

UNIVERSITY OF

# RHODE ISLAND

FALL 2020

MAGAZINE



## Our Plastic Problem

Is it too late to turn the tide?



# Aperture

## BREATHING ROOM

**J**on Laustsen is a thinker. An artist too, of course, and a sculpture instructor in URI's art department. But make no mistake, his art is a vehicle for the ideas that inspire and inform his work.

This fall, he mounted an installation in the Project Space at the Fine Arts Center. The idea, he says, was to demonstrate facets of the creative process itself. He built a set that mimics his office as an at-home studio, with a gallery reflecting an envisioned art installation. Making himself a critical part of the installation, he visited regularly to type a few pages and to sculpt freely using his chosen materials: wire, aluminum foil, and an air-hardening clay. His habit of daily writing and sculpting was recently re-inspired by Julia Cameron's classic book, *The Artist's Way*.

Through this dynamic installation, he aimed to "provide [his] students with an experience of discovery through actively working with materials, tools, and space, with curiosity at the forefront. "When you work with words or materials and stay focused on the present—the process, rather than the outcome—something will grow, an idea or theme will unfold."

Lausten's current theme—breathing—emerged from a wire wind turbine he crafted in late spring as he contemplated the country's escalating death toll from COVID-19. He took a late-night walk, which took him to an overgrown field where, he says, he "envisioned a cemetery overflowing with sculpted wind turbines." He continues, "They seemed a sign of healing, an emphasis on the air of the earth, the breath of life. This was the day George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police, pleading to breathe."

His current work is entitled, "For All Who Can't Breathe, and for a Less-Damaged World."

—Barbara Caron





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The racial reckoning of 2020 reveals how much remains unresolved in the struggle for racial justice. We look back at URI's history of student-led civil rights activism.

At left: Diamondback terrapins are Rhode Island's rarest turtle species, and URI students and faculty are studying their nesting process as part of a long-term conservation program. Story and video at [uri.edu/features/turtle-tracker](http://uri.edu/features/turtle-tracker).

Our cover photo was shot by award-winning filmmaker, photographer, multimedia journalist, and URI assistant professor of multimedia journalism, Jason Jaacks. He is a principal member of the Ocean State Initiative for Marine Plastics team, serving as their lead on multimedia journalism.



## Preparing Students to Lead in the “Next Normal”



This academic year, my final year as president of the University of Rhode Island, reminds me of the central theme of my inauguration in 2010: The future is not predetermined, and we have the opportunity to create the future we wish to see for ourselves and those who follow us. The stories in these pages reflect the URI community’s enduring capacity to recognize some of the most important challenges we face in building a better future: infectious disease; climate change; the global contamination of our environment and food supplies by plastics and other pollutants; hunger that threatens our ability to learn and to thrive; and social injustice that threatens the fabric of human societies in America and across the world. Undaunted by the public health crisis, political turmoil, and the longstanding crisis of systemic racism that have dominated the first year of this new decade, URI students, faculty, and alumni are innovating and finding creative ways to address the most pressing and threatening issues of our times.

URI has weathered—so far—the extraordinary threats and challenges of 2020. Prior to the COVID-19 onslaught, we had received the highest number of applications in our history, validation that students and their families recognize the tremendous value of an education at the University of Rhode Island. Despite the uncertainties presented by the pandemic, we enrolled an impressive 3,345 students. We acknowledge, of course, the potential for COVID-related adjustments to these numbers, despite our having put into place comprehensive and sophisticated safety and health measures.

Throughout the spring and summer, the faculty and staff worked tirelessly to prepare for this academic year. By August, we were ready to teach and our students were ready to learn. Creating a 24/7 learning environment has been a University priority for a decade, and the pandemic served as an accelerant for the delivery of an unparalleled online academic experience. In fact, URI is the only university in Rhode Island to receive a Tier 1 designation from Educate to Career for having

the systems required to deliver its full curriculum online and in-classroom. Building on URI’s institutional strengths, we are preparing our students for the “next normal,” enabling them to pursue their studies while bolstering their resiliency and resourcefulness.

And that is really the heart of our mission. We have long embraced our role in developing and launching multidimensional global citizens with excellent academic credentials who are also capable of navigating rapid change. The pandemic has certainly reinforced the value, indeed the necessity, of this part of our mission.

Our ambitious *Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island* will serve as a catalyst for further development of URI as a learning-centered research university. Thanks to your generosity, we are already starting to see the impact of *Big Ideas. Bold Plans*. Recent graduates like Leah Hopkins ’20, profiled in this issue, exemplify the transformative effect of higher education. Leah’s URI experience has shaped her critical work to raise awareness of Indigenous people and their contributions to our country. And, in turn, Leah’s influence has changed the URI community.

Whatever the future holds, I am confident that we will continue to be inspired by the stories that define our University and its bright future.

David M. Dooley  
President, University of Rhode Island

### MOVING IN

Austin Pare ’23 (on truck) moved into Hillside Hall this fall with help from her mom, Kristen Woodman and stepdad, Michael Harvey. The Essex, Massachusetts, native and nursing major says she was excited to come back this fall after feeling like her first year was “stripped away from me right when I was finally feeling comfortable.” Because of COVID-19, students in URI residence halls are not permitted to have visitors from other buildings. “That rule makes it harder to make new friends,” says Pare, “but I joined the women’s Ultimate Frisbee team and am rushing a sorority in order to meet new people this year. It isn’t challenging to live on campus because our building staff has been so supportive and professors reach out to students and answer questions the best that they can. It is definitely important to know that there are people on campus to support us during this time.”





# Feedback

Write to us: [urimag@uri.edu](mailto:urimag@uri.edu)  
Visit us and comment at [uri.edu/magazine](http://uri.edu/magazine)

## A Few Historical Notes

IN THE 2020 SUMMER MAGAZINE CLASS Notes, Claude Trottier '60 wrote about training a puppy for Guiding Eyes for the Blind in memory of his fraternity brother Manuel "Duke" Germano '60; certainly, a very worthwhile gift. He wrote that Duke was the first visually impaired student to graduate from URI.

I was recommended to URI by John L. "Jack" Klages '53. Legally blind, he lived on campus, but when he could get home for a weekend, my family and I drove him back to school on Sunday evenings, a vivid memory for me. Jack was not the first visually impaired student to graduate from URI, but I believe he was one of the first.

I share this not to discredit Duke Germano's accomplishment (I remember him) or Mr. Trottier's memorial gift, rather to shed light on early strides that URI made to assist people with disabilities to succeed with their education. Mr. Klages made a great impression on me and my sister.

Most of my URI memories center around the women commuters area in

the basement of Davis Hall. Women and men commuters were separated in 1957; the men had space in the Union, women shared the bottom floor of Davis with the mailroom. Each time we left for a class, we walked by the man who rang the bell for classes at the ground floor back entrance. The Dean of Women's Office was one floor up. We loved Dean "Evelyn" and she was kind to us. Those of us who traveled to school every day from all points in R.I. had great fun together and spent spare moments playing hi-lo-jack, knitting argyle socks, studying, and sharing stories. Our restrictions were many: No shorts, for example—even Bermudas had to be covered by a trench coat. Time moves on and traditions and rules disappear, but URI left many of us with great memories and a fine education.

Thank you for your delightful magazine. I enjoy every issue.  
—Jean Bordo Lawrence '61

## Bravo, Cigar!

THERESA BROWN'S STORY about *The Good Five Cent Cigar's* coverage of the pandemic brought back memories. Forty-seven years ago, I was executive editor of *The Cigar* at a time when we were also consumed with a raging issue: widespread student unrest over the Vietnam War.

"URI stresses the importance of experiential learning; what better way to engage in experiential learning than this?" Theresa wrote. "We are testing the skills we've learned in the classroom even as we report on the same topic being covered by the famous journalists we admire."

My experience writing for and editing *The Cigar* during the tumultuous 1970s, combined with the teaching of some fine professors (including the recently deceased Jack Thompson), provided the groundwork for my rewarding 40-plus years in journalism.

*The Cigar's* name comes from a quip attributed to a U.S. vice president some 100 years ago: "What this country needs is a really good five-cent cigar." Well, Theresa and these fine young journalists are just what this country needs now. Bravo!

—Bill Loveless '73



## Kudos

I FINALLY HAD A CHANCE THIS MORNING to go through the latest issue (summer 2020). I wanted to send a message and let you know I thought this issue was one of your best. It was interesting and poignant. I enjoyed it immensely.

—Jane Bourbonnais Northup '82,  
M.A. '14, Ph.D. '19

I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW HOW much I appreciate your magazine. My eyesight prohibits me from reading a lot of digital literature, periodicals, etc. but I can read print versions without any problems. The writing and photography are superb!

The mountains here (New Mexico) are just beautiful but I do miss the ocean, seafood, and Little Rhody—with all its quirks. I enjoyed my years at URI and felt inspired by many of my professors, especially in the Speech Department. Your magazine brings back many happy memories. Thank You!

—Nancy George Pempey '75

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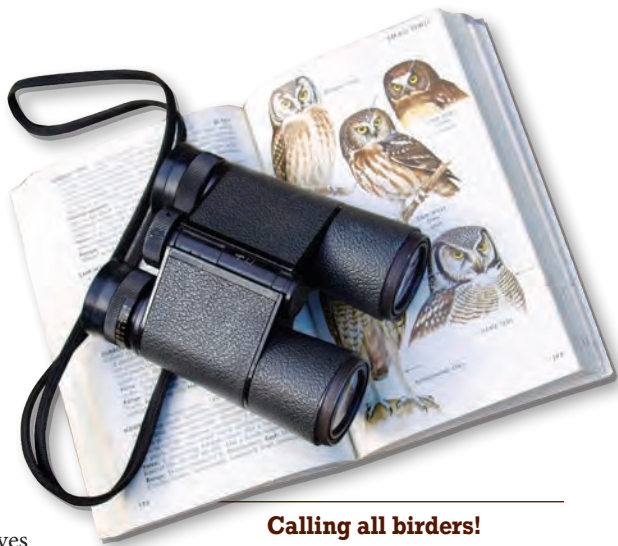
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*University safety guidelines regarding photography and videography adhere to directives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Rhode Island Department of Health.*



## Liberal Professors

I JUST RECEIVED THE summer alumni magazine and I was going to praise you all for such excellent articles and then I saw your cover. We all know that all lives matter. After reading the rest of the magazine and the various quotes, it appears that your professors are extreme liberals. What a sad time for your state and the rest of our country. There are so many good teachers and worthwhile people and events to write about that I am sure your staff could entertain.

—Benjamin Malvinni, M.S. '70

**Calling all birders!**  
Has spending more time at home during the pandemic led you to pay more attention to the feathered residents of your backyard or hiking trails? Or maybe you're a dedicated birder with an impressive life list? We'd love to hear your stories and see your photos. Send them to [urimag@uri.edu](mailto:urimag@uri.edu).

## From the Editor

2020 HAS BEEN QUITE A YEAR. As I write this message in early October, my hope is that wherever we find ourselves in late November, you will find reasons within these pages to be proud of and inspired by your alma mater.

From our cover story about how URI is tackling the problem of plastics in the environment, to the back cover, featuring the beautiful artwork of Eric Lutes '91, this issue is bursting at the seams with stories of you and for you, Rhody alumni.

Whatever you do—whether you paint or teach, build bridges or businesses, explore the oceans, or care for those in need—the world needs you now, more than ever. Keep doing what you do.

—Barbara Caron, Editor-in-Chief

## Corrections

CLASS NOTES  
Well, we really messed up Holly Zimmermann, M.S. '93. Holly did, in fact, finish first in the international women cohort of the 2018 Mount Everest Marathon, but we incorrectly spelled her last name "Zimmerman" (missing the final n) and we neglected to note that her degree was a master's degree. Our sincere apologies, Holly! Read more about Holly on page 53.

IN MEMORIAM  
Clarification: Peter Clark '92, was listed in the "In Memoriam" section of the summer issue. We heard from Peter J. Clark '92 (same name and class year, different person), who wanted to clarify that he is alive and well in Pennsylvania.

## SOCIAL SNAPS | INSTAGRAM



**Move-In 2020**  
Day 4 of move-in is going great, thanks to our RAMS and RAs!!!  
#rhodytogether  
[@urihealthsvcs](https://www.instagram.com/urihealthsvcs)



**Fresh and Beautiful**  
These great looking fresh fruit cups are available at Brookside Bistro and Butterfield! Thanks URI Catering for making these daily. #uridining  
[@uridining](https://www.instagram.com/uridining)



**ROTC Lab**  
Cramer's Sabers battalion's first lab included classes on the chain of command, uniform regulations, crossing linear danger areas, and more. #SABERS  
[@cramers.sabers](https://www.instagram.com/cramers.sabers)



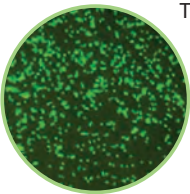
**Engineering Fun**  
The URI Society of Women Engineers made tie-dye T-shirts on the Quad in September. Forty people participated in socially distant small groups.  
[@uriengineering](https://www.instagram.com/uriengineering)



= IN BRIEF =

## 100-Million-Year-Old Microbes Awakened

URI oceanographer Steve D'Hondt, and a global team of researchers investigating for the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology, recently examined sediment taken from nearly 20,000 feet undersea, in the middle of the South Pacific Gyre.



The team wanted to know if microbes could exist in this underwater desert, lacking nutrients and organic material.

They drilled numerous sediment cores below the seafloor and found oxygen present in all their samples. Their findings suggest that if sediment accumulates slowly on the seafloor, at a rate of no more than a meter or two every million years, oxygen will penetrate, allowing for oxygen-dependent microorganisms to survive for millions of years.

When the team incubated the samples to coax the microbes to grow, they found that the microbes were capable of growing and dividing.

"What's most exciting about this study is that it shows that there are no limits to life in the old sediment of the world's ocean," said D'Hondt, co-author of the study. "In the oldest sediment we've drilled, with the least amount of food, there are still living organisms, and they can wake up, grow and multiply."

## Communicating with Brain Signals

Engineering professor Yalda Shahriari has been awarded a National Science Foundation grant to develop a method for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) patients to communicate using brain signals. Recognizing the limitations of current communication methods based on eye movement, her research could lead to new technology that would not depend on fine eye control.

Shahriari and her team will develop algorithms to improve brain-computer interface systems for patients with severe motor deficits and will create an autonomous hybrid system for non-communicative patients who are without residual motor function, such as those who lose their eye-gaze control in the late stages of ALS.

URI doctoral student Bahram Borgheai and URI Assistant Professor Yalda Shahriari (right) adjust the cap used to monitor ALS patient Doug Sawyer's brain activity.

## Record Research Ranking

The College of Pharmacy has been ranked 8th in the country for federal funding, having secured more than \$18 million in fiscal year 2019. The ranking, among 143 pharmacy colleges, makes URI the only Northeast school to make the top 20.



## News Ticker



### TRACKING FISHING LOCATIONS

Thomas Sproul, a natural resource economist at URI, is mapping commercial fishing activity to provide data to offshore wind regulators and developers, aiming to reduce conflict between the two ocean-dependent industries.



### COVID-19 DASHBOARD

An online case tracker is helping to monitor coronavirus cases at URI. The dashboard is designed to provide up-to-date information on COVID-19 cases, testing, and quarantine and isolation space.



### SEABIRDS CONTAMINATED

Research conducted by Graduate School of Oceanography doctoral student Anna Robuck found high levels of chemical contaminants, including PFASs (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), in seabirds from coastal areas in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and North Carolina.



### MOBILE APP LAUNCHED

RhodyConnect, developed by URI's Information Technology Services and Moto Labs, puts information, including news, calendars, visitor maps, sports schedules, and more, at your fingertips. Download at Apple's App Store or Google Play Store.



### VOTING IN A PANDEMIC

Engineering professor Gretchen Macht conducted national research benefiting both 2020 and future elections by developing polling location layout models that consider public health needs and wait times.



### NEW PROGRAMS

This fall, URI launched an online master's program in supply chain management and applied analytics, the first online program of its kind in the nation. And a new bachelor's degree in professional leadership studies will help students develop critical thinking and strategic decision-making skills.

=BAY AND BEYOND=

## Holy Moly! That's a Big Quahog!

A family outing turned into a lucky—and record-breaking—day for 11-year-old Cooper Monaco.



Cooper Monaco poses with the giant quahog he found last summer.

Eleven-year-old Cooper Monaco was clamming with his grandfather last summer in Weekapaug, Rhode Island, when he discovered what may be the largest clam ever harvested from Rhode Island waters. Monaco and his family donated it to URI's Marine Science Research Facility at the Narragansett Bay Campus.

The quahog—measuring 5.75 inches across and weighing 2 pounds, 7.75 ounces—is one of the largest specimens on record, though the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management does not keep quahog records. A typical quahog grows to about 4 inches across.

"I was down on my hands and knees in the water looking for clams, and I touched this huge rock thing," he said. "And then I felt the edge of it and I thought, 'Holy moly, this is a clam!' So I pulled it out. It was amazing."

Cooper's mother, Sherrie Monaco, says the family searched online and learned that the oldest ocean quahog, nicknamed Ming, was dredged from the waters off Iceland in 2006, and scientists calculated that it was 507 years old. The quahog found by Cooper is comparable in size to Ming, though its age has not yet been determined.

"I've been reading the *Guinness Book of World Records*, so I told my mom not to cook it just in case it's a record-breaker," said Cooper.

Ed Baker, manager of the URI Marine Science Research Facility, said the quahog would be displayed at the facility, along with blue lobsters and other Narragansett Bay sea creatures.

"We try to inspire young kids to get interested in marine science by showcasing some of the marine life found in the bay," he said. "We also highlight some of

"I felt the edge of it and I thought, 'Holy moly, this is a clam!' So I pulled it out. It was amazing."

the interesting research conducted here and explain why it's important."

The facility hosts an array of research and features dozens of tanks holding a variety of marine life, most of which is used for research on the changing marine environment. This year's research topics include the effect of warming water on the development of juvenile lobsters, how microplastics affect oysters, disease resistance in local oysters, and understanding coral biology to improve its survival around the world. •

—Todd McLeish



= BEHIND THE SCENES =

## Stay Calm and Know the Drill

At the center of URI's response to COVID-19 is Ellen Reynolds '91, assistant vice president of student health and wellness and the director of Health Services at URI. Known for her boundless energy, calm demeanor, and willingness to do whatever it takes to solve the problem at hand, she's leading URI's response to this crisis with characteristic poise.

Reynolds was central in planning for URI's return to in-person classes this fall, establishing isolation and quarantine processes, and developing resources for students.

Ellen Reynolds '91 had only been the University's director of Health Services for about a year-and-a-half when she received disturbing news the morning of Oct. 21, 2014: A student who had been to Liberia—the African country being decimated by Ebola—had returned to campus exhibiting symptoms consistent with the often-fatal disease.

