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THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969



**THE
WEED
ISSUE**

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About the *Independent*

As Harvard College’s weekly undergraduate newspaper, the *Harvard Independent* provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The *Independent* has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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Letter from the Editor: High Ground

Editor-in-Chief Layla Chaaraoui '26 on the coexistence of freedom and incarceration in cannabis conversation.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26

Editor's note: The Independent's annual Weed Issue arrives amid upheaval on Harvard's campus. On April 14, University President Alan Garber '76 declared in a message to the community that Harvard would not comply with the terms set forth by President Donald Trump's administration. The Trump administration responded by freezing \$2.2 billion on multi-year grants as well as \$60 million in multi-year contract value. The Independent will continue to report on this developing story and its implications. Scan the QR code to follow our coverage as events unfold.



Dear Readers,

The *Harvard Independent* is proud to present the third edition of “The Weed Issue.” What began as spirited late-night conversations in our office—centered on challenging campus conventions and expanding the boundaries of student discourse—soon evolved into something more intentional. Recognizing a gap in how these “taboo” topics are addressed, much like our “Sex Issue,” we launched the annual “Weed Issue” to spark honest and necessary conversations around cannabis and the culture that surrounds it.

But as you explore this issue, filled with powerful interviews, personal testimonies, creative writing, and sharp humor, I urge you to recognize something we do not take lightly: the privilege we hold in being able to have these conversations at all.

I draw inspiration for this letter from former *Harvard Independent* Editor-in-Chief Marbella Marlo '24, who, in her own Weed Issue letter, powerfully described the political and racial dimensions of cannabis in America. Marlo focused on the American criminal justice system, highlighting its

disproportionate impact on marginalized communities, particularly Black and Latino individuals.

Her words, written two years ago, remain relevant today. The legacy of former President Richard Nixon's 1971 declaration of the “war on drugs” fueled a cycle of mass criminalization, with marijuana offenses serving as a key mechanism of systemic racial injustice.

In the United States, Black people are nearly four times more likely to be arrested for cannabis use than their white counterparts. In 2018, 89% of the more than 2,000 individuals arrested on cannabis-related charges were people of color, despite roughly similar marijuana use rates. Beyond arrest rates, racial disparities exist in sentencing as well: people of color are significantly more likely to receive longer prison terms for the same cannabis-related offenses.

These injustices carry a profound weight, especially as policy proposals and altered social norms move us deeper into an era where marijuana is increasingly decriminalized and legalized. In Massachusetts, adults over the age of 21 can legally purchase and use recreational cannabis. Nationwide, 39 out of 50 states have legalized cannabis for medical use, and 24 have legalized it for recreational use.

As we engage in these conversations, and as members of our publication share both personal experiences and the powerful stories of others, we must also recognize the position from which we speak. We are students at an elite institution, afforded the choice to publish our thoughts in anonymity. This anonymity can offer safety and distance. That protection—the ability to speak without fear of retribution—is itself a form of privilege.

Outside these brick walls, many people do not have this luxury.

The *Independent* has not overlooked this contradiction. In this issue, we confront this paradox head-on—where “weed culture” seemingly thrives within the Harvard bubble, even as others continue to face carceral realities for the same acts. We explore what this privilege looks like, and what it demands of us, through a range of stories related to drug policy and use. So as you read our articles—some pieces lighthearted, others more serious—I encourage you to reflect on your assumptions, judgments, and understanding. It's through this lens that the *Independent* finds its power, by challenging you to consider how drugs, society, and culture shape the world around you—and how you, in turn, choose to engage with it. These conversations might not be as taboo as we're led to believe—they're just often overlooked.

Marlo closed her essay affirming the dual truth surrounding cannabis use and its complicated history and place in our society. “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,” she wrote.

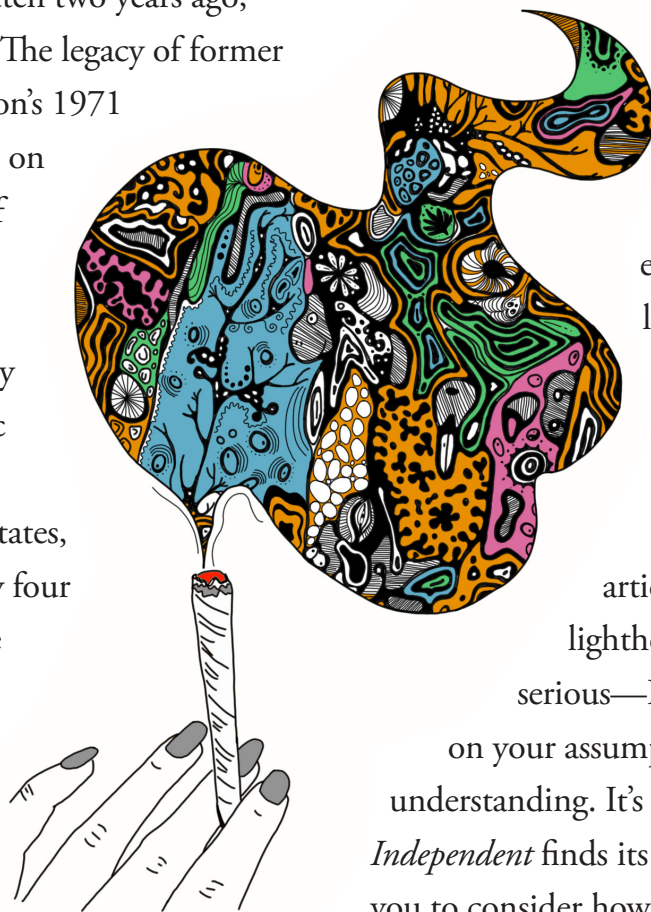
In a country where some people build empires selling the very thing others face incarceration for, every puff carries a history, and every silence, a choice.

The question isn't whether we talk about it. The question is: what are you willing to do once you know? How are we shaping the conversation?

And with that, welcome to the 2025 Weed Issue.

LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26 (LAYLACHAARAOUI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE *HARVARD INDEPENDENT*.

GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26



Harvard Pushes Back Against Federal Regulations, Faces \$2.2B in Cuts

President Donald Trump announced he would revoke billions of dollars from Harvard University following institutional pushback.

BY *HARVARD INDEPENDENT* NEWS STAFF

On April 14, the Trump administration announced that it would freeze \$2.2 billion in multi-year research grants and halt a \$60 million contract with Harvard University—a response to the University’s lack of compliance to what the Harvard administration described as an “unprecedented” list of demands. Federal officials characterized Harvard’s response as an example of elite entitlement and accused the University of failing to address campus antisemitism.

The University’s actions establish a standoff between the federal government and a representative of international higher education. Harvard’s decision to resist President Donald Trump’s order marks a shift from past concessions to executive pressure.

On April 11, the Trump administration sent President Alan M. Garber ’76 and Lead Member of the Harvard Corporation Penny Pritzker ’81 a list of demands regarding far-reaching changes to the University’s operations. The comprehensive mandates outlined a series of new policies: reporting international students who commit campus violations to federal authorities; eliminating all diversity, equity, and inclusion programs; overhauling departments accused of fostering antisemitism; and implementing outside oversight to ensure “viewpoint diversity.”

Harvard responded on April 14 with a public rejection. In a statement addressed to the Harvard community, Garber underscored the stakes of the executive order, asserting that the issue at hand extends beyond any single institution.

“For three-quarters of a century,” Garber wrote, “the federal government has awarded grants and contracts to Harvard and other universities to help pay for work that...has led to groundbreaking innovations.” These partnerships, he argued, have contributed to global advances promoting health and safety. However, in the eyes of the University, these collaborations are now in jeopardy.

Nonetheless, Garber emphasized his commitment to the University’s core values.

“The University will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights,” wrote Garber. “No government—regardless of which party is in power—should dictate what private universities can teach, whom they can admit and hire, and which areas of study and inquiry they can pursue.”

“We will not accept their proposed agreement,” Garber stated. “The University will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights.”

Student leaders echoed Harvard’s stance. “Conceding our independence to the federal government would mean that the rest of the academic world might not have the resources to resist on their own,” said Jack Tueting ’27, Harvard Democrats Co-President, in an interview with the Independent.

“I think overall, it’s a pretty good decision,” agreed Sophia Zheng ’28. “Because we’re such a big, prestigious University and because we have so much money in our endowment.”

“I think it’s good that we’re making a stand and not conceding to the demands,” she added. “Hopefully, that will set a precedent for other universities to not just concede to what Trump is saying, but to stand up and try to fight against it.”

Tueting warned that what’s happening at Harvard is part of “a coordinated attack on institutions of education and progress in America.”

That defense has resonated beyond the student body. In an interview with the Independent, Adam Sychla—a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Harvard Medical School and member of the Bargaining Committee for Harvard Academic Workers—spoke on behalf of the union, which represents thousands of non-tenure track academic researchers, educators, and staff across the University.

“The Trump administration’s demands for an ideological audit are a blatant attack on First Amendment Rights and free inquiry, the basis of American values and Higher Education,” wrote Sychla. “The desire to control research and education on the basis of government-approved ideologies is a dystopian tactic we cannot stand for. Unions exist to protect individual member workers from this type of persecution.”

Sychla also emphasized that the research and educational missions of Harvard and peer institutions are inseparable from the broader public good. “We, along with our colleagues in other campus unions, have repeatedly called on the Harvard Leadership to stand up with us for the values of academic freedom,” he stated.

“We may not always agree with the Harvard Leadership in the course of bargaining, but we stand with them in fighting the Trump Administration’s assault on higher education for as long as it takes.”

“We, the workers, are counting on the university leadership to use Harvard’s significant financial resources to help us weather the storm that will come with the loss of federal funding so that we can continue to perform critical research and education work,” Sychla added.

While the University’s resistance has recently received support from the student body, many expressed frustration with what they view as its prior complacency. “I love that it happened, but I think the student body is celebrating the bare minimum,” said an anonymous junior in Pforzheimer House. “We should not be in this situation.”

That frustration extends across ideological lines. The Harvard Republican Club issued a statement rejecting Garber’s framing of the conflict.

“It is not the constitutional right of any private university to receive federal funding in perpetuity... Harvard has shown itself to be a partisan consumer of the American taxpayer dollar,” the group wrote.

Nevertheless, they maintained hope that a future agreement could be reached with the Trump

administration.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Solidarity Committee took to social media to share what they characterized as selective defiance. “Harvard rightfully rejects Trump’s heightened demands,” they posted on Instagram, “yet still hasn’t walked back its repression of Palestinian studies and solidarity orgs.”

In the eyes of the Harvard administration, Trump’s demands exceeded typical federal oversight. They included audits of faculty hiring, disclosure of admissions data—including race and test scores of both admitted and rejected students—and the shutdown of

entire academic programs. The Trump administration also sought plagiarism checks on faculty and wanted several departments, including the

Medical School and Divinity School, to be placed under external review.

Harvard administration is not alone in resisting federal overreach. Just a month ago, more than 800 Harvard faculty members signed a letter urging the University to take a stronger stand against what they called “anti-democratic attacks.”

This event stands within the Trump administration’s desire to reimagine higher education. In March, the executive branch launched investigations into dozens of universities, targeting “antisemitic harassment and discrimination.”

Harvard’s recent response represents a seemingly surprising moment of institutional action. Garber acknowledged Harvard’s responsibility, especially in moments of national scrutiny. “Our motto—*Veritas*, or truth—guides us...especially when that promise is threatened.”

He framed Harvard’s position as a defense of academic freedom itself.

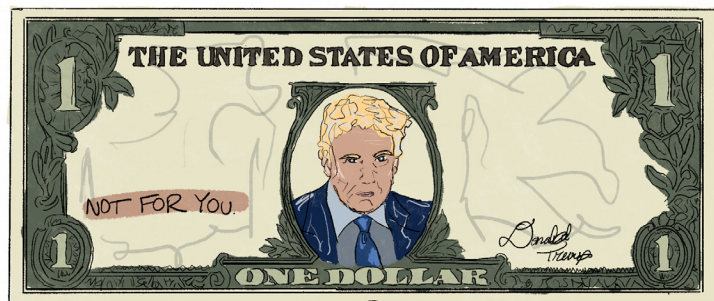
“The work of addressing our shortcomings, fulfilling our commitments, and embodying our values is ours to define and undertake as a community.”

Recent updates have demonstrated how these implications are widespread. Nine universities, including MIT, Princeton, Cornell, and California Institute of Technology, filed a lawsuit on April 14 challenging the administration’s reduction of federal research funds. The case centers on the Department of Energy’s decision to limit indirect cost research funding to 15%, which the universities argue are vital to national innovation and security.

As legal challenges mount and university leaders across the country weigh their responses, Harvard’s decision may set a precedent for how elite institutions confront—or accommodate—political oversight in the years ahead.

WRITTEN BY NEWS STAFF MEMBERS OF THE *HARVARD INDEPENDENT*.

GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE BECKLEY ’27



Tripping in the Classroom

A new Harvard College course delves into the neuroscience of psychedelic experiences.

BY PATRICK SLIZ '27

Next semester, Harvard undergraduates will have the opportunity to explore the science behind psychedelics in the classroom. Dr. Chloe Jordan, currently a lecturer at Boston University and an instructor in Harvard's Psychology Department, will teach Neuro 101EE: "Neuroscience of Psychedelic Experiences." Her course will explore the neurological mechanisms, moral implications, and societal impacts of hallucinogenic and dissociative substances.

Harvard has historically played an important—and often controversial—role in psychedelic research. In the 1960s, University psychologists Timothy Leary and Ram Dass, then known as Richard Alpert, conducted pioneering but ethically contentious studies on the effects of LSD and psilocybin. Their experiments, which involved students and lacked proper regulatory oversight, ultimately led to their dismissal from Harvard. More recently, Harvard announced the Harvard Study of Psychedelics in Society and Culture, an interdisciplinary effort aimed at transforming how these substances are studied and understood.

Yet despite this renewed interest on Harvard's campus, Massachusetts voters recently rejected a proposal to legalize the use of certain psychedelic drugs, underscoring the complex societal attitudes surrounding substance use. Jordan recognizes the cultural tension surrounding psychedelics, particularly as Harvard once again finds itself at the center of conversations that challenge norms.

"Harvard is obviously a leading institution across the world, and a lot of people look to it for an example," Dr. Jordan explained. "If psychedelic drugs, if cannabis, if these substances do have something to offer us—or are potentially disadvantageous in some ways or for certain people—having those discussions at Harvard is really important because the whole world will look to Harvard as an example for what direction we should go in with these things."

To Jordan, her course is a direct contribution to the role of elite institutions such as Harvard in the broader debate on substances—it will prepare students to engage critically with both the scientific and social dimensions of psychedelics. "I hope that [students] walk away with a relatively balanced perspective of the benefits and potential risks," she said.

The structure of the course reflects her goal: students begin by examining the long-standing use of psychedelics in indigenous cultures, grounding the conversation in a historical and spiritual context.

"I think that there needs to be some recognition of the origins of some of these substances like psilocybin, LSD, and ayahuasca," Jordan said. "These substances have been used by indigenous cultures in sacred practices for

thousands of years."

She suggested that today, these origins have largely been forgotten, with some groups using substances without recognizing their significance. "Now, for lack of a better term, white people are coming in to take them and use them in the lab. So I think that historical and more cultural recognition is important ethically as well," she continued.

From there, the class turns to a rotating focus on the neuroscientific mechanisms of individual substances, such as psilocybin, LSD, ayahuasca, cannabis, and ketamine. "We'll do a unit on the mechanisms of psilocybin in the brain, research on psilocybin as a treatment. We'll also next cover LSD [and] some more classic psychedelic drugs that are affecting the serotonin system," she added.

While Jordan emphasized how her course will focus on the effect of these substances on the brain, she also stressed the importance of understanding such drugs within their broader social, cultural, and moral contexts.

"I try to bring in those elements as well so that people are thinking not just on how are these synapses connecting, and what 5-HT_{2A} receptors are being modified, but how does this fit into a broader social context," she said. "I think it's the direction our field needs to go into—being less siloed and more interdisciplinary."

"It's important, I think, to remember that our brains are operating in a larger cultural context and history that also affects our wiring, our responding to things, [and] our behavior," she added.

However, when discussing taboo topics, such as psychedelics in the classroom, Jordan also acknowledges the need for caution. "One of the first types of discussions I like to have in classes like this is one about the language we use surrounding substance use in general," she explained. "You see terms like addict and junkie being thrown around... They are stigmatizing and create barriers to people getting treatment as well. But I think being aware of language and things like that helps a lot," she continued.

While she takes this precaution, she finds that college students today are generally much more open-minded about these topics. "I think there's a lot more awareness and curiosity about counterculture and what these medications or substances that have been used for thousands of years by people from various groups can actually offer us."

Yet, as she stated, despite efforts to destigmatize the language surrounding drug usage, there still exists a divide. "I still think, even among the student population and faculty, there is some stigma that's residual... I think some folks consider substance use a lack of discipline or lack of ethics and morality," Dr. Jordan said.

In pop culture, on the other hand, Jordan warned that people may be overly eager. "I think that there's a lot of hype around them, and there's a lot of eagerness to just make them recreationally legal and have people use them at their own risk,"

she continued. "And that could potentially create problems."

As an example, Jordan describes celebrities going on ayahuasca retreats.

"You see these ayahuasca retreats, and they're very popular in the media. They sound fun, but they're actually pretty difficult experiences," she said. "People are maybe a little too enthusiastic about these kinds of substances and practices and not using them potentially responsibly in every case or overhyping what their potential actually is."

Though Dr. Jordan believes that science can assist in setting the record straight, she nonetheless recognizes some challenges.

"I think a lot of researchers and scientists are doing a pretty good job communicating with the public," she said. "But I do think there's this tendency to oversimplify findings when you're translating from a research paper to the popular media...and that's kind of a conflict between science and the public. I do think it's a little bit overhyped, especially this topic."

"There are a lot of nuances and disadvantages to using psychedelics as well that probably could be communicated better," she emphasized. "I do think scientists really benefit from working with folks like you—journalists, communication, training—in order to communicate the science and its nuances and caveats effectively to people who don't have training in that space."

Looking ahead, Dr. Jordan envisions a future where psychedelics become more widely accepted. "I hope that these substances, as they're shown to have medication potential, they'll become more widely available," she explained. "I find the research coming out really interesting—not only about the anecdotal experiences people have about these being life-changing, but also how these drugs affect the brain and affect the brain circuitry in a way that seems to be somewhat long-lasting."

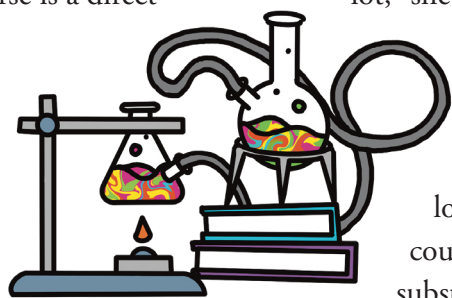
As institutions like Harvard continue to initiate controversial yet critical conversations, Dr. Jordan sees her course as part of a broader effort to reshape public perception regarding psychedelic drugs. "I think being really careful about how we talk about the context in which they do show therapeutic benefit will be really important," she said.

Ultimately, she hopes students will leave her course equipped not only with scientific knowledge but also with an appreciation for both the potential and pitfalls of psychedelic experiences.

"I think we have a lot more knowledge about these substances now that they're being investigated in clinical trials, and it is still a controversial topic," she acknowledged. "But I think it's a timely place in research to really dive into what's happening with them."

PATRICK SLIZ '27 (PSLIZ@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) UNSUCCESSFULLY LOTTERIED FOR THIS COURSE.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



Pot Perspectives with Jeffrey Miron

A conversation with Harvard College Economics Senior Lecturer Dr. Jeffrey Miron about the libertarian perspective on marijuana.

BY BEN KAUFMAN '28

It's true. I swore off the thought of concentrating in economics after a brief stint in Harvard College's Economics 10A: "Principles of Microeconomics" last semester—the supply-and-demand graph shifts didn't spark any Marie Kondo-esque joy. But hey, it's the Independent's renowned Weed Issue, so I figured I might as well venture back into the department to speak with an expert acquainted with weed policy.

In this case, that individual is Senior Lecturer Dr. Jeffrey Miron of Harvard's Economics Department, known for his work with libertarianism—a political ideology that stresses lessening government intervention and valuing individual privacy and freedom (including the right to hit bong). In his signature class Economics 1017: "A Libertarian Perspective on Economic and Social Policy," Miron has given thousands of Harvard undergraduates an introduction to libertarianism. As a newbie to economic policy on weed in general, I wanted to hear what questions of mine he could answer. After all, what better way to spend a Thursday afternoon than talking to a Harvard economics faculty member about smoking grass?

Miron's general views on drugs follow a similar stance that many sharing the libertarian ideology advocate for. "The libertarian view is that people should be allowed to do whatever they want to their own bodies. They should be able to drink alcohol, [smoke] marijuana, take cocaine, whatever. It's nobody's business except the person... it's not the government's business," he said.

That's not to say marijuana is free of wrongdoing. "Of course, there can be irresponsible uses of marijuana, just as there can be irresponsible uses of alcohol or automobiles or chainsaws or billions of other things," he added.

