

JOHN SPENCER BERESFORD

March 28, 1924 — September 2, 2007



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JOHN BERESFORD embodied many lives during this incarnation. He was a healer, a trailblazer, a gentle soul, a truth seeker, an activist, a messenger, a curator, and a warrior for justice.

Healer – John earned his initial degree in medicine at London Hospital Medical College in 1952 and practiced in New York from 1953 to 1963 as a pediatrician. During the Vietnam War John refused to become a U.S. citizen and therefore was temporarily suspended from practicing medicine. Thus, John elected to work underground as a general practitioner in a walk-in clinic in Harlem. In 1974, John moved to Canada and entered the field of psychiatry.

Trailblazer – John’s mission was to wake up the world. While working as Assistant Professor at New York Medical College, teaching pediatrics, John ordered a gram of pure LSD (LOT# H-00047) from Sandoz Laboratories. Shortly afterwards, in 1963, John founded the Agora Scientific Trust: the world’s first research organization devoted to investigating LSD’s effects.

Gentle Soul – Although John was born into an affluent family, he shunned material possessions and spent his life giving to others. From 1990 to 1994 John lived in a small trailer, without the benefits of electricity or running water, among Buddhist monks at a monastery in Canada. This was a time of great introspection for John.

Truth Seeker – John was instrumental in jump-starting the spiritual and political revolution of the sixties. He generously shared his “magic gram” and opened the doors of perception to a large number of key people seeking answers to the mysteries of the mind/universe.

Activist – John founded the Committee on Unjust Sentencing in 1991, and in ’94 moved to Los Angeles to become more actively involved in this effort to raise awareness of the draconian sentencing laws passed during the late ’80s. He collaborated with Karen Hoffman and Becky Stewart to create and publish *The Tallahassee Project*—a collection of testimonials and photos of women incarcerated at the Federal Prison in Tallahassee, Florida.

Messenger – John regularly travelled to remote prisons on visiting days to see the many POWs he corresponded with, bringing hope and determination to the downtrodden. He arranged for John Humphrey to enter several prisons to video and interview POWs. John later testified before the U.S. Sentencing Commission in Washington DC, sharing the footage and stories of those prisoners.

Curator – As secretary of the Albert Hofmann Foundation, John archived a huge collection of art and printed materials related to LSD, including all of the popular and scientific articles about LSD and psilocybin collected by

Sandoz between 1943 and 1986. His dream was to eventually create a museum open to the public, so that the historical evidence of the important impact of LSD was always available and could never be forgotten or buried.

Warrior for Justice – John became a voice for drug POWs who were silenced behind bars. He insisted that the plight of prisoners be addressed at the Drug Policy Foundation Conference in Santa Monica in 1994. In 1996 he teamed up with Werner Pieper in Germany, to host the First International Drug War Prisoners Conference, where they debuted their “Heidelberg Declaration,” releasing the clarion call: *Kein Knast für Drogen!* A decade later at the 2006 International Symposium in Switzerland, John arranged for Karen Hoffman to gift Albert Hofmann with a book of messages from U.S. drug POWs in honor of Albert’s 100th birthday. ☞



At the Albert Hofmann Museum (LEFT TO RIGHT): Kathy Wylie, Ron Brettin, Stacey Brettin, Michael Gilbert, John Beresford, and Don Wylie. • John speaking at the First International Conference for Drug War Prisoners. • John with Karen Hoffman at the 2006 LSD conference.



R E M E M B R A N C E S

One day, John stuck his head into my studio to say hello. An artist, I lived in a communal farm house in Ottawa, Ontario. John was there to see a potential publisher for *The Tallahassee Project*. A few days later, we went for coffee. Soon, we were going on long walks together and those walks evolved into a journey—a journey that led to matrimony and the happiest, most fulfilling days of my life.

Meeting John was like finding a tall glass of water in the desert, because I had gone so long without actually connecting with someone on the same level as I did with John. John was so humble. Every day was a learning experience with him. One day, on a visit to his older son's home in Long Island Sound, John sat down at the piano and played Chopin. I had no idea he had any musical talent whatsoever! That was the essence of life with John.

I feel fortunate to have met John and to have spent those final eight years with him, sharing, meeting his vast and loving group of friends, learning about his efforts to expose the drug war for the ugly monster it is. If there was one goal John would have most liked to achieve, it would have been to wipe the drug war off the face of the earth—to free the prisoners and stop the endless suffering associated with the prohibition of drugs.

Virginia Beresford

Dear Virginia Beresford,

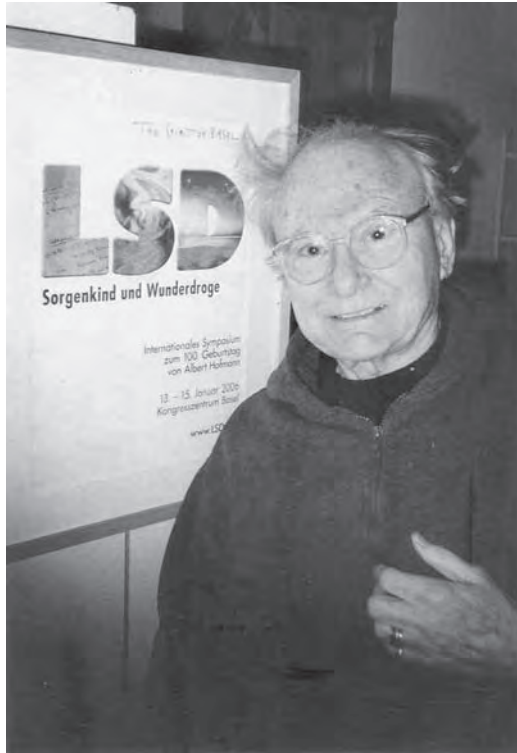
It is a beautiful comforting letter into which you transform the sad message of the death of John Beresford, my dear friend, your dear husband. My deepest thanks go to you for this personal and all embracing love. I am touched by the enclosed photograph of John with the LSD poster. It expresses his close connection with my problem child. His features express love and happiness.

