

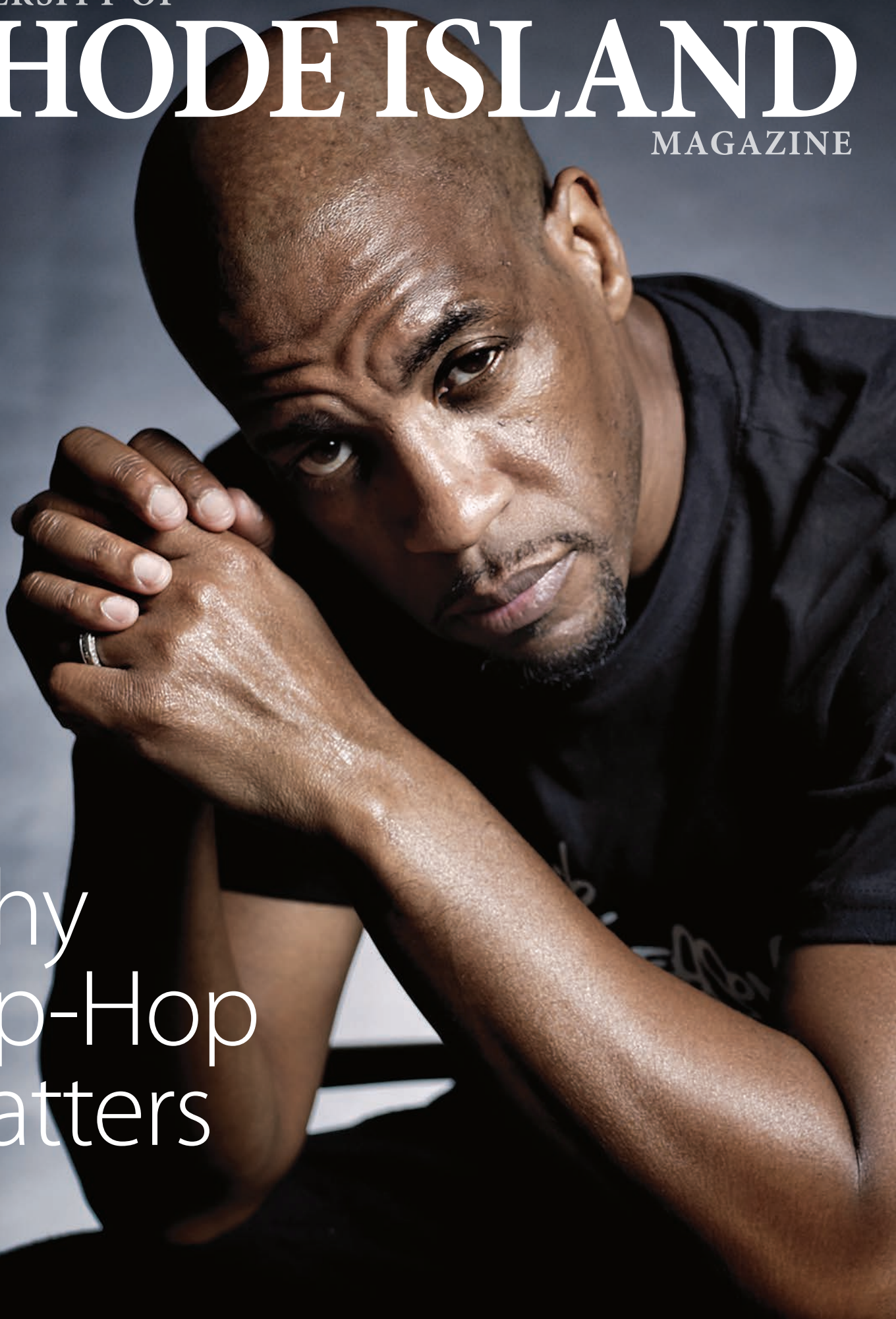
UNIVERSITY OF

RHODE ISLAND

FALL 2018

MAGAZINE

Why
Hip-Hop
Matters



Aperture



“GHOST BERRIES”

by Charlie Scott, M.S. '21

*Honorable Mention, URI Research and
Scholarship Photo Contest*

Juniper berries have always fascinated graduate student Charlie Scott. As a child, Scott mistook them for food. “I learned the hard way that they weren’t,” Scott says. The berries are prized by the Diné (Navajo) people for their spiritual significance. The berries are only gathered once they’ve fallen from the tree. They’re rubbed against rocks to remove the skin and fruit, the seeds are soaked, and holes are bored through them. Once they’re dry, they’re threaded to create necklaces and bracelets. Scott, who lives on the Navajo Nation reservation in Arizona, is studying college student personnel in the Human Development and Family Studies Department and aspires to be president of a tribal college.

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COVER PHOTO: ZOE GOLDSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY
PHOTOS, THIS PAGE: NORA LEWIS; BRIANNA MADIA;
AND COURTESY THUPTEN TENDHAR

Welcome to Your URI Magazine

The new *University of Rhode Island Magazine* brings you a variety of ideas, voices, and images, reflecting the diversity of our community.

AFTER 25 YEARS, QUADANGLES HAS BEEN transformed into the *University of Rhode Island Magazine*. Why a new look and feel for the magazine? In readership surveys last year, you told us you'd like more features, more photos, and more University-focused stories. You wanted alumni, faculty, and students to speak to you through these pages. I know you'll enjoy exploring this inaugural issue.

New sections in the magazine feature those voices of faculty, students, and alumni you asked for. In *Why I Teach*, Bryan Dewsbury explains the intervention system he uses in his first-year biology classes. In *Annotations*, Kyla Duffy '18 shares her insights and photos in a piece about why film photography is relevant in a digital world. In *Ask Our Big Thinkers*, pharmacy professor David Rowley and Kingian nonviolence trainer Thupten Tendhar share expertise you can use now. Our features uncover some true URI treasures, like Duval Clear '88, aka Masta Ace, an icon in the hip-hop industry. These pages reflect the ever-increasing diversity of Rhody Rams from every generation.

Speaking of Rams, our new Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center pays tribute to our mascot with a new statue (left). It opened in time to greet the class of 2022, culled from a record 22,786 applications. Forty-four states, plus Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and 49 nations are represented in the class, which can choose from several new majors, including international studies and diplomacy, and innovation and entrepreneurship. These align with the University's vision to build an international community of scholars in our small corner of Rhode Island. The globalization of URI we imagined a decade ago is a reality today.

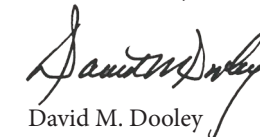
Expanding students' horizons so they truly understand global citizenship is a theme that ties to one of my favorite pieces in the magazine, an essay by International Engineering Program executive director Sigrid Berka. Sigrid explains how learning a new language can teach empathy. She contends, "When we learn a new language, we hold a mirror up to our own culture, allowing us to see it from a different perspective."

The growth of our international programs and cultural competence is not the only evidence of tremendous change at URI. In the last 12 years, nearly \$900 million has been invested in renovating or constructing about 1 million square feet of building space on campus. I am delighted to report that in June the General Assembly approved a \$12 million initial phase of improvements at the Fine Arts Center, so that we can begin needed improvements to our performance spaces and to the building's mechanical systems, roofing, and other structural elements.

What else is in store for the class of 2022, most of whom were born after the millennium? It was fitting for these students, savvy consumers of technology, to help us usher in a new series of events and programs: URI Innovation with Impact 2018. Showcasing the creative and boundary-pushing work of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry partners, the series launched our new academic year with 14 days of events, including the opening of an Artificial Intelligence Lab in the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons.

Just as we thought big about how we could become a global institution of higher learning, so too are we envisioning ways to stay ahead of the next technological breakthrough. I have every confidence the class of 2022 will lead the way. I can't wait to learn what they have to teach us.

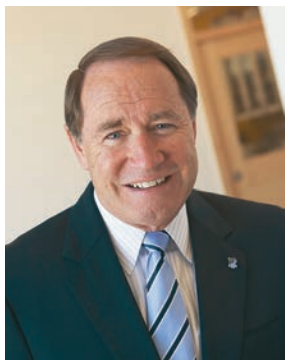
Until next time,



David M. Dooley
President, University of Rhode Island



The new Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center offers a head-turning first impression of URI.



The statue in front of the new Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center was a gift from Joan Libutti and Dan Libutti '63. The bronze sculpture by artist David Spellerberg was given in honor of Daniel Libutti '25 and dedicated to all generations of Rhody Rams.

Feedback

Write to us: urimag@uri.edu

Visit us and comment at uri.edu/magazine

From the Editor

I feel very fortunate to introduce myself to you as the editor of the very first issue of the *University of Rhode Island Magazine*. A product of many months of research, readership surveys, and hard work by the previous editor—my colleague and friend, Pippa Jack—your newly named and redesigned URI magazine will continue to bring you a wide range of stories, news, and interactive content, and will arrive in your mailbox as a slightly longer magazine, three times a year, instead of four. We hope you love the new look and feel of the magazine, and we invite you to share your thoughts about it with us by emailing urimag@uri.edu or commenting at our new website, uri.edu/magazine.

I’ve been part of the URI community as a staff member for almost 15 years, and my connection to URI goes further back than that. I started my college journey taking classes at URI’s College of Continuing Education in Providence in the late 1980s. My mother and both her brothers are URI alumni (classes of 1962, 1954, and 1953), and my grandfather married URI President Howard Edwards’ daughter, Mildred, right here on the Kingston Campus in 1923. Sadly, Mildred died in childbirth the

This photo of my grandfather at his wedding to Mildred Edwards on URI’s Kingston Campus was always a part of my mother’s family photo gallery.



following year. While the Edwards lineage did not extend to my branch of the family tree, URI has played a prominent role in my family history ever since.

The URI community is diverse in every way. We are alumni, staff, faculty, students, parents, legislators, organizations, and businesses. We hail from all walks of life, mindsets, political persuasions, and professions. We are heterogeneous in our race, ethnicity, citizenship, gender identification, language, age, and economic background. We identify with different URI campuses—from Narragansett Bay, to Kingston, to Alton Jones, to Providence—and different colleges, majors, and departments. Our interests range from fashion to pharmacy, science to sports, accounting to aquaculture, civil engineering to civil discourse, and on and on.

These differences define us and make us who we are. Curating stories that will resonate with so many different people is challenging, but it makes this magazine a true pleasure to put together. I learn things I didn’t know, meet people I wouldn’t otherwise meet, and come face to face with new ideas and perspectives.

I hope that in these pages, you, too, will be challenged to reconsider something you thought you had already figured out. I hope you will learn something new. I hope something here will make you smile. And I hope you will share your ideas for what you’d like to see in these pages in coming issues.

— *Barbara Caron, Interim Editor-in-Chief*

= URI ON INSTAGRAM =



Frank and Emma love Rhody women’s soccer, @rhodywsoc, and with these sweet faces, it’s no wonder this story was so popular!



We loved this photo of Davis Hall by @rickyleepotts. And we loved your comments, like this one: “Petition to rename Davis Hall HOGWARTS URI.” Love it!



Sam Silvia ’22 captured this sunset over the Fascitelli Fitness and Wellness Center. It prompted some nostalgic comments, such as “It is always magical in RI,” and, “This makes me miss URI more and more.”



Talent Development, @tdnation86, celebrated 50 years of TD with a gala celebration. Lots of likes and shout-outs on this post! #TDNation

 @universityofri

How Far We've Come

“The Changing Face of Fieldwork” (Spring 2018) presents outstanding examples of how far we have come. Women are serving as chief scientists aboard oceanography vessels in the most rugged and remote reaches of the world.

Such possibilities were a pipe dream 55 years ago when the late Professor Theodore Smayda argued for his female research assistant to be allowed to join one of the early expeditions of the R/V *Trident*, GSO's first deep-sea research vessel. After a lengthy meeting with the dean and the provost, it was decided that inviting a second woman

would make the request possible.

In November 1963, *Trident* left the dock with the assistant aboard, accompanied by GSO librarian par excellence, the late Nancy Coman. It was a wonderful cruise, with a mission to take nutrient and phytoplankton samples from the Sargasso Sea.

Thanks to the vision and tenacity of Professor Smayda, the hatches were opened to women. Oceanography is the richer for it. This fortunate research assistant will never forget.

— *Brenda Boleyn ’61, M.S. ’71
Duxbury, Massachusetts*

Guys Have Stress, Too

I enjoyed the article, “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Stressing” by Marybeth Reilly-McGreen in the Summer 2018 issue. However, surely I was not the only one to note that the author and all six of the professors who contributed to the article’s content were women. On behalf of my fellow male work professionals, let me go on record that guys have perspectives on this topic and can use some counsel on managing work-life stresses, too.

— *Al Potter, Saunderstown, R.I.*



What? No Pet Penguin?

John Visneuski ’70 wrote (in response to the editor’s letter in the Summer 2018 issue) that he was surprised to hear we’d received Research and Scholarship Photo Contest submissions from all seven continents, plus New Zealand. John said, “If that claim is true, I doubtless speak for many alumni in asking why you haven’t yet published an interview with the URI student whose home is Antarctica. Such an interview would be fascinating to say the least.”

His comment gave us a good chuckle as we imagined a profile of our very chilly

(and very lonely) imaginary student from Antarctica. We explained that the submissions were actually from research being done on all seven continents, not from students who live on all seven continents.

John replied, “Thanks for the explanation that the photos, not the submitters of the photos, originate from seven continents. I admit to being a bit disappointed, though, that there is no student on campus with a pet penguin.”

Sorry, John. We’re actually a bit disappointed about that, too.

This photo of a gentoo penguin by David Gleeson ’15, M.O. ’18, was one of a handful of contest photos submitted from research being done in Antarctica.

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= QUAD ANGLES =

Language Lessons

By Sigrid Berka

Learning a new language has obvious practical benefits. But Sigrid Berka explains that the true value of learning a new language is in stepping out of our comfort zones and becoming open to lessons in empathy, culture, and perspective.

LANGUAGE ISN'T SIMPLY A MEANS for communication, it is also a medium through which we understand the world. Wilhelm von Humboldt was one of the first to advance this idea in the early 19th century. Since then, we have come to understand that learning a new language means immersing oneself in a new world view. Thus, the value of learning a new culture through language lies in trying on new identities, expressing ourselves more thoughtfully, and, most importantly, stepping out of our comfort zones. When we learn a new language, we hold a mirror up to our own culture, allowing us to see it from a different perspective.



In 2010, when I took over leadership of URI's International Engineering Program (IEP), I expected to employ expertise from my previous job at a program with a similar mission: to educate global engineers. But what I found here was a unique kind of program—one that integrates languages with engineering. Little did I know then that this five-year program with its mandatory year abroad would allow me to witness truly transformative growth in our students.

At the end of their year abroad, when we ask our students how they have changed, they point out that they have adapted to the lifestyles modeled to them

by people in their host countries: biking to work and recycling in France and Germany; playing soccer and enjoying siestas in Spain; learning to salsa dance in Mexico; and using public transportation in

Europe and Japan to travel extensively. Many adapt to things like living without air conditioning, eating smaller portions, and wasting less food. Many try new things, like bouldering, hiking, biking, singing in a church chorus, or even skydiving! They experience tremendous educational and personal growth while developing cultural empathy—and often changes of personal and political perspectives.

An internship host company in Japan praised an IEP intern because, unlike other U.S. students they had worked with, our student had not simply learned to speak Japanese, but had also learned the Japanese way of communication—he came across as humble, modest, team-oriented, and extremely polite. In exit interviews and reflective essays, our students relate increased levels of independence, responsibility, and altruism. They tell us that the initial feeling of isolation and culture shock they experience in their host countries helps them develop a deeper understanding for what international travelers, immigrants, and refugees face.

