



August 1998

Volume 8 - No. 8

A NEW LEAF

A Publication of Marijuana Anonymous

No Regrets

By Jon P., Berkeley, CA; District 2

Not so long ago, I was attending an MA meeting while out of town on vacation. The woman who was chairing the meeting gave one of those "war story" kind of shares that tells a great deal about "how it was" and said very little about "what happened" and still less about "what it's like now." She went on and on about how much of her life had been wasted, how much she had lost and, most of all, how she lived a life of *regret*. She used the word regret over and over. It was a "tag" meeting and it seemed that all of her friends had at least as much to lament about in their own lost lives as she did. Each, it seemed, had more to regret than the last guy. I just couldn't contain myself. I just couldn't contain myself. I started waving my hand around until somebody finally called on this stranger from parts unknown. I do still love hearing the sound of my voice, after all. I registered my complaint without cross talk by quoting the AA Promises.

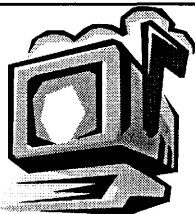
So why does all this talk about regret upset my tender sensibilities so much? As always, it is because of my own issues. As it happens, I make my living as a clinical psychologist. We are all in therapy, don't you know? Not

so many years ago, I was lamenting to my own therapist about some terrible thing I had done. I cannot even recall what it was about, but I will not soon forget her response. "*Well of course you regret what you did. You are, after all, the Master of Regrets, aren't you?*" I told my sponsor about all the abuse that was being heaped on me by my therapist. He said, and none too sympathetically, that maybe the doctor should have better referred to me as the "*Queen of Regrets.*" Like I need this?

Well, guess what I did! This was the regrettable of my life. During the years between then and now, I have considered the problem of regret to some depth. Even with all of my unique and special wisdom, I am not the first person to think about this. It does suggest in the Promises in the Big Book that "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." I wonder why they put that in there. Now this is a lot to think about, isn't it? The past is the past. It is over. That includes everything, not just from ten years ago, but it even includes what just happened a moment ago. It is all a part of the past now, is it not?

But many of us live our lives continuing to regret the past. It is natural enough to wish that we had not taken this hasty action there. Of course, we might wish that this or that thing had not happened. We wish we were not so powerless over people, places and things. We wish we had managed it better. Herein lies the problem, I think. It is a kind of First Step issue, isn't it? You know, the part about being *powerless* and that *our lives had become unmanageable*. This issue also involves the Second and Third Steps.

Please forgive me if this sounds like I want to beat you or myself over the head with the Twelve Steps. But this is a kind of spiritual problem that we have here, you and I. We are at bottom; we are people with a physical disease that requires a spiritual solution. The problem, some Buddhist might tell us, is that we believe that we are somehow separated from the rest of life. But this is really an illusion. We are in fact, each of us, connected to the Living Universe. The Universe is alive and responsive. There is a Higher
(continued on Page 2)



Tell us a story about working with a Sponsor or Sponsee!!
Write to *A NEW LEAF* and pass it on!! Please send all articles to:
A NEW LEAF P.O. Box 4314 North Hollywood, CA, 91617
or e-mail to ANULEAF@aol.com or CRZIFNGRS@aol.com



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.

Managing Board

Editors:

Mary Ellen K. and Tom M.
ANL Distribution Coordinator:
Judy S.
LWH Distribution Coordinator:
Terri R.

District 1 Bureau Chief: Phillip W.
District 2 Bureau Chief: (vacant)
District 3 Bureau Chief: Jerry
District 4 Bureau Chief: Mary M.
District 5 Bureau Chief: Melody
District 6 Bureau Chief: Sandy B.
District 7 Bureau Chief: Gary L.
District 8 Bureau Chief: (vacant)
District 9 Bureau Chief: Bernie G.
District 10 Bureau Chief: Bill H.
District 11 Bureau Chief: Susan B.
Eastern PA Bureau Chief: Lee R.