Special deep thanks go to you for reporting the heavenly beautiful Buddhist ceremonies accompanying the enlightenment of our dear John. I send you best wishes for good health and happiness.

With warm regards,

Albert Hofmann





*All darkness disappears
From those
Who carry the radiance of the sun
In their hearts*

— Sufi saying

JOHN WAS INDEED one of those shining lights, in the sense that his friendship was genuine. From where I write this letter—which is inside prison walls, where I’ve been for seventeen calendars—John has reminded me that someone believed in me, and understood the complexities that landed a fairly intelligent and creatively gifted black man from the inner city ghetto in prison. He motivated me to never give up. He believed in my talent to write and encouraged me to pursue it as an occupation, even from behind these prison walls. I am proud to say that John lived to see me become a published author. John has passed but he has not gone away. He exists in all that he has touched. In loving memory of a good man.

Reginald Cash Alexander



I first became aware of John by way of an Op-Ed he wrote in February of '99 that was published in an Illinois paper. The article can be read online at <http://tinyurl.com/2ux9qm>. I found it highly inspiring with regard to my efforts as a drug policy activist. I still recommend the item to people. Imagine my surprise a couple of years later upon meeting Sue Ellen and finding that she was one of the drug POW's that John corresponded with.

Jay Bergstrom



I only got to meet John once in Basel, at the big conference for Albert Hofmann's 100th birthday. I'm so glad I had the chance to speak with John face to face, as short as our time together was. I wish I would have had the opportunity to get to know him better. He was a cherished member of the Albert Hofmann Foundation and we miss him dearly. John mentioned that he was writing a book; I hope it got to a status where it will eventually see the light of day. John caused a lot of good in this world. He deserves more credit than he gets—the world would be very different without him. I can't begin to imagine how it would look. My best wishes and condolences to his family and friends. I will think of him on the day of his memorial and join you in spirit from the East Bay!

Oliver Billsberger

President of the Albert Hofmann Foundation

WHILE INCARCERATED AT CARSWELL, Texas, in my mail (didn't get much), I got a letter from John. It gave me hope; made the tears run that somebody cared. Such began our correspondence. My illuminated letters caught the eye of Virginia, whom I recently met in Basel. My monthly letters took me away from being in prison, if just for a moment. Ram John, thank you. Hip hip hooray!

Sue Ellen Charlton



John joined the Albert Hofmann Foundation for the sole purpose of realizing a vision and dream called "The Albert Hofmann Museum." During his time with the Foundation, John solicited for and archived a vast treasure trove of LSD memorabilia, including safekeeping the original chronicles from the Sandoz Library. He focused his energy and attention entirely to establishing a museum devoted to the history and beneficial attributes of LSD on mankind. With the generous donation of the ground floor of Don and Kathy Wylie's commercial building, we succeeded in establishing a temporary home for the Albert Hofmann Museum in Pasadena, California.

Ron Brettin



John was a significant player in the psychedelic movement in the West. This is certainly good karma for the next incarnation.

Ram Dass



John always used to tell me to never give up hope, which I don't have very much of. I spent ten years in prison with thirteen more to go. I've been fighting a battle with Hep C that I can gladly say I've finally won. It's not easy to take the BOP to court, but I achieved a cure. John was very supportive of me and all I went through.

Franki Delise

SUCH A WONDERFUL HUMAN BEING. I hope he will be reborn soon. We need him more than ever. Sorry, can only be there in spirit.

James Fadiman



I returned from a magical trip in the Himalayas where I was staying with Sadhus at the spring of the Ganges, and immediately got a telephone call from Casey Hardison about John's memorial. It is the greatest honour for me to write a few words about my meeting with John, as he burnt an indelible impression in my memory of a wonderful compassionate man who made one proud of being part of the entheogenic community. I am so sorry that he is no longer with us, his loss will be felt by many. I last met John at Albert Hofmann's centenary celebrations in Basel in January 2006. I was deeply moved by his sincerity, integrity, and nobility, and by his dedication of his considerable energies to keeping the flame of hope burning for those most unfortunate warriors who have become POWs in the "War on Drugs." In his care for the least fortunate of our circle, I could see a man who lived by the highest spiritual concepts of compassion and caring. I was greatly moved by my meeting with him, and inspired by encountering someone who lived so fully according to the principles and practices espoused by a culture based on higher states of consciousness. Dear John, your work will reap rich fruits. *Vale Atque Ave*—Farewell and hail!

Amanda Feilding, Lady Neidpath



I've been swamped with something that I know John would be proud of, and I wish he were here to advise me about. I miss his wisdom and love. I try to hear him at night when I go to sleep, imagining that I am dying... His life changed the world in very profound and very good ways.

Robert Forte



I dearly loved John and wish I could be there. My love, thoughts, and spirit will be with you all. John was remarkable. His generosity of spirit and the depth of his consciousness research made him a true pioneer and—as he liked to think—he, not Michael Hollingshead, was the Man Who Turned On the World.

