There are many ways you can communicate with us. Questions, comments or ideas are always welcome!

E-MAIL: staffcouncil@alum.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 rosters above.
STAFF COUNCIL SPONSORED COMMUNITY FORUMS

For more information about the discount program, visit
www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/discount_page.html

"It's the staff that keep this place running at a very high level." — President Ruth J. Simmons

She Came, She Improved...
Dear Ruth...

BY PATTY KIMURA
(for Staff Council)

As you prepare to leave Smith, I thought I would share a bit of what I have heard from members of the Smith staff. Perhaps the greatest tribute to your tenure is reflected by the enormous sense of loss many of us feel about your decision to leave Smith for Brown University. Although some may question the insularity of retaining the "Happy Valley" for the "hobby-hunted" Rhode Island (it's not really an island, you know), we also know that we can celebrate your move to Brown as a tribute to your equally enormous success as a member of the Smith community.

A lot has happened in your six years here. The institution and the staff community have changed in ways that many of us thought might never happen. You have joined us in building a civil and changing community that celebrates and respects diversity and difference. Together we have created a community with witty, high morale, more flexibility, increased staff participation in governance, far more support for diverse families and, most importantly, the understanding that good can be done, and better done together rather than apart.

Staff Council has often asked the Smith president to do her part to improve things. But we also recognize that we staff members have a responsibility to improve the quality of life and work at the institution. Part of the success of Smith's staff is dependent on our community and neighborhood—our support of one another. This works only if we can find the openness with which to look beyond the things that separate us. In spring 2003, Staff Council created a proposal for a new initiative: Diversity/Problem-Solving/Leadership training for Staff Council members. We asked for your help, and, along with Ruth Constantine, you gave it. Your support helped bring together 27 staff members in a six-week workshop designed to transform participants' various beliefs into something practical and give them the ability to lead others by creative example. The training changed many of us, and it changed how we collectively view the role of Staff Council.

We have since sponsored a community forum on diversity; promoted a Lunch & Learn series; became involved in more college-wide committee work; joined the HR Lunch Buddies program for new employees; created opportunities for employees from diverse areas of campus to work together; increased staff participation in the CCWG; asked department heads to look at departmental diversity training; sought ways to bring service and non-service staff together; created a cross-campus Staff Council departmental liaison list; continued to look at ways to improve our responsiveness to and representation of all areas of campus; and more. We couldn't have done any of this alone; your inspiration and support have been critical to our success.

When staff members were asked what qualities they would like to see in the next Smith president, they listed qualities that describe you. This is remarkable considering that Smith staffers are notable for their forceful and passionate diversity of opinion. When we agree it really means something. We also share a concern for the college and understand the unique issues that affect the qualities of work and community here. We understand the difficulties and complexities of leading a place as special as Smith. And take it from us, you've done a good job.

Though some of us may continue to suffer now and then from Brown University envy, we wish you the best. You once said that you were one of us, a member of the staff; and we are honored to share this title with you.

As staff members, we are proud to have worked alongside you "to provide Smith College students with exceptional and innovative services and to participate actively in their education and growth." As the Smith College Staff Mission Statement reads.

We bid you a fond farewell with grateful thanks. May you find all you dream and more. It was great working with you.

Bon voyage (it's still not an island).
Wellness Programming in the Workplace

 Are you concerned about your health and wellness? Most people are. The struggle is to find time to dedicate to our personal health; it ends up low on the list of things to do each day unless you make it a priority.

Back in the early 1970s, the concept of employee wellness programming was new. There were only about 30 companies in the country that offered such programming for their workforce. Now, according to a recent survey, some 12,000 companies have wellness programs and this number is continuing to increase. Healthier, happier employees cost their employer less money. They stay in their positions because they are happy, which lowers the need for recruiting. The employees like the fact that their employer invests in their health, which inspires them to take care of themselves, too.

Last June, Robert Pattee, director of the Physical Plant, decided that he, too, would like to offer wellness programming to his staff. Able to identify the staff population at a high risk for coronary problems, he decided he would be proactive and launched a pilot program that would address that risk.

As a result, Physical Plant employees are given 30 minutes, three times each week at the beginning of their workday, to participate in the program. The group stretches and practices warm-up exercises together. Then participants walk briskly and/or run, do strength training and abdominal exercises, then cool down and stretch some more. Each quarter, all participants must take part in a variety of screenings. Improvement in all areas is the common goal.

Group members have already seen reductions in their blood pressure and body fat composition while increasing their cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility and one thing that nobody expected: their camaraderie. Many folks who barely knew each other prior to the program now have a chance to interact. Staff members from different trade areas have the chance to talk and laugh with one another, and it has been very powerful. Working toward a common goal has become a more productive process.

The program continues to evolve in an effort to meet participants' needs. Wellness bulletin board areas have been created in each trade area. Each month a national health topic is promoted and a variety of health educational materials are posted for all to read and utilize. The month of March, for example, was National Nutrition Month and a fruit bowl was well-received in the Customer Service area. Fruit has been made available for all employees, at a shared cost to staff, and will continue to be offered. This success practice also benefits nonparticipants of the program as well as visitors to the department, who can sample the fresh fruit—a much healthier option than a trip to the vending machine!

As Spring sets in, the wellness program involves its participants outside and the theme has become "Spring into Fitness" as the program introduces participants to activities they may not have experienced before.

Following the success of the Physical Plant wellness program, RADS will soon pilot a similar program. Stay tuned for an update and meanwhile, be your best.

Simmons continued from page 1

valued. Governance of the college and identification of institutional priorities must include full participation by members of the staff." (The Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation, Committee on Mission and Priorities, College Council, and the President Search Committee all include staff members.)

At the top of her list of staff-centered changes is the leadership at Human Resources (HR), she says. "Laime Sullivan-Crowley is truly outstanding. She has brought the right sensitivities, respect and generosity of spirit, along with great intelligence, to her position here. I found it essential that she should become a member of the Senior Staff so that we can benefit from her wise counsel on collegewide issues." She feels strongly that "the job of HR is not protecting the administration from the workers, but is to advocate for those workers."

Ruth stressed that her current campaign toward greater civility is meant to "help us all understand how to better relate to each other in all settings on campus, and beyond." For example, "It is critical that faculty respect staff and the great work that they do here."

Just as our time together was ending, we asked, what is the single aspect of her presidency about which she is most proud. Her answer: "My relationship to students—without question. I take great satisfaction in having had the opportunity to influence thousands of young women, to speak with them about things like love, justice and truth; to help shape their values and aspirations. There is nothing more important to me."

And what of the next Smith president? "That person will need the independence to ignore the common statement, 'That's not how we do it here,' and enough courage to swallow hard and sometimes do just the opposite of what they're advised, and try new things, like the holiday break for Smith staff."

So, like the college's graduates each year, another very bright woman has spent time at Smith College and now goes out to help another part of the vineyard a better place. She goes with our thanks for having been a part of our lives here, and with our very warmest wishes for great success at Brown University.
Everyone Wins With Flex Time Program

Supervisors and staff members at Smith may ask, with justification, “What’s in it for me?” when a flexible work schedule is proposed. Ideally, a flexible work schedule benefits both the department and the worker.

Mary Martineau, research associate in advancement, works Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As a result, her department can provide greater coverage early in the morning, and Mary, who happens to be a morning person, is able to concentrate in a quiet envi-

ment and focus on her research with few interruptions. As a personal benefit, Mary has the freedom to schedule her mother’s doctors’ appointments on Fridays.

Jane Clayton, circulation assistant at Nellison Library and a Smith employee since 1973, works a four-day week from 8:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. She was asked to change to this schedule to accommodate the library’s busy afternoons. While she has a choice about which day to take off, she usually stays out Thursday so she can “take care of some of my life” on a weekday rather than cramming errands and chores into the weekend.

With flexible schedules, long-term employees can often avoid burnout and creative types can keep their juices flowing with more control over their work lives. For example, Parry Hayes, publications manager in college relations and a Smith employee since 1985, works a week of four long days. Not only does that arrangement provide longer blocks of time during the day for designing publications, but it also gives Parry a day off during the week to clear her head and revitalize, so she’s fresher and more energetic when she tackles a new project.

Short-term, flexible schedules often serve to retain the service of strong, dedicated staff members. When she became pregnant with her third child, Cam Kelly, director of planned gifts and bequests in advancement, knew she needed to create a different environment at home and on the job. Hoping not to be forced to decide between leaving her job or tending her family, she sought a creative solution. Logging on to workoptions.com, Kelly purchased a “blueprint” for crafting a successful proposal for a job share. Her investment paid off: she’s now enjoying her third and final year of working a 60 percent schedule. At first, she experimented by working three full days. But she has since found that her current schedule of four short days works best for continuity in the office and with her family.

Smith Staffer Pays It Forward

BY ERIC WELD

In January 1999, Maria Vallesco, assistant for administration in the Office of Institutional Diversity, was enjoying another yearly visit to the Caribbean island of Nevis, lounging under palm trees on the beach near a resort, when terror struck.

Her 13-year-old nephew, Kyle Mangini, ran toward her, yelling that her 13-year-old nephew, Santiago Garcia, wasn’t breathing. The boys, who were good friends, had been playing in the resort pool—challenging each other to hold their breath for long periods under water—when Garcia didn’t come up for air.

When Vallesco ran to her nephew and called out for help, an emergency medical technician applied CPR to the unconscious boy and revived his breathing after several minutes. Still, Garcia was unconscious and convulsing and needed medical attention fast. He was taken to the island’s small Alexandria Hospital where he was admitted in critical condition and monitored—still convulsing—in the point of requiring physical restraint—all through the night.

“It was all very scary,” recalls Vallesco, who stayed up through the night, periodically informing the boy’s frightened mother by telephone. “We didn’t know if he would come back, or if he would have brain damage. He was very close to death.”

