CAWS ’98 CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Carrie C.

It will be here before you know it – a convention like no other. The Cocaine Anonymous World Service Convention will be held over Memorial Day Weekend, May 21-25, 1998 at the Irvine Marriott located in Irvine, California. All of the CA fellowships in the Pacific South Region of Cocaine Anonymous (Orange County, San Diego, Inland Empire, Central California, San Gabriel-Pomona Valley, San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles, and the region’s newest area, NEVADA!!) are working hard to make this event a memorable one.

If you have never attended a CA World Service Convention, you are probably wondering what all the fuss is about. This convention is special due to its primary purpose: “…to promote enthusiasm and unity within the Fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous and financially support World Service efforts to carry the message.”

This means that the convention is yet another way to meet other sober addicts to whom we can carry the message of recovery. It is also a great opportunity to help the CA World Service Office carry out its duties of maintaining contact with members, Groups, Districts and Areas through correspondence, the Newsgram, distribution of chips and literature, and by sending starter kits to far flung meetings just starting up.

Ask someone who has been to a CA World Service Convention and you will hear about the new sober friends the person probably made from across the United States, Canada, Europe, and anywhere else where CA has sprouted roots.

You will hear about that breathtaking moment during the sobriety countdown, when the newest of the newcomers step forward with the oldest of the old-timers.

You might just hear how the workshops and marathon meetings are led, and participated in, by sober addicts from virtually everywhere CA has a meeting. Although our program of recovery is the same worldwide, the different views and customs of people you have never met from places you have never been (or, quite possibly, even heard of) are fascinating. If you live in Southern California, are you aware that not every CA meeting celebrates sobriety dates with “birthday” cakes and that they are frequently referred to as “sobriety anniversaries” instead? And … that not every meeting bursts into applause after someone has shared?

We hope to see you in Irvine, California over this Memorial Day Weekend. We want you to raise your hand during the state and country countdown to see how far you traveled to have the opportunity to participate in a celebration like no other.

Yahoo, It’s Convention Time Again!!!

If you have never been to a convention, let me encourage you to attend the World Service Convention in Irvine, California on May 21–25, 1998. You might be saying, “California? Why would I travel so far for a Convention?” Well, let me tell you…

On May 16, 1997 I was laid off from a job I had been at for 3 years. I had no intention of traveling to Denver. I received a call from a very close program friend named Robbie and next thing I knew, I was in a rental car on my way to the World Convention in Denver! Here I was a little depressed, broken-hearted and severely low on money. What the hell I thought, why NOT go to Denver! This trip turned out to be one of the most memorable events of my life! I met program... continued on page 5

Open-Mindedness

By Randall O’B.

The other day I went to a meeting and the topic was open-mindedness. I thought about the last few years of my using. My life experience had led me to the closed-minded conclusion that God was a sick and twisted universal mind. In reality, using had sickened and twisted my perception of God.

Of course, my first sober reckoning with open-mindedness was when I opened my mind to the idea that I could be sick and that using drugs was the problem. That idea had to come first. But to continue with recovery I had to become open to the idea that God was something other than what I had imagined God to be. Perhaps God was loving, caring, all-knowing, and interested in guiding me towards a life that was happy, joyous and free. The idea was a stretch for me. But rooms full of sober people in CA helped open my mind to this possibility. And I’m happy to say that the thin sliver of light that they helped bring into the darkness of my world has grown to wonderful proportions.

Of course, more open-mindedness is still needed for complete recovery from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Our need for open-mindedness does not end after the first three steps. Acceptance of the idea of God is only a beginning. I had to become open-minded about all the remaining steps, beginning with the Fourth.

Maybe, I thought, a fearless and searching moral inventory as described in the Big Book could boost the quality of my life. Maybe a frank and open revelation of my inventory to God and another person really could result in a remarkably deeper spiritual understanding; one that would make my life immeasurably more meaningful.

