

# The ADVOCATE.

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The ADVOCATE

## BUSINESS

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## Before you start networking, get on the Net

*CoolTea 'Blog and Dine' merges blogging with old-fashioned schmoozing*

By Richard Lee  
Assistant Business Editor

Call it a marriage of an age-old art form and a new-age communications technology.

They can learn a lot from each other, and that's a goal at CoolTea's "Blog and Dine" business networking event on Sept. 19 at Chocopologie, a South Norwalk boutique chocolate maker.

The Blog and Dine event has been preceded by an online blog to facilitate conversations among CoolTea members that Chuck Scott, founder of CoolTea, hopes will continue at the event. The blog contains business, food and beverage, social and general

### High-tech networking

■ CoolTea has been hosting business networking events in Fairfield County since the late 1990s. The organization is online at [www.cooltea.com](http://www.cooltea.com).

chat themes.

CoolTea is a regional group mostly composed of business professionals. Please see **COOLTEA**, Page A10

## CoolTea

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posed of individuals involved in high-tech and business professions. Online at [www.cooltea.com](http://www.cooltea.com), it has been hosting business networking events in Fairfield County since the late 1990s.

"It is quite possible that this Blog and Dine networking event is the first time that Web blogging technology has been combined with business networking event experience," Scott said, adding that the blog was seen by more than 1,500 visitors last month.

Many CoolTea participants are operators of small businesses and should be inspired by the story Chocopologie owner Fritz Knipschildt tells about how he became a chocolatier and started his own business. Scott said.

A native of Denmark, Knipschildt worked in restaurants in Denmark, France and Spain before moving to the United States in the mid-1990s.

CoolTea member Marzena Kmiecik, owner of Pixelfanatix, a Norwalk-based Internet marketing firm, suggested holding the event at Chocopologie.

"I hope it's inspiring. It will be cool. He's got a great story to tell. He's passionate, and CoolTea tells people to focus on what they love," Kmiecik said. Like many of CoolTea's members, Knipschildt relies on technology to connect with customers around the world.

Scott, founder and managing director of the Avanti Group, a Ridgefield business that integrates communications, management and the Web, said he expects more than 80 people to attend.

"Hopefully, we'll have a lot of people coming to learn about what we do," said Knipschildt, who employs 32 people in the manufacturing and shipping of his unique chocolates at the 12 S. Main St., business and in the adjoining cafe.

The menu features a variety of Chocopologie's chocolate desserts and unique hors d'oeuvres.

Also, Peter Troilo from Nicholas Roberts Ltd., a Darien wine merchant, will showcase wines and beers.

— The fee to attend is \$40 per person for CoolTea subscribers and \$50 per person for nonsubscribers. Advance online registration is required at [www.bloganddine.com/events/0601/](http://www.bloganddine.com/events/0601/).