Furthermore, in navigating the complexities of learning new communication systems, students are rewiring and plugging in to both the left and right sides of their brains. Learning new languages, especially those with significant linguistic and/or cultural differences from English, such as Chinese and Japanese, develops abstract capabilities that allow students to think more flexibly. For example, IEP (German) alumna Sareh Rajaei '06, fluent in Farsi, English, French, and German, completely switched career paths from engineering to the medical field and is now a practicing vascular surgeon.

My own life is almost equally split between Germany and the United States. Having thus learned to navigate ever-increasing layers and nuances of these and several other cultures, I am happy to share with my students both the challenges and the considerable surprises and joys of living two cultural identities and of seamlessly switching between them. •

Sigrid Berka is executive director of the International Engineering Program and a professor of German.

= WHY I TEACH =

Scientific Method

Bryan Dewsbury
Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences

For students struggling in Bryan Dewsbury's first-year biology classes, the intervention starts before class is over. Dewsbury monitors email while he's teaching—to address students' questions on the spot, sparing them the embarrassment of publicizing their confusion. It's one pillar of Dewsbury's "aggressive early intervention system." He says the key to reducing failure and withdrawal rates in introductory science courses is an inclusive teaching approach that considers students' diverse needs.

The inclusive teaching approach works especially well with minorities who, historically, struggle with STEM disciplines, Dewsbury says. Research supports this, but he has anecdotal evidence, too. As a graduate student in Florida, he taught first-generation college students, gaining an appreciation for their unique challenges. Some challenges, like socioeconomic pressures, were obvious. Others weren't. The students' parents often dictated their career choices; they saw in their children a way to create upward mobility for the whole family—a heavy mantle for a student to bear, Dewsbury notes.

"In my initial semesters as a teaching assistant, I learned the value of teaching someone to believe they can be better than they imagine," says Dewsbury. "This is what propels ordinary people to do great things."

Dewsbury says student success comes from getting to know students and adhering to best practices. He's on to something. Nationally, students in big, introductory math and science courses who struggle often withdraw or receive failing grades, driving them out of intended fields of study. A 2014 *New York Times* article reported that at four-year colleges, "28 percent of students set out as math, engineering, and science majors, but only 16 percent of bachelor's degrees are awarded in those fields." It noted that the University of California, Davis, and the University of Colorado abandoned the lecture model typical of large introductory courses in favor of active learning and in-class group work. The results: improved student performance, sometimes by as much as 50 percent more than students in traditional classes.

In Dewsbury's introductory biology classes, the withdrawal and failure rate has been as low as 6 percent. His URI students, he says, are "a remarkably diverse group in every way possible. The opportunity to facilitate their growth has taught me incredible things about the human experience." •

“What inspires me about teaching is not the dispensation of information; it is the awakening of the soul.”

= ANNOTATIONS =

Falling for Film

By Kyla Duffy

Kyla Duffy '18 shares her ideas about film photography in a digital world. Her film photos illustrate the process of developing film in the Cage, where, as a student worker, she helped other students discover the magic of film.

THE DIGITAL AGE HAS BROUGHT A NEW WAVE of photography. Today, nearly everyone has access to a camera, and photographs can be taken, reviewed, and shared in a matter of seconds. The idea of taking a photo without the ability to review it instantaneously becomes more foreign as technology advances. Even those who remember the days of 35mm cameras and enlargers often see the process as an outdated memory. In an age when everyone sees themselves as photographers, film photography might seem an art form of the past, slowly dying as newer, faster technology takes its place. But at the photo lab in URI's Fine Arts Center, known affectionately as the Cage, the art of film photography is very much alive. For those looking to explore this artistic process, the Cage is equipped with tools for developing and printing black-and-white film, providing students with a portal to the past.

As a former student and a Cage employee, I fell in love with the art of film photography. When I took my first darkroom class, I didn't think I would be able to capture the beauty I sought in my images under the limitations of black-and-white. But as I continued, my appreciation for black-and-white photography blossomed. I began to discover that color was not necessarily the most important factor in creating a remarkable image. Instead, I began exploring contrast, discovering that I could find inspiration in something as simple as the deep richness of a shadow or the subtle glint of a highlight. Working in film has also pushed me to put more thought into every shot I take. Since the average roll of film allows you to capture only 36 photos, every shot is valuable. Without the ability to immediately review my images, I quickly learned the importance of contemplating the composition of a photo before taking the shot. The constraints of film photography forced me to improve my skills as an artist.

While digital photography continues to grow and evolve, the art of film photography should not be forgotten. Even as technology advances, there will always be something magical about standing under the glow of those amber lights and watching a blank piece of paper slowly turn into your very own work of art. And at the URI photo lab, the darkroom will continue to hold magic for those who seek it. •



1 After shooting a roll of film, the first step in developing it is removing the film from the roll and placing it in the developing tank without exposing it to any light. Changing bags like these act as portable darkrooms so your film can be moved without exposure.

5 After the paper is exposed to light for the proper amount of time, you move it into the developer. This is where you see your photo in its positive form for the first time!

2 Once the film is loaded into the developing tank, it must go through a multistage process of exposure to different chemicals and water rinses.

6 Like the film, the paper must be processed through various chemicals before it can be exposed to light. First, a stop bath keeps it from developing further; then it is moved into the fixer, and then to a final wash. Now you have your very own print!

3 After the film is developed and dried, you can catch the first glimpse of your photos in negative form! The artist can view negatives on the light table, and select photos for printing.

7 This is a print I created in the URI photo lab. It is a double exposure, created by sandwiching two negatives together before placing them in the enlarger. Two images overlap to create a unique new image.

4 Now it's time for the darkroom! Once you select a negative, you place it in the enlarger, which enlarges the negative and uses light to expose the image onto light-sensitive paper.

8 Student monitors who work in the Cage assist fellow students with developing film. If you visit the photo lab, check the door for a photo portrait of the on-duty monitor—they're always happy to help you explore the world of film photography!

= GO RHODY =

Engineering for Athletes

URI athletic trainers are working with biomedical engineering students to optimize protective gear, prosthetics, and braces to better support and protect student-athletes.

CAN A KNEE BRACE BE ADJUSTED to provide extra support and help prevent an injury? Can information from helmet sensors help prevent concussions? A research initiative between URI's College of Engineering and the Department of Athletics will give students an opportunity to answer these questions.

Through the National Science Foundation's Broader Impacts diversity initiative, URI athletic trainers are working with biomedical engineering students to optimize the practical impact of protective gear, prosthetics, and braces the students are designing. Students—chosen through a competitive process—interact with doctors, chiropractors, podiatrists, sports psychologists, and nutritionists, while getting hands-on experience in URI's athletic programs. Next summer, the students will present their research findings to the Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society in Berlin, Germany.

Charles Watson '93, assistant director of minority student recruitment and

retention for the College of Engineering, and Andy Llaguno '92, associate athletic director for health and performance, have spent two years developing the pilot program.

"Engineers are learning how to make new grafts for body parts," Llaguno said. "We are providing lab space where students can learn to create protective gear, prosthetics, and braces to better support and protect student-athletes. We will give students a chance to observe surgeries—a great opportunity for them to see how doctors use measurements and angles in replacing limbs and joints." Funding for the initiative will come through the National Science Foundation via URI's 17-year involvement with the Northeast Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation.

A member of URI's back-to-back Yankee Conference Championship basketball teams in 1984 and 1985, Watson's most profound impact at URI has been creating opportunities for minorities in engineering. Since he joined the College of Engineering in 2004, minority

enrollment has more than quadrupled. In 2016, the National Society of Black Engineers honored him as its Minority Engineering Program Director of the Year.

Llaguno—a first-generation college grad whose family came to the United States from Cuba—previously served on the National Athletic Trainers' Association Ethnic Diversity Advisory Committee. "This initiative is going to help URI recruit engineering students," Llaguno said. "It will help the athletic training staff. It will help the doctors who come through the training room. This is a great networking opportunity all around."

"The goal here is to be forward-thinking," Watson said. "As engineers, we want outcomes. With anything we do, we want our students engaged and getting everything they can out of the experiences we provide. This will be a phenomenal initiative, and this is just the start." •

—Shane Donaldson

Charles Watson (center) and Andy Llaguno (right) work with student-athlete (football) Kevin Lawrence '20.



= ASK OUR BIG THINKERS =

PASS THE CRANBERRIES

College of Pharmacy Professor Dave Rowley has researched the beneficial agents found in cranberries, so we asked him to share some of the benefits of eating this traditional holiday food.



Here's why you should pass the cranberries:

- Cranberry consumption has been shown to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Cranberries have long been used to help prevent urinary tract infections.
- Certain cranberry compounds are strong antioxidants.
- And finally, cranberries are a delicious holiday Thanksgiving tradition! Have seconds!

Video at uri.edu/magazine



= GO RHODY =

Courtside

It's Rhody basketball season! Here are a few things you need to know about this year's men's and women's teams.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Head Coach David Cox was named the 20th head coach in program history in April 2018. This is his first season as a Division I head coach.

Rhody heads into the 2018–19 season looking for its third-straight trip to the NCAA Tournament. It would mark just the second time in school history the Rams have accomplished the feat; the last three-year streak was from 1997–99.

Junior guard Jeff Dowtin ranked third in the country last season with a 4.4 assist-to-turnover ratio. For his career, Dowtin averages just one turnover every 26.9 minutes.

The Rams will spend Christmas in Hawaii this season—playing three games in the Hawaiian Airlines Diamond Head Classic from December 22–25.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Redshirt sophomore Davida Dale, who transferred from Syracuse, will play for the Rams this season. The Providence native is projected to be one of the best in-state recruits ever to play for the Rams.

The team spent nine days in Portugal and Spain in August, going 2-1 against international competition.

Rhode Island will host the 2018 Ocean State Tip-Off Tournament December 1–2 at the Ryan Center. All four Division I teams in the state—URI, Brown, Bryant, and Providence—will participate.

The Rams have two active players who have represented their countries in international play. Sophomore Marta Vargas plays for Team Portugal, and redshirt junior Laura Perez plays for the Mexican National Team.

= FAST BREAK =

Smarter in an Instant

It's possible if you put away your phone.

So says Tracy Proulx, Harrington School of Communication and Media senior lecturer. Her course, "COM 321: Social Media and Interpersonal Communication," requires students to examine what effect their social media and technology use has on their perceptions, identities, and relationships. And, in doing so, they just might get better grades.

"The rule in my class is *no phones*," Proulx says. "If a student is even touching a phone, it's one point off of their final average."

Her justification: Researchers have found that a student with a phone on their desk will score lower on an assessment than one who keeps the phone in their backpack.

In the course of the semester, Proulx requires students to analyze their social media use for a week, asking questions such as, "How many days, weeks, years did you waste on Instagram? You can't get that time back. What could you have been doing?"

Students are often aghast at their self-study. "I'm a horrible person," one student told Proulx. "I've been wasting my life."

The Pew Research Center reports that 95 percent of U.S. adults own mobile phones. How much wasted time that adds up to is impossible to say, but knowledge is power, Proulx says. "Use it, but understand it. Don't let it dictate your life."

— Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

= ASK OUR BIG THINKERS =

How to Be at Peace

We asked Thupten Tendhar of URI's Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies to share some expert advice on how to remain present, calm, and peaceful—important during the holiday season, and always.

Thupten Tendhar is a Level II Kingian nonviolence trainer. Born to Tibetan parents, he joined Drepung Loseling Monastery in South India at the age of 12 and studied there for 18 years, earning the respected doctoral level Geshe degree in Buddhist philosophy. He is also a poet and has dedicated his life to promoting compassion for individual and universal peace.

Video at uri.edu/magazine

Be Present.

Cherish the present moment, as it will slip away soon. Do not dwell on any past mistakes or future worries, for they will only burden you with anxiety and more suffering.

Be Open-Minded.

Keep the door to your wonderful mind calm and open to diverse ideas. You can breathe in what you want, and let go of the rest without judging. Judgment brings unwanted conflicts and confrontations.

Be Compassionate.

Practice compassion by treating yourself and others with understanding, kindness, and respect. Everyone deserves to be loved and avoid suffering.

Be Grateful.

Be aware and grateful for the interconnectedness that we benefit from in daily life. Gratitude helps us maintain personal well-being, as well as positive interpersonal relationships. Appreciate time together, and keep it joyful and peaceful.



= CIGAR BOX =

Student Journalism in the Age of Mistrust

By Nick Bush and Lianna Blakeman

ACROSS THE NATION, JOURNALISM IS facing significant threats. According to a 2016 Gallup poll, only 32 percent of Americans had a great deal or a fair amount of trust in the media, down eight points from the previous year. As student journalists, we strive to understand and prepare ourselves for "real-world" journalism, but we must also consider the role of student journalism.

Student newspapers across the country face the threat of losing their impact and relevance to the community. In the age of mistrust, many view the reporting in university newspapers as subpar and lacking important news coverage. But, the *Good Five Cent Cigar*, since its inception, has held that student journalism should not only be a learning experience, but also serve the community. The *Cigar* is fortunate to be in a campus environment where freedom of speech is not only protected but cherished. As a result, we have been able to tackle challenging stories that you might not expect in a student newspaper.

In the first issue of the spring 2018 semester, the headline on the front page of the *Cigar* was, "Former URI student charged with first-degree murder." This was an unusual story for a student newspaper to cover, and it caught students' interest. The papers flew off the shelves, demonstrating there was reader demand for investigative articles. In response, the *Cigar* editorial board felt a growing need to have a dedicated team of skilled reporters to manage these types of articles. Our team of investigative reporters, Cigarlight—a play on the name of the *Boston Globe* Spotlight team—has tackled topics like Student Senate financial regulations and the defunding of one of URI's largest student organizations. They spend hours listening to interviews with students, faculty, and administrators, poring over official documents, and piecing together a cohesive story that the *Cigar* is proud to publish.

We always work diligently toward accurate, high-quality articles, but sometimes we make mistakes. That is what makes student journalism so unique—while we are not professionals in the field, we still strive to hold ourselves up to the highest of professional standards.



