



A NEW LEAF

January 1997
Volume 7 - No. 1

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

Felton - - My Sober Addict

by: Michael M., District 1

I can remember walking into the Castro Weed Patch meeting over two years ago for the first time. It was quite a scary experience after having walked out of AA meetings 4 years early, never to return. At first, I balked at real recovery like many newcomers. I tried working the program in my own way. Then I started to listen.

My early months of recovery were marked by the classic withdrawal symptoms of sleeplessness, major depression, and severe stomach problems. I even ended up in the hospital.

By attending meetings and getting a sponsor to work the steps, the good days slowly started to outnumber the bad days. I was doing great for a while. Three or four meetings a week and slowly plugging along in my steps. Then Felton started paying me visits.

Felton is the name I have given the addict portion of my personality. More accurately, a friend in the program gave me the label. It all began at an annual M.A. camping trip in Big Sur National Forest (near Santa Cruz). My wife and I got lost on our way to the camp-out, because I forgot to bring the directions. We had no good flashlights and I had run out of white gas for cooking (and I was "positive" I brought enough for the trip--or so I told my wife). Instead of settling in for the evening and waiting until daylight to straighten things out, I let my obsessive/compulsive addict

personality take over. I left my wife alone in the forest (real smart, eh?), hopped in my truck, and went down to a town about 15 miles away called Felton to get supplies. My insanity was so acute at the time, I even rationalized it by telling myself that it was because I had "the courage to change the things I can--and

caught up with them the next morning and told them our story. My friend David, after hearing the story, began calling me Felton for the rest of the trip and we all had a good laugh about it. But it taught me a great lesson, which I am still struggling with today.

"Even when we are not practicing addicts, we still have the addict personality within us that can lead us back onto the path of destruction.."

Even when we are not practicing addicts, we still have the addict personality within us that can lead us back onto the path of destruction.

Maybe not by

the wisdom to know the difference."

The MA group had stumbled across my wife while I was away and they gave her directions as to where they were. We

leading us to use again, but rather in more subtle ways. For example, by treating those we love as if we

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The Fifth Tradition - For One

by Hillary, District 6

Relationships change as the issue of dependence arises. When one person becomes dependent upon another, fear is produced for the dependent one. If the other stops caring about them - they will also stop caring FOR them. The issue becomes one of survival. The dependent one cannot allow the other to stop caring, therefore, three things happen:

(1) He/she begins to caretaker the other. This means to anticipate their every want and supply it before the other even knows they want it. Three things happen as a result of this: (A) The other becomes more important than the dependent one.

He/she must now subordinate his/her own needs and wants to those of the other. (B) The dependent person then loses a sense of their own life, of themselves. They stop doing all of the things that make them feel good and instead do that which makes the other happy. They stop practicing their hobbies and interests. They neglect their friends to be with the other. (C) This loss of self becomes a loss of self-esteem. The way to ensure the maintenance and growth of self-

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The purpose of *A NEW LEAF* is to carry the message of recovery from marijuana addiction. It is through the written experiences of recovering addicts and their stories that we may find experience, strength and hope.

Articles submitted should reflect recovery, unity and service. The articles contained in *A NEW LEAF* are the sole opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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The Fifth Tradition - For One

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esteem is to remain active in the things which promote personal growth and pride.

(2) Dependence sets up fear of the loss of the relationship. It also sets up fear of the diminishing attraction of the dependent person. One can become neurotic wondering if they are pretty/handsome enough, smart enough, active enough, perfect enough to hold the others attention. And since the other is out in the world on a daily basis, will they find someone else more interesting? This brings obsession and jealousy and all the behaviors that go along with these feelings. In desperation to hold on to the relationship, the dependent person stifles and pushes the other away. The result is more loss of self-esteem.

(3) One also loses self-esteem due to the inability to take care of self, to make ones own way in the world. To have to need someone else for basic needs may set one up to feel like less of a person, or at the least, an inadequate person.

As a result of these three occurrences, one of four things will happen:

(1) As the dependent person begins caretaking the other. The other will become dependent upon them as well for emotional well-being. The relationship will then be based upon mutual dependence rather than mutual respect. The two will be in the relationship

because they HAVE to be rather than because they WANT to. The relationship becomes unhealthy.

