



# Staff Council

## C H R O N I C L E

JANUARY

FEBRUARY 2003

### The Cookie Swap - A New Smith Tradition?

The cookie swap on December 16<sup>th</sup> was a scrumptious success! Much thanks goes to Susan Hollingsworth for her vision and organization. Roughly twenty-five Smith community members brought in two-dozen or more of their favorite holiday cookies (baked or bought) to exchange with each other. Those in attendance brought a bag lunch along with their cookie tins and shared stories of holiday memories and the history of their recipes. Some shared funny stories about the baking of their cookies. One baker commented that she had done a



test run with one recipe a few weeks earlier only to decide it would not make the cut for the Smith swap. What recipes did make the cut? There were biscotti, sugar cookies, ginger snaps, peppermint molasses cookies, drop cookies and candy cane cookies - just to list a few. (See the recipes for Peanut Butter Cups and Candy Cane Cookies on the third page.) The Activities Committee hopes to make this swap a yearly tradition. It's a great way for employees of the college to get to know each other and expand their cookie selection around the holidays.

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### Rally Day Show 2003

Staff Council has accepted an invitation from the Student Activities Coordinator and the Rally Day Show Chair to participate in this year's Rally Day Show on Wednesday, February 19. If you are interested in participating, please contact Janice McDowell by telephone at x2271 or by email at [jmcdowel@email.smith.edu](mailto:jmcdowel@email.smith.edu) as soon as possible.

The deadline for skit outlines is Wednesday, February 5.

### Upcoming Events:

#### Staff Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 5 at 1:30 p.m.

Alumnae House Conference Room

A special meeting devoted to investigating the use of the "Study Circle" model for staff diversity development. Due to space limitations, an RSVP has been requested. Please contact Patty Kimura (x2288 or [pkimura@smith.edu](mailto:pkimura@smith.edu)) or Merrilyn Lewis (x2630 or [mlewis@smith.edu](mailto:mlewis@smith.edu)) if you would like to attend.

#### Food Drive

February 10 through March 3

To support the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

#### Lunch & Learn: Craft Demonstration

Friday, February 14 at 12:00 p.m.

Neilson Browsing Room

Basket weaving, cut glass, dream catchers, knitting, and weaving by fellow staffers.

Refreshments will be provided.

#### Smith Night at the Twisters

Saturday, February 15

Come out and support the "hometown" soccer team. See back page for details.

#### Annual Book/CD Exchange

Monday, March 24

Start putting aside those used books, now!

#### NYC Bus Trip

Saturday, May 3

#### Boston Bus Trip

Saturday, June 6

Please contact your Staff Council representative for more information.

### Cast your vote...

How will you be spending your Smith community service day?

For what organization(s) do you currently volunteer? What has been your most rewarding volunteer experience?

Email your response to [nhomstea@smith.edu](mailto:nhomstea@smith.edu).

# COUNCIL UPDATES

## Activities Committee

Smith College supports the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts by holding a food drive every February. The dates of this year's drive will be February 10 through March 3. Collection containers will be distributed to 16 buildings throughout the campus.

Our annual donation is shared by a network of 420 member agencies, which include meal sites, shelters, pantries, and other non-profit programs in western Massachusetts serving food to low-income people. They are anticipating a need of more than 6.5 million pounds this year – an increase of more than 35% over the past two years. In 2002, we gave 3,038 pounds of food, which was five times more than the previous year. Please help support this important endeavor.

Submitted by Cheryl Donaldson

## Diversity Committee

In the fall, Staff Council formed an ad hoc committee to focus on ways to facilitate further discussions about diversity within the staff community at Smith. Concerned with the ongoing challenge of having difficult conversations around complicated topics, the Diversity ad hoc Committee is researching Study Circles - a model for discussion groups that has received enthusiastic reviews from many communities throughout the United States.

To help us clearly understand the model, we have invited Program Director Michael McCormick from the Study Circles Resource Center, a non-profit organization, to explain what study circles can and cannot do, help us define reasonable goals, run a sample dialogue study circle, and explain the specific steps necessary to organize a pilot program at Smith. We believe this model may offer significant and wide-reaching opportunities for staff to recognize, learn from and support our differences; build a strong and diverse community; and, enhance our work lives at Smith. One of the many attractive parts of the model is that study circles are meant to be self-seeding, with members of initial study circles able to facilitate additional study circles. We encourage everyone to visit the Study Circles website at [www.studyircles.org](http://www.studyircles.org).

The information session on Study Circles is being presented on Wednesday, February 5 from 1:30-4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Alumnae House. All are welcome.

Submitted by Marilyn Lewis

## Personnel Policy Committee

The Workload Report was distributed to the Smith College staff in December. The Personnel Policy Committee will be discussing the results and how best to proceed.

The Staff Orientation Committee has met and is in the process of reviewing and updating a checklist that managers can use to make sure a new employee has been informed about benefits and procedures at Smith College.

