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Annual forensic series kicks off, puts spotlight on state crime lab

BY GILDA CENTENO Contributing News Reporter

The Forensic Forum began its annual seminar lecture at the University of Rhode Island on Sept. 14 in Pastore Hall. URI, the birthplace of the Rhode Island State Crime Laboratory (RISCL), began its series of seminars with College of Pharmacy professor and director of the RISCL, Dennis Hillard.

Hillard, a charismatic expert in the field of forensic science, led the informative lecture to basic forensic with the beginnings of the RISCL and its prominent role in the state's criminal system. With a history at URI since 1962, today's lab is a shadow of its beginnings.

With more than 12 acting scientists specializing in various sections of evidence analysis, the RISCL has progressed, with state of the art equipment and specialists in the field. Hillard said the RISCL is the only crime lab in the state to have a firearms expert, he said, "A firearms examiner is tough to find."

Neil Clapperton, Robin Freeland and Dennis Lyons are the leading firearms specialists currently serving at the RISCL. Clapperton, who joined as leading scientist in the field of firearms, has an extensive 18-year history with beginnings in Trinidad and Tobago.

The RISCL processes an average 812 cases each year by submission of law enforcement officials, Hillard said. That is a factor that brought statewide attention in 2007, when the RISCL became accredited as an ISO 17025 laboratory, able to compare unknown to known five that is collected. Only a few national forensic labs have attained this distinction. Hillard said the main reason for late attainment of accreditation was, "Money. Without money you can't be accredited."

With ongoing growth and expansion, URI has served as the RISCL main advocate in furthering funding. Since the inauguration of the new pharmacy building, the RISCL has seen an opportunity to expand and further its services and function.

"URI sees value in the lab and plays important role in growth of the RISCL," Hillard said. The issue of funding has limited the lab to its current space in Fogarty Hall. The current space of the lab has ramifications for further student involvement, Hillard said, "A training laboratory for students to use, as well expansion of the law enforcement training space has been restricted due to space, affecting further student involvement."

Funding provided by state budget cuts are major source in financing the RISCL. Just last year the lab was denied a grant by the federal government due to state budget constraints. This of course does not affect quality of analysis, but does limit additional training and services that otherwise would give the RISCL a future in groundbreaking research.

"Funding is minimal right now," said Hillard, who Continued on page 2

URI graduate takes unconventional path to fashion magazine internship

BY JULIE DAWSON Contributing News Reporter

A Spring 2012 graduate of the University of Rhode Island took a different path in getting an internship this past summer.

Graduating with a bachelor of sciences degree in textiles, fashion merchandising and design, Vinije "Vini" Varghese knew she wanted to pursue a career in fashion. Unlike most students, Varghese's internship with "Fashion and Fame Magazine" began when she was discovered at the "Old Hollywood" themed Fashion Merchandising Society (FMS) fashion show last spring.

"Fashion and Fame Magazine" is an international magazine that focuses on cutting-edge fashions and up-and-coming fashion artists from all over the world.

Varghese said for the fashion industry, creating fashion garments that represented the 1940s and 1950s. After the show, two members of "Fashion and Fame Magazine" the creative director and editor-in-chief introduced themselves to Varghese.

"They both said that they loved our work and gave me their business cards," Varghese said, "[they] asked me to send them any work I had done in the past."

The following day, she sent her portfolio to "Fashion and Fame" and they created an internship position especially for her. Naturally, Varghese jumped at the opportunity and started the job shortly after she graduated.

"I was thrilled that I would be able to continue working with the company, and get more experience working in the magazine industry," Varghese said. "So I agreed to be their intern in Fogarty Hall."

Varghese said she gained hands-on experience with styling models of all looks and sizes for photoshoots and was able to help in promoting the magazine, and attending fashion related events.

"I've learned that the magazine industry is busy and exciting," Varghese said. "I've also learned that the fashion industry is exactly where I belong."

She said the most memorable day was when her work Continued on page 3

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This past Sunday, one of HBO’s most celebrated shows had the premiere for its third season, accompanied by a huge following, critical hype and the beginning of a new year of great new programming, coming off a very tame summer.

What I got from the first episode, titled “Resolution,” was nothing short of spectacular coming off of a year-long hiatus of unanswered questions, future rivalry setups and perhaps the best part of “Boardwalk Empire”- it’s web of many interesting characters spanning across three cities and how their actions all have repercussions. From the first frame on, nothing is what it seems.

