

Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

I'd be delighted to help you with any and all of your celebrations.

Join Me Around the Table for an Eat Well-Do Good Dinner! Support the fight against Alzheimer's Disease & Enjoy delicious food & fun!

Treat Yourself to an Around the Table Chef's Apron

Cook like a chef or just look like one!

You can find lots more information on the web at www.susannye.com and www.susannye.wordpress.com

For cooking tips, recipes and more, connect with me on Facebook www.facebook.com/swny or follow me on Twitter at twitter.com/susannye Watch me cook on www.youtube.com/susannye

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As I sit at my keyboard, I hear loud thumps and bumps around me. It started last night just as I was drifting off to sleep. It's a bit discombobulating since my father is upstairs in bed recovering from surgery. With each crash and boom, I listen intently for a cry or moan for help. At least so far, it's not been him. It's only snow sliding from the roof.

Last summer we put a new roof on the old family homestead. Okay, as homesteads go, it's not that old. More or less forty-six years to the day, we spent our first weekend in our

little house in the woods. For my sister, brother and me, it doesn't matter that we all have houses of our own; it is still a place we call home. This house, the lake and town witnessed so many of our firsts. First swim, first sail, first ski, first kiss, first beer and more, much more.

But back to the thumps and bumps. After the third, yes third, thirty-year roof called it quits after all of ten maybe fifteen years, we decided to take a different approach. The house now sports a slick metal roof. Yesterday morning, six or eight inches of snow were resting picturesquely on the peak. Then the annual January Thaw arrived. Warm air has turned the sheet metal into a Slip 'n Slide. Great slabs of snow keep plummeting to the ground. I guess I will remain on edge until the roof is clean and clear.

But what is this thing called the January Thaw? Is it fact or fiction; another sign of global warming or some sinister extraterrestrial plot? Maybe it's all a myth; an old wives' or old skiers' tale. According to meteorological scholars the January Thaw is real although not necessarily understood. That be-all, know-all source of the New England weather, the Old Farmer's Almanac, agrees. These weather wizards call it a phenomenon or, better yet, a calendaricity. In other words, although we can observe it, we can't really explain it. By all rights and reason it should be cold but it isn't.

Year after year, usually in late January, a waft of warm air settles over New England. It stays for about a week and then leaves us back in the cold. It's glorious when the Thaw is soaked in sunshine. Hiking trails are filled with smiling snowshoe and cross-country ski enthusiasts. They are joined by overjoyed dogs; absolutely delighted to have a sunny romp in the snow. Up on the mountain, skiers dump heavy parkas and helmets in favor of baseball caps and sweatshirts. Lunch hours are extended as most everyone finds an excuse to spend at least an hour or two outside.

Unfortunately, it's not so glorious when the Thaw is soaked in rain. Basements flood. Ice dams form. No one wants to walk the dog. Once beautiful ski and hiking trails become obstacle courses of mud, rocks and ice. Cooped up inside to stay dry, cabin fever generally strikes within a day or two. It's funny how wonderful 40 degrees and sunny feels but how horrible 40 degrees and rainy is. Okay, maybe not funny at all.

But then, just like that, an arctic blast comes down from Canada. Slushy snow and puddles freeze hard and fast. Black ice abounds. And any lingering question of why January is called the coldest month is put to rest.

Stay warm and bon appétit!

Mixed Greens with Gorgonzola & Walnuts

Thaw or no Thaw – try this great winter salad. Enjoy!

Serves 12

About 12 ounces mixed baby lettuces in red and green
1/2-1 head radicchio, thinly sliced
Roasted Garlic & Shallot Vinaigrette (recipe follows)
4 ounces gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
1/4 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

In a large bowl, combine the lettuces and radicchio. Drizzle with enough Walnut Vinaigrette to lightly coat and toss to combine.

Transfer to a serving platter, sprinkle with cheese and nuts. Serve immediately.

Walnut Vinaigrette

Makes about 1 cup

1-2 tablespoons shallot or red onion, minced
1-2 tablespoons Champagne or white wine vinegar
Kosher salt or freshly ground pepper to taste
1/4 cup walnut oil

Put the shallot and vinegar in a small bowl, season with salt and pepper and whisk to combine.

Slowly add the walnut oil and whisk until combined.

Store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.

