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A NEW LEAF

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

The Long Way Home

By Sparkplug, District 5

My mother passed away when I was six and my father was too busy drinking and smoking pot to care; my grandparents got legal custody. I didn't have many friends growing up, and I was constantly pining for attention from my family. I felt like I had to be the center of attention all the time because I thought that no one loved or wanted me. My family lived in denial about my grandmother's alcoholism pretending that everything was O.K. As a result, I grew up thinking that it was wrong to feel any pain or anger.

When I first got high at age seventeen, all the feelings of low self esteem and lack of confidence were gone. I had finally found something to fill the void of pain, anger, love, respect, and all of the other emotions that I had never felt. Everything was finally O.K. I loved the way pot made me feel: totally tuned out; I didn't have to deal with any of those useless emotions. Within six months I was smoking daily. First, as a closet smoker, I didn't want my

friends to know I needed anything to make me feel comfortable. (The fact was that I only felt uncomfortable when I wasn't high.) Over the next seven years I gathered many friends. I finally belonged to a group; I was a "Stoner." I could pick out another stoner in a crowded dark movie theater and we would be getting high within five minutes. I always had plenty of pot and was the center of attention once again.

Somewhere along the road it became more of a chore than fun. I moved out at the age of eighteen so I could take bong hits first thing in the morning. I only dated girls who smoked, had jobs where I could smoke, and went places where I could smoke. Marijuana made every decision for me; I was no longer in control of my life. Years of depression followed. My low self-esteem also returned. I was constantly fishing for compliments just to feel good about myself. I often prayed to be taken into the deep woods so I

could just dry out. I just needed a head start. I thought once I quit smoking that everything would be all right. Almost nightly, for two years, I would smoke all my stash promising my self that this was the last time I would ever smoke. When morning came, I soon forgot my vow. All this time I was still stuffing my emotions and appearing happy on the surface.

One night, after being dry for three days, my ex-girlfriend and I got into a heated argument. I had no way to mask my emotions and all those years of stuffing anger, pain, fear and every other emotion exploded. I felt as if evil spirits possessed me. I had never felt so many different and extreme emotions at one time and I was at their mercy. I had hit an emotional bottom.

In addition to spending seventy-three days in jail for spousal abuse, I had to complete a fifty two-week anger management and drug diversion program. I had been getting loaded between my sentence and my enrollment into

(continued on page 2)



Do you have a birthday approaching?? Write an article for **A NEW LEAF** telling us how you did it!! Please send all articles to: **A NEW LEAF** P.O. Box 4314 North Hollywood, CA, 91617 or e-mail to ANULEAF@aol.com or CRZIFNGRS@aol.com



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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Get Your Convention 1999 Raffle Tickets Now!

By The District 6 Convention Committee

The District 6 Convention Committee is alive and well! We are very excited to be hosting Convention 1999 in Burbank, CA at the Burbank Airport Hilton on January 15-17, 1999. We have already begun working on the workshops and events to be held at the Convention. This article is to bring to your attention the Convention 1999 Raffle. We will begin selling raffle tickets at the 1998 Conference in District 5 over Memorial Day weekend. Prizes that we have collected so far include: artwork by MA members, concert tickets, MA merchandise (including a copy of Life With Hope signed by all Convention attendees) and possibly even a cash prize! At the Conference, the Convention Committee will be present, selling tickets to attendees, as well as providing books of raffle tickets to YOUR delegates that are willing to sell them in your district.

Stay tuned to A NEW LEAF for more details on the Convention Raffle, registration and the exciting and informative workshops we are planning. If you have any suggestions for the 1999 Convention, or if you need any information, please send comments to: Convention Committee c/o District 6, P.O. Box 2433, Van Nuys, CA 91404 or e-mail: Burbank99@aol.com. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you in Burbank in 1999.



Home (from pg. 1)

the diversion program, constantly telling myself I had to quit. With eighteen months of prison time over my head, I had an important decision to make. I had found myself in an MA meeting with a courtcard that needed to be signed three times a week. Someone reached out and gave me his phone number. I asked him to be my sponsor and put his name on the back of my card to show my counselor. He bought me a big book and gave me some direction.

As a result of being as honest with myself as possible, working the steps with my sponsor, and carrying the message to the marijuana addict who still suffers, I have lost the obsession to get high and been sober over two years. I have acquired an emotional foundation in which I have built some of the strongest relationships with my friends and family I have ever had. I am able to face pain and anger and accept them in my life for what they are. I have a Power Greater than Myself in which I have complete faith. I am no longer greatly dependent on other's opinions of me. I am actually someone that others look up to and someone who is willing to help others grow along spiritual lines.

For the first time in my life I feel real love in my life and the hole I once tried to fill with drugs is now filled with the faith I have in a Higher Power. It has definitely been a lone, bumpy road through many out of the way places, but I have finally found my way home. I owe all this to my Higher Power, Marijuana Anonymous, the people in meetings, my sponsor and all of the people who told me to KEEP COMING BACK!

Much Love,

~Sparkplug

Clip and Save Traditions Checklist:

Tradition Two:

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God whose expression may come through in our group conscience.

Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

- ☐ Do I criticize or do I trust and support my meeting, group and district officers? How about committees, newcomers, old-timers or other members?
- ☐ Do I fulfill my MA service commitments in a responsible manner?
- ☐ Do I look for credit when serving MA? Do I seek praise for my MA ideas?
- ☐ Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I *yield* in good spirit to the group conscience and work *cheerfully* along with it?
- ☐ Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing serve MA wherever needed (i.e. make coffee, clean up, reach out to newcomers etc.)
- ☐ Do I wholeheartedly accept the spirit of rotation in service, happily allowing another member to become an active part of the MA service structure?
- ☐ Am I willing, as a member of my group, to table a matter for further study when nearly complete agreement cannot be achieved?
- ☐ In group discussions, do I speak of matters which I have no experience and little knowledge?
- ☐ If I've held service positions for some time, am I prepared to move into the role of "elder statesman" (holding no resentments, having sound judgement and willing to sit quietly on the sidelines, patiently and humbly awaiting developments)?

"Experience has shown us that the conscience of the group, when properly informed, is much wiser than any one leader."

-Life With Hope, Tradition Two (page 75)

***** ★ **Congratulations to Our Members** ★ ★ **Celebrating Their Sober Birthdays!** ★ *****

District 4

Howard 4/3/92 6 years

District 5

Sailor Chris 4/1/91 7 years
David D. "Piano Man" 4/1/96 2 years
Anna M. 4/4/96 2 years
Jason 4/14/95 3 years
Tom "Slick/Oldtimer" 4/15/96 2 years
Mary Ellen K. 4/16/96 2 years
Adam G. "Swedish Chef" 4/17/96 2 years
Jeff Y. 4/23/96 2 years

District/Group Unknown

Bob 1/28/96 2 years



District 6

Geoff F. 4/1/89 9 years
Grady S. 4/1/93 5 years
Susie C. 4/6/94 4 years
Van W. 4/12/73 25 years
Gwen G. 4/13/93 5 years
Sammie 4/15/94 4 years
Gary Z. 4/20/94 4 years
Carol S. 4/20/91 7 years
Joanne K. 4/21/90 8 years
Brian K. 4/23/90 8 years
Sunnie R. 4/25/94 4 years

District 8

Krannie 4/02/97 1 year

1998 Marijuana Anonymous World Service Conference

May 22, 23, 24 & 25, 1998

at

Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC)

455 S. Main St., Orange, CA 92868

(at Main St. and La Veta Ave.)

CHOC West 2nd Floor Conference Rooms A, B, C, & D
(behind parking structures)

Conference? Who, ME?

by Mary Ellen, District 5

This year, District 5 is hosting the Marijuana Anonymous World Service Conference (if you didn't already know this!) I have been around the fellowship for 2 years now and when I was a newcomer I heard many people talking about this mysterious conference. I thought it was like a secret club that only the coolest or most important MA members could go to and had absolutely no idea about what it was for. I have since been informed about what takes place at this event.

First, ANYONE who is a Marijuana Anonymous member can go. Basically it is a big meeting where members discuss and vote on pertinent issues in MA: new literature proposals, changes to the book, financial issues, public information and hospitals and institutions. Each District should send delegates, but if you would like to go and check out the inner workings of this program, all are welcome and are encouraged to attend. Service is a great way to give back what we have been so freely given.

For More Information or if you
need a place to stay
during the conference call:
Mike LB (714) 547-3693
Terry (714) 438-2414
Az A (Pirate) (714) 638-4224

MA Worldwide...

San Francisco (District 1) P.O. Box 460024 San Francisco, CA 94146 (415) 522-7373	L.A. County, North (District 6) P.O. Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 (818) 759-9194	New York (District 8) P.O. Box 507 New York, NY 10276 (212) 459-4423
East Bay (District 2) P.O. Box 8354 Berkeley, CA 94707 (510) 287-8873	L.A. County, South (District 7) P.O. Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 (213) 964-2370	Portland, Oregon (District 11) P.O. Box 14125 Portland, OR 97293 (503) 221-7007
South Bay (District 3) P.O. Box 111341 Campbell, CA 95011 (408) 450-0796	L.A. County, East (District 10) P.O. Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 (909) 787-6020 (626) 583-9582	Humboldt, CA Area (707) 443-5928
Seattle (District 4) P.O. Box 1509 539 Queen Anne Ave. N Seattle, WA 98109 (206) 548-9034	Orange County (District 5) 358 S. Main #215 Orange, CA 92668 (714) 999-9449	Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter P.O. Box 194 Sadsbury, PA 19369 (610) 622-9243
Santa Cruz (District 9) P.O. Box 3196 Santa Cruz, CA 95063 (408) 427-4088		New Zealand MA Service Centre P.O. Box 74-386 Newmarket Auckland 3, New Zealand (09) 846-6822

World Service Office

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