

CCWF PAPER TRAIL

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Photo Courtesy of PIO M. Williams

The Dolphins Quartet from New York's elite music school, Julliard, performing for Music Heals Us participants

Project Music Heals US

By Diana Lovejoy

What can touch the soul of almost anyone in the world? Is there a song right now that really evokes feelings in you? Music is often called a "universal language" for good reason.

The week of January 6th brought a magical healing moment to the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), as Project Music Heals Us (PMHU) filled our

Visiting spaces with musical strains beyond beautiful. Teaching Artist Ben Grow (a.k.a. Music Boss) guided residents through enough music theory and composition to write their own short pieces and then hear them performed by The Dolphins Quartet from New York's elite music school, Julliard.

The Dolphins are not only world-class musicians, but accomplished composers. These talented young men

worked individually with residents to help bring their pieces to life. The Dolphins are: Luke Henderson (violin), Isaac Park (violin), James Prencil (viola), and Ian Maloney (cello).

Program Manager Dana Martin started PMHU to bring interactive, musical healing to healthcare set-

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Paper Trail's List of Prison-related Legislation Implemented in 2025

By Amber Bray and Kanoa Harris-Pendang

Every year on January 1, many laws go into effect. Whether a law was created through the state legislature by a Senate or Assembly bill or is approved by the voters via a ballot proposition, changes to California's legal landscape generally become effective on New Year's Day.

California is welcoming the new year with various new laws that will impact incarcerated individuals, from restitution fines to menstrual product access. Below are summaries of these new laws and the impact they could have.

AB 1186: Restitution Fines

Assembly Bill (AB) 1186 will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2025. AB 1186, authored by Assemblymember Mialisa Bonta, created Penal Code § 1465.9(c), which amends one aspect of restitution collection in the state of California.

Current law allows a judge, as part of a sentence, to order a defendant to pay restitution via direct restitution orders (Penal Code § 1202.4(f)), via restitution fines (Penal Code § 1202.4(b)), or both. Direct restitution orders are assessed when a victim has suffered economic loss as a result of the defendant's conduct. The money collected via this section is supposed to go directly to the victim(s) in order to provide compensation for the losses they suffered.

Restitution fines, on the other hand, shall be set at the discretion of the court and must be proportionate with the seriousness of the offense. For felonies, the fine shall not be less than \$300 and not more than \$10,000. For misdemeanors, the fine shall not be less than \$150 and not more than \$1,000. For felonies, the court shall impose the restitution fine

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Local incarcerated artist Crystal St. Mary created this inspirational art piece to celebrate Black History Month.

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COMMENTARY

Learning From Our Black History

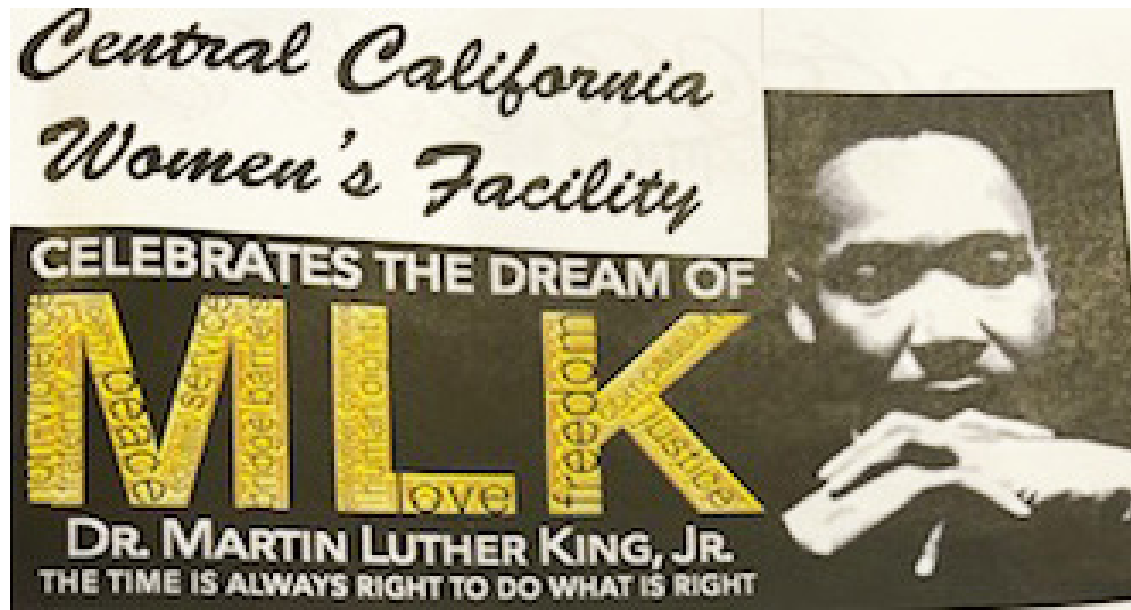


Photo Courtesy of PIO M. Williams

By Paper Trail Editorial Board

Central California Women's Facility Paper Trail asked a handful of people from off the yards for their take on how Black History Month is celebrated here in the facility. Special thanks to the following people from the following buildings for taking the time to talk with us: Hunt (516), Chappelle (514), Nicole (506), Rosetta (506), Jalen (510), Heinz (510). Here are some quotes from the group conversation that particularly caught our attention:

"I'm in the honor dorm at 516 and in D-Yard, and they celebrate Cinco de Mayo. They celebrate the Day of the Dead. They're starting to prepare for it right now. [But] Black History Month, in my opinion, is very much downplayed."

