Don't hesitate! 
Exhibiting your work in Staff Visions is easy, fun and rewarding.

Staff Vision is co-sponsored by Staff Council.

Feel In Conflict? Help Is at Hand
BY DICK FISH

Gina Smith
Inside
The Kahn Institute
EAP
Credit Union
Staff Art Show

She knows what it's like to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome; to be at a place where she's not wanted. That was her experience during her first year of college, and it probably helps to insure certain empathy for those visitors who may be feeling alienated working or studying at Smith.

So explained Gina Smith, who has just been appointed to the newly created post of Ombudsperson at Smith. The need for that office was identified, and recommended, in the recent Staff Self Study report.

The Ombuds service is to be a pilot program, with its usefulness determined over the next three years. It is available to all staff, faculty and students. As a guarantee of autonomy and confidentiality, Gina reports, directly, and only, to President Ruth Simmons.

Strongly influenced by her grandmother's stories of how people in Baltimore had "been done wrong," Gina's earliest recollections were of wanting to help others. "Growing up, there were only three things that I wanted to do: be a minister, a nurse or a lawyer." The unhappy experience during her one year at a small religious college in the South, eliminated the ministry option. She found that she couldn't stand the sight of blood, which closed the door to nursing. That left the law, and she pursued it with a vengeance.

Finishing college and law school in her native Baltimore, Gina worked as a Legal Aid attorney defending low-income tenants embroiled in housing disputes. With an enviable record of winning cases, she was invited to teach housing law at the District of Columbia School of Law.

From law school teaching to law school administration seemed like a natural, so Gina came to Western New England College Law School, as the Assistant Dean. At Smith, Gina is here to listen, to guide, to suggest solutions, perhaps to mediate, or as she says, "just to be here for folks to come by and get a reality check. Technically, I'm not an advocate because that means I take sides. I'm supposed to be a neutral resource and someone who can help folks work through the system here."

Gina's quiet office, at the end of a hall in Nellison, may be just the place to take a problem with your boss; to discuss the politics of a department; or to lament the seeming indifference of an instructor. She comes to us with a wide experience of how to make the best use of "the system," with superb people skills, and the plain talking, no-nonsense approach that makes dialogue easy.

Gina Smith is available 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7-9:30 p.m. Tuesday evenings, and via phone-mail, daily. Her office is on the lower level of Nellison, room B18. E-mail is <ombuds@smith.edu>. You can expect a non-judgmental, neutral ear, with absolute confidentiality (even the president doesn't get names) and perhaps, some informal conflict resolution.
There are many ways you can communicate with your Staff Council.

E-MAIL
staffcouncil@ae.smith.edu

THE WEB
www.smith.edu/staffcouncil
From the Web page you may e-mail individual Staff Council members.

CAMPUS MAIL
Send mail to the Staff Council box in Central Services.

TELEPHONE OR IN PERSON
See the Staff Council roster on page 21.

STAFF COUNCIL SPONSORED COMMUNITY FORUMS

We are an organization for you and we want to hear from you. Questions, comments or ideas are always welcome. Contact us soon!

Edju, We Miss You

This summer, the Smith community was robbed of a special friend when Ed Kopec lost his battle with a serious illness. When recalling Ed, most people on campus will immediately remember his deep, resonating voice, and his likely response to someone asking, "How are ya, Ed?" with the answer, "Rotten!" never had a bad day in my life." His seemingly gruff response belied an individual who took pride in his work and always did the best job he could, and all with a keen sense of humor.

Ed had the unenviable but essential job of Plumbing Shop jobber in Physical Plant, a job whose scope would amaze most people. Ed was often the first line of response for problems that ranged from garbage disposals that didn't work, to contact lenses down the drain, to (the dreaded) plugged toilet. No matter what job he was working on, he did it with an easy humor and great care.

Along with many friends who have left this life before their time, Ed is missed, but we are grateful that he was able to live out our days with his good cheer. That is his legacy to us.

REGISTRATION FORM

Staff Visions is an annual exhibition of arts and crafts created by Smith College staff. Monday, January 25—Friday, February 5, 1999, Hilger Gallery
Please complete the information below and return by December 1, 1998 to Patricia Hayes in Garrison Hall.

Your name

Job title

Department

Campus address

Telephone (on campus)

(off campus)

ART/CRAFT INFORMATION (Please describe the work you'll be exhibiting.)

Piece #1

Title:

Medium:

Date completed

Size:

☐ framed ☐ unframed

Piece #2

Title:

Medium:

Date completed

Size:

☐ framed ☐ unframed

Piece #3

Title:

Medium:

Date completed

Size:

☐ framed ☐ unframed

Piece #4

Title:

Medium:

Date completed

Size:

☐ framed ☐ unframed

Piece #5

Title:

Medium:

Date completed

Size:

☐ framed ☐ unframed

Please submit from 1 to 5 pieces. See reverse for additional information.
United Way Needs Our Bucks

For more than seventy years, the Hampshirst United Way—an amalgam of former Community Chests—has been a collection and support organization, helping to fund the agencies that we all use. For most, United Way funding is their single largest source of support. It's certainly less painful to contribute one-time at work, through payroll deduction, than to answer the door bell at home for each non-profit that the United Way represents. Consider it one-stop giving.

Every Smith family has been touched in some way, by at least one agency, and most of us know several. Many of us have also worked as volunteers for UW agencies, and have intimate knowledge about how crucial the community’s financial support has become.

So, whether it means giving up one trip to East Side Grill a month, or simply designating that a couple of dollars should be taken out each pay period, it’s a small but significant step toward supporting a couple of dozen agencies that really do make a difference in our valley. It’s also that much less that the tax man carries off to Washington!

“...We hope that others will benefit from the United Way services as much as we did.”

—anonymous giver

Access for All: New Disability Services Director

As an administrative staff member working within the Office of Institutional Diversity, Laura Rauscher takes a broad view of her newly-created job. Her role as the first Disability Services Director at Smith is an expansion of the previous position of coordinator. One reason that Rauscher was attracted to the job is her belief in the college’s strong commitment to encouraging and welcoming diversity among students, faculty and staff—including the differences that come with disabilities. She looks forward to the opportunity to draw on her extensive experience by developing policies and new programs at Smith in her area of expertise.

Rauscher, an engaging woman with a mobility disability, has focused her career on independent living and disability rights. Her background in this field includes graduate and professional work at the University of Massachusetts, involvement in the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley and Hawaii, a national policy fellowship in Washington, D.C., and, most recently, the position of director of the Office on Health and Disability at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, in which she helped set policy in the Commonwealth.

At Smith, about 150 students currently receive some level of support services related to disabilities which include hearing and visual loss, lupus, arthritis and other medical conditions, learning disabilities and ADD. Rauscher notes that there are currently few students here with mobility disabilities, despite the substantial increase in accessibility on campus over the last several years. Students with highly specialized needs are more often drawn to the large universities where special accommodations, health services and facilities help “level the playing field.” But Rauscher would love to see Smith become a leader in this area among the top liberal arts colleges in the country. She envisions participating in developing a variety of new facilities at Smith, coupled with an outreach program to attract bright and talented disabled students. “It’s unfortunate to see students limiting their choices when they have extraordinary potential,” she says.

—Stephanie Cooper Schenk
The Kahn Institute Takes Flight
BY THE REVEREND
RICHARD P. UNSWORTH

A lot of attention has been paid to the increasing number of women in the work force over recent decades. Included in that increase, of course, are all those mothers of young children who are trying to contribute financially to the family budget by paid employment outside the home. One consequence of this growing parent is the number of very young children who are being cared for (at heavy expense to their parents) outside the home. Childcare has been a largely unregulated growth industry for some time. But as a society, we pay far too little attention to the professional training and standards we should expect for people entrusted with the nurturing care of our infants and pre-school aged children for 20 or 30 or 40 hours every week. Some of those closest to the problem have observed we impose tougher licensing requirements for the professional care of our pets than we do for the day-care of our children.

Last year, Smith College was challenged to look at its own capacity to address this and a related array of problems for children in society. The challenge came in the form of a proposal prepared for the 20-20 study by three members of the Smith community: Professor Lester Little, chair of the department of history; Lella Gandini ’78, an adjunct professor in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts; and Cathy Weisman Topal, a lecturer in education and child study, and a member of our Campus School faculty. Their paper called on Smith to become one of the important centers for research and teaching that would contribute materially to the way Americans address children’s issues of health, welfare and development in the years ahead.

Their paper sparked a responsive chord with many of us, including President Simmons, a person for whom these issues have long been a high priority. It also coincided with the visit of Marion Wright Edelman as the 1997 Commencement speaker. Mrs. Edelman is the founder and director of the Children’s Defense Fund, and one of the most effective voices in this country for the advocacy of children’s welfare.

All of these threads came together last year in two very promising programs. One was an informal organization of students and faculty called the Coalition for Children, a group that met bi-weekly throughout the year to come up with ways that members of the Smith community could respond to the issues of children. The other was the establishment, by a generous bequest, of the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute, a unique opportunity for faculty and students to work together on issues of broad general interest that have the potential for impact on our curriculum. The Institute’s governing committee, chaired by mathematics professor Marjorie Senechal, elected this cluster of issues concerning children as the project with which it would inaugurate its program in 1998-99.

Six of the first Fellows of the Kahn Institute have been working throughout the summer, under the leadership of Peter Puffal, Professor of Psychology, to shape a program for the coming year. The project is titled “Exploring the Ecologies of Childhood.” Its aim is to advance Smith’s ability to make a difference for the welfare of children. That can happen in lots of ways, but especially by encouraging our better understanding of such varied concerns as:

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When people learn that Geary Gravel is the sign-language interpreter for deaf students at Smith College, they often exclaim, "Wow, you should get 5 degrees!" But while Geary may interpret three classes a day for Smith's four deaf undergraduates, pursuing a degree is out of the question. "You don't retain the information in long term memory. The point is to get the information in and out as fast as possible," Geary explained.

