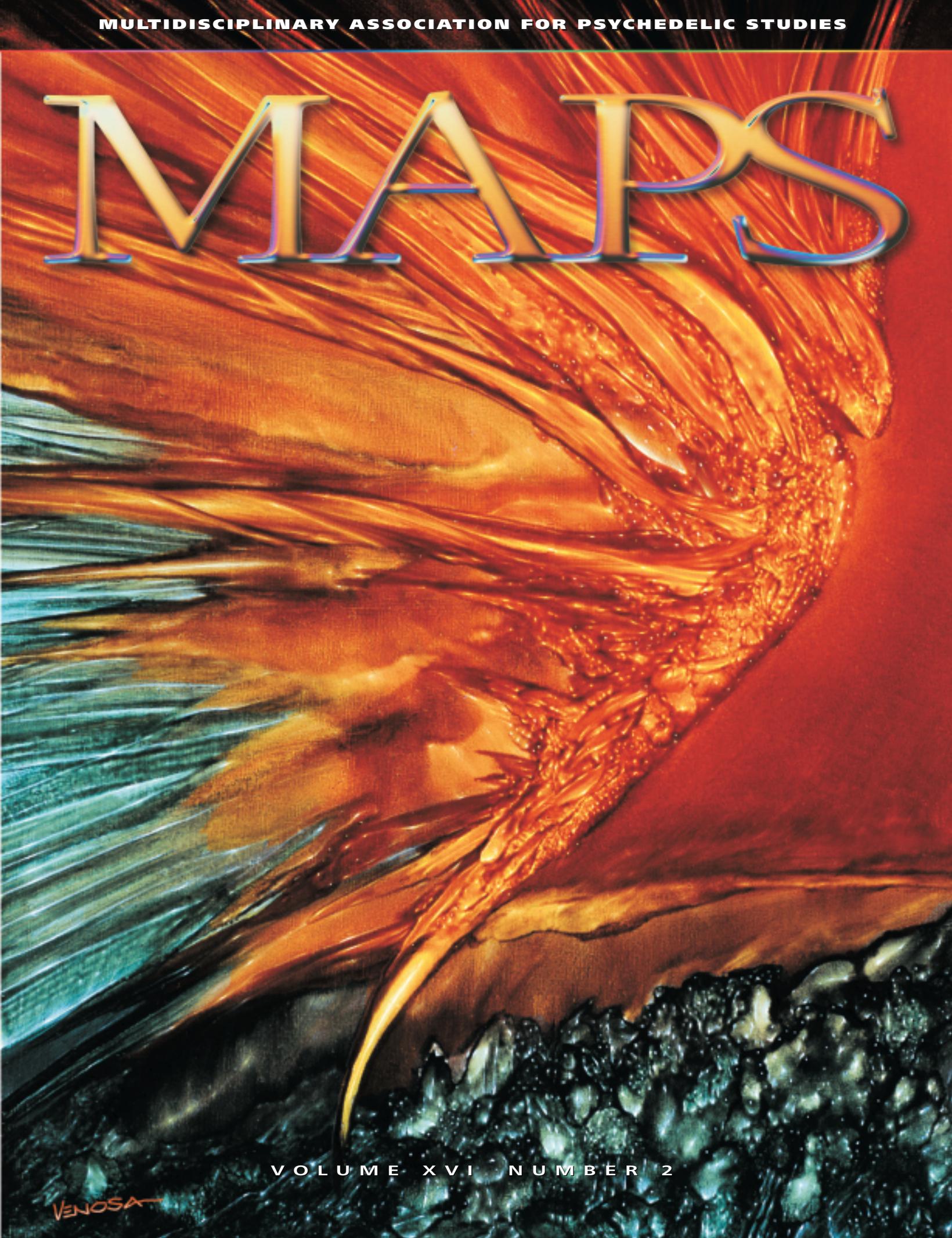


# MAPS



VOLUME XVI NUMBER 2

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**MAPS** (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies) is a membership-based organization working to assist researchers worldwide to design, fund, conduct, obtain governmental approval for, and report on psychedelic research in humans. Founded in 1986, **MAPS** is an IRS approved 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation funded by tax deductible donations. MAPS is focused primarily on assisting scientists to conduct human studies to generate essential information about the risks and psychotherapeutic benefits of MDMA, other psychedelics, and marijuana, **with the goal of eventually gaining government approval for their medical uses.** Interested parties wishing to copy any portion of this publication are encouraged to do so and are kindly requested to credit MAPS and include our address. The *MAPS Bulletin* is produced by a small group of dedicated staff and volunteers. **Your participation,** financial or otherwise, **is welcome.**

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(facing page)

### Ram Dass

This Limited Edition Print of Ram Dass (aka Richard Alpert) is the fourth print by Dean Chamberlain in a special signed and numbered limited edition selected from Dean Chamberlain's **Psychedelic Pioneers Series.** Fifty percent of the profits from the sale of these prints will go toward **MAPS-sponsored LSD research** (see page 10).

There are only 50 of these beautiful archival pigment prints. The image is 11"x14" and is printed on archival quality matte paper. Prints numbered 1-10 are \$1000, prints numbered 11-40 are \$1500, and prints numbered 41-50 are \$2000. Visit [www.maps.org/catalog](http://www.maps.org/catalog) for additional purchase information.

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## Letter from Rick Doblin, MAPS President

**T**HE VITAL IMPORTANCE of research into technologies of healing and peace is never more painfully apparent than in the midst of war. On August 3, 2006, on the same day that more than 230 rockets rained into northern Israel over the Lebanese border in one of the heaviest barrages of Hezbollah rocket fire in the recent war, a small package from Switzerland, ordered and paid for by MAPS, arrived safely and legally in Tel Aviv, Israel. Inside the package was close to five grams of pharmaceutical-grade MDMA. With the arrival of this MDMA, the final piece of the puzzle was put into place for our MAPS-sponsored Israeli pilot study investigating the safety and efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in subjects with war- and terrorism-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This study is now set to begin, just as a tragically large number of Israelis and Lebanese have been freshly traumatized by yet another war. The technologies of war continue to advance, yet, more slowly and quietly, technologies of healing and peace are also progressing.

AT A RECENT CONFERENCE in Tel-Aviv, sponsored by the Israeli Anti-Drug Authority, one of the speakers noted that about 20 million doses of MDMA are smuggled into Israel each year, and “every one is a hand grenade.” The emotionally inflamed rhetoric of the War on Drugs, so often used to generate the fear required to justify the harshness of prohibition, is so clearly hollow when viewed through the lens of actual war.

THE POTENTIAL of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy to become an accepted and widely-used technology of healing is becoming more realistic, as evidenced by Dr. Michael Mithoefer’s latest update on his US MDMA/ PTSD study (page 6), Dr. Peter Oehen’s report on the imminent initiation of his Swiss MDMA/PTSD study (page 9), and MAPS Clinical Research Associate Valerie Mojeiko’s report on the Israeli MDMA/PTSD study (page 8). Furthermore, the recent donation to MAPS of \$250,000 by philanthropist Peter Lewis for these three pilot studies guarantees their implementation, which we expect will take the next two years. Then we will be in a position to review data and decide whether it makes scientific and financial sense to initiate the multi-site Phase 3 studies required to obtain permission from the FDA and the European Medicines Agency for the prescription use of MDMA.

MAPS’ OVERALL STRATEGY to develop psychedelics into prescription medicines also involves studies exploring the use of psychedelics in treating anxiety associated

with end-of-life issues. By demonstrating the value of psychedelics for a use that almost everyone is concerned about, to help ease the emotional and physical pain of dying, MAPS hopes to show that psychedelic psychotherapy offers potential benefits to people who would otherwise never consider taking such drugs.

MAPS IS WORKING with Swiss psychiatrist Peter Gasser, M.D., on the design and approval process for a MAPS-sponsored study exploring the use of LSD-assisted psychotherapy in people with anxiety dealing with end-of-life issues from cancer as well as other causes (page 10). Once approved, this study will become the first government-approved LSD psychotherapy research in over 35 years. This study will complement research by John Halpern, M.D., investigating MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in advanced-stage cancer patients (for which MAPS coordinated the design and approval process and which Peter Lewis is personally sponsoring) as well as Dr. Charles Grob’s ongoing Heffter Research Institute-sponsored study of psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy in advanced-stage cancer patients. Dr. Carl Hammerschlag’s case report describing the use of ketamine-assisted psychotherapy with a terminally ill patient (page 11) lends further support to the potential of psychedelics as tools to assist in the dying process, and suggests yet another promising area of research. As part of our educational mission, MAPS is proud to have just published Dr. Stanislav Grof’s new book, *The Ultimate Journey: Consciousness and the Mystery of Death*, based in part on his LSD research with cancer patients.

MAPS’ EFFORTS to develop marijuana into an FDA-approved prescription medicine are also moving forward. Our lawsuit against the DEA for refusing to issue a license for a MAPS-sponsored marijuana production facility is approaching its climactic moment: the recommendation of the Administrative Law Judge to the Administrator of the DEA (page 3). We’re preparing for the possibility that the recommendation will be favorable.

AT TWENTY YEARS OLD, MAPS is going through an exciting yet challenging growth phase. At this time of celebration and reflection, culminating in our 20th anniversary gathering at Burning Man, I’m deeply grateful for the partnership of MAPS members and staff, which has made this all possible. Working together, we can accomplish even the seemingly impossible—the end of the Drug War and the legalization of psychedelic technologies of peace and healing.



Rick Doblin, Ph.D., MAPS President

## Waiting But Not Idly:

### **An Update on Progress Toward Prof. Lyle Craker's MAPS-Sponsored Medical Marijuana Production Facility**

Kelly Burns  
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MAPS has joined forces with MMPAP, a coalition of medical marijuana advocates who are working toward getting support from the American Medical Association for more reasonable medical marijuana policy.



ARE NOW STARTING the sixth year of MAPS' efforts to sponsor a privately-funded facility to produce marijuana for FDA and DEA-approved research. When we wrote about University of Massachusetts-Amherst Prof. Lyle Craker's lawsuit against the DEA in the Spring 2006 MAPS Bulletin\*, lawyers for both sides were working on the final legal briefings for this case. Both MAPS and the DEA filed final briefs to DEA Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Mary Ellen Bittner on May 8, 2006.

Prof. Craker, Director the Medicinal Plant Program in the Dept. of Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences at UMass-Amherst, MAPS staff, and medical marijuana advocates and patients throughout the country are now eagerly awaiting a decision that will tell us a lot about the course of medical marijuana reforms over the next few years. Waiting and preparing, that is, because even if Prof. Craker receives a favorable recommendation, there's much more work to be done to ensure that Prof. Craker's facility becomes a reality, since DEA Administrator Karen Tandy can either accept or reject ALJ Bittner's recommendation.

For researchers seeking to perform FDA-approved clinical studies with most Schedule I substances, it is a relatively simple matter to obtain a license from the DEA to possess the actual research material, once the security of their laboratories has been demonstrated. Not so with marijuana. Marijuana alone is subject to a monopoly controlled by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a government agency whose mission is certainly *not* to examine the beneficial uses of controlled substances. Further,

Prof. Mahmoud El Sohly of the University of Mississippi, NIDA's producer of marijuana, has a personal financial interest that conflicts with smoked marijuana becoming a prescription medicine. Prof. El Sohly personally has patents on a marijuana suppository delivery system, and he has a DEA license to grow marijuana for his own private gain in order to supply THC extract under contract to a pharmaceutical company that produces generic Marinol. Both of these products would face direct competition from prescription marijuana, either smoked or vaporized.

The results of these several levels of conflict of interest are as one might imagine: NIDA's marijuana supply is of the low quality that befits NIDA's agenda to research the harms of marijuana, and, more importantly, NIDA's lack of competition produces arbitrary and total control over the supply. As a result, NIDA has been able to halt MAPS' medical marijuana research program for the last decade by refusing to sell marijuana to several of MAPS' FDA-approved studies. NIDA has even refused to sell 10 grams of marijuana for a MAPS-sponsored laboratory study of the chemical composition of marijuana

A private facility would create the possibility for MAPS to initiate its medical marijuana drug development clinical trials to evaluate whether marijuana can become an FDA-approved medicine.

vapors produced by the Volcano vaporizer, a non-smoking delivery system that successfully addresses FDA concerns about the inhalation of marijuana smoke.

MAPS and Prof. Craker are seeking to break this monopoly by opening a MAPS-funded production facility run by Prof. Craker. This facility would provide marijuana for all of MAPS' FDA-approved protocols and would spur additional new research, as the threat of a years-long bureaucratic nightmare is removed from MAPS' research-planning picture. More importantly, a private facility would create the possibility for MAPS to initiate its medical marijuana drug development clinical trials to evaluate whether marijuana can become an FDA-approved medicine. Clinical trials of a plant-based medicine must take place using the same strain of plant material that a drug developer plans to market, since the effects and side effects of another strain with different chemical concentrations could vary. No rational drug developer would invest millions of dollars in researching a low-potency, low-quality strain that is controlled by NIDA, a government body that could withdraw or refuse permission to use the strain at will, and that in any event is not permitted to be the supplier of marijuana for prescription medicine distribution, leaving the sponsor with the need to negotiate with Prof. El Sohly despite his major conflicts of interest. As one of our fellow medical cannabis advocates recently noted, this is like Pfizer spending millions of dollars researching a new pill that Merck owns the rights to, which would clearly be a foolish investment.

MAPS' final brief to the court, prepared by lawyers Julie Carpenter (Jenner & Block, LLP), Allen Hopper (ACLU Drug

Law Reform Project), and Emanuel Jacobowitz (Steptoe & Johnson, LLP) highlighted these and other arguments, and can be found with other information related the case at <http://www.maps.org/mmj/DEAlawsuit.html>. The DEA's reply brief, also filed on May 8, was rather empty of analysis and legal arguments and was padded, like a weak high school term paper, with a long reiteration of the contents of the testimony of each witness. Unfortunately but unsurprisingly, DEA lawyers resorted to *ad hominem* attacks on Rick Doblin for his personal marijuana use, despite the fact that he would never have access to any of the marijuana in Prof. Craker's facility. Since Rick had never sampled NIDA's supply of marijuana he had therefore not "diverted" legal marijuana to non-medical purposes. The DEA's brief can also be viewed on the MAPS website.

The final recommendation from ALJ Bittner is expected approximately four to six months after the brief filing date, which would be sometime between September and November. We've been spending these months preparing actively for the recommendation, because—unlike a decision in state or federal court—the DEA is not obligated to follow a recommendation from its own administrative law court. For comparison, some of you may be surprised to learn that DEA ALJs have *already* recommended rescheduling both marijuana and MDMA, and it is obvious how far that did not go!

With this historical trend in mind, the MAPS staff has been working hard to gather support from a broad range of individuals and organizations to put political pressure on the DEA to issue the license should Judge Bittner recommend

that course of action. Our supporters include 38 members of Congress, Senators Kennedy and Kerry of Massachusetts, the state medical associations of California and Texas, the state nurses associations of New Mexico, North Carolina, and Wisconsin, the Lymphoma Foundation of America, the National Association for Public Health Policy, the United Methodist Church, the Drugs and the Law Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Grover Norquist, president of the conservative organization Americans for Tax Reform, and several other notable organizations. Efforts are continuing to get support letters from other organizations such as the American Nurses Association and the American Cancer Society.

MAPS has also just joined forces with the Medical Marijuana Policy Advocacy Project (MMPAP), a coalition of medical marijuana advocates who are working toward getting support from the American Medical Association (AMA) for more reasonable medical marijuana policy. The AMA House of Delegates already has a very positive resolution calling for further research into the use of marijuana as medicine\*\*. MMPAP is working to find state delegations of the AMA who will help us propose a new resolution at the November House of Delegates meeting, calling for support for private production facilities like Prof. Craker's. The proposed resolution also supports protecting patients in medical marijuana states from criminal prosecution, in hopes that AMA support will assist the passage in Congress of the Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment, which aims to codify such patient protection into federal law. The passage of our AMA resolution depends on support from

state medical associations, so if you have or know of good connections with any state medical associations, particularly in states that have medical marijuana laws, please contact me at kelly426@gmail.com.

We are hopeful that Judge Bittner will issue a favorable recommendation, and that the broad base of support that we have collected will convince the DEA to follow that recommendation. If the DEA does not follow a favorable recommendation, we can still pursue the case in federal court, arguing that the DEA's reasons for not following the recommendation are flawed. More litigation would delay Prof. Craker's facility from opening for many more years, so this is certainly not our desired outcome. However, if the DEA does fail to follow a favorable recommendation, or for that matter if the recommendation is unfavorable, it will only boost the efforts to pass state medical marijuana initiatives by providing even stronger evidence that the federal process for making marijuana into a medicine is blocked. What happens over the next few months in Prof. Craker's case will be a decisive factor in what sorts of medical marijuana reform efforts we see in the future, nationwide. We hope we'll have some good news for you on this front in an upcoming monthly email update and in the next *MAPS Bulletin!* •

Since Rick had never sampled NIDA's supply of marijuana, he had therefore not "diverted" legal marijuana to non-medical purposes.