Maybe practicing willingness and humility in asking God to remove my character defects could lead me onto a new path of freedom. Maybe the willingness and making of thoughtful amendments could actually result in my experiencing all the promises of CA rather than just a few. Maybe time spent in prayer and meditation could... continued on page 5
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A Note from the WSO
As the Storybook states on page 47, “…no matter how bad things look at times during sobriety, they get better. And no matter how good things are, they can get worse. That’s called life…” Well that is also called change and here at the WSO we have had a lot of changes to absorb over the last three months.

In December K.D. Zager resigned as Director of Operations after more than five years of service to pursue other interests. K.D. arrived at a time when there was, for all practical purposes, an office in name only. She was the only employee then and supervised the expansion to three full-time employees and a significantly larger scope of operations. She met the many demands on the office and its staff diligently over the years and I hope you will join the Board of Directors in wishing her the very best in all her future endeavors.

The Board of Directors is approaching the end of its search for a new Office Manager and hope to have that process completed shortly. The lack of having that position filled has caused some difficulties, but we have met many of our production standards. This Newsgram is, unfortunately, one item delayed due to short staffing.

The theme of this Newsgram is the upcoming CAWS ‘98 convention being held just south of Los Angeles in the beautiful city of Irvine. Already registrations are pouring in and room reservations are filling. If you haven’t already done so, be sure to reserve a room as soon as possible. Can’t come to the convention? Well, you may participate by either assisting a newcomer in attending or purchasing some memorabilia. Be sure to check out the registration form in this Newsgram for details.

The next Newsgram will, as is customary, provide an analysis of the annual financial results of CAWSO, Inc. during 1997. There have been requests for financial information recently and this will provide some answers. Quarterly and annual financial statements are prepared by our CPA’s and are sent, when finished, to each delegate in their quarterly mailing. If you are interested in where the money is spent please ask your delegate for a copy of the report. We also provide a breakdown of 7th tradition donations each issue, please see last quarter’s on page 8.

Already Spring is arriving, albeit late due to the infamous El Nino, and we are all looking forward to a serene and enjoyable 1998. Hope your trudging is fulfilling and to see you in Irvine this May.

The CAWS 98 Opportunity Drawing Winners Are:
The Grand Prize Winner: Vanessa P. San Gabriel/Pomona California
2nd Prize: Silvia W. Inland Empire, California
3rd Prize: Mark A. San Diego, California

Where to Write:
CAWS, Inc.
Board of Trustees
P.O. Box 492013
Los Angeles, CA 90049-8013

CAWSO, Inc.
Board of Directors
3740 Overland Avenue - Suite C
Los Angeles, CA 90034-6337

ATTN: NewsGram Editor
c/o CAWSO, Inc.
3740 Overland Avenue - Suite C
Los Angeles, CA 90034-6337

The NewsGram presents experiences and opinions of Cocaine Anonymous members. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual contributors and are not to be attributed to nor taken as an endorsement by either Cocaine Anonymous or the NewsGram.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 26–28, 1998
Happy One Year Birthday Cocaine Anonymous of Nevada
Las Vegas Area of CA is announcing the event
Life After Death Group is celebrating / Marathon slots available
Contact Michelle J 702-312-3202 / Billy E 702-648-5027
or Royse & Dawn K 702-598-0372

June 26–28, 1998
“Meditate in ‘98… It’s a Spiritual Thing The 1998 Ohio” Area Convention / Hosted by Akron District
Best Western Executive Inn, 2677 Gilchrist Road, Akron, Ohio 44305 (800) 528-1234
For more information Contact: Una H. 330-290-9062
or Dennis D. 330-773-9778

July 3–5, 1998
Arizona Area CA Convention “We Stood at the Turning Point…”
Hotel Park Tucson, 5151 E. Grant Road 520-323-6262
Hotel Reservations by 6/19/98 $65.00 a nite conv reg $20.00 by 5/25/98 $25.00 after 5/25/98
For more information contact: Mark H 520-319-2591
or Patti L. 520-294-5613

July 17–19, 1998
“Crossroads of Recovery” 4th Louisiana Area Cocaine Anonymous Convention
Holiday Inn Convention Center, 4th Street Alexandria, LA 318-442-9000
For more information contact: Patricia J. 318-487-9477
or Bobby J. 318-442-1249

