**Working Wonders...**

**The Smith Outdoors Program**

Did you know that Smith College has an Outdoors Program? And that it is not just for the students? While the program does run a first-year pre-orientation trip and a variety of outdoor trips throughout the year for the students, Scott Johnson, coordinator of the Smith Outdoors Program, wants staff and faculty to know that there’s something in it for us too. Since the program began, staff and faculty members have joined in on a few skiing, paddling and hiking trips.

The Outdoors Program is also responsible for the Boathouse and climbing wall programming, something Johnson has worked hard to expand over the last five years. Did you know that you can check out boats to use on Paradise Pond?

It’s true – you can, and it’s easier now than it has ever been. In the past users had to pass a test, showing their proficiency on the water. NO MORE! Johnson staffs the Boathouse with knowledgeable students that can show you the basics. Just bring your Smith College ID (guests are welcome). Swim tests are a thing of the past too, however they might require you or guests to wear a life jacket while boating. The college now also has a supply of life jackets for children. The Boathouse has a whole range of canoes and new sea kayaks.

For those of you that want to learn more about boating opportunities on Paradise Pond, this spring’s clinic will be Sunday, April 13 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and will cover canoeing and sea kayaking. Sign up on the day of the event at the Boathouse for a 45-min. session.

Another fantastic feature brought to campus as an effort of the Outdoors Program is located in Armitage Gym. The new climbing wall is great and has something for everyone. Open six days a week, the climbing wall conveniently offers evening and weekend hours. Hours are: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.; Friday from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 noon – 5:00 p.m. Kids’ hours are 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

During three times the climbing wall is heavily staffed for groups and families. New climbers are encouraged to learn “the ropes” during open enrollment clinics held Tuesday and Thursday from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. These hours are open to everyone and are used to teach climbing techniques that will help new climbers pass the belay test (required to climb during other non-family/less staffed) open hours.

Scott Johnson has taught and tested many staff and faculty who are now regulars at the wall. He is happy to teach new-timers who just want to climb on their own or with their family or friends. The climbing wall is a wonderful asset for students and employees at Smith College.

What’s next for the Outdoors Program? Scott Johnson is working toward making the Boathouse more of an “outdoor center,” where anyone with a Smith College ID can come in to find information on outdoor recreation opportunities in the area, as well as check out equipment. His hope is that individuals and families will come by and pick up a map and a pair of snowshoes, or a tent and a sleeping bag for the weekend. He plans to have the equipment lending library up and running by the fall of 2004.

Lots of staff members have shared their ideas with Johnson regarding this “outdoor center” plan. If you have thoughts or questions, or are interested in learning more about how the Outdoors Program can benefit you, send an email to smithoutdoors@email.smith.edu.

Submitted by Silvana Marsh

**Upcoming Events:**

**Staff Council Meeting**

Wednesday, April 9 at 2:30 p.m.
Meetings are open to all Smith employees. They are usually held on the first Wednesday of each month.

**New York City Bus Trip**

Saturday, May 3
CALL NOW. SEATS STILL AVAILABLE.
(Ext. 4424)

**Cinco de Mayo**

Monday, May 5
Scott Gym
4:30-6:00 p.m.
Festive music, La Vera Cruzara... bring your party sombrero!

**Boston Bus Trip**

Saturday, June 7
Faculty/Staff Picnic
Wednesday, June 18
Fun and food for the whole family.

Please contact your Staff Council representative for more information.

**Thank You!**

The Staff Council Activities Committee would like to thank all those Smith College community members who contributed to the Have A Heart Food Drive this winter, which benefited The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. We collected 837 lbs. of assorted food. Special thanks to Cheryl Donaldson for her coordination efforts!

**Cast your vote...**

What issues do you think Staff Council should be exploring in the year ahead?

Email your response to rhromote@smith.edu.
COUNCIL UPDATES

Activities Committee

Thank you to everyone who submitted an Activities Survey. Based on the information collected, committee has begun looking into several new activities, including an overnight trip and more local events. Fear not, many of the most popular trips will remain on the schedule for the 2023-2024 academic year.

The Book Swap (March 24) was a big success once again. More information will be released in the next week, so if you’re interested, please reach out to us. We are planning more events, the Cinco de Mayo celebration (May 5) and the Boston City Bus trip (June 7).

