

Letter from Rick Doblin, MAPS President

DEATH HAS A WAY OF FOCUSING ONE'S ATTENTION on what is truly important. In symbolic form, the death/rebirth process is a frequent aspect of psychedelic psychotherapy, and the extent to which a patient is able to experience that process fully contributes substantially to therapeutic outcome.

THIS ISSUE of the MAPS Bulletin contains a posthumous tribute to a pioneering psychedelic researcher; Dr. Jan Bastiaans, a Dutch psychiatrist who explored the psychotherapeutic use of LSD in the treatment of concentration camp survivors suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (*p. 18*). We also mourn the loss of a psychedelic activist; Nicholas Saunders, MAPS' partner in England in the struggle to open the door to human clinical research into the benefits and risks of MDMA (*p.61*). Nicholas died in an automobile accident while in South Africa conducting research on iboga for a book he was writing about the religious use of psychedelics.

IN A DREAM shortly after I learned about Nicholas' accident, I found myself speaking about him with an old friend of mine. We used a curious phrase, noting that Nicholas was "cracking paradise," perhaps both simultaneously cracking out of and into paradise. We remarked that his death had shattered his creation of a form of paradise on earth—right before his death he was by all accounts happier than he had ever been in his life. We then speculated on the possibility that his death may have also catapulted him into some mythical paradise in heaven. We decided that his life had prepared him well for the uncertainties of death. Though not a saint, Nicholas seemed worthy of heavenly paradise, if it exists, as result of his kindness and generosity.

UPON AWAKENING, I imagined that if Nicholas had known ahead of time when he was going to die, he probably wouldn't have changed anything about his last years. After some self-reflection, I reconfirmed that working with MAPS, despite its frustrations and however limited the accomplishments, is a direct expression of how I want to live my life. I am deeply grateful to all MAPS members who have enabled me to do work I love.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT that progress is being made on several research projects that MAPS, the Heffter Research Institute (*p.42*) and the Albert Hofmann Foundation (*p.43*) are working to support. The FDA is reviewing the research protocol submitted by Dr. Charles Grob, Harbor-UCLA Medical School, designed to evaluate the use of MDMA in the treatment of emotional distress and physical pain in end-stage cancer patients. Dr. Donald Abrams' historic study of the effects of smoked marijuana on HIV patients is about to begin at UC San Francisco. Dr. Evgeny Krupitsky's study of the use of ketamine in the treatment of heroin addicts is on-going at the Leningrad Regional Center for Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Therapy. Data analysis is well underway in the long-term follow-up study of 40 subjects who volunteered to take LSD in the phenomenological research conducted by Dr. Oscar Janiger from 1954-1962.

MAPS HAS ALSO BEGUN TO COLLABORATE with the organizers of a small upcoming gathering of Psychedelic Elders at a meeting planned for the fall and sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Sciences and the Fetzer Foundation. The project is designed to record for posterity the elders' reflections on the impact that their use of psychedelics has made on their personal spiritual development. All these projects seek to demonstrate that psychedelics or marijuana can, when used skillfully, enhance life.

BEST WISHES
TO ALL for another Spring and another crack at paradise. – Rick Doblin, MAPS President