

Make the Bay Your Bae: From beaching to boarding, get the most out of the water this year

It is gearing up to be another crazy summer in the Ocean State. The millionaires are fighting for free parking spots on Ocean Road, and \$50,000 houses are selling for a couple mil. If you don't own a place by the shore, you certainly won't be able to get one now, unless you are very rich and live in NY or CT (maybe NJ as well).

Be aware that the recent trend among out-of-state, beachfront homeowners is to erect signs saying *Private Road* and *No Beach Access*. There is no such thing as a private road near and around our beaches and coastline. If there is public access to a surf or fishing spot, you have the right to access that beach or coastline.

But we can all afford to take the drive to our state and town beaches, if we pay the man, and can visit them all summer. The best deal is still a state beach pass, which is only \$30 and usable at eight state beaches. Seniors only pay \$15. There is also a new deal called the Flex Pass, which only charges you the daily rate of the beach you visit and allows you to drive through the express entrances. The only drawback is that it requires your credit card to be on file.

There are no more season passes available at state beaches. You must either buy them on the internet or at the state beach kiosk in the Scarborough Beach overflow lot (across from the main beach). Go to lazparking.com to buy passes otherwise.

The toughest beach in New England to lay your blanket down on is the Narragansett Town Beach. It is expensive, very limited in parking spots and crowded. Daily admission is \$12, and parking is \$10 on weekdays and \$15 on weekends and holidays. The problem is that everyone wants to go there because it is where you want to take your selfies. Loaded with surfer wannabes, aspiring Olivia Culpos and an award-winning championship team of lifeguards, what more can you ask for? Call 401-782-0658 for more information or go to narragansettri.com

This is the summer for surf camps, as many of them across the region were filled by the beginning of May. There are camps at Second Beach, First Beach, Little Compton, Matunuck and Narragansett. The most popular camps are at the Narragansett Town Beach, which is probably one of the most ideal beginner surf locations in the world. The shallow sandbars and gentle surf make it very inviting to novice riders. For more information on Narragansett and Matunuck camps, email bicsurf@hotmail.com.

Don't forget that there are skimboard camps at the South Kingstown Town Beach, which is one of the best skimboarding beaches on the east coast due to the depth of the sand bars and slope of the beach. Call the South Kingstown recreation department at 401-789-9301. All information is available on the website: southkingstownri.com.

Summer in RI means that all the young hot talent will be ripping up the waves at the surfing competitions that take place at Second Beach and the Narragansett Town Beach, as well as the

Westerly Town Beach. Sponsored by the largest surfing association in the world, the Eastern Surfing Association, groms (super young surfers) go after trophies, prizes and bragging rights. You can check out the comps and schedule on the ESA South New England Facebook page.

I, along with many others in the paddleboard industry, thought the craze would be long gone 10 years ago. We were very wrong. It is bigger than ever, and the best place in the state to paddle is in the Narrow River in Narragansett. 9 miles long and spilling into the Atlantic Ocean at the base of the exclusive Dunes Club on the Narragansett Town Beach, it offers ideal paddleboard conditions. If you want to try it out, drop by the Narrow River Kayak center, located at 94 Middlebridge Road, call them at 401-789-3334 or go directly to the website to reserve one at narrowriverkayaks.com.

We are all hoping for a long, hot summer with no more variants of the Coronavirus around. See you in the line-up.