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# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

## Life's Happenings

by Jeff

**M**ost people's lives are busy nowadays, so I am not claiming to be unique. I know I am "unique, just like everyone else." I know I am just one of many sober people, and I am glad, but regardless I do lead a busy life. I am at work at least 40 hours a week, I go to 12 Step meetings, I have sponsees, and I have a life. A life IN recovery, true, but there are a few things that are not directly related to recovery in my life, such as working on settling my parents' estate, spending time with my grandchildren, planning a wedding – you know, life's happenings.

It is some of these life's happenings that I am writing about. Last May my daughter gave birth to a wonderful bouncing baby boy. Like most newborn babies, he cried a lot. It was getting to Mom and Dad, but they just chalked it up to being a while since the last baby and this one being a little bit fussier – until he had a high fever. That high fever got them to the hospital, for just under two weeks.

The fever started late at night, so they went to the emergency room and eventually into a hospital room. They thought it might be a kidney infection, or a viral infection. When three days of antibiotics didn't solve the fever problem, they looked some more. That is when they found the infection in his windpipe and realized that he had an extreme case of acid reflux. That, however, was discovered at a different hospital. He had been transferred late at night because of a possible obstruction in his trachea and the need of surgery if it was blocked. A complete examination proved that the obstruction was only an infection and surgery wasn't required – a longer stay, but no surgery.

It is bad enough having a six-week-old baby in the hospital, but with two other little ones it is even tougher. That is where my wife and I came in. We took care of the other two in the evenings and on the weekend. There isn't anything like having two youngsters running around to keep you hopping and make you tired, and they did. Since the evening is when we go to most of our meetings, we didn't go for the time we had the little ones, just under two weeks. One of the advantages of living with a fellow addict is that you can always have a meeting, for whenever two are gathered together with God, you have a meeting. That made it a little easier, as did talking with sponsees and my sponsor, but it still isn't the same as going to regular meetings.

Once the emergency was over and the baby returned home, we had a couple of days till our normal Sunday meeting. We had planned for my wife to work with a sponsee and me to do some family trust/computer work at home. But that wasn't meant to be. Late Thursday night we received a phone call from a friend in the program. He had just been informed the Marijuana Anonymous panel he was trying to put together was set to start the next day. He knew I had MA panel information because he had done a panel with me previously, so he called for help. I told him I would make a copy and give it to him. He then asked if we could also speak. I told

him I could but my wife couldn't, because she had already planned to be working with a sponsee.

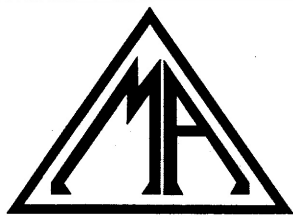
As so often happens, we make plans, God laughs, and changes them. The next afternoon as I am getting ready for the panel, my wife checks with her sponsee to make sure everything was still on, and she found out it wasn't. She was feeling very sickly and was calling off the session. So I did what any helpful mate would do: I volunteered her to come speak with me. I mean she didn't have anything else to do how, and besides, we still needed another speaker for the panel, and since she is so nice she went with me. It was very good. It is always good, for me, to speak and talk with newcomers, and this panel was no exception. It was God doing for me what I couldn't do for myself, in this case getting me to a meeting, of sorts.

Two days later, after the Sunday meeting, we were talking with friends about why we hadn't been there last week. In the conversation, we mentioned the baby to a member who is a student doctor and just happens to be doing her residency in pediatrics right now. We mentioned that he had blood in his stool, and she guessed right a way that he was allergic to his formula, which is what the final diagnosis was. She asked what hospital he had been in, and we told her, and she was surprised because that is the hospital she was working at. The more we talked about the family and everything she realized that she had met my daughter and family. This is really important to me because my daughter doesn't understand my involvement in recovery; she thinks it is some kind of cult. So this was a good thing. It showed her that Recovery was more like a large extended family than a secret cult.

