



JULY 2006

Volume 16, Number 7

# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

## Listening to My Higher Power

It's the final night of the 2006 conference in Seattle, where extraordinary efforts from District 4 has exceeded my expectations for accommodations. On the ride back from the quaint after-hours coffee shop meeting, (if you can believe there is such a thing as after hours for coffee shops in Seattle) Thor made a suggestion to write about another area of service happening in the Portland area.

Just outside of Portland in Vancouver WA. there is a "Deaf Leaf" MA meeting. What makes this meeting so special, other than the fact that they serve the deaf community of marijuana addicts, is that this meeting has been active for approximately five years, and every month they come to the district meeting to buy chips and to correspond a report.

Having grown up with a hearing impairment myself, not quite enough to classify me as deaf, (contrary to popular belief among friends LOL) I decided it was time to create unity among our deaf members since it was hard for them to attend our many "social events."

Our quarterly speaker meeting hosted by the largest meeting in the district seemed to be lacking attendance over time. I requested permission to hire an ASL interpreter for the purpose of including "all" MA members from our district to have the ability to attend and/or speak at this function.

We had a bit of a snafoo on the first unity speaker meeting with "Deaf Leaf;" each representative misunderstood exactly who retained the interpreter and none showed up. A miracle occurred that night...Our first speaker knew adequate ASL to share her story, but the amazing part was all the "Deaf Leaf" members lining the back wall and assisting her with proper sign. The team work was so love inspired, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. In the end we all chalked it up to experience and I learned how to sign "sorry" very well.

After that I set out to find a paid ASL interpreter. I had no idea the task I was about to engage! I found organizations that wanted to charge outrageous prices and began to worry our unity meeting wouldn't be able to continue. Just when I let go of the fear and started asking for help in the project, I remembered I used to go hiking with a woman who got involved with the "Access Committee" from another 12 step program.

I called and she was able to secure an interpreter with a decent price who was familiar with our language. The speaker meeting went without a hitch and our interpreter worked above and beyond to support the unity of all members present!

I want to end by saying service comes in many forms; not just big positions and tasks, but also in small acts of kindness to each other. So, the next time you are at a meeting and a newcomer introduces themselves to the group, (remember how hard that was for you?!) take the time to welcome them after the meeting, and you have in fact done service!

Love to All,

## What I do for Fun to Stay Sober

When I failed a drug test at my job and was told that if I wanted to keep it I had to keep from using drugs and drinking alcohol, I thought my life was over. I didn't think I would ever have fun any more. I mean how can you listen to music, watch TV, or do anything without being stoned?

I thought long and hard about quitting that job and getting another one where I could smoke and drink, but I had been there for 23 years and could most likely retire in a couple of years so I stayed and went into a rehab. I did most of what the rehab clinic told me to do. Go to meetings, call people, get a sponsor and not drink or use. I did them but not always happily.

My sponsor, and the rehab clinic wanted me to go to sober events, but I was too busy. I had a wife, grandchildren, and was trying to complete a college degree. I started college at the age of 42 to try and cut back on my smoking but it didn't work and since I started the degree I wanted to finish it.

Amazingly after being sober a few years I found that I liked it, but more importantly I found that I liked the person I was becoming. I graduated college with honors. College is a lot easier if you aren't stoned all the time. I began to enjoy life and I began to go to sober events, and with my sponsor's OK, a few non-sober ones.

Early in my sobriety, the first 90 days or less, I went to the movies with a normie friend of mine. It was hard not smoking because it was a great movie to smoke and go see. I had been high the first time I saw it, "Star Wars Episode IV." The funny thing about it was that this time, and I had seen it at least 3 times when it had first came out, was that I really enjoyed the plot line, the dialog and the concept of "The Force." Was this the result of being sober and actually being able to remember and follow the plot of the movie, not that it was that hard to follow any way, but yes. Was my attraction to the concept of "The Force" because I was beginning to believe in the idea of a Higher Power who was keeping me sober? Yes. I saw all three reissues and each one I enjoyed more than the last, and more than when I saw them stoned. I am convinced that seeing a movie sober is much better than stoned. You can remember the movie and what is happening in it.

Since I have gotten sober I have enjoyed concerts because I remembered all the songs and didn't spend half of it either standing in line to pee or worried about getting busted for smoking pot or where did I put my pot. I have gone to the Annual Musicians Picnic, the largest sober event on the west coast, and had a blast. I have heard some of the greatest Jazz and Rock and Roll Musicians in the world there. I have seen more live music since I have gotten sober than I ever did stoned. It is hard to get off the couch when you are stoned. It is hard to remember to buy the tickets when you are stoned. And I was always worried about not having enough to smoke on the way, at the concert and the way back. It was just easier to stay home and smoke.



## 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 July the RR asked, "What do you do for fun in sobriety?" Here are what a few members had to say...

This one's a cinch for me..CAMPING is what I do for fun in recovery. It was my first official MA event and I did that with just two weeks clean. That was my first camping trip in almost 20 years, since I was a kid, and I knew right away I would be doing that every time I could...and I have. In nearly four years I've missed only one official camp-out in my district and, this year, I'm making both camp-outs in my district plus two or three in other districts. I also attend the other events and of course I fellowship for fun in recovery, but camping is my communion with my Higher Power, fellow addicts and nature. I can't describe the feeling of love and peace that overcomes me in such a serene setting. I just love it. -- **Trés P. District 5**

How do I have fun? I have so much more time to fill since I made the decision to live my life without pot. I enjoy spending time with people; I haven't gone to a movie alone since I quit weed. I enjoy gardening, and reading, and spending time with my kids. We play board games and video games (I can finally rack up 'trick' points in the ATV game). I enjoy walking down a street sober, like downtown Huntington Beach on a sunny day, smiling at people instead of making as little eye contact as possible. I like meeting new people. I like groups of people. I am not so afraid to attend the MA events now. I have fun doing whatever I'm doing. Little by little I've loosened up, stopped taking things and people so seriously. I have fun at meetings and fellowship, and I enjoy the company of others (Have I mentioned that again?) I ride my new bicycle and take walks in the park, and I window shop without envy. I have fun cooking breakfast on Sunday mornings for my family (waffles and sausages) and then staying around to eat with them. I wake up each morning grateful that I remember how to have fun. **Kathy B - District 5**

Kind of like my old saying, "what do ya got?" by no means am I the bungee-jumping kind. I love to show up for almost all the social events that our district has and the various campouts. Be a kid with my daughter, while she still likes hangin with me. Design and do an art project. Write stories that inspire me to feel good about my life, and a few dark ones to remind me what it was like. Life Is Good!!! **Trisa, District 11**

Everything I did when I was stoned but more so because I am now NOT Stoned. I LIVE A SOBER LIFE, A LIFE BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS. And boy do I have some wild dreams. **Jeff M., District 7**

For August the RR asks, "What have your sponsee(s) taught you about life or sobriety?" Please send your submissions to your bureau chief or email ANLP.

*continued from page 1*

I have gone camping sober and have had some of the most spiritual moments of my sobriety out under the stars, or around a campfire with hundreds, and I do mean hundreds of other sober people. One of the more special times camping happened as a group of us were getting ready for the campfire meeting. It was just past sunset with the sun still lighting some of the sky, but it was getting a darker blue by the minute when a large and quite bright meteor left a long white trail across the sky. Several of us joked that it was God saying I'm here, let the meeting begin.

I have gone white water rafting sober. I can't imagine doing that stoned. It is truly life-threatening doing it sober, doing it stoned would be very dangerous. And as it happens, just the other day my normie friend was telling me about the time several of his friends and him went white water rafting when most everyone, except him, was stoned. He wasn't sure what frightened him more, the river they were rafting on, or the poor decisions, the lack of concentration, and the lack of concern for the deadly situations they were in because they were all stoned.

I can honestly say that nearly 30 years I spent stoned, from about 16 to 45, were not nearly as much fun as these last 10 of sobriety. So to answer the question: what do I do for fun in sobriety, the answer is LIVE A SOBER LIFE, A LIFE BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS. And boy do I have some wild dreams.

by Jeff MAuser

## A Program of Action

by Steve S.

I hear a lot of talk in MA meetings about god and spirituality. I've heard a lot of people share on this topic. Then they mention they haven't taken the steps, or they took the steps until Step 3 then stopped. Some haven't even gotten a sponsor. They still go to meetings, and talk the talk, but that's about it. Step 12 says *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps*, and not as a result of only going to meetings. I had to take action and work, to find god and have a spiritual awakening, because like all other addicts, selfishness and self-centeredness is the root of my troubles.

First I have to concede to my innermost self that I'm an addict, and that I'm the problem. Step 3 is a decision, but a very important one. It says at the end of step 3 *in another fellowship's book* "Next we launch out on a course of **vigorous action**, the first step which is a personal housecleaning. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent affect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of the things in ourselves that had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions Step (4)". On Page 15 in the *MA Life with Hope* book it says if we resist step 4 that "Some of them stop coming to meetings and start using again. Others keep coming back, but their spiritual awareness does not grow. They recount the same experiences, express the same emotions, and suffer the same pain. Nothing changes for them; they appear to be stuck."

The 4<sup>th</sup> step tells us to write down a list of resentments, fears, harms done to others, sex harms and other harms. As my sponsor told me, we write down the secrets we want to take to the grave. Until I take this list and do Step 5, "Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs" then I am blocked off from God, and I won't find out what my character defects are. Later on in the Big Book it says "Now we need more action, without which we find that **Faith without works is Dead**" (Steps 8 & 9). I have to go out and clean up the wreckage of my past, and make those amends to the people and places that I did harm to that were on my 4<sup>th</sup> step list. At step 10 after the promises it says, "And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone even Alcohol for by this time sanity will have returned." Remember step 2, (Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity), for it's telling me it takes work to get to this point, (Step 10). By this time all of my hang ups about god are gone, there was no more bitching and complaining about how bad life was, for this agnostic had a personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from addiction by working and applying all of these steps in my life. In Step 11, I continue to seek through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with god, praying only for the knowledge of his will and the power to carry it out. A lot of people constantly talk about what the program has given them, you know the program has given me this and that, me, me, me. The steps have taken something out of me, a little bit of selfishness and self centeredness that was the root of my troubles to begin with, because I learned and feel that it's not about me anymore, and I want to be of service to MA, God, and my fellow addicts (suffering and recovered). Trying to work this program without a sponsor is like being a one-legged man in a butt kicking contest. If I don't take the steps, then I really don't know God, spirituality, or anything about a spiritual awakening, for I'm **only lying to myself** and to the newcomer who walks through the door, because I cannot give away something I haven't got.

My take on Step 7 - Humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings. Every day I am reminded of my shortcomings, sometimes boldly and at other times subtly. Every day I ask God, in my clumsy way, to show me a better, more compassionate, more accepting way to live. I ask how to keep my side of the street clean (take care of my issues instead of someone else's). And in those occasional moments, I have to apologize for an error on my part, an assumption, a hurt I caused. By being able to admit and accept my shortcomings, my character defects, I am able to relate better to others and to look myself in the mirror everyday. Knowing I am not perfect is one part of this; remembering that no one else is perfect either is another part of it. I am grateful for those who have come before me, because I am getting better at listening, instead of arguing. And I am grateful for the newcomers who remind me, when they share, of what I still have to learn.

Kathy B - District 5

### A Message from ANLP

Can't find your bureau chief? Can't make it to a meeting? DON'T WORRY!--you can now submit your birthday directly to ANLP by going to the MAWS website -- [www.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org) and click on PUBLICATIONS--(but please only send birthdays for the upcoming month or the previous month if it was missed)

You can also submit a story, share and Roving Reporter Response.

Thank you

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to Long Island, NY  
for becoming  
DISTRICT 15  
of  
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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 5**

Phil	7/10/05	1 year!
Tender John	7/02/91	15 years
Gary T.	7/07/01	5 years

**District 7**

Rob	5/05/05	1 year!
Annie	6/15/04	2 years
Ruel T.	6/04/02	4 years
Mark D.	6/04/02	4 years
Angry Greg	6/04/00	6 years
Barry R.	5/20/98	8 years
Nick M.	5/16/96	10 years
Jenner	5/96	10 years
Sam K.	5/05/91	15 years

**Miscellaneous**

Jonas W..	7/11/04	2 years
Rasmus R.	8/03/05	1 year!
Ray H.	8/01/01	5 years

**District 11**

Brandon R.	7/05/94	12 years
Bill K.	7/20/05	1 year!
Pat L.	7/23/95	11 years

**District 6**

Mark I.	6/21/99	7 years
Jim S.	7/05/95	11 years

**District 2**

Marguerite	5/06/06	1 year!
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**Celebrating 121 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**