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Inside: Students on drugs, body modifications, and more.

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The Indy subverts

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Audrey Effenberger '19.

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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, 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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INDY COUNTER CULTURE

Staying True to Counterculture

The story of American counterculture is well-known. Rooted in sixties era fears and frustrations, counterculture arose as a challenge to American politics and culture. Youths began to reject imperialist Cold War policies and continued intervention in Vietnam. They were disenchanted with social values of materialism and conservatism. They turned against authority and turned to explorations of alternatives. The New Left was formed. Hippies flooded Haight-Ashbury. The feminist movement found momentum.

The punk subculture soon followed, bringing with it new music, new fashion, and the same ideology. Tie-dye and sandals were replaced with leather and Doc Martens. Body modifications, like tattoos, dyed hair, and piercings became symbols of non-conformity. Riot grrl swept the Northwest. Ideas of traditional gender-expression were inverted and thrown out.

It is difficult to pinpoint what today's counterculture is. My guess is that it is an amalgamation of its predecessors, found in D.I.Y. scenes, far-left activist circles, and community art gatherings. Generally speaking, at the point counterculture is identified for what it is, it has already become mainstream. The most recent identified counterculture in the US was hipsterism in the early 2000s, which today is about as anti-establishment as the Starbucks brand.

Historically, counterculture has encompassed a litany of differing political views. However, at the center of American counterculture have stood a core of left-wing ideals. Those within American counterculture were generally viewed as anti-racist, anti-capitalist, pacifist, feminist, environmentalist, and, most of all, anti-establishment.

However, it is important to note that what we view as historic counterculture has largely been trends of white, middle class youth and the practices that have been passed down from them are not always necessarily true to those ideals. As time distances us from what most consider the first big American countercultural evolution of the sixties and trends from different subcultures are subverted and reeled into the mainstream, it is easy to forget the histories of each movement and become further removed from the ideology that surrounds it.

Take tattoos for example. Tattoos have a long history in the United States, but really came to popularity as a result of the punk movement which associated tattoos with individuality and rebellion. Modern tattoos in America thus have a deep link to the punk subculture and its ideology – an ideology entrenched in anti-racist and anti-establishment practices. But, it is important to remember that, according to the Smithsonian, western tattooing practices were taken from native Polynesian cultures, which were later subjugated under European powers.

Today, some popular tattoos use images or languages from Native, Hispanic, or Southeast Asian cultures. Tattoos of dream catchers, mandalas, buddhist iconography, calaveras, and other patterns and designs that hold cultural significance for different communities are stripped of their histories and contexts and appropriated by those outside of the culture. This comes at a harm to the communities that the imagery originated from: their culture is abstracted and stripped of its roots to be commodified, while they have often been oppressed by western forces for practicing that very same culture which is now only seen for its aesthetic value.

Remembering the political origins of counterculture.

By SEGAN HELLE

Modern and historic countercultural trends and practices often come into the mainstream at the expenses of people of color. The hippie movement in the sixties often appropriated southeast asian and native cultural practices. Hipsterism is largely linked to the gentrification of lower-income black and brown communities. Today, thrift shops are morphing more and more with high-scale boutiques that price out the people shop there by necessity, as a result of a growing countercultural trend of “thrifting” for clothes that mirrors past subculture’s desires for individuality and anti-corporate consumerism.

When countercultural trends are picked up by the mainstream but the ideologies are left behind, we forget that counterculture has always been something more than just being edgy. Counterculture, at its core, is political. It has always been meant to challenge the status quo. Its roots are anchored in activism, challenging everything from imperialism to gender norms. Everything must be remembered in context and counterculture is nothing without its revolutionary politics.

Segan Helle (shelle@college.harvard.edu) loves punk music and countercultural fashion trends, but loves the political spirit even more.

Clumsy Drug Use or Acid Tripping?

By ANONYMOUS

I love a good spontaneous vacation and my acid trip was no exception. I hadn't even had a chance to renew my passport before the most impulsive drug trip of my life. You ever wondered what the mind thinks on drugs? Let me tell you.

We took acid at around 12:57 am, or at least that's when I started sending messages to my friends saying I had taken a microdose of LSD.

It's all fine until sometimes there's a big buzzing cotton ball in the corner that comes closer.

I can feel my pupils doing yoga.

I feel like my skin cells are dabbing.

My bones are made of clay and if anyone touches me for too long they'll alter the shape of my body. I am claymation.

