

UNIQUE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHELBURNE FARMS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont boasts many gems that draw visitors to our Green Mountains. Among them is Shelburne Farms, known to many Vermonters—and many visitors to Vermont—for its work on historic preservation, agriculture, sustainability, and nutrition. And so it was with great interest and appreciation that I read an article about the Farm's caretakers in the Burlington Free Press.

I have been proud of the work Alec Webb and his wife, Megan Camp, have done at Shelburne Farms for the last many years. Through their leadership, Shelburne Farms has become a first-rate educational hub, promoting environmental conservation, food education and agriculture sustainability. The partnerships initiated by Alec and Megan with the National Park Service Conservation Studies Institute and with the University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture have furthered these goals.

Today, Shelburne Farms is a National Historic Landmark, a distinction I was proud to help secure in 2001 because they earned it. During this week's debate on the Farm Bill, I think it is fitting to highlight the important work being done at Shelburne Farms. Others can take a page from their successful playbook as we explore ways to bolster our green economy, put food on Americans' tables, and promote the environmental stewardship that continues to protect our farm lands and environment.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this article, "A Vision Realized," 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, June 16, 2012]

A VISION REALIZED

ALEC WEBB IS LIVING—AND MANAGING—A
VISION HE RETURNED HOME TO CREATE
(By Sally Pollak)

SHELBURNE.—The summer Alec Webb turned 18, he ran his first camp. He pitched a tent in a field in his backyard—it was a big yard, about 1,000 acres—and camped out for six weeks with kids from Labrador, the Bronx, and a Cambridge, Mass., housing project. There were a couple of locals, too.

"It was a funky group of urban and rural kids," said Webb, who will turn 60 next month. It was the summer of 1970 and Webb, now president of Shelburne Farms, was a recent high school graduate. He had left Groton School, a prep school outside Boston, spring semester of his senior year and moved back home. Webb spent his last semester at the Shaker Mountain School, an alternative school in Burlington, where he earned credit to graduate from Groton.

"Instead of going abroad, I went to Burlington," Webb joked.

He left Groton because the school had become, to him, irrelevant.

"It was the '60s and that (Groton) environment didn't feel relevant to what was going on in the world," Webb said. "I wanted to be in an environment that was more real, more connected to what was going on in the world.

A place that was engaged with more meaningful social issues." In that context, Webb pitched a tent, built a campfire, and invited kids over. The campers even spent a solo night in the field, grown-up free (if you can call Webb, a newly minted 18-year-old, a grown-up).

"They all seemed to survive," Webb said.

The camp was the original manifestation of Webb's interest in "meaningful education" that is an intersection of agriculture, nature and environmental awareness. From these beginnings, at the boyhood home where Webb grew up the fourth of six siblings, Shelburne Farms would become a nonprofit (incorporated in 1972) whose various endeavors bring 140,000 people a year to the farm.

There are so many camps and school programs at Shelburne Farms these days, the child-centric activity prompted Webb to wonder on a recent walk—where packs of happy kids raced around the place—if summer camps had already started.

He's no longer sleeping in a field with the kids.

These days, you can find him in his corner office in a barn, surrounded by big maps and less-glamorous paperwork. He says he's part town manager, part town planner. And full-time fundraiser.

Webb lives with his wife, Megan Camp, the farm's vice president and program director, and their cats Fanta and Stella, in an 1850s shingled farmhouse that predates Shelburne Farms. Other animals sometimes wander onto their lawn. Chickens make regular appearances; goats jump the fence and hang at Webb's place. A donkey came by one morning last week.

The visitors come with the territory when you live where you work and work where you live: a teeming campus with activities including walking trails, a Brown Swiss dairy herd, environmental education programs, harvest festivals and a cheese making facility.

Shelburne Farms, a onetime private estate, was founded by Webb's great-grandparents and designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead in the 1880s. At the turn of the century, the lakeside property of Dr. William Seward and Lila Vanderbilt Webb encompassed nearly 4,000 acres. The barn they built for work animals was colossal—so big, in its reincarnated life it houses a cheese-making and packing operation, a school, a woodworking shop, a kid's farmyard, a bakery and offices.

In 1972, Shelburne Farms was incorporated as a nonprofit—a decision that was useful in setting the farm on more solid financial ground, Webb said. (His father had to borrow money to pay property taxes, he said.) In seeking a new direction for Shelburne Farms, Webb and his five siblings saw that the property could and should be a community resource and asset, he said. The six young Webbs did not want the dairy farm where they grew up to become a carved-up, high-end suburb of Burlington, Webb said.

"If we all had one-sixth of this place," he said, "we would've spent the rest of our lives dealing with that."