Geary Gravel has been Smith's full-time interpreter since the fall of 1996, but he has worked at the college part-time, since 1980. There have been several inspired students in Geary's graduate programs, but the first deaf undergraduates will receive their diplomas in 1999. Their names and Geary's don't often match, but it is fascinating to Geary to sit in the classrooms as a somewhat invisible observer. "Some teachers worry that they're attracting too much attention," Geary confessed. "But after the first week, the draw of watching the interpreter fades."

In a lecture you will find Geary stationed a little behind the professor so that he is not in the professor's line of sight, and so the deaf student can view him both easily. Most of Smith's deaf students have some lip-reading ability and close proximity of interpreter and professor allows them to alternate back and forth, between the two. In the case of a round table discussion, Geary sits directly across from the student, translating every comment as well as its tone. The voice inflections which convey sarcasm, excitement, or anger are interpreted through facial expressions and body language.

This has caused some interesting situations when Geary has translated harsh criticism of men with the same fervor as they are delivered by students. Some students seeing their words and tone mirrored back at them have offered him the apology, "I'm not referring to you of course." Geary encourages students not to modify their comments because of his gender. "There is a strict code of ethics for interpreters which prevents us from commenting on the content," he said smiling, "even if it's just by rolling our eyes."

If Geary seems cool and aloof in the classroom, that's deliberate so as not to interfere with the deaf students experience. Staff can assist Geary by not involving him in class discussions, always addressing their comments to the student. "My role is to provide a deaf student with the same experience they would have if they were hearing. I'm not their friend, or another student," Geary explains. "Don't feed the interpreter," he growls, and then grins.

Geary graduated from UMass as an English major and his thesis was a science fiction novel. As he pursued his craft, he re-enrolled at UMass for a second degree in astronomy. In his final physics class there was a sign language interpreter and Geary was fascinated, moving into the first row with the deaf students in order to better appreciate the language. He enrolled in a sign language class and his second career took off from there.

Geary's first love remains writing, and his senior thesis became his first novel, The Alchemist, published in 1983. In addition to several other original titles, such as A Key For The Nastoch, Geary has written the novelizations for the movie "Hook," and for the animated television series, "Bartman." Like many sci-fi writers, Geary is fascinated with exploring the idea of what it means to be human.

The Alchemist is set on a newly discovered planet which has been identified for colonization. "The hero of the novel must struggle to save the planet's humanoids, who don't meet the colonists' rubric for intelligent life. In some ways, you can say we explore that question every day," Geary pointed out. "When we choose whether or not to install a $10,000 ranny that maybe only one person a year will use, we're deciding what that one person's access to experience is worth. In effect, we are deciding what they are worth." Science fiction allows Geary to look at a society's choices as they play out over time. "And to do so in a way that isn't heavily burdened or moralistic," he adds, "to address those questions inside an exciting story."

Faculty and staff can call the Office of Disability Services if they would like an interpreter for a meeting they may have with someone who is deaf. Just as deaf members of the Smith community can request help for meetings with hearing people. —Kara Morin

- what makes for healthy brain development in infants and young children?
- effective educational methods for the early school grades,
- public policy issues that affect young children's physical health and personal development,
- the overlooked (or underestimated) cultural resources that support vigorous intellectual and moral development of children, and
- better ways to take account of the diverse religious, cultural and social patterns that shape our expectations about child development.

Look for a fascinating list of programs, questions, discussions and inquiries in the year ahead. If you have a special interest in children's issues, you can follow some of the current discussion by tuning in to the e-mail list server being used by the Fellows this summer. Simply send your e-mail to: mayer@science.smith.edu with the message "SUBSCRIBE ECO" and you'll be on the list. Later this fall, there will be a web page devoted to the program. There you'll be able to read documents, see illustrations, be introduced to visiting scholars, find out what's happening next, and in general become a better informed person about the most urgent issues affecting the most vulnerable members of our population.

The Kahn Faculty Fellows who are "Exploring the Ecologies of Childhood" are: Brenda Allen, Psychology; Susan Etheridge, Education and Child Study; Alice Hearst, Government; Rhonda Singer, Sociology; Richard Unsworth, Religion; Pearl Puglisi, Psychology; Ernest Benz, History.
You may have heard something about a "flexibility committee" on campus. If not, you will soon. In the meantime, give these questions some thought.

1. What does flexibility in the Smith workplace mean?

2. What equity issues, if any, surround flexibility at Smith?

You'll be hearing about pilot programs, the FlexFocus web site, and more. Stay tuned.

What's She Doing in Newsweek?

Early for a meeting, your Chronicle editor was walking in the halls of Suebe, and spied a clipping on the wall outside Pat Skarda's office. A familiar face was grinning out from a picture in Newsweek. It was Sid Dalby! So we asked Sid to explain.

"Are you nuts?" I asked. I was tap dancing as fast as I could to keep up with my mom-life and my Smith-life. Just the thought of adding something else was exhausting. So, we compromised. We wrote an article togethe r.


Mid-life seems to be a good time for me, creatively. The Boston Sunday Globe bought an article I wrote about the pain of college rejection. Newsweek ran an essay I wrote for "My Turn" (in the April 20, 1998 Scandal issue, no less!) about how it feels to be on duty nonstop as an admission officer.

The number of responses I've received—regarding old friends as well as stragglers—has been remarkable. While I always feel very vulnerable and naked right before a publication date, I'm on a roller coaster ride afterwards when I hear from radio stations, colleagues, and readers who want to discuss a point I've made.

It's a kick when friends discover something I've written. One told me he was reading Newsweek in his dentist's waiting room. He turned to page 14 and, surprised to see my face, felt like quoting, "Wait a minute, I know her. What's she doing in Newsweek?" (Instead, he furiously ripped the article out and took it home!)

Although I returned to full-time work last summer, I kept jotting down paragraphs and ideas in my notebooks and have some stuff on my computer at home that needs editing and polishing. Many thanks to friends and colleagues at Smith for their support over the years.—Sid Dalby

3. What does it mean to balance the flexibility request of a staff member with the needs of the workplace?

4. What training and development regarding flexibility would you like to see provided in the community?
Erika Laquer Is Filling Big Shoes

Erika J. Laquer, founding director of Merrimack Educational Services, a consulting company in equity and diversity issues at schools and health-care facilities, and an adjunct professor of women's studies at Merrimack College, has been chosen from a pool of 130 applicants as the new Director of the Ada Comstock Scholars Program (ACSP) at Smith.

Erika is filling some very big shoes. Since its inception in 1975, Ellie Rothman had stood at the helm. She nurtured and developed the ideas of Alice Dickens, Tom Mendenhall, Jill Conway, and others. Admissions officer, dean, counselor and mentor, Ellie has been a motivator and mentor for hundreds of older women who have returned to school at a non-traditional age. Those two decades of front-line experience are now being used in the service of long-range planning, and working with Ruth Simmons in locating new sources of funding for the program, and Ellie has passed the reins to Erika.

Born in Philadelphia, Erika received her A.B. from Bryn Mawr College, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Erika concentrated her graduate studies in the field of Medieval European History. Her teaching and research interests are in books written by and about mid-wives in the period from 1500 to 1800. She has spent the last three years teaching women's studies courses at Merrimack College. She brings a variety of interests and background experience with women and women's studies to her new position at Smith.

Erika was the oldest of five children—three girls and two boys. Her father was an "old-fashioned" general practitioner, who had an office in the house. Erika's mother was a nurse and worked alongside her husband in his practice. It may be hard to imagine today, but Erika remembers the days when Dad went out on house calls and actually visited sick patients in their homes. (Her dad is no longer living and her mother is alive and well, and living in Colorado.) Erika has been married to entrepreneur Geoff Kuter for the past 16 years. Geoff works for a company whose areas of concern include land preservation, composting and recycling. The Amebury Company, for whom Geoff works, will be developing projects in this part of the state, and, therefore, he will be travelling back-and-forth between Northampton and the eastern part of the state. Erika and Geoff are the parents of two young daughters, ages 6 and 11. Both girls were adopted as infants, with one coming from the Dominican Republic and the other from Chile. The couple plan to teach their daughters about their backgrounds and heritage, and to instill ethnic pride.

Moving from a development of newer homes in North Andover to an older home in Northampton is a lifestyle change to which the family is looking forward. They also look forward to exploring the waterscapes of the valley by canoe and skiing in the Berkshires. Erika says that the girls had their first skiing lessons this year, "and took to it like ducks to water."

Did Erika have any unusual jobs? Friends thought she was crazy when she had a summer job as a receptionist/jobber in a netherside maintenance program for heroin addicts. At another time, Erika went above and beyond fealty loyalty when she agreed to work for her sister who had a chance to go on vacation. Erika replaced her sister as a toilet-cleaner at an athletic club. With those two jobs, which, incidentally are not listed on her résumé, and her extensive experience in academia, Erika indeed offers the Ada Comstock Scholars and the Smith community at-large, a wealth of diverse experiences.

