

The MCCX Mountain Review

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Breaking Down Parole in TN

Parole approvals plummet by 50%, Board lacks diversity

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

Every year, thousands of incarcerated men and women across Tennessee are denied parole. In the Volunteer State, currently only about 2 in 10 individuals who go before the Board of Parole are granted early release—one of the lowest rates in the country. The state has also continued a trend of denying an increasing number of individuals the opportunity to go before the Board and make their case for release.

Parole has been utilized in the U.S. for nearly 150 years, with the intended purpose being to “help individuals reintegrate into

society as constructive individuals as soon as they are able...,” (emphasis added) as articulated by the Supreme Court in *Morrissey v. Brewer*.

The lack of transparency in the Board’s decision-making process, combined with their political vulnerabilities and propensity to emphasize retribution over rehabilitation, has resulted in a dysfunctional system for release.

HEARINGS & GRANTS

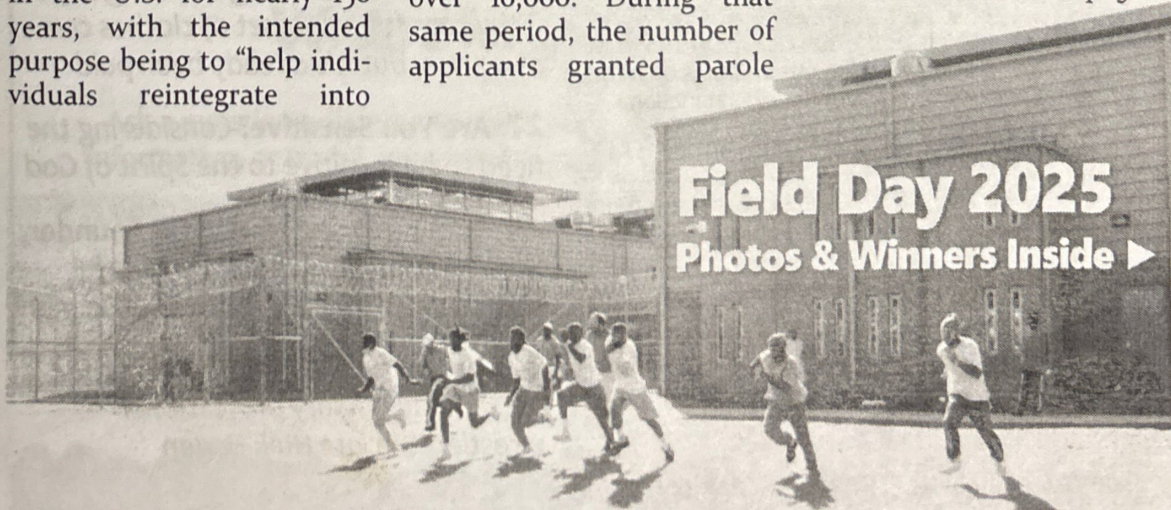
A recent report by Prison Policy Initiative (PPI), a national organization that researches mass incarceration, shows that from 2019 to 2024, annual parole hearings in the state have steadily declined, dropping from nearly 15,000 per year to just over 10,000. During that same period, the number of applicants granted parole

has plummeted by nearly 50%, to just over 2,000.

Tennessee is not the only state seeing such dramatic reductions in parole rates. The report reveals that states have combined for over 68,000 fewer parole hearings in 2024 than six years earlier. Offering statistics from the Council of State Governments, it reveals there are nearly one-quarter of a million prisoners in the U.S. “whose parole eligibility date is in the past.”

Twenty-one of the 35 states with discretionary parole had lower grant rates as compared to 2019, and nearly every state released fewer individuals on parole during that period.

See **PAROLE** on page 12



Field Day 2025

Photos & Winners Inside ►

Mountain Review

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We seek to amplify the voices of those affected by the Criminal Justice system while providing accurate, relevant, and constructive content to the incarcerated community.

We invite submissions and letters to the editor from confined and free citizens alike. Send to:

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Submission Guidelines:

- Limit submissions to between 350 and 500 words. Can be typed or legibly hand-written.
- Content should be original, veritable, and relevant to the incarcerated community.
- Include your full name and location. (Note if you do not want your name published.)

We reserve the right to edit submissions for reasons such as clarity or space and to decide whether or not to publish a submission. Submissions will not be returned. We will not publish content that is obscene, degrading, or promotes violence or discrimination.

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Field Day Photos: Jamie Choate, STG Coordinator

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Are You Just Wasting Your Time?

As one year comes to an end and another is beginning, I encourage you to take the time to reflect on what you did—or *did not do*—with your life over these past 52 weeks. Have you been productive or are you just wasting your time? Are you better or worse off than you were at this time last year?

Our body may be incarcerated, but our mind remains free. We are free to read and to write. We are free to learn and to teach. We are free to give and to receive. We are free to love and be loved.

We may not be able to change our current situation, but we can change the way we respond it. Sometimes I think of prison as a retreat away from the fast-paced, high-stress environment of the free world. It may seem silly, but being locked up has provided me with an opportunity to slow down and appreciate life. It has also give me a chance to pursue some things I might never have.

We don't have to view the restrictions of our incarceration as limiting but can instead choose to see them as empowering. Lockdown might seem like a hinderance. In reality, it provides a time for rest, giving us an opportunity to unwind, take a break from the duties of the day, and gather our thoughts. In the free world, we might be forced to go hours or even days without this kind of relief.

When it seems like there isn't much to do while you're locked up, let me encourage you to consider your time as opportunity for improvement. Start with some simple activities: read a book, learn to draw, or develop your chess game; practice meditation, prayer, or journaling; join a sports team, start running, or hit the weight pile. It doesn't matter where you choose to start, just start doing something productive with your time.

Robert Piraino
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Once you get used to filling your time with sensible activities, begin thinking about what it is you want to do with your life. Be specific and don't hold back. Then start working toward your future. **If you have to spend time behind bars, you might as well spend it wisely.** So I ask you again, are you just wasting your time?



Write a Letter to the Editor



Ask a question or let us know which articles you've found most interesting, informative, or useful. You can also give us a suggestion or make a correction.

- Keep your letter clear and concise.
- Be sure to include your full name (or initials) and where you're writing from.

Your letter might even get printed in the next issue!

TN Private Prisons Get Death Penalty

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

NASHVILLE—The number of deaths inside prisons managed by CoreCivic, a publicly traded, for-profit enterprise, is so alarming that state lawmakers made the rare move of passing a bill that would penalize the world's largest private prison operator.

The new law states that if any contracted prison in the state has a reported death rate that is twice that of an equivalent state-operated prison, TDOC must reduce that prison's population by 10% within 90 days and continue the process until the problem is remedied (T.C.A. §41-24-120).

The state's largest prison, Trousdale Turner Correctional Center, is just one of four in Tennessee owned and operated by CoreCivic. In a report published at the beginning of the year, the

tions across all four facilities, since 2022.

The report also claims the facility's chronic understaffing has led to "prisoner assaults, overdoses, lack of medical treatment, and families forced to pay extortion fees..." adding that numerous lawsuits, brought about by former inmates, staff, and family members, argue that the mismanagement has led to injuries and deaths. According to Dept. of Health records, sixteen deaths attributed to overdoses alone were recorded between Jan. and Nov. of last year.

Based on CoreCivic's past blatant disregard for penalties, it is unlikely the new law will bring about change. ▲

**Private prisons
with a death rate of
twice state-
operated prisons
will have to reduce
population by 10%**

Tennessean revealed that the facility—infamous for its cruel and dangerous conditions—has never been in full compliance with its state contract, and Tennessee has fined CoreCivic nearly \$30 million for contract viola-

GLEN CASADA TENNESSEE

President Donald Trump has recently pardoned the former Tennessee House Speaker convicted of multiple criminal charges.

On Sept. 30, Casada was sentenced to three years in federal prison and one year of supervised release by U.S. District Judge Eli Richardson. He was ordered to pay a \$30,000 fine for his part in a scheme to defraud taxpayers.

With Trump's pardon, the charges are annulled and another former politician escapes accountability for his actions.

SEAN COMBS NEW JERSEY

The rap mogul known as "Puffy" is now serving a 50-month sentence at the Fort Dix Federal Prison in NJ where he has been assigned a highly-coveted job as a chaplain's asst. The position provides perks like a private, air-conditioned office, and food from religious events.

Combs previously taught a six-week course to fellow prisoners titled "Free Game With Diddy," which focused on business and positivity. His lawyers were quoted by the *Wall Street Journal* as saying he views the class "as one of the most impactful and important endeavors of his life."

GHISLAINE MAXWELL TEXAS

Jeffrey Epstein's former girlfriend plans on arguing for her release from prison, pro se (self-representation), despite the Supreme Court having declined to hear her appeal.

After a July meeting with senior Justice Dept. official Todd Blanche, the unusual decision was made to move the convicted sex offender from a max-security federal prison in Fla. to a minimum-security prison camp in Texas where she has received special treatment to the ire of fellow prisoners.

FCC Sends Mixed Signals, Raises Caps for Prison Call Rates

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

WASHINGTON—In a recent vote, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reversed course, approving increased rates for audio and video calls in prisons and jails across the country.

In 2024, the FCC adopted new regulations, requiring communications companies to lower the rates charged for calls with those behind bars. The rate reduction was made in response to the Martha Wright-Reed Fair and Just Communications Act, which requires relief to be brought to those struggling to communicate with their incarcerated loved ones.

Earlier this year, the FCC yielded to growing pressure from service providers, sheriffs, and state attorneys general, agreeing to suspend the lowered rate rules and calculate higher ones.

Service providers and sheriffs both argued that the new rules inhibited profitability. One of the major complaints revolved around the ban on site commissions (kickbacks given to facilities) and ancillary fees used to boost earnings.

In an effort to appease complaints, the FCC calculated increased rate caps, which include “safety & security” costs associated

with call monitoring technology and a .02 “facility fee.” The rules prohibit companies and facilities from adding charges beyond those now included. (See charts below.) The FCC also created a new tier with significantly higher rates for “extremely small jails” housing fewer than 50 individuals.

The rate caps are the legal maximum rates that can be charged for these services. This means that jails and prisons are not obligated to increase rates and can choose to maintain

the current rates, or reduce them even further.

In an effort to reduce the burden for those already at a disadvantage, several states offer free or reduced rates for prisoners to communicate with friends and family.

After making multiple rate cuts over the past few years, TDOC has not announced if it plans to raise calling rates in response to the increased caps. ▲

Source: Wanda Bertram, “Bowling to pressure from jails and companies, FCC raises phone rate caps,” Prison Policy Initiative, Oct. 30, 2025

Phone & Audio Calling Rates

	2024 Rate Cap	2025 Rate Cap	% Change	Rate Change
Prisons	.06	.11	83%	.05
Lg. jails (1,000+)	.06	.10	67%	.04
Med. jails (350-999)	.07	.11	57%	.04
Sm. jails (100-349)	.09	.12	33%	.03
Very sm. jails (50-99)	.12	.14	17%	.02
Extremely sm. jails (<50)	.12	.18	33%	.06

Video Calling Rates

	2024 Rate Cap	2025 Rate Cap	% Change	Rate Change
Prisons	.16	.23	44%	.07
Lg. jails (1,000+)	.11	.18	64%	.07
Med. jails (350-999)	.12	.18	50%	.06
Sm. jails (100-349)	.14	.19	36%	.05
Very sm. jails (50-99)	.25	.24	-4%	-.01
Extremely sm. jails (<50)	.25	.41	39%	.16

Data calculated prior to the FCC's last-minute “inflation factor” which will likely add around .01 to rate caps. Source: Prison Policy Initiative

Physical Mail Purged from TN Prisons

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

The Tennessee Dept. of Correction (TDOC) announced that as of Nov. 2, 2025, physical mail will no longer be delivered to residents. Incoming mail will now be scanned and uploaded for viewing on state-issued tablets.

Residents received the announcement that their incoming mail would be "returned to sender," just two weeks before the new policy would go into effect, resulting in a scramble to update their mailing address.

Tennessee is just one of the latest states to adopt a digital mail policy in an effort to curb contraband, namely drugs, from entering prisons through the mail.

The same justification was given years ago when departments across the country began banning care packages from being mailed in.

eliminating physical mail in the prisons did not reduce drug use.

That change failed to eliminate drugs from flowing into prisons and generated millions of dollars annually for private contractors and approved vendors.

If drugs could be elimi-

nated from prisons, or even dramatically reduced, by doing away with physical mail, it might be a worthwhile effort. A recent study by Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) suggests it isn't.

