



# THE RUTABAGA RAP

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FOR A NEW GM**

**AGRICULTURE:**  
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TO "PLEASE READ THOSE LABELS  
CLOSELY. HOW ABUNDANCE SHOP-  
PERS CAN HELP SLOW THE FARM  
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POTLUCKS AND FOOD CHOICES**

# IGM'S MUSINGS

INTERIM GENERAL MANAGERS

BY FRANCIS & CAITLIN

■ How could we start these musings without telling Jim how thankful we are? Jim was the one who inspired the move to the South Wedge, and he worked very hard to make this “musing” come true. He retired at the end of August after almost ten years as the General Manager of Abundance Food Co-op.

Now, we are in this spacious and colorful building; after a year and a half here, we still have some challenges to face, but also an abundance of opportunities to embrace! First, as the Board of Directors is still in the process of selecting the next GM, they have asked us, Caitlin Holcombe and Francis Barrow, to share the GM responsibilities in the interim. We accepted, knowing that it would be hard and exhausting (we both still work in our “home” departments), but also knowing that we would have the support of: the Board of Directors, NCG (National Co-op Grocers), our fellow co-ops and most of all, the amazing staff of Abundance.

We, the Abundance staff and board members, are all working to make the co-op thrive. We are making plans to improve our online presence on Facebook, Instagram, and our website. We also want to open the front door

on South Ave to offer better access to the store from the street. We will have a Wellness Fair on Saturday October 27 with sampling and demos. On Thanksgiving morning, we will again be the starting point for the Wedge Waddle.

There are a lot of changes planned as well in the Deli. New Grab & Go products, as well as new entrées in the hot bar coming soon. Saturday and Sunday brunches are BACK! You may also have noticed the changes on the floor: the Grab & Go has moved to the front, and cheese is now located in the two-door cooler, and in the back of the Grab & Go. We are working to make our shoppers' journey through the store smoother.

We also need you in this process! You are our customers, and many of you are also shareholders. If you think of something great for the store, please, let us know! We always have “suggestion” forms for you to use at check-out. Just ask a cashier and they will be happy to help you! Summer is coming to an end, and as students are going back to school, we are preparing for the fall season. Squashes are making their way back to our Produce crates, pumpkin flavors are filling the Grocery aisles, and Oktoberfest beers are ready to leave the cooler... Thank you, to all of our customers, shareholders, volunteers, and staff members, for supporting the co-op! We are stronger together!

In co-operation,  
Caitlin Holcombe and Francis Barrow,  
Interim Co-General Managers

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**CAITLIN HOLCOMBE & FRANCIS BARROW  
(INTERIM GENERAL MANAGERS)**

**WRITE FOR  
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for the WINTER ISSUE.  
● ●  
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*Tahkiah Burrs, Co-editor & Design*

*The Rutabaga Rap is Abundance Food Co-op's quarterly newsletter. With articles, notes, and recipes, we explore the food, values, and way of life that matter most to our co-operative community.*

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**Produce**

Caitlin Holcombe, Produce Manager  
Saqrah Houck, Produce Buyer

# PLEASE READ THOSE LABELS CLOSELY.

## How Abundance Shoppers Can Help Slow the Farm Crisis

BY ELIZABETH HENDERSON

There haven't been any tractor cavalcades to DC in recent memory, but the farm crisis that made big headlines in the late 1970's has not ended. Two years ago, the aggregate earnings of all farms in the US dropped by 50%. For three years, the price dairy farmers get for their milk has been below what it costs them to produce it resulting in smaller dairies giving up and going out of business including the last two that I drive by on my way from Newark to Rochester. The farm press reports farmer suicides. Giant "organic" dairies in Texas, Colorado and Idaho are underselling the milk from the family-scale organic dairies in NY and most of the organic processors have cut payments to dairies by as much as 25%. Except for the 100% grass fed brands, organic processors will not take milk from any new farms so the growth in organic farm numbers and acreage in NY that had been going on for a decade has slowed. To make matters worse, under the current administration in DC, the National Organic Program (NOP) recently declared that hydroponics could be certified organic and dropped the livestock and poultry rule that would have eliminated eggs from chickens that do not get to scratch around in the soil. Abundance shoppers can help our local farmers by paying closer attention to the origin of the food you buy.

