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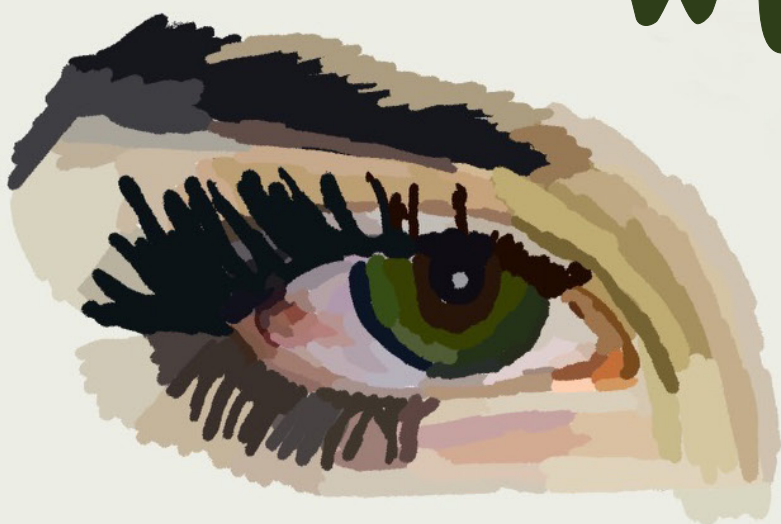
THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969



THE



WEED



ISSUE



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April 20, 2023

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY MARBELLA MARLO '24

Dear Readers,
In 1969, the *Harvard Independent* was established as a platform on campus for students to freely voice their opinion against a commonly biased public narrative. Student protests due to the Vietnam War sparked a cascade of on-campus political and social involvement, giving rise to the *Independent's* role as a Counterpoint. Since then, *Independent* writers have reaped the benefits from an open platform to articulate and advocate for issues of controversy—a privilege unrepresentative of American history. One year after the birth of the Indy, Congress passed the Controlled Substances Act, agglomerating all substances under the same federal regulatory umbrella and sparking the War on Drugs.

Regardless of the original intention, the subsequent attempts by President Nixon and Congress to combat this “public enemy number one” has precipitated a world of inequitable drug arrests and has shaped our criminal justice system to one that undeniably has racial undertones. From 2001 to 2010, over seven million people were arrested for the possession and use of marijuana,

boiling down to one marijuana-related offense every 37 seconds, and contributing to more than half of total drug arrests. White and Black people use marijuana at around the same rate, yet nationwide, Black people are nearly four times more likely to be arrested and with sentences, on average, longer than white people of similar arrests. This number varies dramatically between states and counties, yet always disproportionately jeopardizes people of color. Despite federal attempts to lower these criminalization rates, the vast racial bias has remained the same, not only costing the United States \$3.6 billion in enforcement each year, but also disproportionately punishing communities of color in ways that extend beyond marijuana arrests.

The criminalization of marijuana manifests itself differently in each of our lives, yet its federal legality continues to present arbitrary standards. 21 states currently have legalized recreational use of cannabis for users 21+, including the state of our home here at Harvard. 2016 marked the legalization of cannabis in Massachusetts, yet underage and illegal marijuana use undoubtedly oc-

curred before then. The ability, therefore, to freely report, comment, and illustrate the myriad ways to use marijuana, unafraid of any legal ramifications, is not only a privilege, but also a responsibility to recognize this substance's racial history and current prejudices, and advocate for change to be made.

Weed is not just a party trick, and getting high should not allow users to avoid the drug's social history. It is an activity and product that carries a dark narrative, yet also has created a space for open dialogue and enjoyment. Recent developments towards the legalization and decriminalization of recreational marijuana have deviated the drug's stigma away from malice, and hopefully towards more unrestricted thought. It is with this recognition and great excitement that I present to you all our inaugural Weed Issue.

Yours in the Indy,



CANNABIS LEGALIZATION THROUGH A RACIAL LENS

A conversation about cannabis legislation and racial injustice highlighted the possibility for change.

BY SACHI LAUMAS '26 AND GAURI SOOD '26

“We’ll have edibles for you on the way out,” moderator Khalil Gibran Muhammad jokingly promised at the start of the Institute of Politics JFK Forum Event on Wednesday, April 12th. Though the discussion did not end with edible goodie bags, it did discuss the ramifications and historical path of the racialization and legalization of cannabis across the United States and Canada.

The panel consisted of Akwasi Owusu-Bempah and Tahira Rehmatullah, co-authors of the new book *Waiting to Inhale: Cannabis Legalization and the Fight for Racial Justice*. Muhammad, a professor of History, Race, and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, moderated the discussion which was hosted by the Institute of Politics and Institutional Antiracism and Accountability Project.

Muhammad began the discussion by asking Owusu-Bempah and Rehmatullah for background on the history of racial justice relative to cannabis and the use of cannabis criminalization to target Black and brown communities. Together, they crafted a clear history of the unjust cycles of drug criminalization tracing back to the Great Depression, as well as the profiling and discrimination that permeates to today. Their stories were peppered with shocking statistics, riveting personal stories, and opportunities for the audience to get involved.

The criminalization of cannabis exemplifies how the justice system targets marginalized groups using commodities used within their communities. As the panelists stated, 80-90% of the 800,000 marijuana possession drug arrests per year are directed at Black or brown individuals, regardless of the equivalent levels of cannabis use across racial groups. Owusu-Bempah and Rehmatullah told numerous anecdotes that solidified the personal and life-long impact of these numbers and facts having imminent consequences on individuals and their families.

One account told the story of Evelyn, a college-educated woman who held a steady job. Not a user nor distributor of cannabis, Evelyn’s friend used her bank account to store proceeds from her sale of cannabis. After undergoing an arrest and

the ensuing criminal investigation, Evelyn served 87 months in prison, most of which was spent on suicide watch or in isolation in high-security prisons across the country, and away from any family or friends to visit her. Receiving the same treatment as murderers and rapists, Evelyn’s incarceration was a clear legal overreaction for a tangential involvement with cannabis sales.

Although Evelyn was fortunate enough to have a support system after she got out of prison, her example is an exception to an all-too common trend. Her conviction and status as a felon will follow her forever, tainting her record and ability to find employment; as Rehmatullah stated, “these kinds of things, they hang on to your life for the rest of time.”

To introduce the idea of the social perception of cannabis, Owusu-Bempah polled the audience. After asking if people know peers who use alcohol and cannabis, he asked, “how many people realize that alcohol consumption has much greater societal and individual impact than cannabis?” This question elicited a new perspective to the conversation—despite marijuana being more minor of a problem than alcohol, it carries a stigma and history that demonize both the drug and its users.

Owusu-Bempah used a college-relevant example to explain the social perception of marijuana. He asked, “think about your friends when they get high versus when they get drunk. When they get high, they want, what, pizza? But when they get drunk? Something very different happens.”

Owusu-Bempah provided a provocative perspective rooted in science, explaining that while daily items like coffee and sugar are more addictive than cannabis, their connotations differ greatly. Further, Rehmatullah mentioned that there are no cases of death from someone overdosing on cannabis.