My entire body is soaking up all the water but my roommate handed me warm water and I've never felt so much distrust in my life.

My jaw is tight.

Do I swallow the paper Wait, did I swallow the paper? Where's the paper??

I feel like my body is ripping open and being reborn.

Everything is spicy.

I am definitely having a brain aneurysm, please don't tell my mom.

My heart is on fire.

When my roommate handed me that warm water bottle I felt the pits of hell open up and we became one, me and hell.

My roommate's hair keeps falling into this weird mullet and there's no order everything is chaos.

There's an angry violin, it's like someone is trying to find this fucking cello's G spot except it's all 'not the right spot.'

I think all my hair fell out and regrew.

My eyes are getting bigger and smaller and I'm VIBRATING I'M VIBRATING THESE WORDS ARE V I B R A T I N G.

My astigmatism is coming and going.

I want a guitar right now.

I wish I was more talented.

I can move the sign by how I move my mouth.

I just keep changing the same margins.

I'm so thirsty everything is bulging.

The Forum Board (forum@harvardindependent.com) has definitely seen that angry violin before...

It's Only Skin Deep, Fam

Do you feel personally attacked by this already? Are you or someone close to you in need of dragging recently? This is the piece for you!

You've tried some wild stuff since coming to college. What's the *one* thing you definitely would *never* do?

- A. Tattoos are too permanent and the only thing I've committed to thus far in life is Harvard College when I got admitted.
- B. Honestly, who knows until I've done it at this point.
- C. No butt stuff.
- D. Septum piercings - if I wanted to constantly look like I've got a booger, I'd just stop taking my allergy pills and let Cambridge seasons ravage my sinuses.

If you had to hear quotations only from one person for the rest of your life (or until your skin starts sagging and you can't make them out any longer), who would it be?

- A. My mom reminding me how long she was in labor for me, just to have me tarnish my body.
- B. Somebody classy, like William Shakespeare or Snooki from Jersey Shore.
- C. Dr. Seuss. It's the closest I'll ever come to med school, so maybe my mom will be less disappointed in me for it.
- D. Definitely band lyrics from the playlist that got me through finals.

Where would you want some ink?

- A. On anybody's body but mine.
- B. A whole sleeve - talk about an excuse for why I can't lift because who would want to ruin an investment like that.
- C. Whichever body part is the least painful.
- D. Let's go with something discreet, like behind my ear or my ribcage under my chest, since it's not like anybody's looking around there anyways lately.

"I would get a tattoo but I don't know what I would get a tattoo of."

By HUNTER RICHARDS

What kind of image are we talking about here?

- A. A nice, short quote in 6 point font. Single spaced. Times New Roman. No citations. @Ad Board, what's up?
- B. A cute little drawing of my favorite animal, for sure.
- C. Some funny caricature that my entire family is especially ashamed of because it's so tacky, like a hot piece of pizza or Pickle Rick.
- D. How much longer before we get some Harry Potter-esque talented tattoo artists who can work with GIFs?

What color theme works best on you?

- A. Is Invisible Ink an option?
- B. I look great in spring colors, but I'd settle on anything pastel.
- C. Which is easiest to have removed?
- D. Which is cheapest?

How would you introduce your average day-to-day Pleb to your ink?

- A. My mother already called the entire family crying when she found out, so I'm positive everybody now knows.
- B. They must answer 3 riddles and submit a cover letter, resume, and 2 letters of recommendation. They should receive a response in 3-5 business days.
- C. It's below freezing but I'm not wearing anything but shorts until the snow piles are taller than my knees and cover up my thigh tattoo.
- D. Talk about an excuse to show off some skin!

Mostly AS: Do you really want a tattoo, or do you just really want to rebel against your parents?

Mostly BS: A cute little line outline is a great move. If you live in Eliot, you're legally obligated to get a sketch of an elephant somewhere on your body in case nobody's mentioned how much they wish they could've gone to Fête. If you live in the Quad, make sure to get your ink on those swole and sculpted calves you've been rocking since Housing Day to show them off more than you already are.

Mostly CS: Get that really philosophical quote you mentioned during section because it's the only sentence that popped out at you while skimming the readings you hadn't even opened before being called on inked over your inner arm so the next time your TF calls you out for not participating you can raise your arm faster than the quad shuttle speeding away when you're .002 seconds late to the stop.

