



# FIRST WOMEN FIELD MINISTERS GRADUATE

Heart of Texas Foundation  
College of Ministry

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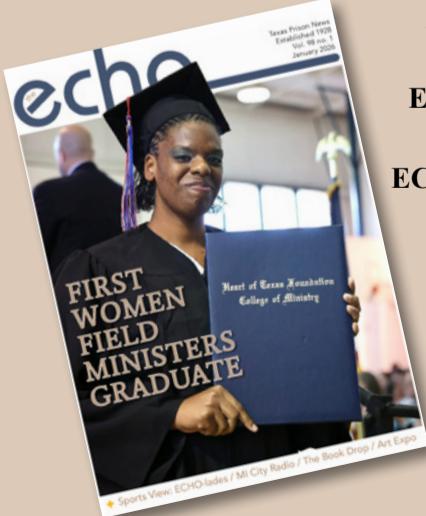
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# the echo

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## SUPPORTED BY



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# Letter to the Editor

Bambi Kiser | Managing Editor

**The ECHO**  
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## To the editor,

I need help finding the parole address for this region along with the names of the voters on the panel. I remember seeing a map of Texas with all of the offices and their addresses in *The ECHO* a couple of years ago. Can you please reprint that information? I see parole soon and I am trying to submit my parole packet. Thanks for the help.

**A Parole Candidate**  
**Clements Unit**

## To the reader,

*Look for updated parole information in this issue. Thank you for writing!*

## To the editor,

Hello, my name is Scott B. Pierce and I am in recovery from drugs, money and the fast life. I am a 50-year-old man who realized this thanks to a wonderful program on the Roach Unit called the Clean and Sober Living Dorm.

I'm back on a brand new 25-year-sentence. When I reentered the system with a sober mind, the effects of my actions were clear — along with the effects of everyone struggling with drugs in the prison system. I wanted no part of it. I just wanted to get away from the drugs.

After weeks in transit, I arrived at the Roach Unit. In classification I asked to be placed on an older (population) housing unit with not a lot of craziness. The major asked if I would like to sign up for the Clean and Sober Living Dorm. I had heard about a similar dorm on the Estelle Unit and it sounded cool, so I signed up. The first day in the program everyone in the dayroom was talking about the classes we would attend, and I thought, "This is just a housing unit — no classes." Then I found out what was required and I thought to myself, "I don't have time for these peer-led classes." I just didn't want to be around the drugs because I needed to work on me.

After the first class, my mindset was still the same, but as the weeks rolled by, I started to notice a change in my thought process, thinking patterns and attitude. I'm now four months into the program and living with a group of men who at one point were at the same crossroads as me.

Some have found a path to right living and dealing with their addiction, while others are learning to open up and trust others. Many are learning how to keep schedules and set small goals to achieve greater goals. All are learning to overcome.

I finally feel that I'm living an addiction-free life, and my thoughts and actions support that feeling. Thanks to the administration and staff for giving a group of men who want to change, the space and opportunities to do it. I have grown to see a great difference: the choice to live clean and sober.

Thanks to the same administration and staff for giving me the tools to navigate into the Clean and Sober Living Dorm. If you are reading this and find yourself in a similar crossroad, take the chances where they are offered and change your life. Just know that if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten.

**Scott B. Pierce**  
**Polunsky Unit**

## To the reader,

*Thank you for writing and sharing your journey to sobriety. You're not alone with your challenges. Keep up the good work; we applaud your efforts to change your life.*

## To the editor,

Greetings. My name is Shawn Barclay on the Hughes Unit. I was delighted to see Michael Ory's advice on how to save the current e-messages on the tablet and how to refer back to the message we are answering. I, for one, am deeply grateful for his helpful advice.

My memory is woefully inadequate and I used to frequently use the "Draft" feature on our tablets. I was very disappointed when they did away with the feature. Ory's counsel is appreciated. Thank you to the staff at *The ECHO* for printing this information. I hope you will be able to print this in an upcoming issue of the paper, or at the very least, share my gratitude.

**Shawn Barclay**  
**Hughes Unit**

## To the reader,

*We're glad that Mr. Ory's advice was helpful for you. Thank you for writing!*

Meet The ECHO's Newest Member:

## Robert L. Gonzales Transfers to Wynne Unit, Joins ECHO Staff

**N**ew ECHO staff member Robert L. Gonzales credits its education and programming with preparing him to serve with *The ECHO* newspaper.

“Education saved my life,” said new ECHO writer Robert L. Gonzales. “Pursuing a lifelong education while in TDCJ opened infinite positive opportunities I would not have realized otherwise.” He said choosing to invest his time, attention and energy participating in every available avenue of education has taken him to ever-increasing levels of achievement. He also said becoming the newest staff writer for the Wynne Unit *ECHO* team was part of his educational journey.

Gonzales has been involved in substance use/sober living communities, enrolled in many faith-based classes and attended courses from Lee College to earn two associates degrees. Simultaneously, he completed On-the-Job Training certificates and the Graphic Design apprenticeship program offered through the Wynne Unit Sticker Plant.

Gonzales transferred to the Ramsey Unit to earn his bachelor’s degree in Behavioral Science and a master’s degree in Humanities from the University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL). While at Ramsey, he joined Toastmasters Inter-

national Gavel Club (the Warriors of The Light), encouraging him to apply his education.

“Time, place and circumstance play a big part in what happens in our lives; however, seizing every positive opportunity and having a willingness to do the work—that is the zone where self-actualization occurs,” Gonzales said “At times we may not see how all the puzzle pieces fit together; but if you do the work, the big beautiful picture comes together in the end.”

Gonzales graduated from Cohort 16 of TDCJ’s Life Skills program in 2025, trained at the Life Coach Academy and served as a life coach at the Ramsey Unit. After contributing writings to *The ECHO* at the Wynne Unit, he received an invitation to join the publication staff.

“Working for *The ECHO* is a dream job I had once believed unobtainable,” Gonzales said. “I understand this is an awesome opportunity to reach and connect with a broader audience in need of encouragement and a positive example.”

Gonzales said he is prepared to serve TDCJ residents by finding ways to inspire excellence and transform lives. He plans to use his experience in various programs to share success stories found throughout TDCJ. **E**



## HELP SHAPE THE ECHO CONTENT

Do you want to be part of *The ECHO*? There are several ways of getting involved.

1. Showcase your artistic talent! Send in examples of your artwork to be highlighted in the Art Expo issues.
2. Send in a delicious recipe for the Chow Hound section.
3. Need advice or want to give out some? Write advice columnist Dear Darby who is ready and willing to help with questions about relationships, daily concerns, general life and prison etiquette.

### PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE:

Have you learned something in a class that you want to share with the rest of the readers? Are you getting closer to your reentry date and want to leave some parting words of wisdom? Send a copy of your submission to:

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### ATTENTION STAFF:

Do you spend your day repeatedly answering the same question? Is there something you wish the resident population understood better? Are you a facilitator of a graduating program or class? Contact [Bambi.Kiser@wsdtx.org](mailto:Bambi.Kiser@wsdtx.org) and share your idea or information with *The ECHO* readers throughout Texas.





**Dear Darby,**

I am writing to you to request that you publish (in *The ECHO*) something I wrote. Originally, I wrote this statement for my own personal vision, but then realized that more people than just me could benefit from it:

"You are the Master of your own Life and Destiny. Embrace that power. Rejoice in it, and don't ever let anyone take that Power away from you."

**David L. Miller**

**Hughes Unit**

**Dear DM,**

*Sage advice! As they say, you are the captain of your ship, so how will you sail it? Hmmm. On a lighter note and speaking of sales, there's a movie sale goin' on right now, so I have the power to pick my entertainment for the weekend — and embrace it on my tablet. Smooth sailin' to you!*

**Dear Darby,**

My name is Bryndon Lewellen and I am 21 years old. I am currently enrolled in CHANGES and Culinary Arts. I am writing to ask you: how does a person come to cope with "soulness?" I often times hide my soulness with a fake smile in an attempt to blend in. People sometimes think I'm weird or psyched, but I just don't know who to be. I often try to make people come to acknowledge me, but I often impress them by being someone I am not. I do not have anyone besides my mom and even that is hard. It is a lonely feeling. I hope you understand what I am talking about and are able to give me some advice. Thank you!

**Bryndon Lewellen**

**Clements Unit**

**Dear Bryndon,**

*At first, I thought you wrote "sourness" and wrote you a long, sweet answer on being sour. Then my coworker corrected me on the fact that it wasn't a misspelling and you really meant "soulness," which kinda' threw me for a loop. So, I broke out my trusty dictionary. It wasn't in there, so I went and looked in the BIG dictionary in the library — a 10-pound tome of word-defining pleasure — and still didn't find your word. So, were you thinking of "soul-less?" Soulful? Listless? Regardless of what word you intended, the main point that I get from your letter is that you feel rudderless and aren't comfortable being yourself, especially around others. As far as those around you are concerned, just be yourself — either they'll like you, or they won't, but it's OK either way, because you're being authentic. Be comfortable bein' you, and you'll discover that the right people will come into your life. There's nothin' wrong with being alone, but loneliness can also be a tough companion. Consider signing up for more programs, a tournament or other unit activities, and be open to findin' a friend with similar interests. Find the right program; find the right friends. As far as being rudderless, think of what you want to accomplish in a week, month and year and put it on paper — this will give you some direction. As far as ol' Darb's direction, I want to accomplish goin' to commissary this week, get me a pint of Homemade in the Shade and a holiday pecan pie and marry the two in my spread bowl — that's a pretty sweet direction, as far as I'm concerned! It's too bad we can't compete together in a tournament or two or compare snack preferences, but know I'm still pullin' for you. Thank you for writin'!*

**Dear Darby,**

Hello! My name is Jonathan Goodwin on the Ramsey Unit. I have been trying to get on the waiting list for the bachelor's degree program. I have been told there is maybe a form that has been emailed to the student advisor and to just keep checking back with them. My question is this: How does someone get placed on the bachelor's degree waiting list? Thank you very much for your time.

**Jonathan Goodwin**

**Ramsey Unit**

**Dear Jon G,**

*It's a very positive step to be workin' toward involvement with postsecondary education. Congratulations! Meanwhile, know that changes are taking place in how the college entry processes work in TDCJ. A change like this takes time to get up and running. Send an I-60 to the college if they are on your campus. If not, send an I-60 to the Windham student advisor. Good luck on this new pursuit!*

# the echo

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TEXAS PRISON NEWS

## EVERY STORY MATTERS

**WOMEN JOIN PUBLICATION TEAM**

**The ECHO's Newest Members Expand Coverage in Texas**

By Mary (Dee) Roden Staff

**Writing a New Chapter**

**Looking for the Future**

**Welcome to the ECHO**

**This endeavor creates new opportunities for women residents to create content and provide different perspectives, which will allow readers to have a 'ECHO' perspective on the news.**

— B. Dyer, ECHO Assistant Editor

**Pricia Mounalanga**

**M**ounalanga has accomplished numerous achievements as a TDCJ resident. Though Mounalanga is in a number of ways, however, there was no office established on a women's unit to collaborate with the team at the Wynne Unit. This changes with the newest addition to the publication at the Murray campus.

This new chapter in the partnership between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and Windham School District (Windham) allows for an energetic blend of ideas, perspectives and talents.

“This endeavor creates new opportunities for women residents to create content and provide different perspectives, which will allow readers to have a ‘ECHO’ perspective on the news,” said Bular Dyer said. “The staff and I are new in the new ECHO office preparing for upcoming coverage, and we are excited to see what the future holds.”

Pricia Mounalanga, Ashley Moerssen and Kelly Roddy were selected from among several qualified candidates to be the first three women to serve as resident staff members of The ECHO. They are eager to be part of this exciting undertaking while working alongside the team at the Wynne Unit.

“I am grateful for the support of Bular Dyer, managing editor, and the team at the Wynne Unit,” said Mounalanga, the communications team at Windham. “Murray Warden Kamisha Cogar, Murray Principal S. Carries and the Windham staff have been instrumental in the unit by serving as a member of the Lane Murray band, learning to play the drums and overcomes the challenges of being a TDCJ resident.”

She credits the late R. Green, who taught Introduction to Graphic Arts for Windham, for supporting her in her desire to be a graphic designer and believing she could be one of the few chosen to work for The ECHO.

“I wanted this job because it was one of my dreams before I got into the system,” Mounalanga said. “We get to contribute in the same way the Wynne staff members do, and it is revolutionary to be part of an event that is so important to the women on a macro level, starting at this campus. Some people plant the seeds and others water them, but we are lucky to harvest the fruits with the support of TDCJ and Windham. The ECHO | OCTOBER 2025

**PAROLE INFO YOU CAN USE**

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**THE ECHO**

Vol. 97, No. 10

PATRIOT PAWS

**Pawsitively Irresistible Dogs, Residents Change Veterans' Lives**

By Kelly Roddy Staff Writer

**MAL Director Bill Lewis Promotes Opportunities for Residents**

By Todd R. Carman Staff Writer

**MAN ON A MISSION: CVSD Director Chris Carter Uses Experiences To Lead Rehabilitation Efforts**

By Robert Morgan Staff Writer

**“A**sociate with people who are not a part of your past,” is the advice of Bill Lewis, director of Manufacturing, Agriculture and Logistics (MAL) for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Lewis oversees an expansive TDCJ division that encompasses Texas Correctional Industries (TCI), agricultural operations that include livestock and crops, and the management of transportation and storage goods throughout the system. His leadership is deeply rooted in a career with TDCJ that spans more than four decades. “I started in 1984 at the Ferguson Unit,” Lewis said. “I ended up promoted to warden. I was a warden for about 16 years on six or seven different units.”

— LEWIS continued on pg. 10

**INSIDE**

Tribute to a Rock Icon

A list of the legendary Ozzy Osbourne's more notable accomplishments

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**ART EXPO**

Get creative inspired with more resident masterpieces from around the state.

