Conversation Peace
How do you celebrate the New Year?

“Out of my friends have a New Year’s gathering every year. I always look forward to the party because everyone invited brings a food item that they like to prepare, so I know the food is going to be good.”

Rick Rubin
RADS

“On New Year’s Eve, I hope to be in a place where I can recharge my spiritual batteries. Last year it happened at St. John’s Episcopal Church. This year hopefully I will be in a similar place.”

Kathleen Mosley
Office of Institutional Diversity

“The New Year is always a special time in our home because we celebrate the New Year along with our oldest daughter’s birthday. Happy children’s voices are a wonderful way to begin each New Year.”

Lianne Sullivan-Crowley
Human Resources

“We celebrate the New Year with family and friends. Usually a get-together with games and movies. We always have a lot of fun. It’s great to start the New Year with the things that matter the most in our lives.”

Patty Hentz
RADS

“Our family usually makes an effort to participate in some of Northampton’s First Night activities, especially watching the ball rise at the Hotel Northampton and hearing the cannons blast.”

Alan Bloomgarden
Admissions
**PROJECT COMMON GROUND**

When I arrived as Smith, I identified diversity as one of the main goals of my presidency. I want Smith’s staff, faculty, and student body to be even more broadly representative of the ethnic composition of our country than they are, and I want the Smith community to develop a fuller understanding of diversity.

We have had some success in regard to numbers. For the past two years, the percentage of U.S. minorities in the first year class has been greater than the year before; the class we welcomed this fall, 25.7% of whose students come from U.S. minority groups, is the most diverse since Smith began tracking student diversity in 1976. We have also had some success in the area of faculty recruitment. Over a third of our new tenure track faculty hired in the past two years have been members of minority groups. On the staff front, the percentages of minorities working at Smith increased significantly in 2002 and have remained stable since that time. Nonetheless, we have suffered some critical losses, both on the faculty and the staff fronts, as individuals who have been leaders in diversity issues have taken early retirement or accepted positions at other institutions. We will need to work hard to recruit and develop the leadership we have lost.

Although numbers are critical, it is a measure of diversity, diversity involves more than numbers. We must develop and nurture the kind of community that respects and values difference of all kinds, whether difference of race and ethnicity, of class, of political opinion, of sexual identity or expression of religious belief. This is not an easy task.

I believe that the most fruitful starting point in nurturing the diversity of our community is a perspective that expects to find diversity wherever we look. Our identities are multifaceted and complex; no single attribute defines them. Many things may surprise us about our closest neighbors. To have productive conversations about diversity, we need to give everyone a place at the table. We have begun this process in the classroom, with the generous help of an anonymous alumna gift, by developing a set of courses, focusing on American ethnicities, that will give students more opportunities to explore the different cultures of our country.

Last spring the Campus Community Policy Board recommended that we develop an opportunity for staff and students, similar in its approach, dialogue groups that would bring a set of community members together for a series of extended conversations about diversity issues. I have asked Jennifer Walters, the Dean of Religious Life, to develop an initiative in response to this recommendation.

This fall I have been particularly glad to welcome our new Director of Institutional Diversity, Naomi Miller, who will lead us forward in developing a set of strategic initiatives in the area of diversity. She will be guided in this process by the advice of two groups - a campus group, made up of students, faculty, and staff, and an alumnae group. The name she plans to give the project - Common Ground - represents her perspective on connecting groups across differences in order to work toward shared goals of building community.

This perspective is one I share and endorse. I look forward to the initiatives that will help define our common ground.
It is almost time to make your New Year’s Resolutions!

By Susan Barker

The New Year is the tabula rasa of the calendar, full of potential new beginnings and fresh starts. In Italy, people throw old things out the window to forget anything bad from the past year and to ensure good luck and fortune in the next. It is a time of resolutions, parties, and midnight greetings.

In Norway you don’t speak your resolutions out loud because they won’t come true if you do. The Japanese have shrine maidens who read fortunes for the coming year. In the Philippines, if you want to travel, carry a suitcase around the house on New Year’s Day. My problem with resolutions is that I am great at making them, but bad at keeping them.

Someone once told me that instead of resolutions, to pick two words as my theme for the year. I have been much better at this. I’ve chosen “fun and ease,” “beauty and creativity,” “humor and grace.”

Because this past year at Smith I am thinking of choosing “strength and flexibility” after watching trees bend in a recent storm.

Two of my favorite New Year’s Eve customs I witnessed at a party given by my sister. First, everyone read the predictions made the year before. Then, we each wrote down predictions for the coming year. The highlight of the evening was the awarding of the Don H. Memorial Sleigh award. The award itself was a miniature plastic sleigh nailed to a small log.

