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ASK 420



Puff, puff ... don't pass

BY **NGAIO BEALUM** / ask420@newsreview.com

I'm **freaking out** over this **coronavirus**, man. What can I do?

Dude. Chill out. The odds of you getting infected by COVID-19 are very low. Just take some reasonable precautions. 1. Wash your hands. A lot. Carry lotion if your skin gets dry. 2. No passing doobies for a while. Every stoner should have their own joint or pipe or blunt or whatever. 3. Avoid touching your eyes or mouth if you haven't just washed your hands. 4. Avoid traveling to northern Italy. That's about it. Be smart. Stay safe.

I have **nothing against** **marijuana**, but I don't want to work with **stoned people** in the same way that I don't want to work with **drunks**. And I worry about **stoned drivers**. Is there a way to test for **cannabis impairment**?

I understand your concerns. I mean, it's easy to figure out if someone is drunk. Breathalyzer tests are fairly accurate, and science has proven that a blood alcohol level of about 0.01% is enough for just about anyone to be impaired. When it comes to THC, however, there is no generally accepted threshold. Traces of THC can stay in the body way after the effects have worn off. Some people are super impaired after a puff or two, while others can smoke a blunt to the face and not seem any different. This is creating a challenge for law enforcement, especially since smokable, high-CBD, low-THC hemp varieties are becoming extremely popular.

Fortunately—or unfortunately, depending on your point of view—there are ways to test for impairment that don't involve Breathalyzers or blood samples. The Predictive Safety Company (its name is very *Minority Report*, so I hope none of you are involved in any “pre-crime”) developed the “AlertMeter”—a 60- to 90-second test of cognitive function and alertness. The thing is, someone would need to take the test at least 10 times so the pre-cogs, er, computers, can establish a baseline score making this test useful for employers, but not as useful for the Highway Patrol. The thing is, there are studies that show cannabis users to be really good drivers. So your risk of being in an accident caused by a stoner is extremely low. I wouldn't worry about any of this too much. Try not to be so judgy.

Anything **exciting** **happening in your world**?

Yes! I'm headed to Barcelona for the International Cannabis Business Conference. The ICBC is always great and fun and educational, and Barcelona is one of the most 420-friendly cities in the world. There are cannabis social clubs in every neighborhood, the food is great and there is almost always a place to sit and relax if you get too high, although they smoke a lot of sativa, so sitting down isn't always a priority for me when I'm there. Expect a full report in a week or so. □



Ngaio Bealum is a Sacramento comedian, activist and marijuana expert. Email him questions at ask420@newsreview.com.

