



AUGUST 2005

Volume 15, Number 8

A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

How I had 120 Days Off Pot When I Came to My First MA Land Meeting by Suzy P

Go back a year and a half when I was a pothead working at a bikini bar as a dancer, living with my now ex-boyfriend, who shared a bag of weed with me daily. Crack came into his life and I had to get out. I had no friends, no credit and no savings. I had skills, but where had they gotten me? I had a family who loved me, but who hardly knew the real me. I had kept people conveniently away from me if they were not heavy smokers, to protect my own sick way of life.

I chose to move home. Detox started and it was a good feeling for me to sweat out, cough up, vividly dream and lay awake at night. It was healing and therapeutic. I found www.marijuana-anonymous.org on the internet and read about detox, but did not return to the site until a year later. During that year, I first went back to my ex-boyfriend and started on a two to three month relapse. I decided to keep my new bong in the car. I made stupid choices as a pothead. Things got so bad with him I finally gave up. I wanted out of my lifestyle. I buried my bong along with a letter about all the people I'd influenced with my habit and all the negative and harmful consequences I'd attained from my habit. I said goodbye.

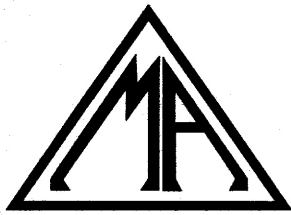
Since that day I didn't buy weed or paraphernalia again. I did however occasionally run into and associate with potheads, most of who were at work and finally quit them and my job after 10 years. I had an old buddy or two, one being a casual smoker and the other being an old best friend and heavy pot user. Later I started to change. I did not like being influenced by people who did not care or consider for my well-being. Recovery was lonely for me. I found a 12-step meeting for addicts of any addictions and I would share almost weekly on

spiritually themed topics at these newcomer outreach meetings. I had still never shared my story of being a pothead to other potheads and gotten that support and understanding I needed.

At MA Online, I related to those people. After a couple attempts at dating relationships with people who were clean, but not in recovery, I withdrew into the same pattern of avoiding people, but without the addictive smoking.

The last time I smoked, I met someone. We played the same role as background actors for the band, Polyphonic Spree, on a TV show. Was that a bag of weed he put in his pocket? The pothead in me used that knowledge of what I saw as a conversation opener. I had only used pot about twice in the last six months, but I was open to it with him and the walk back from the event was one of that same out of control feeling I had gotten from pot sometimes. I felt lost, like I didn't know how to get where I was going. It was an escape, but I had come to sense it was an unhealthy one.

Without pot I am better. The tools have made it easy for me to abstain on my own knowing MA is there and learning more about my higher power, God, and how I depend on him. I have written journals since childhood and find it is an extremely therapeutic process, as I am honest and thorough with the sharing I do in my journals. It helps keep me on the right track, especially during times when I don't feel like sharing in a meeting. Now I am in touch with my spirituality and my need for a higher power and reaching out to others in therapeutic environments. It is a thrill and goal for me. The MA 2005 MA Convention was my first land meeting.



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 681 copies of *A New Leaf* each month to subscribers in 31 states



The Roving Reporter

For this month the Roving Reporter asked, "What do you like best about your sponsor?" Here is what a few had to say:

What I like best is he is a working person, he also guided me through the steps and is right to the point. He worked with me like his sponsor did with him. When I call him he says it sounds like I'm doing good. *Robert M., District 2*

I would have to say my sponsor is someone who makes the program come alive. This sponsor is one who I can identify with, share honestly and get honest feedback. I get directed to the steps and tools of the program. *Laura - District 5*

I like the way my sponsor allows me the dignity to work out my own problems and recovery. He offers me spiritual tools that help me to make my own decisions, rather than direct advice. He gives me guidance on how to work the steps and apply the program to my life, rather than orders to be carried out. *Terry H - District 5*

His unconditional love and positive reassurance that things do get better. He never makes me feel worse when I already feel badly about myself. *Matt*

Her honesty, her wisdom, her sense of what's right. *Sheila B., Philadelphia*

Solid, like a rock. *Anonymous*

Dedication and sense of humor. *Anonymous*

Supportive, understanding. *Anonymous*

That he is honest and doesn't push me. *John C., District 11*

She is nonjudgmental. *Jennifer. L, Philadelphia*

Her sense of spirituality sometimes seems unattainable, but her patience in teaching me is invaluable. She is honest and calls me on my defects. She helps me to sort things out when I'm overwhelmed. *Trisa, District 11*

That he'll listen to me and be supportive as well as not buy my bullshit. *Jason, District 5*

There's no finger pointing. I am comfortable bringing up anything. *John Mc., District 5*

She has what I want. We got to work through some communication issues and came up with solutions that work. She has been very supportive of me and my recovery. *Becky, District 6*

That he's got a softer way for me. He gives me things to do. We have something in common. *Ruel, District 7*

My sponsor doesn't take my bullshit and it pisses me off. It causes me to think and pushes me into growth. *Hal - Dist 5*

My sponsor truly guides me into the direction I wouldn't normally go. He is available to me 24/7, whenever I am in need and if he doesn't have an answer he will find it. *Jon C - District 5*

The thing I like best about my sponsor is that she doesn't act like she is better than me, she suggests direction rather than telling me what I should or shouldn't do, and she is honest without being hurtful. She is just what I need in a sponsor! *Kathy B. (District 5)*

For next month, the Roving Reporter asks, "What do you do take care of yourself when you're feeling low?"