So make a resolution this year. Pick two words as your theme for the year, send New Year’s greetings to your friends, and on New Year’s Day get up to watch the first sunrise of the year, where the Japanese think is a good and proper start to the New Year.
**Season’s Greetings to all!** As the year draws to a close, it’s not uncommon to find people reflecting on the preceding months and tying up loose ends before January. I’ve decided to take that approach to my column this month.

**Welcome to Naomi Miller, Smith’s new Director of Institutional Advancement.** We look forward to working with her as she explores the common ground that unites us. I hope you’ll enjoy Patty Kimura’s interview with Naomi in this issue.

**Kudos to Smith’s Human Resource team!** As we hear reports of double-digit increases in health insurance, they have managed to achieve the impossible and keep our rates the same for 2005. Yes, a 0% increase in health care, dental, life and long-term disability insurances. Thanks for your good work.

**Smith College plays a significant role in the community’s United Way Campaign.** Not only in leadership—Carol Christ, chair of the highest education division—but also in the amount of money we raise for the 32 agencies the United Way supports.

**Snow Emergency Parking announcement by Physical Plant via Priority News**

**For announcements of delays or early closing of the College - Dial 585-INFO**

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**Smith News and Information**

**Every winter day Bob Dombkowski, Supervisors/Grounds, monitors the weather, prepares for snow, and reacts to a snow storm approaches our Campus.** Once an alert is issued, Bob notes the timing of the storm and the type of storm expected. A usual forecast for a storm that will arrive in the next 6 to 7 hours states that a significant amount of snow (from 2 to 3 inches) is not as much of a concern as it’s not mixed with freezing rain. Once the snow has accumulated, Bob’s team goes out in full force and once it’s declared to be 8 – 12 inches, the campus becomes a major situation. Though these storms come with many surprises and challenges, Bob’s crew works in the long, cold hours to make the campus safe and comfortable.

Bob takes a snow emergency recommendation on the time of day of a forecasted storm and whether it is a weekday or a weekend. One of his first priorities is to start students/faculty/staff time to move their vehicles to snow lots before the snow starts. Not moving your vehicle can result in it being towed to a local impound lot where you will have to pay for towing and any storage before your vehicle will be released. So please move your vehicle when a snow emergency is announced.

The Physical Plant commends an average of 23 – 25 staff members per storm that handle all the snow equipment to clear the college-owned roads, parking lots and walkways that are able to be driven by machinery. They have approximately 6 miles of sidewalks to clear and keep clear for our safety.

We use an “organic, environmentally friendly ice melt” for those areas which we have advanced notice of a storm. During an ice storm Smith College equipment uses a little & amount of sand (so you can’t even see the sand from a window). Bob’s team starts in the center of the main campus and works outward and doesn’t stop clearing until hours after the storm has stopped. Please be careful in any storm that a street crew is not available to clear the campus. If you are concerned about your car, please call the service center to make the team available for all the necessary efforts.

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**By Smith Spencer and Karen Hebert**

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**To Human Resources: How does the College decide to Delay Opening or Close Early?**

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The college reviews the most updated weather information and forecasts available for Northampton through the National Weather (NOAA) site, and local new/ weather information. If reliable forecasts warn of adverse weather conditions, the college would determine if it warrants an early closing or a delay for Smith.

Why can’t we simply call a snow day when Northampton schools close? Smith’s a residential college and as such requires additional preparation for students regardless of weather conditions. The public schools are a multi-campus day school system, and they have developed mechanisms that are less vulnerable to severe weather than their counterparts. The college has the ability to extend their school and work year by adding days in June for minor snow days. Smith does not. The reasons for an extraordinary decision to delay or close the college must ultimately and responsibly be Smith College-based.

Who among staff are considered “essential” in the case of a delay or early closing and what are the criteria for deciding who are essential?

Departments and offices which provide “essential” services must continue operations during adverse conditions. Offices and departments that are considered essential are those which provide critical services such as

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**Activities Committee**

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**Wine Tasting Class**

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**Field Exchange**

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**March 20th**

**Comm. Change**

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**With E-Digest replacing the “first-listserv”, the Communications Center are concerned about ensuring Phoenix and other service staff have access to the list for new students.**

**Discussed finding a replacement editor for the Chronicle.**

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**Personnel Committee**

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**Disussed how a college-wide shift is a single payroll system might affect staff.**

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**PFC members requested to have HR board the difficulty in the sick leave between defensive support and administration.**

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**The In the Staff Handbook: Section II - 14.15: “Adverse Weather Conditions” and “Announcement and Pay Procedures When the College Operations are Not Curtailed”**

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**What is the college’s policy on the day or class?” Smith’s residential college, and as such requires additional preparation for students regardless of weather conditions. The public schools are a multi-campus day school system, and they have developed mechanisms that are less vulnerable to severe weather than their counterparts. The college has the ability to extend their school and work year by adding days in June for minor snow days. Smith does not.”**

