart Diet, this new approach to meal preparation within the department is designed to combat the rise in diseases such as hypertension, cancer, and diabetes-conditions that can be mostly controlled by daily exercise and healthy lifestyle choices.

However great this new idea may seem to dieticians, prison administrators, doctors, etc., many among the incarcerated population have yet to be sold on a diet that includes “rabbit food” as a staple; each day, food containing vital vitamins and minerals fills the trashcans instead of nourishing bodies.

Most noticeable among wasted produce are carrots, onions, radishes, cabbage, and celery, even though these are some of the most important vegetables in terms of maintaining a healthy immune system, and in preventing or controlling chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

For example, carrots that are rich in carotene are not only good for the eyes, they also protect against infection, strengthen the immune system against cancer, and they are full of dietary fiber that allows the body to lower blood sugar levels and control diabetes. Broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower are all high in vitamins C and A, and aid in controlling diabetes as well. If you’re being treated for diabetes, then these facts may interest you in your food choices since the essential vitamins you need to heal your body cannot be found in a summer sausage or a sodium-loaded package of

shredded beef, a honey bun, or ice cream.

Healthy food choices are especially critical for those being treated for hypertension, also known as the “angry disease.” Believe it or not, the key to managing one’s blood pressure lies in the same fruits and vegetables often thrown away each day, along with daily exercise and drinking plenty of fluids. Do you want to lower that blood pressure? Eat bananas. Bananas contain carbohydrates, potassium, ascorbic acid, and vitamin A. They regulate blood pressure and they are a great source of energy because they are a rich source of vitamin B6. Additionally, cabbage, cauliflower, and garlic have great benefits in reducing hypertension. They should be consumed on a regular basis to improve overall health. Sadly, more cabbage and cauliflower find their way into the trash than anything that can actually be called garbage, when they could better serve as natural medicines.



If you’re being treated for heart disease, then pears, peas, peaches, and onions are your friends as these fruits and vegetables contain flavonoids, and vitamins A and C, which protect the body from the effects of heart disease and cancer. While eating fruits and vegetables is not a substitute for the treatment your healthcare provider may select for you, eating lots of them in place of sugary snacks and processed foods — especially packaged meats loaded with sodium — is the top recommendation of the

American Heart Association, the Diabetes Association, and the Hypertension Association.

Eating to live means more than simply eating three meals a day; it means selecting the right foods to nourish your body in order to maintain good health. Natural foods contain everything we need to stay alive and well if we make them an indispensable part of our daily lifestyle. By choosing natural foods over what simply tastes good, we can take control of our health and contribute to our own longevity.

Be sure to consult a physician when making choices about your health and lifestyles changes. Also, be sure to ask questions about any of your prescription medication for chronic conditions, as some natural foods may interfere with your current treatment and thereby cause adverse reactions.

At the end of the day, it’s up to you to decide what to put into your body. Choose wisely.

Digital Literacy Matters

Filing College Study Documents on Canvas

By O. Rick Bridges, Feature Reporter

FOR RETURNING COLLEGE students, ease of access to Canvas provides critical support for daily student learning requirements. In this context, the experience of educational scaffolding is critical to build and reinforce learning. Beyond the requisite box of college paperwork under the bunk, Canvas provides a full five gigabytes of storage capacity — in excess of 1,000 individual documents, in a cloud-based archival document storage system that can be individually customized to support a student’s access to documents related to past coursework.



1. Begin by signing on to Canvas.
2. Using the mouse, left-click on the **Account** icon in the upper-left margin of your student desktop.
3. Scroll down the menu that appears and left-click on **Files**.
4. Click on the **My Files** icon on the screen that appears.

You will now see two sub files of the My Files file tree: **Submissions** and **Unfiled**.

- **Submissions** contains every document that a student has submitted to an instructor via Canvas. These documents are automatically organized into individual folders for each class that a student is or has been enrolled in. Each is a locked (view-only or download) file. To view a file, simply left-click on that file. To view a document, simply left-click on it. To download a document, close the reader and point to the document that you’d like to download; click on the three-dots “:” icon in the far right margin and left-click **Download**. A copy of the document will download to your computer.
- **Unfiled** contains any document that you have ever posted to a discussion board. It is a holding file, and the documents contains can either be deleted or re-designated as a student sees fit.

(From Digital Literacy, pg. 12)

You can also create a new folder to upload and storage; for example, "FALL 2024."

1. Left-click on **My Files** then left-click on the **+Folder** icon in the upper-right section of the screen. A dialogue box will appear in the center of the screen.
2. Type in a name for the folder, then left-click on the checkmark at the right of the dialogue box. The "FALL 2024" folder has now been created.
3. To upload a copy of a document into the folder, left-click on the "Fall 2024" folder. Then point to the **Upload** icon in the upper-right section of the screen and left-click on the icon.
4. The pop-up file tree box for your laptop computer will appear over the upper-left portion of your screen. Locate the folder that contains the document that you'd like to upload. Left-click to open that folder and highlight the document that you'd like to upload. Press **Ctrl** and **A** to upload the entire contents of the folder. Left-click on **Open** in the lower-right section of the pop-up file tree box. Copies of the documents will automatically upload to Canvas and the pop-up file tree box will disappear.

Just as in the file tree on your laptop, you can organize your documents uploaded to Canvas in a customizable series of folders to support your learning style and study objectives. Once you verify that your documents have been successfully uploaded to Canvas, feel free to delete that document from your laptop to free up limited and valuable digital storage space.

5. Always end your upload sessions by syncing your laptop with the network that it's connected to.

Point to the **Sync** icon just to the left of your battery status indicator in the lower-right corner of your screen. Right-click on the circular icon and left-click on **Sync All** to synchronize your data.



Mule Creek State Prison

TV Channel Line-Up

(effective June 2024)

Channel	Station	Network
2	Informational Slides	Sports Talk (1140 FM)
3	Full-Time Information	Spanish (94.3 FM)
4	3.1	NBC
5	6.1	PBS
6	10.1	ABC
7	19.3	Bounce
8	13.1	CBS
9	31.1	KMAX
10	31.5	Movies!
11	40.1	Fox
12	58.1	The CW
13	19.1	Univisión
14	33.2	Telemundo
15	Movie A	(8am, 11am, 2pm, 5pm, 8pm)
16	Movie B	(9am, 12pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm)
17	CDCR Mandated Content	Local
18	Movie Shuffle	Local
19	Community Relations + Education	Local
20	Vision	Local – MCIC
21	DRP TV (Education)	CDCR
22	DRP TV (Wellness)	CDCR
23	DRP TV (Freedom)	CDCR
24	DRP TV (Employment)	CDCR
25	6.2	PBS
26	6.3	PBS World
27	10.5	Quest TV
28	29.1	ion
29	40.2	Antenna TV
30	58.2	Heroes & Icons
31	64.1	Unimás
32	3.2	Me TV
33	TBN Satellite	TBN Hillsong
34	TBN Satellite	TBN Inspire
35	TBN Satellite	PosiTV
36	Hits Mix	(96.1 FM)
37	Modern Rock	(94.7 FM)
38	Movie A	(2, 5, 8, 11)
39	Movie B	(3, 6, 9, 12)
40	Hip-Hop and R&B	(102.5 FM)
41	Classic Rock	(93.7 FM)
42	Country	(105.1 FM)
43	Old School Hip-Hop and R&B	(101.1 FM)

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Attorney **Maya Emig** focuses her area of practice on parole and post-conviction law. She is a former attorney with the California Parole Advocacy Program, where she represented thousands of parolees in parole revocation matters. She also has extensive experience representing prisoners at parole consideration hearings. Ms. Emig has appeared on The Today Show and Dateline to discuss lifer suitability matters. Ms. Emig is a graduate of UC San Diego and the McGeorge School of Law.

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on institutional channels
21.22.23. and 24

NOTE: The board has access to your therapy notes and may ask you questions regarding statements you made in therapy. Likewise, your lack of attendance may be noted in your risk assessment or at your suitability hearing. This can be labeled in a number of ways, such as “resistance to individual sessions” or “documentation shows he did not show up for the last six appointments.”

Constructing Mental Health Management Plans, Pt. 1

By **Maya Emig**, Post Columnist

WHEN I MEET with my clients, the discussion I seem to have more and more these days is that they need to have individual relapse prevention plans, because the one-size-fits-none relapse prevention plan of ten is not worth the paper it is written on. The things that make you angry are different than the things that make you act out violently. The things that triggered you in the past to use drugs are different than the things that trigger you to commit domestic violence. My clients and I often discuss issues that brought them to prison, and then we discuss which relapse prevention plans they should be working to understand their triggers for each of their issues. Mental health management plans often go hand in hand with relapse prevention plans, especially when that person has a history of mental health issues (including depression). I’ll like spend these next columns discussing mental health management plans and how to work up a decent one. For those of you who do not have mental health issues, continue to read this column; the process is where insight is gained, and you can utilize this for other issues you may have.

According to a 2015 study by Kim, Becker-Cohen, and Serahos (Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health), “People with mental illness have higher recidivism rates and stay longer, once incarcerated, than those who do not have these challenges.” Just as it’s important to take care of yourself physically and seek treatment for health issues with your heart, blood pressure, diabetes, or glaucoma, it’s equally important to take care of yourself mentally. It is important to understand mental health issues and have plans in place to deal with them.

In your comprehensive risk assessment (or “psych eval”), there are a couple of sections that address mental health issues. Look for the sections titled “Major Mental Disorder” and “Personality Disorder,” commonly found prior to “Assessment of Risk for Violence: HCR-20-V3.” A frequent diagnosis is antisocial personality disorder. Antisocial personality disorder is a mental condition in which a person has a long-term pattern of manipulating, exploiting, or violating the rights of others without remorse. It is defined also as “a personality disorder characterized by persistent disregard of the rights of other people, failure to comply with laws and social customs, and irresponsible and reckless behavior.”

Let’s Construct a Mental Health Management Plan

Why is a mental health management plan important? It’s important to be an active participant in your mental health management, and the plan documents an understanding of your mental health issues, in conjunction with a tangible representation that identifies your triggers, your coping skills, and how you plan to address mental health symptoms when they develop, along with a support network of people who will assist you in maintaining your stability.

I have worked with a lot of clients in giving them guidance on how to develop a mental health management plan. It is important for you to develop your own unique plan, and you can do so by following these steps.

I hope the process of evaluating yourself independently — and in conjunction with any diagnoses that have arisen over your lifetime — will help you work through and develop a comprehensive plan to deal with your mental health issues. I am going to write out one method to develop a mental health management plan for major depressive disorder (depression).

Step 1: Title your plan “Mental Health Management Plan” and then what it’s for — whether it’s for schizophrenia, paraphilic disorder, or something else.

Step 2: Define your mental health issue and what it means for you to have it, and the importance of dealing with it.

Looking back, I have suffered from depression for the majority of my life. While in custody, I sought help and have been active in CCCMS. I take medication to help me with my depression. In my first comprehensive risk assessment, I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder. I have been working with my clinician and psychiatrist to address my depression, and plan to continue this in the free community as well.

Definition: Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think, and behave, and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems.

Part 2 will continue in the August 2024 edition of the Mule Creek Post.

