Staff Volunteers Provide Many Helping Hands

BY ERIC WELD

Late last year, about a week before Christmas, Connie Dragon, payroll and billing assistant in the Physical Plant, spent part of her days driving around to people's homes in Easthampton and its surrounding towns, delivering presents to their children. Then she purchased and delivered gifts to some of the area's nursing home residents and people unable to leave the place where they live. At other times during each year, Dragon delivers gifts to elderly people in need, or plans to people in nursing homes, and she helps organize a Valentine's Day brunch for seniors and periodic pizza parties for local veterans.

It's all part of Dragon's work as a volunteer in the community, a role to which she donated a substantial amount of time throughout the year. Dragons among many who serve as Smith staff members who give of their time, effort, creativity and knowledge to help those in need and to brighten the seasons of people who can use it. It's impossible to say how many volunteers there are among Smith's 900 staff employees because most of them don't bring attention to their efforts. But almost every department and office on campus employs someone who donates time and talent to those in need, either individually, by working with local nonprofit agencies, or often through the church.

Most of Dragon's volunteering is carried out through her membership in Helping Hand, an Easthampton nonprofit organization that assists people in need in that town and those surrounding it. She also belongs to the Immaculate Conception Church's Women's Club and the Hampstead County Business and Professional Women's Club, both of which coordinate volunteer projects.

Susan Stano, senior associate director in student financial services, does some of her volunteering as the "Western Massachusetts coordinator for Project Linus, a national organization that collects and distributes handmade blankets to children who are ill or are experiencing trauma. In addition to knitting her own contributions to Project Linus, Stano has enlisted the efforts of other Smith staff, taking in blankets from officiants Myra Buss Smith, director of student financial services, and Pattie Coray, associate director."

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Dear Readers...

The lives of Smith staff members outside the workplace remains a mystery to many of those with whom we share office and campus space every day. We build strong working relationships with a long list of fellow employees while depending on them for professional support and expertise to get through the day. But for many of us, what our fellow staffers do with their time after they’ve left the campus is anybody’s guess.

It is, after all, their business. But we’ve found that many Smith staffers spend their time outside campus in meaningful, creative and productive ways that often help others in the process. So in an effort to bring their efforts to light, we tell some of their stories in this issue, along with the typical mix of information and news that we try to pack into every edition.

Thanks for reading.—EW

The Council Chronicle

WINTER 2001

News and more for the Smith College community

THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE IS FUNDED BY THE SMITH COLLEGE STAFF COUNCIL AND IS PUBLISHED IN JANUARY, APRIL, JULY AND OCTOBER BY AND FOR THE STAFF OF SMITH COLLEGE, NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS. THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE IS DISTRIBUTED TO STAFF, FACULTY AND COLLEGE TRUSTEES.

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DESIGN
PATRICIA C. HAYES

WHAT CAN I DO?
While working in a kitchen I overhear two workers telling offensive jokes and I interrupted them. It might be my neighbor. She will be the second person of color to move into my neighborhood and I will be an ally to her. I only came in at the break today, yet the effect of the workshop extends into work with a difference in attitude; the students were served the best beef stroganoff they ever ate tonight. The power we have in turning negative into positive and what we can do ourselves to change. I took a little step today and I hope others did too. What we are doing is creating change. I have been thinking about how every diversity training has changed me, I am more outspoken when incidents happen.

OUR PATH
"The answers lie right here, we are looking to each other. We have to give ourselves permission to make mistakes. If we are to be perfect and always right we will kill ourselves or stop trying to change. I am not more cynical about community and diversity. There is hope. The answers need to be concrete, not just ideas. We need to focus on making this training mandatory. This is hard stuff and it is amazing how we can think about it together. This work started with a small group of people, first we were three, then six, then the steering committee, then the full staff council. Each piece needed to fit, we felt our way along. We are working for a common cause, there is a path out there, and no two of us are going to put our feet in the same exact place.” Staff Council drafted two Plans of Action—one an ambitious plan for the community and the other on a departmental level.

OUR COMMUNITY PLAN
1. Integrate Diversity Training as Part of Employee Orientation, Training and Performance Review
   • Institutionalize Diversity Training for new employees within the first year of employment
   • Make Diversity Training mandatory for current employees
   • Find ways to integrate Diversity Training in the work performance review

II. Representation and Outreach of Staff Council with Other Campus Groups
   • Increase council participation on the Campus Climate Working Group (CCWG)
   • Join Orelis Cornwell Day Committee (a joint academic/staff program)
   • Add a Staff Council member to CCWG committee
   • Foster outreach to other campus groups including the Student Government Association

III. Projects
   • Create a "diversity project" each year for Staff Council to work on
   • Sponsor one participatory event each year
   • Develop an annual group/team building Staff Council event
   • Sponsor a community forum focused on Diversity

IV. Networking, Publicity
   • Encourage the editors of the Council Chronicle to maintain a focus on diversity when thinking of story ideas
   • Let our departments know about Staff Council’s commitment to diversity, share our experiences from the workshops

V. Civility vs Diversity, Keeping the Conversation Alive
   • Staff Council Steering Committee should maintain a focus on diversity each month
   • Initiate conversations regarding civility vs diversity

OUR DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN
• Push for mandatory Diversity Training for whole departments (Advancement model)
• Include unions in decisions which affect staff
• Encourage others while sharing our experience
• Initiate conversations with co-workers about diversity
• Help the college foster a change in behaviors not attitudes
• Foster alliances with groups outside our comfort zones (lunch groups, projects, etc.)
• Identify ourselves as Staff Councilors and state our council commitment to diversity
• Use the work we have done in training in other situations
• Become active allies

"Bigotry is learned... And if learned, it can be unlearned."

