



Freedom from...

Most of us know that the MA groups started in different places, with different names, within a couple of years of each other. They started hearing about each other in the late 1980's and decided to try and see if there was a way to fold these few small groups into a larger group in order to be able to help more marijuana addicts.

The San Francisco area group was called Marijuana Addicts Anonymous (MAA); the Orange County (CA) Group was called Marijuana Smokers Anonymous (MSA); the Los Angeles group and the Seattle groups were called Marijuana Anonymous (MA).

The Los Angeles MA had started the process for incorporation in February of 1989 and was finished in May of the same year. Meanwhile the MAA, MSA, and Los Angeles MA groups were starting to get in contact with each other and decided to have a meeting in June of 1989 in Morro Bay, CA, which was about half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco. A total of 11 delegates gathered.

That meeting was another whole story, but this is about the decisions on MA sobriety requirements. MA in Los Angeles had always been about freedom from marijuana and all other mind-altering substances including alcohol – Period and Exclamation Point – for everybody. The other two groups were about singleness of purpose, like the original anonymous group. The members from LA more or less caved in

because they personally wanted to unify and be able reach more addicts. And then, they came home.

Los Angeles County which later became Districts 6 and 7 and part of 10 was not happy and the meetings all over the county demanded a meeting with the three delegates that returned from Morro Bay. They were the MA President, Secretary, and Treasurer due to the incorporation. So a meeting was held in a park which is now

*The only
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marijuana"...*

part of District 6 and the original mood was to drop out of the merger all together. MA members wanted absolutely nothing to do with singleness of purpose. After hours of discussion the compromise became that as long as all members of World Services (Trustees, Chairpersons, and Delegates) were totally clean and

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To Any Lengths

I thought I hit bottom in 1995. I knew I had a problem with marijuana years earlier, but I thought I could control it. When the panic attacks hit, I had enough. I started making MA meetings. No weed for a year and a half, a miracle. I drank though. Someone gave me the pamphlet "Dangers of Cross Addiction." But I was here for weed; all I needed was to hit a few meetings and I'd be fine, thank you. I didn't get numbers, didn't get a sponsor, and though my elevator was definitely broken, I did not take the Steps! Life improved, but I still had all my -isms and nothing changed much in me. I was the weed equivalent of a dry drunk: full of anger, resentment, blame, self-pity, and when I felt like it, alcohol.

I started to jones so I asked someone to be my sponsor. It was a pleasant exchange until I told him I drank. He flipped out, shouting all the reasons why drinking would lead me to a joint. I wasn't convinced, and I wasn't going to hear any message that wasn't delivered...soberly. So with no tool belt of recovery on my person, down the road I picked up. A couple of years later, after a couple of drinks, I hit a terrifying bottom with marijuana. Pot had frightened me many times before, but not like this. I really needed help this time.

I didn't know what else to do but go back to MA. It was different this time. I couldn't count days or collect chips if I had been drinking or using other substances. What? I had chips from my first time

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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 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 submit online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on the newsletter tab.

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

🌀 IN SPIRIT OF SERVICE 🌀

A New Leaf Publications is looking for a dedicated member of the fellowship to step up and into service as the next ANLP secretary. ANLP expresses its sincerest thanks to Susan C. for a job well done.

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sober then membership could be about the desire to quit using. (They figured that later on their Sponsors could work on that "other" stuff too.) So, MA was willing to join with the other two groups if they were willing to compromise too.

The second Unity Conference was held in October of 1989, one day in Orange County and the next day in LA County. In the meantime, MA in Seattle was heard from and they sent delegates too. They had been about freedom from all mind-altering substances too, so the Grand Compromise was made. The only requirement for membership is "a desire to stop using marijuana," but any commitment at World Services level is to be freedom from marijuana and all mind-altering substances. In fact, one group had sent an elected Trustee but he had to resign because he still drank. Another member of that group became a Trustee instead.

by Carol McD.

Why Didn't I Find MA 30 Years Ago?

