Author speaks on JFK assassination

By Lacey Korevec

Film and the assassination of John F. Kennedy will be the topic of discussions on Wednesday, Feb. 25, in the Sweigart Auditorium.

Author and professor Art Simon from Montclair State University will be speaking at the program, which is called “Representations of the JFK Assassination in Film and Art.”

From the English department, Assistant Professor Dr. Cynthia Lucia is working to increase the number of film classes and is helping to organize the event.

“What he’ll be doing is talking about the fact that somehow the assassination of Kennedy represented a crisis of vision in American culture and kind of a crisis of knowledge,” said Lucia. “There was only one visual record of that event and it was a home movie of a guy who just happened to be there in the crowd.”

The event’s title was named after Simon’s book, Dangerous Knowledge: Representations of the JFK Assassination.

“He is a really fascinating speaker. He’s very dynamic,” said Lucia, who said he has spoken before in some of her classes when she was teaching at New York University. “He’ll also show a really interesting avant-garde experimental film.”

Though Lucia is coordinating it, she said the Law and Justice department is co-sponsoring the event.

“Film students will be interested in it and there is currently a course being taught in the Law and Justice Department on conspiracy theory and students in that class are looking at JFK and also reading various pieces of lit concerning conspiracy theories,” she said. “They’ll certainly be interested in this. It also interests anybody and everybody and it is open to the public.”

The lack of a visual account of exactly what happened made the Kennedy assassination difficult to investigate, according to Lucia.

“It created a good sense of fear,” said Lucia. “I think that gave rise to a number of conspiracy theories and all kinds of questions about the assassination.”

The event is only one of three that will be taking place through the course of the semester. “Spice Lee and Brooklynn” and “Fred Astaire and Ginger Roberts: Juggling Gender in Top Hat” are part of the series and will take place within the next two months.

“The series is going to be called ‘Movies in America: Guest Speaker Series,’” she said. “Its purpose is to bring people who have done serious scholarship in the area of cinema studies to Rider to speak to students and faculty and to complement some of the film courses that we’re teaching here.”

Rider participates in class experience survey

By Tim Green

Rider is participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and has asked 2,100 freshmen and seniors to rate their classroom experiences.

NSSE will be used to rate Rider’s academic performance based on the students’ responses and show how Rider measures up among the 450 institutions participating in this nationwide survey, which is administered by Indiana University. Rider is one of eight schools in New Jersey involved in the study.

“It’s the only national test to see what’s going on inside the classroom,” said Ron Walker, associate vice president of Academic Affairs.

The survey is divided into five criteria for accurately assessing students’ responses: level of academic challenge, enriching educational experience, student-faculty interaction, active and collaborative learning and supportive campus environment.

In the past week since the web-based survey was e-mailed to the 2,100 students, roughly 200 people have responded, according to Institutional Research Analyst Laraine Schwartz. That number is only expected to rise, but if it doesn’t, the university will take a more proactive approach in obtaining responses.

“If people do not respond to the first mailing, we will send out a second mailing and a third mailing if they do not respond to that one,” said Walker.

Rider used NSSE in 2001 to rate its academic performance. For then-freshmen who answered the survey Rider was ranked in the 50th percentile for enriching educational experiences, but for seniors who took it at the same time, Rider was placed in the 30th percentile in the same category.

However, the 2001 survey showed that Rider was placed in the 50th percentile for level of academic challenge by both the freshmen and senior classes. Rider also ranked in the 70th percentile for supportive campus environment by freshmen and seniors alike.

Walker pointed out that the 2001 NSSE results revealed that 66 percent of freshmen devoted less than five hours a week to studying. NSSE also showed that only about 15 percent of freshmen at the time spent more than 10 hours a week studying.

The 2004 NSSE will gauge how things have changed in the past three years, said Walker. Some of the same people who took it three years ago will be taking the survey this time, he said.

It is important for those who have been selected to participate in the study, Walker said. It will only benefit the university.

“President [Mordechai] Rozanski is very interested in seeing these results and he is willing to make any necessary changes,” Walker said.

The 2004 NSSE results will be available sometime this summer, said Walker.

Students click online to end hunger

By Lacey Korevec

Imagine that in the confines and comforts of a dorm room, it was possible to fight hunger, even while on the computer. No, not by eating a bag of chips, but by simply clicking a button on a website.

A new website, povertypainters.com, allows students to do just that, free of charge.

Rider was signed up for this college-wide campaign several weeks ago by junior Jaimie Campbell.

“People should do this because it’s easy,” said Campbell. “You’re helping other people. And you are also showing Rider spirit. I want to be proud of my school. If we could raise a lot of money than I would definitely be proud.”

Assistant Dean of Students, Anthony Capurro, was enthused about Rider being involved with the campaign.

“I think, as long as it is a credible institution, that anything we can do to end hunger is great and if students can help others for free in Rider’s name, that’s wonderful,” said Campbell.

“People should do this because it’s easy,” said Parker. “You’re helping other people. And you are also showing Rider spirit. I want to be proud of my school. If we could raise a lot of money than I would definitely be proud.”

The series is going to be called ‘Movies in America: Guest Speaker Series,” she said. “Its purpose is to bring