



# CSOR

*Though I have fallen,  
I will rise. - Micah 7:8*

29<sup>th</sup> Edition

December 2020

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CSOR Newsletter  
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## THOUGHTS ON THE MOMENT WE ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING

**Susan Walker**

Never in America, in my opinion, in my lifetime, have we confronted an obstacle to life quite as difficult and life penetrating as Covid 19. I was born near the end of World War II, and so am not including the holocaust in this list – it definitely belongs in the list, but I experienced it not in person, but in hindsight. It certainly ranks with the worst scenarios humankind has ever experienced. When I look back on my life – my experience with polio in the 1950's polio epidemic, my Dad getting sick at age 36 with Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) and dying at 41, the shooting death of President Kennedy (announcement came while I was in 9th grade physical science class), the Viet Nam War and its related tragedies, the AIDS epidemic, 9-11 in New York City and the 3,000 deaths because of that, and the sentencing of my son Mark to a 4 – Life sentence in the Colorado Department of Corrections – I am filled with wonder that life has gone on to regain some kind of normalcy. Covid somehow feels different. It feels with Covid as if we have so little control over our present and our future. IF and as we move beyond Covid, perhaps our experiences with it will begin to blend into all of the other tragedies we remember in our lives.

Hearing about E-bola and tsunami activity in other countries is heartbreaking, but when America is at the epicenter of a major life-threatening occurrence involving hundreds of thousands of people, it definitely reminds us of the, at times, seeming futility of life. There is a passage in the Bible that says "Behold all flesh is as the grass, and all the goodness of man (and woman) is as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof decays." But it goes on to say: "The redeemed of the Lord shall return again and come rejoicing unto Zion." Even with this horrific illness that currently surrounds us, God gives us hope for a brighter tomorrow. For those experiencing prison and the Covid Pandemic at the same time, it likely feels as though you have been completely forsaken by God. Romans 8:38 in the Bible says: "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Do not give up hope for tomorrow, whether you are in a prison cell with Covid, or living in the general community surrounded by Covid!

*Be The Change You Want to See in the World: Mahatma Gandhi*

Over the last months of Covid 19 experiences, it has been my privilege to try to support Executive Director Dean Williams of the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) by sending him frequent e-mails stating that I am praying for him and for the whole CDOC operation. Director Williams has been stalwart in the face of this tragedy, as have many folks working with him. He prays each day for wisdom in the performance of his responsibilities as Executive Director of Colorado Prisons. Case Managers have, in some facilities, had to leave their case management responsibilities and go to work in the kitchen preparing and delivering food. You who are incarcerated have also sacrificed mightily as you have been locked down and moved over and over again. Please know that we remember all of you daily!

**EVIDENCE-BASED REFORM RECOMMENDED BY ATSA RE:  
REGISTRATION AND COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION OF ADULTS CONVICTED  
OF A SEXUAL CRIME  
(ATSA = Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers)**

A great paper came out recently from ATSA based on strong evidence, recommending the reform of registration and community notification. The paper is long (27 pages including references), and we are not able to share the whole content with you. However, there is room to share the overall ATSA recommendations and a few other interesting thoughts around the issues of registration and community notification and our CSOR efforts to bring the paper to the attention of our Legislature.

Following are ATSA's recommendations: 1) "Discontinue one-size-fits-all approaches for the registration and notification of individuals convicted of sexual crimes. 2) Individualize registration and notification requirements based upon empirically validated risk assessment tools and similar methods; 3) Develop avenues and criteria for relief from registration which incorporates the desistance literature and recognizes the importance of treatment and supervision interventions for reducing recidivism risk, facilitating desistance and strengthening protective factors; 4) Limit public community notification practices to the highest risk registrants, decrease broad-based dissemination of registrant information and/or re-establish law enforcement only registration practices coupled with allowing public inquiry about specific individuals; 5) Remove adjunct policies such as residence restrictions from SORN laws as they do not work and are one of the primary drivers of legal challenges. Adjunct policies also undermine protective factors and create unnecessary barriers for community registration; 6) Recognize that a national one-size-fits-all approach to SORN laws does not work within the U.S. and allow states to make adjustments to their registries based on individual needs without incurring any financial penalty; 7) Utilize registration as part of a larger management scheme for adults convicted of sexual crimes, with greater collaboration and focus on rehabilitative and reintegration efforts; 8) Enhance SORN information for law enforcement purposes, including steps to ensure the accuracy of the information and strengthening tracking of registrants moving between jurisdictions; and 9) strengthen partnerships between law enforcement and sexual offense specific management professionals, including treatment professionals."

