

A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

June 2000

Volume 10 - Number 6

Animal Crackers by Morning John

I love to watch nature shows, and I learn a lot from them that I can use in my program, for example: When the bushmen of the Kalahari set out to capture a small baboon, their method is simple and ingenious. They take a hollowed-out gourd and cut it off at the neck, leaving an opening just wide enough for a small baboon to put his open hand in.

They then place a nut inside and tie it down by a watering hole. The young baboon, after reaching inside to grab the nut, discovers it cannot withdraw its closed fist through the narrow neck. It then screams and tugs and sets off a wild commotion to pull out its hand, doing everything to gain its freedom except letting go of the nut! The Bushman then simply walks up and captures it. That is very much like me and my addiction to marijuana. It was a tempting treat that I couldn't resist, and when too late I found myself ensnared by the insidiousness of the disease, I fought and railed against it and tried every means of releasing myself from its bondage (look on page 1 of

the "Life with Hope" book, I tried 'em all) except letting go! When I finally did start to let go and let God handle my obsession and compulsion regarding marijuana, I found there were many other ways I ensnared myself by old behavior, instances where I had to let go! Now I find if I get

caught by traps laid for my sobriety, I can get help to extricate myself, such as talking to my sponsor, taking the steps, going to meetings, reading the literature, and most importantly, prayer and meditation. Lately I have even learned to start avoiding some of the traps altogether.

Another example: A traveler in India came upon a fully grown elephant being held in place by a tiny rope attached to a small stake in the ground. When he asked the owner what prevented the elephant from merely pulling up the stake and running away, the owner replied that he obtained the elephant as a youngster, and at that time it did indeed try to get away, but the rope and stake held it fast, so even at its present size and strength, the elephant had it in its mind

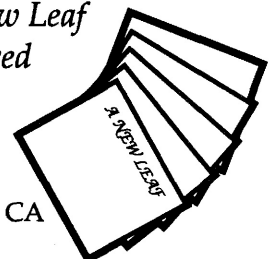
that the rope and stake were stronger than it was. So it is for me when I allow my past to dominate my present consciousness, and let old manners of thinking and behavior rule my present. When I keep old angers and resentment as part of my life, I am surrendering my enormous capacity for love and forgiveness to this tiny rope that I still think is stronger than I am. When I practice my character defects instead of the spiritual principles of the program, I allow this tiny stake to keep me rooted into my old way of life that brought me only fleeting moments of happiness and serenity.

As always, it is my choice to drink like a fish, eat like a horse, be stubborn like a mule, work like a dog, or be wise as an owl. I'll settle for being happy as a clam. ▲

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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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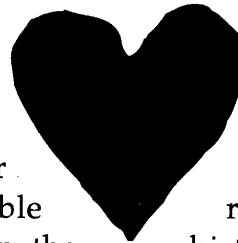
Gifts of Sobriety by Carmen

My name is Carmen and I am an addict. I just celebrated 1 year clean and sober on March 28, 2000. Though this is not my first time around, in fact, I've been trying to live a sober life since 1975. I have put some time together on my own, once for maybe 5 years. But the first time in a Twelve Step program was back in 1987. I put together 7 years. After a little over 2 years, I decided I needed something more. I heard about a church that was right in my neighborhood at the time. A friend in the program thought that I would really like it, and asked if I would like to go with her on Sunday. I figured by what she told me about it, that it sounded almost too good to be true. Well, the first half hour in this place and I knew I was home! I almost immediately began an intense study there and after about 3 years, became a licensed practitioner. I was leading a recovery group there. I was a member of the choir and had the incredible opportunity to sing on the first album the choir recorded. Life was going extremely good! I had a lot of good things going for me, but! I pretty much stopped going to meetings. I wasn't keeping in touch with a sponsor. Then some

things started happening. I'm not going to get into details because I know they were not the cause of my slip! I know that if I had stayed in the program it would not have happened! First, my 3 year relationship was in really serious trouble and I was thinking it didn't look like it was going to get better. Then she got pregnant and that really shocked me. Then my dad died! But like I said before, these were not the reasons for my slip. The reason was that, because I wasn't going to meetings regularly, I had no one reminding me that I can not drink or use no matter what! I simply forgot that I cannot drink or use NO MATTER WHAT! So I started thinking, once again, (I first had this thought back in the 70's and many times since) that maybe I could just use on the weekends. Ha! I flew to N.Y.

for my dad's funeral, an old "friend" picked me up at the airport and passed me a pipe as soon as I got in the car and the rest is history! My relationship, history! My practitioner license, history!

Backing up a bit. A few days before my dad died, we were all at my sister's house, (my mom and dad were out here in California visiting) I was 7 years sober and my



Gifts of Sobriety continued

mind was very clear, which to me is the greatest gift of this program, and I was feeling great physically. But it seemed my dad was not. Throughout the night he kept complaining about his stomach, I thought he had a stomach ache, and didn't think much else about it. Well, Cori (my ex) and I had a

really nice time seeing everyone, and it was time to go, so we said our goodnight and were on our way. When we got home I went upstairs to change, when all of a sudden I hear a voice in my head say (so clearly) "You're never going to see your dad alive again!" which to me was absurd

because I'd thought nothing of his "belly ache" and even now the thought of it was not there. I went down stairs to tell Cori. When I reached the kitchen she turned to me and before I could say a word she said, "Something just told me we were never going to see your dad alive again!" It stopped

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

District 1

Mikki K. 6/15/91 9 yrs

District 2

Eric S. 6/20/99 1 year !

