



A NEW LEAF

a literary publication of Marijuana Anonymous

Vol. 36, No. 10 - October 2024

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browser**

Letter from A New Leaf Publications Department

Greetings friends!

Our first monthly writing workshop held on October 5th was a huge success! Over 25 members joined us to come together, inspire one another, write about our recovery, and share our writing. Thank you to everyone who attended! It was a joy to hear members share their writing - our fellowship has so much passion and talent! Whether brand new to creative writing or seasoned writers, it was truly inspiring to hear from all who attended. We're looking forward to continuing the momentum with next month's workshop, which will be on November 2nd. We hope you will join us and help spread the word! Email Write@ANLP12.org to receive the calendar invitations and visit anewleafpublications.org/workshop for more information.

One goal in holding this monthly writing workshop is to inspire new writing from members of our fellowship to submit and help carry the message of recovery through our literature. In furtherance of this goal, we hope those who attended will submit their writing to be featured in A New Leaf, or other MA literature. And as always, A New Leaf Publications is always seeking content submissions from all members of our fellowship of not just writing, but also drawings, illustrations, comics, artwork, photography, puzzles, song lyrics and more!

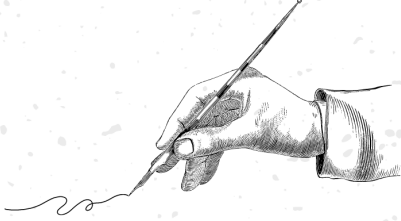
This month we'd also like to thank Janice O, for her time in service as the ANLP Administrator, as she is no longer working in this special worker role. While we are excited about the many changes happening at ANLP, we are sad to be losing Janice. Her kindness and dedication to ANLP will be missed, but we know she will continue to share her many skills with our fellowship by being of service in other ways! Janice, thank you for all of your service and hard work - this issue is dedicated to you!

Thank you for reading and sharing this issue of A New Leaf.

Yours in Service,
ANLP Department

Introducing Monthly Writing Workshops!

Let us cherish, preserve, and carry the message
and the gift of experience, strength, and hope
to those marijuana addicts who are still suffering



A NEW LEAF PUBLICATIONS CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS

1ST SATURDAY
EACH MONTH

9 - 10:15 AM PACIFIC
12 - 1:15 PM EASTERN
5 - 6:15 PM UTC

TO JOIN US, EMAIL: WRITE@ANLP12.ORG

A New Leaf's Purpose

A *New Leaf* celebrates MA member creativity and seeks to publish the message of hope in recovery. With your many wonderful and creative submissions, **A New Leaf continues to unify us in our shared experience as marijuana addicts.**

The articles contained in A New Leaf are the sole opinions of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole. MA is not affiliated with— and does not endorse or accept contributions from—any outside enterprise.

