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A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

IT FEELS MUCH BETTER

by Scott A.

My name is Scott A., and I live in San Leandro, CA. I attend the Castro Weed Patch MA group in San Francisco. I have been clean since February 7, 2002.

I started smoking in 1975 when I entered high school. I have always had interest in the psychedelic media and been a rebellious sort of person. My childhood family life was not like the other kids. I was constantly being mentally and physically abused by my father and was looking for a way out.

I was turned on to smoking by a neighbor girl who attended the same high school as I did. Smoking did the trick; I was able to let go and relax for the period of the high. I would not smoke before school, but afterwards I would look forward to sharing a few tokes with the other stoners in my class. It made me feel accepted by some in an otherwise unfriendly atmosphere of my peers.

I really got into the pot culture. I collected movies and books (Reefer Madness, A Child's Garden of Grass, R. Crumb Comics, etc.) In the early 1980s I was one of the petitioners for the California Marijuana Initiative and helped produce several of the smoke-ins on the Los Angeles Federal Building Lawn. I worked at a couple of psychedelic boutiques, as well.

I lived for getting stoned. It helped me get over a lot of the anxiety and depression I endured through adolescence. Getting stoned helped me suppress the memories of a very unhappy childhood. Getting stoned helped me relax after stressful days. When California passed Prop 215, I was right there to get my Doctor's Recommendation for Medical Marijuana by a well-known doctor and medical marijuana advocate. I had also joined

three medical marijuana clubs here in the San Francisco bay area.

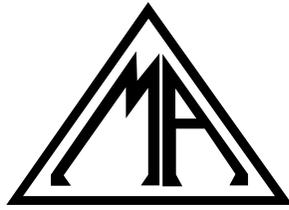
I have hit bottom many times in my life, but the final straw was February of this year. In the recent months I had been doing some baking of medicinal marijuana pastries for some friends who suffered from glaucoma, neuropathy, and HIV among other things. I would also consume my own baked goods. That started leading me down the road to major depression. I had many other financial burdens on my back and started feeling like my life was worthless and I had nothing to live for. I had my job and a wage garnishment, and that was it. I could not take life anymore.

Fortunately, I had a smoking buddy who understood where I was coming from. On February 6, 2002 we came to the realization it was time for both of us to stop smoking. But I could not just say "That's it" and throw it all away. We sat in my house, and I brought out all my paraphernalia and told him the story of each piece and how or why it was acquired. Each pipe, bong, smoking stone, and roach clip had a story attached to it. As I told him my stories, I packed up each piece and finally gave it away to someone who would dispose of it. Along with the paraphernalia, I also got rid of a quarter ounce of recently acquired California green bud.

The next day at work, I had a major mental breakdown and took a month off to detoxify. I had to get medical help to do this. The doctor had me on a very low dosage of Librium, and eventually I was put on Prozac. Marijuana affected several chemical receptor levels in my brain, and



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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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Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:
ANLP@marijuana-anonymous.org
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It Feels Much Better

concluded

that was making me very depressed and suicidal. I had lost my sense of humor and was very unpleasant to be around.

My smoking buddy had been to the Castro Weed Patch MA group in the past, so that Friday night he took me there. I was very nervous about going, but I knew I had found a group that would be supportive in my lifestyle change. There were others who were sharing stories very similar to my own. Just recently I had asked someone to be my sponsor. He first told me to read Step One and read it again and again. He then gave me a writing assignment. That assignment has been very difficult for me to complete, but I am slowly making my way through it.

My life has changed greatly since stopping smoking. My level of concentration is up. I have regained my sense of humor (a clear sign that the depression is gone.) My stamina has allowed me to go further than I did when I was smoking on a daily basis. I feel much better being smoke free and living a clean lifestyle. With medical help, I do not have a craving to get high. But there are days when I walk around the streets of San Francisco and I get that familiar smell wafting through the air. I take a breath and then remember the down days of depression and say to myself, "It feels much better to be without the effects of marijuana on my mind and body."

