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*** Smith Day and Oral History Project great successes—see pages 2 & 3 ***

WINTER 2009

Smith Club of Minnesota

A Word From the President

—Laurie Kramer ('69)

Greetings, Minnesota Smithies! I hope many of you have had or will have the opportunity to sneak out of town for a little sunshine over this tough winter.

While some of us were relaxing, our three new Alumnae Admissions Coordinators, affectionately known as AACs (see page 5), were busy organizing the club's annual Smith College Winter Tea.

The tea is an opportunity for prospective students and interested parents to meet current Smithies home on vacation—and some of their parents too. The afternoon included time for informal conversation and a Q&A session about the college. I was delighted to represent the club.

The refreshments table featured hot chocolate, exceptionally delicious chocolate chip cookies baked by Kathryn Sutton's mom, and lots of healthy nibbles. There was an impressive array of Smith admissions materials, to which I added copies of our new oral history book, *Strong Women Building Strong Communities* (see page 2).

I encouraged prospectives' parents to take a copy of our book, figuring that the devotion and accomplishments of our alums would be a great recruitment tool. One supportive mom whose daughter was just accepted early decision insisted on making a donation to the club for our scholarship fund.

The Q&A revealed current student and parent concerns and what's going on at the college today. A few observations:

■ On-campus jobs seem to be a fact of life. Prospective students and parents brought the subject up, and the AACs and current students had many experiences to share. First-year students often work in dining halls, later moving on to

more sought-after jobs involving research, professor-student discussion groups, academic departments, and admissions. Caitlin Boley was even paid to take notes in one of her classes as an accommodation to a deaf student.

■ The professors and classes sound as exciting as I remember. Asked about their favorite courses, current students spoke enthusiastically about art history, logic, women & gender, abnormal psychology, and others both in and out of their majors. The advising system sounds multilayered, with Heads of New Students in each house plus pre-major advisers for all first-years.

■ Extracurricular activities, the house system, and campus social life seem to be thriving, along with the five-college consortium. Unique summer opportunities for Smith students—many funded by Praxis internships—and outstanding study-abroad programs are also important to Smith's appeal. While valuing a top-notch liberal arts education, parents are very aware of the cost. They want to make sure their daughters' college years include a range of experiences that prepare them for life after graduation.

Interestingly, one topic hardly mentioned was the value of single-sex education. Maybe these young women and their parents were beyond that. One dad did ask about the impact of having no young men in classes. The response was that many classes do have male students (through five-college and other programs).

Please take time to read this issue of the newsletter to check out our club's activities. If you're new to the area or haven't participated for a while, we'd love to see you soon. In the meantime, Happy 2009 to all!



**WINTER 2009 Issue
from your local club**

Minnesota Smith News



■ **Newcomers:** If you've moved to Minnesota in the past year, please contact Ann Carr (see page 1) so you'll be included in a newcomers dinner to meet others and network!

■ Janet Woodhull ('44), a beloved and loyal member of our club, died on November 5, 2008, after a brief illness. Two of Janet's daughters are Smith alums, Holly Churchward ('76) and Allison Donelan ('78). Janet was her usual tireless self at Smith Day in September, so her death was especially unexpected and tragic for many club friends who worked with her there. We're honored that Janet is profiled in our club's oral history book (see page 2).

■ Siri Caltvedt ('93) had solos in two recent St. Paul Vocal Forum performances. And word has it that Siri is helping Betsey Whitbeck ('71) spruce up her piano skills! Siri can be reached at scaltvedt@hotmail.com.

■ Cathy Muldoon ('88) founder of recruiting firm TopTalent, has a number of jobs open and a resume-writing seminar available. See www.toptalentinc.com.

■ Marnie Hensel ('52) was the star of KARE 11 News feature "Positive Aging—People discovering their own fountain of youth" recently. Go to www.kare11.com and type "Marnie Hensel" in the search box to see the story, pictures, and a video of 77-year-old Marnie, who "feels like 37," teaches water aerobics, and recently won gold in a downhill ski race!

■ Jane Howard ('75) needs a new home for "the two greatest cats in the world!" Jane's at 651-644-1874 jhoward@TNC.ORG.

■ Empoword, the company founded by Stephanie Ross ('86) and Wendy Lutter ('89), was featured on channel 9's "Changing Lives" recently. Go to www.myfoxtwincities.com/myfox and type "Empoword" in the search box to see a video. Also check out www.thinkempoword.com.

