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# A NEW LEAF

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## I Lived for Getting Stoned

by Scott A.

Greetings, all!

My name is Scott A., and I live in San Leandro, CA. I attend the Castro Weed Patch MA group in San Francisco. I have been clean since February 7, 2002.

I started smoking in 1975 when I entered high school. I have always had interest in the psychedelic media and been a rebellious sort of person. My childhood family life was not like the other kids. I was constantly being mentally and physically abused by my father and was looking for a way out.

I was turned on to smoking by a neighbor girl who attended the same high school as I did. Smoking did the trick; I was able to let go and relax for the period of the high. I would not smoke before school, but afterwards I would look forward to sharing a few tokes with the other stoners in my class. It made me feel accepted by some in an otherwise unfriendly atmosphere of my peers.

I really got into the pot culture. I collected movies and books (Reefer Madness, A Child's Garden of Grass, R. Crumb Comics.) In the early 1980's I was one of the petitioners for the California Marijuana Initiative and helped produce several of the smoke-ins on the Los Angeles Federal Building Lawn. I worked at a couple of psychedelic boutiques, as well.

I lived for getting stoned. It helped me get over a lot of the anxiety and depression I endured through adolescence. Getting stoned helped me suppress the memories of a very unhappy childhood. Getting stoned helped me relax after stressful days. When California passed Prop 215, I was right there to get my Doctors' Recommendation for Medical Marijuana by a well-known doctor and medical marijuana advocate. I had also joined three Medical Marijuana clubs here in the San Francisco bay area.

I have hit bottom many times in my life, but the final straw was February of 2002. In the recent months I had been doing some baking of medicinal marijuana pastries for some friends who suffered from glaucoma, neuropathy, and HIV, among other things. I would also consume my own baked goods. That started leading me down the road to major depression. I had many financial burdens on my back and started feeling like my life was worthless and I had nothing to live for. I had my job and a wage garnishment, and that was it. I could not take life anymore.

Fortunately, I had a smoking buddy who understood where I was coming from. On February 6, 2002 we came to the realization it was time for both of us to stop smoking. But, I could not just say, "That's it" and throw it all away. We sat in my house and I brought out all my paraphernalia and told him the story of each piece and how or why it was acquired.

Each pipe, bong, smoking stone, and roach clip had a story attached to it. As I told him my stories, I packed up each piece and finally gave it away to someone who would dispose of it. Along with the paraphernalia, I also got rid of a quarter ounce of recently acquired California green bud.

The next day at work I had a major mental breakdown and took a month off to detoxify. I had to get medical help to do this. The doctor had me on a very low dosage of Librium, and eventually I was put on Prozac. Marijuana affected several chemical receptor levels in my brain, and that was making me very depressed and suicidal. I had lost my sense of humor and was very unpleasant to be around.

My smoking buddy had been to the Castro Weed Patch MA group in the past, so that Friday night he took me there. I was very nervous about going, but I knew I had found a group that would be supportive in my lifestyle change. There were others who were sharing stories very similar to my own. Just recently I had asked someone to be my sponsor. He first told me to read Step One and read it again and again. He then gave me a writing assignment. That assignment has been very difficult for me to complete, but I am slowly making my way through it.

My life has changed greatly since stopping smoking. My level of concentration is up. I have regained my sense of humor (a clear sign that the depression is gone.) My stamina has allowed me to go further than I did when I was smoking on a daily basis. I feel much better being smoke free and living a clean lifestyle. With medical help, I do not have a craving to get high. But there are days when I walk around the streets of San Francisco; I get that familiar smell wafting through the air. I take a breath and then remember the down days of depression and say to myself, "It feels much better to be without the effects of marijuana in my mind and body."

I celebrated one year smoke-free on February 7, 2003!

### CONTRIBUTION FOR AUGUST

Note: Each month we ask you, the reader, to share on a Step or Tradition, based on which month it is. For August we're looking for shares on Step 8 or Tradition 8. Please send them to us at [anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org) by July 20. Thanks!

From your friends at ANLP



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

## Conference 2003 Summary Report

The 2003 Marijuana Anonymous World Services (MAWS) Conference was held Memorial Day Weekend in Burbank, California. It was hosted by District 6 (LA North). Below is a very brief summary of what was accomplished.

This report is provided by the MAWS Secretary as an overview of the Conference. Complete and official conference minutes are sent to district delegates and are available upon special request from MA World Services.

### District Reports

A common issue mentioned by many is that membership is disproportionately male, making it difficult for women to find sponsors. District 4 changed their name from "Seattle" to "Western Washington" to accurately describe the scope of their coverage. Many Districts undertook strong outreach efforts through their Hospitals & Institutions and Public Information programs. Overall attendance, however, among Districts seemed to remain unchanged, with the exception of District 11 (Portland), who noted a marked increase.

