

Some Things About Monty

“A laborer works with his hands, an artist works with his heart,” Monty Jacobs used to say, “but a craftsman works with his hands and his heart. I like to think I am a craftsman.”

“I was spoiled!” Mary Pat told her friends at the memorial service for Monty. “He could fix anything I could break.

“He had told me that he had a thousand and one skills that would keep us in a lower income bracket for life. And I fell for it.”

Monty was born in 1949 and raised in Bellflower, a suburb of Los Angeles. His father was a hydraulics engineer. His parents built and managed some small apartment buildings on the acre that Monty’s mother had grown up on. She was a fifth-generation Californian—a distant great aunt had arrived with the group that split off from the Donner Party to come through Death Valley. Maintenance work on the apartments is how Monty and his older brother Hal learned carpentry, plumbing, and wiring—the skills that enabled them to become expert builders and craftsmen.

At age 14 Monty had surgery for cancer in his right testicle. He received megadoses of cobalt radiation—then the state-of-the-art procedure—at City of Hope. It left him with radiation scarring in front and back, along his spine, chest and gut. The chest and upper back scars deepened as time went on and pain escalated from the damaged nerves.

He met Mary Pat in 1970, in Yosemite. She had come to say goodbye to friends leaving for Canada to avoid the draft. Monty, she remembers, “stepped out of his hand-restored Porsche with his long hair flowing... I was in love instantly.”

She was teaching at a Montessori school in San Luis Obispo and Monty, who had a draft exemption, followed her there. They rented a small house with a yard that had been destroyed by dogs. He cleaned it up, pruned and restored the plants, added a stone path. “He made it beautiful again,” says Mary Pat. The landlords wrote a letter to his parents saying that their faith in the younger generation had been restored.

Monty and his brother Hal had bought a sign business in 1970 and followed a county fair circuit, using a router to make redwood signs to order on the spot. The brothers built a gypsy-styled trailer booth pulled by a customized camper truck. The camper they designed as a sort of cannastoga wagon in wood and fiberglass on a heavy duty Ford truck chassis. The entire rig, truck and trailer really turned heads.

It was a carnival life in the summer, with Mary Pat staying behind to teach in the spring and fall.

Monty’s parents lent them money to buy property in Los Osos, north of SLO. He designed a contraption to move an old cottage that had been straddling a lot line (in sandy soil) onto one of the lots. Monty rebuilt that house for Mary Pat and himself. On the empty lot he intended to build a spec house to pay off the first cottage.

As he was designing the new structure, two lots with another old home came on the market directly behind the first two. Deciding that he might as well build two as easy as one, Mary Pat says, they bought those lots. One of the houses Monty designed in a “Northern California Sea Ranch style,” with no overhangs and plenty of light. This was the start of his interest in passive-solar heating.

The other was modeled after an old-style farm house with walkways leading to it above an ancient Live Oak, windswept and growing close to the ground. This second house had a decked mansard roof, a captain’s walk, that commanded a 360-degree view, with Morro Bay to the north and the Pacific on the west.

Both houses had stained glass windows.

“Monty had a special gift,” says Mary Pat. “His sense of proportion was like perfect pitch in a musician.” He always designed houses with a specific site in mind.

Brother Hal was inspired by the captain’s walk idea to build a house for himself with a marijuana garden on the roof. He and Monty designed and built the house in Grover Beach, south of SLO, in a run-down neighborhood. “Grover Beach,” they joked, “Where the debris meets the sea.”



Hal, realizing that the area was close to the ocean and due for gentrification, started buying up lots and houses. He and Monty also collaborated on several award-winning homes in Shell Beach.

Hal had an irresistible calling to grow marijuana, some of which went to Monty, some to their father when he was dying of cancer, some to AIDS patients, some to an arthritis sufferer and an epileptic of their acquaintance. Few of these people defined their use as medical, Mary Pat reflects.

