

UNIVERSITY OF
RHODE ISLAND

SUMMER 2023

MAGAZINE

“ He had
the chemistry,
and I had
the bees. ”

An expert entomologist and a beekeeping chemist
join forces to save honey bees from their biggest
threat, the hive-wrecking varroa mite.



URI RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP PHOTO CONTEST 2023: THE WINNERS

Entries in URI's sixth annual Research and Scholarship Photo Contest included underwater photographs, images of muscle tissue taken through microscopes, and macro shots of insects. They showcased the breadth of work that URI community members are immersed in.

This annual contest offers students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to share their perspectives of their work in any area of URI research and scholarship. Images

from laboratories to libraries to the depths of the ocean and beyond have streamed in over the years and been featured in the three URI magazines sponsoring this contest—the *University of Rhode Island Magazine*; the URI Division of Research and Economic Development magazine *Momentum: Research & Innovation*; and the Rhode Island Sea Grant/URI Coastal Institute magazine *41°N: Rhode Island's Ocean and Coastal Magazine*.



First Place

AQUATIC ODDBALL **Michael Corso '24**

Aquaculture and fisheries science

At 70 feet below the surface, a rare whitelined toadfish peers out from the darkness to observe a research dive group from URI. Corso captured this photograph of a creature that is endemic to Belize's barrier reef system while on an aquaculture and fisheries science Winter J-term course in scientific research diving. Corso says, "As an AFS major, I focused on biological survey techniques and underwater photography while collecting real scientific data. While the toadfish exemplifies the extent of a reef's ecosystem biodiversity, warming seas and ocean acidification are chipping away at the natural world's biodiversity and weakening reefs. The highly specialized animals that rely on these underwater jungles are being impacted directly," Corso says.



Second Place

LIFE IS A MAZE **Janelle Mercer '23**

Marine biology

Mercer took this photo of maze coral off the coast of St. George's Caye, Belize, roughly 40 feet underwater, during an underwater archaeology class with Diving Safety Officer Anya Hanson in Belize. Maze coral is a type of stony coral with a photosynthetic dinoflagellate living within polyps on the coral's surface, providing coloration. The polyps and their corallite walls have a unique twisting, maze-like formation. Mercer, who earned her American Academy of Underwater Sciences Scientific Research Diver certification on this trip, is preparing for a career in marine biology and conservation.



Third Place

GOT NECTAR?

Julia Vieira '21, M.S. '23

Graduate student in plant sciences and entomology

This macro photo shows a brown-belted bumble bee foraging for nectar from common milkweed. The female worker takes a break to re-energize by sucking up the delicious, carbohydrate-filled nectar within the milkweed flower with her long proboscis (tongue). The bumble bee was visiting one of the many milkweed plants within the acres of pollinator plantings on URI's East Farm. Vieira's research primarily focuses on assessing bumble bee visitation to various flower species to enhance Rhode Island bumble bee conservation programs by improving recommendations for pollinator plantings throughout the state.



Honorable Mention

CROSSING UNDER
Olivia Mazzone '23

Marine biology

This photo depicts a comb jellyfish floating among seaweed at dusk off the southeast corner of Conanicut Island (R.I.). "The day that I took this picture was the first time I ever picked up an underwater camera. It was an assignment for a class, a class that was supposed to involve scuba diving except that I broke my elbow two weeks before the start of the semester. So I found myself snorkeling alone, in the middle of April, in a small cove in Jamestown," Mazzone says. Her first attempts to photograph anything underwater failed, she says, and she longed to get out of the water and go home. "But then when I was finally exhausted, for whatever reason instead of getting out of the water I lifted my feet and let myself go completely. I became part of the tide, and everything in my view became clear," she says—including this jellyfish, whom she now considers "a dear friend."

Honorable Mention

MALE BOMBUS IMPATIENS
Gena Anika '23

Wildlife and conservation biology

This photo is a close-up image of a *Bombus impatiens* (common eastern bumble bee) face. The yellow patch of hair on the bee's face signifies it is male. There are pollen granules present on the bee's face, and you can see the hexagonal lenses (ommatidium) in the compound eyes. Anika used a digital microscope to observe the bee closely to help learn bee characteristics and to identify its species and sex for the class BIO 338 Bees and Pollination.

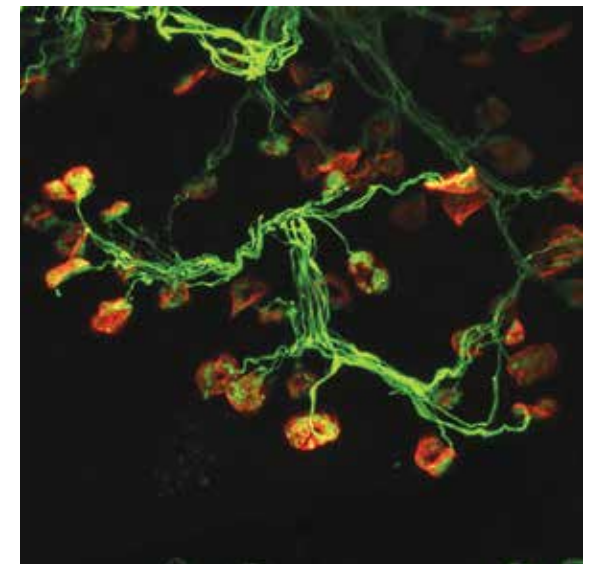
Honorable Mention

FLUORESCENCE MICROSCOPY OF NEUROMUSCULAR JUNCTIONS

Alyssa Madden '23

Molecular neuroscience

This fluorescence microscopy picture shows the neuromuscular junctions in the calf muscle of a rabbit modeling cerebral palsy. In the Manuel Lab, Madden is working on looking at the differences in neuromuscular development in a rabbit model of cerebral palsy. Using confocal microscopy, researchers can observe how the structure of the neuromuscular junctions is affected by cerebral palsy, in the hope of better understanding this disorder.



CURRENTS

10 In Brief
URI news to keep you in the know.

12 Syllabus
Professor Tolani Olagundoye on leadership and emotional intelligence.

14 Quad Angles
Join music faculty member Adam Levin on a listening journey with J.S. Bach.

15 Innovators
Ella Schneider '26 is finding sweet success in the world of bean-to-bar chocolate.

16 Momentum
URI research news, plus newly published books from URI faculty.

17 The Class of 2023
Meet this year's inspiring student Commencement speakers.

18 Big Ideas. Bold Plans.
URI's comprehensive campaign continues to transform the University.

FEATURES

26 Water Warriors
URI's water outreach programs—all headed by dedicated alumni—work together to keep the state's waterways and watersheds clean and healthy.

34 Swimming with Sharks
Mary Parlange joined URI "shark guy" Brad Wetherbee and his BIO 492 students on a trip to Isla Mujeres in Mexico. She learned a thing or two about shark research—and a lot about an inspiring teacher and his exceptional students. And she took notes.

40 Sisters Cracking Up
Abby Rodman '84 and sister Julie Howard '86 host *Sisters Cracking Up*, a podcast that approaches the challenges of midlife with humor.

46 For the Love of Honey
Chemistry professor Matt Kiesewetter and entomology professor Steve Alm are developing better ways to fight honey bees' number-one enemy: the varroa mite. Plus, alumni craft brewers donate a portion of their profits to URI bee research.

NETWORK

53 Class Notes
Catch up with your classmates—and share your note.

58 In Memoriam
Remembering those we've lost. And a tribute to URI legend Agnes Doody.

60 Rhody Traditions
The Mayor of Kingston—a funny campaign for an honorary office. Do you remember this tradition?

60 Your Stories
Alumni reconnect after many years, finding love after loss.

61 Rhody's 100th
The Nicolatos are a two-mascot family. That's something to celebrate.

63 Close-Up
Dottie Cunningham '64 teaches learn-to-skate classes for the over-50 crowd.

64 Caption This
Stroll down Memory Lane, check out the last issue's winners, and send your best captions for this issue.



"Full Moon at Point Judith During Blue Hour" by Ang Cai, Ph.D. '17. See page 53 for more about Cai and his photography.



32 Keeping Watch on Narrow River
Meet veteran Watershed Watch volunteer, Veronica Berounsky, Ph.D. '90, who's been monitoring water quality in Narrow River for two decades.

62 The Greatest Generation
Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe '19, Hon. '51, says, "I suppose the most important thing I ever did was to notify Washington [D.C.] of the forthcoming attack on Pearl Harbor." His warning was ignored. Thorpe's military story spans some of the biggest moments of World Wars I and II.



COVER PHOTO: HARRISON BROADBENT ON UNSPLASH PHOTOS, THIS SPREAD: ANG CAI; NORA LEWIS; COURTESY URI DIGITAL ARCHIVES



Milestones and Celebrations

URI has a profound impact in Rhode Island and beyond. And as our incredible 2023 grads step into their next chapters, that impact will increase with their contributions.

As we closed another academic year, capped by a truly memorable Commencement in May, I can't help but feel a sense of pride in all that we accomplished. And while Commencement, for many, marks the end of a journey, it is, by definition, a beginning. After shaking the hands of thousands of our graduates as they eagerly crossed the stage to collect their diplomas, I am confident that, while they may be departing our campuses, URI has prepared them for bright futures.

This July, I will mark two years of serving as president of URI—two transformative years that have been filled with growth, change, excitement, and deep gratitude for our community. We have achieved so much together, and as our campuses shift to summer activities, I reflect on this past year, marked with milestones and much to celebrate: a record number of applications; an inauguration; a successful \$100 million bond campaign for the Narragansett Bay Campus (thank you Rhode Islanders); the launch of a 10-year strategic plan; the appointment of Provost Barbara Wolfe; new academic programming and formal collaborations; athletic championships; historic levels of financial aid offered to our students; a State of the University address; millions secured in federal funding for research; unparalleled giving by donors and friends; and renewed commitment and investment by the state in Rhode Island's flagship university. URI has and always will be in service to all Rhode Islanders, and just as we are changing lives every day in many ways across our campuses, it is our staff, faculty, students,

and alumni who impart real change in their own communities and beyond.

The features in this issue share some of the ways URI is broadening and deepening our impact. "Rhode Island's Water Warriors" profiles URI's water outreach programs, including Watershed Watch, which rely on a robust network of volunteers and work together to keep the state's waterways and watersheds clean and healthy. "For the Love of Honey" documents chemistry professor Matt Kiesewetter and entomology professor Steve Alm's work in developing better honeybee protections. "Summer on the Wild Side: Studying Whale Sharks with Wetherbee" showcases the important programming by assistant professor of biological sciences Brad Wetherbee, whose passion for shark research draws everyone from Mary and me to under-represented high school students to his boat to learn about these notorious sea creatures. Finally, there is the story of Abby Rodman '84 and Julie Howard '86, who host a podcast focused on navigating midlife with truth and sanity.

URI—thank you—it has been a tremendous and rewarding journey so far! And to our newest alumni from the Class of 2023, welcome to the next chapter!

Marc B. Parlange
President, University of Rhode Island



A DAY TO CELEBRATE

URI's Graduate School Commencement Ceremony was held on Friday, May 19, in the Ryan Center, where 781 graduate students earned master's and doctoral degrees. Congratulations to all our 2023 URI grads!

Feedback

We welcome and encourage letters to the editor. Write to us at urimag@uri.edu
Visit us and comment online at uri.edu/magazine



KUDOS

Thank you for the marvelous spring 2023 issue of the URI alumni magazine. The layout on each page is visually attractive. Moreover, it is easy and enticing to read. The cover, too, is sensational. I LOVE "Caption This," showing a bygone moment of life at URI. Congratulations to all who make the alumni magazine a very special and personal publication. Bravo!
—Suzanne Grossman '59

I am so impressed by the spring issue of *URI Magazine*. Loved sharing it with my family and fellow alumni!
—Aurora Faria '20

SWIMMING NARROW RIVER

Fun to read. Thanks! Congrats to Anthony Russo for the cool illustration. It's great!
—Paul Daley, parent '98

THE SECOND-TO-LAST LOBSTERMAN ON BLOCK ISLAND

Great story! Inspirational, hopeful, yet tinged with a sense of melancholy. A challenging career for young Mr. Howarth, but I have a bit of envy for the life he is carving.
—Greg Whitehead '78

What a wonderful story. I'm always inspired by people, both young and old, who keep their local traditions strong. It is not easy work. Proud of you Ebben for seeing a bigger picture and getting your college degree! Keep up the energy you've maintained!!!
—Kimberly Leute, parent '26

KEEPING CURRENT

Loved "Keeping Current" with Kevin Rosa.
—Jean Connelly '68



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CAP-TIVATING 2023 GRADS!

The winners of this year's graduation cap contest:

Rhody Pride: Daniela Acarapi '23, B.S. data science

URI Affiliation: Trinity Testa '23, B.S. sustainable agriculture and food systems

Most Creative: Kevin Ramos '23, B.A. computer science

As a land grant university, URI has a three-pronged mission that includes teaching, research, and outreach. Our water outreach programs (page 26), including Watershed Watch, embody the outreach mission in every way. As part of the Watershed Watch volunteer army, I work with Surfrider R.I. to collect water samples from a handful of surf spots once a month year-round. It's the best volunteer gig ever, and I look forward to it whether I'm bundled up in winter gear and waders or, as in this photo from Fenway Beach in Westerly, R.I., enjoying a calm, sunny June morning.



FEEDBACK GUIDELINES

University of Rhode Island Magazine welcomes letters to the editor addressing topics covered in the magazine. We do not publish letters containing obscenities, potentially libelous statements, personal attacks, or known false statements. All letters must be signed. Letters may be edited for style, grammar, typographical errors, content, and length. The submission of a letter to the editor does not guarantee its publication. Views expressed by readers in the Feedback section are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the University of Rhode Island or *University of Rhode Island Magazine*. Please send letters via email to urimag@uri.edu.

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From the Editor

Welcome to the summer issue! Here, we offer you summer reading and an introduction to a few notable members of the Rhody family who are working hard *and* having fun. And that's the best kind of work.

In these pages, you'll meet a chocolate entrepreneur, a craft brewer, and a skating instructor. You'll meet alumni sisters finding the humor in life's challenges. And you'll meet URI researchers who study some cool creatures—sharks and bees.

Keep reading and you'll find master classes on authentic leadership and music appreciation. And if you like history, you'll meet someone I can't help seeing as the Greatest Generation's Forrest Gump: Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe '19, Hon. '51, who managed to be part of some of the biggest moments in history; in fact, he might have changed history had his warning of the imminent attack on Pearl Harbor been heeded.

Since summer reading wouldn't be complete without a little romance, we offer you two love stories: Norm Scholler '71 and Barbara DeCubellis Taylor '70, who met in kindergarten, dated as URI students, went their separate ways, and then reunited, discovering they had both lost their spouses to Alzheimer's; and David Nicolato '98 and Cortney Nicolato '01, who were both Rhody mascots as students, and who still see URI as the foundation of their life together.

Finally, if your summer includes some time in the water, "Rhode Island's Water Warriors" is a must-read, along with companion story, "Water Detective." The stories show how four programs—Watershed Watch, Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officers, Onsite Wastewater Resource Center, and Home*A*Syst—work together to help keep the state's water—from our rivers, ponds, and oceans to our wells and groundwater—clean and healthy. As a proud member of the volunteer army that works with the amazing Elizabeth Herron '88, M.A. '04, for Watershed Watch, I hope this story demonstrates the important work these programs do for all of us.

So find a comfy spot by the water and dig in—your summer reading is here.

—Barbara Caron, Editor-in-Chief

IN BRIEF



NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

Traditional measures of business success focus on how well corporations create economic opportunities and deliver value to customers and shareholders. But that's

changing—business leaders are looking for ways to benefit people, the planet, and the bottom line.

URI's fall 2023 Honors Colloquium, coordinated by College of Business faculty members, will explore how businesses and their leaders can do good while doing good business. Speakers, including Lanre Ajakaiye '95, social entrepreneur and chief development officer for United Way of R.I., and Wallace J. Nichols, marine biologist, author, and blue mind visionary, will discuss how businesses operate and thrive while embracing sustainability, the challenges and limitations of business approaches to social good, and more.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the URI Honors Colloquium and the 100th anniversary of URI's College of Business.

COMPUTING REVOLUTION

URI launched a quantum computing initiative to position students and the Rhode Island workforce at the forefront of the next computing revolution, and to enable scientific discovery and advancement.

Quantum computing offers enhanced processing speed and allows for modeling complex issues, including climate change. Supported by \$1 million in federal funding secured by U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, as well as funding from URI's College of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School of Oceanography, the initiative establishes a research partnership with IBM.

"This initiative will help establish URI as a hub for quantum information science in the Northeast, helping the University expand its teaching capacity, bringing in experts to expand the University's quantum degree programs, and training the next generation of students and researchers," said Reed.



U.S. Sen. Jack Reed at the announcement of URI's new quantum computing initiative with IBM, supported by \$1 million in federal funding secured by Reed.



STUDENT AFFAIRS VP NAMED

Ellen Reynolds '91 was appointed URI's vice president for student affairs following a national search. Reynolds, who holds a Ph.D. in education leadership, has served in leadership roles at URI for two decades, most recently as interim vice president for student affairs.

As vice president, Reynolds oversees multiple departments, including the dean of students, counseling center, housing and residential life, dining services, student health services, campus recreation, and Talent Development. She works closely with the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity to develop strategies and programs that support an inclusive and equitable community. She will also develop and implement policies and procedures that support the University's strategic plan.

URI President Marc Parlange praised Reynolds' leadership and her commitment to helping students in all aspects of their learning and development.

BUILDING MEDIA LITERACY

Courageous RI, a new URI initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, is working against violence and extremism with training and tools that counter disinformation and encourage conversation. The two-year initiative will offer free online workshops on propaganda, disinformation, hate speech, and media regulation. Courageous RI was the only New England grant recipient in this national effort.

Professor Renee Hobbs (communication studies), founder and co-director of URI's Media Education Lab, said, "Courageous RI will provide individuals with practical strategies and problem-solving skills at a time when people spend an increasing amount of time online, on social media, and in other digital spaces."

Get more news at uri.edu/news

NEWS TICKER



VISITING SCHOLAR

After serving for more than 20 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, recently retired congressman James Langevin was appointed a visiting scholar in URI's Department of Political Science.



FULBRIGHT AWARD

Engineering professor Joe Goodwill was named a U.S. Fulbright Scholar and will teach and conduct research at the University of Trento in Italy, focusing on new approaches to improving water quality for developing countries.



HISTORIC MOMENT

A truncated quote from civil rights leader Malcolm X, which sparked protests and a building takeover when it was engraved on the exterior of URI's library in 1992, has been removed after a decades-long effort.



