



# a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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## I Got What I Needed

It is often said in recovery that one gets what one needs, but not necessarily what one wants. It was true for me at the 2012 MA Conference in Hempstead, NY, at which I served as a district delegate. Much of the business was routine, and much of it was exciting. One proposal before the body, however, was difficult for the Conference and difficult for me personally, and that was a proposal by a committee of people of color in MA for a "People of Color" pamphlet. The way the debate played out was particularly uncomfortable for me, not just as a white person grappling with race issues, but because of my own struggle to be part of MA as a male-to-female transsexual back in 2002.

It became clear early in the debate that the proposal as is was a non-starter, and when it came time for the sole spokesperson in support of the pamphlet, who was also the sole African-American in the room, to speak, she became very upset and vulnerable. As she expressed her strong feelings about the need for the pamphlet, she expressed how scary it was to even be in the room with us. She expressed how it felt to be alone. As I sat there and listened, I felt myself involuntarily drawn into my own early experiences in MA. I identified deeply with the speaker's expression of separation and exclusion. I had known these feelings myself, personally, in MA, because I was different myself.

In 2002, 18 months into my recovery, I began male-to-female gender reassignment. When I started this transition, three members of my home group in MA asked the DSC Chair about what could be done about me, because

my presence was "disruptive." Though this Chair halted this nonsense by citing Tradition Three, "the only requirement of membership is a desire to stop using," it didn't stop there. One of these members told me, "It's not part of my public persona to hang out with people like you." Another member never stopped leaving the room every single time I spoke. These people had been friends. To be honest, I still miss them. At the same time, I felt rejection, exclusion, and separation over and over again for the next two years, until I moved away. I persisted in my commitment to being in MA, though.

Being brought back to all of this brought me to a moment of clarity. My feeling like one addict among others in MA, of being part of the group, is such a central comfort to me, and here was someone who, all by herself among us, was expressing the pain of not having that. I realized she didn't have to be alone that day, however, if I could find it in me to speak up and feel it with her. What was stopping me? Pride. I knew I'd get emotional and lose some control, because the loss of that feeling of being part of the group is just too upsetting. I felt sick, because I knew I had to go there because it was the next right thing. I was called on speak. As I feared, I also got upset, emotional, and vulnerable. I lost so much composure from that feeling of separation by the time I got to the part of my story about Tradition Three, I garbled it up! I also felt embarrassment and shame over losing control.

Nobody should have to be alone when they're not, though, so I don't regret it one bit. Pride is a major character defect of mine, and it

keeps a lot of bad feelings alive. My sick mind rained down on me with recriminations for losing control and for feeling hurt. It's bulls--t, but I'm sick, and that's why I stayed in MA in 2002 and why I'm still here now, even when it hurts, because thanks to staying in the program and working the steps, I know pride is a problem for me, and that self-knowledge is what allows me to rise above it sometimes and to see those self-recriminations for what they are, as a detached observer rather than true believer.

That's the gift of working the steps. Today, I don't have to believe everything I think. I'm able to do hard things, have emotional fallout, and get over it, without resentment or self-pity. I don't need to be a slave to my own pride, to my desire to be accepted and liked, or to fear. I had the tools of the program at hand, including the twice-daily MA meetings. I was uncomfortable because of my own issues, but there is a solution. Thanks to our Traditions, that solution is available to everyone, even if part of this is harder for some than it is for others because none of us are saints. Being a part of MA is worth fighting for.

As for the vote, I could not vote yes to send the pamphlet to committee because the people of color in my District, whom I engaged on this, were not in favor of having any "People of Color" pamphlet at all. However, I couldn't vote no against the desires of others struggling to be comfortable in MA. Since abstentions count as "NO" under MAWS procedure, I left the room for the vote.

I'm glad I showed up for this. I got more than I bargained for. Not at all what I wanted, but what I needed.



## 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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

### District Bureau Chiefs

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Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:  
anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org

A New Leaf  
P.O. Box 6482  
Torrance, CA 90504

or submit online:  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
and click on the newsletter tab.

## A Miracle Happened! ..... ME

I have now officially been sober longer than I was using. Who knew? I certainly never thought this would happen. I think, in the beginning, I had this wild idea that I would come to these meetings and then learn how to smoke dope like a lady. Didn't happen did it? Nope. Instead I got clean and then went marching up these Steps like my life depended on them. And it did.

