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


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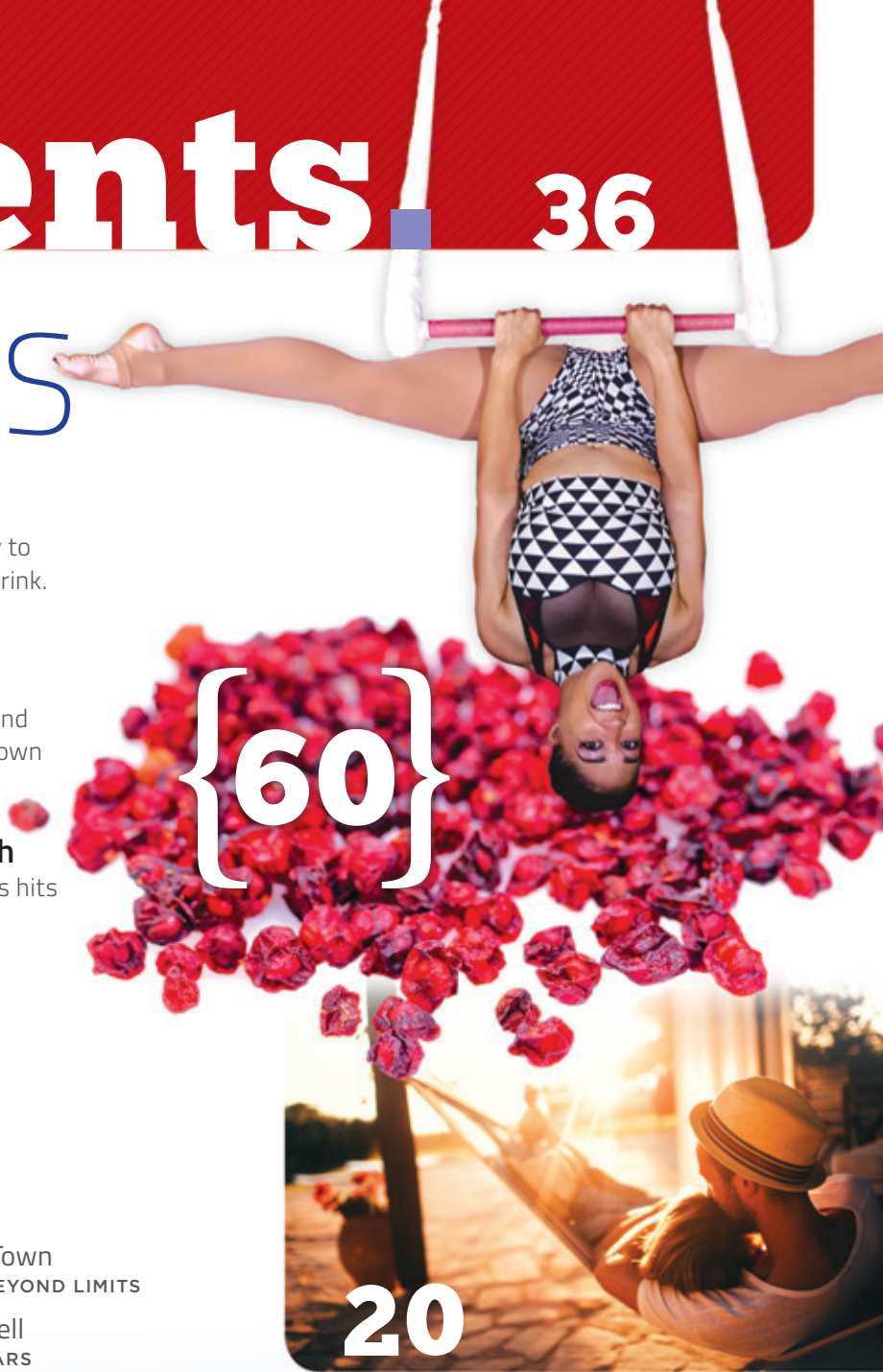
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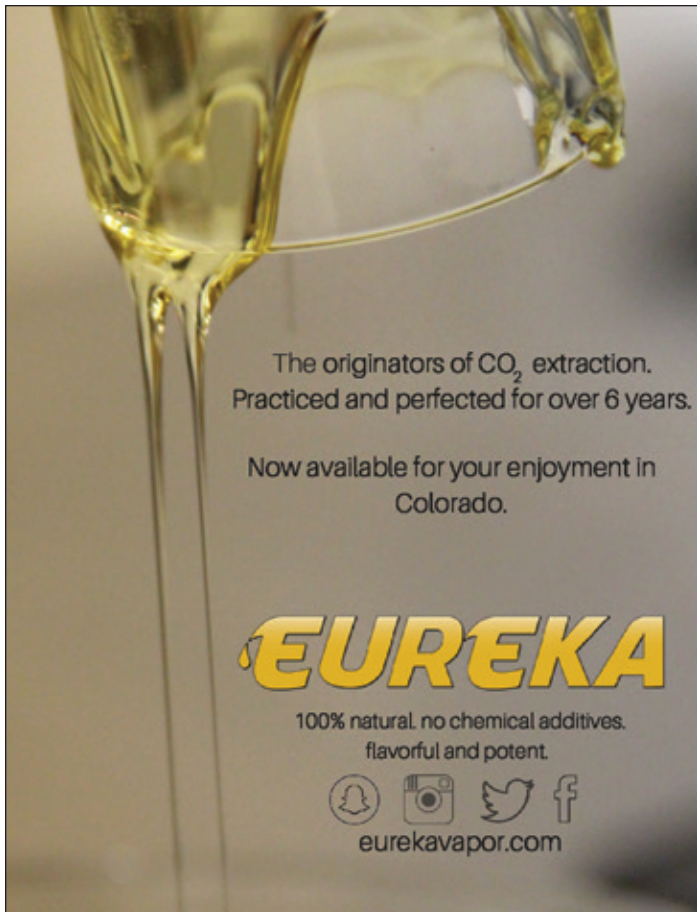
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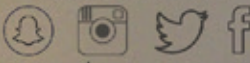


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My entire adult life, I've suffered from insomnia. Although I don't always think of it as "suffering," per se: some of my greatest ideas and creative bursts of inspiration come to me in the darkest hours of the night, and, in my previous East Coast life, I often found myself dancing around my apartment celebrating the witty turn of phrase I just concocted or the boxspring I just turned into bookshelves while listening to the roosters start crowing their alert to Miamians that a new day has arrived.

But since moving to Colorado, I haven't heard too many roosters. That's because A) There aren't too many wild ones on the streets of Denver; and B) I finally found something to combat my insomnia. Cannabis edibles.

Sleep is such an important part of everyone's wellness, and I am happy to say that all it takes for me to get a solid night is about 10 mg THC, which I prefer to ingest in gummy or chocolate form because, hey, who doesn't like a treat before bed?

Cannabis is a key component of many Coloradans' healthy lifestyles, which is why we opted to dedicate this entire issue to the idea of health and wellness. Our main story, Leland Rucker's special report on the endocannabinoid system, dives deep into exactly how the various components in cannabis interact with systems in our bodies to produce the desired effects. Robyn Griggs Lawrence's feature on Adaptogens goes even farther, detailing some of the other plants that deliver health benefits to our bodies.

On the wellness side of things, columnist Ricardo Baca discusses the positive impacts cannabis has had on the relationships in his life, while Randy Robinson talks to some high-flying aerialists about how a yoga school in Fort Collins is allowing them to reach new levels in their active pursuits.

In the remaining dog days of summer here in Colorado, there are so many opportunities to explore the great outdoors in pursuit of your own health and wellness goals. I've made it my goal to get my butt up at least three more fourteeners before snow gets in the way this fall. If you're heading out there as well, I hope to bump into you on a trail or two.

In the meantime,  
**HAPPY READING.**



*Stephanie Wilson*  
Stephanie Wilson  
EDITOR IN CHIEF  
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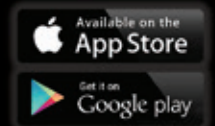
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It's being called the "Celestial Event of the Century," probably because the last time Americans experienced this was nearly 40 years ago, when bellbottoms were chic and cassette tapes were a new thing. On Monday, August 21, the US will witness a total solar eclipse, where the moon passes in front of the sun. When this occurs, our lunar satellite will blot out our nearest star, blanketing the daytime hour in a brief bout of darkness. The sun's corona may blaze around the moon's perimeter, and stars might be visible in that inky near-noon sky, too.

In Colorado, we won't see the eclipse in its "totality," a term for when the moon completely covers the sun. Rather, we'll get a glimpse of a "partial" eclipse, which still looks pretty gnarly, even if there's a sliver of sunshine peeking from behind the moon. The eclipse should start around 10:20 a.m., reach its zenith by 11:50 a.m., and end around 1:15 p.m. If you want to catch the totality, better plan a trip to Wyoming or Nebraska now.

If you miss this month's solar eclipse, 2045 marks the next time we will see one in Colorado. Fortunately, that one should total out, so no treks to the cornfields or pastures of our neighboring states. (If you can hold out for another 28 years ...)

Caution! Staring at the sun is hazardous to the eyes. Avoid watching the eclipse with naked peepers. To gaze at the astronomical anomaly, get your hands on a pair of special solar eclipse glasses. These stellar spectacles will be available—for free—at local libraries through a project cofounded by astronomer Douglas Duncan of the University of Colorado. However, the free glasses won't last long. If your nearest library runs out, you can purchase them from companies such as High Point Scientific. ([HIGHPOINTSCIENTIFIC.COM](http://HIGHPOINTSCIENTIFIC.COM))

—RANDY ROBINSON



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## VOLUNTEERS FOR OUTDOOR COLORADO

Help prevent some of Colorado's most iconic destinations from being "loved to death"—that's the mission of **Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado**, an organization that brings people together to become what they call "active stewards of Colorado's natural resources" through volunteer projects that range from trail maintenance to gardening and planting to habitat restoration all over the state. On August 17, you can lend a hand at **Chautauqua Park Fence Construction**. With the Flatirons as your backdrop, you and a group of roughly 50 other volunteers will dig holes, assemble rails, and hang wires to help erect fencing along the Bluebell Mesa Trail that overlooks the National Historic Landmark of Chautauqua Park toward the iconic sandstone Flatirons. The purpose is to keep hikers on the designated trails, leaving the pristine meadow in that picturesque condition for future generations to enjoy. For more details about how to lend a hand and to register: [VOC.ORG](http://VOC.ORG).



## dive in!

On the evening of August 4, don't ask questions, just put on your bathing suit and find out how deep the wave pool goes. **Elitch Gardens** is hosting a Dive-In Movie screening of *Moana*, so stop staring at the edge of the water. Grab an inner tube and hop on in.

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—STEPHANIE WILSON

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Our curious cannabis expert, **LELAND RUCKER**.

