

Battling toxic advice on social media

BY JENNA WALSH

In a technical era, nutritional advice is everywhere. It can be challenging knowing who to trust, what is true evidence vs “pseudo” science, as well as safely balancing personal choice, social pressure and your own capacity to follow suggested lifestyle tips.

In June, I came across an instagram reel of a dad with his daughter in Costco saying “10g of sugar from corn syrup” isn’t “Bobby approved.”

This dad went on to suggest a “better” product instead, that had 8g of sugar from maple syrup (totally Bobby approved).

There are numerous studies comparing the impact of different sugars and sweeteners on the body (blood glucose, insulin resistance, liver fat accumulation, inflammation etc) and results still vary.

Both corn syrup and maple syrup are carbohydrates that offer energy, and equally (for the most part) impact blood sugars.

This dad (whose educational background is in business) is aka FlavCity.

No health background or nutrition background yet their feed is solely focused on product comparisons to help you eat “cleaner,” less refined foods.

Ironically, he’s also selling you his own protein shake products, and though they are of course processed, they’re ok as they are “natural” with “Bobby approved” ingredients (eye roll).

I fell for the trap. I commented.

My frustration of endless diet-culture BS hit a peak while I watched him training his 3-year-old daughter to assess which foods were appropriate or not based on the ingredient list and praised her for tattling when

she witnessed other kids eating Veggie straws (yeah, you guessed, it - not Bobby approved).

Well, as you can imagine if you’ve ever passionately commented on a social feed, my notifications continued going off for the next two weeks with either people supporting my anti-diet approach and nutrition

background, or those expressing that my professional designation and years of education were useless if I thought feeding cliff bars to a kid was OK.

Why am I recounting a social media discord I had?

Well, part of the reason I’m on social media is for my business and to share safe nutrition information. The other reason is to be aware of what everyone else (including my

own kids) is exposed to.

I’ve vowed to be the voice for those not quite ready or able to challenge those posting body and food-shaming content. But geez is it exhausting. And frustrating... and harmful.

I took a break after this and didn’t even realize it was three months since I posted professionally on my social media or wrote an article (sorry folks).

There came a moment of futility as I watched more of the same content of people without a medical/health background posting restrictive nutrition advice, food shaming different products in stores, or full on bashing health care professionals for “being minions.”

The engagement with FlavCity was the tipping point of overwhelm and social-overload for me.

So, does it matter who you follow or take health or nutrition advice from? Absolutely.

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Retraction

Re: “Sober second thought?”, letter, NRT September 20.

The North Renfrew Times published comments in last week’s issue suggesting that Deep River Reeve Glenn Doncaster provides “copying, printing and... equipment” to Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd and

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories and that this raises the issue of “potential conflicts of interest.”

The NRT has learned that these statements are factually incorrect and thereby misleading to the public.

The NRT regrets publishing these statements and apologizes for any misunderstanding they may have caused.

Deep River and District Community Foundation

DRDCF.CA



Support our new
Community Emergency Fund

- New fund launched June 2023
- Provides funding for when crisis strikes our community
- Make a difference with even a small donation!
- Go to drdcf.ca to find out more!



THIS WEEK

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

8-10:30 am, Coffee Club, Chalk River Lions Hall (daily Mon-Fri)
1-6 pm, North Renfrew Family Services Free Counselling Clinic (every Wednesday), call ahead for appointment (for information, call 613-584-3358)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

10 am, Seniors Friendship Club: Coffee, Tea and Conversation, The Hexagon, Deep River Yacht & Tennis Club
1:15 pm, Duplicate Bridge Club, DR Library
1:30 pm, Jabez Blanket Ministry meeting, Our Lady of Good Counsel parish hall, Hwy 17 Deep River
7 pm, Fun Euchre, Deep River Legion

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

7 pm, “Science and Smoke,” presentation by Steve D’Eon on the science behind Canada’s 2023 forest fire season, Deep River Library
7-9 pm, Casual bowling, Deep River Bowling Alley

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

10:30 am - 2:30 pm, Lego Club/ Steam Club, Deep River Library
10 am - 3 pm, Deep River Farmers Market hosts “Taste of the Valley,” with 50+ vendors from across Renfrew County, Deep River town hall parking lot

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

11 am - 3 pm, RBWM Historical Society “Cow Paddy” Fun Day, with Cow Paddy Bingo, caboose reopening, bake sale, hot dog lunch, live music and more, School House Museum, Hwy 17 west at Meilleur’s Bay
1-4 pm, Casual bowling, Deep River Bowling Alley

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2

10 am - 1 pm, Deep River and Area Food Bank open (weekly except holidays), at the Deep River and District Hospital (for more information, phone 584-3333 ext 7910)
7 pm, Fun Darts, Deep River Legion
7 pm, Al-Anon, group support for families & friends having alcohol addiction, CE Centre (behind DR Community Church)
7:30 pm, “Love Bomb,” show and discussion re: human trafficking, Childs Auditorium, Mackenzie Community School

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3

10:15 am, Fall Storytime, Deep River Library
1 pm, 49ers euchre, Deep River Legion

To submit your event, email nrt@northrenfrewtimes.ca
For more activities, visit tinyurl.com/Activity-List-2022-Dec

Still standing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

The North Renfrew Times has been publishing in one form or another since 1944 (we have in our archives issue #2 of our predecessor, the “Deep River Digest,” dated December 1944) and we have no plans to stop anytime soon.