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**SPORTS VIEW**

Honoring two athletes who served our country — Rocky Bleier and Ted Williams

**PAGE 12**

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AND THE FYI APP ON TDCJ TABLETS



# My Journey at MI City Radio

By Brandon Dale  
Woodruff  
| Michael Unit

I was blessed with an opportunity I never imagined would come my way.

After volunteering in the Michael Unit's Chapel of Hope for 10 months, I was selected for a job assignment as a radio station operator at the same facility. When asked if I wanted the job, I didn't hesitate for even a second. I knew this was something special I could pour myself into and something that could be even bigger than myself.

Not long after I was hired, my coworkers Jason and Tony sat down with me and we brainstormed what we wanted the identity of our station to be. We knew that if we were going to make an impact, we needed something strong — something that spoke to who we were and what we believed. After throwing around a lot of ideas, we landed on the statement: "Free on the Inside."

Those four words captured everything. They weren't just about us — they represented "MI City." That's right, here at the Michael Unit, we call it MI City. So, at MI City Radio, we believe we are all a family. We're united by faith, hope and the deep desire to cultivate the freedom inside each of us. "Free on the Inside" means so many things to us. It means freedom in Christ. It means freedom in music. It means freedom in thought.

It means freedom to face challenges head on. Not running away from them, but tackling them with our whole hearts. Most importantly, it means freedom to love ourselves, our brothers, our families and above all, God.

### Season for Growth

My first two months at MI City Radio were nothing short of transformative. It was a season of growth. I was learning so much every single day — not just about radio and technology, but about myself, about leadership and about what it means to serve. I was thankful beyond words for the opportunity.

It was also during those first two months that Jason, Tony and I started dreaming about what the station could become. We realized that while we had amazing equipment — generously donated by Gateway Church — the space itself did not reflect the vision we were trying to build. We wanted the station to be more than just a room with microphones and computers. We wanted it to be a place of creativity, a place of excellence and a place that inspired people the moment they walked in. So, we started planning a remodel.



**Brandon Dale  
Woodruff**



**Tony  
Martinez**



**Jason  
Hall**

“At MI City Radio, we believe we are all a family. We’re united by faith, hope and the deep desire to cultivate the freedom inside each of us. ‘Free on the Inside’ means so many things to us. It means freedom in Christ.

It amazes me how much can be accomplished when you combine positive thinking, persistence and a willingness to ask for help. We reached out to multiple people and eventually two companies responded back with their desire and heart to donate all the materials, supplies and furniture. For the next month, I poured myself into organizing, planning and designing the remodel. At the same time, I was still doing my share of recording podcasts, covering unit events and learning everyday about the positive influence media can have.

When the time came, we shut down the station for two weeks and got to work. We scrubbed the walls clean and applied primer and paint, and for the first time in 18 years, I walked on carpet. I cannot explain how powerful that was. Something as simple as carpet became a symbol of dignity and hope — not just for me, but for so many men. It was the number one thing people commented on after the remodel. We put together furniture, arranged everything with care and even built a bookcase. The finishing touch? A fish tank. Yep, you read that correctly — we got a fish tank with fish and our guests love it. The fish remind us that life, growth and movement are possible even in unlikely places. When it was all finished, I looked around at what we had created, and I couldn't help but think: "This room is a reflection of what has been happening inside of me."

### Personal Remodel

As we remodeled the station, I realized that God had also been remodeling me the past few years. Each element of the radio station's remodel process carried a lesson that mirrored my own journey.

“

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how much can be  
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ask for help.**



When we closed down the station to renovate, it mirrored how I had to close down my old way of thinking — shutting the door on negative influences and opening my mind to change. When we scrubbed the walls, it mirrored me having to scrub myself of negative habits and any destructive behaviors. The carpet became a symbol of my faith — a firm foundation. It's put together strong, yet even if I fall, I know I can and will get back up. The furniture represented my community — the brothers I work with. Strong people around you matter. If those around you drag you down, you have to make a change. It is extremely important. My coworkers Jason and Tony have poured into me and supported me like true family. The fish tank? That is a reminder to keep moving, keep breathing and to keep growing no matter what environment I'm in. I have a mission — to help change the culture, to bring hope where there is despair and to be a light where there is darkness.



Working at MI City Radio has given me opportunities I never imagined possible. I've been able to speak with some really amazing individuals and I've seen firsthand how words and music can touch hearts. With every podcast, every event we cover and every guest who walks into the radio station, we're planting seeds of hope. The more I reflect on it, the more I see God's hand at work. He's not just changing a radio station; He is changing lives. He continues to change my life.

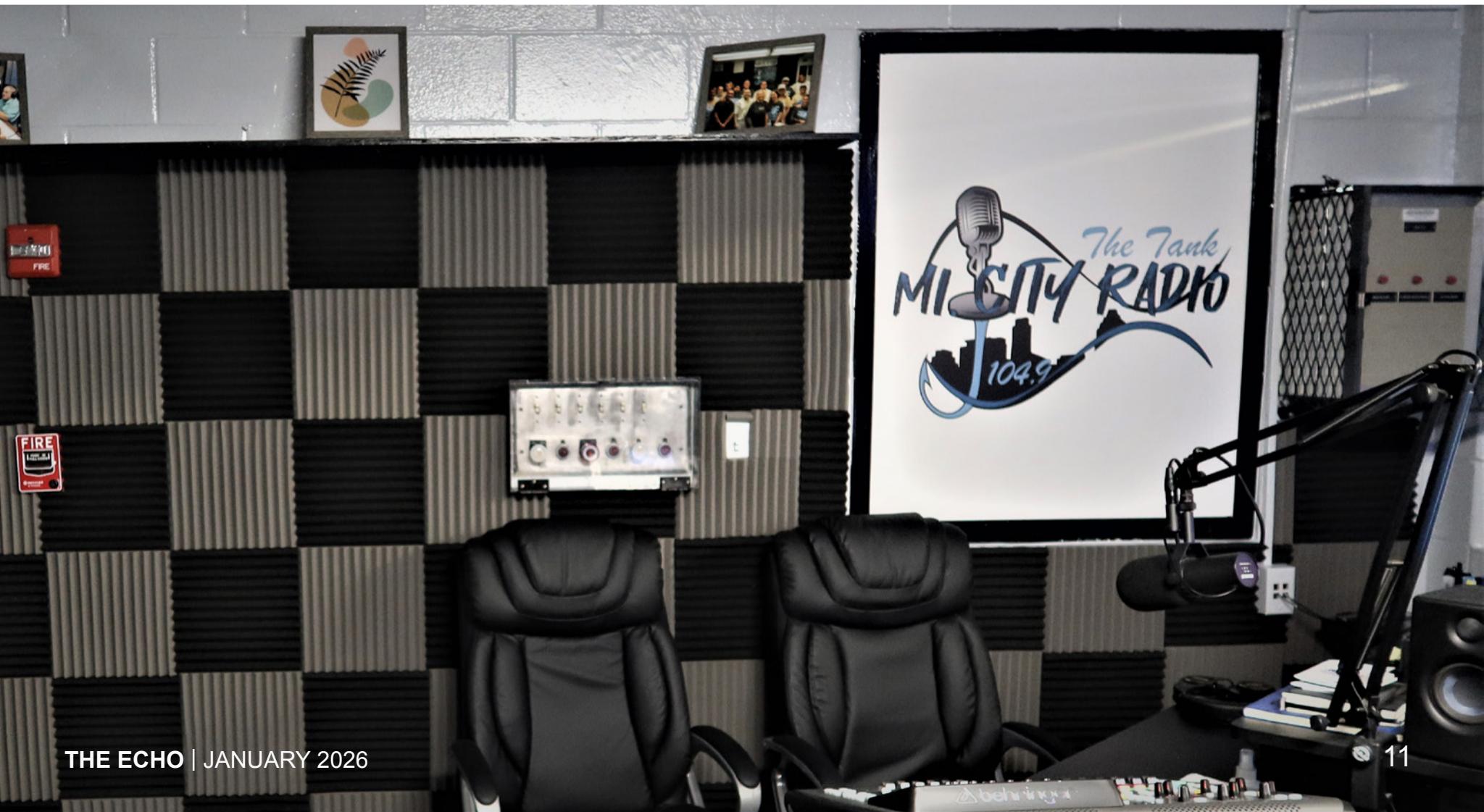
### Changing Perspectives

One of the biggest lessons I've learned through this experience is to never get stuck in a box. When you allow yourself to think big, to be bold and to pursue

positive change with all your heart, incredible things can happen. At MI City Radio, we are not just producing content; we are changing perspectives. We are showing brothers that freedom is possible: freedom in Christ, freedom in thought and freedom in love. We remind everyone that the journey is not over. In fact, I feel like it is just beginning. Every day at MI City Radio is another chance to grow, to serve and to inspire. My prayer is that this station continues to be a source of hope — not only for those here in MI City, but for anyone who hears our message. We are FREE ON THE INSIDE — and that is something no one can take away. **€**

“

**Every day at MI City Radio is another chance to grow, to serve and to inspire. My prayer is that this station continues to be a source of hope — not only for those here in MI City, but for anyone who hears our message.**





# STRENGTH BETWEEN MOTHER, DAUGHTER PERSEVERES

By Ashley Morrison  
Staff Writer

I'm going to be honest: I asked my mom for advice. That may not seem important, but I didn't have the best relationship with her growing up. I wanted her advice on what to write and in talking to her I realized it was right in front of me – the growth of our relationship as mother and daughter.

As children, even as we become adults, I think it's safe to say we put our parents on a pedestal. Without going into detail, I'll say my mom didn't meet those standards most of the time. It took time and space to forgive her and heal. Part of that growth involved seeing my mom as a woman and not just as my mom.



“BEFORE I HAD HEALED, I HATED BEING COMPARED TO MY MOM, BUT NOW I’M HONORED. SHE’S NOT PERFECT, BUT WHO IS?”



In my mind, a mom didn’t make mistakes, but that’s so far from the truth. I have to see her as the woman she is outside of my mother and learn that true love is seeing someone’s flaws and loving all of them. During our conversation, I learned more about her. I asked her, “What have you gone through and overcome as a woman?”

“Always being underestimated,” she answered. “Feeling like a doormat to others. Always giving and never quite getting enough back. I’m still struggling, but the struggle has turned into strength, so when it happens again, I know I’m strong enough to stop, realize and overcome.”

When I see my mom as a woman and not just my mother, it’s inspiring because she has faced a lot of obstacles, yet she’s stronger than them. I see her in me.

Before I had healed, I hated being compared to my mom. Now I’m honored. She’s not perfect, but who is? I have a lot of her attitude. She has a great

capacity to love and an even greater ability to discern someone’s authenticity. She is strong and resilient. In her mistakes, she has shown me how to be better and, in her success, she has shown me the path to greatness.

She also advised me to write about the strength of a woman in all areas, and to consider how we differ from men in certain experiences. She encouraged me to write about what we go through and overcome. She told me not to be afraid of sharing my own stories and heart. She showed me without using words that I have a story worthy of being told, and she believed in me.

Looking back on where our relationship used to be compared to where it is now, I am so grateful she and I never gave up on each other. We both needed time and space to forgive and heal. My mom is still on a pedestal, and it’s because of who she is, not who I thought I wanted her to be. **€**



# A Stream of Forgiveness

By Jon-Casey Rowell  
*Michael Unit*

**T**rickle, trickle.

Michael stood in the clear, cool stream with swift flowing water, stones worn smooth by time and majestic trout the color of the sky at sunset.

Michael stood amongst it all on a Saturday casting a fly rod. His son Charlie up ahead of him — 10 years old, freckled face with unkept hair. This was their first fishing trip together. Michael hadn't been fishing since it happened.

Charlie had started watching fishing shows on the Outdoor Channel and reading Field & Stream magazines. The fishing bug had bit him when he came across an old photo of his father Michael fishing as a boy, and he begged him to teach him how to fly fish. Finally, the boy had worn Michael down to a yes.

Michael looked up to the bank overgrown with mountain laurel and hardwoods. He saw an old man standing there with a smile on his face as he watched the father and son. He waved, and Michael nodded in return. He wondered how long the old man had been there and how long he would stay. The old man wore suspenders over a faded flannel shirt and stained work pants. A Panama Jack hat was cocked back on his head. He had a bamboo fly rod, but made no move to join the fishing duo.

The gurgle of water and the rustle of autumn leaves in a breeze was joined with shouts of excitement from Charlie:

“Dad! Dad! I got one!”

Michael reeled in his line and made his way to his son. He glanced at the river bank and saw the old man walking in step with him, seemingly unobstructed by the vines and branches of the mountain stream. The soft October sun reflected off the stream and lit up the old man in a warm glow.

“Dad, I almost got him in!”

Charlie's rod doubled with a fighting trout. The line was taut with electric energy, beads of water on the line reflecting rays of sunlight. Michael held the net in the water as Charlie worked a small, tired brook trout into the net. Charlie knelt beside his dad with a smile. Michael cradled the fish in his hand while showing Charlie how to remove the hook. Gentle. Instructive. A father teaching a son.

“Respect and take care of the trout, and they'll give you a lifetime of beauty and wildness,” Michael said while letting the trout regain its strength. It was sucking cool mountain water through its gills, refreshing and healing. With a jolt of the tail fin, the trout launched into the current, searching for a deep hole to hide in.

“Dad, I can't believe I caught one! That was awesome!”

Charlie bounced with energy, and Michael gave his son a high five, wrapping him in a hug.

Michael saw the old man clapping his hands and laughing — the sound of it like wind in the trees. Charlie didn't notice him.

The air smelled of acorns, rotting leaves and fresh, moving water. The smell of fall in the mountains. The smell of change. The march of the seasons.

Michael watched his son cast the line in rhythm. Back, forward, back, forward. Charlie paused in his casting.

“Dad, is this where it happened?”