The student tested negative for Ebola, but that scare helped Reynolds and her team respond decisively to a suspected case of COVID-19 on the first day of classes in January 2020. Eventually, the student tested negative for the virus, but Reynolds and her team knew the drill: They immediately isolated the student, meals were delivered to her door, and URI Health Services personnel used technology to check in with her daily. In addition, her roommates were removed immediately from the shared room, tested, and quarantined for two weeks.

Reynolds says that knowing the drill means “frequent training for our doctors, nurses, EMS responders, and staff in how to put on and take off personal protective equipment, as well as infection-control precautions, contact tracing, inventory control, and supply management.”

In February 2020, as the pandemic was beginning to spread internationally, a URI team was formed to bring students back to the United States—first from China, and then from other countries—and to inform the com-

munity about the steps it was taking, Reynolds was often the primary person talking directly with those students and their parents. Through the din of constantly ringing phones and conversations at the University's Emergency Operations Center, she retained her smile and calm manner, and even managed to squeeze in time for interviews with the media.

Reynolds' commitment and steadiness have helped her lead URI's public health response to the COVID-19 outbreak and anchor the University's COVID-19 Task Force, along with the University's Office of Emergency Management and other administrative units. She is also in constant contact with the Rhode Island Department of Health.

In that role, Reynolds was central in planning for URI's return to in-person classes this fall, establishing isolation and quarantine processes, and developing resources for students.

Before the start of the fall semester, Reynolds and her Health Services team tested close to 4,000 students moving into campus residence halls. She helped develop URI's COVID-19 tracker, which gives students, faculty, staff, parents, and the general public daily updates on testing, positive cases, and the numbers of students in isolation and quarantine.

“Our effective response to COVID-19 depends on a thorough understanding of epidemiology, health-care delivery, incident management, and crisis communication,” says Sam Adams, URI's Emergency Management director and assistant director of Public Safety. “In all of these respects, I couldn't ask for a better partner than Ellen Reynolds as URI navigates the complexities of this historic event. Her knowledge, poise, and dedicated leadership bring out the best in everyone on our team.” •

—Dave Lavallee '79,  
M.P.A. '87

Ellen Reynolds '91 was unsure of her career path as an undergrad, but an internship at South County Hospital in her senior year paved the way to a full-time job there and a career in health-care management. She holds a master's degree in health-care administration from Salve Regina University and is completing a doctorate in educational leadership at Johnson & Wales University.



Makerspace URI at the Carothers Library and Learning Commons gives students and faculty access to fabrication equipment, like the 3D printer pictured here. Your support makes URI a place where big ideas and bold plans come to life.

= BIG IDEAS. BOLD PLANS. =

## A View to the Campaign

With the summer issue, the magazine announced *Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island*. Chairman of the public phase, Richard J. Harrington '73, Hon. '02, offers his personal reflections on what the campaign means for URI.

This is a transformational moment for URI. Over the past decade, the University has built on a solid foundation and reached new levels of excellence.

This campaign is an effort to bring in resources for scholarships and campus improvements that will benefit students and faculty, but it is also a great source of alumni pride. We will have new opportunities to highlight our past and present achievements, and more ways to let others know what a great University we have.

Today, URI recruits students with vision and passion who bring with them a wide variety of skills and life experiences. We have nearly 18,000 of them, representing 48 states and 76 countries. We welcome people from all walks of life and backgrounds because that is essential to our mission as a land, sea, and urban grant university.

We are also a flagship public research institution. Last year, we received more than \$100 million in competitive grants for innovative research. Our faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates are leading the way in solving the critical challenges of the 21st century.

Our students are destined to leave their mark on our world because they are thinkers, dreamers, and doers. From saving our oceans to early detection of Alzheimer's, to changing public spaces through art and launching new companies, the people of URI are making a difference.

The campaign takes a comprehensive approach to ensuring our students' success through access to the best faculty, campus, education, and developmental experience possible. This bold undertaking has the power to ensure that URI is

more resilient, resourceful, and better prepared to serve our state, this nation, and our world.

The one thing I want everyone to remember is this: To succeed, we need our whole community to mobilize like never before, because we are at a pivotal moment in our history. I want every alum to realize that they are part of this success and that we are all connected through this institution.

I look forward to connecting with more of our alumni, hearing more personal stories of your URI experience, and moving our University forward together. GO RHODY!

—Richard J. Harrington '73, Hon. '02  
Campaign Chair, Public Phase



**=MEDIA SPOTLIGHT=**  
**You Can Quote Me**

**On the discovery and resuscitation of 100-million-year-old microbes under the seafloor:**

“The most exciting part of this study is that it basically shows that there is no limit to life in the old sediment of Earth’s ocean. Maintaining full physiological capability for 100 million years in starving isolation is an impressive feat.”

—Steven D’Hondt, professor of oceanography  
*Reuters*

**On the impact of the coronavirus, the widening digital divide, and the cost to distribute basic technology to students:**

“If districts don’t receive additional revenue, they will either have to dip into a rainy day fund, ask for additional revenues from the state, or move internal revenues to create more fungible revenue.”

—R. Anthony Rolle, dean, Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies  
*Wired*

**On teaching kids to spot fake news:**

“Ideally, discerning how media influences us should start early on, before kids are even allowed on the internet. Young children need to develop a vocabulary for media literacy early in life.”

—Renee Hobbs, professor of communication studies and director of the Media Education Lab at the University of Rhode Island  
*Good Housekeeping*

**On the popularity of supplement use among teenage boys:**

“Training, nutrition and sleep need to come first. Unless you can say yes to all of those things, supplements should be off the table.”

—Disa Hatfield, associate professor and chair of URI’s Department of Kinesiology  
*The New York Times*

**On ammonium nitrate, the chemical behind the summer’s deadly explosion in Beirut:**

“Ammonium nitrate normally sits nicely and behaves itself until you do something catastrophic to it.”

—Jimmie Oxley, professor of chemistry  
*The Wall Street Journal*

**On how the pandemic has motivated more people to realize they should not put off end-of-life discussions:**

“I believe we are living in a real watershed moment. (The pandemic) will not allow us to be as death-avoiding or death-fearing, at least for some period of time.”

—Sara Murphy, adjunct faculty and certified thanatologist  
*US News and World Report*

**On whether invasive alien animal species could cause another coronavirus:**

“When you bring in an animal, either through the illegal wildlife trade or as a pet, there’s a great possibility that it’s going to be carrying some pathogens that could be zoonotic or spread to other animals.”

—Laura Meyerson, professor of natural resources science  
*The Independent UK*

**On the lack of discussion in doctors’ offices on the important topic of patient diet and nutrition:**

“We want to encourage (physicians) to have diet be part of the conversation and not something that we ignore.”

—Maya Vadiveloo, assistant professor of nutrition and food sciences  
*Today.com*

**= RHODE TAKEN =**  
**Saving the Planet—One Turtle at a Time**  
**CALLIE VEELENTURF ’14**

Callie Veelenturf ’14 was nearing the end of a five-month sea turtle research project in Panama when the nation’s borders were closed due to the pandemic, forcing her to remain in the country for three months longer than planned. She had just completed her first project as a National Geographic Explorer, documenting nests of endangered sea turtles, investigating human interactions with the turtles, and educating residents about the threats turtles face.

The founder of The Leatherback Project, a sea turtle conservation organization, Veelenturf spent her unexpected additional time in Panama launching an international campaign for a universal declaration of the rights of nature, a concept similar to human rights but which states that every species of wildlife has the right to exist and persist without fear of extinction from human causes. Just two countries, Ecuador and Bolivia, recognize these rights in their constitutions, and Veelenturf aimed to encourage other countries to support the idea as well.

“It’s a concept that really resonated with me, and I think it needs to be the basis of the global change we need to see for the planet,” she says. “We must consider the planet and nature when planning future development.”

Within weeks, she connected with several lawyers, conservationists, and other advocates in Africa, Australia, and South America; met with the first lady of Panama; and worked with a Panamanian senator to draft legislation that is now before the country’s National Assembly. She also made a virtual presentation to the United Nations—her third time speaking to the global intergovernmental organization—to make her case on World Oceans Day.

It was a whirlwind of activity, but that’s nothing new for Veelenturf. She has already



Leatherback nest excavation in Equatorial Guinea. Excavating nests after the incubation period ends involves removing and opening all unhatched eggs and shells, and staging the sea turtle embryos. Veelenturf says, “It’s really interesting to see the different stages of development the sea turtles reached before growth stopped.”

had a lifetime of experiences in just the last few years. She studied sea turtles in Costa Rica, Equatorial Guinea, and Saint Kitts; traveled in a deep-sea vehicle 700 feet below the ocean surface as part of a shark research expedition; won a photography contest sponsored by the journal *Nature*; was named a fellow of The Explorers Club; tagged hammerhead sharks with conservationists in Colombia; and launched a project to reduce fisheries bycatch of sharks and sea turtles in Ecuador, where she will return for six months beginning in January. And last summer she was selected for the National Geographic Society’s prestigious Early Career Leadership Program.

“I can’t believe all this is happening,” she says. “It’s like my dreams are coming true.” •  
—Todd McLeish

**RHODE TO A DEGREE**

**Deciding Moment**

Listening to upperclassmen during a marine biology information session. “All of my doubts went away.”

=

**Mentors**

Marine biology professor Jacqueline Webb and fellowship advisor Kathleen Maher

=

**Scholarships**

Centennial Scholarship and NOAA Hollings Scholarship

=

**Campus Leadership**

Civic engagement leader for URI 101; Trip leader for Alternative Spring Breaks to Austin, Texas, and Nashville, Tennessee.

=

**Volunteer Work**

500 hours with AmeriCorps

=

**Study Abroad**

Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences in junior year

=

Center for Tropical Island Biodiversity in Panama as a senior

=

**Influential Experience**

International Nonviolence Summer Institute through the URI Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies: “They treated us like we could all be the next MLK.”

=

**Degree**

B.S. marine biology



= WHY I TEACH =

## This is a Movement, Not a Moment

CARNELL JONES JR.

*Adjunct Faculty Member, Africana Studies Program*

In teaching his Black Lives Matter course, Carnell Jones Jr. includes stories and artifacts from his own history with racial violence and hate crimes, demonstrating to students that what is public is also personal, and that there is a place for everyone in the pursuit of social justice.

Novelist, playwright, poet, essayist, and civil rights activist James Baldwin famously said, “The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

Carnell Jones Jr., URI’s director of enrollment services and adjunct faculty member for URI’s Africana Studies Program, understands wholly what Baldwin describes. Time and again, he has observed the students in his Black Lives Matter course transform from neophytes to activists in the space of mere months.

His Black Lives Matters course is always full. Students routinely arrive to class early and afterward trail him to the parking lot with lingering questions and comments on the day’s lesson. Jones has watched his students engage in televised peaceful protests, and he’s had letters from parents moved at how their children have taken classroom discussion to the dining room table.

In June, media outlets *Forbes* and *The New York Times* noted that students, many still in their teens, have made significant contributions to the Black Lives Matter movement, organizing protests, raising awareness on social media, and donating money to activist organizations. Today’s youth are informed, engaged, and ready to act, says Jones. “I’m seeing my students out there actively protesting, passionately speaking, taking up the movement, and carrying it forward.”

Jones has taught his Black Lives Matter course since 2015, one of the first of its kind in New England. The readings change each semester to keep abreast of current events and include other groups’ trials in the battle for civil rights. This fall’s syllabus includes readings and discussion about the Supreme Court’s recent ruling that the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects LGBTQ employees from discrimination based on sex, as well as the court’s decision to block the revocation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, popularly known as DACA, which has protected from deportation some 700,000 individuals brought to this country as children.

### ‘I’m talking about wailing crying’

Another teaching tool: Jones’ own painful personal history with racism and violence. In 1986,

a then-14-year-old Jones attended the funeral of his 19-year-old uncle, Kelvin Thompson, murdered in a drive-by shooting by two white men, who shot him with a .22-caliber pistol while Thompson was riding a bicycle on the Chef Menteur Highway in New Orleans.

Jones shares with his students court papers and articles about the case, among them an appeal made by one of the two men convicted in the crime. In “State v. Messick,” the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal of Louisiana rejected convicted murderer Emmett Messick’s appeal. Messick, who is serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole for the murder of Thompson, argued in his appeal that it was the other murderer, Harold Allen, who actually shot Jones’s uncle. Allen had already passed away in prison. Added injury: The warden of the prison in which Messick was incarcerated supported his petition, not only writing a letter on his behalf but also showing up at court. “When does a warden get involved in an appeal?” Jones says.

“What the appeal doesn’t talk about, what my father said, is that when they found my uncle, the look on his face was one of shock. Because when you’re hit like that, it captures your last expression,” Jones says.

“And that was the first funeral I went to as a young, Black man—seeing my uncle in a casket due to being killed at the hands of just cold-blooded murderers.”

What Jones needs no documentation to remember is the effect his uncle’s death had on his family.

“To go to that funeral, to see my uncle in a casket, was life-changing for me because that was the first time I saw real pain,” Jones recalls. “I had never seen my grandmother cry. I’d never seen my 17 uncles and aunts cry. I’d never seen my father cry. I’m talking about wailing crying.”

“My mother was traumatized. She felt she had to do everything in her power to protect her three sons,” Jones says. “Everything” meant virtual home confinement for Jones and his brothers when they weren’t at school or engaged in sports. “My mom would tell me that when interacting with the police or folks outside of my comfort zone, to swallow my pride.”

“‘I just want you to come back home,’ she would say.”

While Jones the teenager chafed at the curtailment of his freedom, Jones the father still finds himself saying much the same thing to his own sons, now grown, when they head out the door.

“I tell them, ‘I don’t want you to go. I don’t want to go through what my father went through,’” Jones says. “So it just gets passed on.”

### A generation willing to take a risk

Jones sees the intersection of two historic events, the Black Lives Matter movement and COVID-19, spurring society to rail against racial injustice in numbers not seen since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. “The pandemic has forced the world to be on pause, and people are seeing events happening, and saying, ‘This is wrong,’” Jones says. “This is why you see people flooding the streets.”

“This is a movement,” he says, “not a moment.”

What is encouraging is that Black Lives Matter protests are attracting a broader demographic than what was in evidence in the 1960s. Then, some citizens who might have protested, couldn’t, because such a public action would have surely meant a sacrifice too great to bear,” Jones says.

“During the 1960s, if you protested, you would sacrifice something. You could lose a job, a scholarship. You pretty much had to participate in silence,” Jones says. “This generation questions everything. They push back. They’re not concerned about sacrifice.”

“They’ll take the risk.” •

—Marybeth Reilly-McGreen





CAN WE TURN  
THE TIDE ON THE  
PROBLEM OF

# Plastics?

Plastic has infiltrated the Earth's environment. From Mount Everest to the Mariana Trench, the ubiquitous material has been found in the air, the water, and even in the ice. URI is harnessing the expertise of researchers from all disciplines to address this global crisis, particularly in the area of marine plastics. Our alumni are equally engaged, tackling the problem from a variety of important angles. By Diane M. Sterrett

Last summer, URI Graduate School of Oceanography professor Brice Loose and his team found a disturbing amount of plastic in Arctic sea ice cores collected from floes during an 18-day Northwest Passage Project expedition. Sea ice tends to concentrate everything that is in the water, including nutrients, algae, and microplastics.

“Even knowing what we knew about the occurrence of plastics across the globe—for us, it was kind of a punch to the stomach to see what looked like a normal sea ice core taken in such a beautiful, pristine environment just chock-full of this material that is so completely foreign,” Loose says.



Plastics are chemical compounds that have proven to be inordinately useful for humanity—disposable syringes for example. The problem is, they don't degrade on a human timescale. And once discarded, they begin breaking down into micro- and nanoplastics and drift into the air and water, becoming virtually impossible to recover.

The news is alarming, and inescapable. *PBS NewsHour* reports that over 9 billion metric tons of plastic has been created since the end of World War II. *National Geographic* reports that today, about 40 percent of the plastic produced each year is single-use plastic (SUP), and that about 8 million tons of plastic waste escapes into the oceans from coastal nations every year. And a 2016 World Economic Forum report said about one truckload of plastic waste is dumped into our oceans every minute.

What's more, increasing production may soon outstrip our ability to deal with it. Plastic production has increased exponentially, from 2.3 million tons in 1950 to 448 million tons in 2015, and is expected to double by 2050.





9

billion metric tons  
of plastic has been  
created since the  
end of World War II.

#### THREAT TO PLANET AND PEOPLE

Peter J. Snyder, URI's vice president for research and economic development and professor of biomedical sciences, says the problem is, indeed, growing exponentially and we don't fully understand its ramifications.

"It's only been since the early 1970s that we have recognized uncontrolled ocean pollution from plastic waste," he says, "and alarm bells didn't start ringing until 20 years ago."

You've likely seen distressing videos of sea turtles with straws stuck in their nostrils or whales hopelessly tangled in monofilament fishing line. "Those macroplastics threaten pinnacle species in the food chain and therefore the entire food web that we depend on," Snyder explains. "Bacteria, viruses, and invasive species could also adhere to micro- and nanoplastics and be transported by ocean currents. Nanoplastics aggregate as biofilms on the surface of the ocean and are ingested by all forms of aquatic life, which end up in the tissue of the fish and shellfish we eat. And we're finding them in our own bodies."

The effects of plastic on human health are less well-known, though a new Center for International Environmental Law report suggests exposure to plastics poses distinct toxic risks and intersecting human health impacts ranging from cancer to neurotoxicity, low birth weight, and cardiovascular disease.

Angela Slitt, a professor in the Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, has researched the health impacts of bisphenol A (BPA), and how exposure early in life affects the liver through fat accumulation and increased body weight.

"There is a real concern for exposure to microplastics. They have a lot of different components in them, possibly BPA. Microplastics might also act as carriers for perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that are found in things like Teflon and firefighting foam, called 'forever chemicals.' We need to know more and to understand how to enjoy the conveniences of day-to-day life without having these types of chemical exposures."

#### WE NEED SOLUTIONS NOW

"Our food web is at risk," says Dennis Nixon, M.M.A. '76, director of Rhode Island Sea Grant and professor of marine affairs. "If scientists are correct, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050. When you start messing

with life in the ocean, you're messing with the one factor that is regulating the Earth's temperatures and storms. So by adding this much plastic to the ocean, you are affecting the ability of life itself to function."

Pre-pandemic, there was international recognition of the looming crisis and the idea that we have limited time to impact it in a meaningful way. But COVID-19 increased demand for plastic production.

"We are now producing, using, and throwing away more gloves, masks, drapes, curtains, and surgical gowns than ever before. If you walk beaches, even here in Rhode Island, it's not a shock to find single-use plastic surgical masks or gloves. Until we have a treatment that's effective, I don't see an end in sight," Nixon says.

*The Economist* reports that consumption of SUPs may have grown by 250–300 percent in the United States since the coronavirus took hold, according to the International Solid Waste Association. That includes essential personal protective equipment as well as the return of plastic grocery bags, a boom in e-commerce packaging, and restaurant food packaged in single-use containers for takeout and delivery. In addition, the pandemic has curtailed some recycling programs for SUP bags.