Eventually, thanks to the persistent effort of Dwight Tsiatsis, the doctor who attended to Garcia, and his staff, the boy did revive consciousness and, after staying five days in the hospital, had a full recovery.

“It was kind of like a miracle,” Vallesco says. “The doctor couldn’t explain it. He thought it was a miracle.”

As a way of giving back to the hospital and people who feel saved her nephew’s life, Vallesco and her husband, Dan Mangini, travel every January to Nevis with luggage packed full of medical supplies to donate to the institution.

One year they brought a walker along, and it became the only walker in the hospital, says Vallesco. Another year, it was neck braces and bed sheets. They’ve also donated surgical tools and a resuscitator and have plans to bring larger loads to the future. Vallesco and Mangini urge all their friends traveling to the island to bring medical supplies to donate to the hospital too.

Vallesco says she will never forget the heroic effort of the hospital’s personnel when her nephew was in grave danger.

“Since then, we are so grateful,” she says. “We’re trying to give something back, making sure they have enough.”

Today, 17-year-old Santiago Garcia shows no effects from his accident two years ago. He plays football on his high school team and even joined the swim team. “To this day, he doesn’t remember a thing about it,” Vallesco says.

As for his alert cousin, Kyle Mangini, he received an award from the Boy Scouts of America and from former Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci for acting so quickly when Garcia passed out in the water.

Vallesco, who owns a house in Nevis with Dan Mangini, says she plans to retire there some day. Until then and after, she says she will continue to show her gratitude to the hospital that saved her nephew’s life by donating more medical supplies. “It’s never enough,” Vallesco points out. “But it’s something.”
A Diversity Exercise

Imagine yourself standing in a long line, shoulder to shoulder, with people you know as friends and coworkers. You look to the left and right, glancing and smiling at familiar faces. How comfortable you feel. This is an exercise in your diversity workshop. There are about 20 of you. You’re outside on the lawn in front of Wright Hall. The sun is shining.

The workshop facilitator reads a series of statements. You’re instructed to take one step back, or one step forward, depending on your personal response to the situations described. There is no need to speak. You hear only the statements, one after another, after another. Step by step, the line disappears. Soon you’re no longer shoulder to shoulder with your friends.

• “If your primary ethnicity is American, take one step forward.”

• “If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food when you were growing up, take one step back.”

• “If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.”

• “If you were raised in a single-parent household, take one step back.”

• “If you can formalize your love relationship legally through marriage and receive the benefits that accompany marriage, take one step forward.”

• “If one of your parents was ever laid off or unemployed not by choice, take one step back.”

• “If you went to a school where yours was the primary language used in oral and written communication, take one step forward.”

• “If you were ever discouraged from a career choice because of your gender, take one step back.”

• “If you grew up in a home owned by your family, take one step forward.”

• “If you have ever been physically or verbally harassed because of your gender, race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation, take one step back.”

• “If you ever inherited money or property, take one step forward.”

• “If you have ever been paid less or denied a job because of your race, religion or gender, take one step back.”

The list continues. 27 scenarios described. At the end of the exercise, you’re instructed to remain where you are and to look around. You and your friends are scattered, no longer shoulder to shoulder. Some are behind you, some in front. Or perhaps everyone is behind you. Or everyone is in front. The smiles have disappeared. How uncomfortable you are.

You stand frozen as the facilitators help your group process the result. You’re asked: “What are your reactions to where you are in relation to others?” “What questions are raised for you?” “What does this activity suggest about equality of opportunity, discrimination, and privilege?”

This is difficult. Your answers come slowly. This is not just an illustration about hidden and not-so-hidden privileges and disadvantages. These are lives you have all been born into, grown up in and over which you had little or no control. These are people you know. This is real, and this is not a level playing field.

Some Smith staffers are able to pursue other professional interests by choosing a part-time option. Kathleen Nutter AC’90 is able to “support my teaching habit” and continues writing and doing research by working half of a split staff position in the Sophia Smith Collection. Nutter serves as an adjunct faculty member and teaches two history courses a year at Smith. In addition, with the flexibility to work weekends and evenings, she occasionally has free time during the traditional workday; consequently, she was a face in the crowd when her daughter scored her first varsity goal at Pioneer Regional High School last fall. Nutter shares her position with Bond Schlessly, manuscript processor in the Sophia Smith Collection. Three years ago, Bond began working half time in her permanent position when her children were young; she continues to enjoy having extra time for their athletic and musical activities. With two dedicated people sharing the same job, Smith benefits by fostering collaboration, encouraging loyalty, and having different perspectives on problem solving.

In the experimental stage, flexible work schedules require periodic review and evaluation. Information Technology Service’s Uter Support Center tried having staff members answer the phones four long days per week with a weekday off every two or three weeks. But staff members found that being on the phone for extended hours was “just too long.” At their request, they returned to the traditional workday schedule.

Some flex schedules at Smith have grown out of departmental needs to have coverage beyond the traditional workday. Others have evolved from employee needs to accommodate temporary—such as personal responsibilities such as childcare, health issues and elder care. And still others have their own reasons for preferring a flexible work schedule.

