



Ramblin' Ruth

You can't tell a pizza by its box

By Ruth LeBlanc

Everyone has a pet peeve; I have a couple that maybe you can relate to.

My first one started years ago when a great looking food ad had me happily heading to the restaurant to try the product out. Opting for takeout, I opened the bag and found a small paper wrapped parcel holding a flattened product that when unwrapped, bore little resemblance to the ads on television or the storefront promotions.

After that affront to both my eyes and pocketbook, like a detective, I began my mission to scrutinize and compare the actual fast food items to the photos. It soon became a quirky and annoying hobby for anyone who had to hear my rant about the injustice of it all.

Shortly after that came my recycling peeve caused by the quantity of unnecessary waste created by too much packaging. That was the birth of my double pet peeve, misleading advertising and the over packaging of products by manufacturers.

Simply put, there wouldn't be a recycling dilemma if the outrageous amount of packaging were to be reduced. Let's take a closer look at the problem.

First, take those delicious looking casseroles or appetizers and quick meals looking so tasty that we buy those boxes hoping naively that what is inside is as good as it looks on the outside. Surprise! Open the box, remove the plastic covering and cardboard, bake or microwave and compare.

Where did that cheesy topping go? Oh there it is, sunken and

shrunken and not at all like the photo on the box. Pizzas with cheese stretching from here to the moon loaded with vegetables and topping are shown on the front of the package.

Bake that baby up and compare the result to the picture and you wish you could eat the box. I figure they really need those boxes. If the product were sold naked with just a plastic wrapping there would not be too many takers, but, oh how our landfill sites would rejoice. This is when reality truly bites.

Recently, when running out of freezer space, I took all the frozen foods out of their packaging and was left with a tall pile of boxes. Sitting humbly beside them was a small and sad offering of foods looking once again nothing like the promised picture. To be fair, there are a few products that do deliver, but they are on the short list of winners and that is for taste only, not the problem of packaging.

I feel corporate hackles rising as I write of ridding the store shelves of cumbersome boxes and unnecessary packaging. Just think, they would be forced to make the inside as good as the outside. Now that presents a real problem, while providing a product that resembles the marketing campaign presents an entirely different one.

Too bad money and the high profit margins win out over what is best for the environment and the planet. Once again the almighty dollar seems to rule the world for better or worse and we all pay a costly price. Now that's something to chew on, and it doesn't require packaging.

A RED CARPET FUNDRAISER

The Jennifer Ashleigh Foundation is gearing up for its annual Auction and Dinner on Friday, May 4.

The event will be held at the Hilton Toronto/Markham at Warden and Hwy 7 and this year's theme is A Night at the Oscars, a celebration of the golden age of Hollywood. Proceeds will go to support chronic and seriously ill children across the province.

Ticket prices are \$175 per person, including a gourmet meal, silent and live auctions, and an entertaining game of "Who wins the Oscar". Other auction items include a 2007 Pontiac G6 GT convertible, golf packages in

Muskoka, one week stays in luxury accommodations at Mont Tremblant, a private box at the Air Canada Centre, a weekend in New York for two including theatre and Yankee tickets, signed used hockey sticks from The Great One and The Next One, and many other wonderful items to appeal to all tastes and interests.

Last year's event was completely sold out, so if you would like to attend, call Sandy Schell Kennedy at 905-640-4705 as soon as possible. For more information on the Jennifer Ashleigh Foundation and the May 4 fundraiser, visit www.jenniferashleigh.org

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