At Abundance, there are three departments where you can find food from area and regional farms – the produce section, the dairy case and the cheese island.

Produce Manager, Caitlin Holcombe tries very hard to buy as much produce as possible from area farms. In early September, Saqrah Houck, assistant to Caitlin, wrote this explanation of their policies:

"We get our produce from direct purchases with multiple local farmers, 2 local distributors, and 1 national distributor. We are currently carrying a little over 50% local produce by item. By volume of sales, it is much higher. We are currently in the height of local season. Farmers we buy direct from include Bowman & Hill, Andy's Specialty Garlic & Produce, Bolton Farms, and Smugtown Mushrooms. Our 2 local distributors are Headwater Food Hub and Regional Access. Our national distributor is Four Seasons.

"We set the prices for local produce the same way we set them for non-local product. We determine a mark-up that takes into account the volatility of the product and anticipated speed of sales. This allows



us to create the best deal possible for the customer while minimizing the potential for product aging before being sold. Unlike with Four Seasons, where we sometimes negotiate pricing, we let local farmers set their price. We prefer to simply decline an offer that we determine is too high than attempt to negotiate with them. This way we are not putting them in a position where we pressure them to sell their product below its value. We also do not negotiate pricing with our local distributors.

"We prefer to buy from local farmers that have USDA Organic, Certified Naturally Grown, or NOFA Farmer's Pledge certification. We do still buy from farmers that use organic practices without any sort of certification. We are legally not allowed to sell those as organic, but designate "no spray" on the conventional product sign in order to provide both maximum transparency to shoppers and opportunities to local farmers. In addition, we carry a small selection of local "IPM" or integrated pest management produce. This type of produce is grown with the use of minimal pesticides. The farmer uses their discretion to spray only when necessary. This option provides shoppers a cheaper choice as well as supporting local farmers grown product that is difficult to cultivate without any use of pesticides- typically fruit." Items in the produce section are carefully labeled. Produce from local farms has the name of the farm on it. Items from elsewhere in the country have USA.

Even if they carry an organic label, if tomatoes or berries are hydroponically grown, Caitlin makes sure to add that information.

(Continued on page 8)

# Cornmeal AND LIME COOKIES



BY KENNETH RICH

At a cafe/bakery in the mountains I overheard a patron gushing about the Cornmeal Lime Cookies, so I treated myself to one. It was like a cross between a lemon drop and a muffin top, only, blimey, it was limey! I galloped back to the culinary crime lab to investigate.

Partly, it caught my ear because I knew of the ancient process of Nixtamalizing corn, that is, soaking it in an alkali such as lime water (calcium hydroxide) to remove aflatoxins, increase nutrient availability, and, most importantly, make it easier to make a tortilla. So I wondered if the cornmeal lime cookie was possibly born out of misinterpreting the phrase "corn treated with lime" seen on packages of tortillas. If so, the originator got so embarrassed that they erased all historical evidence and made it seem like it was just a brilliant idea from the first batch. It would be kind of like seeing this cookie recipe call for baking soda, so the brilliant baker put in a quarter teaspoon of 7-Up!

Oh, bizarre, I just looked: there IS a recipe for 7-Up Biscuits out there. Gaah. I feel faint. A cookie might help me to recover from the shock.

## INGREDIENTS

1 stick butter (½ cup)  
1 cup agave syrup  
¾ cup lime juice (4 limes)  
zest from 4 limes  
2½ cups cornmeal  
1½ cups white all-purpose flour  
¼ teaspoon baking soda (Not soda pop!)  
¼ teaspoon salt

Warm butter to room temperature to soften. Preheat oven to 350° F. Cream together butter and syrup. Mix in zest and lime juice. To make zest, a special tool called a zester makes way better zest than you can get by hand-mincing lime peel, and it is way-ay easier. Just "grate" off the aromatic green outermost layer of peel into the butter-syrup bowl before halving the limes to juice them.