"The pandemic has set aside all sorts of new legislation and municipal regulations that were just beginning to take effect with the hope of causing some improvement," Snyder says. "Collectively there had been 15 years of slow consumer education and behavior modification to re-think single-use plastics, to re-use cups, don't ask for straws, and bring canvas bags to the market. All those little things have incremental benefits. That's all being undone. What's it going to mean to try to reverse that now?"

#### URI TACKLES PLASTICS

URI students, faculty, and alumni are involved on many fronts and in a wide range of research. Last winter, Snyder hosted a brainstorming session of experts from across the University to discuss how URI could tackle the problem. As a research university, he says, URI has tremendous value to bring to this global effort.

"We have one of the world's finest schools of oceanography and one of the nation's most productive colleges of environment and life sciences. Our research strengths are squarely within environmental science, the study of

human impacts on the environment, coastal resiliency, ocean health, marine biology, and the impacts of global warming. We have talented and passionate people, and I see a lot of capability to tackle these problems. That includes engineering, polymer chemistry, marine biology, marine affairs, and public policy, as well as educational, social, and cultural initiatives that we need to take to really wrap our arms around the complexity of this problem."

Snyder's brainstorming group mapped all the ways plastic gets into the marine environment and how URI could identify approaches to mitigating the problem. The result looked like a



Dennis Nixon, M.M.A. '76, director of Rhode Island Sea Grant and professor of marine affairs, often commutes to URI's Narragansett Bay Campus by kayak, traveling across the bay's West Passage from Jamestown. On his commute, he finds large quantities of trash floating on the water. "If scientists are correct," says Nixon, "There will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050."

giant spiderweb. Understanding that no single entity can solve everything, the group worked to distill that web into areas where URI could have the greatest impact.

From that web grew a University-wide strategic initiative with a working title of "Plastics: Land to Sea." Currently writing its position statement, the group is refining thrust areas for research.

"We're taking an inordinately complex problem and identifying five research areas we can go deep in and really have an impact. We've been working with faculty across the University as well as external partners and will release our initiative with a new website and campaign this fall," Snyder reports.

One of the five research thrust areas is the textile industry and microfibers, apt in light of Rhode Island's industrial history. Throughout the water column, 85 percent of microplastic particles are shed from textiles. In addition, more than 100 million tons of textile fibers made from plastics are produced each year. Wearing and laundering them results in the continual shedding of microfibers into the environment, which are not visible or retrievable. Many end up in the marine environment and by then it's too late, literally water under the bridge, says Snyder.

"URI has textile scientists working alongside marine biologists, engineers, pharmacists, and chemists—as well as textile manufacturers—to inform research on new generation textiles that shed less. But it's not enough to invent these things, you have to implement them. We need social and political scientists to help us design public policy and eventual legislation," says Snyder.

#### NEW PURPOSE FOR OLD BOATS

Nixon, in his role as director of Rhode Island Sea Grant, leads research devoted to improving the management of Rhode Island's coastal waters. Seven years ago, the Rhode Island Marine Trade Association (RIMTA) brought a problem to his attention.

"There was a tremendous surplus of end-of-life fiberglass boats rotting away and landfills were not eager to accept them. They challenged me to find an environmentally sustainable solution," Nixon says.

A breakthrough came when he and then-research assistant Evan Ridley '15, M.A. '17, attended a marine show in Europe and discovered



40

percent of the plastic  
produced each year  
is single-use plastic.





# 60

tons of fiberglass from 45+ boats has been diverted from Rhode Island landfills and junkyards.

German scientists were working on a process to turn fiberglass windmill turbines into virgin cement. They thought: Why not use the same process on boats? They began to solve the technical issues and Ridley wrote his master's thesis on the topic.

"We solved the, 'Can you do it?' question, but it was important for industry to own the process," Nixon explains. "So we transferred all the knowledge over to RIMTA and Evan went from being my graduate student to directing the project. Rhode Island is now a national leader in solutions for end-of-life fiberglass boats and other states are calling on us. It's a great example of how to use the best of science and engineering to help a real pollution problem."

Over at RIMTA, the project is now named the Rhode Island Fiberglass Vessel Recycling program. Ridley reports they have recycled 60 tons of fiberglass taken from more than 45 boats diverted from Rhode Island landfills and junkyards since they began formal recycling activities.

"The work ahead is focused on developing partnerships and logistic pathways that give us greater capacity to deal with the millions of boats awaiting end-of-life management," Ridley says. "The ultimate intention is to continue refining the process and our capacity to supply material to end users in the cement manufacturing industry and beyond, while documenting and reporting to stakeholders."



## WHAT'S HIDING IN OUR OYSTER BEDS?

While Nixon focuses on macroplastics, Andrew J. Davies, associate professor of biological sciences, is working at the other end of the spectrum, microplastics. He is also lead principal investigator for the Ocean State Initiative for Marine Plastics (OSIMAP), a group he formed to serve as a central point for coordinated research efforts. They are working to better inform stakeholders and the public about the impact of marine plastics on the ocean.

"We're the Ocean State and we have such an incredible natural environment right on our doorstep, but we don't have that much quantifiable information about plastics in the environment," he says. "We don't know that much about how many plastics there are, where they're coming from, or where they're going. Establishing that baseline is really important."

One OSIMAP project is studying how microplastics affect commercially important species to understand how changes due to seasons, rainfall and weather patterns, and human behavior affect microplastics levels.

Coleen Suckling, assistant professor of sustainable aquaculture, runs URI's clean laboratory, the facility needed for the intensive work of extracting, quantifying, and characterizing the microplastic samples they collect.

Suckling, an eco-physiologist gaining recognition as a leading expert in sea urchin aquaculture, is researching how animals interact with and are impacted by microplastics. "My expertise within this project is to determine whether the physiology of oysters, crabs, and sea urchins is impacted by the type and concentration of microplastics in our coastal waters. To assess this, I'm measuring their growth, metabolic rate, and energetic needs."

"We don't expect that current field concentrations of microplastics will have that much of a negative impact on the oyster itself," Davies explains, "but we anticipate there are indirect effects, for example on the oyster's reproduction or resilience to disease."

Rory Maynard-Dean '20, an OSIMAP intern, worked with Davies using the clean lab's Raman spectroscope—a type of laser beam—to determine

Through the Rhode Island Fiberglass Vessel Recycling Program, Evan Ridley '15, M.A. '17, leads efforts to recover and dismantle end-of-life boats, like this one at the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, using the fiberglass hulls to create virgin cement.

the chemical composition of microplastic particles in Narragansett Bay. So far, they have identified polyvinyl chloride and polystyrene microbeads, as well as a few synthetic pigments, and are continuing to identify and quantify microplastic pollution and its impact on important species.

A graduate of URI's textiles, fashion merchandising and design program, Maynard-Dean's background provides a unique perspective. He says his OSIMAP experience was rewarding and challenging.

"Having spent my undergraduate years learning about the negative environmental impacts of the fashion industry and consumer habits, I was left with a desire to reform the systems that contribute to environmental and ecological destruction. Working on the OSIMAP project and specifically with the Raman spectroscope has proven to be the perfect platform to help develop a clearer understanding of the extent of plastic pollution and its environmental and ecological impacts."

## KNOWING MORE ABOUT MICROPLASTICS

Another OSIMAP project is measuring the quantity, sizes, and types of microplastics in Narragansett Bay and their movement. Davies built a complex pump and filtration system to increase sampling volume and provide more reliable results. This summer, URI students Cara Megill '21 and Jacqui Roush '23 used the filter to gather samples from a dozen sites around the bay. They found microscopic pieces of plastic at every site they tested, from Point Judith to Providence, as well as the middle of the bay. Back in the lab, they're analyzing samples to identify the sources of the microplastics. So far, they're seeing plastics that look like they are from fishing line and laundered clothing.

"I've always been passionate about studying plastic pollution, and this research has solidified that interest," Megill says. "I especially want to study the effects of plastics on coral reefs. The field and lab work I did this summer has convinced me I'm heading in the right direction."

"There are so many different dimensions to the microplastics problem that it's going to take multiple projects, multiple principal investigators, and multiple years to really start to understand it," Davies says. "It's an impactful area of research that represents a challenge for scientists, managers, and stakeholders."



Marine biology and ocean engineering major Jacqui Roush '23 (left) and marine biology and chemistry major Cara Megill '21 pump water from Narragansett Bay through a filtration system built by URI professor Andrew Davies.

## PLASTICS IN THE FOOD WEB

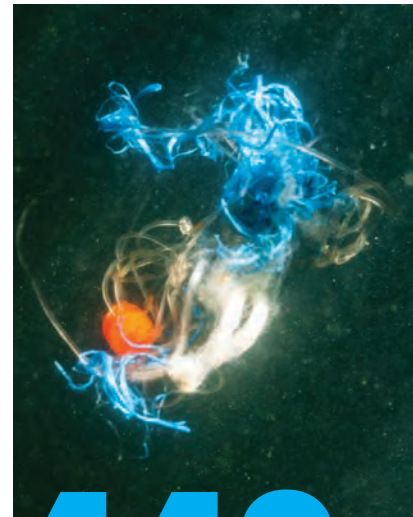
Kelton McMahon, assistant professor of oceanography, is in the beginning stages of an OSIMAP study of how plastic may be propagating through the food web. His project focuses on two commercially important taxa, bivalves and crabs.

"We're looking at the impact of plastic on the biology of these organisms, which in turn impacts their quality as food, how susceptible they are to being eaten, and how they can bioaccumulate plastics as one organism eats another. They can quickly increase their concentration of plastics with every bite," McMahon says.

He is also considering the intersecting relationships between the physical plastics in the organisms and the physiologic and metabolic impacts they might have in terms of nutritional value, size, and the possibility of transferring pollutants and pathogens.

## FILTERING PLASTICS FROM WASTEWATER

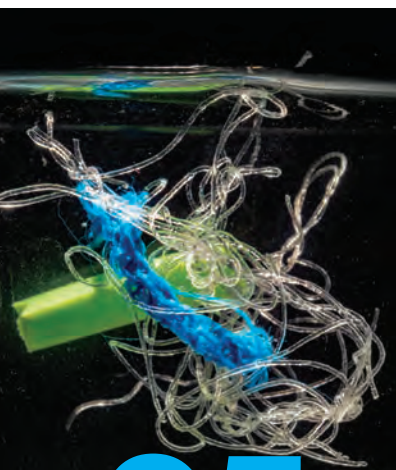
OSIMAP co-principal investigator Vinka Oyanedel-Craver, professor of environmental engineering, is focusing on microplastics in wastewater treatment facility outflow. Her team conducted a critical literature review of extraction and identification reports from wastewater purification sites and discovered extensive differences in the methodology use, which made it difficult to fully assess the magnitude of microplastics contamination. There is a trend toward using common methodologies, which



# 448

million tons of plastic was produced in 2015. That's expected to double by 2050.





85

percent of microplastic particles are shed from textiles.

One hundred million tons of textile fibers made from plastics are produced each year. Jacqui Roush '23 holds a plastic textile fiber, a visible representation of the microplastics that she and co-researcher Cara Megill '21 found at every Narragansett Bay site they tested last summer, from Providence to Point Judith and in the middle of the bay.

will eventually lead to comparable and more accurate information. Depending on treatment methodology, some reports showed an overall removal rate of 95–98 percent.

“Our wastewater treatment systems are not specifically designed to capture microplastics, which are very small and float, and are released in effluent. So even though 95 percent is a high removal rate, if you count in terms of number of particles, 5 percent is still a lot of particles being released,” she explains. “We need new technologies that are feasible to implement, and we are studying electrocoagulation systems used in Brazil as a refinement treatment. In these systems, direct current is applied to metal electrodes that dissolve and change the charge of suspended particles. Bubbles form and particles can be removed when they settle at the bottom or float to the top.”

Oyanedel-Craver’s team is also looking into the contribution of uncontrolled storm water runoff, which some studies show could be the culprit for 70–80 percent of microplastic discharge into coastal systems.

#### WE NEED BETTER DATA

Recognizing the ubiquity of plastic in our lives, Christopher M. Reddy '97, senior scientist in the Department of Marine Chemistry and Geochemistry at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, studies how plastic breaks down in the environment. His goal: Create a better plastic with a shorter life span.

“I find it fascinating to see when nature wins and when nature gets stymied when encountering a pollutant. How a chemical is assembled often dictates how it might be broken down by nature, or not,” Reddy says. “Part of my job is to figure out the attribute in that chemical that will last forever when you release it into the environment. And then inform manufacturers and policymakers about how they might change the formulation, or use a different type of plastic, to make the best product in the future.”

In checking his own lab results on how long plastics last in the environment against existing data, Reddy found the numbers were all over the place. Depending on which report you read, the lifetime of a plastic grocery bag is anywhere from 20 to 500 years. Reddy and co-author Colin P. Ward researched the disparity and published their findings in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*.

“One key assumption behind the issue and public outcry is that plastics last indefinitely in the environment, resulting in chronic exposure that harms animals and humans. But the data supporting this assumption are scant. There is wide variation among published data and a surprising dearth of primary literature supporting it. We need better data—how long plastic sticks around, what makes it break down, and what it becomes—to make more informed decisions,” Reddy says.

Though interrupted by the COVID-19 lab shutdown, Reddy and his team are starting work again and he is hopeful for the future. “I do think you can make a noticeable and measurable impact on this recognized environmental stressor. It is probably the easiest stressor that can be fixed in a reasonable timeframe.”

#### PACKAGING MATTERS

Over in Jamestown, Rhode Island, Victor Bell '73, M.M.A. '77, helps multinational companies develop more eco-friendly packaging and navigate complex sustainability regulations as the U.S. managing director of Lorax EPI.

“We help Fortune 500 companies understand what packaging is recyclable, how best to recycle it, how they can make environmental claims legally, how they can reduce their carbon footprint and increase their recyclability, and how they can incorporate recycled content in their products and packaging,” Bell explains. Right now his company is working with Colgate-Palmolive on a recyclable toothpaste tube for their Tom’s of Maine brand, among others.

Bell is also working with countries around the world and with several U.S. states on extended producer responsibility, a policy approach that makes manufacturers more responsible—financially and/or physically—for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products.

“In every European country and many others around the world, producers have to pay for every gram of packaging they put on the market. The fee is based on how easy it is to recycle your materials—a clear PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottle will have a lower fee than a colored one. This creates stable funding for collection and recycling. Many also have disruptor fees—we call it ecomodulation. If you design something stupidly, like putting a ceramic lid on a glass bottle, you pay, because that contaminates the recyclables. But if you do something smart with recycled content, you get discounts—a great economic incentive to do things correctly. It increases recycling rates and the value of the recycled material.”

The United States, however, is one of the few places that still has single-stream recycling, which leads to more contamination and less valuable recycled content. “We have one of the most broken systems in the developed world,” Bell says.

#### MAKE WASTE A COMMODITY

Susan Bush, M.S. '93, agrees, pointing to statistics that show the total plastic bottle recycling collection rate in the United States was just 28.9 percent in 2018. “We can do certainly do better.”

Bush is a principal of Circular Matters in Narragansett, Rhode Island, a consulting firm that works to bring about the circular economy, a way of conducting business that is restorative and regenerative in nature, which has been popularized by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

“The circular economy stresses designing goods so that waste is designed out. That means re-using materials at the end of their first useful life in an environmentally friendly way and

designing packaging and goods so that they can be reused or recycled, to ‘keep the molecule in play.’ This is very different from our current linear economy, which, for the most part, is: Make, use, dispose.”

At Circular Matters, Bush works with companies, communities, trade organizations, and manufacturers to ensure packaging is as recyclable as possible while strengthening programs and policies to achieve high recycling rates and support the value of the material.

“We’re working to develop strong end markets for recovered materials, including plastics. If we can encourage consumers to recycle and purchase products with recycled content, the market will expand, the material will have value and hopefully be treated as a commodity, not waste. A big part of this is ensuring consumers understand what and how to recycle, so that processing is cost-effective.”

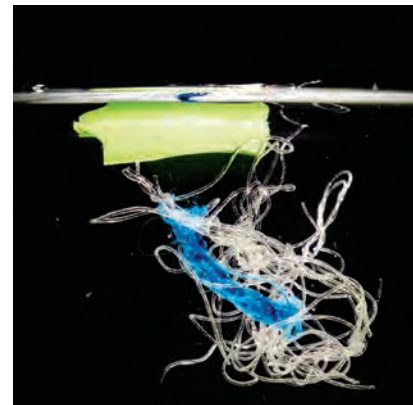
Currently there are strong markets for PET (soda and water bottles) and HDPE (shampoo and milk bottles) plastics, which Bush says comprise 98 percent of plastic bottles produced. PET is recycled into thermoform containers, fiber for carpet and clothing, and fiber-fill products like furniture. HDPE is recycled into plastic bottles, engineered lumber such as composite decking, lawn chairs, and garden edging. Rigid polypropylene plastics such as margarine tubs and to-go containers also have relatively strong domestic markets and are recycled into automotive products, buckets, railroad ties, and other extruded products.

#### POISED TO TURN THE TIDE

There is much about the marine plastic pollution problem and its impact that is not yet fully understood, but URI researchers are poised to change that.

“If we don’t get a handle on the problem, I worry about my grandchildren. I wonder what sort of world they’ll be inheriting,” Nixon says. “They’ll be asking, ‘What was my grandfather doing when they allowed this stuff to go on?’”

“URI is a medium-sized university in the smallest state in the country. We are not naïve in thinking we can tackle this alone. We need to be part of a national and international effort and we need strong partners, but we need to be in the mix,” says Snyder. “Being a strong sea-based institution with a strong ocean program, the ocean is where we can have focused impact.” •



“The circular economy stresses designing goods so that waste is designed out. That means re-using materials at the end of their first useful life in an environmentally friendly way and designing packaging and goods so that they can be reused or recycled, to ‘keep the molecule in play.’ This is very different from our current linear economy, which, for the most part, is: Make, use, dispose.”

—Susan Bush, M.S. '93  
Principal of consulting firm  
Circular Matters



# KEEPER *of Her* CULTURE

While still an undergraduate, Leah Hopkins '20 became the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology's first community engagement specialist. Her job: Collaborate with academic institutions, create educational programming, and raise the profile of Indigenous and tribal communities. A big job? Yes. But also one Hopkins has, in fact, been doing for almost 20 years.

By Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

## Takôy "Cold weather"

A story told out of season disturbs the order of things.





### 1. Takôy “Cold weather”

A story told out of season disturbs the order of things. A harvest story, for instance, shouldn’t be told in the spring if you believe that many things—plants and animals, for instance—are sentient and malleable. This is what Leah Hopkins ’20, a member of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, the Algonquian people native to Rhode Island, was taught as a child. Winter is the time for stories.

This is why, URI English professor Martha Elena Rojas explains to her class one day in the fall of 2019, they will not be following the dictates of her syllabus on that particular day. The class, “What Cheer: Indigeneity and Settler Colonialism,” surveys literature of Colonial America through the lens of critical race theory, specifically examining settler colonialism, the conquering and subjugation of Native people by settlers, as a structure rather than an event. The class was to read “Moshup,” a creation story, but it was fall. Hopkins, a member of the Narragansett Indian tribe and a student in the class, brought this to Rojas’ attention. Hopkins calls herself an educator, but the term seems inadequate given the scope of her work.