■ Buffy Murphy (AC '04) will soon get her MA in education at Hamline and is on a job search in community education, human rights, and/or children's rights. She'd love to connect with alums involved in these areas. Contact her at rombufmurphy@yahoo.com or 651-486-7906.

New Books Authored/Published by Club Members

■ Polly Grose ('54): Her fourth book, *A London Scrapbook* (Beaver's Pond Press 2008), a memoir including the 20 years she lived in England. www.pollygrose.com

■ Judy Neiswander ('69): *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home, 1870-1914* (Yale University Press 2008), examining how the social and political landscape of the time fueled interest in home decoration in middle class England. Check the Yale Press Web site to learn more.

■ Marilyn Carlson Nelson ('61): *How We Lead Matters* (McGraw-Hill 2008), reflects on her life of leadership. Marilyn is profiled in our oral history book (see page 2).

■ Julie Anne Hoffman ('76): *A Ferret in a Garret: An Ode to Jackson Pollock* (Davies Printing 2008), a book her son Peter, now at Middlebury, wrote in the 5th grade. Available at the Institute of Art and Walker gift stores. www.aferretinagarret.com.

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Strong Women, Strong Communities—Oral History Project

Sunday, November 2, was a great day all around for the Smith Club of Minnesota. More than 100 local alums spanning classes from 1934 through 2008, guests, and prospective students joined Smith President Carol Christ at The Metropolitan for the culmination of phase 1 of our oral history project, the book *Strong Women Building Strong Communities*. Its publication follows more than a year of work by scores of club members behind the scenes. Sixteen alumnae were interviewed for the book; honorees in attendance were Helen Anderson ('44), Virginia Humphrey ('42), Helen Kramer ('34), Ann Pflaum ('63), Sally Pillsbury ('46), Joanne Von Blon ('45), and Molly Woehrlin ('53).

More than 100 copies of the book had been preordered, and another 100 have been sold to date. President Christ purchased copies for each member of the Smith Board of Trustees, and Cecily Hines, a member of the Alumnae Association board, reports that a copy was passed around at their recent semiannual meeting, as Meri Hoverman, Alumnae Association staffer who attended the Minnesota event with President Christ, "sang its praises."

Attendees at the event enjoyed

mingling with President Christ and Smith friends on the veranda. We then moved to the ballroom for a light dinner and decadent dessert catered by D'Amico. The program featured a welcome and introduction by club president Laurie Kramer, followed by a presentation complete with fascinating photos and tidbits from the book given by Laurie, Betsey Whitbeck, Marty Swain, Kate Lehmann, Jane Howard, and Mary Gover.

After the program, President Christ spoke and gave a hearty endorsement of our club's project. "This has been profoundly moving," she said as an introduction. "I feel I've had a privileged perspective on the histories of women in the 20th and now 21st centuries, and this project in a rich way

does it even better, telling stories of these remarkable women."

The event was recorded by videographer Steve Date of MinnPost.com (founded by Laurie and husband Joel Kramer). Steve's excellent work can be seen by going to www.minnpost.com and typing "Smith College" in the search box.

It's not too late to order your copy. Contact Holly Dowds ('71) at 651-756-0645—it will be a keepsake forever.

A generous gift to the club from alumna Paula Vesely ('59), earmarked for support of a program other than the scholarship fund (see page 3), was allocated by the club's executive committee to help support the oral history project. Many thanks to Paula.

The next phase of the oral history project is under discussion. If you would like to participate as an interviewee, interviewer, or in one of the many production jobs, please contact one of the officers (see page 1). And if you have skills as a transcriber, please advise! ☞

Left to right: Sally Pillsbury, Helen Kramer, and Molly Woehrlin, three women whose oral histories appear in the book, enjoyed the spotlight.



Smith Networking—A Wonderful New Age

The Alumnae Association has really become a player in the new age of communication, so jump on board! If you have a computer and an Internet connection, a rich experience awaits you at the AASC Web site. You can very easily find fascinating information and connect with others.

Take a look at the following page, for example:

<http://alumnae.smith.edu/education/aetranscripts.php>.

It has links to transcripts of numerous presentations given through alumnae education symposia, reunion programs, interviews with Smith authors, and more. And find pictures of a recent reunion (you might just find a photo of yourself) at <http://alumnae.smith.edu/reunionphotos/main.php>.

If you're game to go a bit further, the new networking functions help you stay in touch with and receive notices from your class or interest groups you choose, faculty presentations, reunion notes, and much more.

