

Why do I write?

written by Sandy | February 5, 2021



By Sandy . . . Over the past almost ten years, I have written many editorials and expository articles based on things that are happening in the world of our advocacy, especially things involving consequences of being on the registry. Looking back at our archived ***Digest*** copies, the first one I find there in which I wrote such a piece was [May, 2012](#). The subject was the plight of registrants who were homeless due to residency restrictions. This is a subject about which I have [continued to write](#) over these years.

Another topic on which I have often written are situations where registrants are excluded – from [homeless shelters](#), from [emergency shelters](#), from [parks](#), from [their children's schools](#), from [government programs](#), and from consideration of early release from prison [due to Covid](#). I'm sure I have overlooked a few.

There have been too many to count about [Halloween restrictions](#) and how they are applied in various states and jurisdictions and the ridiculous, sometimes unconstitutional, sometimes bizarre requirements they place on registrants. In the too-

many-to-count category also are pieces [about the media](#) regarding their biased rhetoric, lack of factual information, and twisting of the facts regarding sexual offense issues; pieces [about legislation](#) that is lacking in constitutional basis and further punishes those who have paid their debts to society, and pieces about [residency restrictions](#) in general.

I have written and published pieces by others about situations where registrants, after the completion of their sentence, some many decades after, were denied something due to their registry status – the [law student](#) who was not allowed to sit for the bar exam, [the singer](#) who is not even on the registry but has an ancient misdemeanor conviction for inappropriate sexual behavior with a minor, [the actor](#) whose scenes were cut from the movie when his background became known, the [baseball player](#) who was shamed and whose career was destroyed, [the artist](#) whose art was banned from a museum, and the [father denied entrance](#) to the hospital room where his critically ill young son was crying for him. (Written by my dear friend Lenore Skenazy.)

Also are the individual situations that I consider a miscarriage of justice – [the mother](#) who was convicted of facilitating a sexual crime because she could not stop her teenage son's relationship with an older woman, a [14-year-old](#) put on the registry for sexting, a [Purple Heart recipient](#) who was denied the gift of a home because he was a registrant, and [those expelled](#) from a [ministry and home](#) where they have lived and served for years because a town decided that a park that had been there also for years was now a children's playground.

Every piece published elicits comments and emails. Most are favorable and complimentary. A few are not, and their theme is always the same: I am too negative; I write only about bad things; not everyone on the registry suffers injustices; not every place has residency restrictions or Halloween restrictions; why can't I ever write about good things; people need hope and encouragement.

If the criticism comes in the form of an email to me, I answer it. Generally, I say that I do write about favorable situations when they come to my attention. Favorable situations are most often in the form of court or lawsuit decisions, and analyzing those is not my forte'; Larry does that quite well.

If criticism is to be helpful, it makes one think about the situation. Why is almost everything I write a "downer," as some have called them?

Why?

NARSOL has a project that showcases registrants who are doing well in their lives, who have something positive to share. It is called [Humans on the Registry](#). The project is virtually dormant; after the first initial applicants, a few more have trickled in, but the trickle has slowed considerably. So, first reason to my why? – almost no one lets us know if they are doing well. They probably don't want any attention brought to them. Our new project, [Lives on the Registry](#) in video form, will, we believe, fare better.

Our mission and our advocacy are to create change. To create change, one must show what is broken, what needs changing. So, second reason – I am showing what needs changing.

I write "doom and gloom" pieces because that is what I am sent. My writing derives almost exclusively from two sources: media pieces, which are virtually always about negative situations, and personal testimony, either put as comments on our blog or emailed directly to me. For both of those, I contact the writer and ask permission to use their story or, in some cases, work with them, edit what they have sent, and publish it under their name.

This is the case with the currently running [Special Edition](#) feature on our blog titled **Shame**, the powerful story of a daughter's life with her father, who is a registrant. As soon

as Part I was published, I received the usual complaint: This is so negative. Why is that all you publish?

I'm beginning to sound like a broken record, but that is what I am sent. These are the people who need their stories told. When people send me [positive stories](#), I will – and do – write about or publish them. When the media writes that a jurisdiction in Texas has removed its “safety zone” restrictions around schools so that registered parents can participate in their children’s education, be assured that I will write about it.

I think, however, that the bigger question is not why I write what I do but why I write at all.

So many do not have a platform from which to be heard. I write as their voice.

So many are bound in the chains of prison, enforced restrictions, and discrimination. I write that they may have freedom.

So many are victims of false perceptions, lies, and unfair generalizations.

I write as their truth.