

Above: EPA Superfund Sites across the country, in various stages of cleanup. (Source: skew-t; Wikimedia Commons)

said, included the messages they had received from scientists and the phone calls they had received from the public. However, the plant still faces emergency rescheduling or permanent rescheduling in the future. And, though the DEA claims "We don't want the public to believe we are simply a group of government bureaucrats who don't care about their safety and health"^[10], their response to public inquiry has been bureaucratic and opaque. Their filing to reschedule referenced 33 endnotes, but the bibliography itself was omitted. When Anthony Roberts of transparency organization MuckRock filed an FOIA request for their supporting documentation, they responded with already available documents, none of which included the bibliography and none of which supported a public health case against kratom. Roberts wrote: "the DEA opened up a comment period for the public to respond. But in order to respond fully, we need to know what we are responding to. [...] The DEA wants to make kratom illegal, and they are completely relying on data and communications that they are outright refusing to provide. Why even list 33 footnotes if you won't allow the public to have access to them?"^[11]

[10] "What's Next for Kratom after the DEA Blinks on Its Emergency Ban?" Angus Chen, Scientific American. 17 October 2016

[11] "DEA refuses to release evidence backing Kratom ban." Anthony Roberts, MuckRock.org. 5 December 2016.

1: Table of Contents
 2-3: tHE sNOOZE
 4: The World Turned Upside Down: The Diggers' Commune, 1649
 5-6;8-12:The War on Drugs Continues: The Case for Kratom (Robert Wells)
 7: /etc/
 12: Radical Cartography

hey everyone, long time no see. i know, everyone missed our sizzling commentary during the election. as soon as we figure out what the hell just happened, we'll let you know. for now, buckle your seatbelts, and if you can stand the motion sickness, read some discussion of the recent arson of the Orange County Republican Party headquarters in this issue's online feature. if you haven't heard, someone apparently threw a molotov cocktail through their window. worse, liberals across the country raised money to pay for the damage. the feature discusses the philosophical and strategic implications of such a move. i'll probably be called an uncritical ideologue or something, so here's the thing that bugs me the most: next time, if you can, you should steal their hard drives and paper files, leak the juicy stuff to the Provocateur, and bonfire the rest at your leisure! One important update is that, while there have still been no arrests in the matter, the FBI have issued a grand jury subpoena for local anarchist Katie Yow in connection to the arson. To learn more and support her, visit:

<https://ncresiststhegrandjury.com>

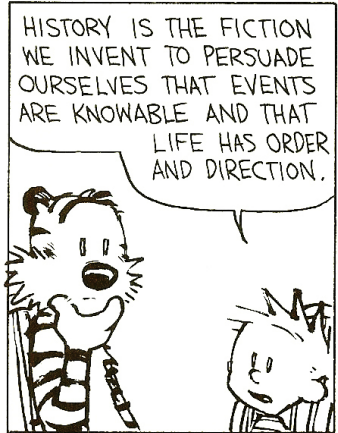
In the meantime, enjoy some top-shelf reporting from Robert about the expansion of the War on Drugs that nearly landed a kratom ban on us. there's also plenty of the usual bits and pieces of song and history we love to deliver. online:

thecarrboroprovocateur.wordpress.com

twitter: @carrboroProvoc

email: thecarrboroprovocateur@gmail.com

take it easy - the eds





14 October 1977: Anita Bryant breaks down crying, having been hit in the face with a pie by a gay rights protester. Bryant was holding a press conference related to her self-described "crusade" against homosexuality. Her movement imploded shortly after the pieing.

In Case You Missed It: THE SNOOZE

9 July 1962: In an experiment codenamed Starfish Prime, the US Atomic Energy Commission and the Defense Atomic Support Agency detonated a thermonuclear bomb in the stratosphere near Hawaii, basically for shits and giggles.

11 July 1970: The USAF launched a rocket laden with radioactive cobalt isotopes from Utah. Their target was another base in New Mexico, but they missed and the rocket landed in the Mapimi Desert in Mexico.