Lynda Francis

JOHN AND I CORRESPONDED with a number of the same drug war victims in the early 1990s. After repeatedly hearing his name mentioned by my prisoner pen pals, I eventually tracked him down, certain that we shared common interests. At the time I was only vaguely aware of the legacy of his “magic gram,” and our discussions centered around shared political activism. We finally met in person in 1997, when I invited him to be my guest at the Mind States conference I produced in Berkeley. I had also asked Mikki Norris to set up her Human Rights 95 display (see www.hr95.org), featuring photographs and stories of drug POWs. There, for the first time, I saw the faces of a half-dozen of the prisoners with whom we both corresponded. It was a powerful, heart-wrenching, humanizing moment. When John turned to me and asked if he could give a short talk on the fly about the plight of our friends, I crunched an already tight schedule and got him on stage with a microphone.

More recently, John was an invaluable ally and sounding board regarding the 2006 outing of MAPS-supported psychedelic researcher John Halpern’s under-reported work as a snitch for the DEA in the trial against purported LSD chemists William Leonard Pickard and Clyde Apperson. After my own article on the topic appeared in *The Entheogen Review*, John was inspired to pen a response—“Halperngate II: Voices from Behind Bars,” co-written by six drug war prisoners—widening the scope of opinions available to the public on a topic of crucial importance to everyone involved in psychedelics at all levels. (These articles are posted online at www.entheogenreview.com.)

John dedicated his life to creating a better world. He was an inspirational light of hope for many who felt abandoned in darkness. In thinking about the work that was John’s passion, an image of Dr. Seuss’ Lorax—lifted by the seat of his pants through a smoggy hole in the sky, glancing backwards at a placard on a small pile of rocks with the one word “UNLESS”—springs to my mind. “UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” John Beresford was someone who cared a whole awful lot. He will be missed, not forgotten.

Jon Hanna



Dear John,

Life is transformation. Life is a cycle of death and rebirth, renewing itself each day. Before, during, and after sunrise; before LSD, during LSD, and after LSD; son, father, holy spirit; this maiden, mother, crone who reads this now reflects your spirit in that she, like you, gives voice to my wilderness. It is through your service to those, like me, in this gulag archipelago of the

so-called “War on Drugs” that we met and, with grace, it is through the service of Virginia’s vocal vibratory matrix that I bid: “Fare you well, I love you more than words can tell, listen to the river sing sweet songs to rock [our] soul.”

Ineffable though it is, as the sun sets over scorched Malibu earth, it sets on an era in which the wisdom to explore the depths of inner-space was intrepidly affirmed by a group of pioneering psychonautical evolutionaries, from which you have ascended and from which we, yes all of us present here and now, will follow suit. Until then, we are left with nothing but your gaseous vapors, a bit of carbon, some salts, a few trace elements, and the many memories of your extensions of will, which touched, nurtured, and inspired our love...

So, John, thanks for the fertilizer. By recycling yourself, our environment is ever richer. “Find the cost of freedom, buried in the ground.” You were all ways of service—the Bodhisattva’s pledge—from your early days of LSD research to facilitating the conveyance of letters to Albert from us incarcerated entheogenæ, you have served me with model compassion and, now, I am responsible; for I am of the generation which your freedom beget and it is on your trail, a golden road of unlimited devotion to the wilderness of “internal freedom,” that I travel swiftly. For that, I am grateful.

I often remind myself that it is the early evolutionary psychonauts such as yourself that boldly paved the way for me to “stand strong like Jah Lion” in knowing confidence that our shared vision of an Entheogenic Reformation will triumph over any misanthropic Pharmacratic Inquisition. And so, it is to your clan that we, or certainly I, owe a debt which, as I see it, can only be absolved through frank communication, integrity, and a willingness to learn not only from your mistakes but also from your success.

And whilst the chief success of the pioneer psychedelic clan is that “the entheogenic genie is out of the bottle” and cannot be put back again, I do question, as you have, whether I and others similarly situated are hunted or are in prison because of what a friend of ours recently called “the wreckage” Leary’s generation “left behind.”

I declare now, as a member of the ascendant generations, it is my responsibility, and I hope the responsibility of others constellated here today, to courageously acknowledge the context and detritus of that initial mêlée, with compassionate anthropological insight, and conscientiously re-cognize it into a coherent whole where the ripples return to still water and where in the reflected moonlight we see our way.

And Yes John, it was in the turbulence of my legal affray that you came into my life; you reminded me that while I jumped up and down throwing “a sacred tantrum” in the Courts of Avalon for my absolute right to cognitive liberty—as against a law that had declared it a crime to see colors—if I was to learn from Leary, in particular, and embody the entheogenic experience, in general, I must account for “the sensibilities of others” *and* that, accordingly, with freedom comes the duty to find that delicate balance between the autonomy of this individual and the welfare of the community of which I am an integral part.

In my journey towards finding that balance, birthing progeny of Albert’s “wonder child” had each time been undertaken with the hope and intention that a mind state of compassion for self and other would bloom like a thousand points of light out of each and every communicant who imbibed the sacred fruits, and from them a message of responsibility and stewardship towards mama earth and all her relations would be engendered in those we touch, nurture, and inspire.

Yet, to some extent my interdiction had shaken my bearings; still, like a pole star, and with the consummate grace of a linguistic samurai, you reoriented me once again to that “fine line between alone and all one” as you concomitantly obliterated my ego and cradled me in the infinite compassion and selflessness only a parent has for its child.

John, as mother earth swallows you up, I commit to thee 1) I will serve tirelessly to speak with wisdom and compassion for the sacraments where they cannot speak for themselves; 2) warts and all, psychedelic exploration will continue; and 3) I will endeavor to steward it with less ego, more empiricism, and full responsibility. I consider the entheogens a sword of light and truth to be sharpened, oiled, and used as efficiently as possible, if only to remind each and every one of us: “Ashes and diamonds, foe and friend, we [are] all equal in the end.” *Fiat lux!*

Casey William Hardison
POWD (Civ)



I will be thinking of John on November 10th. He contributed so much to the timeless, endless spirit of Psychedelia.

