



# a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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## **Willow, clean and sober since December 3, 1998**

I can trace my problems back to the beginning, in early childhood. When I was 4 years old, I was cornered in the barn by the gardener and abused; he said "Don't tell!" He scared me by holding a tarantula over me. At bath time, mom found out, he was gone the next day. The housekeeper (his wife) said, "SHAME ON YOU!!!" I felt like I had been a "bad girl," that it was my fault. I felt I was responsible for bad things. I felt like I could never be good enough, like nobody wanted me, nobody loved me.

My mom was a very angry person, she would chase my sister and I around the house with a switch. We would hide, behind the doors, behind the drapes, under the covers. I was the protector; I would hunt for the switches and break them. I would step in between my brother and the broom or belt. I am still afraid of anger. I don't want anyone to be angry with me for fear of rejection.

My dad expected perfection. Dad always thought I could do better. There were two ways to do things, "Dad's way or the wrong way." If I made a mistake, well then, it was because I didn't do it dad's way because otherwise it would have been perfect. I felt like I could never measure up to his standards. I tried so hard to win his love, never succeeded, never good enough. Even after my father died, I still believed that I wasn't good enough; he criticized me until the end.

I became very timid and shy. When I was a child; I barely spoke above a whisper. I grew up in a comfortable home. We had a lot of wonderful things but to me it seemed as though love was lacking.

I tried very hard to do things right. I tried very hard not to make my mother angry; I lived my life in fear. I have suffered from clinical depression for most of my life. This lack of self-esteem, the fear of rejection, has continued long into my adult life.

I identified with the hippie way of life. I saw that material possessions did not bring happiness. I believe in humanitarian issues, in equality for all, in peace instead of war. I started smoking pot after I graduated from college and continued to smoke throughout most of my adult life.

It was a way to be accepted, be part of the group, and be "cool", at least that's what I thought at first. I had always felt like an outsider and this was a way that I could be included.

I met a man at work; we shared a lot of the same ideals. I was amazed to meet a man who liked me. I thought I was so "fat" and "ugly" (undesirable) that no man would ever want to ask me out much less want to marry me. I started smoking with my husband. It started as a gradual thing but eventually became a daily habit. I had rules about smoking pot: never before work, never at work, never when I was driving, never when pregnant, not in front of the children. If I was going to smoke pot, it was going to be at a time when I didn't have to take any responsibility. I used to wonder what would happen to our marriage if we ever stopped smoking. My ex-husband was abusive; emotionally, verbally, and emphasized my feelings of inadequacy.

The love and joy went out of our marriage after 3 years, but we stayed

married for 16 years. I survived a bitter divorce and custody battle and raised the children by myself. I have 3 beautiful adult children; we survived the tough times together. They love me and have supported my recovery. I have had a wonderful and fascinating career and I was able to pursue and achieve my dreams.

Soon smoking pot became a way of escape from all the demons in my mind. It worsened my depression to a point where I became suicidal. I got into recovery when I hit bottom. I felt nothing but blackness, no joy in life. I could not go on; I was so depressed.

When I became suicidal, I was admitted to the hospital for detox and attended an intensive outpatient program. Also, I began seeing a psychiatrist and have continued to see him every week.

I started attending MA meetings in my city every week. At first I was afraid that I would be rejected because I thought the people would all be "fully recovered potheads" and perfect. When I attended my first meeting, I saw that everyone was just like me! And everyone was so nice! When I first listened to the promises and they said "we will love you until you love yourself" I thought, "Yeah, right, no one is going to love me; I am so unlovable, so unworthy." Well, imagine my surprise when I found out that they did love me! I was welcomed with open arms.

My first year in recovery was difficult for me. I had vivid, screaming nightmares. After the first 6 months, I thought I was "fully recovered" and could start smoking again. When I thought of my clean

# 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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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or submit online:  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
and click on the newsletter tab.

## **Willow, continued...**

time and how much better I felt, I had no wish to relapse. I didn't want to fall back into that dead place again.

I soon learned that it was best to avoid slippery places and magical thinking. Also, at almost a year, my depression worsened and I became extremely suicidal; I had a plan to end my life. My therapist put me in the hospital again. I was hospitalized for two weeks and was under suicide watch. I couldn't go anywhere without asking. I couldn't go outside, if I got flowers, I couldn't have the glass vase.

Everything was interpreted as though it could be a danger to me. I was in a psych ward with other mentally ill patients. My father came to see me; his eyes were red-rimmed from crying. This surprised me, my dad was a very strong-willed person and it was unusual to see him express sadness. One of my dad's favorite things to say was, "Never Give Up!" I remembered that when I was in the hospital and I told him that his expression gave me strength.

I was heavily medicated in the hospital. When I was discharged, I took about 10 weeks off from work in disability time. I just couldn't think. I couldn't do the equations or anything necessary for my work. Even after I returned, I had a difficult time. I had to keep track of every little thing so that I wouldn't get confused. All during this time I continued to go to my MA meetings and everyone there offered a lot of support. Some friends from MA even came to visit me in the hospital.

I met my sponsor within 3 months of attending MA. She was very nice and could relate and understand me. We worked through the steps, which was so helpful to me. I realized that a lot of the concepts that I had accepted as facts were based upon my misinterpretation of childhood beliefs. My fears from

childhood had stayed with me and I hadn't been able to discard them. I came to understand a lot about myself and what behaviors I had that led to addiction.

I have a new sponsor now. I see her frequently and we go to meetings together. When I have a problem that baffles me, I go through the steps to find a solution. I make a gratitude list every day; this helps me focus on the positive things in my life.

**"I HAD VIVID, SCREAMING NIGHTMARES."**

One of the first things I learned about in recovery was a Higher Power. When I was growing up, I was taught that God was loving, forgiving, and accepting. I liked the idea of a Higher Power because it was a spiritual concept instead of a religious concept. I learned to turn my problems over to my HP and I learned to accept my HP into my life. By having a HP, I have experienced love, acceptance, and serenity. I thank my HP for another day clean and sober.

In November 2006, I visited MA online. The late fall and winter months are very difficult for me. I still suffer from depression; I still isolate. I am still lonely. It was a completely different experience to be online. I was able to come online every day and stay as long as I wanted. I attend online meetings frequently and have been of service to the online community. I have friends online who accept me and love me. I have serenity and feel capable of giving love back unconditionally. I am so grateful for this.

I have been able to do service both on land and on line. I think it is one of the joys of recovery; to help others by giving back what I have learned. Recovery has changed my life; I never knew I could be so happy, free and joyful. Life is good; dreams come true. ◀

# CONVENTION! CONVENTION!! CONVENTION!!!

**Registration Form**  
**Annual MA Convention**  
**February 17-19, 2012**  
**Biltmore Hotel and Suites – Santa Clara, CA**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you'd like an e-mail confirming your registration

Check here if you'd like a mailed confirmation (please send self-addressed stamped envelope)

	Cost	Amount Paid
Registration (complete*) before 12/31/11	\$95	
Registration (complete*) before 02/01/12	\$125	
Raffle Tickets	\$1 x ____ (qty)	
Scholarship Fund		

\*Complete registration includes Friday Night Talent Show, Saturday Workshops & Lunch, Saturday Banquet and Dance, Sunday Brunch

**\*\*\*NOTE: Walk-in Registration Price: \$165\*\*\***

Complete **one form per person** with a check or money order payable to **MA District 3**  
 Mail to: MA District 3, C/O Convention Treasurer P.O. Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071- 0551

Questions? E-mail: [registration@maconvention2012.org](mailto:registration@maconvention2012.org)  
 Find the latest convention information at <http://madistrict3.org/maconvention2012/>

Please reserve your room today! Ask for the Marijuana Anonymous Convention rates.

