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# A NEW LEAF

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

## My Last 60 Days of Using

by Gannon B., District 6

What was it like? Well, what can I say? Using, using, and more using! It's difficult to remember exact dates, but I can give you a rough estimate of where I was, my frame of mind, and my daily routine.

I had moved back to my place of true memory, North Hollywood, two months before. The week I moved up here (sometime in early September) I was immediately offered a job with an organization I had been affiliated with for the last thirteen years. It was a very laid-back job that I figured I could do "under the influence." The job was a step up from what I had done in the past---it was actually a position of authority!---and it scared me. I promised myself I would limit my usage to weekends, although I hadn't been able to do *that* for years prior to this "wanna be" commitment. I wasn't even able to keep my promise for one day.

The job seemed perfect for a drug user. I was my own boss for the first four hours of the day and my employer trusted me. This gave me the opportunity to smoke at will. The second four hours of the day consisted of planning and supervising programs for junior high school-aged children. The kids knew me as a slightly amusing person with red eyes the whole time they were involved with this organization (there is an unusually high return rate for these children every year). Anyway, my opportunities for using drugs were endless.

My routine was this: I would wake up at about 9 in the morning and mosey on in to my kitchen, where I would reach for one of my

bongs, fill it with ice-water, and then make it back to my bedroom dresser where my dope was stashed. And this was all before I could get out my first yawn of the morning!

For the last five years or so, that first high of the day had always been the best one. I would pack two fat loads in an extra-large bowl. Each bowl provided about five huge "cough-master" hits. After about ten or twelve lungs full, I'd either stumble into the shower, or over to work (depending on how stoned I had managed to get).

*"Whether it was the people, the scams, or the situations I got myself into.... my life was in danger."*

## Jim's Story

by Jim D., District 4

Hi, my name is Jim and I am a marijuana addict. After twenty-eight years of smoking pot almost daily, I have come to know this.

I started smoking pot in junior high. I liked the effect it had on me. I felt totally different than I had ever felt before, in a very short amount of time. I had tried alcohol before but pot made me feel better quicker. I didn't smoke very often because I couldn't afford it and it was hard to find. I really don't think I started because of peer pressure since not many people even knew about it back then. I played a lot of sports and was

I'd start jonesing at about 10:30. Luckily, I was the transportation coordinator and could take a van out whenever I wanted. I'd speed off to "do errands" (get high) and return just in time to watch the kids for three hours. I never had any activities planned. I'd just go on auto-pilot, hoping that I could remember what I'd been told to do in the past. I normally "maintained" around the kids for most or all of the three hours, only jonesing when troubles arose (they did every day).

After work there were no holds barred. My friends and I would smoke until it was all gone, or we had no more money, or we passed out (*that* never happened). Then I would come home around 1:00 a.m. and smoke the last of my daily stash before hitting the sack.

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on the school teams.

In high school, I continued with sports but got more and more involved with a different crowd. Nobody had any idea that I was getting high because everybody thought I was a jock. Because of my short hair, people thought I was a "narc" and it was pretty hard for me to get pot. Soon people got to know me, and buying pot got easier.

Although I continued to play sports, I began to lose interest in them. Three months before graduation, my father got a

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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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## A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship

## "How do you 'carry the message' of M.A.?"

**Captain Kurt, 3 years 8 months:**

By trying to be an example of the program. M.A. was here for me when I needed it (as I do on a daily basis). By being involved and of service at both the meeting and district levels, I hope I can help M.A. be here for others.

**Robin H., 1 year 2 months:**

In addition to going to my meetings and telling friends and family that I am a member of M.A. (my life-saver!), I am starting a new meeting in the city that I live in where there are no M.A. meetings. I hope to spread the message of recovery there.

**Jennifer, 10 months:**

By being of service in my meetings. By being aware of people who are still using and not being afraid to speak up and say "It sounds like you are looking for help" or "You might be addicted to a substance---would you like more information?" I realize that checking out a person's reaction is necessary. Nobody wants anything pushed on them---a sensitive area.

**Rob M., 2 years 6 months:**

I try to lead a reasonably joyful and responsible life while being clean and sober. I try to maintain an attitude of gratitude. I try to be of service to the fellowship and particularly to the men I sponsor. I try to share what I've learned with newcomers. I try to incorporate the Steps, Traditions, and spiritual principles into my life. I try not to kick myself too hard when I blow it. I try.

**Lance D., 1 year 8 months:**

In my heart and soul! By reaching out to others, not judging them. By being of service in many ways, especially panels.

**Carol Mc., 7 years 9 months**

Sometimes I don't! Sometimes I have bad days and just sit and feel sorry for myself. However---on my good days---I do service work, take commitments, sponsor people, talk on the phone to addicts in pain, and keep in contact with addicts out of my area by e-mail. Mostly, though, I try to walk the walk and act like an example of how the program of M.A. works in my life. I try to work these principles in *all* my affairs and with *all* the people in my life. It's progress, not perfection (or is it perfection, not progress?).

*The Roaming Reporter***Terri R., 5 years 4 months:**

I help out on the Public Information committee. A lot of people don't know what we do: we let people outside the fellowship know who and where we are. I also share my experience, strength, and hope in meetings. This is a simple, often overlooked way to carry the message.

**Steve B., 4 years:**

I live it. When I'm having a conversation and something we're talking about touches on my experience with recovery or my spiritual perception, I bring this to the conversation. I am super-aware to own it by prefacing what I say with "as I see it" (this way, I'm not promoting). This practice benefits me, as I'm being genuine and "getting" the message of M.A., as well as carrying it to another.

## 60 Days

Continued from Page 1

In the middle of November, I lost my job because of a drug test. My excessive tardiness and mysterious days off for "illness" probably also had something to do with it. By then I was paranoid, delusional, and suicidal. I was stealing to buy drugs. I should mention that though pot was always the mainstay of my drug habit, I also used a slew of other drugs (notably crack, speed, and alcohol) to keep me going.

The weekends were when I played Russian roulette. Whether it was the people, the drugs, the scams, or the situations I got myself into...my life was in danger. My pot habit alone cost me \$40-60 a day. I had borrowed, stolen, sold, pawned, and weaseled as much money as I possibly could on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. **ANYTHING FOR DRUGS!!!**

My mind was lost, and after only 23 days of sobriety, it still is. I have no confidence, little faith, a heartful of resentment, and a fistful of rage. I fear death but still I embrace it. I seek love, but only end up sabotaging my relationships. Will it ever end? My heart is heavy. I am a child with no inkling about how to live. I come to these rooms as a last resort. I can only live second to second. I'm quite sure I have another life-long binge in me, but I truly doubt I have another recovery in me.

### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

*I now have a little over 4 months of sobriety. Things are beginning to look up for me, slowly but surely. In the distance, a new life awaits. It's pretty blurry right now, but it is becoming slightly clearer and more focused with each passing day. I know that it will take a lot of work and determination to get there, but at least now I have the willingness to keep trying.* ☾

## God's Path by Brett P.

God works in mysterious ways.

I pray for knowledge of God's will for me and the strength to carry it out. But more often than not, I don't know what the heck God wants me to be doing. God is really good at letting me know what NOT to do, but I don't always know what TO do. My sponsor has told me that prayer is the process of asking God questions, and meditation is the process of listening for God's answers. So tonight I got real quiet, closed my eyes, and asked God to clearly show me what to do.

I was standing there in the pouring rain with my eyes closed and something came to me. It wasn't anything dramatic, like a choir of angels or something; it was simply a word planted in my head. The word was "walk." So I did.

I walked out into the rain, along the riverbank. I was watching and listening to the river flow by and it occurred to me to walk down this small footpath to the river's edge. Well, I took one step down this path, slipped on some really goopy mud, and fell right on my butt. I got myself up, took another step, and fell again...and again...and again. It took me several minutes to make it down

this path, because every step I took landed me right back on my butt. I was covered with mud! Not your average mud, mind you, but the really sticky, goopy kind of mud that sticks to everything. I was filthy!

I sat at the river's edge, covered in mud. I got quiet again and listened to the river's flow. I was wondering what God was trying to show me; just what was the message here? I was shivering with cold, so I decided I had better go back inside where it was warm. I turned around and faced that muddy footpath with my buttpoints all over it. Suddenly it occurred to me that if I went back up that path, I would only fall down again. God's message for me became clear at that moment.

I am to stay off the beaten path. I need to make my own way up the riverbank *and* through life. If I follow the path of the many, I will only fall down and get dirty. I've heard it said that less than one percent of the population lives a life completely free from all mind-altering substances. By remaining sober, I am following God's will for me along the unbeaten path. ☾

Chris E.	Mar. 28	3 Years
Jerry A.	April ??	1 Year!
Grady S.	April 01	3 Years
Sailor Chris G.	April 01	5 Years
Geoff F.	April 01	7 Years
Bonnie V.	April 04	3 Years
David M.	April 08	3 Years
Jeff E.	April 06	1 Year!
Susie C.	April 06	2 Years
Brenda S.	April 08	7 Years
Barb H.	April 10	4 Years
Tom W.	April 12	5 Years
Van W.	April 12	23 Years
Stuart G.	April 13	2 Years
Lester R.	April 15	1 Year!
Sammie F.	April 15	2 Years
Scrappin' Mike P.	April 18	3 Years
Teri A.	April 19	4 Years
Gary Z.	April 20	2 Years
Joanne A.	April 21	6 Years
Brian K.	April 23	6 Years
Evan B.	April 24	7 Years
Sunnie	April 25	2 Years



Congratulations to our members  
celebrating their sober birthdays!

### Thought for the Month

*"When we regularly seek [spiritual] expansion through prayer and meditation, rather than marijuana use, we find that we are increasingly fulfilled; the experience grows more powerful, more real, and more beneficial. We seek, and we find. It seems that the old saying is true. For each step we take towards God, God takes a thousand steps towards us."*

-----Life with Hope, pp. 55-56

promotion and I had to move from California to Connecticut. I really didn't want to leave my school and my girlfriend. I made a decision that as soon as I graduated I would leave home and move back to California.

I worked at McDonald's after school and saved every penny I could. I moved back to California, stayed at my girlfriend's house, and found a job. Things were going my way and I loved it. Soon, I moved to my sister's house, where I could be more independent. I started to get more involved with my old friends and drugs.

My girlfriend didn't like me to smoke pot and didn't even know about the other drugs I was using. One day, she found my hashish pipe and took it from me. I wanted that pipe so bad that I accidentally put a hole in the front door of her house trying to get it back. Her parents found out about it and I wasn't welcome there anymore. My life was starting to become unmanageable because of drugs. Little did I know that this was just the beginning...

I got arrested for driving while intoxicated several times. The courts sent me to jail and told me to go to AA meetings after I was released. I had always thought that drinking was my real problem and that if I could just keep from drinking, all my other problems would disappear.

Then I got into a car accident. I had been drinking and smoking pot all day and had passed out while driving. After the accident I realized that my drinking was hurting other people. I was devastated and didn't know what I was going to do. I decided to promise God that I wouldn't take anything mind-altering.

I asked God to please take away my obsession to drink. If he did this for me, I would try to live my life in the way that he would want me to. A miracle happened to me that night: a feeling came over me that a tremendous load had been lifted from my shoulders. I knew that if I kept my promise everything would be all right.

I checked myself into a good treatment center to find out what was wrong with me. Why couldn't I quit drinking? I learned a lot about drugs and alcohol there, but more importantly, I learned a lot about myself. I found that I only thought about myself and hadn't any regard for anybody else when drugs and alcohol were concerned. If life didn't run on my terms, I ran from it by getting drunk or high.

The obsession to drink had been taken away but I still had the urge to smoke pot. I have since realized I hadn't asked God to remove my obsession with marijuana! I battled the urge to get high by remembering my promise to God. My counselor asked me to start a Marijuana Anonymous meeting and I have been a member ever since.

My pot smoking was really just a symptom of other problems. It was

keeping me off-balance and out of touch with what life is all about. I grew up being high and never really learned how to cope with problems or how to enjoy life without getting high. I have found a power in the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous and a power that I choose to call God. I make a decision to turn my will and my life over to God every morning. I ask for guidance and the willingness to change.

Our M.A. meeting here in Everett, Washington is alive and well. We are operating as the Traditions tell us to and some of us are working the steps in our daily lives. I am grateful for this program and the close friends I have come to love in this fellowship. Thank you M.A. for helping me do together what I could not do alone. €



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