Food is one of those essential things we can't live without—we all know that. But at this time of year food takes on other shades of meaning as well. Favorite family recipes recall the trials of learning to cook, both the baking and the burning. These dishes bring back memories of aunts and uncles, of parents and grandparents. Some of these recipes may have originated in former homes, or even in foreign countries, but it’s clear that a family’s story is closely tied to the foods they share, and these passed-down dishes help keep a family’s traditions alive.

At this holiday time—gathered together in a single, bustling, bursting space—you bump elbows and dig in. Kids run around, adults laugh and chatter, and in the middle of all this crazy mess, you see your family as they are: loud but loveable. And you realize that your family is unique in all the world.

There is something, too, about this time of year that, thankfully, lets us off the hook a little. We’re not checking e-mail (hopefully), and we can relax those diets a bit: the gym will still be there later. This season of giving gives us time to breathe. And it is in these spare moments that we can reflect a little: where we are, where we’re going, what we have. In that pause, you might even feel a small sense of gratitude. You see your family gathered, crazy as ever, but warm and safe, and you realize that many others out there don’t have even half of what you do. It puts all that striving in perspective. You realize that the e-mail can wait. Besides, your family is calling you. It is time to eat.

♦

—the Editor
Challenges We Face

CAROL T. CHRIST
President

This fall, as we have grappled with economic challenges facing Smith and every sector of our society, I have been impressed by the thoughtful questions and comments brought forward by staff members from across the college. As the dimensions of the market downturn, and implications for the endowment, become clearer and as our long-term planning develops, we will be well-served by the best thinking and commitment of every member of our community.

Our budget challenge is not small. With endowment market value likely to be down more than 20%, and taking into account other unfavorable financial trends, we will need to plan to reduce our nearly $200 million operating budget by as much as 10-15 percent—or more than $20 million—over the next three years. To accomplish this work, I will rely on the college’s main committees—the Committee on Mission and Priorities (CMP) and the Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation (ACRA)—both of which are comprised of faculty, staff, and students. They will meet jointly, and frequently, throughout the spring semester to propose the sequence of actions Smith should take to significantly reduce expenditures. The charge to CMP and ACRA is to plan comprehensively and imaginatively in the face of so major a challenge, necessarily considering such areas as salaries and benefits (our largest expense); admission policies; looking ahead.

Looking Ahead

RICK RUBIN
Chair, Staff Council

It’s official. The U.S. economy has been in a recession for the past year. The start of the downturn was announced this month by the National Bureau of Economic Research, but for many of us this news was neither unexpected nor surprising. Most of us knew that we were in some kind of economic downturn just by going to the supermarket, the gas station, even buying clothing.

As I drove to work this morning the news was filled with gloom and doom, including large companies across the country announcing major layoffs. The bad economic news I hear every day often has me thinking about how the economy has affected finances here at Smith and how we as staff will be affected. We know the next few years here will not be as easy as they have been in the past; we have been told tough decisions will have to be made that will directly affect everyone who works at Smith. Many of us who have worked here longer than 10 years remember past downturns in the economy that led to budget cuts, staff reductions and tough decisions, the consequences of which still linger today in our departments.

While this downturn seems to be critical, I don’t have the same uneasiness and alarm I had during previous eras of looming crisis. The feeling I get from staff around campus is more of a cautious sense of
A Visit to Northampton’s Survival Center

KEN MOLNAR
Events Management

One recent November morning, I arrived at the Northampton Survival Center on Prospect street, on time for once—a rarity. There for volunteer orientation, I was greeted warmly by Beth, the Center’s Office Manager. She said hi and handed me a brief form to fill out. Like everything at the Center, the form was straightforward and unassuming: name, address, my available time. Just the facts.

I was told a few others would be joining us, so I had time to look around. Straight ahead, at a simply-made counter, a 40-something man sorted through canned food, placing the cans in labeled cubbyholes behind him. Above me, hanging everywhere, were cardboard holiday ornaments in a big slowly spinning medley: Santas, Christmas trees, stars of David, elves, snowmen, menorahs, snowflakes. The Center was lightly staffed and had not yet opened for the morning, but still there was a humming busyness in the air. The place felt jumbled but peaceful, the complete lack of pre-tense somehow telegraphing that this was a place where good things indeed get done.