“Where what happened?”

“The accident. Was it this stream?”

Michael looked at his son. He was the spitting image of him at that age. He drew in a deep breath and looked up at the looming mountains. The blue haze lingering against the peaks like the memories of his heart.

“Yeah, it was here on this stream.”

“How old were you?”

“Not much older than you are now.”

Charlie whipped the line back and forth. Back and forth. He stopped, turned and faced his dad.

“Is that why you’ve never taken me fishing?” The question sitting heavy in the air like the smell of wood smoke from a chimney. Michael saw the old man watching them. The old man took out a pocket watch, wound it and tapped its glass face. His expectant gaze settled on Michael and Charlie. Michael knew it was time.

“Yes, I guess it is.” Michael said, hanging his head. The sound of water on the move was incessant. When Michael spoke again, he spoke not to his son, but to the mountains surrounding them.

“Your grandfather brought me here all the time. The day it happened we had been fighting.”

“What about?”

“It was the 60s and we had differing views of how I should live my life. I said some really hurtful things. He left and came here. He always said nothing clears the mind like a mountain stream.”

A trout leapt downstream landing with a thwack. Ripples spreading out. Charlie stood there listening to his dad, the water gushing past, creating small eddies. His grip tightened on

the callus cork handle of his fly rod — his grandfather’s fly rod.

“He never came home,” Michael said in a hoarse whisper. “They found him downstream, almost to the French Broad River. Said he slipped. Banged his head. Drowned.”

Tears welled up in his eyes. They spilled over their banks and rolled down Michael’s cheek, catching sunlight as they fell into the stream. The stream would flow into a river. A river full of rapids, boulders, the turbulent water rushing at gravity’s beckoning. Later the river would turn wide and slow. Muddy water churning with certainty, the home of giant catfish and alligators.

Those tears, now dissolved in the water with everything else, will finally be dumped into the Atlantic Ocean. Waves slapping against packed sand, blue water and untold amounts of fish in its depths. The final resting place of the tears.

“I never got to tell him I was sorry. That I loved him,” Michael finally said, watching the old man.

The old man touched a finger to his heart, a smile of compassion on his face. Forgiveness shining in his eyes.

“What are you looking at, Dad?” Charlie asked.

“Nothing. Just remembering.”

Charlie tilted his head not understanding.

“Do you think he would come fishing with us if he was here?” Michael grinned.

“I know he would. Matter of fact, I think he is always with us.”

“What was he like?”

The old man tipped his hat to Michael, turned and headed up the trail. Up into the mountains.

“Well, he carried a fly rod everywhere he went. Had a laugh like the wind in the trees. He would have loved you to death.”

The old man faded from sight in the thick mountain rhododendron, becoming one with the ancient hills as many before him had done. From the Cherokee to the Scotch-Irish, to a father and son fishing, the hazy mountains preserved all in time, and time trickled down around the eroded mountain peaks and settled in its valleys. Washing the present to the future. The past nothing but an ocean of memory. €



# DIVINELY CALLED

FIRST  
WOMEN  
FIELD  
MINISTERS  
GRADUATE

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By Kelly Roddy  
Staff Writer



## The Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry celebrated

Twenty graduates in the first ever women's cohort of field ministers at the Hobby Unit on Dec. 10, 2025. Several distinguished guests from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), college faculty members, friends and family showed their support in the commissioning of Texas' newest field ministers.

"This is a historical day," said Sydney Zuiker from the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. "You are the first ever to walk this stage and carry the title of female field ministers."

Each graduate earned a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Ministry, completing 45 hours of general education core courses, 45 hours of biblical and theological studies and 36 hours of applied ministry.

"These women have become scholars in Biblical interpretation, doctrinal literacy and applied ministry," said Dr. Brenna Norwood, provost and director of the Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry. The men began their seminary studies in 2011 at the Memorial Unit, with the first field ministers graduating in 2015. The women's graduating class will now join the over 122 male field ministers who are deployed throughout Texas.

As part of their training, the students worked in the field at the Hobby Unit by leading Bible studies in the housing areas, tutoring students and teaching reading skills.



Seminary graduates enjoy commencement ceremony.



“YOUR  
PAST NO  
LONGER HAS  
PERMISSION  
TO SPEAK  
INTO YOUR  
FUTURE.”

- Chris Carter  
CVSD DIRECTOR

“You have been divinely called to this work,” Zuiker said. “You’ve walked through fire and learned to carry water; you’ve walked through shame and learned to carry grace, and you’ve walked through breaking and learned to carry others through their rebuilding.”

TDCJ Director of Chaplaincy and Volunteer Services Christopher Carter also encouraged the graduates to take advantage of second chances for success.

“Your past no longer has permission to speak into your future,” he said. A quote attributed to early Pentecostal evangelist Smith Wigglesworth was echoed throughout the ceremony: “God doesn’t call the equipped, He equips the called.” This belief was shared by many of the guest speakers.





“What you do is impactful,” said TDCJ Chief Programs Officer Jason Clark. “A conversation in a day room, a prayer whispered in the hallway, a moment of comfort during someone’s darkest hour, a scripture at just the right time — that’s ministry. That’s how change begins.”

The graduates will be stepping into their new calling as field ministers and deployed to units across the state. Through their own transformations, they can offer guidance, encouragement and strength to those who feel lost and forgotten.

“You’re about to step into places where people feel forgotten, unseen and without hope. You’re going to remind them that God’s love reaches them, even there, because you’ve seen and experienced it,” Zuiker said. “Your stories will become someone else’s turning point.

“You are pioneers,” Zuiker said. “You are history makers, and you are proof that redemption is alive and well in the State of Texas.” **€**



Pastor Nate Sprinkle,  
Texas Board of  
Criminal Justice



Sydney Zuiker,  
Texas Board of  
Criminal Justice

# One Man's Treasure



One Man's Treasure  
Provides Clothing,  
Services For Men  
Returning to  
DFW Metroplex,  
Tyler Area

# One Man's Treasure (OMT) is a reentry resource based out of the

Dallas-Fort Worth area. Its primary service is offering men's clothing for men leaving incarceration and reentering society in the DFW metroplex and Tyler area.

The organization provides clothing for approximately 3,000 men per year that includes several shirts, two pairs of pants, a tie, one pair of shoes, new socks, underwear and t-shirts — and there is no cost for these clothing items. OMT has built up a network of corporate partnerships that enable them to provide a mixture of clothing that includes brand new items. Once a man is released from a state prison and contacts OMT, these items are delivered to him by a male volunteer, known as a "shepherd."

The support does not stop at clothing. OMT has also formed partnerships

to meet critical needs such as health and dental care, as well as partnerships with people who provide employment, work with housing or work with food needs.

Clients can be referred to other organizations which provide classes teaching them how to interview for a job or help them with job and resource searches, such as Miles of Freedom, The Way Back and Unlocking Doors.

Residents may write OMT for an application at 519 I-30 E, PMB 211, Rockwall, TX 75087 or check with a chaplain or reentry caseworker for an application. Once a person knows their reentry date and where they are going to be living (Dallas-Fort Worth, Tyler areas), they can send the application. The only information an applicant needs is their name, TDCJ number and name of the city within OMT's service area to which they will be returning.

The application includes a toll-free number (888-433-9826) that residents MUST call upon reentry. When in the community, clients are interviewed over the phone as part of the entry program developed to determine clothing sizes, favorite colors, and place of residence. Clothing will usually be delivered to the client by a "shepherd" within a week after contacting OMT.



A "shepherd" delivers clothing to men beginning the reentry process.

Started 20 years ago in Rockwall, Texas, OMT is a faith-based organization that does not require any faith affiliation to provide services.





A volunteer selects wardrobes for individuals rejoining the community.

Started 20 years ago in Rockwall, Texas, OMT is a faith-based organization that does not require any faith affiliation to provide services. The volunteers that do the work come from other organizations and places of worship or are just people who want to help. Funding to carry out the work comes from individuals, places of worship and groups that believe in helping men start a new life in the community. There are about 100 volunteers that do much of the work, helping OMT's dedicated part-time staff members.

Size patterns vary among manufacturers and between manufacturers and TDCJ; therefore, clients should be ready to describe sizes or tell the interviewer if they are unsure of their current size before contacting OMT for clothing needs. In addition to the size of clothing you wear, OMT also requests measurements for a client's inseam, which is measured from the top of the inner thigh all the way down; for their sleeve, which is measured from the shoulder where it connects to the neck all the way to the wrist; as well as for their neck size, which is measured from the top of the Adam's apple all the way around the neck.

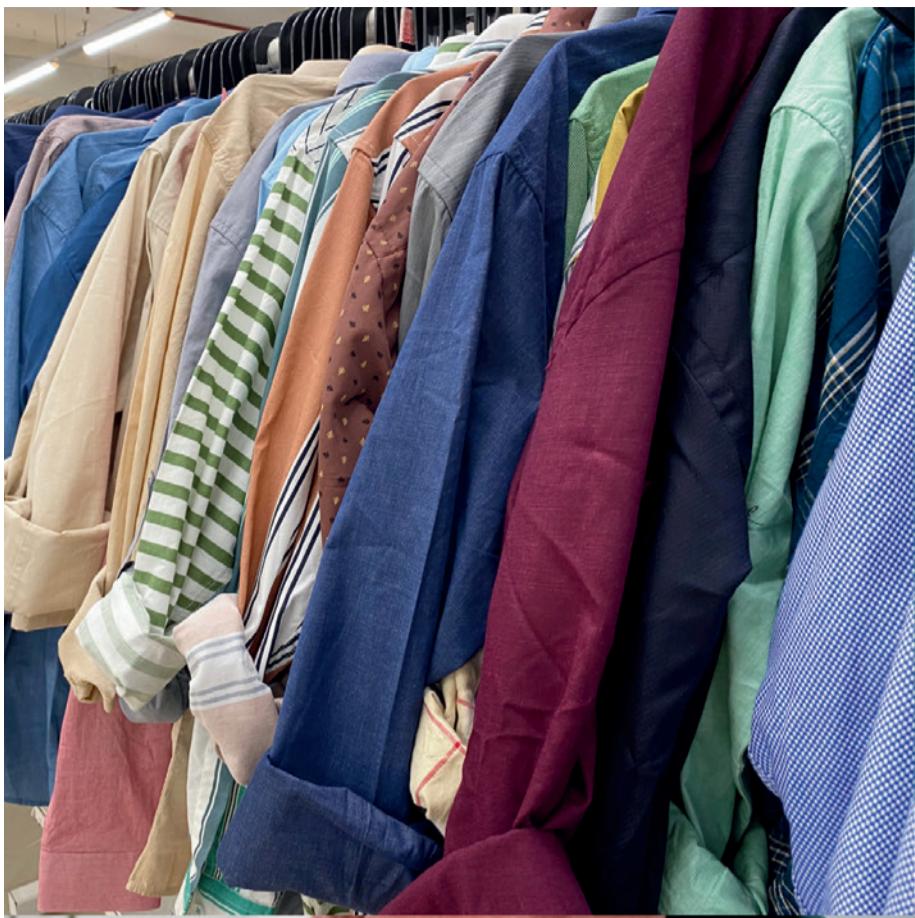
OMT feels that providing clothing to clients can also boost their confidence during the transition period between living in incarceration and moving back into their community. Therefore, representatives of OMT said clothing isn't just provided for day-to-day wear. If requested, OMT will make every effort to provide a suit for occasions requiring more formal attire.

Beyond receiving clothing and services that boost their reentry experience, some recipients of OMT support become shepherds themselves or serve in other volunteer roles. The cycle of new beginnings and hope was communicated earlier in 2025 in OMT social media posts, announcing that the organization had helped transform the lives of more than 19,500 former residents of TDCJ by providing for essential needs. An OMT representative said that number was likely closer to 26,000 by the end of 2025.

OMT's efforts as a support for successful reentry are recognized by TDCJ, according to Rehabilitation and Reentry Division Director April Zamora.

"Reentry outcomes are strongest when institutional efforts are complemented by community-based support," Zamora said. "Organizations like One Man's Treasure help bridge that gap by meeting practical needs during a critical transition period." **E**

Beyond receiving clothing and services that boost their reentry experience, some recipients of OMT support become shepherds themselves or serve in other volunteer roles.



**To apply ask your TDCJ reentry case manager, chaplain or call 1-888-433-9826 for an application.**

*We serve Dallas, Collin, Rockwall, Denton, Hunt, Kaufman, Navarro, Ellis, Van Zandt, Bowie, Henderson, Wood, Smith, Fort Worth, Gregg, and Tarrant counties.*

*Please call for specific cities. This list can change depending on volunteer availability.*

**Are you a resident returning to the community and looking for men's clothing that you'll feel good in?**

**We've got you!**

We curate a set of clothes just for you, with your style and needs in mind.

**Clothing is FREE and will be delivered to you** after your call or application is received. Beyond clothing we will connect you to more resources to help you prosper!

*(A clothing set = short + long-sleeve shirts, pants, jeans, shoes, jacket + tie, and new underwear + socks)*



**One Man's Treasure**  
*Clothing that makes a difference*





Music is Joy:

## Murray Musicians Complete Beginner Band Training

By Pricila Maumalanga  
Staff Writer

### Under the direction of Chaplain Y. Rohlfing,

over a dozen members of the first Beginner Band cohort received certificates of completion after 20 weeks at the Murray Unit Chapel of Hope.

Certified Volunteer Chaplain's Assistant (CVCA) S. Rohlfing, who has been involved with music for over 60 years, taught and led these residents to this accomplishment. They ended the class by playing together for an open call worship service.

"This is the first Beginner Band class I've taught," Rohlfing said. "They're so appreciative, and they just really enjoy what they're doing."

The Beginner Band, known as "The Beebees," includes one drummer, three guitarists, four bassists, four keyboardists, one trumpeter and two teacher's aides. Providing a sense of joy and togetherness, the class has become a form of therapy for many.



