

# A NEW LEAF

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## He Prayed for His Blanket

by Bill D., District 6

I have a son, a seven year old who is the light of my life. His name is Brian. From the day he was born, I have tried to see to it that he has everything he needs in order to have a good chance at surviving this thing called life. I do this by looking back on my own life and remembering what I needed and did not get when I was a child. Don't get me wrong - I am not bitter and I do not hold resentments towards my parents or other caregivers. I believe that they did the best that they could with the child that I was.

My son and I have a nightly ritual. I help him get ready for bed, we talk about our day, and then I sing him a song. I have sung him the same song since he was about 3 months old. It is such a routine that he will not go to sleep without my singing to him. When I sing to him, he begins to yawn always at about the same time (I sometimes think I'm boring him to death). We kiss and then he is off to sleep.

Well, a few nights ago Brian got into bed and noticed that I had washed his favorite blanket. It is actually a quilt made for him by his great-grandmother. He has over the years come to regard his blanket as a sort of sibling, since he is an only child. He pulled the blanket over his body as he settled into bed and said, "It's good to have a nice, clean and soft blanket". I was about to begin the ritual when he stopped me and said, "Dad, when you finish singing, can we say a prayer for my blanket?" I have to admit I was a little surprised by his

request, but it seemed important to him so I said o.k.

I finished singing to him. He put his hands together and began this prayer: "Dear God, thank you for the nice clean blanket on my bed. Thank you for the

*"I believe that help isn't always given to me directly. Sometimes just by observing a given situation the lesson learned will have a direct impact on my life."*

house that we live in and..." As I listened to my son's prayer I began to realize how truly thankful he is for the day to day things he has in his life. How he is developing his own relationship with his "Higher Power".

## Living In A Box

by Neil L., District 1

The last five years of my twenty-year marijuana addiction were like living in a box. Not a big refrigerator box, but a small, tiny, minuscule one. It was dark, cold, and lonely---and I liked it. Well, I was used to it. It was comfortable. There is a strange comfort in familiar pain. My little, smoke-filled world consisted of "NOTS". Not answering the phone. Not answering the door, except for pizza. Not dealing with my problems. Not feeling. I only left the box at night for essentials,

He also caused me to remember something I had not considered in a while. I believe that I never know where I will get help from, where I will get direction from, or from what source I will receive good solid advice. I believe that help isn't always given to me directly. Sometimes just by observing a given situation the lesson learned will have a direct impact on my life.

This seven year old was giving me a message. I do not believe it was intentional, but the impact was great! The message to me was: be thankful, take time to show appreciation for life and enjoy the simple things. I began again to focus on my son's prayer and he added a few more things. He prayed for his mom, and he prayed for ME. He gave me a big hug and said "I love you Dad". I said, "I love you too son... Good Night".

like pot. I feared people and was unable to make eye contact. I was invisible. The world became a foreign, uncomfortable place where I no longer fit in. The only thought that circled my remaining brain cells was suicide.

When I walked into my first M.A. meeting, the lid of the box began to open up and I could see a small stream of light. As I attended more meetings, the box started to warm. By working the

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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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## A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship

The Editors would like to thank the District 7 members  
who have responded this month.

### "When you first got sober, how did you deal with slippery situations, and friends who still used?"

Scott W:

I've basically been as honest with people and friends as possible. I feel that if I tell people that I'm sober, I've set a boundary. To me, all boundaries are defendable and honesty is the weapon I've chosen to defend that boundary. I've been careful of other's feelings and consequently I've kept my sobriety and also managed to keep some of my old friends.

Anonymous:

Besides staying away from them... not much. Basically I was so fed up with using that I didn't have a big problem. Mainly I stayed away.

Chip:

One of the things that was first told to me was when you want to use, put the newcomer chip in your mouth and when it melts, go ahead and use. Needless to say, it never melted. I also have gone and made new friends in the program. Because my

old friends did not want to stop and would get angry at my sobriety, I disconnected myself from them. I use my phone and call people when I want to use and the cravings go away.

