

Vol. 6, Issue 4

# SOSEN NEWS

*Sex Offender Solutions & Education Network*

## The RSOL Conference in St. Louis, MO

*by Lynn Gilmore*

In August, a group from *Arkansas Time After Time* (ATAT) and I attended the RSOL (*Reform Sex Offender Laws*) Conference together in St. Louis, Missouri.

As we entered the hotel and checked in, I admit I felt a bit nervous, awaiting to be pounced on by would-be anti-sex offenders brandishing their pitchforks and torches. Instead, I was met with a very courteous hotel staff who seemed to appreciate that we were there. I wondered, *do they know what we're really about?*

As we entered the elevator to go up to our rooms, other people entered the elevators as well. I looked to see if any of them were wearing I-hate-sex-offender t-shirts, but none were. As I stood quietly watching the numbers above the elevator door blink on and off in order as we ascended, a woman asks us, "Are you here for the conference?" and we smiled, relieved, and say yes. We went on to talk about where we're all from, and in the back of my mind, I was wondering if maybe there was *another* conference at the hotel this weekend. Surely, I thought, *they aren't here for the same conference*, as they looked too calm and too excited. They didn't look nervous at all.

Forgive my apprehension, but this was *really* the first time I was stepping outside of our safe little ATAT group meetings and I was truly concerned about my safety as well as the safety of my travel-mates. After all, many horror stories are abundantly found on the internet involving vigilantes attacking sex offenders and their families.

I needn't have worried. Throughout the entire weekend, I met so many wonderful people between the hotel staff, event coordinators, speakers and the attendees. Everyone was nice and professional and I felt very comfortable. I even went without my identity concealing crutch—my wig.

I'd have to say, the event coordinators put on a *very* good conference, and I should know as I have attended

many work-related conferences in my day. It was well planned out with non-stop presentations and workshops with some seriously dynamic and knowledgeable speakers. A couple speakers that come to mind are David Day and Amy Borrer. David Day, a Missouri State Representative, gave an enlightening and candid presentation on *Building Relationships with Your Elected Officials*, and Amy Borrer, Legislative Liaison for the Ohio Public Defender's Office gave a powerful address on where we are today with Ohio's compliance with SORNA, clearly showing where all the problems lay with the system, why it is so flawed and why Ohio's AWA compliance appears to be "such a gray area." Both Mr. Day and Ms. Borrer are incredibly well-spoken and really know their stuff.

Women Against Registry, a new—or revamped organization, depending on how you look at it—presented their program showing how they are in the process of rolling out their new website and services.

Overall, it was exciting conference and I definitely plan to attend next year's RSOL Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 7 - 10, 2012. Please visit <http://www.reformsexoffenderlaws.org/> for more information. ■



*Conference attendees from Arkansas Time After Time.*

# State Groups Becoming More Active

by Lynn Gilmore

[SOSEN.org](http://SOSEN.org) is a national organization and [reformsexoffenderlaws.org](http://reformsexoffenderlaws.org) is too, but did you know that there might be a very active group fighting the current laws right in your own backyard, in your very own state?

These groups, affiliated mostly with RSOL, are working together and appearing before your state legislative committees to speak out on your behalf for better lives for you and your families. While we encourage anyone suffering at the hands of the current laws to join the SOSEN member forum and participate on a national level, admittedly, there is something more tangible in being able to hop in your car and drive a short distance to attend your state's group meetings and participate in their activities and projects, especially lobbying together for changes to the laws.

Almost *every* state has someone you can contact for information on meetings and such, but just check out this list of websites:

Alabama: [www.reformalabama.blogspot.com](http://www.reformalabama.blogspot.com)

Arizona: [www.azrsol.org](http://www.azrsol.org)

Arkansas: [www.arkansastimeaftertime.org](http://www.arkansastimeaftertime.org)

California: [www.californiarsol.org](http://www.californiarsol.org)

Florida: [www.flareformsexoffenderlaws.org](http://www.flareformsexoffenderlaws.org)

Illinois: [www.ilvoices.com](http://www.ilvoices.com)

Indiana: [www.reformsexoffenderlawsindiana.com](http://www.reformsexoffenderlawsindiana.com)

Maine: [www.mecfc.blogspot.com](http://www.mecfc.blogspot.com)

New Hampshire: [www.cursor.eprci.com](http://www.cursor.eprci.com)

New Mexico: [www.cfcn.org](http://www.cfcn.org)

North Dakota: [www.rsolnd.co.cc](http://www.rsolnd.co.cc)

Ohio: [www.ohiorsol.wordpress.com](http://www.ohiorsol.wordpress.com)

Oklahoma: [www.cfcoklahoma.org](http://www.cfcoklahoma.org)

Texas: [www.txvoices.com](http://www.txvoices.com)

Virginia: [www.rsolvirginia.org](http://www.rsolvirginia.org)

Wisconsin: [www.sexoffenders-in-courts.blogspot.com](http://www.sexoffenders-in-courts.blogspot.com)

If you don't see your state listed here, that doesn't mean your state does not have a group that you can contact or get involved with. If you wish to reach your state's contact person, just call our hotline at 1-800-773-4319 and ask one of our volunteers for that information. ■

## Writing Effective Letters to Your Legislators

by Lynn Gilmore

If you have been keeping a close eye on the news and the bills that are being talked about in your state's legislation, you may have been noticing a slight trend.

Years ago, when I first joined SOSEN and began educating myself on the laws and how ineffective they were in preventing sex crimes, I would read the comments posted on various online news articles and discover with horror the sheer hatred and detest towards anyone labeled as a sex offender—regardless of what that person's crime was.

