

DID SOMEONE SAY PEANUT BUTTER BREATH? P. 32

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ISSUE 014

# beer & weed.

A MAGAZINE WITH REFINED TASTE / MAINE

04  
22

A SPECIAL

4/20

APRIL ISSUE

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

A HERO EMERGES FOR OUR TIMES

**+GAME OF STRAINS**

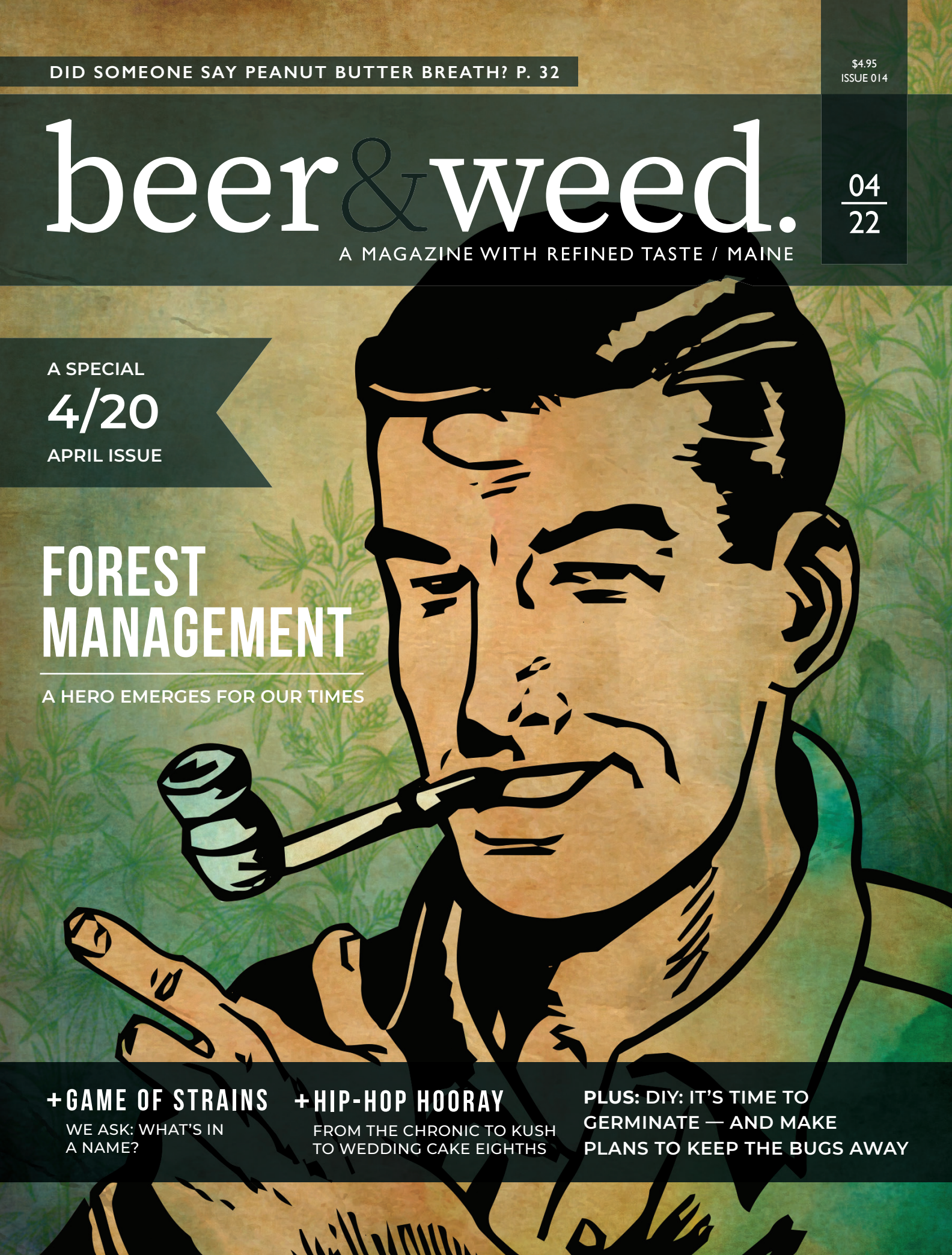
WE ASK: WHAT'S IN  
A NAME?

**+HIP-HOP HOORAY**

FROM THE CHRONIC TO KUSH  
TO WEDDING CAKE EIGHTHS

**PLUS: DIY: IT'S TIME TO  
GERMINATE — AND MAKE**

**PLANS TO KEEP THE BUGS AWAY**





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# WHAT'S CHANGED: ONE YEAR LATER



IN APRIL 2021, WE WONDERED ON THE COVER OF THIS PUBLICATION WHETHER PORTLAND WOULD SOON FIND ITSELF "CANNABIS CITY, USA." ONE YEAR LATER, WHAT'S MAYBE MOST REMARKABLE IS HOW QUICKLY AND EASILY RECREATIONAL CANNABIS HAS INTEGRATED ITSELF INTO THE CITY'S — AND THE STATE'S — REGULAR OPERATING RHYTHM.

Despite literally dozens of recreational storefronts opening in Portland, with all manner of stylistic approaches and business plans, there has been almost zero negative backlash. No stories about high school kids being too stoned to study. Nothing about neighborhoods descending into weed havens. Maybe the worst I've seen is a letter to the editor complaining about having to smell marijuana simply too often while walking the city's streets.

As for the larger State, one story that made the rounds in February noted that the small town of Grand Isle, population of about 500, has only three retail establishments left on Main Street — and all of them sell weed. Clearly, the point was to demonstrate that the once-prosperous Main Streets of Maine have been decimated by any number of factors, from the dissolution of the lumber and shoe industries to the Information Economy's push for people to move to urban areas. But I hope people did note that these weed shops actually were open and actually were providing jobs for the people who owned and operated them.

Of the regular alternatives — fireworks stores, gas stations living on coffee and Lotto tickets, and bars — it's hard to say medical marijuana storefronts aren't a step up.

As for the cannabis culture that we predicted may develop, though, it's hard to say we've seen much evidence yet. Perhaps it's the pandemic's lingering effect, which has largely put a damper on gatherings, or maybe it's the simple fact that no one can host an event with on-premise consumption of cannabis, but cannabis hasn't yet been particularly visible in mainstream culture.

Maybe the best example was the Ruckus Cup at Aura, sponsored by a number of cannabis companies and hosted by Felecia Cruz and Ill by Instinct. It's probably no surprise, given the feature on page TK we've put together for this month with great rap and hip-hop songs

about weed, that the Battle Rap community is one of the first to embrace and be embraced by Maine's cannabis industry.

We here at Beer & Weed admittedly still see a fair amount of cannabis prejudice. There are breweries who don't carry the magazine because they don't like the association with cannabis (others don't carry it because they see cannabis shops as competing for your intoxication dollars). Legislators still haven't passed a bill to expunge the records of those in Maine convicted of cannabis possession crimes. A huge portion of Maine communities still haven't opted in to allowing cannabis storefronts (and others don't know what they've opted into; see the story on Caribou in "This Just In").

A news reporter covering our magazine asked if people giggle when we say we're writing a story about a cannabis-related topic. We found that a bit bizarre. Cannabis is the largest cash crop in Maine. Do people giggle when there are endless stories about blueberries or potatoes or the grains that go into beer? Of course not.

But I do also think that, for many, the rapid rise of cannabis storefronts hasn't changed much because cannabis was already such an integral part of our culture here in Maine. Like any number of other things we like to keep close to the vest — that we care deeply about our neighbors, that the cold actually sucks, that no one really likes the taste of Moxie — we've mostly consumed cannabis with family and friends without talking about it a whole lot.

“ We've mostly consumed cannabis with family and friends without talking about it a whole lot.

I know I was neighbors with a dude I hung out with all the time for about five years before I realized he was a stoner too. Not sure what took so long there.

To me, that seems like the best argument for cannabis I can think of: It was already part of our culture; we just needed to allow ourselves to admit it. Not sure what took so long there, either.

 WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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# CZECH OUT SACRED PROFANE

People tired of the IPA rush will be pleased to discover the new Sacred Profane when it opens in Biddeford this summer. Calling itself a “tankpub,” it’s styled after the pubs in Prague, where you’ll find tons of pilsners and few other styles. Brienne Allan, who’ll be head brewer (she was at Notch and is the brains behind the Brave Noise phenomenon), has plans to be lager-exclusive.

Alongside her will be Michael Fava, who headed up brew operations at Oxbow, and Carson James and Erin Sheehan, who co-founded Lorne Wine, a Biddeford bar and retail operation looking to “make wine fun.”

Look for food options like smoked oysters, pickled curds, ham plates, and other flavorful items inspired by Eastern European holes in the wall.

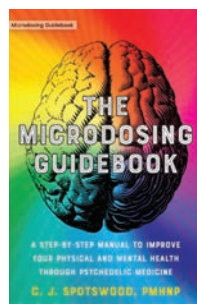
THIS JUST IN / WORDS / SAM PFEIFLE

## MAINER WRITES THE BOOK ON MICRODOSING

As you may have seen, a proposed law that would have made the use of psilocybin, the active ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms, medically legal in similar fashion to medical cannabis never made it out of committee this legislative session. It never even got a full vote in the Maine Legislature. But all hope is not lost.

