



# a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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**INSIDE ANL!**

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A Smile*

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## **Sober since 11/2/2010**

I took my first bong hit when I turned 18 at the start of my freshman year of college. Within a month I was smoking pot every day if I had access to it. There were some glorious years and hilarious times. I smoked to celebrate the end of the day, to cure hangovers, to let my mind ricochet with absurd thoughts, and to turn any ordinary occasion, like doing my laundry, into a special event.

During those early years I did not tend to smoke alone, because everyone I knew was also a lover of weed. But I started realizing something was wrong when I began trying to get a kick from the resin in my pipe and ended up inhaling burning plastic.

I spent a great deal of my 20s "freelancing," which in reality meant I smoked all day and every day while sending out a handful of resumes per week. On paper my accomplishments were far from under-achieving, but as a true child

of Generation X nothing was good or fulfilling enough for me. My life was one stoned daydream after another. I tried 12-step programs on and off for 18 months but was not ready to commit to sobriety.

As I approached 30 I found the perfect solution to give my life meaning: graduate school. Although I managed to remain highly functioning through nine weed-fueled years of study, being a student again and pursuing my own research allowed me to live in an increasingly isolated world.

Having to share weed with other people irritated me. So for the past six years of my using, my character defects were allowed to run rampant: I was arrogant, moody, rage-prone, stubborn, impulsive, self-seeking, resentful, controlling, and forgetful.

Having long-since switched to spliffs, when my stash ran out I would pick through the ashtray and roll new joints from the dregs. During my last year of using I regularly awoke at 6:30 a.m. in order to deal with breakfast. I had spiritually flat-lined.

Even spending 17 hours in a South African prison for buying weed on the street did not get me back into the program. I was a total slave to the drug. I knew I was powerless and hated myself for not surrendering and going to a meeting.

The day I finally did was not because of the worst bottom I ever had or a white-light experience. I was simply living three blocks from a place I knew held meetings, and it was a power greater than myself that got me there.

My life a year later is better than I could ever have imagined it. I was lucky to notice the changes while I was still counting days, but I think the sheer relief that I had surrendered and was not going to fight the program was what buoyed me up.

It is a miracle of sobriety that I am able to tolerate people and even receive criticism without immediately becoming defensive. I no longer think I don't belong in this world. My mood swings are rare. I do not succumb to computer rage. My finances are more manageable, and my work goals are slowly coming true. I am not perfect with any of these things, but going to meetings, calling my sponsor, and helping two sponsees; helps keep me sane. My memory might never fully recover, but my heart is open and I am happy to be alive.

A great program friend of mine once shared, "Recovery is so much fun!" I never thought I would love the program or the people in it, but letting go of my ego and surrendering control has allowed me to embrace the life it offers. It truly does work if you work it.

Ben M.

## **THE ROVING REPORTER ASKS...**

*What was your most  
memorable MA Event?*

(Please submit answers by  
April 17, 2012)

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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A New Leaf  
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or submit online:  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
and click on the newsletter tab.

The primary purpose of us, as addicts and the program of MA, is to carry the message to the suffering addict. How do we do this? The answer is, by being of service. By being of service, we have an opportunity to give back what has been so freely given to us. If we can spend a small portion of the energy we used getting high to giving back, we will be greatly rewarded.

At the meeting level, there are many commitments (cookies, coffee, greeter, treasurer, GSR, secretary, or going out and starting a new meeting) that are crucial to the survival of our 12 Step Program as these are the people that a newcomer sees first.

At the District Service Meeting, an incredible amount of work is being done. The Hospital and Institutions Committee is about going in and talking to patients, sharing their stories and homes in a way that these patients can know that there is a different way of living. H & I is always looking for panel leaders and speakers.

The Literature Committee is busy writing and publishing brochures so that there is literature on the table for the newcomer and the rest of us. We have an Events Committee that always needs help with ideas and staging events. There are commitments that entail returning phone calls from people seeking help and information. Public service announcements are written and sent to radio stations, meeting starter packs are put together and mailed out to people inquiring about them, chips are purchased and sold to meetings.

This newsletter is put together and distributed to meetings. You can be of service by collecting birthdays or writing articles. Delegates are also elected at

the DSM to represent us at the World Conference where the commitments above are one on a large scale for the meetings we have in other states and countries.

If we stick around hopefully we'll be asked to be someone's sponsor and help them work the Steps, another rewarding commitment

The fact that people have taken these commitments before us ensured that the program was here for us and now it is our turn. The greatest reward from this is self-esteem. I feel good that I can finish something and be there for someone else. If you're like me and suffer from low self-worth or just want to feel "part of" something or want to help – get involved because this program belongs to each and every one of us and we all have an equal say in how it grows and is run. So step forward and make a commitment to your own recovery. George B ▲

**Tradition Four**  
**Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or M.A. as a whole.**

**Step Four**  
**Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

## ROVING REPORTER Q and A

Recently the Roving Reporter asked several questions...

### **How do you utilize the strength of your faith?**

I trust my Higher Power, that I am exactly where I need to be at this moment, that everything is exactly as it should be, right now.

It took me about 5 plus years in recovery, practicing the principles and praying for the willingness to be willing to tap into the faith I now have that God, my Higher Power, has got my back.

It occurred at a weekend retreat that I could even begin to understand having faith. I practiced again and again trusting that my Higher Power would take care of the results of my actions, as long as my actions were in line with God's Will rather than my own.

I utilize my faith by trusting that things are exactly how they are meant to be right now. For example, I receive an email from a child, I do not like what is in that email, and first I react - angry, self-righteous - then I pause and I ask God for guidance. I examine my part in the reaction. I calmly draft a response and save it in the draft folder. I pray and I go back to it 24 hours later. I re-read it, and I revise it, if necessary - noting that God's Will is represented. I send it. I leave the result of that email - which outlines my part and what I am willing to do in the future, never pointing out what I think the child should be doing - to my Higher Power.

I trust, I have faith, that this email will be received as it should be... not how I would like it to be.

~ Anon

### **What was the best suggestion you received from your sponsor when you first got clean?**

The Steps are in the order set down in the Big Book for a reason. Don't get ahead of yourself. Also, love and hate can't live in the same house. Pray and hate will evaporate.

*Chris B. Union City, CA clean 3.5 years*

That whenever I had a craving to smoke it was likely because I was afraid to face some fear. And, that my Higher Power believed I was ready to face that fear and the craving would only hinder me from facing the fear.

*Alison F. Los Gatos, CA clean 6 yrs*

### **What do remember most about your first MA meeting?**

I remember really hating my first meeting. People were smiling, laughing, and talking with each other - enjoying themselves, and it made me angry. This was serious shit, my sobriety. Why weren't they all being more serious?

My expectations led to my first sober resentments. I switched meetings for a time but I kept coming back and, eventually, I too could laugh at the circumstances that brought me to my knees and gave me the opportunity to change.

I try to remember this when newcomers join a meeting so I can be available to share my experience.

*Kathy B. Orange County, CA clean 8 years*

## **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. ▲

**New Meetings Start-Up  
All The Time.**  
Check your local districts website  
for updated information!  
or  
Get listed on the MAWS website  
for details contact:  
office@marijuana-anonymous.org

# marijuana anonymous worldwide

## MA World Services

PO Box 7807 Torrance, CA90504 800.766.6779  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

### District 1 San Francisco

www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

### District 2 East Bay

PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 510.287.8873

### District 3 South SF Bay Area

PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

### District 4 Western Washington

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

### District 5 Orange County

1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 714.999.9409

### District 6 LA County No.

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

### District 7 LA County So.

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 323.943.9228

### District 8 New York

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

### District 10 LA County East

PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.583.9582

### District 11 Portland

PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.221.7007

### District 12 North Bay, CA

PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 707.583.2326

### District 13 MA Online

www.ma-online.org

### District 14 London, England

07940.503438

### District 15 Long Island, NY

www.ma-longisland.org 516-568-5883

### District 16 Melbourne, Australia

24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

### District 17 Denmark

info@ma-kbh.dk

For a complete listing of all meetings visit [www.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org)

## YOUR VOICE MATTERS

MAWS is conducting an "Effectiveness Survey" to evaluate what the society of MA thinks about MAWS' service to date, to Districts, meetings and members. We hope to collect a society-wide group conscience to give direction to the type of work in which MAWS should be engaged and help evaluate MAWS' current ability and potential to serve MA's needs as conveyed by that MA group conscience.

SHARE YOUR OPINION.

This month we would like your, your groups', and/or your Districts' answers to the following questions:

1. Are the members of MAWS, Delegates, Trustees and Paid Workers, aware of the responsibilities involved in their individual positions? Is each member actively and effectively contributing their fair share of the workload of MAWS as it relates to completing the tasks assigned to MAWS through the Conference

process?

2. (Tradition 4) Does MAWS do anything that does not conform to MA principles and affect other groups or MA as a whole?

For more details, please go to the website [forum.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://forum.marijuana-anonymous.org). To submit your ideas and share your thoughts on these questions email us at [mes@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:mes@marijuana-anonymous.org).

## Birthdays

### Celebrating 224 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that, a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

#### District 1

Dave W. 3/8/03 9 yrs

#### District 5

Grateful Joe 3/7/11 1 YEAR!

Ernest F. 3/9/95 17 yrs

Kelly 3/17/07 5 yrs

#### District 6

Ray H. 2/1/11 1 YEAR!

Reid K. 2/6/10 2 yrs

David L. 3/17/08 4 yrs

Scott 3/9/10 2 yrs

Mike S. 3/17/05 7 yrs

Jeff M. 3/4/06 6 yrs

#### District 7

Louis W. 3/4/11 1 YEAR!

Peter B. 2/20/10 2 yrs

Howard S. 12/2/11 1 YEAR!

Elizabeth Z. 6/1/09 2 yrs

Dave P. 2/18/09 3 yrs

Ernie C. 3/5/05 7 yrs

Mary G. 2/15/99 13 yrs

Richard D. 3/1/96 16 yrs

Kevin S. 1/5/07 5 yrs

Carlton 3/9/11 1 YEAR!

Amanda S. 2/11/10 2 yrs

Jonathan R. 2/26/92 20 yrs

Rob R. 1/6/06 6 yrs

Howard K. 2/5/09 3 yrs

Steve G. 2/19/98 14 yrs

John H. 2/16/01 11 yrs

#### District 8

Kyle S. 2/23/11 1 YEAR!

Terri F. 2/26/09 3 yrs

Leo W. 2/3/03 9 yrs

Bruce M. 3/1/11 1 YEAR!

#### District 11

Paul G. 2/26/00 12 yrs

Steve M. 3/1/99 13 yrs

Donovan H. 3/6/03 9 yrs

Maria S. 3/15/97 15 yrs