In 1937, Congress punished marijuana usage with the Marijuana Tax Act, and four decades later, significantly escalated anti-drug legislation collectively known as the "War on Drugs." This movement included the adoption of the Controlled Substances Act, per which weed remains criminalized federally.

For marijuana buyers and sellers, Miron elaborated, this effected great change in the weed economy. "The implications of all those [laws] was that it drove the market underground," he said. "[It] doesn't seem that it reduced the size of the market very much,

and it meant that quality control was going to be worse because it was an underground market where the standard mechanisms and quality don't operate very well. So all of these negatives that economists predict will arise from forcing a market underground, in fact, happen for marijuana and a bunch of other drugs as well."

These policies extend beyond cannabis—some states have established lenient policies on some other harder drugs. For instance, in 2021, Oregon implemented a temporary allowance of doses up to 2 grams of meth and 2 grams of cocaine, along with many other drugs. But three years later, Oregon reversed the law after noting overdose rates had not sufficiently decreased.

"There's no question that the state botched the implementation," Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler admitted in an interview with the "New York Times." "And as I say, the timing couldn't have been worse. In terms of the botched implementation: To decriminalize the use of drugs before you actually had the treatment services in place was obviously a huge mistake."

At the time, Oregon had been ranked 50th for access to substance abuse treatment by the *Associated Press*.

Miron offered his thoughts about the Oregon policy's potential economic implications in the larger substance abuse debate. "My view is that it is exactly what we should have expected, because they did a stupid policy experiment."

"The reason you get all of these negative things when you force America underground mainly has to do with the supply side—the production and distribution of the prohibited substances," Miron explained. "They did not legalize the production distribution, so all of the violence, all the quality control problems, all the corruption, was very, very likely going to remain...so we shift the demand for drugs out, meaning you have a bigger black market, which implies you should see more violence, more overdoses, etc."

However, Miron remained firm in his position on legalizing all drugs. "I think what happened [in Oregon] is completely consistent with [what happened], but it doesn't mean that legalization doesn't work. It just means they didn't do legalization."

Due to the Controlled Substances Act, the legal state of drugs remains complicated, as federal law still applies to charges of possession and distribution in the state. Instead, Oregon's attempt to ease drug issues tried to enact

penalties on the demand side of the issue, which Miron found problematic. "If you were going to do one side of the market, it actually would have made more sense to utilize the supply side," he said.

Miron remains unsure regarding the likelihood of federal marijuana legalization. "I think it's plausible," he said. "I mean, it's getting to be sort of a weird situation to have so much of the country in which at the state level marijuana is legal, and yet the federal law is different. But under the current administration, marijuana legalization doesn't seem to be at the top of their list. Heard anything about [Department of Government Efficacy] trying to get marijuana?"

Any lack of effort to tighten up marijuana laws may track back to the fact that, since 2022, more people smoke weed daily than drink daily in the U.S., a figure Miron was familiar with. "I saw that statement as well, and I was really surprised," he stated. "That number made me nervous; I am concerned that they weren't comparing apples to apples."

With such widespread usage of marijuana on a nationwide basis, it seems the social stigma surrounding the drug has decreased.

"Is it plausible that the stigma has gone down? Sure. But so what? I mean, that's fine to a libertarian, you could even say there's potentially some benefit," Miron said. "While it's almost certainly a bad idea to drive under the influence of alcohol or marijuana, the evidence we have points to alcohol causing even bigger drunk driving ability. So people shift to marijuana from alcohol that might help reduce traffic accidents... I'm not asserting that, but, [I'm] open to discussion."

After that, I let Miron get back to his car ride home. Hanging up the phone, I began thinking about America's hazy future—after all, the economic issues of weed affect all of us. Though I'm neither a libertarian, a weed enthusiast, nor an economist, talking about drugs with Miron was still one of the most valuable conversations of my week. If you're leaving this article feeling personally inspired to yap about Bong Hits 4 Jesus, feel free to send him an email to chat. I'll caution you, however, that you may have to wait a little for his response—it took him, like, a whole four minutes to respond to my email.

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GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27



The Price of Cannabis Prohibition: Profits, Public Health, and the Case for Legalization

Is decriminalization worth the risk? A deep dive into cannabis, health, and justice with Akwasi Owusu-Bempah.

BY NASHLA TURCIOS '28

Dr. Akwasi Owusu-Bempah—criminologist, sociologist, and co-author of “Waiting to Inhale: Cannabis Legalization and the Fight for Racial Justice”—has long argued that cannabis policy is deeply intertwined with racial justice. In a JFK Jr. Forum at the Harvard Institute of Politics two years ago, he and Tahira Rehmatullah spotlighted the unequal impact of prohibition and the potential of legalization to correct historic harms. Owusu-Bempah recently shared in an interview insights with the *Harvard Independent* on the potential benefits of legalization, the challenges that have emerged in the push for nationwide legalization, and the current political landscape affecting cannabis policy in the United States.

The push for cannabis legalization in the United States has remained a divisive issue since the early 21st century. Following the repeal of Prohibition in the 1930s, marijuana—primarily used at the time within Mexican and Black communities—became the next target for government officials who sought to regulate behavior they viewed as immoral or minatory to social order, portraying the drug and its associated communities as symbols of a nation in decline.

In 1937, Congress passed the Marihuana Tax Act, effectively criminalizing the plant’s use nationwide, with limited exceptions for medical purposes. Decades later, the Controlled Substances Act of 1970 classified marijuana as a Schedule I drug—defined as having no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse—cementing its place at the center of the war on drugs. Today, 24 states have legalized recreational marijuana, yet the drug remains illegal under federal law, highlighting a growing tension between state legislation and federal policy.

Proponents of cannabis legalization have argued that the benefits of widespread access to cannabis outweigh potential public health concerns. Meanwhile, advocates of prohibition have focused on the health risks and stigma surrounding the drug.

Owusu-Bempah is a criminologist and associate professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto. His

research centers on systemic inequality in the U.S. justice system where he sees cannabis use as closely linked to racial profiling and mass incarceration.

“You can’t understand inequality in the justice system without understanding the role that our drug laws have played in fueling that inequality,” Owusu-Bempah said. “And cannabis, as the most commonly used substance when it was illegal, and still commonly used in those jurisdictions where it’s legal, has been one of the key drivers of this inequality around drug law and drug policy.”

In 2020, a report by the American Civil Liberties Union found a significant disparity in marijuana possession arrests. It revealed that African Americans are, on average, 3.64 times more likely to be detained than their white counterparts, despite comparable rates of marijuana use across racial groups. According to a national survey on drug use and health, Black Americans constituted approximately 38.8% of marijuana possession arrests in 2020 even though they represented only 13.6% of the total U.S. population.

These disparities, critics argue, are not incidental. They reflect deeper institutional patterns in how drug laws have been enforced in the U.S. Legalization, in this sense, is not just about access to cannabis but also about rethinking what and whom the law is designed to protect.

However, as a resident of Canada—a country that federally legalized cannabis in 2018—Owusu-Bempah acknowledged that the extent to which racial equity intersects with cannabis legalization varies by jurisdiction.

“I’m talking to you from Canada,” he said. “We have legalization. Racial equity was not even part of the conversation until it was inserted into that conversation by people like myself and folks that I worked with on the advocacy side. Now, when you look at some American jurisdictions, California for example, very different situations... But I think, subsequently, it’s become a much greater part of the discussion, certainly not the whole discussion.”

Although racial equality has become a prominent part of the conversation in some

U.S. states, Owusu-Bempah stressed that the case for legalization extends beyond justice reform. He also pointed to the economic and social benefits that can arise from a regulated cannabis market.

“There are profits to be made from selling legal cannabis and taking those away from the illegal market and operators in the illegal market,” Owusu-Bempah explained. “Washington State would be a very interesting example in which a certain proportion of the tax revenue from legal sales is then taken to reinvest in social initiatives. Many of those would be targeted at racialized populations. That’s a good example. We’re talking hundreds of millions of dollars there.”

He further illustrated this point by pointing out that in several provinces in Canada, cannabis sales are exclusively permitted through government-run entities.

“The largest cannabis retailer in the world is the Ontario government,” he said, describing the city that he lives in. “We have private retailers, as well, but they actually have to purchase from the government as well. So our provincial government in Ontario is the primary retailer of cannabis, and so they return a profit, in addition to generating tax revenues.”

Still, not everyone sees government-run cannabis enterprises as a perfect solution. Critics of this model argue that commercialization—whether private or public—can lead to overconsumption and the marginalization of smaller, community-based growers. Others worry that without strong equity programs, the same groups harmed by prohibition will be shut out of the legal industry entirely.

Despite the potential benefits, legalization also raises public health concerns that some view as serious enough to warrant continued prohibition. A recent study funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute revealed health risks associated with daily cannabis use, particularly when consumed through smoking. The study found a 25% increased likelihood of heart attacks and a 42% heightened risk of strokes compared to individuals who do not use the drug.

For Owusu-Bempah, the public health concerns associated with cannabis are certainly worth noting, but in his view, the benefits of legalization ultimately outweigh these concerns.

“From a health and public health perspective, it’s



important to note that cannabis has a number of negative health consequences,” he said. “There are links to psychosis for people who are predisposed. People can undoubtedly become dependent on cannabis. So it’s not that there are not health and social risks to cannabis. From my perspective, the harms of prohibition outweigh those risks.”

These risks, however, could be managed within a regulatory framework.

“The more people have access to cannabis, and the stronger cannabis they have access to, the more consequential that is in a negative way to health and to public health,” he said. “So that’s just a trade-off that regulators and health officials need to come to terms with and grapple with.”

Owusu-Bempah also noted that stigma can significantly impede progress toward legalization.

“I think that there are a number of objections to legalization,” he said. “One, people think that it’s morally wrong, like, drug use is something morally wrong. There’s the concerns around danger, like the health kind of impacts of

this, and then there’s more of this kind of stigma of drugs, generally.” Given these drawbacks, two important questions emerged: could an increasingly polarized political climate in the United States worsen these issues, and should the current approach to legalization be reconsidered in response? For Owusu-Bempah, two strategies can be considered at this time: one that emphasizes a libertarian perspective and another that focuses on economic principles.

“One would be the libertarian argument for legalization, right?” he said. “So get the government out of the business of telling the public what to do. That’s a libertarian kind of argument for legalization that I think could gain some currency right now.”

“And then there’s also the economic element, right?” he continued. “At the moment, the profits of cannabis sales are going to continue to go to criminal organizations and groups, when they could be coming to the legitimate economy, and ultimately, to the government as well.”

Owusu-Bempah expressed his belief that the path forward requires more than

just legislation; it demands evidence-based policymaking and widespread cultural change. “My policy recommendation around legalization would be to follow the science,” he said, emphasizing the importance of grounding decisions in research and data rather than fear or stigma. As someone based in Canada, he believes the U.S. has much to learn. “I think they can learn from our lesson on this one. And should.”

When asked whether students and universities could play a role in shaping the future of cannabis policy, he said, “I absolutely do.”

“Students for Sensible Drug Policy, for example, which is a student based organization, which often promotes legalization and sensible approaches to drug policy would be key. So I would say absolutely, student engagement, student activism, and student encouragement of policy shift—it is a must,” he said.

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GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF ’27

Finding Value at Tommy’s

A profile on a well-known staple in Harvard Square.

BY KALVIN FRANK ’28

“Hey Tommy!” is a phrase one will hear many shoppers say to the cashier at Tommy’s Value on a typical afternoon. Located at 47 Mount Auburn St., this family-run market has become a community staple in an area that lacks convenience stores, serving students and Cambridge locals alike since 2002. Though it briefly shuttered during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of sales, Tommy’s returned in the fall of 2021, continuing to serve its patrons with basic groceries and convenience items. Four years later, the establishment has curated a strong network of supportive patrons, especially among the surrounding student body.

“With its central location and friendly service, Tommy’s is my go-to spot,” one anonymous customer said. “There have been many Friday nights when me and my friends stop by to get anything we need to start the weekend off right—snacks, suns, gum, and everything in between.”

Despite the widespread belief that his name is Tommy, employee “Md” Amanat Ulla has never met the ‘true’ eponym. But Ulla isn’t bothered by this ubiquitous misnomer. “My name is difficult,” he said. “I don’t mind.”

Between working as a cashier, cleaning the aisles, and restocking shelves, Ulla’s daily routine is typical for the average convenience store employee. However, the loyal Tommy’s customer base believes he brings more than just this conventional routine to his position. “My connections with them are very good,” he said. “A lot of students are my friends.”

This sentiment is shared by many college undergraduates, with some having unique memories of this establishment. One undergraduate shared a memory with “Tommy” when she decided to offer him a fun and elaborate story to buy a nicotine product. For five minutes, she was a visiting Yale field hockey player. “I was

shitting bricks as I was coming up with all these lies on the spot,” she said. Apart from Ulla’s strong student network, he is also a critical part of the Middle Cambridge community, providing locals with their everyday needs for decades.

As a convenience store near a university campus, Tommy’s sells a diverse range of products. According to Ulla, groceries, chips, and cigarettes are the business’s most popular items.

Tommy’s Value has created a strong community across Harvard Square, serving as a staple for students and locals alike. As these customers continue to support and promote this small business, looking to the future, Ulla looks forward to building upon the relationships he’s built interacting with customers, while meeting new people along the way. “They are supporting me already. They are very good.”

KALVIN FRANK ’28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) FEELS LIKE A VALUED CUSTOMER WHEN HE SHOPS AT TOMMY’S.

GRAPHIC BY ALLYSON ZU ’28



“Been There, Done That.”

How a personal struggle with prescription drug addiction shaped Harvard Medical School instructor Dr. Peter Grinspoon’s perspectives on the use of medicinal cannabis.

BY MEGAN LEGAULT ’28

The implications of using medical marijuana as an alternative to prescription drugs are certainly not a new discussion topic. “We’ve been using cannabis for 5,000 years,” Harvard Medical School instructor and medical cannabis specialist Dr. Peter Grinspoon pointed out in an interview with the *Harvard Independent*. “If you look at the big picture in human history, it hasn’t been an alternative treatment. It just recently was criminalized in the 1930s.”

Grinspoon attributes such stigmatization to the treatment, at least partially to the war on drugs. Grinspoon, a physician who overcame prescription drug addiction and has now made a career endorsing the use of medical marijuana, brings a nuanced perspective to discussions of how concerns of addiction should be considered when utilizing cannabis in a medical context.

Aside from his medical qualifications, Grinspoon’s personal experiences aid his ability to compare pharmaceutical treatments to often-stigmatized natural drugs. “There’s no substitute for lived experience,” Grinspoon said. Having recovered from prescription drug addiction, Grinspoon now leverages his past struggles with addiction to help others and evaluate treatment options.

We often assume that the individuals addicted to prescription drugs are exclusively patients. However, physicians have proven to be equally vulnerable to the dangers of pharmaceuticals—studies have found that around 10-15% of all healthcare workers develop an addiction during their respective careers.

Grinspoon explained that being a physician is immensely emotionally taxing, contributing to high rates of burnout among professionals. The standards and expectations that are associated with being a doctor only exacerbate the frustrations of addiction. “Nobody really expects doctors to be sick or to have problems, so there’s a lot of guilt, shame, and secrecy involved with being an addicted physician,” Grinspoon said.

Following his recovery from prescription addiction, Grinspoon is committed to combating prescription drug addiction and dependence. After pursuing substance-related activism, including

public harm reduction, five years into his recovery, Grinspoon was invited to become an Associate Director for the Massachusetts Physician Health Service. “I had the pleasure of helping hundreds of other doctors with their addictions,” he said.

Beyond this work, Grinspoon contributes to organizations such as Doctors for Drug Policy Reform and has published books on navigating addiction as a physician. “I really enjoy using my lived experience to help treat other people, whether they’re doctors or people from the street who are addicted,” Grinspoon added. When asked if his past fuels his advocacy for harm reduction practice in medicine, Grinspoon responded, “Absolutely.”

“I mean, it’s all about harm reduction,” Grinspoon said. “Cannabis can have a lot of side effects.”

Even as a medical cannabis specialist, Grinspoon openly acknowledges the inherent risks of marijuana. “It can be addictive. It can destabilize people with psychosis. It’s not safe in pregnancy. You don’t want teenagers to use it. It might affect your heart,” he said. Despite this, Grinspoon maintains that cannabis is much less addictive and less harmful than mainstream treatments such as opioids.

Despite emerging research on the side effects of marijuana use, Grinspoon does not find arguments against medical marijuana persuasive enough to disregard it as a viable treatment. Grinspoon believes that “even the most reefer madness-infected doctor who thinks that cannabis is satanic lettuce wouldn’t argue that it’s not more dangerous than OxyContin. OxyContin is much more dangerous.” OxyContin, a prescription painkiller, has been noted by the Mayo Clinic to become potentially addictive with long-form use and should be taken only under provider supervision and according to prescription guidelines to effectively relieve pain. But Grinspoon added that the “pharmaceutical industry promoting OxyContin so that everybody uses it—gets addicted to it,” may worsen the issue.

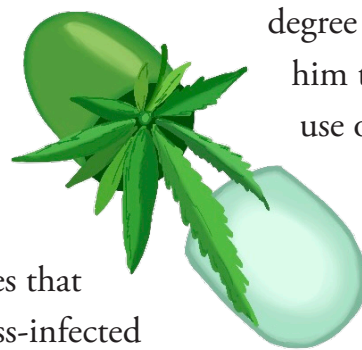
With this controversy in mind, Grinspoon believes that education is the

key to reducing harm and negative public perception of medicinal marijuana among physicians—something that he thinks the current pharmaceutical industry is failing to deliver. “They haven’t been taught anything helpful about cannabis,” he said. “If you look at polls, most doctors want to talk to their patients about medical marijuana, but don’t know enough to have a meaningful, helpful discussion.”

Grinspoon has his own method to safely prescribe the substance. “I generally start people on a tincture, like an old-fashioned medicinal tincture under the tongue, or I start them on an edible like a gummy or a piece of chocolate, or ideally, a pill that looks like cannabis, that isn’t some kind of tasty cannabis treat that some kids gonna eat or some pet,” he said. By using a tincture or edible for consumption, one mitigates the harmful effects of smoke on the heart and lungs. In terms of dosage, Grinspoon advises a low and slow approach, easing the way into cannabis consumption to prevent possible dangerous side effects or anxiety from the treatment.

Grinspoon’s earlier struggles with addiction have offered him the ability to craft a unique understanding of how to approach harm reduction and cannabis usage. The complex relationship between his medical degree and struggles with addiction compels him to challenge how society perceives the use of cannabis, particularly in a medical context.

“The first priority is educating doctors about cannabis,” he said. “I think education is critical, but I think we also need to get everybody on the same page about cannabis.” Moving forward, Grinspoon emphasizes that the implementation of this treatment method depends on how it is evaluated on a factual basis rather than biased social perceptions that often discredit it.



**MEGAN LEGAULT ’28
(MLEGAULT@COLLEGE.HARVARD.
EDU) THINKS THAT THERE IS A
STRONG POTENTIAL FUTURE FOR
MEDICINAL MARIJUANA.**

**GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE
FISHER ’26**

Marijuana: Social Aid or Secret Poison?

Understanding the benefits and risks of using cannabis from undergraduates and professional perspectives.

BY ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26

Note: To protect their privacy, the students referenced throughout the article wished to be anonymous. They are instead referred to by the pseudonyms “Ben” or “Mary.”

“An addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live,” reads the motto of Narcotics Anonymous, a nonprofit founded in 1953 as a peer-guided resource for substance-abuse recovery, inspiring addicts to take ownership of the choices that led to their addiction by offering them a community where they can heal without shame. “We lived to use and used to live... We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions, and death,” the organization continues. As Narcotics Anonymous emphasizes through their work and platform, life in addiction is suffocating, and life after is liberating.

However, while many may believe that those with a history of hard drug abuse can benefit from such rehabilitation services, marijuana abuse is conventionally viewed in a different light, especially by undergraduate students.

Across American college campuses, weed is often seen as a ubiquitous party drug, a harmless high for students to enjoy. Yet in the wake of marijuana’s legalization and popularization, new questions about the potentially overlooked harms of this substance have resurfaced among both undergraduates and professionals. *What are the potential benefits of weed, and can students develop a physical or psychological dependence on the substance that would potentially outweigh its pros?*

“Ben” ’27 used marijuana for the first time at the age of 18. “I needed something to get me through college. It would elevate my mood in ways that other things wouldn’t. It was a fun time because I would do it with friends,” he explained in an interview with the *Independent*.

Familiar with the possibly addictive properties of weed, Ben commented on his belief that the substance affects different people in distinct ways.

“If you’re the type to not be able to self-restrain, or if you have more of a family history of addiction, then [for] sure you need to be careful,” he said. “But if you’re able to self-regulate and use in moderation of a schedule where you don’t build reliance on it, then I don’t think it’s easy to be addicted to it.”

His perspectives align with past medical studies, such as one by the Yale University School of Medicine that explains that several gene variants can increase the risk of cannabis dependence.

