

To Our Readers

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

WITHIN THESE WALLS, in search of self and our place in humanity, to become a fully developed and fulfilled human being requires the ability to express our thoughts and share ideas. Through engagement in public discourse, as we learn and grow, we enhance our collective existence. Within this process we become active participants in the world we inhabit. For we do still inhabit it; from here in the shadows our voices call out.

We encourage our readers to join the conversation; submission guidelines on page 4.



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From Left: Standing—Robert Yim, Matthew Warner, Kenneth Carroll, Damin Pashilk, Ronald Prasad, Joshua Thomas. Sitting—Moises Tejeda, Arthur Henderson, Clarence Sargent. (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

Appreciation for Dog Trainers

By Jason Davis, Feature Reporter
and Joshua Thomas, Mule Creek State Prison

ON FEB. 13, 2024, Guide Dogs of America (GDA) president Russell Gittlen came to Facility E at the Mule Creek State Prison with a heartfelt message of gratitude for the dedication of the service dog trainers in the Prisoners Overcoming Obstacles & Creating Hope program. "You should be proud of what you do," said Gittlen. "I am proud of you."

Alongside Gittlen were GDA vice president Tony Blevins, Tender Loving Canines (TLC) director of programs Jamie Hunt, TLC assistant director Cheryl Herman, manager Nicole Maples, supervisor Sonia Parisi, and Mathew Fike.

Gittlen spoke of the impact the program has on the people the dogs go to, and how the dogs end up in the communities with the police, schools, and hospitals. He asked the group of 27 trainers seated before him to imagine the people in the hospitals who are dying. "These dogs are there with them to comfort them at their end," he said solemnly.

He talked about the recent graduates and thanked each of the trainers personally. Jackson, trained by Robert Yim, went to a veteran who has been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder since returning from duty. "Jackson has changed her life," Gittlen said.

Kuma, trained by Robert Mansfield, went to celebrity Rosie O'Donnell whose daughter is autistic. "Kuma gets to go to school with her. These last three weeks have been the best she has ever had in school," said Gittlen. Kuma has also become an overnight sensation on social media's TikTok.

Barlow, also trained by Mansfield, went to an autistic child. "She was the kind of child that when she went to the store she would walk down the aisle pulling everything off the shelves," Gittlen said, "but with Barlow at her side she has become calm and focused on the dog."

"I come to thank you guys. You guys are wonderful," Gittlen said, "and now I want to serve you lunch." GDA and TLC staff rolled up their sleeves and served pepperoni pizza, chips, cookies, and soda. As the group ate, Mule Creek's community resource manager Jason Ross asked what these dogs meant to them.

Chester Coker talked about the dogs he has trained and the program, how they have "Made me a better person, patient, consistent, things I never used to be."

Frank Rojas shared how before that he had taken so much for granted. "This [program] is a chance to give back to the

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**SOCIETY OF
PROFESSIONAL
JOURNALISTS**



by P. Covello,
Mule Creek State Prison
Warden



The Ripple Effect

THIS MONTH EVERY year, we mark National Crime Victims' Rights Week. It is a time to pause and reflect on the people who have been affected by crime, and to honor their experience. As I invite everyone to think about how far-reaching the ripple effects of harmful acts can be, I want to share this brief poem.

I Am Not A Victim

1. I am not a victim. No one has committed a crime against me. I haven't had my car stolen.
2. I haven't been beat up. I haven't been robbed. No one has used my credit cards.
3. I haven't been shot at. My kids haven't been abused by someone. My business that I own hasn't been robbed. I did hear that the crime rate is going up where I live.
4. I have not been abused. I am not a victim. No one has hacked into my computer. I did read about someone being robbed.
5. No one has tried to victimize my kids through their computers. I haven't had my cell phone stolen. I did find out that there are a lot of registered criminals living near me.
6. I haven't had a gang member shoot at me. My neighbor was burglarized last month. Another neighbor was burglarized last week.
7. The evening news had a special news story about local crimes. I'm getting nervous about leaving my car on the street. I'm not a victim, but I'm thinking about getting a home security system.
8. I haven't been stabbed. I got worried when I thought someone was going to rob me. There were four newspaper stories about different murders that happened in my community.
9. I bought a security system. I haven't been carjacked ... yet. I'm being more careful about where I go. I don't let my kids go certain places alone.
10. I got worried when someone walked past me at the bank ATM. I didn't stop for gas because it was late at night. I don't watch the news very much, too much violence.
11. I have been affected. I have been harmed. I have changed my thinking. I have changed my beliefs. I have changed what I do every day.

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:

Lt. J. Austin (President)
Sgt. M. Rhode (Vice President/Treasurer)
Lt. B. Campbell (Communications Chair)
Officer M. Vanni (Sergeant-at-Arms)
J. Greathouse (Secretary)
Dr. L. Forester
Sgt. J. Villanueva
CCI M. Mendoza
Officer P. Gonzalo
C&PR R. Steele
Sgt. E. Broussard

Above the Call of Duty

Part 1

By Don Chaddock, *Inside CDCR* Editor



SOME EMPLOYEES OF the state prison system have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help those in need. In this installment of "Unlocking History," we explore the story of one of these employees: Captain Randolph.



San Quentin State Prison's former Captain of the Yard Samuel L. Randolph.

A hotel fire near the San Quentin State Prison found Captain of the Yard Samuel L. Randolph acting quickly to save lives. On Oct. 25, 1908, a fire quickly spread from the kitchen to other rooms of the Sheppard Hotel. Randolph wasted no time. He rushed into the burning building and pulled a woman to safety.

"[Fire] did considerable damage to the building, and only the prompt action of Captain Randolph of the prison guard saved Miss Margaret Nails from serious injury if not death," reported the *Sacramento Union*, Oct. 26, 1908.

"When the gasoline stove exploded, the vapors set fire to [Ray] Sicnor's clothing. Captain Randolph rushed to the blazing man and, enveloping him in his coat, carried him from the fire. Sicnor was taken to the prison hospital, where he was treated by Dr. Wade Stone, the prison physician," the *San Francisco Call* reported.

A few years after the fire, Randolph was attacked by an inmate. "As he was passing through the main prison yard, Captain of the Yard Samuel Randolph was stabbed in the back by a convict named Thomas Murphy," reported the *Marin County Tocsin*, Feb. 25, 1911. The stab wound wasn't serious, according to news reports. Murphy was serving five years for burglary, then to eight years in Folsom State Prison for attacking Randolph.

It wasn't the first injury. In 1898, as a new correctional officer, he had his eye on two inmates he believed were trafficking opium. One morning he surprised the cellmates. "As the door swung open there lay the opium in small packages scattered all around the cell. As soon as the prisoners saw Randolph, they grasped package after package and began to hurl them into the yard. Randolph jumped inside and was immediately pounced upon by [Jack] Kane, while [Joe] Keyes kicked the guard's feet from under him," reported the *San Francisco Call*, June 11, 1898. Two other officers responded and subdued the inmates.

A year later he was attacked by inmate Luis Rivas. "Rivas was out of his regular position, and, when told to get into his right place, replied with an oath," reported the *Call*, Feb. 15, 1899. "[Randolph] took hold of him and received a blow between the eyes that knocked him down and partially stunned him. He pluckily returned to the fray." He subdued Rivas and began to take him back inside when Rivas attacked again, knocking Randolph to the ground. He was trying to choke Randolph when backup arrived and subdued the inmate again.

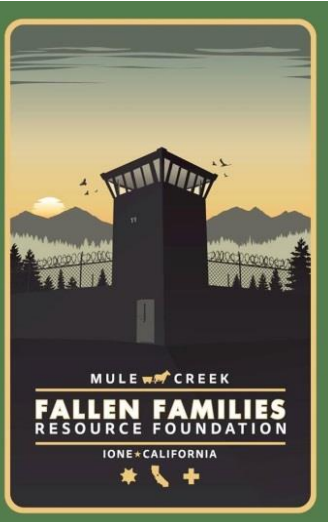
In 1900, he was shot in the leg by former San Quentin inmate James Emmington. "Prison Guard Samuel Randolph was shot and badly wounded by a discharged convict ... at Sheppard's hotel at San Quentin about 6 o'clock Thursday evening," reported the *Sausalito News*, Nov. 24, 1900. "Randolph's wound is serious, the ball having passed through the upper part of his leg."

"Emmington and his partner Davis went to San Quentin to bury opium. Davis was to call at the prison to see prisoner Parker and tell him where it had been planted [but he] was refused the privilege of seeing Parker. The two men loafed around the saloon until Randolph and other guards came in," reported the *Marin Journal*, Jan. 24, 1901. When their eyes met, a "row commenced and resulted in

Emmington shooting Randolph in the leg. ... Witnesses [said] Emmington was the aggressor and that Randolph was endeavoring to avoid trouble."

Emmington had served 10 years in San Quentin and Parker was his cellmate at the time. He was found guilty of assault with a deadly weapon for shooting Randolph and sentenced to 10 years at Folsom State Prison.

Part two of "Above the Call of Duty" will appear in our June 2024 issue.



Just the Bill We Needed

By Fabian Garcia, Spanish Reporter

WHETHER HAVING TO cut back on that deodorant, or cut back on ramen noodle soups, it has been a difficult couple of years for most of us. The culprit behind these stressful times is the price gouging the California state prison population was subject to during this time.

Gone are the days that a \$20 per month salary — if one can call it that — could buy someone their monthly soups, as well as their essential hygiene products. Throughout 2022-2023, incarcerated workers who relied solely on their jobs to acquire these items have had to make difficult choices when tallying up their canteen lists; choices such as having to distinguish what is fundamentally important for their comfort and well-being.

All of this is now yesterday's bother, thanks to the introduction of Senate Bill 474, authored by Senator Josh Becker (D-13th District). This bill, which went into effect January 2024, reduces canteen prices at all California prisons. Here in the High Desert State Prison, the savings that Facility A residents are experiencing at the canteen window are uplifting to see.

The popular items that continue to be a common denominator in many canteen bags leaving the window are more affordable: mayonnaise from \$6.50 to \$3.65, honeybuns from \$1.60 to \$1.15, refried beans from \$3.00 to \$2.45, coffee creamer from \$2.95 to \$2.40, and ramen noodle soups from 45¢ to 35¢.

For context, if I were to purchase the same items this month (January 2024) as I did two months ago, my total would come out to \$64.50, compared to the \$79.85 that I spent in November 2023. That is a 20-percent difference. Understandably, from the outside looking in, \$15 of savings does not seem that significant a sum to be writing an article about. But for someone with a monthly budget of less than \$50, those price changes can have a profound impact.

It was just the bill we needed, and we appreciate it.

CDCR Unveils New Property Matrix

By Jesse Carson, Editor-in-Chief

IN DECEMBER, THE Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation proposed a change to its regulations with Notice to Change to Regulations (NCR) #23-15. According to the department, "The main objective of this regulatory action is to reduce the use of segregation and confinement." Another goal of the change is "to better serve the inmate population in restrictive housing by reducing the amount of transfers, standardizing access to property and privileges, [and] creating new access to rehabilitative programs and education."



Restricted Housing

The new policy renames the Security Housing Unit (SHU), Administrative Segregation Unit (ASU or "Ad/Seg"), and Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU) to "Restricted Housing Unit" (RHU). The department states that the connotation of "security" or "segregated" is harmful and does not accurately describe the reasons for restricted confinement.

The regulations also eliminate the Step-Down Program, consecutive terms in restricted housing, and the use of aggravating or mitigating factors in assessing the time to serve in a Restricted Housing Unit.

Communication Access

The regulatory changes increase access to communication as well. Rather than being restricted to only emergency phone calls while in Privilege Group C, D, U, or AS, one phone call per week is allowed. Tablets are permitted but the calling capabilities and paid services are restricted. The change is to "help inmates prepare for successful reintegration into society, which enhances public safety."

Property

The regulations increase the allowable property authorized for most incarcerated people as well, "to ensure gender equality" and that "there is no disparate treatment amongst the population."

General Population Men. Additional allowed clothing includes: personal jeans (two pair), pajamas (two pair), a robe, a pair of sandals, a scarf, and an additional pair of shoes. Additional personal care items include: cotton balls, fabric softener, makeup, facial cleansers and astringents, hair rollers, tweezers and emery boards, loofahs, a shower bag, and shower caps. Additionally, the limits on how much deodorant, lip balm, shampoo, soap, and hair product one can have are removed. Miscellaneous items authorized include a hair dryer (at the warden's discretion) and a necklace. While a pack of Uno cards was added, so was a restriction on trading cards and collectable cards.

Restricted Housing Unit. Two pair of pajamas are now allowed, as well as facial cleansers and astringents.

General Population Women. Other than authorization of some items (such as razors and insect repellent) for those in a reception center, the only major changes were the removal of items containing sugar (such as BBQ sauce, ketchup, honey, syrup, juice, jelly, and dried fruits), wire antennas, and trading cards.

Non-Disciplinary Restricted Housing. Additional clothing includes: athletic supporters, a pair of gloves, a watch cap, a pair of shoes, and an additional pair of sweats and thermals. Additional personal care items include aftershave, hair oil, laundry soap, lotion, and sunblock. Several food items were added, such as cereal, cheese, chips, cocoa and coffee, crackers, nuts, soups, and drink mixes. Drawing paper, pastel chalk, earplugs, and an extension cord were added to the list of allowable property, as well as a pair of headphones or earbuds, an antenna, and an electric typewriter. The changes are intended to "increase the ability for inmates to maintain personal hygiene, to exercise, and to maintain an active mind."

To learn more about this and other regulation changes, write to the below-address and request a copy.

Regulation and Policy Management Branch (RPMB)
P.O. Box 942883
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001
RPMB@cdcr.ca.gov

MULE CREEK POST Submissions

Freelance writers, staff, and others may submit articles or material to the *Mule Creek Post*, % MCIC AWA's Office, P.O. Box 409090, Lone, 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.



The Wordsmith

By Rob Sharp, Post Reporter

OUR FIRST WORD is *sylvan*, from the Latin *silva*, meaning “wood.” *Sylvan* was first used in English in 1565. One dictionary defines *sylvan* as:

1. Living or located in the woods or forest
2. Of, relating to, or characteristic of woods or forest
3. Made, shaped, or formed of woods or trees
4. Abounding in woods, groves, or trees: wooded

For example, *Pennsylvania* means “Penn’s woodlands.”

Our second word is *verdure*, which comes to us from the French *verd*, meaning “green.” *Verdure* was first used in English in the 14th century. One dictionary defines *verdure* as:

1. The greenness of growing vegetation, also such vegetation itself
2. A condition of health and vigor
3. Unripe in experience or judgment

The derivative word *verdant*, first used in English in 1581, can also be used to indicate a lush and healthy growth of vegetation.

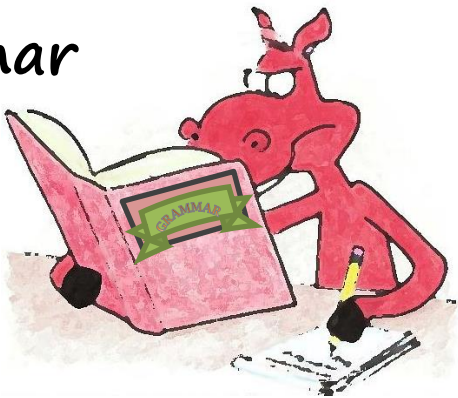
All the words profiled above are often used in novels when describing natural or agricultural scenes. But, how might you use the words *sylvan*, *verdure*, and *verdant* in your own letters, messages, and other writing?

Sources: *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*; *Dictionary of Word Origins*



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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 talked about subjects and predicates. In this installment, we’ll talk about **complements**.

Complements

Although some sentences are complete with only a subject and a predicate, many others need something else to complete their meaning. These additional parts of a sentence are called **complements**, and there are five types: *direct object*, *object complement*, *indirect object*, *predicate adjective*, and *predicate nominative*. Predicate adjectives and predicate nominatives are considered *subject complements*.