Twenty four years later and, every time I take a sponsee through these Steps, I take them again myself. Over the years, as folks have come and gone, I would guess I've marched up these Steps we take probably at least fifty times. And no, I don't have fifty sponsees. It's an accumulation over the years. Some went back out. Some moved. Some found other sponsors. And some, I still sponsor. I've found it to be true that we really can use these Steps in all our day to day living.

Step One? I admitted I was powerless over marijuana. But then there's alcohol, other drugs, people, places, things, and time. I can't leave the house late and get where I'm going early. If I try, I'm liable to have an accident or get a ticket. People don't always behave the way I want them to. So, I have to learn to accept them the way they are. I'm powerless. Acceptance. Isn't that all about changing my own attitude? I don't have to like the way folks behave but I don't have to rent space in my head with a resentment.

Resentment. Now that's a killer. We've got just so much room in our heads and the room we rent out to resentment is space that could much better be taken up with nice thoughts and pleasant dreams. Attitude. That's what really is manageable. That's what changed the day I started coming to MA. All those years that I tried to quit by myself when all I had to do was change my attitude and become willing to do whatever it took to get clean and sober. So now I've learned, when someone gets me riled up, I just have to get a 'Tude Adjustment.' Kind of like a lube and oil change.

Step Two? Coming to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity? Well, I knew I was insane. That was a no brainer. But a Power greater than myself? Whew. I'm sure glad MA doesn't use the God word on that one. I had a real hard time with the God word. It was all mixed up with the gray haired bearded old guy on a gold throne who always tossed lightning bolts at me although I could never understand why. So, I had to get rid of that God problem. I had to find a God concept I could live with. Not an easy job for me. But wait! A Power greater than myself? The combined members of my meetings were sure a power greater than me. I could use that. It worked. It really worked. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. At least when you're talking about a room full of recovering potheads.

Step Three? So I finally decided to turn my will and life over to the care of God, as I understand God. Notice please, I underscored AND italicized that part. It's as I myself understand God to be. Not as you do or anyone else does. I finally got rid of the old poop that really didn't like me and found a creator that wanted only the best for me. "A loving, compassionate Presence; a kind accepting Mother/Father/Friend..." [p.56 LWH] I'll admit, sometimes I try and take back my will and life. I mean, it was just a decision, right? But, it usually turns out so badly that I give it up again.

All twelve Steps have changed who I am and how I behave. I am more comfortable in my own skin. I don't hate myself anymore. I'm not embarrassed about who I am or where I came from. Good people are in my life and I know what real gratitude is.

Twenty four years. Twenty four dollars in the basket? This is getting expensive! Some of us love to do this. It's a small thing in return for a huge gift. Just those first three Steps would be worth it. Add nine more Steps? Maybe I ought to double that? Wait! How much is an ounce these days?

Carol McD.

# Others Have Gone Before; Others Will Follow, *We Recover*

## Registration Form 2013 MA Convention February 15-17, 2013 Hilton/Irvine Orange County Airport

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Check here if you'd like an e-mail confirming your registration

\_\_\_ Check here if you'd like a mailed confirmation (please send self-addressed stamped envelope)

| Banquet Food Choices ___ Chicken ___ Vegetarian              | Amount Paid |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Registration AND Banquet TOGETHER</b>                     | \$          |
| Registration ONLY  | \$          |
| Saturday Banquet ONLY  | \$          |
| Raffle Tickets: \$1 x _____ (qty)                            | \$          |
| Scholarship Fund (helps others who can't afford to register) | \$          |
| <b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>  | \$          |

\*Registration includes: Friday Night Play and Open Mic Show, Saturday Workshops & Lunch, Saturday Dance and Midnight Rock Show, Sunday Lunch. Banquet is separate.

| Register:        | by<br>July 31, 2012 | between August 1 and<br>December 31, 2012 | between January 1 and<br>January 31, 2013 | after<br>January 31, 2013 |
|------------------|---------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| Registration*    | \$85                | \$100                                     | \$115                                     | \$130                     |
| Saturday Banquet | \$45                | \$50                                      | \$55                                      | \$60                      |
| <b>TOGETHER</b>  | <b>\$120</b>        | <b>\$140</b>                              | <b>\$160</b>                              | <b>\$180</b>              |

Complete **one form per person** with a check or money order payable to **MA District 5**  
Mail Registration form and payment to: 3553 Atlantic Ave. #176, Long Beach, CA 90807  
OR Visit **ma2013convention.org** and pay through PayPal.

