



September 2017 Newsletter

The New York Small Scale Food Processors Association (NYSSFPA) was formed to represent and inform all small-scale food processors. The organization's workshops educate by mentoring, teaching marketing, connecting farmers and processors for value-added production, and guiding food-entrepreneurs in the use of current approved processing practices.

NYSSFPA is composed of the following officers and committees:

President: Kathrine Gregory Treasurer: Maria Grimaldi

Secretary: Deb Krajcik

Communication Committee: Chair - Megan Harris-Pero, Esq., Deb Krajcik, Andrew Dufresne, Kathrine Gregory, Beth Linskey, Matthias Reisen

Education Committee: Chair - Maria Grimaldi, Martin Broccoli, Amanda Hewitt, Beth Linskey, Kimberly LaMendola, Sherry Lantz, Robin Puskas

Membership Committee: Chair - Junko Kanamura, Alison Clarke, Chelle Lindahl

SmallScaleNY@gmail.com
this is our "go to" central clearing point.
Have a question?
Need some info?

Email us and you will receive a response from one of our board members within 72 hours (remember we are all volunteers and running a business also)

Please add this email address to your contact list

what to expect:
quarterly newsletters
twice a month e-blasts with time sensitive information

CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS? OR EMAIL?

Please remember to let us know so that you don't miss receiving important information. Send us an email with the update to SmallScaleNY @gmail.com

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our last newsletter focused on introducing you to the NYSSFPA Board. We are honored to have so many top people from the Food Industry leading our organization. This month our focus is on our Corporate members. Please take the opportunity to learn more about these members as we can all encourage each other's success by supporting and promoting one another's businesses. **NYSSFPA** benefits from the wealth of expertise each of our members has in different areas of food production and business experience. That means that if you need some information, there is almost always someone to call. All members of NYSSFPA are caring people and willing to share information to help you grow your business. **In** addition to this personal member network, NYSSFPA shares information with you through various means: this newsletter, e-blasts, our website, Facebook, seminars, and our annual meeting. Every year, our January annual meeting in Saratoga Springs during the NOFA-NY conference presents a valuable opportunity to meet one another, put a face to the name, and ask questions in person. This is a wonderful way to forge a connection with others. This year we have several new presentations and speakers for our NYSSFPA track - you will not want to miss out on the value-added education we are offering. **My** personal reason for joining NYSSFPA was to broaden my knowledge of the food processors in NY State, to learn of their products and some of the issues they face. I have learned so much from my fellow Small Scale members. Please take advantage of the connections NYSSFPA creates to forge new business relationships. You can use the website to contact the people in your region, look for others in the state doing similar work in other regions to share information, or consider following up with members you read about in our newsletter to learn more about their businesses. These are all connections started by NYSSFPA that you can build on as you grow your business. **Talking** about communicating - please check and see what your description on our website says. This is part of the advertising benefit of your membership - if it is not up to date or does not have enough information, please take the opportunity to revise your description to share what you do with your fellow members. 50 words is a lot - there is a great opportunity here to share your elevator pitch with fellow members so we can understand and promote your business. As a side benefit, the inclusion of your business description on our website gives you additional exposure when someone does a google search on your business-free social media!

To your continued success, *Kathrine Gregory*, President

Events going on in New York this month

The Third Annual Made in New York Food and Beverage Manufacturing Summit, will be held Thursday, October 26, 2017 at Schenectady County Community College. The summit is hosted by the Business Council of New York State, Inc. This year, in celebration of National Manufacturing Month there will be focusing on New York State's infinite universe of food and beverage manufacturers. There is also an focus on how the Empire State is expanding in the beer, wine, cider and distilled spirits industries. At the Summit, there were session on Access Capital-Funding for Planning, Launching or Expanding Your Business, Breweries, Wineries, Distilleries and Cideries – New York's Beverage Boom, Navigating the Marketplace – How to Get Your Product onto Shelves and into Establishments and more.

For more details and information, go to <http://www.bcnys.org/events/made-in-new-york/index.html>

New York Small Scale Food Processors Are Again Important Cornerstones For The NOFA-NY 2018 Winter Conference

Once again, the Northeast Organic Farmers of New York (NOFA-NY) have invited the NYSSFPA to add value to their annual winter conference in Saratoga Springs, which attracts over 1,100 attendees. The dates for the 2018 Conference are **January 19-21, 2018**. The NYSSFPA Annual Meeting is also held during the Conference.