Direct Objects

One type of complement that is used with a transitive verb is a **direct object**: the word or words that receive the action of the verb. Direct objects are nouns (usually), pronouns (sometimes), or noun clauses (rarely). You can find the direct object by applying this formula:

1. First, find the subject of the sentence.
2. Second, find the transitive verb.
3. Third, say the subject and predicate, and then ask *whom?* or *what?* If a word answers either of those questions, it is a direct object.

All of this sounds more complicated than it is. Take a look at this sentence:

The little boy constantly dribbled the basketball in the outdoor play-ground.

You can find the subject (*boy*) and the verb (*dribbled*), so all you do is say *boy dribbled whom or what?* The word that answer that question (*basketball*) is the direct object. Easy enough, huh?

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

May is Get Caught Reading Month

By Rob Sharp, Post Reporter

OFT-TIMES WE hear people say, “I hate reading.” The sad thing about that is, in our world, reading is much more than simply fundamental — it is crucial to success. Everything we do requires at least some reading. Even using a cell phone requires the ability to send and receive texts. Our cars are more technologically linked now to screens, maps, and a host of other applications that, more often than not, link to smartphones. And, what about computer use? More than ever before, reading is a necessary skill.



In many cases, when someone says they hate reading or some other form of intellectual endeavor, it is because they don’t understand the process or aren’t very good at it. Math and reading are skills inextricably linked to one another. Do you want to be a carpenter? Then you will need to go to trade school and read and understand the textbooks. How about an automotive mechanic? Then you’ll need to work with published shop manuals on the makes and models of cars, trucks, motorcycles, etc. The list is almost endless of the kinds of work that require good reading skills.

At some point, you may have heard someone say, “All he does is read books,” as a negative comment about another person. The speaker of that sentiment is dooming himself from advancing much in life, either inside or outside of prison. It’s a nod to the old put-down of nerds, who in fact often become millionaires and billionaires like Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and a host of others. And what about the authors whose works get made into blockbuster movies: Dean Koontz, Stephen King, and others? You can bet they don’t mind getting caught reading.

How about you? Does it bother you to get caught reading? If so, then you should probably wonder why.

Memorial Day

By Jimmy Cates, Post Reporter



MEMORIAL DAY IS a day set aside to reflect and remember those who have given their lives so that we can enjoy the freedoms and the lifestyles we cherish today in America. Too often it seems, the sacrifices made by the heroes of the past appear forgotten, lost in the all-too-present mentality of the future-focused society we find ourselves.

First observed on May 5, 1866, Memorial Day was originally held in remembrance of all military personnel who died in the American Civil War (1861-65). The day has since been observed in honor of all Americans who died in service to our country. Proclaimed a federal holiday in 1971, Memorial Day is now observed on the final Monday of May.

When asked what Memorial Day meant to him, Vietnam vet Randy Gavigan (U.S. Army 1967-69) said, "It's a day set aside to honor our fallen and wounded veteran brothers. My grandfather lost his leg from the knee down in World War II, and I always looked up to him as someone worthy of respect because of what he was willing to sacrifice for our country and beliefs."

We as a country owe an enormous debt to all of the brave warriors who lost their lives. As Americans, we can recognize those who served with honor and courage and gave it all. Whether you are a veteran or simply want to honor those who are, take a moment to appreciate the brave Americans who sacrificed the utmost.



Paths

By Mark Daigre, Post Columnist

"There are more than three paths, then?"
 "Each of us has our own path, Mister Rawlins. Symbols are for interpretation, not definition."
 — Erin Morgenstern, *The Starless Sea*



IF WE LOOK at the evolution of the brain, one of the oldest parts, the amygdala, only allows three responses to any event: fight, flight, or freeze — three paths. In truth, there are an endless number of responses to any situation, an infinite number of paths to reach any goal.

When looking at recovery — or life in general — any goal can be likened to a mountain we are trying to climb. Each takes our own path, and, no matter how hard we try, we can never put our feet in the exact same spot as someone before us. There are a number of reasons for this; one might be that each person's experience is his or hers alone, we all have lived our own distinct lives.

Why does this matter? In the grand scheme, what difference does it make? As humans, we often mistake symbols as definition; we accept a representation of something as the reality of that object. Think back over your life. Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon? If so, there is a good chance you were able to view photos of it long before you went there. The photos, no matter how impressive, how technically perfect, cannot convey the grandeur of the canyon without being there. Having experienced the majesty, beauty, and scale that comes with being there, no photograph, piece of film, or written description could ever convey the magnitude of that experience.

However, a picture can sometimes allow us to relive those emotions and thoughts we had while on the canyon's rim. Moreover, as author Morgenstern notes above, the definition comes with the experience; the symbol is the photo.

Those who have experienced the Grand Canyon only through photographs, film, or descriptions can at some level appreciate the sense of magnificence of the canyon. Nevertheless, if ever given the chance to experience it, the thinness and insubstantiality of those descriptions is revealed.

In the insulated lives inside of prison, symbols can be all that is available. For example, a visit to the Grand Canyon cannot be achieved and this can lead some to believe they know all about it based on descriptions by others. This can give some a false sense of expertise. Many, inside and out, have been with someone who, with no lived experience, presents themselves an expert, based entirely on what they have read or learned in a classroom, and, as a result, cannot make a true connection with either the subject matter or those there to learn.

This is not to say those on the inside cannot have familiarity or expertise with myriad experiences — we can and do; however, the physical barriers that restrict our ability to see available paths also limit our areas of true expertise. With determination, perseverance, and dedication, we can build expertise in our lives, especially in those areas in which we can become familiar.

Facility D Mural Project

By Jason Rosacia, Post Reporter

HOW DO YOU feel when you see a gray sky in the morning? Maybe you feel sad or depressed. What about a sky filled with fluffy white cumulus clouds at sunrise? Now there's an image with which to start one's day on a positive note.

Many of the men on Facility D feel the same way, and so the facility is adding some uplifting, eye-catching paintings that match the beautiful hills and trees that surround us. They're doing this because therapy is a real priority of this institution that aspires to make the whole place look hospitable. And, while art won't necessarily help us to enjoy our stay in prison, even the experts agree that a little beauty and culture can't hurt.

With this in mind, the facility administration created the Mural Project in May 2023, and assigned three talented residents to do the job: Steve



Steve Marquez, Angel Ponce, and Sean Petznick at work on a Facility D mural at the Mule Creek State Prison. (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

(continued on page 7)



State and local governments must also make greater investments in strategies that we know protect people from criminal legal system contact — reinvesting in communities impacted by crime, with a focus on jobs, housing, education, and access to community-based health and substance use treatment.

Current Reality Skills

By Mark Daigre, Post Columnist

"Everything is change," Jaidee sighs. "It would be good for you to remember it. Clinging to the past, worrying about the future..." He shrugs. "It's all suffering."

—Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*

THE FOLLOWING ARE skills and characteristics many of us have used outside of prison in our criminal lives. We can take these skills and identify how they can be used to promote a new self and who we are trying to become. Many thought these skills would keep them from success, but with the right application, they can be assets in a life of usefulness, legality, and worth.

Prostitution

- Adaptability
- Intuition and judgment
- Assess needs of others
- Personable and charming
- Enterprising
- Good judgment of people
- Love of excitement
- Endurance
- Tolerance
- Good listener
- Survival skills
- Money management

Auto Theft

- Planning
- Creativity
- Ability to improvise
- Decision making
- Intuitive
- Ability to drive
- Mechanical skills
- Knowledge of cars
- Work well alone
- Perform under pressure
- Adventurous
- Risk taking
- Selectivity
- Team work

Burglary

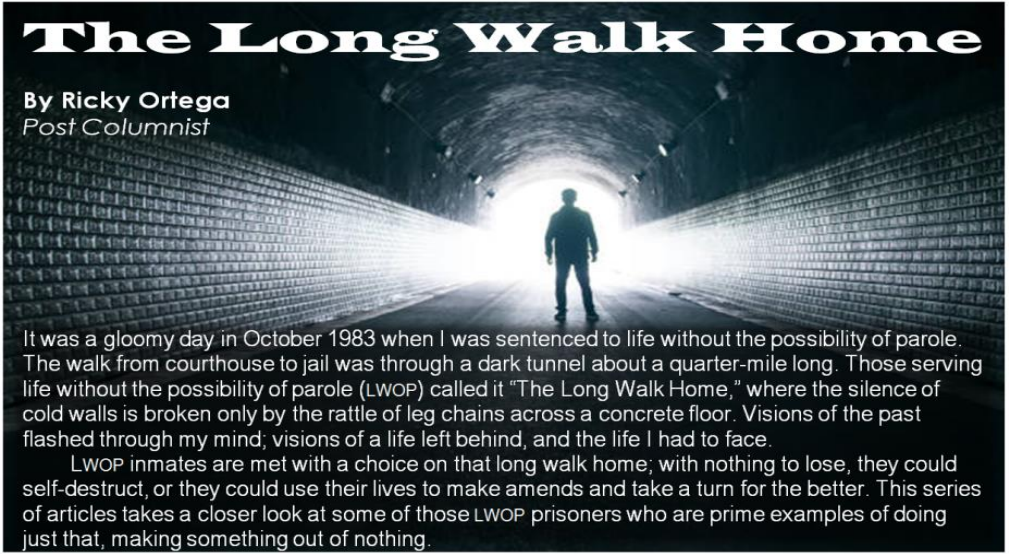
- Observant
- Able to plan and organize
- Knowledge of community resources
- Research information
- Selectivity
- Time management
- Adventurous
- Perform under pressure
- Quick thinking
- Good judgment of character
- Able to move fast
- Ability to improvise

Forgery

- Detail oriented
- Persuasive
- Confident
- Able to improvise
- Salesmanship
- Work well alone
- Perform under pressure
- Good memory
- Power of observation
- Able to plan and organize
- Public Relations
- Sensitive to others
- Artistic
- Knowledge of business community

The Long Walk Home

By Ricky Ortega
Post Columnist



It was a gloomy day in October 1983 when I was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. The walk from courthouse to jail was through a dark tunnel about a quarter-mile long. Those serving life without the possibility of parole (LWOP) called it "The Long Walk Home," where the silence of cold walls is broken only by the rattle of leg chains across a concrete floor. Visions of the past flashed through my mind; visions of a life left behind, and the life I had to face.

LWOP inmates are met with a choice on that long walk home; with nothing to lose, they could self-destruct, or they could use their lives to make amends and take a turn for the better. This series of articles takes a closer look at some of those LWOP prisoners who are prime examples of doing just that, making something out of nothing.

Forgotten

SENTENCED TO LIFE without parole in 1983, I've spent much of my time reaching for the meaning of life through prison bars, grasping onto memories that remind me of the person I used to be; I fear that I will slip away one day and my existence will be forgotten. But the more I miss out on, the more I realize the impact I had on my victim and how it has affected me, and I keep searching for reasons to face myself. I compare my selfish act of taking a human life to that of plucking daisies from a grassy meadow, casting them into the ocean where they wither and die, meanwhile inflicting continual pain upon their loved ones who have died on the inside. It's an inner struggle of my human spirit.

For now, as the years turn into decades, I begin to feel the effects of living this death sentence better known as life without parole. It's an endless voyage across the uncharted waters of prison life. As I test the stamina of my will to live, I summon the hope of being remembered; yet I drift further and further out to sea as my tomorrow is uncertain and it disappears into the distance. Tired of living yet afraid of dying, I'm swept away by the currents of time, by the changing seasons of life and death. One day I noticed something floating next to me amongst these ocean depths a daisy resting on the water with colors that sparkled as yellow as the afternoon sun and petals as white as winter snow. It was the daisy that never died, reminding me that it, too, wanted to be remembered.

Luke Scott was sentenced to die in prison in 1987. He reminisced, "My forgotten-self began as I sat inside the spacious holding cell after being sentenced to life without parole. I couldn't cry even though I was alone," admitted Scott. "I knew that no tears would be found in the dry cement that surrounded me, nor would anyone be concerned. [Those serving life without the possibility of parole] have no friends as they disappear or succumb into the dirt as the moments of Ground Hog Day [sic] tick by. No clock on the wall or a calendar because these belong to people who have a present and a future which are relevant to each other; those who have a person in their life present and worthy of noticing. My forgotten self draws away the feelings for contact," writes Scott. "It struggles to feel worthiness with changed addresses and it seeks to purchase a single moment of happiness and erases emotions which need others to validate. My forgotten-self requires nothing from anyone; it leaves my heart alone and lives inside my forgotten mind."

Scott recalled the changes he has encountered throughout his incarceration, "My forgotten-self had many levels of awareness when I first encountered this beast of the abyss, life without parole. There was an influx of negativity, anger, hate, and loneliness. Next came the drastic sensations of despair, the numbness of nothingness as the peaceful nature of isolation and pity fills each void. Lastly, there comes along the strength within the vulnerability, the insecurity of acceptance, and the renewal of opportunity to process change on the first day after Ground Hog Day [sic] of life without parole and its demise. My forgotten-self from others is at peace as my growth of perseverance has found a new home in each moment of tomorrow," wrote Scott.

Many doing life without parole have served four decades or more behind prison walls. For us, "The Long Walk Home" is an endless journey to a place we hardly remember; a place where daisies paint the landscape in a beautiful display of life. It's an arduous trek down lonesome highways, uncertain of our destination yet determined to arrive. When I get there, I will search for a grassy meadow next to the ocean in my mind where I will plant a daisy on a warm summer afternoon to honor the daisy that will never be forgotten.



By Richard “Lonewolf” Legan,
Post Columnist

I’VE FOUND THE herb wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) growing in Alaska and California. I always like eating this wild fruit whenever I find it while hiking.

This herb has several medicinal uses. It is used for rheumatic problems, gout, fevers, and kidney and liver complaints. Strawberries help clean teeth by removing stains. The leaves can be used as a tea and are calming to the system. The root has been used to treat diarrhea and urinary tract infections. The fruit is a great source of iron and potassium.

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.



The Winds of Change

AT THE PARIS Climate Summit in 2015, 195 nations agreed on the urgent need to limit total global warming to 2.7 °F above average in order to mitigate the worst impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. Eight years later, 2023 became the hottest year in history, pushing the earth precariously close to the 2.7 °F limit with record-high temperatures on land and in the oceans.

“It’s really difficult to see a path to keep warming below 1.5 °C (2.7 °F) ... the threshold will be surpassed,” said Kristina Dahl of the Union of Concerned Scientists. The results of continued warming are far-reaching and life-threatening: increased tree mortality and the loss of biodiversity; wildfires and drought; longer, hotter, and more frequent heat waves; radical rainfall and heavy flooding; destruction of ecosystems such as coral reefs, tropical forests, mangroves, and sea grass; rising ocean levels and melting sea ice; declining crop yields and famine; unrest and political destabilization. If warming isn’t kept below 3.6 °F, the impacts will intensify. Sea levels will rise an average of 22 inches and flood coastal areas. There will be a 25-percent increase in hot days and an 11-percent decrease in snow pack, which translates into diminished supplies of water for human usage. Are these catastrophes inevitable?

“Limiting warming to below 2 °C is still within reach, so long as countries strengthen and implement their pledges,” said Dahl.

These pledges include the one made by 200 nations last year in Dubai to move away from burning fossil fuels for energy. Another way to meet the increased demand for electricity is to harness the wind by installing turbines. While solar power is limited to available sunlight, wind blows day and night. Whether over the oceans, in the mountains, or across the flatlands, its capacity to generate power is almost unlimited. Wind energy potential is 10 times the total domestic demand. Wind can provide the perfect complement to solar power in generating the electricity needed.

One can’t travel any distance in California, even on a prison bus, without seeing wind farms that dot the landscape. From Palm Springs to Lancaster and through the inland valleys, day and night, rain or fog, the massive high-tech turbines are helping to drive the shift away from fossil fuels. Wind power in the U.S. supplied 10.2 percent of demand in 2022 at 144 gigawatts (144 billion watts), enough to power millions of homes. By 2030, wind capacity will double. These are impressive numbers, yet the U.S. trails behind China and Europe. In the United Kingdom, wind farms have grown tenfold: from 1.3 gigawatts in 2010 to 13 gigawatts in 2022. The British Isles have the ideal geography for wind farming: long coastlines and shallow ocean water with high wind speeds. The U.K. boasts the largest installation of wind turbines in the world, with another farm under construction nearby that will set a record for output when completed. The newest technology in offshore wind farming is floating towers. Without fixed bottoms on the ocean floor, turbines can be placed in deeper water where the wind speeds are higher. In 2022, there was only 124 megawatts of floating capacity worldwide because its market share was just getting started. Yet, it’s projected to grow rapidly and reach 40,000 megawatts by 2030.