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## Leland's **SENSIBILITIES**

**SENSI SENIOR EDITOR LELAND RUCKER WEIGHS IN ON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S "HISTORIC" VIEWS.**

**Have you no dignity, sir?** The nation is ass-deep

in serious problems, including a growing lack of trust in law enforcement and an opioid crisis tied to legal prescription drugs. And yet you, Attorney General Jeffrey Beauregard Sessions III, citing an "historic drug epidemic," seem more concerned about the bad people who use cannabis than in emergency rooms and hospitals filling with overdose victims.

You're actually asking Congress to allow you to prosecute states that provide legal marijuana to patients. Have you ever actually spoken with anyone who uses cannabis for pain or stress relief?

I'm ashamed to admit you're only a couple of months older than me. Have you absorbed anything about cannabis beyond the last Cheech and Chong movie you saw? Is *Reefer Madness* on continual replay at the office?

You should probably do some checking around. Have you ever used a search engine? Even the scholarly stuff is online. The National Academies of Sciences, not an advocacy organization, in January 2017 published a lengthy review of all scientific research since 1999 that neatly consolidates what's out there.

Do your handlers allow you to read *Scientific American*? It's not exactly a bastion of pro-cannabis opinion, but it published a piece in June after one of your recent "bad people" tirades that quotes reputable *Journal of Pain* and *Journal of American Medical Association* studies that suggest cannabis be used for pain relief for some patients instead of opioids.

Dude, even the Koch brothers have thrown in the towel on this one. "You are never going to win the war on drugs. Drugs won," their spokesman told reporters in Colorado Springs in response to your maximum-sentence request. Research on the endocannabinoid system is providing insight into how cannabis interacts with the body (See story on page 60). Heck, you could even go back and read the Shafer Report, "Marihuana, A Signal of Misunderstanding," commissioned by Richard Nixon in 1972 as part of the Controlled Substances Act, which concluded, to Nixon's disgust, that the only thing wrong with marijuana was that it was illegal and that it should be treated as a public-health issue.

Look at the way the US has dealt with hemp. The US literally gave away a valuable agricultural crop to the rest of the world simply because of its similarity to marijuana. This is not exceptionalism. You have the opportunity to change that.

You can't be all bad—Sen. Al Franken calls you a personal friend. But please start listening to him. Have some actual patients come to your office and talk about what's happening. Read something that challenges your beliefs. Make decisions based on science, research, and the wishes of the American people instead of your lobbying buddies. Act your age, for goodness' sake.

I won't be holding my breath.

—LELAND RUCKER

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**Golden Bike Library:** In Golden, you can check out a two-wheel ride from the bike-share program—and the first two hours are free. So if your idea of a good time is hitting the trails rather than hitting a dance party or block party, Golden has you covered.

**Roll Denver:** When you were young, did you spend your free time at the roller rink, rocking out to New Kids on the Block as you skated in circles holding hands with your crush? No? Just me? No matter. You can still glide your way to your happy place on the third Friday of the month at Roll, a roller skate party in the EXDO event center.

**Tour de Fat Denver:** Expect to experience the unexpected at this traveling philanthropic beer, music, and bike festival that hits Denver's National Western Complex on August 26. And also expect a Capital Cities concert, 'cause that's how the Tour is rolling this year. The day-long extravaganza will also host a mix of musicians, circus performers, vaudeville acts, magicians, comedians, and mind-blowing provocateurs.

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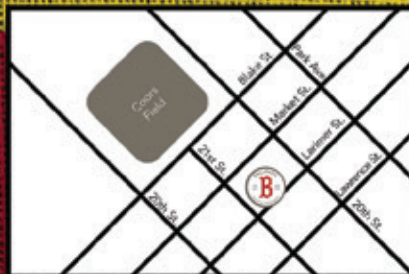
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## ACCESSIBLE outdoors TRACK CHAIR PROGRAM

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## HEALTHY CHOICES

Ricardo Baca reports on the intersection of cannabis and culture.

We've ultimately been familiar with the concept of medical marijuana for centuries, and we've had medical cannabis laws on the books in this country since 1996—thank you very much, Dennis Peron and California voters.

But it wasn't until June of 2015 that medical marijuana truly attained its top-level bona fides from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the 134-year-old top-ranked peer-reviewed publication that is largely considered to be one of the most conscientious, vetted, and respected medical journals in the world.

JAMA's groundbreaking analysis from June 2015, which was based on 79 trials involving nearly 6,500 participants, found that cannabis absolutely does help with certain ailments and conditions, including severe pain, nausea and vomiting related to chemotherapy, and spasticity from multiple sclerosis.

(The analysis also found that marijuana's efficacy toward most conditions it is prescribed for is unproven, but that's an entirely different story given the federal government's many barriers to serious research on cannabis.)

But that game-changing JAMA analysis represents a monolithic marker on the cannabis timeline. Sud-

denly one of the medical world's most discerning voices was finally making a bold statement on the record, reaffirming something already known anecdotally by millions of medical marijuana patients across the globe:

Marijuana *is* medicine.

It really changed the worldwide conversation around medical cannabis, but now I'd like to take this idea one step further. Because while I've successfully used cannabis to treat my physical health, I've also come to recognize that marijuana can also be medicine for our mental health.

Too often when discussing marijuana as a health and wellness tool we ignore that it's also a legitimate medicine for our mental health. A number of legitimate studies have shown marijuana's positive effects on our mental well-being, but a recent one in particular stands out.

Researchers in the Netherlands in 2016 conducted a random controlled trial (a.k.a. the gold standard of scientific research, per the *Washington Post*) to investigate the link between human aggression and two of the most





popular substances we're known to consume: marijuana and alcohol.

Of course cannabis has a reputation for chilling out those who use it, but what did the scientific research say?

"The results in the present study support the hypothesis that acute alcohol intoxication increases feelings of aggression and that acute cannabis intoxication reduces feelings of aggression," the researchers wrote in medical journal *Psychopharmacology*.

Forget about the alcohol making us more aggro and focus on that last part. This study found that marijuana, separate from any other substance, *reduces feelings of aggression*.

**“ THE RESULTS IN THE PRESENT STUDY SUPPORT THE HYPOTHESIS THAT ACUTE ALCOHOL INTOXICATION INCREASES FEELINGS OF AGGRESSION AND THAT ACUTE CANNABIS INTOXICATION REDUCES FEELINGS OF AGGRESSION. ”**

PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY // MEDICAL JOURNAL

As *WaPo* reported: "This is in line with other research. A study in 2014, for instance, found that marijuana use among couples was linked to lower rates of domestic violence. In a fun study from the 1980s, researchers gave undergraduates varying doses of marijuana and then asked them to administer electric shocks to people in another room. The more stoned the undergrads were, the less interested they were in zapping other people."

I remember posting this *Washington Post* story on social media last year to a chorus of *duuhs* from friends and acquaintances who are longtime cannabis consumers themselves. But going back to the JAMA example, anecdotal evidence is of course meaningful—but it won't ever be as trusted or compelling as peer-reviewed analysis or, in this case, a random controlled trial.

As I contemplated a less aggressive world with lower rates of domestic violence—heck, with lower rates of violence in general—it brought me back to a conversation I'd had with my girlfriend (and now wife) years before. I was a still-new marijuana aficionado trying to put my stoned experiences in perspective, and she was a knowledgeable, more-experienced sounding board with wise-beyond-her-years insight.



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"We've never argued all that much," I told her one day in the car, "but I'm thinking we argue even less now that we're consuming marijuana more regularly than alcohol."

She understood the point, but she challenged me to go broader with the hypothesis. How was cannabis impacting all of my relationships—with family, with friends, with colleagues, with strangers?

After a couple weeks of deep and sometimes-uncomfortable introspection, I arrived at my own personal epiphany: Cannabis absolutely bolsters my men-

tal health, including my ability to cultivate meaningful personal relationships.

It means better communication and fewer arguments. It means more patience and less aggression. It means more respectful conversations and fewer tirades on social media.

For me at least, marijuana has made an already spectacular life even better. And I'm looking forward to more science-based research in the future to tell us more about how our relationship with this plant can help our relationships with those who matter most.

**“ I ARRIVED AT MY OWN PERSONAL EPIPHANY: CANNABIS ABSOLUTELY BOLSTERS MY MENTAL HEALTH, INCLUDING MY ABILITY TO CULTIVATE MEANINGFUL PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. ”**

**RICARDO BACA** is a veteran journalist and the founder and original editor in chief of *The Cannabist*. His content agency Grasslands works primarily with cannabis and hemp businesses on messaging and branding via thoughtful and personalized content campaigns.





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# GUT REACTION

From kombucha to kefir soda and kraut, cultured cuisine is taking over Colorado.

Some of my favorite foods are going bad right now. They are falling apart, "turning," getting gooey and starting to bubble. Frankly, I couldn't be happier. Without billions of probiotic minions doing their work, I would miss the joy of tasting Babette's Bakery's baguettes, Il Porcellino's summer sausage, Fruition Farm's Cacio Pecora cheese, Noosa lemon yogurt, and other greatest hits of Colorado cuisine.

Those easy-to-love classics have been joined by a parade of new and sometimes odd fermented foods as I, and the nation, embrace probiotics. It's amusing that ancient fare like water kefir, natto, kvass, and tempeh are undergoing a serious revival in the United States, perhaps the most germophobic country in the history of the planet. Our attempts to expunge icky microbes from our existence have actually harmed our health.

Meanwhile, Colorado is proudly on the cutting edge of gut ecology. Here, kombucha on tap is a common sight at grocery stores where growing cooler space is devoted to locally crafted live foods from pickles to hot sauce. Colorado State University is graduating

classes from its Fermentation Science and Technology program, and a bevy of workshops are available for regular cooks. The home kitchen is where some of Colorado's many fermented food entrepreneurs got

## { FERMENTED } FACT

The number of US food products boasting **probiotic claims has almost tripled since 2012**, according to Innova Market Insights.

their start, often sparked by a strong desire to improve their health.

Naturally occurring probiotics are touted for their ability to deliver probiotics, improve digestion and nutrient absorption, balance gut bacteria, and increase immunity.

Friends and local probiotic pioneers Mara King and Willow King (no relation) started playing around with live sauerkraut and kimchi in their home kitchens. "In



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the big picture, we are reintroducing live foods, picking back up where we left off. We could see how vital these foods were," says Mara King.

They formed a company named Ozuké, which ships its kosher, vegan, and organic products—think: Umeboshi Plums; Kale & Collards Kim Chi; Citrus & Ginger Kraut—from Colorado to stores from Hawaii to New Jersey. The Lafayette-based company won a prestigious national Good Food Award this year for its fermented vegetables.

"Customers tell us our products are not just great flavors, but that they are energizing and make them feel better. We get a lot of notes that say 'I am addicted to your kimchi,'" Mara says.



“Fermenting was so important to the Lithuanians that they worshipped a god of pickled food called Roguszys.”