To register for the conference visit: www.nofany.org

Confirmed NYSSFPA Members who will be presenting are:

- 1) **Basics of Legal Structuring, Developing, Buying, Selling, and Transitioning a Food or Farm Business.** Speakers include: Megan Harris-Pero, Esq. (Founder & Principal Attorney at Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC), Beth Linskey (Former Owner and Founder of Beth's Farm Kitchen) and Christine Rico (Founder & CFO Consultant, CFO on Speed Dial).
- 2) **The Art of Running a Successful Incubator Kitchen.** Speaker : Kathrine Gregory (Mi Kitchen Es Su Kitchen®)
- 3) **Adding Value through Developing Economic Development Partnerships.** Speaker: Kimberly La Mendola (NYS Southern Tier West Regional Economic Development)
- 4) **Ensuring Food Safety and Working with Co-Packers.** Speaker: Amanda Hewitt (SUNY Morrisville/Nelson Farms)
- 5) **Adding Value and Marketing Health from a Certified NOFA-NY Organic Farm.** Speaker: Tom Szulist (Singer Farm Naturals)
- 8) **Making and Marketing a Small Scale Traditional Health Tonic. (Kitchen Demo)** Speaker: Jennifer Jubin (Forever Wild Beverage Co.)

The NOFA-NY Winter Conference also offers NYSSFPA members the opportunity to showcase and sample their products at our Trade Show Booth.



SWAG BAGS FOR THE BOOTH

Hi Everyone,

Once again it is time to think about the Northeast Organic Farm Association (NOFA) conference held annually in January in Saratoga, New York. **Will you be coming?** The time to plan is now.

NYSSFPA will have a booth at the conference. **Remember our canvas bags?** They were distributed at the 2015 NOFA conference spreading the NYSSFPA goodwill and they sport the American Flag with the proud words Made in America. We hope you do because they were a huge hit and they are back!

Are you thinking about growing your business? Do you want to expand your product reach beyond your region? Here is your opportunity! NYSSFPA has 4, that is four bags to fill with member products. Will your business be represented? Your only cost in this venture is shipping. People come from all over to attend this annual conference. Your donation to this project will delight customers from New York, neighboring states and beyond. More information to follow: Please donate your product and ask your fellow members to donate too. New York Small Scale Food Processors, we are working for you.

To discuss details and to donate, please contact Deb Krajcik at greatday2054@gmail.com.

A Salute to Our Corporate Members

We appreciate our Corporate Members' extra support to the NYSSFPA.

Bob Bleistein, Eastern Classic Coverage, 631-422-8585
David Falkowski, Open Minded Organics, 631-574-8889
Kathrine Gregory, Mi Kitchen Es Su Kitchen®, 212-452-1866
Miriam and John Haas, Down to Earth Markets, 914-923-4837
Megan Harris-Pero, Esq., Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC, 518-860-5668
Stuart McCarty, Growers Discount Labels 607-693-1572
Gene Pierce, Glenora Wine Cellars, 607-243-5511

As part of our corporate membership, corporate members are entitled to a 500 word business article in our newsletter. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity for further promotion of your business, consider upgrading your 2017 Membership today to become a Corporate Member or submitting your application today to become a Corporate Member for 2018! Our Member application form is available online.

Bob Bleistein – Eastern Classic Coverage – Who We Are.....

Website: www.classiccoverage.com Address: 1055 Stewart Avenue, 2nd Floor, Suite 5, Bethpage, NY 11714 and 42-18 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11103
CEO Bob Bleistein



Eastern Classic Coverage provides top notch FILI program insurance to food manufacturers. Our Food Industry Liability Insurance (FILI) programs are just what you need for business protection.

These (hospitality, food manufacturers, restaurant, craft and specialty beverage manufacturers) specific programs are tailored to your business and have you in mind 100% of the time. Our clients range from startup companies to multi product national corporations. Our objective is to assist in reducing the overall cost and amount of risk. Whether you are a food manufacturer, food processor, co-packer or own a business in a related field; such as a specialty snack food, make sauces or jams, make bakery items, or a beverage maker it is vital that you reduce your risk *pro-actively* with Food Industry Liability Insurance.

Eastern Classic Coverage's along with Bob's expertise in the food and beverage industry for over 30 years helps us to work alongside you to assess your business and determine your specific needs. We also offer industry specific risk control services to help you maintain a safe work environment; for yourself and your employees. Years of experience in the industry allows us to provide the best possible coverage at the most competitive cost. Bob and his team have taken Eastern Classic Coverage (From Long Island and NYC in our early days to covering clients in all of New York State to Nationally known clients; some of whom you may know) to new heights.

At Eastern Classic Coverage, along with our company partners we prepare an insurance program designed to help you with your specialized and unique needs. We offer all forms and types of coverage (from product liability to auto and property and workers compensation) to provide unsurpassed risk protection. Locally and Nationally, clients come to Eastern Classic Coverage for peace of mind. It is our commitment and devotion to our clients to help make every business owner, landlord, homeowner and individual feel secure and relaxed knowing that Eastern Classic Coverage is always there to help.

Before you approach any retailers with your product or even walking into a kitchen or co-op, you need product liability insurance.

Look for the Eastern Classic Coverage team at food conferences, restaurant shows or seminars – they are always around to help answer your questions since they are knowledgeable, and easy to talk to. They take the time to listen, explore your needs and find the best solution for you and your business.