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**In such cases, you need to make your own judgment about whether to stay home, arrive late, or, after consultation with your supervisor, leave early. If you expect to be late or unable to report to work at all, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Staff who stay home, arrive late, or leave early due to severe weather conditions will be treated as if they were on time.**

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**The Smith College Staff Council was last elected the Spring of 1999 and will be re-electing the Charter in sections, discussing proposed changes and making revisions as necessary.**
Steffie Council Chronicle

STAFF COUNCIL ROSTER
Kim Allen
Adrienne Andrews
Adrian Beaulieu
Suzanne Beausire
Joseph Bialek
Nancy Brady
Chris Carrill
Janice Cole
Terrilyn Calloway
Gayle Fitzgerald
Karen Hebert
Matt Hobbs
Kate Kilpatrick
Patty Kimura
Linda LaFlam
Karla LeHuiller
Merrily Lewis
Jenny Mason
Laura Matta
Steve Monroe
Linda Naitave
Patricia Rist
Sam Rush
Bill Sheehan
Yinh Spangler
Mike Wasnut
Tara Zdosik
http://www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/

What issues do you think Staff Council should be exploring in the year ahead?
Merrily Lewis: I am aware of some issues that are likely to come up soon. One is the possibility of a salary freeze for staff.

WHAT’S NEW

From the Chair

S eason’s Greetings to all! As the year draws to a close, it’s not uncommon to find people reflecting on the preceding months and tying up loose ends before January begins us a new year. I’ve decided to take that same approach to my column and touch on a number of topics:

Welcome to Naomi Miller, Smith’s new Director of Institutional Advancement. We look forward to working with her as she explores the common ground that unites us. I hope you’ll enjoy Patty Kimura’s interview with Naomi in this issue.

Kudos to Smith’s Human Resources team! As we hear reports of double-digit increases in health insurance, they have managed to achieve the impossible and keep our rates the same for 2005. Yes, a 0% increase in health care, dental, and long-term disability insurance. Thanks for your work.

Smith College plays a significant role in the community’s United Way Campaign. Not only in leadership – Carol Christ, chair of the higher education division – but also in the amount of money we raise for the 32 agencies the United Way supports.

This is one of the most effective ways of having your charitable dollars reach those in need, and a payroll deduction is the easiest way to do it. (Can’t you spare $1/week?) In this season of sharing, if you haven’t yet contributed, I ask you to give the United Way your philanthropy.

Special thanks and acknowledgments to Ferris Shelton, who has served as co-editor of the Staff Council Chronicle. The four issues he has prepared have been inclusive, informative, and a pleasure to read. As a limited-time employee, Ferris leaves us at the end of December. We wish him the very best and will keep our fingers crossed that we might find him among us again as a colleague.

The magic of the winter holidays is upon us. I wish the feelings of goodwill expressed during this season could be captured and extended all year. If your faith celebrates in some way, I wish you the happiest of occasions and encourage you to introduce others to your customs and festivities. The more we learn about each other, the more we improve understanding and discover common ground.

Wishing you a happy and healthy New Year.

Merrily Lewis, Chair of Staff Council

Snow Emergency Parking announced by Physical Plant via Priority News

For announcements of delays or early closing of the College – Dial 585-INFO

1. Nouvelle Anne Hureaux
2. Giilciezews Neues Jahr
3. Eyeikkiews Nyt år
4. 12. Zuri Pya Mwaki
5. 3. Hsienhien
6. 19. L’Shana Tova
7. 12. Anno Felix
8. Gausius Novus Anus
9. Aho Novo Felix
10. Chuc Mung Nam Mai
11. Matula Veni Yi
12. Maligaya Bagong Thon
13. Nakip Anno Felix

Staff Council Chronicle

Committee News

Happy New Year is a time-honored expression in every language. How many languages can you identify? 3. "Special Gift" aways the winner.

Smith News and Information

E very winter day Bob Dombkowski, Supervisor/Grounds, monitors the weather, and if conditions are right to react in case a storm approaches our Campus. Once an alert is issued, Bob notes the timing of the storm and the type of storm expected. If possible he will inform us 1 – 3 inches is not as much of a concern as long as it’s not mixed with freezing rain. Once 3 inches have accumulated, Bob’s team goes out in full force and once it’s declared to be 5 – 6 inches we’re in a major situation. Though these storms come with many surpales and challenges, Bob’s crew puts in the long, cold hours to make sure the weather is safe and convenient.

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We use an organic, environmentally friendly ice melt compound to pre-treat walk areas when we have advanced notice of a storm. During an ice storm Smith College equipment uses a limed amount of sand (so you can’t even see the sand from a window). Bob’s teams start in the center of the storm and work outward and doesn’t stop clearing until hours after the storm has stopped. Please be careful of anyone that may be in the area to make sure to team up with the complete team to accomplish the whole task.