The 12 Steps of Insanity

By Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over nothing, that we could manage our lives perfectly and those of anyone else who would allow us.
2. We came to believe that there was no power greater than ourselves, and the world was insane.
3. Made a decision for our loved ones to turn their will and lives over to our care, even though they couldn't understand us at all.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of everyone we knew.
5. Admitted to the whole world at large the exact nature of everyone else's wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to make others toe the line and do right.
7. Demanded others to either "shape up or ship out!"
8. Made a list of all persons who harmed us and became willing to go to any length to get even with them.
9. Got direct revenge on such people whenever possible except when to do so would cost our lives or a jail sentence.
10. Continued to take inventory of others; when they were wrong promptly told them so.
11. Sought, by kvetching and nagging, to improve relations with others as we could not understand them, asking only that they knuckle under and do things our way.
12. Having had a complete physical, emotional, and spiritual breakdown due to these steps, tried to blame it on others and get sympathy and pity in all our affairs.



Pro**gress**
Not
Perfection

Living a Noetic Life

Noetic Aging

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

"Live as if you will die tomorrow; learn as if you'll live forever." —Gandhi

WORLDBVIEWS ON AGING influence how we experience life. While aging in a material world (as in Western culture) may be viewed in a negative context, in some cultures aging and death means re-engaging with ancestors. There is also a movement toward conscious aging, recognizing transformative potentials grounded in humanistic principles, revealing that personal growth and positive development can increase through intentional, successful aging. As we age, we can become less self-focused. While solitude becomes important, meditation, introspection, tolerance, and unity with the universe also becomes essential.

Integrating transformation into our lives: How can we view life through conscious transformation? In our various domains of life — work, family health, social practices — we look at ways of integrating transformation. How can we do it better; how do we grow and understand transformation consciously?

How do we formulate a new model with gained wisdom? Through conscious aging as we reflect on difficulties and the spectrum of experiences, old perspectives may not be enough. Consider what gives us meaning and purpose. Life provides opportunities for transformation. As we age we may realize how we age, how an expanded worldview is evolutionary — embracing the physical and non-physical — the vision of the possibility of human consciousness with broader insight.

Becoming inspired by a new worldview by discovering new awareness, we can prioritize what's important. We may allow false ego to fall away and live fully, engaging with meaning and purpose. We can embrace the great transition of life to death, challenging worldviews by enhancing self with a greater awareness of enriching daily experience.

Intentional practices: Meditation is the most highly prioritized practice for self-development and positive transformation. Bringing intention to the aging process, we can craft an inner compass to direct ourselves to where we want to be. Herein, we discover meaning and purpose and deeper spiritual development.

Acknowledging better qualities: What do we like about self? Am I a good listener? Do I have a good sense of humor? What's one aspect of who we are that we take pride in? What makes us smile about our goodness? Breathe into that quality. Move from being self-critical to understanding our better nature. See our good qualities as jewels we have to give to the world.

Repetition and Guidance: Building new habits to bring intention and attention to awareness. Instead of self-talk on what we're losing by aging, we bring the intention of deserving to be happy. See self with positive awareness. Conscious aging can be rewarding — allowing wisdom, growth, and the ability to know life in its full experience. Life itself becomes the opportunity to see how aging is a positive circumstance, knowing we're not alone and there are people out there as part of our community, we move from "I" to "WE." This shift is a process that infuses in us a desire to work toward transformation of community: volunteerism, engagement of humanity, mentoring, guiding the evolution of the culture. This engenders wholeness. Life becomes sacred, a collective transformation, stimulating expansive growth. Discovering how we can channel our best qualities to help others by living deeply, conscious aging enables us to grow empathy, forgiveness, wisdom. Aging invites changes in worldview and enhances personal quality of life, a greater body-mind consciousness, an expanded sense of self, to see the interconnectedness of all life. When we resist aging, we resist life itself.

Cultivating love, happiness, and wisdom: How do negative emotions affect us? How can we replace negative energy with gratitude and live in appreciation for what life offers us? When we think love, charity, selflessness, how does the body feel? Can we express gratitude about our own capacities for love and hate? How can we release unresolved issues and embrace love? We can let go of the energy we harbor of the damages others have done to us. How can we witness it and let blame go because it no longer serves us? We learn to let these things go with growth and wisdom.

By focusing on goodness, wisdom, generosity, love, forgiveness, and expanded consciousness, we begin to understand that aging offers opportunities for growth for which we can be grateful. This is noetic aging.

"Life must be understood backward, but it must be lived forward." —paraphrase from Søren Kierkegaard

Awareness Into Domestic Abuse

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New OIG “Hotline”

By John L. Orr, Feature Reporter

THE OFFICE OF the Inspector General (OIG) provides direct oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The OIG can be used to report any improper CDCR activities, including employee misconduct, violations of regulations, or policy. It is recommended you go through the written grievance (602) process first. If you find no resolve there, then go to the new OIG “hotline,” which enables the use of a recorded message to continue your complaints. Before making the call, write down the facts of the incident you are reporting:

- Your name, CDCR# and address
- Date, time, location of the incident(s)
- Staff name (if known) and/or assignment (3rd Watch Sgt, E21 podium of-ficer, etc.) and any other involved inmates or witnesses
- Form 602 or other log numbers (Incident Report number, etc.)
- A brief statement of additional updates or information

To Use the New Hotline

1. Use the dayroom phone or start the normal tablet phone call procedure. After you enter your final 4-digit access code, you will hear: “Push 1 for English...”
2. Push 1, then IMMEDIATELY press *7732# — DO NOT WAIT FOR “Press 2 to make a free phone call.”
3. After you enter *7732#, a recorded voice will ask you to leave your message and provide the log numbers, dates, etc. for OIG personnel follow up. It is unknown how long you have to record your message, but be brief. The OIG will contact you by mail with a response.

The OIG has access to all reports so you do not need to send physical copies. Mail sent to the OIG is considered confidential legal mail. See the notice on pg. 20 for more information.



PREP Visits Mule Creek

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter
and Jason Davis, Feature Reporter
with Mark Daigre, Post Columnist

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024, Sister Mary Sean Hodges, Tony Kim, Alfredo Cruz, Arleen Orrante, and other Partnership for Re-Entry Program (PREP) team members visited facilities D and E at the Mule Creek State Prison.

In the hobby room on Facility E, approximately 40 incarcerated individuals gathered as executive director Tony Kim explained PREP had acquired a sizeable grant from the Hilton Grant Program (Conrad Hilton Foundation), allowing it to provide multiple resources not previously available. A similar number were gathered on Facility D, and Hodges appeared at both sites.

Kim served 32 years and was released in 2017. He’s worked for PREP since. “We are here to help you heal yourself and get you ready for board,” he said.

Cruz is a former lifer paroled in 2015 after his eleventh board appearance. “You got to let them know it’s OK to let you out,” said Cruz. “You have to understand the person you became by peeling the layers off. Shame and fear keep us from being honest with others. We remain prisoners to our emotions. You have to be accountable for your actions — to everyone.”

PREP offers help with resources, such as reentry classes, housing assistance, cellphones, clothes, money, schooling, and other things. One recent parolee attended truck-driving school that cost over \$8,000; PREP was able to cover that expense, and he earned a Class A license.

“It’s expensive out there,” said Orrante. “A one-bedroom apartment costs \$1,400 to \$1,500. PREP offers a year’s worth of housing funding. One of the greatest needs is housing, it’s the foundation.”

“Regarding the support letters, write to us three to four months prior to your hearing,” said Cruz. “The more details you provide about yourself, the more I have to work with. I also do letters for transitional housing.”

“At the end of the day, integrity goes a long way,” said Hodges. “People are always watching, some will commend you and others will do their best to tear you down. How you carry yourself on a day-to-day basis is what will come across to the board and anyone else you encounter in your life.

“You are not the first person to go in front of the board in your situation, not the first with your crime, not the first with your specific situation,” emphasized Hodges. “Take comfort in the knowledge that you are not alone in the world, and that there are people cheering you on in your recovery and wanting you to be successful and free.”

PREP Correspondence Courses

By Sister Mary Sean Hodges, Partnership for Re-Entry Program

- Anger Management (AM)
- Centering Yourself (CY) [cellphones in prison]
- Confronting Criminal Thinking (CCT)
- Denial Management (DM)
- Domestic Violence (DV)
- Financial Literacy (FL)
- Gang Awareness and Recovery (GAR)
- Insight #1, #2, #3 Insight Written/Panel both required Insight Modular Format (IMF) with insert
- PREP Restorative Justice (write to Reynaldo Aguilar, 1356 E. 9th St. Upland, CA 97186)
- Parenting (PAR)
- Recovering From Racism (RFR)
- Survivors (survivors of childhood sexual abuse)
- Turning Point (TP) is a life skills oriented course. Ideally this course, which is 16 modules of five lessons each, should be done after completing all other courses. Address requests to participate directly to Sister Mary Sean Hodges.
- Victim Awareness (VA)
- Victim Impact (VIP) [sexual offending and change]
- Wellness & Recovery (W&R) [Twelve-Step substance abuse study]

When sending your course request, identify the course in the address, such as “PREP/AM,” “PREP/DV,” “PREP/VIP,” etc. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope; no indigent envelopes please.

Sister Mary Sean Hodges
Partnership for Re-Entry Program (PREP/REQUESTED COURSE INITIALS)
P. O. Box 77850
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Education Arc of Damaged Souls

Part 2: Appreciative Inquiry
By Marty Williams, Production Editor

Appreciative Inquiry stresses education as a collaboration between teacher and learner that assumes both will benefit from each other's experiences, and that the answers are discovered instead of distributed. Were these inquiry-based education models implemented in childhood, it wouldn't need to be deemed so "successful" after individuals go to prison.

EDUCATION SHOULD NOT be the determinant in society for a "pass-fail" humanity. The goal should be the edification of human process in problem solving. There is still, however, an inherited difficulty when people in prison are objectified by those who know better, including by themselves. The institutional objectification that begins during formative experiences with public school becomes a toxic hindrance throughout life in how people in prison view the world, a world they've been told they have no real part in. Even given the chance to move into higher education, the failure narrative has developmentally arrested them. In "Characteristics of Incarcerated Students," Kathryn and James F. Montross put it like this: "That is, they have the cognitive development of an 11-year-old. Could it be a coincidence that most offenders despite educational achievement still function at about a 5th

grade level?"

Psychologist and educator Stephen Cantore, when speaking specifically about why inquiry models are successful in prisons, says, "Inquiry involves two or more people researching a topic through their own experience of it, using a series of cycles in which they move between this experience, and reflecting together upon it." This works because incarcerated people are listened to differently. The marginalized in public school are listened to in the same way, if at all. But even incarcerated teachers who are sensitive about being listened to differently can have the same societal blind spots when dealing with other incarcerated students, and this is true as well for professionals dedicated to inquiry models.

Dr. Anna Plemons is chancellor of human affairs at Washington State University, whose doctorate thesis was on non-colonial teaching in prisons and the value of incarcerated teaching-artists. In an article for *Teaching Artist Journal*, she shares an episode where she experienced a perceptual blind spot.

In the discussion on death and dying in prison, someone had said "We only write when we are sad or angry." I knew this man's comment was worth remembering — that it was telling me something I needed to know as a teacher about the why and the what of his experience as a poet. But, in my distraction, I managed to scribble it into my notebook incorrectly; in my notebook I scrawled, "We only right [sic] when we are sad or angry". When I got home, and saw my transcription error, I realized my misquote was telling me something I needed to know as well — something about the way well intentioned audiences read the work of incarcerated writers, something about what we expect to hear from men and women behind bars.

Plemons was willing to learn something about herself in how she unconsciously perceived an incarcerated poet via education, circumstance, and race. Louis Alloro, an appreciative inquiry consultant with Lawrence Technological University, makes this the foundation of teaching and working with the corporate world towards well-being. "The principle is that no matter how educated development-sector professionals are," he writes, "their success is based on being with and learning from the people they are working with." This speaks to an education model based on relationship, or relatedness, and shared experiences, versus a one-sided observation of an unapproachable representative of a world in which the student plays no part.

