



January 2003

Volume 13, Number 1

# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

## Step One Set Me Free

by Desi

**W**hen I got sober, I think it was the first time I ever admitted I was powerless over anything. For as long as I remember, I had tried really hard to control everything. There was so much craziness and uncertainty in my life growing up, and it seemed like I had so little control, that as I got older I wanted my life, my environment, myself, and other people to be my way, under my control. I didn't want chaos; I wanted financial and emotional security. It never occurred to me to admit I was powerless over anything.

I started using drugs and alcohol when I was 16, and it was an instant hit. Instantly I fit in with other people. Instantly I had friends. Instantly I shared something with other people, and instantly there was a bond. I liked the people I smoked with, could take acid with, do mushrooms with – these people didn't have a lot of rules and expectations. It was easy being friends with people who partied. I didn't have to try too hard. I didn't feel like a misfit. I could relax.

I grew up in a really strict, abusive home. I learned to not let people know what I was thinking. I didn't say what was on my mind. I lied. I pretended things were okay when they weren't. I didn't make waves. I made plans. I kept my plans to myself. I didn't trust anybody. I didn't find too many people to talk to in my adolescent and pre-adolescent years. I didn't feel like there were a lot of people around who understood or who could or would make my life better. I got into my head and tried to figure out a way to make things "right." Along the way, I nurtured resentments and grew them from little slights into big balls of fire and flames.

I didn't have a very big vision for my life. I had big ideas and big schemes, but little coherence and very little follow-through. I wanted to get away from home, and I managed to do that, but I didn't have too many goals beyond that. I didn't know the world – I only knew my life and what was in my head, my thoughts and my ideas.

Pot helped me relax in the beginning. It helped me share something with other people. I didn't share my fears and insecurities, but I shared something. Pot helped me forget about problems and about worries. It showed me a different way to be – a bit more relaxed, mellow. Unfortunately, being relaxed and mellow wasn't me – it was drug-induced. So the relaxed and mellow transfor-

mation didn't go deep and didn't stay very long.

Eventually I got more and more angry. More angry at the people in my life, more angry at the "wrongs" in my life. Everybody was an asshole. Everybody was an aggravation. Everything was difficult. Nothing was "right." I was angry, and I was, quite literally, mad.

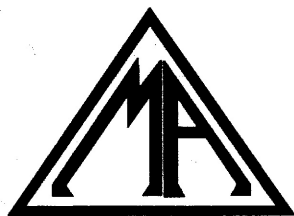
After 18 years of drug use and abuse, I came to my knees. I was out of control – I couldn't control my own behavior. I became desperate. I wanted a solution, and I didn't have one. I could no longer pretend. Though I didn't have the 12 Steps, I knew I was desperate, and I knew I was powerless over marijuana and that my life had become unmanageable.

When I got to the program, I was a walking Step One. I was at the right place at the right time. I don't know what else could have brought me to this admission of powerlessness and the unmanageability of my own life. I had been holding onto a lie. I don't know what I had been holding on to – there was nothing there. It was an illusion. I had pretended life and lived a lie. When I came into the program with Step One – it was the truth. And the truth cut through all the crap and disintegrated all the lies. I became free. Free. I didn't have to be this way or that – I could just be. I could cry. I could share. I could not know. I could listen. I could ask. I could just do, and not think or plot or plan. Step One set me free. It opened me up to a new way of being. It opened me up to life. It made me able to learn.

Now, with four years of sobriety, I go back to Step One when I run into difficulties. For me, Step One is the access to life. When I get anxious, a lot of times it's because I've been trying to manage and control things. When I finally let go and admit my powerlessness and the unmanageability of the situation or the person or the thing, I make room for something else to work. The admission of something being unmanageable is simply the truth for me sometimes, and when I can speak this truth, a peace and power settle in, and things become more manageable, and I have more power.

---

*Each month A New Leaf asks you, the members of MA, to share your thoughts on a Step or a Tradition. For the February issue, we hope you'll share on Step 2 or Tradition 2. You can write anywhere from one sentence to about 900 words. Whoever and wherever you are, we'd love to hear from you! Contact information is on page 2; the deadline for February is January 20.*



## 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.

### Executive Board

**Chairperson:** Loren N.

**Treasurer:** Michael V.

**Secretary:** Debra C.

### District Bureau Chiefs

District 1:	Samara H.
District 2:	Chris M.
District 3:	Jerry P.
District 4:	Open
District 5:	Terry H.
District 6:	Open
District 7:	Baljit
District 8:	Jerry M.
District 9:	Rockin' Bob
District 10:	Michael M.
District 11:	Mike F.
District 12:	Open
Austin, TX:	Valerie T.
Chester Co., PA:	Lee R.