Johnnetta B. Cole
Imagine Yourself in Good Shape

BY SID DALBY

Have you ever curled up this winter with an Afghan on the couch, watching old movies and sports right after night? Do the infomercials for contraptions to strengthen your abdominal muscles make you crave sweets more than a flat stomach?

If so, you’re not alone. During this time of year, many well-intentioned staff members furiously exercise. If you are among the 50 percent of Americans who made a New Year’s resolution to shape up, you can find inspiration on campus among fellow staff members, who are doing their best to keep moving through the winter months.

Lisa Brossard, director of admissions, keeps in shape by working out at lunch. “Do your best to avoid scheduling lunch meetings,” she says, “and if you have a friend you want to catch up with, walk together. I know there are many people who are good about getting up in the morning and exercising, but it’s the winter when the mornings are dark and cold. It’s so hard for me to get out of bed.”

A bonus of exercising at lunch is the boost it gives to your energy level all afternoon. Lunch hour at Ainsworth is a time to catch up with staffers from other offices. You need to show your Smith ID to use the athletic facilities at Smith, and towel service is available for $5 a semester.

Consider taking one of the classes offered specifically for staff. Lisa Thompson teaches yoga to staff every day at noon. Kathy Yarnell, administrative assistant in the Campus School, is a devo-tée and admits, “I really love it and look forward to the one or two times a week that I go to a class.”

There is no question that the weather keeps a lot of us inside. Barbara Brehm Curtis, associate professor of Exercise and Sport Studies, cautions, “One of the keys to making friends with winter is clothing. Dress in layers. Another key is positive thinking. You have to at least pretend you like winter if you live in New England. Otherwise you spend too much of the year feeling bad about the weather.”

If you plan to run outside, follow the lead of Jim Hardy, purchasing manager. Wear shoes that have good tread for ice, and wear brightly colored clothes because icy winds can mask the visibility of drivers. Even with these precautions, Jim finds he’s “ready, willing and able to dive into a snow bank at a moment’s notice to avoid vehicles.”

It’s never too late to start (or restart) exercising. Swimming and diving coach Kim Bierwert suggests that if you are beginning an exercise program, you get clearance from a physician. “Do not be too ambitious,” he says. “The biggest failure of initial exercisers is to do too much too soon. Start small with your comfort zone and build from there. Start with easy walking, biking or swimming for 15–25 minutes a few times per week and build from there. In the weight room start off with 15 repetitions with fairly light weight so there is not an initial onset of serious soreness or pain.”

If all else fails, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine yourself in tip-top physical shape. If you can imagine something, it’s possible.
Karin George

Juggling Success, One Step at a Time

At 9:15 p.m., on October 14, I was startled to have come across Karin George (my boss), vice president for development and chief advancement officer, after a cocktail party and dinner at the Alumni House, that celebrated

BY MARY the Ada MARTINEAU Comstock Scholars Program's silver anniversary. Didn't she run in the Hartford Marathon that very morning? "I sure did," she said. She felt it was her professional obligation to attend the evening's festivities, she said. But she had to admit, she was also caught up in the excitement of the evening. Karin, as "Smithie" herself, class of 1986, feels a special pride in the college. "Adas are the true marathoners," she said.

Though her stride wasn’t as energetic as earlier in the day, she still smiled, and our brief encounter left me wondering how such a busy woman manages her own modern-day juggling act.

A former Smith track star, Karin likens her triumphant finish in the Hartford Marathon that day with the step-by-step scholarly pursuit of Ada. "One just needs to keep putting one foot in front of the other until the finish line is crossed."

Though she had taken a break from competitive running since the birth of her son, Will, four years ago, one of Karin’s dreams has been to run in the Boston marathon. In order to qualify for that prestigious race, she needed to finish the Hartford marathon with a time under 3 hours, 45 minutes. She easily qualified with a time of 3 hours, 28 minutes in her eighth marathon.

With her husband, Rick, in his second year of law school, and Will enrolled at Fort Hill Campus School, the Georges live a hectic life—no nanny, no housekeeper and only an occasional babysitter. Add into the mix that Karin must spend a good share of her work time (40 to 45 percent, she says) on the road, viewing alumni/me, friends of the college and students’ parents in the midst of Smith's capital campaign. Therefore, she says she treasures her time at home.
A Mid-Campus Jewel

Paradise Pond may be the mid-campus jewel in photographs and alumnae memories, but the Neilson Library has more to do with the academic enterprise that is the raison d'être of Smith College. Behind its grey exterior lies more than 1,300,000 books, by PATRICIA manuscript, journals, L. SKARDA and magazines that are the most resistant student, to undergo the most arcane research of the faculty, and to delight virtually all members of the staff.

