



DIVINE SPARK

The cover of this MAPS bulletin is an image from visionary artist Alex Grey's triptych *Holy Fire*, which was inspired by one of Alex's early MDMA experiences. We thought it was an appropriate choice to express our emotions at obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for Dr. Mithoefer's MAPS-sponsored MDMA/PTSD study (see page 7).

The rest of the images on this page and on the back cover are from the 2003 Burning Man Festival, at which MAPS provided psychedelic emergency services. (Article on page 28). In the photo above, members of the Fire Conclave open the festivities at the Burning of the Man, the climax of the week-long festival. The photo below depicts the more somber burning of the Temple of Honor, at which Burning Man participants remember loved ones by leaving notes and tokens inside. As the temple burned, MAPS president Rick Doblin threw in the fire the original copies of the last set of documents about protocol design issues exchanged between MAPS and the IRB. This symbolized his hopes that we would finally move beyond the paperwork of the approval process to the therapeutic work of the study itself.

On September 29, 2003, we received word that Dr. Mithoefer's study won IRB approval (see page 5 for details). After almost two years of bureaucratic and political delays, we are moving to the next phase – seeking a DEA Schedule I license, and then at last beginning to treat patients.

Fire evokes creation, destruction, purification, chaos, and mystery. Its warmth keeps hope alive during the darkness and cold of winter – as celebrated in the candlelit festivals of Christmas, Hanukkah, and other winter celebrations throughout history. As we persevere through what has been a dark season for psychedelic research, we thank you for your continued support as together we keep the light of compassion and reason burning.