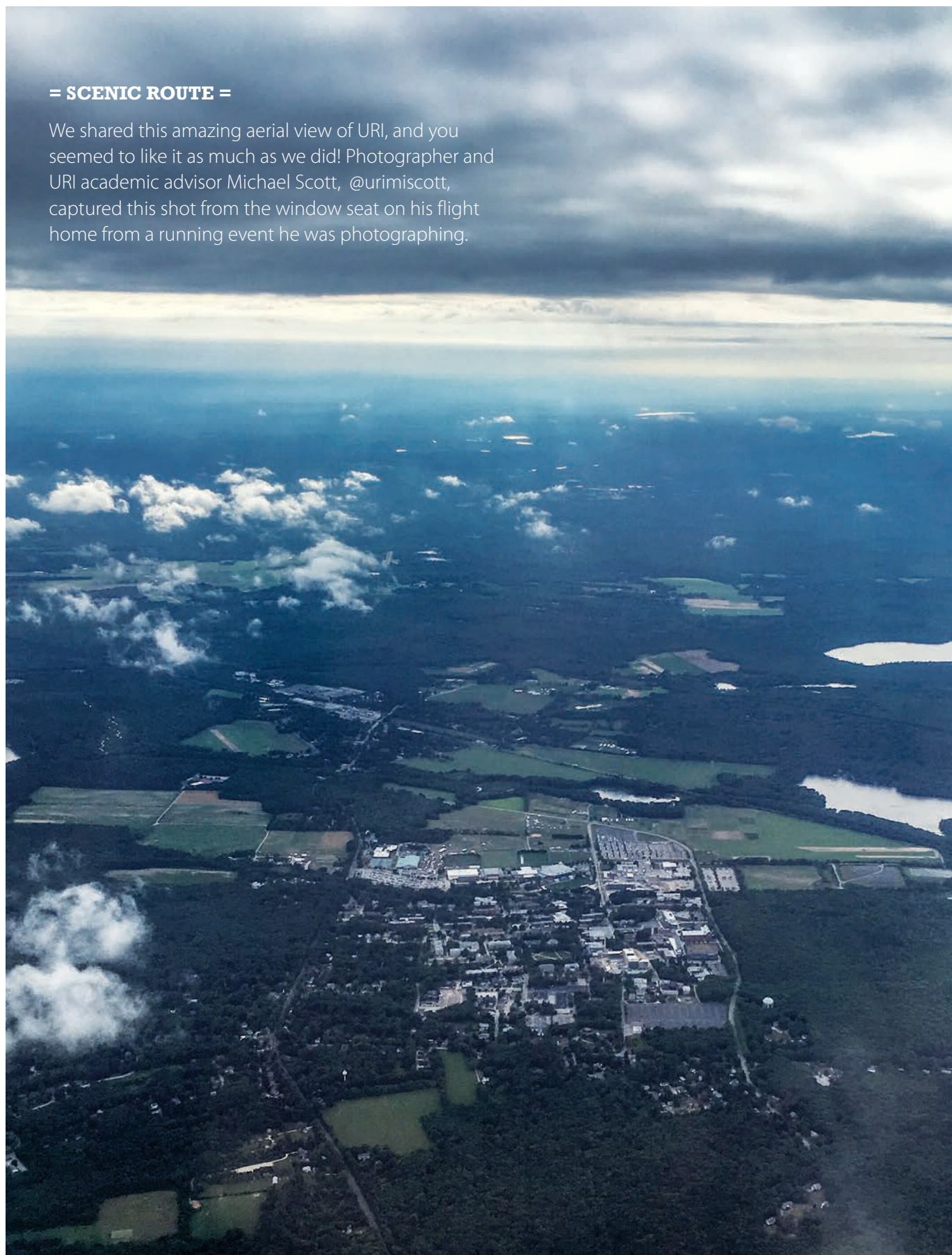
Despite the risk of failing or receiving angry responses, we still choose to do bigger and harder-hitting stories. Yes, it is more difficult and time-consuming, but we believe that our role as journalists demands it. We've seen positive and negative responses to some of these challenging stories, but we are engaging the entire campus community and sparking dialogue on topics that matter, and that's exactly what we, as student journalists, strive for.

The *Cigar* has come a long way since 1971—through many trials and tribulations, highs and lows. But what hasn't changed is that we are still passionate reporters, and we are dedicated to taking the *Cigar* to new places. We hope to fully explore student journalism and, above all, provide a valuable service to the University of Rhode Island community. •

Nick Bush, managing editor emeritus of the *Good Five Cent Cigar*, and Lianna Blakeman, editor-in-chief.

= SCENIC ROUTE =

We shared this amazing aerial view of URI, and you seemed to like it as much as we did! Photographer and URI academic advisor Michael Scott, @urimiscott, captured this shot from the window seat on his flight home from a running event he was photographing.



= RHODE TAKEN =

Getting the Story

ALLIE HERRERA '16

WHEN AN ESTRANGED HUSBAND went on a shooting spree and barricaded himself in an apartment, Allie Herrera '16 raced to the scene as the local CBS reporter. Less than a year after finishing her journalism degree, Herrera earned her stripes that day—interviewing, writing, and delivering the story live.

In an era of digital media, instant gratification, and shrinking newsroom budgets, journalism has been transformed. “You’re a jack-of-all-trades. You’re a Swiss Army knife,” says Herrera, now at the NBC affiliate in Memphis, Tennessee. “I can’t explain how exciting it is to get the story—to get the A slot for the broadcast and have a live shot. It’s an adrenaline rush unlike anything.”

Herrera embodies the 21st century reporter: undertaking—solo—a job that, just a decade ago, fell to a team that included a writer, photographer, webmaster, and producer. It’s the primary reason the University of Rhode Island formed the Harrington School of Communication and Media in 2008 with a \$5 million gift from Richard J. Harrington '73 and his wife, Jean. The school combines communication studies, film/media, journalism, public relations, writing and rhetoric, library and information studies, digital media, and sports media, exposing 1,350 students to a world that no longer operates in silos.

It was in the school’s lab that Herrera learned to edit footage she shot with the school’s cameras. She teamed up with journalism student Marissa Tansino '17 to turn the mock TV studio into a broadcasting center streaming campus news via the internet. She mingled with

the school’s advisory board of industry leaders who served as mentors, friends, and inspiration. Scholarships from the Harrington School and elsewhere helped her balance internships, a teaching assistantship, a job at the Anna Fascitelli Fitness & Wellness Center, and schoolwork.

“If the Harrington School had not made that equipment available, those resources available, I would not have been as prepared to enter my career,” she says. “It prepared students for what we would see in the outside world.”

Those resources will grow with an additional \$3 million commitment in June 2018 from the Harringtons. The gift will fund further renovations of Ranger Hall, which already houses the \$6.8 million Harrington Hub for Global Leadership in Communication and Media, including a video-editing lab, and active learning classrooms.

It’s also where faculty converge to teach, mentor, and conduct research. Herrera credits two in particular—journalism professors Kendall Moore and John Pantalone—with helping her transition from being an aspiring kinesiology major to graduating as a journalism major. “They taught me to be curious,” she says.

And when she graduated, she became just the second person in her family to do so, behind her sister. Born in Peru, Herrera’s parents moved the family to the United States when she was 5 in search of a better life. “My parents still wake up thinking they are in a dream because their daughter is a journalist on TV,” she says. •

—Chris Barrett



RHODE TO A DEGREE

Original Life Goal

Personal trainer in sports medicine.

Revised Life Goal

Multimedia journalist, because “democracy cannot function without people being informed.”

Welcome-to-College Moment

Journalism professor John Pantalone seats 317 students in alphabetical order so he knows who shows and who skips.

Key Turning Point

Kendall Moore’s multimedia journalism class “was the reason I became a TV journalist.”

Mentors

Journalism professors John Pantalone and Kendall Moore. Pantalone “never shut the door on me, even though I had constant questions.” Moore was “a mentor, friend, colleague; you name it.”

Scholarships

Harrington Scholarship, Violet Grace Hellman Endowed Prize in Languages, Erica Knowles Memorial Endowment, Mary Jane Behrends Clark Journalism Scholarship

Internships

WTNH-ABC 8 (Conn.), WJAR-NBC 10 (R.I.), *Rhode Island Monthly*, and more. “URI and the Harrington School have good reputations, which helped me land those internships.”

Landing the Internship

Meeting Josh Aromin '12 from *Rhode Island Monthly* at URI Journalism Day and following up via Twitter.

Leadership Outside the Classroom

Standards chair for Sigma Delta Tau sorority, in charge of ensuring ethical conduct of the sisters.

Degree

B.A. '16, Spanish and journalism, minor in nutrition

= IN BRIEF =



Grasshopper Power

URI environmental science and management major Becky Gumbrewicz '19 has found that grasshoppers are an unexpectedly important player in salt marsh ecosystems, which are threatened by rising seas. Her research findings could help lead to new strategies for salt marsh restoration.



Maple Alternative to Botox

College of Pharmacy professor Navindra Seeram and a team of URI researchers have discovered that compounds in maple leaves show promise for being used in topical alternatives to Botox injections because of their ability to inhibit enzymes that cause skin to wrinkle.



"Study Drugs" Don't Make the Grade

URI professor Lisa Weyandt and Brown University co-investigator Tara White found that, contrary to popular belief across college campuses, prescription ADHD medications used by students who do not have ADHD can hinder, rather than help, academic performance.



= NEWS TICKER =

Warm Welcome

In September, URI opened the Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center to give our 50,000+ visitors per year a warmer welcome.

Smart Degree

URI and Johnson & Wales are collaborating to offer a dual-degree program in pharmacy and physician assistant studies.

Growing Talent

URI's Talent Development Program, which gives underserved Rhode Islanders a chance to earn a university degree, turned 50 this year. The program boasts more than 3,580 graduates who work in nearly every professional field imaginable.

Top-Notch

URI nursing professors Michelle Palmer and Mary Sullivan were recognized by *Rhode Island Monthly* and the Rhode Island State Nurses Association for excellence and leadership in patient care and research.

Sea Change

URI's Graduate School of Oceanography will lead a consortium in operating a new \$125 million research vessel, which will replace the R/V *Endeavor* in 2021.

Better Together

URI's Center for Humanities joined 10 Northeast colleges and universities in a first-of-its-kind humanities consortium to promote public-private collaboration and interdisciplinary programming.

Healthy Change

URI was the first college in the state to join the Campaign to Change Direction, which aims to change the culture of mental health, removing societal stigmas and barriers that prevent people from seeking and getting the care they need.

Get more
news at
today.uri.edu

= BAY AND BEYOND =

All Quiet Undersea

Do the sounds and vibrations from the Block Island wind farm harm the marine life in its vicinity? A URI ocean engineer found the answer is—no.



Block Island wind farm turbines, off the coast of Rhode Island.

"The sound from the wind turbines is just barely detectable underwater," says James H. Miller, URI professor of ocean engineering and an expert on sound propagation in the ocean. "You have to be very close to hear it. As far as we can see, it's having no effect on the environment, and much less than shipping noise."

Miller and a team of specialists from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Marine Acoustics Inc., and others have been monitoring the area periodically since before the wind farm began operation in 2016. To take the measurements, they used hydrophones in the water and geophones—which measure the vibration of the seabed—on the seafloor.

"We listened to a lot of ships, a lot of whales, wind, and fish, but the sound of the turbines was very, very subtle," he says. "We were 50 meters away from the turbine and we could just barely hear some noise at a very low level. And above the water line we just barely heard the swishing of the blades turning."

During the two-week pile-driving stage of construction, however, Miller says the sound was quite loud. Pile driving is the first step in building the support structures for the turbines.

"The wind farm developers know pile driving is loud, so they start with some soft tapping to alert marine life that might be sensitive to the sound," he explains. "Once they realize it's coming, marine life can move away."

The greatest concern from the pile driving is its effect on critically endangered North Atlantic right whales. To minimize the impact during construction, pile driving was prohibited between Nov. 1 and

May 1, when the whales were most likely to be in the area. In addition, trained observers were hired by the developers to watch for whales that had wandered into the construction zone. Pile driving was also restricted to the daytime to facilitate visual detection of whales nearby.

The most surprising result of acoustic monitoring of the wind farm during construction was the intensity of the vibrations felt in the seabed from the pile driving. "The impact on the animals on the seabed is potentially worse than for those in the water column," Miller says. "It may have had an effect on nearby bottom-dwelling organisms like flounder and lobsters, which have a huge economic value in Rhode Island. We're still trying to understand what that effect may be."

"Fish probably can't hear the noise from the turbine operations, but there's no doubt that they could hear the pile driving," he adds. "The levels are high enough that we're concerned."

Miller's acoustic monitoring of the wind farm is part of an effort by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to understand the impact of wind turbine

construction and operations on the environment so future wind farms can be planned appropriately.

The bureau has funded Miller—through Nebraska-based engineering consultants HDR Inc.—to evaluate the sound from wind farm construction and operations at other locations along the East Coast. He will soon deploy his acoustic instruments in the waters off Maryland and Virginia as preparations begin for the first off-shore wind turbines off the Mid-Atlantic Coast.

"Conditions are different there—the seabed is different, the oceanographic conditions

are different, it's warmer there longer—which can impact sound propagation," Miller says. "The seabed there is much more homogenous sand than we have up here, which we think might make the sound levels a little bit louder. It's something we're still trying to understand."

About 1,000 offshore wind turbines have been proposed for installation in the waters from Massachusetts to Georgia in the coming years.

Miller is also part of an HDR team monitoring sound from shipping, oil exploration and production, and other sources in the Gulf of Mexico as part of a separate Bureau of Ocean Energy Management-funded project to describe what he calls "the existing noise soundscape" in the Gulf.

"It's really exciting that we're being asked to do so much of the acoustic monitoring in the oceans around the U.S.," Miller concluded. "We've become the national experts, which has added to Rhode Island's reputation as the Ocean State." •

— Todd McLeish

Why hip hop Matters

Why? Because hip-hop is art. And poetry. And music. And rhetoric. Because hip-hop is political science. And cultural anthropology. And linguistic anthropology. And philosophy. Because hip-hop is business. Big business. Because hip-hop is oral tradition. And zeitgeist. Because hip-hop is life. And death. And, for some, even salvation.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

Derek Lacy '19 raps about **DEATH**

"I LOST MY MOM, LORI, TO CANCER when I was 15. One day my mom complained her back hurt. Next thing, she had a tumor. And then she was dead at 50," he says. "At 18, I was just beginning to understand it. At 19, I started to make music."

For Lacy, now 21, his mother's unintentional legacy is a keen awareness of his mortality and a mad need to succeed as a rapper. "It's made me go all-in. I got a lot of plays on this one song I recorded, so I reached out to [rap star] Mick Jenkins, and he tweeted about it, and it got 10,000 hits. I'm confident. I mean, back pain and life is over?! As bad as it is, death is also a motivating thing."

In his childhood years, the music and lyrics of rappers like Eminem and Mac Miller spoke to Lacy. "I was most interested in the words. Rap validated me. Validated my emotions."

Derek Lacy aspires to a career in rap, and he's eager to get started.

James Haile III, assistant professor of philosophy, uses hip-hop to convey weighty ideas—such as the destruction of thought and the nature of being—to his undergraduate philosophy students.

Lacy says Mac Miller’s mix-tape, *Faces*, kept him going when things went dark. “I can’t even explain how important it was to me. He helped me stay alive.”

Lacy’s desire to make a career of rap and hip-hop led him to study psychology and creative writing; poetry, in particular. “My lane is the prettiest words I can find and the grittiest emotion I can bring,” says Lacy.

News of Mac Miller’s death in September of an apparent drug overdose at the age of 26 left Lacy shocked, but determined as ever to pursue his dream of becoming a rap artist. Miller will be remembered as an artist who had the respect of everyone in the business, Lacy says. “He contributed to the hip-hop culture without stealing from it. I still listen to him every day and what I’ve learned from him is that you’ve got to start early and you don’t need all these connects [sic] to get started,” he says. “He taught me I can do this myself.”

The hip-hop industry generates \$10 billion a year, and its reach extends far beyond music. Hip-hop is a culture with a language and symbols (think graffiti art) and an aesthetic. There are norms and values. There is a mythology and a reality—with the requisite heroes and villains. And increasingly there is recognition of its contributions by the cultural elite. This year, the Smithsonian will release the *Smithsonian Anthology of Hip-Hop and Rap*, comprising nine CDs with 120 tracks and a 300-page book of essays and photographs. In July, the Kennedy Center announced that it would award a special prize to the Tony, Pulitzer, and Grammy award-winning hip-hop musical, *Hamilton*. Last April, hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for music, the first nonclassical or jazz musician to receive the award. Also in 2017, a single painting by graffiti artist Jean-Michel Basquiat sold for \$110.5 million at auction.



Hip-hop is getting to the TRUTH

Need more convincing? The PBS series *Poetry in America* dubbed rap the most popular form of contemporary poetry in the world today. Scholars such as Adam Bradley, author of *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop*, take it further, asserting that rap is the “most widely disseminated poetry in the history of the world.”

In the history of the world. At URI, faculty are introducing critical study of hip-hop to their students through the lenses of philosophy and art. Alumni are making careers in the field, and students like Lacy are finding ways to integrate their love of hip-hop culture into their educations.

Because hip-hop matters, says MC and entrepreneur Theo Martins Jr. ’09. “It’s the driving force of innovation and ideas in popular culture. Hip-hop is solely based on being the first and the freshest, the ‘here’s what’s hot,’ and when you have that as the driving force for your ideology, you are in a constant state of discovery, looking and looking.

