



Quote of the month:

To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains  
but to live in a way that respects and enhances the  
freedom of others.

~~Nelson Mandela



Reform Sex  
Offender Laws, Inc.

# The Digest - May, 2014

## RSOL's Monthly Newsletter



From the Admin Team

### We have a new look!

We hope that you have noticed--the Digest has a new look and a new feel. Please let us know what you like, what you don't like, and what you would like to see by [emailing us](#).

### The conference draws nearer--Hope. Courage. Reform

Joining keynote speaker Lenore Skenazy are featured speakers Chrysanthi Leon, Wayne Bowers, Dr. Steven DavidSon, and Dr. Melissa Hamilton. In addition to these inspirational and compelling speakers, we are gathering a number of applications for workshops and presentations and will soon



start making decisions. The deadline for submitting an application to be a presenter is June 1. Just go to our [main website](#), click on the symbol that you see on the left, and choose "Workshops and Breakout Sessions; Presentation Proposal Form."

Early bird admission fees are applicable through the end of May. Remember that your fee includes lunch each day--Thursday, Friday, and Saturday--that you are in attendance at the conference.

When you register, you definitely want to reserve a ticket for the banquet on Friday night. Not only will this include some of the best food in Texas but also will feature our famous fund-raising auction. Be sure and check the auction page for items to donate for the auction. Remembering that most folk will travel by airline, keep "flyer-friendly" in mind when bringing items to donate.

Information for conference registration, proximity to airports, hotel information, speaker information, and anything else regarding the conference is available through the same link on our website or [directly here](#). See you in Texas in July; Wahoo!!

## RSOL membership and membership forum

Our membership drive is going very well, and the private membership forum has opened and already has some activity. Our yearly membership fee is very low although there are options for individuals who wish to support us at a higher rate or at a recurring monthly rate.

On [the website](#), click the membership button you see on the right. This will take you to the Wild Apricot Membership function. If you did not create a password when you joined, you will need to do so to enter the forum. Click on the forum menu item under "members," subscribe to the forum, and you're all set to go!

**Become an RSOL Member!**



## A message from Josh Gravens



Josh Gravens, a TX Voices member, who is a Soros Justice Fellow with CURE National, sends this message to our wider family: *I am working on a project and I need your help. The project is designed to humanize people on the registry.*

*The best way to destroy the sex offender myth is to make each person into an individual human story.*

*I want to work with those who have stories that include but are not limited to: lost housing or jobs; inability to obtain housing or jobs; people not on the registry who are affected by loved ones who are listed; married couples who deal with registration; people who were 15 to young 20's who had sex with a teen and were prosecuted; people who had offenses many years ago. Also: people who are victims of sexual abuse; advocates for registrants; professionals who work in public safety or mental health. These are just examples to get you thinking. I look forward to working with all of you on this project.*

*If you have always been looking for something to do to create the environment for change, email me at [josh@curenational.org](mailto:josh@curenational.org) or if you or someone you know cannot access the internet, call CURE at (202) 681-8121.*



## A Vision of Hope

[This one](#) barely made deadline; Alaska digs another little niche against ex-post facto application of requirement to register.

The entire civil commitment program in Texas has come under fire recently for a variety of reasons. [This is a very good analysis and critique](#) of the situation by a writer in Austin who is well respected by many legislators.

[This long and excellent article](#), coming in the wake of highly publicized alleged rapes and murders in California, explains in depths the flaws in our registry system--and Jessica's Law in particular--that render it not only useless in preventing serious crime but also contribute to the problem.

The Florida Action Committee [takes a look](#) at one of the driving forces of the hysteria related to registrants--the media.

Focusing on the issue of civil liberties, "[When sex-offender laws promote more crimes.](#)" deals with the suits being brought in California challenging the many restrictions that make public areas off-limits to registrants.



This is a multi-source topic that is proving very popular. It deals with the rights of registrants to travel, both in the states and internationally, and with the issue of passports in light of pending legislation to limit their access to registrants.

First is a blog post from [With Justice for All](#) giving an overview of the legislation.

Then there are two lengthy and thorough blog posts covering virtually every aspect of the situation; one is from *Once Fallen*; titled "[The Traveling Registrant: Your Right of Travel as a Registered Person.](#)" It is current and very well documented.

The other is from *It's Time to Reduce, Reconstruct, Reclassify, Rethink and Reform the Virginia Sex Offender Registry*, and as the name suggests, is geared toward laws in Virginia but has much that will be applicable across the states. This blog actually contains two entries on the subject: "[Traveling as a Registered Sex Offender,](#)" and "[What Are The Laws Restricting Registered Sex Offenders From Traveling Across the U.S. or Internationally?](#)"

The California State Supreme Court [declined to hear the appeal](#) brought to it from Orange County in regard to local jurisdictions creating exclusionary zones for registrants. This is a favorable outcome for registered citizens, as the ruling stands that invalidated registrant restricted areas.

**This is What I Think**

~~by Sandy

I don't know when it happened, but somewhere between when I was too young to care and when I got enough sense to notice, the world became a very unforgiving place.

I have just read an article about a beloved folk singer from my much-younger days. You might not know the name Peter Yarrow, but if you are the same side of 50 as I am, you will remember [Peter, Paul, and Mary](#). You will remember "[Where Have All the Flowers Gone](#)." And you will definitely remember "[Puff, the Magic Dragon](#)," the age-old story of every child's transition from the magic world of childhood into the uncertain territory of the years beyond.



