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# A NEW LEAF

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

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## Convention Madness!

by Mike LB, District 5

About half way into the six hour drive from Orange to Santa Cruz the storm hit. As I drove through the pounding rain punctuated by occasional lightning flashes, I wondered why I was risking my neck to go to the first MA convention. By the end of the weekend, I had my answer. I needed to be there.

Walking into the registration area reminded me of entering my first MA meeting. I immediately felt at home. I may not have known half of the people there, but I was instantly welcomed and accepted. Everyone was smiling, laughing, talking, and having a great time. And they were glad I was there to share it with them. So was I.

On Saturday, I attended the morning workshops. They helped renew my commitment to sobriety and energize my spiritual contact with my Higher Power.

In the afternoon I took some time off to be by myself. I strolled along the ocean cliffs and enjoyed the peacefulness of solitude. After a while I ran into some fellow MA members and embraced their company.

That night was exceptional. There was a very spiritual talk by a recovering priest followed by a raucous dinner/performance of a murder mystery put on by some very

talented MA members. All of us got to play a role in the production. I'll never forget pretending to be gay and dancing with another "flaming" MA member with his dog collar leash in my teeth! What a way to be uninhibited and not care what anyone thought about me.

*"I hope everyone can join us for a happy, joyous, and free weekend filled with fellowship, spirituality and fun!"*

Sunday was very bittersweet. It was sad to say good by to new friends I had made over the weekend. Who knew when I'd see them again? Actually, it turned out to be a year later at the second annual MA convention in Santa Monica.

A shorter drive and no rain, but many

of the same feelings and experiences. It was wonderful to see people from other districts again and make new friends. One of my most pleasant memories was being presented a birthday cake by my very special, and longest, friend in MA, Az. I also learned a lot about myself, my program, my feelings, and my spirituality in the workshops.

Then I got to be wild and crazy again at the dance.

As I was leaving last year I had the thought, "We can do this. District 5 can put on next year's convention. I want to do this."

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## I Heard My Story, And Found Hope

by Mary M., District 4

It was Springtime, 1995 and it was a very bad time for me. I was hospitalized again for depression. This time they told me I had a dual diagnosis. They told me I was also chemically dependent. Of course I was in a lot of denial; I did not want to stop using pot. I told myself I didn't have a problem. I had smoked everyday, if I had it, for 30 years. My husband was telling me he was concerned about me driving while I was high. I was

spending up to \$200 a week on weed. I spent most of my time thinking about where and when I could get some more, and my only "friends" were people who smoked.

While at the hospital I was given a schedule of Marijuana Anonymous meetings. I taped it on my refrigerator where I could see it every day. I knew I should go,

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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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## A Major OOPS!!!

Apologies from the Editor are in order to Hillary of District 6 and the Fellowship general for a pretty major blunder in last month's issue. The article "The Fifth Tradition - For One" (an insightful application of a Tradition applied to an individual rather than the group) was originally intended to be about the SEVENTH Tradition. Your editor was working much too late the night that the article was typed up and I was suffering from major "brain drain". How many of you caught the blunder?!? Would you believe it was a quiz?!?

## Some Major THANK YOU's!!!

Last month, our Managing Editor, Tamar - had to step down from her post as a result of a job move. She will be sorely missed! Tamar brought empathy, laughter, a willingness to work, and an insistence on truth and quality to the monthly production sessions of *A NEW LEAF*. The Managing Editor does more than contribute to the actual production of the newsletter. Tamar was also responsible for most of the real leg-work involved with publication: purchasing paper, going to the printer, keeping track of the growing number of subscriptions, addressing mountains of envelopes, and shipping. She did a great job!

And, we're very happy to announce that we've already found a willing volunteer to take over this difficult position... Judy S. of District 6!

You might also note that *A NEW LEAF* has a new member of the Editorial Board of Directors- Ilene M., our esteemed World Services Office Manager. As *A NEW LEAF PUBLICATIONS* grows in responsibility and duties with the production and distribution of all MA's literature... Life With Hope, the newly updated Service Manual, and more - the need for hard working organizers is vital.

And... since we're at it. I would like to thank Mike H. of District 6 for offering to do our proof-reading in future issues. I'm afraid that this month's issue will be going to the printer at the last moment again, and I'll be unable to take Mike up on his offer. (That's a subtle way of asking forgiveness for anymore typos this month.) However, with Mike's help the errors will decrease in the future.

## A little change this month...

*It has been drawn to our attention that recognizing birthdays BEFORE they happen... flies in the face of "One Day At A Time". So, starting with this issue, we will be celebrating our miracles from the previous month. Here are the members that were not mentioned in the January issue.*



## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!

Robin H.	Jan 16	2 yrs.
"One Step" Dave	Jan 20	2 yrs.
June L.	Jan 29	2 yrs.

# Convention!

*Continued from Page 1*

The only regrets I have ever had about the conventions was that there was not enough time to be a tourist. I was very disappointed in Santa Cruz that it was raining all weekend and the boardwalk amusement park was shut down. I really wanted to ride the wooden roller coaster. And in Santa Monica I wished I had been able to visit the 3rd Street Promenade. While I loved the speakers and the workshops, I felt they needed to be balanced with more play time.

My vision was to have a convention over a three day holiday weekend in a tourist city and include a play day. With a lot of help from my MA friends in Districts 5 and 7, and some compromises, my dream is about to come true. The Third Annual Marijuana Anonymous Convention is about to commence over the President's Holiday weekend in San Diego with everyone invited to stay and play tourist together after the convention officially ends Sunday afternoon.