To make each and every treasure accessible to all users, more than 64 staff members labor long and hard ordering, receiving, cataloging, preparing, shelving (and reshelving) and checking out (and in) anything students, faculty, and staff (or need) to study. This endless work is carried out by Smith's noble heroes and heroines, who are often unseen and usually taken for granted.

Early last year, I needed an obituary that was buried in The New York Times or Daily Hampshire Gazette. I learned then that more than 20 daily newspapers from all over the world are ordered and filed according to a Dewey decimal scheme by Jane Clayton, circulation assistant, whose interface with faculty is more often in preparing reserve materials for classes. In Jane's weekend absence, I set myself the task of redistributing each paper by kind in an effort to find what I needed. It was a dirty task, and consumed more of my time than I would have Jane's, for she had a system in place that remained a mystery to me. My admiration grew with the exercise. How much I relied on Jane, I thought, and how much I took her for granted. Never before had I realized that the staff in Neilson (in the Hillier Art Library, Josten Library and Young Science Library) made it easy for me to find what I and my students need—fast.

Systematically each semester, I fill out the forms for reserve books, even reserve videos, managed inadequately by Melene Zych, nonprint resource specialist, and sometimes even slides, managed with unfulfilled good humor by Beverly Conin, curator of slides, but there I stop, my responsibilities ended and their new beginning. It's time to credit those who do the real work to facilitate the reading and seeing and hearing I require of my students.

This fall, as in others, I asked Martin Antomini, curator of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, to present William Blake as book artist, to my Romantic Poetry and Prose class. Just seeing an original Blake (along with a host of facsimiles) made instant Blake scholars of my students, who before had little more than texts and black and white drawings to heighten their awareness of Blake's achievements. Later in the semester, Karen Kukli, assistant curator of rare books, challenged this same class to see Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as it never read since its first publication in 1818, a text as modern and as attractive to artists and publishers now as it was then. Karen always suggests a number of topics or horror themes, especially one on the reception of Frankenstein, which could be informed by the vast collection of 19th-century playbills and 20th-century edition covers. Known more recently for her distinguished editing of the journals of Sylvia Plath, Karen plays several strings on the fine instrument of the rare book collection.

When editing Textured Lives: Celebrating Ada Comstock Scholars at Smith College (2000) and Smith Voices: Selected Works by Smith College Alumnae (1999), I relied heavily on Nanci Young, college archivist, and Sherrill Redmond, coordinator of special collections, for answers to questions raised in the essays of introductions to these alumnae. I quipped half seriously that Nanci was the smallest woman at the college because she was unfailingly accurate and expeditious in getting back to me. And Sherrill facilicated my selections in ways I could not have imagined alone.

Every one of my class profs from learning just a bit more about research possibilities than I can teach, and I rely heavily on Bruce Sajdak, assistant reference librarian, to keep me and my students up to date on easiest and best ways to access library resources. Sometimes students and (I) have recourse to interlibrary loan, where Susan Daily (Zane), Naemi Suirevent and Christina Ryan can get anything ever imagined.

Born in Switzerland, Karin spent her formative years in Syracuse, New York. Her brir life is very different, she says, from her experience growing up, the daughter of a college professor and stay-at-home mom. As a working mother, Karin wrestles with the same question as many of today's women: how does one juggle a professional career with family responsibilities? Karin hits the desk running (literally) at 5 a.m. At least four days a week, she does running togs and completes a half- or full-hour run. Running gives her some much-needed, rare time alone, she says, while alleviating stress and giving her space to contemplate life's challenges. The best part of running, she explains, is that she can do it anywhere. "All you need is a pair of sneakers." In 1998, when Smith conducted a search for a new chief advancement officer, a head-hunting firm approached Karin, happily ensconced at the time in her job as vice president for advancement at Vassar College. A job at her alma mater appealed to Karin, who has roots in the Pioneer Valley with her energetic, 90-year-old grandmother living in Springfield, where her father grew up. Another factor in her decision to come Smith came after meeting President Ruth Simmons. Karin was excited by Ruth's vision and her goals for the college.

Karin oversees an advancement office staff of 82 employees. She attributes her success as a manager to her wonderful staff. She compliments her talented, hardworking staff members and trusts them to do a great job, believing in allowing them to shine for themselves. As with any great manager, that light comes back to shine even brighter on Karin George.

It hasn't always been so bright in Karin's career. When asked to describe her oldest job, Karin recalled the summer before her senior year in college. She worked in the environmental lab for an engineering firm—analyzing sewage sludge samples. It wasn't the most glamorous job in the world, she admits, but the compensation was great and she made "lots of money" (good thing!). Considering that experience, no one can ever say that the vice presidents for development and chief advancement officer don't know how to get clean and dirty with the best of them.

