

## Summer swelter

The high season is on. Between shots of nitro cold brew, iced tea, and dips in the sea, we continue to close in on our imminent merger as HospitalityMaine. Next week we have a special joint meeting (July 19) to make it official. Please turn out for this historic vote. We. Need. You!

We started the month by saluting the next generation of hospitality stalwarts. Our [34th Scholarship Dinner](#) held at 16 Bay View in Camden recognized deserving youths from across the state. The upbeat evening augers well for the future.

Next we traveled to Sunday River to witness the launch of the ski resort's new [culinary apprenticeship program](#). As our board member Jim Largess says "filling our kitchens with good staff has been a challenge with no relief in sight." Read on about this innovative use of a state-backed job training program.

Lots of member shoutouts in this issue, including DiMillo's chef entering her 20th year.

Stay cool,

*Kathleen Pierce*  
*Director of Member Experience*

## IMPORTANT READ

### HospitalityMaine Final Merger Vote

**Lodging members of the Maine Innkeepers Association and members in all categories of the Maine Restaurant Association are invited to vote on the upcoming merger.**

**Innkeepers have the option of attending the meeting to register their vote, or by returning the proxy card. Restaurant**

Association bylaws require that members must attend the meeting to vote.

The special joint meeting is July 19th at the Senator's Inn in Augusta from 2 to 3 p.m. The sole purpose of this meeting will be to cast your vote. If you did not receive your voting package let us know immediately. Please participate and be part of this historic Maine hospitality event!

### New member Spotlight: Black Elephant Hostel



Nantucket has the White Elephant; Portland has the Black Elephant.

Standing many leagues away from Cape Cod's luxury island, Heather Loeber has created an alternative lodging destination on the peninsula: A modern hostel for the urban traveler.

**Tell us about the building's history?** This was a four-story apartment building from 1890. I fell in love with the India Street neighborhood. It's very walkable. We have bakeries, Amatos, two James Beard award-winning restaurants, the best dive bar ever a block from here called Tomasos, the Portland Food Coop and yoga. It's just an amazing spot! We completely gutted the building and redid it.

**How do hostels change the travel experience?**

Travel is great. It's not so much where you go, but who you are with and the experiences you have. What did you do? As a female solo traveler, I feel hostels are safer. I would rather spend my money on what the city and place I am visiting has to offer, rather than the pillow and mint on it. Hotels have their place, but I like meeting people, and networking is the best part of hosteling.

**What is the difference between a hostel and a hotel?**

A hotel can be very isolating. In a hostel you can put your stuff down, go to the communal space and meet people. We have a WhatsApp space where guests can see who is going on a whale watch. You watch out for each other. Also, we offer free beer at check in if you are 21, so that loosens you up.

**Is opening a hostel something you long thought about?**

I am spontaneous. I have thought about running a hostel before, but was never in a place in my life where I could do that. I changed gears. I kind of did it on a whim. My family was perplexed, they said 'you and hospitality?' There are tons of people that have great ideas and few people take that step. I was in a good position financially. So I went for it. My husband James has been very supportive.

**Why did you join the Maine Innkeepers Association?**

I joined for guidance primarily because I did not major in hospitality, I majored in philosophy and history, which are fairly useless. I spoke to Greg Dugal early on and he gave me good support and was very helpful in navigating the ropes. While I am the only hostel, I am a place of accommodation, so I belong in the Innkeepers Association. I felt like it was the right thing to do.

**Allied member spotlight: Geary Brewing Company**



Alan and Robin LaPoint are the new owners of [Geary Brewing Company](#), originally launched in Portland in 1986.

Stepping in to help the iconic brewery transition to the contemporary beer scene, they gladly embrace the responsibilities that come with this treasured brand.

"We are adding new beers to both the heritage and contemporary lines all the time," said Robin LaPoint.

Geary's newest beers are Brown Ale and Hef'Ah Bier, meanwhile the London Porter and Hampshire Special Ale are as strong as ever.

The Freeport residents have a manufacturing background and are committed to preserving the essence of Geary.

We welcome them into the fold!

### **Is group health insurance in sight?**

Members may have heard that Association Health Plans (AHP) have recently been reinstated by the Federal Department of Labor. These AHP programs were popular prior to implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The National Restaurant Association has created such a plan and we are evaluating how we can implement this or another version for

our members (restaurants and hotels) here in Maine. Stay tuned as there will be more on this soon.

## Twenty years at DiMillo's. What she learned



At 19 she shucked oysters and prepped dessert, but always had her eye on the larger picture: becoming a full-fledged chef.

Now at the helm of one of Maine's largest restaurants, where half a million meals a year are served, chef Melissa Bouchard knows it takes stamina and the ability to "work when other people play."

"We work very, very hard. We are not just sitting back, opening cans and taking tourists money," said the 39 year old, who learned on the job.

Elevated to head chef in 2007, the Eastport native has found her home (and husband) aboard Portland's iconic floating restaurant. "When I started here there weren't many culinarians and the Portland food scene had not picked up." There were two spots - DiMillo's and The Village.

She's turned down celebrity TV slots, passed over afterwork bar hopping invites and keeps her eye on the ball. "I am just a hard worker," said Bouchard, MERA's 2013 chef of the year. "They know they can count on me."

Bouchard's tips from the top:

**DO**

Respect co-workers  
Treat people right  
Be proud of where you work  
Work the line  
Be nice  
Respect food, respect ingredients  
Get lots of sleep  
Give back to the community  
Be humble

**DON'T**

Party hardy  
Strive for celebrity  
Tolerate abuse in the kitchen  
Be wasteful  
Flaunt ego in the kitchen

**More member milestones**

\* Gritty's celebrates 30 years with an epic keg party on July 21 on Wharf Street in Portland. From 12 noon until closing. Everyone's invited!

\* The Waterfront Restaurant in Camden turns 40

\* Sebago Brewing Co. turns 20

\* Five Fifty Five turns 15

**Sunday River apprenticeship program launches**



*Front row, left to right, Sunday River executive chef Steve Learned, Cathy Witherspoon of Boyne Resorts, Sunday River VP of food and beverage Jim Largess, Labor Commissioner John Butera, Central Maine Community College president President Scott Knapp, and in the back is Sunday River president Dana Bullen.*

The concept is earn while you learn. Taking advantage of the long established [Maine Apprenticeship program](#), Sunday River is replenishing its workforce by taking a pre-emptive approach to hiring.

Working with Central Maine and Southern Maine Community Colleges, the Newry resort will pay students a living wage as they earn credits and learn on the job.

"We are adding 10 new employees a year and will end up with some really quality team members," said mountain president Dana Bullen. MERA's board member Jim Largess said the idea was a year in the making.

"It's been a true partnership," said Largess, who is a 35 year restaurant veteran. "I don't think people realize what a rewarding career it can be. Nothing feels better than a successful day in a restaurant."

**Membership meter! See who joined us in the last month**



***Yarmouth's first brewery Brickyard Hollow opened on Main Street in June.***

[Brickyard Hollow Brewing Co.](#)

[BRGR Bar](#)

[SureStay Hotel by Best Western](#)

[Fosters Clambake & Catering](#)

[Castine Cottages](#)

[Geary Brewing Company](#)

[The Captain Swift Inn](#)

**Legislative Lowdown**

**Greg Dugal's e-report puts you in the know**



**The July edition is jam-packed!!**

**ICYMI:**

**Update on 14 and 15 year old hotel workers**

**News state rules on 14 year old buspersons**

**Portland's proposed paid sick leave**

**Camden's short term rental ordinance**

**H2B Worker Visa Update**

**[Read it HERE](#)**

## **Performance Index Statewide**

### **Lodging**

<b>March 2017</b>	<b>\$30,673,000</b>	
<b>March 2018</b>	<b>\$37,477,000</b>	<b>+22.1%</b>
<b>April 2017</b>	<b>\$38,384,000</b>	
<b>April 2018</b>	<b>\$42,312,000</b>	<b>+10.2%</b>
<b>Year to date '17</b>	<b>\$113,860,000</b>	

Year to date '18 \$137,750,000 +20.9%

## Restaurant

March 2017	\$187,657,000	
March 2018	\$200,927,000	+7%
April 2017	\$189,543,000	
April 2018	\$192,965,000	+1.8%
Year to date '17	\$698,379,000	
Year to date '18	\$725,850,000	+3.9

*Source: Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services*

## Media Watch

Portland's new AC Hotel opens this week. [MaineBiz interviews general manager Jeff Lidinsky](#), who worked his way up through the hospitality ranks starting as an intern.

The thirst for craft beer in Maine shows no signs of slaking. Shipyard Brewing [CEO Fred Forsley tells MaineBiz](#) that locals on staycations account for large volume sales.

Our members are crustacean kings! [According to USA Today](#), Five Fifty Five and The Highroller Lobster Co. prepare the tastiest lobster dishes in the state. Congrats for making the Top 10.

## Industry Trends

Will restaurant service become a DIY option in Maine? As rents and labor costs soar in expensive cities, like San Francisco and New York, workers can't afford to live local, prompting restaurants to do without servers, the [New York Times reports](#).

To the relief of restaurant owners here, Maine reinstated the tip credit a year ago. This well written Skift article breaks down [what the tip credit really means for restaurant owners](#).

## EVENTS

Annual Golf Classic - [Registration Now Open!](#)

When: September 5

Where: Spring Meadows in Gray.

To register and/ or sponsor this event [click here](#).

**SAVE THE DATE: Maine Hospitality Summit**

When: Oct. 29 and 30

Location: Cross Insurance Center and Hollywood Casino

[Registration opening soon](#)



| send feedback, tips, and suggestions to  
kathleen@mainerestaurant.com |

STAY CONNECTED:



Maine Restaurant Association is on Instagram, follow us here 