"Black History Month, even Martin Luther King's birthday, it's just overlooked. We're working on it, with very limited information. About resources, the accessibility of being able to speak at events and stuff like that."

"Being African American doesn't mean people know everything about [their history]. You know, with it not being celebrated in that fashion. There's facts and maybe poetry from African Americans, poets we'd want to [to highlight]. If we could access those..."

"I don't even know a lot about my black heritage and I'm 44 years old. I don't really have any information about where to go and look [for resources]."

"My roommate is doing it. She put a picture of [Martin Luther King], and she got someone to give a speech. She's Hispanic but she's part of the decorating committee. This is the first time since I've been here that we've even done that."

We heard some dismay over events being canceled in the past, and some diverse reasons for why. What everyone agreed on, though, was that if given the opportunity, every building at CCWF would organize displays to celebrate and educate residents about Black heritage.

To that end, CCWF recently held a Martin Luther King Jr. celebration for residents. Attendees celebrated the life of Dr. King with songs, performances and speeches. Retired annuitant Velda Dobson-Davis, a preeminent program provider at CCWF, organized the festivities and led a rousing rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Black History Month events are regularly held at the men's facilities in CA. We'd

love to see more opportunities to celebrate, including some in line with what is offered through the men's facilities.

According to articles on Inside CDCR, Avenal State Prison's Education Department collaborated on murals featuring several notable African Americans, such as: Thurgood Marshall, Ruby Bridges, George Washington Carver, Jackie Robinson, Harriett Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Barack Obama.

Similarly, a Ventura Youth Correctional Facility held an essay contest in February 2022 which challenged participants to place "historical figures in a contemporary context, such as social activism groups seeking equality and inclusion."

Here is what the PT editorial team would love to see happen for Black History Month 2026:

- CCWF should sponsor a decorating contest, similar to what is done at Christmas, to encourage residents to get involved and be informed.

- More information on Black History Month and African Americans on the Edovo app.

- Historical movies highlighting African Americans can be shown as weekend movies during the month of February. Movies like "Harriet," "Malcom X," "Hidden Figures" and even the recent movie "The Six Triple Eight" would be of interest to the population. Additionally, Global Tel*Link can feature movies highlighting African Americans during the month of February.

- Inmate Leisure Time Activity Groups (ILTAG) at CCWF could sponsor a fundraising drive with proceeds going to the ACLU, NAACP or other organization focused on equal rights and assisting African Americans.

- An ILTAG can create a curriculum to offer classes to the population regarding Black History Month and the contributions of African Americans to the US.

By incorporating suggestions from CCWF residents, the Paper Trail editorial board hopes more individuals will be motivated to learn about notable African Americans and the significance of Black History Month.

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Why Danielle Gonzalez Loves Coming to Prison

By Nora Igova

“This is a safe space to be who you are,” is the quote one sees immediately after they enter Danielle Gonzalez’s office.

For resident Kandice Ortega, it has been. Gonzalez is Central California Women’s Facility’s (CCWF) supervising psychiatric social worker and the go-to person for residents looking to address their mental health while incarcerated. According to Ortega, Gonzalez is the best clinician she has ever had.

“When I first started seeing her, I was having flashbacks from traumatic experiences,” Ortega said. “Gonzalez actually did therapy with me that helped me tremendously. Because of her care and expertise, I no longer have nightmares.”

Gonzalez’s office is quiet, quaint and decorated with personal touches that give the space an inviting character. A thermos placed by her ergonomically shaped keyboard is covered with affirmations that speak to her character like “Make Your Optimism Come True” and “Change the World.” The desk also holds a few succulent plants, a box of Kleenex and a baby Yoda toy.

Gonzalez graduated from Fresno State University with a master’s degree in social work and though she could work anywhere else, she loves coming to prison.

Gonzalez started her career as a clinical social worker in the prison’s Substance Abuse Treatment Facility. She enjoyed working with the different correctional departments, she said, and talking to her incarcerated clients. She truly believes she can help anyone who wants the help.

“I measure the individual improvements: working with someone who stopped abusing substances, someone that has a board date

“Seeing people appear happier with their lives and realizing they are not their past, fills my heart with joy,” Gonzalez said.

coming up or had a denial, reconnecting with family members, someone that found out that they are worthy of being respected, etc.,” Gonzalez said. “Those little changes bring me here in prison.”

Gonzalez grew up in a middle-class family and expressed how fortunate she was to have good people to raise her. Her parents and grandparents had a huge influence on her because of their strong work ethics. They provided for her and encouraged her to be the best she could be.

Because Gonzalez had a fulfilling childhood, she always wanted to help people who are less fortunate. Famous people in history that helped others inspired her: Mother Teresa, Martin Luther



Photos by CCWF Paper Trail

King, Cesar Chavez, Nelson Mandela, and Oprah.