Raised in New York, a state with similar marijuana laws to Massachusetts, Ben explained how he felt his home state legislation, as well as policies across the globe, could be improved. “They need to legalize it in every part of the world, and the age

of buying should not be 21—[it should be] 18,” he said. “Access should be more readily available.”

He grounded his perspective in his belief that marijuana has certain key benefits, especially for college-aged youth. “It can bring down their anxiety to make them more sociable,” he said. “I know some people who get crossed and then go to parties. I might be one of them.”

But not all students share this more positive perception of marijuana use. “Mary” ’25 has never smoked weed and believes the drug is addictive.

“I think the culture of it continues to put students in positions where they’re pressured into doing it,” she said. “I think weed has a more recreational association [than other drugs]. For example, there’s the weed holiday, 4/20. It’s also the one you see being used for medical reasons.”

Most of Mary’s friends smoke weed recreationally. “For some of them, it seeps from their social life into their everyday life,” she said. “It completely takes over their conversations.” Still, her postgraduate peers in particular insist that their usage is for harmless fun and allows them to destress from highly stressful careers.

As a Boston resident, Mary is familiar with current Massachusetts marijuana legislation and does not completely agree with the expansion of access to marijuana under the law. “I feel like they’re making it more accessible, which is great for some people, but it also desensitizes people to weed,” she said. “It makes it more accessible to people who could become addicted.”

Similar sentiments are shared amongst professionals. In an interview with the *Harvard Gazette*, Jodi Gilman of the Center for Addiction Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital described the results of a clinical trial she led that studied patients who obtained medical marijuana for symptoms of pain, anxiety, or depression. “We learned there can be negative consequences to using cannabis for medical purposes. People with pain, anxiety or depression symptoms failed to report any improvements, though those with insomnia experienced improved sleep,” she said. The study also found that those suffering from anxiety or depression, in particular, were the most vulnerable to developing an addiction to cannabis.

Further reservations about weed usage may be tied to the current state of the debate between professionals, consumers, and businesses about safety. Harvard Medical School Associate Professor of Psychiatry Kevin Hill told the *Harvard Gazette* that the cannabis debate may be exacerbated due to misconceptions about marijuana addiction. “I often compare cannabis to alcohol,” he said. “They’re very similar in that most people who use never need to see somebody like me. But the difference is that we all recognize the dangers of alcohol.”

Cannabis research remains in its infancy. According to Hill, the Food and Drug Administration has only approved for use “cannabinoids, dronabinol and nabilone, for nausea and vomiting associated with cancer chemotherapy, and for appetite stimulation in wasting conditions. [In 2019] they added cannabidiol.”

As weed consumption among teenagers and young adults increases, there is no clear consensus among adolescents about the substance’s potential harms. In Hill’s view, when it comes to the destructive effects of marijuana, the dose makes the poison. “Well, cannabis is not physically addictive; it’s psychological,” he said. Those who use the most are also at the highest risk of becoming addicted. “When we talk about the harms of cannabis, young people using regularly can have cognitive problems, up to an eight-point loss of IQ over time. It can worsen depression. It can worsen anxiety. But all of those consequences depend upon the dose.”

“Unfortunately, the loudest voices in the cannabis debate often are people who have political or financial skin in the game, and the two sides are entrenched.”

Ultimately, when it comes to answering the question, ‘Is weed dangerous?’ the answer is an unsatisfying ‘it depends.’

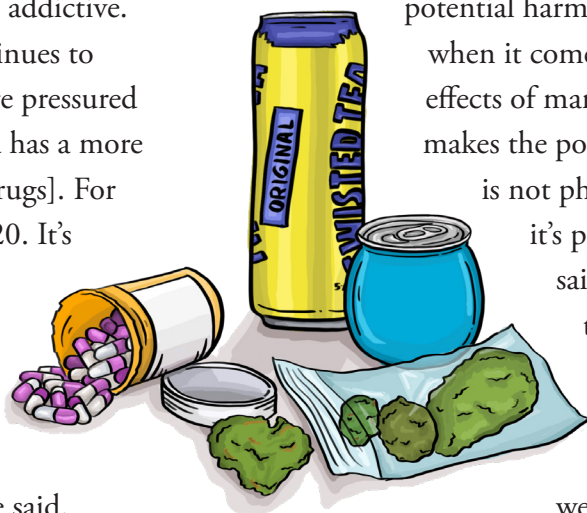
As emphasized by students and experts, marijuana usage has the potential to become an addiction for some users.

However, due to still-evolving research on the effects of marijuana usage due to its recent legalization in certain states, the holistic impacts of this drug are not fully known. As time passes, it will hopefully become clearer whether weed will maintain its general perception as one of the most benign of ‘social drugs’ or be known for its long-term negative health consequences, like in the case of cigarettes. For now, scholars and undergraduates alike stress the importance of remaining informed and protective of one’s own health and encouraging loved ones to do the same.

Gilman said, “There needs to be better guidance to patients around a system that currently allows them to choose their own products, decide their own dosing, and often receive no professional follow-up care.”

ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO ’26 (AADEBAYO@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS CURIOUS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF MARIJUANA ADDICTION TREATMENT.

GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO HWANG ’28



FORUM

High in Reverse

How I smoked away my brain.

BY SIR GALAHAD

I smoked for the first time my sophomore year of high school.

Smoke might be generous—I took a few puffs off my crush’s gas station cart before she ditched me for a Zoom therapy appointment, leaving me to watch “The Office” with her best friend (whom I had just met, and was incidentally drop-dead gorgeous). But the speakers didn’t work, and I was too skittish and stoned to talk to her, so we sat in silence and read the captions.

Back then, I seldom smoked. To be honest, I don’t remember the time after that, or after that, or after that. I was too focused on school and tennis to get high regularly. Senior year, I wanted to win the district championships, so I quit smoking and drinking entirely. I didn’t touch anything again until the following July 4. Even then, I only smoked a few times before leaving for Harvard. But on a whim, the week before classes started, I bought my first two carts—Purple Haze and another strain I can’t remember. They sucked—constantly clogged, needing a blinker just to get a decent hit—but they got the job done. Plus, as a plugless 18-year-old, I didn’t have many options.

It wasn’t long before I learned what I could and couldn’t do while stoned. One puff would end my Math 55 and Stat 110 p-sets almost instantly, but I could cough up a Hist-Lit 10 essay as long as I could see my computer screen. Naturally, when the spring semester began, I decided to take easier classes. I swapped my math/stat ambitions for a social studies/econ double, trading my quant pipe dreams for plans to attend law school. My grades didn’t suffer—they improved—but I was working less and smoking more than ever.

Late in my freshman year—March or April—my long-distance girlfriend called me. She was worried. My sessions had crept earlier into the days, and she feared I’d end up perpetually high. *Impossible*. I brushed it off like ash from a joint—quickly, carelessly, devoid of a second thought. *That could never happen to me, right?* After the call was over, I grabbed my papers and filters, eager to blow off some steam. When we broke up weeks later, I did the same.

That summer, I taught math to high-achieving middle schoolers. I got off work at 3 p.m. and would be on my back porch, bong in hand, fifteen minutes later. This became my routine every day after work—drive home, smoke a bowl, and go to the gym. I only delayed my high on nights I was seeing my new girlfriend, and even then, I’d light up soon after she left.

When she returned to her school two weeks before I did mine, I had no reason to stay sober. Every morning, I’d wake up, pack a bowl, and smoke half of it before putting breakfast on the stove. While my meal cooked, I’d finish the bowl and pack another. After eating, I’d head to the gym, returning home to the bowl I’d prepared earlier. I’d put lunch on the stove and smoke that bowl, too. I’d smoke into the night and wake up stoned. I forgot what sober felt like.

In high school, a friend of mine was a massive Juice WRLD fan—the kind that knows the unreleased tracks like “Coraline” and “Californication.” In one of her favorite songs, “Rich and Blind,” there’s this lyric that goes, “Sometimes when I’m high, I feel high in reverse.” A green stoner then, its meaning escaped me—over time, I began to understand. It’s a nod to a fleeting high—a promise of

euphoria eternally one bong rip away, an anticipation that always turns to disappointment. Sometimes, when I smoke, I feel like Tantalus, yearning for a state just out of reach.

For those two weeks before returning to Harvard, smoking weed was sobering. It numbed me. The half dozen bowls I’d smoke daily did little more than dull my senses and deafen my thoughts, and yet I’d always find myself packing another. I don’t remember much of those days—just a lingering melancholy and my pink pinstripe bong.

When I returned to school that fall, I bought myself a new bong. It sat on the window of my bedroom in Eliot House overlooking JFK Park, always half-loaded. None of my classes that semester took attendance, and I would show up to most of my sections stoned. One story sticks out: I once rolled a joint, smoked it, and then showed up to a two-hour tutorial fifteen minutes late. When I arrived at class, the only empty seat was next to the instructor. Reeking of weed, I struggled to build on my classmates’ comments, scrambling to find quotes to defend my poorly formed arguments. What would’ve been a warning sign to most, I laughed off with my friends.

Spring was more of the same. I broke bongs and bought new ones; I smoked half an ounce a week. I slept through classes and smoked outside my sections. I used to tell my friends, “Everything is better high.” I believed it. A part of me still does.

Looking back, sophomore year is a foggy montage. I can barely recall the tales my friends reminisce over, and even the ones I can feel more like stories I was told than stories I was part of.

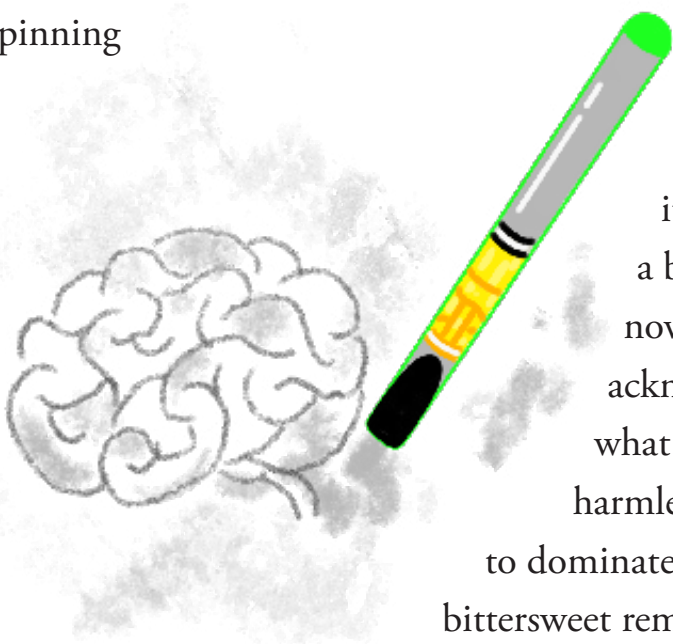
On the last day of the year, I woke up at 4 a.m. for a sunrise session with my best friends. They all slept through it. Not that it mattered—I doubt I would’ve remembered anyway.

Soon after the summer started, I bought myself another cart—the first I had owned since the pair I bought freshman year. Straight from the dispensary, it delivered smooth hits that sent me spinning into a synthetic high. And since I was just researching, I could indulge as much as I wanted—which meant incessantly. I spent most days on FaceTime with my friends, smoking for hours as if we were still in the same Eliot common room.

Even in that haze, reality lurked in the background. I had missed a final exam due to illness and was scheduled to make it up in August; but every time I sat down to study, I ended up hitting the cart instead. Soon, the test was less than a month away, and I hadn’t glanced at the material in months—and given I did most of the work stoned, I remembered almost none of it.

Somehow, I mustered up the willpower to take three weeks off. It was my longest break since arriving at Harvard. I hated every second of it. I had insomnia, and the little sleep I got was riddled with nightmares that left me waking up in puddles of sweat. In those moments, I saw just how deeply I’d come to rely on that smoky escape. It was terrifying—I remember confessing to my father that I would lie in bed for two, sometimes three hours each night, staring at my ceiling and longing for rest. But just hours after I finished my final, there I was: bong in hand, blazed as can be.

People think weed isn’t addictive. Ask any stoner—they’ll tell you otherwise. Teenage smokers face a 17% chance of weed addiction; for daily smokers, that figure is up to 50%. But long before I took my first cart rip back in high school, I thought this wasn’t the case—I was convinced weed addiction was a myth. As semesters passed, that



myth shattered like my pink pinstripe bong and the dreams it took with it. Even when I pack a bowl with my friends now, I can’t help but acknowledge the irony: what I once saw as a harmless escape has come to dominate my existence, a bittersweet reminder of solace and surrender.

This year, my roommates and I tried to cut back. In September, we established rules: “No smoking after 10:30 p.m. on school nights” and “Only smoke three days between Sunday and Thursday.” But, predictably, those rules proved futile. We found ourselves bending the guidelines—stealing an extra day on a Thursday night or sneaking a late bowl after a long day of classes. We told each other that we would get serious the following week, but that promise evaporated as quickly as our kief.

Sometimes I wonder where I’d be if I had never taken that cart back in high school, or if I’d never bought my own before college. Would I have found the clarity I so often smoke for? In chasing a fleeting euphoria, I traded a sharp reality for a comfort that masked the true weight of my days. Now, I can’t help but think that maybe I sacrificed a part of me that, in its absence, leaves a gap of unremembered possibilities and lost dreams. Maybe, like A\$AP Rocky says, “I smoked away my brain.” The math and stat p-sets I spent hours poring over freshman year are foreign to me now. I wonder what a younger me

would think if he knew the reality he’d conjure for himself.

As I’ve written and reflected on my smoking habits, I’ve found myself confronting every lingering inhale of my hazy past. Each word feels like a puff of smoke, drifting through memories that aren’t mine. Coming to terms with the lows my habit has created is daunting, like staring at a sketch of my future that never made it off the page. Throughout writing this article, I’ve wondered if admitting that truth might just be the first step towards reversing my high. And yet, I’ve been baked this whole time.

It’s not as if I lack reasons to quit. I have family and friends I want to show up sober for, internships and ambitions that require a clear head, and the possibility of someday having a spouse and children who deserve a fully present father—not one clouded by smoke or, worse yet, debilitated by years of tar caked in his lungs finally taking their toll. But those reasons feel abstract, distant somehow, like they belong to a future version of myself. They aren’t yet tangible, rendering them incapable of combating the immediate comfort that weed provides.

One day, I’ll quit weed. I’ll have a wife and kids, a family and a job—a million real reasons not to find myself stoned at 9 a.m. on a Saturday (like I did today). So I’ll smoke when I see my very best friends—the same ones that spent all those days with me in that Eliot common room. We’ll reminisce over the memories we barely recall—the ones we smoked away. We’ll marvel over how much we used to smoke; we’ll look at our kids and hope they never do the same. But right now, I don’t have that family, those responsibilities, or even a clear picture of the person I’ll become. How could I quit for someone I can’t yet imagine? For now, I’ll smoke.

**SIR GALAHAD WRITES ANNUALLY
FOR THE *INDEPENDENT’S* 4/20
ISSUE.**

GRAPHIC BY ANGIE LI ’28

Yardfest on Five Substances

This is not a Yardfest review. Also, five is a fun number!

BY LADY GUINEVERE

I started my Yardfest day slinging back mimosas and Coronas bright and early. The goal was simple: pace myself so I could reach my peak—both drunk and high—at precisely 7 p.m., when Natasha Bedingfield would take the stage. I had a plan, and it involved only three substances. I'd start light: seltzers, beer, champagne. Then, after a few hours, I'd graduate to shots and smoke whatever found its way into my hands—preferably a cigarette, not a joint. For special moments, I had a secret weapon tucked in my pocket: a special edition 10ml Pumpkin Spice Latte Double Scorpio bottle of poppers.

But, as these things tend to go, the plan fell apart almost immediately.

The club where my pregame began had only one kind of easily accessible hard alcohol: tequila. After pounding back a tequila and Coke, I went in search of something to smoke. Not long after, I found myself holding a fourth of a joint. Naturally, this was worrying. It's not that I'm scared of mixing weed and alcohol—usually, I end up at least a little crossed after a night out, but this was too soon. I could feel myself teetering toward the edge, so I tossed the joint and moved locations, from balcony to courtyard to basement and back again, in a desperate attempt to stave off the green-out.

This led to more drinks, many vapes, two cigarettes (one skinny, one Marlboro Gold), a bit more weed (whoops!), and most importantly, cocaine.

Originally, the plan had been to snort a few lines of Adderall early in the morning with friends. But for some reason, it never happened. So by 4 p.m.—entering what I'd call the third quarter—I was fading. It was officially time for an upper.

Right on cue, my friend jumped into my arms while I waited in line to get my shit rocked by a mechanical bull. She looked electrified. “I just did three lines with [REDACTED],” she said. “You need to catch up.” She was right. This was the ideal opportunity to boost my vibe. Our mighty foursome ventured outside the walls of the tightly-packed courtyard in search of a semi-private spot to inconspicuously “ski the slopes.” The bag was pulled out. Lines were chopped. Someone's HUID was made useful. I tucked my hair behind my ear and leaned down.

Now, whenever I sniff a powder, I follow it up with a deep inhale of poppers. Prancing back into one of the many courtyards hosting Yardfest festivities, I found myself cruising on a new wavelength. I had no idea what time it was, or how long it had been since my first drink—the first substance. My head was reeling, but in a way that I enjoyed. Kisses were being handed out like candy, though I'm sure they tasted more like cigarettes, coke residue, and half-dissolved Mentos.

At this point, I knew I needed to recenter. My bones vibrated to the music, my limbs moved like liquid, and I felt euphoric. But also? If someone had

told me to do *literally anything*, I would've done it.

The regular rules of life *just didn't apply to me*, because here I was on an artificially induced dopamine rush at the best university in the world. If I did another line or smoked another joint, it probably wouldn't be the hit that killed me because “people like us” don't get addicted, and “people like us” don't overdose.

The state of mind I'd entered allowed me to contemplate the world of drug-related consequences from a gilded pedestal. Every single warning I'd heard about coke, weed, alcohol, nicotine, or poppers suddenly became irrelevant because I was high on life and coke, and I was fine. I suddenly became acutely aware of the fact that I was actively prepared to do just about any substance because I'd already made it this far, and what new danger could a bit of molly introduce into my life? Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, no new drugs were introduced to my waiting and open arms.



As it goes, I found myself walking through the Smith Center, doing my best to appear sober.

Seconds later, I sat, head in hands, bare-bottomed on a Smith toilet seat (yikes!!), trying to mentally isolate each of the ingredients in the cocktail of substances coursing through my overworked veins. In the back of my mind, I heard my drug-ed teacher from high school berating me—I hadn't set intentions with my drug use, I hadn't made sure I was consuming safely, I hadn't prepared for the effects of mixing uppers and downers. Sure, I felt categorically *good*, but what was that feeling worth? Could I really justify pushing my liver to the limit for a marginally better day of listening to loud music? In truth, I felt content in my illicit decisions, even as my head pounded and I counted up the substances I'd partaken in the past few hours. Let's tally up each sensation together:

1) Alcohol. A classic vice. It was making my world seem dull and woozy. I felt giddy, but also at peace. I was happy with my level of drunkenness. I could see straight and balance if I needed to, but jokes were funnier, and people were hotter, and life was sunnier.

Being drunk made me flirtier, and conversations flowed smoother—the alcohol acted as a social lubricant.

2) Nicotine. This has never, for me, done a significant amount. It's more like satisfying a good craving. I could feel the buzz, but compared to the other drugs, it was more of an afterthought. Even so, I'd just sipped my friend's mango vape, and I was still itching to smoke another skinny cig, so maybe that's something.

3) THC (and CBD). If you've ever been crossed, you know exactly how I was feeling. My body was relaxed in a more controlled way than the normal drunk loss of inhibition. Things that weren't supposed to be funny (like almost getting hit by a tour bus on Mount Auburn St.) became hysterical.

4) Cocaine. In a sense, this had sort of sobered me up. I seemed less drunk than I previously had, but not in a bad way. I felt confident, smart, sexy, hilarious, and like I was probably the coolest person at this school. I felt all of the exquisite relaxation and loss of judgment while also having the eerie sensation of being completely aware of my surroundings.

5) Isobutyl Nitrite (Poppers). I've never quite been able to explain the heady rush of poppers. I felt it in the front of my head, right behind my eyes. My face felt flushed, but not red, and my entire body felt like I'd just left an extraordinarily stretchy session of hot yoga. I wanted to dance, laugh, and swing my friends around, all while my ears felt like they were underwater.

Strangely enough, taking five minutes on that toilet to recenter myself and catalog my symptoms helped my buzz. I left the bathroom calm, focused, and fully prepared to high-five Dean Khurana and chat with him for seven uninterrupted minutes about the weather and the delights of the Yardfest glizzies (which I did in fact do). I stopped drinking, smoking, snorting, and popping off, opting to let my current high carry me till the end of the event.

By the time I found myself screaming “I LOVE YOU” to Natasha and moshing with the crowd, I'd achieved the perfect feeling. I'd banished all worrisome thoughts and dialed in on appreciating the music with my friends. My body had responded positively to everything in my system, and I no longer felt overwhelmed. Each of the Big Five had a hand in constructing my mood, and it was goddamn beautiful. I'd felt the rain on my skin, and really, truly, released my inhibitions. I felt *good*, and I'd do it all over again in a heartbeat (just maybe after waiting a moment for a solid T-break).