(2) The other will begin expecting the dependent person to supply all wants and needs. They will start using them and stop doing for themselves. The relationship will become abusive.

(3) The other will resent the obsessive/jealous behavior, feel stifled and leave the relationship.

(4) The other will lose respect for the dependent person, fall out of love and leave the relationship.

Most of the above consequences are true, also, for those dependent not upon another person, but upon any entity, institution, or situation. The longer one remains in this position, the more immobilized one may find themselves. One may become convinced that they CANNOT do for themselves and they become mired in shame. They become fearful that even if they tried, they will fail. Or they become so acclimated to the situation that they don't do anything. They then become resentful of what they perceive as the difficulties of becoming independent ("It takes money to make to make money, and I don't have any!")

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Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Jake A.	Nov 8	1 yr!
John M.	Dec 15	2 yrs
John L.	Dec 15	12 yrs
Rita M.	Dec 23	33 yrs
Don H.	Jan 1	6 yrs
Brad C.	Jan 1	5 yrs
Susan C.	Jan 2	13 yrs
Debra C.	Jan 3	2 yrs
Sandy P.	Jan 3	3 yrs
"Tracker" Sue	Jan 5	1 yr!
Dennis R.	Jan 6	2 yrs
Tina S.	Jan 7	7 yrs
Mike LB	Jan 10	10 yrs
Neil L.	Jan 10	5 yrs
Mimi	Jan 11	11 yrs

"Cigar" Matt	Jan 13	9 yrs
Loren N.	Jan 14	7 yrs
Dave K.	Jan 15	8 yrs
Judy S.	Jan 16	2 yrs
Melody W.	Jan 16	8 yrs
Jim M.	Jan 16	2 yrs
John M.	Jan 18	6 yrs
Dave	Jan 20	5 yrs
Barbara	Jan 20	5 yrs
Joellen F.	Jan 26	4 yrs
Mike McK	Jan 29	9 yrs

Bulletin Board

CONVENTION '97!!

Want to go to the MA Convention in February, but you're wondering about the cost? Well, the convention committee is as concerned as you. We have broken down the costs of the various activities so you can pick and choose the events you want to attend. You could choose to come on Saturday for the banquet and dance only for \$35. Or, maybe you want to attend workshops only - that's \$25. Full details and prices are listed on the Convention Registration Order Form on the back of last month's issue of *A NEW LEAF*.

Maybe the cost of staying down in San Diego is a concern. The hotel is giving us a great deal at \$69 per room, per night. Up to 4 adults can stay in 1 room, that breaks down to \$17.50 each, per night. An added bonus - the low room rate also applies for those of you who can stay Sunday night, and we'll have a sunset meeting at the beach.

There are other less expensive motels nearby, as well as camping facilities. Perhaps you have friends or family in the San Diego area who would put you up for a couple of nights.

Why not carpool and share expenses with other members who are going? Also, many airlines are offering low airfares now. The further in advance you buy, the cheaper the flights. For a nominal fee, there are shuttles available from San Diego International Airport to the hotel.

Then there's the train. Amtrak goes to San Diego from as far north as Sacramento, and the rates are very low.

There are lots of alternatives! In the past, we'd go to any lengths necessary to get our weed. If we really want to go to the Convention (and we do hope everyone in MA attends!) we will find a way. If you have any further questions, please call Mike LB at (714)547-3693 or Jim M. at (310)645-4654. See you there!

SERVICE MANUAL UPDATES!

The MA Service Manual (Revision 1.1) is available for purchase. The price is \$10 plus \$3 shipping. Send check or money order payable to *A NEW LEAF* when you order, and mail to P.O. Box 4314, North Hollywood, CA 91617.

For those who bought the original Version 1.0, the revised pages (only) are being sent to each district (or group of meetings) and can be copied for you, by your district literature chairperson. Any price charged is up to each district or group. If you do not live in an area where you can get a copy from a district or group, please send \$3, to cover the cost of postage, to *A NEW LEAF* at the above address. We will get these in the mail just as soon as possible.

