

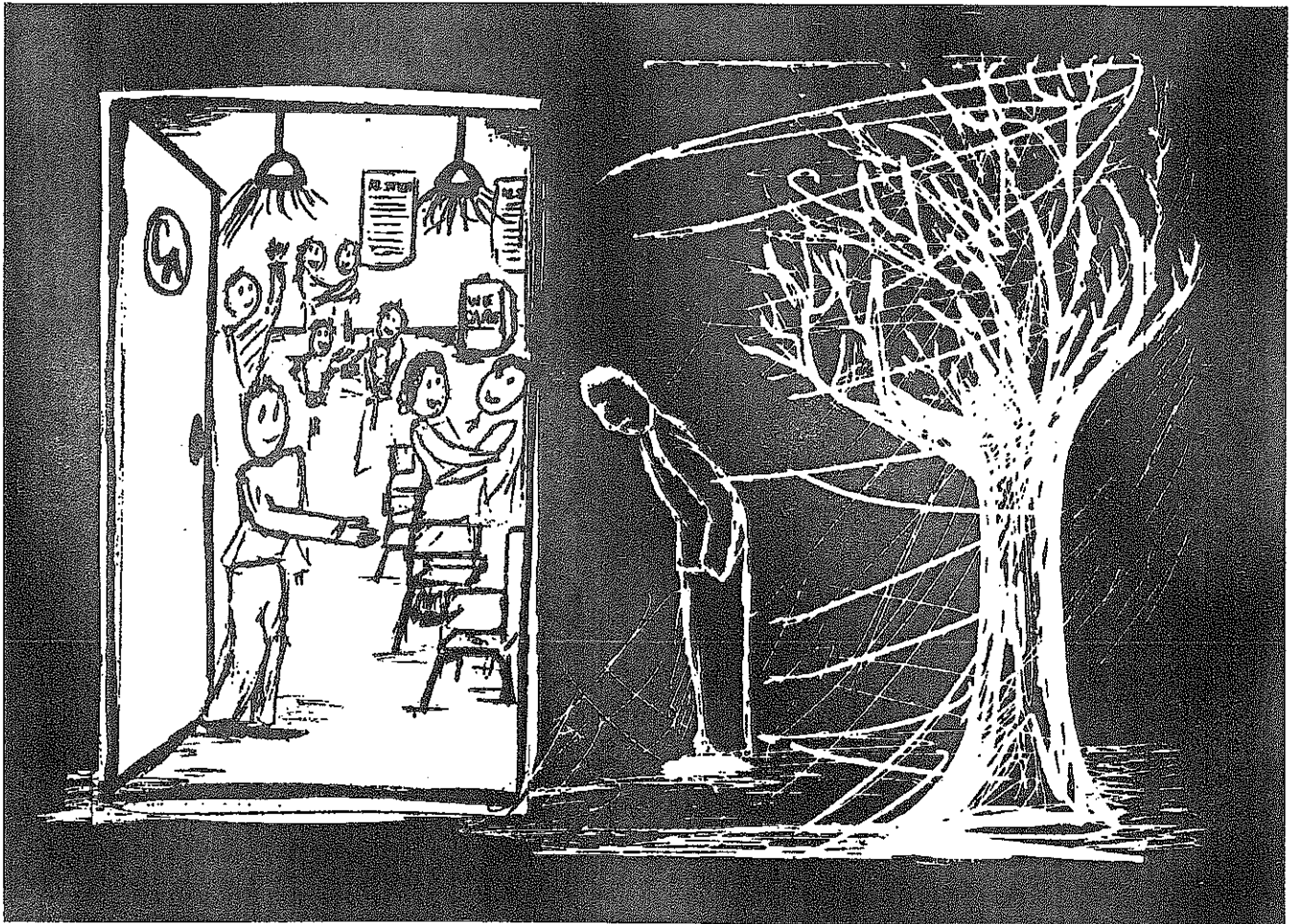
THE CONNECTION

\$ 100

Vol. three

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, AND HOPE WORLDWIDE
OF AND BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF COCAINE ANONYMOUS

Winter 1989



S.R., Pasadena, CA

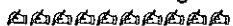
TO THE NEWCOMER

Editor
Susie S.
Typesetting
Mel M.

