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# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

## Happy, Joyous & Free by Mary M.

It was springtime, 1995 and 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 \$200.00 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 but I was scared. I was not using, I was white knuckling it. It was awful. But finally I got up enough courage to go.

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 (1996). 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, but after moving I just felt lost. But I made myself go to another meeting here and I found that these people were wonderful too. I still miss the people from the other meeting, but the message is the same.

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, having fun and be clean and sober. Some days are a struggle and I just pray and ask God to show me the way.

## To Drink or Not to Drink, that is the Question -- Isn't it?

In district 8 we have an email share that encourages us to have an ongoing dialogue about anything and everything affecting our lives, sobriety and recovery. It also enables myself and others to stay connected to our home district, even though living miles away.

For the past month we have been engaging in healthy debate about what constitutes sobriety for us, as marijuana addicts. This discussion seems to surface at least once a year. Realizing this must not be unique to us, I thought I would share that part of my story with you.

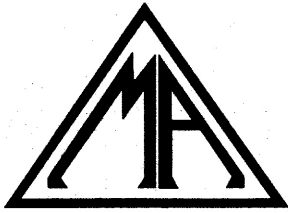
I quit smoking pot on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000, continuing to have an occasional cocktail. I was not, am not an alcoholic, and did not abuse that substance, with few exceptions, in my life. I could leave half a glass of wine, not have a second. Go for weeks without.

I didn't come into the rooms right away. It took me nine months of white knuckling it through self-righteous indignation. When I finally did come to MA, I didn't realize that I was not supposed to drink, and then take chips. When I later did "get it," I was pissed. I was a marijuana addict, in the rooms to stay free of pot. What on earth did that have to do with a glass of wine? Not being an alcoholic, I didn't understand the point of stopping. It made me angry. Just because a bunch of potheads were cross-addicted to alcohol why should I change my life?

I didn't get a sponsor, work the steps and I wasn't happy. I brought up my "drinking" to a friend in the program one day and was shocked to discover that he shared the same secret. He felt that I should adopt the "don't ask, don't tell," as long as I stayed true to my own sobriety, which for me meant abstaining from pot. I fought that, feeling that MA had taught me to be honest. I hadn't lied about anything in the "rooms," and I didn't want to start. I had also learned that omission could be just as dishonest as a straight-ahead untruth. Feeling a bit braver, I began speaking of it at meetings, hoping to change the expectation for those of us whose issues were different. Nine months later, eighteen months after stopping to smoke pot, I pushed through a vote in my home group (Friday Night Meeting,) to allow chips for pot sobriety.

With the "rules" ambiguous, it meant that those of us who really didn't have a problem with alcohol could remain social drinkers. The difficulty came in the example it set for people who perhaps did not have that luxury. Without the discipline of total abstinence, they might,

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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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31 states

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somewhere along the line, falter, and fall back. I wondered if my quest wasn't selfish.

About the same time, I began attending an AA Writing Sober meeting and felt like such a fake. I never had a drink before those meetings and was able to share, but I felt like I was "cheating." A few of us MA gals attended a couple of AA women's meetings and they decided they didn't want us there. I was furious.

I found a temporary sponsor willing to take me as I was, and began to work the steps. My life started to change. I began to feel joy, to open my heart and mind. Wanting to be of service, and give back what had so generously been given to me, I became frustrated by how little I could do without total sobriety. I was told that "I could only keep it (recovery,) if I gave it away." After a lifetime of feeling like an outsider, I wanted to be on equal footing with everybody else, play by the same rules (suggestions,) and stop doing it my way. I was learning the benefit of listening, conforming, and "acting as if."

If my primary purpose is to help the marijuana addict who still suffers, how could I do that if I continued to drink? I cannot be high and sober at the same time. How might I influence a vulnerable newcomer, who might be cross-addicted? I dropped my guard and surrendered. Since drinking meant little to me, it should not have been a big hardship to give it up. Sometimes it is. I resent that I can't have a red wine with pasta or a margarita with a burrito. I have been to weddings, parties, BBQ's, dinners and sometimes (often) questioned the wisdom of my decision. But then I look at my life today.

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## The Roving Reporter

For January, the Roving Reporter asks, "How do you stay humble through life's challenges? How do you work the 7th step?"

### How do you stay humble through life's challenges?

I call my sponsor a lot...or I face the humiliation of repeating the same behaviors because I still sometimes do it "my way" vs HP's way. Being of service, especially with newcomers, keeps me the most humble because it reminds me where I came from and where I do not want to return.

