



# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

April 2000

Volume 10 - Number 4

## Opportunity for Growth by Tom W.

Whenever I see young people at a meeting, people at around the age I was when I started smoking pot, 14 plus or minus 3 years. I'm filled with a strong sense of gratitude, and of hope. Because, rather than beginning their careers as pot-smokers at an early age, they're ending them. This is in itself a complete miracle.

When I was fourteen I made a mistake. I turned my will and my life over to the care of pot as I misunderstood pot. I saw pot as the great leveler, the solution to all my problems, the substance which would take my feelings away and let me live in peace. I don't think it's possible for a 14-year-old person to make such a life-altering decision; that is, it's possible, but it's not appropriate. Someone who's 14 doesn't have the emotional stability to decide not to feel any more. For various reasons, I was allowed to make that decision. Some of those factors had to do with my family life; others had to do with the culture in which I was living at the time.

I don't blame society for the fact that I picked up, and it's due entirely to my emotional makeup that for 19 years I never put down; but the pres-

sure at the time was enormous. Pot was the thing to do; you weren't in, you weren't hip. But on the inside, to many, many people who were the potential addicts, it had a fundamental effect which had nothing to do with culture, with being hip, with turning on, tuning in, and dropping out. It had to do with satisfying an internal craving, a need to escape. For many of us, pot wasn't just a fun thing to do; it was our hope, our solution; and soon it became our life.

Unfortunately, there was no program at the time such as MA. It did not come about for years. And, more unfortunately, even in the early years of the program its progress and growth was small and it is not until recently that it has become more widely known and more available. Even now, 14 years into its existence, we hear in meetings people saying, "I'd never known there was such a thing!"

For those of us who have come into these rooms over the years, and who have heard the message, and have felt the relief of knowing we were not alone, and have taken up our own salvation, MA represents the solution to the solution.

When I started smoking pot, I made a deal. I wanted to get rid of the bad stuff, the negative feelings I was carrying. In order to do so, I had to smoke pot on a daily basis. That was OK; I liked it. But I had to accept that certain fundamental things were going to change. For one, I was also going to have to give up the genuine good feelings. I mean it. You can't have one without giving up the other. I think hard about all the times I had really good times, when I had great laughs and when I was really happy, and I realize that I was stoned the whole time. And how, if I admit that I was by artificial means removing my negative feelings, delude myself into thinking that the positive feelings were genuine?

(continued next page)

## SUBSCRIBE

to

## A NEW LEAF

For \$12 per year, a monthly issue of *A New Leaf* will be delivered to your home.

Send a check to:  
PO Box 4314  
No. Hollywood, CA  
91617





## 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.

### Managing Board

#### Editors

Ron H. and Hava L.

ANL Distribution Coordinators

Richard H.

LWH Distribution Coordinator

Coleman G.

District 1 Bureau Chief: Frank P

District 2 Bureau Chief: Don C

District 3 Bureau Chief: Jerry P

District 4 Bureau Chief: Doug H

District 5 Bureau Chief: Tom W

District 6 Bureau Chief: Dan L

District 7 Bureau Chief: Jodi B

District 8 Bureau Chief: Jeff S

District 9 Bureau Chief: Bernie G

District 10 Bureau Chief: Bill H

District 11 Bureau Chief: Craig S

Eastern PA Bureau Chief: Lee R

North Bay, CA Bureau Chief: Adam G

### Executive Board

Chairperson: Loren N.

Treasurer: Carol Mc.

Secretary: vacant

Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:

A NuLeafPub@aol.com

*A New Leaf*

P.O. Box 4314

North Hollywood, CA 91617

## Growth continued

It reminds me of a scene in a Woody Allen movie, *Annie Hall*. Woody and his girlfriend are going to have some, um, personal fun, and she lights a joint in preparation. And he insists that she not, because the experience won't be genuine.

"It ruins it for me if you have grass," he says, "because, it's like, you know, I'm a comedian, so if I get a laugh from someone who's high, it doesn't count. You know, cause they're always laughing."

So when I see young people getting clean, I get all choked up. Because, for whatever reason, due to whatever motivations, they are giving themselves an incredible opportunity to live clean lives, to set themselves back on a path that does not involve denial of their feelings, that does involve living their lives as fully as possible.

We were the guinea pigs, and the test results are not yet in. We don't know yet what the ultimate effect of our pot use will be on our bodies; but these people, through the grace of their Higher Power and the program and their own hard work, do not have to worry about that. Every feeling, however difficult, will be genuine. Every experience will be real. There will be nothing cloaked, nothing hidden, and every move they make will have

100% guaranteed value, because they made it with a clear mind and heart.

I think back often to how it might have been if I had not begun to smoke pot, or if, somewhere along the road, I had been given the same opportunity sooner, and the

effect that might have had on me. And I realize that there is absolutely no point in that kind of reflection, because the fact is that the path was taken, and cannot be retrod.

But then I think in the other direction. I think of what it would be like in the future, if I had NOT been given the opportunity nine years ago to have a real life. If I had continued to smoke pot, where would I be, say, nineteen years from now? What would I be like at age 63? I can tell you, easily. I would be right where I was nine years ago, standing still emotionally, masking and denying my feelings, thinking and acting like a 14-year-old-kid (not a bad way to be if you're 14, but...) and, on a continual and daily basis, renewing my delusion. Turning my will and my life over to the care of pot as I misunderstood pot. And I see that what I have had in the last nine years, more than anything else, has been growth. And for any young person, growth is what it's all about. ▲



# You Can't Keep it Unless You Give It Away by Loren N.

The program of MA is filled with many dichotomies: "It's easy, but it's not simple." "Don't change anything major your first year, but you got to change everything." And of course my favorite, "It's a selfish program, but you can't keep it unless you give it away."

When many of us were practicing our disease, we were takers. Controlling, manipulating, and using people in any way shape or form in order to further our addiction. Now that we are clean, and we've had a chance to look at our behavior and have become uncomfortable with it,

a nagging voice persists "What is my contribution?" Giving is the foundation of any relationship. When two people are focused on giving to one another, then the relationship flows in two directions - connecting, linking and forging the bond. But when the focus is on taking then the dynamic pulls in opposite directions - creating strain and tension.

The truth of the matter is that giving is one of our greatest forms of spiritual expression. When I give I am not only doing my God's work, but I am emulating my God because He is a giver. He is nurturing and

compassionate. Thus the experience of giving for me is often greater than communicating with my God through prayer and meditation, because by giving I'm being God-like. When you focus on what you can give to a meeting rather than what you can take from the meeting, the meeting improves. So the next time you're at a meeting stick your hand out to the newcomer, and see what it is that you can give. Emulate God and be a giver. Do it with zeal. Do it like your life depends on it. After all doesn't it? ▲

## ★ Congratulations to Our Members ★ ★ Celebrating their Sober Birthdays! ★

### District 1

Jim B.	4/22/93	7 yrs.
James B.	4/21/00	4 mos.
Alex W.	4/29/97	3 yrs.
Bill B.	4/9/89	11 yrs.
Laura L.	4/31/93	7 yrs.
Beth B.	5/1/95	5 yrs.

### District 3

Shirleen	3/17/99	1 year!
Suzann H.	3/23/96	4 yrs.
Ken G.	3/18/96	4 yrs.
Mark M.	3/21/98	2 yrs.
Michael G.	3/23/97	3 yrs.
Peter M.	3/24/92	8 yrs.
Roger W.	3/9/92	8 yrs.
Tim A.	3/5/96	4 yrs.

### District 4

Mary S.D.	1-98	2 yrs.
Brian S.	1-98	2 yrs.
Mike L.	2/11/98	2 yrs.
Connie P.	2/14/98	2 yrs.
Dave L.	2/27/98	2 yrs.
Becky F.	3/4/99	1 year!

Eric J.	2/21/97	3 yrs.
Larry W.	12/28/93	7 yrs.
Bryon D.	1/12/98	2 yrs.
John S.	3/12/99	1 year!

### District 5

Mike C.	3/23/93	7 yrs.
Janet R.	3/17/88	12 yrs.
Gary D.	3/19/93	7 yrs.
Becky T.	3/23/92	8 yrs.
Steve M.	3/27/89	11 yrs.
Diana	3/28/95	5 yrs.

### District 6

Geoff F.	4/1/89	11 yrs.
Bonnie V.	4/4/93	7 yrs.
Kevin M.	4/4/97	3 yrs.
Melissa D.	4/4/99	1 year!
Suzy C.	4/6/94	6 yrs.
Dan L.	4/10/99	1 year!
Don O.	4/11/99	1 year!
Gwen G.	4/13/93	7 yrs.
Kat R.	4/13/97	3 yrs.
Jeff F.	4/15/99	1 year!
Sammie F.	4/15/94	6 yrs.

Glenn B.	4/20/97	3 yrs.
Carol S.	4/21/91	9 yrs.

### District 7

Joanne K.	4/21/90	10 yrs.
Brian K.	4/23/90	10 yrs.

### District 8

Steve B.	2/26/99	1 year!
Eric R.	3/15/98	2 yrs.

### District 10

Tom D.	1/3/98	2 yrs.
Fred L.	1/20/97	3 yrs.
Joe H.	2/1/99	1 year!
Mike S.	2/7/99	1 year!
Bill D.	2/9/90	10 yrs.
Cory B.	2/19/99	1 year!

### North Bay, CA

Adam G.	4-17-96	4 yrs.
Steve S.	4-24-96	4 yrs.
Mindy F.	4-5-97	3 yrs.

### Arizona

Gwen G.	4/13/93	7 Yrs
---------	---------	-------

## The Dreamlife of Addicts by Bonnie V.

I had a using dream last night. I don't get them that often any more, but if they're still popping up after 7 years of abstinence and hopefully recovery, then I guess they're likely to continue.

My using dreams are usually along the same lines — I find a baggie of pot that I'd forgotten about, and decide to have a secret puff, or I'm at a party and take a toke when the joint gets passed around. Then I feel horrible and guilty. I kick myself for throwing away all my clean time and having to start over. I decide to keep it a secret and pretend at the MA meetings that I never used. I decide that, as long as I'm lying anyways, I might as well keep smoking. I feel obsessed by the need to use and to keep it secret. When I wake up from these dreams, I have a disorienting moment of "did I or didn't I actually do it?" Then I realize it's a dream and I feel a huge rush of "Oh thank God I didn't do anything so stupid."

No one seems to know what causes these dreams, but most of the recovering addicts I know have had them. They're most common

during the first year of recovery, but can come up years and years later too. I've heard that they're part of the recovery process, that they're healing in the way they remind us how important our abstinence is to us. Other people laugh them off as a "free high", and say we should just enjoy the gift, but I'm always too consumed with guilt during my dreams to enjoy the buzz.

I often hear that we're as sick as our secrets. I try today to share the important things in my life, good and bad, with at least one other person, so I'm not using all my time and energy keeping secrets anymore. Life has been a lot freer and easier this way. I tell people when I have using dreams, because it instantly negates the secrecy I practice in the dream. I'm getting my 7 year chip in a couple of weeks, and it matters to me. I'm proud of the work I've done and I know I don't want to trade it for that quick buzz and lingering guilt.

I can't say I enjoy having using dreams, but I like that I can remember my dreams (which I couldn't when I was using), and I like



<http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>  
e-mail: [info@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:info@marijuana-anonymous.org)

### MA World Service Office

PO Box 2912 Van Nuys, CA 91404  
800.766.6779

<b>San Francisco</b> (Dist. 1) PO Box 460024 San Francisco, CA 94146 415.522.7373	<b>New York</b> (District 8) PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423
<b>East Bay</b> (District 2) 510.287.8873	<b>Santa Cruz</b> (District 9) 408.427.4088
<b>South Bay</b> (District 3) PO Box 111341 Campbell, CA 95011 408.450.0796	<b>LA County east</b> (Dist. 10) PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.583.9582
<b>Seattle</b> (District 4) 539 Queen Anne Ave N. Box 1509 Seattle, WA 98109 206.548.9034	<b>Portland</b> (District 11) PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208 503.221.7007
<b>Orange County</b> (Dist. 5) PMB 215 358 S. Main Orange, CA 92668-3834 714.999.9409	<b>E. Pennsylvania</b> PO Box 194 Sadsbury, PA 19369 610.622.9243
<b>LA County No.</b> (Dist. 6) PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194	<b>New Zealand</b> MA Service Centre PO Box 74-386 Newmarket Auckland 3, New Zealand 09.846.6822
<b>LA County So.</b> (Dist. 7) PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 323.459.4423	<b>Australia</b> MA Australia P.O. Box 202 Hindmarsh, 5007 South Australia
<b>North Bay, CA</b> 707.793.2149	

knowing that my sobriety is important enough to me that even dream using upsets me. ▲

## Thank You, Kevin G. by Y2K convention committee

First of all, we the convention committee would like to thank everyone who came and made the Marijuana Anonymous 2000 Millenium of Hope Convention the great success it was. Most importantly though, we wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to Kevin G., Convention Committee Chairman. Without Kevin's leadership and constant dedication to

MA, the convention may not have become a reality. He kept all of the rest of us hard at work when we were feeling overwhelmed by the logistics and personal hardships that come with such an endeavor, and kept us focused during the inevitable personality conflicts that arise in group dynamics. Putting personalities aside and working with the principles is an

important part of our recovery. This is doubly true in business committees. This was truly an opportunity to practice this phase of our recovery. Having said all that, we the committee members wish to say thank you Kevin for job well done and know that your leadership is truly appreciated.

Signed, the Convention  
2000 committee members