The Connection presents the experiences and opinions of CA's and others interested in addiction. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Cocaine Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any story or article imply endorsement by Cocaine Anonymous or The Connection. Manuscripts of stories, letters, poems, or quotes are invited, but no payment can be made nor can contributed material be returned and The Connection reserves the right to edit or modify submitted material.

From the Editor:

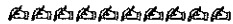
Hi again. Still Susie, still hanging in as Editor. Well we have another issue here, this time with submissions from a few states. Getting better. I still need submissions from all areas, and I am looking forward to hearing from you!



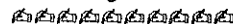
My greatest need is for stories and short letters. The next issue's theme will be "A New Life" which is a general topic, and should be pretty easy to write about. The next one will be a bit harder, "Working It" (For Summer 1989). I also need your poems and quotes...

I am also looking for cartoons and black and white drawings or photos (no recognizable faces please!).

Please take a minute and share your recovery with the world by putting something in an envelope today!



If nothing else, why not announce The Connection in a meeting, or make sure the literature person is ordering it for the meetings you attend. We can use all the support we can get. By the way, The Connection is looking for regional Reps nationwide to commit (you know, like a real commitment) to making sure The Connection is being ordered, announced and submissions are being encouraged in their region.



Well, that's enough from me, thanks for letting me be of service. I love you all. See ya next issue.

IT'S SO SIMPLE

Dear Newcomer:
(What follows is my opinion only)

If you have been to more than one meeting you've probably heard somebody say, "I'm a Newcomer too," even though they might have many months or years of sobriety. What do they mean? I think what they are doing is reminding themselves that staying clean depends upon what you do today, not what you did yesterday. It comes back to the phrase "One day at a time." You have to make a decision each day that you're going to do the footwork necessary to live life clean and sober, and that process is the same whether you have one day of sobriety or ten years. Now, the person with ten years hopefully can draw on previous experience to get them through a little more easily, but that extra experience is the only difference between newcomers and those that have been around longer...

But as a newcomer you may be

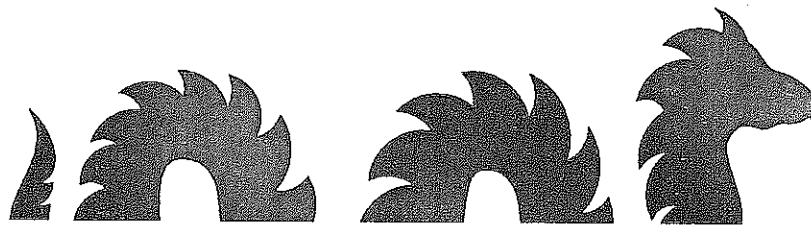
saying "Well what am I supposed to do until I get all that experience? I'm not worried about ten years from now, I just want to get through today without drinking or using."

It's so simple: 1) go to meetings, 2) read the Big Book, 3) get a Sponsor, 4) make friends on the program.

I forced myself to reach out to people in the beginning and with practice it's become much easier for me, both in the group and outside in the real world. The love and support I receive and give with my sober friends really drives home to me how lonely I was as a practicing addict.

I don't want to go back, and you don't have to go back either. As long as we practice a few simple rules for ourselves and make a minimum effort there is a new life to be had. Jump in.

R.K.
South Pasadena, CA



DON'T HATE THE DRAGON

Hello. My name is K. and I'm an addict. I really have come to appreciate the drug cocaine. Cocaine was introduced to me because, I guess, I needed to be brought down to my knees fast. It worked. Today I can't afford to regret my past or have a resentment against the drug itself. It was but a tool.

