

SEPTEMBER 2021

# OPENING



# STATEMENTS

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## FROM THE DESK OF *JOHN RAZUMICH*

### Odd Holidays

- September 1 - American Chess Day
- September 2 - VJ Day
- September 3 - National Skyscraper Day
- September 4 - National Wildlife Day
- September 5 - International Day of Charity
- September 6 - Labor Day
- September 7 - Telephone Tuesday
- September 8 - International Literacy Day
- September 9 - International Sudoku Day
- September 10 - World Suicide Prevention Day
- September 11 - Patriot Day
- September 12 - Grandparents Day
- September 13 - National Pet Memorial Day
- September 14 - National Coloring Day
- September 15 - National School Backpack Awareness Day
- September 16 - Collect Rocks Day
- September 17 - Constitution Day
- September 18 - National Cheeseburger Day
- September 19 - Wife Appreciation Day
- September 20 - National Pepperoni Pizza Day
- September 21 - Miniature Golf Day
- September 22 - Fall Equinox
- September 23 - Falls Prevention Awareness Day
- September 24 - World's Biggest Coffee Morning
- September 25 - National Hunting and Fishing Day
- September 26 - National Family Day
- September 27 - National No Excuses Day
- September 28 - National Voter Registration Day
- September 29 - National Coffee Day
- September 30 - Heritage Day

*- JOHN RAZUMICH*



## FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN WILDFIRES ARE STILL A GROWING PROBLEM



Large wildfires are becoming more common than ever — and as western America is hit especially hard, we're seeing new realities for many Americans across the board. You don't have to suffer from asthma or live in the path of fire to be affected, either. Simply living downwind of a high-activity fire area is enough to change your life.

In many places, winter isn't always a respite from wildfires, as wildfires can smolder in the root system of trees or in the highly combustible beds of peat under an insulation of snow. The next spring, dry weather leads to that same fire system reappearing and burning new areas as soon as it's able, and if a winter month is unseasonably sunny, warm, and dry, then this could happen when people are least expecting it.

At the same time, the areas impacted by wildfires are growing. Is this just due to climate change? Perhaps. There's no doubt that we've had a hot year, and anybody who remembers June and July may also remember wondering about how bad the fires would be in 2021. That said, there's no exact correlation between fires and weather; at best, we know that hot, dry weather certainly doesn't help.

*Continued on Page 2 ...*

One common issue is the “put it all out” mentality that dominated firefighting during much of the 20th century. People, including many scientists, argued that forest biology went hand in hand with fire before man arrived on the scene. But when our structures faced threats to their security, the government declared war on all fire, and that allowed forests to become very overgrown — as compared to the healthy “wiping clean” of the underbrush every decade or so.

Throw in the fact that an average wildfire can cause millions of dollars in damage, and it's not hard to see how the Camp Fire in California, which destroyed entire towns, has many worried for the future of fire in *this* century. What happens if these fires continue to get worse?

We might find an answer in the past. Back in 1910, we saw the first billion-dollar fire, burning in August of that year over a two-day period. It had been a bad season, and heat and drought made for a perfect tinderbox situation to be ignited by weather as well as by the embers floating away from the fire and across other areas.

The most famous story from this fire came from Ed Pulaski, fire crew boss and designer of the Pulaski fire tool. Pulaski led his men into an old mining tunnel, the fire in hot pursuit, with Ed trailing in the back near the front of the tunnel to ensure none of his men were killed. They all survived, and though Ed lived with health issues for the rest of his

life after the incident, his story serves as an example of bravery and inspiration as we deal with wildfires in the 21st century.

Will we ever see a summer without smoke? Of course. But that may be less common, and it doesn't mean we have to stop enjoying the summertime. So, remember to be safe, drink plenty of water, and bring your mask, even if COVID-19 isn't as much of an issue in your city. If the fires start up late in the season, you may be glad to have it!



Willie the Quaker parrot was a pretty remarkable bird. Like many parrots, he had a knack for mimicking certain sounds and words, including barking dog noises, human kissing noises, and a fair share of swear words. However, what made Willie a hero one day was not just what he said, but also when he said it.

Meagan Howard, Willie's owner, brought him over to her friend Samantha Kuusk's house while she babysat Kuusk's little daughter, Hannah. Hannah and Willie were both in the kitchen while Meagan prepared a Pop-Tart for Hannah's breakfast. After placing the Pop-Tart on the table, Meagan stepped away to use the bathroom.

## Willie the Parrot: *The Ultimate Danger Alarm*

While she was away, however, Hannah got her hands on the Pop-Tart and began to scarf it down, lodging a piece in her windpipe. She started choking and was unable to signal to Meagan that something was wrong. Luckily, Willie came to the rescue.

Willie began squawking and shrieking, saying the words “Mama! Baby!” over and over again. In a matter of moments, Meagan knew something was wrong. She rushed to the kitchen to find a very frantic Willie and a very blue Hannah. Meagan jumped into action. She grabbed Hannah and performed the Heimlich maneuver until the Pop-Tart piece dislodged itself and shot out of her mouth.

