



A NEW LEAF

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We've All Heard of H & I..... But What's P.I.?

by The District 6 PI Committee

PI refers to the Public Information Committee of Marijuana Anonymous. This is a committee that few people know about, including us! It was suggested to us that an article should be written for *A NEW LEAF* to "spread the word" about PI.

We always wondered how there could be a Public Information committee for a program which was built on the principle of anonymity. It seemed that the two were contradictory. Well, after reading over the AA Public Information Workbook, we have found out a few things. First of all, the primary objective of the PI Committee is to help the addict who still suffers. This is especially important in MA, because we are still a program that is not widely known or accessible. We think MA's PI Committee, as a whole, needs to find ways to reach those potheads out there who know they have a problem, but don't feel comfortable going to AA or NA. (Sound familiar?)

AA suggests in their PI Manual that we can help the still-suffering addicts by making known to them "our experience as individuals and as a fellowship in learning to live without [marijuana]". However, we must always remember the importance of personal anonymity. This seems like a tall order. How can we possibly let people know about our gift of recovery without breaking our anonymity? How do we wade through all this? What can we actually do and not do? Now we understand why a lot of people don't understand this PI stuff!

This article was not written to tell the PI committees in other districts how

to do their job. There is a World Services PI Committee Representative to help with that, but most PI work does take place at the district level. Here in District 6, we have started by doing a district-wide mailing to rehab centers and other "caregivers", sending

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them a meeting schedule, pamphlets, etc. Our next project will be a mailing to high schools and colleges in the area, places where pot seems to be the "in-thing" nowadays. We wrote this article merely to let people know that PI is an important part of the program,

and we are working hard in District 6 to reach that person who may not know about us.

No matter what the PI Committee does, the AA PI Manual says that "our efforts in this area should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety [and recovery].."

We are grateful that those in AA have walked this path before us, and given us a model for successful PI work. We, on this committee, will continue to work for the goal that "our experience should be made available freely to all those who express sincere interest".

The quotes used in this article are from the Alcoholics Anonymous Public Information Manual. (We hope they don't mind!) 

He Found He Couldn't Do It Alone

by Tony V., District 4

Almost nine years ago, I tried to stop smoking marijuana by checking myself into a local treatment center, because my wife was going to kick me out of the house. I had been smoking for 28 years; most of the time hiding it from my religious friends, my relatives, and especially my immediate family.

In that 28 years, I found that the person I had been hurting most was myself. I checked myself into treatment the day after Christmas, went through two weeks of intensive treatment for my usage, and came out saying I would never smoke again. Well, for the next seven years, I didn't. I stopped, not because I knew better, or knew it

wasn't right, or that I would loose everything, but because my wife would get mad at me and maybe throw me out of the house. I was a "dry dooper".

After seven years, I went to work at a friend's house. Seeing his stash on the table and drooling over it, he pulled it out and asked, "Want some?" I said, "Today, I really feel like having some." We smoked early every morning for the next week; early because I wanted the smell to go away so I could go home by the end of the day without fear of being found out. I stopped a week later.

Seven months later, after not smoking again, I went to work for the

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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

There is always something that gets us here, so from District 5:

What was your bottom?

Lisa S., 10 Months

I was getting anxiety attacks. The last one resulted in my calling my parents (in another state) and basically being quite hysterical to my mother. I just kept telling her, "I'm sick..." I would wake up every morning feeling sick to my stomach. I also told my mom that I couldn't take care of my son (who was less than 2 years old at the time) and I needed her to take him.

Rick B., 5 Years

It wasn't my bottom. It was all those who are close to me. I couldn't understand what was wrong with them, until I discovered that the relationship I had was actually an addiction to marijuana. Thank God for MA!

Mike LB, 7 Yrs. 9 Mos.

My second wife left me saying that she could no longer watch me kill myself. The final straw was work noticing my "erratic" behavior and being called on the carpet by the personnel director. The choice was losing my job or going in for treatment. Thank God, I had a spiritual awakening, got honest, and admitted my addiction. By the grace of God, I've been clean and sober ever since.

