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A Note from Glen

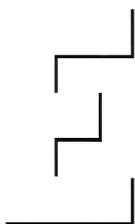
It was March of last year that this newsletter was “born”. It has been quite an experience for me. I have learned a lot and hope that you have gotten something from it also. I have enjoyed your emailed responses and look forward to more of them in the future. All comments are welcome and appreciated.

Fun Facts and Trivia

The cost of raising a medium size dog to the age of 11 is \$6,400.

The lowest point in Colorado (the Arikaree River at the Kansas border near the Nebraska border at 3320 feet) is higher than the highest point in Pennsylvania (Mt. Davis at 3,213 feet)

Brain Teaser (Optical Illusion)



What do you see here? Some people only see three angled lines, but if you look carefully you can actually see the letter E in the empty space.

Beyond the Blarney



St. Patrick's Day is a worldwide celebration of Irish culture and history. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is a national holiday. It is observed on March 17 because that is the feast day of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. It is believed that St. Patrick died on March 17 in the year 461 AD.

Many cities have St. Patrick's Day Parades and special events. In Chicago each year, the parade is held on the Saturday before March 17 (unless, of course, Saturday is the 17th). The Chicago River, which runs through downtown Chicago, is dyed green for the celebration. This has been a tradition since 1961.

In San Antonio, the San Antonio River is dyed green for a celebration on the River Walk. A parade will also be held on Saturday, March 15.

Here are some other interesting tidbits regarding St. Patrick's Day:

- The first year the Chicago River was dyed green, they used 100 pounds of dye. The river was green for a week!
- The number of Americans with Irish ancestry (35,975,855 in 2006 according to the American Community Survey by the Census Bureau) is almost nine times the population of Ireland, which has 4.1 million people.
- The Irish flag is green, white, and orange. The green symbolizes the people of the south, and orange, the people of the north. White represents the peace that brings them together as a nation.
- In Ireland on St. Patrick's Day, people traditionally wear a small bunch of shamrocks on their jackets or caps. Children wear orange, white, and green badges, and women and girls wear green ribbons in their hair.
- Legend says that each leaf of the clover means something: the first is for hope, the second for faith, the third for love and the fourth for luck.
- According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the highest number of leaves found on a clover is 14!



Tips and Techniques

Freeze a frosted cake first by placing it in the freezer unwrapped. Once the cake is frozen, take it out and wrap it with plastic wrap or aluminum foil and then return to the freezer. When ready to thaw, let it thaw slightly, remove the wrap, and then finish thawing.

For long term storage of bread, freeze it for up to 2 - 3 months. You can put fresh bread immediately into a resealable plastic bag and freeze. You can then take out slices as needed and they will quickly defrost at room temperature in plastic wrap to retain moisture.

When a recipe calls for straining broth through a cheesecloth, use a basket coffee filter instead. Just place the filter inside a strainer and pour in the broth. Depending on the amount of broth, you may need to replace the filter several times.

Food Fact

What grills like a burger, tastes meaty on a bun but has a fraction of the fat? Grill up some broad, flat Portobello mushrooms, dress 'em up like burgers, and you'll enjoy a hearty sandwich that's far better for your heart than beef. Healthy cooks use the meaty taste of mushrooms to advantage. And, that meaty taste comes with a very impressive nutrition profile: no fat, no carbs, and hardly any calories. Why not try one soon?

Spring is Here

On March 20th at precisely 8:07 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, the Sun will cross directly over the Earth's equator. This moment is known as the vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere. We call it Spring!

Eat Your Vegetables



Studies have shown that people who eat more fruits and vegetables have reduced risk of heart disease, strokes, diabetes, and some kinds of cancer. Fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and phytochemicals.

Some large studies have shown cancer protective effects from eating dark leafy greens such as spinach, chard, cooked tomatoes, apples, pears, and citrus. This also applies to cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and kale.

Cruciferous vegetables are rich sources of glucosinolates, the compounds that give them their pungent, spicy, or bitter aroma. These compounds act to provide detoxifying enzymes. The key is not to cook them to death. A 2003 study found that boiling cruciferous vegetables for 8 to 15 minutes diminished glucosinolates by 18% to 59%.