The next day when I told my daughter and her husband about one of my friends being involved in the care of the baby, they remembered her. But what really impressed my son-in-law was how far she had come. I had told him just enough of her story to let him know that she had come from a very low bottom to her current status of student doctor. The fact that he acknowledged that fact was impressive for me, because I was using when they first got married, and I had a rather low opinion of him. That he could understand and appreciate where this woman had come from and was going was something I would have put beyond him, but in my sobriety I can see that it isn't.

Even though it is sad that a seven-week-old baby has spent one-third of his life in the hospital, many external blessings have come out of it. My wife has become much closer to my grandchildren and my daughter, and they to her. My daughter has been, once again, reassured that regardless of what is going on in my life I will ALWAYS be there for her and her family. My daughter and her husband have learned, once again, that recovery isn't a cult, it is a source of miracles, and not only in my life but in the lives of others as well.

Thank you, God, for life's happenings.



## 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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A New Leaf

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We send approximately 600 copies of A New Leaf each month to subscribers in 30 states and 3 foreign nations.

## My New Poem of Choice

by Anonymous

I used to live poetry  
filled with dark images  
and phrases carefully plagiarized,  
that I would reword behind my own back

Honest  
wasn't something I could be,  
even with myself  
And then all of a sudden,  
over several years,  
I changed,  
and my life poem changed

It started with a word,  
hope-  
and was composed with willingness  
and action

Now my life is a collaboration  
with the One Light  
and the ones who accepted me  
without reservation  
The ones who lived their own dark poems  
but have chosen to trust instead

I still live poetry  
when I am not too busy  
dancing  
or singing with the music  
they helped me rediscover

## CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW LEAF!

More than 600 recovering marijuana addicts in 30 states and three foreign nations will read A New Leaf this month. And they only have something to read because folks like you share your experience, strength and hope. So please consider contributing to our July issue in one of these ways:

**Write your story** in 1,000 words or less; **share on Step 7** and its principle of humility; **share on Tradition 7** and the importance of MA groups being self-supporting; **write a poem** with a recovery message; or **answer the Roving Reporter question**, "What does humility mean to you in recovery?"

We look forward to hearing from you!

The recovering stoners at *A New Leaf*

## Losing My "Dirty Little Secret"

By RDD

I have long believed that all of us have at least one DLS – a Dirty Little Secret we do that we would not want anyone else to know about. Usually it's drug use, gambling or another vice from an endless list of no-no's. Some of us have more than one DLS, but we can save that part for the therapist. Obviously, my DLS was smoking pot. I was extremely fortunate to not have ventured into other bad habits, and I thank God every day that it didn't amount to more.

I'm sure it would amaze many people I know that I was a chronic user. I have four degrees, two of them advanced. I'm a very high achiever and have done just about everything that was expected of me in life. It never occurred to me that I fit the profile of a pothead, whatever that is. Many people like me who grew up in the 70s were able to grow out of using it. Others of us - those now in recovery - unfortunately, did not. None of my current friends or acquaintances used pot.

My catharsis to stop using was really motivated by my work, but equally important was the realization of what the weed was doing to my stress levels, respiratory and heart. Until very recently, I held an executive position with a Fortune 100 firm. When we completed a very ugly merger, I (like thousands of other hard-working employees) found myself without a job. However, I chose to be laid off and planned for it, because I knew I could no longer function in the high-stress world, and I had to find a way to "get my groove back." I was obviously very unhappy and totally appalled at the way big mergers are conducted in the boardroom. For those of you who work in a big company, there's usually one person who's a kindred spirit on the executive team - the one who tries to be the voice of reason and do the right thing for employees and investors. That was me. However, it amounted to years of beating my head against the wall. I was tired of the games and the lies and the insincerity. And I was tired of using pot as a way to deal with it and justify the constant challenges to my peers. It all came to a head, and I decided a total change in my life - losing the job, the pot and gaining a life - was the only real thing I could do.