Meagan may have been the one to stop Hannah from choking, but she insists that Willie was the real hero of the story. If he hadn't used his unique mimicking skills to get Meagan's attention, she doesn't know what would have happened. It's worth noting that before that incident, Willie had never used the phrase “Mama! Baby!” before. He knew something was wrong, and he knew how to get help.

Shortly after the incident, Willie received the local Red Cross chapter's Animal Lifesaver Award for his heroic actions.



This gorgeous coastal nation will absolutely blow you away with its beautiful architecture, landscapes, and delicious blend of Mediterranean and Slavic cuisine. Even better, it's a fairly affordable place to visit! While many travelers land in Zagreb, the beautiful capital city and cultural hub, you wouldn't want to miss these destinations.

### Dubrovnik

As the "Pearl of the Adriatic," this coastal city is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Adriatic Sea. It's a beautiful city, featuring 13th century walls, marble stone streets, Gothic palaces, breathtaking churches, and an imposing fortress. There's so much to do in the town square — one of Croatia's largest and most beautiful — and you'll be able to explore many historic structures nearby. Nature also has plenty to offer, with secluded coves and beaches nearby for exploration.

### Plitvice Lakes National Park

Near the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina, you'll find one of Croatia's oldest and most beautiful national parks and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Although it's quite the drive, you won't regret it — the park has an outstanding and picturesque series

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of tufa lakes and caves, all connected by waterfalls. With over 16 interconnected cascading lakes, it's unlike anything else you'll see. If you get hungry, you'll love the nearby National Restaurant Licka Kuca, which is famous for its traditional Croatian preparation of lamb under a cast-iron bell.

### Split

The second largest city in Croatia (the first being Zagreb) is Split, founded by a Greek colony in the second or third century B.C. Historically, Split enjoyed being an independent city-state many times, and that free spirit is very tangible, as Split is very different from any other city in Croatia. With well-preserved Roman architecture and a multitude of museums, it's no wonder Split is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Although Croatia was among the first UN countries to open its doors to Americans, always be safe and check the newest regulations before booking your travel. Hopefully you enjoyed learning about this unique, wonderful country!



## One-Pan Apple Cider Chicken

Inspired by WellPlated.com

### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 1 tsp salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp black pepper, divided
- 1/2 cup apple cider
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 4 tsp olive oil, divided
- 3 sweet apples, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 2 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped, plus more for garnish

### Directions

1. Sprinkle chicken with 1/2 tsp salt and 1/4 tsp pepper. Set aside.
2. In a small bowl, combine apple cider and mustard. Set aside.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, warm 2 tsp olive oil. When shimmering, add chicken thighs top-side down. Cook for 4 minutes, then flip and cook for 4 more minutes. Transfer to a plate and cover with foil. Wipe the skillet clean.
4. Heat the remaining oil in the skillet, then add sliced apples, remaining salt and pepper, and rosemary. Cook for 5 minutes.
5. Return the chicken to the skillet and add apple cider-mustard mixture. Cook for 5 minutes, then serve sprinkled with rosemary!

## HAVE A LAUGH!





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## Remember the 'McDonald's Hot Coffee' Lawsuit?

*IT WAS JUSTIFIED ALL ALONG*

Back in 1992, an elderly woman named Stella Liebeck sued McDonald's in what became known as the infamous "hot coffee lawsuit." The public relations team at McDonald's has made sure the case is remembered as frivolous, but, like the third-degree burns Stella Liebeck suffered from a cup of McDonald's coffee, her lawsuit was dead serious.

The facts were simple: Mrs. Liebeck used the drive-thru with her grandson, who was at the wheel. Once the car stopped moving, she placed the cup of coffee she'd just ordered between her legs and tried to add some creamer. The cup tipped over, dumping the contents into her lap, causing third-degree burns over 16% of her body.

She required hospitalization for eight days. Whirlpool debridement of the burns and skin grafts followed. She was at least partially disabled for more than two years, and that's to say nothing of her pain and suffering.

For all of this damage, Mrs. Liebeck asked McDonald's for \$20,000 — arguably not even enough to pay her hospital bills.

When McDonald's refused to pay more than \$800, the case went to court, and it came out that they'd known for at least 10 years about the dangers their hot coffee represented, with over 700 recorded burns and several lawsuits. But in 1992, their policy was to store coffee at 180–190 degrees F, which is almost the boiling point! Furthermore, McDonald's higher-ups testified on the stand that no matter what happened, they had no intention of changing their behavior. Unsurprisingly, at the end of the trial, McDonald's was hit with a \$2.9 million penalty.

Although the penalty was later reduced, McDonald's still dragged Mrs. Liebeck's name through the mud in the press, with their version of the story being the one that stuck in the public consciousness. But it wouldn't change the fact that they had to pay her around \$700,000 at the end of the day — or that their coffee is now being served at a reasonable temperature.

