



Spiritual Awakening: Writing the New Script

Clif

I grew up in the rigidly defined world of military bases and bible-belt communities. Our house was strictly regulated by my father who carried his rank of Master Sergeant home with him. Mother was a poor second-in-command and my sister held rank over me, the private third class little brother.

The fuel for this mini economy was alcohol; my father drank it, and it energized the familial process, directing all activity in the home like electricity running the machines of the factory. There was no "will" other than the authoritarian command of the bottle and here I learned, or began to learn, the meaning of the word "addict," which in the Latin means "written." The script for the familial activity was written by a substance and the need for it; the same way a factory ceases to achieve its end without electricity. Our family functioned, found its direction, sense and meaning, through the endless emptying of the bottle.

According to the script, I rebelled and in this narrative, hence became the source of the problem. I acted out the script and began smoking cigarettes and drinking as soon

as I entered adolescence. But when I found marijuana I took the narrative to a new level. For years using marijuana I was convinced I was "writing" my own life. My adolescent rebellion continued long after my father retired from drinking and began to live a different life.

I, on the other hand, resenting that earlier life at home, was driven by that resentment to continue to live out the script long after I had moved away from home and become an adult.

Somewhere along the way I hit the bottom and got tired of the story. I came to see, through a series of failed relations, the misery that ultimately results from addictive drug and alcohol use, that I had become my father.

This realization came to me not in a blinding flash, but slowly over years of painful recovery and relapses. After more than twenty years of the "revolving door" of relapse and recovery, it was that final relapse that convinced me to end my rebellion; humble myself, get a sponsor, and begin to work the steps.

Somewhere in the process of working Step Eleven I began

to understand what years of meetings had not taught me—or rather, what I had not been willing to learn: I no longer had to live out the script as a passive "written" person, an addict. Ironically, my rebellion had only further chained me to the family script. Only by humble submission to the will of a power greater than myself would I at last have the freedom to write my own life. "Freedom," a poet once wrote, is merely "a chain whose links glitter more brightly." In the brilliance of this simple program, I, and so many more, are granted that freedom and power to write our lives over again. ▲

A NEW LEAF NEEDS YOUR STORY!

You do not have to tell your life history, and you don't have to fill the issue! Anything you feel is worthwhile saying in a meeting is worth submitting to the newsletter.

Submit your story online at <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/literature/newsletter/submit-a-story>, or write to anl.editor@marijuana-anonymous.org. Our mailing address is PO Box 6482, Torrance, CA, 90504.

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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

District Bureau Chiefs

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| District 1: | Lori B. |
| District 2: | Tim V. |
| District 3: | Mark S. |
| District 4: | Thor H. |
| District 5: | Pearl C. |
| District 6: | Rick |
| District 7: | Karen S. |
| District 8: | Nadia W. |
| District 10: | Carlos M. |
| District 11: | Susan C. |
| District 12: | Jim B. |
| District 13: | Anon. |
| District 15: | Gary K. |

ANLP Staff

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Office Manager: | Tom W. |
| Field Editor: | Debra M. |
| Publishing Editor: | Steve R. |
| Secretary: | Open |
| Treasurer: | Terry H. |
| Chairperson: | John McC. |

Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:
anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org

A New Leaf
P.O. Box 6482
Torrance, CA 90504

or submit online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on the **Newsletter** tab.

Speaking Conventionally

This year District 5 did an awesome job of presenting the 2013 Annual MA Convention, the theme of which was "We Recover". As has become our practice, we distributed questionnaires so that we could collect feedback on the experience of both attendees and volunteers at the event. Naturally we cannot fit all the responses we received, but the ones in this issue represent the consensus of all the replies. Please don't feel hurt if you don't see your words. We read and appreciated all that you wrote! -- The Editors

What fears or expectations did you bring to the Convention and did they materialize?

- Tried to have no expectations and keep an open mind, and this allowed my higher power to really work.
- Not many of either. I expected to learn and meet and connect with great people. Both expectations were met. Didn't have any fears!
- No expectation, and fear I wouldn't fit in....far exceeded expectations and fear never materialized! Go figure!
- I was afraid that I wouldn't know anyone and I'd feel isolated but that did not materialize. lots of people and fun
- I had no expectations. Well to meet a girl. It didn't happen but my expectations succeeded as a newcomer it was a great day for recovery!
- We knew it would be great but we were blown away at how great it was.
- Fears about being in the play but I totally had a good time and fed off the crowd.
- I expected to perform for a bigger audience at the open mic.
- I only wish 700 more people were inspired to show up and get the benefits.
- Anxieties around meeting new people, trying to connect. No, everyone was very friendly and approachable.

- Fear of crowds, new places, unknown things. No they did not materialize. I met old friends for the first time and new friends once again!
- My expectation of recovery and fellowship did materialize.
- Thought the play would be a disaster--it was great.
- I brought nothing but fear with me to that Convention. I was afraid of committing to something so deeply program-oriented. I tried to slink in unnoticed and was promptly met by 3 people I see from meetings I attend. In uncomfotability comes growth. At least that's what someone said to me, and now I totally believe that.
- The wonderful fellowship exceeded expectations.
- I expected that I would make a few new connections in the program, and I was not dissapointed in that regard.
- Would there be enough people. Yes!
- That I would be close-minded and isolating. I stepped out of my comfort zone and made connections, as usual. Expected to enjoy the company of my wonderful fellows, and I did as always
- Had none, had a blast!
- Fear of socializing ~ not really, everyone is very nice.
- To get a weekend of recovery/yes!

Is there anything you would like to see more or less of in future Conventions?

Anything from a past convention you feel could benefit future Conventions?

- Yoga. Read the questions during meetings, especially the big ones!
- I love to dance at the convention. A good DJ or band is helpful.
- More coffee!
- The Friday skit really set the tone for the weekend. I think it brought us together through the laugh.
- Better DJ at the dance.
- Marathon meetings.
- I really like the creative workshop. The vision board was awesome.
- The address should be online, I didn't know where it was.
- [Arrange things so that] Friday and Saturday night main events are not booked at same time as meetings, draws people away.
- Would like to see workshops on sponsorship and roles of sponsors and sponsees.
- I missed a dedicated D13 (online hybrid) meeting and a GLBT meeting. Both would be great to bring back.
- I'd love it if somehow there could be activities that include an outdoor element.
- More tie-dyed tees!
- Thank you for including break times in workshop schedulings.
- More craft/interactive workshops
- Not really, this one was perfectly fine

What workshops did you enjoy and why?

- Forgiveness, life w/ hope writing workshop. very therapeutic.
- Enjoyed the economic insecurity workshop. relevant to everyone and some good info. Liked hearing everyone's stories. Writing workshop also very cathartic
- The step workshop and the forgiveness workshop.
- All. Enjoyed the ones that had everybody sharing their thoughts and experiences on the subject.
- Women's meeting and forgiveness meeting.
- The writing workshop was very enjoyable and helpful to me.
- The writing, forgiveness workshops. They got me out of my comfort zone.
- Cross addictions was meaningful, informing, and it was repeated! It was awesome!
- Fear of economic insecurity-helped me clarify my fears. Vision boards, forgiveness, and cross addictions.
- Cross addictions because it was very pertinent to my situation
- I liked the writing workshops and step workshops because I did some writing.
- Vision Board-it worked for me last year! Fear of economic insecurity will leave us (I liked the shares)
- Uh, missed them all, beach time!
- I enjoyed the cross addictions workshop because hearing other people's stories of how they deal with their cross addictions isn't something I get to hear at MA

meetings. It was quite helpful in removing the insecurities I had about discussing my own cross addictions. I also REALLY enjoyed the Steps 1,2,3 workshop. The way it was run lent itself to quickly getting to know the people at my table in an intensely intimate manner. I found myself hanging out with people in that workshop for the rest of the Convention.

- Really liked the cross-addiction workshop.
- The workshops on radical acceptance and fear of economic insecurity were particularly germane to my present issues, and I liked that they were not just specially-themed meetings.
- Stress in Recovery, because it is so relevant to me.

4. Will attending this Convention bring any changes to your program?

- More letting go of little things.
- Yes, I plan to work on my steps. I purchased the step book and workbook.
- I will definitely check out the meetings in other districts now that I have met people out of town.
- Want to continue to be of service.
- Not too much. But it inspired what I am already doing
- Yes, I wish to reach out, either into Al-Anon or creating an online Mar-Anon.
- Helps to reconnect to a larger perspective of how important it is to others in other cities and countries.
- I have a goal to seed a men's stag meeting.

a new leaf

- I don't know. Actually yes, I am more committed to being part of MA.
- Yes, makes me want to attend more meetings.
- More service.
- Yes, it's reinforcement for my recovery.
- Yes, I'll try to be more active in MA.
- Yes! Most definitely! I have got a jumpstart on my program and injection of new life into me!!
- I will be more supportive of my family and friends who are in recovery.
- Yes, enlightened fellowship, spiritual growth.
- More a strengthening than a changing.
- Yes, more regular meeting attendance, service.
- Yes, shared experiences bring strength to all.
- I don't think the convention changed as much as putting it together. The planning made me more dedicated and of service. I'm hoping that I can keep that.
- Lots of growth personally, breaking through social barriers, strengthened fellowships and commitment to MA recovery.
- Yeah, it may actually make me start adhering to a program rather than screw around with it like I have up until attending Convention.
- Probably not, but will always remember it with fondness.

What would you say to anyone thinking of attending next year's Convention?

- Bring an open mind and a willing heart and invite people.

- Do it! Lots of fun. Life can still be joyous without weed.
- You should go! Its 90 times more fun than I could have ever expected.
- If you've been, you know why you need to go again. If you've never attended, you owe it to yourself to experience it.
- It's worth every bit of time and money. Plan on going with people from your district.
- Go. Leave your fears at home.
- Please come. It's a very positive experience--Lots of FUN!
- Supports us. Join the family. Meet some great people.
- Have a great attitude and know it will be a lot of work!
- Good people, self realizations, stronger connection to the people and my higher power.
- Do it! The experience is indescribable!
- You'll get out what you put into it.
- Definitely go!
- It's a good way to socialize outside of the regular meeting format. The fellowship is the best part.
- Such a worthwhile investment in yourself.
- Go! Go! Go!

And from the Volunteers...

What advice were you given to prepare you for the weekend ahead?

- Be ready to sell raffles!

Now that it is over, what do you think this experience will do for you and your district?

- Bring the members together
- Having a great sense of our depth, I can talk this up
- Growth

What advice would you offer to the district hosting the next Conference?

- Keeping merchandise and raffle prizes in same room was a good idea. More Mar-Anon meetings for spouses.
- To set up more activities that bring the entire membership together
- Food was great, larger variety of workshops, and better music (more variety)

Use the back of the page to add anything you feel made an impression on you.

- Thanks for a great convention

Roving Reporter



“What do ‘Principles of the Program’ mean to you and how do you practice them in your daily living?”

Please submit your answers by May 17th for printing in the June issue. Write to anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org or submit online at <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/literature/newsletter/talk-to-the-roving-reporter>

A Reply to the April Roving Reporter Question, “How did you pick your sponsor?”

I didn't pick my sponsor, and he didn't pick me, we believe that our Higher Power did. I was beginning week 7 of the six week Intensive phase of my outpatient program and I needed a sponsor to move on. I was afraid to ask, which I know now is very normal. It didn't help that I hadn't clicked with anyone, that I hadn't heard my story, yet.

Then at the Sunday morning meeting, the speaker was taking an amazing two year chip. I had never heard anyone staying sober for THAT LONG. He said “all I wanted to do when I first came in was figure out how to control my using.” I identified with that, then he said that he found out he couldn't. Sigh. Oh well, I had proven to myself many times before that I couldn't control mine. I listened, he had a good pitch, and I began to identify. When he was done he went around the table and to my surprise gave me his two year chip, as a Hope Chip.

And that did give me Hope. It gave me hope that I could at least ask him to be my sponsor, and when he said no it wouldn't be so bad because I was really going up to thank him for the chip.

After the meeting I went to him and said very quickly “thank you for the chip, do you want to be my sponsor, no OK,” and walked away. Then it hit me that he hadn't said no he had said “Yes.” He has been my sponsor ever since, 16 years and counting.

He took me through the steps and helped me take some of my guys through the steps. We have been there for each other through divorces and marriages, deaths and births. I am very proud to call him my Sponsor.

Meditatively Yours

Mindfulness practice is the basis for my meditation. When I remain in the present in the moment and as conscious as I can be of what's happening within me and around me, then I can trust in the presence of a power greater than myself that I call God. There is a connection to “This Power” that I strive to improve when I can, all the time. Working to improve this connection is like expanding the space in my mindfulness to sustain a kind of “Gods' Presence”; ideally; all throughout the day. Seeing my thoughts and feelings as they arise gives me a chance to effectively let go of them before they become triggering. This foundation eliminates a lot of my problems.

Mindfulness practice in turn has many benefits for me. It allows me to be aware of what's happening at the moment and allows “Higher Power” to help me as I need it. “This path” which is ever changing is my focus in recovery. Practice Mindfulness and you lessen your distractions and illusions and you cultivate love, patience, piece of mind, compassion, happiness and understanding of the true nature of things.

By seeing through “Perfect Awareness” I intuitively know what I have to do in the moment. It is kind of a “Spiritual Guide” and when I make this connection and experience it working in my life, making a difference to me in tangible ways, my ability to maintain conscious contact grows stronger and my faith (confidence) in that connection to a power greater than myself grows stronger and the less doubt I have about “Conscious Contact with a Higher Power”. This practice is bearing fruit in my recovery and adds joy to my life as I build healthy relationships and spiritually based connections.

marijuana anonymous worldwide

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--------------|
| District 1 San Francisco www.ma-sf.org | 415.325.4785 | District 11 Portland PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 | 503.567.9892 |
| District 2 East Bay PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 | 510.287.8873 | District 12 North Bay, CA PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 | 707.583.2326 |
| District 3 South SF Bay Area PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 | 408.450.0796 | District 13 MA Online www.ma-online.org | |
| District 4 Western Washington PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 | 206.414.9270 | District 14 London, England | 07940.503438 |
| District 5 Orange County 1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 | 714.999.9409 | District 15 Long Island, NY www.ma-longisland.org | 516-568-5883 |
| District 6 LA County No. PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 | 818.759.9194 | District 16 Melbourne, Australia 24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 | 403 945 083 |
| District 7 LA County So. PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 | 310.494.0189 | District 17 Denmark info@ma-kbh.dk | |
| District 8 New York PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 | 212.459.4423 | District 18 Sacramento www.sacramentoma.org | 916.341.9469 |
| District 10 LA County East PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 | 626.583.9582 | For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org | |

Next Month...

During the 2013 Annual Convention in Orange County, CA this year, a writing workshop was held with the aim of encouraging submissions to YOUR newsletter, A New Leaf. The principle was put into practice right there in the workshop, as people picked up pens and wrote to contribute to the publication, and we'll start publishing the results next month. The "turnout" was so great, in fact, that there's no guarantee we'll be finished with these submissions in May! Hopefully this will inspire others of you out there in ANLand to do the same and send in your thoughts. We'd love to hear them, so long as they have to do with experience, strength, and hope!

Birthdays Celebrating 190 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? If you're in a District, inform your **Bureau Chief**.
If not, write anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org, or submit online at
www.marijuana-anonymous.org/literature/newsletter/submit-anniversary-birthday.

Birthdays accepted for the current month issue are ones that fall in the **45 days previous to the current month**. Birthdays for this calendar month will appear in the next issue.



| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------|----------|
| District 1 | Hilary M. | 2/26/94 | 19 Years |
| District 4 | Kat | 4/10/12 | 1 Year! |
| District 2 | Dale | 3/3/10 | 3 Years |
| | Laurie S. | 3/2/09 | 4 Years |
| | Tim | 3/1/94 | 19 Years |
| District 5 | Grateful Joe | 3/7/11 | 2 years |
| | Kelly | 3/17/07 | 6 years |
| | Ernest F. | 3/9/95 | 18 years |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------|----------|
| District 7 | Mike "Hemp" | 2/16/12 | 1 Year! |
| | Eric P. | 3/11/12 | 1 Year! |
| | Mark S. | 3/11/12 | 1 Year! |
| | Nathan S. | 3/15/12 | 1 Year! |
| | Louis W. | 3/4/11 | 2 Years |
| | Peter B. | 2/20/10 | 3 years |
| | Ernie C. | 3/6/05 | 8 Years |
| | John H. | 2/18/00 | 13 years |
| | Steve G. | 2/19/98 | 15 years |
| | Richard D. | 3/1/96 | 17 years |

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------|---------|----------|
| District 8 | Leo W. | 2/23/03 | 10 Years |
| | Portia W. | 1/13/83 | 30 Years |
| District 10 | Emily H. | 1/5/10 | 3 Years |
| | Kevin L. | 3/8/09 | 4 Years |
| District 11 | Su S. | 1/26/05 | 8 Years |
| District 13 | Assilon S. | 3/1/12 | 1 Year! |

Birthdays in bold are corrections/omissions from last issue, for which the interim Publishing Editor would like to make a sincere amends.
-TW