

News, Apps, Deals, and Gear from New England and Beyond

HERE

WEBSITE FOCUS: MASSACHUSETTS SKI SLOPES
Get info on 12 local ski areas through a website and online planner launched by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. The site provides locations, short descriptions, cool tips, ski conditions, and social media updates for a dozen areas: Berkshire East, Blandford, Blue Hills, Bousquet, Bradford, Catamount, Jiminy Peak, Nashoba Valley, Otis Ridge, Ski Butternut, Ski Ward, and Wachusett. It also lists notable sites nearby that may appeal to nonskiers, from museums to restaurants. <http://massvacation.com/skilocal>



ESCAPE TO THE CAPE THIS FEBRUARY
Spend the school break on a bluff overlooking Cape Cod Bay. The Ocean Edge Resort & Golf Club in Brewster (above and below) hosts special activities Feb. 15-23 with indoor pool programs, a pizza party, and Ping-Pong for kids, and cooking demonstrations, wine and chocolate tastings, and daily fitness classes for parents. The resort also features family movie and karaoke nights, and a Project Runway program during which children can design and showcase their own fashions. Stay in the Britterage Villas, which have living rooms and kitchenettes, or the newly renovated Mansion Wing guest rooms, which offer hotel-style service. One-room villas from \$129 per night; guest rooms from \$195. Mention “February Vacay” when booking. 800-343-6074, www.oceanedge.com



THERE

EUROPEAN CRUISES ENCOURAGE CULTURAL IMMERSION
Crystal Cruises has shortened its Northern European voyages and boosted the number of overnights it offers to give travelers more time for land-based exploration and for learning about local cultures. Starting June 8, the company will offer three new seven-day itineraries and five new 10-day sailings in Scandinavia, the British Isles, and the Baltic region, down from the traditional 11- and 12-day sailings. It will also provide off-ship accommodations at the beginning and end of each trip, and even mid-cruise port stays. Hop aboard the new seven-day cruises out of Dublin or spend two nights in St. Petersburg, mid-cruise. Seven-day cruises start at \$2,885 if booked by Feb. 28. 888-799-4625, www.crystalcruises.com

STAY CONNECTED ON AMERICAN AIRLINES
The new American Airlines Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 planes will offer satellite and air-to-ground Wi-Fi service starting this year. Gogo, which provides in-flight wireless technology on many US airlines, will install both Ku-band satellite service and its new ATG-4 air-to-ground technology on the American planes. That means if you’re traveling from Boston to Mexico City, for instance, you will have no problem getting online during your domestic and international legs. This service is already available on American’s existing MD-80 and Boeing 737, 757, and 767 domestic planes. You will also find Gogo’s in-flight technology on all AirTran, Virgin America, Alaska, and Delta domestic flights, and select Frontier, United, and US Airways flights. www.gogofair.com

NEW YORK TOUR BLENDS HISTORY AND THE MACABRE
Sites of Memory, an unusual new smartphone tour, guides you to locations that played a part in notable disasters, mysteries, and dark events in the history of New York. Visit the site on Manhattan’s Upper West Side where the first recorded motor vehicle fatality in the Western Hemisphere occurred in 1899; see where the 1904 General Slocum steamship disaster happened; or follow in the final footsteps of Mary Rogers, known as the Beautiful Cigar Girl, whose disappearance inspired the first-ever mystery story, Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Mystery of Marie Roget.” Authors Kurt Andersen, Lewis H. Lapham, Angela Riechers, and Luc Sante narrate the free tour, accessible from a computer or from a smartphone as part of an audio-guided walking tour. Works on Apple and Android devices. www.sitesofmemory.com