NEW BAY CAMPUS PIER

A new pier at URI's Narragansett Bay Campus, which will support and serve as the future home of the new \$125 million National Science Foundation regional class research vessel, *Narragansett Dawn*, was recently completed.



SHORELINE ACCESS

URI graduate student Erica Meier worked with Rhode Island Sea Grant to update an interactive map of shoreline access points. Visit shoreline-ri.com for details on hundreds of access points along Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

You Can Quote Me



On the popularity of Lego's Jurassic Park set, in an article highlighting the 21 best dinosaur toys to spark a child's imagination:

"Jurassic Park ... was the game changer: a whole new generation of now early- to mid-career paleontologists caught the fever from the Jurassic Park and Jurassic World series."

David Fastovsky, URI professor emeritus, geosciences

Forbes



On "forever chemicals," found in myriad consumer goods and a study showing that elevated PFAS levels in blood promote weight gain and make it harder to maintain weight loss:

"Our results add to the concern that environmental pollution may be affecting our metabolism, so that we tend to gain weight."

Philippe Grandjean, M.D., who holds a research professor appointment within the URI College of Pharmacy and serves on STEEP, a special URI-led science effort aimed at understanding PFAS contamination

WebMD



In an opinion piece marking the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, on the topic of sanctions:

"As a tool in the foreign policy arsenal, sanctions should be used sparingly ... otherwise they carry the risk of alienating allies, hurting average citizens rather than the elites, and shifting global trade away from the U.S. dollar."

Koray Özpolat, URI professor of supply chain management

Providence Business News



On the push to build a new generation of small nuclear reactors in the U.S. to replace aging legacy reactors, which provide nearly one-fifth of the country's electricity:

"Other countries around the world that are interested in this technology really watch what's happening in the United States very carefully, and they kind of follow suit in terms of what's been approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission."

Bahram Nassersharif, URI nuclear systems researcher and a distinguished professor of mechanical, industrial, and systems engineering

Agence France-Presse

On NASA's new video demonstrating the gargantuan size of black holes in the galaxies and the hot dust and gas that gets pulled into the black holes, some never to return, while much is spewed back out into the cosmos:

"Black holes are terrible at eating things. They are notoriously picky eaters."

Douglas Goble, URI astrophysicist

Mashable



SYLLABUS

“I’m Asking About Your Purpose on Earth”

Lessons on leadership and life from Professor Tolani Olagundoye

First, Professor Tolani Olagundoye smashes a few leadership myths.

Leadership is not something only certain people are born to. It’s not exclusive to extroverts. And it isn’t about being the loudest, the most confident, or the bravest in the room. Aspiring leaders would be better served concentrating on being authentic, service-minded, and selfless, says Olagundoye, Pharm.D. ’17.

Olagundoye is a clinical assistant professor of leadership in the College of the Environment and Life Sciences and a Coastal Institute Fellow. She teaches leadership through URI 101, a course for first-year and transfer students designed to ensure their successful transition to college. A one-credit seminar, URI 101 sets the foundation for a student’s academic life. The University runs about 150 sections of URI 101 each fall.

Most URI 101 sections group students according to their majors and are taught by faculty and staff who work within that discipline. The primary goal is to plan, define, and develop the skills that contribute to students’ academic success, but URI 101 takes a holistic approach to educating stu-

dents, covering a broad range of topics, including self-care, campus life, technology tools, and leadership.

Olagundoye tells her students the key to finding your leadership style is first to know yourself.

THE FOUR ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

“I have a set of questions I ask my students,” says Olagundoye. “The first I ask is, ‘Who am I?’”

Typically, students answer with an inventory, sharing how many dogs they have or if their grandparents are still living.

“I say, ‘No, that’s not what I’m asking. I want to know—when you’re alone in a room or a car, and the radio has stopped working, and you ask yourself, ‘Who am I?’—how would you answer that?’” Olagundoye says.

“Then I ask, ‘Why are you here?’ and they’ll say they’re here to get a degree to get a good job,” Olagundoye says. “And I say, ‘No, that’s not what I’m asking. I’m asking about your purpose on Earth.’”

Olagundoye’s students nail the third question: What do you believe is wrong with the world?

“They have so much to say: climate change, food insecurity, technology, social media, and the resulting identity crises we’re all going through right now.”

Olagundoye saves the hardest for last: How can we make what is wrong right?

But this question speaks to students’ agency—and hope, Olagundoye explains.

“Humanity is the cause of many of the global issues we face now,” she says, “but humanity is also one of the solutions to it.”

Self-assessment completed, students examine leadership theories. Olagundoye leans toward authentic and transformational leadership approaches.

Authentic leaders favor genuineness, serving alongside the people they work with. Transformational leaders create change by setting an example, Olagundoye says, riffing off *New York Times* bestselling author Simon Sinek’s *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don’t*.

“The qualities of selflessness and integrity are lacking right now in society,” Olagundoye notes. “The way I approach leadership is selflessness; that is, the leader eats last.”

—Marybeth Reilly-McGreen

The Right Stuff: A Leadership Study Guide

Read

LEADERS EAT LAST: WHY SOME TEAMS PULL TOGETHER AND OTHERS DON’T BY SIMON SINEK

In his second book, motivational speaker Sinek, who once worked for the global advertising, marketing, and public relations company Ogilvy, outlines the full complement of challenges an organization might face and recommends a purpose-driven leadership model for dealing with them. The newest edition of his bestselling book includes a bonus chapter on leading millennials.

LEADERSHIP THEORY AND PRACTICE BY PETER NORTHOUSE

This textbook on leadership theory is used by more than 1,000 colleges and universities across the world. In addition to outlining the major theories and models of leadership, Northouse includes case studies of companies’ theories in practice. Northouse is a professor emeritus of communication at Western Michigan University.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 2.0 BY TRAVIS BRADBERRY AND JEAN GREAVES

Bradberry and Greaves outline four pillars of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management as a guide to increasing emotional intelligence, which, they contend, is the key to achieving personal goals and fulfilling one’s potential.

Watch

HOW GREAT LEADERS INSPIRE ACTION

In this short TED Talk (under 20 minutes), Simon Sinek draws upon the examples of Martin Luther King Jr., the Wright brothers, and Apple to illustrate how innovation emanates from a life defined by purpose.

“Who am I? Why am I here?
What do you believe is wrong with the world?
How can we make what is wrong right?”



QUAD ANGLES

Bach In Flight

By Adam Levin

Adam Levin recommends listening to Eliot Fisk's recording of J.S. Bach's Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006 (tracks 26–31) on the album Johann Sebastian Bach: The Sonatas & Partitas for Solo Violin, arranged for guitar, on the Musical Heritage Society label.

And don't miss Levin's own recording of the first movement of the suite, Prelude in E Major, BWV 1006a, on his 2009 album, In the Beginning, track 2.

Discover a new way of listening to music. Press play, close your eyes, and take an imaginative ride as you listen to—and feel the emotions of—one of J.S. Bach's masterpieces, performed on classical guitar.

I invite you to join me on a ride, exploring the whimsical, romantic, nostalgic, spontaneous, ordered—and at times, erratic, thunderous, and florid—nature of the classical guitar and its repertoire. Our guide is baroque genius J.S. Bach, and our vehicle is his heroic Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006. Press play, close your eyes, and listen with me.

The E note is struck as the first movement, *Prélude*, begins, and we are catapulted upward through time, space, and harmony. Our hearts beat quickly as we listen. The performer aims for 84 beats per minute. Our heads bob to the quarter note. Notes flutter left and right in a peaceful and structured musical asteroid field; we are

navigating between harmonies with a jazz-like bass line and a string of seemingly endless notes.

Oxygen levels remain stable despite rapid fluctuations in altitude. But the apex is nearing, the tumult seems to be clearing ahead. The guitarist plucks the culminating bass E note ferociously, like a bald eagle swiping a squirrel from a tree branch with a single talon. The vibration is violently transmitted from the bridge, resonating throughout the top of the classical guitar. It is transmitted to the sides and back of the instrument, resonating through the open air space in the body, finally producing a sultry, pristine, and resonant sound.

The note sails into our ears, and we feel an impulse to applaud. But, to our surprise, the first note of the next movement, *Loure*, conjures the idea of a dancer moving sweetly, eloquently, and effortlessly. Then the third movement, *Gavotte*

en Rondeau, which suggests a second dancer, more upbeat and playful.

In the fourth and fifth movements, *Menuets I and II*, the music becomes simple and repetitive, yet contemplative and expressive with little ornamental flourishes, and in *Bourée*, the music becomes exuberant, which persists through a jig-inspired final movement, *Gigue*, until the E major chord is gallantly arpeggiated at the end of the work and we exhale, satiated. 🎸

Adam Levin is an award-winning classical guitarist and artist/teacher in classical guitar in URI's Department of Music. He is also the founder and artistic director of the URI Guitar Festival, which will hold its eighth edition from October 18–22, 2023.

The festival demonstrates the universal nature of the guitar while uniting artists and audiences alike. For more on the festival, visit uriguitarfestival.org. To follow Levin's career, please visit adamlevinguitar.com.

INNOVATORS

Sweet Success

Ella Schneider '26 launched an award-winning bean-to-bar chocolate company with her father.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, some people made sourdough starter. Ella Schneider '26 made chocolate. She and her father, Steven Schneider, purchased a melanger—a stone-on-stone chocolate grinder—in January 2020, just before the pandemic. But it was during the long hours of lockdown that the Wakefield, R.I., residents experimented with different varieties of cacao beans—along with sugar, milk, and cocoa butter—to perfect their recipes. Ella gave bars out to friends and teachers, while her father, an OB-GYN at South County Hospital, gave them out at work. “We got such great feedback,” she says, “we thought we might actually have something.”

It turns out they had the seeds of a business. In 2021, the Schneiders started Gansett Craft Chocolate, now Rhode Island's only bean-to-bar gourmet chocolate company. In the past year, they've sold thousands of chocolate bars and won national awards. Ella, a business major at URI, has been perfecting the company's business plan with the help of Launch Lab, an initiative combining mentorship, networking, and events for budding entrepreneurs on campus. “It helped us map out our true costs and better plan for the future,” she says.

Steven Schneider has long been obsessed with small-batch bean-to-bar chocolate and got his daughter hooked when they toured a chocolate maker in 2013. When they got serious about experimenting, they used cacao beans from a small producer in Peru. “They come in smaller quantities and cost more, but they were the best ones we tried,” Steven says. The Schneiders also add less sugar—just 30 percent—compared to some commercial chocolate makers who use up to 70 percent. So, the pure taste of the chocolate comes through.

Father and daughter started making dark chocolate, then milk, before getting increasingly creative with recipes—like Rhode Island coffee milk, a white chocolate and coffee combo. “It's amazing how much it tastes like the drink,” Ella says.



Ella Schneider (above) and her dad, Steven Schneider, working on their award-winning Gansett Craft Chocolate at Town Made shared kitchens in Wakefield, R.I.

“It's our most popular flavor now.” Other top sellers include Lil' Rhody Sea Salt and 70% Dark Brown Butter Sage. For next Easter, they are considering releasing a “What's Up Doc” bar, with carrot cake flavor. (A milk chocolate with everything bagel spice, on the other hand, didn't make it off the drawing board. “That was just gross,” Ella says.)

Despite being new to the industry, the Schneiders achieved a sweet victory at the 2022 Chocolate Alliance Awards when they were among six out of 150 entries to win a gold medal for their milk chocolate—conferring instant acclaim on their fledgling enterprise. “It was a really emotional day for my dad,” Ella says. “He cried a little.” Since then, they've also won a gold for their Rhode Island coffee milk and a silver for milk chocolate at the 2023 Craft Chocolat Challenge, a fledgling bean-to-

bar chocolate competition sponsored by Kentucky craft chocolatiers Chocolat Inn & Cafe.

The business has brought the Schneiders closer together, as they bounce ideas off each other and spend long hours roasting beans and setting chocolate bars in molds. “Ella is a go-getter and dedicated to the business,” says Steve. “When other students are sleeping on weekends, she's spending most of her Sundays with me making chocolate.”

Ella plans to continue working for the business part time while she earns her URI degree, then launch the business full time in a storefront upon graduation. Even after all the hard work, she remains a chocolate lover herself. Her favorite flavor? “Milk chocolate,” she says. “You can never go wrong with that.” 🍫

—Michael Blanding

MOMENTUM

Research at the Forefront

URI researchers are working across disciplines to help find answers and solutions to benefit all of us.



John Taylor at URI's agronomy field on the Kingston Campus

MAPPING URBAN AGRICULTURE

A URI team led by John Taylor, associate professor of agroecology, landed a \$970,000 National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant to map alternative food networks.

Urban agriculture has attracted attention in the U.S. as a strategy for stimulating economic development, increasing food security and access, and combating obesity and diabetes. Developing effective policies and programs demands, as a first step, accurate mapping of existing urban agriculture sites. Taylor hopes to provide that template, along with URI researchers Julie Keller, associate professor of sociology, and Melva Treviño Peña and Patrick Baur, both assistant professors of fisheries, animal and veterinary sciences.

With partners at the University of Maryland and the University of the District of Columbia, they will map the alternative food networks of immigrant communities and communities of color in Providence, R.I., Baltimore, Md., and Washington, D.C.

For more on URI research, check out Momentum: Research & Innovation, the magazine of URI's Division of Research and Economic Development, at uri.edu/research/momentum

ALZHEIMER'S DETECTION THROUGH EYE EXAMS

URI researcher Jessica Alber, an assistant professor in the College of Pharmacy and George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience, is the principal investigator of a new study of whether routine eye exams could be an early screening tool for Alzheimer's. The study is funded through a five-year, \$10.3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Positron emission tomography (PET) scanning or lumbar puncture can detect signs of the disease, but the procedures are both invasive and expensive. Using retinal imaging as a "window to the brain," Alber and collaborators seek to develop a more affordable and accessible screening tool that could potentially be part of a routine eye exam.

"Early detection of any disease leads to therapies," said Alber. "Over the last 10 years in [Alzheimer's] research, there has been a shift to preventive medicine, to screening and catching it early."

THE CLASS OF 2023

Thank You, Mom

URI's newest alumni received diplomas in May. Get to know our inspiring 2023 student Commencement speakers.



MAZEN M. TAMAN, PHARM.D. '23

Mazen M. Taman delivered the undergraduate Commencement address on Saturday, May 20, 2023. The Cranston, R.I., native held two paid internships simultaneously in the spring semester of his final year in the Pharm.D. program. He also worked on two research teams, one focused on the efficacy of home electronic

blood pressure monitoring and one focused on software for managing investigational drugs.

While completing his Pharm.D. program, including six clinical rotations at Rhode Island Hospital, Taman played football for the Rams for four years and will enter Brown University's Warren Alpert Medical School this fall.

"I was raised in a one-parent household, where my mom worked tirelessly at multiple jobs to keep my two brothers and me in school and sports," Taman said. "My mother has been there every step of the way, offering endless support as I pursued my dreams. Today, I stand before you ... and I know that this accomplishment would not have been possible without the unwavering love and encouragement of my mother. So, Mom, look at us now—we made it."



TANIA SILVA DE OLIVEIRA, PH.D. '23

Tania Silva de Oliveira, a chemical engineer and an analytical research scientist at a Boston-based global pharmaceutical company that develops drugs to treat some of the world's most serious conditions, gave the graduate Commencement address on Friday, May 19, 2023 at the Ryan Center. She completed two bachelor's

degrees in her native Brazil and an undergraduate study-abroad experience at URI. She returned to URI to earn her doctorate in chemical engineering.

"I always felt and knew that education was the way toward a better life for me and for my family," Oliveira said. "As an undergraduate, I went to a chemical engineering school, and, like many of you, worked nights to pay my rent and bills and studied during the day."

She told the audience that many family members would be watching at home in Brazil. "And as you know, my mom and grandma are not understanding a single word of what I am saying. I will ask you to excuse me so I can offer them a few special words: *Te amo vó e mãe! Obrigada por tudo.* Meaning, I love you Grandma and Mom. Thank you for everything."



FACULTY BOOKSHELF

Elevate your reading list with these new titles by URI faculty authors

FEATURED BOOK: MAKING LIVABLE WORLDS



Most anthropologists would refer to the ethnographic research that Hilda Lloréns did for her latest book as fieldwork. But Lloréns calls it "homework."

That's because the area she studies—the communities surrounding the Jobos Bay in southern Puerto Rico—is where she was born and where generations of her family have lived. In *Making Livable Worlds: Afro-Puerto Rican Women Building Environmental Justice* (2021), Lloréns chronicles the lives of women in this region who draw on deep cultural

knowledge to navigate myriad environmental challenges from industrial pollution to disasters like hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Lloréns, an associate professor of anthropology at URI, says her goal was to elevate the stories of women whose contributions to their community are often overlooked or even erased entirely.

Last fall, Lloréns won two prestigious awards for her book. She says she's appreciative of the recognition, but what's more



important to her is being an advocate for those living around Jobos Bay.

"My academic tradition is advocacy anthropology, so I like to be involved in community work," Lloréns said. "I didn't write this book just to write a book; I'm really hoping to help change the reality of a place that needs advocacy."

—Kevin Stacey



Anti-Colonialism and the Crises of Interwar Fascism
Michael Ortiz, Assistant Professor of History (2023)



Data Borders: How Silicon Valley is Building an Industry Around Immigrants
Melissa Villa-Nicholas, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (2023)



The Tragedy of Ukraine
Nicolai Petro, Professor of Political Science (2022)



Failing Sideways: Queer Possibilities for Writing Assessment
Stephanie West-Puckett, Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric (2023)



ReFocus: The Later Films and Legacy of Robert Altman
Justin Wyatt, co-editor, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, Journalism, and Film/Media (2022)

Find more faculty titles, including textbooks, as well as alumni publications, at uri.edu/magazine/bookshelf



A Network for Leading Women

As part of the campaign, the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement has launched the Women's Philanthropy Circle. This new group recognizes women who have committed \$100,000 or more in cumulative philanthropic support to the University. Starting in 2021, members have come together for events featuring guest speakers and unique networking opportunities.

The goals of the Circle include expanding opportunities for students, raising the profile of women philanthropists, and sharing ideas for the good of the URI community. Elizabeth A. "Liz" Burt '79 recently joined the Circle and shares her reflections on this new group.

"Being a member of the Women's Philanthropy Circle has given me the opportunity to experience the collective enthusiasm, dedication, and team effort of women, diverse in their personal talents and interests, who are united in their commitment to URI. As part of this shared goal, the group has served to solidify and strengthen my support of and engagement with URI, its initiatives, and future leaders.