The panel concluded by discussing possible solu-

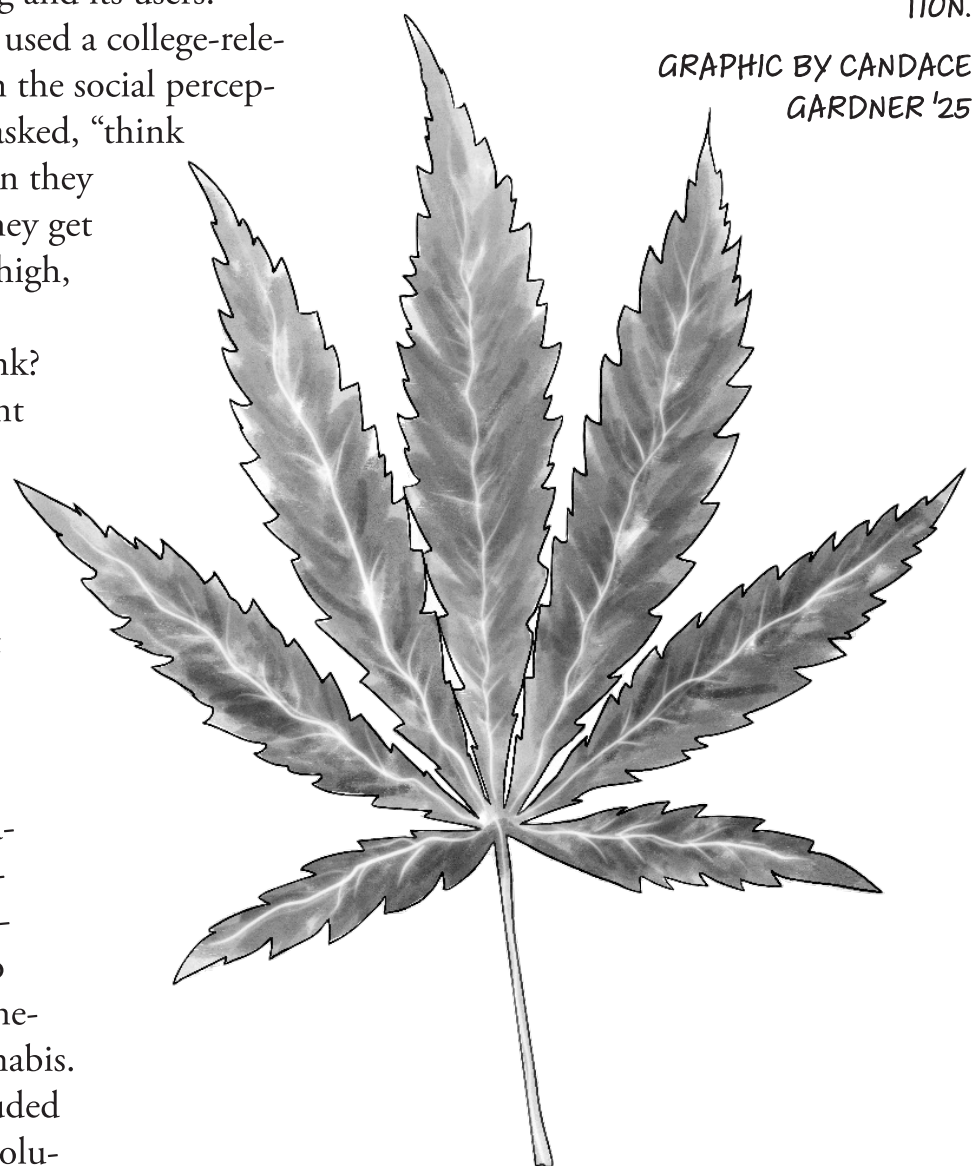
tions. “We have an opportunity to repair the harm done to communities of color,” said Owusu-Bempah. Rehmatullah and Owusu-Bempah described many inspiring initiatives by members of the community that had some kind of personal experience tying them closer to the cause.

There is also growing awareness within criminal justice programs, including the Code for America project. Code for America is working toward removing the criminal records for people who committed offenses that are not illegal anymore in order to clear their records and allow them a second chance. “We don’t have any systems to help people who are coming out of prisons,” said Owusu-Bempah. After serving time for a cannabis offense, you are often unable to get a job, loans, mortgage, be able to vote, and take part in several other normal parts of a self-sufficient life.

“Cannabis is a gateway drug—not to harder drug use, but to the criminal justice system.”

GAURI SOOD '26 (GAURISOOD@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND SACHI LAUMAS '26 (SLAUMAS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) LEFT THE IOP'S FORUM WITH A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CANNABIS LEGISLATION.

GRAPHIC BY CANDACE GARDNER '25



DOWN BAD NOT UNDER

How smoking weed may affect the efficacy of anesthesia.

BY MADDY TUNNELL '26

It is safe to say that most forms and variations of smoking weed are generally socially acceptable. Whether you desire to light up at a park with your friends, smoke a bowl before a yoga class, or get violently high and watch a live action Disney movie, recreational marijuana has developed into an activity we all can enjoy. Yet regardless of the normalization of weed, its effect on our health should not be swept under the rug. People may neglect to mention their intake to their doctors because *hey, it's like having a glass of wine at night, they don't care about that right?* Wrong! Recent studies have shown that smoking weed can reduce the efficacy of anesthesia of patients undergoing surgery.

If you are high while reading this, and currently feel yourself falling into a semi-paranoid state, contemplating when your next surgery will be, let me dispel any rumors that WebMD might give you. In an interview with the *Harvard Independent*, Dr. David Hepner, the Medical Director of the Weiner Center for Preoperative Evaluation for the Brigham and Women's Hospital and associate Professor of Anesthesia at Harvard Medical School emphasized in an interview, how important it is to be honest and open with your anesthesiologist and surgeon about what your weed consumption looks like. It is important to share factors such as your last smoke date, frequency of smoking, and favorite form of smoking.

"Both the marijuana and the anesthesia are targeting similar receptors in the brain, so therefore they can interact in a way that makes the narcotic less effective. [With smoking weed,] in the beginning your body could see an increase in heart rate and an increase in blood pressure, and overtime, these could both decrease," said Dr. Hepner. In his article "Coming Clean: Your anesthesiologist needs to know about marijuana use before surgery," Hepner explained that people see weed very casually now, but the absence of reporting it causes patients to have complications during surgery. According to the CDC, 48.2 million Americans in

2018 smoked weed at some point, proving its casual consumption and increasingly consistent usage. It is thus vitally important to educate ourselves on how cannabis consumption interacts with components such as anesthesia to ensure safety and well-being.

Because of the way our receptors process both marijuana and anesthesia, the anesthetic is much less effective. It is the anesthesiologist's job to monitor their patient's factors such as their heart rate and blood pressure, emphasizing the importance of knowing where inconsistencies are coming from. Hepner also explained that needing more anesthesia or opioids during and after surgery interferes with the patient's heart rate and blood pressure, making it less ideal to opt for higher anesthetic doses. Who wants to be the person who *actually* experienced what is written in the fine print?

In addition to affecting patients on the operating table, the "holy lettuce" has effects on post-operative care as well. In an article from the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Dr. Elyad Ekrami explained that adults who use cannabis both acutely and chronically may experience an increased level of postoperative pain in the days following surgery, which is why these individuals may intake more opioids to manage discomfort and risk addiction. Dr. Ekrami found that cannabis users consume about 7% more opioids after surgery than non-weed smokers. She also noted that weed smokers experience 14% more pain the day after surgery, which alone should deter you from lighting up before laying down in the operating room.

Dr. Hepner stated that patients should report "anything that has an effect on your mentation" to their doctors, including substances that have a range of THC, CBD,

or any other cannabinoids. Dr. Hepner advises everyone to alert their physicians of any mind-altering substances they intake, as well as any other non-prescription medication or supplements that do not typically make it onto medical charts, like naturopathic or homeopathic medicines.

