



CSOR

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

40th Edition

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CSOR Newsletter August 2023 Living with a Fracture - what fun!!!

Hello all!!! I have never had a broken bone before. A couple of months ago, I found out what it feels like to have a broken bone. I was out East of Denver, just inside Aurora, trying to find one of our men whose parole officer had placed him in a building that for some reason, parole was filling with our folks.

I say that because it is right in the heart of Aurora -East Colfax, where gangs, shootings, beatings, drugs and alcohol, etc. thrive. I couldn't get the man I was trying to find to answer the phone (later found he was still asleep), so I stopped near a place I was familiar with - Orlando's - to see if folks there knew where this new apartment building was that parole was using to house our folks. Sad to say, no-one at Orlando's knew where this new building was, so I stopped at one more place across the street where a man told me not to touch his dog because the dog would bite me. Ugh!! I quietly asked folks there if they knew where this new building was (two policemen were there as well as the owner of the motel on that property) and no-one could tell me about this new place where the young man was that I was trying to find. As I carefully made my way past the dog and walked to my car, I had to step up slightly on a cement walk. The front of my sandal got caught under the thin piece of cement, and I knew I was either going to smash my face or my arm/hand. I decided to go with the hand.

As soon as I hit the ground on my left hand and lower arm, I felt incredible pain. I looked at my hand and it was immediately swollen and hurt like you know what! Being a Baptist minister's daughter, I never learned to swear, but if I had learned to swear, I definitely would have done so at that time.

It didn't immediately occur to me that it was broken, but as I continued to meander up East Colfax in search of the man I was looking for, I happened to spot him and his black Cadillac on the left side of the street. He had just woken up and for some reason was outside of his small apartment. While I was happy to have found him - after all, he was the reason I left Bear Valley in S.W. Denver to go to East Colfax, I could have slapped him a good one (or worse) for not answering the phone BEFORE I got out of the car and took my fall.

I took care of my business with this man, and as I got back to the car, I was beginning to feel pretty strongly that I had broken something. Being the fairly stubborn person that I am, I went home and debated for a while about whether to go to Kaiser Permanente which is where my Doctor is, and have it x-rayed. As the pain was definitely not getting any better, I decided to go and get it x-rayed. Sure enough, it was broken.

The staff at Lakewood Kaiser put on a make-shift "cast" to hold me until the orthopedic Doctors at Kaiser Franklin, way across Denver to the East, had time to put a "real cast" on me. Believe it or not, that was five days later!

I now have a steel prosthetic cast which is protecting my fourth and fifth fingers (including the "pinky finger"). It is covered with a "lovely" blue material. The fracture is down below my fourth and fifth fingers, so the cast goes past my hand, and half way up to my elbow! It is interesting that I have been able to learn within the last week or so that I can type not only with my right hand which was not hurt, but with my second and third fingers on my left hand, just to the left of my thumb. It is a challenge, but it seems to work reasonably well for a bit, until the whole left hand starts hurting from the "action". I am grateful that James Morrell is willing and able to pick up more than his fair share of letters for me while I am healing. Thanks, James

Thursday the 20th (you will get this newsletter well after this date), hopefully this cast will come off because the fracture has healed. Then starts the therapy in terms of being able to return over time to a normal functioning hand and fingers!! I am so grateful it was not my right hand!! I suspect many of you have experienced far worse fractures than the one I have being that you are the "male of the species?!"

In spite of the fracture, I was able to drive all the way to Sterling to visit for a couple of hours with one of our men there who writes to me regularly. I made it back safely as well! I guess that is a given since you wouldn't be getting this newsletter if I hadn't made it back!!!

In case you wonder who keeps me company while I am answering the phone and writing letters, I will let you know. My dogs are in many ways my best friends. Cayenne is a Standard Poodle. She has hair that is reddish/yellowish/ brown. She is incredibly loving and barks at every dog she sees along our morning rides. She loves looking out the window of the car at whatever is nearby. Sometimes we ride a mile or so to see the prairie dogs scrambling around eating grass etc. in an open field a short way from our house. Bella is a mini-pincher (min-pin). She runs like the wind. Her joy in life is seeing squirrels run around the neighborhood - she goes absolutely crazy when she sees one and also barks like crazy. They are my steady helpers and companions, and hopefully we will have many years together ahead of us.