The study looked at correctional facilities across four states (PA, MO, VA, NM) that transitioned to digital mail and found that after making the change, the facilities all experienced an *increase* in positive drug tests. Although the exact cause for the increase was not indicated, it made evident that eliminating physical mail in the prisons did *not* reduce drug use.

Oregon State Penitentiary is also considering the adoption of a digital mail policy. Counter to TDOC, the Oregon Dept. of Corrections (ODOC) isn't rushing to roll out the change.

According to *The Echo*, the prison's newspaper, ODOC issued a survey to gather input from residents, adding that any changes wouldn't come before next year.

Stephen Cook, project manager for ODOC's office of communications, is quoted by *The Echo* as saying the survey is an "attempt to get feedback from [residents], friends and family to include them in improving the situation."

Oregon's decision to include residents and their families in the conversation is a productive and respectful way to carry out such

impacting changes.

In December's Inmate Council meeting, residents voiced concern that they can no longer receive Bible study materials, many of

priceless cards, letters, and photos could be lost forever.

which include prepaid postage. Warden Phillips explained that there was some initial confusion but clarified that religious materials mailed to the prison *will* be delivered.

At the prior month's meeting, Phillips announced that legal mail sent from family members (i.e. documents requiring notarization), should be marked "legal mail" on the envelope and be sent to the prison. Standard legal and privileged mail can also continue to be mailed to the prison.

Digital mail can be viewed on tablets in the "free" section under "facility messages." Phillips confirmed mail will remain accessible despite any facility transfers, but could not confirm if digital mail will be made available upon release, suggesting that, priceless cards, letters, and photos could be lost forever. ▲

FOR NEW MAILING ADDRESS DETAILS, SEE INSIDE BACK COVER.

New App Tracks Sentence Credits & Release Dates

Opportunities is the new app that allows residents to track sentence credits and see dates relevant to their release. The app can be accessed through Edovo's homepage and works with TDOC to provide mid-month updates (around the 13th of each month). It also includes information about how specific credits are earned, what the Release Eligibility Date (RED) and Final Expiration Date mean, and what to do if your sentence credit calculation appears to be incorrect.

This app will provide many in custody with their first glimpse at a release date since TDOC changed its policy, eliminating time sheets for residents, over a year ago. ▲

Coming to America

Africa's prison law program has its sights set on the U.S.

NAIROBI—Justice Defenders (formerly the African Prison Project) is a nonprofit that is determined to make change inside prisons. The organization helps those involved in the criminal justice system in Africa navigate the law effectively. It has already reviewed well over 170,000 cases, leading to the release of 60,000 prisoners.

Inside prisons, Justice Defenders teaches law to the incarcerated and the guards. The fact that both groups study together in the same room has made the program highly impactful. One guard stated that there was previously an "us" and "them" mentality but says that now they stand alongside each other.

The program's founder, Alexander McClean, is a former magistrate in the U.K. and explains that the program is a journey of faith, "faith in the law and faith in God."

Sixty-seven individuals have earned law degrees through the nonprofit's efforts, and two program graduates recently traveled to a New York prison to explore launching the program in the U.S. ▲

Source: "The Whole Story," Anderson Cooper, CNN

U.S. Prison News

CA Prisons to Launch Single Cell Pilot Program

Beginning in 2027, four California prisons will transition 10% of their population to single cells. The change comes after research has shown that shared housing and overcrowding have been linked to greater violence and stress for both prisoners and staff. The change is also expected to improve restorative sleep and psychological stability.

LA Prison Hosts Daddy-Daughter Dance

Twenty-nine fathers, along with their daughters (ages 5-20), attended Angola's first annual dance. The event, sponsored by God Behind Bars, gave these loved ones an opportunity to connect in a meaningful way. The men were fitted with custom tuxedos and prepared a choreographed dance for their daughters.

Oregon Brews Coffee Behind Bars

The East Oregon State Penitentiary recently built its own coffee shop used to teach residents skills to prepare for release. Prison Brews' menu includes an Americano, a latte, and a macchiato, each available in vanilla, caramel, or hazelnut flavors. Toppings of chocolate or caramel drizzle and a choice of oat or almond milk are offered.

1 in 15 IL Prisoners Getting a Higher Education

Two thousand incarcerated men and women in Illinois are advancing their education beyond high school, and another 2,000 are waitlisted. The higher ed program offers associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees from institutions that include Northwestern and U of I.

San Quentin Running Club Sponsored by Athletic Brand

Members of the Thousand Mile Club participated in its 15th annual marathon, wearing sneakers provided by Hoka. Brand reps and visitors from local colleges attended the grueling event held on the prison's rec yard.

Professors Spend Time Behind Bars

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

WARTBURG—Two distinguished professors, who are also world-renowned scientists from the U.K., recently spent time teaching behind bars in Tennessee. On Tues., Oct. 14, 2025, the men presented a 3-hour lecture to about 35 incarcerated residents at MCCX. Both are Christians who firmly believe that the creation story in Genesis is a true historical account and use their lecture series to incorporate science with their faith.

Dr. Stuart Burgess opened by sharing his background in engineering. He described how he helped design the solar panels used on the

"As an engineer, I can see God's attention and detail in all areas of life."

Hubble telescope and spent two years developing the fastest bike in the world for Great Britain's Olympic team which went on to win six gold medals in the Rio Games. As he described the precision required to achieve these breakthroughs, Burgess explained that the human eye is even more precise and complex than the most powerful telescope and the human body is far more complicated than any spacecraft. He also believes "there's a lot of dishonesty in academia"

surrounding creation and biology, but maintains that "design reveals a designer" and "God is a brilliant designer" who is better than anyone at NASA.

The brilliant professor went on to provide several other examples in nature that point to an intelligent

"Never doubt there is a designer."

Creator. He explained that there are around 90 different metals on Earth, one for every type of technology. He made a case that there is a type of wood for every possible application, including the likes of rosewood, which has the perfect grain spacing for creating musical instruments. He then provided details about honey and water, two life sustaining substances, that illuminate their complexity and uniqueness. Burgess insists these are not coincidences but are part of God's design, saying, "As an engineer, I can see God's attention and detail in all areas of life."

He concluded his portion of the lecture by referring to Scripture, which declares that on the day of judgement, no one will have an excuse. Then he reminded the audience that God has revealed Himself to all of mankind through His creation, saying, "Never doubt there is a designer."

Dr. Andy McIntosh began his portion of the lecture by clarifying that creation of itself is not a salvation issue but insisted that "mixing evolution with Genesis may cause a shipwreck."

He went on to outline these four important truths: 1) there was no death before sin; 2) creation was accomplished by the power of God's spoken word; 3) Adam was created from dust; 4) and the flood was global.

The combustion and thermodynamics researcher provided a litany of Scriptural, scientific, and historical evidences that support these truths.

McIntosh likened salvation through Christ on the cross to Noah and the ark, explaining that the ark

"Christ can save all, but only some will come."

could have saved many, but only a few came; Christ can save all, but only some will come. He then offered the ABCs of salvation: Admit you're a sinner and need saving; Believe Christ died for your sins; and Commit your life to Him.

An opportunity to learn from such accomplished educators as these two men is an extremely rare one. It is even more so for members of the incarcerated community. Special events like this shouldn't be as uncommon as a total eclipse. ▲

Jailhouse Jurisprudence



The First Amendment: Freedom of Religion

Researched and written at the Equal Justice Clinic of the Seton Hall University School of Law Center for Social Justice under the supervision of Professor Jenny-Brooke Condon.

ALTHOUGH INCARCERATED PEOPLE have the right to practice their religion and express themselves, courts allow prisons to restrict these rights if the prison's restrictions are reasonably related to the prison's need for security and discipline. Here we provide examples of how these issues arise in prison. We include arguments to consider if you believe prison officials are violating your rights to freedom of religion.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN PRISON

The U.S. Constitution protects your right to exercise your religious faith. The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

Although the First Amendment refers to "Congress," the right to free exercise also applies to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment.¹ This means that you have First Amendment religious rights whether you are incarcerated in federal prison, state prison, or local jail.

The first part of the First Amendment is known as the "Establishment Clause." It says that the government cannot favor any religion or force you to practice a religion. The second part is the "Free Exercise Clause," which is our focus here. It says that the government cannot punish you for your religious beliefs or interfere with your religious practice without an acceptable reason.

Prison officials may place restrictions on your rights in the prison setting without violating the Constitution if they have a

valid reason (discussed further below). Prison policies might now allow Muslim prisoners to eat after their Ramadan fast, and instead only provide meals when they are normally served in the prison. Prisons might ban incarcerated people from keeping religious texts or rosary beads in their cells. Prisons might fail to provide halal or kosher food.

When prisons provide a valid reason for these practices, Courts often hold that the prison rules do not violate incarcerated people's First Amendment rights. For example, in *O'Lone v. Estate of Shabazz*, 482 U.S. 342 (1987), the U.S. Supreme Court held that a prison policy that prevented Muslim prisoners from attending Jumu'ah, a required weekly religious service in the Islamic faith, did not violate their Free Exercise rights. Cases like *O'Lone* show that the courts can be unwilling to force officials to change how they run prisons as long as they have valid reason, even when prison policies interfere with incarcerated individuals' sincerely held religious beliefs.

However, if a prison official punishes you for your religious beliefs or interferes with your religious practices without a valid reason, you have constitutional rights that may protect you. If this occurs and you are thinking about bringing a legal challenge, first you will need to show that your practice or beliefs are (1) religious in nature and (2) sincerely held—of real importance to you.

Your sincere religious beliefs may be protected by the Constitution even if they

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

are not part of a mainstream or well-known religion, or even if they differ from the beliefs of most people who practice your religion.

For example, in *Love v. Reed*, 216 F.3d 682, 685 (8th Cir. 2000), the Eight Circuit Court of Appeals recognized that an incarcerated person's beliefs were *religious* even though he did not "formally ascribe (belong) to any organized religion." The person's "religious beliefs derive[d] from his own interpretation" of the Bible. Although the beliefs were not tied to an established religion, the court held that the belief-system was entitled to First Amendment protection.

Some belief systems, even if important, may not receive constitutional protection as religious beliefs. For example, in *Africa v. Pennsylvania*, 662 F.2d 1025 (3d Cir. 1981), the Third Circuit Court of Appeals held that the belief system of an organization called MOVE was not protected. The court asked whether the belief system addressed questions of "life and death, right and wrong, and good and evil," as is typical of other religions. The court also asked whether the belief system was broad in nature and whether MOVE's practices included formal and ceremonial services. The court found that MOVE's belief system was not religious in nature because it did not meet these standards.

When deciding whether you have religious beliefs that are "sincerely held," a court will sometimes consider your knowledge of religious teachings and your faithfulness to those teachings. Evidence that you do not understand the teachings of a religion that you claim to follow can make it hard for you to show that your religious beliefs are sincerely held. If you cannot show that your beliefs are sincerely held, you may be unable to prove that your First Amendment rights were violated, even if the religion you follow is generally recognized and protected under the First Amendment.

If a court decides that your beliefs system is religious in nature and your beliefs are sincerely held, the court will apply the

Turner v. Safley test to evaluate whether the prison has valid reason for limiting your free exercise rights. Most importantly, the court will ask whether the prison's restriction on your religion "is reasonably related to legitimate penological² interests." *Turner*, 482 U.S. at 89. In other words, does the prison have a valid reason for its action, such as maintaining discipline and security inside the prison or limiting the work of prison staff? And is that valid reason reasonably related to the restriction imposed on you?

If you wish to claim that your prison's restrictions on your religion are not reasonably related to legitimate prison interests, you will need to address these for questions under *Turner*:

1. Does the prison's restriction on your religious practice have a reasonable connection to a legitimate (valid) government interest, such as security or order?
2. Do you have reasonable other options for exercising your religious beliefs?
3. Would it harm the prison if it were required to respect your religious rights? (For example, would respect for your rights have a negative impact on prison staffing, on other incarcerated people, or on prison resources?)
4. Does the prison have other ways to address needs without restricting your religious practice? If it does, but chooses to restrict your religious practice instead of choosing the alternative, is this reasonable?

Unfortunately, the *Turner* test often favors the prison, as *O'Lone v. Estate of Shabazz*, 482 U.S. 342 (1987), mentioned earlier, demonstrates. Policies that interfered with the Muslim prisoners' religious practice were upheld because the Court concluded that they were reasonably related to the prison's security concerns.