The Job Classification and Compensation Advisory Group continues to work with the Mercer Consultants to revise existing job classifications.

Submitted by Sandy Bycenski

## Current Staff Council Priorities

- ❖ Exploring the "study circle" as an effective dialogue model.
- ❖ Encouraging widespread participation in the upcoming Staff Council nominations and election cycle.
  - ❖ Nominations are tentatively scheduled to be called for in mid-February.
  - ❖ Elections are scheduled to follow in March.
- ❖ Sharing ideas on volunteering and community service at the next Community Forum.

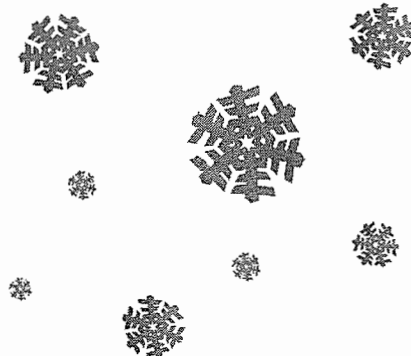
For a comprehensive look at what your representatives are working on, log on to:  
<http://www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/minutespage.html>

## Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is in the planning stages for the next Community Forum. The focus, inspired by one of President Christ's recent initiatives, will be on volunteer opportunities in our community. We are currently looking at dates in April. Please let us know if you have any suggestions or ideas.

The Lunch and Learn Series also continues this semester on February 14 with a craft demonstration by members of the staff. Featured crafts will include basket weaving, working with cut glass, making dream catchers, knitting, and weaving. If you are interested in demonstrating your craft, please contact Jo CannonCarlson at x3472 or [jcannon@smith.edu](mailto:jcannon@smith.edu).

Submitted by Navae Homstead and Cyndee Button



## Planning for Retirement

Connie Dragon, Payroll/Billing Assistant at Physical Plant, started working at Smith College in April of 1985. This coming September she plans to retire from Smith to, among other things, spend time with her husband (who retired last August) and her eight grandchildren. Another of her retirement goals is to put her house and financial matters in order so her children won't have to. Those of you who know Connie "Kodak" Dragon will enjoy knowing that she may even consider a second career as a photographer. Here, Connie shares some tips that she has found useful in preparing for her retirement...

1. Meet with your investment counselor to discuss your current financial standing and your plans for retiring. Ask for an illustration of the monthly income you can expect in retirement.
2. Contribute as much as you can to an SRA (Supplemental Retirement Account).
3. Meet with our benefits person, Charissa Maguire, to check on health, life insurance, etc. to confirm what you are eligible for when you retire at 62 or younger. If you have a partner, check to see what their coverage offers as well. If you are a veteran, check on your VA benefits. Compare costs.
4. Go to as many workshops on retirement, finances, investing and health as possible. Take advantage of Smith offerings. Look also in your local paper for events sponsored by groups such as Cooley Dickinson Hospital and BPW (Business & Professional Women).
5. Stay healthy by taking advantage of Smith's great fitness programs. Aerobics, yoga and "Heart to Heart" are but a few. Health is an important part of a happy retirement.
6. Visit the Social Security Office at least three months prior to your retirement. You will need a copy of your birth certificate, marriage certificate, and last pay stub. Did you know you must be retired the full month in order to get that month's retirement money? If you retire on January 8, you won't receive retirement income for the month of January. (...might as well work through the end of the month.) You can also access the Social Security Administration at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
7. Decide if you will work part-time (for either the paycheck or just to stay busy).
8. Pursue a hobby or passion. Stay active. Have goals even in retirement. Remodel your kitchen or teach your teenage grandchild how to drive. Do volunteer work.
9. Get re-acquainted with friends and loved ones.
10. Let your first waking thought be of gratitude.

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## Cookie Swap Recipes

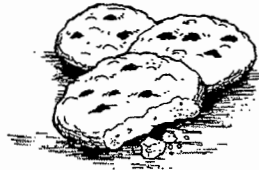
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### Peanut Butter Cups

Chris Carr Hill

2 sticks butter (plus 2 tbsp)  
1¾ cup graham cracker crumbs  
1 cup chunky peanut butter  
2½ cups confectionary sugar  
1 cup chocolate chips

Melt 2 sticks of butter and combine with the graham cracker crumbs, peanut butter and confectionary sugar. Mix well and press into a 9" x 13" pan. Melt chocolate chips with 2 tablespoons of butter in a pan and spread it evenly over the top. Refrigerate 15 minutes and then cut into squares. (Editor's suggestion: To create special treats for Valentine's Day, use a heart-shaped cookie cutter.)



