

C-o-n-n-e-c-t-i-n-g

News from the Staff Connection

December, 1989

You Are Invited
to the Third Meeting of
Staff Connection
Tuesday, December 12
at 4:30 p.m.
in Neilson Browsing Room

- There will be opportunities to discuss issues important to you with other staff members, to sign up for special interest groups, and to help determine the focus of Staff Connection in the coming months. Refreshments will also be served.
- All staff members are welcome. Clerical, housekeeping, custodial, food service, and physical plant workers are especially encouraged to attend.

Reports from the Special Interest Groups

At the first two Staff Connection meetings, people signed up for groups that have been meeting to discuss common interests. You can join any of these groups by contacting the person listed at the end of each report. New groups will probably be formed in the near future.

To assist in planning new groups, please complete the questionnaire on page 3 and return it to the Student Affairs Office in College Hall.

The Diversity Group

This group's goal is to raise its level of consciousness on issues of diversity and to share what they learn with other members of the staff. As its first project, the diversity group plans to show a film, narrated by Bill Cosby, entitled *Black History: Lost, Stolen, or Strayed*. SOAR (Students Organized Against Racism) has agreed to cosponsor this event.

If you are interested in joining the Diversity Group, or if you would like to receive more information about the showing of the above film, please contact Lucia Page, x2516, Garrison Hall.

The Gardening Group

Those interested in trading plant cuttings, sharing information on design ideas, suppliers, and favorite varieties of houseplants perennials and annuals are welcome to join the gardening group. Join us at the next Staff Connection meeting on December 12th, when we will set up our first meeting date, or you may call Tiertza-leah Schwartz at extension 2756.

The Softball Group

About 10 people and one dog showed up for the first practice of the fledgling staff-faculty softball team, held in late summer. Unfortunately, the fall practice got rained out, and then the weather turned cold. Dozens of people have expressed interest in playing, either for a Smith coed team or just for fun. I haven't given up hope and plan to arrange some games in the spring. If you'd like to play but are not on the softball mailing list, please contact Debbie Bradley at ext. 2190. Also, if you'd like to help organize the team, please let me know.

The Lunch Bunch Group

This group organizes lunches so staff members can get to know one another better in an informal setting. In addition to encouraging people to call one another individually for lunch, several dates were chosen on which small groups of staff had lunch together. Anyone is welcome to join this group for its upcoming lunches on Tuesday, January 9 (at noon) and Friday, January 12 (at 1 p.m.) Lunchers should meet just inside the main entrance to Neilson Library. Mark your calendars now for one or both of those dates and meet some interesting people while you lunch. For more information, call Emily Weir at ext. 2180.

The Safety and Self-Defense Lunch Discussion Group

Join us for lunch (bring your own) and to hear about issues of interest. Our first program will be on personal safety and self-defense and will be given by Sharon Rust, director of security, and Crane Willemse, self-defense instructor. We'll meet on Wednesday, December 13, from noon until 1:00 p.m. at Sophie's Terrace Café on Bedford Terrace. Coffee, tea and soda will be available for purchase.

The Sibling Buildings Group

At the first Staff Connection meeting, an idea to decrease feelings of isolation while increasing communication across campus emerged as the "sibling buildings program." There was a common experience among staff members that, although one may interact with an office via telephone or memo on a regular basis, there was little opportunity to learn about that office, the building or the people who work there.

Ideas for the sibling buildings program include luncheons, picnics, croquet games or tours with two or more buildings. The participants would gain knowledge about the location, purpose and available resources of various buildings on campus. Currently, there are plans for interested staff in College Hall to host a tour for interested staff of Garrison Hall, the headquarters for the undergraduate Office of Admission.

Anyone who is interested in joining this tour, or who has ideas for future projects should submit their name, building, extension, and idea or comments to "sibling buildings program; c/o Mary Lou Wittig, Lilly Hall #304.

Lunchtime Workshops Questionnaire

Submitted by Carol Weinberg & Annie Mara

During the next semester the Staff Connection will be planning a series of lunchtime workshops for staff members. Before planning the workshops we would like to have your feedback about what topics you would be most interested in and what lunch time would be most convenient for you. Please check any workshop topics you would be interested in, check off the best lunch time (or fill in your preferred time), and return the form to the Student Affairs Office, College Hall 23, by December 23. Some possible topics are:

- racism/cultural awareness
 - lesbian/bisexual awareness
 - project against sexual harassment
 - special needs awareness
 - learning to be assertive
 - affirmative action
 - healthy/nutritious eating
 - holiday issues
 - coping with isolation in the workplace; networking with other staff
 - dealing with confrontation
 - using non-oppressive language
 - religious awareness
 - rape awareness panel
 - grievance procedures
 - physical fitness
 - personnel services
 - working with international students
 - other
- Preferred time: 12-1 1-2
 4:30-5:30 Other

Campus Recycling Committee Report

Submitted by Katherine Gannett

A campus recycling committee has been formed to look at ways that Smith can effectively participate in the recycling movement. College Treasurer Larry Selgelid organized the committee, which has met four times since early October. Membership on the recycling committee is representative of the following areas on campus: Academic Computing; College Relations; School for Social Work; Neilson Library; Physical Plant; Dining Services; and the Treasurer's Office as well as including representatives from the faculty and student body. To date the committee has met with a recycling consultant, Alison Leschan, and members have made visits to other colleges to see what their recycling projects are like. It was the advice of the consultant that the committee not provide additional guidance to the college groups already involved in recycling, but that it would pursue the formulation of an action plan for a recycling program at the College. To this end, the committee has broken down into two working subcommittees, one to work on the action plan and one to identify ways of source reduction.

Committee members have already visited Dartmouth, Brown, UMass, and Hampshire Colleges and their reports on these projects are now circulating among members to be read and analyzed.

Currently there is a paper recycling project on campus. Started last year by student Leslie McLean, the project tries to make a weekly pick-up of paper from houses on campus. Many houses are cooperating and have shown an interest in the project. Debra Bradley from the Office of College Relations is coordinating an academic building paper pick-up on an as-needed basis. Most of the paper that is picked up now goes either to P. Allen & Sons or to Sunoco. The only paper that we receive money for is computer paper or white office scrap paper. The recycling effort is best served if these two categories of paper are separated from other things such as colored paper, newsprint, and cardboard. Window envelopes are not recyclable unless the plastic inserts have been removed.

If you or your office is interested in knowing more about the paper recycling projects currently underway, contact Debra Bradley.

Recap of Previous Staff Connection Meetings

Submitted by Chrissie Bell

"Very positive ..." "Empowering ..." "Grateful and encouraged ..." "A good beginning ..." "I feel like this was time well-spent by all ..." "When is the next meeting? ..."

These are just a few of the very positive comments heard (and written) after the two all-campus Staff Connection meetings. The first meeting was held in June, the second in July. About 80 participants attended the two meetings.

Some common themes raised in small group discussions were:

- Feelings of isolation which exist among staff members;
- A desire for more "connectivity" and networking among staff members;
- The need for better communication within the staff; and
- The need for more recognition for jobs well done.

Some suggestions for improving communication among staff members were:

- Staff/college newsletter;
- Regular staff meetings with college administration, similar to faculty meetings;
- Orientation for new members; and
- Staff social club.

Some suggestions for future discussion at Staff Connection meetings:

- Confronting oppression;
- Scheduling social activities for staff;
- Day care; and
- Developing networking strategies.

Several special interest groups were formed. A description of those appear on page 2 of the newsletter. Staff who attend the next meeting in December will have a chance to learn more about and participate in these groups.

See you then!

Shall We Dance?

Submitted by Nan Clark

Nan Clark has come up with the idea of holding a winter dance. Plans are still in the beginning stages, and she will be looking for volunteers to help her with the details. In the meantime, this is what she has to say:

Dancing music is in the air,
so bring your partner, or find one there.

This idea will only get better,
so keep an eye on your next newsletter.

Networking Notices

If anyone out there is the parent of a high school senior and is interested in getting together to talk about tests, colleges, financial aid, or college visits, I'd be very willing to hear from you.—Katherine Gannett, x 2915

What Staff Connection Is

Staff Connection is an organization open to **all** Smith College employees (except those who hold faculty rank.) A steering committee coordinates the Staff Connection's work based on ideas from staff members as a whole. The group is sponsored by the Committee on Community Policy.

Why We're Here

The Staff Connection exists "to provide an opportunity for Smith College staff members to get involved in decreasing isolation on campus through better communication, helping one another feel more connected to the Smith community, and improving the quality of work life."

Staff Connection Steering Committee

Chrissie Bell, Admission
 Nan Clark, Housekeeping
 Katherine Gannett, Library
 Scott Girard, Physical Plant
 John Graiff, Library
 Peter Hunsicker, Dining Services
 Louise Mold, School for Social Work
 Lucia Page, Admission
 Susan Smith, Registrar's Office
 Emily Weir, College Relations
 Crane Willmense, Alumnae Biography
 Mary Lou Wittig, School for Social Work