

# Networking

## Over 200 attend VBSR event at Shelburne Farms

Shelburne Farms played host to a Networking Get-Together of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) in October. More than 200 people attended the event at the Coach Barn on the 1,400-acre Shelburne Farms campus.

Event sponsors included **Burak Anderson & Melloni, Davis & Hodgdon, High Rock Consulting, Merritt & Merritt & Moulton, TruexCullins Architecture + Interior Design, Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, and WrightJones.**

Shelburne Farms public relations and marketing director **Vera Chang** said her organization is a nonprofit working to educate for a sustainable future. “We’re excited to have VBSR and 200-plus people here networking this evening to bring together the socially responsible business community, and also share our story,” she said. “We have a unique structure as a nonprofit, but there are many organizations here working toward a more sustainable future through different ways like renewable energy, sustainable architecture, and affordable housing. Our niche — and what we like to collaborate with other organizations around — is education. That’s the story we’ll be telling here tonight: about how people can partner with

us either directly with our education programs or supporting our enterprises.”

**Tom Nold**, CFO at Shelburne Farms, said the organization’s support comes in a variety of forms.

“We’re a very unique mix. We have that mission of education for sustainability, at the same time we have many enterprises through the farm that not only help support the farm but also align with the mission.” Nold noted Shelburne Farms’ award winning cheese business fueled by a pasture-based dairy that uses no fertilizer or artificial products of any kind.

“We don’t just sell the cheese to help support the farm, but it’s part of our educational component,” Nold said.

“Students and teachers can not only taste our cheese but see how it’s made and how animals are raised through our Certified Humane dairy.”

Nold also highlighted the **Inn at Shelburne Farms** and the farm’s **Market Garden**. “Over 75 percent of the food served at the Inn is from Vermont, which is incredible. Our Market Garden has six acres of organic vegetables and foods.” He added the farm also raises lamb and beef.

“Part of the VBSR meeting tonight is networking to find ways to work together, so like-minded businesses can support one another. As hosts, we

### Story and Photos By MIKE REILLY



**Tre McCarney (left) and Erin Boyd of Shelburne Farms helped welcome guests to the October VBSR Networking Get-Together.**

hope people will learn more about us and what we do,” Nold said. He noted many companies give Shelburne Farms cheese as corporate or client appreciation gifts.

Wang added that Shelburne Farms always seeks sponsors and partners for special educational events, such as Junior Iron Chef. “It’s an amazing program that brings young chefs in elementary, middle and high school from around Vermont to compete in contests making foods from local ingredients, from scratch” she said.

Guests were treated to a look at art from the **Burlington City Arts** (BCA) exhibition, “Of Land and Local 2015.” According to **DJ Hellerman**, BCA curator and director of exhibitions, the show represented an ongoing partnership between BCA and Shelburne Farms, now in its

third year. “The exhibit changes every year, and this year every artist was in residence at a park somewhere in the state of Vermont in the summertime. So all the artists worked throughout the summer and their works came back here for the exhibition.” Hellerman noted that BCA offers exhibition tours and even corporate team-building events at its gallery in Burlington.

**Karen Paquin**, development director at **Vermont Symphony Orchestra**, said VSO is welcoming a new executive director, Ben Cadwallader. “We’re really excited,” she said. “He’s coming from Los Angeles, but is a Vermont native who played in Vermont Youth Orchestra when he was young. He brings a lot of energy and we hope he can help revitalize

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## Workers

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comp policy. Before they step onto my work site they need a certificate of insurance, a declaration page as to the status of their own workers’ compensation policy.”

When the Vermont law was enacted in 1915, the state had manufacturing plants for shoes, furniture and textiles, among others.

“There [were] many industrial occupations, many of them involving children,” explained Monahan. When injuries at the workplace

occurred, often the only way to get restitution was by suing an employer, who would argue that by working for them the worker assumed the risks. “Both sides looked for a solution that wasn’t as costly [as litigation] and that actually provided some relief to [an] injured worker and didn’t put [the] burden on society with injured people who could no longer work.”