Michael Horowitz

THERE ARE THOSE WHO EPITOMIZE the term “service” on this space-ship earth. John was one such person. To dedicate oneself to the eradication of ignorance is the highest calling. I can think of no better term than Jonathan Ott’s “Pharmacatic Inquisition” to encompass the horror of those ensnared by this modern day witch hunt—young lives ruined by those opposed to the fundamental right to alter one’s consciousness. John helped me with advice when I met those opposing forces. We should have more of his caliber to eliminate our hearts of darkness. May he voyage in peace.

Craig Inglis (aka “Creative Tingles”)
phoning from a ship in Madagascar



I knew John when I lived in New York City, and I saw him again at the Albert Hofmann centennial celebration in Basel last year. I admired John’s work with incarcerated political prisoners of the drug wars, and this compassion serves as a model for others.

Stanley Krippner



I met John Beresford more than ten years ago while making a documentary about the drug war. He quickly enlightened me about America’s drug war prisoners, who they were, where they were, and what should be done. We became friends immediately, and my admiration for him grew as I watched his relentless efforts to let the world know about the terrible injustice of the drug war. As our friendship grew I also got to know another side of John. The funny, sweet, and understanding man who could laugh at himself and make me laugh at myself. John was unique. While he focused intently on his quest to right the wrongs of the forgotten prisoners (and any other injustice that got in his way), he was always interested in what was going on in my life, in what I was doing, no matter how inconsequential. For me, John was a true American hero—something that is sadly lacking today. I will miss him and our heated (but friendly) conversations, but I feel fortunate to have known him. Whenever I think of John I am inspired to do more to promote justice in this world.

Alaine Lowell
Executive Director, Thomas Paine Society

WHAT I LIKED MOST ABOUT JOHN was that he made it personal and involved the people he wanted to help. Too many other folks were paternalistic and were happy to get our thanks but wouldn't listen to alternative opinions. At least that was my experience. John was always careful to check back with the people that he was helping, and always addressed my concerns. Even when they were counter to what he thought should be done.

Nancy Martz



I have always had a high regard for John. I experienced him as a true humanitarian and healer, who gave selflessly of his energy and caring for those in great need. I'm glad to think of him as a friend and ally in the work toward a more just and enlightened society.

Ralph Metzner



John's capacity for compassion was unlimited. This, combined with his rare intelligence, made him truly an irreplaceable ingredient in our effort here. He had no equal. He was old school with rare dignity and backbone.

Joe Nash
Southeast Legal Foundation



We are deeply saddened by the loss of yet another esteemed colleague who worked to bring visibility and justice for the drug war prisoners locked away out of sight. A charming conversationalist with a twinkling eye and ready wit, he was really one of a kind. John was a caring and committed soul who helped many people tell their stories about their plights and "Shattered Lives," and whom we greatly respected for his service to this cause. John was a model of how psychedelic drugs can bring focus, energy, creativity and empathy to a person's life. Quiet and unassuming in person, John was a larger-than-life character in terms of his amazing experiences and brought with him a terrific sense of humor. He partly credited LSD with giving him a profound recognition of the breadth of the global tragedy caused by prohibition. He said it gave him insight into the broad human condition, and at the same time a very intimate sense of the value embodied within each and every individual. He truly grieved at all the young lives destroyed and wasted in prison for doing nothing worse than

exploring their own consciousness and sharing that experience with others. He believed in uplifting the human spirit, not degrading it, so to him drug prisons were an abomination, a stain perpetrated by and against a humanity that he loved. So he carried the stories of the prisoners to society, to shock its conscience, convinced that the world is better than this; and he continued to communicate with people behind bars to remind them they had not been forgotten. Would that he could have seen the end of the drug war during his lifetime, but alas the travesty endures. His spirit passes to others who do this noble work. We will miss him, and thank the universe for letting us share what few moments we had together. Thanks, John.

Mikki Norris and Chris Conrad



Out of the blue and by post, John invited me to participate in the Second Drug War Prisoners Conference in Toronto. Of course I accepted. I had known of the first through Werner Pieper and had been sorry to have missed it. Some months later, John wrote me and said he was at the point of cancelling the conference for lack of financial support, mostly obtaining funds for travel of the diverse speakers. I at once replied that no worries on my account—I should be happy to pay my own travel expenses, that being the least I could do for the pharmacopolitical prisoners. So it came to pass, and at the dinner closing the event, John addressed us all and noted that it had been my gesture to offer to pay my own expenses which had given him the fortitude to persist in face of adversity and bring the event to fruition! This I much appreciated, and I presented a sort of rallying-cry, morale-booster, I admit a rather hyperbolic talk based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. When I saw all was being videotaped (having anticipated this, I had translated my talk into Spanish for Hispanic prisoners, who are many), I sought and was granted permission to repeat my talk sans audience and before the video-camera, for the benefit of those Hispanic prisoners who might not read or understand English. This was done after the talks formally closed, but as I never saw the resultant video, I know not whether it reached anyone. I also recall having met there the father of my long-time collaborator, Canadian Rob Montgomery... a retired pharmacist, he had been curious about the conference and came from Niagara to attend. I also remember it being quite cold! Although I am from New England, I confess to being no longer well accommodated to frigid weather.

John Beresford was truly a modern saint and an inspiration to many... through him I was placed in contact with many pharmacopolitical prisoners and hope I have been able to help some of them, if only as a pen pal to somewhat brighten the drudgery of incarceration. A precious few, like Amy Ralston, in no small measure thanks to help and support from John, are

now free. I was enlightened to have known John in this context (some know of him only from the so-called “magic gram” of LSD, which ended up in the possession of Timothy Leary), and mourn his passing. He will be much missed.