"My hope for URI students is that they take advantage of the many opportunities and resources URI has to offer that will enrich and support their college experience. In addition to pursuing academic goals, make time to get involved on campus or in the community, cultivate lasting friendships, utilize their education to make a positive impact, and develop a desire for lifelong learning and growth."



An Engine for Growth and Discovery

Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island continues to transform the student experience, the campus, and the research capabilities of URI. As the campaign enters its final year, we are in an exciting phase where early campaign gifts have gained traction and made a difference, with other significant projects still underway and primed to benefit from additional support.

Thanks to the campaign, we've seen endowed scholarships bring unique students to URI. We've seen academic and athletic spaces reborn for a new age. We've seen professors drawn to the University for its academic excellence and sense of community.

It has been inspiring to see groups come together to make a collective impact. The senior class set a new giving record. Faculty and staff showed their generosity and belief in our mission with \$1 million in cumulative gifts. The Alumni of Color Network launched a new endowed scholarship thanks to community support. When we talk about a campaign, this is what it means. These are the stories that inspire us and position URI in the national spotlight.

Lil O'Rourke

Lil Breul O'Rourke
President

Al Verrecchia

Alfred J. Verrecchia '67, M.B.A. '72, Hon. '04
Chairman of the Board

Early in the campaign, URI trustee and former chair of the URIFAE board Thomas M. Ryan '75, Hon. '99 and current URIFAE board chair Alfred J. Verrecchia '67, M.B.A. '72, Hon. '04, each established an endowed scholarship for exceptional students. The Thomas M. Ryan Endowed Scholarship and the Alfred J. Verrecchia Distinguished Business Scholarship both went into effect quickly, being awarded to several students year after year, creating a unique community of ambitious young scholars. These students have come to fully embrace the URI experience and work to make their mark on the world.



Katie Tenebruso
Alfred J. Verrecchia Scholar

Activities

- Double major in business administration and kinesiology
- President, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club
- Vice president and assistant, Women in Business
- Spirit chair, Student Alumni Association
- Rhody Ruckus leadership team
- Member of the Pre-PT Club and Kinesiology Club

Getting the Scholarship

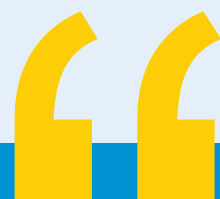
When I found out that I got the Verrecchia Scholarship, I was getting ready for my high school theatre production. And I got the phone call, and they told me that I got this full-ride scholarship to URI. Immediately I ran and told my mom. She was so excited. And then I went off and told all my friends that I was going to the University of Rhode Island.

Standout URI Moment So Far

One of my favorite moments that I've had at URI so far is completing the "train the trainer" program. I was learning how to teach a functional 45-exercise program at the gym – basically a HIIT (high intensity interval training) workout, running through different circuits and pods. I got to learn how to take over the class, how to coach others through the class, how to critique form, and how to encourage others to have fun while working out.

Goals as a Student

Before I graduate, there's a lot of things I want to do. Of course, staying involved on campus, being able to really leave my mark and make a difference. Specifically taking over as president of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club recently; I definitely want to grow that club since it's so new. And I want to take advantage of as many opportunities as I can. I want to get as much experience in kinesiology as possible: being able to be a physical therapist, teaching group exercise courses, and really meeting a lot of mentors and getting that networking experience.



Having the Verrecchia Scholarship means the world to me. It gave me the opportunity to pursue my passion. My mother really taught me that hard work does pay off. Getting this scholarship showed me that.

KATIE TENEBRUSO



Getting the Ryan Scholarship meant everything to me. It felt like it was a result of not only my hard work, but a few generations of hard work by everyone in my family.

CRISTIAN VARELA



Cristian Varela
Thomas M. Ryan Scholar

Activities

- Double major in industrial systems engineering and Chinese
- Double minor in sustainability and international development
- Enrolled in the Peace Corps Prep Program
- Member of Engineers for a Sustainable World
- Member of the Institute of Industrial Systems Engineering
- Member of the engineering fraternity Theta Tau
- Member of BOND (Brothers on a New Direction)

Getting the Scholarship

Nobody in my family knew that I applied for it except for my mom and my grandfather. Dean Libutti [vice provost for enrollment management] told me on the phone, "Congratulations, you got the Ryan Scholarship." Then it was two minutes of just like, "I did it!" Then I called my grandpa, who helped me brainstorm ideas. And then I had to call my other grandparents. And that's when I was thinking, I really won it because of them. My application itself was about them, in essence. It really was never only me. It was my grandparents, my parents, everyone who supported me.

Standout URI Moment So Far

One of the best moments for me at URI so far was actually on September 5 of my freshman year, before classes even started. I knew which direction I wanted to go in, and that I wanted to go abroad and do humanitarian engineering. I found the Peace Corps Prep Program. I spoke with Dr. Michael Rice to officially join the program. With that, I had my application paperwork sent to Washington, and felt like, this is the start. For me, that was a really emotional moment.



I remember calling my mom and telling her, "It's starting. I'm really starting to get going here."

Goals as a Student

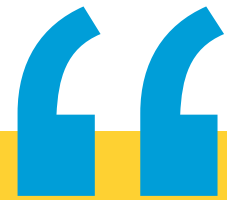
So what I hope to accomplish before graduating is to keep building a big community. I've been involved in a lot of student orgs, meeting everybody from engineers, nonengineers, people from the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, faculty members, it's just been a great experience. In the upcoming year I'm also going to be a global peer ambassador, working with the Office of International Students and Scholars and with study abroad students who are coming to URI for the first time, helping them build a support network and adding them to my own. I hope I can be a good first face for them to see.

From Good to Great
*Fine Arts Center as a
 Community Destination and
 Artist Showcase*

The Fine Arts Center is set to benefit from public support that will update the half-century-old facility. A state bond investment of \$57.3 million as well as \$16 million allocated in the 2023 state budget will provide much needed renovations. One major initiative of the campaign is to elevate this effort to ensure that the new center reflects the caliber of fine arts talent and the history of artistic accomplishment at the University.

With the recent achievements of Tony-winning actor Andrew Burnap '13, the long-term success of Billboard-chart-topping professor Adam Levin, and the potential of students refining their art each day on campus, there is no doubt about the quality of fine arts education at URI. The physical structure of the center needs to communicate this to the broader community, while also serving as a beacon of entertainment and cultural enrichment for 50,000 visitors each year.

Alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations have already contributed to this effort. The University will continue to bring in transformational support to realize this vision.



When I entered URI as a fine arts student, the existing building was brand new. Today, the patina of splattered paint and spilled plaster attest to a building which has served as a workplace for decades of art students. A new facility, with more light and space, will become the laboratory for new artists. What a wonderful and important project!

MAEVE HICKEY '70, DISTINGUISHED MULTIMEDIA ARTIST



Practice Makes Perfect

The Soloviev Basketball Practice Facility nears completion

The final touches are on schedule for the official opening of the Soloviev Basketball Practice Facility this fall, while the women's and men's basketball teams will gain early access for practice sessions in August.

The former West Gymnasium has been undergoing a complete renovation since 2022 and features one full-sized basketball court and two half-sized courts, with the same surface as in the floor of the Ryan Center.

An artwork contest sponsored by the Soloviev Art Foundation encouraged URI students to design wall art for display in the hallway leading to the practice facility. The winner of the contest will receive a \$2,500 scholarship and credit for the installation.

The state-of-the-art facility provides the men's and women's teams with more court time and greater schedule flexibility, while also showcasing URI's first class facilities for recruits.

Since construction of the Thomas M. Ryan Center, the men's and women's teams have had to coordinate court practice times with a robust schedule of concerts, community events, and other activities in the same space. The new practice facility will also open up time in the Ryan Center for more entertainment bookings and increased revenue.

Key Upgrades

- Training room for student-athlete care
- Video board and teaching wall for enhanced training
- Fueling station to maximize student-athlete performance

Metcalf Institute Scales Up

Coinciding with the campaign, Metcalf Institute has extended the reach of its critical work of promoting informed, inclusive communications about environmental challenges and solutions. The institute is developing an increasing number of public programs in addition to its core work of conducting science training for journalists and communications training for scientists, researchers, and other experts. Philanthropic support during the campaign has been key to this growth.

An impact accelerator fund has allowed Metcalf Institute to add staff positions that are essential to scaling up for a broader impact. In 2022, they welcomed a development consultant to expand their donor base, heighten immediate-use fundraising, and forge connections among organizations, corporations, and potential funders. Metcalf Institute will further expand this year with the addition of a staff member focused on its inclusive science communication portfolio and support of the

This was a truly awesome fellowship. I woke up every day excited to learn more and hear from a new round of experts. I have a better understanding of how to navigate scientific papers and relationships with scientists, and how to report on the climate.”

KYLE BAGENSTOSE
USA Today, 2020 Annual Science Immersion Workshop for Journalists

growing global community of practice. This position is initially funded by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the Rita Allen Foundation (via the Civic Science Associate program), and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

The institute is celebrating its 25th year by embarking on an ambitious plan for the future while recognizing a quarter century of improving science communication. While working continuously to address

global issues of environmental health, the clearest examples of the institute's value come from graduates of the program.



Support From Within

In 2022, a committed group of faculty and staff agreed to serve as ambassadors to encourage their peers to contribute to URI Day of Giving. This successful initiative gained momentum and raised \$1.44 million from 641 individuals by the end of the fiscal year.

The effort continued the following year, topping the previous total to reach \$1.55 million with even more faculty, faculty emeriti, and staff members joining in. This level of support from those who are working on campus each day indicates not only their dedication to URI students but also their confidence in the University's direction and the goals of the campaign.

"I have always felt it is important to move University initiatives forward," said one of the ambassadors, Jeffrey Ulricksen M.P.A. '21, assistant director of spatial services. "As a staff member, an alum, and parent of two students, I want to ensure that others get to experience this wonderful community. That's why I give and why I serve on this committee."

89%
toward new
\$300M goal

Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for URI has made all of these things and more possible, advancing URI and creating new opportunities across five strategic areas:

- Student Access
- The URI Learning Experience
- Transformative Faculty Leadership
- Innovative and Distinctive Programs
- Strategic Opportunities

But the work is **not yet done!** It will take everyone across the URI community working together to bring the University to the next level of educational and academic success.



\$15,000+

Rhody Senior Challenge
The Class of '23 set a record
for the senior class gift

Rhode Island's Water Warriors

URI's four water outreach programs—all headed by dedicated URI alumni—work together to keep the state's waterways and watersheds clean and healthy. Together, they comprise a quiet but mighty force that helps Rhode Island care for what is arguably its most precious resource: water.

By Bill Ibelle

Inspired by how URI's water outreach programs work to keep Rhode Island's waterways and watersheds clean and healthy, illustrator Bruno Perosino created map illustrations to represent some of the areas where the programs work.

Pages 26–27, Greenwich Bay and Greenwich Cove
Pages 28–29, Point Judith and Point Judith Pond
Pages 30–31, Watchaug, Ninigret, and Green Hill Ponds

The directors of URI's four water outreach programs—Watershed Watch, Onsite Wastewater Resource Center, Home*A*Syst, and Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials—at Thirty Acre Pond in West Kingston, R.I. From left, Alissa Cox '10, M.S. '13, Ph.D. '20, director, Onsite Wastewater Resource Center; Elizabeth Herron '88, M.A. '04, director, Watershed Watch; Alyson McCann, M.S. '89, director, Home*A*Syst; Lorraine Joubert '77, M.S. '91, director, Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials.



Look at any map of Rhode Island and you'll realize that we visualize our state as a network of paved pathways that carry us to work, the beach, the mall, and to see friends. But beneath this web of pavement, the natural world has its own system of arteries and capillaries, many of them so tiny they go unnoticed. Yet this network is the lifeblood of our planet—the natural filtration system that purifies our water so we can drink, boat, swim, and simply admire its beauty.

It's often said that water is the new oil—a resource that will determine which nations thrive and which crumble. This underscores why it's so important for Rhode Island to preserve the health of its water supply.

And this is exactly what the University of Rhode Island is doing through a cluster of four water outreach programs designed to educate decision-makers, engage the public, and create a detailed database to serve as the foundation for cutting-edge research. To create that database, Elizabeth Herron '88, M.A. '04, has recruited an army of more than 350 citizen volunteers who test water quality at more than 220 locations.

"The state can't possibly monitor all of that, so we need volunteers to get the job done," says Herron, director of URI's Watershed Watch.

Meanwhile, URI students perform the laboratory analysis on the test samples collected by citizen volunteers.

"Our students gain a ton of lab experience and put into practice all of the things they're learning in the classroom," says Herron. "After graduation, many of them go on to work for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Nature Conservancy, and other environmental organizations."

The database created by Watershed Watch stretches back to 1988 and serves as the basis for water quality restoration plans issued by the state Department of Environmental Management (DEM).

"They are the primary source of data in Rhode Island for determining whether a water body is impaired," says Katie DeGoosh, a principal environmental scientist at DEM.

In 2002, Watershed Watch data identified elevated fecal coliform levels in Greenwich Cove, which flows into the shellfishing grounds of Greenwich Bay. Additional testing traced the pollution to its sources and was the basis for a DEM cleanup plan that installed 23 catch basins throughout the watershed to reduce road runoff. The plan also eliminated a host of failing septic systems by connecting the offending homes and businesses to the town sewer system. As a result, water quality in the bay improved dramatically, and in 2022, the state reopened a portion of Greenwich Bay for shellfishing for the first time in 20 years.

"Waterways are all interconnected, so we can't ignore any part of the system."

—Elizabeth Herron, '88 M.A. '04,
director, Watershed Watch

“Most of us don't think about where our water comes from, let alone where it goes.”

—Alissa Cox '10, M.S. '13, Ph.D. '20, director, Onsite Wastewater Resource Center

Environmental Detectives

You never know what you're going to find when you follow testing to the source of water pollution. It can be as egregious as an untreated sewer outflow or as benign as an upstream beaver dam. In the early days of Watershed Watch, bacteria counts spiked in Tiogue Lake in Coventry. The villain? A friendly bread truck that was dropping off bags of day-old bread on the causeway for people to feed the ducks and geese. The birds were adorable, but they pooped so much the lake had to be closed.

Around the same time, Watershed Watch testers encountered a curious phenomenon at Yawgoo Pond in South Kingstown. As an isolated pond surrounded by forest and swampland, it should have been an ideal water-purifying environment. Yet the pond suffered from repeated blue-green algae blooms. Not only did this turn the pond the color of pea soup, but it also signaled the presence of toxic cyanobacteria, which can kill dogs and cause nausea, vomiting, rashes, and liver damage in humans.

“Testing showed that the algae bloom was caused by a phosphorous overload, which is usually caused by fertilizers,” says Art Gold, founder of Watershed Watch. “But there was no agriculture near the pond, so it wasn't from the turf farms.”

Testers were able to trace the phosphorous to one of three tiny brooks that fed the pond, then follow the pollution upstream and through a swamp to an illicit shellfish processing plant.

“The state cleaned up the site and the pond rebounded,” says Gold, a professor emeritus of natural resources sciences at URI.

This is a classic example of how the capillaries of our water network—the unnoticed swamps and streamlets—can cause problems in major bodies of water.

“Waterways are all interconnected, so we can't ignore any part of the system,” says Herron.

More recently, Almy Pond in Newport has suffered a series of blue-green algae blooms each summer. Although no one swims in the pond or drinks its water, it sits right behind Newport's world-famous Cliff Walk and drains into the exclusive Bailey's Beach, which suffers from annual closures due to high bacteria counts.

Residents have responded by installing buoys filled with biochar, a highly absorbent charcoal designed to pull phosphorous out of the water.

Across the state in Tiverton, Stafford Pond was closed in 2020 for a similar type of algae bloom. That community responded by treating the lake with aluminum sulfate, which binds to the phosphorous deposits in bottom sediment, making it impossible for cyanobacteria to feed on it.

Who's the Culprit?

So where does all this lake-killing phosphorous and nitrogen come from?

You. Me. All of us.

It's in the fertilizer we use on our lawns, pet droppings we fail to pick up, the waste from imperfect septic systems, and motor oil and exhaust metals that run off our driveways and roads when it rains.

This is what's called “nonpoint source” pollution because it can't be traced back to a single culprit like an unregulated fish plant or a large sod farm. Most waterway pollution comes from dozens of sources that silently leach contaminants into the ground, then seep into nearby streamlets, which carry them to a river, lake, or reservoir. In more urban areas, pollutants wash down the street, into the sewers, and overflow into Narraganset Bay, closing popular beaches.

Gerry Messina, an avid surfer and treasurer of the Rhode Island chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, which works with Watershed Watch to sample and test saltwater sites in the state, says that testers routinely find elevated bacteria levels at three popular surfing breaks on the east and west sides of Point Judith and Second Beach in Newport.

But like many small environmental organizations, the Surfrider Foundation has neither the money nor the manpower to improve state and local environmental policies. This is where the work of the three other URI Cooperative Extension water programs comes in—one focused on septic systems, another on private wells, and a third on environmentally friendly development.

Septic: Gone, But To Where?

It's hardly a revelation that failing septic systems are a major cause of water pollution. Fixing the problem is another matter, according to Alissa Cox, '10, M.S. '13, Ph.D. '20.

As director of the Onsite Wastewater Resource Center at URI, Cox provides classroom and field training to septic system designers, installers, inspectors, and the public. Her first challenge is human nature: out of sight, out of mind.

“Most of us don't think about where our water comes from, let alone where it goes,” says Cox. “We just assume our water is clean because this is America.”

The second challenge is financial. Cox notes that an advanced septic system typically costs upward of \$25,000, which is why she's working in partnership with the town of Charlestown to pilot a far less expensive treatment system. While most advanced systems come with a proprietary nitrogen treatment system that removes nitrogen from wastewater before

it leaves this system, Cox is testing a drainfield system—developed in Ontario, Canada, and piloted on Cape Cod—that uses layers of sand and sawdust to remove nitrogen in the drainfield.

The goal is to win state regulatory approval for this innovative system design. This requires two years of testing data from 10 locations. Charlestown currently has four of these systems up and

“We can't move the road or the entire septic system, but we can test regularly.”

—Alyson McCann, M.S. '89, director, Home*A*Syst

running and needs funding for the remaining six. If successful, the URI/Charlestown project could establish an affordable way to improve septic systems throughout the state.

The third challenge Cox faces is maintenance, which is a tough sell, given that septic systems live underground and are rarely noticed until the backyard starts smelling funny—which is long after pollution has plumed through the watershed.

“Even a well-designed system doesn't work if it's poorly maintained,” says Cox. “It's just like your car: if you don't change your engine oil, it's going to seize up and that's the end of it.”