In a separate bowl, mix the dry ingredients together. Pour the dry mix into the wet mix, and mix well. Plop out twenty 2-tablespoon cookies onto baking sheets, flattening them by hand. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until the edges lightly brown.

Ah, I feel much better now, thank you. And you will, too!

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# “BOARD NEWS”



BY BETH GARVER BEHA



I hope everyone had a great summer.

The summer was extremely busy for Abundance and the Board, as we were posting, searching for and interviewing candidates for the General Manager role while working to maintain all the Board’s responsibilities with the loss of two Directors who had to resign due to personal circumstances. In light of the circumstances, we were fortunate to appoint a new director to the Board, who brings a wealth of experience.

Monique Marollo is a long time Abundance shareholder, supporter, previous employee, and also served as Interim General Manager (IGM) over the course of 3 years before hiring Jim DeLuca. Monique has an exceptional amount of experience from her time as Manager, IGM, and now as Store Operations Manager of the second Lexington Co-op in Buffalo. We welcome Monique to the Board.

In other news, Jim DeLuca officially retired as GM of Abundance on August 24, 2018. He had been our GM for close to 10 years and had been instrumental in finding our new location at South Avenue, which has been open since April of 2017. We honored him with a retirement party at Abundance on Thursday, September 6, with pizza, drinks and cupcakes brought in by the Board. We wish Jim good luck in his future endeavors.

The Board started actively seeking and interviewing candidates with expertise in running retail food stores and co-ops. This summer we enlisted help from a seasoned CDS consultant, Brittany Baird. Brittany is well known in the co-op world for her experience helping co-ops put together successful interim store plans and leadership teams, employee rela-

tions and general management of co-ops. Brittany spent several days at Abundance, interviewing employees, speaking with Board members and spending time assessing the store and financials. She was instrumental in helping the Board establish the IGM team of Francis Barrow and Caitlin Holcombe. Abundance employees have also been integral in the process of making the transition from Jim to Francis and Caitlin smooth and seamless. Francis and Caitlin will co-manage the store while candidates for GM are being interviewed and vetted.

We appreciate all the support from shareholders and employees during the challenging Spring and Summer of 2018. We are encouraged that Abundance will thrive.

Secretary, Board of Directors, Abundance

[bgarver@rochester.rr.com](mailto:bgarver@rochester.rr.com)

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# “WINTER IS ICUMEN IN” ... FOR NOW



BY JACK BRADIGAN SPULA

As I write this, a hurricane packing incredible rainfall is approaching the Virginia-Carolina coast. This is probably standard operating procedure in the dawning Climate Change Era. And another reminder that extremes are undoubtedly going to be a regular visitor to these parts.

With winter coming soon to the Rochester area, we can be confident we'll experience some low-temperature relief to the heat waves of summer 2018. But still, the inexorable rise of global average temperatures will hit us hard. (No doubt the latest hurricane “remnants,” still pumped with lots of moisture, will leave us a reminder of this.)

While the “times have been a' changin,” our little corner of the world has been getting wetter – except for when it's been approximating drought.

Great Lakes Sciences and Integrated Assessments (GLISA), a project of the University of Michigan and Michigan State, sums up: “The frequency, amount, and form of precipitation falling in the Great Lakes region have changed. Overall, total precipitation has increased by 11% since 1900 in the eight U.S. Great Lakes states.”

Averages do not indicate evenness or uniformity across the region, of course. Summers here in the eastern Great Lakes might get drier (witness 2018). But there's also a compensating trend. Says GLISA: “One analysis indicates a potential 20-30 percent increase in winter and spring precipitation.” It's true, other studies might show less of an increase locally, but still... it makes sense to stock up on galoshes.