Dean W., 2 Yrs. 4 Mos.

When my marriage fell apart when I did my only two hits of free-base cocaine in my entire life. (This broke one of my two cardinal rules of partying: 1. Never free-base, 2. Never shoot-up) When my family decided that I needed outside help.

My bottom might not compare to the extremities of others, however, I felt after 18 years of hiding from my

feelings through the use of drugs alcohol, it was time for my new drug, "A Dose of Reality!"

Mike G.

Coming to Calif., no job, no place to stay, no license to practice law, bar exam study course starting tomorrow, all my belongings in my car on the way to Cal State Fullerton to find a room and place to study. No \$, no pot, no place to go, no support - and nobody to call.

Grasshopper, 2 Years

I lost my job. My girlfriend walked out because I used pot every day (every hour). Bills were due and I was running out of money. I smoked my last joint (a big one), realized that I wasn't getting high anymore, and I started crying. I knew I needed help.

B.S., 9 Months

My bottom was when I stopped diggin' it.

The Roving Reporter

And then from District 4:

How do you see the difference between Sobriety and Recovery?

Pat Mc, 5 Years

Sobriety is the physical abstinence from drugs and/or alcohol. To me it is the easier part of my program. Recovery is the process of changing attitudes and behaviors. Recovery also is the regaining of our real feelings. The retraining of our spiritual selves.

Andrew P., "Today"

Sobriety is the natural state of being. Recovery keeps me there.

Richard A., 5 years

For me - Sobriety is being clean and sober, One Day At A Time. Recovery is how I stay clean and sober, One Day At A Time.

Found He Couldn't Do It Alone

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ame "friend". Again, we smoked daily for one week, but this time I really felt guilty. My twelve year old daughter had just graduated from the local DARE program. Graduation was that night. I went to the graduation after telling my friend that I wasn't going to smoke any more, and that it wasn't right. I went to the graduation in fear; fear that the dope smoking dog that the officer brought with him that night was going to pick me out of the crowd. He didn't.

Two weeks later this "friend" showed up at my door at nine at night wanting me to come and do more work. I told him no. His reaction was that he was going to tell my wife that I had smoked with him and he kept trying to get into my house. Finally I resorted to violence to get rid of him. I was really scared of what was to happen. I went into the house and she asked me what he had wanted. I told her the truth. First she stopped talking to me for a month. Then I came home one day and she and the kids were gone.

Since this happened, I have had to be tested regularly, lost my family, lived in a wood shed for eighteen months, and lost a lot of self respect that I thought I had gained through not smoking for the first seven years. Now I belong to MA, both heart and soul. My life has turned around. I've taken to working the steps. My friends and family treat me with respect now. I am recovering, not just not-using. I feel good about myself. But one thing I've realized, is that I really am an addict. I can't do it myself. I have always been spiritual, but always thought I could do it on my own. Boy was I wrong.

Recently, I found myself again in a situation of being around relatives who were smoking five times a day, at least. At first it didn't bother me, but after a few days, I got the scare of my life. Every one went to work and I found myself searching for the bag of dope. After searching unsuccessfully, I realized what I was doing. I thought,

"the only person who will know is me", then my second thought was, "who am I fooling, this is wrong!" I immediately got to the phone book and searched for something better, a meeting. Being in a different town, I didn't know where to go, but I found a Twelve Step program and by the grace of God, who is my higher power, I felt that I got back onto the right track, remembering one thing, "The program works, if I work it". I think I will keep coming back. Thanks MA, for being there. 

Thought for the Month

"We feel our lives have become worthwhile. Spiritually refreshed, we are glad to be alive. When using, our lives became an exercise in survival. Now we are doing much more living than surviving."

Page 47, Narcotics Anonymous

Hope

by Chris W., District 6

When I was out there I didn't have any idea what Hope was. I was so caught up in myself, that thinking things could be different was out of the question. The only way things could be different was if I managed things better, so I thought. I spent my days and nights talking or thinking about how I was getting the rotten end of the stick. I never once tried to take any action towards making my life better, not in the sense that I've learned today anyway. I didn't have one of those low bottoms that you here about in these rooms, but I surely wasn't on top of the world. As a matter of fact, my world was falling down before my eyes and I couldn't even see it. I wasn't living on the streets, or stealing so that I could get my next drink or high. I wasn't eating out of dumpsters or mooching off the last few friends that I had. I was, however, completely hopeless. I didn't care where I was going to be next year, or next week for that matter.

I received my first dose of Hope when I came to these rooms. I saw people in these rooms who had been where I had been, people who had felt as I had felt. I listened to other peoples stories and realized that they had taken this disease further than I wanted to.

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Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Grateful Rich	Nov. 21	1 Year
Ben K.	Nov. 22	5 Years
Mike H.	Dec. 7	2 Years
Avi	Dec. 8	4 Years
Gary R.	Dec. 10	4 Years
Ashley E.	Dec. 15	5 Years
Rita M.	Dec. 23	31 Years!
Mike G.	Dec. 24	3 Years
Donna S.	Dec. 25	6 Years

BULLETIN BOARD

CONVENTION UPDATE:

BW in San Francisco sends word that, to save money, registration confirmations will NOT be mailed. Simply pick up your name tag at the Registration Desk when you arrive. Have YOU registered??

TRUSTEE CONFERENCE CALL:

(Oct.30th) The minutes from the last Conference have been approved. MA has received its copyright for the MA logo. World Services' continuing financial problems were discussed and the need to communicate the situation to the fellowship was stressed. WS's biggest expense is the 800 line and it continues to be our most effective means to "spread the word" of MA's existence. We have new MA meetings in Colorado, Eureka CA, Arizona, and So.Cal.Dist.6. Video Public Service Announcements are done and ready for distribution. The MA Service Manual is almost completed and will cost \$10.

Hope

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You people told me about the Big Book and in there I realized that I finally belonged somewhere. I came to believe that I was one of you. These people who shared their experience, strength, and hope had a certain look in their eyes. A look that I had lost some years ago. That look was Hope. I became convinced that my way wasn't working, and here was a new way that I hadn't tried. I finally had found Hope.

It says in the Big Book on page 152: "We have shown how we got out from under. You say, 'Yes, I'm willing. But am I to be consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I must get along without liquor/marijuana, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?'"

"Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous [MA]. There you will find release from care,

boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you".

By suiting up and showing up at meetings, I became a part of this fellowship and learned the way out from under. I found out that it takes a lot more than just showing up, but that was my start. I learned to, "act as if". By watching what other people were doing, I could take the same action and possibly feel as they were feeling. You told me, "It's an inside job". I didn't know what that meant, so I finally asked. It means that I have to look at myself and take the steps of recovery that are outlined in Chapters 5 through 7 of the Big Book.

I found out that I can't do this alone. That would be like the blind leading the blind. I had to get someone to show me the way. I've found for me that there are two ways to pick a sponsor. I can either ask someone who's story is similar to mine and who has felt the way that I have felt. Or I can ask the person who pisses me off the most. I found that the person who pisses me off the most is usually best for me because the things that piss me off, are usually the things I need to look at.

Today I have a whole new outlook on life. The promises have, and continue to, come true in my life. I have Hope and Faith that my life has meaning. These things were given to me by the people in these rooms, and by practicing the principles of the 12 Steps of recovery. I could never have managed things better by myself. *LN*

Your Article Here! (Why Isn't It?)

Just a friendly reminder. *A New Leaf* has been a world wide publication for quite some time now, yet there are entire districts we have never heard from. Please send articles to your Bureau Chief or send them directly to us at our Post Office Box or Fax line.

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