

“ Around the corner

A WINDOW INTO
YOUR COMMUNITY

PRISON PEN PALS

I wrote a story last year about Marie Kolasinski, leader of Costa Mesa's Piecemakers, a group of God-fearing, soup-brewing, profanity-spewing folks.

Kolasinski had been imprisoned for defying restaurant inspectors, and her civil disobedience inspired legions of prison inmates, who wrote her by the thousands for religious advice (and cash).

After the story appeared, I started getting my own letters from prison, about a dozen a day for several months. Turns out the Piecemakers were sending copies of the article to their prison pen pals.

At one point, with letters piled high on my desk, I asked Marie to stop encouraging people to write me, as I didn't have time to read the correspondence, much less write back, much less expose the ills of the criminal justice system, as



Piecemakers leader Marie Kolasinski has received hundreds of letters from prison inmates.

many inmates begged.

Later, I'll share some of the tidings California's prison population sent my way. — *Jeff Overley*