

# HOLLYWOOD AREA NEWSLETTER

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## THE CREATIVITY ISSUE

When we put out the word that we wanted to publish an issue on "Creativity in Recovery" and that we would welcome pretty much any sort of expression, we got an overwhelming response!

Poems, articles, lyrics, photography, stories, an excerpt of a play and artwork came in such abundance, we now have a backlog of really great contributions to use as part of the next several issues.

Funny thing: it's not uncommon to hear a newcomer fret in a meeting about fearing that they might not be able to create art without the aid of their drug of choice. They wonder if they are now going to lose their "edge," and be deserted by their Muse!

From what we see here, there's no need to worry!

## CREATING THE HOPE!

**Yvonne H.**

For many years, I was a creative mastermind of deceit and deception. Whatever my imagination could conjure up, in order to get drugs and/or stay out of jail, I would instantly become. One time I told the police that I was recently divorced, had several kids and that I was dealing drugs just to pay the bills. Surprisingly, I just got a warning and I had to promise, never to show up in that city again. I would often convince friends to involve themselves as escorts while I pimped their services for money and drugs.

Another time, when some guy tried to beat me, I had him kidnapped and taken for a very long ride. I was the gangster, and he, my victim; he had to pay. He eventually made it back home about a week or so later with

his leg broken. One time I convinced myself that I was superwoman and jumped out of a second story window, because, in my mind, it was the quickest way to get to the dope-man, rather than using the front door.

I could not see past my own misery to even try to create something more than the lies I was living. It was not until I realized that my life was a complete disaster that I got scared. I could not understand why I did not care about anything or anybody. I asked myself time and time again- what was wrong with me? Why couldn't I create something good? I thought about the many opportunities when I could have gotten help that I let pass me by, knowing that I desperately needed to stop using drugs. I had felt overwhelmed with shame and guilt and that just asking for help was beyond my mental scope. I just could not go back to those places that offered me hope. I had been to so many already, and laughed at what they represented. I laughed myself back into the arms of another hit. Then, somehow, I began to see that the joke was on me and that it was not very funny.

I desperately wanted to clean up the mess that I was, so I took just a mustard seed of faith and called out to God for help. As I gathered his strength I was able to battle through months of torturous withdrawals. Finally, I had kicked this intruder off my back and out of my life, but I didn't know what else to do. My physical, mental, and spiritual states were at an all time low. I humbled myself and stepped through the doors of NA, and into the rooms of recovery. It was there I learned how to create a new way of thinking. I seemed to transcend from my old chaotic life into something new and different. I had another chance to live, and fell in love with the process.

The fellowship promised me a daily reprieve from the compulsion to use. I grabbed a hold of that promise with both my hands and my feet! I was not going to let go. I learned that everything had to change.

Recovery granted me the gifts to create a new me, and a new life. I learned to listen and listened to learn. I discovered through the spiritual principles of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness that a new person could emerge. I could make decisions to do positive things.

I got a sponsor and took more suggestions. I took on service commitments, and reached out to other recovering people, who themselves were creating new lives. And the process continues...

Today, I am so grateful for the predecessors who worked to create this new path of living for people like me. They selflessly showed me how to find my way to God, love, and giving, and to them I humbly express my thanks.

My life is now becoming a reflection of my inner beauties and strengths. Everything created through a sometimes very difficult but freeing process towards a brand new way of life - a life with family relations, friendships, and innumerable adventures of new and exciting things.

Certainly, it does not happen over night. The work is tiring, tedious, and trying, but at the end of the pain of peeling away the disease of addiction, I feel that I have been blessed. I am staying and I hope I will honor recovery by becoming one of the many creative parts of this fellowship that helps to save someone still suffering, either inside or outside the rooms of NA, from the death-intended jaws of the disease of addiction.

## UNEARTHING THE SPIRIT, AGAIN Pollyanne H.

Often I get frustrated that inspiration doesn't just magically come and propel me into creative bliss and action. Then I remember a quote by the French sculptor Rodin: "The artist must create a spark before he can make a fire and before art is born, the artist must be ready to be consumed by the fire of his own creation." Which I like to interpret loosely as: "you don't wait for inspiration to hit you, you wake up every morning and grab inspiration by the balls."

One of my biggest blocks from doing anything creative is when I am in fear, panic, self-pity, regret or entitlement. When I feel powerless over these feelings, I am not in gratitude; I am in a dark ugly place, where I cannot access a creative spark. To get back into gratitude I have a writing exercise that helps me.

