

A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

July 2000

Volume 10 - Number 7

Breaking the Chain by Don B.

As I was sitting there listening to my home group massacre the Happy B-day song, I was just kind of staring at my new 3 year chip. All of a sudden what that chip represents hit me; I haven't smoked pot one day at a time for 3 years. I tried for a long time to get even one day and I failed time after time. That voice in my head would always win, "okay, starting tomorrow," I'd say, but tomorrow never seemed to get here. I loved smoking pot, but I hated thinking about it, and as much as I smoked I thought about it even more. I did it all day, everyday for eighteen years. In those eighteen years I missed a total of five days. I want to share a sample of my obsession with you so you'll know the bondage I've escaped from. The last thing I would do before passing out at night would be to get good and high. I would wake up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. Upon returning to bed, I would be thinking about my pot. I knew where it was, it was in the front pocket of my leather jacket hanging in my closet, that is where I always kept it and that is where I had just put it 4 hours ago. I would

start getting uneasy for some reason thinking maybe it was gone, what would I do if it wasn't there? I couldn't get back to sleep. I would get up and fumble across the room. Being that it was in a leather coat I wouldn't have to turn the lights on, I could feel the leather coat as the touch of the leather stood out next to my shirts. I would reach in the front pocket and feel for my bag of dope. The moment I felt it I would instantly feel better, I would fall back in bed all content knowing in a few more hours I could wake up and smoke it. In case the point just flew by you I'll point it out; I would actually get relief from touching my pot and knowing it was there, I wouldn't even have to smoke it.

Today things are much different. I love being drug free, pull me over, drug test me, search my car, my house, whatever. I don't have to hide anything, sneak around or lie. I can look everybody right in the eye. After living in fear for so many years it feels really good to be playing this game of life on a level playing field. Once I stopped obsessing over my favorite herb the significance of

being clean sometimes gets pushed into the background. As the smoke starts to clear I'm starting to see the areas of my life that I need to work on. Issues I want to resolve so I can enjoy life even more. I've made a lot of progress in three years, but on a daily basis I fall far short of being the perfect little individual I thought I'd instantly become once I stopped smoking pot. I'm pretty hard on myself and a bit unrealistic in my expectations, that can be a tough mix. Talking with other addicts keeps me grounded, and it helps me remember the most important thing, I didn't smoke pot today, all day. If you are doing your nightly inventory tonight and you are disappointed because you (continued on next page)

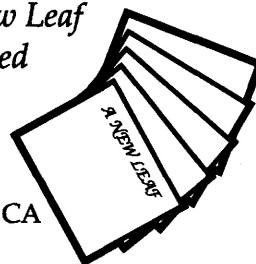
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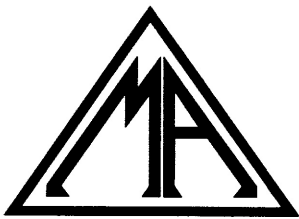
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A NEW LEAF

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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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Breaking the Chain continued

didn't do everything today exactly the way you wanted to, I have good news. You have another chance tomorrow. Tomorrow we can continue to work on those little things but today you get a gold star my friend, you didn't smoke pot and that is a big deal. If you are reading this and your still try-

ing to get your first day, keep trying. I shared my obsession with you to let you know what a mess I was and how chained to my bag of weed I was. Today that chain is broken, my tomorrow is finally here, I hope yours comes soon.

Peace, Out. ▲

Gratitude for the Simple Things by Jeff M.

Gratitude for simple abundance, the abundance of things that I have surrounding me, I think this and then I laugh. I laugh because I feel most people would feel just the opposite. At three years sobriety my Higher Power decided my life needed changing, so change it did. Where I didn't have enough money to support one household, I now support two; where there was only furniture for one household, now there is more than enough for two. This is the wonder of the program. I had a rather high bottom, I came into the program kicking and screaming after failing a drug test, so I guess you could say, "my bottom came up and hit me." Therefore, I didn't have some of the monetary concerns that many other "members" have had, at least till now.

