

## From The Newsletter Staff

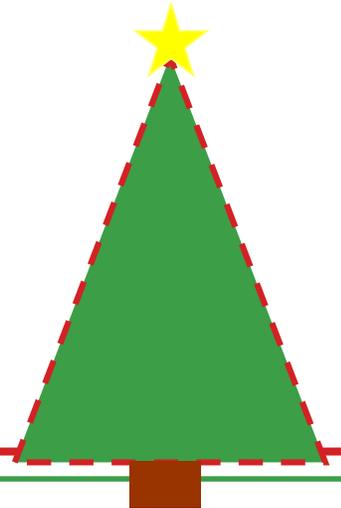
We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Susan Walker for her efforts on behalf of this organization.

Your challenges have increased this year both on a professional and personal level, yet you never complain and remain the guiding light for all whom come to know you and your spirit.

Success is the fruit of personal effort plus support and encouragement from people like you. Thank you for giving us that support.

*When a work lifts your spirits and inspires bold and noble thoughts in you, do not look for any other standard to judge by: the work is good, the product of a master craftsman.*

- Jean de la Bruyere



## SUNSET REVIEW/DORA REPORT 2015

The DORA Report for the Sex Offender Management Board came out in mid-October 2015. While the findings were not as earth-shaking as the findings of the last SOMB DORA Report, there were two significant findings.

The report's writer makes the recommendation to "Remove the sufficient funding caveat from the statute and direct the SOMB and the Department of Public Safety to collect and analyze the data necessary to evaluate the efficacy of SOMB-promulgated policies".

He goes on to say that "the statute creating the Standardized Treatment Program for Sex Offenders states that if the Department of Public Safety acquires sufficient funding, the SOMB may request, from listed providers, data to evaluate the effectiveness of SOMB Policies. The General Assembly should eliminate the funding caveat and the evaluation of policies should be performed".

While we were somewhat disappointed over the paucity of findings in this year's report, on further review, this is a significant finding! It will be up to the advocacy groups to "sell" the legislature on the wisdom of this recommendation. The SOMB spends a great deal of time discussing and worrying about issues that they are afraid might be problems (such as the Burns Case regarding a parent's right to parent their own children unless there are very convincing reasons why they should not), when in fact they have no evidence that this will cause problems! The recommended data collection and analysis should pre-empt large amounts of time spent on this and other "maybe this will cause harm" issues, and focus on the "efficacy of SOMB-promulgated policies"!

The other interesting finding leaves the "fox once again guarding the henhouse", something we fought hard against in the last Sunset Review. The report recommends that the grievance procedure be moved back to the ARC Committee of the SOMB- it has been under DORA since the most recent Sunset Review.

What materialized when the grievance process moved from ARC/SOMB to DORA is that the ARC still had to do significant work on each grievance filed, as DORA did not have enough subject matter expertise to make their rulings without the ARC/SOMB. In fact, the SOMB had to create a second ARC Committee to deal with certain pieces of the process.

While we are still concerned that the SOMB may soon be overseeing the review of grievances again as the initial reviewing party, we are hopeful that with the changes in Standards and Guidelines in process, and the pressure created by the Outside Evaluator Reports for overall change, business will be conducted in a way that allows the person filing the grievance a fair shot at a "fair deal". The recommendation, according to Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, Program Manager of the SOMB, "still requires the SOMB to notice DORA on all complaints it receives (and similarly DORA to notice SOMB on all complaints it receives), and DORA would be able to take up any complaint it felt relevant to its practice standards.."

One of the reasons the report's writer did not make more rulings is that we had requested another Sunset Review in five years instead of the standard ten years – that request was granted. Because the Outside Evaluators Reports of the CDOC and the SOMB caused movement toward change, and some of these changes were in process since the last review, he felt that progress was being made and that in another ten years, DORA would be able to more effectively evaluate those changes.