\* See Spring 2006 article at [http://www.maps.org/news-letters/v15n4-html/dea\\_case.html](http://www.maps.org/news-letters/v15n4-html/dea_case.html)

\*\* See [http://www.amaassn.org/apps/pf\\_new\\_pf\\_online?f\\_n=browse&doc=policyfiles/HnE/H-95.952.HTM](http://www.amaassn.org/apps/pf_new_pf_online?f_n=browse&doc=policyfiles/HnE/H-95.952.HTM)

# MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy in the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Eighth Update on Study Progress

Charleston, SC; USA



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Our preliminary clinical impression is that the supplemental dose extends the period during which the most intense emotional processing occurs.

SINCE MY LAST UPDATE both the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and our Institutional Review Board (IRB) have given us approval to make two significant protocol changes:

1) To add a supplemental dose of 62.5 mg of MDMA (or placebo) two to two- and-a-half hours after the initial dose of 125 mg. 2) To add a third MDMA-assisted psychotherapy session both for subjects who receive MDMA in the first two experimental sessions and for subjects who initially receive placebo and then go on to participate in the open-label MDMA portion of the protocol.

Thus far three subjects have received the supplemental dose of MDMA or placebo on a total of 6 occasions and one subject has had a third MDMA-assisted "experimental session" in the open label stage. Our preliminary clinical impression is that the supplemental dose is useful. It does not appear to change the intensity of the experience, but it does extend the period during which the most intense emotional processing occurs. There have been no problems associated with the supplemental dose. In one case the blood pressure and pulse did go higher than they had before the supplemental dose, but did not reach dangerous levels or require treatment. It is also our impression that the third MDMA session may provide additional benefit, though we do not yet have formal outcome data following this session.

The overall progress of the study is as follows:

- Fifteen subjects have been enrolled, one has dropped out, twelve have completed the original double blind protocol and two are currently enrolled.

- After receiving placebo in the first stage, four subjects have gone on to the open-label stage (which includes two or three MDMA-assisted psychotherapy sessions along with additional non-drug follow-up psychotherapy sessions). Three have completed this stage and the third recently underwent the third experimental session but has not yet completed the follow-up sessions and final symptom measures.

- We have completed telephone screening on 99 potential subjects.
- One potential new subject has passed formal screening and two others are scheduled to have it.

Recruitment has still been somewhat slow and our recent limited newspaper advertising was not effective in changing that. Nevertheless, we are slowly continuing to recruit people with crime-related PTSD, and anticipate being able to find the remaining five subjects we need within the next six months. However, we would like to recruit some veterans with war-related PTSD of less than five years duration. We are pursuing some possible referral sources at VA hospitals and we

now have permission from the IRB to post an advertisement on websites that serve veterans.

We are currently working on a request to the IRB to conduct long-term follow up of our subjects. We plan to repeat symptom measures as well as a more general questionnaire six months or more after completion of the present protocol. In the case of our earliest subjects the follow-up will occur more than two years from the study sessions. Along with this added protocol request we will seek to clarify the IRB's media policy regarding our study.

Another important event since my last update was a visit from Drs. Rael Strous and Rakefet Rodriguez, two of the Israeli psychiatrists who have permission for and are on the verge of starting a MAPS-sponsored study very similar to ours investigating MDMA-assisted therapy for war- and terrorism-related PTSD. Annie and I really enjoyed the chance to show them our approach to working with subjects and to learn from their insights and ideas. Now, of course, the sad reality is that their work to find better treatments for PTSD is even more urgently needed in Israel and the whole region. •



...we would like to recruit some veterans  
with war-related PTSD of less than  
five years duration.

Illustration: James Montgomery Flagg. Lithograph, 1917. American Treasures of the Library of Congress.

## MAPS Prepares to Launch MDMA/PTSD Study in Israel



Valerie Mojeiko  
Clinical Research Associate,  
MAPS

This visit helped MAPS clarify and develop a standardized protocol as we prepare for larger multi-site studies with MDMA.

On Thursday, August 3rd, in the midst of war, about 5 grams of MDMA arrived in Israel for MAPS' MDMA/PTSD study, imported into Israel from Switzerland. The MAPS-sponsored MDMA/PTSD pilot study is being directed by Moshe Kotler, M.D., with Rael Strous, M.D., and Rakefet Rodriguez, M.D., working as the male/female co-therapist team. This study has full government approval and will be initiated this fall.

At the time of this writing, Dr. Rodriguez is planning to take a break from the therapy work she is doing in the north of Israel with traumatized civilians and soldiers to join MAPS at Burning Man this August.

While joining us to celebrate MAPS' 20th anniversary, she will work at Sanctuary, where we assist the Rangers to care for people going through difficult emotional experiences, some psychedelic-related and some not. The Sanctuary project at Burning Man serves as a training program for MAPS' psychedelic therapists, a rare opportunity for researchers to spend time working alongside each other with people who are in a psychedelic-induced state.

Last May, both Israeli co-therapists traveled to the U.S. to observe a treatment session and receive training from Michael Mithoefer, M.D., and his wife Annie in Charleston, South Carolina. This visit not only informed the Israeli doctors about MAPS' therapeutic protocol, but also helped MAPS clarify and develop a standardized protocol as we prepare for larger multi-site studies with MDMA. As MAPS research liaison, I also had the pleasure of attending this very important meeting and I must say that Dr. Strous and Dr. Rodriguez make a very dynamic co-therapist team.

The Israeli study will feature supplemental dosing halfway through each of the MDMA-assisted psychotherapy

sessions, and will use an active placebo of low-dose MDMA. This will make it more difficult for the therapist and subject to be able to tell whether the subject received an active dose of MDMA or not, increasing the success of the double-blind measure. In this study, the researchers will also collect long-term follow-up data for one year after the second experimental session. The study in Israel also tests the efficacy of using slightly less staff time, since only one therapist is present during some of the non-drug therapy sessions, rather than both therapists. Both therapists are present during all of the experimental sessions where MDMA is administered, as well as during some of the non-drug therapy sessions.

This study, although conducted in Israel, will be submitted to FDA under MAPS' Investigational New Drug (IND) application for MDMA in the treatment of PTSD and therefore fits into MAPS' mission of developing MDMA as a prescription medicine approved by both the FDA and the European Medicines Agency. With government-approved research projects on three continents, MAPS is truly becoming a global organization!•

## MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy Pilot Study in Switzerland: On the Verge of Initiation



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We hope that  
this additional  
neurophysiologic  
data will document  
the efficacy of  
MDMA-assisted  
psychotherapy.

On June 14, 2006, the Swiss MAPS-sponsored MDMA/PTSD pilot study passed its final major regulatory hurdle: licensing from BAG (*Bundesamt für Gesundheit*, the Swiss equivalent to DEA). The license is necessary for myself, the Principal Investigator, to administer MDMA, a Schedule I drug. It is also required for the manufacturer to be able to handle the substance, conduct quality analysis, and encapsulate and randomize the MDMA. Furthermore, the license was necessary to export MDMA from the same batch for the MAPS-sponsored Israeli MDMA/PTSD study in Tel Aviv. In early August, the MDMA was successfully exported to Israel after the Swiss export permit and the Israeli import permit were approved.

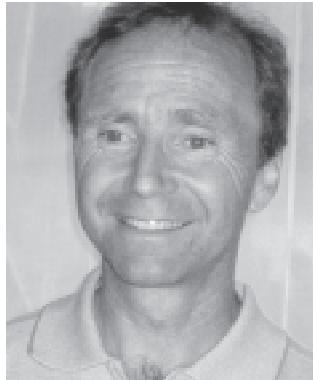
In a recent development, we are now also planning to collaborate with the Psychiatric University Hospital in Zürich. Prospective subjects will be asked to participate in the ongoing study "Psychophysiology of PTSD: A Comprehensive Parameter Study," conducted by Franz Vollenweider, M.D., a renowned MDMA researcher. Prevailing evidence suggests that PTSD patients suffer from deficits in early information processing, such as deficits in "gating," or filtering, internal and external sensory stimuli. Two experimental paradigms designed to assess gating are pre-pulse inhibition (PPI) of the acoustic startle response and suppression of the P50 event-related potential. The neurophysiological correlates of PPI and P50 suppression, as well as the interdependency of these gating measures, will be explored using electroencephalographic (EEG) measures in combination with ERP (evoked response potential) technique. These neurophysiologic parameters will be measured in a novel combination before and after the MDMA-assisted psychotherapy. This will allow the researchers to locate and map the corresponding areas of the brain more

precisely than was possible before. We also hope that this additional neurophysiologic data will document the efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy. The amendment of our protocol is currently awaiting approval from an Ethics Committee, the Swiss IRB equivalent.

Since the protocol is being amended, recruitment of the first patient—who is already waiting to enter the screening process—will be delayed for several weeks. At the time of this writing, we are planning to initiate the study in September 2006.

From the moment my wife Verena Widmer and I first met with Rick Doblin, Ph.D., and Michael Mithoefer, M.D., in April 2005 to discuss the possibility of a Swiss MDMA study, it has taken less than a year and a half to develop the protocol and guide it through the scientific and governmental approval process. Considering the controversial nature of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy research, this relatively rapid pace has only been possible with MAPS' know-how, and the support and advice I have received from the medical and scientific community here in Switzerland. •

## Planning LSD Research in Switzerland



Peter Gasser, M.D.

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Research from the 1950s and 60s provides encouraging evidence that the spiritual experiences and deep insights that LSD facilitates can be great help when one is confronted with one's own imminent death.

**A** FEW DAYS BEFORE the wonderful international symposium on the occasion of Albert Hofmann's 100th birthday, "LSD: Problem Child and Wonder Drug," I had the opportunity to go on a walk in the snowy Jura mountains with MAPS President Rick Doblin, Ph.D. As we walked and talked, we discussed the possibility of re-starting LSD-assisted psychotherapy research, and decided that this year is the right time.

A few months later, we are now in the protocol design stage for a double-blind placebo-controlled pilot study with 12 subjects. Along the same lines as Charles Grob's, M.D., psilocybin/cancer anxiety study and John Halpern's, M.D., MDMA/cancer anxiety study, this study will investigate LSD-assisted psychotherapy as a potential treatment for subjects who suffer from anxiety related to advanced stage cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Research from the 1950s and 60s provides encouraging evidence that the spiritual experiences and deep insights that LSD facilitates can be great help when one is confronted with one's own imminent death. For this study, we seek to empirically examine the potential of LSD-assisted psychotherapy to relieve anxiety and improve the quality of life for these subjects. We also want to evaluate whether LSD-assisted psychotherapy is a safe and reliable treatment, so that if the results are promising, the data from this study can be used to develop LSD into a legal prescription medicine.

The tentative plan is for a double-blind, placebo-controlled pilot study, in which the experimental group of eight subjects will be administered 250mcg. LSD and the control group of four subjects will receive a low dose/placebo of 25mcg. LSD. The tentative plan is for an open-label, double-blind study, in which one control group will be administered 200mcg. LSD and the other will receive a placebo of 25mcg. LSD. The subjects will undergo two or three sessions of LSD-assisted

psychotherapy, in addition to eight conventional non-drug psychotherapy sessions for preparation and integration of the experiences. After their final follow-up evaluation, subjects who receive placebo will have the opportunity to participate in an open-label Stage 2 in which they would receive two LSD-assisted psychotherapy sessions and associated non-drug psychotherapy sessions for preparation and integration.

There has been no legal LSD psychotherapy in Switzerland in over a dozen years. Suddenly, it seems that the ice age is over, now that Peter Oehen, M.D., has received full government approval for a MAPS-sponsored study in Switzerland investigating MDMA-assisted psychotherapy as a treatment for subjects suffering from chronic posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Following the LSD symposium in Basel, the organizers of the event sent an appeal—signed by all of the speakers from the conference—to the political authorities in Europe and the US, urging them to facilitate scientific investigation into the medicinal and therapeutic potentials of LSD and other psychedelic drugs. The Secretary of the Swiss Health Department replied to this appeal by writing that the Swiss authorities will give permission for LSD research if ethical and scientific requirements are fulfilled.

MAPS has pledged to donate \$50,000 for this study, which MAPS has already raised from the sale of art and books signed by Albert Hofmann. MAPS is also in the process of seeking to raise an additional \$100,000 for this study; please contact MAPS if you are interested in donating. Rick Doblin was enthusiastic enough to state that we will have government approval for this study by Albert Hofmann's 101st birthday in January 2007. I am happy to be infected by his enthusiasm. Once approved, this study will be the first LSD psychotherapy research to take place in about 35 years!•

## Seeing in the Dying Light: A Ketamine Case Study

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**Editor's note:** Just before this *Bulletin* went to print, National Institute of Mental Health-sponsored researchers published a study in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* finding that ketamine shows breakthrough potential as a treatment for major refractory depression. In this upcoming article, Dr. Hammerschlag describes a case study in which he utilized ketamine-assisted psychotherapy to help a patient work through difficult psychological material associated with advanced-stage cancer. MAPS will be exploring options for a ketamine/end-of-life pilot study, similar in design to three other studies in patients with anxiety associated with end-of-life issues: Dr. Peter Gasser's MAPS-sponsored study evaluating LSD-assisted psychotherapy, Dr. John Halpern's MAPS-initiated study evaluating MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, and Dr. Charles Grob's Heffter-sponsored research investigating psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy. All this research may eventually lead to FDA approval of psychedelic psychotherapy in general for anxiety associated with end-of-life issues, with therapists and patients able to choose between different substances at different stages of the psychotherapeutic process.



KETAMINE is a pre-anesthetic adjunct first manufactured in 1965. A Schedule

III drug, ketamine has accepted medical uses and can be prescribed by physicians, dentists and veterinarians. It is a short-acting dissociative with some psychedelic-like characteristics. Ketamine poses minimal risk of cardiac and respiratory complications, although, unlike other psychedelics, it can lead to physical dependency if used regularly.

Ketamine induces a dissociative state that causes subjects to lose track of time and place, and to detach from awareness of external stimuli, including pain. Professionals in the treatment of alcoholism, anxiety disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have effectively used ketamine-assisted psychotherapy to treat patients. Before treating Steve, the patient described in this case report, I had never used ketamine-assisted therapy in my practice.

Steve was 64 years old when I first met him in October, 2004. Ten years earlier, he had been diagnosed with non-alcohol related cirrhosis. In early 2000 he was diagnosed with liver cancer, and two years later he learned that he had metastatic disease to the bone. At that point, his doctors told him that he had about 6-9 months to live. He had been treated by chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, but his cancer continued to progress. By the time I saw him, he was no longer eligible for a liver transplant.

However, Steve was unwilling to give up the idea that he could heal himself. He was searching for healing methods and not preparing for death. Steve believed that he had been a shaman in a previous life, and wanted to regress back in time to speak with his previous incarnation. Steve believed that, by accessing this ancient knowledge, he could learn to heal himself. To this end, he wanted to take peyote in a Native American healing ceremony, hoping that it would facilitate his vision.

Steve first contacted me at the recommendation of a friend, since I have experience in the sacramental use of peyote in Native American ceremonies. During this initial meeting I advised Steve

to consider alternatives because peyote is irritating to the G.I. tract, and not dose-specific. Peyote use often causes vomiting, and if Steve vomited, he could bleed internally, which had already happened to him once. Steve and I talked and discussed alternatives that might be helpful, like hypnotherapy and past-life regression.

Steve and I had quite a bit in common and resonated with one another. We were both originally from New York City and had graduated from city high schools and colleges. Steve went on to law school, and became a distinguished attorney and later a federal judge. He had been married and divorced, with two grown children to whom he was close. Angry with doctors, he held them responsible for failing to diagnose sooner the extent of his metastatic disease. If they had found it earlier, he would have been eligible for a transplant. Despite his limited options, though, Steve was not ready to die.

Steve was rational, without evidence of thought disorder; moreover, he was an intelligent critical thinker with a quick wit. He described his spiritual life as ethnically Jewish, by which he meant he liked pastrami on rye and matzoh ball soup, but that he had no personal relation-

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ship with God, or any interest in developing one.

After our initial visit, Steve decided to explore hypnotherapy. During his second visit, he proved to be an easily inducible subject and was able to regress in time to Neanderthal days. At one point, Steve described seeing cavemen from afar, but felt reluctant to join them. I told him to open his hands, put them in front of himself, and approach them. He did so, and they made room around the fire. He sat down cross-legged in the circle but understood nothing they were saying. He did not speak to a shaman and was unable to go back any further in time.