Anonymous: Basically I tried to avoid those situations and told my friends that I

was not using anymore. When they still talked about scoring or whatever, I felt angry and hurt that they were not being as encouraging as they could. I felt resentful, but acted like it didn't bother me.

## The Roving Reporter

Alex:

I stayed away from the people and places that were slippery! If available, I tried to have other sober people with me and/or the Big Book. And, of course, I prayed and meditated!

Stephen S:

Avoided them. And frankly I still do. A little too scary for me...

## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!

Tim L.	Aug 18	4 yrs	Dauna W.	Oct 10	3 yrs
Dan R.	Aug 24	1 yr!	Roc Holiday	Oct 10	3 yrs
Rasputin	Sept 01	8 yrs	Rob M.	Oct 15	2 yrs
Patrick P.	Sept 08	3 yrs	Flyin' Brian	Oct 16	8 yrs
Kristine K.	Sept 15	3 yrs	Jim S.	Oct 17	1 yr!
Randy F. (OC)	Sept 15	1 yr!	Hector J.	Oct 19	7 yrs
Sea Dog	Sept 24	4 yrs	Ilene M.	Oct 20	1 yr!
Sarah	Sept 24	16 yrs	Kathy C.	Oct 21	9 yrs
Derek S.	Sept 25	9 yrs	Sanford G.	Oct 25	7 yrs
Mariska O.	Sept 30	8 yrs	Randy F. (LA)	Oct 25	8 yrs
John Ma.	Oct 2	3 yrs	Jason L.	Oct 28	2 yrs
Joanne M.	Oct 2	7 yrs	Michael L.	Oct 29	5 y
Tomasso	Oct 7	4 yrs	John C.	Oct 30	1 yr
Ed A.	Oct 7	8 yrs	Sue E.	Oct 30	6 yrs
Albert J.	Oct 8	6 yrs	Renee S.	Oct 31	7 yrs
Richard A.	Oct 10	6 yrs			

## In a Box...

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First three steps the lid was removed completely. When I started reaching out, by using the phone and doing service, I was able to climb up and peer over the top of the box. What I saw was that on the outside, this was no ordinary box. It was actually a beautifully wrapped gift.

I am extremely grateful for the gifts of the program. Serenity, unconditional love, higher power, renewed friendships, self-esteem, and the ability to have feelings, to name a few.

With the help of everyone in the rooms, I was able to throw away that old box and enjoy these new gifts. *R*

## Thank you, George ! from the Staff

"In December of 1990 I walked into a meeting of another 12-Step Program and picked up one of its newsletters from the literature table. After reading the newsletter, I became convinced that a similar publication would be a great way to carry the message of Marijuana Anonymous, as well as keeping our members up-to-date with the business being conducted at different service levels of our program. So I stole the idea."

The preceding paragraph is taken from the forward of "A NEW LEAF IN REVIEW". Shortly after attending that meeting, the District Service Committee of District 6 voted to fund 100 copies for the first issue of George's "stolen idea". We now print 1500 copies every month.

At every meeting of MA, long-time members and newcomers alike can "take home a meeting". The newsletter receives "thank-you" notes regularly from people all over the country (members and professionals working in the field of recovery) telling us how much the articles

relating experience, strength, and hope recovering addicts are appreciated. Fellowship-wide events like the World

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## A Grateful Newcomer

by Jason M., District 6

I was at a meeting the other night and heard this person share about her newfound sobriety. She was gripping her Big Book like her life depended on it and was on the verge of tears. She shared how scared she was about life in general. As I was listening to her share, I saw myself sitting in her seat saying the same thing just a short time back. It brought tears of joy to me thinking of how grateful I am today to be alive and sober. Still does.

At my first meeting, I saw all these happy people. They were hugging each other, having a good time. I remember thinking... "What is wrong with these morons! Don't they know how screwed up they are?!" Then they were doing some ritualistic prayer, like we were in a church!!! "What is this B.S. ?!! I came here to get clean, not to pray to something that doesn't exist!" Then I saw people taking chips for 30 DAYS and 60 DAYS!! I was in complete awe of these people. Later, someone was taking a cake for a YEAR!!! I was stupefied! I felt like I should get down on my knees and start bowing down! It was hard for me to comprehend. "What am I doing here? I don't belong here!" When we got to the participation portion of the meeting I just sank down in my seat a little lower so no one would see me. I can't remember what people were talking about because I was still in a daze, but I remember that at the end everyone stood up, held hands, and said "Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.... Amen!!... Keep Coming Back - It

Works If You Work It!" Then people were coming up and hugging me! Didn't they know how messed up I was? So I grabbed some flyers, and ran out the door as fast as I could.

