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Students rally to bring awareness to Trayvon Martin case

BY KIMBERLY DIELANS
News Reporter

Last Friday, three multicultural student organizations, Uhuru SASA, Student Association for the Advancement of Haitian People (SAAHP) and Brothers on a New Direction (BOND), held a rally to bring attention to the Trayvon Martin case.

The rally took place on the Quadrangle and students arrived at the event wearing hoodies to combat Fox News commentator Geraldo Riveras statement on Martins attitude being just as responsible for his death as the shooter. Students also brought posters to the event, most of them reading, I am Trayvon Martin or Justice for Trayvon.

Other posters were illustrated with pictures of Arizona Ice Tea and Skittles, the items Martin was armed with on the night of his death. One poster asked, Am I Suspectious? and What Does Suspectious Look Like?

The students who attended the rally marched around the Quad and yelled Justice for Trayvon.

Uhuru SASA president Elizabeth Gaston felt the rally was important because a case like this affects all minority students and people of color. In order to see any kind of progression, Gaston said rallies like these are important to hold because they have the ability to start a chain of reaction and get more people talking about the case.

I feel as though this case shows that justice isn't blind, Gaston said. There are cases like this happening to blacks, Hispanics and minorities in general, all the time that are going under the radar. People aren't fighting for them as much as they should be. If [Martin] was white and Zimmerman was black, there wouldve been a much louder uproar.

For SAAHP president Janaca Pierre, president of SAAHP, being able to help coordinate this event was a matter of personal importance. Pierre, who has three brothers, thought of them when she heard about the case on the news. If it had happened to one of her brothers, Pierre said, she would want justice for them. Supporting Martins case, she said, It's all about who you know and for me, to have a part time position at URI where I could be a friend of a friend who was a major benefactor in coming to Rhode Island, Westkott said. He knew everybody.

He went on to describe that the two knew each other because Goldens driving coach was a former family friend of Westkotts wife Pam.

That's one man we owe our last 42 years because of what he's done for us, Westkott continued.

During Westkotts first three years at URI, athletics and physical education were a part of the same department. There was also a divide between men and womens athletics into separate entities with different department heads. Varsity athletics were split between the two.

Westkott did not recruit during his first year at URI.

We started with very little money and I didn't know what I was doing in terms of a varsity collegiate athletics program, he said. We didn't have pace clocks or stopwatches. We were bare bones.

The 1972 men's swimming team was comprised of all white ones. The team did not have scholarship money. The first meet was against the University of New Hampshire on Dec. 1.

It was so different [than it is today] because there was very little visibility, he said. There was no timing system, it was all stopwatches. All these things that we now take for granted, we had to make up on our own. It was more of a paper and pencil kind of program. Today its driven by computers and electronics so that made it very different.

The team originally competed in the New England Intercollegiate Swimming and Diving League. The league was broken up into three divisions and had 45 member schools in New England.

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The students who attended the rally marched around the Quadrangle and yelled Justice for Trayvon.

Residents in Rhode Island students walked to make a difference this Saturday by participating in the mile-long Pound the Pavement. Pound a Nail walk, sponsored by URI & South County Habitat for Humanity (SCHH).

Both individuals and student groups were encouraged to register for the walk. When students registered, they were entered in a raffle to win various prizes, such as Artic tickets or an iPad. All of the proceeds from the walk go directly to the URI-Sponsored Habitat house.

The mission of the SCHH is to eliminate substandard housing by creating simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with people in need in order to improve quality of life and provide greater security.

The walk was supported by various student organizations, including fraternities and sororities of the university. Director of Greek Affairs, Stephen J. Simo, is an active participant in the Habitat for Humanity for fundraisers and enjoys seeing students come together for a good cause.

It is a great opportunity for anyone, not just students, to do help others, Simo said.

Its also a great way to be involved and show support for the university and South County.

Simo also stated that URI and SCHH helped raise over $10,000 from the walk last year, and had the same goal for this year.

Other student organizations including URI Students Actively Volunteering and Engaging in Service (URI SAVES), were also there to support the cause. Senior and president of URI SAVES

Miss Game of Thrones premiere?

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Habitat
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Chelsea Tucker is an avid supporter of giving back to the community. Tucker has supported the community with URI SAVES by doing various activities, including the alternative Spring Break program in Austin, Texas. The organization keeps students involved with opportunities to volunteer on and off campus, so they can help make a difference.

“I have met so many different people along the way,” Tucker said. “It’s such a great feeling when you know you are helping others.”

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Trayvon

From page 1

said, is a matter of bringing to light an injustice that anyone should want to fight.

“We have to make noise about this,” Pierre said. “Something like this should not be allowed to happen. It’s important that [we] stand together on this case; we’re not here because of our race or gender; we’re here as one.”

Sammy Ogundare, a communications and business major who participated in the protest, also believed that people should get louder about Martin’s case.

According to Ogundare, cases like this happen too often to black males, based off the conclusions people draw from their beliefs. However, Ogundare said that walks like these are important.

“I take pride in being here,” Ogundare said. “Some people don’t do anything. Holding a rally, showing up in a hoodie, making posters, it’s all a positive step forward in making things better.”

President of BOND and rally host Hakeem Ottman said it was critical for students – not just those from URI – to speak out about the case. For Ottman, the case “hit close to home,” since something like this “could’ve easily happened to him.”

“Just because we’re not directly affected by an event, doesn’t mean we should stay quiet about it,” Ottman said. “We all have a social responsibility to make sure our voices are heard.”

Coach

From page 1

“We ran the conference, we ran the league, the championship meets,” he said, referring to his fellow coaches. “We were referees. Now we pay someone to do that for us, as coaches did it. We did all the meet entries. Those experiences were so great because some of the greatest coaches in the country were your colleagues and you rubbed elbows with them, exchange ideas with them.”

URI competed in that league until it joined the Atlantic-10 Conference in the 1996. Westkott said that the A-10 offers a similar feel to the old league.

In 1975, Westkott was approached and told that the university decided to change the structure of physical education and athletics. Physical education split off into the kinesiology department and athletics was made into its own separate program. The school also added a women’s swimming program that he accepted the head coaching position. Westkott described this as the beginning of change, before Title IX and its major influences and impact. Men and women’s athletics were brought together and for the first time, women’s athletics began to recruit.

Ellie Lemaire was named the new athletic director for women following the restructuring.

“She was awesome,” Westkott said. “Great administrator and very passionate about women’s athletics. She had had experiences when she was in school that were discriminatory towards women. Very sad and very bad experiences.”

Westkott described Lemaire as a great role model who held coaches accountable and to a very high standard. He described a meeting he had with her and all the coaches of the women’s teams.

“We were figuring out what we should do with all this scholarship money we had for the first time ever,” he said. “How were we going to distribute it? We all took a fair share of it, it wasn’t like there was a whole lot of money, but we didn’t know what we were doing. They would ask me about recruiting and I was part time, I was doing recruiting by the seat of my pants, literally.”

Westkott was not able to recruit the way he has done more recently for some time. Along with coaching both the men and women’s programs, he was still a full-time teacher until 2000.

“I was here from three to seven at night, and 5:30 in the morning, but between 7:00 and 3:00 I was teaching in Narragansett.”

URI dropped men’s swimming as a varsity sport in 2008 due to budget constraints. The team has continued to operate at the club level with Westkott no longer as the head coach, but an advisor. Last year, the team won the club national championship hosted at Georgia Tech. The team clinched the title on the final relay event to edge the University of Colorado in the final standings and take home the hardware.

Westkott said he has no plans to retire in the near future. He said as long as the universities will have him, he would continue to coach the URI women’s swimming team. While he does realize that a point will come where it will be best that he step aside and let the program go in another direction, he just hopes that he realizes it himself and he leaves on his own terms.
Sports

Column: NCAA athletes should be paid

BY TIM LIMA
Contributing Sports Reporter

Tonight marks the end of the college basketball season which may surprise many University of Rhode Island students who thought it ended a couple of weeks ago. The championship game will be played tonight, where either the University of Kentucky or Kansas State will be cutting down the nets and celebrating another remarkable accomplishment from an already accomplished basketball program.

However, we must ask ourselves just how accomplished these programs are when it comes to the game of basketball. One can make a valid argument that John Calipari, famous University of Kentucky and Kansas coach, won the tournament last summer with his ability to recruit. Because of the one-year rule, mandating that high school athletes attend at least one year of college before turning professional, many of the nation's top basketball players don't look to attend the right school, but the right program to attend at least one year of college.

Calipari was interviewed prior to his Final-Four tilt against the University of Louisville, explained that he wished there was a rule keeping his players at Kentucky for longer than a year. We figured the best way to do that can't have your cake and eat it too. The best players come to you because your program serves as a gateway to the National Basketball Association and millions of dollars. You do not see the top high school athletes flocking to small-name programs - which just adds to the impact of major upsets in the NCAA tournament.

This gets me to my main point, though. Why do major athletes continue to shell out full-rides to students who are guaranteed to not graduate, while many of the athletes who want to make money have to refuse a college education because they can't afford it? Austin Rivers, before finishing his junior year at Duke University, has also declared that he will enter the NBA draft. A kid who comes from a rich family, whose father coaches the Boston Celtics, received a full scholarship to a very prestigious university. In other words, while this son of a millionaire, who will be a millionaire himself in a few months, was able to attend Duke to play a sport, there is a doctor somewhere who was unable to attend his dream school.

The answer to this problem, I admit, makes me cringe - as I'm sure it will make many others. We must pay our student athletes what they deserve, with the best athletes making the most. However, what is paid to them must first have tuition subtracted from their contract. For instance, if Austin Rivers is said to bring in $70,000 a year for the University, you would then subtract the cost of school from that amount, say $40,000, and pay Austin $30,000 to play basketball at Duke. Universities could, therefore, use the money these athletes are bringing into the university to not pay Austin for his college education, but pay their athletes.