THIS IS AN ENTIRELY FICTITIOUS ACCOUNT, AND THE ANONYMOUS AUTHOR HAS NEVER CONSUMED ILLICIT SUBSTANCES.

GRAPHIC BY KERRIE ZHU '28

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THE 2025 WEED SURVEY RESULTS

Would you consider yourself a stoner?

yes: 76.9% No: 21.4%

Have you used weed in the past 30 days?

yes: 52% No: 47.9%

Indica or sativa?

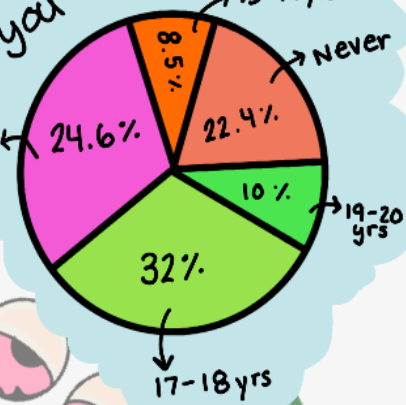
Hybrid: 51.5% Indica: 19.4%

Sativa: 29.1%

How often do you smoke?



When did you first try weed?



How have you Consumed Weed?

By Votes:
Joints - 172 • Edibles - 190
Pen - 162 • Bong - 120 • Blunt - 104
Pipe - 84 • Concentrates - 32 • Dabs - 41

Can you pack a bowl?

yes: 30.7% No: 69.3%

Can you roll a blunt?

NO: 87.6% Yes: 12.4%

Can you roll a joint?

yes: 25.4% No: 74.6%

Have you ever greened out before?

NO: 60% 1-2 times: 31%
3-4 times: 9%

Does being high make you more anxious?

yes: 14% Sometimes: 36.8%
no: 48.3%



Horror story:
"fell in the shower, wake up in
the shower"

Top Stoner houses:
Dunster: 11.7%
Eliot: 8.8%
Currier: 6.6%

Dream Blunt Rotation:
• Barack Obama
• Snoop Dogg
• Dean Kurnana
• Martha Stewart
• Claudine Gay

Favorite name for weed?
ZaZa, Mary Jane, Ganja,
That good good, devil's lettuce

Horror story:
"Greened out on active
train tracks"

Is sex better high?
yes: 40% No: 45.8%
other: 4.2%

Is using weed good for
your mental health?
yes: 21.7% No: 35.2%
Sometimes: 38.7%

Favorite munchie:
Dorito's ; Jefe's ; Trader Joe's

Favorite place to smoke:
• Cambridge commons
• Quad Lawn
• Fire escapes
• By the river

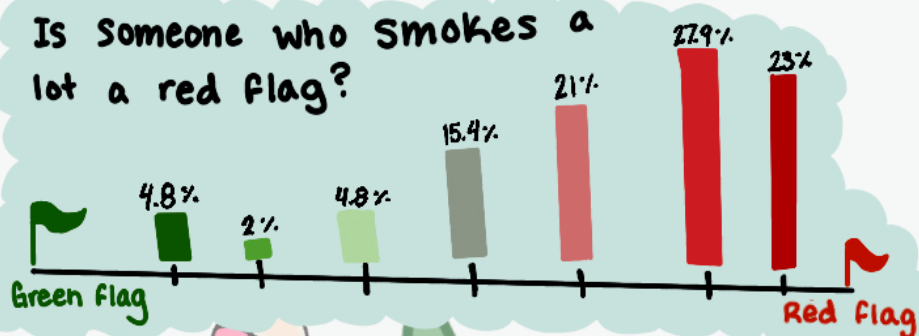
Have you mixed
weed and other drugs?
yes: 44% No: 56%

What is the biggest
misconception about weed?

1. that it's a gateway drug
2. that it's not addictive
3. that it's addictive
4. that it makes you lazy

Horror story:
"Securitas chased me!"

Is someone who smokes a
lot a red flag?



I Started Growing Weed At Five

And I still ended up at Harvard.

BY LITTLE MISS WEED

“It is just like any other farming,” I often tell people when I mention that I was brought up growing marijuana.

Depending on where my listeners are from, that tends to get a mixed reaction. So let me clarify from the jump: I didn’t grow weed by myself, my family wasn’t running a commercial-scale operation, and I never thought there was anything wrong with what we were doing.

The act of growing was also fairly common in my hometown, as half of the parents of my classmates grew weed. Growing up in California, an evening joint was as normal as a glass of wine with dinner. And I don’t just mean the occasional neighbor lighting up. California is home to millions of cannabis consumers. To me, it was no different than growing tomatoes or squash—it was just another plant. My parents never treated growing weed as anything to be ashamed of; it was just like any other farming that we did, only we didn’t talk about it in public. Now, I have more than a decade’s worth of experience in growing marijuana.

Most of the marijuana we planted began with what are called “starts.” A start is a young seedling that comes from a female marijuana plant—what growers often call “ladies.” Only these plants produce buds (also known as “Colas”), which are the flowering parts that people harvest and smoke. Whether a start comes from seed or is purchased from a grower, it doesn’t go straight into the ground. Instead, it’s placed in a small gardening pot inside a greenhouse. This protected the plants from harsh environmental conditions when they were vulnerable. My job growing up was to fill a gallon jug with water, go into the greenhouse, and hand water the plants. I was careful not to add too much water and ruin the starts. I would carefully pour, letting just enough water come out of the jug.

After a few weeks, when the plant’s taproot starts to peek from the bottom of the pot, it’s time to

transplant. The taproot is the first root to emerge, later branching into smaller roots to absorb more water and minerals. For us, that meant moving the plant into a 100-gallon pot in early May. Before planting, we prepped the soil with a custom mix of compost, forest duff, bat guano, oyster shells, and neutral store-bought soil. I recall going to our local gardening store with my parents to pick up the additives of oyster shells and bat guano, and I remember my father sending me out with a bucket into the outskirts of the forest to collect the duff. I would slowly pour the additives into the soil mixture, and my parents and I would take turns shoveling and raking it all together till it was properly mixed. My back always ached after this task and my hands always felt more calloused, even though I wore gloves.

The compost that we used was rich with nitrogen, especially from animal manure—chicken, duck, rabbit, and other forms of excrement from the current animals on the farm. Bat guano (yes, bat poop) also has incredibly high levels of nitrogen and was another component of the compost. To combat the high level of nitrogen that would otherwise “burn” the plants, we regularly used some neutral soil. I hated this part, as adding the compost to the soil always left my overalls smelling of muck and wet earth. My muck boots would be covered in the soil mixture, and inevitably, the manure would get on my bare arms. Naturally, this led me to say “ew” quite a bit, followed by my dad handing me the hose and instructing me to wash them off—even though they would be covered again in seconds.

In the beginning, watering was strategic. We started by watering the plants every other day to encourage roots to grow downward. After the first couple of weeks, we switched to daily watering to keep the soil so wet it leaks from the bottom—this signals proper saturation. Around six weeks in, the plants were ready to be “trained,” so we would gently spread the branches to

improve airflow and sun exposure. As blooming begins, large leaves develop. This stage, also known as “Big Leafing,” refers to when we remove those leaves to prevent nutrient loss and allow more light to reach the “Colas.” Maintenance continued until late October when Harvest began.

Harvest in our small town always left the coastal highways reeking of weed. Whenever we would drive by plots of land with the windows down, I remember my dad would always say, “You can smell their grow.” I always loved the smell of weed; it reminded me of summer drawing to an end. It was almost time for school to start again, and that made me happy. But I also knew that I was in for weekends and weekends worth of labor, and that was less exciting.

When Harvest came, my family would head down to the garden in our overalls and plastic gloves and get to work. We would cut the big branches of the bud and lay them on trays, with which we would transport them to our shed. It was essential to hang the large branches of buds on a string stretched across the shed from one end to the other. The dryness of the shed and the space between the buds minimized the possibility of mold. The bud would hang in this dry, warm facility for about two weeks.

Harvest was one of my favorite seasons on the farm. Days during Harvest meant that my parents and I would spend days in the sun; my father and I wore our overalls unbuttoned at the top, often exposing our shoulders to the warm sun. My father always wore a large straw hat and would wipe the sweat that beaded on his forehead with the back of his gloved hand. My mother would wear a baseball cap and jean shorts that she had cut herself. The jeans were raggedy ones that once had been bought from JCPenney and had since been covered in dirt and grime. This was not a random occurrence in my family; consistently, my father would turn my

school clothes into work clothes as summer came.

It always made me a bit sad to see them cut into shorts. Whether it was the loss of school time or the loss of the jeans I grieved, I do not know. I do know that it was the symbolic prelude to the summer's worth of work that was coming. I wore overalls often, although I always wished to free my legs and feel the sun on my knees. Many times on the days we worked, we would be in the garden even after the sun had set, and my father always had yacht rock playing on a large speaker beside us.

We frequently didn't speak, only sang along to the song, and occasionally turned to each other for advice. This wasn't irregular for the work that we did on the property; there would often be times of silence, unless my father stated, "You can talk and work." However, mainly it was just the music, which was calming, but I always longed for the day to end. Make no mistake, it was all hard labor and long hours. Most of my memories are of the heat of the afternoon, and my wish for the sun to set, so our work of the day would conclude. Looking back on the time, I wish I had been more content with the silence, but I was often filled with angst to do something else with my weekends. I always looked forward to the end of the growing season.

After two weeks, the curing process begins. We took down the branches, trimmed the buds to single stems, and sealed them tightly in large black turkey bags with twist ties. The bags go into a dark, dry place—like a tote—for over a week. Each day, we would open the bags and turn the buds to prevent stickiness. After a week, we trimmed off all stems and leaves, leaving only the bud, known as "smoke." Smoke can be stored in Ziploc bags in dark places for years, though I hear it gradually loses potency. Once trimmed, it's ready to sell.

Back in the early 2000s, the smoke could be sold for \$4,000 a pound, hence why so many people cultivated and vended marijuana. My family always grew it for a little extra pocket change, to help with everyday living expenses and school supplies. While growing

was illegal, it never seemed wrong or unethical—it was just like any other type of farming. It was illegal when we started growing weed, yet no one in our town ever batted an eye. It was like there was this silent understanding that we were all just attempting to do our best. We were all just trying to survive and keep our families in a place of financial security. For us, and many others, it was a way of making ends meet—affording car payments and buying groceries. There is this stigma around weed and weed growers—that they are all "potheads." It must be convenient to



look from one's pedestal and cast down people with glares and suspicions of them lacking drive, hard work, and education.

In my experience, this could not be further from the truth. I mean, look at any family, and tell me they wouldn't do whatever they could to keep food on their tables and give their children moments of luxury. My parents both had full-time jobs and were college-educated, yet they still struggled to keep up with their mortgages. Hell, they even struggle now. With weed being legalized, it cut the middle man out; there really is no more money in growing illegally, and we certainly couldn't sell a pound for four grand now. Now in California dispensaries, it can go for upwards of a grand. "California cannabis prices can vary greatly, ranging from around \$200 to \$1,400 per pound of weed in the recreational market, depending

on quality," according to Vibe by California.

Now, instead of your average person having an extra grand in their pocket, the Big Marijuana gets that money. A grand may seem insignificant, but it can make all the difference in someone's life. I know people who once were known as the well-off families in my town, and now I see them on Facebook advertising dog walking and landscaping. People relied on that money to live, and with it gone, they are picking up odd jobs and trying to live the life they were used to, on a budget that has since been cut short.

I suppose someone could read this article and think poorly of my parents. If so, I would ask them to look at themselves in a place of privilege. Not everyone is always able to make ends meet normally, and there were times when my family needed that money to survive. My parents never let on too much about our financial struggles, but I was always keenly aware of them. I never minded the hard labor of growing weed, just like I never minded any of the other labor we did on our farm. To be able to ease some of the stress on my parents' shoulders has been something I have always tried to do.

At the end of the day, it was all the same hard work. It taught me how to push my body to do work—work that most grown men don't do. Whether it was carrying buckets of water from the stream to water the "ladies" when our watering system broke, or the long days in the sun turning pots by hand, the work was taxing. My muscles always ached, but I wouldn't change it, even now.

This is all to say that, despite some people's assumptions, I learned no poor habits from my time as a weed farmer. I learned a lot of valuable skills—resilience, grit, and attention to detail. I mean, it all seems to have worked out. I grow marijuana and go to Harvard. That is a cool paradox if you ask me.

**LITTLE MISS WEED CAN BE
FOUND SMOKING A JOINT BESIDE
THE CHARLES RIVER.**

GRAPHIC BY EMMA CRAGO '28
FORUM | 17

A Baked Dozen

Medieval Mayhem in a Cloud of Smoke and Epic High Jinks.

BY SIR GALAHAD, SIR GAWAIN, SIR LAMORAK, AND SIR TRISTAN

In a dimly lit Eliot dormitory that doubled as an arena of absurdity, a cadre of unconventional knights gathered at their makeshift round table to challenge a gargantuan dragon that loomed over their consciousness—a beast as enigmatic as any myth. The knights readied their chalice—a crystal-clear, single-chamber bong bestowed upon them by Merlin, the very seer who had prophesied that four knights would one day rescue Camelot by igniting 12 bowls to defeat a dragon. Unsheathing a neon green BIC lighter, these weed warriors embarked on this epic quest.

While Sir Galahad and Sir Lamorak had honed their craft to near-legend, Sir Tristan and Sir Gawain, though no strangers to the smoke, embraced a more measured flame, their puffs a contemplative counterpoint to the unbridled fervor of their more seasoned comrades.

BOWL I

The knights began the rite by clearing the inaugural bowl and laying bare their credentials for the journey ahead.

Sir Lamorak, who kindled his first flame upon his fourteenth birthday, proved himself the foremost master of the sacred herb. He honors it several times a day, wielding a thoroughly iced bong and favoring the energizing spark of sativa. Sir Galahad, initiated at fifteen, maintained a steady regimen akin to Sir Lamorak—the two often burned their offerings together. Sir Tristan, also inducted at fifteen, maintains a disciplined practice of five or six sessions per week. Lastly, Sir Gawain, whose journey into the realm of smoke began at sixteen, admitted a preference for chops and a more conservative routine of four sessions per week.

Lamorak and Galahad, as the senior-most smokers, attacked the haze with youthful vigor. In the wake of their blazing testimony, Tristan and Gawain affirmed their unwavering resolve with measured puffs.

BOWL II

As Sir Tristan prepared the chalice for the second bowl, the knights pondered whether Merlin had gifted them the optimal relic for this ritual.

Sir Tristan argued that the rolled perfection of a joint could never be bested. However, Sir Galahad held that bowls, as a cross between a bong and a joint, are more versatile and thus better suited to the task at hand.

But Knights Gawain and Lamorak sided with Sir Tristan.

“Joints are much cooler than a bowl,” Sir Lamorak declared. “A bowl, you’re huddled over a little piece of glass. The joint is your bitch. You are the bowl’s bitch.” Little did Sir Lamorak know, he spoke the group’s misfortune into existence.

But alas, with the ritual already underway, there was no turning back.

BOWL III

With the third bowl crafted, and the euphoria mounting, the knights delved into a spirited debate over high-induced pursuits.

Sir Tristan championed the magic of camping—building a fire and basking in its embers. Sir Galahad praised the gym, citing weed’s magical, blood-flow-enhancing properties. Sir Gawain declared sports an underrated joy, a testament to unbridled levity.

Each of the knights’ opinions was met with pushback—but no proclamation was more controversial than Sir Lamorak’s. “Lowkey, drinking is overrated,” he said. The other knights responded with a chorus of “nos”, and Sir Gawain, known throughout the realm as a lover of all ales and spirits, quickly reminded Sir Lamorak of his stupidity.

BOWL IV

Clouds billowing, the third bowl was ashed and emptied, and the knights demanded sustenance to renew their questing spirits. Amid the glowing embers and rising laughter, the debate turned to which fare would fortify their valor.

Sir Galahad extolled the artisanal delights of Tatte, a feast for both palate and soul; Sir Gawain, ever the whimsical epicure, proclaimed Pinocchio’s cheeseburger sub the paragon of youthful indulgence; Sir Lamorak, with his customary pragmatism, opted for the multitude of offerings at CVS; and Sir Tristan, with a mischievous grin, championed Shake Shack’s Double ShackBurger.

Thus, with tastes as varied as their smoky styles, the knights agreed that no noble quest was complete without a proper repast to restore body, mind and spirit.

BOWL V

Readying his sword, Sir Gawain stumbled up to the dragon. The other knights looked on in amazement as he halved the bowl in one deep breath. Mere minutes later, we learned that the dragon’s breath had left its mark. Sentences were hard to shape for our glorious knight; perhaps his throat was burned to crisp. It was at this point that we knew that only a divine elixir could remedy Gawain. So Lamorak, Galahad, and Tristan headed to Stein.

“Maybe this is a bad idea,” Sir Tristan murmured, suddenly recalling the scheduled festivities.

“Should we turn back?” Sir Galahad asked.

But it was too late. Lamorak had already thrust open the door, and the clamor of “Battle of the Bands” filled their ears. Galahad, never good with noise, retreated with his tail between his legs, forgetting the elixir entirely. Knights Lamorak and Tristan fell entranced by the enchanted music. Only when the music stopped did they snap out of the trance and remember why they were there. They brought back the finest elixir of the keg and sustenance in the form of generic pizza. It did not take long for the tonic to take hold—Gawain had been revived.

BOWL VI

“I’m going outside,” Sir Lamorak sputtered.

BOWL VII

After the seventh bowl, the knights, teetering between planes of consciousness, envisioned their transformed selves as animals in battle with the dragon. In that hazy reverie, Sir Galahad recalled how his father, a celebrated math instructor from the House of the Grizzly,

had entrusted him with the family crest. Taking the form of a bear, Galahad led the charge.

Sir Tristan followed Galahad into the metaphysical realm, assuming the form of a killer whale.

“They have so much fun,” Sir Tristan said. “When they want dinner, they just go like, ‘let’s grab this guy.’”

Summoning his fierce nature and propensity for stick collecting as a young squire, Sir Lamorak transformed into a wolf. The last knight took a more sentimental approach and transformed into a horse because “that horse movie, Spirit, is fire,” said Sir Gawain.

BOWL VIII

The knights took a break from battle after the eighth bowl to play a game of Codenames. Sir Galahad and Sir Tristan defeated Sir Gawain and Sir Lamorak 9–8.

BOWL IX

The knights once again needed fuel for their journey. First, they raided the vending machine in Eliot’s basement, collecting the leftovers: two Fudge Stripes, two Three Musketeers, and two bags of Lays and Doritos. They microwaved three bags of popcorn before stealing two pizzas leftover from Stein.

Hungry from their trials, the knights devoured the food in seconds. Yet the food was not without consequence—the next morning, Sir Gawain spent an hour and a half in his quarters, wishing he had tightened his belt instead.

BOWL X

By the tenth bowl, the knights had become so confused that they turned on each other, engaging in a form of trial by combat known as Gang Beasts. Fortunately, amidst their fighting, Sir Tristan—the least inebriated knight—realized what was happening. He alerted his comrades that they were mistakenly attacking each other and refocused their attention on the eleventh bowl. Time was of the essence.

BOWL XI

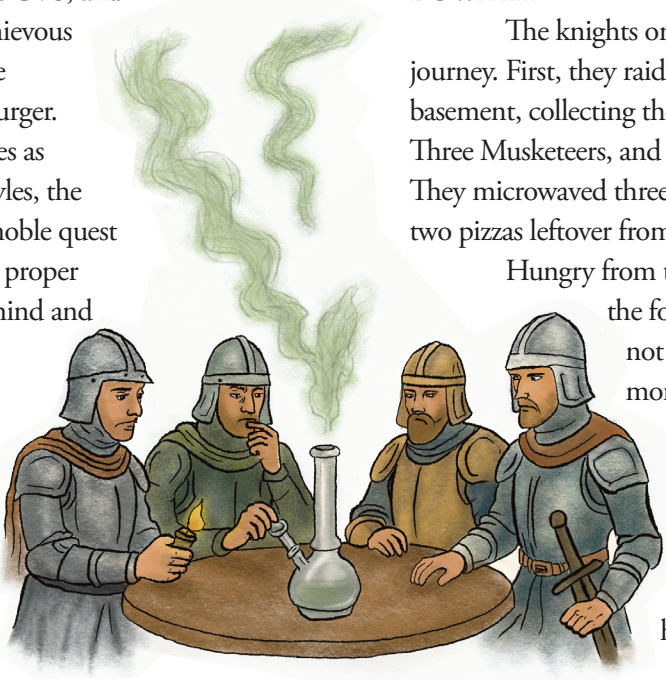
By the eleventh bowl, Knights Lamorak and Galahad were on their last legs; seeing this, Gawain and Tristan mustered all their strength and smoked the eleventh bowl themselves. But no sooner had the last nugget been cleared than Galahad fell on his side, unable to rise to his feet; Lamorak, similarly injured, retreated from the dragon.

