

## Twenty-Five Thoughts from a Locavore

I admit to being a locavore – recently added to the dictionary as one who eats locally produced food. And this applies to beer, too! When we first got our liquor license, the White Dog was likely the only bar in town that didn't serve Heineken and Lowenbrau. I wanted local beers from small breweries, as well as food from local farms, and now a whole range of products and services provided through a local living economy. On the occasion of the White Dog's 25th anniversary, I am offering 25 reasons why going local is important. I hope you'll agree that local is the way to go – for the environment, for equity, and for fun!

1. Locally owned businesses provide unique character to the streets of our towns and cities.
2. Buying local builds community wealth, while buying from chain stores drains capital from our community.
3. Local merchants - the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker - provide personal relationships that enrich community life.
4. Supporting local musicians, artists, writers and artisans strengthens our creative class and builds local identity.
5. Producing basic needs locally builds regional self-reliance, reducing our dependency on long distance supply routes, easily disrupted by climate change and the rising cost of oil.
6. Buying locally produced products cuts the carbon emissions of transport.
7. Eating local food strengthens family farms and increases food security for our region.
8. Buying local renewable energy such as wind power and biodiesel increases our energy security while protecting our environment.
9. Localizing clothing production decreases imports of this basic need, building self-reliance. *Let's legalize hemp, the natural fiber crop for our region.*
- 10 and 11. Food from the industrial system has been modified to extend shelf life for long distance shipping and conformity of size and color, while reducing flavor and nutritional value. Food grown locally is more nutritious. And it tastes better!
12. Fresh beer tastes better, too, and eliminates preservatives needed for shipping.
13. Locally owned businesses make larger charitable contributions to community causes as a percentage of their sales than do chain stores.
14. Supporting and honoring local heroes builds community pride and encourages civic activism.
15. Engagement in local politics – supporting candidates, running for office, and taking a stand on local issues - builds responsible government that protects our place.
16. Local independent media covers events important to our community, and provides views independent of large corporate ownership.
17. Local knowledge – the history of our place, understanding where our water, energy and food comes from, and where our garbage and waste goes to – supports wise decision making that protects our natural environment and culture, and builds a healthier and happier region.
18. Investing locally through local banks, credit unions, and The Reinvestment Fund, puts our capital to work locally, providing a “living return” - the benefit of living in a healthier community and stronger local economy.
19. Drinking local tap water cuts out wasteful plastic bottles, long distance shipping and the draining of aquifers in other communities.
20. Buying from locally owned companies brings economic control to our communities away from distant board rooms where decisions are not always made in the best interest of

local communities.

21. Buying local spreads ownership, wealth and power more broadly, which builds a stronger democracy rather than concentrated wealth and corporate rule.

22. Buying from local producers allows greater transparency. Whether tracing contaminated spinach or children's toys, local production allows exact identification and first hand relationships with producers who reside in our own community.

23. Local traditions - festivals, parades and annual gatherings - provide collective joy. (Like the Mummers Parade and White Dog's annual New Years Day PJ Brunch). Having fun doesn't mean we have to burn carbons and dollars traveling to exotic vacation destinations. We can create fun at home.

24. Making a commitment to a place and taking responsibility for its care and well-being is personally grounding, meaningful and satisfying.

25. Being part of a local community brings a sense of belonging and security that money cannot buy.