Surprisingly, even new systems can be a problem. Some advanced systems don't work because they were installed or designed improperly. URI researchers have discovered dozens of new advanced systems that weren't working because the switch for the nitrogen removal mode was never turned on and others that didn't work because of faulty software.

Wells: How Clean Is My Water?

Where there is a septic system, there is often a private well—and the two don't always play well together. As director of URI's Home*A*Syst program, Alyson McCann, M.S. '89, provides education and technical assistance to the state's 100,000 private well owners. She says that in addition to septic intrusion, there are a host of other potential contaminants: oil and salt from road runoff, bacteria from pet waste or dead animals, lead from old pipes, fertilizer from lawns and agriculture, and industrial waste.

"We can't move the road or the entire septic system, but we can test regularly," says McCann, noting that it costs only \$100 to test your well annually and she will interpret the results for free.

"Communities along the coast are more likely to adopt conservation development because land values depend so much on water quality."

—Lorraine Joubert '77, M.S. '91, director, Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials

Sometimes contamination is catastrophic. In 2001 the water supply for most of Burrillville, including the reservoir and private wells, was contaminated by MTBE, a toxic gasoline additive. Testing traced the contamination back to the Main Street Mobil station, where an underground storage tank had ruptured; the toxin had leaked into the groundwater and spread to the reservoir and private wells.

The spill, which was the biggest in Rhode Island history, was initially detected when a resident tested his private well. The

spill shut down the entire district's water supply, required a multiyear cleanup, and culminated in a civil suit in which Exxon Mobil paid the town \$7 million.

This, of course, is an extreme example. In general, the drinking water quality in Rhode Island is quite good, according to McCann, and most problems can be resolved with relatively simple treatments such as chlorine shock for bacteria and a variety of water filters for other pollutants.

"We provide periodic training sessions throughout the state on what to test for, how to test, what the results mean, and how to treat various problems," says McCann.

Development: A Better Way

Development doesn't have to be a dirty word. Both new development and modifications to existing development can be done in an environmentally sound manner, according to Lorraine Joubert '77, M.S. '91.

As director of URI's Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program, Joubert teaches city and town officials about these practices and helps them craft ordinances that ensure their implementation.

Some improvements are relatively simple. For example, parking lots typically pave over large natural areas including tiny depressions and streamlets that serve as the capillaries of our natural water system. Joubert advocates for ordinances that require new parking lots to be dotted with small green spaces where water can gather and filter into the soil rather than running off into sewers. Similar improvements can be made to existing parking lots.

As for roadways, we can dig swales and natural catch basins along the sides that will filter runoff through the soil, rather than channel all those contaminants into sewers.

Other improvements are more complicated but equally doable. Charlestown recently enacted a "conservation development" zoning ordinance, which

reconceives traditional lots. Using the same amount of land, it groups houses in a village-like cluster, leaving the rest of the land in its natural state. These patches of forest, wetlands, and fields act as natural filtration systems to protect groundwater, the town's only source of drinking water.

Based on results in other communities, Charlestown officials believe conservation development will increase property values by preserving the natural beauty of the area and may even allow homeowners in these mini-villages to share a single septic system.

"Communities along the coast are more likely to adopt conservation development because land values depend so much on water quality," says Joubert. "It's harder to convince communities in the northern part of the state."

In partnership with DEM, Joubert created a detailed process—the Low Impact Development checklist—to help towns assess their current regulations. A URI graduate conducted this process with officials from the seven towns that form the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed, which has been designated a Partnership Wild and Scenic River System by the National Park Service.

"The project fit beautifully with my site-planning and wetland ecology classes," says Hayden McDermott, M.E.S.M. '22, who just completed a master's degree in environmental science and management and recently landed a position with the city of Newport. "It also fits well with my career plans since I was operating as a consultant of sorts to local policymakers."

Performing the checklist was a mammoth undertaking for McDermott, who averaged about 60 hours per town to conduct the detailed evaluation, then put on a PowerPoint presentation before each of the seven planning boards.

"I loved the Q&A after the presentation because the officials were excited about finding ways to implement these ideas," says McDermott.



The Saugatucket River is one of more than 220 locations monitored by Watershed Watch volunteers.

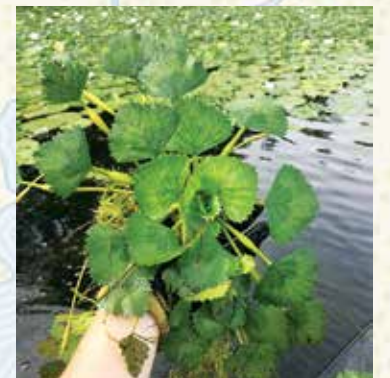
Alien Invasion

Invasive plants are another notable threat to water quality. Because they have no native predators, they can spread rapidly and ruin prized lakes and ponds for swimming, boating, and fishing. They rob the water of oxygen that fish need to survive and shade out native plants that serve as food for aquatic animals.

The two most common of these invasive plants are milfoil and fanwort, which can be found in more than 100 bodies of water in Rhode Island. Both are dense, feathery green plants that mass just below the surface. Milfoil can grow more than an inch per week and reproduce when it breaks apart, as it does easily when stirred up by boaters or swimmers.

One of the newest invasive species in the state is the water chestnut, which was first spotted by a URI graduate student in North Kingstown's Belleville Pond. The plant has since spread to several other locations including the Blackstone River, Chapman Pond in Westerly, and Central Pond in East Providence. Like water lilies, the dense floating leaves of the water chestnut can cover the entire surface of a pond, blocking out sunlight needed by other plants and fish.

"Water chestnut is my biggest worry right now," says DeGoosh of the DEM. "One seed in the spring can sprout 15



Water chestnut is one of the newest invasive species in Rhode Island waters.

plants, and each plant can produce 25 seeds for the next year. So, growth can be exponential."

One favorable trait of water chestnut is it can be eradicated before it spreads by simply pulling it up by its roots. As a result, early detection is the key to containment.

This is another reason why URI's army of water testers is so important, according to Gold.

"The government has a hard time staying committed to monitoring because it's not sexy," he says. "No one could afford to do this with staff, which is why DEM partners with Watershed Watch. If we don't have those eyes on our water system, we won't notice if it's degrading." ☞



Veronica Berounsky, Ph.D. '90, has been a Watershed Watch volunteer for 20 years, sampling and testing the water in Narrow River.

Water Detective

An army of 350 Watershed Watch volunteers monitor and test the water at more than 250 locations around Rhode Island. For one volunteer, who's been tracking water quality in Narrow River for two decades, it's a labor of love.

By Bill Ibelle

It's early morning on Narrow River and the spring wind blows chilly from the north as Veronica Berounsky, Ph.D. '90, lowers a Secchi disc over the side of her Carolina Skiff. The disc is a simple test of water clarity, virtually unchanged since the device was invented in 1865 by the pope's astronomer, Angelo Secchi.

Berounsky, who has been a volunteer with URI's Watershed Watch for 20 years, can distinguish the black and white sections of the disc to a depth of 6 feet, which is quite good compared to the 3-foot visibility

typical in midsummer. Cloudy water usually indicates excessive algae growth, which is caused by nutrients from lawn fertilizers, pet waste, and failing septic systems. As the algae die and decompose, they use dissolved oxygen in the water, leaving less for fish and other animals.

In addition to water clarity, all volunteers for the program monitor temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, acidity, chlorophyll, algal density, and nutrients, such as phosphorous and nitrogen. Most importantly, they also watch for elevated bacteria levels, which have kept Narrow

River closed to shellfishing since 1986.

Berounsky, a coastal ecologist and coordinator of alumni relations and communications for the Graduate School of Oceanography, explains that tidal estuaries like Narrow River play an important role in New England ecology because the daily mixing of salt and fresh water provides a unique habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species.

But among these biologically diverse microenvironments, Narrow River is special.

About 4 miles up the river lie two deep-water kettle ponds carved by retreat-

ing glaciers 11,000 years ago. These ponds are protected from the full tidal surge by shallow sandbars that reduce the mixing of salt water that slides in over the bars. The result is three distinct layers of water with the bottommost devoid of oxygen. Scientists from around the world visit these ponds to study unusual microorganisms that live without oxygen and survive entirely on sulfur.

What's that smell?

On Friday, Oct. 12, 2017, residents noticed a strong smell of rotten eggs. The next morning, the URI women's crew team noticed that the river's lower pond had suddenly turned a strange milky white. Dead fish floated in the water and crabs scurried out of the pond to dig themselves into the soggy exposed mud.

All Watershed Watch volunteers monitor water clarity, temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, acidity, chlorophyll, algal density, and nutrients, such as phosphorous and nitrogen. They also monitor bacteria levels.

To monitor the health of this environment, Berounsky lowers an intricate glass chamber known as a Niskin bottle over the side of her boat and fills it with anoxic water—water that lacks oxygen—found at 40 to 65 feet below the surface. She then releases a pulley that caps the bottle underwater before any air can get inside. As she performs this operation, she tells the story of a strange event that occurred in this spot a few years ago.

The cause was an “overturn,” in which the stratified water layers of the kettle pond flipped upside down—the top layer rotating to the bottom and the anoxic bottom layer rotating to the top, bringing with it the smelly sulfur that feeds the strange lifeforms thriving in those murky depths.

An overturn is relatively rare, occurring once every decade or so. It requires a combination of several factors. The first is

an exceptionally dry fall, which results in less fresh water flowing into the pond and more cold, dense ocean water coming in over the top. The result is a top-heavy pond. But this alone isn't enough. A quick drop in temperature and a blustery wind are also required.

Berounsky emphasizes that an overturn is an entirely natural phenomenon. It's smelly, weird, and no fun if you're a crab—but it's not caused by pollution.

She also notes that three decades of monitoring the Narrow River have demonstrated that conditions are improving steadily and that new municipal sewer systems, coupled with catch basins to filter road and yard runoff, are making a difference.

Although closed to shellfishing, the river has never been closed to swimming, a fact that Berounsky recently took advantage of by swimming the length of the 6-mile river to raise funds for its preservation.

“As an ecologist, it was interesting to watch the biology change as I swam down the river. It was a new perspective on a river I've lived on and worked to preserve for 30 years,” says Berounsky, who is co-president of the Narrow River Preservation Association and chair of the Rhode Island Rivers Council. “It's a unique body of water and important for us to preserve its beauty and ecology.”

Summer on the Wild Side

WHALE SHARKS WITH WETHERBEE: A TRAVELOGUE

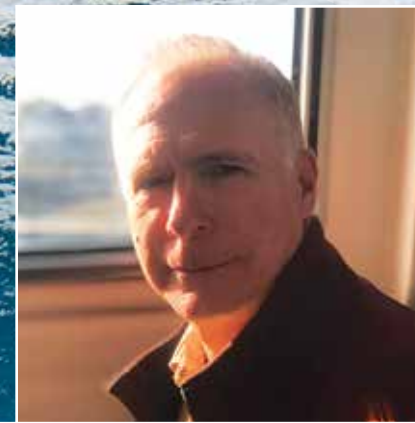
When Marc began his tenure as president of URI in the summer of 2021, I knew we were in for an adventure. But I couldn't have imagined that a year later I'd be swimming in the dark blue waters off the coast of Isla Mujeres, Mexico, eye to eye with a whale shark.

By Mary Parlange

The Shark Guy

Assistant Professor Brad Wetherbee has spent more than 30 years studying shark evolution, migration, and habitats, with a focus on conservation. Known as "the shark guy" around campus, Wetherbee is a world-renowned shark expert.

Get to know Wetherbee in "Take the Fork in the Road," a profile of URI's "shark guy" at uri.edu/magazine.



Whale sharks are the largest sharks and the largest of any fishes alive today, reaching lengths of up to 60 feet. They are plankton/filter feeders, so they're not dangerous, says Brad Wetherbee, who takes students in his BIO 492 course, which focuses on field methods for studying sharks and rays, to Mexico to observe whale sharks in the wild.

AUGUST 2, 2021

It's Marc's first day at URI, and we are welcomed by a crowd of faculty and staff on our new front lawn. URI's resident tick expert, Professor Thomas Mather, gives us a can of tick repellent. A group of students presents us with a cantaloupe grown in the teaching garden. Professor Brad Wetherbee invites us out shark fishing. *Wait, what?*

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021

It's a clear day. Brad Wetherbee and a few of his students are waiting at the Wickford, R.I., docks to usher Marc and me onto the R/V *Hope Hudner*. We're joining them on their regular shark-tagging excursion.

Wetherbee, as his students call him, conducts field research on sharks and rays and teaches ecology, marine biology, and shark biology in the College of the Envi-

ronment and Life Sciences (CELS). He's popular with students, who love his dry sense of humor. He also runs a summer shark camp for city kids that has been featured on NBC's *Today Show*.

Wetherbee is not a man of many words or expressions. At the helm of the boat, he's the picture of a crusty fisherman. I can't get a read on whether he's happy we're out here or not, and I'm usually good at reading

"Throughout the process, the students and Wetherbee operate with confidence and efficiency, a tight-knit team."



Members of Wetherbee's Wickford crew run water across the gills of a Mako shark while they measure, tag, and photograph the fish, which they then carefully release. Makos are common in R.I. waters, as are blue sharks. Blue sharks are long, sleek, supple swimmers with cobalt backs. Makos are compact and muscular with shorter snouts and longer teeth. They swim incredibly fast in short, jittery spurts.



Aboard the R/V *Hope Hudner* out of Wickford. Left to right, Wetherbee lab members with URI president Marc Parlange: Jahnae Drummond '24, now doing a science and engineering fellowship with Wetherbee; Colby Kresge '21, now working on his master's degree; Julian Garrison, M.S. '23; Parlange; Dario Castillo '21.



AUGUST 3, 2022

people. But as we motor out past Point Judith and set out the lines, things start to relax. I get to know the students. Dario Castillo, I learn, is one of only four National Geographic STEM field assistants in the whole country. Colby Kresge will do a master's degree with Wetherbee. Jahnae Drummond came to URI from Baltimore and is doing research on stingrays.

Then, one of the lines whines, its float bobbing madly, and everyone springs into action. The boat rocks like a roller coaster underfoot. I do my best to reel in the line, but soon my arms give out and Dario, who's about half my size, takes over. The crew brings aboard a luminous 8-foot blue shark, which they measure, photograph, tag, and release. Throughout the process, the students and Wetherbee operate with confidence and efficiency, a tight-knit team. He glows with pride.

I have a read on him now—Brad Wetherbee is an exceptional teacher with a huge heart.

On the way back to the dock, Wetherbee mentions that Marc and I would be welcome to come along to Mexico next summer for his field research course, BIO 492, which includes swimming with whale sharks.



FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Wetherbee gets in touch with me to share the details of the summer course in Mexico. My August schedule is wide open, so I decide to tag along solo on the two-week adventure, rooming with the other faculty member on the trip, marine affairs assistant professor Elizabeth Mendenhall.

The summer course begins. First, we spend a week on waters close to home—four half-days on the *Hope Hudner*, learning how to catch, measure, sex, tag, and take tissue samples from sharks. Every day a different student takes the helm of the boat and drives out past Point Judith. I join them one morning, along with CELS Dean John Kirby.

Even though the students are brand new at this, they have been taught what to expect, and when the line whines, each one jumps to his or her station to help bring a blue shark aboard. Dean Kirby and I have jobs, too. While two students run water across its gills, the rest of us measure, photograph, tag, and then carefully release the shark. I'm impressed by how much they have already learned about handling sharks and collecting data.

AUGUST 8, 2022

It's 7 a.m. and we're at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick, R.I. A few of the students have never been outside the U.S. before; they're excited and a little nervous. Professor Mendenhall herself is a little anxious about rooming with the "president's wife" and I do my best to break the ice. It turns out that she is the perfect complement to Wetherbee on this adventure, building immediate rapport with the students by her relaxed, confident manner. Two graduate student teaching assistants are with us as well: Colby, who was with us on the *Hope Hudner*, and Dan Daye. We are in good hands.

Soon, we've landed, made it through customs in Cancun, and boarded the ferry to Isla Mujeres. Hordes of golf carts pitter along streets lined with tourist

shops, restaurants, churro trucks, and swing bars (there are literally swings at the counters). Our hotel is right on the beach, run by Rhode Island native Anthony Mendillo Jr. and his wife, Kin. They also own a restaurant and a sport-fishing business—Keen M International Blue Water Encounters. His boats, crew, and guides will be taking us out to the sharks this week. The hotel's golf carts are a hit with the students.

AUGUST 9, 2022

During the night there's a huge storm, but morning dawns clear. The seas are still rough, and some of the students regret forgetting to take their Dramamine. Up on the bow of the boat our guide scans the horizon with binoculars. I have no idea how he can spot a shark—every wave looks like a fin to me. Finally, the radio buzzes with something other than, "Nada," and we join a flotilla of boats surrounding a few fins moving slowly through the water.

The protocol is this: A guide in the water directs two people at a time to jump in, have a short swim alongside the shark, and then go back to the boat. Of course, the shark is moving, so the boat must keep pace, maintaining a reasonable distance from the swimmer, while not hitting any sharks, people, or other boats. This dance gets increasingly complicated as more boats join the crowd. Wetherbee tells us that in past years hundreds of sharks have aggregated here, and the number of tourist operations getting into the whale shark business has been growing steadily. This year, however, very few sharks are showing up. No one is really sure why—and Wetherbee reminds us that this is another reason that doing research on whale sharks is so important.

My turn comes. The water is dark, dark blue, the bottom, miles down. The shark is a spotted behemoth gliding powerfully through the water, its mouth a gaping cavern. I can see its eyes, the scars on its fins, little fishes hitching a ride alongside. I forget there's a boat, a protocol—it's just me and this giant in the silent blue.



For most of the students in the course, swimming with the sharks was the highlight of the trip.



And then the shark is past us and the guide waves me back to the boat. The students, full of adrenaline, show each other videos from their GoPros. "That was SO cool!" "I was right next to it!"

Wetherbee beams at their excitement.

AUGUST 10, 2022

The water is much calmer today. Everyone nods off as we motor out. News of a shark sighting crackles on the radio and in minutes, dozens of boats zero in on the spot like ants swarming a speck of food. It's just one shark, though. The boats line up, depositing and collecting their human payloads. Our students take their turns in the water with the shark and emerge exhilarated.

