



# A NEW LEAF

March 1995

Volume 5 • No. 3

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

## The Price I Had To Pay For My Recovery

by Stephen S., Dist.7

I recently celebrated my 5th anniversary in the Fellowship, free from marijuana and all other substances which might alter me from the neck on up. While I am convinced I now know a lot at this stage of my Sobriety, I keep hearing more will be revealed. What I do know so far is that this Recovery has not come without its price. I decided to write about some of the "sacrifices" I have had to make since coming to the Program:

1. *The unlimited feeling of aimless, meaningless wandering, coupled by the complete lack of knowledge of what to do with my life.* In their place is a gnawing sense of purpose about what I find myself doing, accompanied by the growing suspicion I am somehow making steady progress in the direction of that purpose.

2. *The utter insanity of wanting a fix, not wanting a fix, then inevitably using the substance, all the while realizing none of it was a good thing for me to do.* That has been replaced by a sense of serenity and well-being that I will be doomed to comfortably cope with whatever happens to me in this lifetime.

3. *The freedom(?) of not thinking, or even being able to care at all, about what was beyond what I could experience through the common five senses.* This has been totally botched up by a feeling of spirituality and divinity which causes me to ponder and relish the larger question of life and the lessons I have come to enjoy thinking about.

4. *The great frustration of wanting to do it all, immediately, then not knowing where to start, then realizing I couldn't possibly do it all perfectly,*

*with the final and total solution of doing absolutely nothing.* I am now stuck with the notion I get to do just what lies in front of me, fully satisfied with whatever I do manage to accomplish, remembering that it's all OK no matter what, because it's about progress and not perfection.

5. *The sensation of isolation which*

*kept me very distant from everyone (who had all actually stopped wanting to be with me anyway), spending my time alone with my ever-trusty TV and bong.* Now I am condemned to meetings and sober friends who have loved me from the start, and who only want to see me happy and fulfilled.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Pain And Process, A Goodbye To Ken

by Sheila F., Dist.2

We didn't get to say goodbye to Ken, so I'm doing it on paper.

He had a sweetness about him. He came to us full of hope, and pain. He told his story, made friends, went to a residential treatment program, and came to lots of MA meetings.

I suppose it's breaking his anonymity to talk about anything he said at an actual meeting, but he said things to me after Chinese food on Grand Avenue that a group of us went to. He smiled with his eyes, and told me about liking the Grateful Dead. He knew all the details of Jerry Garcia's latest escapades. He was on to the Wharf Rats (12-Step meetings at Dead Concerts).

I liked Ken. He left us after sinking into a kind of mysterious despair--not that it is odd to feel sad and full of pain marbled with joy and struggle. But, it seemed unusual to me how very bad it got for him near the end. He was living in his van. It had been raining a lot and all that rain came in from the outside. I guess he must have had his own personal, private rain on the inside too.

Working Steps 1, 2 and 3 on this:

1. Being Powerless--Could I have made a difference? I don't know. What I do know is that I have problems setting boundaries, and that I also have guilt about not being able to save a fellow

human being. I am powerless over the outcome of my actions.

2. Came to believe--I am coming to believe that I can be restored to sanity. This entails acknowledging that I am not sane in the first place. (When others suffer, I just can't stand it.) My Higher Power is present when I am in a meeting, and sometimes when I sit very still and listen. I'm like a radio with an antenna. I have to orient myself a certain way to get the spiritual music without the static.

3. Turn it over--Can I turn my life and my will over to my higher power? Not yet. I need to grieve. This is a battle for me. I have a hard time being real about my sorrow, because I have a habit of stuffing it down into my body, to put on a brave face. It gets stuck in my throat trying to escape. I wonder, if I

*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.

Editors  
Rob M.  
Carol Mc.

District 1 Bureau Chief: Joanne A.  
District 2 Bureau Chief: Sheila F.  
District 3 Bureau Chief: Richard A.  
District 4 Bureau Chief: George T.  
District 5 Bureau Chiefs: Az & Ben  
District 6 Bureau Chief: Joellen J.  
District 7 Bureau Chief: Teri A.  
District 8 Bureau Chief: Carl P.