Ice, for its part, may no longer suffice. We're pretty used to hearing about the slow disappearance of summer sea ice in the Arctic. But the same factors that are driving the monumental polar shift will have a big effect on the Great Lakes, too. And localized effects, definitely including more flash floods, will include changes in vegetation and growing patterns – agriculture, take note – and even the shape of streams, landforms and watersheds.

“Responding to Climate Change,” a study by NYSERDA (the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority), looked at the future of lake ice hereabouts, among many other items. The study, updated in 2014, summarized thus: “Annual ice cover has decreased 71 percent on the Great Lakes since 1973 [emphasis added].”

Rochesterians can be passionate about snow, pro or con. But if you lean toward chionophobia (an excessive fear of the stuff), don't think global warming will do you any favors, at least not in the near term. The NYSERDA study notes that “models suggest this [decrease in lake ice] will lead to increased lake-effect snow in the next couple of decades through greater moisture availability.”

Then things may let up. “By mid-century,” says the study, “lake-effect snow will generally decrease as temperatures below freezing become less frequent... The high ice extent of the 2013-2014 winter highlights the fact that natural variability is expected to continue, even as long-term trends gradually shift the statistics in favor of low-ice winters.”

The science is more solid than a glacier. But let's distract ourselves with the folksy, intuitive approach of the “Old Farmer's Almanac.”

Here's what the OFA – online, as befitting 21<sup>st</sup> century old farmers -- sees for Rochester in its crystal ball, or maybe snow globe. The forecast for October 27-31, 2018: “rain and snow showers, cold.” You might not be persuaded by such a confidently specific prediction, especially if you look at the map supplied by the OFA puts Rochester where Fair Haven is now situated.

But in a small way, the fanciful relocation of our fair city might be prescient, or premonitory. Because when it comes to our famous “lake-effect snow,” we'll likely be seeing more of what Fair Havenites have long enjoyed, in abundance. Until we don't anymore.

(Continued from page 4)

Coop support has been essential for organic vegetable farms in the entire NE region. Buying from many small farms is a lot more trouble than calling up one or two big distributors.

Farmers new to store sales may not know how to prepare their produce for delivery, so the produce department has to provide training. Sales direct to coops help farmers cut out other middlemen to gain a larger piece of the final food dollar.

Since they have been processed and packaged, milk products and cheese are more complicated for shoppers to decipher. An excellent guide is the Cornucopia Institute “Scorecard” which rates dairies according to the quality of their practices. Five Cows, the highest rating, goes to brands that buy from family-scale organic farms that mainly feed their cows on pasture and do not feed soy beans. In his introduction to their August, 2018 study, “Giant Livestock Factories and Family Farms Sharing the Same Organic Label,” Director Mark Kastel summarizes: “Today, this is now a “bifurcated” industry. There are two organic labels. The vast majority of name brand organic dairy products are produced with integrity and highly rated in our study. Unfortunately, the default in this secretive industry, is that it has to be assumed all private-label milk comes from illegal factory farms. ... To illustrate the grotesquely disproportionate scale of some of these organic “farms” in the arid Western states, Texas produces 1.4 times the organic milk that Wisconsin produces, the state with the most organic dairies—even though Wisconsin, commonly known as “America’s Dairyland,” has 75 times more organic producers (453 versus 6, according to the most recent USDA records).”<sup>1</sup>

Abundance carries some of the NE regional brands that rate 5 Cows from Cornucopia: Seven Stars (just over the border in PA), Hawthorne Valley (in Ghent, NY) and Maple Hill Creamery (Kinderhook, NY.) The next highest rating, 4 cows, goes to Organic Valley (OV) and Stonyfield. OV is a national brand, but sources most of the milk sold in NY from NY and nearby state dairies. Stonyfield sources the organic milk for its yogurt from OV farms in New Hampshire, NY and VT. With 3 cows we find Upstate NY, the Niagara Cooperative, Wegman’s store brands



and Perry’s Ice Cream. Rather unfairly rated with 0 cows is Byrne Dairy which did not respond to the Cornucopia survey. Byrne Dairy is a family-owned company, based in Syracuse, and was one of the first milk processors to go Bgh-free (Bovine Growth Hormone). Byrne sources the milk for its wide range of dairy products from both conventional and organic farms in central New York.