### Managing Board

**Editor:** Paul G.

**Office Manager:** Judy S.

**Production Artist:** Tom W.

Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:

ANLP@marijuana-anonymous.org  
or

A New Leaf  
P.O. Box 4314

North Hollywood, CA 91617

## A Promise of Hope

By Jo G.

Why do I punish this unfortunate soul,  
By forgetting I have but one role.  
I can not control forces unseen and unknown,  
I can not change the seeds I have sewn.  
My life is my life,  
Though sometimes filled with frustration and strife.  
To give it all up,  
To just let go,  
That is my daily and everlasting goal.  
Higher power, I look to you for strength,  
On your shores my ship is banked.  
My life is your will  
When I just stand still.  
In your loving light  
I have some sight.  
But guide me to the destination of my own  
So my path I can see and behold.  
In you I trust this heart, this mind.  
From this place I hope to find,  
A freedom from the annoying bond  
Of regretting my past, which is sometimes too strong.  
I seek not to calm the storm around,  
But to have peace and serenity when the rain pours down,  
Help me let go of these selfish desires  
So I can help others when they are lost and tired.  
Let your strength within me glow  
So when I am confused and a wind begins to blow  
I will lead myself to others  
Who are now my family of sisters and brothers.  
Through you I now know I can change  
Because already is gone my self-pity and rage.  
These promises you gave me I always find  
In your wisdom and in my own time

## COME TO THE MA CONVENTION!

The MA Convention, "Conscious Contact," is happening February 14-16 in San Francisco. The convention is a ton of sober fun, with meetings, workshops, speakers, live music, dancing and a banquet.

Get more information on the internet at [www.sf-ma.org](http://www.sf-ma.org), by email at [convention@sf-ma.org](mailto:convention@sf-ma.org), or on the phone at 415-522-7373.

# *The Roving Reporter asks...*

**"Why is it important to have a sponsor?"**

*and MA answers...*

"Especially when you're new, making a connection with another person in the program is important. Hooking up with someone who has more time in the program makes you feel a part of the group, and they can introduce you to their peers and introduce you to the lingo and, most importantly, to the steps."

— Kat, District 7

For the February issue, **Roving Reporter** asks: **"What did you hear at a recent meeting (or read online) that really moved you?"** Please send us your answer by January 20! Contact information is on page 2.

Dear Sponsor,

I'm having a bit of a rough night. Got in a nasty fight with my wife.

I'm thankful to have a friend like you. I know we don't talk as much as we used to, but I know you're there. When I am hurting I think about principles of the program, what you might suggest if I spoke with you about my problems. I hear others share about meeting and talking with their sponsors on a regular basis. Sometimes I criticize myself for not calling you more often and failing to work a better program.

When I judge myself this way, I hear the words you shared with me a long time ago: "It's not spiritual to compare yourself with others. The only fair comparison is with yourself, where you are now and where you used to be." That really helps, because I have grown, and that's easy for me to see.

I know you are there, even if I don't call, and for me that means a great deal. It is a comfort that is new in my life. There was a time when I didn't have anyone that I could call and spill my guts to without some kind of unfavorable consequence. When I call and talk with you, share my problems, vent, or ask for help, I know you are there to listen, to nurture and to provide guidance of a spiritual nature. I don't get direct advice. You share tools with me that I can use to solve my own problems.

I don't tell you often, at least not lately, but I love you very much. You have been such a wonderful blessing in my life. Whenever I see you at meetings or events, it brings a smile to my face and a warmth to my heart. I get a hug when I first see you and a hug when we go our separate ways. Your hugs and wise words help me through difficult times like right now.

I think of you. My eyes well up with tears partly because I hurt and mostly because I am so grateful. Hope to see you soon.