SUE SHEPHARD // "PICKLED, POTTED AND CANNED" // SIMON & SHUSTER

The public is still on a learning curve about fermented foods. "The word 'pickle' is confusing. People think they are cucumbers in vinegar with spices. Real pickles are made with brine, dill, garlic in an oak barrel. It's a different kind of sour, a complex, layered flavor," she says. Look on labels for the term "naturally fermented pickles."

Asia Dorsey of Denver's Five Points Fermentation Company set out to heal herself. "I started making fermented foods at home after I was clinically diagnosed with depression. I wanted to heal it without taking pharmaceuticals. I learned a lot about microbial ecology and how it affects mood and health," says Dorsey.

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"Fermented foods helped me, and I wanted to make sure they were available to everyone as foods, not as supplements," she says.

Dorsey thinks she knows why there has been a rekindling of interest in probiotics. "Every single culture in the world has fermented food of some kind. We have a desire to return home and connect with history. We remember that grandma used to pickle and the live foods the family once ate. People are really feeling a lack of community and connection to traditional culture—culture you can't buy from a store," she says.

Five Points hand-packs simple, unseasoned Soul Kraut, Korean-style hand-cut kimchi, and an Indian chef in Denver helped develop Curry Kraut, a mix of pickled cabbage, cumin, coriander, fennel, black mustard seed, and turmeric. The products are sold through a few outlets including the Union Station Farmers Market.

One Five Points bestseller is "jun," pronounced *juhn*, a probiotic drink Five Points brews from Chinese teas and local honey. "We import the tea and meet the bees and the beekeepers. That makes jun 10 times as expensive as kombucha, which is mainly made from white sugar and basic black tea. It's also much easier to industrialize," Dorsey said.

Five Points offers diverse classes that combine traditional recipes with modern food science in making fermented foods. The most popular workshop is Sacred Sugar, a workshop in making water kefir. "I teach a history of



**TASTE { LOCAL } FERMENTED FOODS**

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MM Local Foods: Green Chile Live Kraut // BOULDER

The Real Dill: Habanero Horseradish Dill Pickle Brine // DENVER

Rowdy Mermaid: Living Ginger Kombucha // BOULDER

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sugar and how it can be transformed by fermentation into a beautiful drink. I think of water kefir as a gateway probiotic beverage. It's easy to make at home," she says. Five Points has a policy of not refusing anyone at its workshops who cannot afford the fee.

Water kefir seems to be the hot new probiotic beverage on the block. Water kefir shouldn't be confused with the very different milk kefir that resembles drinkable yogurt. It is made with water kefir "crystals" or starter and is ready to drink in a few days of keeping it on the countertop and feeding it sugar.

Stuart Dimson also started his fermented studies at home in Louisville. "I'm a licensed acupuncturist and a Chinese herbalist, and about 80 percent of my clients had some condition that came down to the gut. I was no different," he says.

Dimson was familiar with kombucha but wanted to do something different. "My research led me to water kefir, which I hadn't heard of," he says. Dimson's organic Doctor D's Water Kefir in various flavors is now sold in 350 stores in 14 states.

## MAKING **WATER KEFIR**

This site offers a free e-book on making water kefir as well as this detailed how-to video: [CULTURESFORHEALTH.COM](http://CULTURESFORHEALTH.COM)



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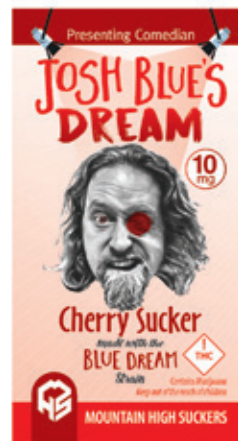
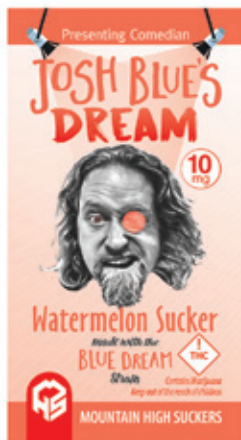
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"We do a live ferment and mix it with fruit flavors. If you make water kefir right, it's just like drinking soda. Kids love it and it's not so tart," he says.

Dimson warns that making water kefir at home is hard to mess up and is drinkable in four to six days, but it is not for the irresponsible. "You've got to take care of water kefir. It's like raising children. You can't not feed them or go on a trip and forget them," Dimson says. In other words, whoever waters your plants and changes the cat litter should also feed your water kefir while you're out of town.

Take a class or, better yet, learn from a friend and be assured you won't kill anyone with your home experiments on the way to a more biodiverse gut.

"We're just starting to understand a very complex field. We have mapped the human genome but our understanding of microbes in the body is still very limited," Ozuké's Mara King says.

Keep your eye out for Ozuké's new sugar-free fermented beverage similar to kvass, but less salty, as well as a green chile kimchi.



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## LIVING BEYOND LIMITS

One yoga studio in Fort Collins is giving a lot more than just lessons. It's giving back lives.

She's dangling from a golden hoop, seven feet high. With her head pointed to the floor, gravity causes brunette strands of hair to cascade over her determined face. She's held in place by only her legs, which braid in a criss-cross fashion across the hoop's curvature, locked at the ankles. If she bends up, she could fold herself around the circumference of the hoop. If she dips back, she becomes a teardrop suspended in time, as if a swollen bead of dew froze along its path from petal to earth.

It's hard to believe that, just five years ago, the woman performing this aerial maneuver could barely walk. In 2012, when she was still an undergrad, Stephanie Morphet suffered severe spinal injuries from a car accident.

"It left me close to immobile," says Morphet. "It destroyed my back. I went from being a really active 20-year-old to spending my days laying on ice packs." Turning her head hurt. Walking hurt. Sitting hurt, too.

It took three years of intense physical therapy to get Morphet back on her feet, to feel functional again. A former cheerleader and gymnast, she wanted to return to a physically active lifestyle, but she felt she was too old to pursue gymnastics. That's how she ended up at Live Beyond Limit, a yoga studio and holistic wellness center in Fort Collins that combines aerial acrobatics, dance, and yoga.

Today, Morphet is one of Live Beyond Limit's advanced professional performers. Nearly three years ago, she started with the hoop, but since then has

graduated to the trapeze, chains, and swings. Her performances with the studio's circus incorporate pyrotechnics, because—well—fire looks really, really cool.

"Just going out in the street and spinning fire adds more magic to life," she muses. "The reason I love the circus, besides being great exercise, is because it's something that makes people happy. How great is it that I can now do something with my body that can bring other people joy?"

Morphet credits her current-day abilities to her past athleticism, but she encourages those with no acrobatic experience to try it, too. "Some people come up to me and say, 'Oh my god, I could never do that,'" she says. "They think the only way you can do it is if you're part of Cirque du Soleil. But anyone can do it. It just requires training and dedication."

Live Beyond Limit was founded by Kate Wrightson, a former bioresearcher, in 2014. Wrightson, like many of her students, suffered for years from debilitating back injuries. She tried everything Western medicine could offer, but conventional therapies and pharmaceuticals never brought her full, long-lasting relief.

Wrightson eventually discovered yoga and energy work, which, she says, restored her body and transformed her life. After nine years of practicing various forms of yoga, she started fusing the ancient Indian practice with acrobatics, challenging her body and her mind to push toward levels of healing doctors told her were impossible.

For those unfamiliar with the intricacies of yoga—



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or, in this case, acroyoga—the idea of mixing the physical dynamics of tumbling or twirling with quiet meditative yoga poses may seem contradictory. Not so, says Wrightson.

“Our view of yoga in this country, personally, I feel is adulterated,” says Wrightston. “Yoga means ‘to combine,’ ‘to bring together.’ It translates literally to ‘yolk.’ Yoga is all about awareness, and to combine yoga with acrobatics, you have to be 100 percent aware of your mind, body, and spirit. When you’re working with somebody else or with an apparatus, you have to be aware of that as well. You have to learn how to communicate with yourself.”

Wrightson’s approach to corrective exercise was recently supported by science. In June, a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that yoga could be just as effective as any other physical therapy program for treating chronic back pain caused by stress or trauma. The study, however, only recommended the gentler aspects of yoga, and advised against more strenuous activities such as inversions.

Live Beyond Limit offers traditional, low stress yoga to its students, but it offers more challenging



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are monthly events held by Live Beyond Limit, where they visit parks in northern Colorado to exhibit the spectacle of their acrobats and aerialists. Check their website for dates on upcoming events. You can also catch them performing live at this summer’s Arise music festival in Boulder, August 4-6.

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yoga alternatives, too. Wrightson believes both types of yoga can be effective, depending on the student.

Mark Lewis is a 59-year-old photographer, and he's a student of Wrightson's. Unlike Morphet, he has no background in gymnastics. Known as "G Mark" to his friends, he worked as a construction worker for much of his life. The wear-and-tear from the daily grind on his back finally caught up to him as he grew older. Chronic inflammation in his sciatic nerve compromised his ability to walk and diminished his quality of life, and he underwent two surgeries to control the pain.

"I've worked with her now for two years," Lewis says. "She's now got me doing aerial silks. She's got me doing things I would've never dreamed about doing."

Lewis notes that although he, and many other students at Live Beyond Limit, dealt with spinal damage and other neurological issues, not all of the studio's students do. His wife, for example, is perfectly healthy, but she attends regular lessons with him once a week.

He also recognizes that the brand of aerial yoga he practices is much more advanced than the ones recommended by the recent *Annals* study, and newer students may feel intimidated by the skill levels of the advanced students.


"Kate had some back trauma," Lewis says of Wrightson, "so she's acutely aware of what goes on with that. She's very conscientious. She has an acute ability to understand limitations and not to push things. Flipping upside down on silks never would have crossed my mind, but we spent plenty of time getting there."

"A lot of people beat themselves up because they can't do something," says Wrightson. "My mentality is, 'Have you ever done this before? Why would you be able to do this now? That's why you're here: to learn.'"

Lewis says he's been liberated, that he no longer experiences pain in his back or legs. He's not entirely sure how much of this is due to the surgeries and how much is a result of the aerial yoga, but he insists the yoga definitely has not been a disadvantage. "What I tell people is just try it," he says. "Just see how it goes, then make your own choice. But I would certainly recommend anyone to try it, just to get in there and let her do her magic."

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# {travelwell}

by LELAND RUCKER



Mesa Arch sunrise  
landscape in Canyonlands  
National Park, Utah

# THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

On the road with Leland Rucker, seeing National Monuments before they're not.

More than 1.35 million acres of red rock, desert, canyons, bluffs, juniper forests, valleys, rocks, and archaeological sites, Bears Ears National Monument is a rugged, wondrous place in southeastern Utah. President Barack Obama designated the wild and remote area an official national monument under the federal Antiquities Act last December, just before he left office. Then, in April, new President Donald Trump signed an executive order that instructed US Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to reconsider all monuments created since 1996.