I hope everyone can join us for a happy, joyous, and free weekend filled with fellowship, spirituality and fun! And I'm already looking forward to visiting the beautiful San Francisco Bay area for next year's convention. R

## Directions to Convention:

From anywhere, go south on the 5 Freeway. Just past Mission Bay, take the 8 Freeway east. Immediately get into the right lane and take the first exit - Hotel Circle. Turn left at the end of the off ramp and the next left over the freeway. Hotel Circle North will curve to the right. Be careful to not get back on the 8 Freeway! Take Hotel Circle North about one mile to the Handlery Hotel.

# I Heard My Story

*Continued from Page 1*

but I was so scared. I was not using; I was white knuckling it. It was awful. But finally I got up enough courage to go.

Well, I can't even begin to tell you how I felt. Here were people telling my story! I listened to what they had to say and felt like crying the whole time. I left there that evening feeling as if there was hope for me for the first time in my life. I wanted what they had, so I did what they said to do. I went to meetings; I did service work; I got a sponsor, and I turned my will and my life over to the care of God, one day at a time.

Last May, I was involved in the conference held here in Seattle. I met many people from all over the country. I even had some stay with me at my home. It was such an honor to be involved with these admirable people who work so hard to keep MA going. I went to my first sober party and had a blast!

Then I moved. And it was too far to

drive to my regular meetings. It was so hard. I was very close to some people in those meetings. I just felt lost. But I made myself go to another meeting here, and I found that these people were wonderful. I still miss the people from the other meeting, but the message is the same.

Once a month I attend our intergroup meeting. Our main goal here is to spread the word to the still suffering addict. We also hope someday to have many more meetings available.

I am so very grateful to my Higher Power and MA, because today I am happy, joyous, and free. Because today I can deal with my pain, I'm learning how not to be afraid of others, and I now know I can relax, have fun, and be clean and sober. Some days are a struggle and I just pray and ask God to show me the way. R

## Convention Agenda

### Friday:

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Registration
8:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Opening Meeting with speaker, Az A.
10:00 pm - 10:30 pm	Late Registration
10:30 pm - Midnight	Comedy Late Nite Show

### Saturday:

7:30 am - 9:30 am	Breakfast Buffet
9:00 am - 10:15 am	1st Workshop Session : <u>Meditation, Sponsorship,</u> and (tentatively) <u>Cross Addiction</u>
10:30 am - 11:45 am	2nd Workshop Session: <u>Service and Relationships</u>
11:45 am - 1:30 pm	Lunch (on your own)
1:30 pm - 2:45 pm	3rd Workshop Session: Men & Women's <u>Stag Meetings</u>
3:00 pm - 4:15 pm	4th Workshop Session: <u>Higher Power, Relapse</u> and (tentatively) <u>Fun In Recovery</u>
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Banquet Dinner
8:00 pm - 9:30 pm	Keynote Speaker, Rocky
10:00 pm - 2:00 am	Dance

### Sunday:

8:00 am - 10:00 am	Breakfast Buffet
10:00 am - 2:00 pm	Closing Meeting: Speaker, Libby G.

Birthday Celebration, Raffle, Drumming

# The Artist Chooses Her Own Colors

by Sunnie R., District 6

Over the last 6 and a half months, I have walked through many of my fears. (Not to say that there aren't many still to be explored.) But the most rewarding and terrifying issue/fear I've faced is my shame.

Shame is a very complex issue. I don't feel qualified to even explain it, but I will let all of you know what I have come to realize and what I understand about it.

My shame tells me I am bad. I'm not good enough. I'll never amount to anything regardless of my effort. My shame tells me that no one must know these things. I must keep them hidden. I must keep all of the people in my life at bay while I perform for them. I use the word "perform" because when I was in high school, my ritual before leaving the house was to look at myself in the mirror and tell myself, "No one knows your life, no one knows who you really are. So, here we go."

My self worth was determined by how much you liked me. I would buy you gifts in order to get praise, to show you how much I was worth.

My shame kept and still keeps me from intimacy. Intimacy requires vulnerability and that is a risk, one which I fear. This is one of the ways shame is exposed.

What I understand about shame is that unless I realize that it exists, I will always be controlled by it. I must trudge — sometimes begrudgingly — through my fears, face them, acknowledge them. Naturally, shame makes me reluctant to admit that I am ashamed.

What got me to the place where I was willing to even explore this issue? I don't know. But I know where the feeling comes from. That place in my gut that I used to fill with drugs, pot, alcohol, and sex. Later I tried to fill that place with people in the program, the love of my family, and acceptance of myself. But that place was still not content. I saw that I was practicing old behavior. With help, I realized that it was my shame. I tried to modify this old behavior to work/compliment my new behavior, but it wasn't going well.

When I was younger, the behaviors I developed from my shame were used as coping

skills. They kept me safe. Now that I am sober, this old behavior has no place in my life. I fear that ridding myself of these coping skills, will result in me being left with nothing. Empty. That is EXACTLY what my shame wants me to think and feel.

I am here to tell you that although terrified, I will face my shame. It will not control me any longer! I will not be alone. My God will keep me safe and I will talk about it. I will learn new behaviors and coping skills. Rebuking my shame only leaves me a blank canvas where I am the artist. I can pick and choose the colors that will tell the story of my life. *R*

## Thought for the Month...

*"Even in silence, the voice of our gratitude does not go unheard. It speaks most clearly as we walk the path of recovery, selflessly giving to those we meet along the way."*

It Works  
How and Why  
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