

# OUR MONKEY STORY

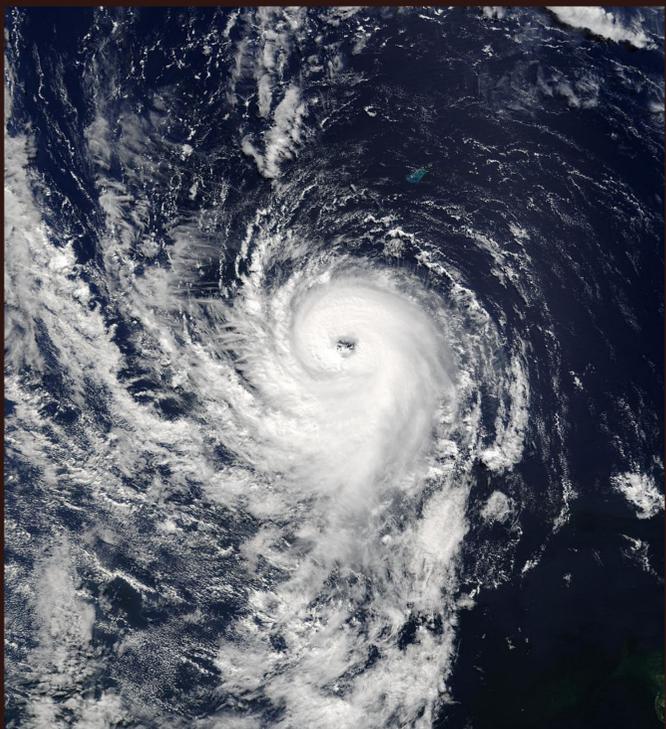


## IT BEGAN SEPTEMBER 29, 2003

BY LIL MACPHERSON, PRESIDENT & CO-OWNER

On September 29, 2003, Hurricane Juan struck with a force that changed the landscape of Nova Scotia. It also changed the direction of my life, and that of Christine Bowers.

Although Christine didn't know it yet, she would soon become my longtime business partner and VP of this Monkey business.



As I sat in my dark living room in the aftermath of the storm, waiting for the electricity to return, I asked myself some tough questions:

- Would there be enough food for all if we were shut off from the rest of the world for a few weeks, even days? (The answer is no.)
- How much do we depend on the world for our food supply?
- How healthy is this food?
- How does climate change & extreme weather affect food security?
- How many farmers do we have in Nova Scotia?

**I learned that Nova Scotia has about 3 days of food supply to use in a crisis. This terrified me.**

Our farms are struggling to survive. Close to 90% of our food comes from far away – US, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Most foods are grown with millions of tons of pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers. Industrial agriculture uses immense amounts of precious water and fossil fuels which exacerbates climate change. Processed foods with high concentrations of sugar and fat have resulted in an epidemic of food related health issues-- obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lactose intolerance, allergies, Chron's, celiac, etc. Food production is slowly killing our planet, and the industrial food chain is killing us!

After this epiphany, I knew that I had to be part of a paradigm shift in Nova Scotia. We wanted to start a business, a first-of-its-kind environmentally conscious restaurant in Halifax that served local and organic foods as much as possible. We wanted to support local farmers, rural communities, and the local economy. We wanted to lead the transition from a nutritionally challenged industrial and imported food system to one that is rooted in local, healthy and sustainable food production.

Apart from the vision which drove us to launch the business, Christine and I had no obvious reasons to succeed. Our determination scared our families to death. The obstacles were many: no money, no backers, no formal business education, and our work experience came from 25 years of waitressing.

What we did have was passion--a bottomless bucket of it. And so, on June 2, 2004, we along with 10 staff opened our first Wooden Monkey restaurant on Argyle Street in Halifax. Its popularity, the hunger in Halifax for nutritious, organic, largely local--"real" and safe food--was overwhelming and immensely satisfying.

Fast forward 10 years ...we decided to open a second restaurant and bring our General Manager of 10 years, Matt Cass, to join us as a partner in our Dartmouth location. At the end of November 2012, the Wooden Monkey team of 60-70 employees celebrated the opening of a second Wooden Monkey restaurant on the Dartmouth waterfront.

The goal of our business is to create an epidemic of HEALTH! Our business shows that we can change our own world here in Halifax and Nova Scotia. By doing that, we are transforming the world. Yes, we do DREAM BIG!