Hopkins occupies a unique space in academia and society: She is a bridge between two cultures, tasked with keeping the customs and traditions of her people

some students came to understand they were benefitting from the wisdom of two dedicated scholars: Rojas and Hopkins. But not every student appreciated that.

One student, part of a group presenting on the Narragansett leader Canonicus, stumbled in the pronunciation of his name. “I’m not even going to try,” she said.

Rojas used the moment to explain to the undergraduates that scholarship—and human decency—demands that students pronounce a name correctly. Hopkins, for whom the leader in question is an ancestral relation, is pragmatic. “It’s a common occurrence,” she reflects. “We do what we can to change it.”

“It’s a 400-year-old battle.”

### 2. Unchemokauhettíttea “Let us discourse.”

Rojas recalls Hopkins, an anthropology major, being a star student when they met in 2008. So it was a big surprise when she left URI.

“She disappeared from my class one day, and I didn’t have a conversation with her about why. English 396, ‘The Literature of the Sea,’ at the time I was teaching it was more traditionally structured, and I was transforming what had once been a very male, very white canon.”

Rojas began adding African-American and Black writers and women writers to her syllabi—writers such as Olaudah Equiano, Phillis Wheatley, Colson Whitehead, Rachel Carson, and NourbeSe Philip.

“And Leah asked

me why there weren’t any Indigenous writers on the syllabus given that we’re at the University of Rhode Island. It was a lightbulb moment,” Rojas says. “I told her, ‘There is no good reason.’ She left the class shortly after that conversation. She

had been an excellent student. I felt like I had failed her.

“I spent the next few years educating myself, trying to figure out what

### Hopkins occupies a unique space in academia and society: She is a bridge between two cultures.

Narragansett or Wampanoag texts I could include. Who was doing the work in oceanic Indigenous studies?”

And then Hopkins returned to URI in the spring of 2018.

“I started school in 2008 and I stepped away for a while because I was working at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center full time,” Hopkins says. “I was on that museum trajectory, and I honestly thought, ‘Why do I need this?’ I didn’t drop out of school so much as I just kind of stopped taking classes for a while, because in my mind I was really like, ‘Why do I need this degree? I’m already in the field,’ and then my husband was like, ‘Just finish, just get it done. You’re almost there.’

“And my mom and dad wanted me to finish, and I took a couple of classes here and there, and then I had my son in 2016,” Hopkins says.

The arrival of a child might cause some to postpone a return to school. Not Hopkins. Motherhood compelled her to finish. “And when I returned, that’s when I really developed my love for continuing education.”

And for a second time, Hopkins enrolled in Rojas’ “The Literature of the Sea” course.

“I was delighted when she called back years later to say that she was returning to URI. That moment of her return was a happy convergence,” Rojas says. “Leah’s question had stayed with me. I needed to



Leah Hopkins wears earrings created by her husband, Jonathan Perry. Perry is an Aquinnah Wampanoag speaker, singer, actor, and artist, and a traditional Wampanoag boatbuilder. Like Hopkins, the focus of his work is educating the public about Wampanoag history, culture, art, and traditions.

be open to it, to hear it, and not just explain it away. She was returning to the class as I was implementing the changes she had prompted me to consider.”

Round two found the pair transcending the usual professor-student relationship. They became friends and collaborators.

“In the last 18 months of her college career, Leah was a gift to me, still a student but possessing the knowledge and confidence of a colleague. We could have frank conversations and there would be

moments when I told her, ‘You will be the expert in the room.’ It was an acknowledgement and an open invitation for her to deliver what were essentially mini-lectures in the class,” Rojas says.

Postscript: Hopkins won the prestigious 2019 Rumowicz Maritime Essay Contest for an essay written for Rojas’ class, titled “The ‘Savage’ and the ‘Leviathan’: The Commodification of the Bodies of Indigenous Men and Whales in the Mid-nineteenth Century.”

## Sauncksquûaog “Queens”

### 3. Sauncksquûaog. “Queens”

It is a sunny Friday afternoon in June 2019, and Hopkins is having coffee and checking her phone with the frequency of a teenager. She is awaiting word as to whether she will be offered the position of community engagement specialist at the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology at Brown University in Providence. There is serious competition and Hopkins is not yet done with her undergraduate degree. If she gets the position, it will mean a full-time job and coursework, come the fall, as well as the demands that come with a precocious 3-year-old.

Hopkins is not too worried, though. She is the product of a strong matrilineal heritage. One of her ancestors, Queen Weetamoo, was a Pocasset Wampanoag sachem and ally of Metacomet, also known as King Philip. Weetamoo led 300 troops into battle during King Philip’s War.

“The whole idea of American feminism is relatively new, but Indigenous feminism has existed for millennia,” Hopkins observes. “The word for ‘woman’ in our language literally translates to ‘one with final say.’”

When people talk about Indigenous male leaders who spoke on behalf of their communities, these men, these decisions, weren’t just off-the-cuff. They were decisions made with the consent of the elder women and the clan mothers of our communities, because that’s just how we functioned.”

What held hundreds of years ago again holds today. The female elders of her0

## Unchemokauhettíttea “Let us discourse.”

alive while also diffusing that heritage to a wider, non-Indigenous group.

The lesson on creation stories was one of many contributions Hopkins would make to Rojas’ class over the course of the semester. And as the semester progressed,





Indigenous artists welcome non-Native collectors of authentic Indigenous jewelry and designs. The best guarantee of quality and authenticity is to buy from the artist directly, Hopkins says. On her feet, Hopkins wears moccasins embellished with traditional beadwork, which is an embroidery technique with glass beads. Hopkins' cuffs were made by her sister-in-law, jewelry-maker Elizabeth James-Perry. The cuffs feature hundreds of wampum beads.



## Npépeyup náwwot

"I have long been here."

community are integral to the governance of its members, Hopkins notes.

"So I think what would be of value for academia and institutions is to value Indigenous women. That's where all the knowledge is. I shouldn't say all the knowledge because that negates men. But that's where a lot of knowledge is held. And I'm not saying, 'Listen to me

because I'm a woman,' but there's a lot to be learned by listening to women. So I hope to use my position as an Indigenous woman to bring light to our history and our knowledge and our voice."

She got the job.

### 4. Npépeyup náwwot. "I have long been here."

It is late September, mid-afternoon at a living history event, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century encampment, at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center in Ledyard, Connecticut. Hopkins, her husband, Jonathan Perry, and their son, Tristan, are dressed in traditional period clothing of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Hopkins and Perry are demonstrating Indigenous meal preparation: She is adding spices to a pot of

"I hope to use my position as an Indigenous woman to bring light to our history and our knowledge and our voice."

—Leah Hopkins

squash and beans; he is dressing venison with maple sugar and garlic. The pair has worked together often over the years, often with Tristan in tow. Only 3 years old, Tristan has declared he, too, will give tours at museums, like his parents.

"We do this at home," Hopkins tells her small audience as she stirs the contents of the small pot. There is no irony in her tone but it does underscore the fact that people are paying close attention to a mundane activity Hopkins and Perry will likely repeat later that evening, without an audience.

During a lull, Hopkins shares how she came to work in museums. "In 2008, I had a high school internship here. My mom was friends with the director of public programs, Trudie Lamb-Richmond, and she took me under her wing. I really liked the public education aspect. I spent time studying exhibits. I moved up to the position of educator. Then I became an education planning coordinator for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head in Aquinah, Massachusetts."

A family of four—husband, wife, and two adolescent sons—arrives, pausing the conversation. After Hopkins introduces her family, the woman smiles at Tristan and asks, "Where is your bow and arrow?"

Turning to Hopkins, she asks, "What is his Indian name?"

"We don't share our Native names. We keep those private," Hopkins replies. The woman presses the issue. Hopkins is gracious but steadfast. The answer is a firm no. Finally, the family moves on.

It is a tough ending to the day but by no means unusual. Hopkins and her husband are physically striking.

They wear their hair long and, in Jonathan's case, braided. They draw attention. Sometimes it's unwanted.

"Automatically we become ambassadors for all Native people throughout Turtle Island—North America," Hopkins says. "For me it becomes exhausting when I'm having dinner at a Thai restaurant with my husband—and it usually happens to my husband, I think, because not many people are used to seeing a man with long

"So if you want to talk about responsible museum curation, you need to talk about 400 years of history first."

—Leah Hopkins

braids. But when you're sitting down to a private meal and people just come up and ask, 'Are you Native American?' And you say, 'Yes,' and then the litany of questions starts.

"Meanwhile you're being polite and you're talking to them but your food's getting cold. We've had that happen quite a few times."

Cold pad thai is one thing, but then there's also translation exhaustion—the term refers to the scaffolding Indigenous people often must provide when in conversation with non-Indigenous people. An example: To understand why an Indigenous person might take umbrage in a discussion about civil rights, it would help to first know that they weren't granted the rights afforded to citizens of the United States until the Nationality Act of 1940, and were prohibited from practicing their religion until 1978. That's not a typo. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act was ratified in 1978. In casual and, sometimes, academic conversation, it falls to the Indigenous person to provide the historical framework for a contemporary conversation to begin to take place, Hopkins explains.

"Sometimes in academia or in daily life, you have to set the stage of colonization before you can get to your point—what it is you really want to talk about," Hopkins says. "So if you want to talk about, for instance, responsible museum curation, you need to talk about 400 years of history first."

Hopkins can handle translation exhaustion. It's part of the job. She worries for Tristan, though.

"I'm 29 and I've worked since I was a young child to educate the public about Native people, to educate mostly non-Native people, because those are the people who really need that education," Hopkins says. "I work to enhance and uplift our communities and obviously I'm always learning, and I'll continue to learn and I'll continue to share what I've learned, but I already see the microaggressions toward my son. He is constantly told what a pretty girl he is because of his long hair.

"He's a strong little spirit, but I still want him to be able to grow up and not have to be an ambassador for Native people if he doesn't want to be. Obviously, he can do whatever he wants. I hope he will never encounter somebody who dresses up as a Native person for Halloween.

"I don't want to break his little heart, you know, by explaining that this is how we're represented. That we're caricatures."

If there's to be translation exhaustion, Hopkins will bear the burden in the hopes of creating a different experience for her son.

"I can continue to educate people for the rest of my life, and I absolutely will. I want to make Native people want to work with museums and to make museums want to work with Native communities," she says. "This is what I was meant to do." •

Author's note: The Indigenous language used in the headings of this story is taken from Roger Williams' *A Key Into the Language of America*.



Hopkins' work as the Haffenreffer Museum's first community engagement specialist will ensure local Indigenous people's visibility and cultural continuity.





## Honing Their Craft

Adam Oliveri '05 and Bryan Ferguson '05 used the skills they developed at URI to build a burgeoning boutique craft beer business.

By Grace Kelly

The story of Adam Oliveri '05, Bryan Ferguson '05, and Craft Collective, their beer distribution company, begins with a song.

“ZBT, we were not the typical fraternity, and one of the things we really prided ourselves on was the Greek Week competition,” says Oliveri. “We made it our business to always win the Greek sing and the lip-sync competition. We’d get a room in a basement somewhere and practice some a cappella song. It’s funny, I was on vacation last week and I found myself singing, ‘jum jubba doo-ah, jum jubba

doo-ah.’ That was my part in one of the songs we covered, “Semi-Charmed Life” by Third Eye Blind.”

With each smooth harmony, jum jubba doo-ah, and refrain, they’d smash the competition and win.

That same desire to hone their craft and win is what drove Ferguson and Oliveri to build Craft Collective, a boutique beer and beverage distribution service that is sought out by suppliers and clients in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine.

“Our fraternity, we were underdogs—we were the smallest, we were new—and

so we just decided to get really good at a few things,” says Ferguson. “And that’s not terribly different from the approach we’ve taken with our business.”

Craft Collective, based in Stoughton, Massachusetts, gives New England craft breweries and beverage-makers the chance to get their product out there, and simultaneously helps restaurants and retailers carry the best in the local craft beverage scene.

“I think their vision was about a serious focus on smaller, specific, really good craft breweries,” says Chip Samson, owner

and business manager of Shaidzon Beer Company in Kingston, Rhode Island, and one of their suppliers. “It’s also the strategy of their clients and accounts they work with—these really beer-specific, beer-appreciating restaurants and bars.”

This has not only attracted small craft breweries looking to make a name for themselves, but has also made Craft Collective sought after by trendy restaurants and bars. Tom Dennen, owner of Bayberry Beer Hall in Providence, says he opened Bayberry knowing he’d use Craft Collective.

“I had my eye on Craft Collective long before they started distributing in Rhode Island,” he says. “From what I could see they had the best beer brands, which I

**“I had my eye on Craft Collective long before they started distributing in Rhode Island. From what I could see they had the best beer brands, which I wanted to build my business around.”**

—Tom Dennen, owner, Bayberry Beer Hall

wanted to build my business around.”

Started in 2015, Craft Collective has grown from the two-person team of Ferguson and Oliveri to a team that’s pushing

50 employees, with a portfolio that includes local breweries like Proclamation and Shaidzon, craft beverage peddlers like The Nitro Cart and Anchor & Hope, and restaurants and bars like Bayberry—and the long-standing Mews Tavern in Wakefield, Rhode Island.

Their idea for a boutique distribution service has its roots in Oliveri and Ferguson’s appreciation for craft beer, the expansive growth of the industry in the last 10 years, their close friendship, and the leadership opportunities that attending URI afforded them.



Left, Adam Oliveri and Bryan Ferguson work remotely at Bayberry Beer Hall in Providence. Below, Adam and Bryan enjoy downtime at Bayberry with their wives, who both attended URI, Felice Gerstel-Friedman and Meghan Ferguson '06.





Adam Oliveri '05, founder and CEO



Bryan Ferguson '05, co-founder and president



Jessica Becker '07, head of marketing



Emily Warden '07, senior manager, business services



Jamie Buscher '15, brand management lead

## Oliveri and Ferguson met during rush season.

"I met Adam when I was joining ZBT," said Ferguson. "I recall that Adam was involved in recruiting me and getting me into my leadership roles there."

Their friendship grew and their very different personalities helped push each other.

"I'm sort of more extroverted; Adam's a little more introverted," says Ferguson, who majored in business management at URI. "Some of those classic traits that partners have."

"He leads through fire and competitiveness and gut feel, and for me, I'm like, 'I'm going to diagram this beautiful mind style,'" says Oliveri, an economics major, laughing. "But that's actually worked out pretty well for us, having these different styles and approaches. It's allowed us to leverage our strengths in being leaders that we developed at URI."

As newly minted 21-year-olds at URI, the duo also began to develop a taste for beer.

The early days were all about the light lagers that were popular at the time. But as the craft beer movement began to grow, so too did Ferguson and Oliveri's curiosity for a better brew—partially sparked by the local craft beer brand Newport Storm (now Newport Craft Beer Company). "During our senior year, we used to go over there on a Friday, and we would do a tour and they would give out these wooden nickels that you could trade for half-pours of beer," says Ferguson. "I think that's when I first became aware of craft brewing, and what breweries actually were and what it meant to make and sell beer."

A few years later, Oliveri had developed an interest in wine, while Ferguson was making frequent trips to breweries in Vermont—those were the early days of the craft beer industry.

Then, in the early 2010s, the craft beer world exploded.

"I first learned about beer and the culture through Newport Storm and then transitioned to going on these wine trails

... and later came back to beer when the craft beer proliferation was happening in the early 2010s," says Oliveri. He became inspired to apply his background in tech and finance to beer, first crafting the idea of a beer incubator, which then morphed into a craft beer distribution service.

"I started the distribution company as a way to lead into doing this incubator, and then it took off and we shelved the incubator," he says. "But along the way, I was like, 'I need a partner here.'"

And his longtime friend Bryan Ferguson immediately came to mind.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Ferguson and Oliveri not only have a growing business with happy customers and clients, they also have a team that includes a number of URI grads.

One of them, Jessica Becker '07, knew Oliveri when she was at URI and always thought he'd do something great.

"He's a great leader.

He has vision and that's

really critical when you're starting or running any company," she says. "Craft Collective is a multi-state operation, so it requires a lot of vision and planning and leadership. Those are skills I saw in him back at URI, and he continues to shine now."

As for her taste in beer back then?

"I wasn't drinking craft beer back then, not even close," she says, laughing. "Lots of Busch Light, I can't even think about it anymore. Luckily I've become educated since then."

In addition to learning to appreciate a beautiful brew, Becker is thankful to be a part of an organization whose spirit and mission is clear in everything it does.

"I think being a part of an organization that is so passionate about this industry is infectious and a great motivator," she says. "Everyone is so excited about their job, and to be a part of that gets me excited, too."

Jamie Buscher '15, brand management lead at Craft Collective, adds, "Bryan and Adam are hands-down the best bosses I've ever had. Bryan and Adam truly care about their employees and treat us like family." •

**"I think being a part of an organization that is so passionate about this industry is infectious and a great motivator. Everyone is so excited about their job, and to be a part of that gets me excited, too."**

—Jessica Becker '07

# Brews and Bites



Milk stouts have their origins in the early 1900s when they were promoted as restorative drinks for everyone from laborers to nursing mothers to the infirm. To make the drink sweeter, unfermentable milk lactose was added to the brew, hence the name, "milk" stout. Oliveri likes to pair SingleCut's version with an equally sweet and rich dessert.

"My wife and I host Thanksgiving every year, and while I look forward to the turkey and fixings, I'm there for the pie. **Chocolate pecan** is the dark horse. I usually pair it with **SingleCut's Eric More Cowbell! Milk Stout**. It's creamy, balanced, and roasty; not too sweet, and the touch of vanilla works well with a slice (or two) of chocolate pecan."

—Adam Oliveri '05, founder and CEO



Do IPAs even need an introduction? The craft brewery darling has grown from a drink that languished in obscurity to a powerhouse with endless varieties. But in almost every IPA, one thing is for sure: hops are the stars. And for Ferguson, a full, fruity IPA with a hint of bitterness goes great with a bucket of hot wings.

"My dad and I have been going to Patriots games together for years, and we've always enjoyed the tailgating almost as much as the game. On the menu? Something spicy like **Buffalo wings**, and a few iced-down cans of an assertive IPA like **Proclamation Tendril**. A West Coast/East Coast hybrid, Tendril has some bitterness but is super drinkable. It pairs superbly with spicy foods, standing up to the heat with refreshing notes of grapefruit, pine, orange, and melon."

—Bryan Ferguson '05, co-founder and president

Craft Collective distributes hundreds of products from more than 90 independent craft producers, from beer and wine to hard seltzer and nitro cold brew coffee. With so many options on tap, we asked five Craft Collective staffers (all URI grads) to pick some of their favorite fall and winter brews and the bites they enjoy with them.

