

COLLEGE AVENUE



WATCHING A MOVIE IN WONDERLAND

ALICE IN WONDERLAND MOVIE
REVIEW....WHILE HIGH

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH MUNHCIES?

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE CRAVINGS

WEIRD DREAMS

THE EFFECTS OF CANNABIS & SLEEP

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FROM YOUR EDITORS

Welcome to this captivating issue of College Ave, where we delve into the ever-evolving and dynamic world of cannabis. In this edition, we take a deep dive into the science behind cannabis and sleep—does it truly have the power to improve your rest, or is it just a myth? We also give you a head's up on the worst movie to watch while you're high, ensuring you avoid the chaos of confusing plots and distorted visuals. Plus, we explore the timeless and intriguing relationship between cannabis and the legendary Grateful Dead, a bond that has shaped both music and culture for generations. As the cannabis landscape continues to evolve, so does our understanding of its impact on society. So sit back, relax, and enjoy a thought-provoking journey through the green frontier. Happy reading!

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WATCHING A MOVIE IN WONDERLAND

ALICE IN WONDERLAND MOVIE REVIEW...WHILE HIGH

Ashley Baron sits beside Candace Michelle in front of a glowing TV screen March 21. The two like the live-action Alice in Wonderland, but prefer the original animated movie.

Photo illustrations by:
Josephine Baron

Written By: Mia Anguiano-Perez



One of my favorite things to do while I'm high is drink and eat, but a close second is watching movies. I could've watched any kind of movie- horror, comedy, romance- but I landed on my least favorite childhood movie, the live-action *Alice in Wonderland*.

A lot of thought was put into this decision. As a child, this movie terrified me, I couldn't quite put my finger on why. Since re-watching it, I can conclude my fear was probably due to the oddity of the language, costumes, makeup, and strange setting.

It was decided, I was going to overcome my childhood fear of *Alice in Wonderland* while being in an unnaturally paranoid state of mind. Watching this movie while high was a shot in the dark; it could've either been one of the worst movie-watching experiences I've ever had or something entirely unexpected.

On top of being paranoid and high, I was home alone for the night, a volatile mixture. I grabbed my Trader Joe's cheese puffs and Takis and found a comfy spot on my couch.

As soon as the introduction song rang in my ears, I knew I had made the right movie choice. I felt like I had levitated off my couch and was transported to my childhood home, happily content with my fingers covered in Red 40 dust.

**IFELT LIKE I HAD
LEVITATED OFF MY
COUCH AND WAS
TRANSPORTED TO MY
CHILDHOOD HOME,
HAPPILY CONTENT WITH
MY FINGERS COVERED IN
RED 40 DUST.**

Right away I noticed I wasn't as scared as I remembered being as a kid. Instead of focusing on the eerie, strange parts of the movie, my mind turned them into something funny. I was cracking jokes to myself, which made the movie much more entertaining.

At first, I noticed Alice was being forced to marry the ugliest man I've ever laid eyes on, that was enough for me to understand why she stayed in *Wonderland* as long as she did.



The characters picking on the old, single, senile aunt because she's unmarried made me furious. A woman can't be single without being the butt of a joke? Come on Disney, if I can pick up on this while high, so can you.

On a less serious note, is Wonderland tiny because Alice had to shrink herself? And why are all the characters so mean to her? At this point the movie was becoming hard to watch because of how irritated I was with the tiny mouse with the naggy voice running around with a sword, tormenting Alice.

Playing cards were running around and could talk, along with the horses, dogs, rabbits, and frogs. Alice was changing sizes throughout the movie; at one point she was smaller than the dog. But was the dog a giant, or was Alice small? No clue.

I was still elbow-deep in my cheese puff bag when the Mad Hatter's character arc started unfolding. That's when I realized I wasn't actually scared of the movie; I was just scared of him. Something is unsettling about how he can go from being so cheerful to suddenly angry, deepening his voice and becoming someone entirely different.

I realized way too late into the movie that Wonderland is actually called Underland, which makes a lot of sense because Alice had to fall into a hole in the ground to get there. I didn't realize, too, that the Queen of Hearts had a sister who she was fighting with for power over Underland.