ATSA closes their article with the following information which we are quoting: "Evidence-based assessment, treatment, management and policy strategies enhance community safety, reduce sexual abuse recidivism and prevent sexual abuse. However, too often the data surrounding public policy interventions is discounted or ignored, especially when the conclusions of the research cause discomfort among policymakers and their constituents. Although SORN laws were created to protect the public from potentially dangerous offenders, given the research and all that is known about the negative effects of such policies, policy makers and practitioners are now faced with the necessity to modify these laws in keeping with their goals. SORN laws as currently applied to adults convicted of a sexual offense in the U.S. are not evidence-based, do not enhance community safety or prevent sexual abuse.

ATSA takes the position that sex offender registration and notification laws for adults should be reformed to better meet the goals of community safety, victim protection, and the effective rehabilitation of those who have committed such offenses.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.  
- Margaret Mead*

## Registration and Residency Restrictions Discussion (continued)

In an effort to get the news regarding this ATSA Paper to the attention of Senator Pete Lee, Representative Mike Weissman (both on the Judicial Committee) and others, I sent the paper to both of them, pointing out the fact that the head of our SOMB, Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, was a co-author on a couple of the papers used as references for the findings above. Knowing that Chris is also an active participant with, and seeming supporter of, the SMART Office, I had to wonder whether we are doing all we can here in Colorado from the SOMB perspective, to make sure that this new, well documented, evidence-based information regarding the fallacies related to the registry and residency restrictions is being appropriately disseminated to the Colorado Legislature and other policymakers?! Senator Lee responded a short time later with a letter to Chris, as well as a number of other heads of public safety departments, other legislators, client advocates (yours truly and Roger Kincade) and more.

Senator Lee commended Chris for his work on these issues, and stated that Colorado was obviously NOT on a track that honored these new findings via years of research. He told Chris that since he was on the Public Policy Committee for ATSA, and had been an author on a few of the publications, he would be looking to him to present to the Legislature in terms of getting Colorado on a path that properly implements or doesn't implement certain aspects of registration, and does not support residency restrictions. Colorado as a State does not have residency restrictions, but individual cities in Colorado have chosen to implement these restrictions out of sheer ignorance regarding the information in this ATSA Publication, and/or made a choice NOT to read or acknowledge the research that has been done in these areas. These cities include: Englewood, Commerce City, Greenwood Village and a few others. Lafayette is currently considering residency restrictions. Denver is the only city in the metro area that will allow two persons with a sexual offense to live at the same address. Littleton will allow group living but only for persons who have not offended against anyone under 18 years of age.

We are hopeful that the Sunset Review which the Legislature plans to take up this next legislative year, and the audit of the SOMB, as well as the truths exposed in this ATSA Paper will all come together in some major steps forward for our cause, even in a pandemic year!

### **THINGS THAT NEED FIXING in Parole and Treatment (in our opinion)!**

While there are definitely signs of hope in the works in terms of improvements, we continue to receive concerns and complaints on an almost daily basis from many of you about a variety of issues related to your treatment and parole. People are still being sent back "for the remainder" for as little as one technical violation in some cases, while parole officers continue to blame the Parole Board for this decision— in reality, it is parole that is recommending the time frame for which they believe the person should go back. We are grateful for the hard work that is being done by Jessica Bertolas, Manager of the Special Supervision Unit (used to be "Sex Offender Unit" – yea for a move toward 1st person language), Deputy Executive Director Ruth Coffman, and others to improve the CST's (Community Supervision Team) ability to be positively effectual with clients who have committed a sexual offense.

We also understand that while more parole officers are trying to figure out alternatives to return to prison for persons with technical violations, it will take time and real effort to get good at seeking and finding alternative solutions – house arrest may work as an option (if the person has not already been put in jail and lost their housing and belongings, as well as their job); increased supervision and a slightly different tact in treatment may also be helpful – limit "ring around the treatment programs" activity.

*You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines whimpering and complaining; you make progress by implementing ideas.  
By Shirley Chisholm*

A man who currently sits in the Akron County Jail with a recommendation from his therapist for a higher level of treatment than the original agency can provide as well as continued treatment on the outside, is likely to be sent back despite serious medical issues that should have been taken care of during his many years of incarceration. This in no way excuses his poor decision-making; however, there is a strong probability that he may not survive another stint inside with his serious medical concerns and a potentially higher possibility of exposure to the Covid 19 virus. Parole's rationale for sending him back is that he needs to take the ARMS Class to really dwell on why he did what he did and did not call on his support for help. The same thing could be accomplished in the community under "house arrest" and in conjunction with a new treatment program and individual sessions with his therapist to address his issues. Another man went back "for the remainder" just last week for one technical violation. Of course we know that few people who are sent back "for the remainder" actually stay for the remainder, but the remainder language has been used, at least it appears, as a scare tactic.