Member Name Search

Classic Coverage, Inc.

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Bethpage, NY 11714
516-320-8120 or 888-833-8120

E-mail

Categories: Misc, Other / Administrative

About us: *Our first hand background & expertise helps guide you through the insurance needs of food production, retail, wholesale & food service industries. Our specialized programs to protect you every step of the way includes industry specific risk control services, product recall coverage, liability certificate service and workers compensation.*



David Falkowski -- Owner/Operator Open Minded Organics Long Island's Mushroom Company

Website: www.openmindedorganics.com Address: 720 Butter Lane, Bridgehampton, NY 11932
dave@openmindedorganics.com 631-255-0990

This week in Meet Your Farmers, it's back out to the East End of Long Island where David Falkowski, better known to Hamptons locals as "Mushroom Dave," is the owner and operator of Open Minded Organics.

A Bridgehampton native, Falkowski started growing, foraging, and selling mushrooms back in 2003. He has since built a loyal following who seek out his farm fresh fungi at farmers' markets and restaurants throughout the Hamptons.

His mushrooms have even received praise from a member of the highest echelon of Hamptons foodies, Ina Garten. Falkowski was featured in an episode of Barefoot Contessa when his oyster mushrooms took center stage in the Contessa's lasagna.

The quality of his produce, not to mention his genial personality, has made Dave somewhat of a local celebrity in the farmer's market community in the Hamptons. You can find Dave and many other pioneering small farmers at the Sag Harbor, East Hampton, Bridgehampton, and Southampton farmers' markets, or at his farm stand in Bridgehampton.

Without further ado, let's get to know Mushroom Dave a little better.

How did you get started into this? In 2003 I got my mushroom cultivation certification from Paul Stamets out in Washington. I came back, built a laboratory and a 12 feet by 20 feet greenhouse in the backyard. We grew maybe 50 pounds a week, selling to restaurants in the area.

I basically started out knocking on backdoors in restaurants, showing chefs that this is a very different product than what you'll get from a wholesaler. Very often I pick and deliver the same day, my varieties are more aesthetically pleasing, and because the freshness they have a better flavor and holding life.

Why mushrooms? I realized that mushrooms are a key component in the cycling of organic matter. Through mushroom cultivation not only do you create humus, or organically rich soil, the basis of soil, but also, as a bonus, we create awesome healing healthy food and powerful medicinals.

How much has your farm grown since you started? Now we peak out at 300 pounds a week out of 2,100 square feet. It's pretty bio-intensive as far as agriculture goes. Like many other people, we've also diversified on the farm. Last year we brought on chickens and this year we're really scaling up our vegetable plot.

Take us through the growing process. The spawn, the cultured tissue in the mushrooms, is grown out on an organic rye grain in the laboratory. In essence, the spawn is the seed. We take straw (wheat straw this year), we chop it, silk it, and pasteurize it. We introduce the spawn to the straw, it gets mixed and put into columns. They almost look like skinny punching bags."

(You can read more online. This is an excerpt from the article: "Meet Your Farmers: David Falkowski, a Mushroom Farmer in Bridgehampton, NY" by Carson Poole, featured on *Serious Eats* <http://www.seriouseats.com/2010/03/meet-your-farmers-david-falkowski-of-open-minded-organics-mushroom-farming-bridgehampton-hamptons-ny.html>)



Member Name Search

Open Minded Organics

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631-574-8889

E-mail

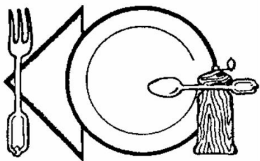
Categories: Fruits and Vegetables, Co-Packers

About us: Nothing but the finest for your highness! Producer, retailer, co-packer. Creating Farm based foods for market.

Kathrine Gregory – Mi Kitchen es su Kitchen®

Website: www.mikitchenessukitchen.com

Kathrine Gregory, Founder and Director



Food industry veteran Kathrine Gregory is the founder and director of *Mi Kitchen es su Kitchen*® conceived in 1996 as a concept for creating a time-share rental facility available to up-and-coming foodpreneurs. As the hands-on director of this consulting firm, *Mi Kitchen*'s clients are not-for-profits who have an existing kitchen space or are interested in building a space to transform it into a business incubator, generating rental revenue for the host organization. Each kitchen incubator provides a nurturing facility to encourage start-up food business clients.

The training that *Mi Kitchen* provides to incubator staff is extensive, ranging from client related issues (food safety, licensing, and legal issues) to daily managerial and operational protocol, enabling the incubator to achieve self-sustainability as quickly as possible. The first incubator was established in Brooklyn and the concept has been developed for a nationwide rollout. *Mi Kitchen's Consulting* starts with the concept, forming a partnership with the community creating a success story that endures.

