

The MCCX Mountain Review

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A Morgan County Correctional Complex Publication

A President With a Record Trump's Second Term Offers Second Chances

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, citizens have voted for a convicted felon to serve as President of the United States of America. On November 5, 2024, Donald J. Trump was elected as the 47th US President, defeating former federal prosecutor and Vice President, Kamala Harris. Trump received the majority of both the popular vote and the electoral vote, including a sweep of all battleground states. In this twist of irony, a man convicted of dozens of crimes was picked by the people over his crime-fighting challenger. In his second term (non-consecutive), Trump brings a whole new meaning to the premise of electing a candidate with a record.

Being convicted of a crime has typically resulted in being sequestered from society, but it appears that a major shift in thinking has transpired in the minds of the American public.

With the election of a felon to the most powerful position in the world, the United States seems to be living up to its reputation as "the land of opportunity." One may consider if this is the result of a country becoming more receptive to giving those convicted of a crime a second chance or that of a nation whose confidence in

**America seems to be living up
to its reputation as
"the land of opportunity"**

the judicial system has simply eroded away. Although there may be some truth to both these postulations, there's also the prospect that America's choice was based chiefly on the allure of Donald J. Trump.

Trump has begun his second term, with a vow to dismantle the Department of Justice, arguing that it's

See **SECOND CHANCES**, page 20

There is a point beyond which even justice becomes unjust.

—SOPHOCLES, *ELECTRA*, C. 409 BC

The MCCX Mountain Review

Vol. 34, No. 1



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From the Editor's Desk

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

THE MOUNTAIN REVIEW HAS been in publication longer than the Morgan County Correctional Complex (MCCX) has been in operation, but details about its beginnings have been mostly lost to time. The newspaper is known to have been originally published by the men housed at the Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary, but the rest of its origin story remains a bit of a mystery. Established in 1896, Brushy's castle-like structure is situated on the opposite side of the mountain from MCCX and was home to a litany of Tennessee's most notorious criminals, which include the likes of the infamous James Earl Ray.

The Morgan County Regional Correctional Facility, as it was initially known, was constructed in the latter half of the 20th century and operated independently of Brushy. In the summer of 1997, the two facilities combined administrations to form the Brushy Mountain Correctional Complex (BMCX), and the *Mountain Review* was distributed to the men living at both sites. In 2009, the 113-year-old Brushy Mountain State

Penitentiary closed its doors for good, but the *Mountain Review* continued on as the official newspaper of MCCX and has remained in publication ever since.

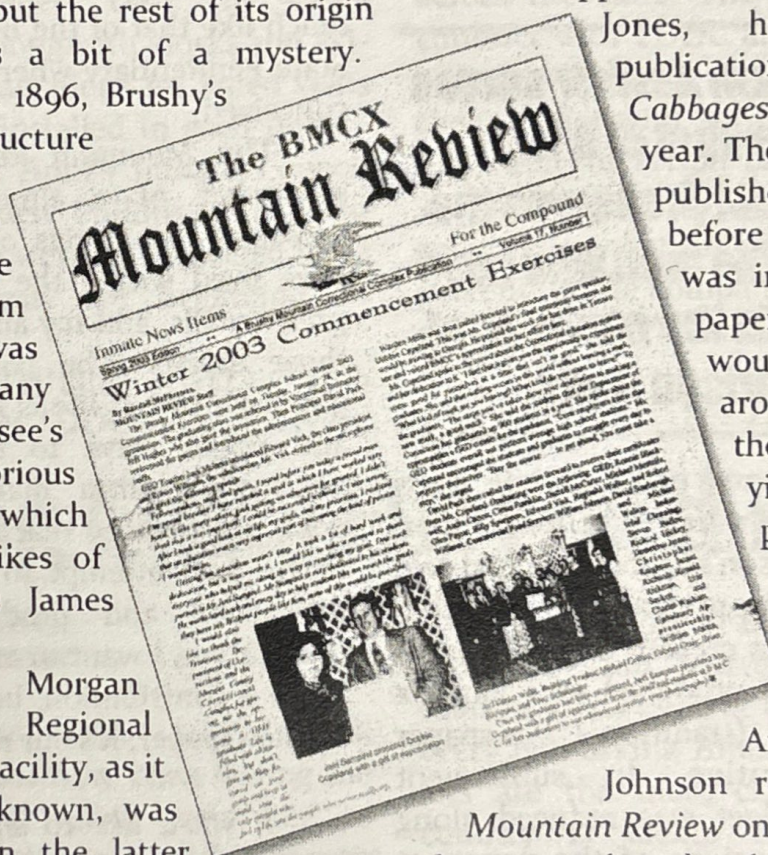
In an effort to retrace some of the prison paper's history, *Mountain Review* editor Garry W. Johnson interviewed longtime Brushy resident Jim Slagle in 2014. At that time, Slagle admitted that he couldn't recall the prison having a paper prior to 1981 and explained that, with the approval of then-warden Otie

Jones, he started a publication called *Cabbages and Kings* that year. The paper was only published for two years before a new warden was installed and the paper terminated; it wouldn't be until around 1987 before the prison would yield another publication.

In the introduction to his book, "A Prison Anthology,"

Johnson reveals that the *Mountain Review* once held copies of the paper that dated back to around 1992 and that they were lost during a remodel of the school building where the newspaper office was located. Only about a dozen issues have been saved in a digital archive, beginning with the Spring 2003 Edition pictured here.

The newspaper has historically reported on news and events that occur at the prison as well as those that



impact the men incarcerated here. Photos of smiling men looking to make the best of their time by participating in a variety of prison activities and organizations adorn the pages of issues past, however, current editions are prohibited from including any images of the men incarcerated by the state.

Another major change to occur over the years is how the newspaper is produced. Prior to 2004, the *Mountain Review* was a magazine-size publication with 16-20 pages and was produced with camera-ready proofs that required the use of a typewriter, layout paper,

The *Mountain Review* serves as somewhat of a time capsule that preserves the stories of the men who have lived within the confines of the prison walls

Exacto knives, and paste. In late 2003, the Golden Bears Veterans' Association (one of the prison's clubs) donated two computers to the prison paper, and that next year it was created using a digital file format and produced as a 10.25" x 11.5" newsprint (traditional newspaper paper) publication. In subsequent years, the budget was reduced along with the dimensions of the paper; at some point, TRICOR took over the printing duties and the newspaper was constrained to a 7.0" x 8.5" publication fashioned on standard printer paper. Most recently, the *Mountain Review* has been condensed into a 5.5" x 8.5" pamphlet that is copied in the prison's main compound library and assembled

You may have noticed a considerable change to the cover of this issue, along with some other marginal modifications. As I looked through the archives, I observed that the paper's masthead (the area on the cover that displays the paper's title) had changed considerably over the past two decades (see back cover). Being a bit of a traditionalist, I resolved to revert back to the original design with hopes of returning the *Mountain Review* to its roots—or at least bringing it closer to them. The Old English type evokes the image of a gothic-style penitentiary, much like that of the Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary where the paper was conceived.

The *Mountain Review* serves as somewhat of a time capsule that preserves the stories of the men who have lived within the confines of the prison walls, and my aim is to help tell those stories. The paper provides a glimpse of what life is like behind bars and might serve to dissuade future generations from making the same poor life choices that put many men here. As I attempt to practice sound journalism and produce a quality publication, I want to encourage you to make a contribution, because this isn't my newspaper; it's our newspaper. ▲

If you'd like to share your story, have an idea for an article, or want to make a suggestion, please send a letter to the editor by writing to the Mountain Review C/O Ms. LaBarge (main compound library). For a response, include your name, ID, and housing info. We're also accepting original artwork, poetry, jokes, short stories, advice, recipes, and other original content.