FEDERAL STATUTES

In addition to the First Amendment, several laws enacted by Congress further protect incarcerated people's rights to practice their religion. Two federal statutes go even further to protect the religious rights of incarcerated people: the Religious

Freedom Restoration Act ("RFRA"), which applies to federal prisons; and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act ("RLUIPA"), which governs state prisons and local jails. RFRA and RLUIPA require prison officials to meet a high standard before they can limit a person's religious rights and practice. As noted earlier, when evaluating whether a prison has violated a person's First Amendment rights in prison, courts ask whether the prison's restriction on religion "is reasonably related to" the prison's concerns with management or security. That approach is very favorable to prisons. It allows prison officials to restrict a person's religious practice as long as the officials can point to a valid reason for the restriction.

RFRA and RLUIPA replace the "reasonably related" standard with a standard that is less favorable to prisons: a "compelling interest" or "least restrictive means" standard. Under this standard, prisons cannot "substantially burden" a person's religious practice. Any restriction that does this is unlawful unless it serves a "compelling government interest." A "compelling" interest means that prison must have more than just a valid reason for a policy. They must have a critically important reason. Prisons must also show that they can achieve their interest only through that policy and that other alternatives do not exist.

To see how RFRA and RLUIPA work, consider the following example. Suppose a prison policy prohibits its people from keeping a Bible or Qur'an in a prison cell because prison officials believe these books are used to hide contraband. Under a First Amendment challenge to the policy, a court might accept that the prison has a valid reason for the policy and that the reason is "reasonably related" to the ban on holy books in prison cells. But, under a RFRA or RLUIPA challenge, a court might be more likely to find that the policy too heavily restricts incarcerated people's religious practice because it prevents them from reading holy books as they choose. The court might conclude that the ban is not the

only way to prevent incarcerated people from hiding contraband and that the prison has alternatives, such as requiring people to submit all books for screening for contraband. This would allow the prison to carry out its goals without banning the Bible or Qur'an from cells.

This approach to religious liberty makes RFRA and RLUIPA potentially more helpful to people who are incarcerated than the First Amendment. If you are challenging a denial of religious liberty by a prison or jail, you should consider bringing claims under RFRA or RLUIPA depending on whether you are in federal or state prison or jail), as well as the First Amendment. ▲

Source: Reproduced with permission from *The Insider's Guide to Jailhouse Law*, a publication of the Prison Book Program. Not meant to provide specific legal advice and should not be referred to or cited as legal authority.



On Edovo

Survive the Trap: A Caselaw Guide

The best way to fight the law is with the law. This 250-page caselaw guide aims to educate individuals about the legal system and criminal law.

The guide covers a variety of topics, including: consent, search and seizure, probable cause, sentencing enhancements, and grand jury indictments. It breaks topics down in an easy-to-understand way and includes relevant caselaw examples.

"Above all, our intention is to disrupt the cycle of incarceration, wrongful convictions and coerced pleas by sparking legal literacy in the communities that need it most."

PAROLE *Continued from cover*

Although the reason for the reduction in parole hearings and approval rates is not clear, it is not likely due to fewer prisoners being eligible for parole. In fact, progressive reforms have increased the number of incarcerated persons eligible for parole in many states while prisons continue to refill.

BOARD MAKEUP

Part of the reason for such extensive denials may be found in how the boards are established. In 34 of 35 states, board members are appointed by the governor and are subject to political pressures.

Law enforcement experience is a qualifying credential in 17 states, and is *required* of at least one board member in seven states. According to criminal justice researcher Leah Wang, board members with a background in law enforcement have been "trained to see people with suspicion" and "might favor incarceration over release in most circumstances."

Most parole boards lack diversity in perspectives and experiential knowledge. They are typically stacked with former politicians and members of law enforcement, while being devoid of members with professional experience in areas such as sociology, psychology, or social work.

RATIONALE

It is obvious that the purpose of parole is to deter-

mine whether a parole-eligible individual should be released from prison prior to the completion of their sentence. What is less evident is exactly how these decisions are being made or if parole is even functioning as it was intended to.

In Tennessee, the code describing the grounds for parole (T.C.A. §40-28-117) states: "*Parole being a privilege and not a right, no prisoner shall be released on parole merely as a reward for good conduct or efficient performance of duties assigned in prison, but only if the board is of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that the prisoner, if released, will live and remain at liberty without violating the law, and that the prisoner's release is not incompatible with the welfare of society*" (emphasis added).

The "reasonable probability" standard is overly vague and gives the Board wide latitude in determining whether an applicant is fit for parole. The fact that the individual was even convicted of a crime can be—and often *is*—used to suggest there is reasonable probability that they would reoffend if released early. The product is an overwhelming number of denials which fail to aptly consider the positive transformation of the individual and relies heavily on factors that are out of the control of the applicant.

Tennessee also provides its board with a guide for making parole decisions (Tenn. Comp R. & Regs. 1100-

01-01-.07). It includes an array of factors the Board "may" consider. For example, the Board may choose to consider the views of the District Attorney who tried the case, the individual's prior criminal record, and any history of substance use, while also choosing to ignore the individual's educational achievements, good institutional record, and positive job reports.

Additionally, the guidelines include this overly broad provision: "The Board to revise or modify its parole criteria and factors for consideration, *as it deems appropriate*" (emphasis added).

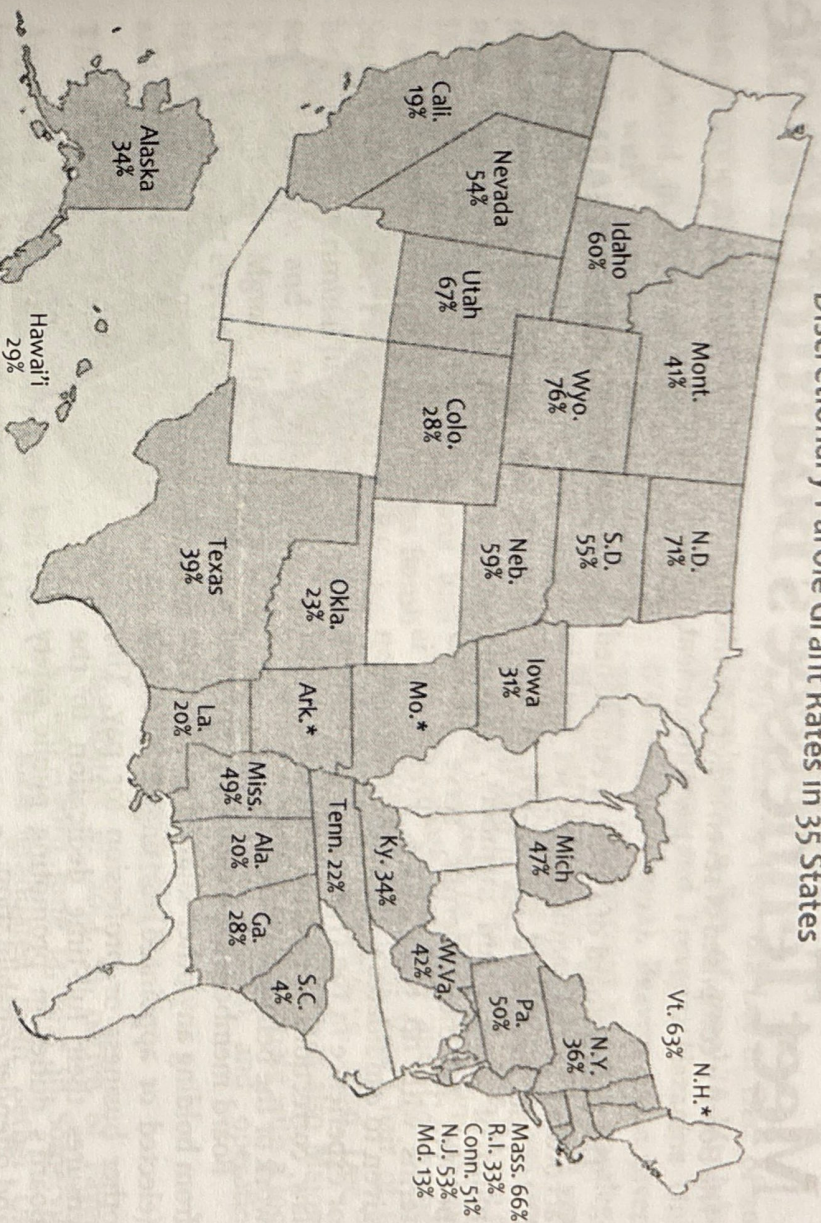
REQUIREMENTS

Interestingly, the guide *requires* that the Board consider victim impact statements and the seriousness of the crime when making their determination. However, the current statute prohibits the Board from denying parole based *solely* on the crime, with an exception only for certain serious offenses (T.C.A. §40-35-503).

In an effort to undermine criminal justice reform, Rick Scarborough (R) sponsored Senate Bill 455 earlier this year. It permits the Board of Parole to reject *any* applicant based *solely* on their conviction. The bill was vetoed by Governor Bill Lee, but Scarborough is confident the state legislature will override the rejection when they return after the first of the year.

Like many states, Tennessee's parole structure disregards the sentencing

Discretionary Parole Grant Rates in 35 States



* Indicates state has discretionary parole, but no grant data were available from 2019 onward. Compiled by the Prison Policy Initiative from state statutes and parole board policies. Most recent data available as of July 2025.

judge's determination that the minimum sentence is sufficient for rehabilitative efforts. "A sentence with the possibility of parole indicates that the judge (or state legislature) believes the timing of the individual's release should depend on their acceptance of responsibility, their successful completion of required programming, their demonstrated plan for going home..." asserts Wang, "These are the criteria parole boards are better suited to consider; the judge has already considered the crime itself."

Parole boards also ought to be proactively staffed with decision-makers whose background is in community-based practices like substance use and mental health counseling, trauma-informed care, and psychology. Individuals with clinical expertise and lived experience are better qualified to determine an applicant's mental and emotional preparedness for release than those whose careers have been spent locking people up.

Because sentencing is already concentrated on the crime, parole boards instead should place paramount consideration on the individual and their rehabilita-

tion that requires one board member to "be a person directly impacted by the criminal legal system—specifically, someone who has completed probation or parole at least three years before their appointment."

Pending legislation in Massachusetts requires a formerly incarcerated board member while also calling for four members to have at least five years experience in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, social work, or substance use treatment.

Tennessee can uphold its commitment to the well-being of its citizens while, at the same time, making parole a more meaningful tool to release those in prison. They just have to be willing to break the mold. ▲

RESHAPING PAROLE

Because sentencing is already concentrated on the crime, parole boards instead should place paramount consideration on the individual and their rehabilita-

Meet Tennessee's Board of Parole

The Board is comprised of seven individuals whose professional backgrounds are primarily in law, law enforcement, and public service.

The state's Board of Parole is established according to the requirements set forth in TN Code Annotated §40-28-103. A maximum of seven Board members, each appointed by the governor, serve six-year terms with no term limits. Preference is given to candidates with training, education or experience in the criminal justice system, law, corrections, medicine, education, social work or the behavioral sciences.

Board members are explicitly prohibited from holding any other salaried public office (elected or appointed) or engaging in any other business or profession for pay. This ensures their full-time dedication to the Board's duties in promoting public safety and offender rehabilitation.

Members are compensated with a salary that shall not be "more than eighty-five percent (85%) and not less than sixty percent (60%) of those established for Class 2 state officials under §8-23-101" with the exception of the Chair, whose compensation may be commensurate to their additional duties.

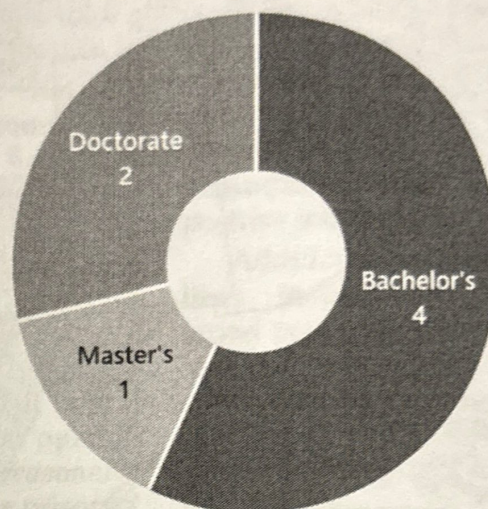
ROBERTA NEVIL KUSTOFF, CHAIR

Appointed by Gov. Bill Lee in Dec. of 2023 to serve as Chair. An attorney with over 25 years of legal practice, beginning after earning her Juris Doctor in 1998 from the Univ. of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. A native of Chattanooga, she graduated from Bellarmine Univ. in Louisville, KY. She spent several years in private practice before joining the Shelby County Trustee's Office in 2010 as Delinquent Tax Attorney, where she handled complex tax enforcement and collections. She is a member of the Tennessee Bar Assoc., Memphis Bar Assoc., and the Memphis Estate Planning Council.