There's a slight discrepancy in the title of the movie since it's Underland and not Wonderland, which makes the movie much more confusing. Question for Disney: Is the movie about Alice at all, or is it really about what can happen if a sister feud lasts for too long?

**MY CONSENSUS: MAYBE
DON'T WATCH MOVIES
WHILE YOU'RE HIGH,
OR IF YOU DO, JUST
DON'T WATCH ALICE IN
WONDERLAND.**

Later in the movie, I entirely zoned out and moved my attention to Instagram Reels, there was no turning back. My consensus: Maybe don't watch movies while you're high, or if you do, just don't watch Alice in Wonderland.

(Top & Bottom) Various scenes from the beginning of Alice in Wonderland float across the screen while Candace Michelle watches March 21.

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Colorful glass bongos, made by the Colorado local business, "Spaceglass" are sold at The Joint Smoke Shop on Prospect Rd. in Fort Collins March 28.



Influential Grateful for the

Written By: Audrey Donow

It's the year 1987. You walk with your friends down Shakedown Street, admiring the artistry and scent of marijuana drifting through the air. It is nearly time to see your favorite psychedelic rock band for the 10th time, and you wait in anticipation with the crowd that has been waiting in the parking lot for hours. It is a hot summer's day in Washington, DC, where the Grateful Dead comes every summer. They work to provide you and the crowd with entertainment and music for roughly three hours, as you enjoy the rattling of the music beating beneath your feet and the sensation of floating through the air with a blunt in hand.

This is a common experience for many 'dead heads' or followers of the band. For Keith Andruso, his multitude of Grateful Dead concerts over the years went something like that.

Andruso noted that the crowds of the concerts varied, stating, "A general rundown of these shows were people 20s to 30s that were on tour and made a lifestyle out of driving around the country selling pot or bracelets or t-shirts to keep gas in the tank and another concert ticket in their pocket and people teens to 20s like myself that loved the music and enjoyed the hippie culture, but really never fully embraced the full scene,"

Andruso has been to roughly 20 Grateful Dead shows, all new experiences. He continues to come back and saw his last Grateful Dead concert in 2023.

Andruso's commitment remained strong from his first concert when he was in the 9th grade in 1987. He was influenced by his friends to attend the show where he became hooked on the relaxing and somewhat rebellious

environment around him.

These shows became mainstream for those a part of the counterculture movement. The Grateful Dead came into the spotlight right during the peak of the counterculture movement, giving the band the opportunity to open their shows for those wanting to rebel against stereotypical norms.

The counterculture movement focused on the rejection of societal expectations, and for 'hippies', it meant a revolt against the middle class and the government. This included free love, drug use, and peace, which were themes surrounding various popular Grateful Dead songs.

It seemed that despite the taboo surrounding marijuana and the police officers at the shows, those attending the shows did not seem to care. If the entire crowd were to blow their puff of smoke in the air, law enforcement could not arrest the entire crowd, so they let it be, and allowed audience members to smoke and enjoy the music.

"The general vibe at the shows sort of normalized drug use, which was a very odd feeling in the '80s and '90s based on the popular opinion that all drugs are a problem and terrible for you," Andruso said, "Popular opinion has really changed, especially on marijuana use, so I think it would be difficult to recreate that feeling again."

Music has always stood as a protest. Whether it is protesting for peace or for the normality of smoking weed openly, it stands for something. With weed culture becoming popularized since the Grateful Dead and many other artists, it continues to expand as students now admire the sensation of music in their ears while smoking recreationally.

CSU students noted that the artists who fill their smoking playlists include Fleetwood Mac, Sublime, Still Woozy, Faye Webster, Hozier, Tame Impala, Fetty Wap, and many more artists and genres, ranging from pop to R&B and indie.

One student noted Tame Impala as their favorite edition to their playlist when smoking, stating, "I think his instrumentals are something that you can't replicate," the student said, "the switches between songs, the meaning behind the lyrics, it just takes me somewhere else every time."