“It’s like poetic space exploration,” Martins says.

JAMES HAILE III, ASSISTANT professor of philosophy, has a lot of research interests: continental philosophy (especially aesthetics), philosophy of literature, philosophy of place, Africana philosophy and philosophy of race, the intersection of 20th century American and African-American literature and existentialism, writers Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Jean-Paul Sartre, black aesthetics, and especially the contemporary genre aesthetics of hip-hop. Oh, and Kendrick Lamar.

Haile recently wrote an article on Lamar’s album, *good kid, m.A.A.d city*, for the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* titled, “good kid, m.A.A.d city: Kendrick Lamar’s Auto-ethnographic Method,” in which he argues that the artist “offers a new way of thinking about hip-hop as a whole, not simply as a capitalistic enterprise or as a ‘black news’ channel, but as a distinct method for collecting data and understanding the experiences and existence of black people.”

What artists like Lamar and graffiti art-

ist Basquiat are doing, Haile says, is blowing up an idea and creating from the fragments. Kendrick Lamar takes the West Coast narrative and gives you those elements in different pieces. It sounds chaotic,” Haile says, likening Lamar to Miles Davis.

“The more you listen, the more you understand that Lamar plays around with voice as a way of shifting perspectives. He plays around with cadence like Wright’s *Black Boy*,” Haile says. “Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* is a collection of ideas. Lamar is a collection of ideas.”

In the shattering of ideas, Wright and Lamar are doing the work of philosophers. It is work Haile knows intimately. He is writing a book on Black art to be published by Northwestern University Press. “The history of philosophy is one of blowing stuff up,” Haile says. “But we don’t do that anymore. We don’t say, ‘Let’s blow up the conceptual framework, the idea.’ We fear being out on the ledge alone.” Haile’s book is about the destruction of thought. “It’s a book about Black art, which is, in itself, Black art. It doesn’t read like a straightforward narrative. It’s constantly moving—a moving target.”

So, how does a philosophy professor use popular music to convey such weighty ideas as the destruction of thought or the nature of being to 18-year-olds? He meets them where they live. He talks about the title track of *good kid, m.A.A.d city*: “Sing about me.” He notes that Lamar alters his voice to tell others’ stories in their voices, creating a conversation in which he channels all parts.

“Kendrick Lamar is switching pronouns in a single sentence! Shifting perspective,” Haile says. “Rather than speaking for those who do not have a voice, Lamar blends their voices as his own without subsuming their voice,” Haile writes in “good kid, m.A.A.d city: Kendrick Lamar’s Auto-ethnographic Method.” “When one is listening and hears Lamar, one is also hearing all the other voices that are not his.”

So to study Lamar is to contemplate the very nature of identity?

Haile grins. “Lamar gets us out of the politics of our identities and more to something significantly true.”

Hip-hop is finding a VOICE

HIP-HOP ARTISTS SO REVERE words that they profane them. They add and subtract letters from them at will. They stretch and pull them like gum wound round the finger. They take two words and mash them together. They take one word and split it like an atom. And the fallout is music—and more: insight into the human condition, the outpouring of a soul expressing love, lust, anger, frustration, hatred, unity, pride, virtue, and vice: it’s all there. Hip-hop has been criticized for its misogyny, homophobia, racist lan-



Africa Costarica Smith is a poet and spoken-word artist. “Hip-hop and rap give people a chance to tell their story,” she says.

guage, and glorification of violence. But is it so different from any other art form? Hasn’t the artist always sought to mirror back to society its triumphs and its failures? Hasn’t art always been about giving voice to thought?

Africa Costarica Smith ’18 loves words. She writes a haiku a day as a kind of personal check-in. “I’ll write in my journal, just write out what I see, and then condense it. My parents are house-hunting right now. I wrote a whole thing about a house being condemned. I ended it with “empty of everything being full,” Smith says. “So I’ll start a poem from that line.”

Smith, a spoken-word artist and former member of URI’s Slam Poetry Club,

intends to make a career in university administration. Art is her outlet. “My parents grew up in New York City and Brooklyn,” Smith says. “Music, hip-hop, has always been a part of my family’s life. My dad had a boom box and an Afro and was into freestyling. My parents used music as a connector. There wasn’t a day music wasn’t played in my house.” Smith’s dad has a beat machine. “He’d be riding the rhythm. It got him out of bed in the morning,” Smith says.

Smith, who competed in slam poetry contests at URI, says the allure of rap and hip-hop is its accessibility. Still true to its urban roots, hip-hop is narrative in the tradition of the epic poem, speaking to universal truths, meant for mass consumption. This is the language of youth speaking their truth.

“Hip-hop and rap give people a chance to tell their story,” Smith says. “And the more

woke you are, the harder it is to sleep. The more woke you become, the more aware you are of injustice in the world.”

As an undergraduate, Smith sometimes found herself the only nonwhite person in a classroom. Writing and performing proved a release from the unease she sometimes felt. “Poetry helps me put it all into perspective. Then I can reflect and feel better about things. In the black community, we don’t talk about mental health. Rap and poetry address personal and societal issues,” she says.

“People can find themselves in someone else’s story and not feel so alone in this world.”

Hip-hop is taking a **STAND**

BOB DILWORTH, PROFESSOR OF art, teaches painting, drawing, design, and African-American art history in the Department of Art and Art History, in addition to chairing Africana Studies. Standing amid his larger-than-life paintings in his Providence studio, he says that he considered naming his next show “Black Lives Matter.”

“The idea for this series of paintings, for the new work I’m doing, is to focus on lives affected by shootings and killings of young kids in the streets,” Dilworth says. “There are families affected. We never hear from the moms, the dads, the aunts and uncles. We never hear how they feel.”

Then Dilworth watched a get-out-the-vote ad featuring former first lady Michelle Obama. In it, she exhorted everyone to vote. Not just Democrats, but all people. It moved him. “I thought, how wonderful! Her concern isn’t about black or white or yellow or green. It’s about everyone voting. She saw it on a higher level, and everyone’s

getting the call,” Dilworth says. “It’s a call that we need to stop, take pause.”

“The way the world has to change is through acceptance and through love,” Dilworth says. So now the show’s working title is “Black Love Matters: The Aesthetics of Repair.” “The suggestion is that something needs addressing,” Dilworth says. “We need to create a new space for repairing what’s wrong.”

Art as activism plays well on the grand canvases Dilworth creates using acrylics and spray paint, Sharpie markers and fabric. It’s an involved process. Dilworth photographs and interviews the subjects of his paintings. Then he makes stencils on grids that are reproduced on the canvases. Square by square, his drawing grows until figures tower and a stepladder is needed.

While his is not graffiti art, per se, Dilworth’s paintings echo the energy, movement, and emotion of graffiti art. Standing in front of a painting in its infancy—several life-sized female figures in black outline rendered over Montana Gold acrylic paint—Dilworth ruminates on art’s provocative nature.

“Part of what’s happening is artists of

color have had to create a visual expression of what’s happening in the country today, and how to counteract or address the issue is through art,” he says. “Art has always been a way to comment, to give some expression to what’s going on. Art reflects life, reflects people who are trying to understand a rapidly changing society, a rapidly changing world. And they’re expressing it in novels and poetry and painting and song,” Dilworth says. “Art helps other people to understand what’s going on in their world. Artists can create, through metaphor, a window into what’s going on in the world.”

Teaching students about hip-hop artists like Basquiat, Banksy, and Keith Haring exposes them to the idea that they, too, can contribute a verse. “Basquiat had a unique perspective on life. Basquiat, Romare Bearden—these are the people you study. The ones that have that unique vision,” Dilworth says. “Sometimes it takes someone who’s way out in left field to help us so that we can see the world in the unique way they’re looking at it.”

Bob Dilworth, professor of art, in his Providence studio. He says, “Art has always been a way to comment, to give some expression to what’s going on.”



Hip-hop is taking your **SHOT**

URI ALUMS AND RAPPERS DUVAL

“Masta Ace” Clear ’88 and Sage Francis ’99 stepped into the world of hip-hop after graduation. Both recommend that path, in that order.

“The main reason I went to URI was to get on the radio,” Francis says. “I grew up listening to WRIU’s hip-hop shows, back when DJ Curty Cut had a show. I ended up visiting the station and rapping on it whenever the DJs would allow me to. I became a fixture to the point where I was actually given a show before I was even a student at URI. It was fun as hell and it helped us whip up a legitimate hip-hop scene in Rhode Island.”

Francis is the founder of Strange Famous Records, an independent label he established in 1996 because, according to his website, he decided to stop waiting around for a label to discover him. His advice to up-and-coming college rappers comes in the form of a question: “Why are

you on a campus if you’re an up-and-coming rapper?” His answer and his advice: “You’re not. So have a fallback plan. Get that degree.”

Thirty-year hip-hop veteran Masta Ace offers similar advice. He counsels those who would follow his path to be equal parts artist and pragmatist. “I tell young people that all things are possible. Look within and find that strength, that drive, that desire—and go for it. But make sure music is not your plan A,” he says. “When I was starting out, one in 1,000 made it, got a deal, put a record out. Now, these kids are up against the world. The odds are much worse now. My marketing degree from URI was my plan A.

“You don’t want to wake up at 35, sleeping on your mom’s couch, eating your mom’s food, with a baby here and one on the way,” Ace says. “It’s almost cliché. You don’t want that. Make music your plan B.”

Hip-hop is keeping it **REAL**

POET, ESSAYIST, AND MASTER’S

degree candidate Reza Clifton ’03 is a former WRIU DJ who introduced the campus to female rappers and musicians through the radio show *Voices of Women*. “The reason hip-hop will continue is because it still represents the voice and mood of the culture of the oppressed,” Clifton says. Hip-hop is a genre where you don’t need to have formal music training; you don’t have to be able to play the violin or the piano.

“Hip-hop was conceived of and grew in an underfunded city at a time when cuts to music programs were happening in schools,” Clifton continues. “Hip-hop was like *The Little Engine That Could*—pressing on whether there was funding or not. It is a message of self-determination that underlies the founding of hip-hop.”

DEREK LACY ’19 ALSO RAPS ABOUT

life. He is fully funding his education with an inheritance he got from his grandfather. He’ll be the first of his family to graduate from college. If he could, he’d have his future as a rapper start today. “It’s the streaming age, and rap is a young man’s game,” Lacy says. “I gotta really get myself together here. I just want to make people feel something.” To hear him is to believe he just might. •

Above, left, rapper Duval “Masta Ace” Clear has been making music his way for 30 years. His longevity, artistry, and influence have made him a legend with fans and other artists.

At right, poet, essayist, and DJ Reza Clifton introduced URI to female rappers and musicians through the WRIU radio show *Voices of Women*.



FROM MASTA TO LEGEND

In 40 years, hip-hop has moved from city streets to stadiums, and has made multimillionaires of teenagers. But staying relevant in an industry that worships youth is nearly impossible. Unless you're Duval "Masta Ace" Clear '88, who, 30 years in, is still making music. His way.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen



PHOTO: ZOE GOLDSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Masta Ace performs for a crowd in Stockholm, Sweden, at the outdoor stage of the Lydmar Hotel, with the Royal Palace in the background.

INTRO

“Listen closely, so your attention’s undivided
Many in the past have tried to do what I did.
Just the way I came off then, I’m gonna come off
Stronger and longer, even with the drum off.”

— Marley Marl’s “The Symphony,” Masta Ace

CHRISTMAS BREAK, BROWNSVILLE, Brooklyn, 1985: Duval “Masta Ace” Clear, a marketing major in his junior year at URI, got a call from a friend, Scooter Rockwell. There was a rap contest in Queens. Kids in the neighborhood had entered. “You wanna roll with me?” Rockwell asked Ace.

“No,” Ace said. “It’s Christmas.”

Yvonne Clear, Ace’s mom, heard the exchange. “If you wanna go, go,” she told Ace.

“So I called my boy back,” Ace says. And he went. And, he won, beating 30 other rappers.

It was no surprise to his friend Dwayne “Steady Pace” Jamison, who went with Ace to the contest.

“I had a feeling. He was so smart,” Steady says. “We grew into hip-hop before we got into it. We were full-fledged into it—everything hip-hop. The neighborhood embraced it. We were listening to mixtapes. We were DJing in the projects. We were winning talent shows in school.”

The top prize was recording time in producer Marley Marl’s studio. This was big. Marl could get a kid someplace. Not that Ace was thinking about that. “I wasn’t thinking along the lines of a career. Hip-hop hadn’t spread to other cities and states, really. I thought, ‘If I get to record a demo and that demo gets played on the radio, that’s cool.’ But I returned to URI and focused on school.”

Ace wanted his prize, though, and it took some doing. He’d been calling Marl’s sister to schedule his demo. After nearly four months of phone calls, Marl’s sister started feeling sorry for Ace. “You know what, I’m tired of this,” she told Ace. “Here’s his number.”

“In 1987 Marley played one of my demos on his radio show, *WBLS Rap Attack with MR*

Magic, and the reaction I got from friends in the neighborhood made me want to put an official song out. I was fresh out of college,” Ace says. “My mom was wondering about job interviews, but I thought, ‘Let me just see how this goes.’” Then the big break: Marl put Ace on hip-hop’s most famous posse cut, “The Symphony.” Suddenly Ace was rethinking career choices.

“Guys on the label were getting album deals; an album advance was \$25,000. That was a lot of money to get in one lump sum. My mom was adamant that I start getting job interviews. As far as she could see, I wasn’t doing anything constructive,” Ace recalls. Yvonne laid it down. “She left me a note saying, ‘I want you out by your birthday,’ because I had started neglecting my household duties and chores due to my late nights in the studio and local clubs.”

Ace signed his first deal in November of 1990, got his \$25,000, and moved out before his birthday. He never had to move back. Never looked back, either. Thirty years later, Ace’s occupation is still what it was: recording artist. He has seven solo albums to his credit and five collaboration albums with the groups eMC and Ace and Edo. Critics called his most recent award-winning album, 2016’s *The Falling Season*, one of the top albums of that year. Stratospheric fame and fortune have not been Ace’s fate, but he has the respect and admiration afforded only to the true artist. Recently, musician and actor Donnie Wahlberg gushed via Twitter, “Always humbled when I’m in the presence of real #HipHop #royalty. Much respect to you @mastaace!” Oscar and Grammy award-winning rapper Eminem also counts himself a fan.

Thirty years into a career in a genre dominated by artists 30 years younger, Ace is an anomaly: a musician still making music, a songwriter still relevant to kids barely in their teens. Again, no surprise to Steady.

“My boy cares. About people. Period. And as an artist, he’s consistent. He is thought-provoking and he is knowledgeable about his role in society. He’s never compromised who he is. He stays the course, does things his way,” Steady says. “He doesn’t do what’s popular just because it’s lucrative. There’s not a lot of trustworthy people in this business. To be in it 30 years—he’s managed to build relationships because of his talent and who he is.”

VERSE

“Yeah, I was born son of Yvonne
Brownsville kid that wanna be on
Hit the streets, run and be gone
Outside with a curfew
Got lessons on honesty and virtue
And the people that’ll hurt you.”

— “Son of Yvonne,” title track from the album *MA_DOOM: Son of Yvonne*

SPANNING JUST OVER A MILE, Brownsville, Brooklyn, showed a kid the choices he had. Ace lived in the Howard Houses. Elders like Ace’s nana, Mrs. Clear, the head of her building’s tenant patrol, kept an eye on Ace and his friends. Some of the neighborhood kids could get you into trouble. “They were more rowdy and took risks that got them on the wrong side of the law,” Todd Bristow, another of Ace’s childhood friends, recalls. “The threat was there, but people looked out for one another. Those were good times,” Bristow says.

“Jerry Harper, Ace, Chris, me, and Junior—we were the rat pack of 260 Stone Avenue, Howard Houses. Our building had a tenant patrol and Mrs. Clear was in charge. In the evening, she and the adults would talk and have coffee, play cards, and watch who came into the building.”

