

Back to school with safe lunches

Packing the right foods and using proper handling techniques will keep lunches safe

By Bruce Pokarney

Whether it comes in a Pokemon Go lunch bag, Spiderman lunch box, or a brown paper sack, the meal you send to school with your child must be packed with care and consideration. Kids are back in school this week and next, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture has some helpful hints on how to make that home-packed lunch as safe as possible. “Children are more susceptible to food-borne illnesses than adults, so it becomes even more important that we protect the lunches they take to school,” says Susan Kendrick, education specialist with ODA’s Food Safety Program. From the preparation of the food that goes into the lunch to the consumption of the meal at school — and all the steps in between — there are several important factors to keep in mind for the sake of your kids. “It all starts in the kitchen with clean hands, clean surfaces, and the washing of fruits and vegetables before they are put into the school lunch,” says Kendrick. “We want to avoid cross contamination. In other words, don’t use the same surfaces for raw foods that you use for

cooked foods. Don’t give those bugs a chance to hop into the lunch pail.” Making the lunch the night before is a good idea so that the preparer isn’t rushed into doing something improper, such as using dirty surfaces. Maintaining a proper temperature for the school lunch is very important. If the lunch is prepared the night before, putting it in the refrigerator to keep it cold overnight is essential for most foods.

“If you are going to send a cold lunch, use a gel-pack, a frozen individual juice box, or a frozen sandwich as a source of cold temperatures so that the entire lunch can stay cold,” says Kendrick.

If your child is going to take a hot lunch to school, chances are it will be something like soup, which would probably be inside a thermos. Chances are the lunch you send to school in the morning will be consumed within a few hours. Still, that’s plenty of time for bacteria to grow if the lunch is not stored properly. Once again, maintaining a proper temperature is important. Kids need to know that lunches are to be eaten at lunchtime — or not at all. There may be some exceptions — depending on what foods are packed.



“Crackers, pretzels, raisins, peanut butter sandwiches, and the little individual cans of fruit — these are all things that are shelf stable and don’t require refrigeration,” she says.

Sandwiches with meat, eggs, or dairy products should be packed directly next to the cold source in the container. The optimum temperature for cold foods is 41 degrees Fahrenheit. How do you know that’s the temperature of the lunch? Put together a “home test” lunch on a Saturday or Sunday. Use a kitchen thermometer and check the reading throughout the day to see how long the cold temperature actually lasts. Packing leftovers from last night’s dinner is OK, as long as that food was chilled within two hours of cooking and kept in the refrigerator overnight. Another consider-

ation for the school lunch is what your child ultimately does with it. It is common for kids to swap lunch items at school, preferring a classmate’s cuisine instead. “Remember that your child’s friends may have food allergies,” says Kendrick. “It’s really not a good idea for them to share their lunch with other kids unless they are sure those friends are not allergic to what was brought in the lunch.” Finally, remind your children of the importance of handwashing before eating. Many times recess precedes lunch. Even more often, kids will need to go to the bathroom sometime before lunch. Washing hands often with soap and warm water is a great way to cut down on potential food borne illnesses. Keeping lunches safe is every bit as important as making them tasty.

MI TOWN

Get out the stadium blankets and be ready to celebrate Western Oregon University’s first home football game of the season Saturday at 1 p.m., when our Wolves meet Central Washington University at McArthur Stadium. Our season tickets just arrived and we’re looking forward to attending four home games this season. Individual ticket prices are reasonable, and the whole family can enjoy an afternoon of college football right here in MI Town.

The second annual Paws for the Cause brought in a good amount of needed and necessary items for the Willamette Valley Humane Society, and an additional \$225 in cash donations to help fund the Randy Whitaker honorary kennel, located at the facility. Thanks to all who participated in, and contributed funds and



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

work and creativity shown by the younger members of our community.

This year’s quilt displays were exceptional, and I always admire the patience, time and energy that it takes to design and put together those true works of fabric art. MI Town resident, Sharon Winegar, received a first-place ribbon for her beautiful quilt, Rites of Spring, which was quilted by Cynthia Shaw. Diane Nordyke designed, created and quilted a wall hanging featuring a Diamond Match Company boat, with workers retrieving logs, that received a first-place ribbon as well.

