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A Note from Glen

Happy Valentines Day from Glen's Place! February is a special month for me. It happens to be the month of our anniversary (it's 38 years this month) and the month that I retired in 1999. Could it have been 9 years already since I turned in my keys and said goodbye? Enjoy the holidays that come in February.

Fun Facts and Trivia

Here's a Math problem for you. Did you know that $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$

The state of Alaska has the highest percentage of people who walk to work.

Brain Teaser

Can you find the anagrams of the following words?

COAGULATE
BACTERIAL
BALANCERS
HEADLAMPS
MILESTONE
TELEPHONY
UNNOTICED

See page 3 for the answer.

February: For Lovers and Presidents



Every February, across the country, lovers express their love for each other. Millions of boxes of chocolates and bouquets of roses are purchased (mostly by men) for this February 14 holiday. And who can count all of the cards that are sold. Valentine's Day is also the day on

which elementary school students get all giddy over the messages on the heart shaped candy. Enjoy the day however you choose to celebrate!

February is also the month of "Presidents' Day".

Remember when we celebrated separate birthdays for Washington and Lincoln in February? Officially, the third month of February is Presidents' Day. Originally, Washington's Birthday was celebrated on February 22 and Lincoln's Birthday was celebrated on February 12. Then, in 1968, congress enacted legislation that affected several federal holidays. One of these was Washington's Birthday, the observation of which was shifted to the third Monday in February each year whether or not it fell on the 22nd. This act, which took effect in 1971, was designed to simplify the yearly calendar of holidays and give federal employees some standard three-day weekends in the process.



Each February, in schools across the country, students learn about the achievements and contributions of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Quick Facts about George Washington:

Birth: February 22, 1732
Death: December 14, 1799
Home State: Virginia
Party Affiliation: None
Terms in Office: 1789-1793 and 1793-1797

Quick Facts about Abraham Lincoln

Birth: February 12, 1809
Death: April 15, 1865
Home State: Illinois
Party Affiliation: Republican
Terms in Office: 1861-1865 (Assassinated on April 14, 1865)

Tips and Techniques

Have drop cookie dough on hand and ready to bake by making up a large batch of dough. Roll the cookies into balls, place on a cookie sheet, and then place the cookie sheet in the freezer. When the cookies have frozen, take them off the cookie sheets, place in a freezer proof resealable bag and store in the freezer. When you want fresh baked cookies, just take them from the freezer, place them on a cookie sheet, and bake. They do not need to be thawed.

Test cornstarch for freshness by mixing one teaspoon of vinegar with one teaspoon of cornstarch. The mixture will bubble if the cornstarch is fresh.

Food Fact

"Pea" is for Protein. Can eating peas save your eyesight? Peas are an excellent source of lutein, which is believed to help fight macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in people age 65 and older. It may surprise you to learn that peas are not vegetables. They're actually legumes. Either way, a 2/3-cup serving contains about 5 grams of protein, or about 10% of the daily protein needs of a 130-lb. person. Like other legumes, peas are rich in B vitamins, minerals, and soluble fiber. Frozen peas are just as nutritious as fresh. Add them to pilafs, bean salads, and soups.

Life's Little Lessons

Life isn't always fair, but it's still good.

Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.

It's never too late to have a happy childhood but the second one is up to you and no one else.

Swiss Chard

OK, I know what is probably going to happen when I start writing about Swiss chard. After you stop laughing, you are probably going to say, "What's Swiss Chard?" I hadn't tried it myself until recently when I came upon a pasta recipe which included it as one of the



ingredients. The recipe sounded good so I gave it a try. It was good. I have since repeated the recipe and also tried chard in other recipes. (The Penne with Sausage and Chard recipe is included in this newsletter as the recipe of the month.) It's easy. Give it a try!

Swiss chard, along with kale, mustard greens, and collard greens is one of several leafy green vegetables often referred to as "greens". It is similar to spinach. The flavor is bitter, pungent, and slightly salty. It comes in white, red or yellow with wide fan-like green leaves. It is quite possibly the most under appreciated of all vegetables.