When we talked about it later, he said he would love to go deeper into trance and asked if I could intensify the hypnotic experience. That's when I told him about ketamine-assisted therapy, and explained that ketamine could be legally prescribed and had been used clinically in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and chronic alcoholism. Used in controlled conditions, there is strong supporting evidence that it can be helpful in making healthful changes, since it activates a portion of the brain that makes it possible to move beyond ordinary conceptions of time and space. I told Steve that I had not yet used it in my clinical practice but was willing to try, if he wanted. I told him to review the literature and talk about it with his children. By the next visit, he had done his homework and had decided to try it.

Steve had experimented with psychedelics in the 1960s and wasn't frightened at the prospect of working with them in a controlled setting. He only wanted to be sure that I would stay with him during the experience, and I told him that I wouldn't leave him and would be totally involved. I wanted to speak to his children, so I met with his son, who happened to be a local physician, and he told me that both he and his sister were fine with whatever their father wanted to do. He added that it didn't surprise him at all, and that he would provide the syringes and needles to cut his father's expenses.

#### **Ketamine session 1: October 21, 2004**

For the first session, Steve brought along some crystals and stones from sacred

Mayan sites in the Yucatán. I told him to place them wherever he wanted, and lit the oil-lamp on my coffee table and some fragrant sage. I explained to him that we were preparing the space to receive the healing energy that will flow once the ketamine is administered.

Once these preparations were completed, I gave him a small dose (25 mg.) intramuscularly, to test his tolerance. Within three minutes, he described a warm tingling in his ears, which then spread to his face and lips. He appeared very comfortable and then described a sense of overwhelming peace and well-being. "It's like an endless orgasm," he exclaimed.

During guided visualization, Steve returned to the same Neanderthal cave. This time, when he approached the group, they recognized him and made room for him around the fire. He could not understand a word. Looking around he saw that the cave walls were covered with beautiful artwork. He saw handprints on the wall and got up to touch them. Watching him, a Neanderthal came over and put his hand on the wall and showed Steve how to make his hand print by spitting a chalky liquid over his hand. Steve put his hand on the cave wall and did the same. When he removed his hand he said, "Only this piece of me stays here."

Later, when I asked Steve what he meant, he said he'd left the handprint behind, but he was "flying out of here ... people leave their mark in the cave but their spirit moves beyond those walls." He marveled that primitive man had time to spend on art and not just survival issues. Then, he commented that although they were gone, and the animals they drew were gone, their spiritual power was still here for all to see and feel. He thought he had spent far too much time exploring the rational world, and far too little exploring this peaceful spiritual world. Steve noted with a smile that his natural tendency was always toward skepticism.

When we talked about it later, I was interested in whether his cave vision and flying away might have something to do with the direction in which he felt himself moving. I was hoping that he might see comfort in something other than his frantic pursuit of a cure. He said, "I know

you want me to talk about my soul with God, but that's not me. I'm just happy that I am moving in a direction that feels so peaceful."

#### **Ketamine session 2:**

**November 18, 2004**

I injected 50 mg. and within 3 minutes Steve felt the same enveloping warmth and peace. He described himself floating in the cosmos— "I feel light, I am light, there is a light inside me, I feel like I'm floating with the angels." He began humming and I joined him. He moved his hands over his body, asking his shamanic self to make itself visible so that he could heal himself. Then I followed his hands over his body, and together we spread this divine light all over. I pressed my fingers deep into the right upper quadrant of his abdomen to direct the energy into his liver. The intensity of the experience and the energy coursing through his body made my fingertips tingle.

After this session, Steve began going regularly to his health club and said he felt stronger.

#### **Ketamine session 3:**

**December 14, 2004**

Using 75 mg., Steve again entered a state of peaceful bliss, and he described sensing a harmonic chorus of celestial angels. Following Steve's wishes, I tried to guide him to a place where he could communicate with his shamanic soul. Enveloped in a sense of heavenly peace, I noticed tears rolling down his cheek. When I asked him what the tears were saying he said, "These are tears of joy, I have never felt so in tune with the whole universe. If this is God, I believe, but I don't want to talk to him."

By January, 2005, Steve was feeling stronger but his tumor markers were rising and his alphaphetoprotein (AFP) level was astronomically high. That month he learned of an experimental program at the University of Pittsburgh where researchers were injecting drugs directly into the liver. Desperate for a cure, he flew to Pittsburgh and they accepted him into the program on the condition that he discontinue his ketamine therapy. Steve wanted to participate in this research program, even though he knew it would cause weakness and nausea. I told him that I would support his choice, and that he

could take a break from ketamine-assisted therapy. Steve felt strong enough at this point to take a vacation with his girlfriend before beginning the new treatment.

From April through October, Steve returned to Pittsburgh monthly. On his last visit, though, the research doctors told him that they must stop the treatment because his tumor markers were continuing to worsen. He returned to Phoenix feeling quite depressed, seeing only darkness. He hoped that another ketamine-assisted therapy session would help him find some light and peace.

#### **Ketamine session 4:**

**October 18, 2005**

For this session, I raised the dose to 100 mg. Like last time, when Steve heard the "cosmic chorus", I hummed along with him. It happened to be the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and, unconsciously, my hum became a tune from that day's liturgy. Steve recognized the melody and hummed along with me. The Torah portion for that day was the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. While we were humming Steve had a vision of Abraham, dressed in flowing white garb. When he got closer, though, he saw that the flowing robe was actually a doctor's white coat. In front of Dr. Abraham was an altar on which Steve saw himself stretched out and bound. He saw Dr. Abraham with the dagger in his raised hand, and, just as he was ready to plunge it, God called out to Abraham and he stopped. Steve looked up at the knife, and it had been replaced by a beam of light. Steve felt the presence of an overwhelming sense of peace.

When we talked about the experience later, he said, "The knife is less scary," and then asked, "Do you think the light is my shaman talking to me?"

Over the next two months, Steve was hospitalized twice after fainting, leaving him with several bad bruises. He told me that he knew his health would continue to worsen but that he wanted to "bathe in the light one more time." I found myself wondering if he had finally come to peace with the imminence of his death.

#### **Ketamine session 5:**

**December 13, 2005**

At Steve's request, I gave him 125 mg of ketamine. Like before, he felt immensely peaceful, heard celestial angels

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singing, and soon we were humming together. I asked him if he could see the light at the end of the tunnel and he said, "There is no tunnel, there is only light. I am surrounded by light, I feel love and peace." He wondered if this was the healing conversation he had been looking for with his shamanic self.

After this session, Steve continued to grow weaker and soon he was unable to get up without feeling wobbly and dizzy. I referred Steve to hospice, an option he had previously resisted. I explained that the hospice community is a place where one is surrounded by caretakers of light, and shortly after this discussion he moved into hospice treatment.

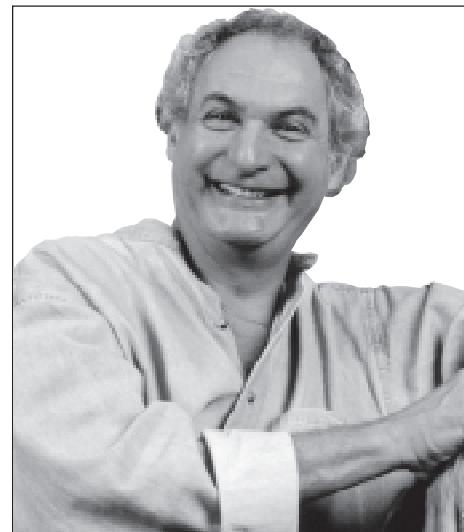
The week before Steve died, he told me this story. "I thanked my hospice nurse when she left the other day. I told her what a great job she was doing. She thanked me and said no matter how much money she was making (ha, ha, ha), that she loved this work and that to be with me inspired her to live her life with joy. There were tears in her eyes when she spoke to me and I had tears in mine." Then Steve said, "It's all about flying into the light and seeing your imprint on the cave wall." He thanked me for helping him see that light, and I told him I felt pretty much as his hospice nurse did, appreciative for having been with him on this journey.

Steve died on March 14, 2006, 10 years after his original diagnosis and five times longer than any of the doctors had estimated. At his funeral service his son said, "We all called my father the Energizer Bunny. His attitude inspires me."

Steve believed that if he could communicate with his ancient shamanic self, he might learn how to heal himself. The shaman he sought turned out to be a tribal ancestral messenger who turned the dagger of impending death into a beam of light. Through the use of ketamine, Steve realized that the shaman he sought was not in the lost continent of Atlantis, but within. When granted the opportunity to suspend ourselves from ordinary consciousness, we can make connections that may have previously eluded us. Steve was able to go to a place beyond our everyday conceptions of time and space, allowing him to make peace with himself and the cosmos.

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I think the ketamine-assisted therapy allowed Steve to hang on to the idea that he could be healed, and, indeed, I believe he was. But there is a difference between healing and curing, and you can be healed even if you're not cured. Healing is about making connections to something other than yourself, something that reminds you that you're not alone on the journey. At the end of life, the connection to others who love us is priceless. Those connections are imprinted in the hearts of others and on the cave walls of the mind that endure, even once we are separated from our physical bodies. •



*Dr. Hammerschlag is an internationally recognized psychiatrist, who for 16 years was Chief of Psychiatry, at the Phoenix Indian Medical Center. He is a faculty member at the Univ. of Arizona Medical School, speaker, author and healer. His journey from doctor to healer has been chronicled in three critically acclaimed books, The Dancing Healers (Harper-Collins, 1988), The Theft of the Spirit (Simon & Schuster, 1993), and Healing Ceremonies (Putnam/Perigee, 1998). He can be reached at [www.healingdoc.com](http://www.healingdoc.com).*

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# MAPS-Sponsored Ibogaine Observational Case Study Approved



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...MAPS  
will soon be able  
to announce that  
an investigation  
on the potential  
of a novel treatment  
for opiate  
dependence is  
underway in  
Canada...

**S**INCE FEBRUARY 12, 2005, a MAPS-sponsored research team working on what is now entitled "Observational Case Series Study of the Long-Term Efficacy of Ibogaine-Assisted Therapy and Associated Interventions in Participants with Opiate Addiction Treated at the Iboga Therapy House"—have exchanged over 200 emails and literally dozens of versions of this novel research protocol, all with the goal of getting this study peer-reviewed and approved by a research ethics board.

Way back in February 2005, MAPS President Rick Doblin contacted me to ask if I would help steer an ibogaine and addiction outcome study through the always-complicated Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. Since this study was not associated with a university or hospital-based researcher, MAPS had to use a private IRB. Considering that I had just received approval for a smoked cannabis and chronic pain double-blind clinical study from an independent Canadian review board, Rick asked if I could help MAPS gain approval for the ibogaine outcome study taking place at Iboga Therapy House, located in Vancouver, British Columbia. Rick had suggested this IRB to me in the first place since he had become aware of it during his search for an IRB that would review MAPS' MDMA/PTSD study, which was finally reviewed and approved by a US IRB.

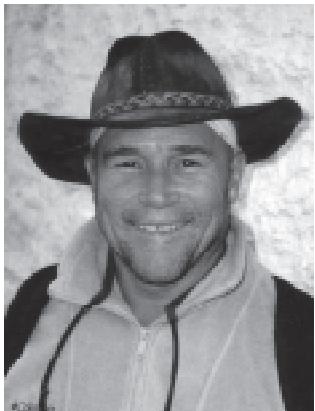
As a long-time supporter of MAPS, I jumped at the chance to work with this cutting-edge organization. "Sure," I answered, "I've got a few hours to spare over the next couple of weeks." Honestly, if I had known that 18 months and four IRB submissions later I would still be working on this protocol, I undoubtedly would have answered differently. However, if I've learned anything in the many years that I've been active in drug policy-related research and activism, it is patience and persistence.

And so it now gives me great pleasure to announce that after months of work and a number of significant changes to the original protocol, MAPS has just received final approval from the IRB to proceed with this study, which will examine changes in substance use in 20 consecutive people seeking ibogaine-based addiction treatment for opiate dependence at Iboga Therapy House. While originally designed as an "outcome study," the protocol was later changed to an observational case-study when the IRB expressed concerns that the initial design was too close to a clinical trial (which has a much stricter approval process, and was never the intention of the research team anyhow). The Principal Investigator is none other than Rick Doblin, Ph.D., and he'll be aided by Dr. Ken Alper and Leah Martin, with data analysis to be conducted by MAPS Research Associate Ilsa Jerome.

Now that all of the IRB's concerns have been successfully addressed, MAPS will soon be able to announce that an investigation on the potential of a novel treatment for opiate dependence is underway in Canada, and I can finally get some well-deserved rest ... at least until the next time Rick calls me up! •

*Philippe Lucas is Founder/Director of the Vancouver Island Compassion Society, Research Fellow at the Center for Addiction Research of British Columbia, and the Director of Communications for DrugSense.*

## 2006 NYC Ibogaine Conference



John Harrison, Psy.D. (candidate)  
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Though the opinions shared were hardly monolithic, the occasionally sharp ontological deliberations seemed to foment camaraderie.

**t**HE SKIES were a slippery gray and the air was wintry cold on the February weekend of the 2006 NYC Ibogaine Conference. The chilly weather, though, did not in any way inhibit the fervent and passionate panel discussions and genuine warm vibes that permeated the gathering.

I am currently preparing a program evaluation protocol for ibogaine treatment clinics in Canada (Iboga Therapy House) and Mexico (Villa Serena) for my dissertation at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS). As a witness to the healing potential of ibogaine, I have sought to work with providers to help them better analyze the variables that affect the long-term outcome of ibogaine treatment.

Thus, I was delighted to be immersed in the diverse and colorful assembly of journalists, researchers, street providers, neurologists, psychologists, physicians, activists, artists and successful veterans of ibogaine treatment that joined me at the conference. The positive energy was palpable and as the conference unfolded, the various presenters articulated the breadth of interest in this little root from the *Tabernanthe iboga* plant from West Africa. MAPS members and *Bulletin* readers are most likely familiar with the potential of ibogaine to reduce drug craving and its concomitant symptoms, and the political and financial obstacles hindering its accessibility.

Jeffrey Kamlet, M.D., (ibogaine treatment provider) and Patrick Kroupa (ibogaine activist and founder of Mindvox) opened the proceedings with a crash course in Ibogaine 101. Dr. Kamlet, who is currently President of the Florida Society for Addiction Medicine, impressed mightily with his unimpeachable medical expertise. Jeff spoke in depth about safety, particularly emphasizing medical pre-screening prior to ibogaine administration. Patrick Kroupa captivated the crowd with his unfaltering integrity and honest self-disclosure regarding his own tortuous process through addiction. Declaring "ibogaine is a gift," Kroupa also reiterated that "ibogaine is more than detox; it's a catalyst, not a cure." Patrick's street credibility and his insight into the human toll of addiction was a poignant and

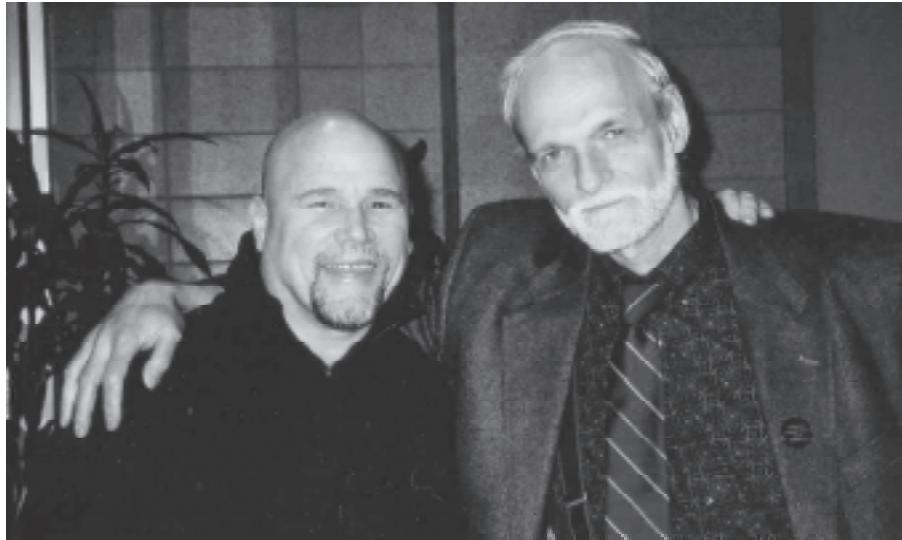
profound balance to Dr. Kamlet's clinical knowledge. Truly a formidable tandem of truth from two who have been in "the belly of the beast!"

Medical journalist Brian Vastag discussed the circuitous route of ibogaine's "forty years of flirtation with legitimacy" as a viable treatment protocol for heroin addiction.

Kenneth Alper, M.D., (NYU Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology) presented a sweeping discourse on ibogaine's mechanisms of action on the human brain. Dr. Alper presented a sampling of his scientific research while making the case for clinical trials in the U.S. Ken managed to convey challenging, complex, and important data in straightforward language that both the novices and the experts in the audience could comprehend.