And Ace, in particular. An only child, he had his beloved mother, his grandmother, and his uncles keeping tabs, and a couple of known neighborhood bad guys, too. One guy, Smokey, did eight years in prison for murder. It was a case of street justice. Smokey went after someone who’d beaten his brother up. He couldn’t let that stand, even at the risk of doing time. A short, muscular type, a real tough street guy, Smokey was the neighborhood’s Napoleon. “Folks wouldn’t bother Smokey or his brother Larry,” Bristow recalls. “You stayed clear if you didn’t want to end up in any type of trouble. We’ve seen friends do really horrible things to one another, but the bad guys saw something special in Ace. Smokey made sure Ace got to school unharmed.”

Yvonne and Nana Clear were the real tough guys, though. “Duval’s mother, Yvonne, was a



A couple of shots of Ace in his college days at URI. Top, in the WRIU studio, where he spent a lot of time; below, at his graduation.

princess of a lady,” Bristow says. “She loved on everybody. And Mrs. Clear, she was the sweetest person you could meet, but if somebody got out of line—well—you’d see Mrs. Clear and do the straight and narrow. She was that grandmother figure who’s going to make sure everybody’s okay. That was Mrs. Clear,” Bristow says. “She was a woman of impeccable integrity.”

“I think Duval’s family values are at the core of his success, of who he is,” Bristow adds. “He treats people right. He didn’t sell out. His education helped him make good decisions. He’s not caught up in being rich.” Because Ace’s mom worked. Because Ace’s grandmother worked. Because Ace worked—at getting good grades, at football, at college and then, at rapping—when success came his way, he didn’t lose his head, didn’t succumb to greed like so many of his peers, Bristow says. “So many other cats, they were like, ‘I’m getting this money because I’m getting this money,’ and that got them caught up in illegal things. Ace had something wholesome to write about,” Bristow observes. “He started out self-actualized. He reached a sense of self earlier.”

The writing started early. Ace wrote his first poem in the fifth or sixth grade. Nana Clear saved it. “It was closer to rap than a poem,” Ace says. “Still, it was the first thing that she saved of mine, and it was an affirmation to me.” In seventh grade, Ace was asked to write a story on a standardized test. A couple of weeks later, the teacher who graded the tests spoke to Ace’s class about one particular story, praising the author for writing something so elaborate. It was Ace’s story. It was further validation. It was also as natural as breathing for Ace. “I was just doing what we did in the neighborhood. Rapping was like riding skateboards. It was about having a good time.” Ace had a lot of freedom, but he used it wisely. “I was one of those latchkey kids. I was left to my own devices a lot, but I didn’t fall into the negative stuff,” Ace says.

When it came time for college, Ace looked for places where he could play football. URI made the list, and Yvonne made

the argument that Rhode Island was away, yet close enough for Ace to return home for a long weekend. “She didn’t really point me in a certain direction, but going to college was an absolute must. I considered taking a year off, but she said, ‘No, you’ll take a job and not go back.’”

End of discussion.

VERSE

“If I never recorded another song
If I was wrong, and nothing I
spitted was ever strong (No regrets)
If I never perform at another venue
If this genuine love doesn’t
continue (No regrets).”

—“No Regrets,” from *Disposable Arts*

ACE LOOKS AT HIS CAREER IN phases. The first phase, 1988 to 1996, saw the release of three albums, *Take a Look Around* (1990), *SlaughtaHouse* (1993), and *Sittin’ on Chrome* (1995). In 1994, Ace recorded the title track of Spike Lee’s movie *Crooklyn* with MCs Special Ed and Buckshot of Black Moon. “From 1996 to 2000, I didn’t release any music at all. I was at a crossroads,” Ace recalls. “I thought my usefulness in the game had run out. I thought I’d become an executive producer.”

Ace’s misgivings weren’t unfounded. Most rappers have the career longevity of the average Victoria’s Secret model or NFL player. In the 2017 Emmy-nominated hit HBO series *The Defiant Ones*, famed rapper, producer, and billionaire Dr. Dre, 53, scoffs at the idea of releasing another album, calling rap a young man’s game. Ace is the exception. His popularity has been steadily growing since 2000, when he did a tour in Europe, 13 shows. “I couldn’t believe the turnout,” Ace says. “It renewed my energy.”

And commenced a wave of creativity that has resulted in some of Ace’s most critically acclaimed work. In 2001, he released *Disposable Arts*, considered one of

the most important hip-hop albums of that year (and loosely based on Ace’s time at URI). *Long Hot Summer* followed in 2004. In 2012, Ace paid tribute to his beloved mother with *MA_DOOM: Son of Yvonne*, and in 2016, he dropped *The Falling Season*. Taken together, Ace’s work is at once an epic tale of a boy’s life and hip-hop at its best: a commentary on the toll modern society takes on black youth, says Marlon Mussington ’01, fellow URI grad and Ace’s friend since the 1990s.

“Hip-hop matters because it allows a culture of people who may not typically have a voice to speak,” Mussington said. “It speaks to what ails many communities of color. Certainly, it speaks to police brutality. You have an education system that may not be the greatest in communities of color. There’s voter suppression. Drugs.”

The things that put people off hip-hop: the misogyny, the homophobia, the vulgarity—these things must be placed in context, Mussington says. Hip-hop is art’s response to the intolerable.

“I can’t think of any other musical genre out there that’s as radical in its use of language as rap is,” Mussington continued. “It might be hard to hear and people might get too caught up in the language to hear the pain behind it.” You have to pay attention, not just to the words, but to the message and the emotion behind the words.

Artists like Ace, who use their work to call out injustice, are finally getting the recognition they deserve, he says. Kendrick Lamar winning the 2017 Pulitzer and Hamilton winning a Pulitzer, 11 Tony Awards, and the Kennedy Center’s first-ever ensemble award—such honors are long overdue, Mussington says. “I’m excited because I feel as if rap music is now starting to arrive. It’s no longer just BET recognizing our artists,” he says. “And it wasn’t that our music wasn’t good years ago. It just wasn’t getting the respect it deserves.”

Ace’s time has come, too. “Ace is such an important figure in the music industry,” Mussington adds. “He needs to be celebrated. He’s a pure artist.”



Masta Ace with eMC crew members Wordsworth and Stricklin. Longtime collaborators, the group produced albums in 2008 and 2015.

OUTRO

“Man, it took me 15 years to
understand my worth
It was 1988 when Marley
planned my birth
Had to get my feet out of
the sand and surf
Never thought that my rap lines
would expand the earth”

—“Story of Me,” from the album
The Falling Season

NOW 51, ACE JUST RELEASED A NEW album, *A Breukelen Story*, with Canadian-born producer Marco Polo. In addition to his music, he’s also working on a play. Rich Ahee, his business partner since *Disposable Arts*, jokes, “We keep coming up with ways to prolong our careers.”

Ahee calls Ace the exception to the typical hip-hop artist. “He’s a humble, regular guy, a person of ethics and morals. I would say most artists are nice, most artists are talented, and a lot are professional. But it’s rare when you get all that in one person,” Ahee says. “He’s a person you’d invite to

your house for dinner. He’s a person I needed to be friends with.”

Would Ahee call Ace a legend? “Yes. One hundred percent. He’s proven it through the last 30 years,” says Ahee. “There’s been artists who’ve had bigger commercial success than him, but he’s the only one who’s 30 years and seven albums in and doing it consistently. He’s reinvented himself for a whole new generation. His albums are only getting better. He’s one of the few guys who, every time he drops a new record, new fans come on board.”

Ace is humble when it comes to talking of legends.

“The term ‘legend,’ people use it too loosely,” he says. “I’m not able to be comfortable with the term because of the cavalier way people use it. People call artists legends after only two albums. So it’s hard for me to know what that even means these days. But I appreciate anyone who affords me that title.”

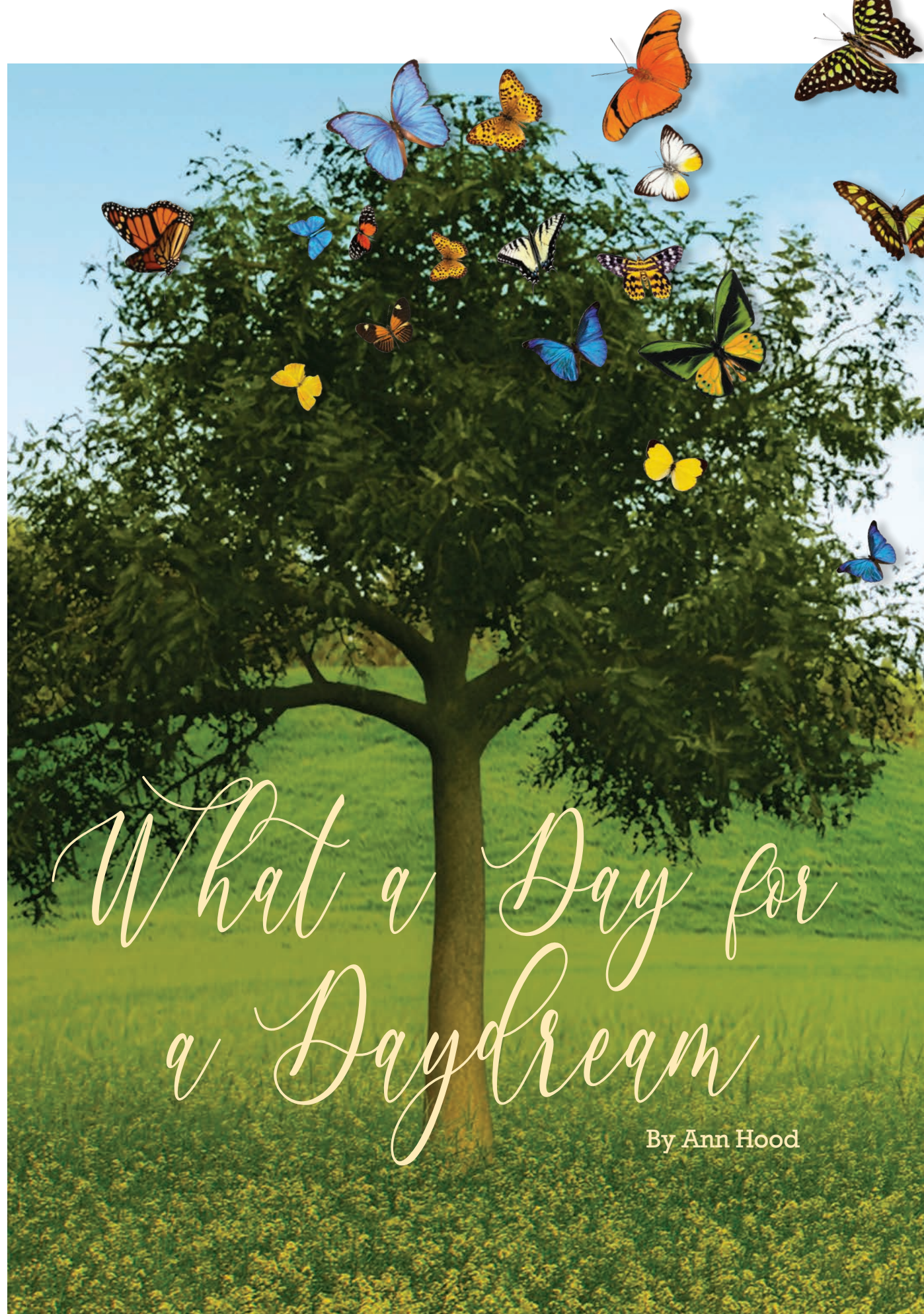
Eminem afforded him the title. The Oscar winner called Ace one of his primary influences in 2003 when he accepted his Grammy for best rap album for *The Eminem Show*. “I didn’t know him at all,” Ace says. “I’d heard rumors he was a big fan. When he said my name in his accep-

tance speech, it threw the world off its axis for me. Most of the names he mentioned in his speech were everyone’s influences, household names.

“It was a cool moment.”

A peak moment for some. But there have been many for Ace. URI being one. “I overcame a lot of obstacles to get to Kingston, R.I., to get to that campus. The fact that I came from the neighborhood I came from, that I made it out of despair—it’s unbelievable I got from there to here somehow.

“Now I’m traveling to Australia and Ireland, Spain and Iceland, Colombia and Brazil,” he said. “To have touched the URI campus was amazing, and then to experience the world, to explore these cultures, to perform for the people there: It’s just the most improbable journey, and the journey continues.” •



Here is what we need to do. All of us. Right now. We need to stare out the window. Or go outside and lie on the grass and look up at the sky.

Perhaps you are rolling your eyes at this suggestion, wondering what good that will do us. Perhaps you have dismissed the idea already and are back to your to-do list or your applications or your phone or your project or any of the myriad things we fill every one of our precious minutes with. But let me tell you what can come of staring out the window. Very early one morning in 1889, a man woke before sunrise and lay in his bed staring out the window. “The sight of the stars,” he wrote in a letter to his brother, “always makes me dream.” That man was Vincent van Gogh, and staring out that window at those stars led him to paint perhaps his most famous painting, *The Starry Night*.



and singing along with the Lovin’ Spoonful on WPRO—*And you can be sure that if you’re feelin’ right, a day-dream will last along into the night*—I had nothing to do but memorize the multiplication tables, read the Nancy Drew books in order, learn all the state capitals, and daydream. This was 1966, long before kids were overscheduled and fast-tracked. I didn’t do after-school activities (actually there weren’t any in my school), play on a traveling sports team, learn an instrument, or get enriched in any way other than through reading and using my imagination.

In high school—West Warwick High School, class of 1974—I acted in school plays and wrote for the newspaper and worked on the yearbook and had a job for Jordan Marsh that required weekly trips to Boston and weekends spent at the Warwick Mall handing out samples of Bonne Belle cosmetics and standing in the department store window in the latest fashions without moving for several hours at a time. As much as I am a fan of daydreaming, I am also a fan of being busy. Daydreaming for a thousand years, as John Sebastian continued in the song “Day-dream,” does not get problems solved or children raised or legal cases settled or books written. About writing her award-winning short stories, Eudora Welty said, “Daydreaming started me on the way.”

It is this perfect balance of working hard, even very hard, and giving ourselves permission to daydream that we all need to strive for. “You know what I worry about?” Judy Blume, author of young-adult novels like *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret* and *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, said. “I worry that kids today don’t have enough time to just sit and daydream.” Even though Freud described daydreams as infantile and a way for us to escape real-life demands and responsibilities, I side with Judy Blume on the debate.

Ann Hood '78 is a New York Times best-selling author of 14 novels, three memoirs, a short story collection, a 10-book series for middle readers, and one young-adult novel.

The sight of the stars

always makes me dream.

—Vincent van Gogh

I arrived at the University of Rhode Island in the fall of 1974, that freshman who had practically run my high school and suddenly found myself one of 10,000 undergraduates living in a coed dorm, confronted with offers of drugs, sex, and acts of daring-do like climbing the tower on Route 138 in the dark, not to mention the slew of 8 a.m. classes followed by hours and hours of no obligations at all. I was 17 years old, and overwhelmed by it all, including having a roommate for the first time in my life. On my second morning at URI, I went to the bathroom at the end of the hall to take a shower. When I looked down, I saw the hairy legs and size-12 feet of the boy taking a shower in the stall next to mine, and I started to cry. It was all too much—Psych 101 with its 100 students in an auditorium, the stack of confusing course syllabi on my desk, the campus map—all of it was too much.

I finished my shower, went back to my room to grab the notebooks I favored back then—purple-lined pages—and practically ran down all four flights of stairs and outside, where I found a patch of grass beneath a tree. I sat down there. I didn't even open my notebook, not right away. I just sat there and lost myself to daydreams. "Unlike any other form of thought," Michael Pollan wrote in *A Place of My Own: The Education of an Amateur Builder*, "daydreaming is its own reward." It was for me that day.