BOWL XII

“We have taken you to the promised land. Now, we must die upon its gates,” Sir Galahad muttered with his final breath. As he drifted off into sweet oblivion, Sir Lamorak was carried to the healers to be treated for his wounds. Unable to save his fallen brethren and too weak to assist the last knight standing, Sir Gawain watched in horror and gratitude as Sir Tristan slew the twelfth bowl alone.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE HAVE SLAIN COUNTLESS BEASTS TOGETHER—AND WILL SLAY COUNTLESS MORE.

GRAPHIC BY CARA CRONIN ’28



Thoughts from New Quincy: Smg to Forget

The soft, soothing rebrand of a drug that used to mean something else.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

She wore a Miu Miu headband and carried a pastel tote bag as she stepped out of the dispensary, clutching a few 5mg hybrid gummies and a pre-roll “for later.” I passed the storefront—blush-pink shelves, botanical product cards, a wall of tastefully labeled vapes—and thought: we didn’t decriminalize weed. We domesticated it.

Not repaired the lives it helped ruin. Just redesigned it.

The politics didn’t shift. The packaging did.

Weed used to mean opting out: slowness, stasis, failure. The stoner wasn’t edgy or interesting—he was a warning, a punchline, the guy in the corner you were told not to become.

Cannabis culture was painted as a dead end and criminalized accordingly.

Now, weed is culture. It’s boxed, boutique-approved relaxation. No longer what dropouts do—it’s what wellness influencers post about. The same behaviors once used to profile, punish, or exclude are now folded into the rituals of self-care. It’s curated, not careless. Chic, not criminal.

The dispensary around the corner doesn’t look like it sells weed. It looks like it sells peace of mind. Soft lighting. Clean shelving. Succulents arranged like sculptures. Products sit on floating glass in pastel tins, labeled like adaptogenic teas. Nothing smells like smoke.

Weed has become just another lifestyle object—engineered to soothe, designed to blend in. Its aesthetic mirrors the branding of Ghia, Flamingo, and Glossier: earth tones, matte finishes, and UX-perfect gradients. What once aimed to disorient now promises alignment.

This shift isn’t just aesthetic. It’s ideological. Weed has been reengineered for the self-optimizing consumer: wellness without the woo, calm without chaos, rebellion without consequence.

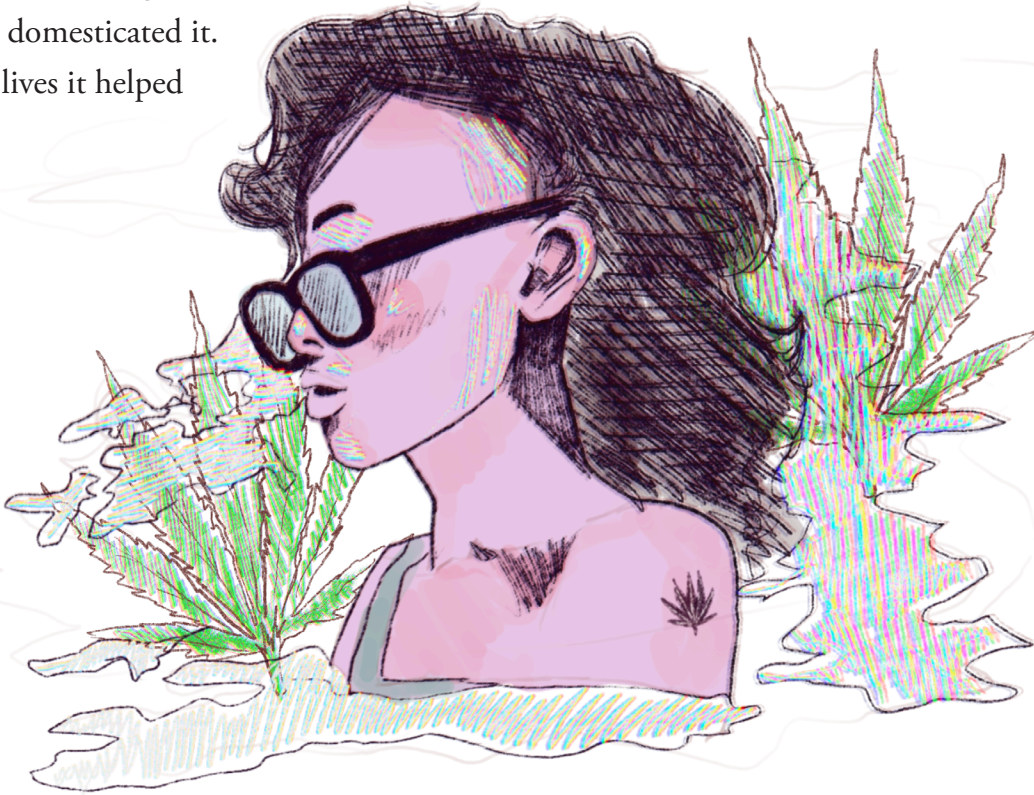
The stoner is out. The microdoser is in.

Get high—but be productive. Stay soft—but stay functional. Rebrand the illicit as aspirational. Normalize the ritual. Monetize the vibe.

Even in the art world, weed has been rebranded. Once the stuff of outsider graffiti

and psychedelic zines, it’s now gallery-safe.

In Chelsea, you’ll find cannabis-themed installations with ambient playlists, QR codes, and sponsorships from boutique beverage brands. The weed isn’t meant to shock anymore. It’s meant to soothe. To sell.



It wasn’t always this polished. In the ’60s and ’70s, cannabis culture created a visual language that was loud, improvised, and joyously disruptive. Posters dripped with hallucination—melting skulls, vibrating fonts, cosmic smoke. The point wasn’t aesthetic harmony. The point was refusal.

That refusal didn’t vanish. It got mood-boarded. What once lived on the margins—illicit, unbranded, uninvited—has been flattened into a lifestyle. The weirdness got ironed out. The danger dialed down. What’s left is an image: cannabis as calm, curated self-expression. You can now buy the aesthetic of rebellion in a recyclable tin.

But weed didn’t just get softer. It got safer—but only for some. Safer for the ones less likely to be stopped, searched, or sentenced.

On campus, the redesign is easy to spot. Some students light up outside dorms like it’s an herbal supplement—just another step in their bedtime routine. Others instinctively walk further. Cross the street. Smoke only off-campus.

A classmate once told me they’d never smoke near the Yard—not because of the weed, but because of how they’d be seen. Even now, Black Americans are over three times more likely to be arrested for weed than white Americans—despite using it at similar rates. Same act, different consequences. The smell of weed doesn’t cling to everyone the same way.

That’s the real rebrand. Not just the fonts

and colors, but the bodies, allowed to relax.

Weed has become a lifestyle product for the people most protected from its past. The ones who can post their gummies in an Instagram carousel. The ones who never had to worry about the smell trailing behind them. The ones for whom “stoner” now means chill, not criminal.

But if weed is now all soft light and smooth lines, what happens to the parts that don’t fit the vibe? The risks that aren’t brandable? The side effects that don’t come with an iced matcha latte?

Behind the oat milk colorways and biodegradable packaging, there’s another reality: three in ten users will develop cannabis use disorder. Teenagers—whose brains are still developing—are especially at risk. Long-term use has been linked to psychosis. Memory loss. Mood disruption. Coordination issues. None of that gets a tote bag.

And this isn’t the weed of decades past. Today’s products are hyper-engineered: crossbred strains, concentrated oils, delayed-onset edibles that hit hours later and linger in your system. Marketed as serenity—but often experienced as precision-delivered chaos. Dosed. Disguised. Branded as balance.

What’s being sold isn’t just weed—it’s a curated illusion of control.

Weed didn’t climb the cultural ladder—the ladder just got redecorated. What once marked you as a problem now makes you marketable. Tie a ribbon around it, lower the dosage, soften the palette—and suddenly the stigma becomes a lifestyle.

As cannabis is folded into the rhythms of consumer life, its history, its harms, and its heaviness are repackaged as aesthetic. Even the high becomes part of the productivity cycle—a brief, optimized detour in the name of self-care.

So what does it mean that weed is now wrapped in soft pinks and sustainable packaging?

Maybe it means rebellion didn’t disappear. It just got redesigned. Smaller. Softer. Market-safe. Five milligrams at a time.

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GRAPHIC BY KAYLA LE '28

The French Alternative to the Smoke Sesh: *L'apéro*

With weed still illegal in France, Parisians turn to *l'apéro* as a way to unwind and connect with friends.

BY FRANCES CONNORS '26

When I first saw the theme for this issue, I wasn't sure what I could contribute. Weed is illegal in France, and without a trip to Amsterdam under my belt, I have no funny stories or observations to share. I briefly considered writing about Europe's smoking culture, but there are only so many ways to say that the French smoke a lot of cigarettes and vape at every hour *and* every age.

Then I decided to think more broadly about weed and its purpose. *Why do people smoke?* A quick brainstorm left me with two main reasons: to relax and to socialize. I'm very familiar with these two activities in France—but here, there's a different catalyst for combining them: *l'apéritif*.

Loyal readers know that *un apéritif*, colloquially called *un apéro*, often precedes a dinner party, but it's not just reserved for special occasions. Any night of the week, you'll find Parisiens enjoying an after-work, pre-dinner drink and snack on terraces throughout the city. Like smoking in the United States, it's a way to unwind and connect with friends. *L'apéro* is a staple of French culture, and with the right ingredients, anyone can enjoy this symbol of work-life balance.

As someone who weighs the “vibes” of a restaurant and food quality equally in my Beli reviews, it should come as no surprise that I believe location is one of the most important elements of *l'apéro*. If you're going to spend an hour relaxing with friends, you want to do so in the right spot. The ideal setting is a lively terrace on a street corner—few cars, many pedestrians. If the conversation ever lulls, you can always rely on people-watching for entertainment, and there's something energizing about being surrounded by others enjoying the evening. For a more economical option, a park or the banks of a river also make perfect backdrops for a bottle of wine split among friends. Like the Charles River for Harvard's smokers, Parisians flock to the Seine at dusk with wine and cheese in tow.

Being outdoors is by no means a requirement for a great *apéro*, but when the weather is nice, it feels almost criminal to be inside (also see my earlier point: people-watching is much better outdoors). And in Paris, outdoor spaces abound; nearly every street is lined with tables and chairs. The ambiance of a terrace filled with laughter and the hum of Paris makes any evening feel a little more magical.

Location aside, another essential part of *l'apéro* is the

refreshments—

truly the foundation of the ritual. First, the drinks. Just like smokers with their bowls, joints, and edibles, enjoyers of *l'apéro* have lots of drink options. With *heures heureuses* (happy hour prices), blonde beers are the cheapest and most popular choice. A close second: a glass of white wine or rosé. For those opting for a mixed drink, it's almost always a spritz—the quintessential *apéro* cocktail. The classic Apérol spritz gets its name from *l'apéro*, but the St-Germain spritz takes the cake with its French flair. It swaps Apérol for elderflower liqueur to create a light, floral refreshment. And if you're going alcohol-free, a Coke Zero always hits the spot. No matter the choice of drink, sipping on something helps you unwind, an important part of *l'apéro* and smoking alike.

Although *l'apéro* may not conjure up the munchies, it still benefits from adding food to the table since a drink or two can make you a little peckish. After ordering a drink, many cafés will bring out a small snack—olives, chips, or popcorn—but if that's not enough, you can usually find small appetizers on the menu. Charcuterie or *oeufs mimosa* (French deviled eggs) are reliable options to hold you over until dinner.

Even at the worst bar with the weakest drinks, any *apéro* can be saved by one thing: good company. The people you choose to share the moment with are the most essential part of the experience. Like smoking, it's a social ritual, a way to bond and get closer to people. With busy class schedules, I've found that *apéros* are one of the best and most consistent ways to see my friends during the week. By 5 or 6 p.m., we're all done with class, and with our only time constraint being the return for host family dinners, the vibe is notably more relaxed. For the hour or so we spend on a terrace, we're not thinking about school or homework—we're simply enjoying each other's company. And

that's exactly what *l'apéro* is about.

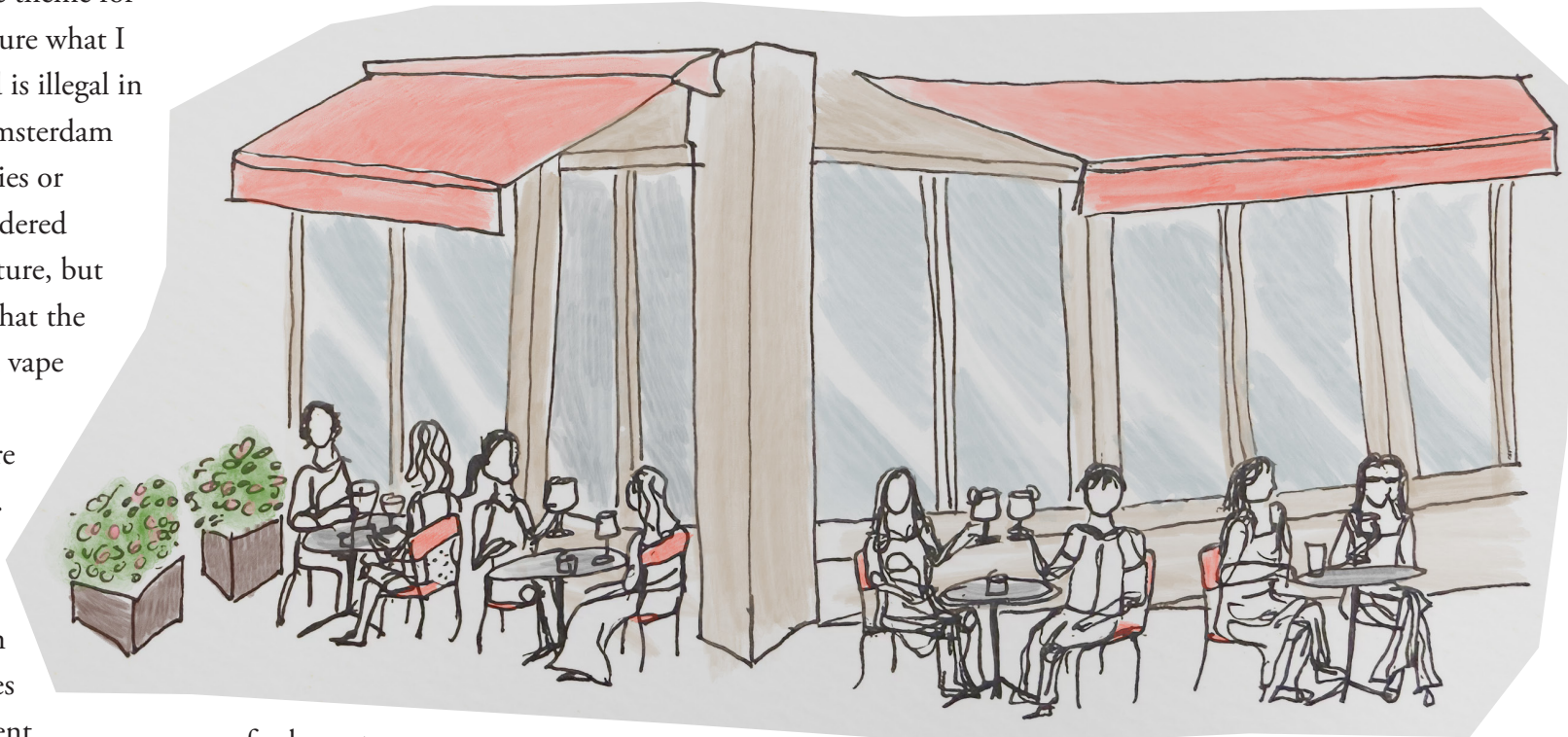
But good company doesn't always have to mean a group of friends. Sometimes, the best companion for *un apéro* is a good book, a journal, or even just your thoughts. *L'apéro* can be the perfect moment to spend some quality time with yourself in an enjoyable way. Alone time is often spent only working, but there's something beautiful about the stillness of solitude without pressure to produce anything.

In life—and especially at Harvard—work time and rest time tend to blur together. *L'apéro* serves as a built-in pause to prevent that. For those in the working world, it marks a definitive end to the workday and allows a transition to life outside of work. This Parisian practice allows for better work-life balance, and therefore a better life. Maybe we could learn a thing or two from the French. Without such pauses, school often feels like a nonstop whirlwind, with little space to breathe. *L'apéro* offers a small but meaningful refuge from that cycle.

Of course, it's not always possible to sip spritzes on a terrace with your friends at 5 p.m.—but we can still embrace the spirit of *l'apéro*. For those of legal age on campus, that could mean a post-p-set smoke sesh by the Charles or a Friday night edible and movie night. With or without substances, carving out time to step away from the hustle is a good start. Add friends and some good fare, and you've got the perfect recipe for a good time. A ritual that invites you to slow down and be present—even briefly—makes *la vie* a little more *belle*.

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(MARYFRANCESCONNORS@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) HOPES TO BRING *L'APÉRO*
TO CAMPUS THIS FALL.

GRAPHIC BY FRANCES CONNORS '26



Psychedelic Week at Harvard

An experimental trip through psychedelic neuroscience, the philosophy of consciousness, and sacred ceremonies.

BY AIDAN FITZSIMONS '25

The Harvard Undergraduate Psychedelic Club hosted a series of trippy, serious, and deeply fascinating events for their first annual Psychedelic Week from March 30 to April 4. A beat reporter was on the scene.

This is not, however, a traditional news piece, since the reporter was involved with the organization. The inescapable entanglement between subject and storyteller was a key launchpad for the ‘New Journalism’ of the 1960s and ’70s. Writers like Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion, Truman Capote, and Hunter S. Thompson leaned into subjectivity, blending creative literary craft with traditionally ‘objective’ journalistic inquiry. They understood that, in some sense, all news is a forum piece. As Harvard’s alternative newspaper, the Harvard Independent is the best home on campus for such journalistic experimentation—fitting, since it was founded in the same revolutionary era.

It’s no coincidence that this stylistic evolution, exploring a wider and deeper view of human intersubjectivity, coincided with the first psychedelic revolution. One of the most essential novels of that time is Tom Wolfe’s “The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test,” his New Journalistic story of how Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters brought acid to America. And of course, Hunter S. Thompson would later take New Journalism to its extreme in the drug-fueled ‘gonzo journalism’ of his infamous “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.” This piece I’m writing on Psychedelic Week, however, is more in the vein of Wolfe, who was sober; he did not drink the Kool-Aid. Besides the feeling we get from that unique Harvard cocktail of sleeplessness and Fogbuster coffee—admittedly, a heck of a drug—this writer, too, was sober.

I helped launch Psychedelic Week with a drop-in collaborative poetry party-slash-workshop. Collaborative poetry makes poetry social and accessible for everyone; you riff line for line, freestyling with partners, and co-create a piece of easy art that lives forever. It’s like finger-painting with language. After each short round, I bring the group together in a circle to read and dig our new poems like a trusty camp counselor of poetry. Forged in the cultural bonfires of Burning Man, Skooliepalooza, and VibeCamp, collaborative poetry embraces the social nature of language; it’s a metamodern transcendence of the death of the author.

If you want to try it yourself, you can add lines in daopoetry, an app developed by a man whose real name, given by his parents, is Laser Nite—we co-created it while crashing his couch in Venice Beach.

Collaborative poetry is an inherently psychedelic activity. Both poetry and human

consciousness are exercises in bounded-yet-free association. Psychedelics expand the possibility space for dialectical interaction, allowing neurons who’ve never met to bump into one another; poetry puts words, images, and ideas together in new combinations, producing genuinely unique experiences of the universe. Each line is a unique interaction, a novel phenomenology, a fresh ontological proposition—it resonates with unities and particularities across the universe like a strike upon a tuning fork.

By tapping into the creative power of social play, even first-time poets can easily write dozens of genuinely interesting poems in a short amount of time. Despite the hype around AI, human “prompt engineering” still pushes the frontiers of intelligence. A single human brain operates its tokens and context windows millions of times more energy-efficiently than current AI models. Put those brains together, and the possibilities are infinitely psychedelic.

The rest of Psychedelic Week was just as mind-expanding, focused on cutting-edge scholarship on psychedelic neuroscience, psychedelic history, and psychedelic culture. Sponsored by the Mahindra Humanities Center’s “Psychedelics in Society and Culture” initiative, the week featured public talks on diverse intellectual topics by experts and researchers from the Harvard Divinity School, MIT, Oxford, and beyond: “Psychedelics and Aesthetics” by Tristan Angieri; “The Current and Future Landscape of Psychedelic Research” by Kenneth Shinozuka; “Cognitive Liberty and the Psychedelic Humanities” by Osiris Gonzalez Romero; “Psychedelic Chaplaincy: Ketamine and Spiritual Care for Treatment-Resistant Depression” by Tara Deonath and Paula Ortiz; “Spiritual and Cosmological Frames as Contexts for Psychedelic Integration” by Nicholas Collura; and “Singing as Plants: Sonic Agency in Shipibo-style Ayahuasca Ceremonies” by Michelle Bentsman.

The Psychedelics Club does not do drugs; it studies them.