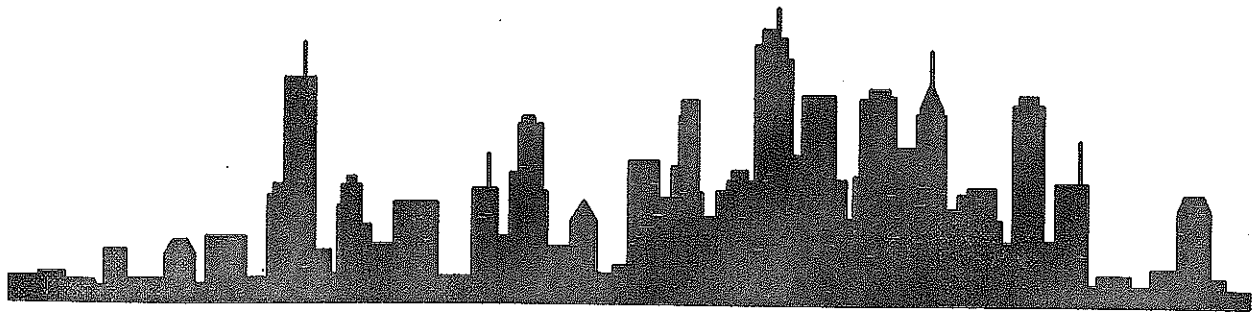
My disease started a long time ago, on a subconscious level. That obsessive, unmanageable, unpredictable, overwhelming, anticipation feeling...active addiction. It was so powerful that it made me believe the opposite of what was really true! There is no human power that can relieve me of the driving force of addiction-- only my Higher Power.

I have learned that the core of my disease is shame and self-loathing. I

used because I was ashamed of who I was, how I looked, what I was doing. I pray for the willingness today to see my faults and accept them. Sometimes I can say, and believe, that I'm okay, now, the way I am. No fixes, no outside influences, just me. The program taught me to surrender to my Higher Power, and it is teaching me self-love. That is how to live life, with love for yourself. The ultimate high.

The rest-- love from fellow addicts, living clean, one day at a time, happy relationships, the list is endless-- are all bonuses. I like that. I'll keep coming back. Thank you.

K.S.
Everson, WA



OFF THE STREET

J's Story

When I arrived, fear and a very lost feeling sunk in. I didn't want to go in; there was laughter and talking, and everyone seemed in touch with each other.

I was off the street, no money, no food, absolutely nothing. I did have some determination to hear what these people had to say. On the other hand, who would want to talk and laugh with a coke addict fresh from prison?

As I stood there a voice from behind me said "Hello there, I'm B." He stuck out his hand and smiled. I thought he looked like an addict, but he was smiling, so I followed him in. He introduced me to some people and got me a cup of coffee, and I proceeded to sit in a far back corner.

The meeting started and a young lady started reading. I felt something, but it was quickly gone. Then she asked if there were any newcomers. To this day I can't remember what I said, but when I stopped, all these people looked at me, clapped, hugged me, they gave me an orange chip and said keep coming back.

I sat and listened. I heard these

Some were like me, some not as bad, some, to my surprise, worse.

people talking about sobriety, and fun, being involved, and their personal problems. People were identifying as addicts, alcoholics, liars, cheats and thieves.

And they were telling my story in bits and peices.

The meeting came to a close. They held hands and said a prayer or meditation.

People came up to me and gave me phone numbers and showed me the

literature and meeting directories. They made me feel good. That was it...the feeling. I hadn't felt for so long. I felt good.

I realized I had to find out! They had what I wanted, and I had to figure it out. Come, they said, follow directions, go to meetings, use the phone. Keep coming back, you'll learn in time, they said.

The next day I went to an AA meeting. It was harder to relate to the speaker at first, then he talked about coming off the streets to the fellowship, beaten. Well, I could relate to that. Also, he spoke of sobriety and its gifts, not just the material but the spiritual.