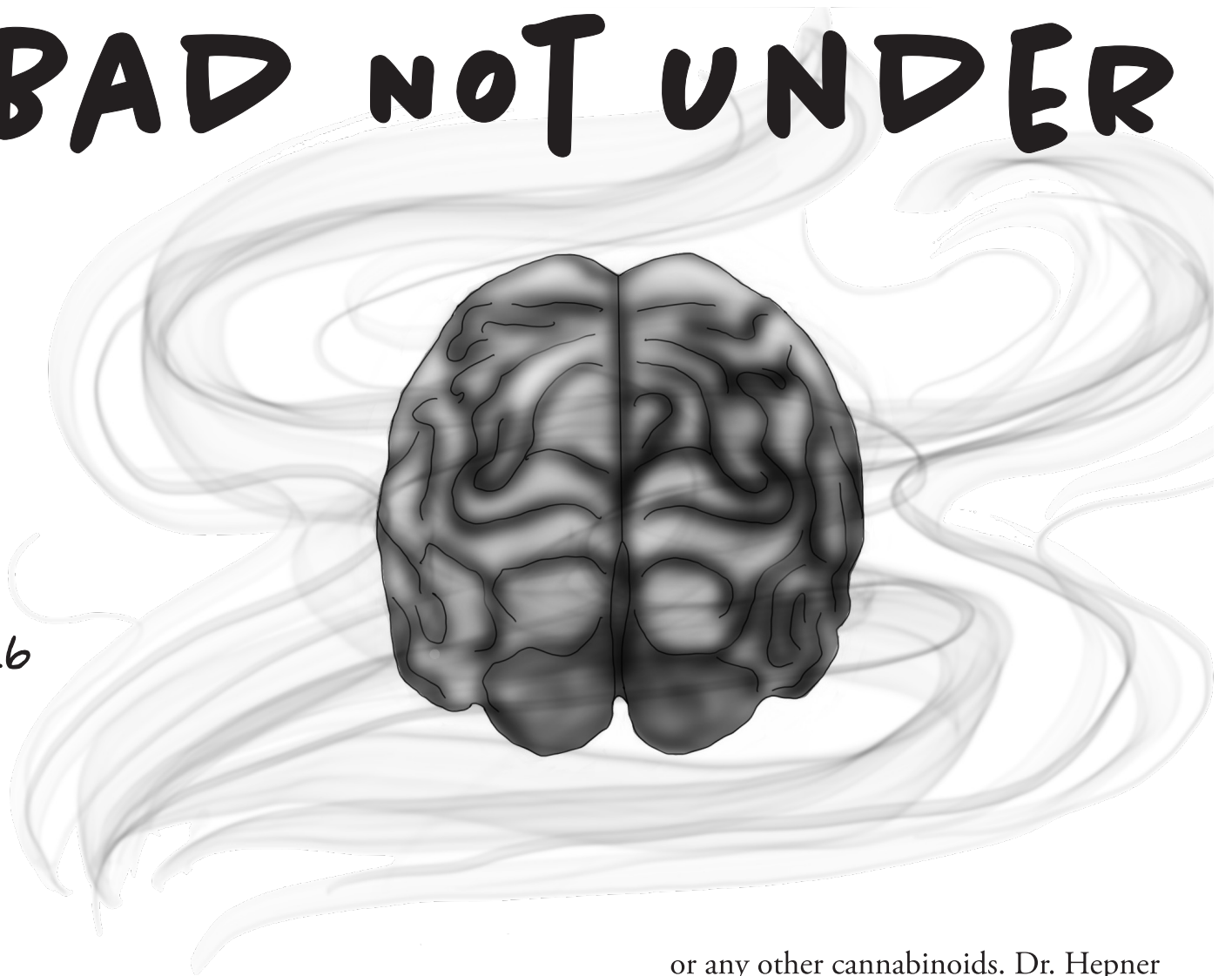
Marijuana is currently classified as a Schedule 1 substance, making it harder to perform scientific studies without spending copious amounts of time dealing with the FDA's barriers to proper research access, and generating a significant lack of information when it comes to weed and anesthesia. Yet the Biden Administration recently passed a law called the ASA-Supported Medical Marijuana and Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act, making it easier for researchers to get through FDA approval for their cannabis studies. Hopefully, this law will open opportunities for weed research to catch up with its usage rates and give us more information about how best to treat patients who chronically smoke weed.

Do not let this news mislead you: weed still has the same benefits that it always has. Yet it is imperative that users disclose their marijuana habits to their doctors regardless of how negligible it may feel. Medically, it is highly relevant.

With that said, it might be time to start asking your mom not to come to your doctor's appointments. Come on now, you are in college.

MADDY TUNNELL '26 (MADDYTUNNELL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) SAW A POST ABOUT WEED AND ANESTHESIA ON INSTAGRAM AND IMMEDIATELY WONDERED WHY NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT IT.

GRAPHIC BY CANDACE GARDNER '25



SMOKE AND MIRRORS

HARVARD'S WEED REGULATIONS MAKE IT AN OUTLIER COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE STATE.

BY RYAN GOLEMME '23

W eed use on campus remains a somewhat open secret—or at least an open smell—depending on the rooms in some dorms. Psychedelics are less common by comparison but still see some use among some student subgroups on campus according to the *Independent's* prior investigations. Yet, despite the breadth of changes around Massachusetts state law and a growing push to reform federal drug scheduling, the unchanged federal statutes mean marijuana remains very restricted on campus for personal and research purposes.

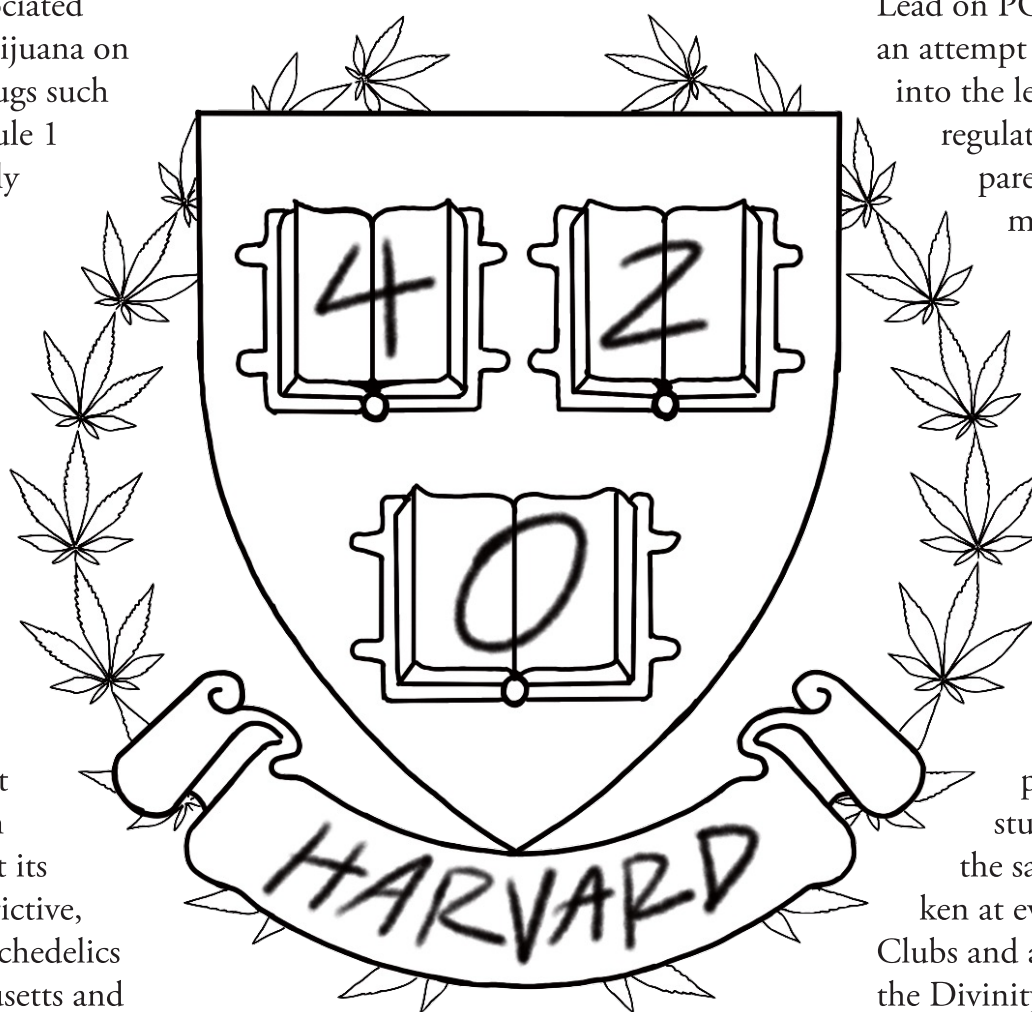
Since Harvard accepts federal funding, and marijuana is still classified under Schedule 1 under the Controlled Substances Act, the University must adhere to the associated federal guidelines that classify marijuana on the same level as more extreme drugs such as heroin. Under the Act, a Schedule 1 drug is one which has “no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse,” according to the DEA. Not only does the Act forbid any type of marijuana possession and consumption, but also any attempts at research to assess its potential benefits and dangers unless they are enabled under very specific federal rules.

Even though Massachusetts legalized the possession and recreational use of marijuana for users 21 and older in a 2016 ballot initiative, the University's ties with the federal government means that its policies on the drug are more restrictive, relative to the rest of the state. Psychedelics remain forbidden under Massachusetts and federal law, but there have been some recent efforts in the state legislature to permit their use more broadly.

The Harvard University Police Department makes this clear on their drug and alcohol policies, as “Even if possession or use of marijuana would be permitted under Massachusetts law, it remains prohibited on Harvard property or as part of a Harvard activity.” This also includes official Harvard-affiliated student organizations that are considered as an extension of the University, even if they were to host an off-campus event and followed all the relevant state laws.

This also means the medical applications of marijuana are prohibited on Harvard's campus, as “Federal law still prohibits the possession, use, or distribution of marijuana, including for medical purposes,” according to the official HUPD policy. This also forbids Har-

vard University Health Services from using or offering medical marijuana for treatment, despite Massachusetts permitting its medical use since 2012. While Harvard Medical School is still able to publish features and some research on the topic, Harvard undergraduates hoping to seek treatment with cannabis remain prohibited from doing so. However, HUPD regulations do not emphasize criminal punishments for simple possession as much compared to active dealing, which fall under Massachusetts' prohibitions on drug trafficking. Marijuana and drug use may place students in situations that could lead to related crimes like property damage or physical altercations, but possession alone is more detailed



in the regulation as a matter handled by Harvard's administration than it is directly by the police.

