Sophomore awarded grant, performed conservation research with professors

BY AUDREY O'NEIL
News Editor

University of Rhode Island sophomore Chelsea Stephens conducted research that could possibly change the future.

As a marine biology major, Stephens completed research at Delaware Bay on a new type of fishing gear called "hook blockers." Stephens was able to pick what project she wanted to work with after receiving a costal fellowship through URI. This project was perfect for Stephens because of her interest in conservation research and her residence close to her hometown, Dover, Delaware.

She was able to work under URI professor, Brad Wetherbee, and Delaware State University professor Dwayne Fox. Fox was her supervisor while Stephens was working in Delaware. Fox worked in conjunction with URI and the University of Delaware for this research project. Stephens also worked with other undergraduates and graduate students from DSIU and URI.

The hook blocker device that was being researched is a ten-inch piece of PVC pipe that is attached about seven inches above the hook on the wire leader with clamps to hold it in place. "We were comparing this new equipment with normal fishing gear as the control; the hook blocker is used to prevent gut hooking in sand tiger sharks that have a bad habit of swallowing the hook along with the bait," Stephens said.

Stephens explained that when the hook is swallowed it will often become lodged in the internal organs of the shark including its stomach, heart and liver. "We would take both kinds of gear out fishing, placing 12 control and 12 blocker hooks on a long line which is about 1,200 feet of rope. We would let it soak for two hours then we would pull the line back in by hand. If a sand tiger shark was caught on a hook we would take down all of its information including length, sex, and whether it was caught on a blocker or control hook," Stephens said.

The researchers would then attach a spaghetti tag for identification purposes and in some sharks an acoustic tag as well for a different research project being worked on by the team.

At the end of the research, they found that the hook blockers are very effective at preventing gut hooking in sand tiger sharks. The process was not simple, and took time because the researchers had to wait until July, when the shark population was at its highest. They also were required to build all new equipment for the experiment.

Every week the boat would go out for at least two or three days and put out line, these were often anywhere from eight to 20 hour days depending on the number of lines put out, number of sharks caught, and the weather, Stephens said. "Then after we finished collecting all the data in late August I compiled a list of all the data and analyzed it to see what the results were that took almost the whole semester to finish." Stephens is also involved in campus activities at URI. She is a member of the color guard for the URI Ram Marching Band and is also on the URI volunteer team.

Continued on page 3

URI taking steps to improve year-to-year student retention rate

By Allison Farrelly
News Editor

Over the last decade, there has been a downward trend nationwide in college retention rates, but this is a trend that the University of Rhode Island is hoping to dodge.

According to CollegeBoard.com, the leading online source of college planning information, URIs retention rate is 81% year to year.

"Retention rate is determined from fall to fall," Dean Libutti, Vice Provost in charge of enrollment management said. "When we think of retention, we think of student success.

According to Libutti, URI has been taking many preventative measures over the last decade to ensure their enrollment numbers and retention rate stay up. URI has implemented a series of programs such as University College, the Early Alert Office, and the Advising Committee to help students connect to the community.

"The Early Alert Office in University College was designed to work with students who have been labeled as at-risk by someone whether it be their roommate, a URI 101 mentor, or a professor," Libutti said. The Early Alert Office is designed to work with students who are not performing to their highest potential and get them on track for graduation.

URI 101, a one-creditclass all freshmen are required to take, is connected to the college and living learning communities are other methods Libutti identified that the university is using to engage students. "Successful students are retained students," Libutti said.

Libutti’s main goal is for students to get connected to the university through peer connections, faculty connections, and connections to the institution.

Another factor contributing to lower retention rates is the tough economic times according to Libutti, however URI is doing the best they can to keep students from transferring.

"URI is always investing in financial aid and support for students," Libutti said. "The 21 percent of students who don’t return to URI is, however, visible at the university. A Weldin Hall resident advisor, Kevin Hourahan, has noticed a loss of students from his hall just between the first and second semester. "There are definitely a lot of kids who leave URI for all different reasons," Hourahan said.