To my subjective mind, the week’s most compelling lecture was the sweeping and intensive overview of cutting-edge psychedelic neuroscience by Dr. Kenneth Shinozuka ’20. Shinozuka co-founded the Psychedelics Club as the ‘Harvard Science of Psychedelics Club’ in 2019 during our junior year, along with two of our friends—Andrew Zuckerman ’21-’23 and J.J. Andrade ’19, who also both attended Psychedelic Week. After graduation, Shinozuka spent the last few years running the Oxford Psychedelic Society and earning his doctorate, studying the neuroscience of psychedelics with field leaders like Robin Carhartt-Harris and Morten Kringlebach.

Shinozuka expertly walked us through his recent meta-analyses comparing research on

psilocybin, LSD, and DMT while effortlessly working the crowd, cracking jokes, and helping us understand complex data. The intensity of his prodigious research was immediately apparent. At one point, he casually mentioned, “If you want, you can scan the QR code on this slide to read these eight other papers I wrote for The American Journal of Therapeutics as a side project while working on this recent meta-analysis.” Then—boom—next slide: a picture of Shinozuka at Oxford hanging out smiling with Yamanawa elders.

Then we segue right into his current post-doc work at Stanford with Veterans Affairs, where he’s investigating the incredible power of ibogaine to treat PTSD, depression, anxiety, and addiction. Ibogaine, derived from the West African iboga plant, is especially effective at treating opioid addiction; during the electric Q&A, Shinozuka confessed a tantalizing hope that ibogaine could play a key role in solving the fentanyl crisis. After looking into Shinozuka’s scientific history, Psychedelics Club member Lauren Howard ’27 aptly summarized the group’s reaction to the return of our co-founder: “Bro’s cracked.”

Psychedelic science is a uniquely promising field brimming with potential—no comparable realm of research was simply illegal to pursue for over ’60 years. As a result, we are now living through a second psychedelic revolution; there’s a lot of low-hanging fruit to explore, with profound implications for mental health and neuroscience. Concurrently, important dialogues about psychedelic history, philosophy, and culture have reemerged. After all, the first psychedelic revolution failed in important ways, as books like Wolfe’s “Kool-Aid,” Don Lattin’s “The Harvard Psychedelic Club,” and Michael Pollan’s “How to Change Your Mind” attest; Timothy Leary and his friends at Harvard in the 60s had some wrong ideas about how to integrate psychedelics into society, and prohibition was the sad result.

In consciously cultivating a healthy psychedelic culture that can fully unlock the potential of these miracle chemicals, we must learn from the mistakes and successes of the past—we must especially include indigenous psychedelic wisdoms developed in diverse cultures over thousands of years, wisdoms which settlers have dismissed in the past at their peril.

As a compelling example of the live intellectual debates at stake, Shinozuka confessed that he “strongly disagreed” with philosopher Osiris Romero’s argument about cognitive liberty and unmediated public access to psychedelics. Shinozuka’s research has tempered his earlier views, and he now believes that society should primarily interface with these dangerously powerful substances

medical container of a well-trained psychedelic therapist or the ritual container of indigenous ceremonies.

While the liberal democrat in me dreams of everyone having public access to these liberating experiences if they so choose, we also need to value the wisdom of experts as we cautiously learn together how these unbelievable chemicals can allow our minds to change. Good environmental and social containers are crucial in shaping the flow of change when we're in states of high neural entropy. By setting our containers with intention, we can more easily wind our streams of consciousness towards wider mouths of the sea.

Imagine that the self is a fire and the environment is fuel, as the wood of a campfire both contains and sustains a continually burning dialectic. Liberal democracy, too, requires a container—a nation, or some other community—within whose structures and rituals the generative process of communication can take place. Freedom is achieved through boundaries.

A core theme of the week was “emplacement,” a term used by speaker Tristan Angieri while they moved through slides of Sonoran Desert art representing the Colorado River toad, *Bufo alvarius*, which secretes 5-MeO-DMT. Since the 1960s, “set and setting” have been the key words of advice for psychedelic preparation for good reason; by dampening the brain's default mode network and encouraging engagement with the world through fresh eyes, psychedelics show us just how powerfully our consciousness is shaped by our environment.

Our minds are inextricable sponges and mirrors, and objectivity is only ever approached through intersubjectivity. Thus, “emplaced” psychedelic use—especially through the use of natural psychedelics in the environment within which they evolved, and through ritual containers developed by people in that environment—can be much more informative than “displaced” use. This poses problems for a Western medical paradigm devoted to fluorescent-white rooms and therapist couches.

Michelle Bentsman's talk on ayahuasca ceremonies was a fitting conclusion to the speaker series, returning us to psychedelics' religious origins. Bentsman studies the essential context-shaping role played by ceremonial ayahuasca songs, called *Ikaros*, with the Shipibo tribe in the Peruvian Amazon—as lushly emplaced as it gets.

Ayahuasca is often referred to as the grandmother of psychedelics. It's a brew made of the chacruna leaf (containing DMT) and the ayahuasca vine (containing an MAOI inhibitor, which allows the body to delay its processing of DMT). If one were to, say, smoke pure DMT on a couch in LA, one might have a very fast but potent vision of textured colors patterned by hyperbolic geometry, as described in the Qualia Research Institute's shockingly famous 2019 Harvard presentation on “The Hyperbolic Geometry of DMT

Experiences.” But the ayahuasca vine allows one to sit with the DMT for hours, to really explore and process its full potential for insight and healing.

In my fallible, contingent, and sincerest opinion, ayahuasca is the greatest medicine grown on Earth.

Bentsman is correct that sound is essential to the experience; the beautiful *ikaros* sung by Shipibo elders engendered ceremonial feelings I hadn't felt in a long time. Even Bentsman's own voice, just talking, resonated—which is to say it shared a vibe with me, a vine-echo voice. I walked around the rest of the evening with a sense of peace and confidence in alwaysness, speaking with a slower, lower voice from deep in my living chest.

The talk ended with a more radical argument: that the plants themselves have agency. Imagining a living, intersubjective, animistic environment takes emplacement to a whole new level. I'm inclined to believe her; those who have sat with the medicine often share similar



impressions. It feels as though ayahuasca wants to heal us.

I remember feeling it move through my body, this loving grandmother looking through every nook and cranny, as if it were searching for where I needed healing the most. When an ayahuasca experience clears a block between your throat and your heart, or shows you a vision of a white owl spirit sharing its eyes and wings, you might be inclined to believe it expresses a degree of agency. But even if we do not believe this, and that the experience is simply a projection of ourselves, the fact that it feels like another agency is itself information with profound implications for the nature of our minds.

Psychedelic Week ended with some fun. There was an open mic at WHRB where people shared music, standup, and poetry. Then, on Friday, comedian Shane Mauss hosted a psychedelic panel discussion between some of our speakers and Harvard neuroscience professor Florian Engert. Rich philosophical debates on the nature of consciousness ensued, particularly between the scientific materialist Engert and the

idealist philosopher Romero. While we never settled whether the mind is the brain, the panel ended with a shared hope that this intellectual discourse around psychedelics can help pursue a unification between these two opposing ways of understanding consciousness.

The final event was a pure standup comedy show, featuring comedians Opey Olagbaju, Biniam Bizuneh, and Mauss. Olagbaju was widely regarded as the biggest hit of the night. And, at the end of the day, is there anything more psychedelic than laughing with your friends?

Psychedelic Week represented the culmination of the Harvard Undergraduate Psychedelics Club's growth into a mature organization. Under the leadership of co-presidents Katie Dorry '27 and Chase Bourbon '27 (who wrote “The Controversy of Altered Consciousness” for the Independent in February), the club has quintupled in active membership just since I returned this past fall. The group is one-third artists, one-third neuroscientists, one-third others; this balance is paralleled by the co-presidents themselves, and symbolized by the group's key events: the semesterly Psychedelic Art Show, and now Psychedelic Week.

The club is a space on campus for students interested in history and culture, politics and programming, writing and philosophy. The only common denominator is curiosity, that essence of human intelligence, what psychologists call “openness to experience.” Unlike most of the Big Five personality traits, openness, which is connected deeply to creativity, can be increased long-term by a single psychedelic session.

The intellectual dialogues around psychedelics connect to every discipline, just as psychedelics connect neural activity across regions of the brain that rarely interact. I encourage you to join us in pursuing the interdisciplinary frontiers of consciousness with an open mind.

Harvard has played a key role in the progress of psychedelic studies for 60 years, but the next 60 years will be both far trippier and far more serious. When the first generation of the Psychedelics Club left campus in March 2020 as the world shut down, we didn't know if the club would survive. But it has. This new generation is larger, more diverse, and more dedicated than ever; its leaders are young, and they have years to solidify a self-perpetuating legacy. The founders had an idea, but the new generation has built a genuinely functional institution that can live for decades. It makes me smile to see the seeds planted in 2019 growing into such strong vines, climbing up Harvard's brick walls toward the light.

AIDAN FITSIMONS '20-'25 (AIDAN_FITZSIMONS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS EXCITED TO FINISH SCHOOL AND RETURN TO HIS SCHOOL BUS.

GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27

ARTS

G.A.N.J.A.

A collection of real-life horror stories from Knights of the Round Table and beyond.

BY SIR LANCELOT

Gummy Galore

You take it at midnight. A single gummy, peach-flavored, soft in the center and hardened at the edges. It's wrapped in cheap plastic, the kind that sticks to itself. No label—just a smiley face drawn in fading Sharpie. You bought it for seven dollars from a guy in a denim jacket standing outside the 7-Eleven on Mass Ave.

You pop it in your mouth. It's chewier than you expect. The flavor is artificial, with a sourness that doesn't fade. Nothing happens for the first ten minutes. You brush your teeth. You scroll through Instagram. You stare at a meme and can't tell if it's supposed to be funny. You get into bed. You pull the covers up to your chin. You close your eyes.

That's when the room begins to shift.

At first, it's subtle. The mattress softens beneath you. The hum of your mini fridge starts to sound like something wet and alive. There's a buzz behind your eyes, like electricity collecting in your skull. Then your limbs dissolve—it's not painful, just a distinct sense of absence. Like you've left them behind. You feel yourself dropping out of the bottom of your body, into something vast and slow and warm.

Then you blink—and the bed is gone.

You're standing barefoot in the middle of a narrow dirt road lined with stone houses. The ocean's somewhere nearby; you can taste the salt. The air smells like woodsmoke and orange blossoms. The sky is bruised purple. Lanterns flicker in the windows of the houses. Someone calls your name, but it's not yours. It's older, rounder. You turn your head instinctively like you've heard that name a thousand times before. You raise your hand and don't recognize the fingers.

You walk toward the house at the end of the lane. Someone is waiting at the door—familiar and not. You can tell they've been waiting for you a long time. Inside, the rooms feel worn in a way that makes your body ache. You find yourself sitting across from them at the table. You don't speak, not at first. There's no need. You fall in love slowly, then all at once—like stepping into a memory you forgot was yours.

You fish every day at dawn and gut your catch by feel. You plant trees that outlive you. You have three children. One of them dies at age seven. A fever in her sleep. You bury her beneath the birch tree and never speak of it again. Not because you forget—but because remembering reopens something you've tried to let die.

Years pass. You fight in a war you do not win. You come home changed. Your wife learns how to make you laugh again, but not in the way she used to. You quit drinking after your youngest catches you weeping into the stove. You pray, not for anything in particular, but as a ritual. A shape

to your silence. Some days, the joy is so pure it frightens you. Other days, you feel like a ghost in your own kitchen. You watch your hands slice onions as if they belong to someone else.

And then, one evening, after decades, you sit with your wife on the back porch as the sun slides down behind the dunes. You look at her face—weathered, beloved—and just as you're about to tell her you love her, you blink.

And you're back. In your dorm room. On your twin XL. The LED lights lining your wall are humming. Your throat is dry. Your mouth tastes like chemicals, plastic, and peaches. Your phone is buzzing somewhere on the floor. Your roommate walks in, holding a half-eaten protein bar.

“Dude,” he says. “It's been an hour. You good?”

You don't answer. You're crying, quietly, without knowing when it started. Not sobbing—just sort of leaking. Your pillow is damp. Your pulse is thudding, not with fear, but with the weight of everything you remember. Everything you shouldn't.

You remember how your daughter used to sing to the moon when she thought no one was listening. You remember the way the birch tree creaked in the wind. You remember the smell of your wife's shampoo. You remember dying. You remember being alive.

The peach flavor still lingers on your tongue. The salt wind still lives in your lungs. That name—your name, the one from before—echoes in your chest like a bell you can't unring.

You're afraid to blink again.

Anatomy Adrift

You say it as a joke.

“I feel like my skin doesn't fit.”

Everyone laughs.

Someone sparks the next bowl.

You pass it like a secret you don't want to keep.

The high comes on slow, then all at once—a thousand pins pricking the perimeter of you, as if your body is trying to remember its shape but failing.

You look at your hands.

They shimmer.

You move your fingers, and the motion lags behind,

like your limbs are buffering.

Like you're a bad download.

Then the feeling starts.

Your forearm tingles—not itchy, not numb—just wrong.

Like your sleeve is wet.

Like your skin is inside out.

You scratch it and feel a seam.

A fold.

You pinch. You pull.

It peels back—

not blood, not muscle—

just more skin.

Smooth. Pale. New.

You look up, and they're all watching.

Their eyes are red—raw, lit from within.

One is already halfway unwrapped, his face sliding off in ribbons, smiling with no lips. “Finally,” he says, “You're getting comfortable.”

You try to scream.

You try to run.

But your foot catches on a curl of your shin, half-peeled and sticking to the floor.

They crowd in, gently.

Helpful.

Unwinding you like a roll of paper towels.

“There's nothing underneath,” you whisper.

You want it to be a question.

But it's not.

They nod.

That's the point.

They've all been through it.

They tell you it's freeing.

Eventually, the last layer lifts.

You don't feel pain.

You don't feel anything.

Just air, finally touching what was never meant to be touched.

You sit in the silence of the peeled.

You smile.

They smile back.

You're all so smooth now.

So silent.

So clean.

Narrowed, Nestled

It starts with the floor. Rising, almost imperceptibly, as if lifting to meet your body. You're lying down when you first notice it—how the edge of the bed feels closer to your ribs than it did a moment ago. You sit up and look around. Everything is the same, mostly. The lights. The window. Your hoodie is crumpled in a lump on the chair. You take another hit, deeper this time, and tell yourself it's just in your head.

Then, the walls start to breathe.

Not a metaphor. Not a feeling. They *breathe*. The corners tighten, just slightly, as if the room is sighing inward. The ceiling pulses once, slow and shallow, and you feel it in your teeth. You laugh. You point it out to your roommate.

He shrugs. “You’re tweaking,” he says.

You watch the window fog from your breath. You blink and realize you can see it—the mist hanging, hovering, like you’ve filled the air with something too heavy to leave. The room isn’t just shrinking now. It’s leaning. Sloping in on itself. The closet door eases open half an inch and stays there like something inside it is watching you.

You try to stand, but the carpet clings to your socks, sticky and unwilling. The corners of the room draw closer. The posters curl in on themselves. The walls are moving—not fast, not dramatic. Just a few centimeters every time you stop looking. Every time you exhale.

There is a low sound behind the radiator. Like someone whispering through a mouth full of static.

“Stay.”

You bolt upright.

You reach for the door. The knob is warm. Oozing.

It beats like a heart.

You wipe your hand on your pants and turn—The hallway is longer than it used to be.

Students pass you in single file, eyes closed, fingers grazing the walls. None of them speak. One of them is screaming. You reach out, but your hand presses into the wall like wet paper. It leaves a mark.

Your phone buzzes. You check it. *You okay?* But there’s no signal. No time. The walls creak. The floor tilts. The lights stutter and hold.

You scream. No one turns.

You run back. Somehow, the door is there again, wide open. Waiting. Your desk is exactly as you left it. Your weed is still lit in the bowl. And on the bed—your body. Curled up. Calm. Smiling.

You are already home.

You’ve never left.

The building breathes in again—deeper this time.

You don’t exhale.

Joint Judgement

You don’t usually smoke joints. You say they burn too fast and taste too much like paper. But tonight is different. The music is low, the floor feels soft under your socks, and some guy with a shaved head and chipped nail polish hands you something already burning. You ask what it is.

“Something special,” he says.

You take it. The inhale is sharp—dry, bitter, like burnt tea leaves and old firewood. You cough once, then settle into the couch. The joint makes its way around. No one else reacts. You try to speak, but for a moment, it passes.

Then the memories begin.

At first, they flicker—a swing set at dusk, a lemon-frosted cake, a woman in a blue dress saying, *You left something*

behind. It’s waiting for you. You don’t recognize her, but your chest tightens when she speaks. Your throat does something involuntary, like it remembers silence.

You try to ask whose memories these are. Your voice cracks halfway through the sentence. The voice that finishes it isn’t yours.

You excuse yourself. The foyer seems different. The mirror in the bathroom is wrong—not warped, just slightly off. Your reflection looks like someone you were once related to. Your eyes are tired in a way you’ve never experienced. Your jawline is bruised with a grief you don’t understand.

You wash your hands until the sink stains gray. Ash gathers under your nails.

Later, you learn the truth. Not from the guy—he’s already disappeared into the playlist, into the smoke. Someone else tells you, laughing.

“Yeah, he mixes them in. His uncle’s ashes or something. He says it’s like... communion. Said it made him feel close to him.”

You pause, trying to make sense of the words. *His uncle’s ashes.* They land wrong in your brain—too dense, too human. You imagine the paper burning, the ash mixing with your spit, smoke curling out of your mouth like something sacred and disgusting. Your stomach tightens. Your throat goes hot. You wonder how much of him is still in you. You think you might throw up, or laugh, or both. Instead, you nod, pretending it’s funny.

You haven’t slept since.

You keep dreaming about a town you’ve never visited. About a body in an urn with your name carved into the side. About a voice—dry, cracking—whispering things only you should know.

You see the woman in the blue dress every time you close your eyes.

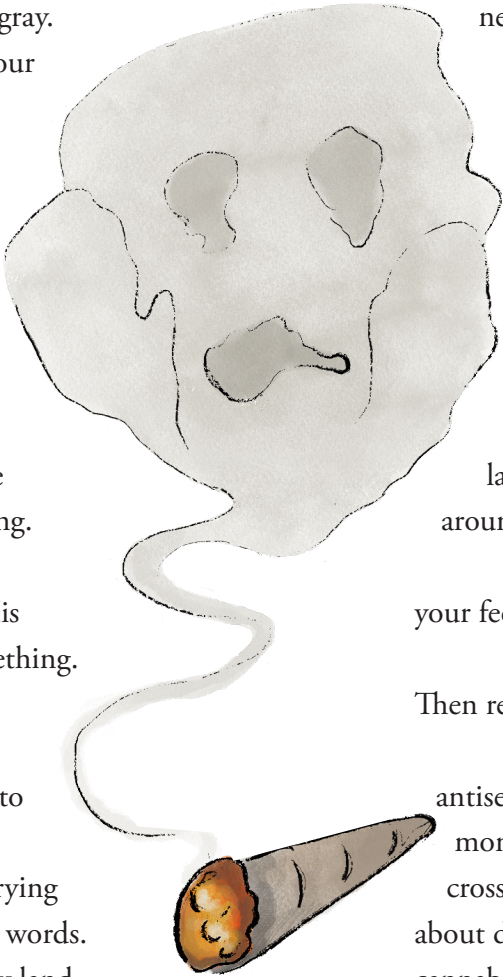
You still don’t know what is waiting for you.

Artifact Aftermath

Los Feliz, maybe. Echo Park, probably. Somewhere east of the 101, where the palms lean like they’re in on something you’re not.

You buy it from a guy named Orbit. That should have been enough.

He’s leaning against the brick wall behind an ATM, jacket made of mirrored panels, each square cracked or smudged, like it’s been through too many reflections. He wears sunglasses at night. You ask what strain it is. He says it’s called *Insight*.



You make a joke—“I could use some of that.” He doesn’t laugh. He just nods once, slowly. Like it’s already done.

You’re with your friend. The one who’s been your best friend since middle school. The one who knows what your voice sounded like before it dropped. You two split the eighth in the parking lot behind the rec center, sitting on warm concrete under that one busted streetlight that always hums its low-pitched song.

The weed is vacuum-sealed but warm. Like it’s sat in a pocket too long. When you open it, the smell isn’t dank. It’s...off. Like something that’s been buried and then dug up again. You both make a face. You joke about Orbit lacing it, but neither of you laughs with your whole chest. Still, you smoke it. Out of that old green pipe your friend’s older brother left behind when he joined the Navy. You each take two hits. You say it’s nothing. You say it’s mid.

It doesn’t taste right. Not skunky. Not sweet. Something else—bitter, alkaline, like battery acid and burnt plastic. You cough hard. Your friend laughs, but it sounds far away. The lights around the courts flicker.

The ground feels like it’s sloshing beneath your feet.

Everything goes still, like you were paused. Then restarted.

Fluorescent lights. A curtain. The smell of antiseptic and something cooked too long. Your mom is sitting in the corner with her arms crossed, eyes hollow. A nurse says something about dehydration. Something about synthetic cannabinoids. Your memory is Swiss cheese.

But what you remember—clearly, sharply—is the heat in your neck. The way your skin felt like it was *moving*.

You ask for a mirror. They refuse. They tell you to rest.

