

## Guest Column: Restaurant makes recycling look easy

Martha Clarvoe

My office window looks out on Pioneer Alley and the back of Doubleday Café. That's why I know this restaurant does a good job of recycling. Every week, I see the cardboard and containers they put out for pickup.

I decided to find out just how much effort it takes to recycle in a restaurant, so I asked owner Kevin Grady if he would show me how he has things set up. Ever since opening the Doubleday Café in 1990, Grady says, he has encouraged recycling because he feels it is the right thing to do.

Doubleday Café has a kitchen on the dining room level and a food preparation area downstairs. Cardboard boxes from deliveries accumulate downstairs, where they are then folded, stacked into a larger cardboard box and stored in the basement until pickup day. Smith Disposal collects them once a week in fall, winter and spring, and twice a week in the summer.

"There is just too much to store during the summer rush," said Grady.

Smith picks up cardboard in a dump truck so it can be compacted for a more efficient run to the Otsego County MOSA recycling transfer facility in Oneonta.

Recyclable containers of metal, glass and plastic, along with newspapers and other paper items, are thrown into one 55-gallon garbage can conveniently located by the kitchen sink. The containers are rinsed, but not as thoroughly washed as for dishes to be used in the restaurant.

When the can is full, it is taken downstairs, where items for recycling are placed in clear plastic bags and set outside for pickup, also by Russ Smith Disposal. There is a pickup charge for recycling. Smith Disposal charges \$1 per bag, which is cheaper than the \$3.25 charge for a bag of garbage.

Beer and soda bottles, which require deposits, are also collected at Doubleday. When the 55-gallon recycling drum comes downstairs for sorting, bottles are placed back into the beer and soda boxes or sixpack containers. Star Cooperative Corp. pays 7 cents a bottle if sorted by distributor and 6 cents a bottle unsorted. According to Grady, it takes only a few minutes to do this several times a day, takes no extra space for recycling these containers, and a small amount of money comes back to the restaurant as a result.

"There is a little learning curve for new employees, but it's not that tough," he explained. "The containers and paper would need to go in a container anyway, so we make it easy for our employees by placing containers where they are needed.

"We do have to be careful, though, if recyclables aren't placed in the proper containers, Smith won't take them," Grady continued.

"Once a new employee placed aluminum pans with the papers and Smith did not pick them up. The correction was made and recyclables went out as usual the following week."

According to Grady, there is bound to be some waste thrown out at the restaurant, but at Doubleday, all that is thrown out is what is left on the table after customers leave. Food scraps, napkins, empty individual jelly containers and butter wrappers all go into the trash. Occasionally, scrap food is collected.

Leftovers in the kitchen preparation areas are sometimes taken home by employees or by local farmers who want food scraps for animals they are raising, but Grady said this is not an everyday occurrence. Grady has even facilitated the reuse of fryer grease by a local biodiesel maker. At one time, David Selover was taking half the restaurant's fryer grease for creation of biodiesel to fuel his diesel truck. Grady says the restaurant goes through two 55-gallon drums of fryer oil per month.

Recycling at Doubleday Café is a given. It's been done for years and is part of the restaurant's day-to-day operations. The efforts of Grady and his staff serve as a recycling model for other area restaurants to follow. Replacing one garbage can with a recycling bin for rinsed containers is an easy way to start. If readers know

of other restaurants or businesses doing an exemplary job of recycling, please call OCCA at 547-4488. We would like to get the word out about these establishments as well.

For more information on restaurant recycling, visit the following websites:

-Starting a restaurant recycling program: [www.foodservicewarehouse.com/education/going-green/start-recycling-program.aspx](http://www.foodservicewarehouse.com/education/going-green/start-recycling-program.aspx).

- Restaurant Guide to Waste Reduction and Recycling: [www.ciwm.bc.ca.gov/Publications/BizWaste/44198016.pdf](http://www.ciwm.bc.ca.gov/Publications/BizWaste/44198016.pdf).

- Recyclables accepted by the Otsego County Solid Waste Department: [www.otsegocounty.com/depts/sw/documents/ListofRecyclableMaterialsforWeb000.pdf](http://www.otsegocounty.com/depts/sw/documents/ListofRecyclableMaterialsforWeb000.pdf).

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