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Contact Susan Nye at
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March is full of surprises. One of them is daylight savings time. If you were paying attention, you sprung forward on Saturday night and lost an hour. If you are patient and wait a bit you will get it back in the fall. Daylight savings time is not without its controversy. The farmers, their cows and early risers don't like it. In the whole scheme of things, one little hour doesn't seem like much. Hardly important really, especially when you compare it to all the time and money, billions actually, lost by banks and automobile manufacturers in the past six months or so.

If you forgot to change your clocks, as I've been known to do, you're probably running late and wonder when you will ever catch up. Over the years, I've missed trains and been late for a few appointments. Nothing too dramatic, although I once had an interesting conversation with a very nice lady who sold movie tickets. It took several minutes of back and forth, she in perfect German and I in broken French, before I figured out why she was refusing to sell me a ticket. If you are feeling a bit at odds, not to worry, you will eventually get back on track. If not, well then the time change probably has very little to do with your befuddlement.

Yes, March is full of surprises. There is that whole in-like-a-lion-and-out-like-a-lamb thing. I was born in March. I arrived two weeks early, in-like-a-lion. My brother is also a March baby, also early. My sister, Brenda, who was born in October, is looking forward to the out-like-a-lamb part of the month. Brenda has had enough of the cold and snow. Mostly she's had more than enough of shoveling and big boots and heavy coats. She doesn't ski any more so all the cold and snow doesn't have much of a bright side. Only wet dogs and cold feet.

I spoke with Brenda just the other night. She called me to wish me a happy birthday and complain about the latest blizzard. I like it when it snows on my birthday; I consider it a gift from Mother Nature. This year Mother Nature's aim was off. The big snow missed the mountains and buried the coast as well as Boston, New York and even Georgia. It wasn't Brenda's birthday and yet she was inundated with more than a foot of snow, a lot more. It hardly seems fair and may be just another ploy to keep the last vestiges of our sibling rivalry alive.

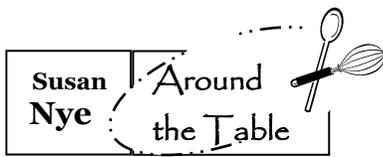
Thank goodness, it wasn't rain. Like it or not we have reached that point when winter is on the way out, not in. I suppose only the skiers fall into the "like it not" category. Every time one of those weather people comes on the air, we hold our breath. Snow or rain? And if it is rain, will Mother Nature take pity on us and keep it well to the south.

New England skiers are an optimistic bunch. We have no choice. Who else can skis on ice and shrug it off as hard packed powder. Or should I say hahd packed powdah. We rejoice and celebrate every snowfall, large and small. We endure hours in the biting cold and still smile. Although, it is possible that it's not truly a smile just some strange, frozen facial contortion brought on by the wind. Now that March has arrived we wait, somewhat impatiently, for a few days of spring skiing.

May Saint Jude and Mother Nature take pity on and bless New England's skiers. No matter how much the wind batters or the cold air blasts, we are tough and tenacious. We shrug off the cold, bundle up in wool, miracle fibers and down and still manage to move with enthusiasm if not grace. And may God bless whoever it was who invented hot chocolate. I think it was the Swiss.

Enjoy the rest of the ski season, may it bring only good surprises!

Bon appétit! - Susan



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Apron

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Warm Chocolate Pudding

This sinfully rich dessert will warm you up after a hard day of skiing. Enjoy!

Serves 4

1/4 cup sugar, or to taste
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
3 large egg yolks
1 cup heavy cream
6 ounces good quality bitter sweet chocolate, preferably Swiss
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 tablespoons Kahlua (optional)
Whipped cream for garnish
Chocolate shavings for garnish

1. Break up the chocolate into small pieces and put it in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Put the sugar, espresso powder, cinnamon, salt, cayenne and egg yolks in a saucepan. Whisk the mixture until well combined. Whisk in the cream. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until it registers 160 degrees on a candy thermometer.
3. Pour the custard through a fine-mesh sieve into the bowl with the chocolate. Let stand for a few minutes; whisk to combine. Stir in the vanilla and Kahlua.
4. Divide the pudding among 4 dessert cups or small teacups. Garnish with a dollop of whipped cream and chocolate shavings. Serve immediately.