One of the proponents of the Maine Psilocybin Services Act (which was introduced by Sen. Donna Bailey) has written The Microdosing Guidebook, which can serve as an entrypoint to the medical use of the drug, published by Ulysses Press in March. Going beyond mushrooms to LSD, ecstasy, and other psychedelics, the book is an instruction manual of sorts for taking between a tenth and a twentieth of a normal dose on a regular basis so as to “improve performance, stave off chronic pain, and alleviate a variety of other ailments like anxiety and depression.”

CJ Spotswood, the author, is a nurse practitioner and educator living in Maine, having moved here from New York. He specializes in psychiatric mental health, with 20 years of psychiatric nursing experience, and is a charter member of the International Association of Psychedelic Nurses (it’s a thing!) and a member of the Psychedelic Medicine Association, as well as being a member of the more traditional Psychiatric Nurse Association. His book not only collects contemporary research on the use of psychedelics, but also looks at the history of its clinical application, offers help on finding the right dose for you, and has various checklists and charts that help you track your experience and improve your outcomes.



Where are you supposed to find the psilocybin, LSD, or ecstasy? For that, the book probably won’t be much help.

**The Microdosing Guidebook**  
By CJ Spotswood  
Published by Ulysses Press



# CARIBOU CONFUSED ABOUT CANNABIS

In a February meeting of its Planning Board, Caribou decided it would not allow a new medical retail cannabis operation to open in the building of an old Pizza Hut. The Planning Board wasn’t sure if such an operation was legal in their town, so asked the code enforcement officer to look into it.

He did, and came to the conclusion, after reviewing town ordinance, that since only

the establishment of a “Registered Nonprofit Dispensary or Registered Cultivation Facility” is legal, then the proposed retail storefront application should not be allowed.

However, Safe Alternatives and Richardson Remedies both currently operate what most people would consider retail operations in Caribou. The code enforcement officer told the board that they were allowed because

“unlike retail stores, dispensaries specifically cater to medical patients, who must receive a medical marijuana card from their doctor before purchasing products.” Huh?

It seems the planning board and code enforcement officer were using “retail” and “recreational use” interchangeably. We hope for the Pizza Hut applicant’s sake they sorted things at their March meeting.

## DISTRIBUTION DISCOVERIES

EACH MONTH, OUR INTREPID DIRECTOR OF DISTRIBUTION, MARK SAYER, MAKES THE ROUNDS OF THE 150+ BREWERIES AND DISPENSARIES THAT MAKE UP OUR DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS. INEVITABLY, HE PARTAKES IN A VARIETY OF NEW PRODUCTS. BECAUSE WHY NOT? FEEL FREE TO OFFER SOMETHING UP FOR A TASTE TEST!



**THIS MONTH HE REVIEWS GOGI PUPIL FLOWER FROM CALICO CANNABIS, IN SCARBOROUGH:**

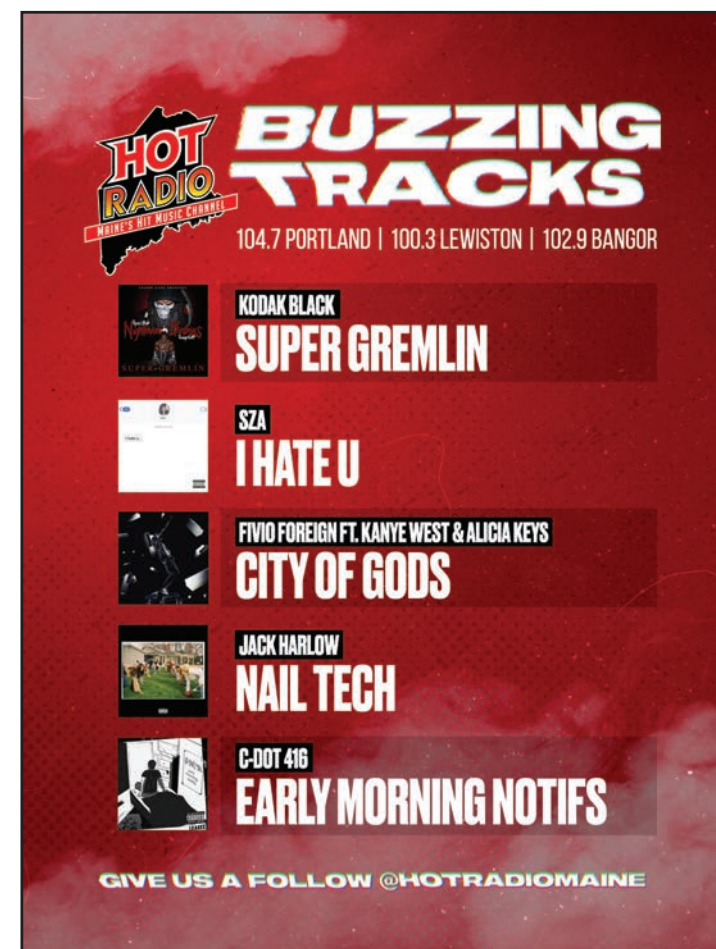
It’s likely by the time you’re reading this the weather is nice. Yet, at the time of this writing, it’s late February, 63-degrees out, and feels like summer. I know it’s only a brief respite from the doldrums of winter (true enough, we got walloped with another foot of snow two days later), but I’ll take it. What’s one to do with such nice weather? Head to the beach, of course!

That single thought in mind, I headed down to the marshes of Scarborough to Calico Cannabis. Tucked in an industrial area off Snow Canning Road (where you’ll also find Shannon’s Best Buds right next door), you’ll discover Craig and crew holding down the fort and producing some awesome product!

With my affinity for all strains purple, I immediately gravitated toward the Gogi Pupil, looking much darker in its jar next to its brethren in the display case. A sativa-dominant cross of Gogi OG and Star Pupil, it’s a magnificent looking weed with a really fruity taste and a high THC level (up to 31%, it’s claimed), perfect for any situation.

Remembering from my last visit, I also opted for some of their Sour Grape Widow, a hybrid cross between Sour Grape Kush (Sour Kush and Grapefruit) and White Widow that smells absolutely fantastic and has a great peppy, energetic high.

For my immediate beach-going needs, though, I chose a fat preroll of Hazy Margarita, another sativa-leaning strain perfect for a quick pop down to the water. It didn’t disappoint. I sat on the beach, the warm sun beating on my face and melting away all my stresses, enjoying the calm washing over me, as I watched the waves crash on the shore. A perfect afternoon.



## WHEN BREWERIES COLLABORATE

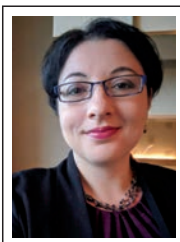
Be on the lookout for Collaboration IPA V2, the second annual effort from the Maine Brewers’ Guild, whereby any brewer who wants to participate releases a beer brewed from a collective recipe and donates proceeds to the Guild. Last year, the effort raised \$27k; this year they’re hoping the 52 participating breweries raise more than \$30k.

And they got some help. Crosby Hop Farms of Oregon and Yakima Chief Hops of Washington teamed with the Maine-based Blue Ox Malthouse and Maine Malt House to donate the hops and malts required in the recipe, with Amherst Label in New Hampshire pitching in with low-cost labels.

Each brewery is encouraged to add their own spice to the mix, so feel free to sample a few options and pick your favorite.



# WHAT'S THE FUTURE HOLD FOR SUMMER BEER FESTIVALS?



IN MY INBOX THIS MORNING WERE TWO SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED EMAILS, BOTH ANNOUNCING THE RETURN OF BEER FESTIVALS THIS SPRING AND SUMMER. AS I READ THROUGH THE DETAILS, IT STRUCK ME HOW LONG IT HAD REALLY BEEN SINCE I'VE ATTENDED ONE. THE PANDEMIC, IN ALL OF ITS CROWD-DISPERSING GLORY, MADE THE IDEA OF A BEER FESTIVAL JUST FALL OFF THE TABLE COMPLETELY. BUT, LIKE EVERYWHERE ELSE, IN-PERSON EVENTS ARE CREEPING BACK INTO THE BEER INDUSTRY.

I have mixed feelings about the utility of beer festivals. The concept is straightforward — a single event/location where small samples from many breweries are available for tasting, in a social setting. For brewers, it can be a marketing opportunity. Brand recognition and establishment of an identity is still important in craft beer, especially if a craft brewer is from a more-remote geographic location or is newer to the beer scene. Craft brewers largely don't use mainstream advertising (usually because they don't have the kind of cash flow that would allow for it), so it can be a way to get in front of customers for a relatively low cost compared to other means.

Like anything else that started off out of love and passion for the industry, however, beer festivals have not been immune to being ruined by organizers chasing profits. While I loved the first few I attended — they were where I got introduced to breweries with wide-eyed wonder — over the years the tone of these events has seemed to shift, and not for the better.

For every positive memory — like sipping a crystal-clear pilsner on the jetty of the Spring Point lighthouse during Pils & Love, or watching the most gorgeous sunset from Maine Brewers Guild Festival at Thompson's point — there are memories of seeing people passed out on the sidewalk outside of the Portland Expo and overflowing portable toilets at the Seaport Trade Center in Boston.

It started to feel like every summer weekend held a beer fest somewhere, and many were oversold, overcrowded, and understaffed. For some events, it seemed that the organizers' only goal was to come as close to violating occupancy limits as possible, while also doing nothing to ensure that participants were protected from overserving or belligerent participants, or helping brewers have a positive experience.

So why, then, bring the beer festival back at all?

