

Make sure your food caterer is 'legal'

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Illegal catering is something that is overlooked but can have disastrous consequences.

Cleveland County Environmental Health Supervisor Marty Allen said there are five ways to prepare food in North Carolina for profit.

An eating establishment in North Carolina can either be a permitted restaurant, a food stand, a mobile food unit and concession stands.

An exemption in a state public health statute allows for people who serve food and/or drinks no more than once a month, and no longer than two consecutive days.

That exemption, Allen said, is where interpretation of the law becomes difficult to understand. "It's so innocent to get into, it's hard to resist," Allen said about illegal catering.

Currently there are five caterers in Cleveland County, with more than 50 catering illegally, Allen said.

Experience in food preparation is another issue that Allen raised about caterers, with some using inadequately sized equipment and not knowing how to store and prepare food safely.

"Even if they're doing it legally, most of them don't have the background or education," Allen said. "And if they're doing it illegally, they have compounded the problem."

But restaurants can make the same mistakes as well.

In 1998 Shelby had an e coli outbreak from food prepared at Shelby Fish Camp.

While restaurants carry liability insurance, many caterers, Allen said, are without coverage.

"We want to have the best control of the food and the contents," Allen said. "This is a frustrating situation for all health departments."

There are three steps the health department goes through when it finds illegal food vendors.

Allen said the department issues a warning notice for the caterers to get permitted or stop doing business. Then an abatement order is issued telling the caterer to cease illegal operations or

make themselves legal. If the illegal caterer ignores the first two warnings, the offender will be taken to court.

During his 26 years at the Cleveland County Health Department, Allen said there have only been two cases that have gone to court.

Allen said a customer can ask questions to find out if the food vendor is permitted.

One of the larger questions is asking to see the vendor's permit.

If they can not produce a permit, Allen said, then they are illegal.

"The propensity of it happening now is more than it has been because more of them do it illegally," Allen said.

COOKING CORNER

Polynesian Crab

1 6-ounce package frozen snow crab, thawed, drained and flaked
2 green onions with tops, chopped
1/4 coconut, flaked
1/4 cup light mayonnaise
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1/4 teaspoon curry powder
•Combine snow crab, green onions, coconut, mayonnaise, curry powder, salt and pepper in a medium bowl and mix well. Refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours to blend flavors. Serve with oriental rice crackers and fresh pineapple spears. Makes 1 cup. Approx. per serving: 26 calories; 2 grams of fat

Easy Spinach Dip

1 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach, or 1 pound fresh spinach, chopped
1 cup low-fat sour cream or low-fat small curd cottage cheese
1/2 cup low-fat yogurt
1/2 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
1/4 cup scallions (including tops), finely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground pepper
•If using fresh spinach, wash and trim stems. Boil in a large saucepan or steam spinach until wilted, then drain thoroughly and chop. If using frozen spinach, squeeze by hand to remove all moisture or wrap in paper towels and squeeze. In bowl, combine spinach, sour cream or cottage cheese, yogurt, parsley, scallions, salt and pepper to taste and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight to blend flavors. Makes 2 cups. Approx. per serving: 60 calories; 4 grams of fat

Split Pea Soup

1 ham bone from cooked ham

1 1/4 cup (12 ounces) split green peas
8 cups of water
4 onions, sliced
Salt and pepper to taste
•Trim any fat from ham bone, but leave meat. Combine all ingredients but salt and pepper in a stockpot. Bring to a boil and skim, lower heat to keep from sticking. Simmer, partially covered, for 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until peas are soft, stirring occasionally. Makes 10 servings. Approx. per serving: 93 calories; 0.3 grams of fat

Stuffed Peppers California

1 pound lean ground beef
1 1/2 cups cooked brown rice
1 egg
2 teaspoons fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
1/2 teaspoon pepper
8 medium green bell peppers
2 cups fresh tomatoes, chopped
1 cup tomato sauce
1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
•Preheat oven to 350°. Combine ground beef, rice, egg, carrots, oregano salt and pepper in a bowl and mix well. Cut peppers into halves lengthwise, removing membrane and seed. Spoon mixture into pepper shells. Place stuffed peppers into a large baking dish. Do not crowd. Combine tomatoes, tomato sauce, onion and lemon juice in a medium bowl and mix well. Spoon over and around peppers. Cover with foil and bake for 1 hour. Serve immediately. Makes 8 servings. Approx. per serving: 203 calories; 8 grams of fat.