Getting the Take on Tablets

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

IN EARLY 2024, IT WAS ANNOUNCED that the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) has signed a contract to have free tablets made available to its entire incarcerated population. The use of tablets has been afforded to the state's imprisoned women for years, and, after much delay, Tennessee's incarcerated men will be provided with the same opportunity. Along with kiosks and Wi-Fi hotspots, stanchions for video visits were recently installed in each unit of the prison. At April's Inmate Council meeting, Warden Phillips announced that the tablets were still expected to be distributed near the beginning to middle of May.

Global Tel*Link (GTL), who already operates TDOC's phone service,

is one of the largest prison vendors in the nation and will be providing the tablets and communication services

**GTL typically charges
between \$5 and \$20 per
month for limited
access to content**

across the state. The details of their contract with TDOC are unknown, but GTL has typically shared a portion of their profits with various states' DOC. According to *Prison Legal News*, some states have received a flat rate or commission that ranges from "30 to 90 percent" of the company's profits, and a 2020 article in *The Prison Mirror* reveals

See TABLETS, page 18

Rising Costs Hit Hard Inside

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS, Americans have been feeling the effects of rising costs due to inflation. Whether it be in the interest rates of home loans, fuel at the pump, or groceries from the market, the impact is felt by nearly everyone. Many individuals have resorted to working a second and even a third job just to survive. Clipping coupons, shopping around for deals, and searching for less expensive alternatives has become the norm, even for those who previously

consumed with little discretion. Inflation, and more broadly, the economy, has been at the top of nearly every poll asking Americans what they feel are the most critical issues the country is facing right now, and political strategists on both sides argue that the economic hardships felt under the Biden Administration have played a significant part in putting Trump back in the White House.

Incarcerated individuals have been hit particularly hard by the rising cost

See HIT HARD, page 9

MONEY MATTERS

Why You Should Use the B-word

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

THOSE LIVING BEHIND BARS regularly avoid using the b-word, but here's why you shouldn't: Despite being thought of as restricting, developing a *budget* is actually quite liberating. Incarcerated individuals have a very limited income, and avoiding the pitfalls of debt is a constant struggle. Aside from helping manage Trust Fund balances, implementing a budget now can help establish healthy financial habits to apply after release.

If you receive fairly steady monthly deposits to your Trust Fund account, you can use them to estimate your monthly income. If you receive irregular contributions from friends and family, use the approximate amount you receive annually and divide it by 12; combine this with your regular pay to estimate your total monthly income.

Pro Tip: Save money by picking two items you typically order weekly and try alternating the weeks you order them.

Since most of your expenses are probably for weekly commissary orders, you can estimate your monthly expenses by reviewing your previous orders. Aside from your regular weekly order, there may be some items that you only order a few times a year. Add up those additional expenses and divide by 12; combine this with your regular monthly purchases to estimate

your total monthly expenses. For example, I know that I get my teeth cleaned twice a year at a cost of \$3 per visit, so I can divide that \$6 by twelve months and include 50¢ to my monthly expenses. Here is an example monthly budget:

Monthly Income	
State draw	\$20
Friends & family	\$50
Total	\$70
Monthly Expenses	
Food	\$40
Hygiene	\$8
Phone	\$10
Misc.	\$2
Total	\$60
Monthly Net	
Income - Expenses	\$10

It might help to break down your expenses further by listing each of the items you purchase separately so you have a better sense of exactly what you buy and where you can make adjustments. Don't just buy whatever you want until you run out of money or you'll be that guy always begging for a shot of coffee. If your monthly expenses are more than your income, you'll need to cut back a bit, but if you keep a surplus each month, you'll have a growing balance you can use for unexpected expenses like replacing a worn pair of sneakers. ▲

EMPOWERING EDUCATION

CEC Makes Positive Impact

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

IN AN EFFORT TO PREPARE THOSE IN custody to make a productive return to society, TDOC offers a Career Exploration Class (CEC). Administered by the education department and instructed by Mr. Shumpert, the course provides guidance and resources designed to prepare residents to enter the workforce. It's typically completed within six months and is required for individuals in custody who have two years or less remaining on their sentence.

As a recent graduate of the course, Justin Brooks says, "I feel more prepared to go into the world again," and "I was blessed to be in the class." He explains that the course taught him how to file tax forms, budget finances, write a resumé, apply for jobs, and prepare for a job interview. Brooks finds that the most challenging aspect was understanding taxes and financing and learning how to establish credit. He encourages future students to "be patient, and be willing to learn, otherwise," he says, "you won't get anything out of the class."

Brooks describes Shumpert as being very forward but in a positive way, saying, "He tells you like it is," but Brooks believes it's because "he's there

to help you succeed." He feels that Shumpert presents himself and the material well and has a great deal of patience, advising that "if you show him respect you'll receive it back." Attesting to the instructor's worthy

"be patient, and be willing to learn, otherwise you won't get anything out of the class."

counsel, Brooks relays that Shumpert cautioned him with this advice: "Don't give up on yourself," "Make sure you think before you act," and "When you find yourself, then you know you're going to be alright." Not long after completing the Career Exploration Class, Justin Brooks was approved for relocation to the annex in preparation for his release.

Sitting through daily classes might seem like torture to many, but it beats the alternative: returning to prison shortly after being released. Participating in the class can have a positive impact on residents by providing them with relevant resources to obtain and maintain employment after release. Consistent employment is linked to a reduced risk of recidivism and can lead to a more enjoyable life after lockup. ▲

He whose life has a why can bear almost any how.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, German Philosopher

A Reiteration of Presidents Past

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

THE FIRING OF NUMEROUS government officials, the pardoning of those prosecuted for sedition, the vehement opposition to the power of the judiciary, the imposing of trade restrictions on foreign countries, and the expansion of the nation's area via the procurement of foreign territories are all actions of our nation's third president, Thomas Jefferson, and it appears that our 47th president is taking his cues from this celebrated founding father.

In the first month of his current term, President Trump has achieved all but one of these endeavors, although he has established his desire to seize control of the Panama Canal, purchase Greenland, and make Canada the nation's 51st state. Within moments of his inauguration, Trump signed dozens of executive orders and continues to use his authority for various matters such as pausing foreign aid, downsizing the government, and directing the military to detain and transport illegal immigrants.

Harvard Law School Professor Emeritus Alan Dershowitz argues that Thomas Jefferson would have agreed with much of President Trump's vast use of executive power ("The Echoes of Jefferson in Trump's Presidency," *The*

Wall Street Journal, Feb. 13). He also points out a key difference between the men, stating, "Jefferson campaigned on the promise of a weaker executive, whereas Mr. Trump made it clear that if elected he would strengthen the power of the president," and goes on to explain that after taking office, "Jefferson realized that the chief executive must take bold actions if he is to serve the interest of our country."

Despite accusations of an "iron fist" type of authoritarianism, Trump's leadership style echoes that of many of America's most influential presidents. Theodore Roosevelt, whose philosophy was to "speak softly and carry a big stick," goaded a revolt in order to usurp construction of the Panama Canal and prioritize the interests of the US. Abraham Lincoln used his executive power to abolish slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation, and Franklin D. Roosevelt remained in office for three terms (1933-1945) and altered the country's isolationist policy after entering into World War II.

Donald Trump may not be like any US President experienced in our lifetime, but the past reveals that his methods are not much different than those deemed the most successful in our nation's 200-plus year history. However, we must hope he also echoes the actions of our very first president who refused to be made king. ▲

Power will intoxicate the best hearts, as wine the strongest heads.

*No man is wise enough nor good enough, to be trusted with
unlimited power.*

—FRANCIS BACON [1561-1626]

MOUNTAIN REVIEW

of food and other goods, and the president's new reciprocal tariffs are sure to further increase prices. In Tennessee, those behind bars are restricted to holding a single job, with few exceptions. Unlike those in the "free-world" who are willing to work more hours or additional jobs, most who are incarcerated simply aren't afforded the opportunity to do so.