We are sorry that it has taken so long to get this update done and would like to thank you for your patience with this bunch of burned out volunteers limping along and waiting for the calvary to arrive. (Hey! Are YOU doing service work?)

Paradox of Miracles

by Jake A., District 1

A few years ago, before I got clean and sober, I went on a one day camping and scuba diving trip on the coast of Northern California. What made this trip unique was the fact that I did not bring any marijuana. Marijuana to me was like the American Express slogan... "Never leave home without it". This rare excursion I was dry because my dealer was temporarily out. Thoughts of cancelling the trip raced through my mind but I decided to make the journey. That night I felt tortured by the anxiety of not having my stuff. I kept on saying things like, "I wish I had a joint." I practically prayed to God asking to get high.

Then, buried in the shag carpet of my custom van, I found a roach with about four good hits left. I lit that roach

and held those hits in until I was about to pass out. I remember thinking, "That was a miracle!"

Six months into my sobriety I was running late for an appointment and put my wallet, keys, and change for the parking meter into a hip pack as I rushed out. When I arrived I started to dig through my hip pack looking for a quarter for the parking meter. Much to my dismay, I found a formidable roach. Again! I had spent weeks searching for and throwing away all my smoking paraphernalia, but somehow I'd missed this roach. The last time I had worn my hip pack was on a vacation in Hawaii when I was still using. I examined the roach for a moment and immediately crumpled it up and tossed it on the street. That action and the desire to remain clean and sober is truly a miracle. *R*

Thought for the Month...

*"Honesty"
without compassion
and understanding
is not honesty,
but subtle hostility.*

Rose N. Franzblau
Touchstones, Daily Meditations

Felton

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were still practicing addicts. By ignoring them or hurting them with words or deeds that are totally selfish and self absorbed.

I understand that my struggle will be life long. I have noticed that Felton rears his ugly head when I haven't gone to a lot of meetings or I am not working my program (which lately, has been the case more often than not). I know the tools I need to use, but my ego always seems to get in the way of reaching out for help. The tool I have been using the most is prayer.

I pray that I may have the courage and strength to continue my program and to become strong in the fellowship. The need is great, especially during the holidays. I find that Felton gets stronger around this time as I start to self destruct by hurting those around me with my ruthless words and my quick temper. Never the less I pray; "God grant me the serenity...". *R*

The Fifth... For One

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Everyone must be dependent on something for sustenance. If one is dependent upon a job - any job - this will tend towards an increase in self-esteem as they are contributing to their own upkeep in whatever small or large way. It does matter what the job is (As long as it is legal/moral. The gains of taking care of oneself are overcome by the losses one experiences when engaged in activities that are not conducive to pride in themselves. Especially if there are negative legal/financial consequences to it as anyone who has been arrested or experienced financial feasts and famines can attest.).

So you see, the founder's of AA placed the guideline of "Self-supporting through our own contributions..." in the Twelve Traditions for a very real purpose. It reminds us of what should be one of our main goals; to become active, productive, happy, independent members of society. It also keeps us on track as each of us develops and nurtures a new self-esteem. *R*

HELP WANTED !!

Last spring, *ANNEWLEAF* became the publishing arm of Marijuana Anonymous. As a result, *ANNEWLEAF* "Publishing" is now responsible for not only the production of our newsletter, but the printing and distribution of our book, *LIFE WITH HOPE*, all sales of our literature and pamphlets to outside entities, and distribution of the Marijuana Anonymous Service Manual.

When we took on all these additional responsibilities, we didn't have a clue just how big a job it would be. We set up a crude structure that was meant only to carry us until we had a better idea of what the job was going to be like.

So... what are we getting at? This has become a big job!

We need people that are interested

in becoming editors. (Candidates should be "online", have computers with good quality printers, should have good writing and language skills, and must be clean from all mind altering substances including alcohol and have an enthusiasm for the "message" rather than the "mess".)

We need people that would be willing to help with shipping of the newsletter, *LIFE WITH HOPE*, and other literature.

We need people with an interest in helping with the accounting and book-keeping.

We want to hear from people that are interested in being of service! **THAT MEANS YOU!** Please drop us a line, send us a fax, or mail us a letter. We need to hear from you! *R*

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