**Biltmore Hotel and Suites - Santa Clara, California**  
 2151 Laurelwood Road, Santa Clara, CA 95054  
 Reservations: 800-255-9925

2 Room Tower Suite (King/Sofa Sleeper) \$79.00 Single/Double \$89.00 Triple \$99.00 Quad  
 Garden Room (Queen/Queen) \$69.00 Single/Double \$79.00 Triple \$99.00 Quad

Room rates include a breakfast for each person. (Breakfast is only for registered hotel guests)  
 Free transportation to and from airport provided by the hotel. Contact 408-988-8411 to make arrangements.  
 Free parking available at the hotel.

*A la carte registration for the following events will be available on the day of the event (prices TBD)*  
*Friday Night Talent Show, Saturday Workshops & Lunch, Saturday Banquet & Dance, Sunday Brunch*

# marijuana anonymous worldwide

## MA World Services

PO Box 7807 Torrance, CA90504 800.766.6779  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

### District 1 San Francisco

www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

### District 2 East Bay

PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 510.287.8873

### District 3 South SF Bay Area

PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

### District 4 Western Washington

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

### District 5 Orange County

1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 714.999.9409

### District 6 LA County No.

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

### District 7 LA County So.

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 323.943.9228

### District 8 New York

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

### District 10 LA County East

PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.583.9582

### District 11 Portland

PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.221.7007

### District 12 North Bay, CA

PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 707.583.2326

### District 13 MA Online

www.ma-online.org

### District 14 London, England

07940.503438

### District 15 Long Island, NY

www.ma-longisland.org 516-568-5883

### District 16 Melbourne, Australia

24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

### District 17 Denmark

info@ma-kbh.dk

For a complete listing of all meetings visit [www.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org)

## YOUR VOICE MATTERS

MAWS is conducting an "Effectiveness Survey" to evaluate what the society of MA thinks about MAWS' service to date, to Districts, meetings and members. We hope to collect a society-wide group conscience to give direction to the type of work in which MAWS should be engaged and help evaluate MAWS' current ability and potential to serve MA's needs as conveyed by that MA group conscience.

## SHARE YOUR OPINION.

This month we would like your, your groups', and/or your Districts' answers to the following questions:

1. Are we doing all we can to make service at the MAWS level attractive?
2. (Tradition 1) Does MAWS put the interests of any individual above the welfare of the Conference Body or of MA as a whole?

For more details, please go to the website

[forum.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://forum.marijuana-anonymous.org). To submit your ideas and share your thoughts on these questions email us at [mes@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:mes@marijuana-anonymous.org).

## ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

### How do you stay honest with yourself and others?

(Please submit answers by February 17, 2012)

## *Birthdays*

### Celebrating 156 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that, a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

#### District 1

Sam B.	11/11/09	2 yrs
Bob D.	11/2/01	10 yrs
Jeff P.	12/1/10	1 YEAR!
Gene B.	12/13/10	1 YEAR!
Mike K.	10/16/10	1 YEAR!

#### District 5

Larry	11/28/99	12 yrs
Lisa S.	12/7/93	18 yrs

#### District 6

Kim J.	12/5/10	1 YEAR!
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#### District 7

Penny LB.	11/10/01	10 yrs.
Jay I.	11/22/01	10 yrs.
Larry C.	11/28/99	12 yrs.
Liz M.	12/08/02	9 yrs.
Manny D.	12/06/99	12 yrs.
Jeff M.	12/06/96	15 yrs.

#### District 10

Noelle A.	12/22/07	4 yrs
Arleigh A.	12/14/07	4 yrs

#### District 11

Andy D.	12/2/07	4 yrs
Owen R.	12/4/09	2 yrs
Cassi S.	12/9/97	14 yrs
Mike D.	12/15/97	14 yrs



## KEEP COMING BACK!