Jobs for individuals in custody of the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) have various classifications, ranging from unskilled to specialty jobs and are accompanied by commensurate pay. Unskilled jobs provide a starting pay of 17¢ per hour while skilled laborers begin at 34¢ per hour. These jobs receive step increases that top out at 34¢ and 50¢ per hour, respectively. Highly coveted specialty jobs offer a starting pay of 75¢ per hour and top out at \$1 per hour. Although pay for those incarcerated in Tennessee has not increased in over two decades, the "median pay in the U.S. more than doubled" during that same period, according to the Social Security Administration as reported by the *Tennessean*.

Some incarcerated individuals are fortunate enough to have financial support from family and friends on the outside, but rising costs are putting an additional strain on these backers as well. Service provider Correct Pay charges a fee for each deposit to an individual's Trust Fund account, and half of all funds are garnished by the state if an individual has outstanding court costs/fees. It can take years to pay off these fees before the full amount deposited remains available.

Although it's true that typically those in TDOC custody are not required to pay for living expenses such as housing and basic utilities, there are other expenditures associated with living behind bars. According to one memo, residents who "have access to a television" are obligated to pay a \$3.⁵⁰ monthly cable bill, under risk of penalty, even if only one of the residents in the cell owns a TV. Consistent with this policy, the facility can charge \$14 per month for a single

Although pay for those incarcerated in Tennessee has not increased in over two decades, the "median pay in the U.S. more than doubled"

TV operated among four individuals in a cell, and non-compliance can result in the TV being confiscated.

Global Tel*Link (GTL) provides phone services to residents which is one of the only areas that has seen a continued decrease in costs. Last year, TDOC announced that calls would be reduced from 11¢ to 7¢ per minute, a further decrease from previously higher rates. *The Prison Mirror*—America's oldest continually printed prison newspaper—reports that as far back as 2020, GTL only charged 5¢ per minute to those incarcerated in the Minnesota DOC. These differences in fees might be explained by commissions paid to the state. During the COVID-19 pandemic, GTL provided residents one free five-minute phone call per week, in lieu of in-person visitation. Since

visitation has been restored, the free weekly phone call has remained in place and has continued to help residents stay connected with family and friends. Although these rates may seem nominal, a single 30-minute call per day costs over \$60 per month which is an amount that's more than most incarcerated individuals make in that period. For a similar price, cell phone providers offer plans in the free-world with unlimited talk and text, and unlimited Internet is available for a flat rate. Even streaming services like Spotify, Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube have opted for unlimited monthly plans instead of per-minute or per-media usage fees, and most of these companies even offer free subscriptions offset by advertising. It's a wonder why the same can't be done in prisons.

On the other hand, postage has increased steadily. A single first-class stamp has gone up by more than 15 percent (now 73¢), and the US Postal Service has announced that five

incarcerated individuals and their families are among the citizens impacted the greatest by these rising prices

additional increases are expected over the next few years. If the past is any indication of the future, it won't be long before a single letter costs more than \$1 to mail. Unlike the free-world, incarcerated individuals don't have access to unlimited free email services meaning that the postal service is one

Pricing comparison* of various items immediately before and after Union Supply took over commissary operations in April of 2024.

- ◆ Fish oil capsules — \$4.⁸¹ to \$8.⁰²
(+67%)
- ◆ Crest toothpaste — \$3.⁷¹ to \$5.³⁸
(+45%)
- ◆ Antibacterial soap — \$.⁸⁵ to \$1.²⁵
(+47%)
- ◆ Dandruff shampoo — \$1.⁷⁰ to \$2.⁸³
(+66%)
- ◆ Hemorrhoid cream — \$1.⁸⁹ to \$2.⁹⁹
(+58%)
- ◆ Aspirin (100ct.) — \$1.³⁷ to \$14.⁵⁰
(+958%)
- ◆ Sliced pepperoni — \$2.¹⁴ to \$3.⁰⁰
(+40%)
- ◆ Summer sausage — \$2.²¹ to \$3.⁸⁰
(+72%)
- ◆ Chicken breast — \$3.⁵⁸ to \$3.⁴²
(-4%)
- ◆ Pepsi — \$.⁶⁰ to \$1.⁵⁰
(+150%)
- ◆ Potato chips — \$1.⁷² to \$2.⁶⁰
(+51%)
- ◆ Hot sauce — \$1.⁰¹ to \$2.³⁷
(+135%)
- ◆ Kosher dill pickle — \$1.¹⁴ to \$1.¹⁰
(-4%)
- ◆ Salt & pepper — \$1.⁵⁵ to \$1.⁸⁰
(+16%)
- ◆ Taco filling — \$2.⁴⁰ to \$4.¹⁵
(+73%)
- ◆ Saltine crackers — \$2.⁴⁵ to \$2.³¹
(-6%)

**Initial pricing includes tax; tax must be added to Union Supply pricing.*

of their only communication options.

In the first half of 2024, TDOC contracted with a new vendor to operate commissary across all their facilities. The *Tennessean* reports the vendor, Union Supply, was purchased by Aramark in July of 2022. Aramark also holds the food service contract with TDOC and has been scrutinized for their quality and service. Prior to the change, residents were permitted to order quarterly packages which offered a wide variety of food (often greatly discounted), clothing, and other items. Individuals had the option of ordering from one of two vendors (Access Package and Union Supply) which not only provided a larger selection but generated more competitive pricing.

and booklights have been completely removed from the offerings. Although Union Supply boasts that purchase limits have increased to \$125 per week, most residents make less than \$40 per month. They also tout that family members and friends can now order products from their website, but customers have complained of frequent crashes and glitches, in addition to fees that can total nearly \$10 per transaction.

Healthcare services, such as vision, dental, and general clinic visits, are another unavoidable expense for individuals in TDOC custody. A \$3 fee is charged for sick calls and includes services such as eye exams and teeth cleanings; a \$5 fee is charged for a pair

Wealthy owners and all masters of labor should be mindful of this—that to exercise pressure upon indigent and destitute for the sake of gain, and to gather one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine.

—POPE LEO XIII

With the consolidation to a single vendor, prices have increased significantly and service has seen a decline.

In addition to a reduced product selection, the new vendor has struggled to meet demand. Many items are regularly out-of-stock, and numerous products have arrived damaged or incorrect. The administration has brought the concerns to the company's attention but upholds that it's ultimately out of their control. Residents have reported items like sneakers, soap, deodorant, and pain relievers being unavailable for months at a time, and other items such as sweatpants, watch bands and batteries,

of basic eyeglasses. Medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and Omeprazole (generic Prilosec) are no longer supplied unless prescribed by a service provider, and although they may be purchased from Union Supply, some OTC medications have skyrocketed by five to 10 times their previous costs (see pricing comparison).

These expenses may seem rather insignificant, but when contrasted with the limited wages received by those behind bars, they reveal that incarcerated individuals and their families are among the citizens impacted the greatest by these rising prices. ▲

Commissary Cooking

EASY CHEESY SOUTHWEST BURRITOS

Prep Time: 3 minutes

Cook Time: 5 minutes

Serving Size: makes 4-6 burritos

Cost: ~ \$7

Ingredients:

- 2 Ramen noodle packs
- 1 cheese bar (shredded)
- 1 chicken chili (with white beans)
- 4-6 tortilla wraps

Tools:

- 1 large or 2 small bowls
- spoon/spork
- microwave

Directions:

Crush noodles and place into bowl with water. Heat for two minutes and drain any remaining water (or let noodles swell until no water remains).

Mix in seasoning packets.

Empty chicken chili pouch into bowl and mix with shredded cheese and noodles. Heat for about three minutes or until cheese begins to melt.