Arrest incidents regarding marijuana remain rare according to HUPD's public logs, but the complications of marijuana dealing have led to tragedy on Harvard's campus. In 2009, non-student Justin Cosby entered Kirkland House possessing large quantities of marijuana and was murdered in the House's basement by another intruder Jabari Copney in what was described as a botched robbery attempt. Copney was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2011, and Cosby's mother attempted to sue the University for the wrongful death of her son. While nothing that deadly has occurred since, students looking to get supplied marijuana face the enormous risks of the black market present in the state even after legalization.

Regardless of police policy, there are a few spots where the University is hoping to shift the norms around drug bans, albeit in areas broader than marijuana. In the Summer of 2021, Harvard Law School's Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics launched a three-year research initiative called the Project on Psychedelics Law and Regulation (POPLAR) to research policy regarding psychedelics. While marijuana is not technically a psychedelic, and thus outside the effort's purview, their research focuses on reforming the rules around other drugs similarly prohibited under Schedule 1 that could help change their broader legal acceptance. Mason Marks, the Senior Fellow and Project Lead on POPLAR, described the project as an attempt to bring more scholarly analysis into the legal and policy aspects of drug

regulation regarding psychedelics, compared to prior academic focus on medical applications that face much tighter regulations on research.

Still, Marks noted that academic efforts like POPLAR remain rare on campus, in part due to the long-standing stigmatization of drugs that also affects their advocacy efforts. “It took law firms a long time to warm up to the cannabis industry and practice in that space, and it's almost like going all the way back to the very beginning with psychedelics,” Marks said. While student outreach remains tricky given the same stigmas, POPLAR has spoken at events of the Harvard Psychedelics Clubs and at a psychedelics research event at the Divinity School.

Whether such efforts to shape federal policy conversations around psychedelics will do the same for marijuana remains to be seen. The restrictions of Schedule 1 combined with the University's dependence on following federal rules to keep their valuable funding flows means that, despite the rarity of incidents and changing academic efforts, marijuana and psychedelic drugs will remain prohibited barring any changes on the federal level. Until then, students on campus continue to balance under the same ambiguous limbo that has remained at the University for decades, one which places them under a tighter watch than the rest of the surrounding state.

RYAN GOLEMME '23 (RYANGOLEMME@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU), WHO STILL HAS NEVER SEEN A REAL CANNABIS LEAF, WRITES NEWS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26

TO STUDY MY MIND

A look at altered states of consciousness and mental health.

BY KATE TUNNELL '24

What is the best way to study your own mind? See your psychiatrist and ask them for their opinion? Get a brain scan? An EEG? Read neuroscience papers? Smoke weed and watch your thoughts as they float on alpha waves? Take a psychedelic drug and meet your demons? There are arguments for each conjecture. Today's common treatments for anxiety and depression certainly do not include altered states of consciousness, yet the current landscape for mental health treatment is barren and fraught with side effects. New "mental health" companies and therapies are cropping up around every corner; take telehealth on demand, such as Better Help, therapist chatbots operated by AI machine learning, and at-home ketamine clinics such as Mind Bloom. The variety demonstrates society's acknowledgement of the pervasive mental health crisis and large consumer market. So, what is the solution?

Psychedelic experiences, or fluid experiences that can work against disorders of rigidity, are often described as "shaking the snow globe," referring to the effects of psychedelics on pervasive thought patterns. There is a growing interest in altered states of consciousness to better investigate the troubled mind, and I believe it is important to further investigate mind-altering substances for mental health, especially those that impact consciousness. Some see these drugs are in contrast to current treatments such as Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, which are the most frequent medication treatment for anxiety and depression, the two most common mental disorders today.

Although scientifically debated, I see weed, specifically THC, as a "psychedelic" primarily because of its altering effect on a user's state of consciousness. While this word has become somewhat taboo over the last century, due to Nixon's War on Drugs, it has recently returned to modern day psychiatric use. Upon discovery, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), for instance, was used in psychiatry and to effectively treat alcoholism before it was used by 1960's teenagers looking to escape reality. All drugs exist on a spectrum, or therapeutic index, which is the difference in the amount it takes to feel the drug versus the toxic dose; some are considered more dangerous than others due to an ambiguous therapeutic index. High doses of cannabis can induce hallucinogenic effects often associated with psychedelic states, however many people do not consider a psychedelic drug like LSD in the same camp as THC due to the different dosages that result in hallucinogenic effects. Furthermore, the trajectories for weed and LSD have been very different. The exploration of both can lead us to a better understanding of the current landscape when it comes to anxious minds and the use of psychoactive drugs.

Anecdotally, many people I know who struggle with anxious and depressive symptoms use weed to temporarily relieve symptoms, a trend not isolated in observation. A 2018 study conducted by the Journal of Affective Disorders discovered that weed can reduce self-reported symptoms of depression in the short-term, but does not result in long-term alleviation. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the effects of THC are not consistent across the board, and for some, can lead to counterintuitive effects such as restlessness and paranoia. Further research is mixed on the positive and negative links between THC and mental health and

what facilitates the relationship.

There are three types of brain waves: alpha, theta and beta. Alpha waves are usually seen in an individual's state of an awake brain at rest, and are most common right before sleep. They are associated with creative, reflective and introspective states, and have been linked to reduced depression symptoms and are known to be a bridge between the conscious and the subconscious mind. Alpha-wave states are dominant under the influence of weed. Notably, in order to complete cognitively demanding tasks, it is necessary to swiftly down-regulate alpha waves. Particularly in adolescents, THC makes it more difficult to exit the trance-like alpha wave state when presented with a cognitive demand. So smoking weed and going to class might cause more stress than it relieves if you are trying to force your brain out of alpha waves when it *really* doesn't want to.

Apart from the fact that alpha waves are directly linked to human creativity, and creativity is linked to optimal human well-being, calming the mind is itself enough of a benefit. During the few hours when one forgets programmed worries, they can reflect, dream, and fantasize: all the aspects critical to flourishing that are nearly impossible to cultivate with a depressed or anxious brain.

For those caught in a repetitive thought pattern, as seen in anxiety and depression, psychedelics have been shown to take them out of a negative thinking loop, also known as facilitating neuroplasticity. If your brain is more plastic, or more malleable, you can see problems from a different perspective or stop and re-evaluate a negative thought in its tracks. Psychedelics can help people see their thoughts from new angles and make novel connections.

However, even though both THC and LSD are consciousness-altering substances with the potential for positive psychoactive experiences, LSD has been assigned the stereotype of psychedelics. Yet according to a 2004 New York Times article, psychiatrist Dr. Humphry Osmand, who originally coined the term "psychedelic", defined the term as "mind manifesting... 'clear, euphonious and uncontaminated by other associations.'"

It is a shame that today, "psychedelic" has been contaminated with a host of other associations, especially here at Harvard where psychologists and heads of *The Harvard Psilocybin Project*, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, used to hand out LSD tabs after psychological discoveries they made while on the drug. It is true that LSD can induce horrific and adverse effects, but this was largely in part to its use as a "club drug" and uneducated dosing before accurate research of the drug had been conducted.

60 years after the inception of the War on Drugs, research on LSD specifically has made a comeback. Scientific interest in altered states of consciousness has increased given an increase in widespread understanding of these drugs' utility for dramatic and long-term solutions to treatment-resistant mental illness.

I am not promoting the use of mind-altering substances for mental health, but it is important for those struggling to get help to consider the landscape. The two most common mental illnesses today, anxiety and depression, are characterized by consistent, unavoidable loops of thinking that are hard to break. Rumi-

nation, the act of repeated and inescapable negative thinking, is a symptom of depression, and is known to predict the severity and pervasiveness of depressive states. Especially for anxiety, people are directed towards SSRIs; this is admittedly an easier approach than confronting the demons of the wandering mind.

I personally believe that when doctors prescribe SSRIs, they are insinuating to their patients that they cannot help themselves without medication. SSRIs then allow and encourage a patient to adopt helpless behavior when it comes to their role in their own mental health. Although it is difficult to slow the mind down enough to observe and reorganize thoughts, current research on THC and classical psychedelic drugs suggest that the positive mental health outcomes observed under the influence come from an ability to calm the mind, step away from current thought patterns, and potentially reorganize and re-evaluate.

