

CUDDY'S CORNER

On Friday, June 27th, the Framingham Detox closed its doors after 30 years of providing services to disadvantaged individuals struggling with addiction. The closing was the result of a drastic reduction in funding for detox services by the Commonwealth. SMOC will work diligently to organize resources to reopen the Framingham Detox at some future date. The following is an essay I wrote on the closing.

Closing Time

I'm sitting in a crowded room
around a table laden with food
trying not to cry
It's the detox staff's goodbye party
well a wake really, with the usual
attendant gallows humor so prevalent
at these kind of things

The whiteboard on the wall lists the
collective years, written in black
magic marker that the current
staff have served here
138.5

I'm quiet, unusual for me at a
SMOC gig, but appropriate
Listening to the war stories as
they swirl around me
The ghost who inhabits the third floor
The frequent flyers
The failures
The successes
including their own. A number of
the staff have been thru the
program. Many are in recovery

I watch their faces
Tom, the cook, 23 years in from the cold
Benny, the driver, a biker turned van chauffeur
Chris, the director, a leader with a heart of gold
the nurses, the counselors, the T/F's, their
faces animated their words running
together

A tune starts playing in my head
Tom Waits' version of "OLE 55/Closing Time"
first time I heard it was at the
Met Café in the Fox Point section of Providence
"the Met" - a meeting place for an
eclectic group of folks to say the least
one of the few places in R.I. where
blacks & whites, hippies & bikers,
blue collars & left leaning academics
could hang together comfortably

Why would I drift back to a place
Where substances were used & abused
in a roomful of people, myself included
dedicated to sobriety
tolerance and camaraderie

Good people in this room with me
doing hard work, thankless work
heroes really

"stars beginning to fade"

I'm sitting in a crowded room, trying not to cry

Jim Cuddy
7/03