

Q&A

All Aboard

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Illustration by Kathryn Rathke

Cupcake Royale's Jody Hall embarks on a new series of public conversations for higher learning.

Jody Hall is changing the present and the future of marijuana culture. The woman who started Seattle's Cupcake Royale dynasty in 2003 recently turned her attention to the edibles industry with her latest venture, [The Goodship Co.](#) In addition to rolling out THC-infused treats like the Saigon Cinnamon Snickerdoodle and chocolate bars, this month Hall is launching the Goodship Academy of Higher Education, a series of heady, pot-centric events. Sitting on the deck of the Cloud Room—where Goodship has its Capitol Hill HQ—she shared her vision for a more enlightened pot future.

Why did you want to start producing edibles?

My career has been a series of fortunate accidents. After earning a business degree and spending a few years at a job crunching numbers for a banking company in a high-rise, I started moonlighting as a barista at Starbucks because I needed money for Christmas presents. I realized, wow, I love this because I'm teaching people about coffee and I'm crafting something. I learned I loved being a pioneer, working in an industry that was just taking off. I also loved the connection with people.

I took a lot of what I learned at Starbucks to Cupcake. When I started that, no one was doing cupcakes, and I saw it as a way to form connections and change the world. We've done little things at this little cupcake place that have made an impact, whether it's lobbying in DC for health care reform, working toward paid sick leave, marriage equality, \$15 minimum wage. People began prodding me to consider getting into this new industry, that it might provide some interesting opportunities to make a difference. Around that time, I was coming around to the notion that marijuana is not harmful, that it actually does allow a connection in a different way than alcohol. It's a different lens through which to see the world.

Is that notion the basis for the Academy of Higher Education?

Higher Ed is the idea of getting people together, not unlike a TED Talk, to have conversations about heady topics while boarded on the good ship, so to speak. It's unfortunate, but there's still a lot of stigma around marijuana. Pot's past is informed by pioneers who were key to legalization: Bob Marley, Cheech and Chong. It's also defined

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by stereotypes like tie-dye and slacker culture. Pot's future has yet to be defined. The idea with Higher Ed is to push that dialog around pot's potential, explore how it's affecting our culture, our senses and our lives.

Is it going to be hosted in the [Cloud Room](#)?

Yeah, it won't be like a traditional lecture hall with rows of chairs. It's more of a relaxed environment and not overcrowded. We plan to do five to six talks every quarter.

Who will be the first speaker?

Blaise Agüera y Arcas. He works in the field of artificial intelligence at Google. He lives in Seattle and speaks all over the world about how machine intelligence will shape our future. It's mind-blowing. I think it will be a great experience for people to discuss while on the good ship.

Do people have to be stoned at these talks?

We recommend that people come "pre-boarded." We say "pre-boarded" because, of course, you can't legally imbibe in any kind of public space like the Cloud Room.

And are you interested in social reform associated with pot, similar to how you've approached social issues with Cupcake?

When I talk about wanting Goodship to be part of changing the world, that means having a seat at the table as this Renaissance unfolds. I've been chatting quite a bit with Alison Holcomb, the ACLU attorney who is head of criminal justice in Washington and is now appointed to reduce prison population by 50 percent in the next eight years. We are talking about Goodship supporting things like that in the future.

Do you have new products coming out?

We want to be the Dean & DeLuca of edibles. Not pretentious, but lovely, more high-end, providing a super-delicious delivery mechanism for THC. We are also launching the Goodship Guide to Edible Cannabis. It's kind of a PSA because no one really understands—what is 10 mg of THC? Or even, what is THC?

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