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Papa LSD makes the trip to 100

By [Ashlee Vance in Mountain View](#)

Published Wednesday 11th January 2006 18:57 GMT

Heroic comedian Bill Hicks once called for the news media to run a positive story on LSD consumption - a "Boy sees God and humanity's inner-beauty" piece meant to counter the "Boy jumps out of window and splatters" tales. We can come pretty close to achieving this goal by reporting that Albert Hofmann - the discoverer of LSD - has turned 100 today.

Far from having some grotesque tumor or a melting brain, Hofmann continues to plod along in smashing style. In fact, he's the celebrity guest at a LSD symposium being held this week in Basel and will give a talk. The conference was set up to match Hofmann's 100th birthday.

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Hofmann's early research into lysergic acid led to the discovery of LSD-25 in 1938. It would, however, take another five years before Hoffman set out on the first voluntary LSD trip. At the fabled 4:20 pm, Hofmann put down a whopping 250 microgram dose of Lysergic acid diethylamide, started feeling a bit funky and set out for a bike ride - likely the most fantastic and odd ride anyone had yet to experience.

For quite some time, LSD was used as a scientific tool and thought to have particularly strong benefits in psychology.

As we all know though, the damn hippies got their hands on the acid and shocked the Normals with their "turn on, tune in" culture. It didn't take too long before the "Boy jumps out of window and splatters" stories started to outclass the feeling that LSD would deliver a higher consciousness to humankind or perhaps open a portal to aliens.

Hofmann continues to call for LSD to be embraced by scientists once again as a possible tool for helping with psychological problems.

Happy birthday, Albert. Our third eye thanks you. ®

Bootnote

It's surely no coincidence that Zane Kesey - the son of author Ken Kesey - has released word today of his intentions to restore "Furthur" - the Merry Pranksters' faithful bus. The elder Kesey and a crew that included Neal Cassady traveled around the US in the 1960s, draining LSD-spiked orange juice as "Furthur" hurtled along the highways.

Kesey, of course, volunteered to take part in a 1959 LSD study at Stanford University. The lab rats were given acid and then observed in a painfully clinical setting. This experience provided some of the inspiration for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and we're all the better for it.

There's a well-timed story in *The Guardian* on LSD's artistic links [as well](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1683655,00.html) (http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1683655,00.html).

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