Introduced as special visitors to the conference were physicians and treatment providers Drs. Alberto Sola and Adolfo Martinez from Villa Serena, an ibogaine treatment center in Cancun, Mexico. As activist Dana Beal opined, "supporting and legitimizing clinics in Canada and Mexico will have the effect of embarrassing the United States by saying 'why everywhere else but not here?'"

Howard Lotsof, the sagacious and insightful 'Grandfather of ibogaine' gave a comprehensive slide presentation on the history, politics, policy, profit, prejudice, and science of ibogaine. Lotsof, who first discovered ibogaine as a viable treatment



John Harrison and Howard Lotsof, who first discovered ibogaine as a viable treatment for heroin addiction in 1962, at the NYC Ibogaine Conference

for heroin addiction in 1962, reflected the tone of the gathering by emphasizing inclusiveness, and by celebrating the common goal of making this valuable medicine available to the people who would most benefit from safe and unencumbered access.

The opening day session culminated in an extraordinary and spirited political panel which included Dmitri Mugianis (ibogaine treatment provider and former patient), Lotsof, Douglas Greene and the peripatetic Dana Beal (Cures Not Wars). Saturday evenings reception featured the powerful documentary *Ibogaine: Rite of Passage*, by film-maker Ben de Loenen.

Then, on Sunday the conference shifted to the wonderful and inspiring environment of Alex Grey's Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (COSM) on W. 27th Street. Grey's vivid colors and breathtaking images provided appropriate and stimulating surroundings for topics and presentations that included "Ibogaine as a Source of Revelation" (an exploration of the spiritual dimension of ibogaine), and "Ibogaine for Self-Development," featuring authors Lee Albert and Daniel Pinchbeck. Others included, "Ibogaine and the Ritual of the Bwiti," "Iboga Visions," (including a discussion of the Céoneirophrenic or dreamlike phase of an iboga session), and a fantastic "Unexplanation of Ibogaine and Sacred Art," featuring the stunning and visionary work of artists [REDACTED], David Hunter, and of course the inimitable Alex Grey.

Though the opinions shared and discussed in NYC were hardly monolithic, the enthusiastic debate around the interface of health and politics and the occasionally sharp ontological deliberations seemed to foment what was already an unmistakable *esprit de corps* and camaraderie amongst the highly energized attendees.

As for myself, the weekend left me feeling honored and inspired to meet so many learned, sensitive, and committed people who, though the work they do is often solitary, found hope and encouragement in this encounter with so many like-minded and like-hearted individuals.

As Lee Albert said so eloquently as the conference came to a close, "we grow in the spirit or die in the body." •

Beal opined, "supporting and legitimizing clinics in Canada and Mexico will have the effect of embarrassing the United States by saying 'why everywhere else but not here?'"

## A Groundbreaking Study on Music, Spirituality, Religion, and the Human Brain



Robin Sylvan  
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THROUGHOUT MY CAREER in both mainstream academia and alternative education, and in my own personal explorations, my primary interest and area of expertise has been the unique capacity of music to induce powerful altered states of consciousness (ASCs) that allow access to spiritual dimensions. However, as many of us are aware, such states are highly subjective and ephemeral, and it is often difficult for skeptics to accept the validity of these states, take them seriously, and recognize them as an important part of the human experience. So when a friend forwarded an e-mail to me a couple of years ago on a study of musically-induced chills using state-of-the-art brain scanning equipment, I was excited because these subjective states were now being objectively verified by scientific methods. When I investigated further, I was even more excited to discover that there was a growing body of this kind of research using brain-scanning technology to investigate musical experience, and other kinds of spiritual and religious experiences as well.

A few months later, while I was organizing a conference on music and spirituality through my non-profit educational organization, the Sacred Center, I decided to find a brain scientist to do a presentation on this kind of work. At the time, I was doing some adjunct teaching at UC Davis, and to my surprise, I discovered that UC Davis has one of the top facilities for brain science in the country, the Center for Mind and Brain, and that one of the leading researchers in the brain science of music, Dr. Petr Janata, had just taken a position there. So I contacted Petr and met with him and we made a good connection, particularly because it was clear that we both shared a strong interest in musically-induced peak experiences. When he presented at the conference, I began to get a sense that he and I might collaborate on some important research somewhere down the line. The opportunity presented itself sooner than I imagined a couple of months later when I received a postcard from the Metanexus

Institute and the Templeton Advanced Research Program soliciting proposals for \$1,000,000 grants in science and spirituality. I called Petr to suggest we collaborate on a proposal for a three-year study on the brain science of musically induced spiritual experiences and he agreed. After much effort over several months, we crafted a proposal and sent it off. To my utter amazement, we just recently found out that, out of over 130 applicants, our proposal is one of two that has been approved for funding, and we are now hard at work getting things going. The synchronistic way these events have unfolded confirms my sense that this view of music as a consciousness-shifting spiritual technology is not only gaining wider acceptance, but that it is also part of a larger paradigm shift away from a view of science and spirituality as mortal enemies to one in which they actually work together as allies.

Since this is the *MAPS Bulletin*, you may be wondering how all this relates to

psychedelics. In the first part of the study, we will be conducting interviews and surveys with people from six test groups: two mainstream Western religions (a Christian church and a Jewish synagogue); two non-Western religions (a Hindu temple and a Yoruba/West African group); and two non-religious but spiritually-oriented musical scenes (the rave/electronic dance music scene and the jam band scene). These last two groups have an obvious association with the use of specific drugs—primarily MDMA with the rave scene and LSD with the jam band scene (although, as we know, people in these scenes use many other drugs)—and this association is one of the reasons I was so surprised we got the grant. However, before our proposal was cleared for final approval, we did have to address a number of concerns raised by reviewers, and the use of drugs in these scenes was definitely one of them. Specifically, they wanted us to establish an experimental control for drug use among the

participants, so that we could be certain the altered brain states were induced by music, rather than by drugs. This was certainly a legitimate concern from a scientific perspective and one we were able to address to their satisfaction, primarily by assuring them that, for the interviews and surveys, we would rely as much as possible on people whose experiences were drug-free, and that drug use would be strictly prohibited in the laboratory experiments of the later stages of the study.

Nevertheless, these concerns raise larger issues that I think are of interest to *Bulletin* readers. First, even though there was some trepidation by the reviewers

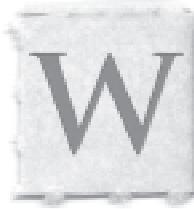
This study  
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as allies.

about drug use tainting the rave and jam band data, I still think it is a positive development that this project was ultimately approved with these two test groups, despite their association with drugs, and that it validates them as legitimate spiritual communities worthy of serious research. Second, I think that separating the effects of music from the effects of drugs actually furthers research on both fronts. When I spoke with MAPS President Rick Doblin, Ph.D., and told him we had won this grant, he was amazed because MAPS had applied several times for grants from Metanexus and Templeton and never succeeded. I can't help but think that psychedelics probably had something to do with this track record and that the absence of this issue probably contributed to our proposal's success. Of course, I am happy to see that, despite its record with Metanexus and Templeton, MAPS has received funding for numerous scientific studies from other sources.

In my view, all of it is important research that scientifically verifies ASCs and their beneficial effects, and it all contributes to the paradigm shift of science and spirituality becoming allies. Finally, I hope that our study will open the way for further studies on the effects of music on the brain, and that these might someday include the central and almost universal role of music in the use of psychedelics in both Western and non-Western cultures. •

*Robin Sylvan is author of Trance Formation: The Spiritual and Religious Dimensions of Global Rave Culture. For more information about this study, please see: <http://atonal.ucdavis.edu/projects/tarp/>*

# So You Want to be a Psychedelic Researcher?



WITH THE CURRENT RENAISSANCE in psychedelic research, after a forty-year moratorium, undergraduates interested in the topic are increasingly starting to ask: How can I get involved? Unfortunately, psychedelics are still heavily stigmatized, and there is as yet no obvious infrastructure into which enthusiasts can channel their energy. There are no psychedelic research graduate programs, no psychedelic student groups, no psychedelic scholarships, and few professors willing to provide mentorship or funding agencies willing to sponsor such research. This leaves undergraduates inspired by psychedelics frustrated and uncertain about what they should be doing in order to most help the cause. Here are some suggestions and guidance for those so perplexed.

Perhaps you appreciate that scientists such as Ralph Abraham, Stephen Jay Gould, Carl Sagan, Andrew Weil, and Nobel Prize winners such as Francis Crick, Richard Feynman, and Kary Mullis have found psychedelics valuable tools in formulating their great discoveries, and wonder how this can be so?

First, examine your motives for entering psychedelic research? Is it because psychedelics are novel and cool? If so, you are apt to find psychedelic research disappointing. While Dr. Timothy Leary, perhaps the most famous of the psychedelic researchers, found it a route to enduring fame and hot sex with large numbers of young women, he did this primarily through his showmanship rather than his scientific research. If such a lifestyle is appealing to you, there are shorter routes to this goal than decades of scholarly study.

Or is it because you have had a mystical or life-changing experience on a psychedelic? You do not need to become a psychedelic researcher in order to continue your self-exploration; you do not even need to continue to take psychedelics, as there are many other methods of changing one's own consciousness, from yoga to meditation to Holotropic Breathwork. Such a path may prove profoundly self-altering; however, it is unlikely to change society.

Or is it because you are frustrated living in a culture that tramples individual freedoms, discourages introspection and insight, substitutes lies and half-truths for genuine science, encourages people to self-censor and conform to that which they know is harmful and wrong, and that you

wish instead to change society for the better? You do not need to be a scientific researcher in order to be an activist. Ultimately, scientific research is only useful as a tool in the hands of the activist, for it is the activist who compels society to improve.

Or is it because you are motivated by a genuine curiosity about these peculiar substances, and wish to apply the tools of modern inquiry toward understanding their properties? Perhaps you appreciate that scientists such as Ralph Abraham, Stephen Jay Gould, Carl Sagan, Andrew Weil, and Nobel Prize winners such as Francis Crick, Richard Feynman, and Kary Mullis have found psychedelics valuable tools in formulating their great discoveries, and wonder how this can be so? Maybe you know that the discovery of LSD was what sparked interest in the serotonin system and prompted the explosive growth of modern psychopharmacology that continues today? Possibly you contemplate what other wonders may lie hidden in the closed box of psychedelic science?

And are you willing to accept that your unconventional interests may lead to professional isolation or even ostracism, and that the time-consuming navigation of the layers of red tape endemic to psychedelic research will inevitably slow

your publication rate and consequently promotions compared with your peers? And are you aware that the total lack of government or corporate support for such endeavors means that you will never be rich, and you may in fact eventually land in jail on trumped up charges of one sort or another? If such considerations do not trouble you, then read on.

#### **AS AN UNDERGRADUATE**

GET YOUR DEGREE! LIE LOW AND INFILTRATE THE SYSTEM

The undergraduate years are a difficult time for the nascent psychedelic researcher because of the stigma that these drugs still hold. Many undergraduates come to realize that broadcasting their unconventional views at this time could potentially harm their future careers, and thus indirectly harm psychedelic research. Sometimes we have to conform to others' expectations in order to establish a solid base of credibility, and wait for a time when we can be more independent in our pursuits. The book *Why Shrooms Are Good* by Joe Schmoe is likely to be ignored; *Therapeutic Benefits of Psilocybin* by Dr. Joe Schmoe considerably less so, even if both books say exactly the same thing. Incidentally, this was the path I followed; I didn't breathe a word of my interests until I was already on the faculty of Harvard Medical School. Be warned, however—conformity for too long can corrode the soul. And in retrospect, you are freer as an undergraduate than you may think you are.

#### **EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT PSYCHEDELICS**

Read what scientific literature does exist regarding psychedelics, not just the material that draws popular attention. If possible, take a course in psychedelics. Dr. Stacy B. Schaefer teaches a class on Indigenous People of Latin America at California State University, Chico, dealing in part with the peyote-using Huichol Indians. Dr. Constantino Manuel Torres teaches an Art and Shamanism course at Florida International University, exploring traditional cultures that use psychedelics. Northern Illinois University offers regular courses by Dr. Thomas Roberts. Invite him to be a guest lecturer at your own school! Dr. Roberts writes:

*If your department or another would like to offer either course—Foundations of Psychedelic Studies or*

*Entheogens—Sacramentals or Sacrilege? to students (graduate or undergraduate), it might be possible for me to travel every now and then and meet with a class, say over long weekends or for a day or two every couple of weeks. The rest we can do by Internet.*

Alternately, design your own independent study course (or courses) for credit in psychedelics. This is the approach MAPS President Rick Doblin took for his undergraduate education at New College of Florida. Use Dr. Robert's syllabus as a basis. Paul Goodwin is starting a web site aimed at interested students offering links and short descriptions of courses relevant to psychedelic studies. This should be online by the fall of 2006 ([www.psycmp.org.uk](http://www.psycmp.org.uk)). Keep current with the literature in your area of interest, and start thinking about ideas for your own research project.

Another graduate student writes:

*I completed an honors thesis as an undergraduate, which basically was a literature review, and it ended up resulting in my first publication a few years later. It also led up to my masters thesis (a quasi-experimental study) and a few other papers in press. The best thing undergraduates can do to help is to prepare themselves, I believe. Be persistent about being a part of psychedelic research, if that is truly where your heart lies. I may not be able to do exactly what I want right now, but I still can keep it in mind for the future.*

"The Implications of Psychedelic Research for XXX" often makes a good term paper topic. Rephrasing a title as a question is one tactic to use when encountering skeptical professors: "Do Psychedelics Have Implications for XXX?" or "How Should We Evaluate Psychedelic Claims of XXX?" Also, consider requesting that your local and school libraries acquire psychedelic books. Not only does this help spread knowledge, it also helps authors and encourages publishers to accept more psychedelic titles.

In the meantime, attend a convention! There's quite a bit of psychedelic research presented at the yearly Society for Litera-



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Read what scientific literature does exist regarding psychedelics, not just the material that draws popular attention.

ture, Science, and the Arts conferences (<http://slsa.press.jhu.edu>). Similarly, the Toward a Science of Consciousness conferences held in Tucson, Arizona every other year also always have some presentations dealing with psychedelic research ([www.consciousness.arizona.edu](http://www.consciousness.arizona.edu)). And more specifically focused on psychedelics and altered states are the yearly Mind States conventions, where aboveground researchers and underground psychonauts congregate to discuss their latest discoveries. The Mind States e-mailing list provides updates on similar events that happen worldwide ([www.mindstates.org](http://www.mindstates.org)).

Underground publications often present cutting-edge discoveries in the arenas of psychedelic chemistry, botany, and pharmacology. *The Entheogen Review*, for example, was the first place to discuss the extraction of tryptamines from Phalaris grasses for ayahuasca analogues and the first to confirm the psychoactivity of *Mimosa tenuiflora* (= *M. hostilis*) without coadministration of a monoamine oxidase inhibitor. These days, countless web sites and discussion forums carry first-person reports of the latest synthetic psychedelics and botanical preparations. Amateur science flourishes in our current legal situation, in which professional science is so difficult to perform that most discoveries have to be made underground. Remember, though, that the rigorous controls present in aboveground science are usually lacking in underground efforts, rendering many results questionable at best.

#### START A PSYCHEDELIC STUDENT GROUP

While one undergraduate is easy to intimidate, large groups of them have a history of occupying administration buildings to facilitate societal change. Fish travel in schools for a reason! Another strategy, therefore, is to start a student group. One possibility would be to form a chapter of a national organization such as the Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) or Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP). This approach would be similar to student chapters of Greenpeace, Amnesty International, or Students for a Free Tibet.

One notorious troublemaker writes:  
*I took out an ad in the school's newspaper, Come to the first meeting of the University of Chicago Psyche-*

*delic Education Society. We met at the spot that marked the beginning of the Atomic Age, a Henry Moore sculpture called The Nuclear Egg. About a hundred people showed up. We shared stories, brought speakers to town, dreamed of a saner world, and labored to manifest one.*

At Harvard, where I work, there is no recognized undergraduate student organization focused on psychedelic research. The procedure for creating such an organization can be found on-line at: [www.college.harvard.edu/student/handbook.pdf](http://www.college.harvard.edu/student/handbook.pdf). The advantages of forming a recognized student organization are many. Not only can recognized groups get permission to use campus facilities and assembly halls for events and symposia, they are also eligible to apply for funding from the student government. A student organization focused on psychedelic research could engage in outreach with other student groups and academic departments encompassing most of the physical, biological, and social sciences, as well as those pertaining to the arts, humanities, and civil liberties. Events could be held on campus to educate and inform, and university funds could be used to bring in speakers and arrange conferences. Such events could draw participants from all over the world. While these activities do not necessarily amount to actual psychedelic research, they could be fashioned in a manner to do so, if—for example—a faculty member were enlisted to supervise a survey-based study. More importantly, student organizations spread awareness, generate understanding, and de-stigmatize psychedelics, thereby helping to set the stage for actual research when the time and place are right.