---Mary Martz

Symposium: "Queer Activism/Queer Studies"

The word "queer," once a term of abuse, is now embraced by many lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender as a word to bring them together in their struggle against homophobia and for equal rights. "Queer Studies"—looking at histories, readings, analyses of sexualities—has become a growing academic field. In a symposium at Smith on November 6-8, leading theorists, artists, and activists from all over the country will gather to address some important unanswered questions: What has made homosexuality or "queerness" such a divergent and charged issue in U.S. politics today? How and what can queer artists contribute to the activist agenda? What difference does it make politically if homosexuality is considered genetically determined or a "lifestyle choice"? How has the history of queerness and queer movements been conceived, and what are the political consequences of those histories? The conference will be held on Friday afternoon, November 6, with a panel including an independent historian, Allan Berube; Michael Lucsey, an academic involved in queer studies; and activist Uwahsi 'Vaid. Panels on Saturday will include "Art as Activism" at 10 a.m.; "The Science Debates and Citizenship" at 2 p.m., and "The History of Politics/The Politics of History" at 4 p.m. Lauren Berland, Professor of English at the University of Chicago, will give the closing address on Saturday at 7 p.m. A group of students is planning follow-up workshops on Sunday; they have also arranged for the lesbian cartoonist Alison Bechdel to give a lecture/performance. All events are open to everyone in the community. The symposium is sponsored in part by the President's Office, Women's Studies, and the Committee on Community Policy. Questions should be addressed to Marilyn Schuster, Professor of Women's Studies, and chair of the organizing committee, in Neilson Library, ext. 3367 or <mschuster@smith>.--Beaure Hamms

Staff Council Sponsors 3rd Denim Day

On Friday, October 9th, Smith will observe National Denim Day. For a donation of $5.00 or more (checks payable to The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation), participants will receive information about breast cancer and a pink ribbon pin. Many employees—those who aren't required to wear uniforms—may wear denim on October 9th to show their support for the cause. Please make your donation to your building representative, or by mail to Cindy Rucci, Technical Services, Neilson Library.

Special Thank You's and Gracious Welcomes

Volunteers are special people. Smith staff who volunteer to serve the college as our representatives on Staff Council, deserve our recognition for their willingness to get involved with the processes of change. Please join us in letting these folks know that you appreciate their time and talent.

Departing Members of Staff Council: Lisa Abbey, Nancy Brady, Avril Crenshaw, David Brown, Joe Cartagena, Liane Hartman, Masha Hynes, Linda Jacque, Jimmy Mason, Stanley Reinko, Christina Ryan, Kathy Santos and Peg Pitzer.

Incoming Members: Sandy Bykowski, Mary Clayton, Jennifer (Negriola, Donna Gingrige, Ay Ling Han, Sarah Laszlo, Cindy Rucci, Naomi Sturrivant.

Shop Till You Drop

Save These Dates For Staff Council Trips

NOVEMBER 21 Shopping in Kittery, Maine —$20

DECEMBER 12 Shopping, Museums in New York City —$20

Call Cindy Rucci, ext. 2923 for details.
He Came Forward and Stood Tall

"In our efforts to build and unify our nation, let us not publicly expose diversity and privately shun difference. If you support diversity and yet find no time to advance it, your statement is hollow, and your courage is lacking. Now is the time to stand up for that truly equal society we hope to attain."

—Ruth J. Simmons

Well, if he didn't hear Ruth Simmons's words at last fall's Convocation, perhaps he heard Desmond Tutu, or Martin King or Ghandi. Whoever it was, Mark Carmien did get the word, and came forward to organize a rally at Northampton's city hall, and he stood tall before 700 people, who were there to help "make Northampton safe for everyone."

The anti-hate-crime rally was in answer to an assault on two gay men in the city's downtown. The response was clear from those in attendance, as Mark explained to a reporter after the emotion-charged event.

"We're not just here to organize a rally and go home, but to organize concrete actions."

Homophobia has been called "the last respectable prejudice," but Mark Carmien and all of those he helped gather together made the strongest possible statement that "it's not o.k. in our backyard."

If the "gay agenda" has replaced the "communist threat" as the bettering ram of reactionary politics. If Ken Sehested right, when he suggested that the Right Wings perception is now, "instead of a commie behind every bush, there's now a queer in every classroom, in every congressional room, in every backyard ward room."

If that is the case, then we might want to remember how James Baldwin described us: "Each of us, helplessly and forever, crawls the other—male in female, female in male, white in black, and black in white. We are part of each other."

Mark Carmien "stood up for that truly equal society" that Ruth Simmons challenged us to work toward. He realized that confrontation is necessary to shake up the complacent, even in NOHO?

—Dick Fish

Jc: Well, we've got a stack (pointing to a stack of paper about two feet high) from the Self-Study, which needs our attention. Some of it, of course, can only be done if the funding can be found. There is a lot of interest in the notion of Smith becoming a place where students can get a start in Engineering. No women's college does engineering in a serious way. This is a field, everyone agrees, that is going to grow and we have a shortage of engineers, unlike lawyers, where currently there is something of a glut. So why haven't women's colleges stepped forward? For one reason, it is very expensive—the machinery needed, and, the laboratory space, new faculty members. And if we build it, will they come? Are there women students who really want to study engineering? And will they come to do it at a place like Smith? As we have floated the idea, there has been a lot of excitement about an engineering program at Smith. It. So, I think that is a tremendously exciting area to explore.

Environmental Science and Policy is a natural for Smith. We have been quite slow in getting started and now the momentum seems to be building and I think that is another area for excitement. The idea of a poetry center at Smith, who would have thought this could really catch on? But there was this really wonderful poetry series last year—as a kind of foundation for the inaugural events for the poetry center—that were beautifully. There are a lot of administrative changes. We have a new ombuds-person, Gina Smith. The ombuds position came about as a direct result of the self-study. I think maybe what we can see in a change of that sort, a kind of realistic assessment of where we are and a willingness to take some steps to deal with discontents. If members of the staff say they are not completely comfortable with the overall, and I say this with a small "g", grievance framework, having something like an ombuds-person will be of real value. There are so many changes. In the 25 years I have been at Smith, there has been nothing like this magnitudinal pace of change. No doubt some of it will come to seem ill advised to us, or some of it will need adjustment, but nobody can say that lots of things aren't happening.

RvE: You've been here for 25 years, as an administrator for the last six, in a position to know a lot of the changes before they happen, and have had much more information that a lot of people who have also been here for 25 years. What would you tell people who might be a little bit afraid about what all those changes mean to them?

Jc: I would say the first thing is to get informed. The information is there. Ten years ago, we did not have Staff Council—that was one of Mary Dunn's innovations. It seems to me a good one. It is a wonderful conduit for information back and forth between administrators, faculty and others to learn about staff concerns and vice versa. So, my advice first and foremost, is to find out what is going on, what the facts are— it has never been easier to do. There is an administration in place now, and I think the changes in the HR office are indicative of that, that really want to move forward in a positive way, listen to the changes, and act on them where possible. There is every reason for the staff to feel like things are looking up. One can certainly work with the team that is in place now, at various levels. So, get informed and have confidence that good things are possible; that changes in a positive direction are possible at Smith; that it is an awfully good place to work, and getting better.

Ruth van Erp and John Connolly

“I think it’s somewhat impressive, but also a little bewildering, all of this changes that has been happening, I certainly would hope that staff members would be able to stay informed through publications of Staff Council and through the various community forums, and that people continue to have a sense of what these changes are, and what their purpose is, and have some level of comfort with that. I think that they are good changes, and they will help the college to move forward.”

—John Connolly
By the same token the faculty would not want either students or staff in attendance.

RvE: So when they took away your vote, how did you feel about that?

Jo: Well, I thought it was a symbol because, in all of the years I have been chairing, only once did I cast a vote. And it happened only when there was a tie in the committee.

Well, there are not going to be any ties in the committee anymore, because whereas the number used to be eight, it’s now five.

It’s not really a practical thing, it was an indication from the faculty of some trepidation about the number of changes and the magnitude of those changes that have been happening over the last year. While we are going in a good forward direction, the academic priorities committee is a very different kind of committee from any kind we’ve had at Smith before. There is some worry that the faculty might be giving up too much.

I take it as a signal that we, who are working as administrators, need to make sure that our colleagues are fully informed about what’s going on, that we are not moving too rapidly for faculty members to follow, and that they are comfortable with the changes.

The important thing is that the faculty was willing to make those changes. The fact that they say the votes should be cast only by those who are actually elected by the faculty; that’s fine.

RvE: What would you like staff to know about all of the changes that are going on?

Jo: I think it’s somewhat impressive, but also a little bewildering, all of the change that has been happening. I certainly would hope that staff members would be able to stay informed through publications of Staff Council and through various community forums, and that people continue to have a sense of what those changes are, and what their purpose is, and have some level of comfort with that. I think that they are good changes, and they will help the college to move forward.

RvE: Do you think those changes will change the flavor of Smith?

Jo: Yes, and I would hope mostly for the better.

One of the things one hears, sometimes, certainly in the faculty and I imagine in the staff too, is that “oh yeah, there’s always a lot of talk about improving this or that, but in fact, relatively little ever gets done.” And I would think that one of the streamlining that has gone on and some of the new structures will make it easier to get things done.

The President has shown that she is not one to dawdle. She sees a need, she certainly wants to know what people think about the changes, but then she wants to move them ahead. I don’t know what the extreme of patience is, but it’s a vice and she does not have it (laughs). She likes to keep things going.

RvE: She’s a woman of action.

Jo: Yes, but she is consummate. She wants to know what people think. She will call on Staff Council a lot to get impressions. If things come forward, like a document such as the Self-Study, she doesn’t wait to sit around gathering dust, she wants to see it acted on. Not necessarily everything can get done—we’re not going to agree about everything. But things that are possible should be done and done quickly.

RvE: What are some of the things to be done that you personally feel are the most interesting?

Jo: I approach with pride, another year as chair of Staff Council. Our accomplishments during the past year continue to emerge and evolve. We are also faced with the realizations of situations beyond our control.

Each of us is a product of our environment.

We bring to our life expectations what we have been ingrained into us from our families and those around us. Our goals, our views of ourselves, our surroundings and our capabilities, combine to define each of us as individuals.

Over the last year, our experiences as Staff Council members have exhibited to me, that, as a united group we can act as a productive force for positive change at Smith. An invitation from the administration to participate in informal interviews with candidates for the Director of Human Resources and the Ombudsman, showed me the sense of concern and duty that Smith College staff possess. Staff Council met and had lunch with the trustees of the college.

This was the first of a series of Kappas. A list of staff people interested in serving on the board of directors was requested and has been submitted to Bill Berndt. This will assure that the staff will have some voice in campus building projects. Many ideas for inclusion and participation have been formed.