Jonathan Ott



Dearest John,

I foolishly presumed, I guess as we all do, that the loves will remain much longer in our lives than they do. I only hope that I thanked you enough, made you feel appreciated enough—truly beloved—while you were in our presence. For myself and others who were exiled to cages for years or decades, you brought the light of a kindred soul to our darkness and despair. You were a true friend in the purest sense.

Otter, who dreams of lightning
ex-pharmacopolitical prisoner, R. D. Milcher



John B. Good—And He Was

I became a hashish and LSD dealer on October 1, 1969. I was prepared for this task: I had a teacher, who taught me the works. When I started I knew my lawyer (I never needed him), and had a one meter bookshelf with literature in case I'd have to spend time in jail. I never read those books. I knew on the first day, I'm gonna do this job for seven years, which I did to the day, with lots of adventures—but never getting into real trouble or jailed for longer than one night. It was the best job I ever had; my best friends today are former customers from that period, almost forty years ago. And I learned from Tim's writings, that dealing with mind-moving substances is about responsibility, solidarity, and should be social work, not money-milking.

The psychedelic scene in Heidelberg was indirectly financed by the U.S. Army, what with thousands of GIs stationed here, just happy not being in Vietnam in those days. Or ones who had come back from hell. Most of them glad to get a little smoke or some acid. What a scene on payday: queues of willing buyers on certain streets.

It took until 1971 for the German police to move in. One day about thirty dealers got busted; a few days later I had organized a benefit concert to pay for lawyers, etc. I spoke to a hundred dealer colleagues asking for solidarity

money. Most refused. Some asked me for help later on, after they got busted. Well, in some cases I refused...

We needed a name. The socialists had the Rote Hilfe (Red Help), the anarchists their Schwarze Hilfe (Black Help), so I, thinking of the color of our main dope—hash from Morocco: Grüne Hilfe—thought of the Green Help. For a few years we did help busted dealers, pay for lawyers, and visit or send parcels (with hash cookies for Christmas) to inmates. Today there are still a few local Grüne Hilfe groups all over Germany. The assistance that the Grüne Hilfe provides today is more about getting your driver's license back than helping dealers. But still, it's a self-help organization.

Years later, on my first night in Los Angeles, Tim Leary introduced me at the encore to one of his shows as the "founding father of the European Greens." Well, anyplace else in the world I might have objected, "Listen, Tim..." But here I was, my first day in Hollywood, on a stage, and everybody thinking of me as being somebody.

In 1993 I went to the United States celebrations of 50 years LSD in California, met John Beresford on a sunny afternoon in Golden Gate Park, and found a soul-mate. He never talked a lot about his life or himself; most of what I know now I've read in Amy's mails. We talked about prisoners, The System, about things that have to be done.

So it was John, who sent me a long article by a Madame X/Jane Doe describing the situation regarding women incarcerated in the United States. I translated that article and published it in Germany. Later I learned that it was Amy who had written the piece. I contacted her, exchanging letters for a while, and then went on to translate and publish her book as well. Publishing books on drugs, drug problems, or drug policy is—even after thirty six years—still motivated by my sense of responsibility as a former dealer.

Researching how people have historically handled drugs came with the territory. I still really can't answer the question of Terence McKenna, why most of these chemical powders (morphine, heroin, MDMA) were discovered by German chemists (with Albert and LSD just a few miles behind the German border in Switzerland). But I did compile two books on the topic of "Nazis on Speed," about the drug use in the Third Reich. Nobody had previously told me, that it was Adolf Hitler who started—in his words—the *Krieg dem Rauschgift* (= War on Drugs), not some president in the United States, like Nixon or Reagan.

In 1996 the world psychedelic community met in Heidelberg for a scientific congress. It was John's idea, to hijack it, and so together we organized the First International Drug War Prisoners Conference, which was a pretty

touching event, with half-a-dozen speakers from Switzerland, Holland, Germany, and John. Around 150 people from twelve different countries attended, including Albert Hofmann, Ralph Metzner, Rick Doblin, and others.

John showed slides and read moving letters from a dozen people who spent time in the United States prison system because of LSD, who nevertheless were thanking Albert for his work. And later on, Albert answered all of those letters. On that day we presented the “Heidelberg Declaration,” which was eventually endorsed and signed by thousands. As a writer I am rather sloppy—most of my stuff is a first take. But he made me write sixteen different versions of that Declaration, before I got it right. Thanks, John. It still pops up once in a while in a book or elsewhere. A few years later John invited me to represent Europe at the second conference of this kind, in Toronto, then he came back to visit us in Germany. We stayed in contact.

We met again in Basel at Albert Hofmann’s 100 birthday event in 2006. “We provided information on all aspects of LSD,” the organizers claimed later. But the truth is that they didn’t want somebody on stage talking about dealing, or even about the law and those in prison on LSD-related charges. This seemed strange, what with being in a crowd of 2500 people, probably 90% of whom have had The Experience, and 95% of those who had gotten their dope illegally.

It hurt to see a frustrated John and the ex-prisoners he brought along being rejected by event organizers who feared that the mention of prisons would make their event less respectable. It was ironic, really, since Albert Hofmann is one of the few guys in the field who really seems to care for those victims of the drug war. He has a big heart—like our friend John.

