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A NEW LEAF

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Watching a Fellowship Grow Up Around Me by Loren N.

I have been asked to write this article to commemorate the 10th anniversary of *Life With Hope*. It is a pleasure and an honor to do so. The fact that 10 years have gone by since the book was first published is absolutely amazing and blows me away.

Life With Hope is more than a book to Marijuana Anonymous. It is the reflection of how a fellowship has grown throughout the years. It is a story of service and dedication by many early MA members who helped shape this fellowship by passionately accomplishing its primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery to marijuana addicts.

My own story as it relates to *Life With Hope* begins in May of 1991. I had been clean and sober 16 months. I was also acting as the conference chair for the MAWS conference in Pasadena. This was a new experience for me. Prior to that I was involved in district service (we called the monthly DSC meetings "Intergroup" back then). Intergroup consisted of 4 members that wore many hats. In those days, there was a lot of chaos. MA was truly following Tradition 9 because we were definitely not organized.

The World Service Conference was a huge change. It was electrifying and exciting. There were addicts from all over doing their best to help MA move forward. After all, MA had only been united as a single fellowship for about two years. I spent most of the weekend locked in a little room with two other addicts. We spent the whole weekend banging out the bylaws of MAWS. The feelings of accomplishment, benevolence and comradery that I experienced got me hooked. I was ready to do anything to help MA survive. I became a service junkie.

That same weekend I agreed to be part of a subcommittee that would work throughout the year and draft the long version of the Twelve Traditions. Another group took on the task of the Twelve Steps. The idea was to have a working draft for a 12 and 12 by May of 1992. Unfortunately a lot of work didn't get done between conferences back then unless somebody picked up the ball and ran with it.

Around that time District 6 started a once a month traditions meeting that met in George B's living room. Three of us attended regularly. Others showed up sporadically. It was at this time I was introduced to the thoughts and visions of Bill W and Dr. Bob. We read *AA Comes of Age*, *As Bill Sees It*, and *The Twelve Traditions For All of Us*. The Traditions had become an integral part of my program. Having not heard from anybody in the subcommittee, and believing strongly in keeping my recovery commitments, I decided to embark on writing the long version of the 12 Traditions myself. I was driven, and by May of 1992 I presented the MAWS conference

with a working draft of what was to become MA's Twelve Traditions.

The fire was lit. Commitments were made by each of the districts to submit ideas and drafts for the 12 Steps over the next year. Not very much was done during that year but in May 1993 some rough drafts were turned in that were written by various people using various tenses, tone and language. Intentions were strong and sincere, but there just wasn't any cohesiveness among the fellowship. My own focus, for those two years, had turned to drafting the MAWS Service Manual, which was completed in 1994.

By then, more ideas and drafts surrounding the Twelve Steps had trickled in and by the May 1994 conference enough material had been compiled so that the Publishing Coordinator could sort through them. A working very rough draft was completed and returned to the Districts for further comment and revision. Also included were the spiritual principles of each step, approved in 1993, that starts off each of the chapters.

Our district's Step Committee consisted of 5 men that met every other week. We went over a Step a meeting. This was a rewarding experience that helped solidify my understanding of the program, and brought strong connections and respect with the men that were involved.

By conference end in May of 1995, all of the districts' literature committees' submissions had been considered, a forward was written by the conference committee, and a final draft of the 12 Steps was completed. Carol McD took on the task of typesetting the book. Previously, George B had come up with the title *Life with Hope*, and Patricia R offered up the logo of the three arms forming the triangle. Ilene M did the final proofreading and off to the printers it went.

I was the fortunate one to be the liaison with the printer. I remember going to the printer in December of 1995 to pick up the prototype to review it before the first complete printing. I was nearly in tears when I held the first *Life With Hope* in my hands. It meant more to me than just a book; it was a chapter in my life. After all, it kept me sober for 5½ years before it was even printed. So if you are wondering where the first book of the first printing of the first edition of *Life With Hope* is. It is on my bookshelf right next to the first book of the first printing of the second edition.

I can't think of a better way to close then by quoting *Life with Hope*: "We are all unique examples of how the program works, each of us with our distinct gifts to share. We take these steps for ourselves, not by ourselves. Others have gone before; others will follow. We recover."



12th Annual Marijuana Anonymous Convention
March 3-5, 2006
Burbank, California

Hotel: Call the Burbank Hilton at 800-840-6450 to make room reservations. Ask for Marijuana Anonymous Convention to get the group rate. Please reserve your room early. Room rates are: \$104 single or double occupancy; \$114 Triple; \$124 Quad. Parking is \$8 per day, and hotel guests get "in and out" privileges.

Registration: Registration for both the hotel and the convention begins on March 3 at 3:00 p.m. The convention ends on March 5 at 3:00 p.m. Further registration information will be sent with your confirmation and can be found on our website.

Transportation: Burbank Airport is directly across the street from the Hilton with a free shuttle. Burbank train station is 7 minutes away. LAX is at minimum 45 minutes away. District 6 will provide transportation if necessary.

You will get confirmation of registration by February along with inquiry for your need of transportation to and from airport/train station. **Each person needs a separate registration form.** Forms are available in A New Leaf or at www.ma2006.com

***Registrations postmarked on or before January 1 receive an opportunity to win two nights free in the Presidential Suite at the Burbank Hilton. Winner will be notified in January.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone number _____

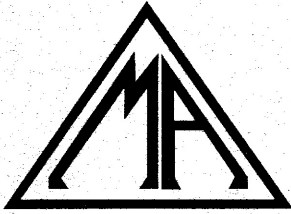
Email address _____

Do you need transportation?

	Cost	Amount Due
Registration (includes Workshops and Hospitality Room)	\$20 before 1/1/06 \$25 after 1/1/06	
Banquet (Chicken / Fish / Vegan) **circle one**	\$40	
Dance	\$5	
Package Deal (Registration, Banquet, and Dance)	\$60 before 1/1/06 \$65 after 1/1/06	
Opportunity drawing tickets	\$1 each	
	Total amount due	

Make check or money order payable to M.A. District 6 and mail to:

M.A. District 6 / P.O. Box 2433 / Van Nuys, CA 91404 Note: Checks will be cashed on the first Friday of every month ONLY. For questions, call Rachel at 909-730-8651, email rachybaby@sbcglobal.net, or visit www.ma2006.com



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



The Roving Reporter

The question for December was, "How do you define LOVE in 25 words or less?" Here are what a few members had to say.

Love is a willingness to take action that helps me and others grow. Making commitments, listening, serving, nurturing, honest communications are acts of love. **Anonymous.**

Love is always wishing the best for someone, no matter what. — **Paul G., Portland**

An unconditional positive regard. — **Su S., Portland**

Love to me is defined as someone or something (God) that sticks it out with you no matter what. This includes the love I have for myself today, the fact that I love myself enough to not use no matter what. True love is not being afraid to show all your emotions to someone...smiles, tears, anger, and all the other trillion emotions we sensitive stoners have once we rid ourselves of the numbing effects of marijuana. (okay, that is 75 words, but hey, who's counting? ha ha!!) **Trisa A., Portland**

Love is the energy that beats our hearts, and is the vibration of god pulsing through each being. We are all lovable and all loving. **Anonymous**

Feeling consumed with kindness and caring toward you when you're here, but feeling crazy when you're gone. **Anonymous**

My spiritual advisor defines love - love is what you will die for. -- **Az, District 5**

Unconditional acceptance--**Ron, District 5**

By removing myself from the equation--**Anonymous**

For January, the Roving Reporter asks, "How do you stay humble through life's challenges? How do you work the 7th step?"

Unmanageability

by John C.

Smoking marijuana became the primary focus of my life over the 27 years that I used. Getting high and finding ways of staying high became my top priority pretty early on. My life is good now but for many years it was a life of desperation. I spent countless hours trying to score weed, and I just missed drug arrests twice while going to cop weed on the street. In hindsight had I been arrested I doubt this would have stopped me from going back out to find more weed.

The compulsion took over my life, and up until I stopped using recently I would still wait for the hydroponics delivery service I used in fear that they had been busted and an undercover cop would show up instead. This didn't stop me from calling though; because once my stash was low I would become obsessed with getting more. I would resent that marijuana wasn't legalized so I could buy pot like cigarettes or alcohol. Then I could kill myself without legal worries like a chain smoker or an alcoholic. I was killing myself too.

My love affair had long hit a point of diminishing returns but this didn't stop me from getting high. My health was suffering. My lungs would spasm and I developed a smoker's cough and was filled with a sense of lethargic ness. I wouldn't leave the house for days unless I had to, and I often found I didn't have to, or more to the point I didn't want to.

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email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

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

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800-766-6779

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My wife is allergic to smoke and I was reduced to sitting in a chair taking hits off a pipe and exhaling out an open window. I would do this for days sometimes, isolated and neglecting to bathe or even get dressed out of my underwear. I would have to get stoned to do the dishes or pay bills, as pot had only fueled my depression at this point. I was being medicated for bipolar disorder by a psychiatrist, but I became sure the constant use of pot was circumventing all the medicines I was taking for this condition.

I was not functioning at all without pot at this point, and I wasn't functioning with pot either. I couldn't even read a book. I would tell myself I needed to get stoned first, and then read the same passages over and over because I was too stoned to absorb what I was reading. I would get stoned to do everything, from taking a shower or getting to work to making love to my beautiful wife. The thing that kept me from quitting was fear. Fear of living. Smoking pot was the only thing I knew at this point, and the obsession of getting and smoking it had made all other life functions secondary to my existence.

It became clear I could continue to use pot until it eventually killed me or I could try to quit once again. I wanted to find a support group for marijuana addicts so I ran a Google search on the internet and thankfully found the Marijuana Anonymous and MA Online websites. I started going to the MA Online chat and their online meetings, and during this time I allowed my dwindling stash to run out and threw out all of my paraphernalia. I also began attending the land meetings in my area where I picked up MA literature and got a sponsor.

I have found that working the program, reading the literature and talking with my sponsor on a regular basis have made a world of difference in my newfound life of sobriety. Being a part of the Marijuana Anonymous fellowship has supplied me with courage, strength, and hope where before there was only a pit of despair. For all of this I am extremely grateful, and there's no doubt in my mind that had I tried to go it alone again I would still be smoking today.



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 3

Pat Mc	12/29/89	16 years
Dave N.	12/28/93	12 years

Hawaii

Kevin E.	10/21/04	1 year!
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District 7

Jim L.	9/25/89	16 years
David C.	10/16/03	2 years
John M.	10/16/98	7 years
Chris L.	10/16/02	3 years
David S.	11/08/02	3 years
Debra S.		2 years

District 5

Lisa S.	12/07/93	12 years
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District 4

Darryl W.	12/14/03	2 years
Dave M.	11/19/04	1 year!
Tim G.	10/16/03	2 years
Jared B.	11/11/03	2 years
Mike S.	11/11/00	5 years
Thor H.	12/06/00	5 years

Fresno, CA

Kari	12/19/03	2 years
Debbie	12/20/03	2 years
Natalie	12/03/03	2 years

District 11

Cheyney	12/24/00	5 years
Carol G.	12/10/03	2 years
Scott B.	12-01-04	1 year!
Wharf Rat John	12-07-03	2 years

Celebrating 105 Years of Sobriety
in This Issue!