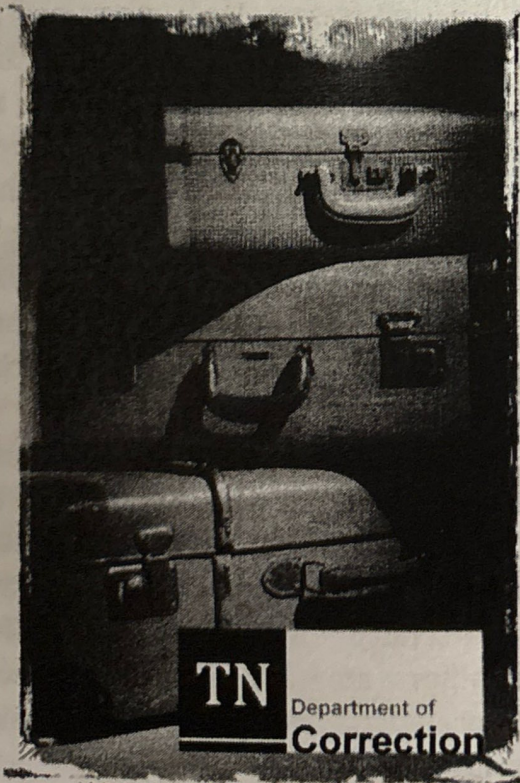
Remove from microwave and season with salt & pepper to taste.

Place a few scoops onto a tortilla wrap and roll into a burrito.

Tip: For an extra kick, add some garlic chili sauce!

MCCX Reentry Department

Located inside Housing Unit 16



Available Resources:

- ♦ Halfway house list and applications
- ♦ Social Security applications
- ♦ Birth certificate applications
- ♦ Potential education grants
- ♦ Child Support services
- ♦ Veterans information & services
- ♦ Project Return information (Nashville & Chattanooga)
- ♦ Potential job opportunities (Memphis)
- ♦ Food stamps
- ♦ Copies of certificates for IPO
- ♦ List of "felon friendly" jobs

Post-Conviction Remedies

It is needless to enter into many reasons for quashing the conviction, when one alone is sufficient.

—WILLIAM MURRAY, BRITISH CHIEF JUSTICE [1756]

CONVICTED DEFENDANTS CAN take a number of steps to challenge guilty verdicts and/or to correct violations of constitutional rights, including motions, appeals, and writs. The following list illustrates these steps. A defendant who loses at one may go on to the next step, all the way down the list (up the legal chain) in a process that can take many years—especially for serious felonies such as death penalty cases.

This list is merely an illustration of possible post-conviction proceedings—some of which may only be used in certain cases. Also, defendants usually must first have unsuccessfully sought relief through the available state remedies before they will be allowed to seek relief in federal courts. For these reasons and because of the complexities of these proceedings and what is likely at stake (liberty or life), defendants should consult counsel to determine which remedies are available to them.

Motion for Acquittal. A request that the judge decide that there is not enough evidence to convict the defendant. Depending on whether the trial is before a judge or jury and depending on court rules, this motion may be made either after the prosecution presents its evidence or after all the evidence is presented.

Motion for a New Trial. Request that trial judge declare a mistrial and grant a new trial.

Appeal to State Appellate Court. Contends that trial judge made some legal error.

Petition for Rehearing to State Appeals Court. Requests that appeals court judges change their own decision.

State Supreme Court Appeal. Requests that highest court in the state review and overturn the decision of the mid-level appeals court.

Motion. An application made to a court or judge which requests a ruling or order in favor of the applicant.

Appeal. A proceeding brought to a higher court to review a lower court decision.

Writ. A judicial order directing a person to do something.

U.S. Supreme Court Appeal. Requests the highest court in the nation intervene to correct an error on the part of the state courts that violated the U.S. Constitution.

State Court Habeas Corpus Petitions. Requests that the state appeals courts order the jail or prison holding the defendant to release the defendant upon a showing that the defendant is being held in violation of some state law or constitutional right.

Federal Habeas Corpus Petition to District Court. Requests the federal

trial court to order the jail or prison holding the defendant to release the defendant because the defendant is being held in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Appeal of Federal Habeas Corpus Petition to Circuit. Requests the mid-level federal court to review the federal trial court's decision denying the writ.

Appeal of Federal Habeas Corpus Petition to U.S. Supreme Court. Request the highest court in the land to review the mid-level federal court's decision denying the writ. ▲

Law Library Services

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

IN THE SAME MANNER AS EACH OF the other facilities in Tennessee, the Morgan County Correctional Complex provides residents with access to a law library where they can undertake their own legal research. Whether a resident wants to review case law at the state or federal level or they need to file court documents, the legal library offers resources that can prove to be invaluable.

According to TDOC policy, the law library is scheduled to operate a minimum of 37.5 hours per week to serve residents adequately. For those confined in segregation or without physical access to the law library, a complete list of materials is available. Residents housed in segregation may request up to five items from the law library at any one time with additional

items being made available with approval from the warden.

The law library offers residents resources for use in preparing legal correspondence and documents, including notary services (\$1 per signature) and word processing software. The computers, which allow residents to type, save, and print legal documents, provide a much needed modernization over the outdated typewriters. Printouts and copies of library materials can be made at the rate of 15¢ per page. It's important to note that policy requires that institutions provide notary services, legal postage, and photocopies required by the court even if a resident's account has insufficient funds; a signed Personal Withdrawal Request (CR-2727) will be required and the fees are to be collected when funds are deposited to the resident's Trust Fund account.

Residents unsure of where to start should approach one of the library's legal aides for some direction. These fellow residents have met institutional requirements and are a valuable resource for those attempting to navigate the legal system. Aides can offer guidance with resources like the WestLaw database and can help prepare court filings such as appeals. The legal aide's function is to assist residents perform their own legal work; their role is not to do the work for them. Although many of the legal aides have years of experience traversing the complicated legal system and can point residents in the right direction, they are not a substitute for professional legal counsel.

The WestLaw database provides residents with access to thousands of case law archives from state and federal court proceedings. The detailed outcomes from a proceeding can be

The law library is one of the most indispensable yet underutilized assets available to incarcerated individuals

reviewed, along with key notes and references to related cases. Moreover, the database contains proposed and adopted legislature from the state and federal levels. Residents can review propositions and discover what changes to the law are going up for vote. The software includes several useful features that make navigating it pretty straightforward. Key-word searches

make exploring the database quick and easy. For example, a search can be made using the key-word "sentencing" to uncover bills or laws that may affect individuals in TDOC custody. Colored flags are utilized to alert users to key changes and allow for simple tracking. Filters provide users the ability to further narrow their searches with the use of specific criteria.

Even though residents have access to thousands of relevant cases and rulings from a range of courts, they may also obtain access to legal materials not available in the institutional law library by submitting a written request to the library supervisor. The request must include: (1) A sufficient description of the material sought (i.e., correct case citation, style, date decision issued) to enable staff to identify the material without being required to perform legal research for the inmate, and (2) A statement as to why the requested material is needed to enable staff to determine the legitimacy of the request as related to the inmate's conviction(s) and/or confinement.

All TDOC and institutional policies can be found in a collection located in the law library. This is an important resource for residents as it allows them to review policy details and cite a specific policy when filing a grievance. Since policies can often be updated without notice, it's important that residents review them regularly to become familiar with any changes.

The law library is one of the most indispensable yet underutilized assets available to incarcerated individuals, but one must be willing to put in the time and effort to take advantage of this resource. ▲

that of those states with a GTL contract, "only two of them—Delaware and South Carolina—are not profiting from the sales made by GTL in their facilities."

Regarding the tablets themselves, each resident will be issued one at no cost, with the exception being that those housed in high security will not receive a tablet. Warden Phillips announced that there will be an introductory demonstration to explain tablet operation, and added that a new position (unpaid) has been created for residents that possess some technical know-how to help others with the learning curve. Residents are warned not to use any headphones other than those provided with the tablets because they will "damage the tablets and make them useless." Phillips conveyed that residents will bear financial responsibility if the tablet should need to be replaced. It's not clear if TDOC's contract with GTL provides repair/replacement for tablets with software malfunctions or other manufacturer defects.