Skip 9/19/98 18 mos

Clive 10/8/98 18 mos

Malaika 2/3/98 2 yrs

JC 2/14/98 2 yrs

Jeri 3/9/97 3 yrs

Meredith 3/23/97 3 yrs

Don C. 2/29/97 3 yrs

Bob K. 6/3/97 3 yrs

Cat 4/13/96 4 yrs

Tim V. 3/1/94 6 yrs

Ruth 2/13/87 13 yrs

District 3

Jill K. 6/8/88 12 yrs

Erica H. 6/1/88 12 yrs

Dean V. 6/11/90 10 yrs

Doug K. 6/10/98 2 yrs

Jerry P. 6/27/93 7 yrs

Robert S. 6/1/97 3 yrs

Ron A. 6/15/95 5 yrs

District 6

Joey 5/10/98 2 yrs

George L. 5/13/91 9yrs

Dan Z. 5/29/99 1year!

Abdol 5/18/85 15 yr

Lucie 5/82 18 yr

Sandy L. 5/29/94 6yrs

Jon D. 4/7/98 2 yrs

Bernie D. 3/99 1 year!

Alice K. 6/1/96 4 Yrs.

Allison O. 6/1/95 5 Yrs

Dave B. 6/1/94 6 Yrs

Sandy B. 6/13/97 3 Yrs

District 7

Carol Mc. 6/23/88 12 yrs

Tommy J. 5/1/98 2yrs

Allen 5/1/97 3yrs

Mike 5/1/88 12 yrs

Carmen 3/28/99 1 year!

Kat 3/13/97 3yrs

Annie 4/29/91 9yrs

Greg R. 5/1/91 9yrs

Mary 2/15/99 1 year!

Dana 5/6/-99 1 year!

Sam 5/5/91 9yrs

Laurence 1/23/-88 12yrs

Nick 5/16/96 4 yrs

District 8

Amy S. 4/27/86 14 yrs

Libby G. 6/6/90 10 yrs

Mary B. 5/15/98 2 yrs

Putney VT

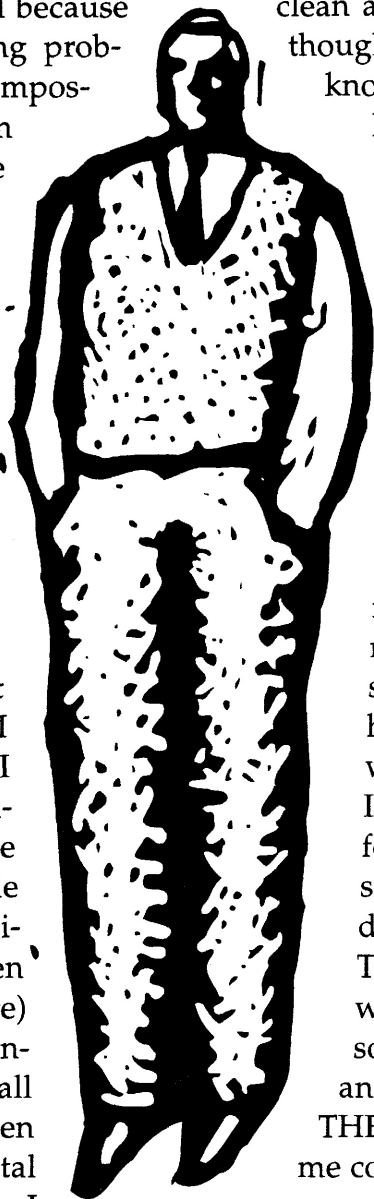
Sheryl C. 5/16/97 3 yrs

Columbus GA

Clara U. 6/3/96 4 yrs

Gifts of Sobriety continued

me cold in my tracks, my mouth dropped, I could not believe what I had just heard! I asked her "What should we do?" It was late and because of my dad's hearing problem it was almost impossible to talk to him on the phone. So we decided to wait until the morning to call. But the real reason I did not call is because I had never had a paranormal experience before in my life and even with the confirmation of Cori repeating word for word what I had just heard in my head, I still didn't trust it! I think these experiences (gifts) could be normal for people who pray and meditate (rather than delay and medicate) daily. The next morning I received a call that my dad had been taken to the hospital at around 5 am. I



NEVER SAW HIM ALIVE AGAIN! I know I was able to receive that message from him that night because I was clean and sober, and even though I didn't trust it, I know that if something like this happens again, I will.

Well, right around the time of my one year sober birthday, my dad came to me in a dream. He put his arm around my shoulder, looked straight into my eyes with so much love and said something to me he'd never said while he was alive. It would be so easy for me in the past to say, "That was just a dream" BUT NOT THIS TIME! I know it was another gift of sobriety, daily prayer, and meditation. THESE are what keep me coming back. ▲



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is accepting articles.

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Whoops by ANL editor

We at A New Leaf apologize for failing to edit out a reference to another 12 step program in an article in the March

issue. A New Leaf's policy is to not mention the proper names of other fellowships, in accordance with traditions 6 and 10.