A few other people arrive: a young man and woman. Beth then takes us on a surprisingly short tour back through the facility. At its heart, the Center is quite simple: boxed meals are prepared, items are shelved, and new goods are received in the back. Amazingly, “the back” turns out to be a room maybe ten feet square. Beth explains that sometimes they must ask donors to return on another day with their donations. There just isn’t enough room. The good news: the City has granted the Center some additional space that they will soon be able to expand into.

Back in the distribution area, Beth calls our attention to the children’s corner: tiny plastic chairs, shelves of books, and various toys, all out of the box but neatly displayed. Beth tells us the books and toys, just like everything on the small rack of winter clothes, are free for the taking. Not “three items per family,” or “one item per child,” just free. As if to help clarify, Beth tells us that their number one rule is to treat every single person with dignity. And this means trusting clients enough to take what they need and leave the rest for others.

Like to help? Contact the Survival Center

The Northampton Survival Center is at 265 Prospect Street, Northampton. Tel: (413) 586-6564. Office hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 9-4 p.m. Tue, Thu 3-7 p.m. Visit http://thensc.org/ for more information.

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STEERING Committee
The Steering Committee is responsible for meeting to discuss issues and concerns brought forward by individual staff members. We also ensure these issues are brought to and discussed with administrators and committees. Information is gathered from various segments of the college community for discussion at Staff Council meetings. This year’s Steering Committee has worked with the Council’s subcommittees on issues of staff communication, reviewing Staff Council’s mission, and meeting with groups across campus, including Faculty Council.

– Rick Rubin
rrubin@smith.edu

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS Committee
The Nominations and Elections Committee is in the process of reviewing the Staff Council charter. Each year, Staff Council members need to be informed about how Staff Council should follow our mandate and the charter. We are working with past members to understand how best to revise the charter, if necessary. All Staff Council members need to be made aware of the College’s release-time policy for meetings and their responsibility in serving on the council and attending meetings.

– Sandy Bycenski
sbycensk@smith.edu

DIVERSITY Committee
The Diversity Committee has been working to raise awareness and promote events around issues of diversity and inclusion here at Smith. We spent most of the fall working on publicity, registration and logistics for two workshops on classism, our choice of focus for this year. (Thanks, to Chris Gentes for creating an attractive poster for the workshops!) We also crafted a letter from Staff Council supporting the Office of Institutional Diversity’s (OID) Class Matters Initiative, a multi-year program for engaging faculty, students and staff in the dialogue on classism. We enjoyed talking to Kendra Colburn, the chair of the Smith Association of Class Activists (SACA), who spoke about student and staff conflicts related to issues of classism and offered to collaborate with and support SACA’s activities. We feel energized by the success of the workshops, and are planning for our spring film series. We hope to
show three films on class, followed by a discussion. We are also looking to suggest that learning resources around class issues be added to the OID’s Web site.

Finally, we invite staff to join the College in "ringing the bells for peace" this Sunday, December 21, at noon. Every day, we hear news and stories of violence and human suffering. We encourage you to get outside, meditate, pray or just wish silently for one minute and then ring a bell for peace.

— Abida Adnan
aadnan@smith.edu

PERSONNEL POLICY Committee (PPC)
For the foreseeable future, we will be talking to HR about keeping channels of information flowing freely between Human Resources, the administration and staff regarding the fiscal crisis. At our most recent meeting, we asked about retirement and how it can best be handled for the benefit of the staff and the college. We also invite any questions regarding personnel policies to be passed along to Staff Council or PPC members so that we can discuss them with Larry Hunt.

— Jinny Mason
jmason@smith.edu

ACTIVITIES Committee
This fall, the Activities Committee was very busy. The committee not only staffed a table at the HR Benefits Fair, but also distributed pie and ice cream to staff on Mountain Day, held several Pub Nights at the Campus Center, had a bus trip to the Culinary Institute of America in Poughkeepsie, NY, held the recent Holiday Hoopla in the Campus Center, and pulled off another successful NYC bus trip!

— Sabrina Marsh
smash@smith.edu

COMMUNICATIONS Committee
The Communications Committee is working on ways to distribute and communicate important information to staff in a consistent and timely manner. We also held a Staff Council Forum on December 3rd as a follow-up venue for those employees who were unable to attend the recent All Staff Forum on November 13, which was called to address the College’s current economic challenges.