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Dear Marijuana

Written by Sara S

Dear Marijuana,

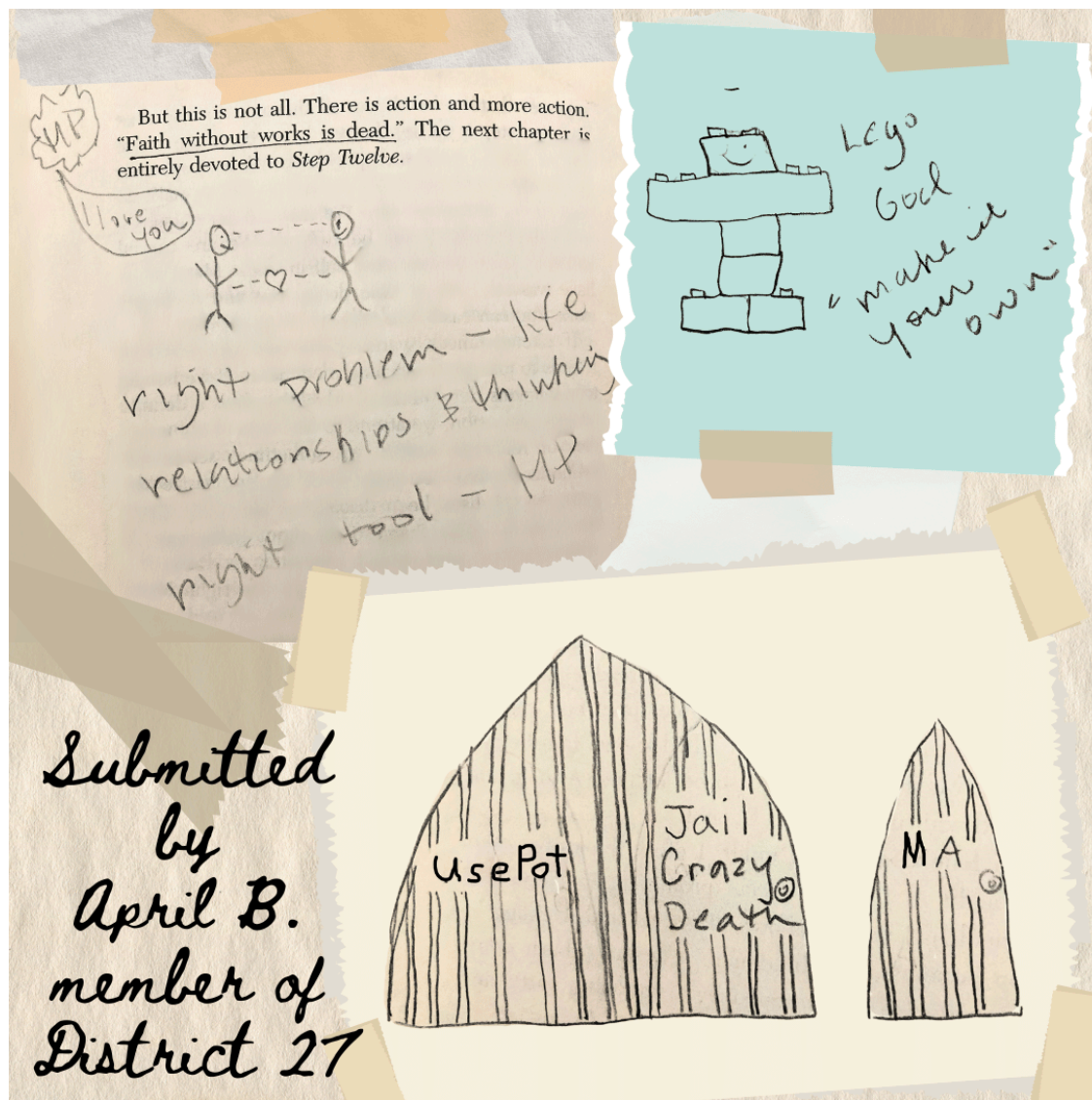
Today is my three year anniversary since I last saw you, and I still think about you. I reminisce on the good times even though, in reality, they were few and far between. The fact of the matter is you ruined my life. We can't be friends. The person I was three years ago was miserable—I had no dreams, goals, or ambitions because being around you killed and destroyed them all.

It's amazing how even three years out I sometimes get bamboozled into thinking that I still miss you. I'm not sure what I miss... I don't miss the way I put you before everything else, including my own needs. I don't miss the way I put you on a pedestal. You were my everything. Everything revolved around you, and yet the fact of the matter is that you made things worse. I thought you were my medicine. You helped me feel better during a really low part of my life, but the

reality of it is you didn't. By numbing out, I also missed out on the good. We can't numb out the bad without missing out on the incredible parts of life, too.

I'm convinced that because we met during a really low part of my life, which you took advantage of, it would not have gotten to the extreme measures that it did if we hadn't met during that time. Don't get me wrong, I am grateful we met. I am also grateful that we don't talk anymore because otherwise I would not have been able to complete the Twelve Steps the way I did earlier this week. I've never done anything like that before. It took three years, and I didn't do them for any reason other than my own personal growth, and it was for free. That's longer than a Master's Degree, and I did this for myself. I didn't do it for anyone else. My therapist didn't force me to. I wasn't court ordered to. I did this for me.

I'm grateful because since you've been gone, I have goals, dreams, and ambitions again. I like the person who I have become. Sometimes I think I miss you, but the fact of the matter is that at the end of the day, ultimately, I don't.



The Addict Brain

Written by Ernest F.

The self-centered thoughts I have always known seem to be normal to me. It is all I have ever known. Bill W. said in the "Big Book" that a spiritual awakening comes to most people gradually, and he seems to become a smarter man as I get better at practicing the program! I'm believing that as I come to think of others more and not just me, or only me. I'm seeing that my thoughts are on a higher level, or "higher plane," as Bill puts it. I see a "higher plane" as: balanced thinking, inclusive of all others and what is around me — being a part of others experiences, emotions and thoughts. It's a community we can choose to be a part of.

We are social creatures. We work together, and need each other. My thoughts cleared of wrong motives isn't different thinking, but correct thinking! How we include others into our stream of life is seen in not what we do, but how we are. "You will be surprised how this works after you have tried this awhile." A spiritual awakening is ESSENTIAL to our recovery and the maintenance of our spiritual condition includes Steps 10, 11 and 12. In this work, I learn to forgive, rather than HOLD onto resentments or "a past." The root of some of these problems has been self-centered thinking and my thinking has improved from what it was like. The way I had always been, always thought, always behaved, believed and felt, seemed normal to me. Now I'm seeing that through all the years and experiences I have wanted to believe was "MY" normal, that maybe it wasn't. Thinking more of others, divorced from self-centered thinking and self-centeredness, and cleared of my other motives, IS the intended use of the mind.. The "Big Book" states, "We ask each day what we can do for the addict that is still sick." For me, it's caring for a community of others because it is a "we program" and together, "we recover!"

For that, I thank all of you! ~"E Boogie"

SHARE

Your contributions to MA literature, and sharing of experience, strength, and hope through submissions to A New Leaf and all other MA publications, serve as an inspiration.

A New Leaf celebrates creativity and invites members to share recovery-focused stories, poems, song lyrics, prayers, meditations, break up letters to "Mary Jane," inspirational quotes heard in a meeting, artwork, comics, illustrations, photos, and crosswords or puzzles. We seek to publish the message of hope in your journey.

Submit Your
Content

Writing
Prompts

For a list of suggested prompts visit: MA12.org/Prompts

Want to share *A New Leaf* with others?

Provide this link to sign-up: MA12.org/New-Leaf



HEARTBREAK

Written by Mirabelle H. of District 14

It's hard to do anything,
forget,
remember
or think
without hurting.

Something is wrong and
there's no hiding it.
Is it a phase?

Will sadness last forever?
A day since it began,
last Wednesday,
when it started.

Work is the pits,
can only do so much.

Food is scary,
along with coffee,
along with sugar.

Songs hit the gut and
what I really want
so long unknowing
about the pain, the happiness
they can cause.

Suppose caution
Is the word to proceed.

It hurt bad.
I think I'm okay,
but it is gonna take more than a day.



INSPIRE

*Sharing program slogans,
quotes, and words of wisdom
heard in a meeting!*

We honor “what you see here, let it stay here,”
and anything included in this section of A New
Leaf will always be shared anonymously.

Share your Favorite Sayings

My Experience Proposing Conference Motions

*(Why You Can—and Should—Propose Changes You Think Will Benefit Our
Growing Fellowship!)*

Written by Heather C. of District 5

I, like so many of my fellows, have chronic illnesses, and rely on medications to treat chronic pain prescribed to me by an addiction pain medication specialist. I also have anxiety, depression, and PTSD, so my doctors also prescribe other medications that some might consider “mind-altering” for those conditions. Treating my pain and mental health is crucial to maintaining my sobriety from marijuana, alcohol, and other substances not prescribed by my doctors.

My grandmother—who was sober and active in AA for many years—was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Due to the definition of sobriety she was used to hearing, she felt that in order to be considered “properly sober” she could not take the medications her doctors prescribed for her pain. Despite the urging of her sponsor, fellows, and family, she chose to not take medication to treat her pain or anxiety, and her untreated anxiety was probably one root of her alcoholism (as it was with my own marijuana addiction!).

Early in my recovery, I felt like a fraud—even though I was rigorously honest with my sponsor. She has never suggested that I not take the medications my healthcare providers prescribe; she only encourages me to take them exactly as prescribed, and to be rigorously honest with both her and my doctors about my medication use and being an addict. In the very beginning, I counted my pain medications, and shared those pill counts with my doctors and my sponsor to keep accountable about my medication use.

Despite this, I still thought maybe I wasn’t “as sober” as other fellows, who I just assumed were not taking any medications due to the existing definition of sobriety. Early in recovery, I felt less deserving when accepting milestone chips because I took “mind-altering” pain and mental health medications prescribed by my healthcare providers. So when it was

suggested that I be of service at the World Services-level, I questioned my qualifying sobriety since I took prescribed medications that might be considered “mind-altering.”

I felt the need to hide my medication use from my fellows. As I gained more time in recovery, and spoke more openly with fellows about my medication use, I learned I wasn't alone, and that many others in MA take prescribed medications too. I came to understand it didn't make my sobriety any less valid than someone who does not take any medications. As I connected to more fellows, I learned I was not the only one who had questioned the validity of sobriety while taking medications as prescribed, and felt shame accompanied with it. I learned the important lesson that comparing myself to others in any respect was pointless; we all are different in our individual recovery in so many ways beyond medication use.

Whenever I told my sponsor about something in a meeting or MA's literature that bothered me, she reminded me of a quote from “A Vision for You” on page 164 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous to “create the fellowship you crave.” This quote reminds me that if I see ways that a meeting, MA literature, or even MA as a whole can be improved, then that change begins with me. If I believe something needs updating to keep up with our evolving fellowship, I should take the initiative and write Conference Agenda items to propose those changes—not just for myself, but for my fellows!

I became very familiar with the Service Manual; first as a committee member, and later as the Trustee for the Policies & Procedures (P&P) Committee. I wrote Conference Agenda items with committee members. Through this experience, I learned how I can make a difference if the group conscience agrees. As a member with about 1 ½ years of sobriety, I wrote an Agenda item that the Conference Body approved to make MA literature gender-neutral, updating the preamble to say “fellowship of people” instead of “fellowship of men and women,” and other similar changes throughout MA's materials. The way we refer to our fellows can make them feel either welcome or excluded, and I believed (and the group conscience agreed) that changing MA literature to be gender-neutral could make a vast difference for both newcomers and long time members alike, and how welcome they feel in MA.

At the recent 2024 Conference, I submitted a motion to revise the definition of sobriety in the Service Manual and other places it occurs. I thought about my Grandma, and wondered if a different definition of sobriety would have helped her feel more comfortable taking medications her doctors suggested to treat her pain and anxiety. I wondered if there were people in MA who were afraid to take medications prescribed by their healthcare providers due to the former definition, or who also felt their sobriety was less valid than people who didn't take medications.

In the requirements for Trusted Servants (e.g. Delegates, Trustees, and ANLP Department Executives) “Clean and Sober” was originally defined, “as abstinence from marijuana and all mind-altering substances including alcohol.” Other materials referred to “mind and mood-altering chemicals,” instead of simply “mind-altering,” which I proposed we change for consistency.

I thought the definition should expressly include an exception for medications taken as prescribed by a healthcare provider, and proposed for the definition of sobriety to add “other” before “mind-altering,” as well as “not taken as prescribed by a healthcare provider.”

So my proposed changes would read: “abstinence from marijuana and all other mind-altering substances not taken as prescribed by a healthcare provider, including alcohol.”

At the 2024 Conference, we discussed how taking prescribed medications is an important part of sobriety for many members, and maintaining a healthy state of mind to focus on our recovery!

The Conference Body was in favor of the concept, then did exactly what the Conference is designed to do, and suggested various revisions in the original language I proposed in order to make the sobriety definition more clear. The revised Motion now defines sobriety as: “abstinence from marijuana, alcohol, and all other mind-altering substances (unless those other substances are taken as prescribed by a healthcare provider).”

The Conference Body adjusted the wording to make it more clear that sobriety requires abstinence from marijuana, (even if it is prescribed), and ultimately came up with this definition that I agree is even better than what I originally proposed. While amending the language this way may seem tedious, this process is vital to creating the best possible and clear language under a group conscience.

While this definition is not binding for any person or meeting, the definitions of sobriety found in the Service Manual are primarily about the requirements for being of service, such as being a District Delegate, or member of the Board of Trustees or the ANLP Department. This definition had previously and still includes abstinence from alcohol, even though the singleness of purpose principle in MA means meetings are free within their autonomy to focus on abstinence from marijuana and award chips for that, regardless of alcohol use. But for being of service for MA World Services, or ANLP, complete abstinence from marijuana, alcohol and other substances not taken as prescribed has always been required. Therefore, as someone who is currently in service for MA World Services and the ANLP Department, revising this definition truly matters to me. And while it might not be a definition that is required for meetings who remain autonomous to define sobriety as they wish, as this influence on how members think about their own sobriety is the primary reason I proposed the change, and that the group conscience of the Conference Body supported the change.

I hope this change makes members feel empowered to follow the medical advice of their healthcare providers – that members will feel safe to be rigorously honest with their sponsors, fellows, and healthcare providers and feel more confident in their sobriety, regardless of whether they take prescribed medications. This definition is specifically for being of service at the World Services-level, and will hopefully encourage more MA members who take medications as prescribed to feel eligible, “qualified,” and welcome to be of service.

TL;DR: Any member, meeting, district or committee may submit Agenda items. If you find anything in MA's materials that might need updating, consider submitting an Agenda item so the Conference Body can discuss and if the group conscience agrees, adopt your proposed changes! Attending P&P Committee meetings is a great way to work with others on proposing changes to the Service Manual and other MA materials. When members work together on Agenda items, they usually end up being better, more well-developed Agenda items that the Conference Body is more likely to adopt.