The cleanup required the excavation of hundreds of tons of soil, and the construction of a road through the desert for its transport. (NSArchive)

2010-2014: Of the private wells in Wake County, NC tested, more than 40 (nearly 10%) had uranium concentrations considered dangerous by the EPA. Uranium is a toxic and radioactive heavy metal; its presence in this case to be due to natural mineral deposits. In 2014, the county abruptly ceased testing for uranium. (INDYWeek)

Houston, 2011: In November, Justin Twohig brought a gun to an Occupy Houston gathering and began firing into the air. He was not known to be associated with the Occupy movement. Twohig survived a police shooting but was ruled incompetent to stand trial for reasons including paranoid delusions. This wasn't the only gun-related episode that Occupy Houston faced. Documents obtained through FOIA and lawsuit showed that around this time, the FBI knew about a plot "to gather intelligence against the leaders of the protest groups [Occupy] and obtain photographs, then kill the leadership via suppressed sniper rifles." (Houston Chronicle)

marijuana is driving up the price of weed.^[9] There have been big winners in the War on Drugs. The question shouldn't be whether or not the War on Drugs has failed, but rather who has it failed?

Marijuana and opium are a lot cheaper than Lexapro and Oxycontin, so given that the DEA's job is to do what is in the government's best interest, seizing all of the weed and heroin and selling the people who use them as labor to for-profit prisons makes total sense. It's almost as if our government were being run as a corporation.

But I'm not convinced that there is a shady group of politicians, pharmaceutical company reps and corrupt judges collaborating behind closed doors. I agree with Elizabeth: There is a lot of ignorance and fear, which most likely stems more from individual prejudices about drugs rather than a nefarious profit motive. Then again, the true profiteers are the news media outlets that have perpetuated the kratom panic. Scary headlines

are a great way to make people read the news. Don't be distressed; you'll likely see an ad for an antidepressant in the corner.

While we may lack information about kratom's risks, kratom is currently helping a lot more people than it's hurting.

Unfortunately, the DEA's drastic measures have left



Parents, siblings, and an infant in a stroller protest the kratom ban. One sign reads, "My mom is not a criminal."

little recourse for the people. The AKA is currently telling concerned kratom supporters to write their federal legislators who can challenge the DEA's decision. Visit the AKA website (AmericanKratom.org) to find out who your representatives are, sign a petition to the White House or call the DEA directly. Keeping kratom legal may not be in the best interest of the federal government, but it could save lives.

Editor's Note

In late October, shortly after writing, the DEA withdrew its plan to schedule kratom. The reasons, their spokesperson

[9] "The High Price Of Medical Marijuana Is Forcing People Back To The Black Market" Sam P.K. Collins, ThinkProgress. 21 September 2015

"Plants, Not Pills." "No Big Pharma."

I was surprised to see that most of the people in attendance were not young, hippie-looking types like myself, but rather much older and more respectable looking citizens. Like Chase uses kratom to curb heroin withdrawal, many older Americans have found that kratom has helped them wean off of prescription opioids, and many of them are afraid of having to either go back to opioids or face hard prison time by treating their ailments with a schedule I drug.

When I asked Robert why he thinks the DEA banned kratom, he responded, "They upped the penalties for marijuana just weeks before, so that tells you all you need to know." He elaborated, "The entire political establishment depends on campaign contributions from big pharma," so the DEA's job is to keep alternatives to prescription drugs off of the market. "It's too good," he said. Chase agrees with this very plausible conspiracy theory.

Elizabeth, however, suggests another culprit: ignorance and fear perpetuated by sensationalist media outlets. She cites a case in Florida in which the local press reported "Tragic Death Moves Broward Commissioner To Ban Addictive Drug"^[6]

"People panicked because they heard that a kid committed suicide after drinking kratom," Elizabeth explained, "But the boy had other drugs in his system." The American Kratom Association has since clarified the story: "There were other legally prescribed drugs involved. Two of them had suicide warnings listed among the side-effects." Kratom likely had nothing to do with the death.^[7]

Nearly all Americans take at least one drug daily, be it caffeine, an antidepressant, a blood pressure medication, or crack cocaine. Everyone picks their poison, so it makes sense to regulate these things. However, the DEA's extreme reaction to a seemingly benign drug has raised eyebrows. Forbes reported that over 10 times as many people went to the ER after swallowing laundry detergent^[8] in the past seven months than have been the the ER after ingesting kratom in five years. Kratom, like coffee, is only toxic in very high doses.