While U.S. capacity of installed wind energy is much less than Europe and China, it will be increasing over the next few years. Along both coasts, ambitious wind projects are in the works. For example, in November, California voters can approve a billion-dollar bond measure to upgrade Long Beach Harbor, including the construction of wind towers the height of trestles on the Golden Gate Bridge. The price tag is only a fraction of the \$12 billion needed to reach the state’s goal of producing 25 gigawatts of wind power by 2025, enough to supply 750,000 homes. The average onshore turbines have blades 164 feet in length and produce 3 megawatts of power. The largest ones are 290 feet high and produce 7.5 gigawatts with a rotor diameter longer than a football field at 390 feet.

While the industrial revolution brought about our modern conveniences, it also created the climate crisis. For the sake of tomorrow’s children, we’re obligated to change our planet’s polluting ways. Using science, innovation, and the forces of nature, we can correct our mistakes and solve the most pressing problems of this age.

Installed Wind Capacity, 2022

(in gigawatts)

China	365
US	144
Germany	67
India	42
UK	28
Brazil	26
France	21
Rest of the world	212
Total:	905

US Installed Capacity Growth

(in megawatts)

2004	10,000
2012	60,000
2019	100,000
2021	140,000
2022	144,000

Sources: Wind Energy Factsheet, University of Michigan 2023; EWEA.org (European Union wind energy website); *LA Times National*, Feb. 1, 2024

Mother's Day Worldwide

By Earl S. Breckenridge,
Feature Reporter

ON MAY 12, 2024, Mother's Day will be celebrated in the United States and more than 40 countries around the world. Though the origins, traditions, and expression honoring mothers vary — both secular and religious — the campaign for an official Mother's Day holiday began in 1905.

At the death of her mother, Anna Jarvis tirelessly sought to honor Ann Reeves Jarvis and all mothers the world over. Ann Jarvis had been a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War. She also created Mother's Day Work Clubs to address public health issues.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation designating the second Sunday in May as a national holiday honoring mothers. Anna Jarvis was later dismayed at the rising commercialism, which she felt obscured and exploited for profit the intention of Mother's Day. She argued that mothers should receive handwritten letters that expressed love and gratitude rather than gifts and pre-made cards. She organized boycotts and protested the sale of carnations by American war mothers to raise money. She was arrested for disrupting the peace at a candy makers' convention in Philadelphia in 1923.

Held on different days and times, some form of celebration for mothers exists in countries around the world. There is Mother's Sunday in the United Kingdom, celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent; this Christian practice began in the 16th century, when one visits their mother church annually. In most countries, however, Mother's Day evolved from the U.S. holiday.

Other countries and cultures derive religious, historical, or legendary associations. In Islam, there is no concept of Mother's Day, but the Quran (the sacred

text of the Islamic faith) teaches that children should give priority to loving their mother over their father. Mother Pilgrimage Fortnight is celebrated among Hindu populations, where mothers are honored with special foods, observed in the month of Baisakh (April/May) on the day of the new moon. In Buddhism, the festival of Ullambana is derived from the story of Moodgalyayana and his mother. In Roman Catholicism, the holiday is strongly associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

While theologians, philosophers, and scientists the world over heatedly argue the origins, nature, and destiny of life, there is little contention that woman is mother of the living.

Bringing Awareness to ALS

By Jason Davis, Feature Reporter

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS) stands as the most prevalent and severe form of motor neuron disease, affecting an estimated two in 100,000 people worldwide. ALS, popularly known as "Lou Gehrig's disease," is a fatal and rapidly progressive disease characterized by the selective loss of motor neurons in the motor cortex, brainstem, and spinal cord. Muscle involvement, muscle atrophy, and subsequent paralysis are among the main features of this disease for which there are only very limited therapeutic options. The cause of most types of ALS is unknown.

Currently, no single test can definitively diagnose ALS. Diagnosis is often delayed due to the need to rule out other neurologic diseases with similar symptoms. Once a diagnosis is made, three drugs are now approved by the Food and Drug Administration to help slow functional decline or prolong life. Degeneration was once believed to be irreversible; however, physical exercise, especially moderate-intensity activity, has emerged as a potential therapeutic option for ALS. It stimulates muscle metabolism pathways, promotes muscle regeneration, and improves muscle conditions.

The incidence of ALS increases from age of 40 and peaks between the age of 65 and 70. Most patients' end of life cause is the result of respiratory muscle paralysis or lung infections within three to five years of the appearance of symptoms. With aging populations, improved diagnostic methods, and changes in reporting criteria, the incidence of ALS is likely to show an upward trend in the coming decades. Despite extensive research, the cause and pathogenesis of ALS remains unclear.

There is a clear need for improved care of patients with ALS, and to expedite the development of treatment. This includes patient and caregiver support groups that offer coping techniques and community, psychosocial, and educational support. Psychologists and other health care professionals can teach patients stress-management skills to help them deal with the myriad stressors identified by patients and caregivers that accompany a life-threatening illness such as ALS.

Sources: Aniket Saini, Pooja A.Chawla, "Breaking Barriers with Tofersen: Enhancing Therapeutic Opportunities in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis," *European Journal of Neurology*, February 2024; N.D. Nelson, M. Trial, N. Van, et al., "Quality Of Life in Patients with ALS: Perceptions, Coping Resources, And Illness Characteristics," *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 2003; E.C. Lai, "Therapeutic Developments in ALS," *Exp. Opin. Invest. Drugs*, 1999.

News Briefs

OKLAHOMA CITY (USA Today) — Gov. Kevin Stitt said he is confident in the state's current lethal injection protocols and has no plans to endorse a switch to nitrogen gas, even as several states are mulling following Alabama's lead in using nitrogen gas to execute death row inmates.

SALEM, Ore. (USA Today) — Three years ago, Oregon became the first state in the country to decriminalize illicit drugs. Now, it's becoming the first state to reverse course and reinstate criminal penalties for use and possession.

RALEIGH, N.C. (USA Today) — North Carolina has joined a nascent nationwide effort to improve outcomes for more prisoners who return to society through an approach focused on education, health care, and housing. Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, signed an executive order that seeks to reduce recidivism through formal training and workforce tools for incarcerated people so more can succeed once they are freed.

COLUMBUS, Ohio (USA Today) — Ohio's Republican attorney general put his weight behind a legislative effort to bring nitrogen gas executions to the state, joining what could be a national movement to pro death penalty states to expand capital punishment on the heels of Alabama's first use of the method.

"[Mother:] The person who has done more for you than anyone in the world."
— Anna Jarvis



By Heidi Wippel, Physical Education
Teacher/Recreation Coordinator,
California State Prison – Corcoran

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s correctional coaches collaborated with the Bakersfield College Rising Scholars program for their annual three-day professional development. This allowed for physical activities and stakeholder involvement. Coaches plan to use this professional development to mentor and inspire others who provide leadership within the prisons.

The correctional coaches have redefined their roles within the institutions, expanding the responsibilities of volunteers. Inspired by the San Quentin Athletic Programs, the Coaches Leadership Committee has worked to provide training events directly related to their day-to-day duties. Members of the committee include:

- Alicia Legarda, Office of Correctional Education administrator
- Stacey Hoffman, Kern Valley State Prison principal
- Forest Hauck, Centinela State Prison assistant principal
- Dave Gambill, California Correctional Institute coach
- Heidi Wippel, California State Prison – Corcoran coach
- Andy Scholl, Mule Creek State Prison coach
- Penny Thiels, High Desert State Prison coach
- Giancarlo Martinelli, Central California Women’s Facility coach
- Bryan Eskew, Avenal State Prison coach

This team has been serving coaches statewide by meeting once a month, using their correctional and recreational experience to share best practices. Most of the coaches work at correctional facilities, providing recreational needs for the incarcerated population.

Coaches have unique positions where they have a variety of duties that combine the need to have subject matter expertise in both physical education and

recreational knowledge, but also correctional awareness to work on the prison yards, gyms, and dayrooms directly with the population. All coaches are required to have a physical education teaching credential issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Also, coaches are under the supervision of their institution’s principal. Correctional coach duties include:

- Procure and process institutional movies
- Procure, receive, distribute, install, and repair recreation equipment
- Train and mentor recreation clerks and coordinators
- Establish recreational tournaments and lead operations of all events
- Meet regularly with advisory councils to address needs and concerns
- Provide training on rules and best practices for all sports units
- Facilitate physical activities such as yoga and fitness
- Provide special events through outside community volunteer programs
- Work collaboratively with the institution’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Office, facility captains, associate wardens, chief deputy warden, and warden
- Work closely with their television specialist to create content for recreation
- Work directly with gym officers, yard officers, sergeants, and lieutenants to facilitate activities
- Collaborate with mental health staff to provide recreation
- Attend annual conferences for physical education best practices including the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
- Work with community partners such as universities and colleges

This year’s event involved outside agencies such as Cal South Soccer, U.S. Tennis Association, Between the Lines Prison Basketball Program, Mastery Prison Home Run Ministries, Fresno State Recreation administration professional Dr. Brandon Taylor, and the Bakersfield College Rising Scholars Program.

The highlight of the event was a special appearance from recently paroled Aaron “Showtime” Taylor. Taylor was featured in an *Inside CDCR* article highlighting his story of redemption and transition back into the community. Taylor shared his story with a strong message that sports and recreation matter behind bars, and the role that coaches play is a significant piece of the rehabilitative puzzle.

More Than a Game

By Fabian Garcia, Spanish Reporter



AS ONE OF California’s northern-most prisons, the High Desert State Prison in Susanville is least likely to hold events sponsored by outside organizations. Fortunately for basketball aficionados, Ballers 4 Christ (B4C) — an athletic-driven organization geared towards spiritual fellowship — made the journey to compete against the Facility A team. Ultimately winning 98-80, the home team was unstoppable, and the event allowed residents the chance to congregate with like-minded members of the public.

Sporting events have always been synonymous with good-spirited fellowship, and placing these two elements inside a prison gym for a special sort of game is a win for everyone involved.

“I appreciated the outside team coming here to play,” said Darnell Dorsey. “It really makes a difference in our rehabilitation.”

Happenings of this type are few in High Desert, and giving the institution a chance to take part helps lessen the isolation sometimes felt by its residents.

“We were all abuzz with excitement at the opportunity to play against outside competition,” said Hanif Gereau, the prison’s point guard. “Not only were our opponents excellent guests, but they also provided fierce competition that called for us to turn it up in order to pull out a victory.”

Incarcerated players and spectators agreed B4C has an open invitation to come back for a rematch. More importantly, the locals appreciated the way Ballers 4 Christ represented themselves, a positive reflection of their organization’s mission statement: “To provide opportunity to pursue, grow, and strengthen our relationship with Christ through athletics ... drawing us closer to God.”



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.

A Trauma Survival Guide

By The Trauma Stewardship Institute,
TraumaStewardship.com

When Experiencing:

- Loneliness, isolation, strained relationships
- Feeling helpless, hopeless, & that one can never do enough
- Addictions
- Hyper-vigilance & always serious
- Sub-impeccable/toxic conduct & compromised impulse control
- Anger and cynicism
- Difficulty empathizing/minimizing/numbing
- Guilt/fear/complicated grieving
- Negativity bias
- Lack of awe
- Sense of persecution
- Grandiosity
- Fight/flight/immobility response
- Disheartened & dispirited
- Dissociative moments
- Intense/rigid/controlling/unable to embrace complexity
- Inability to see options & decreased creativity
- Lack of presence/deliberate avoidance/cognitive overload
- Physical ailments, depression, anxiety, & other mental health considerations
- Pulled toward confirmation bias & away from critical thinking
- Chronic exhaustion & saturated nervous system

Try This:

- **Protect your mornings** or whenever you wake up (*less cortisol, more intentionality*)
- **Go outside** or look outside (*perspective, context and something larger than this*)
- **Be active** and avoid stagnation (*in body, mind, and spirit*)
- **Cultivate relationships** (*those that are edifying and healthy*)
- **Nurture gratitude** (*what's one thing, right now, that's going well?*)
- **Detox** (*if navigating addictions, be wise and safe; limit news and social media*)
- **Spend time with animals** (*less stress and more comfort*)
- **Metabolize all you are experiencing** (*re-regulate your nervous system*)
- **Simplify** (*less is more; be aware of decision fatigue and cognitive overload*)
- **Admire art** (*feeling transported*)
- **Laugh** (*pure humor = a sustaining force*)
- **Foster humility & extend grace** (*self-righteousness + hubris = unhelpful*)
- **Sleep** (*to cleanse and repair brain and body*)
- **Clarify intentions** (*how can I refrain from causing harm, How can I contribute meaningfully?*)
- **Be realistic and compassionate** with yourself (*be mindful of how your presence means so much to others*)

Forgiveness Factor

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us.
— Martin Luther King Jr.

ON A PATH of inner peace and atonement, forgiveness presents itself as the portal to change. The simple concept of forgiving, however, is anything but simple. Our inability to forgive can influence every aspect of our lives, confines us to living in the trauma-filled world of past hurt, and has debilitating effects. We have all suffered terrible harm, as we all have inflicted great harm onto others. In that paradigm of trauma-influenced awareness, we see the world through the lens of our past trauma and ride a rollercoaster of emotional turmoil. Forgiveness is the free pass off that carnival ride.

Forgiveness requires us to be willing to see the other person or self as nothing more or less than human, fallible, and flawed, and more than likely trying the best we can even as we continually make mistakes. Forgiving is allowing love to guide us, transcending ego consciousness in order to create an atmosphere that enables a possibility of something better. It is seeing and feeling the humanity of someone who has caused harm — including self — and seeing, feeling, and accepting the innocence that underlies the harm.

When we release the fixation on self (also called *ego identification* or *local mind*) to align with others and become aware of their humanness and consciousness (*nonlocal mind* or *nonlocal consciousness*), we begin to be in coherence with a larger awareness. We see outside the box, are aware of the bigger picture, and can explore limitless possibilities. In this elevated consciousness we have transcended the small thinking that keeps us confined in a world of division, anger, trivial or petty annoyances — the “me-or-them” narrative. We open the world to “us” instead of shutting it down and living in our little boxes of personal grievances.

Take a moment and just consider: What if we genuinely decided to forgive someone (or self) for the worst thing they ever did? What would that be like? In this fantasy world, what’s the worst that could happen? We let someone (or self) off the hook for unforgiveable harm? We give a free pass to a transgression that has been previously unforgiveable? We allow ourselves to view others and to be viewed with warm loving eyes. We offer a genuine spirit of love and allow it to envelope our being. We turn on the light inside that has kept our soul dark with mistrust, contempt, and the illusion of rightness. What would that be like?

We might find that people begin to respond to us differently. Forgiveness changes everything and everyone. Releasing that venom and hate frees the mind, soul, spirit, and life is a totally different experience. We have opened a door to the prison of small mindedness that has kept us confined, and are being led by some force that beckons to a better world. We have let the light of love shine through that dismal twilight of hate that we inherently knew wasn’t where we wanted to be anyway.

We can’t resent or hate another without recognizing some of what we hate inside ourselves. Forgiveness allows mercy, to self and others. It opens the soul to the vast goodness that is in all of us. When we forgive, we unlock a great power from within, a power that has immense impact and energy that ripples out in currents of positive energy.

There is a purpose why we are here, why these people are in our personal solar systems. Surely, that purpose is not to hate and hold on to grievances and division. Surely, there is greater purpose in the miracle of life.

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





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.

Maya Emig writes a monthly column for the Mule Creek Post focusing on Board of Parole Hearings issues. For more information about the BPH, write:

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Rehabilitative Programs**
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Act as if what you
do makes a
difference. It does.

— William James

The Stages of Change, Pt. 2

By Maya Emig, Post Columnist

LAST MONTH, WE left off with Stage 1 – *pre-contemplation*. This stage is characterized by ignoring the problem altogether. Look back at the times in your life when you were engaging in criminality or before that — had you stopped then, would you be in prison now? Would you go back to those decisions and make different ones?