In the big cooler along with dairy products, you will also find local eggs from Lee Farms and Meadow Creek, and ferments – pickles, sour kraut, etc – with ingredients from regional farms. Small World Bakery also uses NY grown organic flour in their breads.

The Finger Lakes wine trail is finally getting a cheese trail to go with it! In the cheese department, the number of NY produced cheeses grows apace. Lively Run (Interlaken) was the first local cheese starting in 1982. Now you will find Ripley Farm (Moravia), East Hill (Perry), First Light (East Bethany), Shtayburne (Rock Stream), and Stoltzfus (Deansboro). There are also Cabot’s (Vermont), Andrew and Everett (New Jersey) and that old New Yorker – Yancy’s Fancy (Corfu). I have carefully eaten my way around the offerings on the cheese island and can attest that the local cheeses rate from very good to delicious. By the way, Cornucopia rates Rumiano Cheeses, a California company, with 5 Cows. For dairy farms, producing a value-added product like cheese or yogurt, is a way to get out of the commodity milk market where the prices are “take it or leave it” and the farmer has some control.

By paying attention to the small print on those labels, Abundance shoppers can help keep local farms alive!

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<sup>1</sup> You will find the full report on the Cornucopia website – [www.cornucopia.org](http://www.cornucopia.org). I accessed it on August 24, 2018.

# “PICKY PICKY”

BY JAY T. STRATTON

I always loved our Co-op Potlucks of yore for their delicious and varied menus from the strict simplicity of vegan to sinfully rich ovo-lactarian fare. Real food is so good that most folks don't have to bother with the fake meat phenomenon. If I were a mushroom or a bean, I'd feel a bit insulted to be told that I tasted like turkey, or whatever. Why are we so picky about what's icky?

At our potluck I noticed a young lady becoming perturbed over a bean salad because whoever prepared it had not cut off the pointed tips. And, heaven forbid (!), some of the stems had been left on too! Were beans even edible in this condition? she appeared to wonder. The mother was a little bit ashamed that daughter was getting so vehement over such a minor detail. Was this young lady on her way to becoming a dreaded food Nazi? Now that we know the one true way to eat, shouldn't we force the world to go along?

Kudos to Small World Bakery and Fermentary for experimenting with their dilly beans. Did you notice that they are now leaving the stems on and have slightly reduced the price of their wonderful fermented pickles? Green beans are much easier to process this way. I know, Julia Child might demand that they be cut on the diagonal but stems work.

Let's examine now some examples of picky eaters of my acquaintance: Ex-cousin Old Boy eats all beef; no other meat is permitted. To this add potatoes, corn, green beans. And beer. Maybe iceberg lettuce when forced. Of course, all food comes from stores, so you can trust it. Rural friend Old Boy eats only venison, potatoes, corn, green beans. Perhaps fish, if he caught it, iceberg lettuce when forced. And beer. Of course, most of his food comes from the woods so he can trust it. Is one lifestyle really better than the other? I find both to be rather limited.

Meanwhile my young Meth head Cousin has been vegetarian for 7 years now. Congratulations! As a gift I bought her a half dozen Co-op salads - red pepper cashew "cheese," hummus, kale yellow beet carrot salad, quinoa . . . She found every one of them to be disgusting. After 15 years of the big mac diet, her idea of vegetarianism is the toasted cheese sandwich with French fries and deep-fried (bar)

mushrooms. Yum. She hasn't gained any weight on this new diet, but those 3-day parties without food sound particularly bleak.

