



## NEWS FEED

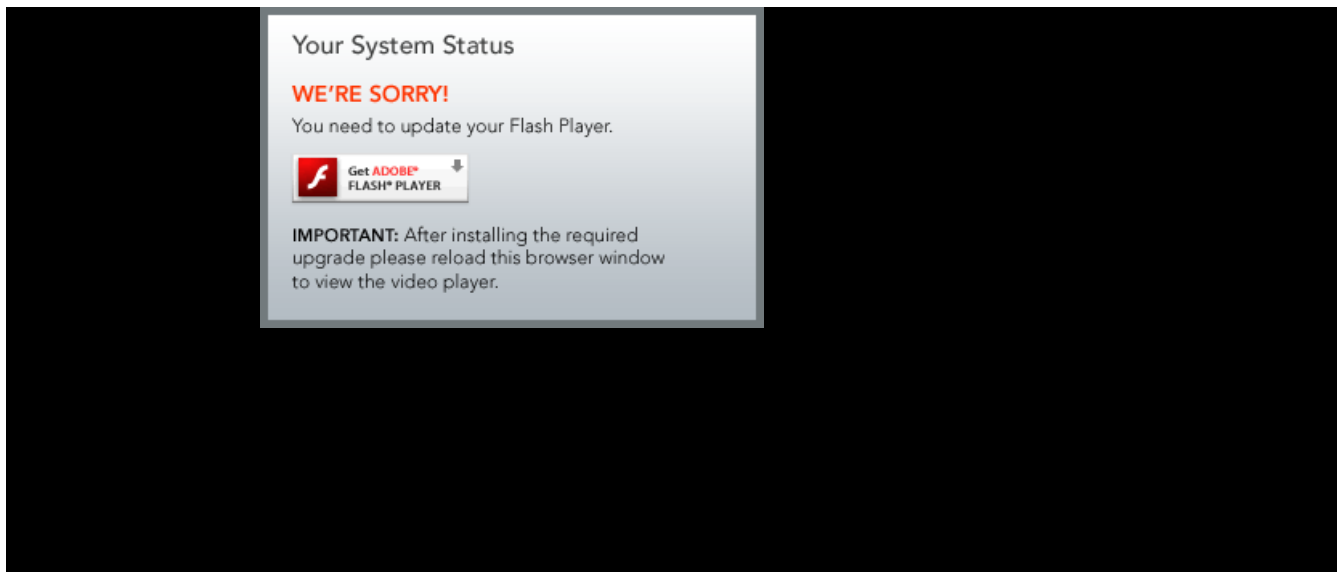
## Here's the Real Reason We Associate 420 With Weed

Olivia B. Waxman @OBWax

SHARE

April 19, 2016

## It was a joint effort



Both marijuana smokers and non-smokers recognize April 20 or 4/20 as a national holiday for cannabis culture, but few actually know how the date got chosen.

Some say “420” is code among police officers for “[marijuana smoking in progress](#).” Some note 4/20 is also Adolf Hitler’s birthday. And some go as far as to cite Bob Dylan’s song “Rainy Day Women #12 & 35” because [12 multiplied by 35 equals 420](#).

But, to put it bluntly, those rumors are false.

The most credible story traces the date to Marin County, Calif. In 1971, five students at San Rafael High School would [reportedly meet](#) at 4:20 p.m. by the campus’s statue of chemist Louis Pasteur to partake. Two of these students, David Reddix and Steve Capper, wrote an article for [The Huffington Post](#) about how this group—known as [the “Waldos”](#) because they met at a wall—would say “420” to each other as code for marijuana.

A brother of a group member apparently knew Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh, so the band is said to have helped popularize the term. On Dec. 28, 1990, Deadheads in Oakland handed out flyers reportedly inviting people to smoke “420” on April 20 at 4:20 p.m.—and one got in the hands of Steve Bloom, a former reporter for [High Times magazine](#), an authority on cannabis culture.

Once the publication published the flyer in 1991 and continued to reference the number, it became known globally for its association with marijuana. In 1998, the outlet recognized the “Waldos” as the “[inventors](#)” of 420 after they came forward.