The common experience of growing up on the farm, a love of the land, and an interest in "responding to the context of the world we were living in at that time," helped shape the siblings' shared vision for Shelburne Farms, Webb said.

"Those threads of agriculture, youth, community, those were our intentions," he said the other day, eating lunch at a picnic table in the farmyard.

"We started Shelburne Farms because we were worried about all the things that are more pressing now," he said, noting climate change wasn't an issue people were thinking

about. "We wondered: 'How are we going to get ourselves on a path that could be more sustainable for people and the planet.' The farm would be an expression of a pathway to a better future. Not a model for that, necessarily, but an example of how things can work given a different set of intentions, around sustainability."

They wanted the land whole and accessible to the public.

Their father, Derick Webb, made that possible on his death in 1984 at the age of 70. Derick Webb—who had retired to Florida—rewrote his will before his death from a heart attack. In his revised will, he left the 1,000 acres he inherited to the nonprofit that was established by his kids 12 years earlier. An earlier version had given the property to the six children.

Though Webb and his siblings agitated for this change—including writing letters that Webb says make him cringe to read today—they didn't know their father had gifted the land to the nonprofit until after he died.

Now the integrity of the property was assured. Suddenly, the nonprofit was in a more formidable position.

"At that point, we were playing for real," Webb said. That meant fundraising, restoring and managing the property, building an organization and related programming.

Making the world a little bit better is something of a bureaucracy—with custodial work on the side.

"When I'm walking around, I'm always looking for deferred maintenance and potholes," Webb said. "It's not a downer. I kind of enjoy that."

His primary focuses are finances and farming; his brother, Marshall Webb, manages the woodland and special projects.

The farm was in disrepair when Webb was a kid, but he liked his father's Brown Swiss herd and chores related to dairying. In those days, a milk hauler rumbled up the long driveway to transport the milk to a creamery. Earlier still, the family delivered milk in cans to Shelburne.

Back then, the barn roofs leaked; plumbing didn't work in portions of Shelburne House, now called the Inn at Shelburne Farms; and Alec and his brothers, wearing plain white T-shirts, ate corn on the cob at picnic tables on a terrace, goats sniffing around the table for scraps. "It's a whole different scene down there now at 6 o'clock at night," Webb said.

At 6 o'clock these days, spiffy diners—guests, not family—eat dinner on the terrace at the inn, a dining spot that overlooks formal gardens, Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks. The food they're eating, chef-prepared, was likely produced on the farm. Not counting work-related dinners, Webb said he eats at the inn about once a year.

He still prefers dairying hours, rising by 5 a.m. and eating a bowl of oat bran before heading to work. His commute is walking across the farmyard. With the exception of two years working for the state Department of Education—fulfilling duty required for his conscientious objector status in the Vietnam War—Webb's work has been connected to Shelburne Farms.

In his office is a black and white photograph of a young girl standing at a table of vegetables. It is the summer of 1973, before the existence of the Burlington Farmers Market. The table is set up on St. Paul Street in front of the original Ben and Jerry's.

It holds cabbages, cauliflower, and bushels of beans. Hand-lettered signs describe vegetables that are organically grown and reasonably priced. The girl grew the vegetables at Shelburne Farms. She's an early example of the farm's decades-long yield: sustainable agriculture, community connections, youthful energy and vision.

"We didn't say, 40 years ago, we're going to have an inn," Webb said. "We had the intention of seeing this place being used as a place for learning—creating a living/learning environment for kids and others to increase their awareness of the environment and community."

"There was something that would seem wrong about doing anything other than treating Shelburne Farms as a community asset. Maybe it's Olmstead's design: (But) the importance of conserving this land was not as clear as it is now."

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL BARRY GASDEK

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I wish to honor LTC Barry Gasdek, Retired, for his decades of service to Wyoming and to America.

As Walter Lippmann once said, "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on." In his 49 years of service to our country, Barry's proven dedication and loyalty have touched hundreds of lives. From his extensive active duty service in the U.S. Army to his quest to aid the veterans of Wyoming, Mr. Gasdek is a true Wyoming hero.

Barry's path to Wyoming is similar to the historic trails that cross Wyoming's terrain—he started out in the east and eventually headed west. Barry showed the strong will and discipline of a natural born leader. Growing up in Pennsylvania, he excelled as an athlete and a scholar. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout in high school. At the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated with a B.S. in education, he earned letters in three sports. All of these honors prepared him for a lifetime of service to his country.

Barry's passion and devotion to the armed forces sparked a distinguished career with the U.S. Army. Barry started his career serving in Germany, fresh from the ROTC program, where he gained firsthand experience of Cold War tensions. Later, he was called to serve in Vietnam as the conflict there worsened. Barry proved himself in Vietnam. He flew observation missions and eventually returned for a second tour of duty. One of his commanders joked that he was like a magnet for drawing fire. Despite the adversity he faced, Barry met his challenges head-on and with fortitude. He continued his military service well after Vietnam by training to become both a Ranger and a Pathfinder and by serving at a number of Army bases around the world.

He is a qualified leader, and his military achievements reflect his success. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, an award second only to the Medal of Honor. In addition, Barry received the Silver Star for his service in Vietnam, 5 Bronze Stars, 2 Purple Hearts, the Soldier's Medal, the Legion of Honor, and 17 Air Medals. These awards are but a few of his military accomplishments.

After many years of successfully serving his country, Barry accepted an

other challenge—this time in Laramie, WY. He was assigned as a professor of military science at the University of Wyoming through its Army ROTC program. Barry was a natural for the title, given his own involvement in the ROTC program in Pennsylvania. He brought the same level of talent and perseverance to this position as he did on the battlefield. For years, he encouraged his students to become our Nation's future leaders.

While many would be comfortable slipping into retirement, Barry knew his mission in Wyoming had not yet been completed. This time, he took up the banner to fight for veterans' issues. He had experienced the lack of support for Vietnam's veterans, and he vowed to keep that from happening again. Barry served in leadership positions with the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart. His goal was to support the State's current veterans while teaching the next generation about the important sacrifices our Armed Forces make each and every day. Eventually, his passionate advocacy led him to serve as a State veterans service officer for the Wyoming Veterans Commission, the UW Veterans Task Force, and as the Army Reserve ambassador.

LTC Barry Gasdek, Retired, has devoted his entire life to serving his country, his brothers in arms, and the people of Wyoming. He is a fighter, a mentor, a teacher, and a good man. He embodies the cowboy ethics and what it means to be a citizen of Wyoming. It is certain that the legacy of his leadership will inspire new generations of brave soldiers. On behalf of the State of Wyoming and the United States of America, I thank Barry for his service. His boots will be hard to fill.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF TITLE IX

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, this week we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the passage of title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. For over 40 years, this historic law has furthered gender equality in education and sports in schools so that young women, including my three daughters, Caroline, Halina, and Anne, who all play soccer, may enjoy the benefits that come along with sports participation.

On October 29, 2002, title IX was renamed the "Patsy Takemoto Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act" to honor the tireless determination and leadership of Congresswoman Mink of Hawaii in developing and passing title IX. If Congresswoman Mink was still with us today, I know she would be proud of the remarkable gains that have been made to ensure equal opportunity for women and girls in sports, education, and professionally.

In my home State of Colorado, we are ahead of the curve with regards to opportunities for girls and women in

sports. The U.S. Olympic Training Center, located in Colorado Springs, was created by an act of Congress in 1978, just a few years after title IX was passed. It is encouraging to know that women, like Gold Medal Winner Lindsey Vonn, now make up nearly half of all U.S. Olympians competing at the games—representing more than 48 percent of the 2008 team. Jamie Derrieux, a senior at Grand Junction High School, was named to the 5A First-Team All-State team and will be playing basketball at the University of Northern Colorado this fall. The flagship all-girls charter school, GALS, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools, in Denver practices active learning that engages students in health and wellness activities in the belief that these are key contributing factors in optimizing academic achievement and self-development. The Colorado Women's Sports Fund Association works toward increasing the number of girls and women who participate in athletics and reducing and eliminating barriers that prevent participation.

Studies show that participation in sports has a positive influence on the intellectual, physical and psychological health of girls and young women. By a 3-to-1 ratio, female athletes do better in school, do not drop out, and have a better chance to graduate from college. Sports participation is linked to lower rates of pregnancy in adolescent female athletes, and according to a study from the Oppenheimer/MassMutual Financial Group, of 401 executive businesswomen surveyed, 82 percent reported playing organized sports while growing up, including school teams, intramurals, and recreational leagues.

Despite the vast improvements, inequalities and disparities still remain. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations, schools are still providing 1.3 million fewer chances for girls to play sports in high school than boys. These numbers have an even greater impact on Latinas and African-American young women. It is because of such disparities that I signed on to the Senate resolution put forth this week by Senators PATTY MURRAY of Washington and OLYMPIA SNOWE of Maine to show my commitment to working toward a more equal future.

We have work to do. Please join me in celebrating the 40th anniversary of title IX by supporting efforts to expand equality in sports participation and education for women and girls around the country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED WAY

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate the United Way on its 125th anniversary. The organization began in 1887 as a community