Most important, please take a moment to check your contact information at the AASC site. We use their database to make all labels for mailing and to send out broadcast e-mails from our local club. This method of communication is free, so we'd like to use it as much as possible to save on postage.

To verify your contact info, go to the AASC site at <http://alumnae.smith.edu>. (This can also be accessed through the college site at www.smith.edu by clicking the link in the upper right.) Once on the AASC site, click "New User" under the log-in box if you haven't logged in before. You'll need your alumnae ID (AVID) number during this process, which you can find on the label of your *Alumnae Quarterly* or request from AASC at 800-526-2023 or alumnae@email.smith.edu. Once you're registered, you can fill out a profile, add to and update your info, look up your old classmates, join interest groups—it's just great. Search around and see all the opportunities at your fingertips.

New Alumnae Admissions Crew Casts Wide the Smith Nets

The Minnesota Smith Club is very fortunate to have a committed and eager new group of Alumnae Admissions Coordinators (known at the college as AACs—try pronouncing that!)—Caitlin Boley ('02), Justina Roberts ('06), and Kathryn Sutton ('08). They have had a busy fall and winter revving up interest in Smith among area high school girls.

Among their activities have been 10 interviews (at this writing) with prospective students, inviting and hosting prospectives and their parents at the November 2nd Oral History Project celebration (see page 2) and a recent winter tea that was attended by a whopping 40+ high schoolers, parents, and current Smith students. The group had a vibrant discussion about everything from credits to dining.

A December tally from the admissions office states that

22 students have applied to Smith from Minnesota. Wonderful news!

Looking forward, Caitlin, Justina, and Kathryn will organize the spring book awards project, which presents books to promising juniors at various high schools in the area (*Strong Women Building Strong Communities* is a contender this year) and a Smith Spring Tea for admitted students.

Their most immediate project will be organizing **rose delivery** to students who are accepted in April. The moment our AACs are notified of students accepted in our area, they bring a rose and note of congratulations to the home of each. If you'd like to help with this gratifying project, please be in touch with one of our AACs (see page 1) or write mnsmithclub@hotmail.com.

Left to right: Outgoing AAC Lida Gilbertson ('05) and new AACs Kathryn and Justina visited with current and incoming students at an August send-off picnic at the home of Marty Swain.



❖ Calling All Recent Grads! ❖

Our AACs (see above) and Lara (see below) are organizing a "Minnesota Smith Club Young Alums" group, which can be found on Facebook. The first gathering will be **February 20th, 5-7 pm**, at Sargent Preston's Saloon & Eatery (221 Cedar Ave S). Check it out!

❖ A Evening with Dance Enthusiasts ❖

Cecily Hines ('73) will host a Smith salon Thursday, **March 5, 5:30-7:30**, where you will hear about exciting plans for the Shubert Theater, our region's flagship center for dance. Guests are welcome. Choreographer James Sewell, who cofounded the James Sewell Ballet, and Colin Hamilton of the Shubert will join us. Contact Cecily at 612-375-1633 or cecilyhines@mac.com.

MEMBER PROFILE: Lara Geneva Senjem de Villavicencio ('04J)

Lara, who associates herself with the Smith class of 2003, is in her first year as secretary of our Minnesota Smith Club. She grew up in our area, graduating from White Bear Lake High School. She first heard about Smith her senior year from her mother, who had met Helen Leslie ('74) and her husband at a New Year's party. Knowing nothing of Smith, she did not research it but felt intuitively inclined to apply.

She lived in Baldwin her first and second years and Park her third and fourth, after taking a semester off between. Randy Bartlett was Lara's advisor. She reports that working in the kitchen is among her most fond memories of Smith. "Some of my best friends were my co-workers in the Baldwin and Park kitchens. I shared and did my homework in the kitchen, helped prepare and cook dinners, and spent many afternoons just chatting about life in the kitchen. I also remember going on many long walks through the area and how beautiful the land and natural surroundings are there."

Lara now works at General Mills in a sales and marketing role for school foodservices in the southeast (Virginia to Florida and over to Alabama). She is married to Jhony Villavicencio, whose 7-year-old daughter, Brittany, spends time with them after school and on weekends.

When not working at the Big G, Lara enjoys soccer, tennis, and art—"making it and viewing it at museums, art fairs, and elsewhere," as well as cooking and entertaining.

Lara has enjoyed her participation in the Minnesota Smith Club because of the opportunity to connect with other like-minded people. She hopes to see more social events and opportunities to connect with other similar-aged Smith alums. Welcome Lara!



