

THE ALLEGED FARM NEWS - 20 October 2005

This may seem like an odd time to sign up for next year. This season has not even ended yet, and you still have all that okra in the refrigerator. But there are good reasons to join up again now—some good for me and some good for you. For me, having members well before the new season starts makes planning easier, gives me a little money to begin the new year and boosts my sprits. I don't have to sit around in February wondering if this will be the year nobody signs up for the CSA. But I don't expect you to start sending in your money just to make me happy. You should also do it to make yourself happy. And it can make you happy because signing up now guarantees you a share. We sold out this year and, my February worries notwithstanding, expect to do so again next year, and earlier in the season. In addition, if you sign up now you get to pay less. After December 15 the price goes up to the full amount.

I would love to be able to let you pay even less to sign up now, but I could only do that by paying myself even less and there's not much less I can pay myself. As you may have noticed, the price of fuel has risen a bit this year. That affects us every time we buy gas or diesel or propane for our trucks, tractors, greenhouse and barn. It also affects us every time we get something—fertilizer, compost, lumber, seeds—delivered or purchase any plastic objects such as picking tubs and bags, both of which have roughly doubled in price in recent months. The fact is, the increase in the share price will quite possibly not cover our increased costs next year (let alone this year). But this is as much as I can stand to raise the price, and perhaps it will spur me on to invest in alternative energy sources such as biodeisel and solar power that much quicker. And that could go a little way towards making everyone happier.

The Alleged Farm CSA 2006 Season Sign-up Form

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail

I would like a 2006 season vegetable share for \$360. I would like to pick up my share from Flanigan Square (DOH employees only)/ Emma Willard / Riverview (DOH employees only) / Parker School / Environmental Advocates / Delmar / Guilderland / Schenectady / Clifton Park / Cambridge / Farm.

Signature _____

\$360 share price good only until 12/15/05. \$75 deposit due with sign-up. Balance due by 5/31/06 (or contact the farm to arrange an installment plan). Please make check payable to The Alleged Farm and send to The Alleged Farm, 209 Cooke Hollow Road, Valley Falls, NY 12185.

This week's share: Arugula, Broccoli raab, Napa cabbage, Carrots, Celeriac, Daikon, Garlic, Leek, Lettuce, Onions, Peppers, Hot peppers, Russet potatoes, Pie pumpkin, Turnips, Basil

This week's news: You may still be thinking that you could be the Alleged Farm pie baking champion. Perhaps you imagine that you could take the crown with your secret recipe for three berry pie or butterscotch pecan or even parsnip (yes, there is such a thing as parsnip pie; I made one once—and only once). Well, your pie may be lovely, but you are too late—though you should still feel free to drop off a pie at the farm some morning. Last Saturday the farm crew unanimously awarded the title to Sue Gutman for an admirable apple pie with a flaky yet sturdy crust and a moist (but not runny) intensely flavored (apple being the flavor) filling. So start practicing for next year. You could start with a pumpkin pie, using the pumpkin in this week's share.

Or perhaps a celeriac pie. All right, maybe not. But then what should you do with this odd, knobbly root? Well, you could cook it not in a pie, either by roasting it with some other roots such as turnips and carrots (and a few onions and garlic cloves) or by boiling it and mashing it, perhaps with some apple. Or you could eat it raw as a sort of salad, shredded (or julienned) with some shallot or onion, lemon juice, mustard, a dash of paprika, salt and pepper and oil or mayonnaise or sour cream or heavy cream or some combination of them.

You could make a leek tart. It might not make a great dessert, but it tastes good. Quarter a leek lengthwise and chop it finely. Cook the leek with salt, pepper and a dash of nutmeg slowly in a couple of tablespoons of butter until it starts to go soft, then turn the heat as low as it can go, add a bit of liquid (water is fine, but white wine or chicken stock work) and cover the pot. Let the leeks simmer until they are very soft, checking occasionally to make sure there is a little liquid in the pot, then add some heavy cream and continue to cook it over low heat, uncovered, until the mixture thickens. Let it cool and mix in an egg and some grated cheese (Gruyere works well). If this mixture is very thick, lighten it with a little cream of milk. Put the leek mixture in a tart shell (or several small shells) and bake it until the pastry is done and the filling has puffed up and started to brown slightly. It would go well with a nice lettuce and arugula salad.

You can also put the leek and cream reduction inside a potato pancake. "Can" not simply in the sense that it is physically possible but also because it tastes good. Grate some potatoes and wash them in a couple of changes of cold water then pat them dry well and mix them with a good dose of salt and pepper. Heat a heavy skillet and add some cooking oil or fat (duck fat works best or potatoes) then put half the grated potato in the skillet in a thin layer. Spread the leek mixture over the center of the potato layer and spread the rest of the grated potato on top. Cook the

Last fruit share: Liberty and Jonagold apples and cider from O.A. Borden and Sons, Easton. The Jonagolds are the larger, yellower ones. Liberty is a fairly recent introduction bred for disease resistance (it tastes good too). Along with a few other tasty new resistant cultivars, it may help reduce pesticide use in orchards