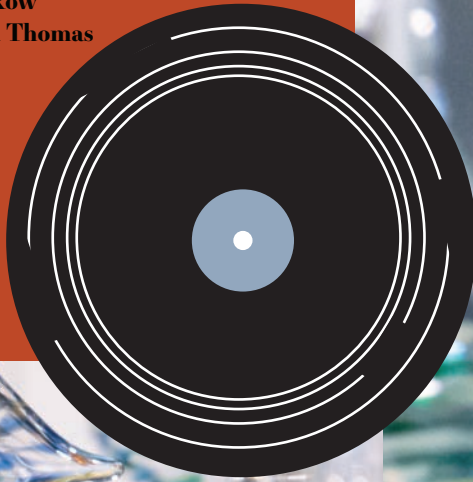
From 1987 to 2025, marijuana influences music, and music influences marijuana use at times. Even if the Grateful Dead did not pioneer weed culture, it has influenced it immensely, which allowed an environment that combines music and cannabis culture for students and beyond.

(Below) Rows of colorful glass bongs made by the Colorado local business, "Spaceglass," are on the shelf for sale at The Joint Smoke Shop on Prospect Rd. in Fort Collins March 28.

(Right) The Joint Smoke Shop displays a blue and orange handcrafted, glass bong March 28.

Photos By: Sofia Raikow

Illustrations By: Sara Thomas





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Mural on the side Green Dragon in Fort Collins March 12.



Written By: Maria Kantak | Photos By: Emma Winters

A BUDTENDERS GUIDE TO BUYING WEED

Whether you are a cannabis connoisseur or a casual gardener, budtenders are your guide through the world of weed. They curate the best possible experience by bridging the gap between how you want to feel and what you need to get there.

Claire Hunt is the budtender specialist at LivWell Dispensary in Fort Collins, voted the best dispensary in Fort Collins by The Best of CSU 2025.

“We focus the customer experience on education here at LivWell,” Hunt said.

Everyone’s physiology is different so Hunt suggests going low and slow with whatever you choose to go home with.

“Ease into it so you have the best experience possible, every experience is going to be unique to you,” Hunt said.

Samantha Garcia is the marketing coordinator and social media manager for Ivy Hall dispensary in Illinois. As a former budtender, she says it’s all about being honest and transparent.

Garcia knows what it’s like for a first-time consumer.

“When I first started in the industry I didn’t really smoke before,” Garcia said.

She recommends starting with a disposable distillate vape because it’s an approachable way to ease into exploring other methods of consumption.

“If you’re newer to cannabis, I think a hybrid is a nice easy introduction into exploring how you want to feel,” Garcia said.

Her best suggestion for college students is drinkables because they are a super low-cost option, more socially acceptable and there’s no hangovers.

“Drinkables are great, especially in social settings and for those in college who don’t want to smell and don’t want to feel the body paralysis that an edible can give you,” Garcia said.

For studying, Hunt suggests edibles with a one-to-one ratio of CBD to THC.

“CBD is really grounding, so I get my psychoactive effect, but I can still be alert and pay attention and go about taking care of business,” Hunt said.

By knowing how you want to feel in your high and what methods you want to use to consume, budtenders can narrow down products and point you in the right direction.

“I’m really passionate about getting people to not only save a little money, but also get the best quality that they can,” Hunt said.

Even if you don’t know what you like, just explain why you’re curious about cannabis and the budtenders will help you navigate your experience.

“We love to help,” Garcia said. “We are huge nerds about cannabis and we really want to dive deep, get to know you as a person and tailor your experience.”

(Left) Mural on the side of Green Dragon Rec and Medical Cannabis in Fort Collins, Colo. March 12.

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WEED AND MENTAL HEALTH

Written By: Kylynn White
Illustrations and Layout By: Aiden Lundien

The risks and rewards of medical marijuana have been debated for quite some time.

Marijuana and mental health treatments have intersected for centuries, primarily being used for both the psychological and the physical. According to the National Library of Medicine, marijuana was medically used by patients in 400 AD and began popping up in the United States in 1850 as a patent medicine.

It wasn't until 1996 that California became the first state to use marijuana for medical purposes with a physician present, under 'The Compassionate Use Act'. It soon spread across the country and slowly became more normalized.