## Denver's Channel 7 News

### Story on Commerce City Police and a Program to Support those with a Sexual Offense Living in their City

My colleague Sandi at RSOL (Reform Sex Offender Laws) saw this story before I did, and immediately sent out word to RSOL Affiliates regarding the approach Commerce City, Colorado is taking as the police work with registered citizens in their community. My first move was to read the story; I then decided to e-mail Russell Haythorn at Channel 7 News, thanking him for his piece on something potentially positive happening in the sexual offense arena! While it is now a month later, and I have not yet heard back from him, I am hoping that I do get a response, and that sometime soon, we will see a story on 7 News about Circles of Support and Accountability. It would be great to see another positive story instead of the negative tales we frequently see.

After e-mailing Mr. Haythorn and numerous colleagues and friends, I contacted the Commerce City Police Department to touch base with Officer Rasmussen whom the article named as the person on the force working directly with the registrant population. It took a few attempts to get through, but I finally did and was able to leave him a voice mail. He called me back about an hour later, and we talked about his role with those who were convicted of a sexual offense in his community.

A couple of weeks later, Glenice Martinez and I met with him over lunch. We shared information about the Outside Evaluations with him, and also talked about the work that we do regarding re-entry and other services. The officer indicated that while he was supposed to be the "dedicated" officer working with this population, he was currently given other slots to fill as well, as they were short-handed. He hoped to be back on his exclusive job with registrants soon.

I asked him how he attempted to help these guys be successful, and he indicated that he visited with them at their homes, helped them find housing and get it okayed by the city, and tried to lend a hand with their job hunt. He explained that while he really did not generally give them specific job leads, he did allow them to use his name as a reference of sorts while they were looking for employment. Let's hope this officer's positive approach can be replicated in other municipalities!



"Christmas in Bethlehem.

The ancient dream: a cold, clear night made brilliant by a glorious star, the smell of incense, shepherds and wise men falling to their knees in adoration of the sweet baby, the incarnation of perfect love."

- Lucinda Franks



PHOTO CAPTION:

Oh Little Town of Bethlehem

"God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it." - Pope Francis

## SEARCH FOR SUPPORT PEOPLE AND VOLUNTEERS FOR CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### The Noble Experiment

Finding people to support men (or women) who have met all criteria to get out of prison except having a support person is a crucially important job, as is finding other folks who would like to volunteer to be part of a Circle of Support and Accountability. We definitely need both! I decided that there was no time like the present to begin looking, and to do that looking in my home church environment.

I got the support of Pastor Jim Walters, and was given 5 minutes in each of three services one Sunday morning not too long ago, to tell my story and the story of my son Mark, put up a display in the church's foyer, and invite people to a lunch meeting the next Sunday to learn more. After the lunch meeting, the plan was to put weekly notices in the church bulletin regarding classes that would meet each Sunday morning for six weeks at 11:00 for an hour and 15 minutes to discuss issues regarding sexual offending such as myths and facts, the criminal justice system, victim concerns, Circles of Support and Accountability and the general need for support and why etc.

The mixture of people who came by to see the display and talk with me after the three services was interesting. There were a number of persons with an offense who came by and very happily shook my hand. There were also a couple of family members who stopped by. The church has welcomed our offenders to attend at Bear Valley Church, but the people that came by were so grateful that someone finally had the hutzpah to talk openly about the issue in front of the congregation. Two persons who had been victimized also came by. One took literature and gave a \$10.00 donation (I was not asking for donations but she gave it anyway), and another came by and gave me a big hug, sharing that she was so grateful that she had forgiven her Dad for sexual abusing her many years before, and that in his later years, he had become a Christian believer. Eight to ten people signed up to be on the CSOR e-mail list.

In marketing, the terms Broadcasting and Narrowcasting are utilized to represent approaches to sending specific kinds of messages. In this case, the Broadcasting approach (talking to the whole church, many of whom were not directly affected by these issues), made an initial impact, but the majority of people did not stop at the display table. Narrowcasting refers to reaching those people who are directly impacted by an issue such as Alzheimer's Disease, for instance. The people directly caring for someone with Alzheimer's Disease are the ones most likely to respond immediately and to stop by a display booth or come to a class. The same is true for our issues. No doubt there were other people who didn't stop by that were touched by our issue, but weren't ready to talk about it or even perhaps think about the subject at that particular time.