— Karen LeHouiller
klehouil@smith.edu

The Creative Gallery Online, An Ongoing Gallery of Staff Art & Writing

Last spring an online gallery was created to give Smith staff members a chance to showcase their artistic expressions. Nine artists shared an eclectic variety of artworks including collages, drawings, cyanotypes, photographs, and paintings. The response from the community was positive and included such comments as “thank you for a great art break” and “this is a lovely way to see another side of colleagues.”

The 2008 Gallery is now archived online. If you haven’t seen it yet, please take a look. But, more importantly, why include your work in the 2009 Gallery? All staff are invited to participate. Whatever your medium might be—photography, poetry, painting, crafts, writing, drawing, quilting—it is welcome here. You can submit up to three works at any time throughout the year—there is no “deadline.” We can also help with taking a photo or scanning your artwork to get a suitable digital image for the Web page. For complete “online gallery” submission guidelines, please visit the Staff Council Web site at www.smith.edu/staffcouncil.


—Chris Gentes

From the Garden to the Table

LESLEY A. SMITH
Campus School

We always needed an extra suitcase for our annual trips to Missouri to visit my grandparents. We had a green and purple floral canvas suitcase that traveled empty to St. Louis, but returned home at the end of the summer full of mid-western summer produce. My grandmother wrapped each tree-ripened peach like an exquisite birthday gift in paper towels and newspaper. Each succulent ear of corn was sent home using grandmother’s special preservation technique of pulling back the cornhusks and removing the silks. Of course, these were also subsequently wrapped in layers of wax paper and plastic bags. Later, we sizzled bacon on the stove at our house and unwrapped tomatoes, magically unbruised from their journey by bus or airplane. At home, I opened my own jar of mayonnaise and prolonged, momentarily, the laziness of the humid Missouri summer. From my grandparents I learned to savor the taste of the tomato, ripened in the sun, plump from days of watering and watching. Each bite revealed a memory; the summer thunderstorm, the sweat on the brow, the mosquitoes at dusk and the delicate maneuver of fingers gently tying vines to tomato stakes.

There is something different about food from the garden. Flipping through seed catalogues in January, it is not horticultural statistics that entice me to spend more than I should on seeds. It is primal hunger. It is a desire to take part in the conjuring up of extraordinary food. It is the pleasure of labor and the mystery of dirt, water and sun.

How can I resist the dream of musk-melons, “their fine perfume and heavily ribbed fruits, with deep orange flesh of incomparable eating quality”? How can I not witness, once more, the miracle of the carrot? How is it that the tiniest of grey seeds grows into a brilliant orange cylinder so sweet and perfectly nestled into the earth?

As soon as the tiny seedlings stretch their brave and tentative leaves from the soil, I am imagining dinner parties of pesto and corn, or picnic sandwiches of fresh salad greens and my neighbor’s homemade cheese. Each moment in the wheel of the year is balanced with another. Planting, growing, harvesting, eating. Spinach waffles on May Day. Tangy raspberry sauce on my daughter’s birthday.

“Each meal harvested is a promise kept.”
cake in July. New garlic roasted on the grill for the Fourth of July. The sweetness of kale and collards after the first frost. There is always the looking forward and always the looking back. When we plant our garlic bulbs in October we are reaching out to the hot July day we will pull the stiff and woody garlic plants from the earth. Each meal harvested is a promise kept.

When I kneel down to pull a weed or plant a seed I think of my grandfather’s prolific garden and the way he expressed gratitude so often in his life. Papa was from the World War II generation and his quiet dignity did not often include expressions of feelings. Nevertheless, the hush in his voice saying grace at a family meal conveyed seriousness and emotion in his words. “For that which we are about to receive, may we be truly thankful.” The sacrament of another meal was truly a blessing.

Was his garden the secret to his gratitude? Or was his gratitude the secret to his garden? ♦

Class Matters
by Abida Adnan

Fifty staff and faculty members joined the conversations on the dynamics of class and rank at Smith and the staff-faculty divide. The two workshops offered by Class Action drew close to 80 registrations, generating a long waitlist.

Participants later commented that they learned how multi-faceted classism is and that people in all class groups have a certain frustration with issues of class. One participant expressed that staff and faculty issues of rank are more complicated than people expected and that faculty do want to bridge the gap of classism here at Smith. Another staff member shared that for her the issue isn’t about the differences in class backgrounds, money or benefits, but about rankism and the feeling of being valued for one’s contribution. Participants felt that some of the stereotypes they had about people’s backgrounds based on their current occupations were shattered. One person stated that they were unaware of the “hazing” of new faculty by established faculty in some departments. Overall, participants got the feeling that it is crucial to continue to expand upon our work to engage class matters at Smith.