Hal was busted for cultivation and went to prison in early 1995. Hearing his story years later, attorney Bill Panzer suggested that the felony could be expunged because Hal had been providing marijuana for medical use and Prop 215 applies retroactively.

When Hal went to prison, Monty said to Mary Pat: “Now we have to stop being cowards.” Activist Ellen Komp had contacted Hal’s girlfriend about an upcoming meeting in Santa Cruz to plan a ballot initiative that would legalize marijuana for medical use. Monty and Mary Pat decided to attend. The event, held in June 1995, was called “Taking the Initiative.” Listening to talks by Elvy Musikka (whose advancing glaucoma had been checked by marijuana) and Valerie Corral (whose seizures had been brought under control), Monty wept. He said to Mary Pat, “I’m a patient! I should be up there, too.”

Much is made nowadays of seemingly able-bodied young men obtaining marijuana legally for medical use. Monty typified the opposite phenomenon (which may be more widespread, even today): seriously ill people not defining their marijuana use as medical.

Since the mid-1970s he had been seeing pain specialists and other physicians in pursuit of pain relief. Many looked at the tall, young outdoorsman and concluded that he was just there for narcotics. Only Mary Pat knew how bad it was. In 1986 cancer was found in Monty’s right testicle, probably caused by the massive radiation he’d received. (It was not the same kind of cancer that had been removed in ‘64.)

Much is made nowadays of seemingly able-bodied young men obtaining marijuana legally for medical use. Monty typified the opposite phenomenon (which may be

more widespread, even today): seriously ill people *not* defining their marijuana use as medical. “We’d had blinders on,” is how Mary Pat puts it. We all did—until the AIDS patients acted up in the 1990s and demanded access to marijuana as an appetite stimulant and anti-nausea drug.

At the 1995 “Taking the Initiative” conference Monty and Mary Pat met Dennis Peron and many other activists who would be their friends from then on. It was the first time they’d heard the term “medicate” in reference to marijuana. They had been

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ture drive, some activists contacted Ethan Nadelmann, a New York-based drug policy reform leader with billionaire connections. Nadelmann said he could provide more than a million dollars in donations from George Soros, Peter Lewis, John Sperling, and Winthrop Rockefeller—on condition that Dennis be replaced as campaign manager by a Santa Monica professional named Bill Zimmerman. Additional funding from George Zimmer of the Men’s Wearhouse would shield the campaign from the charge that Carpetbaggers—forces outside California—were in charge. An additional “grassroots” signature drive would be directed by Chris Conrad and Mikki Norris, longtime activists.

The faction fight that split the Prop 215 campaign was a turn-off for Monty and Mary Pat. One weekend in the spring of ‘96 they rented a car and drove Bill and Vicki Landis, who were near blind, to a meeting in Oakland that Jeff Jones had organized for people interested in starting clubs (as dispensaries were then known). They stayed at Chris and Mikki’s in El Cerrito and the next day they went to Dale Gieringer’s house in the Oakland Hills to attend a meeting they thought would be about signature gathering. A politician named Jim Gonzalez was there representing Bill Zimmerman. Activists in the room were demanding support for their volunteer operation. Monty and Mary Pat looked out at the sunshine on the bay and said to each other: “What are we doing here? We should be out there getting signatures instead of sitting around talking about it.”

Chris and Mikki would call every night to ask how many signatures they’d gotten.

Chris and Mikki deployed the couple to L.A. and Orange County, along with some young volunteers from Oregon. The whole crew moved into the apartments that Monty had grown up in. They would meet every night to check that all the zipcodes were correct and plan the next day. Chris and Mikki would call every night to ask how many signatures they’d gotten. There was so much infighting going on amongst the old school activists that it was a pleasant relief to hear how well the Bellflower crew was doing. It was coming down to the wire, an exciting time.