Haggling over federal lands, especially in Utah, is a longstanding tradition that has gotten particularly nasty at times. While environmental groups, the tourist industry, and Native Americans lauded the creation of Bears Ears, President Donald Trump called it a "massive federal land grab that's gotten worse and worse and worse." His words echo those of Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, who, in 1996, called Bill Clinton's designation of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument "the mother of all land grabs." (That one was so controversial that Clinton announced the creation of Escalante from neighboring Arizona.) But with the Senate and House reluctant to take up public-land legislation, Clinton, like Bush and Obama and many presidents before them, including Ronald Reagan, added significantly to the nation's treasury of protected areas.

Given that backdrop, and that it's under the federal microscope, Miss Billie and I had to see Bears Ears for ourselves. We were eager to find out what all the fuss is about, so we headed southwest to Utah.

For our Bears Ears visit, we stayed just more than an hour from Hovenweep National Monument in Bluff, Utah. A little over a seven-hour drive from Denver, Bluff is a patch of green amidst, you guessed it, massive rock bluffs with the impressive Comb Ridge formation, which forms a kind of backbone for Bears Ears, poking up behind.

Fresh off its national monument designation, Bears Ears doesn't yet have a visitor center, and there are few signs or facilities. And it is vast, encircling other monuments like Newspaper Rock and Natural Bridges, skirting the edges of Canyonlands National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and overlapping the Dark Canyon Wilderness. At one place we stopped, copper tubes were aimed at certain landmarks, with one directed at Dead Horse Point, the northernmost boundary more than 40 miles away.

We checked maps and talked with our host at the motel in Bluff before deciding on a one-day drive that began in Bluff, went west over the Comb Ridge formation to Valley of the Gods, then north to Muley Point and Natural Bridges before turning east over another section of the Comb Ridge and back into Bluff. To get almost anywhere farther into the monument,



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including driving between the Bears Ears formations themselves, you'll need a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

One of the best couple of hours you can ever spend is on the gravel road that winds through the Valley of the Gods. A 15-mile drive takes you amidst goliath monoliths and fantastical formations, with trails and overlooks reminiscent of those at the more famous Monument Valley, the backdrop for all those western films of the mid-20th century, which is sometimes visible in the distance from parts of the park.

Heading north, we immediately faced the enormous escarpment that is Cedar Mesa, 1,200 feet directly above us. The only way up is through the infamous Moki Dugway, a wild, mesmerizing, three-mile ascent up a winding series of switchbacks to the Cedar Mesa Plateau, upon which much of Bears Ears is situated. Moki was built in the 1950s when uranium for nuclear weapons was hauled by truck from an area in Bears Ears to a processing plant in Mexican Hat to the south.

After enjoying the dizzying sight looking back down into Valley of the Gods near the top of the Dugway, we immediately headed over to Muley Point, an overlook with John's Canyon, imposingly dug by the San Juan River, immediately below. I could see some of Monument Valley in the distance.

I say "some" because pristine views are a thing of the past. There are two major coal plants still in operation in Utah, and though they are not the only culprits, air quality in the region has diminished enough that it's causing serious consternation for marketers and lodging owners as well as outfitters and guides.

The Parks Service is intimately aware of the problem. "Many visitors to Canyonlands don't see the clear vistas they expect," its website proclaims. "A haze often hangs in the air, and most of this haze is not natural: it is air pollution, carried on the wind from distant coal-fired power plants and other industrial facilities."

Anecdotally, we can remember seeing Shiprock, the huge rock forty miles south of Cortez in New Mexico as the vulture flies, just 15 years ago. Now it's barely visible out there in the haze, and only if you know where to look. The EPA has taken steps to bring the coal plants into stricter compliance, but it and the Park Service face deep budget and personnel cuts, which may hamper any future environmental efforts.

It didn't take long before the iconic Bears Ears formations begin appearing in front of us as we headed toward Natural Bridges National Monument, and we will see the two buttes from different angles all day. It's pretty easy to understand why earlier residents would have considered them significant, if for no other reason than that they are visible from any direction.

It was worth stopping at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station at the Grand Gulch Trailhead, where we found videos, exhibits, books, and displays about the area, and a ranger told us about current information about weather conditions, roads, and the many nature trails in the area.

View from Muley Point



The Bears Ears Buttes framed with summer wild flowers



Sign of Moki Dugway (Highway 261), Utah

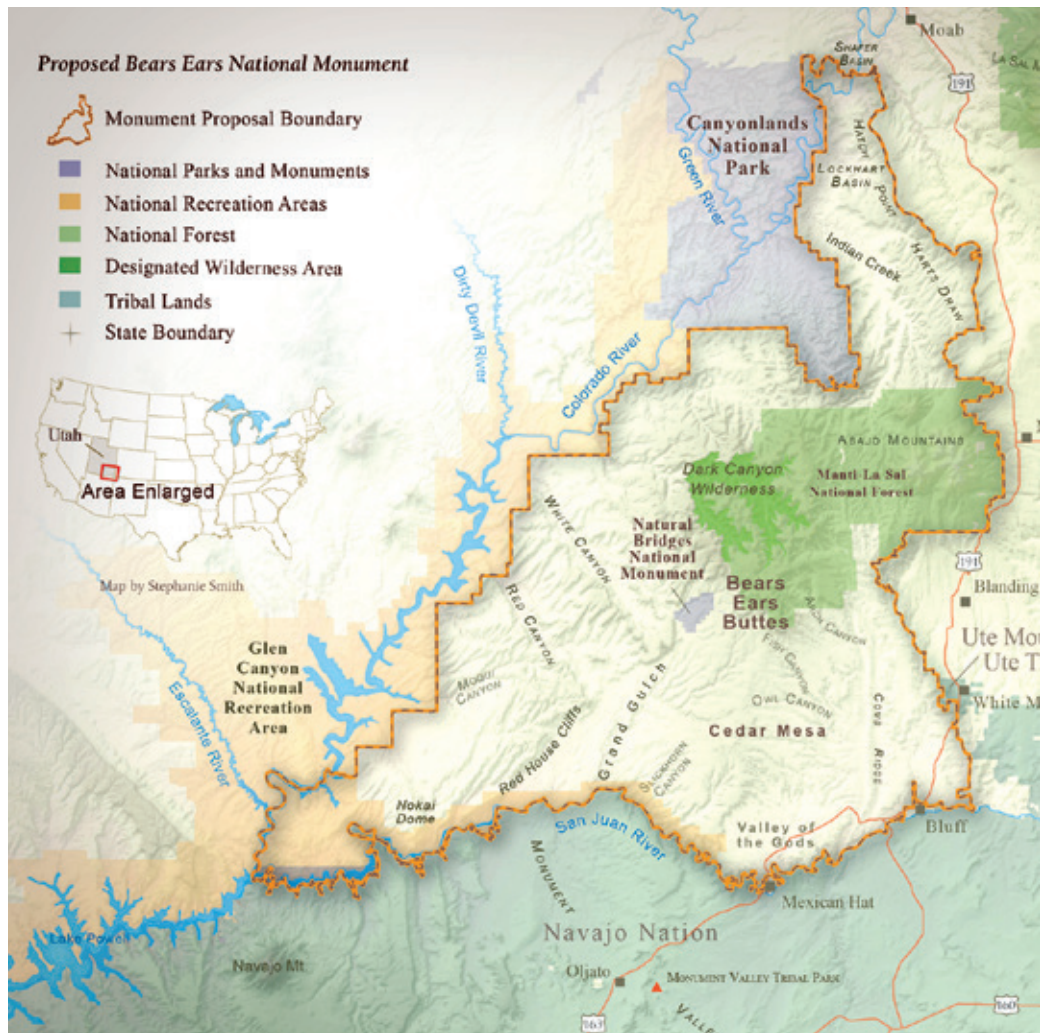


Newspaper Rock petroglyphs



Proposed Bears Ears National Monument

-  Monument Proposal Boundary
-  National Parks and Monuments
-  National Recreation Areas
-  National Forest
-  Designated Wilderness Area
-  Tribal Lands
-  State Boundary



We passed the Elk Mountain Road that takes you between the two Ears if it's the right time of year, on our way to Natural Bridges, which was designated a monument in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt. It includes a nine-mile rim drive with many stops and inspiring views of the three main bridges and well-established walking trails down into each.

There were arguments over its size during the

## national MONUMENTS UNDER **threat**

years-long negotiations over the fate of Bears Ears. Interior Secretary Zinke will almost surely shrink it, using the Antiquities Act's injunction that "in all cases, it shall be confined to the smallest area compatible" and the fact that money has not yet been spent on facilities, roads, or a visitors center. Besides more than 100,000 architectural sites and cultural artifacts revered by Native American tribes, Bears Ears holds oil, mineral and gas reserves, and the state is ready to begin extracting them as soon as the rules change.

Using the Antiquities Act to negate earlier presidents' actions is unprecedented and will no doubt be

### **NATIONAL MONUMENTS CLASH WITH MINERAL AND GAS/OIL INTERESTS ALL ACROSS THE WEST. AMONG THE OTHER MONUMENTS UNDER REVIEW ARE:**

Giant Sequoia, San Gabriel Mountains, and Sand to Snow in California; the Sonoran Desert, Vermilion Cliffs, and Ironwood Forest in Arizona; Rio Grande del Norte in New Mexico; Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah; the Papahānāumokuākea Marine and Pacific Remote Islands Marine in the Pacific Ocean; and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts in the Atlantic.

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## BUZZ ON THE STREET

Dear Sir or Madam,

Let me begin by telling you a little bit about myself before I disclose my personal sexual details. I am 38 years old. For the past five months, my lover and I have had the worst sex of our lives. Honestly, we don't know what happened. We consistently execute our routine to prepare for a spontaneous night of passion, which I will list for you now:

1. I trim all the candlewicks to the exact same height because I cannot get horny if even one candle flame is off.
2. I replace my regular bedsheets with my family's antique ones because you can't go wrong with 250-year-old lovemaking bedsheets.
3. I wear my lucky headband which keeps my bangs out of my eyes.

After completing these pre-sex steps, we then proceed to one of our three time-honored, quality-tested sex routines. Unfortunately, none of our usual go-to's were working. While researching possible solutions, I stumbled upon High Love chocolate in a recent *Penthouse* Magazine which impressed me. I purchased a dozen. On Friday the 18th of April at 0700 hours, my lover and I indulged in a High Love and in a matter of minutes the candles were out, the sheets were wet and my headband was flying off. It is now safe to say that we have a new go-to routine.

Kindest regards,  
Lieutenant Sandra Ortiz,  
Canadian Army

# 1906

It took more than a century  
for the world to return to its senses.

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met with lawsuits and court actions, which could take years to negotiate. Most Utahans we talked with were supportive of the monument, but it's hardly unanimous. The town of Bluff heavily promotes its proximity to Bears Ears—streamers flew in almost every

© JOSH EWING



Prehistoric Granary  
overlooking Cedar Mesa

yard and business window—but we saw our share of signs and posters opposing it, too.

