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Smoke Signal Exclusive (continued): Interview with Jacqueline Ferraro, Vice-Chair of NJCRC

In our March issue, we interviewed Spencer Belz, the COO of Sunny Tien Dispensary & Lounge in AC, and he mentioned that consumption lounges would benefit greatly from being allowed to serve snacks and drinks, even a bottle of water, to their guests, but this is still not allowed by CRC regulations. Do you see this changing anytime soon?

Ferraro: Yes, the restrictions are part of the law, and I understand the frustration of business owners and consumers alike. I believe it will be worth considering how this law impacts everyone and whether it still serves the best interest of our community as the market continues to mature. Revisiting these kinds of practical gaps in our regulations is exactly the work I'm here to help with.

With Chairwoman Dianna Houenou's term expired, what can operators, retailers, and customers expect in the new era of leadership in NJCRC?

Ferraro: What the industry deserves is a consistent, accessible and fair Commission. From ED Chris Riggs and his outstanding staff to my fellow commissioners, there is genuine energy and excitement around the collaborating to get this right. I am also looking forward to engaging with all involved, including the operators throughout every channel of the supply chain. Leadership transitions are a natural opportunity to take stock of what's working and what isn't, and I think there's a real appetite to do that here at the NJ-CRC. The best is yet to come.

You can find more information about the work of the NJCRC, including their livestreamed public meeting schedule, at www.nj.gov/cannabis

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THE SMOKE SIGNAL

THE GARDEN STATE'S FIRST & ONLY CANNABIS PRINT MAGAZINE

Volume 2, Issue 6

"PEOPLE OVER PROFIT"

June 2026

The Road to the World Cup Starts With niche.

Medallion Series



In This Issue: Smoke Signal Exclusive Interview with NJCRC's Jacqueline Ferraro

Matchbooks & Cannabis: The Story of America

THE SMOKE SIGNAL MAGAZINE

The Smoke Signal is an independently-owned & produced monthly magazine, highlighting the best of South Jersey cannabis culture! We celebrate weed, local arts & culture, and the small businesses that make South Jersey special!

Time is the most important thing we have as human beings, and we are so honored and grateful that you've chosen to take a little bit of yours to read this publication!

You can show your support for The Smoke Signal directly by supporting & buying from the small businesses, dispensaries, and cannabis brands you see in our pages! **Every purchase, mention, and repost counts!**

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June 2026 issue: What's in it?

Niche gives back: Your ticket to the World Cup is just an 8th away!

The Smoke Signal's Exclusive Interview with NJCRC Vice-Chair Jacqueline Ferraro

Matchbook Man: Reader Rich Greene & his matchbook collection that tells the complicated story of America & Cannabis

9 to 5 Ryan, a new South Jersey rapper, makes music for the "baddies in the drive-thru"



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The Smoke Signal is proudly an anti-AI publication. We will never knowingly use AI in the writing/design/creation of this publication, and will continue to be vocal about the environmental impacts of data centers, especially those planned for The Garden State. People over Profit.

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Smoke Signal Exclusive Interview:

Jacqueline Ferraro, the new Vice-Chair of the NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission

Congratulations on your recent appointment to the NJ CRC! What sparked your interest in being a part of the industry in that capacity?

Ferraro: Thank you – and let me first thank Speaker Coughlin for appointing me to this meaningful board. I hold deep respect for the Speaker, so for me, this is one heck of an honor. To answer your question, service has always been at the core of who I am. I've volunteered with nonprofits and organizations my entire adult life. In 2017, I found myself advocating for an expanded cannabis medical program, in addition to adult use with the NJ Cannabis Industry Association. There were only a few of us in the space back then. I had the honor of working closely with our legislators, municipalities and stakeholders to help shape responsible bills and thoughtful policy from the ground up. I am thankful, especially for those days, and my colleagues, clients and stakeholders. This next step feels like a profound and natural evolution of everything I've learned and experienced these last ten years or so.



What are the most important things that you'd like to accomplish during your time with NJCRC?

