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A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

Working from Home in Recovery

by Elizabeth A.

7 a.m.: Waking up. Going to get going on this day. It seems cold out, but sunny. Good weather to go for a run. I'll get up at 7:30 and go running. It's so nice to be sober and coherent in the morning, instead of hung over and out of it. I have more choices.

8 a.m.: Okay, I guess I should get out of bed. 8 a.m. is still early. I'll just check my e-mail, then go running.

10 a.m.: How did I get caught up in all this e-mail? Why am I reading every Yahoo news article? I'm hungry. Too hungry to go running. I am going to eat something, then do at least half of this mailing I have to do for work, and then I will go running after I've digested a little bit. I am also going to turn on the heater; it's chilly in here. Time to pull up the shades, too.

Noon: My slippers are gross. They are covered in dirt, and they have holes. I need new slippers. Maybe my significant other has noticed that I left a catalogue out on the table turned to some really nice slippers. I haven't seen the catalogue lately. Maybe he ordered them. I need to get out of these pajamas and go running. It is getting too late to go running. I should've had more than a smoothie. Soon, I will be hungry for lunch. I'll just lie down. Since I am feeling kind of uptight about not accomplishing anything, relaxing in bed away from the computer is just what I need. After the nap, I will go running, take a shower, work on this mailing, and eat lunch. The day is still young.

12:05 p.m.: Saying morning prayer by bed. I forgot to do that when I woke up. Shit. Maybe if I had prayed, I wouldn't have wasted this morning constantly refreshing my inbox in various e-mail accounts, and neurotically worrying about trivial problems. But, I feel better now. More connected. That will help me rest more peacefully.

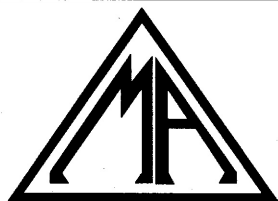
1 p.m.: Definitely too late to go running. What was I thinking, taking a nap? Time to work on the mailing. First things first. But before I do that, I am going to check my e-mail again, since someone may have responded to the important messages I sent out in the morning. But I am only going to read e-mail and not reply to messages now—unless it's absolutely necessary. It's quite warm and comfy in here now. I should turn down the heater. But it looks cold

outside, and I don't want to get chilled fingers while I e-mail...I mean work. I'm starting to get kind of hungry.

3 p.m.: I am going crazy. Stupid mailing. I hate my job. I hate my slippers, too. I should just order new ones myself. But they are kind of expensive. Maybe I should take a shower. Sometimes taking a shower is just the right thing to do when I am feeling dysfunctional. I should've taken a shower hours ago, when I realized I wasn't going to go running. I am starting to feel really gross in my pajamas. And if I don't change out of them, then they will get dirty earlier than my other clothes, and I will be forced to wear second-choice pajamas, or do my laundry earlier than planned, which would be a pain in the ass and a poor allocation of resources. Okay, I am going to take a shower, and do this mailing, and then get something to eat. I am pretty hungry now, but I don't want to waste time eating.

4 p.m.: Sometimes, I just need to stare off into space. It's kind of like meditation. And it doesn't do me any good to get down on myself about it. I have to let it go. Can't change the past. But, now I really have to start working. This job totally sucks, I should look for a new job tomorrow. Why am I stuck sticking labels and stamps on envelopes when I obviously have so many other talents? Oh well, I guess that's HP's will for me right now. I just have to accept it. Geez, I am totally starving, but now I really don't have time to eat if I want to get this in today's mail, I will feel like such a dork if I don't! I will finish up this drudgery, drop the stuff in the mailbox down the block by 5, and then get a slice of pizza as a reward.

5 p.m.: Thank god I am done. You know, it really wasn't all that cold outside. It just looked cold. Just ate at the burrito place in my pajamas. The pizza place is all torn up inside, I guess they are remodeling, which sucks because they are the only pizza place nearby and they do slices. Well, I don't think anyone really noticed I was in my pajamas at any rate. My pajamas look like regular clothes I think, and I had a coat on. Though I kind of had bed-head and squinty eyes. They probably just thought I was tired. Okay, enough work for the day. Now I can play on the internet without guilt, and catch up on my e-mail. I wonder if I should call my sponsor?



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.

Sponsor Quest

By George L.

I have been in and out of recovery for over 15 years. My first sponsor was a friend of mine who I didn't even know was in recovery. It helped to have someone I could trust right away. He gently guided me through the early part of my recovery. He was kind, supportive, and unconditional. I needed that. When I went out to do some more research, he kept in contact, and while my life got more unmanageable, he would suggest that I might want to go to a meeting. It was the unconditional love and support that gave me the push I needed to finally get back. And it was his shoulder I cried on when I really began to remember some of the things that caused me to become an addict: child abuse, sexual abuse, I'm sure you know what I mean.

Thomas was HIV positive, and it was to take his life. That left me in a position I wouldn't recommend to anyone. I was being my own sponsor. I was afraid, distrustful, and after a while my life was in total chaos. Going out again seemed like a good idea. I had been in recovery for 6-1/2 years at this time. Not a good place to be, I'll tell you.

So my journey to find a new sponsor began. In the area I lived there was no MA. I was involved in another fellowship. I felt pretty comfortable there, more or less. But I had no respect for the guys who had more time than me. After hearing them discuss women in men's meetings, I didn't want what they had. I ended up getting a woman who I had much respect for to be my sponsor. She had 16 years of recovery, was happy, and what I felt was a great example of someone who lived what she spoke. I was sad to leave her when I moved to L.A.