I keep thinking about the idea of wilderness and oil or gas or uranium trucks again snaking down the Moki Dugway switchbacks to Mexican Hat. Opening the area to exploration will create more big-rig traffic, more dust, and more air pollution, and for what? A few more years of oil and oil company profits?

And I think about what Wallace Stegner wrote about this area: "It is a lovely and terrible wilderness. ...That is precisely its value. Roads would be a desecration, crowds would ruin it. But those who haven't the strength or youth to go into it and live can simply sit and look... they can simply contemplate the idea, take pleasure in the fact that such a timeless and uncontrolled part of earth is still there."

Making monuments smaller or opening them to extraction might sound practical and might even benefit us in the short run. But, as Stegner notes, there is a value to leaving it intact so humans can just sit and look. We're seeing all these wonderful things because of the foresight of Teddy Roosevelt and presidents on both sides of the political fence over more than a century. People more than a hundred years from now should be able to appreciate them, too.



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# PLANT POWER

by **ROBYN GRIGGS LAWRENCE**

IN THE 1940s, WHEN THE **Soviet Union** WAS VYING TO DOMINATE THE UNIVERSE, MORE THAN 1,200 SCIENTISTS WERE TASKED WITH STUDYING HOW PLANTS LIKE GINSENG AND SCHISANDRA—STAPLES IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE, NATIVE AMERICAN, AND AYURVEDIC MEDICINE—COULD HELP WORKERS, SOLDIERS, ATHLETES, BALLERINAS, CHESS PLAYERS, AND COSMONAUTS ADAPT TO PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL STRESS FOR ENHANCED PERFORMANCE AND SPEEDIER RECOVERY.

In 1947, pharmacologist Nikolai Lazarev rebranded the plants, all but forgotten in Western medicine, as “adaptogens” and defined them as nontoxic herbs that protect the body from damaging physical and emotional stress while improving many of its systems and functions. The Soviets kept their research top secret for many years because of the advantage the plants gave their soldiers and citizens in worldwide competition. Soviet scientists continued to tweak adaptogen regimens, and by 1976, the nation’s athletes were dominating the Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

Adaptogens are pretty miraculous. They create and maintain homeostasis in the body, continually restoring its natural balance by slowing systems down when they’re overheating and speeding them up when they’re sluggish. (They can even do both things—calm and energize—at the same time.) The plants fight fatigue and reduce stress—in an age when stress is rampant and linked to the six leading causes of death.

Dr. Joseph Cohen, an osteopathic physician who integrates cannabis into his functional medicine practice in Boulder and Denver, says adaptogens do far more than most people realize because bringing the body to homeostasis protects the entire neuroendocrine system and the adrenal glands, where valuable hormones such as dopamine, norepinephrine, and epinephrine are produced.

## Is Cannabis an Adaptogen? Does Maca Make You Horny?

In his upcoming book, *The Cannabis-Friendly Guide to Wellness*, Cohen writes about how cannabis works as an adaptogen. He calls the cannabinoid CBD “an adaptogen within an adaptogen” because of its ability to mitigate some of THC’s unwanted side effects. “Cannabinoids do a multitude of things we’re just beginning to understand,” he says.

Cannabis is not officially an adaptogen (according to people who think officially), but it meets all the requirements: nontoxic, stress-reducing, balancing. “It

does act like an adaptogenic herb because the cannabinoid system is all about homeostasis," says integrative clinical nutritionist Laura Lagano, cofounder of the Holistic Cannabis Network, a training and education platform for holistic health practitioners.

More and more scholars and experts are agreeing with her—which is pretty amazing for a plant the federal government still considers a Schedule I drug. Medicine hunter and ethnobotanist Chris Kilham, who has been studying and advocating for adaptogens since the 1970s, is among them. "Cannabinoids regulate the cannabinoid system, and the cannabinoid system is a master regulating system of systems," he says. "That implies all the balancing and harmonizing activities of an adaptogen."

Kilham often drinks extracts of the adaptogens rhodiola and golden ginseng mixed with water when he consumes cannabis because he likes how they all work with each other to make him feel. "Rhodiola and ginseng in conjunction with cannabis is mental Windex," he says. "It sharpens up everything."

Kilham is also a longtime promoter of maca, a root plant from the Peruvian Andes that can increase energy, strength, and stamina and is especially good for women's reproductive systems. Kilham's wife, Zoe Helene, founder of progressive feminist advocacy group Cosmic Sister, has taken maca supplements several times over the years but would always stop because it made her so horny—an effect many people welcome.

"After about a week of taking maca, I feel like a 14-year-old dealing with her first lustful crush, and my husband travels a lot!" says Helene, who recently began taking maca again because nothing else works as well to relieve her perimenopause symptoms.

It's worth it, she says. "I've just had to embrace the increased libido boost."

## FEEL GOOD FOOD

Adaptogens such as maca, ashwagandha, rhodiola rosea, and matcha are the new star ingredients on Instagram and Pinterest and in beverages, bars, powders, and chewables on shelves in natural food sections everywhere. BevNET, a media company that covers the non-alcoholic beverage industry, reports that Natural Products Expo West 2017 will be remembered as the year ashwagandha arrived and suggests the adaptogen plant category could become an entire new beverage category.

If you want to avoid shelling out the high prices these hot new products command, it's easy enough to incorporate adaptogens into your home cooking. You can find edible forms, from fresh to powdered, of most adaptogenic herbs in natural products stores, Asian markets, and online.

The following recipes call for cannabis-infused coconut milk, which is great to have around for stirring into tea and coffee or splashing over fresh berries.

### Maca, Cannabis & Coconut Milk Frappe

{SERVES 1}

- \* 1/2 cup maca powder  
(AVAILABLE IN NATURAL PRODUCTS STORES AND ONLINE)
  - \* 1/2 cup cannabis-infused coconut milk
  - \* 2 tablespoons maple syrup
  - \* 2 cups ice
  - \* 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
  - \* 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Serve immediately.



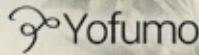
### Green Chia Pudding

{SERVES 4}

- \* 2 1/4 cups cannabis-infused coconut milk
  - \* 2 tablespoons maple syrup
  - \* Dash of cinnamon
  - \* 1/2 tablespoon matcha powder
  - \* 1/2 tablespoon maca powder
  - \* 3/4 cup chia seeds
  - \* Chopped nuts or fresh fruit to garnish
- Combine coconut milk, maple syrup, cinnamon, matcha, and maca. Blend until smooth. Whisk in chia seeds.
- Pour into Mason jars, glasses or ramekins. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight. Garnish with nuts or fruit.



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## Green and Golden Coconut Milk Nightcap

{SERVES 1}

You'll use only a teaspoon of the herb and spice blend in this recipe, so you can store the rest in an airtight container and combine it with cannabis-infused coconut milk for a healthy warm drink. You can also make this with nut milk.

- \* 1/4 cup powdered ashwagandha root
  - \* 1/4 cup powdered schisandra berries
  - \* 1 cup rose petal powder
  - \* 1 teaspoon cinnamon
  - \* 1 teaspoon nutmeg
  - \* 1 cup cannabis-infused coconut milk
  - \* Maple syrup or honey, to taste
- Blend together ashwagandha, schisandra, rose petal powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
  - In small saucepan, gently heat coconut milk until warm but not boiling. Pour into a mug and stir in 1 teaspoon of herb mixture. (Store the rest in an airtight container.)
  - Add sweetener and enjoy.

## Cannabis-Infused Coconut Milk

{MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS}

- \* 32 ounces organic coconut milk
  - \* 1/2 gram cannabis flower or trim
  - \* Double boiler
  - \* Fine mesh strainer
  - \* Cheesecloth or paper coffee filter
- Break up cannabis into small pieces using your fingers or a knife. Combine with coconut cream in a saucepan over a double boiler and heat over medium heat, stirring often.
  - When it begins to boil, immediately reduce heat and simmer gently for 45 minutes. Do not let it boil.
  - Remove from heat and let cool.
  - Place cheesecloth or coffee filter in fine mesh strainer and place over a jar or bowl. Pour coconut cream through to catch solids. You may have to pour through a couple times before cream runs clear. Squeeze out last drops of coconut cream and discard or compost cannabis and cheesecloth.

## EDIBLE ADAPTOGENS

### AMERICAN GINSENG {PANAX QUINQUEFOLIUM}

**FLAVOR:** Bitter, slightly sweet

**BENEFITS:** Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, boosts energy, lowers blood sugar, reduces stress

**TREATS:** Autoimmune disorders, bronchitis, asthma, jet lag, metabolic syndrome, adrenal deficiency, diabetes, immune depletion, sexual dysfunction (male)

**HOW TO EAT IT:** Eat the root raw, steamed or slightly cooked; add extract or powder to smoothies or yogurt

**WHAT ELSE?** American ginseng is less stimulating than Asian (panax) ginseng and can be used interchangeably with it.

### GOJI BERRY {LYCIUM BARBARUM}

**FLAVOR:** Tart cherry, cranberry, tomato

**BENEFITS:** Anti-inflammatory; antioxidant; strengthens weak muscles; tonic for heart, kidneys, liver, and blood; improves vision, focus, energy, and sexual performance; enhances immune system

**TREATS:** Muscle soreness and spasms, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome

**HOW TO EAT IT:** Use dried goji berries instead of raisins in recipes and for snacking; add hydrated dried berries to rice, sauces, stews, or salsas; add to salads and smoothies

**WHAT ELSE?** Goji berries are related to tomatoes and have (ounce for ounce) more vitamin C than oranges, more beta-carotene than carrots, more potassium than bananas and more iron than steak.



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## MACA {LEPIDIUM MEYENII}

**FLAVOR:** Malty, caramel, butterscotch  
**BENEFITS:** Boosts energy and stamina, aphrodisiac, improves sperm count, relieves stress  
**TREATS:** PMS, menopausal symptoms, anemia  
**HOW TO EAT IT:** Add powder to beverages and yogurt; roast or boil root; use maca flour to make bread; eat leaves in salads  
**WHAT ELSE?** Maca is related to turnips, mustard and cabbage and has more calcium than milk. Though it is often called “Peruvian ginseng,” maca does not belong to the Panax genus.

