

# Coalition Corner



The Narragansett-URI Coalition's 4/25 meeting reflected a group of committed volunteers whose mission is "building a community of mutual respect." The meeting was attended by residents, URI administrators and town officials, along with a large number of URI students. Much of the meeting focused on improving relationships.

First on the agenda was the announcement of the winners for the "Good Neighbors" contest. (Please see last week's Coalition Corner for names.) The contest, sponsored by Common Ground's Rhode Map to Safety campaign, provided students and residents the opportunity to recognize and show their appreciation of each other for being good neighbors. While we often hear of problems that arise between households, we also hear of the many students who are responsible renters in Narragansett and of residents and students who work to build good relationships. The contest will be held again next year.

Members were informed that an "Informational Workshop Relating to Rentals" is scheduled for Tuesday, May 2nd from 8:30am to 10:30pm at the Town Hall. This is an event sponsored by the Coalition's Realtors/Neighborhood Association subcommittee.

An announcement was made that Applebee's is donating 15% of its sales on April 25, 26 and May 2nd to support the efforts of Rhody Rides. Rhody Rides is a URI student-run safe rides program designed to prevent drinking and driving in Narragansett and the surrounding community.

Subcommittees gave their reports. Of special interest was a report on the outstanding success of the annual URI-Narragansett clean-up, organized with the Bonnet Shores Fire District. As many as 200 students and residents participated in the clean-up of neighborhoods in Bonnet Shores, Eastward Look and Point Judith. A memorial walk sponsored by the fire district for URI students Daniel Donahue, Fandia Shloul, and Geoffrey Wilkes immediately followed the clean-up. University and Narragansett townspeople came together in a moving testament to the increasing sense of community that has grown between the two groups.

Coalition members were asked to submit issues they wanted addressed, and through an extended open forum there was a lively exchange of ideas and concerns. Some residents shared that they are still troubled by neighboring student households. They expressed concern that they would like to see more police intervention. Police Chief Smith and Community Relations Officer Vellone assured the residents that they are trying to develop better relations with the complainants.

URI Student Senate President Neil Cavanaugh encouraged residents not to fear URI students, emphasizing that most students are good people and do not mean harm to anyone. He challenged both students and residents to "open up lines of communication" to help prevent the problems from occurring in the first place. Common Ground pledged to help get the word out to students about living responsibly off-campus.

Coalition moderator and URI student Ben Matone announced that this was his last meeting as moderator. He stated that he has been very impressed that the members of the Coalition are so committed and willing to work to resolve differences.

The next Coalition meeting is May 16th at 7:00pm in the Narragansett Town Hall.

**For more information about the Narragansett-URI Coalition, please e-mail or call Jim Hurton, Communications Subcommittee Chairperson at [jhurton@narragansettri.com](mailto:jhurton@narragansettri.com), 783-7121 or Paula Santos, Coalition Coordinator at [pmsantos@uri.edu](mailto:pmsantos@uri.edu), 874-2583. Please visit our web site at [www.uri.edu/alcohol/coalition](http://www.uri.edu/alcohol/coalition).**