

KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARC KLAAS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN



A MESSAGE FROM MARC

Congressman Gary Condit is running away and nobody is quite sure why. With rumors of a romance with missing Washington, D.C. intern Chandra Levy fueling the media circus surrounding her April 30 disappearance, the Congressman's strange and suspicious behavior has prompted Ms. Levy's parents, Robert and Susan, to take desperate steps to ensure the integrity and forward momentum of the investigation.

A salacious combination of politics, sex, fame, possible violence, and cover-up has elevated this case to a level of unparalleled envy for the relatives of the other 750,000 individuals who will be reported missing in America this year. Until the Congressman clears himself, speculation and interest will only intensify.

To Dr. and Mrs. Levy, it must appear as if no progress has been made on the case. From their perspective—and I observe as one who has walked in their shoes—law enforcement's job is to locate their daughter, and so far it has failed in that mission. Although Mr. Condit has interviewed twice with Metro Police, the Levys believe that he may be withholding relevant information, that he may be receiving preferential treatment, and that he may be using his political position to hinder the investigation.

Indeed, if revelations that he

asked another woman with whom he was having an affair to sign a false affidavit and lie to authorities are substantiated, the Congressman is impeding the investigation, is involved in a cover-up, and has put his own self-interest far above that of the missing intern.

In contrast, when Polly disappeared, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey made sure that every effort was made on her behalf. She supported all of the family's recovery efforts. She intervened with law enforcement, held press conferences, and represented her constituents with the full backing of her office. Like her, with the exception of Mr. Condit, virtually every elected official in California responds to the disappearance of constituents vigorously and proactively.

Until there is tangible evidence that a crime has been committed, missing person cases are rarely reclassified as crimes. To ensure that a criminal investigation is pursued, and that the Congressman's conduct does

(Continued on page 7)

INSIDE

ACTIVIST ROBIN TRUMBULL: PROFILE....	2
FOUNDATION UPDATE.....	3
FACE-OFF ON THE DEATH PENALTY.....	4
KLAAS ON THE DEATH PENALTY.....	6

MICHIGAN ACTIVIST GETS AMBER ALERT

Robin Trumbull is a financial consultant for AG Edwards & Sons in Battle Creek, Michigan, who has volunteered for a number of causes throughout her life. So, when she attended a KlaasKids Foundation town hall meeting in 1999 and heard about the Dallas/Ft. Worth Amber Alert, created in the aftermath of the 1995 kidnapping of little Amber Hagerman, she set her sights on a statewide effort. "For me, this was an easy call," Trumbull said. "Law enforcement stresses that the first 24 hours in a missing child or abduction case are critical. Therefore, having the means to alert the public 24/7 through the media greatly enhances their ability to solve such crimes."

Armed with a \$3,000 matching grant from the KlaasKids Foundation, Trumbull set out to make Michigan a safer place for little children. She depended upon personal resources developed over the years as a member of the Battle Creek Community Foundation Professional Development Committee, as president of the Volunteer Center of Battle Creek, and as a member of her church, the Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter Day Saints, where she is involved in music, children's programs, and emergency preparedness.

Her efforts met with complete success. On Tuesday, June 19, Robin Trumbull joined the state's First Lady, Michelle Engler, on the steps of the state Capitol in Lansing, Michigan, for the announcement of the Amber Alert, a new statewide program to assist authorities in searching for missing children. Michigan



Robin Trumbull (center) speaking at the press conference announcing Michigan's new Amber Alert Program.

"The first 24 hours in a missing child or abduction case are critical. Having the means to alert the public 24/7 through the media enhances their ability to solve such crimes."

"Currently there are more than 1,900 children listed as missing in Michigan," stated Engler. "With the Amber Alert we will use the power of the electronic media to quickly reach the citizens of Michigan, who will then be able to provide the authorities with critical and timely information."

Similar to the emergency broadcast service, the Amber Alert is a cooperative effort between law enforcement and the media. Utilizing MAB radio and television stations to immediately send out information regarding the endangered disappearance or abduction of children in Michigan, it will be activated when law enforcement confirms the abduction of a child 18 years old or younger, when a child with a mental or physical disability warranting concern is reported missing, or if the child is endangered as a result of their disappearance.

Upon verification that a kidnapping meets the Amber Alert criteria, law enforcement will fax case information to the Michigan State Police operations center for

(continued on page 3)

State Police Director Col. Michael Robinson, Michigan Association of Broadcasters (MAB) chairperson Judy Kenney, Calhoun County Sheriff Al Byam, Lansing Police Chief Mark Alley were also at the press conference.

