



The Accidental Reporter: A Rainy Wednesday at the Trumansburg Farmers' Market

by Cadan Ziemba

Every community has places that tell its story better than any history book.

In Trumansburg, one of those places appears every Wednesday afternoon on the corner of Route 227 and Main Street. Beneath rows of pavilions, surrounded by the smell of fresh bread, grilled food, flowers, cider, and coffee, neighbors gather for something that has become far more than a place to shop. The Trumansburg Farmers' Market is where conversations happen, friendships are renewed, and small businesses become part of the community's fabric.

That is exactly the kind of story *The Accidental Reporter* hopes to tell.

The title "reporter" carries enormous responsibility. It represents a profession built on ethics, accuracy, and accountability.

The Accidental Reporter isn't trying to replace traditional journalism. Instead, it serves as an invitation for curious people to practice the art of observation—to notice the

moments, people, and traditions that give a community its character.

Rather than chasing breaking news, *The Accidental Reporter* follows something quieter: the heartbeat of a place.

On this particular Wednesday, that heartbeat continued despite steady rain.

The weather chased away many of the usual crowds, but it didn't keep the vendors home. Week after week, rain or shine, they arrive before opening time, unload their trucks into the pavilions, and greet one another like old friends. With fewer customers wandering the aisles, the rain created something unexpected—time. Time to linger. Time to listen.

The first stop was Ciderhood, one of the market's newest vendors.

Owner Dylan poured a sample while describing the journey from wild apple to finished cider. His

orchard is only part of the story. Some of his favorite apples come from forgotten trees tucked into abandoned orchards or growing wild along country roads. Those apples, he explained, haven't been bred for appearance or





Market attendees gather and socialize, supporting local vendors with their purchases. (photo: Trumansburg Farmers' Market)

shelf life. They simply grow where nature intended, often producing more interesting flavors than commercially cultivated varieties.

Weather shapes every harvest. Contrary to what many might assume, too much rain isn't always a blessing. Dry autumns often produce sweeter apples with more concentrated sugars, resulting in richer cider. After harvest, many apples rest in wooden crates, slowly losing moisture before fermentation begins.

Inside recycled bourbon barrels, another transformation takes place. The wood softens the cider while lending subtle notes of bourbon and toasted oak. Unlike many modern producers, Ciderhood relies on natural fermentation to create carbonation—a traditional French method known as *pétillant naturel*, or “naturally sparkling.” The bubbles come from the cider finishing its fermentation inside the bottle, creating something that feels both handcrafted and alive. It was easy to see why Dylan hoped this wouldn't be his last season at the market.

Just a few tents away, the smell of grilled hot dogs drifted through the damp afternoon air. JJ's Dogs & More has become a favorite stop for families, with a menu that caters especially well to children. Jane, one of the owners, greeted customers with the easy familiarity that seems to define the market. Before joining the food truck two years ago, she and her husband Jim were well known as the owners of Trimmers Ice Cream, another local institution.

In the middle of the conversation, a familiar face hurried through the rain toward the truck. Rich, from Lucky Hare Brewing Company, had come for lunch.

Jane laughed as she joked about charging him thirty dollars for a Chicago Dog before applying the vendor discount. It was the kind of exchange that couldn't happen in a shopping mall or supermarket. Here, the vendors aren't simply neighboring businesses—they're customers, supporters, and friends. After lunch, Rich returned to his brewery's booth with fries in hand.

Lucky Hare has been part of the market for six years, and Rich has spent the past three helping customers discover local craft beer. Looking across the rain-soaked market, he smiled. “Other than the weather,” he said, “I don't have a bad thing to say about this place.” His appreciation wasn't simply about sales.

Farmers' markets give small businesses something many of them can't afford on their own: visibility. Not every entrepreneur has a storefront, but for a few hours every Wednesday, dozens of businesses share one. Customers who arrive for fresh vegetables often leave with cider, flowers, pastries, honey, handmade soaps, or craft beer. Success has a way of spreading from tent to tent.

Rich pointed toward a stain on his tablecloth left behind by someone enjoying a pita purchased from another vendor the previous week. That stain, oddly enough, represented the market perfectly. Everyone benefits when people stay a little longer.

Lucky Hare itself has evolved alongside changing tastes. Like many breweries founded during the craft beer boom, it built an early reputation on bold India Pale Ales, especially Falcon Punch. But as drinkers increasingly seek lighter beers and lower alcohol options, the brewery has adapted with offerings like Lucky Light and I Love Your Whole Face. Rich says staying connected to the community has been just as important as staying connected to changing consumer tastes.

Community, after all, is what keeps people coming back.

The market itself has grown dramatically since opening in 2002. What began with only a handful of vendors has expanded into a gathering of more than thirty farms, wineries, food producers, artisans, and local businesses. Families spread blankets near the music pavilion. Children climb through the manager's play space. Tourists visiting the Finger Lakes often discover the market by accident and leave with a better understanding of the region than any travel brochure could provide.

The market isn't merely a collection of vendors. It's an ecosystem. Each booth supports the next. Every purchase strengthens another local business. Conversations become collaborations. Customers become regulars. Vendors become neighbors.

Walking through the market, it becomes difficult



*Celebrating May Day at the Market.
(photo: Trumansburg Farmers' Market)*

to separate commerce from community. That's why institutions like this endure.

The Trumansburg Farmers' Market reminds us that local economies aren't built solely on transactions. They're built on relationships—on remembering someone's name, asking about their week, trying something new, or sharing lunch under a tent while rain taps softly overhead.

As the first Accidental Reporter, I arrived expecting to gather interviews. Instead, I found stories. Stories about orchards and breweries. Stories about food

trucks and forgotten apple trees. Stories about people who continue showing up every Wednesday because they believe this place matters.

Maybe that's the real assignment. Not to chase headlines, but to notice the everyday moments that quietly hold a community together. If that's reporting, then perhaps being an Accidental Reporter isn't an accident after all.



The weekly musical entertainment prepares to perform under the pavilion. (photo: Trumansburg Farmers' Market)



SUMMER VENDOR DIRECTORY

Allie's Lemonade	facebook.com/p/Allies-Lemonade-61578148632946
Boland Thomas Vineyards	facebook.com/btvineyards
Boundary Breaks	boundarybreaks.com
Boundary Breaks Vineyard	boundarybreaks.com
Briar Burr Gardens	briarburrgardens.com
BYOC Refillery	byocrefilleryithaca.com
Cayuga Lake Creamery	cayugalakecreamery.com
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Craftavia	craftaviamarket.org
Crosswinds Farm & Creamery	crosswindsfarmcreamery.com
Fossil Creek Farm, LLC	facebook.com/p/Fossil-Creek-Farm-LLC-61575587772894
Gardella's Goodies	facebook.com/gardellasgoodies
Hector Hot Peppers	hectorhotpeppers.com
JJ's Dogs & More	facebook.com/p/JJs-Dogs-and-More-61578524374664
Jojo Cook	jojocookflx.com
Know Your Roots	knowyourroots.com
Lucky Hare Brewing	luckyharebrewing.com
Montour Falls Tea Company	montourfallstea.com
Moonlight Epiphanies	moonlightepiphanies.org
Mountain Moor Farm	mountainmoorfarm@gmail.com
Mush Love Greens	facebook.com/mushlovegreens
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Redbyrd Orchard Cider & Kombucha	redbyrdorchardcider.com
Sage Hen Farm	sagehenfarmlodi.com
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