Our fellowship is what we make it, and as times change and our fellowship grows, many of our materials will be ripe for updating. Don't wait for, or expect, someone else to do the

work to make change happen. Others may have thought about proposing the same changes as you, they will likely appreciate you taking the initiative, and will happily collaborate with you! It is just up to YOU—one passionate member—to take the initiative, and rally your fellows, (or a meeting, district, or committee) to “create the fellowship you crave” and propose changes via a Conference Agenda item!

Step, Tradition, Question, and Concept for the Month

Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

In working the Tenth Step, we were practicing the principle of Perseverance.

Tradition Ten

Marijuana Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Question Ten

When your stash is nearly empty, do you feel anxious or worried about how to get more?

Concept Ten

The integrity of our Service Structure depends on continued unity of Marijuana Anonymous Groups, Districts, and World Services through effective communication.

Celebrating 383 Years of Sobriety!

District 2 - San Francisco and East Bay, CA

Mariska P. 9/30/1987 37 Years

District 4 - Western Washington State

Jennifer D. 8/23/2015 9 Years

District 5 - Orange County, CA

Anthony 9/12/2017 7 Years

Az 9/30/1986 38 Years

Barbara N. 9/8/2020 4 Years

Farrah F. 10/8/2021 3 Years

Joel G. 10/6/1989 35 Years

Jacob D. 9/3/2022 2 Years

Marie 9/14/2022 2 Years

Mike G. 9/28/2015 9 Years

Mike T. 9/20/2021 3 Years

Rick D. 9/12/2008 16 Years

Terry H. 9/7/1996 28 Years

Trés 9/20/2002 22 Years

District 6 - N. Los Angeles County, CA

District 11 - Oregon and SW Washington

Becky C. 9/22/2014 10 Years

Bill C. 9/15/2012 11 Years

Dani P. 10/6/2023 1 Year!

Mike F. 10/5/2000 24 Years

Ralph D. 10/1/2019 5 Years

Susan C. 10/9/1986 38 Years

District 13 - MA Online

John C. 9/20/2023 1 Year!

District 19 - Toronto

Fernando T. 10/6/2022 2 Years

District 21 - Colorado State

Ang E. 8/15/2016 8 Years

District 22 - New England States

Michelle H. 9/19/2022 2 Years

District 27 - Independent Meetings

Kat R. 9/21/2021 3 Years

Kathryn W. 10/1/2023 1 Year!

David T. 10/11/2011 13 Years

Nataly Z. 10/2/2023 **1 Year!**

Rose R. 10/8/2023 **1 Year!**

Sarah K. 10/5/2023 **1 Year!**

District 8 - New York Metro

Jillian D. 9/15/2023 **1 Year!**

Jordana B. 9/26/2001 23 Years

Kim M. 9/21/2020 4 Years

District 28 - Phone Meetings

Laura L. 9/8/2018 6 Years

Also

Rik H. 10/05/2013 11 Years

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Share your Sobriety Anniversary in *A New Leaf*!

We want to celebrate your year(s) of recovery! **If your sobriety birthday has occurred within the last two months, please submit it by the 1st of the month** you would like it published, with your Name, District or Location, Sobriety Date, Number of Years, and District or City to anewleafpublications.org/birthday

Self-Supporting through our own Contributions...

Click to make a
contribution

The primary purpose of MA is to carry the message of recovery to the marijuana addict who still suffers. Therefore, this literary publication is free and available to distribute widely. When contributing, please consider the value MA adds to your life.

Marijuana Anonymous Resources

Meeting Finder

Marijuana Anonymous has 300+ weekly meetings that can be attended for free all over the world virtually and by phone, with in-person meetings available in some areas as well.

Need support? Contact us.

[Join a Meeting →](#)

Speaker Tapes Podcast

Experience, strength, and hope on the go! Anywhere... Anytime... Available wherever you listen to podcasts...

Any opinions expressed within these recordings are only those of the individuals sharing.

[Listen →](#)

MA's App

The Marijuana Anonymous App features our basic text *Life with Hope (2nd Ed.)*, *12-Step Workbook*, pamphlets, and sobriety counter.

Please note the in-app meeting finder is unreliable, refer to our website.

[Download the App →](#)

A NEW LEAF PUBLICATIONS

Publishing Department – Marijuana Anonymous World Services

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