© 2001 by the KlaasKids Foundation. The *Klaas Action Review* is published quarterly for Foundation members. Dedicated to the memory of Polly Klaas, the Foundation's purpose is to inform parents, children, and communities about how to prevent crimes against children through personal action and support of legislation. Editorial: Freeman Communications, Berkeley, CA. Design Concept: Blackburn Design, Petaluma, CA. Printing: Marin Stat, San Rafael, CA.

MAJOR GRANT AWARDED TO FUND KLAASKIDS PRIVACY PROJECTS

The KlaasKids Foundation has been awarded its largest gift to date, a \$75,000 grant to pursue privacy initiatives.

Presentation of the grant is in response to the Foundation's efforts in "Kids Off Lists," a groundbreaking privacy campaign. Since 1996, the Foundation has helped to expose database companies that collect private information on children and adults through a series of questionable techniques, and then use prisoners—including convicted murderers, rapists, and child molesters—to process the data, selling it indiscriminately to anyone willing to pay cold cash for information.

Former Los Angeles investigative reporter and current CNN Anchor Kyra Phillips targeted the Metromail Corporation and, using a fake address, phony marketing scheme,

cell phone number, and the name of Richard Allen Davis (the killer of Polly Klaas) purchased a list of 5,000 children in Los Angeles for \$277.00. Duplicated elsewhere throughout the country, such sordid and dangerous practices were exposed and published throughout the country.

In response, former New Jersey Congressman Bob Franks and California Senator Diane Feinstein sponsored federal legislation to outlaw the practice. On September 12, 1996, the *Children's Privacy Protection and Parental Empowerment Act of 1996 (HR3508)* was the subject of hearings before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime. Although the trillion-dollar Direct Marketing Association lobby finally defeated this legislation, the exposé became an important link in the

ongoing battle to protect the privacy of American citizens.

In a related case, Ohio grandmother Beverly Dennis responded to a questionnaire from Metromail that promised coupon savings during the spring of 1994. In June, she got a threatening, sexually explicit letter from a rapist serving time at a Texas penitentiary. This incident led to a recently settled class action lawsuit against Metromail.

On June 14, 2001, the KlaasKids Foundation became one of 18 entities awarded grants from the \$1-million portion of the Beverly Dennis vs. Metromail settlement designated to promote privacy. The six-member Steering Committee established to oversee the allocation of the fund awarded the KlaasKids Foundation \$75,000.00 to pursue a variety of privacy initiatives. Included among them are a special edition of the *Klaas Action Review* and a dedicated mailing to our database of 75,000 young American families. The Foundation will also be upgrading its website at www.klaaskids.org and featuring a section on privacy in anticipation of expanding its consistent core audience of 500,000 monthly visits.

"We are grateful that our efforts have had an impact on this important safety issue," said Foundation President Marc Klaas, "and we are humbled that there are those who will invest in our efforts to combat an extremely serious problem—one that is continually outpaced by questionable vendors and advances in technology." ■

MICHIGAN ACTIVIST WINS OUT

(continued from page 2)

dissemination to MAB radio and television stations for immediate public broadcast. The public will then be able to aid in the rescue of kidnapped children by contacting local police or 911 with information.

According to Robinson, "Ninety-five percent of all people driving in their automobiles are listening to their radios, and 40 percent of missing child photographs shown on television result in their safe recovery. We support the Amber Alert as another important tool that law enforcement can utilize when searching for endangered and

missing children."

"What really motivated me to pursue this very worthy goal was the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children," Trumbull said. "My husband and I are in the process of adopting two precious little boys, and I can't think of anything worse than somebody taking them away from me. It is in their names, and in the memory of little Amber Hagerman that I dedicate this effort. If we impact only one case or save only one child, it will justify all my efforts."

Robin Trumbull is President of the 501 (c)(3) non-profit Michigan State Amber Alert. ■

WHY WE SHOULD HAVE THE DEATH PENALTY

By Nina Salarno-Ashford

Death Penalty"—two words that conjure up more emotions than any others I come across. So many opinions are polarized around the imposition of death penalty for murderers. There are those that vehemently support it and those who rage against it.

As the Director of the California Attorney General's Office of Victims' Services, I have had the opportunity to speak with individuals from both ends of the spectrum. Interestingly enough, both sides of the issue ask one seminal question—of what value is the death penalty? I also have some personal experience: my sister was murdered.

Experience tells me that for crime victims and survivors the value of the death penalty exceeds words. I do not use the term "experience" because my sister's killer received a death sentence, because he did not, but rather because, since my appointment as Director of Victims' Services, my office has worked diligently to secure the victims' ability to be present and be heard at the clemency and execution phase of the process. I have personally been present at the executions of Darrell Rich and Robert Lee Massie.

The program instituted by the Office of Victims' Services is actually initiated long before the execution. Upon the judgment of death at the county level, my office contacts the victim's family members. In most cases, I make the contact personally. Also, depending on a court ruling, we arrange for a videotaped victim impact statement to ensure that their voices will be heard at the time of clemency and execution. After providing initial information to the family, we then keep them informed of the progress of the case on an annual basis, allowing them to stay involved.

At the time of execution, my office works hard to make sure that the victims of the crime are not obscured by the controversy surrounding the death penalty. Since the State of California does not make transportation and lodging for victims and survivors available, my office seeks alternate means of providing these services by coordinating efforts with several state, local, and private organizations. In fact, one year Attorney General Bill Lockyer personally paid the travel expenses of 22 survivors. Prior to the execution date, my office helps victims prepare their impact statements, and if necessary, we will present them to the media on their behalf. To ensure that the focus does not become too diluted, we

also provide information to the media concerning the defendant's crime and the victims' story.

The viewing of the execution is quite involved. My staff and the Department of Corrections spend an inordinate amount of time coordinating security clearances and the various procedures leading to the execution.

Once on the prison grounds, Warden Jeanne Woodford supplies the families with counseling, food, and an opportunity to speak to the media if they choose.

I give you this background information to illustrate how far we have come in recent years. Prior to the Darrell Rich case, victims were excluded from the informational loop. Unless the media called for a statement, families were usually unaware of the case progress, and due to time, financial, or other constraints, they were often unable to attend the clemency hearings and execution of the criminal. If they did attend the execution, it was on their own, with no services provided or available to them.

So why does the Office of Victims' Services do all this now? We do this because it relates back to that all important and central question—of what value is the death penalty? The value for the crime victims resides in the realm of core emotion, because of the overwhelming sense of peace that it delivers. Perhaps the victims from the Darrell Rich case described it best.

For one gentleman, the relief came in knowing that the defendant would no longer be able to daily relive the rape and murder of his sister and that her victimization would end at long last. For one young lady who was not initially a proponent of the death penalty, the value came in the realization that Darrell Rich would never again turn her dreams into nightmares.

In the final analysis, for these individuals, the elimination of evil and execution of the killer allowed them to attain, after so many tortured years, a relative state of grace. And how do you put a price on that? ■



Murder victim Catina Salarno

WHY WE SHOULDN'T HAVE THE DEATH PENALTY

By Bud Welch

I want to put a face on one of the 168 people killed at the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, by bragging on Julie. Julie was my only daughter, my pal, my sidekick, my best friend. We hung together, we fought together, we did everything together. She died at the hands of Timothy McVeigh on the morning of April 19, 1995.

The first month after the bombing I didn't want trials for McVeigh and Nichols. I just wanted them fried. I took to drinking heavily and went from one pack to three packs of cigarettes per day. Now, I look back on that time and think that it was one of temporary insanity. I watched them take McVeigh and Nichols quickly into cars, wearing bulletproof vests, and I knew why. During my period of insanity there is no doubt in my mind that I would have killed them myself if I had the chance.

At night, I would close my Texaco station that I have owned for 36 years and go home and drink until I slept. Eventually, the hangovers went from lasting from ten in the morning until the end of the day.

I went to the bombsite every day after work for the first year and stood under the old American elm tree where Julie parked her car in the shade on hot days. One day in November, I was standing there, tortured and

"Rage and vengeance are what killed all of those innocent people in the first place—they are why the bombing happened... It was rage and vengeance that McVeigh carried to his grave."

hung over and stuck on April 19. I asked myself, "Once they're tried and executed, what then? How's that going to help me? It isn't going to bring Julie back." My rage and vengeance was killing me. I realized that if we took McVeigh out of his cage and killed him, it would be because of rage and vengeance. But rage and vengeance are what killed all of those innocent



Bombing victim Julie Welch

Now, instead of honoring Julie's life through anger, I try to do it peaceably. My family has always been against the death penalty. When Julie was 16, she started a chapter of Amnesty International at her high school. She was an activist, but not me. Not until now. She was tiny, only five feet tall and 103 pounds. It is my view that she was carrying a little white flag. She can

no longer carry that flag, but I am strongly committed to carrying it for her until the day I die.

Since we have seen McVeigh executed, I feel that many people were re-victimized. I remember one family member saying, "I kept looking, wanting him to apologize, to say something, and he never did. It wasn't what I wanted." I hope that killing him is not a no-gainer for everyone. Surely, there is some gain. I don't give a damn about the authorities. We didn't go through this process for them. It was to help family members and to get such bastards off the streets.

There is nothing about taking a human out of a cage to kill him that is going to bring us any type of good feeling. Watching him take that last breath did not make us feel better. It is still the death of a human being. ■

KLAASKIDS VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

The KlaasKids Foundation has launched a national vehicle donation program. If you would like to contribute your old car, truck, or RV, please call our toll-free number at 1-866-538-7366 and we will make arrangements to pick your donated vehicle up anywhere in America. Many thanks for your continued support of our child safety programs.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH PENALTY

By Marc Klaas

Before his execution, Timothy McVeigh was a death row rock star. Like those who preceded him, he commanded and manipulated the popular media. His psychopathy, mistakenly identified as revolutionary zeal, was analyzed as his tactics were condemned. The controversy he generated drove topical conversation for more than six years, beginning at 9:03 a.m. on April 19, 1995.

His advocates spoke respectfully about his presence of mind, feelings, and courage as he prepared to die. Religious leaders offered social forgiveness and revealed expectations to "meet Mr. McVeigh in Heaven." Death penalty abolitionists vilified the government and used his case to argue the inequities of the death penalty in America.

His letters and book were dissected for hidden meaning and profound motivation. Journalists sat with him in his prison cell and helped him prepare "American Terrorist," the third-rate little book that reduces dead babies to "collateral damage" and attempts to explain his twisted justifications for mass murder.

Only a bitterly ironic God would endorse the convoluted religious interpretations that are thrust upon us by self-righteous members of the clergy. None of the preachers who forgave McVeigh for his crimes lost a father, mother, son, or daughter in the gutted nine-story office building that swallowed up 168 lives. Who among us would be so presumptuous as to forgive Hitler or Stalin for their genocidal perversions?

Forgiveness for murder is not ours to give. The only ones in a position to forgive murder are the

victims and, by definition, the victims are dead, which makes murder the unforgivable sin.

In an odd and curiously cowardly act McVeigh requested the Catholic sacrament of last rights in his last moments, but death row religious transformations are as over-rated as they are legendary. Images of double pick-ax killer Carla Fay Tucker, quoting scripture as she gazed toward heaven like a death row Madonna, are as vivid as the images of Jesse Jackson and Jerry Fallwell protesting her execution at the gates of the death house. Serial-killer-turned-jailhouse-preacher David Berkowitz looks forward to the day he enters heaven.

That a murderer can achieve spiritual enlightenment by following a course that leads through pools of their victim's blood advocates body counts as mere stepping stones on the path to nirvana. I wish not to follow in the footsteps of the righteous if I must step over dead bodies to arrive in the Promised Land.

Inequities within our criminal justice system neither begin nor end on death row, so it is difficult to argue that the system can be corrected by eliminating the death penalty. The racial disparities charged by death penalty abolitionists parallel the general prison population and conveniently ignore the fact that blacks are seven times more likely than whites to commit homicide, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Since the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976, only 6.5% of death row inmates have been executed, including 390 or 56% white, 249 or 35% black, 49 or 7% Latino, and 14 or 3% Asian and American



Murder victim Polly Klaas

Indian. If the abolitionists were really serious, they would better focus on the hundreds of thousands of young men of every color who are incarcerated for non-violent drug possession felonies because this is where intervention is desirable, rehabilitation is possible, and where positive influence can be profound.

The death penalty is just punishment for heinous crimes that are the unfortunate but logical extension of our self-indulgent fascination with carnage and destruction. We consume a constant diet of unedited violence in entertainment and news. Online predators populate the Internet, and death row advertising drives fashion. Two hundred million guns adorn our walls, hide in our cupboards, and linger in personal armories.

Misguided children have internalized the message that violence is a viable solution to problems of stress, anger, and alienation. Our violent crime statistics dwarf those in the other industrialized countries. In 1996 alone, handguns murdered two people in New Zealand; 13 in Australia; 15 in Japan; 30 in Great

Britain; 106 in Canada; 213 in Germany and **9,390** in the United States.

