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THE DINER BRIEF

By Todd Jenney*

This is the first in a *new* series in Matrimonial Affairs, designed to assist our readers in answering the perennial and thorny question of how to eat (and how well to eat) when you are stuck at one of Ontario's many courthouses. The first piece demonstrates our intention of looking at this issue on the lighter side, and we invite our readers to offer their experiences, recommendations and senses of humour (consider this a service to our profession and your colleagues!)

Leading off with words of wisdom from Todd Jenney about BRAMPTON:

I've been asked to write a piece about the various places to dine in and around the Brampton courthouse. It was assumed that I would have this information because:

- a) I work in and around the Brampton courthouse; and
- b) I look like I eat a lot.

If you only have a few minutes, the courthouse cafeteria serves perfectly acceptable food at only slightly unreasonable prices. However, if you have a bit more time and you're looking for an ambience that does not include a blaring intercom system which is forever paging 'Dr. Feelgood' to courtroom 102, then just about anything else will do. And you're in luck. Brampton has plenty of 'just about anything else'. Let's face it, with a transit system called 'Zum', you are sure to find plenty of 'Fud'.

There are four mini-plazas within walking distance of the Brampton courthouse, directly north, west, southwest, and south. To the east, there is nothing. If you walk to the east, you will immediately be devoured by dragons or fall off the face of the earth.

You will have to cross at least one road to get to a mini-plaza. If you find yourself in the Royal Bank, you're in the wrong place, even if there's free coffee. If you find yourself in the Legal Aid office, for the love of God, do not put anything into your mouth that is offered to you. Just keep your eyes down and shuffle backwards towards the door.

Starting at the south and working clockwise, we begin with TeeJays. This used to be called Turtle Jack's, but the new owners apparently didn't want customers confusing them for the

former restaurant, so they kept the decor, used the initials for the name, and kept a big cartoon turtle over the door. That certainly avoids confusion. If you've ever been to a Casey's, Kelsey's, or Montana's, you've been to a Turtle Jack's. They have a great patio which is very popular. The best time to get seats is just before lunch, just before the courts close for the day, or in January.

The New China Garden is in this plaza, but I've never been to it. It used to be Antonelli's, a higher-end Italian restaurant which I would recommend to you. Unfortunately, we used to have our Christmas office parties there, and we behaved so badly that the staff all quit and they had to close down.

Pomodoro's Italian Kitchen. This cozy little pizza joint is popular with the court staff for lunch, so don't be surprised if you bump into your motions judge there. They serve tons of delicious carbohydrates, which I fully realize is redundant. If you do go, don't take the last slice of Soprano's pizza. It is mine, and I will hurt you for it.

Tim Horton's. If you don't know what they serve at Tim Horton's, then nothing I write here can help you. Try the coffee.

The first eatery at the southwest plaza is an Irish-style pub called Fionn MacCool's, which, quite frankly, I doubt was named after a real person. This is an Irish-style pub with great Guinness and craic, but it should be kept in mind that no-one ever, in the history of the world, went to an Irish pub for the food. MacCool's took over from East Side Mario's, which I still can't believe couldn't make a go of it in Brampton. I prefer to think that the owners made their millions and retired early.

Hidden around the back of the plaza is a nice little Thai / Vietnamese restaurant called the Tamarine. It claims to serve authentic cuisine, but I hope that isn't true, as my North American taste buds have been too damaged by Kraft Dinner and ketchup for that. Anyway, they also have beer.

At the end of the plaza is a Cora's, a great place for breakfast, lunch or brunch. No dinner menu though, which is too bad. I would totally eat bacon and eggs for dinner. Let's face it - I would eat Froot Loops for dinner. Okay, I've done that. Yes, recently.

In the western plaza, you start with a Beer Store and a Magnolia Wine store. There is no truth to the rumours that there is a secret underground pipeline from these stores to the 5th and 6th floors of the Brampton courthouse. You've probably never even heard those rumours until I wrote about them just now. My work here is done.

In the middle of the plaza is the poorly named Hockey Sushi, which combines two great concepts of raw fish and physical violence. If you can get past the name, I recommend that you order the all-you-can eat option. There is no serve-yourself-buffet; you just keep ordering and they just keep bringing it to you. They apparently charge extra if you don't eat all that they bring to you, but don't be silly - who doesn't eat everything?

On the far edge of the plaza is a Longo's with a deli. You can choose some healthy options there, so obviously I've never been. As far as I'm concerned, there is only one rule when you're on a diet: If it tastes good, *spit it out!*

Along the south side of the plaza there is a Subway. According to someone named Jared, you can eat so healthy at Subway that you can even lose weight. If that is the case, then no-one in Brampton has ever eaten at a Subway.

Then there's the ubiquitous McDonald's. I wouldn't even recommend that to opposing counsel. Well, maybe just a few. You know who you are.

In the north plaza, the anchor tenant is a Swiss Chalet. If you go, try the chicken.

Just past Swiss Chalet on the west side is a Quizno's sub shop. You might be able to diet at a Subway, but good luck with that at Quizno's. It tastes so good that it has to be bad for you.

There used to be a great pub on the east side of the north plaza called the Legal Beagle. A number of court regulars were also regulars there, to the point where if the Beagle had offered cots, many of them could have given up their apartments. The Beagle is now gone, but you can find the sign at the office of a quasi-respected solicitor in Mississauga, who, in fairness, probably paid for the sign with all the drinks he bought when it was open.

Ambitious walkers could wander even further north to Louisiana Seafood (awesome), the KFC (greasy, which is also sort of awesome if you don't think about it, but awful if you do), or the Golden Palace Chinese restaurant.

Walk any further than that and you'll be devoured by dragons and then fall off the face of the earth. Or worse, you'll be late getting back to court.

**Todd Jenney is the best family law lawyer in Brampton with the name of Todd Jenney. If you can find another family law lawyer in Brampton with the name of Todd Jenney who is better than I am, see if he'll lend you a few bucks. I'll split it with you.*

Otherwise, send all your Brampton referrals, extra Leafs tickets, and whatever cash you have lying around, to: Todd Jenney Family Law