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A NEW LEAF

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A Deadhead Recovers

PART 1 -- by Janice M.

I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1969 - The Summer of Love. My parents were Jewish beatniks, as much as Jewish South Africans can be beatniks. My dad was a lawyer and got into Real Estate. My mother was a professional Artist and an art teacher.

My first exposure to marijuana happened when I was 8 years old. One afternoon after swimming, I asked my dad what the "funny looking plant" was under a tree in the garden. He seemed upset, and said it was "dagga" [pronounced dagha] what the Africans call marijuana. He told the gardener to get rid of it and to get all the roots or it will come back. He said that it was a weed the Africans smoke with their liquor at night and get all "crazy".

My father was working hard to get us out of South Africa because of Apartheid and finally, in 1981, we moved to the USA. In 1984, my parents got divorced because my dad was with someone else. In 1985, on a trip to Israel with my confirmation class, some guys on the trip bought a chunk of hashish from the Arabs. They wouldn't let me try any.

When we got back home, I was invited to a party and there was a pipe going around. I got the end of it and thought I got stoned. Everyone laughed at me. There was a self-esteem issue going on from the start with me. I wanted to be accepted and didn't feel like I fit in. The boys called me "Jonice" because of my accent and it made me feel embarrassed.

One day in my art class, I asked a Deadhead girl where I could get a pipe and the next day in class she gave me a wooden one packed with green bud. I went into the bathroom to look at it. I was so happy. At lunch I smoked it in my car with another friend who also wanted to try it. We got really stoned! I cut the rest of the day and from then on I had arrived. I loved pot. I was a stoner. Pot was my thing.

I was very depressed about the divorce and blamed myself and I desperately missed my family and friends back in SA. I used to stay in my room at home and play music to escape from reality. Marijuana gave me a deeper escape. I got really into smoking pot and used to smoke it as much as I could get it. I met a guy cruising one night with my friends who was a heavy metal rocker. He smoked pot and chain-smoked cigarettes. We used to hang out, get stoned, play Dungeons and Dragons, and build model cars. We went to a lot of concerts and I thought I was having fun. I had a lot of sex and thought I was in love.

I started getting sick a lot. One night after thanksgiving dinner I got really sick and hallucinated that hundreds of horses were galloping toward me over my bed. He broke up with me because he said I was always sick. I met a guy at a friend's house where I bought pot. At this time I was more hippie than metal and we hit it off because he was a surfer and into the Grateful Dead. We went to lots of Dead shows and did lots of drugs. One show I was at in Sacramento - the Cal Expo summer Shows - I met some clean and sober Deadheads who called themselves the Wharf Rats. I was shrooming and they were really nice to me. I'll never forget that.

I graduated with a BFA in painting and sculpture and moved to the Belmont hills. I was working as a picture framer. However, something kept drawing me back to San Jose. I went back there every week to a bar called TOONS where a hippy Grateful Dead cover band played Sunday nights. I met their friends and as it turned out they were a Tribe of people who called themselves the Trinity of Tribes. They had lots of parties and lots of drugs. I tried X/ecstasy and speed. I didn't like the X, but I liked the speed.

A guy I knew let me crash on the floor of his room and I stayed there until he started making passes. I slept with him, but it felt weird. I thought I had to stay there. My thinking was pretty messed up. I was smoking 2 ½ packs of cigarettes a day, smoking pot everyday all day, doing some speed and just on the hunt constantly to get high and stay high. I needed help bad. I called my mom and asked her for help. She came and got me and we moved all my stuff back home. I spent the next 9 months getting clean and kicking all the drugs I was hooked on including cigarettes, which was the toughest one to quit. My mother had become a spiritual healer and helped me immensely with homeopathy, flower essences and Reiki.

This was 1995 and I was 26 years old. I was told to go to AA and NA by some healer friends of my mother and I did, but I remember that I didn't understand it and I would look at the 12 Steps hanging on the wall and not get them at all. I would sit at the back of the room, usually by the big sleeping Indian and just cry big tears.

I stayed clean and sober for 2 ½ years and got a job and a car and eventually moved into shared housing. I was doing well, but I hadn't worked any kind of program. I started going out to bars with her and a friend from work. One thing led to another, and I relapsed. I continued to use and lost my job. I got on unemployment and drove every morning across the bridge to a friend's house to get high with him. He was a guy that I knew in high school and he always knew where to get weed.

I hid bong and pipes everywhere. I stashed weed. I was a paranoid wreck. I was scared the landlord would find out. I jumped at every noise and thought that everyone knew. Later I would find out that they did. The area around my apartment reeked of pot. One morning my neighbor banged on my door and yelled at me. She said she was sick of smelling marijuana wafting into her apartment and I better "wake up and smell the coffee". This scared me a lot and I stopped smoking out of fear of being told on.

I decided to quit and out of fear did. The last time I used was October 18, 2000. My walk out of hell was extremely difficult. I often say that I may have another run in me, but I don't think I have another recovery in me.

Coming down from drugs, I went into a psychosis where I thought I was being visited by Native American animal totem spirits visiting me such as Bear, Wolf, and Alligator. One time while taking a shower, I saw my feet webbing and I thought I was turning into a fish! I was in the outpatient section of the Women's Recovery Association [WRA] and while there this was happening. I told them what was happening to me they told me that I needed to find a Shaman. I didn't know where to find one...

to be continued....



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

or

A New Leaf
P.O. Box 4314

North Hollywood, CA 91617

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



The Roving Reporter

For the month of November, the Roving Reporter asked "How do you stay sober during the holiday season?"

District 11 responded by saying:

Try to avoid situations where people are going to be using. If you have to go there, get a support person to go with you who knows your situation.

— Sukho

Be honest with people so they'll know not to tempt you, have some support mechanism in place, and remember there's always a meeting you can get to. Even if it's not MA, there's a meeting you can get to.

—Tommy J.

I walk my dogs, then I walk my neighbor's dogs, then I cross the street and walk their %@*&^\$ing dogs if I have to!

—Quinton

Avoid your old crowd and find some MA family to do the holidays with.

—Tom S.

Make sure, if you're in a place with alcohol, that you take your own special drink, so you won't feel goofy toasting with water. Sparkling cider works great.

—Dave C.

Keep your sponsor's phone number with you.

—Drea B.

For December, *The Roving Reporter* asks: "What is the number one thing on your holiday wish list?...and be honest!"

The Fourth Dimension

Rachel K.

Recently a good friend of mine with years of sobriety "went out." As addicts tend to do, I pondered how it could happen to someone who seemed to have so much recovery. Interestingly enough, the moment he got high was not the moment he relapsed. I've heard that when we enter the program, there are three components to our recovery. First we get sober, which is physical recovery. Then we enter mental recovery, where we start to get some normal brain operation back. We begin understanding the program on an intellectual level. Finally we get launched into the "fourth dimension," spiritual recovery, where we *feel* this program. After talking to my friend and fellow addicts at great length, I've learned that when one decides to leave the program recovery happens in reverse. First we spiritually lose contact with our higher power, whether by lack of prayer and meditation or by lack of faith. Next we start to think crazy thoughts, such as "I'm not really an addict," "I don't need to talk to anyone in this program," "I can cut back on my meetings," or other such nonsense that our disease tells us. Last, we make a decision to use again. This usually happens long before we ever pick up. We've been contemplating it for some time. We've figured out how we can do it and how we can get away with it. Sobriety Loses Its Priority. One day the urge overcomes us and we get stoned. What I realized by my friend's relapse is that none of us are truly safe. If it can happen to him, it can happen to anyone. It could even happen to me. I began to evaluate how spiritually fit *I am*. I've been making a conscious effort recently to participate in my recovery. I know that there could be a time, and there have been times where the only thing that stands between the next bong load and me is my higher power. I've begun praying before bed every night and for if nothing else, at least thanking my higher power for another day sober. I can't say that I will never get high again. Forever is a long time to think about. I'm just trying to focus on today, and as long as I work on my spiritual recovery, I hope to stay in the "fourth dimension."

CELEBRATE!!

2005 MA Convention

*Presidents Holiday Weekend February 18th to 20th 2005, at the beautiful Torrance Del Amo Marriott
Rooms are available Wednesday February 16th to Tuesday February 22nd at \$89 per night (1 to 4
people)*

*For reservations call 800-228-9290 by February 1st 2005 and state that you are with the MA
Convention*

Free self parking available (\$6 valet parking)

Convention registration begins at 4:00pm, Friday February 18th

The Convention ends at 3:00pm Sunday February 20th

Transportation to the Marriott will be available to and from LAX and Long Beach airports

		<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Registration:	\$20.00 (\$25.00 after January 1 st)	_____	_____
Banquet:	\$40.00 per person	_____	_____
Includes:	Dinner, Banquet Show & Dance		
Dinner Choices:	Chicken ___ Mahi Mahi ___ Vegetable Wellington ___ *One choice per person Vegan entrée upon request		
Dance Only	\$5.00 per person	_____	_____
Raffle Tickets:	\$\$Prizes\$\$ \$1 for 1 ticket, \$5 for 10, \$10 for 30	_____	_____
Tee Shirts:	Women's Tanks		
	Med ___ Lg ___ \$12.00 (\$15.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
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	Lg ___ and XLg ___ \$17.00 (\$20.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
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Donations to help another MA member share the convention experience are welcome _____

Grand Total : _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____ Email Address _____

If you will need transportation to and from the airport

Arrival Date: _____ Time: _____ Airport _____ Airline _____ Flight # _____

Departure Date: _____ Time: _____ Airport _____ Airline _____ Flight # _____

Please mail this form and Payment to: **Make Checks payable to MA District 7**

Penny Roebuck

MA Convention 2005

2106 Grant Ave #1

Redondo Beach CA 90278

For further information call Mike LB or Penny R. at 310-376-2400 or go to WWW.MA2005.com

MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>
 email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

MA World Service Offices
 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404
 800-766-6779

San Francisco (Dist. 1)
 PO Box 460024, San Francisco, CA
 94146-0025
 415.522.7373

East Bay (District 2)
 PO Box 20484, Oakland, CA 94620
 510.287.8873

South Bay (District 3)
 P.O. Box # 551
 Saratoga, Ca. 95071-0551
 408.450.0796

Western Washington (District 4)
 POB # 17323, Seattle, WA 98107-1023
 206.548.9034

Orange County (District 5)
 (Includes San Diego)
 1439 W.Chapman Ave.
 PMB #215, Orange, Ca 92868
 714.999.9409
 619.685.2808

LA County No. (District 6)
 PO Box 2433, Van Nuys, CA 91404
 818.759.9194

LA County So. (District 7)
 PO Box 3012, Culver City, CA 90231
 323.964.2370

New York (District 8)
 PO Box 1244, Cooper Station
 New York, NY 10276
 212.459.4423

Santa Cruz (District 9)
 PO Box 3003, Santa Cruz, CA 95063
 831.427.4088

LA County East (District 10)
 (Includes Inland Empire)
 PO Box 94400, Pasadena, CA 91109
 626.583.9582

Portland (District 11)
 PO Box 2012, Portland, OR 97208-2012
 503.221.7007

North Bay, CA (District 12)
 PO Box 1001, Petaluma, CA 94952
 415.419.3555

Austin, TX
higherground_austin@yahoo.com

Chester Co., PA Chapter
 PO Box 194, Sadsburyville, PA 19362
 610.622.9243

Chicago
Ma_chicago@hotmail.com

Colorado
 303.607.7516

Denton, TX
outoffthefogDFW@yahoo.com

Ithaca, NY
ma_ithaca@yahoo.com

Omaha, NB
omaha_ma@hotmail.com

Rogue Valley, OR Chapter
 541.941.2995

Westmont, NJ
JERSEYMA12@yahoo.com

Australia
 MA Australia
 PO Box 202, Hindmarsh, 5007, South Australia
 0.500.502.654
maaustralia@yahoo.com.au

London, England Chapter
 07940.503438

New Zealand
 MA Service Centre, PO Box 74-386
 Market Road, Auckland 3, New Zealand
 649.846.6822

MA Online
 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404
 800-766-6779

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 10

Paul Br.	9/5/03	1 year!
Christian M.	10/6/03	1 year!
Kristopher T.	10/8/03	1 year!

District 12

John L.	10/21/03	1year!
Trish E.	10/31/03	1year!
Paul M.	11/27/03	1year!
Marlen	11/28/03	1year!
Lew W.	11/23/02	2 years

District 11

Mike C.	9/18/84	20 years
Susan B.	10/09/86	18 years

District 6

Dean G.	10/13/03	1 year!
Courtney N.	10/20/01	3 years
Ted G.	10/07/01	3 years
Wendy M.	10/29/01	3 years
Gary M.	10/12/00	4 years
Paul L.	10/12/00	4 years
Mike F.	10/05/99	5 years
Wes D.	10/16/97	7 years
Kim B.	10/15/95	9 years
Terri R.	11/18/90	14 years
Joel G.	10/06/89	15 years
Joanne M.	10/02/88	16 years
Flyin Brian	10/16/87	17 years
Randy F.	10/25/87	17 years
Kathy B.	10/21/86	18 years

District 5

Meredith	11/05/91	13 years
Ron "Big Dog"	11/05/95	9 years
Rich C.	11/02/98	6 years
Larry	11/28/99	5 years

District 7

Eleah	8/11/99	5 years
David	8/01/96	8 years
Javonne	8/18/03	1 year!
Kevin	8/17/03	1 year!

Austin, TX

James L.	11/16/02	2 years
Susan P.	10/13/03	1 year!

District 1

Rick R.	11/20/03	1 year!
Dore E.	11/01/03	1 year!

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF ABE NORMIL

This is Abe. Abe Normil. Abe has a problem. He loves to smoke weed all day long and hang out with his dog Sparky. His girlfriend is MJ and best friend is BUD. Follow Abe through his journey to recovery.

Come on Abe, you need to go find a new job!	I feel like crap. I can't go on living like this.	Remember at the concert when everyone gathered around the yellow balloon?	The one where all the heads were doing nitrus?
No, the sober dudes called the Wharf Rats. They party, but they don't do drugs anymore. Check out their pamphlet.	The Wharf What? Sounds like a bunch of nutjobs to me. Come on MJ, partying without drugs?	Just read it.	