Gregory entered the food industry in 1976, gaining experience and expertise in catering and restaurant/hotel management. In 1989, she became a consultant for independently run restaurants and the not-for-profit community, where she provided expertise in one-on-one sessions with the owners and created customized operational manuals. Some not-for-profits she assisted are One City Cafe/Food & Hunger Hotline and Roundtable for Women in Foodservice. Gregory organized fundraising galas for One City Cafe, and tripled the membership and networking system of the Roundtable for Women In Foodservice. She owned two restaurants: The Argenteuil, which served American-French cuisine, and The Grill, a bistro that was later revamped to Peccavi, which *New York Magazine* called "a haven for health-conscious gourmets." She closed the restaurants in 1988.

Gregory is the recipient of several nationwide awards by major corporations, publications, and several women organizations for her innovative concept supporting entrepreneurship.

She has spoken at culinary academies, universities, and trade shows, lecturing on subjects ranging from restaurant management/ food trends to the potential in the food industry and marketing.

Consulting with start-up food manufacturers led to her identifying the lack of available approved production kitchens as one of their major impediments to growth. Her concept of a time-share kitchen helps both the start-up business and the community itself. The incubator became the solution to this stumbling block.

Up to date, she has created ten commercial kitchens nationwide and is currently the managing consultant of the Entrepreneur Space Kitchen Incubator in Queens, NY.

Her definition of an entrepreneur is, "one who has the ability to create an appetite in those who are not hungry."

Gregory joined NYSSFPA in 2013 because she believed that the farm-to-table concept was an important trend in the food industry, and she believed that NYSSFPA best exemplified this partnership. She is the current president, hoping to spearhead, with the assistance of the board, the educational and supportive aims of the organization.

Member Name Search

[Mi Kitchen Es Su Kitchen](#)

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Categories: Kitchens and Restaurants

About us: *Founder/Director of a consulting firm servicing non-profit organizations nationwide, specifically for creation of Kitchen Incubators. These facilities contain fully equipped cooking spaces rented on an as-needed basis. In addition to the manufacturing space the food-preneurs are offered professional advices on how to grow their business, ultimately leading to community prosperity.*



Miriam Haas and John Zeltsman - Down to Earth Markets - Shop Your Values

Website: www.downtoearthmarkets.com **Address:** 173 Main St. 3rd, Ossining, NY 10562
Telephone 914-923-4837

Recently we've had lots of conversations with our farmers and food makers about the changing food industry, and changing it most certainly is. 26 years ago, when our founder Miriam Haas started Down to Earth Markets, the neighborhood supermarket was where everyone bought their food. No meal kits, very little restaurant delivery outside of NYC, few food co-ops or natural food stores, a nascent CSA movement and just a scattering of urban farmers' markets. There's good news in this story: today many towns and neighborhoods have their own farmers' market and sales of highly processed convenience foods are slumping as we all become more aware of the link between food and health. There are some question marks too. As our food purchasing options explode into hundreds of different streams, will there ever be a universally embraced, go-to source for groceries again? Amazon clearly has some thoughts on this, given their recent move to acquire Whole Foods. And there's a downside. As we embrace a kaleidoscope of food buying options, we risk losing sight of the people behind the food. The future of our regional farms, and the farmers who work them, the future of small production kitchens, and the cooks who create in them, depends on us, the consumers.

It resonates with us as a call to action for everyone who is navigating this newly complex landscape of food purchasing choices with health, environmentalism, community, support of local businesses and the desire to see farming and access to good food remain at the core of New York's identity in mind.

Comments By Peter Endriss, Head Baker at Runner & Stone

Countless customers at the Park Slope farmers market have very specific, very informed questions about our ingredients and/or processes, which I'm proud to answer. I've watched children grow, met newborn babies, and said goodbye to customers who were moving out of the neighborhood. A baguette or croissant purchase at our farmers market stand is not merely a transaction. It forms part of a relationship. They are each valued human interactions with parents and their children, baby boomers and millennials, each of which reminds us every week how important it is for us to provide you, the Park Slope community, with responsible, sustainable nourishment. This is what shopping at a farmers market.

Shopping at your local farmers market is not just a delicious, relaxing way to spend time with your family, friends and neighbors. It's not just a way to know what you're eating, who produced it, and where it comes from. It's an integral part of our interaction, and interconnectedness, as a community.

"Shop Your Values" is more than just a phrase on a bumper sticker or window decal. It's a call to action to preserve the vital community resource that is our urban farmers market. Regretfully, however, my fellow producers and vendors are witnessing a steady decline in attendance at our beloved farmers market.



Member Name Search

Down to Earth Markets

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[E-mail](#)

Categories: Fruits and Vegetables, Misc, Other /
Administrative

About us: For more than 25 years, Down to Earth Markets has created and managed farmers' markets in Westchester, Rockland and New York City. Our mission is to bring cooks and eaters together with regional farmers and local food makers to create food communities, improving access to fresh, local foods, strengthening the local food system and supporting small businesses in the New York area.

