

COALITION CORNER

Profile: Ben Matone, Moderator



It is just about 7:00 pm at the Narragansett Town Hall, and the Narragansett-URI Coalition meeting is about to begin. At the front of the general seating is a panel of active community members, each holding a leadership role on the Coalition. At the center of this panel stands the moderator, ready to call the meeting to order. One might be surprised to learn that this important position is held by a *student* at URI – a junior Finance major named Ben Matone.

Ben Matone, who grew up in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, is happy to be living in Narragansett while in school at URI. His future career plans include investment banking, general financial services or possibly doing finance with a marketing firm. He knows he wants to be active and “avoid sitting at a desk crunching numbers all day.”

On campus Ben is an active figure, serving as a member of University Judicial Board and as the Parliamentarian for the Inter-fraternity Council (IFC). It was through his role as Parliamentarian that he was asked to serve as the moderator for the Coalition during the 2005-2006 academic year. Ben thought that as a URI student and a renter in Narragansett it would be a good idea for him to participate, so he took on this role at the start of the fall semester.

Ben serves as the neutral moderator for the Coalition, which can be challenging at times. He is responsible for running the meetings and ensuring that the meetings progress smoothly. “It is tough because I’m supposed to stay neutral and can’t really offer my opinion. I’m there to make sure everyone has the chance to have his or her voice heard.”

Ben enjoys this role because he likes to hear what is going on around the town of Narragansett and to hear the residents talk about the University. Ben believes that the coalition has made a positive transition by working to create solutions. He says the Coalition has “opened the lines of communication as to what the students can do for their neighbors, what the neighbors can do for the students, and what the police can do.”

According to Ben, the key to continuing the success of the Coalition is to increase student participation. He believes “Some students don’t want to concern themselves because they believe only a small percentage is involved. But everyone is affected in one way or another.”

He would like to see more involvement from other groups on campus. Ben is happy with Greeks’ efforts to get more involved, but thinks other organizations including athletic teams could participate, because every little bit of involvement helps students. “The URI-Narragansett Coalition is a perfect place to use your voice. At the very least you can hear other people speak. You’re not going to learn unless you go, so you should at least attend.”

Ben believes the future of the Coalition is important because the number of off-campus students is increasing. He says, “This is all the more reason for students to get involved in the Coalition. The University and the Coalition are going to have to create a balance between off-campus students and the community. This can be achieved through continued communication and by increasing student involvement.” He would like to see other means of promotions to get students’ attention and increase involvement of students, residents and tavern owners.

When asked why he became involved in the Coalition, Ben remarked, “I enjoy meeting new people and hearing their opinions of the University. You see the regular attendees; they voice their opinions, and there is always something you can learn from.” Ben’s involvement as the moderator of the Coalition has proved to be a rewarding opportunity.

For more information about the Narragansett-URI Coalition, please e-mail or call Jim Hurton, Communications Subcommittee Chairperson at jhurton@narragansettri.com, 783-7121 or Paula Santos, Coalition Coordinator, at pmsantos@uri.edu, 874-2583.

Please visit our website at www.uri.edu/alcohol/coalition.