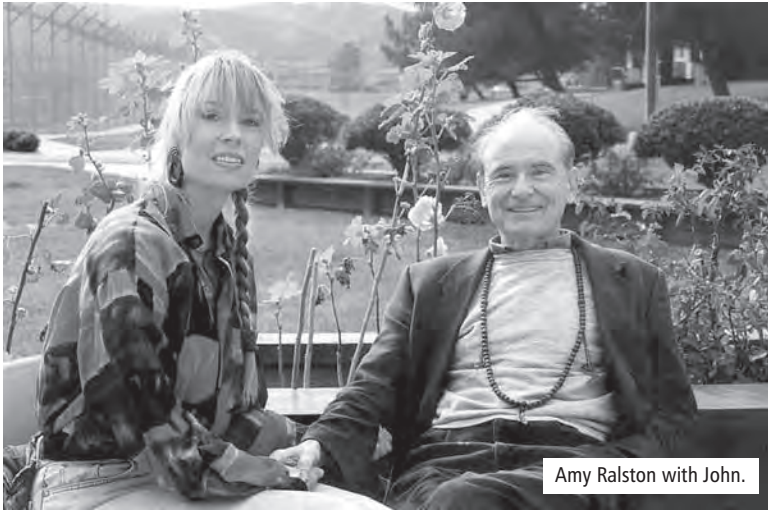
For years I have had colorful Tibetan flags flying in front of my two office windows. They wear out after a while, needing to be replaced. John, having seen a photograph of the house, sent me new ones—just when I needed them. I look at them now, as I write this. I look at them a lot. They will always remind me of John. I am grateful to have met this wonderful, inspiring man. And no, I don’t miss him, because he lives on—not only in my heart.

Werner Pieper



In loving memory of John Beresford, M.D. Friend, mentor, visionary... John, your heart of compassion, bright and warm, full of energy, taught me many things. I will hold you in my heart and mind. Forever.

Leonard Pickard



THANKS TO NANCY MARTZ, John visited me in prison many, many times. I would marvel at his ability to magically appear at the prison gates without the benefit of transportation. Sort of like Jesus or those Tibetan monks who can project themselves over large land masses. Those visits were pearls in a long necklace of days that I spent behind bars. Nine years and three months of a 24-year sentence for MDMA, and I'd be in prison today if it weren't for the help of people like John Beresford. He migrated here from his remote hideaway in Canada because he heard about the latest incarnation of a drug war that was, as he later wrote, akin to Nazi Germany. I could write volumes about John, and indeed, plan to do so, but, for now...

What amazes me most about John is that I had such a fascinating man who sat with me for hours inside endless rows of razor wire at FCI Dublin, and *I never knew* what his role was in the history of this country. I never knew because John never talked about himself. We always talked about me, me, me, and the drug war. And now, all I want to do is to sit at his feet and have a long conversation with him. I want to talk about *John* and all those rich, earth-shattering, spiritual memories that he created for so many people in the '60s. He played a huge role in kick-starting a spiritual revolution with that "magic gram" he generously shared. Having lived it, I think John always thought it could happen again. It is my hope, with this memorial, that we can connect the dots and weave together something that John would be proud of. Something that will live on after the memorial is over.

Amy Ralston



IN MAY OF 1963, in a day-long session, John Beresford, then still a relative stranger, opened the gates of heaven and the universe to me with a hefty dose from his “magic gram” of Sandoz’ best—that resulted in my conversion, within a year, from a very successful, ambitious, competitive, anti-drug, martini-swiggling New York book editor into a peaceful, barefoot, pot-smoking hippie single mom living in the Virgin Islands, working for the Black Liberation movement there. And for the next forty-four years of his life John became one of my closest—correct that—my closest friend. His departure has left a huge void in the lives of all he touched—and there is a large army of us—so perhaps at his memorial we can pool all our love and our intelligences to see if we can’t fill that void by carrying out his work: to enlighten people and to free prisoners, not necessarily in that order. In struggle, with love.

Sigrid Radulovic



There is a void that can never be filled with the passing of John Beresford. John’s philosophy was this: What one thinks goes out into the world in the form of energy, whether good or bad, depending on one’s intentions and on the morality of one’s character. That energy doesn’t fizzle out. It spreads and has an effect wherever there is a sensitive being to receive it, touching someone on the inside where it counts. John has touched us all with his good intentions.

I am a prisoner of this war on drugs and have been incarcerated for almost twelve years, most of which I've had the honor to correspond with John and his lovely wife Virginia. John once told me he and Virginia are of one mind on the subject of the injustice suffered by drug war prisoners.

Throughout these years John has been POWD's rock, hope, and leader. I've admired his persistence and constant drive in seeking justice. John would give presentations in Switzerland, Germany, the United States, anywhere that he could inform people about the injustice of this Drug War.

John believed in direct action to end the war on drugs, which is not an easy task here in the United States. John devoted his time and energy to strangers to try and make a difference. I feel as though I lost a family member, friend and adviser. John's journey in life was for justice, or should I say "just us." We love you John and will miss you so.

Vicki Rosepiler
POWD



John's legacy will live long.

Julie Stewart
FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums)



John Beresford was dedicated, hard working, and unrelenting in his quest for recognition of the Albert Hofmann Foundation. We appreciate all he did for the Foundation and we'll miss his energy. Blessing to all,

Jean and Myron Stoloroff
on behalf of the Albert Hofmann Foundation



I have been thinking daily of John and about his calling and mission.

Ron Turner

JOHN BERESFORD HAS PRACTICED and accumulated enough merit in this life that he will not have an ordinary rebirth. Wherever he chooses to be reborn, he will be an extraordinary person and will be considered a tulku.