Tender-Crisp Broccoli & Carrots

1 pound fresh broccoli

1 tablespoon corn oil or safflower oil
2 medium carrots, cut into matchstick strips
2 small onions, cut into wedges
1 8-ounce can sliced water chestnuts, drained
1/3 cup light corn syrup
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons light soy sauce
1/2 teaspoon ginger
Unsalted cashews (optional)
•Separate broccoli into

florets, then peel and thinly slice stems. Heat oil in a wok over medium-high heat and add broccoli steams, carrots, and onions. Stir fry until tender-crisp. Add florets and water chestnuts. Combine corn syrup, vinegar, cornstarch, soy sauce and ginger in a small bowl. Stir mixture into vegetables and cook for 1 minute. Sprinkle with cashews. Makes 4 to 6 servings. Approx. per serving: 226 calories; 6 grams of fat.

Three Bean Casserole

3 16-ounce cans of your favorite beans, drained (butter, pinto, red, etc.)
1 pound ground turkey breast
1 pound turkey sausage
3 cans whole tomatoes
Pinch garlic powder
2 green bell peppers, chopped
1 cup celery, chopped
2 cups reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
1 tablespoon barbecue sauce
1 teaspoon vinegar
•Cook turkey, sausage, bell pepper, and celery in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Pour into a large pot. Add beans, tomatoes, garlic powder and vinegar and simmer for 30 minutes. Pour mixture into baking dish and layer with cheddar cheese. Sprinkle a dash of barbecue sauce on top. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake in

oven just until cheese has melted. Makes 10-12 servings. Approx. per serving: 341 calories; 10 grams of fat.

Lemon Pilaf

1 teaspoon corn oil margarine
1/3 cup celery, sliced
1/3 cup green onions with tops, sliced
1 cup rice, cooked
1 teaspoon lemon rind, grated
1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
Dash of pepper
•Melt margarine in a skillet over low heat. Add celery and green onions and saute until tender. Add rice, lemon rind, salt and pepper. Heat to serving temperature, stirring occasionally. Makes 2 servings. Approx. per serving: 134 calories; 2 grams of fat.

Baked Potato Chunks with Garlic

4 baking potatoes, peeled or unpeeled
1 bulb garlic (about 10 cloves), unpeeled
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
•Preheat oven to 450°. Cut potatoes into chunks and arrange in a shallow baking pan. Add unpeeled garlic cloves. Drizzle olive oil over potatoes, spreading oil to coat cut surfaces. Bake for 30 minutes or until potatoes are brown on the outside and soft inside, stirring every 10 minutes and basting with pan juices. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Makes 4 servings. Approx. per serving: 158 calories; 5 grams of fat.

Healthy Hash Browns

2 large baking potatoes
2 tablespoons onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme or 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/8 teaspoon pepper
•In a saucepan, cook potatoes in boiling water to cover until tender. Drain, allow to cool slightly, then peel and shred. Combine potatoes, onion, garlic, thyme and pepper in a bowl and toss to mix. Spray a 10-inch non-stick skillet with vegetable cooking spray and place over medium heat until hot. Pack potato mixture into preheated skillet and cook for 6

to 7 minutes or until browned on the bottom. Invert potato patty onto a plate. Slip potato patty browned side up into skillet and cook for 6 to 7 minutes or until browned. Cut into wedges. Makes 4 servings. Approx. per serving: 150 calories; 0.2 grams of fat.

