

Advocates For Change



THE ADVOCATE

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One of the founders of Advocates for Change, Annie Wallen, resigned her Board and Chair position July 21, 2011 due to pressing family medical issues. Annie transitioned from chairing the original CURE Sex Offender Issues Group to assuming the chairmanship of the newly formed Advocates for Change in November 2010. For nearly two years Annie shepherded our infant, loosely organized but passionate group as AFC worked to gain recognition, credibility and effectiveness. All three have been accomplished in less than two years, in large part due to Annie's leadership, insistence on working together as a group and focusing on the mission of AFC. Although not on the Board, Annie will continue to contribute to the work of AFC. The AFC Board will elect a new chair and will continue its important work of providing support to those with a sex offense: in legislative change, education and re-entry for those convicted of a sex offense.

Advocates For Change Board of Directors

Acting Chair/ Co-Chair Legislative and Research Committees: Carolyn Turner
 Treasurer and Membership Chair: Rose M. Graf
 Secretary/Co-Chair Website, Research, Newsletter and various other Committees: GL Rosencrans
 Media Chair and Bylaws Committee Chair: SS
 Other Board Members: Susan Walker, RMS, Kelly Killion, BJ Russell, Yvonne Paretti, Mark Walker.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS: P. Randall and Pat H

NOTE NEW CONTACT INFORMATION FOR AFC

New Phone: 720-690-7125

Email: advocates4changeafc@yahoo.com

**New P.O. Box: P.O. Box 351032
 Westminster, CO 80035-1032**

Web Address Remains the Same: www.advocates4change.com

REPRESENTATIVE SU RYDEN ADDRESSED AFC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

About Representative Ryden: She was the sponsor for HB10-1134 last year that reauthorized the Sex Offender Management Board that was ultimately vetoed by then Governor Ritter. She was an advocate for eliminating the “no known cure” language and worked hard to get bi-partisan support for the bill.

At the June 21, 2011, AFC general membership meeting, Colorado Representative Su Ryden, featured speaker, spoke of the legislative process, outlining the formation of bills during the off season (June through December), and the importance of hearing from her constituents during this time about their concerns. Emphasizing that legislators are just people like everyone else, they come to their job as legislators with some knowledge about some topics, but can't be expected to know a lot or anything about all of the more than 700+ bills each legislator is expected to vote on. That's why legislators rely on the public, their constituents for information. Knowing who your legislators are is the first step. Googling the Colorado General Assembly will take you to the web site and links to assist you finding your legislators. Contact information for them is listed as well as profiles and committee assignments. The AFC Board members flooded the legislators this past session with visits, fact sheets, and research in order to provide legislators with needed information regarding HB11-1138 the bill that ultimately re-authorized the SOMB.

Representative Ryden was interested in the concerns of the AFC membership. Some of the concerns expressed were the abuse of the polygraph, the treatment of juveniles as registered sex offenders, the need for better treatment of family members when they go to their loved ones' parole hearing, and the number of offenders still in prison way beyond their bottom number. Representative Ryden stated that it is important for legislators to hear personal stories. A member responded that it takes a lot of courage to tell personal stories publicly because of retaliation against their loved one. Other concerns expressed later focused on medical/dental lack of care and concern about the polygraph, particularly for offenders who are on medications like anti-depressants. This last concern is interesting because the SOMB had a discussion recently about offenders in therapy who had a medical prescription for marijuana and how the marijuana might affect their polygraph results.

AFC Meets with DOC/SOTMP

On July 7th, several AFC members met with the Director of Prisons, Tony Carochi, and with the Chief of Behavioral Health, Peggy Heil. Among the topics discussed with Ms. Heil were the role and expectations of support persons and a review of optional treatment programs, especially ones that are more rehabilitative rather than punitive. Peggy reminded us that there is an AR that stipulates that one cannot support more than one person at a time in response to a question whether or not an AFC member could support his loved one inside and support someone else on the outside.

Topics that were in Mr. Carochi's area included the Reading Committee and magazines that were being rejected. Specific arguments regarding AR300-26 follow this report. Tony stated that AR300-26 was being reviewed. A great amount of time was spent sharing our members' concerns about the lack of adequate and timely medical and dental treatment. Tony noted that he would like individual stories so that he could follow up. Although the Chief of Dentistry position had been vacant, interviews were occurring at that time and the position would be filled. Retaliation and warehousing were also discussed.