Gonzalez said she has always been drawn towards working with underserved populations (i.e., the LGBTQ+ population, patients with acute mental illness, immigrants, incarcerated population, etc.). Growing up, she noticed the struggles of these populations and felt it was unjust and always wanted to help make changes.

Gonzalez said she believes incarcerated individuals are not bad people, just people who have

made bad choices. She hopes that, while incarcerated, individuals will utilize the time to self-reflect and make better choices for the future.

“Transformation is possible,” Gonzalez said. “I am not here to judge anyone, I am here to support the next step, whatever that person wants the next step to look like, in a positive direction. Whoever wants the help, I am going to be part of their story. Everyone has their own time frame and timeline for change.”

Not everybody is fit to work with special populations. In choosing this profession, Gonzalez said she had the confidence that she can work with individuals that made a

bad choice in their life.

According to Ortega, Gonzalez has created a space that feels judgment-free, which has allowed her to open up about things that very few know.

“She is professional but personable, she is trustworthy, she remembers what I tell her and what I go through, and she also follows through,” Ortega said.

Ortega gave credit to Gonzalez for playing a huge part in Ortega being a better Peer Support Specialist in the institution.

However, Gonzalez’s job is far from easy. The most challenging aspect, she said, is the system’s structure. The timeframes to see clients are short and they are often prevented from reporting to appointments by yard-downs and institutional lockdowns that restrict movement.

“There are not enough hours in the day to feel I have a complete day of service,” she said. “This job requires flexibility. Oftentimes things will come up, situations will happen, and I just have to roll with it.”

Even outside of working hours, Gonzalez is always there to listen and help. Ortega witnessed this generosity when one of her peers who was paroling, didn’t know who was picking them up or what would happen once they got out of CCWF.

“Gonzalez sat with them in the Reception and Release building, helping the individual figure out the next step,” Ortega said. “She made sure that person transitioned with peace in her heart.

“She is professional but personable, she is trustworthy, she remembers what I tell her and what I go through, and she also follows through,” Ortega said.

Gonzalez settled in for another work day at her office within CCWF

That girl was not even her client. She saw her as a human being in need.”

Once she goes home for the day, however, she tries not to bring her work life with her.

“If I know I did enough that day and did everything I could, I will be able to turn it off and concentrate on my personal needs,” Gonzalez said. “However, sometimes I think I could have done something more.”

Gonzalez’s self-care is lots of puppy time with her three furry kids (dogs): Chewy, Munch, and Gigi. She takes them for long walks accompanied by playtime. She also considers herself a TV junkie and her favorite shows include Law & Order and Chicago Fire. She is a diehard Star Wars fan.

Gonzalez has been working with CDCR for 10 years and her professional goals are to keep challenging herself, and to continue to help with new mental health-gear programs and rehabilitative programs for another 10.

She is also inspired to do new things to continue her support of the incarcerated population.

“Staying involved with the population keeps my passion and my drive going,” Gonzalez said, “I want to continue to challenge myself and find new aspects of the job. Every person is worth it.”

Gonzalez said, “I love coming to prison and I love the work that I do.” She has found her niche and her passion. It has made coming to work a happy thing.

FEATURES

One Woman's Journey Through Menopause

By Elizabeth Lozano

It all started with little changes in my body. I thought I was losing my mind. I could not hold on to thoughts. The second I thought I was getting better, something else would happen to me.

The only consolation I had was going in the shower to let the hot water soothe me as I sobbed. What was happening to me? I had no control over my body or mental state. I have gone through hard times before – I've served 30 years after all – but this was different. I seriously thought about taking my own life.

This was affecting every aspect of my life. I had exhaustion, brain fog, depression, headaches and an anxiety rollercoaster that went up and down the core of my body that came out of nowhere. And let me not forget the furnace I lived in, with hot flashes and night sweats that felt like I was in my own personal summer, burning from the inside out. I wondered at times if this was human combustion and if all that remained of me would be ashes on my bed.

At some point I made up my mind – I wanted to live but I couldn't keep living like this. I desperately needed to understand what was going on on a deeper level. I needed help.

Meditation and prayer are something that has always facilitated me through hard times. So I turned to that first. But I also knew I would need to look outward, to medical professionals and to my peers.

It was March 2020 and due to COVID-19, it took over a year to see the OB/GYN at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) just to confirm I was perimenopausal. I did not get much help through the OB/GYN. He wanted to prescribe birth control pills to assist me with the hot flashes and help balance my hormones. I did not want to take the medication because I had heard it could cause cancer. So I continued to suffer in silence.

When I spoke to the middle-aged women in my building, I came to find out they did not have any more information about menopause than I did. Everyone I knew had served decades in prison and no one understood the changes their body was going through. It always came back to them navigating a major life change and figuring out how best they could manage their symptoms on their own, such as with herbal remedies, food, or vitamins that would soften the

symptoms. It was sad to know that there was nowhere else to turn.

I went as far as to read the dictionary to see if it would have some magical word that could possibly assist me in my despair.

