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# A NEW LEAF

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## Pot Was My Weakness

by Vicki A.

**A** marijuana addict for the better part of 30 years (did I say *better?*), as I near my anniversary, I have been drawn to “act out,” and dream of using again, as if it were day one. I am greatly comforted to know that others have experienced this creepiness.

When I first came to the rooms, I had nine months clean, but not really. I was still drinking, although I did not, and do not, consider myself an alcoholic. Drinking for me was a glass of wine or two with dinner occasionally, and I would often not even finish it. I enjoyed a beer here or there, and a margarita with lots of salt, but I seldom had a second drink and can think of only a handful of occasions in my life when I over-indulged. Pot was my weakness, and even when I quit smoking, I didn’t “up” my alcohol consumption (well, maybe just a little).

I took my one-year chip when the day came, at a meeting that had an attitude of tolerance. Only abstinence from marijuana was required. I never knew what to do when they asked addicts with a year or more of continuous sobriety to raise their hands to show the program works. I sometimes did and sometimes didn’t, depending on the script of that particular meeting. Regardless, I began feeling very guilty doing so, knowing that I was living by my own set of rules. I started to share about my dilemma, and it turned out I was not alone; some claimed not to know that total sobriety was required at most of the meetings, while others like myself were uncertain where we fit in and were consumed by guilt and shame yet again. I began campaigning to change the rules at my home meeting, so that we could take chips there and come up with “creative” ways of doing service.

A funny thing happened on the way to the business meeting. I stopped drinking. Motivated by the growth and progress of others, and out of respect to them, the program, the steps, and my HP, I made the decision that playing by the suggested rules was more important than celebrating my “uniqueness.” We voted the tolerance rule change for getting chips at my home meeting and I announced my new total sobriety date. I kept two day counts and took chips for my pot date at the meetings of tolerance. When they asked for those “with a year or more of continuous sobriety” to raise their hands, I no longer did, but coveted more than anything the day I could with clear conscience and good faith. Working towards becoming a sponsor, to give back some of what had been given to me, motivated me like nothing else. I was so grateful for

the fellowship and the steps, which were slowly changing my life and the way I lived it. Happiness, joy and sometimes serenity, were becoming part of my existence. My relationships with my HP and the people in my life were greatly improving. From the bus driver to my children, I found myself so much more aware of the needs of others. I am learning the meaning of staying on my own side of the street (when I can restrain myself), watching my expectations, trying to turn my will over by taking the next right action, and aiming to do an immediate 10th step when I fail, which is often.

I began to realize that those who had what I wanted also do a lot of service, and in trying to follow their lead, I waited for the co-chair position in my home group to become available and gratefully took the spot. I helped to start an MA email share in my district and began organizing women’s monthly brunches with another “fellow.” Service and step work was changing my life in now extraordinary ways. The miracles were coming. Not to say that life is always sweet. There are still disappointments, heartaches, and depression, but I have the tools to make them shorter-lived, and faith that I will survive them, knowing the lessons will strengthen me and give my life added meaning. I also have immense gratitude.

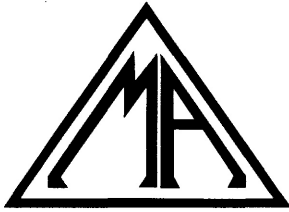
Recently, I began sponsoring a woman in need. I felt guilty not yet having my suggested year of total sobriety, but it was pointed out that it was merely a suggestion, and that as long as I stayed sober and had a sponsor myself, I had the necessary requirements. I rationalized my decision, having had over two years of marijuana sobriety, although I’ve kept it fairly hush-hush for now, fearing the scorn of some MA traditionalists, however, I have received nothing but support.

I did take my two-year chip at my home meeting when that day arrived (it was the principal of the thing; we had changed the rule, after all) and from then on I stopped keeping two day counts and began only publicly recognizing my total sobriety date. It is not without some resentment, and I’m working on that. (That’s a lie, I always get it in somehow, but I’m working on that too!) My ego still wants everyone to know that I have twenty-eight months free of pot! (See, I even got it in here.)