I imagine being viewed from the outside. I imagine my life being watched and fantasized by a small child. This small child watches my life from a small window of the tiny upstairs apartment she lives in. She is a sad child. Her father is an angry abusive man, and her mother is a depressed and abused woman. They are too angry and too tired to have much to do with her. There is also a new baby in the house. She wonders why these selfish angry parents want to have children anyway. She is told to stay in her room and be quiet. She looks out her window and watches me live my little life in the tiny backhouse I rent. To her my life is one of joy and wonder, freedom and love. Happy people come to visit me. There's a lot of hugging and smiling going on at my front door. I can wear any clothes I like, wear my hair how I like and come and go as I please. No one yells at me. All the people around me are loving and treat me as nicely as I treat them. My porch is decorated how I like- no rules. I ride around the neighborhood on my rusty old bike decorated all strange and I don't seem to care what others think. She cares a lot what others think. She sees me zooming around on my motorcycles- girls can ride motorcycles-she thinks-really? She watches me having freedom, balance and appreciating my self-created joy.

If I think of her point of view I have no choice but to truly realize what an amazing life I have. The freedom I have today gives me the opportunity to do what is right for me and shows me how I can contribute and be a part of my community. I'm a free, clean adult and I have choices.

Nowadays instead of thinking about what drug I thought I needed to inspire me to make art, I tap into new ideas or things I already love. I let my new found feelings guide me. I remember that the universe is providing solutions all around me. I am not powerless over my life-just my addiction. I can more readily recognize and get fortified by a lovely view, a good smell, beautiful sounds, wonderful tastes and being touched by the human condition. Simply seeing someone do something kind for another often fuels that feeling. I get it when I witness an addicts' growth in recovery, or by other people's art or music. When I can appreciate grace or great skill, passion, or wonder- I love it! It can be by viewing great art in person (like getting to travel to Rome in early recovery) or from a TV commercial. It doesn't matter and one isn't better than the other- what matters is my ability to tap into the things that are going to fuel me. My ability to harness my own inspiration is a result of being clean and participating in my recovery.



## the craze of disarray By Rocco H.

remember this?  
the oceanic bliss....  
& we have plans we can forget.  
but in the meantime,  
some kind of cruel blindness  
keeps us craving....  
hungry & unstill,  
swept away by the craze  
of disarray in an otherwise  
orderly world.....

## PALM OIL MILL EFFLUENT By D.H.

It has found its position  
above and behind me,  
a mammoth red begrudging star

My nails grow faster  
in its pull it begins  
to cook my liver and  
other organs

Worthies and unworthies are tallied between us,

creeping destroyer

Dwarf cottages, mosques, palms  
and dirty eucalyptus can be found  
suspended in this Hollywood backwater,  
thick as cheese

A dwarf myself, apparently no longer supposedly  
(the shit) (a shit), I walk to my car  
at the foot of a peace  
that is not characterized by the absence of war

## WAR By Frankie

We stayed all day  
Hoping they would come back

The bullets adjusting the distance

All thing begin within sight

The human army  
Advances within each of us

We are told to kill or be kill  
For country & flag

We will not wait forever  
To change the faces  
We're told to wear

The faces we're told to kill with

## AT 26 By Michael A

i flounder, then remembered  
back from those ages when i couldn't fall  
too deep. it was inconsequential - the way it folded in  
over us and out onto platforms so high.  
we couldn't breathe.

i'll keep re-living those purple-darkened  
minutes by the glass and i'll keep them  
sacred, locked up and sound.  
we never had time enough to follow through,  
the way we talked and all our stories, the misadventures,

collided and came down to our everyday.  
this is what we've come to, and i'll keep re-living them,  
every one, glass by glass.

## “IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”

By Arnold Mc.

This is my story about how sponsorship helped me to write all of my own lyrics for my latest venture as a solo musician.

My sponsor, Craig and I actually worked Steps 1-6 on my career, helping me to get unstuck, and move me out of resentment and fear.

Of course as with every step we do we're asked to read all written material that pertains to it before beginning. Craig suggested that when I see the word "recovery," I replace it with "solo career." In my case I make a good living as a side-man, and was asked what I was willing to give up for my solo career and what I was not.

I was encouraged to listen in meetings for people talking about applying the steps to their career, and get their numbers! Craig suggested I ask them to talk about self-doubt and other things that might come up in pursuing a solo career. I was told to share about self-doubt in meetings and what I have done in the past 24 hours to overcome it using the first three steps.

I was told to pray for self-honesty and acceptance, and to surrender daily to the process of working the steps in this area.

Craig had me answer some important questions while we were doing this work:

He asked me to clarify what aspects of work and career I was powerless over.