Mostly DS: It depends. If there's a 2-for-1, BOGO sale going on or you happened to find a coupon, consider getting a cute two-part design, like a lady bug on one foot and a leaf with a tiny little bite mark out of it. Or a cheeseburger and fries. Or Khurana and "Transformative Experience." If there's only one, you should still splurge for the two-parter.

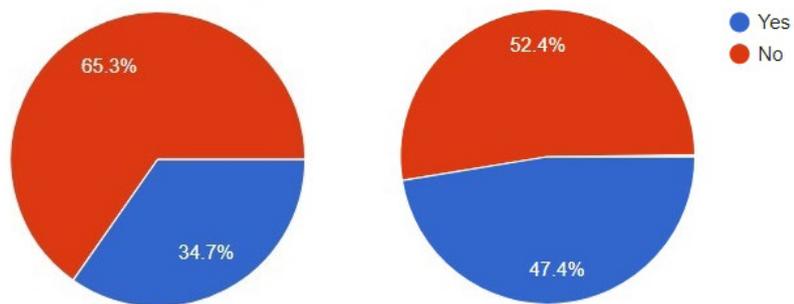
Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) hopes you find something fitting, but the first step to choosing a tattoo is ignoring what everyone else says anyways.

INDY COUNTER CULTURE

The Survey results are in!

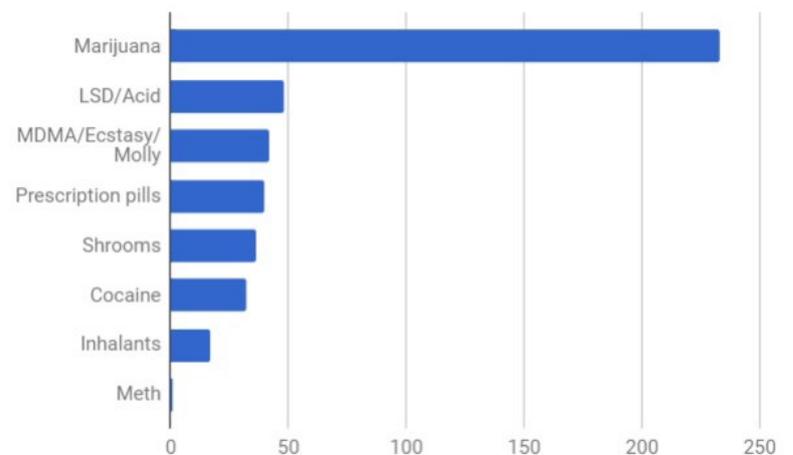
We asked, and you answered. Here are some stats and sick tats:

Have you ever done drugs?
Before Harvard...



...and since Harvard.

What have you tried?



Belly Button Piercing Woes

But not the kind you think they are.

By ALAYA AYALA

The cold February day I got my belly button pierced, I hadn't been planning on doing it. My mom had two coupons for free piercings, and she asked if I wanted to use one. I was a bit surprised at first, but like any reasonable, broke sixteen-year-old would, I agreed to go with her.

I remember not feeling very afraid on the way to the tattoo and piercing parlor. I was mostly trying to figure out how I could possibly ask my mom to buy me some pricey Northampton food afterwards.

I wasn't afraid walking up the stairs to the tattoo parlor.

I wasn't afraid picking out the blue barbell jewelry that would be holding open my piercing in a few short moments.

I wasn't afraid when the guy who would be piercing my stomach used a sharpie to mark where the needle would pierce me.

Hell, I wasn't even afraid when I was laying down on the table, with the needle poised to stab me.

It honestly wasn't until everything was said and done, and I stood in front of the mirror next to the table I had been laying down on only a few moments before that I felt the first inkling of terror. The blue barbell sparkled from my navel as I tilted my hips one way, then the other, trying to remember exactly why I had decided to do this. Did it make my stomach look any flatter? No. Did it make me feel any more powerful? No.

"Do you like it?" my mom asked.

Did I? I mean it was cute. It was cute, and a commitment. A commitment. Oh God, I had just committed to something.

Oops.

Maybe that's why the piercing rejected a few months down the road. At first, I took such good care of it. I soaked the piercing in salt water with a shot glass twice a day, every day and only wore loose pants just like I was supposed to. I didn't pick at it no matter how much it itched while it was healing. I did everything right for about a month, thinking it had healed.