Greek Zucchini

8 small zucchini, scored lengthwise with fork
2/3 cup water
1 tablespoon corn oil margarine
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
4 ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
•In a large saucepan cook zucchini in water over medium heat until tender. Remove pan from heat and set aside. In a skillet, saute onion and garlic in margarine until tender. Add tomatoes and cook until they are soft. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drain zucchini and arrange on a serving plate. Spoon tomato mixture over top. Makes 6 to 8 servings. Approx. per serving: 53 calories; 1 gram of fat.

Orange Asparagus Ziti

1/2 pound mostaccioli, ziti or other medium pasta shape, uncooked
2 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided
12 ounces frozen small shrimp, thawed
3 medium carrots, cut diagonally and thinly sliced
1 bunch scallions, sliced
1 pound asparagus, cut diagonally into 2 inch lengths
1 cup fresh orange juice
Salt and pepper to taste
•Boil 4 cups water in a large saucepan, add pasta, and cook until al dente according to package directions, then drain. Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet or wok over high heat. Add shrimp and stir-fry for 3 minutes until shrimp is firm, opaque and lightly brown, then set aside. Add remaining oil to pan and stir-fry carrots for 2 minutes. Add asparagus and scallions, stir-fry for 3-4 minutes, until asparagus is tender-crisp. Add pasta, shrimp and orange juice to skillet or wok and toss for 2 minutes, until hot. Season

to taste with salt and pepper and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings. Approx. per serving: 428 calories; 5 grams of fat.

Summer Pasta with Feta

4 large ripe tomatoes, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
12 ounces Feta cheese, crumbled
1 cup fresh basil, chopped
3 to 4 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
9 cups rotelle pasta, cooked
Parmesan cheese
•Combine tomatoes, Feta cheese, basil, garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper in a large bowl and set aside at room temperature. Cook rotelle al dente according to package directions, then drain. Combine with tomato mixture, tossing well to mix. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Makes 6-8 servings. Approx. per serving: 354 calories; 13 grams of fat.

FOOD INSPECTIONS

Cleveland County Health Department inspected the following food establishments during the period June 14-19.

Restaurants

Alston Bridges BBQ, 95.0
Arrowood's Grill, Shelby, 95.5
Donut Connection, Shelby, 91.5
Classic Diner, KM Truck Stop, 95.0
Hardee's, Grover St., Shelby, 91.0**
Honey Bear Cafe, 92.5
Hamrick's Grill, Cliffside Rd., 86.5
Nakata's, Shelby, 95.5
Pancake House, Dixon Blvd., re-inspection, 90.0
Papa's Pizza, Boiling Springs, 98.5
Subway, KM Truck Stop, 96.0
The Ribbarn Smokehouse, Shelby, 95.0
Uptown Cafe, Boiling Springs, 96.0
Winter House, Shelby, 96.0

Food Stands

Pantry, Boiling Springs, re-inspection, 91.5.
Thunder Valley, Lawndale, 95.0.

Important Message For Time Warner Cable Customers:

Channel Lineup Changes Effective July 24, 2001

Time Warner Cable is pleased to announce the following changes which will add even more value and programming choices to our Standard Service.

The Disney Channel will become part of Standard Service and will move to channel 54. This network will no longer be available as a premium channel.

WE: Women's Entertainment and **Oxygen** will be added to Standard Service on channels 61 & 62.

Sci-Fi, The History Channel, The Golf Channel, Speedvision and **ESPN Classic** will become part of Standard Service. They will remain in their current channel positions.

The Disney Channel West will become part of the Digital Variety Tier on channel 181. This network will no longer be available as a premium channel.

In addition, the following networks will be moving to new channel positions to accommodate the additions to Standard Service.

- TBS will move to channel 24.
- Comedy Central will move to channel 52.
- TV Land will move to channel 56.
- Fox News will move to channel 57.
- Turner South will move to channel 60.
- ESPN2 will move to channel 68.
- C-SPAN will move to channel 70.
- C-SPAN 2 will move to channel 71.
- HSN will move to channel 73.
- The Movie Channel will move to channel 82.

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