In the Webster's Dictionary, the word menopause is defined as "the cessation of menstruation." Even the dictionary minimizes the definition of what a woman goes through during menopause. However, ask any woman who has experienced this, and you'll hear menopause is much more than just those few words. For some, it is debilitating. To others, it may be a welcome change. Every experience is different.

In Judith A. Houck's research on how menopause was treated over the last century, I read "...menopause is more than the loss of fertility, more than the loss of estrogen. Instead, menopause is a social, cultural, and physiologic transition, and anyone attempting to shepherd women through this period must consider all these factors." Hold up, now I was reading something that spoke to my experience – not some dismissive words. But none of this is considered in the prison environment.

The United States now incarcerates 190,600 women and girls, a population that is growing at twice the rate of incarcerated men. At CCWF as of February 2025 there are 1,996. Yet, we have only one OB/GYN and do not have a contract with an outside OB/GYN provider, even though there are existing contracts for other medical issues. How is it possible that I am in the world's largest women's prison and so limited in information and assistance in



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“What was happening to me? I had no control over my body or mental state. I have gone through hard times before – I've served 30 years after all – but this was different.”

a matter that is detrimental to all women's health? How can this be in the 21st century?

To answer this question, I talked to CCWF's HealthCare CEO on several occasions about the importance of focusing on women's health around menopause and starting a support group for women experiencing menopause using my own lived experience and struggle with suicidal ideation. He said he agreed on the need and that for now, he would make informative pamphlets available to the population and will continue to address our needs as best he can.

Two things are clear: One, we need more menopause resources and OB/GYN providers at CCWF. But as I've discovered, it's going to take patience. In the meantime, we as peers need to be the ones talking about menopause, advocating for resources, and being there for one another. After

all, it takes a village.

Five years through my change, I am now postmenopausal, I have learned to manage my symptoms. It has not been an easy task since they vary so much and I am limited in what I can have to combat them. At this point, my concern is to bring awareness to the need we have at CCWF for meaningful care around this matter and create a support group for the ones that need assistance in navigating this impactful life change.

I stand in unity with those who struggle as I have. I urge every person going through menopause to advocate for themselves, if not who will? Menopause affects all women, yet it seems like real research is just beginning to try and figure out how to best meet the needs of millions of women. I feel optimism for future generations. Hopefully, they will not have to suffer in silence.

Lifestyle Tips for Managing Menopause

- 1 Healthy diet**
Foods that are low-fat, plant-based, and rich in calcium and soy can help with hot flashes.
- 2 Vitamins**
Calcium and Vitamin D are important for menopausal people.
- 3 Exercise**
Daily movement helps with menopausal weight gain (very common), mood and sleep.
- 4 Mindfulness**
Activities like yoga and meditation can help manage stress.
- 5 Sleep**
Nightly routines, bed times, and reducing screen time can help with sleep disturbances.
- 6 Sexual Health**
Talk to a doctor about vaginal dryness, low libido, and painful sex.
- 7 Community**
Connect with others who are navigating menopause for support and insight.

Information adapted from the Society for Women's Health Research's "Menopause Preparedness Toolkit."

Menopause and Renewal

“The Change” comes with obstacles and opportunities

By Delina L. Williams

It may be winter here at Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF) with frost on the main yard. However, for a few residents it is summertime all year round. For them, menopause has taken effect, and the change is real.

The National Institute on Aging describes menopause as “the stage of a woman’s life when her menstrual periods stop permanently, and she can no longer get pregnant.” This life stage starts between the ages of 45 and 55, and can take several years. During this time, a woman’s body produces less and less estrogen and progesterone, two hormones made by the ovaries.

The institute is careful to point out that it is not a disease (though some people view it that way). Medical doctors will offer women a biological description of menopause that comes with a host of physical changes. Others may look to the cultural understanding of what it means to be a “woman of a certain age,” with all the existential discourse that comes with it. Not only is the loss of fertility an important biomarker, but the increased risk for midlife problems is exasperating to most.

It is true – there should be a personalized manual for this life stage. This is because menopause brings varied symptoms and the timing is unmanageable. The top physical menopausal symptoms stemming from hormonal changes are night sweats and hot flashes. But there are many others: insomnia, fatigue, bone and joint pain, sexual dysfunction and emotional instability. Cycling through the numerous pitfalls associated with menopause can make the days slow and without meaning.

Women worldwide would love there to be a “one size fits all” remedy. The closest we have right now are menopausal hormone treatments (mHT). One such treatment is estradiol. According to a 2024 article published by Climacteric, the peer-reviewed journal of the International Menopause Society, estradiol taken in transdermal patch or pill form are effective



Photo from Adobe Stock Images

treatments for menopausal symptoms “with little difference in treatment efficacy and safety.”

But the imbalance of hormones and the treatments available do not always fit. From what we’ve seen at CCWF, just like menopausal women, the use of mHT can run hot or cold. It either works or it doesn’t.

When we finally got to talking about this difficult topic, CCWF residents had much to share.

“I take Prempro for hot flashes and night sweats. Without it, my legs will sweat. And my face gets beet red. Who needs that?” Holly Ramos, 51, told me.

Ramos relayed what many women here know: immense stress is a leading cause of early onset menopause. “So,” she said, “at 40 I just stopped menstruating. By the time I was 45, I was in the throes of menopause when [CCWF OB/GYN] Dr. Graves suggested Prempro and I’ve been on it ever since.”