Later, alone in the bathroom, you pull down your collar.

It’s small. Just above your clavicle. Irregular. Textured. A patch of skin that isn’t skin. Dark brown, with ridges. It catches the light when you tilt your head.

It doesn’t wash off.

You don’t tell anyone. Not your mom. Not your friend. Not the doctors. You Google things in secret: *synthetic weed + rash + drug reaction*.

The mark never goes away. It doesn’t grow. It doesn’t fade.

But sometimes, late at night, it itches. Sometimes, when you’re sweating, it feels cool to the touch.

And sometimes, in the mirror, it looks like it’s breathing.

FOR IN MUCH WISDOM IS MUCH GRIEF: AND HE THAT INCREASETH KNOWLEDGE INCREASETH SORROW – ECCLESIASTES 1:18

GRAPHIC BY MADISON KRUG ’27

Made With Weed

All the things I want to see weed-ified before I die.

BY FRANCIS '27

Yes, I know that was a strangely morbid subtitle. But it's true. There are some things I just need to see infused with marijuana before I pass on from this Earth.

Over the years, humanity has progressed beyond just merely smoking marijuana. Instead, we have developed a myriad of ways by which an individual can experience the high weed offers.

You might be thinking: Weed brownies? Vaporized marijuana? Maybe even THC soda?

WRONG. More like: weed beef jerky, cannabis pizza sauce, weed tampons, and weed bacon, just to name a few of the strangest pot products reported in a 2016 article by The Ranch Tennessee, a Tennessee-based mental health and addiction treatment center.

In a stroke of the exact genius that brought me to Harvard, I have created the following list to inspire future entrepreneurs, visionaries, and dreamers to develop the next generation of weed products. Below is merely a brief selection of such products I hope to see one day brought to market.

WEED AIRPODS

This is what Steve Jobs would have wanted. Some would argue that listening to music while high is already commonplace. But with Weed AirPods, it's the music itself that gets one high. The Weed AirPods algorithmically analyze each song such that different songs elicit varying intensities of a high, conducting a vibe assessment and adjusting in real-time to correlate high intensity with musical composition.

For example, Tones and I's 2019 hit "Dance Monkey" would create zero high. That would literally be the last song on God's green earth that I would listen to while high. Beethoven's classic "Moonlight Sonata," though, would produce a high for the listener that allows them to transcend time and space.

WEED FIRE ALARM

"OH NO THERE'S A FIRE" said *no one ever* in the world where we have the weed fire alarm. Instead of inciting panic and triggering the sprinkler system, the weed fire alarm creates intense relaxation by releasing fumes of burning marijuana to fill any given room.

You might wonder, "How does this protect me from a fire?" It doesn't. It simply makes you enjoy the classic "I'm in a fire" experience more than you would if you were not breathing in fumes of burning marijuana from the weed fire alarm. Enjoy the high and grab the fire extinguisher, my friend.

5D MOVIES (The fifth dimension is weed.)

Most 4D movie theaters offer a plethora of sensory features to enhance the movie-going experience: 3D visuals, scents, mist, and even seat

motion. What do these 4D experiences *not* offer? Weed. That's where the fifth dimension comes in.

In a 5D movie, the fumes of burning marijuana abruptly release from the seats at carefully selected points in a given film. For example, in today's current box office hit, *A Minecraft Movie*, the fumes would release the moment Jack Black enters the frame. In the VIP package, the fumes simply release every time Jack Black blinks.

WEED SCUBA DIVING

In 1943, Jacques Cousteau and Émile Gagnan created the first self-contained underwater breathing apparatus. This standard scuba diving tank contains compressed air, comprised of approximately 79% nitrogen and 21% oxygen. Clearly, Cousteau and Gagnan didn't have enough oxygen hitting their brains, because there is no weed in this chemical mixture.

Now let me introduce you to the weed scuba diving tank: 1% Oxygen (because it's essential), 0% Nitrogen (because who needs that) and 99% weed fumes (because there's nothing like making long, sustained eye contact with a sea turtle while high).

WEED OLYMPICS

Let the games begin! Except none of the events are from the actual Olympics, and all competitors must be high. The only concern is that competitors will reach an intensity high that inhibits their capacity to compete with one another, instead bringing the competitors to bond and form lifelong friendships.

Events included but are by no means limited to may be Munchie Battles, Aristotelian Debates, Staring Competitions, Paint-offs, Stand Up Comedy, Speed Blunt Rolls, and EDM Songwriting.

WEED TOOTHPASTE

Brushing your teeth is one of the all-time most boring activities out there. Never have two minutes ever felt longer than when you are brushing your teeth. That all changes with weed toothpaste, which instills a high with a THC infusion that seeps into your gums and goes straight to the brain.

Maintain that ever-so-important dental hygiene and experience the high of pearly-white THC teeth right before bed. Weed toothpaste flavors include blue raspberry, strawberry, and weed.

WEED CHICKEN

A common misconception of this idea is that my vision is of an edible, cooked chicken capable of getting an individual high after consumption. This is wrong.

The weed chicken is a living chicken with

a highly specialized and specific set of skills: provided you feed and take care of the creature, the weed chicken will meticulously and rapidly roll a joint, pack a bowl, or bake any assortment of desserts infused with cannabis (e.g., Crème brûwéed).



WEED TREADMILL

Lots of people don't go to the gym very often. But with the weed treadmill, that all changes.

The design of the weed treadmill is intended to encourage high-intensity physical exercise while entering a flow state induced by marijuana. The weed treadmill carefully analyzes the speed at which you maximize your physical activity while simultaneously releasing marijuana fumes to maximize your high. Next thing you know, you've run 49 miles in eight hours.

WEED CONCENTRATION

"Hey everyone! I'm Francis. I'm a sophomore from New York living in Winthrop House, and I'm concentrating in Weed."

Didn't that sound great? The basic Harvard Weed Concentration would consist of: WEED 1000: Introductory Marijuana; WEED 100 (Methods); WEED 104 (Lab); WEED 97: Sophomore Tutorial; WEED 98: Junior Tutorial; 5 electives (e.g., WEED 1465: Can this Cannabis?).

WEED SECONDARY

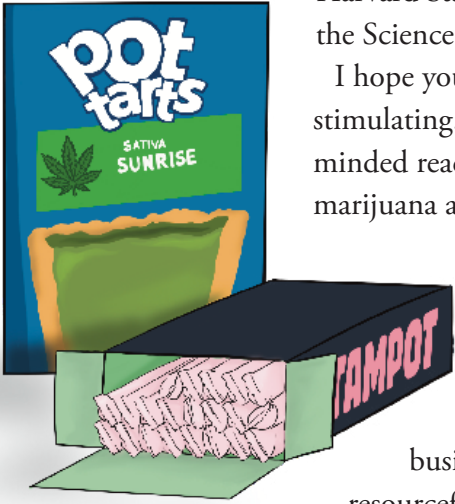
"Hey everyone! I'm Francis. I'm a sophomore living in Winthrop House from New York, and I'm concentrating in Folklore & Mythology with a secondary in Weed."

Because why have weed be a concentration if you're not also going to have it be a secondary? The basic Harvard Weed Secondary would consist of: Philosophy Review Comp, Blunt Rotation with the Ad Board, Staring Contest with the John Harvard Statue, and an Interpretive Dance in the Science Center Plaza.

I hope you found my list intellectually stimulating. To all my entrepreneurially-minded readers with an appreciation of marijuana and a net worth of over \$100 million, don't hesitate to get in touch with me to develop an idea listed above. Yes, this article is anonymous, but the first test of our potential business partnership is to assess your resourcefulness. Godspeed.

FRANCIS '27 IS WONDERING WHETHER HE WAS SUPPOSED TO ADD TM TO THESE IDEAS, BUT HE IS PREPARED TO FIGHT FOR HIS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN COURT.

GRAPHICS BY NESHAMA RYMAN '28
ARTS | 25



Horrible Harvard Things That Would Be Better High

Because sometimes, this school really needs to chill out.

BY MARY JANE

I know you've thought about it before. Whether it was sitting in Sanders during the election watch party or writing three essays in one day, the thought has crossed all of our minds: "This would be way better if I was high." I'm not encouraging anything illegal (Hi Mom. Hi Harvard.)—I'm just saying that if Harvard insists on stressing students out 24/7, maybe we should be able to take the edge off somehow.

Here are some Harvard experiences that I think would be better high:

1. Primal Scream

Is there anything weirder than hundreds of students stripping down and sprinting around Harvard Yard in freezing temperatures? Yes. Doing it sober.

Now imagine doing it high. The cold? A concept. The screaming? Angelic music. The naked guy in a Spider-Man mask? Your spiritual guide. High you embraces the chaos. High you could care less about the people gawking from the sidelines. High you feels free.

And if you were one of the people gawking from the sidelines... shame on you.

2. Election Watch Party

There is nothing more stressful that I can think of at this school. If you were sober, you were packed into Sanders with hundreds of other stressed-out students watching the CNN electoral college map change colors with horror. You were Googling Canadian visa requirements. You came for civic engagement and left with permanent emotional damage.

High you probably would've still been stressed out, because absolutely nothing could fix that on election night. But at least you would have enjoyed some free food while waving an American flag. You might've cried, but it would've been the kind of laugh-cry where you're not sure if it's the edibles or democracy collapsing.

3. Getting Quadded on Housing Day

It's the Ivy League version of being exiled. You're crying in a freshman common room at 8 a.m. while someone in a floppy fish costume waves at you and chants "C-A-B-O-T you just won the lottery."

Sober you is probably devastated. It seems like all your friends got the river and will be hanging out together in the newly renovated Adams dining hall.

High you would be at peace. You'd get a good laugh out of the fish costume. You would most likely think something along the lines of, "Honestly, the Quad has trees. It's giving forest retreat. I'm sure smoking on the Quad lawn is fire." You could start looking forward to late-night shuttle rides and satisfying your munchies during late nights in Currier.

4. Peeing on the John Harvard Statue

It's a rite of passage. It's also disgusting. And creepy tourists love to try to record students doing it. Sober you is questioning every decision that led up to that moment, trying to touch the smallest amount of surface as possible. And you're probably cold.

High you is laser-focused. You don't care that the tourists are still lurking in the Yard at 2 a.m., trying to record your mission, or that the statue is suspiciously damp. All you care about is honoring tradition by peeing on John Harvard like a true Harvard student. Your balance could be better, sure—but you're high, which obviously means you think you're a ninja, and that's what counts.

5. The 3 a.m. CVS Run

All CVS runs at 3 a.m. are fun, but sober you is on a mission. You need NyQuil, gummy worms, and batteries. You look like you've been studying for 16 hours straight—because you have.

But high you? High you has transcended. CVS is your playground. Aisle 3 is a journey. You stop to read the greeting cards and consider buying one for your mom. You almost buy a tourist trap lobster keychain and you buy every flavor of Snack Factory Pretzels "for science."

*Disclaimer: one can mimic the high experience with enough sleep deprivation.

6. Dodging Tourists in Harvard Yard

They're everywhere. Taking blurry photos. Touching the statue. Asking you where "the library from Legally Blonde" is (hint: it's in California).

Sober you dodges the tourists like it's a contact sport.

High you loves it. You don't care that you have a lab in 10 minutes. When they ask you if you can take a picture of them, you gleefully agree, so excited to watch a family of five all touch John Harvard's foot which you know is covered in pee (maybe yours?). You offer fake facts like, "This is the tree that Obama planted when he came to visit last month." No one questions it. You could do this sober, but you would probably find yourself a lot funnier if you did it high.

7. Brain Break alone at 11 p.m.

You've hit a wall. You're surrounded by other exhausted students, all nursing a cup of coffee and barely making eye contact with each other. The snacks are sad. The energy is lower than your GPA after that last midterm.

Now imagine if you were high: the

HUDS mozzarella sticks would slap like they never have before. You'd eat five in a row, and the mysterious cheese would fuel you through your creative essay...or your article for the Weed Issue of the Independent. All problems would be solved because now, you're done with your work and you get to go back to your dorm and either have a philosophical conversation with your roommate or get a fantastic night of sleep.

8. Office Hours Where You Pretend to Understand

You came with a simple question and left with four more questions and an existential crisis. Sober you nods politely, writing down words your TF says without knowing if they're even spelled correctly (they're not). You walk out and immediately Google half the conversation.

High you walked in with zero expectations and left having accidentally trauma-dumped to your TF. You didn't finish your p-set, but maybe your TF will cut you some slack when they grade it.

9. Harvard-Yale

It's cold. You're hungover (or still drunk because you never went to bed). Someone in a full-length fur coat is yelling "safety school" while doing a keg stand.

If you're sober, you probably want to leave at halftime because you're cold, tired, and don't know who's winning.

If you're drinking... just imagine how much better it would be if you were also high. Being crossed at Harvard-Yale would be epic. The odds of making friends with a Yale student while passing a joint are exponentially higher than making friends with one while drunkenly yelling in the stands. And boom, you now have a place to stay for The Game next year!

I'm not saying you should do drugs. (Hi again, Mom. Hi again, Harvard.) I'm just saying... if Harvard's gonna stress us out, we might as well relax and laugh our way through it.

MARY JANE DEFINITELY
HAS NOT EVER DONE
ANY OF THESE THINGS.

GRAPHIC BY EMMA
CRAGO '28



Dis(joint)ed Journaling

A workweek's worth of weed-driven words. Say that five times fast!

BY ANONYMOUS

So. I've been feeling a little bit off-kilter lately, and with the perfectly-timed Weed Issue of the *Independent*, I have decided that this is the perfect excuse to engage in my favorite form of catharsis: writing while high off my ass.

This week, I plan to get high and write every single night. (Okay, so not much of a change from my usual routine. But this time, with purpose! The purpose being writing a bunch of bullshit in EB Garamond font size 12 so I can publish it in the *Independent*.)

Sometimes humorous, often incomprehensible, these words come straight from the marijuana-addled mind. Enjoy.

Monday

Happy Monday! We have a lot to talk about.

I'm tired, so my writing today may be a bit short. But do you guys remember when—

Suddenly, a torrent of childhood memories floods your mind, like I'm some sort of witch or psychedelic drug forcing you to have visions—think the Mickey Mouse Clubhouse intro, H2O: Just Add Water, and how Emma was probably your first gay crush, not Rikki, but Emma! Crazy! Think the Christmas in Camelot Magic Tree House book, the Polly Pocket pool, Littlest Pet Shop videos, resisting the urge to shove a Squinkie up your ass, that one parody song, your parents spraying sunscreen into your eyes, stealing your mom's lipstick, being asked out by a boy for the first time (a mere two days after he called you an “awkward fatty”—flirting was crazy back then!) Think running wild around your suburban streets, playing, *really* playing, to the point of scraped knees and dirt on your cheek, and it's something quite beautiful because the memory still burns white hot in your mind all these years later.

All these flashbacks are making me crave the dialogue. So now, a conversation:

Wanna know a secret?

Yes!

I'm writing this on Tuesday. Surprise, bitch!!!

What the fuck? Reneging on your promise?

Holy shit, the voices are using the word reneging.

Yeah. I have a better vocabulary than you, idiot. Not just an idiot, but a hypocrite who can't keep to her promise of writing high every night of the week. Where's your dedication to the craft?
Damn. Harsh. I have a good excuse. Last night

when I was high, instead of writing, I watched a two-hour History Channel YouTube video about the evidence of aliens in Da Vinci's work.

Terrible excuse. I heard that that's exactly what the less intellectually gifted do when they're high.

Oh, wow, the voice I've invented to make my piece more tonally varied is getting all elitist on me! Fuck you then! I'm going to bed.
See you tomorrow.

Tuesday

Happy Tuesday (okay, Wednesday morning. But we'll be back on track soon). Today, there's something in the air. It's not just the smell of weed. It's nostalgia. Well, it's both. So, to imbue this piece with the two things that I sense in the air around me, memories and marijuana, I'm going to tell you about my first time smoking weed. It's a good story, I swear.

Let's rewind a few years. I was two weeks into my freshman year of college. Two of my favorite new friends were a girl from Ohio and a boy from Massachusetts, both of whom smoked together most nights (and then hooked up, but I didn't realize that at the time). Our little trio was a love-at-first-sight situation—two stoners and one soon-to-be stoner. They were like my weed parents. They adopted me. I owe all of this to them.

The clock had struck 9:30 p.m. on a Thursday, and the three of us gathered at the most inconspicuous smoke spot on campus—the Widener steps. Some lingering students milled around us, entering and exiting the library and sitting, chatting with each other. The boy produced a dab pen from the depths of a North Face backpack that looked like it had seen things.

My friends sucked the air from the pen with ease. They passed it to me, and I stared at it, thoroughly confused. I had not revealed my status as a weed virgin to them, as I was very dedicated to maintaining my cover. I had to obscure the fact that I was still early in my metamorphosis from high school weird to college cool. The pen barely worked, and it took me like 10 minutes to figure out how to take a hit. But eventually, I was successful. I knew I was high when I looked up at the leaves and thought they looked really fucking cool. I did not realize quite how high I was until I stood up and had trouble walking.

The Massachusetts boy and the Ohio girl laughed at me as I figured out how to walk again. Eventually, we made it to what is still the best smoking post-game I've ever had the pleasure of experiencing—Annenberg Brain

Break. I waddled into the servery, where I was struck by just how deeply I wanted to consume every single kind of cereal. So, of course, I filled up three bowls with different types of cereal and one bowl with milk. I balanced all four paper bowls on my forearm and began my trek back down the center aisle of the Annenberg tables.

The journey felt like an hour, each step careful yet wobbly. Every time I took another step forward, a little bit of milk spilled out of my milk bowl, or an off-brand Cheerio rolled onto the floor and through the feet of some of my unsuspecting classmates. When I finally made it to my table at the end of the hall, I looked back. I immediately noticed that I had left a long, very noticeable trail of milk drops and cereal bits all down the center walkway of Annenberg. I instantly felt sort of guilty and shameful—like I'd just carried some cloth-wrapped dead body parts down the aisle and let the blood drip out like some really shitty failure of an axe murderer.

I then tried to set the milk bowl down at my table, where some friends and acquaintances were working on p-sets. As I attempted to place the milk bowl down without spilling my bowls of cereal, my hand slipped a little, and unfortunately, upon contact with the table, my entire bowl of milk spilled all over some poor guy's iPad.

I paused, frozen in shock, and attempted to restrain myself from uttering the inevitable.

Don't say it. Don't say it. Don't say it.

To no avail, my inhibitions were lowered! I could not help myself. Forgive me.

“Don't cry over spilled milk!” I exclaimed.

Shocked at my own utterance, I immediately burst into laughter. Everyone at the table gave me tempered yet obvious looks of horror and concern, peppered with the occasional courtesy laugh. My mood quickly turned from silly to embarrassed. I haphazardly wiped some of the milk off the guy's iPad and then trudged over, ashamed, to visit some friends at a different Annenberg table. When I arrived, I slouched over their table and blinked all empty and dead-eyed at everyone, by that point having gone completely nonverbal out of humiliation. One of the girls I was vaguely friends with gave me a weird look.

“Are you high?” she mouthed at me, looking bemused.

Exhilaration rushed through me. *She noticed. Redemption! She knows I smoke. She must think I'm so fucking cool.*

I gave her a weird, lopsided smile, nodded slowly, and winked at her.

Winked. *I winked.*

By the time I realized what I'd done, she had laughed, and I felt slightly less self-conscious. With returned confidence, I went back to my original table, where Ohio girl suggested we go to Insomnia Cookies.

After a long, arduous walk from Annenberg, I made it inside Insomnia Cookies and successfully ordered a cookie. I was brimming with self-pride, grinning at my cookie like I'd just won an award. Finally, a moment of success. A moment of being both high and functional! But, alas, storms of tragedy were brewing. My successful cookie acquisition had made me overconfident, and this cost me dearly. I became complacent. And complacency is the enemy of composure.

As I descended the Insomnia Cookies stairs, I made a grave miscalculation. Thinking I'd reached the bottom of the staircase, I was taken by surprise by an extra step where I thought there wasn't one. Time entered slow motion. I toppled forward. The cookie launched from my hand. My legs flew out from under me. The next thing I knew, I was lying face-first on the ground, left hand grasping the empty paper my cookie had once rested in, right hand grasping a freshly cracked phone. Suddenly—a moment of clarity.

Wow. I just ate shit in the Insomnia Cookies stairwell.

That's not all. The boy I was sort of hooking up with at the time was standing just outside with our group of friends. He had witnessed the whole disastrous fall. Somehow, it was decided that he would walk me home. I cannot remember if he offered or if he was told. He led my sorry, stoned ass back to my freshman dorm, where he dropped me off and left quickly. I hung my head and didn't even attempt a flirty farewell as I trudged into my bedroom. To this day, I credit that moment as the beginning of the untimely and rapid demise of our "relationship."

When I woke up the next morning, my first thought was something along the lines of "That was really embarrassing. That can never happen again." But, being the high-achieving and driven individual I am, rather than vowing to never smoke again, I instead resolved to become really fucking good at getting high.

Several years later, I like to think I've achieved the mastery I once sought. Hopefully, by this point, it is obvious to you that I can perfectly meter my marijuana consumption to the ideal point of literary productivity. And then produce a fantastic piece of writing. (Clearly). See you tomorrow.