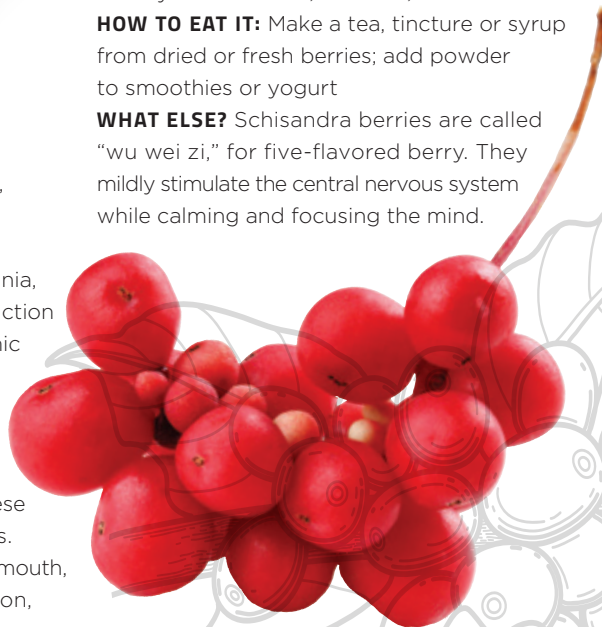


## HOLY BASIL {OCIMUM SANCTUM}

**FLAVOR:** Bitter, spicy  
**BENEFITS:** Antioxidant, neuroprotective, reduces stress, antidiabetic, antibacterial, antiviral, diuretic, stabilizes blood sugar; improves respiration, aphrodisiac  
**TREATS:** Acne, PTSD, bulimia, hypoglycemia, arthritis, bronchitis, vomiting  
**HOW TO EAT IT:** Fresh or dried leaves in tea or as a tincture; add fresh leaves to salads  
**WHAT ELSE?** Holy basil, also known as tulsi, contains compounds similar to those in cannabis. In India, it's known as the “elixir of life” and said to be sacred to the Hindu god Vishnu. Avoid if you're taking blood thinners or anti-clotting medications.

## SCHISANDRA

{SCHISANDRA CHINENSIS}  
**FLAVOR:** Sweet, salty, spicy, sour, bitter  
**BENEFITS:** Anti-inflammatory, astringent, cardiogenic, improves gastrointestinal health, boosts memory, protects liver  
**TREATS:** Respiratory and digestive illnesses, heatstroke, frostbite, exhaustion, asthma, urinary incontinence, diarrhea, asthma  
**HOW TO EAT IT:** Make a tea, tincture or syrup from dried or fresh berries; add powder to smoothies or yogurt  
**WHAT ELSE?** Schisandra berries are called “wu wei zi,” for five-flavored berry. They mildly stimulate the central nervous system while calming and focusing the mind.



## ASIAN GINSENG

{PANAX GINSENG}  
**FLAVOR:** Sweet, slightly bitter  
**BENEFITS:** Calming; boosts mood, memory, focus, and performance; aphrodisiac  
**TREATS:** Stress, depression, insomnia, diabetes, cachexia, erectile dysfunction  
**HOW TO EAT IT:** Make into tea, tonic or tincture; chop root and add to soup, stew, or stir-fry  
**WHAT ELSE?** Panax stands for “panacea of all ills,” and panax ginseng is used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat many conditions. Taking too much can result in dry mouth, irritability, palpitations, blurred vision, and other negative side effects.

## ELEUTHERO

{ELEUTHEROCOCCUS SENTICOSUS}  
**FLAVOR:** Sweet, slightly bitter  
**BENEFITS:** Antioxidant, mild anti-inflammatory, nervine, immune support, lowers blood sugar, improves memory  
**TREATS:** Bone marrow suppression, angina, insomnia, appetite loss, joint pain, mild depression, chronic fatigue syndrome  
**HOW TO EAT IT:** Use ground root to make tincture, tea, or tonic; steam and slice roots and add to stir fries or drizzle with honey  
**WHAT ELSE?** Eleuthero root is a distant cousin to American ginseng but doesn't belong to the Panax genus. The United States made it illegal to market it under the name “Siberian ginseng” in 2002.



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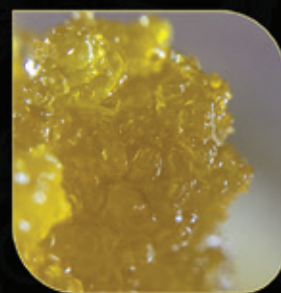
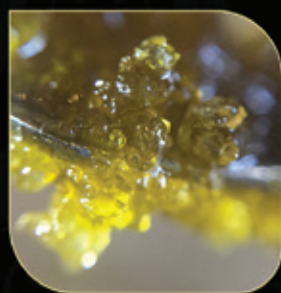
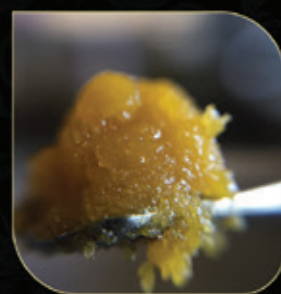
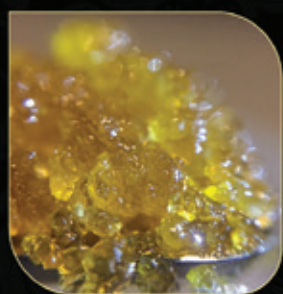
## ASHWAGANDHA

{PANAX QUINQUEFOLIUS}  
**FLAVOR:** Bitter, sweet  
**BENEFITS:** Anti-inflammatory; balances mood; antioxidant; astringent; normalizes blood pressure, general health, and vitality; uterine and fertility tonic; rich in iron  
**TREATS:** Fatigue, insomnia, ADD, anxiety, chronic fatigue, spasms, fibromyalgia, mild Tourette's syndrome, osteoarthritis, anemia  
**HOW TO EAT IT:** Make into tea, tincture or tonic; add powdered root to smoothies and yogurt  
**WHAT ELSE?** Also known as “winter cherry,” ashwagandha delivered antianxiety and antidepressant effects comparable to Ativan and Tofranil in an animal trial. If you have thyroid conditions, consult with a health care practitioner before consuming ashwagandha. **S**

**ROBYN GRIGGS LAWRENCE**  
 is the author of *The Cannabis Kitchen Cookbook*.



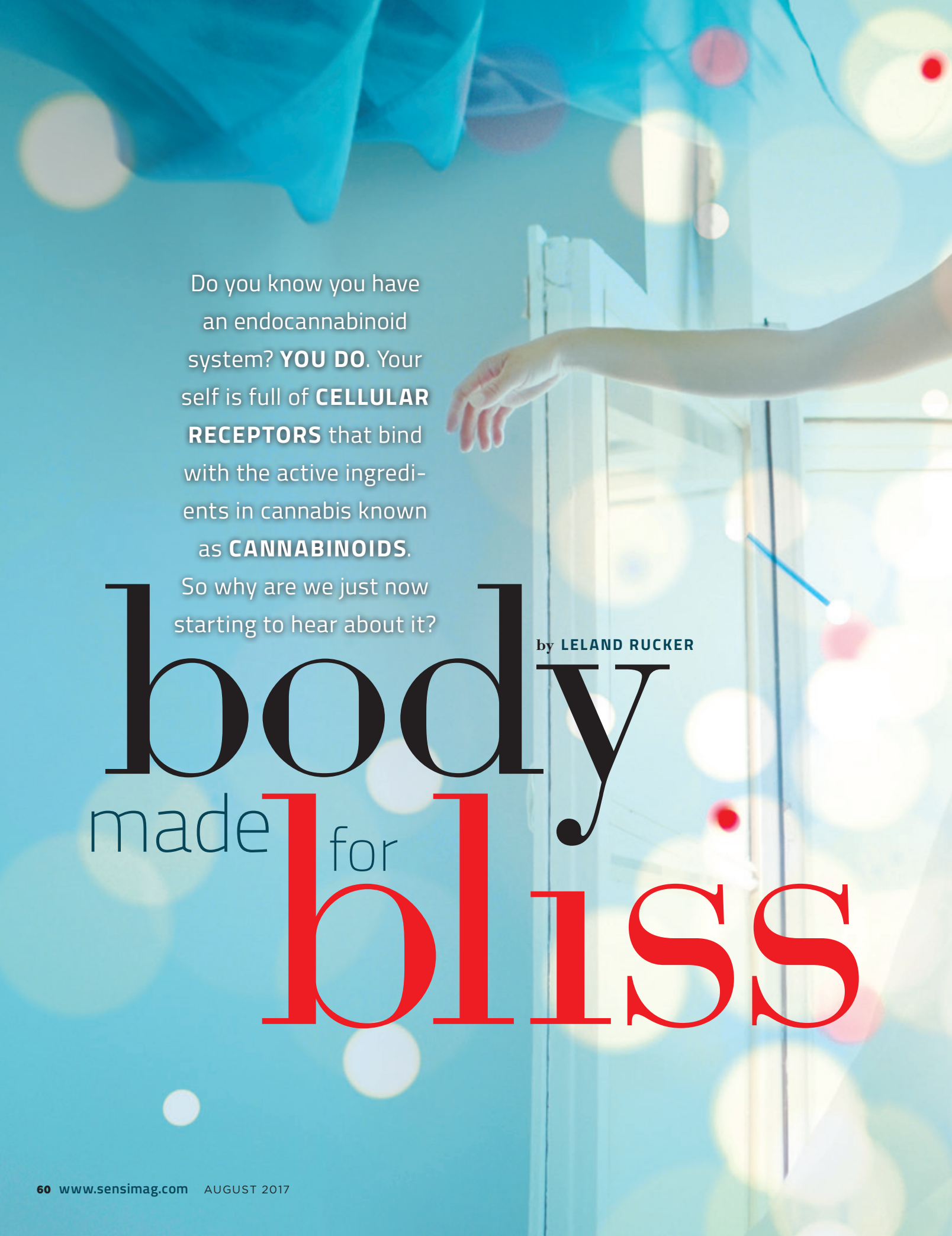
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So why are we just now starting to hear about it?

by **LELAND RUCKER**

# body

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A woman with dark hair, wearing a white strapless dress, is shown from the back, looking upwards. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of light blue and pink circles. Overlaid on the image is a complex molecular structure with red spheres connected by blue lines, resembling a network or a chemical structure. The text is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

**ONE THING I've noticed** OVER THE YEARS, WHEN TALKING WITH MY CANNABIS-USING FRIENDS, IS THAT THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY IT MAKES THEM FEEL "NORMAL" RATHER THAN "STONED." I GENERALLY ANSWER THAT "IT KEEPS ME BALANCED" OR SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES. I WOULD NEVER SAY THAT ABOUT OTHER MIND-ALTERING SUBSTANCES (ALCOHOL, FOR INSTANCE), AND IT'S AT LEAST ONE REASON MILLIONS OF US KEEP COMING BACK FOR MORE.


**BUT WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE WHO USE CANNABIS FEEL THAT WAY? A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, I BEGAN READING ABOUT SOMETHING CALLED THE ENDOCANNABINOID SYSTEM, A REGULATING PROCEDURE WITHIN THE BODY THAT WORKS IN MUCH THE SAME WAY CANNABIS DOES. MY BS DETECTOR TURNED BRIGHT RED. YEAH, RIGHT. EVEN FOR AN ADVOCATE, THAT SEEMED A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO SWALLOW, A LITTLE TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.**

There is much evidence that cannabis, or what's in cannabis, has been used to treat symptoms of human illnesses, disorders, and diseases in many cultures for centuries and that it was a standard pharmaceutical product in the United States. Today, after decades of lies from the government and popular culture's continuing depiction of marijuana users as inept "stoners," we're finding that ordinary people are using cannabis for pain, arthritis, and muscle relief and — surprise — just to relax. But why?

