

## A Sense of Things to Come

If someone gave you a combined set of dollar bills, what would be your first thought? Buy a gadget, a widget, a new suit or test them for drugs? If I were a betting woman (which I am from time to time), I would wager the later would not enter your head.

Recently in Ireland scientists researching the drugs problem decided to randomly test dozens of randomly chosen euro bills of all denominations to check for traces of cocaine. Their findings are startling. Every single euro bill contained traces of cocaine. They also found that the fifty euro bills contained more substantial traces of cocaine than any of the others.

The findings in relation to all the euro bills are, according to the scientific research, indicative that hundreds of thousands of Irish people are using cocaine. The findings in relation to the fifty euro bills may indicate, but not definitively, that the wealth of the country is such that more and more people have fifty euro bills on their person at any given time.

Also, recently another survey was compiled in the U.K. which indicated that a “substantial number” of residents were using cocaine as the preferred drug of choice. Apparently cocaine use in the United Kingdom has increased four fold in the past year.

The other day I was at a meeting of my service club and the speaker discussed the topic of drugs, with an emphasis on cocaine use. The organization was S.A.F.E. (Substance Abuse Family Education) [www.safeorlando.com](http://www.safeorlando.com) phone: 407-812-8680. The talk was frightening, stark, and incredibly informative. The speaker brought along a very brave, confident and articulate recovering addict to give her testimony about her battles with drug and alcohol addiction. The recovering addict was fifteen years old. She said she was now in the S.A.F.E program and was eighteen months drug-free. God Almighty!

Her revelations of how she became involved with drugs and alcohol at age twelve left the room in muted bafflement. The speaker talked about his two sons who were also addicts and who began their path to darkness at age ten and twelve. Their stories were all gut-wrenching and miserable.

As we all know cocaine is a most addictive drug. To my knowledge cocaine is made – in varying formats - in the following way. First the cocoa leaf is harvested and brought to a central location where it is ground up. Then, at various times and apparently not in a way that is uniform or very sophisticated (most cocaine labs are in very hidden and out-of-the-way locations) the drug manufacturers add: cement, caustic soda, petroleum, quick lime, sulfuric acid and ammonia. The end result is apparently a pure white cacophony of chemicals and other highly toxic items that must, and does, over time fry the brain.

The method of manufacturing cocaine may vary from country to country; however the basic principal is the same – the end result of addiction to cocaine is a life of utter misery and in many cases, premature death.

There is another end result of cocaine use and abuse – and indeed any illegal or legal drug use and abuse; and that is that if the European research is to be believed, many of our young people are being lost to the betterment, advancement and development of our country and as a consequence, our economy. They are being lost on the mêlée of social destruction and cultural annihilation.

This great loss will become more and more apparent as our businesses battle for optimum production levels in the drive for a ‘clean’ workforce. Widespread drug testing is a huge advantage to U.S. firms; a matter that is of recent times becoming prominent amongst European employers. However, my research – which is not very scientific – holds that the ways and means exist, and are constantly being developed and upgraded, to mask drug use and abuse. Further, according to my research, many of the ‘over-the-counter’ drugs and prescription drugs contain many of the elements contained in illegal drugs; thus at least some of the drug tested employees may fall through the cracks, as it were.

However, there are eminently more positives than negatives attached to drug testing and, I firmly believe that our policy of workplace drug testing has had a most beneficial effect on the health of our nation overall.

More needs to be done as the drug manufacturers, pushers and dealers are becoming more and more sophisticated, persistent, persuasive and credible to our youth. I recall with horror my adolescent daughter’s description of a middle-school talk by an ‘expert’ about tobacco use. Apparently she said with an acute southern drawl, “Y’all shouldn’t do tobacco,” whereupon the students derived huge hilarity from this and even talk about it to this day to amuse each other.

I would like to suggest that businesses partner more closely (read: financially) with the Boards of Education to devise a strong, comprehensive, hard-hitting program of education for K-12 students at local level to save our young people from the wrath of drugs and to ensure our economic wellbeing into the future.

According to the S.A.F.E. Chief Executive Officer, if we don’t persuade young people before they reach Middle School; we have substantially lost the fight. This is one fight we should not lose. Employers also have children.

I would be happy to assist in this endeavor in an active way. Contact me.

Ailish M. Nic Phaidin, MPRII©  
President & CEO, Partnerships International, Inc.  
0207