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Upcoming Events

9/22/04 - Smith College Staff Community Forum
2:00 to 3:00 PM Sage Hall
All Smith Staff Are Invited

9/23/04 - “Gender Talk” - With reading and book signing
by the Authors: Johnnetta Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall
4:30 PM Leo Weinstein Auditorium - Wright Hall

10/25/04 - Cultural Heritage Exhibit
Smith College Campus Center

10/26/04 - ‘Poetry At The Center’ Alumnae Event
Speaker: Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney
7:30 PM John M. Greene Hall
This year, Opening Convocation falls on Labor Day. In that raucous celebration, in which the faculty, sedately gowned in academic garb, face a student audience, clothed in somewhat less elaborate dress, we welcome the 705 new students of the Class of 2008. We have had a bonanza year in admissions. Aiming for a class of 640, we had an unexpectedly high percentage of students accept our offers of admission. We’ve had other good news over the summer as well—a number of wonderful gifts to the college, and a high level of overall giving, rebounding from the dip in giving that we had had the year before.

The good news is welcome, because the past year was a challenging one for all of us. We had to make painful budgetary cuts, including lay-offs and the elimination of positions. We accomplished this with considerable cost, not only to the individuals involved but to the fabric of the community. However, it is done. No other shoe is going to drop. We made the necessary reductions and are moving forward.

We can now begin the strategic planning in regard to the academic program that will ensure Smith’s continuing excellence. The faculty is now engaged in a comprehensive review of the curriculum in order to identify distinctive strengths and new opportunities. About half of the faculty will retire within the next decade. This situation is both a challenge and an opportunity—allowing us to imagine and to plan for the curriculum of the future.

We are also looking forward to a planning year in the area of diversity. The new Director of Institutional Diversity, Naomi Miller, has already arrived. I have asked her to develop a strategic plan for diversity; she will be meeting with many groups, including Staff Council, as she begins the process.

Finally, we will be developing a set of initiatives in the area of student life in which we hope to engage staff, since they are as relevant to employees as to students. These initiatives will focus on civil discourse and on work/life balance. I look forward to talking with you more about what I have in mind at the Staff Council Community Forum on September 22nd.

Although our celebration of Convocation on Labor Day is a calendar coincidence, it has symbolic resonance. Labor Day celebrates those who labor, and the contributions they have made to our community. In addition, the holiday has come to mark the end of summer, one last summer fling. As we begin this year, I want to thank all of you for your hard and dedicated work for the college in the past year, and say how much I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Mark your calendars for a Staff Community Forum on September 22 from 2-3 p.m. in Sage Hall. All Staff are granted release time to attend, so please plan to join us.
Sharing, Participation and Fellowship

What is this concept of “building community?” It sure sounds cozy and good...on paper. It has a nice ring to it. I know I’ve heard the term before, but what does it mean and how is it done? Let’s go to Dictionary.com: “Building” 3. To develop or give form to according to a plan or process.” and “Community” 1. A group of people having common interests” and, more importantly, “2. Sharing, participation, and fellowship.” Hmmm...sounds like a tall order.

Certainly, in our lives outside of Smith, we have a community of loved ones in which we share, participate and find fellowship with family and friends; our circle of Love, our most important community. We know this because when tragedy strikes we are knocked out of our robotic fog of laundry lists and daily errands and remember why we are here: to love, to learn, to lend a hand. We know from experience that this feeling of fellowship after tragedy can also be true of non-familial communities on any scale. Some find themselves lending a hand to complete strangers when tragedy strikes. Perhaps the lesson is to realize we don’t need a crisis to experience love and fellowship in our communities.

We here at Smith are also a community. We are tied by our interest in working at Smith. We embrace the smaller communities nestled within Smith, which help define who the Smith community is as a whole. But what happens to the “building” part of “building community” when some of the bricks are forced out of place? How do we re-build community after sustaining injury? How do we “give form to” a renewed community?