Every day the crew would split up for different venues. Some headed out to farmers markets, others hit campuses, concerts, beach boardwalks, store fronts and even a car show where the people lined up to sign anything with a marijuana symbol on it. Wherever possible Monty would open the tailgate of their VW bus and clamp a big sign on the window above it to draw a crowd. They had posted different testimonials and study reports on cannabis around the bus windows for interested folk to read before signing.

Mary Pat would walk into the crowd and encourage people to sign the petition. Monty made sure people provided the required info for verification. Between them they gathered 6,000 signatures, and they supervised the collection of 6,000 more.

During the signature-gathering effort Monty was approached by a Doctor of

continued on next page

fearful at the time of Hal’s bust, but surrounded by like-minded people, they were encouraged. A professional signature gatherer gave a talk about how to circulate petitions and Mary Pat thought, “We can do that, it’s just like selling signs!”

Two medical marijuana initiatives were submitted to the Secretary of State—one drafted primarily by Dennis Peron and his lieutenant, John Entwistle, and another by Dale Gieringer of California NORML, attorney Bill Panzer, and Valerie Corral of the Wo/man’s Alliance for Medical Marijuana. (Dale, Bill, and Valerie had also helped draft Dennis’s initiative; the differences were “more about phrasing than substance,” says Dale.) In the end, it was Dennis and John’s version that made it to Sacramento as “The Compassionate Use Act of 1996.”

Back in San Luis Obispo Monty and Mary Pat hit the farmers markets with petitions. Monty made eye-catching signs that said “Sign here,” with the medical marijuana symbol at each end (a green leaf imposed on a red cross). People often saw the cannabis leaves and signed before asking the details.

When the loose circle of activists promoting the initiative met in early December at the San Francisco Cannabis Buyers Club, Monty and Mary Pat brought in a thousand signatures. Nobody else was close.

“Everybody was waiting for everybody else to do something,” Mary Pat recalls. “Dennis made a big deal of us. He gave Monty a gold card that said, ‘Number 1’ on it.”

It would have taken about 70 signature gatherers with the capabilities of Monty and Mary Pat to carry out Dennis’ plan to “do it with love”—meaning get on the ballot relying on unpaid volunteers. By early January 1996 Dennis claimed to have gathered 150,000 signatures, but skeptics questioned the total and the validity rate. Seeking funding for a professional signa-

Monty Jacobs from previous page

Osteopathy, Stephen O. Ripple, who was so impressed by him that he offered to sponsor him as an approving physician for cannabis.

Sonoma County

After the passage of Prop 215 the "MontyPats" moved to Sonoma County—an 88 acre spread just northwest of Cazadero. They had been lured north by a contractor friend who wanted Monty to help him build houses in Sea Ranch. This friend was launching a saw mill and it was Monty who installed the equipment his friend was buying at auction. Eventually, with the relief that a consistent supply of cannabis provided, Monty designed and built a passive solar home there, "The Octopod." He installed an off-the-grid electrical system using solar panels and harnessing the water power from their spring. They dubbed the property "EntWalk."

When they were settled in, Mary Pat says, "We thought 'Okay, we passed the law, now we can grow Monty's medicine.' But noooo. They were still taking people off to jail, throwing them on the ground and putting guns to their head."

The Sonoma Alliance for Medical Marijuana (SAMM) had been formed by Carol Miller and friends. "Carol cajoled us into attending a meeting," says Mary Pat. "At first, I wanted to say 'No, I need to stop and take care of my husband now,' but a young attorney for the group, Sandy Feinland, took me aside and said, 'No, you have to go, you have to speak.'"

Mary Pat and Monty helped SAMM negotiate with District Attorney Mike Mullins to establish the first reasonable cultivation guidelines in the state. SAMM's proposal, based on Monty's greenhouse, was to allow a 100-square foot canopy (instead of a number of plants). Mullins said that "his guys" in law enforcement needed a number, and SAMM came up with 99—which would eventually doom the regulation. Growers ignored the 100-square-foot limit and just grew 99 plants of enormous size.