Although the tablet is free, it can get expensive to operate. Each will contain a limited number of free applications, which include the likes of an education-based platform, a radio tuner, and some basic games. Users who wish to access the majority of the tablet's features will need to purchase a pre-paid package. These entertainment packages will allocate a limited number of minutes to access content such as movies, music, and games, but additional fees will be required to use phone, e-messaging, and video-visit functions. Although costs for these

entertainment packages in Tennessee has not been announced, reports reveal that GTL's packages typically range from \$5 to \$20 per month for limited access to content.

In a 2023 rate survey published by *The Angolite*, Louisiana State Penitentiary's award-winning prison news magazine, the cost to send an e-message was found to vary greatly across the country. The survey, conducted by Prison Policy Initiative, discloses that e-messages for those incarcerated in Connecticut prisons were free, while those in Alaska and Arkansas were charged the greatest amount, at 50¢ per e-message. At that time, Tennessee was shown to be among the most expensive states, charging 40¢ per e-message. Most commonly, e-messages appear to cost around 30¢, which is down from 49¢ in 2016. The report also reveals the unsurprising fact that correctional departments that don't receive site-commissions have among the lowest e-

in Delaware, GTL charges an additional 5¢ per minute to read or respond to an e-message

messaging costs; those incarcerated in Illinois and New York were only charged 15¢-20¢ per e-message.

These per-message rates may only be the tip of the iceberg. GTL is shown to commonly charge those incarcerated a per-minute rate to read and type e-messages, in addition to their per-message fees. *The Angolite* reports that,

in Delaware, GTL charges an additional 5¢ per minute to read or respond to an e-message. All indications are that they will require a similar fee for users incarcerated in Tennessee, but that remains to be seen.

Considering the limited income available to those confined behind the prison walls, residents will mostly have to rely on their families for financial support. These additional costs will result in a bigger burden being placed on those who are already suffering from the effects of mass incarceration. For those who can afford it, the tablets will provide a much needed source of entertainment while fostering improved communications with family and friends.

Video-visits will make it possible to see loved ones who can't regularly travel the distance for in-person visits. According to a recent memo, anyone expecting to schedule a video-visit with an individual in TDOC custody will need to go through the same approval process they would for in-person visits by submitting an visitation application and awaiting an approval. Individuals will also need to be added to the resident's approved phone list in order to schedule a video-visit, suggesting that there will be some limitations in place.

It's also important that users understand their communications will be monitored and their data shared with and utilized by the provider and the correctional facility. The report also cites a GTL advertisement that boasts their "Data IQ" technology, stating that it was designed to "enable correctional facilities to easily review and analyze the networks, relationships, and connections associated with their

inmate population." It's of no surprise that those incarcerated will have their communications monitored, but the personal information being obtained and stored by the state and the service provider may be cause for concern.

According to Warden Phillips, "Tablets will not affect any ongoing services," and are only meant to be a supplement. He clarified that video-

"Tablets will not affect any ongoing services," and are only meant to be a supplement

visits will have no affect on in-person visits. The warden also announced that at some point, residents can expect all incoming mail to be scanned and viewed electronically, but this process will not take effect immediately. This change is generally thought to reduce the amount of contraband entering facilities via postal mail. It also means that all correspondence can be electronically stored and accessible to an unknown number of parties. Some residents may see a benefit in having less clutter in their cell and an easy-to-access archive of all their mail, but the thought of not receiving physical mail, including cards and photos, has troubled others.

Despite the high costs and privacy concerns, most residents are excited to receive the tablets. The technology will help streamline many processes like submitting forms and ordering commissary. Overall, the tablets are a welcome addition to the often-times archaic prison system. ▲

comprised of "violent, vicious lawyers" who "[use] the law to terrorize the innocent and reward the wicked." Shortly after being sworn into office, President Trump began purging the DOJ of employees and has even

it is uncertain as to what the determining factors are for who gets pardoned and who gets punished.

threatened some with criminal prosecution. America's Commander-in-Chief has vowed to restore fair, equal, and impartial justice to the courts, proclaiming, "I am your warrior, I am your justice...I am your retribution." However, it remains to be seen if President Trump truly wants to return integrity to the judicial system for the good of the people or simply desires retribution for his own vindication.

While the president is upending the DOJ, he is also pushing for harsher penalties for certain individuals convicted of violent crimes. Trump recently touted that he is investigating the potential for the US to ship its worst prisoners—including its own citizens—to supermax facilities in El Salvador. This coming just weeks after signing an executive order to pardon or commute the sentences of all those convicted crimes related to the events of Jan. 6, 2021, which includes those that resulted in injury and death. Furthermore, Trump has floated the possibility of having them, whom he calls "patriots," as guests to the White House. These seemingly contradictory

positions are cause for confusion regarding Trump's view of those convicted of crimes and the justice system that has condemned them.

In his first term, President Trump pardoned the former Illinois governor, Rod Blagojevich, who served time in federal prison after he was exposed for attempting to sell a vacated senate seat. The legality of Blagojevich's actions is arguable but the ethics are hardly disputable. The president has since announced that he's considering the disgraced former governor for a future leadership position.

In his current term, Trump's DOJ has argued for the dismissal of criminal corruption charges against New York's embroiled mayor, Eric Adams, who is suspected of profiting from backroom deals involving Turkish nationals. Trump has denied asking the DOJ to dismiss the case, but it seems the department is motivated by the prospect of Adams' support for Trump's lofty immigration endeavors. At least seven federal prosecutors, including devout right-wingers, have resigned from their position due to the matter. Regardless of what his reasons may be, it's undeniable that President Trump is willing to return the favor and give the benefit of the doubt to those whose past behaviors are seen as unethical, immoral, and even unlawful.

The president's recent actions further exhibit the notion that he believes not all individuals accused of or convicted of crimes should be treated with contempt, but it is uncertain as to what the determining factors are for who gets pardoned and who gets punished. For the moment, the only people who appear to be benefitting from the president's

ostensible fight for justice are those with wealth, power, and those who have displayed fervent support for the GOP front-man.

In his first month in office, Trump has been able to rally republican lawmakers to support his controversial cabinet picks with little resistance. To lead the Pentagon, Trump has selected former Fox news anchor and US military veteran Pete Hegseth. Allegations of sexual assault, gender discrimination, and alcohol abuse alone were not enough to cause Tennessee representatives Marsha Blackburn and Tim Burchett to disqualify Trump's

background. However, conservative lawmakers confirmed RFK Jr. overwhelmingly, with the party's former majority leader and committed Trump critic, Mitch McConnell (Kentucky), being the lone dissenter among them.

Former democrat turned republican, Tulsey Gabbard, got behind President Trump and was chosen to lead the Department of Intelligence, despite her apparent lack of qualifications. Her controversial support of Edward Snowden, a convicted conspirator who shared government secrets with Russia, also

All experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

—THOMAS JEFFERSON, US PRESIDENT [1801-1809]

pick. At the behest of Trump, Hegseth was confirmed with nearly complete GOP support.

The president also designated former political rival Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to lead the Department of Health and Human Services in the face of disparaging statements about him by his own family members. RFK Jr., who was selected after placing his full support behind Trump, has made

was seemingly ignored. Gabbard was approved by the majority republican senate shortly after her first confirmation hearing.