Published by  
A New Leaf Editorial Board

Patricia G., chairman  
Loren N., treasurer  
George B.

Send all articles, inquiries and  
correspondence to:

A NEW LEAF  
P.O. Box 4314  
North Hollywood, CA 91607

Fax No.  
(818) 907-5947

Editorial Phone Nos.  
(818) 708-0717  
(818) 505-1408

Copyright 1995 • Marijuana Anonymous

## A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship Questions Asked at The First MA Convention....

*What qualities should one look for in a potential sponsor?*

**Todd E., Dist. 7, 1 yr. 5 mos.**

Someone who: walks their talk; has completed the 12 Steps; is a good listener; is *honest* with themselves, and with you; is humble and grateful; returns phone calls(!); is gladly, and often, of service; is patient with you as they guide you through the Steps; knows their own strong and weak points; is playful and has a sense of humor; is ultra-capable of loving and being loved; and is not afraid of rolling their sleeves up and getting dirty in the trenches. In other words, someone who has what I want!

**Joanne A., Dist. 1,  
4 yrs. 9 mos.**

For myself, I sat at meetings for quite a while before I found myself identifying with anyone. I was told that I needed to pick someone who had something that I wanted. Well, what I wanted was a sparkle in my eyes. And today - I have it!

**Bob H., Dist. 2, 4 years**

They have "what I want". They are the same sex, and usually older. They walk the walk. Their program looks to me like it's got stuff in it that I need. They are a good listener. They tell the truth.

**Jonathan R., Dist. 7, 2 yrs. 11 mos.**

Someone that: has worked ALL 12 Steps; has what you want; not only talks the talk, but walks the walk; will take you through the 12 Steps, will tell you what you NEED to hear, which might not always be what you *want* to hear.

*What does the concept of "God's Will" mean to you?*

**Tom W., Dist. 3, 4 years**

I would ask my sponsor what God's will for me was. He would reply, "To be 'Happy, Joyous, and Free'. It's in The Book on

page 133." To which I would reply, "Yeah but what does He want me to do?" Today, I realize what my sponsor meant. Today, I get to be Happy, Joyous, and Free - when I am doing God's will for me, and my choice, on a daily basis, is to accept or reject His will for me.

**Jack D., Dist. 6, 6 months**

The direction God takes us is based on the way we live our lives, sometimes giving us hints to get on the right track when we are stupid or get lost.

**Todd E., Dist. 7, 1 yr. 5 mos.**

God's will, to me, is the course that my life is supposed to take. Not necessarily the way I want to do things, but the way that it does just naturally happen. My ego is strong and my disease had run amok, but sobriety has helped me to let go, to not fight the course

of things, to check my ego at the door. God's will is my disease. God's will is MA. God's will is letting go, getting out of the way, and letting my Higher (my Highest) Power work through me.

*How do you "Get out of self"?*

**Joyce M., Dist. 6, 4 yrs. 5 mos.**

I try to be of service to fellow addicts, or other human beings in my community. Sometimes it takes the form of helping my daughters work through problems, sometimes it's volunteering at church, but most often it's reaching out to another addict. There are always people who have a need for me to focus on them rather than my selfish self.

**Bob H., Dist. 2, 4 years**

It doesn't happen so often that I have a good answer. Yes, it's a "we" program, but I still have an "I" disease. Working the 11th Step helps, and so does service. In meetings when I truly identify with "the other", I often get out self.

## The Roving Reporter

# Paying The Price of Recovery

*Continued From Page 1*


6. *The mercenary pleasure of hoarding my stuff, keeping everything I owned and knew all to myself; my pride of ownership embellished by the steady realization that everything was dwindling right before my eyes.* I find I am now sharing everything I have. The strangest part of this is that my supply never seems to lessen. The more I give the more I get, especially when it comes to the most valuable commodity of all - Love.