Megan Harris-Pero – Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC
For Your Legal Life, Business, & Estate Planning Needs

Website: www.HPeroLegalCounsel.com **Address:** 7 Wells Street, Suite 201, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Phone:** 518-860-5668



NYSSFPA Board Member, Megan Harris-Pero, Esq. started the law firm, Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC, in 2015 with an intention of helping farmers and small food businesses. Megan brings with her experience working in a large law firm serving global companies out of Pittsburgh, PA and after a family relocation, in a smaller boutique litigation firm in Saratoga Springs, NY. In venturing out on her own, Megan wanted to help people and small businesses from a ground floor perspective through a proactive and organized approach to planning for needs that are personal to her clients.

Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC helps people plan and prepare for life transitions by providing services to help you protect your legacy: your family and your small business. The firm's services include creative and collaborative approaches to planning for business needs (formation to succession), end of life needs (planning what happens to your legacy and assets), and planning for unforeseen circumstances (establishing plans and guardians and protecting as a precaution to protect against unforeseen events such as disability or an inability to care for loved ones).

Megan enjoys counseling clients to identify and focus on furthering the client's specific interests. No client is identical. Differing family structures, assets, and business interests call for unique solutions. Individualized planning may include business planning (using the right structures for your business), estate planning (will or trust along with advanced directives), elder law or Medicaid planning (more sophisticated trusts), business succession planning (for transfer or sale), and additional advice, representation or legal services to support your overall plan. HPLC works collaboratively with you and your advisory team to turn your complex needs into an understandable comprehensive plan.

As the firm has developed and broadened its client base, HPLC continues to cultivate an interest in issues unique to food and farm businesses while serving a variety of clients with diverse backgrounds and differing needs. HPLC shares knowledge, resources, and expertise to assist individuals, families, general small business & family business clients, and agricultural clients. We all undergo many of the same life transitions - death for example is inevitable and 50% of us are likely to need long term care assistance. As business owners, there are start-up pains, growing pains, and transition pains. Planning for both unexpected and inevitable events provides peace of mind - HPLC is privileged to assist clients in allowing for more peace of mind.

Planning ahead to address potential problems unique to your business can help avoid family feuds or litigation. A well written agreement, testament of your wishes, or trust that avoids probate can create clear expectations and help avoid litigation. Just as doctors follow the principle of "first do no harm," attorneys should counsel their clients to understand the various means of preventing and resolving conflicts.

Megan recognizes and utilizes various methods for identifying and solving problems to help reach your unique planning goals. Megan creates ease and simplicity out of areas that are daunting without proper help.

To ensure your goals for your business, yourself, and your loved ones are taken care of, contact Megan to begin your legal planning with a lawyer who is attentive, dedicated, and ready to meet any unique challenges you may face.



Member Name Search

Harris-Peró Legal Counsel, PLLC

Megan Harris-Peró, Esq.
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Categories: Other / Administrative

About us: Farm and family business focused legal services offering collaborative legal solutions from an attorney-mediator-advisor. Available to help small scale food processing business with questions on legal and compliance issues, business entity formation (corporations, LLCs) and transfer (sale) business contracts (review negotiation, and drafting), and dispute resolution. HPLC works with you for smart growth and protection of your business.

Stuart McCarty -Stuart McCarty - Growers Discount Labels

Website: www.growersdiscountlabels.com Address: P.O. Box 70, 632 Tunnel Road, Tunnel, NY 13848

Telephone: 800-693-1572 607-693-1572

The Lowdown on Bar Codes



On a fairly regular basis customers come to us with what they feel will be a headache and an insurmountable challenge: they need bar codes (UPC)! This is an opportunity to increase sales by making your product more user friendly for markets that use UPC for accurate & quick check out and inventory control. We recommend that you buy your UPC from a reseller, which works very well unless your customer requires that you have a certificate from GS1 (<http://www.gs1.org/barcodes>). You are guaranteed that you will receive unique numbers at a reasonable price. Buy enough for future needs so the numbers are in sequence. Keep a list to record what numbers have been assigned to what products. Each flavor and size of yogurt, for example, will require a unique UPC. Once you have the UPC, we will add it to your label and fit it in with your design. There is nothing beautiful about bar codes but we can minimize the effect. When you make your first delivery, the retailer will program your product and price into their data base.

Grower's Discount Labels

Stu McCarty Lynn Thor

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info@growersDiscountLabels.com

Categories: Other / Administrative, Design Services

About us: *Grower's Discount Labels' mission is to work with farmers and food producers to develop direct marketing labels that will be economical and effective. See label gallery, label designs for purchase and quote request form at GrowersDiscountLabels.com. We provide full graphic design services, free catalog and estimates.*

Gene Pierce - Glenora Wine Cellars-The Story of Glenora

Website: www.glenora.com **Address:** Glenora Wine Cellars, 5435 State Route 14, Dundee, NY 14837

Telephone: 800-243-5513 607-243-5511

GLENORA
WINE CELLARS

After the Farm Winery Act of 1976 was passed, Gene Pierce along with Eastman Beers, Edward Dalrymple and Howard Kimball saw an opportunity to venture into the wine industry. Glenora Wine Cellars were the first winery on Seneca Lake and they were instantly recognized in the wine circle. Their initial vintage wine received a couple of medals at the New York State Fair wine competition. These pioneers saw their farm winery develop into a commercial producer and get accomplishment in the wine industry. Glenora Wine Cellar won recognition as one of the world's top winery from Wine Spectator magazine.

