

MAPS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHEDELIC STUDIES

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LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

PSYCHEDELIC RESEARCH is slowly gathering momentum, emerging from a generation of hibernation into a cautious springtime of scientific activity. In keeping with the growth of research, this MAPS newsletter is the most ambitious and lengthiest ever published. It is designed primarily to inform you about scientific studies currently underway in the US and globally, and also offers perspectives on psychedelics, book reviews, notices about a new organization and upcoming conferences, an interview with Laura Huxley, letters from MAPS members, a special section on "Families Who Value Psychedelics", and requests for volunteers and funding for various studies. ■ Several of MAPS' projects are nearing completion of their protocol design phase and will be discussed in the next issue. These include Dr. Manuel Marin Madriz's study in Nicaragua investigating the use of MDMA in the treatment of patients suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Dr. Dietrich Hoffmann's study examining the constituents of marijuana smoke after it has been filtered by water pipes and vaporizers, and Dr. Donald Abrams' study exploring the use of smoked marijuana in the treatment of patients experiencing the HIV-related wasting syndrome. ■ MAPS is an educational as well as a scientific research organization. The newsletter is its primary vehicle to disseminate information. Almost 1500 people will receive this issue in the mail, more than ever before. Slightly over half of these are MAPS members. The rest are potential MAPS members, scientists, therapists, teachers, students, government officials, prisoners, patients, even people firmly convinced that psychedelic research should not be permitted to emerge from the scientific deep freeze. ■ As MAPS' President, it is my firm conviction that continued progress in the field of psychedelic research hinges upon developing relationships of understanding between proponents and researchers, regulators, skeptics and opponents. There is no stronger foundation upon which to build such relationships than on a policy of open information, freely shared. Full disclosure permits informed (though often contentious) debate around ideas, not just ideologies. ■ Disclosure about scientific studies is relatively easy, given that the FDA offers legal sanction for research. Though MAPS is focused on research into the use of psychedelics for medical and scientific purposes, it allows that persons other than the clinically ill may benefit from the use of psychedelics. Discussions about the value of psychedelics outside of clinical research studies are more difficult, especially within the punitive context of an international "War on Drugs." Relatively few people are aware that psychedelics have been valuable to many responsible and respected members of our society. In a recent telephone interview, Dr. Kary Mullis, the recipient of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Chemistry (and a new member of MAPS) remarked, "There are a lot of people, and I'm one, for whom psychedelics have been really beneficial. But I wouldn't recommend it to everyone. Some people are just not ready, but society would benefit from letting people who are ready for psychedelics have legal access to them." ■ With your support, MAPS can sponsor psychedelic research leading to socially approved contexts for the beneficial uses of psychedelics. In the short run, this issue is intended to provide you with intriguing reading well into the hot summer months. ■

Rick Doblin, MAPS President.

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