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Mayor's message: Gearing up for a busy spring season

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As winter draws to a close, local businesses, cultural organizations and civic groups are gearing up for a busy spring and summer - assuring that there will be plenty of activities here in Warwick for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.

The Warwick Museum of Art, in historic Apponaug Village, has a series of events and an exhibition running through the end of March to celebrate Women's History Month. The museum, housed in an old armory, is also busily preparing for a Centennial Celebration of the building with a weekend of events slated for May. The festivities will also mark the grand reopening of the lower level of the museum, which is undergoing a renovation of classroom and kitchen space, thanks to a \$55,000 grant from the Champlin Foundation.

"On the Water at Clouds Hill" is the theme for the March exhibit at Clouds Hill Victorian House and Museum. Three generations of watercraft will be on display - appropriate for a community boasting 39 miles of coastline and more marina slips and moorings than any other Rhode Island community. Other exhibits this spring include Women and Horses and Children through the 1870s to 1940s. In June, Gardens in Bloom offers visitors the chance to tour the breathtaking gardens on the property and enjoy an outdoor tea hour.

May and June bring the perennially popular Gaspee Days, a series of events to commemorate the 1772 burning of the HMS Gaspee off the shores of Narragansett Bay. A precursor to the Boston Tea Party, the "First Blow for Freedom" is considered the first act of rebellion against the British. An arts and crafts festival runs during Memorial Day weekend, and, June 8 through 10 features a fireworks showcase, road race, Colonial encampments, and the parade and burning of the Gaspee, considered two of the Days' highlights.

As always, our marinas and fresh- and salt-water beaches, together with a handicapped-accessible fishing pier, miles of walking trails, parks, golf courses and horseback riding offer plenty of opportunities for those who love the outdoors.

Warwick's also known for its wide array of restaurants, and we're happy to welcome some new additions - a renovated Shannon View Inn offers American and Irish fare, while Cilantro Mexican Grill, Wasabi Japanese Cuisine and Mizu Japanese Sushi and Steakhouse recently opened. A number of longtime waterfront restaurants, including Iggy's Chowder, the Carousel Grille and Top of the Bay, are gearing up for the spring and summertime crowds as well.

There are a number of fun, family-friendly, affordable places and events to enjoy here in Warwick. I invite you to log onto www.visitwarwickri.com for more information, or call our Tourism, Culture and Development staff at (401) 738-2000, ext. 6202 for assistance.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.

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