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**Elucidations & Elaborations**

Every year about this time I start to get depressed, Sometimes it occurs even earlier. There is no relief from all the commercialism. It's Halloween in August or earlier. It's Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas in September. Why do we have to endure Christmas in September? I'm tired of it already. Is it New Year's yet? I'm ready to start the Easter Celebration!

**Brain Teaser**

Two guards were on duty outside a barracks. One faced up the road to watch for anyone approaching from the North. The other looked down the road to see if anyone approached from the South. Suddenly one of them said to the other, "Why are you smiling?" How did he know his companion was smiling?

See page 3 for the answer.

**Carving Consumerism out of Halloween**

It should not be surprising that marketers work hard to dress up little kids for Halloween. After all, last year consumers spent about \$1 billion dollars on costumes and a total of \$7 billion dollars in all Halloween spending.

There is nothing wrong with all that spending but it's not necessary. You can take back control from marketers and retailers and at the same time foster creativity in your children or grandchildren. They can probably create a costume from stuff in the house if they look around and use their imaginations. Just "shop the closet" and you'll be amazed at what's there!

Another great idea is to go to the local thrift store. You may even find almost new costumes. If it's not exactly what you want, a little ingenuity could possibly transform it. Kids don't need to look perfect. If they like their costume that's all that matters. So get busy, be creative and enjoy Halloween!

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**Thoughts on Politics**

All of us who are concerned for peace and triumph of reason and justice must be keenly aware how small an influence reason and honest good will exert upon events in the political field.

~ Albert Einstein

## From the Kitchen

Do you have trouble cleaning those stubborn little bits of food that stick to your pan and won't come off? There's an easy way to clean that and you don't have to expend a lot of energy. Here's how. Place the pan on the stove, over medium-high heat until it's hot. Add a little bit of water and, using a wooden spoon or spatula, scrape off the browned bits. They should peel off easily. After the stubborn bits are removed, take the pan off the heat and finish washing in the sink.

When you use wine, this process is known as deglazing. It's a basic part of cooking. When you sauté, sear, or roast meats or vegetables, they leave behind browned bits stuck to the pan. Remember, these browned bits can contain an amazing amount of flavor. They are often used to enhance the flavoring of the dish being cooked. Sometimes they are later turned into a gravy, glaze or sauce to serve with the finished dish. If you're deglazing to make a sauce, use a nicer wine that will complement the overall dish. A basic rule of thumb is that if you wouldn't drink it, don't use it to deglaze. If you're just cleaning the pan, feel free to use any wine or in a pinch, you can use another kind of acid such as vinegar, but the scent of sizzling wine is much more pleasant than the potent stench of scalding vinegar!

## Featured Recipe: Spicy Chicken Tortilla Soup

6 cups low sodium chicken broth  
1 medium onion, diced  
2 carrots, peeled and diced  
2 stalks celery, diced  
1 medium potato, peeled and diced  
2 tablespoons chopped jalapeños  
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro  
1/4 teaspoon cumin  
1/4 cup tomato paste  
1 bay leaf  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
Salt and pepper to taste

1 zucchini, diced  
1 can (14.5 ounce) diced tomatoes  
2 small boneless, skinless chicken breasts, poached and shredded

3 corn tortillas, cut into match sticks and fried in vegetable oil until crisp. (You may use broken up tortilla chips.) See note below.  
1 1/2 cups shredded Jack cheese  
8 to 10 slices avocado  
Cilantro sprigs

In large pot, combine all soup ingredients except zucchini, tomatoes, and chicken. Season to taste and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 25 minutes. Add zucchini, tomatoes and shredded chicken. Bring to a boil, and then simmer 10 minutes.

To serve, warm bowls and heat soup until very hot. Put a handful of tortilla strips in the bottom of each bowl. Add a bit of cheese to each. Fill bowls with very hot soup. Garnish with avocado slices and cilantro sprigs. Serve immediately. Makes about 8 cups.

**Note:** The easiest way to do the tortilla strips is to get a bag in the produce department of your supermarket. They may be labeled as salad toppers. We get Fresh Gourmet® Lightly Salted. Why not keep some on hand to sprinkle on salads.

## Wine Selection of the Month



This is the second Tobin James wine to appear in this column. I hope you enjoyed the Liquid Love from the February newsletter.

Zinfandel has been the flagship varietal at Tobin James since 1985. The 2008 Tobin James Ballistic Zinfandel is a classic Zin. It has strong ripe, juicy berry flavors and just the right amount of peppery spice. Drink it alone, with a juicy steak, or just about anything you want to pair it with. If you can't get the '08, try a later version for around \$18. You'll like the label, too!

## California Rice

If you're sick of me promoting California products, just tell me! I may not stop but I will at least know how you feel.

Not everyone knows that this fine state is the largest producer of short and medium grain japonica rice in the country. In fact, most of you probably had no idea that California even grows rice! The state's rice industry produces more than 2 million tons of rice annually making it the second largest rice growing state in the nation.

## Marinades

Sometimes a brief marinade will help to ensure tenderness and flavor to meat, chicken, or seafood. Many times we resort to the same tried and true marinades. How many of us trust Italian dressing as the go to marinade for chicken kebabs?

There are so many other choices, however. Many have only a few ingredients and are quick and easy to make. Here is an easy one for chicken or seafood.

### Lemon-Herb Marinade

Combine 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 1 1/2 teaspoons grated lemon peel, 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano, 1 teaspoon salt, and some fresh ground black pepper. Marinate chicken or seafood for 15 to 30 minutes before grilling.

Here is a special page of [Sauces, Dressings, and Marinades](#) for more ideas.

## 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: Aging is not the problem. The problem is when you stop aging.*

**Answer to brain teaser:** They were facing each other.

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