Treatment programs can also improve the way that they say things to people and the way they make decisions. A man in treatment with intellectual challenges was recently told by his therapist that he wasn't making eye contact and was not progressing in treatment. A better approach that offered more effectual and positive direction certainly could have been found. This person also indicated that they did not understand the program's workbook. Classes had recently been increased for him to three or four a week, too many for him to handle. A more thoughtful approach by the therapist might have been to say something like the following: "I would like to help you make more progress in treatment, and wonder if you have any ideas about how we could work together to make that happen? Again, because he was told he was not making eye contact, an explanation from the therapist to this client with intellectual challenges as to why that was a concern and suggesting that together they figure out a way to work on it would have made a lot of sense. This was staffed, and improvements in approach are in the works.

After 20 years of doing this work, we have seen some progress forward, made after intensive effort on the part of advocates for the sexual offense population. More advocates are needed!

## AMAZING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

While I cannot include ALL of the amazing accomplishments by some of our men and women, here are a few that will inspire those of you still on your way "up" and "out". Since I can't name all, please do not feel left out if you are not mentioned. These are men and women who have stayed in contact with me and whom I know well.

1. David Smith – David has faithfully, along with the love of his life Marion, assisted me specifically and CSOR with the newsletter for 7 ½ years. Thank you so much, David, for your continued support in this important arena.
2. Conrad Gonzales – Conrad spent several days a week over the past couple of years assisting CSOR with the compilation and organization of our movement's history. This extends from the early days when we were part of The Sex Offender Issues Group (SOIG) at Colorado CURE, to the formation of Advocates for Change, and finally to the formation of CSOR. Conrad, besides spending months and months on the organization of the historical material re: our advocacy growth, filed, helped with the newsletter's publication and dissemination, and serves on the CSOR Board. Conrad also does a "support group" for people at RSA. Conrad, get healthy and stay that way. We need you.
3. Mike Dell – Mike has been around since SOIG days, and continues to support men coming out of prison and those who have been out for a while. He also advocates at the Legislature on a regular basis.
4. Len Rudolph -Len is now on the western slope and over the last few years has built an amazing Hangar House, complete with an apartment for him and an Air B and B for travelers! He also maintains a condo in Aurora which houses two of our men at any given time. Since his "operation" on the slope will take a while to get going, he has offered for a man needing housing on the western slope to live in the Air B and B until his operation is fully ready to go! Yea Len.

*Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out. James Bryant Conant*

5. Rene Moroe who spent 15 years at the womens' prison, came out of prison a number of years ago, flying full steam. With the death of her Mom, she received an inheritance, and is now pursuing her dream of a cabin in the mountains. It is nearly finished – she is doing much of the work herself – amazing. Rene surprised me with a gift out of that inheritance from her Mom of \$10,000 for CSOR. Wow.
  6. Mark Walker and Quentin Valdois– Mark got his paralegal certificate while in DOC and has worked in a Denver law firm since he got out in 2009. He started a prison ministry called The Cell Church, and with his friend and co-worker Q (Quentin Valdois) runs The Cell Church, a non-profit that takes seminary level Bible Study to the prisons. Mark's group also has a Saturday church gathering (virtual right now) which provides an opportunity for worship. Mark and I refer to each other frequently. Both men are on CSOR's board as well.
  7. Ken Puhler – Ken is a lifesaver on the Western Slope for men getting out and heading that way. Along with his friend Ron Wagers, he assists new men moving to Grand Junction with issues related to housing, furniture, settling in, and grasping the ins and outs of treatment and supervision in that area.
  8. Ken Kyle – Ken got out a while back, and spent months at CrossRoads to ascertain the kind of lives that our men live when they have to parole homeless. He also frequently supplies phones for people getting out, and is actively advocating for better living conditions and correct interpretation of laws that affect our folks.
  9. Last but not least, Wayne (Skip) Bethurum, got out of prison a few years back and started a non-profit specifically for veterans leaving prison with our offense in their background. He assisted with housing, furniture and other issues before moving to the western slope to begin a new life in CedarEdge! There he is active in the town, volunteers at the city's art center, and blends nicely into the community!
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NOTE: This is not even close to the number of men and women I could have named and reported on – however, it is all I could squeeze in to the last page(s) of the newsletter this time. Some men prefer not to have their names “out there”, still in fear of retaliation from the system or just for privacy reasons. Some people have not stayed in touch and I don't know where they are or what they are doing. I am proud of these mentioned above, and the fact that it certainly fully discounts Greig Veeder's initial beliefs regarding our men and women as to “no known cure” and “one size fits all”, once a sexual offender, always a sexual offender.”