We have three men living here with us at this particular time. One is J. J is a truck driver- he delivers a variety of things not only in the Denver area but up in the mountains as well. He was just allowed to leave Colorado and go to Washington State to see his Mom who he hadn't seen in many years. He is bringing his exotic bird back to Denver to enjoy.

S is a probationer and has a background as a wrestler. He is a chef at a downtown Denver restaurant and loves his work there. He was introduced to me by his probation officer and one of his therapists. He is a good cook, and a great organizer.

E is brand new to us. He just got to the "big city" of Denver a few days ago, and like the rest of us, is trying to learn to find his way around. The city is so full of cranes and multi-person "cubicle" apartments, that you have to look closely to see transitional family homes. Unfortunately, those cubicle buildings do NOT have inexpensive apartments for people in Denver who are living on the streets. No- one has come up with a solution for that problem. Hopefully the new mayor will keep his word and changes will be made. It is unfortunate that other than a limited # of crusaders and parole officers, our particular population has limited choices of places to live. While a church recently raised money for older adults in need, attention to our men and women is scant to say the least.

I have been pleased with the response of, and interaction with Alison Talley and Amanda Retting. When ask them questions over the internet regarding readiness for treatment for individual people, they have been great at getting back to me and following up on the questions I ask. They have also given me specific information that helps me to better understand why people are and aren't in treatment at the present time, and what may specifically affect when they will actually get into treatment. Tx to both!

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Here are some new but not earth shattering tidbits from this year's Legislative Session. Every step forward and not backward MUST be counted as a plus!!!

1. From the SOMB (Sex Offender Bill): Clients can choose their own provider and change one time without having to get permission WITHIN the first 90 days. QUESTION: not sure if this applies only on the outside, or not also inside CDOC. Guessing it is only on the outside. We'll see.
2. Secondly, there will be a study and report to the Legislature on how to fix the Global Referral List at DOC by February 2024. Hopefully this will be really good (Susan's comment) !!!
3. Some children who were prosecuted in the adult court will now go under the juvenile standards.
4. Evaluations are no longer mandatory in history cases, but will be ordered IF requested by the prosecutor of the court.
5. New updates from CDOC: a) They are moving to a three track program to expedite treatment for people with lifetime cases, who are also below average risk. (Not sure how average is being defined).
6. Also there will be a committee with the Parole Board to re-evaluate the criteria for release in determinate cases where people have not been able to access treatment. The bill is Senate Bill, 23-1064 and it went into effect on June 5th.

Susan's comments:

This is a beginning for sure, and we will be grateful for the small amount of change that is being allowed and potentially further considered. THANKS TO Laurie Kepros who in my semi-absence due to a broken hand (left) over the last few weeks, as well as a bit of slack in terms of my faithful attendance at SOMB Meetings, stays as she always does, ON TOP of what is going on at the Legislature and the SOMB. Laurie, we will be forever grateful to you.

In my opinion, there is finally a bit of change in the air. The lag to get into treatment is definitely and finally being noticed, the current difference being that there is clearly a serious attempt to do something about it. I would add my thanks to Amanda Retting and Alison Tally for their ongoing willingness to listen to all of my questions and concerns, and besides listening, trying and frequently succeeding in doing something about whatever issue I had brought to them, again and again! Thank you Amanda and Alison.

THERE IS A SMALL BIT OF HOPE FOR TOMORROW!!!!

National Security Threat (By James Morrell)

I have been out on parole for nearly a year. What a year it has been. I was moved from FCF to DRDC to be released. The morning of my release I was given my clothes and put in a room. After receiving the very important envelope that contained my ID's and JPAY card I was put in a van and taken to the bus station in downtown Denver and unceremoniously told the Bus station is through that building. It had been twenty years since I had been to the Bus station. It looked nothing like I remembered; There I was walking through the building to the Bus Station carrying a rather large box containing all the possessions I had gathered while incarcerated. I find it interesting that what I thought was a lot of stuff while in prison really wasn't unless you're carrying it through a building to that bus station. A side note, the pants that I received at DRDC were incredibly large and fell down every step or so. Imagine carrying a big old box while holding up your pants looking for a bathroom inside a very large terminal. As luck would have it, the bathroom was conveniently located at the other end of the terminal from the gate. For the next five hours I was blessed to sit in the Union Station bus Station in Downtown Denver not knowing a soul wearing the tell-tale garments of a new parolee. Let's not forget about the big box and falling down pants. I couldn't bring more attention to me had I a strobe light attached to my head.