Both Mr. Carochi and Ms. Heil indicated they were interested in continuing the conversation.

AR300-26 Issues: Offender Reading Material

Since the first of the year, AFC has received many offender complaints regarding 1) the increase in the number and nature of their reading materials being rejected (from general titles like TV Guide to religious titles like Christianity Today); 2) changes and discrepancies in Individual Reading Program (IRPs) (like who's in their victim pool); and an appeal process that doesn't work.

AFC makes the point that eliminating the viewing of children under the age of 18 for all offenders with a sex offense, regardless of the age of their victim, regardless of their identified victim pool, and regardless of their psycho-sexual evaluation is unrealistic and a waste of DOC human resources.

It's unrealistic because a) tv is difficult to watch without seeing children, b)daily newspapers have children in photographs, ads, c)magazines being rejected are available in the library, d)offenders view actual children in the visiting room, e)treatment gives an offender tools to deal with his offense specific cycle, f)eliminating any image of anyone under 18 does not prepare an offender for re-entry into a community filled with children where the public expects them to use the tools treatment has given them.

AFC suggests that AR300-26 (E) be reviewed, modified, and simplified, recognizing the reality that as it exists, it does not achieve the desired effect (no viewing of children), it is a waste of DOC human resources, who, overwhelmed, are making subjective and blanket decisions, and it isn't preparing offenders for re-entry into the community.

Trauma Therapy Available to Both Offender and Victim

Jacque Sumida from Compass Counseling Services spoke to the AFC general membership on July 26th about the trauma therapy she provides to both victims and offenders. Ms. Sumida has worked in Social Services in Jefferson County and providing treatment to juveniles. She also works as a contract worker for RSA. Ms. Sumida is particularly interested in what she sees as a hole in the sex offender treatment system, namely that existing treatment programs routinely ignore treating the history of trauma of the offender. Until an offender deals with his own trauma from his past, his recovery is incomplete. Both victims and offenders share similar feelings of secrecy, shame, and guilt. She was quick to say that acknowledging an offender's own trauma was not acceptable as an excuse for his offending behavior.

Changes Afoot With the Parole Board

AFC acknowledges that the two bottlenecks for implementing the Lifetime Supervision Act as it was intended are the long wait for treatment and the parole board's low release rate. There has been movement within SOTMP to move offenders into treatment by creating modified phases and creating programs at other facilities. But offenders are going up for parole with a few exceptions are being told they need to do more time or because of aggravated circumstances (never explained), they are being denied.

With the change in Governors this year, there is always an opportunity for change in Colorado's parole board. In Colorado the Governor appoints the parole board. Governor Hickenlooper recently replaced four members (the majority), signaling a possible change in how the parole board does its business. The new appointees are Dr. Anthony (Tony) Young, Chair, clinical psychologist currently with DBH and chair of the Association of Black Psychologists (former parole board member 1991-1995); Ed Thomas, former Denver police officer and Denver City Council member; Denise Blazic, former parole officer in Missouri and most recently employed at the National Institute of Corrections; and Pat Waak, former chair of the Colorado Democratic Party. Remaining members are Mike Anderson, John O'Dell and Rebecca Oakes.

AFC needs to watch the new parole board to see if there is an increase in the number of releases of those with a sex offense.

Alphabet Soup:

- AFC – Advocates for Change, action group addressing issues related to those who have been charged with or convicted of a sex offense
- BAG – Breakfast Action Group
- CCJJ – Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice
- CCJRC – Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition
- DOCCA- Department of Corrections Class Action Lawsuit
- CURE – Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants
- LSA – Lifetime Supervision Act
- MRD – Mandatory Release Date
- PED – Parole Eligibility Date
- SLA – Shared Living Arrangements
- SMART – Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registration & Tracking
- SOMB – Sex Offender Management Board
- SORFC – SO Ready For Change
- SOTF – Sex Offender Task Force
- SOTMP – Sex Offender Treatment and Monitoring Program

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Advocate newsletter is published by Advocates for Change, providing information on efforts of this group to affect change in legislation, treatment, and re-integration into the community, primarily for those who have been convicted of a sex offense.

Submissions from inmates/offenders and parolees are encouraged. Articles should be no longer than 300 words. Content should be about a single issue, be original, and accurate, citing sources if appropriate. Contributors will be identified by first name only if requested.

