

Staff Editorial

After 4/20, let's talk frankly about marijuana

On Apr. 18, The Illinois House, by a vote of 99-1, approved a bill that would allow infused medical marijuana to be administered to students by parents in K-12 schools. With the potential entree of legal marijuana products into schools, among other reasons, it's time we change the way we talk about marijuana.

In this year's gubernatorial primary, Cook County voters were asked about marijuana legalization, and 63% were in favor. Given that only 3% of people aged 18-24—a demographic very favorable of legalization—voted we estimate that many older voters have evolved on the issue.

Perception of cannabis products has shifted a great deal over the past decades, not to mention the past few years as legalization sweeps more and more states each year. The image of a modern marijuana user is more of a yuppie than a hippie. Adults are more open about their use, and it's no longer outrageous to see even parents using cannabis products.

Today, one is more likely to see a dab pen or other technologies than to see an actual joint. This practice seems to further separate students from the history of taboo, and places them wholly in a future where marijuana is normalized, and even a luxury product. While this has benefits, such as improved pulmonary health, it can also have negative effects by further dissociating young people from what they are doing; psychologically taking a hit from a dab pen is very different from lighting up a joint. We were once taught that marijuana is as dangerous as any other illicit drug, and that if not dangerous itself, it's a gateway drug. Now the scientific community is backtracking those claims, with some research pointing to its being safer than drinking.

With California, Massachusetts, and Colorado being top destinations for graduates, it no longer seems that our health program, which largely lumps marijuana together with drugs like methamphetamine and heroin is effectively preparing students for real life. We need a program that is frank about the realities of marijuana use the good, and the bad.

Part of our health program is teaching young people to be self-advocates. Considering the situation in Illinois and across the country, it's time we teach that medical marijuana is a legitimate medication, and for what conditions someone might want to seek a prescription. Just as we wouldn't discourage a pain sufferer from receiving opioid treatment as part of the war on heroin, we shouldn't dissuade students from receiving medical marijuana prescriptions, though that's what current stigmas do.

We are not saying that marijuana is completely safe—especially for young people, many of the long-term effects are understudied—nor are we encouraging students to start using marijuana. Instead, we believe that school programs and attitudes need to be updated to reflect marijuana's changing status. It is legal in a growing number of jurisdictions, and it is perfectly legitimate prescription drug in Illinois even if it doesn't feel that way when we talk about it.

It's time to think more critically about marijuana use here and across the country as we all must adapt to the changing ordinances and cultures.

Summer: the perfect time to discover your passions



by Michelle Yurovsky

Internships can be some of the most valuable experiences you can ever have.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to intern at Vosges Chocolate, a chocolate company whose office and factory are based out of the same location in Chicago.

I admit that my dad made me find an internship for the summer as a punishment, but it ended up being one of the best six weeks I've ever had.

I've always been interested in the entrepreneurial aspect of business, and I was excited when I found out I was going to be interning at Vosges. CEO Katrina Markoff is such a creative visionary who carried her company from the ground up.

It was truly inspiring to be able to get advice from such a strong and charismatic female leader.

The first day was a little nerve racking because I had to find my way around the city, and I was pretty anxious about what I would actually be doing. For all I knew, I could have been making chocolate in the

factory, like a modern rendition of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

When I finally made it inside, I was greeted by Katrina's sister Natalie who also works there. There were two other interns, who I ended up becoming close friends with as well. Right off the bat, we were given huge bags filled with every chocolate bar flavor they had, and packs of treats from their sister company Wild Ophelia.

Another huge perk of this internship was the amount of chocolate I consumed. I would start my morning with a cup of coffee and a piece of chocolate (amazing combination if you haven't tried it).

Every day we checked our calendars and saw what the agenda had in store for us. We either shadowed meetings, got to watch different department heads do their jobs and ask them questions, and we also had projects that were assigned to us to help maximize various aspects of the company's efficiency.

Whenever I had time, I was able to leave the office for lunch. When returning to work, I would work on some projects or help around wherever I was needed, I was able to go home as early as 3:30.

The days were very flexible. I came in 3 days a week, and I would arrive at 9 and stay until the latest 4. Most of the time I came in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and

Thursdays, but if I had a conflict with one of the days I just swapped it with a different one.