In fact, across the province, we are one of more than 100 independent community newspapers that continue to publish print editions every week.

Here in the northern / western end of Renfrew County, we’re lucky to have four of them - the NRT, the Eganville Leader, the Valley Gazette in Barry’s Bay, and the Petawawa Post. (The Pembroke Observer, a shadow of the paper it used to be, is a corporate title owned by Postmedia.)

What’s the difference? How do so many of Ontario’s independent community publishers continue to survive and thrive in a news media “market” that is increasingly devoted to clickbait and the blue light screen of your smartphone?

The key to that answer lies right in the description - “independent community” publishers.

As independents and members of the communities we cover, we’re driven by something more than bottom-line profits. Of course we need to make enough to pay the bills and keep the lights on, but trust us, no one’s getting rich here.

Instead, we’re focused on serving the communities we are part of, building relationships with readers and advertisers, and bringing you the news that matters to you.

There’s a term that’s become a buzzword in the news media over the past half dozen years or so - “hyper local.” But for independent community newspapers, “hyper local” - what’s happening in our schools and neighbourhoods - has always been the focus.

Not all of us are making it. The Glengarry News had a strong local presence in its community for 130 years and still couldn’t find a way to stay afloat.

But at the NRT, we believe in the value of a community newspaper to the communities of Deep River, Laurentian Hills and the upper Ottawa Valley, and we are dedicated to keeping it going.

If you agree that a community newspaper continues to have value in the digital age, why not come out and show your support next week during National Newspaper Week.

The NRT will hold an informal “meet and greet” get-together next Thursday, October 5.

Details still have to be nailed down, but it will be Thursday evening at 7 pm, location TBD. (Watch for a notice in next week’s NRT.)

Come out to hear a little bit about the paper’s history and how you can be involved - by submitting stories and photos, or consider joining the NRT editorial board.

There will also be time for some Q&A and casual conversation. Hope to see you there.



“Farms Open” returned to the Valley on Sunday. The annual event is a collaborative effort between the Ottawa Valley Food Cooperative, MRC Pontiac, Renfrew County Economic Development and the Co-operators insurance, and is an opportunity for host farms and food artisans to open their doors to the public. This year’s event featured four farms in the Pontiac and eight in Renfrew County, including Forest Cove Alpacas and Country Market here in Laurentian Hills. Breanna Graham is shown here with Galaxie, one of several expectant Alpaca mothers at Forest Cove.

Photo: Vance Gutzman

Toxic advice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

However, someone without the RD designation can be a fantastic guide for eating well, finding great recipes, and general wellness.

We all come with valuable lived experience - a person who’s lived through a similar health issue, may likely have valuable suggestions to give.

However, I’d compare taking personalized nutrition advice from someone like Bobby on social media, whose background is in business, akin to taking business advice from myself (who has a nutrition education, but also runs a business).

Yes, Bobby eats food every day, however, he clearly isn’t sharing evidence-based information, or considering how harmful some of his content may be to the greater community.

“But isn’t it good to compare products?” OF COURSE.

There is always value in understanding what is in the food you’re buying and eating.

However, people (FlavCity, I’m pointing at you) inducing fear in others, especially 3-year-old children, that “10g of sugar from corn syrup” isn’t “Bobby approved” but 8g from maple syrup is ok, crosses into disordered eating, borders on Orthorexia and building a life-time of guilt around food.

We can compare two products (say granola bars) to determine which is “better,” but the “better” depends on what you are looking for: If you want more fibre, more protein, more Omega 3 fatty acids, more calories, more iron, simpler ingredients, allergen-free, cost...

As for including kids in the decision: there is never a reason that a child, especially under the age of 12-13 years, needs any involvement in choosing which foods come into the home, outside of taste-preference.

That is our role as parents or guardians.

As for myself, social media and battling the endless money-grabbers out there promoting unfounded food restriction, I’m moving forward with a focus on promoting an all-foods, body-positive way of life.

And I’ve realized it’s OK if everyone else isn’t ready to leave the dieting world behind... I’ll still be here when they are.

Jenna Walsh, RD, CDE @ walsh.nutrition on instagram and FB. Please message me if you had a nutrition question you’d like me to answer!

Letter: at risk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

THEOP has partnered with several community groups and there will be police, social work and legal professionals there to fill us in on the local situation after the play.

I encourage you all to come and be educated about this serious, unsettling topic. Consider bringing your children or grandchildren if they are over 12.

Admission is by donation at the door with all proceeds to the North Renfrew Family Services.

Katharine Myers