Despite the strides URI has made over the past decade, there is still room for improvement. Compared to other New England public universities, URI is outranked by University of Connecticut in percent, University of Vermont in 88 percent, and University of Massachusetts Amherst in roughly 20 members, the club is continuing to grow and gain popularity.

"We’ve been putting up flyers, and the guys have been tarrying about it so word is beginning to get around," Cohen said.

In the coming weeks, Cohen is eager to begin holding organized practices, obtain a head coach, and begin competition.

With the goal of doing things differently this time around for the wrestling club, Cohen is determined to succeed.

"The guys are very motivated, I’m motivated, everyone seems to get it going," Cohen explained.

The club consists of primarily freshmen but is looking for new members or anyone who is interested in competitive wrestling. Although there is no coach yet, members are excited to working and practicing for upcoming competitions this semester. Competitions will consist of the best wrestlers from the team, so motivation and skill is key for members in this club, although newcomers are welcome. Any athletes interested can email Matt Cohen at mco22012@wol.com.

Continued on page 3

Wrestling Club revived on campus, looks to expand

By Alison Wexburton
Contributing News Reporter

With the previous University of Rhode Island wrestling team having died out, freshman Matt Cohen is attempting to bring the fiercely competitive sport back to campus. Cohen, originally from New Jersey, came to URI hoping to be able to substitute his love for wrestling by joining the rugby team.

"I met a lot of wrestlers on the rugby team and they were all older than me so they had been on the previous wrestling team. So I talked with them and made flyers and just took it step by step from there," Cohen explained.

He teamed up with one of the founders of the previous wrestling club and was able to bring back the URI wrestling club.

After a series of meetings with the new members and the director of club sports, Chris Daigle, Cohen, along with the help of vice president Gregory Van Dongen, have established their first practice next week. Practices will take place at the Mackal Field House using equipment and mats that are owned by Rec Services.

Continued on page 3
There were many great albums that came out in 2012, but there isn't enough space to write about all of them. So before we get into my list proper, here are some albums that I really liked that just barely missed a spot in this article: "Blood" by Beach House, "Attack on Memory" by Cloud Nothings, "Love This Giant" by David Byrne & St. Vincent, "Handwritten" by The Gaslight Anthem, and "Good Kid m.a.d.d. City" by Kendrick Lamar.

In a year that was dominated by several extensive albums by louder indie bands, it is the debut by British quartet 2:54 that stands out above the rest. They've produced a rich, rewarding debut full-length that harkens back to the late 1980's when bands like The Jesus and Mary Chain and The House of Love were the toast of the British indie scene. While the band largely trades in the darkly atmospheres and a bit on the long side.

Donald Fagen's "Sunken Condos" is one of the best surprises of 2012. Fagen, who has been a part of Steely Dan since the 1970's, has released several excellent solo albums, including 1982's "The Nightfly," which play upon the sound palette that knows better than to tweak it and ruin a good thing. I listen to Japandroids for a loud blast of joyful exuberance, and that is just what they deliver on this aptly named record.

Frank Ocean's "Channel Orange" has been tagged as the flagship release in the so-called "hipster R&B" movement, but to write off the album as music for Pitchfork reading indie kids would be doing the album a disservice. On "Channel Orange," Ocean channels both rock and R&B artists like D'Angelo and Prince by making a record that is made to be heard as a whole instead of as a clutch of radio singles surrounded by filler. For instance, I'm rather surprised that a four minute edit of the album's centerpiece "Pyramids" is getting minor airplay, particularly since that butchered version cuts out some of the more intriguing parts of the full 10 minute track. Meanwhile, the wonderful D'Angelo inspired cut "Thinkin' Bout You" - the only song on the album that I can see getting any main-stream radio airplay - stalled at No. 32 on the pop charts. The album features guest appearances from Ocean's Odd Future compatriots Tyler the Creator and Earl Sweatshirt. I'm not a particularly big fan of the Odd Future crew, but neither Tyler nor Earl outstay their welcome, and neither does John Mayer, who shows up on a few tracks to remind people that he's actually a decent guitar player when pushed. Maybe Ocean's inability to have a pop hit works for "Channel Orange" to benefit those whose interest has been piqued in the album by its critical acclaim can give it a spin and discover one of the best surprises of 2012.
Cigar staffer says time to forget your weekly TV doses, binge on Netflix