Yet a new quest. Damn. I didn't want to have to go through this thing again. How would I find someone who I could relate to? Someone who understood my issues, who understood my life as a musician? My hours, my weird ways? I had made the decision that my new sponsor had to be a lot like me. That would be the only way I would feel safe. So I looked and looked. I heard some guys talk, and picked one person after another. I seemed to be picking the guys who had a bunch of guys already, and didn't have the time. There were other issues as well, but the point was that I still didn't have someone to confide in.

My new sponsor came from an unusual place. He was a guy who welcomed me to one of my first meetings in L.A. He was happy, his life was good, he had a great sense of humor. And most important... we had nothing in common? Wait. This isn't the way it's supposed to be! My sponsor was supposed to be a musician. He should have some of the same issues as me, wasn't he?

I had to earn my sponsor this time. He didn't say yes the first time I asked him. In fact, it took me quite a while to get him to agree. I had to be stealthy. I was curious. I asked him a lot of questions. When I didn't have a sponsor when I started my steps, he was the one who I went to for guidance. It was Step 4 when he finally agreed to sponsor me. It was very fulfilling to complete my 5 with him.

He has become one of my best friends. He has 22 years of recovery. He is well respected and loved. He is always laughing. I never feel less than him. He asks me for advice sometimes. On a life level, the only thing we had in the beginning is that we were both in recovery. Who would have thunk it? Not me, that's for sure.

All I can say is this: I give my life to my higher power, my higher power gives me what I need, whether I think I need it or not. My sponsor is the best sponsor in my recovery world. If you don't feel like that, you might want to reconsider your choice of sponsor. This person is someone you should trust unconditionally. It's the only way to really get the benefits of this fantastic program.

After looking over 10 years, doing it my way, the last two years have been the best in my recovery. I hope you can find that person who is the right fit for you.

The Roving Reporter

For this issue, the Roving Reporter asked, "What is a sponsor, and why is it important to have one?"
And only one MA member chose to respond:

"A sponsor is someone who will tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear."
— Steve S., District 3



For October, the Roving Reporter asks, "What was the first thing you liked about MA?" Please answer!

Poem

By Chris F.

So I started my addiction with smoking, toking, not noticing
the sting of the thing that was so fun it made me want to sing.
Feeling like a king, hoping that my doubt about the route
I was taking wouldn't leave me like a drowning trout.

So I bit down and I quit, exercised some wit,
walked away from getting lit, and fought my way out of that pit.
And I'm not sure if I didn't fall into another one.
Because in the stun of the fun with being done with weed,
I might have planted a seed of need in the deed of drinking.
Now I'm thinking instead of my weed addiction
taking wing, and blinking that out, I just got a replacement.
An adjacent encasement in a drug that will drive me further into the
basement as I get more and more wasted,
or am I just overreacting?

Compacting all the quacking yacking in my head
into something that I think I'm lacking.
Or should I also send alcohol packing down the same road as herb?
Will this curb or disturb my thoughts on addiction,
causing friction between my ears,
as fears manifest themselves as tears
as the beers go down and my conscience leers over me...
I guess I'll just have to wait and see.

MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>
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MA Convention 2004

It's all set! The 2004 Marijuana Anonymous Convention will be held in Portland, Oregon, February 14-16. District 11 will be our hosts. Stay tuned for more details!

Uncle M.A. Needs You!

For the October issue, we're looking for shares on Step 10 and/or Tradition 10, plus poems, birthdays, answers to the Roving Reporter question, and - new starting in October - event announcements!

That's right, starting in October we'll carve out a little space in *A New Leaf* for you to announce your MA-related event. If you live in a District, make sure your Bureau Chief lets us know about it. If not, just tell us directly. Our contact information is on page 2. The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month.

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

Erin O.	6/01/86	17 Years
Marishka	9/30/87	16 years
Chris K.	8/12/96	7 years
Tura	9/10/98	5 years
Joe B.	6/26/99	4 years
Carmit	9/3/00	3 years
Kathleen M.	8/28/01	2 years
Matt I.	9/18/01	2 years
Jonathan M.	9/28/01	2 years

District 5

Pirate	9/30/86	17 years
Terry H.	9/7/96	7 years
Matty	9/1/97	6 years
Al H.	9/12/00	3 years
Barb	8/04/02	1 year!
Chris	8/10/02	1 year!
Tres	9/20/02	1 year!

District 11

Pat L.	7/23/94	9 years
Sprout	9/26/01	2 years
David	8/18/01	2 years

District 3

Kimberly M.	9/11/97	6 years
Michelle H.	9/03/97	6 years
Susan S.	9/26/97	6 years
Chuck F.	9/03/98	5 years

District 6

Ellie F.	9/24/97	6 years
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District 7

Alex L.	6/23/88	15 years
Farmer Doug	6/11/99	4 years
Sue F.	7/8/99	4 years
Michelle H.	7/7/99	4 years
Ollister	8/10/01	2 years
Bhavato	7/12/02	1 year!
Ruel T.	6/3/02	1 year!

District 10

Rodger C.	6/15/00	3 years
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El Paso, TX

Kim L.	8/8/99	4 years
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Celebrating 174 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!