Our captain, Luis, hears of another spotting. That scene is far less orderly, however, with several boats breaking protocol. Soon the *guardaparques*, or park rangers, show up with flashing lights and sirens, ordering everyone out of the water. Luis tells us that the downside of the

"My turn comes. The water is dark, dark blue, the bottom, miles down. The shark is a spotted behemoth gliding powerfully through the water, its mouth a gaping cavern."





explosion in whale shark tourism is that probably only 30 percent of the drivers are experienced. With hundreds of sharks spread over a larger area it's manageable, but this is a potentially dangerous situation for people and sharks alike. Luis has had enough. We head off to a nearby reef for snorkelling and ceviche.

Showing off their catch—a sailfish! From left, a boat mate from Blue Water Encounters, Emma Hughes '26, Wetherbee, Mary Parlange, and Colby Kresge '21.



Dan Daye, M.S. '23, shows off his catch, a skipjack tuna. One of Wetherbee's teaching assistants, Daye studied the movements and migrations of whale sharks, including one named Rio Lady, which he tracked for four years, the longest recorded track ever.

AUGUST 11, 2022

Today is the one “free” day on the trip, for students to do whatever they want. I decide I need to understand sportfishing, so I charter one of Anthony's boats for the morning. Wetherbee joins me, along with Colby, Dan, and Emma. I get the first bite—a 25-pound skipjack tuna. Dan reels in a bonito. Then the captain spots it—the ultimate catch, a sailfish! Emma harnesses in and the fight begins. She's tougher than the fish and shines with joy as she poses for the obligatory photo, before the fish is released back into the blue.

Flashes of neon yellow and blue indicate a school of mahi-mahi. Unlike the sail, this is a fish we can keep. We're about to give up for the day when the captain spots another sail. This time Colby has the rod, and the fish puts up an epic fight. We all line up for another photo, Colby grinning ear to ear.

On the way back to port, Wetherbee, who didn't catch a single fish, is smiling like the Cheshire cat. “It's moments like this...” he says, trailing off. “I'm so happy he caught that fish.”

AUGUST 12, 2022

The full moon is setting behind a cloud as we motor out on calm seas. Somewhere there's a fin cutting that smooth surface, a whale shark vacuuming up its breakfast.

Luis spots a pod of dolphins in the distance and changes course to intersect with them, cutting the engine so we can jump in the water. Below the surface, it's a cacophony of clicks and squeaks, the dolphins plunging under and around us. I take off, kicking my flippered feet as fast as I can. A big one swims circles around me. I can reach out and touch them! They're talking to me! I'm in the pod! One of them lets loose a stream of poop right in front of me. I surface and reorient myself, listening as the clicks fade. The high of this incredible interspecies experience stays with us for the remainder of the trip. I would have come to Mexico just for this.

When we arrive at the site of a shark sighting, we count 120 boats, including the *guardaparques*. Instead of joining the chaos, we take turns jumping off the bow of the boat and then head to the reef, where we see a sleeping sea turtle, a small shark in a crevice, and a pod of cuttlefish.

I chat with some of the students about what they want to do with their lives. “I want to be Dr. Wetherbee when I grow up,” says Rachel. Hailey wants to study the reproductive lives of fish. “Did you know some fish species have three sexes?” She knows the names of many fish, having worked in a pet store, but this is the first time she's been to a reef. Julianne wants to teach high school science. Steph contemplates turning her wildlife biology major into a job as a fish and game warden and is happy she's been able to spend so much time on the boat without getting seasick.

Every evening we have listened to presentations—Wetherbee; teaching assistants Colby and Dan; Professor Mendenhall; and a colleague of Wetherbee's, Mahmood Shivji, director of the Guy Harvey Research Institute at Nova Southeastern University in Florida. For the next two evenings, the

“I reflect on something Wetherbee told me before the trip—that there is nothing quite like observing whale sharks in the wild. And now I understand.”

students are the teachers. Working in pairs, they share what they have learned about whale shark ecology, from ecotourism to field methods to population dynamics and migration patterns.

Later, I head out into the warm night to visit the sea turtle hatching zone on the beach outside the hotel. Volunteers collect eggs laid on the island's beaches, tend them, and then release them when they are ready to go—protecting them from predators at every stage of the journey. Earlier in the week, we saw three big turtles digging their nests into the sand near the pool. Tonight, under the red of their headlamps, the volunteers show us a bin of hatchlings. One day they, too, will crawl up on this same beach to lay their eggs.

AUGUST 13, 2022

On the last evening of the trip, we feast at Anthony's restaurant—on the fish we caught. I reflect on something Wetherbee told me before the trip—that there is nothing quite like observing whale sharks in the wild. And now I understand. Demographics, feeding, measurements, the impact of tourism—all these topics related to whale sharks, topics that the students in the course have studied—mean something different when you see and experience the sharks in this environment. And you really realize how little we know and how hard it is to get reliable data.

AUGUST 14, 2022

In the Cancun airport, I talk with some of the students. For most, swimming with the sharks was the highlight of the trip. They appreciate that they were able to witness firsthand the impacts of ecotourism on the local culture and on the sharks. They learned to drive a boat, tag a shark,

and explore an aspect of whale shark ecology in depth and present it to others. And every student mentioned the value of the friendships and memories they made together.

“It was cool to be with a group of students who have the same academic interests and the same passion for sharks as I do,” says Emma. “Other people would say, ‘Get out of the water! There's a shark!’ But we were like, ‘Yay! A shark! Let's go look at it!’”

Wetherbee tells me, “It's great to see these students experience another country and culture while learning about a species as impressive as whale sharks.”



APRIL 28, 2023

We have a reunion, reliving the adventure with a slideshow at my house. Several of the students have become fast friends, taking Wetherbee's shark biology class together, and this summer a couple of them will join his next shark adventure—to South Africa to see great whites in the wild. I'm a little envious that I'm not going to be with them. Who knows? Maybe in 2024. 🌐



Mary Parlange (left) and marine affairs assistant professor Elizabeth Mendenhall in a free moment on Isla Mujeres. Mendenhall, whose research focuses on global ocean governance, says, “I enjoyed watching the students become more confident and capable—in the water, in another country, and working together as a group. The whale sharks were magical, but it was emotional, seeing the sharks surrounded by tourist boats. I wanted to be there but simultaneously wanted to leave those sharks alone.”

Meet Mary

Since arriving at URI in 2021, Mary Parlange has pursued her interest in environmental issues and sustainability by organizing discussions that bring students, faculty, and local business leaders together. She has become a certified Master Gardener and is involved in URI's Free Farmer's Market. She is passionate about community-building at URI, with a particular interest in welcoming and assisting international students, scholars, and their families. Parlange has a B.A. in philosophy from Pomona College and an M.S. in atmospheric science from the University of California, Davis. She has been a writer, editor, translator, and media relations professional for more than 25 years.



Sisters Julie Howard '86 and Abby Rodman '84 host *Sisters Cracking Up*, a podcast focused on midlife. They interview authors and experts as they seek truth and sanity. It's funny, poignant, insightful, authentic—and did we mention funny?

By Diane M. Sterrett

Midlife

Crack-Up?
Add These Sisters to
Your Family



Midlife can be hard enough—aging parents, empty nests, career challenges, physical changes—but then throw a pandemic in the midst and you have the makings of a crack-up. Sisters Abby Rodman '84 and Julie Howard '86 have each other to lean on, and their listeners have their podcast, *Sisters Cracking Up*.

Think back to spring of 2020. Like many, Abby, a psychotherapist, and Julie, a life and leadership coach, were hunkered down, worried about getting sick, sanitizing everything, living too far apart, and dealing with ever-present uncertainty. They had always wanted to work together and saw the pandemic as an opportunity.

“We both had more time on our hands than we ever had before; we were checking in on each other more often. The podcast gave us flexibility to work on a project where we didn't have to travel and we didn't have to be together,” Julie says.

Their focus on midlife grew organically, as well. As they point out, it's a life stage that previous generations really didn't talk about. They are typical midlife women, experiencing all the joys and challenges—divorce, career changes, body image issues, and more.

“So much is happening!” Julie says. “Your children are growing up and out of the nest. Your marital status might be changing. Your career is shifting. Your parents are aging or dying. You're going through menopause. And no one on their path through life says, ‘Gee, what am I going to be when I'm really grown? What's that part of my life going to be like?’”

Reflecting on all they'd been through together and individually—and leaning on each other every step of the way—they knew that sharing their experience could help others.

“We realized that in all the insanity, we weren't that much different from others who are fortunate enough to get to midlife and beyond,” Abby says. “The idea was to create a community of women in our age group where we can talk about all the things that can really crack us and all the things that keep us laughing, keep us sane.”

—Abby Rodman '84

“The idea was to create a community of women in our age group where we can talk about all the things that can really crack us, and all the things that keep us laughing, keep us sane.”

And sisterhood is one of those things.”

With that inspiration, *Sisters Cracking Up* was born, and the first episode launched June 16, 2020.

Producing a Winner

Creating the show was a journey in every aspect: the steep technological learning curve, surveying listeners to find topics that landed, and deciding what kind of conversations to have. They manage every aspect of the show from soup to nuts, including leaving in those little sisterly jabs that add to the authenticity and charm of the podcast.

At first, a listener is drawn in by Abby and Julie's banter and unerring insights. Their interviews, with an incredible range of podcast guests, keep listeners coming back for more.

“Our message resonated with folks. There were some experts we reached out to who, we thought, ‘Oh gosh, they'll never come on.’ But they did! It's absolutely incredible. Every time a guest agrees to come on, Julie and I do a little happy dance! And anyone we reach out to, we're really excited to have on,” Abby says.

For material, they watch what's trending with their audience and keep an eye out for books or articles that inspire them. Julie takes the lead on planning questions and Abby likes to let the conversation flow. They're meticulous in their research and, if the guest is an author, they read the book cover to cover.

They've had many memorable guests. Jonathan Rauch, author of *The Happiness Curve: Why Life Gets Better After 50*, discussed his research about aging and happiness. His conclusion: Life gets better and we get happier as we age. Gabrielle Glaser joined Abby and Julie to talk about pandemic drinking and her book, *Her Best-Kept Secret: Why Women Drink—and How They Can Regain Control*. And Ellen Albertson, author of *Rock Your Midlife*, discussed how to make your next chapter your best one.

“I'm always surprised by the generosity of our guests, their willingness to come on the show, have fun, and impart their incredible wisdom,” Abby says. “Honestly, I don't think we've ever gotten off a call and not said we could be friends with that person. It's just these incredible warm, wonderful, brilliant, generous guests who come on the show and give so freely of their time and expertise.”

Now in its third season, the podcast has a 4.8 iTunes rating, and feedback has been tremendous. Abby and Julie say they get listener comments like, “It feels like I'm listening to myself and my own sister having a conversation,” and questions like, “Can I be your third sister?”

They stress the importance of sister-friends, those who are not biologically related but who serve a sister role in your life.

“There's an honesty in your relationship with your sister and sister-friends that you don't really find anywhere else,” Julie explains.

At the end of each podcast, they hope listeners feel entertained, a little more informed, and part of the family—as well as part of something larger than themselves.

“We want them to feel they know us and that they're not alone, whatever it is that they're going through,” Abby says.

What makes the podcast unique? One of their guests, Steven Petrow, offers some insight. In Season 2, he spoke about his book, *Stupid Things I Won't Do When I Get Old*. He is an award-winning journalist and book author who is best known for his *Washington Post* and *New York Times* essays on aging, health, and civility.

“I might be biased in favor of Julie and Abby because I have a real-life sister, also named Julie, who's my best friend,” Petrow says. “When I was a guest on *Sisters Cracking Up*, I felt at home with these two wise, funny, and empathetic women who were so present in the interview. This might not seem like a big deal, but they actually listen to people, which is also a way of modeling a behavior we need more of these days.”

“And I love their sense of humor—which is pretty close to my own. For all these reasons, Abby and Julie are unique in the media landscape today.”

How To Happily Work Together

Not all siblings can work well together, but these two clearly do. Abby warns it wasn't always a bed of roses. In the beginning, one of their biggest hurdles was learning how to collaborate and make room for what was important to each of them, given that they both like things to be “just so.”

“We really had to adapt to the way the other one worked, to our own sensitivities, frustrations, working styles ... all of that. You can love somebody and hang out with them forever, but if you don't work with someone, you have no idea who they are in that situation,” Julie says.

Even so, they agree that working with each other has also been their biggest joy. “Julie is absolutely creative to a fault. She's super-bright, much brighter than I am, and that's so great for me; I get to ride on her coattails. But honestly, nobody in this world makes me laugh like she does,” Abby says.

“We laugh all the time,” Julie agrees. “And people really like Abby, so much more than me, which has been incredibly helpful in getting guests. I think she could get anyone to come on the podcast.”

Beyond the practical how-to-podcast lessons, they've both learned some things about themselves from the process.

“The podcast has forced us to look at things about ourselves that maybe we wouldn't have had to before in any kind of work situation, because this work situation is unique,” Abby says. “I know what triggers Julie, she knows what triggers me. We have a shared childhood experience and history. The key is looking at ourselves and each other and not always liking what we see but leaning into the love anyway.”

“There's an honesty in your relationship with your sister and sister-friends that you don't really find anywhere else.”

—Julie Howard '86

No One Can Call You Out Like Your Sister

Their close relationship shines throughout the podcasts and in their conversations. Throughout childhood, their dad would remind them, “Your sister is your best friend.”

“I’m not sure whether he was speaking our closeness into truth, but it worked,” Abby says. “One thing I do like to be mindful of is not projecting an idealized version of our relationship. Believe me, we’ve had our ups and downs over the years. But our closeness is never in question. Part of that stems from having to navigate a very chaotic childhood with two parents who made chaotic choices. From a young age, we must have realized we were better navigating those choppy waters together. I heard someone say recently that your sibling is the person who will know you the longest in your life. Your partners, your kids, your parents, they only get a portion of your lifespan. That resonated hugely.”

Julie agrees. “We got closer as we grew older and as our parents’ relationship simultaneously dissolved. By the time we were in middle school or early high school, we were tight. Later, the pressure of our respective lives, parenting, careers, marriage, etc., definitely created times when we weren’t spending as much time together or connecting as we would have liked, but whenever we felt that gap, we reached out and made it a priority.”

“It’s funny that all these years later, doing this podcast kind of reflects our studies from URI, journalistically and creatively.”

—Julie Howard ’86

Making the Most of Every Hour

In addition to the podcast, they both have full-time jobs, clients, families, and other demands on their time. Abby is a speaker and author of the Amazon bestseller *Without This Ring: A Woman’s Guide To Successfully Living Through and Beyond Midlife Divorce*. She is regularly sought out by media outlets for her expertise on relationship and parenting issues and is a featured contributor to *HuffPost*. Julie is a former beauty, wellness, and trend expert who has worked for some of the world’s most recognized brands. She is also the author of a middle-grade fantasy novel and a young adult coming-of-age novel and is a lifelong advocate for the healthy development and empowerment of women and girls.

How do they manage it all? With grace and humor.

“When you’re passionate about something and you want to do it, you find the time,” Abby says. “I don’t think either one of us has as much free time as we’d like, but we’re doing this amazing thing together, talking to great minds and authors and expanding our own worlds and hopefully expanding others’ worlds, as well. It’s a pretty rewarding way to spend your time.”

Rhode Islanders at Heart

Though they live out of state, the sisters still have a home in Rhode Island and feel URI is an inextricable part of their history. Julie was an art major, and Abby was a journalism major. For them, college was a safe space to test the boundaries of independence.

“I felt supported by the faculty and the teaching body that I had around me. It was a very healthy, solid education for life,” Julie says.

“At URI, we learned to flex our creative muscles,” Abby explains. “It’s funny that all these years later, doing this podcast kind of reflects our studies from URI, journalistically and creatively. Certainly my journalism studies helped me tremendously in the work that I’m doing now on the podcast in terms of what it means to tell a story start-to-finish and tell it well. A lot of those things I learned at URI.”

What’s Next?

The sisters show no signs of slowing down and aim to keep podcasting on a regular basis.

“We have a list of dream guests including soccer great and author Abby Wambach, podcaster and author Mel Robbins, physician and addiction expert Dr. Gabor Maté, and actor Danny Bonaduce,” says Abby. “We will keep going as long as we can attract incredible guests and our sisterhood of listeners sticks with us.”

Get in on the Conversation

Abby and Julie invite you to listen to the podcast on your favorite podcast platform and reach out at sisterscrackingup.com.

“We’d love to hear from URI alumni! If anybody’s doing anything interesting that they want to talk about, let us know,” Abby says. And then you, too, can be part of the family and offer your insights on life’s crack-ups with a side of humor.

Sisters Julie Howard ’86 (left) and Abby Rodman ’84 face midlife with honesty and humor on their podcast. The splint on Julie’s finger? “I fell and dislocated my finger,” she says. “Like everyone, trying to do too much all at the same time.”





Burr comb from a research hive at URI's East Farm Agricultural Experiment Station. When researchers inspect a hive to make sure it is healthy, they sometimes find comb that is out of place, called burr comb, which they remove.

Facing page, associate professor of chemistry Matt Kiesewetter (left) and professor of entomology Steve Alm.

For the Love of Honey

Chemistry professor Matt Kiesewetter and entomology professor Steve Alm are putting their heads together to develop better ways to protect honeybees from varroa mites.

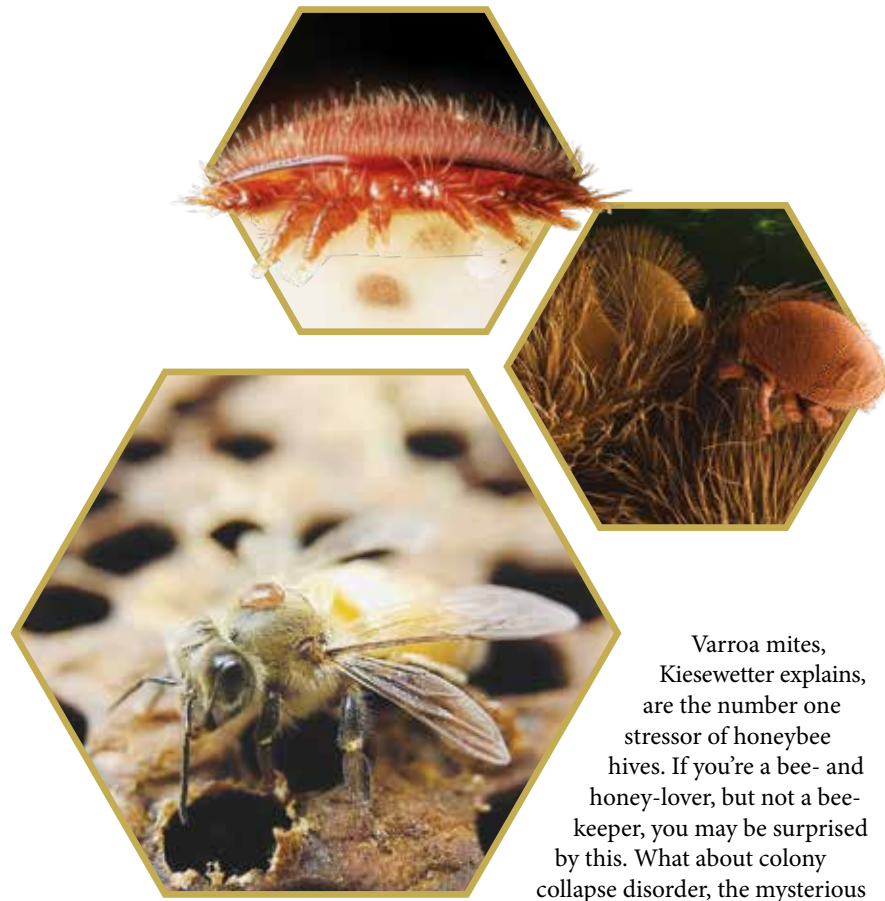
By Lauren Rebecca Thacker



When Matt Kiesewetter was promoted to associate professor of chemistry in 2018, he breathed a sigh of relief and thought it might be time to find himself a hobby that had nothing to do with his work. So, on a whim, he ordered bees.

"Why bees?" he offers, and quickly answers, "I have no damn clue. I can't tell you why. But when I was growing up, I raised butterflies in the yard. Back then, in the country, you could grab milkweed from the side of the road and raise some monarchs. I guess that sparked my interest in insects. So, I got bees."

Now, five years later, he's got four hives in his backyard and more honey than he knows what to do with. And in that time, he realized that beekeeping didn't give him the break from chemistry he was looking for, but instead gave him a new focus: controlling the honeybee's enemy. Enter, the varroa mite.



Varroa mites are the number one stressor of honeybee hives. Clockwise from top: an adult female varroa mite; close-up view of a varroa mite on a honeybee host; a honeybee with a varroa mite attached to its body.

Varroa mites, Kiesewetter explains, are the number one stressor of honeybee hives. If you're a bee- and honey-lover, but not a beekeeper, you may be surprised by this. What about colony collapse disorder, the mysterious and widely reported phenomenon that causes worker bees to flee their hives, leaving their queen to die? Well, that's certainly a problem, but it's not as prevalent as it used to be. The Environmental Protection Agency reports that incidents of colony collapse disorder have dropped dramatically since the disorder's height in 2008. If you're a backyard beekeeper, varroa mites are probably your biggest headache.

Female mites enter and lay eggs in a honeybee brood cell—where the eggs, larvae, pupae, and adult bees develop. Mites develop alongside the growing bees, eventually attaching to a honeybee's fat body, a type of insect tissue that is analogous to the liver in mammals. There are seven confirmed diseases that the mites bring to hives and at least a dozen more suspected—all determinantal, some fatal. The mites cannot exist without the honeybees. So, the problem of varroa mites presents a conundrum: Beekeepers, amateur or professional, must combat the mites to ensure their hives' survival, but mites can only be treated within the hives.

Kiesewetter contended with varroa mites in his own hives using the standard methods: synthetic chemicals, like pyrethroid and organophosphate miticides, and naturally occurring chemicals, like formic and oxalic acids, and even powdered sugar. They work, but there are risks: Synthetic miticides can lead to the development

of miticide resistance, while some natural miticides are less effective and difficult to administer. And, Kiesewetter explains, most pesticides on the market are broad spectrum, meaning that they can kill many different organisms. Which means that they can kill bees, too.

"These chemicals just happen to be a little less toxic to bees than mites," says Kiesewetter. "But there are sublethal effects, and some people suspect that these pesticides are harming the hives. We don't know. But my question is, can we design a pesticide that is essentially nontoxic for bees while hitting the target—the mites—that we want?"

As a graduate student at Stanford University, Kiesewetter was interested in polymer synthesis and renewable plastics. In particular, his research considers how materials, including plastics, can be more sustainable. He carried that interest through a postdoctoral fellowship at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then to the University of Rhode Island, where he arrived in 2013.

Kiesewetter realized his experience in organic chemistry could help him develop new miticides that can evade resistance, in addition to plastic-based delivery systems that could make natural options safer and more effective. What if, for example, he could construct a hive using plastic that degrades to produce a mite-controlling agent? But, while he was a pro at chemistry, he was an amateur when it came to honeybees.

Steve Alm is no bee amateur. The professor of plant sciences and entomology is an expert in pollinators of all kinds, from the honeybee to the estimated 250 native bee species buzzing around Rhode Island. Kiesewetter heard through the grapevine that Alm had hives at URI's East Farm.

The roughly 85-acre spread of East Farm is the place for URI students and faculty to experiment with flora and fauna. The location, about a mile southeast of the Kingston Campus, facilitates bobcat and coyote research; efforts to develop stronger breeds of rhododendrons, azaleas, and apples; and studies on Atlantic salmon. It's also home to beehives and pollinator meadows.

"I'm picturing it right now," Alm says, remembering his first meeting with Kiesewetter. "I was in Woodward Hall teaching a course on bees and pollination. Matt came in, and he had this idea for controlling varroa mites. He had the chemistry, and I had the bees."

Thus, a collaboration began.

Kiesewetter says, "I found Steve by accident, and I couldn't have found a better collaborator if I had tried. He has been so willing to do this work and is just great. And it's been a lot of fun."



Research associate Casey Johnson, M.S. '22, in the pollinator meadows at URI's East Farm Agricultural Experiment Station.

Alm explains the risks inherent in the process of treating a hive with standard commercial products with formic or oxalic acids, both naturally occurring chemicals. "Products with formic acid say right on the package that they may kill your queen and up to 1,500 bees. So yeah, that's very rough on a colony. And with oxalic acid, you need to wear a special respirator, so it's noxious for beekeepers, as well. Sometimes the cure is almost as bad as the disease. We're trying to find safer materials for the bees and the beekeepers."

One particularly challenging aspect of studying varroa mites is their short lifecycle. Mite populations are at their peak in August, September, and October. Scientists want to study mites during this peak, but three months isn't much time.

Casey Johnson, M.S. '22, a research associate, adds that while there are methods to rear varroa mites outside of a honeybee colony and their natural lifecycle, "It's very work-intensive and not foolproof. With our methods, we can get them to live for 24 hours in the lab outside of a hive, but that's it."

And then there are the additional challenges of maintaining the hives and controlling the scale of experiments, things Kiesewetter had to adjust to when turning his attention to honeybees.

"You think about a hive being 50,000 bees and you're like, 'Oh gosh, this is great,'" he says. "But it's only one hive. Fifty thousand bees are a data point of one. If you have five experimental hives and five control hives, you can see how things can get out of hand, real fast. Our initial tests are meant to figure out if we should scale up."

Julia Vieira '21, M.S. '23, a student in Alm's lab, tells us about a recent experiment designed to address these challenges, saying, "The idea

was, could we get another species that is comparable to varroa, and has a similar mortality rate, that we could use for preliminary bioassays when we don't have access to varroa populations?"

It turns out, the answer was yes. In 2022, Kiesewetter, Alm, Vieira, and Johnson, along with colleagues Elizabeth Varkonyi, M.S. '22; Howard Ginsberg, scientist emeritus with the U.S. Geological Survey's Eastern Ecological Science Center; and Kassie Picard, Ph.D. '23, published a paper demonstrating their findings.

The research, published in the *Journal of Economic Entomology*, tested four organic acids at a variety of concentrations on varroa mites and three insect species. The results showed that varroa had levels of mortality consistent with the other species, suggesting that other, more easily managed test subjects can be used when testing varroa mite treatments.

Kiesewetter is pleased with the experiment, which also tested methods of applying the various acids.

"These organic acid treatments are very popular," he says, adding that he uses them in his own hives. The research gives insight into how they work and paves the way for more experimentation. "In the future, we'll experiment with some synthetic pesticides that are less toxic to bees and more toxic for mites. We're trying to scale up and see what kind of plastic-based delivery systems can have good effects."

"My question is, can we design a pesticide that is essentially nontoxic for bees while hitting the target—the mites—that we want?"

—Matt Kiesewetter



Bee Lab researchers Julia Vieira '21, M.S. '23; associate professor of chemistry Matt Kiesewetter; Casey Johnson, M.S. '22; and professor of entomology Steve Alm at East Farm.

The beekeeping community must contend with varroa mites in order for hives to survive. And Johnson points out that varroa mites are a problem for honeybees now but says, "There are documented cases of pathogen spillover from managed honeybees to native bees. Beekeepers," she explains, "have a responsibility to monitor and treat varroa to help mitigate the spread of diseases into our native wild bee populations."

There are different perspectives on how best to treat the mites and ensure a healthy honeybee population. One approach is what Kiesewetter calls Darwinian beekeeping: using no controls, in order to develop a strain of bees with inherent mite resistance. But that's a long game, and Kiesewetter isn't sure it's a realistic approach. Other beekeepers are interested in physical methods, like heating hives to a temperature that harms mites but not bees; and using powdered sugar to coat bees, then shaking them until the mites release their hold. But research, including a soon-to-be-published paper by Johnson, shows that powdered sugar is effective for monitoring mite populations, but not for eradicating them. And studies on heat treatments are in the early stages. So that leaves chemicals, synthetic and natural.

"It might sound like, 'Oh, of course the chemist wants to use chemicals,' but it's not really like that," Kiesewetter says. "Pesticides work. They have sustained the beekeeping world for decades. But if people stop using them or if mites develop resistance, that would be catastrophic for the beekeeping community."

As a chemist and a beekeeper, Kiesewetter wants to keep his hives healthy, and yours, too. Even if beekeeping didn't end up being the nonscientific hobby he first imagined, it has meant a lot to him over the years. It gave him a new direction and exciting collaborations across URI. And don't forget the honey. So much honey.

"Last year, I got about 200 pounds," he says, laughing. "In the summer, people are probably tired of seeing me show up because I'm just carrying jars of honey around. I try to give it all away." ☺



These Bees Are Locals

Since the emergence of colony collapse disorder in 2006, interest in backyard beekeeping has grown among people looking to support global bee health and local ecosystems. While keeping bees is a worthwhile hobby, there are other, less labor-intensive ways to support pollinators.

Honeybees are not native to North America—they were brought over by honey-craving colonists in 1622. Before that, plants were pollinated by native species, including the much-loved bumblebee and the much-maligned wasp, a group of insects that Johnson calls "incredibly misunderstood" and that she lauds for their pollinating and pest-control abilities.

We need all pollinators—not just honeybees—for a healthy world. Of all the crops grown worldwide, about 75% require pollination. Without pollinators, we wouldn't have pumpkins, raspberries, tomatoes, onions, or many, many others.

Kiesewetter and Alm recommend that Rhode Islanders looking to support native pollinators fill their gardens and flowerpots with native plants. Consider blueberries, bee balm, goldenrod, beardtongue, native milkweeds, hyssop, and asters. To convert your turf lawn into a bee lawn, incorporate clovers (especially medium red clover), selfheal, or creeping thyme.

If those aren't your style, don't worry. You can still nourish your local pollinators.

"A very simple equation is: more flowers equals more bees," Alm says.

For more information on ongoing research and pollinator gardens, visit the Bee Lab at uri.edu/beelab.

PHOTOS: NORA LEWIS



Kevin Clark '08 at Grey Sail Brewing in Westerly, R.I., where he brews Hive Beer.

The name came first. The support for honeybee research came several years and many barrels of beer later.

When Kevin Clark '08 and Michelle (Kirms) Clark '07 started dating, they brewed beer for fun. They called their apartment-based brewing hobby Hive Brewing, a nod to one of their favorite bands and a name that conjured a community gathering place and social hub where all are welcome. Bees weren't on their mind.

The couple moved to Colorado for Kevin to attend graduate school, but there was something other than education pulling them west.

"Part of the allure of Colorado was that the brewing and beer scene was much more established, especially back then," Kevin says. "We were excited to get into the beer scene as much as we could and explore a new area of the country."

In 2011, Kevin and Michelle returned to Rhode Island, where Kevin started working as a software engineer and Michelle decided to take her interest in beer and go pro. She joined Grey Sail Brewing, based in Westerly, R.I., in 2012. More than a decade later, she has held many positions at Grey Sail, including head brewer.

Kevin got his first taste of brewing on professional equipment in 2018, when he used Grey Sail's facility to make a batch of beer in honor of his and Michelle's dog, Mahoney. Grey Sail sold the commemorative beer in their taproom, with proceeds going to canine cancer research.

Kevin calls the experience a "lightbulb moment" that got him wondering if he could fast-track his dream of launching Hive commercially by renting Grey Sail's equipment. He pondered it for a while, and then the pandemic hit.

"Things were weird in March 2020. I didn't know what was going to happen in the world," he remembers. "But it lit a fire under me to get the ball rolling and do something I had always wanted to do."

In May 2021, Hive Beer officially launched as an alternating proprietorship brewery. Kevin maintains his day job and runs Hive as a side project out of Grey Sail, where his beers are available in cans to go. You can also find Hive Beer at bars and restaurants throughout Rhode Island, including Mews Tavern in Wakefield and the Back 40—an early supporter of Hive—in North Kingstown.

Kevin, thrilled to see his dream coming true, wondered if he could use it to do some good. He knew of some companies

Drink a Beer, Save a Bee



that donated a percentage of their sales to a worthy cause. With a name like Hive, supporting bees seemed like a natural fit. But he wasn't sure of the best way to do that.

In researching how to support bees, he came across an article on URI's Bee Lab. Kevin emailed chemistry professor Matt Kiesewetter, a partner in the lab, along with entomology professor Steve Alm, and before long, he was on a tour of East Farm.

"I was aware of the farm as a student, but I never realized how massive it is," he says. "Seeing the property and all the research going on there was really cool. Michelle and I saw the hives, picked some apples. And that was the start of a really fun partnership."

"Once I learned about research at the Bee Lab, I was super excited to contribute to my alma mater and support research happening right here in Rhode Island," he adds. ☺

—Lauren Rebecca Thacker

Hive Beer, an alternating proprietorship operating out of Grey Sail, donates 1% of gross sales to URI's Bee Lab.



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 by email to urimag@uri.edu or online at alumni.uri.edu.



LET'S KEEP THE RHODY NETWORK STRONG

Would you take a moment to update your information for URI's alumni database? Thank you!

Visit alumniportal.uri.edu/update-info.

SCENIC ROUTE

MOON GATE

Opposite page: **Ang Cai, Ph.D. '17**, shot this photo of the moon gate at Kinney Azalea Gardens in South Kingstown, located just a half-mile southeast of URI's Kingston Campus.

Cai is a research assistant professor in URI's College of Pharmacy and is director of the Centralized Research Core Facility for RI-INBRE. He pursues photography when he's not working for the pure fun of it. "My work creates positive experiences for me," he says. "Every time I see the perfect shot in front of me, I cannot wait to share it with my friends."

The proprietors of Kinney Azalea Gardens are URI alumni **Tony Faella '51** and **Betty (Kinney) Faella, M.S. '67**. The Azalea Gardens are a popular destination in the spring, when the azaleas are in bloom. Cai was inspired by the serenity of this moment on a May evening just before sunset, calling the light "tender and inviting."

Follow Cai on Instagram [@Leon_tsai_](https://www.instagram.com/Leon_tsai_)

CALLING ALL ALUMNI PHOTOGRAPHERS

Share your photos with your classmates and fellow Rhody alumni in URI Magazine. Send photos, along with background (the story behind the photo), to urimag@uri.edu and we will consider all submissions for publication in future issues of URI Magazine.

1956

Peter DeMasi was one of several inductees in the inaugural class of the Rhode Island Senior Softball League Hall of Fame in October 2022. DeMasi was a URI shortstop from 1952–1955 and has played in the R.I. Senior Softball League for more than 40 years.

1975

F. Randy Vogenberg (Ph.D. Antioch University-IOE in Health Care Administration) published a new e-book, second edition, in April 2023: *Pharmacy Benefits for Specialty Drugs: Access and Management*. It was written for a diverse audience to educate and inform about access to the latest therapies being approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration from the robust research pipeline. He also updated *Non-Specialty Drugs: Access and Management* as an e-book. Both are available through Access Market Intelligence (accessmarketintell.com). Vogenberg has published numerous books and more than 100 journal articles. His current books address insurance, access, and management while identifying emerging challenges resulting from biological products like cell or gene therapies.

1978



Ann Hood '78, Hon. '05, published her fiction piece "Heart Sick" in the spring 2023 issue of award-winning

journal of new writing, *Ploughshares*, guest-edited by Alice Hoffman. Hood's most recent book is her memoir, *Fly Girl* (2022). Her next book is a novel, *The Museum of Tears* (to be released in January 2024).

1980

Scott Bill Hirst was elected to his ninth nonconsecutive term on the Hopkinton, R.I. town council in November 2022. He was elected to his fourth nonconsecutive term as council vice president during council organization. He was an unsuccessful candidate in a three-way race for second vice chair of the Rhode Island Republican State Central Committee in March.

1984

Paul Mason writes: "I'm a 1984 grad and former VP of R.I.-based record label North Star Music. I was an older student, with a B.A. in sociology from the College of the Holy Cross and, as I was about to turn 30, I was performing with the director of URI's



On February 11, 2023, 43 Department of Music alumni spanning five decades (1972–2022) gathered on campus to rehearse a four-piece wind ensemble program and presented a concert for friends and family. They were welcomed by music department chair Mark Conley along with Brian Cardany, URI director of bands, who rehearsed the ensemble and led the band through a beautiful performance that was both musically rewarding and meaningful as everyone reconnected throughout the day.



Paul Mason '84 (top) and musical collaborators Mitch Seidman and Jerry Wilfong

graduate music program, the late Arthur Motyka. I had been making my living as a performing musician and part time teacher when I decided to get the music degree, with the encouragement of Motyka. A few years later, I found an opportunity to join two more URI alumni, **Bruce Foulke '74** and **Richard Waterman '05, M.S. '06**, at a startup record label, North Star

Music. While working for North Star, I produced and recorded a dozen or so recordings for the label, many of which included URI alumni, including **Bruce Abbott '78, M.M. '82**, Marty Ballou, **Arthur Montanaro '82, M.M. '94**, and John Allmark. The recordings for North Star were made in the late 1990s and early 2000s, sold nearly 400,000 copies when the company was active, and continue to sell well on all the major streaming services. Bruce Abbott and I have recently released a new project with my current trio, The Conversation. The current release and other related projects can be found at theconversationjazz.com. The recordings from the North Star label and related info can be found at northstarjazz.com."

1988

Amy Latimer was honored by Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, the largest girl-serving organization in Massachusetts and 10th largest Girl Scout council in the United States, at its 30th anniversary celebration of the Leading Women Awards, which recognize the outstanding contributions of women in eastern Massachusetts. Latimer is president of TD Garden, one of the most active, highly regarded, and successful sports and entertainment venues in North America.

Lisa A. Pruitt published her fourth book, *Soul of a Professor: Memoir of an Un-Engineered Life*. She speaks of how URI helped shape her love of and career in materials engineering. She is a professor of mechanical engineering and bioengineering and the Lawrence Talbot Professor of Engineering at UC Berkeley. Her website is lisapruitt.com.

1996

Renee (Schena) Ward is assistant nursing director for the cardiac immediate care unit at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. She has 25 years of nurs-

ing experience and recently earned a master's degree in nursing administration from Simmons University.

2003



Elizabeth Desautel '03, M.B.A. '04 was named Financial Services Woman to Watch by *Providence Business News* as part of its 2023 Business Women Awards. She is a vice president at JPMorgan Chase & Co. She writes, "I am a proud graduate of the URI College of Business for my undergraduate degree (finance) and M.B.A. My love of finance and being of service was fostered at URI. Both parents are graduates (first in their family) as well as my sister. My commitment to URI is strong. Earlier this year, I held a lunch with the College of Business students at our offices in Boston and was proud of the accomplishments the college continues to make. I am grateful for my education at URI!"



Dan Riordan welcomed URI students into his Westerly, R.I., studio, Gnarly Bay Productions, this past winter. The visit was part of a whirlwind class taught by film and communication instructor **Thomas Zorabedian '74, M.S. '76** during URI's

J-Term. Riordan is a former student of Zorabedian's.

2005

Samuel Snead, M.C.P. '05 was appointed as a board member for the Maryland Transportation Authority by Governor Wes Moore and confirmed by the Senate in April of 2023. He will serve in this role for a four-year term while maintaining his position as director of transportation for Anne Arundel County. He is also actively chairing the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board and is a board member for the Transit Association of Maryland and a commissioner for central Maryland Regional Transit Agency.

2006



Ryan Gallucci was named the executive director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Washington

Office. He is the first post-9/11 veteran to hold the position. He served in the Army Reserves from June 1999 to June 2007. He served in the Iraq War from 2003 to 2004 as a civil affairs sergeant with the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, where he received the Bronze Star for meritorious service and the Combat Action Badge. While still serving in the Army Reserves, he used his G.I. Bill benefits to earn a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science from URI. He leveraged his education and experience to become deputy communications director at the American Veterans (AMVETS) National Headquarters before landing at the VFW Washington Office.

Graham Gardner has published a new book, *Tiny and Wild: Build a Small-Scale Meadow Anywhere*. Published in March 2023 by Cool Springs Press, an imprint of Quarto Group, the book is available at



quarto.com and Amazon. Gardner discussed his book as part of the Gardening with the Masters Tour, sponsored by URI's Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners in June. For more about Gardner, visit uri.edu/news/2023/05/tiny-and-wild.

2008

Maria Cotto, M.L.I.S. '08 was named 2023 Alumna of the Year by the URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the GSLIS Annual Gathering and 60th Anniversary Jubilee in May. Cotto has worked as a youth services librarian at the Pawtucket Public Library, Central Falls Free Public Library, and Knight Memorial Library in the Providence Community Library. In 2013, she returned to the Pawtucket Public Library as a bilingual children's librarian. There, she spearheaded efforts to develop a sensory friendly inclusive group to empower librarians to better serve neurodiverse individuals and their families. Among many other accomplishments, Cotto has also served as chair of the Rhode Island Latino Book Awards since 2014.

2009

Marissa Salvo, Pharm.D. '09, received the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Pharmacy Practice and Management's Distinguished Award in Service at the 2023 American Pharmacists Association's annual meeting in Phoenix, AZ. This national award recognizes Salvo's significant and sustained contributions to the Connecticut Pharmacists Association, American Pharmacists Association, University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy, and her community. Salvo is an associate clinical professor of pharmacy practice at the UConn School of Pharmacy and a board certified ambulatory care pharmacist

LIFE ON EARTH: A VIRTUAL ART EXHIBIT

April Popko '00, a prominent Prague-based abstract artist, has teamed up with photographer **Stephen Wood, URI professor emeritus of communication and film media**. Together they explore the differences and similarities of their respective works of art in a joint virtual exhibition. They have been doing this in online discussions for many years, but recently decided to collaborate. Go to popkoproductions.com and scroll to the bottom of the page for a link to the Popko/Wood exhibit.



who practices in an internal medicine outpatient clinic at UConn Health. She served as president of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association from Sept. 2021–Sept. 2022 and was inducted as a Fellow of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association in their inaugural class in 2019. She lives in Southington, CT with her husband and two children.

2010

Noelle Tubbs will be pursuing a lifelong dream to attend veterinary school, as she returns to New England this August to start her D.V.M. program at the prestigious Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University (Class of 2027). She graduated from URI in 2010 with a B.S. in marine biology and biological oceanography, and wildlife conservation. She later attended the University of Cape Town in South Africa for an MSc in zoology, studying how climate change affects the physiology, behavior, and reproductive capabilities of endangered African penguins. Between and after studying,

Noelle worked as a U.S. national park ranger in biological sciences at Yellowstone, a state and local government aquatic biologist, and veterinary nurse for international marine wildlife hospitals. She plans to continue working with marine wildlife as a veterinarian and is so excited to get involved with the conservation medicine and international veterinary medicine programs at the Cummings School!

2011



Megan Herne, along with URI professor and physical therapy department chair Ellen L. McGough, Ph.D., PT,

has joined the board of PACE-RI, the nonprofit health plan for adults 55 and older who have chronic health needs and wish to remain living at home. Herne is director of human resources and social responsibility at Cooley Group. She is a graduate of Leadership Rhode Island, serves on the board of Meals on Wheels Rhode Island

and is a trustee of the William H. Davies, Jr. Career & Technical High School.

2017

Reuven Hoffman writes, "Don't be afraid to start over in life. This past August I moved from Long Island to Coos Bay, Oregon. I got offered a job with the U.S. Forest Service and decided to accept it. I had never been to Oregon before and didn't know anyone there. I would only have the belongings in my car. I felt like I needed a fresh start in life. I was experiencing burn-out. I was an essential worker for much of COVID, I went through a breakup, I helped my family move. I felt like it was time for a change. I knew it was a longshot of an application. But I saw the opportunity was there. Ultimately, I had to choose between two job offers with the agency. I was already working full-time as a gardener. I liked the organization and the people I worked with. I could have easily declined both offers. But I decided to go for it. In a sense it was like coming to URI for the first

time. Moving to a brand-new place I had never been to all by myself, I had to make an effort to put myself out there. I'm happy I was able to find good friends and organizations to get involved with. Sometimes in life we need to start over. It can sure seem daunting. But sometimes we need that change of pace."

2019

Tayla Cardillo, M.L.I.S. '19 was named 2023 Recent Alumna of the Year by the URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the GSLIS Annual Gathering and 60th Anniversary Jubilee in May. Since earning her degree, Cardillo has worked as a reference and young adult services librarian at the Coventry Public

Library and is now branch librarian at the Oak Lawn Branch of the Cranston Public Library. She hosts a podcast, "Down Time with Cranston Public Library," serves on the Rhode Island Teen Book Awards committee, and is co-chair of the intellectual freedom committee of the Rhode Island Library Association.

Daniel DiTusa recently joined the law firm Goldberg Segella in Garden City, New Jersey. DiTusa focuses his practice on counseling and representing clients in the retail and hospitality industries in a variety of litigated matters. After receiving his B.A. from URI, he earned his J.D. from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University.



ENGAGEMENTS & MARRIAGES

Amanda Silver '13 and **Jared Arnold '13**, son of **Pamela (Wolf) Arnold '82**, were married on October 28, 2022, at Shepherd's Run in South Kingstown. A number of URI alumni were in attendance! The couple resides in Wayne, N.J.

JC Glick '95, LTC (Ret.) U.S. Army, URI ROTC Hall of Fame and **Jennifer (Waters) Glick, '93** Esq., were married in Newport, Rhode Island, on May 14, 2021.

Nicole Brennan '17, M.O. '18 and **Michael Logar '18** were married on March 7, 2023, in Whistler, British Columbia. Rhody Rams in attendance included (left to right): **Sam Giannakos '17, M.O. '18; Danielle St. Pierre '16; Katie Nickles '16, M.S. '19; Anthony McQueen '17, M.S. '19; Nikki Brennan '17, M.O. '18; Mike Logar '18; Jim Hopkins '62; Anthony Kennedy '17; Mike Galasso '17; and Bethany Parslow '18.**

Keisha S. (Gallagher-Smith) Walker '99 celebrated 20 years of marriage to Brian D. Walker. They met in 1998 while she was a student at URI and he was a U.S. Naval Academy graduate stationed at the Newport Naval Base. They married in 2003.

1. JC and Jennifer Glick
2. Keisha and Brian Walker
3. Nicole Brennan and Michael Logar with fellow URI alumni



ALUMNI HAPPENINGS



Take a tour of the arts this fall! Visit alumni.uri.edu/calendar for details starting in September.

October: Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Professor of Photography

November: Emmett Goods, Assistant Professor of Music

December: Rachel Walshe, Assistant Professor of Acting and Playwriting

HOMECOMING

October 14-15, 2023

Return to URI for the Homecoming football game, Rhodyville Block Party, reunions, and more!



100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HILLEL INTERNATIONAL

Celebrate 100 years of Hillel during Homecoming weekend!



BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Jacqueline (Coutu) Christofaro '11 and **Kevin Christofaro Jr. '10** announce the birth of their son, Kevin Peter Christofaro III, on November 13, 2022.



BOOKSHELF

Check out the latest books by alumni authors—and share your recently published (within the last two years) book at uri.edu/magazine.

Or send a cover image, along with author, URI grad year, book title, and year published to urimag@uri.edu.



Science Communication in a Crisis: An Insider's Guide
Christopher Reddy, Ph.D. '97 (2023)



Consent Culture and Teen Films: Adolescent Sexuality in US Movies
Michelle Meek, Ph.D. '16 (2023)



Shadow of the Moon
Edward McSweeney, Ph.D. '85 (2023)



The Fisherman's Kitchen
Leo N. Orsi Jr. '79 (2022)



Frog and Ball
Kathy Caple, M.L.I.S. '94 (2021)



Soul of a Professor: Memoir of an Un-Engineered Life
Lisa A. Pruitt '88 (2022)



Analytic Combinatorics for Multiple Object Tracking
Roy Streit, Ph.D. '78 (2021)



Honest Answers: Interview and Negotiation Skills to Get to the Truth
Lena Sisco '93 (2022)



The Pillars of Immunity
Aileene Palm '95, '00 (2022)



It Has Found You: New Poems and Writings
Brett Rutherford '05, M.A. '07 (2023)

REPRESENTING RHODY IN WISCONSIN

Robert Gentile '65 shares this photo and note: "A proud alum, front and center in URI apparel, with Rhody contingent at a fall volleyball match here in Madison against defending national champion Wisconsin Badgers. I knew our chances were probably few, but my heart will always be with my treasured college memories at URI."





IN MEMORIAM

Adelaide (Petrella) Marsocci '42
 Alfonse Famiglietti '43, M.B.A. '69
 Ruth (Noble) Lindsey '43
 Elizabeth (Ner) Preti '43
 Lois (Littlefield) Hunter '44
 Thomas Falciglia '45
 Anita (Gamble) Goff '48
 Marie (Marquardt) Holman '48
 Elaine (Barry) Chabot '49
 Constance (Whitehead) Stein '49
 Demetra (Pliakas) Coclin '50
 Ernest Hirsch '50
 Barbara (Flynn) Muddiman '50
 Anita (Joly) Easterbrooks '52
 Alice (Pearl) Hochman '52
 Jacqueline (Kenyon) Hutcheon '52
 Doris (Atkinson) Maher '52
 John Reardon '52
 Arnold Schaffer '52
 Philip Shaughnessy '52
 Patricia (Colwell) Houle '53
 Marvin Klar '53
 Richard Alling '54
 Paul Anderton '54
 Robert Shannon '54
 John Silvestri '54
 Gloria (Bedrosian) Casparian '55
 Raymond Christopher '55
 Gabriel DeTommaso '56
 Marilyn (Law) Fiddes '56
 Roberta (Dewolf) Hopkins '56
 Richard Pailes '56
 Robert Stairs '56
 Dwight Cornell '57
 Ralph Sheffler '57
 Louis Fitzpatrick '58
 Patricia (Petrona) Gauthier '58
 Martin Hellewell '58
 James Hixon '58
 Frank Mormando '58
 John Barrett '59
 James Lynch '59
 Robert Myers '59
 Arlene (Basso) Roberti '59,
 M.L.S. '80
 Julia (Matthews) Buckley '60

Joseph Parrilla, M.S. '60
 Doris (Andrews) Picard '60
 James Sullivan '60
 Daniel Veilleux '60
 Michael Hoffer '61
 Willa (Lauder) Hogberg '61
 Jean (Bordo) Lawrence '61
 Charles Northup '61
 James Thompson '61
 Lynn (Evans) Malak '62
 Albert Orzechowski '62
 Alfred Carl '63
 Andrew DeTora Jr. '63, M.S. '67
 Mary Anne (Aronson) Galuska '63
 Raymond Gauthier '63
 Paul Wragg '63
 Richard Boldt '64
 Barbara Burbank '64, M.A. '70
 Leo Lomax '64
 Constance (Morgan) Ruisi '64
 Joseph Withington '64
 Willis Calberg '65
 George Dayian '65, Ph.D. '70
 Michael Mainelli '65
 Raymond McMann '65, M.A. '67
 Lorraine Bloomquist '66, M.S. '68
 Paul Gardner '66
 Elizabeth Phillips, M.S. '66
 William Andrews '67, M.S. '70
 Susan (Lockwood) Krohner '67
 George Manyan '67
 Robert Marotto '67
 Richard Vanhine '67
 Marilyn Brockway, M.L.S. '68
 Richard Nassa '68
 Margaret (Houghton) Phillips '68
 Albert DiPaolo '69
 Thomas Jenckes '69
 Jay Kapsinow '69
 Alan Lemery '69
 Anita (Kassof) Minor '69
 Joseph DeBlasi '70
 Michael Frazel '70
 Angela Lepore '70
 Myra (Berntson) Mercier '70
 Carol (Sorensen) Randall, M.S. '70

Gary Yeadon '70
 Richard Bornstein '71
 Barbara Cummings '71, M.A. '74
 Lawrence Dutko '71, M.S. '74
 Johanna Goldstein '71, M.L.S. '73
 Margaret Henriksen '71
 Marcia McVicker, M.A. '71
 David Preble '71, M.S. '74
 Robert Spargo, M.A. '71
 Michael Brown '72
 Kathleen Crowley '72, M.S. '89
 Hugh Ebbitt '72
 Roman Galysh '72, M.A. '73
 Joseph Croce '73
 Dennis Moseff '73
 Albert Paranzino '73
 John Peters '73
 Michael Scarduzio '73
 Kevin Skaling '73
 Sharon (Theurer) Bright '74
 Rose Caldwell '74
 Kernan Cross '74
 Robert Esdon, M.L.S. '74
 Robert Lachance, M.A. '74
 Raymond Mroz, M.P.A. '74
 Sharon Pavignano '74
 Michael Sheets, M.S. '74
 Paula Chappell '75
 Mary Courtney, M.L.S. '75
 Janine Larose '75
 Randall Rosati '75
 Marilyn (Greenberg) Spirito '75
 William Britt '76
 John Capuano '76
 David Jastram '76
 Bonnie (Leeds) Michael '76
 Kathleen Updegrove '76
 Donald Zeigler, M.A. '76
 Barbara Broderick, M.L.S. '77
 Ralph Flint '77
 Arthur Gladney '77
 John Lebrun, M.A. '77
 Michael Doucette '78
 Nancy Welch Maynard, M.A. '78
 Sheila (Mitra) Milton '78, M.A. '84
 Albertina (Barreiro) Pacheco, M.S. '78

Stephen Pew, M.L.S. '78
 Gerald Seifert, M.M.A. '78
 Marion Allen, M.L.S. '79
 Claudia Castillo '79
 Thomas Peck '79
 Pamela Sullivan, M.S. '79
 Martha Carr '80
 Susan (Baffoni) Derensis '81
 James Gillis '81
 Maria Nardone, M.L.S. '81
 David Santangelo '81
 Nancy Nester '82, M.A. '88,
 Ph.D. '95
 Douglas Connors '83
 Atara (Scharf) Kirsh '83
 Holly (McCabe) Manchester '84
 Karen Annotti '85
 Janet Williams '85
 Margaret Bierden, M.L.I.S. '87
 Michael C. Counnas '87
 David Vitello '87
 Marjorie Kennedy '88
 Eugene Dumas '89
 Michael Tameo '89, '96
 Matthew Wunsch '90
 Sean Nolan '91
 Margaret Spinner, M.L.I.S. '91
 Dean Najarian '92, Pharm.D. '00
 Christopher Stormer '92
 Christopher Wicklund '92
 Stephan McDonagh '93
 Mary Horgan '94
 Sarah Bartlett-Manzo '95,
 M.B.A. '97
 Lakesha Grant '00
 Derek Rusek '01
 Linda Cacciola '02
 Gail Delaney-Kimball '02
 Nancy Duquette '03
 David Kramer, Ph.D. '06
 Brian Byrne '09
 Carol Annunziata, M.S. '12
 Anna Burakiewicz, Pharm.D. '14
 John Christy '16
 George Gyamfi '16
 Miranda Pesci '16



In her 45 years at URI, Professor Emerita Agnes Doody worked tirelessly to help her students and to make the University a better place.

**REMEMBERING A LEGEND:
 PROFESSOR EMERITA OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
 AGNES DOODY, HON. '08**

Professor Emerita Agnes G. Doody, 93, died in Wakefield, R.I., on April 28, 2023. She inspired and enlivened URI for 45 years. Known for wearing purple, coiling her hair in a crown, and driving a pair of Mercedes-Benz cars with "TALK" and "TALK2" as license plates, Doody was staunchly committed to her students' success and well-being.

Doody grew up on a 400-acre farm in North Branford, Conn. She milked cows, was a crack shot with a rifle and camera, and in 1946 became the first female to win the State Meat Animal Fair. During World War II, she was an airplane-spotter, until officials discovered she was only 15 and had lied about her age. She did not hesitate to tell people she was expelled from Central Connecticut State College (now university) for hitchhiking. She enrolled at Emerson College in Boston, where she was a self-described underachiever placed on academic probation. But she graduated and ultimately earned a doctorate from the Pennsylvania State University.

