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An Edibles Company Is Likening Its Cannabis-Infused Cookies To Girl Scout Favorites. The Venerable Girls' Organization Is Not Amused



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[Girl Scout cookie season](#) has gone into high gear: Thin Mints! S'mores! Samoas! With girl entrepreneurs chalking up roughly \$800 million in sales annually, American consumers clearly love these once-a-year treats.

But a California cannabis-edibles company's efforts to bring itself some love by interpreting that word "high" literally may result in a terse legal warning: [Kaneh Co.](#) of San Diego this week was promoting its gourmet cannabis-infused (5 to 10 milligrams) cookies as similar to several of the Scouts' best-loved brands, albeit "with a twist."

Specifically, Kaneh is comparing its Toasted Coconut Caramels ("flecked with vanilla and sea salt") to the Scouts' Samoas; its Lemon Sugar Cookies to the Scouts' Lemonades; and its Salted Toffee Blondies ("a brown sugar blondie swirled with toffee chips and a generous dose of sea salt") to the Scouts' Toffee-tastic cookies.

Those descriptions were part of an emailed, self-described "fun playful pitch" which Kaneh publicist Paulina Millan elaborated on in an interview.

“We’re trying to say that, obviously, it’s Girl Scout cookie season,” Millan said. “Obviously people are buying their Girl Scout cookies, but if someone wants a little cannabis with their Girl Scout cookies, ‘Try these for an elevated flavor.’ But we’re not working with the Girl Scouts or anything like that.”

Although Millan said that the Girl Scouts comparison would not appear in any print or online advertising, Mike Lopes, senior director of critical media for Girl Scouts of the USA, took a terse stand on Kaneh’s promotion.

“They’re naming specific cookie types, and the cookie types are trademarked, so we very much don’t allow that,” Lopes said in an interview. “We also don’t appreciate it whenever anyone has anything to do with marijuana, cannabis or whatever, with anything that Girl Scouts makes, especially cookie names. It’s a bastardization of what the program means; it completely distracts from that.”

The cookie program, he said, is intellectual property and therefore not something other companies may just latch on to; instead, the Scouts protect the cookie program as “a financial literacy program in which girls learn how to run a small business.”

A statement from the organization echoed Lopes’s message: “We consider ... such use of our [cookie names] trademarks to be misappropriation,” the organization said, “which we take seriously and, when applicable, [we] will send a cease and desist request.”

Lopes said that other cannabis-related organizations, especially dispensaries, had previously tried to latch onto the Girl Scouts' cookies names and had all been contacted by the Scouts' lawyers.

On a lighter note, Lopes said that the Scouts' cookie program is run individually by the organization's 111 local councils for four months each year, usually from late winter to early spring, and, given that \$800 million annual receipts total, is obviously a success.

Millan, meanwhile, maintained her own light-hearted tone. She described Kaneh as a four-year-old "gourmet cannabis-infused edible brand" founded by San Diego chef Rachel King in league with some friends. As culinary director, King creates the recipes and products, assisted by 65 employees, 60 percent of whom are women.

Millan said that the company's cannabis-infused treats include cookies, brownies, confections and jelly candies (whose flavors include mango chili and, coming soon, guava tamarind). She said that the treats are sold through California dispensaries and collectives. (Interstate sales are not yet legal.) She said the three cookie flavors being compared to the Scouts' brands were not all recently developed and were not deliberately created to match the Scouts' cookies.

She said no formal taste test had occurred but added that she planned to conduct her own personal taste test and munchies session, in order to compare Kaneh's Toasted Coconut Caramels with the Scouts' Samoas.



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Joan Oleck has been on staff at Entrepreneur.com, BusinessWeek, Newsday and other publications.