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A NEW LEAF

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Out of the Fog

When I had pot, I'd smoke it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I laughed about being on the marijuana and caffeine "diet" – a non-stop yo-yoing between stupid and wired. I would smoke and feel instantly creative, elated, and off I sailed on a secret psychic vacation. When my brain would start sagging after hours of rabid thinking and brilliant insights, I would drink a double latte and – zing! - back on the genius track.

The slow descent into addiction began as my marijuana-induced highs grew more fleeting. A fog of muddled thinking and gathering depression began settling in. Getting high wasn't feeling so good anymore, but I smoked compulsively anyway, always thinking the next high would transport me back into the old euphoria.

I made repeated efforts to curb my use by not replacing my stash when it ran out or by giving away what was left. I sent bouquets of buds spiraling down porcelain waters into the city sewers. I conducted private bong-breaking rituals and solemnly chucked pipes out of windows. I made sincere vows to myself and others, swearing off marijuana for all time.

These methods of controlling my marijuana use were breaking down. The minute I would run out of pot, I got nervous, and the fiending would begin. I searched and researched the same hiding places in my house for a misplaced morsel or a forgotten stash. I whined out loud to myself, "Oh, God, I need some pot! I wanna smoke! I wanna smoke!" I could not face feelings and responsibilities without my helmet of fog to blur the harshness of reality. When deprived of marijuana, I was jangled and irritable. I drove with rage, screamed at my child and snarled at my reflection in the mirror. I hated myself. I believed I was worthless and spineless because I broke every promise I made to quit. My resolve to not to replace my stash never lasted more than a few days or weeks, until, in the fall of 2003, a pothead friend introduced me to a dealer with an endless supply and a cell phone who lived five minutes from my house.

My marijuana use became constant. I smoked non-stop for four months until I was only able to achieve a high for about half an hour in the morning, after which I was blitzed and depressed for the rest of the day. My intellectual acuity had burnt down to an oily, stinking roach; my brain skipping like a scratched record. I couldn't function at my mentally demanding job, so I quit the job – not the drugs. I felt like a complete failure. I was severely depressed, isolated, paranoid and lethargic, but all I wanted was to smoke more and to die. I felt worthless and became obsessed with ways of killing myself, telling myself how much I deserved to die, and

thinking how good it would be to end the suffering. Had I not been a single mother with nobody to care for my child in the event of my death, I'm sure I would have killed myself. What was once fun had become a deadly compulsion.

I don't know how I knew MA existed. Maybe I had seen the name in print years earlier. I knew there were 12-step groups for over-eating and emotions. Maybe there was one for marijuana. One afternoon, in desperation, I checked the phone book to see if there were indeed a Marijuana Anonymous listing. There was. I called. That night I attended my first meeting.

The room in the church was large and over-lit. I felt naked walking into the meeting and kept my gaze glued to the stained carpet. I was terrified someone would recognize me. I was depressed, suicidal and my brain was ragged. When I shared, I told everyone I felt like a loser being in a 12-step meeting. I said I didn't think this group could help me quit smoking pot. I seriously doubted there was a way out of the stranglehold marijuana had over me. It took me more than a month to get a week clean. I went to one meeting a week and the people were always welcoming and supportive, even though I was negative, mentally gelatinous and occasionally insulting. They seemed to understand what I was going through, and even from deep within my bubble of misery, that gave me some comfort.

I heard people talking about how good life had become for them. I didn't believe I could escape the spiritual torture of addiction, though. People with 3 months clean seemed impossibly far along. I thought it would take lifetimes to reach that amount of clean time, but I knew I had to quit somehow, because my marijuana smoking was fueling the depression that insisted the only way out of my pain was suicide. And I couldn't commit suicide because my precious son would be left orphaned, and I couldn't do that to him.

With the kind encouragement, wisdom and support of my MA fellowship, the long, long dopeless days slowly turned into weeks and, miraculously, I now have 4 months clean. The cravings, though at times strong, diminish monthly. I got a sponsor, am doing 90 meetings in 90 days, working the steps and praying to my Higher Power regularly. I still feel fragile and down some days, but I am loving the returning brain function and the feeling of hope that I wouldn't have believed possible 5 months ago. I am deeply grateful to MA and the welcoming fellowship here in Seattle.

by Anonymous



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

For this month the Roving Reporter asked, "What's your favorite step and why?"

