

The Story Behind 4/20: Tracing the Origins of the Cannabis Celebration

The Origins of 4/20

The history of 4/20 traces back to a group of high school students from San Rafael, California, known as “the Waldos.” In 1971, they would meet at 4:20 p.m. near a statue of Louis Pasteur to search for a rumored cannabis crop. Although they never found the crop, their term “420” for the meeting time became synonymous with cannabis culture.

Why 4/20?

The term “420” originated from the time the Waldos would meet, 4:20 p.m., and later evolved into a code word for cannabis consumption. It gained traction through the friendship between one of the Waldos and Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh. High Times magazine helped spread the term by publishing a flyer promoting a “420-ing” event in Marin County in the early 1990s.

The Spread of ‘420’

As the Waldos’ slang gained popularity, it became entrenched in cannabis culture. High Times’ publication of the flyer solidified April 20th as a significant date for cannabis enthusiasts. Despite its origins, the individuals behind the flyer that turned 4/20 into a widely celebrated holiday remain unknown.

The Everlasting Phenomenon

Reflecting on the enduring legacy of 4/20, one of the Waldos, Steve Capper, noted its remarkable longevity. Unlike many trends that fade quickly, 4/20 has persisted, becoming an integral part of cannabis culture worldwide. Though its exact origins may fade into obscurity, the spirit of 4/20 continues to thrive, bringing together cannabis enthusiasts across generations.

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