*SSDP and the student ACLU group helped sponsor the ethnopharmacology society's seminar on the co-evolution of plants and humans. We also were awarded a grant from the student organization office—raising more than a thousand bucks!—and were able to bring in Dennis McKenna as the outside speaker. It was a splendid event, with Dennis giving a great talk examining plant chemical communication signals that may be driving the interesting*

*side of human evolution. It was followed by a panel discussion that included some of University of Washington's botany professors, a classics scholar, and an Incan medicine man.*

#### VOLUNTEER

Numerous organizations exist that appreciate people who offer to do volunteer work. MAPS needs help with their on-line psychedelic bibliography, creating abstracts for many of the articles that are listed. The Erowid web site also sometimes uses volunteers (see [www.erowid.org/general/about/about\\_volunteers.shtml](http://www.erowid.org/general/about/about_volunteers.shtml)). Find an organization with which you resonate and contact them to see what sort of help they need.

#### WRITE LETTERS

Without government approval, psychedelic research will stagnate as it has for the last forty or so years. Government politicians, agencies, and organizations need to understand that people interested in psychedelics are not thoughtlessly promoting drug use, but are sincerely searching for personal and scientific truths. Write letters and share how you feel! Nobody can arrest you for an opinion—yet.

#### DONATE MONEY TO PSYCHEDELIC ORGANIZATIONS

This is by far the easiest way to get involved. With no support from government or industry, that means that funding for psychedelic research is going to come from one place only—you!

#### AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

Your first stop should be the Heffter Research Institute's Scientific Advisory Panel, which is a list of psychedelic allies in the international academic world. The locations where these individuals work are areas where there is possible support for psychedelic research.

Failing this, Dr. Alexander Shulgin's recommendation is to get as strong a foundation in graduate school as possible. Work in a highly-respected institution with good people doing solid, reputable research, pick up as many skills as you can along the way (for you never know which will ultimately be useful) then pursue what it is that you genuinely want to do, which you might not even know until after graduate school anyway. Learn solid

methodology and techniques, gain as much knowledge as you can, hone your analytic skills—while keeping sight of the big picture—and then apply all these resources to psychedelic research when the time comes. The more rigorous and stringent your research and its interpretation, the harder it will be for people to argue with it, reject it, or not take it seriously—and that can make all the difference. If you try to get as much as you can out of graduate or medical school, you'll always have those tools, analytical skills, and knowledge of sound techniques available to do excellent research in whatever field you choose. In addition, it is important to have proficiency and credibility in a field other than psychedelic research, to serve as a fallback position when changing political winds make times tough.

My own path was one of going to medical school and becoming a medical doctor, which I figured was a necessity if I ever wanted to actually give these drugs to people, which I do. Furthermore, I believe that an M.D. sometimes has more credibility than a Ph.D. or politician when it comes to telling people what's good and bad for them. My grant proposals can afford to be a little more daring because if they're all turned down, I won't be living on the street—seeing patients for money is always an option. One disadvantage, of course, is the length of training—which in my case (neurology/psychiatry) was ten years after college. Another disadvantage is the large loans and consequent temptation to specialize in something more profitable than psychedelics (and ample opportunities to do so). But I have no regrets about the path I have chosen to follow.

If you wish to follow the Ph.D. route, however, pure neuroscience or neuropharmacology is extremely valuable, as it is much easier politically to give psychedelics to animals or tissue cultures than it is to humans, and there is a large amount of funding available in areas indirectly applicable to the study of psychedelics, such as the pharmacology and physiology of serotonin. This sort of research builds the credibility necessary to apply for funding to study psychedelics directly. Unfortunately, much of the

Write letters  
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Nobody  
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research done in these fields is on animals and never directly examines higher-order thought and cognition—the levels at which psychedelics engage human consciousness in the most fascinating way. And sadly, there are few academics in these fields willing to serve as mentors for students interested in psychedelics.

Experimental psychology, the study of the human mind, is also valuable, but psychonaut psychologists have given graduate-level psychology study mixed reviews. Today's experimental psychology Ph.D. programs reportedly involve working in very restricted domains, performing tightly controlled experiments that rarely resemble real-world conditions, focus primarily on outward behavior (as opposed to studying mind), and interpreting data in ways that are inevitably constrained by how well they fit with currently accepted theories.

Clinical psychology will allow you to build the skills necessary in any multidisciplinary team researching the psychotherapeutic value of psychedelics. When psychedelics are ultimately approved as a treatment modality, a clinical psychologist will undoubtedly be part of any such treatment team. And as a clinical psychologist, you'll be able to design clinical trials sensitive to set and setting, which are largely ignored in contemporary psychedelic research. A focus on psychedelic psychotherapy outcome research would be an especially useful degree, and could lead to a job at MAPS. Clinical psychology graduate students report that the most prominent psychological perspective today is cognitive-behavioral, an approach more balanced between observable behavior and cognition. Less mainstream, transpersonal graduate schools such as the California Institute of Integral Studies, the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, or the Saybrook Institute provide an alternative to the prevailing cognitive-behavioral paradigm. Collectively, these institutes are the central hubs of clinical psychology wisdom, knowledge, and experience from the sixties, largely due to the influx of faculty such as Ralph Metzner, Stanislav Grof, Richard Tarnas, Stanley Krippner, and other veterans of the psychedelic science community.

Also consider psychoanalytic training,

which is not just for M.D.s anymore—learning to navigate the subconscious is a valuable skill for anyone doing psychedelic psychotherapy! A dream is not so different from a trip, and dream analysis skills translate directly. But if you're interested in research, make sure that you get a Ph.D. rather than a Psy.D.

Cognitive science is a pure science of the mind, drawing from a variety of disciplines, including computer science. (Cognitive science was largely founded as an attempt to model and imitate the human mind on a computer system.) There are far fewer such programs than comparable psychology programs, which are ubiquitous, yet cognitive science differs from experimental psychology in that it relies strongly on theoretical and empirical work done in other fields (such as ethnographic research), especially philosophy, neuroscience, and linguistics, but also sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. These data are then used in an integrative way to better understand and modify theoretical foundations, rather than looked at as orthogonal data from a different field. The boundaries between disciplines often dissolve, resulting in integration that is necessary in order to understand the psychedelic experience and consciousness in general.

Cognitive science, as the science of higher order conceptual structure and thought, will permit you to broadly study the mind itself, its cognitive components, how it is manifested in neural tissue, and how meaning is created, organized, modified, and communicated by humans in the real ecological, social, and cultural environment that we inhabit. Many cognitive science programs emphasize computational modeling, which is unfortunately still in its infancy. One cognitive scientist writes:

*Here, in a cognitive science program, I am able to work in labs doing both brain-imaging (fMRI) as well as electrophysiological (EEG/ERP) brainwave research, but at the same time study in rigorous detail theories from philosophy and linguistics while attempting to form a coherent picture of how the mind works, what thought is, and how we comprehend reality.*

Ultimately, when deciding on a graduate program that will nurture your growth and refine your skills, your decision should be based on the professors under whom you will be working, the type of research that is carried out in their labs, the resources available to you, and the fit of your questions and ideas with those of your advisor. Whatever route you follow, learn as much as you can and keep your mind, eyes, and ears wide open. Absorb and integrate what you are studying with your own interests and ideas, but never shy away from something because it seems too rigid or intuitively wrong or entrenched within illusory modes of thought. Decide what you think is accurate and what is not, know why what you think is wrong is wrong, then envision a better way to understand and explain the phenomenon.

There are many paths to becoming a psychedelic researcher. Like the Internet, science views censorship as a system failure and routes around it; psychedelic research, which has long lain fallow, is slowly germinating once again. You may end up studying the biochemical and neural basis for the psychedelic experience, psychedelic psychotherapy, religious and contemplative approaches to the ecstatic experience, the nature of consciousness, law reform and public policy, going on ethnographic and anthropological expeditions, or designing and running clinical trials. You may become a strong voice in the media. But what matters most in the end is that you attain success and satisfaction on a personal, professional, and spiritual level, while at the same time remaining true to yourself and your beliefs. •

Read "Recommended resources for self-education," adapted from Thomas Robert's Foundations of Psychedelic Studies course on the MAPS website at: <http://www.maps.org/sys/nq.pl?id=951&fmt=page>

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## Buddhahuasca: A Personal Narrative



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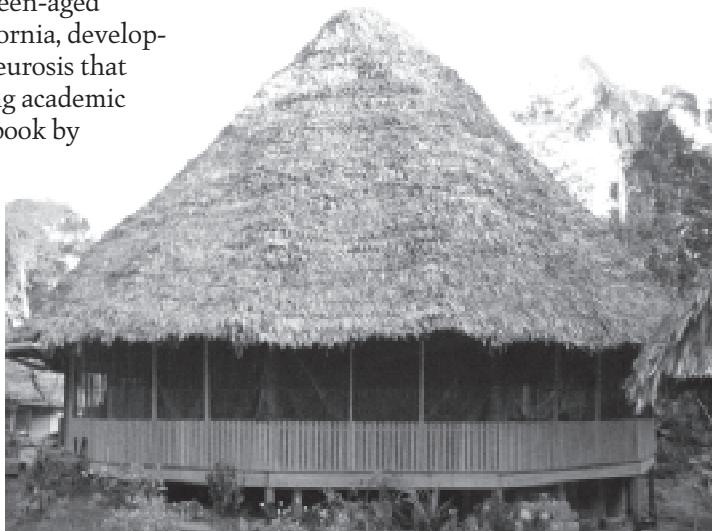
I'M SITTING in a round *maloca* ceremonial building at dusk in the jungle near Iquitos, Peru. I look up and see the interwoven tree limbs that hold the steeply angled roof. And I see the palm leaves woven tightly to the rafters, shielding us from the rain that comes so often here. It's dusk and it's a ceremony night. We'll be drinking the visionary medicine of the upper Amazon, *ayahuasca*. Also known as *la purga* ("the purge"), for the concrete way it removes illness, obstacles or blockages from the participants. Up and out; or down and out, or both up and down and out. And then it fills them with good energies and healing.

I'M HERE EARLY in the maloca to get ready and the best way I know is to meditate. So I sit and expel the stale breath, first from one nostril and then the other and then both. And I firm up the cushion underneath me and straighten my back. I recall the reason I'm practicing—to cast my net wide and include the benefit of all beings in the why and wherefore. I include the birds whose evensong I hear, the trees and plants in the forest that surrounds us, and the 20 or so people in the camp washing up and resting in hammocks and going about their business as the darkness grows from shadows under logs to take over the sky.

Such a strange and wonderful business, this modern life. There I was, minding my own tangled teen-aged business in suburban California, developing a beautiful bundle of neurosis that would lead to some winding academic career, when I read a thin book by Alan Watts. And he opened a whole world of *buddhadharma* to me. Suffering and the cause of suffering all laid out. A path to follow. Something to do and practice rather than a faith to believe or an existential absurdity to envelope with cigarette smoke and pain. So I

signed up and there followed 20 plus years of retreat and study, prostrations and chanting in Asian languages. American name, Korean name, Tibetan name—short hair, no hair, long hair. And in a steady ebb and flow an increase in clarity and compassion and gradually less pain and suffering. Even some insight.

But all that time something was gnawing at my heart, some ghost at the banquet rattling his bones. Deep depression. I started to doubt inside. Either I wasn't doing the practice correctly or deeply enough or the dharma wasn't meant to address this kind of thing. A friend used the metaphor of a broken bone with me. If I broke my leg would I meditate or go to a doctor and have it set? In



the West, we have therapy, but somehow I was never a believer in the talking cure. I tried other things: bio-energetic therapy, hypnosis, acupuncture, holotropic breathwork. The last led me to someone who practiced LSD psychotherapy, which went deeper, but that black dog kept following me.

A friend told me about the healing plants of the Amazon, and sat for me one night as I took an extract of one. It was dark and powerful and the mother of death came to me shaking her rattle. Then I went to a ceremony led by a group of healers from the Amazon. And my body told me this is good medicine for me. And my heart says, "yes." There followed ten years where ayahuasca ceremonies have alternated with meditation retreats and daily practice. Dharma chants met the *icaros* (ayahuasca healing songs) and *hinos* (hymns) of Amazonia. And the spirit of the plants became a teacher both like and unlike my Zen Master and Vajra Master had been. Alike in the pointing out of the Truth and my path to follow; unlike in that I drink her and she comes to teach and be inside of me.

Over the years I have experienced a coming together, like two rivers flowing together. The shamanic path has healed me deep in my heart reconstituted and reseated my soul in a way that allows me to rest far deeper in the essence of awareness both on the cushion and off. And the dharma helps me to sit in ceremony with more awareness and openness and perception. The teachings on *shunyata* (emptiness) also help me to see the visions that are central to experiences with plant teachers in both their relative and absolute aspects. On the one hand, powerful healing messages from the world of spirit, and, on the other, *nyam*, a meditative experience.

One evening the spirit of ayahuasca came to me, and just like my dharma teachers have done so many times, she gave me a job. I should connect my Buddhist path and *sangha* (Buddhist community) with the shamanic path and its community. Not just haphazardly but formally and not just for myself but for others as well. It's not really a message I wanted to hear. For years I've been studiously underachieving and it had

A famous scholar once said that the great cultural work of our time would be the meeting of Buddhism from the East and Christianity from the West.

Not being a Christian, I don't really have much of a part in that work.



Interwoven tree limbs hold the steeply angled roof of the maloca, where ayahuasca ceremonies take place near Iquitos, Peru.

The times  
are certainly  
calling us to  
find new ways  
to heal ourselves  
and wake up...  
  
Besides, trading  
medicine  
should be fun.  
  
And it will be  
quite an adventure  
to see just what  
comes of it all.

There will be a workshop  
to explore this topic called  
**Meeting at the River**  
next Feb 12–20 at the  
Blue Morpho Shamanic Center  
near Iquitos, Peru.  
  
For more information see  
[www.tworiverssangha.org/  
workshop.html](http://www.tworiverssangha.org/workshop.html)

become a comfortable little nest. But she was quite insistent as I sat there in the dark and so I agreed. I could see her point. Despite their different origins and energies these two currents support and complement each other beautifully, in my experience. So here I am meditating and doing yoga in the maloca getting ready to drink ayahuasca tonight.

I finish my session, dedicate the merit and lie down on the wide wooden planks of the floor, looking up and contemplating the view from here.

I'm at the Blue Morpho Shamanic Center in the Peruvian Amazon. I've come here to apprentice with two maestros, Alberto Torres Davila and Hamilton Souther. I'll be here for two months of training and then head home for a month and a half before coming back to the jungle and beginning the cycle again. While I'm up north I'll be attending retreat with one of my Tibetan Buddhist teachers and my yoga teacher, weaving this cross-cultural tapestry on the loom of my own experience. I don't know for sure what the results of all this effort will be but I do know the benefits of the cross-fertilizations that I've experienced so far on this path.

I know that the deep emotional healing I've received in ayahuasca ceremonies has allowed me to deepen my dharma practice and has helped me to apply Buddhist meditative practice in my daily life in a way that has led to greater happiness and effectiveness. The medicine spirits have given my body powerful energetic cleansings in my channels and chakras and even released Reichian-style body armoring in my chest and abdomen. Ayahuasca has manifested my ordinary deluded mind for me, showing clearly how it creates my own personal Samsara with all the attendant sufferings. Visionary experiences as other people, beings, or even animals have opened me to more empathy and compassion for others. And often at the end of a ceremony, after the healing and purging have resolved themselves I've entered into deep states of still, limpid, luminescent awareness. Just clear, open panoramic space.

And I also know that the dharma practice, with its wide, clear awareness, has helped me navigate shamanic space

more easily. Using the witness consciousness I've been more available for whatever type of healing or spiritual experience arises in ceremony, even when they've been difficult or painful. My yoga and chi-gung practices have helped my energy body be ready to receive the sometimes overwhelming amounts of energy that ayahuasca can bring. And of course both the meditative and yogic practices help to unpack and tease out the threads of what is a very compact burst of healing and insight that arrives in one night of ayahuasca. They bring it from the realm of "I had this amazing experience" to a living part of my daily life. Countless times I've called on my teachers and lineage, my heart *Bodhi-sattvas* and *Yidam*, to aid and guide me when the medicine is working strongly. The rivers of love that have sometimes flowed through me in the night have been well met by a heart that has cultivated *metta* ("loving kindness") and *tonglen* ("give and take") practice, however incompletely. And the Dharma teachings on cause and effect, the Bodhisattva way and the essence of mind, have been first and last the best container I could want from which to drink the healing gift of the forest.

A famous scholar once said that the great cultural work of our time would be the meeting of Buddhism from the East and Christianity from the West. Not being a Christian, I don't really have much of a part in that work. For me, as a person born in the Americas, the work is much more about the meeting of the dharma with the "native way" of these lands. I feel that only through a humble and sincere apprenticeship with the first people can we evolve a truly native practice of Buddha's teachings. They have a lot of healing and a lot to teach. And we as dharma practitioners don't come empty handed. There is much we too have to share as we sit in circle together. The times are certainly calling us to find new ways to heal ourselves and wake up. Not just for ourselves, but for our societies and for earth herself. Perhaps we all need each other. Besides, trading medicine should be fun. And it will be quite an adventure to see just what comes of it all.