I cannot remember where those daydreams took me, though surely far beyond Barlow dormitory and Psych 101 to some fuzzy future that involved Parisian garrets or glitzy Manhattan literary parties. But what I do remember is that after a little while beneath that tree, I opened my notebook and wrote a very bad poem that I probably thought was brilliant. Then I got up and walked back inside with the strength to face the day.

Although I can't speak for the generations of college students that followed my own, I do know by having raised a son who is now 25 that the challenges facing them are even harder in many ways than the ones I faced in the mid-1970s. And one of the biggest of those challenges is being over-scheduled, with virtually every free minute after school taken up by activities geared toward achieving better grades, higher status, awards and internships, and fancier degrees. According to *USA Today*, studies show that over the last 30 years, children have seen their free time evaporate. They spend half as much time playing outdoors as kids did in the 1980s. And an American Psychological Association survey showed that 1 in 4 teens feels extreme levels of stress during the school year. Some researchers have even suggested that overscheduling and the grow-

ing pressures to succeed have caused a growing empathy gap. "Students entering college after the year 2000 had empathy levels 40 percent lower than students who came before them," Vicki Abels wrote in that 2014 *USA Today* article, "Students Lack School-Life Balance." She adds that a recent study at the University of Colorado found that students with unstructured time are far better at setting and accomplishing goals.

It may sound facile to believe that daydreaming can help counter these negative trends, yet Josh Golin, executive director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, says, "It's important to let kids be a little bored and see what comes out of that boredom." Golin advocates for the ultimate goal of a healthy mix of activity and unscheduled downtime. Alvin Rosenfeld, author of *The Over-Scheduled Child*, agrees. "Enrichment activities add a lot to kids' lives," he told *The New York Times* in 2013. "The problem is we've lost the ability to balance them with downtime." Part of his solution? "Spend time with no goal in mind."

After my own bumpy start to college, which included landing on academic probation after my first semester—a real blow to a straight-A student—I got busy. I won a seat on the Student Senate, became its Tax Committee chairperson, joined a sorority, took advanced Shakespeare classes, wrote notebooks full of bad poetry and short stories, went to plays and museums. But the busier I got, the more I made time for my favorite activity: daydreaming.

As much as I remember with great fondness listening to Dr. Warren Smith passionately discuss *King Lear* and *Othello*, I remember with equal fondness sitting on Narragansett Beach with my pals Kathy and Mary-Ann doing nothing at all. We talked about love and the big futures awaiting us. But we also stretched out on our blanket beneath a warm sun and just listened to the waves, our minds going in different directions, our dreams taking various shapes and journeys. I treasured, too, the long walk alone from Alpha Xi Delta on Fraternity Circle, all the way uphill to Independence Hall, a walk of almost a mile, with just my wandering thoughts for company. By the time I arrived at Dr. Smith's class, I was ready to think and argue and discuss Shakespeare. From there I walked across the Quad to the Ram's Den, where I always found a table of friends to join. How grown-up I felt when I bought a cup of coffee! How nourished I was to sit there for an hour or more deep in conversation. I would have to race off eventually,



to a class or a meeting, fueled by not just intellectual stimulation but by camaraderie and the time to think my own thoughts in the most unstructured way possible—free-floating, free-associating, unconscious, necessary.

In his *New Yorker* article, "The Virtues of Daydreaming," Jonah Lehrer writes about how psychologists and neuroscientists now believe that mind wandering is actually an essential cognitive tool. "It turns out," Lehrer tells us, that when we daydream, "we begin exploring our own associations, contemplating counterfactuals and fictive scenarios that only exist inside our head." And that's good for us. "We think we're wasting time," Lehrer concludes, "but, actually, an intellectual fountain really is spurting."

As I write this, I am in my apartment in Greenwich Village on a warm summer's day. My husband is across the room at his desk working on his new book. I have a lunch meeting in an hour. During that hour I could read my students' papers for an upcoming class. I could revise the new ending of my manuscript, or myriad other tasks and obligations. But instead, I will step outside into that sunshine and meander across town, just me and my thoughts.

What a day for a daydream, indeed! How about you?

Designing for Sea and Stars

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

To design a garment that anticipates the needs of future female explorers of sea and space, Professor Karl Aspelund and his student design team have taken one of the most ubiquitous items in present-day women's fashion and given it a 16th-century upgrade.



Bridget Buxton is the chief science coordinator for the 2019 OceanGate Titanic Survey Expedition, to be held in June 2019.



Karl Aspelund, associate professor in the Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design, led a team that created an alternative suit for the OceanGate expedition.



Maria Vazquez created the pattern for the women's dive suit for the OceanGate expedition.

IMAGINE YOU'RE AN UNDERWATER archaeologist on an eight-hour dive in a submersible headed to the wreck of the *Titanic*. You're sharing a capsule not much bigger than a small SUV—with four other explorers. You can't stand up. You have limited space to move around.

And you need a bathroom.

But there isn't one. And to further complicate things, you are a woman in a zip-front flight suit that requires near-removal to relieve yourself. So, what do you do?

It has happened, it happens, and it will happen again that women scientists' work places them in situations where lack of forethought for their needs puts them in uncomfortable positions, figuratively and literally. Underwater archaeologist Bridget Buxton, associate professor in URI's history department, can attest to it. In oceanography, clothing tends to be male-oriented and military in design. In talking with female researchers who work in extreme environments, as well as women in the Navy, Buxton learned that women who wanted to be accepted as equals didn't complain about less-than-ideal arrangements for female anatomy, periods, hygiene needs, and privacy.

Buxton is the chief science coordinator for the 2019 OceanGate Titanic Survey Expedition, to be held in June 2019. When

asked to submit her "male" size for a submersible dive suit, Buxton proposed an alternative plan for herself and fellow explorer and graduate student Morgan Breene '14. "We just decided to own the fact that we have a different set of needs from our male colleagues and do something about it," Buxton says.

She contacted Karl Aspelund, associate professor in the Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design, and asked him to create an alternative suit. Years earlier, Buxton had attended a lecture Aspelund gave on clothing design for long-distance space flight and been impressed.

"As someone who studies the history and culture of long-distance navigation, I understand that it's not just about the technology," Buxton says. "There has to be a culture and mindset of successful remote distance voyaging: Some cultures and individuals have it, but most don't. Clothing is one of those cultural factors that probably affects us in many ways that are very difficult to quantify, but the consequences are real and significant," Buxton notes.

"Replicating the culture of successful long-distance voyages will be critical to our long-term survival as a species, and this is where humanity's forays into deep space and deep ocean exploration overlap," adds Buxton.

To design a garment equally suited to the ocean's depths and the outer reaches of space, Aspelund and a team of students—Samantha Myette '20, Rowan Talbot-Guerette '18, and Maria Vazquez, M.S. '18, looked back to the 16th century and an innovation in men's fashion at the time: breeches.

Looking backward to move forward

The irony of futuristic travel is that it must, by necessity, model a medieval model of community, Karl Aspelund notes. "A small group of people trying to create a community in a hostile environment: It's a question of economics. It's the idea that somebody's got to peel the potatoes," Aspelund says. "You have to ensure knowledge is not only kept but transmitted—an apprentice-master relationship. There's your social and economic structure.

So the potato peeler is third stand-in for the gardener and is also the physician's apprentice. Welcome to 1310."

These are the thoughts that preoccupy Aspelund, who also serves as a member of the 100 Year Starship research team, a diverse group of experts from across the country dedicated to making travel beyond our solar system possible within 100 years.



“It’s no surprise that the fear of 377 atmospheres of pressure at the site of *Titanic* is a lot less real to most people than anxiety about having to go to the toilet next to four strangers.”

—Bridget Buxton

For Buxton’s garment, Aspelund tapped then-senior Talbot-Guerette, an anthropology and biology major whose capstone project examined women’s biological needs in space travel, and Myette, an anthropology major and the first student to pilot URI’s new design thinking minor. Myette is working on an independent study, planning apparel and textiles for a 900-day mission to Mars.

Talbot-Guerette shared with the professors her capstone research on the challenges and constraints female NASA astronauts have encountered and endured. Though women, being smaller, are more suited to space travel in some respects, technology and clothing developed for space travel have been designed with men in mind, Talbot-Guerette says. She cited a 400-page NASA report on health concerns in space travel, of which only four pages are devoted to gynecological health issues. To make themselves competitive with men, women astronauts have suspended their periods with birth control or undergone hysterectomies, Talbot-Guerette notes. Or they’ve been excluded altogether. Only 11 percent of those who’ve traveled to space have been women, according to NASA records.

Ignoring female health and hygiene issues or prohibiting female crew members from space exploration won’t work too well if colonization elsewhere is the goal, though. Voluntary hysterectomies or suspension of periods with birth control would thwart the mission. So examining hygiene needs and use of hygiene products



Textile conservator and master seamstress Maria Vazquez accepted the challenge of creating a dive suit for women—leggings with the functionality of breeches.

in space—one woman on a three-year space mission, for instance, needs 1,080 tampons, at a cost, adjusted for space travel, of \$146,400—and designing clothing that accommodates those needs becomes essential. In other words, the potato peeler who is also the third stand-in for the gardener and the physician’s apprentice might also need to be the Eve to another crew member’s Adam if colonization is the goal. “We still need to consider what it means to be human in space,” Myette said.

“People don’t want to talk about birth or death in space. It’s still kind of taboo. Humans, we’re really messy. We can’t just work like robots,” Talbot-Guerette says. “We have to factor relationships, emotions, personalities, and cultural differences into the way we create systems.”

And bathroom breaks. Those, too, must be factored in.

Myette, who’s been studying textiles and sustainability since a high school trip to Ghana, hit upon the essential concept: leggings with a skirt overlay, a staple of her mother’s wardrobe. The skirt would act as a shield, ensuring privacy; the leggings, comfort and femininity—all wishlist items for Buxton. But how to keep the garment mostly on in the most private of moments? The team looked to men’s breeches for the answer. The earliest breeches, which replaced men’s hosiery back in the 16th century, have button fronts that allow for bodily functions to be performed without removal of the entire garment.

Outfitting a feminist rebellion

Aspelund emailed textile conservator and master seamstress Vazquez about creating

leggings with the functionality of breeches. Vazquez accepted the challenge, happy to participate in what she termed a “feminist rebellion.”

Vazquez has been sewing for more than a decade. Her mother had sewn her dresses when she was younger but drew the line when Vazquez asked for a quilt. “I wanted that quilt,” Vazquez says, and smiles. She ended up making a 963-triangle birthday quilt for her mom.

For the dive suit, Vazquez looked for a fabric that was comfortable, breathable, and flexible (allowing for bending over without bulking at the waistband).

Vazquez drew upon her knowledge of textiles—she worked in a fabric store for eight years—and her pattern-making skills. “I looked at fiber content. I can tell by touch how things are made and if it will work. The pattern itself—I was completely comfortable with my pattern. Breeches haven’t changed much in 150 years.”

A history buff, equestrian, and cosplayer, Vazquez settled on the design of false-front breeches with a button flap hidden by a panel. “Once I knew how it would work, it was easy,” she says.

Vazquez once constructed seven giant jellyfish for a Mystic Aquarium gala out of 2,000 yards of tulle, fabric, streamers, and lights. So false-front breeches were, indeed, easy. She had them done in a week.

From concept to completed garment was a mere three weeks. “I’m almost a bystander,” Aspelund says. “The students were already in place, and these are women who know what they’re doing. It was a true collaborative effort.

“Textiles and apparel are unlike a lot of disciplines because what you have here is not a single focus. In one department you have people who know how to make things,

you have historians, you have people who understand marketing, merchandising, and promotion,” Aspelund says. “You have anthropologists, designers, conservationists. We’re a world of our own. And with such a diverse crew with short communication lines, things can happen very fast.”

Vazquez’s characterization of the project as a feminist rebellion isn’t that far off the mark. You could say the leggings represent liberation for someone like Buxton, who has been the recipient of more than one ill-fitting suit over the course of her professional life. Added insult: Women’s gear costs more.

“Retailers get away with this because enough women knowingly or unwittingly agree to pay more for the same product, just as women often get paid less for the same job. It’s illogical, but culturally it’s just where we’re at right now,” Buxton says.

Apart from its utility, this modest garment is an innovation that could have big—and beneficial—implications not only for female scientists and researchers but for the advancement of science and society as a whole.

“It’s no surprise that the fear of 377 atmospheres of pressure at the site of *Titanic* is a lot less real to most people than anxiety about having to go to the toilet next to four strangers—and to women in particular, because our cultural experience of public toilets is typically not public in the way male urinals are. So, either we mock and ignore our cultural and gender differences, or we acknowledge and address them,” Buxton says.

“Only the latter course leads to an intelligent utilization of the critical scientific and cultural resources that women represent.”

Vive la révolution. •

Going STRONG

Today, about 10,000 baby boomers are celebrating their 65th birthday. Tomorrow, 10,000 more will turn 65. This trend will continue until 2029, when approximately 18 percent of the U.S. population will be 65 or older, says Phil Clark, professor of gerontology and director of the Rhode Island Geriatric Education Center at URI, citing statistics from the Pew Research Center.

Pew research also tells us that boomers don't define age the way previous generations did—most believe old age starts around the age of 72. And, most say they feel nine years younger than their actual age. Maybe this redefinition—along with plenty of drive, discipline, and talent—is part of what spurs extraordinary alumni athletes Bill Nixon '58 and Diann Uustal '68.



Bill Nixon

By Nicole Maranhas

EVEN ON A GOLF COURSE, Bill Nixon '58 knows how to take things up a notch. Consider the golf cart he customized with old Jaguar parts—from gleaming rims to leaping-cat hood ornament—to use when he hits the links with friends. It's almost as much bling as the stockpile of gold medals—more than 300—the 89-year-old has racked up in national skiing competitions since he first started racing at age 55. He is a former president of the Warwick Country Club, but the slopes will always beckon. “I like the speed, the exhilaration of skiing,” Nixon says.

He never skied when he was younger. As a kid growing up in Cranston, he was more inclined toward pick-up baseball or hockey on Meshanticut Lake. After high school, he took a five-year apprenticeship at Brown & Sharpe, then the country's largest manufacturer of machine tools. “You signed a contract that you would not get married, and you wouldn't drink or smoke,” he says of the tightly run program. By the time Nixon enrolled in URI at age 23, the Korean conflict was underway. He joined the Navy Reserve, then enlisted full time. Still, he managed to finish his

industrial management degree in less than three years upon returning to school—senior class president, no less. Even then, Nixon was someone who knew how to make up for missed time.

He was 30 the first time he tried skiing, invited by friends to join a ski club in North Conway, New Hampshire. He began spending much of his time there on the slopes and in a farmhouse-turned-ski-house that slept 40. “It was a good way to meet people,” says Nixon, although he couldn't help

After seven years he sold the lodge; he had become an impressive force on the slopes—and the president of his ski club was coaxing him to try racing. “I kept saying I was too young,” says Nixon, who figured he'd have a better chance of beating the older guys. By his mid-50's, he gave in and trained for a season. “I started taking lessons because skiing and racing are quite different,” he says. “You don't slide; you have to carve.” At 55, he entered his first NASTAR race (the worldwide National Standard Race

featured on HGTV's *If Walls Could Talk* for being the “crime castle” of Prohibition-era rum runner Carl Rettich. In recognition of his ski racing, he has earned two City Council resolutions and a recent R.I. Senate citation. In addition, the city of Warwick declared November 6, 1991, William “Bill” Nixon day, partly in honor of the ever-growing neighborhood Fourth of July parade celebration he and his wife, Madeline, have hosted for more than 25 years, a community tradition.