A POWERFUL TABLET FOR CHILDREN
You may need to use ice cream and jelly bean bribes to get Ematic’s FunTab Pro out of your child’s hands. This 7-inch Android 4.0 child’s tablet has enough power to load programs before little minds wander (thanks to the 1 GHz processor), two cameras for taking photos or capturing videos that can be securely shared with grandparents and other designated folks, and hundreds of fun and educational apps and programs, from catchy “Sesame Street” music videos to painting programs. The best feature: Create a video recording of yourself reading a children’s book, like “Three Little Pigs,” so you can “read” a nighttime story to your munchkin even when you’re on the road. The FunTab Pro has an ergonomic grip for little hands, and comes with a selection of blue, pink, and red faceplates. \$149.99 at Walmart or JR.com. 888-968-1985, www.ematic.us



COMPACT PORTABLE POWER STRIP FOR THE ROAD
Airports, hotels, and cruise ship cabins never seem to have enough power outlets. The compact FlipIt! Portable Power Strip has three surge-protected three-prong outlets — one on the front and one on each side — that provide 612 joules of surge protection, plus two USB charging ports, letting you plug in up to five devices at once. The three-prong plug of this compact power source also folds up, making it easier to pack; the only catch is you need a three-prong wall outlet. The manufacturer’s warranty covers connected devices for up to \$30,000 in damages. \$19.99 at ThinkGeek.com. 888-433-5788, www.thinkgeek.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

Global Entry program lets you quicken reentry at airports

By Paul E. Kandarian
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT
We’ve all been there. Shifting from foot to foot in the customs line at Logan, tired from a long trip, madly trying to fill out the declaration form while hauling bags we regret having taken, and still facing Boston traffic on the way home. I came from Toronto recent-

ly, headed for customs, and turning the corner, saw at least 200 people slogging along in snaky lines. I breezed by them all and within minutes was out the door.
How? Easy. The Global Entry Trusted Traveler Program for a reasonable \$100 gets you fast reentry into the United States for five years at airports

all over the country at practically idiot-proof kiosks that read your fingerprints and face. I made application online in July at www.globalentry.gov, which was the most tedious part of the process. I paid the \$100 online and was told to check the site for interview information. I got that shortly thereafter and was told to show

up in September at the customs office in Logan’s Terminal E. Sitting outside the office in a tiny hallway, I was going to chat up other folks waiting to be interviewed, but they looked too unhappy to engage. Must’ve been all that grumpy-traveler mojo filtering down from the security lines upstairs. I could hear conversation behind the locked customs door, but at least it sounded friendly.
And it was. Once inside, an armed customs official took me into a small office and casually asked me about my travels, where I go, how often. He seemed curious about my travel-writing work, saying his wife loved to travel. I gave him a few tips on where to go.
Then he took my fingerprints on a digital reader, plus a photo, and took me to a mock kiosk to practice. I slapped four fingers of my right hand on the glowing green screen, got recognized as a trusted traveler, and then a customs declaration form popped up.
I joked that just once I’d love to come through customs with \$10,001 in cash — one dollar more than the limit that won’t



REED SAXON/AP/FILIE

A Global Entry kiosk at Los Angeles International Airport.

get you flagged to the IRS in case you’re trying to dodge taxes.
“You’d be surprised how many people come through with cash, mostly the royal Saudi family, with \$100,000 or more — in spending money,” he said.
A huge plus of the program: At a thus-far nearly three dozen US airports, including Logan, you can use TSA PreV at security with participating airlines, which at Logan includes American, Delta, and United. It allows you to skirt the usual Transportation Security Administration demons — taking off shoes, belt, pulling out your

laptop and 3-1-1-compliant bag of toiletries — saving time and a bit of dignity if you have holes in your socks.
My interviewer was quick to warn against infractions, including allowing a non-Global Entry friend to breeze through with you, the penalty for which is revocation of your privileges.
He said they would mail an ID card in a few weeks, but you really don’t need it. On my first use of the program, coming from Toronto, I just found the Global Entry line — where not a single person waited ahead of me. I put my fingers on the screen, and after a few fidgety attempts, guided by a customs official, the machine spit out a receipt with a picture it took of me, which was so bad it made my passport photo look like a glam shot.
Then I walked to customs, where another empty Global Entry line waited, handed in the receipt, and was gone, all within minutes of landing.
And there I was, driving home through Boston traffic that didn’t seem nearly as bad as usual.

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