

# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

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## Attempting to Find the Words by Ralph O.

Ralph here, grateful recovering pothead,

Tomorrow marks my one-year anniversary free from pot and I could not be sharing at a better time than today. I got back from the convention last night and words could not even begin to describe the feelings I felt at that convention. But I am going to attempt to describe them anyway since I would really like to encourage others to make it next year. I also learned some very good lessons.

The feelings started the minute I got to the hotel and met Carol (MotherMA). When I said my name was Ralph, she asked "RalphieOB??" and gave me a great big hug. From there I stopped at the hospitality suite on my way to my room to take a nap (it was a long trip) where I met Jerry P. Now, mind you, Jerry was the first I met online and was there for me a year ago in MAOL helping me SO much to know that I was not alone anymore. There was another GREAT big hug and a feeling of euphoria to meet this man in the flesh who had only existed as typing on my screen.

After my nap, I was fortunate not to miss Carol's speech (thank you Deb). What an

inspiring speech it was. Again, she made everyone feel like they were "not alone" anymore when she described her story of searching for the bud on the floor and then smoking what was really a spider. (I'm sure I smoked a spider or two in my day, God knows I certainly smoked lots of carpet fuzz).

Then came the most powerful moment of the weekend -- the face to face meeting of our pipeliners. I could go on an on about that meeting but just let me tell you, and for those of you who were there know what I am talking about when I say that you could feel a strong sense of a higher power very active in that room as we shared our "feelings", from where we came from to where each of us were at that moment. Even the people who were not part of the pipeline that were there described an unbelievable feeling in that room. The most powerful share there, for me, was our "surprise guest" (yes, a pipeliner) who shared their story with us and it was at that point that I knew this was my family, in a sense, a family of potheads who I will always have a connection with and who will always be a part of me and who I am. I felt blessed

that Jerry asked me to qualify and he was SO right when he introduced me and said that when I first came to MAOL I was "wound up rather tightly." What a difference one year has made for me.

The rest of the convention was also great, meeting many people from around the country who shared the same silly "spider-like" stories and how they were able to stay clean 24 hours at a time.

The convention ended on a REALLY high note for me. I got to spend the day at the beach with one of our pipeliners and we went on a ride appropriately called "Chaos." That certainly described my life one year ago today. After saying my good-byes to all the pipeliners and all my NEW family members, I got to return to the beach (continued on next page)

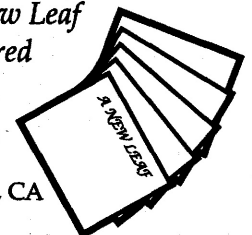
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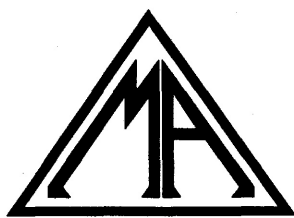
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## A NEW LEAF

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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## Attempting... continued

for dinner and a bonfire meeting.

What was really powerful about the last night was that I did not know ANY of these people before Sunday night. I had seen some of them during the convention, but none of them were pipeliners or people I had taken the time to get to know. After dinner I knew half of them fairly well (about seven of them) and after the meeting around the bonfire I got a hug, a REALLY strong hug, from each and every one of them before we parted, hoping to see each other again the following year. I got email addresses and phone numbers from almost all of them, more than I had gotten all weekend. There was something very spiritual about the ocean waves, the crackling of the fire, and people sharing

honestly about how "grateful" they were. I was certainly grateful at that moment. At no other time in my life could I imagine traveling 3000 miles to meet people I had never met face to face before and get REAL hugs from them as well as strangers I just met who wanted to hear from me as soon as I got back home.

Whew...I got chills just describing that to all of you.

Just want to thank all of you who made it and for making my trip SO worth it. I look forward to seeing some of the people I've met join our pipeline family to share their experience, strength, and hope.

Okay, okay, I'll shut up now...

Thanks for listening!

(to be a part of the recovery pipeline, email [recovery-pipeline-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:recovery-pipeline-subscribe@egroups.com))

## Solstice Morning by Jeff M.

The other day, as a friend celebrated their ninth birthday, I listened to them share why they got sober around the holidays. "...because that is when my Higher Power though it was the right time."

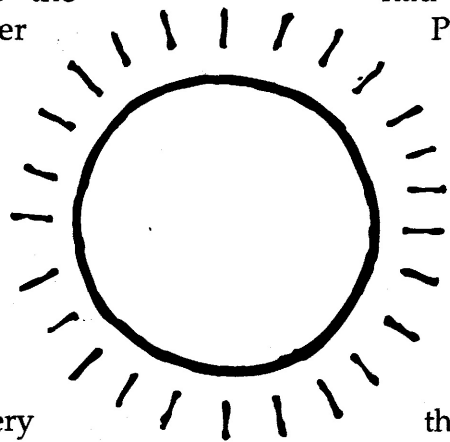
For some of us, it isn't when we decided to quit, it is when our higher power decides, for we had long ago lost the power to control our using. We had become powerless over Marijuana. I had wanted to quit long before my Higher Power intervened in my life and gave me little choice except to stop

smoking. Yes, I had a choice. I could keep smoking and change a large part of my life: lose my job, my house, my car; or I could try to stop smoking. Like most addicts, I hate change, so trying to stop smoking was, I thought, the smallest change and the easiest choice of the two. I found out later that it wasn't the easiest, just the single best thing I have ever done in my life, thanks to my Higher Power.

