

Email - The Alcatraz "Foghorn" Newsletter - September

This Month in Alcatraz' History

September 4, 1934

George "Machine Gun" Kelly arrives on Alcatraz along with 103 other inmates transferred from Leavenworth Penitentiary

[September 15, 1941](#)

[USP Alcatraz](#)

[Escape Attempt #6:](#)

[John Bayless](#)

[September 20, 1937](#)

[Work Strike!](#)

100 cons go on a work strike over the extreme restrictions of *The Slammer*.

September 29, 1958

USP Alcatraz

Escape Attempt #12:

Aaron Walter Burgett and Clyde Milton Johnson

The Alcatraz "Foghorn" Newsletter - September

In this issue:

[Images From Inside: San Quentin Art Exhibit On Alcatraz](#)

[Alcatraz Cruises Celebrates 5 Years of Service](#)

[Escape #6: John Bayless, *If At First You Don't Succeed...*](#)

[Convict Work Strike, 1937](#)

[**Newsflash**](#)

From 1959 to 1963 The Alcatraz "Foghorn" Newsletter was the newsletter for staff and residents of Alcatraz. [See a slideshow of the 1959 September issue.](#)

Images From Inside: San Quentin Art Exhibit On Alcatraz



Images From Inside, featuring artwork from inmates of the San Quentin Arts-in-Corrections program, is on show in the Alcatraz Cellhouse Band Practice room, thanks to the [We Players](#).

The Arts-in-Corrections program is sponsored by the [William James Association](#), and We Players and the NPS have been collaborating on site-specific performance arts, outreach, and education programming "to provoke critical thought and stimulate conversation on the Alcatraz themes of incarceration, isolation, justice, and redemption."



Images From Inside will present a selection of the best of inmate-produced artwork seen in 30 years. Started in 1977, the Prison Arts Project at the William James Association has brought together professional artists, performers, and writers in a teaching and mentoring capacity. Studies have found that participation in such projects significantly reduces recidivism and in consequence also lowers state prison costs.



The exhibition opened on August 27, with a panel discussion including prison arts programming visionaries, the NPS, Conservancy staff and island visitors. It will be on display Cellhouse, until on November 30, 2011.

Kristen Elford, *Parks Conservancy*

Alcatraz Cruises Celebrates 5 Years of Service

In September 2011, Alcatraz Cruises will celebrate its 5th year of partnership with the National Park Service. In this time, an estimated 6.5 million guests have been safely transported to and from Alcatraz and the neighboring Angel Island. [Please see the Youtube video of images from our first year.](#)



The journey began when Hornblower Cruises & Events was awarded the 10-year contract from the National Park Service to provide an exclusive ferry service to Alcatraz Island. After a rigorous bidding process, which involved several interested companies and organizations, Hornblower was chosen because of its over 25 years of experience and reputation for excellent customer service in providing dining cruises and hosting private events.

Alcatraz Cruises began service to the island in September of 2006, and Pier 33, Alcatraz Landing, was transformed from a rather quiet departure point for Hornblower into a bustling Alcatraz ferry terminal. Here are some of the key milestones:

2006 and 2007: Pier facilities were significantly improved and upgraded.

2008: More vessels - the *Flyer*, the *Clipper* as well as the new *Hornblower Hybrid* - were added to the fleet and the Guardians of the Gate Bay Cruise was produced to run daily in the summer, as an alternative to sold-out Alcatraz tours.

2009: The Summer Schedule was expanded to accommodate more visitors through additional departures.

2010: The Bay Cruise was enhanced with a new boat narration and a new route. A Social Media program was implemented to reach out and interact with guests before and after their tour. Additionally, work on two exciting new projects, the Alcatraz model and the traveling exhibit, was started and both are due for release in 2011.

2011: Along with the National Park Service, the Parks Conservancy, and Pier 39, Alcatraz Cruises hosted *Rock the Night*, the opening event for more than 3,000 International Pow Wow delegates. More at: <http://bit.ly/nl4Gl9>.

The past five years of service have seen many ups and downs: the madness of sold-out tours in the summer, tsunami warnings, medical emergencies, and cruise cancellations due to inclement weather.

At the same time, there was the excitement and anticipation of guests who boarded ferries to carry them across the bay and their smiling faces as they disembarked after experiencing the wonders of Alcatraz

Island. In countless satisfaction surveys visitors commend Alcatraz Cruises for the immaculate vessels and the excellent service provided by the staff, making their experiences on The Rock truly unforgettable.

