



# The Feather and the Wind

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ALMAR ORCHARDS & JK'S SCRUMPY LLC

FLUSHING, MI

“I don’t know if we have a destiny or if we’re all floatin’ around, accidental-like on a breeze; but I’d like to think maybe it’s both. Maybe both is happening at the same time.

- Forrest Gump, at Jenny’s grave





(taken the Fall of their first apple harvest)

- Albert and Mary Koan purchased 50 acres in Flushing, MI in 1946
- They planted their first 200 apple trees in the summer of 1948, forming Almar Orchards
- The orchard was on standard roots in poorly-drained, heavy soil



Fast forward to today:  
two (2) LLCs

**Almar Orchards, LLC**

**JK's Scrumpy, LLC**





- 90 acres of organically-certified apples and pears
- 150 acres of cropland, meadows, pastures and woods with a sugarbush



# Welcome to the Farm Store

What is a farm without a farm store? Open year round, our store is a cross between an old-fashioned apple stand and a millennial's organic market. Our award winning hard ciders, Haybaler Switchel and vinegar are always available, and depending on the season and availability, we have a variety of other products as well.



- Apples/pears
- Fresh cider
- Hard Cider (taps offering free tastings)
- Apple cider vinegar and vinegar drinks
- Bakery featuring our donuts, homemade apple fritters and apple crisp
- Dried apples
- Applesauce
- Honey from our hives
- Maple syrup from our sugar bush
- Pork from our hogs

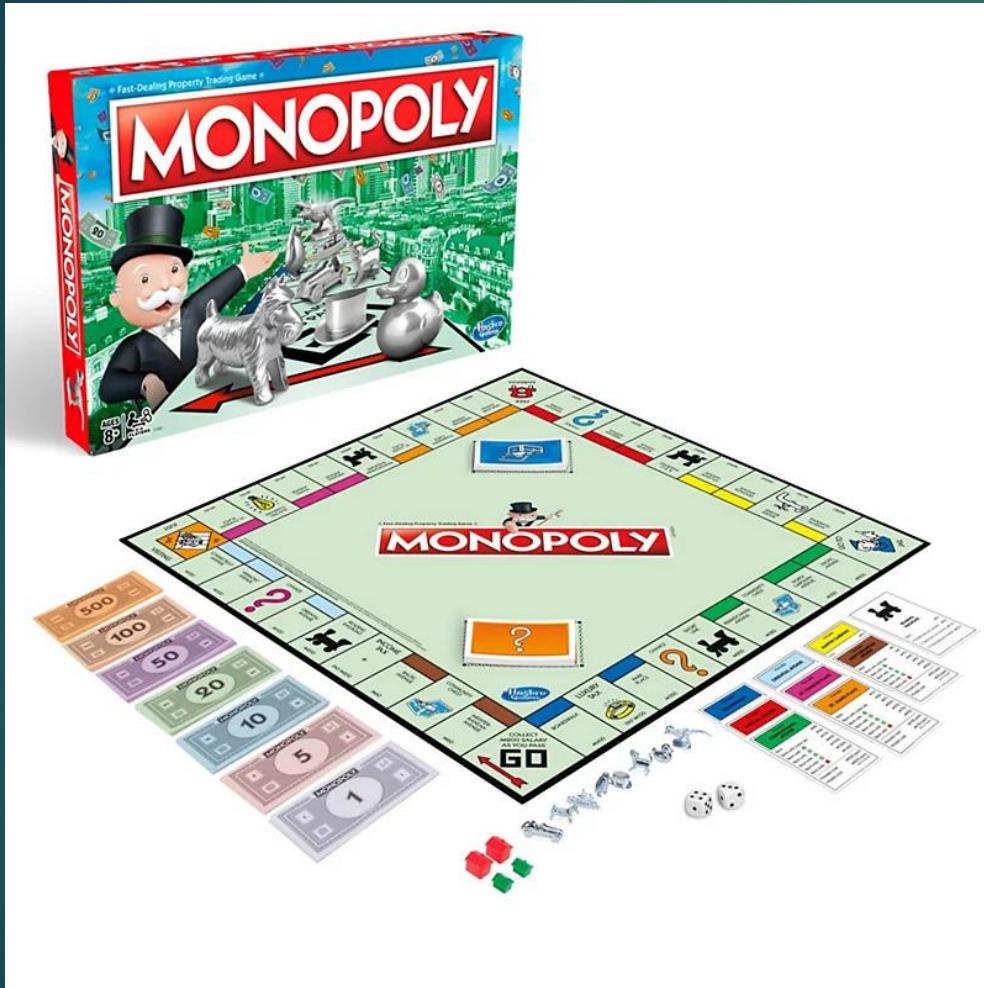




**JK's Scrumpy LLC** – Processor of fresh organic apple cider and Fermenter of organic hard ciders

Bottling, packaging and shipping of organic hard ciders to 25 states, plus Japan and South Korea

# Return to Childhood







*A blowing wind pushed me, like a feather, to apply for college – being the first Koan to pursue a higher education after the University of Michigan accepted my application.*

6 years of public school teaching and a Master's Degree later, I then planned to go to grad school. I was accepted into the PhD program at the University of Michigan – Rackham.

But the *wind blew and pushed me, like a feather*, again.







## Chemicals and Children

- Pesticides
- Fungicides
- Herbicides

Transitioning to organic  
growing ...



1998: I was granted my first official organic certificate



The organic game focuses on the battle between the “good guys” and the “bad guys” in the orchard.

“Bad guys” = 22 pests

“Good guys” = >200 predators

**IPM**





Organic growing was *more pain than gain* ... but thanks to these guys ...

Michigan State University



- Larry Gut
- George Bird
- David Epstein
- Pete McGee
- Mark Whalon
- Matt Grieshop

I was finally back on the path to *more gain than pain*.

Now a different wind (**climate change**) is blowing, pushing my *feather* in yet another new direction.





## Some final thoughts:

- ✓ Now is the perfect time to transition to organic growing. You do not need to sell organic products – they sell themselves.
- ✓ There is no cookbook or recipe for organic growing. We are still learning.
- ✓ <15 acres and direct marketing = more success. Growing disease-resistant varieties of apples only adds to that success.
- ✓ For a larger orchard, only transition part of it to organic. Use the other part as a “control” for comparing organic and conventional practices.
- ✓ Be adaptable for the changing growing seasons. Observe and fix minor problems before they become serious problems.
- ✓ Do not go into organic growing to make money.