As long as death row stars are allowed to exist, they will exert undue influence on us all. Just as Manson's mere existence was enough to inspire Squeaky Fromm's assassination attempt upon President Ford, and serial killer Danny Rowling's "Do It Yourself Serial Killer" website is still maintained by love interest Sondra London, so McVeigh's continued existence influenced what we saw, what we heard, how we felt and what we thought for far too long.

In the final analysis, McVeigh was a callous, unremorseful mass-murderer. He defined society in terms such as "Collateral damage, victory" and "Regret is not an option," and society unequivocally rejected those terms when he was executed. Although we fed his insatiable ego, he was a martyr and symbol only in the grandiosity of his own nihilism.

The paradox of America has come full circle. The very rights that guarantee our freedom also dictate that we impose the death penalty. As

long as we willingly arm all of our citizens and give them the right to say as they wish, when they wish, then in self-defense, we must protect ourselves from the evil influence of overindulgence.

We must not reflect lightly on the death penalty. The power over life and death is an issue of epic proportion and foreboding complexity that McVeigh dared to impose on his victims. To do anything less than answer in kind is to diminish even further the value and meaning of his victim's lives. ■

MESSAGE FROM MARC (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

not become a fatal distraction, the Levys have retained lawyer and criminal investigator Billy Martin and instructed him to launch an independent, parallel investigation unencumbered by the restraints of law enforcement. I also pursued this strategy after Polly was kidnapped, hoping that a fresh approach would uncover new information.

The Levy family is in a difficult and unenviable position. They desperately seek the elusive key to their daughter's disappearance and are unsure of whom is helping or hindering their efforts. Ironically, the families of the other 750,000 persons reported missing every year in America would do almost anything to attract the kind of attention that is being lavished upon Chandra Levy. Unfortunately, as time goes on most of them suffer in anonymity, surrendering faith and hope as their prayers go unanswered. However, strategies exist that can be employed to raise the profile of the missing, at least locally, put their faces back in the newspapers and on television, restoring faith and offering hope that

a successful resolution is possible.

When Xiana Fairchild disappeared in 1999, there were no rumors, scandals, or celebrities to fuel interest. Faced with the formidable task of creating interest in the disappearance of an impoverished mixed-race girl whose case might not be easily or quickly resolved, we created three strategies intended to impact the public's perception of and interest in Xiana's case.

We wrote a "Ten-Day Action Agenda" that included participation in law enforcement press conferences, candlelight vigils, fundraising events, and daily press advisories. We also enlisted the families of other missing children to appear before the press and plea for Xiana's return. A "City Council Wish List" outlined ten points we hoped to achieve with the assistance of the city government, including a pre-written proclamation, a city-sponsored Child Safety Day, and assistance in engaging professional sports franchises. Finally, a "Six-Week Battle Plan" listed at least three weekly events, two of which were tailored for media consumption,

and the other, an organized volunteer search that had the additional goal of locating evidence that would bring closure to the case.

Congressman Condit is failing his duty to represent and serve his constituents as that applies to the Levy family, yet that is the very reason that the case has received such unprecedented attention. Mr. Condit is now faced with the formidable task of convincing the Levys, their lawyer, and Metro Police that he is neither involved in nor has information relevant to Chandra's disappearance. Only then will trust be restored, will the investigation move forward, and the Levy family able to take solace in the knowledge that every possible avenue of investigation is being pursued.

Those families who envy the attention generated by Ms. Levy's apparent tragedy can take comfort knowing that by working hard, being creative, and following some simple strategies, they may generate enough local attention to achieve the same goal being sought by the Levy family: the safe return of their missing child. ■

JOIN THE FOUNDATION AND HELP FIGHT CRIME!

To join the KlaasKids Foundation, please fill out this form and return it to the address below. Your tax-deductible membership costs just \$15.00 per year, and includes a subscription to the quarterly *Klaas Action Review*, with news and information, practical tips, events, and more.

Members may also receive:

- Information on starting a National Community Empowerment program.
- Safety information for your children.
- Information about how to support legislation against crime in your state.
- Other: _____

As a personal gift, you will also receive the Children's Identification Packet and a beautiful "Polly, We Love You" pin, in memory of our inspiration, Polly Klaas.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Enclosed please find my tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

Discover Card Visa MasterCard

Credit card number is: _____

Expiration date: _____

Be sure to check out our website at www.klaaskids.org for regular updates and information on child safety. Give us your feedback!



■ KLAASKIDS FOUNDATION
P. O. Box 925
SAUSALITO, CA 94966

Nonprofit Org.
Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sausalito, CA
Permit No. 41