I thought about my employer and their decisions about my involvement and salary and shared that with him.

He asked me, when living in the illusion that you have power over work and career how does it make your life unmanageable?

I answered that I believe that I have power over my solo work but the problems come when I need to shift gears back to being a side-man!

Finally I was asked if there was anything compulsive, obsessive and self-centered about my work and career?

I replied it is all self-centered and it should be, but my

problem comes when I feel I am not enough of a writer and musician and question my ability to handle my own business affairs.

I hope this shows you what a great sponsor I have and how he encouraged me to move forward with my project. As a result I wrote every word of my latest recording and interpreted the melodies of my own true heart and soul with confidence!

Thanks, Craig!

## LOVE WILL PREVAIL By Arnold Mc.

DON'T LOOK BACK WHERE HAS MY HEART GONE  
CAST MY FAITH INTO THE SEA  
KNOWING I SHOULDN'T GIVE IN YET

WHERE OR WHEN NOBODY TOLD ME  
THE COST ONE PAYS LIVING SO FREE  
THE BEST OF MY YEARS ARE BESIDE ME

SINCE YOU PIERCED MY SWEET HEART  
CAST ME OVER THE RAINBOW  
ARMED A SLING  
SHOT A STONE  
LAUNCHED A SAIL  
LIKE A POWERFUL LIGHT  
BURNING DAY INTO MIDNIGHT  
I'M CONVINCED THAT YOUR LOVE WILL PREVAIL

SOMETIMES I JUST DON'T KNOW  
GOD WILL YOU SHOW ME  
WHAT YOU HAVE WAITING FOR ME  
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T GIVE IN YET

EVERYONE ONE SEEMS TO BELIEVE IN YOU  
THERE'S AND OPPORTUNE TIME AT THE DOOR  
WHY DO I KEEP LOOSING PATIENCE

(REFRAIN)

YEAH YOU'VE BEEN SO GOOD TO ME  
YOU'VE FORGIVEN MY FAULTS EVERY TIME  
AFTER ALL THE THINGS I'VE DONE WRONG  
YOUR LOVE FOR ME STILL STAYS STRONG

(REFRAIN)

GOD WILL YOU SHOW ME?

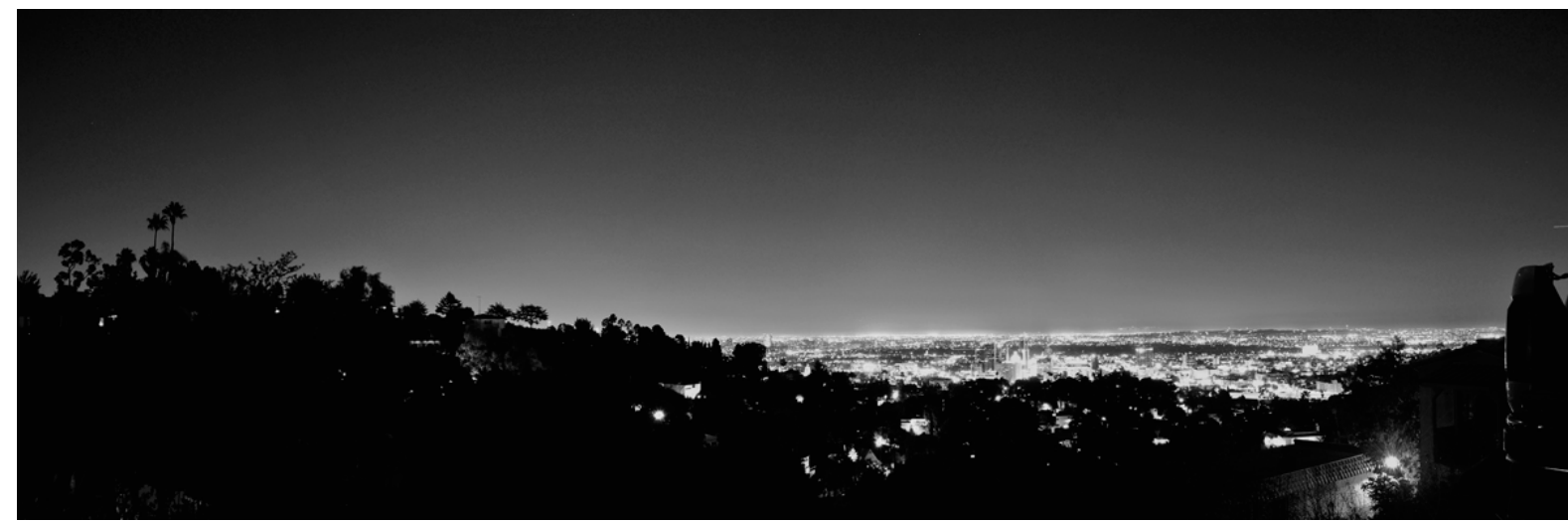


Photo by Daniel G.