Regardless of the circumstances that inspire Smith staffers’ creative and flexible schedules, it’s clear who actually benefits from the program: the college, the participants, those served by staff members, and the people in staffers’ lives—in other words, everyone.

Staff Council Activities Committee Report

On Sunday, April 1, nearly five dozen staff members and their guests tried their luck at Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Ledyard, Connecticut. The trip was organized in response to numerous staff requests.

Paperback Book Exchange. On Wednesday, April 25, Smith employees exchanged their used books in the Neillson Browsing Room. All books that were not exchanged were donated to the Easthampton Rotary Club, which will sell them at a future scholarship fundraiser for students in Easthampton, Southampton and Westhampton.

Bronx Zoo trip. Saturday, June 23. The cost for this trip will be $38 for adults and $34 for children and senior citizens. The trip includes transportation, general admission, a round-trip zoo shuttle and a one-way trip on the Bengal Express Monorail and the Skyfari Cable Car. Admission to the Children’s Zoo, World of Darkness, World of Reptiles and JungleWorld is also included. All reservations must be made and paid for one month in advance of the trip.

Six Flags Discount Ticket Program. Six Flags New England opened for the season on Saturday, April 21. Adult day passes (for guests at least 48 inches tall) are $20.50, a savings of $16.49. Junior passes (for guests between 36 and 48 inches tall) are $18.50. Season passes are $52.50 per person (a discount of $5) and, after being initially processed at Six Flags New England, may be used at any other Six Flags Theme Park. To participate in these and other activities Committee-sponsored events, please send e-mail to Cindy Rucci, crucci@smith.edu, or leave a message on the Staff Council voicemail line (ext. 4124, then press 1 for Activities) —Cindy Rucci
Lunch Buddies

This pilot program, started in January by Human Resources (HR), pairs a new employee with a veteran employee for a free lunch at the Smith College Club or at Davis Center. Inspired by the community-building work of Staff Council, the Lunch Buddies Program pairs employees from different areas of campus, who have different job types and backgrounds or work different shifts—people who might otherwise never meet. Program participants receive a certificate on which is written the name of their new employee’s “lunch buddy,” whom they then contact to set up a date.

Here are some comments from new employees who have had lunch on the program: “Very welcoming and delightful! ’’A wonderful community building program! ’’ ‘‘It’s a good way to meet someone you might not normally meet, another friendly face on campus. ’’ ‘‘We had a great time. How did you know we’d get along?’’

And from some of their hosts: “It turns out we actually knew each other from years and years before. ’’ ‘‘Talking with a new employee helped remind me of why I came to Smith in the first place, to leave the corporate world for an academic environment. ’’ ‘‘We formed an instant bond. ’’

If you want to be a Lunch Buddy, contact Patty Kimura at pkimura@smith.edu, or extension 2286. HR encourages staff and faculty members to volunteer, whether or not they work a shift that doesn’t fall during lunch time.

—Patty Kimura

Staff Feedback About the Parking Garage

It’s not quite as bright as the shell station in Hadley, but then I don’t live next door to it. I love the view from the top floor—the Holyoke range to the east and the state hospital to the west. And it’s a convenient place to park.

—Tom Reddell, dean of the first-year class

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—Patty Kimura, human resources specialist

“To the members of the Smith College Board of Trustees: Thank you for the parking garage!”

—Mary Ann Phoenix, assistant to the provost/den of the faculty

“I appreciate the convenience of not having to search for parking anymore, but since the CDO, Dickinson, and other lots slated for closure are still open, this isn’t an accurate picture of things to come. It won’t be long before we’re once again scrambling for spaces.

As for the allotment of spaces, it seems peculiar to me. Why are car pool participants, who

are certainly worth more noble than I’ll ever be, assigned less than premium spaces between the second and third levels? Visitors and those who drive small cars seem to have fared better than those who are making a sacrifice for their employer and the environment. And why were there so many slots set aside for noncommuting students? While it makes sense to provide sufficient parking for nonresidents such as Hampshire House students and many ADA Constable Scholars, providing additional spaces for boarding students does little to discourage them from bringing their vehicles to campus. Furthermore, the inconvenient location, far from the majority of residences, isn’t likely to reduce the number of vehicles illegally parked on local streets.”

—Cindy Rucci, MARC cataloguer, library

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—Gwenyld Weiss, associate director, human resources

“I haven’t used the garage, but it’s certainly a decent-looking structure (for a garage).”

—Jay A. Yoder, director of investments

The Smith parking garage is a blessing! On occasion, I have early morning meetings off campus, and prior to the parking garage, finding a parking space after 8:30 a.m. was almost impossible. Now when I arrive on campus after off-campus meetings, I drive directly to the parking garage, and I have always found a space. Of course, I park there on other days, too, and I particularly appreciate the shelter for my car when the weather is inclement.

