



MAPS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHEDELIC STUDIES

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Politics & Protocols:

**In Search of
a Balance**

THESE LAST several months, my work has focused more on the politics of research than on the research itself. I'm hoping that the balance will shift back toward research in the coming months. The political work has mostly been in support of Dr. Abrams' proposed study into the use of smoked marijuana in patients suffering from the HIV-related Wasting Syndrome (p. 11). The study is still not fully approved, though it is gathering momentum. The political and scientific issues are highlighted in an exchange of letters between myself and Robert Peterson, Michigan State Drug Czar (p. 44). ■ The marijuana smoke analysis study is further along. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has agreed to donate 250 grams of marijuana to the MAPS/California NORML water pipe/vaporizer study (p. 19). For a comprehensive overview of MAPS' strategy for evaluating marijuana's safety and efficacy in treating the AIDS Wasting Syndrome, see MAPS' Clinical Plan (p. 16). MAPS is also working with other organizations in support of National Medical Marijuana Day on November 15, 1994 (p. 24). ■ In the world of psychedelic research, the focus is decidedly on protocols, especially in Dr. Rick Strassman's clinic. Dr. Strassman's article describes the expansion of his DMT work, and his upcoming psilocybin project (p. 32). Laura Berg's article describes her work as a research nurse in Dr. Strassman's DMT studies (p. 34). Research nurses perform some of the most sensitive work in psychedelic research, but their voices are almost never heard. Not any longer! One component of the psilocybin research is Tamara Allen's Archetypal Art Therapy project, to which MAPS donated art supplies (p. 39). ■ Additional progress includes NIDA's plans to conduct a phase I safety study with ibogaine (p. 30). Psychedelic research has been approved in Germany, and is being proposed in Israel (p. 41). ■ In MDMA research, the MAPS-sponsored study by Nicaraguan psychiatrist Dr. Manuel Madriz Marin into the use of MDMA in the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is well into the protocol design phase (p. 26). In England, Nicholas Saunders investigated MDMA and the placebo effect (p. 28). In the U.S., the news from Dr. Charles Grob's MDMA research is music to the ears. On May 18, 1994, the first legal dose of MDMA in the United States in almost nine years was experienced by a subject in Dr. Grob's research (p. 25). ■ In a stroke of incredible good fortune, Dr. Grob received a substantial donation for MDMA research through a combination of high-tech wizardry and old-fashioned generosity. As part of MAPS' outreach efforts, Dr. Grob's article from the last MAPS newsletter was posted on the Internet (p. 8). Three days later, Dr. Grob received a call from someone at the LA airport who had seen the article. He had a few hours to spare between planes, and asked to visit. He took a cab to Dr. Grob's office, stayed about forty-five minutes and left a check for \$25,000. Then he flew home to Hong Kong. How about that for pennies from heaven! ■ Speaking of donations, this issue contains MAPS' annual report for FY 93-94, which officially ended May 31, 1994 (p. 4), MAPS' organizational strategy (p. 2), and letters from members (p.10). With your continued support, we *can* make a beneficial difference.

Rick Doblin, *MAPS President*