A few years back I had the honor of sitting with some military men at a banquet. These boys had all kinds of decorations, ranks, security clearances and even bomb codes! To hear them tell it, the biggest menace to our American lifestyle today is not Islamic terrorism or Russia but the evil empire of Tofu. They were not content with their own pork chop, potato and over-cooked used-to-be vegetable and felt free to condemn the dietary choices of others. "It's not even food!" "It leaves you hungry." "Only Asians can digest it." "It takes virile American men and converts them into big-breasted soy boys ready to follow the feminist party line." etc. Let's remember the old joke that "military intelligence" is an oxymoron.

Sorry boys, but scientists say that around 20% of the damage to the earth's atmosphere is caused by industrial meat production, not tofu. Beef is the main culprit, especially the practice of feeding cattle grain to fatten them up during their last month of life. Now which is more important, planetary weather systems or fat marbling on your steak? The meat production system is just as harmful as our transportation systems or electricity production. If you feel guilty about this, do consider buying some of Abundance's certified grass-fed beef.

How can we get our children to be more imaginative in their food choices? We don't need food Nazis here; brute force and guilt trips do not work. Our government subsidizes beef production on public land and still considers ketchup to be a vegetable. If adults don't experiment and try new things, how can we expect the children to do so?

Carnivores beware! Frankenfood is out there and coming! They say that the addition of genetically modified heme- producing bacteria (blood flavored!) to the food system will soon make it impossible to tell by taste test or by texture the difference between a McBurger and a McSoyBoy. Isn't it a brave new world out there?

# UNIQUE WIND TURBINES FROM KOHILLO BY ELSBETTE GROVE



Have you ever noticed, as I have, that you feel more energetic and alive on windy days? And have you also noticed that we have an abundance of this wind energy in our Great Lake City of Rochester, New York? As I sit here in my fourth floor apartment, I feel a steady breeze coming in my west facing window. I ask myself, why aren't we using this treasure to produce our energy here? Recently, there has been a lot of controversy in Rochester and the surrounding areas over the installation of the large tall horizontal wind turbines off shore in the lake because of the danger to birds in their migratory paths. But wait, there is another feasible and safe alternative to these tall horizontal turbines.

“KOHILLO WIND” is a company that is producing vertical wind turbines in nearby Skaneateles Falls, NY. International distributor agreements as well as domestic partnerships have enabled them to provide energy across the globe from the Philippines to South America. “KOHILLO wind turbines are unique in that they condition the wind through a diffuser system not used in traditional turbines, which in turn harnesses the energy more efficiently and increases power production. This elevates the potential for wind turbines drastically, making a clean energy source a reality even in urban environments. The nucleus of KOHILLO is its unparalleled technology that has ‘stayed home’ in Central New York.” \*

\*(<http://kohilowind.com/kohilo-wind-vortex-tech/>)

Some of the complaints regarding the horizontal turbines are not present in these turbines. Their movement is quite silent and they are not tall enough to be a threat to migrating birds. They are capable of turning at speeds as low as 1 mph, and under harsh wind conditions at speeds up to 127 mph. They are an efficient way to harness the wind in cities where high velocity air crosses low velocity air. They are very versatile as they can be installed on rooftops, and at ground levels in many places such as.... schools, libraries, street lamps, colleges, churches, apartment buildings, backyards, and beaches.

Bill McKibben has reported that we are no longer dealing with Climate Change but with Climate Crises! During this past week in Rochester every day was over 90 degrees. It is becoming more imperative that we convert to renewable energy. It is timely that we are turning back to the Sun and the Wind as our sources of energy and abandoning the use of fossil fuels. Derek Grassman, the inventor, founder/CEO of KOHILLO and a nature enthusiast has used his mechanical engineering skill to come up with a design that is economical, efficient and environmentally friendly. He is keeping its main base in Skaneateles Falls where it is a beacon of hope when it comes to jobs and the future of energy in Central New York. “KOHILLO’s goal is to preserve the environment and empower people towards change by offering affordable green energy solutions that are built to last for generations”.\*

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