

Closing







There is always much talk among seniors about preparation for getting a job and carving out an existence in the "real world." One begins to get the impression that the university is a world unto itself, isolated and cloistered.

A look back to the events at URI during the 1978-79 school year reveals this impression to be little more than a myth.

How did national trends affect those of us who were pursuing a life of academe?

Well, as the pendulum of public opinion began to swing against increased government spending, state legislators decide that students would have to pay more for their education. So, tuition went up and dining hall fees went up and dormitory fees went up and health service fees went up and . . . well, you get the picture.

And what of those hearty souls who dared to rent a house down-the-line? Well, those poor creatures really go taken for a ride—if they could afford the gas, that is. Food prices went up, heating costs went up, gas went way up—budgets went out the window.

People and events reached us here at URI with amazing speed. In late November, a shocked world read the accounts of a mass suicide by the followers of the Rev. Jim Jones. On Feb. 5, Mark Lane, a lawyer involved with the People's Temple and a survivor of

the tragedy, recalled his experience in Guyana in a lecture delivered to a packed audience at Edwards Auditorium. Two months later, *The Good 5¢ Cigar* satirized Lane and the suicide in the April Fools issue of the paper.

On March 27, Elie Wiesel, noted Jewish author and a survivor of the Nazi death camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, brought us the good news of the Egyptian-Israeli peace signing which he had attended the previous day.

On Sept. 25, feminist Kate Millet told a URI audience about male domination in our government. Six months later, Ms. Millet was kicked out of Iran for telling the Ayatullah Khomeini the same thing.

The energy crunch didn't seem to reduce the number of people using cars to commute to the university, as the persistent parking problem indicated.

And most surprising of all were those incidents at URI which actually drew the attention of people out there in the real world. Peter Hinkamp, URI's energy manager, made headlines in the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Los Angeles Times* when he decided to mix used crankcase oil with the regular fuel to heat university buildings. William Krul, associate professor of plant and soil science, made scientific history when he created a clone—of a grape, that is.

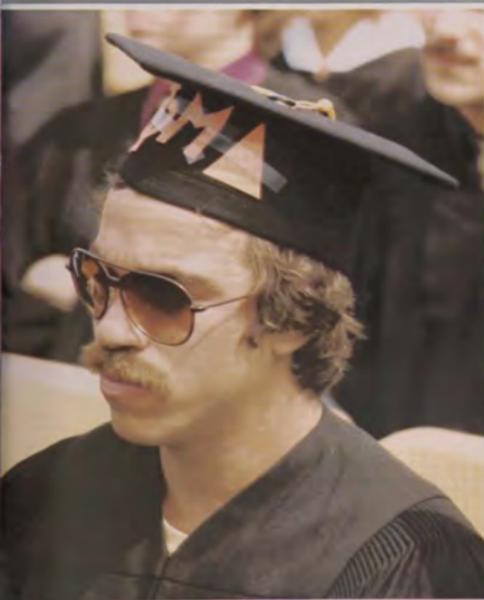
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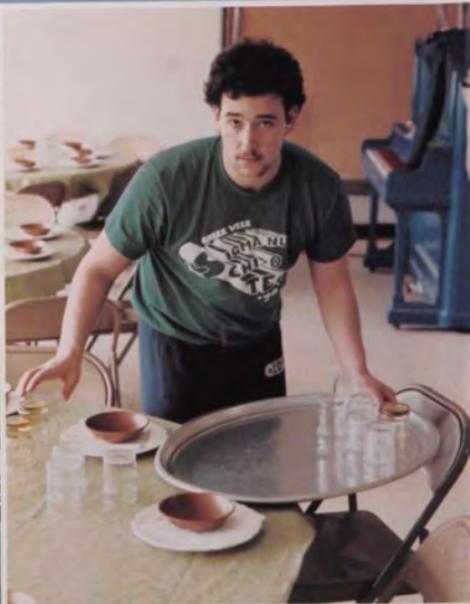




Beginnings are often endings. The beginning of a career is often the end of college days. And so commencement, a beginning, is the last of our undergraduate experiences. Yet beyond all beginnings and endings is a yearning for growth and that is what the experience of studying, interacting and understanding life at a university encompasses. For there need not be an end to education, or to studying or to understanding. If the oak tree sheds its leaves in the winter, so does it renew its green each spring. And what we have gained here at the University of Rhode Island is a means of remaining "evergreen."

It was the prophet Joel who said, "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men will see visions." The difference between youth and age is not to be measured in years, but in outlook and direction.







Here at URI, we have been provided with a perspective and an awareness of the potential of education and of knowledge. We are equipped with the means of looking to the future and achieving a better life for ourselves and our community.

Education is such an intangible quantity. It cannot be measured by the degree one has; nor is it necessary to have a degree to be educated. For most of us, these four years bridge the period of late adolescence to the beginning of maturity. It has been time spent in learning, and having a good time, and probably terrible times as well. But the focus has been to gain knowledge as well as the systems for gaining knowledge and understanding. This intangible quality of education is the very fact of its value. For though we, in the future, may become rich and powerful, or poor and ineffectual, we cannot lose what we have gained here.



For education cannot be stolen or lost or burned or taken from us. And so we have a responsibility to our university and to the society we are now prepared to participate in: to remain evergreen, to see visions, rather than dream dreams, and to help create a means for others to reap the benefits that we have received.













