



**Susan (Draybuck)
Fahnestock**
[LibArts '90]

LMU Mentors
Sr. Peg Dolan, R.S.H.M.
Renee Harrangue
Prof. Susan Rabe

Best Car Ever Made
Volvo 240
(converted to biodiesel)

Least Favorite Car
The full-size Hummer

**Proudest LMU
Achievement**
Organized a campus
rally after the 1989 murder of six Jesuits, their
housekeeper and her
daughter in El Salvador

When you run a car dealership that's trying to save the planet, you need to lead by example, Susan Fahnestock says. That's why the hardwoods in her office are made out of bamboo, the brilliant colors of paint on the walls contain no volatile organic compounds, and the vehicles in her garage get 50 miles per gallon, run on electricity or use alternative fuels.

She even sells biodiesel so people won't burn fuel looking for it.

Running perhaps the country's only environmentally friendly car dealership may be the last thing the psychology major thought she would be doing after leaving LMU, but it's part of a natural progression. She was such a gearhead growing up that her first business was a Volvo brokerage where she helped customers find the cars they wanted. When those clients started requesting Volvos that used cleaner-burning biodiesel fuel, she was intrigued enough to find out more. And when she had a daughter, she became concerned about global warming.

"I want to make sure that Seattle's not a beach resort when she's an adult," says Fahnestock, co-owner of Green Car Co. in Kirkland, Wash.

She's trying to reduce global warming by changing what people drive and the way they think about their transportation choices. The problem is convincing them to change. After all, most motorists don't really need military assault-style vehicles if they're just commuting. Fortunately, high gas prices are helping make the case for her.

Better Cars for a Better Planet

This car dealer sells environmentally friendly cars, and she's preparing her business to head for the future.

That's why the dealership that Fahnestock and her husband own not only sells gas-sipping Smart Cars (50 m.p.g.), biodiesel vehicles and electric-powered autos, it also includes a library where visitors can learn more about environmental issues.

One of the keys is showing people they can make do with an electric automobile for routine driving and maybe a regular car for commuting. People have long feared electrics because of their speed — around 35 m.p.h. — and their 40 to 60 mile range. The truth is, that's all many people need most days, Fahnestock says. On rare occasions when they need something more, they could do a short-term rental.

Fahnestock is no hippy nor are her clients. Her dealership is on the edge of downtown in an upscale Seattle suburb, and the people who buy Smart Cars are baby boomers who have seen them in Europe, think they're cool and can afford the \$27,000 price tag. When the company introduced them, it was selling one every other day and that was when it was in a location that was harder to find.

Although she's already moved up, she's not content with just one location. Fahnestock wants to go where the population is going. That's why her plan is to open small, downtown retail offices in cities throughout the country.

"There's all this movement of people into downtown areas. These vehicles are the perfect solution for all your running around trips. We think this is going to be a big trend in the future," she says.

—David Volk