Currently, Glenora Wine Cellar is owned by Gene Pierce and fellow friend Scott Welliver, who become friends in the early 70's during a sailboat race. Both Gene and Scott have different business experience but they have shared values, which has been a great asset for the winery. Besides the winery, Gene Pierce and his business partner oversee an Inn and a restaurant, which provides outstanding service to its guests. The winery is open 364 days a year, except Christmas Day when they are closed.

Value-Added Lessons from a visit to an Ontario Ag Small Business- Heeman's Garden Centre and Strawberry Farm



Tom Heeman, Megan Harris-Pero and Rudy Heeman at Heeman's Garden Center and Strawberry Farm. (Photo credit: Joel Pero)

By Megan Harris-Pero, Esq., NYSSFPA Board member and Founder of Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC

As a member of the lead New York, last year I had the privilege of meeting colleagues in a similar program in Ontario, called advanced agricultural leadership program. One of these participants, Tom Heeman, is a third generation agricultural leader. While driving

through Ontario with my family this summer, I stopped for a tour of Heeman's in London, Ontario to see what makes them successful. I can sum up my tour by stating that Heeman's understands the meaning of value-added. Primarily a nursery operation, the family has attracted loyal customers by growing delicious strawberries and raspberries. In the summer customers come for the berries and end up purchasing plants as well. While the berries add to what is offered in the nursery, there are also very many value added products produced with the berries. Y

ou can buy a freshly prepared milkshake made just for you, or you can pick up a jar of preserves. Have you ever venture in on a shopping trip only to find you are exhausted and in need of nourishment as soon as you're arrive at the store?

Heeman's has their customers needs covered - The café just inside of the store offers an assortment of items from cold shakes to hot coffee so that customers can feel comfortable to linger and take in the full experience.

In the back of the nursery, a water retention pond has become a welcoming attraction with a comfortable deck to observe schools of goldfish. In the nursery not only can you buy exotic and unusual plants but as another value added service Heeman's offers a service to store your plants in their greenhouse over winter. With so many great value-added ideas I couldn't help but share with you all. There are great lessons here to think about how selling one product might help you sell another, and how to identify all of your client's needs to differentiate yourself with your goods and services.

MARKETING : Telling Your Story: Letting Consumers Know Why Your Brand Is Unique

By Dr. Kathy Kelley and Dr. Bonnie Canziani*

Editor's note: this article was published in July 2017 by Wine & Grape U. on the internet - one can substitute the words 'small scale food processor' for winery and appreciate the lessons. Submitted by Andy Dufresne Reprinted by permission.

Every winery [and small food processor] has a story to tell about its history and about its wines [and food products]. A winery's story often comprises the main advertising message that consumers receive. Critical visitor expectations are being formed as your potential customers read marketing materials about your winery or listen to your staff in the tasting room embellish on "the story," using it as a performance script during visitor encounters. Indeed, your tasting room hosts are often the main onsite story tellers and serve a vital role as direct ambassadors of the brand and the company—sharing important information with all visitors to the winery. In this post, we discuss why wineries should have a well-crafted story and steps you can take to develop your story.

So, what should you include in your story?

A brand's story is more than words on a page designed to be a pitch for your winery. Rather, your brand's story includes "facts, feelings and interpretation" and is a way to differentiate yourself from competitors (<http://bit.ly/2tNGkWf>). A successful story will help a business build a following, which in turn encourages these consumers to care about the brand and, hopefully, leads to customer loyalty. Following are some tips for making your winery story genuine and engaging for your visitors.

1) **Storytelling is based on "interpretation"** Interpretation is a skill that connects your audience with information in ways that create emotional ties between the speaker and the listener. Basically, you take important facts about the wine (e.g., type of grapes or fruit used and production processes) and the winery (e.g., family history or facility information) and share these facts with your visitors in an informative and entertaining manner. A story is not just a dry recitation of facts and figures. Stories attract consumers looking for higher levels of personal recognition and warmth from service staff at your winery.

2) **Storytelling is part of your marketing strategy** Your goals need to be clear when forming and telling the winery story. Typical goals include connecting your guests emotionally to the brand, influencing guests to try something new (e.g., join the wine club or attend a future wine event), and motivating your visitors to buy your wine and share their experiences with others via positive word of mouth. One sign that your guests are engaged is if they ask for more details about the wines, the winery, or the winemaker/owners. A good story will lead to conversation and customer action.