BY AUGIE KING
Entertainment Editor

Since the dawn of its time, the basic model for television has remained the same. Sure, shows have evolved and television has intensely stepped up its game in the storytelling department in the wake of “The Sopranos,” but the way shows are shown is exactly the same. Once a week at a specific time, a new episode is released, and when it is done people froth at the mouth to see the next chapter exactly one week from then. It is a method that has proven resilient over decades and did not look to be changing anytime soon...until now.

Recently, Netflix has been pushing hard into the television arena with their previous original show “Lilyhammer” and the upcoming revival season of “Arrested Development.” While “Lilyhammer” was technically the first, it did not have the great buzz and production value behind it that Netflix’s most recent excursion, “House of Cards,” has. It debuted last week, and, like “Lilyhammer,” was given to the public in a method that television had never experienced before: every episode was available all at once. This flies in the face of everything that television culture has built up over the past 60 years, but is that really a bad thing?

Television’s once-a-week model has endured because it encourages constant discussion. Every week at the water cooler (so to speak), people would come together to discuss what they had witnessed the previous night. One person will talk about how they like a new plot twist, another will say how one character is finally getting their moment to shine and another will ponder where the show will go from there. With the weekly method, a show will build a reputation over time as fans converse with each other and hook in newcomers to watch it too. It is a tradition that is entirely unique and special to television and no other storytelling medium can claim. Now Netflix wants to throw a wrench in that old adage. The release of “House of Cards” has brought greater attention to the fact that every piece of the first season was put online on the same time, perfect for binge watchers. I am a binge watcher myself, and personally prefer it in most cases. For comedies without overarching stories, I am perfectly fine with spacing out episodes over weeks. In the case of dramatic series’ that build over time, binge watching is the way to go.

Being primarily a film person, I love storytelling and the intricacies that go into the art of crafting it. Television is an excellent ground for said intricacies, the little details and various subplots that would not have fit in a two-hour film. Binge watching allows me to pick up on them much easier as I view episodes in rapid succession and can connect the story themes, symbolism, and callbacks to previous episodes. With the weekly model, I cannot see myself finding all of that in one sitting unless someone points it out to me after the fact.

Since I have gotten back into television after a personal hiatus of watching almost none of it, binge watching has been the only way for me. With the exceptions of “The Walking Dead” and “ Archer,” every show I have watched in the last few years has been binged, and I would not have wanted it any other way. “Breaking Bad” was tailor-made for this with its constantly mounting tension and individual character arcs that are given greater clarity when seen in a short period of time. I could never imagine that I would want to watch it as much as I did had I watched it spread out over six years, where the complexities in its narrative would have likely been lost on me and the slow-burn pacing highlighted even greater.

So what exactly does the Netflix model for “ House of Cards” mean for television? It means that the writers don’t have to worry so much about contriving “hooks” or cliffhangers at the end of every episode to keep audiences tuned in for the coming weeks. They can let the story breathe naturally on its own and build towards a season conclusion. HBO has certainly been doing this regardless of the weekly schedule, notably with “The Wire,” but the network and cable shows often feel the need to include those shocks to hold interest.

Sure, the hooks are a part of the fun of serialized television, especially in a show as crazy as “The Walking Dead,” but they would feel forced and unnecessary for something like “House of Cards.” As a big fan of binge television viewing, I am very excited that Netflix is experimenting and shaking up tried-and-true approaches for the future. While I love the water cooler aspect of serialization as much as the next person, maybe it is time to look forward and see the greater picture...all at once.

Swimming

Research

From page 4

remains strong and they’re worn out later very well,” Westcott said. “They never really lost their confidence. We swam against Northwestern and Dartmouth University at Dartmouth two years ago and felt a little intimidated. We didn’t feel that way this year.”