Monty became progressively more debilitated from extreme pain, but he always showed up, did his part and never said "Feel sorry for me." Despite the constant pain in his upper back and gut, he carried himself well, with a gentle manner and a sweet smile. I'd see him manning a table at an event or attending a conference and never did he convey that he was suffering. Only Mary Pat really knew.

In 2006, another mass was found between his lungs and heart. At first the "Tumor Board" at UCSF thought it was scar tissue. An attempt to biopsy it—as an outpatient procedure—resulted in profuse bleeding and Monty was put on life support for three days as Mary Pat watched. The growth turned out to be malignant, but the surgeon said, "nobody should ever cut you open there. We can't guarantee that radiated area would heal." More radiation was not an option, either, as he had already been exposed to too much.

Three oncologists were consulted. None offered hope. At that point they saw Donald Abrams, the renowned UCSF oncologist-hematologist. "He was totally positive," says Mary Pat. He recommended several adjuvant therapies, including mushrooms and salmon three times per week. He sent us to a nutritionist who worked out some other supplements as well."

A young oncologist in Santa Rosa was willing to try two older chemotherapies that had showed promise when Monty's cancer cells were cultured. He advised metronomic dosing—small doses every three weeks and then one week off, instead of one large dose and three weeks off—which seemed to help. But after two rounds of chemo the cancer started creeping back.

The young oncologist suggested a new anti-cancer drug called Tarceva, which



MONTY JACOBS' BROTHER HAL was one of a dozen people who reminisced about him lovingly at a memorial service arranged by Chris Conrad and Mikki Norris.

costs more than \$4,000/month. After one month, the cancer was gone! For a year and a half they paid for it on their own and went through their savings. After that, they got help from Medicare D and a cancer foundation.

Through the years, whenever Monty was getting discouraged and wanted to give up, Mary Pat would take him to a palliative care specialist in Santa Rosa, Gary Johanson. Dr. Johanson had been the second MD to approve Monty's cannabis use, and kept him on after he had given up his pain-management practice to do palliative care. Johanson would adjust Monty's medications, put his hand on Monty's knee and say, "You know, Monty, when you're ready I'm going to be here for you. But I

just don't think you're there yet."

In the end it wasn't cancer that took Monty's life. He had a faulty heart valve and couldn't be operated on due to the fibrosis caused by radiation. He was scheduled to undergo surgery employing an experimental technique but went into decline beforehand.

On December 24, 2011, he was having trouble breathing and was brought to the ER at Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa. He wanted to live, and as of Dec. 26 was hoping to get in good enough shape for the heart-valve operation. But by Dec. 28 his heart, kidneys, and liver were losing functionality. She and Dr. Johansen—whom she calls Gary, like a real friend—woke Monty up. Mary Pat thought, "If Monty

saw Gary, no matter what state he was in, he would know what was going on."

The doctor said: "You know Monty, things aren't going well. But don't worry, we're going to take really good care of you."

And as he fell off, his friends and loved ones had a party in the spacious palliative care room at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital. Will Foster and Susie Mueller brought dinner. Chris Conrad came with his wife, Mikki Norris and his guitar. His brother, Hal and life partner, Anne Marie Kirkpatrick were there along with long time friend Rod Sinclair, who also brought his guitar. Many others had been in and out through the day and previous night to honor Mr. Mont.

Leonard Cohen was one of his favorite songwriter-performers, so "Hallelujah" was sung by the gathering, among many others that night. As they sang, they rubbed his feet and kissed him. "Monty looked so relaxed, truly asleep and pain free for the first time in many years, says Mary Pat. "We almost thought he would be waking soon and demanding ice cream."

One of the nurses approached Will Foster out in the hall and asked, "Who is this Monty? The cardiologist is in here bawling his eyes out, and cardiologists don't cry."

