August 19, 2023

Press Release:

Congregation B’nai Harim at the Nevada County Jewish Community Center (NCJCC) invites the public to its pre-Jewish New Year Welcome Back event on Friday, September 8th at 506 Walsh Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945. The Welcome Back event will include a family-friendly dinner and short child-friendly Shabbat service, followed by a regular Shabbat service and Friday Night Forum on the issue of wrongful convictions. The Forum will feature a conversation with Carol Menaker, local author of The Worst Thing We’ve Ever Done; Lori Stone, a former Northern California Innocence Project (NCIP) senior staff member; Todd Fries, new Executive Director of the NCIP; and Obie Anthony, exoneree and founder of Exonerated Nation. The forum will be moderated by Criminal Law Specialist David Cohen, Esquire, past president of the NCJCC. NCJCC is a Jewish Community Center and reform Jewish Synagogue that has been serving the greater Grass Valley/Nevada City community since 1978.

The event schedule is as follows:
5:30 Welcome Back dinner and short child-friendly Shabbat service
7:00 Shabbat Service
7:30 Justice Forum

Suggested donation: $5 -10/person, no one will be turned away for lack of funds
For more information please visit www.ncjcc.org or https://www.facebook.com/ncjcc/. The NCJCC can be reached by emailing ncjcc@outlook.com or calling (530) 477-0922, or by Facebook Messenger.

NCIP is a non-profit clinical program of Santa Clara University School of Law whose mission is to promote a fair, effective, and compassionate criminal justice system and protect the rights of the innocent. Since its inception in 2001, NCIP has processed over ten thousand requests for inmate assistance, investigated hundreds of cases, pursued litigation or collaborative resolution in dozens, and obtained the freedom of 35 wrongfully convicted individuals. Learn more at www.ncip.org.

Bio 1: Carol Menaker is a writer and author of The Worst Thing We’ve Ever Done: One Juror’s Reckoning with Racial Injustice. Published by She Writes Press in April of this year, the book is a memoir of Carol’s 1976, 21-day jury sequestration in the murder trial of Frederick Burton, a young Black Revolutionary charged with the murders of two white prison wardens. Forty years after she voted to convict Mr. Burton, she revisited her experience of the trial and came to terms with how her youth, naïveté, and white privilege may have led her to convict a man whose shoes she could never have walked in. For more about Carol, visit http://www.carolmenaker.com.
Bio 2: Lori Stone is a seasoned nonprofit leader with a strong commitment to driving strategic change for justice and creating real impact. Her track record includes significant achievements in external relations, fund development, and strategy development, complemented by expertise in marketing, communications, and fundraising principles. Lori's approach centers around equity-focused community engagement, empowering change through community organizing, strategic development, storytelling, and fostering collaboration. Her contributions have been instrumental in various social justice and human rights sectors, especially in areas such as criminal justice, immigration reform, and legal advocacy. As a sought-after nonprofit consultant, Lori has been a valuable resource for organizations, showcasing her proficiency in executive, development, and program leadership. Her adeptness at striking a balance between organizational sustainability and ambitious goals sets her apart as an effective and impactful leader. For more about Lori's work and achievements, visit her LinkedIn profile. She welcomes the opportunity to connect and collaborate with like-minded individuals and organizations, united in their vision for a more just and inclusive world.

Bio 3: Todd Fries graduated cum laude from Santa Clara Law in 2009 with a certificate in Public Interest and Social Justice after completing his Bachelor of Arts at the University of California, Los Angeles. Prior to working at NCIP, he worked at Paul Hastings LLP and as a volunteer attorney at the Santa Clara County Superior Court, Family Law Self-Help Office. Fries began working for the Northern California Innocence Project in 2007 as a clinical law student and returned to NCIP in 2010 as a research fellow as part of the law school's post-graduate fellowship program. Following the retirement of NCIP's founder, Linda Starr, Todd Fries was appointed as the new Executive Director in August 2023.

Bio 4: Obie Anthony, wrongly imprisoned at 19, served 17 years for a murder he didn't commit. Upon his 2011 release without even proper identification, he struggled to rebuild his life – uncertain about resumes, jobs, and technology. This led him to aid other exonerees in meeting post-release needs. His efforts were pivotal in passing California's "Obie's Law" (Assembly Bill No. 672), mandating assistance for exonerees' transition, encompassing housing, job training, and mental health services. In 2016, he founded Exonerated Nation, aiming to reshape exonerees' post-release experiences, fostering safety, stability, and healing. Recipient of the 2017 Rockwood Leadership Institute Returning Citizens Fellowship, Obie speaks frequently at events like Loyola Project for the Innocent and the Innocence Project, contributing to dialogues on exoneration and incarceration.