As my Zen Master used to say,  
"Why not?" •

# Toward Light in the Darkness: A Review of the SheShamans-MagicMamas and 2nd Amazonian Shamanism Conferences

“We are at the beginning of a worldwide spiritual movement: one in which women and men trained in various shamanic traditions insist on their right to openly practice ancient religious rituals as well as complementary and alternative medicine to restore themselves to a healthy balance with the world around them.”

— *Barbara Tedlock, Ph.D., anthropologist and shaman, in THE WOMAN IN THE SHAMAN’S BODY (2005)*

“Healers are the white blood cells of the global body and our white blood cell count is dangerously low.”

— *Carlos, apprentice of Don Juan Tangoa Paima, Peruvian curandero, at the 2nd Amazonian Shamanism Conference*



Julia Onnie-Hay  
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I slowly write this article, midwifing it into existence, from an internet cafe off a busy, life-filled street in the Amazonian city of Iquitos, Peru. I am saturated with fresh memories of dozens of presentations by a diverse variety of healers and experts who work with psychedelic medicines, as well as many illuminating discussions with spiritual seekers and scientific investigators. These individuals have been courageous enough in their life-journeys to venture out of the mainstream onto the taboo, yet well-beaten, path of psychedelic healing.

This article is a report on two conferences where I had the honor of representing MAPS during the first two weeks of summer: the SheShamans and Magic-Mamas Conference in Geyserville, California, and the 2nd Amazonian Shamanism Conference in Iquitos, Peru. Both events were intimate, drawing around one hundred participants and a dozen presenters, and because of the strong synchronicity of their messages, this article will review both conferences and situate them within an overview of the history of global shamanistic healing traditions.

The shaman, called by many culturally-specific names including “curandero,” “witch,” and “lightworker,” is, I believe,

the original psychedelic therapist. Most shamans I have met seem to agree that the medicines themselves are the true teachers. Yet, these gifted individuals have administered and facilitated these powerful medicines for millennia, creating safe and sacred spaces to navigate the dark, uncharted territory of spirit and psyche. Fortunately, in spite of thousands of years of persecution, a small number of contemporary shamans and underground psychedelic therapists continue to practice the science and art of shamanistic healing traditions.

## **A History Shrouded in Darkness**

Humans have been using psychedelic medicines, or “plant-spirit medicines,” for at least several millennia, probably longer, often in conjunction with shamanistic healing traditions—widely acknowledged as the common heritage of both religion and medicine. Unfortunately, psychedelic medicines and those who facilitate their administration have been persecuted by political and religious powers for hundreds of years. The witch burnings of the European Inquisition and the colonization of the world by the US and Europe are just two of the series of genocides aimed at discrediting and destroying indigenous cultures that honored and used psychedelic medicines. Still, people in several

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corners of the globe continued to use the medicines, often by adapting to new circumstances and traditions. As western allopathic medicine developed, chemical derivatives synthesized from these plants gained higher trust, prestige and credibility from the legal, profit-driven medical establishment.

Over the past two centuries, the industrial revolution and process of colonization has accelerated the pace of the destruction of our natural environment on Earth and the devaluation of non-western cultures. The new medical establishment did not acknowledge the legitimacy of shamanism or psychedelics, yet many people all over the world continued using psychedelic medicines, quietly. As the international War on Drugs heightened over the past half-century, psychedelic medicines that our ancestors used for healing and spiritual guidance continued to be taboo in mainstream U.S. society as well as in others that have been politically, economically and culturally influenced by the U.S. However, with the relatively recent successes in revitalizing legal scientific research on the healing potential of psychedelic medicines, more and more people are able to envision a global society in which psychedelic medicines are culturally and legally reintegrated, in which psychedelic psychotherapists and other contemporary shamans are respected rather than persecuted, and in which the medicines are affordable, safe and accessible.

#### **SheShamans-MagicMamas**

Around eighty women and fifteen male allies gathered at the eclectic Isis Oasis Sanctuary in Geyserville, California for a gathering in celebration of women who work with entheogens. The conference participants came from all over California and even from overseas for three days of presentations and workshops led by Adele Getty, Cynthia Palmer, Karen Vogel, Valerie Corral, Anne Zapf, Sandra Karpetas, Katherine Harrison (former wife of the late Terence McKenna), and Jane Straight. Artistic performances by Lou Montgomery and others provided festive entertainment, healers offered massage and energy work, and artistic wares and crafts were on display. It was remarkable to see so many women passionate and

informed about psychedelic plants and substances, in spite of mainstream society's ban on these powerful medicines. The conference opened and closed with group rituals honoring the spirits of the visionary plants that fuel the group's healing and exploratory work. With nearly all conference participants standing in a circle, arms woven together, with hands clasped to their neighbors' hearts, a strong feeling of unity circulated through the group that was carried beyond the ritual into daily activities. Although participants had a wide variety of spiritual, religious and cultural backgrounds, they appeared enthusiastic and open-minded about the rituals. The closing ritual was facilitated by pagan priestess and witch Macha Nightmare with the help of MAPS volunteers Vanessa Vaudo and Corinna Loomis, an elderly woman named Mickey from Monterey, and myself. A closing spiral dance gave participants the opportunity to gaze into the eyes of each participant, further solidifying the connections formed at the conference. Those connections were the highlight of the gathering.

One common theme of the presentations was that women have been working with psychedelic plants since the beginning of modern human history and were, in many cultures, the first shamans and healers. As elder Cynthia Palmer said in her presentation, "If we look at women priestesses and healers of prehistory, they all worked with psychoactive plants, they were all gardeners, and they knew if you ate, smoked or drank certain plants, you would get in touch with the divine. We have to get at the root of why we behave the way we do, and plant medicines are the great tool to do that." Another common theme was the shared love and respect for psychedelics as healers and teachers with their own intelligence. As Katherine Harrison explained, "Plants and mushrooms are as eager for relationships with us as we are for them."

Conference producer Diane Darling advertised the event as a benefit for the Womens Entheogen Fund (WEF), a fund managed by MAPS to offer resources for exceptional women who help in a variety of different ways to foster the cultural re-integration of psychedelic experiences.

Although there was a successful silent auction that raised about \$1,000 for the WEF and SheShamans contributed another \$1,000, the WEF donated \$1,300 towards the event and thus realized only \$700 from SheShamans. All of the conference participants that I spoke with expressed a desire for a gathering of wise women to become an annual event and also expressed interest in forming smaller groups that meet regularly to continue generating the supportive environment for women to do their work. The urgent need for a real fundraiser for the WEF came to light based on numerous projects envisioned by presenters and participants. In spite of the legal and socio-economic hurdles faced by women, "the forces are too profound, the need is too profound to disappear. We need to be strong, wise and prolific in what we do," said conference presenter Karen Vogel.

Hopefully, in the future, events such as SheShamans-MagicMamas that empower women who work with psychedelics will continue to be held, in addition to new events that convey a clear, active intention to culturally and legally reintegrate psychedelic medicines into society.

"The peyote spirit walk is frequently like a night of hell for a morning of heaven," explained Anne Zapf, spiritual counselor at the Peyote Way Church in Arizona. Likewise, psychedelic healing work is not all fun and games. While it is important and great for women to gather together in celebration of our steadfast call to work with psychedelics, there is much hard work to be done for the protection and survival of the sacred, ancient science of healing work with psychedelics, especially by women, perhaps the original shamans.

#### **2nd Amazonian Shamanism Conference**

To help facilitate this conference, MAPS served as a fiscal agent, processing credit card orders on behalf of conference organizer Soga del Alma. In exchange, Soga del Alma offered MAPS a free registration for the conference, where I gave a presentation about MAPS and ran a MAPS information table.

In contrast to the conference that happened the preceding week in California, the 2nd Amazonian Shamanism Conference was dominated by male

healers and presenters. Of the eight *curanderos* represented at the conference, only one was a *curandera*, a female shaman. When I asked conference organizer Alan Shoemaker about this, he noted that the common South American taboo against the use of ayahuasca by menstruating women, and the cumbersome responsibilities of raising a large family from an early age dissuade many women from undergoing the demanding training necessary to become a *curandera*. The other nations represented at the conference (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, England, Holland, Sweden, Lapland, Lithuania, France, Mexico, the United States) apparently are also not immune to cultural traditions that prevent women from pursuing psychedelic healing research and work. The only two female presenters on the schedule were myself and Paula C.M. Harbrink Numan, the apprentice of *curandera* Norma Paduro and Vice President of Estrella Ayahuasca. Still, in terms of participants, the conference was quite balanced between men and women, and the conference obviously could not have happened without translator Yasmeen Grant, the friendly Peruvian staff of young women and men, and Mariella, Alan Shoemaker's wife.

This year's conference was smaller than last year, but greatly improved because ample time was allotted for *curanderos* to give their own presentations. Since the majority of conference participants came to Peru to attend the conference with the intention of participating in one or more ayahuasca ceremonies with one or more *curanderos*, being able to listen to each *curandero*'s philosophy was an appropriate balance to the presentations by European and American researchers, scientists and notables such as Dennis McKenna, Frank Echenhoffer, Benny Shanon, Richard Grossman, and Peter Gorman. While all of the presenters made significant contributions to the eclectic discussion of ayahuasca and Amazonian shamanism, the *curanderos* were better able to explain the crucial role that the *curandero* plays in shamanic healing.

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Applause, laughs and cheers erupted when Norma Paduro finished her presentation by saying, "Many blessings to President Bush and I pray that he may one day come to drink ayahuasca. Bush, with all his defects, is one of us, one of our brothers, and I wish him happiness."

and emotions," said Peruvian curandero Don Juan Tangoa Paima. In contrast to the western investment in the power of the ayahuasca medicine itself, it became clear that the power, skill, and intention of the curandero play a crucial role in the healing and visionary work that takes place in a ceremony. "A curandero is neither guru nor sage but an individual you can trust going on the path of an ayahuasca session. Ayahuasca is the teacher itself," stated Benny Shanon in his presentation. Without the curandero, he emphasized, that path could lead to dark dead-ends.

After six afternoons and evenings filled with presentations containing an enormous variety of often contradictory information, it is obvious that humanity is only beginning to comprehend the powerful nature of ayahuasca as a medicine and therapeutic tool. One curandero, Guillermo Arevalo, stated, "Right now in the Amazon, we can't say that there's any pure tradition. It's mixed. Even the indigenous are fusing together different cultural beliefs. This is not a bad thing, it's natural. When it comes out of positive intention, it's good. When one learns to balance out these different types of knowledge, it's good."

Because of this "mixing," there was a lot of confusion about some of the basic aspects of Amazonian shamanism, such as the diet followed before, after, or on a continuous basis while working with ayahuasca. For example, most of the curanderos agreed that the diet includes abstaining from salt, sugar, spices, and sex, but Norma Paduro clearly stated (to the vocal delight of some of the conference participants) that sex is acceptable during the diet. Conference participants with little experience or previous educational work with ayahuasca and Amazonian shamanism expressed frustration about not knowing which curandero's diet to follow. Such multivocality in concepts as important as diet could be dangerous for those without close guidance. One curandero stated, "To receive knowledge from ayahuasca, you must be cleansed little by little, the way one cleans a computer of a virus." Not only can a person fail to have a powerful experience with ayahuasca because of disregard or confusion about diet, it is also possible that

the person's health could be harmed by drinking ayahuasca without proper guidance. Like last year's conference, participants exhibited a strong display of faith in the mysterious operations of the universe, and the complementary recognition that science has thus far contributed very little to understanding the healing and visionary power of psychedelics and shamanism. "There are plants very sacred, very capable of doing things that science says are impossible," said Elias Mamallacta, an Ecuadorian curandero.

Many conference participants instead chose to pursue a mystical understanding of what ayahuasca is and how *curanderismo* works through direct experience. Some had powerful, life-changing experiences in which they were blessed with powerful visions and messages, while other people became violently ill, purging negative energies and toxins from their bodies, while still others perceived very little during the ayahuasca ceremonies.

"Some people consider ayahuasca a hallucinogen or drug but for me, it's a medicine that cures mind, body and spirit. I had friends who drank and were disappointed because they didn't receive the visions of DMT. They did not appreciate the healing that comes with ayahuasca," said Percy Garcia, Peruvian curandero, describing the Western focus on seeing visions. The curanderos collectively agreed that ayahuasca uniquely tailors its effects to each individual through a spiritual intelligence that operates outside of the scientific understanding of chemical processes.

According to Don Juan Tangoa Paima, "A lot of foreigners talk about curanderismo without knowing what it really is. They think it's just drinking ayahuasca. I see a lot of people drinking ayahuasca without recognizing the spirituality of the medicine." Many scientists, Benny Shanon in particular, expressed doubt as to the existence of spirits and the spirit realm, but most conference participants I talked to acknowledged having personal experiences that confirm the existence of spirits. Dennis McKenna stated in his presentation, "Spiritual evolution is something we need a lot of. Spiritual experience is difficult to quantify even though many of us are coming from a scientific perspective. Drugs have souls, chemicals have souls,

even if synthesized in a lab. Don't dis the chemicals. Everything has spirit."

A concept that united the conference participants, diverse as we were in our thoughts and feelings about ayahuasca and shamanism, was that the medicine can be a valuable tool in human survival and evolution. Applause, laughs and cheers erupted when Peruvian curandera Norma Paduro finished her presentation by saying, "Many blessings to President Bush and I pray that he may one day come to drink ayahuasca...Bush, with all his defects, is one of us, one of our brothers, and I wish him happiness." The lessons imparted by ayahuasca and curanderos were not all taken light-heartedly, though. Visionary filmmaker Jan Kounen eloquently explained that, "Drinking ayahuasca for fun or just to see visions is like surgeons using heart transplants just for fun. If you don't do it carefully, with the dieta and a good healer, you can touch realms causing difficult psychological situations." In other words, the decision to drink ayahuasca should not be made lightly—one should patiently seek out a good curandera and respect the tradition that she follows. In such work I have seen that divine clarity, healing and light can be found where there was once confusion, illness and darkness.

#### **Toward the Light**

Both of the conferences were excellent forums for networking with spiritual seekers, scientific researchers, students, practitioners, and shamanic healers, and a tremendous amount of information was relayed through dozens of comprehensive presentations and countless productive informal discussions. Still, some participants at both gatherings expressed concern about a lack of clear intention and direction. One young woman who attended both conferences lamented, "energies and resources were gathered at both conferences, but how are we going to move forward? We (advocates of shamanistic healing with psychedelic medicines) seem stuck."

As environmental and social problems have grown more dire, and as more people have studied alternatives to western allopathic medicine, more people are turning to the root of all medicine and religion: global shamanistic healing

traditions. The role of MAPS in this revitalization is to generate the scientific data and spread the information that will protect the medicines and shamans from legal persecution. Just as the Inquisition and colonization could not destroy psychedelic medicines and shamanism completely, the U.S. Drug War is failing to accomplish its mission and its end is inevitable. The question is not if psychedelic medicines will ever be legal, but when and how they will become legally accessible. MAPS exists to provide the structure for these medicines to become available in legal, safe and affordable clinics and administered by trained, trustworthy, licensed, and above all, well-intentioned therapists: contemporary shamans.

As more and more folks learn from psychedelic medicines and use them for healing, and as ancient and contemporary shamanistic modalities of healing from all over the world continue to fuse together in a cultural rejuvenation, the re-integration of shamanism and psychedelic medicine is already underway here, now. In this time of great suffering, social injustice, war, illness, imbalance, spiritual emergency, and environmental degradation, the participants of the SheShamans-MagicMamas and 2nd Amazonian Shamanism Conferences have shown their willingness to assist in the healing and evolution of humanity. There is healing work currently going on and those with courage and vision must work to protect the shamans and underground psychedelic therapists facilitating the work. It is time for those of us who attended the two conferences and all others who are able to use psychedelic medicines under the care and protection of shamans and underground psychedelic therapists to help our brothers and sisters have the same opportunities for healing. It is time for humanity to collectively move out of the dark ages of persecution of shamanism and psychedelic medicines, and toward the light the medicines so mercifully, so patiently, so lovingly offer us when we approach them with respect. •



Courtesy: Jelena Cvetkova

## A Brief History of The Women's Entheogen Fund

Annie Harrison  
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...as I began  
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funding for  
entheogenic research,  
it became clear  
to me that  
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for women  
who chose to be  
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THE WOMEN'S ENTHEOGEN FUND (WEF) was created in 2002 to support the work of women who spend a significant portion of their professional lives researching psychoactive plants and chemicals.

While women have historically played a central role in investigating the use of entheogens, their work has been funded less frequently and has been consistently underrepresented in the scientific and popular entheogenic literature.