Prempro is a hormone replacement therapy (HRT) used by millions of women for the relief of menopausal symptoms.

It can’t be said strongly enough that the conditions of incarceration make treating menopausal symp-

toms even more difficult. This important point was made in Menopause: The Journal of the North American Menopause Society, in a 2021 article called “Experiences of Menopause During Incarceration.”

“Understanding menopause experiences among women who are incarcerated,” the authors write, “is a critical step in identifying gaps in access to and quality of care for the underserved and growing population of older women in prisons and jails.” According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) most recent COMPSTAT DAI Statistical Report, from 2023, the total number of women of menopausal age in CDCR custody 1,448. That’s approximately 50% of the total biologically female prison population.

The experience of CCWF resident Donna Lee, 73, makes this point clear.

“When my menopause was at its worst,” Lee said, “I couldn’t strip down fast enough. However, I had to program all day and go to chow. I had a wash cloth to hit all my hot spots (face, neck, arms and feet). I

was probably cranky as well. I had to push for some medication I saw on TV [Estroven, a food supplement for menopausal symptoms], but they only gave it to me for a month and then refused my requests to refill. I finally just gave up trying.”

Another difficulty during menopause while incarcerated is the lack of sanitary supplies to support the changing body, like sanitary pads, replacement underwear, and clean bedding. Although CCWF is a women’s facility, there is a never-ending need for sanitary products. It adds an extra layer of stress for women trying to care for their very private needs, not to mention the overall difficulty of striving for “normalcy” within the razor wires.

Since menopause stems from declining production of certain hormones, it is easy for people to wrongly correlate menopause with deficiency within the woman’s body. This explanation runs in line with the information many receive through their doctor. “It’s just what happens,” “There is nothing that can be done” and the list goes on.

This is a hard thing to hear and takes a psychological toll. This is when our minds start racing with the “forever young” discourse, which challenges the mind of any woman who doesn’t want to appear her age. The waiting game for moisturizers to fix that wrinkle or that saggy eyelid can drown out the truth: We all age and we need to accept that.

More helpful is an existential thought process about menopause that brings acceptance and that focuses on the many possibilities that exist in the future of an aging woman. These include the right to believe in one’s own freedoms and how to carry those out with confidence. A woman going through the “change” can still have many adventures on the horizon that bring wisdom, strength and hope to those who follow. This is where the positivity of being “grown” makes its rounds through the newness called menopause and life gets good. Self-discovery and challenging oneself to be the best version, no matter what, will confront the lie that menopause is ‘death to the soul.’

Until there is sufficient knowledge of mHT’s, HRTs, and their true ability to eradicate menopausal distress, women will continue to prepare themselves mentally and emotionally for the physical journey. Women around the world will continue to hope for the best while sweating it out during the night.

Start a Conversation

Start small



Choose one trusted friend or family member to test out articulating your menopause experience.

Share your experience



Talk about your symptoms and how they affect your daily life, as well as goals and successes along your journey.

Communicate openly



The more transparent you are about your experience, the better your loved ones can understand and adapt with you.

Ask for help



Express what you need or how they can help - whether it is in the moment of a hot flash or general support.

Infographics by V. Roseborough

NEWS

**COVER STORY: PROJECT MUSIC HEALS
...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

tings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters and refugee centers. Martin emphasizes bringing dignity and compassion to all humans.

“I believe that the arts can heal and transform,” says Martin. I love music and art passionately and I want to bring it to those that need it: for comfort, healing, transformation.” Martin herself is a musician, actor, director, theater critic, and teacher.

The CCWF original compositions performed by The Dolphins illustrated how powerfully music can pull out our deepest internal workings, and catalyze dramatic, positive change. Participant Nicole Gulley was in awe of the Julliard musicians. “They started with feelings – fear, shame, anger...and translated them to notes and music.”

Each morning of the five-day workshop, Martin opened with stretching and breathwork which relaxed participants, heightened sensory awareness, and prepared them to imagine and create music. Martin emphasized the importance of mind-body connection in creative endeavors and emotional processing.

Teaching Artist Ben Grow’s teaching style was as clear and poetic as the sound produced by The Dolphins. He made the writing of music accessible and flexible, and encouraged



Photos Courtesy of PIO M. Williams

Participants, CCWF administration and members of Music Heals Us pose on the last day of the 5-day workshop.

composers to use their own language to indicate how their pieces should be interpreted. For example, residents marked their works as “lively and upbeat,” or “with swag.” Grow said he feels “duty-bound to share the creative force that goes into composition.”

Participant Carol Coronado enthused, “My childhood dream came true...When (our pieces) were performed I felt alive; I was able to express myself and emotionally regulate myself.”

Warden Anissa De La Cruz, Community Resource Manager Gabriella Armendariz, AAPIO Monique Williams and Ombudsman Tami Falconer, along with facility administrators and community leaders, joined the group for the final performance. After each resident introduced their piece, The Dolphins

played the collaborative work.