However, that leads to the question of whether medical marijuana is actually helping with managing medical conditions or if it comes with more risk.

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, many medical marijuana users suffer from severe pain and fall between the ages of 31 and 40. These individuals turn to the traditional pharmaceutical route before moving to alternative medicine.

Using marijuana for medical purposes

means learning how to balance the way it is used and questioning whether it has more benefits on a case-by-case basis.

One downside to using medical marijuana is building a higher tolerance, which leads to more frequent usage and a higher dependency, rather than relying on other methods alongside marijuana. Many have also noted that medical marijuana often provides short-term release, meaning it is not always a long-term solution, and is used more sparsely for imminent pain.

However, that does not mean there are no positive reasons for most for being recreational, and while many adults partake in it for that reason, there is an alternative method paving the way for many who need better and stronger alternative methods to heal.

If you are 21 years and older, using marijuana for medical purposes is an alternative worth looking into. However, it is important to understand the effects of marijuana and how it can affect the body, and it's just a balance of whether the pros outweigh the cons.

*Photo illustrations by:
Josephine Baron*

Ashley Baron sits outside of her home, holding a pipe and staring out into the parking lot in Fort Collins March 20. She often uses electric pens, but once in a while she will use a traditional pipe.





WHAT'S THE DEAL

Written By: Tiana Shonoiki

Everyone's heard of the well-known side effect of marijuana; the munchies, and if you've ever consumed cannabis you've likely felt those cravings firsthand. But what exactly causes this surge in hunger? While the answer still eludes scientists, many speculations fringe the study of this curious phenomenon.

Here's what we do know.

Cannabis and cravings

The term munchies first became popular in the 1970s, right alongside the explosion of cannabis culture. It quickly caught on as slang for the intense cravings and insatiable appetite that follow the consumption of marijuana, especially calorie-packed snacking foods.

What's really behind this snack attack?

The science behind this sensation is still under investigation, leading experts on a munchies goosechase through the mechanisms that affect people's strong desire to snack while high.

Many scientists blame munchies on

tetrahydrocannabinol, aka THC, the active compound in cannabis. When you consume cannabis, THC swoops in and takes control of the brain receptors that control emotion, smell, and taste by mimicking the cannabinoids that our bodies naturally produce. This specifically triggers the feeling of hunger, making cravings hard to resist.

A recent study published by Nature Neuroscience suggests that the brain's endocannabinoid system regulates food consumption by modulating sensory processes, specifically through the olfactory pathways. The study found that in mice, THC binds to and activates the cannabinoid type-1 receptors (CB1) in the endocannabinoid system. This activation enhances the mice's ability to detect odors, which in turn increases food intake.

Another study from scientists at Washington State University found that the base of your brain, called the mediobasal hypothalamus (MBH), has a big hand in making you hungry when you use cannabis. It turns out that certain brain cells, called AgRP neurons, are the key players. When cannabis activates those special receptors in the MBH, it dampens the satiety signals in these neurons, making you feel extra hungry.



WITH MUNCHIES?

Controlling consumption

Munchies, from hunger level to food choice, are incredibly dependent on the method and amount of THC that a person consumes. The effect of inhaling versus eating versus other methods of cannabis consumption will alter a person's experience.

Inhaled THC enters the bloodstream quickly through the lungs, producing fast-acting effects. This rapid onset often triggers cravings for salty or sweet snacks, making those who choose to inhale, reach for and quickly consume whatever's nearby. The high peaks and fades swiftly, making this munchie scenario intense, but short-lived.

On the flip side, consuming THC in edibles has a slower onset since it needs to be digested and metabolized before entering the bloodstream. This can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Once the effects kick in, they're typically stronger and last longer, meaning the munchies will likely impact the consumer for a longer period of time. People often find themselves craving more substantial meals like pizza or mac and cheese.

What are the best snacks to satisfy these cravings

Some experts argue that cannabis doesn't just make you hungry, it actually makes eating more enjoyable by increasing dopamine production. This surge of "feel-good" chemicals turns a simple snack into a mini celebration for your taste buds. The mundane bag of chips with ridges, turns into the best thing you ever ate with each dip into queso and subsequent shovel and munch into the mouth.