Alcatraz Cruises is privileged to be partnered with two great organizations that share the same standard, the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. We strive to provide nothing but the best service to all guests and are looking forward to the next five years of this great partnership.

Lorelei Octavo, *Alcatraz Cruises*



USP Alcatraz Escape Attempt #6

John Bayless, AZ 466 / AZ 966

If At First You Don't Succeed...

A repeat offender, John Bayless was sentenced multiple times for escape and bank robbery. His recidivism earned him not just one Alcatraz inmate number, AZ #466, but a second as well, AZ #966.

On September 15, 1941 John Bayless made the spontaneous and rash decision to attempt escape while on garbage duty. Under the cover of fog, Bayless climbed down to



the rocky shore near the powerhouse. Guards noticed Bayless missing immediately and discovered him cold, wet and mostly naked. Recaptured without resistance, he was walked directly into D-block, and on January 28, 1943 he was brought to trial in San Francisco for his attempt. While in the courthouse he tried again to escape, but did not get very far before being apprehended. Thirty years were added to his sentence.

John Bayless was born on May 16, 1915 in Wichita, Kansas, to a middle class family with a comfortable life. A Boy Scout when he was younger, he was also involved in his community. John's bright future, however, took a turn for the worse when his parents divorced and he left Kansas to live with his grandmother in Missouri. Bayless graduated high school and then he went into the Navy where he served for a few years on the aircraft carrier, *USS Saratoga* based out of Long Beach, California. Despite his prospects for a promising naval career, Bayless hated the military lifestyle and at 20 years old, committed his first crime.

On July 28, 1935, Bayless wrote a bad check as payment for a 1931 Ford Roadster, deserted the Navy, and drove back home to Missouri. The car was reported missing immediately and he was soon arrested after attempting to forge his grandmother's signature on a check. He was convicted of forgery and breaking the Dyer Act by taking a stolen vehicle across state lines. The Dyer Act landed him in the U.S. Southwest Reformatory in El Reno, Oklahoma where he served a term of two years before being released. Easy money was a draw for Bayless who then turned to bank robbery, which led to a prison sentence of 20 years for robbery using force and 25 years for using a deadly weapon.

Soon after Alcatraz opened as a federal prison, Bayless found himself bound by train for the San Francisco Bay. He arrived on November 29, 1938, and was given his first Alcatraz inmate number, AZ #466. He received a job during his prison term on Alcatraz working in the garbage detail where inmates assigned to this work duty had very limited supervision. That is where he attempted his September 15, 1941 escape.



At sentencing, thirty more years were added to his time and Bayless proceeded to serve them without any further incidents. He earned his transfer back to Leavenworth in November of 1950 and received a conditional parole release on August 19, 1951. AZ #966 became his second inmate number when he decided to rob yet another bank and was sent right back to Alcatraz in 1952.

Bayless was one of the last inmates to leave Alcatraz on March 21, 1963 for McNeil Island where, you guessed it, he attempted escape yet again. He was discovered five days later, this time 45 years were added to Bayless' sentence.

Paroled again in August of 1973, Bayless landed in jail one month later. Prison's revolving door finally stopped spinning for Bayless for good, however, when he passed away July 30, 1981 while on parole.

Teresa Williams, *Parks Conservancy*

Convict Work Strike, 1937



Alcatraz was the first U.S. maximum security penitentiary, established to define *hard time*. Among the lack of privileges during the early years of The Rock, the code of silence was the worst, limiting speech to certain times and sending gregarious cons like Al Capone to the Hole.

Before these restraints began to be eased, about 100 cons went on strikes twice: January 20, 1936 and September 20, 1937, to protest the no talking rule, as well as the lack of pay, radio, movies, library law books, newspapers and a commissary, which were available at the prisons from which they came.

Each time, the strikers were asked to reconsider, celled and fed bread and water until they agreed to work. Those identified as leaders or who held out were placed in "the hole," or isolation. The enforcement strategy worked.

Over the next 20 years, however, all of the original complaints were addressed, except for daily news and a prison store.

Richard Jorgensen, *Parks Conservancy*

Newsflash

[Golden Gate Bridge Proposed Change to Plaza](#)

[America's Cup News](#)

September 21, the Agave Trail and the Parade ground will reopen.

Do you want to contribute to or receive The Alcatraz "Foghorn"? [E-mail](#) the editor.

Thank you to everyone who contributed!

Kristen Elford, Editor

Katharina McAllister, Assistant Editor