

BOOM! COVER PROFILE

Peggy Sutton, Advocate for All Foods Organic

This month's BOOM! Cover Profile is Peggy Sutton who is the Founder and President of To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co. She began her business 12 years ago when she began a personal quest to take better care of herself and family. Peggy's journey has made her an innovator in the world of organic food and a supplier to some of the world's leading food companies, such as Whole Foods and Kellogg's. She works closely with her husband Jeff in the small town of Fitzpatrick, Alabama, about 30 miles southeast of Montgomery. Peggy is making her dreams come true after first reading about sprouted grains at the age of 48, so she'll tell you it's never too late to start something great! We think you'll enjoy getting to know Peggy as much as we did... and you will definitely want to try some of her products in the kitchen!



Peggy and Jeff on the farm in Fitzpatrick, AL

BOOM! Please give us a brief biography, i.e. where you're from, education, what brought you to the River Region/Montgomery area, did you raise your family here, schools, married, family, etc.?



Peggy, in her commercial kitchen 2006

Peggy: I'm originally from Fitzpatrick (Bullock Co.) which is where I currently live and have my business. I'm an AUM graduate with a degree in English/Marketing and minor in Business. I started my career in Public Relations at Kinder-Care Learning Centers in Montgomery in the early 1980s during its heyday then decided to try out Atlanta in 1986. I worked in Atlanta in post-secondary education and banking as an officer of operations and marketing for almost eight years, then slowly began transitioning back towards home via a five-year stop in Columbus, GA as Membership V.P. at its Chamber of Commerce. I remember lots of meetings at the Chamber with Montgomery representatives taking a look at Columbus' new Riverwalk. Now that I'm back home it's wonderful to see

how successful Montgomery has made its Riverwalk venue.

lower boy, so the name LB stuck.

I have a younger brother, Vic, and older brother, Jim; both of whom live in the neighborhood as well. Jeff and I decided to put down roots in my home community when we married and built our home in what was then a cow pasture as my Daddy was a cattleman. We love our home in the country. Lots



Still a home baker - Sprouted sourdough bread

I have been married to my husband, Jeff, for 19 years. We met in Columbus through the Chamber where he was a very active participant on the Riverwalk development committee and managed a state-wide telecom company. Neither of us have any children between us except for our dogs. We tell folks our children are of the four-legged tail-wagging persuasion. We have our girls: two French bull dogs Olive and Sprout, and recently added a little brother, LB the chihuahua (we were referring to him as little brother, little buddy, little bit, and

of BOOM! readers will recognize Daddy (Mr. Griswold) from his career as a school teacher, as well as a cattleman. He taught physics at Sidney Lanier, then spent many years at Cloverdale Junior High teaching science and biology.

BOOM! You are the founder and President of a very unique business called To Your Health (TYH), located in Fitzpatrick, AL. Would you share the

inspiration for your business and the kind of products you sell? What is your job/role at To Your Health (TYH)?



Peggy and her frenchie girls - Olive and Sprout

Peggy: To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co. began in my kitchen 12 years ago during a personal quest to take better care of Jeff and myself. Both sides of my family have enjoyed longevity well into their nineties with several centenarians, so I decided to study

how they prepared foods, hoping I had picked up the family's "staying power" genes. Part of my research included the natural way that grains sprouted in the fields before the Industrial Revolution which made them more nutritious, digestible, with greatly enhanced taste (especially important to me as a home baker). I bought some wheat berries, sprouted them in Mason jars, dried and milled them and made the best loaf of bread I had ever tasted! I wanted everyone to taste sprouted bread, so I started making and selling my sprouted baked goods to friends and family. Word

spread quickly so Jeff built me a 12 x 24' commercial kitchen in his new barn so I could get a food-processing license to sell at regional Farmers'



Pasta Cooking class at Jovial Villa in Lucca Italy June 2017

Markets and local Montgomery stores. Two short years later sprouted flour became a house-hold word for nutritious

baking so I transitioned from baking to making and selling sprouted grains and flours.

Jeff finally got to use his barn in 2010 when I had outgrown it and he had completed our first 7,200 sq. ft. building on some of our land on U.S. Hwy 82. The building made it very convenient for trucks to come in and out and my

sprouted flour business continued to grow. Jeff came aboard full-time in 2010 (he had worked as a station manager for Bonnie Plants in Illinois for nine years prior) and serves as CEO. We began to create some much-needed jobs for Bullock Co. Our Development Authority told us that one job in our county is equal to 27 in Montgomery Co. We anticipated growing into our first building over the course of several years, but only two short years later Jeff was designing a

second 7,200 sq. ft. building that opened in 2013, and we recently completed our third expansion which brings our business facilities to over

40,000 sq. ft. We employ 34 full-time employees, 30 of whom reside in Bullock Co.

I currently serve as Founder and President of my business. I'm referred to as the visionary because most of the time we add products by customer requests and I'm the one who gets excited about sprouting something new. I've also introduced several new products using our sprouted flour such as baking mixes and beer bread mixes. We currently sprout more than 28 grains, legumes, seeds, and nuts. Our facilities include a dedicated gluten-free operation as about 70% of our products are gluten-free. All our products are certified organic and kosher.

We have individual customers who purchase our products from our web site (healthyflour.com) and Amazon.com. We sell to small and large stores, Whole Foods Market being one of the bigger chains, and we private label for several companies. Most of our sales, about

80%, come from supplying large manufacturers with ingredients for their sprouted products: chips, cereals, breads, crackers, cookies, etc. We export to 11 countries including Mexico, UK, New Zealand, Canada, France and Denmark. With our latest expansion, our production is growing to 80,000

pounds of sprouted grains weekly. We have the capacity to grow our production to 240,000 pounds weekly. A recent article has projected the sprouted product market to grow to more than \$250 million by the end of 2018 which is great news for To Your Health's continued growth potential.

BOOM! As a woman, what were some of the challenges of starting your own business? What advice would you give to other Boomers, especially women, wanting to start their own businesses?

<https://issuu.com/riverregionp..>

Peggy: As Founder and President my role is to hold it all together. While I'm not as "hands on" in the production department as I use to be, or wearing as many hats as I did at one time, it's very important for me to keep my finger on



Growing Organic Seeds at Montessori Garden Montgomery

the pulse of my company. I also manage the company's marketing efforts. I have a phenomenal management team and we work very well together. Most of my employees are working on their third, fourth, or fifth year with the business. I like to think that's because they enjoy their job and the family environment we've grown. It hasn't always been as good as it is now. There are many challenges to running a business; especially one that I didn't plan that has grown from my kitchen to the world's biggest producer of organic sprouted grains and flour in 11 short years. My best advice to any women (or men) wanting to start their own business is: Don't let the stress rule the day because no matter how much you love what you're doing, if you lose sight of why you're doing it, the magic can get lost in the minutia. I've had to pull back on several occasions, take a deep breath, and remember to be thankful, seek direction in prayer, pay more attention to friends and family, and then re-approach the tasks at hand with a renewed vigor. By the way, I was 48 when I read about sprouting grains, so it's never too late to do something great.

BOOM!: What role has technology played in helping your specialty flour business thrive from a little out of the way place like Fitzpatrick, AL?

Peggy: Being in the food business, technology and food safety play a major role in the production of our sprouted grains and flours. To Your Health is SQF Level II certified for Safe Quality Food,

one of the highest standards of food safety certification, which assures our customers of the high quality of products we make. We are audited at intervals throughout the year by SQF, the FDA, state and county health departments, organic and kosher inspectors, and audit teams from some of our larger companies like Kellogg. Our

employees undergo rigorous sanitation and safety training before they can begin working with us and we repeat training as needed all year long. We have several employees whose sole responsibility is to implement food safety, facility safety, and sanitation.



Where it all Started - Our home barn

Another story about technology is that I began my business sprouting in Mason jars. As the demand for my sprouted flour grew Jeff and I had to get very creative about how to sprout larger quantities because there was no machinery to do what I was doing. We graduated from Mason jars to 5-gallon buckets and utility sinks, then to specially manufactured machinery for our unique application that can sprout 1,600 pounds each and is programmable to handle all of the steps necessary to germinate our grains.

BOOM!: We know your husband has an active role in your business as the CEO, what has his impact been on To Your Health and what are the advantages of working closely with your husband? Any disadvantages? Who's really the boss?

Peggy: Today I can honestly say that Jeff and I make great business partners, but it hasn't always been that way. We've had lots of great experiences together growing the business and several not so great ones when we've disagreed on how to handle specific issues. Over the years we've become comfortable with each other's strengths and weaknesses and either stand aside when a strength needs to take precedence, or gently step in when a weakness isn't quite getting the job at hand done. I could not have grown To Your Health to the success it is today without Jeff as a partner in so many ways: he designed and managed the construction of our facilities, he's the best sales person I've ever met, and he has a keen sense for understanding folks. Jeff is also a walking calculator which comes in handy at number-crunching times. But, I guess I have to be honest and say that it's still good to know that I have the last say where the business is concerned.

BOOM!: Many Boomers are experiencing a renewed sense of purpose, new goals, new careers, especially if they've experienced the empty nest

syndrome of their kids moving on. How would you describe this sense of renewal in your life? Any advice for the rest of us seeking renewal?

Peggy: My personality is the type that always needs to be doing something. I believe two of my gifts are to give and teach. I have found it deeply rewarding to give back, educate, and make a difference through my business. Whether it's providing healthy products to folks who want to take better care of themselves and their families, creating jobs, advocating organic farming in our great state and the region, educating children at local schools through gardening, or supporting other worthy causes in the area, it's good to stay active. It's a good thing to seek your purpose and live your faith in something honorable that can positively impact others.

The River Region's 50+ Lifestyle Magazine

BOOM!: What are you most passionate about?

Peggy: I am most passionate about the state of this country's poor food quality and how junk food is ruining the lives of so many children and ravaging years of otherwise quality life from too many adults. I am a strong advocate for all foods organic, and cooking and eating with family on a regular basis. I read research like others read novels. It's a sad state of affairs when it comes to nutrition in our neighborhoods today.

BOOM!: How do you like to relax and wind down from a hard day's work?

Peggy: Some days are harder than others, but I love to get home in the evening and spend time with the girls, then prepare a healthful meal for Jeff and me. We always have dinner together unless one of us is traveling. Sometimes I'll take a dip in our pool in the evening and I'm addicted to word puzzles of any kind; the harder the better. Television at night puts me to sleep, but Jeff enjoys it to help him unwind and because I sleep through all the shows, he's king of the remote.

BOOM!: What are some of your favorite travel destinations and why? Any travel dreams planned?

Peggy: By nature I'm a nester: I like to stay close to home but sometimes I'll venture out with Jeff to see somewhere new. We took a trip to the Tuscany region of Italy in June which was a wonderful vacation. The vistas were breathtaking, the culture interesting, and the villa where we stayed was beautiful. We



Peggy featured on the back of Kashi Cereal Box

even took Italian cooking classes every other night and enjoyed our creations for dinner. We also have a beach house on the Gulf coast which is our get-away destination most of the time, especially in the spring and summer. Even the girls love the beach.

BOOM!: Peggy, you are part of the nutritional, food is medicine culture

that continues to gain followers seeking healthy lifestyles, do you actively participate in this trend through personal appearances, lectures, etc.? What's the future of the food is medicine trend?

Peggy: Truth in nutrition was my reason for making changes in my lifestyle. I grew up in a close family setting with home-cooked meals, ice in my milk because it had just come out of the cow, home-made butter, grass-fed beef, and big gardens with fruit trees, but I was also allowed to eat plenty of junk food. Then in my college years I was always going for the fat-free, low-calorie stuff, thinking Twiggly was healthy. Thank God, I returned to my senses. I am a huge advocate of healthy eating to enjoy good health. It's our company slogan. I believe that we should let food be our medicine and not be too eager to get the quick fix from modern medicine when a few lifestyle adjustments are all that is needed.

I have also researched how nutrition can assist folks with serious disease or cancer and ease the pain and after-effects of medical treatments; so even if someone's health issues are serious, quality nutrition still plays a big part in quality of life. Millions of people are experiencing this for themselves. Eleven years ago, hardly anyone knew why they should eat sprouted baked goods other than they tasted great. Now it's a huge

PRESERVE FAMILY MEMORIES

SHOEBOX SCANS & VHS/REEL FILM TRANSFER

- Quick scanning of large loose print quantities.
- Saved to CD/DVD for archiving, viewing & ordering.

CD
DVD

20% OFF

(Bring your memories & this ad for in-store discount)

total image

908 Forest Avenue / Montgomery, AL 36106 / 334.299.3456

totalimage.com

f t i

CD
DVD

market segment and we're shipping our products all over the world. I believe that the "food matters" movement will continue to grow rapidly and will become the norm, not just a trend. My hope is that soon conventional (non-organic, pesticide laden) foods will have to be tagged as "grown with pesticides and synthetic fertilizers" and be more expensive, and organic won't have to be labeled at all because it will be real food and less expensive.



With Renowned Author Peter Heinhart at first annual Intern't Symposium on Bread

medicine. Now that sounds like a great next career!

BOOM! As you've aged, how have your priorities changed?

Peggy: I've gotten more comfortable with who I am and enjoy where I am. I enjoy observing people who cross my path to truly see who's in front of me. This has taught me to listen to others better and sense the needs in my business, community, family, and friends. I enjoy simplicity now more than ever. I've even learned to relax a little more in the last couple of

BOOM! Do you have any hobbies or activities that grab your attention?

Peggy: My business started as a hobby according to Jeff. I enjoy gardening although I haven't been able to do much of it in the last few years. I enjoy making fermented foods and cheeses, too. I think it would be fun to create Crossword Puzzles or to study Alabama history in depth. I might also enjoy making You Tube baking classes. It would be fun to research and prove or disprove some of today's fake reports on food and

years and not be on such a tight schedule to get things done. Jeff used to tease me about my needing to plan in order to take a day off and then plan what I was going to do.

BOOM! Give us three words that describe you?

Peggy: Caring, passionate, driven.

BOOM! If you weren't in the flour business what kind of work would you be doing?

Peggy: I would probably be in organizational management. I enjoyed my work at the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and graduated from the Institute for Organizational Management thinking I would pursue that line of work once we returned to Alabama. Before I started To Your Health I served as Executive Director of the Alabama Hospice Organization for three years.

BOOM! Many of us may think about retirement but we're not sure how to define it...how do you think about retirement?

Peggy: Sure I think about retirement! I'm not sure when or exactly what it will look like as I'm still young (in my mind) and To Your Health has a lot more growing to do, but somewhere in the back of my mind I can easily conjure up more leisurely days.

We want to thank Peggy for helping us put together this month's BOOM! Cover Profile. If you want to learn more about Peggy and her business, To Your Health visit www.healthyliving.com or send her an email to Peggy@healthyliving.com. For this month's cover photo we relied on a photo shot by photographer Jack Jeffries, www.jackjeffries.com. If you have questions, comments or suggestions about our cover profiles, including nominating someone, please send them to jim@riverregionboom.com

Read all of the BOOM! Cover Profiles at www.riverregionboom.com/archives

People over the age of 50 are Worth More

The River Region's 50+ Lifestyle Magazine

Affordable Ad Rates
call today 324.3472, ad deadline the 20th

BOOM!

riverRegionBoom.com



Sieu Tang Wood opened her first civilian location in 1994, still located at 500 Cloverdale Road Montgomery, AL 36106, 334-263-9584



Peppertree Shopping Center
8115 Vaughn Rd
334-279-5000



8125-G Decker Lane, Montgomery, AL 36117
334-239-8258, just off the Atlanta Hwy, between Taylor Rd. and Chantilly exit.



Young, manager of Cloverdale Rd has worked with Tang's for 13 years, and Cici for 17 years.



Yun has worked with Peppertree for 13 yrs



Wang Lihai has worked with Peppertree for 16 yrs



Diana has worked with Tang's for 23 years.



Anne Ocare has worked in Prattville for 22 years.



Jhang 9 years and Hyundai Suk 2 yrs working at Peppertree



Ruthie has worked with Tang's for 28 years.



Wong Hui has worked with Tang's Zelds Road for 17 years



"I began sewing commercially in 1973 and together with my associates featured here we have 257 years experience"
Sieu Tang Wood, Owner
Come See Us



Kiki has worked with Tang's for 8 years.



Kay has worked with Tang's for 19 years.

Tang's
Designs and Alterations

Additional Locations:

• 2900-D Zelds Road, 334-273-0706 • 1738 E. Main Street, Prattville, 334-358-0396



Mary has worked with Tang's for 28 yrs