Modern day psychedelic research is still unarguably young, but it should be noted that the synthetic psychedelic, LSD, was brought to the limelight at first not as a party drug, but to investigate the mind—an origin that unfortunately has been woven into American history as a dangerous substance. Original LSD advocates, such as Alan Watts, Adolphus Huxley and countless others, saw the drug as a way to open the *Doors of Perception*. For mental health, however, these substances should not be used to escape reality, but to calm cyclical thoughts and investigate the mind.

Anyone can be a great scientist, for each of us have the tools to investigate the greatest biological mystery of mankind, the mind. It might be a waste of a lifetime to miss the opportunity to study your own.

Disclaimer: This article is not promoting or suggesting the use of THC or psychedelics for mental health. This is not a replacement for doctors' advice, please seek help from a professional.

KATE TUNNELL '24 (KATETUNNELL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES FORUM FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26



Wildest Place you've smoked?
Out a window above the President's office
50 yards from a cop
before my grandmother's funeral
Dream blunt rotation...
Obama
Jennifer Aniston
Margot Robbie
Snoop Dogg
Seth Rogen
Abraham Lincoln

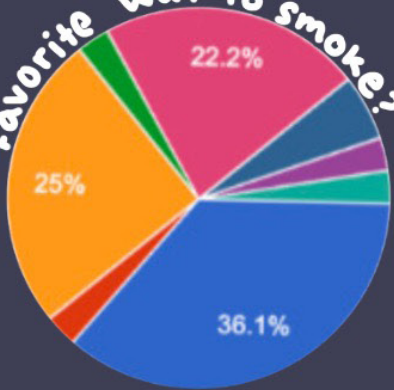


HIGH HORROR STORY:

SMOKED ON ACID AND HAD TO GO HOME AND TAKE A PRACTICE SAT.

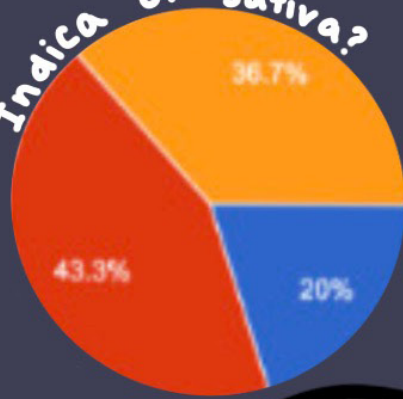
FOUND OUT MY PET GOLDFISH DIED WHEN I WAS HIGH LAST WEEK... NEVER BEEN THE SAME

Favorite Way to Smoke?



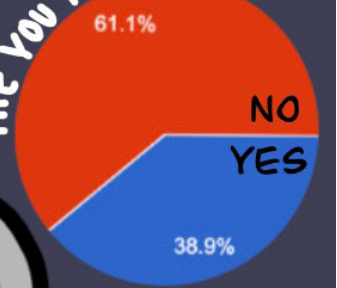
- JOINT
- BLUNT
- BONG
- BOWL
- DABS
- DAB PEN
- EDIBLE
- GRAVITY BONG

Indica or Sativa?



- INDICA
- SATIVA
- HYBRID

Are you a stoner?



Need for mental health?



Ice in the bong?

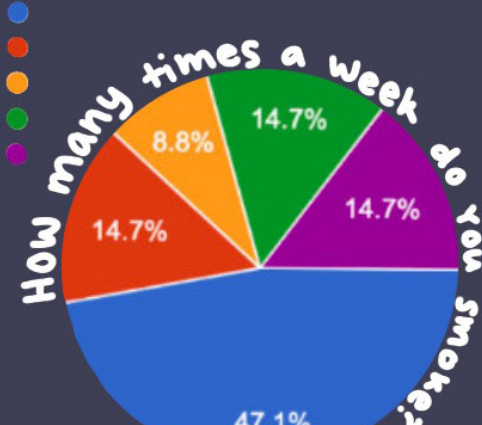
Yes: 42%
No: 12%
Never tried: 45%

FAVORITE MUNCHIE:
PIZZA + MILKSHAKE
WHATEVER CVS TELLS ME
TAKIS AND PEANUT MEMS
NACHOS
FALAFEL CORNER

do your parents know you smoke?
yes: 40%
no: 46%
maybe: 14%

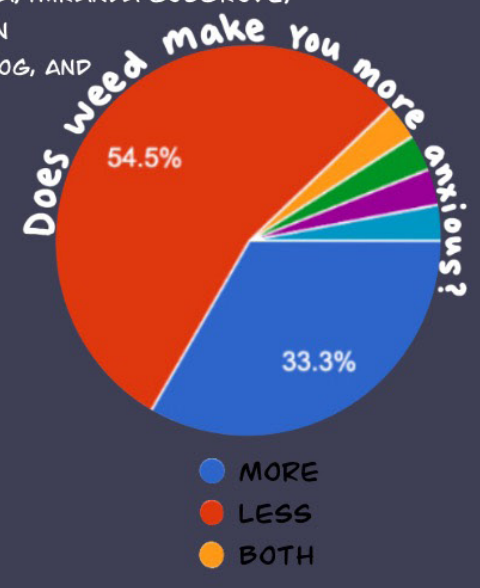
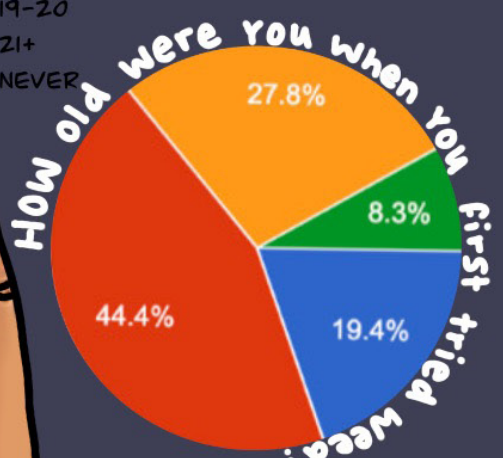
Can you roll a joint?

yes: 41%
no: 35%



DREAM BLUNT ROTATION

- MARGOT ROBBIE, JENNIFER ANISTON, AND SETH ROGEN
- SNOOP DOGG, OBAMA, MIRANDA COSGROVE, AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN
- LEONARDO DA VINCI, SNOOP DOG, AND JIMMY KIMMEL



WEED - THE ULTIMATE ACADEMIC PED

Two stoners reflect on using weed in school.

BY SIR LANCELOT '69 AND SIR GALAHAD '69

Sir Lancelot: 2.5% of Americans smoke weed every day. We are two of them.

We don't mean purely recreationally, either. This school year, we have smoked before going to the gym, working on Math 55 problem sets, or even showing up for midterms and final exams. Our results speak for themselves; we both have near perfect grades, and yet, we seldom hear people using the same methods. This is especially surprising at a school like Harvard where students look to gain an edge wherever possible. Weed has the potential to reduce stress, make work more tolerable, and aid in focus, and students who smoke weed recreationally should be more open to the possibility of adding weed to their study-aid repertoire.

Sir Galahad: I suffer from general, social, and separation anxiety disorders. I have seen a psychiatrist since I was 10, and I have been medicated with Zoloft since I was 13. When I came to Harvard, problem sets piled up, and the pressure to perform pushed me over the edge. I was losing it. As a last-ditch effort to help me get my work in on time, my psychiatrist recommended I try smoking weed. She said it may help me overcome the anxiety preventing me from working. I had smoked recreationally before, but never to help get work done. Still, since my daily Zoloft seemed to be working less and less, I gave her advice a try.

Sir Lancelot: Did it work?

Sir Galahad: Surprisingly, it did. It helped me focus on my work by alleviating the stress that my problem sets caused. I was getting so overwhelmed by various due dates that I couldn't get anything done. Weed reduced my stress just enough that I could focus on the task at hand, but not so much that I didn't feel motivated to work. I also began to enjoy the most mundane assignments, which made my work feel like less of a chore. I started to love the entire process of a problem set, rather than just the moment I turned it in. Finally, weed helped my writing become more descriptive and emotional. One professor told me that she thought that while my writing initially felt guarded, it became more emotional and rawer over the course of the semester. I truly believe that without marijuana, my first semester at Harvard would have been a wash.

Sir Lancelot: I know many smokers—myself included—who frequently do their math homework high. I've had similar success in my economics courses. In fact, the only work that I can't do while high is

Sir Galahad: Why do you think that is?