Stories and illustrations by Grace Kelly



Czech pilsners have a clean malt profile with a hint of spiciness from Saaz hops. Drinkable, with a clean, bitter finish, Buscher likes to pair **Shaidzon's Czech Pilsner with a cheesy, meaty cheesesteak**, like the ones from Tilly's in West Kingston, Rhode Island, near URI—and a stone's throw from Shaidzon Beer's taproom.

"When I'm craving a crisp and delicious beer to match the autumn weather, I take the familiar trip down Routes 2 and 108 to West Kingston, where Shaidzon brews Buffalo Czech Pilsner. It's clean, refreshing, and a thirst-quencher after a long day of leaf-peeping. The beer's subtle sweetness and noble hoppiness cut through the salty fare I usually pair it with, like cheesesteak—or chili, or a grinder."

—Jamie Buscher '15, brand management lead

**Oxbow Farmhouse Pale Ale + Clam Chowder**



A saison's flavor lies in its use of a specific breed of yeast, which lends peppery, spiced notes to the brew. Oxbow throws in some hops for a bit of citrus punch, creating a quaffable beer that Becker sips with some "chowda."

"I'm a Rhody native, and I recently moved back to Rhode Island after a 13-year hiatus. What I missed the most? The **clam chowder**. I usually pair a bowl with a bottle of **Oxbow's Farmhouse Pale Ale**, brewed due north in Newcastle, Maine. Hopped with American hops, Oxbow masterfully marries the traditional Belgian saison with the American pale ale for a blonde, dry, highly carbonated beer that balances the rich, creamy chowder exceptionally well."

—Jessica Becker '07, head of marketing

**Anchor & Hope Mendo Red + Pizza**



Who says Craft Collective only distributes beer? **Anchor & Hope**, a Rhode Island wine négociant, works with small vineyards around the world to produce craft wines. And Warden likes her **Mendo red wine with a classic pizza**.

"My husband and I travel a lot around the holidays to visit family throughout New England. We never leave home without a bottle or two of wine from Anchor & Hope. Their wines are incredible, make the perfect host/hostess gift, and pair really well with pizza, which is our go-to for takeout after a long day of holiday travel. We usually open a bottle of Mendo red to enjoy with a slice or two."

—Emily Warden '07, senior manager, business services





Apples from URI's East Farm are sorted and boxed for distribution to URI students and Rhode Island food banks.

# HUNGER HITS HOME

## FOOD INSECURITY ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

Hunger. It's a widespread problem—even on college campuses. How is URI responding to help get food to those in need? Donating and delivering produce grown in our experimental agricultural fields, running a campus food pantry, advocating to expand the federal school lunch program to public colleges, and more.

By Todd McLeish

An international student living in URI's Graduate Village Apartments with her three young children was struggling to feed her family while working toward her degree half a world away from her extended family and friends. She was doing the best she could on her limited income, but after paying for her academic expenses, clothing for her growing children, and housing costs, she had little left over for food.

It's a surprisingly common problem on university campuses nationwide, and URI is not immune. Food insecurity is a growing concern, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even more challenging for an increasing number of students.

Thankfully, URI has developed a number of resources in recent years to support students in need. It is also growing fresh produce for area food banks and leading efforts to improve access to healthy food for families in need around the state. But much more needs to be done at the state and federal level to address the underlying issues behind these problems to prevent a further escalation of food insecurity on campus and beyond.

### FOOD INSECURITY ON CAMPUS: THE BIG PICTURE

It has only been in the last 10 years that food insecurity has been recognized as a significant problem on college campuses in the United States. According to Kathy Collins, URI's vice president for student

affairs, it's a subject that simply wasn't talked about or acknowledged. "It's an embarrassing thing for colleges to make public," she says. "But we have to talk about it."

National surveys have forced the issue into the light.

In 2019, 167,000 students were surveyed by Temple University at 171 two-year colleges and 56 four-year institutions, and 39 percent of respondents indicated they had been food insecure in the previous 30 days, meaning they did not have enough to eat or they were uncertain where their next meal would come from. The rate is lower at four-year schools, where it typically ranges from 8 to 30 percent. A similar survey at URI found about 13 percent of students were food insecure in 2019.

"The expansion and diversity of the people who go to college has really changed the landscape," says Kathleen Gorman, director of URI's Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America, who led the URI survey. "Many more lower-income and moderate-income students with limited support from their families, who before wouldn't have gone to college, now do. And colleges now have a lot more older students who have families and jobs and are struggling to pay their bills.

"If 13 percent of our students are food insecure—and the true number is probably higher than that—then that means a couple thousand students are hungry," she adds. "That's not OK."





## ASSISTING URI'S FOOD-INSECURE STUDENTS

The demographics of those experiencing food insecurity varies widely among URI students, but it includes commuters, in- and out-of-state students, grad students and even some who live on campus. Student-athletes are particularly susceptible to food insecurity, as only 25 percent are on full scholarship, and their required training regimen—coupled with their coursework—leaves little time to earn extra income.



Jacqui Tisdale, Ph.D. '14, assistant dean for outreach and intervention in the URI Dean of Students Office, said the survey numbers aren't surprising, since the issues people are faced with across the country—and that are illustrated by increased visits to food banks—also play out on college campuses.

"Today's students are pretty savvy," she says. "They eat out of vending machines, they borrow meal swipes from their friends, they order a pizza and make it last for eight meals. Food insecurity has close ties to housing insecurity, and we see a number of students who have to make choices between stable housing, food, and books. Their version of housing insecurity just looks a little different—

they're couch surfing with friends or living in their cars and lack a consistent address."

Tisdale serves as a case manager on campus, so students who are hungry eventually find their way to her. She guides them to a variety of services that are now available.

Rhody Outpost, the campus food pantry, was established in 2013 by two students as their final project in Gorman's class. They had an inkling that food insecurity was a concern for many students on campus and believed that if a food pantry were available, students would use it. They were right. Located in the basement of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on Lower College Road and administered by the Dean of Students Office since 2017, it regularly serves the needs of hundreds of students, thanks largely to donations from church members,

**"Food insecurity has close ties to housing insecurity, and we see a number of students who have to make choices between stable housing, food, and books."**

*—Jacqui Tisdale, Ph.D. '14  
Assistant Dean for Outreach  
and Intervention*

campus food drives, and fundraising by Greek Life.

In the fall of 2018, a meal-sharing program was launched enabling students on meal plans to donate one meal per semester to students in need. Called Share a Swipe For Hope, the program is modeled after the national Swipe Out Hunger program. Students donate "guest swipes" from their meal plan via a dining hall kiosk, and those seeking meals can apply

to have a certain number of meals added to their ID card so they can easily access meals with their peers anonymously.

"We run a big campaign every fall and spring to encourage students to share a swipe, and we get a great response," Tisdale says. "There are usually enough swipes donated to meet the need, in part because that's not the sole program we offer."

Students with greater needs than an occasional meal can also apply to the Students First Fund, which provides financial support to students with demonstrated financial need for a variety of emergency uses, including for the purchase of groceries or even an entire dining hall meal plan. "Share a Swipe meals are often used for students who are not in the best financial standing with the University—those that might have an outstanding balance on their university account or who might not be actively enrolled but are still coming to campus regularly for one reason or another," Tisdale explains. "To access the Students First Fund, students must be enrolled in classes, be in good financial and academic standing, and they must have exhausted all other financial aid options."

## URI RESPONDS TO HUNGER IN RHODE ISLAND

Food insecurity isn't just a problem on campus, of course. About 11 percent of Rhode Island households worry about where their next meal will come from, according to a 2019 report, but that number doubled this year due to the pandemic. National figures are similar.

"Unemployment skyrocketed when the pandemic hit, and the last thing you spend your money on is food," Gorman says. "There are certain things that are less flexible—you pay your rent so you don't get evicted, you pay for transportation to get to your job. But people scrimp on food. And food prices have gone way, way up."

It's an even greater problem in some segments of society. Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that one out of every five Black households, one out of seven Hispanic households,



**"If you're worried all the time about whether you can get food and how to pay for it, it's not just about the food. It's the psychological stress and constant worry,"**

*—Kathleen Gorman  
Director, URI Feinstein Center for  
a Hunger Free America*

and one out of three single-mother households regularly experience food insecurity.

"It's a huge issue. And if you're worried all the time about whether you can get food and how to pay for it, it's not just about the food. It's the psychological stress and constant worry," says Gorman. "You can make an argument that it's an economic problem and a health problem and a physical nutrition problem, as well. For kids in school who can't get enough to eat, it affects their academics, their behavior, how they feel about themselves. It spills over into all kinds of things."

A number of efforts are underway around the URI community to respond to this growing problem. Gorman has had a contract for 19 years with the state of Rhode Island to manage its SNAP Outreach Project, which involves helping potentially eligible individuals and families gain access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps). She has had a team of staff and students visit community centers and other agencies to provide information, conduct screenings, and help people fill out the complicated paperwork and compile the necessary

documents to apply for SNAP benefits. They also help recipients complete interim reports and recertify that they still qualify.

This year, the state has taken over the program, but Gorman and Tisdale have applied to make URI a community partner in the program to help URI students—as well as students at Rhode Island College and the Community College of Rhode Island—access SNAP benefits.

In addition to Gorman's work, URI Cooperative Extension coordinates a SNAP Education program led by Sarah Amin, assistant professor of nutrition. She oversees a team of 20 staff members who teach nutrition education to low-income families in urban communities in Rhode Island. The federally funded program encourages people to choose nutritious food through hands-on programming.

"One of the critical aspects of our programs is food resource management skills—how to stretch your food dollar and use it wisely," Amin says. "We empower participants with cooking skills and food preparation skills, in addition to nutrition information, to make the best food decisions. We teach them how to make a grocery list, for instance, and how to understand unit prices when shopping."

## SHARING THE HARVEST

The University also grows a great deal of fresh produce in its agricultural research fields, most of which is donated to local food banks like the Jonnycake Center in Peace Dale, where Kate Brewster '95 serves as executive director. Tens of thousands of pounds of squash, corn, melons, peppers, tomatoes, and other crops are harvested on campus each year to feed those in need.

"The Agricultural Experiment Station has been around since 1892, and there's always going to be extra food when you're experimenting with crops," says Tim Sherman '10, who manages the operations at the Gardner Crops Research Center, also known as the Agronomy Farm. "We're doing fertilizer trials, we've got a study on sweet corn, we've got a pepper trial. And every year we have crops to harvest from what the students in the vegetable production class have planted."

Although some of the produce could





**“I can’t live in a place where we’re plowing under food and we have people who don’t have food. It’s a community—we have so much food, we just need to get it to the right people.”**

*—Sharon Pavignano ’74, Associate Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations for the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement*

be sold, the University doesn’t want to compete with local farmers. “The Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension are here to help local farmers and build agriculture in the state,” Sherman says. “That’s why we do variety trials in the first place—to see what vegetable varieties grow best in our environment to help our farmers. We don’t want to be competing with them for sales.”

In addition to what’s grown on campus, URI Master Gardeners grow tons of fresh produce each year—15 tons last year alone—at more than a dozen community gardens around the state for donation to food pantries and other hunger-relief agencies. According to Vanessa Venturini ’08, M.E.S.M. ’11, the Master Gardener

state coordinator, they tend vegetable gardens at House of Hope in Warwick, for instance, where many individuals formerly experiencing homelessness now live, and partner with SNAP Education staff to offer workshops to teach the residents how to cook the vegetables they grow. Gardeners tending the Produce Donation Garden at Roger Williams Park in Providence and the Grow4Good Garden at Mount Hope Farm in Bristol do similar workshops for clients of local food pantries.

### CONNECTING GROWERS, PRODUCE, AND THOSE IN NEED

At the far corner of URI’s East Farm, a mile from the Kingston campus, a dozen Master Gardeners and other volunteers using long-handled poles harvest apples from the University’s research orchard every week from mid-August through October. Some pick by hand, while others load bright orange totes with apples and sort them before placing them onto a truck for delivery to Graduate Village and the Jonnycake Center. By the end of the season they will have harvested more than 15,000 pounds of apples from 159 apple trees of 11 varieties that would otherwise have dropped to the ground to spoil. A dozen nearby peach and pear trees are also harvested.



URI Master Gardeners grow food on the URI campus and in community gardens, which they harvest and distribute to Rhode Island food banks and other agencies.

Master Gardener Susan Axelrod ’89 has coordinated the harvest for the last four years, often bringing in school and scout groups, Grad Village residents, and others to help pick, though the pandemic limited this year’s participation. “Everyone has fun picking in the orchard,” she says.

The logistics of this year’s harvest were managed by Hope’s Harvest RI, a Pawtucket-based nonprofit that has partnered with the Master Gardeners to collect surplus produce from local farms around the state to deliver to hunger relief agencies in a practice called gleaning. Hope’s Harvest gleaned more than 80,000 pounds of produce last year that would have otherwise gone to waste. By training Master Gardeners to lead gleaning trips to area farms, it expects to triple that number this year.

“There are a lot of things that farmers can’t control, like the weather and pests, so they often grow more than they need to mitigate risk,” says Eva Agudelo, executive director of Hope’s Harvest. “That’s them being good farmers. But they may not have the labor to harvest crops they know they can’t sell, so Hope’s Harvest provides the labor and infrastructure. We coordinate with volunteers and food pantries for deliveries.”

Master Gardener Sharon Pavignano ’74, associate director of corporate and foundation relations for the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement, also has her hands full during the harvest season. In addition to her regular job responsibilities, she facilitates the movement of produce around campus and ensures that nothing goes to waste. She makes sure Rhody Outpost is supplied with fresh produce each week, alerts the residents of Grad Village when certain crops will be available, coordinates with Dining Services to transport food around campus, and delivers produce to nutritionist Kelli Kidd, who counsels student-athletes, for distribution to hungry athletes. Pavignano even found funding to build a vegetable garden at Grad Village and recruited Master Gardeners to serve as mentors to the student gardeners.

“I can’t live in a place where we’re plowing under food and we have people who don’t have food,” she says. “The people growing the food probably didn’t know about the food insecurity issue and don’t have time to move melons to where they’re needed. It’s a community—we

have so much food, we just need to get it to the right people.”

Pavignano also coordinates the annual Food Summit, hosted by the URI Business Engagement Center, a networking opportunity for those in the food industry to hear from local experts, discuss partnership opportunities, learn about funding sources, and support the development of the local food movement in the state. The theme of the 2021 event in January is food insecurity. It is hosted by the Rhode Island Food Center, which Pavignano had a hand in launching on campus in 2016 as a place where farmers, growers, producers, distributors, servers, retailers, and other food pioneers can easily access URI’s agricultural resources, wider food expertise, researchers, and business support programs.

### ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES

Despite the wide range of activities and programs the University is engaged in to address food insecurity on campus and in the state, the problem is far from solved. To do so, according to Gorman, requires that the root causes of the issue be addressed: low wages and a poorly funded safety net.

“Living wages—which is a lot more than \$15 per hour—would be the goal and would go a long way toward remedying the problem,” Gorman says. “But not all people are working or can work, so we need a safety net, and that’s where SNAP comes in. It has the potential to make a huge difference in the lives of many families, so keeping it strong and well-



Students who live at URI’s Graduate Village Apartments help harvest and package apples from East Farm. They take home part of the harvest for their own households; the rest is distributed to food banks.

funded is critical. We can do that, with a little political will.”

Gorman has advocated at the federal level to expand the K–12 free- and reduced-price school meals program to the state’s public colleges, in part because many college students don’t qualify for SNAP benefits, though the effort hasn’t gotten much traction yet due to the cost.

“If families are struggling, we need to help them,” she says. “If students are struggling, we need to help them. It’s complicated, I know, but we should do it anyway.” •

### STUDENTS FIRST FUND

Established in 2014, the Students First Fund provides emergency support to URI students with demonstrated financial need. While it is often used to provide meals to students experiencing food insecurity, it has also reimbursed travel expenses so students can attend a family funeral, paid for medical expenses not covered by health insurance, and subsidized the cost of books and other academic supplies. During the pandemic when classes shifted online, the fund even paid for cell phone costs to access remote classes, since many students are dependent on their phones for internet access.

The fund is managed by the URI Foundation and administered by the Dean of Students Office. Those interested in contributing to the fund are encouraged to contact Sharon Pavignano at URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement at [spavignano@uri.edu](mailto:spavignano@uri.edu).

The Fifth Annual Rhode Island Food System Summit  
Taking the Lead:  
Improving Food Access  
in a Global Pandemic  
January 20, 2021

[web.uri.edu/food-center/foodsummit2021](http://web.uri.edu/food-center/foodsummit2021)



# The Fight for Justice

## URI's History of Student-Led Civil Rights Activism

The 2020 “moment” of racial reckoning is the latest iteration of what is, in truth, not a moment, but a longstanding struggle for racial justice in the United States. At URI, student-led protests have been some of the most powerful catalysts for change.

By Grace Kelly



The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at URI in October 1966. He addressed a crowd of 5,000 in Keaney Gymnasium.

“The appalling silence of the good people is as serious as the vitriolic words of the bad people,” said the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. from the podium.

Five-thousand students, professors, and staff sat in Keaney Gymnasium on a mild October afternoon in 1966, soaking up the words of the civil rights activist.

King’s words—as well as the words and actions of others—inspired change. Over the years, URI students, staff, and faculty spoke out against injustice, protested inequality, and honored those who fought the true fight. Buildings were occupied, activists gathered, and organizations formed.

“All or most of the progress that has been made on campus has come, if not

immediately, in the years subsequent to student protests,” says Abu Bakr ’73, M.S. ’84, M.B.A. ’88.

Africana studies, the Multicultural Student Services Center, the Black Student Union, the creation of the chief diversity officer position, and resources to address racism and bring about equity on campus all have their roots in the student protests of 1971, 1992, and 1998.

“It’s such a pivotal part of our history, but not necessarily part of the narrative that we tell about URI,” says Mary Grace Almandrez, chief diversity officer and associate vice president. “We all know about Rhody Ram, we know the fight song—there are certain parts of our

narrative that we continue to perpetuate, but not necessarily that activist history.”

“I always wish that there was a way for students to understand the long history of the struggle,” says Frank Forleo ’74. “It would be a great benefit to the students today to understand how we have arrived where we are—at what young people call ‘the moment.’”

“It would be a great benefit to the students today to understand how we have arrived where we are—at what young people call ‘the moment.’”

—Frank Forleo ’74

# 1971

In 1971, students took over the administration building, protesting the lack of diversity at URI and cuts to funding for the Talent Development program. The protest led to several important changes, including securing funding for Talent Development for subsequent years.



## Voices of Change

**Frank Forleo ’74** was assistant director for Talent Development from 1975 until his retirement in 2016. His wife, Sharon Forleo ’72, M.A. ’94, also served Talent Development as associate director. The Forleos were the recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2019 URI Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Awards for their 40+ years of service. President David M. Dooley praised their dedication, saying, “The cumulative impact of your love for the students of the University of Rhode Island, particularly those students who, for very good reasons, felt marginalized, ignored underappreciated and disrespected, is extraordinary.”