Your stories must seem genuine to your listeners Storytelling in the winery setting needs to incorporate truthful information about your ingredients, your production techniques, and your business background. Stories create personal ties between the winery and its visitors and people want to be able to trust that the information you are providing is accurate and relevant. The more believable stories

will be shared with others via word of mouth after the visit.

Example: Honor Brewing Company & Winery

It seems only natural for a winery to support a cause either with raising funds during an event to donating a portion of the proceeds/price per bottle to a charity. Sometimes, though, the connection between the cause and the wine brand is not as clear as it could be and why the cause was selected (e.g., to help fund medical research for a disease that an employee has suffered from, to support local community efforts). Honor Brewing Company, Inc. and Honor Winery owners either served in the military or who had close family members who did. From the name to the labels (e.g., pictures of dog tags, combat boots) to their mission ("...supporting and celebrating those that have served or are serving..."), the brand's is exclusively "dedicated to the men and women who proudly serve our country" (<http://bit.ly/2tO1J1K>). The owners also raise money and donate funds to charities that assist injured veterans and families of those who have fallen – and they are transparent in their efforts. In 2014/2015 they raised over \$200,000 for these charities. They also encourage social media followers to post about family members in the military and partner with many veteran organizations.

Stories are built on essential raw material Winery stories need to cover the basics so that every visitor has a good understanding of the wines being served and sold, the fruit that goes into the wines, and other interesting details that make the winery business unique. Proof of quality is often incorporated into the winery story by emphasizing the various awards that your wines have won. The story can move from the past to the present as well as indicate new wines and strategies that are forthcoming in the future. It can also help the visitor identify the role of the winery in the greater community or wine industry in the state.

Most winery stories are also family stories The concept of 'family' appears either overtly or as a subtext within many winery stories on their websites and during the exchanges between visitors and tasting room hosts. The idea of 'family' is represented in multiple ways:

- remarks about preserving the family farm, land, or agricultural business heritage through the development of vineyards and winemaking operations (the 'family-business' message),
- sharing a history of family generations in the wine-making business (the 'family-tradition' message), or an advertising appeal aimed at generating closeness to the visitor based on the inclusive treatment of guests (the 'join-the-family' message).

In closing

The art of storytelling can be especially useful to wineries that are trying to develop a visible brand presence and uniqueness in the marketplace. Ultimately, winery hosts need to know how to craft and present a winery story that moves their customers to positive actions, e.g., buying wine and sharing winery experiences with others.

**Dr. Canziani is a faculty member at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, Bryan School of Business and Economics, specializing in the management of customer service relationships and business profitability in various sectors including hospitality, tourism, and transportation. Since 2001, she has been involved in marketing and business research focused on the NC wine and grape industry, with more recent emphasis on wine tourism.*

Small Batch America

Business Brain Exchange with NYC's Organic Food Incubator

By Tom on June 4, 2014 in **Business Brain Exchange**

Editor's Note: Deb Krajcik pointed out this blog article as a good follow-up read to the "So You Need A Co-Packer" article in the last Newsletter. The article was originally published online at <http://www.smallbatchamerica.com/business-brain-exchange-with-nycs-organic-food-incubator>

In a few short years, Michael Schwartz has gone from being a fledgling small batch producer of fermented goods- BAO Food and Drink- to also being the co-founder and operator of the Organic Food Incubator in NYC's Long Island City. Since opening its doors, the incubator has been the making home of some of the area's most interesting independent food and drink brands including Free Bread, Simply Gum, Jam Stand, Hella Bitters, Gefilteria, Alchemy Creamery, LuliTonix, and dozens more.

We recently chatted with Michael about his journey from producer to incubator operator and a slew of other things.

You're also the founder of BAO Food & Drink, which you started prior to opening the Organic Food Incubator. Can you talk a bit about the path from independent food producer to incubator operator?

Well, the incubator grew out of our struggles with starting BAO. In 2009 we had many doors slammed in our faces. No one was interested in helping a start up weird fermented food company. So after we found (a tiny bit of) success and some like-minded companies, we opened our doors to other start ups to help them navigate the way.

It grew very slowly for about 3 months, then it exploded our first spring, with almost 10 companies joining us from March to June 2011- and it hasn't really stopped.

The one part that unites everyone is that there is a severe lack of small manufacturing space available.

As you built the Organic Food Incubator (O.F.I.), were there other incubators you looked to for inspiration? Any one that you admire or hold in high esteem that helped you craft your vision for O.F.I.?

Yes, Kathrine Gregory at Mi Kitchen Es Su Kitchen®, was an immeasurable help. She was very kind and spent quite a bit of time with us.

Are all of your tenants' products USDA Certified Organic? Is that a requisite for working with O.F.I.?

No, our focus is on real food. All of our companies use real ingredients and most of them have some kind of health benefit angle. But companies can be industrial food companies (I mean conventional) or can be organic. We can help them with organic certification if they are interested.