"Music is joy. Music is peace, and we enjoy the fact that we have this opportunity to come together and play and do something we love."

- Lakeishia Lavine,  
trumpeter

# “Music heals me spiritually and mentally. It removes depression and wipes away stress.”

- Rosalind Hill,  
keyboardist



“Music is joy,” trumpeter Lakeishia Lavine said. “Music is peace, and we enjoy the fact that we have this opportunity to come together and play and do something we love.”

According to Harvard Health (July 25, 2022), studies show music therapy, listening to music and singing can improve quality of life by improving mental and physical health.

“Music heals me spiritually and mentally,” said Rosalind Hill, keyboardist. “It removes depression and wipes away stress.”

Learning and actively making music also helps to engage the entire brain. It creates potential for expression, pain reduction, distraction, cognition and fine and gross motor development, according to Harvard Health. “Now, some people progress a lot faster than others, and some people just struggle to progress,” Rohlfing said. “My thought is to just keep them in there and keep them going.”

Music challenges people to think in different ways, helping them deal with stress in a healthy manner.

“I think the class is an excellent way to remove the frustrations of prison, and the difficult hurdles that we come against every day,” said Nicole Selectman, drummer.

The class has also contributed to the women residents building strong bonds with one another, giving them the self-confidence to step out of their comfort zones.

“Over the few weeks we have been together, I have seen them grow,” said Christine Dodson, teacher’s aide. “Their confidence has grown as they have learned new chords and songs. The band members have been instruments to each other.”

With hopes of potentially having an Intermediate Band class in the future, these residents are excited to continue with music being the center of their healing process.

“Chaplain Y. Rohlfing and CVCA S. Rohlfing have brought such a unique ministry to TDCJ (Texas Department of Criminal Justice),” Dodson said. “Music has such power to heal and restore a person’s soul.” **€**



# 2025 ECHO-LADES

BY  
**WILL HILL**  
STAFF WRITER



## 2025 ECHO-LADES

**T**op Golfer Award: **Scottie Scheffler**  
The world's number one ranked golfer, Scottie Scheffler, once again proved why he is the best golfer in the world in 2025 as he picked up his fourth consecutive Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour Player of the Year award. Scheffler joins Tiger Woods as the only golfers to win the award four years in a row; however, Woods actually won it five years in a row. Scheffler earned his honors by winning six times on the PGA Tour, including two majors: the PGA Championship and the British Open. The win in the British Open means Scheffler needs only one victory in the United States Open to become only the seventh golfer in the history of the PGA to collect the career grand slam. This involves having at least one victory in each of the four majors.



### Cry Baby Award: The University of Notre Dame

Hey, Notre Dame football, there was a time, a very long time ago, when college football needed your star power, but that is not the case now. You need to change your team nickname from the "Fighting Irish" to the "Crying

Irish." After the College Football Playoff (CFP) selection committee bypassed you for the team that beat you head-to-head, you threw a temper tantrum that would make any five-year-old proud.

The powers that be in Notre Dame decided that they will make the selection committee rue their decision to exclude them by opting out of playing in the Pop-Tarts Bowl in Orlando. But guess what, Notre Dame? The games will go on, a national champion will be determined on the field and you can say, "Next year is our year!" for the 37th consecutive time since you won your last national championship.

### Clueless Award:

My comments above were more about Notre Dame's reaction to being left out of the playoffs than about the committee's decision.



Now I want to talk about the CFP selection committee decisions. How can anyone on that committee actually show their face in public and say that they put the 12 best teams in the playoffs? They can't. Texas beat the Oklahoma Sooners and the Texas A&M Aggies, both of whom are in the playoffs and were ranked in the top 10 at the time they played.

The committee's answer was that the Longhorns' loss to the inferior Florida Gators was why they did not belong in the playoffs. Okay, but then, by that logic, neither the Sooners nor the Aggies deserve to be in because they both lost to the "inferior" Longhorns. Come on CFP, keep it real.

Don't even get me started on the fact that the Alabama Crimson Tide, like the Longhorns, is a three-loss team and also has a "bad" loss to the Florida State Seminoles — who couldn't even win the weak Atlantic Coast Conference.

This season's college playoff bracket is a joke with the five-loss Duke Blue Devils, James Madison Dukes and the Tulane Green Waves among the 12 participants.

#### **Texas Two Step Award: Patrick Mahomes and Jalen Hurts**

Super Bowl LIX featured two starting quarterbacks from the Lone Star State: the Kansas City Chiefs' Patrick Mahomes from Whitehouse, and the Philadelphia Eagles' Jalen Hurts from Channelview near Houston are carrying the banner of quarterbacks from Texas.



In addition to Mahomes and Hurts, other National Football League starting quarterbacks with ties to Texas include Baker Mayfield in Tampa Bay, Kyler Murray in Arizona and Matthew Stafford in Los Angeles. With the exception of Mayfield and Murray, all the others have led their teams to a championship. Quinn Ewers was named starting quarterback for the Miami Dolphins after Tua Tagovailoa was benched.

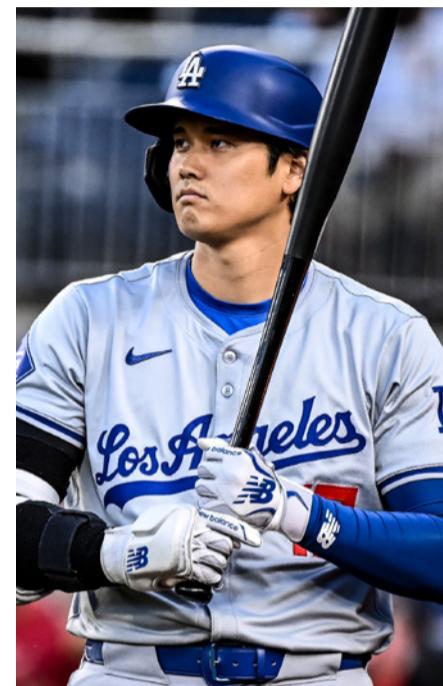
#### **A Melancholy Happy Trails: Tom Hicks, owner of the Texas Rangers**

The Texas businessman and former owner of the Major League Baseball's (MLB) Texas Rangers and the National Hockey League's (NHL) Dallas Stars, died on Dec. 7, 2025. In 1995, Hicks purchased the Stars and helped the team bring

an NHL Stanley Cup to Dallas in 1999. Three years after purchasing the Stars, Hicks bought the Rangers. He also signed free-agent shortstop, Alex Rodriguez, to a then record 10-year, \$252-million contract in 2000. The team reached its first World Series in 2010 under Hicks' ownership.

#### **Spikers Paradise Award: Texas A&M Aggies Women's Volleyball Team**

The Aggies served, dug, set and spiked their way through a gauntlet of worthy challengers to win the 2025 National Collegiate Athletic Association's Women's Volleyball National Championship. The Aggies dispatched the Wisconsin Badgers in three straight sets to win the championship. Gig 'em, Aggies!



#### **The Most Expensive Championship Award: Los Angeles Dodgers**

The Los Angeles Dodgers are Major League Baseball's (MLB) two-time defending champions. The victories come with a

**“THE WORLD'S NUMBER  
ONE RANKED GOLFER.  
SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER.  
ONCE AGAIN PROVED  
WHY HE IS THE  
BEST GOLFER IN THE  
WORLD IN 2025 AS  
HE PICKED UP HIS  
FOURTH CONSECUTIVE  
PROFESSIONAL GOLF  
ASSOCIATION (PGA) TOUR  
PLAYER OF THE YEAR  
AWARD.”**



high price tag in the luxury tax. MLB is unique among the four major sports leagues in that it does not have a salary cap. Instead, it has a luxury tax where teams with payrolls that exceed a certain predetermined threshold each season must pay a tax. This money is used for revenue sharing for small market teams. For the 2025 season alone, the Dodgers paid a record \$169.4 million in taxes, which set a record for a single season. Their two-year total of \$272.9 million is also a record.

High payrolls are no guarantee of postseason success. The New York Mets, Houston Astros and Texas Rangers all paid luxury taxes, but all three teams also missed the playoffs in 2025.

### **The Taylor Swift Curse: Kansas City Chiefs**

Can it be only coincidence that as soon as Swift began dating Kansas City Chiefs' tight end Travis Kelce the team's performance began slipping? Yes, I know the Chiefs won the Super Bowl their first year, but remember they said they were only friends for most of that year. The following season, the Chiefs were blown out in the Super Bowl against the Philadelphia Eagles. The descent finally reached its depth when the Chiefs were eliminated from playoff contention in week 14 of the regular season.

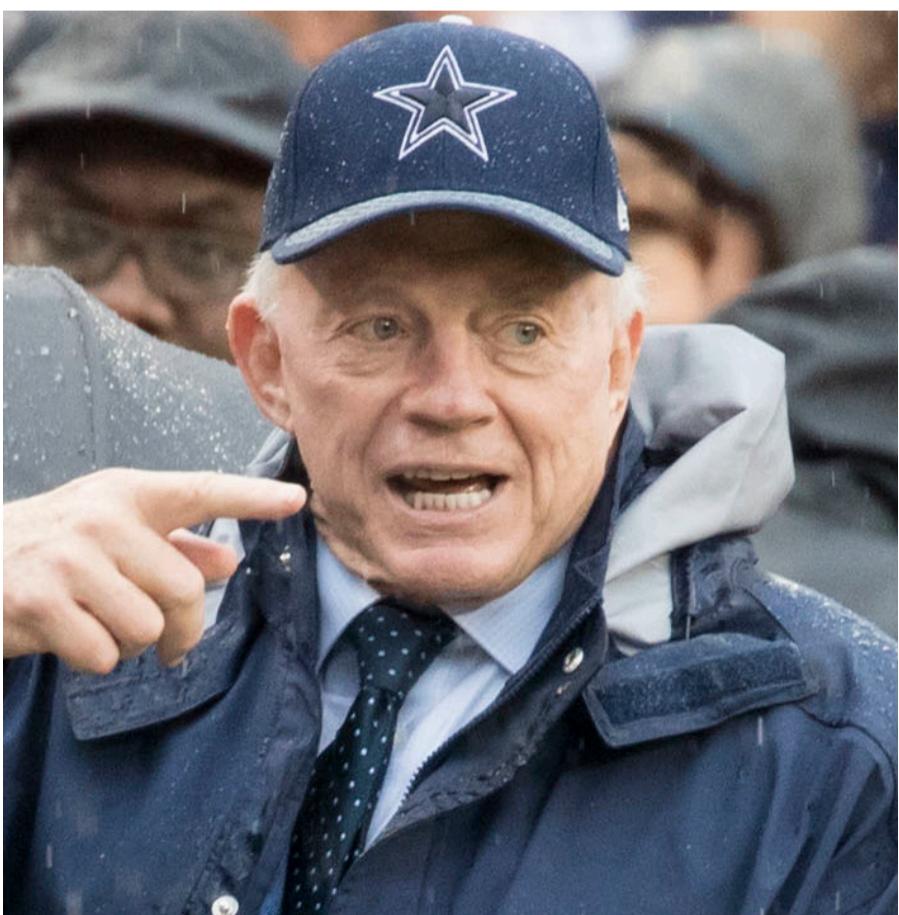
To add injury to insult, the Chiefs lost their quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, for the rest of the season and probably a good portion of the 2026 season. Maybe the two things don't have anything to do with each other, but when something looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, there is a real good chance it is a duck.

### **Bonehead of the Year Award: Jerry Jones, Dallas Cowboys' owner and general manager**

I am tempted to name Jones the winner of this award in perpetuity for his inane trade of a future hall of famer Micah Parsons to the Green Bay Packers for a pittance. I wrote an

**“CAN IT BE ONLY COINCIDENCE THAT AS SOON AS SWIFT BEGAN DATING KANSAS CITY CHIEFS’ TIGHT END TRAVIS KELCE THE TEAM’S PERFORMANCE BEGAN SLIPPING? YES, I KNOW THE CHIEFS WON THE SUPER BOWL THEIR FIRST YEAR, BUT REMEMBER THEY SAID THEY WERE ONLY FRIENDS FOR MOST OF THAT YEAR.”**

open letter to Jones that appeared in a previous issue of *The ECHO*, but I don't want to keep rehashing it here. Instead, I'll just say that over the holidays I hope Santa brought Jones a nice big chunk of coal for Christmas. €



**HOUND**

# Eat Up!

***Editor's Note:** The following are some of The ECHO staff's favorite featured recipe submissions over the years, covering many creative culinary delights! Have a favorite recipe you want us to reprint or a new creation you want to share? Write the Chow Hound and let him know! Write to: The ECHO, c/o "The Chow Hound," WSD Admin. Bldg., P.O. Box 40, Huntsville, TX 77342-0040.*



## Sublime Summer Sausage Tacos

### Ingredients:

2 summer sausages, diced  
2 jalapeños, diced  
1 can V8 juice  
1/2 can water  
1 large squirt ketchup  
2-3 heaping spoonfuls no-salt seasoning  
2 heaping spoonfuls onion powder  
1-2 spoonfuls garlic powder  
1 spoonful black pepper  
3-5 spoonfuls diced pickle  
3-4 spoonfuls pickle juice  
1 pk. chili soup seasoning  
1 pk. vegetable soup seasoning  
1/2 bag pork skins, crushed (optional)  
1/4 bag instant chili beans (optional)  
3 soups, crushed  
1/2 bag Shabang or jalapeño chips, crushed (optional)  
2 pks. ranch dressing (optional)  
Hot sauce, to taste (optional)  
10-12 tortillas

### Directions:

Combine first 14 ingredients in a bowl, mix thoroughly and divide into two cooking bags. Cook in two hotpots for 30-45 minutes. Place crushed soups and instant chili beans in an empty bowl. Add heated summer sausage mixture, stir well, place back in two cooking bags and cook for an additional 20-30 minutes. While this taco filling mixture is heating, preheat tortillas. When the taco filling mixture is cooked, place in a bowl and stir; add a little more hot water if needed, but mixture should be somewhat dry. Take a heated tortilla and add a few spoonfuls of filling, some crushed chips and a drizzle of ranch dressing and hot sauce. Repeat until all the filling and tortillas are used up. Enjoy!