Ownership of the perceived world instead of "observer outsiders" allows more creative input into how the world can be directed. To quote Paulo Freire, "they come to see the world not as static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation." Social ills that seemed overwhelming become manageable when solutions arise from normalized dialogue and inquiry, not the concretized answers from an authority to which we have become dependent and addicted; parents who have been taught inquiry and dialogue will in turn raise their children to do the same. Changing our education models after the marginalized come to prison is too late; the toxic results of education have already rippled through society and built more prisons. If inquiry models have proven successful with incarcerated adults, those same models would utterly transform children before thinking patterns and self-beliefs become concretized. The education arc that traps damaged souls becomes liberating, educational evolution.



Paulo Freire (biola.edu)

Sources: Betit Alloro, "Learning Leaders," *AI Practitioner*; Stefan Cantore, "Appreciative Inquiry Research Notes," *AI Practitioner*; Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1993; H. Giroux, "Pedagogy of the Depressed," *College Literature*; Kathryn and James F. Montross, "Characteristics of Incarcerated Students," *Journal of Correctional Education*; Anna Plemons, "Saying Goodbye, Keeping My Keys," *Teaching Artist Journal*; David Van der Haar, "Evaluating Appreciative Inquiry," *Human Relations*; Ocal Yildiz, "The Effects of Unemployment, Income, and Education on Crime," *International Journal of Economic Perspectives*



Rattle magazine, which is put out by Prisoner Express, is always open to submissions by incarcerated poets and writers.

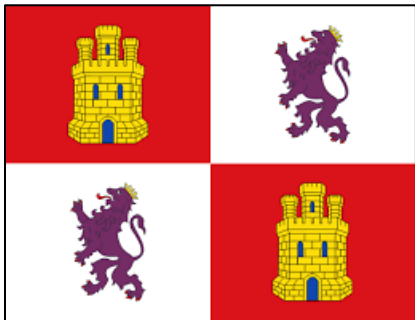
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Flags That Made America

A Gallery of Flags Used in the Forming of America



Spanish flag carried by Christopher Columbus in 1492 (Wikipedia.org)



British flag adopted in 1606, showing the red cross of St. George to represent England and the white cross of St. Andrew to represent Scotland (hpsd.k12.pa.us)



Taunton Flag raised over Massachusetts in 1774 (Wikipedia.org)



U.S. flag of 1777, with 13 stars and 13 stripes to stand for the 13 states (Wikimedia.org)



U.S. flag of 1795, with 15 stars and 15 stripes to stand for the 15 states (cwfllags.com)

The Helping Business

By Philong Huynh, Feature Reporter

LOOK BACK at early adulthood with much trepidation, but also with fond memories, the latter of a simpler time before incarceration.

I began college at 18, terrified and excited at the same time. Before classes began, San Diego State University organized an orientation day where we were lectured by upperclassmen on the ins and outs of college life, then taken on a tour of the campus. When they took us to the bookstore, I remember one of my first college purchases was of a daily planner. In those days, the 1980s, one usually saw only professionals carrying around planners; that purchase made me feel like an adult.

My major was biology, with an aim toward medical school. My great-great-grandfather was a doctor in Eastern medicine. His daughter, my maternal great-grandmother, also practiced medicine, and so on down the generations numerous people in my family tree became doctors. It now fell on me to go into this selfless profession of helping others, but life has a winding way of putting you in your place according to your fate, and my fate led me here, to a prison college course in social work on effective helping skills.

Effective helping begins with success in learning and achieving, which requires the cultivation of soft skills — with time management being at the forefront among other attributes — like motivation, commitment, ambition, and critical thinking. These are characteristics that will help one become a life-long learner and succeed in any environment like work or school.

With a pre-med academic load, averaging five courses per semester in addition to extracurricular activities like volunteering and work commitment, the daily planner was a compass helping to navigate the turbulent strife of a freshman pre-med's life.

But life didn't lead me to medicine. Instead, I devolved into mental illness, addictions, and criminal convictions. Now I am in prison learning to be an effective helper, hoping that one day I will utilize these skills outside of prison to help others in whatever capacity.

Effective helping also involves listening. As some would say, God gives us two ears and one mouth for a reason. In listening, you gather information critical to the assessment of a problem before you can devise or affect a solution using critical thinking skills — as filtered through your knowledge base, value system, and cultural worldview — while keeping in mind your limitations and biases to avoid overextending, underperforming, or otherwise making mistakes detrimental to the helping relationship.

I go into a helping relationship without expectation, lest I be disappointed. Research suggests that an effective helper is one who is self-aware and exhibits facilitative attitudes and values like being open, flexible, patient, and non-judgmental. As I was taught, an effective helper also employs an investigative approach to helping and possesses a desire to strive for competence.

Here in prison, I have a friend who was horribly abused as a child. As a result, he became a very angry individual. Having been subjected to anger and abuse as a child myself, (albeit not by my single working mother, but by other caretakers), I have a bias toward those with anger control issues; but the humanity in me helps overcome my bias and look past my friend's character flaws to see a broken person in need of help. A lot of times my role is just to listen to the venting. My friend utilized what psychologists call "help-rejecting complaining" as a defense mechanism to express his frustration toward life's injustices; I let him do so freely as I learned that his goal in those moments was just to vent and not seek any particular solution.

Then there are times when I have to intervene, not by telling him what to do, but by pointing out potential consequences of his contemplated actions. In between, I use my knowledge and resources to help guide him on the creation of a parole/relapse-preparation plan for the parole board, as his goal is to eventually obtain his freedom through parole. Like a coach, I identify a goal and help guide the "helpee" toward this goal.

Whether life is broken or perfect, we all have the need for support and natural instinct for helping one another. How we go about affecting or delivering that help speaks not only to our humanity, but also to our emotional intelligence; how we manage ourselves and others with awareness, responsibility, and empathy. As we selflessly extend ourselves to others we may, in turn, find ourselves on the receiving end of the same kindness and selflessness. In the end, helping does for the helper as much as it does for those who receive help, and paying it forward will help us all collectively find our way out of life's darkness.



Flags That Made America

A Gallery of Flags Used in the Forming of America



U.S. flag of 1818, with 20 stars to stand for the 20 states and 13 stripes for the original 13 states (Wikipedia.org)

In 1818, to keep the flag from being burdened with stripes, Congress ordered that the flag should have 13 stripes and one star for each state



The Great Star Flag of 1818, with 20 stars to stand for the 20 states and 13 stripes for the original 13 states (GettysburgFlag.com)



U.S. flag of 1861, used during the Civil War, with 34 stars to stand for the 34 states (including those in the South) and 13 stripes for the original 13 states (Wikipedia.org)

Elder Abuse in Prison, Pt. 1

Clandestine Bullying
By John L. Orr, Feature Reporter

ELDER ABUSE IN society is often confirmed by overt acts like neglect, physical and psychological harm, and frequently perpetrated by family members and caregivers. In prison, acts of elder mistreatment are more often committed by fellow prisoners with no vested interest in the victim. Cell and dormitory living ensures a regular in- and out-flow of strangers creating a dangerous, fraternity-like atmosphere of complacency and regular bullying. In the violent gang and class-conscious climate of higher security level prisons, the elderly and incapacitated have little status on the yard. The calmer environment at lower custody levels and medical facilities seem to ease the abuse and some compassion exists; self-help groups like anger management and Guiding Rage Into Power appear successful in these settings. Incarcerated people classified as ADA (falling under the Americans with Disabilities Act) are frequently elderly; for the purposes of this article, ADA-designated individuals will be included in this discussion.

While elder abuse is, unfortunately, also perpetrated by corrections and medical staff, these articles are only concerned with incarcerated-on-incarcerated abuse, both intentional and the general oversights noted below. Elder abuse in prison settings has many configurations: financial exploitation; intentional or unintentional neglect; physical, emotional, psychological, and even sexual exploitation. Such abuse, even the commonplace, falls into the same categories as in general society, but the mistreatment is more often perpetrated by aggressive fellow prisoners rather than family members or caregivers. Juvenile-like antics are common and frustratingly cruel to the elderly:

- *General Oversights and Omissions/Verbal Abuse:* Posting flyers and announcements too high on bulletin boards affects communication for the wheelchair-bound who cannot stand up to read these messages; as is leaving doors open or otherwise blocking frequently traveled passageways used by elders requiring canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, which is stressful to the impaired. Referring to the elderly as “old man,” “Gramps,” or “geezer” shows disrespect and oppression.
- *Physical Abuse:* Direct, hands-on striking, pushing, and shoving. This includes juvenile horseplay like reaching around others in a waiting line and tapping an elderly person on the shoulder, then hiding behind others, perplexing and angering the elderly or disabled victim — a frequent, subtle form of bullying.
- *Financial Exploitation:* Outright theft — forced or coerced — of canteen and quarterly package purchases, and extortion by threatened exposure of case factors.
- *Misappropriation:* Counterfeit symptoms used by the able-bodied to obtain ADA and restricted designations (and vests) to avoid work obligations and education assignments. These costly ruses demean the elderly and disabled while abusing medical staff and medical supply resources.

As we all age, declining mental cognition and medical issues contribute to an inability to process regular prison programming issues. The elderly forget medical appointments, class and group schedules, and even meal release times, leading to problems directly affecting others. Younger individuals, especially cellmates, exposed to the elderly and ADA-designated are frequently forced to become involuntary caregivers. Few are equipped to handle the sometimes-distressing needs of the aging.

Unknown to most people, the actual cause of distressing traits of the elderly can be attributed to a partial or total loss of the sense of smell, often as a result of COVID-19. Many perceive uncleanness in the elderly as laziness, or even overt defiance, and dramatize interactions accordingly, leading to verbal abuse, harassment, and altercations. Missing scheduled events like clothing and sheet exchange create serious issues leading to elder abuse. These complications become a health issue to their cellmates and staff, as well as to others around them in the dining hall, library, and classrooms. Offensive behavior and odors frequently have the simplest of explanations. Prison elder abuse is often caused by a lack of empathy with the varied disorders of many aged.

Next month we will look more closely at the frequency and effects of prison elder abuse.

News

Inside

The Marshall Project

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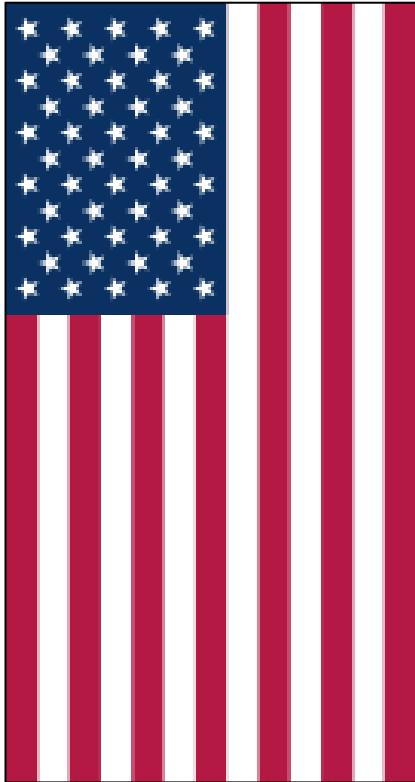
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Flags That Made America

A Gallery of Flags Used in the Forming of America



U.S. flag of 1912, with 48 stars to stand for the 48 states and 13 stripes for the original 13 colonies (Wikimedia.org)



U.S. flag of 1960, with 50 stars to stand for the 50 states and 13 stripes for the original 13 colonies (Wikimedia.org)



LSA Correspondence Courses

By Vanessa Nelson-Sloane, Life Support Alliance

FAMILIES AND PRISONERS can request any of the below pamphlets. Families can now order several correspondence courses on our website, LifeSupportAlliance.org, under the “Shop LSA” tab. Those inside can order any product by writing to:

Life Support Alliance
P. O. Box 277
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Be sure the recipient’s name, CDCR number, and housing information is included. The web-site accepts credit or debit cards; personal or institutional checks are also accepted via mail. Note that Working Toward Parole, Understanding Your CRA, Impression Management, and Writing a Parole Hearing Book Report can be sent to family members, via email, at no cost for them to print and mail.