-- I'd have to say that my favorite step is Step One; Until I could admit that I was powerless and that my life was unmanageable, the rest of the Steps were just "lip service." For me, Admitting was the key, to becoming humble and becoming willing to allow my Higher Power to do for me what I could not do for myself - Get sober, stay sober and work a plan of recovery. Today I live a miracle. -- *Kathy B., District 5*

-- Step 6 is my favorite. Becoming "entirely ready" gets to the core of faith (surrender) for me, the H.O.W. (honesty, openness and WILLINGNESS) of the program and what I believe is possible through the limitless power of my Higher Power. For me, continuing to work this step is crucial to my continued growth in recovery. It is continuing to clean house, being willing to release things that are useless to me. It is about setting aside self-image and moving into self-awareness. -- *Trudie*

-- My favorite step is Step 1, because it's the easiest and simplest to work: Just don't get high. It's also the most important step. As the book says, "The entire foundation of our program" rests on honestly working this step. Even my pot-addled brain can understand that: If I get high, the whole deal comes down. If I don't, then I am attaining the primary purpose. Simple! Not easy, but simple! -- *Paul G., Portland*

-- Step One, it is the foundation for all others. -- *Anonymous*

-- Step One, because if it is "skimped" on, it will bite you. -- *Anonymous*

-- Step 10, because it says "when" I am wrong, telling me I won't be perfect. -- *Coleman G.*

-- Step 5, because it was the first time I felt free. A burden was lifted from me that I didn't know I was carrying. I can define my life between before and after my first fifth step. *Matt, District 4*

-- Third step because it happened, I didn't do it, it just happened and it was the beginning of the change from sobriety to recovery. -- *Trisa, District 11*

-- Eleventh, of course, because that's where my healing is and that's where I go way past my addiction. The addiction becomes a footnote. -- *Garry J., District 7*

-- Second, because the principle is open-mindedness and it's the step where you build your relationship with God and it's a precursor to doing the third step. I don't believe in working the steps, I live them. I get relief when I do the second step. Step three should be easy when you do step two. -- *Carmen, District 7*

-- Step three, because it's applicable at any given time in any situation and there's a solution for every problem you're confronted with. When in doubt, turn it over. -- *Alex M., District 6.*

-- Ten, Eleven and Twelve: They are maintenance steps because they keep us in the present. It's a composite of all the other steps. The key words in those steps are "continued", "improve", and "practice." -- *Az, District 5.*

-- I love the 11th step. While it is a short and relatively simple sentence, the possible avenues by which we can practice it are so vast. Any open minded experimentation into spirituality in its many forms pays dividends. -- *Travis E., District 5*

-- Step 1 because it keeps me in touch with the fact that I was an addict, I am an addict and I will always be an addict because my disease works to convince me that I am not. -- *Jennifer L., Philadelphia*

-- Step 11, it enables me to think differently and gain peace of mind. The addict in me always tries to act out emotionally, so it's great to have a tool to keep myself in check. -- *Mike D., Districts 6 and 13*

-- Nine. It has repaired past relationships in ways I never thought possible and given me a better sense of pride/honesty that I never had before. -- *Matt H., Humboldt County.*

-- Step 3 - it feels like a Nestea plunge. Complete release. -- *Sheila B., Philadelphia*

An Amends Letter to a Former Employer

Dear Jerry,

My name is Drea. You may remember that I worked for your company for six months several years ago, and was fired for testing positive on a drug screen following a fall on company property.

I have been in a twelve-step program of recovery for addiction to marijuana for two years now, and have been clean for the same period of time. Part of that process is to look back at my life and see whom I may have harmed through my using.

You made it on my list. During the initial interview, you explained that I would have to pass a drug screen in order to be eligible for employment. I explained to you that I would certainly test positive, saying that I had been at a party recently where I had smoked pot. You graciously gave me a month to "clean up" and allowed me to work the while. I passed the screen, not because I refrained from using but because I figured a way around it using a product designed to hide it. I did work hard to do a good job, which had always been a gauge for me to prove that my marijuana usage wasn't *that* much of a problem. Problem users and drinkers lose their jobs, and that hadn't ever happened to me.

Until the afternoon I rushed to my car after work and slipped on ice, landing on my elbow with my full weight. This injury brought me to the workmen's comp office the next morning, where of course I was required to take a drug screen.

Being fired and escorted from the building with my belongings in a box was acutely embarrassing at the time, but was a blessing in disguise. I could no longer hide behind the façade of functionality and for that I am grateful.

I want to apologize to you for lying to you and for taking advantage of your trust. I am learning to live a life of integrity and honesty, which I am just beginning to see takes a lot less energy than keeping up a false front and manipulating others to do so.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Drea

The MAD 7 2005 MA Convention Committee would like to thank all of the attendees at the convention for helping and being part of one of the best conventions to date.

This convention surpassed the committees wildest dreams. It exceeded our expectations in attendance, participation, and the money donated to MAWS. It was truly an amazing Celebration and saying 'Thank You' to all the fellow addicts out there is the least we can do.

The committee especially wants to thank ALL of the people who were of service at the convention. Thank you to all those people who took time out of their busy schedules to help with no compensation other than helping themselves and another addict stay sober one more day.

We want to thank all MA members who "entertained" us and were of selfless service!

A special thank you to all the members of MAD 7, MA District 7, for responding so generously to all of the committee's monetary and service requests. We want to thank you for making this the GREATEST CELEBRATION ever. This convention was successful on every level and we could not have done this amazing convention without all of you.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all who attended this convention, and we hope to see you next year in Burbank when District 6 will Host.

JEFF & DEBRA MAuser

District 7 ROCKS !!!!!!!

DISTRICT NEWS

Here are some upcoming activities from various districts to plan for. If you have an event in your district and would like it in the New Leaf, please contact us.

DISTRICT 12

May 14-15th Spring Lake Campground,
Santa Rosa

Aug. 27-28th Doran Beach Campground,
Bodega Bay

Call Anna M. (707) 971-0953

DISTRICT 11

Second Sunday Sober Stroll:

April 10, noon, call Rick V

MA WORLDWIDE

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

email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

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800-766-6779

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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 SF Bay Area (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)
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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

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PO Box 2012, Portland, OR 97208-2012
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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 12

Alan C.	4/12/04	1 year!
Adam G.	4/17/96	9 years
Michelle	4/21/03	2 years
Steve S.	4/25/96	9 years
Truman	4/30/04	1 year!
Anthony	4/30/04	2 years
Patricia T.	3/01/03	2 years
Sean H.	3/19/04	1 year!
Liz A.	3/22/01	4 years
Don L.	3/28/97	8 years

DISTRICT 7

Richard	3/01/96	9 years
Susan	2/26/03	2 years
Stephanie	2/28/79	26 years
Ron	3/06/99	6 years
Mary	2/15/99	6 years
Alan L.	3/09/93	12 years
Dick W.	3/05/94	11 years
Julie M.	2/24/01	4 years

DISTRICT 4

Wendy M.	4/03/03	2 years
Chris L.	4/04/02	3 years

DISTRICT 5

John S.	4/11/95	10 years
Tom W.	4/12/91	14 years
Brad C.	4/10/98	7 years
Keith K.	4/07/98	7 years
Mike P.	4/13/99	6 years
Laura	4/20/04	1 year!

DISTRICT 6

Becky	3/20/04	1 year!
Don O.	4/11/99	6 years
Kevin B.	4/22/02	3 years
Melissa D.	4/04/99	6 years
Susie C.	4/06/94	11 years
Chuck R.	4/15/04	1 year!

DISTRICT 2

Allen	1/01/91	14 years
Bill	1/07/04	1 year!
David G.	1/24/85	20 years
Scott A.	2/07/02	3 years
Meredith	3/23/97	8 years
Sheldon	4/21/96	9 years
Jim B.	4/23/93	12 years

DISTRICT 10

Bill D.	2/09/90	15 years
Alicia C.	2/13/04	1 year!
John P.	3/07/02	3 years
Paul B.	3/30/04	1 year!
Mike M.	4/01/95	10 years
Mike Z.	4/23/01	4 years

DISTRICT 11

Steve M.	3/01/99	6 years
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DISTRICT 1

William	3/06/95	10 years
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AUSTIN, TX

Deanne S.	3/22/04	1 year!
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DISTRICT 3

Holly	4/05/00	5 years
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Celebrating 316 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!