### Tortilla heating tip:

Take a really hot hotpot, fill 1/2 way with water and plug it in. When the water is steaming, place a tortilla across the top (take the lid off). When the steam makes the tortilla puff up a little, flip the tortilla; remove when tortilla puffs up again.

Set heated tortilla in an empty bowl and replace with another tortilla. Repeat until all the tortillas are heated; cover the bowl of heated tortillas and set the bowl back on top of steaming hotpot to keep tortillas warm until ready to use.

## Rhino Hot Sauce

### Ingredients:

1 pickle, diced, juice reserved  
15 jalapeños, diced  
1 bottle picante sauce  
1 bottle ketchup  
5 bottles hot sauce  
1 lemon/lime sports drink

### Directions:

Place diced pickle and peppers in an empty pickle bag, cook in hot pot for two hours. Pour pickle juice and picante sauce in an empty chip bag and cook 20 minutes. Place cooked pickle/pepper mix in an empty white bowl and crush well with the bottom of a hot pot insert or cup. In a

separate empty white bowl, pour ketchup and two hot sauces and stir. Place remaining three bottles of hot sauce in the empty ketchup bottle and shake to mix with any residual ketchup and pour on top of crushed pickle/pepper mix. Add sports drink to both bowls and mix all ingredients back and forth between both bowls. Enjoy!

***Yum!***

## No Bake Chocolate Cookies

### Ingredients:

36 packets sweetener  
4 spoonfuls butter  
1/3 cup hot chocolate mix  
1/2 cup dry milk  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
2 1/2 to 3 cups oatmeal, any flavor

### Directions:

Combine the sweetener, butter, hot chocolate and dry milk in an empty chip bag, boil until hot and the mixture dissolves. Stir in peanut butter (mixture will be thick) and add oatmeal. Drop mixture by the spoonfuls onto paper or plastic and allow cookies to harden for one hour. Delicious!



## Perfect Pizza

### Ingredients:

1 pack turkey bites, diced  
3 soups, finely crushed  
1/2 bag cheese puffs, finely crushed  
3/4 can V8  
1/4 cup ketchup  
pepper (optional)  
garlic (optional)  
squeeze cheese, to taste  
1 packet ranch dressing

*Try It!*

### Directions:

Mix crushed soups and cheese puffs in the cheese puff bag. Add enough hot water to wet the mixture to a thick gravy consistency. Set mixture aside and let firm up to a dough. In a cup or jar, mix V8, ketchup and spices (if using). Flatten dough in bag, open up bag along the seams and pour V8 mixture evenly on top. Squeeze on desired amount of cheese. Sprinkle on turkey bites and drizzle with ranch dressing (and additional crushed cheese puffs, if desired) and enjoy! Makes two or more servings.

## Sweet and Spicy Pork

### Ingredients:

4 jalapeños, diced  
1 pickle, diced  
2 bags pork skins  
2 packs mackerel  
2 packs peanuts or energizer mix  
1 bottle strawberry preserves  
2 cans Big Red or Dr. Pepper  
1 bag barbecue chips  
1 bag rice

### Directions:

Dice the jalapeños and the pickle, then mix together. Open the first bag of pork skins and combine the following: 1 pouch Jack mackerel, 1 pack peanuts, 1/2 jalapeno/pickle mixture, 1/2 bottle strawberry preserves and 1/2 can of Big Red. Repeat with the second bag of pork skins. Cook both bags for one hour. Add some BBQ chips to absorb the excess juice. After 45 minutes, heat the other can of Big Red and pour over the entire bag of rice in a bowl. Cook rice for the remaining 15 minutes. Split the rice into two bowls. Pour contents of pork skin bags over the rice. Enjoy! Makes two servings.

## Sunshine Citrus Tea

### Ingredients:

6 tea bags  
1 lime sports drink  
1 orange sports drink  
12 sweeteners

*Yum!*

### Directions:

Fill a hot pot 2/3 full with water, add tea bags and cook for 20-30 minutes. Squeeze out and remove tea bags, then add sports drinks and sweeteners. Add cold water until hot pot is full; stir well. Pour the tea into three empty water or green tea bottles. Add cold water to the bottles until they're full. Enjoy!

## Jeff's Spaghetti Daze

### Ingredients:

1 chili no-beans  
(substitute: chili with beans)  
1 can V8  
2/3 bottle ketchup  
2 heaping spoonsful garlic powder (more or less to taste)  
2 or 3 heaping spoonsful onion powder (to taste)

2 jalapeños, diced  
1 summer sausage, diced (optional)  
6 chili soups, seasoning packets reserved  
black pepper to taste  
1/3 to 1/2 bag jalapeño cheese puffs, crushed finely

### Directions:

Place first seven ingredients in an empty corn chip bag. Add 1/2 cup water and a chili seasoning packet, stir well. Place bag in a hot pot and cook for 45 minutes to an hour. Place two soups and one chili seasoning packet in each of three separate bowls. Add water and cover for eight to 10 minutes. Drain any excess

water from the three bowls and sprinkle black pepper on the noodles to taste. Remove spaghetti sauce bag from hot pot, stir, and pour evenly over the noodles. Pour crushed jalapeño cheese puffs over the spaghetti sauce, mix well. Serve with snack crackers or saltines. Makes three servings.

## Big Mama's Taco Rice

### Ingredients:

1 bag white rice  
1 bag jalapeño chips  
1 bag pork skins, slightly crushed  
1 bag party mix (without pretzels), slightly crushed  
1 bag nacho cheese chips, slightly crushed  
1 pouch chunk chicken  
1 pouch spam, diced  
1 bag turkey bites, diced  
1 jalapeño pepper, finely chopped

1 pk. hot vegetable soup seasoning  
1 pk. chicken soup seasoning  
Garlic powder (to taste)  
Onion powder (to taste)  
1 packet cream cheese  
1/2 bottle squeeze cheese  
1 V8 vegetable juice (optional)  
1 bottle salsa (optional)  
3 hot pots  
3 large spread bowls

### Directions:

Cook rice in its bag with hot water. Combine the rest of ingredients, then divide into each spread bowl. When rice is done, divide it evenly between the three bowls

as well. Mix well. Put mixture back into rice bag and cook for an additional 30 minutes. If you like, you can add V8 juice or salsa.





## V's Peanut Butter-M&M Cookie Bars

### Ingredients:

- 1 pk. duplex cookies
- 1/2 pk. Maria's cookies
- 1 heaping spoonful peanut butter
- 2 pkgs. peanut M&Ms, crushed in their bags

### Directions:

Separate the cream from the cookies and place the cream in a hot pot insert and the cookie wafers in a bowl. Add the Maria's cookies to the wafers and finely crush both. Crush one bag of M&Ms and mix with the crushed cookies; add peanut butter. Add 1 1/2 spoonful of hot water and begin to make dough; add a little more water if it seems too dry. Divide dough into three evenly-sized balls; smash each

into an empty cookie tray to mold into a bar. Place bars on an opened empty chip bag. Pour 2 spoonfuls of hot water to the cream and stir to create a smooth paste — add a little more water if needed. Spread the cream on top of the cookie bars; top with the other bag of crushed M&Ms. Enjoy! Makes three cookie bars.



## Uncle Lance's Quesadillas

### Ingredients:

- 2 pkgs. chunk chicken
- 1 can V8 vegetable juice
- 1 pk. vegetable soup, crushed
- 1 pk. flour tortillas
- 1 pk. ranch dressing
- 3 empty rice bags
- 3 pkgs. cream cheese
- 1/2 bottle squeeze cheese
- 2 jalapeños, diced
- 1/4 bottle garlic powder
- 1/4 bag refried beans
- 1 empty large chip bag

### Directions:

Drain juice from both pouches of chunk chicken, then remove chicken to a spread bowl and liberally apply garlic powder, stirring as doing so. Set aside for one hour.



## Tater Bomb

### Ingredients:

- 1 pouch chunk chicken
- 1 jalapeño pepper
- 1/2 dill spicy pickle
- 1 spoonful salad dressing
- 3 spoonfuls squeeze cheese
- 1 chicken noodle seasoning
- 1 bag of jalapeño chips, crushed fine
- 1 pack ranch or cream cheese

### Directions:

Place pouch of chicken in a bowl along with jalapeño and pickle. Chop thoroughly. Place salad dressing, cheese and noodle seasoning in a bowl; mix well. Take a whole bag of jalapeno chips and crush till fine. Once crushed, add 12 spoonfuls of hot water to the

chips. Squish mixture until the water and chips form a crust. Flatten out mixture in the bag on flat surface. Once done, rip open the bag and add the bowl contents in the middle of the crust. Grab the diagonal corners of the potato, pinch them and bring them to join in the middle. Then do this to the other side. Once the potato is formed, add either ranch or cream cheese (your choice). Makes two servings.

*Enjoy!*

## Mackerel Stew

### Ingredients:

1 bag instant chili beans	1 spoonful mustard
1/2 bottle cheese	2 spoonfuls onion powder or flakes
2 packs mackerel filets	1/2 to 1 spoonful garlic powder, to taste
3 soups, crushed with spices	1/4 spoonful salt
1 bag pork skins, slightly crushed	1/2 spoonful black pepper
1/2 pickle, diced	
4-6 spoonful Rhino sauce, to taste (see recipe on page 29)	

### Directions:

Place instant chili beans and cheese in an empty white bowl, add hot water and cook. Place remaining ingredients in a separate bowl, add hot water, stir well and cook for 10 minutes. When soup mixture is cooked, place half the

bean mixture and soup mixture in an empty third bowl. Mix well in the three bowls, adding more hot water if needed. You should have a soupy stew consistency. Enjoy! Makes two to three servings, depending on how hungry you are!

# The ECHO Puzzles & Mind Benders



## Trivia

### The Truth About 'Toons

Catch us stretching the truth about cartoons. Answer the following questions true or false.

1. Barney Rubble has a wife named Wilma. **TRUE or FALSE**
2. Felix the Cat has frequent run-ins with Officer Dibble. **TRUE or FALSE**
3. Deputy Dawg is continually harassed by Musky Muskrat. **TRUE or FALSE**
4. Betty Boop was once censored for immorality. **TRUE or FALSE**
5. Disc jockey Wolfman Jack provides the voice for Shaggy, Scooby-Doo's best friend. **TRUE or FALSE**
6. The red-bearded, pistol-packing Yosemite Sam appears frequently to bedevil Daffy Duck. **TRUE or FALSE**
7. Soul singer Isaac Hayes provides the voice for Chef in the animated series South Park. **TRUE or FALSE**

### Common Bonds

Find the common bond (or theme) among three very different pictures.

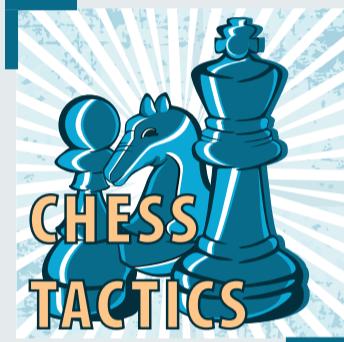


### Name That Comedian

Match the funny-person's name below to the action or role described.

1. Trying desperately to keep up with a candy factory's conveyor belt \_\_\_\_\_
2. Joe the Bartender, who dips his finger in a frothy glass of beer \_\_\_\_\_
3. A bumpkin named Clem Kadiddlehopper \_\_\_\_\_
4. A laugh that goes "nyuk, nyuk, nyuk" \_\_\_\_\_
5. A "tramp" with an uncomfortable walk \_\_\_\_\_

**A) Lucille Ball**      **D) Curly Howard**  
**B) Charlie Chaplin**      **E) Red Skelton**  
**C) Jackie Gleason**



The goal of this exercise is to find the best first move, together with the subsequent moves, that lead to an advantage for the superior side. There is only one apparent best first move for this exercise. However, there may be several moves for the second and later moves that are equally as good. All of the choices are acceptable as solutions.

The game scores use standard algebraic notation. The following symbols are also used. The side to move on a diagram is denoted by a white or black circle on the side of the diagram.



A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H

#### Symbols

X	capture
+	check
#	checkmate
!	good move
!!	brilliant move
?	bad move
??	blunder
1-0	White wins the game
0-1	Black wins the game

Chess Tactics Exercises  
from Tournament Games  
by Sam Cicero 2017  
<http://cicerochess.com>.

# The ECHO Puzzles & Mind Benders



## Getting to Know Ancient Mexican Culture

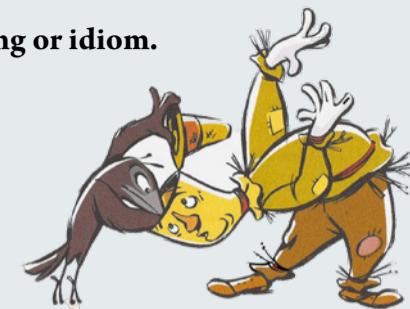
Try this round of questions about early native culture.

1. The Mexica, the Acolhua and the Tepaneca tribes are known by what broader term?
2. Despite their tribal differences, what trait did the Aztec people share?
3. Where in the modern world would you find the ruins of the ancient Aztec city Tenochtitlan, built on an island in Lake Texcoco?
4. Spaniards such as Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo and Francisco Pizarro were known collectively as what?
5. Beyond military advantages, what natural factor played a substantial role in the Spanish conquest of native American populations?
6. The 16th-century Laws of Burgos forbade the Spanish mistreatment of native Americans and encouraged what?
7. What two now-common domestic animals were unfamiliar to American natives when the Spanish invaders introduced them?
8. Who was the Aztec ruler in power at the time of the Spanish conquest?