Ferraro: As I became more and more engrained in the cannabis space, I took a shine to the culture of our industry. And that's why I decided in 2018 to start advising and consulting clients throughout the supply chain and the country – what a privilege! The real-time, on-the-ground experience is exactly what I'm bringing to this seat. I commit to showing up with integrity, listening to what operators, patients and consumers are actually experiencing, and doing the practical, unglamorous work of making the regulatory process more equitable and functional.

CRC holds monthly public meetings. What kind of issues or problems does the Commission deal with in a normal meeting?

Ferraro: After many years in corporate business, I've learned that strong institutions are built on sound process and the Commission's work is no different, covering everything from licensing and compliance to rule making and operator oversight. But I really see this as the next exciting stage in the maturation of the NJ marketplace, not just routine regulatory work. We have an enormous amount ahead of us as we revisit existing rules and regulations, contemplate meaningful policy and work to build a framework that truly serves consumers, patients, operators and stakeholders.

(Continued on the back page)

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SCAN ME



Artist Spotlight: 9 to 5 Ryan

9 to 5 Ryan is a rapper out of South Jersey with a wholly unique perspective. He raps in a stream-of-consciousness style about his job at a local fast food restaurant. His music touches on a little bit of everything: from his relationships with co-workers, his thoughts about the customers, and the economics that he and his peers are facing. His latest project, *Work Til Close*, puts all of these ideas into an absurd and hilarious mixture, and adds some fire beats to create some of the most interesting music being made out of Jersey in recent memory. My favorite track on the album is "baddies in the drive thru", a great illustration of the magic that Ryan is pulling off in the album. **Work Til Close is available now on Spotify & SoundCloud.**



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Community Calendar


June 13 & 14 @ 11am-6pm - Black Comic Con (Bethune Center Jersey City) - A celebration of black creators in comics, animation and pop culture! Buy tickets online!

June 4th @ 6pm - US Citizenship Info Session (Pemberton Library) - learn the basics of the citizenship process, from application to testing, presented by library staff.

June 21st @ 11am to 2pm - Mini Putt Fathers Day Wake & Bake (SunnyTien Lounge in AC) - Come and play mini putt while consuming in the lounge. Free event, \$15 special includes breakfast sandwich & coffee or juice. The perfect gift for dads!

June 12 & 13 @ 12pm to 6pm - Elevate The Block (Cuzzie's Dispensary in Camden) - Come out and support local businesses, artists, and creatives at Elevate the Block, a monthly pop-up event bringing the community together through shopping, networking, and good vibes.

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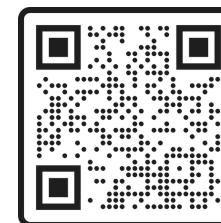


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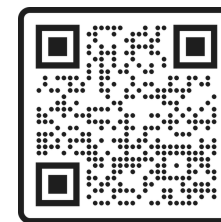
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"There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind."
-Fred Rogers

High-Ku Corner

Unfortunate Event
by Michael Hoff

High on the boardwalk

Watched her drop blunt
between cracks

Our gasps echoing

Michael Hoff is a South Jersey poet & artist, with books of poetry on sale now! @mikehoffcreates

NICHE Kicks Off the Ultimate World Cup Giveaway: How You Can Get In The Game

The World Cup is ready to take over summer 2026 in Jersey. Changes to NJ Transit, watch parties, and bars with extended hours for the summer...the tri-state is ready. Niche, a Hudson County cultivator, has your chance to get in the action, with their Winner's Circle Giveaway! The fine folks at Niche wanted to give back to their care offering two pairs of tickets to each of the 8 World Cup games at MetLife Stadium. All you need to do is purchase a specially-marked 3.5g Niche flower jar. Each jar with a Winner's Circle seal is your ticket to enter the giveaway.

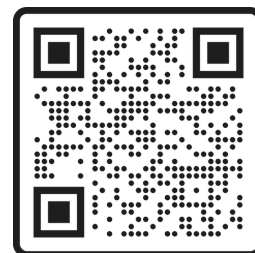
Each 3.5g jar purchase counts as one entry and there is no limit on entries. A new winner will be selected every Sunday until all tickets are awarded. Entries automatically roll into the next drawing. The games are taking place from June 13th to July 29th, so this is your chance to get in the game!