RICHARD MONTGOMERY

Longtime Chair (prior to Kustoff's 2023 appoint) and current board member. A

HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED



native of East Tennessee, Montgomery (born Oct. 21, 1946) brings extensive experience in education and public service. He served as a member and Chair of the Sevier County School Board from 1982 to 1998, then as a Republican state representative for Tenn. House District 12 from 1998 to 2012, focusing on education, commerce, and rules committees. He holds a B.S. from the Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville, and was appointed to the board in 2013, becoming Chair that same year. His background emphasizes policy leadership in education reform and local governance.

ZANE DUNCAN

Appointed in 2016. A Knoxville native and graduate of Lincoln Memorial Univ. (Harrogate, TN) with a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology. Before joining the Board, Duncan worked in public relations as Manager for the R.J. Corman Railroad Group in Nicholasville, KY; as property appraiser for the Knox County Property Assessor's Office; and in public affairs for the Air Transport Assoc. in Washington, D.C. He is active in community service as a youth basketball coach and is a member of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville,

reflecting his commitment to youth development and community engagement.

GARY M. FAULCON

Appointed in Oct. of 2013. A Tennessee native with 25 years of law enforcement experience as a commander with the Metro Nashville Police Dept. (MNPD). His assignments included Background and Recruitment, Criminal Investigations Division, Vice Division, and the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, culminating as Bomb Squad Commander. Faulcon holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Tennessee State Univ. and a master's degree in Public Service Mgmt. from Cumberland Univ., providing expertise in criminal investigations, tactical operations, and public safety management.

TIM GOBBLE

Appointed in July of 2013 by Gov. Bill Haslam. Gobble has over 36 years in public service, including as a U.S. Secret Service special agent, Bradley County Sheriff (elected), Cleveland City Council member (elected 2002), Bradley County Emergency Mgmt. Director, East Ridge City Manager, and Interim Deputy Chief of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office (until his Board appointment). He earned a bachelor's degree in Government and Public Administration from Lipscomb Univ. (formerly David Lipscomb College) in 1986. His background spans federal law enforcement, local government admin., and sheriff's office leadership.

MAE BEAVERS

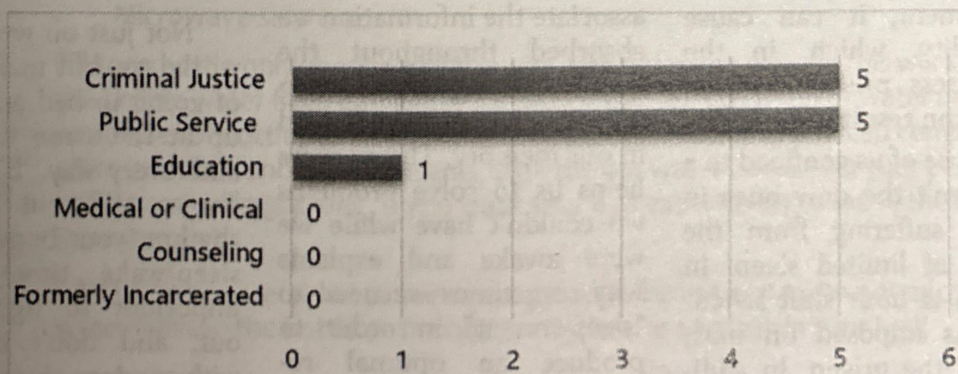
Appointed by Gov. Bill Lee in Dec. of 2019 (term began in Feb. of 2020). A Mt. Juliet, TN resident and Trevecca Nazarene Univ. graduate (B.S. 1992), Beavers has a diverse career as a former court reporter, paralegal, and securities broker. She served eight years in the Tenn. House of Representatives (1994 to 2002) and 15 years in the State Senate for District 17 (2002 to 2017), including as Chair of the Senate Judiciary and Government Subcommittee and First Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee. Born Dec. 11, 1947 in Millport, AL, she was also Majority Caucus Treasurer in the Senate with a focus on conservative judicial and operations reform.

BARRETT RICH

Appointed in 2014. A native of Fayette County (born June 14, 1977 in Somerville, TN). Rich graduated from Bethel Univ (McKenzie, TN) with a B.S. in Management/Organizational Development and holds a Juris Doctor from Nashville School of Law. He served three terms in the Tenn. House of Representatives for District 94 (2008 to 2014) and worked as an insurance agent for Tennessee Farm Bureau. Earlier, he was a Tenn. Highway Patrol State Trooper (graduate of Trooper School) starting as a Road Trooper and later on the Governor's Security Detail for Gov. Phil Bredesen and Don Sundquist. His experience bridges law enforcement, legislative policy, and rural community advocacy. ▲

Based on the most recent public records, official bios, and reports (as of Nov. 2025).

QUALIFYING EXPERIENCE



Members may have qualifying experience in multiple categories.

5 Tips for Better Sleep

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

Millions of people wrestle with getting a good night's sleep, but it is especially challenging for those of us involved in the criminal justice system. The high-stress environment of prison amplifies many factors that contribute to poor sleep. Understanding sleep and making some simple changes can help you live a longer, healthier life.

Experts recommend the average adult sleeps 7 to 9 hours per night. Dr. Matthew Walker explains that no human can survive on less than five or six hours of sleep per night without showing signs of impair-

Some parts of the brain are up to 30% more active during REM sleep than when we're awake.

ment. Yet, many incarcerated individuals struggle to achieve just that. Sleep deficiency not only leads to impairment, it can cause irritability, which, in the high-stress prison environment, can result in violence.

Those of us confined to a cell aren't the only ones in prison suffering from the effects of limited sleep. In 2024, a 12-hour shift schedule was imposed on most staff at the prison. In addition

to the longer hours, many guards are drafted and required to work additional shifts. These long hours play a significant role in the health crisis that's plaguing corrections officers nationwide.

SLEEP INSIGHTS

Dr. Eriana Buteau explains that the average person has a 90-minute sleep cycle and REM sleep occurs in the middle of it. She stresses the importance of never interrupting that cycle to wake up, suggesting it is better to sleep for 7.5 hours than 8.

REM stands for "rapid eye movement," and is an active state of sleep. It is during this state that we form dreams that act like a form of "overnight therapy," according to Walker.

During dream sleep, we are able to process the difficult emotional experiences we encountered throughout the day. Walker describes it as a "nocturnal soothing balm" that helps us recover from those events and feel better about them the following day.

It is at this point that we associate the information we absorbed throughout the day by relating it to existing information we have stored in our memory. This process helps us to solve problems we couldn't have while we were awake and explains why sometimes we need to "sleep on it" in order to produce an optimal response.

Research shows that some parts of the brain are up to 30% more active during REM sleep than when we're awake.

Non-REM sleep is a passive state of sleep that reinforces and merges all of the information you have consumed throughout the day. It provides the brain with a method to permanently capture and store these memories.

During deep stages of this sleep, blood pressure is reduced and there is a shift from chaos to calmness. Walker says this shift allows us to "restock the weaponry in our immune arsenal," improving the immune system.

IMPROVING SLEEP

Being confined to prison limits the resources you can access to improve our sleep quality, but there are still some actions you can take to get better sleep.

Follow these five tips and you'll be on your way to a better night's sleep:

1. Develop a consistent sleep schedule.

Not just on weekdays or workdays, but make a habit of going to bed and waking up at the same times each and every day. Each of us has a different circadian rhythm (your body's natural sleep/wake time) so it's important to figure yours out, and don't disrupt it with random sleep patterns.

Studies have shown that sleeping late on the week-end can have negative health benefits and effect sleep the remainder of the week.

2. Use sleep psychology.

Avoid using your bed for any activity other than sleeping. If you eat breakfast or talk on the phone while in bed, your brain will associate your bed with these activities. This can be difficult in prison, so if you have to use your bed for things like reading or watching TV, try sitting up straight, on top of your blankets, and with the lights on. This way, when you turn the lights off and get under the covers, your brain will signal it's time for sleep.

3. Cut out the caffeine.

If you're anything like me, you can't do without

caffeine. Limit your intake to mornings to help improve your ability to fall asleep later. Experts recommend cutting out coffee and soda after noon, but if you have a higher tolerance for caffeine, try stopping by 2pm. Instead, drink green tea which has less caffeine than coffee and beneficial antioxidants.

4. Power down 30 minutes before sleep.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends putting away technology at least 30 minutes before you expect to go to sleep. If you do find yourself using tech in the evenings, try dimming the screen and setting the color mode to warm (Blue light can have negative effects on sleep).

5. Reduce your stress.

If you have a lot going on in your head, write down your thoughts or list all the things you accomplished

throughout the day. Drawing, stretching, or doing puzzles can also help reduce stress before bed.

Try using a multi-sensory approach:

Scent: Place a dab of aromatic prayer oil on the edge of your pillow.

Sound: Use the Calm or Stingray app to play some nature sounds or spa music before bed.

Sight: Make a sleep mask to block out any excess light.

Feel: Try laying under your coat to create the soothing effect of a weighted blanket.

Good sleep is critical for your health, so try some of these tips and see what works best for you. Remember, you don't have to change everything at once. Make gradual adjustments until you find you're getting some of the best sleep of your life!

WATER BOTTLE BED WARMER

Use this simple prison hack to get rid of your winter bedtime blues.

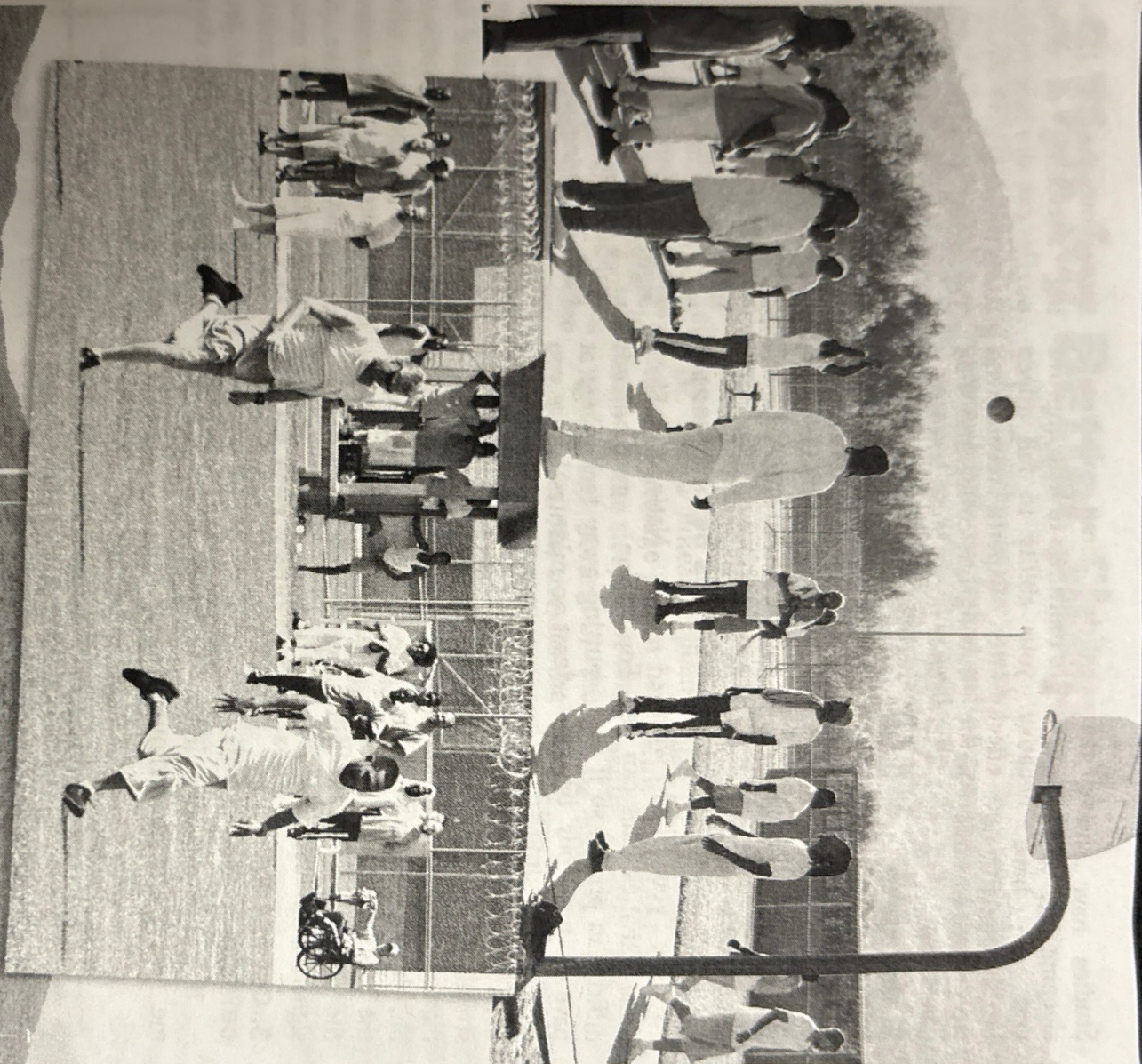
Items needed:

- Sturdy plastic soda bottle (empty)
- Tube sock (clean)
- Microwave-safe cup

Fill soda bottle only about 1/4 of the way with warm tap water. (This will keep the boiling water from damaging the plastic bottle). Boil a cup of water and fill remainder of bottle, leaving a little room for expansion. Tighten cap completely, place in a sock, and tie off the end. Slide the hot water bottle into your bed to keep it cozy all night long. If you want your bed extra toasty, remove the bottle from the sock.