District 1 (San Francisco) was lauded for hosting a terrific "Conscious Contact" convention.

### A New Leaf Publications

Changes occurred to the board of A New Leaf Publications (ANLP) with the death of Treasurer Michael V and the exit of Loren N. as Executive Director. Brandon R. completed his fourth term as a MAWS Trustee, was recognized for his outstanding contributions, and will continue in service to the fellowship as ANLP Executive Director.

ANLP also announced the hiring of ANLP Office Manager, Judy S. ANLP donated \$3,500 to MAWS during fiscal 2002.

### MAWS

The MAWS Office Manager reported that the fellowship of MA has 182 known regular weekly meetings worldwide (113 in districts, 52 US orphans, and 17 International orphan meetings). New meetings were started this year in Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Indiana.

The Trustee Treasurer reported that our federal tax return was once again delayed due to untimely reporting from many district treasurers. With the help of our accountant, however, all filing requirements have now been met. MAWS completed acquisition of a Directors and Officers insurance policy, established a new savings account, and reorganized payroll and petty cash procedures – all of which help protect the fellowship, its funds, and members. The current combined balance of MAWS accounts is adequate to cover present expenses.

### Growth Online

The online community represented a major area of growth for our fellowship during the past year. Web site traffic increased 10 percent to approximately 50,000 visits per month, with 250 total downloads of PDF pamphlets. We offer two key services online: pen pals (1-3 requests daily, fulfilled by up to 35 committed members) and the chat space/MA Online Community (ma-online.org) with five weekly online meetings.

### Committee Reports and General Session

FINANCE reported the need to increase contributions to sustain and grow our fellowship. They recommended that July be a special fundraising month for the fellowship of MA (referred to as "Seventh Tradition Month") and that districts, groups and members hold special events like garage sales, coin rolling parties, etc., to fundraise for MA.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES investigated an agenda item proposing changes to Steps 3 and 11, especially the difficulty some people have in accepting the word "God" in the Steps and Traditions. They recommended Delegates take back to their districts the idea of possibly replacing the word "God" with "a power greater than ourselves," "Higher Power," or similar, in Steps, Traditions and MA approved literature, and report back to the MAWS Policies and Procedures Trustee.

From H&I/PI Committee, the video Public Service Announcement submitted by District 6 was passed as "conference approved." It was also passed that the Office Manager be entrusted with

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# Conference 2003 Summary Report

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replying to 800 line inquiries.

ONLINE (a new subcommittee this year) reported the establishment of a web chat site (ma-online.org). Motions passed included: enabling the MAWS Office Manager to help maintain Trustee and Conference email group lists and updating the web site meeting directory; the provision of hyperlinks from marijuana-anonymous.org to district web sites and ma-online.org (pending certain requirements); and directing the Trustees and ANLP board to investigate and implement online sale of publications.

LITERATURE tackled many agenda items and offered the following motions that passed: look into putting *Life With Hope* on CD in audio format, oversee creation of a *Life With Hope* workbook, and recommendation that MA Members submit meditations of less than 150 words to ANLP for compilation of an MA Daily Meditation book.

## Passed Motions from the Floor:

The reading of "Adding a Little Green: Breaking the Buck Barrier" is suggested for July meetings to support the recommended "Seventh Tradition Month." Suggested Meeting Formats will be revised to include: "A donation of \$2 or more is suggested to help cover rent, photocopies, and other expenses." District 11 (Portland) was approved to host the 2004 MA Convention.

## Trustee Elections

Charlotte M. was the only Trustee still completing a term; thus her spot was secured. Elections were held for the remaining positions, and the following were chosen: Bean L. (continuing), Eric R. (continuing), David VB (continuing), Lisa T. (continuing), Jim S. (new), Elizabeth A. (new), Bonnie V. (new), and John H. (new). First alternate: Judy S. (new). Second alternate: Alan B. (previous Trustee).

Thanks and kudos were afforded to those who helped make the conference an overwhelming success. The weekend concluded with cheers from all.

## The Roving Reporter

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

*And MA answers:*

Humility in recovery means having faith that my Higher Power will take care of me

— Kelly, Grays Lake, Illinois

Humility means everything to me today. Humility first started becoming real to me as cracks began forming in the hard, dry husk of my pride when I admitted that my sad state was the result of my own willfulness. By staying clean a day at a time and becoming more honest with myself and others, my false-pride cracked open gradually, further admitting the healing light of honesty. My addiction is apparently photophobic, as it remains still within me. Pinned flat, my addiction grows increasingly vile and angry as it waits and watches for my hopefulness to dim. Now I know through experience that I always have the choice between humility and arrogance. Depending upon my choice I'll have peace of mind or a life fueled by fear, and that difference is to me everything.