For all correspondence courses, except the Mental Health Project, include self-addressed stamped envelopes (SASE) to Life Support Alliance (LSA) for the student responses to each part of the course. Write to LSA for the cost of individual courses; the charge for all workbooks covers the expenses to produce, send, and review the course material.



Correspondence Courses

Connecting the Dots: Four-part course designed to assist life prisoners in identifying causative factors of their criminal actions and to develop insight. Events cause emotions. The course includes exercises and correspondence to assist students in applying a cognitive approach to their specific situations and experiences. Students will receive a certificate of accomplishment.

The Amends Project: Two-part course that assists students in creating acceptable and appropriate amends and apology letters to victims and victims’ families. The Amends Project is based on the tenets of restorative justice, and to facilitate and further the healing that can be realized by prisoner and victim through expressions of amends and apology. Students write letters of apology and amends to the victims of their criminal actions, sending the draft letter to LSA to be critiqued, with possible changes suggested before returning the letter for rewrite. A copy of the letter and a certificate of achievement will be sent to the successful student and can be submitted at the writer’s parole hearing as part of their self-help accomplishments.

Denial Management: Breaking the Habit of Dodging Reality: Two-part program first used in the substance abuse recovery world, but also applicable to other areas of culpability and anti-social — even criminal — behavior. Denial management is presented in the context of insight, identifying ways individuals rely on denial to avoid acknowledging or taking responsibility for behavior and decisions, and the results of those actions.

The Mental Health Project: Two-course packet encompassing cognitive behavioral therapy methods to deal with anger management and depression. The curriculum is adapted for self-study from the department’s own group-therapy courses in both topics and requires the submission of responses to several questions at the end of each chapter. Two certificates of completion are available. Also included is a workbook for dealing with anxiety caused by COVID virus.

Power Struggle: Primer on domestic abuse, including exploration of avenues of abuse other than physical.

Self-Directed Informational Pamphlets

Parole Suitability and Hearing Preparation Tips: This informative and no-nonsense booklet is usually reserved for attorney Michael Beckman’s private clients, and we offer these insights to a wider audience. A valuable contribution to any lifer’s hearing preparation work with advice on the board’s workings and how to prepare.

Roadmap to Parole Plan: This booklet provides tips and insights to help build a solid and realistic parole and relapse plan unique to a parole candidate’s needs and situation. Available in Spanish (disponible en español).

Working Toward Parole: Created for incarcerated individuals facing parole and their families. This booklet explains how the parole process works, what is expected from lifers in their hearings, and how their families can help them toward rehabilitation.

Understanding Your CRA: The origin and use of the comprehensive risk assessment, what to expect in the interview with the clinician, and explanation of many of the clinical terms used in the evaluation. Available in Spanish (disponible en español).

Impression/Image Management: An explanation of one of the newest denial points.

Writing a Parole Hearing Book Report: How to write a book report for parole hearing purposes. Also, book suggestions on various subjects relevant to lifers.



Daisy Switzer is a psychologist who specializes in criminal evaluations. She was contracted by the Board of Parole Hearings a decade ago to perform forensic risk assessments. Mostly retired now, she contributes her time and knowledge toward a regular column in the Mule Creek Post.



Since ancient times, philosophers have sought to understand the nature of matter so that reality could be transmuted and substances become anything one desires. Today, we have the Alchemy app on our GTL tablets.

The premise of the game is simple: Beginning with four elements (air, earth, fire, and water), combine them with one another (or themselves) to create new substances. For example, the combination of earth + fire = lava, or air + air = wind; then you can go further, adding lava + water to make stone and steam. There are 390 possible results in the game. Have fun!

SO, YOU WANT to be an alchemist. Here's your challenge for the month. The word doctor comes from Latin and refers to someone who is educated. The Doctor element aligns with the stereotype of "doctor" as a medical professional. Starting with the base, can you create two fictional doctors, Dr. Zoidberg and House, M.D.?



Psych View

Placement Scores

By Daisy Switzer, Post Columnist

IF YOU ARE a life inmate, you have a placement score based on your behavior. For life inmates in many states, that score cannot go below a certain number. Even under those conditions, some records will indicate "0" next to the number and then indicate "(lowest possible score for life inmate)." The "0" shows that this would be your score, if you were not a life inmate. When you review your file, see if this has been done. If it applies to you, and has not been done, either put a note of your own in the file to ask the reviewers to look at this possibility, or ask a trusted staff member to speak with the placement score officer on your behalf. If you have a low placement score, you are either new to your term or are not a behavior problem. This reflects well on you.

Many people have moderate or high placement scores, and either of those conditions can have problems associated with it. Moderate placement scores (under 100) are sometimes a reflection of a temporary setback during your incarceration. Perhaps a term in a prison where you were guilty by association during times when problems arose, or a time when you first came into prison and needed to learn to make different choices. Is the score rising or falling? If it is rising, you need to get control of your behavior. If you require a different institution, ask for one. A rising score is a risk consideration and, while it is not by itself a condition that will prevent your release, it is a red flag that you may not be suitable.

A falling score takes time. Often inmates who are new to the prison get into trouble early in the term and then begin to mature. Unfortunately, scores take much longer to decline than they do to increase. Your committee will recognize this, and this is why even a high score is not going to be enough by itself to prevent release. However, a high score is something that indicates serious problems with adjustment and it will draw attention. Find out ways to reduce your score if it is moderate or high; work, programs, and discipline-free time intervals are generally some of the options.

Examine your score and contemplate why it is high or moderate, so that you can explain it to your evaluator. You may even want to write down the items that increased your score, and what you have done to change and to make sure you won't do those things again.

If you are able to learn from the score you have and work with it, the risk associated with the high number may be diminished. If you are a defensive, cocky individual who continues to get into trouble for the same kinds of behavior — over and over — with no indication that you have learned anything, you will probably be found unsuitable for parole. The choice is yours.

Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services Opens Remorse Letter Bank

If you are interested in learning how to write an apology letter and having it available to those you have harmed, write to Life Support Alliance and request enrollment in The Amends Project

Life Support Alliance
P.O. Box 277
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

LifeSupportAlliance.org



4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608
info@womenprisoners.org

California Coalition for
Women Prisoners

The Office of the Inspector General is here to serve you!

The OIG is a prison oversight agency independent of the CDCR, established by the California Penal Code, §§6125 and 6126(a).

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10111 Old Placerville Road, Suite 110
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(916) 555-0001 oig.ca.gov

The Office of the
Inspector General



Importance of Newspapers

By Jack Mitchell,
Ledger Dispatch Publisher

Ledger Dispatch
Amador & Calaveras Objective Regional News

IT'S TOUGH TO work in an industry where from the very first day they tell you you're dead. The stronger the newspaper, the stronger the community. Newspaper journalism is the highest level of journalism, as once published there are no edits, no changes; it's set in black and white forever. With the addition of social media and computer platforms, it seems almost everyone believes they are a journalist. While an excellent way to share information, it is the misinformation, and the abundance of news that is spread that is completely false, that concerns me. Additionally, online stories can be altered, changed, edited at any time without notice — changing your opinion, your voice, without notice. Additionally, as companies like Google collect user data, they can pick what you have read, what interests you — take stories based on those likes, and computer generate a customized story that fits with your beliefs. You no longer are receiving unbiased coverage, but rather coverage that fits specifically to what you like. They are not a watchdog, but steer individuals the direction they want you to go.

The saying goes, "There are two sides to every story." In facts and findings, investigative reporting, there are hundreds of sides and ways to present data and data sets. There is no such thing as unbiased coverage; but the good ones keep their own biases in check and reach out to those people they might disagree with to get a better picture of what is really going on. Without newspapers, you have lost the history of your area. Couple that with data that shows the economy itself in any size city dramatically drops without a newspaper. You don't have to love newspaper; you don't have to hate newspaper. But if you are indifferent or don't care, you will ultimately lose a community resource that has been the watchdog, the trail of insights, and the history of your home and family.

This, I imagine, is why Thomas Jefferson said, "A free press is one of the pillars of democracy," and "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost." I also believe in what Oscar Wilde said about journalism: "Journalism has been referred to as the fourth estate; our democracy depends on an independent press to hold officials accountable."

Freedom of the press is the right to circulate opinions in print without censorship by the government. A loss of a newspaper is, quite simply, losing accountability. Losing your voice. Losing your freedom.

Jack Mitchell is the publisher of the Ledger Dispatch and chief adviser to the Mule Creek Post



Jack Mitchell (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

Un Sobreviviente de Trauma Ofrece Su Consejo

Por Mark Daigre, Post Columnist
Traducido por Fabián García, Spanish Reporter

KATHY KLEINER RUBIN sobrevivió un ataque en manos del asesino en serie Ted Bundy, en enero del 1978. En un artículo reciente en el *USA Today*, Rubin dio consejos a familiares, amigos, y cualquiera que esté en contacto con alguien quien ha vivido por algo traumático, independientemente del origen de la trauma. El origen de la trauma no es importante; en cambio, lo que sí es esencial es el efecto de la trauma a la persona quien lo vive.



Kathy Kleiner Rubin (USAtoday.com)

Primeramente, no todos los traumas dejan una impresión física; para muchos, el trauma es psicológico y no se puede ver — como el estrés postraumático.

Segundamente, y esta podría ser el tropezón más grave que hacen la familia y los amigos, nunca le preguntes a un sobreviviente de la trauma se ¿Ya lo supero? Este puede hacer que los sobrevivientes se sientan que están fracasando con su recuperación, y crear nuevos traumas basados en los sentimientos que tienen por no recuperarse adecuadamente. Cada persona se recupera a su propio tiempo, y muchas veces, el trauma que uno vive el día de hoy podría estar conectado a las experiencias del pasado. Al preguntar, "¿Aun no lo superas?" indica que esa persona, de alguna manera, no está alineada con otras personas quienes han sufrido por algo parecido.

Terceramente, para aquellos padeciendo el tratamiento médico de gravedad, muchas veces no ayuda ser recordado de cuanto tratamiento aún falta por completar. Más que nada, ellas están haciendo todo lo que pueden para terminar el día sin tener que estar recordados del dolor, y el sufrimiento que aún falta por venir.

Cuartamente, las personas que han sobrevivido la trauma pierden el contacto con amigos, igual a las estructuras de apoyo, a través del desacomodo en no saber el que hacer — ni decir — sobre dicha trauma. Esto puede crear una situación con otro aspecto en falta de ser procesado — la perdida de los amigos y el apoyo que apartan.

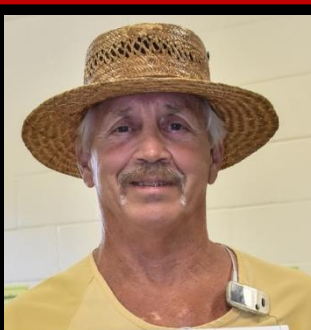
Finalmente, los sobrevivientes de la trauma simplemente necesitan un abrazo, a alguien que los sostengan, sin tratar de arreglarlos. Para aquellos quienes cuentan con un sobreviviente de la trauma en sus vidas, y que se incomodan, a no saben que decir; no es problema. Por lo general, el simple hecho de estar ahí por ellas es suficiente. Teniendo alguien quien te diga, "Todo está bien", o "Cuántas con migo" puede ser la diferencia entre un día bueno y un día malo. Asegurase que siempre les des el mensaje "no es tu culpa", porque no lo es. El trauma nunca es merecido, y la persona vivienda con dicha trauma no tiene la culpa.



