Welcome to the new Staff Chronicle!

Do you like our new look?

In our effort to get information to Smith staff in the most effective way, Staff Council has reorganized the way we do things here at the Chronicle. Twice a year (probably in April and November), you can expect to receive a copy of the Chronicle in your email inbox. The newsletter will share photos, links to upcoming workshops and training, a “Did You Know...?” feature highlighting some of the less-publicized benefits available to staff (check out this month’s on page 3), and other staff-specific news.

We’ve also given our webpage—smith.edu/staffcouncil—a bit of a makeover. In addition to Staff Council bios and meeting notes, you can find our brand new Staff Council virtual bulletin board online. Bookmark the bulletin board (smith.edu/staffcouncil/bulletin.php) for more time-sensitive updates, features, and announcements than you’ll find in the emailed version of the Chronicle.

We hope that you enjoy the updated Chronicle and virtual bulletin board, and we welcome your feedback. Send us an email with your suggestions and comments to chronicle@smith.edu.

Where am I?

Can you identify this spot on the Smith campus?

Let us know at chronicle@smith.edu. We’ll reveal the answer and a winner (chosen at random from all correct responses) on our virtual bulletin board by April 7.

(We’ll also be posting monthly contests on the bulletin board, so stay tuned for more fun!)

To honor the memory of our co-worker, writing partner, and friend Susan Barker. Susan was an administrative assistant in special collections; she passed away March 11.

Freesias

The scent of white freesias unbuttons my blouse
The feel of silk against shoulders
my lips part
The heavy droning of bumble bees
at the window
drunk with perfume
Seduced by flowers
the color of sugar
Sweetness at my fingertips

—Susan Sanborn Barker
Staff honored at Rally Day

On February 19, two beloved staff members—Scott Grabowski and Reese Julian—were awarded the Elizabeth B. Wyandt Gavel Award at Rally Day. Two Gavel Awards are given annually by Smith students to Smith staff members “who have given extraordinarily of themselves to the Smith College community as a whole.”

Student Government Association Vice President Catherine Aguilar presented this year’s awards. In her speech, she referred to the large number of staff nominations for the 2014 Gavel Award and said that this “speaks volumes about the kind of staff members we have here at Smith. We are so fortunate to have genuine staff members who really care about Smithies and our community as a whole—staff members who are more than just a friendly face, but are invaluable assets to our community. So, to all of the Smith staff members, please know that your hard work is very much appreciated and does not go unnoticed.”

From the nominators:

Scott Grabowski: Residential Custodian, Facilities Management
Scott “goes beyond the call of duty to maintain a safe, clean and pleasant environment for all students and cheers up students who are having a rough day…. The lyric he sings when he mops the floor, ‘I would mop 500 miles, and I would mop 500 more’ is so representative of his dedication and drive to … make sure our Smithies are well taken care of. [He] represents the ideal Smith service staff member because he has a solid work ethic and an authentic heart of gold.”

Reese Julian: Circulation Manager, Neilson Library
Reese “is remarkably patient, and his positive energy flows throughout the Circulation department…. He simultaneously takes care of every Smith student’s library needs and cracks good jokes regardless of how hectic it may get at Neilson. Whether you work with him behind the desk or are just getting some help to find the right book, [Reese] is a shining force in Neilson library.”

Staff art show showcases collaborative work

“Creative Colleagues: An Exhibition by Smith College Libraries Staff” is in honor of Mimi Lempart’s retirement. The exhibit includes watercolors, photographs, poetry, videos, knitting, quilting, pottery, and more, all by members of the Smith College Libraries staff. Many of the items on display are the result of collaborations among work colleagues.

“We’ve been collaborating more and more in our work,” Lempart says of herself and her colleagues, “on projects and on just getting the work done, so I put that out there as an optional theme.”

Lempart’s idea struck a chord; artwork by about 30 libraries staff members make up the exhibition, which is on display through May 27 in the Book Arts Gallery on the third floor of Neilson Library.
Did you know?

BORROW A BOAT

The Smith College Boathouse is open in the spring and fall for open paddling and instructional clinics. Staff can use their OneCards to borrow kayaks, rowboats, canoes, and stand-up paddle boards, all of which are available seven days a week, from 1-5 p.m.

