

Tray-nappers are costing students money

By **DEB MASSIC**
Staff Reporter

Food Services faces a growing problem of disappearing trays in the cafeteria, and if they do not turn up, students may see increases in food costs to cover the expense of switching to all paper and Styrofoam products.

The original idea behind reusable trays was to save money that would in turn be passed down to students, and to accumulate less trash. But it has not worked, according to Assistant Director of Housing and Food Services, Greg Schiavoni.

"We didn't anticipate this," he said. "Otherwise, we wouldn't have done it. But we aren't giving up yet."

The problem arises not just from trays being thrown out, but also from people taking them to their offices or apartments. A recent search turned up about 40 or 50 baskets in offices and rooms, with a dozen found in one office alone, according to JoAnn Coleman, director of Housing and Food Services.

"We don't mind people taking them," she said. "As long as they bring them back."

New trash cans were installed recently that are designed so trays and baskets cannot be thrown out. After they are in place for a while, Schiavoni and Coleman will see if they alleviate the problem at all or whether they need to switch to paper or Styrofoam products. Student workers are even told to look for the trays when they empty the trash. Food Services recently had to purchase 200 more to make up for lost ones.

The cost is \$2.69 for the round trays, \$1 for the baskets and \$.04 for the tissue paper used in the baskets. If Food Services is forced to switch over to Styrofoam, it will cost \$.06 per plate. But these plates cannot be reused and 500 Styrofoam plates will take up more space in a trash bag than 500 sheets of tissue paper leading to more money spent on trash removal.

The cafeteria serves about 1,000 people per day, according to Schiavoni. This means that every day, if at least half of those customers eat in, \$30 will be spent a day on the Styrofoam, compared to \$20 for tissue paper and trays. Over a week, this is a price comparison of \$150 for Styrofoam versus \$100 for tissue paper and trays. The trays themselves should only have to be bought once every few years.

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They can be used 10 times over, cutting down on trash and keeping costs for customers down. In a given year, with the purchase of 400 baskets and 32 weeks worth of tissue paper, Food Services will spend \$3,600 on eat in service. In a given year, purchasing 32 weeks worth of Styrofoam will cost \$4,800, not including the cost of additional trash removal. But if trays keep disappearing, it will soon be more economical to use Styrofoam instead of buying new trays every few months.

Takeout food is currently being wrapped in foil and put on a plate. In the past Styrofoam containers were used, but the packaging added too much additional cost. Food Services has looked into what other schools are using, according to Coleman and Schiavoni. They found that most use a combination of china and paper. Penn State Harrisburg's cafeteria is not set up to handle china. They found it would be an inconvenience for students to have to take plates back to another area after eating. It would result in plates left lying around and a need for more staff to wash the dishes.

Both students and Food Services would like to see the prices remain the same in the cafeteria. It is self-supporting, so contrary to what some students may think, their tuition does not pay for any part of Food Services. Extra money that is saved from reducing waste is passed down to students in the form of lower prices, special dinners and items, like shrimp and steak, and entertainment. Students can look forward to an Elvis impersonator in the weeks to come.

Overall, the new cafeteria has seen an increase in sales of 40 percent since last year, Schiavoni said.

"I've heard mostly good things from students," he said. "We are always looking into shifting things as students look for more. We are infusing new foods all the time."

At the end of the year, Food Services plans to do inventory on the number of baskets and trays they have. They will perform room inspections and then determine whether they have to switch to paper.

"We haven't given up on the baskets yet," Schiavoni said. "We hate to raise prices for everyone because of a few people."

****Food Services have asked anyone with baskets lying around their offices or apartments to please return them ASAP****

Spirituality seen in more than just religion

By **LAUREN MIKULA**
Staff Reporter

Spirituality is always present through imagery and music, yet it often is unacknowledged, said Dr. Elizabeth Tisdell, associate professor, at the "Women, Culture, and Spirituality" event held in Penn State's Morrison Gallery.

The event was one of seven free events featured in "Women and Society: Current Issues and Topics." Sixty people participated in a discussion about spirituality, religion, and culture, and how they interrelate with women's history. Tisdell defined spirituality as how people make meaning out of life experiences and how they construct knowledge through the symbolic process of music and art.

"Spirituality is an aware honoring of the life force that's happening through everything," she said. "It's about a move to a greater authenticity."

Tisdell said religion is an organized commitment to faith. She said religion sets spiritual guidelines, which relates to culture. Culture is the shared attitudes and beliefs within an organized group. People form religion based on their culture and are sometimes influenced by visions, nature experiences, near death experiences, or synchronicities, she said. "It's an experience where someone has been on your mind for a long time and all of a sudden you get a phone call from them."

Dr. Felicia Brown-Haywood, president of Student Support Services and Intercultural Affairs, led the second half of the discussion with an African-American spiritual. "I Got a New Home," she sang, "and it's mine." She introduced several slave and work songs and explained how they relate to spirituality. African-American slaves learned through oral culture.

"They attempted to find divine justice in the midst of suffering and hope

[through music]," she said. An ecological transformation enabled slaves to feel "free." The idea of being set free through music and God gave slaves hope for a better future.

The audience sang a variety of spiritual and slave songs with Haywood: "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," "Were You There?" "Wade in the Water," and "Oh Freedom." The songs represent hope, suffering, and freedom. Haywood ended with a call-and-response about religious healing.

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