Oh boy, was I wrong. During the summer things went downhill really fast. I went swimming for the first time with my piercing. A week later I once again stood in front of the mirror, trying to decide if I still liked the piercing when I noticed that it seemed to have...moved. Was it not centered anymore? Was it just a trick of the light? I convinced myself it was nothing and forgot about it. The next week, it seemed like it was a little more crooked. And the next, it was even worse, and it seemed like the barbell had gotten longer. But no, that was impossible. The piercing itself must have gotten shorter.

I remember going to my mom, full of questions, since she had gotten her belly button pierced years ago, and hers looked nothing like mine did. She thought I was crazy, said it still looked exactly the same. I don't blame her at all for what ended up happening next, because honestly, it wasn't that noticeable that the piercing was moving. I'd always been hyperaware of everything that I thought was wrong with my body. So, the second that piercing started to reject, I knew.

By the end of the summer, the barbell was only half embedded in my skin. The piercing had definitely rejected, and with a broken heart I decided to just take it out. And I was definitely brokenhearted at this point because somewhere along the line, probably when I realized that the piercing was no longer going to be a permanent part of me, I started to

really love having it.

I guess that's pretty cliché, huh? At least, as cliché as the story of an idiot who decided to go swimming with a not-fully-healed belly button piercing and subsequently lost said piercing can be.

Well, the piercing scarred me pretty badly. I have been afraid to take my shirt off because I worry someone will notice the scar and think it looks as awful as I'm convinced it does.

But, honestly, more recently I'm getting over feeling insecure about the scar, and I want to do something about it. A few days ago, I found myself in yet another tattoo parlor with my angel of a roommate, eighty dollars waiting to be spent waiting on my debit card as I talked to someone about possibly re-piercing a scarred navel. I didn't go through with it, not because I didn't want to, but because piercing scar tissue gets really tricky, and the aftercare is no joke either.

I hope that by the end of the week I'll have another blue barbell sparkling merrily at me as I stare at it in the mirror. This time, I'll definitely say I like it without any hesitation.

Alaya Ayala (alaya_ayala@college.harvard.edu) really likes getting tattoos and piercings, and is no longer quite as broke and scared of commitment.

A Night With the Record Hospital

An inside look at WHRB's weekday punk rock radio program.

By SEGAN HELLE

It is 2 A.M. on a Thursday night. Ana Georgescu '20 begins setting up her laptop on a desk fixed with a microphone, a couple computer screens, turntables, and a soundboard. The studio is small and is outfitted with a few chairs and a couch. Above the couch hangs what appears to be Christmas lights. Signs are postered on the walls around the equipment and on a billboard near the couch holding information about "record care," and a reminder for DJs to "Spinitron everything you play." A children's song plays from the speakers with rhythmic accordion and violin backing the vocals of a man singing in Russian. The music fades out and Georgescu speaks into the microphone.

"Good morning, Boston. You are listening to Epicycles and Miasma. I started my show today with a shoutout to my mother, who introduced me to Russian literature and art, with a song called 'Goluboy Vagon.'"

It is Worldwide Week at WHRB, Harvard's student-run radio station, and Georgescu has centered her show's playlist around music from the Russian underground. Preceding her, was a show centered around Chinese and Taiwanese music.

"I already try to have a pretty internationally focused playlist every week, so when I go to look on Bandcamp for kids who put out their mixtapes and stuff like that and people who are trying to get out, I bump into stuff and I'm like, 'Oh, this is great,' or 'This is good.' Then, you look at the label that they record with and you mostly stay in touch with the label. So, I

already knew a bunch of Russian labels going into this," Georgescu said. "That's how I chose the theme of this show."

Georgescu is a DJ on the Record Hospital (RH), WHRB's on-air department that traditionally specializes in D.I.Y. and punk rock music, running four different shows from 10 P.M. to 5 A.M. Monday through Friday each week. Georgescu is in charge of the 2 A.M. to 3:30 A.M. slot each Thursday night.

DJs for the Record Hospital try to curate playlists for their shows that showcase music that is out of the mainstream, picking artists that they feel deserve more exposure and that their listeners may enjoy, but might not necessarily have stumbled upon themselves.

"We have a set way that we are supposed to go about [building playlists]. I mean the whole point of this is to expose what's not been exposed before. That's kind of where the rules come into play. It just makes for better quality air for the listener. It's not just to be obscure," Brie Martin '18, WHRB's current President, said.

The process of finding music for their shows is a labor of love. Georgescu describes her way of finding new music for her show as "a lot of poking around." Aside from looking at which artists are signed to specific labels she likes, she combs through articles published about different underground scenes and looks at what people are listening to that seems to be related to artists she already knows about.

"RH tries to play as underground as possible because we take pride in helping new artists. There are two reasons. One: we want to help new artists we think are good and worthy of exposure by offering them airtime they wouldn't otherwise get. We want to give

those artists the platform to have their music known," Georgescu stated. "Secondly, we care about what our listenership is into. I'm not going to play 'My Bloody Valentine' for people who are into punk because they already know that and they can play that on their own on Spotify. I try to show them things [like that] that they would not have found otherwise."

The station also frequently receives hard copies and samples through the mail sent to them from different labels and artists. Located in the basement of Pennypacker, the WHRB station is a labyrinth of different studios, offices, and libraries. The libraries are possibly the rooms with the most character.

The walls of the Record Hospital's library are covered with shelves and bins cluttered with decades-worth of different CDs and vinyls. The covers of the disks each hold a white sticker, on top of which a past or present member of the station has written a note about the disk's contents. Against the back of the room sits a stereo. Two couches and a coffee table fill the rest of the space. Stickers, posters, and graffiti cover the visible backs of a few CD cases and some areas of the walls not already covered by shelving.

Martin stands in the back of the library, pulling out different disks, and pops them in and out of the stereo. John Ruby '18, Treasurer of WHRB, sits on the couch across the room, surfing through music on his laptop. The two are preparing for a show at 3:30 A.M., a time slot on Thursday nights without a set DJ that rotates between members who are able to fill in.

"John, what's the theme of our show? We used to always have a theme. This one we haven't thought about that much. We just finished a pset that was due. John and I, I don't know why we do shows together. We do them because we are friends, but not necessarily because we have similar styles. We just like try to play off that contradiction."

"Yeah, you usually do like indie pop, and I do, like, death metal."

"We once did Cupcakes and Death Metal and we'll alternate. But, this is a late nighter so you have a lot more freedom. With the 11 P.M. show, I'm usually much more careful about what I play. Not that I'm not careful right now, but there it's a little bit more of a formula," Martin said.

INDY COUNTER CULTURE



Record Hospital DJ Ana Georgescu '20 plays Russian underground music as a part of WHRB's Worldwide Week at Harvard. *Seagan Helle '20*

The Record Hospital is one department in a larger business. WHRB as an organization raises and operates a budget of over \$120,000 a year. They sell ads, pay their own bills and do maintenance on the equipment at their transmitter site. They record everything they broadcast on an online playlist through Spintron to give credit to artists. RH hosts live shows on Fridays and occasional concert events. During the comp process, members learn how to comply with Federal Communications Commission and music licensing regulations. Members are also educated on the history of radio and the musical genre of their department so they have a better understanding of the context that they operate within.

The Record Hospital is also a community, both within Harvard and beyond. Members of WHRB have developed their own culture,

complete with their own language, "whrbic," and a system of personalized symbols for each member that they use to identify themselves. The audience of their program is diverse and draws largely from a wide array of people across the Boston area from teenagers within the D.I.Y. scene to older adults.

"We don't really have any metrics, but we know from who calls us on the phone and who comes to our shows and our fests and stuff. It's local punks and people from the area; people from Allston and different neighborhoods around the city, or some of the suburbs," Martin said. "Some are kids who make their own music and they find us and they grow up a little and say, 'Oh, I listened to you.' Sometimes, it's really old people, or guys or girls who run D.I.Y. spaces in Boston. We've been on the air since '84."

WHRB's online streaming service also enables the station to reach far beyond Boston. Georgescu explains that, though she also has received calls from middle aged and older members of the Boston area, her audience is mostly made up friends and family from back home, in Bucharest, Romania. At its core, the Record Hospital tries to operate as a tool for a wide community of music-lovers.

"I would say that I joined [WHRB] because I was interested in reaching somewhere beyond Harvard and this signal goes far beyond Harvard in a way that other publications on campus don't always do," Martin said. "The point of this is to go beyond Harvard."

Seagan Helle (shelle@college.harvard.edu) encourages anyone interested in underground rock to check out the Record Hospital and the rest of WHRB's programs on 95.3 FM or at <https://www.whrb.org>.



Tat-Too Tired For This

Breaking my mother's heart only cost \$120 but was still much cheaper than therapy.