Vajracharya – Venerable Peling Tulka Rinpoche
Orgyan Osal Cho Dzong Buddhist Monastery and Retreat Centre



Dr. Beresford made life so much nicer with his contributions to prisoners. I was serving a twelve-year sentence and during that time, his compassion, love, and passion for the cause gave hope to so many. For those who do not know what it is like to be in prison, it is a very lonely, hopeless place. The laws are so skewed in the government's favor that you can never crawl out of such a dark hole. And when someone comes along who offers such concern, it is heart-warming and hopeful. It really makes a difference and Dr. Beresford made all the difference to me. He will be dearly missed.

Diana Webb

BERESFORD'S MAGIC GRAM

[He] purchased, in 1960, a gram of LSD from Sandoz for the price of \$269. I believe he had made a mistake, and thought he was going to get four doses, but got 4,000—because he didn't notice the difference between a milligram and a microgram. He soon got together with another fellow and they turned on... well, eventually this gram went into a couple thousand people, such as Timothy Leary, Jean Houston, Charlie Mingus, the list goes on and on. Keith Richards, Paul McCartney...

— Peter Stafford
November 22, 1997,
at the Mind States conference
in Berkeley, CA.



John standing in front of a mural at an Italian Coffee Shop in Ottawa, Ontario.

CURRICULUM VITAE

- Educated at Sherbourne School, Dorset
- Meteorological Office, R.A.F., 1942–1945
- London Hospital Medical College, 1946–1952
- Intern, Highland Hospital, Rochester, N.Y., 1953–1954
- Resident, Department of Pediatrics, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, New York, NY, 1954–1956
- Research Fellow, Section of Childhood Leukaemia, Sloan Kettering Institute, New York, NY, 1956–1957
- Research Fellow, Department of Mental Retardation, New York Medical College, New York, NY, 1957–1958
- Instructor in Pediatrics, New York Medical College, 1958–1960
- Research Associate Pediatrician, New York Medical College; Director of Pediatric Teaching Programme for Second Year Students, 1960–1963
- Founder and Director, Agora Scientific Trust, 1963–1965. The Agora Scientific Trust was a research organization established to investigate the effect of LSD on consciousness. Research was carried out with a group of associates in premises furnished and equipped with the purpose of providing for optimal control of experimental variables. Accounts of some aspects of the work undertaken first appeared in print in 1967. Other material is in the course of preparation.
- Private practitioner of medicine, New York, NY, 1966–1973
- Head of Emergency Psychiatric Services at Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto, Ontario, 1974–1990
- Retired from medical practice, 1990. Went into retreat for four years at the Orgyan Osal Cho Dzong Buddhist Monastery in Ontario, Canada. John was one of the principle investors in the start-up of the monastery, helping to purchase the initial twenty-five acres of the property, which has since grown to 350 acres.
- Founded the Committee on Unjust Sentencing, 1991
- Vice President and Director of the Southeast Legal Foundation, 2001–2007. A nonprofit organization founded in 1996, the Foundation provides pro bono services to those unable to obtain counsel. The types of cases include assisting the elderly who are targets of identity theft and other scams; unfair debt collection cases; drug related cases and civil rights matters, such as police misconduct.



Poster for the
First International
Drug War Prisoners
Conference
in Heidelberg, 1996

Werner Piper with John.



John and Albert
at the
First International
Drug War Prisoners
Conference.

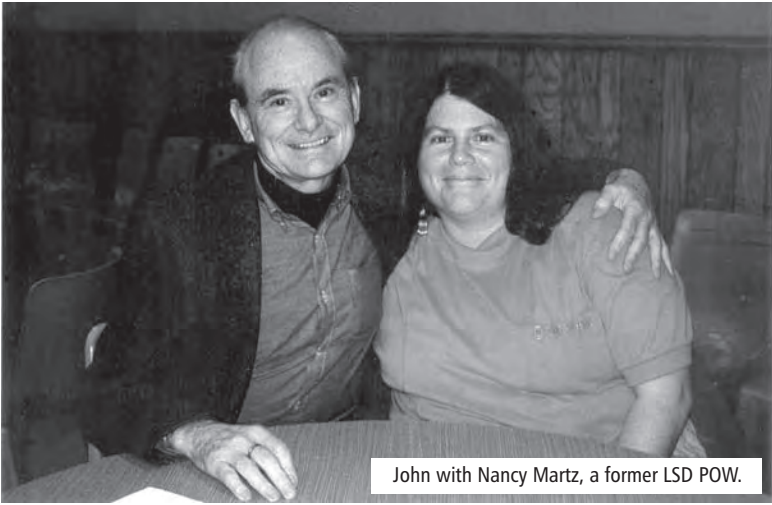




People use drugs for reasons as various as the reasons for most forms of human behavior, yet are liable to be lumped together under the basket-term “addict.” As a group they are singled out for censure and punishment on a par with the treatment accorded alienated minorities by majority groups we rightly condemn as barbaric. They fill the world’s prisons, in some jurisdictions for terms exceeding in length terms set for murder and other violent crimes.

...Why were users subject to imprisonment in the first place? What justification could be advanced for the incarceration of those for the most part guilty of a consensual offense? What political and other considerations lay behind the time and money put into locking people up for the offense of using drugs?

