



No glasses for Chris as he and Mikki started the year with a visit from Marci and Tom, who snapped this photo.

The trouble with writing a Year's End wrap-up letter is that we never get it done before Christmas because — well, the year hasn't ended yet. Nonetheless, here's hoping your 2004 was great and 2005 will be all the better. It's been an interesting year, to say the least. It sure has been trying politically, with the distressing national presidential election. But, we also had a fantastic win, locally. More about that later.

A tale of three booklets

This year we didn't write or publish any new books, as such, but we had a hand in three booklets. Last year Mikki worked with her mom, Bernice, to write up her life story, and this year we edited text, compiled photos and pulled it all together into *My Memoirs*, by Bernice Malin. Best of all, it was ready in time to be her 21st birthday gift (she's a leap year baby with 84 solar years) in a very limited edition for family members. Bernice was so happy to see it.

Mikki collaborated with Americans for Safe Access on a booklet telling the personal stories of *Patients in the Crossfire: Casualties in the War on Medical Marijuana*. Meanwhile, Chris put together a booklet on *Cannabis Yields and Dosaçe*(safeaccessnow.net) to

show the science behind his court testimony and explain in general how marijuana is grown and used for medications. We are now getting copies into the hands of attorneys, policy makers and influential politicians to encourage them to establish reasonable guidelines to avoid arrests and protect access for qualified patients. This year both Santa Cruz and Humboldt counties adopted new ordinances similar to his proposal, so the work is showing its effect.



We joined other California activists in a sit-in while lobbying at the DC office of Senator Dianne Feinstein.



NORML gave us an award, along with (l-r) Keith Stroup, Paul Kuhn, and Irvin Rosenfeld, seen here smoking a federal IND program medical joint.

Lasik for Chris, but specs remain

In January Chris went under the laser and got eye surgery to correct his astigmatism. It was quite successful and makes an amazing difference. Some attorneys were concerned that, without glasses, Chris would look less "intellectual" as an expert on the witness stand. However, they needn't have worried. It did not mean a farewell to spectacles, as far-sightedness has already staked its claim. Now it's reading glasses only, but we both do a lot of reading.

Courting liberty and justice for all

Chris is still active as a cannabis expert in the courts. His testimony was given favorable mention by the state Court of Appeals when it upheld the defense in the Arbacauskas ruling. The case benefits people in all criminal cases because prosecutors must now show new evidence to re-file charges once they are dismissed by a judge. This is the fourth Appeals Court case (plus one state Supreme Court case) where he is mentioned, but the first time the Court went into so much depth regarding his testimony. Unfortunately, he is still busy defending too many people facing prison. Enough already! Two federal cases to mention are the HIA victory over the DEA that protects hemp foods, and our friend Angel Raich took her medical marijuana case to the US Supremes.

Measure Z wins election mandate

As an Oakland Civil Liberties Alliance board member, Mikki spent lots of time and energy working to get a city initiative on the ballot and pass it. Measure Z makes private, adult marijuana offenses (including

sales) law enforcement's lowest priority and puts it on the record that city voters want to tax and regulate cannabis sales like alcohol as soon as possible under state law (see more at yesonz.org). Chris naturally got heavily involved. It was exciting to get great endorsements from elected officials and mainstream groups including State Sen. Don Perata, Rep. Barbara Lee, all the Democratic clubs, and many others. It was an intense campaign, but we had a great team and learned a lot. Oakland voters passed Z by over 65%.

Imagine our victory party – quite a bipolar experience, with our local win transposed against the bleak national outcome in which the Reds seized power, by hook or by crook.

Keeping our show on the road

We didn't have an extended vacation this year, but we were lucky enough to get a few visitors, and to take a few days off here and there during work trips. In March we spent almost a week soaking in minerals at David Walley's Hot Springs, NV. We drove to nearby Reno for dinner, saw a great Riverdance show, Spirit of the Dance, and lost \$1.25 to the slots.

We were honored in April to receive the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws Outstanding Citizen Activism award at its annual convention. That took us to Washington DC, where we met with Congressional staffers, and joined in the March for Women's Lives. While in the area, we visited Chris' mom in Maryland. She's still pretty snug in her little red house in the country and working at the school library. Then we drove to New York to speak at the Million Marijuana March there, and participated in an event at SUNY, New Paltz before coming home.



Mikki handed over stacks of petitions for OCLA to put measure Z on the ballot. It passed with 65%!

We finally got to have a closer encounter with the San Francisco Bay that we usually just see from the free ways and bridges. Our friend Eugene took us out on his yacht, Higher Hopes, to cruise the Bay this spring and see the fabulous Kaboom fireworks show. He also took us out in the fall for Fleet Week where we got to see Canadian jets zipping overhead in aerial feats.