We work towards some sort of standard policy for input in hiring and performance reviews.

Already this year, our communications committee is working on a project that will provide discounts for staff purchases. Items ranging from travel, theater and hotel accommodations, to auto parts, appliances and more, may be offered. Our personnel policy committee will be working with Human Resources to encourage adoption of this program. Flextime is a proposal whose time has come. Council members and other employee volunteers have embarked on a pilot project to incorporate this into our work lives.

Staff Council has been downsized this year, as a part of our by-law revision. There are now 25 members, rather than 30. There are two less standing committees to allow for a more focused core. Bruce Sadowsky will continue to represent us on ACA and the college planning committee this year. Bruce does a great job as spokesperson for Smith’s working people.

Finally, I would like to address Smith’s union members. Staff Council exists as a test tube of possibilities. These possibilities determine much of our working environment.

I encourage you to include yourselves in committee work. That work needs to become a part of your work life here at Smith. Like it or not, many decisions about our environment are made in one committee or another. If you’re not there, someone else will be making decisions that directly affect your job.

I know the word “committee” is often a deterrent, but that is the system here. Treat participation as an opportunity for you to offer your thoughts and ideas, because, ultimately, we are all in this together.

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News from the Chair of Staff Council

Council Streamlines Structure

Earlier this year, Staff Council discussed and approved several by-laws changes to streamline its structure and improve communication among committees and officers.

Following is a summary of those alterations:

- **COUNCIL SIZE**: The number of members is now 25 rather than 30.
- **OFFICERS**: The Vice Chair will now become Vice Chair/Parliamentarian.
- **COMMITTEES**: Standing committees are reduced from 7 to 5. The functions of the former Finance Committee, now falls to the Treasurer, and those of the former Staff Training Committee, to the Personnel Policy Committee.
- **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**: With assistance from each group, descriptions of the functions of standing committees are revised to reflect current practice and future goals.
- **STEERING COMMITTEE**: The Steering Committee now includes Staff Council officers, the chairs of each standing committee, and four non-voting members: two presidentially-appointed information liaisons, the Council Chronicle editor, and (not reflected in the recent by-laws changes) the Staff Council representative on ACA and the Committee on Mission and Priorities.
There was an article in a recent issue of the Chronicle about the EAP at Smith, the Employee Assistance Program. I think many people don’t fully understand how the program works, or what it can do for them, so I want to share my experience.

Like most of us, I knew only that Smith has such a program, administered off-campus, to help employees (faculty and staff) to deal with issues that may not only affect their professional lives, but their lives at work as well. We all have that little refrigerator magnet with the 800 number on it, but do we know what the program can do for us? This is what my experience was like.

By the end of 1997, I was at the bottom of a three-year spiral that included my husband getting laid off at age 59; my brother-in-law marrying, being diagnosed with cancer, and dying within seven months; my mother-in-law dying (both out-of-state), my father becoming ill and dying within three months (after we made five trips to South Carolina); and my mother deciding to move up here and buy a house... and she didn’t drive! In addition, for the last six years my husband and I have shared our home with a sibling who has a substance abuse problem.

Normally, I cope fairly well with life, and there are many people with far more problems than I, but sometimes it just starts to color everything you try to do. By December I felt like everyone, home and work, was demanding more of me than I could give. I decided the problem was my mother, that I could handle everything except the constant attention she seemed to need from me, and I began to look for other resources. When I didn’t get much help from the Senior Center or First Call, I gave up and called that 800 number on the refrigerator magnet. I felt like the world’s worst daughter, as I briefly outlined what I thought I needed for help.

On the first call you are asked to describe your problem so an appropriate therapist can be found. I was given the choice of two, picked one because she has an office downtown, and I was told to expect a call within two hours. If I didn’t get the call, I was to call the main number again. I should add that I was asked if I wanted to be seen immediately. This was on a weekend, but I didn’t think that I was that upset.) Within an hour, the therapist called and we discussed my problems and set up the first appointment. She worked around my schedule so I wouldn’t have to tell my supervisor, but after the first session I told her anyway... I was excited by it! What a great feeling to know my feelings are normal, to have a sense of validation, and to know I could continue with the therapy.

Depending on the problem, there are 8 to 10 visits, at no cost to the employee. By the time my sessions ended, I had some concrete plans for dealing with my father’s illness, my brother’s cancer, and my mother. I had names of people I could continue on with through my HMO (something I hadn’t even thought of), and a deep appreciation for the EAP.

If this leaves you thinking that the EAP is only for “typical” therapy issues, such as substance abuse and depression, here are some other reasons to call: financial problems, problems with grieving, children’s issues (behavioral, scholastic, medical)—senior issues (finding a nursing home, long-distance care), workplace problems or anything that is causing you anguish is a reason to call. And, the issues are not limited to work, so if I felt I needed to find ways to deal with another problem, I could go again for another round of visits.

The only information reported back to the college is the number of employees who have used the program in the year. This is reassuring, but at the same time it means many people don’t appreciate what a great program it is. When I clicked on to the Beneficial page and read the positive comments about the EAP, former Director of Benefits Eileen Corbeil sent back a message saying the new system hears anything, due to the privacy clause, so she was glad to know I had used the program and that I was happy with it.

I decided to share my experience because I think this is a greatly under-utilized and misunderstood program. As employees, we don’t always think the college has our interests in mind. The EAP is one example that serves us both; we are able to solve some problems, and the college in return gets employees who are able to focus on their work! I would be happy to talk more with anyone who is considering using this benefit.

Honestly, I am not into therapy as a rule, or quick fixes, but I had a chance to sort things out with a professional. It helped me, and without cost.

Ruth van Erp and John Connolly

JC: Do, I do.
JrE: What other languages do you speak?
JrC: At one time I could speak French. It has been too long since I’ve used it in any serious way. That was the language I studied in high school and college and liked it very much. But, fate took me in a different direction, when I started to learn German after college and met the woman I eventually married, who is a German, and got very much involved in German philosophy. We lived for four years in Germany, including a year spent as the director of the Smith junior year program. Translating into German and out of German and so on, that has been a very important part of my work and personal life.

As I say, French was the first modern foreign language I learned, but I also had a lot of Greek and Latin in high school and college. I’ve used some of that in my philosophy.

Jc: Have you published?

JrE: Yes, sure. Many things. Including this volume that I did with a German colleague (banding me a handbook of Hermetics vs. Science edited by John Connolly and Theodora Keeler). It was eventually translated into Korean. I don’t read any Korean, but we wrote for it and it’s one of the works I’ve done. I’ve done many articles and reviews and so on. I had a regular scholarly life before coming into administration six years ago.

Jc: I noticed you ride your bike to work.

JrC: Yes I do. (I live close by and love to ride the bike. Especially if I have to save a little time, it is great. I don’t have to take up a parking space or use gasoline.

Jc: I want to know, as a fellow bicyclist, why you don’t wear a helmet.

Jc: Well, I should. If I am going any distance, I do. I know every square inch of this stretch that I ride. If I lived a half mile further away I would wear a helmet.

JrE: Will there be staff representation on the new college governance committee?

Jc: I can’t remember exactly the composition of the new College and Faculty Committee (CMC), but that would seem to me to be a natural one for staff membership. The same way there has been staff representation in one form or another on CPSIR and also on the Ad Hoc Committee on the present college governance structure. The MEC will have a similar sort of mission: a mandate to look at the college’s priorities and the budgetary realities. So, I think that would be a good place.

The faculty committees, for example the academic priorities committee, that’s where one of the faculty and I think it is right, to maintain its exclusive right... the fact that the faculty, in approving this new committee, took away the vote of the dean of the college. So although I chair the new committee on academic priorities, as I did the old committee on academic policy that no longer in existence, I will not have a vote on this new committee.

Jc: How did they take that vote away?

JrC: I don’t have a committee to characterize the faculty in setting up this new committee, was giving away, at least it seemed that way, some of its traditional oversight to the administration of the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Academic Development. And furthermore, the Dean of Faculty was becoming a provost, so there was concern that the administration was becoming too powerful vis-a-vis the faculty. So while there are administrators on the academic priorities committee, none of us have votes. In a sense, the faculty retains its traditional control over the curriculum.

In The First Person

EAP Offers Help That Works

BY SYLVIA CRAFTS

The role of the provost? It’s really two things—
the need to have someone in the position to carry on the business of the college and their close presence of the president, and secondly, someone who in doing so is primarily responsible for the academic mission of the college.

—John Connolly

continued
On a warm summer day, I sat down to chat with John Connolly in his newly remodeled office. Not only is his office new, so too is his job. The sign now reads, Provost and Dean of the Faculty. While I was a little nervous, not knowing what to say, John was warm and friendly. This is some of what we discussed.

Will I have less time for the faculty? Yes, but we are adding another dean to the office too. That is Karen Feiler, who's a member of our economics department. We will then have a national, or at least a regional, search for an Associate Dean. Someone who would be, while very familiar with faculty issues, primarily an administrator, not someone rotating in and out of the faculty, which has been the tradition.

It's a very big job.

It is a big job! (laughing) I don't know if I am able to do it, but we'll see!

Do you think that the faculty will get less of your attention to champion their issues?

Perhaps a little. I am going to be concerned about some other things now not directly faculty concerns. Although one has to say that for some time the Dean of the Faculty has had other roles at Smith, serving on ACRA and as a budget officer. This office gradually over time has taken on responsibility for more of the things that used to report directly to the president. These are things that are more or less concerned with the academic mission: the libraries, athletics, center for academic development, campus school. I think it's a good thing that these things have come over to us, but it has meant, over a period of 10 or 20 years, a gradual expansion of the competence and responsibilities of the Dean of Faculty. This is another big step in the same direction.

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Ms. Wright, now Chief Public Affairs and College Relations Officer, graduated from the University of Rochester with a background in English. After teaching high school and college for ten years, Ms. Wright learned that the University of Rochester was looking for someone to run the Alumni Activities Program. She applied and got the job. Later, she followed the position of Dean of Admissions at Rochester.