Has the War on Drugs Really Failed?

In a June 2011 report, the Global Commission on Drug Policy declared, "the War on Drugs has failed," but I disagree. The War on Drugs has been very lucrative for lawyers, judges, bail bondmen, doctors and prisons. Meanwhile, the marketing of legal drugs has also become lucrative; indeed, the medicalization of

7 April 2016: Hillary Clinton's staffers blasted reporters with white noise machines at a Colorado campaign stop in a contentious primary election, preventing them from hearing her fundraising speech at the private event. (Washington Examiner)

June 2016: City workers in Durham, NC win a \$15 minimum wage!

Summer 2016: An August paper published in Geophysical Research Letters warned that global warming could unearth buried hazardous wastes by the end of the century: Camp Century, a US military base in Greenland, was abandoned in 1967. Left behind under the ice was a large quantity of diesel fuel, toxic PCBs, sewage, and low-level radioactive waste from an on-site nuclear reactor. The region is expected to begin losing ice by 2090. We might not have to wait that long for rising temperatures to become a public health crisis: an anthrax outbreak struck Siberia in July, after a heatwave lasting weeks. The first such incident in Russia in 75 years, a thawing reindeer corpse is believed to be the origin of the disease. More than a dozen were hospitalized, and more than a thousand reindeer died. (AGU;Wunderground)

10 August 2016: The Triangle chapter of the International Workers of the World held a demonstration in front of the Durham jail to support a nationwide prisoners' strike. Prisoners are an invisible workforce, coerced into low-paid manufacturing or conscripted into fighting California wildfires, and the strike coincided with the 45th anniversary of the Attica Prison uprising. Former prisoners spoke at the rally, describing medical neglect in the jail. The demonstration was supported by local community groups, including a muslim organization and the city workers' union, UE150.

3 September 2016: After bulldozers from the Dakota Access Pipeline Company destroyed Native American burial sites, protesters overtook the construction site. Led by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest opposed construction of an oil pipeline, which would threaten their water supply and run through sites of cultural importance. Private security forces attacked the protesters with pepper spray and dogs. At least half a dozen were bitten, including a young child. (FOX/DemocracyNow)

[6]"Tragic Death Moves Broward Commissioner To Ban Addictive Drug." CBS Miami 8 October 2014

[7]"Kratom Wrongly Accused of Causing Another Suicide" Paul Kemp, American Kratom Association. 18 June 2015 AmericanKratom.org/

[8]"DEA Argues That Public Comment Is Unnecessary Before Kratom Ban." David Kroll, Forbes. 31 August 2016.

The World Turned Upside Down: The Story of the Diggers' Commune - as told by Chumbawamba, Billy Bragg, and Leon Rosselson

*In sixteen forty-nine, to St.
George's Hill
A ragged band they called the
Diggers came to show the
people's will
They defied the landlords; they
defied the laws
They were the dispossessed
reclaiming what was theirs*

*"We come in peace," they said,
"to dig and sow
We come to work the land in
common and to make the
waste ground grow
This Earth divided, we will
make whole
So it can be a common treasury for all*

*"The sin of property we do disdain
No one has the right to buy or sell the earth for private gain
By theft and murder they took the land
Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command*

*"They make the laws to chain us well
The clergy dazzle us with heaven or they damn us into hell
We will not worship the god the serve
The god of greed who feeds the rich whilst people starve*



**George W. Bush, dodging a shoe at an Iraqi press conference.
14 December 2008**

*"We work, we eat together, we
take up swords
We will not bow to the
masters or pay rent to the
lords
We are free people though we
are poor"
You diggers all stand up for
glory, stand up now!*

"Thank you, sir."

meet new people or relax with friends, without the figurative and literal headaches that come with serving alcohol. A North Carolina native, Elizabeth decided to open a similar establishment when she moved to Carrboro.