Volunteers

continued from page 1

Student financial services employees have also teamed up in the past two years to raise money for the Jimmy Fund by participating in its annual marathon, which traces the route of the Boston Marathon. Coray, Stano, Smith, Shelly Corriol, assistant director of loans and grants, and Valerie Schumacher, student employment/fund coordinator, walked and ran a total of 117.9 miles in September to raise nearly $3,000 for the fund.

Campus volunteers say it's the feeling of accomplishment they get from giving that partly drives their volunteerism—that and, sometimes, the looks on the faces of those who benefit from it. "I can't put into words how moving it is to see," says Schumacher of the rousing reception she and her cohorts received from the Jimmy Fund beneficiaries upon finishing the marathon. "I didn't expect the emotional impact of it. All those people were cheering for us." "You should see these kids and their parents," Dragon says, referring to the looks of gratitude from those who receive her presents. "Some of these kids probably don't get much for Christmas and they appreciate any help they can get."

Some volunteer efforts by Smith staffs are individual endeavors. For the past two holiday seasons, public safety officer Bob Young donned a red and white Santa Claus outfit and canvassed the campus to raise money for Jessie's House, a local homeless shelter. Cathy Brooks, publications secretary in college relations, does the choirs at her church in Easthampton, and contributes her efforts to the annual parish bazaar. Alan Bloomgarden, associate director of faculty grants and community relations in advancement, serves on a voluntary basis as the president of the Hatfield Foundation for the enhancement of Education, a group that raises money for the town's schools. And in every campus office, volunteers each year coordinate contributions toward the college's United Way campaign.

Last year, the Office of Advancement conducted a survey among its employees regarding their volunteerism and determined that more than 50 community organizations have benefited from their input.

The tireless volunteerism of Smith's staff members is essential to the success and quality of life in the towns surrounding the college. And staff employees here know their volunteer efforts are needed. They say, but as Brooks puts it, volunteerism provides its own rewards. "I love volunteering because it energizes me," she says. "I feel like I've accomplished something without having any monetary compensation for it. It always seems to lift my spirits."

Schumacher agrees. She says, simply, "It's just a great feeling."
The Selection of EEA Winners

Each year, Employee Excellence Award (EEA) recipients are chosen by a committee made up of six volunteer employers. These six reflect the diversity of our community, and based on the recommendation of last year's committee, this year's group also included two of 1999's EEA recipients. The 2000 committee was Shawn Connolly (Local 211), Felicia Leveille (1990 EEA recipient, academic support), Eric Leach (1999 EEA recipient, administrative), Michelle Moye (administrative support), Dennis Seymour (Local 211), and Mastlyn Woodman (administrative).

The committee had the enormous task of reading through more than 70 nomination forms written by staff about the extraordinary work of their peers. The hard work was deciding the final 11 winners from among so many deserving employees. The 2000 committee selected Christine Barbutto, Cathy Brooks, Charlene Correa, Debby Diemand, Candy Furtak, Ay Ling Han, Janice McDowell, Terriech Rich, Steve Stander, Ann Walton, and Joanna West.

As part of its work, the 2000 EEA Selection Committee made these recommendations for the future:

- Begin the nomination process earlier in the calendar year.
- Expand the time the committee reviews the applications from two weeks to three or four.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the committee until after awards have been presented.
- Recommend review of award for teams.
- Continue the peer nominated-peer selected Employee Excellence Award three-year pilot program.

Look for information in early spring about the 2001 Employee Excellence Awards—Patty Kinuma

Caution: Heavy Party

Spotting recently converging on the Smith campus: two brand new bucket loaders, a brand new track excavator, an 80-tow crane, a time truck with a telephone pole atop, a crane truck, Bobcat, Lull, fork lift, high lift crane, and a high-powered light for night work.

Was it a contractor equipping one of the many construction job sites on the Smith campus? No. It was the highly creative decorative crew's transformation of the Indoor Track and Tennis Facility (ITT) for the fourth annual President's Winter Party 2001.

When a construction theme surfaced in a brainstorming session, there was some skepticism and some worry as to how guests would react to a decidedly casual theme that was different from previous party schemes.

The vision came together as the decorating subcommittee presented ideas after whimsical idea, and the full committee soon hopped on board. By the time the party was staged, there were lights spilling out of buckets to simulate overflowing construction "goo", paint-covered drop cloths floating from the ceiling, plastic hardhats and crumpled construction plans decorating gurney tables, scaffolding supporting abstract construction material vignettes and a dance floor that looked like a giant compost pit for an advanced abatement project—mirror ball included!

Guests danced throughout the evening in the cozy "lumber room" on the big band sounds of Don Bartuch's orchestra and to requests played by DJ Ali Glade.

The culinary offerings were, as always, exciting and tasty: hot carved turkey and various pastas for every taste from White Glove catering Chinese and Mexican delicacies from Padua Garden and La Veracruz; and the perennial favorite: ice cream from Steve Harelli’s.