—Juli Marksberry, secretary to the president

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—David Cline, publicity/office coordinator, theatre department

“Before we paved this part of paradise to put up the parking garage, so many of us carved the daily 20-minute parking spot search out of our morning schedules. Now that I have a young family, it is delightful to be able to give that time to them, especially since it is probably the most chaotic time of the day! Another bonus is that the garage has turned the rhythm of morning walks to the office. Each day I walk from the garage with either a new member of the community, an old friend, or someone with whom I’ve rarely had a chance to have a face-to-face conversation.”

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—Elaine Henderson, secretary, office of the provost, dean of the faculty

“I am one of those people who find the garage a time savor even if there might be a spot closer to where I work, I never want to be more, almost without fail I have found a legal spot in the garage. I have seen some nonstaff cars in the stuff parking, but I guess since there is apparently no funding for attendants this is one of the minor kinks we may have to live with. I have noticed with this extraordinary weather is a lack of sand as we walk to the stairs and outside the doors. When we park and all that snow melts, or when the snow blows in, it is sometimes icy when I go to my car.

I would like to suggest that the city repave the lines on west street for crossing at the garage driveway; I find it easier on me and the traffic to cross there instead of at the end of green street.

So, even though I think the building is ugly and wish there wasn’t a need for it, I am using it and enjoying having the convenience of a sheltered parking place!”

—Sylvia Craft, kitchen assistant, RADS

Faculty/Staff Picnic 2001

President Simmons’ farewell Texas barbecue on Thursday, May 3, won’t be the only party to take place this spring. The annual Faculty/Staff Picnic, to take place on Tuesday, June 19, on the athletic field in the middle of the running track, will offer something for each member of your family to enjoy. In addition to the wonderful menu brought to you by our own RADS staff, DJ Ali Ghaliel will play your musical requests. For the building Pedro Martinez in your household, the Fenway Football arcade game will measure the speed of a thrown ball with a radar gun. Younger children will love the mini bounce house while kids aged 3 to 12 can enjoy a 39-foot long giant inflatable slide. Face and nail-painters will round out the entertainment lineup.

Don’t forget to sign up at the event for a chance to win a pair of passes to Six Flags New England amusement park in Agawam. Also, please consider making a donation to this year’s designated charity, Cancer Connection. A table will be set up amid the picnic activities with personnel to accept donations. Cancer Connection is a local nonprofit agency that offers programs and support services to cancer survivors and their families at no cost. See you there!

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Faculty/Staff Picnic 2001

President Smarssen’s farewell? Texas barbeque on Thursday, May 3, won’t be the only party to take place this spring. The annual Faculty/Staff Picnic, to take place on Tuesday, June 19, on the athletic field in the middle of the running track, will offer something for each member of your family to enjoy. In addition to the wonderful menu brought to you by our own RADS staff, DJ Ali Gilani will play your musical requests. For the budding Pedro Martinez in your household, the Fenway Football arcade game will measure the speed of a thrown ball with a radar gun. Younger children will love the mini bounce house while kids aged 3 to 12 can enjoy a 39-foot long giant, inflatable slide. Face and nail-painters will round out the entertainment lineup.

Don’t forget to sign up at the event for a chance to win a pair of passes to Six Flags New England amusement park in Agawam.

Also, please consider making a donation to this year’s designated charity, Cancer Connection. A table will be set up amid the picnic activities with personnel to accept donations. Cancer Connection is a local nonprofit agency that offers programs and support services to cancer survivors and their families at no cost. See you there!”

—Cindy Rucci

“I love the parking garage! It has been particularly great through the snow storms when many spaces are not plowed, and when I can go to my car at the end of the day and not have to brush it off.”

—Gaynelle Weiss, associate director, human resources

“I haven’t used the garage, but it’s certainly a decent-looking structure (for a garage).”

—Jay A. Yoder, director of investments

The Smith parking garage is a blessing! On occasion, I have early morning meetings off campus, and prior to the parking garage, finding a parking space after 8:30 a.m. was almost impossible. Now when I arrive on campus after off-campus meetings, I drive directly to the parking garage, and I have always found a space. Of course, I park there on other days, too, and I particularly appreciate the shelter for my car when the weather is inclement.”

—Julia Manksbury, secretary to the president

“Didn’t even know it was open.”

—David Cline, publicinfox office coordinator, theatre department

“Before we paved this part of paradise to put up the parking garage, so many of us carved the daily 20-minute parking spot search out of our morning schedules. Now that I have a young family, it is delightful to be able to give that time to them, especially since it is probably the most chaotic time of the day! Another bonus is that the garage has turned the rhythm of morning walks to the office. Each day I walk from the garage with either a new member of the community, an old friend, or someone with whom I’ve rarely had a chance to have a face-to-face conversation.”

—Louise Bardon, secretary to the Board of Trustees

“Regarding the new parking garage: All I can say is who knew was on the committee to make this happen, thank you very much.”

—Elaine Henderson, secretary, office of the provost/Dean of the Faculty

“I am one of those people who find the garage a time saver even if there might be a spot closer to where I work, I never want to move more. almost without fail I have found a legal spot in the garage. I have seen some nonstaff cars in the staff parking, but I guess since there is apparently no funding for attendants due to one of the minor kinks we may have to live with. I have noticed this extraordinary weather is a lack of sand as we walk to the stairs and outside the doors. When we park and all that snow melts, or when the snow blows in, it is sometimes icy when I go to get my car.”

