



In This Issue

- 'Tis the Season
- Pecans: Delicious and Nutritious
- Holiday Shopping Tips
- The Wine Corner
- Recipe of the Month
- A Final Word

A Note from Glen

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas, if you celebrate Christmas. To those of you who celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or other December events, we wish you a happy holiday season as well.

The new "Food Fact" feature initiated last month will now be included regularly. I think you will be amazed with the facts about maple syrup which you will find on page 2.

For those of you who are looking for a "sweet" gift for friends or neighbors, I suggest you try the [Caramel Corn](#) recipe. It is a featured recipe in this December edition of the newsletter. It is done in the microwave and takes only a few minutes. I think it is a recipe that you will repeat!

Brain Teaser

Changing one letter in each of the following words will make new words that are all related to each other. What are the new words?

Storm Payable Cable Moth

See page 3 for the answer.

'Tis the Season



Yes, it's that time of year again! It's the season to be jolly. Or merry. Or something. For approximately one month a year, or four if the decorations in some supermarkets are to be believed, we're called upon to eat like there's no tomorrow, drink like there's no liver disease, and buy like there's likely to be a shortage of bath gel!

If you've waited until December to do your shopping, be careful out there! The mall parking lots are full and cars are racing around corners in the parking lot, sending parents scurrying with their kids in their hands to get out of the way of the quest for that last parking spot on earth! Terrorizing shoppers with cars seems to be a better use of time than adding 2-3 minutes to the walk across the parking lot.

Then, once inside the mall, you had better know what you are looking for and where to find it because there will be no salesperson to help you. They are either nonexistent or hiding out somewhere.

Let's assume you were successful in your shopping and now have decided to relax at the food court and have a quick snack. Hint: It's not going to happen. You see, in the food court anything goes when racing to get an open table. Then, once you find a spot, you have to be very careful to protect it. If you step away from your table for one second somebody will perform their "public service of the day" by removing your half eaten food items and throwing them away. No, I'm not referring to the mall employees; I'm referring to your fellow shoppers. They are vicious this time of year.

Of course, now that your shopping is over, you still have to get your car out of the parking spot. On the way to it there will be a line of 5-6 cars following you and trying to run you over as you head to your spot. Oh, and once you get to your car it is inevitable that someone will block you in while waiting to take the spot you are vacating.

Remember though this is the season to be jolly, or merry, or something and it only comes once a year.

Seriously though, if you take some time away from the season's hectic pace and step away and relax, it'll make the holidays much more enjoyable.

Tips and Techniques

Pecan Storage Tips: To preserve freshness at home, store pecans in clean, dry, airtight containers. Shelled pecans will last at room temperature 1 to 2 months, refrigerated 6 to 12 months, and frozen for at least 2 years.

Cookies: For a moister, puffier cookie use a larger proportion of brown sugar to white. You can substitute up to ALL brown for white sugar for maximum chewiness. Darker brown sugar (more molasses) will produce a chewier result.

Food Fact

Maple Syrup Guess how many gallons of raw sap it takes to make 1 gallon of pure maple syrup? When the sap starts running, Vermont sugar makers start stoking the fire under the evaporators. There are 40 gallons of raw sap per gallon that reaches your breakfast table. The all-natural sweetener is loaded with calories, 50 per tablespoon, and has no significant nutritive value. But it's so flavorful a little will go a long way. Maple sugar is about twice as sweet as refined granulated sugar, and is produced when nearly all the sap has evaporated. Try it sprinkled on scones or biscuits or stirred into hot apple cider!

Fun Facts and Trivia

Over 15 billion prizes have been given away in Cracker Jacks boxes.

The world is not round. It is an oblate spheroid, flattened at the poles, and bulging at the equator.

Americans eat on average 18 acres worth of pizza every day.

A kangaroo rat can last longer without water than a camel.

Pecans: A Delicious and Nutritious Snack

The quiet little pecan, delicately sweet and so rich tasting, is as American as, well, pecan pie! The pecan tree, a member of the hickory and walnut family, was growing wild in the United States long before any newcomers arrived here. Pecans originated in central and eastern North America and the river valleys of Mexico. They are native to southeastern North America, from Texas and Mississippi to southern Iowa and Indiana. They grow wild in Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina and other southeastern states of the U.S. The pecan is the only tree nut that is truly native to the United States. It is considered one of the most valuable nut species in North America. While many very old original pecan trees still produce nuts that are gathered and marketed, today most commercial pecans come from cultivated trees which produce pecans with a thinner shell that is much easier to crack than the wild pecans, making them more marketable. The cultivated trees are also more reliable fruit bearers than their wild cousins that bear erratically.



Pecans were widely used by pre-colonial residents because they were accessible to waterways, easier to shell than other North American nut species and of course, for their great taste. Native Americans relied on pecans as an important food staple. The early colonists learned survival lessons from the Indians who shared their knowledge and taught the early settlers how to gather and utilize the nuts for sustenance throughout the harsh winters.

Pecans are very nutritious. They contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals including vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, several B vitamins, and zinc. One ounce of pecans (approximately 20 halves) provides 10 percent of the recommended Daily Value for fiber. Pecans are also a natural, high-quality source of protein. They contain very few carbohydrates and no cholesterol. Pecans are naturally sodium-free, making them an excellent choice for those on a salt or sodium restricted diet.

