



# A NEW LEAF

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## The Last Bag To Sobriety by Richard D

I had attended the Thanksgiving Meeting-A-Thon in Mar Vista at St. Bedes Church for my Thanksgiving Day. During one of the meetings I had raised my hand to share and was called upon. I talked about my using times and some sobriety things and acknowledged the presence of my "Eskimo" who was present in the room for that meeting. When the meeting was over I was approached by my Eskimo and heard her say, "You forgot to talk about the last bag story"! Well, I told her that I am now 4 1/12 years clean and sober and said I just don't think about "those" using times anymore and she replied that it was a critical turning point in my sobriety for me and I shouldn't forget it. Well, for several days I thought about why I needed to remember the moment I went from a 30-year-using Marijuana addict to making a decision to turn my life over to a bunch of strangers (ex-drug-addicts) who had some words I was unfamiliar with and a program I knew nothing about. He's what I learned about day one 4 1/2 years later.

The following Sunday I went to another of my regular meet-

ings and was planning to just listen to others speak (you know, "suit up, show up & shut up"). After one fellow took a newcomer chip and talked about 26 years of abusing Marijuana and how scared he was for his life and how glad he was he had found MA, I was struck with the familiarity of the "last bag". Then another took a one-year chip and again I was reminded of my own hard work and how important that one-year chip was to me and again I was remembering the "last bag". As the meeting went on and several people shared I knew then that I had to raise my hand and share about the "last bag" because although at the time 4 1/2 years ago it was so important to my program, I now know how important it is to share with other addicts, especially the "new comer".

Here's my story about the "last bag". I came to MA in March of 1996 after having tried sobriety through a hospital program and failed and personal attempts and failed. I then took advantage of my work's medical insurance and went to Kaiser Hospitals Outpatient

Program. After only one session a stranger came up to me and we began to talk. He asked me if I was also going to the Tuesday Mar Vista meeting after this one. I told him I didn't know anything about it. He offered me directions and I followed him to my first MA meeting. It was comfortable; I heard things I liked hearing, the people seemed pretty cool and I was OK with it for now. At the end of the meeting I ended up meeting my first Eskimo who did all the things addicts with time do for the newcomers. By the third or fourth week in the program, I met another person who actually became my second Eskimo.

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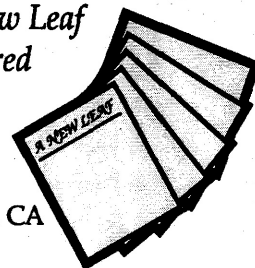
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## A NEW LEAF

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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## Last Bag to Sobriety *continued from page one*

Keep in mind one thing, when I came through those proverbial doors for the first time I was desperate and beaten from long-term stupidity, Marijuana abuse of the worst kind. When my two Eskimos heard my beginner's shares and heard my story they 12-stepped me several times in several ways. "If you want to get and stay clean and sober you have to get rid of all your paraphernalia and pot in order to make a real commitment to yourself and the program". Yeah! Right! OK! I was willing to toss my pipes (several) out of the car window as I was driving around town, beginning to think of my powerlessness over Marijuana and my desperation to get and stay clean and sober after 30 years. I could toss the Bambús, the Zig Zags, the bong, the roach clip holders and other stuff out the window and make a commitment to getting clean and sober.

When I returned to one of my now-regular meetings and met with my Eskimos (or they met with me) and was asked if I had gotten rid of all of my "stuff" I said yes. I felt good about that. All that money out the window, all in the name of getting clean and sober. Then one of my Eskimos asked me did you also get rid of that "bag" of pot I had just scored? Ah...oh! Well, you see, I, well, I got rid of all my paraphernalia so I don't have any way to get

high, besides, I just want to hold on to it a little bit longer. You know, just to smell once in awhile, you know? Then came my second 12<sup>th</sup> step. All the reasons why I had to let go absolutely; why I couldn't hold on to my old ways and ideas; why I had to get rid of everything including the "last bag" of pot. I heard what they were saying but they didn't understand what that "last bag" really meant to me. It was the kindest of the green, I had spent a lot of money on it and I just wanted to hold on to it a little bit longer. They just didn't understand. Yeah, right. I found out later through their own shares that their addictions were equal to mine or even greater than mine but they just didn't understand. So, after one of the regular meetings I was asked to do one of two things. Either to go home and get rid of the "last bag" or to give it to some person who will give me the money for it and he will empty it or destroy it somewhere, somehow. Yeah, right. I'm going to give a total stranger my "last bag" of dope to destroy for me. HA! So that night when I got home after the meeting, teary-eyed and angry with my Eskimos that I had to destroy my "last great bag" of pot, I went into the bathroom, raised the lid to the toilet and began a ceremony dedicated to that "last bag". I would pick out one kind bud and drop and flush. One tear. Then another bud, flush.

## Last Bag to Sobriety

concluded

And another and another and another. And then it was all gone and I was so totally spent from that experience I knew right then and there that my smoking and using and abusing days were over for good. Today I have over 4½ years of sobriety and there are some lessons of that time I would like to share with you.

