



# A NEW LEAF

February 1998  
Volume 8 - No. 2

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

## And This Is Coffee

By Craig J., District 6

A few months after I made the personal commitment to get sober, I asked a person who I had seen at a few meetings if he didn't mind going to Starbucks to talk. I was almost 60 days clean, but I wasn't getting it. I was showing up at meetings, but I had no clue what the program really was and how to work it. What he told me set me on my way.

After some small talk he said, "The meetings are fellowship, the steps are the program...and this is coffee." My stumbling block, I was then to understand, was trying to intellectualize the steps. He told me, "Don't try to understand the steps, just do them. Once you start to do them, you will begin to understand what the program and the steps are all about." He was absolutely right.

I have heard it said many times that if you wrote down on a piece of paper what you expect to get out of Marijuana Anonymous when you enter the program, and then look back at that piece of paper at a later date, you will be amazed at the result. I thought that I was entering the program to get sober. Period. End of story. I never thought that MA was a *life* program—I thought it was a *drug* program. I quickly realized that the drug was just a

symptom of a much bigger problem: my inability to deal with life on life's terms.

I didn't have any tools to deal with what I had allowed my life to become. I had a lot of built-up resentments and anger, and no way

*I have taken part in events and ceremonies that before MA I would have most likely rejected.*

to exorcise those demons. As I began my step work, I found my toolbox and my exorcist. The steps are unforgiving. They don't let you hide. They "out" you every chance

they get, and hold a mirror in front of your face. It was exactly what I needed. I was tired of running away and anesthetizing myself when faced with the work of dealing with my self. The time had come for some major changes, and the steps

are the only thing that I have found that have enabled me to do that.

The steps have also enabled me to renew my

relationship with God. Although I grew up in a home that had a strong religious identity, I felt alienated. At the time I entered the rooms, I was

*Continued on page 3*

## The Homecoming

By Anonymous, District 2

My story is one of escape. I was born irritable, restless, and discontent. I felt different from others. I was the problem child making too many demands on my parents and relatives. I was uncomfortable in my own skin, and I couldn't bear to deal with my feelings. I was too sensitive and cried all the time. The sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in my home started me running down

my path. Beginning as a two-year old, I'd ask why I was put on this planet. In my teens I just wanted to die the pain was so great.

I turned 13 in 1974. I took my first toke that year. As far as I was concerned, my parents, relatives, teachers, nurses, and counselors hadn't a whole lot of answers. I was on my own to figure out how to live life. It was sex, drugs, and rock n' roll—sounded good at the time.

*Continued on page 3*



**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.

Publishing Editor  
**David H.**  
Managing Editor  
**Judy S.**

District 1 Bureau Chief: **vacant**  
District 2 Bureau Chief: **Praline M.**  
District 3 Bureau Chief: **Kevin G.**  
District 4 Bureau Chief: **Mary M.**  
District 5 Bureau Chief: **Mary K.**  
District 6 Bureau Chief: **Sandy B.**  
District 7 Bureau Chief: **Suzanne C.**  
District 8 Bureau Chief: **vacant**  
District 9 Bureau Chief: **Bernie G.**  
District 10 Bureau Chief: **Bill H.**  
District 11 Bureau Chief: **Sam H.**  
Eastern PA Bureau Chief: **Lee R.**

Published by  
**A NEW LEAF Editorial Board**  
**Rob M.**, chairman  
**Loren N.**, treasurer  
**Ilene M.**, secretary

Send all articles, inquiries, and  
correspondence to:  
**A NEW LEAF**  
P.O. Box 4314  
North Hollywood, CA 91617

Email #1: ANewLeaf98@aol.com  
Email #2: ANuLeaf@aol.com

Editorial Phone No.  
**(818) 353-5537**  
Fax No.  
**(818) 990-2980**

© Copyright 1997 • Marijuana Anonymous

# A Life This Good

By **Sandy B., District 6**

I smoked pot for over 20 years. I am a 35-year-old single mother of a three-year-old child. I have about four months sober to date. I have tried to stop smoking pot time and again. Nothing has worked. But coming to MA has changed everything. I wish I would have known how good it would feel. How freeing it would be. I was so tied up in my guilt, shame, and being the victim that I could not see the freedom which was so close.

My life has improved beyond words. Anyone who says MA doesn't work for them has not worked the program. I got a sponsor after my first few meetings and began going through the steps immediately. I also took on commitments at the meetings I could attend regularly.

I worked hard on my steps because I wanted what so many of you had: a feeling of belonging, of being loved and cared about, and mostly a feeling of hope.