In the last year or so, I have begun to notice a slight shift in not only how the news is reporting on these types of stories but also in the way the general public is reacting with their comments.

Recently, my good friend and fellow Arkansas Time After Time

representative, Carla Swanson, and I attended a presentation for the community of Fort Smith, Arkansas. This presentation was a program about sex offenders and we went fully expecting the room to be filled with anti-sex-offenders and the like and only about eight people showed up. One woman was there because her close friend was in prison for an internet crime. Two people were from the media. That left about three "possibly concerned citizens" from a town of over 85,000 people that felt this was an important enough event to warrant spending the evening attending it.

Three people. Really? Now, imagine this taking place just three years ago, when sex offender hysteria was really sweeping across the nation. I believe that if this event had taken place then, the room would have been full to capacity with people with their pitchforks and torches blazing.

I don't know if it's just wishful thinking that it seems now the tide is turning, but what if it really is?

What if there really is a shift going on in the minds of the American public regarding the sex offenders laws?

Wouldn't this be the prime time for us to take a more proactive role in implementing the changes that we know needs to take place? Strike while the iron is hot, as they say?

So, what could *you* do to help?

Aside from contacting your state group's RSOL representative and asking what you can do, one thing you can do from the comfort of your own home is to write letters.

You might think it would be a waste of time, but as many of us in this movement have discovered, letters *work*!



Write your legislators and your congressmen. Don't know their names or addresses? Use a site like one of these: <http://www.contactingthecongress.org/> or <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>.

Don't have access to the internet? Have a friend or relative look up the contact information for you or just visit your local library.

Don't know what to say in your letters? SOSEN has an entire library of template letters you can use on the member forum at: <https://sosen.us/secure/3v1/index.php?board=400.0>.

You can email your letters, of course, but mailed letters tend to get better results. You can hand write your letters (as long as your writing is legible) or type them out on a computer and print them out.

Share a brief summary of how the laws are affecting you and your family and then fill the body of the letter with facts that back up your reasons for asking the laws to be changed. (Again, you can use the template letters we have for this).

Just remember to:

- Address the recipient correctly and use correct spelling of his/her name.
- Date your letter.
- Keep it short, one page letters are best.
- If you send the same letter to other people, change up some of the wording on each one.
- Know what you are talking about—educate yourself on the law or bill. Keep the body of your letter on a single topic.
- Run spellcheck after composing your letter.
- Have a friend or relative read it over before you send it to check for mistakes.
- Write letters often. You cannot

write too many letters, even to the same person.

- Encourage others in your state to write letters with you or create a letter writing campaign.

These are just some suggestions to help you get started. In the next newsletter, we'll talk about what you can do to help change laws while your state's legislation is in session. ■

## Donations for the Duval family - Update

Below is an updated amount of money members of SOSEN have donated to the Duval family for Mary, as of the end of September, 2011.

A check was sent to Mary's son, Ricky, for \$561.42 from our members. There is an additional \$195.80 that was just received and will be sent soon. This would make a total of \$755.22 that was collected for this fund drive.

Thank you so much for your generosity, we know that Mary's family appreciates it very much. ■

## To all SOSEN Members

*by SOSEN Staff Member Topwop*

At a recent SOSEN Staff meeting we discussed setting up our own print shop.

We would like to purchase a laser printer, inks and various plain and glossy papers to make our brochures and material look as professional as possible.

These educational materials would then be distributed upon request to people in our movement to take to meetings, send to other people and do what needs to be done with them.



A fee would be charged for shipping and possibly for material.

NOT LABOR!!!

We need to know if you would support a fund drive for the monies needed for this project.

Please respond with your thoughts and suggestions or consider pledging to this cause in this thread.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Please send your donations or comments to:

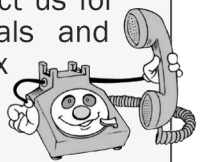
SOSEN Inc.  
P.O. Box 235  
Dixon, IL 61021

Thank you,

Staff/BOD ■

### SOSEN RESOURCE CENTER

Our toll free number is available for the public, media and lawmakers to contact us for educational materials and information on sex offender laws and issues. Call **800-773-4319**.



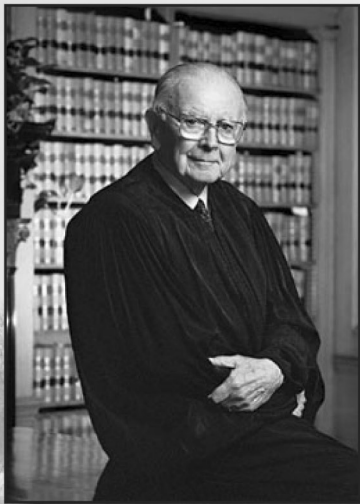
**S.O.S.E.N.**

**SOSEN\_INC**

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, please do not be alarmed. **We want you to know that you are not alone and we are here to help you, if you need it.**

We contacted you because you or someone you know is listed on the registries and we will absolutely **NOT** share any of your information with anyone. We have used the most discreet way we can find to contact you. We want you to know that there **is** support for you and your family members.



*The* Framers of the Bill of Rights did not purport to “create” rights. Rather, they designed the Bill of Rights to prohibit our Government from infringing rights and liberties presumed to be preexisting.

~Justice William J. Brennan

# SOSEN

**IS WORKING TO MAINTAIN THE CONSTITUTIONAL  
RIGHTS FOR ALL OF OUR CITIZENS**



PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE