



June 1998

Volume 8 - No. 6

A NEW LEAF

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

A Return to Recovery

By Melody W., District 5

I am an addict. What is important right now is the past nine months of my clean time. Nine months ago, I felt myself sliding into a depression. This feeling was not new to me; I had always seemed to cycle a lot. I would have periods of energy and hope, followed quickly by intervals of lethargy and despair.

Before I was clean I would use drugs to either celebrate or medicate according to my present state. In recovery I would find myself leaning on my program in bleak times and "not needing" meetings when all was well. This time was different. Looking back, I do not think I could have come up with a more drawn-up, yet effective, suicide plan if I had consciously planned it. I stopped going to meetings. I stopped going to church. I would have stopped calling my sponsor, but I did not have one. I actually threw away all of my phone lists when I cleaned out my desk just before Christmas. I put all of my energy into looking good on the "outside."

At work, I was the Good Child in a dysfunctional family. I took on more and more work and hardly a day went by when someone didn't ask how I managed to deal with all of the stress and keep smiling. A week and a half before I went into the hospital, my son was

sick with a cold and I stayed home with him for four days. My husband kept urging me to get out for a few hours. I couldn't stop crying and I didn't change out of my pajamas for those four days. A couple of days later, I stopped sleeping. At about four a.m. on Monday, January 12th, I told myself that if I didn't fall asleep within the next hour, it would be perfectly reasonable to drink the bottle of cold medicine in the cabinet. Thankfully, I slept two hours and went to work.

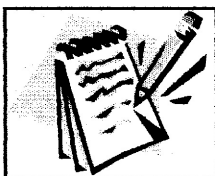
I work in a hospital. That morning I knew when the doctors were speaking to me, because I could see their lips move, but I could hear no sound come out. I repeated, "I'm sorry doctor," until they walked away. I called my therapist, she spoke to my manager, and I was fifty-one fiftied as a danger to myself into the hospital that same day.

Even though I would never have chosen to spend ten days in a psych ward, I was grateful from the first day that Spirit put me there. There were a few others that were both addicts and mentally ill like me, and on January 16th, they sang "Happy Birthday" to me at breakfast in the cafeteria. No nine years chip, and we were all wearing pajamas, but I could not have been more

grateful.

I was diagnosed with Bipolar 1 Disorder (they used to call us manic depressive). My condition can be controlled with medication. I still have trouble identifying as mentally ill, just as it was so difficult years ago to identify as an addict. I must remember I am not my illness just as I am not my addiction. When I was first released from the hospital I figured I was done: cured. How many times have I felt that way in recovery? I must remember that healing of any kind is a process, not an event. With medication taking care of the Suicidal-Thought-Lows and Able-to-Function-on-Two-Hours-of-Sleep-a-Night-Highs of my Bipolar Disorder, I found myself with a s-t load of feelings, resentment and never-acknowledged character defects to deal with.

I am amazed that I ever saw Step Three as an event, as in, "I did my Third Step." I am living a Third Step right now. Today I am either willing or in pain. Since I am the controlling one, not Spirit, I get to choose between the two. I find myself on an emotional roller coaster. Old issues and resentments clutter the rails, threatening send my tiny car jumping from the (continued on page 2)



Share your experience with meditation!! Write to
A NEW LEAF and pass it on!! Please send all articles to:
A NEW LEAF P.O. Box 4314 North 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:

Mary Ellen K. and Tom M.
ANL Distribution Coordinator:
Judy S.
LWH Distribution Coordinator:
Terri R.

District 1 Bureau Chief: vacant
District 2 Bureau Chief: Praline M.
District 3 Bureau Chief: Jerry
District 4 Bureau Chief: Mary M.
District 5 Bureau Chief: Melody
District 6 Bureau Chief: Sandy B.
District 7 Bureau Chief: Suzanne C.
District 8 Bureau Chief: vacant
District 9 Bureau Chief: Bernie G.
District 10 Bureau Chief: Bill H.
District 11 Bureau Chief: Sam H.
Eastern PA Bureau Chief: Lee R.

A NEW LEAF Executive Board:

Chairman: Rob M.
Treasurer: Carol Mc.
Secretary: Ilene M.

Send all articles, inquiries and
correspondence to:

A NEW LEAF

P.O. Box 4314
North Hollywood, CA 91617
Email: ANuLeaf@aol.com

Editorial Phone #:
(818) 353-5537

Fax #:
(818) 990-2980

© Copyright 1998 - Marijuana Anonymous

Purim Story (Fellowship & Recovery)

By, Anonymous

I was born the child of two liberal musicians. I was taught to call my parents by their first names and my father smoked marijuana frequently. From what evidence I've come up with, my father wouldn't let my mother touch me for a couple years when I was a baby, which I believe resulted in some of the personality problems I have today. I was brought up as an only child which I think further interfered with my social skills. And then my parents divorced when I was nine, which made things worse. I don't mean to suggest that everything about my childhood was bad, I remember my first five five years as being happy, and I know my father taught me how to use my intellect.