If you are reading this article, then you are likely not in the pre-contemplation stage, though you probably know individuals who are. During this stage people are not considering change and do not understand how damaging their behavior is. They certainly are not thinking about their victims or their future victims. For those who are in this pre-contemplation stage, start thinking about your actions and what they are costing you. A small example: Holding that cell phone is likely stressful, as you wonder when you will be caught. Perhaps you listen more attentively to movement, or wonder when the next cell search will happen. Being that aware is costing you peace of mind.

Stage 2 is *contemplation*. There are strategies to deal with this contemplation stage. Start listing the pros and cons of making a change or not making a change — weighing the pros and cons of the behavior change whether it’s working on your addiction, your anger issues, your criminality, or for some of us our issues around overeating. We all have our issues. It is during this contemplation stage that people may view change as a process of giving something up rather than a means of gaining something physically, emotionally, or mentally. If you are contemplating a behavioral change, there are some important questions to ask yourself: Why do you want to change? Is there something preventing me from change? What are some of the things that could help me change?

Look into self-help programming. Read books, enroll in correspondence classes, and if you are lucky enough to have a tablet then you should have access to programming and education. Figure out your issues and start contemplating the pros and cons of addressing them.

Stage 3 is *preparation*. This stage is characterized by small changes, and experimenting with small changes. If you are in this stage, get information about strategies for change. Write down your goals and write a list of motivating statements for yourself like “It takes courage to grow and become who you really are.” “Nothing is impossible.” “Your future self will thank you.” “Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels.” Reading books related to your issues, consulting with an attorney who concentrates on parole suitability matters, and putting together a list of books you will read that address your specific issues are just a few suggestions as you make a plan for success.

I spend time every week helping individuals create action plans, and what I can tell you is that having discernible goals is very important. Do not just run to run — run with a specific goal in mind. Unraveling your criminality can be hard on your own, and I often speak to individuals who are running just to run. In my next article, I will be discussing the big picture that I hope gives you a better and more defined goal.

Stage 4 is *action*. This stage is about making steps toward the goal — it is about taking directed action. During this stage, seek support from other individuals, especially individuals in your groups who are aligned with your thinking and have goals similar to yours. Learning together is extremely valuable. Find people who cheer you on and encourage you to be your best self. If you are currently taking action toward achieving your goals, then please congratulate yourself and reward yourself for the positive steps that you take. This is called positive reinforcement and it’s important to do. On a basic level, it’s akin to giving your dog a treat when it sits. To this day, I reward myself when I accomplish goals whether they are professional goals or personal goals. When you are moving toward your goals, it’s important to check in with yourself and see where you are, see what is working for you and what is not. Get rid of those things that are not working for you and replace them with more things that work. Also, check to see what your motivations are and what kind of additional resources you may need. Keep reconfirming your commitment as well.

Stage 5 is *maintenance*. This stage is about maintaining this new behavior and avoiding temptation. Whether it’s addiction, gangs, explosive anger, or criminality — it’s about maintaining your sobriety, staying away from anti-social peers, managing your anger, and being pro-social. Reconfirm your commitment to maintaining your goals. Rewarding yourself and checking in with yourself is important in this stage as well. This maintenance stage is really an important stage because it involves successfully avoiding former behaviors and maintaining the new behaviors, such as maintaining your sobriety. Using learned coping skills is very important, as is remaining hyper vigilant about your triggers.

(continued on page 14)

(from *Stages of Change*, pg. 13)

Replacement factors are also important here that replace old habits with positive ones. As I mentioned at the beginning, relapse is always a possibility, and is always a possibility at any stage of change.

Some researchers even include a sixth stage, *relapse*, noting that most people experience nine to 18 episodes of relapse before change really takes hold. What this means is that it's normal and to be expected — don't beat yourself up! Just pick yourself up and keep running. You can do this!

The Path of a Rescission Hearing

By Vanessa Nelson-Sloane,
Life Support Alliance

1. The process begins with a referral from the governor, who states reason for the request to have the Board of Parole Hearings review its decision.
2. En banc board reviews earlier grant of parole:
 - a. If a majority vote in favor of parole, the grant is upheld and matter is concluded.
 - b. If the majority determines the grant may not be appropriate, a rescission hearing is orders.
3. A rescission hearing determines if parole was improvidently granted, based on factors examined at the parole hearing or new factors. There is no questioning; statements may be made by the inmate or their attorney, the DA, and the victim or next of kin.
4. Decision:
 - a. The board may conclude that the parole grant should stand.
 - b. The board may conclude that parole was improvidently granted and parole should be rescinded. The inmate will be scheduled for a new parole suitability

Living A Noetic Life

Life as Transformative Practice

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

HOW DO WE begin to develop our own noetic knowing (inner awareness)? Much of what guides us lies below the threshold of our consciousness, and as we begin to bring our awareness to the factors that influence our lives, we may examine our assumptions and broaden our understanding, thus becoming more proactive in our lives.

Creativity provides a framework for breakthroughs in discovery and understanding, and as we address difficult problems we can focus inward instead of looking for answers outside of self. Inner awareness increases brain activity in conceptual processing; focusing inwardly silences irrelevant thoughts and stimuli from without. With introspection, every problem is an opportunity for growth. We can develop the inner, introspective abilities to prepare the brain for problem solving, allowing mind-consciousness expansion. There are five basic elements to conditioning the mind for greater awareness and realization.

Intention: There are different types of intention, such as: 1) Effortful striving; 2) Bringing intention to awareness — breathing and focus from distraction, relief from anxiety such as with meditation, walking in nature; 3) Others' intentions put on us, such as a teacher's expectations and their effects; 4) Transpersonal intention — aims in which we influence others; 5) Intention as a transformative practice — what do we want to change or influence, and how do we apply intention? If we grow roses, for instance, that can be a transformative practice. If we love growing roses and bring intention to bear, becoming aware of the transformative nature of the experience in the moment, this is intentional awareness. If we apply intention to the art of writing, another example, by not just researching and writing the story, but are in love with the story and the process, we bring the intention to the writing and the experience in a more genuine way. It becomes a transformative experience.

Attention: Where do we place attention? Where do we focus our consciousness? Cultivating self-observation is an opportunity to bring greater self-awareness of who we are, taking in sensory information and recognizing we are aware of being aware — through meditation, journaling, becoming aware of nature and consciousness. Also, by becoming aware of critical self-talk and becoming more compassionate to self and others, our awareness is focused.

Repetition: Building new habits. Schlitz reports that 40 percent of actions are habits, not decisions. To build new habits in order to change we have to train awareness — find an intentional way of being in the world. Setting intention and arranging our world for success includes building a support network and rewarding self when things go right. This is retreading neural pathways — creating new experiences to order to live in new ways. This is transformation and requires working these tools daily. The body craves things we're used to. We can override these urges and desires and old reactive actions by learning to behave in new ways. Building new habits is through repetition.

Guidance: Humans crave wisdom. Listen to self, to internal knowing and learn to trust our feelings. Honor intuition. Repeatedly making good decisions — those with good outcomes — increases self-trust.

Acceptance: To be agile and resilient in the face of a complex world. We can be accepting of challenging and difficult people and situations by mastering balance in the midst of difficulties. To become wiser and better are techniques for transformation that allows a more joyful life. Practice gratitude: What am I truly grateful for? Another person, a book, something that's difficult? In our greatest adversities, we find our greatest opportunities for transformation and in that moment through a transformative experience; that's a gift. Take a life-affirming action every day, perhaps a gratitude meditation. Think of the goodness of what we're going through. Think of what the good qualities are about another person. Take actions that are stronger than our fears.

The mundane daily experiences are there to imbue transformation. Every moment of every day, notice when we feel reactive. Bring the prefrontal cortex into play and pay attention to how we can stay in the moment. Be aware of ego triggers. Ego is a donkey. We want to ride the donkey to the top of the mountain, not let the donkey ride us. This is transformation.

For more about this topic search "Noetic Living" on the Edovo educational app. Marilyn Schlitz also lists two books that changed her life: Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, and Psychic Exploration by Edgar Mitchell.

Missteps

The article by Rodeski M. Edwards on page 7 of the April edition, "Designing Homes from Behind Bars," failed to mention that a version of the article previously appeared in the *All of Us or None* newsletter.

The calendar in the December 2022 edition erroneously listed December as Black History Month, American Heart Association Month, and National Cancer Prevention Month; these actually fall in February.

GDA Calls for Assistance

By Jason Davis, Feature Reporter

ON FEB. 13, 2024, Guide Dogs of America president Russell Gittlen, along with Tender Loving Canine's director Jaime Hunt and assistant director Cheryl Herman, visited the Mule Creek State Prison to present the Puppy Raiser Orientation on Facility E with the hope of placing six Labrador puppies.

The program goal of graduating 60 service dogs per year requires 150 puppies in the program, as only 40 percent make it through the process to graduation. "That's why puppy raisers are so critical," said Hunt.

Volunteers work with a K9 development team that gives them the tools and support to be successful. The focus is getting the dog into a routine, building confidence, and developing the six basic obedience commands.

Hunt spoke of the importance of listening to the dog as a way of building a bond. "Puppy raising takes a lot of work," she said. "I'm not sugar coating it — [the] first few weeks kinda sucks."

In the puppy management schedule, there are outings and workshops, meetings and K9 kindergarten, all emphasizing positive reinforcement training. Herman explained the need for socializing with the environment, body handling, even escalators, as they will be with the raiser volunteers for 14 to 16 months. She also warned of a spreading respiratory disease often found at dog parks, yet reminded everyone that there are many other alternatives to dog parks.

Gittlen spoke on the impact the program has on the clients the dogs go to: veterans, autistic children, police, schools, and medical facilities. "It's a selfless act that is good for the community," he said. Gittlen encouraged everyone to sign up and be part of the program. "What you and we do is giving back," he said. "We couldn't do it without you."

In the end, four prison employees made the commitment, including Mule Creek's community resource manager Jason Ross. "I just want to do my part," he said.

Ultrasound Therapy for Tremors, Alzheimer's, and Drug Addiction

By Al Rice, Copy Editor



ULTRASOUND HAS BEEN used for over 70 years to image internal organs and developing fetuses, but now it's being used in revolutionary ways by doctors on the cutting edge of medicine, like Dr. Ali Rezai, executive director of the Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute in Morgantown, West Virginia.

In a Jan. 14, 2024 segment on *60 Minutes*, correspondent Sharyn Alfonsi and her team were permitted to observe Rezai's use of ultrasound therapy to attempt to decrease the cognitive impairment of Alzheimer's patients. "It's never been done before," said Rezai. "There's no miracle cure here. It's advancing medicine with calculated risks and pushing the frontiers."

According to Rezai, the objective of using ultrasound in treating Alzheimer's patients is to open the blood-brain barrier so that two Food and Drug Administration-approved, intravenously administered drugs — aducanumab and lecanemab — can enter the brain and break up the brain plaque (beta-amyloid protein) that has built up there. They believe it is this protein that disrupts communication between the cells of the brain and causes the disease.

In 2019, Rezai and his medical team used ultrasound to treat a tremor in Dan Wahl, which he'd been suffering for 15 years. By focusing the ultrasound into a portion of the thalamus, the team destroyed a tiny portion of cells they believed caused Wahl's tremor. Two hours later the tremor was gone. It was this success that convinced Rezai ultrasound might be used to help patients with various brain disorders, including addiction.

"We've been able to map out with neuroscience imaging [that] there's a specific part of the brain that is electrically and chemically malfunctioning that is associated with addiction," said Rezai. "It's a brain disease; it's an electrical and chemical abnormality in the brain that occurs over time with recurrent use of drugs. And this can be any substance, alcohol, can be opioids, amphetamines, cocaine, and they all are involving the same part of the brain."

Rezai's team, said Alfonsi, "would be the first to treat addicts by aiming hundreds of beams of ultrasound to a precise point deep inside the brain."

"So the area that we're treating is the reward center in the brain, which is the nucleus accumbens," said Rezai. "And we deliver ultrasound waves to that specific part of the brain, and we watch how acutely, on the table, your cravings and your anxiety changes in response to ultrasound."

"How is ultrasound making a change here?" asked Alfonsi.

"Ultrasound energy is changing the electrical and chemical milieu, or activity, in this structure in the brain involving addiction and cravings," said Rezai.

"Just resetting them and giving them kind of a fresh start?" asked Alfonsi.

"At this point, it seems like the brain is being reset, or rebooting of the brain, and the cravings are less, they are managed, anxiety is better," said Rezai. "So now that allows them to interact with a therapist. It's very important to know that this is not a cure, but an augmentation of the therapy by reducing the cravings and anxiety that's so overwhelming that the therapist has difficulty working with the patient."

In February of 2023, Alfonsi and her team watched as Rezai utilized 90 watts of focused ultrasound energy on Dave Martin, who's been using drugs since the age of 7, any kind of drug he could find for the past 37 years. A brain scan was taken while showing Martin images of drug use, which allowed Rezai to spot the segment of the nucleus accumbens most active from Martin's induced cravings. Afterward, the images of drug use did not cause the cravings.

"The day of the procedure, it was the best day of my life," said Martin. "I didn't experience the same effect as, like, the times before ... I didn't feel like I needed, the urge or the desire to use wasn't there anymore."

"So within 15 to 20 minutes of treatment, the craving and anxiety melts away, and we're seeing this pattern in multiple instances," said Rezai. "They get off the table and go home."

Rezai is currently utilizing ultrasound therapy on several dozen addiction patients, and is thinking about how he might use ultrasound to help others with brain disorders, to include obesity and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"This is serious business," said Rezai, "research that's never been done before. We have to learn more. We have to replicate our findings. There's always a risk, but you cannot advance and make discoveries without risk. But we need to push forward and take the risk, because people with addiction and Alzheimer's is not going away; it's here so why wait 10, 20 years? Do it now."

Opinion: Foster Care in the U.S.

By Jesse Carson, Editor-in-Chief

MAY 7 IS National Foster Care Day, a day to think about the foster care system in this country. Nationally, almost half a million young people were in foster care in 2023; almost 1 percent of Americans under the age of 18 are in foster care.

Why does this matter? I recall my brief stay in a foster home as a boy, and the older kids telling me what my life was going to look like as a foster child. It was depressing and discouraging, certainly, but even those veterans didn't know how bleak the future really was. By the age of 17, over half of foster children will be arrested, and 70 percent of those who "age out" of the system will be arrested at least once by the age of 26.

What some call the foster care-to-prison pipeline is even starker: Twenty-five percent of former foster youth wind up in prison within two years, and according to the California legislature, over 70 percent of all incarcerated individuals have spent time in the foster care system. It's telling that five of the 10 states with the most foster children also have the highest number of prisoners in the country.

What is to be done? The country needs to devote more resources to the foster care system and the effective training of social workers and foster parents to recognize how traumatic the system is for a young person. Also, studies show that overall criminality was reduced when children were returned home, due to all the work parents must undergo with social workers and courts in order for their duties to be returned to them. Those two things — increasing the number of capable foster parents and reunifying families — can have a huge impact on the rate of crime and incarceration in the U.S. That's time and money well spent.

Sources: "Youth in Care 2011-2023," *The Imprint*; "National Prisoner Statistics Program," Bureau of Justice Statistics; Jaxzia Perez, "The Foster Care-to-Prison Pipeline: A Road to Incarceration," Oct. 18, 2023

Addicted to Punishment

By Emily Widra, Prison Policy Initiative

JAILS AND PRISONS are often described as de facto mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, and corrections officials increasingly frame their missions around offering healthcare. But the reality is quite the opposite: People with serious health needs are warehoused with severely inadequate healthcare and limited treatment options. Instead, most of these institutions prioritize mail scanning policies and visitation rules that fail to prevent drugs from entering facilities, according to data compiled by Prison Policy Initiative and the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Substance Use in Jails and Prisons Far Outpace Rates in General Public

Nationally, approximately 8 percent of people met criteria for substance use disorders in 2019, but such disorders are far more common among people who are arrested (41%) and people incarcerated in federal (32%) or state prisons (49%). This means that approximately 3 million people with substance use disorders are locked up in a given year: at least 2 million with substance use disorders are arrested annually, about half a million in state and federal prisons meet the criteria for such disorders at the time of their admission.