By HUNTER RICHARDS

The old saying goes, “Sticks and stones will break your bones, but words inked into your skin breaks-your-mother’s-heart-honestly-how-could-you-do-this-to-your-family.” You can try to keep that ink to yourself and hide it from all the parents and potential employers you encounter, but it’s almost like they’ve got a sixth sense for picking up on secret body modifications. It doesn’t matter how well I can design building structures or how well I calibrate scientific instruments or if I make it to class on time (which, to be fair, I don’t).

After asking me the meaning behind my tattoo, people often ask why I positioned the *Slaughterhouse-Five* quote upside down. It feels almost obvious to me but ultimately the quote was meant for myself, and I wanted to be able to look down and read it. I can barely read what my professors write on a 5x10 chalkboard 15 feet away from me, how am I supposed to enjoy upside down writing without it becoming a chore? Although it may have looked more aesthetically

pleasing to others if they were able to read Vonnegut’s words without me contorting my lower arm around to reveal it clearly, this tattoo wasn’t meant for others.

Every morning, I woke up to rays of sun sprawling over my left arm, highlighting the black ink within my skin. The dark ink felt as if it could soak up the warm sunlight and leave me feeling full of gold. During a period of time where my body felt too heavy to carry it out of bed, seeing those symbols of resilience got me through it. After a reminder of my own mortality, I took a step back and reconsidered more than just whether an interviewer turning me away because my tattoo played a strong role in my life.

“I really like your tattoo.” Whether the sentiment was shared by an admired professor, coworker, or mentee, it left me feeling filled with sunshine yet again. Although most people immediately tell me why they could never get a tattoo after seeing mine, it doesn’t make me regret my tattoos

at all. But hey, I now know about more than a few people’s struggles with their parents for bodily autonomy, or interview stress, or how they’ve never felt strongly enough about any single thing to want to remember it every day.

I admit, I’ve repurposed the heavy concealer previously reserved solely for those aggressive dark hickeys only excusable as a messy freshman to cover up my tattoo. While I don’t regret the tattoos and still get excited seeing them walking in between busy classes, the black ink doesn’t always color-coordinate with formal dresses as well as I could have hoped. Primarily, the dark triangle and quote near my elbow are harsh reminders of how painfully pale I’ve gotten since the temperature dropped below 75 degrees. So, since Monday of this week (thanks @Global Warming).

The world is much bigger than me and so much has happened since having spent 2 hours having a grungy man drag a needle carefully over my arm in a small building on a slower corner of Allston. Perhaps it’s because I’ve resettled into a new field that’s more accepting (maybe environmentally focused people have bigger concerns with the inevitable heat death of the universe) or that I’ve become the type of person others would just expect to have a tattoo in the first place, but whatever the reason I’ve enjoyed receiving more support than criticism for my ink. Nothing will top the professor who told me he loved my tattoo during office hours, or the guest lecturer who compared their own ink to mine during class, or the professional mentor who asked which tattoo shop I got mine done at to see where the youths are heading for body modification these days. I love my ink, and I’m excited to hear that others I admire do, too.

Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) is currently brainstorming her next tattoo, coming the next time her thesis has her extra #REKT.

Peace by THC

By ABIGAIL KOERNER

Concrete steps down into a woodland escape were my favorite place to walk. I'd hop skip and jump down to where they ended and the dirt and grass began. Trees billowed out overhead to guard my body from any sunlight which could have blinded me. Behind sunglasses, I'd look up and gaze at the clouds.

Clouds like puffs of smoke which escaped my lips. Sitting on a log or on a tree stump or even on the steps I'd smile over at whoever sat beside me in my little spot. I'd pass the joint.