De La Cruz related personally to the musical-emotional experience, as a classically-trained pianist herself. “When I hear a song,” she commented, “it really touches me. When someone wrote the song, they were probably feeling the same thing that I’m feeling.”

The residents requested a special piece for the grand finale: viola player James Prencil’s original composition, “Just Around the Bend.” His intention with this song was to express what we feel when we’re about to see someone we’ve been missing.

With a unique fusion of classical and contemporary pop and country influences, the music captured the room. By the second instance of the melodic motif, I felt my heartstrings

pulled straight from inside as my eyes blurred with tears, and emotion projected toward the loved one I miss the most. Mine were not the only tears in the room.

Participants Jessalynn Graham shared, “This has been instrumental in orchestrating a new life song for me. I lost part of my soul, and here I found it again.”

Not only did PMHU facilitate an amazing initial performance, but they stayed for a nine-week session to delve further into music theory and composition with the residents. This incredible workshop embodied music’s raw emotional power as described by great composer Ludwig Van Beethoven: “Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.”

**COVER STORY: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES
...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

unless it finds compelling and extraordinary reasons not to do so.

Pursuant to newly created Penal Code § 1465.9(c), once 10 years have passed since a person was sentenced, any remaining amount an individual owes on a restitution fine cannot be collected.

According to the Prison Law Office – a Berkeley-based nonprofit public interest law firm – any uncollectible restitution fines should automatically be written off and no longer collected in accord with the new laws.

In other words, restitution payments should stop automatically if an individual in CDCR custody meets the criteria established by AB 1186, without any action on their part.

Importantly, money that has already

been paid towards a restitution fine prior to AB 1186 going into effect will not be refunded. (See *People v Clark*, (2021) 67 Cal.App.5th 248. *People v Lopez-Vinck*, (2021) 68 Cal. App.5th 945; and *People v Greeley*, (2021) 70 Cal.App.5th 609.)

AB 2310: Language Access in Parole Hearings

Another bill that will go into effect is AB 2310, written by Assemblymember Gregg Hart. AB 2310 adds section 3041.8 to the Penal Code and will require the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) to translate notices into the five most common languages spoken by incarcerated persons.

The notices that will be translated are those that advise incarcerated individuals of their rights during the parole hearing process, provide procedural information about the parole

hearing process, provide information on how to file a grievance for a denial of rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and petitions to advance a parole hearing.

AB 1986: Banned Books

AB 1986, authored by Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, pertains to books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals banned by CDCR. AB 1986 requires that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) post the Centralized List of Disapproved Publications to OIG’s website. The bill also authorizes OIG, upon request, to review publications on the list to determine if OIG agrees with CDCR’s determination that the publication violates CDCR rules.

AB 1810: Menstrual Products

Penal Code 3049 was amended by

AB 1810, also written by Bryan. AB 1810 requires incarcerated persons who menstruate or experience uterine or vaginal bleeding to have ready access to menstrual products (i.e. sanitary pads and tampons) without having to request them.

A suggestion from Paper Trail’s Editor-in-Chief Amber Bray and Managing Editor Kanoa Harris-Pengdang: if an individual is unsure whether they have a restitution fine that is affected by AB 1186, they can refer to their sentencing report and abstract of judgment to verify what penal code is listed.

If anyone has questions or opinions regarding any of these legislative changes, individuals are encouraged to write to Paper Trail so their voices can be heard.

Felon’s Alphabet

By Sagal Sadiq

From presidents and populace, to wardens and wards, we all have defects of character. So, the question today is: When push comes to shove and shove goes to punch and if, God forbid, punch goes to stab, what are you made of? When our mettle is tested, will we succeed or succumb to our own defects of character?

“D” is for defects of character. Webster’s Dictionary defines a defect as “an imperfection that impairs worth or utility, a shortcoming, or an inadequacy.”

Floating around Central California Women’s Facility is a list. You know you’ve seen it, the infa-

mous defects of character list, beginning with “Abusing others for enjoyment,” and ending with “Wasteful.” The list is 194 defects long—194 ways to potentially screw up.

While there are some very obviously undesirable character defects on this list, there are also many that don’t register as all that bad at first glance. For example, did you know that complaining was a character defect? I didn’t. I do now though. So, for all you complainers out there— beware.

Let’s look at an example. What about the inability to set boundaries? How did that make the cut? On the surface, an inability to set boundaries may not seem like much of a character

CCWF'S Top Valentine's Day Gifts

By Megan Hogg

"Quality time, a meal, and a deep belly laugh," said Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) resident G. "Chase" Ward.

While it seems like a simple request for a gift, fulfilling it in prison makes this ask a whole lot harder.

Believe it or not, the big rush for gifts usually starts early in November. No, no, not Christmas gifts - Valentine's Day gifts. Yes, three months may seem like extreme prep time for a Valentine's Day present but Valentine's Day can be an even bigger deal here in CCWF because there are no sales or special offers just for the day. You can't plan a surprise getaway or book a private dinner like you can on the outside.

Aside from monthly canteen items and quarterly packages, everyone has access to the same old items as everyone else; yet each gift has to be original, and personal and adorable and special and surprising and memorable and full of love and - for all intents and purposes - it has to be legal. This is where the gift ideas require a more creative and lengthier search.