Marketing and communications have always been a major interest for Ann Wright. So when President Simmons offered her the opportunity to create a new Public Affairs office, she was very interested. Although universities have this position, this is a first for Smith. The position involves dealing with government representatives—federal, state and local—and portraying the college in the best possible light in the public domain.

Smith has a prominent president as well as many well-known alumnae and faculty. Getting publicity does not present problems but Smith's self-study plan has brought the college into new venues. These include: the Engineering Program with Dartmouth College; the new University Internship Program; and a more focused interest in environmental and scientific programs—an area that more and more women are exploring. These new avenues of learning for women have been added to the already strong programs that Smith has in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Although the self-study focused mainly on the undergraduate school, publicity will also be given to our graduate programs. An example is the college's School for Social Work having its intern work in area schools.

Having written for many journals, newspapers and magazines, Wright finds the new aspects of this position in the realm of marketing the college. One example entails working with government officials. Financial aid for students is an area where schools have had to search out new approaches. The need for effective communication between educational institutions and the various governmental bodies has evolved as federal and state monies become tighter. Higher education must look to other means to help students, and to ensure a widely diverse student population.

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Marketing and communications have always been a major interest for Ann Wright.
The Price Is Right...

Since you heard about the UMass/Five College Credit Union in the last issue of the Chronicle, have you asked yourself just what other services our credit union provides to its members?

I met recently with Jon Reske, our credit union's VP for Marketing, to discuss the myriad of offerings, as well as upcoming initiatives. The services offered rival that of many banks, but unlike banks, credit unions provide primarily consumer services [loans, checking accounts, CD's, for example] and are democratically controlled, member-owned cooperatives that have volunteer, unpaid directors. Because they are not profit-driven institutions, they benefit their members by passing along competitive, low loan rates and higher saving rates, all while providing very personal service.

**Money Orders and Cashiers Checks** for $1.00.

- **Seven types of Term Share Certificates of Deposit (CD's)**.
- **Direct Deposit, Payroll Deduction** for automatic payments.
- **Electronic withdrawals and deposits** without charge.
- **Overdraft protection in two forms**.
- **Wire transfers**.
- **Purchases may be made using a Check Card**, which automatically deducts the purchase amount from your credit union checking account of choice.
- **VISA Classic and VISA Gold** at low rates.

Members should also note that the credit union's loan product offerings are extensive, including Mortgage, Home Equity, Home Improvement, Auto, RV, Boat, Motorcycle, Student and Computer.

The UMass/Five College Credit Union is about to embark on a study of their Smith College, Northampton-based membership in order to determine how they can enhance member services provided to this group.

Throughout the months of September and October, the marketing group will assess current needs for the 1900 members that comprise this group, through analysis of past and current activity, surveys of current members and finally, development of a list of potential options for the area. Some possible enhancements could include locating an ATM in Northampton, enhancing the services provided by a member representative in the area, offering expanded services to Smith members, upgrading M.A.T. or even finding a location for a branch. While all these options have yet to be approved, any one of them would be an improvement of the services that are currently available to the Smith community.

It is important to note that credit unions work because current members put money into the financial institution through deposits that are loaned out in the form of loans, making it possible for other members to take advantage of similar interest rates and superior services. For a credit union to survive, it needs help from all its members. If you, a co-worker, or someone else you know, may have been reluctant to join in the past, but may be interested in learning more, encourage them to contact the UMass/Five College Credit Union to discuss the many services that might be right for them. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on September 29th, the credit union will host an open house in Dewey Common Room for current members to do business, to answer questions for non-members and to introduce themselves. Because the credit union cannot mail to non-members, it is important that they hear from people who may have been interested in joining in the past, or those who may be new to the Smith community, but may be unsure of which financial service options could be best for them.

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Be sure to watch the member newsletter for exciting and innovative product offerings that will be introduced in the months ahead, and encourage your co-workers to check out the Credit Union during the Smith Open House on September 29th, in person at the Ambrose office, or on the Web at www.umasscu.org. And remember, the best way to have improved services in the Northampton area is to let the credit union know what we'd like—Amy Holch
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- **ATM service is provided through the CIRRUS and NYCE networks.**
- **M.A.T. (Member Audio Teller), through which members can use a touch-tone phone to obtain account information and services.**
- **Series EE Savings Bonds are offered at no cost to members.**
- **American Express Travelers Cheques at 1% of face value.**
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Provost???

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A Conversation

Ruth van Erp and John Connolly

I: Do, yep.

RvE: What other languages do you speak?

I: At one time I could speak French. It has been too long, though, since I’ve used it in any serious way. That was the language I studied in high school and college and liked it very much. But, fate took me in a different direction, when I started to learn German after college, and met the woman I eventually married, who is German, and got very much involved in German philosophy. We lived for four years in Germany, including a year spent as the director of the Smith summer program. Translating into German and our German and so on, that has been a very important part of my work and personal life. As I say, French was the first modern foreign language I learned, but I also had a lot of Greek and Latin in high school and college. I’ve used some of that in my philosophy.

RvE: Have you published?

I: Oh, yeah, sure. Many things, including this volume that I did with a German colleague (banding me a hardback copy of Herminesius vs. Science edited by John Connolly and Theodor Keutel). It was eventually translated into Korean. I don’t read any Korean, but we wrote for a forward for it and it’s one of the works I’ve done. I’ve done many articles and reviews and so on. I had a regular scholarly life before coming into administration six years ago.

RvE: I noticed you ride your bike to work.

I: Yes, I do. I live close by and love to ride the bike. Especially if I have to save a little time, it is great. I don’t have to take up a parking space or use gasoline.

RvE: I want to know, as a fellow bicyclist, why you don’t wear a helmet.

I: Well, I should. If I am going any distance, I do. I know every square inch of this stretch that I ride. If I lived a half a mile further away I would wear a helmet.

RvE: Will there be staff representation on the new college governance committee?

I: I can’t remember exactly the composition of the new Mission and Priorities Committee (MPC), but that would seem to me to be a natural one for staff membership, the same way there has been staff representation in one form or another on CPSR and also on ACRA. The MPC will have a similar sort of mission: a mandate to look at the college’s priorities and the budgetary realities. So, I think that would be a good place. The faculty committees, for example the new academic priorities committee, that’s one where the faculty and I think it is right, to maintain its exclusive right... the fact that the faculty, in approving this new committee took away the vote of the dean of the faculty. So although I chair the new committee on academic priorities, as did the old committee on academic policy that no longer in existence, I will not have a vote on this new committee.

RvE: How did they take that vote away?

I: The idea was that the faculty, in setting up this new committee, was giving away, at least it seemed that way, some of its traditional oversight to the administration at the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Academic Development. And furthermore, the Dean of Faculty was becoming a provost, so there was concern that the administration was becoming too powerful a vis-a-vis the faculty. So while there are administrators on the academic priorities committee, none of us have votes. In a sense, the faculty retains its traditional control over the curriculum.

The role of the provost? It’s really two things—
the need to have someone in the position to carry on the business of the college and the need to have someone in the absence of the president, and secondly, someone who is doing is primarily responsible for the academic mission of the college.

—John Connolly

continued
News from the Chair of Staff Council

Council Streamlines Structure

Earlier this year, Staff Council discussed and approved several by-laws changes to streamline its structure and improve communication among committees and officers. Following is a summary of those alterations:

- COUNCIL SIZE. The number of members is now 25 rather than 30.
- OFFICERS. The Vice Chair will now become Vice Chair/Parliamentarian.
- COMMITTEES. Standing committees are reduced from 7 to 5. The functions of the former Finance Committee, now falls to the Treasurer, and those of the former Staff Training Committee, to the Personnel Policy Committee.
- COMMITTEE CHARGES. With assistance from each group, descriptions of the functions of standing committees are revised to reflect current practice and future goals.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee now includes Staff Council officers, the chairs of each standing committee, and four non-voting members: two presidentially-appointed information liaisons, the Council Chronicle editor, and (not reflected in the recent by-laws changes) the Staff Council representative on ACRA and the Committee on Mission and Priorities.

Like it or not, many decisions about our environment are made in one committee or another. If you're not there, someone else will be making decisions that directly affect your job.

By Scott Girard

I approach with pride, another year as chair of Staff Council. Our accomplishments during the past year continue to emerge and evolve. We are also facing with the realizations of situations beyond our control. Each of us is a product of our environment. We bring to our life expectations, what has been ingrained into us from our families and those around us. Our goals, our views of ourselves, our surroundings, and our capabilities, combine to define us as individuals.

Over the past year, our experiences as Staff Council members have exhibited to me, that, as a united group we can act as a productive force for positive change at Smith. An invitation from the administration to participate in formal interviews with candidates for the Director of Human Resources and the Ombudsperson, showed me the sense of concern and clarity that Smith College staff possess. Staff Council met and had lunch with the trustees of the college. This was first for staff. A list of staff people interested in serving on building and planning committees was requested and has been submitted to Bill Benard. This will assure that staff will have some voice in campus building projects. Many ideas and efforts for inclusion and participation are now yet firm policy. We will work towards some sort of standard policy for input in hiring and performance reviews.

By the same token the faculty would not want either students or staff in attendance.

RvE: So when they took away your vote, how did you feel about that?
JG: Well, I thought it was a symbol because, in all of the trees I have been chairing, only once did I cast a vote. And it happened only when there was a tie in the committee.

RvE: What would you like staff to know about all of the changes that are going on?
JG: I think it's somewhat impressive, but also a little bewildering, all of the change that has been happening. I certainly would hope that staff members would be able to stay informed through publications of Staff Council and through the various community forums, and that people continue to have a sense of what these changes are, and what their purpose is, and have some level of comfort with that. I think that they are good changes, and they will help the college to move forward.