Love,

T

# MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>  
email: [office@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:office@marijuana-anonymous.org)

**MA World Service Offices**  
PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404  
800-766-6779

**San Francisco (Dist. 1)**  
PO Box 460024, San Francisco, CA  
94146-0025  
415.522.7373

**East Bay (District 2)**  
PO Box 8354, Berkeley, CA 94707  
510.287.8873

**South Bay (District 3)**  
408.450.0796

**Seattle (District 4)**  
POB # 17323, Seattle, WA 98107-1023  
206.548.9034

**Orange County (District 5)**  
(Includes San Diego)  
PMB #215, 358 S. Main, Orange, CA 92868-3834  
714.999.9409  
619.685.2808

**LA County No. (District 6)**  
PO Box 2433, Van Nuys, CA 91404  
818.759.9194

**LA County So. (District 7)**  
PO Box 3012, Culver City, CA 90231  
323.964.2370

**New York (District 8)**  
PO Box 1244, Cooper Station  
New York, NY 10276  
212.459.4423

**Santa Cruz (District 9)**  
PO Box 3003, Santa Cruz, CA 95063  
831.427.4088

**LA County East (District 10)**  
(Includes Inland Empire)  
PO Box 94400, Pasadena, CA 91109  
626.583.9582

**Portland (District 11)**  
PO Box 2012, Portland, OR 97208-2012  
503.221.7007

**North Bay, CA (District 12)**  
PO Box 1001, Petaluma, CA 94952  
707-583-2326

**Austin, TX**  
[higherground\\_austin@yahoo.com](mailto:higherground_austin@yahoo.com)

**Chester Co., PA Chapter**  
PO Box 194, Sadsburyville, PA 19362  
610.622.9243

**Chicago**  
[Ma\\_chicago@hotmail.com](mailto:Ma_chicago@hotmail.com)

**Colorado**  
303.607.7516

**Denton, TX**  
[outofthefogDFW@yahoo.com](mailto:outofthefogDFW@yahoo.com)

**Ithaca, NY**  
[ma\\_ithaca@yahoo.com](mailto:ma_ithaca@yahoo.com)

**Omaha, NB**  
[omaha\\_ma@hotmail.com](mailto:omaha_ma@hotmail.com)

**Rogue Valley, OR Chapter**  
541.941.2995

**Westmont, NJ**  
[westmontma@yahoo.com](mailto:westmontma@yahoo.com)

**Australia**  
MA Australia  
PO Box 202, Hindmarsh, 5007, South Australia  
0.500.502.654  
[maaustralia@yahoo.com.au](mailto:maaustralia@yahoo.com.au)

**London, England Chapter**  
07940.503438

**New Zealand**  
MA Service Centre, PO Box 74-386  
Market Road, Auckland 3, New Zealand  
649.846.6822

**MA Online**  
PO Box 302195  
Sacramento, CA 9860-2195



**Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in A New Leaf? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.**

## District 2

Noelle	11/23/87	15 years
Joan	11/12/7	5 years
Paul R.	12/22/92	10 years
Joshua T.	12/15/97	5 years
Louise	12/3/98	4 years
Brendon W.	12/24/01	1 year!
Ed L.	12/25/01	1 year!
Taia W.	12/30/01	1 year!
Jerry	1/7/91	12 years
Doug P.	1/17/01	2 years

## District 3

Diane F.	10/22/91	11 years
Carol G.	1/15/90	13 years
Bob F.	1/1/95	8 years
Bobbe	1/26/97	6 years
James S.	1/28/97	6 years
Andy C.	1/21/98	5 years
Chris T.	1/1/99	4 years

## District 5

Mike LB	1/10/87	16 years
Cigar Matt	1/13/88	15 years
Melody W	1/16/89	14 years
Dave G	1//92	11 years
Sue "Tracker"	1/5/96	7 years
Andrea	1/4/99	4 years
Jo G	1/9/02	1 year!

## District 7

Terri R.	11/8/90	12 years
Clint	11/30/00	2 years
Lisa	11/29/01	1 year!
Dave	11/28/87	15 years
Avi	12/07/90	12 years
Jeff M.	12/06/96	6 years
Manny D.	12/06/99	3 years
Steven C.	11/25/99	3 years
Tina	12/15/00	2 years

## District 7 (cont'd)

Jaime L.	12/03/01	1 year!
Barry R.	??/05/98	4 years

## District 9

Will N.	1/7/96	7 years
---------	--------	---------

## District 10

Conrad G.	1/8/01	2 years
Rachel K.	1/15/02	1 year!

## District 11

Stephen P	11-26-95	7 years
John C.	1-1-99	4 years
Kolleen	1/5/02	1 year!

## Texas

Eva G.	1/1/94	9 years
--------	--------	---------

**Celebrating 269 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**

**convention2003**  
san francisco

february 14-16 2003

SF airport Marriott reservations 1-800-228-8290  
mention MAWS today for special room rates  
questions? [convention@sf-ma.org](mailto:convention@sf-ma.org)

[www.sf-ma.org](http://www.sf-ma.org)

**conscious contact**