I would like to suggest that the city repaint the lines on west street for crossing at the garage driveway, I find it easier on me and the traffic to cross there instead of at the end of green street.

So, even though I think the building is ugly and wish there wasn’t a need for it, I am using it and enjoying having the convenience of a sheltered parking place!”

—Sylvia Craft, kitchen assistant, RADS
A Diversity Exercise

Imagine yourself standing in a long line, shoulder to shoulder, with people you know as friends and coworkers. You look to the left and right, glancing and smiling at familiar faces. How comfortable you feel.

This is the exercise in your diversity workshop. There are about 20 of you. You're outside on the lawn in front of Wright Hall. The sun is shining.

The workshop facilitator reads a series of statements. You're instructed to take one step back, or one step forward, depending on your personal response to the situations described. There's no need to speak. You hear only the statements, one after another, after another. Step by step, the line disappears. Soon you're no longer shoulder to shoulder with your friends.

- “If your primary ethnicity is American, take one step forward.”
- “If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food when you were growing up, take one step back.”
- “If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.”
- “If you were raised in a single-parent household, take one step back.”
- “If you can formalize your love relationship legally through marriage and receive the benefits that accompany marriage, take one step forward.”
- “If one of your parents was ever laid off or unemployed not by choice, take one step back.”
- “If you went to a school where yours was the primary language used in oral and written communication, take one step forward.”
- “If you were ever discouraged from a career choice because of your gender, take one step back.”
- “If you grew up in a home owned by your family, take one step forward.”
- “If you have ever been physically or verbally harassed because of your gender, race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation, take one step back.”
- “If you ever inherited money or property, take one step forward.”
- “If you have ever been paid less or denied a job because of your race, religion or gender, take one step back.”

The list continues, 27 scenarios described. At the end of the exercise, you're instructed to remain where you are and to look around. You and your friends are scattered, no longer shoulder to shoulder. Some are behind you, some in front. Or perhaps everyone is behind you. Or everyone is in front. The smiles have disappeared. How uncomfortable you are.

You stand frozen as the facilitators help your group process the result. You're asked: “What are your reactions to where you are in relation to others?” “What questions are raised for you?” “What does this activity suggest about equality of opportunity, discrimination, and privilege?”

This is difficult. Your answers come slowly. This is not just an illustration about hidden and not-so-hidden privileges and disadvantages. These are lives you have all been born into, grown up in and over which you had little or no control. These are people you know. This is real, and this is not a level playing field.

Some Smith staffers are able to pursue other professional interests by choosing a part-time option. Kathleen Nutter AC '90 is able to “support my teaching habit” and continues writing and doing research by working half of a split staff position in the Sophia Smith Collection. Nutter serves as an adjunct faculty member and teaches two history courses a year at Smith. In addition, with the flexibility to work weekends and evenings, she occasionally has free time during the traditional workday. Consequently, there was a face in the crowd when her daughter scored her first varsity goal at Pioneer Regional High School last fall. Nutter shares her position with Baud Schleissinger, manuscript processor in the Sophia Smith Collection. Three years ago, Baud began working half time in her permanent position when her children were very young; she continues to enjoy having extra time for their athletic and musical activities. With two dedicated people sharing the same job, Smith benefits by fostering collaboration, encouraging loyalty, and having different perspectives on problem solving.

In the experimental stage, flexible work schedules require periodic review and evaluation. Information Technology Service’s User Support Center tried having staff members answer the phones four long days per week with a weekday off every two or three weeks. But staff members found that being on the phone for extended hours was “just too long.” At their request, they returned to a traditional workday schedule.

Some flex schedules at Smith have grown out of departmental needs to have coverage beyond the traditional workday. Others have evolved from employee needs to accommodate temporary—as well as permanent—as personal responsibilities such as childcare, health issues and elder care. And still others have other reasons for proposing a flexible work schedule.

Regardless of the circumstances that inspire Smith staffers’ creative and flexible schedules, it’s clear who actually benefits from the program: the college, the participants, those served by staff members, and the people in staffers’ lives—in other words, everyone.

Staff Council Activities Committee Report

On Sunday, April 1, nearly five dozen staff members and their guests tried their luck at Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Ledyard, Connecticut. The trip was organized in response to numerous staff requests.

Paperback Book Exchange. On Wednesday, April 25, Smith employees exchanged their used books in the Nelson Browsing Room. All books that were not exchanged were donated to the Easthampton Rotary Club, which will sell them at a future scholarship fundraiser for students in Easthampton, Southampton and Westhampton.

Bronx Zoo trip. Saturday, June 23. The cost for this trip will be $38 for adults and $34 for children and senior citizens. The trip includes transportation, general admission, a round-trip zoo shuttle and a one-way trip on the Long Island Express Monorail and the Skyfari Cable Car. Admission to the Children’s Zoo, World of Darkness, World of Reptiles and Jungle World is also included. All reservations must be made and paid for one month in advance of the trip.