With “Game Of Thrones” gone until next March, this series should catch anyone’s interest who is in love with the crime movie association with a deep personal side guiding the sails.

I haven’t been this invested with any group of television characters since the end of the great ABC series “Lost.” I feel like most television shows try to copy off of that type of formula, and “Boardwalk” makes sure that no matter who pulls the punches in the 1920’s prohibition era, no one is left unsaved. By far the most looked into aspect of this series is just how well writer Terrance Winter combines everyone to another storyline without sounding cliché or contrived. No matter who you root for, everyone has a secret to hide, and trust me, they’re not pretty. Either that, or a bullet to the back of your head, and you can probably understand why most of the main players, including Nucky Thompson (played by the ever-brilliant Steve Buscemi), do the things they do. At the start of season three, Atlantic City may never be the same.

Starting off approximately a year and a half after the events of the season two finale, Nucky and his business associates are capping off another great year of revenue and no interference from either the federal agents or other “amateurs” interfering in matters they don’t understand. In the ever-descending madness that is Atlantic City, you start to see where these damaged people, so caught up in the lies and corruption, can’t distinguish who they can trust anymore.

In regards to Nucky, his list of allies seems to be becoming limited, either by his own fault or circumstances that were outside of his control. As Nucky begins to realize that, even within his own household things rapidly changing (from his newly married wife Margaret, played by Kelly Macdonald), desperate times come with desperate measures.

What made this season opener so great, along with top directing by Tim Van Patten and all-star acting from Buchemi and Michael Shannon-playing exiled cop Van Alden-is just how well things just come together in the odds of all things. Business is booming, even when the corrupted government of New Jersey is seemingly collapsing under all the scrutiny that had allowed them to get away with so many acts of illegal bootlegging for so long. With all voracious advocates out of the way, it’s only a matter of time before we start to see Nucky’s walls starting to buckle around him. “Boardwalk Empire” ensures that its viewers aren’t just numbed down by pointless lines or unnecessary acts of violence.

Everyone and anyone who utters a word in this series has something to say, politically, emotionally, or all of the above. All the powerful individuals that ultimately make “Boardwalk” so great to watch have great chemistry with one another, and that’s saying something to care about when these events occurred more than 80 years ago in a time that has we have far since moved on from. Buscemi here proves once again that even with Nucky on the point of retirement from the entire bootlegging business, you don’t ever want to cross him. Everyone is connected, and when you pull out one leg from the table of the business, everyone falls down. You don’t want to miss “Boardwalk Empire,” not after this fantastic season opening in “Resolution.”

What else has the series got come with desperate measures.
We [went] for it and we [took] chances," Needham said. The Ashley Evangelista scored off head well-prepared."

You can't make silly mis­up ground as second s ran off up a scoring attempt. Black scored two goals. . . a rebound with nine seconds remaining seconds expired. Black Bears forward Eve L'Abbe slipped by the defense and rocketed a shot from outside the box that sailed over the head of Rams sophomore goalie Reilly Lindsey and into the back of the net to put the Black Bears up 2-0."

"Soccer's a game where you can't make silly mis­takes," head coach Michael Needham said. "We made two silly mistakes, they scored two goals...I thought they were very organized and well-prepared." The Rams tried to make up ground as seconds ran off the clock. They made up ground when senior forward Ashley Evangelista scored off a rebound with nine seconds left. The score sat at 2-1 as the remaining seconds expired.

"[Down 2-0] with five minutes left, I'm happy that we [went] for it and we [took] chances," Needham said. "We nicked a goal there. It shows that we fight to the end."

The first score for the Black Bears came the fifth minute of the first half. Midfielder Camille Varin-Tremblay recovered the ball after a save by Lindsey. She then tapped the rebound into the goal. The assist on the goal came from Charlene Achille. Following the goal, both squads stepped up defensive­ly and shut down the attack. URI was only able to muster one shot on goal the entire first half.

"We played an uninspired first half," Needham said. The Rams charged out of halftime with their coach's advice to step up the intensi­ty, and had three shots on goal. In addition URI had a couple of corner kicks late in the game, but were unable to convert.

"I thought she did a nice job," Needham said of Maine's goaltender Lauren Swant. "We really didn't chal­lenge her too much. We did­n't make her do anything dif­ficult, but she did what she made.

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