Today some 18,000 fresh reports of injuries are recorded in Vermont every year; this is down from the late 1990s when 25,000 reports came in annually. Workplace health and safety rules have helped reduce the numbers of claims. Monahan said Vermont has done a good job at keeping premium rates at or below 1994 rates. ❖



**Sue Schlom (left) of Campus Career Solutions networks with Jacob Dubois of Designbook.**



**Greg Epler Wood of MediaVox with Jim Elder of Rising Ridge Communications.**



**Andria Denome (left), UVM 2014 and Keeshawn Nicholson, Champlain College 2017, were among more than 20 college students or recent graduates who attended the event as guests of VBSR.**

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and reshape VSO. It's our only professional state-wide orchestra, and such an important part of the cultural landscape of Vermont."

**Pride Center of Vermont** hosts one of its signature events, "Uncorked for a Cause," December 7 at Burlington City Arts. **Kim Fountain**, executive director, said, "It's an event supporting our 50-and-up group, our work with our aging population in the lesbian, gay, bi-, and trans community. All you do is bring a bottle of wine as your entry fee, and you get to bid on some amazing lots of wine." She said there would be music and catering by Velvet Catering.

Board member **Claire Giroux-Williams** said, "It's a great time, a chance to stock up on wine for the holidays, including some wines you normally can't buy here in Vermont."

**John Burton** of NPI has been working on an elevator pitch. "**Vermont Consultants Network** is a monthly meeting that happens to be at my office, and the group wanted to do a session on how to introduce your business without hesitation when you meet them for the first time," he said. "One of our members, Markey Read, came in and helped us refine and improve our pitches, and everyone gave a pitch and reviewed each other." How is Burton's pitch coming along? Let's see:

"I work with NPI in South Burlington, one of the first technology management companies. We dig deep into details of budgeting, how business goals are set, and how we can align technology with those goals. We work with C-level executive

managers to make sure their investments give them a return when they buy computers, software, and applications."

**Sue Schlom**, career advisor at **Campus to Career Solutions** in Burlington, said, "I work with college students, recent graduates, and young professionals to help them find their first jobs, or internships." She brings extensive experience as a recruiter and career advisor, and is working with students and young professionals from all over the state.

**Jacob Dubois** works in business development for **Designbook**, located on Bank Street in Burlington. "Designbook is a Web-based app startup. We've developed a financial app that helps people raise capital to start companies," Dubois said. Designbook connects emerging and startup businesses with investors, potential co-founders, and collaborators.

**Greg Epler Wood** of **MediaVox** said, "I'm here on behalf of **Keep BT Local**, [a] cooperative formed to acquire Burlington Telecom, turn it into a co-op, and keep it hyper-local." He said financing for the co-op is moving forward and that Burlington Telecom's subscriber base, now over 5,000 customers, is at its historical peak. "It's making a profit and the co-op believes acquiring it would be a great benefit for the whole community."

**Jim Elder**, president of **Rising Ridge Communications**, said the company is, "A South Burlington-based marketing and public relations firm focused on business-to-business companies in manufacturing and information technology. We've been in business 15 years, with clients in Vermont and nationwide, and we provide a full range of branding, digital marketing and public relations services."



**Pride Center of Vermont was well represented by (from left) board member Claire Giroux-Williams, of American Red Cross, Executive Director Kim Fountain and board member Josie Leavitt, of Flying Pig Bookstore.**

**Groennfell Meadery** holds what co-owner **Ricky Klein** called its "biggest event of the year" in December. "It's our 'Mid-Winter Fest,' built on the Scandinavian mid-winter festival. We have bonfires, a free hog roast, and the release of our Wassail, based on an 18th-century recipe. Last year we went through 78 gallons of mead in three hours."

On the socially responsible front, Klein said Groennfell Meadery established a "growing wall" with live plants that sequester all phosphorous from the sanitation process at the meadery. "It's the forgotten waste product," Klein said. "We're at about 90-percent sequestration now, and we'll be adding more evergreens that can take that product year-round."

**Heather Winther**, project manager at **Lisaius Marketing** in Burlington, said, "We are a branding agency that's been around for more than 20 years. We do ads, packaging design, complete re-brands and logos." While Lisaius has a strong national client base, Winther said, "One of the things we're really excited about is that over the past year the majority of our new clients are Vermont businesses." She said the shift was in many ways by design.

*The Champlain Business Journal offers regular coverage of area business networking events, with notes on event hosts and sponsors, and snippets from those in attendance. Visit [www.vbsr.org](http://www.vbsr.org) for information on VBSR and upcoming Networking Get-Togethers.* ❖