Going to MA meetings and using the tools turned me around. I went from feeling like a victim to feeling like I had a purpose...from isolating to getting out and going to meetings and calling people in the program...from running on self-will to believing that a power greater than myself existed...from feeling guilt and shame to feelings of knowing I deserve a

*Continued on page 4*

## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



### District 2

|              |        |        |
|--------------|--------|--------|
| DD S.        | Dec 6  | 1 yrl  |
| John L.      | Dec 15 | 12 yrs |
| Sebastian B. | Dec 16 | 1 yrl  |
| Suki G.      | Dec 16 | 3 yrs  |
| Matt C.      | Dec 21 | 2 yrs  |
| Jay C.       | Dec 23 | 3 yrs  |

### District 3

|         |        |       |
|---------|--------|-------|
| Kathryn | Dec 11 | 1 yrl |
|---------|--------|-------|

### District 5

|            |        |        |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Sandy P.   | Jan 3  | 4 yrs  |
| Susan      | Jan 5  | 2 yrs  |
| Mike L.B.  | Jan 10 | 11 yrs |
| Matt       | Jan 13 | 10 yrs |
| Bonnie     | Jan 15 | 1 yrl  |
| Melody W.  | Jan 16 | 9 yrs  |
| Barbara G. | Jan 20 | 6 yrs  |
| Dave G.    | Jan 20 | 6 yrs  |
| Mike M.    | Jan 29 | 10 yrs |

### District 6

|           |       |       |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| Jacqui P. | Jan 2 | 4 yrs |
| Tim P.    | Jan 2 | 4 yrs |
| Tina S.   | Jan 7 | 8 yrs |

|            |        |       |
|------------|--------|-------|
| Loren N.   | Jan 14 | 8 yrs |
| Dave K.    | Jan 15 | 9 yrs |
| Judy S.    | Jan 16 | 3 yrs |
| Robin H.   | Jan 16 | 3 yrs |
| Joellen F. | Jan 26 | 5 yrs |
| June L.    | Jan 29 | 3 yrs |

### District 7

|          |        |        |
|----------|--------|--------|
| Steve A. | Oct xx | 2 yrs  |
| Trish G. | Dec 30 | 1 yrl  |
| Rocky    | Dec xx | 16 yrs |
| Renelde  | Jan 1  | 5 yrs  |
| Debra C. | Jan 3  | 3 yrs  |
| Jim M.   | Jan 16 | 3 yrs  |
| Danny G. | Jan 17 | 4 yrs  |
| John     | Jan xx | 2 yrs  |
| Mark L.  | Feb 1  | 8 yrs  |

### District 8

|                   |        |       |
|-------------------|--------|-------|
| Ron H.            | Dec 17 | 1 yrl |
| <b>New Mexico</b> |        |       |
| Brett             | Dec 15 | 3 yrs |

## The Homecoming

*Continued from Page 1*

After my cousin and I finished our first joint, I asked her where we could find more. When pot wasn't around I would drink myself into oblivion. A real treat was mixing pot with hash or hash-oil and drinking hard liquor—that was a good night!!

I smoked every day in high school and would only hang out with pot smokers. Everyone else was totally uncool. I continued to be uncomfortable in my own skin and became depressed. I figured my depression was a result of the adults in my life letting me down and life just sucking in general.

Twice I quit for a couple of years. Once at 16 when I was introduced to Christianity, and then at 19 when I was introduced to Hinduism. Both experiences were good for me, as I learned to pray and meditate. However, I never dealt with two important issues: One that I was a pothead, and that I needed to come to grips with what it meant to be addicted. And two, I was a survivor of sexual and emotional abuse, and needed to start facing difficult feelings.

I got worse as my responsibilities increased and as I ignored my addiction and the childhood abuse. I smoked pot before work, at the morning break, at lunch, after work, before dinner, after dinner, during the evening, and before bed. I smoked at home, in the car, in parking lots, in parks, in friends' and relatives' backyards, wherever I could. I'd do anything to get marijuana, including prostitution, and spent all my money, getting into major debt.

In the end, I usually smoked alone. I was a slave to marijuana.

I experienced a bottom. All at once, I lost my job, my married

lover of four years, and my residence. I hated my life. I was ready for a change. I reached out for help. I enrolled in a drug treatment program. After three months of trying to stay clean with minimal success, I agreed to go to MA.

Right away I felt comfortable. I met people who actually smoked more than me, which I thought was impossible. I heard people's stories and figured if they could do it, so could I. They told me to do it one day at a time. They told me to call other potheads. I called others in the program and would go out for breakfast and dinner with them. They told me to get a sponsor and work the steps and I did.

Today, I go to meetings regularly, at least three a week. I go to different 12 Step programs to help me with my substance abuse and other addictive issues, like relationships. I have learned a lot from each program I've attended. First, I focused on getting clean from pot, second from alcohol, third from relationships and sex, fourth from spending too much money, and fifth from using food. I'm still working on all five, particularly the last three.

The main thing is to be honest with myself, my higher power, and the people in my life. I meditate and pray daily. With the help of my sponsor, I work the steps on daily. I practice yoga and take regular walks to help me stay balanced physically. I have a relationship today that is mostly good—nurturing and loving.

Life is better, just like they said it would be five years ago. I held on to their hope, like a drowning person holds on to a life raft. Life is difficult and stressful, but there's much more joy, peace, and meaning today than there was when I was

out there. Now, I make it better with the help of my higher power, my sponsor, my fellows in MA, and my partner.