I am not saying it will be easy stretching the money that use to barely support one household and make it support two, but having faith in my Higher Power, and using coupons, I know it will. As my sponsor is always reminding in this program, as in life, having faith and doing the footwork pays off ten fold. Subsequently by doing my best to live within my means, I will have more than enough money to meet my needs. And if monetary

concerns weren't enough, when I first moved out on my own, I didn't have a clue as to how I was going to furnish this new household. Faith and footwork paid off again. Friends in

and out the fellowship have responded to my needs. When I shared honestly with them of my feelings, my doubts, when I let them be part of my life, they



Gratitude for the Simple Things continued

rose to the occasion. They either donated, or sold to me at huge discounts everything I needed, and then some. My Higher Power even made a point to insure that I would start my new life fresh, without anything, except my books, clothes, and computer from my old life. My apartment came with a stove but no refrigerator, no problem. Buy a new one for the old house and take the old one to the new apartment. It didn't turn out quite like that. You know how to make God laugh? Make plans. During the moving of the old refrigerator some thing went wrong because when I plugged it in it longer cooled, it heated up the

insides. When I was using, and even in my early sobriety I would have gotten mad kicked the old refrigerator, blame everything, everyone, including myself for the collapse of the world as I knew it, and then gone off and smoked a joint. Something that wouldn't have done anything to fix the problem. Instead this time I stopped and thought about how I could solve the problem. I called someone I know from the program and talked to them about it. It didn't solve the problem either, but it sure made me feel a lot better. The next day at work, as I am telling friends about my weekend, low and behold,

someone has an even newer refrigerator they will let me have at a bargain price. They even said they would help me move it. Once again, my Higher Power was doing for me things that I could not do for my self. That is why I can look around me and feel so loved and grateful. True my décor is rather eclectic, and that is why I feel some people wouldn't feel as grateful as I do. However, as the Big Book teaches us, it is not the material things that should concern us, but the spiritual, so if you take care of the spiritual the material will follow. My new apartment is a shining example of this.

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 ★ **congratulations to Our Members** ★
 ★ **celebrating their Sober Birthdays!** ★
 ★

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 Pamela J. 7/8/97 3 yrs

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North Bay, CA

Greg G. 6/99 1 year!

Bricks in My Wall by Don A.

Like so many others, I started smoking pot around 13 years of age. I was the youngest of three boys. My oldest brother was exactly like my mother and the middle brother was exactly like my dad. I was a fairly even combination of both of my parents. My parents tended to pair up with their child of choice. Sadly, I tried to fit with either pair but was unsuccessful. My lack of involvement with my parents and brothers was not due to anything that they did wrong, I was just trying to fit in where I didn't. I was too young to see the reality. While my brothers loved both our parents, they gravitated towards the one they most resembled. I could have had the best of both parents if I had dealt with my feelings of being excluded. I felt since my parents had favorites, that I was not loved as much as my brothers. I was unable to gain the #1 spot in either of my parents hearts. I had firmly planted my feet in the #2 spot with both of them, I just could not see it. I started to build a wall that would keep my emotions buried and the world out. I was a perfect candidate to become an addict, and I did.

The first time I smoked pot I felt something in common with the people I was with, we were stoned and it was a wonderful feeling. Pot made the inadequate feelings and shyness fade away. The more I smoked, the more I felt good about myself. I had a new friend named marijuana and she really liked me for me.

Whenever I felt bad I smoked. Whenever I felt good I smoked. I smoked daily for 20 years. I believed that I could do anything

stoned because I did everything stoned. I graduated high school stoned. Every job that I have ever had, I went to stoned. Being stoned made me feel better.

In August of 1998 I had a very strange thought come into my stoned head, "What would life be like without pot". I didn't have emotional problems, because I didn't have emotions. I had spent 20 years piling all my emotions behind a wall. A wall that was built one brick at a time. A wall that stood solid when my dad passed away, when I got married and divorced. I didn't know what to expect, so I went to a counselor that was provided by my insurance. He sat quietly as I proudly told him of the worldly possessions I had gained and goals that I had reached. Then he made one profound statement, "If you did all these wonderful things stoned, just think what you could have accomplished if you had been straight." Those words took all the wind from my sails. I truly felt humbled. He directed me to a 12 step meeting that eventually lead me to Marijuana Anonymous.

In my sobriety I have had many wonderful realizations. I told my mother how I felt unloved as a child and why I started smoking. She simply explained that my dad and her spent more time and energy with my brothers because they knew that I would be OK. She said my brothers needed the extra attention, I didn't. If only I would have spoke up as a child instead of stuffing my feelings and building a wall. There was so much that I missed because I stayed stoned and never talked to my parents about



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how I felt, like a child should do.

Once I stopped smoking, my wall started to crumble. Pot did not built my wall, I did. Pot was not my problem, I was. I firmly believe that pot was the mortar that held the bricks together in my wall. Today I didn't smoke. Today another brick has fallen off my wall. Today I have more feelings, both good and bad. Today I love my mother, my sponsor, my fellow addicts, my fellow man and myself. I owe these new feelings to my higher power and the addicts that have gone down this road before.

