

for the Study of African American Life and History has declared the theme for 2012: “Black Women In American Culture and History.”

Each year since 1976, the President issues an executive proclamation naming February as African American History Month. More than a half dozen Federal agencies, including the Library of Congress, conduct celebrations, programs, and activities relating to this rich history.

I join them in recognizing the importance of remembering the contributions made by such memorable figures as Rosa Parks, Shirley Chisholm, Sojourner Truth and Maya Angelou just to name a few, and our country’s initial African-American First Lady, Michelle Obama.

Just as importantly, countless unsung African-American women have made a mark in their communities by caring for their families, teaching our youth, running successful businesses, serving their churches, and getting elected to public office.

Many African Americans spent their entire lives without getting the credit they deserved. By focusing on Black history in February, we can give overdue acknowledgement and perhaps inspire our young African Americans to continue to achieve greatness.

In Alaska, African Americans have worked to build our communities with their many contributions.

I urge all Alaskans and other Americans to examine and contemplate the significance of the contributions that African-American men and women have made in determining the course of these United States of America.

RECOGNIZING KING ARTHUR FLOUR

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I would like to bring to the Senate’s attention the recent accomplishments of King Arthur Flour of Norwich, VT.

Established in 1790, King Arthur Flour has stood the test of time as the oldest flour company in the United States. Over the years King Arthur Flour has continued to raise the bar as an outstanding Vermont company. Most recently the company redesigned its website to allow for easier mobile phone and tablet use, placing it in the Hot 100 feature of Internet Retailer magazine. This continued focus on technology is propelling King Arthur Flour into the future as a cutting-edge company to watch.

As the company has continued to grow and succeed, it has managed to stay true to its Vermont roots. King Arthur Flour has flourished as an employee stock ownership company (ESOP), a model of business stewardship that highlights a strong commitment to the company’s workforce and the local community. I also appreciate that King Arthur Flour has been a long-time participant in the annual Taste of Vermont event in Washington, where we bring the finest Vermont products to the Nation’s capital.

I wish King Arthur Flour the best of luck as it continues to grow both its web presence with new technology and its physical presence with a major expansion project set to open this summer. I ask unanimous consent that a December 22, 2011, Burlington Free Press article highlighting the company’s achievements be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Dec. 22, 2011]

A (WEB) RECIPE FOR SUCCESS (By Stephen Mills)

NORWICH.—King Arthur Flour is America’s oldest flour company, established 1790, a year into George Washington’s presidency.

So how does a company that makes flour and bread—an ancient art—win national awards and acclaim for its business practices in the 21st century?

Quite simply, the company has become the toast of the town among the technocrati of e-commerce.

With the economy flagging, many companies turned to enhanced e-retailing to capture more sales, offering free shipping and additional savings for shopping online. King Arthur Flour is no different, relying heavily on its website, kingarthurfour.com, to sell its products and services that can also be found at its “Norwich, Vermont bakery, school and store”—a sponsorship refrain often heard on Vermont Public Radio, which also calls it “home” for its company-sponsored studio there.

But to maximize online sales, King Arthur Flour redesigned its website to allow its offerings to be displayed on any-size screen, including phone, tablet or desktop. And it did so without having to write exotic or expensive software programs for each device.

Company online services director Halley Silver explains: “Our previous site used a template that was 780 pixels wide. We have moved to a template that adapts its layout from 320 pixels wide to 992 pixels wide. This is called a responsive website design. It’s not a mobile application, but rather a mobile-friendly website.

“We have built a new website that works well across mobile devices and tablet computers, as well as desktops and laptops,” Silver added. “We have seen strong growth in mobile and tablet traffic to our site, and also realize that having a usable site while shoppers use their phones in the supermarket and tablets in the kitchen is critical to our success online.”

The result has been explosive mobile sales growth for the company by shoppers using hand-held smartphones and tablets, up 14 percent in September compared with just 2 percent for the comparable month last year. The sales spike was 5 percent from tablets such as iPads, and 9 percent from mobile phones.

The company’s success compares favorably with online sales figures just out for all retailers showing a 15 percent increase over Thanksgiving, the nation’s busiest shopping period, compared with last year, and even better than those for mobile devices, which increased 7.4 percent, according to data from IBM Benchmark.

Company CEO Steve Voigt said: “I have long been a big supporter of online efforts and it is very encouraging to see all the success which our customers and we enjoy by our efforts to-date. . . . Baking seems custom-made for the online community; a little online chat, then a little offline baking.”