I used to dream of running away. I needed an escape—from my childhood home, from my family, from myself. Today, I'm creating a life and home where I feel welcomed. A life I can live and breathe in. Welcome home. ☉

### One Day At A Time

Patient present, not awaiting  
the big bang.  
The universe arose ages past,  
so long ago, sometime today,  
this very second in delight  
brighter than the blinding  
implacable stars  
ready to release us from waiting.

—David H., District 8

### And This Is Coffee

*Continued from Page 1*

completely devoid of spirit. The steps have helped me in my search for a God I can understand. It's a long journey, but one where I am now confident that I can find some answers. Through the steps I have been more open to alternative ways of thinking about God and spirit. I have exposed myself and taken part in events and ceremonies that before entering the program I would have most likely rejected.

Aside from sobriety, I think the greatest gift of the program for me is a sense of hope for the future. This is the one thing I needed in my life. Although I have really just begun (I recently celebrated my first sober birthday), I know with work all things are possible. Through the steps, this is what I have come to know and believe. ☉

## A Life This Good

Continued from Page 2

better life, and being able to go after that life...from hiding in the bathroom to get high, while my child knocked at the door, to playing endlessly with that blessing in my life. Without MA I would have been sitting in my bathroom smoking my life away—not able to see the blessings that were being given to me.

I have completed my step work. I apply those steps in every aspect of my life, asking myself the steps as questions to evaluate a situation. I want to say that I have gotten some mixed feelings about my going through the steps in four months: that maybe I did them too fast, not thoroughly enough, not understanding them fully. My sponsor tells me that I should not let that bother me. That I've done the work, that she was there. To let it go.

Another friend with nine years of sobriety pointed out Dr. Bob's story in the AA Big Book. I feel good that I have done my first "go-round" of my step work. I will be doing them again and again if I intend to stay sober—and I do. It is now a way of life.

So for anyone who comes to MA and decides to "get busy," don't let anyone tell you that you're moving too fast. Do the work, reap the rewards, change your life, change your thoughts from negative to positive. Rid yourself of as much pain and resentment as you possibly can. I guarantee you there will be riches beyond compare. ☉

# Keep It Simple

## Quote of the Month

*"Higher Power" means different things to different people. To some of us, it is a God of an organized religion; to others, it is a state of being commonly called spirituality. Some of us believe in no deity; a Higher Power may be the strength gained from being a part of, and caring for, a community of others. There is room in MA for all beliefs. We do not proselytize any particular view or religion.*

—Life With Hope, Step Two [page 7]

## MA WORLDWIDE...

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>SAN FRANCISCO (District 1)</b><br>P.O. Box 460024<br>San Francisco, CA 94146<br>(415) 522-7373            | <b>L.A. COUNTY, NORTH (District 6)</b><br>P.O. Box 2433<br>Van Nuys, CA 91404<br>(818) 759-9194                    | <b>NEW YORK (District 8)</b><br>P.O. Box 507<br>New York, NY 10276<br>(212) 459-4423                                |
| <b>EAST BAY (District 2)</b><br>P.O. Box 8354<br>Berkeley, CA 94707<br>(510) 287-8873                        | <b>L.A. COUNTY, SOUTH (District 7)</b><br>P.O. Box 3012<br>Culver City, CA 90231<br>(213) 964-2370                 | <b>PORTLAND, OREGON (District 11)</b><br>P.O. Box 14125<br>Portland, OR 97293<br>(503) 221-7007                     |
| <b>SOUTH BAY (District 3)</b><br>P.O. Box 111341<br>Campbell, CA 95011<br>(408) 450-0796                     | <b>L.A. COUNTY, EAST (District 10)</b><br>P.O. Box 94400<br>Pasadena, CA 91109<br>(909) 787-6020<br>(626) 583-9582 | <b>HUMBOLDT, CA AREA</b><br>(707) 443-5928  |
| <b>SEATTLE (District 4)</b><br>P.O. Box 1509<br>539 Queen Anne Ave. N<br>Seattle, WA 98109<br>(206) 548-9034 | <b>ORANGE COUNTY (District 5)</b><br>358 S. Main #215<br>Orange, CA 92668<br>(714) 999-9409                        | <b>EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER</b><br>P.O. Box 194<br>Sadsburyville, PA 19369<br>(610) 622-9243                    |
| <b>SANTA CRUZ (District 9)</b><br>P.O. Box 3196<br>Santa Cruz, CA 95063<br>(408) 427-4088                    |  | <b>NEW ZEALAND</b><br>MA Service Centre<br>P.O. Box 74-386<br>Newmarket<br>Auckland 3, New Zealand<br>(09) 846-6822 |

### WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

P.O. Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404 ■ (800) 766-6779

Marijuana Anonymous World Wide Web

<http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>

email: [info@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:info@marijuana-anonymous.org)