One way is through the Staff Council Chronicle Feature Article. You are participating right now in building community by reading this. (I know...don’t panic.) Other community-building bricks at Smith include the Staff Council-sponsored bus trips, the annual book exchange, the staff art show, ESS fitness classes offered in the lunch hour or other classes offered through the Chapel’s Wellness Initiative or ITS. The annual summer picnic is also an effort in community building. Though attendance was down this past June, perhaps a reflection of our recent wounds, we will no doubt participate again more fully as those wounds begin to heal.

There are also the volunteer opportunities offered through our SOS office. By volunteering locally, you have the chance to meet other like-minded Smith employees as well as members of the community, thereby broadening your brick-laying efforts to include Northampton and the surrounding areas.

And on an even broader scale, we have the global community. In June, my daughter began her two years of service with the Peace Corp in Uganda. When I got her first mass email, I was not only elated, but found it fascinating and educational. I felt compelled to share it with others. By doing that, I’m realizing as I’m writing this article that in a very small way, I’m helping to facilitate global community-building, which actually is one of the goals of the Peace Corp: for Americans to learn about other cultures through the experiences of its volunteers.

So, the once seemingly tall order for building community now appears less daunting, more doable. Sharing information and stories, participating in events or classes, and finding fellowship with others breeds understanding. Understanding paves the way for acceptance. Acceptance of others allows for a healthier community whether it be our personal community of loved ones, the Smith campus community where we spend a good part of our day, the town in which we live or the world.
Merrilyn Lewis  
Chair of Staff Council

Even though we are three-quarters of the way through the calendar year, September and the start of a new school year have always seemed like times of fresh beginnings. The air turns crisp, the light takes on a golden quality, and the academic year is full of possibilities. Working at Smith I feel some of the same sense of excitement. I look forward to students arriving on campus with the level of energy and activity only they bring. Colleagues return from whatever summer distractions they enjoy. And as the air grows cooler, there’s vitality in my step that is missing during the heat and humidity of summer. And, year after year, but especially this year, I still believe in the promise each new academic year holds.

There’s no question that the past couple of years have been particularly difficult for everyone at Smith. The issues that had to be addressed touch us all. As we move into fiscal equilibrium, we face a year with challenges still, as we settle into new responsibilities, evaluate how work is done, and change our processes. All of these efforts will require patience; patience as we explain again and again (without frustration or resentment) to the innocent and the impatient that things are being handled differently and guide them in new directions.

On a much broader level, we must foster and build the sense of community that has long been a source of pride at Smith. Building community is one of the major goals for Staff Council this year; you will see it in all that Staff Council proposes and sponsors. We invite you to join us in this effort since no one can build a community alone. Perhaps the kindest promise we can make to each other is to recognize and appreciate the good things as they happen. As Gandhi said, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

Merrilyn Lewis  
Chair of Staff Council

Bon Appetite

The dining services team is a diverse, dedicated group of professionals working to support the goals of Smith College. The staff works to consistently provide outstanding customer service to the students, faculty, staff and guests with nutritious, quality food at the Smith College Club, the Campus Center Café and in the student residences.

To understand and appreciate the changes that will be introduced to students for the 2004 – 2005 academic year, please check out the web site: www.smith.edu/2eat.

Many staff have new positions and their new work location is listed on the 2eat web site.

The new dining program provides more menu options and greater flexibility for the students. New additions at the Campus center café, including Bart’s ice cream and panini sandwiches, will now be available at the Smith College Club as well. In addition to providing food and service to numerous summer program guests, the staff have spent the summer preparing for the upcoming year. Mark Ricker, Ann Stolarik, Sylvia Crafts, Nancy Long, Oul Chaam, and Yaeko Wartel worked with the dining management team preparing the new menus which will highlight Asian, Mediterranean, trends, traditional and Smith favorites.

Kathy Zieja  
Director  
Dining Services

Welcome Back And Good Luck To All Smith Dining Staff
Many shifts are evident at Smith this fall. Jobs have changed or disappeared, increased accountability has moved in and departments have been reorganized. Change is tricky. A few of us relish it, and a few of us detest it. Most of us who are somewhere in between those extremes, however, have at the least an uneasy relationship with change, wary of the losses and challenges it might bring. And so some of us might be finding the usually delicious “back to school with a fresh start” energy of autumn a little tarnished by some of the changes we’re living with this year.