## PRACTICING HONESTY THROUGH ART By Julia M.

A couple of years before I got clean, I attempted suicide. But the will of my Higher Power did not let me succeed. At that time, drugs were not my primary source of unmanageability and rock-bottom unhappiness. Undiagnosed and untreated severe depression is what dropped me to my knees. After several days in intensive care I was transferred to a psychiatric facility, which, for me, was probably equivalent to a resort. I soon became extremely motivated, and when I get motivated, I want to tell my story. I've found that writing about my experiences, particularly the really bad ones, serves as a spiritual cleansing mechanism for me. I suppose this is much like working the steps, except when I write on a more specific and creative level, my end goal is to create a product that can be shared publicly. While I was in the psych ward, I passed the time by writing a screenplay and sketching storyboards. About three months later, I wrapped a short film that I wrote, produced, directed and acted in. About a year after that, it hit the small-time festival circuit. The film is quite dark. It's about depression and suicide.

Now that I've achieved a little more than eighteen months of recovery, I find that I am ready to tell my story again. What is this one about? Drugs, of course. But more specifically, a condensed portrayal of my last year of using – the downward spiral that brought me to my knees for the second time in my life. And in this story, I want to portray myself. But this piece will be for the stage. I am fortunate enough to be a part of a theatre company here in Los Angeles that will support me

in this endeavor, and a close friend of mine from that company has already expressed interest in helping me produce the play. But first things first, I need to write it. It's been a slow process as of yet, but here is an excerpt of the opening scene that I feel honored to have included in this issue of our newsletter. And don't worry – in the end, she'll get clean.

## TWENTY-TWO [working title] Written by Julia M. © 2008

The stage is dark except for a single stream of light, as if leaking from a small crack in the invisible sky above, allowing us to just barely make out LEILA. She sits center, cross-legged, hunched over something on the floor in front of her. She straightens up slightly and we see that she is forcefully pressing a razor blade against her forearm, perhaps carving something very specific into her skin. When she completes her work, she dabs her wounds with toilet paper from a loose roll propped up nearby, then pulls down her sleeve. She wipes the blade on her pants and leans forward again, her face almost to the floor. The lights come up to reveal a small mirror in front of her containing the early morning remains of cocaine. Leila uses the blade to cut what's left into a couple of lines, rapidly snorts them, then licks the mirror clean.

Suddenly, a door slams open. Lights on full.

We're in the living room of a relatively nice apartment in West Los Angeles. It's spacious and furnished, but has look of an addict's hovel. Aside from the food, trash, clothes and random paraphernalia scattered about, we see the remains of a budding musician's studio - a couple guitars, an amp, a turntable, a mini keyboard, drum

machine and maybe even a decent mixing board.

Roughing their way through the front door are DANNY and ERIC - both slightly out of breath, arms overflowing with large cases of cheap beer and greasy bags of fast food -.

DANNY: Fuck, man! That was so fuckin' close.

LEILA: Jesus Christ! Where the fuck have you guys been?

ERIC: My dad was still up. He was pissed cause I left one of his guns out in the living room. The one I showed you last night.

LEILA: The sniper rifle?

ERIC: Yeah.

DANNY: Dude, Leila. You gotta hear this. So, we're like six blocks away and this fuckin' cop starts tailing us. But his lights aren't on yet, so I keep driving, and I take some random side streets back. And he's still fuckin' following us. And I'm like sweatin' bullets cause I know Eric's got a couple 8-balls on him, So I speed up and take the alley to get back here and right as we jump outta the car, the cop turns the corner. But we're already runnin' across the street, and I know that motherfucker can't stop us once we're outta the car. So we got through the gate and just waited and he sat on the street for like five minutes. We had to wait for him to leave cause I didn't want him to know where I live. It was so fuckin' close.

LEILA: What the fuck, Danny? That's not cool. I'm never letting you drive my car again.

DANNY: What? Well, you're the one that wanted the blow but didn't wanna get it.

LEILA: Well, where the fuck is it?

DANNY: Jesus, calm down, you fiend.

LEILA: I prefer the term, drug addict.

Eric reaches into his inside coat pocket, pulls out a small sandwich bag wadded into a knot, and tosses it to Leila. She inspects it.

LEILA: This is an 8-ball?