PREP
P.O. Box 77850
LOS ANGELES, CA 90007

partnership for reentry program

The donation of flat artwork for PREP auctions is ongoing without a deadline for submissions. Donations can be made in the drop boxes in the facility chapel. If you wish to contact PREP for its excellent self-help correspondence courses or to receive the Oasis newsletter, feel free to write.



"I used the concrete sidewalks and tables outside on the prison yard as sanding blocks. There's over 1100 hours into its construction...many wounded fingertips."
– Rick Stevens



Livy O's Verse of Enchantment, © 2024 L. Rick Stevens, mixed media
This mixed media sculpture by artist Rick Stevens was a gift to his granddaughter, Livy. It took a year of work, popside sticks, beads, paint, glue, metal jewelry, and rocks. It features several secret compartments, some Stevens believes she won't find right away. Using the concrete walks and tables as sanding surfaces, the glued sticks were shaped into all the components you see here. Media Specialist H. Kim insisted the piece be brought to his office for photographs. (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

Meet Our Neighbors: Bats at MCSP

By Mark Daigre, Post Columnist

HERE AT MULE Creek we have many neighbors, some more welcome than others, as well as a number residents don't recognize until forced to engage. Bats, the only mammal that actually flies, fall into that category for many Mule Creek residents (flying squirrels do not actually fly, they glide).

According to the organization Emergency Bat Rescue, there are 14 different species of bats living in the Central/Northern California foothills, where Mule Creek is located.

One common bat seen at Mule Creek is the little brown myotis, or little brown bat. Weighing in at about half an ounce with a wingspan of 6 to 7 inches, this mammal doesn't look like much, but as a predator, they are fierce. Able to eat more than their body weight in insects each night, little brown bats contribute greatly to the health and comfort of people that live in their neighborhoods. The bat's diet consists almost entirely of flying insects, and while they will occasionally roost in buildings, they spend most of their sleeping time tucked into crevices of abandoned buildings and in the forest canopy. At Mule Creek, on

most nights from April through October, little brown bats can be seen rapidly revolving around yard lights as they hunt insects attracted by the illumination.

Every now and then, a bat will find its way into a housing unit, dining hall or other indoor space here at the prison. When this happens, Emergency Bat Rescue recommends calling Vector Control to come and remove them. Like most wild mammals, bats will bite when handled or feel threatened.

In the hottest part of the summer, bats will sometimes find a way into buildings to cool off and sleep. Bats will also go into unfamiliar places when sick or injured. If you are bitten by a bat, and it cannot be tested for rabies, medical staff will need to evaluate you for possible vaccination. Today, the rabies vaccination is much less invasive and painful than it was some 30 years ago. When bats are infected with the rabies virus, the mammals generally do not foam at the mouth or get aggressive; they pretty much act normal, until they are too sick to fly.

Over a life span of 34 years or more, female little brown bats produce an average litter of one pup per year, nursing their young like other mammals. In the daytime, they keep their pup under their wing while they sleep.

Contrary to popular belief, bats are not blind; although some are colorblind, most have some level of sight ability and all bats use echolocation like dolphins and whales to locate prey animals, and avoid objects in the night sky.

A bat's wings are very specialized hands and arms that have evolved over time to include flaps of skin between arms and fingers that are a bats' fur-covered wings.

If you see a bat on the ground, or hanging in the fence, it is best to not touch it, as any bare skin contact with a bat is considered dangerous. Again, call Vector Control and have qualified personnel come and remove the bat for evaluation and possible relocation.

Watching bats hunt has become a favorite pastime for many incarcerated people. Their acrobatic flying skill seemingly unsurpassed in the animal kingdom, giving endless hours of joy and awe to many.





UC Davis Books to Prisoners
CSI Box #157
1 Shields Ave.
Davis, CA 95616

Prisoners Literature Project
% Bound Together Books
1369 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Prison Book Project
P.O. Box 592
Titusville, FL 32781

Human Kindness Foundation
% The Prison Ashram Project
P.O. Box 61619
Durham, NC 27715

PDX Books Through Bars
% Left Bank Books
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Seattle, WA 98101

Women’s Prison Book Project
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2002 23rd Ave S.

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Prisoners
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Prison Library Project
% The Claremont Forum
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128
Claremont, CA 91711

Providence Books Thru Bars
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Providence, RI 02906

LGBT Books to Prisoners
1202 Williamson St. #1
% Social Justice Center Incubator
Madison, WI 53703

NYC Books Through Bars
% Bluestockings Bookstore
116 Suffolk Street
New York, NY 10002

The National Veterans Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing national veteran crisis management, information, and referral services.

Call 1-888-777-4443 toll-free for information and references.

5777 West Century Boulevard,
Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90045-5656

☎ (310) 642-0255
☎ (310) 642-0258
✉ VetSupport@NVF.org
🌐 NVF.org

Opinion: Edovo – A Phishing Expedition?

By John L. Orr, Feature Reporter

IN OCTOBER 2023, while eating breakfast, I overheard a conversation at an adjacent table. The man extolled the virtues of Edovo, an unannounced, just-released app in the Education section of our state-issued GTL/ViaPath tablets. The content of the new setup was described as “massive, dude” according to my vocal neighbor.

I accessed “Edovo Content Shell” only to find a firewall of sign-on security needs. I excitedly took the first two steps, then, as asked, created a password. The next stage was a list of 10 probing personal queries requiring replies to establish a “profile” in order to gain entry — a red flag to me. Trending and social media dictate caution, such as the popular internet scam of the imaginary Nigerian prince seeking help and enabling riches for your effort.

Civilians face invasive robocallers, phishermen, and various other online villains trying to gain private information from users to complete their reprehensible activities. With a closed system, standalone tablets issued to California’s incarcerated are not exposed to such practices. We do not have internet access either, and only know these schemes exist through outside media or conversations with our external connections. The GTL/ViaPath tablets do have messaging, phone, and video-calling capabilities to connect with outsiders, but no spam or cold callers trying to data mine our personal information.

After I answered the first probing question, “What street did you grow up on?” my sixth sense perked up, but still I continued. Next question was the city I grew up in. OK, public knowledge. Next, “What was your childhood nickname?” Middle-class white kids like me, in suburban L.A. in the 1950s, never had a childhood nickname. What value is this information, other than data mining?

The remaining queries included a requirement I provide my first pet’s name, my mom’s maiden name, my favorite sports team, and more. Even if I could remember, many of these answers are the basis for passwords created by most real-world users for access to cellphones, computers, banking, and financial accounts, a common practice. Then I recalled some of my casual outside tablet messaging contacts and how they were initially reluctant to provide me with their cellphone numbers, but were OK with occasional direct messaging. One day I wandered into the video calling app, even though I did not intend to engage in this activity. I was shocked to see that not only was the phone number of each of these cautious phone contacts listed, but a personal email address was provided as well. A normal action, I imagined, but also a gateway into their personal devices. Are our friends and families now open to probing through Edovo and other tablet app inquiries (messaging and video calling set-up requirements)?

In an August 2023 *San Quentin News* article, the Prison Policy Initiative was quoted. “The quantity and sensitivity of information captured in e-messaging systems — from people on both sides of the prison walls — is staggering,” wrote the organization. “The data includes names, addresses, credit card info and the contents of the messages. ... Vendors provide very little information to users about how their data is stored, protected, or even used.”

Citing the same article, GTL/ViaPath described the capabilities of its service as promoting its product to correctional officials as a data mining technology to “enable correctional facilities to easily review and analyze its networks, relationships, and connections associated with their inmate population.”

Despite an abundance of high-quality educational and general interest content, I shied away from Edovo for months, waiting for the other shoe to drop. I refused to expose my friends and relatives to potential invasive data mining by completing the questionnaire for GTL/ViaPath. Then I heard the *San Quentin News* was available in Edovo. Curious, I tried to log on and a firewall of my own making stopped me cold. I forgot what childhood nickname I fabricated months before to complete my initial profile. I was locked out.

Weirdly, on March 11, 2024, just two days after my denied entry, a message from GTL/ViaPath greeted all tablet users: a new direct sign-on procedure for the Edovo app. The process eliminated the redundant ID and PIN, and the suspect Q&A intrusions. We could now sign on like any other app on the tablet, the commendable Edovo educational and informative content readily available.

Maybe my uncertainties about Edovo and privacy issues are speculative, but the real-world trend is to show caution. Those who are soon to be released from prison should be especially vigilant with all private data.





French giant house spider (*Eratidena atrica*)
(SpiderID.com)

L'Araignée de Notre Dame

By Brian Arnold,
Mule Creek State Prison

SHE SAT BACK after yet another busy day of mending line, her thin legs sagging under the weight of her body. With her eyes gazing into the endless murky distance, lit by streaks of multicolor light shooting across the gossamer shadows, she thought back to how things used to be, to when she was young. To when she was light-hearted, almost buoyant, floating on the breeze to she knew not where; to when life seemed an opportunity for exploration and growth. And to when the vastness of space in front of her alluringly beacons, constantly calling her, as though continuously tugging on a nearly invisible string. She had landed fortunate and satisfied, in the area within which she would make a suitable habitation and raise many young ones. Her “itsy bitsies” she called them.

She was no stranger to her surrounding; her ancestors had lived many generations over the 900 years they had occupied the region. She had heard tales spun, of course, of the many who had forayed into the vastness, attempting to cross the slippery barren plain, and of the few who had actually succeeded in establishing themselves out there, somewhere. And over the months, she had hungered to see what that unknown had held, to look at awe-inspiring things she imagined to be there with her own glassy eyes, with eight eyes if she could! The problem was distance. The problem had always been distance. The closest inhabited woody place was a good three-day’s travel from her little enclave and beyond that stretched many, many more, each separated by endless distance.

Woody areas were definitely desirable places to live, for life was, in general, much easier there. She thought of these things and of the past as the shadows lengthened and the stained colors threaded their way through immense space.

Where she lived was more than adequate, she knew. Her woody area provided an intimate, protecting, and stable location upon which to secure the threads of life. Food was regularly available, with no real seasonal constraints, and it could be wrapped and stored for future consumption. And there were the colors, the brilliant, beautiful colors, as rich as a bouquet of many-hued roses. Sunlight, after traveling more than 93 million miles at about 186,000 miles a second, during a journey of around eight minutes, finally pierced the vastness with multicolor fangs. But she did not know science, as she was not educated. The physics of the speed of light or refraction of light or polarization of light were unknown to her. But she did know colors. The colors were nearly as satisfying as a plump meal, or hanging comfortably suspended in a hammock.

In addition to colors there were the vibrations. They too were satisfying, in a more personal way. Some were deep and sensuously slow, strongly caressing every segment of her body from abdomen to her head. Others were light, airy, soaring to great heights, and tickling her in places she enjoyed being touched with the lightest stroke. These seemed particularly heavenly, and gave her much pleasure. Between the colors she saw, the vibrations she felt, and the reliable food, she felt content and safe in her space. Nobody bothered her. Nothing interrupted the routine she had grown accustomed to. Life proceeded as regularly as drops dripping from up the waterspout.

