Rider’s Idol
WCC graduate is one of 20 finalists

By Lacey Korevec

After his audition in Washington, D.C., Anwar Robinson left a message on Evelyn Thomas’ machine saying, “I tried out for American Idol and I’m going to Hollywood!”

Now Robinson, a 2001 Rider graduate who completed his studies at Westminster Choir College (WCC), is one of 20 rising stars who are finalists on the Fox TV show American Idol, playing for a chance to win a recording contract.

As director of WCC’s Equal Opportunity Program (EOP), Thomas said she got to know Robinson well during his undergraduate years.

“I’ve known Anwar since he was a senior in high school,” she said. “We recruited him as an EOP student. He was a standout from the very beginning. Not only was he very talented, he has always had this wisdom and insight that is beyond his years and that struck me from our first discussion.”

According to Thomas, Robinson returned to WCC to work as a professional tutor for the EOP program for the past two summers. During the academic year, Robinson teaches music at West Orange Middle School.

“He has continued his service to the school and to the students,” she said.

As she watches Robinson sing on national television, Thomas said she can imagine what might be going through his head.

“If I know Anwar, he’s feeling very excited but also very blessed,” she said. “He’s an extremely humble young man. He just feels very honored to be in this position.”

Winning is a conceivable feat for Robinson, according to Thomas, who said she could “absolutely” picture him as the next American Idol.

“I can envision that. I would be really excited,” she said. “I think he would be a tremendous role model because he has tremendous integrity. He would want to portray dignity through his music to young people.

It is important that the community support his effort,” Thomas said. “He has asked me to tell everyone that he is very grateful for the support,” she said. “He encourages everyone to watch the show and vote.”

Two campuses coming together

By Charlie Olsen

Since Westminster Choir College (WCC) was formally annexed as a part of Rider College in July of 1992, integration between programs and student bodies has been plodding.

When Rider President Mordechai Rozanski took office in 2004, one of the points he made in his inaugural speech was the idea of “connected learning.”

“From one link between departments, another between disciplines and yet another between faculty, exponential fruits emerge: new programs, new student interests, new niches and new jobs,” Rozanski said.

The connection between programs reflects this, with administrators and professors in many departments coordinating. One of the most noticeable changes is the combination of the schools’ yearbook staffs.

According to assistant professor and faculty adviser of the WCC yearbook staff Edward Carmien, the staff went over budget in 2003 and hadn’t done sufficient fundraising to get the debt handled. They didn’t manage to complete the yearbook because of time constraints between fundraising and production, he said.

“When 2004-2005 rolled around, we found students were again interested in doing the yearbook, but the [Westminster] SGA wasn’t interested in funding it.” Carmien said. “[The SGA] shouldn’t be required to create paid editorial positions, admin...