In Front of the Eight Ball

Tradition 8: *Marijuana Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*

We are a fellowship of mutual support because our recovery grows when we give it away. This process can't be bought it can only be shared as equals because of our commitment to twelfth step work. But because of increased workload people need reimbursement for the expenses incurred such as photocopying literature, phone calls, etc.... it is common sense that tells us when we need to hire special workers to help coordinate our efforts at the levels of Public Information and area conventions.

by Anonymous - Dist 5

Step 8: *Made a list of all people we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*

This is a two-fold step..... one that I have made more difficult than it really is. It only asks that we make a list..... I had to keep it simple...not think to the steps ahead. I focused on just making a list. I made a couple of columns--Who I have harmed--and--How I have harmed-- referring to my 4th step. I started with the easiest people first, some are obvious, those I felt bad about or felt some guilt. My first sponsor told me if I feel guilty there is a good chance that I may be. Some start the list with anyone they feel discomfort with. Some sponsors suggest you start with the people you wouldn't even want to put on a list.....Some start the list with God. Some start the list with themselves.... after all haven't we caused ourselves harm. Then after we examine our list being thorough and fearless from the start....maybe looking back at step 4 but not planning the outcome ahead....We then become "willing" to make amends to them (all) I haven't reach that point yet.... We are only asked to *become willing* to make amends. Some may adjust their list in order of willingness. The easy ones again..... others seek prayer for courage and fellow members for help on how to become willing. Me, I had to pray for the willingness to become willing. I am still in the process of becoming willing...I've learned we really don't need to like or do something in order to be willing. But if my motive is recovery then I have a desire to be willingI still need my Higher Power's help. I can't do this alone. Making a list and Willingness is all that is asked of me.

--by Anonymous - Dist 5

Early Thoughts on the Road to Recovery

by Dustin

For first time I am really scared about the days coming, I don't know what they bring but I do know this, no man can change his fate. So I wait until the time comes when I am judged. So I stand strong. Until then I hold my head up high and never make the days come sooner, I just take it one day at a time.

The days have come and I have seen and done what I could do to stop what is happening, but with everyday it gets worse and I was right, that I cannot change my fate but I can make it better by how I take it, so I try as hard as I can to make me feel better, by letting them out, I don't know, I need time to think, this is the end and I don't know which one to take.

The days are hard, it's harder to see what you want but can't have. It taunts you and hurts so much, much more then getting hurt physically, you feel like you were dying inside and not on the outside, but you can see and tell how I feel and I can not stop or do anything about it. All I can do is try not to give it to others and smile at times and live a life.

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ATTENTION IMPORTANT ANLP NEWS

Dear Marijuana Anonymous fellowship. Please note A New Leaf Publications has a new P.O. BOX address. It is P.O. BOX 6842, Torrance, CA 90504 and can also be found on page 2 for future reference. Please send all submissions, book orders and mail to this new address to ensure we receive them. Thank you, ANLP STAFF

A New Leaf Publications is seeking a volunteer to serve as Executive Treasurer. To qualify as an executive director one must be clean and sober from marijuana, alcohol, and all other mind altering substances for two years AND must satisfy at least one of the three following requirements; 1. Has been either a Managing or Executive Director on the board of ANLP for at least one year, 2. Has been a MAWS Trustee for at least one year, or 3. Has been a MAWS Delegate for at least one year. The selected candidate will have a solid understanding of basic accounting & book-keeping principles and practices and show demonstrated competency managing financial services professionals. Duties to include; managing professional accounting bookkeeping services provided by an outside vendor, maintaining general oversight of ANLP's financial systems, controls, and obligations. If you are interested please contact Brandon by e-mail at office@marijuana-anonymous.org.



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 5

Tender John Mac	7/02/91	14 years
Gary T.	7/07/01	4 years
Chris G.	8/21/90	15 years
Lisa T.	8/21/90	15 years
Coleman G.	8/13/92	13 years
Chris M.	8/10/02	3 years
Mike	8/20/04	1 year!
Scott	8/20/04	1 year!

District 13

Lynn	8/06/01	4 years
Kim	8/08/99	6 years
Drummerdude	8/12/03	2 years

District 7

Vaneddie	7/19/90	15 years
Bhavato	7/11/03	2 years

District 6

Alannah G.	8/01/01	4 years
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District 3

Julie F.	8/18/96	9 years
Pam M.	8/12/96	9 years
Mike G.	8/05/00	5 years
Tristan	8/24/96	9 years

District 2

Christine I.	8/01/04	1 year!
Chris K.	8/12/96	9 years
Kim D.	8/22/04	1 year!
Kirsten F.	8/26/04	1 year!

District 1

Ari K.	7/03/96	9 years
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District 12

Blake	8/01/04	1 year!
Michael F.	8/21/00	5 years
Charlie	8/23/04	1 year!
Diana	8/28/03	2 years

Celebrating 155 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!