### How do you work the 7th step?

Funny little story/analogy about 7th step: I used to "smack" gum just to piss my mom off...she would inevitably slap me for doing so. Sooo, the 7th step teaches me that if I want to keep from getting slapped, I need to change my behavior. Of course old habits die hard...that is where I humbly ask god to remove my shortcomings/behavior, because I alone am incapable of restraining from the urge to piss my mom off one more time. Let's just say, I have not been slapped for a long time, and mom and I have a pretty good relationship today (even with gum in my mouth, hee hee). *Trisa, District 11*

For March, the Roving Reporter asks, "What is living life on life's terms?"



**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Marijuana Anonymous Convention**  
**March 3-5, 2006**  
**Burbank, California**

Hotel: Call the Burbank Hilton at 800-840-6450 to make room reservations. Ask for Marijuana Anonymous Convention to get the group rate. Please reserve your room early. Room rates are: \$104 single or double occupancy; \$114 Triple; \$124 Quad.

Parking is \$8 per day, and hotel guests get "in and out" privileges.

Registration: Registration for both the hotel and the convention begins on March 3 at 3:00 p.m. The convention ends on March 5 at 3:00 p.m. Further registration information will be sent with your confirmation and can be found on our website.

Transportation: Burbank Airport is directly across the street from the Hilton with a free shuttle. Burbank train station is 7 minutes away. LAX is at minimum 45 minutes away. District 6 will provide transportation if necessary.

You will get confirmation of registration by February along with inquiry for your need of transportation to and from airport/train station. **Each person needs a separate registration form.** Forms are available in A New Leaf or at [www.ma2006.com](http://www.ma2006.com)

\*\*\*Registrations postmarked on or before January 1 receive an opportunity to win two nights free in the Presidential Suite at the Burbank Hilton. Winner will be notified in January.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need transportation? \_\_\_\_\_

	Cost	Amount Due
Registration (includes Workshops and Hospitality Room)	\$20 before 1/1/06 \$25 after 1/1/06	
Banquet (Chicken / Fish / Vegan) **circle one**	\$40	
Dance	\$5	
Package Deal (Registration, Banquet, and Dance)	\$60 before 1/1/06 \$65 after 1/1/06	
Opportunity drawing tickets	\$1 each	
	Total amount due	

Make check or money order payable to *M.A. District 6* and mail to:

M.A. District 6 / P.O. Box 2433 / Van Nuys, CA 91404 Note: Checks will be cashed on the first Friday of every month ONLY. For questions, call Rachel at 909-730-8651, email [rachybaby@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rachybaby@sbcglobal.net), or visit [www.ma2006.com](http://www.ma2006.com)

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For so long a guilty, self-loathing user, I have learned to say I'm sorry, to stay on my own side of the street (sometimes,) to be of service and show up for people, even when I don't want to (sometimes.) I have amended for the lying, cheating, stealing from my past. I go to sleep at night with clear conscience knowing that I still make mistakes constantly, but at least now I right the wrongs, instead of justifying them. My life is not perfect, but I am comfortable in my skin for the first time in my fifty-year life. I am even slowly, very slowly, learning that I don't need applause all of the time. In fact, I find that when I do things anonymously (still rarely,) the rewards are HUGE. Humility? Hum.....working on it....so hard for me.

I still suffer....I still ache....I still worry....but I do so less, and get out of it quicker. I wouldn't trade that miracle for the saltiest, most ice-cube laden, perfect margarita. We are each responsible for our own recovery. Whether we choose to abstain from all mood and mind-altering substances is between us, and our higher power (and hopefully our sponsor.) I strive not to judge, always a Herculean effort for me.

Total sobriety has changed my life far more than quitting smoking did. Thank you for teaching me that, for suggesting it. Thank you too for my occasional genuine happiness, and my ongoing self-challenge to do better, be better.

by Vicki A.



## BIRTHDAYS



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 5

Melody W.	1/16/89	17 years
Tony R.	1/01/03	3 years
Alissa	1/27/04	2 years
Brent	1/01/05	1 year!
Hal	2/26/91	15 years
Papa Joe	2/26/93	13 years
Peter S.	2/17/99	7 years
Bea	2/04/00	6 years

### District 7

Pam	1/03/05	1 year!
Mel A.	1/17/04	2 years
Greg A.	1/03/03	3 years
Rob H.	12/30/00	5 years
Vaiss	1/99	7 years
Debra M.	1/03/95	11 years
Dan O.	1/01/91	15 years
Frank	1/88	18 years
Mike LB	1/10/87	19 years

### District 11

Su S.	1/26/05	1 year!
Carlin C.	1/26/04	2 years
Trisa A.	2/01/96	10 years
Jeff F.	2/01/99	7 years
Harry H.	2/04/87	19 years
Rick V.	2/08/03	3 years
Dave C.	2/22/02	4 years
Paul G.	2/26/00	6 years

### District 12

Jim H.	1/27/03	2 years
Mark V.C.	1/17/01	5 years
Sammy	1/25/05	1 year!

### Cambridge, MA

Dean A.	2/14/004	2 years
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**Celebrating 207 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**