

APRIL 2010

# CULTURE

SO CAL'S MEDICAL MARIJUANA MAGAZINE  
FREE

## JULIAN MARLEY

A Q&A WITH THE GIFTED  
SON OF A CULTURAL ICON



## 420 AROUND THE WORLD

FIND OUT HOW THE PLANET IS  
LIGHTING UP APRIL 20

## THC EXPOSE'D

L.A.'S FIRST 'GREEN' GATHERING IS  
BACK WITH A VENGEANCE!

## 24-HOUR 420 DAY GUIDE

IT COMES ONCE A YEAR, SO DON'T  
MISS A MINUTE OF IT



NEWS NUGGETS  
STRAIN & EDIBLE REVIEWS  
RECIPES  
COOL PRODUCTS  
ENTERTAINMENT REVIEWS

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# SEARCHING FOR THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF 420 DAY

**F**iguring out the origin of a fairly recent annual observance should be an easy thing to do, right? After all, it's not like we're talking about Valentine's Day, of which all the original participants have been dead for 17 centuries. Surely, all one has to do to find out how it all began would be to run a few Google searches and make a couple of phone calls. Right?

But what if the observance in question was originally *designed* to be hard to pin down? Such is the case with 420 Day, when every year on April 20, tens of thousands of cannabis fans around the world turn out to celebrate their love of the leaf. How do you track down the beginnings of a holiday whose very name was a code created to keep the observance on the down-low?

Not easily, I'm here to tell you. Perhaps this is why 420 Day has over the years gathered more confusing legends about "how it all started" and "what it all means" than the symbols on the dollar bill. Some of these legends—myths, really—are perfectly understandable, while others are just plain bizarre. Here's a few of these tall tales:

*The first 420 Day participants chose the name because "420" was police radio code for suspects smoking pot.* Truth: Uh, no, actually—unless the smokers happened to be juveniles lighting up while creating a public disturbance in San Francisco. The San Francisco PD appears to be the only California police agency to use "420" as a radio code, and it isn't for smoking pot.

*April 20—or 4/20—is the best day of the year to plant cannabis.* Truth: As much as this might seem to make sense, it makes sense only if you live in a region where April 20 provides the best window for sunlight and the absence of frost. In other words, it's just not true—and a good thing, too, or we'd run out of pot faster than you can say, "It's just not true."



*There are 420 distinct chemical compounds in cannabis.* Truth: Well, there aren't, actually—cannabis contains some 315 distinct compounds—but nice try.

*Jimi Hendrix died on April 20.* Truth: No, he did not. He died on Sept. 18, 1970. But there's no reason why you shouldn't light up on 918 Day.

The legends and myths go on and on, involving everyone from J. Edgar Hoover to Abbie Hoffman and everything from tea-time in Holland to "4 and 20 blackbirds."

So what is the truth? The most credible origin story, one confirmed by *The Huffington Post* last year (to the extent that writer Ryan Grim managed to reach

several of the original participants, who confirmed it), involves a group of San Rafael High School students who, in 1971, heard a story of an abandoned plot of marijuana plants near the Point Reyes Peninsula Coast Guard station. The students—who called themselves the Waldos because they hung out by a wall near their school—would meet at 4:20 p.m. each day to go in search of the stash. They never did find it, but eventually the phrase, "420," became their code that it was time to take a smoke break.

As it happened, the Waldos had a lot of contact with fans of the Grateful Dead—one of their fathers managed a Dead side band. So the term "420" spread. And spread. Today, 420 Day or some iteration thereof is celebrated every year across the planet.

But whether this particular origin tale is true is really beside the point. The real point of the Tale of the San Rafael Waldos—beside it being a really cool story—is the message it contains, which is this: *Never forget that a small band of dedicated pot smokers can change the world.*

*By David Burton*

David Burton  
Editor-In-Chief, CULTURE

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SO CAL'S MEDICAL MARIJUANA LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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David Burton

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

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Brooke Ellis, Hans Fink,  
Roberto C. Hernandez, Anna  
Lambias, James Lang, Khai Le,  
Bruce Margolin, Lanny Swerdlow,  
Dr. Who

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Vidal Diaz

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ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Candice Reel-Landa,  
Michael Levitt, Dave Ruiz

## BUSINESS

PUBLISHER

Jeremy Zachary

southland  
publishing

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2175 Sampson Ave. | Suite 118  
Corona | California | 92879  
Phone 888.694.2046 | Fax 951.284.2596  
www.freeculturemag.com