It has been especially distressing to see relatively few female entheogenic researchers presenting their work at relevant conferences over the years. This continuing disparity was illustrated once more at the International Symposium on the Occasion of the 100th Birthday of Albert Hofmann that took place in Basel, Switzerland earlier this year. Of the seventy-three confirmed speakers at the event, only eight were women.

Some women who investigate entheogens have good reasons to pursue a lower profile than their male colleagues. Women are often more vulnerable to retaliatory action and frequently have less money to defend themselves within the judicial system. But as I began to keep track of funding for entheogenic research, it became clear to me that more support was needed for women who chose to be public about their work.

A conversation with then-MAPS staff member Carla Higdon in the fall of 2002 was the catalyst for the creation of the WEF. Carla was wondering aloud why there wasn't more support for women like her who wanted to incorporate entheogenic studies into an academic program. In response to this conversation, I created the WEF and gave Carla the first grant to pursue her education.

Since 2003, I have provided the funds for five other women to receive grants of at least \$5,000 from the WEF. Women who receive the grants make recommendations for future recipients. MAPS, which has sponsored the WEF, has also nomi-

nated women for funding. When Carla passed away earlier this year, another woman made a generous grant in Carla's memory, thus expanding the pool of donors to the fund. Other women have now stepped forward to make donations in Carla's honor and create more awareness of the WEF.

I am very pleased to see the WEF community continue to grow and acknowledge the contributions of its members. I would like to thank WEF recipients Sylvia Thyssen and Fire Erowid for taking the time to document their valuable research here in the *MAPS Bulletin*. These women form the center of a community that I hope will continue to support the work of female entheogenic investigators—a proud and sacred tradition that stretches forward from the first wise women healers of prehistory to our modern day woman healers, researchers and writers.

I plan to continue supporting the WEF and I have set aside a portion of the money in my will to continue this funding after my death. I invite others who value this work to donate financially or simply take time to honor and acknowledge the important work of our contemporary wise women.

I would like to close with a passage from the chants of María Sabina, a Mazatec *curandera* and a woman of great moral and spiritual power who spent a lifetime working with healing plants.

*She is a woman of the day*

*She is a clean woman*

*She is a well-prepared woman*

*She is a woman of light*

*She is a woman of the day*

*Because I am a woman who lightnings*

*I am a woman who thunders*

*I am a woman who shouts*

*I am a woman who whistles*

*I am a woman who looks  
into the insides of things*

## WEF Recipient: *Sylvia Thyssen*



Sylvia Thyssen  
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Clearly,  
the appreciation of  
reliable information  
about human  
experiences with  
psychoactive substances  
and the  
states of mind they  
engender  
is not limited to  
the proverbial  
psychonaut.

**I** WAS GRATEFUL to receive the Women's Entheogen Fund award in 2003 and again in 2006. The field of progressive drug education is not well funded, and grants to individuals who facilitate important grassroots efforts are exceedingly rare.

Since my tenure at MAPS, my editing and administrative work has continued to focus on drug-related topics. In 2000, I briefly joined the DanceSafe national office. The most rewarding project I coordinated during that time was bringing a group of DanceSafe chapter leaders to a harm reduction conference in Miami, Florida. In 2001, I began assisting Joel H. Brown and the Center for Education Research + Development (CERD)—perhaps best known for their pioneering work in resilience education as applied to drug education—with grant writing. CERD was producing an important drug reference manual for teachers to use in the classroom. I had the opportunity to guide the editing of this publication, relying on my deepening understanding of the disparate voices in drug information.

In 2001, I also had the great opportunity to begin contributing to the Erowid Project. At that time, Erowid had some specific similarities to MAPS' status when I began working there in 1993—a staff of one-to-two people and a growing membership base requiring increasing administrative oversight. As an information hub for a constantly shifting and growing world of drug research, both legally approved and illicit, Erowid faced other challenges as well. Large numbers of people were contacting the site daily with questions and submissions, the site's complex structure required constant updating and maintenance, and new projects needed attention. For example, at that time, Erowid was asked to manage DanceSafe's Ecstasy testing program, restructured as EcstasyData.org, a collaborative project between Erowid, MAPS and DanceSafe. Erowid also took on the multi-year digitization of the Hofmann Collection of LSD & Psilocybin References, a joint project with MAPS and the Albert Hofmann Foundation.

By 2003, I was working collaboratively with Fire, Earth and crew on document editing, site updates, membership development and volunteer management. I helped beta-test new tools that could support a growing number of donors, volunteers and submissions, and also helped identify new areas of content, such as Families & Psychoactives, Psychoactives & Sex, Death & Dying, and character vaults about little-known elders like Betty Eisner and Nina Graboi. As I continued to acquaint myself with the site's demands, following the parallel paths of information architecture and content, I joked to friends about having become a psychedelic librarian. Embracing this curious role, I continue to nourish the knowledge systems that further the cause of research, and that bring people and information together.

My current focus is on raising awareness of how specific language used to describe psychoactive drugs and experiences can deeply imprint on the thoughts and actions of others, with a significant impact on not only individual, but societal understandings of psychoactive drugs. To this end, I authored "Rumor and Ethic: Careful Communication as a Harm Reduction Measure," adapted from my presentation at the 2005 Mind States conference.

Today, Erowid is better equipped than ever to respond to the waves of data flooding the site from all sides, even as new challenges to its balance of resources arise. To test new waters, I am coordinating Erowid's presence at the November 2006 American Public Health Association Expo in Boston. Clearly, the appreciation of reliable information about human experiences with psychoactive substances and the states of mind they engender is not limited to the proverbial psychonaut. Everyone benefits from collecting and sharing knowledge, and I look forward to continuing to cultivate an atmosphere of inquiry among Erowid visitors and volunteers. •

## WEF Recipient: Fire Erowid

**I** RECEIVED the Women's Entheogen Fund (WEF) award in both 2004 and 2006. I am pleased to have received these awards, which supported my continuing work at Erowid as a psychedelic librarian—writing, collecting, sorting, archiving, and publishing information about psychoactive plants and chemicals as a contribution to the public record on these powerful materials.

I was raised with the deep expectation that I could accomplish anything and compete or contribute with the best in any field, whether male or female. My mother has a Ph.D. in statistics, an accomplishment that was quite rare for a woman in the mid-1960s. My B.A. in humanities and my undergraduate thesis were both related to women's studies (in a historical context) and I've continued to incorporate this part of my history into my work by asserting gender equality and balance in everything that I do.

This can be an interesting challenge in the world of psychoactive studies, which is no more immune to assumptions about gender than are other fields. Erowid often receives letters addressed simply to Dear Gentlemen, highlighting the common assumption that men must be in charge. Despite the fact that I have been the Director of the Erowid project since its inception, many people automatically assume that Earth (my partner) is the authority because he is male. For example, he is more often asked to speak at conferences or to the media than I. We have responded to this particular bias by always presenting together at conferences, revealing how we work as a team. We also politely draw attention to and correct other types of gender biases whenever they appear.

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My work on Erowid is supported entirely by donations and grants such as the WEF award. In 2004, this work included the redesign of Erowid to implement a new style and format with better navigation and improved search functionality. Another large project undertaken that year involved significant expansion of the law vaults. Nearly 100 new law pages were added, making comprehensive legal information about a wide variety of psychoactive materials more available and consistent. The Erowid library and book list also saw significant expansion with the addition of information about more than 100 titles. My hope is that cataloging information about these books will help pull together some of the important, yet more difficult-to-find, pre-internet knowledge about psychoactives, both by creating a reference library for use in our work as well as advertising the existence of these printed source materials.

The WEF award also supported work on a broad array of articles and information published on Erowid. This includes the tracking and addition of information about new substances such as 3C-P, 5-MeO-DALT, TMA-2, 4-HO-DIPT, 2C-T-21, Arundo donax and many more. Though they are too numerous to name here, new articles include a "U.S. Drug Control Timeline" and "The

Spirits of Maguey," both published in *Erowid Extracts*.

As has been the goal of the Erowid project from the beginning, we will continue to balance the information we present, between technical and artistic, scientific and spiritual, objective and subjective, in an attempt to provide equal voice to a wide variety of viewpoints, values, beliefs, and thoughts. •

## From Arcturus to Love Creek: **MAPS Moves Across the Continent**



Sarah Hufford  
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THE MAPS OFFICE STAFF HAS accomplished an intricate and exhilarating feat, moving our headquarters thousands of miles cross-country. From 1998 to May 2006, the office was located in Arcturus, a house that MAPS President Rick Doblin built in Sarasota in the 1970s while studying psychedelic therapy and laying the groundwork for his drug policy reform efforts. Arcturus is a psychedelic, hand-made art house, practically a living organism, with walls of cedar and granite that soar to skylights and rainbow-colored stained glass depicting a cosmic Eden on a turtle's back. Arcturus seemed a fitting base for MAPS, and, with New College of Florida nearby, the location provided a small but steady flow of recent college graduates and students to run operations and drive the mission forward.

After three months of dedicated *Craigslist* hunting, I found a listing titled "Magical Sanctuary by a Babbling Brook"...

As MAPS celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, it is burgeoning from adolescence into adulthood, both literally and metaphorically. We're experiencing a time of transition on many levels, as our successes demand that we expand to accommodate our achievements and prepare for the new challenges that lie ahead. With transition comes growing pains, and we were indeed feeling the restrictions imposed upon MAPS by our previous location. Our 400 sq. ft. office space was bursting at the seams, and, though Sarasota had served us well, the lack of a supportive atmosphere was limiting.

Last winter we began searching for a new home for MAPS that would provide new opportunities for educational outreach, community-building, and a more desirable location for our staff and future staff. Our short list included Chicago,



MAPS' new two-story office at Love Creek has a "shipping facility" on ground level with a spacious office and meeting room upstairs.

We're experiencing a time of transition on many levels, as our successes demand that we expand to accommodate our achievements and prepare for the new challenges that lie ahead.

Boston, Asheville NC, and, of course, the San Francisco Bay Area, which eventually emerged as the front-runner. The Bay Area has a rich history of scientific, cultural, and political innovation, and is already home to a substantial proportion of MAPS' members and supporters.

Once we settled on a general vicinity for the new MAPS office, we kept our options open, looking for homes, offices, and live/work spaces everywhere in the area, particularly in Oakland, Berkeley, and Santa Cruz. After three months of dedicated *Craigslist* hunting, I found a listing titled "Magical Sanctuary by a Babbling Brook," for a property in Ben Lomond, a small town nestled in the San Lorenzo Valley, 10 miles north of Santa Cruz. To our amazement, everything about it fit our needs—affordability, accessibility to the larger communities of the Bay Area, a professional office space on the property separate from the living space, and plenty of nature to replenish our energies. Once

we had all visited, there was no doubt about the suitability of the spot, and the move was on.

Despite a plethora of logistical concerns, we managed to organize, pack, and then deliver the entirety of the MAPS office safely to the opposite shore. Upon our arrival, we were amazed at the welcome we received, as many local MAPS members and supporters came to offer their support and assistance. When our moving truck met us at Love Creek, a dozen volunteers helped us unload, easing our transition. Others brought us meals, helped set up our computer network, and assembled furniture. We've settled in quite nicely, thankful for the beautiful spot we've found and eager to engage our new surroundings. The new MAPS headquarters at Love Creek is thriving with activity, as we work together in the name of social justice and scientific freedom, with the intention to change the world! •



MAPS staffer Julia Onnie-Hay showing MAPS' new Love Creek office some love.

IN PREPARATION for MAPS' 20th anniversary celebration at Burning Man 2006, members of the MAPS Burning Man camp hosted gatherings around the country to raise funds, practice working together on event coordination, and raise awareness of MAPS and our Burning Man project. These events ranged from thumping all-night raves in Chicago to more intimate affairs such as

a dinner and art show in Asheville, North Carolina, captured in the following photo montage. MAPS would like to thank all of the people who helped out at these events. If you are interested in coordinating a MAPS fundraising event in your community, please let us know by contacting the MAPS office.

## Entheon Village Burning Man Fundraiser in Asheville, North Carolina



**A** Forty-five psychedelic enthusiasts dine in the Flood Gallery while listening to a keynote speech by MAPS President Rick Doblin, Ph.D. (upper left). The fundraising event drew a crowd of local MAPS members and supporters as well as some who were visiting from out of town for Transformus, the North Carolina regional burn or for the Buckminster Fuller Institute's Design Science Lab, which both ended earlier in the day.

**B** MAPS Program Director Valerie Mojeiko emcees between courses, welcoming a wide variety of speakers.

**C** Chef Josh Sonstroem samples the dessert—Rose Cornbread Cake served with cashew-fruit sorbet with North Carolina moonshine, peach-balsamic demi, rosehips, rose petals, roasted jalapeno, and pepita brittle.

**D** Event co-organizer and local glass artist Logan MacSporran (sporting a colander), Yugoslavian artist Jelena Cvetkova, MAPS videographer Daniel Potthast, and former MAPS staffer Brandy Doyle pose after a hard night of work.

**E** Psychedelic abstract expressionist paintings and chimerical centerpieces by Jelena Cvetkova transformed the industrial warehouse space into a surrealist dining hall. Local glass artist Logan MacSporran and Flood gallery President Sean Pace aka "Jinx" also exhibited art at the event.

**F** MAPS Resident Chef, Josh Sonstroem of Sirius Catering, oversees preparation of his Indian-inspired entrée in the makeshift kitchen.

## St. Albert and the LSD Revelation Revolution

Alex Grey

These were  
dark days  
in 1943,  
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psychically  
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Switzerland.



**N**JANUARY 11th, 2006, the Swiss chemist who discovered LSD, Dr. Albert Hofmann, turned 100 years old. The birthday celebration was an elegant gathering of family, friends and colleagues held in Basel, Switzerland at the Museum of Cultures. My wife Allyson and I were invited because of our association with psychedelic culture and participation in a Symposium later that week. Distinguished guests at the birthday gathering spoke in German, but even monolingualistic Americans could understand the reverence and enthusiasm shown in speeches praising Dr. Hofmann as a scientist and a sage. A reception followed where invited guests mingled and toasted. Allyson and I greeted many old friends and made some new ones. I was intrigued to learn that none of the members of Dr. Hofmann's large family or any of his relatives, except for his wife, had ever tried LSD. The good doctor has always steered away from advocacy, yet has come to feel that some kind of divine intervention or destiny did play a role in his discovery.

I was especially glad to see Stanislav Grof, M.D., and H.R. Giger because they could not be in attendance at the Symposium. Stan Grof is the leading psychiatric researcher, having led over 4,000 LSD psychotherapeutic sessions, and premier cartographer of the spectrum of consciousness that LSD gives a person access to. Grof has commented that LSD is a tool for exploring the mind in the same way that the telescope gives one access to the celestial realms and the microscope gives one access to the world of the cellular, molecular and atomic. He has also included in all his research some amazing drawings and paintings by LSD patients and fine artists that help describe the various altered states of awareness. Grof has used Giger's work in many of his books, such as *Realms of the Human Unconscious* and *Beyond the Brain*. When I asked the obvious question to Giger as to whether LSD had made a difference in his own work, he would only say, "Oh no, no, it is against the law, it is forbidden!" I guess you've got to respect a man's privacy. Though I do admire artists like R. Crumb and Keith Haring who admitted they used LSD and that it was critical in

the development of their own style. That is the way Allyson and I feel regarding our own work. The next day we and some good friends visited the Giger Museum, which is an astonishing, in-depth immersion into the artist's unique visionary shadow realm. You have to be a bit determined to find Giger's castle in the small and beautifully Swiss alpine town of Gruyere. We enjoyed seeing the biggest collection of his work ever on display. The dark galleries felt filled with the demons of modern life, a festering biomechanical psychosexual orgy of predators and victims. On an upper floor Giger exhibits some of his collaborative works with several artists and then has several galleries filled with his own art collection, which includes Joe Coleman's amazing Charles Manson portrait and a few beautiful originals by Ernst Fuchs. No one leaves without getting a drink at the Giger Bar. Gaudi meets Gunter Von Hagen.

