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Seacoast Sunday

WEEKEND

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Jake Magro, owner of L Street Tavern, and bartender Abby Satrape take a seat on the bar's distinctive stools at the Hampton Beach hangout. DEB CRAM/SEACOASTONLINE

BEST DIVE BARS IN SEACOAST

8 spots loved by locals and worth the trip

Max Sullivan
Portsmouth Herald | USA TODAY NETWORK

Seacoast dining is becoming higher end, but there are still a few holes in the wall for locals to enjoy. Eli Sokorelis estimated there were probably 20 to 30 dive bars in the Portsmouth area when he opened State Street Saloon in 1983. Most are gone, he said, the watering holes replaced with expensive development and fancy restaurants.

"We're becoming dinosaurs," Sokorelis said. "Ask the locals, you know what I mean? And you'll see that they go to three or four, maybe half a dozen establishments in town they can afford."

But a dive bar is more than just cheap. It has a certain character, local dive bar owners say, and certainly is not cookie-cutter or commercial.

"It's not McDonald's, it's not Chili's," said Bill Niland, owner of the Chop Shop in Seabrook. "And it's not a white collar-type of establishment. You don't go there for business meetings."

A dive bar is blue collar, according to Niland, giving a place for "regular folks" to chat and meet. Those places in the Seacoast still have dedicated followings, offering live music, dart leagues, bowling and karaoke.

Here's a look at eight of the Seacoast's popular dive bars that still pack in the locals

State Street Saloon, Portsmouth

The bar on the corner of State and Pleasant streets

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Judge gives Rochester schools deadline to release Azarloza report

Karen Dandurant
Foster's Daily Democrat | USA TODAY NETWORK

ROCHESTER — Strafford County Superior Court Judge Andrew Livernois on Nov. 13 gave the Rochester School District until January to complete a review and redactions to its investigative report on former Superintendent Annie Azarloza.

Azarloza represented herself in court Nov. 13, gain-

ing two small steps in her ongoing efforts to secure the release of the report, which was completed in May. She and the district agreed to part ways in June. Azarloza months ago filed a Right to Know request for the investigative report. Foster's Daily Democrat separately filed its own Right to Know request for the report.

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Portsmouth sets sites on non-residents parking in free city lots

Jeff McMenemy
Portsmouth Herald | USA TODAY NETWORK

PORTSMOUTH — The popularity of the city's free municipal parking lots — with both residents and tourists — has some city councilors thinking it may be time for a change.

As it stands now, people can park for free at the Parrott Avenue lot, the library and the pickleball courts at South Mill Pond.

But the lots often fill up, and that leaves residents who can't find a spot frustrated to see some spaces filled by cars with out-of-state license plates, according to recent interviews with city officials.

City Councilor Andrew Bagley said "it's an issue for sure with the municipal lots being full."

Bagley said he expects to hear at least a verbal update after he and City Councilor Kate Cook asked city staff for a report back on the issue during a previous council meeting.

Cook said she she expects City Manager Karen Conard to share an update on the issue at the Monday, Nov. 17 meeting.

She believes the council will receive a formal report back at its Dec. 8 meeting.

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The South Mill Pond parking lot in Portsmouth has very limited parking, especially now due to spaces taken away due to playground construction. DEB CRAM/SEACOASTONLINE

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