A NEW LEAF Executive Board:

Chairman: Rob M.
Treasurer: Carol Mc.
Secretary: Ilene M.

Send all articles, inquiries and
correspondence to:

A NEW LEAF

P.O. Box 4314

North Hollywood, CA 91617

Email: ANuLeaf@aol.com

Editorial Phone #:

(818) 353-5537

Fax #:

(818) 990-2980

© Copyright 1998 - Marijuana Anonymous

from "The Solution" by MA Members...

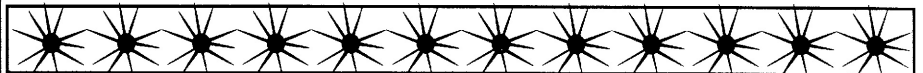
Several stories were submitted to MA World Services by MA members for publication in a new edition of *Life With Hope*. "The Solution" is a compilation of excerpts from these stories that was given to *A New Leaf* for further publication, to share experience, strength and hope with other marijuana addicts.

...I began going to MA meetings and listening to fellow "potheads" share their stories, and I could relate with every one of them. When I mentioned not having a sponsor, I was approached by someone who volunteered to sponsor me. We got together on a regular basis and started working the steps.

Today I've got that same sponsor, and I am working the twelfth step. I have written down a lot of resentments and a lot of fears, admitted a lot of personal shortcomings, and made a lot of amends to those I had harmed. I pray on a daily basis, and my favorite daily prayers are...

- The Serenity Prayer
- "God, show me the way to get rid of my defects of character and give me the power to carry it out."
- "God, I am alive only because you have a mission for me...show your will for me, show me my mission."
- "God, if there is an addict who can benefit from my help, show him to me, and give me the power to help him."

Life doesn't come up roses just because I am working the steps and talking to my sponsor. I still have that craving to smoke a joint or a bowl and sometimes I just have to look to my higher power to give me the inner strength not to act on that craving. Today, I've got the confidence that I can live life without getting high....



No Regrets (continued)

Power that knows we are here.

I have found in my life that I simply have to trust that somehow it all makes sense. It took every experience that I have lived to bring me here to this moment with you now at this place in time. Everything happened exactly as it ought to have or it simply would not be the way it is. This is not to suggest that I have adapted a passive fatalistic understanding of my life. I have not. But I have come to under-

stand this much: *regret is as deadly as any of the deadly sins might be*. When I wallow in "shoulda, coulda wouldas," regretting this and bemoaning that, I am wasting my life. I may feel as though I am doing something, but the fact is that nothing constructive is happening.

Regret leads us into an emotional abyss that is rather arrogant, really. Regret and arrogance are in fact closely related. Both problems have every-

thing to do with human suffering and our own narcissistic desire to avoid it. Carl Jung, the famous psychologist, who had a considerable impact upon placing recovery on a solid spiritual foundation, goes so far as to say that "Neurosis can be defined as the attempt to avoid necessary suffering." Voltaire, the great French philosopher in a similar vein suggests that "There are two ways, and only two ways to learn. One is by (continued on page 4)

Clip and Save Traditions Checklist:

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers..

- ☐ Do I apply the spiritual principals of the traditions to my life as an individual, or do I avoid some of them by saying: "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
- ☐ Am I willing to explain firmly to a fellow member the *limitations* of MA help, even if he gets mad at me for not taking care of him?
- ☐ Do I ever expect fellow MA members to do things for me which I can, and probably should, do for myself?
- ☐ Am I willing to carry the message to the next newcomer without regard to who he is or what is in it for me?
- ☐ Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
- ☐ Do I remember that people who have gathered some time in the program can also be marijuana addicts who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and learn from them?

"Tradition Five also teaches us that we cannot keep our own recovery unless we give it away. Our own lives and sanity are in jeopardy if we don't help those who are still sick."

-Life With Hope, pg. 81

Congratulations to Our Members Celebrating Their Sober Birthdays!