July 17–19, 1998
First Alberta Area Convention “Everyday is a miracle because tomorrow is promised to no-one!”
Highlander Hotel, 1818-16th Avenue N.W. Calgary, Alberta Canada 800-661-9564
For more information contact: Doug 403-212-0211
or Darlene 403-248-7757

July 24–26, 1998
CA Convention of Arkansas “Trudging the road to Happy Destiny in the Fellowship of the Spirit” Holiday Inn City Center, Little Rock, Arkansas

August 21–23, 1998
2nd Annual Greater Mo. Area of CA “Show Me Recovery Convention”
Adams Mark Hotel, Kansas City, Mo 800-444-2326 Hotel reservations 1 mo in advance $79.00
For more information contact: Rod D. 816-436-4954
or Jeannette W. 314-653-6289

August 27–30, 1998
14 Annual CALA Convention “The Road of Happy Destiny”
Palm Springs Riviera Hotel 800-444-8311 or 760-327-8311 $69.00 a night
For more information contact: Leon M. 213-751-4852
or Robin C. 310-359-2580

September 10th–13th 1998
Big Su-enity Ventana Camp Ground, Big Sur, CA
For more information contact: 800-357-1488
or 805-969-5178

September 11–13, 1998
‘98 CANOLA Hospitals & Institutions Extravaganza
Best Western Landmark Hotel, 2601 Severn Avenue, Metairie, LA 70002, 800-277-7575
For more information call: Colin T. 504-341-3578

October 2–4, 1998
Twelfth Annual Texas State CA Convention
Holiday Inn Medical Center, 6701 South Main St., Houston, Texas 77030
For more information call: Linda R. 713-729-6254

October 16–18, 1998
Louisiana Area Cocaine Anonymous, “Crossroads of Recovery” Convention
Bentley Hotel, Alexandria, LA

November 6–8, 1998
1998 Midwest Regional Convention
Clarion Hotel 7007 N. High Street, Columbus, OH 43137 614-436-0700
For more information contact: Donald C 614-866-2752
or Tom K. 614-326-0686
Milwaukee ‘99 The World Convention
We’re Looking for New & Enlighten Speakers To Speak at the Convention
Please Send Tape To:
CAWS ‘99 1622 W. Mitchell, Milwaukee, WI 53204

If you are having a Regional, Area or District Cocaine Anonymous Event, please let us know. We can list your event in the NewsGram. Submission is 30 days prior to the publication of each NewsGram. Publications dates are: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. We will publish up to a year in advance, and continue the listing until the event. Submissions will be published at the discretion of the editor and/or the World Service Office Board of Directors.

Submissions should be made to:

ATTN: The NewsGram
c/o CAWSO, Inc.
3740 Overland Avenue - Suite C
Los Angeles, CA 90034-6337
310-55-2554 FAX
Back to Life
By Jerry S., Hulmeville, PA

It’s good to see you all tonight – it really warms my heart. Recovery’s been good to me and you’ve all played a part. A part’s been played by every one I’ve met here in these rooms which saved a heart, a life, a man from Death. Destruction. Doom.

See, once upon a time this happy man you see today had chosen a bad road in life and sadly lost his way. A path that led to booze, then grass then dope and coke and pills – which each day tightened round his neck a rope that chokes and kills.

He felt closed in, was stuck in place and wouldn’t dare to cry. But worst of all – he used and used but just could not get high. Getting high had been his world, his life, his wife, his heart. But turned on him, and in the end – just tore them all apart.

He tried to just slow down, then quit – he tried it on his own. But it was just too powerful for him to face alone. No matter how he willed it (and he gave it his best try) – it had him, scared to live and even more afraid to die.

Then one day, he just gave up – he knew that he’d been beat. He laid his burden down upon the ground at C.A.’s feet. Feet that never kicked, instead he found the helping hands that lifted up the man that now before you gladly stands.

C.A. has turned my life around – you plucked me out of time. You taught me how to love myself and brought me peace of mind. When all seemed lost: the job, the car, the house, the kids, the wife – when I was all but dead and gone you brought me BACK TO LIFE.

