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Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, Inc.

A Time of Tests

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MAPS HAS BEEN experiencing growing pains since the last newsletter was mailed to members. MAPS has been successful in enlarging its mem-

bership base, several research projects that MAPS is coordinating are coming to fruition, and the field of psychedelic research in general is experiencing a renaissance. The flow of mail, phone calls, and e-mail messages has increased (MAPS now has an internet address on America On Line: RICKMAPS@aol.com), as has the number of requests from the media for information (see article on drug trends in Newsweek, December 6, p. 62). MAPS' expanding opportunities and responsibilities have also coincided with a very personal and joyous but time-consuming series of celebrations, namely my marriage. ■ This MAPS newsletter is written almost entirely by myself, unlike the last issue which was more like a journal. MAPS has so many projects underway that I wanted to let you know about them in some detail. I should have more time to put out a lengthier newsletter with the next issue. Very fortunately, MAPS has recently obtained the part-time assistance of Sylvia Thyssen, a bilingual University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill liberal arts graduate (page 12). If contributions to MAPS are sufficient, it is our hope that Sylvia will be able to work full-time for MAPS in the not too distant future. ■ MAPS' growing pains are primarily a result of the recent developments in MDMA and marijuana research. After eight years of effort, FDA-approved Phase I human studies with MDMA are commencing at UCLA's Harbor Hospital under the direction of Dr. Charles Grob (page 2). MAPS recently donated \$2,700 to pay for high-tech brain scans for two of Dr. Grob's experimental subjects. Research into the use of MDMA in the treatment of pain and distress in cancer patients will follow after the Phase I study. ■ During the last several months, three additional MAPS-coordinated research projects have cleared most of the hurdles required prior to actual implementation. Dr. Donald Abrams' marijuana project exploring the use of smoked marijuana in the treatment of the HIV-related wasting syndrome has been approved by the FDA (page 5). The MAPS-California NORML project to investigate the effectiveness of water pipes in filtering marijuana smoke will begin in early 1994. The necessary \$28,800 has been obtained, due in part to the generous gift of \$18,000 from a MAPS member who gave \$14,000 and also bid \$2,000 each for the two original Doonesberry cartoon strips donated to MAPS by Garry Trudeau (page 10). An exciting new MDMA research project, not previously discussed in any MAPS newsletter, will explore the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of post-traumatic stress related to war trauma. This study will take place at the Military Hospital in Managua, Nicaragua. Permission for the study has been granted by the Nicaraguan Minister of Health (page 3). ■ After enormous and sustained effort by advocates, the FDA has approved Phase I human trials designed to explore the physiological and psychological effects of the African psychedelic root, ibogaine. Phase 2 trials examining the use of ibogaine in the treatment of cocaine addiction will follow (page 4). ■ Your previous support of MAPS has nurtured the infant field of psychedelic research. Your continued support will help enable the field to continue its long, slow walk toward scientific maturity and social sanction. ■ Rick Doblin, MAPS President