As I approach my one-year total sobriety date, I have had

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*concluded on page 4*



## 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 700 copies of New Leaf each month to subscribers in 30 states and Canada.

## How and Why

By Sam B. Stone

Do tell us how and why  
Came the collective sober sigh  
Please participate and share in what you know  
The how is still a mystery  
And why is very clear, you see!  
From the bottom I have nowhere else to go  
For thirty years with short refrain  
I obliterate my heart and brain  
And hide behind a massive wall of drugs  
In life I now participate  
As fog and noise they dissipate  
And now, all I'm taking are the hugs  
Be it smoking buds, or drinking suds  
Or sneaking and beating off to porn  
The results the same  
More fear, more pain  
On the tree of life resentments do adorn  
No insurance cards or prison yards  
Can re-assemble these human shards  
The jumbled mess of the addict's soul  
But an open door and outstretched hands  
With gentle words and not commands!  
Might bring about some measure of control  
For men and women everyday  
These friends of Bill have shone a way  
With baby steps love re-acquaints itself  
So before the timer chimes  
I'll share with you my rhymes  
And take this grateful heart off of its shelf  
So how and why you asked of me?  
The how is you! And the why is me!  
That's my answer and I'm sticking to it

## CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW LEAF

We're always looking, and sometimes begging, for submissions from MA members, whoever and wherever you are. Please take some time this month to send us your story, or a poem, or an answer to the Roving Reporter question. Or, for the September issue, send us your thoughts on Step 9 or Tradition 9. Please keep your submissions to around 1,000 words or less, and remember that the deadline for each month's issue is the 20<sup>th</sup> of the previous month. Thanks!

—The grateful folks at *A New Leaf*

# The Roving Reporter

*The Roving Reporter asks, What's the one thing you'd like to say to every newcomer?*

*And MA answers:*

Welcome! The beginning is the hardest part – the rest is a miracle of discovery. Keep Coming Back!

—Carol R.

You'll hear a lot of true things and a lot of bullshit in meetings, so stick around long enough to learn which is which.

—Bonnie V.

Focus on taking it one day at a time.

—Lynne S

Seek out a temporary sponsor as soon as possible, to help guide you and support you through the initial process of becoming involved in the MA program. It is suggested that women work with women to avoid any misunderstandings.

—Desiree L.

*For the September issue, the Roving Reporter asks, "What is a sponsor, and why is it important to have one?" If you have an answer, contact your local Bureau Chief (if you live in a District area) or send it straight to us. Our contact information is on page 2.*



Have you stopped digging?

—Sean D.

Get a meeting schedule and a phone list and use it.

—Ray A.

Before you decide if you is or you isn't, give this program a chance.

—Michael W.

## My A\*\* Had Been Utterly Kicked

By Lacie H.

I need sobriety now as badly as I needed pot then. Being clean is not my first choice, it's my only choice, 'cause, like walking through a strange forest, you may come upon something scary ahead, but you already know what's behind you isn't something you wanna face.

When I was 17, I moved from New Jersey to Los Angeles to become a movie star. This required, in my estimation, getting rid of some things (my virginity, to name one) and taking up other things (drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and loose sex.) The life of an artist was a fun trip. Falling from grace was very much what I needed. I had spent my childhood years acting the perfect child, and I badly needed the experience of being what I thought was adult and independent. Soon, this independence and wildness came to be how I defined myself. Lacie the partier, "life is a cabaret, old chum," Lacie the actress, Judy Garland, Lacie H., Sally Bowles, Lacie H., Janis Joplin, Lacie H., the great artist, the great thinker, Winston Churchill, Lacie H., the befuddled burnout.