I think I’m here in Hulmeville at the C.A. Poetry Slam. And with my friends all gathered round – it’s like a dream come true. I dedicate this poem tonight to every one of you.

It’s a God Thing
By Mike

On March 7, 1988 my world came crashing down and I wanted to die. But God in His infinite love had other thoughts. You see, I believe deep down to the very core of my being that God guided me to Cocaine Anonymous so that I might have the opportunity to find Him. And for that, I am forever grateful.

My first two years in Cocaine Anonymous were not easy because I could not stop using cocaine. No matter what I did, that mental twist was always there. I was completely baffled by people who would say things like “Don’t use no matter what” or “Even if your–falls off, carry it to a meeting” or “Just don’t use and go to meetings.” God, I tried. One day, after another relapse, a C.A. member said to me, “Mike, I don’t think you want to get sober.” Boy, did that hurt. I wanted to get sober more than anything in this world, but I didn’t know the secret. I had been going to meetings every day, reading the literature, talking to others, praying, going for coffee, etc., but that mental twist was still there. I got to the point where I thought I might just be one of those people who were mentally incapable of getting sober. I didn’t know that I was beyond human aid and that I had to find a God of my own understanding that would solve my problem. Fortunately, I didn’t know what else to do, so I just kept coming back.

Then on May 18, 1990, after I’d gone without cocaine for three weeks, my father died. During this time I had a spiritual experience of sorts and realized that the answers to all my problems were in the Twelve Steps of Cocaine Anonymous. Upon returning home I got a sponsor, who had actually worked the steps, and I began my journey into sobriety. Now it always boils down to who am I plugged into today, God or Mike? It seems that the more I plug into God’s will the easier my life is. And all that loneliness, anger, guilt, shame, etc., that we come into C.A. with has pretty much dissipated through working the steps.

Through cocaine I lost everything materially, physically, emotionally and spiritually – I lost my soul. Through the Twelve Steps of Cocaine Anonymous, I found a God of my understanding and through His grace I have been blessed with another day of sobriety. I love being happy, joyous and free. The journey of sobriety has been one of progress, walked one day at a time with God and my fellow members of C.A. So if you’re having trouble getting sober like I did, the answer just might be the Twelve Steps of Cocaine Anonymous. It’s worked for me for more than seven years–one day at a time.

We are the 2000 C.A.W.S. Convention
Theme & Logo Contest
A once in a millennium chance to have your theme used for the 2000 C.A.W.S Convention

Winner gets a complete registration package including meals!
Mail Entries to:
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c/o C.A.W.S. Inc.
P.O. Box 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90049-8000

The 2000 Cocaine Anonymous World Service Convention
Phoenix, Arizona
Unity Corner
By Francis Benedict

Unity promotes our purpose

C.A. is a fellowship of people who, as individuals, have had their lives restored by God. Our purpose is to find ways of helping the addict who stills suffers and to promote the well-being of each individual who comes through our doors. We have exchanged insanity for sanity, addiction to cocaine and all mind altering substances for sobriety, and unmanageability for serenity. Addicts are most often isolated people who are looking for a Higher Power who can restore them to unity and spirituality. We now belong not only to our Higher Power but also to a fellowship which has welcomed us at all levels. What separated us from each other on the outside, can now unite us in our rooms. Black or white, male or female, affluent or struggling, old or young—we all belong to the fellowship and experience each other as brothers or sisters in recovery. Our unity in the fellowship of C. A. promotes unity in the wider society.

But this unity which is part of the gift of our fellowship is a reality that is a gift and a call to action. There is still not enough unity in our fellowship at every level. We do not always reach out to the newcomer who is different than us. We do not always try to understand the outspoken old-timer or that person whose personality clashes with our own. Personal effort at communication with those who are different than us can bring new insight and spiritual enrichment.

Unity is promoted by hospitality toward the stranger and the newcomer. People within our fellowship say that C.A. is the most friendly of fellowships and is welcoming of all. We must remember this quality of our fellowship and work to keep this spirit alive for those who are desperate for recovery and looking for what we have by God’s grace.