## COLOR FILL

Put back the missing color in each phrase, saying or idiom.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ with envy
2. \_\_\_\_\_ journalism
3. Take a \_\_\_\_\_ streak
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Heart



## Seeing Starz

The answer to each clue is a title or phrase that contains the word STAR.



### Riddle Me This

Classic riddles like this one are easier to solve if you think outside the box.

One Sunday morning, a wealthy man was found dead in his mansion. When the police arrived, they started the investigation by interrogating the dead man's wife and the household staff. His wife said she was asleep. The cook said he was making breakfast. The gardener said he was picking vegetables. The maid said she was getting the morning mail. And the butler said he was cleaning the closet. When they were done, the police arrested the murderer. Whom did they arrest?



### Puzzle Solutions

#### Riddle Me This

The maid. There is no mail delivery on Sundays.

#### Seeing Stars

1. Lone Star State  
2. Star of David  
3. "The Star-Spangled Banner"  
4. "Stardust"  
5. Star-crossed

#### Common Bonds

Theme: Parts of a computer  
Mouse, Screen, Keys

#### Name that Comedian

1. Lucille Ball
2. Jackie Gleason
3. Red Skelton
4. Curly Howard
5. Charlie Chaplin

#### Color Fill

1. Green with envy
2. Yellow journalism
3. Talk a blue streak
4. Purple heart

#### The Truth about 'Toons

1. False; Wilma is the name of Fred's wife.
2. False; Officer Dibble rides herd on Top Cat and his gang.
3. True
4. True; the boop-oop-a-doop girl was censored in the 1930s for her racy clothing.
5. False; Shaggy is voiced by another radio personality, Casey Kasem.
6. False; Yosemite Sam was created as an archenemy for Bugs Bunny.
7. True

#### Getting to Know the Ancient Mexicans

1. Aztecs
2. Their language-Nahuatl
3. Mexico City
4. Conquistadors
5. Diseases that the Spanish brought with them, particularly smallpox
6. Converting natives to Catholicism
7. Horses and dogs
8. Montezuma or Moctezuma

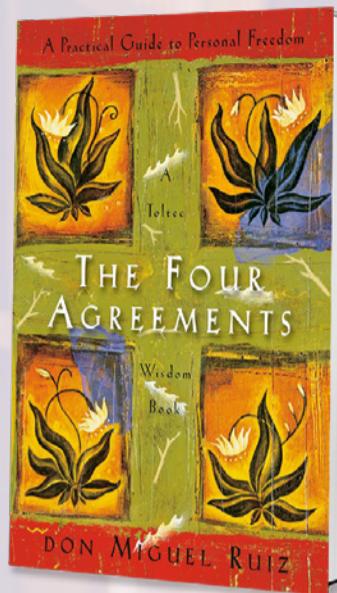
#### CHESS Solution

**Answer:** 1... Be4+.  
1... Be4+ 0-1  
Black wins the queen after 2.Bd3 {2.Kal Nb3#; 2.Kcl Nb3+ 3.axb3 Qal#} 2... Bxd3+ 3.Qxd3 (3.Kal Nb3#) 3... Nxd3-+.  
**Game reference:** Gregory (2117) – Way (2005), England, 2016

# THE BOOK DROP

FABIAN W. FLORES  
STAFF WRITER

Non-Fiction



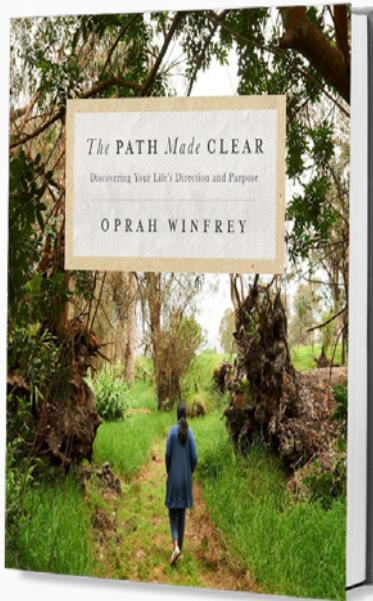
## ***"The Four Agreements: A Toltec Wisdom Book"***

***By Don Miguel Ruiz***

**A**t first glance, this slim book may not seem to pack much of a punch. Yet, Ruiz's New York Times bestseller takes the reader on an inspirational spiritual journey inspired by Toltec tradition. The four agreements emphasized here — like Be Impeccable with Your Word or Don't Take Anything Personally — have the power to help a person free themselves from needless suffering. Having been raised by a curandera (healer) mother and a nagual (shaman) grandfather, Ruiz was inspired to share this wisdom after a near-fatal accident inspired his own intensive journey of self-inquiry and self-mastery. Even for an individual living in incarceration, the wisdom in this book is simple and completely possible to achieve.

Disclaimer: Reviewed books may not be in your campus library. If you have suggestions for books — old or recent — that can motivate, inspire and educate your broader community, drop a letter to The Book Drop, c/o *The ECHO*. Enjoy — and remember: READ BETTER — BE BETTER.

## Non-Fiction

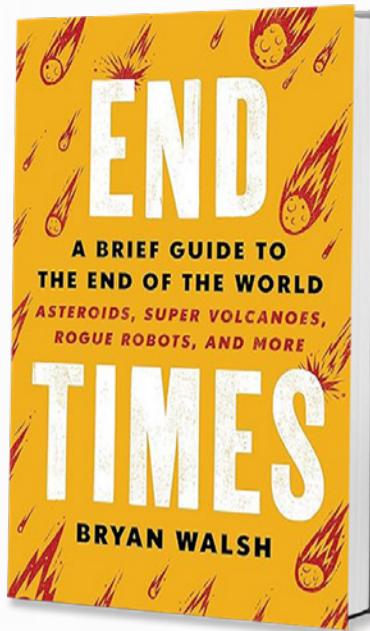


***"The Path Made Clear: Discovering Your Life's Direction and Purpose"***

*By Oprah Winfrey*

We all have the power to find our purpose, if we're willing to put in the work. In Oprah's latest book, she shares her guide for activating our deepest vision of ourself, offering a framework for creating not just a life of success, but one of significance. The book's 10 easy-to-read chapters highlight the important milestones along the road to self-discovery, things like learning how the journey is about laying out what you need to achieve your own brand of personal contentment, and what life's obstacles can really teach us—even one as big as incarceration.

## Non-Fiction



***"End Times: A Brief Guide To The End Of The World"***

*By Bryan Walsh*

Utilizing skilled reportage that peels back the complex layers around the unimaginable—and inevitable—end of humankind, veteran science reporter and *TIME* editor Bryan Walsh provides an eye-opening view of the most catastrophic threats to the human race. Part non-fiction, part thriller, *End Times* is a stunning journey through asteroids, artificial intelligence, volcanic super-eruption and even nuclear war. Walsh takes you into the very rooms with the people whose job it is to imagine the unimaginable. What will cause our extinction? Can we save ourselves and our future? This book will answer questions we didn't know we even needed to ask.

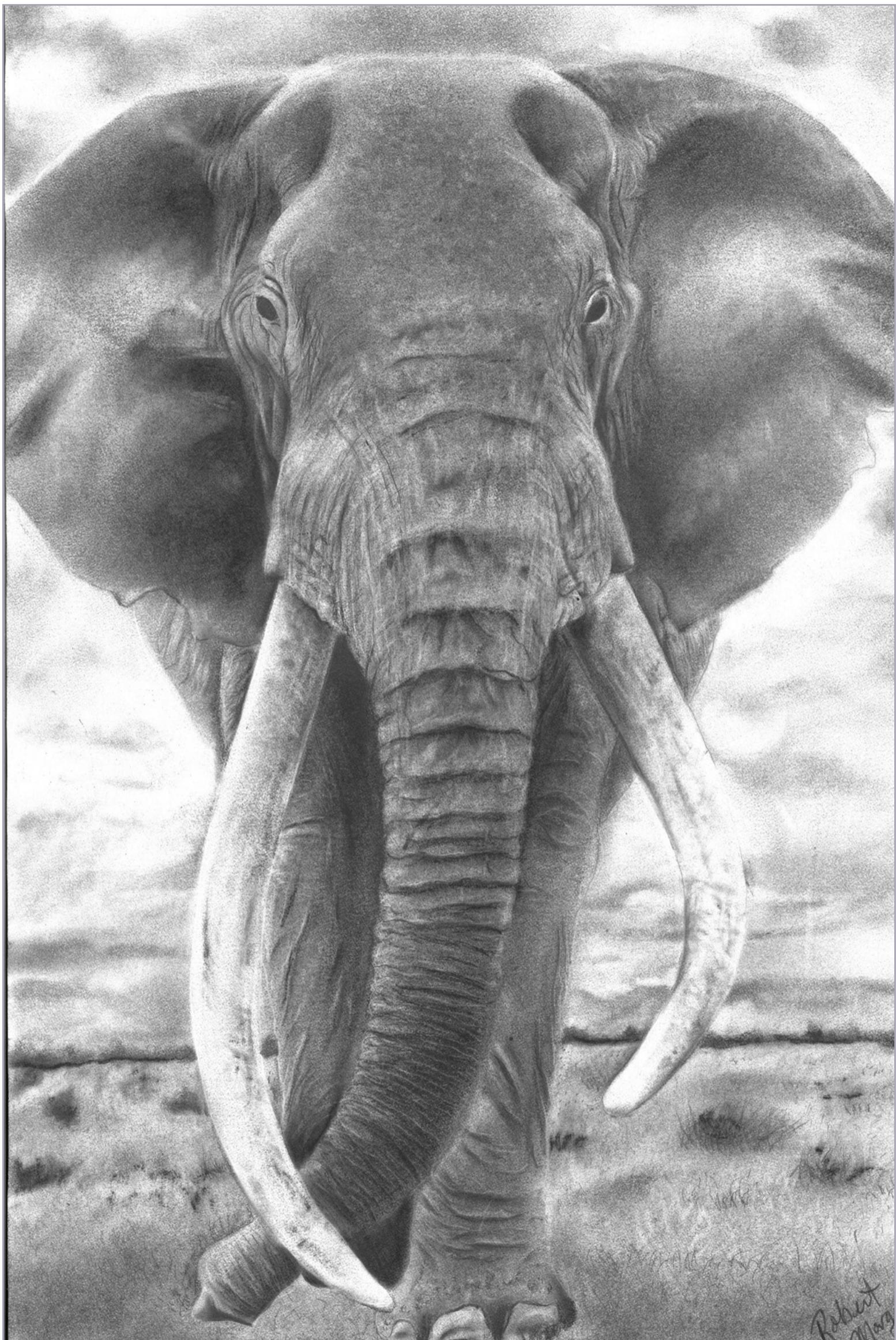
# ART EXPO

Want your art featured in  
The ECHO? Send it to:  
**The ECHO c/o WSD Admin.**  
**Bldg., P.O. Box 40, Huntsville,**  
**TX 77342-0040.**  
Drawing pads and/or  
illustration boards preferred.  
Half and quarter boards welcome.  
Artwork cannot be returned.



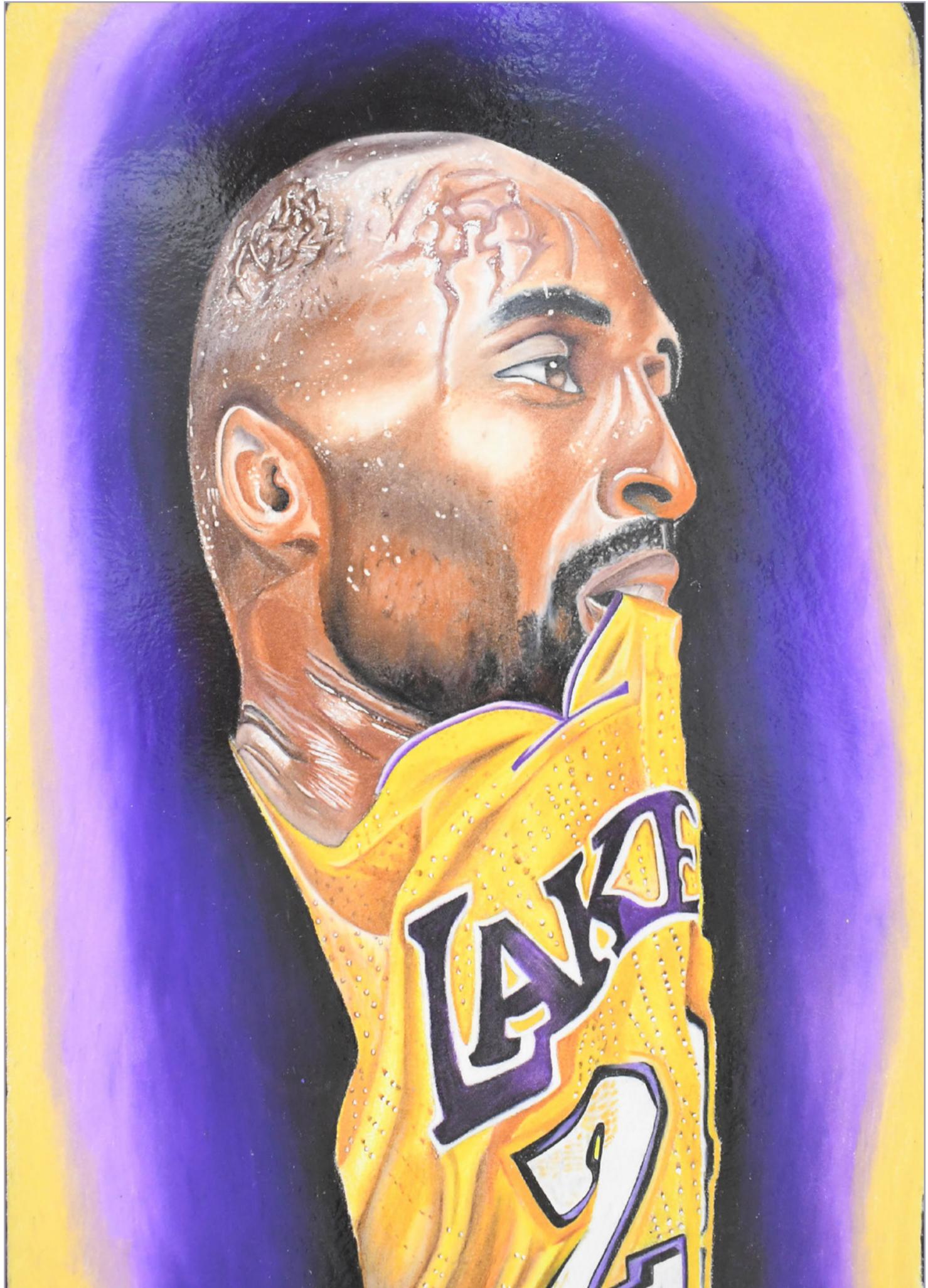
**Virgin Mary** | Mario Guevara  
Mixed Media on Illustration Board | 15" x 20"