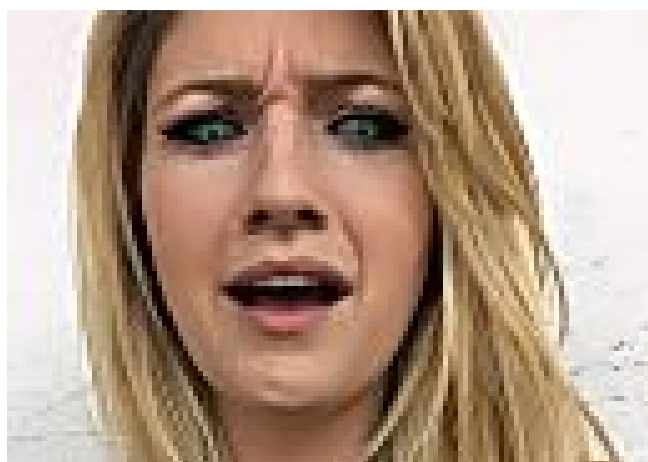
Bloom, now the publisher of Celebstoner.com, has credited the people who wrote the flyer for the date’s reputation as an annual gathering of pot smokers. “They wanted people all over the world to get together on one day each year and collectively smoke pot at the same time,” [he wrote last year](#). “They birthed the idea of a stoner holiday, which April 20 has become.”

## AROUND THE WEB

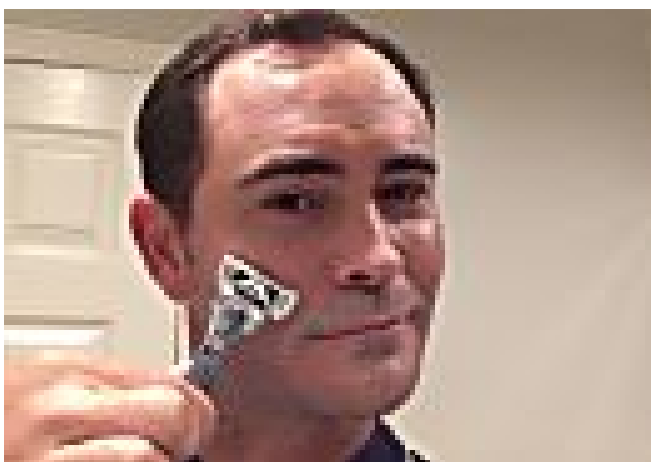
Sponsored Links by 



**Downsizing? Ditch These 12 Items**  
AARP



**Type in your name or anyone's, this site is addicting**  
Instant Checkmate



**Three Months of Dollar Shave Club and Here's What I Think**  
Dollar Shave Club



**This Meal Kit Delivery Company is Changing the Way People...**  
HelloFresh



## READ NEXT

If George R.R. Martin and J.R.R. Tolkien Had an Epic Rap Battle It Would Look Like This [>](#)

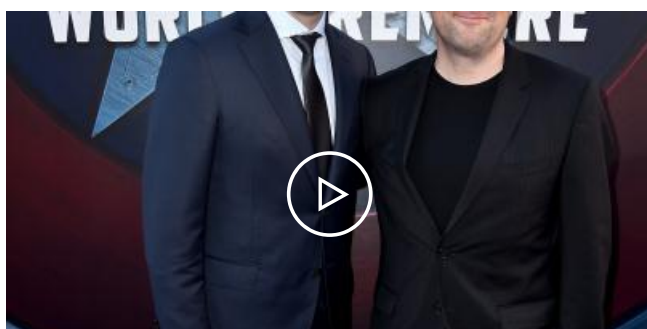
## MOST POPULAR STORIES

1. Patton Oswalt Remembers His Wife, Michelle McNamara: 'She Steered Her Life With Joyous, Wicked Curiosity'
2. The 50 Most Influential Gadgets of All Time
3. Review: *Captain America: Civil War* Is Blessedly Light on Its Feet
4. Here's the Full Transcript of President Obama's Speech at the White House Correspondents' Dinner
5. Watch President Obama's Full Routine at the White House Correspondents' Dinner

## TRENDING NOW



Dwayne Wade Cried After Finding Out He Was Prince's Favorite Basketball Player





## Captain America: Civil War Writers on How They Crafted a Whole New Spider-Man

### MORE FROM TIME

Sponsored Links by 



Porn and the Threat to Virility



The Last Nude Issue of Playboy Comes Out Today

© 2016 Time Inc. All rights reserved.  
Powered by WordPress.com VIP