

RSOL (Reform Sex Offender Laws) Conference
Dallas, Texas 2014
July 16 – 19

Susan Walker

I traveled this week with D.L. and J.H. from Denver to Dallas, Texas for the yearly RSOL Conference. The two ladies who went with me were lots of fun. We laughed, listened to all kinds of music, and shared our stories. It was a great trip. Even in my 2003 Subaru Outback, which has 140,000+ miles on it, we had no problems and J.H. was great with checking oil and tires etc!

RSOL is committed to gaining constitutional rights for those who are “registered citizens”. Since most of the people at the conference were not from Colorado, they are quite united in going after the registry and the very negative effects it has on registrants and their families and friends. I reminded folks more than once that Colorado has not yet gotten seriously to the issue of registration because of our own very special problems, i.e. the no known cure philosophy, the Lifetime Act of 1998, the Containment Model and other oh so not fun challenges. With the reminder that we haven’t been able to focus specifically on the registry at this point, I encouraged RSOL to branch out a bit and support those states such as Colorado that are still fighting against archaic beliefs and practices.

Conference at a glance: Lenore Skenazy, known as the World’s Worst Mom for letting her 9 year old son travel the New York Subway by himself, gained fame because she appeared on the Dr. Phil Show. She has written a book called ‘Free Range Kids’. While she and her husband were debating whether to let their 9 year old do this solo trip on the subway, someone asked her “how would you feel if he was raped and murdered and never came home?” Her tongue in cheek reaction was “I have a spare son at home”. While some may feel that this is a light and inappropriate answer to a serious question, Skenazy feels strongly that in today’s world where it is so important to try to be danger free in every aspect, we have overdone. Here are some reasons she says we are so obsessed with danger:

- 1) The media – “news, weather, sports and kidnapped children”.
- 2) A culture of experts who tell us we need everything from protective baby kneepads to baby bath water temperature ducks (or you could just stick your finger in the water before you put the baby in),
- 3) Laws and the people who make and support them.

Lenore believes that the culture seems to constantly need harsher sex laws to show that they “care about the children, and points out the absurdities and gross obscenities of sex offender and other laws by referencing the child who was suspended from school for eating his pop-tart into the shape of a gun.

If you would like to learn more about Lenore and her message, check out her website at Lskenazy@yahoo.com.

Janice Bellucci is an attorney from California who fights for constitutional rights, hands out pocket size copies of the constitution everywhere she goes, and identifies her fight as a civil rights movement. She has won a number of significant victories regarding “presence restrictions”, as well as a battle over whether those with sexual offenses had to post signs saying they had committed a sexual offense on their front doors on Halloween. Janice challenges anything that challenges the 1st amendment rights of registered citizens.

In her fight against presence restrictions, 12 municipalities in California have been served with a lawsuit in Federal Court; 28 municipalities have repealed their ordinances; 7 municipalities have issued a Stay of Enforcement; 21 municipalities are actively reviewing their ordinances, and 11 municipalities have either not replied to Janice's letters or have not acted to comply. Janice is not afraid to sue in Federal Court for violating the Federal Constitution! She has a template available for such lawsuits – all we have to do is ask.

Everybody in California is on the registry for a lifetime! Janice states that "I am here to protect the Constitution by restoring the rights of registered S.O.'s" You can Google to get a pocket edition of the Federal Constitution.

Dr. Melissa Hamilton, J.D., Ph.D. spoke on The Science and Policy of Risk Assessment. Dr. Hamilton talked about a variety of risk assessment tools, their pluses and drawbacks, and how they can be helpful if utilized with other tools, the RNR Model, and clinical judgment.

Dr. Hamilton points out that risk assessment tools should not be utilized with non-contact offenders, as the risk tools weren't normed on them. She also points out that non-contact offenders are not likely to recidivate at all. Also important is the fact that these instruments were created to be used by professional mental health experts; they were not meant to be used by parole and probation officers or those who provide daily treatment to people with sexual offenses.

Many other topics were covered as well, and there is a small chance that the RSOL Conference could come to Denver in the near future! Nothing has been decided for sure, but it is possible. If it does come to our area, we all need to be there to support this organization's growth and success.

CSOR is a state affiliate of RSOL.