GET SOME GEAR

Want to plan your own trips but need the gear? For a small fee ($25/semester or $40/academic year) Smith staff can check out equipment for use on personal trips. Membership includes repeated use of equipment including snowshoes, cross-country skis, camping gear, mountain bikes and more. This spring, staff may borrow equipment from the Boathouse gear room on Mondays between 2 and 4 p.m. and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE

Though Staff Council elections are held each spring, nominations can be made all year. Visit smith.edu/staffcouncil/about_nominations.php for more information.

Spotlight awards highlight contributions of staff

Did you know that you can highlight a colleague for a Smith Spotlight Award at any point in the year?

Already this year, 38 employees from more than two dozen departments have received Smith College Spotlight Awards. The campus will celebrate these achievements this spring with a reception on May 14 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. (More details will be sent out later in the semester.)

The Spotlight Awards were created as a means of acknowledging and demonstrating timely appreciation and recognition for the exceptional contributions of individuals at Smith. All employees, managers, and supervisors are encouraged to nominate staff colleagues—inside or outside their departments—by submitting a Spotlight Award Nomination Form (which can be found online).

In addition to recognition from their colleagues, Spotlight Award recipients receive a small monetary bonus and are eligible for a grand prize drawing at the reception in May. The Spotlight Award period runs from April 1 to March 31 each year.

Sustainable Smith: Learning about divestment

You may have heard the word “divestment” around campus and wondered what it was all about. Here, a staff member from the Center for the Environment, Ecological Design, and Sustainability (CEEDS) gives us the scoop.

The Responsible Endowments Coalition defines divestment as “the act of selling all of one’s shares of a given company or type of asset for an explicit political or social reason.” Smith students began a campaign to divest the Smith endowment from the fossil fuel industry about a year ago, joining a then-handful of other schools in the effort to realign the college’s action with its values. These days, there are approximately 400 such campaigns on college campuses around the world.

College endowments resemble savings accounts, and their operating budgets are made up in part by returns on endowment investments. If Smith were to divest from the fossil fuel industry, that would mean selling the portion of our endowment that is invested in such companies, making a public statement that Smith no longer intends to profit from activities that contribute to climate change.

This fall, CEEDS held a series of events to engage the campus community in the debate about divestment, and conversations on this important matter are continuing this spring. The President’s Office also hosted a panel on this subject in February.

Two key points about divestment and Smith College:

- Smith is not new to divestment. The college has previously divested its endowment from Apartheid South Africa, the tobacco industry, and Sudan.
- In 2010, in recognition of the need to move towards a more sustainable future, Smith pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030. The plan for achieving this is called the Sustainability and Climate Action Management Plan (SCAMP).
From the archives: Smith’s first mailman ‘an object of general affection’

John Quirk was the first mailman for Smith College; he also worked as a janitor and night watchman. Quirk served the college from 1878 to 1895.

On the back of this cabinet card photograph (right) the owner writes, “Mr. Quirk–‘A Man of Letters’ so called because he was our mailman and brought up in one bag to College Hall all the mail of the College.”

The mail was delivered to College Hall and then distributed at the “post office” room near the circular stairs on the first floor, now part of the Student Financial Services Office. A member of the Class of 1880 described Quirk as “reliable as the College clock…. He was a big man with reddish or sandy hair… a distinct Irish brogue, and a characteristic combination of dignity and good humor, and an object of general affection. When you needed to know about anything, you could always ‘ask Mr. Quirk.’”

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Spring staff workshops
All staff and faculty at Smith are encouraged to enroll in learning and development programs at Smith. Larry Hunt, Associate VP for Human Resources, has reminded management to allow employees to attend these sessions, so please take advantage of the opportunities presented and let your supervisor know which programs you would like to attend.

Here are a few of the sessions being offered this spring:

Mediterranean Eating and Lifestyle
Information Security: It’s in the News and in Your Hands
Emotional Intelligence
Make the Right Choice: Grammar Reminders in Business Communications
Bystander Awareness
Your Successful Retirement: Three-session Series “Plan On It”

You can find full program details and registration information at smith.edu/hr/hrdev_catalog.php.