RvE: Do you think those changes will change the flavor of Smith?
JG: Yes, and I would hope mostly for the better. One of the things one hears, sometimes, certainly in the faculty and I imagine in the staff too, is that "oh yeah, there's always a lot of talk about improving this or that, but in fact, relatively little ever gets done." And I would think that some of the streamlining that has gone on and some of the new structures will make it easier to get things done. The President has shown that she is not one to dawdle. She sees a need, she certainly wants to know what people think about the changes, but then she wants to move them ahead. I don't know what the extreme of patience is, but it's a vice and she does not have it (laughs). She likes to keep things moving.

RvE: She's a woman of action.
JG: Yes, but she is consultative. She wants to know what people think. She will call on Staff Council a lot to get impressions. If things come forward, like a document such as the Self-Study, she doesn't want it to sit around gathering dust, she wants to see it acted on. Not necessarily everything can get done—we're not going to agree about everything. But things that are possible should be done and done quickly.

RvE: What are some of the things to be done that you personally feel are the most interesting?

"What would you like staff to know about all of the changes that are going on?"
—Ruth van Epps
He Came Forward and Stood Tall

Well, if he didn't hear Ruth Simmons's words at last fall's Convocation, perhaps he heard Desmond Tutu, or Martin King or Ghandi. Whoever it was, Mark Carmien did get the word, and came forward to organize a rally at Northampton's city hall, and he stood tall before 700 people, who were there to help "make Northampton safe for everyone."

The anti-hate-crime rally was in answer to an assault on two gay men in the city's downtown. The response was clear from those in attendance, as Mark explained to a reporter after the emotion-charged event.

"We're not just here to organize a rally and go home, but to organize concrete actions." Homophobia has been called "the last respectable prejudice," but Mark Carmien and all of those he helped gather together made the strongest possible statement that "it's not o.k. in our backyard."

If the "gay agenda" has replaced the "communist threat" as the bettering ram of reactionary politics. If Ken Sehested was right, when he suggested that the Right Wing perception is now, "instead of a commie behind every bush, there's now a queer in every classroom, in every congressional room, in every gantlet-lpushed room."

If that is the case, then we might want to remember how James Baldwin described us: "Each of us, helplessly and forever, owns the other—male in female, female in male, white in black, and black in white. We are part of each other."

Mark Carmien "stood up for that truly equal society" that Ruth Simmons challenged us to work toward. He realized that confrontation is necessary to shake up the complacent, even in Noho.

—Dick Fish

Ruth van Erp
and John Connolly

JCI: Well, we've got a stack (pointing to a stack of paper about two feet high) from the Self-Study, which needs our attention. Some of it, of course, can only be done if the funding can be found. There is a lot of interest in the notion of Smith becoming a place where students can get a start in Engineering. No women's college does engineering in a serious way. This is a field, everyone agrees, that is going to grow and we have a shortage of engineers, unlike lawyers, where currently there is something of a glut. So why haven't women's colleges stepped forward? For one reason, it is very expensive—the machinery needed, and, the laboratory space, new faculty members. And if we build it, will they come? Are there women students who really want to study engineering? And will they come to do it at a place like Smith? As we have floated the ideas, there has been a lot of excitement about an engineering program at Smith. It. So, I think that is a tremendously exciting area to explore.

Environmental Science and Policy is a natural for Smith. We have been quite slow in getting started and now the momentum seems to be building and I think that is another area for excitement. The idea of a poetry center at Smith, who would have thought this could really catch on? But there was this really wonderful poetry series last year—as a kind of foundation for the inaugural events for the poetry center—that were beautiful. There is a lot of administrative changes. We have a new ombuds-person, Gina Smith. The ombuds position came about as a direct result of the self-study. I think maybe what we can see in a change of that sort, a kind of realistic assessment of where we are and a willingness to take some steps to deal with discontents. If members of the staff say they are not completely comfortable with the overall, and I say this with a small "j", grievance framework, having something like an ombuds-person will be of real value. There are so many changes. In the 25 years I have been at Smith, there has been nothing like this magnitude and pace of change. No doubt some of it will come to seem ill-advised to us, or some of it will need adjustment, but nobody can say that lots of things aren't happening.

ReV: You've been here for 25 years, as an administrator for the last six, in a position to know a lot of the changes before they happen, and have had much more information than a lot of people who have also been here for 25 years. What would you tell people who might be a little bit afraid about what all those changes mean to them?

JCI: I would say the first thing is to get informed. The information is there. Ten years ago, we did not have Staff Council—that was one of Mary Dunn's innovations. It seems to me a good one. It is a wonderful conduit for information back and forth between administrators, faculty and others to learn about staff concerns and visa versa. So, my advice first and foremost, is to find out what is going on, what the facts are—it has never been easier to do. There is an administration in place now, and I think the changes in the HR office are indicative of that, that really wants to move forward in a positive way, listen to the changes, and act on them where possible. There is every reason for the staff to feel like things are looking up. One can certainly work with the team that is in place now, at various levels. So, get informed and have confidence that good things are possible; that changes in a positive direction are possible at Smith; that it is an awfully good place to work, and getting better.

—I think it's somewhat impressive, but also a little bewildering, all of what has happened. I certainly hoped that all members would be able to stay informed through publications of Staff Council and through the various community forums, and that people continue to have a sense of what these changes are, and what their purpose is, and they need level of comfort with this. I think that they are good changes, and they will help the college to move forward."

—John Connolly

Mark Carmien

PHOTO: Marc J. Barmin

PHOTO: Marc J. Barmin

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Erika Laquer Is Filling Big Shoes

Erika Laquer, founding director of Merrimack Educational Services, a consulting company in equity and diversity issues at schools and health-care facilities, and an adjunct professor of women's studies at Merrimack College, has been chosen from a pool of 130 applicants, as the new Director of the Ada Comstock Scholars Program (ACSP) at Smith.

Erika is filling some very big shoes. Since its inception in 1975, Ellie Rothman had stood at the helm. She nurtured and developed the ideas of Alice Dickinson, Tom Mendenhall, Jill Conway, and others. Admissions officer, dean, counselor and den mother, Ellie has been a motivator and mentor for hundreds of older women who have returned to school on a non-traditional age.

Those two decades of front-line experience are now being used in the service of long-range planning, and working with Ruth Simmons in locating new sources of funding for the program, and Ellie has passed the reins to Erika.

Born in Philadelphia, Erika received her A.B. from Bryn Mawr College, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Erika concentrated her graduate studies in the field of Medieval European History. Her teaching and research interests are in books written by and about mid-wives in the period from 1500 to 1800. She has spent the last three years teaching women studies courses at Merrimack College. She brings a variety of interpersonal and background experience with women and women's studies to her new position at Smith.

Erika was the oldest of five children—three girls and two boys. Her father was an "old-fashioned" general practitioner, who had an office in the house. Erika's mother was a nurse and worked alongside her husband in his practice. It may be hard to imagine today, but Erika remembers the days when Dads went out on house calls and actually visited sick patients in their homes. (Her dad is no longer living and her mother is alive and well, and living in Colorado.)

Erika has been married to botanist Geoff Kuter for the past 16 years. Geoff works for a company whose areas of concern include land preservation, composting and recycling. The Amsbury Company, for whom Geoff works, will be developing projects in this part of the state, and, therefore, he will be travelling half- and forth between Northampton and the eastern part of the state. Erika and Geoff are the parents of two young daughters, ages 6 and 11. Both girls were adopted as infants, with one coming from the Dominican Republic and the other from Chile. The couple plan to teach their daughters about their backgrounds and heritage and to instill ethnic pride.

Moving from a development of newer homes in North Andover to an older home in Northampton is a lifestyle change to which the family is looking forward. They also look forward to exploring the waterscapes of the valley by canoe and skiing in the Berkshires. Erika says that the girls had their first skating lessons this year, "and took to it like ducks to water."

Did Erika have any unusual jobs? Friends thought she was crazy when she had a summer job as a receptionist/gopher in a nether-done maintenance program for heroin addicts. At another time, Erika went above and beyond by giving up loyalty to the密集 agreed to work for her sister who had a chance to go on vacation. Erika replaced her sister as a toilet-cleaner at an athletic club. With those two jobs, which, incidentally are not listed on her résumé, and her extensive experience in academia, Erika indeed offers the Ada Comstock Scholars and the Smith community at-large, a wealth of diverse experiences.

Special Thank You's and Gracious Welcomes

Volunteers are special people. Smith staff who volunteer to serve the college as our representatives on Staff Council, deserve our recognition for their willingness to get involved with the processes of change. Please join us in letting these folks know that you appreciate their time and talent.

Departing Members of Staff Council: Lisa Abbey, Nancy Brady, Avril Crenshaw, David Brown, Joe Cartagena, Liane Harkman, Mervyn Hoyle, Linda Jaquie, Jimmy Mason, Stanley Roaik, Christine Ryan, Kathy Santos and Peg Pitzer.

Incoming Members: Sandy Bywater, Mary Clayton, Jennifer Tvradija, Donna Gingras, Lynn Han, Sarah Luzar, Cindy Rucci, Naomi Sturevant.