At The Smoke Signal, we love giving our readers a deal on quality weed, so we teamed up with Niche to supercharge your chances to win! We're offering reader-exclusive discounts in Niche's partner stores that are participating in the Winner's Circle promotion.

We're even offering discounts in Niche's retail partner stores that are not participating in The Winner's Circle, so you can sample this quality local brand of cannabis!

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Matchbooks as Storytellers: Rich Greene's matchbook collection illustrates the history of "lighting up" through the decades

"Got a light?"

by Dan Coyle,
Founder & Editor of
The Smoke Signal

It's a question we've all asked, or been asked at one point—one that most people don't think much about. That was the case for me, until recently.

Last month, we had our first Smoke Signal Distance Record holder, South Jersey reader Rich Greene, who took his April copy all the way to Albuquerque, NM, a whopping 1,948 miles away from NJ. I reached out to Rich to congratulate him for the bragging rights that he now enjoys, and Rich had a lot to say. Rich is a matchbook collector. Overall, he has 250,000+ matchbooks in his collection! His collection tells a story, and it's indirectly the story of American history of the last 150 years. I had to visit Rich to see his collection for myself.

Modern Americans, especially our younger readers, may not realize this, but before the tobacco industry nationally imploded over cancer settlements, smoking was EVERYWHERE. Smoking sections in restaurants, movie theaters, you could even smoke on a commercial flight! And with it, came the rise of matches & matchbooks. "At one point, there were 200 match companies in the country. Now, there are 3", Rich says as he flips through a binder of his favorites. Matches were the primary way of lighting up before everyone had a personal lighter. "The only two things that separate humans from animals are written communication and mastery of fire. Matches accomplish both!" Rich tells me proudly.

In their heyday, like all things, matchbooks were great real estate for advertising. Advertisements for local businesses were commonplace on matchbooks. Political campaigns began to use the message space to garner votes. Rich even showed off some decades-old matchbooks advertising for hemp companies before the first federal criminalization laws took effect in 1937! Movies, and eventually television, took advantage of the real estate a matchbook provided. Rich's collection includes representation from each of these elements, and many more. It is vast & impressive!

Meeting Rich and learning about his collection got me thinking about matches as a broader concept. Why did we actually stop using them? There are many reasons why we should start using them again!



Matches foster community. If you ask someone for a light from a match, you're using one of 20 matches in the book, but you had to ask! To get your light, you had to connect with another person. Each match lit is telling its own story of a conversation in the cold outside the office or the bar, or a new friendship blossoming in a cannabis lounge, or perhaps a solo sesh that got you through a hard day. They are a reminder of the fleeting nature of the here and now, and that all books, even matchbooks, have an ending. Smokers are protective of a lighter. We've all seen the little social shame game toward the one who lifts the lighter for themselves after the sesh. With matches, there is none of the social shame. Need a match? Sure, I have a bunch more! Take the whole matchbook!

Matches are accessible. At a convenience store, lighters are \$2–\$3. Matchbooks are usually free at a Wawa. Anyone can use them (responsibly, of course). From a CEO to a someone living on the street, matches are available to any soul who wants to light up. No fee required.

Matches are renewable. Lighters are ubiquitous in modern society, but are a nightmare for the environment. Their production and disposal fills up landfills. Matches use completely renewable resources (paper) and generate little to no pollution.

Above all, matches are a reversion to an analog world in this modern technological society, a rebellion in some small way. So....why did we actually stop using them?

Publishing The Smoke Signal has taught me a lesson about the power of one person exercising open-mindedness, willingness, and kindness in the right circumstances. So let's start something new: let's build a movement back to matches as a community. If enough people get involved, then NJ cannabis could lead a national charge against lighters, and back to the matchbook roots of our industry & community. **Why the hell not?** Over the next few months, we'll feature articles by Rich diving deep into the history of matchbooks & their intersection with cannabis.

Next time you're lighting up, grab a matchbook and give it a try!