Many participants stated that they would tell a potential workshop participant that this workshop was very informative and enlightening. As one participant put it, these workshops create a safe environment where one can come to a greater understanding of life and learn more about oneself and others. ♦

A Moment of Thanks
by Jinny Mason

Working at Smith often leaves me pondering where I am, why I am here, how did I get here? Many days I simply marvel at the physical beauty of the place, especially at times like those nights lately when the setting sun has illuminated the trees and buildings, making them appear to be gilded.

I also enjoy following trends in the fauna, like the orange squirrels that started by College Hall and spread their way across campus. Has that voracious hawk polished off the ones that were brightly colored? They don’t seem to be about now.

And, maybe you think I am crazy, but this morning I had what I call a “Thankful Moment.” When I got to the crosswalk near John M. Greene, I arrived there at a the same time as four other people. One was a tall, dark haired white woman, one was a short black woman, one was a woman of Asian descent on her bicycle, and the last woman wore a head scarf showing her to be of the Muslim faith. They were all young and slim. And then there was short, fat, mousy-grey me.

I have no idea of the backgrounds of the other women, we might all have been immigrants or I might have been the only immigrant. But I was just very pleased that I could casually meet such a disparate group on a crosswalk first thing in the morning. ♦
Thank you to our judges and to our participants in the 4th Annual Holiday Hoopla Cookie Contest! You’re all winners, though special congratulations to Karin LaBarge (Marble Bars #1) and Mary Clayton (Tri-Chip Cookies #2) for winning. Clearly our judges liked desserts made with chips this year!

— Sabrina March

**Tri-Chip Cookies**

**INGREDIENTS**

1 bag each semi-sweet chocolate, butterscotch, and white chocolate morsels
3 cups flour, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp baking soda, 1 cup shortening, ¾ cup light brown sugar, ¼ cup white sugar, 2 eggs, 1 tsp vanilla

Combine dry ingredients in small mixing bowl. In larger bowl beat together the shortening, sugars, eggs and vanilla. Mix in dry ingredients and then hand-mix two cups of the combined chips.

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. On an ungreased insulated cookie sheet, place one-inch round portions of the batter. I do 3 to a row, so 9 to a sheet. Bake at the top rack of the oven and—as soon as they turn a light brown—remove and allow to cool. This recipe can also be customized by using chips of your choice, such as milk-chocolate chips, or by adding M&Ms. They also freeze very well, so can be made ahead.

-- Mary Clayton, ITS

**BEST IN CHOW**—Cookie judge Renee Tatro, of Facilities Management, samples one of the many amazing contesting cookies at the recent Holiday Hoopla.

**Italian Cookie Gems**

Melt ½ cup margarine and ¼ cup white shortening.

Add to:

¼ cup sugar, 4 eggs, 3½ cups flour, 5 teaspoons baking powder, ¼ tsp salt, 2 teaspoons orange extract (may also use almond or anise)

Mix well. Drop by rounded teaspoon. (I just shape into small balls by hand on a greased cookie sheet.) Bake at 350° for about 10 minutes or until they are light brown on the bottom. Let cool, remove from cookie sheet, then frost.

Frosting:

Combine 2 cups confectioners sugar, 1 teaspoon orange extract, and enough milk to spread (I like to keep it thick.)

Top cookie with frosting and cover with sprinkles.

— Mary Clayton, ITS
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. You will need a cookie press for these cookies.

Ingredients:
- 1 cup sugar, 1 egg, 1 tsp. almond extract,
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour,
- semi-sweet chocolate (optional)

1. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
2. Mix in egg and almond extract.
3. Add flour and mix just until blended.
4. Transfer dough to cookie press.
5. Press onto ungreased baking sheet, forming 2-inch rounds or “S” shape.
6. Bake until light brown and firm to touch; about 10 minutes. Transfer to rack and cool.
7. (Optional:) Melt semi-sweet chocolate. Dip biscuits and let cool.

-- Felicia Lundquist, Admission

Easiest pie ever ... Apple Cranberry!

Use your favorite crust recipe or purchased unbaked crust. Use a good tart apple, a little sugar, and cinnamon. Mix with half of a 12-ounce bag of frozen cranberries (rinsed well, with any imperfect berries already removed). Fill pie crust, then sprinkle more sugar, cinnamon, and orange zest over it. Top with second crust or crumb topping. This pie is awesome with either orange-flavored whipped cream or homemade orange vanilla ice cream. A few spicy nuts with it is good, too.