We might, in fact, be sitting on lingering resentment, sadness, or at least a few doubts about what to expect. And so, rather than let those questions linger and keep us caught in the past, let’s pose another one to help move us where we need to go.

Let’s ask this: “What do the changes closest to you now allow—or even push you—to do that you wouldn’t otherwise have considered in the face of the status quo?”

At a Five College Leadership Workshop on managing change in April 2004, participants were shocked to discover that when they sat with colleagues from other campuses, who brought a wider lens to the question of institutional change, negative feelings about perceived upheaval on their own campuses gradually morphed into excitement about what new things could happen in the aftermath of involuntary change. Here are just a few of the unexpected positive consequences that were talked about that day:
* Being asked to take on new challenges, and succeeding
* Discovering that “the way we’ve always done it here” wasn’t really working very well, and inventing more efficient and effective modes of operation
* Getting to know more people as a result in shifts in how business was conducted
* Being inspired to take classes or learn new skills
* Finding that managers were more open to different ideas once the same old, same old patterns were disrupted
* Enjoying teaching others about things they did well
* Discovering skills they didn’t know they had because someone else had been doing those things
* Being able to take a wider view of different functions on the campus, and see their work from a fuller perspective
* Making new departmental relationships and partnerships in cases where overlap and turf wars had drained energy and wasted resources
* Thinking about (and in some cases beginning) new ventures or major changes in career paths
* Becoming more confident (and thus less cautious in general) because they had indeed been able to handle a major change in duties and emerge feeling good about it

The challenge for all of us in this time of transition and, hopefully, transformation at Smith is to be on the right side of the “Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.” Why? Because what we expect is, after all, exactly what we’ll get. And when we expect to be upset, unhinged, or under-appreciated, we open ourselves not only to those unrewarding emotional states of anxiety and depression, but a parade of immune system breakdowns and physical pain as well.

Futurist Marilyn Ferguson, in her classic The Aquarian Conspiracy, surprised us with the promise that “life sends us many opportunities, brilliantly disguised as problems.” What better time than the fall of 2004 to create a new relationship with change in our lives by searching for those opportunities? This is hard to do alone, and so we’re going to have to help each other—by asking that “what’s possible now?” question and by pointing out to each other the increases in confidence, skills, flexibility and optimism whenever and wherever we see them happening on campus this year. They’ll be there all right, we just have to notice them!
**Rumor Buster**

**Rumor:**
The internal mobility process has not worked for employees whose positions were eliminated by budget cuts.

**Busted:**
On August 2nd, positions ended for the 26 employees affected by the budget cuts. As of August 27th, 11 people are no longer seeking further employment at Smith, 7 of the people whose positions were reduced are now employed at Smith in positions that range from 2 months to a year, and 5 people have been rehired elsewhere on Campus. Another person has agreed to consider Smith College project work as a consultant. That leaves 2 people continuing to seek employment at Smith.

Barbara Reinhold
Associate Director
Human Resources

**Contributors**

**Writers:**
Jan Morris
Barbara Reinhold
Kathy Zieja

**Group Photographs:**
Judy Roberge
Christina Bauer

**Cover Exposure**

The Staff Council Chronicle editors are calling all artists to submit their work for cover consideration.

**The Don’ts**
Controversy
Photos

**The Do’s**
Good Taste
Digitized

All submissions will be considered for future issues of The Staff Council Chronicle

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**Employee Feature**

“My assignment: to write an article about “summer vacations.” While thinking about this, I experienced a familiar paralysis. I recalled times in my youth sitting in a classroom and having this same requirement in front of me and not being able to think of anything to write about. Then, as now, I must have done something over the summer. This year I most certainly did. But, I was there and as fun as it might have been, how does one convey that in words?

Looking for inspiration, I took a stroll down memory lane. As a young boy when the final bell rang indicating that “school’s out for summer,” no one was happier than me. Fall, winter and spring were the academic seasons, while summer was free for baseball, hanging out with friends and sleeping late. Yet, by the end of August, the allure of going back to school was enticing even with the “what-did-you-do-on-your-summer-vacation” paper looming.