Readers should know that AFC makes no representation as to the accuracy of any submission and does not necessarily endorse the opinions of any author. Nothing offered by AFC is intended to be legal advice, and any information provided should never be a substitute for obtaining counsel and/or conducting your own research.

The editor reserves the right to publish all, part or none of the contributions submitted. Send contributions to Advocates for Change, PO Box 441656, Aurora, CO 80044. Please also send any articles for publication and comments on the newsletter to: AFC Newsletter, 10343 Federal Blvd., PMB #444, Westminster, CO 80260.

Editor: BJ Russell

Publisher: GL Rosencrans

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS OPINIONS

*Opinions from those who have been convicted of an offense
and their families*

There Is No End – Really!

-by inmate anon

I am a sex offender. In June 2004 I met an inappropriate aged female in a Yahoo Colorado chat room. I started a conversation with her, then took the steps necessary to meet her the next day. I was arrested in the resultant sting. I went to trial and lost, receiving a two year work release sentence and a 10 to life probation, coupled with the requirement to attend offense specific treatment and the obligatory requirement for polygraphs and individual counseling. I begin with this information because readers need a frame of reference for my questions, concerns, and feelings. I want everyone to know in the hopes I can someday prevent someone else's fall into sex offender hell.

I did what they say I did. I know I should be punished and I am. But for those with the sex offender label and an indeterminate sentence there is no end. Prior to my incarceration I spent four and a half years in therapy, plus 15 polygraphs and hundreds of hours of probation visits – and never got close to feeling like I'd be done. Even though my treatment was supposed to be offense specific, group therapy treated everyone the same – the serial rapist who sat on one side of me in therapy and the guy who peed in public on the other side. The rapist is now off parole (and doing well at last report) and the guy who peed in public was revoked because his parole officer didn't like the job he had and he was behind in his bill to therapy. The media and the sex offender industry has shipwrecked us into believing that anyone with the SO label will reoffend and we are a danger to the community even though statistics indicate differently.

I'm now serving a 2 to life sentence. I may never walk out of prison. A man convicted of manslaughter can walk before me and he wouldn't have to attend any groups. Weird. I feel I have been discarded and thrown into the mental health abyss where at the whim of a therapist I can be repeatedly denied treatment or given treatment but kicked out because of a failed polygraph, or finally make it to parole where they are routinely denying sex offenders release. So, where is my hope?

AUGUST 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>SOTFWG=Sex Offender Task Force Working Group</p> <p>Hudak = District 19; Williams = District 28; Newell=District 26</p> <p>* Perkins Restaurant 1995 S Colo Blvd Denver</p>						
	<p>1</p> <p>7-8am *AFC Board mtg / 8-9am *AFC Bag mtg</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>SOTF 1:30-4:30pm / 150 E 10th Ave, Denver</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7-8am *AFC BD / 8-9am *AFC BAG /10-12p COSA 700 Kipling/ 5-8pm BOARD Retreat - 7739 Wads Blvd Panera Br</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10-11a AD SEG mtg DWCF 7-8pm So CO CURE 3615 Roberts Rd, Co Spgs /8-9pm AFC Co Spgs- to follow</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>12:30-4:30pm CCJJ State Patrol Academy 15350 S Golden Rd bldg 100 (STAR program)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10:30-noon Evie Hudak's Town Hall Standley Lk Library</p>
<p>14</p> <p>8pm Prison play: "In The Belly" 2727 W 27th ave, Denver Insurgent Theatre</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7-8am *AFC Board mtg / 8-9am *AFC Bag mtg</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7-9pm AFC General mtg - St. Paul's Lutheran Church 16/Grant Denver</p>	<p>17</p> <p>SO TF 1:30-4:30pm / 150 E 10th Ave, Denver (Registration)</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9am-3pm SOMB General mtg PPA Event Center 2105 Decatur, Denver</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>*7-8am AFC Board *8-9am AFC BAG meetings</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7-9pm Co CURE 2727 Monroe St, Cherry Creek (new location)</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>*7-8am AFC Board *8-9am AFC BAG meetings</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>SO TF 1:30-4:30pm / 150 E 10th ave, Denver</p>			

ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE

P. O. Box 351032
Westminster, CO 80035-1032
Phone: 720-690-7125
E-mail address:
advocates4changeafc@yahoo.com
We're on the Web!
See us at: advocates4change.org

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Membership Fee \$20 for those on the outside and 8 stamps for those on the inside.

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If you would like to work on one of our committees, please check here:

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