



# A NEW LEAF

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## MA Office Manager — A Hands-on Experience

**K**athy C. has been Marijuana Anonymous World Services office manager since August, 1992. Although a long standing member of MA, Kathy became our first employed "special worker." Before becoming office manager she performed service at the meeting, district, and World Services level, including serving as MA's WSO Trustee Secretary when MA was first incorporated. New Leaf Managing Editor Carol C. interviewed Kathy as she prepared to turn over her commitment, and following are excerpts from that interview.

**A NEW LEAF: Has being office manager been a gratifying job?**

**KATHY:** Yes, absolutely. It's amazing when you listen to the 800-line to people calling from all over the United States, from all over the world. They're starting meetings in Australia now. That's the most gratifying part, knowing that something that started out as a couple of addicts helping each other is slowly becoming worldwide. And people calling from all over is probably the most exciting part.

**A NEW LEAF: Has there been a change in interest in MA in the last two years?**

**KATHY:** Yes! I did some work on averages and for the first 10 months we had two requests for information a month. Once the 800-line really got going, the average has increased to 21 requests per month during the last 10 months.

**A NEW LEAF: Many of our members do not understand where their donations go or that one of our largest expenses is the 800-line. Can you give us**

**an idea what the monthly bills have been lately for the 800-number?**

**KATHY:** We did an average of three month's bills, and between the long distance charges and the voice mail, it was \$183 a month.

**A NEW LEAF: So the member's donations are doing a good job?**

**KATHY:** Primarily accessing the 800-line for all correspondence and starter kit requests; going to the post office and answering the mail; setting up the conference calls for the trustees; making sure the 800-line is staffed by volunteers; and processing chip orders. This last year I spent most of my time manning the 800-line and filling the requests from that.

**A NEW LEAF: Would it work as well if MA hired an outsider?**

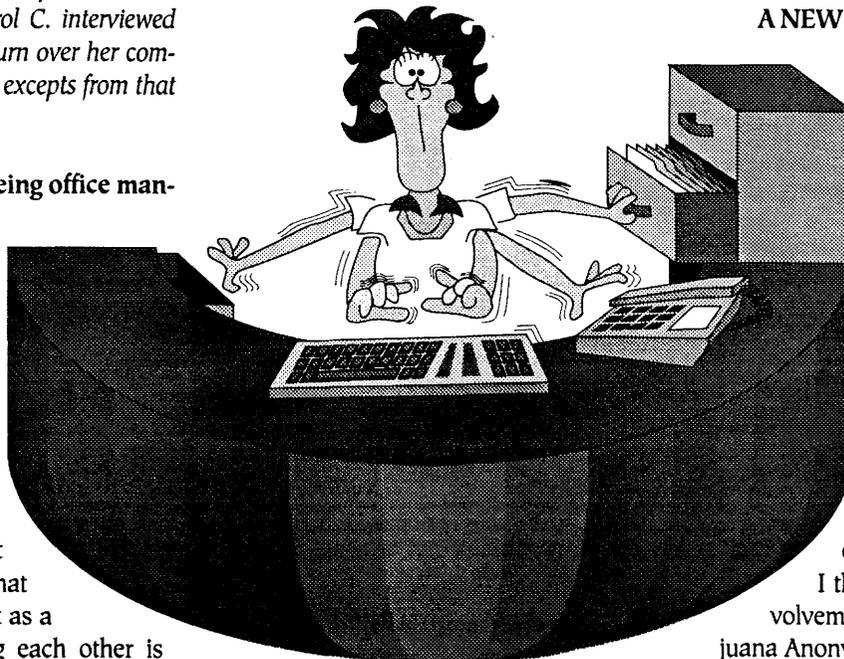
**KATHY:** I think it would, although I think you need a certain amount of personal interest to really do the job well. What I do as far as clerical work, that could be done by an outsider. There are times when you get questions about certain things that an outsider would not know, not being a member. In time it may get to a point where someone from the outside would do it, but for now, I think you need the personal involvement and the passion for Marijuana Anonymous to do a really good job.

