

## REFLECTIONS ON THE ENVIRONMENT



### Carpool -- With Bread

By Doug Kievit-Kylar

Every Wednesday morning, I carpool to work with a neighbor -- and a box or bag of bread. Fresh out of the oven, the french loaves make my car smell just like the bakery I deliver for. And, when I get to work after making the delivery, I can break bread with my colleagues using the loaf I received as payment for the delivery.

Elaine Manghi began baking bread in her home and offering it for sale as early as 1978. Together, she and her husband Paul decided to make baking their sole source of income and opened Manghis' Bread in Montpelier in 1981. Valuing health, community and the environment, the Manghis decided to bake and sell wholesome and healthy bread, that is simply and plainly packaged, to remain small, and to satisfy local markets for their product. Their decision to focus on more local markets meant that they could avoid the business and environmental costs of a fleet of delivery trucks, but still left them with bread to be delivered.

To resolve this distribution dilemma, Paul and Elaine made arrangements with friends and neighbors who, in the course of their daily commutes to work, were willing to deliver a bag or a box of bread to a distant customer. In exchange, commuters were given a loaf of bread for each delivery they made. Once a week, a delivery truck comes to Manghis' Bread in Montpelier to deliver baking supplies, but never does a large delivery truck leave the bakery on a delivery route.

Sustainable business practices must, almost by definition, provide an accounting of the environmental consequences of production and distribution. Pollution prevention or source reduction of effluents, emissions and waste needs to be the cornerstone of any business effort to become environmentally sustainable.

The Manghis work with 39 local commuters making 43 deliveries per week to 16 different customers. The customers are all generally within a 25 mile radius of the bakery and include primarily food cooperatives, small locally-owned stores, and restaurants. What this means is that nearly 500 miles are avoided each week because the bread is delivered in a vehicle already traveling to the customer. This also means that approximately 33 gallons of gasoline are saved each week. Translated into air emissions, that means 4.3 pounds of hydrocarbons (an air toxic responsible for urban ozone/smog), 33.6 pounds of carbon monoxide (a poisonous gas), 2.1 pounds of  $\text{No}_x$  (oxides of nitrogen are responsible for urban ozone/smog, and acid rain), and 571 pounds of  $\text{CO}_2$  (a global climate change gas) -- or a total of 611 pounds of harmful air pollutants -- are avoided weekly.

The Manghis take for granted what they do on behalf of the environment. What they do and how they do it is now just too much a part of normal operations for them to recognize any of it as environmentally significant. Their operations, like their products, are basic and simple, rooted in the community, and sustainable over the long term -- business goals that can help us to redefine the marketplace and achieve prosperity without pollution.

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