



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Irene Barber, staff horticultural therapist at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay Harbor, speaks to members of a program for the visually impaired.

Therapy

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Alethe Donaldson, 77, of Thomaston is a gardening greenhorn who lost the vision in one eye about six years ago and struggles with the loss of her depth perception. Every week in the summer, she makes the trek down crowded Route 1 to the gardens. On this afternoon, she pulled flowers from a bucket of yellow, red and orange snapdragons and carefully arranged them in bud vases.

"I need to feel the flowers," she said. "When you lose one thing, you get something else. You think about things differently."

Across the table from her, Dick Butler, 91, a Southport man with macu-

lar degeneration, worked on his own flower arrangement. The World War II veteran ran Butler Twins Florists in Farmingdale for 40 years and clearly still knows his way around a bunch of flowers. But nowadays he is learning to do his arranging by touch instead of sight.

"We're always learning," he said. "You've got to quit when you say you know everything."

That's just what Barber likes to hear.

"Dick is a well-versed gardener," she said. "But he can learn new tricks to still enjoy the experience of gardening."

As Donaldson, Butler and others worked on their bouquets, Barber bustled around, using words to describe the flowers they could no longer see for themselves. She brought around con-



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Members of the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens' Therapeutic Horticulture program who have visual impairments arrange flowers together during a sunny summer afternoon at the Visual Garden of the Five Senses in Boothbay Harbor. From left are Marilyn Greenleaf, 86, and her husband Dick Butler, 91, volunteer Julie Freund, horticultural therapist Irene Barber, Mollie Moore, 82, and Alethe Donaldson, 77.

tainers full of aromatic flowers and herbs and challenged the group to take a deep breath and identify them. For a moment, the air is full of the smell of lavender, as Greenleaf crushes it with her fingers, then the bracing aroma of lemon verbena.

Mollie Moore, 82, of Southport sniffed deeply at a box of parsley but couldn't immediately figure it out. She lost her sight overnight while on a trip to her home country of England 16 years ago. She had pneumococcal

meningitis and wasn't expected to survive.

"I'm a tough old bird and came back," she said.

The Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens and the Lerner Garden of the Five Senses, which she helped to develop, have assisted her in navigating her newly sightless world.

"No matter what your disability, you can still garden," she said.

Barber said the garden was designed so that people of all abilities can appreciate it and feel able to use it.

The raised beds help with that, as does a sturdy railing that runs around the perimeter, and the way that the gardens staff don't rush to help people when they are faced with doing something new or challenging.

"I resist that sense of urgency to help them and encourage them to help themselves more. They definitely become more free-spirited and independent," she said. "It is the reason why I do what I do. There's a sense of hope and opportunity."

Breweries

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The Maine Law

The issue of how many craft breweries Maine can support is an interesting one, Sullivan said, with some likely answers found in the state's pre-Prohibition history. Before the state became the birthplace of prohibition with the 1851 passage of the so-called "Maine Law," which prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, it likely looked a lot like other places in the nation in the early 19th century.

"Prior to Prohibition, the average city and community had its own brewery in America," Sullivan said. "That brewery served the local market. It catered to local tastes and was kind of a community gathering place."

The draconian Maine Law was repealed just a few years after its passage, but the state continued to regulate and control the sale of liquor long before 1919, when Prohibition was passed nationwide. And Prohibition wasn't lifted here until 1934, one year after the repeal of the national law. Even then, it took decades until a brewery reopened in the state.

"We didn't have a brewery open from when Prohibition ended until 1986, when Geary's opened," Sullivan said. "Think about that."

So one way of looking at the craft beer boom is that Mainers simply are making up for a lot of lost time. During the decades between the end of Prohibition and the beginning of the craft beer

movement, there weren't a lot of options at bars, restaurants or grocery stores. That was the case around the country, too, Sullivan said. Just five years ago, 92 out of every 100 beers brewed were made by what he calls "Big Beer": megabreweries, such as Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors. But craft beers are growing in popularity and claiming a bigger share of the marketplace, with 17 percent of all beers sold in America made by craft breweries.

Before Prohibition, there were as many as 4,100 breweries operating in the country. Even after the law against selling alcohol was repealed, the beer climate had changed in America and the number of breweries continued to shrink until the 1980s. By 1983, there were just 80 breweries making beer in the whole country, most of which was pale lagers that all tasted largely the same, according to the website craftbeer.com.

But then things started to change, and the number of breweries has risen like carbonation bubbles foaming to the top of a pint glass. There are now 4,600 breweries and counting, Sullivan said.

"This is the ultimate David and Goliath story that we're seeing play out right now," he said. "And prior to Prohibition, the population of the United States was certainly smaller than it is today. That implies to me that we can support a substantially higher number of breweries per capita."

Barley, hops and more

That sounds good to Don Todd, executive director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Maine Farm Ser-



BDN FILE

Beer is poured at the Bangor Beer Festival in June 2013.

vice Agency in Bangor, a federal agency that gives loans to beginning farmers. Maine's craft beer boom is great for the farming renaissance, he said, and is helping make crops such as barley and hops be more profitable for farmers.

"Beer is a big economic deal for the state and it is growing rapidly," he said. "It's just phenomenal. We're trying to help support the industry and keep it growing, because it just ripples out through the economy. And Maine can support a lot of breweries, because we all like beer."

David Carlson, who owns Three Tides and Marshall Wharf Brewing Co. with his wife, Sarah, agrees with that assessment. When the couple opened Three Tides in 2003, there weren't a lot of local options for Maine breweries.

"We were the 25th brewery in the state," he said. "Now, with the number of breweries out there, I'm not threatened. I don't think other breweries are. We all as a whole support each other. We're friendly competitive. Yes, we are in business and we are competitive, but at the end of the day it's pretty cool to sit down with

a beer and your competitor."

Still, if the growth in microbrews is unchecked, there could be a downside, according to Carlson.

"The industry is not afraid of the growth," he said. "The industry is afraid of people not making good beer and the public reacting to that — and saying it really isn't that good. There can be as many breweries as the market can support, as long as they're making good beer."

Marshall Wharf Brewing Co., known for its strong beers brewed with unusual ingredients that include seaweed, oysters, chile peppers and more, makes about 24,000 gallons of beer per year in a wide variety of drafts. The uniqueness of their products helps to bring in many of the beer tourists that Maine is attracting.

According to Sullivan, all those six-packs are adding up. Beer tourism and beer lovers have helped jumpstart the annual sales of craft beer brewed in Maine from about \$92 million in 2013 to more than \$125 million per year now, he said.

"We have people who come to Maine just to drink

our craft beers," Sullivan said.

Two of the state's newest brewers, Ethan Evangelos and Scott Bendtson of Threshers Brewing Co. in Searsmont, said beer lovers have been finding their way to their tasting room in the Come Spring Business Park since the two opened their doors on July 9.

"I'm pleased with it," Evangelos said. "I think it's just going to get better from here. Every day, more people find their way to us."

He said Maine's skyrocketing growth in craft breweries seems to be all positive.

"People want stuff that's better than you can get at the store," he said.

Sullivan agreed, adding that Maine needs to keep its beer quality high.

"Our goal is to make Maine one of the top three destinations for craft beer in the nation," he said. "The same way people think of beer and Portland, Oregon, I want them to think of Maine. We're in the new golden age here for beer. If you like beer, now is an incredible time to be alive."

ALBUM

Wedding



Michael Trimm
Heather Ajzenman

MILFORD and WOODBURY, NY - Michael Trimm son of Merle and Cindy Trimm of Milford, and Heather Ajzenman, daughter of Morris Ajzenman and the late Sandra Cohen of Woodbury, NY, were married at the summit of Loon Mountain Resort in Lincoln, NH.

Bridesmaids were Rachel Ajzenman and Meghan Hird. Groomsmen were Zachary Ajzenman and Gregory Hird II. Ring bearer was Pearson Hird. Judge Meryl Berkowitz of New York officiated the ceremony. Michael is employed by Cisco Systems, Inc., and Heather is employed by New England Pediatric Services.

The couple will honeymoon in Venice, Italy.

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