Elizabeth describes Krave as a modern version of the great salons of 17th century France. Sitting in its chic interior, I overhear conversations about literature, philosophy, politics and music theory. "There's no alcohol, no sports, no news," Elizabeth proudly proclaimed. "People get jobs here, they find roommates, they go on dates, they fall in love."

Kava and kratom users have their own subculture, but they come from all backgrounds. Krave's customers are lawyers, real estate agents, cardiologists, midwives, pharmacists and police officers. Elizabeth is also familiar with kratom's medicinal qualities, and she has vouched for its effective use in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder^[5] and chronic pain.

Drugs and rude behavior are not tolerated at Krave, nor are minors. "We don't sell to people under 18, not because we can't, but because parents should still be responsible for them at that age," Elizabeth assured me. "Besides, kids don't like kratom because it tastes awful."

Elizabeth is unashamed that her kratom tea tastes like dirt. Customers here drink it for the effect, not for the flavor. She serves it the authentic way people in southeast Asia have been making it for centuries. Others prefer to get the powdered kind and mix it with something more palatable like chocolate coconut milk. I fall into the latter camp.

Taking the War on Drugs to the White House

On Sept. 13, 2016, an advocacy group called the American Kratom Association invited kratom supporters to march on Washington, D.C. I joined a group of about 500 people on Pennsylvania Avenue, and many of the signs I saw waving in front of



Demonstrators picket the White House

the White House expressed similar sentiments: "Kratom Saves Lives."

[5] "PTSD and Kratom" The Kratom Project, 16 August 2016. KratomProject.org



Monument to the shoe. Tikrit, Iraq

a few months ago. "I've seen a man with rheumatoid arthritis drive a motorcycle after drinking kratom," Robert claimed. "I've heard from people who had nightly migraines for years say that kratom allowed them to finally get a good night's rest. I've had customers come in after having their wisdom teeth extracted and leave with a smile. I saw a patient with chronic knee-pain walk for an hour after having a cup." He also knows someone who bought kratom for her teenage son to treat pain after a testicular operation.

In addition to being an opioid agonist, kratom serves another common function of opioids: pain relief. Many of Robert's customers have traded their opioid pain-killers for kratom because it is less addictive and doesn't carry the same side effects as many prescription drugs.

Robert isn't too concerned about the financial impact the kratom ban will have on his business, but he is very worried about his customers. "A lot of young people will be vulnerable to other drugs, and older patients will fall back on opioid pills," he said. "Opioids are expensive, addictive and they make you sick. Kratom does good."

The Culture of Kratom

While many people take kratom for its medicinal properties, there are also plenty of recreational users. In Carrboro, most of them hang out at Krave. Krave looks like a traditional bar, but instead of beer and liquor, they sell teas made from psychoactive plants such as kratom, kava and yerba mate. They have a selection of board games, complimentary Wi-Fi and relaxing music that is conducive to conversation and artistic endeavors like writing or drawing.

Elizabeth Gardner, a former family lawyer who owns Krave, has spent thousands of her own dollars fighting to keep kratom legal as states have tried to ban it. Krave and many other "kava bars" that are popping up around the U.S. were inspired by The Purple Lotus^[4], a chain in Florida, which is where Elizabeth learned about kratom. "While living in Florida, I buried a lot of friends and clients, and I didn't want to go to a bar," she recalled. So she found an alternative place that offered all of the positive aspects of bar culture, such as getting to

The War on Drugs Continues: The Case for Kratom by Robert Wells

What is kratom?

Just a few weeks after digging their heels into the ground on marijuana criminalization, the DEA claimed another casualty in their never ending War on Drugs. The latest victims are the thousands of Americans who use kratom to treat chronic pain and opioid addiction.