PEDEE NEWS

Among the award-winning displays of jams, jellies and other home canned goodies, were those created by Laurel Sharmer, who also won a first prize for her



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

peach pie. Robert Beck’s creativity and ingenuity was well represented by a first prize for pumpkin pie, as well as another first prize blue ribbon for a beautiful ash liquor cabinet.

Construction continues at the Monmouth Senior Center, and we’re all looking forward to having additional space for ongoing programs and the opportunity to bring new offerings to MI Town in the future. Our regular weekly events such as yoga, exercise and Wii bowling continue, and we’re happy to have the center available during this time.

Our streets will be filled with U-Hauls, trucks and SUVs with new and returning students to WOU in the next few days. Let’s all welcome our new residents and help make them feel at home.

Excitement reined at the Pedee Women’s Club at the sight of so many quilts that came in for the club’s inaugural quilt show this Friday and Saturday at the clubhouse. There must have been 75 quilts stacked on the tables to be labeled and classified. Some of the quilts will be for sale, too. There will also be a “country store” with items for sale. The show will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. this weekend.

New club member (and old neighbor) Alvina Wright and her husband George brought his son Lee and wife to the club’s potluck last week. They are visiting from

Tokyo, Japan. Lee had been an exchange student to Japan when he was in college, fell in love with this beautiful Japanese girl, and, to make a long story short, stayed on in Tokyo, where both teach.

I caught up with Kings Valley Charter School freshman Dawntae Bault on his Polk County Fair entries. He

had entered an angel food cake in the open class division and got a blue ribbon. As you may know, angel food cakes are tricky to make, so that was quite an accomplishment. He also entered his goat in the 4-H division and received a blue ribbon in showmanship, plus a blue with it and her baby in the dam and daughter class. He and his horse Trigger got a blue ribbon for their clever costume, Dawn-tae in a Hawaiian shirt and the horse in a hula skirt.

Steve and Audrey Cameron have had a wonderful summer with kids and grandkids coming for

BIRTHS

Golden-Phillips

Liberty Grace Golden-Phillips was born at 8:14 a.m. on Aug. 17 to Crista and Theran Golden-Phillips, of Independence, at Silverton Family Birth Center.

She weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 21 inches long.

Liberty joins Michael-Ann, 6, Dakota, 6, and Jaxon, 1.

Grandparents are Xona and James Becker, of Camas, Wash., Kathlene Golden, of Placentia, Calif., and David Phillips, of Salem.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Continued from page 6A

TUESDAY, SEPT. 13

• **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) Club** — 6 to 7 p.m. weigh-in, 7 to 8 p.m. meeting, First Christian Church basement, 1079 SE Jefferson St., Dallas. Meetings offer programs and activities aimed at losing weight. Open to anyone. First meeting is free.

• **Overeaters Anonymous** — Noon to 1 p.m., Salem Health West Valley, 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. Support group meets in the quiet room/chapel immediately inside the emergency entrance on Clay Street. Dee Ann White, 971-718-6444.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 14

• **Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank** — 10 a.m. to noon, Monmouth Christian Church, 959 Church St. W., Monmouth. For eligible community members; available every Wednesday. 541-404-6517.

• **Polk County Republican Women** — 11:30 a.m., Oak Knoll Golf Course, 6335 Highway 22, Independence. No-host lunch available; everyone welcome. 503-623-5759.

• **Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program Food Bank** — 1:30 to 6:30 p.m., 888 Monmouth Cutoff Road, Building E, Dallas. Weekly distribution for eligible community members. 503-831-5634.

• **Free Blood Pressure Check Clinic** — 2 to 3 p.m., West Valley Hospital (surgery admitting area), 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. 503-623-7323.

• **Monmouth Senior Center Music Jam** — 6:30 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. Open to the public; musicians of all types welcome. 503-838-5678.

• **Brew and BS: The Old Testament** — 7 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. A lecture series on the Old Testament. Bring brew of choice — coffee, tea, chai, beer, wine, cider. 435-503-4304.

• **Dallas American Legion Post No. 20** — 7 p.m., Academy Building, Room 108, 182 SW Academy St., Dallas. 503-831-3971.

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Solution on Page 12A

				1		5	6
				8		4	
				7	5	3	9
7						6	
8		5				2	1
9	2						
		4	3			1	5
9	3						2
		8		2			6

Sudoku

Difficulty: ★★★★★

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

How to do Sudoku

Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

Pencil us in!
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