I remember being picked on more than most kids in elementary school, but the ego boost I got from scholastic honors made up for it. Then puberty came along. Everyone from friends to parents to health class told me that at puberty a boy becomes sexually excited by girls. When this did not happen to me, I rationalized it with every excuse in the book. It wasn't until 22 years and one failed marriage later that I admitted I was homosexual. Meanwhile, as I became worried about my sexual problems, I became depressed. I didn't know what the word meant then, but I spent lots of daylight hours lying in bed.

Then the marijuana temptation came. I was generally a conservative kid and when the teachers said not to smoke dope, I didn't. But two things happened. First, my father said to me, "I don't think you should smoke pot until you are 16 because your brain is still growing, but after you are 16, smoke it with me and I'll show you the correct way to do it." Then my best friend said that he was smoking pot, that it was wonderful and that I should try it. By my 17th birthday, I was smoking pot. Pot greatly enhanced my appreciation of music and seemed to make the smallest insights incredibly profound. Probably, I liked it most because it temporarily replaced my depression with euphoria.

Getting to college, I had my first experience with the "down side" of pot. It made me feel good, but I sure wasn't getting my papers written. I dropped out for a year, got an apartment (continued on pg. 4)



Return (cont'd)

track. At this point, I must hold on and trust.

I can finally say that the amount of time I spend willing is greater than the time I spend in pain. When I was first released from the hospital, I was afraid I had developed a new weakness. Previously I could push myself physically for maybe a month before I collapsed of exhaustion. I could live other people's lives for them, ignoring my own emotional needs, for a week or two before I dumped all over another human being or found myself cursing Spirit. But now, in my present state, it all comes back to me in a day's time, sometimes less. Spirit has me on a very short leash and I am grateful for it. I pray I will never rebuild my tolerance.

This has forced me to listen to that small, quiet voice within, to trust it and honor it in every circumstance. To trust Spirit in the large things in my life feels natural. To seek guidance in the small things is what I must learn. Finally, the thing I have found myself most grateful for is the patience of this program. I can walk away, run or hide from it, but whenever I choose to go back, there it is, waiting for me.

(continued)

and a job. That is when the dark side of pot fully reared its ugly head. I was living in an unfamiliar city, friendless. Instead of making friends, I went home every night and got stoned. Soon I had new problems, like my bills weren't getting paid and my apartment's rug looked like a pizza with everything on it. As the mess got worse, I was increasingly too depressed to face life without pot and bought higher and higher quality dope to get stoned every day. My work became terrible as my brain got more pickled. I had a filing job and filed an A-file under Y so that my supervisors had to spend hours cleaning up my mess. It is only by the grace of God I wasn't fired.

I somehow got the idea to enlist in the Marines to force me off the dope for at least the three month duration of boot camp. I was a little foggy when I got there but my mind eventually cleared. Back at college I never got stoned as much again. I did enjoy doing organic chemistry stoned and I got an A+ in that course. Then I joined the Navy after college and I had to quit again so I could pass the urine drug screens. Twelve years later I got out of the Navy and I had my first chance to use pot with no one stopping me.

My life was nearing a real bottom. I had just gotten divorced largely due to my sexual problems and I was very depressed about my sexuality. Jobwise, I was a medical doctor, but I found it increasingly difficult to find a specialty I could practice competently. Over the last four years my life had seemed increasingly hopeless, and I had become suicidal. I had been in the hospital five times for depression. For the last year I had had constant suicidal thoughts. Thoughts that I could not keep out of my head no matter what I tried. Psychotherapy and medications were no longer helping. Finally, I decided that if I couldn't beat these thoughts, I would join them.

(This story will be concluded in the July issue)

NEW MEETINGS!!!!

CALIFORNIA (OTHER)

Thu-Santa Rosa-7:00pm O, NS
3554 Round barn Blvd. Room "H"
"Stoners on the Steps"

ALASKA

Sat-Cordova-2:00pm O, W/A
Cordova Community Hospital
"High On Life"

COLORADO GROUP

Sun-Denver-5:30pm O
3131 E. 4th Ave (corner of St. Paul),
Bottom Floor
"Clean Headed Buds"

GEORGIA

Wed-Decatur-7:00pm O, NS, W/A
Clubscape, Inc. @4279 Memorial Dr
Suite D (Memorial Drive exit off I-
285; across from Kensington
MARTA station)

MICHIGAN

Sat-Royal Oak- 11:00am O, NS
Catholic Social Services @11424 E.
11 Mile Road "Royal Oak MA"

OHIO

Thu-New Boston-7:00pm O
4346 Gallia Street, Upstairs (Route
52 West, Next to Whitey's Bike
Shop)

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

P.O. Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404 • (800) 766-6779

<http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>

e-mail: info@marijuana-anonymous.org