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A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

Beyond My Wildest Dreams

By Anonymous

I just celebrated my four-year birthday in MA, so I think it is time that I write my story.

I first began using in high school, before my 18th birthday. I was invited to a party at one of the "loaders" homes, and I eagerly accepted. I had many acquaintances growing up, but I never felt a part of a group. I often struggled with weight and didn't have much confidence.

After that first party I always followed the smell to wherever the smoke was. I had instantly become one of the crowd, and they never asked anything of me; we just got stoned together. I didn't really care for alcohol. I never could handle the feelings the way I thought I could maintain on pot.

After high school, I decided I would rather hang out with my loader friends and go to beauty school rather than college, and my family figured I would marry and have children some day, so it was okay. I did marry an alcoholic when I was 20. He was 21, and we moved to Colorado, where my son was born when I was 23.

My husband was not willing to give up the alcohol, so I left the marriage, with my son, after 5 years. Since I only smoked pot I didn't feel I had any problems. I returned to my parents' home in California, where I was born and raised. I ran into an old high school friend my first week back, and he connected me with a pot dealer, so I thought all was well now.

I met my second husband when I was 27. We married one year later. He turned out to be very controlling and a rageaholic, but he didn't ask me to give up my pot, so I stayed in my fog when things weren't going well in the marriage. I had my daughter when I was 30. It was a pretty materialistic lifestyle, which in hindsight was part of the reason I stayed in this marriage for so long – 11 years. I was able to be a "stay at home" Mom, which I loved, but it also enabled me to stay high most days, especially when the kids were in school. When they were home I would hang out my bedroom window, spray the room, use eye drops and thought they didn't know.

After 11 years, my husband left the marriage, complaining of my increased weight and pot smoking, to be with my best girlfriend and smoking partner. I was devastated and felt like an orphan. Who would take care of the kids and me now?

Over the next six years I had relationships with men who did not smoke but didn't ask me to stop, either. I usually dated men that didn't use because I thought it would be best for me; I guess I always knew deep down that I was powerless over pot. My smoking increased, since I didn't feel I had to hide

it any longer. Eventually these relationships ended because of my pot use, but I was never willing to stop. I tried a few times but always returned.

I was pretty involved in my church but always had my pipe loaded in the car, waiting for the service or board meeting to end so I could get high on the way home. I always wished I could meet a man in church that got high, too, which only shows me the insanity I lived in at that time.

I did meet a girlfriend at church that told me about MA while we were passing the bong in my living room one day. I was so happy, and I had so many questions. After she left, I found the MA website and started my detox the next week – but not before smoking all the stash I had. The website was a tremendous help. I had no idea I would have to detox, and I thought I could just stop. I went to online meetings until I could get to a face-to-face one.

When I did get to the first face-to-face meeting, I was miserable with my detox but heard so many things I could relate to that I kept coming back. During my first 30 days I thought about smoking so often; I would just wait it out and the thought eventually came less often. That meeting had so many people who had quite a bit of time in recovery, and it showed me that maybe there was hope for a better life for me – once I woke up from the fog.

I am an addict and extremist; as soon as I was allowed to, I jumped into service. I kept hearing how it would keep me there, and I did know I needed to be in the rooms. I eventually found a good sponsor, with quite a bit of time and much wisdom, who has been really good in my recovery process. I have worked quite a few steps and have a very strong faith in my HP, closer than ever before.

I started seeing a therapist after hearing others talk about theirs; this has been so beneficial. I have experienced the grief of both ex-husband's deaths, and recently my mother's, as well. I have used the support and tools of recovery to help in this process. I have continued to be of service in MA; it is important for me to give back. I now know how sick I was in my addiction when I first came in.

After three years in MA, I started recovery in another 12 step program for my compulsive eating. Today, the promises have come true in my life, and the gifts I have received are beyond my wildest dreams.



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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We send approximately 681 copies of *A New Leaf* each month to subscribers in 31 states

The Roving Reporter

Last month, the Roving Reporter asked, "How do you have fun in recovery?"



"I've made a lot of recovery friends over the years, and we do things like going on long road trips to conventions, staying up all night playing Scrabble, going camping, and attending other program-related events. One of my biggest joys of the freedom of recovery is going to jam band shows and hanging out with my Wharfrat, Jellyfish & Phellowship (groups who enjoy live music without the use of drugs) friends. If I wasn't having fun and living happy, joyous and free in recovery, I wouldn't still be here.

— Lisa T., District 5

This month, the Roving Reporter asks, "How did you first work the Third Step? And how do you work it today?"

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"Why not decide to put our lives in the care of God, as we understood God? Our way had certainly not worked for us."

— Life With Hope, page 12

Please Contribute to A New Leaf

We have a few stories sitting around our virtual office these days; what we need is Step or Tradition shares, poetry, district events, and answers to the Roving Reporter question. For March, we'd especially like to hear about Step or Tradition 3, but write whatever you want! Just write!

Also, please check our staff box on the left for the name of your local Bureau Chief. Find that person, tell them your sober birthday, and give them your shares or other info. If you don't have a Bureau Chief, send it straight to us; contact info is in that same staff box.

A NOTE FROM THE CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Thank You, MA!

The exhausted, relieved, and completely blissed-out Convention Host Committee wishes to thank all of MA for making this year's Convention in Portland something truly special. The speakers, the workshops, the fellowship, the dancing, and the meetings - it was all great, and you made it happen! The sun even came out!

We are now working on putting the speakers' shares on a CD. To find out more about how to order the speakers' shares on CD, contact us at info@ma2004.org, or stay tuned to the District 11 website, www.madistrict11.org.

Thank you thank you thank you!

This Too Shall Pass

by Carol

I was going to make this a personal note to a stressed-out friend, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized that there is more than one person who reads this newsletter and/or comes into these rooms who only has a few days or weeks or months of clean time and is in a hell of a lot of pain. And so, to all of you:

READ THE DETOXING PAMPHLET! It's on the web page. It's on the literature table.

Hell, read all the pamphlets. It'll keep you busy for a little while, and maybe do you some good by letting you know that you are NOT alone in this venture. It's a wonder I didn't kill someone in my first few months. I was so angry I'd roar up to stoplights (in my old large 70's maxi-van), a light that had just changed to green, and run right through the intersection just hoping to hit someone who might have run a red light. Angry? ANGRY! Oh boy you bet I was angry. I wanted to kill me and everyone else on the planet. Just nuke the whole damn place.

Depressed? DEPRESSED! I cried until I thought my face would fall off and my eyeballs drop out. Nobody in the world had ever suffered as much as I was. I knew this beyond a shadow of a doubt. I'd cry until I'd throw up.

Higher Power? What? GOD? Are you kidding me? The nasty old man who either ignored me or made my life miserable? No way!

First, let me reassure you that you are in the right place. We here who read this newsletter and/or come into these 12 Step rooms know who you are and what you're going through. You are not alone.

And, for a while, we'll even be your Higher Power for you. Yep. We're willing to do that for you. How? All of us together really are a power greater than any one of us alone. That's not hard to believe in, is it? Later you may find another power you'd like to acknowledge, but if you can't believe in anything else, believe in us. It was the people in these rooms and newsletters and online meetings that did for me what I could not do alone.

Depression. We didn't realize that the drug that was "helping" us with our depression was really making it worse, did we? It's true. Long-time use of marijuana messes with the chemicals in our brains. So, for the first few months, our brains are desperately trying to get things back on some kind of even keel. That's why some of us, more than others, go through a roller coaster ride of up, down, sideways, and back again. We're depressed; we're angry; we're lost; we're lonely; we're frightened; we hate ourselves, we hate everybody else. We can't sleep. We can't stay awake. When we start to dream again, our dreams are scary. We're horny. We have no sexual desire at all. We're sweaty. We've got chills. You name it. We've got it. It's detoxing! So hang in there - this too shall pass.

And, there are no promises that life will suddenly be absolutely wonderful. What there are promises about is that we will learn to deal with the bad stuff much more rationally and enjoy the good stuff much more enthusiastically. That's a pretty good way to live life, isn't it? What a concept! To actually participate in life, and learn how to enjoy it. Wow.

ANLP ANNOUNCEMENTS

It's all about "thanks" and "welcome" these days at ANLP.

Debra M. completed her third full year of service with ANLP in February. In this time she was Managing Editor for one year and Executive Secretary for two. Debra served in both these positions selflessly with diligence and care. We have Debra to thank for drumming up submissions and editing the content of *A New Leaf* while she was serving as Managing Editor. As Executive Secretary, Debra faithfully kept the staff of ANLP connected to the outside world in cyberspace and dutifully captured and published the minutes of each ANLP staff meeting. Debra also applied for the Library of Congress registration for MA's book, *Life With Hope*. Thanks for carrying the message, Debra; we're going to miss you at ANLP!

With the publishing of this edition of *A New Leaf*, the staff of ANLP says goodbye to Paul G. As Managing Editor, Paul has been a steady, trusted servant rallying the Bureau Chiefs and members at large for great newsletter submissions. Without fail, Paul edited these submissions and published them on time every month, for two years straight. We can also thank Paul for being instrumental in broadening *A New Leaf's* content to include poetry for the first time, and the return of the "Roving Reporter." Keep coming back, Paul; your service really made *A New Leaf* consistently great, and we appreciate you!

Of course, in service work as in life, "goodbye" always leads to "hello," and we have two new trusted servants on board. During the MA Convention in Portland, Eric M. was voted in by the ANLP staff as the new Managing Editor, and Lisa T. was appointed by the MA World Services Trustees to be ANLP's Executive Secretary.

We thank all of these fine folks for their commitment and service!

2004 M.A.W.S. CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY
DISTRICT 5
(THE D.C.)

MAY 28-31ST

AT
CONCORDIA
UNIVERSITY
IRVINE, CA

****ALL ARE INVITED****

CONFERENCE INFO
AND REGISTRATION FORMS
CAN BE FOUND AT
WWW.MADISTRICT5.ORG

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For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>
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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 2:

Paco	1/3/03	1 year!
Dave W.	3/8/03	1 year!
Katina	2/14/03	1 year!
Ari	1/3/02	2 years
Scott A.	2/6/02	2 years
Victoria J.	2/20/02	2 years
Ethan	3/28/01	3 years
Angie	1/1/00	4 years
Dave S.	2/1/00	4 years
Don C.	2/29/97	7 years
Annemarie	2/14/94	10 years
Tim	3/1/94	10 years
Fay C.	11/30/90	14 years
David G.	1/15/86	18 years

District 5:

Debora A	2/14/03	1 year!
Robert M.	3/18/00	4 years
Patti C.	3/17/99	5 years
Diana	3/28/95	9 years
Ernest F.	3/9/95	9 years
Mike C.	3/25/93	11 years

District 3:

Heather C.	3/23/03	1 year!
Margee W.	3/07/03	1 year!
John F.	3/12/00	4 years
Shirleen N.	3/17/99	5 years
Ken G.	3/18/96	8 years
Peter M.	3/24/92	12 years
Roger W.	3/09/92	12 years

District 4:

Rosie S.	2/8/02	2 years
Dave L.	2/27/99	5 years

District 7:

Bruce	1/1/03	1 year!
Kathleen	1/16/02	2 years
Rob H.	12/13/00	3 years
Mary Bianca	1/10/01	3 years
DAve S.	1/1/95	9 years
Debra M.	1/3/95	9 years
Dave K.	1/15/89	15 years
Mary Q.	2/15/99	5 years
Rochelle	2/9/02	2 years
Mike LB	1/10/87	17 years

District 6:

Lynne S.	1/12/03	1 year!
Do-All Dave	1/8/03	1 year!
Demetrius B.	2/1/03	1 year!
Mike N.	2/2/02	2 years
Reanna P.	1/21/02	2 years
Wendy	10/29/01	2 years
Chris A.	1/21/02	2 years
Ben B.	1/4/98	6 years
Loren N.	1/14/90	14 years
George B.	2/6/88	16 years
Sean D.	2/1/90	14 years
George B.	2/6/88	16 years
Terry M.	2/24/88	16 years

District 11:

Walt G	2/13/01	3 years
Maria S	3/15/97	7 years

District 1:

John M.	3/1/01	3 years
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Davis, CA:

Liam K	3/6/03	1 year!
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Celebrating 352 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!