When we reach our hand out to another, we may be grasping the hand of the best of friends who only needed someone to welcome them into our fellowship of recovery. If we do not take the first step toward the other, they may not receive the grace they need and our lives and our fellowship may be impoverished. The growth of our fellowship will depend on our loving, friendly spirit of service, which recognizes the value of each and every human person. This fellowship is for everyone who wants what our Higher Power has given to us.

Let us welcome them as part of our lives and of our future service to God and humankind.

A C.A. Member
By Don K.

I would like to tell you of a member of the fellowship that I can only say is just outstanding. He is a true example of Step Twelve. He is a person who believes in the Traditions. He is a person who really believes in helping others. He is a person who joined a fellowship and never stopped. There would be days when he would want to stop. There would be days when he was the only one there. But he never left. A person who would tell you like it is, no shortcuts. He is a person who has been to hell and back. He is a person who has good days and bad days. And when questioned, he would only answer, “It’s on page 449.” That’s all he would say.

By now you are asking who this person is. We all know him. We should all have one in our lives. He is a sponsor. My sponsor is a person who will tell me to shut up when I need to. My sponsor is a person who will tell me to keep coming back. My sponsor is a person who helps me build confidence in myself. My sponsor is a person who shows me what it’s like to live life on life’s terms. His name is not important. But the next time you call your sponsor, take the time to thank God. I do!

We’re Searching the World Over

The CAWS 1999 Convention Committee is looking for new and enlightened speakers for the World Convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

If interested, please send tapes to:
CAWS ’99 Convention Committee
1624 W. Mitchell
Milwaukee, WI 53204

Questions? Call Karmen K. at (414) 545-0372

Open-Mindedness
continued from Page 1
actually bring me nearer to God. And maybe service to others could actually be the secret to a happy, joy-filled life. Through working with others, I might begin to discover who I really am; by giving to others, maybe I could find myself on the receiving end of a wonderful life.

Thanks to all these “maybes” I realize that my job today is to remain open-minded, and to actually try new ideas that seem to have worked for others. Then I can truly decide for myself whether an idea works, based on my own experience. I have learned that if I isolate too much, my mind closes very quickly. But when I live and work with others it becomes much easier to remain honest, open-minded and willing. And that is exactly the point where my life starts to get better.

Yahoo,…
continued from page 1

folks from all around the world and I was also able to be of service there.

The convention committee had put together such a great convention! There were so many things to do and get involved with that I didn’t have much time at all to think about myself and having lost my job. I think it was a blessing in disguise! I went to the marathon meetings and drank coffee endlessly! In Denver, the scheduled events were outstanding and transportation was arranged for everything. There were greeters hugging me everywhere and the hotel was magnificent! I could go on and on, but I’ll get to the point of this article…

For the CAWS 98 convention: Travelers to John Wayne Airport will be greeted daily in the downstairs baggage claim area, look for our Information booth! The Irvine Marriott Hotel will provide transportation to the hotel (free of charge) every 20 minutes. Flights arriving at Los Angeles Airport (LAX) will need to take a shuttle bus, see the following for more information.

I personally hope that anyone contemplating doing something else other than the CAWS 98 Convention this Memorial Day weekend will reconsider and see us here! I promise a memorable enjoyable trip!

God Bless,
Terry Z.
Grateful for Recovery

By Gerald Van P.

I sometimes wonder whether I would be alive today if it weren’t for the day I ran into an undercover police officer (whom I had run from earlier that very day). I had been using for more than six years. Yes, I guess you can say I have been through some very tough times. I have been through treatment centers, one on one sessions and, yes, attended meetings of several twelve-step programs. Yet I was still unable to stop using.

I lost a marriage, kids, and friends. I even lost my grandmother when someone I knew decided to break in and kill her for $100.00 in pennies that he used to purchase rock cocaine. I have tried to run from my addiction all around the world, but still always found a way to get high.

Yes, I have been close to death—just missing drive-by shootings, or in a house when someone drives by and opens fire. I have plenty more that I could tell you, but why bore you? I just wanted you to know that after all I have been through I am still alive today.