CAUTION: Be careful not to burn yourself with the hot water. Do not microwave water while in the bottle or the bottle will deform and leak in your bed!

FIELD DAY 2025





2025 FIELD DAY

MAIN COMPOUND

UNITS 2-16

FREE THROW

1st: Gene Peavy
2nd: Akeem Memphill

THREE-POINT SHOT

1st: Tordarius Rhodes
2nd: Demetrice Carter

SHUFFLEBOARD

1st: Tim Flood
& Timothy Sorrells
2nd: Jemel Johnson
& Darrick Edwards

HORSESHOES

1st: Rocky Lucietta
& Timothy Sorrells
2nd: Calvin McMahan
& Christopher Turner

CORNHOLE

1st: Carl Hall
& Chase Norden
2nd: Rocky Lucietta
& Tim Flood

WHEELBARROW RACE

1st: Verico Jackson
& Justin Ellis
2nd: Vontay Head
& Carl Hall

50-YARD DASH

1st: Deshun Hampton
2nd: Jason Williams

100-YARD DASH

1st: Carl Hall
2nd: Deshun Hampton

220-YARD DASH

1st: Justin Ellis
2nd: Joshua Holmes

440-YARD DASH

1st: Tony Williams
2nd: Reginald Williams

WEIGHTLIFTING

120-135 LBS.

1st: Bryan Adkins
2nd: David Lawson

136-151 LBS.

1st: Michael Lewis
2nd: Kyle Schwartz

152-166 LBS.

1st: Deshae Robb
2nd: Vontay Head

167-183 LBS.

1st: Cameron Cook
2nd: Terry Hicks

184-199 LBS.

1st: Trevor Nelson

200-214 LBS.

1st: Carlos Heywood

215-231 LBS.

1st: Deavean Gregory

232+ LBS.

1st: Diangelo Goliday
2nd: Kevin Smith

TRIANGLE

22 BUILDING

FREE THROW

1st: Tyson Tharpe
2nd: Xavier Alvarez

SPECIAL EDITION | MOUNTAIN

DAY WINNERS

THREE-POINT SHOT

1st: Tyson Tharpe
2nd: Joseph Thomas

HANGTIME

1st: Brashard Gibbs
2nd: Letonio Swader

CORNHOLE

1st: Cameron Brewer
& Baron Coffee
2nd: Terrance Washington
& Leslie Tharpe

100-YARD DASH

1st: Abram Young
2nd: Nacee Canno

OLD MAN RACE

1st: Michael Blackburn
2nd: Kenny Phillips

WHEELBARROW RACE

1st: Melvin Champ
& Ladarius Jackson
2nd: Antonio Jenkins
& Brashard Gibbs

TRIANGLE

23 BUILDING

THREE-POINT SHOT

1st: Vordell Williams
2nd: Tony Butler

100-YARD DASH

1st: Vordell Williams

OLD MAN RACE

1st: Lawrence Francis
2nd: Curtis Lowe

WHEELBARROW RACE

1st: Jimmy Easley
& Kenneth Williams

ANNEX

27 BUILDING

FREE THROW

1st: Antonio Johnson
2nd: Corpeio Brock

THREE-POINT SHOT

1st: Darius Jackson
2nd: William Luke

HORSESHOES

1st: Bobby Wright
& Michael Parker
2nd: Nathan Blakley
& James Gregory

CORNHOLE

1st: Jody Townsend
& Dustin Riggs
2nd: Timothy Adams
& Bobby Wright

PICKLEBALL

1st: Cristopher Dyer
& John MacDonald
2nd: William Henry
& Daniel Whitehead

SPADES

1st: James Ketner
& Marcus Stanford
2nd: Henry Parrish
& Jewell Smith

WEIGHTLIFTING

all classes

1st: Dereece Bailey
1st: Aaron Dinguss
1st: Brent Mood
1st: Jeremy Harris
1st: Bobby Sanders
2nd: Kenneth Shockley
2nd: Isaiah Simmons
2nd: William Moris





The Great Exchange

CHRISTOPHER CONWAY
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD people say that when you're nervous at having to speak in public, you should just imagine that everyone in the audience is in their underwear. I don't do that. It's just weird. I think we can all agree that clothes are important. We need clothes for a variety of reasons. Clothes protect us from the elements. In the summer, we would get very sunburnt without clothes, and, in the winter, we would probably get frostbite. We are not like animals that have fur coats. We are vulnerable without clothes. Clothes hide those parts of our bodies that shouldn't be seen. They cover our shame.

Ever since the fall of man, when Adam and Eve knew that they were naked, clothes have been morally and socially essential. Clothes also form part of our identity. They are an expression of our style, of who we are. Even in prison, where we all have to wear the same clothes, we still try to make our own look somewhat unique. We have choices of shoes, belts, and undershirts, and whether or not we iron our clothes and put creases in them. And you can always tell the people who just arrived to prison because their jeans are still dark.

Clothes also grant us access to exclusive events and places. You will not be admitted into the free world in these prison uniforms, and you will not be allowed to enter a formal gala without black tie attire. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, when Bunyan's character, Christian, met the three Shining Ones, the second one—who is symbolic of Christ—stripped Christian of his rags and gave him a new set of clothes. What were those clothes, and why were they so important? What was wrong with the clothes he had? Christian's old clothes, referred to as rags here, are a

“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags”

symbol of his own righteousness, that is, his own wretched attempts to keep the law and so make himself righteous.

Isaiah 64:6 says, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (NASB). That phrase “polluted garment” or “filthy rags” refers to cloths that were used to soak up a woman's menstrual flow. In Jewish culture, this would be considered especially unclean. In any culture, it's pretty gross, but if you remember, according to the laws in Leviticus, women who were menstruating were not allowed near the tabernacle or temple. This effectively cut them off from the presence of God. Christian needed new clothes.

The Apostle Paul came to this realization when he gave us his resumé (Philippians 3:2-14). What he had counted as assets became liabilities for him. Everything he had trusted in before Christ was nothing but rubbish. The Greek word is *skubalon* (σκύβαλον). It means garbage, feces, or anything that is rotten and decaying. Much like the menstrual cloths, these things are unclean, and they actually separated Paul from God.

For us, these clothes might consist of your chapel attendance, the number of programs you've completed or the certificates you've earned. Maybe it's singing in the choir or playing in the band. It might be the number of drug tests you've passed or the responsibilities or job position you hold. It might be your popularity with the staff and other inmates. Maybe it's your memory of walking down the aisle and being baptized when you were eight years old. All these things are rubbish.

In his autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Bunyan writes, “I saw that I lacked a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God, and

this righteousness was nowhere to be found but in the person of Jesus Christ."

What would these new clothes consist of? Many of us are familiar with the passive obedience of Christ in submitting to death by crucifixion. This secured the forgiveness of our sins because He took on Himself the wrath of God that our sins deserved. Jesus satisfied justice in our place. But if we stop there, this leaves us morally neutral, fit for neither heaven nor hell. It leaves us naked, and heaven is not a nudist colony.

Growing up in the Reformed tradition, I was very familiar with the doctrine of the total depravity of man. I knew that my own righteousness was as filthy rags. This made reading much of the Bible somewhat discouraging and confusing. Why are there so many promises made for the righteous when there are no righteous people? What's the point? This is where the active obedience of Jesus comes in to play. Passages like Matt. 3:13-15, 5:17 and Luke 2:46-51 are just a few places that talk about the perfect obedience of Christ in keeping the law—all of it—perfectly. These are the works of Christ during those thirty some odd years He lived in Israel. These are what are applied to the accounts of those who trust in Christ alone for salvation. This is imputed righteousness.

There is a beautiful illustration of this in Zechariah 3:1-5. Joshua, the high priest, is standing there in filthy rags and being accused by Satan. God orders that he be stripped of his rags and clothes in new robes. Satan does accuse us, and his accusations are not false. Like Joshua, apart from Christ, we really *are* clothed in filthy rags. Christian, when he was being attacked and accused by Apollyon, said, "All you have said is true and much more which you have left out." Thankfully for us, God's grace is greater than our sin.

James Montgomery Boice explains it this way: "The gospel says that when those who have been made alive by God turn from

their own works...and instead by faith embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, God declares their sins to have been punished at Calvary and imputes the righteousness of Christ to their account."

This is what Christian received from the second Shining One. II Corinthians 5:21 says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Imagine for a moment that you are back in the court room on the day that you were sentenced. You are standing there in your orange jumpsuit with big black letters across your back that says: "INMATE." The District Attorney is standing some-

where on your right, and he or she is telling the judge a lot of horrible things about you. The judge sentences you to however many years. Then your attorney walks up to your side, takes off his suit, right there in front of everybody, and hands it to you. He tells you to take off your jumpsuit and give it to him. You do, and he puts it on. The bailiff puts your attorney in handcuffs and leads him away, leaving you standing there, a free man in a designer suit. Not just free, but wealthy and respected. You are given a new name and a new identity.

The Sunday school definition of grace is *getting* what you do *not* deserve, and mercy is *not* getting what you *do* deserve. God is gracious and merciful.

What is required of someone to receive these new clothes? Well, you have to get naked. As prisoners who are regularly strip-searched, this might not seem like that big of a deal. But think back to the first time you had to get naked in front of someone. It's humiliating. It's still humiliating for me. So, it takes humility to admit that your own clothes aren't good enough. It takes humility to get naked. It takes humility to receive new clothes from someone else and

Continued on next page

grace is *getting*
what you do *not*
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Anger & Forgiveness: Part II

COURTENAY PRICE
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

FORGIVENESS SENT a prayer up to Jesus concerning the pain Anger was holding close inside of his heart. Anger knew what his greatest fear was, and he also knew that Forgiveness possesses the one thing that he was afraid of. Anger's plan to ambush Forgiveness failed repeatedly. Anger's ambush did not work for one very important and powerful reason: The love that Forgiveness possessed inside of his heart was an overflowing cup of love. This love spilled, from abundance, to a radius that not only covered Forgiveness, but from the prayer Forgiveness prayed to

Jesus on Anger's behalf became a double dose, able to soften anyone to encountered.

Anger, watching from a great distance, now feels the tables have turned against him. He is noticing the power of the love Forgiveness possesses has increased and is changing the hearts of anyone who is in the same pain that Anger himself holds onto. Anger, observing this with his own eyes, begins to panic. Anger's only option to hold onto the pain was to run. Little did he know Forgiveness said a prayer for Anger, and Jesus answered his prayer. Anger frantically runs to escape, failing to remember the strength of Forgiveness' love.

Forgiveness's love does not only catch those in pain, his love destroys and conquers all pain through the strength and power of Jesus' love. Anger is concerned with only two options: Anger is now left to choose death from the hurt pain is causing his heart, or Anger can decide to live by choosing life through love, which heals and gives life. True love from Jesus Christ, through the gift of Forgiveness, gives life and meaning to all, no matter what the cost. Anger now embraces Forgiveness' free gift.

In Jesus' name, amen. ▲

C. Price believes writing is creative expression, through the use of words, used to ventilate.

Continued from previous page

the implications that come with that. But think of everything you gain! Think of all the promises that you can now appropriate to yourself! It takes faith to receive these new clothes. "Justification is an act of God's free grace, righteousness of Christ imputed on us, and received by faith alone" (Westminster Shorter Catechism 33).

As an example of what happens to those who will not accept these new clothes, let's look at Jesus's parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-14). You can tell from the context that the guests who came would not have been able to afford wedding garments. They got these people, "good and bad," from the street. They were probably homeless. So, the clothes were provided by the Master of the house. The king did not send his servants out to look for people who already had wedding garments. All they had to do was

put them on and walk into the wedding feast. The man who came in and did not put these clothes on was thrown out. Wedding clothes were required, but they were also provided.