Sophomore Julie Coleman was able to grab a third-place and second-place finish in the one-meter and three-meter diving, respectively, with scores of 199.95 and 215.24. Sophomore Colette Aubin, freshmen Shelby Stang, Revolinski and Keshishian ended the day on a high note for Rhode Island when they blazed ahead of their nearest competitor in the 200-yard freestyle relay.

“As we were doing,” Westcott said, “we asked one of our swimmers in workouts this morning what was different about this year from last year and she said the intensity we have this year is greater than last year, in terms of progress and preparation for the Atlantic-10 Conference Championship, which is our focus since day one.”

As for the team’s next meet, Westcott went on to say the University of Connecticut Invitational is mainly a meet composed of swimmers who will not be competing in the Atlantic-10 Championships. He referred to the trip to Connecticut as a “last chance meet,” in which it could be a swimmer’s last opportunity to make his or her career or seasonal best in a meet.

Retention

From page 1

after her first semester to Elon University in North Carolina.

“I felt very disconnected from the school,” Carnevale said. “I felt like none of my professors cared about my progress and my advisors were not only unhelpful, they didn’t know my name.”

Boden acknowledges that there are students like Carnevale for whom URI is not a good fit. “People leave URI for personal reasons and continue on to other institutions,” Boden said.

“However students from URI are prepared for college work. 90 percent of students who transfer from URI go on to graduate within 6 years from another institution.”
Rhody SPORTS

Tayra Melendez becoming bright spot in tough women’s basketball season

BY EMILY JACOBS
Sports Staff Reporter

From the time pregame is over, freshman Tayra Melendez gets into the zone. There is no special ritual, and no loud music; just a calm and focused player ready to step onto the court.

The Rhode Island women’s basketball team has been struggling all year, having just come off its 10th consecutive loss, but Melendez remains a mainstay—a career-high 21 points, her 11th game in double-digits. The 5’11’’ freshman from Mattapan, Mass., has been a bright spot in this tough season. Aggressive both in the middle and on defense, she remains a core player for the team.

Track teams sweep meets on Senior Day

BY BRANDON MAXWELL
Sports Staff Reporter

The University of Rhode Island men’s and women’s track teams swept the competition this past Saturday on Senior Day as both finished in first place in the Coaches’ Tribute Meet at Mackal Field House with 193 and 163 points respectively.

Both teams were led by Chad Copeland, head coach of both teams. The men dominated the competition and forced their opponents into a final point total of 193, more than 100 points ahead of second-place New Hampshire. The women didn’t disappoint either as the squad went on to finish easily ahead of the University of Massachusetts, which finished with 103.5 points.

While the meet appeared to be a dominating team victory, the coaches and athletes were primarily trying to improve upon the aspects that we have been working all season,” men’s coach John Copeland said. “If we get better at what we do, the improved performances should follow.”

The idea of improving appears to be an ongoing sentiment this season as the team’s performances have consistently been one of the conference’s best. In fact, a recent coach poll conducted by Atlantic-10 Conference pegs the Rams as the favorite to win the A10 Championships beginning later this month.

When asked about what she felt about her team’s performance, women’s head coach Laurie Feit-Melnick said she was content.

“We were pleased with the results from this past weekend,” Feit-Melnick said. “We had numerous personal and season best performances. A couple of those notable performances came from the likes of senior Ronald Woodley and junior Hannah Janeczak who both had first place times in the 60-meter dash. Woodley won the event with a career best time of 6.97 seconds. Janeczak broke Rhode Island’s 60-meter dash record when she finished in 7.39 seconds. She broke her own previous record of 7.63 seconds. The men had seven first-place finishes and 11 podium finishes. The women had two winners and seven second-place results.

Despite their success, Feit-Melnick said she remains skeptical about the competition still to come.

“We are excited to host the Atlantic 10 Championships on February 16th and 17th,” Feit-Melnick said. “We love to compete at home and look forward to a great team meet. The conference added Butler [University] and [Virginia Commonwealth University] so it will be a very competitive meet.”

Copeland said there is much to do as his squad prepares for the league meet.