NET ROYALTY

Voigt is demur about the company’s financial success, noting figures for the private company are “confidential.” But according to the Internet Retailer Top 500 Guide, King Arthur Flour reported online sales of \$15.15 million in 2010. Voigt did say the company has \$96 million in annual revenues for the most recent fiscal year.

Internet Retailer magazine, a leading tracker of e-commerce, picked the company for its Hot 100 feature in the December issue. The Hot 100 are not ranked but represent the nation’s the most interesting innovations in online retailing this year.

Under the article heading, “Mobile Drives Design,” the publication notes: “Founded in 1790, baking ingredient and bakeware retailer King Arthur Flour is both the oldest brand in this year’s Internet Retailer Hot 100 and one of the most forward-looking.”

The article added, “King Arthur’s ‘mobile first’ approach to Web design exemplifies an elegant solution to Web merchants’ growing challenge of designing for multiple access devices.”

Internet Retailer also has asked Silver to be a featured speaker at its annual Internet Retailer Web Design and Usability Conference 2012 in Orlando, Fla., in February. It refers to her as King Arthur’s “secret ingredient” who “mixes common sense with tech know-how.”

As Silver said she will explain in the session she’ll call, “The Mobile-First Approach to Web Multi-Platform Design,” one key element in the redesigned site is the use of a Web design language called CSS3 (cascading style sheets) that presents images and product information differently depending on the visitor’s device and browser.

“For a small company, King Arthur Flour is a very innovative retailer,” magazine editor Don Davis said in a phone interview. Of Silver, he said, “She is someone who is as innovative as anyone at Amazon for the cool stuff they’re doing.”

“One of the things that’s so impressive is that she’s extremely knowledgeable about the intricacies of e-commerce and Web technology, an area that’s constantly changing, while at the same time has a grasp of her company’s business goals,” Davis said. “It’s not that often you find someone fluent in the language of bits and bytes who also understands the overarching importance of the bottom line.”

How does Silver feel about all the attention she’s receiving?

“I still am somewhat amazed that a company selling flour and ingredients online can be seen as an inspiration and used as an example to other online retailers,” she said.

BUILDING VISIBILITY

Other online innovations Silver has brought to the company include: two website redesigns.

a 55 percent increase in completed checkout sales after adding items to the cart by streamlining the process and offering further discounts for additional items.

tools that help website designers face the difficult challenge of displaying multiple fonts while sticking with a site’s branded look.

the launch of the Bakers’ Banter Blog.

This year, 32 videos were also posted to the website to help customers better appreciate the “farm-to-plate” relationship with mostly Midwestern farmers who supply much of the grain for King Arthur’s flours.

Born in Cleveland and raised in New York City, London and San Francisco and eventually Vermont, Silver was a math major at Wesleyan University. She moved through a number of posts centered on Web technology, including the former Internet shopping

search portal Excite@Home, and Internet security firm VeriSign. She also built and launched Hoofpicks.com, a free, Web-based, equestrian-event management service.

She joined King Arthur Flour in 2007 because of her passion for baking. "Cooking and baking have been a hobby of mine since a very early age," she said. "To be able to combine that passion with building for the Web has been a wonderful experience."

What else is in the offing for the company online?

"We hope to expand our presence in the mobile and tablet space, and continue to improve all of our offerings online," she said.

One new development is a Google ad about the company, filmed in October that began airing Nov. 27. A longer version of the ad is available only on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzjCA2aWILo&feature=channel_video_title.

Collectively, Silver and the 255 workers at the employee-owned business have won a host of awards that include: the 2011 Vermont Governor's Award for Outstanding Workplace Safety in the Large Business category; the 2011 Magnus Opus Awards for its bi-monthly newsletter, The Baking Sheet; the 2007 Business Innovator of the Year Award from the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce; the 2006 Outstanding Vermont Business Award; the 2006 Best Place to Work Award; and the 2006 Better Business Bureau Local Torch Award for Excellence.

The company is also one of the nation's few to attain B-Corporation status because of its beneficial balance between "people, planet and profit."

Some of the many ways it does so is through donating to local food shelves within a 100-mile radius; the Life Skills Bread Baking Program for 155,000-plus students nationwide, teaching them to bake bread themselves and for the hungry; a corporate volunteer program that provides paid time-off for employees as volunteers in the community (in 2010, 123 employees volunteered 1,075 hours); annual employee participation in Green Up Vermont Day; Winterbake, when employees bake bread for donation to local food pantries annually on the Martin Luther King, Jr. day of service; a food-diversion program that donates old baking products to local farmers for animal feed or composting; the use of eco-friendly certified cleaners in all company facilities and available to employees for home use at \$1 per bottle; and participation in the Bike/Walk to Work Day program.

LIVING HISTORY

The company has come a long way from its origins. King Arthur Flour began in 1790 as the Sands Taylor & Wood Co., a retailer of specialty flours and cookbooks and baked goods, based in Boston.

Founded by Henry Wood, primarily an importer and distributor of English-milled flour, the business grew quickly. A partner, Benjamin Franklin Sands, took over the company in 1870, and in 1886, the firm introduced a premium brand of flour.

At that time, a partner attended a performance of the musical "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table" that inspired the name of the new product, King Arthur Flour (and its current logo). The brand was introduced at the Boston Food Fair on Sept. 10, 1896, to great fanfare.

Subsequently, during ownership changes, retail flour sales declined, and the company expanded into commercial baking equipment in the 1960s, and other retail products, including a line of coffee and prepared pie fillings. In 1978, the company sold its other interests and returned to a core flour business, and moved to Norwich in 1984.

Today, new things are cooking at the company.

The Norwich site is undergoing massive changes, with the expansion of the bakery (to 3,400 square feet), baking education center (3,400 square feet), store (4,700 square feet), and cafe (2,200 square feet with seating for 75). The offsite administration offices and recipe-testing center will also be housed under the same roof, and continue to be affectionately known as Camelot. Also offsite nearby is the manufacturing center, known as Avalon. Begun in June, the work will be completed in July. Artist renderings of the new digs, work progress and historic detail about the company can be found at www.kingarthurfLOUR.com/ourstore/renovations.html.

The company could certainly use the space, officials said. Business was booming one day a few weeks ago, with shoppers packed into the store all day long, looking for seasonal comestibles, while the cafe did a brisk trade in fresh pastries and coffee.

"This is our peak season, with Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas," public relations coordinator Terri Rosenstock said.

Across the courtyard, bakers were busy making bread, pizza and croissants, and the baking school was fully booked for a pastry class.

"We have a lot of people with pie-crust and yeast anxiety right now," quipped the instructor.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. PAUL TAYLOR

• Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I would like to speak for a moment on the courageous and heroic actions of a fellow Alaskan. Dr. Paul Taylor of Fairbanks, AK, while serving as a member of the United States Army Special Forces in the Republic of Vietnam, risked his life on January 17, 1967, to save a wounded soldier and prevent the further demise of American forces.

While under heavy attack, Staff Sergeant Taylor and a fellow soldier led a direct charge on the enemy position and both sustained serious injuries. After dragging his wounded comrade to safety, Staff Sergeant Taylor continued to lead the attack on the enemy until the platoon could retreat to a secure helicopter landing zone.

Staff Sergeant Taylor's decorations from his service in Vietnam include a Bronze Star with "V" device, Silver Star, three Purple Hearts, and the Army Commendation medal.

It is with great honor and humility that I, along with the United States Army, on February 4, 2012 will recognize Dr. Taylor with the presentation of a Silver Star with a Single Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster for this action. Although this recognition is 45 years after the fact, Dr. Taylor's actions and sacrifice shall not be forgotten by Alaskans and all Americans as the memory is still alive with him.●

RECOGNIZING COLEMAN DAIRY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, it takes hard work, dedication, and great service for a business to thrive. In our changing world, companies are forced to adapt and modernize to compete for

customers and maintain their success while continuing to grow.

In order for a company to withstand the test of time, it must achieve a commitment to quality products, customer satisfaction, and efficiency. Coleman Dairy is an excellent example of a homegrown business that continues its service and commitment to providing the best quality products that are just as important as the excellent people employed by the company.

Small businesses are the building blocks of our economy. They provide important services, products, and employment opportunities while sharing an identity with the community and the values of its employees. There is no better company that exemplifies being a leader on this front than Coleman Dairy.

Coleman Dairy has grown since Eleithet Coleman began the business in 1862. Through the generations the family has continued his vision, where hard work, honesty and customer service remain top priorities.

This year Coleman Dairy is celebrating 150 years of providing dairy products to Americans. As one of the 100 oldest family-run businesses in America, Coleman Dairy has a track record of success and I am confident will continue to provide high-quality products for customers who deserve the very best.

Thank you for providing us a quality product all these years. Congratulations on 150 years and best of luck on the next 150.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13396 ON FEBRUARY 7, 2006, WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN OR IN RELATION TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE—PM 38

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides