

DVAM: An Amazing Blow-Out Month!

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and the theme was “It’s Time to Tell the Truth about Domestic Violence.” *And this year 10 organizations came together to assure the truth would ring loud and clear throughout the land.*

During October these groups arranged for **1 gigantic billboard**, did **2 days of lobbying**, released **3 reports**, participated in **4 rallies**, issued **6 press releases**, fostered the publication of **9 editorials**, distributed information via flyers and displays **9 times**, published **18 letters to the editor**, and stimulated **22 articles and interviews**.

WOW!!!

During the course of the campaign Fox News 2 in Detroit aired a segment on October 22 titled, “Men Also Suffer from Domestic Violence.”

<http://www.myfoxdetroit.com/myfox/pages/ContentDetail?contentId=4712816>

The Christian Science Monitor (and many other newspapers) published letters to the editor on male victims: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1023/p08s01-cole.html>

The blogosphere was buzzing, as well:

- Carol Lloyd – What’s so Funny about Abusive Girlfriends?: <http://www.salon.com/mwt/broadsheet/2007/10/25/girlfriends/index.html>
- Chris Norris - Women Who Hit Men: <http://www.marieclaire.com/life/sex/advice/abusive-women>
- Abusive Girlfriends: http://buzzfeed.com/buzz/Abusive_Girlfriends

Thanks to all who participated in Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and who made sure the truth got out.

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The groups’ activities are detailed below:

A. RADAR:

1. Released 4 press releases:

- Groups Call on Department of Justice to Tell the Truth About Partner Abuse
- Domestic Violence Programs Do More Harm Than Good, Report Shows
- Men Presumed Guilty by Domestic Violence Laws, Experts Say
- Domestic Violence Laws Require Reform, Groups Say
- All press releases were also reprinted as editorials in the Hawaii Reporter: www.hawaiireporter.com

2. Released Special Report/Documents:

- Why Have Domestic Violence Programs Failed to Stop Partner Abuse?: <http://www.mediadar.org/docs/RADARreport-Why-DV-Programs-Fail-to-Stop-Abuse.pdf>
- Agenda for VAWA Reform: <http://www.mediadar.org/docs/RADARdocument-Agenda-for-VAWA-Reform.pdf>

3. Developed flyer, “It’s Time to Tell the Truth about Domestic Violence”:

<http://www.mediadar.org/docs/RADARflyer-Time-to-Tell-the-Truth.pdf>

4. Did lobbying: October 26 – U.S. House of Representatives

4. Encouraged the writing of editorials:

- Stephen Baskerville: Feminist Justice at Duke
- Richard Davis: Dating Violence/Abuse Hypocrisy
- David Helleniak: Manhattan Prosecutors Declare War on Family
- David Helleniak: Erring on the Side of Hidden Harm: The Granting of Domestic Violence Restraining Orders
- David Helleniak: Nifong and HRES 590
- David Helleniak: Gitmo at Home: Domestic Violence Courts in America
- David Helleniak: False Domestic Violence Accusations Can Lead To Parental Alienation Syndrome
- Mike McCormick and Glenn Sacks: Conscientious Judge Railroaded for Denying Restraining Order Based on False Domestic Violence Charges
- Carey Roberts: Women Who Batter, Proudly

5. Media Interviews/Articles:

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Press release | Internet | NBC24 | Toledo, OH | Website | Kylie Conway | 10/22/2007 | New Report: Domestic Violence |
| Chuck Corry | Newsp. | Rocky Mtn. News | Denver, CO | | Tillie Fong | 10/22/2007 | Agenda for VAWA Reform |
| Ron Grignol | Radio | KRMS | Lake Ozark, MO | Michael McSorley | KRMS | 10/24/2007 | Why VAWA is Ineffective |
| None | Newsp. | Herald Net | Everett, WA | Editorial | Mark Mahnkey | NA | It's Time to Tell the Truth about DV |
| Don Dutton | Radio | 700WLW | Cincinnati, OH | | | | |

B. California Men’s Center – Harry Crouch

1. Published letter to the editor:

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/opinion/2003917213_tueletters02.html

2. Marched in the local DV month "Not to Be Forgotten" rally, and got pictures of us carrying signs like "Equal Rights for Men" published in the Navy's weekly magazine *The Compass*.

3. Arranged for our first male DV victim to be sheltered in a sober living facility.

C. DVStats.com – John Dias:

Attended a DV information fair held in Sacramento, CA, passed out RADAR flyers

D. Equal Justice Foundation – Sheryle Hutter:

1. Distributed DV against men information at Colorado Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) fairs across state.
2. Met with the Lindsey Koehler editor, *5280 Magazine* (Denver) to discuss the inequity of VAWA and outrageous actions occurring within the judicial system due to false allegations of DV and the misuse of protective orders.
3. Attended the DV Awareness Brunch, Rally and passed out RADAR flyers to each Colorado legislator.
4. Challenged Colorado legislators to respond to the misuse of the VAWA law.

E. Florida Coalition for Families – Carl Stepling:

In response to inflammatory media reports that 34 Pittsburgh police officers have been accused of domestic violence, sent a detailed letter (see Appendix A) comparing the DV claims to a “modern day witch hunt.” Following the letter, the media hysteria subsided.

F. Fourteen Percenter Newsletter – Don Mathis:

October 11: Published letter to the editor in the *Texoma Enterprise*

G. Men and Women against Discrimination – West Virginia – Ron Foster:

1. Organized a rally on October 1 to protest the handling of DV cases. The rally was staged directly across the street from the Charleston Marriott and purposely coincided with the start of West Virginia's state DV conference.

2. Released report: “Analysis of Domestic Violence Costs in West Virginia and the Potential Cost of False or Unnecessary Claims:”
<http://madmenunitedwv.org/False%20&%20Unnecessary%20Domestic%20Violence%20Cases%20-%20WV%20Cost%20Analysis%20-%20Doctor%20Ben%20Foster.pdf>

3. Arranged for large billboard saying, “42% of Domestic Violence Homicide Victims are Male:”
http://www.acfc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=WV_DV_Billboard&JServSessionIdr009=3o7tb1txr1.app6a

4. Articles published in the *West Virginia Record*:

- October 8: “Group: Most Domestic Violence Cases Clog, Court System” by Lawrence Smith
- October 5: “Victims of false domestic violence reporting detail experiences” by Lawrence Smith

H. National Coalition for Free Men – Los Angeles – Marc Angelucci:

1. Publicized DV bias with large truck-mounted sign reading, “No Excuse for Abuse – Even If You’re a Woman”:
<http://blogwonks.com/2007/10/31/theres-no-excuse-for-abuse-even-if-youre-a-woman/>

2. Did two press releases

3. Obtained extensive media coverage, especially in college newspapers – listed in Appendix B

I. Southeast Massachusetts Chapter of the Fatherhood Coalition – Wayne Jewett:

Organized a street theater demonstration in Salem, MA comparing the modern-day issuance of restraining orders to the Salem witch trials.

J. Stop Abuse For Everyone, SAFE-New Hampshire, and SAFE-Illinois – Lee Newman:

1. Had five displays each week in lobbies of banks across New Hampshire, for a total of 20 banks during the month.
2. Gave interviews to six university students to assist with course projects addressing male and lesbian victims of domestic abuse.
3. Expanded collaborative efforts with three mainstream DV programs during October. *Two of these – both located outside of New Hampshire -- have agreed to provide services and shelter to men who are victims of DV.*

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Appendix A:

Letter to Pittsburgh media regarding allegations of widespread domestic violence among Pittsburgh police:

All,

October is domestic violence awareness month. Of course, perpetrators of domestic abuse should be dealt with appropriately. Unfortunately, real victims are being denied access to relief in shelters, and innocent citizens face persecution, while likely offenders are not even questioned. Again, today the Pittsburgh Post Gazette has reported domestic violence by Pittsburgh's police officers, while offering no substantiated proof in any particular case. Here is the quote from today's paper – "Mr. Ravenstahl promised to meet privately with officials from the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh on efforts to address domestic violence among Pittsburgh police" - <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07277/822805-85.stm> . Disregarding the facts about those cases, the thought process has seemingly become if you say it enough times, then it must be true. Luckily, our system of law is designed to avoid such hear-say. History shows us that such Due Process was designed for good reason.

Other recent stories in the paper about domestic violence, especially pertaining to Pittsburgh police officers are becoming modern day witch hunts. As history repeats itself, today's accused face sanction before findings of guilt. And, it is already happening to police officers in other cities. Like 1692 Salem, today's controversy is centered by real people. Twenty-four innocent victims lost their lives in Salem's hysteria. Today's hysteria has been fanned by repeated quotations of unsubstantiated claims, portraying the accused as guilty. Thirty-four Pittsburgh police officers face such accusations. Like a witch from Salem, no one accused in a domestic dispute today is safe.

Stories summarily dismiss words such as complainant, accused, alleged, Due Process, Equal Protection, and presumed innocence as they evolve into naming abusers and their victims. Absent findings of guilt in this freshly stoked controversy, the suggestion is that Pittsburgh police officers prove their innocence in order to retain their standing in public. To innocent police officers, it must be as surreal as it was to yesteryear's witches. After all, it is no more possible for them to prove when they stopped beating their wives than it was for Salem's witches to prove their innocence. Just as in Salem, where accusers eventually recanted their testimony and other accusations were left unproven, today's accused but innocent will be forever damaged, as wrongful accusers face no consequence. In both situations, a large portion of the accusers have or had motive that innocent people be punished.

In October, 1692 there became reason to doubt the word of the accusers. With no proof of witchery, the public demanded that the rest of the 150 who stood accused be set free. In a case of conscience, it was determined "It were better that ten suspected witches should escape that one innocent person should be condemned." That legal premise seemingly stood the test of time, at least until recently. A quick study about domestic violence

claims shows there are about 10 claims of domestic violence for a resulting arrest, let alone the percentage of those arrested who were actually found to be guilty. In stark contrast to lessons learned so long ago, the idea behind the proposal before Pittsburgh is to condemn 10 innocent men in hope of finding one that is guilty.

The chart below from West Virginia illustrates that mindset:

Table 3
Domestic Violence Claims, Investigations, and Arrests in West Virginia, 1981-1992

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Claims</u> | <u>Investigations</u> | <u>Arrests</u> | <u>% Claims leading to arrest</u> | <u>% Investigations leading to arrest</u> | <u>Claims % > 1981</u> | <u>Investigations % > 1981</u> | <u>Arrests % > 1981</u> |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1992 | 6,029 | 5,780 | 590 | 9.80% | 10.20% | 466.10% | 565.10% | 170.60% |
| 1991 | 4,625 | 4,446 | 562 | 12.20% | 12.60% | 334.30% | 411.60% | 157.80% |
| 1990 | 3,040 | 2,869 | 319 | 10.50% | 11.10% | 185.50% | 230.20% | 46.30% |
| 1989 | 2,563 | 2,252 | 336 | 13.10% | 14.90% | 140.70% | 159.20% | 54.10% |
| 1988 | 1,505 | 1,093 | 192 | 12.80% | 17.60% | 41.30% | 25.80% | -11.90% |
| 1987 | 1,341 | 963 | 162 | 12.10% | 16.80% | 25.90% | 10.80% | -25.70% |
| 1986 | 1,375 | 1,060 | 246 | 17.90% | 23.20% | 29.10% | 22.00% | 12.80% |
| 1985 | 1,316 | 985 | 174 | 13.20% | 17.70% | 23.60% | 13.40% | -20.20% |
| 1984 | 1,185 | 839 | 213 | 18.00% | 25.40% | 11.30% | -3.50% | -2.30% |
| 1983 | 1,232 | 893 | 209 | 17.00% | 23.40% | 15.70% | 2.80% | -4.10% |
| 1982 | 1,468 | 1,179 | 326 | 22.20% | 27.70% | 37.80% | 35.7% | 49.50% |
| 1981 | 1,065 | 869 | 218 | 20.50% | 25.10% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |

Source: West Virginia State Police Annual Crime Reports

The September 19th Pittsburgh Post Gazette article “City takes 'unfortunate' stance on police PFAs” - <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07262/818659-53.stm> explicitly criticized the city’s policy of dealing with charges of domestic abuse by its police officers. Rather than judge the merits of each case in court, the group of accusations were presented in a one-sided manner, causing hysteria by some. Below is a breakdown of specific criticisms in that article:

1. “Experts who take a hard line in dealing with police officers accused of domestic violence recommend a range of approaches by departments, including temporarily putting alleged abusers on desk duty, taking away their guns or forbidding contact with their accusers.”