## NEWS TIDBITS

1) Jeff Brosh, beloved son of Ann Brosh, passed away recently. Jeff and Ann have, for many years now, supplied funds for first month's rent to hundreds of men. While Ann is now retired and not involved in this mission in exactly the same way that she and Jeff were in the past, she still honors men who wrote to her asking for help years ago who are finally getting out.

We send our love and prayers to Ann and her family at this time of the loss of her beloved son Jeff.

2) After a number of delays, Susan is meeting during November (via Zoom due to the latest surge in the Corona Virus) with Deputy Executive Director Ruth Coffman who is over Parole and other outside activities of the Colorado Department of Corrections. A major piece of the work Ruth has done since the inception of her position is to implement a new approach and create a new face for what used to be called “The Sex Offender Unit” – this referred to parole officers who worked specifically with those on sexual offense parole. Hurrah for a move toward person first language. Jessica Bertolas, previously the head of the Aurora Parole Office, was chosen to be the manager of the newly named unit, the “Specialized Supervision Unit”. Jessica is doing a fantastic job as she leads the effort to “reframe” the approach to parole for our men and women. Doors are opening for more honest communication between parole and our advocates!

*Progress requires setbacks; the only sure way to avoid failure is not to try. Henry Spencer*

It is hoped that this meeting between Susan and Ruth can address the issue of more easily accessed dollars to assist in the first couple of months of housing on the outside for men and women who have no outside support when it comes time for them to leave the physical boundaries of the Colorado Department of Corrections. While our hopes are not “super high” that this can be accomplished, we are introducing the subject to see where the conversation may lead. It is clear that at \$40,000 per person per year with our offense to be housed inside the Department of Corrections and receive treatment, money saved by those same people being on the outside should be going to support the first two or three months out, while people are trying to procure a job! We’ll see if there is foundation for this logic.

3) Drugs and alcohol continue to be a reason that many struggle while on parole for our offense. We are hopeful that powerful entities around us, the Sex Offender Management Board, the Colorado Department of Public Safety, the heads of parole and probation, will recognize the fact that of the issues that affect the number of sexual assaults that happen, drugs and alcohol play a big part. Doors must be opened that allow our men and women access to drug and alcohol treatment facilities, both out patient and in-patient. Sexual offense specific treatment does NOT adequately address these issues. If these powerful entities do not join the battle to open the doors to in-patient facilities for our men and women, the fight to do so will languish.


4) NARSOL (National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws) is offering a Litigation Summit (virtual conference) to its members as well as other interested persons November 19 & 21, 2020. Presenters are: Paul Dubbeling, Civil Rights Attorney; Erica Dubno, Post Conviction Counsel; Aaron Marcus, Civil Rights Attorney; Adele Nicholas, Civil Rights Attorney; Paul Reingold, Law Professor Emeritus, and Mark Yurachek, Appeals Attorney. While we are not able to open the doors for those of you inside to attend, we will attempt to capture highlights of this Summit to share in the March CSOR Newsletter.

### **CSOR Associate Retires from Housing Responsibilities**

**To all my CSOR contacts, Clients in and out of DOC and CC, Advocates, Colleagues, Friends:**

I am gently phasing out of CSOR housing responsibilities as of December 31 2021. This is due mainly to family life changes and other situations at home. It has been rewarding to work with Susan and other CSOR Board Members. As a longtime landlord, I have always believed housing, while basic, is so essential. One of my greatest pleasures is preparing a place to become someone’s home. It has been my pleasure to work with all, and especially our leader, Susan Walker.

Janet Hunsaker – CSOR Associate and Board Member (continuing)!



“UNTIL ONE FEELS THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, THERE IS NO CHRISTMAS. ALL ELSE IS OUTWARD DISPLAY—SO MUCH TINSEL AND DECORATIONS. FOR IT ISN’T THE HOLLY, IT ISN’T THE SNOW. IT ISN’T THE TREE NOT THE FIRELIGHT’S GLOW. IT’S THE WARMTH THAT COMES TO THE HEARTS OF MEN WHEN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT RETURNS AGAIN.”

Unknown

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