CCWF

Paper Trail NEWSROOM

YEAR 2026 VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

Paper Trail Hosts Historic Film Festival

" IT WAS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE. I STILL THINK ABOUT IT OFTEN."

-SAGAL SADIQ

By Mimi Le and Mallissa James

In March 2026, Pollen Initiative in partnership with CCWF Paper Trail hosted the SQFF presents @ CCWF. We never have had the privilege to host an event of this magnitude.

The CCWF Paper Trail team helped make this historic event possible through months of planning via virtual meetings–a novel experience for the newsroom. CCWF Paper Trail staff used their voices to express views that were crucial to the development of the event.

Countless hours were spent on logistical preparation, including visiting the units weekly to collect pitches and sign-up sheets, passing out fliers, and overall making sure the population had every shot to be there.

With a sense of heightened responsibility, editorial board members, Kanoa Harris-Pendang and Sadiq Sagal led the hospitality effort –handing out food tickets, name tags, and keeping the guests organized and comfortable as they entered the festival.

Staff writer Mallissa James stepped into the logistics lead role. She also handed out awards to CCWF Warden Anissa De La Cruz and retired Chief Deputy Warden and program provider Velda Dobson-Davis.

Amber Bray, editor-in-chief of the newspaper, and Nora Igova, art and layout designer, both hosted the event.

Bray said she was "anxious and excited for having such a big responsibility," and Igova said, "my heart was beating faster. I felt gratitude, excitement, and proud to be a part of an incredible team that worked so well together."

From a director's chair, LaKisa "Kiki" Crowder, staff writer, moderated the women in film panel. After speaking with five film industry women she said, "I forgot I had lungs for a moment." This was the first time Crowder had stepped out of her comfort zone and put her journalistic skills into practice.

All guests were served breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Erica Olson, contributing writer, and her team provided continuous service throughout the day.

During the event, outside guests, volunteers, residents, and members in the film industry sat side by side enjoying a movie while sharing laughter and tears. Class and situation did not separate us.

Guadalupe Barragan, CCWF Paper Trail contributing writer, spent hours behind the camera capturing timeless memories.

The opportunity to showcase the talent of women is scarce as we are often treated as a marginalized class.

The CCWF Paper Trail team is honored to continue to make its mark in history.

Winners from the SQFF Presents @ CCWF Event & Script Competi-

By Mallissa James

On March 28, Krysten Webber was called to the stage as the winner for best narrative pitch at the SQFF Presents @ CCWF event and script competition. The pitch, Untitled, is heartfelt and very personal.

Q: What inspired you to write this script?
A: I've never had a close relationship with my family. When my mother was in the beginning of dementia, it was a shock to everyone because it was a very immediate and abrupt beginning. When the script contest came up my mom had just died. The way I had to navigate dementia with my family was really awkward because I was just a voice on the phone. Dementia is something you can't slow down—you can't fix it.

Q: What is the purpose of this script?
A: One of the biggest lessons I learned was that you always stay angry if you are holding onto something. Dementia came into my life and took away the anger. She could not hold onto things because she couldn't remember and I was still mad at her for stuff she didn't remember. Trying to put myself in her shoes I learned compassion and empathy. She was looking to me for peace of mind and safety.

Q: If this story becomes a film, what do you hope others will take from it?
A: Forgiveness is always easier. It's hard to hold onto whatever it is that you're angry about. When everybody is hard and crashing into each other, you can't embrace someone when you're hard and rigid. I want people to come away feeling a little softer… wanting to give forgiveness.

Congratulations

By Mallissa James

Diana Lovejoy—CCWF Paper Trail Journalism Guild Chairperson—gracefully accepted her win for best documentary pitch. Desert Blossoms is a real story about Diana Jordan, a mother, whose bond with her children was severed by her crime leading to incarceration. Diana Lovejoy, the author, and Diana Jordan, the subject, share a connection; not only because they have the same name, but because both women struggle with being incarcerated mothers.

Q: What motivated you to write this script?
A: I have known Diana for eight years. We have similarities; I am interested in her family and watching her relationship with her daughter grow. Just learning so much about my own experience and not having contact with my own son. He is the most important thing in my life. My main goal is for my son to not feel rejected and abandoned. Children are the victims and no one in the system cares that families are torn apart. The child learns that the mother does not care and that is trauma for a child. Many of us are here because we learned to feel unworthy. It is important to break that cycle.

Q: If Desert Blossoms becomes a film, what do you hope others will get from it?
A: I want caregivers [people] to understand how important it is for children to have positive relationships with their incarcerated parents. I'd like to inspire reform in the criminal system so the impact on children is minimized. How could the system do better and not break those ties.

Introducing Paper Trail's New Staff Writer Kimberly Machleit

"MY LOVE FOR JOURNALISM STARTED IN THE FORM OF A DIARY, AND THANKS TO THE PAPER TRAIL, IVE BEEN ABLE TO REFINE MY SKILLS TO HELP THE GREATER GOOD OF MY COMMUNITY."

Editing with Paper Trail

By Mimi Le

In May, the newsroom held its first editing class hosted by Paper Trail's own Editorial Advisor Dr. Kate McQueen.

The purpose of the class was to teach us the essentials of editing. We practiced developmental editing, line editing, proofreading, fact-checking, and centered feedback methods. The goal is to examine the writing as a potential reader and work with the writer for the best result. Editing is a collaborative effort between the editor and writer.

McQueen especially enjoyed the collective wisdom shared as we practiced the editing process. Each person brought a unique perspective and our comments were cohesive. "There's wisdom in group feedback," she said. "Everyone had such humorous and insightful comments on drafts."

"As a team, we shared different ideas and perspectives in giving ethical feedback. The 'sandwich tool' resonated with all of us; begin and end with positive comments and center in on constructive criticism to effectively motivate our writers to reach their full potential," said Paper Trail's Managing Editor Guadalupe Barragan.

As a writer, it is quite easy to drift away from the original point of the story. It is the job of the editor to point out and ask clarifying questions. In the final step, known as the line editing phase, McQueen described this as "slash and burn," where once a story is fully developed, the editor looks at the flow of the story and maintains but elevates the writer's specific style.

Up until now, outside volunteers assisted with editing. Now that we have polished our technique, we are more then confident we can do it ourselves.

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WHAT TO EXPECT FROM OUR NEXT ISSUE..

Journalism Guild Graduation

A Newsroom's Code of Ethics

American Penal Press Awards

A Special Visit from Love Does

By Mallissa James

The newsroom was visited by Love Does, an organization that offers resources to help dreams come true through a dream big grant.

Brows raised at the realization that the work bringing this newsroom to life was volunteer until recently.

The newsroom has big dreams of bringing a new era of opportunity to the women here at CCWF.

CCWF Paper Trail Co-Sponsored Events

LGBTQIA + Event

Breast Cancer Awareness and Survivor Fest Event

If you wish to support any of our events scan QR code

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Art layout and design by La'Kisa Crowder