Street fair revitalizes Trenton area

By Melissa Borotto
Staff Writer

For many students at Rider, the first of the month means it is time to pay the bills. For the community of Trenton, N.J., it is a time to party in the street, literally.

First Friday is an event that has been going on in Trenton since September 2001.

“This September’s event has been the most popular so far with about 1,000 people attending,” said Jamie Griswold, volunteer organizer for First Friday.

The idea was adapted from Old City Philadelphia, where a similar event takes place once a month. Since the city of Trenton is going through an urban renewal, the community is trying to bring people back into the city. As part of this change, the merchants have banned together to try to make Trenton a hot spot for people to go to enjoy themselves.

“Merchants were having specials once a month, but at different times,” said Griswold. “Having a once-a-month gathering was a way for us to synchronize special events and attract people.”

Last month’s event was held despite rainy weather. Since November’s First Friday was on the day after Halloween, the organizers guess the weight of the giant pumpkin contest and a costume parade for kids.

Café Olé featured folk rock artist Rebecca Jensen. At the Conduit, musicians Freddy Johnston and Chris Harford performed. The New Jersey State Museum offered planetarium shows for those interested in the stars.

This month’s First Friday will be on Friday, Dec. 6. Many different craft vendors have been attending the festival each month.

At this First Friday, there will be basket weavers, jewelry, art, food vendors and music. The Ellarslie and New Jersey State Museum gift stores will be set up in one of the empty buildings.

“All of the vendors this month will be a great opportunity for people to have fun and do some holiday shopping,” said Janice Herbert, events organizer for First Friday.

Restaurants and bars are open late as well. These include the Archives Restaurant, Blue Mountain Café, Café Olé, Checkers Bar, Delight of India, Maxine’s, Utopia and the Trenton Marriott. Often times, these restaurants will run specials on drinks and appetizers in honor of First Friday.

December’s First Friday will host a special appearance by Santa Claus. Each Santa visitor can have their pictures taken in Polaroid or digital form and participants will receive a free cup of hot chocolate.

Music is a big part of First Friday. Each month there is different form of live entertainment. Maxine’s is a key place to go for jazz and the restaurant is open for dinner. If a person is looking for even more culture in Trenton this Dec. 6, free shuttles will be provided to take partgoers to the Conduit, a club, and Urban Word café.

“We are trying to create a festive atmosphere with music,” said Herbert.

In his book, he states that during the process of mixing ground beef, the factories mix up to 32,000 pounds of beef together. Thus, if one cow is infected with salmonella or E. coli and is part of that mixture, then this could result in the contamination of the entire amount of beef.

“McDonald’s is the biggest purchaser of this kind of beef, as well as potatoes and pork, and the second-biggest purchaser of poultry in the U.S.,” he said.

He said that the food at fast food restaurants is “frozen or freeze dried or powdered” and the flavor “is manufactured at huge chemical plants, most of which found along the N.J. turnpike, that look like a place where you would think antifreeze is made.”

He also spoke against the conditions the workers at these meatpacking industries undergo.

Schlosser said that despite being considered “the most dangerous job in America,” the meatpacking workers are the lowest paid for a factory job with the biggest turnover, and that most of the workers are illegal aliens.

He cited several repeated deaths of meatpackers while on the job and said that most factories have been fined $480 for the last lives.

“This fast cheap food is ultimately too expensive,” said Schlosser. “Every dollar you spend is a vote in their favor.”

Anybody want a Big Mac?

By Jennifer Seaman
Staff Writer

Information given by Author Eric Schlosser at Princeton University may make you think twice before indulging yourself in fast food.

The author of The New York Times Best Seller, Fast Food Nation, lectured in front of hundreds of people in support of Princeton’s series titled “Progress and its Discontents,” which is sponsored by Eating Fresh Publications of Hopewell, N.J. and two campus groups, Another World is Possible and Students for Progressive Education and Action. During the lecture, he gave the audience some disturbing information found in his book about the meatpacking industry’s most revolting secrets.

“Seventy percent of fast food purchases are impulse or done without thinking,” said Schlosser. “I wrote the book to burst that one bubble, to make you think twice before indulging yourself in fast food.”

Also stated in his book are the meatpacking workers are considered “the most dangerous job in America,” the meatpacking workers are the lowest paid for a factory job with the biggest turnover, and that most of the workers are illegal aliens.

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