District 4

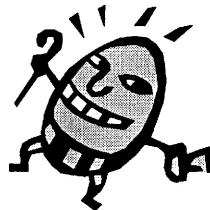
Eric 7/1/95 3 years

District 5

Eric R. 8/8/96 2 years
Coleman G. 8/13/92 6 years
"Jailhouse Dave M. 8/20/91 7 years
Lisa T. 8/21/90 8 years
Victoria H. 8/28/89 9 years

District 7

Alan L. 5/22/97 1 year
Ingrid E. 5/24/97 1 year
Alison O. 6/1/95 3 years



Erin 6/1/86 12 years
Ari K. 7/3/96 2 years
Jim S. 7/5/95 3 years
Patricia W. 7/25/90 8 years
Milo J. 8/25/96 2 years

District 8

Andi O. 7/8/97 1 year

District 11

Rychen 6/28/94 4 years
Carl P. 9/1/91 7 years
Connie L. 9/1/95 3 years



IT'S STORYTIME!!!

Participate in your recovery.. Write a story or entry for **A NEW LEAF** and reach out to marijuana addicts all over the world! We are always looking for all sizes and types of stories. Here are some ideas to get you going. Try writing about...

- ♦ a spiritual experience.
- ♦ your first service position
- ♦ an experience making amends
- ♦ sponsorship - from both sides
- ♦ meditation ideas or experiences
- ♦ the step you practice the most in your life today
- ♦ your first meeting
- ♦ a sober event (camping...)
- ♦ anything *you* would like to see in **A NEW LEAF**.

No Regrets (cont'd)

failure and the other is through suffering. We addicts are here to learn.

It is a necessary fact of life that if we are to have lived it, we will have suffered it. The base of my own regrets grows out of my resentment that I should have to suffer. So what that everyone and everything in life must also live and die and experience the pain of existence. I am much too precious, in my moments of regret, to suffer anything. I am just too special, too dear, too unique for any of that. It would be regrettable indeed to live my life as if this were true. I would be alone and without hope. ☹

Top Ten Reasons To Do Service...

by Praline M., District 2

1. It's Fun!
2. You get to know your fellows.
3. It's like being in the "in" crowd in high school.
4. It helps keep you clean.
5. You can learn new organizational skills.
6. It improves your self-esteem.
7. It's a chance to clean out your closet.
(when we have garage sales!)
8. You form life-long friendships.
9. You can practice screwing up and making amends in a safe environment.
10. It keeps the program strong and it is good to give back!!!

MA Worldwide...

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| San Francisco (District 1) P.O. Box 460024 San Francisco, CA 94146 (415) 522-7373 | L.A. County, North (District 6) P.O. Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 (818) 759-9194 | Portland, Oregon (District 11) P.O. Box 14125 Portland, OR 97293 (503) 221-7007 |
| East Bay (District 2) (510) 287-8873 | L.A. County, South (District 7) P.O. Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 (213) 964-2370 | Humboldt, CA Area (707) 443-5928 |
| South Bay (District 3) P.O. Box 111341 Campbell, CA 95011 (408) 450-0796 | New York (District 8) (212) 459-4423 | Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter P.O. Box 194 Sadsbury, PA 19369 (610) 622-9243 |
| Seattle (District 4) P.O. Box 1509 539 Queen Anne Ave. N Seattle, WA 98109 (206) 548-9034 | Santa Cruz (District 9) P.O. Box 3196 Santa Cruz, CA 95063 (408) 427-4088 | New Zealand MA Service Centre P.O. Box 74-386 Newmarket Auckland 3, New Zealand (09) 846-6822 |
| Orange County (District 5) 358 S. Main #215 Orange, CA 92668 (714) 999-9409 | L.A. County, East (District 10) P.O. Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 (909) 787-6020 (626) 583-9582 | |



World Service Office

P.O. Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404 ♦ (800) 766-6779

<http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>

e-mail: info@marijuana-anonymous.org