Brewers still need opportunities to get in front of new customers, and the usual avenues for customer-brewer interactions have been squeezed through pandemic restrictions. The sheer number of breweries in Maine means it is unlikely that consumers have been exposed to a good chunk of these breweries, and a one-stop-shop approach to trying them still has a strong appeal. The other reasons are more social. Beer festivals can be a great way to celebrate and explore local beer, network with and meet fellow enthusiasts, visit unique locations, and just have a good time with friends.

But, perhaps some self-reflection needs to come first. In a way, the recent "pause" in event production is an opportunity for fest organizers to look back on the experiences for brewers, volunteers, and attendees alike, when compared to their bottom line. There is a balance between creating a positive experience and getting as much profit from an event as possible, and the wrong side of the line can leave participants or brewers reluctant to return to another poorly-run event.

Thankfully, one of the festivals that's announced their return has this already figured out. Baxter Brewing company, the organizers of Great Falls Brewfest, has announced the fest will return to Lewiston on June 25. In this festival's inaugural year in 2014, I was struck by decisions that seem so simple, but are fundamental to a safe and enjoyable attendee-centered event. Held in a large, outdoor park, the site organization — with beer and other activities separated by a nice lawn — encouraged people to take breaks from the drinking to hang out, listen to some music, toss a frisbee, or play some cornhole. A roundup of food trucks (a decent walk from the beer tent) provided actual food opportunities and a built-in break, and there was free water at stations throughout the entire venue.

Not everything has to be a profit-making machine, and by limiting the amount of breweries and selecting a sane amount of tickets to go up for sale, Great Falls should be looked at as an example for other fests to follow. If the other fests that come back can hit that sweet spot, then we should heartily welcome them back into Maine's summer event calendars.



WORDS / BEER BABE  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



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# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHY STRAINS ARE CALLED WHAT THEY'RE CALLED  
(INCLUDING 'CAT PISS COOKIES')

Names are curious things — sometimes they tell you a whole lot about someone or something, and other times, they create obscurity, cultivating intrigue and mystique.

Take my name for instance. Chances are you'd mispronounce at least one of the three probably unfamiliar names in my byline. As a kid in school, I quickly got used to keeping my ears perked for a pause after an "O" or "P" name. I'd see the baffled look on the teacher's face, the mouth fixing to sound the letters out, and I'd swoop in and declare "Cyndle" (like "spindle" without the "p"; not "kindle") before they had the chance to butcher it or somehow turn it into Cindy or even Crystal, which incidentally just happened to me at the donut shop the morning of writing this article.

It can be a good thing, though: Usually after a couple times of me repeating it, my unusual name sticks. And it's kind of unforgettable.

If you're an avid imbibor of cannabis, I'm sure you've seen your fair share of weird, convoluted, and possibly even kinda gross strain names that are equally unforgettable. But where do these names come from? Some seem pretty obvious. Strawnana is pretty straightforward. Ditto Runtz. And even Cat Piss Cookies, as out there as that sounds, gives you a pretty good idea of what kind of flavor journey you'll be on when you take a puff. But for every Bubble Gum, there's a Swamp Slurricane.

What actually goes into naming a weed strain? The answer is multifaceted and pretty damn interesting.

There are lots of perspectives and roles that come into play when you're talking about naming weed strains, including those of breeders, seed companies, growers, brokers, marketing folks, and plenty others. After visiting a few different spots, you'll likely see some familiar names repeated on dispensary menus, strains that have remained popular for years, and their names are pretty much set in stone: Your Gorilla Glue, Girl Scout Cookies, Sour Diesel, OG Kush.

So where did all these new names come from?

Some of them come from people like Hughes Pope, co-founder and "Chief Greenthumb" at Sweet Dirt. He has the benevolent creator vibes of a cannabis Bob Ross — gentle, passionate, and completely at home among his happy little trees.

I met him in Sweet Dirt's greenhouse, where his MOFGA-certified plants grow in local, living soil under natural light. The greenhouse is his playground, where he does what's known as "pheno-hunting." A "phenotype" is an example of how a set of genetics (like a seed) responds to its environment and expresses itself (how big, smelly, terp-y, etc. it gets). So, to pheno-hunt is to look for the best expression of a seed or plant in the environment you're growing it in. Even a dozen clones from the same plant won't perform the

WORDS / CYNDLE PLAISTED-RIALS



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same in the same environment and you want to build on the best going forward.

Pope showed me a few different groups of as many as 24 plants of the same strain, out of which he'll choose the best possible plant to cross with the best-performing plant of another strain in order to create an exciting new strain that will be exclusive to Sweet Dirt. It's the possibility for variation within one strain that gets him especially excited, from the terpenes to the THC content to the way the plant looks, and more.

"That's one of the magical things about all this. Three of us could grow the same thing and have different results," he says. Even the soil can change things, and it gets pretty microscopic. "Compost people hate it when you call and ask, 'Is your soil bacterially dominated or fungally dominated?'" he laughs. But he means it – he cares about every little detail.

One of the strains you can get at Sweet Dirt is Phoenix, whose aromas they describe as "fruity grapes and alcohol smashed together with stale motor oil." The extra special thing about Phoenix is where the name comes from. Sweet Dirt suffered a devastating fire in June 2019. They pretty much had to start over from scratch. "I saved two seeds," Pope says. "And we lost all the other females and males." He planted those seeds, and from the ashes rose Phoenix.

Pope is excited by the diversity in his current projects, some of which are completely unique to Sweet Dirt, and, as his own creations, he'll most likely have the flexibility to name himself. Chances are, those names will follow their brand philosophy, which Sweet Dirt's director of marketing Paul Slater describes deftly: "Strains that have the best provenance, the clearest, cleanest, simplest way to describe where they came from, we want to bring that forward. Part of our naming conventions, if we have any, are that we don't want to conform to other naming conventions."

Pope brings his own perspective to naming, as someone who works with these plants day in and day out. "It's just so subjective. But it's fun to name things, too," he says. "I build a relationship with these plants ... like a boat, if you have it and you go out in it every day, you want to name it."

Just down the road from Sweet Dirt at East Coast Cannabis, co-founder and COO James Folan is excited about the opportunity to get in on naming, too. Over the next handful of months ECC will be expanding its grow fourfold, and they're looking to delve into the genetics side of things.

"My R&D background has me itching for that," Folan says, the light catching on his gleaming hazel eyes. "With the technology – terpene analysis and genetics testing – you can test for anything."

He believes the best names will come from a combination of two important factors: the information gleaned in that testing, like how so many of those fruity strains exploding on the market these days focus

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GARANIMAL #2



ALASKAN ORANGE

A woman with blonde hair and sunglasses is lying down on a green and yellow checkered blanket. She is holding a lit cannabis cigarette. Scattered around her are small white daisies and yellow flowers. A pack of 'HIGHNORTH MAINE CANNABIS' pre-rolled joints is visible. A constellation graphic with white dots and green lines is overlaid on the bottom half of the image. A QR code is also present.

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◀ FROM PAGE 12

on the flavors of terpenes to find a fitting name, and from East Coast Cannabis's identity. "Our whole ethos is outdoors. We want people to be active with cannabis. There are certainly strains that will make you wanna watch every single Star Wars and hang out all day. But you want Root Beer Float if you're gonna be floating down a river on a kayak."

His goal is for the names of the strains they eventually develop to carry more of a message and a feeling than just "Strain X crossed with Strain Y," though they will certainly provide customers with the lineage of the plant as well. "At the end of the day we want to be a professional company. Not to knock anyone else, but getting into those crazy names isn't really gonna be our thing. As far as naming goes, the appearance, the smell, smoke, the high, obviously that's a huge driving force. Maine is Vacationland. We want people to be able to have a strain from the East Coast where it's like, 'Go for a hike with this one,' or, 'Go out in your kayak with this one.'

That's where the consumer and their response to a name comes in. Sean Moriarty maintains a focus on that aspect in his capacity as Highbrow's director of business development. With their production focus, Highbrow has great relationships with local breeders and growers, and they're always interested in checking out the newest strains those folks have to offer.

"We have one strain that every single facet is a 10 — yield, bag appeal, effect, terpenes — Terpin Station. We're the only ones in Maine selling it. It's Original Glue crossed with Mandarin Sunset. [The breeder] probably just wanted to pay homage to the Dead and found a terp-y pheno. That's a huge success for us and we will never stop growing it. Most people get the reference, some people don't, but something about the name really piques their interest."

In fact there's a lot of fun to be had in taking the classic, familiar strains and exploring the possibilities of experimenting with genetics. That approach can allow a breeder to select for all the characteristics customers want, which, for the moment anyway, is pretty heavily focused on terpenes, so any reference to that aspect, like with Terpin Station, is sure to draw some attention. Moriarty is pretty animated talking about some of the other unique strains they have to offer at Highbrow. "Sour Strawberry Pie, when I tell you it tastes exactly like it sounds ... it's like being on your Grandma's back porch. Fruity, caramel, molasses, it hits you in the nose. You can't get away from it. That's one of those strains people see it, and they want it instantly. A huge portion of our clientele go for those sweet fruity terp-y strains. They gravitate to that."

So whether the name of a strain conveys a little taste of its complicated lineage, connects to a cultural touchstone, or conjures a memory, good weed is good weed no matter what you call it, right? Paul Slater summed it up perfectly, his bespectacled brown eyes locked on mine: "My firm belief is if the flower is good enough, and it is, the name is an opportunity to give a kind of emotive expression — but it really all comes back to what's in the bag."