Six Flags Discount Ticket Program. Six Flags New England opened for the season on Saturday, April 21. Adult day passes (for guests at least 48 inches tall) are $20.50, a savings of $16.49. Junior passes (for guests between 36 and 48 inches tall) are $18.50. Season passes are $52.50 per person (a discount of $5) and, after being initially processed at Six Flags New England, may be used at any other Six Flags Theme Park.

To participate in these and other Activities Committee-sponsored events, please send e-mail to Cindy Rucci, crucci@smith.edu, or leave a message on the Staff Council voicemail line (ext. 4424, then press 1 for Activities).

—Cindy Rucci
Everyone Wins With Flex Time Program

 Supervisors and staff members at Smith may ask, with justification, "What's in it for me?" when a flexible work schedule is proposed. Ideally, a flexible work schedule benefits both the department and the worker.

Mary Martineau, research associate in advancement, works Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As a result, her department can provide greater coverage early in the morning, and Mary, who happens to be a morning person, is able to concentrate in a quiet environment and focus on her research with few interruptions. As a personal benefit, Mary has the freedom to schedule her mother's doctor's appointments on Fridays.

Jane Clayton, circulation assistant at Nellson Library and a Smith employee since 1975, works a four-day week from 8:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. She was asked to change to this schedule to accommodate the library's busy afternoons. While she has a choice about which day to take off, she usually stays out Thursday so she can "take care of some of my life" on a weekday rather than cramming errands and chores into the weekend.

With flexible schedules, longtime employees can often avoid burnout and creative types can keep their juices flowing with more control over their work lives. For example, Parry Hayes, publications manager in college relations and a Smith employee since 1985, works a week of four long days. Not only does that arrangement provide longer blocks of time during the day for designing publications, but it also gives Parry a day off during the week to clear her head and revitalize, so she's fresh and energetic when she tackles a new project.

Short-term, flexible schedules often serve to retain the service of strong, dedicated staff members. When she became pregnant with her third child, Cam Kelly, director of planned gifts and bequests in advancement, knew she needed to create a different environment at home and on the job. Hoping not to be forced to decide between leaving her job or tending her family, she sought a creative solution. Logging on to www.workoptions.com, Kelly purchased a "blueprint" for crafting a successful proposal for a job share. Her investment paid off: she's now enjoying her third and final year of working a 60 percent schedule.

At first, she experimented by working three full days. But she has since found that her current schedule of four short days works best for continuity in the office and with her family.

Smith Staffer Pays It Forward

BY ERIC WELD

In January 1999, Maria Vallejo, assistant for administration in the Office of Institutional Diversity, was enjoying another yearly visit to the Caribbean island of Nevis, lounging under palm trees on the beach near a resort, when terror struck.

Her 13-year-old nephew, Kyle Mangini, ran toward her, yelling that her 13-year-old nephew, Santiago Garcia, wasn't breathing. The boys, who were good friends, had been playing in the resort pool-challenging each other to hold their breath for long periods under water—when Garcia didn't come up for air. When Vallejo ran to her nephew and called out for help, an emergency medical technician applied CPR to the unconscious boy and revived his breathing after several minutes. Still, Garcia was unconscious and convulsing and needed medical attention fast. He was taken to the island's small Alexandra Hospital where he was admitted in critical condition and monitored—still convulsing in the point of requiring physical restraint—all through the night.

"It was all very scary," recalls Vallejo, who stayed up through the night, periodically informing the boy's frightened mother by telephone.

"We didn't know if he would come back, or if he would have brain damage. He was very close to death."

Eventually, thanks to the persistent effort of Dwight Thwaites, the doctor who attended Garcia, and his staff, the boy did revive consciousness and, after staying five days in the hospital, had a full recovery.

"It was kind of like a miracle," Vallejo says. "The doctor couldn't explain it. He thought it was a miracle."

As a way of giving back to the hospital and people who she feels saved her nephew's life, Vallejo and her husband, Dan Mangini, travel every January to Nevis with luggage packed full of medical supplies to donate to the institution.

One year they brought a walker along, and it became the only walker in the hospital, says Vallejo. Another year, it was neck braces and bed sheets. They've also donated surgical tools and a resuscitator and have plans to bring larger loads in the future. Vallejo and Mangini urge all their friends traveling to the island to bring medical supplies to donate to the hospital too.

Vallejo says she will never forget the heroic effort of the hospital's personnel when her nephew was in grave danger. "Since then, we are so grateful," she says. "We're trying to give something back, making sure they have enough."

Today, 17-year-old Santiago Garcia shows no effects from his accident two years ago. He plays football on his high school team and even joined the swim team. "To this point, he doesn't remember a thing about it," Vallejo says.

As for his alert cousin, Kyle Mangini, he received an award from the Boy Scouts of America and from former Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci for acting so quickly when Garcia passed out in the water.