Yet, in the back of her mind always was a lingering thought, as if lurking within cobwebs or underneath a trap door, waiting to spring out and seize some hapless prey. She didn’t dwell on this thought, but she knew it was there. Sometimes late in the quietest nights, it would creep up into her head, and she would think about what was out there, in that vastness, beyond the beautiful rose light, and she would momentarily entertain thoughts of leaving her safe and familiar area, striking out across the great barren area with its glassy smoothness she had heard tale of, and into the unknown — but no doubt exciting — world beyond. This thought was her window to a world she had longed for when younger, but then later only occasionally came to think of, what with the endless responsibilities of weaving and mending and providing food for her young ones. Yet lately, now that she was much older, that thought kept crawling back to her, slowly at first, but as time passed it came more often, until it became persistent in its beaconing. And finally, she decided she would do it, leave the comfort, the security, the safety of her familiar place in exchange for the unknown.

She had waited her entire life to make this decision, and regretted that it had taken her so long to do so. She thought about life, and second chances, and what living was really all about. She thought about the colors. The rose colors. She hoped the colors and vibrations would be in the new place, wherever it turned out to be. But she was not sure they would follow her. She wanted them to, but she continued to feel a disquieting uncertainty. However, she was quite certain that tomorrow, with the advent of those glorious colors of brilliant blooming roses, she would leave to seek her destiny, to achieve that which she had always secretly wanted, to fulfill her dream of exploration. Thus, she went to sleep, eagerly awaiting the blooming colors.

During the night, she dreamed. She was surrounded by different colors, bright intense yellows, gold, and oranges, comets of yellow shot through the dark, seeming to crackle within her neural pathways. Billowing clouds ballooned across the vastness. Vibrations were rampant, although these were not the pleasant variety. She slept uneasily and awoke abruptly, with a feeling of unseasonable warmth enveloping her. Slowly, she drifted back through clouds of consciousness, clinging to her dream of the dawn, of her new beginning, wondering hazily what the vastness might hold. Finally, she dreamt no more.

*During the night of April 15, 2019, the 900-year-old Cathedral of Notre Dame experienced color of a different sort. Notre Dame’s famous roof burned and collapsed, and the cathedral’s three glorious rose windows, capable of providing such brilliant light, were destroyed. Along with this architectural gem, approximately 3,732 French giant house spiders (*Eratidena atrica*) lost their lives, including an old female living high up in the wooden rafters, adjacent to the northern rose window. Everything, it seems, even more than can ever be known, went up in the dull gray smoke.*



Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, before the fire of 2019 (Britannica.com)

Why Read the Classics?



By Rob Sharp,
Post Reporter

HAVE YOU EVER read any of Ernest Hemingway's novels? *The Sun Also Rises* is a good example of the quality of "Papa's" work.

The story opens by describing Robert Cohn, a middle-weight boxing champion, graduate of Princeton, and novelist. The narrator is Robert's friend, Jacob (Jake) Barnes, who attempts to focus Robert's wanderlust: "Listen Robert, going to another country doesn't make any difference. I've tried all that. You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There's nothing to that."

As restated in *The Road Warrior* (Mad Max II): "No matter where you go, there you are!" Location in and of itself won't satisfy a person who's not satisfied with their self.

Written in 1926, the story is set in Paris, France and refers at times to "The War," meaning WWI. The scenery includes both horse-drawn carriages and motor vehicles in a setting of gentle debauchery. The forthrightness and blunt honesty of the characters bespeaks those who don't have time to waste when there is living to be done. It's an ongoing party atmosphere, much like Papa Hemingway's own life. He writes the reflections of his characters' lives, their hopes, and regrets: "It's awfully easy to be hard-boiled in the daytime, but at night it is another thing."

This novel moves along at pace and shows deep insights into its denizens. Due to his proficiency as a writer, it's never dull as could be the case in what amounts to a character study.

The storyline shifts gears early on and then concentrates on Jake's doings in around Paris with a motley crew of characters. However, he does get around to Robert Cohn from time to time.

This is a captivating story of writers, artists, lords, and ladies in Paris during the "Roaring Twenties," and would be worth your time to read. *The Sun Also Rises* can be found in the GTL Library app.

The Uncaged Writer:

Interview with *Prism* Magazine's Tamar Davis

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter



PRISM ONLINE MAGAZINE recently reported on PEN America's Prisoner Writing Program. For a follow up article, *Prism* reporter Tamar Davis contacted several PEN writing contest winners to find out about their experiences. She says, "I first got interested in writing about PEN because a few members of our staff at *Prism* heard about issues going on around their prison writing programs related to writers not being paid for prizes as well as being ghosted by their PEN assigned mentors. I've been put in touch with incarcerated writers in facilities across the country that have won PEN prizes but haven't been paid yet or were paid only after waiting unreasonable lengths of time."

PEN's process of filtering correspondence through its New York office apparently impedes efficient communication. Some writers have found (later) that a mentor has written, but the correspondence was not forwarded, or their correspondence was not forwarded to the mentor. *Prism's* upcoming report includes efforts toward resolving the PEN issues.

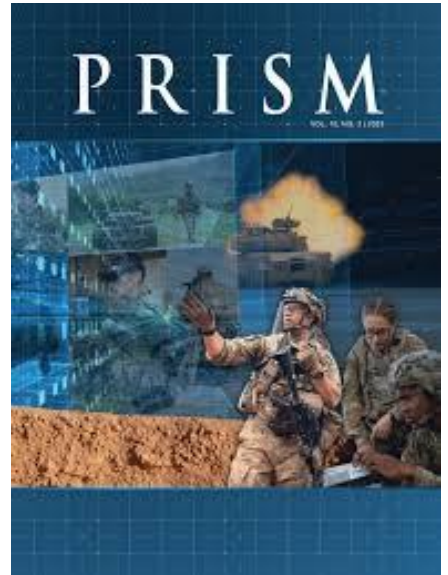
Davis says, "I think the most interesting [part of the] piece is that a lot of outlets are beginning to work with incarcerated writers, which is great, but they often don't have the infrastructure or internal organization to responsibly provide these writers with the resources they need — sometimes causing more harm than good."

"For *Prism*, I typically write about the carceral system as well as policing. A lot of the stories on my beat also explore women's experiences in the system. *Prism* is run across the country so we don't have a central office but my day consists of meetings held online with different members of our editorial staff, interviews with sources, and a lot of writing and researching."

Prism is an independent, nonprofit news organization established in 2019, and reports on the hard truths of injustice, featuring stories of those most acutely impacted. It provides a platform to tell these stories and seek to disrupt harmful narratives in pursuit of liberation and justice for those historically oppressed.

Davis adds, "The most interesting and unique thing about the job is the fact that every day really does look different. Some days it is more writing, while others are spent interviewing or reading in order to get the context for my stories. One of my most recent stories that I was really drawn to was a bit of a historical piece. It was about medical experiments that were done in a Philadelphia prison in the 60s and 70s and how formerly incarcerated participants are now seeking reparations from the city and the doctors involved for some of the unethical tests that were done to them."

Incarcerated individuals and those previously incarcerated may submit their writing to PEN's annual contest. Categories are poetry, fiction, drama, nonfiction, and memoir. They receive over a thousand entries annually and award cash prizes for first, second, and third place. Winners also have the opportunity to work with a mentor via snail mail.



(NDUPress.ndu.edu)

Help Wanted:

Mule Creek Post writers needed.

Are you interested in seeing your yard or your prison represented in the Post? Do you know of a newsworthy event or interesting person on your yard that should be known by all our readers?

Send a Résumé and Writing Sample to:

The Mule Creek Post • Mule Creek State Prison • % MCIC Associate
Warden • P.O. Box 409090 • Ione, CA 95640
Attn: Editor-in-Chief



CA in Contempt

State Denies Divine Heritage, Human Rights for Youth of Color

By Earl S. Breckenridge,
Feature Reporter

THE DECLARATION OF Independence represents the American colonist's official break from Great Britain and establishment of a new nation: The United States of America. As justification for this otherwise treasonous act, Thomas Jefferson invoked divine right. In California today, legislative, judicial, and prosecutorial entities systematically deny youth of color similar rights and, instead, target them with harsh legislation, and prosecutorial and sentencing schemes such as life without the possibility of parole (LWOP).

The Declaration states in part:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men ...

According to the Declaration, it is "Nature's God" that endows the rights of its citizens. It is the privilege and duty of governments to protect this divine heritage of all its citizens.

In a recent California Supreme Court ruling, Justice J. Evans made the following observations: "Black people are disproportionately convicted of the felony-murder special circumstances ... while racial disparities exist across age groups, racial disparities are most prevalent among people who were 25 or younger at the time of the offense and received a life without parole sentence — 86% are people of color. Of the roughly 3,100 youthful offenders sentenced to LWOP, 38% are black, 38% are Latinx, 14% are white ... African American youth are sentenced to life without parole at a rate that is 18.3 times the rate for whites. Hispanic youth in California are sentenced to



life without parole at a rate that is five times that for white youth."

Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascon, whose office accounts for over 40% of the state's prison population, made the following statement in Special Directive 20-14: "Justice demands that the thousands of people currently serving prison terms imposed in Los Angeles County under earlier, outdated policies, are also entitled to the benefit of these new policies. Many of these people have been incarcerated for decades or are serving a 'virtual life sentence' designed to

imprison them for life. The vast majority of incarcerated people are members of groups long disadvantaged under earlier systems of justice: black people, people of color, young people, people who suffer from mental illness, and people who are poor."

In enacting the Racial Justice Act, the California Legislature wrote:

Current law, as interpreted by the courts stands in sharp contrast to this Legislature's commitment to 'ameliorate bias-based injustices in the courtroom' ... The Legislature has acknowledged that a person possesses implicit biases, that these biases impact the criminal justice system, and the negative implicit biases tend to disfavor people of color. In California in 2020, we can no longer accept racial discrimination and racial disparities as inevitable in our criminal justice system and we must act to make clear that this discrimination and these disparities are illegal and will not be tolerated in California both prospectively and retroactively.

Historically, California has neither safeguarded nor protected the divine heritage of youth of color. While it is clear that serious attempts to rectify this maltreatment exist, they offer little consolation for those targeted and forced to endure harsh sentences such as LWOP. "LWOP sentences, then," writes William W. Berry III, "are an affront to human dignity because they are life without hope sentences. The mental consequences of knowing one will never live outside of prison, and that one will remain isolated in prison until death by natural causes can be significant. The LWOP sentence often imposes its own unique form of psychological torture on offenders." Berry also notes that the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute, which has signatures of 123 of the world's 193 nations — but not the U.S. — does not allow LWOP sentences. "In 2013," writes Judith Lichtenberg, professor of philosophy and adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University, "the European Court of Human Rights decided that LWOP violated Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights, which prohibits 'inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'"

At the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War, another modality for reposing freed "property" emerged. By making laws legalizing slavery for prisoners, freed slaves could be justifiably and legally recaptured and branded as "criminals" and denied their divine heritage, and returned to a life of involuntary servitude in perpetuity. The U.S. has the world's largest incarcerated population with over 40,000 serving LWOP sentences. California's practice of creating and prosecuting laws that deny youth of color their divine heritage violates the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and its mandate to safeguard and protect the rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all its citizens.

Sources: California Racial Justice Act, Section 2(g); Margaret E. Leigey, "The Forgotten Men: Serving Life Without Parole Sentence," 2015; Leon Shaskolsky Sheleff, "Ultimate Penalties: Capital Punishment, Life Imprisonment, Physical Torture," 1987; William W. Berry III and Jessie D. Puckett, University of Mississippi; D. Phil., Oxford (UK); J.D. Vanderbilt, Virginia, "Life-With-Hope Sentencing: The Argument for Replacing Life-Without-Parole Sentences with Presumptive Life Sentences"; Judith Lichtenberg, "Against Life Without Parole," *Washington University Jurisprudence Review*, vol. 11, no. 1; *People v. Hardin*, 15 Ca.5th 834 March 4, 2024; *Mule Creek Post*, "Los Angeles County District Attorney Announces New Policies for His Office," April 2021.