What these supposed experts are advocating is a reprimand of the accused before Due Process is allowed to run its course. Conspicuously absent is any suggestion of recourse for the not-guilty against their complainants. Domestic violence should be taken very

seriously. As illustrated above, police departments are inundated with false and unsubstantiated claims. These claims take time and vital resources away from departments to properly investigate true cases of abuse, which are a fraction of the number of allegations filed.

How many of the 34 officers accused of spousal abuse have claims against them which are founded? How many of those complainants will ever help produce evidence to substantiate their claims? What motives might be present to file a claim of abuse; even if they know the claims to be untrue?

2. "An officer accused by a spouse or significant other is typically allowed to go back to work as though nothing happened as long as there is no arrest."

It is unlikely that claims against the overwhelming majority of accused officers will ever be substantiated. Taking innocent officers off the beat will not help the true victims of spousal abuse. Those victims and society at large deserve the police department's full resources and protection by its officers.

3. "You can't just say arbitrarily, 'He hasn't been arrested, indicted, we're not doing anything,' because that can go bad real quick."

Properly investigating claims of abuse is neither doing nothing, nor is it arbitrary. Allowing courts to judge the facts about a case is the essence of Due Process. Police departments can and should follow the Due Process of our court system.

4. "If the incident is such there's a potential danger to other people, it would be best practice to remove them from the street," Mr. Key said. "You've got an armed individual out there involved in a potentially violent incident and may seek redress."

Anyone who is armed presents a potential danger to the public. Surely, Mr. Key did not mean to say that we remove all potential dangers to the public. It is not feasible to do so anyway.

5. "The issue is now front and center in the Pittsburgh bureau, where at least 34 current officers have been defendants in PFAs. Top brass recently promoted three officers whose histories included accusations of domestic abuse that did not include protection orders."

There seems to be at least 3 upper level police officers who would have suffered if Pittsburgh had not followed due process of the law. Apparently, the claims against those 3 officers are still unfounded. What percentage of PFA's, if any against Pittsburgh police officers have been substantiated?

6. "Under pressure from City Council and various public interest groups, Police Chief Nathan E. Harper is updating the bureau's policies regarding officer-involved domestic disputes. One of the changes he plans is to authorize an "administrative investigation" of all domestic violence incidents."

The operative word here is “dispute”. That means there are differing accounts to this very serious matter. If one is guilty, then they should be prosecuted for domestic abuse. If the accused is not guilty, then the complainant should face prosecution for slander, and for filing a false police report. Within the same quote above, the “dispute” was raised to a “domestic violence incident” before the “administrative investigation” ever took place. This habitual jump to conclusion is evident in article after article. Does presumed innocence no longer exist?

7. ““If the evidence indicated the likelihood that this officer did this, if I were in command of the police department, the officer would be assigned to a lighter duty until we can conduct a more in-depth investigation,” Mr. Williams said.”

Does Mr. Williams care to share what measure or degree of “likelihood” of the accusation being well-founded that he has in mind? I am not aware of anyone proposing that in depth investigations not be performed. But, with the burden of weeding through all of the false claims, we could have a lot of officers relegated to light duty for a very long time. Public safety would be jeopardized if all of the innocent officers were taken off of their beats.

8. “Let's say they do nothing. The guy carries a gun, goes home and kills the wife. The issue becomes the liability of the municipality of this officer's conduct. Was it put on reasonable notice that this officer was involved in abusive conduct, and does it have some responsibility to take some action? Before it gets to the point of some legal requirement to take the gun away, the police chief can take the gun away,” Mr. Williams said.”

Since Mr. Williams is into hypotheticals, let’s say the City of Pittsburgh puts 34 officers named in PFA’s on light duty, even though there was reasonable notice that the complainants had motive. Nothing comes of those investigations. Crime increases 3%, which is in relation 3% of the city’s officers being put on light duty. How does the city compensate the victims of those crimes, since the city was not as aggressive in its deterrence of crime as it would have been if those officers had been in full duty? How would tax payers be reimbursed for the unnecessary expense of those light duty officers? Besides those hypotheticals, does Mr. Williams have a report that shows any percentage of police officers whom were subjects in PFA’s that used their service weapon to kill their spouse?

9. “If someone has issued a protective order against you we cannot in good faith allow you to walk around and carry a weapon,” police spokeswoman Officer Nicole Monroe said.”