For me, achieving my first 30 days of sobriety around the holidays was perfect. My life was

# Solstice continued

so chaotic from having to go the out-patient meetings 5 nights a week, helping my daughter with the birth of her daughter, my granddaughter, who has two days sobriety on me, and Christmas, I didn't have time to smoke. I wanted to very much, but I just didn't have time. The next thing I knew, the holidays were over and I had somehow accomplished 30 days of sobriety. However, it wasn't that simple,



nor that easy. Something happened to me during that 30 days that made it all possible: I had found a Higher Power. My Higher Power had been there all along, I just didn't know it. It took the winter solstice for me to see my Higher Power in action. It took the solstice for me to see how blessed I was and how grateful I should be.

Many years ago, not too long after I had started smoking, I was lying in bed, high, listening to a radio program

about the winter solstice. The program talked about how the Hopi Indians prayed and had a big festival every year at the winter solstice. They prayed for the Sun to stop his southward journey and return to them. It went on to say that they have been doing this for as long as anyone can remember. Being a typical teenager who thought I knew everything, I thought to myself, "that is just a bunch of superstitious nonsense, science says that the Sun moves back and forth throughout the year because of the earth's axial tilt, and rotation around the sun." It was as if the announcer on the radio could hear me for he next said, "True,

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 Dean S. 2/1/90 10 yrs.  
 James S. 2/8/98 2 yrs.  
 Kevin G. 2/23/94 6 yrs.

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Diana F. 12/21/94 5 yrs

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Ron "Gardner" 11/5/95 4 yrs.  
 Meridith K. 11/5/91 8 yrs.  
 Lisa S. 12/7/93 6 yrs.  
 Gary R. 12/20/90 9 yrs.  
 Sandy P. 1/3/94 6 yrs.  
 Sue "Tracker" 1/5/96 4 yrs.

Mike L.B. 1/10/87 13 yrs.  
 Cigar Matt 1/13/88 12 yrs  
 Melody W. 1/16/89 11 yrs  
 Dave G. 1/20/92 8 yrs.  
 Barbara G. 1/20/92 8 yrs.  
 Rick B. 2/1/89 11 yrs.  
 Papa Joe 2/1/93 7 yrs.  
 Eric M. 2/1/93 7 yrs.  
 Moonshot Ben 2/4/94 6 yrs.  
 Victoria C. 2/5/95 5 yrs.  
 Hiking Mike 2/6/88 12 yrs.  
 Billy B. 2/13/93 7 yrs.  
 Mike B. 2/18/94 6 yrs.  
 Hal "coholic" N. 2/26/91 9 yrs  
 Randy P. 2/27/93 7 yrs.

### District 6

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 George B. 2/6/88 12yrs.  
 Janelle A. 2/7/95 5yrs.  
 Steve G. 2/8/92 8yrs.  
 Dan Z. 2/14/93 7yrs.  
 Margaret F. 2/24/91 9yrs.  
 Terry G. 2/24/88 12yrs.  
 Robert S. 2/25/99 1year!

### District 8

Sam L. 11/26/98 1 year!  
 Gary B. 1/1/98 2 yrs  
 Eddie P. 1/24/99 1 year!

## Solstice continued

science states that the Winter Solstice is a natural phenomenon with a rational explanation, just like the fact that the sun rises every morning. However, the Hopi Indians have been praying for the return of the Sun for centuries, so are you so sure that it will return if they stop?" That put just enough doubt in my zoned-out, marijuana-fogged brain that the Winter Solstice has always been a special day for me. Just in case.

During my first 30 days, the solstice became even more special. I have always felt that Native Americans have a special spiritual connection with nature and here I was starting my spiritual journey. Therefore, the Winter Solstice was a perfect time to celebrate the start of this journey of mine. This first time, I got up before the sun, dressed very warm, as it was a cold Southern California morning, (44 °, and with a cup of hot coffee in my hand, I sat waiting to make sure the sun rose and hadn't traveled any farther south. As it rose, I was impressed by the beauty of the dawning day. The black despair of the night sky slowly turned a weak, insipid blue, then a deep, heartwarming blue. The clouds obscuring the horizon turned from a deep, dark, foreboding mass of an unknown future into the harlequin pink of the past, then to the white innocence of purity all fluffy and loving, a perfect present for the day. That morning I became grateful for my addiction. Because of it, I

was now able to sit and watch a morning and feel. Because of my addiction, I knew the difference between what I was feeling at that moment, joy, and the deep, black depression that I had been feeling. Depression born of waking up knowing that the last thing I wanted to do was get high, and then the incomprehensible demoralization of knowing that it would be the first thing I did. I also knew that now, being sober, I had my first true opportunity to satisfy a boyhood dream, the dream to write. As soon as the sun had risen, as soon as the sun had cleared the foggy bank of my brain, I went to my computer and started writing. I wrote a very long poem, which I call 'The Promise'. Just a few days ago, in anticipation of this up coming Winter Solstice, my third sober one I wrote this short poem:

Cold cobalt blue sky  
 phiery Phoenix sunrise  
 On this luminescent winter  
 solstice

Glorious rebirth amidst  
 the esoterically obscure  
 dearth of winter  
 where phoenix fires  
 consume the night  
 and life conquers death.

That is how I feel, that life can conquer death, that I can, through the principles of this program and the grace of God conquer the death of addiction one day at a time, one sunrise at a time.



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