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Business & Finances

ENTREPRENEUR'S WORKSHOP

By Leah Ward-Lee
Post Columnist

Set Up A Prioritized "To Do" List

HAVE YOU EVER had the feeling of always being behind or that you can't possibly accomplish everything you need to do? Do you have tasks that, if completed, would simplify or improve your life, even if by just a little bit?

Most of us keep some form of "To Do" list; however, if you're anything like me, there are tasks that don't make the list that should have. These are tasks I put off because I don't enjoy (or dread) doing them, or tasks I leave until the last minute because I procrastinate, resulting in consequences I could have avoided.

There are many methods for managing the things you need to do. For most of us, if we don't manage the list, it's easy to forget or put off doing something that ends up costing us time or money.

There are an abundance of "To Do" list templates and apps available online and through standard office products. You can also make your own template, use a journal, or simply use a piece of paper. Be certain the tool you choose is easy for you to use.

Leah Ward-Lee

is an international business consultant for the airlines and aerospace industries, community activist, social justice advocate, and entrepreneurial trainer. LWL Enterprises Inc. provides scholarships for disadvantaged minorities and underserved demographics such as prisoners. She volunteers for Defy Ventures, a prison entrepreneurial training program, and provides pro bono counseling for aspiring small business startups.



Build and Protect Your Credit Like the Pros

Situations That Require a Credit Card

By Carolyn Warren, Post Columnist

IN ADDITION TO purchasing a home, there are other times when having access to credit is essential. How many of the following situations apply to you, either now or in the future? Good reasons to own a credit card:

- You can shop online securely.
- You have access to money without actually carrying cash.
- You are protected from financial loss if your car is lost or stolen.
- You get free protection in case your merchandise is lost or stolen within 90 days.
- You benefit from rewards that your card offers.
- You have access to an instant source of emergency funds.
- You are guaranteed to get the best exchange rate when traveling abroad.
- You may want the extra insurance protection when traveling out of the country.

A major credit card is smart to have for the following situations:

- You need to rent a car, truck, or moving van.
- You need to book a hotel or reserve a room via Airbnb or other vacation rental.
- You need to book an airline flight.
- An unexpected situation occurs, such as when your furnace goes out in winter, or your automobile breaks down on a road trip.
- You want to buy a home and apply for a mortgage loan.

Carolyn Warren is the author of Amazon's bestselling *Repair Your Credit Like the Pros*. She is passionate about saving people money and helping people reach their dream of home ownership.

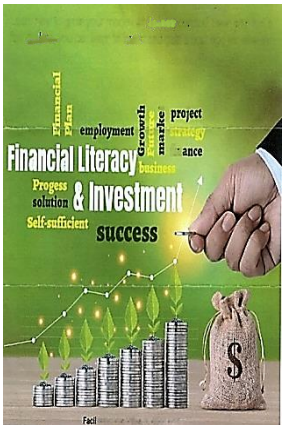


Financial Literacy at CSP-Corcoran

By Al Rice, Copy Editor

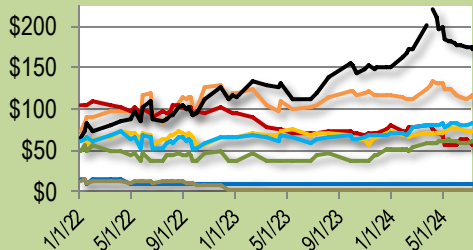
RECENTLY, ONE OF the *Mule Creek Post's* original founders, Robert Von Villas, wrote us from the California State Prison at Corcoran to fill us in on what he's been up to since his transfer. We were not surprised to learn that — true to his interests in all things financial — Von Villas began a financial literacy class on the Level II facility there.

The class of approximately 20 incarcerated students meets for one hour a week. The primary subject is direct investment plans (DRIPs), but also covers other areas of financial literacy important to the incarcerated, like banking and establishing credit.



Financial Corner Tracking Stocks (From Jan. 1, 2022 to July 8, 2024)

●Apollo Comm. Real Est. Fin. Inc. (ARI)	\$10.76	→	\$9.75	-9.4%
●ConocoPhillips (COP)	\$117.00	→	\$112.55	-3.8%
●CVS Health Corp. (CVS)	\$93.19	→	\$56.63	-39.2%
●Edison International (EIX)	\$63.62	→	\$72.40	+13.8%
●Lumen Technologies (LUMN)	\$5.22	→	\$1.02	-80.5%
●Marathon Petroleum Corp. (MPC)	\$112.00	→	\$170.74	+52.4%
●ONEOK Inc. (OKE)	\$65.90	→	\$82.25	+24.8%
●Wells Fargo & Co. (WFC)	\$41.29	→	\$59.62	+44.4%



Creative Arts Program

“What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?”
—Vincent van Gogh

The Healing Power of Art

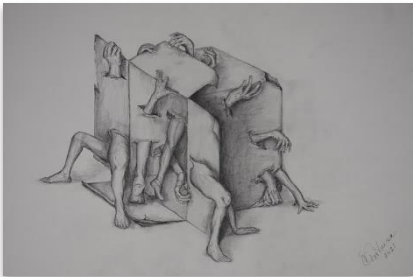
By Marty Williams, Production Editor



Sailboat, © 2022 Carlo Fortuna, mixed media

Carlo Fortuna

EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING there is a graphic arts group that meets in the Facility E hobby room at the Mule Creek State Prison, a range of diversely developed artists working on projects while the classical guitar group nearby creates ambient joy. This is where Carlo Fortuna works on his craft, but also mentoring others and giving knowledgeable critiques. He is quiet and thoughtful, soft-spoken and courteous, yet Fortuna’s life has been a journey of personal loss and physical pain, pain he lives with every day.



Arms & Legs Out of Box, © 2022 Carlo Fortuna, pencil

Creative Arts Program Facility E Hobby Room

Creative Writing	Tue 12:30-2 pm
Poetry	Tue 2-3:30 pm
Graphic Arts	Tue 2-3:30 pm
Graphic Arts	Tue 6:30-8 pm
Graphic Arts	Wed 9-11 am
Guitar	Wed 9-10:30 am
Guitar	Wed 11-12:30 pm
Intensive Journal	Wed 2-3:30 pm



Doodle, © 2022 Carlo Fortuna, color pencils

He was born on a ship outside La Rochelle, France, a port city on the western coast of Europe. He is therefore not a native of France or the U.S., but has lived here since the late 1980s. Coming from a large, mobile family, he was exposed to a wide canvas of cultures, nature, and art; he’s been to the Louvre in Paris, the National Gallery in Leipzig, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He was a born artist, and time spent in these museums allowed him to reflect on how the world’s greatest artists achieved results. Since then he’s done literally thousands of oil paintings during his 69 years of life, became a glass colorist and stained glass artist, and is proficient with graphite, charcoals, watercolor, and sculpture.

“I like to be able to express myself with what’s going on internally,” Fortuna explains. “I want others to know, or see, or feel.”

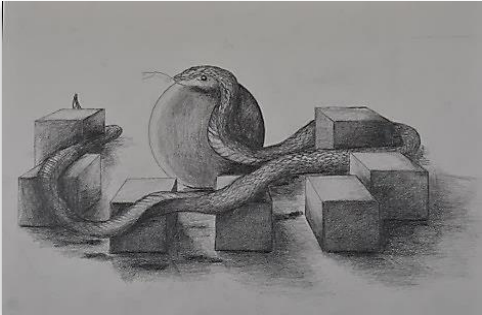
Art has kept Fortuna’s soul alive, especially while incarcerated for the last 34 years. Art has given him “A world that I can enter, where I can be free.” He has never created the same piece twice; every project is original, unique, and teaches him something about staying connected to nature, strength, and understanding.

His work runs the spectrum, from fanciful, to iconic, to masterwork. The pieces here are evidence of his diversity and soul. His biggest influences are Monet, Dalí, Peter Max, Cézanne, Turner, Frida Kahlo, and Andy Warhol; he thinks Leonardo da Vinci is overrated, but that the great woodcut master Albrecht Dürer is woefully underrated by the rest of the world.

He continues to physically work through the pain; the pain of having lived, of being mortal, and of choices he cannot unmake. But his art speaks what he’s unable to put into words, and tells the story of being deeply, thankfully, human.



Stained Glass, © 2022 Carlo Fortuna, color pencil



Snakes Out of Box, © 2022 Carlo Fortuna, pencils



Scarab, © 2022 Carlo Fortuna, mixed media



Locked in a Dark Calm, © 2016 Tameca Cole, collage and graphite on paper (courtesy of the Ellen Driscoll Collection)

Psilocybin Has Benefits for Crime Reduction

By Alex Rosales,
Mule Creek State Prison
and Jason Davis, Feature Reporter

THE UNITED STATES holds the world record for the most people incarcerated per capita at 950 per 100,000, with such a high rate of return (77% within 5 years) that recidivism is the rule, rather than the exception.

The public health and economic impacts of incarceration are so massive that researchers Grant Jones and Mathew Nock identified a “clear and pressing need to identify factors associated with reduced criminal behavior.”

Psilocybin — the magic in the mushroom — may be a factor for its ability to “create lasting changes in personality structure,” Jones states, as well as positively address personality pathologies found in high rates among the incarcerated, such as antisocial personality disorder (as high as 50%), post-traumatic stress disorder, and other trauma-related criminal behavior.

In other words, psilocybin alone has the potential to ad-

dress the incarceration problem in the U.S. by changing the criminal’s beliefs and antisocial personality characteristics. This is done through the process known as psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy (PAP) in which lasting effects have been seen with just one or two uses of psychedelics.

There are three interdependent stages to the safe and effective use of PAP: pre-dosing preparation, support and dosing, and integration. During the pre-dosing preparation stage, the client and therapist develop trust and a plan to “set the stage” for the dosing sessions. They discover the client’s “hopes, beliefs, traumas, fears, temperament, and personality, as well as ... [their] fantasies and expectations about psychedelic experiences.”

During the support and dosing stage, therapists aim to make the client feel “comfortable and vulnerable enough to fully embrace their unique experiences, while gently providing emotional support when difficult sensations, thoughts, feelings, or memories arise.” The careful arrangement of the physical environment and reassurances of safety and vulnerability are necessary not only to minimize risk, but also to enhance therapeutic responses.

The integration stage occurs immediately after the dosing session — usually the next day — and involves a careful assessment of the client’s psilocybin-induced experiences. This is where the client makes personal meaning of the experience and incorporates any new insights or understandings into purposeful, lasting change. This process is uniquely designed for the client and therapist to meticulously work towards a specific behavioral change, meaning the entire process is designed to control the outcome. It also means it should be manipulated to intentionally, but voluntarily, weaken criminal beliefs and antisocial personality while strengthening the desire for pro-social beliefs and personality traits.

Mindful of unique qualities, each PAP session must be carefully devised to match individual needs, but interactionist theories of desistance to crime (ITD) should guide the process. How this might look can be found in “Psychedelics and Desistance from Crime: Lessons from the Concord Prison Experiment,” a study on whether psychedelics can facilitate the personal transformation needed to stop criminal behavior. The findings suggest that psychedelic experiences could trigger the cognitive shifts necessary to the desistance process. *Desistance* is the process by which individuals lastingly disentangle themselves from the sticky web of criminal beliefs and behaviors. Although there are many criminological theories of desistance, the overall goal is to determine how desistance arises and how to maintain it.