A few seats remain for the New York City Bus trip on May 3—call or email us now to make reservations! Please continue to share your feedback regarding staff activities with us at our else address, staffinfo@smith.edu.

Nominations and Elections Committee

Staff Council plays an important role in the work environment of Smith College. Serving as the voice of staff employees for the past 12 years, the Council has represented staff interests and perspectives directly to the administration and by participating on a range of college committees.

Although Staff Council cannot make policy decisions, recommendations have resulted in a number of significant changes, including increased tuition reimbursement, sick family days, and voting staff representatives on major college committees such as ACA and CMB. With the challenges facing us over the next several years, it is critical that Staff Council continue to reflect the comprehensive views of all staff constituencies.

This is the time for nominations. Each Staff Council member serves a two-year term, with the opportunity to run for a second term, if they choose. Please look thoughtfully about your department and identify colleagues who would represent the collective interests of your area well.

For your convenience, a nomination form is enclosed. Please submit completed forms via campus mail to the Staff Council Mailbox, C/O Central Services by April 7, 2023.

The old adage states, “You’re either part of the problem or part of the solution.” Staff Council wants Smith College employees to be part of the solution. Won’t you help us?

Communications Committee

We hope many of you were able to join us for the recent Staff Council Community Forum on volunteering. Thank you to those who responded to our mini-survey in the last issue of the Chronicle—your input helped set the tone of the event. We are also especially grateful for the participation of our knowledgeable and inspiring panelists. If you have ideas or suggestions for future forums, please email your Staff Council representative.

Submitted by Neave Homstead

Current Staff Council Priorities

- **Budget**: Understanding the impact of the college’s economic issues on the lives of staff.
- **Volunteers**: Encouraging staff to make a difference in the larger community.
- **Dialogue Circles**: Using a small group dialogue model to understand issues that concern us and to develop action plans for implementation.
- **Staff Council Elections**: Continuing outreach to involve representation from all areas of campus.

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

Personnel Policy Committee

Early Childhood Education
After several meetings with the parents and childcare staff, issues were voiced about the curriculum, the need for flexibility and the timing of school closings for custodial work and staff vacations. Laurie Sullivan-Crowley updated us on the status of the restructuring. Staffing considerations are being worked out to accommodate the new 12-month schedule.

New Employee Orientation
The ad hoc committee has begun to create a new Staff Orientation Checklist for new staff to use to make sure they are well informed about Smith issues. The committee has invited managers/supervisors to attend a meeting in April, so they can give their suggestions for the checklist and share feedback on what has been developed so far.

Workload Issues
President Christ has asked for the development of a leadership program to train managers. In this training, they will be expected to achieve leadership competencies that will become a part of their performance appraisals. Some departments are now participating in Organizational Effectiveness Assessments to review their overall workflow.

From the Chair of Staff Council...

Conventional wisdom has it that our generosity of spirit, our willingness to share, our openness to new and different things when expansion occurs in areas of economic contraction: people retreat into their own issues, are less willing to take risks, and less able to trust each other or their lives to an uncertain future. We find ourselves living in a time of great uncertainty; we see facts, we witness a flurry of arguments of words, we feel the fluctuations of our own mistrust and hope as we try and sort through what we do not, and may never, know.

In this time of change, I wear three hats: I am the Chair of Staff Council — I represent the concerns of the staff community to the administration of the college, I am the Employee Relations & Staffing Manager of Human Resources — I try to understand and apply the policies of the college to the lives of the staff; and I am the partner of a Physical Plant union employee with a low seniority number — who risks layoffs. I say all these things because as difficult and painful as the challenges that face me, what sustains me is my unrelenting faith in the staff community of Smith to rise again as we must, to the work before us: with great passion and fierce conviction and, each of us, I hope, without the meanness, indifference or spite that left unredressed and festering the cuts of the past. Just as we face our own decisions at home about what we can afford and how we sacrifice to ensure our future as a family, we face the same tough challenges here. It will not be easy. But it can be made worse if we fail to see the good intentions of others (though we may not agree with their conclusions) to do right by the institution and the people who depend on it — whether our hot hats union member, administrator, student, faculty member, administrative support, chair or president, we are all trying to do what we believe is right. Let us respect the difficult path we each face in our different ways, in our different jobs; let us respect each other and listen.

Please Contribute!

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

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MARCH - APRIL 2003 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
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MARCH - APRIL 2003  
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