We didn't know if anyone would come to the six weeks of classes, but we had from 3 – 7 people there each week. Out of that group, three were persons with an offense that would not be accepted to be a Circle member. The three people that were eligible to be on a Circle did sign up to be invited to the next Circle training held by Beyond Containment.

The bond that developed between us was amazing. We decided that we would get together occasionally for dinner and fellowship. I was glad that I had decided to participate in this "adventure" to try to identify a few folks that would consider being either individual supporters or Circle Members. All three that signed up felt more comfortable being part of a Circle than being an individual support person.

Whether this is a good venue for identifying support people remains to be seen. The Pastor is more than willing to have me try to do the class again in a few months when others in the pew have had more time to let the message they received from the platform that first Sunday sink in a little. This continues to be a bit of a scary subject for people, but I am grateful that we forged a bond with at least some of the people attending Bear Valley that have an offense background, and that three people did step forward to consider being involved in the Circles training! We'll let you know how we proceed down this road.

**"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps... means a little bit more!"**

**— Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!**



## News Tidbits

1. John McGill at CMRC stated this week that approximately ½ of the people with sexual offenses housed at CMRC have been released or are ready to be released.
2. The ACLU received word from a family member that persons with a sexual offense at CMRC had to wear pink bracelets to identify their dormitory area or pod. I checked with CMRC staff and was told that everyone at CMRC and at least some other facilities wore bracelets to identify their living quarters. According to staff, the bracelets are not pink, but are black and white. While this identifying bracelet admittedly can be perceived as dangerous in terms of letting everyone know who is living in the sexual offense area, staff pointed out that because they all eat together, people are aware anyway of their sexual offense status.
3. Citizens' Advocate Meetings are held several times each year by the CDOC at the Womens' Prison in Denver. This allows family and friends of those incarcerated to ask questions and meet with CDOC Staff, including Executive Staff, Department Heads and Wardens etc.

Since people attending represent all segments of the prison population, and sexual offense questions easily outnumber questions coming in regarding those who committed another type of offense, CDOC made a decision not to answer questions from the sexual offense families and friends at the meetings. Rather, the questions, e-mailed to CDOC well before the date of the meeting, would likewise be answered by return e-mail before the meeting. The goal was to give those there to ask questions regarding non-sexual offense issues sufficient time to be able to speak and get answers from the CDOC Team.

The CDOC is considering the possibility of holding two meetings each year just for those families and friends with sexual offense questions/issues, at which time relevant SOTMP Staff would be available to answer those questions to the best of their ability. This plan is still under consideration; CDOC will let us know if and when these meetings will be held.

4. We are very busy assisting those that are paroling and re-entering society. The parole department is making changes, and we are seeing some positive results of their work. For the two weeks before Thanksgiving, I personally had seven people on my calendar whom I had been writing to and who were getting out. I am grateful to my colleagues G.M. and J.H. who have contributed heavily to the successful re-entry (to this point) of most of these people. G.M. and I will both be out the day before Thanksgiving picking up people who are getting out that day!
5. I again apologize for not answering your letters in a timely fashion. I have tried to answer those relating to parole and illnesses that you feel need attention as quickly as possible. I know that many of you have not yet received a letter from me. Hopefully this newsletter will help to fill the void a bit. My personal challenges with my husband's failing health have made it difficult to keep up with this task which I feel is one of my most important! I do care for you all.
6. Thanks to David and Marion who give of their time and expertise to put the nuts and bolts of this newsletter together.
7. CSOR received an \$18.00 gift today from a parolee who is working two jobs. He started out giving \$5.00 when he could, and because of his second job, has now been able to send \$18.00. I just about cried! Thanks to all the parolees and folks still in prison who give stamps and dollars when they can. My heart is touched deeply.