ART  
EX  
PO



**Elephant** | Robert Morgan  
Pencil on Illustration Board | 11" x 17"

# ART EXPO

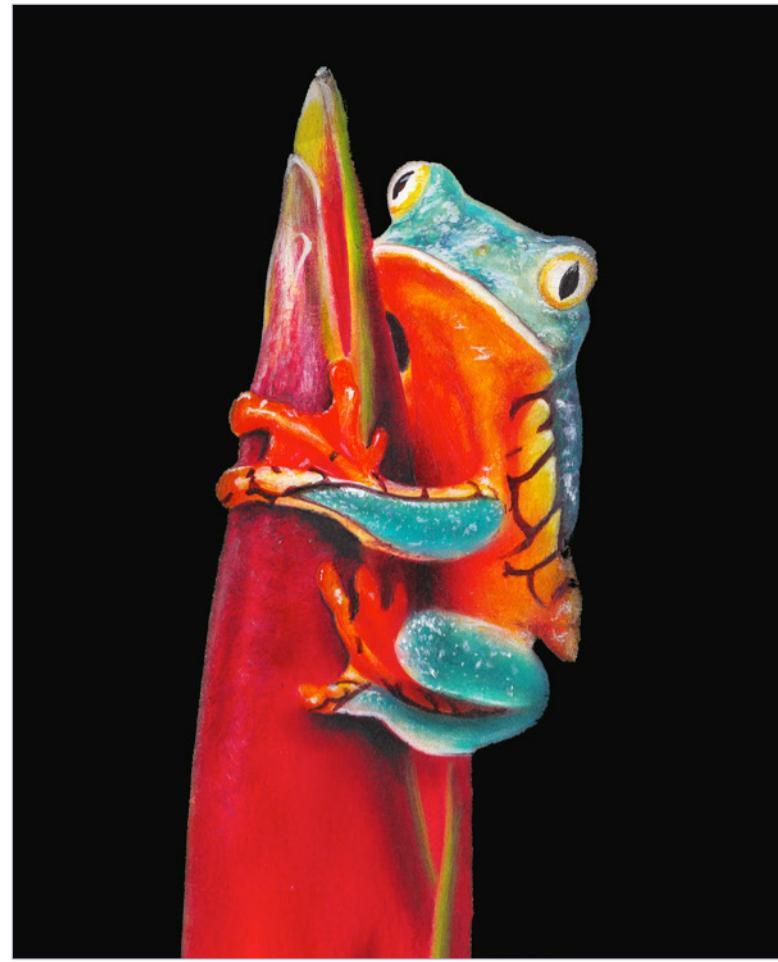


**Kobe** | Rudy Delacruz  
Mixed Media on Illustration Board | 15" x 20"



*Compassion Atrophy* | Joshua Schnizer  
Colored Pencil on Paper | 8 1/2" x 11"

# ART EXPO



**Frog** | Fabian W. Flores  
Airbrush on Bristol Board | 8" x 10"

*The Adventures of*  
**TINY THOR**

By Joshua P. Schnizer  
ECHO Staff

7:20 a.m. HAILSA... NO... MY KINI!

7:25 a.m. SHIELD WALL! I'M COMING BROTHER!!!

7:28 a.m. OH NO... WHAT MANNER OF SORCERY?

7:44 a.m. YOU'VE BEEN TURNED TO STONE. THIS REEKS OF LOKI!

7:51 a.m. WE SHALL PREVAIL!

7:55 a.m. ALAS... THIS IS WHERE WE PART COMPANY. IT'S BEEN A LONG JOURNEY MY OLD FRIEND. WEEP NOT! FOR THIS IS NOT GOODBYE! THE MIGHTY THOR SHALL AVENGE YOU YET!

# Preparing For Inclement Weather: Recognition of Cold-Related Illness, Injury

## Frostbite

Not only can wind chill cause a rapid body heat loss, it also can cause frostbite — the freezing of body tissues. Frostbite can occur in 15 minutes or less at wind chill values of 18 below zero or lower. Residents can be at an increased risk to frostbite because of factors such as exhaustion, hunger and dehydration, which further lower the body's defenses against cold.

## Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a condition occurring when the body loses heat faster than the body can produce it. With the onset of this condition, blood vessels in the skin constrict (i.e., tighten) in an attempt to conserve vital internal body heat, thus affecting the hands and feet first. Hypothermia, the severe or prolonged loss of body heat, begins when a person's body temperature falls below 95 degrees. Because the temperature drop may be gradual, and an early symptom of hypothermia is mental confusion, the victim may not know a problem exists. If one's body continues to lose heat, involuntary shivers begin. This reaction is the body's way to produce more heat and is usually the first real warning sign of hypothermia. Further heat loss produces speech difficulty, forgetfulness, loss of manual dexterity, collapse and finally death.

Some residents can be at an increased risk to hypothermia if they have predisposing health conditions or take certain medications. Some of these conditions include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, poor physical condition, poor diet and/or advanced age.

### Watch for the following symptoms of frostbite:

- \* cold, white and hard skin;
- \* pain;
- \* itching;
- \* loss of feeling in the affected area;
- \* spots or blotches on skin;
- \* swelling and blistering;
- \* skin becomes red and blotchy; and
- \* tissue loss, depending on the severity of the frostbite.

### Watch for the following symptoms of hypothermia:

- \* confusion;
- \* drowsiness;
- \* slurred speech;
- \* a drop in blood pressure;
- \* shallow breathing; and
- \* a pinkish tint to the skin.

*Report all incidents of cold-related illness to a staff member immediately.*

# Parole Review Process



- The Parole Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice identifies inmates six months prior to their initial parole eligibility, and four months prior to subsequent review dates, and directs the case file to be pulled for review.
- Notice is sent to trial officials, victims and victim family members.
- An Institutional Parole Officer (IPO) of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles interviews the inmate and prepares a parole case summary for the Board.
- The inmate's file is sent to the designated board office for review and vote by a Parole Panel.

## **Standard Parole Panel**

A standard parole panel consists of three voting members, usually one board member and two parole commissioners; a majority of two votes is needed for a final decision. Panel voting is sequential, with one panel member recording their vote and passing it to the next panel member. If the first two votes are the same, the vote is final. If the first two votes differ, the third panel member reviews the case and breaks the tie.

- An interview with the inmate is at the discretion of the Parole Panel member, as are interviews with individuals in support or protest of an inmate's release to parole.
- Parole Panel members must grant an interview to victims, as defined by statute, upon request.
- The inmate is notified of the Parole Panel decision via correspondence. A denial will include the next review date.

- An approval may include special conditions.

## **Full Board Parole Panel**

A full board parole panel consists of parole board members only; parole commissioners do not vote these cases. A two-thirds majority vote of the Board (five out of seven voters) is necessary for a positive parole decision for the following:

- Inmates convicted of or serving a sentence for a capital felony
- An offense under Penal Code section 20A.03 [Continuous Trafficking of Persons]
- An offense under Penal Code section 21.02 [Continuous Sexual Abuse of Young Child or Children]
- An offense under Penal Code section 21.11(a) (1) [Indecency with a Child]
- An offense under Penal Code section 22.021 [Aggravated Sexual Assault]
- Inmates required under Texas Government Code Section 508.145(c) to serve 35 calendar years before becoming eligible for release on parole.

These inmates, except capital felons serving a life sentence and those convicted of or serving a sentence for Aggravated Sexual Assault, are eligible for a minimum of a 3-year up to a 5-year set-off. Capital felons serving a life sentence and those inmates with Aggravated Sexual Assault offenses are eligible for up to a 10-year set-off.

*Source: <https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/bpp>*

### **Parole Review Status Line**

A parole decision status can be checked by family, friends and loved ones at:  
<https://inmate.tdcj.texas.gov/InmateSearch/start.action>  
or call: 844-512-0461



### **General Office**

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles  
P.O. Box 13401  
Austin, Texas 78711-3401  
E-mail: [bpp\\_pio@tdcj.texas.gov](mailto:bpp_pio@tdcj.texas.gov)



### **Support Letters and Parole Packets**

TDCJ—Review and Release Processing  
8610 Shoal Creek Blvd.  
Austin, Texas 78711



# Reasons for Approval and Denial



Key: "A" - Approved; "D" - Denied

## ▼ 1. CRIMINAL HISTORY

- A.** The record does not include a documented pattern of violent or assaultive arrests or convictions.
- D.** The record indicates that the inmate has repeatedly committed criminal episodes that indicate a predisposition to commit criminal acts upon release.

## ▼ 2. NATURE OF OFFENSE

- A.** The record indicates non-violent offenses and the instant offense indicates no tendency toward violent/assaultive behavior, with limited potential for future assaultive type offenses.
- D.** The record indicates the instant offense has elements of brutality, violence, assaultive behavior, or conscious selection of victim's vulnerability indicating a conscious disregard for the lives, safety, or property of others, such that the inmate poses a continuing threat to public safety.

## ▼ 3. DRUG OR ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT

- A.** The record indicates limited or noninvolvement with substance use.
- D.** The record indicates excessive substance use involvement.

## ▼ 4. INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

- A.** The record indicates that the inmate has maintained a satisfactory institutional adjustment.
- D.** The record indicates that the inmate has an unsatisfactory institutional adjustment.

## ▼ 5. ADJUSTMENT DURING PERIODS OF SUPERVISION

- A.** The record indicates successful periods of supervision on probation, parole, or mandatory supervision.
- D.** The record indicates unsuccessful periods of supervision on previous probation, parole, or mandatory supervision that resulted in incarceration, including parole-in-absentia.

## ▼ 6. PARTICIPATION IN TDCJ PROPOSED OR SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

- A.** The record indicates participation in and completion of TDCJ-CID programs and activities in the individual treatment plan that should

enhance chances to obtain and maintain full-time stable employment.

- D.** The record indicates that the inmate refused to participate or intentionally failed to complete TDCJ-CID programs and activities in the individual treatment plan.

## ▼ 7. TIME SERVED

- A.** The record indicates that length of time served by the inmate is congruent with offense severity and criminal history.
- D.** The record indicates that length of time served by the inmate is not congruent with offense severity and criminal history.

## ▼ 8. FELONY OFFENSE

- D.** The record indicates that the inmate has been charged before a magistrate, indicted, or convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction, with a felony offense committed while incarcerated.

## ▼ 9. DISCRETIONARY MANDATORY SUPERVISION (DMS)

For a vote not to release, it is necessary to vote both D1 and D2, along with any other reasons that may apply.

- A.** Release to Discretionary Mandatory Supervision.
- D1.** The record indicates that the inmate's accrued good conduct time is not an accurate reflection of the inmate's potential for rehabilitation.
- D2.** The record indicates that the inmate's release would endanger the public.

## ▼ 10. GANG AFFILIATION

- A.** The record indicates that the inmate is not a confirmed member of one of the TDCJ-CID designated security threat groups.
- D.** The record indicates that the inmate is a confirmed member of one of the TDCJ-CID designated security threat groups.

## ▼ 11. OTHER

- A.** or **D.**—Write an explanation.

# Parole Panel Has Many Voting Options



The voting panels of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles do not just vote “yes” or “no” — they also vote the type of parole approval or denial, length of set-offs and any stipulations upon release.

## The board’s parole panel approval vote options:

**FI-1** — (Further Investigation 1) — Release inmate on parole supervision as soon as eligible.

**FI-2** — Release on parole on a specified future date.

**FI-3R** — Transfer to a TDCJ rehabilitation program. Release to parole only after program completion and not earlier than three months from specified date. Such TDCJ programs may include either CHANGES/Life Skills, Voyager, Segovia Pre-Release Center (Segovia PRC), or any other approved tier programs.

**FI-4R** — Transfer to a TDCJ rehabilitation program. Release to parole only after program completion and not earlier than four months from specified date. Such TDCJ program shall be the Sex Offender Education Program (SOEP).

**FI-5** — Transfer to a DWI Program and release to a continuum of care program.

**FI-6** — Transfer to the DWI rehabilitation program and release to continuum of care program.

**FI-6R** — Transfer to a TDCJ rehabilitation program. Release to parole only after program completion and no earlier than six months from specified date. Such TDCJ programs may include the Pre-Release Therapeutic Community (PRTC), Pre-Release Substance Abuse Program (PRSAP), In-Prison Therapeutic Community Program (IPTC) or any other approved tier program.

**FI-7R** — Transfer to a TDCJ rehabilitation program. Release to parole only after program completion and not earlier than seven months from the specified date. Such TDCJ program shall be the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI).

**FI-9R** — Transfer to a TDCJ rehabilitation program. Release to parole only after program completion and not earlier than nine months from specified date. Such TDCJ program shall be the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP-9).

**FI-18R** — Transfer to a TDCJ rehabilitation treatment program. Release to parole only after program completion and no earlier than 18 months from specified date. Such TDCJ program shall be the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP-18).