I needed more. And went to a CA book study. Now I was hearing my story from a book. This guy at the meeting, S., I remember his jolly laugh, asked me to read a portion of this "Big Book." I began to read, and there was that feeling again. This time it really came from inside and I began to cry. It all sounded so true, and I really wanted it.

S. looked at me and said, "Still have feelings, huh? More than I can say about myself when I first came."

I left feeling really good. I was trusting and building new friends. Real friends.

Today I am able to pay my bills. It's not always easy and I don't always have those good feelings. But it is a good living. Also I don't know your response to God, but God is important to me.

I should say that after 24 months I went back out. I had set myself up for it. It was all about the stuff on pager 449 of the Big Book. People, places and situations just weren't doing what I wanted them to!

Now I know I need to always stay in touch and in service to our fellowship and to you. We all help each other to keep living life on life's terms.

So come and join us. I can tell you for a fact that you will see the faces of the people I spoke about that helped me.

They were still there when I came back.

Today ten minutes of serenity is better than a lifetime of what I had in the past.

"We shall be with you in the fellowship and the spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the road of happy destiny. May God bless you and keep you until then."

J.M.
Pasadena, CA

MASKS

Different masks that people wear
Different masks worn everywhere
To try to hide your greatest fears
To hide the scares and show no tears.

To have your guards up at all times,
Making sure that no one finds
The insecure child you are
Or the grown-up person you see afar.

But when you stop your masquerade
You feel secure and not afraid.
For its only then that you will see
The terrific person you are and can be!

I.G.
Pasadena, CA

CHECKING IN ON:
"TO THE
NEWCOMER"

Dear Newcomer:

Do yourself a favor, stay. If you have made it here, chances are that the using wasn't so great anymore. Take it from people who know, it won't get better. We all tried for years to convince ourselves that we would be able to handle it, control it, enjoy it, somehow, someday. We couldn't do it; none of us. Overall, it just got worse. If you think it couldn't be any worse, think again. Somehow we can always find a lower spot, lower than now, lower than the last low.

If you ever wanted anything good for yourself, stay. If you ever want to feel respect for yourself, stay. If you have people that care about you, that you care about, stay. If you want to live, stay.

S.S.
Arcadia, CA

What are these people doing? What is this, some sort of social club? They all seem to know each other. I don't belong here. When I first got to the program, I thought those things. Thank God I stayed long enough to hear what was being said. They were talking my language. They were talking drugs. And, they were not lightweights. Somehow, though, they were doing what I could not; they were staying off cocaine. Okay. Just for now, today, I'll try this, I thought. I can't believe that that was four years ago. I can't believe that I haven't had to use cocaine since that first meeting (before the program, I hadn't made it for more than a few days in six years!!). It works, if you want it. Or maybe I should say if you just don't want it anymore...

S.M.
Pasadena, CA

Say Goodbye:

It's time to say goodbye to my love. Yes, it's true. For so long always #1 in my life, now I have found something that I feel better doing. I no longer need you. I no longer want you. In fact, I hate you and hope to never see you again. You have destroyed lots of things in my life, almost my life itself, but you no longer have a place in my life. Not ever again. I am free now. You are dead. Goodbye PCP, goodbye Cocaine. I am alive.

K.P.
Lombard, IL

90 DAY GUARANTEE

The People of the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous solemnly guarantee that if at the end of 90 days of attendance of meetings and staying clean and sober your life has not shown noticeable, even dramatic, improvement, we will happily (or regretfully) refund your misery in full.

This is our guarantee to you:

The Newcomer

*From Us: The Fellowship of
Cocaine Anonymous*



A MAN OF VISION



Finally, a moment of clarity where he could see.

I'm not one of those guys who picked up his first drink when he was seven, shot dope at twelve and got sober at sixteen. Although sometimes I wish it were that simple. No, that was not me at all.