7. *The lowest self-esteem imaginable, knowing that I was simply not good enough to do anything or have anyone good in my life.* My self-esteem has been damned to a steady incline, and I'm totally mystified because that was never the focus of my attention. Instead of acquiring all the goods and people I was convinced would make me feel better about myself, I got distracted by spending time working on my own insides.

8. *Spending my days the way I thought I wanted, never having to be anywhere, never expected by anyone; many days checking out altogether and continuing my experiments to achieve the highest (most anesthetized?) drug-state I could discover.* Now, in spite of myself, I find I have a responsible job in the real world, with regular reviews of satisfactory performance and minimal problems about getting along with my co-workers. I even suspect that I am getting to serve some greater good than just earning my salary.

9. *My truly astonishing memory and attention span.* Used to be, I could go to the movies and instantly free my brain of any burden of having to remember anything about the film whatsoever. I could forget things in my life as quickly as they occurred, like right in the middle of a conversation with a friend. I notice today that I am present wherever I am. And - I am missing out on all that senility I thought was coming my way long before its time!

10. *I have definitely lost a sense of achievement. Though I hadn't done much, whatever I did do, I knew for*


*certain I was responsible for it all.* That entire idea has gotten obliterated by an "attitude of gratitude" that everything I now have, or know, has been freely given to me by my fellows. And there's also been a whole lot freely given by Somebody I can't see. I can't even figure this Somebody out. I just have the innate awareness that it's Some Power greater than myself. I don't know how to say thank you, except to maybe stay sober one day more and perhaps help another addict, or alcoholic, or just some person that I may come across along the way. 

## A Goodbye

*Continued From Page 1*

do turn it over, will I sob? Will it be like flowing down a river on a tiny boat, going with the current instead of trying to paddle upstream? So far, I've only been able to cry in a meeting, and that was a great blessing. Thanks, HP.

And how do I make my amends? How do I change my own behavior? I think I'm going to reach out more. I'll use the phone and spend more time with newcomers after meetings.

Ken, I've heard a lot of people say they loved you and miss you. I certainly do. I wish there had been something I could have done, but for now, I'll just say, goodbye. 

## Bulletin Board

DISTRICT 5 - Pizza Party - March 25, 8 p.m., 6191 Ball Road (corner of Juanita) in Cypress. \* Garage Sale - April 8 & 9. Contributions can be stored at Willy R's (714) 557-7407. Sale is at Al & Aleta's, 7772 19th Street, Westminster. \* Talent No-Talent Show coming up the end of April. For talent sign-up, call Hope (714) 533-8820.

DISTRICT 6 - The Yard Sale netted exactly \$700 for the Conference Fund. Yes, being compulsive, a couple of members did donate a couple of dollars and some change to make it even.

DEAL OF THE WEEK - [From the Brattleboro (Vt.) Reformer] BRATTLEBORO - The Police Department has found a bag of marijuana on Cotton Mill Hill. Anyone wishing to claim this property may do so by contacting the Police Department.

## Thought For The Month

"A clear light seems to fall upon us all - when we open our eyes. Since our blindness is caused by our own defects, we must first deeply realize what they are. Constructive meditation is the first requirement for each new step in our spiritual growth"

*Bill W. - As Bill Sees It*

## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Carol G.	Jan.05	5 Years
God Dan A.	Mar.01	2 Years
Dave V.	Mar.02	3 Years
Karie M.	Mar.15	5 Years
Eugene A.	Mar.17	1 Year
Janet R.	Mar.17	7 Years
Nicole	Mar.18	1 Year
Gary D.	Mar.19	2 Years
Carol Ann M.	Mar.22	5 Years
Becky T.	Mar.23	3 Years
Peter	Mar.24	3 Years
Buffalo Soldier Mike C.	Mar.25	2 Years
Steve M.	Mar.27	6 Years

## Santa Cruz Diary


by Anonymous

Last January 13, 14, and 15th a lot of "different" people, yet the "same", all gathered round to be a part of history in the making. There were over 100 recovering addicts from Oregon, Washington, and California. All wanting to experience Unity, Recovery, and Spirituality. At the opening meeting, Father Tom was great! He filled the room with laughter and hope. After the meeting, we rushed off for dinner, either with well-known friends, or with new ones we had just met. The weekend was just starting and I was already feeling grateful. I also got to take part in a late night meeting with four other recovering addicts. What a great way to end the day!