Doody began teaching at URI in 1958 and quickly earned accolades for a uniquely effective teaching style, along with an ability to ride a bicycle in high heels. When denied a raise because she was married and "only" a woman, she threatened to have her marriage annulled and take out a newspaper ad describing the unjust treatment. She protested other unfair actions of every type.

In 1967, Doody founded and chaired URI's Department of Speech. Thanks to her work and advocacy, communication studies became one of the most popular majors at URI. In 1980, she received the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement Excellence Award for Teaching.

"Dr. Agnes Doody was a legendary and outstanding professor who did everything possible to help students become all they were capable of being," said Winifred Brownell, dean emeritus of the College of Arts and Sciences. "A force of nature who advocated for people, causes, and programs, Agnes was not afraid of conflict or authorities who told her no. I knew she was ready for battle when I would see her in her purple pantsuit holding her purple pen while striding with vigor into a college or Faculty Senate meeting. She courageously fought to unionize faculty, insisted on equal rights for women and people from underrepresented groups, and encouraged students to become responsible global professionals. Her marvelous sense of humor could diffuse even challenging situations. Agnes was a brilliant public speaker, avid reader, and talented chef and gardener. Above all, she helped people's dreams come true."

Gifts in her memory can be made to the Agnes G. Doody Scholarship Fund at alumniportal.uri.edu/Doody

FACULTY AND STAFF

Lorraine Bloomquist '66,
 M.S. '68, professor emerita
 of exercise science
 Christopher Brown, professor
 emeritus of chemistry
 Agnes Doody, Hon. '08,
 professor emerita of
 communication studies
 Thomas V. Falciglia '45, former
 director of alumni affairs
 Warren Hagist, professor
 emeritus of mechanical
 engineering
 Ronald D. Hedlund, former
 vice provost for research
 and service
 Robert Kenyon Jr.,
 URI police officer
 Surendra Singh Malik, professor
 emeritus and former physics
 department chair
 Anthony Nunes, professor
 emeritus of physics
 Kenneth H. Rogers, professor
 emeritus of languages
 Richard E. Sheridan, professor of
 landscape architecture
 Armand Silva, professor emeritus
 of civil, environmental and
 ocean engineering
 Jacqueline Sparks, professor
 emerita of human development
 and family science
 Mario Trubiano, professor
 emeritus of Spanish
 Bryna Wortman, professor
 emerita of theatre

RHODY TRADITIONS

The Mayor of Kingston

Dave Lavallee '79, M.P.A. '87, and his family unearthed a bit of URI history when they found his dad's typewritten 1938 speech and photo from his run for the mayor of Kingston.

Not to be confused with the Paramount crime drama *Mayor of Kingstown*, URI's mayor of Kingston was all about fun and was elected through an annual "mayorality campaign."

We spoke with Betty Cugini '52, who recalls that the whole campus voted to elect a mayor, who had various honorary responsibilities. She says each candidate had a theme and would campaign at the student union (a Quonset hut, at the time) in the evenings.

Cugini says the whole thing was about fun and community. "The college," she says, "was a real community then."

Roger Lavallee '48 clearly had that spirit of fun. He arrived at URI in 1938. He left for several years, served in World War II, and returned to URI on the GI Bill, graduating in 1948.

On the typewritten page the Lavallee family found, the speech, which was apparently broadcast on the radio, is preceded by a tongue-in-cheek introduction making



Roger Lavallee campaigning for Mayor of Kingston in 1938

fun of Lavallee's slight stature: "The next speaker is a member of the freshman class. We have just lifted him on a stool so he is within range of the microphone. A resident of Riverside, he entered college from East Providence High School."

Lavallee's speech began:

"Friends of the Radio Audience – Today I come to you as the candidate of the

Modernistic Party, whose slogan is 'Go modern with the Little Giant.' I am the Little Giant, although I am only five feet two inches tall. I may assert, however, with all modesty, that through the endowment of mental capabilities, I am literally a giant in intellect.

... [One of our planks] is – Paved Roads Throughout Kingston. Last fall on the way to a football game, I found two students going in opposite directions, both thinking they were on their way to the game; but in reality they were lost in the dust. The ruts in Fortin Road are now being used by the military department as trenches for sham battles. We promise cement roads with plush carpet sidewalks.

We also advocate Modernization of all faculty, transportation of all students to and from classes; an eight-day week; comfortable lounging chairs in every class room with a radio at each desk; ... Go Modern with the Little Giant, and live happily ever after."

Lavallee's political career may have been short, but his platform sure was sweet. ☺

—Barbara Caron

Many thanks to the Lavallee family for sharing this piece of history with URI Magazine. Please email us at urimag@uri.edu if you would like to share your memories about this piece of URI history.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RHODY

Two Rams in Love

David Nicolato '98 and Cortney Nicolato '01 break the mascot code of silence to share their story in celebration of Rhody's 100th birthday.

David Nicolato '98 doesn't usually let on that he was once Rhody the Ram. There was a code. You were quiet in the suit, unknown out of it.

If someone in class recalled a great stunt by Rhody at last night's game—maybe a slam dunk off a mini-trampoline, his signature move—he was mum.

"Even today, I don't volunteer that I was a mascot," says David, a former URI alumni relations staffer. "It was an outlet to have fun and be a nut without getting into trouble. It was a phenomenal experience."

You don't discuss it—unless, maybe, it's with another Rhody.

Luckily, David is married to one.

David and Cortney Nicolato '01 celebrated their 18th anniversary this year—likely the only two URI mascots to tie the knot. They live in Saunderstown, R.I., with sons Jacob, 15, and Ian, 12.

"URI is how we met. It's the foundation of who we are," says Cortney, CEO and president of United Way of Rhode Island and a member of the URI Board of Trustees. "It's where it all began."



When they met in 1996, Cortney Mahoney was a "cocky little thing"—she prefers "resourceful"—from Pawtucket, R.I., and David was a New Jersey kid.

Cortney, who worked full time to pay for college, was looking for a way to be connected to the University. She learned David ran the mascot program. True to the code, David wasn't admitting anything.

"I went right up to him and said, 'I hear you run the mascot program,'" remembers Cortney. "He was like, 'What do you mean?' I said, 'I know you run the program.' He finally admitted it and said, 'Well, you're going to have to try out.' He was kind of a jerk. I'm not going to lie."

"There were never really any tryouts at that time," confesses David. "I was just putting her through the ringer."

At URI, they built camaraderie through their mascot roles and as resident assistants in Hopkins Hall. "David used to throw out the worst pickup lines ever. Now he's taught our children these ridiculous pickup lines," jokes Cortney. "He's still convinced that's what wooed me."

A couple of years after college, they went on their first date, to URI's Blue



and White Ball. Three years later, they were engaged at the ball; they married in 2005.

After several moves, they returned to Rhode Island when Cortney was hired at United Way, and one reason was to be close to campus.

"We wanted our kids to see what a fantastic place it is," says David, who followed an interest in fixing things to start a handyman business, My RI Handyman. "The kids can go eat Albie's cheese fries or we'll go to a Fine Arts event."

They made one of the first donations to the Rhody the Ram Endowment, which provides scholarships to students who serve as Rhody.

"We are forever grateful for our time as Rhody because it brought us together and we have built this beautiful life and family," Cortney says. "We are thankful that we are a small part of the history of this iconic mascot." ☺

—Tony LaRoche '95

Read more of Cortney and David's story, and more about Rhody, at uri.edu/news/rhody-centennial

YOUR STORIES

An Amazing Reconnection

That's what Norm Schoeler '71 and Barbara DeCubellis Taylor '70 call their relationship, which started as a kindergarten friendship. Life took them separate ways and then brought them together—again!

In 1953 I had a favorite girl in my kindergarten and first-grade classes at Norwood Avenue School in Cranston, R.I. I looked forward to going to school just to talk with her. My family moved to Warwick the following year and I lost contact with Barbara, but never forgot her.

Fast-forward about 17 years, 1970.

At the beginning of my senior year, I found out that my kindergarten friend was on campus, but I didn't know where she lived. Then, I spotted her at a fraternity event in Point Judith, so I introduced myself. Soon we were dating and enjoying our senior year.

After graduation, she moved back to her family home and started her first job

as a social worker. I had grad school and military service waiting for me, so we said a tearful goodbye—our second goodbye. She told me she would always feel love for me, and I had that on my mind as I went off to boot camp at Fort Dix with the Vietnam War raging.

Fast forward 49 years, 2019.

After a heroic nine-year battle with early onset Alzheimer's, my wife Ann died. About four months later, our country plunged into the COVID crisis. While I was housebound, I received a beautiful alumni directory from URI. I looked up a dozen friends, including Barbara DeCubellis Taylor. She was the only person I looked up who still lived in my home state of Rhode Island.

I emailed her and later we spoke on the phone. I told her what our family had been through trying to take care of Ann. I said to Barbara, "So, I see you married Joe from North Providence. How are things going?" After a brief silence she said, "I lost Joe to early onset Alzheimer's in 2020." I almost fell out of my chair. What were the odds of both of us dealing with this disease? We started talking on the phone nightly and then met in Watch Hill for lunch.

We have such an amazing history together and now we talk every night and meet every few weeks to create new memories together. It's been over a year now, and we have met each other's families, including the grandkids. We refer to this



Barbara and Norm on the URI campus in their senior year, 1970, and in 2022 at a family wedding.

as an "amazing reconnection." We both have an "attitude of gratitude" for where we have been and this special time we are enjoying!



We would like to think that our late spouses, Ann and Joe, are rooting for us. ☺

—Norm Schoeler '71

LOOKING BACK

All the Right Moments

Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe '19, Hon. '51, was present at some of the most historic military moments of World Wars I and II. And he sent a warning to Washington, D.C., in 1945 that, had it not been dismissed, might have changed the course of history.

Resting atop a cabinet in the Rare Books Room in the University Archives and Special Collections is a case containing a ceremonial sword and a book, *East Wind, Rain*, a memoir signed by the author, Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe '19, Hon. '51.

Thorpe was born in Pawcatuck, Conn., in 1897 and grew up in Westerly, R.I. He enrolled at Rhode Island State College in 1916 to study mechanical engineering. He left school before graduating to enlist in the Army during World War I, achieving the rank of second lieutenant by the war's end. He had the distinction of being present as a guard in the Hall of Mirrors during the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Thorpe reenlisted in the 1930s and served in World War II as an intelligence officer under Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He worked with the Dutch as an Allied official in charge of counterintelligence in the Pacific theater. He also led a battalion of American-Filipino servicemen looking for Japanese spies and insurgents embedded in the Pacific Rim island nations. When the war ended, he was charged with finding and arresting Japanese war criminals. By 1945, Thorpe was nominated for the rank of brigadier general by President Franklin Roosevelt.

"I suppose the most important thing I ever did as an intelligence officer," said Thorpe in his memoir, "was to notify Washington [D.C.] of the forthcoming attack on Pearl Harbor." Thorpe was stationed in the Dutch East Indies in 1941; his team intercepted coded Japanese military communications containing specifics about where and when the attack on Pearl Harbor would take place. Thorpe forwarded the communications to his command center in Washington, D.C. The War Department did not take the threats seriously and told Thorpe to "knock it off." The gravity of



"I suppose the most important thing I ever did as an intelligence officer was to notify Washington of the forthcoming attack on Pearl Harbor."

URI President Woodward accepted a Japanese ceremonial sword, a gift from Brig. Gen. Elliot Thorpe, in Kingston in 1947. The sword is now on display in the Rare Books Room in the University Archives.

school's ROTC program. He received an honorary degree in humane letters from URI in 1951.

Thorpe's most visible legacy at URI is the (War) Student Memorial Union. After WWII, with the passage of the GI Bill, URI's enrollment skyrocketed. Quonset huts housed students and their families until new residence halls could be completed. Quonset huts—two of them, located on the Quad—also served as student gathering spaces. In 1950, seeing the need for a large, accessible space where students could gather, study, and socialize, Thorpe donated his veteran's bonus check toward the cost of building such a space, and then began holding fundraising events. The Memorial Union was completed in 1954 and dedicated to the student soldiers who served in World Wars I and II.

Thorpe died in 1989 and was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. ☪

—Mark Dionne

this miscalculation would be realized within a week.

After serving in Australia as chief of counterintelligence of the U.S. forces in the Far East, Thorpe accompanied MacArthur on the USS *Missouri* to Tokyo Bay to manage the Japanese surrender in 1945. At the formal surrender, Thorpe accepted the ceremonial sword as a gift from his Japanese counterpart. He donated it to URI in 1947.

After his postwar service in Japan, Thorpe founded the Army Language School (now the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center) in Monterey, Calif. In 1949, after 32 years of service in the U.S. Army, Thorpe retired in Florida, where he wrote his memoir.

Thorpe regularly visited URI President Carl Woodward, and later President Francis Horn, on campus. On occasion, he would address the student body, exhibit his South-east Asian art collection, and survey the

CLOSE-UP

Raring to Go

Dottie Cunningham '64 shines when she's teaching—in the classroom or on the ice.

Dottie Cunningham '64 can't stand still. We eat breakfast at T's Restaurant in Narragansett, R.I. I work at a slab of French toast; Dottie nibbles her spinach and eggs. But only 30 minutes prior, she was skating around in a fur coat and snow pants at URI's Boss Arena. When I ask her if she's the kind of person who needs to be active, a small smile appears on her face and her eyes twinkle. She nods.

Cunningham is busy, and always has been. She manages a summer vacation home in Jamestown with her sister (she tries to entice this reporter to bite for the upcoming season), teaches ice-skating to the over-50 crowd, is part of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at URI, gives presentations on the Iditarod (one of her many passions), and still tutors students, even though she's long retired from her 29-plus year position teaching at Mercymount Country Day School in Cumberland, R.I. Just this past fall, she also twirled the baton with the Ramettes at Alumni & Family Weekend—and her daughter only recently saw the video.

"My kids have no idea what I'm doing, so when they see me, they're like, 'Mom!?' she says, laughing.

But skating is where she really shines. Cunningham is a natural on the ice (she ran her own skating school in Franklin, Mass., for years), and each spring, she teaches an eight-week-long OLLI class for 50-and-older skaters, twice a week. "My motto in skating—well, in everything—I want my students to know more and to appreciate the efforts of others," she says.

Beth Leconte, executive director of OLLI, says of Cunningham, "Her enthusiasm and style are contagious, and she encourages everyone to have fun and enjoy life—no matter what your age."

A group of skaters piles onto the ice at Boss Arena just after 9 a.m., laughing, knees wobbling slightly, and Cunningham floats around—a tuft of her pink, cashmere sweater peeking out from her fur coat, framing her smile. She quips to her group,



Dottie Cunningham '64 leads her Learn to Skate class at Boss Arena.

"You folks are about ready for a jump lesson," to which she's met with laughter broken up by shouts of, "No way!"

Today, instead of jumps (much to the relief of her class), Cunningham plans to lead them through a routine set to "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head." "That's our tune," she explains. And though it is actually raining outside this Thursday morning, it's very hard to dampen Cunningham's enthusiasm.

Two of Cunningham's best friends from Park View Middle School in Cranston, R.I.—Janet Wilson and Marcia Gladue—stand near the penalty box, cracking jokes and watching, gleefully, as their longtime friend shines under the fluorescents. "We all turned 80 last year," says Cunningham. "Eighty and raring to go!"

Neither Wilson nor Gladue were serious skaters before her class, as far as

Cunningham remembers. But throughout her years teaching—whether her students were 7 or 70—she's always believed that if you do the work (and have fun), you can achieve a great deal.

"You only get out of a thing what you put into it, and it doesn't matter if you go to a big-name school or whatever... you can still make it no matter what, but it depends on you," Cunningham says. "There is no 'can't,' and I believe that because I've witnessed it so many times before."

B.J. Thomas' voice comes over the speaker, sprinkling proverbial raindrops, and the class gathers and glides up and down the rink, finishing with a little spin, arms—and smiles—wide.

"We just keep on truckin'," says Cunningham, "because it's fun." ☪

—Grace Kelly

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 or respond at uri.edu/magazine.

Submit entries by August 31, 2023



TYPING IS HARD

Well, Rhody readers, you guys are funny. And smart. And creative. And apparently, many of you remember taking (or maybe wishing you'd taken?) your high school typing class—that was an overwhelmingly recurring theme in the caption ideas you submitted.

This photo from the URI archives is from a folder dated 1970–1993. A note indicates that another photo with students using a similar typewriter is from 1982. That's it. That's all we know.

We can't help loving that our winning caption wouldn't be funny anywhere but here at URI (well, except maybe at another school with a building called Peck Hall).

SPRING 2023 WINNERS

WINNING CAPTION

"Another Long Semester in Peck Hall."
—Stephen LaFlamme '87

RUNNERS-UP

- "Hmmm, now which one is the Wite-Out key?"
—Mary J. Scott '88
- "What's my password?"
—John Pyers '78
- "Siri, what does this button do?"
—Joe Darling, M.A. '67



SHARE YOUR VINTAGE URI PHOTOS!

Would you consider sharing some of those vintage photos from long ago (or not so long ago) for the photo caption contest or just for fun?

If so, we'd love to consider sharing your photos in URI Magazine. Please scan or take a good-quality photo of your snapshot and mail to urimag@uri.edu.

PHOTOS: COURTESY URI DIGITAL ARCHIVES



It's What We Do Together

Join the thousands of Rhody Rams around the world making their voices heard on **URI Day of Giving**. While students fill the Quad to celebrate their shared bonds at URI, alumni and friends reconnect and show their support for the areas they care about most.

Tune in on **October 5** for real-time challenges and regular updates from students, professors, and coaches. You can help students with scholarships, see which class year comes out on top, and push your favorite sport to the next level. Whatever you do, we hope you will use this as a day to show your Rhody pride!

URI.EDU/GIVE





EPILOGUE

SMITTEN

Meet Basil, the therapy dog who arrived at URI in September 2022 and has been melting hearts and making smiles every day since then.

Basil is based in URI's Psychological Consultation Center. Center director Lindsey Anderson, M.A. '07, Ph.D. '11, M.S. '22, reached out to Boonefield Labradors in New Hampshire after hearing they had donated a therapy dog to the East Providence, R.I., Police Department. She knew a therapy dog would be invaluable on a college campus.

"The goal is really to get animals into spaces where they are most needed. And there is no greater need than college campuses, given what's happening with mental health among college students," Anderson says. "So far everyone who has interacted with her is smitten."

See Basil in action at uri.edu/magazine/basil