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**Elucidations & Elaborations**

Happy Valentine's Day. Love is in the mail. It's tradition! According to the Greeting Card Association, 25% of all cards sent each year are Valentine's Day cards. That's second only to Christmas cards.



No matter how old you get, Valentine's Day is still special. We have our own traditions for this day. I'm sure you do,

too!

Many people get married on Valentine's Day. We missed that by a week but we can celebrate our anniversary and Valentine's Day at the same time. (Don't tell, but it will be our 42<sup>nd</sup> this year!)

**Brain Teaser**

Seven men arrive at a meeting, and each of them shakes hands once with each of the others. How many handshakes does that make?

See page 3 for the answer.

**Leap Year - All You Need to Know and More**



February 29 is a date that *usually* occurs every four years, but not always! More on that later.

This day is added to the calendar in leap years as a corrective measure because

the earth does not orbit around the sun in precisely 365 days. Specifically, the actual solar year is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds long. That's the time it takes for Earth to make a full revolution around the sun. It is calculated by taking the average time that it takes for the Earth to move from one vernal (spring) equinox to the next.

Most years that are evenly divisible by 4 are leap years, but there are exceptions. Years that are evenly divisible by 100 are *not* leap years unless they are also evenly divisible by 400, in which case they *are* leap years. For example, 2000 *was* a leap year but 2100, 2200, 2300, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2900 and 3000 *will not be* leap years, but 2400 and 2800 *will be*.

The marginal difference of 0.000125 days between the average year on the Gregorian calendar and the actual year means that, in 8,000 years, the calendar will be about one day behind where it is now. That's not for us to worry about since most of us will not be around then!

Do something special and enjoy your extra day this year.

## From the Kitchen



Image courtesy of [Lee Valley](#)

I have one last gadget to tell you about, and then I will go to other topics! This

stainless steel rasp and zester should be in every kitchen! It comes from one of my favorite web stores, [Lee Valley](#), which I have talked about in a previous newsletter.

The story is that the wife of one of the Lee Valley woodworkers discovered that his new wood rasp was perfect for zesting oranges. Then she found that it was perfect for zesting lemons and limes. It worked great for grating nuts, ginger, garlic, and especially for grating hard cheese for salads or pasta.

The utility of this device was greatly enhanced for kitchen use when Lee Valley patented the design of a stainless-steel base that makes the rasp easier to hold. It also collects the zested material. Just remove the base and there it is, ready for your recipe.

You can get this Stainless [Steel Rasp and Zester](#) from their website. You will be glad you made the investment!

While you are visiting the [Lee Valley](#) site, don't forget to explore other things. Some of my most useful and unique garden tools came from there.

## Featured Recipe: Cherry Cheesecake

I have two good cherry cheesecake recipes. If you are interested in the easy no-bake one, you can find it in the [February 2009 Newsletter](#) or on the [Glen's Place Desserts](#) page. This recipe is more authentic if you have a springform pan (it's not too late to get one) and it will make a sublime dessert for your sweetheart on Valentine's Day!

### **Crust:**

1 cup graham cracker crumbs  
3 tablespoons sugar  
1/4 cup butter, melted

### **Cheesecake:**

24 ounces Philadelphia Cream Cheese, softened  
3/4 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
3 eggs  
16 ounces Comstock Red Ruby Cherry Pie Filling, chilled

Combine crumbs, sugar, and butter; press onto bottom of 9-inch springform pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside.

Combine cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla, mixing at medium speed with electric mixer until well blended. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Pour into pan and bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 250 degrees and continue baking for 30-40 minutes. Loosen cake from rim of pan.

Chill. Spread cherry pie filling over cheesecake before serving. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

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William Lawrence started distributing his cream cheese in foil wrappers in 1880. He called his cheese Philadelphia Brand Cream Cheese, now a famous trademark of Kraft Foods. His company, the Empire Cheese Company of South Edmeston, New York, manufactured the cream cheese.

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## Wine Selection of the Month



Tobin James Cellars, located 8 miles east of Paso Robles on Hwy 46, is undoubtedly the most popular winery in Paso Robles. Not only are their wines tasty, but everyone is friendly; both staff and visitors.

Late into the season, after the harvest is over, a few select rows of Zinfandel grapes are left on the vine. These luscious, super ripe gems concentrate and intensify the flavors, creating a wine that is completely unique.

This Late Harvest Zinfandel, Liquid Love, is the perfect dessert wine for your

Valentine celebration. This remarkable wine is rich, decadent, and sweet. It is delicious either alone or with anything chocolate! You'll agree that this Liquid Love is worth the \$17 you pay for a 375mL bottle! Happy Valentine's Day.

## Through the Grapevine . . . . .

Wine is like opera. You can enjoy it even if you do not understand it.

In NYC, they hail taxis. In Napa, they hail cabs.

Wine drinkers make grape lovers.

## A Flexitarian Diet

What is a flexitarian diet? It's described as significantly cutting meat out of a diet without becoming a full vegetarian. Americans eat more meat than any other people in the world. We consume about one-sixth of the total, though we're less than one-twentieth of the population. But that's changing. In recent years, consumers are choosing to eat less meat. According to the Department of Agriculture, our meat and poultry consumption will fall again this year, to about 12.2 percent less in 2012 than it was in 2007. Beef consumption has been in decline for about 20 years. The drop in chicken consumption is even more dramatic over the last five years or so. Pork also has been steadily slipping for about five years.

Why is this happening? Many consumers are buying less meat because prices are high and times are tough. Others are choosing to eat less meat for all the right reasons. *We're eating less meat because we want to eat less meat.* In an [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com) survey of 1,400 members, more than one-third of home cooks said they ate less meat in 2011 than in 2010.

Whatever the reason, it seems that flexitarian diets are becoming a way of life for many people.

## A Final Word

Thanks again for reading the Glen's Place Newsletter. Pass it along if you know someone who might enjoy it. Send ideas, comments, and questions to [Glen@Glen's Place](mailto:Glen@Glen's Place).

*Until next time remember: My obsession with nostalgia is all in the past.*

**Answer to brain teaser: 21**

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