Practice the Kwanzaa greetings. Starting on December 26, greet everyone by saying "Habari Gani" which is a standard Swahili greeting meaning "what is the news?" If someone greets you, respond with the principle (Nguzo Saba) for that day:

- December 26: "Umoja" — Unity
- December 27: "Kujichagulia" — Self-determination
- December 28: "Ujima" — Collective work and responsibility
- December 29: "Ujamaa" — Cooperative economics
- December 30: "Nia" — Purpose
- December 31: "Kuumba" — Creativity
- January 1: "Imani" — Faith

Non-African-Americans are also welcome to participate in greetings. The traditional greeting for them is "Joyous Kwanzaa."

**PROBLEMS WITH THE POLYGRAPH**  
**Over-reliance, Overuse, Misuse and Abuse**  
**From Standards and Guidelines 5.0 Subcommittee Meeting 11-5-15**

As we attend and participate in SOMB (Sex Offender Management Board) Committee Meetings on a variety of issues, the polygraph is frequently fodder for discussion. The fact that the Board's Standards and Guidelines are being rewritten following the Outside Evaluator Reports on both the SOTMP and the SOMB and in light of the current Sunset Review, means that the subject comes up often in SOMB Committees.

The Best Practice Committee is charged with reviewing all recent and "scientifically worthy" polygraph literature, as well as answering a variety of questions brought to the committee by a plethora of stakeholders. That mandate from the Board is currently being carried out by this committee.

Another committee where the polygraph became a recent topic of discussion is the Standards and Guidelines 5.0 Subcommittee which deals with community supervision issues, and home of the famous or infamous Child Contact Assessment (5.7). Due to concerns expressed in the SOTMP and SOMB Outside Evaluations regarding inappropriate polygraph utilization, and as we discussed a new TEAMS configuration that may potentially replace the Containment Model language, the inclusion or lack of inclusion of the polygrapher as one of the required members of the CST (Community Supervision Team) was discussed. An example of a concern raised in the Outside Evaluators' Report of the SOTMP was that 80% of people in prison that were part of the SOTMP and interviewed by the evaluators, stated that they felt they were coerced into reporting more victims than they had, or they would not be considered for completion of treatment and release from prison.

The supervising officer and the therapist were considered the two required CST participants, and there was debate regarding whether the polygrapher ought to be the third required participant, or should truly be an adjunct CST member, just like families/friends, victims' representative, clergy etc. There was stakeholder disagreement on this issue, and the discussion was left open until the Best Practice Committee is ready to make a recommendation on a polygraph approach going forward.

What was most interesting and amazing was that prominent members of the Board present at the Standards and Guidelines 5.0 Subcommittee Meeting (several) agreed that the polygraph was overly relied upon, overused, abused and misused! We have stressed over and over that the Outside Evaluators and certain research articles talk about the polygraph being an "adjunct" tool. The word adjunct means next to, alongside and perhaps in a more colloquial fashion, not utilized on a regular basis. An adjunct college professor fills in for a regular professor's sabbatical, or covers a semester of classes for someone who is ill; that person frequently has another full time job.

While this is happy news, a statement was also made by the committee chair that it was not likely the polygraph was going to go the way of Canada, i.e. not be utilized in sexual offense treatment. He made it clear that it was most likely going to be around, but hopefully utilized in a more appropriate manner than it has been during the history of its use in Colorado!

Hanukkah: חנוכה also known as the Festival of Lights and Feast of Dedication, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire of the 2nd century BC. Hanukkah is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December in the Gregorian calendar.



The festival is observed by the kindling of the lights of a unique candelabrum, the nine-branched menorah or hanukiah, one additional light on each night of the holiday, progressing to eight on the final night. The typical menorah consists of eight branches with an additional visually distinct branch. The extra light is called a shamash and is given a distinct location, usually above or below the rest. The purpose of the shamash is to have a light available for practical use, as using the Hanukkah lights themselves for purposes other than publicizing and meditating upon Hanukkah is forbidden.