I feel I've come a long way since then. I have rediscovered my Higher Power, and pray to him often. I no longer feel the meetings are some sort of ritualistic cult where everyone is crazy. They are a place where we can share our experience, strength, and hope with others who have this disease of addiction. I do not put old-timers on pedestals anymore, for I realize they are only human. They only prove that if you work the program, your life will get better and you can stay clean one day at a time.

Today, I work the program to the best of my ability. I'm working with my (second) sponsor on the Twelve Steps. I go to a meeting a day to help me stay focused on my number one priority: sobriety. I take commitments whenever they come my way (sometimes I get "rail-roaded" into them, but I don't mind), and I try to help whenever possible. I try to study the Big Book because that's where a lot of the answers are. I write a lot. I call an addict a least once a week and try to do as much fellowship as possible. I'm looking for progress rather than perfection.

I cannot accurately express my gratitude for God, for the program, and the people who enrich my life so much. So all I can say is Thank You - my heart and prayers reach out to all of you. Keep Coming Back. The miracle does happen!! *R*

## Thought For The Month

*"We can only turn our eyes toward God. We do not have to search for him, we only have to change the direction in which we are looking."*


Simone Weil, "Concerning the Our Father"

## Thanks George...

*Continued from page 3*

Services Conference and the MA Convention are publicized and made known to the fellowship-at-large. The success of local district events is facilitated by mention in "The Bulletin Board".

Well, all this might never have happened if a certain addict had simply "observed" that MA needed a newsletter. In the spirit of the 12-Steps, George B. took action. He DID something (and we assume it appears on his Fourth Step!). Every month, every year since then, ALL of Marijuana Anonymous benefits.

Last month George retired from the Board of Directors. Carol Mc. (our recently retired Co-Editor...) was elected to fill the empty spot. The Editors, and the Board of Directors of *A NEW LEAF* want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution and dedication of George B. for his years of service to both this newsletter and Marijuana Anonymous as a whole. Thank you George! (and please, keep coming back!) 

## Convention Update

### Volunteers!

Volunteers for the weekend are still needed. Let us know either on your registration form or give Sharon P. a call at (310)652-6885 or Gary S. at (213)656-8520.

### D.J. needed!

If you area DJ, or know one who might be interested in donating their time for the January 13th Saturday night event, please call Todd E. at (310)281-9504

### Saturday Night Event

We're looking for 5-8 minute sketches, songs or other performance pieces. Contact the Convention Committee through your GSR.

### Raffle

Still needed are donations of new, unopened and valuable items for the raffle to be held at the Convention. All donations are tax deductible. Please call Todd E. at (310)281-9504 regarding potential donations.

## Bulletin Board

### Day Hike

Sunday, October 22, 10am. At Stoney Point, Chatsworth. Flyers will be available shortly.

### Talent / No Talent Show

Saturday, November 11 at a location/time to be announced. To donate your time/talent or for more info, call Todd E. at (310)281-9504.

## Six Haiku, "Before and After"

by Bill B., District 1

Here are six haiku which I wrote a few years ago. I call them "Before and After", meaning before and after I got clean and sober. They still seem meaningful to me, so I thought I would share them with you.

### Before:

Indifferent stars

Now cartoons in my eyelids—

Roll another one.

Ah, sunshine! fog! rain!

Time to get high. Get high! Get high!

Now what? Now what?

Wind-whipped fog obscures

So much. Indoor smoke curls up—

My eyes burn, blind.

### After:

Sun disperses fog

Like your cold water listening

Dispels my fears.

Hummingbird hovers—

Now gone. My sober brain awakes:

I catch a thought.

Spring breezes caress.

Your hug, your smile, your warm thoughts—

I am sprouting.

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