Reserve your room today! Ask for the **MA 2013 Annual Convention** rates or visit the hotel link.

**Hilton/Irvine Orange County Airport – 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612**

**Reservations 800-445-8667**

[http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/S/SNAOCHF-MA2013-20130213/index.jhtml?WT.mc\\_id=POG](http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/S/SNAOCHF-MA2013-20130213/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG)

Room Rate .....\$109 Single/Double (Standard King or Two Double Beds)

**(NOTE: Room Rate increases up to \$140 on Jan. 31, 2013)**

Questions? E-mail: [lizprimary@aol.com](mailto:lizprimary@aol.com)

**ENCOURAGEMENT DRAWING:** Register for the Convention **AND** Book Your Hotel Room\*\* **BEFORE** December 31, 2012 and you will be entered in a drawing to win two Adult admissions to Disneyland **AND** a \$50 gift card to use during your visit.

**\*\*must stay in hotel at least one evening to be eligible for drawing**



a new leaf

## marijuana anonymous worldwide

### District 1 San Francisco

www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

### District 2 East Bay

PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 510.287.8873

### District 3 South SF Bay Area

PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

### District 4 Western Washington

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

### District 5 Orange County

1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 714.999.9409

### District 6 LA County No.

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

### District 7 LA County So.

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 323.943.9228

### District 8 New York

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

### District 10 LA County East

PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.583.9582

### District 11 Portland

PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.221.7007

### District 12 North Bay, CA

PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 707.583.2326

### District 13 MA Online

www.ma-online.org

### District 14 London, England

07940.503438

### District 15 Long Island, NY

www.ma-longisland.org 516-568-5883

### District 16 Melbourne, Australia

24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

### District 17 Denmark

info@ma-kbh.dk

### District 18 Sacramento

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

For a complete listing of all meetings visit [www.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org)

### THE ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

*I would read the  
New Leaf more  
if it....*

(Please submit answers by  
August 17, 2012)

**Tradition Seven**  
Every M.A. group  
ought to be fully self-  
supporting, declining  
outside contributions.

**Step Seven**  
Humbly asked  
God to remove our  
shortcomings.

## ***Birthdays***

### Celebrating 174 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that:

a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

#### District 2

|          |         |         |           |         |         |
|----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Kathy L. | 6/14/95 | 17 yrs. | Ben R.    | 6/1/06  | 6 yrs.  |
| Becky G. | 6/18/06 | 6 yrs.  | Rob       | 5/5/05  | 7 yrs.  |
| Nina S.  | 6/21/85 | 27 yrs. | Mark      | 6/4/02  | 10 yrs. |
|          |         |         | Josh G.   | 5/3/00  | 12 yrs. |
|          |         |         | Carol McD | 6/23/88 | 24 yrs. |

#### District 5

|          |         |         |            |         |        |
|----------|---------|---------|------------|---------|--------|
| Tom G.   | 5/17/10 | 2 yrs.  | District 8 |         |        |
| Gustov   | 5/23/11 | 1 YEAR! | Larry S.   | 5/23/04 | 8 yrs. |
| Londyn   | 5/23/11 | 1 YEAR! | Larry L.   | 5/28/05 | 7 yrs. |
| Trudie   | 6/1/98  | 14 yrs. |            |         |        |
| Pearl C. | 6/21/10 | 2 yrs.  |            |         |        |

#### District 6

|           |         |         |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Mark I.   | 6/21/99 | 13 yrs. |
| Jeremy B. | 6/21/01 | 11 yrs. |

#### District 7

|          |         |         |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Craig M. | 5/6/11  | 1 YEAR! |
| Gregg S. | 6/12/10 | 2 yrs.  |
| Lizzy Z. | 6/1/09  | 3 yrs.  |

**KEEP  
COMING  
BACK!**

**Save The Date!**  
**February 15 - 17**

*We Recover*



**2013 MA Convention**  
**Orange County, California**  
**Registration Begins July 1, 2012**

*Special Rate if you register BY July 31, 2012*  
[www.ma2013convention.org](http://www.ma2013convention.org)

**New Meetings Start-Up**  
**All The Time.**  
Check your local districts  
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website for details contact:  
[office@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:office@marijuana-anonymous.org)