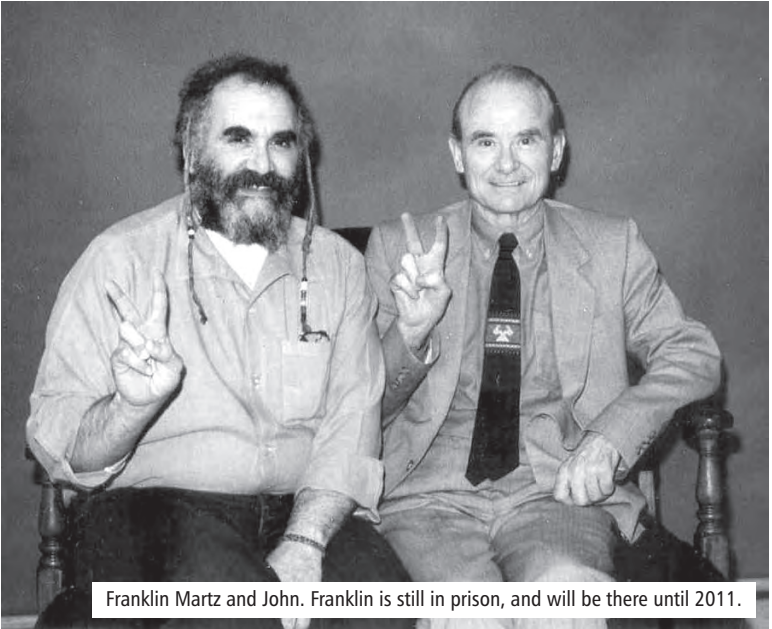
— John Beresford,
describing his motivations for holding the
Second International Drug War Prisoners Conference
at York University in Toronto, Canada.



John with Nancy Martz, a former LSD POW.

Sustaining Courage

It takes great courage and personal strength to hold on to our center during times of great hurt. When we are in the midst of loss, betrayal, or crisis of any kind, there is power in the words, "Be still and know I am." That was John's message to drug war prisoners.



Franklin Martz and John. Franklin is still in prison, and will be there until 2011.



John in front of the Human Rights 95 exhibit of drug POWs.



1999, outside the Rico Gallery in Santa Monica, where "Gone: A Showing of Blotter Acid Art" by Mark McCloud was being exhibited. Julie Rico, John, and Ron Brettin.



On the streets of Basel in 2006, with Dale Pendell, Christian Rättsch, and Robert Forte.

*John Beresford had a way about him
that made you smile.
He was a bright ray of sunshine,
A happy soul,
Always fighting the good fight,
Always willing to listen,
Never boastful.
A free spirit,
A warrior,
He demanded attention.
He wanted justice.
He is liberated.*

We will all miss him.

M O R E R E M E M B R A N C E S

I spoke with Albert a few minutes ago. He very much liked John's charming character, and his always-broad commitment for his discovery and its value for the benefit of humanity. Exactly the same goes for me, and additionally I was deeply impressed about John's commitment and his role with the Committee on Unjust Sentencing; he was one of the most honorable representatives of the early psychedelic movement and we will treasure his respective life and work. Especially today we will be with all of you in spirit during the celebration. Much love to Virginia, also from Albert.

Dieter A. Hagenbach
Gaia Media Stiftung



In June, 1989, I had driven up to Toronto to meet with John at his office on Younge Street in midtown. As we took the elevator down to the street level, he began removing his three piece suit jacket, vest, tie, dress shirt and tee shirt! All to reveal for me his Happy Cross—a crucifix cast with a smiley face in the center—that he had devised, and was in process of offering via an advert in *High Times*! After this, we drove over to his apartment for a spaghetti dinner and much, much story telling.

Marc Franklin
photographer



Very sorry that Laura and I cannot be present. Meeting John Beresford was the high point of my trip to Basel. He gave a voice to those who could not be present—the incarcerated—and made me feel proud to have given so much of my own life to psychedelic scholarship. He will be missed.

Dale Pendell



John Beresford rang my doorbell in the early nineties, and when I opened the door he said: "So-and-so [some name I didn't know] told me to come meet you." I responded that I didn't know so-and-so, but that I recognized him as a new friend and immediately invited him in. Then I got his name. That's how beautiful John was.

Mark McCloud

M O R E R E M E M B R A N C E S

The ladies at FCI Tallahassee and FMC Carswell would like the world to know what an inspiration John was to us. He cared when no one else seemed to. Many times he was a one-man show, working independently and always trying to spread the message that our drug law sentences were unjust; he was relentless in his efforts. He never gave up on us, nor did he forget us—just as each and every one of us will never forget him! With special affection,

Becky Stewart & Drug War Prisoners
from FCI Tallahassee and FMC Carswell



I love you, my neighbors, as dear Dr. John loved you. I love you because you know how Dr. John loved what is good in each and every breath *Ha-Shem* (the Divine Name) breathed into every instance of life, every manifested G-dness we are ever allowed to behold. Yet I'm a lower life form—a P.O.W. in the All-American/Z.P.G. drug wars and *still* a lover of the sacrament that dear Dr. Albert helped to bring to life—when compared to the scholars, literati, holy people, sages, and monks, that called Dr. John “friend.” Dr. John wept for the dishonor of an America that he loved. He wept for the sadness of a war against “the people”—many of them questing children—by a government of spies, informers, and agent provocateurs. Thus did he joyfully report the continued call to activism that found him playing guitar with Dick Alpert before federal courthouse steps in championing a teenager's rights following an entrapment. I salute such activism that led Dr. John through years of gifts of energy, writings, and testimonies before the monolithic forces of government far more subservient to pharmaceutical company lobbies than to the true expert and wise stewardship of the misunderstood, magical sacrament that our good Dr. John could only epitomize. Lastly, I love Dr. John because he was freedom's true knight/herald, and in that role a truer American than the hawkish firebrands of the globalized scene. My mind's eye sees Dr. John having tea with Mrs. Huxley, visiting Dr. Tim in his final cosmic daze, and allowing me—in person, in the Indiana State Prison at Michigan City visiting room—to thank and hug him for the sugar cube that melted me forty years ago. You are missed, and loved, and always to be remembered, dear Dr. John. Peace and love,

Franklin Martz