Sir Lancelot: Chinese is not my first language, so I'm not completely comfortable with it yet. When I try to speak Chinese while high, it tends to mess up the tones, and I have trouble formulating my sentences.

Sir Galahad: That's an interesting point. I've had similar problems with my philosophy readings; I find it hard to understand the rhetoric and syntax typically used in philosophical writing, since it is so different from what we read on a daily basis. I'll read an entire page before realizing that I did not understand a word of it.

Sir Lancelot: I don't think that everyone enjoys being high. Weed might make you more relaxed and productive, but I do not think that weed is the answer for everyone. I do enjoy smoking small amounts and being productive while high, but not everyone will have these results.

Sir Galahad: Of course not. While I'm not advocating for everyone to try doing homework high, I think that those who already have experience with weed should consider trying it.

Sir Lancelot: How did you find out what size dose works for you?

Sir Galahad: I started with a very small amount—about 20%—of what I normally smoke. I tampered with this amount until I found my optimal dosage. Right now, I consider a working joint to be about a third of a gram. Of course, everyone's tolerance is different, and those who want to try weed as an academic aid will have to do their own experimentation for best results.

Sir Lancelot: I was wondering if you ever feel that weed makes you feel lethargic when taking tests. Sometimes, I find it hard to stay alert and focused on my work when high.

Sir Galahad: There are two main ways I counteract the drowsiness some weed users report when I smoke before taking exams or working on assignments. I typically also ingest some type of caffeine, as well as making sure to smoke a sativa-dominant strain, both of which help to prevent the typical

symptoms of sleepiness associated with smoking. The intense relaxation associated with indica can be counterproductive when trying to take an exam or finish an assignment.

Sir Lancelot: I'll be sure to give that a try. My last question: who shouldn't smoke for academic assistance?

Sir Galahad: People who have never smoked weed before should not try smoking to focus on schoolwork. When it comes to conducting yourself while high, there is a learning curve. Since being high affects motor coordination, people who have not been high very many times will have to exert a lot of effort into controlling their body. This will ultimately detract from their assignments. Once you've been high a few dozen times, you'll have a better idea of how your body responds and will be able to conduct yourself better. Moreover, those who have experience smoking recreational doses of weed will not find the much smaller working dose potent.

Sir Lancelot: That makes a lot of sense. I have smoked enough that a working joint does not make me feel that high, but in the past, it would have.

Sir Galahad: Exactly. I think that anyone who has experience smoking weed and does not react adversely to it should give it a try.

SIR LANCELOT AND SIR GALAHAD'S TRUE NAMES HAVE BEEN PROTECTED FOR LEGAL CONCERNS. OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY THAT OF THE WRITER AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES OF THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY ISABEL EDDY '24



REVIEW OF THE HIGH

Rating many, many different ways of getting high.

BY ANONYMOUS

Baked. Stoned. Faded. Zooted. Melted. These are just some ways of saying you are absolutely, 100% high. Now, being high is great, but the method of attaining this elevated state is arguably the most important part. Here I will be reviewing a myriad of ways to get high, from the standard joints and pens to your more unorthodox bell-pepper bong and knife hits.

Joints: The classic, go-to method. Everybody has smoked a joint. Peaceful, relaxing, it is an amazing introduction to the art of smoking weed. You can control how much you smoke, making it that much better of an experience.

8/10

Jesus Joint: Ok, I know this is still a joint, but once my friends and I rolled a joint that looked like a cross and smoking it was the craziest experience ever.

10/10

Edibles: Depending on who you ask, edibles are either the worst or best thing ever. To create an edible, one extracts the cannabinoids (THC and CBD), and incorporates them into food. Gummies are popular to buy from dispensaries, but if you choose to go the homemade route, I would recommend cannabutter for brownies, cookies, and more. Edibles are volatile, so the experience varies. My personal favorite edible is the Blueberry Lemonade Hash Rosin Mixer, a cough-syrup-esque liquid where 40 mL will do you so, so right.

6/10

Pieces: A small, shaped vessel, usually ceramic, that is common among smokers. What you gain in easy transport and preparation, you lose in the quality of the smoke. Far too often have I pulled away feeling as though my lungs were in flames, so this is definitely not my

favorite way to smoke.

5/10

Bongs: A bong is a large beaker-shaped object which functions similarly to a pipe or dab rig, except it has water in it. I am extremely partial to the bong. My first real time smoking was a bong hit, and not to be melodramatic, but it changed my life. The professional method is to put ice in the tube so that it cools down the smoke when you inhale, leading to the smoothest bong rip you will ever take. You need to make sure to pour a little water over the ice, as using dry ice can lead to the inhalation of microscopic ice shards, which absolutely nobody wants.

7/10

Gravity Bongs: A boujee variation of the bong: the gravity bong. It is a contraption which uses water and air pressure to provide you with highly concentrated smoke. While it may not be the easiest usage of weed, the style factor alone more than makes up for it.

7/10

Dab Rigs: Violent High. No other way to describe it. Probably the most efficient way to get high, which is both good and bad for obvious reasons.

7/10

Pens: Hit or miss. Because there is so much variation from pen to pen, the experience you get also varies. Sometimes, you get the perfect blinker and all is well, and sometimes you take a couple rips and you feel like death. Additionally, with a pen you open yourself up to the possibility of flavor, my personal favorite being this one cranberry-flavored cart that was a top-tier experience. You also have to consider the ambience. Taking a hit of a pen doesn't necessarily have the best vibes.

6.5/10

Knife Hits: First of all, just saying knife hits sounds super cool. Knife hits are when you heat two knives up over a flame, press dab wax between the hot knives to

create smoke, and then inhale that smoke using some sort of funnel. My first piece of advice: come prepared. You can easily end up damaging knives beyond repair, wasting dab wax, or stinking up your whole kitchen.

7.5/10

Hotbox: This is when you (and a group of friends) enter an en-

closed space, the smaller the better. Personally, the car hot box is a classic, but hotboxing a tent and a sauna are also something that everyone should experience. Technically speaking, you would be usually smoking joints within this area, but let's separate them due to the unique nature of hotboxing.

11/10

Smoking out of a Pepper: Now let's delve into using non-traditional objects as pieces. First up is the bell pepper. To get into smoking shape, you must poke various holes in the side and the top until you are left with a somewhat functioning piece. When attempted, it did not work extremely well, but you will get high, nonetheless.

6.5/10

Smoking through a Banana: Fitting with the theme of using food items, another option is the banana. Now in theory, you would carve out a little divot and then poke a hole through the banana. Not the most efficient use of weed, but acceptable in the case of an emergency.

5/10

Smoking out of a hot dog. Yes, this really has been attempted. Like the banana, the concept was to use the hot dog as a pipe to smoke out of. It wasn't the most successful, but if you end up in a situation where you have weed, a lighter, and a hot dog then anything is possible.

4/10

Nug on fire: Now, say all you have is bud and a lighter. Nothing else. It may be hard to believe, but it is still possible to smoke. There are two ways that I have heard done. Just straight up lighting the nug on fire and inhaling, which honestly works better than you might think. The other is sticking bud in your nose and lighting it. I cannot say I have had the pleasure (or displeasure) of lighting bud on fire in my nose, but it sounds pretty painful so I probably wouldn't recommend.

4/10

Overall, there are many, many ways to get high. Some are better than others, but they all produce a memorable experience.

ANONYMOUS IS REALLY HOPING THEY NEVER HAVE TO FASHION A PEPPER INTO A PIECE AT 2:00 AM AGAIN.

GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26

FORUM | 11



A TOUR OF THE FDR SUITE

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's former suite is a well-preserved look into Harvard in 1904.

BY MATTHEW SHUM '24

Tucked into a corner of B-entry-way in Adams House's Westmorly Court is the ornately decorated former room of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Class of 1904. Stepping into the Victorian architecture of Adams House in and of itself evokes a bygone era, but the FDR suite, replete with reconstructions of each room, is a genuine blast from the past. In 1900, Roosevelt and his Groton classmate Lathrop Brown visited Cambridge and chose to rent rooms in the newly constructed Westmorly Court, part of the so-called Gold Coast dorms along Mt. Auburn Street. The pair chose a two bedroom suite which cost the modern equivalent of about \$13,000 annually.

comparisons from his classmates when sporting Theodore's classic pince-nez and shouting 'Bully!', a common exclamation by Theodore meaning 'wonderful'. A few months into his first year on campus, a scandal arose involving another of FDR's cousins at Harvard, James Roosevelt "Tadd" Roosevelt Jr. Descended from the Astors on his mother's side, Tadd decamped from Harvard after his freshman year, married an alleged prostitute Sadie Messenger, and settled in an Upper West Side apartment in New York. The shock of the scandal allegedly led to the heart attack and death of FDR's father and Tadd's grandfather, James Roosevelt, after he disowned his grandson.



a puppy-dog or a baby named after me than one of those carillon effects that is never quite in tune and which goes off at all hours of the day and night! At least one can give paregoric to a puppy or a baby."