## 1971: The Push for Recognition and Respect

When Valerie Southern ’75, M.C.P. ’80, first arrived at URI in 1970, she was stunned at her treatment.

“When I arrived and started participating in my classes, which I was used to doing, I realized that there was a difference,” she says, “not because they didn’t know who I was, but just because I was Black.”

Southern grew up in Jamestown, Rhode Island, the daughter of a Naval serviceman, attending St. Catherine Academy in Newport, where she was encouraged to participate in class.

But things were different for her at URI. Classmate Forleo explains: “When I started at URI, it was lily-white. There were some student-athletes of color, and there were a smattering of African-American students, but the numbers were very small.”

After a hiatus when he fought in Vietnam, Forleo returned to URI to some small improvements. “By the time I came back in ’69, things had changed a little because the Talent Development (TD) program was created in ’68. But the group was still pretty small.”

And in 1970, Southern was part of that small population, around .001 percent.

“They weren’t used to Black students,





At left, students occupying the administration building address a crowd on the Quadrangle. In addition to securing funding for the Talent Development program, the student protesters succeeded in establishing a Black studies program and a Black student organization at URI. At right, the cover of the January 15, 1973 issue of *Black Gold*, a student newspaper established by Valerie Southern to give Black students at URI a voice.



## Voices of Change

**Valerie J. Southern '75, M.C.P. '80**, is the president of VJS-TC, providing expert consultation in planning, management, engineering, and design of transportation systems. Before establishing her practice, she held various municipal, state, and federal transportation planning and policy positions, including serving as the deputy secretary for transportation planning and capital programming for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While a student at URI, she started and served as editor-in-chief of the influential student newspaper, *Black Gold*.

and there were hardly any Black faculty, hardly any," she says.

"I realized that professors were ignoring me. I would raise my hand, say, 'I have an idea,' and they'd be like, 'Yeah right, hold on,' and all the other students would get their say," she says.

"It was just signs—some subtle, some very blatant—that we weren't considered worthy of the experience that the state university was offering."

So, in 1971, the Black students took matters into their own hands.

"We got together and decided we needed to try to communicate to the University that we were feeling neglected, as though we weren't respected—that the institutional racism was actually encouraged as opposed to examined," says Southern. "So, we decided one evening to take steps to be seen and heard."

They requested a meeting with then-President Werner Baum; when this request was ignored, they decided to take a more dramatic approach.

"We went into the [Carlotti] administration building and told everybody to leave, we're going to lock the doors. They

realized we were serious; they all left, and we chained the doors," says Southern.

The 50-some Black students then hammered out a list of demands.

**"We decided one evening to take steps to be seen and heard."**

—Valerie Southern '75, M.C.P. '80

*"We, the black students at the University of Rhode Island, because of an increased lack of respect from the racist administration and the Student Senate (Tax Committee), plus a lack of Black representation, hereby declare a takeover," they wrote.*

*"We demand that the freshman enrollment for fall '71 contain 300 black students," demand 4 read, while demand 13 required the University to "appoint a committee approved by the Afro-American Society to develop a Black studies Program."*

During the first week of May, 1971, they occupied Carlotti for days, giving speeches on the balcony, watching as a large crowd grew on the Quad in front of

In 1992, President Robert L. Carothers (seated at center) and Vice President for Student Affairs John McCray (standing behind Carothers to his left) met with students who took over Taft Hall to protest a truncated Malcolm X quote carved into the library facade. Two Hundred students participated in the takeover, which was led by the newly formed Black Student Leadership Group (BSLG). The students successfully negotiated important advances, including reconstruction of the Multicultural Student Services Center, establishing a chief diversity officer position, creating the library's Malcolm X Reading Room, and initiating an Africana studies major.

them, and gratefully accepting food from friends to keep their takeover energized.

Wednesday evenings at URI were normally quiet. "About the biggest thing on campus is an intramural softball game," quipped a May 7, 1971, issue of *The Good Five Cent Cigar*.

But the evening of Wednesday, May 5, was different. Southern remembers it vividly.

"Suddenly, the police showed up and they broke the glass and stormed in, grabbed us and threw us outside. I thought they were going to kill us, I mean I literally thought, 'This is it, my life is over, but it's for a good cause,'" Southern says. "I closed my eyes and just kind of hugged myself; I could feel rough hands picking me up, and I was like, 'They're probably going to beat me up or kill me,' and the next thing I knew, I was lying on the grass outside."

The occupation of Carlotti was over, and Southern was unharmed, but the experience has stayed with her to this day.

"It was very, very traumatic," she says. "For the rest of my life, I participated in marches and protests, but that was the one that took my mind away."

The takeover was not in vain.

"The end result is, we got a Black studies program, we got an officially established Black student organization—and they gave us a van so we could do community work in the South Kingstown community," Southern says. "It was a result of just speaking up."

Southern also started a successful student paper called *Black Gold*.

"*Black Gold* was designed expressly to give students a voice," says Bakr. "And to also express their literary and creative sides. It was an outlet for students to not



1992

only be able to read, but to contribute to."

Bakr and Southern were also involved in planning the annual Black Cultural Weekend. "It was like a festival and the people that passed through—the Temptations, Alice Coltrane, various poets, intellectuals, it was just fantastic," Southern says. "Through hard work, we were able to bring notables of American Black culture to URI and it was really just wonderful."

## 1992: Why Haven't Things Changed More?

While the 1970s were a pivotal decade for race relations at URI, students some 20 years later found there was still much to be done.

Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03, fondly remembers her first experience on the URI campus, the summer before her first year.

**"And then you begin to experience isolation, microaggressions, and the world all of a sudden becomes real."**

—Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03

"I was a Talent Development student and, like the majority of the students on campus who were students of color, I came through the TD program," she says.

The TD program started in 1968, bringing students from diverse backgrounds to the state university. The summer program was a way for TD students to prepare for the fall and get to know the campus.

"You have this amazing experience where you're connected with students you can relate to. We came from similar backgrounds, many of us from the inner city



## Voices of Change

**Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03**, is the interim executive director in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and special advisor to the president of Life University. Prior to that, she served URI as an academic advisor and transitions coordinator for Talent Development, part-time faculty member in human development and family studies, and assistant director and acting director of the Multicultural Student Services Center.





1998

of Providence. We felt like we belonged,” she says.

But then came the fall.

“In the summer you had this time of friend-making and navigating the campus—an amazing experience, and then fall comes and you realize, ‘Wow, there aren’t that many of us here,’” Oliveira says. “And then you begin to experience isolation, microaggressions, and the world all of a sudden becomes real.”

A string of incidents compounded this sense of “otherness” and disrespect, including mistreatment by the URI police and the misquote of Malcolm X on the library.

“The [Black students] were being isolated and unfairly watched by the police,” says Forleo, who was the assistant director of Talent Development at the time.

The lid blew when a Malcolm X quote was chiseled onto the façade of the library, but was a truncated version of the original quote. The inscription on the library read, “My alma mater was books, a good library. I could spend my life reading, just

satisfying my curiosity.”

But the original quote was much more damning.

“I told the Englishmen that my alma mater was books, a good library. Every time I catch a plane, I have with me a book that I want to read. And that’s a lot of books. If I weren’t out there every day battling the white man, I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity.”

“That was really an issue for the students,” says Forleo. “And the other thing besides misquoting Malcolm X was the quote from Thomas Jefferson on the other side of the library. It really angered the students that a slave owner was being quoted in stone and Malcolm X was being misquoted in stone.”

Coupled with the crumbling, condemned building where the Black student group Uhuru Sasa held its meetings, and other racist incidents, the students took action.

“We really had had enough,” says Oliveira, who was a member of the Black

In 1998, a cartoon published in *The Good Five Cent Cigar* set off protests led by Black student group Brothers United for Action. The controversy exposed ongoing racial tensions at URI.

Student Leadership Group (BSLG).

“A group of around 30 students made a determination to take over Taft Hall, along with another 300 people who were involved when they finally took over the hall and renamed it Malcolm X Hall and issued the 14 demands,” says Forleo. “The demands were all about changing the numbers of students of color at the University, having more facilities and support structures for students of color, and curricular change, which was still a big issue, because African-American studies had not yet become a major in those years between 1971 and 1992. The students asked, ‘Why haven’t things changed more?’”

Two days after the takeover of Taft, then-President Robert Carothers met with the students to hear their grievances and listen to their demands, a far cry from the reception students had received in 1971.

“All or most of the progress that has been made on campus has come, if not immediately, in the years subsequent to student protests,”

—Abu Bakr ’73, M.S. ’84, M.B.A. ’88,

“This was historic,” says Forleo. “I mean, it’s quite extraordinary. Carothers supported some of the demands. The TD program grew, African-American studies became a major, other curricular things were offered—there was change.”

A multicultural center was also built in the center of campus, creating a safe and accessible meeting space for students of color.

For Oliveira, this was a powerful moment that reminded her of what her father had always told her: “You stand for something or you fall for anything.”

“Being in that building, for me, I felt so empowered that no matter what happened, even if I was kicked out of school, I was standing up for what I believed in,” she says.

## 1998: Still Fighting Racism with Growing Solidarity

In 1998, another protest against injustice was led by the Brothers United for Action (BUA) after the publication of a racist cartoon in *The Good Five Cent Cigar*.

“There were only six years between the Black Student Leadership Group [takeover of Taft Hall] and the BUA protests. That was not a very wide gap before another major movement occurred,” says Forleo. He still vividly remembers the BUA-organized march from Taft Hall to the Memorial Union, a massive show of solidarity.

“They had an enormous following of students of all races and ethnicities,” Forleo says. “When the BUA stepped off for their march ... by the time the first members of BUA got to the newspaper office in the Memorial Union, there were still people in line coming from Taft. It was one of the biggest demonstrations I had ever seen at the University.”

## 2020: The Moment

Today, the fight to bring racial justice and equity to URI continues.

“I believe that URI has made some strides,” says Oliveira.

Examples include the fact that URI now has a chief diversity officer, a post currently held by Mary Grace Almandrez. The University is undertaking a campus climate survey to help inform the next University diversity action plan. Another example is the successful College of the Environment and Life Sciences Seeds of Success Program, run by another former student activist, Michelle Fontes ’96, M.A. ’11.

Current URI student Maya Moran ’21 is working hard to make sure URI keeps the momentum moving forward. She is part of a group of students working with URI’s Office of Community, Equity and Diversity on a social justice series called Diversity Dialogues, which addresses issues of bias, microaggressions, and social identity.

Moran, who came from a diverse high school, says her initial experience as a student of color on a largely white campus included feeling like she was sometimes put in the awkward position of being an authority on race. “As if I were the spokesperson for all Black persons on Earth,” she says, adding, “We recognize that students

are in different phases of awareness. Some are just learning about racism and microaggression, some know a little about these things, and some are deeply rooted in this work.”

For many of the activists involved in movements past, the racial reckoning happening in 2020 reminds them that the battle isn’t over. King’s words from his speech at URI more than 50 years ago still ring true: “We have gone a long way, but we still have a long, long way to go.”

Reflecting on the past and seeing the Black Lives Matter movement today gives Southern, Bakr, Forleo, and Oliveira hope.

“I was born in 1951. I saw and participated in civil rights activities and movements, and I have never seen the level of engagement and involvement by folks to advance a critical issue like today,” says Bakr. “To have that kind of movement take on the energy that it has, not only in this country, but in untold numbers of places internationally,” he pauses. “It’s totally unprecedented, totally unprecedented.” •

“Some students are just learning about racism and microaggression, some know a little, and some are deeply rooted in this work.”

—Maya Moran ’21



## Voices of Change

Maya Moran ’21 is a psychology major and leadership studies minor and an undergraduate scholar in residence for URI’s Office of Community, Equity and Diversity. She is a co-creator of URI’s Diversity Dialogues project and vice president of the student organization D.R.I.V.E. (Diversifying. Recruiting. Inspiring. Volunteering. Educating.), which works with URI’s Office of Admission to increase diversity at URI.



## The Rev. Arthur L. Hardge and the Origins of Talent Development

The story of civil rights and the fight for racial justice at URI is incomplete without mention of Talent Development (TD) and the Rev. Arthur L. Hardge. “Rev. Hardge was an extraordinary man,” says Frank Forleo ’74, “A preacher, a storyteller, a leader.”

Hardge was a freedom rider with Martin Luther King Jr. He came to URI in 1969 as founding director of the TD program, to give underprivileged kids access to the state university.

“If you think about this time in context, Dr. King was assassinated and the civil rights movement was roaring through,” says Valerie Southern ’75, M.C.P. ’80. “At that time, the University was desperately behind, which is why Rev. Hardge started the program.”

The program that began with 13 students has grown to admit approximately 600 each year. And a large part of this growth is due to Rev. Hardge, the other founding staff of TD, and the belief they had in their students.

“They asked me to become summer director. I was young and didn’t necessarily think I was ready for that,” says Abu Bakr ’73, M.S. ’84, M.B.A. ’88, laughing. “But folks at TD were about giving people opportunities and allowing you to develop your talents. So that was my beginning, at age 23 or 24, of actually being in a director role. That’s what TD and Arthur Hardge gave me.” •



## Voices of Change

Abu Bakr ’73, M.S. ’84, M.B.A. ’88, transferred to URI from Duke in 1970 as a scholar-athlete. As an undergraduate, he served as a counselor for the Talent Development program and, upon graduation, as its summer director. He played on URI’s men’s basketball team, serving as captain for two years and earning distinction as one of URI’s top all-time career rebounders. After a successful basketball career in Europe, Bakr returned to URI to complete two master’s degrees. He served URI as an administrator for 35 years—in many capacities, including executive assistant to the president, and interim associate vice president for community, equity and diversity and chief diversity officer. Bakr retired from URI in 2013.



Network



= CLASS NOTES =

Let your classmates know what you're up to. Reunions, gatherings, career or academic updates, weddings and birth announcements, retirements, exhibition openings, travel, or your favorite URI memories.

Submit notes and photos: email: [urimag@uri.edu](mailto:urimag@uri.edu), or online: [alumni.uri.edu](http://alumni.uri.edu).

1950

**Joseph Young** reports, "I am in Osprey, Florida. Retired and enjoying life in the Sunshine State. Hope all my former classmates are also doing well."

1956

**Don Velozo** writes, "On May 2, 2020 I was inducted into the Pennsylvania Basketball Hall of Fame. For over 30 years from 1970 to 2002, I broadcast more than 900 high school basketball games and 600 high school football games on radio and cable TV."

1964

**Laurence J. Sasso Jr. '64, M.A. '67** published a book of short fiction, *Is Where the Heart*, in 2019. He served 19 years as managing editor of the three

Rhode Island weeklies published by the former Observer Publications Inc. He was poetry editor of the Providence Sunday Journal's *Rhode Islander Magazine* for seven years. An inductee into The Rhode Island Journalism Hall of Fame, his poetry has been published in *Yankee Magazine*, *Commonweal*, *Thought*, *Sou'wester*, *Confrontation*, *California Quarterly*, *Prairie Schooner* and many others. He is also an award-winning playwright, and his fiction has been published in several journals. He co-owned and co-edited *Your Smithfield Magazine* and has been a featured columnist in four periodicals, winning first place honors from the New England and the Rhode Island Press Associations.



tioned into the Army Quartermaster Corps where he served the remainder of his career. Col. Saulnier exhibited exemplary leadership at every level throughout his civilian and military careers. The United States Army established a National Hall of Fame to recognize outstanding ROTC graduates who have demonstrated an extraordinary level of leadership and service to the nation.

1965

**Denny Wilson** writes, "So far Maine has had 125 deaths, rates of infection are low and most people have recovered. Warmer weather brought most of our summer residents to Maine, but infections have not gone up. I learned that my friend, Steve Tucker '64, passed away in March. Steve and I had been friends since the late 1950s. We both joined TKE fraternity and enjoyed many good times, especially while we were living in Bonnet Shores. We kept in touch over the years. I will miss him."

1971

**Steven E. Neville, A&S**, of Merritt Island, Fla., writes, "Retired as vice president for a third-party claims administrator, where I contracted with underwriters at Lloyd's, London to administer commercial property and transportation insurance claims. Married to Meredith for 47 years; have two children and five grandchildren. Life is good."



1972

**Stephen Hopkins**, page 52, is a lifelong environmental educator whose work has taken him from URI's W. Alton Jones Campus to California and Ecuador. Pictured above with a giant Sumaco earthworm, the proud father and grandfather says URI provided

him "an incredible learning environment, a strong background in the life sciences, and excellent mentors, particularly then-grad students **William Bruce Hunter, Ph.D. '74** (who passed away in 2016) and **Robert Guimond '61, Ph.D. '70.**" Hopkins now lives in the Sierra Nevada mountains near Lake Tahoe in California and "still loves birds and all things wild and free."

1973

**Abu Bakr**, page 44

**Victor Bell '73, M.M.A. '77**, page 22

1974

**Frank Forleo**, page 41

**Sharon Pavignano**, page 38

**Dave Turnquist** writes, "I recently retired as the associate vice chancellor at University of Colorado Denver and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. During my tenure, my department relocated the medical research university from Denver to Aurora, to the Fitzsimons Medical Army Base, building and renovating nearly 4 million square feet of space. I have been active in my professional association. In 2017, my department received an Award for Excellence from the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA), their highest institutional award. Since then, I have evaluated other facilities departments as a subject matter expert for APPA. I recently moved to Castle Rock, Colo., and I look forward to traveling the country with Laura-Lee, my wife of 41 years, visiting family and friends, riding our bikes, camping, reading, lots of golf, and other fun things that retirees do."

1975

**Valerie Southern '75, M.C.P. '80**, page 42

1976

**Dennis Nixon, M.M.A. '76**, page 18

1977

**Andrea Berkman Tilzer** writes: "After 43 years in the apparel and textile industries, I have finally decided to retire. I started with learning positions and worked my way to management. I was able to use my URI experiences to help me move up. I now look forward to the next chapter where I will strive to keep busy and to use my abilities where ever that might be—in Bayside, New York, where I currently live with my retired husband, David, or maybe even Las Vegas."

practitioner at the Rhode Island Hospital Center for Primary Care and adjunct faculty at Rhode Island College School of Nursing.



1991

**Eric Lutes**, back cover

**Ellen Reynolds**, page 10

1993

**Susan Bush, M.S. '93**, page 23



Carr's character, Corwin

1983

**Lynne Kaplowitz, HS&S**, of Montville, Maine, is the executive associate and training coordinator for Maine Family Planning, a volunteer council member for Midcoast Conservancy, and a judge for the Maine Women's Hall of Fame.

1987

**Bruce Moffett**, page 50

1989

**Susan Axelrod**, page 39

1990

**Nancy (Gautreaux) Harritos, M.S. '90** (Nursing), received her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Rhode Island College in May 2020. Ms. Harritos is a nurse

**Christine Carr** of South Kingstown, R.I. has been a physical education teacher in East Greenwich, R.I. for 27 years (since graduating from URI). She recently started a greeting card business. Her website, [www.chriscarrink.com](http://www.chriscarrink.com) features her lovable character, Corwin, whose name means "heart's friend." This new venture has been a source of true joy.

1986

**Julie Howard** writes, "My sister **Abby Rodman (Geduldig) '84** and I have recently started a podcast called *Sisters Cracking Up* on Apple podcasts. We were inspired by the challenges of this life stage—the 'sandwich' between parenting children and managing aging parents, menopause, empty nests, career reinvention, divorce, etc. On the podcast we talk about issues that are 'cracking us' but also, what's cracking us up and helping us to get through it all. Our hope is that we can build a community of listeners that can relate and laugh with us.

"Abby is a psychotherapist who, after URI, got two post-grad degrees; an EDM (Education and Counseling Processes) from Harvard and an MSW from Boston College. She has a thriving practice in Newton, Mass. and is a successful author and speaker. I have spent my career in the beauty industry working for and with such brands as Clinique, Estee Lauder, Bath and Body Works, Origins, MAC and more. I am also the author of young adult fiction novels. We always think fondly of our time at URI and still spend time every summer in Rhody."

She believes that a simple card can remind people that they are loved, important, and thought of. She also sells t-shirts, stickers, and a social/emotional coloring and activity book. She gave every K-2 student in East Greenwich a copy of this booklet during their online distance learning.

**Holly Zimmermann, M.S. '93**, page 53



Newman's Twisted Orca series

1994

**Keri (LaRoche) Newman** of Pawtucket, R.I. writes, "I chose URI because of its excellent oceanography program but graduated with a degree in English and Communications. The education I received at URI, along with a passion for ocean and marine life conservation, prompted me to create the *Twisted Orca* series of children's books to foster a love of marine life and inspire future generations of ocean conservationists. Books are available at BarnesandNoble.com, Amazon.com, and Stillwater Books. I am grateful to URI for everything it has done for me."



BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

**Lara (Hinz) Proctor '99** and Benjamin Proctor welcomed Thomas Harold Proctor on February 19, 2020.

**Karoline Oliveira '94, M.S. '03**, page 43

**Ken Volante** publishes "Something (rather than nothing)," an art/philosophy podcast that harkens back to his time in Cheryl Foster's Philosophy of Art class at URI. Topics include, "What is art? What or who made you who you are? Why is there Something (rather than nothing)?" Guests are artists of all types, including **David Verespy '94** and **Buell Thomas '94**. The podcast is available on Podbean, iTunes, Spotify, and YouTube. In addition, Ken works in the labor movement for The Oregon Education Association and paints, writes, photographs, and works in film.



Julie Howard and Abby Rodman in Quonochontaug, R.I.



1995

**Kate Brewster**, page 37

1997

**Christopher Reddy**, page 22

2002

**Jason E. Abate** has joined Lynch's Restoration as Insurance Director and Estimator.



2003

**Stephanie (Pavone) Mills '03, M.L.I.S. '07** was named 2020 School Librarian of the Year by School Librarians of Rhode Island for her creative lessons, projects, and ideas for incorporating reading to the curriculum at Park View Middle School in Cranston. She adapted quickly to quarantine in the spring, creating video lessons and tutorials, meeting with students online, and collaborating with the public library to promote summer reading. She continues to come up with new ideas for the 2020-21 school year. She says, "It's different but I'm hoping it will be just as much fun."



**Jennifer (Lodge) Ruthven '03, M.A. '11** was named 2020 East Providence Teacher of the Year. She is a second grade teacher at the city's Orlo Avenue Elementary School. She was nominated for her ability to connect with students and families and provide a safe space to learn.

**Holly Susi, M.A. '03** (Adult Education) was recently named a fellow of the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) having completed the ACUE year-long Effective Practice Framework coursework. Susi, a professor in the English Department at the Community College of Rhode Island since 2002, teaches communication and reading courses, has advised the student newspaper and supervised honors projects.

2005

**Bryan Ferguson**, page 30

**Adam Oliveri**, page 30

2006

**André M. Brown, M.S. '06**, is launching Coaching for Community, the first Racial Just Us offering, intent on eliminating racist policy through the individual efforts of one person at a time. Brown is an ICF certified coach and racial bias trainer. The program is a one-of-a-kind virtual hybrid group coaching and training program. Participants complete an action plan to help guide anti-racism efforts in their personal lives and communities. In addition to uncovering the roles implicit bias and white privilege play in race relations and racial justice, Coaching for Community helps participants target individual areas of anti-racism meaningful to them. [www.racialjustus.com](http://www.racialjustus.com).

2007

**Jessica Becker**, page 32

**Emily Warden**, page 32

2008

**Vanessa Venturini '08, M.E.S.M. '11**, page 38

2010

**Tim Sherman**, page 37

2014

**Jacqui Tisdale, Ph.D. '14**, page 36

**Callie Veelenturf**, page 13

2015

**Jamie Buscher**, page 32

**Evan Ridley '15, M.A. '17**, page 19

2019

**Emma Hidalgo** of Providence, R.I., has been accepted into the Japan Exchange and Teaching program to become an Assistant Language Teacher. She was set to depart on April 11, 2020, but the pandemic postponed her departure. She graduated with a double major in writing and rhetoric and English and Japanese. She looks forward to teaching English, strengthening her Japanese proficiency, and of course sharing the URI Fight Song with her future students.



2020

**Leah Hopkins**, page 24

**Rory Maynard-Dean**, page 20

**Zach Rollins**, page 49



**Julia Garrick '13** and **Marc Rabideau '14** (top row, fourth from the right) were married on October 13, 2019 in New Jersey. The classes of 1974, 1991, 2016, and 2021 joined in the celebration!

## ENGAGEMENTS AND WEDDINGS



**Joelle L. Herbert '07** and **Mathew L. Lorie '06** were married on April 5, 2020.



"I'm teaching people how to love the ocean."

= BLUE MINDS =

## Sea Stories for the 21st Century

Zach Rollins '19 hosts a podcast called *Along the Keel*. A URI marine affairs grad and licensed boat captain, he's discovered a calling in teaching people to love the ocean. Writer Hugh Markey caught up with him to chat about finding his niche as a podcaster.

### How did the Rhode Island coast shape you?

I grew up near Mill Creek in Wickford, Rhode Island—we used to call it the Amazon. As you travel down the creek, it turns into an estuary, then a harbor, and then Narragansett Bay. So much to explore.

My parents wouldn't allow me to take out our 12-foot Zodiac Rib power boat alone. I'd been rowing a boat since I was 6, but the deal was, when I could swim across the creek without a life jacket, I could take the boat. Well, the summer I was 12, I swam that creek. After that, I could take the boat, and a whole new world opened for me.

### As a college student, you got your captain's license.

I had been working at a boatyard and got my license at the end of my junior year at URI. When I went to take the test, the test administrator offered me a job teaching people to drive boats.

That job was trial by fire. I knew how to drive a boat, but figuring out how to teach someone else was a great learning experience.

*After graduation, Rollins wanted a new challenge. He was reading Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance when a friend called and suggested moving to Hawaii. Maybe inspired by the transformational cross-country journey he was reading about, he agreed to go. Soon, he was working as a captain for a tour company.*

I met hundreds of people from around the world; some had saved every penny to come on this trip. Encountering a manta ray or a humpback whale became an opportunity to share and educate. I had customers tell me it was a life-changing experience. I learned how much I enjoy teaching and sharing what I know.

*The pandemic devastated Hawaii's tourism industry, so Rollins returned to Rhode Island to focus on his podcast.*

### How did your podcast start?

I was on a plane toying with the idea of how cool it would be to tell stories of people whose lives are focused on

the water. I started contacting people whose businesses related to the ocean.

People were interested. The first week the podcast was out I got, like, 25 downloads, mostly friends and family. But it kept growing and now we have thousands of downloads a month.

### I noticed that a number of your guests are artists.

Art and conservation go hand in hand. Conservation is really an interpretation of what's important and valuable. I think that's what artists do—interpret what's valuable.

### What's ahead for you?

I just signed a contract with a company that is doing geophysical surveys off the coast of Rhode Island and Montauk, New York—it's for the wind

**Captain Zach Rollins** at his home in Wickford, Rhode Island, on the shores of Mill Creek, part of Wickford Harbor. Zach has collected abandoned buoys around the waters he's traveled for many years.

farms. Whatever else happens, I'll continue working around the ocean because it feeds the podcast. The podcast has a lot of legs. I want it to be entertaining and educational. I'm teaching people how to love the ocean. •

—Hugh Markey '81

*Interview excerpted and edited from 41° North: Rhode Island's Ocean and Coastal Magazine and included here courtesy of 41° North, a publication of Rhode Island Sea Grant and the Coastal Institute at URI.*





=CLOSE UP=

# A Chef’s Journey from New England to the New South

Bruce Moffett ’87 has found success and satisfaction creating dishes inspired by his home state, Rhode Island, and his new home, North Carolina.



Chef Bruce Moffett is the founding chef of four successful restaurants and the author of a cookbook that tells the story of his evolution as a chef and his journey from New England to the “New South.”

Chef Bruce Moffett ’87 reminisces about his earliest food memories—all quintessential Rhode Island experiences: shopping for produce at Carpenter’s Farm in Matunuck with his mother and grandmother, slurping Del’s lemonade at the beach, and plucking mussels off the sea wall for dinners at his family’s South County summer home.

But Moffett, founding chef of four restaurants in Charlotte, N.C., and author of the cookbook, *Bruce Moffett Cooks: A New England Chef in a New South Kitchen*, wasn’t born to be behind a stove. A political science major at URI, Moffett spent time in Washington, D.C., working in the office of the late U.S. Sen. John Chafee (D-R.I.) before moving to Charlotte with a friend and opening a pizza restaurant: “A big, impulsive decision by a depressed young man at the time,” he recalls.

The pizzeria broke even and propelled Moffett to pursue a degree from the Culinary Institute of America. He returned to the Queen City in 2000 to found—with a nod to his East Bay home-

town—Barrington’s, a “new American” eatery that helped elevate the city’s culinary scene with a mix of Southern and New England cuisines. “It’s really rewarding to see Charlotte’s evolution from ‘meat and three’ cafeterias to where it is today, and feel like I was a part of that,” he says.

Moffett would later add three more Charlotte restaurants: Good Food on Montford, focusing on farm-fresh dining; the cozy Italian eatery Stagioni; and NC•RED, a casual seafood restaurant with hot lobster rolls and cold ’Gansett beer on the menu.

“I try to mesh the Southern dishes I really enjoy with the Northern dishes I really enjoy,” explains Moffett. His menus feature fusion dishes like grouper in tomato vinaigrette served over grits, but also classics like Rhode Island-style “stuffies” and pulled pork sourced from house-butchered North Carolina hogs.

Moffett’s meals at URI were more likely to come off a cafeteria plate than a La Cornue stove, but his time in Kingston still helps the chef face the challenges of

being a business owner.

“URI taught me how to balance my life and gave me a lot of discipline,” he says. “My political science and literature classes gave me an understanding about different political systems and how they work. In the workplace, it’s important to know the difference between being authoritarian and being democratic—it gave me some diplomatic skills.”

“I think URI is a unique place,” he adds. “It has a sense of connectivity and a sense of home—I don’t know if you get that at a lot of colleges.”

In many ways, that quality of URI is a reflection of its home state—and Moffett’s—where he recently returned for a visit spent, in part, sailing on Narragansett Bay.

“I still miss Rhode Island,” he says. “I may end up there again.” •

—Bob Curley

*Chef Moffett shares the recipes on the facing page with URI Magazine readers. Bon appétit!*



## Stuffed Clams ("Stuffies")

Stuffed quahogs are considered a poor man's dish that is highly revered. Being near the coast in Rhode Island, there are Italian and Portuguese communities that popularized the dish. Stuffed clams became known by their local name, “stuffies.” No one can put an exact date on the origin of the dish, but it is thought to have been an invention of Italian and Portuguese immigrants in Rhode Island. “Stuffies” are nostalgic and comforting. It’s the seafood cousin of turkey stuffing. A good clean clamshell is a must. Make sure you cook them long enough to get the browning effect on the top and crunchy bits around the edges.

### Ingredients:

- ⅓ cup clams, cooked and chopped
- ⅓ cup chorizo
- 3 tablespoons white onion, fine dice
- 3 tablespoons red bell pepper
- 3 tablespoons celery
- ⅓ cup butter
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 9 ounces clam juice
- 6.5 ounces chicken stock
- ¾ cup corn flakes
- ¾ cup panko
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon sweet paprika
- ½ teaspoon oregano

In a large stockpot, melt the butter on a medium flame, add chorizo and cook to render fat. Add all of the veggies and sweat down until tender. Add clam juice and chicken stock, bring to a simmer for 5 minutes. Add all seasonings (black pepper, sweet paprika, salt, oregano, and chili flakes). Finish with panko, corn flakes, and Parmesan cheese. Add clams. Cook together for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and cool mixture. When ready, add a scoop of mixture into a quahog hard shell clam and bake at 375 degrees Fahrenheit in a preheated oven until golden brown and cooked through, about 12 minutes.



## Classic Mussels with Crushed Tomatoes, White Wine, and Garlic

Mussels are abundant on the jetties that line the New England shore. As a kid, we’d go out with our buckets to pick clams and mussels while the adults did adult things. My grandmother would steam mussels as a start to a summer meal. They’re a distinct part of my childhood. At Barrington’s, we serve a classic Italian version—plump mussels steamed in tomatoes, white wine, and garlic. This recipe takes almost no time to make and works as a quick lunch, a light dinner, or an appetizer for two.

Mussels may require a process called debearding that removes a wiry membrane on the shell’s exterior. You can purchase mussels already debearded, but in case you need to take this step, there are instructions below. Serves two generously.

### Ingredients:

- 2 pounds mussels
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, shaved
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- Pinch crushed chili flakes
- ½ cup white wine
- ¼ cup clam juice
- Pinch kosher salt
- 4 whole Roma tomatoes, peeled, with juice
- Crusty bread, for serving



Rinse the mussels under cold running water to remove any sediment. If necessary, use your fingers to pull off the beard, the wiry excess protruding near the hinge of the shell. Scrub the mussels once more under cold running water and place them in a colander to drain until use.

Heat a sauté pan with olive oil over high heat and add the shaved garlic. Toast the garlic until it is golden brown, then add the thyme and chili flakes, shaking the pan to incorporate the flavors. Add the mussels, wine, clam juice, and salt. Crush the tomatoes and add them to the pan with their juices. Simmer, covered, for 4 minutes, until the mussels open. Transfer the mussels to a wide, shallow bowl, discarding any that have not opened. Serve immediately with crusty bread.



=YOUR STORIES=

## Field Ornithology and My Life of Crime

Long on dedication to their studies and short on money and common sense, two URI zoology undergrads head to South Carolina in search of the elusive ivory-billed woodpecker. But things don't go quite as planned.

Listening to myself I sounded quite unconvincing. I was behind bars and claiming my innocence. Some guy in a suit was flashing his FBI credentials and asking me questions.

It was 1970. I was 20 and had just discovered—the hard way—that they take law and order very seriously in South Carolina. I was in jail on suspicion of bank robbery.

• • •

Vertebrate biology was the perfect class for me in the spring semester of my junior year. It was an elective, so it attracted only the hard-core budding zoologists. The prof was a great teacher and a renowned scholar. In class, we delighted in discussions about the realms of man and nature. One discussion was about recent discoveries of animals previously considered extinct. We held a lofty debate on the status of the mysterious ghost bird, the ivory-billed woodpecker. Recent unconfirmed sightings in the forested wetlands of South Carolina had piqued the interest of ornithologists worldwide. To satisfy our curiosity—and seeking an opportunity to make a grand contribution to science—we decided on a class field trip to the swamps over spring break. The University would provide transportation and the prof arranged for us to stay in a biological field station just outside of Aiken.

At 5 a.m. on the appointed day, I was one of 10 students ready to travel and make ornithological history. Then the bad news: The professor's wife became ill the night before and was in the hospital. Field trip canceled. My lab partner and I looked at one another: "To hell it's cancelled." Despite the setback, we would make the trip.

Without the professor, URI would not provide transportation and neither of us owned a car. We would thumb our way south, find the bird, and report back to our classmates.

URI's proximity to Interstate 95 and some good luck got us to Aiken, South Carolina, in about 14 hours. Arriving at

the vacant field station, we found a note tacked to the door welcoming us—their colleagues from URI.

Typically, the biological field station offered the most basic of accommodations. We crashed. The next day, we explored our immediate surroundings and mapped out potential woodpecker habitat. That evening, completely out of food, we hoofed it to a rural village in the nearby outskirts of Aiken, where we found a few houses, one streetlight, a phone booth, and a police substation the size of a large closet.

A brawny policeman stepped out of the closet and asked, "What you boys doin' here in Aiken?" We told him we were students from URI and that we were there looking for the ivory-billed woodpecker. He invited us in and said he would make a call to someone who might just be able to help us. With the large cop and an oversized desk, the substation was a tight squeeze for the three of us. He spoke to his friend: "We got a couple of Yankees here in my station looking for a bird. Y'all get over here ASAP?" We were impressed. Here was a guy who could call an ornithologist and have them show up at a moment's notice.

Moments later, two police cars—lights and sirens blazing—skidded into the dirt parking lot. Two of South Carolina's finest entered the station. Now it was really crowded. One of the newly arrived stated it first, and they all agreed: Yep, we fit the description of the bank robbers.

My buddy and I looked at one another.



Not only were Southerners hospitable, they also had a fine sense of humor. So, when they asked me what I had done with the sock I had over my head during the bank robbery, I offered my contribution to the levity: "Well, hell," I laughed, "It's back on my foot."

Whoosh—we were cuffed and tossed into the back of the police car. The humor of the situation deteriorated remarkably when they drove us back to the field station and spent an hour looking for the loot. When we failed to satisfy their repeated demands to disclose the location of the money, they took us to the main police station in Aiken and locked us up.

Round about noon the next day, the FBI guy showed up and we somehow convinced him that we were not bank robbers. He drove us back to the field station to retrieve our stuff and then out to the county line, with this departing advice: "Now, you boys don't come back, ya hear?"

Somewhere in the dusty archives of the Aiken, South Carolina, police station is my mug shot with the caption, "suspected bank robber." •

— Stephen Hopkins '72

*Editor's Note: After they were sprung from jail and relocated to the county line, Hopkins and his classmate spent the rest of their spring break mucking around in the bottomlands of the Savannah River ecosystem. He reports that they never found any evidence of the woodpecker, but since unconfirmed sightings of the bird persist, he still ponders the possibility of returning to the scene of his "crime" in search of the ghost bird—and that loot the police were looking for.*

Read Stephen Hopkins' Class Note on page 46.

=NICHE=

## Finding Herself in the Extremes

Holly Zimmermann, M.S. '93, started her racing career with a 5K. Now this author and mom of four has pushed her body to its limits in the Sahara Desert and on Mount Everest. She shares why she does it and what's next.

