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ASK 420



Stay high, responsibly

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

Hey, welcome back! I have a question about weed and COVID-19. In fact, I have several questions. What's the deal?

Hey, yourself. It's good to be back! Shout out to every single person who gave their time, money and attention to getting SN&R back in print. I will smoke a bowl in y'all's honor.

As to your question: Wow. There's a lot going on. Research-wise, there's a study from Canada that says certain high-CBD cannabis strains may be effective at preventing the virus. Before you get all excited, the study has yet to be peer reviewed and it was sponsored in part by two cannabis companies (preprints.org/manuscript/202004.0315/v1). But it claims that CBD prevents coronavirus infections by 70% by blocking the ACE2 receptors.

Meanwhile, in Israel, scientists are experimenting with ways to use the anti-inflammatory effects of cannabis to alleviate the symptoms of COVID-19, especially in the lungs. It's way too early to tell if either of these studies will be successful, so don't start passing the joint around just yet.

Seriously. This is not the time to be passing joints or sharing blunts or bowls. In fact, you might want to be extra nice to your lungs until this pandemic is over. Also, wash your hands.

If you are wondering about obtaining cannabis, I say: GO GET YOU SOME. I recently spoke to Debby Goldsberry, who runs Magnolia Wellness in Oakland. She has also been a strong cannabis advocate for more than 20 years, so I asked her about safe consumption practices during this time.

"Dispensaries are the safest places in town—as we have long served medical marijuana patients with serious illnesses and infection prevention—and safety is built into our industry's DNA," she said. "Expect to wear a face mask, to sanitize your hands before entry, to find the line outside rather than inside and to find our diligent staff enforcing social distancing and cleaning high-touch spots all day long."

She also adds that Oakland dispensaries are going way above and beyond other retail stores to keep staff and clients safe.

I am sure the same is true for all the spots in Sac as well. Delivery may be an even safer option. I texted Jason Smith from delivery service theheartcanna.club, and he had Mike, the retail manager, send me a list of steps they take to prevent spreading the virus:

The drivers have gloves and face masks, hand sanitizer is provided in all delivery vehicles, delivery vehicles and work stations are cleaned daily and people can use electronic payments for contactless delivery. Sounds pretty safe to me.

With all the turmoil, upheaval, rage and hope ("Black Lives Matter"—and don't you forget it) in this country and in the world right now, it's nice that some of us are privileged enough to not only be able to obtain and use a little weed to help us deal with the stress, but to be able to do so safely and without fear of arrest. Activism works. Be safe. □

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