“For A-10, we need to improve upon our focus and concentration,” Copeland said. “We had some lapses last week that need to be corrected. We’re hoping this is just the start of what’s to come. These performances are great indicators to let us know we’re right on track, for where we want to be over the next couple of months.”

The University of Rhode Island men’s swimming and diving team fell to the Northeastern Huskies, 162.5-110.5 on Senior Day this past Saturday.

The Rams, who dropped their second-straight meet by more than 40 points and fell to 3-4 overall in one-on-one competitions this season, were only able to claim four first-place victories on the day.

“We need to get our swimmers better,” Rhode Island head coach Mick Whipples said. “Northeastern is a team that has had good success and for longer than we have. Whether we’ll ever be fast enough to beat them, is a question for us and for the coaches of Northeastern in the future. I don’t know, but it’s a program we look to so that we can get better.”

Rhode Island was only able to net a couple of second-place finishes in the first five events, led by senior captain Susan Janeczak, sophomores Rachel Revolinski, Chaya Zabloudoff and Emily Thomesen clocking in at 4:01.08 in the 400-yard medley relay and sophomore Sarah Keshian finishing with a time of 1:56.39 in the 200-yard freestyle.

Revolinski and senior captain Eileen Morrison then finished first and second, respectively, with times of 25.27 and 25.33 seconds during the 50-yard freestyle to help us make up some ground.

The squad went three more events without taking the top spot until Zabloudoff claimed victory in the 500-yard medley freestyle, finishing at 5:06.15.

Later, in the 200-yard individual medley, Thomesen, freshman Jenna Kirchhoff and senior Christine Beecher swept the race to take all 16 available points.

The attitude of the team continued on page 3

THOSE WHO CAN’T PLAY, WRITE!
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Rhody SPORTS

Men’s hockey team rebounds, dominates Villanova University

BY COLIN HOWARTH
Contributing Sports Reporter

The No. 17-ranked University of Rhode Island men’s hockey team bounced back after a three-game losing streak to sweep Villanova University last weekend at the Bradford R. Ross Ice Arena.

The Rams defeated the Wildcats 10-0 on Friday and 6-2 on Saturday.

Sophomore goalie Andrew Sherman got the start on Friday and recorded his first shutout of the season, improving his record to 9-4-1.

After a scoreless first period on Friday, the Rams exploded for eight goals in the second period. Assistant captain Sean O’Neill netted two goals, along with AJ Chua and DJ Grigon. Ben Upham, Cameron Schreck, Josh Watkinson and senior captain David Macalino all scored a goal as well.

“It’s good [to win] after getting shut out last weekend,” head coach Joe Augustine said. “We got to work on our power play and that helps.”

Rhode Island scored seven total power play goals over the weekend, with five on Friday and two on Saturday. URI had only scored seventeen power play goals prior to Friday’s game.

“Sherman’s also coming off an injury, so it was important to get him some time out of net. Our defense played fairly well,” Augustine said.

Senior goalie Kenton got the start in the net on Saturday where he was able to save all 25 shots he faced. O’Neill and Robby Ana both earned the win in relief, with David Ricci and Macalino added a goal apiece.

“This team wasn’t as strong [as Villanova University], so we had our backs against the ropes,” Macalino said. "Nationals were at risk if we dropped any games this weekend.”

Kenton was taken out after the second period, loading 5-0, and replaced by senior goalie Matt Delujo. Delujo turned away all 12 shots on route to the Rams’ 19th win of the season.

“The goalie is probably the most valuable this season, possibly the most valuable,” Macalino said. "When they play good, everything else falls into place.”

O’Neill scored four times over the weekend, giving him 16 on the year. Macalino also added two more goals to give him a team-high 25 on the season.

This win improved Rhode Island to 19-10-3 on the season.

“Getting goals and points will hopefully carry over to next weekend,” Macalino said. “Rhode Island’s next game is an exhibition game at Assumption College on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Assumption plays at the NCAA Division III level.”

Women’s swimming team drops second straight meet

BY JAKE MARROCCO
Sports Staff Reporter

The University of Rhode Island women’s swimming and diving team fell to the Northeastern Huskies, 162.5-110.5 on Senior Day this past Saturday.

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