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A NEW LEAF

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A Deadhead Recovers

PART II -- by Janice M.

...My parents decided that I had to be put on medication. My step-dad was a psychiatrist and he said to see a doctor. The doctors said I had Bi-polar disorder and depression. I was put onto meds for 1 year, but at the same time I also, through my mother's help, got hooked up with a 10th level Reiki Master – a Shaman of sorts. This woman, Serena, helped me gather the scattered pieces of my soul and helped me assimilate them energetically back into my body.

This was a slow but miraculous process and after a year I was able to stop the medication. All this while I was going to AA meetings, but never spoke up in a meeting. WRA required that I go and I got used to them and liked them a lot. I met a lot of people like me and I felt like I belonged. I didn't know about MA yet. After I got off the meds, I started speaking up in meetings and got a sponsor. My brain was working again! I worked the 12 Steps and began to find my way out of the fog.

I learnt that by taking the 12 Steps, I could 'armor' myself against the evil and the good in me would win out. I wouldn't have to use anything again after taking the 12 Steps!

I found an MA meeting in Redwood City and was so happy to meet other stoners who had surrendered to the addiction and asked for help. I started an MA meeting in my town with the help of other MA's in February 2004. We meet on Sunday nights in a church attic. It is growing and doing well. It's great to have another MA meeting in my area.

On the 18th of October, I will have 4 years clean and sober of quality sobriety. I almost relapsed recently from getting into a dysfunctional relationship with someone who was young in sobriety. I believed it was going to work 'against all odds', but it didn't. I was warned by many to be careful not to let it 'take me out'. There were many red flags/warnings signs, but because of my idealism/self will, I didn't heed them. My partner had come from a much rougher place. I thought I could help him change and believed I did in the beginning, until he seemed to suck all the light from me and I was slowly disappearing.

Emotional abuse became verbal abuse and eventually physical abuse ensued. He hit me 3 times total in my

face. I was always in shock and didn't know what to do. We would get in arguments and he would flip everything around to be my fault. I would feel confused and lost and completely ripped off energetically. I wanted to commit suicide many times and started playing with the kitchen knives. I wanted to use.

Finally after the third time, I called the police but was too afraid to have him sent to jail, so cleaned up my bloody lip and I lied. The next morning I told him he had to get out. I had had enough. I went off to a meeting with a friend and said he better be gone when I came back. I realized that night that I was losing my sobriety and this scared me the most of all. After one month he is completely out of my life. I go to DVP [Domestic Violence Prevention] classes once a week because I want to understand what happened and not repeat the same mistake.

I pray every morning with the Serenity prayer, the 3rd Step prayer and the 7th Step prayer. And if I need to, during the day I pray. My favorite one is "God, please help me!"

It works. If you ask for help HP will help. Surrendering is freeing because then I don't have to carry the whole load.

My higher power is God or Great Spirit. Sometimes I imagine an old bearded man sitting at his computer and sometimes I see God in the trees and the animals. Sometimes it's just the wind. A lot of my spiritual beliefs are based on Native American ways because they are in touch with the earth, nature and the animals.

I am so grateful for MA. When I found MA I knew I had arrived. Today, I grow emotionally and spiritually. I build a stronger relationship with my self and my higher power. My dreams are coming true in sobriety. I love myself now and I respect myself. Through prayer and meditation I will attain heights I never got when stoned. I don't crave pot anymore. I am a pothead till I die, but I don't have to pick up today. My higher power relieved me of my addiction and for that I am eternally grateful. I must remember this though if nothing else: FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD. If you want this thing, you have to really want it and you have to work at it. I almost died to get here. If fear is what saved me, then thank you fear. I wouldn't change a thing now. I love the program and I love MA.

God is Good... God is Love... God is Peace... and
God laughs.☺



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

I'm Still Not Cured

by Anonymous

If there were a chip offered, I would have taken a 2 1/2 year chip last week. This is the first time I've had to wait longer than 6 months to get a chip. It makes me feel more recovered somehow. One of the things people told me when I got here was that I shouldn't be involved with anyone for my first year of recovery. I waited until I had worked Step 9 and had 20 months of sobriety before venturing into a relationship. They also told me that "relationships could take me out." Actually, it's not getting into one that has made me want to get high, but rather the painful process of getting out of one. They also told me that relationships would make every single defect of character I have come to the forefront, which I found to be true. The controlling and manipulative person I had tried to leave behind awakened. The behavior I was used to relying on fit like an old shoe. For an addict like me, it takes lots of practice to establish new, useful, productive habits. The "road gets narrower," which I never really understood until I had about two years of sobriety. Behavior that I once deemed not only acceptable, but unequivocally right, I have no longer found to be so. I have an inner voice that sometimes gets overshadowed by the "committee," but is always there for me. The voice guides me to make amends where necessary and change my actions and attitude if they are contrary to the person I want to be. I feel grateful to be an addict, because I always wanted to change but never knew how. Where I used to select marijuana to cope with my life, I now have so many tools to escape feeling bad without hitting the bong. I am not a prisoner to the same actions with the same results anymore. For that, I thank the fellows of Marijuana Anonymous for sharing their experience, strength, and hope with me that there is a better way. I hope that I've done the same for you.

Recovery, Unity & Service

by Rachel K.

As seen in our triangle, recovery, unity, and service are closely linked. One builds upon the next. Recovery is personal and based on the steps. Recovery is action taken in an individual's life for enhancement in all areas of functioning and relationships. It's all about "me." Next comes unity, where all the "me's" come together and form a "we." It is the joining of people with a common bond or purpose, the becoming of "one" for a universal goal, the building friendships among like-minded individuals. Service is about "them," those addicts who are still out there suffering. Service is about being a living example of the recovery and unity in action. Without recovery, we didn't have unity. Without unity, we can't be of optimal service. However, if we are of service, more recovery and unity will result. Thanks for letting me be of service.