As we visited with guests throughout the evening, the most appropriate comparison I could make was this for people in the construction business, using these 10 pieces of powerful equipment as the focus of the decorating theme was like bringing out the good china for company. They brought the heavy equipment into a venue in which everyone could see and touch its power and mass as we celebrated a year of hard work with colleagues from all over campus.

Committee co-chairs Amy Holich and Peg Pinet extend their thanks to the committee (Gary Harpwell, Lou Barden, Pat Coby, Dick Briggs, Mylin Cummings, Rick Rubin, Karl Kowitz, Matt Gawron, Alicia Guidotti, Janice McDowell, and Monica Regino) and to the Physical Plant paint, electrical and carpentry and building service groups, who provided technical support and astounding creative talents—Amy Holich

A Different Time, A Different Smith

Shuichi Kusaka

As we embark upon a new century, many campus groups, including Staff Council, have been asked to focus on issues of diversity and tolerance. But back in the period following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the appointment of a 27-year-old physics instructor named Shuichi Kusaka in the fall of 1943, unleashed a swarm of criticism and put a serious strain on town-gown relations.

At a time when colleges and universities were struggling to meet the need for trained physicists for teaching and research positions, Smith's physics department was seriously understaffed due to its own members' contributions to the war effort. Temporary appointments had to be made to fill the void. So with the approval of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Immigration and Naturalization Services, and the recommendation of distinguished physicist, Smith College hired Shuichi Kusaka.

Kusaka was born in Osaka, Japan, but was sent to Canada to live with an older sister at age 4. Kusaka was educated in Vancouver schools, and after graduation received a bachelor's degree from the University of British Columbia, a master's from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a doctorate from the University of California. He spent a year on a traveling fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University before coming to Northampton. Although he would have preferred to enlist in the United States Army, Kusaka was a resident alien, and therefore ineligible.

When it became known that Smith College had hired a Japanese faculty member, controversy followed. Without regard to his character, credentials or loyalty to his adopted country, the local newspaper, board of alderman, labor unions, Legionnaires, and state hospital employees urged for Kusaka's dismissal. He could not get a hair cut at a local barbershop and wasn't served in the town's restaurants. There were threats to tar and feather Kusaka and dump him in Paradise Pond. The employees union, Local 263, which counted 36 of its members and fellow employees among the armed forces fighting the Japanese, found itself in the unusual position of opposing an academic appointment. A strike was only avoided because it would have undermined the U.S. Navy's on-campus training of W.A.V.E.S.

Frustrated with Smith's refusal to fire the young professor, a few angry residents threatened to pull the windows of 74 Elm Street with tomatoe, believing it was the resistance of Kusaka's sponsor, college Chaplin A. Burns Chalmers. (It was the role of French professor John Smith, who awoke to a scene of smashed glass and ruined furniture. Kusaka was safely in his home at 7 College Lane.)

Kusaka finally got his wish in the summer of 1944, when he was allowed to enlist in the United States Army. After completing basic training at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia, Kusaka spent two years of enlisted service at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. His work at Aberdeen was of such great value that intervention of the highest authority was required to bring about his release, after which he returned to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton.

In August 1947, Kusaka drowned in a swimming accident at Beach Haven, New Jersey. At the time of his death he was a naturalized American citizen.
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In August 1947, Kusaka drowned in a swimming accident at Beach Haven, New Jersey. At the time of his death he was a naturalized American citizen.
A Mid-Campus Jewel

Paradise Pond may be the mid-campus jewel in photographs and alumnae memories, but the Neilson Library has more to do with the academic enterprise that is the raison d'être of Smith College. Behind its grave exterior lie more than 1,000,000 books, by Patricia manuscripts, journals, L. Skarda and magazines to inspire the most resistant student, to undergird the most arcane research of the faculty, and to delight virtually all members of the staff.

To make each and every resource accessible to all users, more than 64 staff members labor long and hard ordering, receiving, cataloging, preparing, shelving (and reshelving) and checking out (and in) anything students, faculty, and staff want (or need) to study. This endless work is carried out by Smith's noble heroes and heroines, who are often unsung and usually taken for granted.

Early last year, I needed an obituary that was buried in The New York Times or Daily Hampshire Gazette. I learned then that more than 90 daily newspapers from all over the world are ordered and filed according to a swastik in marble by Jane Clayton, circulation assistant, whose interface with faculty is more often in preparing reserve materials for classes. In June's weekend absence, I selected the task of redistributing each paper by kind in an effort to find what I needed. It was a dirty task, and consumed more of my time than it would have Jane's, for she had a system in place that remained a mystery to me. My admiration grew with the exercise. How much I relied on Jane, I thought, and how much I took her for granted. Never before had I realized that the staff in Neilson (and in the Hillyer Art Library, Josten Library and Young Science Library) made it easy for me to find what I and my students need—fast.

Systeematically each semester, I fill out the forms for reserve books, even reserve videos, managed indistinguishably by Melanie Zvony, nonprint resources specialist, and sometimes even slides, managed with unfailing good humor by Beverly Conlin, curator of slides, but there I stop, my responsibilities ended and their new beginning. It's time to credit those who do the real work to facilitate the reading and seeing and hearing I require of my students.