For criminal desistance, *integration* means available social-environment support. This includes post-release housing, employment, transportation, health care, and substance abuse treatment; social networks that share similar commitments and values; and significant others who are willing and able to validate the new identity or role that can help affirm one’s pro-social identity. In a few words, post-release support.

With recidivism rates so high that it is the “rule” in the U.S., reducing that number even slightly means less direct and indirect victimization, less economic loss, less incarceration trauma, etc. Most importantly, according to Jones and Nock, the nearly 85% of incarcerated individuals surveyed have dreams of swapping their criminal and anti-social personalities for a new pro-social identity, while the public has similar dreams of crime reduction.

Sources: Mathew W. Johnson, “Consciousness, Religion, and Gurus: Pitfalls of Psychedelics Medicine,” *ACS Pharmacology & Translational Science*, 16 Dec. 2020; Grant M. Jones, and Matthew K. Nock, “Psilocybin Use is Associated with Lowered Odds of Crime Arrests in US Adults: A Replication and Extension,” *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 2021; Logan Neitzke-Spruill, “Psychedelics and Desistance from Crime: Lessons from the Concord Prison Experiment,” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 2022



The Prayer Warriors Alliance (PWA) is a non-denominational organization of volunteers who will assist anyone of any faith with research. The PWA charges no fee; return postage (up to 20 pages per request) is paid by PWA. See the July 2023 edition for more information about the PWA.

PWA follows all departmental mail restrictions and guidelines. PWA cannot search for legal or case information or individuals. Donations are gladly accepted.

Prayer Warriors Alliance
P.O. Box 28352
San Diego, CA 92198-0352
SupportPWA.org

Creative Arts Program: Drawing Class

The Creative Arts Program provides instructional workshops in drawing techniques, led by local artist Cherie Hacker.

In Facility E Hobby Room:
Tuesdays 2-3:30 pm

In Facility E Hobby Room:
Tuesdays 6:30-8 pm

Fill out an Inmate Activity Group Program Request (CDCR 2016) if you'd like to be on the waiting list for this group.

The Great Fireworks Fiasco of 1983

By John L. Orr, Feature Reporter



(OntarioScienceCentre.ca)

IN JULY OF 1983, at a monthly meeting with representatives of all Southern California fire and police departments, the group reported a huge upsurge in illegal firework confiscations during the fireworks season. The seizures increased primarily due to an organized month-long pre-Fourth of July surveillance of a legal fireworks outlet near the California border in Pahrump, Nevada. Local police agencies in Pahrump reported California license plates on over 90 percent of the buyer's cars from that one outlet. Most were small family customers, but at least one 18-wheeler was followed and seized in the L.A. area.

At the meeting, an L.A. County Sheriff's Department representative flatly stated, "We can't store all your confiscated fireworks like we usually do — we don't have room. We'll schedule a day we can blow them off all at once like we did before — problem solved." The accumulations included bundles of small bottle rockets, bricks of firecrackers, boxes of M-80s and quarter-sticks, all the way up to commercial-grade aerial pyrotechnic and explosive mortar rounds. Everyone in the all-male crowd smiled broadly. The deputy warned, "No pipe bombs, just fireworks and sparkly stuff." Thus, a loophole was inadvertently created. We could have sold tickets to this expected extravaganza.

Within two weeks we received flyers to bring our pyrotechnics to a rock quarry in nearby Irwindale, adjacent to the famous drag strip. The facility covered over 100 acres and consisted of several massive, tiered open pits, some covering eight to 10 acres and 200 feet deep.

At the appointed time, at least 26 agencies trucked in their stashes in the trunks of city sedans, pickup beds, and several 20-foot box trucks. In prior smaller destructions, the fireworks were laid out in rows in the open air at a dump, or confined in an abandoned house that was set on fire, preventing the bottle rockets and aerial displays from flying off uncontrolled. The pit was ideal.

Following the sheriff's department instructions and map we received at the entrance, our line of vehicles descended about 100 feet into one of the pits. We saw a concrete sewer drain situated like a huge empty soup can adjacent to a descending dirt road; positioned on one end, the conduit looked like a volcano opening, 30 feet across and 30 feet deep. The rim extended four or five feet above the road level for easy deposit of the contraband: drive up and dump your load.

L.A. County Sheriff's Arson/Explosives Unit personnel monitored the contributors as each vehicle pulled up next to the opening to unload. After a cursory check of boxed and bagged contents, a sergeant watched as the volatile fireworks were deposited into the inverted drainage pipe. The procedure took over an hour and the volcano was stuffed to within two feet of the rim: thousands of pyrotechnics in paper and plastic bags, as well as assorted colorful cardboard containers of every description. The final estimate was several tons of confiscated illegal fireworks, including the Downey big rig's massive contents.

The deputies stepped away to organize stand-by medical and fire support as the last unit, an Azusa fire department pickup truck, dumped its mixed fireworks load — unexamined. The contents of five apple boxes was loose and bagged black powder, which were poured directly into the near-edge of the sewer pipe. Four ancient one-pound tins of black powder were opened and emptied as well. Like flowing gasoline, this highly volatile addition spread over a 10-foot-square area with much of the fine granular material filtering downward.

Most of the throng of 100-plus positioned themselves about 200 yards uphill, with one pickup truck facing the opening just 150 feet away for photography and videotaping. A pair of deputies drove downhill and the passenger held a lit road flare out his window as the truck pulled adjacent to the deposit point, right where 10 pounds of scattered black powder rested.

The traditional, "Fire in the hole!" rang out three times and the flare was tossed in by the blameless deputy. A slow propagation of the burn was expected with plenty of time to clear the area, but the black powder flashed as designed. A sizable brilliant yellow flame pushed an explosive roiling cloud of white smoke upward, followed instantly by hundreds of flying bottle rockets and multiple explosions propelling firework shrapnel after the hapless deputies. The lone photographer dove into the bed of his pickup to escape the waves of heat, flaming cardboard, and flying plastic shards. Roaring like a huge jet engine, the combined flames and explosions pushed the churning white cloud over 3,000 feet into the clear sky. The impressive plume was seen from 20 miles away in the East L.A. Sheriff's headquarters. A recruiting deputy commented, "Oh, crap..."

As the mass burned lower, the photographer was able to jump in and move the pickup, but not before it was covered with spent rockets, Piccolo Pete remains, melted plastic, and scorched paint. Muffled explosions and white smoke continued; the total burnout took about eight minutes. As we departed, the displeased quarry owners banned our return for liability concerns. The legendary event became known as "The Great Fireworks Fiasco of 1983."

Postscriptum

"WE must not be enemies," Abraham Lincoln said. "Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection."

This month, for the first time in the memory of most Americans, we saw an attempt on the life of a former president. This can only be a direct result of the polarization of our country, of seeing politics — and, increasingly, each other — as "us" and "them." As author and former Middle East envoy for the White House Jason Greenblatt asserts, "Dehumanizing our fellow Americans got us into this mess."

He's right. We have spent too many years tearing each other apart and dehumanizing one another, on a national level, a local level, and a personal level. It is comforting to blame others for what we see wrong in the world, and to belong to a group confirming our beliefs. But doing so creates a group of other people, the ones to blame.

Regardless of one's politics, values, or beliefs, no one deserves to be thought of as "the enemy." *Time* columnist Jennifer Mercieca suggests that this works against solving political problems; "Instead it helps to cultivate outrage, erode trust and fellow feeling, and increase the potential for actual violence." It is part of what Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Florida) calls "angertainment," and it is not limited to one group or another; it is endemic in the U.S.

"We are a country of more than 330 million people of infinite worth and potential," says Greenblatt. Let's start honoring that in one another, and dismantle the systems that promote violence against our fellow human beings.

-JC, Editor-in-Chief

THE BACK PAGE | What you need to know about

Sources: United States Code Service Title 3 §19, Title 6 §111, Title 7 §2201, Title 10 §131, Title 15 §1501, Title 20 §3401, Title 22 §2651, Title 28 §501, Title 29 §551, Title 31 §301, Title 38 §301, Title 39 §201, Title 42 §§3501, 3531, and 7101, Title 43 §1451, Title 49 §101; U.S. Constitution, Article II; *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (2021); *World Book Encyclopedia* (2017)

The heads of major executive departments constitute the *U.S. Cabinet*. The body is not provided for in the Constitution, but developed as an advisory body for the president; it has no formal function and holds no executive power (other than what the individual members hold over their own department). As it is not a formal body, there are no restrictions on membership, so presidents frequently designate other individuals to be a part of their Cabinet (such as the vice president, director of national intelligence, or White House chief of staff).



(Wikipedia.org)

President
created by Article II of the Constitution in 1787



(Wikipedia.org)

Vice President
created by Article II of the Constitution in 1787



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of State
the Department of Foreign Affairs was created by Congress July 27, 1789, and renamed the Department of State Sept. 15, 1789
•2020 budget: \$25.7 billion



(FlagsAndEmblems.com)

Department of the Treasury
created by Congress Sept. 2, 1789
•2020 budget: \$701 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Defense
created by Congress Sept. 18, 1947, by combining the former Department of War (created Aug. 7, 1789)—later the Department of the Army—and the former Department of the Navy (created Apr. 30, 1789)
•2020 budget: \$759.7 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Agriculture
created by Congress May 15, 1862; on Feb. 8, 1889, its commissioner was renamed the secretary of agriculture and became a member of the Cabinet
•2020 budget: \$154.6 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Commerce
created Mar. 4, 1913, when Congress divided the Department of Commerce and Labor (created Feb. 14, 1903) into two departments
•2020 budget: \$17.1 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Justice
the Office of the Attorney General was created by Congress Sept. 24, 1789, reaching Cabinet rank in Mar. 1792; the Department of Justice was created June 22, 1870, under the attorney general's leadership
•2020 budget: \$45.3 billion



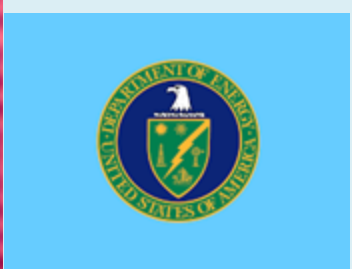
(Wikimedia.org)

Department of the Interior
created by Congress Mar. 3, 1849
•2020 budget: \$17.5 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Transportation
created by Congress Oct. 15, 1966
•2020 budget: \$84.7 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Energy
created by federal law Aug. 4, 1977
•2020 budget: \$34.4 billion



(FlagCenter.com)

Department of Labor
created Mar. 4, 1913, when Congress divided the Department of Commerce and Labor (created Feb. 14, 1903) into two departments
•2020 budget: \$36.4 billion



(apedesflags.com)

Department of Housing and Urban Development
created by Congress Sept. 9, 1965
•2020 budget: \$36 billion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Veterans Affairs
the agency formerly known as the Veterans Administration became the Department of Veterans Affairs Mar. 15, 1989 after President Reagan signed a bill in 1988 to grant Cabinet status to the agency
•2020 budget: \$214.3 billion



(Wikimedia.org)

Department of Education
formed by Congress Sept. 27, 1979, out of the existing Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
•2020 budget: \$159.3 billion



(FlagsAndEmblems.com)

Department of Health and Human Services
created by Congress Apr. 11, 1953, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was renamed Sept. 27, 1979, when Congress created a separate Department of Education
•2020 budget: \$1.32 trillion



(Wikipedia.org)

Department of Homeland Security
created by Congress Nov. 25, 2002
•2020 budget: \$62.2 billion