I got stoned nearly every day of my life since 1993. Before then, it was every now and then, especially before a displeasing chore like mundane administrative work or cleaning the garage. When I finished my first advanced degree, I took a little toke in the morning before work because I thought I deserved it. I was surprised that I was actually very creative and figured no one knew. That little toke turned into a daily activity. I now wonder if everyone knew about my DLS but didn't say anything.

Like so many of us, I quit when I needed to - to pass an employment or insurance screening. But when the coast was clear, I was back to my old habits.

Now, at age 42, I've decided enough is enough. I've been sober for two months. In a few weeks I'll begin attending meetings. I haven't done that for fear of being recognized, and for other reasons that I know are either blatantly irrational or can be overcome.

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## The Roving Reporter

*The Roving Reporter asks,  
What is one basic truth you have learned in recovery?*

*And MA answers:*

"For this addict it was something so simple that it actually hurt getting it through this thick head of mine: It's not WHY ME, it's WHAT can WE (me and God) do to get through this one. I learned that every time I asked WHY, I was questioning my Higher Power and therefore not trusting that there was a solution to everything/anything that came my way. By saying WHAT, it keyed me to at least try to trust a power greater than myself."

— Trisa, District 11

"IProgressing with the Steps is like the One-Day-At-A-Time program, because I can only focus on what's in front of me."

— Kelly, Grayslake, Ill



One basic truth I've learned in recovery is that being 'one among the many' is incredibly empowering. I am driven now to express myself to others without minimizing, aggrandizing or romanticizing my experiences, to tell the truth about who I perceive myself to be instead of presenting who I'd like to be. I find that I'm not so bad after all. In fact, for all my nutsiness, I'm a fun person to be.

— Lacie H., District 6

"The world doesn't revolve around me, but as long I'm clean and sober I can have a place in it."

— Joe, Grayslake, Ill

*For next month, the Roving Reporter asks, "What does humility mean to you in recovery?"*

# MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>  
 email: [office@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:office@marijuana-anonymous.org)

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## Losing My "Dirty Little Secret"

*concluded*

My first step was losing my DLS and being able to say to myself it's not for any specific reason other than it's time to change and I feel it to the tips of my toes.

What I've noticed since then is a dramatic improvement in my mood, really clear eyes (vs. the Visine-inspired ones) and better sleep patterns. I worry about what the weed has done to my thought process and memory, but there's not much I can do about that now. It'll be a difficult journey, and the tendency to lapse will be ever-present. I'm relieved to say, however, "so far so good." When the time comes for me to go back to work, I'll be able to jump back in without fear. And I'll look forward to MA veterans' help. I know you may see some very big holes in this story so far, and potential land mines, but I hope you can appreciate how far I've come.

Thanks for a useful publication, and to all who have shared their stories. It's made a very big difference in my life.

## Thought for the Month

*"Recovery is like photography; we use the negative to develop."*

— Gabe A., District 8

## BIRTHDAYS

Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in A New Leaf? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.

### District 2

Kathy L. 6/14/95 8 years  
 Bob K. 6/3/97 6 years

### District 3

Jerry P. 6/27/93 10 years  
 Ron A. 6/15/95 8 years  
 Pam L. 6/23/01 2 years

### District 5

Amber B. 6/15/92 11 years  
 Dean W. 6/29/92 11 Years  
 Cinde B. 6/4/94 9 Years  
 Brad M. 6/3/97 6 Years  
 Carlos 6/13/02 1 Year!

### District 6

Alice K. 6/01/96 7 years

### District 7

Carol McD 6/23/88 15 years  
 Alan B. 5/1/97 6 years  
 Tommy J. 5/1/98 5 years  
 Andy McD. 4/22/01 2 years  
 Elisabeth 4/30/02 1 year!

### District 8

Libby G. 6/06/90 13 years

### District 10

Kevin 4/99 4 years  
 Mike Z. 5/01 2 years  
 John P. 3/7/02 1 year!

### District 12

Dave L. 6/23/01 2 years

### Georgia

Clara U., 6/03/96, 7 years

**Celebrating 135 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**