



Pasta Night 2010

For Pasta Night 2010, the PTO Environmental Committee secretly replaced the customary polystyrene foam trays with compostable trays made in Maine by Chinet.

Why? Because polystyrene foam is bad news. It's made from non-renewable petrochemicals; it's not readily recyclable; it won't degrade in a traditional landfill; and it emits pollutants when incinerated.

The Chinet tray is made from renewable sugarcane, and it's 100% compostable. However, it weighs more than the foam tray (0.9 ounce versus 0.3 ounce), and it costs more than the foam tray (9 cents versus 3 cents).

With help from Amy Joyall and Mr. Kressler, I set up a waste station in front of the stage. The station had two bins for bottle recycling, three leaf bags for trays and two trash cans for regular garbage. As sated diners approached the station, they would shake excess food, napkins and tableware in the trash, then drop the trays in the leaf bags. Bottles went in the recycling bins.

By the end of the night we had collected 367 trays in three leaf bags; all were graciously donated to the Bald Hill compost pit. The "eco-upgrade" cost the PTO about \$22, and executive chef Laurie Brosnan reported no adverse feedback from the evening's patrons. We should do it again.

Brad Weeden