He sometimes wonders how far skiing would have taken him if he'd started earlier. “Most Olympic skiers start when they're 5 years old and dedicate their life to it,” Nixon says.

“I always thought maybe if I had started at that age ... you never know.” Memories of a handful of second-place finishes still dog him, especially the win he missed by four-tenths of a second on Colorado's Winter Park Mountain in 2010 after switching out his skis for a new pair right before the race. “I was upset with myself for that,” he says.

The wins are sweeter to remember—especially that very first race, up against skiers who had been competing for decades. Some novices might never have believed they had a chance, but that isn't how Bill Nixon became a champion.

He says, “You always think you're going to win.”

“I like the speed, the exhilaration of skiing.”

noticing the mountain lacked a good cocktail lounge for socializing. Undeterred by lack of experience, he partnered with two ski buddies to open the Alpine Inn motel and restaurant at the base of Cranmore Mountain—a hugely popular venture that quickly became known as the “Alpine Fun Spot.” He taught himself to ski while teaching economics and machine processes at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston. “The [lodge] took off like crazy,” says Nixon. “It got to the point where I never went skiing. I was so busy running the business.”

When he did find time to ski, he was known for his speed.

program for ski racers and snowboarders, held across 100 mountains). In the 45-gate giant slalom, he beat the nine-time Rhode Island champion.

That was 300-something medals ago. “Probably more,” he admits.

Broken ribs. Broken knee, nose. Concussion. The octogenarian doesn't get hung up on his past injuries. “You can't think about getting hurt,” he says. “It's just part of the game.” He focuses instead on keeping in shape (“I ride a bike, go to the gym, things like that”) and mostly attributes his longevity as an athlete to genes, luck, and attitude. It's a winning combo behind a life generally lived in high gear, from his torch-red Corvette Stingray to his house on Warwick Neck, which was

Diann Uustal

By Paul E. Kandarian

IF THERE'S ANYTHING people can learn from Diann Uustal '68, it's resilience. A horrific car crash in 2003 and a brutal fall in 2008 left her with crippling injuries. She has overcome the injuries, but still feels their lingering effects. She thrives nonetheless.

The other thing people can learn from Uustal is how to swim. She lives in a waterfront home in Jamestown, Rhode Island, with her husband of 50 years, Tom Uustal. They met when both were teen lifeguards. Today, she looks out on Narragansett Bay and watches a Coast Guard boat putter past Prudence Island. "I betcha I've taught some of those folks to swim," she laughs.

She's not kidding. Uustal, 72, a lifelong competitive swimmer who was recently—for the third time—named a World Masters Swimmer of the Year, trains at the U.S. Navy pool in Newport, where she also teaches military men and women to swim.

Uustal has 31 Masters world records to her credit, almost too many trophies and titles to count, and in 2016 alone, she established 13 national records and nine new world records in the 70–74 age bracket.

Although she's a lifelong swimmer, she's done a lot of her best work as an older competitor and while recovering from her injuries. In 2003, a woman talking on her cell phone crashed into Uustal's car, leaving her with a severe spinal



injury. In 2008, she slipped on a wet floor in an airport, blowing out a rotator cuff as she tried to break her fall, tearing her hamstring muscle off the bone. In both cases, doctors said she might not walk again, let alone swim competitively. Or at all.

"Success isn't a medal around your neck or a digit on a scoreboard," says Uustal, beaming a bright smile and

flashing blue eyes. "It's whatever it takes to get where you're going and love it. For me, success is being able to accomplish some pretty unusual things in the face of daunting challenges."

She's always taken the unusual route. She's a registered nurse specializing in palliative care, and has been one of the country's top medical ethicists.

In the 1970s, Uustal started a consulting firm, working with hospitals and doctors on difficult end-of-life cases. "I'd been teaching at a national conference at Boston University; someone saw me and said, 'You have no idea how good you are,'" Uustal laughs. "She told me, 'I can put you on a national stage.' So by 1976, I had started my own firm, which was radical—a

nurse starting her own consulting company."

URI kick-started her nursing dream, she says: "It was at URI that I learned to be focused on healing and wellness, even in the face of disease, and to be a healer by being present to people. That's a tall order for young neophytes in college, and I am grateful for the program and nursing professors at URI."

Uustal has long loved to swim, having "chlorine in my blood," she says. This is due hugely to her late grandmother, Ruth Coburn, who was an outstanding open-water swimmer. Uustal, in fact, is working to get

relishing the memory. "When we'd get to the park, she'd bundle me in the sand to get warm, and get a hot dog for herself, hot chocolate for me."

Uustal says the most important lesson she learned from her grandmother was humility. "She'd tell me, 'You will win like a champion and you will lose like a champion,' " though the young girl, and much later, senior citizen, wouldn't lose many meets.

Swimming, Uustal says, gives her a sense of peace and serenity, and a feeling of "re-creation of body, mind, and spirit; I'm more at home in the

water than on land. I'm passionate about swimming and I love the camaraderie and challenging

myself in competition."

But she was forced to sit out Nationals and Pan American games this past summer because she was diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, which Uustal dryly terms, "a really crappy syndrome." "I'm heartbroken," she says. "I should be out there breaking the records I set last year and the year before." Her doctors say it's career-ending. "I'm not trying to defy the diagnosis," says Uustal, "Just the verdict. I love the sport part of my life."

She knows this may be the toughest setback yet. But, she says, those blue eyes flashing bright at the thought, "You can emerge like a phoenix, and a lot of my friends have called me that. 'I don't feel like one now, but,' " she smiles, "I will. I just need another chance to test my wings." •

"I'm more at home in the water than on land."

her grandmother inducted into the Rhode Island Aquatic Hall of Fame at URI's Tootell Aquatic Center because she competed her entire life, which was a radical achievement for a woman of her time. Coburn won her last trophy, Uustal says proudly, "on the day I won my first. She took me everywhere I needed to be as a kid, and hers was always the last voice I heard before the starting gun went off. She's my heroine."

And she was a tough coach: She'd take little Diann to the beach on a small lake in Apponaug, in Warwick, Rhode Island, where she'd connect herself to her granddaughter with a small belt, and together they'd swim to Goddard State Park. "She always had a small raft with us and would say 'When you get tired, you can hang onto the raft, but there's nothing free in life, you gotta keep kicking,'" Uustal says,

5 Good Reasons to Get Up and Get Moving

Deb Riebe, professor of kinesiology and associate dean of URI's College of Health Sciences, says everyone can enhance their health and well-being through physical activity. Riebe and Phil Clark, professor of gerontology, offer these really good reasons to get and stay active:



IMPROVE YOUR MOOD

Exercising can help with many of the things adult populations struggle with. Besides the oft-cited physical benefits of exercise, such as combatting obesity, exercise has been shown to decrease anxiety and improve mood. And, if you do something with a social component, such as taking an exercise class, or walking with friends, it can help combat loneliness.



RECOVER FASTER

If you exercise, you may be able to recover from injuries and other health setbacks faster than those who don't exercise.



EXPERIENCE POSITIVE SIDE EFFECTS

Exercise is good all-around medicine. Unlike pharmaceuticals, which usually positively affect one body system, but often have negative consequences or side effects on other body systems, exercise has positive effects across the board—to your physical health, mental health, and cognitive functioning.



SLOW THE AGING PROCESS

Aging is inevitable, but research has shown that exercise can slow the trajectory of physical decline.



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Aging is a lifelong process. No matter your age, get active now. Exercising early in life sets you up for more successful aging, but it's never too late. **Start now.**

Riebe and Clark suggest talking with your doctor before beginning an exercise routine, especially if you haven't been physically active.

Network

= CLASS NOTES =

= 1958 =

Bill Nixon fondly remembers the class of 1958 gift to URI, *Rameses I*. The beloved sculpture is located in front of the Memorial Union, and is joined this year by another ram statue, which graces the front of the new Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center.

► Read about skier **Bill Nixon** on page 43.

= 1968 =

Thank you class of 1968!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended the 50th reunion events and participated in the reunion giving campaign. And special thanks to the 1968 reunion committee for their efforts in planning a festive weekend and a successful giving initiative. Members of the class rallied together to raise more than



\$392,000 to support URI students and programs!

► Swimmer **Diann Uustal** is profiled on page 44.

= 1969 =

Bill Simonson reports that the class of 1969 50th reunion committee continues to plan a memorable event to be held

May 17–19, 2019, so hold those dates! Friday events will include a tour of the Narragansett Bay Campus, and formal presentation of the class gift to President David M. Dooley. Saturday will start with breakfast on campus, a campus tour highlighting some of URI's fantastic new buildings, catered lunch at Butterfield Hall dining room, presentations by nationally and internationally renowned URI faculty, a lobster dinner, plenty of time to meet and socialize with fellow classmates, and of course, '60s music! It will be a fantastic event! On Sunday, we will have brunch with the option of leading the procession of the 2019 URI graduation ceremony! If you would like to serve on the reunion committee or just help with reunion activities, please contact Bill Simonson at wsimonsonpharmd@gmail.com

or Sarah Bordeleau, assistant director, URI Alumni Relations, at sbordeleau@uri.edu.

= 1972 =

Paul Rollins wrote *The Broken Giraffe* with illustrations done from his own photographs.

Lismary Perez '17 was the illustrator for this book. Paul writes: "In 2016 I was fortunate enough to go to Africa on safari and it was even more than I expected, life-changing actually, and I wanted to somehow encourage others, especially young people, to help protect these magnificent animals, that are under tremendous pressure, for future generations like their own."

= 1978 =

► Don't miss "What a Day for a Daydream," an essay by *New York Times* best-selling author **Ann Hood**. Page 34.

= 1981 =

Barbara Haynes of Riverside, R.I., has been named the new executive director of McAuley Ministries. Barbara comes to McAuley Ministries after most recently serving as the interim president of St. Mary Academy–Bay View. From 2003–2015, she was the vice president, market manager for Cumulus Media Providence, where she managed all aspects of operations for radio stations 630 WPRO AM, 92 PRO-FM, Lite Rock 105, HOT 106, and WPRV.



= 1982 =

Stephen A. Nisbet, former Ram basketball player, recently retired as president of Otterbox. Before his position as president, Steve was managing director (CEO) of Otterbox, Asia, headquartered in Hong Kong.

= 1985 =

Joe Hart has retired from the North Kingstown Police Department after 30 years of dedicated service as the patrol commander for the Uniform Division.

= 1988 =

► Read about the remarkable life and career of rapper **Duval "Masta Ace" Clear**. Page 28.

Kenneth MacDonald is happy to be back on the beach in Hull, Mass., thanks to a new four-wheel drive Cajun Commando chair from Cajun Mobility, which makes the sandy terrain accessible.

= 1989 =

Mark Moitoza defended his doctoral dissertation, *Fresh Courage for Moral Injury: Sacramental Healing with Returning Veterans*, at La Salle University on May 2, 2018. Mark received a Doctor of Theology degree on May 18, 2018. He serves as the vice chancellor for evangelization with the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, in Washington, D.C.

= 1991 =

Elisa Mazzaferro, M.S. '93, received the Ira M. Zaslow Distinguished Service Award from the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS).

= 1992 =

► **Andy Llaguno** is featured in "Engineering for Athletes." Page 12.

= 1993 =

Mark W. Hubert, PE, LEED AP-BD&C, CxA, is branch/project manager at Custom Engineering Inc. in St. Louis, Missouri.



Kenneth MacDonald '88 with his new four-wheel drive Cajun Commando chair.

WEDDINGS



Jennifer Nussinow '08 to William Tasker on April 21, 2018



Marissa Muscillo '11 to **Colin O'Dell '10** on June 23, 2018

► Read about **Charles Watson** in "Engineering for Athletes" on page 12.

= 1998 =

► CNN reporter **Darran Simon** is featured in a Field Notes career profile on page 53.

= 1999 =

► Rapper and founder of Strange Famous Records, **Sage Francis**, has some words of wisdom for up-and-coming rappers. Page 26.

= 2001 =

Zachary J. Budman produced ESPN's SC Featured "Rod Carew," which received the 2018 Edward R. Murrow Award–National for television feature reporting.

= 2006 =

► **Michael Shawver** co-edited the blockbuster film, *Black Panther*. Page 49.

= 2009 =

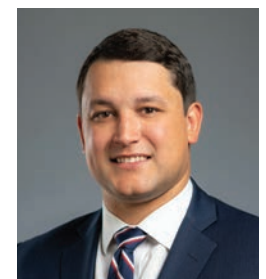
► MC and entrepreneur **Theo Martins** shares his insights in "Why Hip-Hop Matters." Page 22.



Mark Moitoza '89



Ashley O'Shea M.B.A. '11
(See class note, page 48)



Matthew Phillips '13
(See class note, page 48)



RHODY RAMBLERS

Bruce Zimmerman '51 shared this fun flashback photo. In it, members of Alpha Epsilon Pi head to Philadelphia in the Gilman family car for a football game in 1950. Left to right: George Handler '51; Jay Halpert '52; Bruce Zimmerman '51; the late Norman "Cookie" Solish '51; Marshall Rakusin '51; and Lenny Gilman '51.

PHOTO: COURTESY BRUCE ZIMMERMAN

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

BIRTHS



Jessica (Moran) Dunn '03, M.S. '06 and Michael Dunn, M.S. '06, Ph.D. '10 welcomed daughter Sawyer O'Neill Dunn on February 19, 2018; she joins brother Jameson Brennan Dunn.



Jennifer (Corvese) Hyde '06 and Tyler Hyde '15 welcomed daughter Anneliese Camilla Hyde on November 2, 2017; she joins older brother Harrison, 3.



Lindsey Viveiros Henry '08 and Mason Henry '07 of Narragansett, R.I., welcomed their baby boy Collin David Henry on July 22, 2018.



Janna Tyrrell '08 and Matthew Tyrrell '06 welcomed a daughter, Alessandra Gia. She joins big sister Lucianna.



Jacquelyn Erb '13 and Kevin Fanning '13 welcomed baby girl Cara Fanning on March 20, 2018.

= 2011 =

► Read about writer, adventurer, and social media celeb **Brianna Madia**. Page 52.

David Lieng, CPA, was promoted to supervisor at the accounting firm of Sansiveri, Kimball & Co., LLP. David will manage audits, reviews, and compilation engagements. He also will provide consulting services to clients in industries including manufacturing and distribution, construction, and professional services. He will supervise the audit of employee benefit plans including 401(k), 403(b), defined benefit pension plans, and employee stock ownership plans of various privately held businesses.

► Check out **Sam Morrissey's** photos on the back cover of the magazine and at endeavorstudio.com.

Joshua Thompson participated in Miami University's Earth Expeditions global field course in Borneo over the summer of 2018.

Ashley O'Shea, M.B.A. '11, was recently named director of community investments at the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

= 2012 =

Marissa Norman completed her doctorate in clinical psychology at William James College and is currently on the sports psychology staff for University of Minnesota Athletics. She also works as a sport psychologist for Premier Sport Psychology in Edina, Minnesota.

Amanda Norman, M.S. '14, is a certified public accountant and was recently promoted

to a tax management position at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Boston, Massachusetts.

► Activist and Point Foundation Scholar **Marisa O'Gara** is attending Columbia Law School. Read more on page 50.

= 2013 =

Matthew Phillips has joined the law firm of Duffy & Sweeney as an attorney in the business law practice.

= 2016 =

► **Allie Herrera** is featured in a Rhode Taken profile. Page 17.

= 2017 =

Lismary Perez illustrated *The Broken Giraffe*, a book by **Paul Rollins '72**.

= 2018 =

► **Kyla Duffy** writes about film photography in a digital world. Page 10.

Rachel McQuay of Gansevoort, New York, has been accepted to the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in Urbana. Throughout the rigorous four-year program leading to the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, coursework in anatomy, physiology, and other sciences will be integrated with clinical material.