In a self-conducted survey of 42 adults aged 21 and older, participants were asked, "Do you prefer sweet or savory food when high?" The results revealed that nearly 73% of respondents favored savory foods over sweet options. When prompted to list their favorite snacks while high, the most common choices included Chinese takeout, pizza, ice cream, and popcorn.

While the science behind these cravings is still a bit of a mystery, it is clear cannabis has quite the effect on senses and appetite. So, next time you indulge in cannabis, plan ahead to avoid overdoing it. Whether you're craving savory or sweet, understanding how THC impacts you can help you make the best snack

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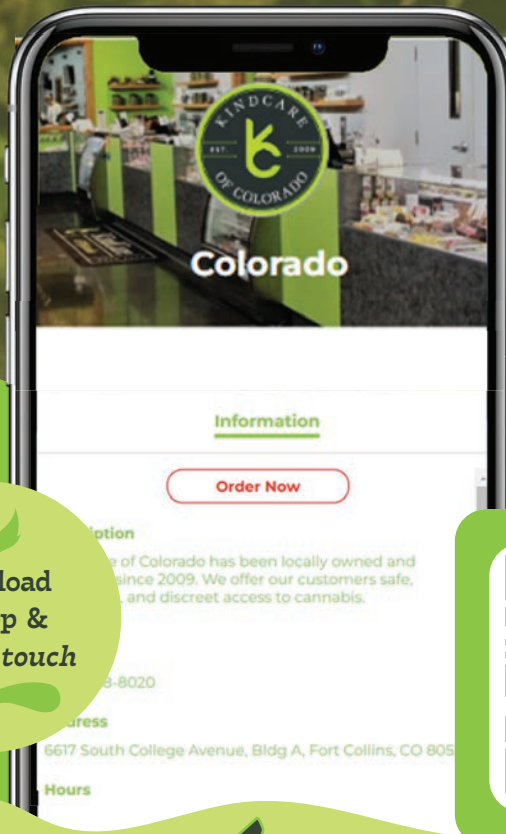
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EFFECTS OF CANNABIS ON SLEEP

Written By: Aubree Wood

Insufficient sleep has been recognized and researched as a public health epidemic in the United States since 2008, so it's not surprising that people are turning to sleep aids like prescription drugs and other vices to soothe themselves into slumber. Most notably the use of medically prescribed marijuana has become one of the most popular and conventional sleep sedatives on the market.

A 2024 study on weed conducted by the Harris Poll, found that 16% of American adults turn to cannabis to promote better sleep, surpassing the use of prescription sleep aids (12%) and alcohol (11%). Additionally, they found that nearly one in five U.S. adults over

the age of 21, use some form of cannabis to help them sleep.

But is Cannabis really an effective sleep aid?

Cannabis, also known as pot, weed, or marijuana, is a non-chemically uniform psychoactive drug that is derived from the Cannabis plant. Its origins of use for medical purposes can be traced back to 2700 BC, when the Chinese Emperor Shen Nung, first discovered the healing properties which exist within the plant. Even up until the 20th century, the United States recognized the powerful healing elements in cannabis and even encouraged the domestic production of Hemp.

In recent years scientists have been studying the effects of THC on the brain



during sleep. In a 2020 review of existing research, they found that THC indeed has sleep-promoting effects, which help people fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. They also found in their research that cannabis decreases the period of time an individual is in the REM sleep period. Reducing REM sleep consequently reduces dreams, which can even reduce nightmares for individuals with PTSD.

The legalization of marijuana in various states has allowed for an increase in acceptable use, thus more and more Americans are turning to dispensaries to reach their full recommended seven and a half hours of sleep.

However, not just any joint can send someone into dreamland, instead, research has found that certain types or strains are more apt to induce sedative qualities. For instance, the two most popular cannabis types are Sativa and Indica, which both illicit different effects. While both types are known for having relaxing qualities, indicas increased levels of CBD and terpene profiles promote higher levels of sedation and sleepiness.

Additionally, researchers have found that

sleep disorders like insomnia can be best treated by searching for strains rich with certain terpenes (the compounds that give cannabis its aroma) like terpinolene, myrcene, and caryophyllene.