Wednesday

Guys, in all honesty, I'm not high right now. I'm drunk. And in this newfound spirit of honesty, I cannot ethically write an entry for Wednesday. See you tomorrow.

Thursday

Just like Sunday is the day of the lord,
Thursday is the day of the vignette.
Here you go:

"I'm not feeling very inspired," she says.

A whisper, then a yell, then an echo. I take my jagged thumbnail and run it under the lip of the round metal table. The unpleasant texture abuses the sliver of skin just under my nail, rough and cold. Next, an unexpected interruption—no longer able to move my thumb, as a hardened glob of gum blocks it. I shudder and lean back.

My Brilliant Friend sets her glass of wine down with a hint of force. Its round base slams against the metal table, making a dramatic clang. Her hand lingers by the stem of the glass, resting on the table. I wonder if the metal is cold against her fingers. Tap. Tap. Tap. Now, the long red acrylic nail on her pointer finger taps the table. As it taps, the wine sloshes around in the glass a little, recovering from the jolt of impact. Small waves of red rise up to meet the glass's edges, where faint lip gloss stains mark the intimacy with which My Brilliant Friend knows glass and wine and words.

Her eyes have pivoted upwards. I recognize the look in them (not consciously, of course, only thanks to brain-stem brine)—exasperation. Exasperation at the lack of inspiration, a tragic downward exchange of four syllables to five. Combined with a sharp outward breath, she absent-mindedly pets the dog in her lap's head.

Little dog, small and white and fluffy, sitting all small and dainty and perfect. A product, no, a prop, of a poorly thought-out favor to a family friend. It is the perfect accessory for the moment, occupying her right hand so gestures can occupy her left.

She tilts her head in the other direction, but her earrings swing more than her jaw, creating a ridiculous flourish of metal. A moment's thought. Another moment, but with her eyes looking to the right. Then, a resolve. She moves to pick up her wine glass again. But her exasperation has muddled her coordination. The sewage of the cortex has

drained into the brainstem, turning it into a momentary cesspool.

Acid exhaust from the base of her skull travels to her hand as it shoots toward her glass. Her hand jerks a little to the right. Contact with the stem of the glass. A tip, then a tilt. Red flies out everywhere, freed like arterial blood from the body. Formed glass falls through the air until it hits metal with a force greater than it can bear. Formed glass becomes shattered glass. Silence.

Next, a blur of course correction. She laughs at her clumsiness and attempts to clean up the mess. I laugh too. The waiter comes to help. The little dog barks. I notice splotches of red marring his perfect white fur. This makes me laugh, and then it makes me scared. Poor little victim, all covered in blood or wine or both! A quick inspection reveals the dog is fine. My Brilliant Friend takes a napkin and dabs some of the wine off its fur. Another laugh, or two.

"Wow, am I drunk already?" More laughter. *"Give it to me straight."*

Okay. The waiter brings a new glass of wine, and you are thrilled as it is even more full than your previous.

Eventually, things settle down, and you take a breath in, a breath you will use to repeat your previous gripe. You exhale. With it, words:

"As I was saying, I'm not feeling very inspired."

I wager a reply, some naked utterance of confusion, in no way encapsulating everything but in all ways encapsulating nothing.

"But you're so beautiful?"

A laugh, as if I'm joking. I know you know I'm not. You know I know you know I'm not.

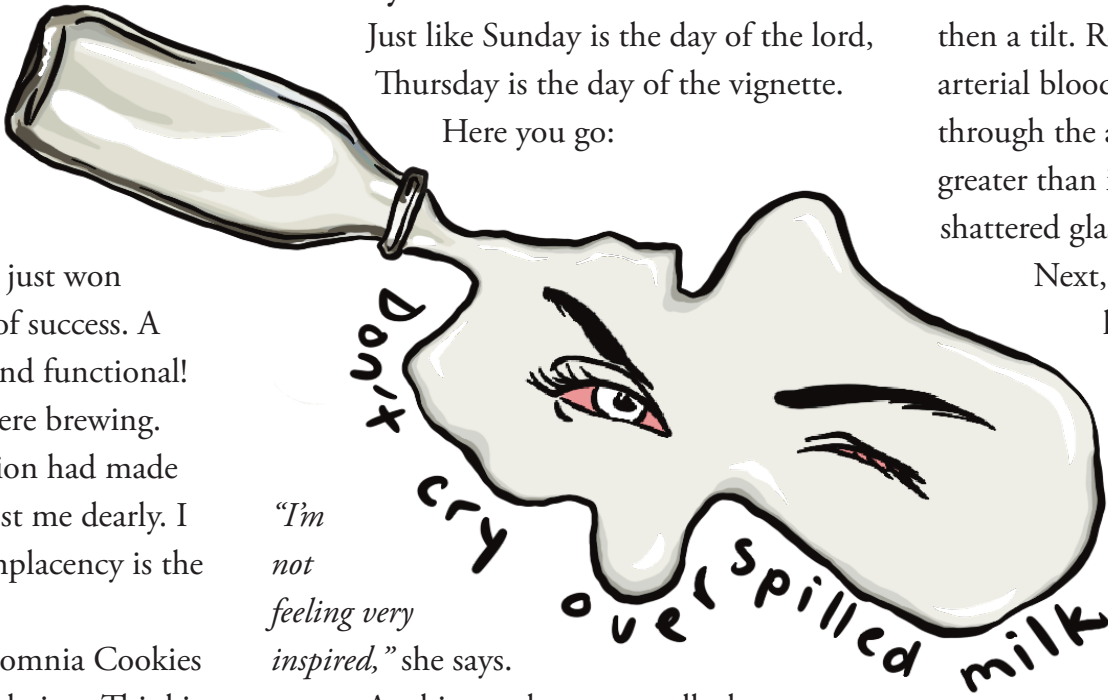
Friday

I'd like to conclude my week of weed writing with gratitude—gratitude for my ability to consume a substance that oils my synaptic joints to a point so slick I can run in wicked loops around my memories, connecting one to the other in strange, impossible-to-translate ways. But then to try to put them on paper anyway! Thrilling.

I am grateful, and I have run out of steam, and I am over my word count. Let's wrap this up.

WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



Roll Crimson

One Harvard student's dream blunt rotation.

BY MERLIN

Although weed is strictly forbidden by the Harvard College Student Handbook, for the sake of this article, let's pretend that killjoy little booklet of rules magically disappeared.

Harvard is well-known for its diverse and impressive student body. It is likely one of the reasons you gave for wanting to attend this school aside from its U.S. News ranking. It's truly a surreal experience to live among and become closely acquainted with Olympic athletes, relatives of global leaders, and child actors. As much as I love bragging about my adjacent fame to friends back home, even the most mundane member of the Harvard community likely has insane lore and would make a wonderful addition to the sacred space of this blunt rotation.

With reading period and finals to look forward to in the coming weeks, I have decided that to actively avoid the diabolical state of my academics, I will write unserious articles for the Independent! I present to you this list of who I would include in my Harvard dream blunt rotation.

1) Justice Professor and American Political Philosopher Michael Sandel

Whether you took GENED 1200: "Justice: Ethical Reasoning in Polarized Times" this past fall, or you simply sat in on his speech regarding intellectual vitality at the beginning of this school year, Professor Sandel is the obvious first draft pick for this smoke sesh. The way in which Sandel can capture the attention of an audience (even nine hundred exhausted students in Sanders) can be described as nothing less than the apogee of academic aura. Sandel once divulged how he applied his studies in political philosophy to evaluate the just acquisitions and transfer of his children's baseball card trades. Because of this fact, I am certain that Sandel would, at the very least, bring an interesting philosophical vibe to the function. After all, he seems to be intellectual vitality's final boss.

2) Upperclassmen Course Assistants

I think we can all agree that upperclassmen are your lifeline on campus, especially if you are a freshman. Ninety-nine percent of the time, CAs are not just valuable assets when it comes to surviving courses, but also extraordinarily chill. There have been

numerous instances where I have gone to office hours, and instead of doing work, I ended up just yapping with a course assistant. They are wonderful people. Although they may indulge in conversation since they are getting paid, or because they get entertainment from watching us suffer through courses that they have already survived, I generally find CAs to be some of the most nonchalant motherfuckers on campus. CAs, we welcome you to the blunt rotation.

3) Human Chatbot Outside of the Science Center

For some reason, everyone I have talked to about this has no idea who I am speaking of. Perhaps this is just a figment of my imagination, but I swear there is someone who stands outside of the Science Center in a robot costume holding a sign that says, "Ask me questions." I refer to this person as the Human Chatbot. Not only do I find this utterly hilarious, but I also respect this person's performative protest against the societal takeover by artificial intelligence as he bravely takes on the questions of strangers who cross his path like a personified version of ChatGPT. I have yet to ask them a question, but due to their apparent immunity to social anxiety and creative spirit, I would gladly invite the human chatbot to a smoke session.

4) Dean Khurana

I don't really have much of an explanation for this choice. I just think that Khurana does an impeccable job of engaging with students and relating to the youth. I'm also obsessed with Khuranagram and love his influencer era. Two thumbs up for Dean Khurana!

5) Any A Cappella Group's Beatboxer

This choice is non-negotiable. My previous selections have been people I think would make good conversationalists and not hinder the immaculate vibes of the function I'm crafting. However, let us not forget the importance of good entertainment! Imagine you are high off your ass, and someone starts beatboxing. You would probably be able to hear everybody's minds implode. But seriously, I think members of the beatboxing community need

to capitalize on the fact that most of them have an insane party trick up their sleeves.

6) Honorable Mentions: Remy the Cat, Sasha the Police Dog, and the Kirkland Mouse

Logistically, these picks can't actively partake in the activities. However, I think having the Harvard student body's class pets present would be a wonderful finishing touch. Remy would be an undeniable fan favorite and perfect for a photo op. Sasha would be there for emotional support (obviously). Finally, I think a strong argument can be made for the Kirkland mouse. Once, I was studying alone in Lamont during the wee hours of the night when a little mouse came out of the woodwork to keep me company. Something about this experience was utterly wholesome, so I would champion that the internet-famous Kirkland mouse has a rightful place as a class pet. That being said, rats are NOT invited to the function.

If you, too, find yourself on the verge of a crashout, take a deep breath (or a long pull) and reflect on the wealth of social opportunity you have here at Harvard. I cannot deny that ninety-nine percent of the time, I question if people who are not chronically concerned about internship opportunities, p-sets, and papers exist in the world.

Let's face it, this place can be fucking draining at times. The social scene is far from perfect. Despite this, the people, while the furthest thing from normal, are probably some of the coolest we will ever be surrounded by. Plus, who wants to be normal anyway? Take some time to reflect on who is around you and talk with a stranger, even if they are the Science Center Chatbot.

RATHER UNFORTUNATELY, THIS ARTICLE WILL BE THE ONLY LIT THING MERLIN PARTAKES IN THIS APRIL 20.

GRAPHIC BY JOYE WINGARD '28

Light on the Charles
BY AIDAN FITZSIMONS '25

Sundazzles enormous stretch across the surface
Of the Charles River, informing ripples
From the sun through space directly splashing
Upon the water of my eye to the depths
Of this woven candle, this riverring starstuff.

We are the ones learning now, we living
Blood of the spirit, ancestors of the moment,
Brainvessels beating an experience into time
Of this light, and this river, this meeting
As in the wind over the ledge of Weeks Bridge
We brace our bodies against eternity.

**GRAPHIC BY
CLARA LAKE '27**

SPORTS

The Dream NFL Blunt Rotation

Hot takes courtesy of my stoner ex.

BY LONELY STONER

FaceTime session with someone desperately trying to win you back? Prime time to hit them with the real questions—like who’s in their NFL dream blunt rotation. Bonus points if you still remember their favorite team and casually toss in a token player to keep them wrapped around your finger. With this in mind, we present to you our handpicked blunt rotation, courtesy of two young adults still trying to figure out if they should get back together (they really shouldn’t).

Xavier Legette:

Who wouldn’t want to smoke with a first-round draft pick who also happens to be a raccoon hunter? If you’re unfamiliar with Xavier Legette, we highly recommend immersing yourself in his hunting technique. The 2024 Panthers’ first-round draft pick hails from Mullins, S.C., where he grew up chasing raccoons, squirrels, and whatever else lived in the woods with his family. Not into hunting? No worries—he is also internet-famous for riding his horse, Dime Piece, in camo overalls. If his interview personality is anything even close to him after a couple of hits, we want him in the rotation.

Jameis Winston:

We have one question for Jameis Winston: Did he ever get on that boat? If you have no idea what we are talking about, take the time to watch Winston become enamored mid-interview with the owner of the Jaguars’ yacht. If that is not enough to get the conversation going, we can always circle back

to the time he attempted to shoplift king crab legs out of a Publix in 2014. This man has no shortage of stories, and his laser-sharp focus—whether on the game or something totally unrelated—is sure to keep the whole rotation locked in.

Antonio Brown:

Where do we even begin with Antonio Brown? He has been no stranger to slightly deranged moments during his career in the NFL. After a solid hit, our first questions go to that unforgettable Jets game meltdown—where he decided to throw his shoulder pads into the crowd and run off the field in the middle of a game. This was not the first time he displayed eccentric behavior during a game—he loves flipping a Gatorade cooler—but his decision was an extremely unexpected way to end his career. Throw in his fake vaccine card and reckless driving, and we have plenty to discuss during our sesh.

Jamaal Williams:

Mr. Mermaid is up next. Yes, Jamaal Williams has called himself a mermaid in perhaps one of the funniest

post-game interviews of all time. Across every team he has played for in the league, Williams continues to be one of our favorite NFL players. We’d value his opinions on other topics

as well, like *Frozen 2* (of which he is apparently a huge fan) and the Pokémon Championships. Williams is guaranteed to have everyone else in the rotation reeling with laughter. Honestly, we would

pay money to get this man to say yes to the invite.

Joe Burrow:

Joe Shiesty is an obvious choice for this rotation. From his spectacular pregame fits to the ice in his veins, Burrow is sure to be an absolute chiller. We have a few burning questions: Is he actually dating the *Sports Illustrated* model? Props to him if so, but otherwise, let’s just say there are plenty of hopeful women who would love to hear he is still single. How’s he holding up after the recent string of burglaries at his home? Relationship status aside, we need to know if he is keeping the frosted tips next year.

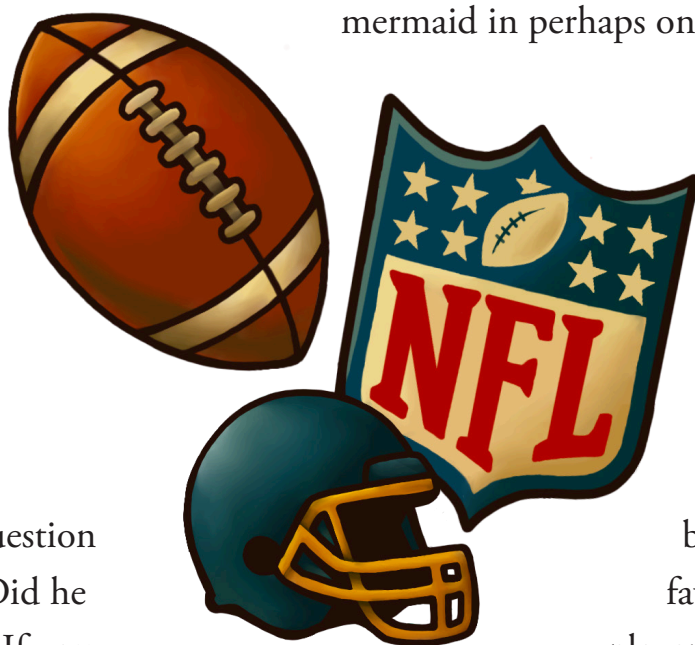
Tom Brady:

Last but certainly not least, we have the GOAT Tom Brady. While his GOAT status has already been debated by the Independent, this ex-couple would like to focus on other pressing matters once the blunt is lit. *Was Brady involved in Deflategate?* We’ve taken our time, read the amicus brief submitted on Brady’s behalf, and even skimmed the Wells Report. At the end of the day, we just want to hear it straight from the legend. Did he do it, and how exactly did he pull it off?

And there you have it: probably the most chaotic, random group of NFL characters you could imagine, but ones that, according to my ex, would make for a fantastic high. While we cannot agree on the trajectory of our relationship, at least we can agree on this.

LONELY STONER ISN’T ACTUALLY LONELY, THEY JUST NEED TO STOP TEXTING THEIR EX AND LISTENING TO KID CUDI.

GRAPHIC BY ALLYSON ZU ’28



Running on Fumes and Gummies

The underutilized benefits of CBD for athletic recovery.

BY KATE OLIVER '26

In June 2024, the NCAA voted to remove marijuana from its list of banned substances for student-athletes across all divisions. Following the removal of the same ban in the NBA, this rule change was a significant shift for the athlete community, who are no longer subject to season-long suspensions for a positive test. Additionally, this opened the avenue for student-athletes to use CBD products for recovery purposes, an option previously off-limits. CBD offers unique benefits to anyone who is looking to alleviate pain, sleep better, and navigate the chaos of college life.

While not everyone has the same reaction to CBD when it comes to their sleep, several studies suggest a positive relationship between usage and the management of sleep disorders. Experts recommend that student-athletes have anywhere between eight and ten hours of sleep a night to achieve proper recovery; for many, this is unrealistic given their myriad commitments. The use of CBD to combat sleep disorders such as insomnia and sleep apnea, which serve as barriers to proper rest, is an underutilized solution. THC-free CBD gummies are a great way to help reach your WHOOP's REM goal for the night.

Not only can CBD improve sleep, but it also provides a more homeopathic approach to pain relief. When comparing CBD and Ibuprofen, the way the two drugs interact with different systems within your body is reason enough to pause and consider which one you want to use. CBD regulates pain throughout the body through receptors and neurotransmitter interactions after it is absorbed into the bloodstream; Ibuprofen, on the other hand, works by inhibiting the production of enzymes involved in the inflammation.

While CBD still interacts with other receptors in the liver to slow its breakdown, when it comes to pain management, disrupting enzyme production can have side effects outside the intended pathways in the body. Long-term daily usage of Ibuprofen is responsible for 107,000 hospitalizations and 15,600 deaths in the United States every year. While these situations are extreme, they should be noted when making the best choice for pain management in-season.



Furthermore, there are significantly more ways to use CBD for pain relief in comparison to Ibuprofen. The only readily available way to ingest Ibuprofen is in different pill forms; meanwhile, CBD can be used in gummies, drinks, topicals, or sublinguals. Topical creams are not absorbed into the bloodstream but still provide anti-inflammatory benefits to the applied area; this is especially beneficial for targeting specific injured areas for athletes.

Being in season is one of the most stressful times of year for a student-athlete. Between the academic commitments of being a student at Harvard and the pressure to perform at the highest level, it is easy to feel

the crushing weight of stress and anxiety. CBD can help relieve these dynamics, given how it interacts with your body. The absorption of CBD into the bloodstream interacts with the endocannabinoid system, which impacts your mood. Additionally, cannabidiol interacts with serotonin receptors in the brain. This combination makes individuals feel happier and less stressed before a big game.

Now, it would be irresponsible to sing the praises of CBD usage for recovery without mentioning some of the downsides. Primarily, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not have strong oversight of CBD products. The FDA is making efforts to strengthen its regulatory powers, but the existing system cannot effectively oversee the production and sale of CBD products in the same way as prescription drugs. While many products are third-party tested, it is not guaranteed that the product you are taking is tested in the same way as Ibuprofen or Melatonin. That being said, we take risks daily, and researching any product you put into your body will always remain as the best practice.

When it comes to recovery, everybody reacts differently to various treatments; there truly is no one-size-fits-all approach to sleep deprivation, pain management, or stress reduction. You are your body's best advocate, so if traditional medicine and advice are not working for you, it may be worth it to look into alternatives.

KATE OLIVER '26 (KOLIVER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) TAKES WAY TOO MUCH IBUPROFEN IN SEASON.

GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26

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

JOINT EFFORT

By Gemma Maltby '27

DOWN

1. Latin dances
2. Sailboat poles
3. What a toast might be
4. Italy's main broadcasting network
5. High-society coterie
7. Yanks' foes
8. Chess champ Mikhail
10. Swing trumpeter Les
11. Be Honest
13. "Peanuts" boy
15. Actress Jessica
20. Where the green goes
21. "____ Karenina"
22. Puff Puff ____
25. How-____: instruction books

ACROSS

1. "For goodness ____!"
3. Debits' counterparts (abbr.)
6. Optics crew, casually
9. Artifacts used in teaching
10. Safe to swallow
12. Doles out
14. Cave dweller
16. Zodiac dozen
17. Literary monogram
18. ____ King Cole
19. Honest ____
20. Gunny
23. Tit for ____
24. Recurring melodic phrase
26. "Christ's Entry Into Brussels in 1889" artist
27. Blazed, in a way
28. ____-Babylonian (ancient Semitic language)



JOIN CERCA



DESIGN BY CLARA LAKE '27

Katie Merriam
Clara Lake
Alma Russell

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