Hear these words from Charles Spurgeon: "Since Christ did not love you for your good works—they were not the cause of His beginning to love you—so He does not love you for your good works even now; they are not the cause of His continuing to love you. He loves you because He will love you. What He approves in you now is that which He has himself given to you."

Augustus Toplady wrote one of my favorite hymns, "Rock of Ages" which includes these lyrics in one of the verses: "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling. Naked come to thee for dress, helpless look to thee for grace. Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee." ▲

Are You Sensitive?

CHARLES JOHNSON
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

MY BROTHERS, I pray the love of Jesus over you now as you read this and that you may be blessed in every area and come to know the One who calls you His own! I was in prayer a few months ago, and I asked God to let me be sensitive to His Spirit, and that I may hear His voice. He asked me something: "Are you sensitive?" It really hit me sideways. I did not know how to take it at first. Then I started seeking God, in prayer, reading His word, talking to Him as I walked, and meditating on Scripture. He took me to 1 Samuel 3, and He took me on a journey.

Can you remember the last thing someone you loved said to you? Someone you respected, someone you looked to for answers or to help with your problems. What about those who hurt you and have let you down? Those who have caused you pain or heartache? Those who have caused you sorrow? Have you ever felt betrayed to the point of giving up on yourself?

(1 Samuel 3)

How would you feel now, if we would have God say that about us? We love God, right? We desire Him, right? We seek after Him, right? Do you really seek after Him? Do you really crave His Spirit? Crave it as

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built his house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." Luke 6:46-49, NIV

a necessity? What about His word, His love, His guidance? Lord, speak to me. Lord, help me. Lord, I can't hear you!

Let's go deeper. What are you allowing to linger in your life that keeps you from hearing from God? That keeps you from living in the fullness of His joy? The fullness of His presence? The fullness of His power? The fullness of His love? What are you putting up with? What are you still toying with? What are you still giving excuses for? Well, my momma done this. My daddy abused me. My wife left me. This is why I get high. This is why I am angry. This is why I cuss every word.

What are you not letting go of? (1 Corinthians 7:1) It's time to cleanse ourselves. It's time to grow. It's time for us to move forward. Are you sensitive to the Spirit of God? Or are you still doing the same things, thinking all is cool, God will forgive me, I'm OK where I'm at, while the whole time, asking God for a breakthrough, saying, "Lord, I want this" or "God, I want that"?

Jesus said, "Why do you call me Lord and do not do what I say" (Luke 6:46). When you do something

that you know is wrong, do you feel convicted by the Holy Spirit of God? That godly sorrow? (2 Cor. 7:9-11) Are you to the point where you are not sensitive to the Spirit of God anymore? Or are you sensitive at all? Can you hear Him? Can you see His leading? Or have you put up with sin in your life like it's just OK that we have a twisted way of thinking that God thinks is OK?

Let's back up. So did Eli! (1 Sam. 2:22-29) How many times do we continue to play with things that God is trying to take away from us to set us free so that we can have a closer fellowship with Him, a fuller life, a deeper life? He wants us to be a true vessel used for honor and not dishonor; one of peace and not pain; one of love and not anger or hatred; one of obedience.

How many times do we kick Jesus? Spit on Jesus? Slap Jesus? Continue to take His sacrifice for granted? The One who loved us willingly suffered, willingly died, willingly rose again so that we may have newness of life, freedom, prosperity, everything—every good thing—but we choose the opposite (1 Sam. 15). Are you sensitive?

Continued on next page

The Enemy Looks Just Like You and Me

COURTENAY PRICE
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

THEREFORE, WE ARE called not to hate the person but the sin the enemy produces through the actions of the person to whom he attaches himself. One must know who the enemy is to realize that they are being led astray from the

"I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the lookout tower."

True voice that saves us all. The enemy looks just like you and me. We are human beings with a spiritual soul, and the enemy is a spiritual host which allows him to attach to our being and in turn gives him the

appearance of us, you and me.

The spiritual enemy can attach to us through gateways. These gateways are referenced in 1 John 2:16: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." These are three big doors that lead to—and open—smaller doors in our lives which allow the enemy to sneak in undetected. In the book of Habakkuk, he used these words in a different context. Habakkuk 2:1 says, "I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the lookout tower." I am using these same powerful words but in a different context because they add vision to how we must be aware of the craftiness of the enemy.

One way to avoid an attack from the enemy is by

emptying one's self of his sinful nature; self-taught theologies; and cultural, societal, and traditional influences. This sinful nature of the old man can also be referred to as "old wine skins." A new life in Christ is not contained in the old man but is only sustained in the new man which comes through death, burial, resurrection, and baptism from death to life of the old man and into a new creation in Christ! Mark 2:21-22 tells us that no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new patch pulls away from the old cloth, and worse, a tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost as well as the skins. ▲

Continued from previous page

It's time for us to stop making excuses and for us to start seeking Him, His face, His voice! He is not interested in our excuses. He wants our obedience. Can you hear Him? Do you want to hear Him? Or do you want to continue to think all is OK, I will be OK?

It is a dangerous mindset to play with the love of God and not be sensitive to His Spirit. Be hardened. (Jude 1:53) It's time for us to fight for the faith like we fought to hold onto sin. (Revelations 3:14-16, 19-21)

Let us be sensitive to what the Spirit of God—that is inside us—is saying to us. That we may truly walk in victory in every area of our life. Lord, let us love how you love, let us feel how you feel, let us touch how you touch. Let us say, "Lord, here I am, use me." Let us grow sensitive to the Spirit of God, seeking His face in all that we do and watch Him move.

I love you all, and I pray the love of Jesus over you and your family, in Jesus's name. ▲

I would like to encourage you to join us in fellowship, together as children of God and brothers in Christ, by attending one of our many evening services in the main compound chapel.

Remember, when praises go up, blessings come down. Let's lift up the name of Jesus together.

Be blessed always in Jesus's name,

Brother Charles

Remembering NorthStar Founder, Scott Cagle

ROBERT PIRAINO
MOUNTAIN REVIEW

"[Scott] was a man who loved the word of God and preached the word of God."

DURING A RECENT Sunday service, NorthStar Church's lead pastor, Corey Hainy, took the stage with a somber look on his face and informed the congregation that the church's founding pastor, Scott Cagle, had passed away. Hainy expressed that he had far more questions than answers and was overwhelmed with a feeling of disbelief.

Around 10am on the morning of Friday, Oct. 17, 2025, Cagle tragically chose to end his life. A graduate of Carson-Newman University (formerly Carson-Newman College), he spent 40 years in ministry and over 20 years as the lead pastor of the church he founded in Knoxville.

Over this past summer, Cagle had several surgeries which led to a long and difficult recovery, affecting his mental and emotional health. He sought out mental, physical, and spiritual healing but ultimately lost the battle.

On July 28, 2024, Cagle

preached his last sermon as lead pastor of NorthStar Church, before passing the baton to Pastor Hainy. The final point of that message was an instruction for the church to "always be a place

**"always be a place
where broken,
abandoned, abused,
wounded, disillusioned,
and burned-out people
can feel God's love and
presence."**

- Pastor Scott Cagle

where broken, abandoned, abused, wounded, disillusioned, and burned-out people can feel God's love and presence."

The towering, slender pastor with silver hair lived this out by coming to MCCX for over a decade and showing the love of God to hundreds of men who have felt hopeless and abandoned. He

greeted every man with a handshake and a smile, helping them to feel seen and loved.

Pastor Cagle used every opportunity to share about Jesus. "Scott was a man who loved the word of God and preached the word of God," said Hainy.

Pastor Hainy revealed that Cagle's decision was not a result of spiritual failing or disbelief and declared that this tribulation does not define Cagle's ministry, saying instead, "The focus is not on the man but on the God that man loved and served."

Members of the MCCX campus of NorthStar Church will miss Pastor Cagle immensely. His faithful service has impacted the lives of so many, and we are all better for having been touched by his ministry.

Scott Cagle is survived by his wife Melissa, along with his son and daughter. ▲

Discipleship Training

Join us for Discipleship Training every Saturday from noon to 3pm in Classroom C (main compound). We will learn to be like Jesus and walk in His love. Because as He is, so are we in this world. You have a purpose in the kingdom, so bring a friend and let us fellowship together.

Give Yourself a Chance

BRENT FRAZIER

RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

Don't quit on yourself, but give yourself a chance to figure things out.

ONE DAY, another resident made a remark to me using a cliché that's heard very often here in prison: "I'm not a quitter." He was referring to his continued use of drugs. I told him to hold up because it looked like he was on the run at the moment, and my spirit was urging me to pull him over anyway. I addressed his pride in not being a quitter. He told me he was just joking, but I said to him that I wasn't. Then, I told him what I'm about to tell you: "Don't quit on yourself, but give yourself a chance to figure things out."

I understand it's not easy when it comes to any aspect of addiction. Our human nature is to try to avoid things that cause us pain or misfortune and make us uncomfortable, but it happens. That's why we

it's not easy when it comes to any aspect of addiction.

do what we too often do. We don't know how to or we don't want to handle the problem. It's typically the latter. Let me give you my perspective and witness. For me to get it, God had to show me. I honestly recognized what it is that weighs so heavily on me. It truly breaks me down and ex-

hausts my spirit. Even still, it comes and goes. But God!

I want you to receive this blessing, so pay attention closely. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity but of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7).

First, God has given you power over every obstacle, through Jesus (Philippians 4:13). Second, He gives you His love, and nothing can get in the way of Him (Romans 8:31-39). Third, has given you self-discipline. Because you have His power and His love, you are free (1 Peter 2:16), and your freedom in Christ wins this battle we face against the whole world (1 John 5:3-5).

The book of James says, "When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing" (1:2-4).

Let me emphasize "needing nothing!" You won't need any of the things that you're tempted by. Your conscious mind will not want whatever it is because you know the consequences and troubles of the struggle it will take you through.

My final encouragement to you is that if you don't already know Jesus, get to know Him. Don't just know about Him, but establish a personal relationship with Him. Jesus can set you free (Luke 4:18-19). Be free, and stay free. Will you fall down? Of-blessed-course you will. I don't know any child who didn't first fall

If you don't already know Jesus, get to know Him.

when learning to walk. We will all eventually learn to walk, run, and even fall some more. But we need to get back up and keep trying. But you don't have to do it alone if you have Jesus to help you through it. Just keep this state of mind, and don't forget to claim what is yours (James 1:12).

I'll leave you with my favorite Scripture verse: "Rejoice not against me O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah 7:8).

God bless you and may you take care of yourself and each other. ▲

B. Frazier combines his faith with his carceral experience to encourage those around him.

Kairos Inside Weekend

PATRICK RILEY
JOSEPH WILSON
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTORS

KAIROS PRISON Ministry's motto is: "I was in prison and you came to me" (Matt. 25:36). On the weekend of Oct. 16-19, 2025, dozens of Kairos volunteers did just that. Select residents at MCCX's main compound were given the opportunity to spend time in fellowship, study, prayer, and worship.

**Through the world
we are lost but
through Christ we
are redeemed.**

Having never spent any time around this completely volunteer-filled ministry, either here or at any of the other institutions I served time at, I was completely shocked at these men and the way they treated those of us wearing blues.

With attitudes of love and kindness, full of respect, these men were eager to serve and share more than just their time with us, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was not only a common theme but was contagious among those of us invited to be a part of the Kairos Inside Weekend program.

The Kairos volunteers made it clear that their mission is to shine a light on issues that they believe are

the most fundamental and valuable to help overcome the extremely tough situations we are faced with daily. Choosing to follow the example of Jesus Christ, they reflected the love of God and showed us kindness, seeing us not as the world does—as convicted felons—but as individuals redeemed through the blood of Christ shed on Calvary and as the bearers of His very image.

I'm sure every one of us shared a smile while enjoying the chocolate chip cookies that these same volunteers passed out that Saturday. But these cookies are baked with much more than just cookie dough. Yes, the secret ingredient is love, but it's also time. It took many ovens, in many kitchens, and a lot of spare hours to bake the roughly 4,000 packs of cookies distributed inside the prison over that weekend.

The volunteers who spent time with us over the weekend aren't the same volunteers who baked these cookies. That's because Kairos is a multi-church, multi-denominational ministry that includes thousands of volunteers from across the United States, and there is an entire community of believers here in East Tennessee who have pulled together to share the message of Christ to those of us living in the difficult circumstance of imprisonment.

This massive community is telling us to trust God and understand that through the world we are lost but through Christ we are redeemed. They're also letting us know that everyone falls down but we don't have to stay down. They have encouraged us to look to the Gospels and to stop chasing the things that won't matter in 10 years. Instead, we are called to begin building a life of eternal truths.

