

'Show Us Your Bra!' Supports Cancer Victims (Daily Hampshire Gazette)

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NORTHAMPTON – The weekend benefit at A.P.E. Gallery on the third floor of Thornes Marketplace will not feature the usual canvases hanging on the freshly painted white walls, but rather 171 sculptures of bras.

"Come. Eat, drink, be merry, laugh, and bid on a bra," said Judith Fine, owner of Gazebo, a lingerie store at 14 Center St. in Northampton. Show Us Your Bra!, a benefit for The Breast Form Fund, is back for its fourth year under Fine, the director, and Linda Rosen, the project manager.

The event, to be held tonight from 7 to 9:30 p.m., will auction off the colorful bra interpretations that have been submitted from several states in the Northeast. "I think we all need to laugh a little right now," said Fine as she indicated a nearby bra constructed from a folded American flag, one of a number of patriotic entries. "The Ryder Cup," made entirely of golf tees, and "De-fence," dangerously constructed of barbed wire, are only two examples from the eclectic exhibit. Materials also include ribbon, bird nests and even pearls and sapphires, which adorn a sterling-silver bra by Silverscape Designs of Amherst and Northampton.

Most of the bra sculptures were made by people living in Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden counties. But with the show gaining wider publicity, entries also came from New York, Connecticut, and Maine. Fine said the show has attracted interest from national media, including the "Rosie O'Donnell Show" and CNN, since October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The sculptures were made by 131 artists, including some professionals. Others are as young as 12. Some submitted more than one entry. Prizes will go to the creators of the three entries judged most creative. Local artists Lynn Parsons, Greg Stone and Mary Kasper are judges. "We were hoping against hope for 75 entries," said Rosen, which seemed high compared with the 30 submissions in 1998. She never imagined the event would grow to its current size.

"There is not one of us that doesn't know someone with breast cancer or someone who has been touched by this disease," said Fine. Her husband, Charles Miller, fought and won a battle against cancer, she said. In 1991, after her husband's recovery, she began offering post-mastectomy

bras and prostheses in her lingerie store. With the help of friend Emma Dostal, she founded The Breast Form Fund in 1994 to aid uninsured or underinsured women in need of breast prostheses. It is supported by a percentage of Gazebo's profits as well as the Show Us Your Bra! gala. In its first two years, the event raised money by auctioning the bra sculptures. This year an entry fee to the exhibit is also part of the benefit. Fine secured donations from local businesses for the gallery space, publicity and refreshments so that all proceeds – along with those from the 2002 Show Us Your Bra! calendar – go to The Breast Form Fund. The gala has a \$20 admission fee. There will be a silent auction throughout the evening as well as a breast health information table and live jazz by Miller and his trio. The top three entries will be sold in a live auction at 8 p.m.

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