**How and when did you start running? When did that become a desire to do extreme races?**

Like many children growing up in the United States, I took part in team sports. Soccer, field hockey, cross-country, skiing—I loved anything active, especially outside sports. But it wasn't until after my fourth child was born that I started racing. I began with a 5K and was hooked. Armed with a GPS watch, which motivated me to go longer and faster, the distances quickly went to a marathon and beyond. The exhilaration you feel at the finish line, knowing you've given it your all, is indescribable. It brings me back time and time again.

**What would people be surprised to know about you?**

People think that I am strong and confident and that I know exactly what I want out of life. But I wouldn't run 160 miles through the Sahara Desert if I weren't looking for answers. I don't do these races to prove something to other people, I do them to find my true self, and that grounds me and gives me self-confidence.

**Why URI?**

URI runs in my family—both my parents and my sister are alumni, and my grandfather was a professor there for many years. After graduating, I worked in engineering research and development. Although I no longer work in engineering, the tools that I learned at URI are always with me. And believe me, planning a multi-stage adventure race involves some serious calculations in terms of calorie consumption, fluid intake, gear selection, risk analysis, timing, and logistics that may have been very challenging for me without a technical education.

**Why did you decide to write about being an ultramarathoner?**

When I was planning for the Marathon des Sables across the Moroccan Sahara Desert, I couldn't find much information about preparation, gear, and what to expect, so I kept a journal, which I intended to publish as a guide. That became a book, *Ultramarathon Mom: From the Sahara to the Arctic*. My second book, *Running Everest*, is the story of my 10-day trek to Base Camp Mount Everest and running the highest marathon in the world. Both books are based on running, but can be enjoyed by anyone, athlete or not.

**What advice would you give someone who wants to do what you're doing?**

Find a race that inspires you and register for it. The rest will follow.

**What's on your bucket list?**

I'm considering a 10-day adventure race in Patagonia in 2021. I'd love to see that part of the world, and what better way to do it than on foot?

More from Holly Zimmermann at [uri.edu/magazine](http://uri.edu/magazine).

"The exhilaration I feel at the finish line brings me back time and time again."



Zimmermann, who lives with her family in Germany, ran the Marathon des Sables in 2016. The race is a 160-mile, seven-day race across the Moroccan Sahara Desert.





= IN MEMORIAM =

Alvin Noss '35  
Gloria (Montella) Comiskey '44  
Beatrice (Browning) Parker '45, M.L.I.S. '69  
Richard Tashian '46  
Evelyn (Shapiro) Saltzman '47  
Dominick Berardi '48  
George Geisser '48  
Domenic Mainelli '48  
Helene (Sylvander) Pritchard '48, M.S. '74  
Cosimo Serio '48  
Gordon Johnson '49  
Irving Johnson '49  
Marguerite (Mansolillo) Lischio '49  
Andrew Engilis '50  
Sally (Keleher) Goodwin '50  
Arlene (Eisenberg) Kelman '50  
Ernest LaPorte '50  
Howard Nicholson '50  
Robert Smith '50  
Francis Spilecki '50  
Frank DeSantis '51  
Dolores (Lovett) Lustig '51  
Harry Onoyan '51  
Forrest Sprague '51  
Gordon Dey '52  
James Leslie '52  
Walter Vargas '52  
John Bagdovitz '53  
Mario Casinelli '53  
Francis Jarvis '53  
Russell Knibb '53  
Robert Williamson '53  
Robert Chapman '54  
Carolyn (Joly) Johnson '54  
Jeremiah Kelliher '54  
John Morse '54  
Lois (Grinnell) Pearson '54  
William Ritzau '54  
Helen (Izzi) Schilling '54  
Burton Staugaard, M.S. '54  
William Whitaker '54  
Stanley Smith '55  
Edmund D'Amario '56  
Marilyn (Gould) Schwan '56  
Norman Sefton '56  
John Hatch '57  
George McLaughlin '57  
James Norman '57  
Edward Salzillo '57  
Kenneth Theroux '57  
Donald Yaras '57  
Richard Carvalho '58  
Robert Goodman '58  
John Piacitelli '58  
Alfred Budnick '59, H. '97

Cynthia (Feller) Duffek '59  
Leonard Forcier '59  
David Fishlock '60  
Lois Hackett '60  
Francis Perry '60, M.S. '67  
Michael Rooney '60, M.B.A. '65  
Patricia (Rainone) Vollendorf '60  
Carolyn (Cartier) Caparco '61  
Carlo Sabetti '61  
Claire Andrews, M.S. '62  
Nancy (Miller) Cyr-Larson '62  
Daniel King '62  
Elizabeth (Colavecchio) Walker '62  
Donna (Forte) Dilorio '63  
Linda (Dworetz) Baron '64  
Evans Carter '64  
Madhukar Chaubal, Ph.D. '64  
Theo Kazamias '64  
Edward Oliveira '64, M.S. '74  
Joseph Abi-Hashim, M.P.A. '65  
Richard Mills '65  
Paul Read '65  
William Stafford '66  
Richard Testa '66  
James Twaddle, M.B.A. '66  
William Adams '67  
Lena (Azar) Dame, M.L.I.S. '67  
Carl De Simone '67  
Robert Nelson, M.B.A. '67  
Marcia (Fortin) Carman '68  
Elizabeth Schumann, M.L.I.S. '68  
Thomas Shevlin '68  
Valton Wood, M.P.A. '68  
Evelyn (Koury) Armfield '69, M.A. '76  
Dominic Desnoyers '69  
Robert Ise, M.B.A. '69  
Karl Johnson, M.L.I.S. '69  
Richard Lagasse '69  
Grace Lemon '69  
David Pellett, M.B.A. '69  
Becky (Rhawn) Renner '69  
Donald Arabian '70  
Anne Burns '70  
John DeCataldo, M.A. '70  
Mary Fermanian '70  
James Salinger '70  
Janet (Mitchell) Schade '70  
Mary Chartier '71, M.L.I.S. '73  
William Clautice, M.S. '71  
Adam Komisarcik '71  
Donna Loomis '71, M.A. '73  
Joan Monticone '71  
Judith Mosher '71  
Nils Nilsen '71  
Joan Pilson, M.S. '71  
Robert Richardson, M.L.I.S. '71  
Angel Rodriguez '71

JIM NORMAN '57

Legendary "Voice of the Rams" and longtime URI sports information director, Jim Norman '57, died on July 28, 2020.



Norman was on the air for 34 years, calling 1,286 consecutive radio broadcasts for URI football and men's basketball. He was a mentor and friend to student-athletes, journalism students, and sportswriters and broadcasters around the country. He was a member of the Rhode Island Journalism Hall of Fame and the Rhode Island Broadcasters Hall of Fame. In 1995, *The Providence Journal*

honored him as one of Rhode Island's "Top 40 Most Influential Persons in Sports for the Past 40 Years."

Norman was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of Rams athletics and his smooth voice as he opened football broadcasts: "Hello everyone and welcome to Meade Stadium in Kingston on this beautiful fall afternoon for today's game. I am Jim Norman and we're happy to have you with us today." His men's basketball broadcasts were energized by the standing-room-only crowds at Keaney Gymnasium on cold winter nights.

Norman is remembered fondly by his wife, Roberta Homan Norman, his children and family members, and countless members of Rhody Nation. •

Michael Sadow '71  
Robert Cohen '72  
Joyce (Goodwin) Duerr, M.A. '72  
Albert Hazard '72  
Barry Siegel, M.A. '72  
Barbara Yuells '72  
Bruce Birmingham '73, M.S. '77, Ph.D. '81  
Frederick Howayeck '73  
James Sullivan '73  
Henry Antoni '74  
Gary Boden '74  
Heather Crumbaker '74  
Carole (Frandsen) Driver, M.L.I.S. '74  
Ronald Hammersley '74  
Harriet (Murdock) Pepper '74  
Richard Tuoni, M.L.I.S. '74  
Dolores Dorsey '75  
John Holtkamp '75  
Noreen (Jerzylo) Lilja, M.S. '75  
Grace (McDonald) Sowa '75  
Eric Nickerson, M.B.A. '76  
Eleanor (DeBlasio) Oddo '76  
Diane (Jobin) Roper '76  
Raymond Clark '77  
Clinton Salisbury, M.P.A. '77  
William Simmons '77  
Lars Vidaeus, Ph.D. '77

Patricia (Barker) Habif '78  
Stephen Hoitt '78  
Steven Luciano '78  
Cheryl (Marcucci) Maine '78, '97  
Vincent Marcaccio '78  
Robert Nesbitt '78  
Eric Rosenberg '78  
Bruce Ellefsen '79  
David Goldberg '79  
Marilyn Gralnik '79  
Lynn Hamel '79  
Lucile McDonald '79  
Sharon (Medici) Moskwa '79  
Jo-Ann (Lapolla) Ragosta '79  
Herbert Wax, Ph.D. '79  
Marjorie (Thomas) Adamcewicz, M.L.I.S. '80  
Laurence Butler '81  
Dana (Galin) Dubois '81  
Barbara Hackey '81  
Daniel Lekas '81  
Adam Nisbet '81  
Gilda Resnick '81  
Alfred Hanson, Ph.D. '82  
Michael Keefe '82  
John Mallinson '82  
Beatrice Choiniere '83  
David Correia, M.P.A. '84  
Brian Mulvey, M.L.I.S. '85

Roberta (Celona) Dickenson '87  
Marie Moore '87  
Robert Jacobson '88  
James Ross, M.B.A. '88, '04, M.A. '07, '11  
Janet (Johnson) Joyce '89  
Lori Mello '89  
Declan Connolly, M.S. '91  
Carolyn (Pickett) Erwin, M.S. '92  
Eric Christensen '93  
Annie Duncan-Ponvert '93  
Barry Watson '93  
Raymond Brennan, M.L.I.S. '94, M.P.A. '96  
James Compton, M.A. '95  
Christian Pedrazzoli '01  
Sharon Colby Camara, M.P.A. '02  
Steven Connor '03  
Daniel Flyntz '03  
Daniel Schnebly '05  
John Oberle '07  
Marissa Murphy '08  
William Lally '10  
Kenneth Buteau '12, M.S. '13  
Eugenia Tsantinis, M.L.I.S. '12

FACULTY AND STAFF

Anthony Allen, professor emeritus of education  
Gary Boden '74, former senior information technologist in the Office of Institutional Research  
Richard Gelles, former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences  
Elaine Hall, former janitor  
Alfred Hanson, Ph.D. '82, former marine researcher, Graduate School of Oceanography  
James McGovern, former laborer  
Steven Moricas, former housekeeper  
Yardley Norman, former groundskeeper  
John Oberle '07, former housekeeper  
Alfred Pascale, professor emeritus of human development and family studies  
Charles Schiffino, former director, Information Technology Services



= BOOKSHELF =

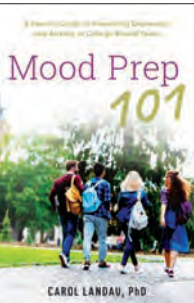
Check out the latest books by alumni authors—and share your recently published book at [uri.edu/magazine](http://uri.edu/magazine). Or send a cover image, along with author, URI grad year, book title, and year published, to [urimag@uri.edu](mailto:urimag@uri.edu).



*Running Everest: Adventures at the Top of the World* (2020)  
Holly Zimmermann, M.S. '93



*World War II: The Letters That Brought Him Home: Fighting with the 83rd Infantry Division* (2020)  
Michael S. Caprio '78



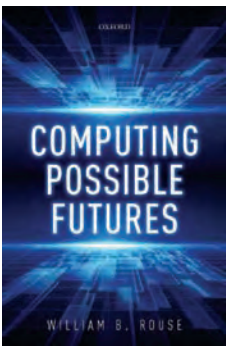
*Mood Prep 101: A Parent's Guide to Preventing Depression and Anxiety in College-Bound Teens* (2020)  
Carol Landau, Ph.D. '76



*Dream, Reach, Contribute: An Intimate Story of Survival, Dark Family Secrets and a Quest for Truth and Purpose* (2020)  
Peter Van Schuyler '65



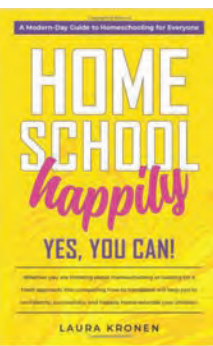
*Young Love: An Adoptee's Memoir* (2020)  
Bonnie Parsons, M.A. '74



*Computing Possible Futures: Model-Based Explorations of "What If?"* (2019)  
William B. Rouse '69



*Is Where the Heart* (2019)  
Laurence J. Sasso Jr. '64, M.A. '67



*Homeschool Happily: Yes, You Can!* (2020)  
Laura Kronen '92



= CAPTION THIS =

## Photo Caption Contest

Do you have a funny idea for a caption for this photo from the URI Archives? Email your caption to [urimag@uri.edu](mailto:urimag@uri.edu) or respond at [uri.edu/magazine](http://uri.edu/magazine).

Submit entries by  
January 15, 2021



### SUMMER WINNERS: CLIMBING THE WALLS



Well, readers, there must have been a lot of wall-climbing going on in URI residence halls in the 1970s.

The photo in the summer issue was sent to us by a reader who said it was a photo of him with his roommate and another student who lived down the hall in Fayerweather in 1973.

Another reader wrote to say her sister was the one in the back, with only legs visible, and that it was Heathman Hall, 1973.

One reader said it was definitely a photo of her husband outside his room on the fourth floor of Fayerweather, but that it must have been after 1973, since he wasn't at URI until a couple years later.

Yet another said Heathman Hall, 1977.

So it's a mystery. But a fun one. Further clues and guesses are always welcome! •



#### Winning Caption

"This COVID-19 quarantine is driving us up the wall!!!"  
*Tom Mulvey, M.A. '67*

#### Runner-Up

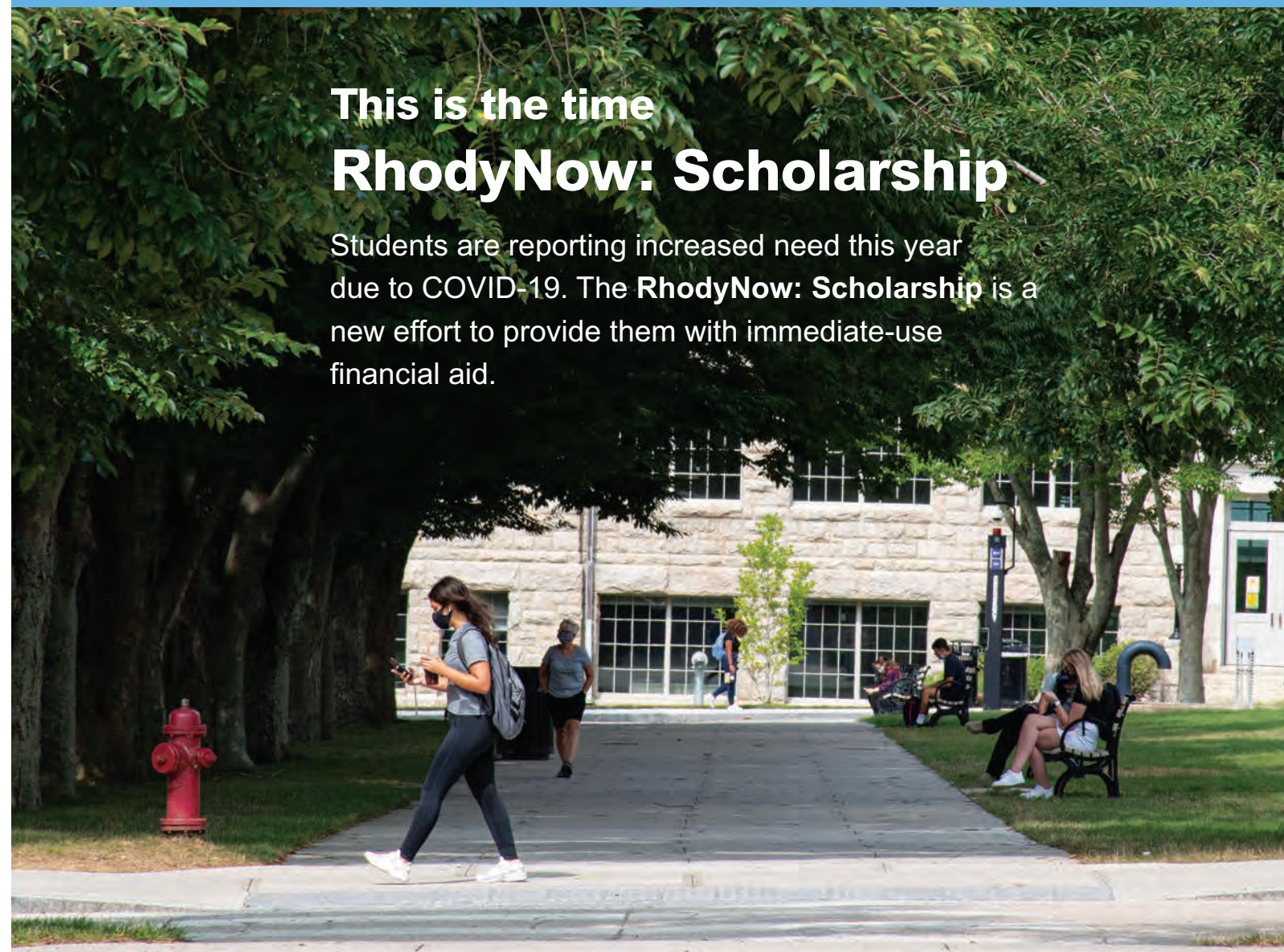
"The floor is lava!!"  
*Nancy Ryan '00*

#### Honorable Mention

"Why didn't you tell me they painted the floor?"  
*Sheila Whalen Masson '63*

## This is the time RhodyNow: Scholarship

Students are reporting increased need this year due to COVID-19. The **RhodyNow: Scholarship** is a new effort to provide them with immediate-use financial aid.



Gifts to **RhodyNow: Scholarship** will help students stay enrolled during this challenging situation.

Your gift will double its value with a 1:1 match up to the first \$190,000.

Go Rhody!

**#RhodyNOW**  
Scholarship



= EPILOGUE =

## Art of the Ocean

*With the ocean as his muse, Eric Lutes '91 embraces his first love, painting.*

Eric Lutes '91 likes to paint "grungy, well-used marine items." His paintings of weathered docks and boats bear that out. He also skillfully depicts the play of light in seashells and ocean waves.

Lutes grew up in Charlestown, R.I., and his dad was a well-known marine painter. But Lutes found his own path. With a B.F.A. in theater from URI, he built a successful acting career with roles on *Caroline in the City* and *Frasier*, and guest appearances on hit shows including *Mad About You*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *CSI: Miami*.

These days, Lutes devotes himself to painting in his quiet South County studio. He says his style is looser and more free than his dad's. "But," he says, "when you paint boats, you have to get the details right."



*Rose Bud*, Eric Lutes, 24" x 36", oil on canvas, 2020 • [ericlutesart.com](http://ericlutesart.com)

PHOTO: COURTESY ERIC LUTES