



COMMENT

Safe dining program adds bit of insurance

Since the beginning of May, dining out in Halton became a lot safer thanks to the implementation of the health department's Dinewise food safety program.

Restaurants participating in the program make available upon request to their diners and potential diners a summary inspection report that outlines whether the restaurant has met basic food safety standards required by provincial legislation.

As well, the restaurant posts a certificate of inspection.

Surely, residents should feel confident the establishment they're eating in has paid due diligence to the eatery's cleanliness and that staff are following proper hygiene practices.

Restaurants that have met standards certainly won't lose any customers by posting their inspection certificates and letting their clientele know they consider proper food handling and storage important aspects of running a restaurant.

Enjoying a night out in a local restaurant should be a pleasurable and safe experience.

The Dinewise program is an added bit of insurance it will be.



OUR READERS WRITE

Reader says you have to carefully research all the facts before you can make an informed judgment on an issue like smoking

Dear Editor:

I've been following local smoking bylaw discussions with some interest. What I find most interesting are the numbers that appear to be inaccurate on both sides of the discussion.

In Murray Townsend's recent column regarding DSRs, he states that bars have an 80 per cent smoking and a 20 per cent non-smoking clientele ratio. These numbers were printed in The Champion at the beginning of the discussion and apply only to Bingo Country. Overall however, I believe Mr. Townsend presented a well-

reasoned article that clarified the issues.

One of the letters to the editor referred to a belief that exposure to second-hand smoke could increase the chance of developing lung cancer by 50 per cent.

According to an article by Tom Utley in the Daily Telegraph, anti-smoking groups have put the increased risk of lung cancer among those who live with smokers at 20 per cent and the increased risk of heart disease at 30 per cent.

The results of a 40-year study involving 35,500 husbands and wives married to smokers were recently published in the

British Medical Journal. The researchers, Dr. James Enstrom and Professor Geoffrey Kabot, found no hard evidence to substantiate anything as high as the 20 and 30 per cent increases. They concluded, "Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke could not plausibly cause a 30 per cent increase in the risk of coronary heart disease."

They also stated, "It seems premature to conclude that environmental tobacco smoke causes death from coronary heart disease and lung cancer."

The results of their extensive and long-term study met with a firestorm of criticism. Both researchers are non-smokers and stood to lose their professional credibility by publishing their findings.

A Queen's University researcher recently completed a study indicating that alcohol consumption increases the risk of breast cancer more than smoking. In any study, it's important to find out how large a sampling was used and how long the study was conducted.

Larger studies confirm the results of smaller preliminary studies. The small

study produces useful avenues of research, but the smallness of the sampling can lead to the wrong conclusion.

When any discussion becomes politicized, it becomes more difficult to discern where the truth lies.

Certainly none of us would argue that smoking is good for you, but you can't read only what you agree with and expect to be well informed. I've never smoked and patronize only non-smoking restaurants.

But I don't think that I have the right to put someone out of business or treat a smoker like a leper.

DSRs are a compromise and a very expensive one, which will only be permitted for a few years.

Another fact recently floated in the letters to the editor was that the strength of marijuana has increased by 25 times since the 1960s.

I'd like to know what the writer's source was for this information.

Sophie Cheney
Milton

Letters welcome

The Canadian Champion welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit, revise and reject letters.

Letters must be signed and the address and telephone number of the writer included.

You can fax letters to (905) 878-4943, e-mail them to miltone@halt.onsearch.com or drop them off at The Champion, 191 Main St. E.



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by Steve Nease