- **Jails:** In 2019, only 64% of all people admitted to jail each month were screened for opioid use disorder, but only 15% met the criteria for opioid use disorder. Because we cannot see the full picture, it's useful to look at mortality data as well. More than 15% of jail deaths in 2019 were attributed to drug or alcohol overdose, a significant increase from 4% (2000) and 7% (2009).
- **Prisons:** Prison Policy Initiative estimates that more than 578,000 people (47%) in state and federal prisons in 2022 had a substance use disorder in the year prior to admission. While the mortality rates are lower than jails, 7% in 2019, almost all deaths were attributed to drug or alcohol intoxication, compared to 2% in 2009. Meanwhile, in 2019, only 4% of all deaths in the U.S. were attributed to drug or alcohol intoxication.

Treatment Options in Jails and Prisons

Not every person who uses substances needs or wants treatment, but it is imperative that evidence-based, quality healthcare options be made available for those who do — regardless of their involvement in the criminal legal system. For people with opioid use disorder, this can include psychosocial treatment (including counseling), medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and self-help groups. In correctional settings, the availability of such options pales in comparison to the level of need.

- **Jails:** Of the nearly 3,000 local jails across the country, less than two-thirds (63%) screen people for opioid use disorder when they are admitted. Only half (54%) provide medications for people experiencing withdrawal. Only 41% provide behavioral or psychological treatment, and 29% provide education about overdose. The most effective treatment — medication-assisted treatment (MAT) — is the least provided: just 24% continue MAT for people already engaged in treatment, while only 19% initiate MAT for those who are not.
- **Prisons:** Most state and federal prisons (81%) offered some "drug or alcohol dependency, counseling, or awareness programs" in 2019, but among people in state prisons with a substance use disorder, only 10% had received clinical treatment in the form of a residential treatment program, professional counseling, detoxification unit, or MAT. This suggests the "drug or alcohol programming" available in prisons is primarily self-help or peer-based.

Misunderstanding Drug Use Inside

Consistent with a punitive approach, many corrections officials enforce serious sanctions for positive drug tests, medication diversion, and non-fatal overdoses. Sanctions for drug use in prisons can include solitary confinement, denied visitation, delayed parole hearings, loss of "good time," reduced programming, facility transfers, reclassification, and fines. There is, unsurprisingly, no evidence that these disciplinary policies actually reduce drug use behind bars. However, it is easy to imagine how such approaches create a dynamic in which people hide their drug use and engage in riskier, deadlier behaviors. The culture fostered by punishment does not actually address drug use — it just makes it more dangerous. People who need mental health and substance use treatment are better served in voluntary, non-carceral, clinical treatment settings.

Emily Widra is a senior policy analyst at the Prison Policy Initiative, PrisonPolicy.org.



May the Fourth Be With You



Luke Skywalker (CultureSlate.com)



Princess Leia (Medium.com)



Han Solo (StarWars.com)



Darth Vader (ew.com)



C-3PO (StarWars.Fandom.com)

Meet Counselor E. Albertson

By Don Chaddock,
Inside CDCR Editor

SINCE 2005, E. Albertson has helped the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) fulfill its mission, first as a correctional officer and now as a correctional counselor. During her nearly two decades with CDCR, she's seen the department evolve with renewed focus on rehabilitation.

Albertson has worked in many different areas of the prison, spending nine years as a correctional officer, nearly half that time in the Investigative Services Unit. She spent the bulk of her career at the Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy as an officer and sergeant. She transferred to the Mule Creek State Prison as a correctional counselor. She can be found working in the Mule Creek Infill Complex, a Level II facility more closely resembling a college campus than a prison.

She said she joined the department for many reasons but the biggest was job security, stability, and benefits. "I was a single parent working two jobs in management, seven days a week," she recalled. "Starting as an officer, I knew at least I would get two days off a week. Also, I would still make more money than I was working two jobs."

Having retirement benefits, she said, meant she was also working for a future. "I haven't given retirement much thought," she laughed. "Maybe I'll get a part time job to keep busy."

Like any job, she said there are challenges but being in a prison environment amplifies those challenges. "Sometimes it's hard to find something positive when surrounded by so much negative," Albertson said. "These people have worked their way to be here [on the Level II facility]. When you see the light bulb go on, seeing positive change, is inspirational. You don't see it every day."

According to Albertson, a typical day involves casework and being involved in various programs. "I juggle my time with different groups like transgender, journaling, youth diversion, and incarcerated journalism, which is currently paused," she said. "Getting to know those on my caseload makes all the difference."

For those serving life sentences with the possibility of parole, she helps them study and prepare for their hearings. "Sometimes we have milestones we want to meet such as getting degrees [or other] time sensitive goals," she said. "[As a counselor], you have to juggle your eight hours."

While some may have academic goals, others have different interests such as woodworking. For those who earn a diploma or degree, it's a big moment. "A 45-year-old who gets his high school diploma might be the proudest moment for their family," she said.

Promoting, she said, means being open to learning. "If you want to do case work, learn every aspect of your area. Ask questions. When I first promoted to sergeant, I had many correctional officers with more years in the department. I would take them aside and ask for input on what is or isn't working," Albertson said.

When she started with the department in 2005, she said she never would have imagined herself staying after work as a volunteer. "Now I'm sponsoring groups," she said. "I see the changes [in the population as] we offer more positive programming."

For the incarcerated population serving life without the possibility of parole, she said the positive atmosphere has influenced them as well. "Many see the positive changes so everything seems lighter," Albertson said.

Said Albertson, the California Model is here. While the department begins a massive shift in corrections, she believes it's time for staff to get behind the effort. "Up here, in Level II, implementing the California Model will work but it might be more difficult in Level IV yards," she said. "My personal thoughts and beliefs need to be set aside. If the California Model is the direction we are going, you need to get on board."

Editor's Note: As a trusted adviser and thorough proofreader, CCI Albertson has become essential to the success and operation of the Mule Creek Post, helping us maintain high standards of journalism and integrity.



CCI E. Albertson (D. Chaddock / Inside CDCR)



Albertson's dog, Sasha.
(Courtesy of CCI E. Albertson)

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Chew bacca (Wikipedia.org)



R2-D2 (ReflektSabers.com)



Jabba the Hutt (Disney.Fandom.com)



Senator Palpatine (ScreenRant.com)



Grogu (TheGuardian.com)



Yoda (TheFactSite.com)

The Exodus of Michael Burton-Brown

By O. Rick Bridges, Feature Reporter



Michael Burton-Brown (H. Kim / Media Specialist)

MICHAEL BURTON-BROWN stood in the canteen line in a light rain. It wasn't his draw, but he wanted to spend the rest of the money available in his account. After a lengthy term in prison, just over 21 years, he was at last headed for home in Los Angeles. There was much to do — many conversations to bring to an orderly conclusion, and many heartfelt goodbyes.

After a referral from the office of the director of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation under Penal Code §1170(d)(1), Burton-Brown was resentenced: a 30-years-to-life sentence was reduced to 11 years. After credit for time served, he was to be released in a few days to serve a brief period of parole in transitional housing before going home.

Home had always been close, just a few hundred miles away. Then again, there were the gates and fences that kept Burton-Brown from the immediate reach of it. It was his faith that bridged the distance. "I've been a really serious Christian for the past 24 or 25 years," said Burton-Brown. "Reflecting back, when I closed my Bible, everything in my life went to hell. I went to hell with it. I made a promise to myself at Los Angeles County Men's Central Jail that no matter what, I'd never close it again."

Throughout the incarcerated journey, he was faithful to that promise. "My thing was to always be true to myself," said Burton-Brown. "I've never adapted to prison. I loathe the prison lifestyle and everything that goes along with it. My best day in prison was the day that my mother and father came to visit together at California Men's Colony in my 17th year of custody. It felt like they became my life raft."

While Burton-Brown was busy completing his bachelor's degree in seminary and ministry, the winds and tides began drifting that life raft toward home in late 2022. That's when his family hired attorney Lisa Mattern of Los Angeles to advocate for his release. There were what seemed endless hearings, endless filings, endless requests for information and, of course, endless prayer. "My spirituality is probably the only thing that kept me sane," he said. "Lisa was a godsend. Secure in her role as a competent professional, she did a phenomenal job for us."

Before parting, there were a few things that Burton-Brown wanted the residents of the Mule Creek State Prison to know. "I'm pretty impressed with the way that the majority of this population is engaging with rehabilitative opportunities," he said. "I marvel at the change that I see in the men around me. There are some exceptions, but they are a shrinking minority. The majority rules as far as I'm concerned. I'm glad that God brought me to this place as the destination of my incarcerated journey. I applaud and encourage each one of you: Don't give up. And, if you believe in a God, get out of the way and let God work."

News Briefs

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (*USA Today*) — Alabama's first use of nitrogen gas for an execution could gain traction among other states and change how the death penalty is carried out in the United States, much like lethal injection did more than 40 years ago, according to experts on capital punishment. Attorney General Steve Marshall said the execution of a 58-year-old convicted of a 1988 murder-for-hire went off as planned and his office is ready to help other states if they want to begin nitrogen executions.

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Darth Maul (StarWars.com)



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Princess Amidala (Wikipedia.org)



Admiral Ackbar (Vulture.com)

Broken Gods

The Role of Religion in Rehabilitation

By Earl S. Breckenridge, Feature Reporter

RELIGION IN AMERICA is as old as the nation itself. Many of the nation's colonists adhered to some form of religious persuasion, and religion is mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. Religious identity shaped the values, moral structure, institutional and political worldview of the young nation's rise to world prominence. This religious impetus would fuel the civil rights movement and later influence the nation's jurisprudence and understanding of crime, human nature, and how and what it means to be law-abiding citizens. Given such religious history, many researchers wanted to know if religion played a measurable role in offender rehabilitation and societal safety.

Thomas P. O'Connor of the Oregon Department of Corrections writes:

There is a deeply held belief among many in the U.S. that religion plays a profound and necessary role in the creation and maintenance of a moral and law-abiding community. A 1991 survey found that about one out of every three inmates (32%) participate in worship services, Bible study groups and other religious activities, making religious involvement one of the most common forms of 'programming' in U.S. state prisons [citing the U.S. Department of Justice].

America's first penitentiaries evolved on the religious idea that criminals rehabilitate through recognition of one's sinfulness, repentance towards God, and commitment to a righteous way of life. The failure of this system led to the positivist idea of moral reformation, and the reformatory. Later, the idea of treatment of inmates evolved into modern systems of corrections. Each system had its pros and cons, the effectiveness of which may be ascertained by the fact that the U.S. imprisons more than 2 million of its citizens with an average recidivism rate of about 70 percent.

"In his well-known study," writes Andrew Skotnicki, "Francis Allen offers the following description: '[T]he rehabilitative ideal is the notion that a primary purpose of penal treatment is to effect changes in the characters, attitudes, and behavior, but also to contribute to the welfare and satisfactions of offenders.'"

Multiple studies to determine whether there was a correlation between religious involvement while incarcerated and the likelihood of recidivism after release revealed no noticeable differences from those who did not participate in religious programming. However, there was a reduction in disciplinary infractions among incarcerated individuals engaging in religious activities. One study conducted by O'Connor found that religious belief in a transcendent God did have a significant effect on lower offender rearrests.

In his 1902 book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, philosopher and psychologist William James suggested viewing religious experience from an outward theological, ceremonial, and ecclesiastical expression, along with a subjective that he identified as "The highest flights of charity, devotion, trust, patience, bravery to which the wings of human nature have spread themselves have been flown for religious ideals." He continues, "Religious rapture, moral enthusiasm, ontological wonder, cosmic emotion, are all unifying states of mind. ... Religious feeling is thus an absolute addition to the subjects' range of life. It gives him a new sphere of power."

Though instantaneous, the fruits of such religious experience — often called *conversion* — typically develop over time through a process of abandoning old ways and adapting new ways. This new way of living leads to new association and involvement in religious practices that are vital for attaining the new ideal.

The benefits of religious involvement in rehabilitation include 1) Individuals are exposed to alternate ways of living; 2) It provides instructive, supportive role models through engagement with volunteers; and 3) Upon release from incarceration, religious affiliation helps facilitate reintegration of their members.

"Piety and charity," writes James, "live in a different universe from worldly lusts and fears, and form another centre of energy altogether." Such religious vitality not only liberates the soul from its anti-social, criminal, and addictive behaviors, but it embodies a new impetus, direction, and energy for crime-free, drug-free, productive living — in and outside of prison.

Sources: Thomas P. O'Connor et al., "Prison Religion in Action and Its Influence on Offender Rehabilitation," *Religion, Community, and the Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders*, Hayworth Press 2002; Thomas P. O'Connor, et al., *Criminology and Religion: The Shape of an Authentic Dialogue*; Andrew Skotnicki, "Religion and Rehabilitation," *Criminal Justice Ethics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1996; William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902





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. In addition to the film franchise itself, there are six Star Wars elements. Can you find your way to creating the three iconic characters C3PO, R2D2, and Yoda, as well as the generic champions of good and evil, Jedi and Sith, and their signature weapon the Lightsaber?



Psych View

Community Placement and Support (Pt. 2)

By Daisy Switzer, Post Columnist

AFTER PAROLE, DO you want to live a free life, one without a worry that you will return to prison? If so, you must create a place for yourself where you are protected from elements that would increase your risk of parole failure. Doing so prior to release will ensure that such protections are in place, and that you have a safe lifestyle to parole into.

What if you are facing deportation? I hope that you have a community to return to if you are deported, but this is not true for everyone. Do you speak the language of the country you will be sent to, or will you live in a border town or tourist town to assure yourself options? Do you have dangers that you may encounter, and if you can document those dangers, might your deportation be reconsidered? Immigrant parolees face other challenges and require some sensitivity. If you parole into the wrong territory, will gang tattoos result in your execution? What special help must you secure prior to your parole? Take these steps prior to finding yourself stranded or surprised. Your "gate money" might need to be converted into the currency of your home country. You will need to have a place to go and to speak the language of the place you go. Hopefully, you have someone there to help you or the means to connect with such persons.

What if you have made plans for employment, living, and program? What if parole isn't granted in spite of your efforts? That is a difficult place to find yourself, but your efforts shouldn't be thrown away. Instead, keep those connections that you've made and continue to reinforce them by keeping in touch with those who support you. Thank them for being there for you and assure them you are working to increase your odds for parole at the next hearing. Understand that others are there to support you and you can maintain their support by fostering relationships with them. Let them know you value their support and are thankful for it. Encourage them to continue to validate your plans.

Do not fill your support file with multiple letters from one writer. A support letter does not require more than annual updates unless there is a change in circumstances, such as a person now able to offer housing, or a facility no longer able to offer work. This is true for support letters inside the prison as well. Perhaps you have a supervisor who is very positive. This will reflect in your work reviews and may prompt a letter of reference. Any more than an annual reference draws suspicion of overfamiliarity. Protect your support system and don't overuse them.

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

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Calif. Model Rolls Out to Prisons

By Lt. Brent Urban,
Substance Abuse Treatment Facility
and Todd Javernick,
Office of Public and Employee
Communications

PEACE DAY AT the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility (SATF) demonstrates the transformative power of the California Model, where Facility F, selected as one of the facilities to incorporate the California Model, hosted Peace Day on July 12, 2023.

The celebration began with a brief introduction and moved right into the Facility F Color Guard presenting the colors. Meanwhile, the facility's band performed the national anthem. The SATF Peace Day included an Aztec dance demonstration, African drumming, and art.

Alphonso Williams, chairman of the Facility F Inmate Advisory Council, took to the microphone to share some of his life experiences. He also thanked everyone for allowing such an event to take place.

Numerous staff took some time out of their day to play cornhole, dominoes, and chess with the population. Although most of the staff were not winners in those events, everyone said they had an amazing day.

Warden Brian Phillips and Capt. Donald Stohl also spoke to the gathering, thanking everyone for their hard work to make Peace Day a success. The population, in turn, thanked Phillips and Stohl for allowing them to feel as if they were not incarcerated. Plans are coming together to have many more events in the near future.

