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A NEW LEAF

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It Didn't Matter if My Sponsor Liked Me by Rosie S.

I had been coming to meetings for three weeks, stoned. People kept talking about the AA 12&12 book, so I got a copy from the library and read the first four steps in one weekend. I felt I had "worked" the first three steps. The next week I quit smoking pot and went to a women's meeting where they had a 12 step workshop. I met my first sponsor there. She asked me what step I was on and I told her the fourth step. She asked me who I worked the first three steps with, and I told her I did them on my own. She got a big smile on her face and put her arm around my shoulders and said "You got here on your own. Recovery doesn't happen on your own. You can join our workshop and we can help you."

Over several weeks I went through a rigorous process of answering a bunch of questions to complete a powerless and unmanageability inventory. Then I found that I had some major blocks keeping me from trusting a higher power, but after a few more weeks, the fear of being stuck and relapsing drove me to believe MA was a higher power that could restore me to sanity, and I made a decision to keep doing all the suggestions from MA. I pushed forward into my fourth step. I had heard so many people struggle with the fourth step, so I just tried my best to put the pen to paper and keep moving forward with my inventory.

Three months later when I finished my fourth step, I was very afraid of doing my fifth step because I was afraid that if anyone knew about the things I had done they would never understand, and definitely not like me anymore. I just had to trust my higher power wanted me to do this and it didn't matter if my sponsor liked me, so I trusted her and told her everything. She was so understanding and supportive that it helped me to accept myself and feel safe to be vulnerable. After that I could really share openly in meetings and grew by leaps and bounds in my recovery. By the time I had a year clean I had worked through all the steps and made a couple of amends. That workshop fell apart after my sponsor relapsed, so I joined another workshop and worked the steps again.

Now it has been over five years since that first meeting and I am in another workshop currently working the third step. I keep working them every day because I continue learning new things about myself and my life is better than I ever imagined possible.

Coming to Terms by Anonymous

I am a recovering marijuana addict and alcoholic. The first time I was drunk was at age five, when an uncle gave me vodka instead of water. The first time I smoked, I was 10 or 11 years old. I don't really remember getting high, but I do remember from that point on, all I did, I did stoned. I have done every drug I knew of except heroin.

I was the type of addict who could smoke a lot and still "function." I received a master's degree in Anthropology with a high grade point average on a full scholarship, was stoned all the way. I took great pride in winning contests where 25 to 30 joints later, I would have smoked people under the table. This was a great achievement to me. I smoked 27 or 28 years of my life, everyday, all day, morning to night. I didn't go anywhere without pot, and I don't remember much. I don't even remember being de-virginized.

The alcoholism kicked in really strongly about three years ago. It made my disease escalate. Whenever I drank, I wanted to smoke, and visa versa. I never hit a non-functioning bottom. I got into recovery because I was in an abusive relationship and I thought maybe it had to do with my use of marijuana and alcohol.

I never admitted to anyone I was an addict, yet daily I tried to not use. The voice in my head said I was an addict and alcoholic and I was killing myself. And I didn't care. I was experiencing blackouts and, because of my relationship, my use had increased. I could feel how my brain and my body were being affected, yet I didn't care. And that really bothered me a lot. I knew, on some level, I was killing myself. My whole life centered around getting high and then making sure I held it together so nobody knew how high I was. It was an awful life. It was so painful. I did not enjoy it.

I started going to CODA (Co-Dependents Anonymous) meetings, and one night I was sitting in an empty room waiting for a meeting to start, but no one showed. I saw all these people going into another room. I figured any 12 Step meeting would do, so I went in.

The question for me is not, "Does God exist?" I know God is here because that was my first MA meeting. I was being cared for and directed to the right place. If you want to stop, but you can't, keep coming back. This program and the people in it work miracles. Today I experience my life as better than it has ever been. With almost one year of sobriety, I just feel so great. I am recovering from a fatal disease that was killing me. I now have my energy and my life back. And I am not afraid anymore. I feel, and that is the greatest gift of all. Good luck and love to you all...and thanks



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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Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:
 ANLP@marijuana-anonymous.org
 or
 A New Leaf
 P.O. Box 6842
 Torrance, CA 90504

We send approximately 681 copies of *A New Leaf* each month to subscribers in 31 states



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

Farewell Mary Jane

*When I chose to let you go, my apathy went with you.
For so long, I turned to you when my problems were
heavy and draining.*

*The life I knew, I knew as you.
You healed me and helped me cope.*

*Now the pain at times seems insurmountable.
The anger of the people closest to me, incomprehensible.*

*There is no longer anywhere to run,
in your smoke, I cannot hide.*

*The absence of thought was once so comforting,
the hurt that remains is limitless.*

*I fear that my fear will devour my hope,
that all of my dreams will die with you.*

*I cannot understand how I got to this place,
Where did the time go?*

Where am I now?

Who am I?

Where am I headed?

*The road to serenity is just ahead,
the endless circle lies behind.*

*I am caught in the middle,
looking back at myself.*

*Not knowing which foot to put in front of the other,
wondering if walking backwards is my only salvation.*

*I cannot protect myself from me,
or from you,
any longer.*

*I cannot go on this way,
or that.*

I cannot become all that I hate.

*I cannot live in existence without suffering,
without knowing true heartache,
without feeling your convoluted arms circling me.*

*Yet you no more feel safe,
you are no longer my net.*

*I fall free, towards the sky,
holding onto another tomorrow*

And letting go of all that I have ever known.

by Kimberly Anne



The Roving Reporter

The question for November was, "How long did it take you to work the steps?" Here are what a few members had to say...

So far it has taken me 3 year and 2 months (and a few days). I'm formally on step 8. I don't think there is a particular timeframe for doing the steps, it's at whatever pace you are comfortable. Plus I feel it's a life long process, I don't think I'll EVER stop working (or reworking) the steps.
Rich C, District 13 (and Philly)

First time in recovery = never, only did the first 3, did the 1,2,3 waltz ;-). After 14 month relapse = about 3 or 4 months, and then again after I turned 10 (and it made a huge difference in my life). I will do them again when I turn 15, next May 13th.
George L, District 6

Once I started the 12 steps, it took me: three tries and four months to get through the 4th and 5th steps, then seven months total to get through the 12 steps for the first time. After 17 months in recovery I am still not fully done with my 9th step.
Carol G aka Cgod from District 11 and 13, respectively.

I was able to look at my fears and resentments and feel better once I talked about them. Speaking about these things has brought them into the open and showed me what I need to deal with. There are things in my inventory that I just need to let go of. I know this is just the beginning, but it is a start in finding peace of mind on the subject of these things I have written and spoken about. I feel that for me to stay clean and have a decent life I need to make a change in how I think and do things to let go of the thought that I might smoke weed again. I realize now that when I don't smoke, things go better. In the past two years, there have been many changes, but I will keep working to make more changes.
Wharf Rat John, Portland

It has taken me years to learn a whole new way of living. It will take me a lifetime of working the steps to live my life into a better way of thinking. Rather than thinking my way into a better way of living. I've veered off the road of recovery occasionally trying to find my own way. I'm back on the road again not necessarily starting over but where I left off. We all begin where we are. There have been times when I'm in a lot of pain that I grow the most. I start over at step 1 everyday. I've studied and worked the steps to the best of my ability with others in the program. But I cannot say I've completed each and every one to total completeness. Because still I am learning....
Anonymous

The question the Roving Reporter asks for December is, "In 25 words or less, how do you define LOVE?"

Please send responses to district bureau chief or email to anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org

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

MA WORLDWIDE

Fresno, CA
 4718 Griffith Way, Fresno, CA 93722
 559-289-5099
 DuaneizKing1961@sbcglobal.net

MA World Service Offices
 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404
 800-766-6779

San Francisco (Dist. 1)
 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)
 1439 W.Chapman Ave.
 PMB #215, Orange, Ca 92868
 714.999.9409
 619.685.2808

LA County No. (District 6)
 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

Portland (District 11)
 PO Box 2012, Portland, OR 97208-2012
 503.221.7007

North Bay, CA (District 12)
 PO Box 1001, Petaluma, CA 94952
 415.419.3555
 707.583.2326

MA Online (District 13)
 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404
 800-766-6779

District 14
London, England Chapter
 07940.503438

Chester Co., PA Chapter
 PO Box 194, Sadsburyville, PA 19362
 610.622.9243

Hawaii
 www.angelfire.com/ma4/hawaii
 (808) 965-5535 - ext. #5
 ma4hawaii@hotmail.com

Colorado
 303.607.7516

Denton, TX
 outofthefogDFW@yahoo.com

Ithaca, NY
 ma_ithaca@yahoo.com

Omaha, NB
 omaha_ma@hotmail.com

Rogue Valley, OR Chapter
 541.941.2995

Westmont, NJ
 JERSEYMA12@yahoo.com

Australia
 MA Australia
 PO Box 202, Hindmarsh, 5007, South Australia
 0.500.502.654
 maaustralia@yahoo.com.au

St. Louis, MO
 ma_stpeters@hotmail.com

New Zealand
 MA Service Centre, PO Box 74-386
 Market Road, Auckland 3, New Zealand
 649.846.6822

Austin, TX
 higherground_austin@yahoo.com

Chicago
 Ma_chicago@hotmail.com

Share on Tradition 11

When I first walked into a 12 step program, I was fearful, embarrassed and unsure if I belonged. When I saw those around me with a sense of peace in spite of their circumstances, they had something I wanted; I think it was serenity. That was the "attraction" for me. I began to feel safe. Then after a while I became eager to share the program with others. I was not familiar with the traditions. I wanted to "promote the program to others who I felt needed it. But the problem with promoting the program is that others don't always want it or feel they need it. What I can share is about my own experience, strength and hope. I can only speak for myself and not for the program as a whole. By understanding the principles behind the steps and traditions, I can maintain my anonymity and hopefully be an attraction rather than a promotion. Living the program is the best way to carry the message. The program can benefit from exposure by public information on what the program has to offer. We can carry the message, one of hope and recovery. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions.

Whether famous or not we are equals when it comes to recovery. We need to respect the anonymity of others in all programs.

by Anonymous



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.

Fresno, CA

Charlene P.	11/01/04	1 year!
Leonard	11/23/98	7 years
Ray	11/29/03	2 years

District 2

Kirsten	1 year!
Genevieve	1 year!
Mark	1 year!
Marcus	1 year!
Carmit	5 years
Leigh	15 years
Timna	1 year!
Elizabeth	15 years
Louise	7 years
Matt C.	11 years
Fay	16 years
Sally	9/17/04 1 year!
Barbara	11/15/00 5 years

District 3

Ann B.	11/04/03	2 years
Dave G.	11/19/03	2 years
Edd G.	11/10/03	2 years
John J.	11/10/03	2 years
Kevin D.	11/08/00	5 years
Steve C.	11/27/03	2 years

District 5

Meredith	11/05/91	14 years
Ron		
"The Gardener"	11/05/95	10 years
Rich C.	11/02/98	7 years
Larry	11/28/99	6 years
Kathy B.	11/04/03	2 years

District 11

Stefan	9/22/02	3 years
Wharf Rat John	12/07/03	2 years
Marvin	9/09/84	21 years

Celebrating 170 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!