We spent a few days in Las Vegas for a Marijuana Policy Project workshop. For Mikki's birthday we saw Cirque du Soleil's Zumanity (quite risqué, and lots of fun). We took a pull on the slots and this time lost \$3.25 (ouch!). We thrill to a certain degree of risk, but certainly aren't gamblers. We hadn't been to Vegas for 20 years. It's really changed; very noisy, and we may not be back for another 20 years or so. We went to a superb Medical Marijuana Patients Union conference in Mendocino in August. They have an enlightened DA and Sheriff who gave us hope on a panel after Ram Dass. The next week we went to the Seattle Hempfest, where we spoke and had a booth.

Unfortunately, it rained a lot this year, so we took the opportunity in town to see the Experience Music Project Museum. We recommend it. When we got out the rain had stopped and the rally was back in swing.

In September, we went to North Carolina to speak at the UNC Asheville with the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform (WONPR), revitalized from Alcohol Prohibition days. We had a great time,



Above: Mikki singing at nephew Loren (behind Dolly) and David's commitment ceremony.

Inset: David and Loren.

and were blown away by the beauty and price of land. It was tempting, but then we don't feel drawn to the South and we also caught the tail end of Hurricane Jeanne (just a lot of wind and rain).

We made a few trips to Santa Cruz, toured the WAMM medical marijuana garden that is protected from federal raids by an injunction and stayed at the Compassion Flower Inn. After the Hemp Industries Association convention in San Francisco, we went to the Humboldt Hempfest and spent time with a Lakota leader who is working to grow hemp on his tribal lands. We had a spliffy time with friends, and Mikki took in a little golf while in Shelter Cove.

Mikki was invited to speak about Measure Z at the November Student's for Sensible Drug Policy conference at the U of MD. She gave presentations to students at El Cerrito High School, and we both spoke at Canada College. These young people are inspiring, smart, and give us great hope for the future.

Keeping in touch with the family

Mikki's sister Shelley hosted a 50th birthday party and Kerry fundraiser, and Bernice and nephew Geoffrey stayed at our place. They seemed to enjoy the wild birds and squirrels who frequent our feeders.

Our family tree branched out when we celebrated nephew Loren and David's commitment ceremony in



Below: Mikki, Bernice, Shelley and Dolly, drumming and bonding at Miraval resort.



Above: Chris in the WAMM cannabis garden with Mike Corral, next to the plant named Victoria in honor of winning an historic injunction against DEA raids.

Right: It's a fun job, but somebody has to do it ... !

June. It was a beautiful and touching affair. Mikki sang the song, 'You've Got a Friend' during the service.

Mikki joined her mom and sisters for a few days at Miraval, a wonderful mind-body-spirit resort/spa in Arizona, for a special treat, and had some quality bonding time. They took classes, workshops, challenges, ate gourmet food, and had spa treatments. It was a life-changing experience (until the effect wore off a week or so later). We managed to get to LA several times this year and even spent Thanksgiving there with the family, something we haven't done in a while. With food like that, we just might be back!

Bad / good year for computers

Everybody has these stories, we know; but please forbear with our tale of woe and catastrophic computer failure that ate three hard drives of data and backup files, only to learn that the emergency backup copies we had on CD were corrupt. We really thought that three levels of backup would be enough – silly us. In the end we only lost three weeks time and six weeks work, but it still hurt. Now we're happy with our computers again and ready for a new round of upgrades and gizmos. Mikki's cannabisconsumers.com website is growing and evolving. Chris put together a website for the Socially Responsible Network and maintained the Measure Z website for the campaign, plus a half dozen other sites nested at our portal domain.

We made added a couple other goodies, too. First is the projector we got for doing PowerPoint and AV presentations that also works great for watching



movies on the wall at home. We also got an analog to digital converter and a slide/film scanner to organize and edit our archives. It should be a lot of fun to look over these many years of material, if we ever figure out where we put all those tapes and negatives.

It also sounds time consuming, come to think of it. But that's what the future is for, right? To do things.

The whirlwind of reality

The rest of the year was a whirlwind; we saw The Lion King stage production in the summer and threw a few parties for Measure Z, the HIA and even a couple just for fun. In the fall we received commendations for our work with the Socially Responsible Network. For Halloween Chris was a green character from "Star Trek: the Hemp Generation." Mikki was "the Spirit of WONPR Past," a spectral reminder of the failure of alcohol prohibition. We lost a few friends but found a good many more and ended up by writing this letter.

And as we approach the future to see what it holds, we are thinking highly of you and wishing you well. One thing we learn from life is that there will never be enough time to spend with all the fabulous friends and family members with whom we are so blessed.

Oh, yeah, that and the fact that we will only rarely get a letter out before the holidays. Sigh.

Thank you and have a happy, healthy 2005!

– Chris Conrad and Mikki Norris

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