Meredith Shubel joined Caster Communications Inc., an award-winning public relations agency specializing in tech PR, as account coordinator.

► Spoken-word artist **Africa Costarica Smith** is featured in "Why Hip-Hop Matters." Page 23.

► **Rowan Talbot-Guerette** and **Maria Vazquez** are featured in "Designing for Sea and Stars" on page 38.



#RAMFAM

URI was proud to share this fun wedding photo from Janelle McKenzie '11 and Julian Edlow '10 on our Instagram feed. Their wedding was on June 17, 2018, with lots of Rhody Rams in attendance to help them celebrate! #RAMFAM strong. #GoRhody @madelinrosephoto

= CLOSE UP =

Editing BLACK PANTHER

MICHAEL SHAWVER '06



A PANTHER HAS TAKEN DOWN THE Titanic and Michael Shawver is among those responsible.

That's right. The URI grad co-edited *Black Panther*, the futuristic superhero flick that has surpassed *Titanic* in earnings, making it the third-highest-grossing film in North American history. *Black Panther* is Shawver's fourth collaboration with superstar director Ryan Coogler.

Shawver said Kristine Cabral's communication studies classes laid the foundation for his approach to storytelling. "I learned I could evoke emotion in people. I learned how to find the truth in every moment," he said. "I use what I learned at URI every day."

A year after graduation, Shawver enrolled at the University of Southern California and soon began editing classmate Coogler's films. While other student filmmakers were making movies about death or breakups, Coogler was tackling issues of race and society. "I went up to him and said, 'You're making the kind of films I want to make—movies that shift

the paradigm. I want to do that,'" Shawver recalled.

After the two collaborated on one of Coogler's student films, *Fig*, which aired on HBO, Coogler offered Shawver the job of co-editing *Fruitvale Station*, which won 39 awards, including Sundance's Grand Jury Prize. *Creed* was next and earned Sylvester Stallone an Oscar nomination. And then came *Black Panther*.

Shawver, who'd been studying directing at USC, had to learn film editing on the job.

"That's been my career: getting a chance and having to figure it out," Shawver said. "What I showed Ryan was that I was willing to do everything it took for him to achieve his vision."

It's not unusual for Coogler to hand Shawver eight hours of film to be whittled down to a three-minute scene. "It's like putting a puzzle together, but you don't have the picture on the box," Shawver said. "But Ryan trusts my opinion."

"It's crazy. I'm the luckiest person in the industry," Shawver said. •

— Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

= CLOSE UP =

Answering a Call to Lead

MARISA O'GARA '12



THE TOWN OF HUDSON, NEW HAMPSHIRE, population 25,000, has to its credit two golf courses, recreational facilities, an abundance of walking trails, and a high school with its own farm. For Marisa O'Gara '12, a quiet, intellectual kid who studied state capitals for fun, Hudson's pastoral setting and homogeneity chafed. "I was one of the darkest-skinned students in my high school," O'Gara says. "That was something I felt very aware of."

"URI was a big shift. It felt great. There was a lot of diversity. Diverse people bring a diverse perspective," O'Gara says. "As a kid, I was always trying to answer a lot of questions for myself."

At URI, O'Gara found mentors and opportunities to develop as a scholar and an LGBTQ activist, participating in an eight-day sit-in in the library to raise awareness of LGBTQ issues on campus. After graduating, she ran Jorge Elorza's successful campaign for mayor of Providence against six-time former Mayor Vincent "Buddy" Cianci. O'Gara—most recently Mayor Elorza's deputy chief of staff—returns to the classroom this fall as a member of Cornell Law School's Class of 2021 and as a 2018 Point Foundation Scholar, one of only 20 students nationwide to receive such a prize from the country's largest

higher education scholarship-granting organization for LGBTQ students. O'Gara will receive significant financial support to offset the cost of her education. In return, she'll complete a community service project of benefit to the LGBTQ community, as well as mentor future Point Foundation Scholars.

O'Gara intends to use her law degree to work on immigration or election reform.

"The more I learn about immigration policy, the more I realize how broken it is," O'Gara says. "And I care deeply about increasing voter participation and keeping elections fair, clear, and transparent."

The one-time small-town girl says she can certainly see herself returning to city government one day.

"What I love about working in city government is that you're so close to the people there. You're interacting with the people you're serving. You pay the same taxes, you drive over the same potholes," O'Gara says.

"City government is closest to the people, and it makes you a better leader." •

— Marybeth Reilly-McGreen



URI TEAM WALKS TO END ALZHEIMER'S

URI students, faculty, and alumni joined the Walk to End Alzheimer's in Newport in September 2018. The team formed to support **V.J. Anastasia '80**, who was diagnosed in 2013 with frontotemporal degeneration. Pharmacy professor **Erica Estus '96, Pharm.D. '00** (back row, fifth from left) shared this photo of the team, including V.J.'s husband, **Chuck Anastasia '80** (back row, third from right) and four of V.J.'s sorority sisters from the URI chapter of Alpha Chi Omega. The team has walked together for the last few years. Chuck and V.J.'s daughter, **Emily Anastasia, Pharm.D. '13**, has recruited members of URI's College of Pharmacy to join the team since 2014, but was unable to attend this year's walk. They raised more than \$7,300 for Alzheimer's research, education, and patient support.

“The enigma that is Alzheimer's won't be solved without exploring the multiple factors likely to play a role in this complex disease.”

— Paula Grammas, Executive Director,
George & Anne Ryan Institute for
Neuroscience, University of Rhode Island

10 under 10 AWARDS

The first-ever 10 Under 10 Awards recognized outstanding young alumni during Alumni and Family Weekend, October 13, 2018.

The awards recognized graduates of the past decade who have demonstrated excellence in the four core URI values: creativity and scholarship; diversity, fairness, and respect; engaged learning and civic involvement; and intellectual and ethical leadership.



10 UNDER 10 HONOREES

- ◆ College of Arts and Sciences
Ashley Kuhar '14, M.B.A. '18
- ◆ College of Business
Bryan Liese '10, M.B.A. '15
- ◆ Alan Shawn Feinstein
College of Education and
Professional Studies
Henock Constant '18
- ◆ College of Engineering
Ryan Zaczynski '09
- ◆ College of the Environment
and Life Sciences
Becca Trietch, M.S. '15
- ◆ College of Health Sciences
Daniel Faggella '09
- ◆ College of Nursing
Janelle Amoako '15
- ◆ College of Pharmacy
Stephen Cutts '09
- ◆ Athletics
Taylor Ross '18
- ◆ Provost's Award for Ethical
Leadership and Community
Engagement
Omar Bah '10



Left, URI Provost Donald H. DeHayes with Omar Bah and his sons, Barry and Samba.

At far left, left to right: Omar Bah, Taylor Ross, Stephen Cutts, Janelle Amoako, Becca Trietch, Daniel Faggella, Bryan Liese, Ashley Kuhar, Ryan Zaczynski and Henock Constant.



= SOCIAL NETWORK =

Life on Purpose

BRIANNA MADIA '11

IT'S THE STUFF SOCIAL MEDIA DREAMS are made of—beautiful, young, nomadic couple, living in a van with their dogs, desert vistas in the background, and product promotion tastefully tied in with well-written, heartfelt prose.

And Brianna Madia '11 is, indeed, living that dream. She lives out of her beloved orange van, Bertha, with her husband, Keith, and two dogs, Bucket and Dagwood—mostly in the desert landscape of southern Utah. They mountain bike, they climb, they sometimes have to change their plans to deal with van repairs. And it's all documented beautifully on Instagram. In earth tones with orange accents.

But this social media celebrity has plenty of substance below the surface. To listen to her is to hear echoes of Thoreau's *Walden*. "I wanted to see if there was something worth struggling for in living this way. And I fell in love with how intentional everything felt," says Madia. "Realizing how little I need has opened my eyes. I'm willing to be scared and nervous. This is what makes me feel alive."

The world has taken notice. Madia has 235,000 Instagram followers and a book deal in the works. The book will be a series of essays culled from her Instagram posts. Its publication will be the realization of a dream for Madia, who, until now, has shied away from calling herself a writer, favoring the term storyteller. "It felt safer to say storyteller," she says.

She's been open about the fact that for a few years, post-college, she didn't have a plan, felt like a failure, and was generally lost. It's that kind of openness that engages her followers. That, and this kind of advice: "The one thing I can promise you is that when you find your way—when you finally get that big break, that interview, that dream gig—and you're looking back on those formative years ... you will wish you were more patient with yourself. You will wish you were more proud of yourself. You will wish you were kinder to you than I was to me." •

— Barbara Caron and Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

Left, Brianna Madia '11 with her husband, Keith, dogs, Bucket and Dagwood, and Bertha—the van they call home.

= FIELD NOTES =

Have a Plan and Be Willing to Change It

DARRAN SIMON '98



Q. What is your job and what do you like about it?

A. I am a senior writer for CNN Digital. I like that every day is different. I have covered mudslides and wildfires in California; mass shootings in Parkland, Florida, and Sutherland Springs, Texas; fatal police shootings of black men nationwide; and terrorist attacks in London. I recently traveled to Philadelphia, where I wrote about librarians using Narcan to save heroin addicts. I even crawled through the Everglades with a real-estate-investor-turned-part-time-python-hunter searching for the invasive species.

Q. Did you have a plan for your career when you graduated from URI?

A. I graduated at 21 years old, an English major, and had my life mapped out. I had planned to graduate from law school by the age of 25 and live in the Washington, D.C. area. I applied to seven law schools, and every school rejected me. I had written for the *Good Five Cent Cigar* at URI and I decided to try journalism. I really fell into journalism.

Q. What has helped you most in your professional life?

A. I am not afraid to work hard and I'm not afraid to fail. I have failed and stumbled many times. I have had some luck, and prayer has helped a lot, too.

Q. Did you have a mentor?

A. Yes, many. They have guided me, challenged me, and held me accountable. They have believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself. They have helped me to put things in perspective. I am grateful for them and I hope, in turn, to be a mentor for young journalists.

Q. What's your best career advice for students or recent grads?

A. • Don't be afraid to fail.
• Outwork everyone.
• Find a mentor.
• Learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, you'll figure it out eventually.
• Have a plan, but be willing to follow the direction your career takes you.
• Make time to breathe and to do things that make you smile. You still need to live.

Looking for more great career advice?
Visit Alumni Career Services at alumni.uri.edu/career.



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Blanche Murray speaking at the 2012 Distinguished Achievement Awards Ceremony.

BLANCHE R. MURRAY '41, HON. '88 of Jamestown, R.I. died on September 6, 2018. Blanche was the first woman president of the URI Foundation and the Alumni Association, and a lifelong educator who served two terms on the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education. At URI she majored in home economics and joined Chi Omega—one of her granddaughters later joined the same sorority and invited Blanche to share her tales of campus hijinks with her sorority sisters. Blanche was a co-ed colonel of the ROTC unit, president of the Concert Choir, and a member of the Portia and Newman Clubs. She won the Alumni Ram Award in 1976 and was appointed by Gov. J. Joseph Garrahy to the Board of Governors for Higher Education in 1984. In 1988, URI awarded Blanche and her husband, Dan, honorary degrees. She was inducted to the College of the Environment and Life Sciences Hall of Fame in 2003, and was named an Athletic Department Rhody Role Model in 2011. The following year she received the President's Award from URI President David M. Dooley. For 34 years she was a member of the URI Foundation Executive Board and also served on a presidential search committee and the Golden Grad Committee. Blanche, a lifelong golfer, would also want you to know that at the age of 84, on May 20, 2005, on the par-3 fifth hole at Jamestown Golf Course, she deftly swung her 3-wood and made a hole-in-one.

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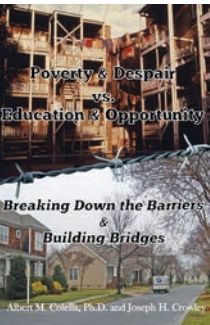
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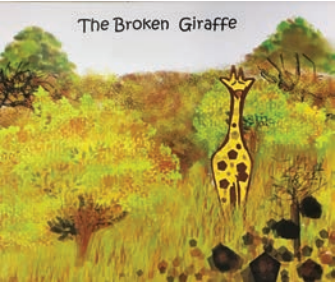
The following alumni authors shared recently published books with us. Please email news about your recently published books to urimag@uri.edu.



Albert Colella '61, M.S. '65, Ph.D. '73 and Joseph H. Crowley '73, M.B.A. '75
Poverty & Despair vs. Education & Opportunity: Breaking Down the Barriers & Building Bridges (2016)



Lance McCormack '04
Lust: Living Under Severe Torment, The Guide to Beating Addiction (2017)



Paul Rollins '72, with Lismary Perez '17
The Broken Giraffe (2018)



= **CAPTION THIS** =

Photo Caption Contest

Do you have a funny idea for a caption for this photo from the 1969 *Grist*? Email your caption to urimag@uri.edu or respond at uri.edu/magazine.

Submit entries by
January 15, 2019

SUMMER WINNERS: PICNIC AT WORDEN POND, 1907

IN 1907, WHEN THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN, there were fewer than 100 students at the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Most of them were engineering students and most were men. President Howard Edwards was the president of the college, and would become the longest serving president of URI, serving from 1906 until his death in 1930.

Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States, and it would be another decade before women would win the right to vote. In 1907, women, even on picnics, were wearing corsets and high necklines.

If this group hadn't spent their afternoon at a picnic in a sheep pasture on Worden Pond, perhaps they would have spent a nickel on a movie at a nickelodeon or gathered around a piano to enjoy a new song—if one of them were lucky enough to have bought, borrowed, or made a trade for the sheet music!

Since one of our winning captions refers to Prohibition, we should mention that the era of Prohibition began about a decade after this photo was taken. But whatever was on their picnic food and drink menu, they were clearly enjoying a break from classes in the great outdoors of South County. Your captions captured this spirit of fun, and, as always, it was hard to pick a winner. Thanks to everyone who entered!



Winning Caption

"I do believe I have the longest arm to take the selfie!"
— *Dina Potolicchio O'Neil '89*

Runners-Up

"Bottoms up, fellas! Something called Prohibition starts tomorrow."
— *Lisa Esterrich '00*

"Ooh, you brought the Grey Poupon!"
— *Paul Tetreault '73*

Honorable Mention

"Clearly still in its experimental form, this is the earliest known photo of a game of Twister."
— *Ricky Hamilton '88*

MORE THAN 7,500 CONTRIBUTORS TO THE URI ANNUAL FUND PROVIDE VITAL RESOURCES THAT STUDENTS USE EVERY DAY.



Annual subscription,
Journal of Cardiovascular Pharmacology:
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In addition to direct student support, the URI Annual Fund covers improvements across campus. Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons has developed into a place of collaborative learning, integrated with technology to explore a world of academic resources. Your gift makes such advancements possible. Give today to inspire innovation, creativity, and discovery at URI.

These figures represent approximate University expenditures and are not specific to the students pictured.

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Winter Waves

SAMUEL MORRISSEY '11

"In March 2018," Sam says, "a series of nor'easters hit Rhode Island. That stretch of weather brought some pretty crazy snow and surf. On March 13, 2018, with forecasters predicting blizzard conditions, I went out to check the surf. There was snow and high wind, and the roads were pretty bad. I always bring my camera when I head out to surf. I snapped this shot of my friend Morgan holding his board just before he paddled out, and I followed. There weren't any other surfers out, and the waves were great!" Sam, in true surfer style, didn't want to give away the exact location of this photo, but did share with us that it was on the coast in South County, Rhode Island.

Samuel Morrissey graduated from URI with a B.F.A. in photography. He is a professional photographer and co-owner of Endeavor Studios in Wakefield, R.I.

Share your surfing photos
and stories with us!
Post with **#surfuri** or email
to urimag@uri.edu.

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