This fall, as in others, I asked Martin Antonetti, curator of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, to present William Blake as book artist, to my Romantic Poetry and Prose class. Just seeing an original Blake (along with a host of facsimiles) made instant Blake scholars of my students, who before had little more than texts and black and white drawings to heighten their awareness of Blake's achievements. Later in the semester, Karen Kukli, assistant curator of fine books, challenged this same class to see Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as an Extant version since its first publication in 1818, a text as modern and as attractive to artists and publishers now as it was then. Karen always suggests a number of topics for honors theses, especially on the reception of Frankenstein, which could be informed by the vast collection of 19th-century playbills and 20th-century edition covers. Known more recently for her distinguished editing of the journals of Sylvia Plath, Karen plays several strings on the fine instrument of the rare book collection.

When editing Tenured Lives: Celebrating Ada Comstock Scholars at Smith College (2000) and Smith Voices: Selected Works by Smith College Alumnae (1999), I relied heavily on Nanci Young, college archivist, and Sherrill Redmond, coordinator of special collections, for answers to questions raised in the essays of and introductions to these alumnae. I quipped half seriously that Nanci was the smartest woman at the college because she was unfailingly accurate and expedient in getting back to me. And Sherrill facilitated my selections in ways I could not have imagined alone.

Every one of my class profits from learning just a bit more about research possibilities than I can teach, and I rely heavily on Bruce Sajdak, assistant reference librarian, to keep me and my students up to date on the latest and best ways to access library resources. Sometimes students (and I) have recourse to interlibrary loan, where Susan Daily (Zane), Naemi Surlevavent and Christina Ryan can get anything ever imagined.

Born in Switzerland, Karin spent her formative years in Syracuse, New York. Her buxom life is very different, she says, from her experience growing up, the daughter of a college professor and stay-at-home mom. As a working mother, Karin wrestles with the same question as many of today's women: how does one juggle a professional career with family responsibilities?

Karin hits the desk running (literally) at 5 a.m. At least four days a week, she does running togs and completes a half- or full-hour run. Running gives her some much-needed, rare time alone, she says, while alleviating stress and giving her space to contemplate life's challenges. The best part of running, she explains, is that one can do it anywhere. "All you need is a word of sneakers."

In 1998, when Smith conducted a search for a new chief advancement officer, a head-hunting firm approached Karin, happily ensconced at the time in her job as vice president for advancement at Vassar College. A job at her alma mater appealed to Karin, who has roots in the Pioneer Valley with her energetic, 90-year-old grandmother living in Springfield, where her father grew up. Another factor in her decision to come to Smith came after meeting President Ruth Simmons. Karin was excited by Ruth's vision and her goals for the college.

Karin oversees an advancement office staff of 82 employees. She attributes her success as a manager to her wonderful staff. She compliments her talented, hardworking staff members and trusts them to do a great job, believing in allowing them to shine for themselves. As with any great manager, that light comes back to shine even brighter on Karin George.

It hasn't always been so bright in Karin's career. When asked to describe her oldest job, Karin recalled the summer before her senior year in college. She worked in the environmental lab for an engineering firm—analyzing sewage samples. It wasn't the most glamorous job in the world, she admits, but the compensation was great and she made "lots of money" (good thing!).

Considering that experience, no one can ever say that the vice president for development and chief advancement officer doesn't know how to get chief advancement office and dirty with the best of them.
Karin George

Juggling Success, One Step at a Time

At 9:15 p.m., on October 14, I was startled to have come across Karin George (my boss), vice president for development and chief advancement officer, after a cocktail party and dinner at the Alumnae House that celebrated

BY MARY the Ada MARTINEAU Comstock Scholars Program's silver anniversary. Didn't she run in the Hartford Marathon that very morning? "I sure did," she said. She felt it was her professional obligation to attend the evening's festivities, she said. But she had to admit, she was also caught up in the excitement of the evening. Karin, as a "Smithie" herself, class of 1986, feels a special pride in the college. "Ada saw the true marathoners," she said.

Though her stride wasn’t as energetic as earlier in the day, she still smiled, and our brief encounter left me wondering how such a busy woman manages her own modern-day juggling act.

A former Smith track star, Karin likens her triumphant finish in the Hartford Marathon that day with the step-by-step scholarly pursuit of Ada: "One just needs to keep putting one foot in front of the other until the finish line is crossed."

Though she had taken a break from competitive running since the birth of her son, Will, four years ago, one of Karin’s dreams has been to run in the Boston marathon. In order to qualify for that prestigious race, she needed to finish the Hartford marathon with a time under 3 hours, 45 minutes. She easily qualified with a time of 3 hours, 28 minutes in her eighth marathon.

With her husband, Rick, in his second year of law school, and Will enrolled at Fort Hill Campus School, the Georges live a hectic life—no nanny, no housekeeper and only an occasional babysitter. Add into the mix that Karin must spend a good share of her work time (40 to 45 percent, she says) on the road, visiting alumnae, friends of the college and students’ parents in the midst of Smith’s capital campaign. Therefore, she says she treasures her time at home.

in a matter of days. Last summer Zane reorganized and relabeled the entire reference collection while Bruce oversaw the preparation of a computer classroom near his office to make presentations both easier and less disruptive to regular library operations. Eric Loehr, systems coordinator, keeps the computers operating at full tilt, while Bruce and his reference colleagues exercise our imaginations. "What’s now proved was once only imagin’d," Blake says.

All of us have profited from Crittenden Sankey Ahram’s management of circulation with its revolving staff of student workers behind the desk and resident denizens of the Reserve Collection, including the unfailingly gracious Nylida Weeks, circulation assistant. And most of us have had to be comforted and guided by the expertise of the reference librarians: Pamela Skinner, Christine Hannon, Betsy Barone, Sita Berger, and Robin Kinder, one of whom pointed me to reviews of an alumnae artist exhibition and then dropped off a printout of a missing review at my office when Smith Voices was about to go to press. That’s service well beyond my expectations.

But few of us recognize the painstaking care with which books are ordered and charged to the nearly 100 special funds by Mia Brisai, head of acquisitions, though the bookplates installed by Joe Bialas, preparations supervisor, do seem interesting enough to provoke an inquiry from time to time. Cataloguing new acquisitions would be tedious to most of us, but not to the happy staff of catalogers who devote their offices for every season and often are the first to read the best of the best sellers in the Barack Collection. And though we read the news of the Smith College Libraries, aimed at the growth and wisdom behind every purchase, exhibit, conference and lecture offered, few of us recognize the hours and expertise embodied in Mary Irwin, who gets many of the gifts and sponsors many of the public events for the Friends of the Smith College Libraries. We may all be friends in our own way and according to our means, but we ought to pause now and again to be friends and to befriend the staff that serves us all so very, very well. The real job of Director of Libraries Christopher Loring is to polish a splendid mid-campus jewel.
LAST DECEMBER, A SMALL GROUP OF STAFF COUNCIL MEMBERS MET DURING WINTER BREAK TO TALK ABOUT WHAT WE COULD PERSONALLY DO TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY CLIMATE. THERE HAD BEEN SOME DIFFICULT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOME STAFF WE KNEW, BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

SILICARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

A DIVERSITY PROJECT

Most of us attended all the sessions, a real testament to the support of our community and our personal commitment to diversity and change. In six short weeks we reached across our differences and learned about things that we bring with us to each work day: class, race, ethnicity, size, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and heterosexual. We had lots of questions, and sometimes after a session we felt: ähnlich, amazed, sad, wonderful, proud, connected, angry, no longer cynical, and surprised.

In our own words:

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"I did not want to wear my uniform at first, I did not want to be known as a RADS person. Now I know that is not important." - After last week’s session: first I got angry for blaming, when I stopped I was able to see through the other’s eyes. - I have a better life here at Smith. I constantly need to anticipate the thoughts of others. - I was initially reluctant, didn’t want to expect. I wasn’t sure if white men would be targeted. I got more out of these sessions than I expected. - It struck me at the dining room, surrounded in a sea of white faces. It struck me while having fun. - Will things ever change?

WHAT WILL I DO?

- "When I hear prejudice do I step in, do I defend? The challenge will be when we are back at our workstations, we are comfortable here with each other. Will my voice shake when we speak our minds? The physical effect of negativity amused me, the power of baggage, I need to work...

Imagine Yourself in Good Shape

BY SID DALBY

Have you been curbed this winter with an afghan on the couch, watching old movies and sports right after night? Do the ironmongers for contraptions to strengthen your abdominal muscles make you crave sweets more than a flat stomach?

If so, you're not alone. During this time of year, many well-intentioned staff members neglect their health. If you are among the 50 percent of Americans who made a New Year’s resolution to shape up, you can find inspiration on campus among fellow staff members, who are doing their best to keep moving through the winter months.

Lisa Blassard, assistant director of admissions, keeps in shape by working out at lunch. "Do your best to avoid scheduling lunch meetings," she says, "and if you have a friend you want to catch up with, walk together. I know there we many people who are good about getting up in the morning and exercising, but at the winter the mornings are dark and cold and it is so hard for me to get out of bed." A bonus from exercising at lunch is the boost it gives to your energy level all afternoon. Lunch hour at Ainsworth is a nice time to catch up with staff from other offices. You need to show your Smith ID to use the athletic facilities at Smith, and towel service is available for $5 a semester.

Consider taking some of the classes offered specifically for staff. Lisa Thompson teaches yoga to staff every day at noon. Kathy Yarnell, administrative assistant in the Campus School, is a devo tee and admits, "I really love it and look forward to the one or two times a week that I go to a class."

There is no question that the weather keeps a lot of us inside. Barbara Brehm Curtis, associate professor of Exercise and Sport Studies, cautions, "One of the keys to making friends with winter is clothing. Dress in layers. Another key is positive thinking. You have to at least pretend you like winter if you live in New England. Otherwise you spend too much of the year feeling bad about the weather."

If you plan to run outside, follow the lead of Jim Hardy, purchasing manager. Wear shoes that have good tread for ice, and wear brightly colored clothes because icy winds limit the visibility of drivers. Even with these precautions, Jim finds he’s ready, willing and able to dive into a snow bank at a moment’s notice to avoid vehicles.

It’s never too late to start (or restart) exercising. Swimming and diving coach Kim Bierwert suggests that if you are beginning an exercise program, get clearance from a physician. "Do not be too ambitious," he says. "The biggest failure of initial exercisers is to do too much too soon. Start well within your comfort zone and build from there. Start with easy walking, biking or swimming for 15-25 minutes a few times per week and build from there. In the weight room start off with 15 repetitions with fairly light weight so there is not an initial onset of serious soreness or pain."

If all else fails, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine yourself in tip-top physical shape. If you can imagine something, it’s possible.
Dear Readers...

The lives of Smith staff members outside the workplace remains a mystery to many of those with whom we share office and campus space every day. We build strong working relationships with a long list of fellow employees while depending on them for professional support and expertise to get through the day. But for many of us, what our fellow staffers do with their time after they've left the campus is anybody's guess.

It is, after all, their business. But we've found that many Smith staffers spend their time outside campus in meaningful, creative and productive ways that often help others in the process. So in an effort to bring their efforts to light, we tell some of their stories in this issue, along with the typical mix of information and news that we try to pack into every edition.

Thanks for reading.—EW

The Council Chronicle

WINTER 201

News and more for the Smith College community

THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE IS FUNDED BY THE SMITH COLLEGE STAFF COUNCIL AND IS PUBLISHED IN JANUARY, APRIL, JULY AND OCTOBER BY AND FOR THE STAFF OF SMITH COLLEGE. NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS. THE CHRONICLE IS DISTRIBUTED TO STAFF, FACULTY AND COLLEGE TRUSTEES.

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This newsletter is also published on the Web at:
www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/council_chronicle.html

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it out for myself. — My energy is low now that these sessions are coming to an end, I am wondering how we can continue this work, I do not want to lose what we have gained. — I personally have a long way to go.

WHAT CAN I DO?

"While working in a kitchen I overheard two workers talking offensive jokes and I interrupted them. — X might be my neighbor. She will be the first person of color to move into my neighborhood and I will be an ally to her. — I only came in at the break today, yet the effect of the workshop extends into work in a difference in attitude; the students will be served the best beef hotdog they ever ate tonight. — The power we have in turning negative into positive and what we can do ourselves to change. — I took a little step today and I hope others did too. — What we are doing is creating change. — I have been thinking about how every diversity training has changed me, I am more outspoken when incidents happen."

OUR PATH

"The answers lie right here, we are looking to each other. — We have to give ourselves permission to make mistakes, if we have to be perfect and always right we will kill ourselves or stop trying to change. — I am no longer cynical about community and diversity. — There is hope. — The answers need to be concrete, not just ideas. — We should focus on making this training mandatory. — This is hard stuff and it is amazing how we can think about it together. — This work started with a small group of people, first we were three, then six, then the steering committee, then the full staff council. Each piece needed to be felt our way along. — We are working for a common cause. — There is a path out there, and no two of us are going to put our feet in the same exact place."

Staff Council drafted two Peaks of Action — one an ambitious plan for the community and the other on a departmental level.

II. Representation and Outreach of Staff Council with Other Campus Groups

• Increase council participation on the Campus Climate Working Group (CCWG)
• Join Overta Cormwell Day Committee (a joint academic/staff program)
• Add a Staff Council member to CCWG committee
• Foster outreach to other campus groups including the Student Government Association

III. Projects

• Create a "diversity project" each year for Staff Council to work on
• Sponsor one participatory event each year
• Develop an annual staff/team building Staff Council event
• Sponsor a community forum focused on diversity

IV. Networking, Publicity

• Encourage the editors of the Council Chronicle to maintain a focus on diversity when thinking of story ideas
• Let our departments know about Staff Council's commitment to diversity, share our experiences from the workshops

V. Civility vs Diversity, Keeping the Conversation Alive

• Staff Council Steering Committee should maintain a focus on diversity each month
• Initiate conversations regarding civility vs diversity

OUR DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN

• Push for mandatory Diversity Training for whole departments (Advancement model)
• Include unions in decisions which affect staff
• Encourage others while sharing our experience
• Initiate conversations with coworkers about diversity
• Help the college foster a change in behaviors not attitudes
• Foster alliances with groups outside our comfort zones (lunch groups, projects, etc.)
• Identify ourselves as Staff Councilors and state our council commitment to diversity
• Use the work we have done in training in other situations
• Become active allies

"Bigotry is learned ... And if learned, then it can be unlearned.”
Johnetta B. Cole
**2000 - 01 STAFFCOUNCIL ROSTER**

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

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(Campus Mail: Send mail to the Staff Council box in Central Services.
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*The Chronicle*  News and more for the Smith community Winter 2001