The word "queer," once a term of abuse, is now embraced by many lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transsexuals as a word that brings them together in their struggle against homophobia and for equal rights. "Queer Studies"—looking at histories, readings, analyses of sexualities—has become a growing academic field. In a symposium at Smith on November 6-8, leading theorists, artists, and activists from all over the country will gather to address some important unanswered questions. What has made homosexuality or "queerness" such a diverse and charged issue in U.S. politics today? How and what can queer artists contribute to the activist agenda? What difference does it make politically if homosexuality is considered genetically determined or a "lifestyle choice"? How has the history of queerness and queer movements been conceived, and what are the political consequences of those histories? The conference will begin on Friday afternoon, November 6, with a panel including an independent historian, Allan Berube; Michael Lacey, an academic involved in queer studies; and activist Uwabali Uwini. Panels on Saturday will include "Art as Activism" at 10 a.m., "The Science Debates and Citizenship" at 2 p.m., and The History of Politics/The Politics of History" at 4 p.m. Lauren Berlant, Professor of English at the University of Chicago, will give the closing address on Saturday at 5 p.m. A group of students is planning follow-up workshops on Sunday; they have also arranged for the lesbian cartoonist Alison Bechdel to give a lecture/performances. All events are open to everyone in the community. The symposium is sponsored in part by the President's Office, Women's Studies, and the Committee on Community Policy. Questions should be addressed to Marilyn Schuster, Professor of Women's Studies, and chair of the organizing committee; in Neilson Library, ext. 3367 or <schuster@smith> —Betsy Harms

Staff Council Sponsors 3rd Denim Day

On Friday, October 9th, Smith will observe National Denim Day. For a donation of $5.00 or more (checks payable to The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation), participants will receive information about breast cancer and a pink ribbon pin. Many employees—those who aren't required to wear uniforms—may wear denim on October 9th to show their support for the cause. Please make your donation to your building representative, or by mail to Cindy Rucci, Technical Services, Neilson Library.

In a symposium at Smith on November 6-8, leading theorists, artists, and activists from all over the country will gather to address some important unanswered questions.

In a symposium at Smith on November 6-8, leading theorists, artists, and activists from all over the country will gather to address some important unanswered questions.
Stay Tuned for **FlexFocus**

1. What does flexibility in the Smith workplace mean?

2. What equity issues, if any, surround flexibility at Smith?

3. What does it mean to balance the flexibility request of a staff member with the needs of the workplace?

4. What training and development regarding flexibility would you like to see provided in the community?

You'll be hearing about pilot programs, the FlexFocus web site, and more. Stay tuned.

What's She Doing in **Newsweek**

"Are you nuts?" I asked. I was tap dancing as fast as I could to keep up with my mom-life and my Smith-life. Just the thought of adding something else was exhausting. So, we compromised. We wrote an article together.

Since then, we've collaborated on three guidebooks: The Transfer's Guide to Changing Colleges, ARCO/Prentice Hall, 1993; The International Student's Guide to Going to College in America (with Emily Wein), ARCO/Macmillan, 1996; and College Admissions: A Crash Course for Parents, ARCO/Macmillan, 1994 and 1998.

Mid-life seems to be a good time for me, creatively, The Boston Sunday Globe bought an article I wrote about the pain of college rejection. Newsweek ran an essay I wrote for "My Turn" (in the April 20, 1998 issue) about how it feels to be on duty nonstop as an admission officer. The number of responses I've received from old friends as well as strangers—has been remarkable. While I always feel very vulnerable and naked right before a publication date, I'm on a roller coaster ride afterwards when I hear from radio stations, colleagues, and readers who want to discuss a point I've made.

It's a kick when friends discover something I've written. One told me he was reading Newsweek in his dentist's waiting room. He turned to page 14 and, surprised to see my face, felt like shouting, "Wait a minute, I know her. What's she doing in Newsweek?" (Instead, he furiously ripped the article out and took it home!) Although I returned to full-time work last summer, I keep jotting down paragraphs and ideas in my notebooks and have some stuff on my computer at home that needs editing and polishing. Many thanks to friends and colleagues at Smith for their support over the years.—Sid Dalby

**Moral Lessons & Slap-Stick**

Dick Unsworth has retired again. That makes three times that Dick has left Smith. After serving as the chaplain here in the early 60's, he went on to serve as dean of the Tucker Foundation at Dartmouth—their religious umbrella organization. Happily, he was invited back to Smith, and his stewardship of the chaplaincy here was one of great distinction. He brought the reality of the civil rights struggle to Smith's campus, where he preached from his personal experience as a volunteer in the South. His warm, but commanding presence brought out SRO crowds. At a time when this was an embarrassingly lily white campus, he worked hard to bring students of color to Smith. His example, all those years ago, still motivates a lot of us to be involved in social causes, to work for justice, to do, rather than just to observe. He left again to become president of Northfield-Mount Hermon School. When he retired, he was asked to serve a year as headmaster at The Berkshire School. That turned into five years.

More recently, Ruth Simmons invited him back as a year as Acting Dean of the Chapel. Happily, that turned into two years. It gave us a reprise of his warmth and kindness, and, it gave us a new infusion of enthusiasm to continue to work on issues of social justice. His presence has been a huge gift to so many of us, that I shouldn't begrudge him what may be his real retirement, but I sort of do. (see the article by The Rev. Richard P. Unsworth elsewhere is this issue)

Another loss was, at 88, perhaps more timely. It certainly was more final. The year was 1959, and Tom Mendeshall and I arrived at Smith at the same time. He was the president, and I was the College Photographer. It was the time of the "grasp and grip" picture. Every speaker of any standing had to be photographed with our president, so Tom and I saw a lot of one another. He made sure that he introduced me to all the heavy hitters of the period: Rusk and McNamara, McCloy and Huxley, Mencken Williams and Mendelson, Tocqueville, Anne Lindberg, and lots of others. I was the boss, he said, which meant that these folks were to follow my instructions. That became our name for each other. "Hi boss." "Hi boss." I don't suppose that I learned a great deal from Tom, not in the way that I did from Dick Unsworth, but we did have a whole lot of fun together. He had a great sense of humor and went to some lengths to demonstrate his sportsmanship. Can you picture us in sailor suits, doing Gilbert and Sullivan? Probably not!

When a trustee or capital fund chair retired, it was time to produce a silly picture to present to the honoree. Eaking was a favorite painter, and Tom and I collaborated on many re-makes of famous paintings. I'd make copies of the paintings, and scaled shots of our contemporaries, and head for Paradise. Tom's wife, Nellie, would call down from upstairs, "There's beer in the fridge, and Tom should be along shortly," and we'd be cut ting and pasting, often until the wee hours. Our creations were always a hit.

All of the nice things that have been written about Tom Mendeshall not withstanding, he was a teacher first, not an administrator. God bless Florence Macdonald for keeping him on task, at least most of the time. Tom has been gone from Northampton for awhile, but now he's no longer at the end of the phone or a postage stamp. I imagine that he's still rowing his skull early every morning; no longer on Paradise, but perhaps in Paradise. —Dick Fish
When people learn that Geary Gravel is the sign-language interpreter for deaf students at Smith College, they often exclaim, "Wow, you should get 5 degrees!" But while Geary may interpret three classes a day for Smith's four deaf undergraduates, pursuing a degree is out of the question. "You don't retain the information in long term memory. The point is to get the information in and out as fast as possible," Geary explained.

Geary Gravel has been Smith's full-time interpreter since the fall of 1996, but he has worked at the college part-time since 1980. There have long been hearing impaired students as Smith's graduate programs, but the first deaf undergraduates will receive their diplomas in 1999. Their names and Geary's don't often match, but it is fascinating to Geary to sit in the classrooms as a somewhat invisible observer. "Some teachers worry that you're attracting too much attention," Geary confessed. "But after the first week, the draw of watching the interpreter fades."

In a lecture you will find Geary stationed a little behind the professor so that he is not in the professor's line of sight and so the deaf student can view him both easily. Most of Smith's deaf students have some lip-reading ability and close proximity of interpreter and professor allows them to alternate back and forth between the two. In the case of a round table discussion, Geary sits directly across from the student, translating every comment as well as its tone. The voice inflections which convey sarcasm, excitement, anger are interpreted through facial expressions and body language.

This has caused some interesting situations when Geary has translated harsh criticism of men with the same fervor as they are delivered by students. Some students seeing their words and tone mirrored back at them have offered him the apology, "I'm not referring to you of course," Geary encourages students not to modify their comments because of his gender. "There is a strict code of ethics for interpreters which prevents us from commenting on the content," he said smiling, "even if it's just by rolling our eyes.

If Geary seems cool and aloof in the classroom, that's deliberate so as not to interfere with the deaf students experience. Staff can assist Geary by not involving him in discussions, always addressing their comments to the student. "My role is to provide a deaf student with the same experience they would have if they were hearing, I'm not their friend, or another student," Geary explains. "Don't feed the interpreter," he growls, and then grins.

Geary graduated from UMass as an English major and his thesis was a science fiction novel. As he pursued his craft, he re-enrolled at UMass for a second degree in Astronomy. In his final physics class there was a sign language interpreter and Geary was fascinated, moving into the first row with the deaf students in order to better appreciate the language. He enrolled in a sign language class and his second career took off from there.

Geary's first love remains writing, and his senior thesis became his first novel, The Alchemist, published in 1983. In addition to several other original titles, such as A Key For The Novostch, Geary has written the novelizations for the movie "Hook," and for the animated television series, "Batman." Like many sci-fi writers, Geary is fascinated with exploring the idea of what it means to be human.

The Alchemist is set on a newly discovered planet which has been identified for colonization. "The hero of the novel must struggle to save the planet's humanoids, why don't meet the colonists' rubric for intelligent life. In some ways, you can see we explore that question every day," Geary pointed out. "When we choose whether or not to install a $10,000 ramp that maybe only one person a year will use, we're deciding what that one person's access to experience is worth. In effect, we are deciding what they are worth." Science fiction allows Geary to look at a society's choices as they play out over time. "And to do so in a way that isn't heavy handed or moralistic," he adds, "to address these questions inside an exciting story."

Faculty and staff can call the Office of Disability Services if they would like an interpreter for a meeting they may have with someone who is deaf, just as deaf members of the Smith community can request help for meetings with hearing people.—Kara Morin

- what makes for healthy brain development in infants and young children
- effective educational methods for the early school grades,
- public policy issues that affect growing children's physical health and personal development,
- the overlooked (or underreported) cultural resources that support vigorous intellectual and moral development of children, and
- better ways to take account of the diverse religious, cultural and social patterns that shape our expectations about child development.