Having tenants outgrow the incubator and graduate to bigger facilities or relationships must be really rewarding for you. Any recent examples of that?

Yes, we've had a few great successes. Tumeric Alive recently moved to Connecticut. Rawpothecary and Chloe's Soft Serve Fruit graduated to larger facilities as well.

You added small batch co-packing as a service last year. How's that going?

It is a steep learning curve but it is a much needed service in NYC and is steadily growing.

Stepping out of the making process is something that makes many makers nervous and is something most have strong opinions about. Are there any misconceptions or unfounded concerns about co-packing you want to address?

It is a funny game- you have the company, the co-packer, the distributor and the retailer. Everyone thinks that the other is making the most money, when in reality everyone is squeaking by on really slim margins.

**Co-packers do not develop the product-they follow directions. There are some that specialize in that, but for the most part, the only way to make a profit is to do the job quickly. So any interruptions, like tweaking the recipe in process, throw a wrench in the works.*

**Through your work with so many independent food and drink entrepreneurs, you've surely recognized some common pitfalls. What's the most common mistake you see indie food and drink producers make?*

**Under capitalization and spending too fast. Obviously, having a large -or any- cash reserve is really important as most suppliers want to be paid COD at first and the clients usually pay at 30 or 60 days, so there is a long time before cash starts to come back in.*

**Also, everyone thinks that they need thousands of square feet, but you can make a lot of product in a small space.*

How have you seen the Organic food and drink landscape change; particularly for new, independent makers?

There are so many new and great ideas. Because of incubators and more entries, the access to information has become easier.

What's on the horizon for O.F.I.?

Bigger machines to work faster, expansion of our coaching program which has been very successful, and eventually a new permanent home.

And finally- aside from the awesome ones associated with the O.F.I. do you have any current favorite small batch organic goods and makers?

The best thing I've seen recently is Motto, a carbonated matcha tea made by really nice guys out of Boston- it tastes great.

<http://www.smallbatchamerica.com/business-brain-exchange-with-nycs-organic-food-incubator>

Tips for Business Succession: Preparing Your Business For a Successful Handoff

By Megan Harris-Pero, Esq., NYSSFPA Board Member and
Founder of Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC

FIRST: Have a Plan

Do you plan on selling your business at some point in the future? Do you plan on passing your business interests onto your children? In

either case, have you started training your likely candidate to take over your business? Have you communicated your thoughts to that

person? Have a plan in place as a starting point. You can always evaluate and modify your plan. The first step is to make a plan and put it in writing!

Do you have an emergency plan? What would happen if you could not show up to work tomorrow? While it is not wise to make early

promises, it is essential to begin communicating with potential successors early on to gauge their interest. This may help direct your business decision making in the years leading up to your planned business succession. Many times people are forced into retirement or selling a business before their ideal transition date.

SECOND: Communicate Early On and Regularly

Many family businesses struggle with communication. It is hard enough communicating with employees but when family members work with one another the family dynamics can make communication even more difficult. Make sure you have a standard procedure and practice for communication in your business. Regular meetings that include the business owners and your likely successors or high-level managers can give everyone a chance to inform one another of business ideas and share information that can create buy-in: like sales data. Some businesses have had great success including non-management employees in regular meetings and providing incentives for employees to identify and propose solutions to

improve the business. If you have yet to identify successors for your business, growing and developing your employees is essential to help locate potential candidates.

THIRD: If you're the only one who can do what you do, you have a problem:

For the longevity of your business it is important that you train others to do your work. This can include developing standard written

procedures and/or providing opportunities for others to assist you or shadow you in your work. If you haven't been on a vacation and

several years because only you can keep the ship afloat, consider it your work to train others and have your systems in place and go on that vacation.

FOURTH: Don't be afraid to retire

Retirement offers opportunities to begin new projects. It can be the beginning of something new rather than an absolute end. You don't have to completely step out of your business either.

Consider what parts of the business you truly love. Are you a farmer that loves working the fields? Chances are you would be happy to have someone take over the business functions of your job and that others would welcome you to help with some of the fieldwork in between your time catching up on your overdue vacations. Are you a jam making expert like Beth Linskey? Beth's passion is making jam. After selling her business, Beth has been able to continue to make jam and promote and sell the jam of her former business at the Fulton Stall Market in New York City.

*For more tips, plan to attend Harris-Pero Legal Counsel, PLLC's presentation at the **NOFA New York Conference in Saratoga Springs in January 2018**. NYSSFPA Board Members Attorney Megan Harris-Pero and Beth Linskey, former owner of Beth's Farm Kitchen and Jam Educator, will present and discuss business and legal planning issues for small scale food businesses along with small business financial expert, Christine Rico, Founder & CFO Consultant, CFO on Speed Dial.*

"I hate how many people think, "glass half-empty" when their glass is really four-fifths full. I'm grateful when I have one drop in the glass because I know exactly what to do with it."

- Gary Vaynerchuk, co-founder and CEO of VaynerMedia.