-- Sylvia Crafts
Dining Room Coordinator
Hubbard House

Easiest Pie Ever !

Not a Snap Snaps aka Brandy Snaps

1. Heat together in a saucepan 1½ cups each butter and sugar and 1 cup molasses, stirring mixture until well blended.
2. Stir in 4 teaspoons powdered ginger, remove pan from heat, and add 3 cups sifted all-purpose flour—a little at a time—beating well after each addition.
3. Once slightly cooled, drop batter from tip of a spoon onto buttered cookie sheet, allowing 2 inches between wafers. (TIP FROM SABRINA: I found that letting batter cool significantly lets me roll it into balls and place on tray, which leads to more uniform circles for rolling, once baked.)
4. Bake in a slow oven (300° F.) for about 12 minutes or until nicely browned. Remove from pan immediately with a spatula, and roll wafers over a wooden stick or handle of a wooden spoon if preferred, shape them into cones.
5. Store brandy snaps in airtight containers. As a variation, 1½ teaspoons grated lemon rind may be added to batter before baking;

-- Sabrina Marsh, Admission

* or “not a snap” as the case may be.
**Ring the Bells!**

The college will be ringing bells for peace this Sunday, December 21, at noon. We will be inviting students, faculty and staff to join in wherever they might be that day to ring bells with families and friends. More details can be found at: [www.smith.edu/newsoffice/releases/NewsOffice08_028.html](http://www.smith.edu/newsoffice/releases/NewsOffice08_028.html).

In a lead-up to the ringing of bells, there will be a tour of the carillon at College Hall on Thursday, Dec. 18, 12:15 p.m. Grant Moss will play a few tunes, and Nanci Young will offer a brief history of the college bells. Meet on the third floor of College Hall, just outside the wrought-iron door at the top of the stairs. Check e-Digest for more details.

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**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**
Kelly Richey, of Central Services, while on the staff bus trip to NYC. With her are Lyndsey and Taylor, nieces of Maureen Raucher, Chapel.

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The Staff Council annual New York City trip was once again a huge success. The weather was brisk but comfortable, making the holiday sightseeing and shopping fun. The city was decorated in its finest holiday attire, with holiday music heard everywhere. The Rockefeller Plaza tree was spectacular, all lit up with skaters filling the ice rink below. My friends and I had lunch at the famous Ellen’s Stardust Diner on 51st and Broadway; it is truly a “must go to” place. The waiters are all aspiring actors and actresses and truly sing and dance for their tips. We visited the newly renovated Plaza Hotel, home to Eloise, the new Apple Store (really cool) and Central Park to see the horse-drawn carriages. We finished up the day with a quick ride on the subway downtown to Macy’s to do some final shopping.

—Kelly Richey, Central Services
Do you know someone who has Celiac Disease? I have it and have been Gluten Free for about 35 years. At the time I could only find one cookbook with GF recipes and information from the doctor about what foods to avoid. It was very depressing at first, but as time went on I realized that it was only a diet that I had to follow. I am very grateful to have support from my family and the online resources for Gluten Free products and recipes. A couple of my favorite sites are: www.Glutenfree.com, www.glutenfreeda.com.

I use Pamela’s Products, Glutenfree Pantry, Bob’s Red Mill, Tinkyada pasta, Chebe bread mix, Namaste pizza and cake mixes as well as adapting recipes to be gluten free. To learn more about Celiac Disease, please check out the Staff Council Gluten Free Web site: www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/glutenfree.html.

— Sandy Bycenski
sbycensk@smith.edu
Campus Camera – Holiday Hoopla 2008!

The recent Holiday Hoopla was a great success! Carolers from Campus School, cookies (and a contest), cakes, co-workers, camaraderie!

Thanks to all who made it possible.
Thanks to all who came!
Eating, Drinking, Being Merry!
More Food for Thought

A Family Tradition is Born (or baked, you might say)

My sister Maureen is the best cook I know, and that is saying something. Maureen lives in a large metropolitan city and she still “entertains” in the home. She regularly has gatherings that would outgrow most dining room tables (or, in my case, even my dining room). For about ten years now, at the holidays, she has sent to family and friends a tin of the best homemade granola we have ever tasted. The recipe is based on one that our family found at a weekend B&B stay in the White Mountains, and we have altered it for our taste. A few months back, a bell went off as I was seeing my family purchase granola weekly and eat it daily. I asked my sister for the recipe. Pulling out that “famous family recipe” and making a batch has become part of our every-other-Sunday routine.