I didn't start drinking on a daily basis until I was 33, snorted cocaine for the first time a year later, and injected it a couple of years after that. I was arrested after seven years of substance addiction and didn't tie it all together until a year and a half later that cocaine was the cause of my criminal, financial and emotional difficulties. Like I said, I was a late bloomer.

My original drug of choice was fantasy. I could shut down emotionally and live in a fantasy world where I was the duly elected beloved emperor. Where everyone was willing to love me unconditionally and do things my way.

I was married in 1965, right after I passed the Connecticut Bar exam and started practicing law. Feelings of anxiety and a need to be perfect created a great deal of inner tension, so a friendly pharmacist turned me on to valium. These I used on a daily basis for 15 years, swallowing 100 mg every day at the end. The pharmacist also supplied me with amphetamines. Each day became a ritual of getting the right balance of "ups" and "downs" so I could cope. Working until midnight, "she" would be up waiting and angry at me, so I began stopping off for two or three vodkas at the local bar. She'd still be awake and angry, but now it didn't faze me. The lesson was indelibly stamped on my brain: I couldn't change reality, but with drugs, I could change me!

I left the practice of law, and my marriage, and set out to build an empire. My very first venture got going when my pharmacist friend put his store into bankruptcy. Doing what any self-respecting addict would do, I purchased the pharmacy. Now my world of pills expanded. Eventually I sold the business and built a medium-sized chain of eyeglass stores, leaving the day to day management to others because I had found a new love...COCAINE...which was taking more and more of my time, quickly becoming a full time career.

My new business became "sex, drugs, and rock & roll." (On cocaine) I experienced a euphoria, self confidence and power I had searched for all my life. I also noticed that lots of attractive women liked cocaine. Within a short period my whole life became centered around cocaine.

In the meantime I wasn't showing up at the office until after 4:00 each afternoon, as I had been up all night hosting cocaine parties with my wonderfully new devoted female friends. My money was rapidly running out, but it was too painful to acknowledge that I was becoming a financial failure.

I was now doing cocaine around the clock (in addition to quaaludes, valium and vodka). My ability to converse was limited to "coke talk," price, flake, rock, purity...but I got confused, and often got scammed. I was hanging around with smugglers who carried guns. In my mind I was their legal advisor and would cite stuff like "U.S. vs. Miranda" but could not recall for the life of me what that decision held.

Parania became my middle name, (at one point) my condominium was turned into a "mattress room" for ten very crazy people armed to the teeth. One guy came in battle fatigues!

My world was crumbling. My friends were in prison. I had little money left. I sold my last bit of external self-esteem...my Jaguar...to raise money. I also sold my furniture, paintings and televisions to get cash. I was severely depressed, but it never occurred to me that cocaine was a problem, that I was an addict.

On February 14th 1981, I was reading a newspaper about the first NFL drug casualty to go public with his cocaine addiction. He stated, "Because of cocaine I've lost family, friends and career." A flashbulb went off in my mind. For an instant I was restored to sanity. This was my moment of clarity. Six days later I got into a treatment program.

The only support group in my area at that time was AA. I went to at least a meeting every day for two years, but in AA we were discouraged from even talking about drugs. Three years sober I had not even become "desensitized" to

cocaine conversation. Let someone start talking about cocaine, and my hands would start perspiring.

In 1984 I heard about an organization that was growing in California. A support group for cocaine addicts called Cocaine Anonymous. I put my entrepreneurial skills to work and started Cocaine Anonymous in my state. We grew quickly as more and more cocaine addicts were seeking recovery.

I started making visits to CA conventions in California and was elected to our World Service Board of Trustees for a five year term. In the past seven years I have worked with hundreds of men and women who, like myself years ago, were ready to die.