CELEBRATE

2005 M.A. CONVENTION

District 7 - Torrance, CA @ The Marriott

Please visit WWW.MA2005.COM

For all information regarding the upcoming convention.
(registration, fundraisers, location information, workshops,
raffle, entertainment and more!!)



The Roving Reporter

For the month of December, the Roving Reporter asked "What is the number one thing on your holiday wish list? And be honest!!"

Only Lori B from District 1 responded by saying: *I hope to fill up on love, not food!*

My friend Scobie in District 4, the H&I Panel Leader, recently held a panel at a local community college with an audience of 50 high school students. Two weeks later, the teacher gave an extra credit assignment asking a few questions on what they thought about the Marijuana Anonymous panel and how addiction and recovery affected them. Here are some of their responses.

What did you find most interesting about the MA presentation?

--"The people looked like normal human beings. They did not look like recovering addicts. I would of never figured them to do drugs."

--"To me it was interesting that they started smoking marijuana at such a young age and they had the desire to stop. They realized that it's not what they need and there's other things that are important. And they're committed."

--"What I found most interesting about the panel was that they all had such a hard time quitting. I never knew that that substance could be so addictive, like alcohol and other serious drugs. Also that I have learned from their experience to know warning signs to becoming addicted."

--"It was interesting how all of the people on the panel were ruined by marijuana in the same way. They were from different backgrounds and not all of them were from bad families, but their stories were surprisingly similar."

--"One of the things that I found most interesting from the MA presentation is the existence of it. I didn't know this helpful program that can change the lives of people existed. It was very interesting to hear the people getting into the process of recovery to make a wonderful change in their lives after all the suffering they had gone through."

--"What I felt most interesting was the life stories they told us, and the personal experienced that brought them up to the way they are now. Not only that but throughout the presentation they threw out some interesting quotes, such as "strive for progress not for perfection", and another was "you are what you're caught doing the most."

--"The most interesting thing that I realized was that it seemed as if it was hard for them to tell their story, but they still did. As personal as their stories were, I'm not sure if I could've done what they did."

How has this presentation made you consider how addiction and recovery has touched your life or the lives of those around you?

"This presentation made me realize that my friends that smoke marijuana are really addicts. I tried to be in denial and say that they aren't really smoking every day, but really they are. I learned that it's not easy for marijuana smokers to stop out of nowhere and that they're doing it from their self. It taught me to help them overcome this addiction and with that, I need to sit and talk with them."

"The presentation took away my prejudice that all users are worthless uneducated street rats. I still cannot fathom that an Ivy League graduate got into drug use. It just woke up my mind that anyone could be caught up in drug use."

"I think that this presentation made me think about what people can do with drugs. They can risk their lives to kill themselves and still take drugs to think that everything will be better. It made me think that NO! I don't want a life like them and I don't want to go through with all those pains."

"This presentation was helpful to me. I used to be addicted to smoking marijuana as well as drinking. I used to smoke like at least once a day every day. It went from doing it just on the weekends to doing it at least twice a week to doing it every day. I didn't like the way it was making me. I didn't care about anything or anyone, just getting high or drunk. When you're high or drunk, the real you comes out, you don't care about what others think of you. I can say I haven't smoked in like 3 months.

"This presentation really made me think how their lives are so close to ours and that it can happen to us if we're not careful. They started doing it at late or early teens and we are at that age when it so easy to get, and you can get so addicted to it. They lost their lives because of it and are just now gaining it back. I never want to do that or have anyone I know go through it."

MA WORLDWIDE

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

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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 8

Jeff S.	9/01/99	5 years
Sasha M.	9/11/03	1 year!
Evan F.	9/15/03	1 year!
Susan B.	11/15/96	8 years

District 12

Owen K.	11/17/98	6 years
Paul M.	11/27/03	1 year!
Lew W.	11/23/02	2 years
Laura S.	12/4/02	2 years
Kevin G.	12/9/01	3 years
Vanessa	12/31/03	1 year!
Evan C.	10/13/03	1 year!

District 3

Dave G.	11/19/03	1 year!
Ann B.	11/4/03	1 year!
John J.	11/10/03	1 year!
Ed G.	11/17/03	1 year!

District 1

Dore E	10/2003	1 year!
Tina D	9/23/03	1 year!
Lori B	1/11/02	3 years
Ron H	1/3/96	9 years

District 6

John G.	12/25/91	13 years
Mike H.	12/07/92	12 years
Richard O.	12/08/01	3 years
Richard T.	12/17/00	4 years

District 2

John L.	12/15/84	20 years
Fay	11/30/89	15 years
Louise	12/98	6 years
Matt C.	12/98	10 years
Jay C.	12/94	10 years

District 5

Lisa S.	12/07/93	11 years
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District 9

Dave N.	12/28/93	11 years
Pat Mc.	12/29/89	15 years

District 4

Jared B.	11/11/03	1 year!
Mike S.	11/11/00	4 years

District 11

Mike F	12/28/98	6 years
Wharf Rat John	12/7/02	2 years

District 7

David C	10/06/03	1 year!
Dan S	11/05/04	1 year!
Penny R	11/12/01	3 years
Andrea K	9/05/02	2 years
Mike H	11/06/99	5 years
Jim L	9/25/89	15 years

Celebrating 219 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!

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.

S T R I P # 4