If vegetables got grades for traditional nutrients alone, Swiss chard would be one of the vegetable valedictorians. It has enough vitamins and minerals to place it at the head of the Dean's List. It is loaded with vitamin K, Vitamin A, and Vitamin C. One cup of cooked Swiss chard has 306.3% of the daily value of vitamin K which is important for maintaining bone health. One cup of Swiss chard contains just 35 calories, but provides 109.9% of the daily value for vitamin A. The same amount of this cooked vegetable supplies 52.5% of the daily value for vitamin C which is the primary water-soluble antioxidant in the body. It also has many other vitamins and minerals.

Choose chard from a chilled display. This will help to ensure that it has a crunchier texture and sweeter taste. Look for leaves that are vivid green in color and that do not display any browning or yellowing. The leaves should not be wilted nor should they have tiny holes. The stalks should look crisp and be unblemished.

Chard is extremely perishable, so keep refrigerator storage time to a minimum. Store unwashed leaves in plastic bags in the crisper for 2 to 3 days. The stalks can be stored longer if separated from the leaves. Chard leaves freeze well after blanching, but the stems become soggy and rather unappealing.

Swiss chard is also known by Silver beet, Sea Kale beet, Leaf beet and Spinach beet, or just greens.

The Wine Corner



The focus this month is on a wine that may be less familiar to you: Malbec. This grape is indigenous to France even though it seems to be from Argentina. In France it is used mainly as a blending grape, used in small amounts to soften the strength of Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon in Bordeaux wines.

Somehow Malbec found its way to Argentina, where the high altitudes, long, warm sun-filled days, cool nights, extra-dry climate, and sandy, alluvial, porous soils are ideal for the grape. Malbec is Argentina's signature grape..

Malbec is typically a medium to full-bodied red wine. Ripe fruit flavors of plums and blackberry give it a jammy characteristic. The flavor profile may be somewhere between California Cabernet Sauvignon and California Merlot. It is sometimes referred to as Merlot's softer, lusher brother.

If you enjoy red wines, and you haven't yet tried a Malbec, then it's a no-brainer. Buy one and match it with a grilled steak (or Portobello if you prefer not to eat red meat). Even though Malbec is definitely a red meat wine, it is versatile enough to stand up to Mexican, Cajun, Indian or Italian fare. As with most wines, you will get what you pay for, so don't pull a bottle from the bargain bin and expect it to bowl you over. Go to a decent wine shop, find the South American aisle, and spend somewhere between \$12-\$18. You won't be disappointed.

Quotable Quote

Education is the transmission of civilization. ~ Will Durant

Recipe of the Month

Spicy Baked Penne with Sausage and Chard

8 ounces dried penne pasta
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 links hot Italian sausage (8 oz. total), casings removed
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups chopped rinsed Swiss chard leaves (about 3 oz.)
1 can (14 1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes
1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (8 oz.)
1/4 cup shredded parmesan cheese

In a 5 to 6-quart pan over high heat, bring about 4 quarts water to a boil. Add penne and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender to bite, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain.

Pour oil into the same pan over medium-high heat. Add sausage and garlic and stir, breaking apart with spoon, until sausage is crumbled and brown, about 10 minutes.

Add chard and stir until wilted, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes with juice, salt, pepper, and cooked pasta. Pour mixture into a 2 to 2 1/2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle mozzarella and parmesan cheeses over the top.

Bake in a 350° oven until cheese is browned and bubbling, 25 to 30 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

A Final Word

Thanks again for reading this newsletter. Comments are always welcome and appreciated. Send them along to glendal@glensplace.com.

Until next time remember: To admit you were wrong is to declare that you are wiser now than before.

Answer to Brain Teaser:

CATALOGUE
CALIBRATE
BARNACLES
LAMPSHADE
LIMESTONE
POLYTHENE
CONTINUED