In prison, we often feel forgotten and unloved, but the Kairos Prison Ministry is screaming at the top of its lungs that they are the Church, the Congregation of those who follow Christ and that they love us and have not forgotten us.

There are hundreds of hours of preparation that go into every single Kairos Inside Weekend, from cooking to planning meetings to prayer sessions. That is a great deal of time that these mighty men (and women) of God have given freely just to serve us.

In an environment where men hold "being real" above almost anything else, I don't believe I'm wrong in saying that this is as real as it gets.

For this is the time—the Kairos time—for you. This is God's time for you to see His love! ▲

P. Riley and J. Wilson are both pursuing Bachelor's degrees at Carson-Newman University.

INSIDE THE RING *with Brandon Doyle*

The career of legendary professional wrestler,
the late Hulk Hogan

BRANDON DOYLE
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

BOXING HAD MUHAMMAD ALI. Baseball had Babe Ruth. Professional wrestling had Hulk Hogan. Hogan graced wrestling fans with his larger-than-life persona for decades, helping to take wrestling through two major boom periods. Unfortunately, on July 24 of this year, at the age of 71, Hulk Hogan passed away.

Unbeknownst to most, Hogan's health was in decline for a few months, after having surgery on his neck in May. This deterioration led to cardiac arrest and resulted in his death at his home in Clearwater, Florida. Let's take a stroll down memory lane and look at some of the highlights from "Hollywood" Hulk's career.

The man, Terry Bollea, was born on Aug. 11, 1953 in Augusta, Georgia. Before becoming the Hulkster we know today, he was simply known as Terry Boulder while wrestling in the Alabama and Memphis regions. Hogan caught the eye of Vince McMahon Sr. and made his debut in the World Wide Wrestling Federation (WWWF) as a villainous Hulk Hogan in 1979. By 1980, he was in a high profile feud with Andre the Giant where Hogan was the bad guy and Andre the fan favorite. This was an

early version of their massive feud that occurred years later with Hulk body slamming Andre in more than one of their matches.

McMahon Sr. released Hogan from the WWWF in 1981 in response to Hogan accepting the role of Thunderlips in the *Rocky III* film. He would soon after join the American Wrestling Association (AWA) where he gained massive popularity. Despite being a fan favorite, he never did obtain the AWA Heavyweight Championship. However, the AWA is where Hogan would first use the term "Hulkamania" and his famous catchphrase, "Hulkamania is runnin' wild!"

At the end of 1983, Hogan was back at the WWF, now being run by Vince McMahon Jr. He quickly became the face of the company, winning the WWF Heavyweight Championship from the Iron

**"Take your vitamins
and say your
prayers."**

Sheik in 1984. Hogan began wearing the red and yellow gear, ripping his shirt, and striking his iconic poses. It was at this time that he began referring to his fans as "Hulkamaniacs" and promoting his demandments to "take your vitamins and say

your prayers." Hulk Hogan would lead the boom period of 80s professional wrestling which saw a large increase in attendance, TV ratings, and Pay-per-view buys. He was the main attraction for the first ever Wrestlemania in 1985 where he teamed up with Mr. T to take on "Rowdy" Roddy piper and "Mr. Wonderful" Paul Orndoff. In 1987, the new fan-favorite, Hulk Hogan, feuded with the now villainous Andre the Giant. Their feud led to Wrestlemania III where we all witnessed the body slam heard 'round the world.

The 1980s were huge for Hogan. He was the most requested celebrity for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He graced the covers of People magazine and TV Guide and was the first wrestler to be featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated. Hogan made appearances on SNL and the Tonight Show, and he even had his own Saturday morning cartoon show on CBS. Hulkamania was indeed runnin' wild.

After a steroid scandal in WWE, Hogan left the company in 1993. World Championship Wrestling (WCW) signed him the next year, giving him a guaranteed payout and creative control, a first for professional wrestling. His signing was a massive deal for WCW and

brought mainstream attention to the company. Hogan would feud with Ric Flair, reunite with Randy Savage, and hold the WCW Championship for 469 days. However, in 1996, Hogan would change his ways and, in the process, change the landscape of professional wrestling.

At a WCW Pay-per-view match, Hulk Hogan would turn his back on the Hulkamaniacs by leg dropping Randy Savage and aligning himself with Kevin Nash and Scott Hall to form the New World Order (nWo). For the first time in roughly 15 years, Hogan was once again a bad guy. He traded the red and yellow in for black and white, calling himself "Hollywood" Hulk Hogan. With this transition, Hogan helped WCW beat the WWF in the ratings for 83 weeks and draw more eyes to the company and wrestling as a whole.

As he won championships, wrestled comedian and TV host Jay Leno, and teamed up with NBA star Dennis Rodman, Hogan was once again at the front, leading professional wrestling through another boom period. But after some disputes and a controversial match, he would make his final appearance for WCW in 2000.

Hogan would return to the WWF in 2002 with the nWo to feud with The Rock and "Stone Cold" Steve Austin. This led to one of the best matches of all time with Hulk Hogan taking on

The Rock at Wrestlemania X8. (If you have never seen it, you need to watch it; it's professional wrestling at its finest.) Shortly after this match, Hogan put back on the red and yellow and won the WWF Championships for a sixth time, becoming the final WWF champ before the company rebranded as World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE).

Over the next year, Hulk Hogan would win one half of the WWE Tag Team Championship, wrestle Vince McMahon, and have a match with "Rowdy" Roddy Piper. In 2005, he was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame and began his final WWE in-ring run.

Hogan and his 24-inch pythons have seen and done it all.

Hogan would have a highly anticipated match against Shawn Michaels (one of my personal favorite matches). His final match for the WWE would be against a young up-and-comer, Randy Orton, in 2006.

From 2009 to 2013, Hogan would have an unimpressive stint with a wrestling company called TNA Impact. He would come back home to the WWE and make various appearances from 2014 until his death. Without going into detail, it's important to note that Hogan had a racism scandal that publicly hurt him and his image. He made apologies both publicly and privately, and the

WWE allowed him to continue to represent the company. In January of 2025, Hulk made his final wrestling appearance at WWE's Raw debut on Netflix.

No doubt about it, Hulk Hogan has had an illustrious career. There is still so much more about his life and career that one article cannot justly cover. Whether it was body slamming Andre, facing the Ultimate Warrior, or leading the nWo, Hogan and his 24-inch pythons have seen and done it all. He has been the face of professional wrestling for decades, brining entertainment to millions of people worldwide. At some point, nearly everyone has been a Hulkamaniac. Hogan has definitely solidified his spot on the Mount Rushmore of professional wrestling.

Although a scandal may have hurt Terry Bollea, the man, it should not take away from the accomplishments of his persona, Hulk Hogan. So, listen up dude! Be sure to take your vitamins and say your prayers because at the end of the day, you gotta ask yourself one question brother: Watcha gonna do when Hulk Hogan runs wild on you?!

WWE NXT: Tues. 8 p.m.
CW (antenna only)

AEW Dynamite: Wed. 8 p.m.
TBS (Ch. 12)

WWE Smackdown: Fri. 8 p.m.
USA (Ch. 11)

AEW Collision: Sat. 8 p.m.
TNT (Ch. 13)

Poems from Prison

Original poetry from MCCX

In August of 2025, **Mason Warner** wrote the following poems during a 30-day stint in solitary confinement. God used his time there to draw him back and teach him the importance of being in His presence with no distractions. This became his motivation for writing "Be Still," while "The Son" was written from a place of hope and steadfastness. Warner explains that when he became still, he was able to realize his need for Christ, writing, "I needed an anchor. I felt tossed and thrown around and couldn't understand why until I realized in the rush of life I took my eyes off of Jesus and was fighting by my own a fight. Christ had already won but I could claim His victory as my own by trusting Him explicitly."

Be Still | MASON WARNER

Out on the water, I'm now free at last
To enjoy all I missed by going too fast
The rustle of leaves in the cool morning breeze
Blue jays and robins singing with ease
The chirping of crickets, the buzzing of bees
A babbling brook as its voice to the choir
As the sun on the horizon begins rising higher
Painting this glass lake with dazzling fire
As creation in harmony worships and raises
It's voice to the One who is worthy of praises
Who told the oceans "You must stop on the sand"
Who formed mountains and valleys with the stroke of His hand
Who poured rushing rivers and carved canyons so grand
And I'm humbled to know He did this for me
A canvas He painted for my eyes to see
A glimpse of His beauty, His splendor, His majesty
Out on the water, I feel you so near
Out on the water, I think I'll stay here

The Son | MASON WARNER

The wicked are blown as chaff in the wind
As the righteous stand firm before Jesus their friend
And He's more than a friend, He's our Savior and Lord
For on Calvary He paid what we could never afford
It was His life that He laid down, His blood that He gave
His resurrection defeated death, Hell out the grave
As the veil was torn and the earth shook asunder
All Hell was trembling with great fear and great wonder
And Heaven rejoiced, yea the angels did sing
"Hosanna, Hallelujah" to Christ Jesus the King
The battle is over, the victory won
At the right hand of the Father stands Jesus the Son.

Commissary Cooking

Slammin' Salmon Sliders

Submitted by Deshun Hampton

Prep time: 5-7 minutes

Cook time: 2 min per bowl

Serving size: 2 servings (3 patties ea.)

Cost: ~\$13

Ingredients:

- 2 smoked salmon pouches
- 1 Bugle chips bag
- 1 mozzarella cheese bar
- 5 mayonnaise packets

Optional:

- Goya seasoning
- garlic/onion [powder]
- peppers [diced jalapenos]

Tools:

- large bowl
- 1 utensil: spoon/fork/spork

Prep: Crush up bag of chips and slice cheese into small cubes or shred.

Directions: Combine all ingredients into large bowl. Using clean hands or gloves, mix well.

Once mixed, divide into six small handfuls. Roll each portion into an even ball to form a patty.

Place three patties in a large bowl, and cook in microwave (on high) for one minute. Flip patties and cook for an additional minute.

Set aside cooked patties to cool, and repeat for remaining patties.

Once patties are cooled to desired temperature, eat and enjoy!

Peanut Butter Fudge Reindeer Balls

Submitted by Robert Piraino

Total time: 10 minutes

Serving size: around a dozen balls

Cost: ~\$10

Ingredients:

- 10 hot cocoa packets
- peanut butter (~5 packets or use from jar)
- 1 cream cheese packet

Optional:

- 1 salted peanuts packet

Tools:

- 2 bowls (1 large, if possible)
- 1 sturdy spoon
- ice/cooler

Prep: Crush peanuts into small pieces (tip: use medicine bottle cap or jar lid).

Directions: Empty hot cocoa packets into bowl. Add a small amount of cream cheese at a time (1 tablespoon) and mix well.

IMPORTANT: Do not add the entire packet of cream cheese. Only add small amounts of at a time, mixing until no cocoa powder is left. The mixing takes some time and effort, so be patient and don't rush to add more cream cheese or the consistency will become too watery; it needs to stay thick!

Begin to add peanut butter and continue mixing. Add desired amount of peanut butter while keeping mixture thick.

Place crushed peanuts in a bowl.