September 6, 2008—What a Day!



Top, left to right: Sarah Garrett reminisces at lunch; Holly Dowds and Grace Norris in the bakery; Sheila Moar at her Fashion Fusion booth. **Middle:** Brigid Brindley in the Book Department; Laurie Kramer with Stephanie Ross and Wendy Lutter at the Empoword booth; Ellen Van Iwaarden bidding at Silent Auction. **Bottom:** A large representation of past Smith Day chairs, some sporting tiaras and finger baubles presented at lunch; Polly Grose showing her book.



It was one grand celebration



Smith Day 2008: A Rollicking Success

Smith Day 2008, **Diamond Jubilee: 75 Years and Still a Gem**, was a wonderful celebration enjoyed in September by well over 200 alumnae and guests at the Hopkins Center for the Arts. We had great representation across classes—1942 to 2007. Shopping was excellent, lunch was delectable, and the much-requested daiquiris of the past made a return visit for the day. Besides all the fun, our fund-raising effort was a success as well (see story below).

We had special recognition of Smith Day chairs from past years, with many of those in attendance sharing quips and memories of the Smith Day they headed (see picture on next page). We also had a new iteration, thanks to Ellen Van Iwaarden



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Co-chairs Shirley Mah Kooyman ('73), left, and Hue Alexander ('98), right, enjoy the spotlight.

(‘81), of *Hats Off to Smith Day: The First Fifty Years*, a booklet presented at Smith Day 1983. Ellen produced a new publication, *Gloves Off for Smith Day: 1983-2008*, which updates us on the past 25 years and includes a reprint of the earlier work. We still have copies: Write mnsmithclub@hotmail.com for info.

New at this year's Smith Day was expansion of the Entrepreneurial Showcase. Various services and merchandise were offered by enthusiastic alums at eight booths that contributed significantly to overall proceeds for the day. Regan McCormack, Siri Caltvedt, and Laurie Kramer promoted their ventures; Stephanie Ross and Wendy Lutter, Sheila Moar, and Robin Hartwell sold merchandise, and Polly Grose and Julie Anne Hoffman signed and sold books they've published. We appreciated having them as part of Smith Day. Think about having a booth in 2009!

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of Smith Day 2008's Department Chairs and workers as well as all you shoppers. It was a wonderful day for all.

—Shirley Mah Kooyman ('73) and Hue Alexander ('98)

It's never too early to donate your gently used clothing, books, art, collectibles, etc for Smith Day 2009! Year-round storage is available in St. Louis Park. Contact Robin Hartwell (612-374-6166), Liesl Hargens (see page 1), or mnsmithclub@hotmail.com for instructions.

And Here's Where Our \$\$\$ Goes . . .

The Smith College Club of Minnesota Scholarship Fund was established in 1964 and is supplemented each year by proceeds generated at Smith Day. As of June 30, 2008, the fund totaled \$2,230,335. The estimated amount available for disbursement in 2008-09 is \$109,812, which will fund scholarships for Minnesota students at Smith.

Proceeds from Smith Day add to the scholarship fund each year and also provide Praxis summer internships. In 2008 our Praxis recipients were these:

◆ Kelsey Finch ('09) interned at Priority Publications, a local custom publishing house, where she was responsible for writing articles and conducting interviews. She writes, "I learned far more about myself and about the working world than I could ever have imagined. This last summer has taught me that I can work under pressure, write for any audience, handle complex problems, and still manage to enjoy my job and coworkers. Having found a working environment in which I thrive will undoubtedly help me manage the inevitable post-graduation job search. The most valuable

thing I have taken away from my Praxis internship is confidence and a better appreciation of how much Smith can help me. I can never thank you enough for supporting Praxis and Smithies like myself, as your donations really do make a difference in our lives."

◆ Kelsey Olwell ('09) interned at the Penumbra Theater Company, where she was involved in their Wilson Lab Oral History Project. This project is attempting to record and catalog the personal stories and anecdotes of original company members who worked with the groundbreaking playwright August Wilson during his years at Penumbra. Kelsey helped transcribe these interviews and organize the entire lab into one cohesive and logical source that interested and aspiring playwrights, actors, and directors will be able to access and utilize. Kelsey writes, "Without your donation, I would not have been able to dedicate the time and energy to this enormous undertaking. Thank you so much for your generous philanthropy, and rest assured that it has helped to keep an important part of African American cultural history alive."
—Liesl Hargens ('98)

Turn the page for more Diamond Jubilee photos!