Is Ms. Monroe suggesting that anyone with a motive to disarm an officer effectively be allowed to do so, by filing a PFA against that officer? What if an unfounded PFA were filed against her? How would she prove her innocence in order for her to fulfill her job duties? How should she be compensated when she gets passed over for the next promotion by an officer who was able to show their merit for advancement? What if she received that promotion anyway, only to face those allegations all over again in public,

like three current upper level police officers? What penalty for the filing of a false PFA would she suggest?

10. "Victim advocates say do whatever is best to keep our victim safe, which sometimes is not stripping the officer of his weapon and 'identity' by placing him on a desk assignment," said Dottie Davis, who runs Davis Corporate Training Inc. and is deputy chief of the Fort Wayne, Ind., police department."

If the officer is the subject of a false claim, then they ARE the victim. What is being done to keep officers safe from such claims?

11. "Ms. Davis recommends issuing a gun only during the officer's tour of duty if a protective order is in place."

That's a bit hypocritical. The officer is either a threat to society with a gun, or not.

12. "I don't care what the judge says,' Mr. Thomas said."

Due Process be damned.

13. "Some filed discrimination claims, leaving the administration in the uncomfortable position of explaining why one officer who was not allowed to use a weapon was given desk duty, while another wasn't."

True, Due Process is not the only issue at hand, Equal Protection under the law should not be swept under the rug either.

Finally, since this is domestic violence awareness month, everyone should recognize the most heinous of all domestic abuse, that which is perpetrated against children. It is more than just conceivable some of the complainants against the Pittsburgh police officers show up in some other government figures. Below are the most recent charts from the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services as to who perpetrates fatalities and maltreatment against our nation's children:

Perpetrators of maltreatment against children -
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm05/figure3_5.htm

Perpetrators of fatalities against children -
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm05/figure4_2.htm

Now that everyone has both sides of the story, let's see what is reported.

Sincerely,

Carl Steppling, Naples, FL

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Appendix B:

Letters and Articles by the National Coalition for Free Men – LA:

- 10/31/07: University of Connecticut: "Domestic Violence: A Danger to Men and Women Alike"
- 10/29/07: University of California (Irvine) newspaper, the New University, quotes NCFM-LA extensively in article "Women More Abusive Than Men, Study Says."
- 10/26/07: Long Beach Gazette prints NCFM-LA letter thanking the newspaper for including male victims of domestic violence and thanking the WomenShelter of Long Beach for increasing its outreach and services to male victims and considering changing its name so as not to discourage male victims from seeking shelter.
- 10/25/07: Glendale News Press prints NCFM-LA reply to biased comments from the YWCA re domestic violence
- 10/23/07: North Dakota State University newspaper, The Spectrum, quotes NCFM-LA extensively in article covering male victims of domestic violence.
- 10/23/07: Baltimore Sun prints NCFM-LA submission thanking the paper for printing Glenn Sacks op ed on false accusations of rape.
- 10/22/07: Capitol Times (Wisconsin) prints NCFM-LA's reply to Gloria Steinem's false claim that male victims of domestic violence are a small percentage and mostly elderly men.
- 10/18/07: Capitol Times prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/18/07: University of North Carolina campus newspaper quotes NCFM-LA extensively in story on male victims of domestic violence.
- 10/17/07: Capitol Times (Wisconsin) asks Gloria Steinem about NCFM-LA's position that male victims of domestic violence are being ignored; Steinem falsely said it's a small percentage and mostly elderly men.
- 10/17/07: Herald Banner prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/14/07: Santa Rosa Press Democrat prints NCFM-LA reply to Suzy Marzalek's (YWCA) sexist and false comments re domestic violence.
- 10/14/07: Seattle Times prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/14/07: Red Bluff Daily News prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/12/07: Broward Times prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/10/07: Lansing City Pulse prints NCFM-LA reply to extremely anti-male article on domestic violence.

- 10/9/07: Cal State University Northridge campus newspaper, the Daily Sundial, quotes NCFM-LA extensively in article about domestic violence awareness month.
- 10/9/07: Argus Leader prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/8/07: Kansas City Star prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/4/07: Victorville Daily Press prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article
- 10/3/07: Catoosa County News prints NCFM-LA reply to biased domestic violence article.
- 10/2/07: Virginia Tech Collegiate Times quotes NCFM-LA extensively in editorial, "Men Often Victims of Sexual Assault."