Cannabinoids are chemical compounds found in cannabis plants, more than a hundred different ones so far. For the most part, no other plant accumulates them quite like cannabis, and these cannabinoids provide the plant with everything from pest resistance to

relief from the sun's UV rays. The most recognized are tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), known for its psychoactive properties, and cannabidiol (CBD), recognized for its medical applications. "Many people have tried THC and CBD. Those are called phytocannabinoids," says biochemist Samantha Miller, founder of Pure Analytics, a cannabis testing facility in California.

Scientists have also discovered cannabinoids that are produced naturally in the body. Called endocannabinoids, they have structures similar to phytocannabinoids. Raphael Mechoulam, William Devane, and Dr. Lumir Hanus found the first endocannabinoid and called it anandamide after the Sanskrit word for bliss, in 1992, and later found another, called 2-arachidonoylglycerol, or 2-AG.



So far, so good. In 1988, scientists found receptors in all mammals that respond to cannabinoids, CB-1 receptors found in the brain and CB-2 receptors found throughout the body. These endocannabinoids hook up with these receptors. In biochemistry, it's called the "lock-and-key" model, where the cannabinoid molecules act like "keys" that fit into the CB receptor "locks." When the CB receptor is "unlocked" by a particular cannabinoid, it changes its shape, and how it changes shape determines how it regulates cell signaling (how cells communicate within themselves and how they communicate with other cells). From a chemical standpoint, THC is structurally similar to

**“Historically, people just thought cannabis was something that got you high and concentrated on the THC. Because of medical-marijuana efforts and a little increase in**

anandamide, and CBD is comparable to 2-AG. THC “unlocks” the CB-1 receptor in almost the same way anandamide does, and CBD “unlocks” the CB-2 receptor much like 2-AG.

“The reason we interact with cannabis so strongly is that we have this natural architecture to interact with cannabinoids,” Miller says. “You find these all over the body, in the nervous system, the immune system, everywhere. The endocannabinoids control and influence a lot of different things, like sleep, appetite, anxiety, addiction, the cardiovascular system, immune system—everything to do with quality of life.”

Perry Solomon is chief medical officer at HelloMD, a popular wellness website with a growing number of patients using cannabis. He describes the endocannabinoid system as a feedback mechanism that helps keep the body in equilibrium. “When you get excessive stimulation, pain, emotions, or bad experiences, chemicals are released that can overwhelm

the body,” he says. “Endocannabinoids are a way to keep the body in balance.”

There are literally thousands of research papers and studies around the world on cannabinoids. But cannabis research remains a somewhat arcane branch of science in the United States, which, under the auspices of the National Institute of Drug Abuse, until recently would fund only projects that were aimed at the abuse side of the equation.

US researchers still encounter bureaucratic hassles, lack of adequate study product, and the fact that cannabis remains a Schedule I drug, which by definition means it has no medical purpose. “Conventional medicine traditionally has concentrated on opioids,” says Dr. Selma Holden, a physician and assistant clinical professor at the University of New England. But even US scientists and doctors are beginning to recognize that something’s going on.

“Historically, people just thought cannabis was something that got you high and concentrated on the THC. Because of medical-marijuana efforts and a little increase in evidence, they’re starting to come around,” she explains. “And more patients are turning to their medical doctors and saying, ‘this stuff works for me.’”

Currently, the University of Vermont is the only medical school in the country with an accredited

**evidence, they’re starting to come around,” she explains. “And more patients are turning to their medical doctors and saying, ‘this stuff works for me.’”**

course on the endocannabinoid system in its curriculum. “The people who should know about it aren’t taught it in medical school,” says Solomon, and he understands some doctors’ initial reluctance to deal with the endocannabinoid system. “Until doctors come out and become familiar with what’s involved in the system, there’s a hesitancy.”

Oncologists, who already know it helps relieve the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy,



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are among the leading edge of physicians beginning to take cannabis seriously, and other specialists are looking into cannabinoid alternatives, Solomon says. "A recent National Academies of Science study found

## Oncologists, who already know it helps relieve the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy, are among the leading edge of physicians beginning to take cannabis seriously, and other specialists are looking into cannabinoid alternatives.


that cannabinoids are being used to treat chronic pain in adults, and it does work," he says. "So anesthesiologists are saying, 'Maybe this is something we should look at.'"

Holden says that some of the most exciting research today concerns cannabinoids' anti-inflammatory qualities. "When you think of it, a lot of diseases, not all of

them, have an inflammation component," she says. "In dementia, in asthma, it's all inflammation. That's what's interesting about the endocannabinoid system. It's influencing these inflammation markers."

Much of the research is being done at the behest of drug companies eager to create new products from cannabinoids and able to afford the expensive research needed for approval. GW Pharmaceuticals has developed a couple of cannabidiol products to combat epilepsy that are close to authorization. Arizona company Insys Therapeutics recently received preliminary DEA approval for a synthetic cannabis drug called Syndros. (The company also contributed to the successful effort to stop a marijuana legalization initiative in that state last year.)

Much of the emphasis on cannabis healing these days is concentrated around CBD and marketed for its non-psychoactive effects. Holden cautions that if someone is using cannabis for a chronic condition like back pain or Crohn's disease, the feeling of elevation can be an important part of the therapy, too. "We can't fall too much into the belief system that having an altered state of consciousness is bad."

And that gets us back to where we began. That altered state of consciousness that has offered me and so many people a feeling of relaxation, of being in a place where they can be creative and focused or as a way to deal with common maladies. "Our brains are ideally suited for cannabis," Chris Kilham, an author and ethnobiologist who studies plant-based remedies as the Medicine Hunter on Fox News, told me. "There's no substance other than water that has the health benefits and continued significance of those benefits." 





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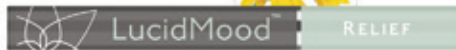
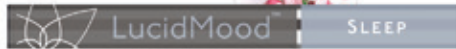


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# ULTRA HIGH

by LELAND RUCKER





Professional ultramarathoner **AVERY COLLINS** hits the road with a little help from **CANNABIS**.

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It's part of the growing sport of ultramarathoning, which is gaining in popularity all across the globe. Though there is no set distance, an ultramarathon is defined as any footrace longer than the traditional marathon length of 26.2 miles. The International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU) organizes and operates four different world championship events and keeps ultramarathon achievement records. Many nations have their own organizations, and races are held on all continents—there are even two in Antarctica. There are perhaps four to six thousand working ultramarathoners.

Why would anyone do this, you ask? Just entering the Death Race, to any normal person, seems, well, batshit crazy. I got the chance to ask that question to this year's winner, 24-year-old Avery Collins. Many of the Death Race pathways he calls "East Coast

trails," built before we learned about things like switchbacks, he says, and instead just go straight up and down hills and mountains. "It's 99 percent rocky, rooty trail, where it's easy to fall and break your face open. Most of the time you're just staring up at the trail," he admits.

A mentally exhausting sport like this certainly takes you to places that are dark and deep, Collins admits. "It sucks," he says. "A hundred miles is going to hell and back. Just absolutely terrible. But you keep going back."

But he had an ulterior purpose. "Ultimately, I did it specifically because there are five golden ticket races on the tour. If you finish first or second, you get an automatic bye for the premier event in California."

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Valley to Auburn, California, held in late June. The byes for the Western States event are coveted among ultramarathoners, as more than 4,000 people sign up and only 375 get chosen for the race. "If you can do the golden ticket," he says, "you can bypass an impossible lottery." It helped. Collins came in sixth in this year's race, his best finish ever in perhaps the most grueling race in a grueling sport.

A lot of American ultramarathoners have migrated to Colorado, says Collins, who lives in Steamboat Springs. "It's mostly atmosphere. We live in a place where it's so much easier to train. There are beautiful trails everywhere, and it's not hot and humid. I never sweat," he says, "and once you get used to the altitude, it's such a pleasant experience."

Collins grew up in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, but spent summers in North Carolina. He played basketball at a college in Wilmington, North Carolina,

**"When you come home from a 30-mile run, your legs still think you're running, and the blood is still flowing fast. Whether eating an edible, using a topical, or smoking a bowl, it just slows me down back to normal, real life."**

**AVERY COLLINS // ULTRARUNNER**

but he wasn't doing much running off the court at the time. He was more into muscle-building and girls than sports.

One day, his gym membership expired. He put on an old pair of running shoes he had from middle school and took off down the road. "Two miles," he recalls running that first day, "and it was an absolute struggle, which is hard to believe, but I went out the next day, and the next day and the next day and the next. There was something about the struggle and what it took to get it done, the pain you experience mentally and physically that you can't get it from anything else."

For all the talk of ultramarathon low points, he says those aren't the ones you remember. In a hundred-mile race, there will only be specific moments. "I was once told it's never an adventure until something goes wrong. And when you have to depend on yourself and be primal and self-reliant, it puts you in a survival state," he says. "No on-demand TV, no car. No one is going to get you over those eight mountaintops but you."

One thing that separates Collins from his contemporaries is that he uses cannabis in his training. There's a healthy debate going on over cannabis use among extreme athletes, and Collins points out that he doesn't consider it a performance-enhancing drug in any way.

So how does cannabis fit into his routine? "There are so many different ways it gets involved, but the starting point is recovery," he says, adding that it really helps with the inflammation that comes after distance training. "I mean it in a sense that when you come home from a 30-mile run, your legs still think you're running, and the blood is still flowing





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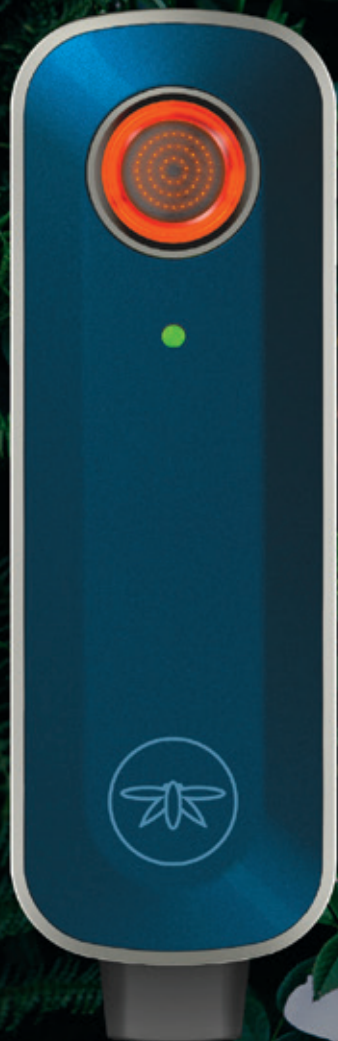


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fast. Whether I'm eating an edible, using a topical, or smoking a bowl, it just slows me down back to normal, real life."