Today I am in jail and almost 90 days clean, and I feel good and clear. Today I don’t feel the urge to use. I have a woman who is willing to stick by me and helps me realize that I don’t want to go back to the life I used to live. She is the one who sent me the CA Newsgram. I just want to thank her and tell you all that I hope someone else out there gets this same message of hope.

Theme for CATW

Celebrate Around The World ’99

Attn: Artists
Artwork needed for the theme “Greater Than Ourselves”
Nor more than four colors. No Tones or Shades.
 Deadline: by August 1, 1998
**Also requesting bids from T-Shirt Vendors
Submit to:
Rose Jones
441 Madrona St. No.
Twin Falls ID 83301
I Love You… Rose

1998 CA World Service Convention
Southern California

at
The Irvine Marriott
18000 Von Karman Avenue
Irvine, CA 92715
(800) 228-9290
(714) 553-0100

For more information, or to request registration forms, please contact the World Service Office at:

CAWSO, Inc.
3740 Overland Avenue - Suite C
Los Angeles, CA 90034-6337
(310) 559-5833
(310) 559-2554 Fax
caws98@ca.org E-mail

Or, visit our web site at: http://www.ca.org/cawscon.html
THE FACTS OF LIFE (MY LIFE)

By Don R.

I came from a small town: good god-fearing parents, good church, and good schools. My sex and race are unimportant. It doesn’t matter where I work. What matters is that I learned to love to “party” more than I learned to love myself. I started by sipping off my father’s beer at the age of 12. Before I knew it I was 16 and smoking pot and dropping LSD. That wasn’t bad enough, though. I needed to suffer more. I got into speed and then my nemesis: cocaine.

Cocaine brought me to my knees fast. And then, by the grace of God, cocaine brought me to Cocaine Anonymous. And for that I thank God. I found help at a critical time in my life. In CA I found a fellowship of recovering addicts helping other addicts—people that truly care and really show it. My life has changed for the better in so many ways that I can’t list them all. If you are an addict, like I am, help is there for you. There is hope.

Peace

By Mitch B.

Peace, something I never thought I’d achieve it was for many, but not for me. With each morning’s disgust, shame and frets my life, though not wanted, was made of regrets. The sky seemed black, the world seemed gray if only I had something worthy to say some skill, some trade, some work to be done. Of worth and power, I felt I had none. This beast called drugs, it took such hold of me. I had nothing.

My will was stripped, even if I wanted to do good inside the outside was coated with a beast stealing, stripping, robbing me of life.

This brought me to a program, one ending with ‘A’. It gives me new hope, new dreams and memories of one day one day of clarity, one day of pride. It’s helping me let out the real me inside the one with caring and ability to love. I’m believing in things I only used to dream of. With light in my life, pride replaces shame. It seems that these two lives could not have been the same.

I feel so good, I want to scream. My life has become a fabulous dream. Not always perfect, it’s sometimes a fight but now I pray and sleep well at night. As tough as it gets, this fight I’ll never cease for I’m finally learning a feeling called peace.

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The Cocaine Anonymous World Service Home Page is available at:

http://www.ca.org
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Information on Shuttle bus companies to get from LAX to Irvine Marriott

All available 24 hours a day for local pick ups. You must call ahead to arrange to be picked up; tell the shuttle company your arrival or departure time and Airline.

• Xpress Shuttle 1-800-4-SHUTTLE (1-800-474-8885) Mention CAWS98 for special $19.00 per person one-way fare. Group rates available at $13.00 per person, contact Francisco at 310-766-0721, to make arrangements.

• Prime Time 1-800-RED-VANS (1-800-733-8267) $12.00 per person, or $65.00 per van, 7 people maximum.

• SuperShuttle Must call their Orange County office 24 hours prior to arrival: (714) 517-6600. $20.00 per person per trip or $69.00 per van, 7 people maximum.

• 3 R Shuttle (310) 373-1443 $16.00 per person per trip, or $60.00 per van, 7 people maximum.

WE WILL HAVE A BOOTH AND EASELS AT JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT