

To the residents of Chilmark:

Chilmark beaches weathered dune erosion and winter storms leaving soft stretches of sand in all three locations. Squibnocket (no rocks for the third year in a row) was especially sandy, making it a favorite for families with small children as well as devoted swimmers of all ages. With lots of sunny weather, Menemsha and Lucy Vincent beaches also had a daily flux of residents and tourists.

There were just a few days during the summer of 2005 when strong currents at Lucy Vincent and Squibnocket made for hazardous swimming leaving a significant drop from past years in the need for rescues by beach guards. Chilmark's experienced guards do an outstanding job of warning beachgoers of dangerous rip currents reducing greatly the number of water-related emergencies.

Staff for the three beaches included 20 beach guards, three gate guards, two parking attendants and three Sticker Office employees, all under the supervision of Superintendent Martina Mastromonaco and her assistant, Sloan Hart. Martina was back for the 11th year and Sloan for her second. Senior lifeguard Karyn Pietruska also served as assistant superintendent, filling in when needed.

The Chilmark Beach Department conducts regular rescue drills with the Chilmark Fire Department, Police Department and Rescue Squad as well as the Tri-Town Ambulance and the Red Cross to help its staff maintain and practice rescue skills.

Beach staff reminds residents that the "mail-in" sticker program, which provides pre-registration and payment for beach passes is also available for tenants. Application cards are available at Town Hall. Please provide all documentation and follow all directions on the applications to ensure they can be processed efficiently.

Two more sections of teak boardwalk were added to the path at Lucy Vincent Beach along with a new rescue board. A flag system was initiated to warn beachgoers of surf conditions. Signs at the Lucy Vincent cliffs are often ignored by beachgoers. Please remember that the cliffs are fragile and climbing on them or digging for clay is strictly prohibited. Their instability makes sitting under them hazardous and should be avoided.

As we look ahead to the summer of 2006 we thank the Chilmark Town Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, Rescue Squad and Harbormaster for their assistance and support, as well as the Tri-Town Ambulance for its speedy response to emergencies. Also, Beach Committee members Judy Herman, Leslie Weiss, Arlan Wise, Liz Zane, and Josh Scott who resigned in the fall. Josh's replacement is Ian Fein, who served a number of years as a Chilmark guard.

Respectfully submitted,

Martina Mastromonaco, superintendent

Sloan Hart, assistant superintendent