I have learned to live a substance free life one day at a time. It has not always been easy. For my first year I didn't date because I just knew a woman wouldn't be interested in me. After all, I didn't have cocaine anymore, and had lost most of the material trappings. But gradually, as my self-love grew, I started going out with women and enjoying them as people, not just as bed partners. Financially it has often been a struggle, but a day at a time, I have a nice roof over my head and eat well. I managed to hold on to one eyeglass store, and it makes a good living for me. I am blessed today with wonderful friends.

I have worked hard to clear up the wreckage of my past. My oldest son graduated from college this year and we have a wonderful relationship. For the first time I am learning what a father is supposed to be and we work hard to understand one another. I know I've been blessed with a second chance and, for the life of me, I don't understand why. I just accept this gift that God has given me with gratitude, knowing that it all hinges on my willingness to stay clean and sober and help others achieve the same freedom. I choose to try to live by spiritual principles today...honesty, unselfishness, purity and love. When I don't succeed, I don't beat myself up. I just do the best I can, a day at a time.

J.P.
Southport, CT

POETRY

For Those Entering Programs

We will come and we will go;
All will promise never again to blow...

Some will make it some will not,
But the program's all we got.

Some will win and some will lose,
But in this fight there are no fools.

So keep your head, continue to fight,
And finally things will be alright.

R.T.

The edge around Reality,
One step toward Infinity,
To find the Being who is Me,
With the freedom to like
the one who I see.

L.M.
Casa Grande, AZ

The Cocaine Whore

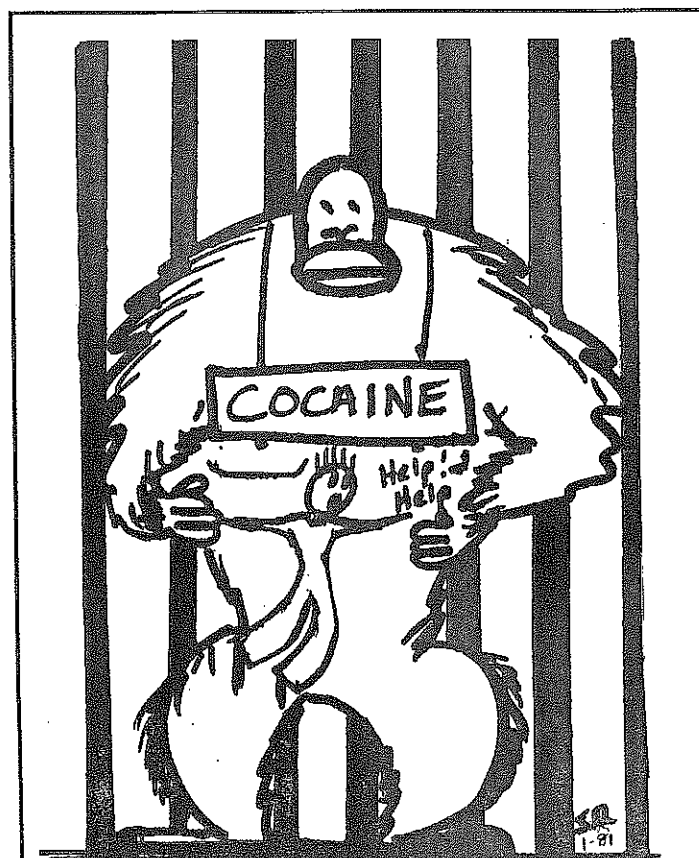
Crystal clear, white as snow
Up your nose or pipe it goes.
Lifting you above the ground
Suddenly, you're listening to every sound.
Now it's getting only too good.
And you can't stop like you know you should.
You get a big rush! Your head is spinning!
You're running a race and you think you're winning.
You've spent all your money and smoked all you had,
Now you're confused and lonely and sad.
You're searching, scraping, and looking for more.
You've just crossed the line, you're a "cocaine whore!"
Cocaine can have you anytime.
Making you scape pennies and nickels and dimes.
You went to the limit! You sold and stole,
And reaching Cocaine was your ultimate goal.
You've lost it all, including your pad,
Congratulations! you've just been had!
You were always willing to take that trip,
Now it hits you, Cocaine ain't hip!
Suddenly you see that your life is at stake
Before you were asleep and now you are awake!
"Clean and serene!" Don't it feel great!
Go my child and sin no more,
No longer must you be a cocaine whore.