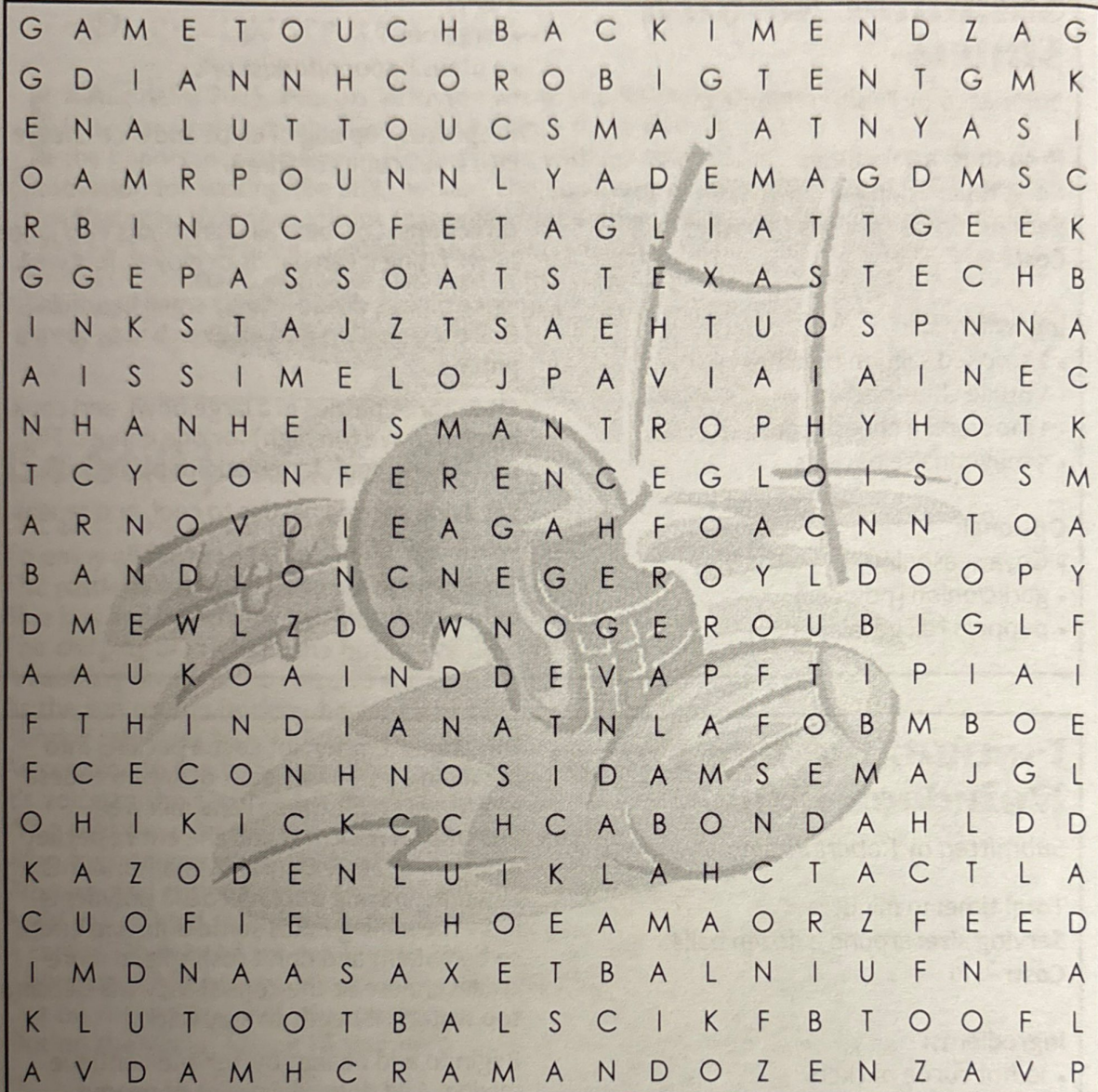
Scoop out a spoon full of mixture and use palms to roll into a ball about the size of a ping pong ball. Then place ball into bowl with crushed peanuts, rolling it to cover completely.

Place balls into a container and put on ice for about 30 minutes to get a thick fudge consistency.

Enjoy with a glass of cold milk or hot cocoa and some friends!

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

Search the grid forward, backward, and diagonal to find each word on the list.



ALABAMA

BIG TEN

CATCH

CHAMPIONSHIP

CONFERENCE

FIELD GOAL

FOOTBALL

GAME DAY

GEORGIA

GOALPOST

HEISMAN TROPHY

INDIANA

JAMES MADISON

KICKOFF

LOVE

MARCHING BAND

MASCOT

MENDOZA

MIAMI

OHIO STATE

OKLAHOMA

OLE MISS

OREGON

PASS

PAVIA

PLAYOFFS

PUNT

RUN

SAYIN

SOUTH EAST

TAILGATE

TEXAS A AND M

TEXAS TECH

TICKETS

TOUCHBACK

TOUCHDOWN

TULANE

Answers on page 38

SUDOKU X

Possibly the first Sudoku variant ever invented, adding just two diagonal constraints makes puzzles surprisingly more challenging. **Instructions:** Place 1-9 once each into every row, column, bold-lined 3x3 box and shaded diagonal.

1

		4		6		1		
	8		7	4	1		5	
		1				2		
	3	8				5	1	
		7				3		
	5		4	1	6		3	
		3		5		4		

2

6								2
		2				9		
	3		7		5		1	
		5		6		4		
			1		9			
		4		3		1		
	6		9		2		4	
		3				8		
9								1

God doesn't play dice

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

3

		6	2		9	8		
9	7						1	3
		2				1		
8	4						9	2
		3	1		4	6		

4

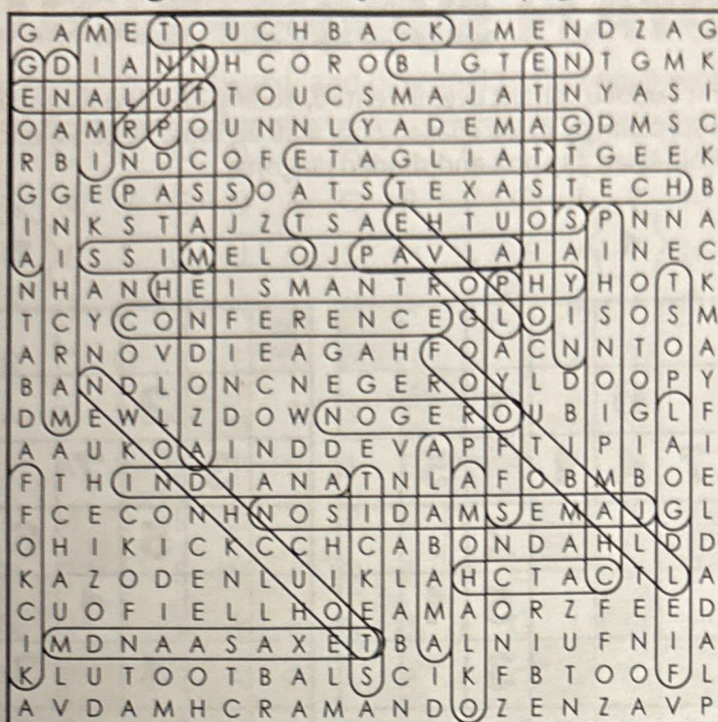
							5	8
		3						9
	1	9	6	3				
3		6				9		
8						2		
				9		1	6	
						4		
			4	5				

Dr. Gareth Moore, "The Mammoth Book of New Sudoku"

Answers on page 38

ANSWER KEY

College Football Playoffs, from page 36



Sudoku X, from page 37

1

1	7	5	8	2	9	6	4	3
2	9	4	5	6	3	1	8	7
3	8	6	7	4	1	9	5	2
6	4	1	3	9	5	2	7	8
9	3	8	6	7	2	5	1	4
5	2	7	1	8	4	3	9	6
7	5	2	4	1	6	8	3	9
8	6	3	9	5	7	4	2	1
4	1	9	2	3	8	7	6	5

2

6	5	1	3	9	4	7	8	2
4	7	2	6	8	1	9	3	5
8	3	9	7	2	5	6	1	4
1	8	5	2	6	7	4	9	3
3	2	6	1	4	9	5	7	8
7	9	4	5	3	8	1	2	6
5	6	8	9	1	2	3	4	7
2	1	3	4	7	6	8	5	9
9	4	7	8	5	3	2	6	1

3

1	3	6	2	4	9	8	5	7
9	7	4	6	8	5	2	1	3
5	2	8	7	3	1	9	6	4
6	1	7	4	9	3	5	2	8
4	8	2	5	6	7	1	3	9
3	5	9	8	1	2	4	7	6
7	6	5	9	2	8	3	4	1
8	4	1	3	5	6	7	9	2
2	9	3	1	7	4	6	8	5

4

6	2	4	1	7	9	3	5	8
7	8	3	5	2	4	6	1	9
5	1	9	6	3	8	7	4	2
1	9	2	3	8	6	5	7	4
3	5	6	2	4	7	9	8	1
8	4	7	9	1	5	2	3	6
4	7	5	8	9	2	1	6	3
9	3	8	7	6	1	4	2	5
2	6	1	4	5	3	8	9	7

TN STATE OFFICIALS:

Governor Bill Lee
Governor's Office
State Capital, 1st Floor
Nashville, TN 37243-0001



TDOC Commissioner Frank Strada
Rachel Jackson Building
320 6th Ave. North, 4th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243-0465

Tennessee Probation & Parole
Suite 300
Parkway Towers
404 Robertson Pkwy.
Nashville, TN 37243

NATIONAL RESOURCES:

⑤ **PAROLE NEWS MAGAZINE**
P.O. Box 8363
Fort Worth, TX 76124
www.parolenews.com
Tel: 817-492-5539

Dedicated to finding and supplying solutions for the immediate release of prisoners who have satisfied their program criteria and have earned the privilege of parole approval and release. Founded by Bryce Todd Jones as a channel to provide intriguing articles, court decisions, and to assist advocates for parole through reform throughout the Criminal Justice system.

Subscription cost: \$21.50

⑤ **PRISON LEGAL NEWS**
P.O. Box 1151
Lake Worth, FL 33460
www.prisonlegalnews.org
Tel: 561-360-2523

Monthly prison-related magazine. Covers court decisions affecting prisoner rights and conditions of confinement.

Subscription cost: \$30 annual (for prisoners)

EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE
P.O. 122 Commerce St.
Montgomery, AL 36104
www.eji.org
Tel: 334-269-1803

Provides legal representation to indigent defendants and prisoners who have been denied fair and just treatment in the legal system. They litigate on behalf of condemned prisoners, juvenile offenders, people wrongly convicted or charged with violent crimes, poor people denied effective representation, and others whose trials are marked by racial bias or prosecutorial misconduct. Mostly works with people in Southern states.

MCCX ACCOUNTING

As of December 11, 2025

Interest Account:
\$92,696.12

Special Rec. Account:
\$0.⁰⁰

LEWISBURG PRISON PROJECT

P.O. Box 128
Lewisburg, PA 17837-0128
www.lewisburgprisonproject.org
Tel: 570-523-1104

PROMISE OF JUSTICE INITIATIVE

1024 Elysian Fields Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70117

THE SENTENCING PROJECT

1150 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 601
Washington, D.C. 20036

SOUTHERN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

60 Walton St. NW
Atlanta, GA 30303

VOICES OF THE EXPERIENCED

2022 St. Bernard Ave., Suite 307
New Orleans, LA 70116

NEW TDOC MAIL POLICY



TDOC has transition from physical mail to scanned, digitized personal mail for residents. Mail from family members, friends, and loved ones will now be received at an off-site, centralized facility, where it will be processed, scanned, and delivered in a digital format to residents via state-issued tablets.

Personal mail sent directly to the correctional facility will be returned to sender.

Be sure to notify your family and friends of the new mail process and updated mailing address:

FACILITY NAME
YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME
TDOC #
P.O. Box 247
Phoenix, MD 21131



MCCX GRADUATES

CLASS OF 2024-2025

High School Equivalency Test

Jarrold Anderson
Andrew Armstreet[†]
Rayshawn Ball
Lyle Birchfield[†]
Eugene Brown
Vincent Buckholtz
Michael Bullen[†]
Demetrius Bynum
Kit Cazelot
Braylon Courtney[†]
Kadarius Davis[†]
Dale Deason
Matthew Dickerson[†]
Thomas Driver
Gerald Ducharme
Ryan Durr
Donald Edgemon
Jayan Forrester
Zachary Gaither[†]
Eric Glover[†]
Davon Harris
Demetrius Harris
Shane Helbert[†]
Sean Jackson[†]
Brandon Johnston
Rodney Keifner
William Keyes
David Lawson
Daniel McMillan
Johnny Miller[†]
Deysean Montgomery
Gene Peavy
James Powell[†]
Joshua Rochester[†]
Christopher Smith[†]
Michael Throneberry
Cody Trammell
Marty Vaughn
Lemar Weatherford
Bernard Wilson[†]
Henry White
Steven Woods[†]
Kratio Word

Career Technical Education

Jerry Anderson[†]
John Benchoff
Michael Bristol
Adam Carroll
Jeffrey Crutcher
Tavaria Davis
Nicholas Dickerson[†]
Kyle Hammock[†]
Joe Langley
Brenson Lawrence[†]
Hunter Lowery
Michael Lewsi
Michael Manley
Kwane Mathers
Lujack McKinney
Bryan Pearson[†]
Christopher Rowell
Bobby Sanders
Cedric Sesley
Gary Toney
Jerry Townsel
Wesley Vaughn
Derek White
Jason Williams

[†] Denotes graduates in special population unable to attend

[‡] Denotes graduates with paroled/expired sentence

Principal

Julia Gregg

ABE Instructors

Luke Banker
John Bowsher
Helen Campbell

Matt Gaskins
Susan Howe

CTE Instructors

Andy Bryan
Todd Carson
Mike Fitch
Jordan Jeffers
Robert Hill

Travis Laxton
Josh Mathis
Mike Napier
Richard Schumpert
Chuck Walker