If you are looking for better sleep, indica or indica-dominant hybrid strains are the best place to start. You can also ask dispensary staff for products that have indica properties. However, not all users report feeling the direct differences between sativa, indica, and hybrid, but it can help to guide you in the right direction.

The rise in cannabis consumption as a sleep aid may have you wanting to test it out for yourself, but it is important to remember that research on the long-term effects of marijuana as a sleep aid is limited and not fully developed. And while there are plenty of positive reports regarding the sleep-inducing effects of cannabis, every person will

(Above) Ashley Baron lays in her bed holding a plushie with an angry, dog-like face on it March 19. There are drawn in, rainbow colored lines extending out from her to exemplify a dream-like state.

*Illustrations By: Sarah Thomas
Photos illustrations by: Josephine Baron*

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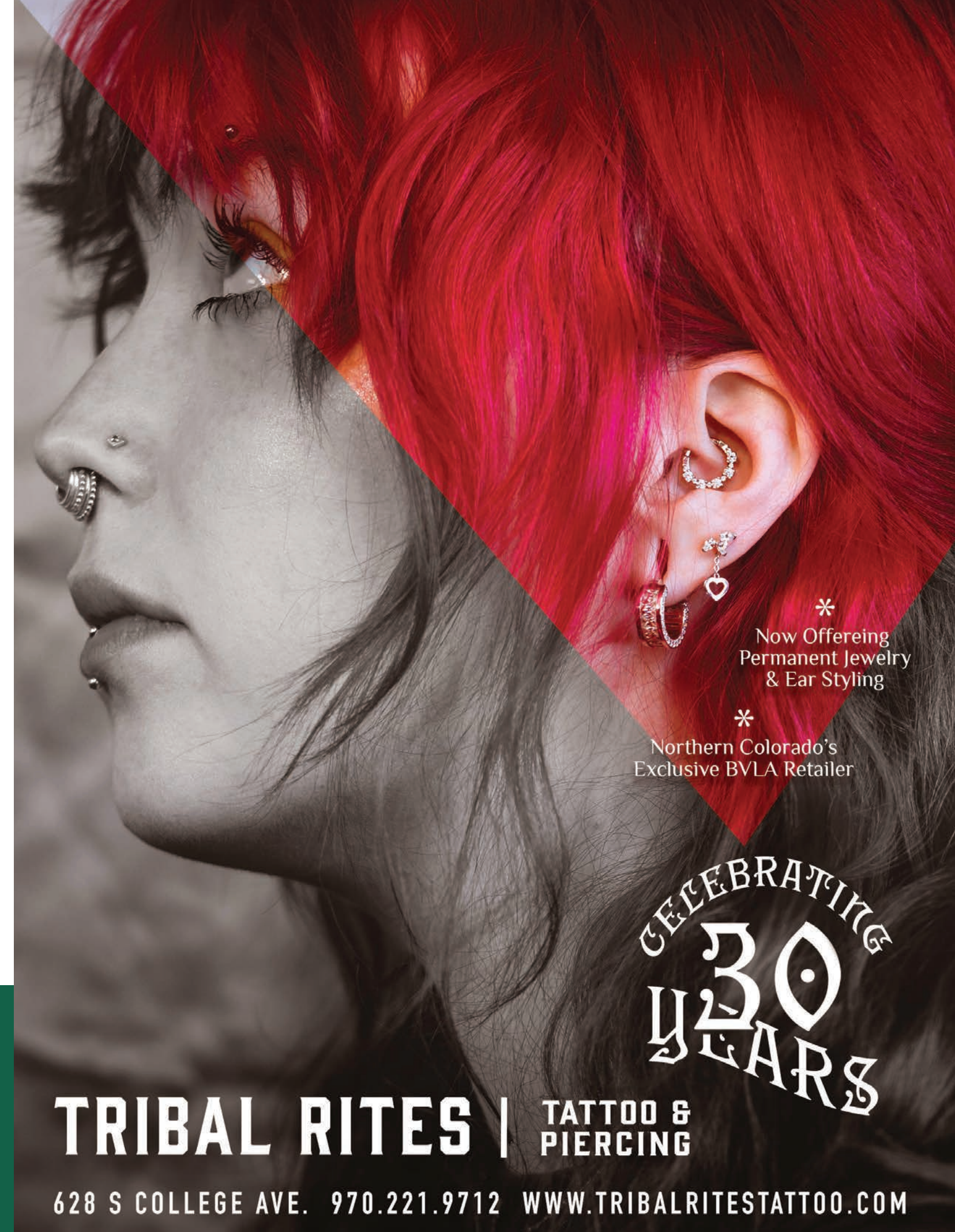
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Photos & Story By: Emma Winters