Look for a fascinating list of programs, questions, discussions and inquiries in the year ahead. If you have a special interest in children's issues, you can follow some of the current discussion by tuning in to the e-mail list server being used by the Fellows this summer. Simply send your e-mail to: mailer@science.smith.edu with the message "SUBSCRIBE ECO" and you'll be on the list. Later this fall, there will be a web page devoted to the program. There you'll be able to read documents, see illustrations, be introduced to visiting scholars, find out what's happening next, and in general become a better informed person about the new urgent issues affecting the more vulnerable members of our population.

The Kahn Faculty Fellows who are "Exploring the Ecologies of Childhood" are: Brenda Allen, Psychology; Susan Eshbel, Education and Child Study; Alice Hearn, Government; Rhonda Singer, Sociology; Richard Usworth, Religion; Fear Puglisi, Psychology; Ernest Buse, History.

Gaynelle Weiss
Appointed to HR Position

Gaynelle Weiss, Director of the Smith Management Program since 1993, has been appointed to the new position of Employee Services Director in Human Resources. In making the announcement, HR Director, Lance Sullivan enthusiastically endorsed Weiss's extensive experience in employee development.

Before coming to Smith, Gaynelle led the Management Development Programs at Simmons College, served as the Human Relations Coordinator at the Sudbury (MA) school system and did a tour in employee relations at BankBoston.

Gaynelle will lead recruitment, as well as some of the new initiatives already underway in Human Resources. She has been a strong advocate of diversity initiatives here, and a regular participant in the Campus Climate Working Group.
The Kahn Institute
BY THE EVERFUND RICHARD P. UNSWORTH

Takes Flight

American children learn to fly. They touch the clouds, dream of higher altitudes. They look up at the sky, are awed by the things they see. And one day they learn to fly.

But they don't learn to fly alone. They learn to fly with the help of others. They learn to fly with the help of the people who care for them. They learn to fly with the help of the people who believe in them. They learn to fly with the help of the people who want them to fly.

The Kahn Institute is one of those people. It is a place where children can learn to fly. A place where children can dream of higher altitudes. A place where children can be awed by the things they see.

The Kahn Institute is a place where children can learn to fly with the help of others. It is a place where children can learn to fly with the help of the people who care for them. It is a place where children can learn to fly with the help of the people who believe in them. It is a place where children can learn to fly with the help of the people who want them to fly.

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United Way Needs Our Bucks

For more than seventy years, the Hampshire United Way—an amalgam of former Community Chests—has been a collection and support organization, helping to fund the agencies that we all use. For most, United Way funding is their single largest source of support. It's certainly less painful to contribute one-time at work, through payroll deduction, than to answer the door bell at home for each non-profit that the United Way represents. Consider it one-stop giving.

Every Smith family has been touched in some way, by at least one agency, and most of us know several. Many of us have also worked as volunteers for UW agencies, and have intimate knowledge of how crucial the community's financial support has become.

So, whether it means giving up one trip to East Side Grill a month, or simply designating that a couple of dollars should be taken out each pay period, it's a small but significant step toward supporting a couple of dozen agencies that really do make a difference in our valley. It's also that much less that the tax man carries off to Washington!

"We hope that others will benefit from the United Way services as much as we did."

—anonymous giver

Access for All: New Disability Services Director

As an administrative staff member working within the Office of Institutional Diversity, Laura Rauchser takes a broad view of her newly-created job. Her role as the first Disability Services Director at Smith is an expansion of the previous position of coordinator. One reason that Rauchser was attracted to the job is her belief in the college's strong commitment to encouraging and welcoming diversity among students, faculty and staff—including the differences that come with disabilities. She looks forward to the opportunity to draw on her extensive experience by developing policies and new programs at Smith in her area of expertise.

Rauchser, an engaging woman with a mobility disability, has focused her career on independent living and disability rights. Her background in this field includes graduate and professional work at the University of Massachusetts, involvement in the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley and Hawaii, a national policy fellowship in Washington, D.C. and, most recently, the position of director of the Office on Health and Disability at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, in which she helped set policy in the Commonwealth.

At Smith, about 350 students currently receive some level of support services related to disabilities which include hearing and visual loss, lupus, arthrosis and other medical conditions, learning disabilities and ADD. Rauchser notes that there are currently few students here with mobility disabilities, despite the substantial increase in accessibility on campus over the last several years. Students with highly specialized needs are more often drawn to the large universities where special accommodations, health services and facilities help "level the playing field," but Rauchser would love to see Smith become a leader in this area among the top liberal arts colleges in the country. She envisions participating in developing a variety of new facilities at Smith, coupled with an outreach program to attract bright and talented disabled students. "It's unfortunate to see students limiting their choices when they have extraordinary potential," she says.

—Stephanie Cooper Schoen

Laura Rauchser was attracted to the job because she values Smith's strong commitment to encouraging and welcoming diversity among students, faculty and staff—including the differences that come with disabilities.

Campus police officers could probably teach their sisters and brothers on municipal forces a lot about community policing: they've been doing it for years. White police academies do teach discipline and restraint, until recently they haven't focused much on communication skills. Smith's Public Safety Departmentylie officers exemplify what it means to be in touch with the community. From left: Tracy Beaudard, Kenneth Ramalesko, Susan Dawley and Nancy Forrestal pose for the photographer. The remaining third of the contingent, Bill Goman and Bill Hurley, were away.
Edju, We Miss You

This summer, the Smith community was robbed of a special friend when Ed Kopeck lost his battle with a serious illness. When recalling Ed, most people on campus will immediately remember his deep, resonating voice, and his likely response to someone asking, "How are ya, Ed?" with the answer, "Rottin', never had a good day in my life." His seemingly gruff response belied an individual who took pride in his work and always did the best job he could, and all with a keen sense of humor.

Ed had the unerringly good sense of attributing blame to himself, or the job he was doing. In Physical Plant, a job whose scope was enormous, he handled it with a calm and measured approach. He was a problem solver, always finding a way to fix things. This was his legacy to us.

Please submit from 1 to 5 pieces. See reverse for additional information.
Staff Art Show Registration Form

Return this form to Patricia Hayes, Garrison Hall, by December 1, 1996! (See the reverse side of this form for details.)

HINTS FOR WRITING A BIOGRAPHY

Please write a paragraph or two on a separate sheet if you would like a short biography to be displayed with your art. (Submit this separate sheet with your registration form.)

How long have you been doing the art/craft that you are exhibiting?
Do you create other arts/crafts than the one being exhibited?
What is your background and education?
Are you actively studying your art/craft with a teacher or group?
Do you belong to any art/craft guild or club?
What brought you to the art/craft you produce?
What influences your art/craft?
What are your inspirations (family, friends, pets, society, nature, other artists/craftspeople...?)

WHEN TO DROP OFF YOUR WORK: The show will be hung Sunday, January 24, 1999.
Stay tuned for more details regarding the setup.

OPENING RECEPTION: 4-6 p.m., Monday, January 25, Hillyer Hall. Please join us!
(Yes, there will be refreshments.)

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: If you're exhibit requires unique site conditions, such as sound, lighting and/or viewer interaction, please note that the exhibit organizers reserve the right to require volume, lighting or other conditions that do not interfere with the rest of the exhibit. Contact the Patricia Hayes or Amy Holich if you have any questions.

ELIGIBILITY: all academic support, administrative, administrative support and service staff are eligible to exhibit their work. All others are of course welcome to visit the show!

QUESTIONS? CONTACT:
Patricia Hayes, ext. 2180, phayes@ais
Amy Holich, ext. 2404, aholich@ais

Don't hesitate!
Exhibiting your work in Staff Visions is easy, fun and rewarding.

INSIDE
The Kahn Institute
EAP
Credit Union
Staff Art Show

Staff Visions is co-sponsored by Staff Council.

Feel In Conflict?
Help Is at Hand

By Dick Fish

Gina Smith

She knows what it's like to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome; to be at a place where she's not wanted. That was her experience during her first year of college, and it probably helps to insure certain empathy for those visitors who may be feeling alienated working or studying at Smith.

So explained Gina Smith, who has just been appointed to the newly created post of Ombudsperson at Smith. The need for that office was identified, and recommended, in the recent Staff Self Study report. The Ombuds service is to be a pilot program, with its usefulness determined over the next three years. It is available to all staff, faculty and students.

As a guarantee of autonomy and confidentiality, Gina reports, directly, and only, to President Ruth Simmons.

Strongly influenced by her grandmother's stories of how people in Baltimore had "been done wrong," Gina's earliest recollections were of wanting to help others. "Growing up, there were only three things that I wanted to do: be a minister, a nurse or a lawyer." The unhappy experience during her one year at a small religious college in the South, eliminated the ministry option. She found that she couldn't stand the sight of blood, which closed the door to nursing. That left the law, and she pursued it with a vengeance.

Finishing college and law school in her native Baltimore, Gina worked as a Legal Aid attorney defending low-income tenants embroiled in housing disputes. With an enviable record of winning cases, she was invited to teach housing law at the District of Columbia School of Law. From law school teaching to law school administration seemed like a natural, so Gina came to Western New England College Law School, as the Assistant Dean. At Smith, Gina is here to listen, to guide, to suggest solutions, perhaps to mediate, or as she says, "just to be here for folks to come by and get a reality check. Technically, I'm not an advocate because that means I take sides. I'm supposed to be a neutral resource and someone who can help folks work through the system here."

Gina's quiet office, at the end of a hall in Neilson, may be just the place to take a problem with your boss; to discuss the politics of a department; or to lament the seeming indifference of an instructor. She comes to us with a wide experience of how to make the best use of "the system," with super people skills, and the plain talking, no-nonsense approach that makes dialogue easy.

Gina Smith is available 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7-9:30 p.m. Tuesday evenings, and via phone-mail, daily. Her office is on the lower level of Neilson, room B18. E-mail is <ombuds@smith.edu>. You can expect a non-judgmental, neutral ear, with absolute confidentiality (even the president doesn't get names) and perhaps, some informal conflict resolution.