**A NEW LEAF: In the next couple of years, what situations do you think the office manager will have to deal with?**

**KATHY:** I've seen a real increase in phone calls on the office manager menu. I think somehow there has to be a new system set up for call backs. I don't know that a person doing this part-time can handle the influx of calls that require callbacks during business hours. That issue will have to be dealt with, possibly a second person or an assistant office manager. Correspondence as well, but callbacks have really increased, and that has to be dealt with.

**A NEW LEAF: Can you recall the**

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**KATHY:** Yes, but we need more! The 800-line is only going to grow. People need to realize that the money they put in the basket isn't just to pay the office manager's salary, it's to facilitate getting the word out. And there are so many other ways the money is used. The whole basis of what we do in the office, at World Services, the Trustees, and the people who write literature, is just to get the word out. And the word is getting out — last year, all over the U.S., Canada, you name it. We just need to see that we can continue that in an organized way.

**A NEW LEAF: Can you give us a run down on the duties of office manager?**



## 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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## A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship

### This month's question: *What brought you to Marijuana Anonymous?*

#### Lyle — 6 months

I read a flyer on MA while in a treatment center. Until that time I had never heard of MA. I am glad this group took the time to send out those flyers. Thanks.

#### Jerry — 9 months

A friend from AA told me about it.

#### Perry B. — 5 months

I lost my job of 10 years by flunking a drug test. I went to counseling at Crosby in an effort to get my job back and was referred here by Ron B.

#### Don — 3 months

I joined AA in 1982 in South Africa but continued smoking weed. I went to NA, but didn't feel comfortable. A friend told me about MA. It's the group for me.

#### Tony V. — 1 yr. 1 mo.

I was first ordered by the court to come to MA 13 months ago, but now I feel that I really belong here. It's

kind of a second home for me. I want to keep coming back because it feels good. I used to think it wasn't broken, but it is, so I must fix it. Thanks to MA, I can get a new lease on life.

#### Mike C. — 2 yrs. 3 mos.

I came here with one month of sobriety and with the help of AA. I was out of money, weed and my head. I found the 12-step program and learned about my disease, cleaning house, and clearing up the wreckage of my past. Most impor-

tantly, I learned about my relationship with my Higher Power and its ability to solve my problem, and the fact that each addict has the gift of being able to understand and help other addicts.

#### Bama — 1 yr. 4 mos.

Metro Bus No. 26. Just kidding! Being in a treatment center has given me the chance to go to a lot of AA meetings. One day I checked the bulletin board and saw an MA flyer and went to a meeting that weekend. I have since made that meeting my "home" group. Thank God for MA!

#### Lee Anne J. — 1 year

I came with a friend to MA when I had about 90 days clean and sober. I had been attending AA, but needed to be able to share with other people who could relate to my drug use and the challenges involved in sobriety from marijuana.

#### Tom — 2 yrs. 1 mo.

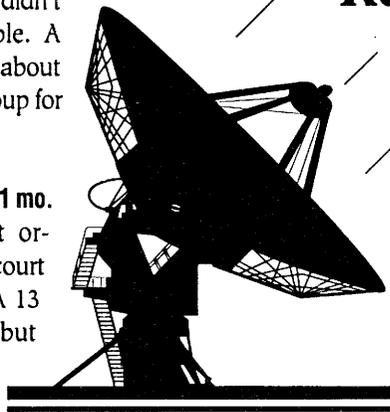
I was curious to see who would quit such a spiritual drug. Who are these people?

#### Doug — 1 month

I came by bus. I'm here because I'm tired of a burned out life. I need a drug (pot) free environment, and the only way to achieve this is to become a member of MA.

*Thanks to George T. for compiling this month's "Roving Reporter" and to the fellowship of District 4 in Seattle for sharing their strength, experience and hope.*

## The Roving Reporter



## Thought of the Month

*"Writing enables me to look at my thoughts and feelings outside myself and evaluate my situation a little more objectively"*

— Sanford from District 6 in *A NEW LEAF*, Nov. '92

# Let's Talk About Unmanageable....

by Richard A., San Jose

**U**nmanageable? How could my life be unmanageable? I have my own apartment in a very good neighborhood. I have a job, a nice car, good friends and a great family. My life is very manageable.

Well this is what I thought for years. Going to work every day and taking care of business. Paying all my bills, never letting

my responsibilities go. Until I hit bottom thirteen years later. Then I realized that I had always taken care of business, but I had never take care of myself! Thirteen years coming home from work and spending the rest of the day and night with a joint in my hand and my bong loaded and waiting.

I couldn't see the truth while I was using and still active in my disease. It wasn't until I found the program of Marijuana Anonymous that I was finally able to see the truth and how unmanageable my life really was.

I spent most nights in front of my television, rarely going out. Turning down my parents for dinner when they invited me over,

## MA Q 'n' A

*Continued from page 1*

**most gratifying incident that's happened to you as office manager?**

KATHY: Newsweek magazine called and wanted to do a story. The story ended up being canceled, but just to know that a major magazine wanted to write about our program was really thrilling.

**A NEW LEAF: Are you glad you took the job?**

KATHY: Absolutely, I wouldn't have changed it for anything. It's really thrilling that MA was able to have a hired position. Once we started it, the ball is rolling and we can't stop it. If we were to try and back things up and say we can't have this position, then we would have to get rid of our 800-line. We really need to concentrate on growth. We've started something big here and we're only going to grow. There's no turning back as far as getting the word out. △

making up some excuse. Not seeing friends unless they came over to my house, where they could see me wasted on the couch with a bag of potato chips in one hand, a joint in the other, and the TV remote nearby. This was my life — or lack of it.

Because of the "Grace" of my Higher Power I was fortunate enough to find MA, which gave me the opportunity to start a new life. A life clean and sober! MA suggested

*Being a newcomer, I had no idea what the Twelve Steps were about, but my sponsor did.*

a program for me to follow, and for the first time in my life I decided to listen to people who had walked the path before me. They looked like they had found some serenity in their lives without using.

The first suggestion I took was to keep coming back, for without the support of the fellowship, I would be lost. The second suggestion was to get a sponsor. Someone who could guide me through the Twelve Steps. Being a newcomer, I had no idea what the Twelve Steps were about, but my sponsor did. He was a person who had taken these steps and had an understanding as to how to guide me through them. I started reading the *Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous which had all the instructions for a new way of living life clean and sober. And most important of all, I was reintroduced to my Higher Power.

The program of MA is built on spirituality. Simply put, this means there is a power greater than me, which is a loving force in my

life. My Higher Power has been there through thick and thin and has helped me get to where I am today — clean, sober and enjoying freedoms and choices I had only dreamed about in the past.

Recently, I celebrated four years clean and sober and today I have a new life. I have respect for myself. I got involved in service from the start, and every year I take on more service positions and challenges. These responsibilities have helped me stay clean and sober and also have given me a benefit that I never expected — a belief in myself!

Acceptance from friends for a job well done and the feeling that I am a part of the fellowship was a big part of life that was missing in my childhood. But I have found that acceptance and that feeling of being part of through service in MA. I find that I can handle situations now that in the past I would have used over. I still have fear, but I have learned that I am not alone. When I need help, all I have to do is reach out and there are many people in the program right there for me.

Life is an up and down roller coaster. It always has been and it always will be, but today I have the tools that have so graciously been given to me in MA, to get through each situation one day at a time!

No matter how much service I do, no matter how much I give back to MA, I will never be able to repay the fellowship for what they have given me. A new life, clean and sober. Thank you MA for being there for me. △

## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Brenda S.	April 8	5 years	Charlotte M.	May 6	5 years
Gwen G.	April 13	1 year	John R.	May 7	7 years
"Scrappin" Mike	April 18	1 year	Lee A.	May 8	3 years
Mark E.	May 2	2 years	Todd S.	May 10	1 year
Brian K.	May 3	1 year	Hope P.	May 18	2 years
Jeff B.	May 5	3 years	Seth P.	May 20	4 years
Shannon W.	May 5	4 years	Norm B.	May 30	11 years

# Making Amends Pays Spiritual Dividends

by Brad M., Northridge, CA

**L**ike it has been for many of us, 1994 has been a trying year for me, too. I have had to try my best to accept things as they are, such as the theft of my vehicle (which by God's grace was eventually recovered), a 6.8 earthquake which took my home, my school, my security, and the relapse of the very person who inspired me to give up drugs and try this new life style.

I had the "acceptance" paragraph on the wall of my old home and read it religiously. In fact, it was one of the few pictures that stayed on the wall during the earthquake. I do my best to believe in the power of acceptance, but acceptance wasn't going to help me make amends to a former employer from whom I stole hundreds of dollars worth of cash and merchandise. I needed courage!

I tried to think of a good reason to avoid this amends, but there was none. I have made other amends, but few involved money and none the amount this one did. To say that I was scared is an understatement — I was shaking in my boots. I had prayed for the courage, yet little seemed to be coming. I

picked up the Big Book and that helped a little. I read another 12-step book, and a little more courage snuck in, but hardly the amount I needed. I decided that I would just drive towards the store and see if anymore would reach me in time.

While driving I listened to a tape of Father Leo speaking at a meeting. He explained that we come into these rooms powerless over drugs and with a life that is unmanageable, and with this program, we regain that power and manageability. I have never thought of it in that way, yet I could surely see evidence of it in many of you and some in me, too. I wanted more of this power and manageability in my own life, for as Father Leo explained, this is what restores us to sanity.

As I continued on my way, I knew I would not turn around. I heard something that I wanted and with the help of my Higher Power I would surely obtain some of it by doing this amends. I had the courage I needed.

After I arrived at the store, I kept praying for the courage to stay with me as I waited to speak privately with the owner. At last, the time had come. I was very nervous, but also

felt a strange confidence that things were going to be O.K.

I started out explaining that this is probably the hardest thing I ever had to do, and that I was scared. I spelled out that in the last two and a half years, I had gone through a lifestyle change, that during my stay in his store I had abused drugs and that I have been clean and sober for two years and seven months. I told him that in order for me to maintain my sobriety, I had to come to him and admit some things I'm not proud of — that I had stolen money and merchandise and I could only estimate the amounts, and it was not small change. I said I would be willing to work for him for free or make small payments, and that it was important that I try and make it up to him. I was not sulking, I was not begging and I did not want him to feel sorry for me. I simply made some mistakes and I wanted to right them the best way I can. It was as humble as I could be, and as I admitted my mistakes a thousand pounds of pressure floated away.

My former boss was understandably shocked. He said that a few people had mentioned to him that I used drugs, but he didn't believe them. He was happy that I was clean and sober, said he supported me 110 percent, and would do anything he could to help me maintain my sobriety. As far as the money was concerned he said the only way I could pay him back was to stay off drugs. He said much of the stuff I took he would have given to me anyway, and that there was no way he could ask me to work for him for free. He assured me this was fine with him and that I needn't worry about anything but staying clean. I told him that was my goal and that I would continue to go to MA and make amends to others like him.

As I left the store and headed home tears filled up in my eyes. I knew I had done the right thing and I was proud, although I still felt like I owed him something and I didn't feel great about being let off the hook. Some of you have suggested making a charitable donation in his name, which I will do.

And as I continue to right the wrongs in my past I know I will be receiving the power and manageability in my life which I have always desired. For this I am truly willing to go to any lengths. △

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