*First*, to my good friend David who took me from Kaiser to MA and always told me that I would get what he could not become true. Today, I have only his memory because he could not get rid of the "last bag". He could not give up the old ways and ideas of the past. For him and countless others I value my sobriety. *Second*, This program is not easy but it is simple for those who want a better way of life for themselves and their families. *Third*, I have learned that if you puts your hand out in MA and ask for help, you will be amazed at how many hands will reach back and say, "Grab hold, everything will be OK". I do truly owe my life to MA and my two Eskimos; without them reaching out to me and saying, "Grab hold, it will be OK" I would still be experimenting for you and would probably die thinking I too could not "get it", either.

Here's to my Eskimos. Thank you and God bless!



## Our Own Private Idaho

Anonymous, from Idaho

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**Editor's Note:** The following was submitted anonymously by one person writing on behalf of a meeting in Twin Falls, Idaho. However, as there is no indication that the views expressed herein express the views of all persons involved in that meeting, *A NEW LEAF* does not represent them as such.

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Dear MA,

We are so glad to be part of this fellowship. There are other fellowships that deal with addiction, but a lot of people still struggle with pot. I myself struggled for the first two years of my recovery. I was going to 12-Step programs for alcoholics and for narcotics the whole time. I found many recovering people who had the same problem. A lot of us just didn't think pot was like the other drugs out there. We never went to jail or prison over it. We never did a lot of things on pot like we did on other drugs. So in our minds we were doing the right thing by just smoking pot, and not the so-called Hard Drugs.

We, as many people in recovery, know now that pot is just as addicting as any other drug. It can cause untold problems in a user's life, short term and long term. At first some people in recovery ask, "Why MA?" And we say, "Why not?"!

We have two meetings going now, one on Saturday and one on Monday. Both are growing very well now. We are waiting for the 2nd edition [of *Life With Hope*] to come out so we can get them into more jails. We have a small H&I committee

here. We also have about 15 home group members at this time. We started with two about three months ago. So we are growing fast, and it shows there is a need for MA meetings in every recovery community.

Thanks again for all your support and prayers. "MA Rules"

Yours truly  
Saturday Night Live  
Twin Falls, Idaho

## Step 2 Meditation

*"Step 2 -- Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."*

I consider myself a smart person, but obviously my better thinking can get me into trouble -- literally and figuratively. I have come to believe that there is something else out there that knows what is best for me and will guide me along the right path. If I continue to rely solely on my own decision-making process I am guaranteed to continue along the same path that got me here in the first place. For my thinking can rationalize ANYTHING: getting made at my boss because I did something wrong; sleeping with as less than desirable sex partner; spending more money than I

*continued on last page*

need to; saying inappropriate things to the wrong people; the list goes on.

To me "a power greater than myself" has to include me, but remain separate from me at the same time. Meaning that, this power knows better than I do what the right path is and will guide me along the way via signs, whether internal or external to me, and through habituation of character. This power has to be something outside of me, and something that is not me, but is willing to embrace me and take me into "the fold". For if it is a part of me, then I will do what I always do -- I will try to control it to effect the end, which I desire, which soon enough will have me focusing on the end rather than the means. And this affects my decision-making process...

What I hope will happen by taking this Second step is that the

sanity I wish to be restored to is something that I've rarely tasted, whether by choice or not. I hope that I will have a better sense of gratitude and appreciation of others rather than distaste and scorn. I hope that by being able to "turn over" some of the choices and results I get to this power that I will become better suited to make better decisions and become more accepting of the results I get because of making better decisions. I recognize that this can be a lifelong process, but I am willing.

I also hope that by coming to believe that there is a power greater than myself, that it will also allow me to believe in an unconditional love in which it accepts me regardless of who I am or what I do. And in this, I hope that I may become better able to accept and love myself unconditionally.

★  
★ **Congratulations to Our Members** ★  
★ **Celebrating their Sober Birthdays!** ★

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Carol G.	1/5/90	11 Years	Kelly	1/8/00	1 Year!
Bob F.	1/1/95	6 Years	Tina	1/14/00	1 Year!
Will N.	1/7/96	5 Years	Lorn	1/17/00	1 Year!
Karen F.	1/18/97	4 Years			
Bobbe	1/26/97	4 Years			
James S.	1/28/97	4 Years			
Andy C.	1/21/98	3 Years			
Chris T.	1/1/99	2 Years			

#### District 5

Mike L.B.	1/10/87	14 Years
Cigar Matt	1/13/88	13 Years
Melody W.	1/16/89	12 Years
Dave G.	1/20/92	9 Years
Barbara G.	1/20/92	9 Years
Sandy P.	1/1/94	7 Years
Sue "Tracker"	1/5/96	5 Years
Andrea	1/4/99	2 Years

#### District 6

Dave K.	1/1/89	12 Years
Loren N.	1/14/90	11 Years
Joellen F.	1/26/93	8 Years
Tim P.	1/2/94	7 Years
Judy S.	1/16/95	6 Years
Robin H.	1/16/95	6 Years
Ben B.	1/4/1998	3 Years

#### District 9

Ron H.	1/3/96	5 Years
<b>Idaho</b>		
Shane N.	1/11/89	12 Years



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