"We start at least a month ahead," said Heather Brown, referring to her Valentine's Day preparations. "We have to decide on what we want to eat and get for each other."

"I do all the cooking because that's me," Brown added.

Gifts like these represent the symbol of your special love - whether it be for a romantic partner, best friend, "mom" or "dad," or something to send home to loved ones.

The biggest demand for Valentine's Day gifts tends to be for items that no one else has, items that speak to one's love language, items that mirror the latest fashion and viral trends, and occasionally items that are not regularly allowed, but have a special exception, such as things purchased at a fundraising sale.

Then there are the items that include all of those characteristics, and more to make them "extra." Finding one of the many incredibly artistic and talented women who



Photo By CCWF Paper Trail

The heart-shaped candy box is constructed from cardstock, construction paper, sequins and tissue paper. It takes about two days to create this unique heart in order to gift it to a loved. The heart is filled with delicious candy bars purchased from canteen or vendor packages.

have a flair for gift design is always a plus. I have seen designs and gifts that outdo what I've seen on TV. commercials.

Unfortunately, there's no way to list them all because the range of answers is so vast. I have found that many of us desire things that bring us a sense of normalcy - things that are often taken for granted or overlooked in society. The simplest items become sentimental and acquire great value here, while perhaps not so much out there. This is a very large part of why items that are rare, personalized, and original are in high demand. Bragging rights don't hurt either.

Over the years, through my own Valentine's Day celebrations, helping others to plan and provide gifts, and when recently talking with people, I've found these to be the most popular:

TOP SIX VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT ITEMS

1. Jewelry

The most popular pieces of jewelry go beyond the rings, necklaces, and earrings available in the vendor catalogs. There are personal jewelry items that have been left behind, which are items that can-

not be ordered. Multi-gemstone cross pendants, colorful gemstone earrings, rings with several cubic zirconia as opposed to one and larger hoop earrings are all pieces of jewelry residents love to receive. Body piercings are regularly sought out as well. Anything that helps a woman feel special and unique is the goal.

2. Clothing

Custom-made items rule this category. Everything from hoodies and ball caps to bandanas, crocheted, and hand-sewn items. Make sure her feet stay warm and cozy in her new favorite fuzzy slippers. Don't forget the old-school items too. Most times it's simply asking what is available or can be made from one of the incredibly talented women known for their work. Word-of-mouth goes a long way.

3. Food

When someone, particularly your romantic partner, goes out of their way to make your one favorite food or plans an elaborate meal just for you, especially if it's something that isn't served here, that says love. One of the best answers about a lasting Valentine's Day memory I heard was a romantic dinner, complete with everything you'd find in a nice

restaurant at home: tablecloths, candles, roommates that leave you alone in the room, special food, and even rose petals on the table. Yep, fresh rose petals. She did that.

4. Sports Teams' Items

What better way to show love than giving a gift that represents a favorite team? Think of the happiness of being able to sleep with a new sheet with your favorite team's emblem all over it. The same can be said for sheets or towels with a favorite designer logo too - not just the main leagues or designers, but toy brands, cartoon characters, superheroes, anything personal.

Keep in mind these things may be one-of-a-kind knock-offs, but sometimes that's the point. When a roommate, friend, or even an officer comments positively on it, that's a reminder of who gave it to you, why they did it, the lengths they went to for you to have it, and that it's lit.

5. Accessories

Many residents choose to customize pre-made items such as purses, backpacks, and personal clothes or find those that are completely custom-designed. This could include cups and water bottles, or really anything that is in limited supply and outside the norm such as designer make-up and body lotions, hair clips, sunglasses, or shoes.

6. Gift Cards

Would you like to treat someone to a pedicure? You can. There are women who will create a "Gift Card" that can be given to that special someone to redeem for a number of different specialties: shoulder massages, manicures and pedicures, hair appointments, and even facials if they're up for it.

Finding that perfect Valentine's Day gift is an important accomplishment wherever you are. Being incarcerated puts greater value on the gifts that are unexpected and certainly those that are highly unusual. Shout out to the many creative and artistic women who share their ideas, time, and talents to help make celebrating and appreciating all the people we love, which includes ourselves, a possibility. Have a very Happy Valentine's Day!

defect until you look a little closer and deeper into what that could entail. Imagine not being willing or able to just say, "No." Now imagine not saying "No" to the illegal demands of antisocial peers and how that could result in running afoul of the law. Anybody know anyone who's gotten "caught up" like that? I sure do; there are many.

Whether or not a defect of character is discernable at first glance, what is disconcertingly clear is that inaction or a denial of our defects may lead people to places like the one we live in. Our defects of character are the proverbial chinks in our chains, the areas where we are "defective" that require exploration, attention, and definitely, tending to.

It all seems so deceptively simple and yet, this journey of self-discovery could rightfully be compared to one of the 12 tasks of Hercules. One needs to wade through the mire of formative years, the dysfunction, the distant parental figures, the authoritative bosses, and the unhealthy romantic entanglements to find the root cause of each character defect. This is necessary in order to order to comprehensively articulate them in all the ways they pertain to our life crimes. It's all in an effort not to reoffend and to emerge from prison as the 2.0 versions of ourselves.