The alarm went off much too early on day two, yet I found myself thanking God on my way downstairs for breakfast. Our Saturday morning speaker, Karen, was a barrel of laughs and truly inspirational. Everyone seemed at home. With the ocean outside our window and rain on the roof, our spirits were higher than ever.

We then started a day full of workshops and fellowship. The atmosphere was happy; some would say "joyous and free". We learned a lot about health, love, dreams, and the Steps. But most of all, we came away with a sense of Unity.

As the night rolled around, we all got dressed up for the Murder Mystery Party. There were colonels and reporters, gangsters and sluts. We all played our parts with a smile. The play ended around 11:00, but most of us were wide awake. A lot of us changed clothes and met upstairs for more, impromptu late night meetings. At the one I attended there were sixteen members all from different districts. Different, yet the same.

Sunday morning, and the last meeting, came too soon. I didn't want it to end, but the convention was winding down. I had learned a lot of good stuff and met a lot of new friends. But most of all, I realized, as an addict, I am not alone. We may be different, but we are all still the same! 

## The Nightmare Meeting

by Anonymous (Too)

I had a dream the other day. I dreamt that I was in a 12-Step meeting. I quickly felt there was something very wrong about the meeting. There was an evil present. I felt anxious.

Some people ambled about without focus while others moved restlessly through the room, disturbed looks on their faces. Still others sat alone, uninterested. No one was speaking or leading the meeting and very few were listening or paying attention. Confusion and fear seemed to be spreading through the room and I had an urgent need to get out while I could.


Then I was struck by a flash of insight. The evil fed upon our fear. I urged people to have faith in one another. "We need to have hope," I implored. "Truth and love will destroy our fear."

The excitement spread and just as quickly the meeting was transformed. All the people thanked me, and I felt empowered.

After I awoke, I dismissed the dream as a peculiar bit of melodrama. It wasn't until I was sitting in my next meeting that I could find a personal lesson in it.

The dream meeting represented my recovery. The people were my thoughts and feelings. Their anxiety and distraction were my own feelings, externalized. Their apathy was my own flirtation with danger. And that flash of inspiration was my Higher Power speaking to me.

If I have fears or doubts about some particular phase of my recovery, I need to practice faith and hope. If I allow myself to indulge my apathy, or worse, my fallacy of control, I move closer to the darker path.

I have to remember that isolation and dishonesty create ruin. In order to recover, I must practice honesty and love. And, I must be aware that I am not alone in this. Reaching out is vital to my recovery. We empower one another, and we grow together. 

## MA WORLDWIDE...

DISTRICT 1 - SAN FRANCISCO  
P.O.Box 194252  
San Francisco, CA 94119  
(415) 522-7373

DISTRICT 2 - EAST BAY  
P.O.Box 8354  
Berkeley, CA 94707  
(510) 287-8873

DISTRICT 3 - SOUTH BAY  
P.O.Box 111341  
Campbell, CA 95011  
(408) 450-0796

DISTRICT 4 - SEATTLE  
P.O.Box 45646  
Seattle, WA 98145-0646  
(206) 458-9034

DISTRICT 5 - ORANGE COUNTY  
358 S. Main #215  
Orange, CA 92668  
(714) 999-9409

DISTRICT 6 - L.A. (NORTH)  
P.O.Box 2433  
Van Nuys, CA 91404  
(818) 759-9194 NEW!

DISTRICT 7 - L.A. (SOUTH)  
P.O.Box 3012  
Culver City, CA 90231  
(213) 964-2370

DISTRICT 8 - NEW YORK  
(no address at this time)  
(212) 459-4423

DISTRICT 9 - SANTA CRUZ  
P.O.Box 1481  
Santa Cruz, CA 95061  
(408) 427-4088

NEW ZEALAND  
(no info at this time)

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