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SWEET DIRT



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PRESERVING HISTORY

*So there are fun new strains popping up everywhere, and seemingly everyone wants to get in on developing exclusive strains you can't get anywhere else, but is there a downside to this focus on novelty?*

*Clint Gould, grower at The Frost Factory in Hallowell, thinks we need to be cautious about stampeding toward what's new if the side effect is going to be forgetting and possibly losing the classic strains that weed was built on. I knew basically nothing about growing weed when we started chatting, so in a voice that might remind one of a favorite Maine-bred uncle, he gave me a quick rundown of just how important the genetics are: "When you breed for seeds, you're not gonna come up with an exact replica of the plant. Unless you clone it you're just going to have something in that family."*

*In addition to that challenge, there's also the selective breeding that's been done along the way to decrease particular characteristics. It's hard to fathom as I drive down certain roads in Maine and smell nothing but weed, but the distinctive fragrance of weed was once undesirable. "Way back when, I'm talkin' before this legalization thing happened, smell was our enemy. Breeders were trying to breed the smell out of the plants because that was what got people busted. I haven't smelt true skunk bud in about 20 years," Gould laments. "You picked the plants that didn't smell, which nowadays seems crazy, but that's what we did back then, and nowadays I think we've lost a lot of those old genetics."*

*To do his part to preserve the genetics he can, Gould lovingly tends to a bank of plants for cloning. "One of our grow rooms is just for our mothers, back to the Super Silver Haze days, because I'm afraid if I just lose that — a lot of people think, 'If I just pop a seed..., ' but you're never gonna have the exact same plant."*

*At both East Coast Cannabis and Sweet Dirt, I saw a similar reverence for preserving the mother plants that are the backbone of each grow, so it seems safe to say that Maine has plenty of folks who remain stalwart stewards of weed's robust heritage.*

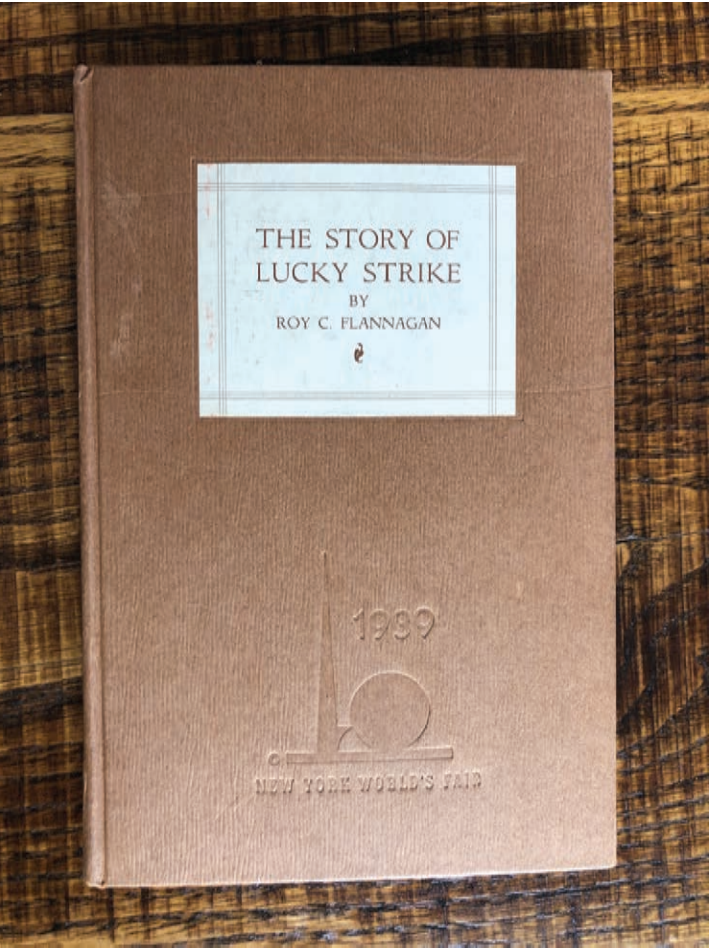
GENERATION GAP?

*Lots of dispensary menus these days are full of dessert-y sounding names, like Sour Strawberry Pie, Wedding Cake. Sounds yummy, right? Then, in almost direct contrast, you have strains like Blue Cheese, Meat Breath, and Cat Piss Cookies. Nasty! I was curious who's buying what, and I had a feeling that a lot of younger millennials and Gen-Zers were driving the terp-heavy market, based on what I've seen in the sour/smoothie beer market — the tie-in is that those fruity beers also contain terpenes.*

*At Highbrow, Sean Moriarty has seen the growing popularity and market demand for terpenes firsthand, and it's happening with other forms of cannabis and flower too. "There's a big market for hash rosin. There's a lot in the dynamic of who's buying what. Papaya Cake, Strawguava, Strawberry Melon, those are always the first to go [in hash rosin], because people want those terps." It's still kind of a mixed bag, however, because their flower strains that sell well include both fruity, terpy varieties, and garlic-y, savory ones. "When we get flower, the stuff that goes first is your Die Hard, Koffee Face, Terpin Station, your GMO. So it really depends on the clientele."*

*Speaking of different forms of weed and how they can appeal to the consumer, Paul Slater introduced a further dimension to the naming conversation when he mentioned the new edibles line at Sweet Dirt that will have launched by the time this issue goes to print. "We're giving ourselves more permission to talk about effect with these names. There's no science for the flower. You can't say [a strain of] weed helps you sleep, because you can't prove it." But for the things added to their gummies, like the melatonin in Crash Berry, the L-theanine in Lemon Lounger, and the green tea extract and B12 in Tangerine Tango, there are studies to back up these associations — there's compelling evidence that melatonin can help people sleep, L-theanine can promote calm, and green tea and B12 can stimulate energy.*

*As with so many other aspects of the cannabis industry in Maine, things are moving quickly, and who knows what other factors might eventually come into play in the name game and how future weed imbibers will shape the market? One thing we know is there will probably always be something new to try at your favorite dispensary.*



WHEN TOBACCO RULED THE WORLD

A BOOK FROM 1938 ILLUSTRATES JUST HOW MUCH THINGS CAN CHANGE

WORDS / SAM PFEIFLE

For those who've been around the cannabis industry for a while, our contemporary boom times can create bitterness. To see folks with little history in the culture profiting off a plant that has landed so many others in jail and prison can rub a person the wrong way.

How many people had to put in the work, had to suffer brutal consequences, to achieve legalization and widespread acceptance? Do those same people get to reap the financial rewards? Sometimes, it seems not.

Now that we've found ourselves here, though, it's worth looking to history to see that an industry's place in mainstream society can be perilous. Public opinion doesn't always travel in one direction. Tastes and cultural mores change. What was once the height of fashion and propriety can spiral out of favor.

Just ask the tobacco industry.

While anyone even middle-aged is old enough to remember smoking sections on planes and the Marlboro Man and Camel Bucks that you'd trade in for sleeping bags and ashtrays, stumbling upon "The Story of Lucky Strike," by Roy C. Flannagan, in Norway's Maine Bookhouse really clarified just how far the tobacco industry

has fallen. And it perhaps offers lessons for the cannabis companies of today in how to approach the marketplace and manage expectations so as not to fall out of favor.

If you can imagine, this book was written and published in 1938 as a way to preview and hype up the New York World's Fair in 1939, where one of the main attractions was a Lucky Strikes Cigarettes pavilion. There, "Visitors will see the processes that this book describes. Machines will actually roll and pack Lucky Strikes. Dioramas will show how tobacco is grown and how it is sold at the tobacco auctions. A motion picture will show step by step how the tobacco is handled."

A motion picture!

Yes, the tobacco industry was a wonder. A practice now seen as so deplorable it is not even allowed to be on television, not even allowed to be advertised in public spaces, was at the time a pinnacle of American industry. The machines that rolled the cigarettes were mechanical innovations to be celebrated. Flannagan, a reporter for the Richmond News Leader in Virginia, wrote a series of articles following tobacco from farm to factory and was asked by the American Tobacco Company to expand his research into this book, "interested in what an average observer thinks about one of the most fascinating modern industries."



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Fascinating, indeed. To read tobacco's history is to hear echoes of our own times. The leaf was "good as gold," Flannagan notes, and became a literal currency among the English colonizers who came to Virginia, learned tobacco's cultivation from the native population, and began to export it back to Europe at great profit. After all, "rich land was plentiful; labor cheap."

That casual reference to slavery is amazing and shameful in modern times. So matter-of-fact about true human suffering and moral abrogation. Elsewhere, Flannagan calls the Civil War the "War of Secession."

But see if this doesn't sound familiar: "So many citizens abandoned trades to enter agriculture that members of the Assembly became alarmed. The pay of carpenters was thirty pounds of leaf a day and board, but nevertheless they threw away their saws and hammers and took up the hoe."

How many in Maine have seen cannabis as a gold rush and changed careers? How many will come to regret that decision?

Tobacco fell out of fashion as the market was swamped and some of its allure disappeared. The growing population of Virginia and the broader United States found other vices, other fads. Then the English and French discovered paper-wrapped tobacco whilst among the Turks in the Crimean War and brought a "new smoking vogue" back to Paris and London.

"The development of the modern cigarette in the seventies," Flannagan writes, and he means the 1870s, "gave the tobacco business a mighty forward impulse. For the first time, the finest tobacco became available to poor as well as rich. Tobacco of the better grades began to sell at prices farmers had not enjoyed since 1619."

But that boom, too, leveled off and Flannagan's account of the auctions in tobacco warehouses is among the most compelling and interesting pieces of the work. Farmers brought their tobacco to a central location by wagon and allowed the "warehouseman" to set an opening bid, which the auctioneer used as a jumping off point. If the farmer didn't like the final price, they could "tuck their ticket" and try again the next day or at another warehouse.

