

SPRING AT LAST

Easter, Greening Trees, and Spring's Power Over Us All

What's important to you?

That is a question that we've all struggled with over the years, but over the past year, it's come into clear focus for many of us. When we have troubles and challenges, the peripheral things that sometimes cloud our vision and crowd out the stuff that matters just sort of ... dissolves away. We're left with a much clearer picture of our world and our goals, and when those moments happen, they can feel like a real gift. I find that spring — and specifically Easter — can be a moment like that, which makes this spring particularly important to me.

I always try to rededicate myself this time of year. April is a time where we feel energy, and the ability to change things for the better seems very close to the surface. Even though we might get the odd storm here or there, by April, winter's power is usually broken for good. We're left with a changing natural world, with trees and grass greening up everywhere again in preparation for another summer of activity. It's hard not to feel inspired by it all after the cold and darkness of winter.

And this past winter has felt especially dark. I can't remember an Easter in recent memory that's felt as essential as this one does. Easter, of course, is one of the most important days for Christians like me, and it touches on a lot of the same things I've been talking about: rebirth, the end of a challenging season, and hope for everyone in the future. I hope that this Easter people will be able to celebrate safely with family and loved ones, as we start to see the pandemic subside.

I know that we've got a ways to go, and it's probably important to continue to be cautious. But it's also important to be hopeful, to have faith. I believe that we're never challenged with something that we can't come together and solve, and that seems to be exactly what's happened over the past year. Society has been shaken. Many of us have lost loved ones. The kind of law that I practice — estate planning and such — has come to the front of people's minds. People feel vulnerable both physically and financially, and of course, that's exactly how we've all felt over the last 12 months.



And yet, spring's promise remains. Easter remains. We're left with the question, "How do we want to finish this thing?" I know the answer to that for myself, but it is both a personal and public question. If we continue to love our neighbors and support each other, we'll end the pandemic in a healthy, positive way that may make for positive changes in our society. That's the public side. The personal side can be answered every day when we interact with our family, especially if we've been spending more time together than usual.

We're also being given the question, "What happens next?" The only way I know to answer that is to focus on doing the right thing in the present and plan for the future. Planning is, after all, exactly what my law office does for its clients, so it's something I'm very familiar with. But there are many elements to it, and I think that having a positive outlook as we head toward summer is going to be an important element.



This spring, I want to cultivate that positivity and the gratitude that I feel in my heart for my blessings. That's what's important to me. I hope that you can identify and celebrate the things that are important to you as well.

-LeRoy Peterson

For the First Time, a Vegan Restaurant Gets a Michelin Star

It's difficult to take animal products out of French cuisine and replace them with lemongrass, seaweed, and fir (yes, the tree). French meals are generally meat-centric, featuring vegetables solely as a side dish. And, even with no meat, how do you cut out cheese and cream?

Claire Vallee, owner of the vegan restaurant ONA, found a way. The name is an acronym, standing for "origine non-animale." And her restaurant, located near Bordeaux, France, was among the 54 restaurants to earn their first Michelin star in 2021. Although a few restaurants in the U.S. and Germany featuring vegan dishes have earned Michelin stars in the past, no restaurant that was 100% vegan has been honored with a star.

ONA had a bumpy start despite this amazing honor. After crowdfunding and securing a loan from La Nef, which specializes in loans for ethical and eco-friendly businesses, Vallee still ran out of money to complete construction. Undaunted, she used social media to rally 80 volunteers to help finish the job over the course of two months. She finally opened ONA in 2016.

"This is a good thing for the vegan community, as this star is evidence that French gastronomy is becoming more inclusive, that plant-based dishes belong there, too," Vallee told CNN.



During the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, ONA went to takeout only. With the rise in popularity of plant-based diets, demand for vegan restaurants has been growing, but ONA still struggled. Last fall, its seven-course menu featured dishes with intriguing combinations of fir, boletus and sake shiitake mushrooms, dulce seaweed, lemongrass, and galangal (also known as Thai ginger).

Today, the restaurant is currently closed because of the pandemic, but the victory is huge for French cuisine. Gwendal Poullennec, the international head of the Michelin Guides, told *The New York Times*, "The general public might not associate pure veganism with a gastronomical experience." But a Michelin star could liberate chefs who are still reluctant to explore plant-based cooking.

For most of us, international travel won't be on the menu anytime soon — but we hope ONA opens its doors again soon. The world deserves to enjoy ONA's award-winning menu!

Up in Flames

The Fyre Festival's Legal Fallout for Influencers

Influencer marketing has long been a legal gray area, but recently settled celebrity lawsuits related to the Fyre Festival — a failed luxury musical festival — have definitely added some color to the debate.

The idea for the Fyre Festival came from rapper Ja Rule and his business partner Billy McFarland, a 25-year-old CEO of a luxury concierge service. The duo created the event together and touted it as the world's most expensive music festival. They'd also launched an attractive marketing campaign which included celebrity promotions by Kendall Jenner, Bella Hadid, and other influencers. All the while, the organizers knew the Fyre Festival was doomed from the start. In lieu of a multiday, luxury experience, thousands of people were scammed and left stranded in the Bahamas instead.

"[The organizers] had six to eight weeks to pull off something that should have taken close to a year," says Chris Smith, who directed a Netflix documentary on the festival. "But what was most surprising to me was going to the Bahamas and seeing the aftermath of what was left behind and the effect on the people there."

The local economy was devastated. "They had engaged with so much of the local community to try and pull this off. There were hundreds of day laborers working," says Smith. "Fyre had such a high profile that I don't think anyone could have assumed that it wouldn't work out."