The election of President Donald J. Trump, along with these recent cabinet appointments, seemingly demonstrate that the "tough on crime" party of Ronald Reagan is willing to embrace individuals with an objectionable history. We might then expect to see conservative states like Tennessee become more like their counterparts in giving consideration to those with a checkered past. Having a convicted felon seated in the Oval Office gives hope for the future to citizens who have been convicted of a crime, but only time will tell if President Trump can usher in a golden era that provides new opportunities to those most in need of a second chance. ▲

Having a convicted felon seated in the Oval Office gives hope for the future to citizens who have been convicted of a crime

numerous dubious statements regarding vaccines and has no medical

From the Archives

Originally published in the Spring/Summer 2006 issue of the *Mountain Review*:

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THINK ABOUT THIS

Original Contribution,
By Stephen Malham

With all the talk in political campaigns about crime and punishment, I wonder how many politicians have visited prison. Not many, judging by the way some politicians on the campaign stump make prison life sound like a breeze.

I spent some time in prison (past and present), and trust me, it's not a nice place, not even to visit. Don't get me wrong, I think people who have committed serious crimes should be behind bars. Prison should not be like a vacation or a country club. Nor should it be like a torture chamber. Prison doesn't look like the "Big House" in those Jimmy Cagney movies. To me, it looks more like a military base with treeless acres of low-sprawling buildings surrounded by miles of razor wire fences.

When you walk through the yard and cellblocks, the atmosphere of fear, anger and resentment is so thick that you could cut it like a block of cheese. What some people might not realize is that most of the corrections officers mingle with prisoners. If something goes

wrong, the CO's would be in a world of hurt. They have no firearms, no nightsticks, no nothing. We hear a lot of politicians talking about getting rid of the televisions, the basketballs and the weightlifting equipment in the prisons and jails. Most CO's I talked to, though, don't care for these notions because they would make prisons more dangerous. Idle time and unspent energy spell trouble behind bars. Removing the equipment also deprives CO's of privileges they can take away to punish inmates.

Contrary to what you may hear, most inmates don't spend the day watching Geraldo. More than 80% of them work. That labor includes working on highway crews, building prisons and doing most of the maintenance chores inside the prisons. That makes sense. Making prisoners do hard labor is not a big problem. Most are young and fit. They relish the exercise.

Brutal treatment does little good because that's how life was for many before they were sent to prison. An old guy who raised a lot of dogs once told me that the best way to make a dog mean is to keep kicking it. Seems to me that brutal treatment would have the same effect on humans. If you really

want to cause prisoners some pain, make each one read aloud a paragraph from a book while standing in front of a class. The overwhelming majority of inmates would be humiliated because they can't read.

That's the nut of the problem. Most of the people in our prisons are functionally illiterate, lack job skills and have drug and alcohol problems. Let's also remember that most of them eventually will be set free.

If you make them address their weaknesses while there in prison, there is convincing scientific evidence that most convicts won't get involved in crime again after they are released. That is not coddling prisoners. The point is to

prepare them to be responsible and productive when they get out. I think back to a circuit court judge who told me that he has asked victims, "Would you rather get even, or do you wish that you had not been the victim of a crime?" The answer to that is simple.

Wouldn't it be wiser in the long run for our elected officials to spend less time trying to make prisons more brutal and instead spend more time figuring out how to work constructively with prisoners and young people so there will be fewer crime victims in the future? Open your eye's America, there is a way to work things out without violence or hatred. ■

Just One More Right, Slipping Away . . .

By Garry W. Johnson,
MOUNTAIN REVIEW Staff

Most of us will never run for public office, but a new bill sponsored by Senator Jamie Woodson, R-Knoxville, seeks to make it a fact of law. A Senate Committee voted February 28, to permanently ban convicted felons from ever seeking elective office, no matter how long ago the offence was committed and regardless if a judge had restored all their rights. Woodson tried to pass the same legislation through in 1999, as a state representative, but was blocked by opponents who believed that voters should have the right to choose, regardless of a candidate's past. "This is a different time," says Woodson. "The

time for this bill is now. . . A person who has breached the public trust should be forever banned from running for office." As the bill was presented to the committee, it would have only applied to those committing a crime after July 1 of this year. However, with Woodson's consent, the committee amended the bill to cover past crimes as well. Out of concern that the amendment to include past crimes would be ruled unconstitutional if challenged in court, another amendment was added stating that if one part of the bill was declared unconstitutional, the rest of the bill would remain in effect. (Source: "Proposed law keeps felons out of office," Tom Humphrey, News Sentinel, March 1, 2006.) ■

FAITH & BELIEF

Grace, Mercy, & Love

COURTENAY PRICE
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

WE HAVE A GOD THAT COVERS all creation with His grace. His hand stretches from the Heavens, whether we reach to grab for it or not. God's listening is keen to our cries, but one must cry out for a cry to be heard. His eyes watching from afar, waiting for our repentance and return home to Him. God's grace is a gift and a robe that covers the shame in one's fall. God's grace allows us to get up and start over with the comfort of us not tackling life alone.

His mercy washes us clean in the areas of life that are out of our reach. Our God is so rich in mercy that He waits each day and night for us to find our way home. Even through our deliberate acts of selfishness and rebellion, He offers His mercy to us. We should praise God daily for this abundant and rich mercy that we are able to drink from, even during our

ignorance. God's love is a pure and infinite love that covers the entire world.

He demonstrated the power of His love through the sacrifice of His son who died on the cross. Jesus, who knew no sin, died for all sins. That indeed is *true* love which was

Jesus, who knew no sin, died for all sins.

demonstrated as a choice. Jesus' death conquered what we would never defeat. His death made grace, mercy, and love available to the image bearers of God. This is more than enough for us to glorify His name! We must accept the blessing of God's grace and open the door to the mind and to our hearts to receive the fullness of God's mercy and love.

In Jesus' name, amen. ▲



The Ripple Effect

A Heartfelt Message to Fellow Christians

CHRISTOPHER CONWAY

MOUNTAIN REVIEW

RECENTLY, MY CELLIE AND I watched a classic film titled *Cool Hand Luke*. Admittedly, this is Hollywood's portrayal of prison life in a by-gone era, but I was struck by the culture of mutual goodwill among the inmates that so starkly contrasts with our own. They all seemed to realize that they were in the same boat, all ripples on the same pond. The prevailing attitude at Morgan County Correctional Complex seems to view every fellow inmate only in terms of how they can be extorted. Wouldn't we make incarceration easier for ourselves if we lived together as brothers instead of selfishly individualistic wolves preying on the simple, the weak, the poor, the addicted among us? I often hear inmates complain about the way we are treated by the staff, but how can we expect to lead others to Christ if our lives are no different from non-Christians?

How can we—how can you (insert your name here)—change the culture at MCCX? I submit to you that the answer lies in learning to see Jesus in the eyes of our neighbors and in learning to think through the practical

implications of our actions. Jesus said that how we treat our neighbor is the same as the way we treat Him. What we do to “the least of these” is what we do to Jesus (Matt. 25:40). When we buy a block of butter that was stolen out of the kitchen we not only encourage theft, but now when Jesus goes to the chow hall, his potatoes are barely edible. When we insist on private laundry service, then Jesus' white t-shirts come back brown because they've been washed with dirty mop heads, and His jeans are returned wet because there wasn't time to dry His laundry *and* the private laundry. When we steal food out of the chow hall—including going through the line multiple times—then Jesus' tray has half the portion on it that it's supposed to have. When we skip to the front of the med line, we skip Jesus. Even if we are not directly stealing or extorting people created in the image of God, our participation in such practices has very real consequences. When we see a need, will we be like the priest and the Levite and “pass by on the other side” (Luke 10:32)? If we do, we might see a blinding light and hear a booming voice from heaven asking, “(Insert your name here), (Insert your name here), why are you persecuting Me? (Acts 9:4). ▲

By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

—1 John 3:16-18

Crossroads Prison Ministries



Crossroads is a Michigan-based prison ministry that helps individuals grow spiritually by studying God's Word through their unique mentorship program. They offer 15 different correspondence Bible study courses, each containing up to 14 lessons. The courses are separated into three tiers. Students begin with tier 1 and work their way through each tier. All correspondence materials are free of charge and include paid postage to return completed lessons.