J.Z.V.

By now the feelings have grown less intense
And they will fade until I find it hard
To recall that great pain which deeply scarred
Each taunt nerve and each distraught sense.
Like childbirth, too soon we forget the pain,
Which makes it easier to survive today,
But also makes us think that we might find a way,
It wasn't so bad; I could do it again.

But I will live my life close to you,
The beaten ones, like me, that are now new.
You save me from a lone and gruesome quest,
Perhaps I won't go back like all the rest.
I know the great pain my mind can erase,
But thank God I see it still in your face.

S.S.
Arcadia, CA



QUESTION: Why is using cocaine like dancing with a gorilla?
ANSWER: Because you're not finished until the gorilla says you're finished..
SOLUTION: Don't go into the damn gorilla's cage!

QUOTES

First we came. Then we came to.
Then we came to believe.

Don't drink, don't use, no matter what!

"If you want what we have and are willing to go to any lengths to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps."

Better than keep coming back is...stay.

Try to find the similarities, not the differences.

I wouldn't have used with most of you people, and you surely wouldn't have been thrilled to know me, but I was willing to get sober with you and am now honored to share my life with you in this fellowship.

Someone offered me their telephone number when I first came in; I offered mine in exchange and they said 'no thanks, you don't have anything I want.' I understand that today.

SPRING EDITION THEME:
"A NEW LIFE"
SUMMER: "WORKING IT"

Please send your stories, letters, poems, and quotes to:

The Connection
P.O. Box 1367
Culver City, CA 90232

Last Chance Rap

My name is 'Had My Phil' and I'm here to say,
That sobriety is the only way.
I like to rap and I like to dance,
But let me tell you about my last chance.

Last chance sounds drastic, but I'll tell you why,
If I hadn't stopped I'da surely died.
It wouldn't of been bloody or really gorey,
Just let me tell you a little about my story.

I was working all day not too hard for my money,
When my work day ended I'd do blow with my honey,
Spending all our time with the mirror and the blade,
Fooling myself that I had it made in the shade.

We'd do us up a fatty and I'd do her like a rabbit,
But before I know'd it I'd developed a bad habit.
I started chugging Cuervo just to bring my body down,
And before I knew it I's in a blackout walking 'round.

My heart was getting weaker and it decided to attack,
But as soon as it was better I went out, smoked some crack.
I started packing bindle when I went off to work,

My partner he done caught me and said that stuff's for jerks.

I told him that the stuff's okay; it sets my soul on fire,
He told me coke'll kill you, boy, it's nothing but a liar.
He said he used to be a baser and some days he'd smoke ten grams,
But now he was serene and clean, he'd found some programs.

He took me to a meeting and I heard some addicts share,
I realized I was not alone and that the people care.
I told them I had tried to kick, they said you're no coward,
They said it was easier when you've got a Higher Power

A month ago I took a chip for being clean for ninety days,
I cannot tell you how it feels to be coming from that haze.
I'm feeling good, I'm eating now, gaining back some weight;
I roll on a board, not with a pipe, when I go out to skate.

So if you want what we have, come on and walk with us,
Cause it is so much better living without that demon dust.
Yeah, sobriety is really hip; it's the only way for me,
Cause it so much better living sober, clean and free.

P.G.
Newport, CA

Please send some copies. For my:

Meeting _____
Region _____
Organization _____
Friends _____

name & address

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_____	To The Newcomer (Winter 1989)	_____
_____	A New Life (Spring 1989) (Release April 1989)	_____

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You wanted more, right? Addicts never get enough!