Because athletes are making tens of thousands of dollars a year, they will be less eager to jump for the NCAA tournament. Rather than to put the extra $30,000 back into an already wealthy program, or give your athletes who have made that money for you. University of Michigan star star quarterback Denard Robinson, who often times bring in crowds of over 100,000, are not receiving compensation for the money they are bringing in, and are therefore rushing to go to the next level.

Lesser-known schools could also, then, rise to a higher level. Austin Rivers would likely be more valuable to an organization of non-name athletes, than he would if he was surrounded by future stars. This would minimize the growing divide between major programs, including Duke and other elite universities, and Duke, and would help the smaller programs like Wichita State, UMass, URI and so on.

What have we seen student-athletes get indirectly pay for his or her own education. If star athletes are recruited to colleges and universities based on what they can bring to the university, they should be rewarded for it.

Colleges and universities could work on a checks-and-balances system, then giving back to students what they bring in, while having the athlete indirectly pay for his or her own education. If star athletes are recruited to colleges and universities based on what they can bring to the university, they should be rewarded for it.

Luckily, the NCAA has made a change to this system, giving a much better plan for the athletes. The Rams showed their strength on Sunday bunting 21 hits and dominating the game. Senior catcher Milan Adams went 4-for-6 and batted in three runs in the win. Roy, junior Chris Farnsworth and sophomore Pat Quinn finished with three hits each.

Junior Pat Foruntado and freshman Tim Caputo also had multi-hit games.

"I was happy for the offense," Foster said. "We've been beating up on them late. We've faced some really good teams, good pitching and for them to go out there and give us a couple of days and get a bunch of hits was good to see."

Junior Sean Furney continued to be consistent on the mound. Furney threw six innings, surrendering only two hits, to pick up the win. Saturday's win was much more dramatic as the Rams came back from two runs down in the eighth to win 5-4 in 10 innings. A sacrifice fly by Adams plated Roy in the top of tenth for the eventual winning run.

Sophomore Nick Nardowy anchored a staff day for the pitchers, throwing 4.2 innings, striking out six and surrendering a run. Senior Mike Bradshear picked up the win throwing 1.2 scoreless innings to end the game.

"I'm glad we improved pitching from Nick Nardowy which was big for us," Foster said. "The bullpen continued to do a good job with a pretty good effort."

Next up for the Rams is a non-conference game with Northeastern University today at 3:30 p.m. at Bill Beck Field. Foster said that his team needs to play more consistent and less streaky.

"I don't want to be a team that's either hot or cold," Foster said. "I want to be the same team whether you win or lose as is overall a pretty good effort."

Men's track rained out against UConn, heads to Florida Relays this weekend

BY JOE HOLLENBECK
Sports Editor

The University of Rhode Island men's track team was supposed to kick off it's outdoor season this past weekend at the University of Connecticut, but due to weather concerns, the team did not attend the meet.

"We found out that the weather was not going to cooperate, and that the meet was cancelled," said John Copeland. "The worst thing that could happen for our team would be an injury in the first outdoor meet that we could have pre¬

vented.

"Despite missing the first meet, the team is excited and ready to perform in the outdoor events this spring," The Rams look to continue their excellent run after winning the Atlantic-10 Indoor Conference Championship this past winter.

"Obviously there is a ton of pressure coming now," Copeland said. "It's the downside that comes with winning the championship. We know that we have a great team, but otherwise we all feel very confident going into the new season." The Rams decision not to compete at UConn will not affect the team's standings much, but Copeland said that he was upset that he wouldn't have the chance to face off against them.

"UConn is a very talented school," he said. "It will take everything we have to really compete against them if we ever get the chance and this weekend.

The Rams next meet coming up this weekend will likely not be rained out as the team travels to the Colonial Relays, in the Florida Relays hosted by the University of Florida.

"Everyone is excited for the [Florida Relays]," Copeland said. "There are plenty of schools that will be competing so it will help us get a better grasp of where we are on the national scale as far as our talent goes."

The meet is scheduled to take place starting Friday, April 6 at noon and will go on through the next day.

Baseball team takes both weekend games

BY MIKE ABERSON
Sports Staff Reporter

In recent years, the University of Rhode Island baseball team has won its games utilizing a combination of small ball and base-running prowess.

Last weekend the Rams chose to flex their muscle and surrounded Saint Joseph's University to the tune of 37 hits over two games as Rhody bounced back from a Friday loss to beat the Hawks 5-4 and 15-1 to end the weekend.

"It was good," head coach Jim Foster said. "Disappointing Friday, but the guys bounced back nice on Saturday and Sunday. They did a great job swinging the bats.

"On one swing the bats better than Jeff Roy. The sophomore went 8-11 during the series, scored seven times and batted in a pair of runs. Three of his hits went for extra-bases."

"Jeff Roy was awesome at the top of the lineup," Foster said. "He was on base all weekend long. It doesn't get much better than that."

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Find out how

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