### Candy Cane Cookies

Sabrina Marsh

½ cup butter	½ tsp peppermint (to taste)
½ cup shortening	2½ cups flour
1 cup sugar	pinch of salt
1 egg	¾ tsp red food coloring
1 tsp vanilla	2 candy canes or several red and white mint candies (optional)

Pre-heat oven to 375° F

Do not grease cookie sheets

In large bowl: cream butter, shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg, vanilla and peppermint. Stir in flour and salt. Beat until thoroughly combined. Divide dough in half. Stir red coloring into one half. Roll 1 tsp of each dough into 4 inch rope. Twist and form into candy cane shape and place on cookie sheet. (Optional – sprinkle top of each cookie with broken up candy cane/mint bits.) Bake 8-10 minutes until light brown. Tip: leave on cookie sheet to cool for 5 minutes, or so, before transferring to cooling rack to avoid breaking the cookie.

## Please Contribute!

THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE is published bimonthly by the staff of Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. Staff are encouraged to submit news, updates, and other items reflective of their Smith experience. Letters-To-The-Editor are welcome and should include name and campus address. The Chronicle reserves the right to edit material for clarity and length.

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# WORKING WONDERS...

## Stretches to keep you feeling tiptop on the job.

The Smith College Ergonomics Program is designed to help Smith employees maintain their well-being by identifying and minimizing ergonomic risk factors on the job.

The program website, [www.smith.edu/ergonomics](http://www.smith.edu/ergonomics), contains a wealth of information including many practical guidelines that are easy to implement and will help keep you comfortable and healthy in your work environment. The following stretches represent but a small sample of the many offerings.

### General Guidelines

- ❖ Stretch until you feel a mild tension and relax as you hold the stretch.
- ❖ Try not to bounce.
- ❖ Hold each stretch for the recommended amount of time.
- ❖ Stretch only until you feel a slight tightness, not pain. If you experience any pain, stop and check with your doctor.
- ❖ When appropriate, repeat exercises on both sides of your body.
- ❖ Remember to breathe throughout each exercise.

### Arm, Hand, Wrist and Finger Stretches

- ❖ Interlace your fingers behind your head. Keep your elbows straight out to the sides with your upper body in an aligned position. Pull your shoulder blades toward each other until you feel tension through the upper back and shoulder blades. Hold this position for 8-10 seconds, then relax. Repeat several times.
- ❖ Stretch your hands: separate your fingers as much as possible and hold for 10 seconds. Relax, then bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for another 10 seconds. Repeat both stretches several times.
- ❖ Interlace fingers and straighten your arms in front of you with your palms facing away from you. Hold this stretch for 10-15 seconds. Repeat at least twice.
- ❖ Interlace your fingers and straighten your arms upward. Try to reach as far up as possible with your arms. You should feel a stretch in your arms and the upper sides of rib cage. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds, then relax. Do it at least three times.

- ❖ Put your right elbow on a table, hands raised. With your left hand, gently bend your right hand back toward the forearm. Hold 5 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

### Neck Stretches

- ❖ Glide your head back as far as you can, keeping your head and ears level. (If you do it right, you should feel a double chin.) Now glide your head forward. Repeat 3-4 times.
- ❖ Start with head in a comfortable, aligned position. Slowly tilt it to the side to stretch neck muscles. Hold the stretch for 5-10 seconds. Be careful not to overstretch! Do this exercise 2-3 times on each side.
- ❖ Gently tilt your head forward to stretch the back of your neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times. Remember: stretch only to the point of slight tension. DO NOT stretch to the point of pain.
- ❖ From an aligned position, turn your chin toward your left shoulder to stretch the muscles on the right side of your neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds and repeat on the right side. Do this exercise twice on each side.

### Back Stretches

- ❖ Raise your hands to your shoulders. Using your arms, push your shoulders back. Keep your elbows down. Hold for 15 seconds, then release. Repeat 3-4 times.
- ❖ Standing up with knees slightly bent, place your palms on lower back just above your hips with fingers pointing downward. Gently push your palms forward to create an extension in the lower back. Make sure this stretch feels comfortable to you. Hold it for 10-12 seconds. Repeat several times. Use this stretch after sitting for long periods of time.
- ❖ Lower your head and slowly roll your body as far as you can toward your knees. Hold for 10 seconds. Push yourself up with your leg muscles. Repeat 3 times.

Brought to you by the Smith College Ergonomics Team

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## SMITH NIGHT AT THE TWISTERS!!!

Did you know that a member of the Smith College staff plays professional indoor soccer for the Massachusetts Twisters? Aaron Fischer, Web and Systems Specialist in the Office of Admission, is in his fourth season with the team. Let's all show some Smith spirit and cheer him on in his game against the Connecticut Academica on Saturday, February 15 at 8 p.m. at the Big E Coliseum in West Springfield. Show your Smith ID at the door and admission is only \$5.00 per person for you and your guests. Wear some Smith gear and get a prize at the door! Meet the players after the game! For directions and additional information on the Twisters, go to [www.masstwisters.com](http://www.masstwisters.com).

Sponsored by the Staff Council Activities Committee