Also in the news, the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) is "bridging the gap" between the incarcerated and staff. To further the efforts of the new California Model, selfies were taken by Lt. Monique Williams and incarcerated residents during the event.

CCWF hosted the Bridging the Gap event, which provided a normalized environment for staff and population. The event falls in line with one of the California Model's seven pillars of change: "Efforts to normalize the environment."

This May 16, 2023, event took two months of coordination. The outcome provided an opportunity for staff and incarcerated individuals to interact with one another as equals with a full day of activities.

"We have staff and incarcerated people engaging by having lunch together, and playing games just to get that normalcy of the California Model," said Warden Anissa De La Cruz.

Approximately 25 staff and nearly 100 residents worked and played side by side throughout the day. Activities included grilling hamburgers and hotdogs, enjoying snow cones and cotton candy, listening and dancing to a DJ, and playing yard games. However, the ultimate witness of normalcy throughout the day was staff and incarcerated involved in ordinary conversation and laughter.

"Today's event was something long overdue as we transition from an us-versus-them culture," said Lt. John Cuske. "Rehabilitation is interacting with people as people. What I saw today was a baby step. We are making progress to work in a more fulfilling environment."

Additionally, 22 outside guests from various organizations were available to the incarcerated population to provide information. These guests included the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, the Insight Garden Program, Life Support Alliance, Woman II Woman, and Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Education Program

"Today felt like a piece of freedom," says Nora Igova, a CCWF resident. "Mentally, that piece of freedom goes all the way to being a service to others and to become human beings."

Life and Breath

By John L. Orr, Feature Reporter

IHAVE SEEN 32 years of incarceration pass by, most at some pretty terrifying Level III and IV California institutions. By August 2017, I earned my way to the relative serenity of a Level II prison and hoped I could put death-threatening situations behind me. I told myself, *I've seen it all* — I was wrong.

On March 15, 2018, I walked into the typical din and chaos of our cavernous dining hall for the evening meal. I sat down with my usual table buddies and we immediately labored with our dinner tray components to assemble what the menu suggested was a "hamburger."

While toiling, I noticed a sudden lull in the noise level surrounding us. The scenario reminded me of a western movie when the grizzled mountain man stopped walking in the wilderness because all the birds stopped chirping and the wind ruffling the leaves in the trees ceased — something was up.

Out of the corner of my eye I caught frantic movement. One guy at a nearby table stood up, arms outstretched and flailing and advanced on his tablemate.

My immediate thought: *Cool; dinner and a show!* However, the main event I expected was totally the opposite. As Daniel Slayter, 45, a prison plumber, told me later, he noticed his friend, Al, turning red, his eyes bulging, and making the classic hands-cupped-to-the-throat gesture signifying "I'm choking!"

Dan said he automatically jumped into action without thinking. "I got up, moved behind Al and got into the Heimlich position [arms wrapped around the lower rib cage and sternum, ready to thrust up to expel the obstruction]. I didn't squeeze because he was still breathing, but obviously having a problem."

Al struggled with the blockage and quickly sipped some water to soften the food, which enabled a clear airway. Dan stayed at ready, squatting behind Al.

Still red in the face, and coughing slightly, Al patted Dan's forearm gently in gratitude, and to let him know he was OK. After full recovery, Al was able to say, "Thanks." We all went back to dinner.

Dan explained he has limited first-aid training but has seen the Heimlich maneuver many times on television. "I had to do something. Al was in trouble ... it all happened so fast." The following morning, Al dropped by Dan's cell and graciously hugged him, thanking him again for his efforts.

Dan acted instinctively and while he did not save Al's life, he was prepared to do so. In prison, such an aggressive action, with gunners manning the overhead observation posts in dining halls, Dan could have been shot.

In my 24 years as a first responder, I personally saw the horrible results of reluctant people not stepping up and the deadly consequences of such inaction. Thankfully, Dan Slayter was proactive. I couldn't write an "attaboy chrono" for Dan back then, but karma won out and he was rewarded, earning parole on August 28, 2019.

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

GRIP's Reentry Coordinator is Rafael Cuevas
(415) 759-8824



A Story of the Inside Circle

By Marty Williams,
Production Editor

THEY SAT TOGETHER in a circle, in the center of a prison chapel, men agreeing to be equal for a brief time, honoring a large carpet between them where a solitary candle burned on top of a wooden stump. In a chair was propped a picture of a man in prison blues, oddly iconic; nearby, a shirtless middle-aged man sat in anger and tears, unable to know if he could be loved.

In the current group culture prevalent in lower-level prisons, such a scene might not seem unusual. But this was 1998, on Facility B of the California State Prison-Sacramento, one of the most violent maximum security prisons in the state. The men in the circle were not young prisoners with dates to go home, but hardened convicts raised by the system; scarred mainliners, many who were also “shot callers” on the yard. They were of different races, different gangs, different sets. There would be no chrono in their files, no hope of board or commutation at that time. They came here for no other reason than to look across the circle at each other to see where their lives were the same.

This was the creation and dream of Pat Nolan, a lifer from Canada who came to the U.S. to get tacked-back, then go home with prison stories from American prisons. Instead, he earned a life sentence for murder. He became a regular convict. Then he became a poet. Then he became the founder of one of the most important rehabilitative tools in the department’s history, which went virtually unknown for a decade except by those whose lives were changed forever.

After a violent riot between races in the mid-1990s, Nolan decided the only way to have any effective change was to start from the inside out. He knew all the major players, and he brought them together in a circle in the chapel, reflecting the

way men in former times and elder cultures looked each other in the eye over a fire. The idea — influenced by the writings of Robert Bly and Joseph Campbell, themes of male myth and cultural symbols, with a little cognitive behavioral therapy thrown in — became the Inside Circle.

The Inside Circle is now a foundation run by ex-prisoners whose lives were profoundly changed, and who continue to work on themselves and serve in the journey of other incarcerated people. Many of these men were lifers who should have had no hope, but are now free, alive, and powerful in the world.

Nolan died in 2000 at the age of 36 due to complications from hepatitis C. He never got to see the foundation or freedom. Still, his poetry lives on, his legacy continues in the work of the Inside Circle Foundation, and his picture still occupies a chair in every circle.



Photo by Jim Carlson (InsideCircle.org)

La Resentencia de Michael Burton-Brown

Por O. Rick Bridges, Feature Reporter
Traducido por Fabian Garcia, Spanish Reporter

PARADO BAJO UNA brisa ligera, Michael Burton-Brown esperaba gastar el dinero que sobraba de su cuenta, aunque no le tocaba hacer compras esa semana. Después de una larga sentencia penitenciaria — más de 21 años — estaba por irse a Los Ángeles, a su casa. Aún tenía mucho que hacer. Había tantas conversaciones en necesidad de su conclusión apropiada, y despedidos de sentido en abundancia.

Después de ser referido por la oficina del director del California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), resultó eficaz. Su sentencia original de cadena perpetua — con oportunidad de libertad condicional en 30 años — fue reducida a una sentencia determinada de 11 años. Dándole crédito complete por los años servidos, tendrá un breve periodo en libertad condicional. La única condición aplicada por el fiscal fue que consiga, y verifique, una vivienda de transición, cuyos datos disponibles sobre la reincidencia apoya esta decisión. Quieren que Michael salga exitoso.

A cienas de millas de distancia, su casa siempre estaba a su alcance. Pero aun así, había portones y rejas previniendo su llegada. Fue su fe que salvó la distancia. De manera extraña, su corazón siempre estaba en casa.

A preguntarle sobre su disciplina espiritual, Michael responde de manera práctica. “He sido un dedicado Cristiano estos últimos 24 o 25 años. Recordando hacia el pasado, cuando cerré mi biblia, todo en mi vida se fue al infierno — yo incluido. Cuando estaba en la cárcel Los Ángeles, me hice una promesa: que pase lo que pase, nunca cerrara la biblia.”

Durante su viaje de encarcelación, ha seguida con su promesa. Michael fue circunspecto. “Lo mío siempre fue la honestidad con mi mismo. Nunca me adapte a la prisión. Detesto el estilo de vida que vive el prisionero, igual a todo que lo acompaña. Mi mejor día en prisión fue durante mi decimoséptimo ano, cuando ambos padres vinieron a visitarme en la prisión California Men’s Colony. Sentí que se convirtieron en mi bote de salvavidas”.

Mientras Michael estudiaba para su licenciatura en ministerio y seminario, el tiempo cambiaba el sentido de los vientos el fin del 2022, acercando dicho bote a su casa. Fue precisamente en ese momento que la familia de Michael contrató los servicios de la abogada Lisa Mattern de Los Ángeles, para hablar en favor de su liberación. Interminables fueron las audiencias, catalogaciones, pedidos de información, y, sin olvidar, muchas oraciones. Michael fue firme en su valoración. “Es posible que mi espiritualidad fue la única cosa manteniéndome sano”, dijo Michael. “Dios me mando Lisa, bien segura en su rol como profesional competente. Hiso un trabajo fenomenal para nosotros”.

Por último, hay algunas cosas Michael Burton-Brown quiere compartir con los residentes de MCSP. “Estoy muy impresionado con la mayoría de esta población por la manera que se han involucrado con los oportunidades de rehabilitación. Me maravilla el cambio el cambio que miro en los hombres de mí alrededor. Aún hay algunas excepciones, pero siguen siendo una minoría; y por lo que yo entiendo, la mayoría gobierna. Estoy contento que Dios escogió a ese lugar como destino para mi viaje de encarcelación. Les mando mucho ánimo a cada uno de ustedes. No se den por vencido. Y finalmente, si ustedes creen en un dios, entonces muévanse para dejar que Él trabaje”.



INSIDE CIRCLE
(InsideCircle.org)

Editorial: Failing to Connect

By Fabian Garcia,
Spanish Reporter

ALMOST TWO YEARS have passed since the long-awaited Global Tel*Link (GTL) tablets made their appearance at the High Desert State Prison. A lot has been supplemented on behalf of GTL: movies have been alternated, educational content added (Edovo), and e-cards are now available. Although these attainments are heading in the right direction, what has yet to be corrected is the pestering interruptions with the tablet's connection.

During the early post-tablet epoch on Facility A, service interruptions of any sort were widely overlooked. Having entertainment, news, and family and friends just a swipe away for the first time acted as a buffer against the intermittent spells of inadequate service.

Fast-forward 18 months and the difficulties persist with connection. This ongoing problem tends to occur in the evenings when the majority of people expect to hear from their incarcerated family members. "During the interruptions, I am not able to call my loved ones back, which causes issues between us," said Robert Sanchez, 35. "The service ceases to exist during the hours of 6 p.m. to 8:55 p.m."

The psychological and emotional strain arises when people — making the effort to bond — ultimately fail to connect. This is shared by many of those impacted by the justice system. William Cresham, 57, whose familial predicament parallels that of Sanchez, stated, "I have a 4-year-old daughter who gets frustrated with the constant interruptions; it's damaging to our already fragile relationship."

What has become business as usual for the residents of High Desert should be recognized for what it really is — cruel and unusual. These systems and devices have been implemented in prisons (both state and federal), throughout the nation, as a way to better connect the incarcerated with family, friends, and overall support networks. Granting that, there continue to be evenings when one would be fortunate to enjoy

speaking to loved ones for three minutes before the call drops.

"The service has been awful at night during my phone calls and text messages," said 43-year-old Jeff Schmid of his own struggles to communicate with family. "Dropped calls and little-to-no service; all of my family members get upset," he added.

The unending issues with connection on this yard almost nullify the reasoning behind implementing these tablets in the first place. It takes a toll on the many who rely on the service, both free and incarcerated. Ultimately, just as it is out of the question to accept any rhetoric classifying an incarcerated person as second-class, an incarcerated person having to settle for second-class connectivity should, too, be out of the question.

Building Healthy Relationships

By Jason Davis, Feature Reporter

WHAT DOES A healthy relationship look like and with whom? Julia W. Hubbs and Shawn Hawk answer these questions and more in their Healthy Relationships workshop. The program started in 2015 at Folsom State Prison. Today, they have a leadership team in place with a 12-week course and curriculum. They also travel the state visiting institutions, delivering motivational speeches, and conducting workshops that inspire others to be the best versions of themselves.

Hubbs, who prefers to be called "Coach," is president and founder of About Progress Not Perfection, and author of several books including *It's Your Life, Live It!*; *Exhale*; and *About Progress Not Perfection: The Journey*. Armed with a Master of Science in counselor education from California State University, Hubbs looks to empower people to make life changes. "It's about developing life skills and making healthier choices," she said.

Hawk is vice president, author, paralegal, and coach, who brings along valuable insight and perspective, having served over 27 years himself. "Part of a healthy relationship starts with talking the same language," he said about the program. Although, he reminds us, "you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others."

A testament to the value of a healthy relationship, every participant interviewed mentioned the dynamics of facilitators Hubbs and Hawk. "I have never been to a class or program with two facilitators that worked so well together," Luke Scott said. "The presentation flowed so well."

The workbook requires participants to take stock of their personal inventory through a series of questions. Scott said, "It made me reflect on the relationships that I failed in the past." Each chapter teaches healthy habits that can be applied in relationships whether professional or romantic. The lessons emphasize trust, respect, and balance, meaning partners are equal, with emotional trust as the bedrock of healthy relationships.

Johnny Guerrero relates the lessons to prison and navigating personal relationships over the phone, "You have to know about yourself to be an effective participant in any relationship." He talks about the importance of active listening, "You become more in tune with the conversation and how you talk to others." It can be tough when you have to foster relationships over the phone, he adds.

Hubbs reminds us that, "No matter how bad life seems there is hope for something better, but you have to work hard to make healthy changes in your life." People who are emotionally balanced are in control of their emotions and their behaviors. The workbook also talks about the importance of self-respect, but first you have to know who you truly are, and what you stand for.

Workshop participants were encouraged to continue to build healthy relationships in their lives. Scott said, "It gave me the tools to build healthy relationships in the future." With these tools, we can build a better community, with meaningful relationships, inside and outside the fence. He adds, "It humbled me, truly humbled me."

With a final message, Hubbs read a quote from her book *Exhale*: "In spite of everything you may have been through, remember you are capable of finding your own sense of inner peace and joy."

**Progress
Not
Perfection**



Navigating the Road to Freedom

By **O. Rick Bridges**, Feature Reporter
and **Raymond D. Martin**,
Mule Creek State Prison

NAVIGATING FROM A tragic and criminal past and into a dignified future requires a reliable map and compass. As with most of life's important endeavors, the journey is every bit as important as the destination. Given the gravity of consequences for all parties involved, when plotting our course in criminal recovery we don't want to travel in circles.

For incarcerated residents with personal histories that include sexual trauma, abuse, addiction, and indicted or unindicted sexual criminality, a good place to begin is the working textbook, *The Road To Freedom*, by Jill S. Levenson and John W. Morin. Whether you are a recovering victim of past sexual trauma, are working in a 12-step framework with sexual abuse and amends in your personal inventory, are recovering from sexual dependency and addiction, or are rehabilitating from your own history of criminal sexual abuse and offenses, you'll likely find the course of action and exercises structured by this text to be essential support.

The Road To Freedom demands the use of first person language, challenges labeling and denial, assists in self-evaluation of risk factors, activates an ongoing process of examination and self-reflection, encourages the examination of traumatic impacts, structures practices of self-regulation and prevention, and thereby defines what it means to live a healthy life.