One summer my family went to the Wisconsin Dells, a small resort area north of Chicago. I thought that stuff too boring to write about back then but it’s amazing how precious those memories have become.

When I was a bit older, I started working at various camps over the summer. Some of those years required me to spend a couple of weeks away from my parents. The first taste of independence can be bittersweet – and usually more fun the second week than the first. It was exciting to have a job and to have responsibilities - that is, until it really became work. During those years it never occurred to me that soon having the summer off except for a two-week job would morph into working all four seasons with just two weeks off.

Reminiscing about childhood is not getting this assignment done. What did I do this summer? A lot of things, but nothing really leapt to mind. So, I began thinking of summers spent as an adult. Approaching that two-week break from the office, the factory or the road was just as exciting as impending summer was as a student. There is a thrill associated with packing the car or buckling into a plane seat at the beginning of a family vacation. I fondly recall driving into the night with my children sleeping in the back seat.

We went somewhere every year. Remembering our first vacation flight, I had never seen such wide-eyed excitement on my children’s faces. We visited family in Chicago and Atlanta, attended family reunions in St. Louis and Denver. I have vivid memories of each. I wonder if my children thought those events too boring to write extensively about upon returning to school.

If there is one thing that stands out about those family vacations, it is the fact that the kids were growing up and maturing with every passing year. As children, they wanted to spend nearly every waking moment with us. Their teenage years found them wanting to spend nearly every waking moment anywhere but with us. No matter the age, the end of summer represented a rite of passage, signifying an incremental transition from one stage to another: childhood to adolescence, adolescence to adulthood.

But those were summers past. What did I do this summer? Well, I attended my daughter’s college graduation and I was part of Northampton’s 350th anniversary parade. I don’t feel much like elaborating on those now, but ask me in five or ten years and I’ll have great stories for you. It’s too fresh in my mind. I guess the old adage is true: Today is the yesterday you will look fondly upon tomorow.

By Ferris Shelton

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*Memories, like the corners of my mind. Misty, water-colored memories of The Way We Were* - Barbara Streisand

*During those years it never occurred to me that soon having the summer off except for a two-week job would morph into working all four seasons with just two weeks off.*

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**Vacation**

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Clarke School for the Deaf students enjoy shooting a few balls at the Smith Parade Float celebrating Northampton’s 350th
"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it."

Marian Wright Edelman

"How poor are they that have not patience!"

William Shakespeare

"Voters don't decide issues, they decide who will decide issues."

George Will

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Aristotle

"Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Learning is ever in the freshness of its youth, even for the old."

Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.)

"There is the matter of service to others; that has been a way of life at Smith. I am sure that each of you envisions continuing involvement with people and communities."

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS 2004
Judy Woodruff, May 16, 2004

“Planned a trip to Haiti to give goats and pigs to children and families in need. We provide the animals and they provide the love and care to raise them. Everybody wins in this deal. Haiti is my home away from home, a great place to share my faith and serve those in need.”

Gail Packard
Records Assistant
Advancement

“I drove the Smith Float during the Northampton 350th parade. I loved working that day because everyone was so enthusiastic. It was fun with lots of kids running behind the float. Their energy was contagious.”

Ken Chapin
Groundskeeper
Physical Plant

“Well this is my first summer as a Smith alumna and I have never been so bored! As for vacation, I took it easy, and read books for pleasure instead of part of my assignments.”

Serena Harris
Human Resources Specialist
Human Resources

“Actually, I did not take a vacation this year. I did take a couple of days off here and there to relax.”

Xinh Spangler
Business Operations Assistant
Physical Plant

“This year we decided to try renting a cottage and what a great idea that turned out to be! We settled down for a whole week in Vermont with it's crystal clear blue water, sandy beaches, huge small mouth bass, quaint village shops, good friends and a lot of food that you don't have to cook!”

Sheli Galipo
Human Resources Specialist
Human Resources