When the pot started to talk to me in the morning was when I really became scared. The whole day was night. The whole trip was a relaxation. Like when you get home from work and you finally kick your shoes off. Only I didn't have the feeling that I deserved to rest. I lived in recline. My days and nights had melded together into one romantic, woozy dance and it became, just as Janis put it, "all the same f—ing day."

I tried indulging only at night. For a while, it was a casual stroll toward the pot cabinet without panic or attachment. Very soon, there would be an urge toward the night coming earlier. "Maybe after my last appointment. Maybe I'll get high after my last appointment today." Finally I came to a point when my first waking thought was, "When can I get stoned?" This went on for a period of several months until I had no faith in myself whatsoever. As I was swearing to myself in the morning, "I'll take today off," I was crying out internally, "I can't. It's impossible. I'm entirely without willpower to make good on this."

So I came to MA, where the first step (in Jersey-speak, anyway) is: we admitted our asses were utterly kicked. And though I had said it to myself, when I went into a place where other people were saying it, I was humiliated beyond comprehension. I fought this feeling, I fought the steps, I fought the people, I fought the books: I fought. Now, two years later, I'm settling into MA one hair, one fraction, one resistance at a time. And I'm finding that, hey, its-a not so bad. It's a nice-a place. And, for now, I really like life. I don't see the world as a dark forest but as an extremely intriguing drop into the rabbit hole. No drugs required.

I have compelling urges now to overdo things, but not one of them is as painful for the moment as the addiction to drugs. Coffee at its best will never be in a league with pot, and so the obsession with it isn't nearly as great. I like who I'm becoming. I know it's the right direction for me to be heading in. Sobriety isn't my first choice but I see it as my only choice.

# 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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 415.522.7373

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 PO Box 8354, Berkeley, CA 94707  
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 408.450.0796

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 POB # 17323, Seattle, WA 98107-1023  
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 PO Box 3003, Santa Cruz, CA 95063  
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 800-766-6779

## Pot Was My Weakness

*concluded*

the itch to use, to act out, to be self-ish. I feel like I deserve a thanks. And then it hits me. On that day, when it is asked, "will all of those people with a year or more of continuous I will raise my hand for the first time with more pride than I should allow. I am still way too driven by ego and will. I have so much to learn, so much work to do. My fifth step awaits me with a wonderful new sponsor, a woman with 14 years in MA and the wisdom and humor to help me through life's challenges. She is my gift from HP, and it's the gift that just keeps on giving. I aspire to do that in kind. Once I hit my one-year date, I can begin that journey and be openly available.

I have more gratitude than I know what to do with today. Must be time for this willful Jewish girl to get down on her knees and say thanks.

And, thank you, for letting me share.

## Thought for the Month

There is no situation in life that using drugs won't make worse.

## 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 3

Chris A.	8/26/02	1 year!
Mike G.	8/5/00	3 years
Julie F.	8/18/96	7 years
Pam J.	8/12/96	7 years

### District 4

Eric K.	7/1/95	8 years
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### District 5

Christina M.	8/17/97	6 years
Coleman G.	8/13/92	11 years
Chris G.	8/21/90	13 years
Lisa T.	8/21/90	13 years

### District 6

Désirée L.	6/7/02	1 year!
Sam S.	5/5/02	1 year!
Lacie H.	6/29/01	2 years
Mark I.	6/21/99	4 years
Jim S.	7/5/95	8 years
Leonard B.	8/4/94	9 years

### District 7

Larry	6/20/01	2 years
Mark	7/13/01	2 years
Alex M.	6/21/98	5 years
Vaneddie	7/09/90	13 years

### District 10

George G.	7/7/94	9 years
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### District 11

Drea	8/27/02	1 year!
Sukho	8/1/02	1 year!
Walt	8/11/02	1 year!
Wharf Rat John	8/28/02	1 year!
Steve	6/1/97	6 years
Ty	7/21/95	8 years
Rocco	5/29/95	8 years
Brandon	7/5/94	9 years

### District 12

Meg L.	7/9/87	16 years
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**Celebrating 176 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**