One room that still possesses its original furnishings is the bathroom. Pictured here is the original tub, fixtures, floor, and woodwork. Out of frame is the original toilet and sink.

This Ivers and Pond upright piano dates back to 1898, bought by Roosevelt and Brown to help them practice for the freshman Glee Club. Atop the piano is an original portrait of a Gibson Girl and Johnny the Bobcat pinning down Eli the Quail. On the right is the room's entrance and on the left is Brown's room.

At the time, this prodigious sum would have bought a laundry list of amenities including daily maid service, doormen, breakfast in bed, and access to the school's largest private swimming pool complete with palm trees and a river god installation sprouting hot water. Roosevelt and Brown lived in the room for four years and decorated it extensively with stolen signs, Groton memorabilia, and personal effects. In 2008 the room underwent an extensive reconstruction process based on significant archival research, ceasing all undergraduate ability to reside there. Many of the objects in the room are recreations or sourced from Roosevelt's time period.

As a first-year, Roosevelt joined the Republican Club to support his cousin and Harvard Class of 1880 graduate Theodore 'Teddy' Roosevelt's vice-presidential campaign, inspiring

Roosevelt's time at Harvard following his first-year was spent engaging in numerous extracurriculars and social activities that will seem familiar even today. He rowed intramural crew and served as president of the Crimson. He also served as a cheerleader and usher at football games. From this suite in Westmorly Court, he was even plagued by a regular modern complaint: the Lowell Bells. After a 1933 hoax in which undergraduates attempted to congratulate Roosevelt on the dedication of the bells in his name, "Strictly between ourselves, I should much prefer to have





FDR's bedroom is complete with an Eastlake bed, which was a popular choice for the time. Most of the wall decoration revolves around traveling and ornithology, passions which were developed by Roosevelt in his childhood years spent across both Europe and the United States.

marily 'gentleman's C's', averaging a C- on his study card. While Roosevelt returned regularly for reunions following his graduation and spoke at both Commencement and Tercentenary exercises, in the years following his death Harvard kept him at arm's-length. Until the establishment of the



The period football on top of the left-most cabinet is smaller and shaped differently than the modern football. In 1906 when the forward pass was added to the game the football was made larger and thus easier to throw. Proposals under consideration to increase the safety of the game included widening fields or increasing the forward pass, and the recently constructed Harvard Stadium could not be widened. Thus Harvard lobbied strongly for the addition of the forward pass.

The wall displays the Harvard 1904 flag, a Class of 1904 picture (right), a view of Harvard Yard in 1896 (center), and poster from the Hasty Pudding Show in 1904 (left).

Even at Harvard, Roosevelt's post-graduate career breathes rarified air, being one of the five presidents who attended Harvard College. Despite this impressive professional path, Roosevelt received pri-



FDR Foundation and Suite, there existed no lasting memorial to Roosevelt at the school.

In contrast to this, President John F. Kennedy '40 maintained a close relationship with the school while he was president. While visiting Harvard to campaign for his economic reform bill which aimed to revitalize so-called 'distressed areas', Kennedy was greeted in the yard by students in Weld Hall holding signs which read "Mr. President, Weld is a distressed area!" Following Kennedy's assassination, Harvard honored him by renaming its school of public administration.

The FDR suite thus provides an important opportunity to engage with the legacy of Roosevelt and his time at Harvard. In implementing his New Deal economic policy in the wake of the Great Depression, Roosevelt hired extensively from Harvard faculty. Roosevelt always returned requests from the class office for alumni information, and in 1939 answered the questionnaire as follows:

Your business or professional associations: Same.

What traveling have you done? About 1,000,000 miles.

What classmates do you frequently hear from or see? Flocks.

What have you written, edited, compiled, translated, or composed? Altogether too much.

What public service have you performed? President, U.S.

Tours of the FDR suite are available for Harvard affiliates upon request. For more information, please contact michael.weishan@fdrfoundation.org.

MATTHEW SHUM '24 (MSHUM@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAS USED FDR'S TOILET AND RANKS IT IN THE TOP 5.

IMAGES SOURCED FROM THE FDR FOUNDATION WEBSITE.

THE PARADOX OF PAINLESSNESS

An original poem.

BY ANONYMOUS

They say it offers insouciance:
Like Granny Smith apples soaked
In peanut butter,
It's ever-adored.

It may only be a guise:
A parched rose wrapped
In a bouquet of April tulips.

I myself am uncertain:

The prison sentences are ghastly,
There's no question. But does it really infuse
Our tired, debilitated selves with painlessness?

*

Pain, it seems,
Has utility.

Indeed,
Pain is the great instructor.

**

Repress, repress! They chant:
I'm skeptical.

Illumination! Illumination! They chant:
It's nebulous.

Perhaps they're right.
Perhaps they're not.

I AND MY SENSATIONS

An original poem.

BY ABRIL RODRIGUEZ DIAZ '26

glazed walls / hazy still-shots around the room: how
to slice birthday cake / spilled drink / sit by me / sat-
in, sour patch, kisses, cables / and seconds, staggered
seconds / berry adolescence / all this in black and
blue air sinking, breathing / like a merry go round /
these walls are warm and safe, effortless

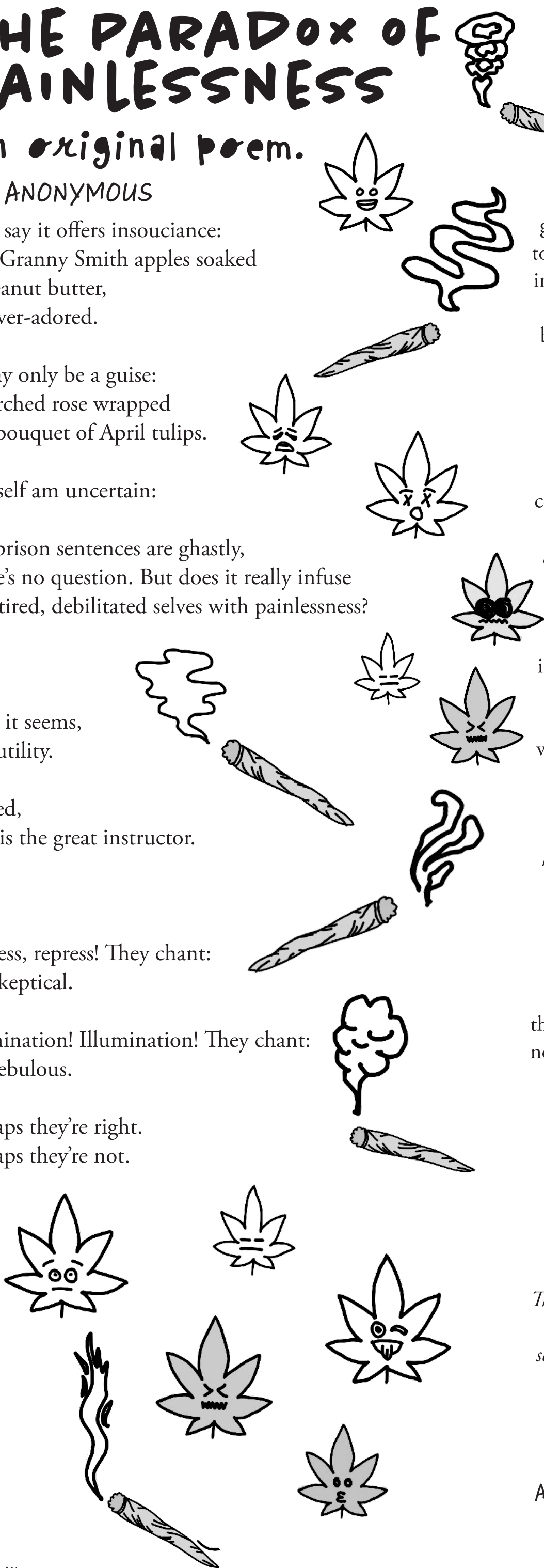
the world is still / lights twinkling / the two inter-
twined beside me / still / ladle floating in punch /
potato chips in frosting / untouched / the world
comes at me in starts and stops / but slowly, how it's
supposed to / beautiful and out of order / a red lip
/ a slipping tongue / talk filled with semicolons and
unfinished sentiments / half-calls home, half-used
napkins, half-welded hearts / but that is okay

i tell god to go and he does / it feels easy / like float-
ing downstream / loose / unbraced / so nice / i've
spent my life trying to let the current take me /
without dissolving, losing perspective / but there are
always too many things that bother me more than
they should / why peaceful existence comes down,
once again, to an effort / to a science / i don't know
/ but tonight there hasn't been a word about past or
future / i breathe the now in / slow and deep / my
mother says that i make everything about myself /
and even now it is i / thinking hard about how soft
things feel / about currents / about balance / there's
only one subject here / sparkling / patterns etching
themselves into my throat / scraggly / nauseating but
not if i don't think about it / there we go again, i and
my sensations

the cold outside bites / so good / like chilled selt-
zer / like crystal / like a song i've never heard / like
toothpaste / and metal / the smoke freezes midair,
blown-up glass, before shattering on the sidewalk /
the moon hasn't fallen from the sky yet