I made it to Evans and was picked up by my friend. We went to the parole office. I had to go back the next day as the bus was late and the parole office was closing. At the parole office I was given the standard this is what you are permitted and not permitted to do. I then went and received the most beautiful piece of ankle jewelry ever made. It was cumbersome at the beginning. Now I don't even feel that it's there. I so enjoy the reaction from some of the public who notice the monitor when I don't wear long pants. I am not sure of their issue, they're not the ones who have to wear it. I am close to having the monitor removed. Honestly, that will be a good day. Getting my driver's license, food stamps, and Medicaid was simple, slow, and easy.

In September I am paroled for a year. I am feeling well about my progress and the ease that I have experienced my transition to living within my community. I have a good PO and Therapist (not brown nosing here. They really are good). I sincerely believe that I am having an easy time because I follow the rules, am not a management problem, and listen to and use my support team. I honestly believe and advocate a strong support team. I have been becoming more confident living in Evans. I am not as paranoid or leery about being in public. I am rather proud that I get anywhere in Evans and Greeley via the transit system. I had never ridden the bus before. Granted the area isn't large compared to Denver. I would like to point out it is quite a bit larger than my residence for the past twenty years.

All that previous information was a preface to the fact that I recently found out that I am a threat to the National Security of the United States. I attempted to take my mom to her bank located within Fort Carson, Colorado. I was asked to obtain a visitor's pass and waited in line for over an hour, in my rental car. Suddenly the Gate Guard came to the car and yelled you are not permitted on base as you are a sex offender, He then escorted me and my mom off the post. I felt bad that I put my mom through that ordeal. I had no idea that my conviction was a threat to national security.

I am not really a Threat to the National Security of the United States nor Fort Carson for that matter. It is important to note that rules are put in place to protect the innocent. Regardless of what crime you have committed. It's a natural consequence. For those of us who have committed a sexual offense it's even more strict. Society sees us as a pariah. Scourge of the earth and ones that should never be trusted. Let alone released from prison. It will take years to change this unrealistic view. The most productive method of beginning this change is that those of us who have committed a sexual offense demonstrate that change is possible. We can be trusted. We can become productive members of society and our communities. It will take a communal effort. There are many more successful parolees out here than not. I would encourage those of you still incarcerated to begin now. Begin acting as you would act once paroled. How you want your families, friends, and your community to see you. It's not too early to make a positive impact on how we as those who have committed a sexual act are perceived.

Comparing my parole to the "horror" stories I have heard prior to my parole has been easy and stress free. I give credit to my support team, the work I did prior to my release, and my friend and roommate Travis. He has worked very hard for the last eight plus years and has an excellent reputation with Parole and the City of Evans Police Department. He has demonstrated day end and day out the proper way to be successful on parole. I so appreciate his guidance, his example, and for him allowing me to ride on his coattails. I must also acknowledge my good friends Don and Glenn, who are very successful on parole. I met Travis, Don, and Glenn in prison twenty plus years ago. All three are constant support, wealth of constructive information, and most of all, something I never had before coming to prison. Real friends. What a Blessing they are.

“Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It’s not something you learn in school. But if you haven’t learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven’t learned anything.” — Muhammad Ali

My Unexpected Surprise from NARSOL - National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (by Susan)

Never did I expect to get an honor from NARSOL. The first and I assumed the last one I got was in 2020 – I was named Advocate of the Year. When this most recent one came a few weeks ago, I was truly surprised and a bit shocked to say the least. I had been pretty much out of commission for a year or so- disheartened to be sure due to the loss of my 4 year helpers, but continuing to write letters to many of you, help people find housing etc. When the call came from Robin Vanderwall at NARSOL saying that I had been recognized with The Lifetime Achievement Award, I was shocked even more than the first time I got an award to be sure. Please enjoy the pictures below of the plaque and a small one of me holding the plaque. I will soon be hanging this new one below or alongside the one I got in 2020. I am not attempting to flaunt my award(s), but to share with all of you who gave me the opportunity to do something really worthwhile with what is left of my life! Thanks for allowing me to "share" my life with you.

Susan



"How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world."
— William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

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