Editorial

"Connected to your Community"

Keep food cool to avoid illness

In the hot, hazy heat of summer, stay cool, along with your food.

Hot weather has been dominating the headlines and that's likely to continue this summer.

While everyone's looking for a way to cool down, they should also be ensuring their food products stay chilled as well.

As the temperature rises, so does the risk of food-borne illnesses, says Health Canada. Hot and humid weather are the perfect recipe for the rapid growth of bacteria.

The risk of food poisoning increases during the summer because harmful bacteria grow quickly in warm, moist conditions.

Ensuring the safety of food can be challenging this time of year because temperatures are warmer and we often cook outdoors during picnics, barbecues, and camping trips.

Health Canada estimates there are approximately 11 million cases of food-related illness in Canada every year.

But many of these cases could have been prevented if Canadians followed four simple steps: clean, separate, cook and chill.

Clean — Wash your hands and surfaces to avoid the spread of bacteria and always wash raw fruits and vegetables with clean water.

Separate — Be sure to separate your raw meat from cooked or ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross-contamination. Keep raw meat on the bottom of a cooler or fridge to avoid its juices from dripping onto other foods. Wash any dishes, utensils or boards that may have touched that raw meat before using again.

Cook — Kill the harmful bacteria. Don't rely on traditional clues such as colour to ensure meat is cooked. Instead use instant-read digital thermometers to ensure readiness.

Chill — Keep cold food cold. Don't keep food at room temperature for more than one hour on hot summer days.

Keep foods such as your meats and potato and pasta salads in the fridge or in coolers with freezer packs.

Keep perishable foods cold. Use a cooler filled with ice packs to store your food on the go. The temperature inside the cooler should be at or below 4 C (40 F).

Keep the cooler out of direct sunlight and avoid opening it too often.

Store the leftovers as soon as you've finished eating.

Those are four simple rules. But there is another, and perhaps the simplest, when it comes to food safety: When in doubt, throw it out.

In the lazy, hazy days of summer spent with friends and family around the backyard barbecue or campsite, the rules can be easy to forget.

But remember food illnesses — some of which can cause serious health issues — never take a vacation.

C R E A T I V E G I V I N G

Barb Ambrosie paints a bowl at Crack Pot Studios for Home Suite Hope's seventh annual Empty Bowls event. The fundraiser will take place on Oct. 20 at St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School.

| **photo by Michael Ivanin – special to the Beaver**

Letters to the Editor

Mall is more than a place to shop

Editor's Note: *This letter was sent to the management of Hopedale Mall and copied to the Oakville Beaver.*

I have spent many days thinking of exactly what to say to you.

I have lived near Hopedale Mall for 23 years.

In that time, I have come to know many people who work and shop there — if not by name, by face. There is a sense of belonging to a community when you stop into your local mall for whatever your purchase needs are and you get smiles and a wave from store owners who recognize you.

When my children were little and I was on maternity leave, a walk to Hopedale was my sanity. I would stop into El Spero restaurant treat myself to a coffee and enjoy people watching. I always have felt so comfortable at this family restaurant. No matter if my children were quiet or loud, I was, and still am, left feeling very welcomed to be there.

Joe at the hardware store 'saved' me many times. When I became a single parent and had very little knowledge of home repairs and or maintenance, I knew I could go see Joe and he would instruct me in what to do and what I needed. And the next time he saw me he would always ask how the project went. Sorry but you won't find that in the big chain stores. Half the time you can't even find someone to help you and when you do, they take no personal interest in you.

I am deeply saddened and quiet frankly, angry and disturbed, to see what is happening to our community mall. It belongs to this community. You may want to remember this is the community you will be counting on to spend money at the mall you are creating.

I have been very upset to walk into Hopedale to see yet another well-loved store closed down. Gone are our dollar store, our hardware store, our wonderful second-hand book store. and now... closing of this community's deeply-loved El Spero.

Do you not care about what our community thinks? Are you arrogant enough to think you know better what this community wants? Have you stopped for one second to think

See Transformation on p.8

The ***Oakville Beaver*** welcomes letters from its readers. Letters will be edited for clarity, length, legal considerations and grammar. In order to be published all letters must contain the name, address and phone number of the author. Letters should be addressed to: **The Editor, Oakville Beaver, 467 Speers Rd., Oakville ON, L6K 3S4,** or via e-mail to: **ablackburn@oakvillebeaver.com.** The *Beaver* reserves the right to refuse to publish a letter.

Oakville Beaver

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General Inquiries: **(905) 845-3824**
Editorial Department: **(905) 632-0588**

Classified Advertising: **(905) 632-4440**
Circulation: 5300 Harvester Rd., Burlington
(905) 631-6095

Volume 51 | Number 81

The Oakville Beaver is a division of metrolandmedia

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