Untitled

Drifting away

On a sea of delusion

Praying to God

Stop this endless confusion

Thoughts are swirling in my head

Spawned on Satan's evil bed

Go ahead, they seem to say

One more toke, just for today

Tomorrow I'll quit

The mindset goes

When is tomorrow

No one knows.

The life of an addict

continuing to sin

If you quit fighting

The devil will win.

jwb

We Want to Hear from You!

Please take a moment to contribute to A New Leaf and help us carry the message of hope and recovery to the marijuana addict who still suffers.

For the November issue, you can contribute in several ways:

- Share on the “Step of the Month,” which is the 11th Step: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.” How has working the 11th Step helped to keep you sober?
- Share on the 11th Tradition: “Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, t.v., film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow M.A. members.” How, in your opinion, is anonymity important to MA?
- Answer our Roving Reporter question, “What does serenity mean to you?”

Please keep your responses as brief as you can so we can get lots of voices in.

Thanks!
A New Leaf Publications

Thought for the month:

“Each day, we renew our commitment to spiritual progress in order to stay one step ahead of the progressive disease of addiction.”

Life With Hope, page 49

Getting a New Sponsor

by Leonard B.

With seven years of smokeless time, I found myself in a situation that was unusually awkward and uncomfortable.

I needed a sponsor. My one and only sponsor that I had had since I was 4 weeks clean had told me he was not going to meetings these days and perhaps I didn’t want to have him as my sponsor anymore. I immediately said, “No, I want you, you guided me through the steps, were there when my lover(s) walked out, inspired my son to get sober, and we are great friends. Why would I want to have to bond to a new sponsor?”

There was no way, at seven years clean and sober, I was going to be in the position of having to ask another man to be my sponsor.

Some months went by, and even though I only saw my sponsor for lunch every few months, I started to think I really didn’t need a sponsor at all. But then on October 3rd, my mother died. My sponsor was the second person I called, after my Reverend. My sponsor had lost his mother two years ago, and we had a deep if brief chat.

A week later, when I was back in California from the funeral in Philadelphia, I called my sponsor and asked to meet him as soon as he could. I was not thinking of drinking or getting high, I just knew from all I heard over the years at meetings, to cover all the bases and use all the tools. But days and then weeks went by with only e-mails as my limited source of contact with my sponsor. And of course I thought the death of a parent is pretty high on the list of reasons to have a face-to-face with one’s sponsor.

So then my resentment started to interfere with the grieving process, and I really began to get pissed off and hurt. So in my head I thought it would be better not to even have a sponsor rather than be disappointed by one. And that worked for about six months. But the fragility of my sobriety started to sense underwater eruptions

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that I knew would reach the surface if I didn't do something quick.

The next day I shared what was going on at a meeting, and afterwards two men gave me their numbers. The next day I called Mort, and we talked about setting up a meeting when he got back from a seven-day business trip. Fine, I could wait, and I wasn't in such a hurry to start up with another sponsor who might suggest I work the Steps again. When we spoke again a week later, we still couldn't pin down a time to meet, and since he lived more than five miles from my home, I wasn't about to drive all the way out to the suburbs to meet him at his house. So I said I'd call him again, which I never did.

A month later I saw the other guy who gave me his number having Italian sodas in my local coffee house with his two sons. That I could relate to, because I have two sons who love Italian sodas, too. So I got Joe's phone number again and told him I would call, and I did. And we met. And we did that precious and brilliant thing that we drug addicts do with help from divine spirit: we just sat and talked and talked and listened. And when Joe said he once bought a Volkswagen beetle because it came with a conga drum in the back seat, I knew this man was going to be my new sponsor. The handshake that followed was one of those very special moments in life.

And late that night, when a friend outside the program asked me how my day had been, I really couldn't explain to them, or even mention to them what a very beautiful and important day it had been for this happy ex-pot head.



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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 Elizabeth S. 10/27/90 12 years Kurt A. 10/5/00 2 Years	District 6 (cont'd) Mark M. 10/3/01 1 year! Ted G. 10/7/01 1 year! Courtney N. 10//01 1 year! Adams 10/26/01 1 year! Wendy M. 10/29/01 1 year!
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Celebrating 276 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!