I had a 40 year pot smoking career and realized I had a problem. My problem? I had to smoke it! Constantly, chronically, compulsively. If it was anywhere around, I'd sniff it out and bum a hit. When I had it, I was smoking it until it was gone. Life was something that just happened between hits.

I knew I wanted to quit, but I couldn't go more than five days or so before the cravings became too strong and I was too weak to resist. Also, to my detriment, I had an enabler, my wife. She thought she was helping me while she was helping herself to some peace. She needed the peace because she was living with a manic-depressive. I had bi-polar disorder and we didn't know it. My behavior was unpredictable when I wasn't high, but when I was stoned, I was steady and predictable – predictable as in being spaced out and not annoying.

I was diagnosed as bi-polar when I was 30 and had been smoking pot since I was 14. The diagnosis came after a period of frantic fear and a suicidal crash that landed me in a psychiatric hospital. While at the hospital, my mental illness got a lot of attention, but my addiction didn't. That was

mostly my fault because I didn't want to admit to anyone that I was an addict. When I was discharged, they told me not to drink or smoke and to take my medicine. But it wasn't long before my addiction took over again.

This time I got high with a new purpose. It was to mask my shame of having a mental illness. It was something I just couldn't accept. I wanted to be in denial and the pot helped me accomplish that.

Around this time I attended a sort of self-help, life-improvement seminar. During that seminar, I admitted my fondness for having a beer with dinner every evening. The leader suggested that might be a problem if I couldn't resist it and it was suggested that I attend another 12 Step group. I went to a meeting, but after hearing the shares, I was sure I didn't have a drinking problem and my pot smoking problem just didn't seem to apply. If only I knew about MA then because I had an opening in my life to change for the better.

From there my life just drifted. I went off my medication (except pot) a couple times, worked a couple of different jobs, but basically had no ambition, no direction and no real belief in anything. Talk about a

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privately defined world. Years went by like that. Eventually my wife wanted to move to be near our first grandchild. I reluctantly agreed.

Change was not very good for either my wife or I. We were in a new place, didn't know anybody, and neither of us had a job. Yet even worse, I had no connection of my own. I had to rely on my son-in-law who soon found out what an addict I was. Eventually we found work just as our money ran out. It was great in the beginning, but eventually it became too stressful. I had another manic-depressive breakdown. Once again I was in a psychiatric hospital.

This time I was given a "dual-diagnosis." I wasn't just bi-polar. I had a real addiction that was finally being addressed and I had a real moment of clarity. I seized the moment and totally and willingly immersed myself in the hospital's program. It was there that I learned about MA. As a condition of discharge, I had to find and attend a 12 Step meeting. I got online and found the closest MA meeting -- a half hour drive away. No problem. I'd gone farther just to get a bag. This time my life was at stake.

Nervously, I drove to that first meeting. I had trouble finding it and almost gave up, but reminded myself that this was my moment to change and take my sobriety seriously. So I found the meeting. I embraced that meeting and it embraced me. I quickly took a commitment. I made a point to share, no matter how short. I surrendered to my Higher Power.

It's now three years later. I'm clean and sober. I'm religious with my medication and I have a sponsor. MA has given me a new way to be in life. My life has never been better. Thanks, MA and thank you to everyone in the fellowship.

by Layne F.

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around. But that's how it was, district-wide. I wanted chips and applause, so that was where my initial willingness to not drink a day at a time came from. Soon after, I drank because I was resentful that it had been suggested that I not drink. A moment of clarity came: if I'm drinking due to a resentment regarding a suggestion that's supposed to help my recovery, maybe I ought to look at my drinking. That's when surrender came: in order to fully recover from my addiction, I had to be willing to go to any lengths. When I think of my bottom - the feeling and vision of my brain melting in my head, my heart racing to the point where I felt it would burst in my chest, my face soaked with tears and my body twisted in a fetal position as I rocked it desperately in a futile effort to come down from pot, not for the first time, but for the last - thank God! - saying goodbye to alcohol also a day at a time - seems like a small price to pay. So, with my Higher Power's help, if I don't pick up any drug, including alcohol, I will celebrate my fourteenth anniversary in June.