ERIC: We did a couple lines at the bar, then some at my place. Plus, like I said, my dad was up, so I had to give him some.

LEILA: Fuckers.

ERIC: Relax. I got another one. It hasn't been touched.

LEILA: Give it to me.

ERIC: No way.

LEILA: I already fuckin' paid you for both of 'em. Give it to me.

ERIC: I said no. You'll do it all right away and give yourself a fuckin' heart attack. I'm lookin' out for you, mak-

ing sure you pace yourself. Don't ask me again.

Leila and Eric stare off for a beat before she gives in and realizes he isn't joking. She switches her attention to the drugs - briefly struggling to open the bag, then pouring a decent amount of its contents onto the mirror.

LEILA: Fine. Then I'm holding onto this one myself.

She re-knots the bag and over-dramatically places the remainder of the cocaine into her pocket. As she begins cutting lines, Eric cracks open a beer and digs into his fast-food. Danny has long already made himself comfortable, swallowing the last of his meal, lighting up a cigarette and setting himself up behind the mixing board.

## POTTING PLANTS ON A SUNDAY By Robert T.

This surreal subculture feels so real  
This American flag waving in this cell  
Some of our troops angry  
Some just comfortable as hell  
My country 'tis of thee  
How you breed us to be  
This way

We have fallen  
Victim  
To your commercials and billboards  
These bibles come in so many different  
Tongues  
Flipping through these commissary pages  
Like the newest Popular Science

Making dummies out of grown men  
These soldiers all talked so much talk  
These Americans all  
Walking these planks  
We drive these tanks  
Of narcotics  
Into our lives  
Ignoring the war  
Until we lose it

Finally free  
And coming home  
Can't wait to bury this past next to you  
In the garden



Photo by Daniel G.

## THE MANIFEST DESTINY OF ME By Corina H.

A retaining wall of  
Bitter, unequivocal fear  
Dissembled

With the strength of an  
inexplicable power

Untangle my mangled, wrangled anger

Slide aside

Layers of  
my ill-intentioned martyrdom

Misplaced blame resurfacing in each  
cross-section of time

To reveal a shine from beneath  
The disorder- A crinkled future unraveling within me.

## SO SPEAK MY MUSE By Frankie

So speak  
My Muse  
The bellow of the bark  
The secret muttering  
Of the inner mouth  
The cracking  
Of the stem  
In the darkest night

The stillness  
Of the little mouse  
As he licks the blood  
Off his injured paw

The empty breathing  
Of the world outside

& you & me  
On this page  
Like blood  
On a injured paw/

# GRANPASPONSE & Char Defect by Rocky M.

**RING**

Char Defect...  
Wazzup, bro?

Grampa Spouse... We're on creativity  
in my Drug 'N Alcohol class... Teach's  
makin' me do an ArtWork!

I'M SCREWED!

Cool it, Char...um...Do Found  
Art! Stuff gettin' tossed out...  
use that! Remember—Universal  
Appeal MOVES people, ok.?



**RING**

Grampa Spouse... so  
I ended up winnin' the  
People's Choice Award!

I followed your direction...my NA coffee  
commitment had a half-wrn left...I mix  
it with vanilla puddin' ai'...

NA COFFEE PIE!!!  
Ain't seen so many WIRED-UP  
folks since my last CRACK RUN!

'at's creativity, Char. But...  
one favor... next time ya got NA  
coffee left make ME a pie!!



## ICE CREAM, DAISIES, ASPHALT By Devon, Joyce, Von, Susan S., & Anthony written at Mt. Calvary poetry workshop

My hunger breathes  
My heart beats fast  
Can't stand still  
Ice cream, daisies, asphalt  
Passion awakens  
The blanket moves  
Inside the heart  
My recovery dreams  
My ears tear  
I then sleep.

The Hollywood Newsletter's next issue will be about adventure and discovery. We welcome artwork, photography, poetry and short-stories by members to showcase in this issue. Please contact any of our members with questions.

Submit your work to [nl@hollywoodna.org](mailto:nl@hollywoodna.org). Thanks!

Editor: Bruce W. | Assistant Editor: Corina H.  
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THE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS AND THE AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE FOR SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE IN WORDS AND PICTURES.

THE ARTICLES HEREIN ARE THE VIEWS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS. NO ENDORSEMENT BY NA IS TO BE IMPLIED

TO CONTRIBUTE YOUR WRITING, ARTWORK OR TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE, PLEASE CONTACT US AT: [NL@HOLLYWOODNA.ORG](mailto:NL@HOLLYWOODNA.ORG)