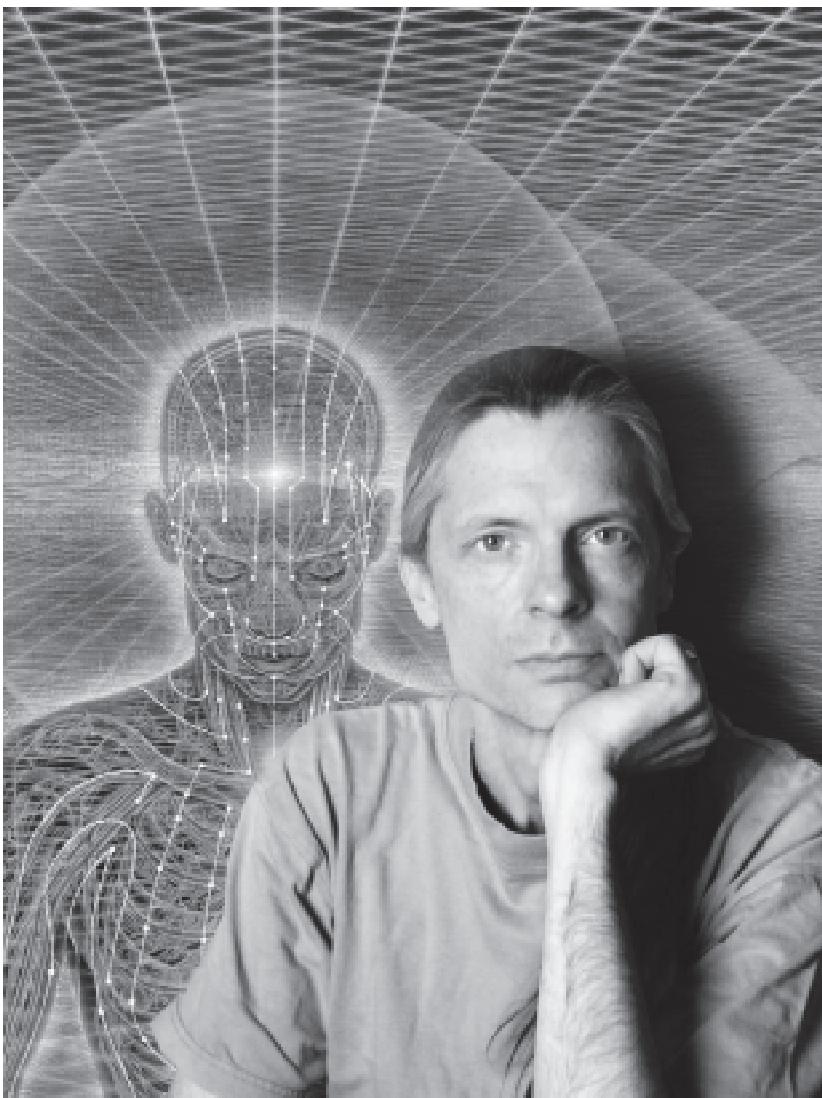
To honor Dr. Hofmann's centennial, a three-day LSD symposium was held January 14, 15, 16 in Basel, Switzerland. Leading scientific, psychiatric, pharmaceutical, legal, artistic, mystical voices spoke on the various physiological, personal,

social and spiritual impacts of LSD. Dr. Albert Hofmann spoke the first and last evening and was showered with praise and applause by over two thousand attendees (we also sang, "Happy Birthday to you"). Hofmann was swarmed with fans wherever he went, and one of the Symposium announcers said, Dr. Hofmann apologizes that he will not be able to sign everyone's book, because he explained, "I'm no longer 90."

Dr. Hofmann first synthesized the compound in 1938, while researching ergot derivatives as a chemist for Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in Basel. The substance was tested on lab animals with no interesting results, so like hundreds of similar test compounds, investigation of this drug was abandoned.

Yet, in 1943, at the horrific height of WWII and shortly after Fermi made his discovery that led to the atomic bomb, Hofmann had a "peculiar presentiment" to re-synthesize LSD. These were dark days in 1943, I imagine the smoke of the ovens of Auschwitz psychically wafting over Switzerland. Hofmann said that never before or since had he any similar "presentiment." His remix of LSD-25 in April of 1943 was when he discovered the psychological

vortex of acid. He experienced overwhelming fear of dying and feelings of having left his body and later, heavenly kaleidoscopic visions. The first LSD trip, April 19, 1943, is also widely known as "Bicycle Day" because of Hofmann's wild bike ride from his lab to his home through the streets of Basel, full of perceptual distortions, not knowing whether he would ever return from his madness. The last element I painted on the portrait was a little bike riding Hofmann, and in honor of the good doctor, I was on LSD as I painted it.



In my portrait of Dr. Hofmann, the eye of transcendental spirit in the upper left hand corner of the painting releases spiralic streams of primordial rainbow spheres of potential, one of which becomes a compassionate alchemical angel, whose tears drip down to anoint or "create" the LSD molecule that the doctor holds in his hands, and a demon, here identified with Nazi power, tugs or pushes at it. LSD opens a visionary gateway to the heart, as shown by the spiral of fractally infinitizing eyes resembling the stripey eye-spheres of the molecule, swirling into the center of the chest. On St. Albert's shoulderblade is a portrait of Paracelsus, the Alchemist of Basel, 500 years ago, who is credited with founding modern Chemistry, yet his alchemical goal was to discover the Philosopher's Stone. Alchemy was the art and science of the transmutation of the elements, like turning lead into gold and the identification of the soul of the alchemist with the chemical transformations as a metaphor of their journey to enlightenment. Modern Chemistry took the psyche and mystery out of the material weighed and measured world, reducing the world to a heap of atoms. LSD brought psyche

back front and center to the chemical material world, that is partly why I believe that LSD is the Philosopher's Stone, the discovery of which, also in the town of Basel, is the result of an alchemical process put in motion by the great Paracelsus.

I put a lot of LSD personalities and symbolism in the aura of Dr. Hofmann. Some of these people were Dr. Hofmann's friends, like Aldous Huxley, Gordon Wasson, Maria Sabina, and Richard Evans Schultes, each of whom had a special connection to psychedelics. Huxley wrote

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and said there were  
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fearlessly about the psychedelic experience in *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, which also talks about visionary states and works of art. His dying wish was to be injected with 100 mcg. of LSD and this was noted by his wife Laura to assist his transition. Gordon Wasson brought the magic psilocybin mushrooms to the world by attending the Mexican *curandera*, Maria Sabina's sacred mushroom healing ceremony, then writing about it in *Life* magazine. Hofmann later analyzed the mushroom and distilled the previously unclassified psychedelic, psilocybin.

I put the classic folks in like Timothy Leary, Ram Das, Ralph Metzner, Grof, Ott and McKenna. I tried to put in a few lesser known psychedelic stories, like the Pittsburgh Pirate, Dock Ellis, who pitched a “no-hitter” on acid and said there were comet trails on every ball. An article originally appeared in *The Daily Mail* (London) on Sunday, August 8, 2004, with the headline, “Crick was high on LSD when he discovered the secret of life!”, explained how Francis Crick used it for creative thinking, in this way unraveling the structure of DNA, the discovery that won him the Nobel Prize. Directly under Crick is Kary Mullis, who won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1993 for his invention of PCR, a method for detecting even the smallest amount of DNA in ancient materials. “Would I have invented PCR if I hadn’t taken LSD? I seriously doubt it,” he says. “I could sit on a DNA molecule and watch the polymers go by. I learnt that partly on psychedelic drugs.”

One of the best summaries of the mystical impact of acid was George Harrison’s *Rolling Stone* interview from 1987. In it he says, “For me, 1966 was the time when the whole world opened up and had a greater meaning. But that was a direct result of LSD. It was like opening the door, really, and before, you didn’t even know there was a door there. I had such an overwhelming feeling of well-being, that there was a God, and I could see him in every blade of grass. It was like gaining hundreds of years of experience within twelve hours. It changed me, and there was no way back to what I was before.”

The LSD Symposium could be a turning point in the story of this amazing molecule, as the subtitle of the conference, “From Problem Child to Wonder Drug” suggests. Thousands of people from all over the world came together to discuss the proven possibilities of LSD in psychotherapy, spirituality, the arts, for creative problem-solving in all fields, and how LSD was misused and abused by the CIA, and also by many people seeking a recreational high who catalyzed their own latent psychoses.

Yet, as has been proven in the Good Friday Experiment and in follow-up studies, psychedelics can evoke a mystical experience and bring a person closer to God. Even if only a glimpse of the infinite, a person never forgets that encounter. The hope is that such a vision of unity can help bring people to care more for themselves, each other, and our world. I believe that taken in the proper set and setting, LSD can be the right medicine for humanity’s ailing and alienated soul. God help that it find a more fair legal and spiritual status around the world in the 21st century. One of the most intensely beautiful moments from the trip to Basel came when Dr. Hofmann generously signed the back of my portrait of him, adding also the date of his birthday and the LSD formula. He wagged his finger at me and in Germanic-sounding English said, “You’ve got the eye!” He agreed to sign an edition of 50 prints to help fund scientific psychedelic research through MAPS, and to assist our cultural center in New York City, the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors ([www.cosm.org](http://www.cosm.org)). Forty-nine of the portraits have been sold, and print 1/50 will be auctioned online in October 2006. St. Albert and the LSD Revelation Revolution will be on display in the Chapel. Please come visit. •

*This article previously appeared in Juxtapoz Art and Culture Magazine, [www.juxtapoz.com/](http://www.juxtapoz.com/)*



Rick Doblin

**Rick Doblin, MAPS founder and President**, earned his Ph.D. in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Doblin was also in Stan and Christina Grof's first training group to receive certification as a Holotropic Breathwork practitioner.



Valerie Mojeiko

**Valerie Mojeiko, Program Director and Clinical Research Associate**, studied psychology with an emphasis on drug addiction and psychedelic therapy for four years at New College of Florida. Currently, she provides data monitoring services for MAPS-sponsored research, and coordinates other projects.



Julia Onnie-Hay

**Julia Onnie-Hay, Director of Educational Outreach**, started working at MAPS after five years of volunteering while earning her B.A. in cultural anthropology from New College of Florida. She is a student of ancient shamanistic and contemporary mystical healing methods, and desires to cultivate r/evolutionary sustainable cultures through grassroots activism.



Jag Davies

**Jag Davies, Director of Communications**, has a B.A. in cultural anthropology and enjoys examining the intersections of drug policy, media, culture and consciousness. He has been working at MAPS since 2003, where he coordinates outreach projects, research advocacy, and educational materials, including the *MAPS Bulletin*, monthly email news, and website content.



Sarah Hufford

**Sarah Hufford, Membership and Sales Manager**, joined the MAPS staff in the Fall of 2005, after receiving her bachelor's degree in psychology from New College of Florida. She values psychedelics and marijuana as powerful medicines, and hopes to help integrate their safe and conscientious use into our society.

## MAPS: Who We Are

MAPS IS A MEMBERSHIP-BASED ORGANIZATION working to assist researchers worldwide to design, fund, conduct, obtain governmental approval for, and report on psychedelic research in humans. Founded in 1986, MAPS is an IRS approved 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation funded by tax-deductible donations from members.

MAPS has previously funded basic scientific research in both humans and animals into the safety of MDMA (3,4-methylene-dioxymethamphetamine, Ecstasy) and has opened a Drug Master File for MDMA at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. MAPS is now primarily focused on assisting scientists to conduct human studies to generate essential information about the risks and therapeutic benefits of MDMA, other psychedelics, and marijuana, with the goal of eventually gaining governmental approval for their medical uses.

ALBERT EINSTEIN WROTE:

*"Imagination is more important than knowledge."*

If you can even faintly imagine a cultural reintegration of the use of psychedelics and the states of mind they engender, please join MAPS in supporting the expansion of scientific knowledge in this area. Progress is possible with the support of those who care enough to take individual and collective action.

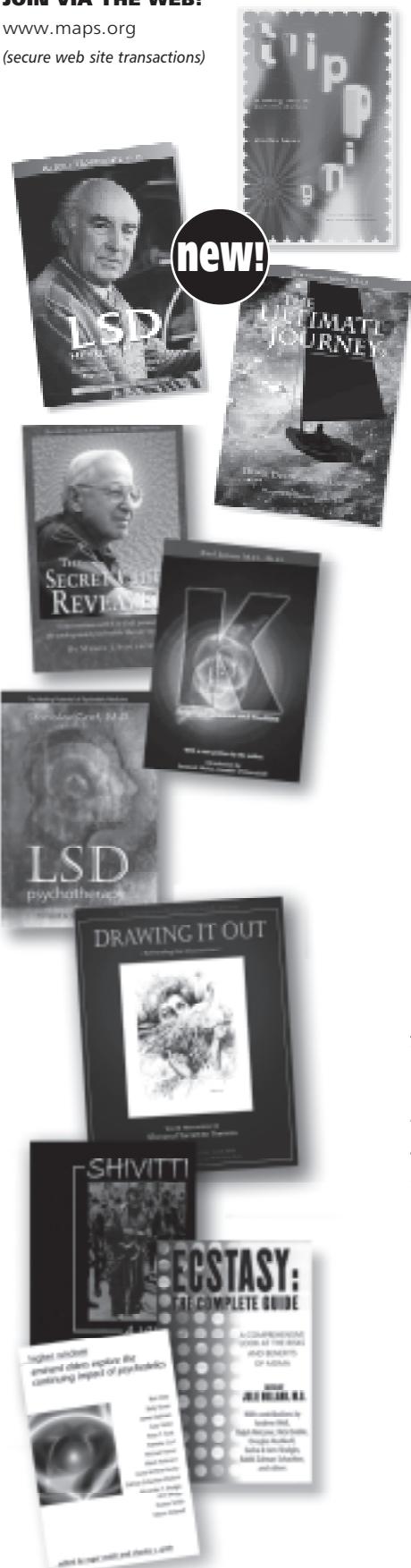
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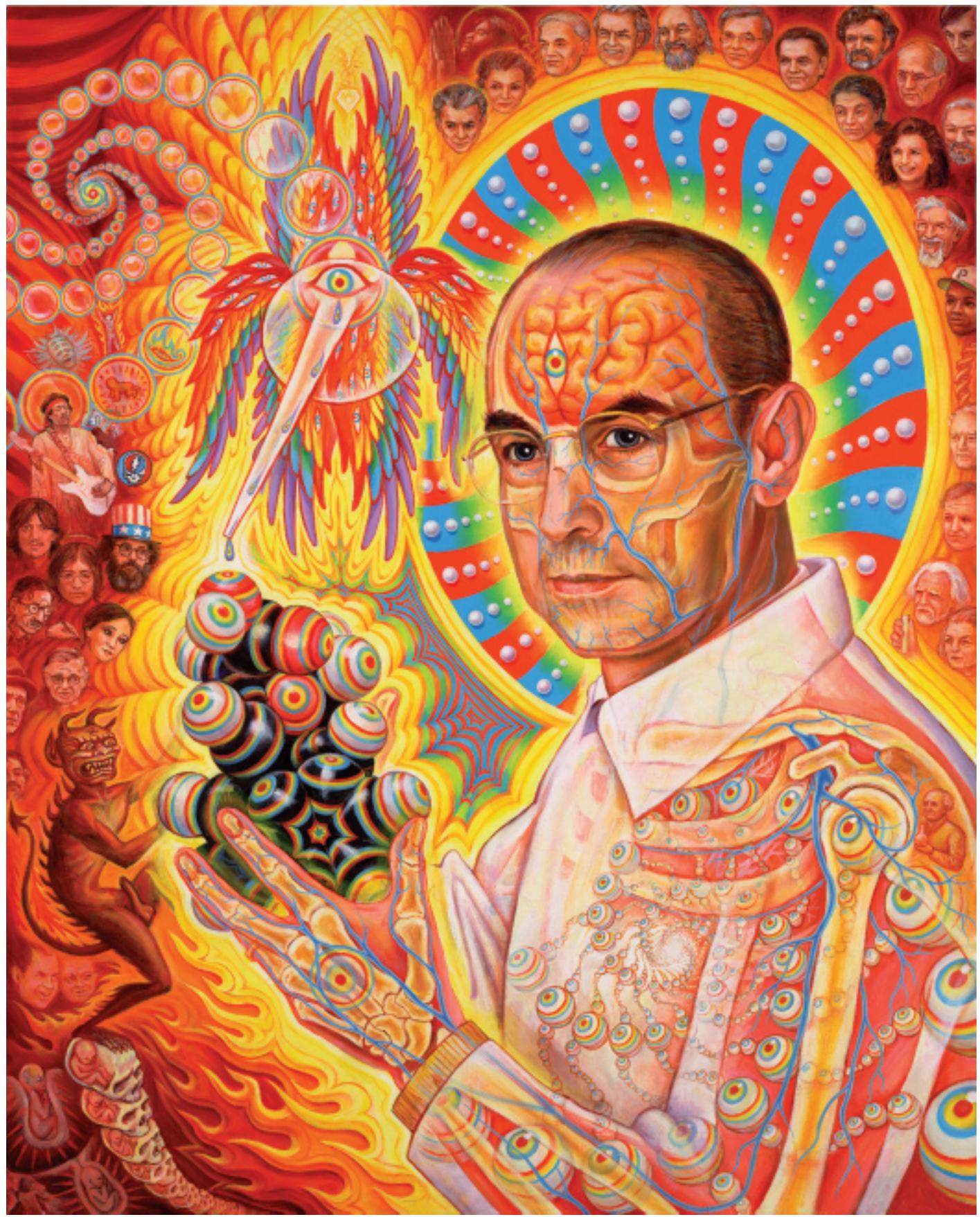
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*"...Because I am a woman*

*who lightnings*

*I am a woman who thunders*

*I am a woman who shouts*

*I am a woman who whistles*

*I am a woman who*

*looks into*

*the insides*

*of things"*

—Marina Sabina

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