Collins says that it works as a pain reliever as well. He doesn't want to sound too spiritual or hippieish, but he admits there is something special about running through the mountains during practice runs in an elevated state. "It's just amazing—this very natural, spiritual feeling. The whole point of running is getting away from work, getting away from the stress of daily life. Sometimes you can't stop thinking about those things."

He says it took him awhile to find the right balance of cannabis use during training. He follows all World Anti-Doping Agency rules, stopping his use long before each race. "I think experience plays a major role," he says. "As you have more experience with cannabis, you start to use it and dial it in. I feel it's more trial and error for at least a year or more."

He uses many methods of ingestion, including vape pens, topicals, and ointments, but says that smoking a bowl is still his favorite way to ingest cannabis. "I also use a variety of different edibles and try to switch it up in the coolest ways—lately it's putting olive oil into my food at night. It's awesome. You just put it on salad or bread or steak."

He is sponsored by The Farm, a dispensary in Boulder, and Mary's Medicinals, which makes popular cannabis products in Colorado, as well as with non-cannabis companies like inov-8 cross-fit running shoes.

"We really wanted to get away from that stigma about stoners not being able to accomplish anything in life," says Abel Villacorta, director of marketing for The Farm. "We looked around, and Avery being an ultramarathoner, it was a no-brainer to ask him if he wanted to work out a relationship. We want to normalize people who do incredible feats and use cannabis in a productive way. He's such an amazing and positive guy."

When you get right down to it, Collins says, cannabis plays its biggest role in helping him think through and forget about things that really aren't that important. "Sometimes it's nothing more than, 'Is this really something I should be worked up about?' This can be misinterpreted by someone who's not an advocate, but I'm not running away from problems. I'm just dealing with them." 

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The adage “first is best” could be an all-out truism in marQaha’s case. When the company’s founders—Skip Meador and Tim McDowell—first met, they imagined a new way to enjoy cannabis, one that regaled the taste buds while making full use of the plant’s medical, spiritual, and therapeutic effects. After all, McDowell was a chef with special training in food safety and production, and Meador developed his own nutraceutical line governed by strict FDA guidelines.

“We came up in the early days of Colorado’s medical cannabis with the idea of a dose-tested product,” says Meador. “Tim and I felt, with our skillsets, we could do it and be medically minded.” Their simple mission is to bring consumers closer to finding, achieving, and maintaining the plant’s purpose in everyone’s lives, and the close connection that comes through this relationship.

In 2010, their vision became marQaha, and it set the standard for medically centered cannabis products today. Named after the Arabic word for “bliss,” marQaha has always crafted its line of cannabis beverages, tinctures, and sublingual sprays with quality and reliability in mind. It’s one planet many plants: cannabis offers something to everyone, marQaha makes it better by blending it into different ingestible forms that harnesses the power of nature.

Since dosing varies between individuals, marQaha’s beverages, sublingual sprays and tinctures are specially formulated for rapid, time-released, and efficient absorption by the body for quick relief and less guesswork. Each product is formulated around the bottle, designed to consistently deliver the same dose each time.

marQaha’s beverages are also tailored for complete sensory experiences. Every flavor fuses a particular blend of fruit, tea, or coffee matched with a desired effect. For instance, the Lemonade Black Tea and Ozo Cold Brew Coffee Shot flavors are sativa infused to enhance the drinks’ energizing qualities. For a session of relaxation, look to the indica infused Blueberry Chamomile. For a more balanced hybrid infusion experience, try Pomegranate or Fruit Punch.

“We’ve looked at this from the beginning as a medical product, even for the recreational market,” says Meador. “Every ingredient is vetted. Every step is documented. That goes in to every bottle we make.”

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## Happy Trails

### HOW TO **STAY HAPPY** FROM THIS **ROCKY MOUNTAIN** POT SHOP

Tucked away in the quaint mountain town of Bailey, Colorado, you'll find The Happy Camper. This shop, located just off Highway 285, serves as a cannabis gateway between the Denver area and Park County. Park County is a natural wonderland for Colorado's outdoor enthusiasts, where travelers can discover some of the state's most pristine sites for camping, backcountry skiing, hiking, bicycling, fishing, boating, and rafting.

"We fill the niche left open by 'big business' cannabis companies," says Carley Manning, the dispensary's marketing director. "It's our mission to provide the finest cannabis products to both seasoned connoisseurs and those recently acquainted with cannabis."

That mission includes a staff of knowledgeable, experienced budtenders. Customers can count on The Happy Camper to direct them to the flower, edibles, and oils best suited to their needs, whether it's something for a pep-up along one of the area's many biking trails, or a CBD product to unwind and relax the muscles after a day of mountainous trekking.

In regard to oils, The Happy Camper is best known for its award-winning concentrates. The company offers some of the most pure and potent waxes and shatters not only in Park County but in the entire state. To craft their in-house concentrates, "we carefully select only the finest material from some of the most renowned cultivation facilities in the industry," says Manning. The Happy Camper provides its concentrates wholesale and also processes its brand of hashers for other cultivators, too.

As The Happy Camper continues to grow, the team plans on opening in new locations, each within hiking distance of Colorado's world-famous outdoor recreational spots. Watch for bike repair stations, tire filling stations, water refilling fountains, and other services to keep local wilderness explorers on track and tip-top.

To spot The Happy Camper's storefronts or products, "Just look for the orange tent," says Manning. "Get happy. Stay happy."





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For newer and veteran vapers, the Firefly's ease of use is more than welcome. It features just two buttons, and it generates vapor almost instantly. The newest model, the Firefly 2, expands on the original Firefly design, giving users the option of setting variable temperatures, optimizing the vaporizer for different types of cannabis products, such as flower or waxes.

The Firefly also employs a convection heating device, whereas most other vaporizers are actually atomizers instead of vaporizers (most e-cigarettes fall into this category), or they use conduction heating, which is pre-heating vapor to a point where the delicate terpenes get damaged. However, Firefly's convection heating only works when you start inhaling on the vape, ensuring an extremely smooth hit that lifts only the good stuff from the buds—no burning, no coughing, just the pure flavor from your favorite cannabis and the elevation that will quickly follow.

Suzy Lanza works in the realm of business development and creative partnerships at Firefly. She notes common conduction devices, because they heat prior to inhaling, end up burning many of the cannabinoids and terpenes from the buds before ever reaching the lungs. "As we study it more, we are realizing terpenes contain many of the medicinal properties of cannabis," she says. "And in a convection vaporizer, since it's only heating when you inhale, you get practically every terpene and cannabinoid into your system. The Firefly provides whole plant medicine in the form of full spectrum vapor."

Including the full profile of beneficial compounds from the cannabis plant is ideal for both medicinal and recreational consumers. This is due to the "entourage effect," when other cannabinoids and terpenes work in tandem with THC, the part of cannabis that gets us elevated. Terpenes shape how we experience our elevation—whether we feel a jolt of energy or become glued to the couch—as well as for the buds' characteristic flavors and aromas.

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AS THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY GROWS, SO DO THE NUMBER OF NICHE EXPERTS WITHIN IT. FROM TOP-TIER DISPENSARIES AND EXTRACTION BRANDS TO EDIBLE MAKERS AND MARKETING SPECIALISTS, THESE COMPANIES ARE INCREDIBLE SOURCES OF INSIDER INFO ABOUT THE TRENDS AND ISSUES DRIVING THIS THRIVING MARKETPLACE FORWARD. THE SENSI ADVISORY BOARD IS COMPRISED OF LEADERS FROM A VARIETY OF FIELDS WITHIN THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY. EACH ISSUE, ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS SHARE SOME OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH OUR READERS IN THIS DEDICATED SECTION. THIS MONTH, WE HEAR FROM EXPERTS AT **Wana Brands**.

For a full list of our Advisory Board Members, turn to the masthead on page 9.

## 4 Cannabis Potency Myths Debunked

by **Wana Brands**

**VOTERS IN 29 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HAVE CHOSEN TO LEGALIZE MARIJUANA EITHER FOR MEDICAL OR ADULT USE. DESPITE THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS WIDESPREAD LEGALIZATION, CLAIMS OF “REEFER MADNESS” CONTINUE TO SPREAD FALSE INFORMATION ABOUT HIGH-POTENCY CANNABIS, EVEN THOUGH IT’S JUST AS SAFE AS CANNABIS WITH LESS THC. SO WE DECIDED TO WEIGH IN ON SOME OF THE TOP POTENCY MYTHS SO YOU CAN FEEL COMFORTABLE WHEN YOU GRAB SOME GANJA, SIT BACK, RELAX, AND ENJOY THE HIGH.**

**{1} MYTH: Higher potency cannabis is more dangerous than strains with lesser amounts of THC.**

**FACT:** Higher potency is not more dangerous, and the higher potency allows for a more elevated lift with a smaller amount of product consumed. In fact, higher potency strains reduce the number of respiratory inhalants necessary to achieve the same high when smoking and therefore are safer than less potent strains.

**{2} MYTH: Marijuana concentrates and dabbing are unsafe.**

**FACT:** Although concentrates offer a stronger, more immediate lift, they are no less safe than flower or infused products with lesser amounts of THC. In fact, dabbing is one of the most efficient uptake methods, especially for medical patients who are looking for immediate relief from their symptoms. Consuming cannabis concentrates is an effective way to reach an optimum high, although new consumers should always “start low and go slow”: start with a small amount of product and wait awhile after using it before taking more to achieve the desired effects.

**{3} MYTH: Edibles are stronger than flower and concentrates, and therefore more dangerous.**

**FACT:** While it is true that the effects of edibles can last longer for the consumer than other methods of cannabis consumption, these products are equally as safe as flower and concentrates. Many infused product brands have introduced microdose edibles that contain smaller doses of THC. Microdoses allow newcomers and people who have lower tolerances to “ease” into edibles safely and slowly.

**{4} MYTH: Consumers do not know what they are getting regarding potency, and therefore are not in control of their experience.**

**FACT:** While this is true for black market products, in states where marijuana is legal, there are heavy regulations on lab testing and labeling requirements. This helps to ensure a safe and homogenous product and provides consumers with the information they need to determine dosing and desired effects.





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# SENSI NIGHT



**What:** Sensi Night Summer Solstice

**Where:** Denver City Hall

**When:** June 20, 2017



© DANIELLE WEBSTER

The week of the summer solstice, Sensi Night brought the cannabis community out for an early celebration at City Hall. And by early, we mean while the sun was still shining—the extra-long days gave us ample excuse to open up the roof and take advantage of the golden hours while surrounded by a solid crowd of fun-loving, like-minded people. The next Sensi Night is in September. Keep your eyes on the Sensi Mag Facebook for details.



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