In introducing the text, the authors examine some of the deeply personal questions and statements that precede lasting and dynamic rehabilitation and recovery:

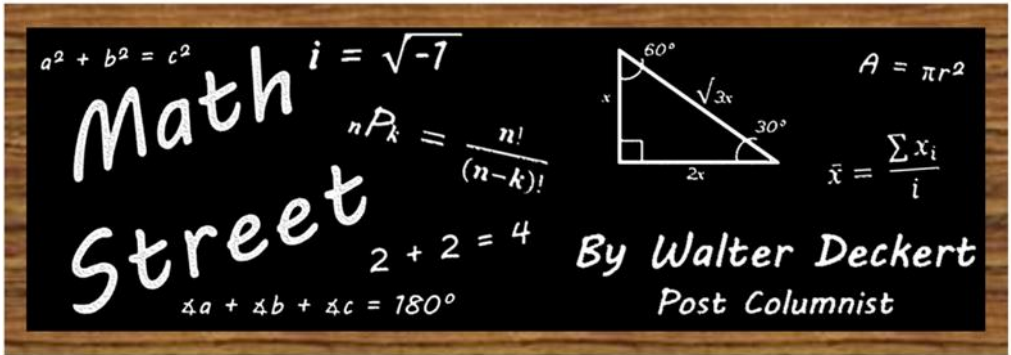
- How do I identify?
- But I wasn't convicted of a sex crime.
- What should I expect?
- But I really don't need this.
- Why did I do what I did?
- But I really don't want this.

- Why did this happen to me?
- This is not who I am.

The difficult social stigma assigned to sexual recovery and sex offenses within the context of a prison environment can make the necessary rigors of sexual recovery and sexual rehabilitation challenging. That does nothing to change the factual need to do the work. The entire body of available study data on recidivism serves to illustrate a reliable generalized relationship between structured self-reflective work and logical therapeutic outcomes.

As the saying in Twelve Step and therapeutic community goes, "You're only as sick as your secrets."

Let the journey begin.



WE STARTED OUT looking at probability in last month's edition, so let's continue. Remember that all the probabilities of a population must sum to 1. Since this is true, we can always solve for any missing probability.

In math-geek speak, we can say that if we have only two possible events in a population, event A and event B, then each probability can be written as P(A) and P(B). This means:

$$P(A) + P(B) = 1$$

Using a bit of algebra, we discover an important rule called the "Complement Rule."

$$\begin{array}{r} P(A) + P(B) = 1 \\ -P(B) \quad -P(B) \\ \hline P(A) = 1 - P(B) \end{array}$$

So, if we are missing a probability, we simply subtract the known probabilities from 1. For instance, let's say we have some event of interest in which there are four possible outcomes (0, 1, 2, 3) listed below with their probabilities:

C	P(c)
0	0, 1
1	?
2	0, 2
3	0, 3

Notice the probability that P(c=1) is missing. Using the Complement Rule we can figure out what that probability is.

$$\begin{aligned} 1 - P(c = 0) + P(c = 2) + P(c = 3) \\ = 1 - [0.1 + 0.2 + 0.3] = 1 - 0.7 = 0.3 \end{aligned}$$

So the probability that c=1 is 0.3.

Take a look at a deck of cards. There are 52 cards, ace through king, and four suits. This means there are four aces, four deuces, etc. The deck is called the sample space. What if we want the probability that we randomly chose a card that is a jack (we call this an "event")? Since there are four jacks and a total of 52 cards, the P(jack)=4/52. What is the probability the card is not a jack?

There are a couple of ways to get this answer; all give us the same answer.

- First, there are 48 cards that are not jacks, so:

$$P(\text{not jack}) = 48 / 52$$

- Second, we can use the Complement Rule since:

$$P(\text{jack}) = 4 / 52$$

- Then:

$$P(\text{not jack}) = 1 - 4 / 52 = 48 / 52$$

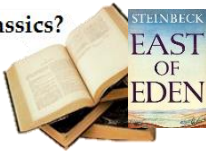


(Stock.Adobe.com)

If you have math-related questions or comments about my column, come see me in the Facility E Post-Secondary and Continuing Education program (formerly VEP) or send them to the *Mule Creek Post*.

Why Read the Classics?

By Rob Sharp,
Post Reporter



WHEN JOHN STEINBECK wrote *East of Eden*, he penned a multi-generational historical novel about his own family in the Salinas Valley of California. Most engaging about this novel is Steinbeck's masterful use of language:

The Gabilan mountains to the east of the valley were light gay mountains full of sun and loveliness and a kind of invitation, so that you wanted to climb into their warm foothills almost as you want to climb into the lap of a beloved mother. They were beckoning mountains with a warm brown grass love.

To describe the matriarch of a Jewish family:

Liza hated alcoholic liquors with an iron zeal. Drinking alcohol in any form she regarded as a crime against a properly outraged deity. Not only would she not touch it herself, but she resisted its enjoyment by anyone else. The result naturally was that her husband Samuel and all her children had a good lusty love for drink. ... When Liza was about 70, her elimination showed up and her doctor told her to take a tablespoon of port wine for medicine. ... She always took the wine in a tablespoon, it was always medicine, but after a time she was doing over a quart a day and she was a much more relaxed and happy person.

Insight into some character's bent towards the bad:

I believe there are monsters born in the world to human parents. ... And just as there are physical monsters, can there be mental or psychic monsters born? The face and body may be perfect, but if a twisted gene or malformed egg can produce a physical monster, may not the same process produce a malformed soul?

This is an entertaining novel about the Central Coast of California, where it mostly takes place just after the Civil War until the late 1920s.

You should find *East of Eden* in your facility's library, but it's not available in the GTL Library app.

Education Arc of Damaged Souls

Part 1: Failed People

By S. Martin Williams, Production Editor

No one is born educated. Most of society assumes, as it does with the homeless, that the "poorly educated" are so by some kind of choice, that this is how they want things to be. The American education system, as it currently exists, has created an expectation of failure for those who begin as already marginalized, or have become so through inability to conform to authoritarian pedagogy. But if inquiry-based models that have been used in prison have been successful (after the fact), then such models belong in schools before the journey of damaged souls begins.

FAILURE FOR INCARCERATED persons begins in public school. This is why the terms "good citizen" and "free thinker" are rarely synonymous. Kathryn and James Montross, in their research about teaching incarcerated persons, found that, "In its Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice (1988), the U.S. Department of Justice stated that offenders generally do not know how to solve problems, cannot think of alternatives and do not know how to think about consequences."

Children who have not learned how to problem-solve or be able to identify alternatives along the lines of institutional rote are people taught not to trust their own process. While it is true that plenty of incarcerated people made it to high school, it has nothing to do with the level of education; it is the self-beliefs generated by education models that create "failed" people. This characteristic of the traditional teaching model of an authority dispensing "the knowledge" to their charges — then valuing the charges based on their ability to regurgitate it — in no way engages the life experience of the charge, or their unique way of being in relationship with the world.

Children rejected by the education tradition of public school as failures in a pass-fail assessment of their value and humanity, will in turn not value education or the authority that has rejected them. There is little-to-no room for those who learn differently, or have difficulty in authority-based environments due to poverty location or culture; they are neither freethinkers nor good citizens. What becomes of them is deemed unimportant; we only value the successes we can take credit for.

Paolo Freire, the Brazilian educator and theorist, explains exactly why they are failures. "They are treated as individual cases, as marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a 'good, organized and just' society ... which must therefore adjust these 'incompetent and lazy' folk to its own patterns by changing their mentality." These patterns are not the patterns of the individual, so the individual is left feeling like an outsider, or as Freire puts it, a "marginal." There is no way to commodify the marginal into the pass-fail narrative; they do not pass — or even take — standardized tests, so their value cannot be measured by the canon of educational tracking. Public education has become an industry paid by the test score, an industrial complex that manufactures a product of right-thinking citizens and sends its factory rejects into the outer darkness.

The American prison system is chock full of marginalized, failed outsiders who have bought into their own devaluation, becoming participants in their own oppression, and the institutional education that aided their failure has a prison industrial complex to receive them, or as Montross puts it, "offender-students being given more of the 'failure' they experienced in public school." If this doesn't change, mass incarceration will continue to escalate as social depression, mistrust of government, and anger at institutions grows with it.

The arc of education failure which often ends in prison ironically has a different narrative once inside the walls. Incarcerated students are less likely to be seen as information drop-boxes, but as lived lives with unique approaches to solving problems. Therapist David Van de Haar understands the community which he is addressing:

Today's correctional facilities have a strong contingent of self-made poets, artists, musicians, politicians and scholars in their midst. The deep motivation of individuals serving years in confinement can triumph over the lack of materials, time, and teachers in correctional facilities. At the same time, there are many individuals in prison who had terrible experiences in schools while they were growing up and they lack confidence in their ability to learn.

But where did these poets, artists, and scholars come from? Not from the education model they failed in, but from life experiences they had to work out themselves.

Sources: Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1993; H. Giroux, "Pedagogy of the Depressed," *College Literature*; Kathryn and James Montross, "Characteristics of Incarcerated Students," *Journal of Correctional Education*; David Van de Haar, "Evaluating Appreciative Inequity," *Human Relations*.



Paolo Freire (biola.edu)

Their Journey is Their Resource

By Fabian Garcia,
Post Reporter

FOR RESIDENTS OF California’s corrections institutions approaching their release dates, it can be nerve-racking and exhilarating to be heading home. While excited for the opportunity to reenter society, the uncertainty of how prospective employers will take to their criminal records remains ever present.

Taking into consideration that the majority of competing job seekers do not have a criminal record shouldn’t come as a disadvantage. That’s not to say that a job applicant with a felony conviction is necessarily the better candidate over their record-free counterparts. Instead, it’s the journey of transformation — that arose from said felony conviction — to who they’ve ultimately become, that makes for an appealing aspirant. Being able to fully embrace this intricate journey while articulating its end result in a job interview is something to capitalize on.

The unique dedication and sacrifice that comes with rehabilitating, educating, and overall becoming a better person while in a prison environment is no small feat. Family, friends, and loved ones of those formerly and currently incarcerated can attest to the positive changes that have taken place over the years because of their proximity to them. For many of those same returning citizens, prospective employers are unaware of their transformative story, and it’s up to them to sensibly communicate it. Doing so appropriately really highlights the valuable qualities and good work ethic — much sought after in any number of industries — that they have to offer.

It goes without saying that a person with a criminal record will never be fully immune to the stigma brought upon by their past. With that said, the antiquated preconceived notions that helped fuel the anti-reformative thinking of previous decades lessens each day. Because of this progress, every one of those returning citizens must showcase their personal experi-

ences and positive change, as a way to continuously impact the criminal justice narrative. This, in turn, not only improves one’s chances of success in the job market, but also the success of their formerly incarcerated peers as well.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, 800 incarcerated students throughout California’s prison system earned a college degree in 2023 alone. This reality is making it more difficult for employers to overlook the potential that is exiting these institutions. Those approaching their release dates, including those recently released, need to understand just what they’re up against: themselves. Analogous to the way a lifer must prove to members of the Board of Parole Hearings why they’re suitable to reenter society, justice-impacted job interviewees must prove beyond their education, experience, etc., why they’ll be an asset for that company. Doing so successfully levels the playing field for anyone with a felony conviction and a desire to succeed.

The Ferrari

By Scott D. Culp, California Institution for Men

A version of this article was first published in The Blotter Magazine (Jan. 2024) and won The Heartland Review 2024 award for nonfiction.



(ExperienceFerrari.com)

ASK ANY CHRONOBIOLOGIST what the vacuum of solitary confinement does to one’s emotional state and they’ll try and factor in the time, tides, sun, moon, light, temperature, etc. The only thing I’ve read that comes close to the reality of solitary is from the ancient Roman philosopher, Seneca, and his descriptions of silver miners who encountered phenomena from long-term mental distress, psychic pressure from claustrophobia, and the full tempest of panic as they imagined the ceilings and walls closing in on them.

With no sunrises or sunsets, something inherent and primordial devolves into instinct, and, like animals in a zoo, one becomes sad and pensive. Eventually, something clicks and the individual succumbs to the enclosure and falls into paralytic shock, which can be recognized by endless pacing back and forth.

My extended stay in this subterranean cave has nothing to do with breaking prison rules. As a convicted bank robber, staff views me as an escape risk, leader, and organizer. I find it difficult to organize my thoughts, much less lead an uprising against the bologna sandwiches served daily. There’s an urban legend about the use of solitary confinement; the legend says that over time solitary dismantles the last vestiges of hope. Instead of becoming easier over time, the cumulative effects of a prolonged stay results in diminishing returns.

In the 1980s, an expedition into the Sarawak Chamber, a cave in the Malay Archipelago, had to be guided out after becoming emotionally despondent. In these places, one becomes adroit at communicating with our fellow condemned. Reading lips, sign language, or just passing lines, we reach out to one another. I’ve learned that my life isn’t written in the stars, but in the hearts of those men around me.

Recently, I spoke through my cell vent with someone from Stockton. For hours we shared our life experiences. He was in for a parole violation, and as we continued to speak, things just weren’t adding up. He said he had worked part-time at Costco in Tracy, but later remarked he left for work at 5 a.m. and didn’t return until 5 p.m. Stockton is about 20 miles from Tracy. Finally, he admitted he was ashamed to tell me that he didn’t own a car and walked the 20 miles between Tracy and Stockton. That floored me. He was ashamed of that?

There’s always an uncanny mixture of bravado among a den of thieves; however, any prisoner worth his salt displaces those false veneers and finds within himself elements of authenticity. Personally, I’d rather befriend someone who walks 20 miles to a part-time job than someone who drives a Ferrari. The context and meaning of my own struggles stood in stark contrast. I had lost sight of the beauty that lies therein. His story emboldened me to look deeper within myself and focus on that inward voice, and not on the footfalls echoing off the walls of this concrete cave.

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.

Business & Finances

ENTREPRENEUR'S
WORKSHOP

By Leah Ward-Lee
Post Columnist

Plan What You'll Do Tomorrow Before You Finish Today

ONE OF THE most effective methods for optimizing your activities is the tool used by Phil Maxwell, who was the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Neiman Marcus. At a time in history when CIO typically stood for "Career Is Over," I met with him in his office and was astounded to see his office was not only pristine, but Phil was relaxed, on time for our meeting, and completely focused on our discussion.

Phil's department was implementing a new point-of-sale system as well as several other major initiatives. Just before our time was up, I asked him how he managed to stay so organized and focused. The method he shared with me has become a tool that not only increased my effectiveness, it's something I've shared with dozens of executives and business owners and in turn I have seen their effectiveness increase.

He simply scheduled the last meeting of every day as a meeting with himself and used that time to reflect on what he'd accomplished that day, prepare for the next day, and clean up anything he hadn't finished before leaving.

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

Dispute Letters: Four Mistakes to Avoid
By Carolyn Warren, Post Columnist

YOU DON'T WANT to send a letter to the credit bureau that shoots you in the foot, that contains a bad account to your report like Gorilla Glue.

There's a lot of bad information on YouTube about credit repair. And, there's a lot of bad free letters on the internet that will sabotage your efforts.

Three Mistakes You Don't Want to Make in Dispute Letters to Credit Bureaus

1. Don't give more than one reason for requesting a deletion. One letter = one reason. That's what the best credit repair pros do. If you put all your reasons into one letter, then if they send you a form letter denial there's nothing new to send for round two.
2. Don't tell them specifically what's wrong. It's not your job to fix things for the credit bureaus. If you tell them the balance is incorrect, then they will update the balance and your score will go down. If you tell them the date for the late payment is wrong, they will fix the date and your score will go down. Don't do that! Instead, make this truthful statement: "This account is showing factually incorrect. Delete account."
3. Don't enclose a copy of your letter to the creditor (Visa, Santander, Macy's). There is no reason the credit bureau should see the contents of your letter to the creditor. If you are stating that you did not receive a reply from the creditor, simply state that with the date you sent it.
4. Don't send any dispute letter before you have cleaned up your personal identifiers: Name misspellings, nicknames, address errors, Social Security number, or date of birth errors. Don't jump the gun by firing off dispute letters before you have the whole picture of what professional credit repair looks like.

If you want professional results, conduct your credit repair like the pros, not like youtubers and so-called advice from people who don't have a portfolio of experience.

If You Have Already Sent a Bad Letter

If you made a mistake with a letter already, then my advice is to give it a rest for at least three months and work on the other aspects of your credit. Your future starts today. Do yourself a huge favor and pick up a copy of *Credit Repair MIND-SET*. It can change your life.

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.