-- Peg Pitzer, Events Management

GRANOLA MIX (from the old Balsams resort, New Hampshire)

INGREDIENTS: 5 cups oatmeal, 1 cup walnuts, 1 cup slivered almonds, 1 cup sesame seeds, 1 cup sunflower seeds, 1 cup wheat germ, 1 cup shredded coconut, ¼ cup safflower oil, 1 cup honey, 1 cup raisins, 1 cup dried currants

DIRECTIONS: Oil two big cookie sheets. Preheat oven to 300°. Heat oil & honey in a pan until just warm. Combine first seven ingredients in very large bowl, mix well. Add honey & oil and mix well. Spread out in thin layers in pans and bake 45 min. or until nicely browned. Stir occasionally with spatula or spoon. When cool, add raisins and currants. Store in tightly covered container in fridge. Will keep for weeks when properly stored. Serve with yogurt or milk, or on top of cereal.

Spinach Dip!

INGREDIENTS
1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
1 (16 ounce) container sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
1 envelope dry vegetable soup mix
1 (8 ounce) can water chestnuts, drained and chopped
3 green onions, chopped

DIRECTIONS
In a medium bowl, mix together spinach, sour cream, mayonnaise, dry vegetable soup mix, water chestnuts and green onions. Cover and chill in refrigerator approximately 2 hours before serving.

-- Rick Rubin
Dining Services

A Quick Party Fix!

There is one item that guests seem to gravitate toward when at parties, and that’s Spinach Dip! Water chestnuts add a delightful twist to this very easy recipe. Serve with wheat crackers or rye bread.

Spinach Dip!
CHALLENGES WE FACE  
(continued from page 2)  
Tuition; financial aid and the discount rate; facilities and services; and opportunities for significant Five College collaboration. I ask you to give them your support as they consider the difficult choices and trade-offs that will be required. As that work proceeds, I am committed to frequent and open communication with staff, faculty and students to ensure we are making the best possible choices for the long-term strength of the institution. Please also feel free to send your thoughts or suggestions to planning@smith.edu or to your senior staff member.

However challenging this moment may be, I believe Smith College has both the precedent and the will to plan thoughtfully and well in times of stress. Last month, I shared with our alumnae the letter I had sent to the campus about the effect of the economic downturn on Smith. Their response was heartening. “Rock on, Smith College,” one alumna wrote. “You gave me the gift of resiliency and I see you are still giving the gift.” Another put it this way: “It is comforting to know that the college continues on sound footing. I would not expect less. Thank you for your careful stewardship of Smith.”

I extend those thanks to each of you.

LOOKING AHEAD  
(continued from page 2)  
Confidence that senior management, the President, and the Board of Trustees have made—and will continue to make—appropriate and prudent decisions.

I applaud the honesty, concern, and—most of all—the respect from Smith’s decision makers that we as staff have been shown. The communication directed to staff regarding this issue has been commendable. I also commend the staff of Smith, who have responded to this news with professionalism and solidarity. Will there be tough times ahead? Of course. Will there be decisions we don’t agree with? Most likely. It is important that staff continue to be involved in looking at ways to cut costs in their departments. It’s also important that they attend meetings, get informed and ask questions. Honest and timely communication is the key to success, no matter how hard a discussion might be. I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season and a restful break.

SURVIVAL CENTER  
(continued from page 2)  
Of course food, being the Center’s main form of assistance, does have to be regulated. At the food counter, simple menu charts explain what each family is allocated each month, and there is a chart of “extras” on the wall, kind of an à la carte menu clients can choose from to make their food variety more interesting. Again, Beth explains that if it is not something that you would personally enjoy eating (cans of lima beans, say) then it is not fair to load up families with these items. The menu system is a great solution to give families a real sense of choice.

It is soon time to go. Beth asks me if I would like to choose a time to volunteer. Guiltily, I tell her that I had visited the Center three years ago, intending to come back, and yet never quite did. Without missing a beat she says, “Well, you’re here now. At least you made it!” It’s just this type of optimism that makes this place shine.

I’ll be back.
ALL VOTING MEMBERS OF STAFF COUNCIL
(listed alphabetically)

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