Is kratom a trendy new way to get high, a public health crisis or a life-saving medication? It depends on who you ask. A botanist would tell you that kratom is *M. speciosa*, a relative of coffee that has grown in southeast Asian for millennia. The people who have been making tea out of it for generations would tell you that it promotes happiness by soothing pain and anxiety. Many former heroin addicts would claim that kratom mitigates the harsh withdrawal effects of opioids. Thousands of senior citizens would say it's a better alternative to prescription opioids for treating chronic conditions like arthritis. Recreational users like myself will tell you that drinking kratom tea is like downing a very stiff cup of coffee minus the dreaded caffeine crash.

Unfortunately, the DEA sees kratom as a potential threat to public health, which is why they issued an unprecedented emergency drug scheduling^[1]. As of September 30, 2016, kratom will be in the same legal category as heroin, LSD and marijuana. While the agency claims the ban is temporary pending research, classifying kratom as a schedule I drug makes it difficult to study.^[2] Even worse, the agency has foregone the legally required public comment period that should typically occur before such a decision becomes official. Therefore, I took initiative to ask the public what they think about the kratom ban.

Can Kratom Cure Heroin Withdrawal?

Chase was introduced to me as someone whose life had been saved by kratom. I met him at a local cafe in North Carolina where he is a regular customer. On a busy Memorial Day weekend, we were surrounded by families with small children enjoying cookies, pastries, teas, coffee and kratom. Chase started doing heroin when he was 18 years old. Heroin is highly addictive not only due to the euphoria it induces, but its withdrawal effects leave users feeling sick for weeks after the high wears off, which compels them to use more. He had recently heard about kratom's ability to prevent heroin withdrawal from a friend, and after doing some research, he decided

[1] "What The DEA's Plan To Schedule 1 Kratom Will Mean For Millions." David Disalvo, Forbes. 13 September 2016.

[2] "DEA ban puts damper on research into kratom's painkilling effects: Schedule I listing may stall testing of plant's natural compounds and derivatives" David Kroll, Chemical & Engineering News. 8 September 2016; Volume 94, Issue 36. p. 5



A banner in opposition to the DEA ruling hangs on the chainlink fence outside the Carrboro Commune.

[4] PurpleLotusKavaBar.com

to give it a try. Now in his early thirties, Chase told me he was 67 days "clean" at the time I interviewed him.

"With kratom, I'm a more productive member of society," he claimed. Chase said he wouldn't have talked to me a month earlier because of his crippling anxiety. Getting relief from heroin withdrawal has allowed him to tackle his long-term struggles with depression and addiction. Chase now holds a steady job, and he attributes his recent stability to a daily \$5 cup of kratom tea.

Like many heroin users, Chase's opioid addiction began with a prescription for pain pills. Over 2 million Americans^[3] abuse legal opioids such as Oxycontin and Vicodin. Because heroin is cheaper than these drugs without a prescription, addicts often turn to the streets.

Kratom is not an opioid, but it is an opioid agonist, which means it stimulates the same part of the brain that opium targets. Opioid agonists such as methadone and Suboxone are commonly used to treat heroin withdrawal, but both of those substances are addictive and have their own withdrawal symptoms. Kratom is a much milder substance, which is why some addicts prefer it.

Kratom also isn't like Spice, K2, bath salts or any of the other new synthetic drugs you've heard about making people collapse in the streets and bite each other's faces off. Kratom has been consumed by humans for literally thousands of years, but the plant has only become popular in North America over the past couple of decades.

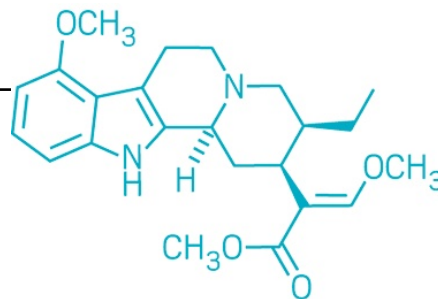
"I've never seen anyone fucked up on kratom," Chase assured me. "No one is going to take kratom and want to shoot dope. It depends on your mindset. If you're immature, you can abuse it." I personally drink one cup of kratom tea once per week, and I find the "high" it induces to be comparable to very strong coffee.