*This is about my experience at a house party after prom,
during which I felt very in-tune with my senses. The
sensory ways in which I experienced things are still very
clear to me. This poem depicts the physicality of that
night.*

ABRIL RODRIGUEZ DIAZ (@
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WRITES POETRY FOR THE INDEPENDENT.



THE KEY TO THE PERFECT HIGH

A GUIDE TO CONQUERING THE ZA ZA.

BY ANONYMOUS

Ah, the quest for the perfect high. It's a pursuit as old as time, and one that has confounded stoners for generations. But fear not, dear reader, for this guide will help you on your journey to getting really, really baked.

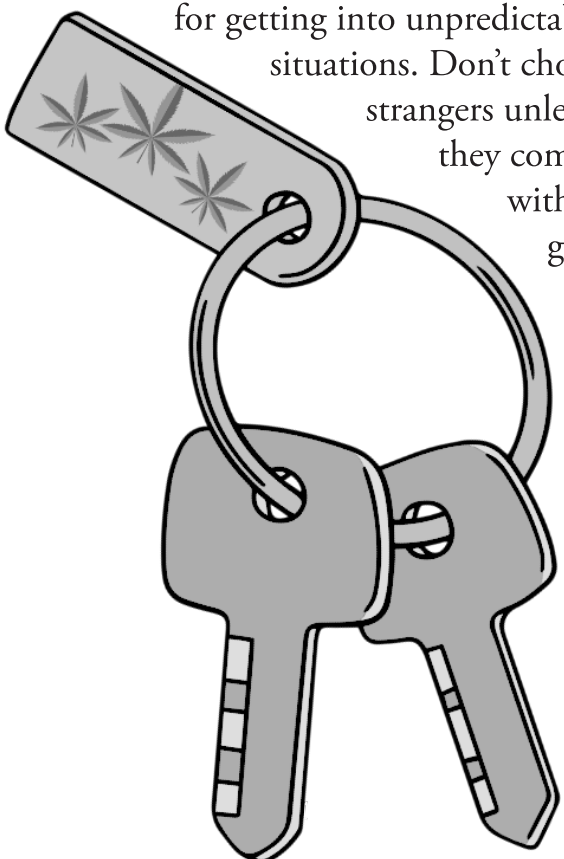
There is no one-size-fits-all answer to achieving the perfect high. Different strains, different methods of consumption, and different personal preferences all play a role in determining what works best for you. First and foremost, know your limits. Start with a small amount, wait a bit, and see how you feel before deciding to take another hit. It's much better to ease your way into things than to find yourself staring at the ceiling wondering if you'll ever come down.

Here is an uncensored, uncompromised, and unfailing formula:

Take half as much as you planned to—be it hits of the joint, rips of the bong, or bites of an edible. As you start to feel the effects, make it a bit to find reasons to indulge in the other half. For example, take multiple hits upon receiving any canvas notification. Take an extra 5mg if it's a mid-term grade. Once you've had about 10mg, or three shared joints, indulge when it feels right—another 5mg one or two hours later won't hurt. Once you've been staring at the same spot on the wall for 45 minutes, call it a night.

To reach the pinnacle of altered states, you'll want to carefully curate your entourage. Surround yourself with people who share your values, like a total disregard for personal health and well-being, a lack of concern for legal consequences, and a deep desire to escape reality at any cost. Bonus points if they have a history of making terrible life decisions and/or a penchant for getting into unpredictable situations. Don't choose

strangers unless they come with good



advice, a full Hydro Flask, or more weed; the best are individuals who are as empathetic as they are unhinged. People who can provide a safe and supportive environment to explore your complicated relationship with your mom without fear of judgment. Find those who inspire you to grow and learn, and who challenge you to be your best self by endlessly encouraging you to take another hit.

Next, choose your strain wisely. Choosing the right weed strain is a delicate art—a balancing act between science, intuition, and sheer dumb luck. First, do your research. Read up on the hundreds of strains out there, compare their THC and CBD levels, and consider their flavor profiles. Do you want something uplifting and energizing or something mellow and relaxing? Do you prefer a fruity, citrusy taste, or something more earthy and pungent?

Once you've narrowed it down to a few contenders, get experimental—try them all, mix and match, and pretend you can feel a difference. More importantly, forget everything you've just learned about strains and choose your weed based on the packaging you enjoy the most. And don't forget to trust your gut—sometimes the right strain will choose you, revealing itself in the hour you spent deciding if a straw has one or two holes.

Once you've selected your strain, you must consider your method of consumption. First off, let's talk joints—not only are the classic cannabis delivery systems easy to use and readily available, but they offer a quick and efficient high that's perfect for those on the go. But the smoke can be harsh on your lungs, and the smell can be a dead giveaway to those around you (unless you're into that sort of thing).

Next up are bongs, or water-based contraptions that offer a smoother, cooler hit than joints, thanks to their filtration system. Bongs can be cumbersome to use and clean though, so the pocket-sized, phallic magic of weed pipes is a better way to go. Plus, they come in all shapes and sizes, from simple glass pipes to elaborate, neon-lit creations that would make even Dr. Seuss proud.

Finally, there are edibles—these tasty treats offer a slow-burning, full-body high that can last for hours, perfect for a lazy Sunday afternoon. Keep in mind that edibles can be tricky to dose, and the effects can take up to an hour (or more) to kick in, leading to some unexpected trips down the rabbit hole. Your choice should depend on your personal preference and tolerance

level, but mostly on your appetite for adventure.

If you had cavities as a child or enjoy pretending you're a naughty kid sneaking candy from the jar, then gummy candy edibles will allow you to relive those sweet, innocent moments of stealing treats from the pantry. But if you're more sophisticated, then chocolate edibles are the way to go. Nothing says "I have refined tastes" like indulging in a fancy chocolate truffle that also happens to get you high. And finally, for those who like to live dangerously, brownie edibles are a game of Russian roulette with your taste buds and your brain. You will never know how much THC is in each bite, so plan to sink into a couch and spout nonsensical "hot takes" for at least an hour.

Contrary to popular belief, a humble living room is the perfect setting for experiencing the ultimate high. Beige walls, floral-print armchairs, and bland artwork provide the ideal backdrop for losing oneself in a sea of existential musings. But when that is not an option, you should at least replace the fluorescent lighting of your dorm room with a dimly lit lamp. If your Twin XL, cinder block walls, and questionably stained carpet fail to provide a tolerable backdrop, here is a list of activities perfect for losing oneself in a haze of smoke and introspection:

1. Go on a late-night CVS run—nothing satisfies the munchies like an overpriced bag of Sour Patch Kids.
2. Attend a campus comedy show—one of the best parts about being high is that unfunny things become especially funny.
3. Take a tour of every house you've hooked up in.
4. Visit a local art museum or gallery with your friend who "doesn't get it."
5. Listen to music by the river and consider going for a swim (but don't).
6. Draw doodles of your friends that highlight their insecurities.
7. Pass the Bechdel test.
8. Play frisbee in the quad—aim at a window.

Assuming you've made it this far without greening out, congratulations! You're well on your way to achieving the perfect high. But there's one last piece of advice to mention: always have snacks on hand. There's nothing worse than getting stoned out of your mind and realizing you have nothing to munch on.

GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26

COVER ART BY ARSH DHILLON '23
LAYOUT BY PIPER TINGLEAF '24

OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY TO THE WRITER AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES OF THE INDEPENDENT.

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