

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Stockton Presents “Genocide: Never Again?” Month-long Series of Events Aimed at Education, Commemoration and Action

On 15th Anniversary of Srebrenica Massacre in Bosnia, College Presents
Multi-media Commemoration Including Lectures, Art Exhibit, Play, Film

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GALLOWAY TWP NJ- The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, home to the nation's first Master of Arts degree program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center, will present a series of events in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the Srebrenica Massacre during the war in Bosnia.

The July 1995 slaughter of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in the town of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia was the only event of the Bosnian war officially classified as genocide by the United Nations. Despite the presence of UN troops stationed in Srebrenica, thousands of inhabitants were rounded up and killed by Serb nationalist forces. To this day, bodies are still being exhumed from secret mass graves scattered throughout the region. The College, in conjunction with the Noyes Museum of Art of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, has planned a month-long series of events aimed at commemorating the horrific wartime atrocity while educating and issuing a call to action.

The series will include talks by Dr. Sabrina Ramet, one of the most respected authorities on Balkan politics and author of numerous publications on Yugoslavia and Bosnia, as well as author Zlata Filipovic, whose war diary, *Zlata's Diary*, chronicled three years of her life under siege in Sarajevo.

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Stockton “Never Again” Series / page 2

“In developing this series, our thought was to have a good mixture of multi-media events,” said Christina Morus, assistant professor of comparative genocide and communications studies. “The goal is to raise awareness of this genocide through exposure to as many different audiences as possible.”

A highlight of the series will be the October 20 and 21 performances of the play *A Patch of Earth*. Playwright Kitty Felde, a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who covers politics for National Public Radio, was inspired to write the play by her series of reports on war crime tribunals for Rwanda and Bosnia. The production focuses on Drazen Erdemovic, a disinclined soldier who was one of those given orders to kill in Srebrenica. The play allows its audience to inhabit Erdemovic and consider his struggle with guilt. The play questions where personal culpability ends in acts of war and what choices audience members would have made were they thrust into Erdemovic’s situation. It has been performed across the country including the National Theatre in Washington, D.C., and Felde received the 2009 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award in recognition of the work.

Felde will give a brief talk and lead a Q & A discussion following the October 20 performance at Stockton’s Alton Auditorium, and there will be a reception for her the following evening after a performance of the play at the Noyes Museum. The reception at the Noyes also serves as a benefit for the women and children of Srebrenica who -15 years later- are still suffering from effects of the war. Proceeds from the sale of several books at the event will benefit two Bosnian aid organizations.

Stockton’s performance of the play is directed by Christine Farina, associate professor of communications. Junior computational modeling major Michael Saab-Smith, of Pleasantville, NJ, stars as Drazen. Saab-Smith, 24, has appeared in four previous plays and a film, but says the production of *A Patch of Earth* challenged him as an actor more than anything he had previously attempted.

“In getting to know Drazen, I was required to look at the differences in the culture of Bosnia and the way they think about things,” he said. “One of the things I took from that was the heart and the intensity of the people and the lengths they will go to in order to accomplish the job at hand.”

Another powerful element of the “Genocide: Never Again” series is an exhibit of photos of Srebrenica survivors taken by Dutch artist, photographer and activist Jehanne van Woerkom, on display at the Noyes from October 8th through January 11th. Woerkom will talk about her portraits of survivors mourning loved ones, taken at the Potocari Memorial Center near Srebrenica on October 11 and October 14 at the Noyes. Woerkom has also been outspoken about the role of the Dutch UN peacekeeping force (Dutchbat) assigned to the “safe area” Srebrenica to protect the local population. The mission failed as Dutchbat handed over the town to the Bosnia-Serb army, which led to the atrocity.

The talk will follow screenings of *Smoke Rings*, a 30-minute documentary about the massacre told through the story of one of its survivors, a mother who lost her sons and husbands. The film

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Stockton “Never Again” Series / page 3

was produced by the Serbian NGO Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR). A second documentary film is being shown in conjunction with van Woerkom's exhibit. *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* presents testimony of victims, forensic experts and confessions of several perpetrators next to denials and revisionist interpretations that seek to minimize the scale of the massacre.

On Monday, October 25, the series concludes with a presentation by Zlata Filipovic at the Noyes. *Zlata's Diary* is a definitive look at war-torn Sarajevo. Often called the Anne Frank of Bosnia, Zlata chronicles over three years of her life under siege in Sarajevo. Beginning with carefree diary entries about piano lessons, good grades and a love for Michael Jackson, the passages soon take a dark turn as she witnesses the disintegration of most everyone and everything she holds dear. Now a young woman of 30, she lives in Ireland and works as an advocate for child victims and survivors of war all over the world.

For more information on these events, visit <http://bosniaremembrance.bogspot.com> and www.onemillionbones.org.

“Genocide: Never Again?” Event Schedule:

Lecture by Dr. Sabrina Ramet, “Bosnia-Herzegovina Since the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords.” Tuesday, October 5, 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. Richard Stockton College, Room F-207.

Opening Reception of “Srebrenica: Never Again?” Friday, October 8, 5-8 p.m. at The Noyes Museum of Art of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Lily Lake Road, Oceanville NJ

Artist talk, Jehanne van Woerkom and screening of film, *Smoke Rings*, Monday, October 11, 4:30 p.m. at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Alton Auditorium

Artist reception Jehanne van Woerkom and screening, *Smoke Rings*, Thursday, October 14, 6:30 p.m. at The Noyes Museum of Art of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Lily Lake Road, Oceanville, NJ

Performance of play, *A Patch of Earth*, Q&A with Playwright Kitty Felde, Wednesday, October 20, 7 to 9 p.m. Alton auditorium, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Thursday, October 21, 6:00-9 p.m. at The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ. *A Patch of Earth* and reception in honor of playwright Kitty Felde.

“Child Survivors of War,” presentation by Zlata Filipovic, author of *Zlata's Diary* Monday, October 25, 7 p.m., The Noyes Museum of Art of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

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