So why doesn't everyone just eat tons of vegetables and fruits? Education plays a significant role. A study shows that Americans who were aware of the benefits spent an average of \$111 more annually on fruits and vegetables.

There are other reasons, or excuses, for not eating more fruits and vegetables.

- We are genetically programmed to like salty, fatty, and sweet foods.
- Children are strongly influenced by fast food and junk food marketing.
- Adults don't know how to prepare fruits and vegetables. If it doesn't come in a box they don't know what to do with it.
- Availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at local stores or distance to the nearest supermarket may influence consumption.
- Cost is also a consideration for some families, however, per serving fruits and veggies are less expensive than candy bars.
- Availability and ease of eating helps determine consumption. An apple on the counter may be passed by but one that has been peeled and cored will be eaten quickly.

The bottom line is, "Stop making excuses and start eating your vegetables and fruit today!"

The Wine Corner



When we think of wine regions in the United States, many of us think of California. That's natural since California is the number one wine producing state in the country. Did you realize, however, that Washington State is the number two producer of wine? Over 31,000 acres there are planted with wine grapes. In fact, wine grapes are now the fourth most important fruit crop in Washington State behind apples, cherries, and pears. Washington's wine industry generates more than \$3 billion to the state economy. There are more than 200 wineries in Washington Wine Country. Most of them, 99%, are located east of the Cascades. Two of the better known ones are Columbia Crest and Chateau Ste. Michelle.

Chateau Ste. Michelle, founded in 1934, is Washington State's oldest winery. It is one of the few premium wineries in the world with two state-of-the-art winemaking operations, one devoted to whites and another to reds.

Columbia Crest Winery, located in the heart of the Columbia Valley, has 2,500 vineyard acres surrounding it. The winery was founded in 1983. It has made headlines, as consumer interest propelled its premium wines onto bestseller lists throughout America.

The next time you are in your favorite wine shop, why not try a Chardonnay, Syrah, or Cabernet Sauvignon from Washington. You'll be glad you did!

Quotable Quote

Don't ever take a fence down until you know the reason it was put up.

~ G. K. Chesterton

Recipe of the Month: Irish Beef Stew

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided	2 tablespoons flour
Salt and pepper	Pinch of cayenne
1 1/2 pounds stew beef, cut into 1-inch pieces	
6 large garlic cloves, minced	6 cups beef broth
1 can Guinness beer	2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon sugar	1 tablespoon dried thyme
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce	2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons butter	1 large onion, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped	3 carrots cut into 1 inch pieces
3 large russet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces	

Toss the meat with 1 tablespoon of the oil. In a small bowl, season the flour with salt, pepper, and cayenne. Toss the meat with the seasoned flour.

Heat remaining olive oil in large heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add beef and brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add beef stock, Guinness, tomato paste, sugar, thyme, Worcestershire sauce, and bay leaves. Stir to combine. Bring mixture to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, then cover and simmer 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

While the meat and stock is simmering, melt butter in another large pot over medium heat. Add potatoes, carrots, and onion. Sauté vegetables until golden, about 20 minutes. Set aside until the beef stew in step one has simmered for one hour.

Add vegetables to beef stew. Simmer uncovered until vegetables and beef are very tender, about 40 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Tilt pan and spoon off fat. Transfer stew to serving bowl. Sprinkle with parsley and serve. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

A Final Word

When St. Patrick's Day rolls around, it seems there's a wee bit o' the Irish in most of us. Maybe your get-togethers and family dinners will include corned beef and cabbage or other traditional Irish and Irish-American dishes. Maybe you plan to build a meal with a "green" theme. Try some spinach, asparagus, or other leafy greens. Add some parsley to your potatoes or rice. How about ending with a minty green dessert? Enjoy the day!

Thanks for reading this newsletter. Send comments and questions to glendal@glensplace.com.

Until next time, remember this Irish Blessing: May you have the hindsight to know where you've been, the foresight to know where you're going, and the insight to know when you're going too far.