How It Works

- 1 Crossroads sends a Bible study lesson to you.
- 2 You complete the lesson and mail it back to the Crossroads office using the pre-paid envelope provided.
- 3 Crossroads sends the next lesson to you and forwards your completed lesson to a volunteer mentor.
- 4 As you're working on your next lesson, your mentor reviews your completed lesson and mails it back to you along with a personalized letter of encouragement.

When all the lessons in a course are completed, students will receive the following:

- A certificate of achievement
- A free book to acknowledge your progress
- A congratulatory letter

Upon request, Crossroads will also provide a progress letter to your parole board, judge, or future employer, if you have completed at least 12 lessons. The progress letter will list the courses and lessons you've completed at that time.

Tier 1 courses are introductory and include a few brief lessons. Each lesson is reviewed and responded to by a different mentor. These courses include:

- *Who Are You?*
- *Who is Jesus?*
- *What is the Bible?*
- *Great Truths of the Bible*

Tier 2 courses are more in depth, and you will be assigned a specific mentor who will correspond with you on all seven of these courses:

- *God's Story of Redemption*
- *10 Men You Should Know*
- *10 Women You Should Know*
- *The Sermon on the Mount*
- *All Work is God's Work*
- *It All Belongs to God*
- *All in God's Family*

Tier 3 courses are seminary-level elective courses and are not required to complete the program. Interested students may apply for Tier 3 after completing the required Tier 1 & 2 courses. These courses include:

- *Biblical Interpretation*
- *Biblical Truths in Depth*
- *Christian Worldview I & II*

Crossroads Prison Ministries

PO Box 900

Grand Rapids, MI 49509-9944

Enrollment cards with pre-paid postage are available in the main compound chapel or by sending a request to the chaplain.

Poems from Prison

Original poetry from MCCX

The Secret Place

COURTENAYPRICE

Is there a request that you hold onto?
In your secret place, do you know what to do?
Are you close to the Father, or did you stray away?
Do you humble yourself; do you get on your knees and pray?

Do you knock at His door?
Do you seek to find answers?
Is your heart made of flesh,
Or is it like the disease called cancer?

Who holds your cure?
Who holds your healing?
First make time, offer yourself in submission.
Turn from old ways and you must be willing.

Your Father in heaven is waiting.
Your Father in heaven is willing.
Your cure is in His hand,
Healing you is inside your Father's plan.

Our Real Place

COURTENAYPRICE

Are we God's sheep? How surely we are.
How did we go astray, lose our sight, and go so far?
Surely as the sheep get lost from grazing and not paying attention,
As do the children of God as we focus on our own intentions.

Did God design us for us not to care, not to share?
As we're lost inside darkness, the more we become unaware.
Oh, how we must return. How do we find the light?
Only through God's love and God's word shall His children regain their sight.

Our good shepherd waits for us, to seek our way home.
Turn away from your darkness, away from where you once roamed.
Our real place is with God; our real place is God's home.

"Poetry is something
to make us wiser and
better, by continually
revealing those types
of beauty and truth
which God has set in
all men's souls."

— J.R. Lowell



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Magic: The Gathering

2025 Full Set Release Preview

JAKELIEBHABER
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

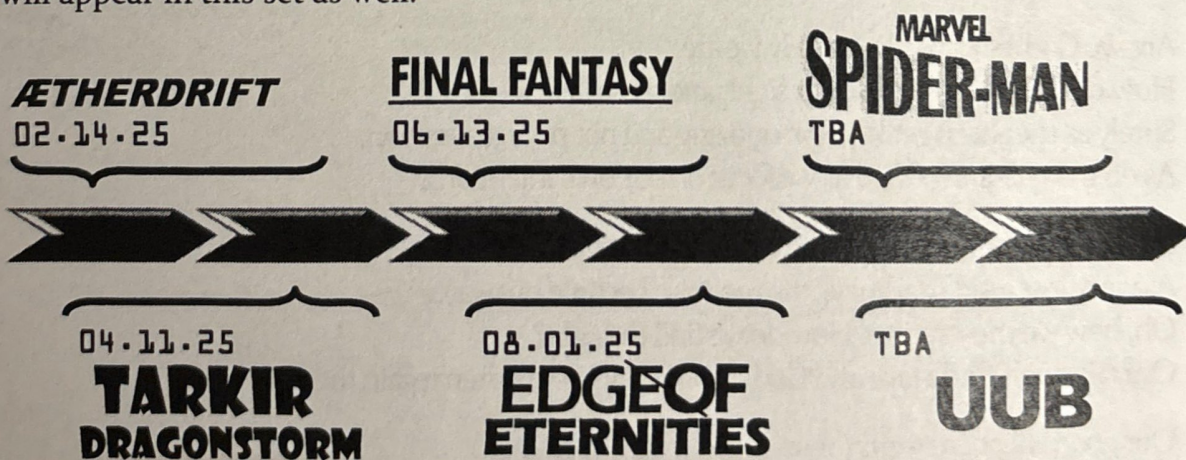
WIZARDS OF THE COAST (WotC) has revealed details for each of its major *Magic: the Gathering* (MTG) set releases this year. Although TDOC has not allowed those in custody to order *Magic* cards for the past year, we have the details here for fans who want to keep up with all the newest sets:

Innistrad Remastered January 24, 2025

2025 started off with the release of this set which returns to the original horror world of *MTG*, and contains reprints from all of the sets from this iconic plane. It also introduces headliner cards which offer an innovative method to feature a single card from the set. A serialized showcase Movie Poster was designed for the headline card of the *Innistrad Remastered* set and features Edgar Markov. A default version, a showcase treatment, and a retro-frame version of Edgar Markov will appear in this set as well.

Aetherdrift February 14, 2025

This set will be the first Standard-legal release of the year. *Aetherdrift* is described as "A high-speed, high-stakes death race across 3 planes that brings fans a mixture of fresh new ways to explore *Magic* while delivering on high fantasy worldbuilding you love." The race is through the Omenpaths which spans three planes; it appears to include two returning planes, Kaladesh and Amonkhet, while the third is unknown but does boast dinosaurs. This set is built around 10 distinct racing teams that will compete for the "ultimate prize." There will be one team for each color pair in *Magic*, and creatures, including Goblins and Insects, will have their own teams. The headliner card for this set is The Aetherspark which is a Legendary Artifact Planeswalker — Equipment. Chandra attempts to restore Nissa's spark in order to make her a planeswalker again by making an effort to win the Aetherspark.



Details obtained from the October 2024 preview by Nick Miller of Star City Games.

Tarkir: Dragonstorm

April 11, 2025

This set brings back wedge gameplay and allows you to revisit Tarkir as one of the five clans fight to keep dragons from tearing through the Omenspath and terrorizing the Multiverse. The clans are reimagined with a totally new appearance, returning in a modern timeline while still honoring their origins, and new dragons will be added along with old dragons. No details have been released on their abilities, but Planeswalkers Sarkhan Vol and Ugin both return and include a special Booster Fun Dragonfire treatment to their cards.

Final Fantasy

June 13, 2025

I'm really excited about this highly anticipated video game crossover set which will be the first *Universes Beyond* offering of the year. MTG's *Final Fantasy* set incorporates pieces from *Final Fantasy* 1 through 16 and includes characters like Cloud, Lightning, Noctis, Sephiroth, Terra, and Titus. As these fan-favorite characters enter the world of MTG, they'll be joined by rivals, locations, legendary weapons, and monsters, like the iconic Chocobo the Behemoth, that all come from the world of *Final Fantasy*. This set will offer fans "the biggest collection of art from the game" that's ever been found in one place. A Standard-legal (FIN) set and a Commander (FIC) set will both be available. Through the Ages (FCA) are Commander, Legacy, and Vintage-legal sets, and individual cards are also

legal where already available in other formats. The *Final Fantasy* Play Boosters contain cards from FIN and FCA.

