



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

March 2013

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From the Archives

But for a couple of short pieces we received online this month, we don't have much to offer in the way of stories. However, we do have access to much that was published over the years, and so we're going to take advantage of that for the purposes of this issue. Journey bac k with us, then, twenty years to the March 1993 edition.

Recovery and Relapse

As of this writing I'm gratefully experiencing my 110th day of complete sobriety. It's pouring down rain outside my bedroom window as blissful sounds of mellow jazz play on my stereo. Despite the serenity I'm feeling, this rainy weather brings back dark and cloudy memories of choosing to stay indoors to smoke endless bong loads.

Today I've chosen not to get high but to share with you my personal experience with how and why I relapsed while in M.A., and what it took to finally surrender myself to this wonderful program.

After a year of unsuccessfully trying to quit smoking pot on my own, I finally realized I needed help! I could not quit using by myself. On Monday, May 11, 1992, I walked into my first M.A. meeting. I was quite nervous because it was my first experience with any kind of anonymous program. That first meeting had quite an impact on me. I knew M.A. was where I belonged.

For the next 78 days I stayed sober, but was only attending about 1 meeting a week (I thought that's all I needed). Without warning I relapsed on my 79th day of sobriety. I hadn't been to a meeting in two weeks and was hanging out with an old using buddy when my relapse occurred. Being high again wasn't the same. I became scared, nervous and confused. The next day I got myself to an M.A. meeting and shared with a few people that I had regrettably relapsed.

Despite my one day relapse back into the world of weed, I still continued to only go to one or two meetings a week. Looking back upon that confusing period, I wasn't even using many of the simple tools M.A. suggests for recovery. I didn't have a sponsor, didn't use the phone to call other M.A. members, rarely opened the Big Book, never attended fellowship, rarely shared, and didn't believe in a Higher Power. I just went to a few meetings and wasn't yet willing to surrender to the M.A. program.

It's no wonder that I relapsed once again on my 73rd day of sobriety. This time I went out for 4 days. I was hanging out with my old using buddies once again. They welcomed me back into their loop

Beta Tester

When I came into recovery I knew I was in the right place when I heard the saying "Progress NOT perfection" because the only thing I'm perfect at is imperfection.

All my life I have been the one to find flaws, as my computer geek friends call me Beta Tester. I can find the ONE stack of items that isn't stable as it falls around me. I can find that one combination of key strokes that will lock up the most stable program. I'm the baseball fan that unknowingly buys the seat on the opposing team's side. I'm the guy who as one of my favorite songs goes, "Buys a Maserati and puts the key in the wrong little hole." The guy who gets busted the first time he tries cutting classes in High School. The kind of guy who tries to do a good deed for safety as in changing out a burnt out light bulb and blows the main transformer at his job site. Or even the kind of guy who can get lost in a town that has the same road in and out.

As you can guess being embarrassed happened to me quite a lot and when I started getting high I would just laugh them off. My friends knew I was stoned and everyone else who didn't know me just assumed, correctly, that I was.

When I first got sober I was very, very careful in ALL I did. Not so much because of my Beta Tester history but because I had

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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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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and click on the Newsletter tab.

with open arms, and countless bong loads. Smoking weed again became a nightmare, but I continued to smoke, hoping to feel better. What was I thinking? On my 4th day of using I felt too sick to smoke anymore pot. I stayed sober for the next 3 days, but then found myself getting drunk on Halloween night. My lungs hurt too much to get high, so I drank. To this day I regret missing that M.A. Halloween party.

I now regrettably had 3 relapses under my belt. I was on a roll. I was faced with the decision to continue to get high or to finally surrender myself to the M.A. program. On Monday November 2nd 1992, I finally

surrendered. I admitted that my life had become unmanageable. I haven't used since that day!

I now have a sponsor, call other M.A. members, read the Big Book, attend fellowship, share at meetings, have a Higher Power, and attend 5 to 6 meetings a week. This program really works if you work it. Unfortunately it took me 3 relapses in M.A. to figure that out. I thank God that I kept coming back to M.A. meetings despite my relapses. I'm just grateful to M.A. and I plan to keep coming back...one day at a time.

Robert W.
March 1993



The Roving Reporter Asks:

“What are some of the reasons you picked your current sponsor?”

Please submit your answers by April 17th for publication in the May issue.

The following is a response to the question published in the January 2013 edition. The question was, “How was your last craving triggered and what do you do to prevent a reoccurrence?”

To be honest, my last serious craving for pot was many years ago. I've had a few mild urges to smoke since then, but it has been easy to think them through to the end, and make them vanish. The biggest challenge to my recent sobriety came when I went to a gas station a couple of months ago. I walked in the door, and saw on the ground in between the garbage can (or whatever was sitting there) and the door, a bud in some cigarette pack cellophane. I didn't even want to touch it (mostly) but a small obnoxious voice in the back of my mind wanted me to take it.

I ended up leaving it where it was. I checked on the way out of the gas station just to be sure I had really seen it, but got the hell out of there without touching it. I suppose I could have thrown it away, but I'm not that heroic of a person.

After I jumped on the recovery wagon voluntarily six years ago, it only took about two weeks for the serious cravings to disappear. They have not returned. I was four years sober when I volunteered for treatment and had been locked up that whole time.

I really don't miss them....

Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understood God.*

Tradition Three

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana.

Meditatively Yours

Following is an excerpt from the MA Meditation Book, a work in progress. If you would like to contribute to the Meditation Book, please forward your text to the Office Manager at anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org or write to:

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Mindfulness practice is the basis for my meditation. When I remain in the present in the moment and as conscious as I can be of what's happening within me and around me, then I can trust in the presence of a power greater than myself that I call God. There is a connection to "This Power" that I strive to improve when I can, all the time. Working to improve this connection is like expanding the space in my mindfulness to sustain a kind of "Gods' Presence"; ideally; all throughout the day. Seeing my thoughts and feelings as they arise gives me a chance to effectively let go of them before they become triggering. This foundation eliminates a lot of my problems. Mindfulness practice in turn has many benefits for me. It allows me to be aware of what's happening at the moment and allows "Higher Power" to help me as I need it. "This path" which is ever changing is my focus in recovery. Practice Mindfulness and you lessen your distractions and illusions and you cultivate love, patience, piece of mind, compassion, happiness and understanding of the true nature of things.

By seeing through "Perfect Awareness" I intuitively know what I have to do in the moment. It is kind of a "Spiritual Guide" and when I make this connection and experience it working in my life, making a difference to me in tangible ways, my ability to maintain conscious contact grows stronger and my faith (confidence) in that connection to a power greater than myself grows stronger and the less doubt I have about "Conscious Contact with a Higher Power". This practice is bearing fruit in my recovery and adds joy to my life as I build healthy relationships and spiritually based connections.

The Twelve Steps of Marijuana Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understood God.*
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood God*, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to marijuana addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs. ▲

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BETA TESTER ...concluded

not done ANYTHING sober in several decades. As I grew more comfortable in sobriety my Beta Testing ability resurfaced. The biggest difference now is that I laugh it off and help people pick up my messes. The computer programmers I work with love to give me a shot at their programs because they know if I can't mess it up no one can. And my boss, well, he has come to accept that my projects NEVER come in on time, but when they are done, they need at best only minor corrections because, as I said, I have already screwed it up several times and fixed them several more.

MAUser

A NEW LEAF NEEDS YOUR STORY!

You do not have to tell your life history, and you don't have to fill the issue! Anything you feel is worthwhile saying in a meeting is worth submitting to the newsletter.

Submit your story online at <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/literature/newsletter/submit-a-story>, or write to anl.editor@marijuana-anonymous.org. Our mailing address is PO Box 6482, Torrance, CA, 90504.

Birthdays

Celebrating 134 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? If you're in a District, inform your **Bureau Chief**.

If not, write anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org, or submit online at

www.marijuana-anonymous.org/literature/newsletter/submit-anniversary-birthday.

Birthdays accepted for the current month issue are ones that fall in the 45 days previous to the current month. Birthday for this calendar month will appear in the next issue.

District 2		
Sandy	2/22/11	2 Years
Jeff K.	2/18/03	10 Years
Ari K.	1/13/02	11 Years
Doug P.	1/13/00	12 Years
District 5		
Lisa L.	2/22/04	9 Years
District 7		
Elf	2/16/06	7 Years
District 8		
Su S.	1/26/05	8 Years



District 11		
Frank P.	2/10/12	1 YEAR!
Rick V.	2/8/03	10 Years
Walt G.	2/13/01	12 Years
Trisa A.	2/1/96	17 Years
Guy E.	2/15/88	25 Years
Independent		
Mike "Hemp"	2/16/12	1 YEAR!
Denver		
John A.	1/2/12	1 YEAR!
Doron	1/11/12	1 YEAR!
Matt S.	12/28/05	7 Years

These birthdays are included late due to the ineptness of the stand-in Publishing Editor in last months issue. -TW