



Spotlight

MOST DIFFICULT TIME OF THE YEAR

by Reesy Floyd-Thompson (Mrs. GE-6309)

Two days before Christmas — two days before we announced our engagement — I witnessed my fiancé’s arrest. In those two days, I learned my fiancé wasn’t coming home anytime soon. Yet, Christmas came in spite of it. Unlike the wrapped holiday gifts under my tree, no amount of tape would hold together the pieces of my life. Tears flowed, until finally it was a silent night.

The timing of my now-husband’s arrest and subsequent incarceration changed the innocence of the holiday season. The glee of the season contended with my feelings of loss. In those two days, I lost who I thought I was, as I had promised to never be a woman with a man in prison. I constantly relived the events that landed my husband on the island of misfit boys, repeatedly punishing him for stealing Christmas then and twelve years to follow. His guilt, palpable. His apologies, sincere. Yet, no matter our state of mind the other 364 days, two days before Christmas was the most difficult time of the year.

Several years ago, two days before Christmas, he called. I’d prepared another fifteen minutes from hell. I intended to make him miserable. Before I said, “Hello,” and with all the sarcasm I could muster, I shouted three little words, “Happy Arrest Day!” He laughed and replied with three words of his own, “Another year down.” In that moment, I realized I was the one robbing us of the joy of what two days before Christmas *really* meant. Time was moving. I needed his three words to appreciate the true meaning of a commitment. Our efforts were not in vain, but my personal perceptions threatened us. I didn’t recognize my actions told my husband he was unacceptable. When I stopped judging our lives and gave myself the freedom to love outside of my self-imposed conformity, it was indeed a happy arrest day.

The period from November to January is naturally difficult. Heaviness hangs in the halls of the prison this time of year. It’s the season of family. Our family is separated by miles. We experience a measure of melancholy. In spite of this, we look forward to two days before Christmas with all the “fa-la-la” with which the rest of the world looks upon Christmas Day. We are another year closer to finally making it to that holiday dinner. Two days before Christmas, now eight years into this sentence, we celebrate our official “new year” as a reminder of how far we have come and how much we have grown. It’s a celebration that adds joy to our world and guarantees the pain of it all is not re-gifted year after year, two days before Christmas.

Reesy Floyd-Thompson is the founder of Prisoners’ Wives, Girlfriends, & Partners (PWGP).

DEATH ROW

December Birthdays

Jose Busanet
DX-0422, GRN

Ronald G. Champney
EC-0356, GRN

Bernard Cousar
EQ-1988, GRA

Daniel L. Crispell
BH-8972, GRN

Junious Diggs
FS-1123 GRN

Thomas W. Hawkins Jr.
CN-6108, GRA

William Howard Housman
EX-0456, GRN

Robert Hughes
BC-8234, GRN

Steven Hutchinson
EC-3986, GRN

Aaron C. Jones
BL-0480, GRN

Roger Judge
DT-6550, GRN

Carolyn Ann King
OC-7210, MUN

Robert Lark
AM-4192, GRN

Kelvin J. Morris
AS-1924, GRN

Lamont Overby
DS-1648, GRN

Kevin Pelzer
BC-9251, GRN

Gregory Powell
EL-7745, GRN

Derrick G. Ragan
BN-8022, GRA

Christopher Roney
DF-1973, GRN

Alfonso Sanchez
HU-2193, GRN

Leroy Thomas
AM-2728, GRN

Roy L. Williams
CF-4784, GRN

GRA = SCI Graterford
PO Box 244
Graterford, PA
19426-0244

GRN = SCI Greene
175 Progress Drive
Waynesburg, PA
15370-8090

MUN = SCI Muncy
Post Office Box 180
Muncy, PA 17756-0180

If you do not want your name published, send a letter to Graterfriends each year you do not want it to be included. Be sure to note your date of birth.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

Below are the solutions to crossword puzzles printed in this issue and the previous issue of *Graterfriends*.

November, 2011

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L | A | S | T | H | A | L | A | C | T | S | |
| A | N | E | W | E | G | O | F | R | E | E | |
| S | T | R | E | S | S | E | S | F | E | L | T |
| Z | E | A | L | S | T | E | A | L | S | | |
| | K | I | S | S | O | C | T | | | | |
| C | O | O | P | O | T | E | N | T | I | A | L |
| O | R | C | S | P | E | A | S | O | L | E | |
| N | E | C | E | S | S | A | R | Y | N | E | T |
| A | X | E | K | N | O | W | | | | | |
| P | A | S | T | E | S | Y | A | W | N | | |
| E | R | I | E | T | O | M | O | R | R | O | W |
| R | I | G | T | A | D | E | M | A | T | E | |
| M | A | N | S | B | O | T | S | P | E | D | |

December, 2011

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | W | F | U | L | A | S | P | Z | I | P | |
| P | H | A | S | E | X | C | I | E | R | A | |
| T | O | N | E | S | L | A | P | R | O | W | |
| | | | S | K | E | L | E | T | O | N | S |
| A | C | T | I | O | N | P | S | I | | | |
| C | H | A | N | N | E | L | E | L | A | | |
| H | A | D | A | W | D | S | D | O | R | A | |
| T | A | J | L | A | D | Y | B | U | G | | |
| | A | S | S | K | R | E | S | G | E | | |
| C | O | M | M | I | T | T | E | E | | | |
| H | B | O | Z | O | A | R | I | S | E | | |
| O | O | P | E | R | M | A | D | L | Y | | |
| W | E | E | S | E | E | S | P | O | R | E | |