

Jamestown resident to graduate as top music student

On a summer outing when she was three years old, Jamestown resident Lydia Lis saw a group of students playing violins and immediately decided that she wanted to play violin, too. Nineteen years later she is set to graduate from the University of Rhode Island as the top music student on campus.

"I started taking lessons with Jamestown violin teacher Emily Anthony when I was six, and I've been keeping up with it ever since," said Lis, who will be presented with the URI President's Award for Academic Excellence at a special ceremony the day before graduation on May 18. "When I was 12, Emily suggested I take lessons from John Dempsey in North Kingstown, who teaches at URI, and he's a big reason why I came to URI."

Lis has filled her four years at URI with a multitude of performance opportunities. She has been a first violinist for the URI Orchestra, performed in small chamber ensembles, and she even was one of the back-up musicians when Grammy-winning recording artist Kanye West performed at URI in 2005.

In addition, Lis played a supporting role at numerous recitals highlighting her fellow students.

"The students in the music department are pretty tight," she said. "We all know each other and like each other and help each other. We're always in the Fine Arts Center building practicing and taking classes, so it's like



Lydia Lis

we're one big family."

The URI student's favorite experiences have come as a member of the URI Undergraduate Honors String Quartet, a group she auditioned for while still in high school and has played with ever since.

"That has been a wonderful experience because you get to work closely with the other three members and get to know them really well," said Lis, who will graduate with a minor in German. "We've developed some really good friendships and learned to play more advanced literature. It has definitely helped me grow musically. Whenever string quartets come through the area to perform, they give us master

classes and bring fresh ideas to the group."

In addition to performing locally, Lis and the Honors String Quartet traveled to France to perform at a summer music festival in Provence in 2005, and they performed at many community events in Rhode Island, including at a higher education event at Fidelity Investments and at Blithewold Mansion's Christmas celebration.

Perhaps her most important performance to date was her senior recital, held in April, during which she performed pieces by Bach, Mozart, Lalo, Dvorak and Debussy, all accompanied on piano by her boyfriend, Scott Cressi, who graduated from URI in 2006.

"My recital went very, very well," Lis said. "I had unbelievable support from my friends and family. About 200 people were in the audience, some even coming from Maine, New Hampshire and Virginia, so it was really fun and very special. On one hand you might think it would be scary, but we had a blast and I loved it."

Surprisingly, Lis doesn't expect to pursue a career in music after graduation. She is toying instead with the idea of going to culinary school, or even to law school, business school or medical school.

"There are so many things that I'm interested in, there's so much I want to know, and I know that if I put my mind to any of them I can make it work."

"Music will always be a part of who I am," Lis said. "I came here and majored in violin performance, not because I expected to be a famous soloist, but because I just know that I love it and it's been a huge part of my life. But it's not what I want my life to revolve around. I'm going to keep playing some gigs, and for the next year I think I'll take some classes to help me figure out my next step."

Animal shelter to hold flea market

Friends of the Warwick Animal Shelter will host a "Flea Market Extravaganza!" on May 17, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Warwick Animal Shelter, 250 Service Rd. (off Jefferson Blvd.), in Warwick.

Over the last 6 months, the Warwick Animal Shelter has been overwhelmed by two separate instances of cat hoarding in Warwick. The shelter is full of cats; the Flea Market will help showcase and encourage adoption of the many beautiful, friendly and loving cats and dogs of all ages waiting for a forever home.

Items for sale include household items, books, baked goods, homemade dog treats, jewelry, Friends logo apparel and more.

Reserved spaces are still available for a \$15 rental fee. Set-up is between 9 and 9:30 a.m.

Call Brenda Nordin at 467-2692 or Betsy Cushman at 738-6322 for more information.

Hunger awareness day in Peace Dale

The Hunger Task Force – a joint initiative of the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale and the URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America – will sponsor its second annual Community Hunger Awareness Day event on June 5.

This year's event will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the Village Green in Peace Dale. Community members are invited to participate in a dinner on the Green, which will feature a simple offering of soup donated by Panera Breads.

The meals will be served (while supplies last) in bowls painted by local middle school students from Broad Rock Middle School as a community art project. These lovely bowls can be kept afterwards, as a symbolic reminder of the empty bowls around the world to encourage participants to act to fill them. Brickley's Ice Cream is donating ice cream for desert.

Meals will cost \$10, and tickets can be purchased in advance from the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale.

The evening will also feature entertainment, with a free, special performance by the Westmorland Street Jammers, a great Classic Rock & Blues band.

Diabetes education offered for nurses

Nurses are invited to attend a "Diabetes Refresher for Nurses" on Thursday, May 29, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at Blenheim-Newport, 303 Valley Rd., in Middletown.

The program will be presented by Joanne Costello, assistant professor at Rhode Island School of Nursing and Maureen Bouris, director of health services with East Providence Senior Center.

The continuing education program will benefit licensed nurses working in acute care, long-term care and home care settings. Participants will learn about: healthy eating and activity interventions for clients with diabetes, proper use of insulin delivery and self monitoring blood glucose devices, effective teaching strategies for clients with diabetes.

The event is free and open to nurses and dinner will be served. Nurses can earn 2.0 Continuing Education Units. To RSVP, call Blenheim-Newport at 849-0031.

Blood drive at Bowen's Wharf in Newport

There will be a blood drive at Bowen's Wharf in Newport on Thursday, May 15, from 4 to 7 p.m.

The Mobile Donor Coach will be parked in front of Seamen's Church Institute on Market Square. For more information, contact the Rhode Island Blood Center at www.ribc.org.

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