**CU-FI** — Designates the date on which the inmate serving consecutive sentences would have been eligible for release on parole if the inmate had been sentenced to serve a single sentence. This date shall be within a three-year incarceration period following the panel decision.

**RMS** — Release to mandatory supervision.

## The board’s parole panel denial vote options:

**NR** (Next Review – Month/Year) — Deny parole and set a time for next parole consideration. State law requires annual reviews except for inmates serving a sentence for an offense listed in Section 508.149(a), Government Code, or for an offense punishable as a felony of the second or third degree under Section 22.04, Penal Code. For these inmates, the next review date (month/year) may be set up to five years from the panel decision date, but in no event shall it be less than one calendar year from the panel decision date.

**SA** (Serve All) — Deny parole with no regular subsequent review, requiring inmate to serve balance of sentence, unless eligible for mandatory supervision consideration prior to projected release date.

**CU/NR** (Month/Year-Cause Number)—Deny favorable action and set the next review date at one year from the panel decision date. If the inmate is serving a sentence for an offense listed in Section 508.149(a), Government code, or for an offense punishable as a felon of the second or third degree under Section 22.04, Penal Code, the next review date (month/year) may be set at any date in the five-year incarceration period following the panel decision date, but in no event shall it be less than one calendar year from the panel decision date.

**CU/SA** (Month/Year-Cause Number)—If the inmate is serving a sentence for an offense listed in Section 508.149(a), Government Code, or for an offense punishable as a felony of the second or third degree under Section 22.04, Penal Code; deny release and order serve-all, but in no event shall this be utilized if the inmate's maximum expiration date is over five years from the date of panel decision. If the inmate is not serving an offense under Section 508.149(a), Government Code, deny release and order serve all, but in no event shall this be utilized if the inmate's maximum expiration date is over one year from the date of the panel decision.

**DMS** (Month/Year)—Deny Release to mandatory supervision and set the next mandatory supervision review date one year from the panel decision date. This decision denies mandatory supervision (and sets next review date) because inmate's accrued good conduct time does not accurately reflect the potential for rehabilitation and the inmates release would endanger the public.

#### **The board's parole panel set-off options:**

**From three to 10 year**—Inmates convicted of an offense listed under Tex.Gov. Code §508.046 are eligible for a three-year up to a 10-year set-off.

**From one to 5 year**—Inmates convicted of an offense listed under Tex.Gov. Code §508.149(a) are eligible for a one-year up to a five-year set-off.

**One year**—Inmates convicted of other, non-aggravated offenses are eligible for a one-year set-off.

**Source:** <https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/bpp> and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles

#### **FY 2020-FY 2024 Parole Consideration and Approval Rates**

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
<b>Cases Considered</b>	77,530	65,488	62,579	64,785	66,204
<b>Cases Approved</b>	29,919	25,190	24,604	22,465	25,875
<b>Approval Rate</b>	38.59%	38.47%	39.32%	34.68%	39.08%

#### **FY 2024 Parole Considerations and Approvals by Board Members and Parole Commissioners**

	TOTAL VOTES	NUMBER APPROVED	APPROVAL RATE	DENIAL RATE
Adams, M.	6,588	3,091	46.92%	53.08%
Aiello, R.	5,009	2,060	41.13%	58.87%
Bishop, J.	6,911	2,552	36.93%	63.07%
Brito, E.	7,356	3,226	43.86%	56.14%
Butler, J.	6,704	2,580	38.48%	61.52%
Davila, E.	5,936	2,452	41.31%	58.69%
Eck-Massingill, L.	7,265	3,009	41.42%	58.58%
Farley, M.	5,194	2,429	46.77%	53.23%
Fletcher, S.	6,421	2,565	39.95%	60.05%
Fox, T.	4,165	1,489	35.75%	64.25%
Gonzalez, R.	6,421	2,329	36.27%	63.73%
Gutierrez, D.	1,349	747	55.37%	44.63%
Jones, C.	8,223	3,447	41.92%	58.08%
Kiel, J.	6,785	2,519	37.13%	62.87%
Long, B.	8,228	2,897	35.21%	64.79%
Marton, J.	6,394	2,603	40.71%	59.29%
Moberley, M.	7,738	3,257	42.09%	57.91%
Molina, L.	7,736	2,914	37.67%	62.33%
Ramirez, A.	6,172	2,014	32.63%	67.37%
Robertson, E.	7,066	2,926	41.41%	58.59%
Salcido, A.	7,310	3,068	41.97%	58.03%
Tejada, R.	6,909	2,973	43.03%	56.97%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>141,880</b>	<b>57,147</b>	<b>40.28%</b>	<b>59.72%</b>

#### **FY 2024 Parole Considerations and Approvals by Offense Type**

	CASES CONSIDERED	CASES APPROVED	APPROVAL RATE
Violent Aggravated Non-Sexual	11,075	3,982	35.95%
Violent Aggravated Sexual	3,584	1,099	30.66%
Violent Non-Aggravated Non-Sexual	11,974	3,693	30.84%
Non-Aggravated Sexual	2,023	680	33.61%
Non-Violent	37,548	16,421	43.73%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>66,204</b>	<b>25,875</b>	<b>39.08%</b>

#### **FY 2024 Special Review Votes**

	NUMBER	PERCENT
FI-1 (Parole when Eligible)	38	16.96%
FI-2 (Parole on Specified Date)	19	8.48%
FI-3R (CHANGES)	14	6.25%
FI-4R (SOEP)	0	0.00%
FI-5 (IPTC)	6	2.68%
FI-6 (DWI)	4	1.79%
FI-6R (PRTC, PRSAP)	12	5.36%
FI-7R (SVORI)	0	0.00%
FI-9R (SOTP-9)	2	0.89%
FI-18R (SOTP-18)	1	0.45%
NR (Set-Off)	64	28.57%
CU/NR Vote	11	4.91%
CU/FI Vote	3	1.34%
CU/SA Vote	2	0.89%
SA (Required to Serve All)	16	7.14%
RMS (Release to Mandatory Supervision)	17	7.59%
DMS (Deny Mandatory Supervision)	15	6.70%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Frequently Asked Parole-Related Questions



## Does an interview with a parole panel member increase the chances for parole?

No. An interview merely provides the resident, their family and/or friends the opportunity to speak with a voting parole panel member before the parole panel reviews a case.

## What can family members do to help a resident gain parole?

Residents' behavior and accomplishments in prison are factors that are considered in all parole decisions. Family members should encourage residents to maintain a clear conduct disciplinary record and to participate in the educational, vocational and character development programs offered at their unit of assignment. Also, in many instances, the resident must rely on family or friends when arranging a suitable parole plan.

## When does release become effective?

A parole release becomes effective when the resident signs his or her release certificate. The certificate orders the release and tells the resident in clear and understandable language where to report and to whom. The certificate lists the conditions of release and gives the date on which the resident will discharge his or her sentence and be free from supervision. The certificate also includes a waiver of extradition. The parole certificate must be signed by the resident.

Residents released on mandatory supervision are given release certificates that provide parole office information and release conditions. Mandatory supervision residents are not required to sign their release certificates, but they nevertheless must obey the rules and conditions of supervision and are subject to revocation if they violate the rules or conditions.

## Will a large number of petitions and letters make more of a difference to the parole panel than just a few?

No, a few clear and concise letters stating the nature of support (financial, vocational, residential, etc.) are preferable to voluminous petitions and letters. It is not necessary to send a copy of the letter to each parole panel member. Letters are placed in the resident's file to be available to any reviewing parole panel member.

### Sources:

<https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/bpp>

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

- **PAROLE PANEL REVIEW**
- **SUPPORT LETTERS**

*Information in this section is derived from the Board of Pardons and Paroles website:*

*<https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/bpp>  
and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles Annual Statistical Report for Fiscal Year 2024*

# Parole Contact Information



Source: [tdcj.texas.gov/bpp](http://tdcj.texas.gov/bpp)

## Amarillo Board Office

5809 S. Western, Suite 200  
Amarillo, TX 79110  
Phone: (806) 359-7656  
Fax: (806) 358-6455  
BM: Elodia Brito  
PC: Jeffrey Marton  
PC: Julie Phillips

## Angleton Board Office

209 E. Mulberry, Suite 120  
Angleton, TX 77515  
Phone: (713) 982-9755  
Fax: (713) 982-9775  
BM: Sandra Fletcher  
PC: Joel Butler  
PC: Michael Hardges

## Austin Board Office

4616 W. Howard Lane, Suite 200  
Austin, TX 78728  
Phone: 512-671-2532  
Fax: 512-671-2497  
BM: Ed Robertson  
PC: Richard Aiello  
PC: Roel Tejada

## Gatesville Board Office

545 State Hwy 36 Bypass N, Suite A  
Gatesville, TX 76528  
Phone: (254) 865-8870  
Fax: (254) 865-2629  
BM: Marsha Moberley, Chair  
PC: Mary J. Farley  
PC: Clint Gunnels

### Units

Allred  
Clements  
Dalthart  
Daniel  
Formby SJ  
Fort Stockton  
Jordan  
Lynnaugh  
Mechler  
Montford

Roach  
Robertson  
Rudd  
Sanchez SJ  
Smith  
Wallace  
West Texas RMF  
Wheeler SJ  
Wilderness III

### Units

Carole S. Young MC  
Clemens  
Gib Lewis  
Gist SJ  
Goodman  
Henley SJ  
Hightower  
Hospital - Galveston  
Jester III

### Units

Bridgeport  
Coleman  
Crain  
Halbert SAFFP  
Hamilton  
Hilltop  
Hobby  
Hughes  
Luther  
Marlin

### Units

Bridgeport  
Choice Moore  
Cole SJ  
Crain  
Havins SJ  
Hilltop  
Hughes  
Stiles  
Travis County SJ

Kyle  
Lindsey SJ  
Memorial  
Murray  
Pack  
San Saba  
Sanders Estes  
Stevenson  
Hutchins SJ

## Huntsville Board Office

1022 Veterans Memorial Parkway, Suite A  
Huntsville, TX 77320  
Phone: (936) 291-2161  
Fax (936) 291-8367  
BM: Carmella Jones  
PC: Jimmy Guyton  
PC: James Paul Kiel  
PC: Wadella Murphy

### Units

Bell  
Byrd  
Diboll  
Duncan  
Ellis  
Estelle  
Ferguson

Goree  
Holliday  
Huntsville  
Kegans SJ  
Wainwright  
Wynne  
Federal (FCI)

## Palestine Board Office

1670 N. Hwy. 155, Suite A  
Palestine, TX 75803  
Phone: (903) 723-1068  
Fax: (903) 723-1441  
BM: Brian Long  
PC: Jacqueline Bishop  
PC: Michael Adams

### Units

Beto  
Billy Moore  
Boyd  
Coffield  
East Texas  
Gurney  
Hodge

Johnston  
SAFFP  
Michael  
Polunsky  
Powledge  
Skyview  
Telford

## San Antonio Board Office

85 N. E. Loop 410, Suite 112  
San Antonio, TX 78216  
Phone: (210) 342-2012  
Fax: (210) 342-1421  
BM: Linda Molina  
PC: Raymond Gonzalez  
PC: Edward Davila

### Units

Briscoe  
Connally  
Cotulla  
Dominguez SJ  
Garza West  
Glossbrenner SAFFP

Lopez SJ  
McConnell  
Ney SJ  
Segovia  
Torres  
Willacy County SJ

# SHIFT GEARS. BUILD SKILLS.



## LOOKING FOR DRIVERS

*Put your skills to work in a career that drives purpose.*



**If you are ready to begin training for your Commercial Driver's License, you must meet the following requirements:**

- Custody level- Must be G1 or OT
- Must not have an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detainer

**To sign up, send an I-60 to your student advisor or principal today.**



### JOB OPENINGS

TCI

Wynne Sign and Plastics Factory

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Unit List: Wynne Unit  
Workers for the Following Position:  
Carpenter

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as G2 or G3 status
- Must be skilled in usage of woodworking tools (table saw, chop saw, planer, joiner and router etc.
- Must have a good attitude and excellent work ethic
- Must be able to work 4:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
- Must be able to accept constructive criticism
- Have a minimum of two years left in TDCJ
- Have no major disciplinary cases within the past year
- No medical/work restrictions that would prohibit performing job duties

Attention:

Applicants:  
If you are interested, send an I-60 or letter with your qualifications to:  
Wynne Unit Sign and Plastics Factory  
Ms. Whitney, Plant Manager  
810 FM 2821  
Huntsville, Texas 77349

All eligible workers are encouraged to apply.



### JOB OPENINGS

MAL

Transportation &amp; Supply

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Unit List: Statewide  
Workers for the Following Position:  
Class A CDL Drivers

Minimum Requirements:

- Must have knowledge of commercial driving regulations
- Must be able to operate a tractor trailer combination
- Must be able to perform pre-and post-trip inspections and submit reports indicating truck condition
- Must be able to assist with loading and unloading products and know proper load securement practices
- Must have a good attitude and excellent work ethic

Minimum Requirements:

- Must adhere to all safety rules and regulations
- Must be able to perform additional tasks when assigned
- No medical/work restrictions
- Have no major disciplinary cases within the past year
- Must be eligible to be classified as an OT/G1
- Must have a valid State of Texas Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

Attention Applicants:

If interested, send an I-60, including your driver's license number, a list of all previous experience and a preferred (not guaranteed) location of assignment to:

Transportation & Supply  
C. Jones  
P.O. Box 4013  
Huntsville, Texas 77320

All eligible workers are encouraged to apply.

Please note: If you have never held a CDL, you must successfully complete a commercial vehicle operator class offered by either Windham School District or Lee College prior to applying. An application will NOT be considered if you have never held a commercial driver's license.

**Don't stand in your  
story. Stand ON  
your story.**

**LISA NICHOLS  
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER**