Vallejo, who owns a house in Nevis with Dan Mangini, says she plans to retire there some day. Until then and after, she says she will continue to show her gratitude to the hospital that saved her nephew's life by donating more medical supplies.

"It's never enough," Vallejo points out. "But it's something."
Simmons
continued from page 1

valued. Governance of the college and identification of institutional priorities must include full participation by members of the staff." (The Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation, Committee on Mission and Priorities, College Council, and the President's Search Committee all include staff members.)

At the top of her list of staff-centered changes is the leadership at Human Resources (HR), she says. "Lianne Sullivan-Crowley is truly outstanding. She has brought the right sensitivities, respect and generosity of spirit, along with great intelligence, to her position here. I found it essential that she should become a member of the Senior Staff so that we can benefit from her wise counsel on college-wide issues." She feels strongly that "the job of HR is not protecting the administration from the workers, but is to advocate for those workers."

Ruth stressed that her current campaign toward greater civility is meant to "help us all understand how to better relate to each other in all settings on campus, and beyond."

Just as our time together was ending, we asked, what is the single aspect of her presidency about which she is most proud. Her answer: "My relationship to students—without questions. I take great satisfaction in having had the opportunity to influence thousands of young women, to speak with them about things like love, justice and truth; to help shape their values and aspirations. There is nothing more important to me."

And what of the next Smith president? "That person will need the independence to ignore the common statement, 'That's not how we do it here,' and enough courage to swallow hard and sometimes do just the opposite of what they are advised, and try new things, like the holiday break for Smith staff."

So, like the college's graduates each year, another very bright woman has spent time at Smith College and now goes out to help make another part of the vineyard a better place. She goes with our thanks for having been a part of our lives—once, and with our very warmest wishes for great success at Brown University.
Dear Ruth...

BY PATTY KIMURA
(for Staff Council)

As you prepare to leave Smith, I thought I would share a bit of what I have heard from members of the Smith staff. Perhaps the greatest tribute to your tenure is reflected by the enormous sense of loss many of us feel about your decision to leave Smith for Brown University. Although some may question the sincerity of calling the "Happy Valley" for the "locally named Rhode Island" (it's not really an island, you know), we also know that we can celebrate your move to Brown as a tribute to your equally enormous success as a member of the Smith community.

A lot has happened in your six years here. The institution and the staff community have changed in ways that many of us thought might never happen. You have joined us in building a civil and changing community that celebrates and respects diversity and difference. Together we have created a community with its own identity, more flexibility, increased staff participation in governance, and more support for our diverse families and, most importantly, the understanding that good can be done, and better done together than apart.

Staff Council has often asked the Smith president to do her part to improve things. But we also recognize that we staff members have a responsibility to improve the quality of life and work at the institution. Part of the success of Smith's staff is dependent on our community and our neighborhood—our support of one another. This works only if we can find the openness with which to look beyond the things that separate us.

In spring 2003, Staff Council created a proposal for a new initiative: Diversity/Problem-Solving/Leadership training for Staff Council members. We asked for your help, and, along with Ruth Constantine, you gave it. Your support helped bring together 27 staff members in a six-week workshop designed to transform participants' various beliefs into something practical and give them the ability to lead others in creative new ways. The training changed many of us, and it changed how we collectively view the role of Staff Council.

We have since sponsored a community forum on diversity; promoted a Lunch & Learn series; became involved in more collegewide committees; helped new employees create opportunities for employees from different areas of campus to work together; increased staff participation in the CCE; held departmental meetings; taught ways to bring service and non-service staff together; created a cross-campus Staff Council departmental liaison list; continued to look at ways to improve our responsiveness to and representation of all areas of campus and more. We couldn't have done any of this alone; your inspiration and support have been critical to our success.

When staff members were asked what qualities they would like to see in the next Smith president, they listed qualities that describe you. This is remarkable considering that Smith staffers are notable for their forceful and passionate diversity of opinion. When we agree it really means something. We also share a concern for the college and an understanding of the unique issues that affect the quality of work and community here. We understand the difficulties and complexities of leading a place as special as Smith. And take it from us, you've done a good job.

Though some of us may continue to suffer now and then from Brown University envy, we wish you the best. You once said that you were one of us, a member of the staff; and we are honored to share this title with you.

As staff members, we are proud to have worked alongside you "to provide Smith College students with exceptional and innovative services and to participate actively in their education and growth," as the Smith College Staff Mission Statement reads.

We bid you a fond farewell with grateful thanks. May you find all you dream and more. It was great working with you.

Bon voyage (it's still not an island).
There are many ways you can communicate with us. Questions, comments or ideas are always welcome!

E-MAIL: staffcouncil@alum.smith.edu
THE WEB: www.smith.edu/staffcouncil
(Check the Staff Council web page for current times, dates, and deadlines.)
CAMPUS MAIL: Send mail to the Staff Council office in Central Services.
TELEPHONE OR IN PERSON: See the Staff Council roster for contact information.

STAFF COUNCIL SPONSORED COMMUNITY FORUMS

For more information about the discount program, visit www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/discount_page.html