Although it was a bit frustrating commuting to the city, it was definitely worth it. I always knew I wanted to do something with business in the future, but it was amazing to see it in action and get a hands on view of how a company works. I was also able to narrow down different areas that I couldn't see myself working in.

One of the days, we were able to take a tour of the factory and learn from start to finish how they make their products. I never thought about how many details go into making chocolate.

I never understood why Vosges, for a chocolate company, was so expensive, but after seeing how much really goes into making these delicacies I completely understood that the chocolate was worth every penny.

I highly recommend doing an internship at some point before graduating high school. Although most of them are not paid, including mine, it is still extremely worthwhile to get a sense of where your interests lie, especially before college.

Who knows, maybe you'll be able to find a place where you get paid in chocolate too.

What Bollywood can teach us about love



by Arjun Thakkar

In our modern entertainment climate, there's no lack of quality television shows, films, and videos to catch your eye. The openness of the Internet makes this all the more attractive—YouTube awaits you for when homework procrastination hits, or you can always hop on Netflix to binge The Office again (guilty as charged).

Even though there's a variety of interesting programs to watch, I challenge each of you to step out of your comfort zones to enter a world of emotional connection, of energetic expression, a world so dramatic and romantic that Shakespeare himself would be on the edge of his seat, eager to glimpse into it.

I am, of course, talking about the world of Bollywood.

As a child, I grew up watching Bollywood with my family. I didn't understand a single word, but I loved them anyway.

Once I grew older and learned that subtitles existed, I found an even greater level of appreciation for Hindi films that I just couldn't quite get from English-speaking cinema.

The drama was intense, the acting passionate, and the stories surprising in their depth and twists.

I guess there was one other famous part about Bollywood—the catchy songs and over the top dance choreography—that might've caught my attention. Not like they kept me out of the loop on popular American music until I was a teenager or anything like that.

Bollywood really has something for everyone—watch "Singham"

to see a cop fight corruption with his fists, or "Lagaan" for a village sticking it to the British Empire in a game of cricket, or (one of my favorites) "3 Idiots" about a group of former students on a journey to find their long-lost friend they met at engineering school.

Even artistic folks can find something to enjoy in Bollywood. There's adaptations of epic poems or historical events, or Shakespearean plays like "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" placed in an Indian modern context that your English teacher is sure to give you extra credit for.

Bollywood will entertain you while immersing you in a new cultural environment. And if you're a romantic, then you haven't seen a real love story yet.

Within each of these distinct and tonally different movies, it's rare if there isn't love involved in some way. Love is almost it's own character that's been there since Bollywood's very inception, haunting the youth of India for ages to come.

But this isn't the same romance that you know and—like—from American movies. No, there's a difference between the American and Bollywood perceptions of love.

The key difference is that of intimacy—American movies are flooded with it, but Bollywood is devoid of it. Bollywood movies can run their entire two-plus hour duration without a single kiss.

And don't even think about including a brief sex scene in there like American movies might.

The main tool of portraying affection is the song and dance numbers, where a man usually looks longingly at a woman to the tune of catchy lyrics. This means romance is generally less direct and that partners in Bollywood films resort more to language and plot to bind them together rather than attraction.

While there's certainly less

intimate relationships, I wouldn't say this version of love is any less passionate. The interactions between partners and families transcends mere attraction and binds characters together in a meaningful way, more so than I see in American films.

This is what I mean when I say Bollywood is Shakespearean in nature; according to Indian directors, love isn't just sex appeal or physical attraction. Love is a unifying force that allows individuals to endure together whatever obstacles come their way.

Just as American film has an influence on Americans, Bollywood does on Indians too. I can't speak for myself as I've never really pursued romance, but I understand the shift towards less intimacy just as much conviction.

My parents had an arranged marriage. Western education will tell you this is always an unjust practice that isn't fair for anybody, but this simply wasn't the case for my parents.

They weren't forced into it without a choice. They got to know each other before and decided to follow through with it.

Many Indian couples might not demonstrate affection as much as you'd expect from those in a relationship, but I don't doubt the conviction. It's shown in how my dad cares for my mom when she has a headache. It's shown in the way my mom stands by his side at work on busy days. It's shown in the way they support me and my brother in our lives.

It might not be an ultra-entertaining movie story, but this is what's defined love for me. Not just attraction, but also a willingness to sacrifice and care for a cause beyond yourself.

If anything, Bollywood is worth experiencing just to consider what love means to us.

At least entertain the idea.