Edge of Eternities

August 1, 2025

Players will get to "explore the cosmos and its many planets and systems in this space-themed science-fantasy set." MTG ventures into the world of Sci-Fi and fantasy in this out-of-this-world set that includes the excitement of spaceships, aliens, star fields, new planets, and more. Use the advanced technology of the Sothera system to travel the galaxy and uncover new material. Various races, new magic, artifacts, and the all-too-familiar Tezzeret are featured across this solar system of planets. Sothera, The Supervoid will be the headliner card for this set.

Spider-Man

TBA

Little information has been released about this first full Marvel booster release except that it will arrive in the final quarter of 2025. *Spider-Man* will be Standard-legal after the announcement that "starting in 2025, all *Universes Beyond* sets will be legal in all formats."

Unannounced Universes Beyond

TBA

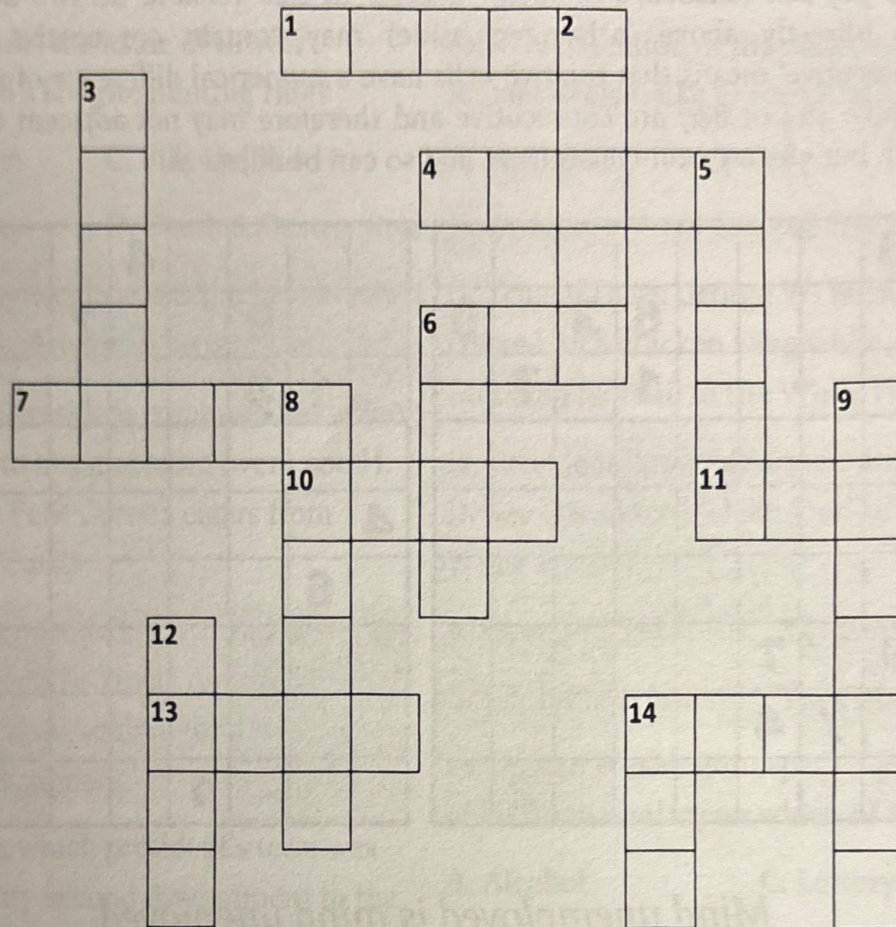
The final set of 2025 will also be a *Universes Beyond* set, but the IP hasn't been released. We'll hopefully have more info in the next issue. ▲

We suffer from a peculiar form of moral anesthesia, an anesthesia based on the delusions that by calling something "art" we thereby purchase for it a blanket exemption from moral criticism—as if being art automatically rendered all oral consideration beside the point...

—Roger Kimbell

Easter Crossword

Fill in the blanks using the King James Version of the Bible to solve this crossword puzzle based on Jesus' Resurrection.



ACROSS

1. Mary Magdalene ran and came to Simon _____. (John:2)
4. Ye seek _____ of Nazareth. (Mark 16:6)
6. The women saw a young _____ sitting in the tomb. (Mark 16:5)
7. Jesus said, "_____ be unto you." (John 20:19)
10. Mary told the disciples she had seen the _____. (John 20:18)
11. Mary saw _____ angels sitting. (John 20:12)
13. It was the first day of the _____ when Mary went to the tomb. (John 20:1)
14. Jesus came to the disciples when the doors were _____. (John 20:19)

DOWN

2. He is _____; He is not here. (Mark 16:6)
3. Mary Magdalene saw the _____ taken away. (John 20:1)
5. Several women bought _____ spices to anoint Jesus. (Mark 16:1)
6. Who stood outside the tomb (sepulcher) weeping? (John 20:11)
8. Jesus appeared unto the _____ when they were eating. (Mark 16:14)
9. Jesus appeared to two men as they went into the _____. (Mark 16:12)
12. The women looked and saw the stone was rolled _____. (Mark 16:4)
14. The women came to Jesus's grave at the rising of the _____. (Mark 16:2)

Answers on page 37

Domino Games

MULTI-PLAYER/TEAM GAME

Sniff

(aka East Coast Dominoes)

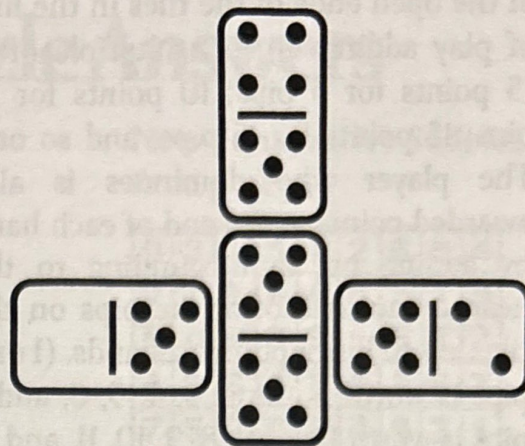
This is a scoring game in which scoring is done during play and at the end of each hand.

- One set of double-6 dominoes (28 pieces) is used.
- Shuffle the dominoes, face down, at the beginning of each hand.
- *Object of the game:* To gain the highest score possible by making points while playing the game and by being the first player to domino.

What's unique: The first, and only the first, domino played is a spinner, or "sniff." The pips on any open end of the sniff are counted for points until plays have been made on all four ends.

Number of players: 2 to 4 players; the game may be played in teams when there are 4 players.

Variations: 1) No more than 4 can play



and every player draws 7 tiles. 2) If 4 play, each draws 5 tiles; if 3 play, each draws 6; and if 2 play, each draws 7.

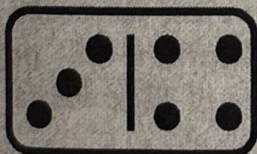
The tiles not drawn are pushed to one side to make up the boneyard.

Set: Lots are drawn to determine who sets the first tile. The first player may play any domino in his hand. After the first tile has been set, play continues to the left.

Variation: The player holding the highest double in his hand makes the first play by setting that tile. After the first tile has been set, play continues to the left.

The first double played is a spinner.

Scoring: A player is awarded points every time he makes a play that results



The numbers on a domino are represented on each half by spots, commonly called *pips*, or the absence of spots, which represents zero. A half that doesn't have pips is often called a zero, blank, pale, or white. The domino shown here has 3 pips on one half and 4 pips on the other half and is called a 3-4 domino. Dominoes with the same number of pips on each half of the face are known as *doubles* or *doublets* (French). A *single* domino, also referred to as a *combination* domino, has a different number of pips on each half of the face.