For storm-related information and weather conditions, e-mail “Customer Service” at Ext. 2400 or ppvreq@smith.edu. Smith College is always on 24/7 Monday through Saturday and 7:30 to 1:30 on Sunday and 6:30 p.m. 90-come outside weather condition. The impact of a storm can vary from one side of the campus to the other, so please call if you feel there is a dangerous situation that may not be known and don’t forget to give accurate and detailed information when calling or e-mailing. Whoever possible please keep phone numbers in case of any call orders through e-mails to keep the phone free for possible emergencies.

By Steve Fangel and Karen Hebert

To Human Resources: How does the College Decide to Delay Opening or Close Early?

Where can I find information on the College’s weather policy?

In the Staff Handbook: Section II – 14.15: “Adverse Weather Conditions” and “Announcement and Pay Procedure When the College Operations are Not Canceled”

What if the college doesn’t call a snow delay, but I feel I would be hazardous to travel? Can I make the decision for myself to come in late?

On occasion, adverse weather conditions may cause you to be concerned about traveling. In such cases, you need to make your own judgment about whether to stay home, arrive late, or, after consultation with your supervisor, leave early. If you expect to be late or unable to report to work at all, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible. You should not drive through the Central Avenue area if rain, snow and/or sleet are predicted.

Special thanks to Steve Monroe and Laura Matta. Many thanks to the contributors.

Nomination and Elections

The Smith College Staff Council Charter was last reviewed and revised by a committee on March 19, 1998. During the next year, the committee will be reviewing the Charter in sections, discussing proposed changes and making revisions as necessary.
It is almost time to make your New Year’s Revolutions!

By Susan Barker

The New Year is the tabula rasa of the calendar, full of potential new beginnings and fresh starts. In Italy, people throw old things out the window to forget anything bad from the past year and to ensure good luck and fortune in the next. It is a time of resolutions, parties, and midnight greetings. In Norway you don’t speak your resolutions out loud because they won’t come true if you do. The Japanese have shrine maidens who read fortunes for the coming year. In the Philippines, if you want to travel, carry a suitcase around on New Year’s Day. My problem with resolutions is that I am great at making them, bad at keeping them.

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Because this hard year at Smith I am thinking of choosing ‘strength and flexibility’ after watching trees bend in a recent storm.

Two of my favorite New Year’s Eve customs I witnessed at a party given by my sister. First, everyone read the predications made the year before. Then, we each wrote down predictions for the coming year. The highlight of the evening was the awarding of the Don H. Memorial Sleigh award. The award itself was a miniature plastic sleigh nailed to a small log.

Don, a longtime family friend, once bought an antique sleigh at an auction. It was huge and was heavy. He never put it together and never used it. Still, he hauled it around the country in eight different moves and it became a sort of albatross for him. The Don H. Memorial Sleigh award was given with affection and humor to the person who had done the most ridiculous/impractical thing the year before. Last year my friends and I took the Smith bus trip to New York City. We went to the Met and saw an exhibit of exquisite Japanese postcards. Many of them were cards that are sent out for the New Year. They are called chirashi and as long as a certain deadline is met, the post office will deliver all of the cards on New Year’s Day. This past year I sent out my own New Year’s greetings with a stylish approach to the resolutions I might be able to keep.

In the new year I resolve to eat only a few marshmallow; and to listen happily to my cats walking on my beds clothing sound as though they are wearing slippers while walking is soft snow; and to have plenty of roses in my life; and to take de-light in the fact that the megapixels, and the word squinted means shadow and tail in Greek; and to purge my closet of awkward clothes; and to appreciate swirling snow and the early dawn blue up the sky; and to not forget that there is always time for beauty; and to say over and over again, as Thoreau said, that the bluebird carries the skies on its back; and I will inhale deeply and remember that when you shoot for the stars you sometimes land in London; and I won’t point fingers; and I promise to write dear letters to my lovely friends and family.

So make a revolution this year. Pick two words as your theme for the year, send New Year’s greetings to your friends, and on New Year’s Day get up to watch the first sunrise of the year, which the Japanese think is a good and proper start to the New Year.
From the President

PROJEC T
COMMON GROUND

When I arrived at Smith, I identified diversity as one of the main goals of my presidency. I want Smith’s staff, faculty, and student body to be even more broadly representative of the ethnic composition of our country than they are, and I want the Smith community to develop a fuller understanding of diversity.

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Alan Bloomgarden
Advancement

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UPCOMING EVENTS
12/24-04 to 12/31-04 - Winter Break
1/3/05 to 1/2/05 - Interterm 2005
1/15/05 - Free Saturday Matinee Movie “Shrek II” Weinstein Auditorium
2/23/05 - Rally Day