In a nutshell, the Board of Parole Hearing requires incarcerated individuals to have a firm grasp on not only what one's character defects are, but also on how these character defects

came about, and ultimately what has been done to mitigate, if not prevent, them from reoccurring. Again, so as not to reoffend.

I encourage you to dissect each defect of character you have. Really dig deep, figure out its source, analyze how it manifests itself in your life, and process any secondary gains that may have resulted from maladaptive behaviors. It's hard work, but it's rewarding. Be aware that eradicating defects of character is an impossible undertaking-the best that can be done is to identify what our defects are, ascertain how and to what degree they impact our lives and then learn how to manage them.

FEATURES

A Visit to the CCWF Library

By Christine Loyd



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Henry David Thoreau wrote in “Walden” that “books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations.”

A piece of that wealth can be found here, at the Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF) Library. This is a place of knowledge open to incarcerated persons in CCWF. And, as a matter of fact, according to Senior Librarian Robert Oldfield, more than a thousand incarcerated persons visit the library every quarter, including those who come in every week for legal research.

Currently the library contains 15,487 books, 5,977 fiction and 9,510 non-fiction—thousands of books catalogued on a statewide system in every category: law, reference, encyclopedias, fiction, non-fiction, religious texts, foreign languages, magazines, prison newspapers, legal forms and most of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s Operational documentation.

Children’s books we can read to the kids during phone calls or video visits are available, as well as large print versions of many bestsellers. Copies of legal documents and filings are provided by staff that serves A-yard and general population. All we need is a GA-22 Request for Interview to schedule a visit or ask for services.

Oldfield’s staff includes librarian Lisa Andrade, and library technical assistants A. Mirelez and K. Van

Buren. G. Gonzales manages the A-Yard Library. Two incarcerated persons also work at the Library. Clerk Mariam Martinez and an ADA Assistant are available to help with any request for using library resources.

There is wheelchair and walker access. For anyone expanding

“Literacy can play a major part in our rehabilitation, as Oldfield believes. “The right book can keep [people] on the road to recovery,” he said.

reading skills or working on vocabulary, there are “Easy Readers” for all levels of reading expertise. Large print books are shelved in the Law section, so ask for assistance in finding what you need.

Our Law Library uses the LexisNexis Law Library system which is also on our GTL tablets. There are three computers available for research on case law, state and Federal statutes, and CDCR rules and procedures.

Department of Operational Manual Supplements or Local Operations Procedures are available on request. When you submit the request, be specific by using the number or title of the procedure you need.

If you need legal forms or copies of documents, remember to include the form number and the number of copies. This is especially important if you want legal documents or

packages for filing in the courts.

Chantell Gosztyla, a routine visitor, has used numerous features of the Law Library.

“The staff is consistently helpful and supportive, even encouraging me to expand my research and supplying copies for filings in court,” Gosztyla said.

The Recreation Library contains a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. Popular best-selling fiction authors are located near the entrance.

If you’re looking for Nora Roberts, John Grisham or James Patterson, they are easy to find as you walk in. All the regular fiction is filed by author’s last name. Ask the staff if you need assistance finding an author; some of the classic literature and poetry books are in special sections.

All the non-fiction books are filed first by a numerical system, then alphabetically by author. Charts are posted at various locations to help you find your book.

Some popular subjects are biographies, arts and crafts, medical and health books, and reference books on language, i.e. thesaurus or dictionaries. There are three sets

of encyclopedias, including one in Spanish, available for use in the library. Another popular topic is on starting a business, which can give you a head start before parole.

The library regularly acquires new books and the next book order is being prepared now. New editions of medical and reference books will be included.

The latest version of the “Physician’s Desk Reference” which describes all prescribed medications, and the “Diagnostic Statistical Manual” which lists names of diseases and conditions, will be in the new order. Suggestions for new books can be made at the library or by GA-22 Request form.

Donations are welcome and come in through several ways. Gently used books sent by friends and family can be taken back to Receiving & Release (R & R). Just inform staff in R & R that you are donating the book(s) to our Library. Books can also be donated through official channels by obtaining forms from the Community Resources Manager (CRM).

When you visit the library for the first time, you will complete a Trust Withdrawal form. Checking out books is quick and simple; your books are stamped with a due date of 30 days. There is a grace period before any reminder notices are sent. If a book is damaged while in your possession, you may be charged \$5.00 for repair.

Donna Lee, a former library worker, has been using library services for many years. She encourages everyone to “check out all the great books and use the resources on the law side. The information can help us regain our freedom, improve our knowledge and provide hours of entertainment.”

It’s important to remember that although we can use our GTL tablets for recreation and education, library staff can help get us started on self-help topics and study subjects.

Oldfield has several plans for future services at the library, such as updating legal forms and starting book clubs. So, plan a visit to the CCWF Library and explore the resources in our “center of knowledge.”

Literacy can play a major part in our rehabilitation, as Oldfield believes. “The right book can keep [people] on the road to recovery,” he said.



Left, Janine Chadler pursues books at the library.

Right, Monica Rusconi assisted by ADA worker to access the library.

Photos by CCWF Paper Trail