Build and
Protect
Your Credit
Like the Pros™

Go from beginner to expert,
raise your credit score, and
secure your finances

Carolyn Warren
Bestselling author of *Repair Your Credit Like the Pros™*

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

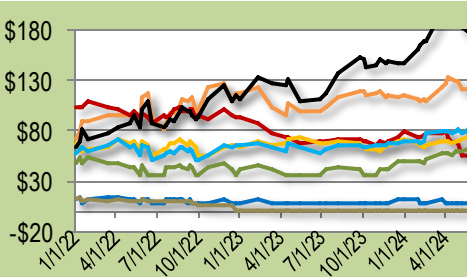
LIFE SUPPORT ALLIANCE

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!**

P.O. Box 277 Rancho Cordova, CA 95741 • LifeSupportAlliance.org

Financial Corner Tracking Stocks (From Jan. 1, 2023 to May 20, 2024)

● Apollo Comm. Real Est. Fin. Inc. (ARI)	\$10.76 → \$10.48	-2.6%
● ConocoPhillips (COP)	\$117.00 → \$121.71	+4.0%
● CVS Health Corp. (CVS)	\$93.19 → \$57.68	-38.1%
● Edison International (EIX)	\$63.62 → \$76.30	+19.9%
● Lumen Technologies (LUMN)	\$5.22 → \$1.32	-74.7%
● Marathon Petroleum Corp. (MPC)	\$112.00 → \$179.67	+60.4%
● ONEOK Inc. (OKE)	\$65.90 → \$82.63	+25.4%
● Wells Fargo & Co. (WFC)	\$41.29 → \$61.08	+47.9%



Creative Arts Program

Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.

—Carl Gustav Jung

Family Minerals

Stars are relatives in different forms,
Kinfolk not skin folks.
Emotions they evoke,
my tears are their moons.
Circling synapses,
rising invisible neurons to neutrons —
from gray matter to heart matter.
Remember, you are the universe,
and this universe is you.

— Albert Bell

Hope Still Lives Inside

Dark spaces unruly chaos, for ten long
years my eyes have seen,
multiple shadows pacing miserable
within their own sedated misery;
the sunrise that use to greet me daily
into golden paradise of Free open
doors
vanquished my opportunity
to live in Freedom to explore.
Before I was bound captive,
when my arms flew free open wide,
before I was labeled a criminal
I actually had a decent life;
Many days at night, I lay awake to
dream
By free-will of consciousness distinc-
tion
of fresh winds outside and golden
light,
Reminiscing when my life had mean-
ing,
when I cruised across the blue open-
sea
enjoying happy years a blissful free-
dom;
unchained beauty of Founded liberty
Before I was a criminal,
when my lungs still breathed fresh
airs outside,
after years no longer a criminal

and hope still lives inside.

— Raymond White



Deities, © 2022 Charles Williams, mixed media

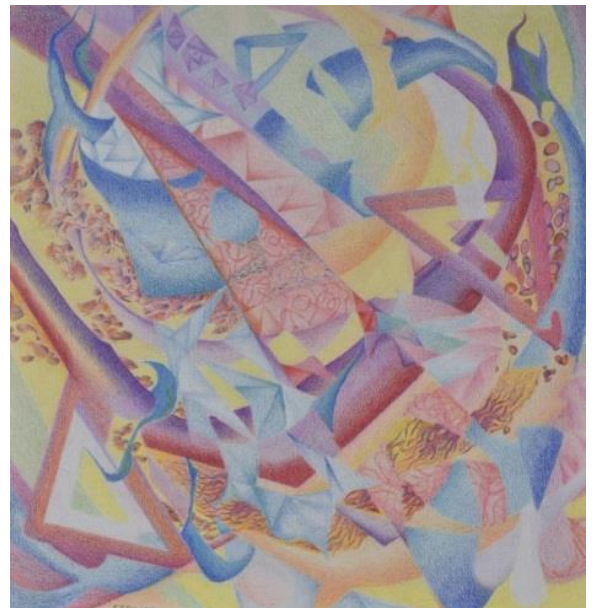
Me and My Teddy Bear

I have a teddy bear in my cell.
My feeling of loneliness goes away.
He makes me feel like a boy.
I hug and kiss my soft plush
teddy bear before I go to sleep.
I'm playful with him.
Sometimes I think he
acknowledges me.
He warms my heart
I offer my teddy bear honey buns
even though I know I will not
get an answer.
When I'm away from the cell
I miss him.
I read touching letters from my
family to Uriah, my loving toy.
One day, I wept from sorrow
in my heart,
and noticed tears coming down
from my teddy bear's eyes.

— Arnoldo Juarez



(Stock.Adobe.com)



Doodle, © 2022 Jose Pulido, colored pencil

The Seasons of My Life

As the clouds form above
On this place we call home
It will soon rain down
Just as the rays of sunlight shone

Where we come from
It matters not
But while we're here
We do good, and do it a lot

As our lives intertwine
Our branches weave to and fro
The leaves bask in the sunlight
And out roots swim in the darkness
They're at home, don't ya know

Winter is always a blast
With its icy chill
Oh what a thrill
Still knowing it will never last

Spring is never far away
We now let the buds play
Stretching out so far and wide
Never needing nor wanting to hide

And Summer, so hot and burning bright
Warms us all day and into the night
The nourishment it gives us, vitamin D
We give back in O², it's a cycle for you and me

Fall is not so bad despite its cruel name
The colors are so magical
It seems that none are the same

So now the frost beckons
As it cuts like a knife
Mother Nature is dictating
The seasons of my life

—Chris Rosas

*This poem is dedicated to my wife, Tina, may she rest
in peace. A Tennessee girl forever.*



Boxes and Shadows, © 2022 Franklin Lee, colored pencil



Landscapes, © 2022 Joe Bogel, oil pastel

What is Our Purpose?

By Mark Daigre,
Post Columnist

MEMBERS OF CRIMINALS & Gangmembers Anonymous (CGA) have a rare opportunity to utilize our strength and painful experiences as the foundation stones in the evolution of CGA. In order to do this, we must be open-minded to each other's opinions and not criticize or cause disagreements. Let's be mindful that we are always being watched, that people are listening to what we say, how we say it, and how we treat each other. There has been enough separation and attempts at dominance through our reckless, criminally aggressive behaviors. We now must do whatever is necessary to recover and establish unity among ourselves in service to help others avoid the nightmares that criminally acting out will always bring upon the innocent.

Separation within our ranks disrupts progress, as it relies upon selfishness to feed our egos with poisonous ideas, prejudices, and expectations we put on others. This can cause differences that help support the belief that some of us are better than others. The outcome of such thinking is to blindly push for control rather than to work as a team. If the vehicle is force, the result is destruction. Our mission to support each other in sobriety is diminished if we condemn others and ourselves, and, as a result, continue a cycle of pain, conflict, and isolation that can relapse into active criminal addiction.

We cannot recover if we are putting out fires caused by selfish needs and egoistic wants. When one fire is put out another inevitably begins — because we are keeping tally as to who started the first fire and we want to get the upper hand by fueling the next. The questions to ask ourselves are "What is our purpose?" and "What kind of recovery is that?" These problems only exist in our minds, and if we allow these thoughts to fester, then we allow them to come to life. Presentation is the key to productivity; sometimes our egos get in the way of our presentation and this can cause

a negative effect in our productivity.

We cannot take inventory for others or allow their lack of recovery to interfere in our personal growth. Our personal recovery should always come first. This attitude and approach opens the door to unity by removing differences so we can see our similarities. Only then can we support one another in working together for the needs and dignity of all. The outcome is change, the vehicle is responsibility, and the result is respect.

In order for each member of Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous to move forward from living in addiction — to peace and harmony — those of us who seriously hold the mission in our hearts, minds, and actions must lead the way by example through our thoughts, our words, and how we live. Like any noble path, the road must be carved through the actions of many committed individuals, a path that is smoothed by working together and widened by the example we provide for all to follow.

Now, more than ever, we need to stop talking about the twelve steps and start using them to recover. Now, more than ever, we need to reach out to those we perceive as different and stop dividing ourselves for petty reasons. Now, more than ever, we need to build bridges through better communication rather than tearing them down through backbiting, power struggles, and poisonous speculation. Now, more than ever, we need to be responsible for our wrongs and accountable to mend what needs healing in all our relationships with others.

Now, more than ever, we need to see ourselves in others like us, as well as for all those watching and listening to us, setting the standard by example. Let us ask ourselves, "What is our purpose?"

Crime, Trauma, and Rehabilitation

By Earl S. Breckenridge, Feature Reporter

CRIME IS NOT an accident. Criminals are not born, but made. Whether substance abuse, acts of violence, or theft, crime is essentially a violation of legal sanctions against behaviors, relationships, and outcomes society has deemed incompatible with or disruptive to its progress and well-being. Crime is thus the epitome of anti-social behaviors.

Rehabilitation, if it is to be authentic, transformative, and enduring, must address the biological, psychological, and social-environmental roots of crime. Understanding the origins and nature of criminality is prerequisite to a comprehensive model of rehabilitation: A model that not only transforms criminals into law-abiding, healthy, and productive citizens, but encompasses a strategy for rectifying victim harm and increasing public safety.

"In 1998 about 1.8 million people were behind bars in the U.S.," writes Ofelia Ortiz Cuevas from the University of California, Riverside. "Today, the U.S. has the highest imprisonment rate in the world, ahead of China and Russia. Last year more than 7 million men, women, and children were either incarcerated, on probation, or on parole." She notes that a report by the Pew Center on the States finds 1 in every 100 adults in the U.S. is now imprisoned, which many scholars have called "the largest state project of the twentieth century."

"A large body of research has shown that incarcerated populations have a high prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), increasing their risk for associated mental health problems and violent and aggressive behaviors," write Nena Portia Messina and Mitchell Schepps. "The significant association between ACEs and anti[-]social behaviors among justice-involved populations are crucial research results that have led many clinicians to propose a need for treatment interventions that specifically address histories of trauma and the resulting adult multiple chronic conditions."

Trauma is a disruption and impairment of the brain's innate tendency toward differentiation, integration, and coherence, resulting in affect dysregulation, cognitive dysfunction, and maladaptive behaviors, such as substance abuse, mental illness, and criminality. This impairment (trauma) may be caused by physical head injury, being a victim of or witnessing violent crime, war, natural disaster, or ACEs, such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. "The initial encounters that an individual has can exert a substantial influence on the development of their brain, thereby carrying enduring consequences for their well-being, aptitude for acquiring knowledge, and conduct," write Parima Narula and Divi Tara of Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences.

For instance, the child reared with attentive caregivers in a nurturing environment develops corresponding neuro-connections that enable healthy social interactions, which provide the internal resilience to face and overcome life's many adversities. On the other hand, the child raised in an abusive and neglectful home environment will experience varying degrees of chronic stress that impairs neuronal capacity for healthy interactions, resulting in maladaptive strategies for getting needs met.

"According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adverse child-

(continued on page 30)

(from *Crime, Trauma, and Rehabilitation* pg. 29)

hood experiences are experiences that occur before the age of 18 that cause extreme distress and can result in long-term medical, mental health, and behavioral issues. ACEs include 10 categories organized by abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (e.g. emotional neglect, divorce), which can be measured by the ACE's questionnaire [such as by Dube or Felitti]."

"Justice-involved women and men report a significantly higher prevalence of all categories of ACEs as compared with the general population in the United States. Yet such histories have not been sufficiently explored among justice-involved populations, especially among men, and are often excluded as a focal point of treatment and recovery in corrections."

While many adolescents age out of crime, career criminals desist from crime for two primary reasons according to research by Butler, Cullen, Burton, Theilo and Burton Jr. "What offenders thought about themselves and their future shaped their capacity to avoid crime and 'make good' in life."

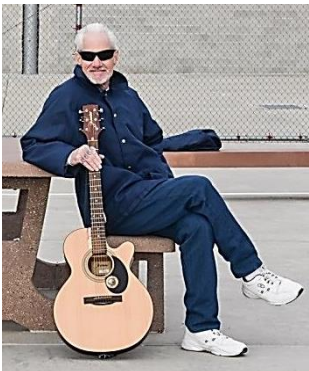
Resolution to criminality and realization of innate potential is the aim of a successful rehabilitation strategy. This point cannot be over-emphasized. Rehabilitation is not just about producing law-abiding citizens, but rather is about rectifying lingering dysfunctions while simultaneously bringing to fruition the highest qualities of human nature: spiritual, moral, psychological, social, and biological.

Sources: Ofelia Ortiz Cuevas, *Riverside Journal of American Ethnic History*, Fall 2010; Nena Portia Messina & Mitchell Schepps, "Opening The Proverbial 'Can of Worms' on Trauma-Specific Treatment in Prison: The Association of Adverse Childhood Experiences to Treatment Outcomes," 2021; Parima Narula and Divi Tara, "Unraveling Childhood Experiences: Exploring Emotional Regulation and Resilience Through Positive and Adverse Experiences," Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh; Brett Zyromski, Emily Baker, Jennifer Betters-Bubon, Colette T. Dollarhide, & Joseph Antonides, "Adverse Childhood Experiences: A 20-year Content Analysis of American Counseling," *Association and American School Counselor Association Journals*; Leah C. Butler, Francis T. Cullen, and Alexander L. Burton, "Redemption at a Correctional Turning Point: Public Support for Rehabilitation Ceremonies," University of Cincinnati.

Bard on the Yard

By Fred Munch, Post Reporter

IN LATE NOVEMBER, under a bright blue sky and winter's chill in the air, a small crowd gathered on Mule Creek's Facility D to hear the music program's "Day at the Park" event that featured a variety of resident artists. I was there out of admiration for singer-songwriter Kevin St. John. We'd become acquainted through his music, and I was often an audience of one while he practiced the songs he was always working on. In turn, he read some of my articles. We both got encouragement from the feedback of a fellow artist.



Kevin St. John

His band No Bad Vibes was second in line to perform. With Michael Turner on lead guitar, and Jason Rosacia on bass, St. John played rhythm and sang two original folk-rock ballads. He belted out the tunes with a strong, clear, distinctive voice. Both songs were about love lost. The first, "She Doesn't Know What She's Got," and "I've Had Enough" which echoed with this refrain:

Walkin' in the rain with you
Layin' in the bed right next to you
Sayin' all the things you want me to say

When asked about the origin of these lyrics, St. John said they came from a 10-year romance "that was a curse from its inception."

For most offenders with life sentences, which includes St. John, the prospect of spending decades locked away from the world is daunting and depressing. Can there be anything positive about the endless years of this stark reality? Many are resigned to sit in the front of the television or tablet for hours on end. Yet a few find it fulfilling to take up an art form and utilize their innate talents for music, drawing, and writing. They certainly have enough free time for artistic pursuits from which they can derive a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Before coming to prison, their creativity was unrealized because they were caught up in the distractions and detours of life on the outside: careers, crimes, substance abuse, and, of course, women.

St. John's story is an apt example. As a 12-year-old in a foster home, he was given guitar lessons along with his foster brother. When the lessons had to be



discontinued due to finances, the instructor offered to work with St. John for free because the teacher was impressed with his student's potential. However, the family refused this generosity and the budding musician never plucked a string or strummed a chord until he came to prison in 2013 at 43.

At first, St. John was stymied by the loss of freedom and spent the first seven years aimlessly grappling with it. He tried beading to fill the empty hours, but his eyes and posture suffered as a result. His talent, dormant for 30 years, finally resurfaced with he used the stimulus money to purchase a guitar in 2020. He taught himself to play from books and by sitting in with other players on the yard. He had a knack for composing and wrote his first song about the Uvalde school massacre:

Shots fired, shots fired
Nothing left to be desired
Another child dies, mama cries
In a world that just won't last

Over the next year, his song writing took off and he added 12 more compositions to his repertoire. All of them are ear-catching melodies with poignant, poetic lyrics, such as these lines about prison life:

All alone with no one home
Year after year, day after day
In a place where hope slips away

Postscriptum

NEXT MONTH, WE will be marking the 80th anniversary of the Normandy invasion, a major turning point in World War II. Decades later, armed conflict persists on international and local scales throughout the world.

Ken Hay was a soldier who landed at Normandy. When asked how to end war, he said, "Love." He explained: "If you love your family, if you love your friends, if you love the people you met yesterday, and the people you meet today and the people you're going to meet tomorrow. If we could do that, there would be no wars."

Let's look forward to the end of wars, and the spread of love.

-JC, Editor-in-Chief