As the Fyre Festival fell apart, Gregory Messer — the trustee in charge of overseeing the bankruptcy for Fyre Media — looked into the finances. He began to suspect that there had been "fraudulent

transfers" between the founders and many of the event's promoters, and he began to sue the celebrities and influencers that drove the hype behind the festival.

For example, McFarland and Ja Rule reportedly paid Kendall Jenner over \$275,000 to publish an Instagram post promoting the festival. Although Jenner denied liability, she did not disclose on the post that it was paid and sponsored. Messer's attorney further argued that Jenner had not told her Instagram followers that she'd pulled out of the festival after learning of its disastrous problems.

Although more legal parameters will likely spring up in the future to further define the limits of influencer marketing, this will certainly make any celebrity think twice about accepting money to promote events and brands. And that's definitely for the best!

TAKE A BREAK



SPRING VEGETABLE AND CHICKEN PASTA BAKE

Inspired by TheSeasonedMom.com

Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked chicken, diced
- 1 14-oz can artichokes, drained and quartered
- 1 cup fresh asparagus pieces
- 1/2 cup carrots, grated
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked penne pasta
- 1 3/4 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup fresh chives, chopped and divided
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped and divided
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 F and grease an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In the prepared dish, stir together cooked chicken, artichokes, asparagus, carrots, uncooked pasta, chicken broth, half the chives, half the parsley, garlic, salt, and 2 tbsp Parmesan.
3. Cover the dish tightly with foil and bake for 35 minutes.
4. Uncover and stir. At this point, check the pasta to make sure it is al dente. If it's undercooked, cover the dish and return to the oven until pasta is tender.
5. Remove from oven and garnish with remaining Parmesan, chives, and parsley.

TRENDING RAINCOAT STYLES FOR 2021

As April showers arrive, how do you stay dry when dashing from place to place? Luckily, wearing a raincoat doesn't mean looking like Paddington Bear anymore. Here are several raincoat styles you'll love so much you'll be praying for rain.

No. 1: The Everyday, Lightweight Hoodie Raincoat

There's something satisfying about wearing a black hoodie and not having to make other decisions about an outfit that day. The same applies to your everyday, lightweight black hoodie raincoat. Beautifully simple, you can wear it over anything you own — but until the rain comes, you can leave it rolled in your bag or pocket. Yes, it's that compact! Check out Rain's Ultralight Jacket on US.Rains.com, which fits the bill perfectly.

No. 2: The Confident, Classic Trench Raincoat

Just because you have a trenchcoat doesn't mean it's rainproof anymore — so why not buy a fashionable, elegant trenchcoat you can wear rain or shine? A high-quality trenchcoat is super practical, and it'll also give you a classic, on-trend look for years to come. Find yours on Zappos.com, which has beautiful coats that'll last a lifetime at a decent price.

No. 3: The Practical, Stylish Poncho

Ponchos are a rainy day favorite because they're affordable, easy to put on no matter how bulky your clothes are, and generally easy to store once you're done wearing them. If you live somewhere that doesn't rain often or you just prefer the feeling of a loose wrap, then a light poncho might be your best option. Some even include pockets, making your life a little easier wherever you're headed! Try Amazon.com to find diverse styles at various price points.

Of course, we cannot ignore the popularity of Sherlock Holmes. Will his raincoat, the Inverness cape, be the next sensation? Combining elements from a poncho and trenchcoat, the Inverness cape is a unique style that's fashionable and practical! No matter which style you prefer, these coats prove that looking good while staying dry is possible.



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Spring's Power Over Us All
- 2 For the First Time, a Vegan Restaurant Gets a Michelin Star
The Fyre Festival's Legal Fallout for Influencers
- 3 Spring Vegetable and Chicken Pasta Bake
This Spring's Trending Raincoat Styles
- 4 AI Is Helping Us Explore Space!

Genius Technology

3 Ways AI Is Changing Our Lives for the Better

Artificial intelligence (AI) became a household feature when Apple introduced us to Siri, and it expanded with Amazon's Alexa and Google Home. However, AI can do so much more than tell us the weather or answer our customer service questions.

Today, AI is more advanced than ever, and as engineers continue to tweak its capabilities, it continues to shape the way we think about the future. Here are three ways AI is expanding beyond computer programs.

Exploring Mars

Putting humans on Mars is NASA's ultimate goal, so it's probing for safe landing sites on the big red planet with the help of AI. For the past 15 years, scientists have relied on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter to send photos and other valuable data to NASA. One of the crucial aspects of the planet that NASA needs to study is the craters, both old and new. But expecting the orbiter to find these with precision hasn't always been easy. In 2020, NASA scientists developed an AI software that could detect fresh craters on Mars' surface in the photos that the orbiter sends back. This has already led to the discovery of dozens of once-hidden craters in the orbiter's photos.

Detecting Disease

Our health has never been more in focus than it is today, and innovators know that. Some AI devices now can detect illness just by smelling someone's breath. The bots are designed to pick up on certain odor cues that the body gives off while fighting diseases, like cancer or diabetes. While these machines are still in the implementation and development phases, they have the potential to improve diagnostic testing and find diseases in the near future.

Creating Better Engineering Platforms

Engineers have thankless, albeit powerful, jobs. While they're responsible for some of our biggest achievements, much of their job is spent tinkering with existing models to improve small components for greater success. Thanks to AI, Stanford University professor Chris Re surmises that engineers may be able to spend more time playing with greater ideas instead. Machine-learning technology is capable of understanding where the pitfalls in a device lie and how it would need to be improved. This can cut down on time spent doing mundane work, and instead, engineers can move innovation along faster than ever.