Chase doesn't plan on drinking kratom forever. "It's a way to detox, get my head right and get off of everything," he said. Chase also tried methadone and Suboxone, but the withdrawal effects of those drugs were just as bad as heroin. He recalls veering off of the road one day while driving to a methadone dispensary to get his daily fix. However, since he started drinking kratom, he's had days without it and has experienced no symptoms beyond mild anxiety.

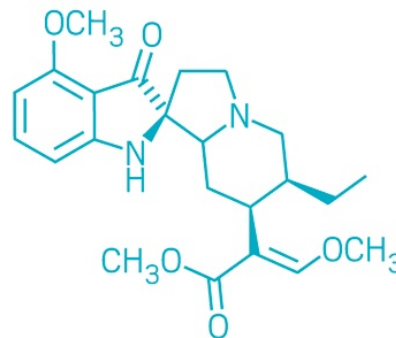
I was very annoyed when I found out about the impending kratom ban, but the situation for people like Chase is far grimmer. "The former drug users who come here will go back to the streets," he lamented. "Without kratom, I don't know if I'll be dead, but I'll probably be back on drugs."

Can Kratom Kill the Pain?

I spoke with the cafe owner, a man named Robert, and he has seen a tremendous boom in his business since he started selling kratom



(-)-Mitragynine

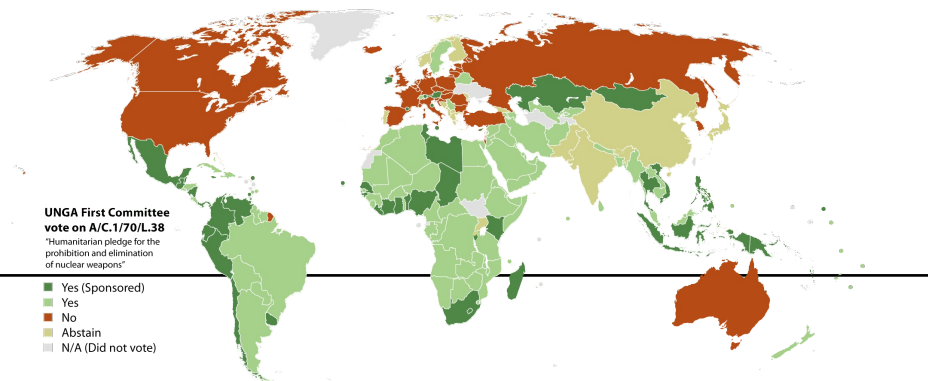


Mitragynine pseudoindoxyl

^^ Molecule of the Month:
Mitragynine, an active ingredient in kratom, and a synthetic derivative

>> An account from Harvard Law Professor Roger Fisher

vv On 27 Oct 2016, United Nations member states voted 123 in favor to 38 opposed to begin negotiating a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. The ban was opposed by the United States, Russia, Israel, and the United Kingdom; its supporters included the world's poorest countries.



about nuclear war. There is a young man, probably a Navy officer, who accompanies the President. This young man has a black attache case which contains the codes that are needed to fire nuclear weapons. I could see the President at a staff meeting considering nuclear war as an abstract question. He might conclude: "On SIOP Plan One, the decision is affirmative. Communicate the Alpha line XYZ." Such jargon holds what is involved at a distance.

My suggestion was quite simple: Put that needed code number in a little capsule, and then implant that capsule right next to the heart of a volunteer. The volunteer would carry with him a big, heavy butcher knife as he accompanied the President. If ever the President wanted to fire nuclear weapons, the only way he could do so would be for him first, with his own hands, to kill one human being. The President says, "George, I'm sorry but tens of millions must die." He has to look at someone and realize what death is—what an innocent death is. Blood on the White House carpet. It's reality brought home.

When I suggested this to friends in the Pentagon they said, "My God, that's terrible. Having to kill someone would distort the President's judgment. He might never push the button."

[3] "America's Addiction to Opioids: Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse" Nora D. Volkow, M.D. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control May 14, 2014. DrugAbuse.gov