

Women with moxie

Networking group connects female professionals

Recently, I was invited to attend a brainstorming session for a group called Women With Moxie. Intrigued, I decided to attend the meeting and see what this hubbub was all about.



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Women With Moxie is the creation of Tinnmouth native Elsie Gilmore. Gilmore, who grew up on a farm in Tinnmouth and then moved to Sarasota, Fla., was the owner of a successful website design and development company in Florida.

In 2007, the successful Gilmore realized that while she didn't need to attract any more clientele for her business, she had met some very interesting, creative women who were involved in some exciting projects. Wanting to continue to build upon those relationships, Gilmore put together a very casual mixer event for some local women and to her surprise, 53 women responded to her invitation.

Women With Moxie was born out of that event. She and her organization received some wonderful publicity in the Sarasota area. Soon, they were holding mixers on a monthly basis, which were regularly attended by over 100 people each.

Moxie is synonymous with vigor, pep, aggressiveness, courage and know-how. The name was chosen by Gilmore because hers is no ordinary networking group.

Women With Moxie was built around the notion that women network and do business a bit differently than men. Gilmore comments that her group seeks to foster friendships and business relation-



TAMMY HEFFERNAN PHOTO

Elsie Gilmore, the founder of Women With Moxie, is shown here.

ships between women that are long-lasting and meaningful.

Women With Moxie's main goals are to educate, connect and promote. The organization does this by holding monthly mixers, attending member events and connecting women freelancers, business owners, artists and other female micro-businesses that might otherwise have a

difficult time connecting on their own.

Currently, Women With Moxie has grown to have chapters in Sarasota and Venice, Fla., and Portland, Ore.

True love brought Gilmore back to her home state and she is in the process of launching the Vermont chapter of Women With Moxie.

"I am very excited about launching this

chapter and think it will have a unique feel from other chapters," Gilmore said. "I also think, in many ways, it will be more valuable as Vermonters are so much more geographically isolated from each other — Women With Moxie can bring exposure to micro-businesses, freelancers, artists and others who otherwise have a hard time marketing themselves."

This month marks the soft launch of the Vermont chapter.

Being a member of Women With Moxie will help to represent those who are often under-represented by local chambers of commerce. The organization is built around the notion that women network and do business a bit differently than men so mixers in Vermont will have an educational component and will also be social in nature as well. Getting to know people, Gilmore stated, is "more than shoving business cards in their face — it's finding commonalities, learning from them and sharing your knowledge."

Members of the Vermont chapter of Women With Moxie will hold monthly mixers in various locations around the state, affording all members the opportunity to attend a mixer close to home. The website will feature detailed profiles of each member, along with member events, promotions and conversations. Gilmore envisions that Women With Moxie will become the akin to a women's chamber of commerce — which is very much what the original Sarasota chapter has evolved into since its beginnings.

Gilmore encourages any female interested in Women With Moxie to "like" the

Moxie

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group's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/moxievermont. Facebook is the best place to keep up with what is going on with the formation of the Vermont group and the best opportunity to win a free one-year membership.

On Monday, Women With Moxie will begin to give away some free memberships to folks to give women in the area and the state an opportunity to see what it is all about. Gilmore has met some of her best

friends and most trusted colleagues through Women With Moxie and she is excited to bring that same opportunity to Vermont.

The informal meeting that I attended at The Pub in Wallingford provided a fun, informative and educational evening with some very talented women. I would encourage any

women out there to see what Women With Moxie is all about.

Tammy Heffernan, an attorney and writer, resides with her husband and three teenage sons in East Wallingford. Story ideas are always welcome; please email Tammy at tammy.heffernan@mac.com or call her at 259-3711.