Quality mattered. Not all tobacco was grown the same or had the same value. A 20-year-old, name of Eddie Neal, gets 58 cents a pound and the crowd goes wild. But old-timers remember "World War days when almost anybody could get sixty cents a pound, and quite a few got a dollar or more. Those were the days."

One wonders if cannabis growers will similarly pine for the high times of the late 2010s.

And for those who might complain about the tax on cannabis, the tobacco industry never had it easy, Flannagan notes. "Yes," he says, as though it were very hard to believe, "every twenty cigarettes



bears a tax of six cents. It is one of the oldest excise taxes now extant, one of the first sales taxes levied in America."


We have always, it seems, fueled our government with vice.

Finally, we see the machinery and business that turn this tobacco into product to be shipped around the world. The breathless way in which Flannagan extols Lucky Strike's virtues speak to his reverence for the men who sign his checks, but the quality control, where even one bad filter spoils the pack, is something every successful cannabis producer still speaks to today.

As cannabis approaches a new mainstream peak each year, it would be wise to wonder just how tobacco fell so far, to the point this paragraph was once written in earnest by a reporter and now seems so laughable:

"Truly the story of Lucky Strike is an amazing blend of industry and romance, of the tradition of tobacco and the precision of modern science, of a magic product and of the men who handle it."

Isn't it the mushrooms that are magic now?

 WORDS / **SAM PFEIFLE**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**The Story of Lucky Strike**  
**By Roy C. Flannagan**  
**Published for the New York World's Fair, 1938**







# Your One Ideal Partner for Cannabis Security

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**HAPPY 4/20!**  
**IS WHAT YOU'LL SAY AFTER**  
**WE HELP YOU GROW YOUR**  
**CANNABUSINESS.**

Maine's cannabis industry is growing, and we're here to help you grow with it. For compliance, licensing, and business development, contact our experienced small business attorneys Jill G. Polster, Esq. and Andy M. Cohen, Esq. at 207 387 3192 or [cohenlawmaine.com](https://www.cohenlawmaine.com).

**COHEN**  
**LAW**  
**MAINE**





**T**here are many great pairs in this world: peanut butter and jelly, Tom and Jerry, MJ and Pippen. But none may be more inventive – or more storied – than the legacy of cannabis and hip-hop. From the infinitude of words and phrases rappers have thought up to talk about weed to deeply cerebral songs about the effects cannabis prohibition has had on people of color to definitive spark-up anthems, cannabis-flavored hip-hop has essentially become a genre unto itself.

Sure, there are the undeniable classics: Dre and

Snoop’s “The Chronic,” Wiz Khalifa’s “Kush & Orange Juice,” Luniz’s “I Got Five On It,” just to name a few. But if one thing’s for sure, it’s that ganja and rap certainly do not discriminate; pick any era, region, or subgenre of hip-hop, and you’re bound to find more than a couple love songs penned to the sweet Green Goddess herself — and New England is no exception. Here are five great skunk-and-sesh songs, all created by artists from the great Northeast, that you can light one up alongside this 4/20.

Happy hotboxing.

#### “SMOKE SESSION” — EDUCATED ADVOCATES

A meat-and-potatoes smoking song, “Smoke Session” is everything a great weed song should be. Backed by a jazzy beat complete with vinyl crackle, forlorn horns, and a smooth piano roll, Maine trio Educated Advocates take a classic meta approach to the weed anthem: rapping about the exact thing they’re doing, which makes sense given the title of the song. “Slow tempo to blow temple / Blow a sack and relax to instrumentals / This is the smoke session.”

“Smoke Session” executes a tried-and-true, timeless formula — I could listen to hundreds of versions of this type of song (which I most definitely have) and I’ll never get sick of it. Released in 2010 on Spose’s Preposterously Dank Entertainment label, this song could’ve been released anytime between now and 1990 and I would believe it. All that’s left to do is take EA’s advice: “Kick back, play a record and chill / With a six pack, and a swisher of ill.”

#### “WEDDING CAKE EIGHTHS” — R.A.P. FERREIRA

“Wedding Cake Eighths” might be the headiest smoking song ever created. R.A.P. Ferreira, underground hip-hop’s abstract poet laureate who opened a Biddeford record shop in 2018, raps like a Beat poet flailing his arms, unstuck in time. Having dedicated an entire album to one of the unsung heroes of the Beat Generation (2021’s “Bob’s Son,” named after poetic enigma Bob Kaufman), and wielding a style that sounds like a live recording of a smoky, spoken-word jazz lounge, Ferreira truly does “rap his booklist” as he once proclaimed.

“Wedding Cake Eighths” is no exception. Over an airy, stuttering instrumental, he says things like, “Flex to feel special, what about you not for purchase? / Misery careens, suffering lurches / Poetic terrorists make a resurgence.” And then, quickly, before once again getting lost in an alphabet soup, “Purple lung potion,” just to reinstate the song’s mission statement. If there’s ever been a weed anthem you’ll have on repeat, just as a means of cracking each line’s ornate code, it’s this one — a disguised smoking song dressed up in layers of oddball poetic acrobatics.

#### “BONING AND SMOKING CHRONIC” — SPOSE & CAM GROVES

Spose has a wonderfully self-aware sense of humor, which is why the title to a fairly serious song about being dedicated to his craft is so ironically funny. Sampling a song that features one of the pivotal marijuana enthusiasts in hip-hop history (Dr. Dre from Eminem’s “Guilty Conscience”), “Boning and Smoking Chronic” finds Spose and Cam Groves rapping about their love of hip-hop and occasional tendency to smoke a little grass.

“Though I’m a proponent of boning and smoking chronic / I propose doing both with discretion, I’ve learned lessons,” they each state to start their verses. Spose is a Maine hip-hop fixture, and while he’s tipped his cap to cannabis plenty of times throughout his career (see his “Peter Sparker” mixtape, or his Outkast tribute “Dankonia”), “Boning and Smoking Chronic” is a hard-nosed rhymefest of an entry into his catalog.

#### “GROUNDHOGS DAY” — BILLY WOODS

Billy Woods is an underground emcee who makes haunting literary music about the horrors and beauties existing in the small moments of everyday life. Although he currently calls New York home, Woods spent at least a part of his life in Maine, explaining in a Passionweiss interview that he wrote his first-ever “real rhyme” in a laundromat in Kennebunk in 1997. “Groundhogs Day,” from 2017’s “Known Unknowns,” depicts Woods in a literal and figurative never-ending loop to mimic the short-term memory loss of being high, starting and ending each bite-sized verse with the lines “I wake up and smoke weed / I wake up and smoke weed.”



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Woods moves through narratives like a stoned ghost floating through memories; he fluctuates between laughter and apprehension after his dealer tells him he's taking some time off, he reflects with pride on the good ol' days of smoking "Reggie Miller 8ths," and he attempts to rewrite a lost verse only to arrive at another wake-and-bake in the form of the song's chorus. "Groundhogs Day" is a mind-boggling success of a song about smoking weed, capturing the "Known Unknowns" one experiences while high in thoughtful, novelistic detail.

"TAKE TWO AND PASS" — GANG STARR

As every marijuana connoisseur knows, there's certain etiquette one must follow while participating in the sacred smoke circle. One learns these rules early on, maybe on a walk with a favorite cousin, or hanging out with an older brother's group of friends. And who better as a mentor to teach the unwritten rules of marijuana consumption than hip-hop pioneer Guru, arguably the most acclaimed rap artist to ever come out of New England.

On Gang Starr's "Take Two and Pass" from their 1994 album "Daily Operation," Guru lays out the simple but vital rule-of-thumb all must abide by to get right: "You better take two and pass / Take two and pass / Take two and pass so the blunt will last." Legendary DJ Premier provides a typically scratched-up and groovy East Coast loop for Guru to educate the public over, where he explains his proclivity for Phillies (although they do, unfortunately, burn quicker), inquires over Premier's "nice plump blunt" and offers one of his own to match, and unloads a litany of laid-back metaphors and monikers for the plant (with a hilarious highlight being "I'm in love with Mary Jane / She keeps me large"). There's nothing like a classic 90's East Coast la-la tune, and "Take Two and Pass" scratches that itch as good as anything.

**bw** WORDS / CALEB JAGODA  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



APANI B

MY FAVORITE WEED PUNCHLINES

*Ask any hip-hop fan what their favorite weed punchline is and they're bound to have a forever-rotating list compiled in their head. Therein lies one of the great things about marijuana references in rap — they are gifts that keep on giving. Documenting every weed punchline would take a lifetime (we need a historian at a prestigious university to undertake that project), and it's undeniably subjective deciding which are the cream of the crop. Some are great on their own, and some rely on the delivery and charisma of their author — there's a whole lot of green gray area. Thus, here's my personal registry of go-to ganja lines that I can't help but marvel at each and every time they come on.*

**Nickelus F, "Mojito"** "You on your last leg like a zombie / Crawling across the lawn on your fingertips / Even in the midst of evil shit, I keep the cheeba lit."

**Smino, "Amphetamine"** "Back-a-wood rolla, really a smoker / This louder than when you drive on the shoulder."

**Lauryn Hill, "Ready or Not"** "I play my enemies like a game of chess / Where I rest, no stress if you don't smoke sesh / Lest I must confess, my destiny's manifest / In some Gore-Tex and sweats, I make treks like I'm homeless."

**Noname, "Mary Jane Love"** "Sweet Mary Jane, Mary-Kate and Ashley / Two twins rolled up, I think it was a Saturday / After they learned to wear pearls all pretty / Backwoods, back porch, trees so fitting."

**MF DOOM, "America's Most Blunted"** "DOOM nominated for the best rolled Ls / And they wondered how he dealt with stress so well / Wild guess? You could say he stay sedated / Some say buddha-ed, some say faded."

**Apani B, "Can I Watch?"** "He talked, I listened, he listened, I spoke / We walked arm-in-arm and split a Cherry Coke / Spit religion and politics, Sega and chess / Roots and culture, hip-hop, skunk and sesh."

**Earl Sweatshirt, "Pre"** "Right here, right ear got a Pesto blunt / Why that shit got a young n\*\*\*\* Velcro stuck? / Why your bitch go down, when the sesh go up?"

**Ghostface Killa, "Nutmeg"** "But Ton' Stizzy really high, the vivid laser eye guy / Jump in the Harley ride, Clarks, I freak a lemon pie."

**Roc Marciano, "Flash Gordon"** "As a dove flew out the glove of the magician / It was just as I predicted, reality is pre-scripted / Trees twisted, autistic / Gorgeous hitmen escort the vixen / Porsches, imported liquids."

**Keisha Plum, "Michele Ma Belle"** "Keisha Plum the only one under the sun / Dynamic, magnetic, goddess, villain, phenomenal catastrophe / Shit starter, blunt lighter, I deliver this like the gospel / Tears of honey, drop flow."



MAINEGROWERSALLIANCE.COM



# APRIL IS FOR EARTH DAY: EMBRACE IT!

**SEEDS IN HAND, YOU BEER AND WEED ENTHUSIASTS ARE STARING HERE IN APRIL AT WHAT ARE THE VERY BEGINNINGS OF GROWING OUTRAGEOUS CANNABIS IN YOUR BACKYARDS: MAKING SURE TO CREATE A HEALTHY HABITAT FOR THE POLLINATORS AND INSECTS EMERGING FROM THE WINTER. WHILE ORGANIC GROWERS OF OUTRAGEOUS WEED HAVE BEEN WHILING AWAY THE WINTER SEASON HERE IN THE NORTHEAST BY SMOKING AND EATING AND APPLYING LAST SEASON'S HARVEST TO THE SKIN, OUR INSECT FRIENDS HAVE BEEN LYING DORMANT, JUST WAITING FOR WARM WEATHER TO EMERGE AND BEGIN THEIR OH-SO-SHORT LIVES.**

Together we are aiming for environmental protection to build structures that will endure our earthly liberties and to be sustainably healthy.

Spring showers will awaken the earth, with creepy crawlies everywhere, providing food as a welcome home meal for the migrating birds returning from their winter sojourn. All of our creatures provide different benefits to support nature and humankind (except maybe browntail moths — they're truly nasty). Nature knows what it's doing. Let's follow nature's lead as we plan for success in growing our outrageous weed in your backyard gardens.

Simply put, applying insecticide, pesticide, or herbicide has a detrimental consequence for us and for the natural world. If you're planning on killing dandelions or insects such as lacewings, ladybugs, spiders, hover flies, or parasitic wasps ... you will find that whatever the problem, that makes it worse instead of better.

Instead, welcome in the birds, take a puff, and slop around in your muck boots as we embark upon the control measures that promote sustainable practices as we work to avoid the damage to plants that can be caused by so-called pests and disease. April's Earth Day is perfect timing for scouting out and cleaning up your garden and surrounding areas.

Did you catch what happened to B&W editor Sam Pfeifle's grow last fall? Yup, he discovered a malady of Eurasian Hemp Borers in his hood! To help him vanquish these devious bugs (and keep the same from happening to you) let's map a plan that will guide the Chief to move them on out.



Preventive management matters when you hear about Eurasian Hemp and European Corn Borers or Corn Earworms invading your nearby fields and setting up their digs on your outrageous weed plants. They will become obvious by the wilted and curled leaves in or around the bud of the flower or bore holes into the cannabis stalk. But by that time, it's too late. Manage pest problems before they begin. Prevention of invasion is easily managed in the egg and larva stages, but once the caterpillars enter the stalk they are more difficult to deal with.

The Eurasian Hemp Borer (EHB) is a reddish brown caterpillar; the European Corn Borer (ECB) is more of a tannish color. When corn is harvested, the European Corn Borer needs a new source of food and shelter and may move onto cannabis plants, Japanese knotweed, hops, hemp, smartweed, potatoes, beans, wheat, millet, large-stemmed flowers, and weeds.

Look especially for eggs on leaves right after the local corn comes down.

Most likely, cannabis plants being invaded by the Eurasian Hemp Borer are plants being grown along the edges of corn fields and/or near wild stashes of Japanese knotweed. Remember, alfalfa fields are the best companions for field-grown cannabis. Monsanto's herbicide/GMO grown corn is not a companion plant!

Luckily, the EHB moth is a weak flier and only able to travel in a one-mile radius. Moths emerge in late May to mid-July and again in early August through September.

That's when you'll need to be on the lookout, before the eggs they lay turn into caterpillars that then bore into your cannabis stalks, make and hide their pupa, and transition into the adult stage of the moth, which then lays eggs and the pattern begins in earnest.

EHB are capable of having two generations in one growing season. It's the second generation that will ruin everything.

With pests like these in the area, and only becoming more virulent because of the increase in backyard grows, it's important to separate plants as much as possible. This helps interrupt the pattern. Rotation helps, too. Try not to grow in the same place over and over again to avoid pests finding an apartment they can move into every summer.

While nothing can replace a close attention to your plants, with a keen eye toward removing eggs from the plants, key areas of attention for assuring you grow pest-free cannabis start with:

**Site Selection:** Full morning through evening sun limits insect transmissions. Keep cannabis away from corn fields and Japanese knotweed. If you can't avoid growing in or near cornfields, perhaps install some bird feeders to set up around your cannabis. Bring in the birds to eat up those caterpillars!

**Scouting:** Fall and Spring clean ups are imperative. Leave no crop residue in any growing areas: Eliminate, burn, shred, till under, and remove any and all standing cannabis, corn, or nearby Japanese knotweed stalks before the adults have a chance to emerge this season. Clean up all buckets, tools, and harvest drying and trimming surface areas. Larva will hatch around May Day (the first of May). Definitely get your Mars on here; hopefully you're toking sativa!

**Rotation:** Pests survive the winter and can reinfect a crop if it is grown in the same spot year after year. Crop rotation moves the host plant and that helps decrease the chances of the pest.

**Stalk and plant management:** Avoid damaging your weed plants and always trim with sharp scissors and knives. Torn or damaged plants cause wounds, infection, and stress that weakens them, which pests use as an open door to enter and damage tissue. Squishing and smooshing are always encouraged when you spot a troublesome bug chomping on your plants. EHB/ECB may lay a mass of 20/30 flat white eggs on the backside of the leaves that have a web-like cover over them. Yep, squish and smoosh.

Of course, healthy, nutritious composted soil and companion planting is a great help to a strong and healthy cannabis growing practice, as well. It is an investment both for the ecosystem and for our outrageous weed.

I have great faith that all you outdoor organic weed growers will have pest-and disease-free seasons and are ready to head to your backyard and prepare for this magnificent new growing season — don't forget to prepare your soil, clean all of your pots thoroughly, and germinate your seeds here in April so they'll be ready to get outside next month!



WORDS / DIRT DIVA  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

## GERMINATION TIPS

*If you're starting from seed, mid-April is when you want to germinate your plants inside to get a jumpstart on Maine's short growing season.*

*Choose a clean, sturdy container with drainage holes to germinate your selected cannabis beans. The seedling will live in this container indoors for (most) of the next six weeks. Place a plate beneath the pot.*

*The container should be conservatively and loosely packed (if that makes any sense), three-quarters full of nourishing composted soil.*

*Plant just one bean per pot. Make an indentation in the center of the soil and place your seed upon it, take a pinch of soil and cover the bean. Place the pot in a warm, dark environment. Keep the soil moist to germinate and throughout the grow. It usually takes 3-5 days until the bean pops; when it does, give your seedling plentiful amounts of sunshine in a south-facing window!*

*When your seedling is strong and vigorous (with a full 2-3 sets of leaves) it will thrive being outdoors during warm sunny days. Make sure that the soil is wet and the direct sunlight does not burn the little seedlings and then be sure to bring them back in at night until you plant them outside around Memorial Day (see next month's issue for details).*





# POT BROWNIES AND DINER BREAKFAST

‘OF HER MANY FRIENDS, I WAS NOT SURPRISED I GOT THE WEED CALL.’

Joe orders the egg white scramble with tomatoes and mushrooms, and I like the spinach and feta. Dry toast for Joe, sometimes bacon for me. We drink the bitter coffee, his with milk and mine black. The mugs are yellow and thick, and they feel heavy and right in the way diner mugs should. We know the servers by name. Katie is our favorite — a singer by profession, I hear her voice sometimes when I walk downtown at night.

The topic is never off-limits, but we don’t often talk about Beth. I do wonder what she might say though. She requested different things from her friends: Watch out for my boy, help write an obituary, sort belongings.

WORDS / SHONNA MILLIKEN HUMPHREY

“Make sure Joe is OK?” she asked me, after the pot brownies.

Beth received her first diagnosis during the summer solstice, details emerging throughout the upcoming season in clipped or hissing syllables: stage four, metastasis, inoperable, two years, maybe. A doctor would eventually say with certainty, “This will shorten your life,” but that first day when Beth knew “bad,” just not “how bad,” I did what she requested.

I brought the weed.

“To smoke or to eat?” I asked.

“To eat, please.”

Because Beth did not regularly use marijuana, I arrived an hour later with two dry chocolate brownies pulled deep from my freezer. She sat on her bed, propped up with pillows while Joe puttered in the kitchen. She tucked the foil-wrapped package discreetly under her blanket because she was not quite sure how Joe might react.

The tiny subterfuge seems funny now. During the Miss Portland Diner breakfast that has become our weekly ritual, Joe insists he would not have cared. He suspects Beth got a thrill from the secret.

On that first day, though, before Joe became as much a friend as Beth, when she hid those pot brownies under her blanket, she said it felt like her belly had been punched. Colon for sure, the tests confirmed, and lungs likely. She was waiting to hear about her uterus.

“I keep thinking this all must be wrong,” she whispered, and I agreed.

On that longest and brightest day of the year, with the sun not scheduled to set for several more hours, any unexpected tilt toward darkness seemed impossible. Any return to light, unnecessary.

Of her many friends, I was not surprised I got the weed call. My musician husband often found homegrown at the bottom of his tip bucket or pressed into his hands by appreciative fans. After shows, he counted crumpled bills on the coffee table and placed baggies into a glass jar. One jar filled, and then another.

Too frugal to throw the pot away but unable to ever smoke that much, I dabbled in homemade edibles. An accomplished home cook and occasional food writer for the local newspaper, I knew my way around a recipe, but marijuana baking requires journeyman chemistry skills. Cannabinoids, the chemical compounds secreted by the cannabis flower, if not directly inhaled, require an oil conduit for release. Temperature affects the release, too. Sprinkling marijuana cuttings into brownie batter has little effect.

With practice, my brownies tasted quite good, but it took a while. The early attempts were grainy and burnt. The kitchen smelled foul. As I pulled Beth’s first brownies from the far corner of my freezer, I remembered scraping early batches into the garbage bin and wondering what I had done wrong. Beth, too, wondered what she had done wrong. At forty-six, she exercised and ate a mostly vegetarian diet. Her family were healthy, long-living types, and she dreaded calling her vibrant, horse-riding, eighty-year-old mother with the news.

I nodded down the hall and asked if her young son knew.

“Not yet,” she said. Her son was smart though, and Beth had already caught him searching “How to stop a bad cough” on the Internet.

I watched her son’s bedroom door and recalled a story about his pet lizard, Twister. During a particularly brutal Maine ice storm, the power went off in the middle of the night. With no electricity for the heat lamp, Twister would freeze, so Beth gently pulled Twister from the dark and cold terrarium and snuggled the bearded dragon like a newborn baby between her chest and blankets while her husband and son slept.

“You do what you’ve got to do,” she told me the next morning. “You know?”

I knew.

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After leaving Beth’s bed on that first day, I did laps in the grocery store with an empty cart. Her diet would now be sugar- and gluten-free, and rather than contemplate a world without Beth in it, I focused on developing a pot brownie recipe to accommodate the food restrictions. However, when the shock of a fatal diagnosis swirls in big, painful, existential circles, it is difficult to concentrate on wheat flour substitutes. While trying to process Beth’s news, I filled two bags with random ingredients. Once home, I stacked cookbooks on the countertop, pushed emotions to the side, and got to work. This, I reasoned, was something I could do.

Each batch improved, and here is what I learned: Grind the ingredients super-fine. Double the oil. Use almond butter. Mint and cinnamon, too. Avocado adds extra calories. Bean paste makes the best base. Try coconut sugar. Stevia tastes funny. Four eggs are better than two. I studied cannabis varieties and their differences. Sativa, indica, and hybrid each have different properties. Sativa can lighten a mood, and indica can relax a body. The nameless, cheap, and sticky buds I smoked as a college student seemed quaint now. The baggies from my husband’s tip jar, elementary level, and I frequently found myself driving a car loaded with a felon’s worth of upscale marijuana varieties to my kitchen.

With time and practice, I developed a potent and delicious product, as rich as any professionally baked confection and as mellow as two glasses of wine. The dosage was simple: Take a small bite, wait an hour, then go to bed. I instructed taste-testers to not get cocky and eat the whole thing. “Blend a brownie into almond milk for a hot or cold beverage,” I advised while imagining a Nobel prize speech or medical school acceptance letter if only I had learned chemistry like this in high school.

As municipalities legalized medical marijuana and de-criminalized recreational possession, word got around, and friends began making requests. I was invited to start a business for profit. I never accepted money, but I often presented neatly wrapped packages as gifts. A friend sent me a cheeky “Chocolatier” T-shirt, but it was a misnomer because in addition to chocolate, I offered gingerbread, pumpkin, and banana brownies.

“I shall not go gently, Mrs. Humphrey,” Beth whispered in her throatiest Katherine Hepburn from her bed as she patted those first brownies.

“I should never doubt it, Mrs. Lombardo,” I answered, trying to replicate Maggie Smith.

Many years prior to her diagnosis, Beth and I perfected a Downton Abbey-style dowager countess schtick in the manner of Edina and Patsy from the British television show *Absolutely Fabulous*. As Mrs. Lombardo and Mrs. Humphrey, we affected accents, riffed on opium dens, and recalled imaginary Eastern European lovers. We invented a pool boy. “Of course,” we always nodded, “that was before the War.”

We exchanged text messages and left voicemail recordings from the perspective of ironic, impatient, imperialist bigots. Together we crammed double entendre and literary reference into these daily exchanges. It was our middle-aged version of playacting, and we giggled like teenagers.

Beth did not go gently. After the confirmations, she asked not to see the bell curve. When the doctors suggested her disease’s likely trajectory, Beth focused harder. She wanted all energy directed toward her health and healing, and there was no space for doubt or negativity. When presented with bad news, she challenged her team to describe the aspects in her favor.

Still, when Joe took her son to run an errand one afternoon, I warmed our marijuana smoothie mugs and rubbed her back while she sobbed, bent forward into my neck. As I tightened the blanket on her shoulders, it occurred to me that I had never held a grown woman before. It felt as foreign to me as a newborn or a lizard named Twister.

We swapped stories about old boyfriends, stupid decisions, and the sum total of experiences that make a life. Both of us grew up in small rural towns and found home in Maine. She described her years as an expatriate in Japan, telling me again about the children’s television show, Betty’s English, she hosted and how her recorded voice once welcomed visitors to a terminal at the Kansai airport. During one particularly wild night, she made a bartender piggyback her through the streets. She pretended he was a pony, she told me, and this reminded me of the parable of the optimist and pessimist child each placed in a room filled with manure. The punch line has the optimist child noting that with all the poop, there must be a pony hidden somewhere.

Later, Beth thanked me for sitting in the dark places with her. I still have the text message exchange. “Much shit, many ponies,” she offered, and I cheekily asked if that was Rumi. “No,” she deadpanned, “Chief Seattle.”

She called me while I was still laughing. We were both a little high.

“I do not wish to leave my boys, Mrs. Humphrey.”

Beth did not want to die alone, and we all promised that she would not.

The home-based hospice nurse answered questions while I took notes with a pencil, trying to be helpful. She explained the process — what Beth might feel, how to conserve energy. I sat on the corner of the bed with Joe, the three of us making an awkward triangle.

When Beth said, “I do not want to suffocate,” I realized my pencil notes were useless. By this time, Beth had no need for my brownies. She had moved on to stronger painkillers, and I held

her pale hand during the barely conscious ambulance ride to the hospice center. Another friend rode in the ambulance, too, and still more followed in a Joe-led caravan. There were seven of us, total. She did not suffocate, and she did not die alone.

Beth received her diagnosis during the summer solstice, and her funeral happened on the next year’s Lammas. She would have smiled about the impropriety of a gluten-free cancer diet aligning with a wheat harvest celebration. The church ladies laid out a potluck. Finger sandwiches. A berry cobbler. Cheese and crackers. Brownies, but not the marijuana kind. I imagined her Katherine Hepburn nasal voice noting the vulgarity of such abundance.

Before Beth, the closest I ever came to a friend’s death were acquaintances or high school classmates. Tragically young or mercifully old. Sad, but with layers of distance — often just newspaper obituaries mailed by my parents. Suicide. Car accident. Heart attack. War.

Before Beth, I had never taken the first shift of a hospital stay and adjusted a friend’s incontinence pad. I had never coached anyone through an anxiety attack or watched them vomit from stress.

Before Beth, I sent condolences.

I never grieved.

When the third valium had no effect on the day of her funeral, I sat down on the church bathroom’s floor and swallowed a fourth, wishing I had packed a brownie, the tile cool against my bare calves.

In the space following those final moments, there is so much I want to tell Beth. Joe and I eat breakfast almost every week. He often orders home fries packed to-go for their son, who is off to college soon. Their son is much taller now, handsome and lanky with adolescent swagger. A smart kid. Funny. I see Beth’s features in his face. She would be so proud. Twister still lives in his bedroom.



On that first day of her diagnosis, when Beth knew bad but not how bad, Joe existed as a sort of peripheral presence — the husband character in the stories Beth told. He was a man waving from the porch or offering to toast bagels, not a friend sitting directly across from me. As Beth declined, Joe became more of a presence. I learned cheesecake was his favorite when, unable to drive, Beth asked me to deliver one for his birthday. Throughout her illness, Beth requested foot rubs from each of her visiting friends. She ranked Joe and I both as the very worst foot massagers, dead last on the list. It was the first time he and I laughed hard together.