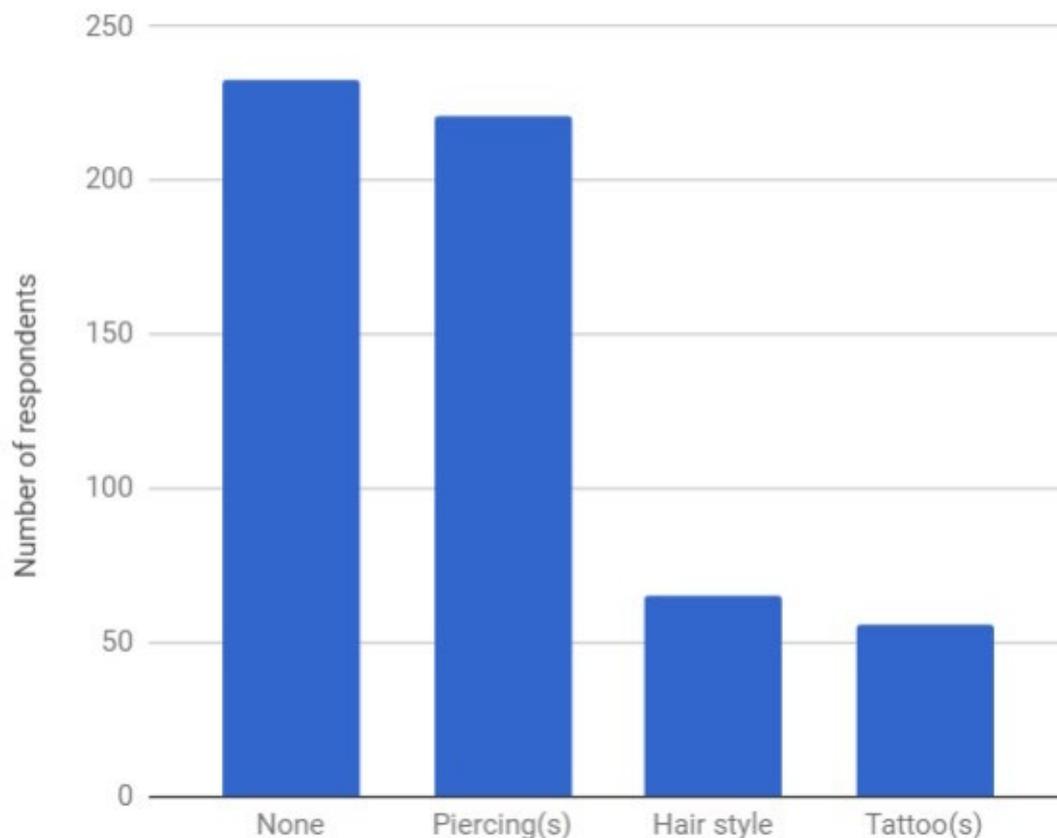
Seconds turned to minutes turned to hours and day turned to night and I'd be high as shit sitting on those stairs. Probably still staring at clouds. Puff, puff, passing around whatever would yield the greatest flame. The burn in my throat like the haze over my mind would lull me to sleep if wanted. Sweet days, sweet smoke. Buds of green in the palms of my hand to be broken down by you or by me. Then rolled into a blunt - split by hand, licked by tongue, flicked by bic, smoked by lungs.

I wish that my mind could rest this easy always. Like summer days when you and me would sit by the bay and laugh and talk and smoke. Winter nights when we tiptoed out into the cold, wet night when parents were

sleeping. We tiptoed out to see each other and smoke would escape our lips - not to be confused with frosty breaths that warmed the tongue between cool, crisp breaths in. To breathe out! Then crawl back to whatever place my body could fold up into properly. THC feeling like I could just melt. Buttery popcorn to follow. Coca cola to trickle down my throat and I'd feel carbonation like I never felt it before. Finally, peace.

Abigail Koerner (ajkoerner@college.harvard.edu) writes short fiction, but not always after burning a fat one!

Any body modifications?



Tell us about it:

"My mom pierced my ears when I was an infant. I had no say in the matter."

"My older sisters got theirs done for their birthdays, so I did, too."

"Mateo stuck his finger up my nose and kept it there for a while before piercing it."

"It wasn't a difficult decision because my mother also loved tattoos, and couldn't wait for me to get mine. I had been waiting to do it for a long time, just needed the money to do so! I was scared about the nostril piercing because I was a bit worried that potential employers/lab PIs wouldn't like it-- but realized that many students here had much more than nostril piercings."

"I honestly have no idea."

"I got a rock in my eye in the mall parking lot and cried and my best friend held my hand while it happened in the Piercing Pagoda."

"I tattooed a dollar sign on my ass when I was 15 with a handmade tattoo gun."

"I got a sticker at the end, so it was pretty rad."

captured and shot



“I believe tattoos are meant to be external expressions of how you experience the world. My tattoo serves that function for me. When I had the idea, it felt as though I had fallen in love – I knew immediately that I wanted to spend my life with it. I drew the design for my own tattoo based off a sketch a talented artistic friend had drawn for me. I feel extremely close to it and I believe it to be a beautiful representation of how I see myself.”