Peter Yarrow, in 1969, had a consensual but illegal relationship with a young lady below the age of consent. He served a three month jail sentence, received a pardon from a president, but has, for some, ever since been considered a sexual criminal. He has continued his music and combined his music career with involvement in political issues. His alliance has been with those of the Democratic party. Those of the opposing party have not hesitated to bring up Yarrow's past and use it against their political enemies, often with the results they desired.

Now that same past is being [dredged up again in protests](#) against Yarrow being honored at a New York high school for the performing arts.

What is wrong with that picture? Our criminal justice system is comprised of both punishment and rehabilitation. The purpose of the punishment is to bring about rehabilitation.

Sometimes it works like it is supposed to. Mr. Yarrow committed a crime in 1969. That is over 40 years ago. He served his court ordered punishment, and, in light of the fact that there has been no re-offense in over 40 years, I think we are safe in declaring him rehabilitated. Everything worked just like it is supposed to.

What then is the problem? Is rehabilitation not good enough for some? Is there some other standard of measure needed? What are we teaching these high school students--that if you mess up somewhere, as most people do at least once, you might as well not even try to make up for it because no matter what you do, no matter how repentant you are, it won't be enough?

High school is supposed to prepare students for the real world. If we have a real world where there is no forgiveness and no opportunity to ever, ever, EVER make up for the mistakes we made in our past, then THAT is what people should be protesting.



## From Our States and Committees



In **Colorado**, the Outside Evaluators' Report on the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) was submitted to the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) of the Legislature in January, 2014.

Colorado SOR immediately took steps to involve legislative effort toward just having the report acknowledged; they provided a three page summary to both senate and house judicial committees. One senator feels that the impetus will be there for the report to be utilized productively next session, when DORA will again be talking with stakeholders and producing a major report on the SOMB. In the meantime, the SOMB is slowly moving forward to consider the recommendations of the report, knowing that the Sunset Review is to follow!



On a more personal note, Colorado SOR has seen an interesting situation develop for a person with an offense here in Colorado. A man was released from prison several months ago, planned to move in with his Mom in what he thought was Wheat Ridge, Colorado, and immediately called the Wheat Ridge Police to register. When they finally called him back, they told him his mother's address was actually in Arvada and gave him the number of the Arvada police. It took weeks for Arvada to call him back. When they did, they told him to come in the next Thursday to register (they are small municipalities and don't register people every day). He did and was arrested for failure to register which is a felony in Colorado! He was able to plead this down to an unclassified misdemeanor and time served.

The **Correspondence Committee** is very excited about this new forum for our newsletter. We really do want our readers' input. You may suggest a regular column for consideration or request that a specific topic be addressed in the next upcoming issue. You may send comments about any articles or content, and good comments will be printed in the next *Digest*. This is your newsletter; help us make it what you want it to be; [email here](#).



**New Mexico** has had some excitement going on. With the joint effort of National and RSOL-NM, we have prepared two press releases dealing with recent local issues, both involving issues related to sexual accusations and both exemplifying hypocrisy and double standards in the system. One involves a [college football player](#) accused of rape; the other deals with leniency shown toward a defendant involved in vigilantism toward someone who had committed an offense of voyeurism and will most likely be released after we have gone to press; we will have a follow-up on it in the June edition.

We in **Maine** have received new requests for the newsletter. Every new member means more impact, so this is good news!



Those who have survived this cold Maine winter need change! This should be our focus for the remainder of the year. We hope to have meetings at some point but must first find a place to have them which is reasonably located for our membership.



**Texas** Voices will be heading to New Orleans in June to hear arguments before the 5th Circuit Court. This case concerns litigation filed against the city of Lewisville, Texas, regarding residency restrictions. Texas Voices is a supporter of this litigation.

We are starting work and preparations for the next legislative session by preparing for and scheduling meeting with legislators and legislative aides.

The **Affiliate Development Committee** is pleased to announce that RSOL has reached a new plateau with the forth-coming re-organizational plan which will regionalize by Circuit Court designations. This reorganization of our front lines and forerunners has the goal of providing better services and greater outcomes for everyone concerned. One Circuit Court's ruling becomes precedent for all others.



We are currently in the process of soliciting provisional Regional Coordinators to assist in the development of policies and procedures pertinent to the formation of ten designated regions. RSOL's Regional Coordinators will work with current State Affiliates and their supporters, acting as liaisons to



meet my co-affiliate, Bev, and share information I have "collected" in preparation for scheduled meetings with our 2014 SD Senator candidates.



I now have 34 inmate pen pals and would appreciate any "treatment" stories (failure or success) while incarcerated from any new inmates. Please send to: Georgina Schaff, 402 2nd Ave E Lemmon, SD 57638



Ever since **Maryland's** State Supreme Court of Appeals declared in a plurality decision that Maryland's sex offender registry is punitive, and thus cannot be applied retroactively to "Mr. Doe," the state has refused to take ANY other person off without a separate declaratory judgement lawsuit, even though the case is identical. Several have been removed in that way, which only strengthens the argument that Maryland needs to quit wasting time and taxpayer money fighting and go ahead and remove everyone else. We are hopeful that a clarifying question to be heard on May 6 in our Court of Appeals (in which FAIR and RSOL have played an important part) will finally force the state to apply the decision to everyone else who was retroactively forced to register in 2009 or 2010.

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