Weed. Mary Jane. Pot. Marijuana. No matter what name is in use, most people know the topic is cannabis. Despite the plant's popularity, not many people know how much work goes into growing them.

Organic Alternatives is a vertically integrated dispensary located in Fort Collins. Founded in 2009, they take pride in the work that goes into growing 50 different strains of cannabis, all of which can be categorized into sativa, hybrid, or indica.

"We kind of rotate a variety of those different types throughout the dispensary. So, one product will be in stock for a long time, and then we won't see it again for a little while," Jeremiah Lucas, the Director of Cultivation at Organic Alternatives, said.

Some fan favorites at the dispensary are their unique strains of Kushman and Devil Driver. To get the effect of two different strains on the same plant, you can either germinate

THE SCIENCE BEHIND GROWING

Weed



*Mural on the side of Organic Alternatives in Fort Collins
March 12.*

seeds or take clones from plants that already exist.

"I like that one (Kushman) because we could have an entire tray or two of that same plant and they all look the same," Lucas said.

"So that's nice from a production standpoint. The female plant produces the buds that everybody likes to consume. The male plants produce pollen, so if you get a male plant mixed in with female plants, you have a chance to have seeds made."

Organic Alternatives genetically clones all of their female plants in order to create more cannabis. They start by taking a branch of the plant, scraping a little of the stem off, and dipping it in a rooting hormone. After that, they put it in a substrate, which is usually peat moss.

"From the clone, we put that in a dome, under 100% humidity for about two weeks," Lucas said "Then, within that time, certain strains will root faster than others, but that branch grows a root. Then that branch turns into a new plant."

After that, the plant is grown to the size that works the best, while ensuring the proper amount of nutrients is provided in order to limit deficiencies.

"We can just take more clones off of that plant to keep the genetics alive, or we just send that plant into flower," Lucas said. "Once



we turn it into flower, that's when it starts growing the buds that we then harvest and sell it to the dispensary."

When it comes time to harvest the plants, they chopped down at the base. Then, the excess leaves that transpire nutrients and absorb sun are taken off. The leaves don't serve any purpose from that point on.

"We dry the buds from there, and then at each step that it dries, we trim off more of the leaves that are remaining until we get to the point where it's ready to package or ready to go out for testing."

There are a lot of requirements and standards that the plants need to be held to in order to be ready for sale. The greenhouses have to be kept at the perfect humidity, temperature, light cycles, and CO₂ levels.

The budtenders constantly test for yeast, mold, heavy metals, potency, and turbine to make sure that the cannabis is safe to consume.

Parking sign with mural in the back-ground at Green Dragon March 12.



Even the clothes that workers wear have to meet certain standards. Every time someone steps into the greenhouse, they have to change clothing. They have to step on pads to clean the bottom of their shoes, as well as wear gloves.

"As scale got bigger, there's more demand, more consumers. Kind of had to get more efficient with how you cultivate," Lucas said.

Instead of growing fewer plants that were larger, Organic Alternatives switched to growing more plants that were smaller because they moved through them faster. They started focusing more on efficiency and production and not wasting time.

"When you have smaller plants or less plants, you use a lot of trellises or steaks, like you would see on a tomato plant in the backyard," Lucas said. "Or when you're having more plants, you then begin trellising, so you have a big net and you get all the plants in a net together, instead of one by one."

This process and these changes have helped Organic Alternatives grow and supply cannabis to Fort Collins for 15 years.

"Small things along the way that we've done have helped us out quite a bit," Lucas said.

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