## REACHING OUT TO ONE WHO WAS VICTIMIZED

It was November 1, a Sunday morning, and I was just ready to head out the door to church. An e-mail came over my phone from someone whose name I did not recognize. The content of his message told me that he was either at the most recent SOMB Meeting a couple of Fridays before, or someone who was at that meeting quoted him a phrase or two regarding meeting content.

In the course of discussing the currently underway rewrite of the Standards and Guidelines, I made the comment that under the "old regime", where beating those who had offended into the ground with emotional and confrontational taunts was normal, many men committed suicide. The particular part of the rewrite under discussion was the part that used to say "There is no known cure for sexual offending" and which had been changed in this rewrite to say "Sex offenders are capable of change".

The victims' advocates had just quickly pushed through a Guideline that expressed thoughts they felt were important, and it was time to move on to the next Guideline regarding the capability of offenders to change. There was a long explanatory paragraph that went with this Guideline title, making it clear that change was the responsibility of the offender, but that therapists and supervising officers and the way they engaged in the treatment and supervision process, contributed to the success or lack of success experienced by the person with the offense. One of the victims' supporters questioned whether offenders were capable of change, and said that saying it that way made it sound as if all could and perhaps would change. Others chimed in with similar conversation.

The writing of this Guideline was eventually sent back to the committee working on that particular section of the Guidelines for further perusal and "repair", as several attempts at voting by the Board did not result in consensus. I wanted to share the e-mails of the person victimized and my responses to him. I did everything I could to support him and encourage him that we all needed to work together, but nothing I said made any difference.

His words and my words:

His: "As a survivor of sexual abuse, I am stunned by the suggestions you all support the criminal. I think that they should be punished. And to bad if some kill them selfs!!! (his spelling).

Mine: "Hi \_\_\_\_\_, we also support the survivor/thriver. I would be happy to meet with you in order for us to share our stories and goals. I support Restoration for all. I do not support offending but do support the restoration of the person with the offense".

His: "Have no reason to talk, I'm just stunned, revolted"!!!

Mine: "Hi \_\_\_\_\_, don't wish to make you more angry by prolonging this, but do want you to know that I too believe in punishment and so do all the families that I know who have a person in their family who committed a sexual offense. I do believe, however, that once that punishment has been administered, the person who offended should be supported in moving on with their life. Because some survivors suffer for a prolonged time or even a lifetime (some don't and live healthy, productive lives in spite of their victimization), does not mean that the person with the offense should also suffer for the rest of their life. Two wrongs don't make a right. Hatred for the person with the offense does not help in the healing process, in my opinion.

My heart grieves for those who have been offended against, and I am committed to doing everything in my power to participate in risk-reduction activities regarding sexual offending, including education, appropriate punishment, treatment activities etc.

As a Christian, I believe that wrongdoing (what the Bible calls sin), must be punished, but that God forgives the wrong doer (sinner) who has confessed his/her sin and is committed to a new and changed life. You certainly do not have to share my belief system, but that is the motivation for what I do to care for both the person who offended and the person who was offended against."

His: "Eye for an eye."

Like a number of attempts that we have made to reach out to those whose primary goal is to support victims/survivors/thrivers, this attempt to reach out did not go very well. I have not been a victim of sexual assault, so I cannot say that I understand the pain and anguish people feel when they are assaulted. It has, however, been my privilege to work with and/or meet with seven or eight people who were assaulted sexually, and while I did find them wounded by this experience, I also found them forgiving and willing to give the person who offended a second chance.

It is my hope and prayer that the person who wrote this e-mail to me does eventually find peace instead of anger and hatred, and it is also my prayer that when someone who is victimized sexually comes to me for understanding and support, I will be there to support them. I am especially called, however, as my primary work, to support those who have committed those offenses, and to work diligently for their restoration!