Around 11:30 things were winding down, Mary Pat was ready to be alone with Monty, just touching him for as long as she could. Hal's girlfriend led him off, leaving Rod saying the last goodbye. Mary Pat had asked to have Monty repositioned and a nurse entered just then.

He was standing at the foot of the bed, cocking his head from one side to another. Mary Pat asked, "What's the plan, how can I help?" The nurse said, "I think our guest of honor had other plans."

Mary Pat went to look at him. "His color had been beautiful until that moment but when the party broke up and then his brother left the room, Monty left, too. He left this life as graciously as he lived it. He

Alexander Cockburn 1941-2012

By Fred Gardner

The most incisive political journalist of our time, Alexander Cockburn, died on July 19, 2012

We were friends for many years. Shelacked on a file cabinet in the garage is a photo of Alex preparing to photograph a gravestone in Trinidad, California. We were on our way to or from the Redwood Summer protest in Samoa.

Schanubelt's widow had put up a stone that said "Murdered by Capitalism." Alex



ALEXANDER COCKBURN preparing to take a picture of a gravestone in Trinidad, California. The stone said E.B.Schnaubelt Born April 5, 1855, Died May 22, 1913 Murdered by Capitalism

Alex had heard about Schnaubelt's gravestone and wanted to pay homage. He later wrote (in *The Golden Age is in Us*), "E.B. had set up a lumber mill as a workers' co-op but then the big companies cheated him out of the land where the mill stood, though he still owned the plant. One night Schnaubelt, living nearby, thought he heard someone messing with his machinery. He went to investigate and a watchman hired by the companies shot him dead. His widow put up the stone and moved away."

himself may have been murdered by Capitalism (in which case Capitalism could claim self-defense). We're all being massively bombarded by radiation and exposed to carcinogens in the air, the water, the food, the upholstery, the receipt at the gas station... and it's all in the pursuit of profit. America's "war on cancer" does not mean identifying and eliminating the causes of cancer but a "search for the cure." The corporados don't want to stop the plague by closing their nuclear power plants and eliminating cancer-causing chemicals in their production processes. That would cut into profits. They want to fight the war on cancer inside our bodies. That generates profits.

In 1994 Cockburn and I had collaborated on a piece about the marketing of Prozac. In one of our last exchanges I told him I was planning to use it as the introduction to *The O'Shaughnessy's Reader* and he replied "Go for it," which was a relief.

Alex believed that smoking marijuana had precipitated his beloved nephew Henry's break with reality, and he was never into smoking it himself (even in his dire hour of need). But he was open-minded, tolerant, and liberal in the old John Stuart Mill sense. And he well understood why our Prozac piece would make a relevant prelude to a book about medical marijuana.

Eli Lilly's Prozac marketing campaign had changed the way Americans defined "depression" and what constituted the "medical use" of drugs.

Everybody who knows the history of the medical marijuana movement knows that Dennis Peron started the San Francisco Cannabis Buyers Club in the midst of the AIDS epidemic. Forgotten is that we were also in the midst of the Prozac epidemic. In the early 1990s Eli Lilly's pervasive marketing campaign had changed the way Americans defined "depression" and what constituted the "medical use" of drugs.

In this period Dennis said with amused astonishment, "Half the people I talk to are on Prozac! I can always tell because they get so chatty. People who used to never say a word, suddenly they're talking talking... 'Are you on Prozac?' 'I was but now I'm on Paxil...'"

U.S. doctors were writing millions of prescriptions for SSRIs—Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors—to treat depression, "social anxiety," and a growing list of "clinical disorders." It was in this context that Dennis declared, "In a country that pushes Prozac on shy teenagers, all marijuana use is medical." It was a brilliant line that simultaneously questioned and exploited the definitions of illness that Big PhRMA and the medical establishment were promoting.

Dennis's detractors snipped off his prefatory clause and then mocked him for making an absurd overstatement. Dennis being a rapscallion, instead of protesting, started using the shorter version, "All marijuana

continued on next page