“I really loved her,” he said when he let her ashes go.

Once in a while, he says the same words at the diner. Usually though, we talk about ordinary days. Salmon on sale at the grocery store. Olive oil imports. The election. We like the same hot sauce. He worries about his dad. We both stress about money. Joe offers good advice and tells funny stories. He listens. He thinks he might want to fall in love again someday. He says he is okay with me writing about Beth dying and the brownies I made for her.

We nod when Katie asks if we want a coffee warm-up.



WORDS / **SHONNA MILLIKEN HUMPHREY**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**This essay by Shonna Milliken Humphrey, Maine-based author of *Show Me Good Land, Gin, and Dirt Roads and Diner Pie*, is excerpted from *Breaking Bread: Essays from New England on Food, Hunger, and Family* (Beacon Press, 2022), profits from which go to Blue Angel, a nonprofit combating food insecurity by delivering healthy food from local farmers to those in need. Reprinted with permission from Beacon Press.**



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# IT'S TIME FOR SEEDS

WORDS / BRANT DADALEARES

## DID SOMEONE SAY PEANUT BUTTER BREATH?

Happy 420, bitches. When thinking about making something for the 420 edition I immediately thought of peanut butter cookies — because stoners love peanut butter cookies. Then I thought, “How can I put a twist on peanut butter cookies?” Because I was high, my mind then went to the now-legendary workroom entrance of Rupaul’s Drag Race season 6 contestant, the constantly high Miss Laganga Estranga, where she belts out, “Oh y’all wanted a twist, aye?,” and then does an incredible death drop. So thank you Laganga, both of you, for helping me out with this one. The twist on these peanut butter cookies comes from the addition of miso, soy, sesame, and candied ginger.

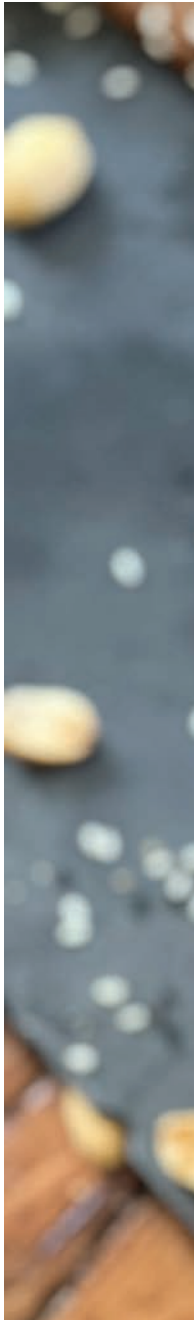
Let’s get sickening! (Oh, and a heads up that you need to let this dough sit in the fridge overnight before baking. I know you stoners don’t always do well with delayed gratification.)

- Ingredients:**
- 250g. all-purpose flour
  - 1t. baking soda
  - 1t. baking powder
  - 115g. butter at room temperature
  - 200g. dark brown sugar
  - 125g. white sugar
  - 90g. chunky peanut butter
  - 80g. sweet miso paste
  - 1T. roasted sesame oil
  - 1 large egg
  - 1T. vanilla extract
  - 35g. diced candied ginger
  - 1 cup turbinado sugar
  - 1/2c. each of black and white sesame seeds

**Directions:**

Start by sifting together the flour, baking soda, and baking powder in a small bowl and set that aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the sugars and butter on medium speed until everything is well incorporated and light and fluffy. It should take about six minutes, with a scraping down of the bowl about half-way through.



# PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES, WITH SESAME AND MISO

YIELD: ONE DOZEN COOKIES



With the mixer on medium speed, add in the peanut butter, sesame oil, and miso paste and give it another four minutes, scraping down the bowl twice during mixing. Then add the egg and vanilla extract and mix for another two minutes or so, or until well combined and no streaks remaining.

Shifting down to low speed, add the flour mix from the small bowl in three increments, mixing each time until the flour is incorporated. Then mix in the diced candied ginger.

Once everything is incorporated, place the dough into a container, cover, and refrigerate overnight.

The next day, start by preheating the oven to 350°F and lining a baking sheet with a nonstick silicone mat or parchment paper.

Now mix the sesame seeds together in a small bowl, placing the turbinado in a separate small bowl.

Working in batches of six cookies at a time, weigh the cookie dough out to 2.5oz portions and roll it into balls. Roll half the cookie ball in the turbinado and the other half in the sesame seeds and place them on the tray with the seeds facing one side and the turbinado facing the other. Using the flat base of a glass, press the cookies gently to flatten them slightly so the sugar and seeds are on opposite sides.

Insert your tray in the oven and bake the cookies on the middle rack for eight minutes, then pull out the tray and tap it onto the counter 6 times, then rotate it and tap it again six more times. This will flatten the cookies out a bit and make the interior texture chewy while having a crispy exterior.

Place the cookies back in the oven, bake for three more minutes, then remove and tap another six times, rotate again, and tap another six times.

Finally, bake for an additional 4 minutes, repeat the tapping process, and let cool on the tray for a few minutes to firm up. Then remove the cookies to a cooling rack to fully cool.

**Note:** The cookies will remain chewy for a few days in a covered airtight container, but that probably only lasts you through episode 3 or so.



# THE ALL-TIME BURN CRUISE PLAYLIST

CHECK OUT THE  
FULL PLAYLIST HERE



**SOMEONE ON A SOCIAL MEDIA APP (I DON'T REMEMBER WHICH ONE) SUGGESTED I SHOULD WRITE A COLUMN ABOUT WEED ANTHEMS. SO, AS COLUMNS OF TANKS DESCEND ON KYIV (WASN'T IT CALLED KIEV LAST YEAR?), AND THERE'S A CHANCE YOU COULD BE READING THIS IN A FALLOUT SHELTER AS HALF-VAPORIZED PAPER SCRAPS FLOAT THROUGH A WINTRY NUCLEAR HELLS-CAPE OVERHEAD, THAT'S EXACTLY THE TYPE OF FLUFFY POTHEAD SHIT I'M GONNA DO TO CLOSE OUT THIS ISSUE OF BEER & WEED.**

Disclaimers: I am just one man. I cannot account for everybody's journey through the fog of Mount Weed nor the music that soundtracked their burn-cruises. So these songs might mean nothing to you. You probably have your own list, which you're welcome to write down wherever you see fit. I'm also changing the rules a little bit. The anthems I'm going to detail may not even be about weed. I might've just heard them when I was high. Or heard them at my weed dealer's house in high school. Additionally, I'm not what you would call a "hippie." I've only ever heard jam bands by accident, and I don't know any songs by Phish. So, assuredly, this list will not coincide with many of the playlists you guys would put together. That said, even though the criteria for this list is broad, just know all these joints slap and hold a special place in my heart and lungs.

Here's a few weed anthems I'd put on my playlist for the guy on Instagram (or Twitter):

**Pink Floyd, "Us & Them"** — This song is not about weed. I actually have no fucking clue what this song is about. All I know is that I first heard it stoned out of my mind in high school and I've loved it ever since. It goes without saying that "Dark Side of The Moon" is one of the best albums of all time. It also goes without saying that you should listen to it while blazed. "Us & Them" specifically feels like the album's crescendo, floating through the universe on echoed, ethereal vocals and disappearing into a dying star of a saxophone solo. It's a trip, man.

**Lloyd Banks, 50 Cent and Snoop Dogg, "I Get High"** — Obviously time and place come into account with anybody's musical memories or favorite songs. The rise of 50 Cent, G-Unit and its punchline-iest emcee, Lloyd Banks, coincided with my last

few years in high school, which were exciting times filled with girls, bowl packs, and burn cruises. My high school girlfriend Liz Condon (who tragically passed away far too soon a few years ago) used to rap Snoop's part in this song in her best white-girl-doing-Snoop-Dogg impression as we'd spin this album front to back. I'll always remember Liz, the great times we had, the bowls we bought at that sketchy porn shop in Kittery, and this classic Lloyd Banks album.

**Ben Harper, "Burn One Down"** — This is about as far as I go into hippie culture. Is this even hippie culture? I dunno. It's acoustic guitars. I gotta attribute this song's inclusion in this list to my friend Tom Knight, who piloted many a hazy excursion through the streets of York County, with me in the passenger seat. I'm pretty sure he showed me this song. I thought of it immediately when I started writing this list because it takes me back to Tom's Jeep and the light-hearted Ben Harper vibes of getting blazed (when it was illegal to do so) and Ben Harper letting us know, "Hey guys, it's okay! I'm gonna burn one down, too!"

” This song is an all time classic for all occasions but especially for when there's "so much smoke, need oxygen."

**Notorious B.I.G. and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, "Notorious Thugs"** — This is the one. At least for me. If you know this song, it's very likely that you know every word to this song (or at least the approximation of whatever the hell Bone Thugs are saying). Many high school car-rides and college parties for me included very-blazed, possibly drunk recitations of this biblical hymn. It begins with several hypnotic choruses before Biggie comes in with the most complex and rapid-fire verse of his tragically truncated career: "Armed and dangerous!" We'd all yell. And then proceed all the way through the "get high" choruses, the wild verses by Bone Thugs into the outro. This song is an all time classic for all occasions but especially for when there's "so much smoke, need oxygen." Biggie, for a lot of people of my generation, could be the all time most beloved rapper, but especially for those of us who were smoking the same "Backwoods and dutchies" he rapped about. RIP BIG!

**bw** WORDS / SPOSE  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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