Nearly 60 percent of the fats in pecans are monounsaturated and another 30 percent are polyunsaturated. This leaves very little saturated fat in pecans. The unsaturated fat in pecans is heart-healthy fat meeting the new Dietary Guidelines that recommend Americans keep intake between 20 and 35 percent of calories, with most fats coming from heart-healthy sources like fish, nuts and vegetable oils. If you are wondering about trans fat, pecans have none.

In addition, pecans contain about 40 mg of plant sterols which are highly touted for their ability to reduce cholesterol.

Holiday Shopping Tips

The Sunday edition, November 11, of the Los Angeles Times included a section regarding holiday shopping. I thought the article was worthwhile and have condensed part of it for you below just in case you still have shopping to do.

Tips for Saving Money

- Limit your holiday spending to your net income, that's after taxes, for three working days. That way you can (theoretically at least) pay it off by the end of January.
- Pay with cash and go home when you don't have any more.
- Write your holiday budget on a piece of paper and carry it with you. Consult it often. The total should include all expenses like travel, postage, decorations, and any other related expense. Add purchases as you go and when you reach your limit, STOP.
- Walk, ride your bike, or take the bus to the store or mall. This way you won't be able to purchase more than you can carry home.

Shipping Tips

- Use sturdy new boxes with plenty of padding. Remove old labels if a box is used.
- Use packing tape only. Do not wrap the box with string that can get caught in automatic processing equipment.
- Put the address on the outside and inside of the package. The one on the outside should be placed on one spot, not all over the box.
- Ship early. Check with the carrier to determine the last day for shipping.

Tips for Saving Time

- To avoid long lines and crowds, shop early, or late, in the day.
- Experts agree that the first day of the workweek is usually the least busy for stores so try shopping before noon on Monday.

- Make use of the wrapping services provided at the malls. Some are manned by volunteers with the proceeds going to charity. Others are services provided in the mall for profit, but they will save you time.
- Use the concierge. The staff may be able to help you brainstorm ideas, or make restaurant reservations.

Tips for Shopping at Home

- Curl up with a pile of catalogs and your laptop. I am sure you are still getting catalogs in your mailbox. Catalogs are key drivers of online sales. A lot of people will place orders for goods online with a catalog nearby. You don't have to go out of your house and the packages are dropped off at your door! You don't have to deal with parking or waiting to be helped. You don't have to endure the biggest disappointment of all – they just sold the last one a few minutes ago!
- If you're not comfortable paying with a credit card, consider PayPal, Google Checkout or Bill Me Later.
- Be sure you understand the retailer's return and exchange policies. And find out who pays for return shipping.
- Check for shipping deadlines and for promotions that allow faster shipping. If it's too late to ship, some stores will allow you to order online and then pick it up at the store's customer service counter.
- Some retailers will offer free shipping, some with conditions, such as spending more money than you'd planned to. Some of them will ship at no charge, no strings attached, to increase sales.
- Read the fine print; details such as warranty information often are displayed in small type.
- Don't forget to print purchase confirmations and keep them on file just in case there is a problem with your order.

Happy Shopping!

The Wine Corner



If you are having a holiday party, or attending one, wine is a great accompaniment. You probably don't need to get the most important brand or vintage unless your crowd consists of a group of wine connoisseurs.

Holiday parties typically have a variety of tastes and flavors so you can pretty much forget trying to match the wine to the food. Basically you need to give your guests a choice of red, white, or blush. This will satisfy most tastes.

Wine in moderation is a festive addition to the holiday party. There are no fastidious rules for holiday party wines, so if you are hosting a party, have a few basic wines available for your guests. Guests may bring a bottle or two as a welcome addition to the festivities. Enjoy.

Quotable Quotes

A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on. ~ John F. Kennedy

A civilized society is one which tolerates eccentricity to the point of doubtful sanity. ~ Robert Frost

Festive Facts

It is predicted that within the next 5 years, emailed Christmas cards will overtake actual hard copies of good wishes as a way of spreading Christmas cheer.

The least productive day of the year is the last day of work before Christmas.

Happy Holidays

Recipe of the Month

December is your lucky month! I have included 2 easy and delicious recipes for the holidays! You should try them both!

Luscious Pecan Pie

1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup light Karo syrup
3 eggs
1 cup pecans



Melt butter. Add sugar and Karo. Beat in the eggs, 1 at a time. Blend in pecans. Pour into your favorite 9-inch crust and bake at 350° F for 50 minutes.

Buttery Caramel Corn

Place 16 cups of popped corn in a large paper bag.

1 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup white Karo syrup
1 stick margarine
1/2 teaspoon salt

Place above ingredients in a large bowl in microwave for 2 minutes. Stir well. Micro again for three minutes, stirring after each minute.

Add 1 teaspoon vanilla and 1/2 teaspoon soda. Stir well and pour over popcorn in bag.

Fold top of bag and Micro 1 minute. Shake. Micro another minute. Shake. Micro again 30 seconds. Shake. Micro another 30 seconds. Shake. Shake out on foil to cool. Enjoy! Or store and enjoy later!

A Final Word

Response to this newsletter has exceeded my expectations since I composed the first issue in March. Thanks to all of you who have passed the word and suggested that your friends and neighbors join the mailing list. The number of recipients is increasing regularly. If you know someone who might be interested, they can sign up or read previous editions on the [Glen's Place Newsletter](#) page of my website.

This has been a great year for [Glen's Place](#). I hope you have had a good year also. Enjoy the holiday festivities. Be safe!

Comments regarding this newsletter are welcome. Send your thoughts to glendal@glensplace.com.

Until next time remember: No pressure, no diamonds!

Answer to Brain Teaser: Story Parable Fable Myth