— Joe, Grays Lake, Illinois

## Nothing Short of a Miracle

By Zach

I have an interesting 7th Step experience to share:

Zach here, recovering marijuana addict. I sat on my 6th step for a few months, reading recovery literature and trying to understand how exactly to "become ready." One day I decided that I was stagnant and that I had to push forward. I told my sponsor I wanted to do my 7th Step, and he said that it would be a good idea for me to do so. I read the 7th Step in my various recovery literature.

That very morning at work, I bumped my head very hard on a speaker cabinet, but shrugged it off trying to be a "tough guy." Later that night I was playing a gig in Dallas. I began to feel sick. By the third set I couldn't see clearly, and I thought I was going to throw up. I didn't realize that I had a concussion.

After the gig, I lay down and felt as though I had been hit by a meteor. I had to drive 45 minutes to get home, and I was terrified. I started crying, and my mind started spinning in rewind through the scariest and most difficult moments in my life. I couldn't explain to anyone around me what was going on. I didn't have the courage to call someone (at 2 am) and ask them to come pick me up and drive me home, only to have to get my car in the morning. I knew I couldn't drive in the condition I was in, but I saw no alternative at the moment.

Everyone around me had been drinking (the gig was at a nightclub), and I could not afford a taxi. I got in the car and called my brother, who is a doctor. I did not tell him about bumping my head because I saw no connection at that point. He determined that I was thoroughly dehydrated and that I hadn't eaten in nearly 10 hours, something I was totally unaware of. I got some pedialyte and some power bars and started for home.

I was crying so intensely that my face hurt all over. I knew I would not make it home safely. I prayed my ass off! I just kept telling God, "Please get me home" again and again. This intense crying was representative of my worst character defects: intense chronic depression and emotional pain. I kept begging God to remove it, not just the pain that night, but that feeling — once and for all!

I remember getting home and just sitting in the car thanking God. That was about 1-1/2 years ago, and I haven't had any such feelings since. After 27 years of chronic depression and 1-1/2 years without, out of fear-based thinking, I still am not totally convinced that God removed it; However, based on all the facts that I have, he did just that.

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# 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)

**MA World Service Offices**  
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PO Box 3012, Culver City, CA 90231  
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**New York (District 8)**  
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**Santa Cruz (District 9)**  
PO Box 3003, Santa Cruz, CA 95063  
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**MA Online**  
PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404  
800-766-6779

## Nothing Short of a Miracle

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That was my first 7th Step experience, and it was nothing short of a miracle. When I came into MA, I believed that if I quit smoking pot I would become happy and successful in all that I set out to do. After my first year I realized that the marijuana was just a symptom of many problems in the makeup of my character. Through the 7th Step, God has given me so much more than just not smoking pot today. He has removed my depression. I still struggle with the difficulties of life as they arise, but I rarely find myself in painful, prolonged times of intense misery and confusion for unknowable reasons. God used the day that I got a concussion to remind me of a lifetime with the huge character defect of depression, and proved to me that he has more power than any doctor, medication, or change of lifestyle. In one night he just took it away. What an awesome God!

By the way, a few days later I got to a doctor and was told that I had a severe concussion. I was confined to bed for the next three weeks. I still get headaches when I exert myself too hard. Those headaches are a reminder of the huge pain that has been removed. I believe they will also pass in God's time. Thanks for lettin' me share.

## Thought for the Month

*"We learned that the more we could let go of our selfishness and carry out what we perceived as God's will, the more we started to experience serenity in our lives."*

— *Life With Hope*, page 33

## 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

Oliver 6/25/01 2 years  
Anonymous, 7/14/89 14 years  
Tom S. 7/1/02 1 year!

### District 5

John McC. 7/2/91 12 years  
Brad M. 6/3/97 6 years

### District 7

Sam 05/5/91 12 years  
Nick 05/16/96 7 years  
Doug G. 06/10/95 8 years  
Raul 06/04/02 1 year!  
Rich C. 7/23/02 1 year!

### El Paso, TX

Kim L. 8/8/99 4 years

### Mesa, AZ

Gwen G. 4/13/93 10 years

### District 3

Ken S. 7/3/88 15 years  
Mary S. 7/1/90 13 years  
David G. 7/4/97 6 years  
Steve S. 7/4/97 6 years

### District 6

Albert M. 6/16/02 1 year!  
Morning John 7/23/96 7 years

### Arcata, CA

Andrew J. 6/6/01 2 years  
Dan O. 6/7/02 1 year!

### Austin, TX

Heather B. 6/25/00 3 years  
Valerie T. 7/23/93 10 years

### Philadelphia, PA

Steve K. 7/15/00 3 years

**Celebrating 145 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**