Now there is a meeting where you can get chips just for clean time off pot. I'm glad when I came back, that wasn't an option. I needed to stop using all drugs in order to stop using marijuana, and alcohol is a drug. When I took that suggestion for ninety days, I really learned something about myself and my addiction. Only then did I become willing to get a sponsor and work the program. I took the cotton out of my ears and put it in my mouth to learn to listen and listen to learn. That listening, along with years of being a sponsor, has put me in contact with many people who smoked pot again, spiraling out of control because they used another substance first. In my case, I had

to stop using alcohol for a while to see how it actually was interfering with my recovery, but I cannot expect that to be everyone's experience. Today, I'm mostly happy, joyous and free, and am living a life of endless possibility.

For me, it is cut and dry: you can't be sober (from alcohol) and high (from drugs) at the same time, an AA slogan. There's no MA equivalent. Maybe there should be, since there is controversy right now in MA about what the word sobriety actually means and an effort to change its meaning. I am concerned that we want to do the work that's already in the dictionary. There, we find that definitions of "sober" apply solely to alcohol use, or non-use. Therefore, it seems that the term "sober" is of no use to MA at all when pertaining to abstinence from marijuana only. There are other definitions such as "clean" that make sense, such as "I'm clean from marijuana." To say "I'm sober from marijuana" makes no sense.

Whatever the outcome in addressing this issue, MA needs to be clear on what exactly we are talking about. This is not an issue of who in the fellowship chooses to use alcohol; the Third Tradition states the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana. The pamphlet "Dangers of Cross Addiction" addresses why it's important to consider taking further action to fully recover.

I've told you my story. Yours is yours, and if you are not smoking pot today, you are a miracle. For everyone to "keep coming back" we need clear language everyone can get on board with, but we don't need to change existing definitions. Our recovery just might depend on that.

-Missy F.

marijuana anonymous worldwide

MA World Services
 PO Box 7807 Torrance, CA90504 800.766.6779
 www.marijuana-anonymous.org
 email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

District 1 San Francisco

www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

District 2 East Bay

PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 510.287.8873

District 3 South SF Bay Area

PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

District 4 Western Washington

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

District 5 Orange County

1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 714.999.9409

District 6 LA County No.

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

District 7 LA County So.

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 323.943.9228

District 8 New York

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

District 10 LA County East

PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.583.9582

District 11 Portland

PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.221.7007

District 12 North Bay, CA

PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 707.583.2326

District 13 MA Online

www.ma-online.org

District 14 London, England

07940.503438

District 15 Long Island, NY

www.ma-longisland.org 631-647-0768

District 16 Melbourne, Australia

24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

District 17 Denmark

info@ma-kbh.dk

District 18 Sacramento, CA

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.

Tradition Six

MA groups ought never endorse, finance, or lend the MA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

How do you practice tolerance of other people?

(Please submit answers by July 17, 2013)

Birthdays

Celebrating 108 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that, a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

District 1

Chrysanthemum H. 5/5/01 12 yrs.
 Paul P. 4/16/97 16 yrs.
 Steve K. 3/12/07 6 yrs.

District 3

Davis 3/31/10 3 yrs

District 5

Erik 4/3/06 7 yrs.
 Jamie 4/26/11 2 yrs.
 Laura B. 4/21/04 9 yrs.
 Mary C. 5/10/10 3 yrs.
Matt W. 4/10/12 1 yr.
Paloma 4/8/12 1 yr.
 Reinhard 4/11/09 4 yrs.

District 6

Chuck R. 4/15/04 9 yrs.

District 7

Ryan W. 4/5/04 9 yrs.

District 8

Cassidy F. 3/23/12 1 yr.
 Suzanne R. 5/6/11 2 yrs.
 Ted K. 5/13/12 1 yr.

District 11

Jesse C. 4/21/08 5 yrs.
 Lael P. 5/5/08 5 yrs.
 Peggy F. 5/18/11 2 yrs.

District 15

Drew 5/4/10 3 yrs.
 Gary K. 5/26/11 2 yrs.
 Richard E. 4/12/08 5 yrs.

KEEP COMING BACK!

